8 Recovering Barmiok Lama, Tibetan material knowledge and a Himalayan 'scene of collecting'

Emma Martin

Abstract This chapter considers what it means to recover Tibetan material knowledge from the imperial archive. It pays attention to the 'scene of collecting' (O'Hanlon 2000), namely the location of colonial collecting and those present in that 'scene'. The relative absence of the scene in colonial collecting histories means that they still largely privilege the decisions, knowledge and movements of the colonial collector and their supporting institutions. To counter this and enable others present in the scene to come to the fore, this chapter stays in a Himalayan scene of collecting to recover the material knowledge and connoisseurship of a Tibetan Buddhist lama from Sikkim, Barmiok Jedrung Karma Palden Chögyal (1871–1942). Of particular interest are the values and meanings that the lama ascribed to numerous Tibetan Buddhist objects offered to him for his opinion by the colonial administrator, Charles Alfred Bell (1870–1945) in 1912–13. Bell later included his notes of their conversations as object descriptions in his 'List of Curios'. I read this document for the scene of collecting, listening closely for Barmiok Lama's voice and use of terminology in order to recover his appraisal of the Tibetan material world and the layers of Tibetan material knowledge he relied upon.

Keywords material knowledge; scene of collecting; colonial collecting; Tibetan Buddhism; Buddhist statues

Martin, Emma: Recovering Barmiok Lama, Tibetan material knowledge and a Himalayan 'scene of collecting', in Martin, Emma, Brox, Trine and Lange, Diana (eds): Among Tibetan Materialities. Materials and Material Cultures of Tibet and the Himalayas, Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing, 2025, pp. 177–206. https://doi.org/10.11588/hasp.1522.c23984

Figure 8.1 The Dorje Chang statue appraised by Barmiok Lama on 13 January 1913. Currently in the collection of National Museums Liverpool, accession no. 50.31.58. Courtesy of World Museum, National Museums Liverpool.

Introduction

On a January day in 1913, a lama sat in the drawing room of the British Residency in Gangtok, the capital of the Himalayan principality of Sikkim. He carefully studied a small metal statue or *kuten* (*sku rten*) of the Tibetan Buddhist deity Dorje Chang (rdo rje 'chang) that had been placed before him (Figure 8.1). As he did so, he was closely watched by a colonial officer who sat fountain pen in hand, notebook at the ready, poised to scribble down the lama's pronouncements on the exquisite little figure that had been offered to him for an expert's opinion. The lama held Dorje Chang into the light to register the rich red metal with a hint of yellow that formed the statue's body. Looking closely, he appraised the figure's beatific face, supple arms and the folds of his diaphanous garment. Having made his assessment, the lama turned to the officer and, according to that officer's notes, said: 'This image is a very old one (i.e Chö-gyel [sic] li-ma alias Ser-sang Nying-ba) of the time of King Song Tsen, Gem-pa [sic] or a little later; i.e 1000 to 1200 years old.' He then pointed out to the officer: 'Dorje Chang is as a rule represented as holding a Dorje in his right hand and a bell in his left, but here for the sake of adornment, a lotus is held in each hand, the Dorje resting on one and the bell on the other.'[1] The British officer who sat hurriedly translating and transcribing the lama's words was Charles Bell (1870–1945), the colonial administrator, collector and, later in life, well known Tibetan scholar. His instructor, who Bell referred to only as 'Barmiak Lama',[2] was the highly regarded lama from Sikkim, Barmiok Jedrung Karma Palden Chögyal (1871–1942).

---

1 Description recorded in Charles Bell's 'List of Curios' (Bell n.d.) as part of the entry for Dorje Chang, recorded as No.34.

2 Following the lead of Alex McKay (2002: 263), I use this naming convention knowingly (i.e. the lama from Barmiok), while remaining aware that this colonial shorthand has deprived individuals of their proper name and title, something I aim to rectify in this specific case. For further discussions, see Lopez 1997: 15–45. There are several variations on the spelling of Barmiok, for example, Bermiok and Burmiok. I will use the preferred spelling of Barmiok (as used by the lama's family, the Densapa family, whose ancestral home is in Barmiok) unless I quote directly from Bell, in which case I will revert to the spelling he used which is Barmiak. Barmiok is pronounced 'Ber-nyag'.

This chapter focuses on the intimate transfer of knowledge between the lama from Barmiok and Charles Bell, extending Carole McGranahan's question: 'What can imperial but non-colonial subjects teach us about empire? They have stories to tell that challenge and complement understandings of empire drawn exclusively from colonialism' (2017: 68). I use McGranahan's question to consider the affordances offered by an imperial archive when recovering Tibetan material knowledge from 'the scene of collecting', particularly the still overlooked knowledge of Tibetan and Himalayan intellectuals. This in turn adds to understandings of connoisseurial practices in Tibetan Buddhist material worlds.

I borrow the term 'scene of collecting' from anthropologist Michael O'Hanlon's (2000) introduction to the foundational volume on colonial collectors *Hunting the Gatherers* (O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000). When researching the histories of anthropology collections, O'Hanlon (2000: 9) suggests that it is useful to distinguish the different stages of collecting, namely, the 'before of,' the 'scene of' and the 'after of' the collecting act (see Figure 8.2). Structurally speaking, this framework continues to dominate research produced on colonial-era histories of collecting, including those pertaining to Tibet and the Himalayas.

The collecting act

Before: the collector's background, their theoretical or ideological position, and their institutional support systems

Scene: the processes of making collections in the field, content, encounters with indigenous peoples, and the impact of collecting

After: the fate of collections in the hands of colonial collectors, and their afterlives in museums

Source: M O'Hanlon 2000: 9.

Figure 8.2 The collecting act

Historical and provenance-based studies that focus on Tibetan and Himalayan collections now in North American and European museums still largely tend to spend far longer dwelling in the 'before' and 'afterwards' of collecting acts than they do in the 'scene'.[3] This tendency speaks to a wider body of studies on the history of collections.

A longstanding and familiar lament amongst researchers is that colonial-era collectors rarely documented the scene of collecting or the precise circumstances under which objects left a maker, owner or practitioner's possession. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to recover the named individuals (other than the colonial-era collector) who were active in that scene (Gosden and Knowles 2001; Schindlbeck 1993; Thomas 2000; Wintle 2013). As a result, studies continue to privilege the decisions, knowledge and movements of the colonial-era collector (including their movement of material culture), and their associated networks of supporting institutions. For research based on Tibet and Himalayan collections, this means that the names of prominent colonial and colonial-connected actors—Francis Younghusband, Giuseppe Tucci, Laurence Waddell, the Schlagintweit brothers and Charles Bell—are searchable via museum catalogues, publication titles or keywords, but this is not the case for the Tibetan and Himalayan actors who were also living, learning, collecting and negotiating in the same spaces made visible by the imperial records used in such research (e.g. Carrington 2003; Diemberger 2012; Höfer 2017; Klimburg-Salter 2015; Lidchi and Nicholson 2020; Livne 2010; Martin 2012, 2014; Myatt 2012; Phuntsho 2012; Von Brescius 2018).[4]

There are, however, increasingly thoughtful critical reflections on the visibility of the colonial-era collector and the usefulness of the archives pertaining to them, with a growing recognition that such documents need to be reframed as obstructive rather than productive

---

3 Important exceptions are Rob Linrothe's (2014) *Collecting Paradise* exhibition catalogue, which not only dedicates a chapter to Tibetan Buddhist patronage, but also critiques the Italian explorer Giuseppe Tucci for both his collecting methods and his denigration of the Tibetan Buddhists he worked with during his expeditions; and Diana Lange's (2020) study on the Wise Collection, which recounts the painstaking methods she employed to identify and locate a Tibetan lama.

4 See Harris (2017) for further discussion and her use of James Clifford's concept of copresence to reflect on indigenous agency and transcultural interaction in early twentieth century Darjeeling through the lens of colonial photography.

archival spaces for research (Elliot 2016). In these readings, the collector is recognized as a presence that looms so large that they become a barrier to research, blocking our view of what and who lies beyond their immediate actions. I argue that staying with the collector has produced a palpable bias in the ways histories of collections continue to be imagined and constructed. Not only has the collector's name retained a prominent position in the titles of publications, but the collector still defines what and who is worthy of a researcher's attention. The collections named after the collector—and what they chose to steal, buy, commission or take as a gift—continue to determine the scope of grant applications and research projects. In other words, those who are repeatedly written into the archive inevitably shape the agenda, remit and future of collections-based historical research. Acknowledging this bias should mean that imperial archives are taken as a starting point only and with the recognition that research must move beyond the colonial-era collector, rather than seeing the recovery of their actions as the ultimate goal. In this context what does it mean to read imperial archives *against the grain* so that one's attention is focused beyond the actions of the colonial collector?

In this chapter I take the still unusual and challenging position of staying in the historical field and the scene of collecting. My reason for this is simple. If one stays in the acts that the archive records in detail—the before and afterwards—the researcher is unavoidably led back to the colonial institutions of Europe and the actions of non-Tibetan collectors and curators.[5] We become more concerned with what non-Tibetan actors did to Tibetan objects, and with the new classification systems and ways of dating and knowing Tibetan material culture that emerged in European institutions. In the process, significant figures in Tibetan and Himalayan society are left behind and their presence in the collecting narrative becomes peripheral rather than essential.

This was true for the subject of this paper, Barmiok Lama, who remained unidentified in a UK museum archive for more than fifty years. The name 'Barmiak Lama' is repeatedly recorded as the source for the descriptions of numerous Tibetan Buddhist objects loaned and eventually donated by the family of Charles Bell to National Museums Liverpool in northwest England. Yet the identity of this lama remained unknown to museum staff and researchers until it was identified

5 A rare exception is the work of Samuel Thévoz (2019).

during my doctoral research.[6] When previous unsuccessful attempts were made to locate the lama, curators and researchers privileged colonial institutions and networks as potential sources of information. In contrast, here I show that the lama remained alive and well in the scene of collecting, his birthplace, where he was a significant and well-known figure of intellectual and religious standing. I argue that when a researcher leaves the historical site they knowingly place themselves at a distance from individuals of historical importance who were present there—and from those individuals' knowledge of Tibetan Buddhist material culture: staying in the scene of collecting closes that distance. In this chapter, I stay close to the scene of collecting because this is the space where the lama and his actions are most visible.

This Himalayan vantage point allows for a reflection on what Ting Chang calls, 'the messy components, the dialogic and social relations involved in forming a collection' (2013: 75). By mapping out the social relations that ensured the lama was present in this particular scene of collecting, this chapter starts by tracing out the circumstances that led him to the Gangtok Residency drawing room, and to the series of materially-led conversations he held with Bell over the course of several months during the winter of 1912–13. In locating the lama's life in Sikkim and Tibet through additional Sikkim and Tibetan sources, some written with the specific aim of countering the colonial narrative, this study shows how multiple acts of colonial violence—ranging from acts directed at the lama to those against the sovereignty of Sikkim—conditioned and produced this collecting scene. The chapter then turns to the dialogic through a consideration of the archival echoes of Barmiok Lama's voice. Here, I am particularly interested in what values

6 The assumption was that the lama was Mongolian. Elaine Tankard, the Keeper responsible for building and curating the Tibet collection in Liverpool, tried at several points to identify 'Barmiak Lama'. She was an exceptional curator who understood the value of knowing the lama and where his knowledge came from (for an introduction to Tankard's practice, see Martin 2010, 2014). Shortly before her retirement Tankard wrote to Dr R. O. Meisezahl (1906–1992) at the British Museum on 22 June 1965 asking, 'while in London you can trace the name. The Central Asian Society might help' (Tankard Papers). But Meisezahl and the CAS were of no help. In the first detailed study of the colonial history of the Tibet collections at Liverpool, Jane Moore noted the presence of the lama in Bell's documentation, 'though this man is otherwise elusive in Bell's writings' (Moore 2001: 88).

and meanings Barmiok Lama ascribed to the objects set before him at the Gangtok Residency, and the kinds of Tibetan material knowledge we are privy to because of this scene of collecting. Of note are the ways he used Tibetan terminology to think through the materiality of Buddhist statues—something rarely recorded and attributed to named individuals in colonial sources. In acknowledging the presence of this terminology, I offer a repositioning of this lama from a religious archetype towards that of a Tibetan connoisseur who had a deep material and intellectual engagement with Tibetan things. In reading for his connoisseurial skills, this chapter also pays close attention to Barmiok Lama's education and training to understand how he came to make these material assessments. In this regard I believe that a focus on the scene of collecting produces a counter to established narratives of colonial collecting, enabling those beyond the colonial collector to come to the fore.

We are taken to this specific scene of collecting via the pages of an unpublished document, spread over two volumes, which records more than four hundred Tibetan objects that were either gifted to Bell or that he bought, took or commissioned when he lived and worked in the north-eastern Himalayas and Tibet between 1900 and 1921. He called his documentation project 'List of Curios' (Bell n.d.), but this is a misleading title as the document is not simply a list of curious things. Instead, List of Curios can be understood as a relational piece of imperial paperwork that can be read in counterpoint. On the one hand, it is a document that catalogues the social and political circumstances of collecting Tibet at the height of the British empire and the lasting material effects of British imperialism on the people of Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet. On the other hand, it also draws into its pages the voices of those who carried on their lives despite continual colonial imposition and who become audible when their lives intersect with the colonial project. By listening closely and muffling the continual presence of the collector, we can focus our attention on discussions that may now be faint but are nevertheless still possible to recover. Making a choice about which register to follow determines the types of conversations deemed worthy of attention and whose actions one might then track.

This type of recovery work relies on processes of acknowledging and locating. It requires long periods of comparative analysis and the layering together of often dispersed archives across several continents. It involves flipping back and forth between objects, written words, photographs and oral testimony in the hope of confirming what might

seem like deceptively simple details, such as an individual's full name,[7] a date of birth or death, or exactly where they lived. To acknowledge those who are so often relegated to the role of intermediary or informant we stay with a Himalayan counterpoint that comes in the form of Barmiok Lama. We will listen to his spoken words and use of Tibetan terminology as recorded in List of Curios as a way to recover his appraisal of the Tibetan material world. There are many examples—142 descriptions in total. As with the case of Dorje Chang they are short and his words have been translated. As a result, we hear him once removed and through the filter of the colonial officer. But there is still much we can learn from staying with these traces.

The scene of collecting

> In Christmas week 1912 the Barmiak Lama came to explain the meaning of those Tibetan curios wh.[ich] were concerned w.[ith] religion. He is first among the Sikkim lamas for learning & has a high reputation among the learned lamas of Tibet … He is renowned for his piety no less than for his learning and holds himself aloof from political intrigue and from the invitations of others to wield secular power in the state. (Bell, 'Diary Volume V', n.p., private collection).

In late December 1912, Barmiok Lama entered a particular scene of collecting. His visits to the Gangtok Residency during Christmas week were the first of many that he would make over the winter months of 1912–13. However, before we turn to his connoisseurship, his presence in this decidedly colonial world raises a question: if Barmiok Lama was a man who kept himself 'aloof from political intrigue' as Bell described him, under what circumstances had he come to be offering object appraisals in the Gangtok Residency, the epicentre of colonial rule for Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet?

Despite Bell's imagining of Barmiok Lama as an other-worldly presence, this was not the first time the lama had been recorded in a colonial scene of collecting. Sometime around 1910, he had been engaged in lengthy conversations with the French explorer and writer

---

7 As shown in this chapter, all too often names are spelt in multiple ways by colonial actors which makes cross referencing and archival and digital searching difficult.

Alexandra David-Neel (1868–1969) in the grounds of the Royal Palace in Gangtok at the request of the Crown Prince of Sikkim, Sidkeong Tulku (1879–1914), a close friend of David-Neel and the same man who likely facilitated the lama's meeting with Bell. In the following vignette, David-Neel provides a useful insight into Barmiok Lama's approach to knowledge transfer:

> Nearly every afternoon he crossed the gardens and went to the villa where the crown-prince lived. There, in the sitting-room furnished according to English taste, we had long conversations on topics quite foreign to Westerners. … At a short distance from the prince, the Honourable of Bermiag, majestically draped in his garnet-coloured toga, had an arm-chair and a bowl with a silver saucer, but without a cover. … While the learned and fluent orator, Bermiag Kushog, talked, we were lavishly supplied with Tibetan tea. (David-Neel 1936: 29)

David-Neel's recollections make it possible to imagine Bell and Barmiok Lama in a similar situation in the Gangtok Residency, engaged in focused conversation and studying the assembled collection of objects intently. While it is tempting to read these respective scenes of collecting as isolated, intellectual encounters, the existing connections between Barmiok Lama, Sidkeong Tulku, David-Neel and Bell alert us to the colonial context that underscored these meetings.

Before entering this scene of collecting, Barmiok Lama had already spent more than a decade as a person of interest to the British, to the extent that he had earned an entry in the colonial publication, *List of Leading Officials, Nobles, And Personages in Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet, 1907* (1908), a who's who of influential figures in the Himalayan region. Members of the Densapa family, including the lama, were included in this publication due to their loyalty to the Sikkim royal family and the significant role they played in negotiating and contesting colonial rule in Sikkim and southern Tibet. Yet, when reading the colonial-sanctioned publications on Sikkim and Tibet that emerged around the turn of the twentieth century (e.g. Risley 1894; Waddell 1895; White 1909), there is little evidence of the oppression meted out by the British colonial government toward the royal family of Sikkim during the latter stages of the nineteenth century. To find a detailed counternarrative of Sikkim resistance during this period one must turn instead to the accounts in *'bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (History of Sikkim) written at the behest of the ninth chögyal (monarch) Thutob Namgyal (1860–1914)

and the maharani Yeshe Dolma (1867–1910) (Tsering 2012), and translated into English as 'History of Sikkim 1908' (hereafter 'The History').[8]

The History provides the royal family's perspective on the British government's attempts to undermine the rule of the chögyal and the particular divide and rule approach they took in Sikkim, including the considerable role played by the Densapas in that contestation. It records how from 1889, coinciding with the arrival of Bell's predecessor John Claude White (1853–1919), the Sikkim aristocrats loyal to the chögyal, including Barmiok Lama's father, were replaced with British supporters and exiled to their family estates, effectively placing them under house arrest. In response, the chögyal made a bid for exile taking a small group of loyal supporters with him towards Nepal. This group included the chögyal's spiritual advisor, who at the time was Barmiok Lama. The escape plan failed, and the entourage was route-marched back to Sikkim.

The History measures the severity of British brutality in the wake of that failed escape through the treatment of Barmiok Lama. It records how White took it upon himself to severely reprimand the lama for leaving with the chögyal. Although White knew that the lama's mother was dying at the family estate, Barmiok Lama was placed under house arrest and heavily fined for trying to leave. As a result, he only reached his ancestral home after his mother had died. Barmiok Lama was then intimately embroiled in a power struggle between the chögyal and the British and marked by the British as an unfailing supporter of the man they wanted to oust from the Sikkim throne. Nevertheless, the British were determined to bring the lama into the colonial fold. After 1895, when the chögyal was gradually given back a number of his political powers, the British allowed Barmiok Lama to travel to Tibet and he was included in several geopolitically sensitive imperial events.[9] While Bell

8 My discussion of this history and its contents is based on copies of what was then the unpublished manuscript 'History of Sikkim 1908', written by Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma and translated into English by Kazi Dawa Samdup (India Office Records, MSS Eur E78; SOAS Library Special Collections, MS/380072). Since undertaking this research, a lavish annotated volume has been published under the auspices of the Bhutan Royal family. See Ardussi, Balikci Denjongpa and Sørensen 2021.

9 He was included in the following: the Sikkim chögyal's delegation to Calcutta from December 1905 to January 1906 for the ninth Panchen Lama's audience with the Prince of Wales; the 1908 Sikkim delegation to Nepal; and the March

had not played a part in the attempted overthrow of the chögyal he had been part of the organizing committee for several of the diplomatic events the lama had been a party to, and so even before Bell wrote down his thoughts on this 'aloof' lama, politically he knew him very well.[10]

It is from this destabilizing moment in Sikkim's history that Barmiok Lama's material contact with Bell arose. While Bell looked to settle some of the many differences that had been a feature of White's tenure, the political restrictions put in place by White to control the power of the chögyal would remain highly visible in the distinctive staffing arrangements that existed between the chögyal's palace and the Gangtok Residency. During Bell's tenure these two sites, built next to one another but representing very different ideological worlds, would increasingly use the same men to administer their political and diplomatic affairs.[11] Bell would take advantage of these administrative arrangements as he began to document the Tibetan objects he had started to amass. As a result, Barmiok Lama walked across the gravel paths of the Gangtok palace to the Gangtok residency to offer his knowledge to a colonial presence. This colonial context is vital if we are to understand the unequal power relations behind this moment of material knowledge exchange, but it does not define the lama, as is evident when we turn to consider his educational background, knowledge and status.

The Lama from Barmiok[12]

Barmiok Lama (Figure 8.3) belonged to the most prominent lay family in Sikkim, the Densapas. He was the son of Barmiok Athing Tenzin Wangyal (d.1926), Chief Steward at the chögyal's palace and one of the

---

1910 Sikkim delegation to Calcutta for the thirteenth Dalai Lama's audience with the Viceroy of India.

10 Barmiok Lama was also likely already assisting Bell in his collecting activities as Bell records in a notebook that the lama gave him a number of manuscripts ('Tibet Note Book I': 33, private collection). Although an undated entry the lama's donation is noted between two entries dated to 1910.

11 See Martin 2012 for an overview of some of these influential men and their backgrounds.

12 This chapter contains a much-expanded biographical account of the lama first published in Martin 2012, made possible by archival research and importantly, two people. Firstly, Anna Balikci-Denjongpa, Research Co-ordinator

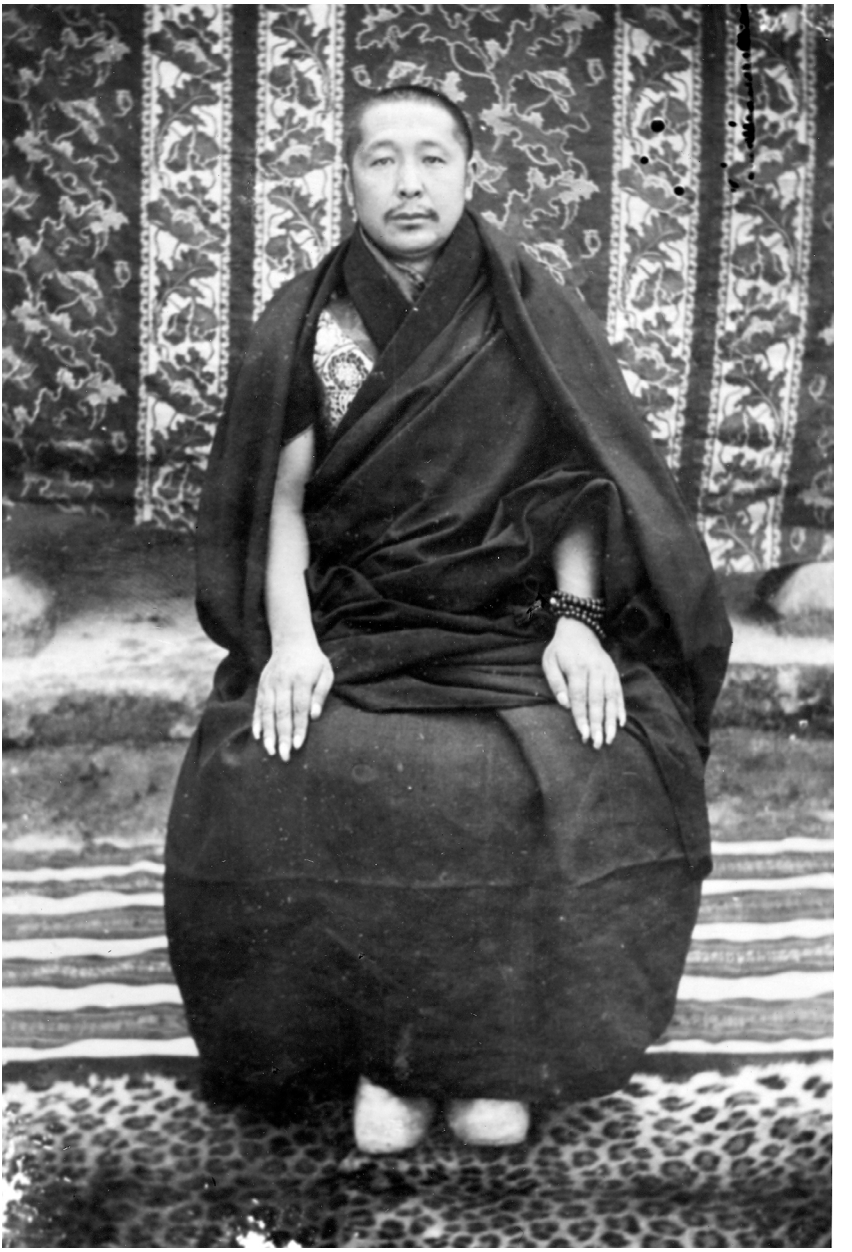


Figure 8.3 Barmiok Jedrung Karma Palden Chögyal (1871–1942) aka 'Barmiak Lama'. Photograph taken around 1920 (photographer unknown). Image kindly sourced by Tashi Tsering. Courtesy of the Densapa Family.

most influential landlords in Sikkim. Barmiok Lama's half-brother was Barmiok Athing Tashi Dadul Densapa (1902–1988), considered the most important political figure in Sikkim during the twentieth century and a doyen of Sikkimese literary and historical studies.[13] Barmiok Lama was an important Buddhist figure in his own right. Having been recognized as the first reincarnation of one of the four yogis of Sikkim, he held several influential monastic positions. He was head lama of both Simick monastery in eastern Sikkim and Ralong monastery in southern Sikkim. Although he was a Nyingma lama by reincarnation, his family were Kagyupas and followers of the Karmapa. As such he was well versed in the traditions of both Nyingma and Kagyu lineages, an intersection that would have a bearing on his connoisseurial education. His knowledge and status meant he was also appointed as chief Buddhist counsel to the Sikkim royal family and later sat on the Sikkim state council (1917–18). The lama's family was also recognized for their scholarship and famed for their extensive ancestral library held at the family estate in southern Sikkim. This and other libraries contained not only texts dedicated to historical, religious and literary genres, but also treatises and texts on the production and appreciation of Tibetan arts and crafts.[14]

Barmiok Lama was then one of Sikkim's elites, who moved in privileged monastic and aristocratic circles and was widely recognized

---

at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, who I initially contacted to see if the 'Barmiak Lama' could have come from Barmiok in Sikkim; she delighted in informing me that her then director, the late Tashi Densapa (1942–2021), was in fact the reincarnation of the Barmiok Lama. She provided various pieces of biographical information. In addition, Tashi Tsering, one of the founding directors of the Amnye Machen Institute, Dharamshala, has shared photographs and information he transcribed from the Densapa family archives relating to Barmiok Lama and has also pointed out several archival sources. For his short biographical account of Barmiok Lama see Tsering 2013a.

13 For a short retrospective of his life, see Tashi 2010.

14 The library was destroyed on 7 April 1973 during the overthrow of the chögyal and the destruction of property that belonged to his supporters: 'The Densapa family home in Barmiok was razed to the ground. Rare *thankas* [*sic*], ikons [*sic*], Tibetan brass and bronze, and ancient Buddhist manuscripts—a priceless collection matched only by the Namgyal Institute's treasures—went up in flames' (Datta-Ray 1984: 184).

as a key Tibetan Buddhist leader and intellectual in Sikkim. Via his family estate and his monasteries he gained access to important monastery and private collections of ancient Buddhist statuary, religious implements and tangkhas, as well as high quality silks, porcelain and saddlery.[15] He would have had ample opportunity to study these treasures, appraising and comparing their styles, their metallurgical compositions, and the skill in the casting, incising and setting of precious and semi-precious stones. But it was his travels to some of the great monastic seats in Tibet that likely honed his connoisseurial skills.

In 1896 Barmiok Lama began an extensive tour in Tibet taking in several of the great Nyingma and Kagyu monasteries.[16] The lama travelled first to Mindröling, a Nyingma monastery situated to the east of Lhasa, which Dominique Townsend has described as a civilizational centre for the elite education of the Tibetan world's ruling upper classes (2021: 22). It combined both Buddhist and worldly subjects, with an emphasis on its students acquiring an aesthetic education framed by *rikné* (*rig gnas*) or the *recognized* fields of learning, which include arts and crafts (*bzo gnas rig pa*). This environment would have provided Barmiok Lama with growing expertise in a type of Tibetan Buddhist cultural production that valued worldly arts and sciences as an integral part of a Buddhist education. His learning would have been further deepened that same year when he travelled across central Tibet to Tsurphu, the seat of the fifteenth Karmapa, Khakyab Dorje (1871–1922), and then accompanied the Karmapa to Kham to study with Jamgon Kongtrul the Great, Lodro Thaye (1813–1899), at one of the prodigious artistic and scholarly centres of Karma Kagyu learning, Palpung, in Derge. Palpung monastery was then home to an important regional university, an impressive library and a significant collection

15 This access extended to his daily life, including the robes he wore. On seeing a photograph of Barmiok Lama (Figure 8.3), Sherab Tharchin, the Changdzo or manager for Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche (b. 1954) remarked that the lama was wearing a very fine cloth made from a wool called *tseter* (*tse ther*), usually reserved for the Dalai Lama (Tashi Tsering, pers. comm., 14 April 2013).

16 The Densapa family papers record that Tibetan border officials at Gnatong treated the Barmiok party with a great deal of suspicion due to their colonial links. They were detained at the border for a year and Barmiok Lama only gained entry after agreeing to sign a contract stating that he was entering Tibet purely for study and monastic training (Tashi Tsering, pers. comm., 13 April 2013).

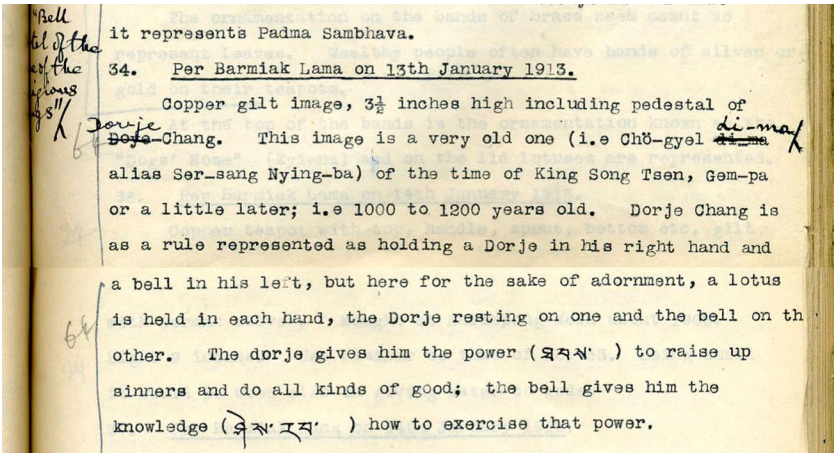
of tangkha paintings, a rich material and artistic world that the lama would have come to know well. In total the lama spent nine years in Kham and Ü-Tsang, returning to Sikkim sometime between 1903 and 1904.

During his studies and travels, Barmiok Lama gained privileged access to some of the great monastic minds of his generation and trained at some of the most distinctive centres of learning. Critically for this paper, he also had access to many important collections of Tibetan material culture in Tibet. Taking his knowledge, experiences and skills into account, Barmiok Lama can be thought of as not only an important monastic figure and outstanding scholar, but also as someone who gained the type of aesthetic education that would define him as a connoisseur. How then, did his connoisseurial training materialize in the colonial record?

Recovering Tibetan material knowledge

Bell gave Barmiok Lama a very precise task when he entered the Gangtok Residency on the winter morning of 13 January 1913. During his daily visits over a period of three months, the lama was asked to provide Bell with a spoken commentary on the many unidentified and decontextualized objects that were placed before him. Bell would then translate and record in English the lama's appraisals, including his enthusiasms, uncertainties and expertise. Bell determined what was religious and thus which objects fell under the lama's purview; any objects Bell considered to be secular were appraised and commented on by others (see Martin 2014). Figure 8.4 shows an image of the full description, according to Bell, that the lama provided for the statue of Dorje Chang—this was later typed up (as we see here) and became part of Bell's List of Curios. If we purposely look beyond the Christian positioning that underpins Bell's translation, it is possible to identify a Tibetan classification system (in this case for statues) that sits at a distance from the classification systems later constructed by western Tibetan art historians.[17]

17 See for example, Von Schroeder (2008: 18–19) for a discussion on Tibetan and non-Tibetan classification systems using stylistic markers. In this chapter, I am solely concerned with how the lama chose to identify this statue and the knowledge he drew on to do so. Peripheral to this study is the western



it represents Padma Sambhava.

34. Per Barmiak Lama on 13th January 1913.

Copper gilt image, 3½ inches high including pedestal of ~~Dorje~~ Chang. This image is a very old one (i.e Chö-gyel ~~di-ma~~ li-ma alias Ser-sang Nying-ba) of the time of King Song Tsen, Gem-pa or a little later; i.e 1000 to 1200 years old. Dorje Chang is as a rule represented as holding a Dorje in his right hand and a bell in his left, but here for the sake of adornment, a lotus is held in each hand, the Dorje resting on one and the bell on th other. The dorje gives him the power (ཐབས་) to raise up sinners and do all kinds of good; the bell gives him the knowledge (ཤེས་རབ་) how to exercise that power.

Figure 8.4 Entry for Dorje Chang in the List of Curios. Courtesy of a private collection.

The lama referred to the statue using a number of specific terms, the most obvious being *chögyal lima* (*chos rgyal li dmar*) and *sersang nyingpa* (*gser srang snying pa*).[18] It is striking how closely his choice of words—here and throughout the List of Curios—map onto those found in several connoisseurial manuals produced by Tibetan scholars from the late sixteenth century onwards that outline the material meanings behind these and many other terms. Most notable amongst these works are the foundational texts *'jig rten lugs kyi bstan bcos las/ dpyad don gsal ba'i sgron me zhes grags pa bzhugs so* written in 1524 by Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal, *li ma brtag pa'i rab byed smra 'dod pa'i kha rgyan* by Pema Karpo (1527–1592), and the later work, *gtam gyi*

classificatory system produced through scholarship that would date the statue to the fourteenth or fifteenth century and classify it as a copper alloy statue made by a Newari statue maker either in Tibet or Nepal. I do, however, wish to express gratitude to the late and much missed Dr John Clarke, Curator in the Asia department at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for discussions on several of the copper alloy figures described in the List of Curios.

18 According to the "THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan" (Germano and Tournadre 2003), the term *chos rgyal* should be spelt *chögyel*. However, this is the same term used for the title of the ruler of the Kingdom of Sikkim, which is commonly spelt chögyal. For the sake of consistency, I have retained the latter spelling throughout.

tshogs theg pa'i rgya mtsho by Jigme Lingpa (1729–1798).[19] Indeed, we know that the lama had a number of such manuals, including copies of some of those mentioned here, at his disposal.[20] Several decades after the lama referred to these manuals, they garnered the interests of a number of Tibetan studies scholars who translated, surveyed and aimed to make sense of Tibetan ways of knowing and reading Buddhist statuary through the frameworks offered in such texts.[21] In particular, the works of Lo Bue (1991) and Tucci (1959) are pertinent to this case study as both scholars drew on several manuals to determine Tibetan

19 I have referred to digitised versions of these manuals available in the Buddhist Digital Resource Centre: Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal n.d.; Pema Karpo 1973; Jigme Lingpa n.d. Tucci used an incomplete manuscript of Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal's *'jig rten lugs kyi bstan bcos las / dpyad don gsal ba'i sgron me* without colophon. He did not know who the author was and when it was written. This is the same text used by LaRocca who notes five extant versions (2006: 252–63). When writing this chapter, I did not have Tucci's manuscript at my disposal. Instead, I used the Gangtok version published in 1981 in Sṅags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya's *legs par bshad pa padma dkar po'i chun po*. For further readings on the appraisal of kuten, see also Sṅags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya 1979: 2–14; 1981: 3–21 (for *sku gzugs brtag pa*), 165–181 (for *sku rten brtag pa*).

20 Barmiok Lama gave Bell copies of two such manuals, both of which were donated by Bell to the British Museum in 1933 (Barnett 1933) and were later believed to have been moved to the British Library manuscript collection. One of them is catalogued: *rin po che bzo yi las kyi bsgrub'i rgyud dang ja dang dar gos chen dang rta rgyud tshugs bzang ngan gyi rtag pa bzhugs so* (n.d.). Donald LaRocca (2006) draws extensively upon this manual in his exhibition catalogue, *Warriors of the Himalayas: Rediscovering the Arms and Armor of Tibet*. The second manual, *bzo rig kha shas kyi pa tra lag len ma yod pa*, has yet to be located in the British Library collection; neither does it feature in E. Gene Smith's 1969 catalogue of the Tibetan holdings at the British Library. However, see *bzo rig kha śas kyi pa tra lag len ma and Other Texts* (1981), a volume that includes the title 'bzo rig kha shas kyi pa kra lag len ma yod pa lags so' (1–20) which closely resemblances the text given to Bell by Barmiok Lama.

21 See, for example, Denwood and Singer 1997; Kreide-Damani 2003; Lo Bue 1991; Tucci 1959. One could also argue that the work of Loden Sherap Dagyab and his 1977 publication *Tibetan Religious Art* was instrumental in establishing this growing interest in Tibetan artistic styles and aesthetics.

methods for identifying the material properties of a statue and a methodological approach to a statue's appraisal, the same methods used by Barmiok Lama.

The lama appears to structure his appraisal following a materially-led tripartite frame of reference for thinking through kuten or, bodily religious supports, which Tucci highlights in his translation of an incomplete version of Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal's manual.[22] These are the *gyu* (*rgyu*) or material properties; the *rik* (*rigs*) or stylistic varieties (e.g., proportions or type of adornment); and the *ngowo* (*ngo bo*) or identification of whom the statue represents or embodies (for example, the Buddha, a bodhisattva or a Buddhist teacher).[23]

Gyu

A connoisseur, like Barmiok Lama, would consider two things when determining a statue's gyu: the site of manufacture and the materials used in the statue's production. Both the sites of production and the materials indicative of those sites are described in Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal's manual and arranged in chronological order, thus the site combined with material properties determines a statue's date.[24] For example, Barmiok Lama made a temporal and spatial appraisal of the statue based on this framework when he described Dorje Chang as chögyal lima and sersang nyingpa. Sersang nyingpa literally translates as ancient gold. Despite the broad nature of the term, it still hints at the lama's understanding of the statue's age. His reference to chögyal lima provides greater insight. By defining the statue as 'lima', a metal with the finest red brilliance with a slight yellowish tinge, Barmiok Lama had considered the material makeup of the statue's metal body. In using 'chögyal' as a precursor he had also seen something else. In Pema Karpo's classificatory system the term chögyal lima identifies a statue as coming from Tibet and being produced during the reign of one of the three Tibetan kings. Pema Karpo then goes on to attribute a set of specific stylistic and material qualities to the statuary of each king. It

22 See note 19. Tucci cross references and elaborates on his translation with Pema Karpo's manual, which he surmises, and which Jigme Lingpa, in turn, drew on extensively for his own work.

23 Tucci 1959: 181.

24 These are India, Upper Hor, Uigur, Tibet, Old Chinese, Hor and New Chinese (Tucci 1959: 181).

was following such criteria that Barmiok Lama narrowed down his opinion further and dated the statue to the period of Songtsen Gampo 'or a little later', tentatively placing its production in the oldest of the three periods of chögyal lima.

Rik

The lama's apparent hesitancy in dating Dorje Chang firmly within Songtsen Gampo's reign can be explained by his observation of stylistic markers consistent with two distinct periods of statue making. In Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal's manual the connoisseur is directed to look for particular attributes in a statue from the Songtsen Gampo period:

> [F]ace wide, body gentle: upper and lower part of face large, cheerful in appearance and face a little elongated, well-shaped nose, eyes long, the lips accurate, the shape good, body big, hands and feet soft, folds of the garment small; generally the shape of the casting is marvellous. The seat is like that of South Indian images, but they may also have neither throne nor cushion. …
>
> Usually the garment has chiselled designs … they are fire-gilded or polished with resin or greasy material or not polished at all. (trans. Tucci 1959: 185)[25]

The manual then notes how statues from the time of Trisong Detsen should be differentiated from this earlier period of chögyal lima:

> [T]hey have short face, style of the fingers not accurate; they are polished with greasy matter or resin and have coloured inlaid work; the fusion of the lower edge is not accurate: generally many

25 My quotation of Tucci's English translation of Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal's manual omits the transliterated Tibetan terms Tucci provided in parentheses in favour of providing the original Tibetan in full from Sṅags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya 1981: 176(5)–177(2): *zhal ras stod smad rgyas zhum med pa la/ cung zad dkyus ring sku yis tshugs legs pa/ sha nyams che zhing sor mo sgros gtsang ba/ na bza' dar dpyangs lhug cing gos 'khyud rings/ pad ma la sogs lho phyogs pa dang tshungs/ na bza' ber dang zhabs la phyag gsol ba/ dbu brgyan gsum pa brtse mo nang du sbug/ de 'dra'i lugs kyang 'ga're 'byung bar snang/ phal cher na bza' bzong ris yod pa mang/ gdan med pa dang 'bol gyi rnam pa'nag srid/ tsha gser byugs pa'i che chung sna tshogs yong/*.

> of them have triple diadem; the images of the *C'os rgyal* [chögyal] have no turban, the tresses of the hair hang down to right and to left. (trans. Tucci 1959: 185)[26]

In making his decision we can see how the lama recalled many attributes ascribed to a Songtsen Gampo period statue, but also took note of the presence of several stylistic features present at the time of Trisong Detsen, for example, the triple diadem and the positioning of the statue's hair that placed the figure in a later period.

Barmiok Lama may not have commented on the quality of the chiselled work present on Dorje Chang's garments, but we know from other descriptions in the List of Curios that the lama would have taken this into account. For example, in List of Curios No. 32, the lama is recorded explicitly guiding Bell in how to assess a statue's manufacture:

> Barmiak Lama thinks this image a good one. … The workmanship is good in that details e.g on the soles of the feet, the borders of the robe etc. are carved in accurately and neatly. In inferior work the impressions made by the hammer and the file will show on the image.[27]

Using a statue of Buddha Shakyamuni, the lama pointed out the quality of the chisel work, drawing Bell's attention to the high calibre craftsmanship that left no visible trace of the metalsmith's labour on the statue's surface. Here we see that the lama understood the varying qualities of a statue's craftmanship through reading the statue's materiality and therefore knew how to differentiate between what might be considered marvellous and the not so marvellous.

---

26 The original Tibetan in full from Sṅags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya 1981: 177(4)–177(7): *chos rgyal khri srong lde btsan dus kyi lha/ gzhan rnams snga ma dag dang mtshungs pa las/ zhal dkyus cung 'thung sor mo'i sgros mi gtsang/ byu rtse byugs zhing khra rnams mtshon khra bkye/ bsham gyis lugs kha cung zad mi gtsang zhing/ phal cher dbu brgyan gsum pa mang ba yin/ chos rgyal sku la la thod med pa la/ dbu skra lan bu g.yas g.yon gnyis su 'chang/*.

27 List of Curios No.32: a figure of Buddha Shakyamuni, given to Bell by Sidkeong Tulku as a wedding present in January 1912, current object location unknown.

Ngowo

Comparative analysis was also vital to the lama as he came to a decision on the statue's ngowo. As someone who has curated Tibetan material culture for a number of years what strikes me about Barmiok Lama's identification and grading of Dorje Chang is the complex form of comparative analysis required to make this appraisal. It involved a process of comparing and contrasting that necessitated a mental back catalogue of statuary gathered over many years of study.[28] The authors of the manuals discussed here expected their readers to have this type of ability, as is evident in the direction given on how to read the differences between Songtsen Gampo and Trisong Detsen statuary. Barmiok Lama is recorded using this practice when he makes note of the additional lotus in each of Dorje Chang's hands. With this notation we witness him mentally searching, firstly for attributes that would allow him to put a name to the statue placed before him and, secondly, for any other statues of Dorje Chang he had seen before that he could now use for the purposes of comparison. He decided that this Dorje Chang was unusual and worthy of Bell's attention. In turn, his insights allow us to pause and pay attention to this statue today.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown Barmiok Lama to have possessed many of the skills considered necessary if one is to be recognized as a connoisseur of Tibetan Buddhist material culture. Not only should a connoisseur be a *taktap khepa* (*brtag thabs mkhas pa*), or a skilled appraiser, but they must also be *nor nyamchöpo* (*nor nyams chod po*), that is, skilled in differentiating between the poor and excellent qualities in a treasure, and *gyu nyamchöpo* (*rgyu nyams chod po*), skilled in evaluating the materials and/or qualities of a treasure (Tsering 2013b: 126). According to these overlapping terms a Tibetan connoisseur needed an eye for the material and to be equally capable of judging an object's aesthetic worth, meaning that the values inherent in a Tibetan Buddhist

28 In her review of *Tibetan Art Towards a Definition of Style* (Denwood and Singer 1997), Deborah Klimburg-Salter notes a lack of comparative stylistic analysis techniques used in the volume. She goes on to ask: 'What is style when it is discussed by Tibetan traditional sources?' (Klimburg-Salter 2000: 84).

object did not, and still do not, rest entirely with its religious efficacy, but also in its material properties and artistry. This combination of skills produced what the scholar Tashi Tsering calls the ability to, 'appreciate not only the beauty of these masterpieces but also the deep significance of the traditions responsible for their creation' (2013b: 126). From this we can infer that early twentieth century elites like Barmiok Lama continued to draw on a longstanding aesthetics-based literature and lexicon to understand the merits of the Tibetan Buddhist materiality that surrounded them. By acknowledging the presence of Tibetan connoisseurial manuals in this scene of collecting, we also see that Tibetan material knowledge was known to colonial agents—and by extension western scholarship—much earlier than is currently acknowledged.[29] Arguably this knowledge received less attention because it was passed on in oral form in the scene of collecting; it would only be recognized much later, when the types of texts the lama drew upon were deposited in Europe's libraries and museums or became available via publications produced in Europe and North America.

Many western scholars have noted the vagueness or imprecise nature of these connoisseurial manuals as a barrier to using them as a tool for classifying Tibetan Buddhist statues. What we might draw from Barmiok Lama's appraisal of Dorje Chang is that the manuals were only one part of a connoisseur's repertoire. As the lama's words show, he relied on layers of material knowledge—the material, the textual and the comparative—to bring insight to the figure placed before him. Following the identification of many of the statues in the List of Curios by a succession of curators and researchers (including myself), I have been able to study the same statues that the lama held in his hands as I attempted to understand his material knowledge. I have come to the conclusion that none of the forms of knowledge used by the lama could have been considered definitive or intended to be used alone. Each was meant to be 'read' in conjunction with the others to produce a kind of material knowledge and understanding that required one to be in the presence of a statue if one was to benefit from consulting the manuals.

I argue that understanding Barmiok Lama's material knowledge is made possible by staying in the scene, pausing over small details and following his gestures. He is visible to us due to moments recorded

29 Tucci believed the Tibetan connoisseurial manual he translated was the first known example in western hands (1959: 180).

and archived by a colonial collector—moments underscored by a cruelty and violence that ran through the colonial presence in Sikkim during the lama's lifetime. Yet we can also acknowledge that his knowledge was sufficiently valued by Bell that he wanted the lama's contributions to his own ways of knowing to be recognized and held in the archive.[30] In many ways the List of Curios and the objects recorded within it make visible the complex and intimate interplay between individuals in the Himalayas and Tibet at a time when an appreciation of one man's connoisseurship sat alongside the suppression of his sovereign's right to rule. Yet, one can consider much more than coloniality if one follows the lama rather than the colonial collector. Tracing the lama's movements over the course of this chapter, we have seen that Barmiok Lama's life was shaped by Tibetan Buddhist worlds and in places well beyond the jurisdiction of the political officers of Sikkim and the British government in India. As a centre of power in his own right, Barmiok Lama drew on and was part of a wide-reaching religious and aristocratic network, whose intellectual and temporal leadership was located in Himalayan and Tibetan power places—Ralong, Simick, Mindröling, Tsurphu and Palpung—several of which no colonial officer had the right to travel to. Bell, the colonial collector, was not the centre of this story; he was just one of several foreigners who Barmiok Lama was asked to educate due to their colonial presence in his homeland.

Finally, then, what form of Tibetan material knowledge does Barmiok Lama represent? His intersecting background as a Lepcha, a Sikkim aristocrat, a Tibetan Buddhist of the Nyingma and Kagyu schools, and someone who resisted colonial power and defended the sovereignty of his country presents us with a question over what and where we might consider authentic Tibetan material knowledge to come from and who gets to produce it. In identifying 'Barmiak Lama' and locating his knowledge, skills and experiences to a specific space and time, the museums and libraries that now hold his connoisseurship in their archives have the opportunity to recognize the precise nature of his material knowledge and how it came to be present in those institutions.

---

30 In Bell's last will and testament (Archives of National Museums Liverpool) he left a number of objects to the British Museum, stating (my emphasis), '*and I direct* that the explanation of such of the said curios ... may be furnished from my typed volume entitled "List of Curios"'.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Anna Balicki-Denjongpa and Tashi Tsering. This chapter would have been a rather poor imitation of a scene of collecting without their generosity and many discussions. I owe an additional debt of gratitude to Tashi Tsering who agreed to return to Barmiok Lama and the manuals and review this chapter some ten years after our first discussions. There have been many iterations of this chapter presented at seminars and conferences since 2008. I first introduced Barmiok Lama as a pivotal figure in understanding Tibet-related colonial collecting practice in 2008 at a conference at the University of Leicester dedicated to the foundational research of Susan Pearce and her work on collectors and collecting. I am grateful to Sandra Dudley and Jenny Walklate who gave encouraging feedback and included my first academic chapter in that conference's 2012 publication. Since then many others have provided space for me to discuss the ideas that developed into this chapter. In particular, thanks go to Jürgen Osterhammel and Harry Liebersohn who granted me a junior fellowship for the Some Institutes for Advance Studies (SIAS) 2013 and 2014 seminars 'Cultural Encounters: Global Perspectives and Local Exchanges, 1750–1940'—a transformational experience; Inbal Livne and her workshop (Mis-)Representing Cultures and Objects at the University of Stirling, 2014; and Trine Brox and the Centre for Contemporary Buddhist Studies, Copenhagen, 2016. I am grateful to Trine Brox and Diana Lange for the opportunity to co-convene the Tibetan Materialities network and for their continued support, friendship and encouragement.

Note on the author

Emma Martin is a Senior Lecturer in Museology at the University of Manchester. From 2003 to 2020 she was the Senior Curator at National Museums Liverpool and responsible for the Tibet collections held there. Her research sits at the intersection of colonialism(s), Tibetan studies, museum activism, and materiality and moves between contemporary museum practice in Tibetan exile contexts and historical research on Tibetan materiality in British colonial archives. Her forthcoming book, *The Dissident Museum: Oppositional Curating at the Tibet Museum* is based on practice-based research undertaken between 2018 and 2023 at the Tibet Museum, Dharamshala, India.

ORCID®

Emma Martin https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1644-8515

References

Ardussi, J., A. Balikci Denjongpa, and P. K. Sørensen (2021), *The Royal History of Sikkim: A Chronicle of the House of Namgyal. As Narrated in Tibetan by Their Highnesses Chogyal Thutob Namgyal and Gyalmo Yeshe Dolma. Based upon the Preliminary Translation by Kazi Dawasamdup. Corrected, Supplemented, and Thoroughly Revised by John A. Ardussi, Anna Balikci Denjongpa, and Per K. Sørensen. Under the Patronage of Her Majesty Gyalyum Kesang Choeden Wangchuck, Queen Mother to His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan*, Chicago: Serindia.

Barnett, L. D. A. (1933), 'Tibetan Collection of Books and Manuscripts', *The British Museum Quarterly*, 8 (July): 12–13.

Bell, C. (n.d.), 'List of Curios', unpublished catalogue, Archives of National Museums Liverpool.

bzo rig kha śas kyi pa tra lag len ma and Other Texts on the Minor Sciences of the Tibetan Scholastic Tradition, Reproduced from a Collection of Rare Manuscripts and Blockprints From the Library of Burmiok Athing Rai Bahadur T. D. Densapa (1981), Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives.

Chang, T. (2013), *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, Farnham: Ashgate.

Carrington, M. (2003), 'Officers, Gentlemen and Thieves: The Looting of Monasteries During the 1903/4 Younghusband Mission to Tibet', *Modern Asian Studies*, 37 (1): 81–109.

Dagyab, L. S. (1977), *Tibetan Religious Art*, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

Datta-Ray, S. K. (1984), *Smash and Grab*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd.

David-Neel, A. (1936), *Tibetan Journey*, London: John Lane, The Bodley Head.

Denwood, P., and J. C. Singer (1997), *Tibetan Art: Towards a Definition of Style*, London: Calmann & King.

Diemberger, H. (2012), 'The Younghusband-Waddell Collection and Its People: the Social Life of Tibetan Books Gathered in a Late-colonial Enterprise', *Inner Asia*, 14 (1): 131–71.

Elliot, M. (2016), *Another India: Explorations and Expressions of Indigenous South Asia at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Germano, D. and N. Tournadre (2003), 'THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan', The Tibetan and Himalayan Library. https://thlib.org/terms/#/terms/phonetics (accessed 25 July 2025).

Gosden, C., and C. Knowles (2001), *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Harris, C. (2017), 'Photography in the "Contact Zone": Identifying Copresence and Agency in the Studios of Darjeeling', in M. Viehbeck (ed), *Transcultural Encounters in the Himalayan Borderlands: Kalimpong as a 'Contact Zone'*, 95–120, Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing (heiUP).

Höfer, R. (2017), '"Most Unusual Facilities for Obtaining Valuable Specimens": The Legacy of LA Waddell in Berlin Museums', *Baessler-Archiv*, 64: 39–64.

India Office Records, British Library, London.

Ja Jamyang Tashi Namgyal (n.d.), *'jig rten lugs kyi bstan bcos las/ dpyad don gsal ba'i sgron me*, Buddhist Digital Resource Center, bdrc-W1KG15883, https://archive.org/details/bdrc-W1KG15883/page/n1/mode/1up (accessed 21 March 2025).

[= Jigme Lingpa] Kun mkhyen 'jigs med gling pa (n.d.), 'gtam gyi tshogs theg pa'i rgya mtsho', in *dpe rnying rtsa chen par ma'i skor phyogs bsdus*, vol. 25, 3–546, Buddhist Digital Resource Center, bdr:W2PD20323, http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW2PD20323_8363D2 (accessed 21 March 2025).

Klimburg-Salter, D. E., ed (2015), *Discovering Tibet: The Tucci Expeditions and Tibetan Paintings*, Milan: Skira.

Kreide-Damani, I. (2003), *Dating Tibetan Art. Essays on the Possibilities and Impossibilities of Chronology from the Lempertz Symposium, Cologne,* Wiesbaden: Dr Ludwig Reichart Verlag.

LaRocca, D. (2006), *Warriors of the Himalayas: Rediscovering the Arms and Armor of Tibet,* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lange, D. (2020), *An Atlas of the Himalayas by a 19th Century Tibetan Lama: A Journey of Discovery,* Leiden: Brill.

Lidchi, H. and R. Nicholson, (2020), 'Seeing Tibet Through Soldiers' Eyes: Photograph Albums in Regimental Museums', in H. Lidchi and S. Allan (eds), *Dividing the Spoils*, 128–61, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Linrothe, R. N. (2014), *Collecting Paradise: Buddhist Art of Kashmir and its Legacies*, New York: Rubin Museum of Art.

List of Leading Officials, Nobles, and Personages in Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet, 1907 (1908), Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing.

Livne, I. (2010), 'Hostage to Fortune or a Considered Collection? The Tibetan Collections at National Museums Scotland and their Collectors', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 23: 84–97.

Lo Bue, E. (1991), 'Statuary Metals in Tibet and the Himalayas: History, Tradition and Modern Use', *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 1–3: 23–4.

Lopez Jr, D. S. (1997), *Prisoners of Shangri-la: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

O'Hanlon, M. (2000), 'Introduction', in O'Hanlon, M. and R. L. Welsch, eds (2000), *Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents, and Agency in Melanesia 1870s–1930s*, 1–34, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

O'Hanlon, M. and R. L. Welsch, eds (2000), *Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents, and Agency in Melanesia 1870s-1930s*, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Martin, E. (2010), 'A Feminine Touch: Elaine Tankard and the Creation of the Tibet Collection at National Museums Liverpool', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 23 98–114.

Martin, E. (2012), 'Sidkyong Tulku and the Making of Sikkim for the 1911 Durbar', *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 48 (1): 7–32.

Martin, E. (2014), 'Charles Bell's Collection of "Curios": Negotiating Tibetan Material Culture on the Anglo-Tibetan Borderlands (1900–1945)', PhD Diss., SOAS, University of London.

McGranahan, C. (2017), 'Imperial but Not Colonial: Archival Truths, British India, and the Case of the "Naughty" Tibetans', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 59 (1): 68–95.

McKay, A. (2002), 'The Drowning of Lama Sengchen Kyabying: A Preliminary Enquiry from British Sources', in H. Blezer (ed), *Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the IATS, 2000. Volume 1: Tibet, Past and Present,* 263–79, Leiden: Brill.

Moore, J. (2001), 'Colonial Collecting: A Study of the Tibetan Collections at Liverpool Museum – Cultural Encounters, Patterns of Acquisition and the Ideology of Display', PhD Diss., University of Liverpool.

Myatt, T. (2012), 'Looting Tibet: Conflicting Narratives and Representations of Tibetan Material Culture from the 1904 British Mission to Tibet', *Inner Asia*, 14 (1): 61–98.

[= Pema Karpo] Kun mkhyen padma dkar-po (1973), 'li ma brtag pa'i rab byed smra 'dod pa'i kha rgyan', in *Collected Works (gsun-bum) of Kun-mkhyen Padma-dkar-po, Reproduced Photographically from Prints from the 1920–1928 Gnam 'Brug Se-ba Byan-chub-glin blocks*, Vol. 1, 293–306, Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW10736_2D5A41 (accessed 21 March 2025).

Phuntsho, K. (2012), 'The Provenance and Cataloguing of the Younghusband Collection', *Inner Asia*, 14 (1): 121–30.

Risely, H. H., (1894), *The Gazetteer of Sikhim*, Calcutta: Bengal Government Secretariat.

rin po che bzo yi las kyi bsgrub pa'i rgyud dang ja dang dar gos chen dang rta rgyud tshugs bzang ngan gyi rtag pa bzhugs so (The Continuum of Precious Things Accomplished by the Crafts, and the Analysis of the Quality and Forms of Tea, Silk Brocades, and Horse Breeds) (n.d.), Or 11,374, Oriental Manuscripts, British Library, London.

Schindlbeck, M. (1993), 'The Art of Collecting: Interactions Between Collectors and the People They Visit', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 118 (1): 57–67.

Sṅags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya (1979), *Brtags thabs padma dkar po'i 'chun po,* in *Brtags thabs padma dkar po'i 'chun po, A Reproduction of an Incomplete Manuscript of a Verse Work on Criterion for Appraisal and Appreciation of Omens, Precious Objects, Weapons, and Other Possessions by Sṅags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya; Gyi liṅ rta yi spu gtsug bzaṅ ṅan gyi brtags pa, A work on the examination and criteria for judgment of horses by 'Jam dpal luṅ rig*, *With an Introduction to the Manuscripts by Tashi Tsering*, 1–95, Dolanji: Tashi Dorji, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Community.

Sṅags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya (1981), *Legs par bshad pa padma dkar po'i chun po: A Treatise Describing the Qualities and Criterion for Appraisal and Appreciation of Omens, Precious Objects, Weapons, and Other Possessions by Snags-'chaṅ Hūṃ-ka-ra-dza-ya, Reproduced from a rare manuscript belonging to Jokhang Lama Gyaltsen*, Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen Lama, Palace Monastery.

SOAS Library Special Collections, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London.

Tankard, Elaine, Papers (1860–1960), DX/82, National Museums Liverpool.

Tashi, T. C. (2010), 'Barmiok Athing Tashi Dadul Densapa: Colossus of Sikkim', *Talk Sikkim,* (July): 37–9.

Thévoz, S. (2019), 'Embodying Tibet in Paris in 1908: An Early Tibetan Traveller, a Parisian Buddhist Temple, and the Opening Ceremony of the Tibetan Room at the Guimet Museum', *15th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, 7–13 July 2019.

Thomas, N. (2000), 'Epilogue', in M. O'Hanlon and R. L. Welsch (eds), *Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents, and Agency in Melanesia 1870s–1930s,* Vol. 6, 273–78, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Tsering, T. (2012), 'A Short Communication about the 1908 "Bras Ljongs Rgyal Rabs"', *Bulletin of Tibetology,* 48 (1): 33–53.

Tsering, T. (2013a), ‘o rgyan sbas yul ’bras mo ljongs kyi gzi mig ras chen grub mchog ’od gsal rdo rje (1786–c.1869) dang sku skye ’bar nyag rje drung karma dpal ldan chos rgyal (1871–1942) rnam gnyis rnam thar ngo sprod rags bsdus dad spro yar ‘phel bzhugs lags so’, in T. Tsering (ed), *o rgyan sbas yul ’bras mo ljongs kyi gzi mig bla ma ras chen grub mchog ’od gsal rdo rje’i sku skye ’bar nyag rje drung karma dpal ldan chos rgyal zhabs kyi gsung rtsom thor bu khra bo gzi yi sgrom bu bzhugs lags so Selected Writings of Burmiok Rinpoche Karma Palden Choegyal (1871–1942)*, 62–123, Simick Sangag Duduling Monastery.

Tsering, T. (2013b), ‘Si tu paṇ chen and His Painting Style: A Retrospective’, *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, 7 (August): 125–92.

Townsend, D. (2021), *A Buddhist Sensibility: Aesthetic Education at Tibet’s Mindröling Monastery*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Tucci, G. (1959), ‘A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to Their Style’, *Artibus Asiae*, 22 (1/2): 179–87.

Von Brescius, M. (2018), *German Science in the Age of Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Von Schroeder, U. (2008), *108 Buddhist Statues in Tibet*, Chicago: Serindia.

Waddell, L. A. (1895), *The Buddhist of Tibet or Lamaism*, London: W. H. Allen & Co.

White, J. C. (1909), *Sikkim & Bhutan: Twenty-One Years on the North-East Frontier 1887–1908*, London: Edward Arnold.

Wintle, C. (2013), *Colonial Collecting and Display: Encounters with Material Culture from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, Vol. 4, Oxford: Berghahn Books.