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**Ritual Funeral Text Tang 665  
from the Tangut Collection of IOM, RAS**

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*Abstract:* This paper represents a brief study and a translation of a ritual funeral text dated to the 11th–13th cc. Despite its brevity, the manuscript is a consistent and complete fragment describing the ritual and proving the doubtless similarity between the Tangut and Tibetan religious traditions. The very age of the text attests to the fact that this tradition has survived down to the present day in unaltered form.

*Key words:* Khara-Khoto, funeral ritual, bardo teaching, Tangut Buddhism

**The Description and Identification  
of the Manuscript**

This manuscript Tang 665 was selected for study when a catalog of the Tangut collection kept at the IOM, RAS was being compiled in 2005–12<sup>1</sup> under the supervision of Evgenii Kychanov (1932–2013). As a rule, the process involved special descriptions of those books whose bindings differed from those traditional or regular for canonical texts (pothi, scrolls, and accordion book) and which looked more like small copybooks. This manuscript is a book with its pages sewn in that way; its two folios, each with text on both sides, measure 17.5 by 12.3 cm. The cursive handwriting is fairly legible (cf. Pl. 1–4). Concerning dating, we can easily determine that it belongs to the 11th–13th cc., that is to say, it is the same age as the bulk of the items collected by Piotr Kozlov (1863–1935). The visible features of the text reveal its structure to be an alternation of poetic and prosaic parts. The latter contain 15 characters per line; a poetic line consists of two parts (each of 7 characters) separated by a caesura. This brief handwritten fragment represents part of the burial procedure, but it also is logically consistent which provides reliable grounds for making it the object of a separate study.

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<sup>1</sup> Until recent times this manuscript was registered under inv. No. 4084. This unattributed fragment was entered in the inventory by E.I. Kychanov along with other items in the 1950s.

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The self-sufficiency of the text, legible handwriting and good condition of the manuscript simplified its reading and comprehension.<sup>2</sup> The basis for this short study was found in the translation of the title written over the top right-hand margin of page 3: *je ngiwə tšja vje šjei*<sup>3</sup> 爾爾魏魏爾 *Ritual [sequence] of cutting in the temple*. Firstly, this clearly indicated the nature of the ritual described; and it did indeed soon become clear that the text dealt with funerals. Secondly, the positioning of the inscription on the margin before the text body indicated that the title concerned either the previous or, more likely, the following chapter or text, a component of some larger whole text cycle.<sup>4</sup>

### Text's Characteristics

Now it is the time to address the text. An indication that the book was used for practical purposes is the line containing the formula *someone's name* intended to be replaced with the actual name of the dead or dying person for whom the ritual was performed:

*žion si liwų lin mje swi nje* 駁解身穢修補爾 “Someone's name's life is expiring. The body will be changed, changed”. (p. 2)

The following lines reveal that a lama read the text over the body of a *disciple*, i.e. a monk or some person following the path of the Buddhist teaching:

*liwų lin ndzje ngi mə tšhja šje* 身穢駁駁駁爾爾 “The body has changed, the disciple will ascend to the heaven!” (p. 3)

That personal and at the same time social characterization of the deceased determined both the form and the content of the ritual. The text states the points of doctrine relevant for the ritual, along with the established rules. The latter were traditionally supported by diverse metaphors and comparisons making it easier to perceive the sense correctly and in-depth. At the same time, these metaphors provide the text with a degree of artistic value. Its basic idea is the following: as soon as one feels that death is imminent, one should immediately and decisively give up one's attachment to the temporary and fragile body:

<sup>2</sup> This is rarely the case with books from Khara-Khoto, most of which have reached us as fragments of various sizes.

<sup>3</sup> The phonetic transcription in M.V. Sofronov's reconstruction is used in this article.

<sup>4</sup> It might also be a convolution.

*liwü 'm tsi ti ndzu kyo tseu ndziwo liwü mi 'ju ndzin nje*  
 勿 亦  
 “Do not feel affection for [your] body and do not love it! A human body is short-lived, you are about to borrow another”. (p. 1)

Such are the initial lines of the fragment; this appeal was repeated more than once when the ritual was performed. The body belonged to and symbolized the fleeting and illusory world that was also to be rejected. Instead, the spirit of the dying (or already dead) person is exhorted to consider the Buddhist faith, to apply every effort in order to purify the *nje* 解 (Chin. *xin* 心, “mind”, “consciousness”) of all affectations, to acquire the new nature of disembodied being, to ascend, and later, fate permitting, to achieve a better rebirth.

### Religious and Ethno Cultural Parallels in Ritual Context

Now, we should take a closer look at certain peculiarities of the ritual found in the text.<sup>5</sup> They are of interest as they make the procedure comparable with later descriptions of the burial traditions of the Tibetans, Buryats, and Mongols. The manuscript contains the following lines:

*ziön si liwü lin viə tsin na / thi tha 'ja ta mbju ngiei tjei / thi lə wo ta na*  
*liwü ndza* 駁 解 亦  
 “Listen about the expiry of life and the changes the body will undergo! This is a great umbrella giving [you] shelter. This is a banner measuring [your] body”. (p. 2)

These lines can be considered the origins of the ritual that was described much later as follows: “A Tibetan was dying... His name accompanied by invocations was written on an umbrella-shaped shield covered with a khadak. Food was left in front of it; it was revered”.<sup>6</sup> “The deceased’s best clothes were placed in front of the body, with a representation of the person’s soul affixed to them... (stamped... on a sheet of paper)”.<sup>7</sup> At this point, one

<sup>5</sup> In Russian sinological tradition this key concept of Buddhist philosophy is usually translated as “mind”, “consciousness”, but these words do not provide an adequate understanding of the meaning. Evgenii Torchinov, for instance, used a better equivalent, “heart-mind” (TORCHINOV 2008). We, however, will use the traditional translation, “mind”, occasionally employing more elaborate versions, i.e. “heart-mind”, “heart” and “mind”.

<sup>6</sup> KYCHANOV, SAVITSKY 1975, 159–160.

<sup>7</sup> GERASIMOVA 1981, 117.

may recall the Tibetan tradition of making flags with representations of the *wind-horse* indicating the birth date and the wish to ascend like that wind-horse.<sup>8</sup> Rolf Alfred Stein also compared the *tente du corps* (“tent (umbrella) of a body”) with the traditional Tibetan *wind-horse* flags.<sup>9</sup> One can assume that the invocations and the pictures of the soul symbolically represented the merits attained by the deceased during earthly life. It also corresponds to the Tantric concept of *body-consciousness* according to which the *body* denotes only the living shell, a means to spend one's life, but never an object for study by a pathologist.<sup>10</sup> It should be added that Richard Gombrich emphasized the similarity and even identity between the notions *merits* and *good karma* acquired during one's lifetime and passed on at rebirth.<sup>11</sup>

Describing the transformations of Central Asian shamanic rituals under the influence of Tibetan Buddhism, Kseniia Gerasimova mentioned as essential the fact that the lama performing the ritual was identified with as the god of the corresponding ritual: “The lama acted in the name of Buddha's specific Tantric form. The power of the invocations was secured by the force of Buddha's holiness and the teaching of the Buddhist religion”.<sup>12</sup> In the Tangut ritual text, too, the officiating lama, in accordance with the tradition, glorified Buddha: *mjuo ldje pju me tshje tjei min* 𐞑𐞓𐞔𐞕𐞖𐞗𐞘𐞙𐞚𐞛𐞜𐞝𐞞𐞟𐞠𐞡𐞢𐞣𐞤𐞥𐞦𐞧𐞨𐞩𐞪𐞫𐞬𐞭𐞮𐞯𐞰𐞱𐞲𐞳𐞴𐞵𐞶𐞷𐞸𐞹𐞺𐞻𐞼𐞽𐞾𐞿𐟀𐟁𐟂𐟃𐟄𐟅𐟆𐟇𐟈𐟉𐟊𐟋𐟌𐟍𐟎𐟏𐟐𐟑𐟒𐟓𐟔𐟕𐟖𐟗𐟘𐟙𐟚𐟛𐟜𐟝𐟞𐟟𐟠𐟡𐟢𐟣𐟤𐟥𐟦𐟧𐟨𐟩𐟪𐟫𐟬𐟭𐟮𐟯𐟰𐟱𐟲𐟳𐟴𐟵𐟶𐟷𐟸𐟹𐟺𐟻𐟼𐟽𐟾𐟿𐠀𐠁𐠂𐠃𐠄𐠅𐠆𐠇𐠈𐠉𐠊𐠋𐠌𐠍𐠎𐠏𐠐𐠑𐠒𐠓𐠔𐠕𐠖𐠗𐠘𐠙𐠚𐠛𐠜𐠝𐠞𐠟𐠠𐠡𐠢𐠣𐠤𐠥𐠦𐠧𐠨𐠩𐠪𐠫𐠬𐠭𐠮𐠯𐠰𐠱𐠲𐠳𐠴𐠵𐠶𐠷𐠸𐠹𐠺𐠻𐠼𐠽𐠾𐠿𐡀𐡁𐡂𐡃𐡄𐡅𐡆𐡇𐡈𐡉𐡊𐡋𐡌𐡍𐡎𐡏𐡐𐡑𐡒𐡓𐡔𐡕𐡖𐡗𐡘𐡙𐡚𐡛𐡜𐡝𐡞𐡟𐡠𐡡𐡢𐡣𐡤𐡥𐡦𐡧𐡨𐡩𐡪𐡫𐡬𐡭𐡮𐡯𐡰𐡱𐡲𐡳𐡴𐡵𐡶𐡷𐡸𐡹𐡺𐡻𐡼𐡽𐡾𐡿𐢀𐢁𐢂𐢃𐢄𐢅𐢆𐢇𐢈𐢉𐢊𐢋𐢌𐢍𐢎𐢏𐢐𐢑𐢒𐢓𐢔𐢕𐢖𐢗𐢘𐢙𐢚𐢛𐢜𐢝𐢞𐢟𐢠𐢡𐢢𐢣𐢤𐢥𐢦𐢧𐢨𐢩𐢪𐢫𐢬𐢭𐢮𐢯𐢰𐢱𐢲𐢳𐢴𐢵𐢶𐢷𐢸𐢹𐢺𐢻𐢼𐢽𐢾𐢿𐣀𐣁𐣂𐣃𐣄𐣅𐣆𐣇𐣈𐣉𐣊𐣋𐣌𐣍𐣎𐣏𐣐𐣑𐣒𐣓𐣔𐣕𐣖𐣗𐣘𐣙𐣚𐣛𐣜𐣝𐣞𐣟𐣠𐣡𐣢𐣣𐣤𐣥𐣦𐣧𐣨𐣩𐣪𐣫𐣬𐣭𐣮𐣯𐣰𐣱𐣲𐣳𐣴𐣵𐣶𐣷𐣸𐣹𐣺𐣻𐣼𐣽𐣾𐣿𐤀𐤁𐤂𐤃𐤄𐤅𐤆𐤇𐤈𐤉𐤊𐤋𐤌𐤍𐤎𐤏𐤐𐤑𐤒𐤓𐤔𐤕𐤖𐤗𐤘𐤙𐤚𐤛𐤜𐤝𐤞𐤟𐤠𐤡𐤢𐤣𐤤𐤥𐤦𐤧𐤨𐤩𐤪𐤫𐤬𐤭𐤮𐤯𐤰𐤱𐤲𐤳𐤴𐤵𐤶𐤷𐤸𐤹𐤺𐤻𐤼𐤽𐤾𐤿𐥀𐥁𐥂𐥃𐥄𐥅𐥆𐥇𐥈𐥉𐥊𐥋𐥌𐥍𐥎𐥏𐥐𐥑𐥒𐥓𐥔𐥕𐥖𐥗𐥘𐥙𐥚𐥛𐥜𐥝𐥞𐥟𐥠𐥡𐥢𐥣𐥤𐥥𐥦𐥧𐥨𐥩𐥪𐥫𐥬𐥭𐥮𐥯𐥰𐥱𐥲𐥳𐥴𐥵𐥶𐥷𐥸𐥹𐥺𐥻𐥼𐥽𐥾𐥿𐦀𐦁𐦂𐦃𐦄𐦅𐦆𐦇𐦈𐦉𐦊𐦋𐦌𐦍𐦎𐦏𐦐𐦑𐦒𐦓𐦔𐦕𐦖𐦗𐦘𐦙𐦚𐦛𐦜𐦝𐦞𐦟𐦠𐦡𐦢𐦣𐦤𐦥𐦦𐦧𐦨𐦩𐦪𐦫𐦬𐦭𐦮𐦯𐦰𐦱𐦲𐦳𐦴𐦵𐦶𐦷𐦸𐦹𐦺𐦻𐦼𐦽𐦾𐦿𐧀𐧁𐧂𐧃𐧄𐧅𐧆𐧇𐧈𐧉𐧊𐧋𐧌𐧍𐧎𐧏𐧐𐧑𐧒𐧓𐧔𐧕𐧖𐧗𐧘𐧙𐧚𐧛𐧜𐧝𐧞𐧟𐧠𐧡𐧢𐧣𐧤𐧥𐧦𐧧𐧨𐧩𐧪𐧫𐧬𐧭𐧮𐧯𐧰𐧱𐧲𐧳𐧴𐧵𐧶𐧷𐧸𐧹𐧺𐧻𐧼𐧽𐧾𐧿𐨀𐨁𐨂𐨃𐨄𐨅𐨆𐨇𐨈𐨉𐨊𐨋𐨌𐨍𐨎𐨏𐨐𐨑𐨒𐨓𐨔𐨕𐨖𐨗𐨘𐨙𐨚𐨛𐨜𐨝𐨞𐨟𐨠𐨡𐨢𐨣𐨤𐨥𐨦𐨧𐨨𐨩𐨪𐨫𐨬𐨭𐨮𐨯𐨰𐨱𐨲𐨳𐨴𐨵𐨶𐨷𐨹𐨺𐨸𐨻𐨼𐨽𐨾𐨿𐩀𐩁𐩂𐩃𐩄𐩅𐩆𐩇𐩈𐩉𐩊𐩋𐩌𐩍𐩎𐩏𐩐𐩑𐩒𐩓𐩔𐩕𐩖𐩗𐩘𐩙𐩚𐩛𐩜𐩝𐩞𐩟𐩠𐩡𐩢𐩣𐩤𐩥𐩦𐩧𐩨𐩩𐩪𐩫𐩬𐩭𐩮𐩯𐩰𐩱𐩲𐩳𐩴𐩵𐩶𐩷𐩸𐩹𐩺𐩻𐩼𐩽𐩾𐩿𐪀𐪁𐪂𐪃𐪄𐪅𐪆𐪇𐪈𐪉𐪊𐪋𐪌𐪍𐪎𐪏𐪐𐪑𐪒𐪓𐪔𐪕𐪖𐪗𐪘𐪙𐪚𐪛𐪜𐪝𐪞𐪟𐪠𐪡𐪢𐪣𐪤𐪥𐪦𐪧𐪨𐪩𐪪𐪫𐪬𐪭𐪮𐪯𐪰𐪱𐪲𐪳𐪴𐪵𐪶𐪷𐪸𐪹𐪺𐪻𐪼𐪽𐪾𐪿𐫀𐫁𐫂𐫃𐫄𐫅𐫆𐫇𐫈𐫉𐫊𐫋𐫌𐫍𐫎𐫏𐫐𐫑𐫒𐫓𐫔𐫕𐫖𐫗𐫘𐫙𐫚𐫛𐫜𐫝𐫞𐫟𐫠𐫡𐫢𐫣𐫤𐫦𐫥𐫧𐫨𐫩𐫪𐫫𐫬𐫭𐫮𐫯𐫰𐫱𐫲𐫳𐫴𐫵𐫶𐫷𐫸𐫹𐫺𐫻𐫼𐫽𐫾𐫿𐬀𐬁𐬂𐬃𐬄𐬅𐬆𐬇𐬈𐬉𐬊𐬋𐬌𐬍𐬎𐬏𐬐𐬑𐬒𐬓𐬔𐬕𐬖𐬗𐬘𐬙𐬚𐬛𐬜𐬝𐬞𐬟𐬠𐬡𐬢𐬣𐬤𐬥𐬦𐬧𐬨𐬩𐬪𐬫𐬬𐬭𐬮𐬯𐬰𐬱𐬲𐬳𐬴𐬵𐬶𐬷𐬸𐬹𐬺𐬻𐬼𐬽𐬾𐬿𐭀𐭁𐭂𐭃𐭄𐭅𐭆𐭇𐭈𐭉𐭊𐭋𐭌𐭍𐭎𐭏𐭐𐭑𐭒𐭓𐭔𐭕𐭖𐭗𐭘𐭙𐭚𐭛𐭜𐭝𐭞𐭟𐭠𐭡𐭢𐭣𐭤𐭥𐭦𐭧𐭨𐭩𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯𐭰𐭱𐭲𐭳𐭴𐭵𐭶𐭷𐭸𐭹𐭺𐭻𐭼𐭽𐭾𐭿𐮀𐮁𐮂𐮃𐮄𐮅𐮆𐮇𐮈𐮉𐮊𐮋𐮌𐮍𐮎𐮏𐮐𐮑𐮒𐮓𐮔𐮕𐮖𐮗𐮘𐮙𐮚𐮛𐮜𐮝𐮞𐮟𐮠𐮡𐮢𐮣𐮤𐮥𐮦𐮧𐮨𐮩𐮪𐮫𐮬𐮭𐮮𐮯𐮰𐮱𐮲𐮳𐮴𐮵𐮶𐮷𐮸𐮹𐮺𐮻𐮼𐮽𐮾𐮿𐯀𐯁𐯂𐯃𐯄𐯅𐯆𐯇𐯈𐯉𐯊𐯋𐯌𐯍𐯎𐯏𐯐𐯑𐯒𐯓𐯔𐯕𐯖𐯗𐯘𐯙𐯚𐯛𐯜𐯝𐯞𐯟𐯠𐯡𐯢𐯣𐯤𐯥𐯦𐯧𐯨𐯩𐯪𐯫𐯬𐯭𐯮𐯯𐯰𐯱𐯲𐯳𐯴𐯵𐯶𐯷𐯸𐯹𐯺𐯻𐯼𐯽𐯾𐯿𐰀𐰁𐰂𐰃𐰄𐰅𐰆𐰇𐰈𐰉𐰊𐰋𐰌𐰍𐰎𐰏𐰐𐰑𐰒𐰓𐰔𐰕𐰖𐰗𐰘𐰙𐰚𐰛𐰜𐰝𐰞𐰟𐰠𐰡𐰢𐰣𐰤𐰥𐰦𐰧𐰨𐰩𐰪𐰫𐰬𐰭𐰮𐰯𐰰𐰱𐰲𐰳𐰴𐰵𐰶𐰷𐰸𐰹𐰺𐰻𐰼𐰽𐰾𐰿𐱀𐱁𐱂𐱃𐱄𐱅𐱆𐱇𐱈𐱉𐱊𐱋𐱌𐱍𐱎𐱏𐱐𐱑𐱒𐱓𐱔𐱕𐱖𐱗𐱘𐱙𐱚𐱛𐱜𐱝𐱞𐱟𐱠𐱡𐱢𐱣𐱤𐱥𐱦𐱧𐱨𐱩𐱪𐱫𐱬𐱭𐱮𐱯𐱰𐱱𐱲𐱳𐱴𐱵𐱶𐱷𐱸𐱹𐱺𐱻𐱼𐱽𐱾𐱿𐲀𐲁𐲂𐲃𐲄𐲅𐲆𐲇𐲈𐲉𐲊𐲋𐲌𐲍𐲎𐲏𐲐𐲑𐲒𐲓𐲔𐲕𐲖𐲗𐲘𐲙𐲚𐲛𐲜𐲝𐲞𐲟𐲠𐲡𐲢𐲣𐲤𐲥𐲦𐲧𐲨𐲩𐲪𐲫𐲬𐲭𐲮𐲯𐲰𐲱𐲲𐲳𐲴𐲵𐲶𐲷𐲸𐲹𐲺𐲻𐲼𐲽𐲾𐲿𐳀𐳁𐳂𐳃𐳄𐳅𐳆𐳇𐳈𐳉𐳊𐳋𐳌𐳍𐳎𐳏𐳐𐳑𐳒𐳓𐳔𐳕𐳖𐳗𐳘𐳙𐳚𐳛𐳜𐳝𐳞𐳟𐳠𐳡𐳢𐳣𐳤𐳥𐳦𐳧𐳨𐳩𐳪𐳫𐳬𐳭𐳮𐳯𐳰𐳱𐳲𐳳𐳴𐳵𐳶𐳷𐳸𐳹𐳺𐳻𐳼𐳽𐳾𐳿𐴀𐴁𐴂𐴃𐴄𐴅𐴆𐴇𐴈𐴉𐴊𐴋𐴌𐴍𐴎𐴏𐴐𐴑𐴒𐴓𐴔𐴕𐴖𐴗𐴘𐴙𐴚𐴛𐴜𐴝𐴞𐴟𐴠𐴡𐴢𐴣𐴤𐴥𐴦𐴧𐴨𐴩𐴪𐴫𐴬𐴭𐴮𐴯𐴰𐴱𐴲𐴳𐴴𐴵𐴶𐴷𐴸𐴹𐴺𐴻𐴼𐴽𐴾𐴿𐵀𐵁𐵂𐵃𐵄𐵅𐵆𐵇𐵈𐵉𐵊𐵋𐵌𐵍𐵎𐵏𐵐𐵑𐵒𐵓𐵔𐵕𐵖𐵗𐵘𐵙𐵚𐵛𐵜𐵝𐵞𐵟𐵠𐵡𐵢𐵣𐵤𐵥𐵦𐵧𐵨𐵩𐵪𐵫𐵬𐵭𐵮𐵯𐵰𐵱𐵲𐵳𐵴𐵵𐵶𐵷𐵸𐵹𐵺𐵻𐵼𐵽𐵾𐵿𐶀𐶁𐶂𐶃𐶄𐶅𐶆𐶇𐶈𐶉𐶊𐶋𐶌𐶍𐶎𐶏𐶐𐶑𐶒𐶓𐶔𐶕𐶖𐶗𐶘𐶙𐶚𐶛𐶜𐶝𐶞𐶟𐶠𐶡𐶢𐶣𐶤𐶥𐶦𐶧𐶨𐶩𐶪𐶫𐶬𐶭𐶮𐶯𐶰𐶱𐶲𐶳𐶴𐶵𐶶𐶷𐶸𐶹𐶺𐶻𐶼𐶽𐶾𐶿𐷀𐷁𐷂𐷃𐷄𐷅𐷆𐷇𐷈𐷉𐷊𐷋𐷌𐷍𐷎𐷏𐷐𐷑𐷒𐷓𐷔𐷕𐷖𐷗𐷘𐷙𐷚𐷛𐷜𐷝𐷞𐷟𐷠𐷡𐷢𐷣𐷤𐷥𐷦𐷧𐷨𐷩𐷪𐷫𐷬𐷭𐷮𐷯𐷰𐷱𐷲𐷳𐷴𐷵𐷶𐷷𐷸𐷹𐷺𐷻𐷼𐷽𐷾𐷿𐸀𐸁𐸂𐸃𐸄𐸅𐸆𐸇𐸈𐸉𐸊𐸋𐸌𐸍𐸎𐸏𐸐𐸑𐸒𐸓𐸔𐸕𐸖𐸗𐸘𐸙𐸚𐸛𐸜𐸝𐸞𐸟𐸠𐸡𐸢𐸣𐸤𐸥𐸦𐸧𐸨𐸩𐸪𐸫𐸬𐸭𐸮𐸯𐸰𐸱𐸲𐸳𐸴𐸵𐸶𐸷𐸸𐸹𐸺𐸻𐸼𐸽𐸾𐸿𐹀𐹁𐹂𐹃𐹄𐹅𐹆𐹇𐹈𐹉𐹊𐹋𐹌𐹍𐹎𐹏𐹐𐹑𐹒𐹓𐹔𐹕𐹖𐹗𐹘𐹙𐹚𐹛𐹜𐹝𐹞𐹟𐹠𐹡𐹢𐹣𐹤𐹥𐹦𐹧𐹨𐹩𐹪𐹫𐹬𐹭𐹮𐹯𐹰𐹱𐹲𐹳𐹴𐹵𐹶𐹷𐹸𐹹𐹺𐹻𐹼𐹽𐹾𐹿𐺀𐺁𐺂𐺃𐺄𐺅𐺆𐺇𐺈𐺉𐺊𐺋𐺌𐺍𐺎𐺏𐺐𐺑𐺒𐺓𐺔𐺕𐺖𐺗𐺘𐺙𐺚𐺛𐺜𐺝𐺞𐺟𐺠𐺡𐺢𐺣𐺤𐺥𐺦𐺧𐺨𐺩𐺪𐺫𐺬𐺭𐺮𐺯𐺰𐺱𐺲𐺳𐺴𐺵𐺶𐺷𐺸𐺹𐺺𐺻𐺼𐺽𐺾𐺿𐻀𐻁𐻂𐻃𐻄𐻅𐻆𐻇𐻈𐻉𐻊𐻋𐻌𐻍𐻎𐻏𐻐𐻑𐻒𐻓𐻔𐻕𐻖𐻗𐻘𐻙𐻚𐻛𐻜𐻝𐻞𐻟𐻠𐻡𐻢𐻣𐻤𐻥𐻦𐻧𐻨𐻩𐻪𐻫𐻬𐻭𐻮𐻯𐻰𐻱𐻲𐻳𐻴𐻵𐻶𐻷𐻸𐻹𐻺𐻻𐻼𐻽𐻾𐻿𐼀𐼁𐼂𐼃𐼄𐼅𐼆𐼇𐼈𐼉𐼊𐼋𐼌𐼍𐼎𐼏𐼐𐼑𐼒𐼓𐼔𐼕𐼖𐼗𐼘𐼙𐼚𐼛𐼜𐼝𐼞𐼟𐼠𐼡𐼢𐼣𐼤𐼥𐼦𐼧𐼨𐼩𐼪𐼫𐼬𐼭𐼮𐼯𐼰𐼱𐼲𐼳𐼴𐼵𐼶𐼷𐼸𐼹𐼺𐼻𐼼𐼽𐼾𐼿𐽀𐽁𐽂𐽃𐽄𐽅𐽆𐽇𐽋𐽍𐽎𐽏𐽐𐽈𐽉𐽊𐽌𐽑𐽒𐽓𐽔𐽕𐽖𐽗𐽘𐽙𐽚𐽛𐽜𐽝𐽞𐽟𐽠𐽡𐽢𐽣𐽤𐽥𐽦𐽧𐽨𐽩𐽪𐽫𐽬𐽭𐽮𐽯𐽰𐽱𐽲𐽳𐽴𐽵𐽶𐽷𐽸𐽹𐽺𐽻𐽼𐽽𐽾𐽿𐾀𐾁𐾃𐾅𐾂𐾄𐾆𐾇𐾈𐾉𐾊𐾋𐾌𐾍𐾎𐾏𐾐𐾑𐾒𐾓𐾔𐾕𐾖𐾗𐾘𐾙𐾚𐾛𐾜𐾝𐾞𐾟𐾠𐾡𐾢𐾣𐾤𐾥𐾦𐾧𐾨𐾩𐾪𐾫𐾬𐾭𐾮𐾯𐾰𐾱𐾲𐾳𐾴𐾵𐾶𐾷𐾸𐾹𐾺𐾻𐾼𐾽𐾾𐾿𐿀𐿁𐿂𐿃𐿄𐿅𐿆𐿇𐿈𐿉𐿊𐿋𐿌𐿍𐿎𐿏𐿐𐿑𐿒𐿓𐿔𐿕𐿖𐿗𐿘𐿙𐿚𐿛𐿜𐿝𐿞𐿟𐿠𐿡𐿢𐿣𐿤𐿥𐿦𐿧𐿨𐿩𐿪𐿫𐿬𐿭𐿮𐿯𐿰𐿱𐿲𐿳𐿴𐿵𐿶𐿷𐿸𐿹𐿺𐿻𐿼𐿽𐿾𐿿

Then, the lamaist ritual demanded purification of the dead body which was to be cleansed of evil spirits: *jen giwə phe to si 'u ndžei / rju kai mbe je ngiwə phe vie / njei pu 'u zon ndju su rai* 𐞑𐞓𐞔𐞕𐞖𐞗𐞘𐞙𐞚𐞛𐞜𐞝𐞞𐞟𐞠𐞡𐞢𐞣𐞤𐞥𐞦𐞧𐞨𐞩𐞪𐞫𐞬𐞭𐞮𐞯𐞰𐞱𐞲𐞳𐞴𐞵𐞶𐞷𐞸𐞹𐞺𐞻𐞼𐞽𐞾𐞿𐟀𐟁𐟂𐟃𐟄𐟅𐟆𐟇𐟈𐟉𐟊𐟋𐟌𐟍𐟎𐟏𐟐𐟑𐟒𐟓𐟔𐟕𐟖𐟗𐟘𐟙𐟚𐟛𐟜𐟝𐟞𐟟𐟠𐟡𐟢𐟣𐟤𐟥𐟦𐟧𐟨𐟩𐟪𐟫𐟬𐟭𐟮𐟯𐟰𐟱𐟲𐟳𐟴𐟵𐟶𐟷𐟸𐟹𐟺𐟻𐟼𐟽𐟾𐟿𐠀𐠁𐠂𐠃𐠄𐠅𐠆𐠇𐠈𐠉𐠊𐠋𐠌𐠍𐠎𐠏𐠐𐠑𐠒𐠓𐠔𐠕𐠖𐠗𐠘𐠙𐠚𐠛𐠜𐠝𐠞𐠟𐠠𐠡𐠢𐠣𐠤𐠥𐠦𐠧𐠨𐠩𐠪𐠫𐠬𐠭𐠮𐠯𐠰𐠱𐠲𐠳𐠴𐠵𐠶𐠷𐠸𐠹𐠺𐠻𐠼𐠽𐠾𐠿𐡀𐡁𐡂𐡃𐡄𐡅𐡆𐡇𐡈𐡉𐡊𐡋𐡌𐡍𐡎𐡏𐡐𐡑𐡒𐡓𐡔𐡕𐡖𐡗𐡘𐡙𐡚𐡛𐡜𐡝𐡞𐡟𐡠𐡡𐡢𐡣𐡤𐡥𐡦𐡧𐡨𐡩𐡪𐡫𐡬𐡭𐡮𐡯𐡰𐡱𐡲𐡳𐡴𐡵𐡶𐡷𐡸𐡹𐡺𐡻𐡼𐡽𐡾𐡿𐢀𐢁𐢂𐢃𐢄𐢅𐢆𐢇𐢈𐢉𐢊𐢋𐢌𐢍𐢎𐢏𐢐𐢑𐢒𐢓𐢔𐢕𐢖𐢗𐢘𐢙𐢚𐢛𐢜𐢝𐢞𐢟𐢠𐢡𐢢𐢣𐢤𐢥𐢦𐢧𐢨𐢩𐢪𐢫𐢬𐢭𐢮𐢯𐢰𐢱𐢲𐢳𐢴𐢵𐢶𐢷𐢸𐢹𐢺𐢻𐢼𐢽𐢾𐢿𐣀𐣁𐣂𐣃𐣄𐣅𐣆𐣇𐣈𐣉𐣊𐣋𐣌𐣍𐣎𐣏𐣐𐣑𐣒𐣓𐣔𐣕𐣖𐣗𐣘𐣙𐣚𐣛𐣜𐣝𐣞𐣟𐣠𐣡𐣢𐣣𐣤𐣥𐣦𐣧𐣨𐣩𐣪𐣫𐣬𐣭𐣮𐣯𐣰𐣱𐣲𐣳𐣴𐣵𐣶𐣷𐣸𐣹𐣺𐣻𐣼𐣽𐣾𐣿𐤀𐤁𐤂𐤃𐤄𐤅𐤆𐤇𐤈𐤉𐤊𐤋𐤌𐤍𐤎𐤏𐤐𐤑𐤒𐤓𐤔𐤕𐤖𐤗𐤘𐤙𐤚𐤛𐤜𐤝𐤞𐤟𐤠𐤡𐤢𐤣𐤤𐤥𐤦𐤧𐤨𐤩𐤪𐤫𐤬𐤭𐤮𐤯𐤰𐤱𐤲𐤳𐤴𐤵𐤶𐤷𐤸𐤹𐤺𐤻𐤼𐤽𐤾𐤿𐥀𐥁𐥂𐥃𐥄𐥅𐥆𐥇𐥈𐥉𐥊𐥋𐥌𐥍𐥎𐥏𐥐𐥑𐥒𐥓𐥔𐥕𐥖𐥗𐥘𐥙𐥚𐥛𐥜𐥝𐥞𐥟𐥠𐥡𐥢𐥣𐥤𐥥𐥦𐥧𐥨𐥩𐥪𐥫𐥬𐥭𐥮𐥯𐥰𐥱𐥲𐥳𐥴𐥵𐥶𐥷𐥸𐥹𐥺𐥻𐥼𐥽𐥾𐥿𐦀𐦁𐦂𐦃𐦄𐦅𐦆𐦇𐦈𐦉𐦊𐦋𐦌𐦍𐦎𐦏𐦐𐦑𐦒𐦓𐦔𐦕𐦖𐦗𐦘𐦙𐦚𐦛𐦜𐦝𐦞𐦟𐦠𐦡𐦢𐦣𐦤𐦥𐦦𐦧𐦨𐦩𐦪𐦫𐦬𐦭𐦮𐦯𐦰𐦱𐦲𐦳𐦴𐦵𐦶𐦷𐦸𐦹𐦺𐦻𐦼𐦽𐦾𐦿𐧀𐧁𐧂𐧃𐧄𐧅𐧆𐧇𐧈𐧉𐧊𐧋𐧌𐧍𐧎𐧏𐧐𐧑𐧒𐧓𐧔𐧕𐧖𐧗𐧘𐧙𐧚𐧛𐧜𐧝𐧞𐧟𐧠𐧡𐧢𐧣𐧤𐧥𐧦𐧧𐧨𐧩𐧪𐧫𐧬𐧭𐧮𐧯𐧰𐧱𐧲𐧳𐧴𐧵𐧶𐧷𐧸𐧹𐧺𐧻𐧼𐧽𐧾𐧿𐨀𐨁𐨂𐨃𐨄𐨅𐨆𐨇𐨈𐨉𐨊𐨋𐨌𐨍𐨎𐨏𐨐𐨑𐨒𐨓𐨔𐨕𐨖𐨗𐨘𐨙𐨚𐨛𐨜𐨝𐨞𐨟𐨠𐨡𐨢𐨣𐨤𐨥𐨦𐨧𐨨𐨩𐨪𐨫𐨬𐨭𐨮𐨯𐨰𐨱𐨲𐨳𐨴𐨵𐨶𐨷𐨹𐨺𐨸𐨻𐨼𐨽𐨾𐨿𐩀𐩁𐩂𐩃𐩄𐩅𐩆𐩇𐩈𐩉𐩊𐩋𐩌𐩍𐩎𐩏𐩐𐩑𐩒𐩓𐩔𐩕𐩖𐩗𐩘𐩙𐩚𐩛𐩜𐩝𐩞𐩟𐩠𐩡𐩢𐩣𐩤𐩥𐩦𐩧𐩨𐩩𐩪𐩫𐩬𐩭𐩮𐩯𐩰𐩱𐩲𐩳𐩴𐩵𐩶𐩷𐩸𐩹𐩺𐩻𐩼𐩽𐩾𐩿𐪀𐪁𐪂𐪃𐪄𐪅𐪆𐪇𐪈𐪉𐪊𐪋𐪌𐪍𐪎𐪏𐪐𐪑𐪒𐪓𐪔𐪕𐪖𐪗𐪘𐪙𐪚𐪛𐪜𐪝𐪞𐪟𐪠𐪡𐪢𐪣𐪤𐪥𐪦𐪧𐪨𐪩𐪪𐪫

bones held preserved the soul, and, when performing purification of dead bodies, "...they tended to break the bones of the dead".<sup>15</sup> These beliefs were linked to the idea that the shelter best home of the soul and the life force in a dead body was the skull. The supposed particular sacral nature of the head is confirmed by funeral (and other) rituals observed by several peoples in Central Asia. For the Tibetans, the soul was linked to a substance of life, the *wind*, *wind-horse* dwelling in the *shin*. If the deceased was someone who had achieved holiness, the soul could find its way to heaven on its own; ordinary secular persons required special rituals performed by a lama and invocations allowing the soul to exit via the top of the dead head.<sup>16</sup> The Mongols associated the head with the notion of *sulde* (one of its meanings being "the life force"). Galina Galdanova remarks that according to the "Secret History", Gurbesu, Nayman Dayan-Khan's mother, ordered that the head of Van-Khan be brought and gave it for sacrifice because Van-Khan belonged to an ancient clan. The legend about ongon Burte says that while the Buryats were moving from Mongolia one of them took along his father's head... as his most cherished treasure.<sup>17</sup> And in the same study there is evidence recorded by Tsyben Zhamtsarano (1880–1942): "...give your gray head to your descendants".<sup>18</sup> All these actions involving the dismembering of bodies, probably rooted in ancient shamanistic ritual sacrifices, were sanctified by the Buddhist ritual with its primary meaning of magical unification turning into *nothingness*.<sup>19</sup> That initial and final emptiness, the illusory nature of the body is emphasized in the Tangut ritual text as well; there, the body is represented as "the center of emptiness" and likened to "a mass of clouds", "a reflection of the Moon in the ocean".

As soon as the evil spirits were chased out, the lama addressed the deceased's spirit urging it to abandon the perceived world and everything in it, to reject all components of samsaric existence: feelings, attractions, urges, and to strive towards the Three Jewels of the Buddhist faith. The Tangut text confirms that the tradition was old indeed: *thi niyo zjon si liwu lin mje zi phju so ldjə ndo mbju tjei ldeu* 禿皸散髻鬚髮疹癩皸散髻鬚髮禿皸禿皸禿皸 "This is the reason why the one whose life is expiring, whose body is being changed, should seek the protection of the Three Highest Jewels". (p. 2)

<sup>15</sup> GERASIMOVA 1981, 119

<sup>16</sup> KYCHANOV, SAVITSKY 1975, 234.

<sup>17</sup> GALDANOVA 1987, 49–50.

<sup>18</sup> GALDANOVA 1987, 50

<sup>19</sup> GERASIMOVA 1980, 67.

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**Text Transliteration and Translation**
**Ms. Tang 665, p. 1. Pl. 1**

- (01) *liwụ `m tsi ti ndzu kụo tseu ndziwo liwụ mi `ju ndzin nje wạ sju*  
 (02) *`wê lo mi `ju rại ndzie mi liê zje phə `je sju tshio rjụ ndziwo*  
 (03) *liwụ `m ndzu kụo ldeu nịau*  
 (04) *zịon si liwụ lin ndjụ ti ndzu / ndziwo liwụ nga ngu ndi tson sju*  
 (05) *rại ndzie mi ndu xịa rịa ndziq / rjụ kha tsi `m tha vjə sju*  
 (06) *ndzịon sju nga ngu lhịei to sju / lhịei rə liệ ngôn zje kha sja*  
 (07) *tha lhịei zje kha to ldjə nịau / liệ ngôn zje kha lhịei mi ndjụ*

**Ms. Tang 665, p. 2. Pl. 2**

- (08) *rjụ kha tsi `m tha vjə sju / zịon si liwụ lin nwə tsin ldeu*  
 (09) *zịon si liwụ lin mjə swi nje sọ kại rạ ndai tsi zi tha vjə sju mi*  
 (10) *ngwi lwo zjə kwə tsi min nwə tsin ldeu thi niuə zịon si liwụ lin*  
 (11) *mjə zi phjụ so ldjə ndo mbjụ tjei ldeu*  
 (12) *zịon si liwụ lin vjə tsin na / thi tha `ja ta mbjụ ngjiei tjei*  
 (13) *thi lə wo ta na liwụ ndzq / thi ndzjụ wo ta mjə `o tjei*  
 (14) *thi nje wo ta njen dzje tjei / thi ruə `u ta ngwi ldeu ngwu*

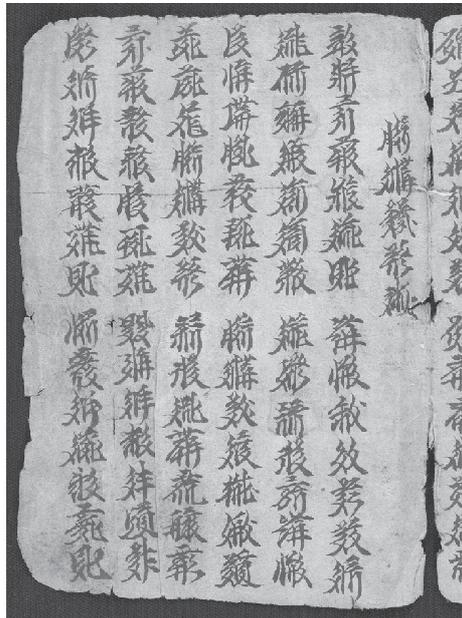
**Ms. Tang 665, p. 3. Pl. 3**

- (15) *je ngiwə tĩa vje sjei*  
 (16) *zịon si liwụ lin vjə ts in na / mjuə ldjə pjụ me tshje tjei min*  
 (17) *nga `m mbi `ê mbie ndziwon tha / phjụ tseu lhi pụ `in zịon si*  
 (18) *ldq `u tseu rjə na sjuwo zon / je ngiwə phe to si `u ndzêi*  
 (19) *rjụ kại mbe `je ngiwə phe vje / njei pụ `u zon ndjụ su rại*  
 (20) *liwụ lin ndzie ngi mə tshja sjə / nde ldj nje ngwu tha lhjə we*  
 (21) *zje min nje ngwu nda sjə na / lại liụ nje ta vjei ka na*

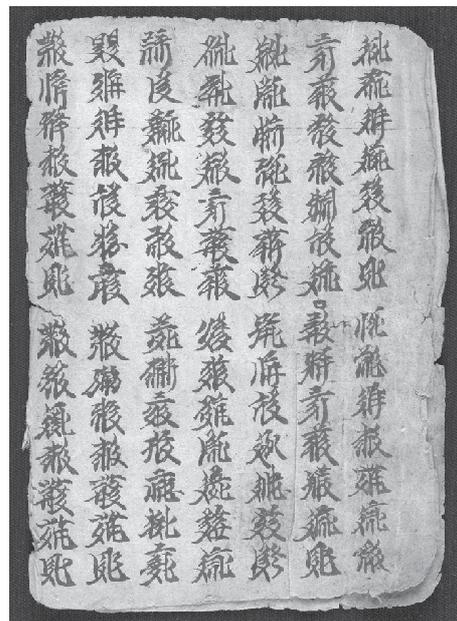
**Ms. Tang 665, p. 4. Pl. 4**

- (22) *khu ndziei nje ta tin in na / mi ngeu nje ngwu sjə ldeu ngwu*  
 (23) *liwụ lin ndzie ngi xịa `in tsin / zịon si liwụ lin vjə tsin na*  
 (24) *mụ mjə `je nja ti zon zje / tha `u `in ndzie ngo ki zje*  
 (25) *rại `ja ki liwụ nda lin / thje zje thi mjə mbə ndzjo ldeu*  
 (26) *lhi pụ vjiei `u na tsjwụ zje / rjụ kha ndzu a zi khwa ka*  
 (27) *nde ldj nje ngwu `in `a tshjo / tha khwai `u ngwu `in nda na*  
 (28) *tha zi mjə ngwu `in nda na / tha kê `je ngwu `in nda na*
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Pl. 3 — manuscript Tang 665, page 3



Pl. 4 — manuscript Tang 665, page 4

- (01) Do not feel affection for [your] body and do not love it! A human body is short-lived, you are about to borrow another.<sup>20</sup>
- (02) Noble birth and wealth are temporary, like the material world, and passing like bubbles on water. Therefore,
- (03) It should not be attached to [thy] body.
- (04) Life ends, the body will undergo changes,<sup>21</sup> do not be attached [to it].<sup>22</sup> A human body is like the center of emptiness,<sup>23</sup> an accumulation of clouds.
- (05) It does not exist for long, it perishes soon. Such is the law of [this] world.<sup>24</sup>
- (06) Like the center of emptiness, like the rising Moon with its reflection<sup>25</sup> in the ocean water.
- (07) Though the Moon is reflected in the water, [it is] not there, the Moon is not in the ocean.
- (08) This is like the law for [this] world. Life ends, the body will undergo changes; it should be recognized.<sup>26</sup>
- (09) The life of *someone's name* is expiring; the body will undergo changes, be changed in the Three worlds,<sup>27</sup> everything obeys this law.<sup>28</sup>
- (10) A human body is not a solid fruit, it does not have a [solid] basis; it should be recognized.

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<sup>20</sup> As the entire text is an exhortation, a monologue addressed to the listener, punctuation marks used for indicating direct speech have been omitted.

<sup>21</sup> The ritual could be performed over a person dying or already dead; the text has no temporal indications, and so the translation will not go into particulars concerning the alternatives to be expressed by grammatical tense: “life is ending or has ended, the body is undergoing or has undergone changes”.

<sup>22</sup> Lit. “You shalt not love”.

<sup>23</sup> Meaning “shunyata” (Sansk. *śūnyata*), “nothingness”. The word denotes a key concept in Buddhist philosophy.

<sup>24</sup> Here, the grammatical construction allows for other translations. The dictionary compiled by E.I. Kychanov (below, DEK) translates character No. 4179, 礙, present in similar texts, as “the Buddhist Dharma” — according to the tradition. The metaphor can doubtlessly indicate the unavoidable and universal nature of the dharma laws. However, a literal and possibly simplified meaning of “law” is also possible.

<sup>25</sup> The text employs the character 影 “shadow” (DEK No. 2454), but the context suggests “reflection”.

<sup>26</sup> The text unequivocally emphasizes the process of dying instead of its end, death. Likewise the body (more strictly, “body-mind”) transforms (and not just decomposes!) thus acquiring the properties required for reincarnation.

<sup>27</sup> According to Buddhist cosmology, the life in the three spheres is conditioned by the individual karma.

<sup>28</sup> The grammatical construction allows also another translation: “Like all dharmas of the Three Worlds /which/ get changed...”

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- (11) This is the reason why one whose life is drawing to its end and whose body is undergoing changes, should seek protection from the Three Highest Jewels.<sup>29</sup>
- (12) Listen about the extinguishing of life and about the changes which the body will undergo! This is the great umbrella which can give [you] shelter.
- (13) This is the banner measuring [your] life.<sup>30</sup> This is the explanation of the place where the [earthly] glory dwells.
- (14) This is where consciousness resides, like a pearl [in a shell].  
[At the same time] this vessel of evil is [nothing but] the outer cover.
- (15) Ritual [sequence] of cutting in the temple
- (16) Listen about the extinguishing of life and about the changes which the body will undergo! No words can express the might and wisdom of Tathāgata!<sup>31</sup>
- (17) My might is great, my name is glorious, [I am] the greatest descendant [from the clan] of Tathāgata [himself],<sup>32</sup>
- (18) [I] hold a skillfully sharpened ax in [my] hands. In the temple, the dead body will be dissected, [then the body] will be taken away.
- (19) [So,] all illusory nature<sup>33</sup> of [this] world [will be] revealed.<sup>34</sup> The oldest nephew is holding the head, more joyful than anybody around.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The Three Highest Jewels in Buddhism are Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

<sup>30</sup> The passage possibly implies the merits attained during one's earthly life.

<sup>31</sup> Sansk. *tathāgata*, “thus gone”, is one of Buddha's epithets.

<sup>32</sup> There is a problem with reading the 8th character in the second line. It looks like 𐰃𐰚 (DEK No. 4509) “old, ancient” or *phju* 𐰃𐰚 (DEK No. 4573) “high, upper”. In the event of the first interpretation, this phrase is of particular interest and raises a few questions. The one performing the ritual, the oldest descendant of the deceased, claims to belong to Tathāgata's kin. Most probably, however, the second variant is correct, so it is a metaphor reflecting the identification of the performer with the Tathāgata himself.

<sup>33</sup> Correct understanding of this line is hindered by the poorly written top of the left-hand side of one character which could be read as 𐰃𐰚, “illusion, magic” (DEK No. 4913) or 𐰃𐰚, “indivisible” (DEK No. 4914). The same ideogram (minus the two top horizontal strokes) means “empty” (NEVSKY 1960, 1,494). However, as a rule, the notion of emptiness was rendered in Tangut texts (including this one) by 𐰃𐰚 (DEK No. 2735). As the right-hand character in ideographs No. 4913, No. 4914 in Kychanov's dictionary and the ideograph denoting “emptiness” in Nevsky's dictionary was a determinative grapheme with the meaning of “demon” (KYCHANOV 2008, 397), it cannot be ruled out that the line implied revealing or perceiving the demons' world, which in turn might be directly linked with the idea of purifying the body during the ritual.

<sup>34</sup> Lit. “[will be] disclosed”.

<sup>35</sup> The text repeatedly mentions a descendant of the deceased as a participant in and performer of the funeral ritual (cf. p. 3, lines 2–4, p. 4, line 5). The implication that custom demanded that certain relatives participate in the funeral ritual requires additional research

- (20) The body has undergone changes, and the disciple will ascend to heaven! With heart-mind<sup>36</sup> full of joy, [he] will be reborn in Buddha's land.
- (21) Go with [your] mind cleansed of perplexity!<sup>37</sup> Purify [your] mind of passion and greed!
- (22) Do not hurry [your] mind when it is being perfected. [You] should leave with [your] mind purified of all perplexity!
- (23) The body undergoes changes, the disciple must recognize it now! Listen about the exhausting of life and about the changes which the body will undergo!
- (24) The dark earthly habitat cannot withstand testing. When [you] dwell in it, there come sicknesses-obstacles.<sup>38</sup>
- (25) Lots of days passing, the body will undergo changes. That habitat must be left behind now.
- (26) [When] the descendant,<sup>39</sup> an ax in his hand, touches the head,<sup>40</sup> he will release [you] from everything [in this] world, whatever [you] loved and [whatever you] submitted to.
- (27) Ascend [to heaven] with joyous heart-mind!<sup>41</sup> Having played [your part] in this great play, go ahead!
- (28) Having sacrificed a lot, go ahead! Having obeyed the Great Law, go ahead!<sup>42</sup>

### **The Wholeness of Ritual Tradition in Historical Prospective**

Finally, we should pay attention to the semantic similarity between this ritual text and the Tibetan treatise “Bardo Thodol”,<sup>43</sup> also known as the

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involving other sources. The “oldest nephew” and the “oldest descendant” mentioned here imply the importance of paternal filiation common for the family ties existing in Tangut society at that time (KYCHANOV 1997, 72–78). The text actually mentions two descendants: the oldest member of the clan who dissects the body, and the “oldest nephew” who is to hold the head, but these two might well be the same person. Besides, it remains unclear whether the “descendant” and the lama performing the ritual and identifying himself as Tathagata are two people or one.

<sup>36</sup> The text reads “with joyous mind”; cf. commentary to fn. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Lit. “with your mind [from which] all obstacles have been removed”.

<sup>38</sup> I.e. obstacles on the path to liberation.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. fn. 39.

<sup>40</sup> Evidently, cutting the head off in accordance with the ritual.

<sup>41</sup> Lit. “with joyous mind”; cf. Preface, fn. 5.

<sup>42</sup> I am very grateful to Kirill Solonin for the assistance he rendered during the translation.

<sup>43</sup> Its title has been transcribed in more than one way.

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“Tibetan Book of the Dead”,<sup>44</sup> that has been extremely popular (if that word is appropriate for such compositions) in Europe since 1927, when it was translated into English and commented on by Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961). That work, presumably written in the 9th c., has been ascribed to Padmasambhava. It used to be one of the “clandestine texts” or “concealed books” hidden when Buddhists were persecuted at that moment in history.<sup>45</sup> In the course of time that text, or rather, an entire set of texts have undergone inevitable changes; it was not written down until the 14th c., in the version subsequently edited in English translation by Walter Evans-Wentz (1878–1965). Admittedly, the teaching concerning the existence in the intermediary state between death and rebirth (Sansk. *antarābhava*, Tib. *bardo*) was thoroughly covered in the Buddhist canon and philosophical treatises. That teaching was especially well-known and widely applied in practice in Tibet. The process must have involved writing ritual texts of various length and structure, in which the basic ideas were presented in a form easy to understand and use in practice, so the “Bardo Thodol” might well be just another text of that type. Returning to the Tangut ritual funeral text, we can safely assume that it also was one following the teaching of *bardo* and intended for use in everyday practice. It was genetically and ideologically related to the doctrine and the “Bardo Thodol” text, reflecting the same key values. Therefore, the Tangut text was supposed to confirm the veracity of the Teaching and to attest of the fact that, while transferred, the Teaching had not been interrupted.

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<sup>44</sup> This conventional title was initially used when the treatise was translated into English. There exist other translations actually disclosing the meaning of the word.

<sup>45</sup> That apocryphal text has primarily been quoted and referred to in esoteric literature, while until recently academic Russian tibetology remained more skeptical about it. For example, Andrei Vostrikov (1902–1937) was critical about both its history and presumed authorship (VOSTRIKOV 2007, 46).

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