
The Monastic Guidelines (bCa' yig) by Sidkeong

Tulku: Monasteries, Sex and Reform in Sikkim¹

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Abstract

Sidkeong Namgyal Tulku was a colourful figure in the history of Sikkim. This crown prince was an incarnated lama as well as a student at Oxford, and a member of the Royal Asiatic Society. This article considers the various roles of Sidkeong Tulku in the light of a Tibetan work by his hand, which has been previously not connected to his person. Written in 1909, it consists of 'monastic guidelines' (bCa' yig) which are a clear witness to the time and circumstances they were written in. This traditionally framed work, authored by a supposed Buddhist modernist, addresses the education of monks, monastic economy, sex, and preaching to the laity. These guidelines shed light on the changing status of the monastery in Sikkim, in the midst of reforms and threats to Sikkimese sovereignty. In this article I examine the contents of these guidelines in the context of its author's eventful but short life, against the political, religious and social backdrop of a Buddhist kingdom in turmoil.

The Sikkimese Maharaja Sidkeong Namgyal Tulku² who ruled for only eight months, until his untimely death in 1914 was an enigmatic figure. Like a Sikkimese Forest Gump, he seemed to have been involved in and present at events that turned out to be major episodes in the history of Sikkim, Tibet, the British Empire and, from a different perspective, in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies. He lived at a time when the Himalayan area saw great changes, when his homeland was brought under the protection of the British government,³ and found itself being pushed towards reforms with regards to trade, immigration, law and religion.

In the brief thirty-five years of his life (1879–1914), he took on various roles and functions. Among others things, he was: recognised as the incarnation of his paternal uncle Sidkeong Namgyal (d. 1874), the head of Phodang monastery; a monk; Vice-President of the Central Committee of the Buddhist Shrines Restoration Society (henceforth: BSRS); student at Pembroke College in Oxford; world traveller; friends of Evans-Wentz and Kazi Dawa Samdup; benefactor and suspected lover of Alexandra David-Néel; member of the Royal Asiatic Society; head of the departments of education and forestry; in religious control of

¹I am grateful for the various suggestions made by Jonathan Samuels, Jonathan Silk and the anonymous reviewers.

²Tib.: *srid skyong mam rgyal sprul sku*. In this article I spell his name 'Sidkeong', in accordance with the spelling found in most contemporary British documents. Many other sources merely call him Maharaj Kumar (the crown prince), but I avoid this title as it may be confused or conflated with other people bearing the same title.

³On the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890 see: Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle : a Historical Survey of British India's Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950* (London, British Library, 1988), pp. 218–224.

all Sikkimese monasteries, and to top it all, towards the end of his life – for a mere eight months – Maharaja of Sikkim.

Much of the above information is documented in various works available to us, mostly based on British records held in the India Office Library and Records.⁴ From the very sketchy information given above, one may well surmise that this Sidkeong Tulku, with his Oxford education and contacts in the western world, must have been something of a ‘Buddhist modernist’. This is indeed how Toni Huber describes him, mainly based on Sidkeong’s role as Vice-President of the BSRS and his invitation of the Theravādin monk Kali Kumar.⁵ Alex McKay details Sidkeong’s education, his relations with the British and his quest for a suitable bride. Whilst being rich in information on his life in general, McKay’s study bases itself on western sources alone, conjuring up an image of a Sikkimese royal who was highly influenced by the West and moulded by British colonialist rule.⁶ Was Sidkeong Tulku truly a mere product of British colonialism? Do his writings and his actions support this portrayal as a Buddhist modernist? How did his contact with the western world effect his position as a religious authority?

In this article I bring forward a work written in Tibetan by Sidkeong in 1909, which has – to my knowledge – not been previously connected with his person. The contents of this work call the identification of Sidkeong as a Buddhist modernist into question. The text is a *bCa’ yig*,⁷ which in this particular instance I will translate as ‘monastic guidelines’.⁸ The document was found among a cache of Tibetan manuscripts retrieved from Phodang (*pho ldang*) monastery by Dieter Schuh. Its facsimile, together with a transliteration and a brief analysis of the contents, was published in German in 1978.⁹ This short text sheds light on Sidkeong’s ideas on the restructuring of the monasteries and, implicitly, his religious role within the Sikkimese society in the early twentieth century.

This work allows us to see that Sidkeong Tulku intended to reform and perhaps even modernise monastic Buddhism and – to a lesser extent – lay Buddhism in his country. He was in part forced to push through certain reforms, which were required by the British, but other reforms, as evidenced by this piece of writing, clearly show his vision of the future of

⁴See: Singh Amar Kaur Jasbir and Library Records India Office, *A Guide to Source Materials in the India Office Library and Records for the History of Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan 1765–1950* (London, 1988).

⁵Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (Chicago, 2008), p. 281.

⁶Alex McKay, “‘That He May Take Due Pride in the Empire to Which He Belongs’: the Education of Maharajah Kumar Sidkeon Namgyal Tulku,” *Bulletin of Tibetology* 39, no. 2 (2003), pp. 27–52.

⁷As a PhD candidate in the research project ‘Buddhism and Social Justice’ (headed by Jonathan Silk) I am conducting research in the genre of *bCa’ yig*, a generally under-appreciated resource in the study of Tibetan Buddhist social history. Despite the fact that many of these monastic guidelines have a tendency to be highly formulaic, they more often than not reflect the attitudes and social circumstances of the inhabitants of a monastic estate at the time of writing.

⁸In an influential article on these types of work, Ter Ellingson translates this word as ‘monastic constitution’. As *bCa’ yig* have also been written for religious communities that do not necessarily constitute as monasteries (e.g. groups of retreatants, tantrikas (*sngags pa*), etc.), this translation does not entirely cover the meaning. Also, in many cases the texts that bear the classification of *bCa’ yig* are not ‘constitutions’ in the sense that they are not always ‘the fundamentals’ of conduct in the monasteries, since they can often be additions (not replacements) to an older existing *bCa’ yig*. See: Ter Ellingson, “Tibetan Monastic Constitutions: The *bCa’ yig*,” in *Reflections on Tibetan Culture: Essays in Memory of Turrell V. Wylie*, (ed.) Lawrence Epstein and Richard F. Sherburne (Lewiston, 1989), pp. 205–229.

⁹Dieter Schuh and L.S. Dargyab, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang* (St Augustin, 1978), pp. 267–271.

(monastic) Buddhism in Sikkim. This text presents us with the unique opportunity to hear Sidkeong Tulku's own voice, allowing us to see past the filter of English language sources that tend to pigeonhole him. It therefore offers a historical insight that is far wider than the issue of administration of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.

In its colophon, these monastic guidelines bear both the Tibetan year (*rab byung* 15 sa bya) and the western year (*ye shu'i 'das lo* 1909), but no exact date is provided. The name given for the author is 'Srid skyong sprul'. The text itself is but short, consisting of one large page written in block print (*dbu chen*), traditionally decorated at the top. The author's formulaically proclaimed motive for writing the text (here: '*chad don*') is to provide a work that is "in accordance with all of Sikkim's larger and smaller monasteries' own rules, the local customs, [people's] dispositions, capacities and intentions".¹⁰

It is not unusual for several monasteries to share one single set of guidelines,¹¹ but that this *bCa' yig* is intended for *all* Sikkimese monasteries of all schools is rather exceptional.¹² Although this document takes the shape of a traditional work, the contents and the historical and personal circumstances under which it was written are definitely out of the ordinary. Because these monastic guidelines address real-life situations in the monasteries and Sikkimese society, it is a significant social document. The document furthermore shows the political and personal views of an extraordinary Sikkimese *tulku*-cum-crown prince. It is testament to the situation of the small kingdom of Sikkim, perched between the 'modern' British Empire and 'traditional' Tibet. Sidkeong Tulku had to navigate between the winds of change and his country's treasured traditions. The tumultuous time in which he lived influenced Sidkeong's ideas and actions, and this is why I give a brief sketch of Sidkeong Tulku's life against the backdrop of several major historical events below, before moving on to describing the actual contents of this text.

Sidkeong Tulku's Early Life

Born in 1879, Sidkeong Tulku was recognised as the reincarnation of his paternal uncle bearing the same name (r. 1862–1874). He was the head of the Karma bka' rgyud monastery Phodang and was intended to be celibate, as his predecessor had been. In his youth, Sidkeong was witness to the British gradually gaining influence in his country, culminating in Sikkim becoming a protectorate of the British Empire in 1890.¹³ Along with the strategic stake the British had in Sikkim, came their attempts to influence the Sikkimese royal house, then headed by Sidkeong's father Maharaja Thutob Namgyal (mThu gtobs rnam rgyal). With

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 269: '*bras khul gyi dgon sde che phra tshang ma nas sgrigs lam rnam gzhas mams yul lugs khamdang bsam pa dang bstun*'.

¹¹ The Seventh Dalai Lama authored one *bCa' yig* for three religious communities: *Nag shod rtar smod chos 'khor gling*, *Rab brtan phun tshogs gling* and *Rog khyim dar rgyas gling*. See: *sKal bzang rgya mtsho*. "*bCa' yig sde brygad la springs yig lam yig sko 'ja' sogs kyi rim pa phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs*". In: *gsung 'bum/_skal bzang rgya mtsho*. TBRC W2623. 3 (Gangtok, Dodrup Sangye, 1975–1983), pp. 361–367.

¹² Interestingly, Vandenheulken notes that a similar work had been written by Sidkeong's uncle and previous incarnation Sidkeong Namgyal in 1870. She mentions that it is called '*Bras ljongs chad [sic: bCa'] yig*'. The work itself was not available to me. See: Mélanie Vandenheulken, "Secularism and the Buddhist Monastery of Pemayangtse in Sikkim," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 39, no. 1 (2003), p. 60.

¹³ Singh, *Himalayan Triangle : a Historical Survey of British India's Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950*, pp. 18–23.

relations with both Tibet and the British Empire strained, the family must have lived a rather isolated life, in particular with regard to international politics. The British Political Officer stationed there at the time was John Claude White, a person whom Alex McKay describes as “mean, petty and domineering”.¹⁴

Not much is known about Sidkeong Tulku’s earliest education, but at sixteen he had learned “a smattering of Hindi and Tibetan” and it was also at this age that the British started to educate him in English.¹⁵ He studied an hour a day for nine months with the renowned Sarat Chandra Das. In 1899 he was sent to St Paul’s boarding school in Darjeeling for six months, at his own request, where, in his own opinion, he made but little progress.¹⁶ In the English language sources available to me, no mention is made of his Buddhist education, which a recognised incarnation would usually receive. The British did however watch his religious commitments closely, as they noted that in 1893 Sidkeong had not taken “his final vows” at Phodang monastery.¹⁷ Whether these vows should be taken to mean *dge tshul* (*śramaṇera*) or *dge slong* (*bhikṣu*) vows is unclear. It does indicate that he was seen to belong to the clergy.

He was recognised in 1899 as the successor to the throne, instead of his older brother Tsodak Namgyal (mTsho bdag rnam rgyal), who – opposing British influence – had fled to Tibet and had been subsequently banned from returning to Sikkim. His father the Maharaja objected to Sidkeong’s recognition on the basis that “the rules of Buddhism bound an incarnation to a life of celibacy and religious contemplation”.¹⁸ The Phodang monastery also protested, for the likely reason that there was a danger of losing him, their religious head, to politics. It is of course not unusual among Tibetan Buddhists to have one person fill the position of both religious and secular head, but in this case the integration of the two in the person of Sidkeong Tulku was seen as less desirable, in all likelihood mainly because the appointment was initiated by the British.

In secondary sources Sidkeong’s identity as a monk and a religious authority gets muddled, although there are many indications that his religious standing was high. Alexandra David-Néel, who first met him in Kalimpong in 1912, mentions his being a monk. She writes that “as usual, he had donned the monastic garb while still a child, and spent a part of his youth in the monastery of which he is now the head”.¹⁹

Even though he is often seen to wear brocades in the style of a royal or government official in photographs and is described as having long hair and wearing jewelry, we know that he did wear his monastic robes. When Sidkeong met with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1908 in Beijing’s Yellow Temple, he changed into his robes for the occasion.²⁰ His monastic robes

¹⁴McKay, p. 27.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Singh, *Himalayan Triangle : a Historical Survey of British India’s Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950*, p. 230.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹⁹Alexandra David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (New York, 1965), p. 10.

²⁰McKay, “‘That He May Take Due Pride in the Empire to Which He Belongs’: the Education of Maharajah Kumar Sidkeon Namgyal Tulku,” and J. Claude White, *Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty-one Years on the North-East Frontier, 1887–1908* (Delhi, 1971), p. 252.

are now on display at the Sidkeong Tulku and Ani Alexandra David Neel Memorial Hall in Phodang monastery.²¹

Language

There are various misconceptions about the languages Sidkeong Tulku spoke. His good friend Alexandra David-Néel notes that his English was better than his Tibetan.²² Together with the above statement regarding his “smattering of Tibetan and Hindi” this may lead one to believe that his Tibetan cannot have been very good, adding to his attributed identity of a westernised modernist. But then, what was his mother tongue? It is unlikely that his ‘Tibetan’ was rudimentary, given the fact that both his mother (who died when he was one year old) and his stepmother were Tibetans from Lhasa, and that most monasteries would have had some form of Tibetan as their *lingua franca*. I believe that the above are comments on his command over the *Central-Tibetan* dialect. It is likely that he spoke some sort of Tibetan dialect, as it was used in Sikkim and Darjeeling (now often called *lho skad*). We see elsewhere that he was perfectly able to converse with both the Panchen and the Dalai Lama and that he even interpreted for Alexandra David-Néel during an audience with the latter.²³ Moreover, he clearly wrote in Tibetan.

The *bCa' yig* that I discuss here is not the only Tibetan language work accredited to Sidkeong. Vandenhelsken located a statement written by him in 1901 allowing Pemayangtse monastery to collect taxes. It gives the yearly allowance granted by the government and demarcates the boundaries of the monastic compound.²⁴ It is possible that more such documents by his hand exist in the archives of the monasteries in Sikkim.

Sidkeong Tulku, World Politics and the World

I suggested above that Sidkeong Tulku was present at or involved in many occurrences that were of global import. One was the celebration of the accession of his Majesty the King-Emperor in Delhi on January the first 1903, the great Delhi Darbar, to which he went as a representative of his father. White claims that the Maharaja's astrologer had prophesied that he would fall ill if he were to go, but Singh contests this, saying that it was White who pressured the Maharaja to let his son take his place in presenting the kingdom to the British for the first time.²⁵ White writes that for this event Sidkeong himself drew the designs for the tents to be used and even supervised their manufacturing. In Delhi, the young prince entertained foreign guests in the Tibetan style tents.²⁶ The Sikkimese presence at the Delhi

²¹ Mahendra P. Lama, *Sikkim : Society, Polity, Economy, Environment* (New Delhi, 1994), p. 58.

²² David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, p. 10.

²³ Barbara M. Foster and Michael Foster, *The Secret Lives of Alexandra David-Neel : a Biography of the Explorer of Tibet and its Forbidden Practices* (Woodstock, 1998), p. 97.

²⁴ Vandenhelsken, “Secularism and the Buddhist Monastery of Pemayangtse in Sikkim,” p. 68. Vandenhelsken sent me the copied translated version of this letter that she acquired in Sikkim, for which I thank her. The original was not available to me.

²⁵ White, *Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty-one Years on the North-East Frontier, 1887-1908*, p. 45; Singh, *Himalayan Triangle : a Historical Survey of British India's Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765-1950*, p. 247.

²⁶ White, *Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty-one Years on the North-East Frontier, 1887-1908* : pp. 47-48.

Darbar was a success and White writes that for Sidkeong, the celebration of the crowning of the King-Emperor “brought home [to him] the greatness of our Indian Empire”.²⁷

In July the same year, Younghusband arrived in Sikkim and met with Sidkeong and White. He and his army were on their “mission to Lhasa”. The Maharaja tried to negotiate between the British and Tibet, to no avail. To aid the mission’s advance the Sikkimese court was pressured into laying roads and building bridges.²⁸ The person who was to supervise these proceedings was none other than Sidkeong Tulku. Though unwilling, he in effect assisted the Younghusband invasion of Tibet in 1904.²⁹ This no doubt strained relations between Sikkim and Tibet, impacting both trade and religious exchange.

In November 1905, the Maharaja and his family (including Sidkeong) were invited to Calcutta to visit the Prince and Princess of Wales. The Panchen Lama had also been invited. In December the same year, Sidkeong joined the Panchen Lama and his entourage on a pilgrimage to Buddhist sites in India, visiting, among others, Sarnath and Bodhgaya. It is there that he became involved in the BSRS, an organisation set up in part to restore monuments such as the Bodhgaya temple, but also to exert greater Buddhist influence over those sites, which at that time were under the care of Hindus.

Sidkeong Tulku was appointed vice-president and the Panchen Lama president of the society. According to Huber, the members consisted of “Buddhist revivalists” and “influential Tibetan Buddhists”.³⁰ Sidkeong must have been taken with the objectives of the Society, for it is a topic he raised with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama when they met in Beijing in 1908.³¹ Huber comments that this BSRS served to draw “other members of the Tibetan Buddhist elite into the religious and political arena established by the Buddhist modernists in India”. He sees Sidkeong Tulku as a good example of this trend and calls him a “Buddhist modernist”.³² I will return to this issue later, as the monastic guidelines Sidkeong authored shed new light on his presumed Buddhist modernist identity.

In 1906, Sidkeong Tulku was finally allowed to study in England. He had made earlier requests which had been refused, but this time, White, the political officer in Sikkim (who was effectively in control) commented that removing him “for a time from the baneful influence and the sordid intrigues of the palace” would do nothing but good.³³ He travelled to Oxford where he studied English, drawing, elementary mechanics and physics for two years. The first year he boarded with a Mrs Skinner and the second year, in 1907, he matriculated at Pembroke College.³⁴ The records show that he lived frugally, although he

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁸ The roads and bridges to Tibet were eventually trodden by 2,500 soldiers and 10,000 sepoy. For a description of the life of Younghusband and his expedition to Tibet see: Patrick French, *Younghusband : the Last Great Imperial Adventurer* (London, 1994).

²⁹ Singh, *Himalayan Triangle : a Historical Survey of British India’s Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950*, pp. 247–248. The Tibetan government was due to this invasion forced to recognise British overlordship of Sikkim.

³⁰ Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India*, p. 278. Kazi Dawa Samdup was one of the two resident secretaries for the society.

³¹ McKay, “‘That He May Take Due Pride in the Empire to Which He Belongs’: the Education of Maharajah Kumar Sidkeon Namgyal Tulku,” p. 32.

³² Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India*, p. 281.

³³ White, *Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty-one Years on the North-East Frontier, 1887–1908*, p. 250.

³⁴ Pembroke college matriculation register, information provided by Pembroke’s archivist Amanda Ingram.

did have a healthy social life.³⁵ Pictures of him show him out boating and in fancy dress at a ball.³⁶

Oxford is also where Sidkeong met Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz, who, just a year younger than the crown prince, was reading Celtic mythology and folklore at Jesus College. It was Sidkeong who first invited the young scholar to Sikkim.³⁷ While in Oxford, Sidkeong was also visited by the Oxford alumnus Charles Bell,³⁸ who advised him to study Indian law, forestry, agriculture and political economy.³⁹ Bell was to replace White in 1908 as the political officer for Sikkim and had already thought up a political role for the young Sidkeong Tulku.

In 1908, Sidkeong made a world-tour, beginning in New York, accompanied by a Captain O'Connor. This visit was noted by the *New York Times* on July the 19th. The article speaks of a prince in western clothes, who collects picture postcards and has a liking for pink pajamas. It also says that his style was not at all like that of the other oriental potentates who go around the world "displaying their pagan wealth".⁴⁰ In another short article, published the next day, Sidkeong is reported to belittle the skyscrapers when compared to the Mount Everest in "his country".⁴¹ Again, some days later the same newspaper reports on a toothache "the little Prince" suffered and Sidkeong's subsequent dismay at the dentist's bill.⁴²

After touring the United States, Sidkeong visited Japan, China (where he met with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama) and Burma.⁴³ When Sidkeong returned to Sikkim in 1908 he was appointed vice president of the State Council. In the same year he was elected to join the Royal Asiatic Society, only to retire from the Society two years later.⁴⁴ Bell placed him in charge of the departments of education and forests and he was given the religious control of the monasteries.⁴⁵ Under Sidkeong's watch some 70,000 trees were planted.⁴⁶ This was to be the start of modern forestry in Sikkim and Sidkeong Tulku is now still called the 'Father

³⁵A New Zealand newspaper article reports that his friends at Oxford nicknamed him 'Sikkim'. See "News Items," *The Colonist*, 17 October 1908.

³⁶At the fancy dress do he donned the outfit of an ordinary Bhutia-Sikkimese.

³⁷See the foreword by R. Marrett to the second edition of: Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines: Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path* (London, 1967 [1935]), p. 2. Evans-Wentz only made it to Sikkim after Sidkeong's death in 1914, where he met the man who would turn out to be his 'guru', Kazi Dawa Samdup, an old friend of Sidkeong.

³⁸This same Charles Bell later authored several books that have been very influential in Tibetan Studies, e.g. *Tibet: Past and Present* (1924) and *The Religion of Tibet* (1931).

³⁹McKay, "'That He May Take Due Pride in the Empire to Which He Belongs': the Education of Maharajah Kumar Sidkeon Namgyal Tulku," p. 32.

⁴⁰"A Tibetan Prince Here", *New York Times*, 18 July 1908. In fact, there was no pagan wealth to display, for the Sikkimese royal house was relatively poor.

⁴¹"Skyscraper Really a Pigmy", *New York Times*, 19 July 1908. Interestingly, here Sikkim is still described as "a Tibetan principality".

⁴²"Royal Toothache Cost \$30," *New York Times*, 21 July 1908.

⁴³For more on his travels see: McKay, "'That He May Take Due Pride in the Empire to Which He Belongs': the Education of Maharajah Kumar Sidkeon Namgyal Tulku," pp. 27–52.

⁴⁴"General Meetings of the Royal Asiatic Society," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (New Series)* 40, no. 03 (1908): p. 935 and "General Meetings of the Royal Asiatic Society," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (New Series)* 42, no. 03 (1910), p. 981.

⁴⁵His uncle and previous incarnation had also been made head of the five *bKa' rgyud* monasteries of Sikkim, not by the British but by the fourteenth Karmapa in 1842. See Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma (Mthu Stobs Rnam Rgyal and Ye Shes Grol Ma), *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* (Gangtok, 2003), p. 171: '[...] 'bras nang bka' dgon lnga'i bdag por mnga' gsol te ..'

⁴⁶Charles Alfred Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present* (Oxford, 1968 [1924]), p. 171.

of Forestry' in his homeland.⁴⁷ Singh writes that Sidkeong, *due to his modern education*, had been influenced into thinking that he could bring the feudal conditions existing in Sikkim into line with modern administration. When he took up specific areas of administration he attempted to push through land reforms. He also sought to reduce the monopoly held on trade and land by the aristocracy (*kazis*) and the monasteries.⁴⁸ Did Sidkeong initiate these reforms, as Singh said, "due to his modern education" or because he had no other choice? Sidkeong Tulku was unpopular among the Sikkimese 'establishment' because he was perceived to be anti-traditional. However, the monastic guidelines he wrote reveal the extent of his traditional views.

The Monastic Guidelines

It is this person, an Oxford educated heir-apparent, an incarnate lama, someone who had seen the world and had connections with people of academic, religious and political import, who, placed at the head of the education department as well as head of all the monasteries in Sikkim, authored in 1909 the monastic guidelines that I discuss below.

To a certain extent this work reflects some of the more drastic reforms Sidkeong tried to implement. It emphasizes the importance of study and clearly shows Sidkeong Tulku's attempt to make the monastery more meritocratic. The contents of the text are furthermore very pragmatic.⁴⁹ The work is written in a loose style, without any (obvious) quotations or references to 'Vinaya'-type material and contains various colloquialisms, which I assume reflect the dialect he spoke. The work is organised into thirteen points. The intended audience is first of all reminded of the importance of the Vinaya, because the source of happiness of the world, both provisional and lasting, depends on the Dharma, and the Dharma in turn depends on the adherence of the Saṃgha to pure discipline: the three trainings.⁵⁰ Thus, the work begins conventionally enough.

Points two through to seven encourage the monasteries to grant privileges on the basis of behaviour, education and training, and do generally encourage study. Striking here are the economic incentives he offers to studying monks, something that we can assume was previously not the norm. Point five for example states that intelligent monks need to study the monastic academic subjects and that at least eight studying monks need to stay at the monastery for at least six months of the year (three in the winter and three in the summer). Sidkeong rules that the monks who take an interest in learning need to be provided for economically.⁵¹ The text says that those who study diligently should always be

⁴⁷<http://www.sikennis.nic.in/Reports%20and%20Publications/100years/100%20Years%201.pdf> (viewed 04-08 2011)

⁴⁸Singh, *Himalayan Triangle : a Historical Survey of British India's Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765-1950*, p. 256.

⁴⁹This is much in line with the nature of many older *bCa'* *yiḡ* that I have read.

⁵⁰Schuh and Dagyab, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang*, p. 270.

⁵¹We tend to assume that monasteries used to provide for their monks, whereas especially in pre-modern Tibet, monks (in particular those who committed themselves to extensive studies) could often not get by without outside sponsorship. Goldstein remarks on the Tibetan situation that monks had to provide their own food and that there were no monastery- or college-run communal kitchens. See: Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951 : the Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 34.

provided with tea and soup (*thug pa*) by the central monastic administration (*spyi sa*) until they complete their studies.⁵² Point five furthermore states that those who have had some education: “unlike before, need to get a position and rewards and relief from tax, corvée duty, transportation duty (*dos*) and so on, commensurate with their achievements”.⁵³

Other points deal with issues such as monks who have not taken certain exams should not sit at the front during congregations, that teachers should not play favourites with their students and should not use them as menial servants (*rtsa g.yog*), thus not allowing them to study. Sidkeong further writes: “Monks, both *dge tshul* and *dge slong*, who behave well, get – in addition to general admiration – a seat and a table, even when they are young, and get a double share (*skal*: i.e. wages), the same as the chanting-master and the disciplinarian (*dbu chos*). With the monastery’s monetary allowance they should be given rewards (*gsol ras*) annually, taking into account their particular conduct (*byed babs dang bstun*)”.⁵⁴ Here it is important to note that this is to a certain extent a departure from the norm. The Tibetan Buddhist monastery was (and is) hierarchical and status (here in the form of a seat and a table and extra money) was conferred on the basis of seniority and official appointment. Sidkeong here values behaviour (and accomplishments) over the traditional sense of hierarchy.

Sikkim has always had very close ties with Tibet, in particular with regard to religion. It had been common practice to send monks to Tibet to get an education there. It is likely however, that religious as well as political relations between Sikkim and Tibet had soured, in part due to Tibetan incursions into Sikkim and the Younghusband expedition into Tibet in 1904. Sidkeong seemed to have been keen to restore the ties with Tibet both for political and religious reasons. In point six he states that “every three years monasteries of the old and the new schools all need to send two monks to Tibet to further their studies and learn [to become] exemplary. Up until their return they should be supported by the monastic administration”.⁵⁵ Thus despite the fact that the British did discourage strong ties with Tibet, as this was not in their interest, Sidkeong attempted to strengthen the traditional bond with Tibet, as also evidenced by his contact with the Panchen and the Dalai Lama, mentioned earlier.

Point seven declares that the monks who are uninterested in studying and just do what they please need to be made to do physical labour (*sa las rdo las*) during renovation of the monastery. This is likely to be a deviation from what was common in the monasteries, as it was often the case that lay-people from the locality either volunteered or were summoned to do repairs on the monastery. Other points speak of the importance of adhering to the rituals in the monastery, the roles of the administrative monks and the keeping of (honest) accounts, in which all income and expenses are recorded. Sidkeong’s guidelines state that any surplus needs to be spent on repairing and adorning the monastery.

⁵²Schuh and Dagyal, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang*, p. 270: *gong gsal slob gnyer thar ma phyin bar sbyang brtson nan tan bya dgos dang/ de bar spyi sa nas ja thug pa chad med sprod dgos/*

⁵³*Ibid.*, *sngar lam ma yin pa'i go sa bdag rkyen dang/ khral 'ul dos sogs yon tan dang bstun yang cha btang rgyu/*

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, *[...] dge slong dang/ dge tshul tshul mthun byung na/ spyir gzigs pa che ba'i khar/ gdan dang lcog rtse 'phar kha/ gnwa gzhon gras yin kyang dbu chos dang 'dra mnyam gyi gnyis skal// dgon pa'i dngul phogs thog nas lo re bzhin byed babs dang bstub gsol ras babs gzigs gnang rgyu/*

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

Another interesting issue that Sidkeong raises is the “preaching to lay-people”. He recommends three works that may be used to teach ordinary people. He writes in point eleven: “When the chant-master, the disciplinarian or others, young or old, go somewhere for the welfare of other beings, they need to take the *kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*,⁵⁶ the *dad ldan sems kyī lcags kyu*,⁵⁷ the biographies of ‘*das log karma dbang 'dzin* and *gling sa chos skyid*,⁵⁸ etc. to congregations of the general public and in marketplaces, in order to promote the Dharma among the people, and explain all that they know on virtue and non-virtue and causes and effects”.⁵⁹ The first work is a book that gives a thorough introduction into Buddhism as practiced in Tibet, which contains copious vibrant anecdotes and a good dose of humour. The second suggested text is similar with regard to its topic, but is written by lHa btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med (also known as lHa btsun chen mo), the figure accredited with introducing monastic Buddhism in Sikkim. The last two texts give a less institutional view of Buddhism and are written in a very accessible way. The works recommended when teaching lay-people are thus highly narrative (and even now rather popular) and speak of basic Buddhist virtues. I suspect it cannot have been very common for monastics to actively preach to lay-people in this way. It may have been the case that Sidkeong's attempts to promote this preaching were inspired by Christian practices he had been able to observe in India and the West, although positive corroborative materials are lacking.

The final point that Sidkeong puts forth in the guidelines asserts his authority and expresses the intention to increase direct (governmental) power over the monasteries, in particular the larger ones.⁶⁰ It reads:

It is not allowed for the various larger monasteries to make decisions on important issues without notifying me (*ngos*). From now on, there will be a yearly investigation into whether affairs are handled appropriately in accord with the above points. And when it turns out that the conditions have been met there will be rewards; if they have not been met, there will be a severe punishment that will not just be verbal. It will not, as previously, be left to the pretty hues of meager rhetoric: everyone – whether a chant-master, a disciplinarian or a teacher, young or old – needs to understand that the issues must be at all times put fully (*rus kun*) into practice.⁶¹

⁵⁶This work by dPal sprul rin po che (O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyī dbang po) (1808–1887) has been translated, and was published as *Words of my Perfect Teacher*, trans. Padmakara Translation Group (Boston, 1998).

⁵⁷Contained in *rdo rje snying po sprin gyi thol glu*, visionary teachings of lHa btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597–1650), the famed treasure-revealer (*gter ston*).

⁵⁸The biographies of the two ‘*das log* (people who returned from death) can be found in one volume: ‘*das log karma dbang 'dzin gyi nam thar dang gling bza' chos skid kyī nam thar*, ‘*das log gling sa chos skyid kyī nam thar mdor bsdu*. For the accounts of both Karma dbang 'dzin and Gling bza' / sa chos skyid see: Lawrence Epstein, “On the History and Psychology of the ‘Das log,” in *Buddhism: Critical Concepts In Religious Studies: Tantric Buddhism (including China and Japan)*; *Buddhism in Nepal and Tibet*, (ed.) Paul Williams (London, 2005), pp. 75–146.

⁵⁹Schuh and Dagyal, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang*, p. 271.

⁶⁰There are five major monasteries (*dgon chen*) in Sikkim: Pemayangtse, Ralang, Rumtek, Phodang and Phensang. A monastery is a ‘*dgon chen*’ not on the basis of the number of inmates but on the basis of the amount of land held. See: Vandenhelsken, “Secularism and the Buddhist Monastery of Pemayangtse in Sikkim”, p. 67.

⁶¹Schuh and Dagyal, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang*, p. 271: *don bcu gsum pa dgon sde che khag rigs nas las don gal che'i rigs ngos la zhu bskor med par thag chod byed mi chog bcas/ da phyin gong gsal bkod don rnams tshul mthun byed dang mi lo re bzhin blta rtogs kyī byung bar bdag rkyen dang/ ma byung bar bka' nyes kha tsam min pa gtong rgyu las/ sngar lam lta bu'i kha bshad skam po'i mdzes tshon tsam du bzhang rgyu ma yin pa de don dbu chos khrid rgan gzhon tshang mas dus kun nyams myong lag len du bstar rgyu yin pa go bar gyis/*

Sex and the Monastery in Sidkeong's guidelines

The first point of these monastic guidelines is possibly the most interesting. It pertains to the make-up of the community of monks. When a young monk first enters the monastery he should only be enrolled (*sgrigs su bcug*) after his hair has been cut in the presence of the Vajrācārya (*rdo rje slob dpon*). The text stresses the importance of taking any of the seven *pratimokṣa* vows, for without any of these, one cannot be a follower of the Buddha. The text further emphasizes that those who take not only either *dge tshul* or *dge slong* vows but also bodhisattva and tantric vows are “great ones, exemplary of the Buddhist teachings”.⁶² It goes on to state:

When, for a short time and for minor gain⁶³ and due to bad examples, one does not keep the vows correctly and when – in the worst-case scenario – one needs to be with a woman, one can merely take the vows of refuge and the *upāsaka* vows. Having made the woman religious, one can be with her in secret, like a yogic couple (*rnal 'byor pho mo ltar*). If this is not possible one can sleep with the wife of one's brother (*spun zla'i chung ma*). Anything else is not allowed, such as continuing to use the monastery's amenities (*gzhis 'khor*) whilst one personally has already given a name (i.e. started one's own family), for these things will give the *Samgha* a bad name.⁶⁴

Perhaps we now have to remind ourselves that these guidelines were intended for the whole of Sikkim's monastic population. Sidkeong Tulku here clearly does not forbid sexual intercourse by inmates of the monasteries; indeed he gives instructions *with whom* to have sex if one would wish to do so. This passage is in sharp contrast to what can be found in other *bCa' yig* on monks and sex. It is unusual that sexual conduct is even mentioned, let alone approved of. Needless to say, the first part is in accordance with common Buddhist rules in that one cannot be a novice (*dge tshul*) or fully ordained monk (*dge slong*) and also have sex; one should, in that case, “just take the refuge and *upāsaka* vows”,⁶⁵ implying that one has to give up one's ‘monk vows’. What is remarkable here is that sexual intercourse within the monastic context is not forbidden outright, but condoned in certain instances. ‘Tantric sex’ is advised, but sex with one's brother's wife is also an option.⁶⁶ The point that Sidkeong clearly makes is that inhabitants of a monastery are not to start a family of their own. Moreover, here having sex does not necessitate leaving the monastery.

It is likely that Sidkeong had observed on his many tours of the monasteries in Sikkim that it was not uncommon for the inhabitants to sleep with women. Perhaps he thought that

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 271: *bstan pa'i mig rgyan* [sic: *rgyun*] *du che ba zhiḡ yin 'dug/*

⁶³ Tib.: *yud khud chung zhiḡ*. I am not entirely clear on the meaning of this unusual phrase.

⁶⁴ Schuh and Dagyab, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang*, p. 271: *ci ste yud khud chung zhiḡ/ mig 'dren ngan pa'i rkyen dbang gis so thar gyi sdom pa ji bzhiḡ pa zhiḡ ma byung na/ mtha' ma'i tha mar bud med brten dgos byung na yang/ skyabs 'gro'i sdom pa dang dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa tsam len te bud med de yang chos sgor thog rnal 'byor pho mo ltar gsang stabs su brten pa'am de min spun zla'i chung ma dang sdebs nas sdod pa ma gtogs sger gyis ming btags byed nas gzhis 'khor bsten pa sogs dge 'dun gyi mtshan shas su 'gro rigs byed mi chog/*

⁶⁵ *skyabs 'gro'i sdom pa dang dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa tsam len te.*

⁶⁶ Interestingly, this ruling also contradicts the third *upāsaka* vow of sexual misconduct, in which one is not to have sex with people who are married. In *kun bzang bla ma' i zhal lung* it says that rules on sexual misconduct (*log g.yem spyod pa*) pertain only to lay-people as those who are ordained need to avoid sex altogether. This text, as do others, also mentions as sexual misconduct [intercourse with] “someone who is owned by another” (*gzhan gyis bdag pa*).

trying to restrict the monks to celibacy would be futile. By stipulating with whom to have intercourse he attempted to counter the tendency for monasteries to gradually become places populated by ‘monks’ living with their families. One of the obvious reasons for wanting to prevent this from happening is an economic one. Once families settle on monastic grounds, they will feel entitled to the income of the monastery and may in the end inherit the rights that were originally reserved for the (celibate) monastic community.⁶⁷ That this is indeed what – at least in some monasteries – happened is mentioned by Vandenhelsken in her article on the problematic separation between the lay and the monastic spheres in Sikkim. Nowadays in the Pemayangtse monastery for example, among the ‘lamas’ no one is a *dge slong* and most who live there are now married. Numerous other people in the area claim to descend from the Pemayangtse lamas.⁶⁸

Unlike in pre-modern Tibet, the ruling classes had greater control over the monasteries in Sikkim. The monasteries did not own the land, but were allowed to collect tax over land allotted to them. Sidkeong Tulku’s work also makes it clear that they were further sponsored by yearly donations, which I assume to be state-funded.⁶⁹ This is another argument that can be advanced to suggest that Sidkeong’s statement was mainly motivated by concerns of control and economics rather than religiously inspired as such. This *bCa’ yig* is not the only set of guideline which makes it clear that if a monk has had sexual intercourse he is not necessarily expelled from the monastery.

The Fourteenth Karmapa Theg mchog rdo tje (1797–1868?) composed a *bCa’ yig* for Phodang monastery in 1846 in which he – possibly taking the specific circumstances of Sikkim into account – mentions inmates of the monastery who have had sex (here: *mi tshangs gyid pa*). They can, he states, remain in or perhaps ‘re-enter’ the monastery and the monastic group to which they belonged.⁷⁰ This can only take place after the person in question has made extensive reparations in the form of offerings to the three jewels and the monastic community, has confessed his faults, has made prostrations in the assembly and “renewed his seat”⁷¹ in the assembly. What is made clear is that the monk, having had intercourse, effectively loses his monastic vows and therefore has to retake them.⁷² However, this does not deny the perpetrator future monkhood. Risley, who may have had direct or indirect access to a Pemayangtse *bCa’ yig* in use in the late nineteenth century, makes a similar observation in his *Gazetteer of Sikkim*:

⁶⁷Settling in this way on monastery-ground could also have been an effective way to evade household-tax.

⁶⁸Vandenhelsken, “Secularism and the Buddhist Monastery of Pemayangtse in Sikkim,” pp. 63–64.

⁶⁹One indication of this is found in Schuh and Dagyab, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang*, p. 271: *dgon par lo re bzhin phogs dngul dang/*. The (partial) state-funding of the monasteries was at that time a relatively new development in Sikkim, in order to exert greater power over them and halt the established custom of monasteries collecting tax from ‘their dependents’.

⁷⁰The wording is: *sngar rgyun skyid bsdug [sic: sdug] la bcug*. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁷¹This means that the person in question loses seniority.

⁷²Schuh and Dagyab, *Urkunden, Erlasse und Sendschreiben aus dem Besitz Sikkimesischer Adelshäuser und des Klosters Phodang* p. 246 : *mi tshang gyid pa byung na bla ma las ’dzin dbu chos nas zhib bcod thog ’dzin bzung kyi byed lte kho pa rang la rgyal khrims rtsa bar bzung ba’i thog mar rten gyi drung du snyan bshal steng mchod ’dus sder zho drug gi tshogs ’khor mang ja sbyor brgyad bla ma la mañdal brten gsum mtshan grangs bab stun dbu chos las ’dzin so sor phyi mdzod kyi mtshon pa’i sne bshags lag ldan yod med gyis bshags brten smar steg ’gres ma’i dmar zho bcu gnyis sgrub ste tshogs bshams nas brgya phyang dang tshogs gdan gsar rjes thog slar sdom sems gyis na gan tshig blang ste sngar rgyun skyid bsdug la bcug/*.

The regulation which is most frequently violated is that of celibacy; but in most of the institutions other than Pemiongchi celibacy is not observed. Should it be proved that a Pemiongchi monk consorts with women, he will be expelled by a chapter, unless it be his first offence and he prays publicly for forgiveness, and then is awarded some penance and pays a fine of 180 rupees according to the rules of the lChags-yig [sic: bCa' yig].⁷³ He must also pay over again the entrance fees and presents as before.⁷⁴

In a recent article Shayne Clarke discusses the issue of sex and expulsion in the context of Indian Buddhism. The point he convincingly makes is that according to most monastic law codes, committing the *pārājika* of the vow of celibacy does not mean one necessarily gets expelled from the monastery. Clarke writes that: “Interpretations equating sex with permanent expulsion can be traced back nearly to the beginning of the western study of Buddhism”.⁷⁵ This equation is one that he feels has been created by “modern commentators”, whilst this is not supported by Indian Buddhist monastic law codes.⁷⁶ Both the Tibetan monastic guidelines cited above seem to follow Clarke’s findings related to the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, in that they imply that sex does not need to lead to expulsion. However, it is important to note that many other, and I dare say most *bCa' yig* – if they mention sexual conduct at all – do *not* take a tolerant stance with regard to issues of celibacy. To cite an example from the guidelines for the rNying ma monastery sMin grol gling, written in 1698:

When someone is suspected of having had sex, he needs to be investigated and if it is found to be true, he is to be expelled (*dnas nas dbyung*) under the sound of the very loud *ganḍi*.⁷⁷ Even if his [case] seems to have supporters, it needs to be put an end to, for it has been determined that it was ‘the first *pārājika*’.⁷⁸

There are more *bCa' yig* that, if they mention intercourse at all, deal with this problem in similar ways.⁷⁹ It seems to me that the way in which sex by inhabitants of the monastery is condoned by Sidkeong is an exception, rather than a rule. The idea that sex necessitates expulsion from the monastery is therefore not solely a creation by western scholars of Buddhism. Despite the fact that the Indian Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya rules, mentioned by

⁷³This rendering of the spelling Risley explains as the “the iron letter”, in the sense of the “inflexible rule”. This may have been a local etymology or merely his own flight of the imagination. See: Herbert Hope Risley, *The Gazetteer of Sikkim* (Calcutta, Printed at the Bengal secretariat Press, 1894), p. 300.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁷⁵Shayne Clarke, “Monks Who Have Sex: *Pārājika* Penance in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37, no. 1 (2009), p. 5.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷⁷A *ganḍi* is a piece of wood used in the monastery to call the monks for certain gatherings but is also sounded under exceptional circumstances. See: Mireille Helffer, “Le *ganḍi*: un simandre Tibétain d’origine Indienne,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 15 (1983), p. 114.

⁷⁸*de dag gang rung dang khyed par mi tshangs spyod kyi nyes pas gos pa mthong thos dogs gsum dang ldan pa la dogs pa chod nges pa' i rgyu mtshan yang dag mthong na 'chal pa'i klad pa 'gems pa'i gaNDi'i sgra drag po dang bcas pas gnas nas dbyung// de'i rgyab snon pa snang yang tshar gcod/ pham pa dang po'i mtha' 'gegs phyir/*. In: bsTan pa'i sgron me, *O rgyan smin grol gling gi dkar chag* (Xining: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992), p. 279.

⁷⁹See also Jann Ronis, “Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas: Contestation and Synthesis in the Growth of Monasticism at Katok Monastery from the 11th through 19th Centuries” (Charlottesville, 2009), pp. 146–161. Ronis describes a *bCa' yig* written by Situ Panchen, in which it is said that when the act is concealed the monk should be expelled. Throughout this text celibacy is strongly advocated, although the author shows leniency (as we see in the case of Sikkim) in that the retaking of vows is possible.

Clarke, seem to give certain allowances, monks who have sex were, and are, generally not tolerated in Tibetan monasteries.

It is tempting to think that Sidkeong made these allowances because his own status as a monastic was not altogether clear. McKay writes about his search for a suitable (preferably Japanese) wife, an ongoing process from around 1906.⁸⁰ Singh mentions that his father refused to allow him to marry in 1913 on the basis of his being an ‘Incarnate Lama’, who was to be celibate,⁸¹ whilst David-Néel casually mentions the existence of Sidkeong’s mistress and the son he had with her.⁸² However, despite his own personal predicaments and the liberal stance taken by him in the monastic guidelines, some of his actions show that he was keen to turn round the attitude to celibacy in the monasteries. To these I turn below.

Sidkeong: a Reformist and a Buddhist Modernist?

It seems that the allowances that Sidkeong Tulku makes in these monastic guidelines take into account the common practices of monastics in Sikkim at that particular time. This relative leniency can also be seen as a reflection of the limits of his effective power over the monasteries of Sikkim. In the time after he had written these monastic guidelines until his death, Sidkeong made more concerted efforts to get the monks to adhere to the precepts. David-Néel, who visited several Sikkimese monasteries with Sidkeong, mentions that in 1914 he appointed the new ‘head lama’ of Phodang monastery, who was from Tibet. This new head lama replaced the previous head, who had the reputation of being “a jolly fellow” and who was known to keep two wives at his private home. This new abbot was “fully ordained”⁸³ and had remained celibate, which – as David-Néel puts it – “is rare among the Himalayan clergy”.⁸⁴ In the same year, Sidkeong made an ex-political prisoner from Tibet abbot of Enchee Monastery.⁸⁵ It is noteworthy that he appointed a *geshe* (*dge bshes*) from the dGe lugs school – which never gained a secure footing in Sikkim – to head a rNying ma monastery. It is possible that this *geshe*’s appointment was aimed to raise the level of education and discipline.

Sidkeong, from his return to Sikkim in 1908 up until his death in 1914, tried hard to reform the monasteries. It has been suggested that this was largely for the sake of the restructuring of the tax-system (as demanded by the British) and thereby to increase government revenue.⁸⁶ However, it seemed that he genuinely intended to implement purely religious as well as economic reforms. This is evidenced by correspondence between David-Néel and Sidkeong Tulku which shows that he claimed to have banned smoking and drinking from the monastery and disallowed the monastic ritual dances (*’cham*) to be performed outside

⁸⁰McKay, “‘That He May Take Due Pride in the Empire to Which He Belongs’: the Education of Maharajah Kumar Sidkeon Namgyal Tulku,” pp. 33–34.

⁸¹Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: a Historical Survey of British India’s Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950*, p. 254.

⁸²David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, p. 61.

⁸³This presumably refers to the abbot being a *dge slong*.

⁸⁴David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, pp. 51–52.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁸⁶See: Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: a Historical Survey of British India’s Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950*, p. 256.

of the monastic compound, as this would relegate the dances to mere entertainment.⁸⁷ David-Néel furthermore reports that Sidkeong had made attempts to banish animal sacrifices from Sikkim.⁸⁸ There is no doubt that Sidkeong not only *had to* reform certain aspects of Sikkimese society due to outside pressure, he also really wanted to.

In 1914, he invited the Theravādin monk Kali Kumar who was to introduce “orthodox Buddhism” and “to make his subjects renounce superstitions”.⁸⁹ This development, which is in many ways puzzling, is one of the main reasons for Huber’s labelling Sidkeong a good example of a ‘Buddhist modernist’.⁹⁰ This raises the question what is a Buddhist modernist? Bechert coined the phrase ‘Buddhist modernism’, which he said concerned “trends towards reinterpretation of Buddhism as a system of thought”.⁹¹ Besides stressing reason, meditation and the rediscovery of Buddhist canons, Buddhist modernism deemphasised ritual, image worship, and ‘folk’ beliefs and practices. It was also linked to social reform and nationalist movements.⁹²

Indeed, when taking Sidkeong Tulku’s background, his associations and his actions into account, he ticks many of the ‘boxes’ that would make him a Buddhist modernist. The Buddhist revivalism in Ceylon was in part an attempt to reinvent the religion in response to western colonial oppression.⁹³ Sidkeong may have seen parallels with what was taking place in his own Sikkim and Ceylon and felt affinity with the movement, for despite his selection and ‘grooming’ by the British, according to Charles Bell he was an outspoken critic of British and European methods and policy.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Sidkeong, educated by westerners and in the West, displayed a deep aversion to what he claimed were superstitions, another character-trait that fits the image of a Buddhist modernist. This gained him the reputation of being impious. In a letter to David-Néel he complains: “People think I am an atheist”.⁹⁵

At the same time, Sidkeong’s monastic guidelines, despite their intention to *reform* the monasteries, i.e. to make the monasteries more meritocratic and to regulate finances, are not recognisably ‘modernist’, in the sense described by McMahan as reflecting three cultural processes that are products of modernity: detraditionalisation, demythologisation,

⁸⁷Lama, *Sikkim: Society, Polity, Economy, Environment*, p. 54.

⁸⁸David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, p. 54.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 53. Also see: Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: a Historical Survey of British India's Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950*, p. 256. This may be the same person as a certain Babu Kali Kumar Das, who had also been a member of the Royal Asiatic Society and whose membership was discontinued under Article 21 (i.e. failing to pay contribution). See: “General Meetings of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1908” If so, he was the author of “The Lepcha people and their Notions of Heaven and Hell”, (*Journal of the Buddhist Text Society* 4 (App. 1), 1896, pp. 1–5) and thus must have had a fair understanding of Sikkim and its people.

⁹⁰Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India*, p. 381.

⁹¹Heinz Bechert, “Buddhist Revival in East and West,” in *The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture*, (ed.) Heinz Bechert and Richard F. Gombrich (New York, 1984), p. 275.

⁹²David L. McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (New York, 2008), pp. 6–8. Interestingly, the author sees David-Néel as a formative figure in the early years of Buddhist modernism.

⁹³*Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹⁴Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present*, p. 171. Kalzang Dorjee Bhutia is currently conducting research on the monks Sidkeong Tulku reportedly sent to Burma and Ceylon as an educational experiment. One of them, Jathika S. Mahinda Thero, became well known as a poet and anti-colonialist.

⁹⁵Lama, *Sikkim: Society, Polity, Economy, Environment*, p. 54.

and psychologisation.⁹⁶ The emphasis on education was not new to Tibetan Buddhism and neither was the notion of the – at least nominally – meritocratic nature of the monastery and its internal hierarchy. Even though the text itself does not make any claims, it is obviously aimed to ‘traditionalise’ rather than to ‘detraditionalise’. It takes the shape of a traditional monastic document, not a decree; it lays emphasis on following rules and it demands the acceptance of Sidkeong as the overarching authority.⁹⁷ In doing so, I suspect he, in part, tried to model his rule⁹⁸ on that of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, with whom he was in irregular contact.⁹⁹ Like him, Sidkeong was also in the position of having to balance his religious role with his political destiny. Both men had been able to see the machinations of the British Empire and the efficacy of its bureaucracy at close hand. The Dalai Lama had also tried (in vain) to modernise the political structure of his country and sought to exert greater power over the monasteries, in particular over the three large dGe lugs monasteries in Central Tibet (*gdan sa gsum*).¹⁰⁰ Yet, despite the fact that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has been branded a Buddhist modernist,¹⁰¹ this label has not stuck to his predecessor.

Is it then right to call Sidkeong a Buddhist modernist? What makes him appear to be a modernist is the fact that he opposed superstition, recommended preaching Buddhist values to ordinary people, and tried to ward off colonial influences while introducing modern techniques of administration. But what makes him look more like a traditional Tibetan Buddhist figure of authority is that he also asserted his power, tried to rekindle religious liaisons with Tibet, and advocated the continuation of the performance of rituals in the monasteries. There is no mention of Buddhism as “the religion of reason”:¹⁰² the values he upheld were largely orthodox. The goal that Sidkeong seems to have had is to reform, in order to sustain monastic Buddhism in Sikkim and to develop a politically stable polity. This is also reflected by the ruling on sex by monks: it was mainly devised to discourage monastics from starting families (as was the general trend), which would greatly impact the economy and social standing of the monastery.

The year Sidkeong died was the year of his *'gegs*, the astrological obstacles which many Tibetan Buddhists try to avert by performing a variety of rituals. As a non-believer in superstition, he refused to have any performed. When he suddenly passed away in December 5th 1914, the ‘traditionalists’ felt vindicated. Many of the reforms that Sidkeong had introduced were abolished and Kali Kumar was sent away.¹⁰³ Singh, not taking into account the document I have presented here, calls Sidkeong Tulku’s policies demonstrative of a ‘radical heterodoxy’.¹⁰⁴ This view is, in the light of the monastic guidelines discussed

⁹⁶ See McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, p. 42.

⁹⁷ Detraditionalisation tends to involve a shift from external authority to internal authority. See: *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Even though Sidkeong was only enthroned as Maharaja of Sikkim in 1914, he was thought to have taken on most of his father’s duties some time before his father’s death.

⁹⁹ They met in 1908 and in 1910.

¹⁰⁰ For more on this see: Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: the Demise of the Lamaist State*.

¹⁰¹ Lopez calls him “the leading proponent of Buddhist modernism.” See: Donald S. Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago, 1998), p. 185.

¹⁰² Bechert, “Buddhist Revival in East and West,” p. 276.

¹⁰³ David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, pp. 54–55.

¹⁰⁴ Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: a Historical Survey of British India’s Relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan, 1765–1950*, p. 256.

here, clearly incorrect. This work authored by Sidkeong himself presents us with his own voice, his vision of society, that was influenced by Sikkim's being stuck between a rock and a hard place, but not dictated by those circumstances. We can see now that Sidkeong was treading a fine line (which he may well have crossed by inviting Kali Kumar): he attempted to deal with and balance colonialism and self-preservation, religion and politics, progress and tradition. This does not make Sidkeong Tulku a Buddhist modernist *per se*, but rather a Buddhist reformist, a Buddhist pragmatist and a remarkable product of his time.

Appendix I

Translation

Om svasti. May the three: the perfect Buddha, the leader who has completed the two collections; the holy Dharma, the scriptures and realisations of the truths of both cessation and the path; and the best community of those knowledgeable and liberated, the *Ārya*-s bestow their glory that is auspicious at all times.

With these auspicious words, the path has been made virtuous. As for the topic at hand, [I here] compose in a condensed form the guidelines for upholding moral behaviour¹⁰⁵ that is to be put into practice, which is in accordance with all of Sikkim's larger and smaller monasteries' own rules, the local customs, [people's] dispositions, capacities and intentions.

The basis for all prosperity and happiness – both provisional and eventual – in this world is dependent on the Buddha's doctrine alone. And that doctrine is dependent on [whether] the members of the *Samgha* are in agreement, have pure ethical discipline and have trainings that flourish.

1) Since that is the case, the first point is that when young monks are enrolled in the monastery, they need to have their hair cut in the presence of the lama who is the tantric preceptor¹⁰⁶ and then they are enrolled. If one does not enter the door of the teachings through taking any of the relevant seven classes of *prātimokṣa* vows, then one is not a follower of the supreme teacher Śākya. Therefore it is absolutely essential¹⁰⁷ for one to receive the trainings of a *śrāmaṇera* or a *bhikṣu* [according to] the *prātimokṣa*. Ideally, one should be a basis consisting of the external *śrāmaṇera* or *bhikṣu* [vows]; on that basis one can take the internal bodhisattva vows and the secret tantric vows, [thereby] becoming a three-fold *varja*-holder: then one truly is a great one, exemplary of the doctrine.

However if, for a short time and for minor gain¹⁰⁸ and due to bad examples, one does not keep the vows correctly and when – in the worst-case scenario – one needs to be with a woman, one can merely take the vows of refuge and the *upāsaka* vows. Having made the woman religious, one can be with her in secret, like a yogic couple. If this is not possible one can sleep with the wife of one's brother. Anything else is not allowed, such as continuing to

¹⁰⁵ *spang blang*, literally 'abandoning and adopting'.

¹⁰⁶ *rdo rje slob dpon*, S. *vajrācārya*.

¹⁰⁷ *ma byung ka dag*: I take this to be an idiom of sorts, although I have not been able to trace any parallels.

¹⁰⁸ *yud khud chung zhing*, the meaning of this unusual phrase is not clear to me.

use the monastery's amenities whilst one personally has already given a name,¹⁰⁹ for these things will give the *Samṅha* a bad name.

Furthermore, the teachers of all monasteries need to teach those between eight and fifteen years of age – which is to say those of fifteen and below – how to read and write and the various ceremonies and prayers in their entirety so that they can pass the exams.

2) The second point is that those between fifteen and twenty years old who have not passed their exams at the assembly on their studies of the rituals of ceremonies, consisting of sacred dance, mandala drawing and chanting–melodies of their own religious system, old or new, may not assemble at the front of the row.

3) The third point is that, unlike before, during the aforementioned studies, the teachers need to teach wholeheartedly, motivated by affection, having developed a good intention, blind to the fatigue and hardship endured. It is not allowed for students, until they have completed all their studies, which are for their own benefit, to do such things as viewing the teacher in a wrong way and undermining his authority. It is not allowed for the teacher to needlessly force [his student] into serving him, not letting him have an education as though he were a menial servant.

4) The fourth point is that the monks of the middle rank, having taken the initiation, the transmission and the explanation of the mandala-s of their own religious system, need to be able to take an exam with a qualified lama, on the experiences of the three: the preliminary practices, the actual practice and the aftermath, consisting of reciting the refuge [prayers] four hundred thousand times and doing the relevant meditation deity practices.

5) The fifth point is from among the intelligent monks who have sharp intellects, in order for them to get an education in the various fields of knowledge such as reading and writing, poetry, grammar, astrology, Buddhist art, carving printing–blocks and other crafts, each year eight monks need to stay in their own monastery for three months in the summer and for three months in the winter, so six months in total. And one needs to persistently prioritise learning until one has finished the aforementioned studies: thus during that time one needs to be provided continuously with soup (*thug pa*) and tea by the central monastic administration. Furthermore the persons, be they old or young monks, who have knowledge, even if they completed only part of their education, will, unlike before, need to get a position and rewards and relief from tax, corvée duty and transportation duty (*dos*) and so on, commensurate with their achievements. The chanting–master and the disciplinarian may not force them to go hither and thither. The aforementioned monks, both *śrāmaṇera* and *bhikṣu*, who behave well, should get – in addition to general admiration – a seat and a table, even when they are young, and get a double share [of wages], the same as the chanting–master and the disciplinarian. With the monastery's monetary allowance they should be given rewards annually, taking into account their particular conduct.

6) The sixth point is that every three years each monastery of the old and the new schools needs to send two monks to Tibet to further their studies and learn by example. Up until their return they should be materially supported by the monastic administration.

¹⁰⁹ i.e. started one's own family.

7) The seventh point¹¹⁰ is that the monks who do whatever takes their fancy, without taking the responsibility to study for their own good, need to be made to do physical labour at the time when the monastery gets renovated inside and out. Also when improper things happen that are against the rule according to which the young listen to what the elders say,¹¹¹ such as when certain monks don lay-clothes which is not in accord with the Dharma, or when they smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol and get drunk, or when they, immorally and recklessly, sleep with unmarried women¹¹² who then have illegitimate children,¹¹³ then corporal punishments as stipulated in the monastic guidelines [should be applied] and then they will be struck from the monastic record, in order to serve as an example from then on.

8) The eighth point is that because the lama the tantric preceptor is the object of refuge in life and in death, he needs to have completed the three practices during the tantric retreats consisting of the inner outer and the secret mandala of one's own religious system. The chant master¹¹⁴ needs to [know] the original chanting-melodies without mixing up the order of the ritual practices. The disciplinarian needs to punish¹¹⁵ severely in accordance with the Dharma. The general treasurer needs to take care of the faithful benefactors and needs to make sure that what is given by donors – however big or small – does not get whittled away,¹¹⁶ but goes towards the intended object of the offering. The caretaker of the shrines¹¹⁷ needs to pay homage and lay out offerings with the utmost attention to cleanliness. By reflecting on the short and long term, according to the objectives of the monastic guidelines, it becomes obvious that when no one – old or young – anywhere and in any regard, is able to act as an example, which is to say someone who does not resort to destroying one's own discipline, and is thus in accord with the dharma, whether it is by means of one's movements, food, drink, dress, footwear and so on, then it is certain that this impure discipline will amount to a stream of polluted and bad habits. From this would follow, that there would then be a genuine instance of the teachings declining due to this stream. For that reason, in anticipation of what the future may bring, one can, by developing great care for the teachings, restore that which has deteriorated,¹¹⁸ and improve that which has not deteriorated. As stated above, it is absolutely unacceptable when people do not rely upon the unmistakable practices of moral behaviour, which have been recently introduced.

9) Point nine is that the yearly monetary allowance for the monastery, the tax-income from its monastic estates, as well as the income provided by donors in order to bring about merit for the dead and the living, and so on, need to be written in an account book, specifying what came from where, without it getting whittled away like before. This [resulting] amount,

¹¹⁰The text here has *bcu bdun pa* (seventeen), this must be a scribal error for *don bdun pa*.

¹¹¹It literally says, “not in accordance with the rule that [when] the elder speaks the younger listen” (*rgan lab gzhon nyan khrims mthun min par*).

¹¹²Literally ‘un-owned’ women (*bud med bdaq med*).

¹¹³*na le*, read: *nal le*.

¹¹⁴*dbu mdzad*.

¹¹⁵*khrims bcod*, read: *khrims gcod*.

¹¹⁶*thim zas med par*, read: *thim zad med par*.

¹¹⁷*dkor gnyer*, this is sometimes also spelt *dkon gnyer*.

¹¹⁸*nyams pa sor tshud*, read: *nyams pa sor chud*.

which is kept in the monastic administration, should be used to restore cracked and aging walls on the in- and outside and to restore the receptacles of body, speech and mind. Thus each year one needs to have a roster that shows who does the chores. On the tenth of the month and during rituals the butter lamp are to be filled. The trust funds¹¹⁹ for the scriptures and other works should be developed without ever letting them deteriorate, by which each and every religious festival can continue.

10) Point ten is that those who are appointed as monastery officials (*las sne*), being aware of the responsibility that befalls them and acting to the best of their abilities, need to prioritise the general good and therefore when standards have slipped, they need to carry out punishments after having investigated the case.

11) Point eleven is that when the chant-master, the disciplinarian or others, young or old, go somewhere for the welfare of other beings, they need to take the *kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, the *dad ldan sems kyi lcags kyu*, the biographies of *'das log karma dbang 'dzin* and *gling sa chos skyid*, etc. to congregations of the general public and in marketplaces, in order to promote the Dharma among the people, and explain all that they know on virtue and non-virtue and causes and effects.

12) Point twelve is that it is not allowed to keep horses, cattle, goats, sheep, chickens and pigs, etc. within the 'sealed' surroundings of the monastery, which is set off by forest.

13) Point thirteen is that it is not allowed for the various larger monasteries to make decisions on important issues without notifying me. From now on, there will be a yearly investigation into whether affairs are handled appropriately in accord with the above points. And when it turns out that the conditions have been met there will be rewards, if they have not been met, there will be a severe punishment that will not just be verbal. It will not, as previously, be left to the pretty hues of meager rhetoric: everyone – whether a chant-master, a disciplinarian or a teacher, young or old – needs to understand that [these issues] must be at all times put fully into practice.

I, bearing the incarnation title 'Srid skyong', have written this in the earth-bird year of the fifteenth cycle on an auspicious date.

The Christian year 1909, month X, day X.

Appendix II

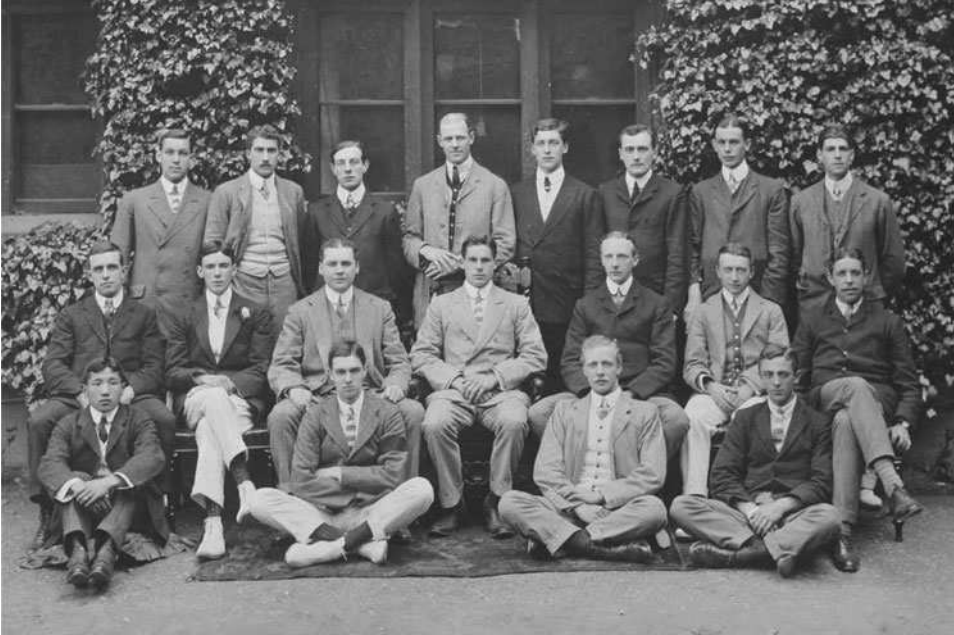
Transliteration

Oṃ svasti | | tshogs gnyis mthar phyin rnam 'dren rdzogs sangs rgyas | | 'gogs lam gnyis bden lung rtogs dam pa'i chos | | rig grol tshogs mchog 'phags pa rnam gsum pos | | gnas skabs kun tu shis pa'i dpal stsol zhig | zhes shis pa'i tshig gis lam dge bar byas nas | 'chad don ni | 'bras khul dgon sde che phra tshang ma nas sgrig lam rnam gzhag rnams yul lugs khams dbang bsam pa dang bstun spang blang rgyun khyong nyams su bstar rgyu'i bCa' yig mdor bsdu su bkod par | 'jig rten gyi khams 'dir gnas skabs dang mthar thug gi phan bde ma lus pa 'byung ba'i gzhi ni sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa kho nar rag las shing | bstan pa de yang

¹¹⁹ *thyor 'jags*, read: *sbyor 'jags*.

dge 'dun gyi sde rnams thugs mthun khrimts gtsang bslab pa phyug pa la rag las pa dang | des na {1} don dang po grwa chung sgrigs su bcug skabs kyang dgon pa de'i bla ma rdo rje slob dpon gyi drung du skra bcang nas sgrigs su bcug ste | de yang so thar (rigs) bdun gang yang rung ba (zhig gi) sgo nas bstan sgor ma (zhugs) na ston mchog shAkya'i rjes 'jug ma yin pa | de'i phyir so thar dge tshul slong gi bslab pa nod pa zhig ma byung ka dag yin pas | lha rab phyi dge tshul dge slong gi rten can du bsgrub nas | de'i steng nang byang sdom dang | gsang bsngags sdom sogs gsum ldan rdo rje 'dzin pa zhig byung na bstan pa'i mig rgyan du che ba zhig yin 'dug | ci ste yud khud chung zhing | mig 'dren ngan pa'i rkyen dbang gis so thar gyi sdom pa ji bzhin pa zhig ma byung na | mtha' ma'i tha mar bud med brten dgos byung na yang | skyabs 'gro'i sdom pa dang dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa tsam len te bud med de yang chos sgor bcug thog rnal 'byor pho mo ltar gsang stabs su brten pa'am de min spun zla'i chung ma dang sdebs nas sdod pa ma gtogs sger gyis ming btags byed nas gzhis 'khor bsten pa sogs dge 'dun gyi mtshan shas su 'gro rigs byed mi chog | yang grwa tshang rnams so so'i dge rgan nas lo 8 nas lo bco lnga'i bar ram | gang ltar lo 15 nang tshud dpe cha 'bri klog dang | sku rim smon lam (sogs) yongs (rdzogs) (rgyugs) skyel thub pa byed nas bslab dgos {2} don gnyis par lo 15 nas nyi shu tham pa'i bar gsar rnying (so so'i) rang (lugs) kyi chog phyag len gar thig dbyangs (gsum) bcas yong (rdzogs) slob sbyong (tshogs) (rgyugs) pher ba ma byung tshe mdun gral du (tshogs) mi chog | {3} don gsum pa gong gsal slob sbyong skabs dge rgan nas sngar lam ma yin pa'i sha tsha 'khur blang bsam pa che bskyed ngal dub dka' sdug la ma bltas par mthar thon bslab dgos dang | dge phrug nas kyang rang don bsam shes slob gnyer mthar phyin ma sbyangs bar dge rgan la lta log rgyal ral rigs byed pa dang | dge rgan nas kyang yon tan sbyang ma bcug par rtsa g.yog lta bu don med g.yog bskul 'ded mi chog | {4} don bzhi pa grwa bar gras rnams kyi rang lugs dkyil 'khor rnams kyi dbang lung khrid gsum zhus te | skyabs 'gro 'bum bzhi grangs (bsags) yi dam so so'i bsnyen sgrub tshad tu long pa bcas sngon 'gro dngos gzhi rjes gsum gyi nyams myong tshad ldan bla ma'i drung du (rgyugs) 'bul thub pa dgos rgyu dang | {5} don lnga pa grwa rig pa can shes rab rnon po yod pa rnams nas | rig gnas | yi ge dang | snyan ngag | sum rtags | rtsis dkar nag | lha sku bri bzo | spar brkos bzo rigs (sna tshogs) sogs pa yon tan slob sbyong bya rgyur lo re bzhin grwa brgyad re nas dbyar zla 3 | dgun zla 3 | bsdoms zla 6 re dgon pa rang du sdod nas gong gsal slob gnyer thar ma phyin bar sbyang brtson nan tan bya dgos dang | de bar spyi sa nas ja thug re chad med sprod dgos | de ltar slob sbyong gyi yon tan sne gcig yin kyang mthar phyin pa zhig grwa rgan gzhon su yi shes thub pa byung kyang de 'phral sngar lam ma yin pa'i go sa bdag rkyen dang | khral 'ul dos sogs yon tan dang bstun yang cha btang rgyu | dbu chos chos khrimts pa nas kyang phan tshun 'gro sdod sgrigs (rgyugs) bskul 'ded mi chog | yang gong gsal so thar gyi dge slong dang | dge tshul mthun byung na | spyir gzigs pa che ba'i khar | gdan dang ldog rtse 'phar kha | grwa gzhon gras yin kyang dbu chos dang 'dra mnyam gyi gnyis skal | | dgon pa'i dngul phogs thog nas lo re bzhin byed babs dang bstun gsol ras babs (gzigs) gnang rgyu | {6} don drug pa bka' gsar rnying gi dgon khag (so so) nas bod tu yon tan dang | mig ltos slob tu grwa gnyis re lo 3 re la grwa rgyun chad med btang dgos | grwa sa nas phyir log ma 'byor bar gtong byed spyi sa nas btang rgyu | {7} bcu bdun pa grwa (rigs) phal cher nas slob gnyer la rang don 'khur bsam med par snang chung rang snang gang shar byed mi'i (rigs) dgon pa'i phyi nang nyams gso byas skabs | sa las rdo las sogs g.yog byed tu bcug rgyu | yang grwa re gnyis nas chos tshul dang mi mthun pa'i skya chas 'grig pa dang | tha ma seg hreg 'thung ba | chang

'thung ra bzir | bag med 'chal 'chol bud med bdag med brten te na le skyes pa (sogs) dang |
 rgan lab gzhon nyan khirms mthun min par 'os min (rigs) byung tshe bCa' yig gzhir bzhag
 gi nyes pa lus steng dang | (sgrigs) nas phyir 'bud de phyin chad mig ltos phan pa byed rgyu
 | {8} don brgyad pa bla ma rdo rje slob dpon de bzhin shi gson gyi skyabs yul yin pas | rang
 (lugs) dkyil 'khor rnams kyi phyi nang gsang ba'i bsnyen sgrub las gsum mthar thon pa dang
 dbu mdzad nas kyang cho ga phyag len rnams gong 'og ma nor ba'i gdangs dbyangs khungs
 thub | chos khirms pas chos mthun gyi khirms bcod tsha non btang dgos | spyi gnyer nas
 dad sbyin khag la 'tsho skyong dang | yon bdag gi 'bul ba che phra ji byung thim zas med
 par mchod yul du 'gro ba byed dgos | dkor gnyer nas kyang phyag mchod la gtsang sbra
 gang che byed dgos bcas bCa' yig dgongs don ltar 'phral yun bsam shes thog | rgan gzhon
 tshang mas 'gro 'dug | bza' btung zhwa gos lham (sogs) gang sa spyi thad nas rang khirms
 rang gshig tu 'gro ma dgos pa chos tshul dang mthun pa'i mig ltos yar 'dren thub pa zhig ma
 byung tshe slad khirms lhadré chu ngan lam (zhugs) su 'gro nges bcas | de dbang btang tshe
 bstan par chu shor gyis nyams chag tu 'gro ba dngos dod la | de don rjes yong sngon dran
 bstan lar bsam pa che bskyed kyis nyams pa sor tshud | mi nyams gong 'phel du 'gro ched |
 gong don sngar lam ma yin pa'i spang blang 'dzol med lag len rgyud thog tu khel ba zhig ma
 byung tshe gtan nas mi 'thus pa dang | {9} don dgu par dgon par lo re bzhin (phogs) dngul
 dang | yang chos gzhis khral 'bab | phan tshun sbyin bdag nas shi gson dge sbyor (sogs) babs
 yong 'di nas 'di byung deb bkod thog sngar lam thim zas ma yin pa'i spyi thog tu bzhag nas
 ma rtsa bzos te phyi nang gad brdar dang | sku gsung thugs rten nyams gsor btang rgyu yin
 pa dang | de yang lo re bzhin las ka sne re mig ston byed rgyu yod pa dgos rgyu | tshes
 10 dang sgrub mchod mar me'i rkang | bka' bsgyur 'bum (sogs) kyi 'byor 'jags (rigs) nyams
 chag spu tsam med par bskyed thog nas dus mchod re re bzhin chad med dang | {10} don
 bcu par las sne ming (btags) 'gan phog (rigs) nas shes yong gang (bcogs) spyi don gtso bzung
 gis lhag bsam 'thus shor med pa ma byung tshe zhib 'jug gis bka' nyes btang rgyu | {11}
 don 11 pa dbu chos (sogs)grwa rgan gzhon su yin kyang phan tshun 'gro don (sogs) la 'gro
 skabs mi mang (tshogs) sa dang | khrom 'dus rnams su | mi rnams blo chos la bskul phyir |
 kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung | dad ldan sems kyi (lcags) kyu | 'das log karma dbang 'dzin |
 gling sa chos skyid (sogs) kyi rnam thar 'khur te dge sdir rgyu 'bras gang shes sgo nas tshang
 mar bshad dgos | {12} don (bcu gnyis) par dgon pa'i mtha' bskor rgya (nags) bcad pa'i nang
 tshud rta nor | ra lug | bya phag (sogs) gso mi chog | {13} don (bcu gsum pa) dgon sde
 che khag rigs gnas nas las don gal che'i (rigs) ngos la zhu bskor med par thag chod byed mi
 chog pa bcas | da phyin gong gsal bkod don rnams tshul mthun byed dang mi byed lo re
 bzhin blta (rtogs) kyi byung bar bdag rkyen dang | ma byung bar bka' nyes kha tsam min pa
 gtong rgyu las | sngar lam lta bu'i kha bshad skam po'i mdzes tshon tsam du bzhag rgyu ma
 yin pa de don dbu chos khrid rgan gzhon tshang mas dus kun nyams myong lag len du bstar
 rgyu yin pa go bar gyis | zhes ngos srid skyong sprul ming pas rab byung 15 sa bya zla tshes
 dge bar bris || ye shu'i 'das lo 1909 | zla ba rta rig la | <b.k.jansen@hum.leidenuniv.nl>



Sidkeong (bottom left) at matriculation in 1907 (By kind permission of the Master, Fellows and Scholars of Pembroke College, Oxford).



Sidkeong at a costumed ball (bottom right) in 1907 (By kind permission of the Master, Fellows and Scholars of Pembroke College, Oxford). He appears to be dressed as an ordinary Sikkimese citizen.



Sidkeong Tulku (middle) with Charles Bell (left) and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in Calcutta, 1910.

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