

# Contents

List of Tables and Figures .....	xi
Abbreviations .....	xvii
Acknowledgments .....	xix
Author Contributions .....	xxi
Notes on Transliteration and Transcription .....	xxiii
Note on Texts .....	xxv
Introduction: Potency as Efficacy-in-Becoming .....	1
Foregrounding potency	5
Efficacy and efficacy-in-becoming	7
Artisanal epistemologies	10
Skilled practice, taskscapes, and meshworks	16
Collaborative methods and multi-sited fieldwork	19
A metadisciplinary approach	19
Encounters with Sowa Rigpa experts	20
Fieldsites	23
Chapter outline	25
1 Menjor, Materiality, Artisanship .....	29
The growing and making of <i>chongzhi</i>	30
Sourcing substances	33
Processing substances	35
<i>Chongzhi</i> recipes as guided rediscoveries	36
Moonlight <i>chongzhi</i> in Ladakh	39
Moonlight <i>chongzhi</i> in Himachal Pradesh	48

## Contents

Distributing and imbibing substances	53
Coating pills	53
Discussion	59
2 Learning, Making, and Becoming Medicine .....	63
Butter, essences, and rejuvenation	64
Forms of potency	67
Crafting potency during a rejuvenation workshop: Setting the scene	69
Preparing Dresum Menmar	73
Formulation	73
Grinding	74
Extraction into water	75
Processing of jaggery and honey	76
Extraction into milk and butter	78
Cleansing	78
Consecration	82
Discussion	86
3 Potency as Potential: Textual Theoretical Foundations .....	89
Sowa Rigpa as “a basic science”	90
Potency as epiphenomenon of elemental dynamics	94
Conceptualizing potency	97
Potency as one of the five functional activities	97
Taxonomies of potency	103
Understanding potency in ritual contexts: The potency-strength-quality triad	108
Crafting potency: Expelling toxicity, cultivating purity, and designing efficacy	111
Expelling toxicity	112
Sculpting potency through processes and layers	113
Imbuing potency: Ritual, meditative, and alchemical modes of transformation	117
Discussion	120

4	Institutions as (Im)Potent Modes of Education .....	123
	Professionalization of Sowa Rigpa education	124
	Arriving in Kathmandu	126
	Sowa Rigpa International College (SRIC): An institution with a political agenda	129
	“Very traditional style”: The Traditional Buddhist Sorig Institute (TBSI)	135
	Orgyen Menla Clinic	135
	“Why mix things up?”	138
	“Like a father and his sons”: Lineage-based transmission	141
	The Sorig Bumzhi School (SBS): Ancient medicine, modern education?	144
	Discussion	147
5	Continuity Substances, Lineage, and Ritual Empowerment .....	151
	Plural meanings of <i>papta</i>	154
	<i>Papta</i> as fermenting agents in <i>mendrup</i> rituals	154
	<i>Papta</i> as catalyst and vehicle	158
	<i>Jinten</i> and <i>papta</i>	161
	Tracing patterns of confluence and diffusion	162
	<i>Mendrup</i> ritual cycles at Nee	162
	Confluence of lineages and <i>papta</i> in Nee, 1992	165
	Further convergences: The Nee <i>mendrup</i> of 1997 and 2004	167
	<i>Papta</i> in medicines: Diffusion and transformation	169
	Continuity and precarity	173
	Discussion	175
	Conclusions: Crafting Potency .....	179
	Forms of literacy	181
	Imperfect crafts	183
	Methodological limitations	185
	Knowledge and substances on the move: Historical and textual considerations	188
	Future trajectories	190
	Making potency tangible	195
	Appendix .....	197
	List of Individuals	197
	Glossary of Recurring Tibetan Terms and Key Texts	201
	Bibliography .....	207