

Muktinath, Secret Treasure of Annapurna... The Rainbow Bridge

Susan M. Griffith-Jones

First Edition, February 2009, New Delhi, India

Second Edition October 2013

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Muktinath, Secret Treasure of Annapurna ... The Rainbow Bridge

“This book is dedicated to

**Chogye Trichen Ngawang Thupten
Khenrab Lekshey Gyatso Rinpoche,**

without whose precious guidance
it would not have come into being.”

Contents.....Page

Author's Note 7

History and background of Muktinath 17

Location and brief history of Muktinath as a place of Pilgrimage	17
Muktinath – a Hindu pilgrimage site	21
Muktinath – a Buddhist pilgrimage site	24
Muktinath today	26
Traditional Pilgrimage guide to Muktinath, 'The Clear Mirror'	27
History of the Mahasiddhas	28
Mahasiddha Tradition	31
Tantra	33
Mahamudra	35

Text of The Rainbow Bridge

Prologue	44
Section 1:	45
“The Pen”	
Section 2:	55
“The Perception of Intrinsic Awareness”	
Section 3:	58
“The Blissful Fire of Intrinsic Awareness”	
Section 4:	62
“The Blissful Mirror of Intrinsic Awareness”	
Section 5:	70
“Intrinsic Awareness Infused with Compassion”	
Epilogue	78

Commentary to The Rainbow Bridge

Infra-Red:	80
Introduction	

Contents.....	Page
Red:	82
The Rainbow Bridge... Directly perceiving emptiness whilst holding appearance	
Orange:	90
Commentary to Prologue	
Yellow:	94
Commentary to Section 1, "The Pen"	
Green:	137
Commentary to Section 2, "The Perception of Intrinsic Awareness"	
Blue:	148
Commentary to Section 3, "The Blissful Fire of Intrinsic Awareness"	
Indigo:	162
Commentary to Section 4, "The Blissful Mirror of Intrinsic Awareness"	
Violet:	192
Commentary to Section 5, "Intrinsic Awareness Infused with Compassion"	
Ultra-Violet:	216
Commentary to Epilogue	
Appendix - The Clear Mirror	219

Author's Note

Susan M. Griffith-Jones,
September 2013, Kullu, H.P. India

In February 2009, I published the first edition of **'The Rainbow Bridge'**, whose title has now been revised to **'Muktinath, Secret Treasure of Annapurna... The Rainbow Bridge'**, in this second edition. I wanted to elucidate the connection between the verses of 'The Rainbow Bridge' and the very sacred value of one of Annapurna's greatest mysteries, the Muktinath valley and this title gives more emphasis on Muktinath's part in the inspiration.

The voyage of this book started long ago, high up in the trans-Himalayan region of Mustang in July 2001, when I went there on an unexpected journey during my first visit to Nepal. Indeed as most life-turning events seem to begin, it was a trip prompted by a very different purpose and yet one that would eventually result in me giving up my life in the Western world to come to live in Nepal on a permanent basis.¹

My second trip to Muktinath was equally unplanned. In the spring of 2005 when I had already been living in Kathmandu for four years, I was about to leave on a journey to a region of Tibet that I had long been wishing to visit.

I had put much effort into planning the trip, researching the places and obtaining the tickets and various visas and permits that were required for such.

¹ Please visit <http://www.pyramidkey.com/archive.aspx?sid=435> starting at Part 1 for the story of this journey in more detail.

However, the day before departure I went to visit His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, a great Master of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, who by this time had become my spiritual teacher. Like myself, he was also residing in the area of Bouddhanath in Kathmandu.

It is customary to seek the blessing of one's spiritual guide before undertaking long journeys, even if it is just to say that one will not be around for some time. Explaining to him the route I would take through Tibet and what I wished to achieve, the fuel of imagination that had fired this path petered out as I was suddenly and completely unexpectedly stopped in my tracks.

"Go to Muktinath instead!" was his instruction and even though I was fully coherent in the final decision making process and also totally and rationally able to refute this sudden change of plan, I somehow could not disobey this simple order that his clairvoyant mind had detected as more suitable for me. 'Was it protective advise against an ill to befall me in Tibet?' I wondered at the time. Now I see it as a fulfillment of personal destiny.

Within a couple of days, I found myself in the heart of the Kali Gandaki gorge heading towards Mustang that is located in the Northern Trans-Himalayan region of Nepal. This land is barren and virtually inside the arid Tibetan plateau. There are many little Tibetan Buddhist temples dotting the landscape of the valley and the local people largely practise Buddhism.

During my previous trip there in the monsoon period of July 2001, I had spent three weeks living in the monastery at the famous fire temple of the valley, named 'Muktinath Chumig Gyatsa'.²

² See next chapter for more history and background of Muktinath Chumig Gyatsa

I had been new to the scene then and just finding my feet amongst Tibetan Buddhists and their vast array of spiritual practises and had not been able to see beyond the surface of the place that was to reveal so much to me during this second trip.

For it was upon entering the valley of Muktinath in this spring time of 2005 that I was unknowingly swept into the vortex of the place as I explored its highs and lows, interiors and exteriors as well as its sacred and mundane. After returning to Kathmandu and shaken in a new way by what had happened, I set about to write it down in a travelogue of sorts to explain my experience.

At sacred places all over the world, the bridge between different levels of manifest reality is generally more open than in other places and it is possible to easily reach within to hear inner truths. This is what essentially makes somewhere a 'sacred place'. Muktinath is one such place. Consciously realising that I had entered this kind of sub-strata reality, where the division between gross, hard-core existence blends easily into a more subtle space of being, this uncharted journey of spiritual awakening culminated in a kind of transcending of the so-called 'ordinary' world.

Rather than something that had been consciously planned or something that I was trying to enact, in its own peculiar way this stumbled upon sub-surface vision of Muktinath was triggered by taking photographs. For whilst roaming the valley, held by my inquisitive hand the camera took on a mind of its own as I was inspired to shoot a plethora of plants, rock formations, villages, people and whatever else stood along the way.³

³ To see the collection of these photos, please visit <http://www.pyramidkey.com/photogallery.aspx?sid=545>

But what does it really mean to enter the sub-surface of a place? If one has not had the direct experience of this, then it is difficult to perceive that there may be varying degrees of what may appear within one's vision at any time, depending on one's state of mind at that moment.

Indeed, 'going beneath the surface' can happen anywhere and at any time, in the sense that one sees beyond the obvious physical and geographical layout of the scene, whereby a keener sense of the essential reality of existence is able to speak to you through whatever appears before you.

Just after acquiring the camera, I had received a short, but punctilious teaching from an old friend of mine on how to use it. "There are two key points to measuring the light. If it's bright outside, allow less light in to the camera by keeping the aperture (opening) small and shutter speed high. If it's darker outside, reverse the process." After that, I found myself paralleling this statement with many aspects of life!

The light meter on my 35mm reel, twenty-five year old Pentax was long past mending and so doubled with the urge to shoot many appearing forms, I was also forced to read the light of the intended object of my focus and fix in the correct coordinates of shutter speed and aperture accordingly, with speed of attention so as not to lose the object of the picture, which is constantly changing appearance before one's eyes.

As I played with the light in this way, whilst standing at different locations of the valley, I shot different aspects of it everywhere, clumsily adjusting the light aperture and shutter speeds whilst attempting to read the light on the object of focus, an exercise that turned out to be an

adjustment of my own vision.

And so as I failed to read the light correctly, by virtue of putting in the wrong settings, a large quantity of my pictures appeared with rainbows strewn across the valley and thus Muktinath appeared as a place filled with subtle colour that I had not seen with my physical eyes.

I am still not sure if this was purely my mistake, or if my camera was just seeing beyond what I could !

Muktinath has several prominent mountains around its bowl-like upper valley. One stands out in particular, having a mandala-like plateau at its apex that is permanently covered by snow, four points at each of its cardinal directions. I began to notice that it would often appear in my pictures, a corner of it here or a whole of it in the background there. Even though it was always the same mountain, same physical size, same height, unchanged in its natural presence, it seemed to appear to change size and shape as I moved my location.

This was when I started to look at this philosophically and see that an object in focus is always fundamentally unchanged, yet appears in myriad ways depending on where one is standing. This blatant paradox got me thinking about how when we change our view on a matter, it also shifts size and perspective. What we are focusing on does not really change in any way, but it is our mind that changes so that the object (the matter at hand) seems to have changed. This highlighted to me the importance of one's state of mind at each moment in life and how going sub-strata is perfectly possible as whatever one sees and how one sees it is all a trick of the perspective of mind.

Even though the objective appearance seemingly changes as one's subjective point of view changes

position, mind never actually strays from absolute awareness.

When this understanding is realised, then no matter from which angle a situation is viewed, even though it appears to change, subjective thinking and objective appearance are always in union, just like the mountain of Muktinath is always simply the same mountain!

Born from that understanding came the mystical and flowing explanation of the process in the poetical verses of 'The Rainbow Bridge'. Appearing as a vision of its meaning during the summer months of May and June 2005, I sat in my room at Bouddhanath in Kathmandu and allowed this understanding to tumble onto the page.

The vision that fed this pouring out of words was never solid in itself, but appeared as a changing, mutating impression in the mind. Whilst I perceived its multi-layers by just simply writing down what I could see of each part of the vision in the mind at that moment, I tried not to get caught up in its detail, but to stay with its main focus, the lesson that the great mountain in the valley of Muktinath had taught me along with the camera.

It was only in the middle of 2008 when the verses had already been in my computer for three years that I had the chance to re-read the text. I had already shifted to the old British hill station of Mussoorie in the Indian Himalayas after Rinpoche had passed out of his human body in 2007 and had in some sense already been able to digest the meaning of the text into my everyday life.

Now pretending that I was any reader of the text, I saw that it may raise some questions and it was for this reason that I set about to explain the meaning of the verses in a commentary to elucidate its subtleties, so that

its definition according to the original meaning of the vision would be maintained.

When I started to write the commentary, I was interested to note that the same vision was available to me in my mind, albeit three years later.

However, this raises another issue, because even though I am strictly speaking both the author and commentator of 'The Rainbow Bridge', it is not a text that I can say that I 'wrote' as such, but it was as if I were a kind of scribe describing this vision that was held in my mind in its multi-faceted way.

Due to this feeling, I refer to myself as 'the writer' during much of the commentary and in this way have been able to de-identify myself with the authorship of the text, which is how I evidently perceive it. This technique has also allowed me to comment on its content without personal attachment to it.

On March 1st 2009, I finally gazed at the cover of a hard back book held in my hands depicting a rainbow outstretched above a monastery in the heart of the Muktinath valley, whilst looking across at the twenty or so boxes within which the 1000 copies we had published were neatly stacked. The first edition was in print!

I had already decided to self-distribute the books, as I was keen to learn the process as well as to keep tab on where they would be placed in the market. I also knew that this was not a book for everyone and that it required an audience of like-minded seekers of knowledge and wisdom.

The truth is that I did not really know how, nor where to start its distribution. The only way to begin seemed to be just by beginning.

I therefore turned to one city on my list of those that

attracted like-minded foreigners, namely Rishikesh that is nestled at the foot of Ganga's mountainous path in

Northern India and transported eighty books to the place.

On the first night there, I stacked a pile of books on the table where I was eating dinner that evening, attaching a marketing poster advertising 'New Book Release' nearby. By the end of the evening, one copy had been sold and I felt euphoric.

And so it continued, until I had combed the entire length and breadth of Rishikesh, leaving books in cafes and bookshops alike, some paid for upon receipt, others that would be paid for after selling.

Sometimes, the purchasing of a book would happen in an extraordinary way. I would have just piled a stack of books on a table in a public place as I was counting, sorting, or rearranging my bag and someone would appear out of the blue, ask about the book, glance over a copy (and not even open it in some cases) and buy it there and then.

I began to feel no attachment to the books as it became obvious to me that those who were taking them were somewhat like vessels who would transport them to further pastures. I could not cover the entire world with my 1000 books, but if I were to concentrate on certain key areas where people from all over the world would come, then they would do the job for me.

So it continued in Dharamsala, which is also located in the foothills of the Himalayas in Northern India, where the process of distribution had become even easier as I was becoming familiar with the way that the shops worked and also more flowing in my description of the book. Then on to India's capital city of Delhi,

Kathmandu and Pokhara, which is the city at the foot of the Annapurna range in Central Nepal.

The finer details of what occurred in each of these places and the meetings and conversations that ensued around the distribution and selling of the book to both individuals and shops would merit a book in itself! I was meeting different religious backgrounds, beliefs and moods in which I came to detect a unified spiritual understanding that definitely exists between people of different origins.

The launch of the book at one of Delhi's great cultural places, 'India Habitat Centre' in May 2009 brought about a new series of questioning and debate around it. I suddenly found enthusiasts interested in learning more and going deeper into the meaning of its content.

Today as I see so many of the books gone to their destinations and others within the distribution network, I feel both a sense of satisfaction as well as intrigue as places further afield reveal their interest in it. From Holland and the United Kingdom to South Africa and Singapore, I have been invited to lecture on its content and how it came about. And as I go around to different countries of the world, I deposit a book in the central library of the capital city or in places that would seem to have interest in such a book.

I now contemplate on how one small step, three small words of "Go to Muktinath!" really does lead to giant paces. And how Muktinath, a previously silent and remote valley of the Himalayas is now traveling the world, its inner meaning and secret essence manifest upon the pages of this book.

It is with great pleasure that I have presented this second edition of the book, along with a short history of

Muktinath and some other relevant information about its passage throughout the ages that was not in the first edition.

If there are errors within, these are my own doing, but I have sincerely tried to minimize such.

May all beings pass over the rainbow bridge to gain knowledge of their inherent perfection!

History and Background of Muktinath

Location and brief history of Muktinath as a place of pilgrimage

The historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, once said, 'The choice of holy space is not random but found and identified by the help of mysterious signs'. Indeed, as one approaches a secret or sacred place, there are often notable physical landmarks in and around it as well as interesting characters inhabiting it. One's mind may be affected by certain moods, both good and bad and often one can leave such a place, not knowing quite where one is anymore. In other words, such a place provokes a change in one's energy state, often ultimately for the better.

For centuries, the territory of Mustang has been a secluded and secretive place, a forbidden land where modernity and exploitation of the environment has had very little or no impact. Until as recently as just over half a century ago, this Trans-Himalayan valley was unknown to the outer world. That is, of course changing now.

Previously a major caravan route between India and Tibet, Mustang is politically situated within the territory of the Kingdom of Nepal, but is geographically part of the Tibetan plateau and culturally, its inhabitants are also largely Tibetan.

The dry and desert-like landscape that is so prevalent in the Tibetan plateau cradles caves that look somewhat like organ pipes majestically standing across long cliff

faces and bear testament to another era of inhabitants that used to live in these huge cities of sheer rock.

Leaving Pokhara, the nearest city to the Annapurna mountain range and the bright green rice fields of the valleys and foothills behind, one enters the Kali Gandaki gorge that bisects the Himalayan mountain ranges of Annapurna and Dhaulagiri. Known as the deepest gorge in the world, its biodiversity spans from deep jungle to pine forests before emerging on the arid heights of the Tibetan plateau at around 3000m.

Practitioners of Hinduism and Buddhism traditionally made pilgrimage on foot to Muktinath along this arduous trail, a five to seven day journey from Pokhara. For the pilgrim, it is mastering the road itself that will mean arriving at the sacred destination. But now the foot path has been surpassed by a motorworthy road that is dominated by jeeps and buses ferrying visitors up and down, to and from Mustang, so traditional pilgrimage requires a determination to pass over the temptation of easier travel. The footpath, however, is still there and is ironically mostly used by trekkers on the Annapurna circuit.

Upper Mustang is in the northern part of the District of Mustang and consists of seven Village Development Committees (VDCs). Lo Manthang, the capital of this northern part of Mustang is thought to have been built in 1380AD by the first king of Lo, Ame Pal. Upper Mustang remains one of the few areas in the world where Tibetan culture still continues to survive in its original form.

Muktinath-Chumig Gyatsa, a sacred place for both Hindus and Tibetan Buddhists, is situated at just below 4000m above sea level in the lower part of Mustang, the

capital of which is the town of Jomsom that also has an airstrip allowing small planes and helicopters to reach the district.

It also has all basic facilities such as a large school and hospital, as well as police and army depots, yet calling it a town is not really apt as it's more like an extended village. The Muktinath valley and surrounding valleys are known by the name 'Baragaon', or 'Twelve villages' as traditionally these were the collection of villages of the Lower Mustang area above Jomsom.

Muktinath Chumig-Gyatsa lies right at the top of the Muktinath valley before one goes up the path that leads to the Thorang-la pass that crosses over into the district of Manang. On an outer level, Muktinath Chumig-Gyatsa may be seen as around a thousand square metres of temples, shrines, burial stupas, prayer wheels, springs, sacred trees along with other natural and man-made features imbued with supernatural characteristics reflecting both Buddhist and Hindu principles, but on a more subtle level it can be recognised as a working example of different religions sharing the same holy site with mutual respect.

As for its age, the Nepali scholar, Sharada Prasad Dahal, in his paper 'Muktishetra, A Historical, Religious and Cultural Exploration' mentions, 'The glory of holy spots like Muktitirtha⁴ spread throughout India through these Puranas that were created during the Gupta period (4th-7th centuries AD).

Thus on the basis of these ancient sources, it must be accepted that Muktinath is around 2000 years old.'

The religious sources such as Ramayana,

⁴ another word for Muktinath, pertaining to its status as a place where the bridge between different realms is apparent.

Appendix

Translation of The Clear Mirror

The Clear Mirror
A Pilgrimage Guide to the Major Sacred Place
Chumig Gyatsa (One Hundred Springs)
By Jampal Rabgyé Rinpoche

(This is the translation of the printed version of the original manuscript of Jampal Rabgyé Rinpoche /MFI)

Translated from Tibetan into English by Ngawang Zangpo and offered by him to Muktinath Lama Wangyal in the year of the Iron Snake, 2128 (2001 AD). © 2001-2002 Muktinath Foundation International

Namo Guru!

Previously, during the time of the doctrine of the fully and completely enlightened Buddha Shakyamuni, Guru Rinpoché was born in a lotus-flower in the wonderful and excellent western land of Oddiyana. Within this worldly realm, his fortune was to become a prince of the royal family of Zahor.

***In the land of India, he cut through all his misunderstandings [of the sacred Teachings].
In Cool Grove, he attained the two forms of accomplishment.
In Varanasi, he turned the wheel of the sacred teachings.
Due to karmic connections and aspirations made in past lifetimes, The Tibetan king Tri-song Dé-u Tsen invited the Lotus-Born Master from Oddiyana to Tibet.***

***At the great Samyé Monastery in central Tibet, he tamed the land.
Further, in the Land of Jambu's four directions and its central
region.***

***He blessed all mountains and glacier lakes
And concealed many treasures for the benefit of future
sentient beings. He bound under oath all Tibetan gods
and cannibal demons And spread the Buddhist doctrine
throughout the Himalayas. Now he suppresses the
cannibal demons in the south-west. He has not passed
away but lives on as the lord-protector of all beings:***

***Lotus-Born Master, the three bodies of enlightenment in
one, at your feet I bow.***

Both Hindus and Buddhists consider this major sacred place a special location. Hindus call it Muktinath, while we Buddhists call it Chumig Gyatsa (The Hundred Springs), comparable to the thirty-third heaven, Joyous. This text will present a brief account of its origin.

In the past, Tibet's king Tri-song Dé-u tsen sent a translator to India to invite the Great Master to tame the land for the great Samyé Monastery. As the Great Master traveled to Tibet, he considered the people of Lo-wo as his disciples and constructed a temple here in Lo-wo. As its inner sacred support, the Lotus-Born Master sculpted a statue resembling himself, to be placed in the temple. That temple is now the Lamp Temple and the inner sacred support within it, the statue made by the Guru's own hand, is the Guru "Looks-like me" statue that can now be seen there.

Further, this place has been blessed by India's eighty great accomplished masters. With the intention to benefit sentient beings, those masters took an Indian cliff called Ral-pa-chen (in Tibetan) with the tips of their fingers and made the wish that it cover a boiling lake of poison. They flung it into space and it fell to earth, covering the boiling lake of poison.

Then the accomplished masters went to offer many prostrations and circumambulations to the monarch of the Himalayas, Kailash

Mountain. They washed themselves in Lake Manasarovar, then brought 80 gourds of water to this special, sublime sacred place. They stayed above the Vajra Palace and dreamed that on this central, great sovereign mountain, the sacred circle of the sixty-four deities of Supreme Bliss (Chakra-samvara) manifested.

*This sublime sacred place that appears as a mountain
Is the great female consort, Vajra Yogini.
Its appearance is the male consort; its emptiness, the female.
Appearance and emptiness are in inseparable union.
This is the palace of male and female Supreme Bliss.*

*The golden eastern mountain
Has the form of the noble gentle lord-protector.
The intermediate hills--white, yellow, red, and green--
Are the twenty-one Taras.
The southern, yellow mountain
Has the form of the Transcendent Conqueror Shakyamuni.*

*In such a wonderful, sublime sacred place,
A river, as large as a horse-tail, emerged.
At that place, Lotus-Born Master
Made tenth-day offerings continually, without fail.
It is known as the sublime place of Dakini Land.*

*Within it, the meditative experience and realization
Of the assembly of the eighty accomplished masters
increased. When they danced, one thousand impressions
of their footprints were left in stone.
All were concealed as treasures,
Except for two, which were left for beings' benefit.*

*This is a place for fortunate persons to practice
tantra; Persons without such fortune cannot practice
here. This musical sound of water in the South
Is an offering of water to the Three Roots,*

*By the kings of the nagas, Ga-wa and Jok-po. If
you go 36 yards from there, toward the South,
You find the renowned, major sacred site,
Which is endowed with outer, inner, and secret qualities.*

*Outwardly, it is the lord-protectors of the three kinds of beings.
The fire from water is All-Seeing One (Chenrézi);
The fire from earth is Gentle Splendor (Manjushri); And
the fire from stone is Lord of Secrets (Vajrapani).*

*Inwardly, the three poisonous obscuring emotions are burned:
Fire burn in the water of purified desire;
Fire burns in the earth of purified anger;
And fire burns in the stone of purified stupidity.*

*Secretly, this is the non-dual union of the male and female deities:
Fire burns in the water of transcendent knowledge;
Fire burns in the earth of skilful means;
And fire burns stably within the stone of union.*

You will gain accomplishment by seeing or hearing this.

*At the one hundred and eight springs,
The eighty accomplished masters
Each made a reservoir in the earth.
From the heatless turquoise Lake Manasarovar,
They brought the finest, blessed water.*

*"In a future time of decline,
There will be many sentient beings who will commit
negative acts, Such as those of immediate retribution.
They will be reborn in the hell of unceasing torment.
To guide those sentient beings,
We consecrate
The hundred and eight springs,
That even by drinking a mouthful of this water,
They will not have to experience the sufferings of such torment:
Let alone other forms of suffering."*

*They thereby expressed their great wishes for beings' benefit.
After having concealed this as a precious treasure,
One hundred and eight springs
Later appeared.*

*Each accomplished master had a staff,
Which he or she used as a walking-stick.
They each planted a staff in the ground
And said that marked their residence.
The trees that grew from their staffs
Can still be seen today.*

*Along the pilgrimage path of this sublime sacred
place, In the rock is Guru Drakpo's hand-implement,
A self-arisen scorpion.*

*Slightly above that place,
There is the clear impression of a foot in stone,
Which Lotus-Born Master from Oddiyana made
With positive aspirations for sentient beings' happiness.*

*Close to that boulder,
Lies a sign of the treasures, an impression of a vajra.
Within it lies the dakinis' drinking water.
On it, there is a self-arisen garuda.*

*In the north-west of this sublime sacred place,
Between the Pu-hrang region and the monastery,
There is a blessed impression of the Buddha's foot.*

*In the east of this sublime sacred place,
There are impressions
Of Lotus-Born Master from Oddiyana's
Fireplace--the hearth-stones,
A kapala, tea churn, tea-strainer, and ladle.
Such amazing things can be seen there.
That location's name is Ja-dong Dong-mo.*

***In the south-east of this sublime sacred place, Near
the place called Accomplishment of the Deity, There
are two particularly exalted impressions of the feet
Of Lotus-Born Master from Oddiyana.
The right foot's impression is wearing a boot;
The left foot's is clearly of a bare foot.
This place is called Impressions of the Guru's Feet.***

This is the story of how this [statue of] Chenrézi (Chenrezig),
Great King of the Nagas, came to this place in later times:

In the past, the central, main figure and the two dakinis to his right and left, were self-arisen statues, made of copper. They resided in the region of Dzum-lang but saw that their benefit for sentient beings would take place in Chumig Gyatsa. They flew through the air and arrived here. The king of Dzum-lang searched everywhere for them and heard that they were located at Chumig Gyatsa. To bring them back to his country, he came with a strong army of his subjects. As they carried the statues back to their previous home, they reached as far as Drak-zur [literally, Cliff-Corner, the point after which Chumig Gyatsa can no longer be seen]. They managed to carry the statues no further and had to put them on the ground. Then the king, his sons, and subjects were unable by any means to lift the statues again. Unable to do anything else, the king brought the statues back to their new home and enlarged its location. He then returned to his country.

From that time forth, when people from Dzum-lang visit this place on pilgrimage, they cry to the statue, complaining, "Since you no longer live among us, we have to undergo great hardships crossing a river on our way here." This custom continues to the present day.

In the past, accomplished Buddhist meditation masters performed burnt offering rituals here of exceptional blessing. Even now, you can find food to eat between the rocks.

***It is said that whoever meditates and recites mantras
with devotion In this sacred place Chumig Gyatsa,
Will be happy during this lifetime, will realize the
meaning of the nature of mind,
And will attain enlightenment in a later life.
It is also said that any prostrations, offerings, or virtuous
acts done here
Will lead to success during this life, the purification of
negative acts, And the attainment of awakening in a later life.***

Noble Tara's prophecy states:

***Many fierce nagas live
In that sublime sacred location, Chumig Gyatsa.
It is the realm where Supreme Bliss (Chakrasamvara)
and his consort reside.
Once you have made a positive connection with the place,
You will attain the great stage of no-regression along
the path to awakening.***

Further,

***The benefits of erecting prayer flags with
single-minded supplications
At this place of accomplishment
Are that you purify the suffering of the six classes of beings
And you temporarily dispel your personal obstacles.***

***The benefit of prostrations and circumambulations
Is rebirth as a universal monarch with a thousand-spoked [wheel].***

***By offering bells and chimes here,
You will attain a pleasing and clear voice
And the accomplishment of the speech of enlightenment.***

***By drinking and washing with the water,
You will purify the bad karma and obscurations related
to the five acts of immediate retribution.***

***By repairing [the structure] with earth, stone, or whitewash,
You will be freed from [harm by] any malevolent animals,
Such as tigers, leopards, bears, yeti, and poisonous snakes.***

***By offering canopies and victory banners,
All your intense, negative emotions will be pacified,
You will become worthy of everyone's respect,
And you will have magnificent wealth, without insecurity.***

***By offering cooked rice and food,
You will not be reborn in a place of famine
And in this life and all others, you will be wealthy.***

For many years until the present, one family has taken continual and unfailing responsibility for this major sacred place of Chumig Gyatsa. They trace their origins to the time of the Tibetan religious king Song-tsen Gam-po. When the emperor of China, Tang Tai-tsung sent his daughter, Wen-cheng Gong-ju, to wed [the Tibetan king], he sent a statue of the Buddha Shakyamuni as part of her dowry. For its transport to Tibet, it was placed within a chariot, to be escorted by four strong Chinese athletes. These four Chinese athletes, such as Lha-ga, were at the origin of four major Tibetan clans--Nam-drol Lha-ga, Sa-kya Khon, Dri-gung Kyu-ra, and Tak-lung Ga-sé. Our present family is known to have descended from the Lha-ga clan. Nowadays, it is known as the Do-mar, after the practice place called Dza-drak Mar-po. In any event, it is my nephew Péma Wangyal who is the present custodian of this sacred place, a position he inherited in a father-to-son lineage.

Because the great master from Oddiyana blessed this sacred place, this monastery's affiliation among Buddhist schools is with the Original Nyingma tradition. From days past until the present, those who practice Buddhism in the monastery are exclusively nuns.

In the Dzar and Kying-ka regions, families with three daughters traditionally will ask that their middle daughter, at the age of thirteen years, have her hair cut by the monastery's head lama. She then enters the monastery.

Apart from those girls, any woman of the Dzar and Kying-ka districts who wishes to can enter this monastery as a nun. This sublime, sacred place, touched by the feet of and blessed by the second Buddha, the master from Oddiyana, is known as Chumig Gyatsa (The Hundred Springs).

It provides a field for the cultivation of merit for all beings. Just seeing it, hearing it, or bringing it to mind can close the door to rebirth in miserable existences.

It is said that a clear and extensive pilgrimage guide to this blessed place used to exist. However, due to recent misfortunes and changes in time, although the legend of such a text continues, I have never seen the actual book itself. Nevertheless, the flower of my faith has fully blossomed and it is full of the nectar of our ancestors' oral lineage. Thinking of the swarm of bees of present and future faithful individuals, I, Jampal Rabgyé, have composed this short account.

In the presence of the Three Roots, the deities, spiritual masters, and oath-bound guardians, I ask for their patience toward any mistakes this work might contain, in words or in meaning. If my words move any reader to faith, devotion, or mental strength in virtuous acts, may this become a cause for all sentient beings, our mothers whose numbers fill the infinity of space, to attain the state of a great holder of awareness.

Dedication of the Text's Printing

**Lha-ga family, which intimidates with their brilliance
demons who harbor misleading aspirations;
Past generations' children who led this family, present family**

lineage-holders,
And the hosts of spiritual masters yet to come:
To you I pray! Lead me to maturity and liberation, and
make our connection meaningful!

Supreme among all past family lineage-holders, Praised
as being like a white lotus, Jampal Rabgyé, Elegantly
composed the pilgrimage guide, The Clear Mirror. May it
accomplish great benefit for the doctrine and for beings.

For the ocean of all sentient beings and me,
May the virtuous act of the printing of this pilgrimage guide
Pacify all harmful influences in our present circumstances
And ultimately lead us to the attainment of spiritual awakening!

Virtue! Virtue!

The family lineage-holder Péma Wangyal offered these
words of positive aspirations and the money for this
printing, at Nepal's [Baudhanath] Stupa. May this be
virtuous and fully positive!

Virtue!

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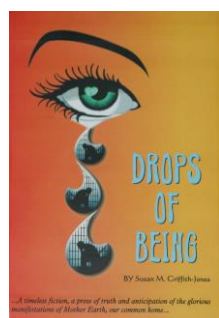
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