Trigrams and Tortoises
Sino-Tibetan Divination
Gary Dickinson & Steve Moore

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Front Cover: A thangka painting from the Dalai Lama's summer palace, the Norbu Lingka.
Back Cover: Nepalese tortoise-diagram thangka.

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TRIGRAMS AND TURTUGOISES

1. CROSSING CULTURAL BOUNDARIES: INTRODUCTION

1A: SALVAGING A TRADITION

As the 20th century approaches its end, it will be obvious to anyone with an interest in the Orient that the indigenous culture of Tibet, both religious and secular, is under very great pressure. Such a situation naturally arouses enormous sympathy and it's no surprise that the leaders of the Tibetan community, in attempting to preserve their native cultural heritage, have found fertile ground in foreign lands. There are times, indeed, when one is tempted to wonder whether, notwithstanding the situation in the Land of the Snows itself, the Tibetan diaspora might actually have brought about something of a renaissance as its culture takes root abroad.

If such a renaissance there be, it's quite natural that interest has concentrated mainly on the Buddhism of Tibet, its doctrines, literature and associated material culture. This is as true on the academic as on the popular level. Nonetheless, there are other aspects of Tibetan life and society which have not received the same attention, and it's one of those neglected areas that we hope to explore here: the fusion of Chinese divination methods with Tibetan culture, and the developments and transformations they subsequently underwent on the Roof of the World. Similarly, one suspects that scholars of Chinese divination have neglected Tibetan usages because they are often alien to the original, mainstream tradition.

In exploring this material, our intentions are two-fold. Having a particular interest in the I Ching or Book of Changes, we are fascinated by the spread and mutation of the Changes-tradition as introduced into another cultural milieu, and we trust that the interplay of such Sino-Tibetan divinatory material will prove equally absorbing to those approaching the subject from a similar viewpoint to our own. Besides this, we hope that this publication will bring a neglected subject to the attention of a wider audience: the audience which is currently showing such an extensive interest in Tibetan Buddhism and culture, but which seems, perhaps, less aware of the cross-cultural nuances of Oriental divination and its history.

Within the limits of a short treatment like this, however, we cannot cover the entire range of Tibetan divination; instead we shall concentrate on those elements deriving from the Chinese I Ching (Book of Changes) and its associated cosmology and apparatus. In particular we shall be looking at the use of the eight trigrams (Chinese: pa kwa, Tibetan: partha) and the magic square of three (Chinese: Lo shu, Tibetan: Mewa). In the Tibetan system, these are both generally subsumed under the rather vaguely-defined system of 'astrology' or tsi (rTsis).

If much of the following material should appear historical, it shouldn't be thought that Tibetan divination is a completely 'dead' subject; books by such authors as Namkhai Norbu and Tai Situpa (listed in the bibliography) show that we are still dealing with a living tradition, even if it is not at the forefront of attention. As Tai Situpa says, regarding astrology and geomancy:

These are practical sciences that utilize the elements and laws of nature to explain circumstances of life so that one can find the best way to adapt to these circumstances and derive benefit from them. [36:97]

This seems as fair a summary of a living tradition as one could hope to find. We hope that this work may make a small contribution to the continuation of that tradition; and that it may inspire others to take the subject further, particularly those with a greater facility in dealing with original Tibetan source material than we have.

In order to assist those taking the subject further we have, naturally, provided as full a set of references as possible for the material that follows. These references are given in bold brackets, thus: [1:23], referring to the first item in the bibliography, page 23.

We should gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Robert Beer, Mike Crowley, Edward Hacker and Mike Murray, who have provided us with reference material and clarification of a number of obscurities. Any faults that remain in what follows should, of course, be attributed to us, and not to them.

1B. THE TRANSLITERATION OF CHINESE AND TIBETAN WORDS

There are, naturally, always difficulties in providing comprehensible equivalents for the pronunciation of foreign words, and this is particularly the case with languages that do not use the roman alphabet. Chinese and Tibetan present particular difficulties here.

Over the years, there have been a number of systems of transliterating Chinese pronunciation, none of which are particularly satisfactory. Some of the research material we need to quote here is transliterated using an antiquated 19th century system. The Wade-Giles system, in use throughout most of the 20th century, is something of an improvement, while the modern pinyin system is confusing to the newcomer in that it uses roman letters to convey sounds which are quite unlike normal English speech: for example, qian is pronounced, in English, roughly as "che-en". Being probably the most comprehensible compromise, we have chosen to transliterate Chinese words into Wade-Giles here.

Tibetan, although written alphabetically, is actually far more difficult. The written language has remained largely unchanged since its invention in the 7th century CE, but pronunciation has changed enormously. The result is a number of silent letters which are not pronounced at all, and the complete change of sound for some other letters. We thus arrive at a situation where the pronunciation has diverged so far from the written word as to be virtually
unrecognisable. For example, *spu* is pronounced "fu", *phywa* is pronounced "cha", and so on. Most authors writing in English attempt to provide a more-easily pronounced phonetic equivalent, along with a literal spelling. We have attempted, where possible, to do the same, providing a literal spelling at first appearance and using the phonetic thereafter. Unfortunately, it has to be said that when it comes to the "easily-pronounced equivalent", there is little agreement between various authors, and this may show up, confusingly, in quoted passages.

When we have to deal with material where a Chinese text attempts to reproduce the pronunciation of Tibetan words, and vice-versa, before the original material is translated into English, the problem is compounded many times over. We can thus only beg our readers' patience and indulgence.

## 2. Parting the Mists of History: Introduction of the I Ching to Tibet

### 2A. Early Tibetan History

The origins of the Tibetan state are obscure and shrouded in legend, and Tibetan records of their own history before the 7th century CE appear to be unreliable, if not largely symbolic. The early Tibetan kings are said to have come from the sky, while their cultural origins and early influences are claimed to derive from various poorly-identified or legendary lands to the west, such as Shangshung (Zhang-zhung), said to lie in western Tibet, or Tazik (STag-gzigs), tentatively identified with Persia. However, academic opinion would generally seem to have it that they are descended from the nomadic tribes of Central Asia known to the Chinese from the 1st century BCE onwards as the Chi'ang, whom migrated into Tibet and founded the Yarlung dynasty [34:21] [37:5]. Tibetan tradition would have the Yarlung dynasty founded before the Common Era, but this is hardly verifiable.

Tibetan history, as anything like a veritable record, really only begins in the 7th century CE, with the reign, from 627-650, of King Songtsen Gampo (Srong-btsan sgam-po). It was during his reign that Buddhism was introduced, and that the Tibetan alphabet was invented by Thonmi Sambhota [35:52]. Songtsen Gampo also established political relations with China, then ruled by the Tang dynasty (618-906 CE), and one of his wives was the Chinese Princess Wen-ch'eng, to whom we shall return below.

Tibet grew to be a powerful state during the royal period, which finally ended in civil war about 842 [34:64]. During this time its relations with China were fraught, to put it mildly, and the two chapters on Tibetan history contained in the official History of the T'ang Dynasty (*T'ang Shu*) make sorry reading, being little more than a catalogue of treaties sworn and broken, raids made and heads taken, treachery, deceit and opportunism, with both the "civilised" Chinese and the "barbarian" Tibetans offending in equal degree [4:passim].

Nonetheless, there appears to have been a certain amount of cultural contact between the two countries at this period, and Snellgrove and Richardson go so far as to speculate on the possibility that during the early T'ang there may have been a few scholars of literary Chinese at the Tibetan court. They also go on to remark, however, that after the royal period "Chinese studies were never fostered in Tibet, and the Tibetans have remained to this day as ignorant of Chinese literature and philosophy as of Chinese historical records" [34:64]. This is undoubtedly overstating the case, although it's perhaps a reasonable inference based on the other evidence suggesting the T'ang period as the time when the I Ching arrived in Tibet.

However, there were later periods of more formal interaction between Tibet and China: in the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) and during the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911). In both these periods the foreign rulers of China adopted Tibetan/Lamaist Buddhism, and the cultural exchanges between the two countries were not limited to religious matters. Two 18th century lamas of the Gelugpa sect who interested themselves in the I Ching (Rolpai Dorje and Tu-wan) are discussed in more detail in Appendix One. Here we may also mention the 8th Tai Situpa, Choky Jungne (1700-1774), who, apart from establishing the famed Dege Printing Press, also travelled widely in China and composed numerous texts on astrology and medicine [36:xxii]. The interaction of Sino-Tibetan divination systems obviously remained a live tradition until a relatively recent date.

### 2B. Princesses Wen-ch'eng and Chin-ch'eng

Whether Wen-ch'eng actually took the I Ching with her when she departed for Tibet in 641 is perhaps a moot point. She is certainly credited with bringing some civilising influences to bear on her Tibetan husband and his court, and from the T'ang Shu we learn that "(Songtsen Gampo) sent the children of his chiefs and rich men to request admittance into the (Chinese) national schools to be taught the classics, and invited learned scholars from China to compose his official reports to the emperor" [4:445]. The "classics" would, of course, have included the I Ching.

Wen-ch'eng died in 680, but another Chinese princess, Chin-ch'eng, was married to the Tibetan king Tride Tskuksen (Khri-Ide-gtsug-brtsan) in 710. In 730 she sent a request back to her homeland for further copies of the Chinese classics (although the I Ching is not specifically mentioned in the list of titles given by the T'ang Shu). The T'ang Shu reproduces a memorial on the subject by Yu Hsu-lien, in which he argues, astonishingly, that the books should not be sent because of the risk that, by studying the books of the 'civilised' Chinese, the 'barbarians' might learn deceit and treachery [4:456-8, 467-8]. The books were sent nonetheless, and if we were looking for a specific period for the introduction of I Ching-related material to Tibet, it would seem most likely to be during the century between the marriage of Wen-ch'eng in 641, and the death of Chin-ch'eng in 741.
Thereafter the *T'ang* Shu records little but internecine warfare between the two states.

Tibetan works are more explicit on the subject, though being mostly written long after the events, are perhaps less reliable. The *Chronicle of dPa'-bo gTsung-lag phreng-ba*, written 1545-1565 and quoting the *Thang-yig chen-mo*, gives a stylised scheme of events in which Songtsen Gampo acquires 'treasures' from the great lands at the four points of the compass: "In the east, from China and Minyak, he took books of technology and of divinatory calculation (others say: medicine and calculations of the five elements)" [35:52]. There's an anachronism here, in that Minyak didn't, as such, exist at the time, being a name of the Tangut state of Hsi Hsia in the north, which first exerted its violent political influence around the beginning of the 11th century. Be this as it may, China is undoubtedly the most important of the two countries mentioned in this context, particularly when this is taken together with our next reference.

The *Dub-thah-selkyi-Melon* (*Grub-mthwa's-hel-ki-me-long*), written in the 18th century by Tu-wan Lob-zang Choe-chi Nyi-ma (Th'u-bkwan Blo-bzang chos-kyi-nyi-ma), states that "the earliest written encyclopedia of Astrology is the chief repository of Yeckyin (*I Ching*) ... The art of divination ... which was brought into Tibet during the reign of the Than (*T'ang*) dynasty was obtained from this great work" [6:102]. The same work also says that Princess Wen-ch'eng asked her father, the Emperor Tai-Tsung, for permission to take with her "several volumes of Buddhist scriptures, besides a few treatises on medicine and astrology" [6:221]. Further discussion of, extracts from, and material about the date of this important work of Tu-wan will be found in Appendix One. A modern work [44:206] enlarges further on the subject: Wen-ch'eng is said to have taken 360 works on divination with her, as well as numerous other useful books. One suspects this figure is largely symbolic, and tied in with the 360 days of the standardised lunar year.

Tatz [37:12] provides a succinct summary of the reception of Chinese divination methods in Tibet, which is worth quoting in full:

*The eighteenth century encyclopaedist Th'u-bkwan, himself influenced by the interpenetration of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism under the Ch'ing, refers to Srong-tzan as "an incarnation of Confucius in the spirit of Avalokiteshvara", mentioning astrology and divination as acquisitions from China in that king's era. One of the three major lines of Tibetan astrology, according to the classification of the fifth Dalai Lama, goes back to Confucius (*Tib. Kong-tse; Chin. K'ung-fu-tzu*) via Wen-ch'eng. Other works of this system were introduced by Kim-ch'eng (*Chin-ch'eng*) and translated by Vairocana, a disciple of Padmasambhava. They were diffused largely among the Bon-po, who absorbed the astrological deities into the cult of the sa-dag (*sa-bdag*). Buddhist tradition considers Confucius as an emanation of Manjushrasya. Bon beliefs, which could date back to the time of Wen-ch'eng, entitle the sage Kong-tse tr'ul-gyal (*Kong-tse 'phrul-rgyal*), "Confucius, king of miracles"—thus a mythical emperor, the inventor of divinatory and geomantic sciences and astrology. The calendrical cycle of animals on which the Tibetan chronicles are based was evidently taken from the Chinese, as was the very concept of historical records.*

One last piece of evidence for the introduction of the *I Ching* system is given by Laufer [20:589-591], who provides philological support for a *T'ang* date. The eight trigrams (*pa kua*) of the *I Ching* play a large part in Tibetan astrology, where they are known as *parkha* (*sPar kha*), and the Tibetan names of the individual trigrams are loan-words from the Chinese. Tibetan is an alphabetic language and, although pronunciation may have changed over the centuries, the spelling has remained the same as when the words were first transcribed. Thus comparison between the Tibetan spelling and the known pronunciation of a specific Chinese historical period allows us to date the first appearance of the words in Tibet. An example of this would be the name of the trigram *k'an*, pronounced in the *T'ang* dynasty as *k'am*; for which the Tibetan spelling is also *k'am*. Laufer remarks: "As the Tibetan transcriptions have partially preserved the ancient initial sonants and the ancient finals of Chinese, they are thus well attested as coming down from the *T'ang* period*. If the names of the trigrams were known in Tibet at this time it is, of course, obvious that the trigrams were known then also.

2C. TUNHUANG

From what has been said so far, it might be possible to get the impression that we are talking about a single book (the *I Ching*) being introduced into Tibet on a single occasion. Such an idea is potentially misleading. While the Tibetans of the early royal period may well have studied *T'ang* editions of the classics, including the *I Ching*, it's the surrounding apparatus of the *Changes*, such as the eight trigrams, the *Lo Shu* magic square of three and various calendrical elements which have been absorbed into the Tibetan astrological/divination system. Much of this material, of course, does not appear in the canonical *I Ching*, but would have been included in separate works. Besides this, the histories quoted above tend to concern themselves with larger political matters, rather than the everyday exchanges of information between working diviners. Such exchanges may well have been difficult across the borders of two warring states, but there is one area where we know that translation and cultural exchange between Chinese and Tibetans took place during the *T'ang* dynasty: the oasis of Tunhuang, in what is now the north-western province of Kansu, near the borders of Mongolia and Sinkiang. This was the location of the well-known library of manuscripts, hidden in the area's caves-temples about 1000 CE and plundered by the Englishman Sir Aurel Stein in 1907, and the Frenchman Paul Pelliot in 1908. The manuscripts, dating from 406 to 995 and mostly in Chinese, but including some in Sanskrit, Sogdian, Brahm and Tibetan, are now scattered between London, Paris, Japan and China [12:5-6] [39:236-8].
Tunhuang was established as a Han dynasty commandery in 111 CE, its first cave-temples being made in 353. In 781, after being cut off from the rest of China for ten years, it surrendered to the Tibetans, in whose hands it remained until 848 [39:250]. At around this period we know that translation work, both from Chinese to Tibetan and from Tibetan to Chinese, was being undertaken, and we know the name of at least one of those responsible [37:20-22]. The Buddhist monk Fa-ch'eng was born in 755, son of Wou Siu-che, one of the area's garrison commanders. He remained in the area throughout the Tibetan occupation, and his Buddhist learning was acknowledged by both the Chinese emperor and the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen (Khri-srong IDe-btsan). He died in 849, after translating numerous books to and from Chinese and Tibetan. These were mostly Buddhist works, but among those translated into Tibetan Tatz mentions "an astrological text, the basis of later systems" [37:22].

Besides this, among the Stein collection of Tunhuang material in the British Museum there is a very early printed calendar (document P.6) for the year 877 [12:45 & pl.VIII]. This calendar contains illustrations of the 12 cyclical animals, charts on which the trigrams are named (though not illustrated) and a number of numerical tables; the whole bearing at least a superficial resemblance to the large divination table discussed by Schlagintweit, which will be examined below.

Taken together, this material would appear to provide strong evidence for the introduction of the I Ching system into Tibet during the Tang dynasty. Our next task is to see what the Tibetans themselves have to say on the subject, within a Tibetan context.

3. Time and the Tortoise: Tibetan Ideas on the Origin of 'Astrology'

3a. The Two Astrologies

A Tibetan proverb quoted by Lama Chime Radha has it that 'cho (religious doctrine) came from India and tsi (astrology) from China' [26:7], and on the popular level of proverbial lore this would seem true enough: the overwhelming majority of the population are Buddhist, while the main elements of the various divinations clumped together under the name 'astrology' derive from China. Yet this is by no means the whole story, as Indian astrology was known in Tibet as well.

The two forms were distinguished by the Tibetans as 'white astrology' and 'black astrology'. There is no moral judgement involved in this distinction, as it simply derives from the Tibetan names for the two countries concerned. India was known as the 'vast white continent' because its inhabitants tend to wear white; China as the 'vast black continent' because its people wear dark clothes [13:164].

Indian astrology appears to have arrived in conjunction with the Kalachakra Tantra. Kalachakra means 'wheel of time', and this work is said to have been brought to India from the legendary Buddhist land of Shambhala in the 10th century CE. It was then translated and introduced into Tibet in 1027 CE, the pivot point from which the Tibetan calendar is calculated. Indian astrology has strong similarities to that of the West, in that it relies on calculations derived from the movements of the planets against the signs of a zodiac bearing strong similarities to that known in the West [28:passim], but the Tibetans regarded it as more complicated than the Chinese system and it was therefore less popular [13:164]. Those parts of the rather more calendrical and cyclical Chinese system which were integrated into Tibetan divination will be discussed in more detail below.

3b. A Buddhist View of the Introduction of Astrology

Both forms of astrology are mentioned in the epitomised biography of the Indian Buddhist Padma-Sambhava translated in Evans-Wentz [11:101-192], a text attributed to his disciple/consort Yeshe Tshogyal (757-817). Padma-Sambhava was invited to Tibet in 762 CE by king Trisong Detsen (Khri-srong IDe-btsan) [44:273] and was probably the major figure in the introduction of the religion, being widely regarded as a 'second Buddha' by the Tibetans. He is said to have studied astrology with a guru at Benares before leaving India for Tibet, and became known as 'The Astrologer of the Kalachakra' [11:122].

The same source contains a rather more interesting tale concerning Chinese astrology, however [11:134-136]. Yeshe Tshogyal's biography, being itself a terma (gter ma), a text that was said to have been hidden after its composition and only discovered at a later date, undoubtedly post-dates the introduction of the I Ching system from China, and thus, despite displaying a certain prejudice, appears to be here attempting to justify the inclusion of the Chinese-based 'astrological' system within a Tibetan Buddhist context.

Chinese divination is claimed as an invention of the Buddha, and is geographically connected with Wu-T'ai Shan, itself a Buddhist holy mountain, where the main temples are of the Tibetan/Lamaist lineage. In what follows, Wu-T'ai is said to be near the Sita-sara river, but here we seem to have a convergence of terrestrial and mythological geography. The Sita-sara ('River Sita') is the eastern branch of the 'Heavenly Ganges', which splits into four around the mythical central mountain, Mount Meru. We do not find Berthold Laufer's attempt to identify this celestial river with the terrestrial Tarim convincing [3:184]; even if there were anything to this, the Tarim is still a long way from Wu-T'ai. Given the context of the following story, however, such questions are none too relevant.

According to this tale:

Padma's next great guru was the Bodhisattva Manjushri, residing on the Five-Peaked Mountain [i.e., Wu-T'ai Shan], near the Sita-sara River, in the Shanhsi Province of China. Manjushri's origin, like that of Padma, was supernormal.

The Buddha once went to China to teach the Dharma, but instead of listening to Him the people
cursed Him. So He returned to Gridhrakuta, in India. Considering it to be useless to explain the higher truths to the Chinese, He decided to have introduced into China the conditional truths, along with astrology...

There follows a passage describing Manjushri's birth from a lotus blossom on Wu-T'ai Shan, and then:

From Manjushri's head there issued a golden tortoise. The tortoise entered the Sita-sara River, and from a bubble there came forth two white tortoises, male and female, which gave birth to five sorts of tortoises.

This reference to the tortoise would appear to be an aetiological explanation of the Tibetan tortoise-diagram, the Si-pa-Khor-lo (Srid-pa-Hkhor-lo), the astrological and divinatory chart which, as Evans-Wentz points out in a footnote, is "presided over by Manjushri transformed into a tortoise". This diagram, which will be discussed in greater detail below, contains the eight trigrams of the I Ching and the magic square of three, known to the Chinese as the Lo Shu. In the original Chinese tradition, both these items are said to have been found on the shell of a tortoise which emerged from the Lo River. The two white tortoises mentioned here, male and female, probably refer to the yang and yin, while the five sorts of tortoise to which they gave birth would appear to refer to the Chinese Five Elements. The passage continues:

At about this time the Lord Buddha emitted from the crown of His head a white light-ray which fell upon the Goddess of Victory. The Goddess went to Manjushri; and he, taking in his hand the golden tortoise, said, 'This is the great golden tortoise'. Then he instructed and initiated the Goddess in seven astrological systems; and she studied under him a total of 84,000 treatises. Of these, 21,000 treated of astrology as applied to living human beings, 21,000 of astrology as applied to the dead, 21,000 of astrology to marriage, and 21,000 of astrology as applied to land and agriculture.

These areas, life (birth), death, marriage and agriculture are among the main subjects to which divination is applied by the Tibetans. Funerals are arranged at auspicious times, and the circumstances of the dead person's future rebirth can also be predicted by astrology. The numbers of treatises mentioned are undoubtedly symbolic.

When these astrological teachings, known as the teachings which issued from the head of the most holy Manjushri, had spread all over the world, the people gave so much attention to them that the Dharma of the Lord Buddha was neglected. So Manjushri placed all the texts containing the teachings in a charmed copper box and hid it in a rock in the eastern side of the Five-Peaked Mountain. Deprived thus of astrological guidance, mankind suffered dire misfortunes: diseases, shortness of life, poverty, barrenness of cattle, and famine.

On the instructions of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, Padma-Sambhava then disguises himself as Brahma and goes to Manjushri, saying:

'Although not really a part of the Dharma of the Lord Buddha, astrology is, nevertheless, of vast benefit to worldly creatures. Therefore, I beg of thee to take out the hidden texts and instruct me in them.' And Manjushri took out the hidden texts and instructed and initiated Padma in all of them.

The titles of these astrological treatises then follow in the original Tibetan text but, unfortunately, they are omitted by Evans-Wentz.

A similar attempt to correlate Chinese divinatory lore with Tibetan thought appears to be behind a cosmogonic passage from the Vaidurya Karpo (Bai du rya dkar po), where the universe is said to originate from an eternal tortoise, whose rounded upper shell corresponds to Heaven and the trigram Khen (ch'ien), the flat lower shell to Earth and the trigram Khon (k'un). This passage is given in full, with commentary, in Appendix Two.

3G. BONPO TALES OF THE ORIGIN OF DIVINATION

Bon, the indigenous religion of Tibet, is traditionally said to have been founded by Shenrab Miwo (gShen-rab Mi-bo) a native of Shangshung whose date of birth is deduced (astrologically) by Namkhai Norbu to be 1917 BCE [25:156-158]. In the same way that the Buddhists have attempted to subsume Chinese divinatory theories to their own tradition, so the Bonpos (practitioners of Bon) have made attempts to include the same material within the historical scheme of Bon.

Namkhai Norbu, a scholar who would appear to take traditional writings rather more at face value than western scholars might, is probably the main modern exponent of this theory. Here is one of his early expressions on the subject [24:19-20]:

In the most widely known Tibetan histories, it is written that during the reign of King Srongtsen Gampo astrology was introduced in Tibet from China. As China is regarded [as] the source of astrology, it goes without saying that many principles of Chinese astrology did come into Tibet during the time of King Srongtsen Gampo. But according to the biographies of Shenrab Miwo, the Lord Shenrab had eight sons, of whom the youngest, Prince 'Phur-'bu-chung, introduced and spread the Tibetan astrological system.

Moreover, it is recorded in the Bon historical text Byams-ma, a hidden-treasure text [terma] believed to have been unearthed by Khro-tsong 'Brug-lha in the year 1500 after Buddha's death (956 A.D.), that "twelve rGyu Bon scholars lived during the reign of King Nyatri Tsenpo" [gNya'-khri bTsan-po, the first king of Tibet, said to have lived c.4th-2nd centuries BCE].

Among this list, number eight is Ko-'she Tsi-Khan (sKos-shes rTsis-mKhan), the "Astrologer who knows how to face all events". Norbu concludes:

From this text also we can learn that there was astrology in Tibet before the reign of King Srongtsen Gampo.
concerning the external condition, the method of calculating the ‘black and white’ mewa according to the Chinese astrological system. [25:152]

All these passages, both Buddhist and Bonpo, tend rather to suggest an attempt to justify the inclusion of imported foreign systems into a Tibetan context. A rather more startling example of this sort of inclusionism follows.

3D. CONFUCIUS IN TIBET

In Chinese tradition, Confucius is supposed to have written the commentaries on the I Ching known as the ‘Ten Wings’, although modern scholarly opinion would argue to the contrary. Indeed, Confucius seems to have had little interest in divination [22:41-42]. However, the Tibetan tradition shows a completely different picture.

The ultimate source of Bon is said to be the land of ‘Olmo lung ring, a country vaguely placed to the west of Tibet which has become highly mythicised and now corresponds in many ways to the similarly mythicised Buddhist land of Shambhala. There lies the palace where Shenrab Miwo was born, and in an ocean to the west of ‘Olmo lung ring is an island where "Kong tse 'Phurul gi rgyal po built his miraculous temple. According to tradition, he was a Chinese king and a follower of Shren rab mi bo. The temple became a very important place: it was there that the chief disciples of Shren rab mi bo gathered together all his teachings, wrote them down, and deposited them." [2:53]

As we've seen, this Kong tse, the "wise king" or "king of miracles", is none other than Confucius, or K'ung Fu Tzu. Norbu [25:151] gives a rather confused account, from the Zermig, of Kong tse's birth, in which we're told that he was the reincarnation of a virtuous king called Selchog Tampa, who was a great Bon practitioner. He was reborn as the son of a king in the western realm of 'Olmo lung ring, with thirty magic letters on his hands, and his father "called him Gya Kongtse Trulgyi Gyelpo, because he was a king (rgyal po) by the Gya race [Chinese] and because on his hands he had thirty magic letters (kong tse 'phurul yig) written in a circle." His project to build the temple, having its foundation in water, is beyond the power of human hands and, consulting his magic letters, he divines that it can only be built with the assistance of 100 demons. After considerable tribulations and the assistance of Shenrab, the temple is eventually built, and becomes the depository for Shenrab's teachings [19:33-34] [18:passim]. The story is told both in the Zermig, mentioned above, and the Zijid (gZi brjod), another biography of Shenrab that Norbu dates to the 14th century [25:289]. Kong tse is also said, directly, to be the inventor of divination [18:564]

This idea is further expanded in a passage from The Treasury of Good Sayings [17] a translation of Legs-bshad rin-po-che'i mdzod dpyod-lidan dga'-ba'i-char ('The Precious Treasury of Good sayings, pleasant rain for the wise'), written in 1922 by Tashi Jeltsen (bKra-shis rGyal-mtshan) (1859-1933). Here we're told:

In China first to appear was the science of the 'Astrological Calculation', etc. The Enlightened One,
sTon-pa gShen-rab Mi-bo, taught the science of the hundred and sixty six kinds of astrology to Phrul-bu-chung, the nephew of Kong-tse Phrul-gyal. He prophesied in the Dri-med that this science would appear in China in the future:

O you the master of purification, sPong-la gNnam-gshen,
In the East of Dzam-bu-ling,
In the capital of Ga-cu Gya,
Will be born as the magic king of Cu-tse,
And will replace the erroneous calculations
Arrived at by the demon king, 'Khor-ba,
Through the magic science of astrology. [17:23-24]

It will be noted here that 'Phrul-bu-chung has become a nephew of Confucius, rather than a son of Shenrab, as he was said to be in the previous section. One is also tempted to suggest, on the basis of the numerical symbolism we've already come across, that the "160" kinds of astrology should be corrected to "360".

Finally, in this section, we have the more considered view of the Tibetan scholar Kongtrul Yongten Gyatsu (1813-1899), whose Shes bya kun khyab is quoted by Norbu [25:152]:

The so-called 'astrology of the elements' (byung rtsis) or 'black astrology' (nag rtsis) originated in China. (In fact it is handed down that) Fu Hsi (Spa Hu Hshi Khdi), the first emperor, received the gift of a gold-coloured turtle from a subject who lived on the ocean coast, and when he observed and examined it for the first time he intuited the symbols of the eight parkha. On this basis he elaborated the astrological systems of the parkha and the mewa in relation to the cycle of years, which were subsequently further developed by other wise sovereigns and ministers (who were considered) emanations (of divine beings). In particular Confucius (Kong spu ts'i), an emanation of Mañjuśrī and known in Tibet as Kongtse Trulgyel, elaborated innumerable systems of astrological calculations and To rites, giving rise to a genre that has subsequently been greatly developed.

The To (gTo) rite is one eliminating disturbances and subjugating negative forces, with the aid of a protective deity [25:264]. The reference to Mañjuśrī may be compared to the passage quoted in the previous section, from the biography of Padma-Sambhava, and undoubtedly betrays Buddhist authorship here.

What are we to make of all this material about Confucius? The I Ching had long been a Confucian classic by the 7th century, with the authorship of the canonical commentaries, the Ten Wings, attributed to Confucius. One imagines that when the book was introduced into Tibet, along with its associated apparatus and cosmology, Confucius came along too, as part of the package. Although the dispository system became 'common property' for both Buddhists and Bonpos, the two religions appear to have integrated it in different ways. For the Buddhists, Confucius became an emanation of Mañjuśrī, the Bonpos, attempting to interpret his Chinese name (Kung Fu-tzu) in terms of Tibetan words (Kong tse 'phrul yig), invented an explanation centered on the "30 magic letters" and transformed him into a character who could be legitimately placed within their own system of religious myth. Both these notions would, of course, be quite alien to the Chinese tradition.

4. Within And Without Traditions: The Practice of Divination

4A. The Scope of Tibetan Divination

As will already be obvious, divination has a venerable history and wide variety in Tibet, some of it of native origin, some derived from neighbouring countries such as China and India. An idea of its scope can be obtained from the following passage, translated from the Chinese book Wei Ts'ang Fu-chih (Illustrated Record of U and Ts'ang [Tibet]), written in 1791 by Ma Shao-yin and Mei Hsi-sheng. The passage also gives some idea of the respect in which it was held, although this, of course, is couched in the rather grudging terms that the Chinese of the imperial age normally reserved for discussing the ways of the 'barbarians'.

Divination.—There are various modes of divining in use in Tibet. Sometimes the lama draws the eight kua [trigrams] accompanied by Tibetan characters, and divines by them. Or he will cast lots with barley-corns, divining from the difference in colour of those which he draws. Again, he may divine by counting on his prayer-beads, by lines (which the person inquiring) traces on the ground, by burning sheep's bones, or by gazing into a bowl of water.

Notwithstanding the variety of their methods of divination and their unskilfulness in their modes of examining, they are quite frequently surprisingly accurate.

There are women who understand these methods of divination. Still more, there are diviners who find out at once what is going to happen by examining their sacred books and predicting according to what they disclose to them. Explaining all about a person's luck by what the sacred books say is a process similar to the Chinese method shen chien. [27:235-236]

There are, besides these, numerous other methods, of which perhaps the best known in the west is that using dice. Divination by arrows, bootstraps, drums, dreams, pebbles, mirrors, butter-lamps and singing may also be mentioned (amongst others), as well as the consultation of mediumistic oracles and the seeking of visions in the surfaces of sacred lakes. A more general treatment of these varieties of divination may be found in the works listed in the bibliography by Ekvall [10:251-282], Goldberg and Rhada.

4B. Who were the Diviners?

As we've seen above (section 2b), Tatzi is of the opinion that, when Chinese divination methods were introduced
into Tibet, they were first taken up by the Bonpo, and there
is good evidence to show that this lore has continued
to play a large part in the Bon tradition. The first of the "Nine
Ways of Bon" is called "The Way of the Shen of Predic-
diction" (Phya gser theg pa) [33:24-41]. This, excerpted
from the Zijid (gZi-brjed), deals in summary form with
various predictive arts, including 'astrology', clairvoyance
and dream, medical divination and diagnosis, and so on.
Norbu [25:147-162], following a different classification,
includes "The Bon of Astrology" among the "Twelve
Lores of Bon". Both these collections of texts contain large
sections of material, such as that relating to the parkha
and mewa, which are of quite obvious Chinese derivation.

However, when we turn to other source material, such as
the works of Schlagintweit [31:156-158] and Waddell
[38:450-474], both of whom are largely dealing with the
Buddhist tradition, we find a completely different picture.
The divination systems are the same, but one could be
forgiven for thinking that the practice was entirely
Buddhist. These authors, rather than dealing with written
texts, offer descriptions of the practice of 19th century
Buddhist lamas and both, it has to be said, take a rather
cynical view of astrologer-lamas, accusing them of
chicanery and profiteering. There may, of course, be
something in this, but it has also been pointed out [26:7]
that anyone whose predictions were not subsequently
confirmed would rapidly lose both his reputation and his
income. Nonetheless, it would appear from these sources
that every monastery had its Tsi-pa (Tshe-pa) or
"astrologer-lama", and that these were regularly con-
sulted, both by clergy and public.

With the emphasis of recent interest being largely on the
religious culture of Tibet, it seems to be often forgotten
that there was actually a secular culture as well. As Rhada
points [26:7], "Members of the aristocracy and important
officials employed their own diviner-astrologers. Matters
of military strategy were also referred to astrology and
divination." Besides this, there also seem to have been
secular diviners or mopaas who made a living by divination
and astrology, and there was also the annual publication of
almanacs [26:6].

All in all, then, what we seem to have is a common
cultural heritage of astrology and divination which
underlies a broad spectrum of society: which is made use
of by both major religious traditions and by members of
the laiety besides. For all its apparent Chinese origin, this
is a tradition which has become modified and adapted by
the Tibetans, and deeply embedded in their culture. It is
now time to begin a more detailed survey of this tradition.

5. Cracking the Tortoiseshell: A Survey
of Sino-Tibetan Tortoise Diagrams

5A. Uncovering the Material
In 1855, Hermann Schlagintweit purchased in Darjeeling
a scroll of Tibetan astronomical diagrams. The scroll was
said to have originated in Lhasa [31:294]. With the
reluctant assistance of Chibu Lama, Hermann discovered
some of the scroll's uses. But it fell to his brother Emil,
with the aid of Lama Gombojew, to uncover its secrets.

The most fascinating aspects of the scroll are the
diagrams. The two most prominent of these are in the form
of a large tortoise bearing the eight trigrams of the I Ching,
numbers and other symbols on their shells. These magic
tortoises are by no means unique to this scroll. As we shall
see, similar tortoises appear on such diverse objects as
finely painted thangkas and crude block-printed illus-
trations. And, the trigrams virtually always appear in
conjunction with these tortoise diagrams.

The arrangement of the trigrams on these Tibetan
tortoise diagrams is problematic. In every case, the tri-
grams partially reproduce the so-called King Wen
arrangement, one of two important circular arrangements
in the I Ching tradition. But, also in every case, one or two
trigrams are transposed, and others are either duplicated
or are entirely absent.

It is difficult to account for these anomalies. We might
infer that the Tibetans were unaware of the significance of
either individual trigrams or of the King Wen arrange-
ment itself. Or it could be that the unfamiliar trigrams
were poorly reproduced by artists ignorant of their
significance.

As we shall see, the context in which the eight trigrams
appear strongly suggests that they were highly prized
and integrated into Tibetan thought and belief. Also, the
Tibetans practiced at least one divinatory technique based
solely on the trigrams; a practice that appears unique to
Tibet.

So, how did the Tibetans regard the eight trigrams and
what did they believe they represented? To answer this
question we must first look at the place that the eight
trigrams of the I Ching occupied in Tibetan religious
culture and note the various arrangements of the trigrams
that occur. And we can start in no better place than the
various representations of the tortoise in which the
trigrams appear. The various other symbols that occur in
these representations give us a context in which we may
gain an insight into the Tibetan understanding of the
trigrams.

5B. FIRST TORTOISE DIAGRAM
The first of the tortoise diagrams we will look at is
important for two reasons. First, it is one of the finest
representations of the tortoise that we have come across,
probably because it is a thangka painting from the summer
palace of the Dalai Lama at Norbu Lingka. This in itself
shows that the diagram, and therefore the trigrams, pene-
trated to the highest echelons of the Tibetan hierarchy.

This thangka painting, which is reproduced on our front
cover, is also important because it represents a standard
model of which almost all other tortoise diagrams are
elaborations. The symbols which appear in relation to the
tortoise and its trigrams are common to all other forms of
the diagram, whatever other devices are incorporated into

8
The principle figure on the Dalai Lama's thangka is the golden tortoise, depicted in the wrathful aspect of a protective deity, displaying fangs, round, glaring eyes and surrounded by a corona of flame. Gold and silver vajra, the thunderbolt symbols of power, protrude from the tortoise's head. The tail is also shown in vajra form. Snakes are entwined around the vajra symbols whilst the tortoise's stylised hands grasp skewered toads. In Chinese geomantic practice, the Black Tortoise or Dark Warrior, one of the symbolic animals representing the four cardinal points, is often shown entwined by a snake.

5b1. The Mewa
The tortoise's shell forms a type of mandala or sacred diagram. At the centre is a small circle divided into nine cells. In Tibetan this circular diagram is called the Mewa (Me-ba) or Nine Blotches. The term 'blotch' is more commonly used to describe a birth-mark or mole. From left to right, the upper row of cells are coloured green, purple and black. The middle row, blue, yellow and red. The three cells in the bottom row are all white. Each cell is inscribed with a numeral from 1 to 9. The numerals form an acrostic or 'magic' square:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
4 & 9 & 2 \\
3 & 5 & 7 \\
8 & 1 & 6 \\
\end{array}
\]

Figure 2: The Mewa or Nine Blotches
The total of any column, whether added vertically, horizontally or diagonally is 15. The base number of the square, 3, multiplied by the 5 at the centre also gives 15. Five multiplied by nine, the highest digit in the square, gives 45, the sum of the numbers of the square. Five is also halfway between the pairs of numbers either side of it. For example, 5 is 2 digits from both 3 and 7. And the positions of the even numbers within the square are determined by the addition of 5 to each of the odd numbers; i.e., 3 plus 5 equals 8 (tens are discounted for the purposes of this nonary system).

The earliest known description of this 'magic' square is found in the Ta-tai li-chi, a late Han period commentary on the Li-chi or Book of Rites ascribed to Tai-te, a ritualist and disciple of Hou Ts'ang (fl.70 BCE) [21:146]. Tradition associated the 'magic' square with the mysterious Lo-shu or Writing of the Lo River. The mythical Sage-Emperor Yu was believed to have received the Lo-shu on the shell of a tortoise that emerged from the River Lo. The legend of the tortoise is of considerable antiquity. In the Analects Confucius laments that 'the rivers give forth no more diagrams', and the Great Treatise appended to the I Ching mentions the Lo-shu. These ancient sources do not specify what the Lo-shu actually was. But, by the Han period it had become identified with the 'magic' square.

5b2. The Eight Trigrams
The Nine Palaces divinatory system was also partially based on the symbolic attributes of the eight trigrams of the I Ching. On our Tibetan tortoise diagrams, these three-line figures appear in a ring surrounding the central Mewa.

In the Chinese tradition, the Lo-shu was most closely associated with a circular configuration of the trigrams known as the Later Heaven or King Wen arrangement, after its supposed inventor. It is still used today in some methods of feng-shui based on the ancient Nine Palace system. And, indeed, the Tibetans at least partially reproduce this arrangement.

Comparison between the traditional King Wen arrangement and the order in which they appear on the thangka painting from the Dalai Lama's summer palace, reveals that up to four of the trigrams are transposed:

Figure 3: (Left): The King Wen arrangement. (Right): The Dalai Lama's thangka
The trigrams Li, K'un, Ch'ien and K'an are in the same positions as in the King Wen arrangement. Following normal practice and taking south at the top, Chen has been transposed from the east to the west, and is repeated in the south-east. Sun has been moved from the south-east to the north-west, transposed with Ken which itself has been repeated in the west, unless we read it as Chen. Tui, which appears in the west in the King Wen arrangement is absent, unless we read from the outer ring inwards, in which case Sun is missing.

5b3. The Five Elements & Twelve Animal Signs
Whatever the mysterious arrangements of the trigrams may signify (either error in their reproduction or some otherwise unknown divinatory practice), they are displayed on Tibetan tortoise diagrams surrounded by the 12 animal signs, matching those used in China.

The 12 animals are shown in their usual order and, on
the \textit{thangka} painting from the Dalai Lama's summer palace, are depicted in the colours of the Five Elements of Chinese cosmology: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. The theory of the Five Elements is traditionally attributed to Tsou Yen (c.350-270 BCE) and in China was applied to astrology, medicine, alchemy and even politics. The system of Five Elements with their colour, directional and seasonal correspondences, probably developed during the Han dynasty, was the basis of most of the Chinese esoteric arts adopted by Tibetans.

On the Dalai Lama's \textit{thangka} the Snake and Horse are shown as red, the colour of Fire, the Sheep in Earth yellow, the Monkey and Cockerel in the white of Metal, and the Dog is also yellow. The Pig and Rat, normally Water signs, are depicted in white, probably because black, normally the colour of the element Water, was either impracticable or considered inauspicious. The Ox is yellow, again the colour of Earth, the Tiger and Hare in bluish-green, the colours of Wood, and finally the Dragon in yellow.

The 12 animals themselves seem to have made their first appearance in Chinese horoscopes and other astrological diagrams during the T'ang period, although it has been suggested that prototypes of them can be found in the symbols attributed to the eight trigrams in the \textit{Shuo-kua or Discussion of the Trigrams} appended to the \textit{I Ching} [40:66]. Be that as it may, the 12 animals otherwise appear to be relatively late in date.

The 12 animal signs are best known as part of a system for designating the years of a 60-year cycle. Many readers will know that 1997 is a Year of the Ox. 1998 will be a Year of the Tiger, and so on. Fewer people will be aware that 1997 is, in Chinese astrology, more precisely the \textit{Ting-Ch'ou Year}. The two characters of the designation \textit{Ting-Ch'ou} represent one of the Ten Heavenly Stems in combination with one of the Twelve Earthly Branches. Although both of ancient origin, the names of the Ten Stems are recorded as calendrical terms on Shang oracle bones. They are now usually known by their elemental attributions. The Twelve Branches, however, are normally called after the 12 animal signs. The current 60-year cycle therefore commenced in 1984 with the \textit{Chia-Tzu Year}, known as the Wood-Rat Year. The current \textit{Ting-Ch'ou Year} is therefore the 14th in the cycle which ends in 2043 with the combination \textit{Kuei-Hai}, the Water-Pig Year.

The Tibetans appear to have adopted this system during the 11th century, counting the first year of their first sexagenary cycle from 1027, \textit{i.e.}, the year after the introduction of the \textit{Kalachakra} system into Tibet. The significance of \textit{Kalachakra} is described in some detail below. However, we should note that 1027 was in fact the first year of an Indian 60-year cycle, and not the Chinese one, which in fact commenced some two years earlier. The Tibetan and Chinese sexagenary cycles remained out of synchronisation until 1718, when the Manchu emperor K'iang-hsi invaded Tibet and decreed that the Tibetans should adopt the Chinese calendar.

This form of the golden tortoise with \textit{Mewa}, trigrams and animal symbols displayed on its shell is a 'standard' representation of the \textit{Lo-shu} in Tibetan iconography. And, as we shall see later, these symbols became the major elements of an elaborate divinatory system. However we should also look at the other figures and symbols displayed around the central figure of the tortoise on the Dalai Lama's \textit{thangka}. These give us an insight into the way in which the Tibetans integrated the symbols of the \textit{I Ching} tradition into their own culture.

5b4. Protective Deities

At the top of the \textit{thangka} painting are depicted three important Tibetan divinities. Slightly larger than the others, the orange-red bodhisattva in the centre is Mañjuśri, the embodiment of Wisdom. The tortoise itself is a 'wrathful' or protective emanation of Mañjuśri, who is depicted with usual attributes, raising a flaming sword with a book carried on the blue lotus from which he himself was born.

On the left is one of the most important Tibetan deities, Chen-re-zi or Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of Compassion. The Dalai Lama himself is believed by the Tibetans to be an incarnation of this bodhisattva. In China, Avalokiteśvara is known as Kuan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy. Here, the white bodhisattva is shown in a four-armed form that embodies the universal mantra \textit{Om mani padme hum}.

On the right is the bodhisattva Vajrapani in his wrathful aspect. Such black-skinned, ferocious figures are meant to be protectors and represent the power of the enlightened state to overcome the entanglements of existence. Many of these 'wrathful' deities are therefore depicted with necklaces of severed heads and sip blood from cups made from human skulls. Wrapped in a tiger's skin and surrounded by flame, Vajrapani wields the \textit{vajra} or thunderbolt symbol.

5b5. The All-Powerful Ten

In the top right-hand corner of the Dalai Lama's \textit{thangka} is a more familiar representation of the \textit{Mewa} or \textit{Lo-shu}, in square rather than circular form. In the top left-hand corner is the so-called \textit{namchu wangden} or All-Powerful Ten, the seal of the \textit{Kalachakra} tradition. The All-Powerful Ten is composed of ten characters which themselves represent the elements of the cosmos as enunciated in the \textit{Kalachakra Tantra}, woven into a mystical monogram in the colours of the Five Elements. It is regarded as a powerful talisman.

The presence of the All-Powerful Ten and important Tibetan deities on this and other tortoise diagrams is an indication of the place that symbols from the \textit{I Ching} tradition came to occupy in Tibetan Buddhism. The \textit{Kalachakra Tantra} is the basis of one of the most important schools in Tibetan mysticism. According to Tibetan tradition, the \textit{Kalachakra Tantra} was written by the Buddha during his earthly existence (6th century BCE) and then taken to the legendary kingdom of Shambala. Historically, the \textit{Kalachakra} was introduced into Tibet from India during the 11th century.

\textit{Kalachakra} literally means the Great Wheel of Time.
Unsurprisingly therefore, divinatory arts such as astrology are studied in the early stages of Kalachakra initiation. These arts chart, from the moment of birth to the hour of death, our uncertain progress through life burdened, in the Buddhist belief, with the karma of previous lives. By coming to understand the cycles and processes of the Great Wheel of Time, which form the basis of the astrologer’s calculations, it was hoped that the aspirant might transcend them, thus escaping from the bondage of countless births, deaths and re-births. Here perhaps we see why the Tibetans assimilated the symbols of the I Ching into one of their own most sacred traditions.

5B6. PROTECTIVE SIGILS

Either side of the main tortoise on the Dalai Lama’s thangka are columns of mysterious glyphs and symbols. According to tradition, these are the seals and signatures (sigils) of demon kings who protect the Golden Tortoise. Tibetan Buddhism was adept in ‘converting’ native and alien deities from opponents into protectors of the Dharma. Many of the more ferocious protective divinities that appear in Tibetan art may have originally belonged to the pre-Buddhist shamanic Bon tradition.

Although these columns of strange figures include highly stylised characters and hieroglyphs, they also appear to include several lineal figures similar to the trigrams and hexagrams of the I Ching. Some are three-lined, like the trigrams, but others are four-lined tetragrams and five-lined pentagrams.

Having given a description of the eight trigrams, Emil Schlagwortewert notes:

*Other types [of lineal figure] may be occasionally considered to be more useful, or more damaging to the influence of evil spirits; and famous astrologers do not unfrequently invent quite new ones [31:307-308]*

He goes on to give eight example tetragrams. These are reproduced at Table 1. The directional correspondences and designations of the tetragrams have been corrected to allow for the fact that Schlagwortewert persistently reads Tibetan diagrams in a European fashion, i.e., assumes that the top of the diagram points north. Both the Tibetans and Chinese show south at the top of their diagrams and maps. Schlagwortewert therefore succeeds in reversing the correspondences of the trigrams and tetragrams in his work. Having corrected his mistake, the mysterious tetragrams follow the King Wen arrangement of the trigrams.

5B7. THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

Below the tail of the Dalai Lama’s great Golden Tortoise are inscribed seven symbols which represent the days of the week. As in the Indian/European systems, each day of the Tibetan week is attributed to one of the seven planets of ancient Babylonian astrology. Sunday, as its name suggests, is the day of the Sun, shown as a small disc just below the vajra-tail of the tortoise. Monday, similarly, is the day of the Moon, a crescent. Tuesday is attributed to Mars and depicted as an angry red eye. Wednesday, the day of Mercury, is represented by the sign of a hand. Thursday, the day of Jupiter, is depicted as a phurba or magical dagger. Friday, day of Venus, is given as a symbol representing a girdle. Finally, the day of Saturn is shown as a bundle of stalks and the head of a bird.

5B8. PROTECTIVE DIAGRAMS

The smaller tortoise diagram at the bottom left of the thangka and the eight-petalled lotus diagram at the bottom right-hand side are both protective diagrams inscribed with mantras to ward off evil. In fact, this seems to have been the purpose of the thangka painting itself. It cannot have been used as a calendar or even as a practical astrological chart. It is too generalised for that. Rather the diagrams form a sort of mandala or universal scheme representing the elements of time and space.

5C. SECOND TORTOISE DIAGRAM

Tortoise diagrams, with their complex symbols, were apparently not only the preserve of important lamas who might have understood the principles of astrology. Our second diagram reveals the how widespread the use of pictures of the tortoise with its trigrams were in Tibet.

Plate 1 is a block-printed representation of the tortoise from Dolpo in north-western Nepal. Like other block-prints, this one was probably mass produced for popular use. Such prints were posted at the entrances to villages, on mountain passes or places of pilgrimage to ward off evil spirits.

Although relatively crude in comparison with the thangka painting from Norbu Lingka, these block-prints have a vitality often absent in more refined works of art.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Tibetan tetragrams</th>
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<tr>
<td>North</td>
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<td>water</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
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<td>fire</td>
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</tbody>
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Plate 1: Geomantic calendar charm in the form of a tortoise displaying the Mewa, eight trigrams, 12 animal signs, and decorated with the four guardian creatures. Woodblock from Dolpo, N.W. Nepal.
We see the tortoise with the *Mewa*, eight trigrams and 12 animals displayed on its shell, together with mantric formulae. In this particular instance the representation of the trigrams is particularly curious. The trigram *Ch'ien* appears no less than three times, *Chen* twice, whilst others are absent. But the most interesting features of the print are the four creatures that appear around the tortoise itself.

We noted above that, in Chinese geomancy, the tortoise represented the Dark Warrior, one of the four guardians of the cardinal points of the compass. The other guardians are the Blue/Green Dragon of the east, the White Tiger of the west and the Red Bird or Phoenix of the south.

These four fabulous creatures also occur in Tibetan geomancy, though their positions have shifted. In Tibet, the Tiger occupies the east, the Phoenix the west and the Dragon the south. The Tortoise remains in the north. Our Tibetan block-printed tortoise diagram shows three of these *Sung-zhi* (*stun-gbzhi*) or Four Protectors surrounding the central tortoise; the Dragon and Tiger in the top right- and left-hand corners, with the Phoenix in the lower right-hand corner. But it is interesting that the fourth creature is shown as a large toad.

The combination of the main tortoise figure with toad motifs, which appear to have also represented the northern guardian, together with snakes which occur in Chinese iconography, suggest that the Tibetan golden tortoise has incorporated some elements of the Dark Warrior.

**5D. Third Tortoise Diagram**

Our third tortoise diagram is taken from another *thangka* and has the same basic elements as that from Norbu Lingka, but it is a much more elaborate version. The *thangka* probably dates from the 19th or early 20th century.

The main tortoise diagram (Plate 2) has been reduced in proportion to the rest of the picture, occupying the lower half of the *thangka*. Whilst in most illustrations the tortoise is depicted with spots, they are more pronounced in this example. This tortoise is covered in the spots more characteristic of the toad. Rather than holding skewered toads, it is shown grasping gemstones. With black spots on a yellow background, this tortoise appears to show more evidence of combining in itself the attributes of the Dark Warrior of the North, which may be represented as a toad in Tibet.

The tortoise's orientation with regard to the cardinal points is also more explicitly depicted, with the flames of Fire emerging above its head and its tail immersed in Water, the tree symbol of Wood on the left-hand side and flaming sword of Manjusrī, presumably representing Metal, on the right.

The shell of this toad-like tortoise is decorated in an unusual way. The nine cells of the *Mewa* occupy the centre as always and they are surrounded by the eight trigrams. Again, we find an almost complete King Wen arrangement, but here Sun occupies the place of the absent Kan at the bottom of the diagram (north); Ch'ien in the southwest is repeated in the east, whilst Chen replaces Sun in the south-east.

The 12 animal signs are shown as twelve figures with winged bodies and the heads of the 12 animals. Finally, the outer ring of figures is decorated with 8 mysterious tetragrams. Some of these tetragrams appear to be included in the columns of glyphs either side of the tortoise and closely follow the figures on the *thangka* painting from Norbu Lingka.

The Dragon and the Tiger, two of the guardians of the cardinal points, occur in the top right- and bottom right-hand corners of the *thangka*. In the top left-hand corner is the Garuda, a winged bird-headed spirit. Though not often thought of as auspicious omen in Tibetan astrology, here it may stand for the Red Bird of the (in Tibet) west. Finally, the White Lion, symbol of Tibet itself, occupies the lower, left-hand corner of the painting.

**5D.1. Protective deities**

The All-Powerful Ten symbol of *Kalachakra* is prominent above the tortoise's head. The bodhisattvas at the top of the painting include Vajrapani, Manjusrī and Avalokitesvara, as in the *thangka* from Norbu Lingka. What appears to be the healing Medicine Buddha occupies pride of place in the centre of the protective deities.

There are, however, some nine other figures displayed around this *thangka* painting. On the left-hand side, just below Vajrapani, is an armour-clad 'wrathful' spirit engulfed in flame, raising a club. Below him is another warrior mounted on a horse, raising a whip in his left-hand and holding a Vase of Life in the right, and surrounded by clouds. Below him again is a Naga or dragon/snake spirit, also larked by flames. And, at the bottom-left of the tortoise, a tiger-headed figure rides upon a tiger beneath a tree.

On the right-hand side of the *thangka*, at the top, just below Avalokitesvara, is a figure with a nimbus holding a wand and a Vase of Life, seated on what could be either a toad or a leopard! Beneath this figure is another mounted warrior, surrounded by a corona of fire, carrying a banner and clutching a handful of jewels. Below him, in a plume of cloud, is a female figure with a tiger's head, riding upon a dark-blue deer (?) carrying a flag and holding a Vase of Life. Below this figure is a winged, animal-headed creature with hands in prayerful gesture, riding upon what appears to be a boar. This figure is lapped by deep-blue waves. Finally, at the bottom-right is a monkey (?)-headed winged creature mounted upon a monkey (?) sheltering beneath rocks.

In the Tibetan pantheon, the nine cells of the *Mewa* are each attributed a deity of a type known as a *Sa-dag*. These *Sa-dag* were a sort of *genii-locus* or spirit of a place. In the Chinese tradition, the nine squares of the *Lo-shu* were inhabited by stellar deities. The imperial cult of these star gods reached its peak during the Tang period. Nebesky-Wojkowitz [23:294-295], lists the names and attributes of the nine *Sa-dag* of the *Mewa* found in the *Vaidurya Karpo*, as shown in Table 2.

Comparison between the *Vaidurya Karpo*’s descriptions of the *Sa-dag* and the nine deities surrounding the tortoise diagram on this *thangka* reveal some similarities. One
Plate 2: Detail of a thangka painting with tortoise diagram displaying Mewa, trigrams, animal signs and tetragram figures. The All-Powerful Ten sigil and protective deities can be seen surrounding the tortoise.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Tibetan Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Rab Brtan Ma</td>
<td>White bodied female, white robed, lifts Mt. Sumeru with right-hand, holds vase of amrita in left-hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>b Dud kyi rgyal po</td>
<td>Male diety robed in black, holds magical notched stick in right-hand, left-hand throws snare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure</td>
<td>Sa bsen gdug byed</td>
<td>Dark-blue male diety, dressed in black. Right-hand holds rosary of children's skulls, left-hand a skull cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Lha mo dal byad</td>
<td>Green female horned diety, robed in green, lifts precious vessel in right-hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Sa dbag rgyal po 'jig rten dbag</td>
<td>Yellow male diety dressed in gold. Right-hand holds precious vessel, left-hand carries a trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>rGyal po skye 'gro'i dpal</td>
<td>White male diety, right-hand wields a club, left-hand carries 'precious banner of victory'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>bTsan damar chen po</td>
<td>Red male diety, robed in red carrying dice and a lance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Lha chen dbang phyg che</td>
<td>White male diety, carries trident in right-hand, holds skull cup full of blood in left-hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Ma mo dza mun ti</td>
<td>Dark-red female deity robed in red, right-hand holds sack of diseases, left-hand a coil of thread</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The Nine Sa-dag of the Mewa

wields a club, another carries a stick, another a flag, one brandishes a lance, and two carry the Precious Vessel containing amrta. The colours of the figures and their robes do not allow us to identify each, but taking these objects together with the fact that each seems connected to a particular element by virtue of the waves, flames, clouds, leaves or rocks that surround them, we may have an indication that these nine figures are forms of spirit associated with the squares of the Mewa.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz notes that the eight Trigrams also have Sa-dag attributed to them [23:295]. Waddell describes the Sa-dag of Kun and Ch'ien as female and male deities riding upon a ram and a dog respectively [38:484, 487]. The Sheep and Dog are the animal signs most closely related to these trigrams. The other six Sa-dag of the Par-kha may therefore have been represented in the same manner.

5D2. A Talisman

Whilst amulets and suchlike were minor elements of the thangka painting from Norbu Lingka, in this painting a talismanic diagram assumes similar proportions to the tortoise itself. Located above the tortoise's head and the seal of the All-Powerful Ten is a large circular talisman surrounded by flame. At its centre is an eight-petalled lotus blossoms. Each of its petals is decorated with a mystical letter. Five of these appear to repeat the larger glyph at the diagram's heart. These may be the parts of an eight-syllable mantra. Surrounding this mantric lotus is a circle containing the Eight Buddhist Emblems, a common set of auspicious symbols, interspersed with eight vajras. As we shall see shortly, 16 recurs throughout Tibetan divinatory diagrams and may therefore have been a significant number to the Tibetans. Encompassing this central device is a wide band in which is inscribed, with tiny golden Tibetan letters, what is probably a prayer for the protection of the deities dispersed around the thangka.

5E. FOURTH TORTOISE DIAGRAM

Our fourth Tibetan tortoise comes from the Lhasa scroll itself. At first sight Plate 3 is rather different from the types of diagram we have so far seen. Whilst the centre has a circular Mewa, there are no trigrams or animal signs. The tortoise itself is shown against a background of water, its shell resembling a spider's web divided into eight radial sections, each further subdivided into nine compartments by nine concentric rings. Each of the 72 compartments of this 'web' is inscribed with a Tibetan numeral. A final, outer tenth ring is divided into 64 cells.

The original diagram is very poorly reproduced and we are fortunate that Schlagentweit records in detail the numerals shown in each sector of the shell. The few legible figures on the original confirm that Schlagentweit's description is accurate. A restored version of the tortoise, based on Schlagentweit's description is shown at Figure 4.

Schlagentweit tells us that this diagram: is particularly used for calculating from the combination of planets with constellations at the time of one's birth, from the birth Meba, and other moments, which deity an individual man has to address as tutelary god in every year of the sixty years circle. [31:311]

In order to understand both the arrangement of the numbers on this tortoise and the usage described above we must first turn to a Chinese system of 'astrology' based on the Lo-shu in which the numbers migrate through the nine cells of the 'magic' square.

In this system, each number in turn occupies the central square of Lo-shu. In each case, the other eight numbers move to occupy the position held by the next higher digit in the sequence. For example, when the number 4 occupies
Plate 3: Detail from the Lhasa scroll showing dial-plate in the form of a tortoise with eight variant Mewa figures below.
so. The fang-shih, professional astrologers and diviners, may therefore have devised this system of theoretical 'stars' to pursue their trade. By the seventh century, when Chinese divinatory arts were being introduced into Tibet, use of this system of astrology had become widespread. Calendars found in the caves at Tunhuang contain examples of such 'magic' squares.

| 3 8 1 | 8 4 6 | 1 6 8 |
| 2 4 6 | 7 9 2 | 9 2 4 |
| 7 9 5 | 3 5 1 | 5 7 3 |

| 2 7 9 | 4 9 2 | 6 2 4 |
| 1 3 5 | 3 5 7 | 5 7 9 |
| 6 8 4 | 8 1 6 | 1 3 8 |

| 7 3 5 | 9 5 7 | 5 1 3 |
| 6 8 1 | 8 1 3 | 4 6 8 |
| 2 4 9 | 4 6 2 | 9 2 7 |

Figure 4: Tortoise dial-plate (see Plate 3)

the central cell of the Lo-shu, 5 moves from the centre to occupy the place of 6 in the north-western cell, 6 takes the place of 7 in west, 7 moves to the north-eastern position of 8 which itself goes to the southern house of 9 and so on.

Figure 5

In the Chinese tradition, the pathway along which the numbers migrate (here indicated by the arrow) is referred to as the Paces of Yu, after the journey through the nine provinces made by the legendary Sage-Emperor Yu who received the tortoise bearing the 'magic' square.

The occupation of the central square by each of the nine numbers creates eight variants of the Lo-shu based on the 'magic' square. And these eight variants are displayed on the Lhasa scroll as circular Mewa beneath the tortoise diagram under discussion.

Arranging these variants in accordance with the original position of the central number within the 'magic' square (at the centre) we have a master diagram of 81 cells, as shown in figure 6.

Several systems of Chinese divination are based on this diagram. Each of the numbers represents a so-called 'flying-star', and is designated by the element and colour of the number in the original 'magic' square. For example, the number 4 becomes the 4 Green Wood 'star' and its relative position within each of the variant Lo-shu will be interpreted as favourable or otherwise. More details of this system are given elsewhere in this paper.

The system itself probably developed in China during the Han period when the actual observation of the movements of the planets was regarded as strictly the prerogative of the imperial astronomers who calculated the calendar. It was a capital offence for anybody else to do

so. The fang-shih, professional astrologers and diviners, may therefore have devised this system of theoretical 'stars' to pursue their trade. By the seventh century, when Chinese divinatory arts were being introduced into Tibet, use of this system of astrology had become widespread. Calendars found in the caves at Tunhuang contain examples of such 'magic' squares.

| 3 8 1 | 8 4 6 | 1 6 8 |
| 2 4 6 | 7 9 2 | 9 2 4 |
| 7 9 5 | 3 5 1 | 5 7 3 |

| 2 7 9 | 4 9 2 | 6 2 4 |
| 1 3 5 | 3 5 7 | 5 7 9 |
| 6 8 4 | 8 1 6 | 1 3 8 |

| 7 3 5 | 9 5 7 | 5 1 3 |
| 6 8 1 | 8 1 3 | 4 6 8 |
| 2 4 9 | 4 6 2 | 9 2 7 |

Figure 6: The Master Square of 81

The cycle represented by the nine squares can be applied to a number of different time frames: years, months, days and even hours. The yearly cycle was the most important as this determined which of the nine 'stars' was designated as an individual's natal number. This natal number was the 'star' which occupied the central house of the Lo-shu in the year in which the person was born.

To return to our tortoise diagram, it will be noted that the central Mewa is the acrostic 'magic' square with 5 in the middle cell. The eight radial sectors are each inscribed with the numbers 1 to 9 in ascending order from the number it aligns with on the central Mewa. For example, the bottom sector of the diagram aligns with the number 1 in the central Mewa. Counting from the centre outwards, the first ring is inscribed 2, the second 3, the third 4 and so on up to the 8th ring, which is marked 9. Likewise the next sector clockwise aligns with the 8 of the central Mewa. Its first ring is inscribed 9, the second 1, the third 2, etc.

Each of the concentric rings of the diagram, which are divided into 8 sectors, therefore omits one digit in the 1-9 sequence. This is significant. An example will best serve to illustrate why. The innermost or first ring omits the number 6. If we now compare this ring of the tortoise diagram with the variant Lo-shu that has 6 at its centre, we see that the digits on the ring correspond exactly with the positions of the other eight numbers in the Lo-shu:

| 5 1 3 | 4 6 8 |
| 9 2 7 |

Figure 7

This particular tortoise diagram is therefore a type of dial-plate, not unlike the Chinese geomancer's compass or Lo-p'an. Having identified which particular number occupied the centre of the Mewa at the moment of
consultation and referring to the appropriate ring on the
dial, the disposition of the other eight digits could be seen
at a glance without having to refer to any other chart. A
useful little device, and one which appears uniquely
Tibetan. We have not seen any similar Chinese examples
of this diagram.

An outer tenth ring on this tortoise dial-plate is divided
into 64 small sections. Schlagentweit tells us that:

in 60 the names of the cyclic animals (byi, giang, &c.)
are written; the four remaining symbolical figures of
the four principal points of the compass occupy a
position as on our geographical maps...

[31:313]

Whilst this may well be the case, the number 64 is
significant in that it is the number of the hexagrams of the
I Ching. Although the trigrams are used extensively in
Tibetan divination, the hexagrams are noticeable by their
absence. The addition of only four of the Five Elements to
the 60 signs of the sexagenary cycle seems somewhat
artificial, whereas the 64 hexagrams would fit rather more
naturally with these other symbols of the I Ching tradition.

5F. Fifth Tortoise Diagram
The master diagram of 81 cells is the key to understanding
the next of our tortoise diagrams. Figure 8 comes from the
Lhasa scroll, but the same diagram is found in several
other sources. They include a modern thangka painting
from Nepal (see back cover), a block-printed picture and
an illustration of a soapstone carving exhibited by Babu
Saratchandra Das at the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1890
which was subsequently reproduced, in a 'corrected' form,
by Austine Waddell.

Although appearing in a disparate collection of sources,
the diagram is essentially the same in each. From this we
may conclude that this form of tortoise diagram was in
widespread use and the following description based on
these sources relatively faithful to the Tibetan tradition.

Perhaps the most important feature of this type of
diagram is that it in fact comprises two tortoises; a small
circular tortoise very similar to ones we have looked at
above set within a larger, square tortoise. Das explains
that the circular tortoise at the centre of the scheme

![Figure 8: Geomantic diagram from the Lhasa scroll in the form of a square tortoise displaying circular Mewa at its centre.](image-url)
represents the 'celestial' form of the creature [7:5]. From this we may assume that the larger square tortoise is its 'earthly' emanation. This would certainly agree with Chinese symbolism, which accords the circle to Heaven and the square to Earth.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 9: Geomantic Mewa diagram (see Figure 8)

Although perhaps not immediately apparent, the second important feature to note at this stage is that the square tortoise is itself in fact a large Mewa, divided into 8 smaller Mewa. The central cell of the large square Mewa is occupied by the small circular tortoise (A on Fig.9). This is surrounded by the familiar 12 animal signs of the Sino-Tibetan zodiac (1-12 on Fig.9). However, four additional 'signs' have been included at the cardinal points of the diagram.

Inserted at the top of the zodiac, between the signs of the Snake and Horse, is a small section in which are shown flames (13 on Fig.9). These represent the element Fire, which we have seen is traditionally associated with the south. At the bottom of the zodiac, between the signs of the Pig and Rat, another small section shows waves, symbolizing Water and the north (14 on Fig.9). On the left-hand side of the zodiac, between the signs of the Tiger and Rabbit, leaves or a tree are variously shown on the diagrams, indicating Wood and the east (15 on Fig.9). And finally, on the right, between the signs of the Monkey and Cockerel, a dorje or thunderbolt represents Metal and the west (16 on Fig.9).

It is interesting that on Das' illustration of his soapstone carving of this diagram (Figure 10), these 16 houses form a quite distinctive ring which in fact overlaps the cells of the outer Mewa. The increase in the number of mansions surrounding the central Mewa from 12 to 16 by the addition of four elemental signs may in itself be significant. A number of other Tibetan divinatory systems are based on a system of 16 houses. A table found on the Lhasa scroll shows 16 allegorical figures, for example a Lama with a yellow hat or a woman with hands raised in prayer. According to Schlagentweit, small pebbles or seeds were cast onto this table in order to foretell the outcome of sickness [31:313]. Besides, any complete system of tetragrams of the type we have seen on other tortoise diagrams would include 16 such figures. A system of 16 'houses' is not common in contemporary Chinese astrology, but it does occur in Islamic astrology.

The four sub-Mewa at the cardinal points on the square tortoise (B, C, D and E on Fig.9) are elongated into rectangles. The Mewa at the intervals between the cardinal points (F, G, H and I) are reduced in size to smaller squares. The central cells of each of these outer 8 Mewa are occupied by one of the Eight Trigrams.

We find here the closest Tibetan arrangement of the trigrams to that of King Wen. Reading the trigrams horizontally, i.e., assuming that the line closest to the top of the diagram is the top line, Li, K'un, Ch'ien, K'an, Ken and Sun all appear in their King Wen positions (i.e., south, south-west, north-west, north, north-east and south-east). It is only the two trigrams which appear to have been placed perpendicular in the east and west which are problematic. We can add Tui in the west, if we assume that the inner line is the top line; this would, however, be contrary to Chinese practice. In this case Sun would be repeated in the east.

Perhaps the most interesting features of this diagram, though, are the 8 small symbols that occupy various cells in each of the outer eight Mewa. These appear purely Tibetan in origin and occur in precisely the same positions in each of our examples of this type of tortoise diagram. We can therefore be reasonably certain that we have an accurate description of their arrangement and that that arrangement was significant.

Das gives us at least an outline of the significance of each of the eight symbols. He divides them equally into four auspicious and four inauspicious signs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auspicious signs</th>
<th>Inauspicious signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Symbol] The Swastika</td>
<td>![Symbol] Human limb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Symbol] The Jewel</td>
<td>![Symbol] Five Devils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Symbol] The Dorje</td>
<td>![Symbol] A Phurba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Symbol] The Endless Knot</td>
<td>![Symbol] A Wedge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The 8 Portents

Whereas the other seven symbols are the same in each of the outer Mewa, there are eight different human limbs. Also, the disposition of the different limbs in the diagram is interesting. Whilst each limb occupies a different cell in each of the outer Mewa, the head is in the southern (top) Mewa, the house of the trigram Li, the hands are in the south-eastern and south-western Mewa, the right and left breasts in the eastern and western Mewa respectively, and the feet in the north-eastern and north-western Mewa.

The part of the body shown in the bottom, northern Mewa is indistinguishable in Das' version of the diagram. However, the Nepalese thangka painting and the Lhasa scroll are more explicit. The house of the trigram K'an is shown as including the figure of a phallus.

If we now superimpose the relative positions of these limbs onto a simple Mewa, we see that their distribution resembles a prone human figure. According to Tibetan
legend, the Tang princess married to King Songtsen Gampo geomantically calculated that the land of Tibet took the form of a 'demoness fallen on her back.' She is said to have geomantically located the positions of several temples to literally pin the demoness down, with the great Jokhang temple in Lhasa over her heart (this material will be discussed in greater detail in section 9). The allocation of the various human limbs in this diagram therefore closely aligns with the position of the demoness in Tibetan geomancy. And it is to the geomantic tradition that we must turn for explanation of these symbols.

The apparent movement of the human limbs and the other symbols through each of the Mewa is itself intriguing. For example, the swastika symbol moves clockwise by a house in each of the Mewa, occupying the cell which would, in the 'magic' square, be the position of the trigram at the centre of the respective Mewa.

If we now superimpose these eight outer Mewa on the master diagram of 81 cells, we notice other curious patterns in the movement of the symbols, as shown in Fig. 11.

From this diagram we can see that the human limb appears to follow the migration of the number 1. In six out of eight cases it occupies the same cell as 1. Only in the northern (bottom-centre) and the north-western (bottom-right) Mewa does the sequence break down.

The Eternal Knot follows a more curious migration. In four cases it occupies the position of the number 8. The triangular wedge follows the motion of the number 3 in four cases. And the five dots representing the Five Devils who cause an 'untimely death' follows the migration of the number 4 in four out of the eight Mewa. The Swastika, as we have seen, migrates one house clockwise through the eight Mewa. The Phurba or magical dagger, the Dorje thunderbolt and the Flaming Pearl do not appear to follow
any apparently regular pattern.

The solution to the mysterious movements of these Tibetan symbols lies in a school of feng-shui based on the Lo-shu. In the diagram above (Fig. 11) the small letters in the right-hand corner of each cell of each Mewa represent the position in Chinese tradition of one of the so-called Seven Portents. These Portents, as their Chinese names suggest, are auspicious and inauspicious locations within each of the Lo-shu.

We find an almost exact match between the Seven Portents of feng-shui and the Tibetan symbols on our tortoise diagram:

Table 4: The Seven Portents
In Chinese feng-shui, the direction towards which the front-door of a house opens determines which of the eight variant Lo-shu is used as the 'plan' of the location. On our diagram, that position is marked with the letter a. For example, if the door to a house faced south-east, the top left-hand Lo-shu with 4 at the centre would be used as a 'map' of the favourable and unfavourable locations within the dwelling:

The south-eastern entrance to this dwelling is marked by the letter a and has no 'portent' attached to it. In the Tibetan system it is indicated by the Swastika. The favourable locations are Longevity (f), Vitality (e) and the Heavenly Doctor (d) which align with the eastern, northern and southern rooms. In the Tibetan system, these favourable locations are marked by the Flaming Pearl, the Dorje and Eternal Knot respectively. The most unfavourable locations are Severed Fate (g), Six Devils (h), Five Ghosts (h) and Accident & Mishap (c). These areas align with the north-eastern, western, south-western and north-west rooms. In the Tibetan system they are the Phurba, a human limb, five dots and triangle.

In the King Wen arrangement of the trigrams, the south-eastern Lo-shu corresponds to Sun, which is the secondary Wood trigram. With this in mind, if we then superimpose the King Wen arrangement on the Lo-shu with the number 4 at its centre, we find that the Longevity portent corresponds to the primary Wood trigram Chen in the east. Vitality corresponds to northern trigram Kan. This is a Water trigram and, in the cycle of the elements, Water 'gives birth to' or produces Wood. The third fortunate portent, Heavenly Doctor, corresponds to the Fire trigram Li. Wood itself 'gives birth to' or produces Fire.

We can therefore see that the three favourable portents in this particular Lo-shu correspond to the elements in a creative relationship with Wood.

The four unfavourable portents relate to trigrams which are in conflict or in a destructive relationship with the element governing this Lo-shu variant. The worst, Severed Fate, corresponds to the Earth trigram Ken. Wood 'overcomes' Earth, exhausting the source of its vitality. Similarly, the Earth trigram K'un corresponds to the portent Five Ghosts. The two Metal trigrams are also unfortunate locations as Metal destroys Wood.

The positions of the Tibetan symbols almost exactly match those of the Chinese portents in each of the eight
variant Lo-shu. The only exception is a relatively minor one. In the western (centre-right) Lo-shu, the positions of the Phurba, which otherwise represents Severed Fate, and the triangle, which usually stands for Accident & Mishap, are reversed.

Schlagentweit tells us that the square tortoise diagram and the relative positions of symbols:

...shows the region desired for a specific purpose, such as whither to direct the prayers and the Phurba in order to ward off successfully the demons, what direction a bridegroom or a warrior must take on leaving the house, &c. [31:308]

Clearly, the diagram had much the same geomantic and directional use in Tibet as it had in China. This and indeed all of the tortoise diagrams we have looked at can therefore be understood in terms of Chinese divinatory practices.

5G. Conclusion

In each of the tortoise diagrams we have surveyed, the eight trigrams appear in a variable order. In each some trigrams are absent and others are repeated. Those orders, to a greater or lesser degree, reproduce the King Wen arrangement. Can we now account for these variants in any more satisfactory way than merely assuming that the Tibetan arrangement is erroneous?

From the context in which the trigrams appear it seems obvious that the Tibetans invested these I Ching symbols with some significance. That significance seems to have been drawn primarily from their use in astrological and geomantic systems of Chinese origin, adapted by the Tibetans. Those astrological and divinatory systems were in turn largely based on the elemental attributions of the trigrams, the nine cells of the Mewa and the 12 animal signs.

Some common factors emerge when we consider the various Tibetan arrangements of the trigrams. Those figures which are irreversible usually appear in their correct King Wen positions. It is those trigrams which, when reversed, become other figures which appear 'out of place'. This is further complicated in that we are uncertain which way the Tibetans actually read their trigrams in a circular arrangement: from the inner line outwards or from the outer line inwards.

The three trigrams which most often appear out of the King Wen order are Chen in the east, Sun in the southeast, and Tui in the west, that is to say that the two Wood trigrams and the primary Metal trigram.

The symbolic attributes of the trigrams in the Tibetan tradition throws some light on this problem. The Great Tibetan Dictionary, the Tsig Zo Chenmo, gives us the Tibetan transliteration of the names of the trigrams and also glosses their symbolic attributes. Significantly, it gives both the names and symbols of the trigrams in the King Wen order; Li, K'un, Tui, Chi'en, K'an, Ken, Chen and Sun. This allows us to identify the individual symbolic meanings of the trigrams in Tibet, as in Table 5.

Seven of the eight trigrams have identical symbolic attributes to their Chinese counterparts. The trigram Zin, however, is glossed as 'meteoric iron' in The Great Tibetan Dictionary. In Chinese, the name of this trigram, Chen,
6. The Misfortune Account: Tibetan Horoscopes

6A. Sources and Attitudes
Over the last century, Western attitudes towards Tibet have changed beyond all recognition. The earliest travelers and scholars to study Tibetan culture and religion were almost all hostile to the customs and beliefs they encountered. The form of Buddhism practised in Tibet, with its extraordinarily rich iconography, was denigrated as demonolatry. Lamas were portrayed, for the most part, as preying on an ignorant and superstitious people. Today increasing numbers of Western people are spiritually drawn to Tibetan Buddhism and exiled Tibetan religious leaders have become the source of both inspiration and wisdom.

Those early Western scholars used astrology and divination as ammunition in their assaults on Tibetan 'superstition'. However, in doing so they bequeathed to us valuable accounts of Tibetan divinatory practice. These offer us an insight into the actual practice of Tibetan numerology, astrology and divination. Included amongst them is reference to a practice employing the eight trigrams of the I Ching possibly unique to the Tibetans.

In his The Buddhism of Tibet, Waddell includes sample horoscopes of a small Tibetan family for the Earth-Rat year of 1888. Described as a Misfortune Account, it reads like a balance sheet of the auspicious and inauspicious factors in the charts of the father, mother, daughter and son. Two elements of this horoscope are of interest to us here; the Parkha (trigram) and Mewa predictions.

6B. The Parkha or Eight Trigrams
In Tibet, the Parkha and Mewa systems appear to have developed as distinct, although obviously related, divinatory techniques. The examples of horoscopes reproduced by Waddell consider the Parkha quite separately from the Mewa. For example, in the case of the father of the family:

His Park'a for the year (1888) being khan [K'un] he cannot during the year excavate earth or remove stones. The Nagas and the Earth master-demons are opposed to him. He is especially liable to the diseases of stiffened joints and skin diseases. In the second month he is especially subject to danger. The N. and E. and S. directions are bad for him; he must not go there... [38:461-462]

Babu Saratchandra Das informs us how the year's Parkha is calculated:

A particular Parkha is supposed to belong to every individual in every particular year, which may be determined by counting, in rotation, from right to left, always beginning with the top Parkha called Li.

For instance a person aged 5, 13, 21, 29, 37 or 45 will have kham [K'an] for his parkha in the year 1890, another individual aged 4, 12, 20, 28, 36, 44, 52, will have khen [Ch'ien] for his parkha in the year 1890. [7:5]

In the first year of life, the person is therefore governed by the trigram Li, and moving clockwise around the King arrangement, the second year of life would be governed by the trigram K’un. We should be able to test this out. Das asserts that an individual aged 5 would have K’un as their annual trigram. K’an is indeed the fifth trigram of the King Wen arrangement counting clockwise from Li. Similarly, Ch’ien is the fourth trigram from Li clockwise, and Das tells us that an individual aged 4 years would have this figure as their annual trigram.

The individual whose horoscope was quoted above, had K’un as his Parkha for the year of the Earth-Rat, 1888. He was 26 years of age. Counting clockwise from Li, the 26th trigram is K’un, bearing out Das' methodology.

The predictions accompanying the horoscopes are also interesting. He was advised against excavation or quarrying. His annual trigram, K’un is not only associated with the element, but is itself a primary symbol of Earth. The spirits of the Earth are said to be opposed to him. Skin disorders are traditionally associated with K’un in the Chinese system. K’un is the second trigram in the cycle, which may account for the danger associated with the second month. The reasons as to why particular directions are inauspicious for him are unclear. They notably correspond with the locations of the trigrams of his wife and 2 children!

The wife's horoscope does not conform to Das' method of calculation. She was aged 29 in 1888 and her annual trigram is given as Li. If we follow Das, her annual Parkha should be Kham (K’an), diametrically opposite Li. However, the woman's forecast based on her annual trigram tends to confirm that it is indeed Li. She is advised:

not to try to build or repair a house or allow any marriage in her house or spill any water on the hearth. The devil-spirit of a dead person is offended with her. Headache and eyeache will occur; do not look at fresh meat or blood; the eighth month will be especially bad; must not go W. or N.W... [38:462]

The trigram Li is traditionally associated with Fire. As her husband was warned not to disturb the earth because of his annual trigram, she is told not to douse the hearth with water. The head, eyes in particular, and blood are all traditionally associated with Li.

In order to have Li as the annual trigram for her 29th year, the woman's yearly trigrams would in fact have to be counted off from K’an, not Li. As we shall see with the Mewa numbers, there are precedents for women calculating their horoscopes from a point opposite to those of men.

The daughter, aged 7, has Zin (Chen) as her annual trigram. Chen is in fact the 7th trigram clockwise from Li in the King Wen arrangement, supporting Das' methodology. In China Chen is a Wood trigram and stands in the east. Its Tibetan counterpart is given as 'meteoric iron' suggesting Metal, normally attributed to the west. The daughter's predictions indicate a Wood rather than a Metal trigram. She is advised that she must not damage
trees or handle carpenter's tools. This would appear to confirm her annual figure as the primary Wood trigram Chen in the East.

However, as in the case of her mother, if we counted from K'an rather than Li, we would need to count anticlockwise for the seven year-old girl to have Chen as her annual trigram. Obviously, we would need a third female horoscope to be sure, but it would therefore appear that women counted their trigrams anticlockwise, from K'an rather than Li.

The youngest member of the family, a son aged 5, has Kham (K'an) as his annual trigram. We have already seen that K'an is the fifth trigram clockwise from Li and he is told to avoid water, particularly large rivers or pools thought to be inhabited by water spirits. K'an is, of course, a Water trigram.

The practice of calculating annual trigrams by counting the number of years of life around the eight figures appears to be unique to Tibet. It does not occur in the modern Chinese system based on the Lo-shu. However, it relies, in part at least, on traditional Chinese symbols and may even preserve an earlier Chinese practice that has been lost in its native land.

6c. Elements & Signs
Having established the annual trigram, the Tibetan Misfortune Account now considers the relationships between the element and animal sign attributed to that Parkha and those of the year. 1888 was the Year of the Water-Pig. In the case of the father of the family, the 'conflict' of the elements reads: 38:460-461:

| Life     | XX, or worse |
| Body     | 00, or better |
| Power    | XXX, or worse than bad |
| Luck-horse | X, bad      |
| Intelligence | XX, worse |

We have already seen how the yearly trigram was arrived at. Yet how has the Earth-Sheep designation and the five predictions apparently derived from it been calculated?

In the Chinese system, the Mouse and the Tiger are Wood signs, the Snake and Horse are Fire signs, the Monkey and Cockerel are Metal signs and the Rat and Pig are Water signs. The Ox, Dragon, Sheep and Dog are all Earth signs. On Tibetan tortoise diagrams, the sign of the Sheep, an Earth sign, also aligns with the trigram K'un. The Earth-Sheep 'year' of the horoscope does not relate to a calendrical time period, such as the Earth-Sheep Year of 1859, but the sign aligned to the yearly trigram and its usual elemental designation.

In both Chinese and Tibetan practice, a whole science was based on the action of the Five Elements upon each other. For example, Fire overcomes or destroys Wood, producing or 'giving-birth' to Earth. Earth 'gives-birth' to Metal which, in turn, produces Water. Wood overcomes or absorbs Water but is also cut down by Metal and so on.

The Rat, a Water sign, is hostile to the Sheep, an Earth sign. 1888, the Earth-Rat Year, was not perhaps a very good year, particularly for the individual who had K'un (Earth-Sheep) as their annual trigram.

As for the individual predictions, Waddell indicates that an astrological table gave the elemental designations for each of the five areas of the prognostication (Life, Body, Power, Luck-Horse and Intelligence) in each of the 60 years of the cycle. The diviner would therefore have consulted the element of the 'Luck-Horse' during the Earth-Rat Year and established its relationship with the element of the 'Luck-Horse' during an Earth-Sheep Year, making a prediction on the outcome. Sadly, Waddell does not reproduce that table. However, from the diviner's notes we can say that, with the exception of Body, the elements of the two years were in conflict as the predictions are dire.

6d. The Nine Blots
We turn now to the Mewa or Nine Blots. Waddell's horoscopes give Mewa predictions in much the same way as for the annual trigram. For example, in the case of the father of the family we are told:

_His mewa is Dun-mar (= 7 reds): therefore the Tsen and Gyalpo demons give trouble. Dreams will be bad. The gods are displeased. Head, liver, and heart will give pain, and boils will ensue..._ [38:462]

Not a particularly pleasant prospect. And, according to her horoscope, his daughter aged 7 has a Mewa 'like her father's' [38:463]. Unfortunately, Waddell does not give us any detail of how the Tibetans calculated their Mewa horoscopes. However, we may be able to understand the process as the Chinese have a well-developed system of annual predictions based on the nine numbers of the Lo-shu.

The Tibetan Mewa and the Chinese Lo-shu are based on the 'magic square' of three:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Figure 13: The Lo-shu with King Wen arrangement of the Trigrams.

The eight outer chambers of this 'magic square' form a fixed house system similar to those of the Western horoscope. The significance of each of the eight houses is derived from the symbolic associations of the trigrams attributed to them. For example the 'house' associated with the trigram Sun at the south-eastern position of the King Wen arrangement represents intellectual activity and travel. The next 'house' clockwise is associated with the trigram Li and the south, and represents fame and public recognition.

The numbers of the 'magic square', like the planets of
the Western horoscope, migrate through these fixed houses in a regular order. Whereas the fixed houses are designated by their trigrammatic attributes, these migrating 'stars' are more commonly called after the colours and elements associated with the numbers themselves: for example, the 4 Green Wood 'star', or the 9 Purple Fire 'star'. Their symbolic meaning, however, once again derives from the trigrams associated with their positions in the 'magic square'. So, the 4 Green Wood 'star', which we have already noted corresponds to the trigram Sun, represents the mercurial activity of the intellect. The 9 Purple Fire 'star', corresponding to the trigram Li, has an extroverted, solar character. Again, not unlike Western astrology, the 'stars' represent factors at work in chart, the fixed houses where their influence will be felt.

Each 'star' in turn occupies the central chamber, and the others transit to the position held by the next higher digit in the sequence. For example, when the number 4 Green Wood 'star' occupies the central position, the 5 Yellow Earth 'star' moves from the centre to occupy the place of 6 in the north-western house of Ch'ien, the 6 White Metal 'star' takes the place of 7 in the western house of Tui, the 7 Red Metal 'star' moves to the north-eastern house of Ken, and so on. There are, therefore, nine variants of the 'magic square' in a complete cycle.

The cycle can be applied to a number of different time frames: years, months, days and even hours. The yearly cycle is the most important, however, as this will determine which of the nine 'stars' is designated as an individual's natal number, the 'star' of which will hold particular significance for them. The natal 'star' is the number which occupies the central 'house' of the 'magic square' in the year in which the person was born. It therefore functions in a similar way to either the ascendant or the zodiacal sign occupied by the sun in the Western natal horoscope.

In the Chinese system, interpretation of these charts proceeds on the basis of the combination of the trigrammatic and elementary symbols of each 'star' in a particular house. For example, a period during which the rather inauspicious 1 White Water 'star' occupies the House Li would not be fortunate, particularly for a person whose natal number was the 9 Purple Fire 'star', as the element Water overcomes or extinguishes Fire.

We know from the tortoise diagrams, described earlier in this paper, that the Tibetans not only had the classic form of the 'magic square', but used the variants of the Lo-shu. It therefore seems likely that the Tibetan system of annual Mewa predictions follows the same general principles as the Chinese nine 'star' astrology.

The horoscope reproduced by Waddell do not give us the natal numbers of these rather unfortunate people or the number of the year. We can attempt to calculate both.

According to the Chinese system, the annual number of the present year, 1997, is 3; i.e., the Lo-shu with 3 at its centre governs the Year of the Wood-Ox in the current 60-year cycle. The numbers of the years run in reverse sequence, so 1996 was a year, 1995 a 5 year, etc. The annual number of the Year of the Earth-Rat (1888) would therefore have been 4. The number of the year in which the father of the family was born (1863, the Year of the Water-Pig) and, according to Chinese calculation, his natal number, would have been 2. Compare his birth Mewa with the Mewa for 1888, the Year of the Earth Rat:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>168</th>
<th>381</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>924</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>573</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14: The Mewa for 1863 (left) & 1888 (right)

The man's natal 'star', the 2 Black Earth star, occupied, in the Chinese system, the eastern house of the Wood trigram Chen in 1888. There is a hostile relationship between the elements Wood and Earth. Wood overcomes, and exhausts, Earth. The liver is the major human organ attributed to the element Wood. Our calculation, according to the Chinese system, therefore partially supports the Tibetan diviner's forecast.

We may be able to find more information by looking at the daughter's forecast. She was 7 years old in 1888. According to her horoscope, she had the same Mewa prediction as her father. But, in this case, we must take account of the fact that the individual is female. Schlagewitz [31:310] records:

The higher mystical character of the rules concerning the distribution of the Mebas seems to be well illustrated by those respecting the influence of the sex upon the calculation; they are brought in the form of the verses, and run thus:

'The year of man must be counted by the sign of the heaven, turning like Bon,

'The year of women like the doctrine (chos)'.

It seems probable that the 'sign of heaven' referred to here is, in fact, the yllot cross or Svasti-ka (literally 'to make auspicious'). In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the swastika turns clockwise. In the pre-Buddhist Bon tradition, the swastika turns anti-clockwise. The annual number of a man is therefore counted anti-clockwise whilst that of a woman, clockwise.

We have already seen that, in the Chinese tradition, the annual number declines by a digit each year. And a man takes the annual number for the year of his birth as his natal number. However, the sequence of natal numbers for women is reversed. An example may clarify this. The annual number of the year of the Earth-Pig 1959 was 5. Boys born in this year therefore take 5 as their natal number. However, the natal number of girls born in that year is 1. The following year's annual number was 4, again this being the natal number of boys born in that year. Girls born in 1960, however, would have a natal number 2. Only in a year with the annual number 3, like 1961 and indeed the present year 1997, will both boys and girls born in that year have the same natal number.

We can therefore see that the natal numbers of men run backwards, i.e., 'anti-clockwise', whilst those of women run forwards or 'clockwise'. When considering the Tibet-
an system of annual trigram predictions, above, we also noted that women calculated their annual figure anti-
clockwise from a position opposite that of men, who counted their trigrams clockwise.

To return to the daughter of our subject, she was born in the year of the Water-Horse (1882) according to her
horoscope. By our (Chinese method of) calculation, the year of the girl's birth would have been 1. But, because of
the anti-clockwise female numbers, her natal number would be 5.

To add a further complication, although the natal numbers of women are calculated differently from those of
men, for the purposes of annual progressions the horo-
scopies of women in any particular year are based on the
male year number. So in our case, in 1888 the girl's natal
'star', the 5 Yellow Earth 'star' occupies the north-western
House of Ch'ien, attributed to the element Metal:

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
9 & 5 & 7 \\
8 & 1 & 3 \\
4 & 6 & 2 \\
\end{array} \]

Figure 15: The Mewa for 1882 (left) & 1888 (right)

In both the Tibetan and Chinese systems there is a
'maternal' relationship between the elements Earth and
Metal. Earth gives birth to Metal. And this is considered a
most favourable relationship.

There are common threads between the two horoscopes.
Both father and daughter have natal 'stars' connected with
the element Earth. His was the 2 Black-Earth 'star'
associated with the trigram K'un. She had the natal
number 5. This does not have a trigrammatic attribution
in the 'magic square' as it actually occupies the central cell.
In the Chinese system, therefore, men take the 'male'
Earth trigram Ken as their natal trigram and women the
'female' trigram K'un. Father and daughter not only had
the same element but the same natal trigram. It is difficult
to see, however, how the daughter could be described as
having the same Mewa as her father's in 1888.

The man's Mewa for the year is specifically described as
the Dun-mar or 'Seven Reds'. In the Chinese system, the
number 7 is called the 7 Red Metal 'star' and is associated
with the western house of the trigram Tui.

To have had the same annual Mewa in 1888 as her
father, the daughter should have the same natal 'star' as
him. Perhaps then the Tibetans numbered their years
differently from the Chinese. Given that he was born in
1863, and she in 1882, the only natal year they could
share in common is the 8 White Earth 'star'. If according to
Tibetan calculation, males born in 1863 and females born
in 1882 had a natal number of 8, then the Year of the
Earth-Rat (1888) would have had an annual number 1.
But, in such a year the 8 White Earth 'star', according to
Chinese attributions, occupies the Eastern house of Ch'en,
not Tui. And the 7 Red Metal 'star' occupies the south-
western house of K'un.

In fact, the only possible way that this man and his
daughter could share the house of the 7 Red Metal 'star'
during the Year of the Earth-Rat, would be not only if the
Tibetan number of the year were different from the
Chinese one, but perhaps more importantly, if they had
also transposed the 7 Red Metal 'star' from the West to the
East. As we have seen previously, the Tibetan arrange-
ment of the trigrams encounters problems in the eastern
house because Ch'en has become a Metal rather than a
Wood trigram. This would, of course, disrupt the numerological symbolism of the 'magic square'.

Unfortunately the Mewa horoscopes for the wife and
youngest child do not offer us any further clues. The
mother's chart concludes:

Her Mewa is 'something'; therefore will occur
sudden domestic quarrels of great seriousness, lying
reports of infidelity, also grief among relatives, and
dropsy... [38:462]

Waddell italicises the description of the Mewa as
'something'. As we have seen, the Mewa is usually referred
to by the number and colour of a 'star'. The fact that
Waddell puts 'something' in parenthesis may mean that he
was unable to read or translate the Tibetan script. It is
unlikely to be a literal translation of its title.

In the Chinese system her natal number would have
been the 1 White Water 'star' and natal trigram K'an. In
1888, her natal 'star' migrates to the south-western house
of K'un. The relationship between Water and Earth is
hostile. Interestingly, the trigram K'un is traditionally
associated with domesticity and the virtues of obedience.
Unfavourably aspected by her natal 'star', we can see why
domatic quarrels and accusations of infidelity might be
predicted.

On the other hand, if in Tibet 1863 and 1882 were Year
8 for males and females respectively, the mother's natal
number would have been 4. And, if 1888 were therefore a
1 year, her 4 Green Wood 'star' would occupy the north-
eastern house of the Earth trigram Ken. There is again a
conflict between these elements, but this interpretation
does not as readily yield her horoscope's predictions as
the Chinese calculation does.

Her 5 year-old son was born in the Year of the Wood-
Monkey (1884). His horoscope describes his Mewa as
ku-mar, which means 9 Red. The horoscope tells us that
'the Mamo and Tsan fiends are ill-disposed' towards him.
His natal 'star', according to Chinese calculation, would
have been 8 White Earth and his natal trigram Ken. In
1888, the 8 White Earth 'star' does in fact occupy the
southern house of Li, home of the Nine Purple Fire 'star'.
Fire and Earth are in a favourable relationship, which
might explain the brevity of the diviner's forecast.

This does not, however, confirm a calculation based on
the Chinese year number. In actual fact, if his father and
sister did indeed share 8 as their natal numbers, he would
have been born in a 5 year. Therefore, if the Tibetans
counted 1888 as a 1 year, his natal 5 Yellow Earth 'star'
would still occupy the House of Li, home of the 9 Purple
(RED) Fire 'star'.

In conclusion, we can see that the Tibetans used a
system of annual progressions based on the Mewa in much
the same way as the Chinese did and still do based on the
Lo-shu. These horoscopes show some evidence that the Tibetans calculated the number of the year differently from the Chinese, though they do not give us sufficient detail to be able to pin-point the numbering accurately.

These horoscopes make dismal reading. They calculate the 'conflict' between the Five Elements, the Eight Trigrams and the natal and annual Mewa, forecasting a year's misery for the unfortunate clients. There are remedies, however, prescribed for all these ills. To avert the danger threatened by his unfavourable combination of trigrams, the man is to read the 'Gy-tong-ba' section of the Prajna Paramita, offer 100 toras, a type of sacred cake, 100 lamps, 100 rice and 100 water offerings as well as light a lamp daily in worship.

Waddell sees all of this as a cynical attempt by the Lamas to exploit the superstitions of the Tibetan people. But, the Buddhist faith saw the daily round as the realm of Samsara, the realm of suffering into which the enlivened were condemned to countless re-births. It is not surprising therefore that the horoscopes are full of pessimistic forecasts of the many ills that the flesh is heir to.

6E. DEATH HOROSCOPES

The transitory nature of life is underlined by another type of horoscope which was also calculated using the eight trigrams, the Mewa, the 12 animal signs and their elemental attributions: the so-called death horoscope.

Because of the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation, the focus of Tibetan obsequies was not the body of the deceased and the honours paid to it, but the subsequent fate of the soul. The funeral was less important than the ceremonies aimed at releasing the soul of the deceased from the cycle of re-birth. There were, however, complex taboos surrounding the disposal of the body based on the circumstances of the death. These circumstances were determined by divination.

Again, we have Waddell to thank for preserving an example of a death horoscope. Rather poignantly, it is of a girl aged 2, who died in Darjeeling in 1890:

_Her Parka's being Dva in relation to her death, it is found that her spirit on quitting her body entered her loin girdle and a sword. [In this case the afflicted girdle was cast away and the sword was handed over to the Lama.] Her life was taken to the east by Tsan and king demons, and her body died in the west; therefore, small girls, cousins, sisters and brothers in that house will be harmed. The deceased's death was due to Iron. And the death-demon came from the south and has gone to the east._ [38:489]

We have no indication how the death trigram, Tui, was calculated. If it were her annual trigram, based on the rules outlined above, she would have been in her third rather than her second year; Tui is the third trigram anti-clockwise from K'un in the King Wen Arrangement.

It would seem, however, that in this instance Tui is in its correct King Wen position in the west. Her body is said to have died in the west and, interestingly, her life taken east, the opposite direction. The death is attributed to Iron. It is doubtful that this was the physical cause of death, but a reference to the element of the trigram Tui, Metal. And, among its many traditional attributes, Tui represents children and daughters in particular. The death demons are said to have come from the south, the direction of Fire which 'overcomes' Metal.

The horoscope also considers her Mewa:

_Her Mewa gives the "3rd Indigo blue". Thus it was the death-demon of the deceased's paternal grandfather and grandmother who caused her death; therefore take (1) a Sat-s'sa (a miniature earthen caitya), and (2) a sheep's head, and (3) earth from a variety of sites, and place these upon the body of the deceased, and this evil will be corrected._ [38:490]

Again, it is impossible to say whether this refers to the girl's annual figure, or one calculated for the day or even hour of her death. However, the number 3 is more traditionally associated with the 3 Green Wood 'star' and the eastern house of the trigram Chen, is aspected. This ties in with the diagnosis that her life was taken to the east. It is unclear why the spirits of the paternal grandparents were thought responsible for the girl's death, but this appears to reveal a layer of symbolism attributed to the trigrams not found elsewhere.

The remedies suggested all point to the element Earth: the soil from various sites and the sheep's head (the Sheep is an Earth sign). That part of the horoscope dealing with the disposal of the corpse confirms this:

_Those who remove the corpse must have been born in the Dog or the Dragon year. The body must be taken outside of the house on the morning of the third day following the death, and it must be carried to the south-west, and be buried (not burned, or abandoned to birds or dogs)._ [38:490]

The Dog and Dragon are both Earth signs. The south-west is the direction associated with the primary Earth trigram K'un. Finally, the body must be buried rather than the usual mode of exposing the corpse in some remote area to the ravages of birds and animals or cremation.

Earth is produced by Fire, the direction from which the death-dealing demons came. They were associated with the 3 Green Wood 'star'. Wood overcomes Earth but produces Fire. Earth also gives birth to Metal, the element associated with the deceased. Earth therefore completes a cycle between the elements involved: Wood gives birth to Fire, Fire gives birth to Earth, Earth gives birth to Metal, Metal finally overcomes Wood, the source of the misfortune.

6F. CONCLUSION

The horoscopes preserved by Waddell offer us an insight into the uses made of the eight trigrams of the I Ching and the ancient 'magic square' diagram in Tibet. Some of the more technical aspects of their calculation have yet to be fully unravelled. However, we can see that in two instances, the Tibetans used the symbols of the I Ching in ways uniquely Tibetan; the annual trigrams and the death horoscopes. The Parkha and Mewa were not, therefore, merely alien introductions but had been fully integrated into Tibetan culture.
7. The Great Plan: Tibetan Divinatory Cloths

7A. Cloths, Pebbles & Seeds
The 'body of a demoness' is an apt description of the magnificent but wild and unyielding landscape of Tibet, a landscape filled with seen and unseen dangers, both natural and supernatural. Existence was precarious in such an unrelentingly harsh environment. Divination flourished, and few of life's ordinary activities could be safely undertaken without its aid.

Most households would have possessed Mo-pe, manuals of the various popular forms of divination practiced in Tibet. But for important undertakings such as a long and dangerous journey or a marriage, the services of a professional diviner or a Lama would be resorted to. Various rituals would be prescribed to ensure the best chance of success. But, in such an avowedly Buddhist nation, it was not only the concerns of this life that were the subject of the divinatory arts. The actions of past lives which affected the present, and even the fortunes of future lives, could also be divined.

Austine Waddell has left us a description of a divinatory system to discover the quality of an individual’s future life. The various states of existence that the person might be reborn into were represented by squares painted upon a large cloth (Fig. 17). To which of these states one might attain, whether the paradise of the Buddha-to-come, the human or animal worlds, or the pit of some hell, was determined by the roll of a special six-sided dice. Made of wood from the bla tree sacred to Mañjusri, the patron of the divinatory arts, its six faces were inscribed with letters which referred to one or other the squares of the cloth.

Waddell states that the dice which accompanied his divinatory cloth were in fact loaded so that the unfortunate client was always doomed to a ghostly existence in the next life, unless of course they performed the many expensive rites prescribed to avert such an unfortunate rebirth [38:473].

Divinatory cloths appear to have been common in Tibetan divination. Seeds or pebbles were randomly cast onto their grids. The number or sign in the cell into which the seed or pebble fell was looked up in one or other Mo-pe. The Lhasa scroll collected by Hermann Schlagentweit in 1855 has an example of such a grid based on the Mewa.

Figure 16 shows the nine cells of the Mewa further subdivided into nine smaller sections. The central cell of each subdivision is inscribed with a short divinatory formula, whilst the eight radial sections are numbered with digits from one to nine.

According to Emil Schlagentweit this diagram was used to ascertain the favourability of proposed marriages:

This table is consulted by the parents of the young people to be married, who throw a sacred seed upon it; the inscription of the square upon which the seed rests, is taken as the general character of the answer as to the felicity of the ensuing marriage, but the

answer allows a variety of interpretations according to the Meba of the square, if the seed happens to rest upon a numeral and not upon the inscription. Also the elements under which they were born are taken into consideration. [31:316-317]

The use of coloured seeds or pebbles to produce random divinatory results was not confined to their being thrown onto divinatory cloths. Namkhai Norbu, a contemporary Bonpo or practitioner of the ancient pre-Buddhist Tibetan religion, gives us an account of another random divinatory system that used pebbles in conjunction with the Mewa:

In Tibet as a child I myself practiced this divination, and I clearly remember that the text I used to consult, and with which I had become quite familiar, had been edited by the great Buddhist master and scholar Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820-1892). [25:26]

Known as Deutral (rdel drug), literally 'six pebbles', here three black pebbles were rolled three times towards the left and then placed beneath the diviner's seat to remove negative influences. Forty-two crystal pebbles or beads were then randomly divided into three heaps, each of which were counted-off four at a time and the remainders noted in the top row of three cells in the Mewa grid. The procedure was repeated twice more until each of the nine cells of the Mewa contained a remainder of one, two or three.

The various combinations of remainders had specific divinatory meanings, from the 'miraculously' good Source of Existence to the terrible, demonic Black Gyalin. In the examples given by Namkhai Norbu, Mewa in which odd-numbered remainders predominate are considered favourable, whereas even-numbered results are unfavourable.

Although I Ching divination using coins does not seem to have been practiced in Tibet, the procedure outlined above is very similar to the Chinese practice of randomly dividing yarrow stalks and counting them off in groups of four stalks, constructing the divinatory figure from the remainders.

The author of this Deutral text is given as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, a student of the ninth Tai Situpa, Pema Nyinje Wangpo (1774-1853) [36:xxii]. He may well have derived this divinatory system from the Kagyu tradition which had important links with the Chinese court and may have been influential in the development of Chinese divinatory systems in Tibet.
The divinatory cloths, together with coloured seeds, were also used in the calculation of horoscopes by Tibetan astrologers. In a footnote [38:459-460], Waddell has left us an invaluable insight into this method which we reproduce here in full:

The astrologer's board consists of a large napkin on which are drawn squares and other necessary geomantic figures, all in a definite and convenient relation to each other. This napkin is spread on a table, and the calculations are made with coloured buttons as counters which are kept in a bag - the several elements having each a recognized colour: thus wood is green, fire is red, earth is yellow, iron is white, and water is blue. These counters are placed on the coloured squares as in a chess-board, and are moved according to rule, either transversely from right to left or vice versa, or longitudinally over the requisite numbers of squares. In the top row of the board are the sixty squares of the sixty-year cycle, all named and in the proper colour of their elements. And
the succeeding rows of squares are those of the Life, Body, Power, Luck, and Intelligence series, each with its appropriate series of coloured elements. The other divisions relate to the Parkhas [eight trigrams] and Mewas.

The calculations are made according to rule backwards or forwards a certain number of years in the row of the sixty-year cycle squares, and the secondary results come out of the vertical columns of the Life, Body, etc., series according to the conflict of their respective elements; the results being noted by white or black seeds or buttons, which have the following values:

The seven recognised degrees of affinity are expressed in the astrological accounts by the following signs of circles and crosses, and during the calculation the circles are represented by white buttons and the crosses by black buttons or seeds:

When the conflict of the elements comes out:

| Mother | i.e., the best degree = 000 |
| Friend | i.e., the better = 00 |
| Water + Water | i.e., a harmless mixture & ++ good = 0 |
| Earth + Earth | i.e., neutral = 0X |
| Son | Wood + Wood i.e., unmiscibility; |
| Fire + Fire | & ++ opposition & Iron + Iron |
| Enemy | i.e., worse = XX |
| Deadly hate | i.e., worst = XXX |

From Waddell's description we can clearly picture the process of casting a horoscope. To the anxious client the movement of the coloured markers over the squares of the cloth must have seemed very mysterious; one's life being played out as a game of chess by the Fates. It is a short step from the astrologer calculating the positions of the various counters to the Fates themselves determining where they should fall, literally in a game of chance. The astrologer's charts may therefore have been the origin of the divinatory cloths upon which stones and seeds were cast. Or, as seems more likely, astrologers adapted to their own uses an artefact commonly used in the divinatory process.

7B. OTHER USES

That the diagrams and charts drawn or painted upon these cloths were considered microcosms in themselves and held to have supernatural powers is revealed in another, derived ritual use of divinatory cloths.

Several examples of geometric cloths with designs based on astrological and other divinatory diagrams are represented in the exhibition of Tibetan textiles in conjunction with which this special edition of The Oracle has been written. That these geometric cloths were considered sacred objects by the Tibetans and had a religious rather than a purely decorative use is indicated by the red and yellow silk bands that frame a number of examples in this exhibition. Such bands are used to frame thankga paintings and represent the rainbow aura around a sacred image.

Perhaps the clearest example is a relatively simple, though none the less beautiful, square cloth composed of 18 triangular sections of Chinese damask. Seven different coloured silks have been employed, though interestingly, all have the same design woven into them: archaic, scrolling clouds.

The contrasting triangular sections are arranged in the form of the Mewa. The colours of the silks are subtler than those normally associated with tortoise diagrams containing the Mewa. However, the numbers of the Mewa were in fact used by thankga painters to indicate on an outline sketch the placement of the main colours of the finished picture. Here we find some variation in the correspondence between the pigments used by these artists and the hues used in astrological diagrams:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Astrological colour</th>
<th>Thanka colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White (dkor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black (nag)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jade-Green</td>
<td>Blue (mihing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Green (lijiang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Yellow (ser)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>ommitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Orange (li khri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Gold (gser)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Red (dnor)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: The Colours of the Mewa

The colours used in the textile under discussion confirm its identity with the Mewa. The colours selected match the colours of the Five Elements; the yellows and browns with Earth, the blues and greens with Wood, the red with Fire and the indigo with Water. Most distinctively, one half of three of its squares, arranged in a diagonal, are of white damask. There are three white, Metal squares in the Mewa.

The contrasting sections of each square are also of some interest. In each case there is a relationship between the two elements concerned. In the Chinese theory of the Five Elements, each element has a creative and destructive action. In this example we have pairings of Wood (blue and green) and Earth (yellow and brown); Wood overcomes Earth. The three white, Metal sections are also paired with green Wood sections; Metal overcomes, i.e., cuts, Wood. The two red, Fire sections are paired with yellow Earth sections; Fire is said to 'give birth' to Earth, i.e., produces ash, but Earth can also have a destructive action on Fire, by smothering it. Finally, the single, indigo Water section is also paired with a yellow Earth section; Earth overcomes or absorbs Water.

The majority of pairings of elemental colours in this example therefore could be seen as representing the destructive relationships between the Five Elements. Traditionally, the Lo-shu and the arrangement of the eight trigrams associated with it were thought to represent the destruction cycle of the elements [22:69-70].

We can also identify another, more complex geometric
textile with the *Mewa*. This particular example is composed of small squares and triangles of various different Chinese brocades and damasks. Again, all of the materials used reflect the colours of the Five Elements: red, blue and green, yellow, white and black. Inset at the centre of the textile is a circular piece from a fine, 18th century Chinese imperial throne cushion and smaller circular pieces from an embroidered, red Chinese textile at the four cardinal points.

The design of this piece forms a large *Mewa*. The central cell has the circular, yellow inset surrounded by 16 small squares of yellow and blue Chinese brocades. The four cells at the cardinal points are elongated into rectangles, while the longer sides bordering the large central square and the shorter sides forming an interface with the smaller squares are what we might describe as intermediate points of the compass. The double-bordier of triangular pieces that surround the red, embroidered circular insets at the centre of these rectangular cells themselves form 16 complete squares. The smaller cells at the corners of the *Mewa* are also here represented as 16 small squares of silk. Finally, the design is surrounded by a border composed of 48 squares, 12 along each side of the piece.

Both in form, and in the number of individual pieces of textile used, this second, more complex *Mewa* compares with the astro-geomantic tortoise diagram that appears on the Lhasa scroll (Fig. 8), in the Nepalese thanka painting (back cover) and on Das’ soapstone carving (Fig. 10).

In this diagram, the central cell of the *Mewa* is proportionally larger than the outer eight and has at its centre a smaller, circular tortoise displaying the nine numbers in the form of the ‘magic square’. The circular tortoise is represented on this textile by the inset of yellow silk. Yellow is the colour of Earth and associated with the centre. In the tortoise diagram, the circular tortoise is surrounded by the 12 animal signs.

In the tortoise diagram, the four cells at the cardinal points are elongated into rectangles and have at their centre one of the eight trigrams. In the textile, the pieces at the four cardinal points are similarly rectangular and their importance indicated by the insets of red, embroidered satin.

The four corner cells of the *Mewa* in our tortoise diagram, which correspond with the inter-cardinal points of the compass, are proportionally the smallest and are square. And again we find exactly the same relationship between the corner pieces of this textile and the other parts of the *Mewa*.

The number 16 recurs in the construction of the textile. The circular inset at the centre of the piece is surrounded by 16 small squares of brocade. In the tortoise diagram, the circular tortoise was surrounded by the 12 animal signs which also had four additional ‘houses’ inserted at the cardinal points, representing the elements Fire, Metal, Water and Wood. The circular tortoise is, therefore, bordered by 16 ‘houses’ and we find this directly translated onto the textile by the 16 small patches of brocade.

The rectangular sections of the textile are themselves each bordered by triangular pieces of brocade that form 16 complete squares. In his description of the soapstone carving of the tortoise diagram, Das explains that the 16 houses which form the ring around the central square of the figure, and the symbols that transit through them, held a particular significance for the Tibetans. This may be the reason why the number 16 recurs in the outer panels of the textile.

Finally, the whole textile is bordered with 48 squares of brocade, 12 along each side. This seems significant when we look at Das’ soapstone carving which shows the tortoise itself surrounded by a curious combination of the 12 Sino-Tibetan animal signs and the signs of the Indo-European zodiac.

We can therefore see that this elaborately constructed textile corresponds, both in the main elements of its design, their proportional relationship to each other, and in the numbers of individual pieces used to make it, with the astro-geomantic Tibetan tortoise diagram.

Other examples of geometric cloth have simpler designs consisting of a grid of quartered squares. The grids range in number and include 16 (4 x 4), 20 (4 x 5), 24 (6 x 4), 25 (5 x 5), and 28 (7 x 4) quartered squares. Their form closely resemble the divinatory cloths upon which seeds or stones were randomly cast. In several examples, the squares are quartered, probably representing the four cardinal directions. And in some cases, the number of squares in the grid can be related to known divinatory systems.

We have already noted the significance of the number 16 in Tibetan divination. Waddell tells us of a popular divinatory system employed a grid of 20 squares, one of which was further subdivided, used to consult the 21 forms of the goddess Tara [38:467]. The Lhasa scroll purchased by Hermann Schlagwort in 1855 shows a chart divided into 24 squares. A number of the squares of this chart show one of the 12 animal signs being ridden by three of the other signs, representing the interaction of the signs. Waddell also mentions that at least one form of divinatory cloth was based on a grid of 28 squares [38:468-470], although his example is circular. The number 28 was also important in both Chinese and Indian astrology, representing the 28 constellations or ‘mansions’ which marked the Moon’s passage across the sky.

What purpose could textiles with designs based on divinatory diagrams have served? The designs themselves are probably too imprecise to have been actually used for divinatory purposes, and the placement of particular colours or symbols within the examples exhibited here do not reveal any configurations which might have been considered particularly auspicious for the timing of the rituals, etc.

Another example in the collection may help us to answer this question. A five by five grid, composed of 25 squares of white, purple, yellow, blue, green and red damasks, this example is framed with an outer border of the classic yellow and red strips that adorn Tibetan *thangkas*.

Each of the squares has embroidered upon it, in a very fine chain stitch, an auspicious symbol: the Eight
Buddhist symbols and, unusually in Tibetan art, seven of the symbols of the Eight Taoist Immortals. At the centre of the design, circled with flame, are three jewels, a symbol common to both Buddhism and Taoism. The remaining squares are decorated with auspicious symbols drawn from the so-called Eight Precious Things which commonly adorn the wave borders of Chinese dragon robes.

The coloured materials selected to create this example again reflect the Five Elements, and the five by five grid may relate to tables consulted regarding the compatibility of the various combinations of the elements. It is, however, the arrangement of the coloured squares themselves which is most interesting.

At first glance, there is little order in the arrangement of the coloured squares. On further reflection the yellow and red squares form a large, equal-armed cross. With the four white squares at the corners, this cross suggests the form of the Mewa. However, when the mind's eye focusses on the four apparently irregularly placed purple squares, connecting the white corner squares to the arms of the central cross, the green and blue squares blend with the blue inner border into a background against which is displayed a large yinyang cross or Svasti-ka symbol. In Sanskrit, svasti means 'auspicious' and ka is the verb 'to make'; the symbol therefore indicates 'make auspicious'. The Svasti-ka is an important Buddhist symbol. In Tibet it represented centrality. Whilst the four arms 'spin' the central point remains fixed. In China, the Lo-shu diagram from which the Tibetan Mewa is derived was itself a symbol of centrality.

The effect is not unlike that of a gestalt image: once you have seen the outline of the Svasti-ka, you cannot now see the arrangement of the coloured squares in any other way. This may give a clue to its secret. The way in which the mind suddenly perceives the symbol emerging from the apparently random placement of the multi-coloured squares may have been intended as an analogy to the moment of enlightenment, when the aspirant finally sees through the web of attachments and realises the illusory nature of existence. Just as our perception of the textile is changed once we have seen the Svasti-ka symbol, so too the enlightened one is liberated from Samsara.

In the Tibetan tantric tradition, those who aspire to enlightenment practice visualising the pantheon of Buddhas, bodhisattvas and other deities that comprise the Buddhist pantheon. The practitioners identify themselves with a chosen deity. It is believed that they are thus creating with their mind the spiritual vehicle that they will use when they achieve liberation. Thangka paintings and other sacred icons are used to support this practice. They are also taught to view their environment in the form of a mandala, an elaborate mystic circle in which the deity dwells.

At some important ceremonies large mandalas are created from coloured sands. In fact, such a sand mandala is created during the Mani Rimdu festival documented by the film Lord of the Dance, in which a geometric cloth is displayed on the altar set before the presiding high lama. Among the sacred objects on this altar are specially made and consecrated pills which are given by the lamas to the people attending the ceremonies as a type of communion. The geometric cloth is then used to collect the coloured sands of the mandala at the end of the festival and transport them to a local stream in which they are dispersed.

Within the Kalachakra tradition, one of the most important 'schools' of Tibetan tantrism, the practitioner studies astrology and divination during the early stages of initiation. These divinatory arts are believed to be able to chart our uncertain way through life, burdened with the karma of previous lives, from the moment of our birth to the moment of our death. By understanding the cycles and processes which form the basis of the astrologer or diviner's calculations, it is hoped that the aspirant will be able to transcend them. The divinatory diagrams and charts themselves become almost square mandalas.

The geometric cloths based on divinatory diagrams may therefore have once had a important purpose. In the patchwork of silks, which at first overwhelm our senses with their various colours, we can perceive a map of the universe within which grinds the Wheel of Life, the succession of birth and death. At the moment in which we see the pattern emerge from their coloured squares, perhaps we come closer to that supreme realisation that liberates us from Samsara.

8. MANIPULATING THE UNIVERSE: AMULETS, MAGIC AND RITUAL

8A. CONTEXT AND CHINESE PARALLELS.

The parkha and Mewa are also used in amulets, magic, and ritual. Here it is not their philosophical overtones or use as elements in various divination systems which is important, but rather the inherent magical and numinous properties contained in the symbols. Similar usages may easily be found in the Chinese tradition, and perhaps the most familiar will be the use of the eight trigrams in a geomantic context where, usually surrounding a mirror, they are used to deflect the influences of 'bad feng-shui'. Similarly, the trigrams frequently appear in orthodox Taoist ritual, where ritual pacing based on the Mewa/Lo-shu magic square of three also appears, known by the name 'the paces of Yu'. Again, in the unorthodox Taoist sect of Mao Shan sorcery, both trigrams and Lo-shu are used in Five Thunder Magic. Details of such Taoist practices may be found in Saso [30:passim].

8B. PERSONAL AMULETS

In traditional Tibetan society, the carrying of amulets about the person was widespread, perhaps even universal. These came in a wide variety of forms and, similarly, served a wide variety of purposes: mostly protective, but also to obtain divine assistance in carrying through projects both religious and mundane, for medical reasons, and so on. Amulets were normally carried in specially-
designed boxes known as ga’u, usually shaped either like miniature shrines, or as cylinders. They were most frequently made of silver (occasionally of gold), often decorated with turquoise or coral, and were of considerable value. These ga’u, often contained in leather pouches, were worn attached to clothing, around the neck or in the hair, and early travellers in the area frequently remarked that, no matter how poor they might appear, "no Tibetan is ever without one of these". The contents of these boxes frequently included, besides the amulets to be discussed below, printed mantras (most often the well-known Om Mane Padme Hum), grains of sanctified wheat, small clay images, pills, and other such assorted religious miscellanies [32:vii-ix].

Figures 18-19 come from a ga’u obtained by W.E. Carte in Rampoer in 1838. This copper cylinder contained two narrow scrolls, one approximately 8½, the other 4½ feet long. For the most part these scrolls contained excerpts from Buddhist tantras, written in Tibetan, including the Kalachakra Tantra. This particular excerpt apparently also contained the personal astrological data of the ga’u’s bearer. The first scroll (Fig. 18) also includes, drawn in a delightfully naive style, pictures of Manjusri, a tortoise diagram bearing the Mewa and a version of the parkha which, perhaps because the emphasis here is on its prophylactic value, makes few concessions to the original arrangement; indeed, the (presumably intended) King Wen arrangement is barely detectable at all. This is followed by the animals of the calendrical 12-year cycle, the eight Buddhist emblems, the symbols of the days of the week, and so on. Figure 19 shows another tortoise diagram from the second scroll, which is accompanied by an extremely ill-drawn set of the 12 animals, some of which are barely comprehensible [Spaassin]. This, of course, is of little consequence in this context: it is the essentially numinous and protective qualities of the figures represented that is important, not their precision or artistic value.

Figure 18: Manjusri & tortoise diagram, from Carte’s first scroll

Figure 19: Tortoise diagram from Carte’s second scroll

Strong similarities to Carte’s amulets are to be found in material reproduced by Schlagentweit [31:pls. XIV-XVI]. These are prints taken from "slips of wood used in Tibet as a supposed protection against evil spirits", and an example is reproduced in Figure 20. These are, as it happens, from Sikkim, and the fact they are taken from wooden blocks no doubt adds to the crudity of execution. Yet once again we have a recognisable tortoise, bearing the Mewa, and a set of eight parkha, with the expected omissions and repetitions. Schlagentweit gives few details of the use of these wooden slips, but it seems likely that at least one of their uses is in the rite to "bar the door against the earth demons", to be discussed below.

The illustrations included among the material collected by Carte and Schlagentweit are undoubtedly representative of the sort of popular figurative representations to be obtained at local village level, but entirely more sophisticated collections of amulets are presented by Skorupski, who reproduces what are, effectively, entire ‘pattern-books’ of amulets. These are both terma texts included in the book Rin-ch'en gter-mdzod, compiled by the 19th century Buddhist Jamgon Lodro Taye (Jam-mgon blo-gros mtha'-yas). The first series of 109 amulets are entirely composed of written script, and may be passed over here; the second series, of 102 cakras, was apparently discovered in the red chorten at Samye monastery, contains much more illustrative material, and is firmly in the
Figure 20: Wooden slip from Sikkim, with trigrams, tortoise and Mewa

"astrophysical" tradition discussed throughout this paper.

Only one of these amulets contains the trigrams: No. 83 in the series, reproduced here as Figure 21 [32:107]. This appears in a series of "four cakras which prevent damages", and is described as having "the calendar chart laid out. It is worn when wishing to benefit all people."

Figure 21: Personal amulet (chakra) with trigrams, Mewa and names of the 12 animal signs.

Here we see that, while the Mewa are presented in the correct fashion, the parkha appear to have been inverted, with k'nan at the top and li at the bottom; although even when this is corrected, we have (not unexpectedly) serious departures from the King Wen arrangement. In the inner of the two circumferential rings appear the names of the animals representing the 12-year cycle, and the cakra thus contains the essential 'astrophysical' ingredients we have previously seen on the tortoise diagrams.

Also present in this series of cakras are amulets constructed using the Five Elements and the animals of the 12-year cycle, the purpose of which is specifically to counteract the evil influences inherent in the system, while promoting the good ones. The Elements are often signified by a sort of 'graphic shorthand': flames for fire, leaves for wood, and so forth; while the animals of the 12-year cycle appear as 'bearers' of written cakras in the same way that the tortoise supports the parkha and Mewa in the major tortoise diagrams. There are, besides, a number of tortoise-cakras, including a series of five related to the Five Elements [32:58-62]. Figure 22 reproduces one of these as an example, which is described as: "The cakra of the tortoise and the fire element. It is worn by those born in the horse and serpent years if harm is caused by the iron element." In the destruction cycle of the Five Elements, of course, Fire destroys Metal (Iron), which is no doubt the logic behind this and the other four elemental tortoise-cakras in the series.

Figure 22: Personal amulet (chakra) of fire tortoise

86. THE LARGE TORTOISE-DIAGRAM AS PROTECTIVE AMULET

The large tortoise diagrams that have already been previously discussed, besides containing compendia of astrological and divinatory symbolism, are also displayed as auspicious symbols, as amulets to ward off evil influences, and as symbols that attract prosperity. The
Plate 4: Tortoise diagram, with talismans. (Drawing by Robert Beer)
tortoise diagrams used for this purpose, particularly in an outdoor context, are woodblock prints such as those (Plate 1) reproduced by Douglas [9:166-168], but tortoise thangkas would also appear to be displayed in homes and religious buildings.

This practice would seem to extend throughout the area of Tibetan influence, as Douglas' examples are collected from Tibet, Dolpo and Nepal. They are used as prayer-flags and displayed at the entrances to villages, mountain passes and places of pilgrimage, and are believed to counter the malefic influences of the various planets, seasons, and all such influences relating to time.

As is usually the case, there are variations of detail between tortoise diagrams, but perhaps the most complete collection of amulet material that we have come across is contained in the superb drawing by Welsh artist Robert Beer [16:28]. This is reproduced, with his kind permission and our grateful thanks, as plate 4. Given its origin, it's perhaps unsurprising that this is the only example of a tortoise diagram that we have so far come across where the eight trigrams are arranged in the 'correct' King Wen arrangement. Here we have all the usual essentials: the tortoise, Mewa, parkha, animals of the 12-year cycle, symbols of the days of the week, and so on. We can also point out a few more specifically relevant details.

In the top row, above the tortoise's head and starting from the left, we have the Kalachakra talisman, the All-Powerful Ten, followed by the protectors of the three types of beings: Vajrapani, Manjushri and Avalokitesvara. In the top right corner is an amulet based on the Mewa, which provides "protection against the nine evils" and which includes the numbers of the Mewa as well as written texts; this amulet's origin is attributed to the famous early tantric, Padma-Sambhava.

To the sides of the tortoise itself we have the vertical columns containing the signatures of the demons, renouncing their evil powers, as is commonly seen on other tortoise diagrams.

Below the tortoise we have, at bottom left, another smaller tortoise, bearing the parkha. This is a talisman to dispel ignorance. The centre circle contains a collection of syllables. The inner circumferential circle (surrounding the parkha) contains the standard Buddhist dharami: "The Tathagata taught that all things originate from causes, and can be brought to cessation; thus spoke the Great Ascetic." The outer circle contains the phrase: "Om, hail to the great darkness of delusion", followed by the letters of the 'mystic' Sanskrit alphabet.

The usual symbols for the days of the week appear in the centre of the lower row, while to the right is a circular charm averting the possibility of obtaining bad results through divination. It's notable that on the Nepalese tortoise diagram reproduced here on the back cover, the eight lotus-petals and centre-circle of this charm are coloured according to the same scheme as the Mewa. This diagram thus adds specific prophylactic amulets related to the practice of divination to a compendium of divinatory symbols displayed for their auspiciousness. The elements of divination and protective amulet are here perfectly combined.

8D. Magic and Ritual

From the passive protection of the prophylactic amulet it is, of course, only a short step to more active magical practices. Among such rites are those connected with the local earth-spirits, the Sa-dag (sa-bdag) who appear to be closely connected with the parkha and Mewa, and who are easily offended if their territory is disturbed, or if inauspicious acts are carried out. The connection with the parkha may well relate to the King Wen trigrams' geographical and directional properties, making them particularly appropriate to spirits of place; and notions of territorial disturbance show similarities to well-known Chinese theories of feng-shui. The Sa-dag will also be vexed if births and deaths occur within a family at astrological periods considered inauspicious to them. The Bonpo rites designed to promote reconciliation with the Sa-dag are known as To, and include drawing a mandala on clean earth with five-coloured powders. These powders undoubtedly represent the Elements, and the 'divine palace' of the Sa-dag to be drawn as mandala consists of astrological elements familiar to us from the tortoise diagram: the parkha, the 12-year cycle, and the Mewa. Thereafter follow placatory offerings, mantras, chants, and so on. [25:130-132]

The Sa-dag are also involved in practices recorded by Waddell, who, it has to be said, is neither the most sympathetic nor the most well-informed of authorities. He details two rites for "barring the door against the earth-demons" and "closing the doors of the sky" [38:484-488]. Only the first of these concerns the Sa-dag, who are said by Waddell to all be under the authority of "Old mother Khon-ma". Her name derives from the Tibetan name of the trigram k'un, which represents both earth and mother, and Waddell continues: "She rides upon a ram, and is dressed in golden yellow robes, and her personal attendant is 'Sa-thel-nag-po'. In her hand she holds a golden noose, and her face contains eighty wrinkles."

In brief, the rite includes the construction of an elaborate 'thread-cross', surmounted on a downward-pointing ram's skull. On this skull are painted sun and moon, and the trigram k'un in yellow, the colour of the earth, while the threads of silk and wool are interwoven in open geometric patterns on masts above this. Along the base are inserted slips of wood bearing images representing the home and family, said by Waddell to be intended to deceive the demons, so that they will attack the images instead of the real occupants. On another slip are "figures of the geomantic signs eight Parkha and the nine Mewa." This sounds suspiciously like the sort of wooden slip mentioned by Schlagenweit and reproduced in figure 20.

The whole construction is placed over the door of the house, and the officiating Lama turns to the south-west (the direction of k'un in the King Wen arrangement) and offers a lengthy chant. In part, this is as follows:

Through the nine series of earths you are known as Old Mother Khon-ma, the mother of all the Sa-dag-po. You are the guardian of the earth's doors. The dainty things which you especially desire we herewith offer, namely, a white skull of a ram, on whose right
cheek the sun is shining like burnished gold, and on the left cheek the moon gleams dimly like a conch-shell. The forehead bears the sign of Khon, and the whole is adorned with every sort of silk, wool, and precious things, and it is also given the spell of Khon (here the Lama breathes upon it). All these good things are here offered to you, so please close the open doors of the earth to the family who here has offered you these things...

The petition continues with a series of specific requests for protection against harm when house-building, marrying, and so on.

The matching rite, "closing the doors of the sky", is addressed to the local demons of the sky, who are under the control of "the grandfather of the three worlds", known as "Old father Khon-pa". His name derives from Khon, the Tibetan word for Ch'ien, the trigram signifying heaven, sky, and father. The 'master' of the sky, he is represented as an old man with snow-white hair, dressed in white robes and riding on the white dog of the sky, carrying a crystal wand. White is the colour of the Element Metal, which is attributed to Ch'ien.

The ceremony is similar to the previous one, using a thread-cross which, in this case, is mounted on a dog's skull, pointing upwards. This is adorned with the trigram Ch'ien, painted in blue (presumably as the colour of the sky, rather than the Element, which for blue is Water). Waddell only gives the beginning of the invocation, which in this case seems to seek less for protection than for assistance:

O! O! We turn towards the western sun, to the celestial mansion where the sky is of turquoise, to the grandfather of the three worlds — Old Khon-pa, the master of the sky. Pray cause your signifying, the white Nam-tel, to work for our benefit, and send the great planet Pemba (Saturn) as a friendly messenger...

(etc.)

This is obviously a matching pair of rites, and we seem to have moved rather far from the I Ching: here the trigrams are mainly used as symbols for heaven and earth, although they obviously still carry the same numinous properties that we have seen throughout this exploration.

There is another practice, however, which involves all eight of the trigrams. This is the Bon rite of the ransom of the La, which is designed to recall the la or 'vital soul' of a person which may have weakened, become lost, or been abducted by spirits known as Don (gdon) [25:90-97]. Part of the preparation for the rite is to draw a human figure on a table or mat using coloured powders, and:

Around this one traces two concentric circles, the space between them divided into eight sections, the east corresponding to the wood element, the south to the fire element, the west to the metal element, the north to the water element and the four sections of the intermediate directions to the earth element. Since they represent the places of the parkha trigrams, they should be coloured according to the astrological system (of the elements), that is green, red, white, blue and yellow respectively for the wood, fire, metal, water and earth elements. [25:91]

Here, the cardinal directions are correlated with the elements in the orthodox Chinese fashion, which also ties in with the elemental designations of the trigrams in these positions; the intermediate directions, however, are all given over to Earth. One gets the impression that the colouring system here is based primarily on a Five-Element scheme; the trigrams being given secondary importance. The instructions for this rite continue with an immensely complicated list of offerings, effigies, mantras, etc., which would take us rather far from our central concerns. It seems likely that the parkha, elements and directions are being used to 'ground' the rite, placing it firmly within a symbolic cosmology.

It appears to be obvious that in all these rites it is the numinous and symbolic qualities of the trigrams and Mewa that are important, and that no operative or divinatory functions are present. There are similarities here to their appearance in amulets. In such circumstances, of course, it is hardly surprising that the change of emphasis may have led to what appear to be 'mistakes' of position or duplication of trigrams.

Undoubtedly the material collected here barely scratches the surface of the ritual characteristics of the trigrams in Tibet. One suspects that, given further research, particularly into the more popular customs and religion, other similar usages derived from the I Ching could be discovered.

9. PINNING THE DEMONESS: WEN-CH'ENG AND GEOMANCY

9a. Geomancy (Feng-shui) in China.

As we've already seen, Princess Wen-ch'eng has been credited with the introduction of I Ching-related divination into Tibet; but she is also said to have brought a second, related strand of Chinese divination with her. This is a form of feng-shui, or geomancy. In Tibet, the art is known as sache, or 'earth observation' [36:108].

In spite of the pretensions of some modern practitioners of Chinese feng-shui that their art is of enormous antiquity, the systematised, compass-using geomancy which has recently become so popular in Europe and America only developed in the Sung (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. However, there is ample evidence of an earlier form of Chinese geomantic practice before the T'ang dynasty, and nothing inherently improbable about its introduction into Tibet at the same time as the I Ching.

There is some evidence of primitive geomantic thought in the Warring States period (480-221 BCE), but it is with the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) that we first find books on the subject mentioned in bibliographies. The major figure in the early development of the art, however, was Kuo Po (276-324 CE), a Taoist scholar who is said, in The History of the Chin Dynasty, to have "thoroughly understood the arts relating to the Five Elements,
Astrology and Divination, knowing how to expel calamities, how to avert disasters, and how to bring complete succour in hopeless cases.'\[8: (Vol. 3) 1001\]

More relevant to the time period of interest here, however, is that Emperor T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty (r.627-650 CE) appointed a commission of more than ten scholars to sift through the existing material on divination and geomancy, from which they compiled a work in 100 chapters, which was published with imperial sanction [8: (Vol. 3) 1006]. It was, of course, during the reign of T'ai Tsung that Princess Wen-ch'eng made her journey to Tibet.

9B. Introduction of Geomancy to Tibet

The tradition that geomancy was introduced to Tibet by Wen-ch'eng has been repeatedly retold by Tibetan authors and, from its obviously legendary beginnings, became progressively more mythologised as time went by. Aris [1:8-12] discusses ten sources and their dates, the earliest of which cannot be placed earlier than the 12th to 14th centuries CE. This is the Mani Kabum (Ma-ni bka'-'bum), which contains documents said to have been secreted in the Jokhang temple in Lhasa during the reign of Songtsen Gampo. As with all such terma material, we have to note the gap of some five centuries between the alleged writing of the material and its 'rediscovery', but it is the content of the material which is of more concern here than its absolute date. As we'll see, there's evidence to suggest that the geomantic tradition it preserves has its roots in China.

Two main sources of the story have been available to us while researching this paper. Aris [1:12-20] discusses and retells the tale contained in the earliest version, from the Mani Kabum. Gyaltse [14:163-187], writing in 1368, provides a later, more mythologised version. We shall concentrate, to begin with, on Aris' version, and then compare this with Gyaltse's retelling afterwards. So, shorn of extraneous detail, here is a summary of the tale in its early form.

9C. Pinning Down the Demoness

When Princess Wen-ch'eng is about to leave for Tibet to marry Songtsen Gampo in 640 CE, she asks to be allowed to take with her 'a striped scroll of trigrams in 34 sections'. Instead she is given 'a divination chart in 300 sections executed according to the Chinese divinatory sciences'. She is also given a famous statue of the Buddha Sakyamuni to take with her, and when the carriage bearing this gets immovably stuck in sand outside Lhasa, she consults her chart to find out why.

She then discovers that the whole of Tibet is like a demoness (srin-mo) lying on her back and that the Plain of Milk in Lhasa is the palace of the king of the klu spirits; the lake in the Plain of Milk is the heart-blood of the demoness. Two of the peaks rising from the Plain are her breasts, a third the vein of her life-force. These bad aspects are responsible for the brigandage and 'evil behaviour' of the Tibetans; but there are good qualities also, and a temple built on the Plain of Milk would bring these out.

Besides this, there are four sites to be established and five impediments to be removed. The four sites are that of the king, a temple, a monastery, and a place for the common people. The five impediments are sites occupied by demons or native deities related to the centre of the Tibet: the klu, 'dre, ma-mo, btsan and sa-dgra.

However, Songtsen Gampo's senior queen, the Nepalese Tritisun, interferes with the plan, and attempts to lay the foundations of 108 Buddhist temples at sites of her own choosing. What she builds by day is destroyed at night by spirits, however, and eventually she sends a maid to consult Wen-ch'eng once more. Wen-ch'eng once again enumerates the four sites that must be established (all of which, it appears, refer to what will later become the Jokhang). She also gives further details: the cairn of the 'dre and the the-bra'g demons in the Garden of Musk must be destroyed, Siva's linga must be pointed at the demoness' pubic hair in order to suppress the 'earth-demon' of the east, and so on. Most importantly, the lake on the Plain must be filled in last. The maid garbles the instructions, saying that the lake must be filled in first, but this only results in a lake full of muddy water.

Wen-ch'eng is consulted again. She repeats her instructions, emphasizing that the lake is to be filled in last, after the various terrestrial modifications have been carried out. These now also involve the animals of the four directions: the azure dragon in the south, red bird in the west, black tortoise to the north and striped tiger to the east.

Tritisun is still convinced that Wen-ch'eng is deceiving her and in order to comfort her, Songtsen Gampo promises to build her a temple on the shore of the lake. This is said to be on the plan of a 'tall Chinese mansion', with a plan consisting of:

- A square foundation in accordance with the [common] people.
- A chequer-board foundation for a temple in accordance with the monks.
- A site shaped like a swastika in accordance with the Bon-po.

Quite how these fit together is far from clear, but once again what is built by day is overthrown by spirits at night. Songtsen Gampo at last understands what Wen-ch'eng has been insisting on for so long, and sees that the demoness is upsetting things by striking out with her arms and legs.

In order to pin down the demoness, he builds four temples in the central region known as 'The Four Great Horn-Suppressors'. Then, outside these, he builds another four temples to 'tame the border', and finally another set of four to 'tame the area beyond the border'. These building projects eventually do the trick, and Wen-ch'eng's scheme is brought to fruition. The names and positions of these temples, and the limbs of the demoness that they pin down, are most conveniently summarised in Figure 23, reproduced from Aris [1:16]. Some of these temples are still identifiable, and Aris discusses the evidence for placing two of them in Bhutan, rather than what is now Tibet.

We shall return to Gyaltse's elaboration of this material shortly. First, let's look at this tale more closely.
9D. Theoretical Basis of the Story

There are a number of geomantic elements here which have close parallels in the Chinese tradition and, as they appear to have priority in China, it seems logical to assume that they were introduced from there into Tibet. Aris [1:15-24] has examined this material and, again, the following summary is based for the most part on his analysis.

Firstly, the system of 12 temples arranged in four concentric squares shows similarities to a system first propounded in the Chinese Shu Ching (Book of History), in a chapter entitled "The Tribute of Yu". Modern academic opinion places the origin of this chapter in the 5th century BCE. Here there are five concentric zones in the square earth, as shown in Figure 24, and the various zones become less cultured as one moves out from the imperial centre. It would appear that the Tibetan scheme may be a condensed version of this. The Shu Ching was, of course, numbered among the Chinese classics, and we have seen evidence above for the introduction of the classics into Tibet during the Tang dynasty. Whether Wen-ch'eng herself was actually responsible or not for a scheme that used such geomantic concepts is probably not susceptible to proof either way; there was, though, certainly sufficient time for the concept of such a scheme to have reached Tibet before the compilation of the Mani Kabum.

There are, however, differences between the Chinese and Tibetan systems. The Chinese scheme is aligned on a north-south axis, while the Tibetan is aligned on an east-west axis, with the head of the demoness in the east. This perhaps correlates with a Tibetan view that their country is up in the west and down in the east; although one has to say that it might seem more logical if the head of the demoness was in the up direction, in the west. This difference of emphasis in regard to directions may possibly also lie behind the differences between Tibetan and Chinese arrangements of the 'Four Protectors' or 'Four Symbolic Animals' correlated with the four cardinal directions. These differences have been discussed above, but can be briefly summarised again in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Tibet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Black Tortoise</td>
<td>Black Tortoise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>White Tiger</td>
<td>Red Bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Azure Dragon</td>
<td>Striped Tiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Red Bird</td>
<td>Azure Dragon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Aris himself remarks [1:21] it is hard to decide whether these differences have arisen from a genuine Tibetan re-interpretation of the symbols, or simple error.

Aris also discusses [1:19] the possibility that the Tibetan scheme is based on the idea of the great cosmic tortoise, which is particularly interesting in view of the material already examined regarding the tortoise's obvious connection with divination and China. According to the Shed-zoe Yi-zhin Nor-bu (bShad-mdzod-rin-bzhin nor-bu), a 15th century work by Dohen-dma Na-wei Seng-ge (Don-dam sMra-ba'i Seng-ge), the whole of China was represented by a female tortoise lying on her back. This tortoise was seen as lying on a north-south axis, but its four limbs were stretched out toward the intermediate compass-points; and it's on just such intermediate compass-
points that the temples in Wen-ch'eng's scheme are placed. Aris thus speculates that this Chinese tortoise is the prototype for the Tibetan srin-mo demoness, lying on her back and representing the virgin territory waiting to be subdued and civilised. He continues to summarise the Shed-zoe's description of the Chinese tortoise as follows, saying that it is...

... in this particular context, the special emanation of Manjusri but no doubt possesses some of the qualities of her cosmological counterpart who is female 'because all beings are born of the female', is lying on her back 'to support beings by means of compassion', has her head to the south 'because the pure land of Jambudvipa lies to the south', eats essences 'to teach patience to beings' and (normally) lives in the ocean 'so that beings will foregather there' ... These qualities represent a correlation with Buddhist tradition, just as the 'astrological' signs (the par-kha, sme-ba, etc...) on her body are also harmonised with certain numerical categories of the Buddhists. In this source the female tortoise also represents the whole science of astrology.

This is an extremely attractive notion, as it would provide a cosmological underpinning for all the various 'astrological' and divinatory material that we have discussed so far.

There is further evidence of feng-shui concepts imported from China, including a notion that a building is best sited with the land 'open' to the east, 'heaped' to the south, 'straight' to the west and 'curtain-like' to the north. Perhaps the most compelling arguments for accepting that this tale has some basis in fact, though, is that of the 12 temples named in the scheme, at least the inner eight have been identified (although the outer four present more difficulties) [1:23-24]. And recent research has shown, apparently, that far from being a great propagator of Buddhism, Songtsen Gampo was, in fact, far more notable as a codifier of Tsu-lak (gtsug-lag), a term used to denote both indigenous beliefs and the divinatory 'sciences' imported from China [1:20].

9E. Sonam Gyaltsen's Version of the Tale

As Aris points out [1:24-32] all the later retellings of the tale following on from the Mani Kabum introduce distortions of some kind, particularly in the placing of the 12 temples, and Sonam Gyaltsen is no exception to this. Indeed, it's difficult to know what to make of The Clear Mirror. Its translators describe it as "a traditional account of Tibet's golden age", and it interweaves history, legend and story-telling together, perhaps 'history as entertainment' is a reasonable depiction of the author's intentions.

It devotes two chapters to the tale from the Mani Kabum that we have already looked at [14:163-177], and the tale is highly elaborated. It's the differences and additions that we'll highlight here.

According to Gyaltsen, Wen-ch'eng takes an "80-chapter astrological treatise" into Tibet with her, and uses this to make the survey which reveals the demoness. It also reveals a number of additional features, such as the "nearer malign geomantic influences". These are features resembling a crocodile chasing a deu, an ogress thrusting out her vulva, a black scorpion lunging at its prey, a black fiend keeping watch, an elephant engaged in battle, and so on. There are also mountains at the cardinal points resembling, in the east, a stupa; in the south, a heap of precious jewels; in the west a conch-cup on a tripod; in the north a lotus in bloom. Other features seem to correspond, in somewhat garbled fashion, with the animals of the four cardinal points: in the east, there is the lower part of the face of a joyful she-tiger; in the south, the waters of a blue turquoise dragon; in the west, red rocks showing the face...
of a foal; in the north, a black tortoise.

Added to these, we also have mention of four significant mines, for iron, copper, silver and gold, and various features (mountains, glaciers, marshes) representing the Buddhist Eight Auspicious Symbols: the umbrella, fish, lotus, conch, vase, knot, victory banner and wheel. And when the project is completed, we have a much more Buddhist-influenced view of Lhasa: "The sky is an eight-spoked wheel, the earth an eight-petalled lotus; on all sides lie the eight auspicious symbols. This location is directly above the heart of the ogress." This sort of geomantic/cosmological engineering is not unknown in China, and Wheatley devotes a chapter [42:411-476] to such matters with regard to ancient city-planning, but with Gyaltse one gets the impression that he is talking about an idealised and romanticized composition, which has gone far beyond the original scheme and whatever evidence there might be for it.

Gyaltse does, however, have one interesting addition to make regarding feng-shui. This concerns Chin-ch'eng, the second Chinese princess sent to Tibet in 710 CE. Having had her infant son stolen from her by the senior consort, she decided [14:227]:

"...I shall therefore destroy this land of Tibet! She studied the geomancy of the mountains, and in order to sever the royal line of descent, she drew a wheel with her own menstrual blood on the summit of the king's life-force mountain, which resembled a snow-lion leaping into the sky. The princess then concealed the cipher beneath a stupa. Next, in order to prevent the advent of intelligent ministers, she blocked the 'nose' of the ministers' life-force mountain with molten bronze, and severed the conjointed 'tails' of Tagri, 'Tiger Mountain', and Sengri, 'Snow-lion Mountain'. In order to cause famine, she cut the 'roots' of Mena Mountain at Yarlung, which resembled tender shoots of rice, and in order to bring leprosy to Tibet, she removed the 'bill' of Mangkhar Mountain, which resembled a great eagle soaring in the sky.

After this, one expects Gyaltse to bring the episode forward as a reason for the eventual downfall of the kingdom following the assassination of the last, anti-Buddhist king, Relpachen, in the middle of the 9th century. The episode is, however, simply never mentioned again.

9F. LATER GEOMANCY

To those already familiar with Chinese feng-shui, it should by now be obvious that the geomancy of Tibet has a rather different emphasis. The primary interest of Chinese feng-shui was always in the siting of graves, yet the Tibetans rarely disposed of their dead by burial and, as Buddhists, were not prone to the same sort of accompanying ancestral cult. Instead, the emphasis was rather on large-scale 'public' buildings and a type of 'cosmic engineering' which established the correct relationship between a microcosmic terrestrial structure and its macrocosmic celestial or spiritual model. The tale of Wen-ch'eng pinning down the demoness is a typical example of this, on a dominion-wide scale.

Similarly, the Samye monastery, founded in 775 CE, was built to represent the idealised version of the Buddhist cosmos, with the mythic central mountain, Meru, occupying the central point. Around this, the idealised cosmos places seven rings of mountains, seven lakes, the ocean, various structures, and so forth, representing the entirety of phenomenal existence. This sort of representational architecture appears to be a pan-Asian, if not worldwide, concept: it is well-known in pre-Buddhist China, but also can be identified (specifically representing the Meru-centred cosmos) at Borobudur in Java, the Angkor Wat in Cambodia and the Shwe Dagon in Rangoon [36:147].

Similar geomantic theorising is attached to the Potala Palace in Lhasa. This is placed on a hill in the centre of a valley surrounded by mountains, the entire area being taken as representing an open lotus flower. The mountains represent the upturned petals at the edge of the flower, while the Potala and its hill correspond to the central core of the flower [36:111]. The palace itself was built between 1645 and 1694, and was named after Mount Potala, the abode of Avalokitesvara, the patron deity of Tibet [35:84]. Undoubtedly such examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely, but that would take us rather beyond the limited scope of this paper.

APPENDIX ONE

INTRODUCTION

The following material is extracted from a series of documents translated from the Tibetan by Sarat Chandra Das, one of the major figures in Tibetan studies at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Das was the secretary of the Buddhist Text Society of India, and an Associate Member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and it was the latter society which first published the material reprinted here. Besides such learned articles as these, Das was also responsible for the Tibetan-English Dictionary, with Sanskrit Synonyms, published in Calcutta in 1902, which remains the standard work of its type to this day.

After studying in Calcutta, Das became head master of the Tibetan Boarding School at Darjeeling in 1874, spending school holidays with his pupils in Sikkim, and visited Tibet for six months in 1879. He returned in November 1881, this time staying until the beginning of 1883, and later accompanied British diplomatic missions to the Tibetan border in 1884, and to Peking in 1885. Amongst other works, he also wrote Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow, Calcutta, 1893, from which the preceding biographical details are taken.


This is a translation of a chapter from the Dub-thah
TEXT

[p.100] The first king Fo-hi [Fu Hsi] wrote a large treatise on the art of divination and astrology called Khyen-shan [perhaps an error for Lien-shan? [1]] which is the earliest work of the kind known. He also wrote a book on Ethics, called "The perfect and judicious behaviour." [2] Then appeared the five literary and moral works called by the general designation of Ookyins [Wu Ching (Five Classics)[3]], viz.: Yeekyin [I Ching (Book of Changes)], Shee-kyin [Shih Ching (Book of Poetry)], Shoo-Kyin [Shu Ching (Book of History)], Lee-kyin [Li Ching (i.e., Li Chi, the Book of Rites)] and Chhum-chho-u [Ch'un-ch'iu, The Spring and Autumn Annals]. The authorship of Yeekyin [I Ching] is attributed to Fohi [Fu Hsi], the writers of the remaining four being unknown.

[p.102] The earliest written encyclopedia of Astrology is the chief repository of Yeekyin [I Ching], the first of the Uhi series [4]. The art of divination called Porthan [Pu T'ang]? [5] which was brought into Tibet during the reign of the Thun [T'ang] dynasty was obtained from this great work. In early times, as stated above, there reigned in China the Hun [Huang] dynasty of three kings and that of Dhi [Ti] of five kings [6]. During the reign of Fohi [Fu Hsi] (whose name is also written as Hpushy [Pao Hsi]), the first of the Hun [Huang] kings, there came out from the great river He [Ho] [7] in the province of Henan (modern Han-nan) [Honan] a monster called Lun-ma [Lung-ma] having the body of a horse and the head of a dragon. On the back of this hideous monster there were eight figures or Mudrâs [8] (called Pakwas [pa kua] in Chinese), curiously inscribed. The eight Pakwas [pa kua] being multiplied to 64 by permutation, a work was written under the name of Lyan-shan [Lien-shan] (chief work) [9]. The figures on the back of the monster were called Hê-tho-lu [Ho T'u]; tho-hu [tu] in Chinese meaning "figures" and Hê [Ho] being the river from which the monster issued. This earlier account of the origin of the Pakwa [pa kua] is called the "First Heavenly System." [10]. Afterwards a learned man by the name of S'en-non [Shen Nung] wrote a work on the Porthan, called Ku-hi-tsan [Kuei-ts'ang], based on the first work of divination [11]. It is also said that it was brought down by an eagle from the mountain called Swan-ywan [Hsuan-yuan] [12]. It is related by some writers that there is a work which was composed from the cry of an eagle. The third monarch of the Hun [Huang] dynasty named Yee-khyun (written as Yih-shin) [13], by accurate observation of the heavenly bodies and by assigning the distinctive signs of male and female to the five

selkii Mélon (Grub mtha' shel gyi me long) or Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems, written by an author whose name is given as Lama Je-tsun-losan Chhoikyi-Nima pal Ssnpo by Das, as Thu'u kwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma by Norbu [25:238] and as Th'u-bkwan Blo-bzang chos-kyi-nyi-ma by Tatz [37:27]. The phonetic version appears to be Tu-wan Lobzang Choc-chi Nyima, and we shall refer to him here as Tu-wan. He was a famous Gelugpa scholar and incarnate lama (tulku), whose dates are given by Norbu [25:238] as 1737-1802; Das [6:187], however, says he lived from 1674 to 1740. This is just another example of the immense confusion which arises from Tibetan cyclical dating, which runs in cycles of 60 years, from a starting date tied in to the introduction of the Kalachakra Tantra into Tibet. Throughout the 19th century, the determination of this starting date by Csoma de Koros was accepted, as 1026. Early in the 20th century, this was corrected by Pelliot and Laufer to 1027 [20:324-351], although some, apparently including Norbu, still use de Koros' date. Tu-wan's birthdate is given by Das as the "year fire-serpent of the 12th cycle"; i.e. the 51st year of the 12th 60-year cycle, starting from 1027 (or 1026). Assuming this to mean "11 complete cycles (660 years) plus 51 (711), we arrive at a date of 1738 (or 1737). Das therefore seems to be incorrect, and the authors dates should therefore be 1738-1803 (1737-1802). This is confirmed by Laufer, who mentions that the colophon to Tu-wan's book is dated "water-dog year of the thirteenth cycle". This would give us a date of 1803 (or 1802), although, bafflingly, Laufer [20:348] goes on to give a date of 1742 for this. One suspects this is simply an error.

Be this as it may, Das tells us that Tu-wan was born at Pa-rin in Amdo and studied under many eminent lamas, including Chanka Rrolpai Dorje, the spiritual guide of the Chinese emperor Ch'en-lung. As Ch'en-lung reigned 1736 to 1796, this would make it almost certain that Norbu's dating is correct. Rrolpai Dorje will appear again below.

Das [6:188] says that Tu-wan "resided in Peking for more than three years, in order to collect information respecting the various schools of religion which then existed in China, and the ancient ones that had died away". He was greatly honoured by Ch'en-lung and other Manchu nobles, and returned to Amdo for the last 12 years of his life. The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems was completed only a week before his death.

What follows, then, is an informed Tibetan's attempt to present the I Ching and its history to Tibetan readers. Most of the material here is familiar from Chinese tradition, but there are occasional divergences of both fact and interpretation which are of some interest. Perhaps the biggest problem here concerns the names of people and places: obviously these were originally in Chinese, which have then been transliterated into Tibetan by Tu-wan; these, again, are transliterated into English by Das who, for all his knowledge of Tibetan, does not seem to have had the same skill with Chinese; nor, according to Laufer [20:337] does he seem to have been particularly adept at handling Tibetan versions of Chinese words. As a further
elements, formed the ten fundamentals [14] (and gave the names of mouse, bull, &c., to the twelve concatenations or Dendals [15] named the divisions of time, viz., — years, months and days). All these were represented on a globe, called Hun-thyeu-yi [16] constructed for him by the purpose. The clocks (Tse-men chin) and watches (Pe-yo-hu) of modern China are prepared after those illustrations. Moreover, the invention of chariots, boats, forts, ten sorts of musical airs and the use of arms were attributed to him.

The later heavenly system [17]

The fourth king of the dynasty of Te-hu [Chou] [18] named Yo-hu-tho-hu-than-shi [Yu t'iu-t'ien-shih?] [19], was, in the year tree-dragon (the first of the heavenly years according to this system of calculating time), presented with a wonderful tortoise by a man from the south named Yui-shan-shi [Yueh Shan-shih?] [20]. By carefully observing the figures and marks on the tortoise's shell, which were supposed to express the names of divisions of time, the king improved the former books on astrology and the art of divination. From that year to the fire-dragon year of the 12th cycle when the Emperor Chheu-lun [Ch'ien Lung] ascended the throne, there elapsed 4092 years [21]. There are legends which relate that a subject presented a wonderful tortoise to king Yo-hu [Yu], but there is no record of his utilising the marks on the shell for the purposes of astrology. It is stated that king Shi-hu-yothi [22] obtained a wonderful tortoise of miraculous origin from the River Loo [Lo] of Hanan [Honan], and by reading the astrological symbols and marks known as Pakwa, found on its shell, wrote a large treatise on "divination." He gave the name of Loo-tho-u [23] to it, from Loo, the river whence the tortoise came out.

The period during which the heaven and earth remained one and undivided [24], was known as Nam Na, and the period when they became separated and distinct from each other, as Nam Chhyé [25]. During these two periods, and also previously, the science of Pakwa or astrology and divination is said to have existed in itself, in consequence of which it is considered as ever unchangeable. It is not stated in the Chinese books that the "great tortoise" is the prime cause of all things, as is fabled by Tibetan writers on astrology and the black art [26], after the above account of the wonderful tortoise of the Chinese from whom undoubtedly they have derived their knowledge of astrology and divination [27]. The following are the verses on which the Tibetans, after the Chinese, base all their knowledge of astrology and of the position of the earth.


The principal root of astrology
Is the great-golden tortoise. The tail to the north and the head above. The right and left sides lie east and west [28]. The limbs extend to the four quarters. On which lies supreme The world Jambudvipa and rests [29]

Wen-wan [Wen Wang] [30] father of the first king of the Chigur [Chou kuo] [31] dynasty who was a saintly personage revived the first work on astrology written by Fohi [Fu Hsi]. The later heavenly system of astrology, based on the symbols and marks on the tortoise's shell, was revised and improved by Che-hu-wei [Chou kung] [32]. Altogether there were three great works on astrology written at three different times, the first being Le-an-shan's [Lien-shan], the second Khi-thon's [Kuei-tsong] and the third Wen-wan's [Wen Wang's] [33] — all well known in China. During the latter period of the Te-hu [Chou] dynasty, the wicked and stupid king of Chhen-gur [Ch'in kuo] [34] in utter ignorance of the worth of astrology, and apprehending danger from the existence of astrological works which in his eyes appeared ominous and fraught with evil, ordered them to be burnt. The first two works were destroyed, but fortunately Wen-wan's work survived, and it is on this that the modern astrological works of China are chiefly based [35]. Wen-wan's son, Chi-hu-kyun [Chou kung] [36], revised and illustrated his father's work. Khun-fu-tse [Confucius] is said to have improved upon the writings of his predecessors, but this is questioned by some writers who doubt if he ever wrote on the subject of astrology and divination [37]. Another pains-taking author wrote a small treatise on astrology, based on Che-hu-kyun's [Chou kung's] work. One of Khun-fu-tse's pupils is said to have drawn up some astrological formulae under the name of Shi-chin [38], which were ascribed to some Khun-fu-tse himself. Probably people mistake this book for Khun-fu-tse's. Among the ancient writers of China, Fohi, Wen-wan, Chi-hu-kyun and Khun-fu-tse [Fu Hsi, Wen Wang, Jhau kung, and Confucius] are famed as four saintly authors. Old men of Tibet believe that the art of divination was first discovered by Manju-sri, the god of wisdom, on the summit of Revo-tse-na [Wu-t'ai Shan] [39]. Other accounts, stating that it was given to the world by the goddess Namgyalmo (S. Vidyâ) [40] and by Padma Sambhava [41], also obtain credit in Tibet, but are mere fabrications, having no more truth in them than those ascribing the origin of astrology to Buddha [42].

[p. 106] In the works of the two personages [Fu Hsi and Confucius] [43] there are some mysterious passages which appear like the aphorisms of Buddhism, capable of a higher significiation than the mere earthly objects they are taken to mean. The text of Yee-kyin [I Ching] in some respects resembles the Vakhrik philosophy of the Buddhists, as has been explained by the most learned Lama Chan-kyiH Rolpai Dorje [44].

[p. 107] Origin of Heaven, Earth and Men according to the "Ye-Kyin" [I Ching].

In the beginning, before the formation of Heaven and Earth there existed nothing but "Hun tun" or void [45], which evolved of itself and was in a state of chaotic agitation from eternity, until it fell into utter confusion and disorder. In this state of chaos, the order, distinction, cognition, classification and nomenclature of things were unknown. The Chinese account bears a striking resem-
blance to the account as to the origin of the world in all Tibetan works on mysticism that in the beginning there existed nothing except void from which the world arose. In that chaotic state there was the virtue of "The-ji" [T'ai chi] [46] that is, the supreme nature, matter and self-existent energy. Just as we have the innate power of distinguishing different things in ourselves, so the primeval chaos possessed the virtue of giving rise to distinct existences. From its internal agitation, it produced first of all Namba (species), and nature, which were like male and female [47]. Again these being endowed with a virtue like the germination of the seed by the union of the male and female elements, divided themselves into the "Tsha-shin" [Ssu-hsiang][48], i.e., the fourfold distinction into (1) great male, (2) little male, (3) great female and (4) little female. Afterwards from the union of the two species sprung the Pa-kwa [pa kua] or Tibetan Parkha [49] and Choo-gun [chiu kung] [50] or the nine mansions with forty-five gods residing in them [51]. Thereafter from the virtue of these two [52], light and clearness came forth. All light substances flew upwards from the ocean of chaos, the thin and attenuated things resting on the surface. When this separation took place the upper region or heaven (or Thain [T'ien]) was produced. This was called the age of the formation of Heaven (Nam Nama). All heavy (Sanskrit guru), thick, uncleaf and ponderous substances sank to the bottom and formed the Earth called Tee [Ti]. This is called the age of the Earth's closing. When Heaven and Earth were produced, the shining lustre of the former radiated from above and the bright effulgence of the latter rose upwards. These two, united together, produced "Man." This age was called the period of the formation of Man. Heaven, Earth and Man are possessed of three virtues or potential energies and three aims (designs) [53]. In works on mysticism a similar description is given. Heaven is said to have been ancienly the father and Earth the mother. These two meeting together produced a sound, whence emanated Man. The Tibetan "Nam" or Chinese "Thain" [T'ien] means both Heaven and potential Energy. Tibetan "Sa" or Chinese "Tee" [Ti] meaning Earth is purely matter that has productive powers.

Parkha or Pakwa or Mudrâ Symbols [54]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td>li</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa</td>
<td>khon</td>
<td>earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chag</td>
<td>ta</td>
<td>iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namkha</td>
<td>khin</td>
<td>sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chhu</td>
<td>kham</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ri</td>
<td>kin</td>
<td>hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shin</td>
<td>sin</td>
<td>tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lon</td>
<td>son</td>
<td>wind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chinese Choogun or Tibetan Mevgu. English nine mansions of the 45 gods. [55]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>No. of Mansions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chikar</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qinag</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sum thin</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>No. of Mansions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shijun</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naser</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tugkar</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dunmar</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyatkar</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gumar</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the blue sky (or the middle illuminated atmosphere), and the Earth are both called the world. Vulgar people say that the Heaven is of dark blue colour and the Earth four-sided [56]. According to this system only nine heavens are mentioned without a word about their disposition [57]. The Tibetans alone hold that there are nine strata of earth, one above another and nine heavens in regular succession. The great period counted from the beginning of the formation of Heaven, Earth and Man till their destruction is called Yi-yvan [i-wan?] (Ævum). The measure of time in one Yi-yvan is equal to 129,600 human years of the Hindu system or "kalpa." [58] After the destruction of Heaven, Earth and Man, Hîntun and Theji [T'ai chi] will be convulsed to form a second chaos, from which there will be a renewed formation of the world [59].

Notes

1 - There were allegedly two books of divination preceding the I Ching: the Lien Shan, said to be the Book of Changes of the Hsia dynasty (trad. 2205-1766 BCE), and the Kuei Ts'ang, said to be the Book of Changes of the Shang dynasty (trad. 1766-1122 BCE). The I Ching, or Chou I, was the Book of Changes of the Chou dynasty (trad. 1122-222 BCE). The Lien Shan ("Mountains Standing Together") and Kuei Ts'ang ("Reverting to the Hidden") are both lost [43:10]. Fu Hsi is, of course, traditionally said to be the inventor of the Eight Trigrams; besides this, he is also a culture-hero and the first of the "Three Sovereigns" (see below, note 6), allegedly reigning 2852-2737 BCE. This takes the art of divination back to the very beginning of Chinese historical tradition.

2 - It is difficult to identify this work, as we only have an English translation of (presumably) a Tibetan translation of the title. It's possible that this is a misreading of Chou I, taking the words in their alternative senses: Chou as "complete" (i.e., "perfect") and I as "lenient" (i.e., "judicious behaviour"). It should be emphasized that this interpretation is highly speculative.

3 - The Five Classics of the Confucian tradition.

4 - i.e., the first of the Wu Ching, the Five Classics.

5 - Presumably "the divination of the T'ang dynasty".

6 - The earliest mythical rulers of China are known as the Three Sovereigns (san huang) and Five Emperors (wu ti), though there seems to be little agreement in the source material as to whose names should appear in these lists. Tu-wan appears to be listing the san huang as Fu Hsi, Shen Nung and Huang Ti.

7 - The Huang Ho, or Yellow River.

8 - The Ho Tu or "River Chart" is a plan arranging the numbers 1 to 10 in a square, each number displayed as a series of linked dots. The present version dates no earlier than the Sung dynasty (960-1279). It is sometimes said
to appear to Fu Hsi on its own on the back of the dragon-horse, sometimes accompanied by the eight trigrams. For more details see Ruttek's work [29:164-166]. The word *mudra*, used here to describe the trigrams, usually refers to symbolic gestures made with the hands and fingers. A more appropriate word for the trigrams from the Indo-Buddhist tradition would probably be *yantra*, "device".

9 - It's uncertain whether Tu-wan or Das is responsible for offering "chief work" as the explanation for Lien Shan. The title actually means "Mountains Standing Together".

10 - The circular arrangement of trigrams attributed to Fu Hsi is also known as the "Earliest Heaven Arrangement", which appears to lie behind this reference. The arrangement is normally associated with the *Ho T'u*, but does not appear to have been known in the Tibetan astrological system. Perhaps because of this, the designation seems to have been applied here to the entire origin-story.

11 - The authorship of the Lien Shan and Kuei Ts'ang is unknown. The attributions to Fu Hsi and Shen Nung do not appear to be supported by Chinese tradition.

12 - It is difficult to know what to make of this passage. Hsuan-yuan is a name of Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor, the third of the Three Sovereigns mentioned above. It derives from the name of a hill at the place where he was born, and it is possible that Tu-wan is attempting to tie all three of these early rulers in with divination books. The mention of the eagle is more puzzling, however. In Tibet, the eagle (*khyung*) was a numinous bird, corresponding in many ways to the Indian garuda, but the Chinese eagle (*ying*) is by no means so notable. And there seems to be no connection between the eagle and Huang Ti. Two possibilities present themselves. The first refers to a myth where Huang Ti fights another deity, Ch'i-h Yu, and is assisted by a winged dragon, Ying Lung. Although Ying Lung means "Responding Dragon", the word *ying* here is homophonous with *ying* meaning eagle, the characters being written rather similarly besides. It is possible that Tu-wan has misconstrued this and attached an eagle to Huang Ti. The second possibility is that he has confused Huang Ti with Huang Fei-hu, one of the characters in the Feng Shen Yen-i, a Ming dynasty novel concerned with the conquest of the Shang dynasty by the Chou dynasty; the period when King Wen is traditionally said to have composed the I Ching. Huang Fei-hu there appears in company with a trained eagle. Both of these suggestions, however, have to be regarded as speculative.

13 - As we've seen, Tu-wan designates Huang Ti as the third of the Three Sovereigns (San Huang), and tradition also attributes the invention of the Ten Celestial Stems and Twelve Terrrestrial Branches, used to compose the calendrical Sexagenary Cycle, to him. Late tradition also attributes the various inventions which conclude this paragraph to Huang Ti. The names Yee-khyun and Yihishyin, however, are puzzling.

14 - [Das's footnote] — The five elements of astrology—

1. Tree, Male and Female
2. Fire
3. Earth
4. Iron
5. Water

15 - [Das's footnote] — The Sanskrit words corresponding to the 12 Dondals of Tibetan astrology or causal connection on which the existence of the human soul depends are:

1. Avidyā
2. Samskāra
3. Vijñāna
4. Nāmarūpa
5. Shadatāna
6. Sparsa
7. Vidāna
8. Rishna
9. Apādāna
10. Bhāva
11. Jati
12. Jaramara

[The Ten Fundamentals and Twelve Dondals correspond to the Chinese 'Ten Celestial Stems' and 'Twelve Terrrestrial Branches', used to compose the Cycle of Sixty]

16 - *i.e.,* Hun T'ien I, the armillary sphere.

17 - The 'Later Heaven Arrangement' is the name given to the circular arrangement of trigrams attributed to King Wen, which was also the arrangement known to and used by the Tibetans. It is normally associated with the Lo Shu. Once again, we have the name being extended beyond the simple arrangement of trigrams to cover an entire origin story. See above, note 10.

18 - It is difficult to know whether Tu-wan is using Te-hu as the name of the China itself, or of the Chou dynasty here. What seems to have happened, however, is that he's forgotten 'The Five Emperors' mentioned previously, and jumped straight from the Three Sovereigns to Yu the Great, making him the "fourth king of the dynasty". Yu is normally placed after the Five Emperors, and is undoubtedly the subject of the following passage: he was the first emperor of the Hsia dynasty, which preceded both the Shang and the Chou dynasties.

19 - Perhaps "Yu the Master of Earth and Heaven".

20 - The usual version of this story is that a tortoise emerged from the Lo River while Yu the Great was controlling the Great Flood, and that the Lo Shu diagram (a form of the magic square of three) was found on its back [29:164]. It has not so far proved possible to locate any certain Chinese originals for the variant legends contained in this passage; however, see main text Section 3d for a similar passage from Kongtrul Yonten Gyatso, where a subject presents a tortoise to Fu Hsi. It's possible that the first variant given here refers to Yu's father, Kun, whose attempts to control the Flood were assisted by turtles, and who died on Yu Shan ('Feather Mountain', which may perhaps lie behind Tu-wan's "Yü-shan-she"). After Kun's body had lain for three years, Yu was cut from his body and, according to one version, Kun then turned into a turtle and dived into a nearby lake [15:48]

21 - Ch'ien Lung ascended the throne in 1736; 4092 years before this gives us 2356 BCE. According to the traditional chronology [41:9], Yao, one of the Five Emperors, ascended the throne in 2357 BCE. It seems possible that Tu-wan has confused Yao and Yu here. According to the same chronology, Yu reigned 2205-2197 BCE. This reign period is unlikely to be historically accurate.

22 - Unidentified.

24 - [Das's footnote] From this it must not be understood that the first work on divination written from the figures on the horse-dragon, was composed before the formation of the Heaven and Earth from Chaos. The name Nam Na is used to distinguish its priority to that which immediately followed it.

25 - From what Das says in the previous note, one assumes that 'Nam Na' and 'Nam Chhyé' refer to the Former and Later Heaven. This notion, that the Pa Kua existed both "before and after" Heaven, would seem to explain the following sentence, implying that the divination system exists eternally.

26 - This is not to be taken in the sense of 'black magic', but rather as Chinese ('black') astrology, as opposed to the Indian ('white') variety. See main text, section 3.a.

27 - On this, see the translation from the Vaidurya Karp, in Appendix 2.

28 - Note that this alignment follows the Chinese system, placing south at the top.

29 - Jambudvipa being the name, in the Buddhist 4-continent cosmology, of our own world, a 'continent' prototypically based on India [38:80].

30 - King Wen, who is said to have doubled Fu Hu's trigrams and written the Judgement texts of the I Ching, while imprisoned by the last king of the Shang dynasty.

31 - King Wen was only posthumously named "the first king of the Chou dynasty", having died before his son, King Wu, overthrew the Shang. The name Chou I ('Changes of the Chou') derives from this dynasty.

32 - Presumably this is a reference to Chou Kung, the Duke of Chou, even though his name is spelled differently below. The Duke of Chou is said to have written the Judgements to the individual lines of the I Ching hexagrams.

33 - Wen Wang's work being the Chou I, the core of the I Ching. For the other two works, see note 1.

34 - The 'First Emperor' of the Ch'in dynasty (221-206 BCE), Ch'in Shih Huang-ti. Although the Chou dynasty nominally lasted until the time of the Ch'in, its power had in fact collapsed by the Warring States period, commencing 480 BCE.

35 - Ch'in Shih Huang-ti ordered the infamous 'burning of the books' in 213 BCE. Useful works, such as those on medicine, agriculture and divination, were exempt, and so the I Ching survived. There is, however, no reason to think that the Lien-shan and Kwei-ti shan were destroyed at this time; we simply have no idea when they were lost. One suspects Tu-wan of tidying up history a little.

36 - See above, note 32.

37 - Tradition attributes the authorship of the collection of I Ching commentaries known as the 'Ten Wings' to Confucius. This attribution was doubted as early as the Sung dynasty (960-1279 CE) and modern opinion concurs with Sung scholarship.

38 - It is hard to tell here whether "Shi-chin" (probably to be transliterated into Chinese as 'Shih Ching') is the author of the book or the title. If an author, it is possibly a reference to the astronomer Shih Shen, who drew up a star-catalogue (now lost) in the 4th century BCE. Such an attribution would be highly speculative, however. Another possibility is that this is a garbled reference, once again, to the 'Ten Wings' or Shih I.

39 - For Manjusi's connection with Chinese divination, see main text, section 3b. 'Revo-tes-na' appears to carry the same meaning in Tibetan as the Chinese Wu-t'ai Shan: 'Five-peaked mountain'.

40 - 'Namgyalmo' means 'Queen of Heaven'. The most likely candidate for this title is the Bon deity Sipé Gyamo (Srid pa'i rgyal mo), the 'Queen of the Created World'. As noted in main text section 3b, the Tibetan tortoise diagram is called Si-pa-Khor-lo (Srid-pa-Hkhor-lo), and the connection between the Queen and the 'Created World' (Srid-pa) is easily made. Sipé Gyamo is also known as Namche Unga-gyal (gNam phyi gung rgyal), 'Grandmother of Heaven, Queen of the Sky' [19:107].

41 - For Padmasambhava, the Indian Buddhist who arrived in Tibet during the 8th century CE, see main text, section 3b.

42 - The origin of this notion is perhaps to be found in the tale of Manjusi, discussed in main text section 3b.

43 - This paragraph appears in a lengthy exposition of Confucian philosophy, which is attributed to both Confucius and Fu Hsi.

44 - As mentioned in the introduction to this appendix, Tu-wan studied under Rolpai Dorje, the abbot of the Yung Ho Kung, or 'Lama Temple' at Peking. He is said by Das [6:187] to have been the spiritual guide of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (1736-1796); but he is also said, by Waddell [38:243-244] to have been called to Peking about 1690-1700 CE and made "religious viceregent" for Inner Mongolia. He appears to have been a voluminous writer, preparing a number of glossaries and philological works [20:418]. We have been unable to identify the work on tantra and I Ching; presumably it exists only on Tibetan.

45 - This section gives an exposition of the Neo-Confucian cosmological explanation of the origin of the yin and yang, the eight trigrams, and so forth, deriving from the work of Chou Tun-yi and Shao Yang. That system, however, normally starts from Wu chi, the 'Ultimateless', rather than Hun tun, which means 'chaos' in the sense of 'confusion' or 'turbidity'.

46 - Tai chi, the 'Supreme Ultimate', is born from Wu chi. We are now moving from a state of voidness to substance, and from Tai chi we proceed to yang and yin.

47 - We have now arrived at yang and yin, male and female, represented in the I Ching by single unbroken and broken lines respectively.

48 - The Stu hsiang are the 'Four Images': two-line figures made by combining yang and yin lines with themselves. They are usually known as Old yang, Young yang, Old yin and Young yin, corresponding to the names given here.

49 - The trigrams are produced by adding a third line, to make eight possible combinations of yang and yin lines.

50 - The chiu kung, Nine Palaces or Mansions, refers to
the nine positions of the *Lo Shu* magic square.

51 - The numbers 1 to 9 which form the *Lo Shu*, when added together, give a total of 45.

52 - *i.e.*, yang and yin.

53 - Heaven, Earth and Man form the standard trinity in Confucian thinking. The three Confucian virtues listed in *The Doctrine of the Mean* are wisdom, love and courage. It is uncertain what the 'three aims' mentioned here refer to.

54 - For the use of the word *Mudra* here, see note 8. The Tibetan words given in the first column of this table are translations of the English meanings given in the third column. The 'Chinese' words given in the second column are Tibetan transliterations of the Chinese names of the trigrams. In the original, these are *li, k'un, tui, ch'ien, k'an, ken, chen, sun.*

55 - This table gives the numbers and colours attributed to the *Lo Shu* magic square. The Tibetan words in column one appear to combine both numbers and colours, *e.g.*, *dunmar* is 'red seven'.

56 - The usual Chinese conception is that Heaven is round and Earth is square.

57 - The Chinese 'Nine Heavens' are usually taken to refer to the Nine Heavenly Palaces, which were placed horizontally and followed the pattern of the *Lo Shu* magic square [22:199-200]

58 - It is hard to know what to make of this passage, and particularly hard to know what Das intended by 'Ævum'. The Indian *kalpa* is a period of inordinate, but variable, length. One suspects that 'Yi-yvan' is to be read as the Chinese phrase *i-wan*, composed of the words *i*, '100,000' and *wan*, 10,000. Taken together, *i-wan* means 'numberless', and would appear to be used here for *kalpa*. How Tu-wan arrives at so specific a period as 129,600 years is not clear.

59 - It seems likely that this idea of cosmic renewal is most probably of Indo-Buddhist origin, rather than Chinese.

**APPENDIX 2**

**INTRODUCTION**

The following translation is taken from: Babu Saratchandra Das: "The Origin of the World and the art of divination and the signs of the zodiac of the Tibetans." *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1890, January, pp.2-7. This consists of two parts: a reproduction of the tortoise diagram shown as Figure 10 and an explanation of its meaning, and the passage on "The Origin of the World" (originally given in both Tibetan text and English translation), which follows here. This passage comes from the *Vaidūrya Karsö* (*Bai du'rva dkar po*), written by the Regent of Lhasa, Desi Sangé (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho), who lived from 1653-1705. The title of the work means "White Lapis Lazuli", and it is a historical and chronological work written by a Buddhist of the Gelugpa ('Yellow Hat') lineage.

**TEXT**

In the beginning, what existed from eternity, in nothingness, was called the Tortoise. The Buddhas of the past, present and future sprang out of him. The three worlds, and all the animal beings also, originated from that eternal tortoise. Time, without the distinction of past, present, and future, was in him and the whole universe rested between his head and tail. From the vapour of his mouth arose the seven atmospheric strata (which encompass the earth), and gradually the sphere of azure space, and thereafter *Swastika*, the emblem of the divine cross, were formed.

From the saliva of that primeval tortoise sprang forth the oceans; and from his flesh were formed the lofty mountains, the islands, and the great continents having trees for their hair.

His head pointed to the south, his tail to the north [1] and his four limbs stretched towards the four corners of the world. His white back shaped the old father heaven, called *Khen* [2], wherein rested the *Devaloka* (celestial regions) with the mansions of the gods:- Mahâdeva, Brahma, and angels of pure habits, who possessed the fourfold organs of sense. The celestial regions were formed above, and *Rirab* [3], the sublime mountain, stood below, holding the mansions of the thirty-three *Devas* and of the gods of the *Paranirmanatattva* on its top. On the flanks of *Rirab*, there resided the four guardian spirit-kings of the world, together with the sun and moon, the planets and stars. The sun and moon sprang from the eyes of the great tortoise. From the sound of his throat issued the dragon's peal of thunder and from his outstretched tongue flashed forth lightning which produced thunderbolts and hailstorms. From his breath originated the wind, the five internal essences, and the five physical elements. When he shook his body there was earthquake.

From the yellow belly of the tortoise sprang the old mother earth, called *Khon* [4], whose bowels held *nâgaloka*, the nether world.

**NOTES**

1 - This reflects the standard Chinese orientation, which places south at the top of a map or chart.

2 - *Khen* is the Tibetan name for the trigram *ch'ien*, the attribute of which is Heaven.

3 - *Rirab* is the Tibetan name for Mount Meru, the central mountain of the Buddhist universe.

4 - *Khon* is the Tibetan name for the trigram *k'un*, the attribute of which is Earth.
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