



Manuscript reference: Ds 123

This folio with red margins, the last of the manuscript, is drawn on its left side with the image of a *mdos* construction, elements of which are identified by captions, in order to protect children from the fifteen great *gdon* demons.

The *mdos* possesses a tapered base shaped like a lotus flower with two rows of petals. Above the latter, Mt Meru (*ri rab*) is represented with some sense of depth as a three-tier, stepped, square structure. There are no figures visible around this superstructure but the caption written at its bottom indicates that the images of a parrot, a peacock, a vulture should be placed there as ransom articles.¹ On top of the first tier are drawn six *gtor ma* simply crowned with a circular design on the left, and another one crowned with a moon crescent-like symbol on the right.² The top of the second tier is adorned at its centre and its left corner with two arrows, while the related caption indicates that there should be thirteen such arrows in total.³ Two human figures identified as the images of children are also represented on this storey.⁴ On top of the structure is placed the image of a bull.⁵

Instructions for making such a *mdos* construction are found at the beginning of the text in a section written in cursive *dbu med* script. Several differences between this section of the text and the drawing of the last folio and its captions show that the latter were not, properly speaking, based on the former but on an extended knowledge of the ritual itself. Comparing text and image contributes nonetheless to a refined understanding of this ritual.

¹ The caption reads: *ne tshom rma bya bya rgod rlud dzas namṣ /*.

² The caption reads: *st-ā stor ma*.

³ The caption reads: *mda' khra bcu gsum gzugs*.

⁴ The caption reads: *byis pa'i gzugs*.

⁵ The caption reads: *byol bsong zug*.

In the textual instructions, the lotus-base is not mentioned but numerous ransom articles, called *gdon zla*, are listed meticulously from the top down. Only some of these articles were actually represented in the drawing or mentioned in the related captions. While it is prescribed that the images of a bull, a deer (*ri dwags*), a child, and a crow should be fixed on top of the *mdos* construction on its four sides, only the bull, mentioned first in the text and associated with the east side, was depicted. Similarly, among the fourteen other animals listed in this section of the text without information about their location, only three were indicated by a caption. Among the fifteen children, the nine young goats and sheep, and the stag listed in the text for the second storey, only two children were drawn, and among the *ting lo*, the *chang phud*, the *theb kyu*, and the fifteen *gtor ma* mentioned in the text, only some of the latter were drawn. As for the thirteen arrows of variegated colours indicated by a caption of the drawing, they are not mentioned in the textual instructions but further in the text, where they are described as the ornaments of the precious ransom (*rin chen glud*).⁶

⁶ See fol. 3095B.