Photography, painting, and prints in Ladakh and Zangskar. Intermediality and transmediality

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/emscat/4462>

DOI: 10.4000/emscat.4462

ISSN: 2101-0013

Publisher

Centre d'Etudes Mongoles & Sibériennes / École Pratique des Hautes Études

Electronic reference

Rob Linrothe, "Photography, painting, and prints in Ladakh and Zangskar. Intermediality and transmediality", *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines* [Online], 51 | 2020, Online since 09 December 2020, connection on 13 July 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/emscat/4462> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/emscat.4462>

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It's typical for new technologies initially to mimic an existing one; Gutenberg's forty-two-line Bible is not easy to distinguish from a manuscript copy. It takes time to figure out what a new medium can do *besides* the same thing bigger, faster, or cheaper, and for its particular strengths and weaknesses to emerge. Fifty years after Gutenberg, printing had shown itself vastly superior for Bibles and legal texts, a cheap substitute for deluxe books of hours, and no replacement at all for wills, inventories, and personal letters.

(Hays 2014, p. 20)

Introduction

- 1 Photography has been part of the apparatus of scholarship on the Himalayas since the mid-19th century. The assumed "truth value" of photographs led to an unquestioned, self-evidentiary approach to the photograph as document, a sentiment that remains alive and well. The history of photography in Tibet and the Himalayas generally has been much advanced by the work of Clare Harris and others, particularly in identifying the photographers, subjects, locations, and circumstances in which early photographs were made¹. Emphasis has been placed on the uses and abuses of pioneering, exploration, and exploitation photography in the Himalayas in Euro-American and particularly Orientalist contexts. Progress has also been made in the same works on the history of the ways that photographs, old and new, have been creatively employed by peoples of the Himalayas². This is a topic that merits further critical attention, even as scholars are reflexively reviewing their own practices. When compared with recovering and reconstructing the circumstances in which photographs were made, the

identification of photographer and subject matter, and the circulation and impact of the images in the Himalayas and elsewhere, less has been accomplished in the way of analyzing the formal properties of the photographs themselves³. This is in a sense to move from describing the *context* of the photography – primarily informational – to examining how it *works*, the processes of signification⁴. It is important to take the forms seriously as constructed images, and to identify the image-making conventions such as pose, gesture, dress, and objects observed by Tibetan photographers and recognized by their local audiences. The purpose of this paper is to examine the construction and use (i.e. display) of one genre of photographs by local agents, in particular the circulation, combination, transformation, and exhibition of portrait photographs within monasteries and shrines in the Western Himalayan regions of Ladakh and Zangskar. The method used, ironically, is based on photographic documentation of photographs existing in the field, mainly in monasteries or personal shrines. Perhaps this recursive limitation points toward one of the central paradoxes of photography itself, the purported indexicality of the photograph: while a photograph seems to objectively *record* a moment of reality, in actuality it *constructs* a fictional moment from which it quotes, totally out of context. I have tried to keep this in mind as I draw some conclusions⁵.

- 2 My central thesis is that one of the most important aspects of the pioneering use of photography in Western Himalayan Buddhist contexts is its ongoing visual relationship to and with pre-photographic media, including sculpture, printing, and especially painting, which, post-exposure, enhanced the photographs to work for the intended audience. My focus is on portraits of religious teachers and lineage-holders, one of the most highly developed genres of Himalayan art as reflected in subtle differences of Tibetan language terminology for “effigy” (Tib. *'bag*), “portrait” (Tib. *'dra bag, sku 'bag*), “portrait approved by the sitter” (Tib. *nga 'dra ma*), and “self-portrait” (Tib. *nga 'dra ma phyag mdzod*) (Stoddard 2003). Those terms developed out of pre-photographic media representations. I will show that the most common compositions for early portrait photographs of teachers draw closely on earlier templates already well-established by painting and sculpture for such portraits. This is true from the first phases of portrait photography to the present, because the older modes continue to circulate alongside newer ones even though they are predictably fading in importance. Newer types of compositions associated with the informal, spontaneous, and ubiquitous cellphone photography and social-media circulatory networks are overtaking the older, more conservative modes.
- 3 This essay, however, will focus on the period of time when photography by and for Himalayan subjects was still relatively new (the late 19th century and the first two-thirds of the 20th)⁶. In the patterning of early indigenous photographs after pre-existing visual discourses, an instance of intermediality, the Himalayan regions (notably Tibet, Ladakh, and Zangskar) were by no means unique. Many cultures, each in its own way, at first used the camera to produce images in genres with which they were already familiar. Perhaps only in its unproblematic embrace of photographs as relics of revered teachers were the Himalayan Buddhist regions distinctive, and in the relative lateness of indigenous appropriation of photographic technology. In several respects they mirror the pattern of the Dutch Indies, Japan, Yoruba, pre-partition India, Iran – and for that matter Europe – in composing photographic portraits in the same way that

they composed paintings, and in choosing subject matter worthy to be painted or photographed in the first place.

- 4 Moreover, like many other cultures they initially found black-and-white or sepia-toned photographs wanting, unable to compete with painting on its own terms. Paper photographic prints were smaller, more fragile, more apt to fade, and less vibrant than paintings, to which audiences were accustomed. It was only after colour printing became possible that the advantages of automatic verisimilitude, reproducibility, and the perceived tangibility of the process of “exposure” by and to the actual religious figure being photographed outweighed the disadvantages of photography’s “dull” grayscale. An additional similarity with the history of photography in other cultures is the hand colouring of photographs to negate the original weakness, and we will see that various techniques were employed by painters to overcome that perceived weakness. One might conclude that painting was the handmaiden of photography, but photography ultimately became an essential tool both for sculptors and, especially, painters. Entwined as soon as photography entered the field, painting and photography remain inseparable.
- 5 My essay then looks at the role of established visual discourses, mainly painting, in the making of portrait photographs of religious leaders that are preserved and revered in Ladakh and Zangskar, whether they were exposed there or in Central Tibet or in northern India. It considers what was done *to* photographs in the region, particularly in painting or otherwise transforming them to overcome their disadvantages vis-à-vis traditional image-making, and then examines what was done *with* photographs through strategies of recombination and discovering some advantages to the new technology in the process. This includes the widespread practice of painters using photographs in painting and a few examples of chromolithographic prints based on photographs, as well as photographic representations of paintings that were distributed and preserved in Ladakh. I attempt to place this transition period into the perspective of the larger photographic history through some comparisons with other regions.

Painting in the making of photographic portraits

- 6 Both posture and gesture in pre- and post-photography portraiture reveal patterns that can be fruitfully analyzed. About gesture, Carmen Pérez González observes: “[Since] gesture formed an indispensable element in the social interaction of the past and it can offer a key to some of the fundamental values and assumptions underlying any given society, therefore, the study of the pose and gesture of the sitters in portrait photography gives us important clues to understand the mentality of that time” (Pérez González 2012, p. 108). She also helpfully distinguishes pose from posture:

Pose is applied when considering photographs or paintings: the sitter’s pose. Posture is a wider term used in a more general context. [...] Posing is thus a moment of immobility where the sitter turns him/herself into a frozen image. It can also be considered as a moment where the sitter tends to imitate a certain image s/he has in his/her mind in order to project it onto her/his body and gesture. (Pérez González 2012, p. 107)
- 7 Others have also pointed out how the postures and gestures of religious figures are consciously adopted in representations⁷. Pérez González states further, “When analyzing photographs, one must assume that it is possible to distinguish between postures imposed upon the subjects by the photographer and those which are habitual

or indigenous” (Pérez González 2012, p. 109). In the cases that follow, I believe one must reverse the implied direction of the imposition, in that it is more likely that the subject, not the photographer, established the details of the composition – the pose, gesture, expression, and desired regalia – if not framed it through the lens. This is demonstrable in the cases where photographs are constructed so as to resemble conventions established by earlier Himalayan art when the European photographer – whether it was Charles Bell or Thomas Paar, to use examples discussed below – was highly unlikely to have been aware of those conventions or in a position to impose them on, for instance, the Dalai Lama⁸.

- 8 Most early Himalayan portrait photography of esteemed religious notables, whether made in Tibet, Ladakh, Darjeeling or Calcutta, seems to correspond with one of two variants of the same format inherited from sculpture and painting. Both variants were well scripted for conveying what John Clark describes as “the dignified aura” (Clark 2013, p. 77), essential for what may be termed portraits of authority or the “charismatic individual” in the religious sense⁹. Although one was more severe than the other, both versions privileged the frontal and the formal, similar to what has been called, in a different context, the “iconic pose, a device used in many parts of the world to represent deities and transcendent individuals” formed through “strict frontality, symmetry, stasis, and compositional centrality of the figures” (Stuart & Rawski 2001, pp. 83-84). Both variants respect an established vocabulary and range of posture, gesture, expression, dress, accoutrements, and, where possible, background and foreground. In the more severe portrait convention, the sitter usually wears a hat and full robes, looks directly at the camera lens, is seated with a small table directly in front of him on which rest ritual objects and a tea bowl, and sometimes holds a book. I will refer to this below as Iconic Pose A (IP.A)
- 9 An excellent example of this first type is found in Spituk monastery, just outside of Leh. Spituk was either founded or converted to the Gelug (Tib. dge lugs) order in the 15th century¹⁰, and is the seat, if not the main residence, of the Kushok Bakula Rinpoche Tulku (Tib. *sku shogs ba ku la rin po che sprul sku*) incarnation. In one of the shrine rooms in the upper part of the main monastery is a matted and framed photograph of the late 19th Bakula Rinpoche (1917-2003) (figs 1, 2). It was included in his Tibetan autobiography, where it is dated to 1942; the caption indicates that it was taken in Drepung monastery near Lhasa, after Kushok Bakula had earned the Larampa Geshe degree (Bakula 2001, pl. 14).

Figure 1. Framed painted photograph by an unknown photographer of the 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, dated 1942, in the Spituk monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

Figure 2. Close-up of fig. 1

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

- 10 The photograph shows him in full regalia, including a hat and a brocade outer robe. He makes the mudra of exposition (Skt. *vitarka mudrā*) and looks straight at the camera lens, which is almost level with his eyes. Behind his head is a painting on cloth or thangka (Tib. *thang ka*) that appears to be a Refuge Field (Tib. *skyabs 'gro'i zhing*, *tshogs zhing*) composition depicting the Gelug lineage teachers, main Yidam deities, Buddhas of the Ten Directions, the Eight Great bodhisattvas, and so forth¹¹. The square backrest against which he leans has wide white cloths on the borders (actually a ceremonial offering scarf, usually white: *khatak*, Tib. *kha btags*), and in front of him is a red-and-gold lacquered table, stacked on top of another, with a long white *khatak* lining its horizontal surface and hanging over its sides. Placed on the table is a set of ritual objects, including (from right to left) a vajra and bell (left unpainted), a hand-held, double-sided drum (Skt. *ḍamaru*) with a silk banner attached to it, a lidded Chinese porcelain tea bowl on a metal stand between two offering containers, a silver dharma-wheel on a stand behind the porcelain bowl, a “pure water vessel” (Skt. *kuṇḍikā*), and a large vase with peacock feathers for sprinkling the mantra-infused pure water. The altar-table makes it impossible to see Kushok Bakula’s legs, but it seems he is seated cross-legged.

Figure 3. “The Dalai Lama”, by an unknown photographer

© frontispiece for *India and Tibet* (Younghusband 1910)

- 11 Sharing many of these features are photographs of the 13th Dalai Lama that date to 1910-12 when the disruptions caused by a Chinese army in Tibet, followed by the sudden collapse of the Qing dynasty, precipitated his flight from Tibet and his subsequent residence in India. One of the images was used as the frontispiece to Younghusband’s *India and Tibet* of 1910¹² (fig. 3; a sepia-toned version of it, unframed, is pinned inside a cabinet in Spituk monastery, in the same room shown in figs 1, 2). That

particular image is a black-and-white version of a painted photograph that has been relatively well studied¹³. Nevertheless, to my knowledge it has not been observed that it was first published in the London periodical *The Sphere: An Illustrated Newspaper for the Home*, on September 3, 1910. Its caption there reads:

We give here the first photograph that has ever been taken of the Dalai Lama of Tibet in his state robes – that mysterious ruler of an extensive country [...] who until recently had never been seen by European eyes. We have previously published in *The Sphere* (March 26, 1910) a portrait of the Dalai Lama in ordinary clothing, but this is the first illustration of him on his throne with the sacred umbrella over his head seated as for blessing pilgrims. Behind the Lama are the sacred pictures painted on silk. This portrait was taken at Darjeeling at the special request of the Dalai Lama. (*The Sphere* 1910c)

- 12 Two major differences with the Kushok Bakula photograph of thirty years later (see fig. 2) are that both hands are visible (his left hand is wrapped with his string of prayer beads), and the table is at his right side. Placed on the table is a nearly identical fluted metal offering tray in which a *kuṇḍikā* is set; another fluted metal offering vessel is largely covered by a length of folded silk. Although the paintings behind the two lamas are not identical, they equally serve as a religious backdrop for the analogous white-bordered bolster, textiles, tables, and ritual implements. Both photographs conform to a type consisting of a formal pose adopted in a richly decorated ritual space that focuses solely on the hat-wearing incarnating lamas (IP.A).

Figure 4. The 11th Dalai Lama, detail of a mural by an unknown artist in the Utse in Samye, Central Tibet, second half of the 19th century

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2007

- 13 A few examples of earlier painted murals that utilized the same mode of depicting important teachers in Tibet, Ladakh and Zangskar are offered for comparison. Figure 4,

from a mural on the second floor of the Utse in Samye, Central Tibet, depicts the 11th Dalai Lama, Kedrub Gyatso (Tib. mkhas grub rgyam tsho, 1838-1855), identified by inscription. His right hand is in the same position as that of Kushok Bakula (see fig. 2), but here he holds the stem of the lotus blossom at his shoulder. Note the white cloth around the bolster at his back, his frontal gaze¹⁴, and the panoply of ritual objects found on the colourful lacquered low altar table in front of him. These include the vajra and bell, the *damaru* drum, a porcelain cup on a stand, and a *kuṇḍikā*, among other items. Since this is a painting from the second half of the 19th century, it is technically possible that it was contemporary to the earliest of such photographs. Figures 5 and 6, however, show a mural in the abandoned monastery now called the Gonpa Gonma in Photoksar village, Ladakh, that is datable to the 18th century¹⁵. It too has an inscription below the low altar table with a very similar set of ritual objects. The letters (mis)spell the name of Jigten Sumgön (Tib. 'jig rten sum mgon, 1143-1217), the founder of the Drigung Kagyu lineage to which the monastery belonged. The most significant difference, besides the outdoor setting, is the mudra, although that is an iconographic feature, not one related to the pattern of depiction.

Figure 5. Jigten Sumgön, detail of a mural by an unknown artist in the Gonpa Gonma in Photoksar village, Ladakh, ca. 18th century

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2009

Figure 6. Close-up of fig. 5 showing table and inscription

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2009

- 14 An even older prototype painting in Zangskar is found in the cave-like shrine at Phugtal (Tib. phug thar) monastery, honouring Changsem Sherab Zangpo (Tib. byan sems shes rab bzang po, 1395-1457), the late-15th-century teacher who converted Phugtal to the Gelug fold¹⁶. He is the central figure of a biographical narrative mural that probably dates to the 17th century (fig. 7). Not visible in this photograph is a tray of offerings, similar to the low table in fig. 6, that was painted directly below the teacher. We may take it as established, then, that the portrait-icon compositions of Kushok Bakula and the 13th Dalai Lama (see figs 2, 3) derived from an earlier, well-established formula employed by Himalayan painters, and was by no means restricted to artists working for Gelug patrons. The Dalai Lama and Kushok Bakula wanted their photographs to seem as if the image had been composed by a painter, or rather, to convey the same image that painted and sculpted portraits did.

Figure 7. Changsem Sherab Zangpo, detail of a mural by an unknown artist in a cave shrine at Phugtal monastery, Zangskar, ca. 17th century

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2008

- 15 A variant version of this pose has three significant differences from the one just discussed and is possibly more common in photographs. In it, the teacher frequently appears to be seated on a stool or a chair instead of a pillowed “throne”, with his legs down rather than crossed, and his feet exposed. He rests both hands on his thighs, on the cloth covering his lap, or on his knees, and only rarely is shown wearing a hat¹⁷. I will refer to this as Iconic Pose B (IP.B). A large number of such photographs, both painted and unpainted, framed and unframed, hang in various monasteries in Ladakh and Zangskar. One of them, which Clare Harris published in black-and-white (Harris 1999, fig. 41), is framed and suspended near the top of a pillar in one of main assembly halls (Tib. *'du khang*) in Lukhil (Tib. *klu 'khyil*) monastery in Likir village¹⁸ (fig. 8). It depicts a relatively youthful 9th Panchen Lama, Tubten Chokyi Nyima (Tib. *thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma*, 1883-1937). The Panchen Lamas are considered manifestations of the Buddha Amitābha, who is shown directly above the painted photograph in figure 8.

Figure 8. The 9th Panchen Lama, painted photograph, photographer and artist unknown, framed, hanging on a pillar in *lhakhang* at Lukhil monastery in Likir village, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

- 16 In January 1906 a photograph was taken at the conclusion of a brief visit to India by the twenty-nine-year-old Panchen Lama after being invited to visit Buddhist sacred sites (Taxila, Sarnath, and Bodh Gaya) and to meet the Prince of Wales, the Viceroy Lord Minto, and, as it happened, Lord Kitchener¹⁹. The group photograph depicts seven seated people – including the Panchen Lama at centre, along with Frederick O'Connor, the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, and approximately thirty other people, mostly Tibetans travelling with the Panchen Lama or from Darjeeling²⁰. O'Connor presented the invitation approved by the Viceroy to the Panchen Lama, and accompanied him from Shigatse in Tibet to India. The Panchen Lama in the group photograph looks extremely close to the one in figure 8, but in fact that image is from a portrait taken of the Panchen alone. A sepia-toned print of that photograph (see fig. 9) is nailed to the back of a sculpture cabinet at Spituk, with a framed black-and-white photograph of the 19th Kushok Bakula leaning against it. The background in the solitary image of the Panchen Lama in figure 9 is a neutral dropcloth and appears to have been taken in a photography studio in India. For the painted version now in Lukhil monastery (fig. 8), the body of the sitter was carefully cut out of a print of the photograph and pasted onto a cloth that was then painted (and probably later re-photographed), as discussed below. Only slight differences – the pose, dress, and neutral expression – distinguish the group and the solo photographs that were taken around the same time, suggesting Iconic Pose B was a practiced pose that could be adopted at will.

Figure 9. Photographs by unknown photographers of the 9th Panchen Lama (top) and the 19th Kushok Bakula (bottom) in a sculpture case in Spituk monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 17 A similar example in which a cutout figure from a photograph is pasted to a painted background is found inside an “amulet box” (Tib. *ga'u*) in a shrine room usually with an altar (Tib. *lhakhang*, literally “deity room”) in the corner of a packed display case behind glass in Spituk (fig. 10). The figure depicted is an unidentified teacher or abbot, with a halo painted behind his head, seated in Iconic Pose B. At Sankar (alt. Samkar) monastery near Leh, founded by the 18th Kushok Bakula, who himself adopts that pose in known photographs²¹, is a frame enclosing two photographs within a mat (fig. 11). The top one shows the 9th Panchen Lama in monk’s robes surrounded by a group that includes Nationalist Chinese military and Han Chinese civilian officials or scholars²². The bottom photograph shows the 13th Dalai Lama in Chinese silk-brocade clothes surrounded by Tibetan lay officials²³. In both photographs the Panchen and Dalai Lamas are bare-headed and are seated in a chair, facing the camera; their hands are on their knees and their shoes or boots are visible. The 9th Panchen Lama seems to have retained a preference for this pose throughout his life. In the frontispiece to a book published in 1932 by David Macdonald, a much older Panchen Lama is depicted sitting in a chair, wearing Chinese silk robes and leather boots, his hands on his knees, and two Pekinese dogs at his sides²⁴. The book bears the seal of the Panchen Lama, along with a Tibetan inscription that includes his title, as well as a caption by Macdonald that reads in part, “Given to the author by the Tashi Lama (his seal is attached), for a frontispiece for this book” (Macdonald 1932). Even very youthful incarnating lamas adopt this pose (IP.B) when photographed, as is demonstrated by a small black-and-white print of the 19th Lochen Tulku, Tenzin Kalsang Rinchen (Tib. *lo chen sprul sku bstan 'dzin skal bzang rin chen*, b. 1961) of Kinnaur (fig. 12). The image was taken in the

1960s, presumably in a photography studio, and is currently displayed in the nunnery named Choling Namgyal Chomo Gompa (Tib. chos gling rnam rgyal jo mo dgon pa) of Pishu village, Zangskar²⁵. It is rather poignant that the boy's feet, clad in Lahauli-style knitted socks and sandals, do not quite reach the floor. Once again, the incarnate is hatless.

Figure 10. Unidentified teacher in a painted photograph by an unknown photographer in a silver *gau* behind glass in Spituk monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

Figure 11. Framed and matted photographs by unknown photographers hanging in Sankar monastery, Leh Ladakh, showing the 9th Panchen Lama (top), probably in late 1920s or early 1930s, and the 13th Dalai Lama (bottom), taken in Darjeeling in 1910

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2009

Figure 12. The 19th Lochen Tulku as a child, ca. 1967. The photograph by an unknown photographer was inserted into a frame along with several others in the Choling Namgyal Chomo Gumpa of Pishu village, Zangskar

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 18 Lest it be thought that this second pose (IP.B) was exclusive to Gelug hierarchs – the examples given so far having all been of that lineage – let me briefly cite and illustrate examples of photographs of teachers with other affiliations. The “king” of Ladakh posed in exactly this way for a photograph taken for the De Filippi expedition of 1913-1914, probably by C. Antilli, the expedition photographer²⁶. This hints that the pose registers social rather than purely sacred status, overlapping but not identical to religious status.

Figure 13. Togden Shakya Shri in a photograph taken by an unknown photographer in the late 19th or early 20th century, then painted and later placed in a wooden frame in Bardan monastery, Zangskar

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2011

- 19 The revered Drukpa Kagyu yogi, Togden Shakya Shri (Tib. rtogs ldan shakya shri, 1853-1919), also is depicted in Iconic Pose B in a well-known photograph (fig. 13). The copy illustrated here was photographed at Bardan (Tib. bhar gdan, 'bar gdan) monastery, Zangskar. Shakya Shri practiced Mahāmudra teachings early on, but late in life also incorporated Nyingma Dzogchen teachings into his practice. He was a yogi and ex-monk from eastern Tibet who received teachings from the revered Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (Tib. 'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po, 1820-1892), and established a practice centre in Central Tibet that attracted students, including many from Ladakh²⁷. He also had a concern for Zangskar and Lahoul, and one of his disciples is credited with restoring Dzongkul monastery there (Crook & Low 1997, pp. 21-26, 196). Where, when, and by whom this photograph was taken are unknown to me, but both monochrome and at least two different painted versions are in circulation.
- 20 Two successive incarnations of Tagtshang Repa (Tib. stag tshang ras pa), one of the most prestigious incarnation lineages in Ladakh, also adopted this pose (IP.B) in photographs. The main seat of the Tagtsang Repa Tulku is Changchub Samstanling (Tib. byang chub sam stan gling) monastery, usually known as Hemis. It is the wealthiest monastery of Ladakh and several affiliated ones belong to the Drukpa Kagyu lineage in Ladakh, Markha valley, and Zangskar. A monochrome framed photograph of Tagtshang Repa is in the cave-like shrine known as Gotsang, above Hemis monastery in Ladakh (fig. 14). The shrine is named after Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje (Tib. rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje, 1189-1258), who is believed to have meditated there while on his travels beyond Mt. Kailash. It is an important site for the followers of the Drukpa Kagyu

of Ladakh. A painted version of the same photograph at the Thechok Dechen Choeling (Tib. theg mchog bde chen chos gling) monastery in Chemre village, Ladakh, labels the 5th Tagtshang Teacher, Drodul Padma Lingpa (Tib. stag tshang lnga pa 'gro 'dul padma gling pa, dates unknown, died before 1941), who apparently used to meditate at the Gotsang cave. According to a biography of the late Stagna Rinpoche Ngawang Dönyö Dorje (Tib. stag sna rin po che ngag dbang mdo smyon rdo rje, 1920-2010), “Attending upon Taktshang Repa at Götshang Cave, he did preliminary practices of different traditions [...] Shortly after returning to Takna Gönpa, he received the message that his Root-Lama [Tagtshang Repa] had passed away at the Götshang Cave” (Dargye *et al.* 2008, p. 270).

Figure 14. The 5th Tagtsang Repa in a framed photograph by an unknown photographer, probably dating to the early 1930s, at Gotsang Shrine above Hemis monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 21 In the photograph Tagtshang Repa sits cross-legged in front of a brocade drape, his hands on his knees and a small dog in his lap. In front of him, as is the case with many examples illustrating Iconic Pose A, is a table with ritual objects on it: the bell and vajra, the *damaru* drum, and a tea cup with cover and stand. Relatively rare in the adoption of Iconic Pose B (though seen more often in IP.A), he is wearing a crown-like hat.

Figure 15. The 6th Tagtsang Repa in a framed and lightly painted photograph, dated 1953, at Thechok Dechen Choeling monastery in Chemre village, Ladakh. A small photograph of the 1st Kyabje Thuksay Rinpoche has been inserted into the frame; both photographs by unknown photographers

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2013

- 22 His reincarnation, the 6th Tagtshang Repa, Nawang Stanzin Chokyi Nyima (Tib. ngag dbang bstan 'dzin chos kyi nyi ma)²⁸, was photographed as a boy in 1953, according to a printed label hung below the framed photograph in Chemre's Thechok Dechen Choling monastery (fig. 15). According to a hand-lettered label on the slightly tinted photograph, this was produced at the Vassar Studio in Leh; a small photograph of the 1st Kyabje Thuksay Rinpoche (Tib. skyabs rje thuks sras, 1916-1983) was inserted into the frame. The printed label below the frame identifies the 6th Tagtshang and gives the date. The young Tagtshang incarnate Lama sits on or leans against a chair or stool; a camera on a tripod is just behind him. A painted cabinet on his left, heaped with plates of offerings, serves as a table. In a slight variation on Iconic Pose B, his left hand is not flat upon his knee but rather holds his prayer beads.

Figure 16. Drukpa Yongzin Rinpoche in a framed photograph, undated, by an unknown photographer, at Gotsang Shrine above Hemis monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 23 Also displayed in the Hemis Gotsang shrine is a photograph of Yongdzin Rinpoche, a Drukpa lineage regent, pictured in Tibet²⁹ (fig. 16). With long hair and wearing white meditator robes and earrings, he is sitting on a stool. Perhaps it is a youthful 8th Yongdzin, Tokden Paksam Gyatso (Tib. rtogs ldan dpag bsam rgya mtsho, b. 19th century). Such photographs are to be found in nearly every monastery, shrine, hermitage, and home throughout Ladakh and Zangskar.
- 24 In the earlier visual tradition, the Iconic Pose B was not as widely used as Iconic Pose A. For teachers in pre-19th-century depictions to be posed sitting on a stool or chair with their legs down is not nearly as common as shown sitting cross-legged. To be sure, Maitreya in both Buddha and bodhisattva forms is often shown with both legs pendent. Moreover, there are specific iconographic associations with the hands on both knees. For example, it is frequently found in images of the Kagyu teacher Marpa Chokyi Lodro (Tib. mar pa chos kyi blo gros, 1002/1012-1098/1100)³⁰, although it is not exclusive to him and is not the only gesture he is portrayed making. The Nyingma Longchenpa Rabjam Drime Odzer (Tib. klong chen pa rab 'byams dri med 'od zer, 1308-1364) also has his hands in this position, even in the formal portraits where he is wearing a pandit's hat³¹. An unidentified Gelug teacher in a mural at Tashi Odbar (Tib. bkra shis 'od 'bar) monastery in Lingshed, Ladakh (fig. 17), datable to the late 16th century, establishes that it is not confined to Nyingma or Kagyu contexts³².

Figure 17. Unidentified seated Gelug teacher by an unknown artist in the disused Colour Master Hall of Tashi Odbar monastery in Lingshed, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

- 25 Considered as a whole, Iconic Pose B in my opinion is slightly less formal than Pose A, and perhaps more indicative of a public presentation of the position of authority. For example, most of the instances of Pose B show the person without a hat, on a seat that is less throne-like, and in the presence of others. As often as not, the offering table, when one can be seen, is to the side rather than in front. The very fact that pets appear in some instances – those of the aged Panchen Lama in the Macdonald photograph discussed above, and the 5th Tagtshang Repa in fig. 14 – also underscores a slightly more relaxed, even personalized presence.
- 26 Some teachers are photographed in both modes, so it is fair to conclude that neither pose is necessarily suggestive of a higher rank on the part of the sitter. The precise significance of the choice is not yet clear, although the first pose (IP.A) might have associations with a more specialized audience than with the general public. Perhaps it denotes a more formal transmission of religious teachings and religious authority, whereas the second is more of an appearance conveying a generic blessing open to non-initiates. This pose (IP.A) is that of an exalted teacher and regularly appears codified in other visual discourse such as painting and sculpture; Iconic Pose B might be more of a culturally generalized, almost unconscious mode of bodily self-composure and attentiveness, a posture as much as a pose.
- 27 In most photographic group portraits with exalted teachers circulating in monastic contexts today, the incarnating lama is seated while all those in his company are standing, as can be seen in the two photographs in the figure 11. However, in group photographs with Buddhist hierarchs composed by Western photographers, following distinct conventions, all of those in the first row are seated, not just the religious

teacher. In the January 1906 photograph mentioned above, in which the Panchen Lama is seated along with Frederick O'Connor and members of the former's party, all of the seated Tibetans, both lay and monastic, assume this hands-on-knees pose (IP.B) – although of course the two Europeans do not³³. It may be the equivalent of a pose of seated “attention”, as in the military standing pose of readiness and conscious attentiveness to the present moment.

- 28 It is worth comparing such portrait photographs with examples of powerful figures from other cultures whose similarly frontal and formal poses convey authority. A formal photographic portrait of Nasir al-Din Shah on the peacock throne, for example, taken by A. Sevruguin ca. 1880, shows the Shah of Iran looking directly at the camera, feet together and hands on his thighs in a comparably symmetrical pose (Behdad 2013, p. 39). Additionally, the pose adopted by Yoruba leaders in the “traditional formal [photographic] portrait” is strikingly similar, albeit with local characteristics:

The subject always wears his best traditional dress and sits squarely facing the camera. Both hands are placed on the lap or on the knees, and the legs are well apart to spread the garments and display the fabrics. The face has a dignified but distant expression as the eyes look directly at and through the camera [...] The entire body is always included within the frame [...] the figure gives a feeling of sculptural massiveness and solidarity, and the whole pose is one of symmetry and balance. (Sprague 1978, p. 54)

- 29 Even some early photographs of Japanese emperors have comparable aspects (Hirayama 2009, figs 3, 8), as do Qing “imperial visage” (*shengrong*) portraits, which reject “bodily movement or facial expression [...] and] present an emperor in a perfect frontal view” (Wu 1995, p. 27). However, early Thai royal photographic portraits (Stengs 2008) are generally quite different from Tibetan, Yoruba, Japanese, or Iranian authority images. Even if many authority portraits share a stiffness, rigid posing, impassive expressions, symmetry, and regalia, posture and gesture do not form “a universal language but [are] the product of social and cultural differences” (Pérez González 2012, p. 106).

What was done to photographs

- 30 In inheriting pre-photographic conventions of religious portraiture, early photography had both intrinsic strengths, such as its capacity for reproduction and for conveying heightened resemblance, recognisability, and effortless verisimilitude³⁴, as well as intrinsic weaknesses, notably its restricted size and lack of lively colour. Early photographs thus could not yet compete with paintings without modification. As has been observed to have been the case in India, there was “a sense of disappointment regarding photography’s inability to reproduce colour with the same faithfulness” as it reproduced forms (Zotova 2012, p. 37). In response, the desire to manipulate the photographic image stemmed from what was perceived as the limitations of photography’s technical capabilities. Manipulation took many forms, including cropping, composite printing, scratching out, over-painting, retouching, and tinting, among others (Zotova 2012, p. 38).
- 31 While one certainly continues to find black-and-white photographs displayed in monasteries and shrines (such as figs 9, 11, 12, 14, 16), many others have been treated in various ways to overcome obvious deficits in order to capitalize on the virtues. Some were thoroughly painted with transparent washes and opaque paint so that almost no

surface was left uncoloured (see figs 2, 13); others have only one or two tints serving as accents, such as in the figure 15, where yellow was applied to the scarf, fruits, and flowers, along with tiny dots of red and blue added to the foliage here and there³⁵. In some examples transparent paint was applied to parts of the photograph except exposed skin on face and hands, as with the central figures in the figures 8 and 10³⁶. In those examples, however, the figure was given a new opaque painted background that made no attempt to preserve the spatial aspect of the photograph's original setting. The silhouette of the sitter in the figure 10 was cut out and pasted onto a surface that was subsequently or separately painted. While this effect tends to strike Western observers expecting a consistent or unified image as a strange hybrid³⁷, it is in fact quite common and continues to this day throughout the Tibetan visual horizon. This is demonstrated in a recent poster from Amdo Rebgong (fig. 18), which combines a photographic reproduction of the current incarnate of the main monastery in Rebgong, the 8th Kaldan Gyatso (Tib. skal ldan rgya mtsho), Tendzin Jigme Kenden (Tib. bstan 'dzin 'jigs med skal ldan, b. 1979), with traditional religious painting to include his predecessors, most of whom lived in the pre-photographic period.

Figure 18. Colour poster of the 8th Kaldan Gyatso by an unknown artist, shown beneath previous incarnations; as seen on a street in Rebgong, Amdo-Qinghai, PRC, ca. 2001

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2003

What was done *with* photographs

Display strategies

- 32 A further drawback of photography is that unlike painting, it is frozen in contemporaneity of painting (of course, that can also be construed as one of its primary

virtues, though contemporaneity quickly turns to antiquated datedness). Although photographs can be endlessly reprinted – and one tends to see the same photographs of a few teachers used over and over in a wide geographic range – they are limited to living subjects. Painting is not similarly confined. In religious settings, images of important teachers, past and present, were generally commissioned and deployed in painted or sculpted lineage sets. In time, they could be updated. For painters, it was no problem to add the latest portrait to the expanding set of paintings depicting the entire succession of incarnating lamas or abbots, no more difficult than it was to depict a teacher who had lived centuries earlier. But how is a photographer to contribute to such a continuous retrospective tradition without either fictionalizing the earlier members through unacceptable impersonation, focusing only on the subjects who can be photographed, or preying on pre-existing paintings?

Figure 19. View of the main assembly hall at Lukhil monastery in Likir village, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

- 33 In some cases, this drawback is surmounted through a kind of creative exhibition strategy or display scheme of framing painted photographs of important incarnating lamas from different lineages in identical ways and deploying them in symmetrically formal arrangements within the shrine, as is done at Likir. As already indicated, figure 8 is a framed, heavily painted photograph of the 9th Panchen Lama that is attached to one of the pillars in the monastery at Likir. Figure 19 shows that photograph in context, hanging on the left pillar closest to the viewer. On the closest right pillar is a similarly painted and framed photograph of the 13th Dalai Lama (inserted into the frame are two printed postcards labelled “His Holiness Dalai Lama blessing Tibetan People below Potala Palace in Tibet”, depicting the 14th Dalai Lama, and in between, a monochrome photograph of an unidentified teacher³⁸). On the corresponding back left and right pillars are painted photographs of the youthful

successors to the 9th Panchen and the 13th Dalai Lamas: the 10th Panchen and the 14th Dalai Lamas. On the central throne is a large, relatively recent photograph of the latter, signed by him. The relevant point here is that the four photographs on the pillars are arranged in a kind of three-dimensional spatial logic that narrativises the relationships between the two sets of incarnates, acknowledging parallels, intervals, and continuities across time and space. Of course, this could be done with paintings as well.

- 34 In fact, while the earliest “intermediality” of photography consisted of photographs that drew from templates established in portrait sculpture and painting and, depending on the enhancements, of colouring through painting, soon enough it also went in the other direction. That is, photographs were used by painters to create convincing portraits that closely resembled the physiognomic features of the sitter. This also allowed for the continuation of sets, such as the set of pre-1959 murals of the Dalai Lamas on the third floor of the Utse shrine at Samye monastery in Central Tibet. The 14th Dalai Lama portrait is based on photographs, whereas the earlier members of the lineage – including even the 13th Dalai Lama, who as we have seen was himself photographed – are in the traditional, more idealized mode without the individual particularities of facial features seen on the painting of the 14th next to it (fig. 20)³⁹. As already mentioned, while the combination of these two modes – the photographically particularized and inherited idealized – might seem jarring for Western audiences, it does not seem to affect its reception locally. This is attested by many contemporary examples, such as a recent painting of Kushok Bakula by an artist from Mongolia (Kushok Bakula had been India’s ambassador for several years). The work, which was given by the government of Mongolia to his seat monastery, Spituk, is clearly based on a photograph and was done in a naturalistic mode (figs 21, 22)⁴⁰.

Figure 20. Detail of murals by unknown artists depicting the 13th Dalai Lama (left) and the 14th Dalai Lama (right), on the 3rd floor of the Utse shrine at Samye monastery, Central Tibet, mid-20th century

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2005

Figure 21. Thangka painting of the 19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche by an unidentified Mongolian artist, ca. 2009, now in Spituk monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

Figure 22. Close-up of fig. 21

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 35 This kind of intermediality is by no means limited to the Western Himalayas, and the use of photography in the creation process is not limited to the medium of painting even within the Western Himalayas. The nearly life-size portrait-sculpture of Stagna Rinpoche in Bardan monastery (fig. 23) is in effect a photograph transposed into three dimensions. I was told during the installation and consecration ritual that a sculptor at Rewalsar, Himachal Pradesh, had been sent a photograph of the late Stagna Rinpoche and was asked that the sculpture look like him, as it does. The photograph sent probably resembled the portrait photograph of Stagna Rinpoche (though younger by a decade or two) inserted into a silver reliquary stupa (fig. 24), also at Bardan and also consecrated on the same day as the sculpture. Inherited in form and concept ultimately from eastern India – such as the ca. 11th-century example from Ratnagiri in Orissa (fig. 25) – originally in India, Tibet, Ladakh, and Zangskar, these stupas housed sculptures or paintings of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the like in the niches (Biswas 1989). As soon as portrait photo-icons began circulating, they began to be placed in such niches on the front of stupas housing their relics. The way for this was paved in the Himalayas by the recognition of reincarnating spiritual teachers (Tib. *tulku*) as incarnations of these enlightened beings, justifying also the ornamentation of the niche with the inlaying of pearls, turquoise, coral, amethyst, and other synthetic and natural semi-precious stones. Interestingly, in China at Wutai Shan, photographs are also pasted into the niches of bottle-shaped memorial stupas (fig. 26), or were in 1999.

Figure 23. Sculpture of Stagna Rinpoche by an unknown artist in assembly hall of Bardan monastery, Zangskar, ca. 2011

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2012

Figure 24. Stupa by an unknown craftsperson containing relics of Stagna Rinpoche with recent photograph by an unknown photographer of him in the niche in the assembly hall of Bardan monastery, Zangskar; sculpture ca. 2011

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2012

Figure 25. Stupa with Heruka image in the niche by an unknown artist, Ratnagiri archaeological site, Orissa, ca. 11th century

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2017

Figure 26. Stupas by unknown builders with photographs by unknown photographers of deceased Chinese monks at Wutai Shan, PRC

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 1999

- 36 Another example of the integration of photo-icons in ways mandated by prior use of traditional media is again found at Spituk (fig. 27), where three framed images are placed together in a meaningful order, despite slight differences in size. At the centre is a black-and-white photograph of the 9th Panchen Lama. On the Panchen Lama's right (viewer's left) is a painted photograph of the 13th Dalai Lama, and on the Panchen Lama's left (viewer's right), a painting of the Arhat Bakula, the original namesake of Kushok Bakula, stroking a mongoose and surrounded by the other fifteen Arhats, the two Arhat attendants, the four Lokapāla, and, at top centre, Śākyamuni and two disciples. This triptych is particularly "thick" or meaningful on several counts. First, it equates images of different media: photo, painted photo, and painting (the same equivalence of photographs of sculptures of deities and of *tulkus* as equally worthy of reverence on an altar can be seen at Lossar Gompa in Spiti [fig. 28⁴¹]). Second, it seems to equilibrate the two iconic poses discussed above: hatless and with hands on knees (IP.B), and in a detailed religious setting rather than a public one (IP.A). Third, it links the three *tulku* who are the foremost incarnations of the Gelug order in Zangskar and Ladakh in a way that reflects and respects their institutional and personal history as well as their relationships. Fourth, it connects them through an order that is meaningful for those familiar with Tibetan religious and artistic patterns but might be invisible otherwise.

Figure 27. Framed monochrome photograph by unknown photographer of the 9th Panchen Lama (center); framed painted photograph by unknown photographer of the 13th Dalai Lama (left); and framed thangka by unknown artist depicting the 16 Arhats, with Bakula at center (right), ca. 19th century, in a shrine at Spituk monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

Figure 28. Shrine room at Lossar Gumpa, Spiti, with recent colour photograph by unknown photographer of Triloknāth Avalokiteśvara sculpture (left) by unknown artist, painted photograph of young Lochen Tulku, ca. mid-1970s (far right) and unidentified figure (center), by unknown photographers

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2016

- 37 In Himalayan visual discourse one of the dominant spatial hierarchies of order is not left to right but centre first, then the subject's right (viewer's left), and then the subject's left (viewer's right). Decoding this we can read it as Amitāyus/Panchen Lama

in the centre, the highest or most senior position, followed by Avalokiteśvara on his right (the Dalai Lamas are considered emanations of Avalokiteśvara), followed by the Arhat/Bakula Rinpoche on Amitāyus's left. The double photograph arranged with the 9th Panchen Lama above the 13th Dalai Lama (see fig. 11), also gives precedence to Amitāyus Buddha/Panchen Lama over the Dalai Lama, but does it in a different implied system, above and below.

- 38 Yet as the great scholar of Buddhist art, archaeology and Asian languages Albert Grünwedel recognized as early as 1900:

In the person of the grand Lama of Lha.sa, the Sprul.ba [i.e. *tulku*] of Avalokiteśvara is incarnated. In the Paṇ.chen of Bkra.śis.lhun.po [Tashilhunpo], *who is less than Rgyal.ba (Dalai Lama) in the matter of holiness*, the Sprul.ba of Amitābha Buddha [...] is incarnated. (Grünwedel 2013, p. 116, emphasis added)

- 39 However, in both these framings it is the Panchen Lama who is given pride of place. This is rather intriguing, in the context of the sometimes estranged or tense relationship between the 9th Panchen and the 13th Dalai Lamas, as well as between the 10th Panchen and the 14th Dalai Lamas, and with the 18th and the 19th Kushok Bakulas' connections to all of them. By the time the ten-year-old 19th Kushok Bakula arrived at Drepung in 1927 or 1928, the Panchen Lama had fled Tibet after tensions between the two high lamas. He would die in exile in December 1937 on his way back from China and Amdo, so Kushok Bakula could have had little personal connection to him. The 19th Kushok Bakula interacted much more formally, at least at first, with the 13th Dalai Lama, who died in 1933. By the time the young Kushok Bakula left Tibet, the 14th Dalai Lama was still a child, and according to the Kushok Bakula's autobiography, his degree was awarded in the presence of the then five year old 14th Dalai Lama. Later, in India, they were apparently very close, and one might have expected to find the Dalai Lama in the central position based on personal connections. On the other hand, the 18th Kushok Bakula might have had more interaction with the 9th Panchen Lama and so this arrangement privileging the Panchen Lama perhaps reflects their relationship, or else the strong connections that Ladakhi Gelug monasteries generally maintained in recent centuries (until about 1950) with Tashilhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama. Changsem Sherab Zangpo is credited with founding a hostel at Tashilhunpo for Western Himalayan monks. Many more monks received their advanced education at Tashilhunpo under the Panchen Lamas than in the monasteries of the more distant Lhasa⁴².

Figure 29. Double frame containing lightly painted monochrome photographs by unknown photographers of the young 14th Dalai Lama (left) and the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa (right), ca. mid-20th century, in the Choling Namgyal Chomo Gompa of Pishu village, Zangskar

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 40 A different angle on the use of old photographs to reflect current developments is found in a small double frame on an altar at the Choling Namgyal Chomo Gompa in Pishu village in Zangskar (fig. 29). The metal frame brings into alignment a photograph of the young 14th Dalai Lama on the left and the slightly older 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpai Dorje (Tib. karma pa gyal ba rang byung rig pa'i rdo rje, 1924-1981) on the right. Both are examples of monochrome photographs, relatively informal ones at that, especially that of the Dalai Lama, which almost takes the form of a “headshot” along the lines of Western portrait photography. There is a hint of a smile on both faces. Both images have also been treated with minor tinting of accents in yellow and red. What is incisive about this framing is more than that both are *tulkus* and heads of the Gelug and Karmapa lineages respectively, both are emanations of Avalokiteśvara, both left Tibet in 1959 to go into exile in India, and that both made frequent and extensive visits to the West. They certainly did know each other, but it was not until the year 2000, when the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje (Tib. o rgyan 'phrin las rdo rje, b. 1985) escaped from his Chinese handlers and also went into exile in Tibet, that those two actually met. When they did, they seemed to demonstrate mutual respect, regard, and even affection. News and photographs of their meetings became sensations throughout the various arenas of Tibetan Buddhism, including Ladakh and Zangskar.
- 41 I argue that the pairing of the two photographs in the nunnery is a reflection of that connection, the equivalent of a “celebrity marriage” in social media, one that the nature of photography and the ingrained ability to see in a contemporary *tulku* a previous incarnation, or vice versa, made possible. Whichever of the nuns joined them in the frame made a clever and subtle move that her colleagues could recognize. It speaks to the popularization, if not egalitarianism, that photography afforded. The

“innovation [that] is possible beyond the sphere of official public culture in Dharamsala”, as Harris observed, was not performed only by exiled and Tibetan artists with access to “reprographic technologies” (Harris 1999, p. 98). In a sense, the nuns in Pishu and the monks in Likir and Spituk have, simply through the arrangement of old photos (as in figs 19, 27, 29), accomplished what Harris insightfully credits contemporary artists with doing in depicting the Buddha, the 14th Dalai, and the 10th Panchen Lamas together on a poster for sale in Lhasa:

The image [of the poster] condenses large expanses of time and geography in order for all three to appear in the same space which they occupy in the minds of Tibetans, that is as part of a lineage of Buddhist teachers whose physical forms may alter but whose spirits are part of a constant process of transmigration. (Harris 1999, p. 97)

Chromolithography

- 42 An alternate aspect of mechanical reproduction and intermediality tied to photography needs to be recognized here, though it is not nearly as common as early photographs still displayed in contemporary shrines and monasteries. I refer to the use of printing technology, often referred to as chromolithography. In the summer of 2013, I noticed an intriguing example in a household shrine in a remote Zangskar hamlet called Relagong. It is a print, a mechanically reproduced chromolithograph poster of the 13th Dalai Lama, sewn to a cloth backing so as to frame it, to which upper and lower wooden rollers were affixed just as if it were a *thangka* (figs 30-32). A gauzy dust cover serves to protect its still-vibrant colours. The mounting with roller and hanger functions to construct it as a *thangka* and thus signals it as worthy as a focus for reverence. This in turn underscores the capacious framework into which photographs, and prints of photographs, could easily be accommodated within the set of icons capable of consecration – or else the subset of “self-manifesting” (Skt. *svayaṃbhū*) images not in need of consecration.

Figure 30. Chromolithograph produced by the Ravi Varma Press, mounted as a thangka, depicting the 13th Dalai Lama, ca. first half of the 20th century, in Relagong hamlet, Zangksar

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2013

Figure 31. Close-up of fig. 30

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2013

Figure 32. Chromolithograph illustrated in fig. 30, with dust cover

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2013

- 43 The chromolithograph is based on a photograph of the 13th Dalai Lama, one of several taken when he was staying in Kalimpong or Darjeeling in 1910 by Charles Bell and others⁴³. A cropped version was published in 1910 by Francis Younghusband, who in his list of illustrations wrote that it was “Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of the ‘Daily Graphic’” (Younghusband 1910, xv). It has been identified as “a portrait photo taken in studio of Th. Paar, Darjeeling, India, during the Dalai Lama’s stay there, 1910-12”⁴⁴. The image circulates with different painted backgrounds, but the light and shadow falling on his face and hands is identical on all of them; the one in Younghusband’s book is closest in terms of folds of the garment and remnants of the background.
- 44 Apparently, a copy was also acquired by one of the most successful commercial Indian presses, the Ravi Varma Press⁴⁵. So, we have a poster, based on a photograph, that was coloured by a painter, printed in a press, marketed or at least circulated into Himalayan regions and then, finally, treated by its owner as a thangka painting by giving it a cloth mounting and dust cover. The poster was produced by the Ravi Varma Press in Lonavala, Maharashtra, between what are now Pune and Mumbai. Ravi Varma (1848-1906), the famous Indian artist from Kerala, and his brother founded the press and hired the German printer Fritz Schleicher to run it, later selling the press to Schleicher, who ran it until he died in 1935⁴⁶. The press “continued successfully until 1972, when a devastating fire destroyed the factory along with the original lithographic stones etched with Ravi Varma images” (Davis 2012, p. 83). Obviously, since Ravi Varma died in 1906 and the photograph was not taken until 1910, this was one of many of the press’s designs that had nothing to do with Ravi Varma himself. A registration number appears in the lower left corner, no. 623; other prints, such as a Matsya Viṣṇu print

numbered 642, have been dated variously from ca. 1900 to ca. 1900-1915⁴⁷. We can assume a date of ca. 1910-1915 for this particular design, at the height of interest in the 13th Dalai Lama in India, soon after his visit to Darjeeling. Of course, it may have been reprinted from the original stones at any time until 1972. It seems likely to have been acquired in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, or Zangskar itself, but surely was mounted in Zangskar according to local prescriptions.

Figure 33. Printed poster produced by an unknown press based on a photograph by an unknown photographer of the young 14th Dalai Lama, second half of the 20th century, mounted as a thangka, in Dzonkhul monastery, Zangskar

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2013

- 45 A similar item is in the lower shrine at Dzonkhul monastery in Zangskar: a printed poster, printed in a bluish monochrome, based on a headshot of the 14th Dalai Lama as a young adult wearing black glasses (fig. 33). As with the print at Relagong, it is treated like a thangka, but the tailor at the monastery, much more affluent than the private individuals in remote Relagong hamlet, used fine silk, including a patch of imported Chinese silk on the lower “door” of the frame, to mount it. Despite the silk dust cover, however, the print has suffered water damage. The fact that Dzonkhul is a Drukpa Kagyu monastery but includes an image of the 14th Dalai Lama is a testament to the transsectarian status he has attained in Ladakh and Zangskar.
- 46 In the Dorje Dzong nunnery in Zangskar hangs a “Shri Budh Gaya Darshan” poster from the “Kailash Pustkalaya” company (fig. 34). Some local Buddhist pilgrim must have gone to Bodh Gaya, perhaps stopping in Gaya on the way, unless the bookseller had a branch or representative in Bodh Gaya. There is still a Kailash Pustakalay on G. B. Road, Gaya, with the same pin code as that published on the poster: “823001” (Indiaonline 2018). In this case, in terms of “image customization”⁴⁸, the poster is merely stiffened on a cloth backing and has a woollen thread sewn to it, in order to hang it in front of a

thangka and a silk banner, surmounted by a *khatak*. The printed poster is built up from a painted black-and-white photograph of the restored Mahābodhi temple on the left, and a painting – probably also based on a photograph – of the sculpture of the Buddha in the main shrine of the temple. Surrounding these two main panels are twenty painted scenes of the Buddha's life, most in roundels connected with a baroque, Western, *fleur-de-lis* type of patterning. On the lower margin is a badly written inscription in Tibetan – making it clear it was intended especially for a Tibetan market – of “mdzad pa bcu gnyis”, meaning “the twelve great deeds” of the Buddha⁴⁹.

Figure 34. “Shri Budh Gaya Darshan” poster, produced by the Kailash Pustkalaya company, depicting the Mahābodhi temple (left), the main sculpture inside the shrine (right), bordered by episodes from the life of Buddha; found in the Dorje Dzong nunnery in Zangskar, ca. mid-20th century

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

- 47 This example of a popular mass-produced commercial poster from eastern India is far afield from indigenous Himalayan art production. Nevertheless, it still needs to be accounted for in the realm of 20th- and 21st-century Buddhist religious practices. As Pratapaditya Pal points out in his introduction to an exhibition of the H. Daniel Smith Poster Archive: “Whatever their value for art historians certainly [such prints] are important documents for the study of the dynamic and continuous evolution of religious iconography” (Pal 1997, p. 27).

Figure 35. Framed chromolithograph produced by an unknown press depicting B. R. Ambedkar, second half of the 20th century, at Spituk monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2015

- 48 A final example, returning to the genre of the authority portrait, remains in the realm of mass-produced imagery in India. At Spituk monastery, in the same space as so many images of the 18th and 19th Kushok Bakulas, is a poster of Bhimro Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956), the Dalit leader who wrote a draft of the Indian constitution and late in life converted to Buddhism (fig. 35). Although part of the Hindi caption is covered up, the visible portion reads “Baba Saheb Ambedkar”, using his popular title. The 18th Kushok Bakula would not have known him, but the 19th certainly knew of him, and may very well have known him personally. The 19th Bakula Rinpoche lobbied to overturn the 1950 Jammu and Kashmir state ordinance limiting landholding by monasteries, and “it was with the interventions of Prime Minister Nehru and India’s Law Minister Dr. B. R. Ambedkar that Ladakh’s monasteries were exempted from the purview of the Ordinance” (Shakspo 2008, p. 5).
- 49 Ambedkar had been interested in Buddhism for many years before he formally converted to it in 1956, shortly before his death. He quite possibly met Bakula, who in the early 1950s knew Nehru and was playing a public political role representing Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir state and in New Delhi in the central government. In 1996 Kushok Bakula attended the formal opening of the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Museum and Memorial in Pune (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Museum & Memorial 2018). Dozens of chromolithograph designs featuring Ambedkar have circulated in India and continue to be produced⁵⁰. The one illustrated in fig. 35 shows him in a scholarly way, with one hand resting on a stack of books on a table, and a bookcase of multivolume books with English titles on the spines⁵¹. He appears as a secular, educated, modern nationalist leader, projecting an image that is a far cry from the “transcendental secular” that

Kajri Jain found in so-called calendar art in the mid- and late 20th century (Jain 2007b, also 2007a). It is surprising at first to find him in a hand-painted frame in a Buddhist monastery in Ladakh, but, as with many images at Spituk, the personal connection to one or another Kushok Bakula seems inevitable.

Photographing paintings

- 50 I have examined ways that photographs in Ladakh and Zangskar are altered through painting, their meanings modified or expanded through strategies of mounting, framing, and display, or transformed through the technology of chromolithography printing. A final example of the range of things that have been done with photographs is found tucked behind a large, new standing eleven-headed, one-thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara clay sculpture to the viewer's right of the main altar in the assembly hall at Sankar monastery in Leh (figs 36-37). It looks ancient, tattered, and dim. Dust motes and old spider-webs mar the visibility. It is hard to read; the image itself is relatively small within an outsized, unevenly spaced mat that is decorated in relief with the eight auspicious emblems of Buddhism. The photograph under the mat is painted with yellow and red, and one recognizes a Gelug teacher seated against a bolster as in the figures 2 and 3 but seen from a slight angle. Yet it both is and is not a photograph. It is, in the sense that it is a print from a negative. It is not, in that what was exposed to the lens was not a person, but a drawing of a person, a pencil drawing that takes us back to the beginning of portrait photography of Tibetan high lamas.

Figure 36. Framed painted photograph of a drawing (or a postcard of a drawing) of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1905 by N. Y. Kozhevnikov, in Sankar monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

Figure 37. Close-up of fig. 36

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 51 Younghusband's expeditionary force invaded Tibet and fought its way to Gyantse and then Lhasa in August 1904. Just before it arrived, on July 30, the 13th Dalai Lama left Lhasa and headed north. Three or four months later he arrived in Urga, Mongolia, where he stayed for a year (Shakabpa 1988, pp. 293, 300-301). As recounted by Gennady Leonov (1991), Russian Orientalists, including Sergey F. Oldenburg (1863-1934), were apprised of his arrival, and scholars and officials were dispatched to meet with him there. Even before that, Pyotr Kozlov (1863-1935), who later discovered the ruins of the Tangut city of Khara Khoto, had been sent by the Russian emperor Nicolas II (r. 1894-1917) in May 1905 to bring gifts from the court and from the Russian Geographical Society. According to Kozlov, he was treated very graciously by the Dalai Lama. "I was allowed to take photographs of his house as well as the persons accompanying him on his trip to Urga. But the Dalai Lama did not allow me to take a photograph of himself" (Leonov 1991, p. 119). However, the "ruler of Tibet kindly allowed my companion N. Ya. Kozhevnikov [an artist travelling with Kozlov] to draw several portraits of him" (Leonov 1991, p. 119). Two of them were inscribed by the Dalai Lama's scribes in Tibetan with the names and titles of the Dalai Lama, and given to Kozlov to present to Nicolas II. The third the Dalai Lama kept for himself.
- 52 The two portraits presented to Nicolas II entered his personal library in September 1905; after the 1917 Revolution, they were transferred to the Oriental Department, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. According to Leonov, from 1920 to 1991, when he published them, "[a]ll this time the portraits lay forgotten in the library of Hermitage Museum" (Leonov 1991, p. 121). Perhaps not quite so.
- 53 Besides being published in Leonov's article, the two pencil drawings were also published in 2005 in an essay by Martin Brauen (2005, figs 238-239). In the same book is

illustrated a postcard with a lightly painted version of the same drawing in a private collection in Paris (Henss 2005b, fig. 286). Although not mentioned in the text, several features of the postcard are worth noting, since they allow for at least a terminus ad quem not only for the printing of the postcard, but also for the sending of it. First, there is a vertical inscription on the seated figure's proper left in standard Chinese 達賴喇嘛, meaning "dalai lama". On the figure's proper right is a representation of the Qing-dynasty flag attached to a pole – a dragon on a yellow ground chasing a red sun in the upper left corner. It also has a German label at the bottom: "Dalai Lama / Buddhistischer Hohepriester / [...]"⁵². A half-cent postage stamp was attached to the lower right corner, and an illegible postmark was franked on top of it. The stamp itself is inscribed "Chinese Imperial Post" in both Chinese and English. It is a Qing-dynasty stamp; such stamps were "superseded by those of the Republic of China" in 1912, after the revolution (Gelder 2018).

- 54 Thus sometime between 1905 and 1912, a version of the drawing made in the summer of 1905 in Urga was available for sale in China before the fall of the dynasty, probably in the German foreign concession operating at that time. The painting was done by someone who had no knowledge of Tibetan Buddhist monastic conventions: the hat and outer cloak are painted blue, the inner robe green with black lapels. The design of the double- or crossed-vajra (Skt. *visvavajra*) on the cloth that hangs over the throne (as in figure 3) was misunderstood and turned into an unconnected series of circles. On the other hand, the painter added a fluent, readable Chinese inscription and an accurate Qing flag. It must have been painted in China, printed there, purchased, and mailed with a half-cent stamp of the Chinese Imperial Post.
- 55 Although the "original" pencil drawing kept in St. Petersburg and the printed version of the postcard are very similar, subtle differences exist. In the drawing, the bottom of the cushion is parallel to the bottom edge of the drawing, and the cloth with the design of a double vajra was drawn as if it was parallel to the picture plane, even though the seat and the figure are in three-quarter view. In the painted postcard, the bottom of the seat cushion is not parallel with the bottom edge, and the cloth overhang is also uneven. These variations were not striking enough to draw comment in their previous publication. They are close enough for both to have been based on the same original, but they are not identical. The Sankar photograph (see figs 36-37) resembles the postcard, not the drawing, though it is absent the flag, the Chinese inscription, and the stamp. Moreover, the colours of the painting are appropriate to the Gelug Dalai Lama: red robes, yellow hat, and outer robe.
- 56 While I have been unable to trace the manner or the time in which this photograph of a print of a drawing (see figs 36-37) came into the hands of Sankar monastery, most likely it was through the agency of the 18th Kushok Bakula, who had Sankar built and whose possessions and photographs his successor revered (Linrothe 2013b, pp. 174-175). Alternatively, it could have been acquired by the 19th Kushok Bakula himself, whose belongings and photographs are spread throughout Sankar and Spituk. Although the 18th had studied in Tibet early in his life, it is unlikely he was there in the crucial years of 1905-1911, although someone could have brought him the photograph from Tibet later on, before he died in 1917. Or perhaps, in the late 1920s and 1930s when the 18th Kushok Bakula was in Central Tibet and the 13th Dalai Lama was still alive or was still being mourned, searched for, and found in the person of the 14th, a precious

memento such as the postcard was circulating there and was reproduced and properly repainted.

- 57 So what was the source of this precious memento? Three facts are known: a slightly different version of the known photograph was turned into a postcard and was available in eastern China before 1911; Kozhevnikov made at least three drawings, only two of which are presently known; and a reproduction of the postcard-version, in a dusty form that clearly is not a recent acquisition, survives in Ladakh, probably from Tibet. It seems ineluctable, albeit still speculative, that the only source for the postcard and its later incarnation is not the drawing that Nicolas II received in 1905 that came to light only in 1991, but rather is the third drawing that was retained by the 13th Dalai Lama. After leaving Urga in 1906, he travelled to Amdo and stayed there for some time, then proceeded east to Xian, to Wutai Shan, and in 1908 arrived in Beijing (then Beiping).
- 58 As Shakabpa describes it, he was received there on September 27 “with great ceremony. He stayed in the Yellow Palace (Huang Ssu), originally built for the fifth Dalai Lama, and recently renovated. He was received at the railway station by the Mayor of Peking and the internal and external ministers” (Shakabpa 1988, p. 302)⁵³. In other words, his arrival was notable and newsworthy at a time when the Younghusband expedition had made Tibet a contentious international issue. That issue occasioned delicate negotiations, treaties, and missions to Beijing by and among representatives of the governments of the Manchu Qing, Great Britain, Russia, and of course Tibet. Interestingly, Rockhill reports that the Dalai Lama asked him personally for a photograph of the US President (Theodore Roosevelt), and that before he arrived, from Wutai Shan “he has sent greetings to several of the foreign Ministers in Peking, notably to the American [...] and to the German, who sent him a portrait of the emperor William” (Cheng Long 2016, pp. 92-93, 189). Portraits of rulers were apparently circulating in this brief period during which the supply and demand for the image of the 13th Dalai Lama came together in Beijing, before the Qing invasion of Tibet in 1910 that would drive him into exile in India for two years and produce his early photographs.
- 59 That this image was considered astonishing in Tibet is attested by the report of a learned Buryat Russian (B. B. Baradyin; 1878-1938) visiting Urga who became friendly with the Tibetan artists in the train of the 13th Dalai Lama. They had seen Kozhevnikov’s drawing “and were astonished with the likeness of the image. They even did not believe me when I told them that this portrait had been made by a human hand. They thought it had been done with the help of some mechanical device. [They asked] with curiosity whether I knew those methods [of drawing] and what was the secret of that amazing art” (Leonov 1991, p. 118).
- 60 Although the technique was admired, it is apparent that the drawing was done by someone schooled in a completely different convention for portraiture. This is revealed not only by the shadows, modulated colours, and highlights (those on the robe in the original drawing are copied by the painters of the postcard and the photograph in Sankar), but also by the three-quarters view and the lack of engagement with the eyes of the figure, which make him look more aloof than intense or attentive.
- 61 The two extant drawings in the Hermitage are a pair that, though drawn by an admittedly rather mediocre Western-trained artist, recapitulate the two modes of portrait photography argued earlier. Leonov describes them as follows: “In one of the

portraits he is depicted dressed in a monk's robe of the Gelugpa order, in the other – in a rather informal situation – with a small dog, and a typical Tibetan cup and horn vessel and a small bottle with snuff” (Leonov 1991, p. 109). The first representation is more formal, resembling Iconic Pose A, showing him wearing his hat and looking straight ahead, the *khatak*-rimmed bolster at his back, even though the artist chose to depict him at a slight angle. In the other representation he is less formally dressed, wears no hat, has both hands in his lap (though one of them holds a rosary), and with a pet dog at his right knee. This closely resembles Iconic Pose B. The 13th Dalai Lama explicitly gave permission for an artist to draw him, not photograph him, and he did so on at least two different occasions. Although the artist chose the angle of view in the first drawing, it was the Dalai Lama who chose the pose, gesture, and accoutrements. They correspond closely to the pre-photographic conventions of the well-established Himalayan Buddhist visual discourse.

Conclusions. The Himalayan Buddhist case and other encounters with authority portrait photography

[T]he application of transparent and opaque paint to a photographic print was not unique to the Indian context. By the time of the invention of photography, the histories of India and Europe were already enmeshed, producing images from a single history of photography. The challenge has been how to write this transcultural history when location and historical circumstance remain salient features. Photography in India and photography in Europe developed along both similar and different paths. This exploration of Indian painted photographs illustrates that India participated in a transcultural history of photography from its beginnings, a history that has yet to be adequately written. (Dewan 2012, pp. 31-33)

62 Before the introduction of the camera, most cultures with a highly developed visual tradition – especially painting – first tended to create photographs that reflected that earlier tradition. I can think of no exception. The pattern of reproducing the familiar was shared; the specific genres, formats, compositions, and expectations of affect were specific to those cultures and their visual traditions. Many of the earliest photographers of European photographs reproduced genres already long-established: portraits, historical or mythological tableaux, landscapes, the picturesque. To take the latter as an example, the renowned art historian James S. Ackerman documented the role of the picturesque aesthetic in the early photography in France and England (1840s and 1850s) by practitioners from William Henry Fox Talbot to Roger Fenton, Baron Gros to Gustave Le Gray. He concluded: “The Picturesque options imposed the formal precepts of an established taste [...]. Consciously or not, the photographers of the Picturesque legitimized photography’s claim of to be accepted as an art form by placing it in the established tradition of landscape painting and prints” (Ackerman 2003, p. 92)⁵⁴.

63 It was no different in Thailand and Indonesia⁵⁵, or in China. One of Wu Hung’s insights into early Chinese photography is the following:

There is a marked difference between Chinese and foreign approaches toward a composed scene [...] once Chinese photographers started to make such images [...] these pictures are imbued with a distinct literati taste. In fact, many are composed like traditional landscape paintings, with mountains and rivers (*shanshui*) as the two principal visual elements. (Wu Hong 2011, pp. 10-11)

- 64 Stuart and Rawski acknowledge that “[p]ainting traditions clearly influenced early portrait photography”, that the “two formats immediately began to compete for clientele, initiating a tendency toward mutual borrowing and imitation”, and that, in turn, “the new popularity of photographs affected ancestor portrait paintings” (Stuart & Rawski 2001, pp. 168-169).
- 65 Visual anthropologists such as Pinney rightly question an oversimplified, essentialist division between “Western” versus “Indian” ways of seeing which can sometimes be inferred in Judith Mara Gutman’s pathbreaking study of early Indian photographs. Nevertheless, Gutman showed how habits and formats formed by pre-photographic visual traditions, especially miniature painting, conditioned early Indian photography and photographers in ways homologous with the ones I have argued in this essay for Western Himalayan portrait photography (Pinney 1997, pp. 77-82; Gutman 1982, pp. 62-80).
- 66 Mirjam Brusius noted the parallels between miniature painting and photography in Qajar Iran (1785-1925), where the “photograph in Iran became first and foremost a royal art and was carried out intensively at the court”, the same court that inherited a highly polished book illumination practice from the Safavid court (1501-1736) (Brusius 2015, p. 60). Ali Behdad stressed the “long-standing relationship between royal portraiture and political power”, noting that “at the origin of photography in Iran is the royal portrait photograph”, although he aligns the self-portrait images of one Shah in the 1860s to European portrait conventions that had been absorbed by the cosmopolitan ruler (Behdad 2013, p. 33). Pérez González’s extensive study of 19th-century Iranian portrait photographers, on the other hand, underscored that a number of aspects of early Iranian photography were “inherited from Persian miniature paintings”, including poses, gestures, the presumed order of looking (right to left instead of left to right) and the isometric rather than linear perspective in the depiction of pictorial space. Her shrewd observation about a starting point in Iran independent of European expectations and the gradual adoption of Western aesthetic patterns is applicable to most other cultures, including Himalayan Buddhist cultures: “Iranian photographers made elements found in nineteenth-century Western photography their own; they not only [eventually] adopted studio paraphernalia but also the attitude and pose of the sitter” (Pérez González 2012, p. 178).
- 67 The photographs personally promoted by the Panchen and Dalai Lamas in the first decade or so of the 20th century that have been discussed here were similarly created in the Central Tibetan “courts” and their circuits in Darjeeling. They too may have been stimulated by the circulation of photographic images of other monarchs or presidents⁵⁶, or of their representatives in India, but translated into a Himalayan portrait idiom. Like other portraits of authority, these too were perhaps first distributed by the sitter and then circulated much more broadly. Besides bearing the traces of the seal-carver’s ancient art, they differ in that they become touch relics and relics of indexical resemblance and presence.
- 68 Just as Pérez González argued that Iranian photography gradually loosened the thrall of earlier painting, Isabella Doniselli also considers that in their photography “the Japanese are assimilating and appropriating the [aesthetic] principles of another culture”, even while acknowledging the view that early “photography is a direct continuation of traditional painting” (Doniselli 1980, p. 18). Many of the early themes taken up by Japanese photographers were those of one of photography’s immediate

predecessors and contemporary art forms, “print making” (Jap. *ukiyo-e*). Thus many early Japanese photographs (and also exoticising Western photographs) depict beautiful, and beautifully clad, courtesans (“geisha”), samurai (or actors in the roles of samurai in Kabuki theatre), and landscapes⁵⁷, mirroring the popular themes of woodblock prints. Claudia Delank concluded that “[t]he Japanese coloured woodblock print (*ukiyo-e*) was, art historically speaking, the predecessor print medium of Yokohama photography in terms of their themes, as well as with regard to their compositions and techniques, such as that of hand-colouring” (Delank 2002, p. 18).

- 69 At the same time, the horizontality of many early painted landscape photographs, including stitched panoramas, inevitably recalls both “painted handscrolls” (Jap. *emakimono*) and “multi-panel folding screens” (Jap. *byōbu*). One of the most beautiful of such early panoramas by a Japanese photographer, which perfectly illustrates the pictorial values of Japanese painting as found on handscrolls and screens, is *Nagasaki Harbor*, generally attributed to Uchida Kuiche (or sometimes Ueno Hikoma) (Kinoshita 2003, pl. 37; Kaneko *et al.* 1993, pp. 56-57). The use of undulating space, alternating between high, dense foreground and open, empty background, of distant views and the *repoussoir* effect (a framing device on one side of a painting that visually connects foreground and background, mediating the transition), the integration of human and natural subject matter, the independent coherence of each of the four sections as well as the composition in its entirety, all emerge out of the careful planning of handscrolls and screens. It is no surprise then, that some of the early Japanese photographers – Shima Kakoku, for example – were trained in traditional painting (Kinoshita 2003, p. 26).
- 70 Early photography in Japan and in the Himalayan Buddhist realms share a number of features besides their connection in each case to earlier art forms. These features include an initially unfavourable comparison of photographs with paintings, the attempt to ameliorate these differences by relying on painting skills to customize and manipulate the photographic print, and the mounting of photographs in the same ways that paintings were treated. Takahashi Yuichi, a painter of the late 19th century, compared photographs disapprovingly to paintings “for being small, indistinct, devoid of color, and quick to fade” (Kinoshita 2003, p. 27). Painting them starting in the 1860s responded to these perceived deficiencies and in doing so “provides some insight into how Japanese of that era responded to photography and to the disparity between painting and the new medium” (Kinoshita 2003, p. 28). These attitudes mirror those discussed already with regard to the painting of the photographs preserved in monasteries in Ladakh and Zangskar. As with the mounting of photo-derived prints as if they were thangka, complete with wooden rollers and dustcovers (see figs 32, 33), so too some early Japanese photographs were impressed, like paintings, with the seals of the artist or collector and mounted as hanging scrolls or handscrolls. For example, a photograph by Kurokawa Suizan (1882-1944) depicting Mount Fuji has a red seal in the lower left corner and is mounted on silk and paper exactly like a traditional “hanging scroll” (Jap. *kakemono* or *kakejiku*) painting (Kaneko 2003, pl. 68). A photograph attributed to Tamoto Kenzō, *Emperor Meiji’s Fleet in Kakodate Harbor* of 1876, was one of two albumen photographs mounted on a paper scroll with a silk border in the precise manner of an “handscroll” (Jap. *emakimono*; Kaneko 2003, pl. 43). These are clear demonstrations of the way in which photographs were integrated into a pre-existing

system of image-making and display, and precisely parallel instances in the Himalayan Buddhist context.

- 71 Another functional similarity among Himalayan and other cultures' photography practice is the use of photography for memorialization of the deceased. In Japan, India, among the Yoruba, in Buddhist China (see fig. 26), and in the western Himalayas (see fig. 24), ways were found to incorporate (often painted) photographs into local commemorations. Pinney tracked a photographer-painter in western India who produced painted prints "designed to be the visible foci of relatives' memories and also to serve as icons for *shraddh* and *pitr paksh* [both referring to ancestor worship] commemoration" (Pinney 1997, p. 201). While Pinney was referring to more recent practices in India, Dewan has shown that memorial portrait photography can be traced back to the 19th century in India (Dewan 2012, p. 30).
- 72 According to Sprague, among the Yoruba the traditional formal portrait "is meant to memorialize the subject [...] in terms of how well he has embodied the traditional Yoruba ideals [and when] the subject dies, this portrait might be carried in his funeral procession" (Sprague 1978, p. 55). In Japan, photographs substituted for painted portraits or carvings and were interred with deceased hereditary rulers and lords such as *daimyō* and shogun in specially built shrines. These were not portraits in death, but substitutes for the living person (Kinoshita 2003, p. 27). Early photographs of the Thai ruler are "allied with a cult of king images, one learned in part from exchanges with European monarchs, but one also linked to a cult worship of former and deceased monarchs made instinct with power. By the late 19th century at least, these sculptures were enshrined in a royal pantheon" (Clark 2013, p. 77). Reference has been made above to the interaction between painting and early photography studies in the production of Chinese ancestor portraits. What is unique about the Himalayan practices is not that portrait photography is linked to memorialization, but to the specific local iterations and the understanding of the role of icons as relics and teachers as recurring manifestations of the enlightened Buddhas and bodhisattvas.
- 73 Elsewhere, I have tried to show that in the Buddhist Himalayas such commemorations of *tulkus* had meanings and associations that were quite different from a European melancholy cult of absence after death, not of loss but of immanence (Linrothe 2013b, pp. 176-178). Photographs became tools to express Himalayan Buddhist beliefs, values, and experiences. At first they did not succeed in dictating, through photography's relentless one-point perspective, the flattening of the engagement of visual representations into that of two-dimensional "scientific reality" and thereby acting "to translate value from content to form". Some 19th century colonial administrators in India "positioned perspective as part of a larger scientific [sic] project which they imagined would lead to the supercession of 'traditional' paradigms by 'modern, rational' ones" (Pinney 2001, p. 158). Instead, images retained their enhanced status among Himalayan Buddhists as "presence, not merely as likeness" (Clark 2013, p. 75), which was one of the most important functions of all Buddhist relics and relic-consecrated image-representations. Photographs even lent images an extra shade of dimension, akin to the traditional categories of "self-portrait" (Tib. *nga 'dra ma phyag mdzod*) and portraits made during the lifetime of the sitters and approved by them (Tib. *nga 'dra ma*).
- 74 After all, the camera is merely absorbing the light, the radiance, the presence of the sitter, not shaping it the way a painter or sculptor is. Because it was relatively easy to

accommodate a camera-made icon into the pre-existing visual discourse of consecrated icons, since they were basically constructed from those pre-existing conventions, they were almost immediately integrated into monastery altars and personal shrines. As Clare Harris pointed out, “for Tibetans the body is merely a receptacle fleetingly occupied by a person. The photographic record of that body therefore becomes a positive affirmation of an ongoing stream of presence rather than a memorial to absence” (Harris 2004, p. 137)⁵⁸. The inter- and transmediality I have stressed here no doubt facilitates the occasional but growing substitution of photographs for consecrated paintings or sculptures.

- 75 This brings us to some of the changes that are becoming prevalent in the composition and treatment of photography. One is the adoption of contemporary mounting methods: now photographs are placed in a gold-painted wooden frame behind glass. Another is, as with contemporary Western celebrity photographs, the 14th Dalai Lama and others sign their portraits, which are re-photographed and printed, sometimes as posters (see fig. 19, centre). Presumably, this turns a “bodily relic” (Tib. *sku rten*, *ring bsrel*) into a “touch relic”, that is, something like *ex indumentis*, as Catholic theologians term a piece of cloth or clothing that becomes a relic through contact with a saint. The most profound and most intrinsic difference in terms of the look of the contemporary image is the abandonment of formality and frontality. The informal portrait, which is almost never seen in traditional paintings or sculptures, is increasingly gaining acceptance through the proliferation of photographs in the form of “snapshots”, “selfies”, or other informal modes, as Clare Harris and others have already noticed⁵⁹. The wide distribution of informal snapshots of the current Dalai Lama among Tibetans both in Tibet and in exile in India and Nepal, as well as in the Western Himalayan regions of Ladakh and Zangskar, has been in the vanguard of this increasing relaxed apparent casualness or spontaneity. Nevertheless, even the most informal of photographs of teachers are draped with the *khatak* offering scarves accorded to honoured people and consecrated objects, and a variety of offerings are placed before it, just as a sculpture or thangka painting would receive. At Spituk monastery, a photograph of the 20th Kushok Bakula while still a young boy, almost an infant, was placed on an altar in the monastery in the run-up to his formal recognition and installation in the monastery in 2010 (fig. 38).

Figure 38. Framed photograph by an unknown photographer of the 20th Kushok Bakula as an infant, ca. 2008, on an altar with offerings in Spituk monastery, Ladakh

© photograph: Rob Linrothe, 2010

- 76 Typologically, such images stand apart from earlier ones in terms of composition, but more often than not we find new and old, formal and informal, being mixed together and repeated, as can be gleaned by careful examination of nearly any of the many shrines in the Western Himalayas. The new increasingly align with the modes of photographic contemporaneity that tend to be assigned to the West. The pattern, sadly, seems to track the trajectory observed by Vilém Flusser, that while various cultural conditions at first motivate distinguishable acts of photography, eventually, individual conditions “disappear from view: The result is a mass culture of cameras adjusted to the norm; in the West, in Japan, in underdeveloped countries – all over the world, everything is photographed through the same categories” (Flusser 2000, p. 34).
- 77 Much more remains to be said and discovered about the creation, circulation, and display of photographs in the Western Himalayas. This paper has argued that one aspect warranting attention is the relationship photographs once had with pre-existing artistic formats, media, and functions. In this context the Western Himalayas’s experiences with photography resemble those of a number of other cultures with developed artistic and portraiture traditions, examples of which have already been discussed. While this might not be a universal experience, it comes close. Most known cultures went through a phase of utilizing the camera to create familiar images and compensated for the print’s limitations (size, lack of colour) in similar ways. At the same time, each tradition, as it adopted photography, adapted it to existing aesthetic conventions and modes of display so the results are as varied as the cultures involved. In the Buddhist Himalayan context, much of the known early adoption of photography coincided with the social structures and political histories of religious practices, lineages, institutions, and individuals, and the results coincided well with the highly developed portraiture genre. This paved the way for an early embrace of portrait

photographs within monastic settings for liturgical functions, as “supports” (Tib. *rten*) for religious reverence and offerings.

Acknowledgements

- 78 An early draft of this paper was prepared for a two-part panel I organized for the Third Himalayan Studies Conference of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies held at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, March 14-16, 2014. The panel was entitled “Beyond Documentation: Photography in the Field”, and my paper was entitled “Drawing the Line: Painted Photographs in Ladakh and Zangskar”. I am grateful for the comments of the participants, including those of Clare Harris, Patrick Sutherland, and David Zurick, to Julia Adeney Thomas, and to Heinrich Pöll, Gerald Kozicz, and Quentin Devers, the editors of this volume.
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NOTES

1. Harris 2017, 2016, 2012; Harris & Shakya 2003; Brauen 2005; Martin 2017; Kunimoto 2011; Luczanits 2008; Andreyev 2013; Engelhardt 2007; Chen Zonglie 2005; Woeser 2006.

2. This is a topic to which I tried to contribute in Linrothe 2013b.

3. In this, Himalayan photography studies have, perhaps, lagged behind those of early Indian, Iranian, Japanese, Javanese, and Thai photography history, not to speak of those of England and France, and at the end of the essay I utilise some of these studies to draw parallels to early photography patterns in the Himalayas.

4. A useful discussion of the documentary versus the performative aspects of historical evidence is found in LaCapra 1983.

5. Because of this dependence on photographs found in monasteries – often framed, placed behind glass or upon altars, and thus largely inaccessible – this essay offers little in terms of identifying technical aspects of negatives, printing processes, or "originals". By the very nature of materials gathered, my primary sources are generally re-photographed prints.

6. Although Sonam Wangchuk (b. 1936), the Lonpo of Karsha, Zangskar, has had many photographs of himself taken, he has only one of his father, in whose generation photography was not widely available. He recalled in a personal conversation with the author that the earliest photograph of him, which had been taken in the 1960s, had been necessary to get an identity card for a government teaching post, and that he had had to travel from Karsha in Zangskar to Leh to obtain it.

7. "The mystics are depicted in an idealized way with paradigmatic postures and gestures to convey specific religious values of piety. In fact, the respective gestural style leads onlooking devotees to feel receptive towards the symbolic language of Sufism" (Frembgen 2006, p. 130).

8. Particularly among authoritative religious elites, the sitter determines the pose of the photograph far more often than is usually credited. This was something the 19th-century photographer John Thomson commented on while recalling a photography session with a Thai

king: “How to pose an Oriental potentate who has his own ideas as to propriety in attitude [...]?” (quoted in Clark 2013, p. 74.)

9. Harris (1999, p. 92) suggests that the “Thirteenth Dalai Lama seems to have deliberately encouraged an ‘ideology of the charismatic individual’”.

10. The actual name for it is Pe thub (Tib. dpe thub) though it is usually referred to as Spituk in western treatments. The Gonkhang retains some late-15th-century murals – their “distinctiveness lies chiefly in their beauty [and] they are the sole example of their kind in the whole kingdom of Ladakh” (Bellini 2014, p. 231). However, I also recently noticed and photographed fragments of murals on the western side of the Gonkhang in the so-called Renaissance style of the 15th century, not to my knowledge hitherto published or discussed.

11. For a detailed description of a Gelug Refuge Field painting, see HAR item no. 53405 (HAR 2018, accessed 2 April 2018).

12. Younghusband 1910, frontispiece; in the “List of Illustrations” (xv), the frontispiece credit is: “Reproduced by permission of the ‘Sphere’”.

13. Harris 1999, pp. 92–94. Martin discusses the formal portrait of the 13th Dalai Lama taken by Charles Bell and painted at the Dalai Lama’s instruction by Rabden Lepcha in Darjeeling in September 1910, her fig. 6. She suggests it was taken at Hillside, the Dalai Lama’s residence in Darjeeling, in July or August 1910. “It is possible to date this photograph to sometime before 18 August 1910” (Martin 2017, p. 193, n. 24). In her recent book, Harris revises her earlier attribution of the photograph to Bell, and in the caption to fig. 89 attributes the painted version of the photograph to “Thomas Paar and a Tibetan painter, the 13th Dalai Lama, probably Kalimpong, 1912” (Harris 2016, p. 126). Since it was published in *The Sphere* in 1910, the 1912 date (also mentioned in Harris 2016, p. 162, n. 21) is in error, unless Harris is referring to the *painting* of the photograph, its inscription and framing, not to the exposure of the negative to which Martin and Bell refer. Thomas Paar was, according to Harris, “the most successful studio photographer in Darjeeling in the early twentieth century” (Harris 2016, p. 125). However, in Bell’s book of 1924, *Tibet Past & Present*, he uses the coloured version of the photograph as frontispiece, not the framed painted version as in the frontispiece for *The Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (Bell 1946), and clearly states, “From a photograph taken by the author, signed and sealed by the Dalai Lama, and coloured by a Tibetan artist” (Bell 1924, p. xi).

14. Though here one would need to distinguish between the central figure in a set (either thangkas and murals), who is shown frontally, and the other figures ranged around the central one, who are not frontal but are shown in three-quarters view, usually facing toward the central figure; they may or may not have the low table in front. Unlike paintings, photographs were not usually composed in sets.

15. NIRLAC 2008, vol. 1, p. 309. I have consulted the four published volumes of this set for the names of shrines in Ladakh mentioned in this essay. The Zangskar volume has not yet been published.

16. On Changsem Sherab Zangpo and art at Phugtal, see Linrothe 2013a and 2012.

17. I use the pronoun “he” advisedly. I am not familiar with any pre-contemporary photographs of female *tulkus* circulating in Ladakh or Zangskar, but of course there are early photographs of Samding Dorje Pakmo (Tib. bsam sdings rdo rje phag mo) to be found in other areas of the Himalayas (see Bell 1946, fig. 129). Although this certainly needs to be explored further, the Himalayan authority portrait pose and gesture may actually be gendered: based on a superficial survey, a significant number of such female photographic (and sculptural) portraits show the female *tulkus* with hands clasped instead of separated and placed on their knees or thighs.

18. After the negative was printed, the sitter’s robes were painted, as was the background, an issue I will address in the next section.

19. On this visit, see O’Connor 1931, pp. 93–108; Rhodes & Rhodes 2006, pp. 19–20; and Jagou 2011, pp. 43–44.

20. Rhodes & Rhodes 2006, pl. 11, top. Several other photographs appear to have been taken of the Panchen Lama during that visit.
21. See the photograph taken between 1913 and 1914 in De Filippi *et al.* 1932, p. 184 (p. 196 in the 1924 Italian original). I take this opportunity to correct the attribution of a quotation concerning the 18th Kushok Bakula as “a great gentleman, great in heart and in bearing”, in Linrothe 2013b, p. 182, n. 11. It should have been credited to Giotto Dainelli in his chapter titled “Excursion in Ladak” in De Filippi’s text, not to De Filippi himself. In the same note, there is a typo, misspelling Dainelli as Bainelli.
22. I am not sure when or where the photograph was taken, possibly Nanking (Nanjing) or Peiping (Beijing), both of which the Panchen Lama, in exile from Tibet since 1923, visited multiple times between 1931 and 1934 and where he was officially recognized and lauded by the Nationalist Government; see Boorman & Howard 1970, pp. 57-61; Tuttle 2005; and Jagou 2011, pp. 206-210.
23. It was published in *The Sphere* on April 9, 1910, with the caption, “Another Portrait of the Man of Mystery: The Dalai Lama with his staff at Darjeeling. The names, from left to right, are: Tashi Wangdi, Trikhun (Regent), Sata (Regent), Nangma (priest to the Lama), H.H. the Dalai Lama, Shampo Shapé, Shurkhun (Regent), Saichung Shapé” (*The Sphere* 1910b). They are identified in a photo caption as “Longchen Changkhyim, Loncheb Shatra, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lonchen Shalkhang, Kalon Serchung” (Shakabpa 1988, fig. 6). A cropped version of the same photograph is reproduced in Shakya 2005, p. 113, where it is identified as having been taken in India ca. 1910 by an anonymous photographer.
24. It is not without interest for the documentation of the history of photography by Tibetans that among the six photographs taken by the 6th Panchen Lama and found on a page of an album Harris identifies as that of Frederick Marshman Bailey, according to the handwritten caption (Harris 2016, fig. 90, also 130) is one of a Tibetan mastiff that was published in *The Sphere* in 1905, along with five other photographs of dogs. There they are credited to the “Tashe Lama”, that is, the Panchen Lama, but not, as Harris determined, through the agency of Bailey. Rather *The Sphere* credits Captain (later Colonel) Charles Ryder by whom the Panchen Lama “was given a small kodak [sic], and it was by means of this instrument that the lama took the photographs [...] In doing this he was quite unaided as at the time the pictures were taken his English guests had left” (*The Sphere* 1905). Ryder had been a member of Younghusband’s invasion force of 1903-1904. Ryder and Bailey were both part of the Gartok Expedition written up in Rawling 1905. Scenes of hunting kills in Tibet, battle preparation, prisoners of war, landscape, dogs, travel, and Tibetan officials are among the 229 photographs by Charles Ryder included in Ryder Family Archives, n.d.
25. On Lochen Tulku, see Vitali 2000, pp. 88-93.
26. Captioned “Sodnam, the former king of Ladak, in ceremonial robes for the New Year” (De Filippi *et al.* 1932, p. 180).
27. See his biography in Treasury of Lives: Jagar Dorji, “Śākya Śrī”, Treasury of Lives (online, URL: <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Shakya-Shri/8782>, accessed 4 April 2018); Holmes-Tagchungdarpa 2014b; Gyatso 2009; and Ugyen Rimpoche 2005, pp. 129-134.
28. According to Ven. Tsewang Rigzin, he was born in Tibet in 1941 and then came to Ladakh, was installed at Hemis, and returned to Tibet to study in 1955; because of Chinese rule, however, he was not able to return until he was permitted to visit in 1989 and 1990 (Rigzin 2008, pp. 14-15).
29. For this identification I am indebted to Ven. Ngawang Jinpa.
30. See the many paintings and sculptures of Marpa assembled in HAR Set no. 315 (HAR 2018, accessed 5 April 2018).
31. See the HAR Set no. 309 (HAR 2018, accessed 5 April 2018).

32. It is found in what I have labelled the “Colour Master Hall” in Lingshed. It is an abandoned, deconsecrated shrine underneath the current main kitchen of the monastery, now used to store firewood. See Linrothe 2015, p. 51 n. 22; 1999, pp. 66-67, figs 16, 17.

33. Rhodes & Rhodes 2006, pl. 11 top. In the same source, pl. 13 top shows the 13th Dalai Lama seated next to Charles Bell with Tibetan laymen, all of whom pose in the second variant.

34. It is not accurate to say that photography first brought to Himalayan portraiture what we recognize as verisimilitude. Even the mimetic realism that becomes associated with photography was in fact established much earlier in Tibetan and Tibeto-Chinese painting, such as in paintings from the 17th and 18th century with quite striking illusions of verisimilitude and shading. One outstanding example is the large painting of the 4th Demo Rinpoche, Lhawang Geleg Gyaltsen (Tib. de mo rin po che lha dbang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1631-1668) in the Rubin Museum of Art. HAR item no. 578 (HAR 2018, accessed 12 April 2018).

35. Other examples of this manner of very restricted application of colour are found in the figures 15 and 29.

36. According to Clare Harris, “the primary features which expose an individual identity were left undisturbed by pigment. The Tibetan painter, still wary of proscriptions against portraiture, allowed the camera to produce the simulacra of a religious body, just as, according to Tibetan accounts, the living Buddha could only be depicted from a reflection in water or an imprint in cloth” (Harris 1999, p. 92).

37. Frembgen points out that the posters of Sufi saints produced in Lahore, Pakistan, which similarly combine photography and more traditional painting, often receive “aesthetic condemnation” by Westerners. “Laymen as well as scholars [...] judge them as ‘primitive’, ‘hideous’, ‘vulgar’, and ‘heartbreakingly kitschy’, thereby brushing them aside as unworthy of any serious academic consideration. Labelling Islamic religious prints as kitsch does not lead far” (Frembgen 2006, p. 127). Ironically, in describing particular posters, he resorts to similar judgements to the ones he condemns, terming one “a strange collage using the media of photography, painting, and scenic calendar depictions [...] a mere corrupted blend of fragments” (Frembgen 2006, p. 19). Elsewhere he refers to “a bizarre concoction of male and female as well as Muslim and Hindu iconographic details”, and “a bizarre patchwork of cut-outs pinned down like on an info board” (Frembgen 2006, pp. 86, 98). Stuart and Rawski conclude that the practice of cutting a head out of a photograph and pasting it onto a painted portrait “is an awkward, visually disturbing mix of media” (Stuart & Rawski 2001, p. 174).

38. The same monochrome photograph appears in a silver frame in the upper assembly hall at Karsha monastery in Zangskar, so the subject of it must be a teacher of pan-Ladakhi, pan-Gelug, or pan-Himalayan renown.

39. This was also noticed in Henss 2005a, p. 65.

40. Representatives from Mongolia attended some commemoration rituals in Leh after Bakula Rinpoche’s passing. As an offering to his monastery they brought this painting, done by a Mongolian artist, whose identity was not known by the Ladakhi monks who showed it to me. The inscription below the seated Rinpoche is written in traditional Mongolian script.

41. The sculpture in the photograph is the famous white marble identified by Buddhists as Avalokiteśvara at the Trilokināth temple in Himachal Pradesh, well known across the Western Himalayas; see Linrothe 2016, pp. 180-183. The painted photograph on the far right is of Lochan Tulku, slightly older than the age at which he was portrayed in the figure 12. I was not able to identify the other figure in the monochrome photograph.

42. Roberto Vitali observes that “the close links” between “Tashilunpo and, in general, the monasteries in the Western Himalayas were established in the first half of the 16th century when Shantipa Lodrö Gyaltsen (1487-1567) [...] became the 7th abbot of Tashilunpo before returning to the Western regions for an intense religious activity. Tashilunpo then became a focal point of reference for the Gonpas of the Western Himalayas” (Vitali 2000, p. 88).

43. *The Sphere* (1910a) published a very similar photograph of the seated Dalai Lama, though he is wearing travelling clothes, has the background omitted and silhouetted against a faded-out photograph of the Potala. According to the caption, it “was obtained at Phari-jong, Tibet by a correspondent of *The Sphere* who writes: ‘I have much pleasure in sending you the first photograph of his Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet [...] He was averse to showing himself in public [...]’ The Dalai Lama has not returned to Darjeeling from Calcutta” (*The Sphere* 1910a).
44. Reynolds & Heller 1983, 23, fig. 6. This is the widest crop of the photograph I have found. It is identified as acc. no. I22-C in the special archival collection at The Newark Museum. A cropped version is also found with the identical caption in Reynolds *et al.* 1999, pp. 22, 32, fig. 7.
45. “The imaginative use of photographs by the artist Ravi Varma [sic] for his paintings, or even the booming print culture of chromolithographs, oleographs, phototype postcards, etc., are only some of [the] large-scale technological advances in the evolution of painted images based on photographic sources” (Allana 2008, p. 29).
46. Rajagopal 1993, p. 138; Neumayer & Schelberger 2005, pp. 3-4.
47. Neumayer & Schelberger 2003, p. 86, pl. 68; and Davis 2012, p. 102, pl. 79. As Davis points out, the non-Varma prints produced by the press at this time “overall employ a bolder color scheme, due partly to the proprietor’s efforts to save money in the printing process. The figures have clearer outlines, and they appear in simple settings, sometimes reduced to a flat-color background” (Davis 2012, p. 83). Given the firm *terminus a quo* of the date of photograph on which this print is based, it is clear that the dating of the Ravi Varma Press prints based on the registration number is fraught, as some prints with much later numbers are dated to 1900 or 1910. For example, one registered as 734, more than a hundred later than this one, is also dated 1910 in Neumayer & Schelberger 2003, p. 93, pl. 75.
48. Pinney (2001, p. 169) defines this as “transforming the ostensible representation or window into a surface deeply inscribed by the presence of the deity”.
49. A somewhat similar design, with twelve round inset frames and a rectangular one with the reclining Buddha at the same position, bottom centre, was produced in the 1960s by B. G. Sharma; Davis 2012, p. 222, pl. 181.
50. As I write (in 2018), the issue of the politicization of his legacy by the presently-ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and by the Congress Party is roiling the front pages of Indian newspapers.
51. An equally elaborate but quite different “Ambedkar Leela” print of 1974 includes six inset medallions arranged around a standing portrait representing various biographical events, including presenting the Indian constitution and, the final one, converting to Buddhism; Jain 2007b, p. 282, fig. 123.
52. A third line of the caption is cut off by the cropping of the photograph in Henss 2005b, fig. 286. However, the postcard and one of the drawings was also published in Henss 2005a, figs 6, 7. The Chinese stamp is mentioned there, and the third line is visible, reading, in English, “The Buddhist Pope”.
53. William W. Rockhill, who was in the American Legation in Beijing at the time, also translated a Chinese newspaper report dated 28 September 1908 which reported on the Dalai Lama’s arrival; Cheng Long 2016, p. 184.
54. On painterliness in calotypes, see Denton 2002. Walter Benjamin cites Gisèle Freund’s citation of the famous 19th century photographer Disdéri’s observations that some photographs of staged historical scenes and images resembled the paintings of Ingres and Paul Delaroche, and Benjamin points out there were such photographs displayed at the London 1855 Exposition Universelle (Benjamin 2002, pp. 677-678).
55. As John Clark notes of early Thai royal portraits, “the indebtedness of photographic representation to manners current in painted portraiture at the time it was invented becomes clear, despite the rigidity of pose necessitated by long exposure times” (Clark 2013, p. 69). Also, “I have now identified for nineteenth-century Indonesia and Thailand the various roles of

photography in transmitting the conventions of prior visual discourses [...]. Photography does this in ways that link such images on the one hand to conventions of public painted portraiture and on the other to the display of dignified aura that replicates the original – one can say primal – magical materialization which is technically embodied in the medium” (Clark 2013, p. 77).

56. Clark discusses the exchange of images between Southeast Asian and European monarchs and its impact on the depiction of Siamese kings (Clark 2013, pp. 72-73).

57. See, for example, “Geisha in Full Costume”, ca. 1880, attributed to Narui Raisuke; “Samurai Harada Kiichi”, by Ueno Hikoma, ca. 1870 (Bennett 2006, figs 7, 2).

58. Similar conclusions drawn from photographic practices in Ladakh are drawn in Linrothe 2013b, pp. 177-181.

59. Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa (2014a, p. 88) dates this shift to after “around 1960”.

ABSTRACTS

The central thesis of this essay is that one of the most important aspects of the pioneering use of photographic portraits of teachers in the late 19th and early 20th century in Western Himalayan Buddhist contexts is its ongoing visual relationship to and with pre-photographic media, including sculpture, printing, and especially painting. Evidence shows that the most common compositions for early portrait photographs drew closely on earlier templates already well-established by painting and sculpture.

Le propos central de cet article est que l'un des aspects les plus importants des utilisations avant-gardistes de la photographie de portraits de maîtres à la fin du XIX^e et au début du XX^e siècles dans l'Himalaya occidental bouddhique est sa relation visuelle – toujours d'actualité – avec les médias pré-photographiques, notamment la sculpture, l'impression, et surtout la peinture. L'examen des données montre que les compositions les plus communes pour ces portraits photographiques s'inspiraient grandement des modèles établis plus tôt dans la peinture et la sculpture.

INDEX

Keywords: Western Himalayas, photography, transmediality, portrait, Ladakh, Zangskar

Mots-clés: Himalaya occidental, photographie, transmédialité, portrait, Ladakh, Zangskar

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