

# Himalayan Nature Representations and Reality

EDITED BY ERIKA SANDMAN AND RIIKA J. VIRTANEN



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ERIKA SANDMAN AND RIIKA J. VIRTANEN



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# **DHONDUP GYAL AND NATURE: INTERPRETING POETIC IMAGES OF WIND AND CLOUD IN TWO TIBETAN WORKS**

*Riika J. Virtanen*

## **ABSTRACT**

This article discusses two works by a Tibetan writer from Amdo, Dhondup Gyal (Don grub rgyal, 1953–1985). The prose poem “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo” (The Girl of Wind) and the free verse poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” (The Petals of White Clouds) contain nature imagery related to air and sky, namely the wind and the clouds. The poetic images are examined with the help of the cognitive theory of metaphor and conceptual blending and attention is paid to their multilayered nature and different possibilities of interpretation. The nature images in literary works may be used to convey various kinds of ideas and attitudes relevant to the people and to cultural discourse. The unique characteristics of literary representations of natural elements and phenomena become highlighted as contrasted with the natural elements in the external world.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nature poetry is a well-known genre of literature and folklore in different cultures around the globe and the various features and elements of nature have inspired poets from ancient times up to the present day. Naturally, in Tibetan literature too, depictions and images of nature abound. In this article I shall discuss two modern Tibetan literary works that are centred on nature imagery. The word image is here used to refer to poetic images found in literature which are created through writing such as, for example, metaphors, similes and concrete images. They are not visual objects in the same sense as paintings, photos or satellite images, but when encountered while reading they may cause a lively visual kind of imagination in readers' minds. The Tibetan writer Dhondup Gyal (Don grub rgyal) wrote several works with powerful nature images. Especially abundant in his works are images of water and flowers. However, in this article I shall discuss images connected with the aerial element and the atmosphere. Two

works of Dhondup Gyal titled “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” (The Petals of White Clouds) and “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo” (The Girl of Wind) are centred on images of the clouds and the wind, respectively. The imagery of these works includes metaphors, similes and concrete images, which often interact to form composite images. My most important reason for choosing to discuss these two works is their nature imagery, but there is also another reason: these two works, which are of notably high artistic quality, have not yet received much scholarly attention.

The author of these two literary works, Dhondup Gyal (1953–1985) is usually considered as the founder of modern Tibetan literature, which started at the beginning of the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> He was both a scholar and a writer whose brilliant career was cut short by his untimely death at his home in Chabcha at the age of only 32. His literary output consists of short stories, poems, essays, research works, commentaries and translations that have been collected together into his *gSung 'bum* (The Collected Works) which consists of six volumes that were published by the Nationalities Press in Beijing. The Collected Works of Dhondup Gyal also contain the works that are discussed in this paper, “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo” and “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma”.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of my paper is to discuss the images of the clouds and the wind and their function in the works and to make an attempt to interpret the images. I shall also try to understand the possible reasons why did Dhondup Gyal made use of nature imagery to convey some of the fundamental messages of his works. The discussion will throw light on the special characteristics of literary representation of natural elements that set the clouds and wind in literature apart from the corresponding phenomena in the natural world. In my discussion I will observe how representations of the natural elements can be modified by literary means. Although in reality the clouds in the sky and the wind blowing through the air may appear quite similar observed from different locations of the globe, the artistic and cultural perspectives and ways of representing them can have varying features. This paper attempts to illuminate such questions as is it possible in literature to have clouds and wind that are characterized by specifically Tibetan cultural features and if so, what are the strategies of forming culturally specific representations of universal phenomena?

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1 For the beginning stages of modern Tibetan literature and Dhondup Gyal's role and works see, e.g. Tsering Shakya (2000: 36), Pema Tsering (1999: 112–114), Stoddard (1994), Kapstein (1999), Hartley (2003: 185–194) and in Tibetan *bKra shis dpal ldan* (1991), Chos skyong (2006) and Sangs rgyas rin chen (2006).

2 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. VI: 8–11 & vol. I: 231–235).

### 1.1 About the two literary works

I have chosen to discuss two short literary works of Dhondup Gyal in this essay because in my opinion, they share some common features. They are both centred on images of natural phenomena that are characteristic of the atmosphere. In both works the first person voice addresses the personified natural elements and the ends of the works also resemble each other in one respect: they both end with the intermingling of the first person voice and the natural elements.

Both of these works were published posthumously. “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo” is a poem-like essay of four pages that Dhondup Gyal wrote during the last month of his life during a visit to Zhan dbyang where he was taking a test for a teacher’s post in the Tibetan school there.<sup>3</sup> It is an essay written in prose but in its style and expression it resembles a poem, centring on a poetic image. Therefore, I think that it may be called a prose poem.

The free verse poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” was published in a literary magazine titled *Gangs rgyan me tog* in 1991, but I have not yet found any information on its time of composition. It is most likely that Dhondup Gyal wrote this poem during the last years of his life, which is a period of his literary career when he wrote most of his free verse poems.<sup>4</sup> Its length is five printed pages in the Collected Works edition. Three versions of this poem have been available to me: the version in the Collected Works; the version in a selection of Dhondup Gyal’s writings edited by Pema Bhum (Padma 'bum), which was published in India by the Amnye Machen Institute in 1994; and the version included in Dulha Gyal’s (bDud lha rgyal) book containing a selection of modern Tibetan literature and short comments on the works included.<sup>5</sup> These versions have some minor differences in their choices of words and they also differ in their typographic outlook: in the Collected Works the lines of “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” are laid out in the typical step-shaped form of a free verse poem, but in the edition published in

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3 Jangbu (lJang bu), who knew Dhondup Gyal personally, told me about the circumstances in which Dhondup Gyal wrote “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo” (pers. comm. in Xining, 2005). See also Chos skyong (2006: 103). Zhan dbyang is the Wylie transliteration of the Tibetan spelling of this Chinese place name. I heard from Jangbu that it is located somewhere near Xi’an in China.

4 Dhondup Gyal introduced modern free verse poetry into Tibetan literature. However, it is possible to find irregularities of metric patterns in earlier literature too. For a discussion on free verse in Tibetan literature, see Robin (2002).

5 I am grateful to Chokden Tsering who kindly sent me a copy of Dhondup Gyal’s poem in Dulha Gyal’s book, published in 1998. In this edition of the poem, Dhondup Gyal’s pen-name Rangdol (Rang grol) was used. After completing the writing of this paper I also noticed that there exists a fourth version of the poem in a volume titled *Lang tsho'i rbab chu* (named after another well-known poem of Dhondup Gyal) edited by Gyurme ('Gyur med) and published by mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang in 1993. This version is in the form of a free verse poem.

India and in the edition in Dulha Gyal's book its external appearance is that of a prose poem. However, the differences in meaning are so small that they are not significant. As a basis for the discussion in this paper I have used the poem in the Collected Works edition.

### 1.2 Depictions of nature

In the two literary works under discussion the natural elements are at the same time depicted as parts of the natural scenery and used as images to convey metaphorical meanings. In both works a first person speaker is in the midst of natural scenery addressing a natural element: a cloud or the wind. This addressing of the natural elements is also typical of the free verse poem "Lang tsho'i rhab chu" (The Waterfall of Youth) and the song "E ma mtsho sngon po" (Oh, Blue Lake!).

In the prose poem "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo", the tone is very personal: the first person voice first tells how "the girl of wind" accompanied him when he was born. Later on he is outside in early spring when the snow starts to melt and witnesses a conversation between the personified natural elements: the sun, the earth, the water and the ice. The natural elements exchange words that comment on the changes of nature during the seasons, attributing the changes to "the girl of wind" and her moods, which apparently represent the icy winter wind and the warm summer breezes. The Tibetan critic Dekyi Tso (bDe skyid 'tsho) has pointed out that the personified natural forces in the essay represent the four elements of earth, fire, water and air.<sup>6</sup> In Dhondup Gyal's prose poem there are reflections on the nature of the four elements and how "the girl of wind" is necessary for all of them. The conversation between the natural elements may on the one hand create a feeling of closeness and familiarity for a person reading the work. This could be because the elements have been endowed with the human ability to communicate with speech and also because the idea of the natural elements talking with each other may bring to the reader's mind fairy tales read in childhood times. On the other hand, the communicating natural elements and reflections on the nature of the "girl of wind" create a kind of mystic and philosophical atmosphere in this work. By moving between the personal and the general level of discourse the four elements become related both to the nature of the individual and that of the earth and all life on it. This creates a feeling of the shared nature of beings but also at the same time communicates a feeling of change and impermanence – a kind

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6 See bDe skyid 'tsho (1995: 25). I am grateful to Franz Xaver Erhard for sending me a copy of Dekyi Tso's article. For a thorough discussion of the four elements from the viewpoint of aesthetics, see Wilkoszewska (2001). Of special interest is the chapter titled "Air" written by Małgorzata Sacha-Piekło (2001: 271–362). For a discussion on *rlung* in its medical sense, see Janes (1999).

of melancholic atmosphere. The text does not mention any place name, but the environment of the early spring when ice is turning into water and there are still patches of snow on the mountain slope could well be a depiction of a landscape in Dhondup Gyal's homeland Amdo.

In the poem "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" the first person voice addresses the clouds in the sky while standing on the banks of the Blue Lake (mTsho sngon po) in Amdo. However, in this work the tone is not as personal as in the prose poem "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo" because the personal and national perspectives intermingle: when speaking to the clouds the first person voice also mentions the high plateau of Tibet and the fates of the Tibetans. Furthermore, the atmosphere of "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" is light and joyful, differing from the melancholy of "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo". In the former work the voice of the poem is looking at the clouds high in the sky and being inspired by their shapes; he sees various images in the eyes of his imagination. He describes his emotional state as highly joyful.<sup>7</sup> In this poem the attention of the first person voice is on the sky and the poem concentrates on the depiction of the clouds. Some landscape features such as mountain peaks, grassland, forests and lakes are also mentioned, but they are always somehow connected to the image of the cloud. For example, the personified cloud might display the reflection of its face in the small ponds on earth and touch with its hand the other features of the natural landscape. The clouds are depicted with a series of different images that will be discussed below. They are also described in different times: in the morning signalling the new day, and during different seasons, but only three of the seasons are mentioned.

The description of the natural scenery is of high aesthetic quality and could perhaps be characterized as idealized to some degree. Reading Dhondup Gyal's descriptions of natural landscapes and phenomena may easily create in the reader a sensation of breath-taking beauty which emphasizes the beautiful and pleasant aspects of landscapes and nature, but leaves mostly unremarked the potentially not so pleasant ones. For example, if a person stood in real life by the side of the Blue Lake, he would also be likely to experience the harsh climate and coldness of the high plateau in addition to admiring the beauty of the lake and the clouds in the sky.<sup>8</sup> For an ordinary observer the beauty of the high plateau is no doubt

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7 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. I: 232). Seeing various imaginative shapes in clouds can also be found in Mayakovsky's (1985: 74–75) *Clouds Up to Tricks*, where the clouds in the sky are perceived as three men and a camel and elephants that then vanish.

8 This observation is based on my own experience during my first visit to the Blue Lake in summer 2005. I was surprised by the wide gap between my idealized conception about the lake that had been formed as a result of reading prose and poetry and the actual experience of standing by the lake. The weather was rainy and although it was the warm season, it was really cold there. Of

spectacular, but it may still be worth observing that the poems do not express any concerns about environmental degradation or, for instance, hazardous substances in the air: nature is being viewed in the poems from a perspective emphasizing the great natural beauty – a position that is in several cases typical of artists and poets.

## 2. THE IMAGES

In both works the images of nature can be characterized as multilayered and having the possibility of multiple interpretations. This ambiguity of meaning also creates a special depth for the works and causes a need of careful reflection and discussion. The clouds are modified with the help of other images such as similes and metaphors. The possibility of modifying the representations of clouds and wind is a special characteristic of literature and art. Real clouds are just floating high in the sky and the winds are blowing in the atmosphere: their course and shapes cannot be altered by humans. By contrast, literary clouds and winds are created by the writer, who may shape and use them to express various meanings.

Roughly, when analysing the imagery of these two works of Dhondup Gyal, it is possible to discern two levels of interpretation or two basic levels of metaphorical processes that contribute to the creation of the images: first there is the level where the nature images themselves are modified with the help of other images. In this level the wind and the clouds are target domains on which different source domain images are metaphorically mapped. The other level or part of analysis is the interpretation of the metaphoric central images of the cloud and the wind that were modified on the first level. To analyse the images, I have made use of the cognitive theoretical framework of the study of metaphor that was first presented in the works of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff and Turner (1989). The theory of blending introduced by Fauconnier and Turner (1998) is a development in the cognitive studies of metaphor and I have made use of it to analyse the central images of the works.<sup>9</sup>

This kind of complex composite structure is a characteristic typical of poetic metaphors. The forming of composite metaphors is a strategy employed by poets to create innovative new poetic images that still often share some underlying basic structures with more common metaphoric structures.<sup>10</sup>

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course, the grandeur of the natural environment of the lake was impressive, but the nature of the actual experience and reading about the lake in literature were clearly very different.

9 See also Turner (1999) and Dancygier (2006). The latter is a preface for a special issue on blending of *Language and Literature* and its bibliography is very helpful for finding articles on blending in various academic journals, the relevant websites and other contributions on the topic.

10 For a discussion on composite metaphors, see Lakoff & Turner (1989: 70–72).

Strong central images are typical of the poetic expression in modern Tibetan poetry.<sup>11</sup> In these two works it is possible to discern a kind of two-level process of metaphorical mapping: In one level the source domain images are mapped on the images of natural elements of clouds and the wind functioning as target domains. On the other level the images of natural elements are mapped on some other more abstract target domain concepts. However, I think that it is more helpful to depict the second part of the mapping process with the concept of blends where the two parts of a metaphor function as input spaces from where properties are mapped on the shared blended space with its new emergent meaning. Thus the blended space can depict the intertwining and blending quality of the two frames – the frame of nature and the frame of the discussion of some abstract concepts – being combined in the works. The poet has constructed the nature images so that they simultaneously convey the messages desired by him.

The basic structure of the imagery in these two works can be characterized with a schema revealing a kind of double-mapping quality and blended space of the imagery related to the wind and the clouds:

girl → wind → blended space ← X

A, B, C ... → cloud → blended space ← X

The feminine qualities are mapped on the personified wind, which then acts as a central image of the prose poem “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo”. Here the metaphoric structures differ: the first metaphor – “the girl of wind” – has its two parts stated explicitly. But the second one, where the “girl of wind” as a whole acts as an input space, is a metaphor that does not reveal its other input space(s) explicitly but requires interpretation. In the schema about the cloud image the A, B, C and so on refer to the source domain images that are mapped on the clouds. As for the blend, one of its input spaces is the image of the natural element – cloud or wind that has been modified – and the other input space(s) have been marked with X as the explanations of X might be multiple and are open to interpretation. The meaning of the concepts marked with X and the qualities of the blends will be

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11 The Tibetan poet Ju Kelsang (Ju skal bzang 1991: 25–26) mentions in his article the characteristic of modern Tibetan poetry to use images that represent the meaning without stating it explicitly and also discusses how these poetic images may represent the emotions and feelings. Expressing subjective feelings seem to be one of the features characteristic of modern Tibetan poetry. See, e.g. Pema Bhum’s article (1999: 7, 12–13) on modern Tibetan poetry that has been translated into English by R. Schwartz. Luran Hartley (2003: 290) paraphrases the views of Tibetan editor Pel Lhamo (dPal lha mo), who defines poetry (*snyan ngag*) “as a literary genre or form in which the writer conveys a mental image to the reader in order to evoke the strong emotion felt by the writer; and he/she does this by linking sound and emotion”.

discussed below, but it can already be said that those concepts are more abstract in their nature and the natural images have been used to make the abstract meanings as mental images more comprehensible and concrete for the reader.

## 2.1 Modifying the nature images

I shall first discuss the imagery of the level where the images of the cloud and the wind become modified with the help of source domain images (the left side of the schema). First of all, in the titles of both of the works there are metaphors that then are repeated several times in the texts.

The “girl of wind” itself is not a new innovative metaphor, but the way it is used as a central image in Dhondup Gyal’s prose poem is a different matter. In “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo” the source domain image of a girl is mapped on the target domain of the wind. The wind is thus personified in a female form. The personification of the wind seems to make it alive and it also feels more natural to address the wind with the third and second person pronouns *kho mo* (‘she’) and *khyed* (‘you’).

In traditional Tibetan texts the metaphor “girl of wind” can also be found. For instance, in Thukwen Choekyi Nyima’s (Thu’u bkwan Chos kyi nyi ma, 18th c.) poem “I ho skyed tshal gyi bsngags brjod” (A Praise of the Summer Palace)<sup>12</sup> the “girl of wind” has scattered flowers on the river. The metaphor “girl of wind” can also be found in some other works of Dhondup Gyal.<sup>13</sup> It seems that the wind may be imagined as a young slender woman with flexible body and limbs moving in the air. The word that is used here for wind (*rlung*), is *dri bzhon*, ‘the mount of fragrance’, and has its origins in the treatises of synonymic expressions of Indic origin.<sup>14</sup> Depicting the wind as a girl is a personification of the wind onto which some human characteristics have been added. Although it is not a new metaphor because, as we just saw, there are examples of traditional use, the poet has, however, made a choice for this particular work of personifying the wind in a feminine way. This serves the purposes of the work: it is clear that it is

12 Thukwen’s poem is included in a selection of poetry by well-known Tibetan authors edited by the editorial office of the *sBrang char* literary magazine (*sBrang char rtsom sgrig khang*) titled *rTsom yig gser gyi sbram bu* (The Gold Ingot of Literary Works). For the metaphor “girl of wind”, see p. 2 there. The Summer Palace (I ho skyed tshal; Yiheyuan) is located in Beijing (as also explained in a footnote after the poem).

13 For instance, in the poems “rTswa thang gi lha mo” (The Goddess of the Grassland) and “Slob grwa’i zhogs pa” (Morning at School).

14 The dictionary of Das gives the spelling *dri zhon* and its Sanskrit equivalent *gandharvah* (653). Das refers to the *mNgon brjod mkhas pa’i rna rgyan* by Ngag dbang ’jig rten dbang phyug grags pa’i rdo rje.

much more understandable for the reader that the first person voice speaks to the “girl of wind” and feels closeness and attachment towards her instead of merely addressing the natural wind.

In the title of the poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” is a metaphor where the word ‘*dab ma*, which can mean either ‘leaf’ or ‘petal’, is mapped on the white cloud or clouds.<sup>15</sup> I have decided to translate it as ‘petal’ thinking of the shape of the clouds resembling petals of flowers. The image of the petals of clouds appears in the beginning part of the poem first introducing the existence of the clouds in the sky and is repeated in some other places of the text too.<sup>16</sup> The cloud is likened to the “flower of the sky” and the image is then associated with progress, creativity and innovation. The first person voice of the poem addresses the cloud:

*khyed ni nam mkha'i me tog zhid dang 'dra bar/  
gangs can gyi mtho sgang la skye stobs kyi dpal yon bsnan pa dang/  
bsil ldan gyi yul gru 'dir/  
byad bzhin gyi sgeg chos dang/ lang tsho yi mdzes pa/  
zunggs khrag gsar pa dang rnam shes gsar pa yang khyer yong ba red/  
(Don grub rgyal, “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma”)<sup>17</sup>*

you, like a flower of sky,  
add glory of growth to the high plateau of the Snow Land  
to this region of moderate climate  
you show your attractive face and beauty of youth  
bringing new blood and also new consciousness  
(Dhondup Gyal, The Petals of White Clouds)

Images of flowers in bloom are usually very positive and tend to be associated with beautiful women, love, beauty, joy and the best stage of development of something. In the last line of the quoted excerpt, the words related to the role of the cloud as a “carrier of new blood and new consciousness” are of special interest. They could be interpreted as images suggesting the need of innovation, creativity and change in contrast to conservatism and stagnation.

15 The title of this poem could be translated in either singular or plural form, as it does not have any particle indicating plurality or an indefinite particle *zhig* that would indicate singularity. When the cloud is addressed with the pronoun *khyed* (‘you’) during the poem, this would appear to refer to a single cloud. However, because the poem contains references to so many various shapes of the clouds and depicts the cloud or clouds in different seasons and weather, I am tending to think of the clouds “in plural” as floating in the sky and forming conglomerations, but it might also be suitable to translate the title as Petals of a White Cloud or even A Petal of a White Cloud.

16 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. I: 232–234).

17 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. I: 232–233).

The poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” has an impressive series of different source domain images that are mapped on the cloud modifying the reader’s mental idea of it. The above image of the flower belongs to this series too (but it was discussed first because the flower petals were also found in the title of the poem). Below I have sketched roughly these mappings and their function and indicated the aspects that they contribute to the literary cloud in accordance with the contents of the poem:<sup>18</sup>

cloud is a young man  
aspect: declares a message of “new time”

cloud is like a goddess<sup>19</sup> wearing white clothes  
aspects: white colour and the activity of singing in praise of changes

cloud is a messenger  
aspect: carries message about the arrival of new era

cloud is like a flower of sky  
aspect: growth, beauty, innovation, creativity

cloud is like a girl of rainbow  
aspect: gives hope and courage (encourages proceeding forward)

cloud is like a *gandharva* girl  
aspect: smiles<sup>20</sup> and brings good message

cloud is like a heap of curd  
aspect: whiteness and outer shape

cloud acts in the manner of a person wearing a white silken *sham bu*<sup>21</sup>  
aspect: white colour and peaceful nature

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18 I have here used the formula of the type “A is B”, which is a typical way that the conceptual metaphors are described in the cognitive theory of metaphor. The conceptual metaphors give only information on the basic structure of metaphors and similes summarizing how the cloud is described in the poem. However, the above lines are not exact quotes from Dhondup Gyal’s text of “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” in the sense that they would quote the exact wordings, but the poem, for example, has metaphors such as “that young man of water holder [= cloud]” (231) and “you are the messenger of the new era” (232) etc. The corresponding passages of the poem are found in Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. I: 231–234).

19 The edition published in Dharamsala has the word ‘girl’ (*bu mo*; Don grub rgyal 1994: 103) instead of ‘goddess’ (*lha mo*) here.

20 In the Collected Works edition the cloud likened to the *gandharva* girl shows its “row of teeth” (*tshems phreng*) while smiling whereas in the other edition the word used instead is *mtshams sprin*, which would refer to the clouds coloured by the rays of the setting sun.

21 *Sham bu* is a type of ornament. The *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (2836) explains it as “an ornament of the door and windows”, but it could here perhaps be interpreted as some kind of ornamental clothing.

cloud acts in the manner of a *ngakpa* wearing a black cloak  
 aspect: black colour and stormy nature

cloud is like a yogi  
 aspect: altruism and wandering around

Most of these mappings could be generalized using the conceptual metaphor: CLOUD IS (LIKE) A PERSON. Thus most of the images are personifications. Generally, in the cognitive theory of metaphor the personifications are explained as facilitating our understanding of other phenomena by means of relating them to ourselves.<sup>22</sup> I think that the personifications in Dhondup Gyal's poem function so that they widen remarkably the scope of activities of the cloud: by means of personifications the clouds may sing, carry messages, and give hope to people. They also function as image metaphors: the outlook of the clouds becomes especially lively when the reader can imagine the goddesses, *ngakpa* and so on in various types of clothes and with different kinds of appearances. It is evident that when elements of nature become personified they then become imagined in an anthropomorphic light.

In some well-known Western poems with cloud imagery, the cloud is also personified: in Shelley's poem titled "The Cloud", it is personified with the first person pronoun and the cloud itself tells about its own activities.<sup>23</sup> In Torquato Tasso's *Ad Nubes* the cloud is addressed directly with the second person pronoun.<sup>24</sup> But why is the cloud personified with so many varieties of personality in Dhondup Gyal's poem? It must have to do with showing or highlighting various aspects of the cloud. In the cognitive theory of metaphor the tendency of different source domains to highlight different aspects of the target domain has been explained as being because of the partial nature of metaphoric mappings (see Kövecses 2002: 89, a table; Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 52–55). Thus the outlook on the cloud becomes modified and coloured and several attributes, properties, qualities and functional abilities are associated with it with the help of the mapping of the series of source domain images.

Cloud as a messenger is a metaphor that can also be found in the Indian classic love poem *Meghadūta* by Kālidāsa. The wind, too, may be employed as a messenger, as in Dhoyī's *Wind Messenger*, but this metaphor cannot be found in Dhondup Gyal's "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo". In the poem "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma"

22 Lakoff & Turner (1989: 72). For a recent contribution on understanding personification in literature in the cognitive framework, see Hamilton (2002).

23 Shelley (1931/1966: 101–104).

24 See Riikonen's research work on Tasso's ode (1982: 12–13), which also contains the original Latin text dating from the 16th century and its translation.

the cloud as messenger carries the message of the “new era” and also “the great changes in the high plateau of the Snow Land” are mentioned.<sup>25</sup> The “new era” and “the changes” have not been defined in any more concrete sense but remain at an abstract level open to the reader’s interpretation. I think that they can well be interpreted with the concept of modernity understood in its wider sense in many fields of life. Some other concepts related to the topic of modernity and changes, such as innovation (*gsar gtod*) and progress (*mdun skyod*), are also common in other free verse poems of Dhondup Gyal.<sup>26</sup>

The cloud in “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” has many culture-specific features. The images of the *ngakpa* (a lay tantric practitioner), a goddess and a *gandharva* girl that have been mapped on the cloud are of Tibetan and Indo-Tibetan origin.<sup>27</sup> The image of “the heaped curd” also has a strong Tibetan flavour as white curd is a common food substance among Tibetans and it is usually considered as auspicious food, probably due to its colour. The cloud has been depicted in its appearances both as a black cloud carrying rain and then as a white peaceful cloud. The changing appearance of the clouds also leads to the situation that in forming imagery they may be used to express both positive, joyful matters as well as feelings of great despair that can be depicted as storm clouds and the ensuing rain.<sup>28</sup>

## 2.2 The enigmatic central images: Blending with nature

Now we shall take a look at the central images of the cloud and the wind that are metaphoric images, kinds of discourse level metaphors. They act as strong driving forces of the two literary works under discussion. While describing the basic structure of the images above (see 2. “The Images”), they were depicted

25 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. I: 232).

26 Passages expressing wishes for renewal and innovation or highlighting their importance can, for example, be found in the poem “Di na yang drag tu mchong lding byed bzhin pa'i snying gson po zhig 'dug” (Here too Is a Heart Alive Strongly Beating; Don grub rgyal 1997, vol. I: 93) and in the poem “Goms gshis lags/ bdag gi snying gdam 'di la gson” (Convention, Please Listen to This Heart-felt Speech of Mine; Don grub rgyal 1997, vol. I: 241). For information on how ideas related to development and modernization have been represented in modern Tibetan literature, see Hartley (1999) and Virtanen (2008). I think that there is some resemblance to Mayakovsky’s poetry in Dhondup Gyal’s concern for the progress of the people and also in the step-shaped free verse, but Dhondup Gyal’s poetry has its own unique lyrical quality. Chos skyong (2006: 62) actually reports Dhondup Gyal’s interest in Mayakovsky’s poem Cloud in Pants, but the use of the images of clouds does not have anything in common in the poems of Dhondup Gyal and Mayakovsky.

27 *Gandharvas* are believed to be heavenly musicians. Das explains the meaning of *dri za* as follows in his *Tibetan-English Dictionary* (653): “lit. eaters of smells, a class of demi-gods supposed to originate from the zone of scents in Gandhamādna in the Himalayas; are also celestial musicians.”

28 See, e.g. Dhondup Gyal’s short story “Sems gcong” (Depression; Don grub rgyal 1997, vol. II: 9).

making use of the concept of blends in the other level in the two-level metaphorical process of the formation of the central images in these two poems. Now I shall try to analyse and interpret the blends and their input spaces that contribute to their emergent meanings. The poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” itself admits its enigmatic nature when the speaker addresses the cloud: “What an unfathomable mystery you are!” (Don grub rgyal 1997, vol. I: 234). Something similar could perhaps also be said about the wind in the prose poem “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo”. The ambiguity of the central images makes it a difficult task to provide any definite interpretations, but on the other hand at the same time it makes the interpretative process and discussing the meanings worthwhile and fruitful. The ambiguity causes the interpretative process to be open-ended: the various readers of the works are likely to continue to produce their own creative interpretations of their meanings.<sup>29</sup>

In the prose poem the wind is sometimes depicted metaphorically in slightly riddle-like terms. For example, the text tells how the intellectual capacity of the personified wind gets brighter all the time and this is illustrated with the proverb about gold and its quality of shining even if buried under the earth.<sup>30</sup> However, in both works there are actually some places where the “identities” of the cloud and wind appear to be stated, but those statements also seem to require interpretation. First of all, in both works the cloud and the wind are connected with the concept of life. I quote a passage pointing towards this kind of interpretation (in what follows “she” and “you” refer to “the girl of wind”):

*lam la rgyu ba'i tshé na'ang mgyogs shing myur ba ni smos ma dgos pa zhing red/ yin  
na yang/ gnad kyi don po ni de kho nar ma nges te/ khyed la dbyang rlung<sup>31</sup> gi srog  
dang ldan pa'i rkyen red/ gal srid khyed la srog de lta bu ma 'dzoms na/ sra zhing  
'thas pa'i bdag nyid can de gas 'gro ba dang/ brlan zhing gsher ba'i khengs dregs can  
de rul 'gro ba ma zad/ tsha zhing sreg pa'i khro gnyer can de yang shi 'gro la/ bu mo  
rang gi tshé srog kyang 'jig 'gro nges red/  
(Don grub rgyal, “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo”)<sup>32</sup>*

29 Dulha Gyal, in his remarks after Dhondup Gyal's “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma”, writes how the image of the cloud may receive different kinds of interpretations. Interpreting the poem, he characterizes it as expressing the joyful feelings of its writer and associates the cloud with something that may bring forth happiness, but is ambiguous in its meaning (bDud lha rgyal 1998: 447–448).

30 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. VI: 8).

31 The expression *dbyang rlung* cannot be found in dictionaries. *rLung* is the usual word for wind, but the meaning of *dbyang* is not that clear. According to information received in a message from Lhundup Dorje (Lhun grub rdo rje), the meaning is probably ‘oxygen’ and the word is the Chinese *yangzi*. This interpretation makes the expression appear to be connected with breathing.

32 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. VI: 9).

also, when she moves on the road it is needless to say that she is very fast. However, the essential meaning lies not only in that. It is because you have the life of the wind. If you would not have that kind of life, the one of the nature of hardness would crack and that moist and wet arrogant one would get rotten. Moreover, the hot and burning wrathful one would be extinguished and your own life of you, girl, would certainly be destroyed.  
(Dhondup Gyal, *The Girl of Wind*)

The quality of the vital life energy of the “girl of wind” is here depicted as her most essential defining feature, which makes life on earth possible. Thus it is possible to interpret her as a kind of life force or vital energy of life without which everything would be lifeless and spiritless. This is also supported by the beginning paragraph of the work in which the “girl of wind” is attributed qualities that are not usually associated with everyday conceptions about wind: for example, accompanying the first person narrator of the essay from the day of his conception, providing the child “natural wisdom”, advice of the “union of body and consciousness” and bringing a baby in birth to the world. The girl of wind here sounds very much like the power of life. The first person voice characterizes the girl of wind saying that she is all the time with him (“like a body and its shadow”) and “a lifeline” (*srog gi gzung thag*) thus pointing towards the importance of “the girl of wind” on the personal level of an individual. Dekyi Tso has written that the attachment towards the girl of wind in this work of Dhondup Gyal seems to convey “the high esteem on the value of one’s own life” (bDe skyid 'tsho 1991: 25). Likewise, in Indian literature beginning from the Vedic texts there is a strong connection between the ideas related to wind and life (see Bäumer 1999: 145). Associating wind with life can also be understood based on the concept of embodiment in the cognitive theory of metaphor. The metaphors depicting life with the source domain of wind can be understood as based on the human bodily process of breathing that is necessary for staying alive.

The poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” also identifies the cloud as “shadow soul”,<sup>33</sup> “life force” and “basis of existence”:

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33 For information on *srog* and *bla*, see Stein (1972: 226–229). Stein uses the English expressions “life” or “vital principle” (*srog*) and “soul” (*bla*). Characterizing the Tibetan use of these concepts, he writes: “Sometimes the conscious mind itself becomes a mere synonym of the soul (*bla*). But normally the word *bla* is reserved for a soul that is more or less bound up with the body, in particular with breath, whilst the vital principle (*srog*) is linked to the blood. Some authors even compare these *bla* with the higher souls, *hun*, of the Chinese, which are also related to the breath.” (226) Stein discusses the word “wind horse” and discusses the “wind” in it explaining its nature as “a life principle” (223–224). Goldstein in his dictionary has translated *bla srog* as “soul, life essence” (775).

*khyed ni 'jig rten gnas pa'i gzhi ma dang/  
'gro ba 'tsho ba'i bla srog red/  
(Don grub rgyal, "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma")<sup>34</sup>*

You are the basis of the existence of the world and  
the shadow soul and life force for the living of the creatures  
(Dhondup Gyal, *The Petals of White Clouds*)

It seems that the wind and the aerial element have some connection to the breathing of a person or other living creature and thus to its staying alive. In Indian literature, in Dhoyī's *Pavanadūta* (12th c.) the wind is also associated with breathing. In the poem a *gandharva* girl addresses the wind: "From you, o wind, comes the breath of all living creatures" (3.4 in Mallinson 2006).

In the passage from Dhondup Gyal's "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo" quoted above it is also said that anything of the nature of the other elements would get spoiled without the life energy of the girl of wind. This seems to point towards interpretation of one of the possible input spaces (marked above with X) contributing to the blend as life and also in its very important aspect: change. Without change everything would be as if frozen to death and any creativity impossible. The Western Romantic poet Shelley in his famous *Ode to the West Wind* calls the wind "destroyer and preserver", which could perhaps also be interpreted in terms of life and creative energy.<sup>35</sup>

Wind is very strongly associated with movement. In cognitive research of metaphor a conceptual metaphor CHANGE IS MOTION is mentioned (Kövecses 2002: 159; see also Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 183–184). Lakoff and Johnson write about movements from different states or locations to others as a metaphoric way to depict changes of situation or state; in Dhondup Gyal's prose poem, however, the girl of wind flies in the sky and runs on the earth without any mention of particular destinations. The girl of wind could be an image of change in general or the essential nature of change that is necessary for sustenance of life on earth and also visible everywhere in nature. In the poem "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" the changes and the predicting of the arrival of a new era can also be interpreted to be indicative of the necessity of changes to take place for anything to stay functioning and alive. Change has the aspects of both growth and decay

<sup>34</sup> Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. I: 234).

<sup>35</sup> Shelley (1931/1966: 96). Harold Bloom has characterized the wind in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" as "the great wind of creation and destruction" in his discussion on Yeats' poem "The Secret Rose" comparing the "great wind of love and hate" at its end with Shelley's ode (O'Neill 2004: 71).

and in the prose poem “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo” it is also possible to sense the sad melancholy of the latter.<sup>36</sup>

In the poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” there are several passages where the identity of the cloud is characterized with various kinds of metaphoric terms. For instance, in an apostrophe the cloud is identified with “the happiness of the people” (*mi rigs kyi bde skyid*; Don grub rgyal 1997, vol. I: 232). This resembles the way that in the song “E ma mtsho sngon po” the lake addressed directly is said to be “the happiness of this time” and “the hope of the people”. Connecting the happiness of the people with natural elements has some nationalistic sounding flavour.<sup>37</sup> Also, near the end of the poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” when the speaker notices the cloud “touching with its hands the mountains and forests” and other features of landscape, it makes him recall his homeland (235), thus adding some nationalistic emotion to the poem. Furthermore, the personified cloud is said to provide for the people “hope of life” and “happiness” and “courage to move forward” (233). The fundamental importance and necessity of the cloud is conveyed by saying it is “the lifeline of living creatures” (*skye dgu'i srog gi gzung thag*) and “the nurse of the mind of living beings” (*'gro ba'i yid kyi ma ma*; 233). Even some meditative elements are added to the cloud by means of speaking of “the womb of contemplation” (*bsam gtan gyi mngal 'bur*) of the cloud from whence the “little boys of raindrops” take birth (233). The poem also speaks of the great compassion and wisdom of the cloud (234–235), adding some spiritual-sounding nuances.

The natural forces are normally free and uncontrollable. The wind blows freely beyond human control and the clouds drift freely in the sky. Thus the images of the wind and the clouds could also be interpreted as images of freedom. I think that all the different interpretations can be understood as different aspects of the same kind of message: the concepts of life, creativity, freedom, change, and progress are related to the same idea of being intensively alive, open and creative. In his discussion of imagery in Western Romantic poetry, Northrop Frye (1970: 211) has used the words “vehicular energy” and “creative impulse” to interpret powerful nature images. The word “creative impulse” or “power” could also well be a proper word for interpreting these two works of Dhondup Gyal.

At the end of both of the works the natural element becomes internalized or the speaker combines himself with it. I will now look at this tendency of inter-

36 The melancholic nature of the essay is also observed by Dekyi Tso (bDe skyid 'tsho 1995: 25), who writes about the lonely feeling in the work (*kher rkyang grogs med kyi mam pa*).

37 The song says in Tibetan: *mtsho sngon po/ khyed ni da lta'i bde skyid dang/ mi rigs kyi re ba red/*. I have quoted from the text line of a VCD titled *mTsho sngon po'i bstod glu*. For a discussion of the image of the Blue Lake, see Virtanen (2007) and for information on the song, also including information on its composer and performances by various Tibetan singers on VCDs, see Stirr (2008).

mingling with nature in these two works. This is how the poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” ends:

*sprin dkar gyi 'dab ma ni nga'i re ba yin pa dang/  
 chu 'dzin gyi phon po ni nga'i snying gi dga' ma dang/  
 sems kyi ma ma/  
 'tsho ba'i gzi brjid/  
 'dun ma'i rten gzhi/  
 la rgya'i bdag po yin/  
 khyed rang dus nam yang bdag gi yid kyi nam mkha' la rgyu ba dang/  
 khyed rang dus gtan du kho bo'i snying gi mdzes rgyan du bzhugs par smon//  
 (Don grub rgyal, “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma”)<sup>38</sup>*

the petals of white clouds are my source of hope and  
 the accumulation of clouds are the lover of my heart and  
 the nurse of mind  
 the glory of life  
 the basis of expectations  
 the owner of dignity  
 you are always floating in the sky of my mind and  
 I pray that you will always reside as an ornament of my heart.  
 (Dhondup Gyal, The Petals of White Clouds)

When the cloud becomes associated with such ideas as hope, expectations, happy life, and dignity, it is given great importance and thought of as something beloved. There are some metaphors that appeared earlier in the poem in a larger, national context, but now the context is more personal. Mentioning the words “hope”, “glory” and “dignity” also has something in common with the lyrics of the song “E ma mtsho sngon po” (Oh, Blue Lake!) which also uses them in connection with the metaphorical image of a natural element: the Blue Lake in Amdo. In this song, too, these concepts are connected with the “people” and the “motherland”. In the poem “sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma” the cloud is something that the first person voice always thinks about and hopes will always be with him. Freedom and creative power appear as suitable interpretations. This kind of lasting quality (or at least its aspiration) and internalization of the cloud are characteristic features in this poem of Dhondup Gyal. When interpreting the poems, it is notable that the word “freedom” is an abstract term that may receive various kinds of interpretations in different contexts and by different readers.

In the poems by authors of various cultural backgrounds, clouds are very often connected with transience as they move in the sky leaving places behind or are

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38 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. I: 235).

connected with the idea of rootlessness.<sup>39</sup> In Shelley's poem the cloud speaks in the first person voice saying "I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;/ I change, but I cannot die" and it is possible to perceive the two sides of change expressed with the image of a cloud: the transience and the creativity.<sup>40</sup> In contrast with the Chinese farewell poems, in Dhondup Gyal's "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" the cloud is requested to stay with the voice of the poem.

A common feature shared by Dhondup Gyal's other free verse poem "Lang tsho'i rhab chu" and the two works discussed here is their way of ending: in all three works the central concepts are internalized and are in the minds and hearts of us humans. In the poem "Di na yang drag tu mchong lding byed bzhin pa'i snying gson po zhig 'dug" (Here too Is a Heart Alive Strongly Beating), there is something similar in its ending: at the end in this free verse poem the attention of the reader is brought to the central concept of the heart in both the minds of the first person voice and the others whom he is addressing.

The poem "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" ends with praying that the cloud will remain inside one's own heart and mind. Thus it seems to be a kind of basic necessity for each person's life – the thing, idea, energy or a dream that keeps one alive. Northrop Frye (1970: 208–209) has discussed Western Romanticism and connects the tendencies to internalize natural elements and identify with them with the creative power. This internalization of nature seems to be a feature shared by Dhondup Gyal and the Western Romantic poets, but it is difficult to say whether he was actually influenced by the Romantic Movement, perhaps through Chinese translations, or whether he created the powerful nature images in his works in response to the beautiful scenery and landscape in Amdo. In any case, it could be said that the image of the cloud in "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" could be interpreted as the creative aspect of life, or creativity.

At the end of Dhondup Gyal's prose poem "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo" there is also a passage where the girl of wind and the mind of the speaker become blended

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39 See, e.g. in Frankel (1976: 44–45), Yan Jidao's (11–12th c.) classical Chinese poem illustrating the departure or absence of a woman with the departure of "the brilliant cloud". Frankel also quotes from the poem of Li Bo: "I only regret that singers and dancers disperse; turning into brilliant clouds, they fly away." According to Michelle Yeh (1991: 99), some images, one of them being that of the cloud, are typically used in Chinese farewell poems. She examines Xu Zhimo's "Second Farewell to Cambridge" and notes some resemblance with Western Romanticism in the "dialectical" movement between nature and self (100). In a poem by Rihaku (8th c. CE) titled "Taking Leave of a Friend", included in *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems*, there is also a simile in which mind is likened to "a floating white cloud" expressing the idea of the transient nature of encounters with people (59).

40 Shelley (1931/1966: 104). Shelley's poem titled "The Cloud" ends: "I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,/ And out of the caverns of rain,/ Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,/ I arise and unbuild it again."

with each other. Here the wind becomes internalized and the “vital blood of mind” of the voice of the prose poem becomes externalized inside the wind.<sup>41</sup> In the end they become completely inseparable:

*nga rang ni dri bzhon bu mo la dga' ba dang/ kho mo' ang bdag la snying nye ba yin/  
nga'i sems kyi khang bzang na dus nam yang dbyang rlung ldang ba dang/ kho mo'i  
snying gi dkyil dbus na nga'i sems kyi zungs khrag 'khyil yod cing/ dbyang rlung ma  
tshar bar du zungs khrag zad pa med la/ zungs khrag ma zad bar du dbyang rlung  
yang' dzad rgyu ma red/ (Don grub rgyal, “Dri bzhon gyi bu mo”)<sup>42</sup>*

I like the girl of wind and she also is friendly to me. In the good house of my mind the wind always blows and in the centre of her heart the vital blood of my mind circulates. Until the wind stops blowing, the vital blood will not run out. Until the vital blood runs out, the wind will also not become exhausted.  
(Dhondup Gyal, The Girl of Wind)

This passage becomes even more touching reflecting on the tragic nature of the writer’s life: Dhondup Gyal passed away only some weeks after writing these lines. It conveys a love of life, but with the lines the writer also seems to convey a message of continuing presence and existence in the wind even after his physical death.

There is something similar in Dhondup Gyal’s essay and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s poem “Ode to the West Wind”. In Shelley’s poem the voice of the poem addresses the west wind as “wild” and “uncontrollable” and wishes to be like the wind depicting it as “tameless, and swift and proud” (Shelley 1966: 97). Part five of the poem contains words that express the poet’s wish to intermingle or blend with the wind. The first person voice is throughout the poem addressing the wind as “you” (“thou”):

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own!  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!  
(Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind”)

In Shelley’s poem the voice wishes the wind to carry his words everywhere.

41 The Tibetan word *sems* can be translated alternatively either as ‘mind’ or ‘heart’ (see Goldstein 1975: 1170–1171). In Tibetan culture, as in many others, the concepts about the mind and the heart are connected. However, literally the ‘heart’ is called *snying*.

42 Don grub rgyal (1997, vol. VI: 11).

The way of blending with a natural element – either the wind or the cloud – in the two works by Dhondup Gyal seems to convey a sense of intermingling with nature. The boundary between the person and nature becomes blurred and vanishes: this could perhaps be characterized as being part of nature. However, it is clear that the poet is not just merging with nature but is also projecting his own ideas and thoughts on it and the representations of natural elements become modified to the purposes of the works. This is a special power of art and literature. Therefore the natural elements represented in literature and art are unique and of their own special kind as compared to the external reality of nature.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up my essay, I will present some observations on the nature and function of the poetic images of the clouds and the wind in Dhondup Gyal's works "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" and "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo". In both of them the nature images are central images that act as the driving force of the entire work.

The two works share some common features: the images of the clouds and the wind can both be interpreted as conveying abstract ideas of freedom, change, innovation, creativity and being alive. In both works the images are characterized by some ambiguity: this open-ended nature of the interpretative process further enhances the creative and unique quality of the imagery. The interpretations related to life or creative power as opposed to stagnation and conservatism seem to be especially suitable to these two works. This is also suggested with the connection of the aerial element and especially that of the wind to the processes of breathing and their essentiality for all life. The interpretation related to the idea of "change" in "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo" can be viewed as having its melancholic side too: when there is change, the old often has to give way to the new. The interpretations connected with the idea of freedom are possible in several of Dhondup Gyal's works having a central image of a natural element. This could perhaps be explained with the view of nature as something free and uncontrollable. The idea of being free remains at an abstract level and may receive various kinds of interpretations. The power and uncontrollable force of the natural elements could well have been another one of the reasons that inspired the poet to use them so frequently in his imagery. But no doubt, the landscape and the natural forces in the atmosphere are also something experienced by and familiar to all humans and therefore it is very natural that their images often appear in poetic imagery too.

The two works also share a multilayered nature and the quality that makes it possible to interpret them in multiple ways. The multilayered nature has been

created by means of the poetic technique of building composite imagery that makes the works have a unique quality of images. Some connections to traditional and cross-cultural images in some individual elements used to modify the central images may also be observed. However, the way of creatively modifying and blending elements makes the central images of the works innovative and of unique flavour. They are somewhat ambiguous in their nature, being open to individual readers' own interpretations related to their personal life experiences. Thus the images may also receive other kinds of interpretations than those discussed here. Their being open to various interpretations seems to be one of their important qualities. The two works also share the feature of internalization and blending with the natural element at their end. The interpretations above have been based on my reading of the works in question, and thus are only some of the possible interpretations, which can be numerous and of different kinds. It is not possible to claim that one particular interpretation represents the definitive, intended meaning. It is generally known that literary works, and especially poetic images, are often characterized by multiple meanings and some degree of ambiguity.

The two works of Dhondup Gyal also have some features setting them apart. Obviously, the nature images are different. In the prose poem "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo" the tone is more personal, whereas in the other poem "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" the personal and national frameworks of discourse alternate and intermingle. The atmospheres of the works are different: the poem "sPrin dkar gyi 'dab ma" conveys an atmosphere of joy whereas in the prose poem "Dri bzhon gyi bu mo" the atmosphere is perhaps more lonely and melancholic. Also, the reflections about the four elements and their connection to the human nature create an atmosphere of change and impermanence – the transient nature of living creatures.

Some other works of Dhondup Gyal also employ powerful central images of natural elements. Examples of this are the poem "Lang tsho'i rhab chu" and the song "E ma mtsho sngon po". The reason for the need to use different images to convey meanings that may in some respects be similar has perhaps to do with the partial nature of metaphoric mappings. Different images highlight different aspects of the meanings. This has also to do with the cloud and the wind images: the cloud images highlight the joyous floating aspect of creativity whereas the wind image becomes associated more readily with the changing transient nature of life, having its melancholic aspect too, or the creative power. When considering the water images in some works centred on water imagery, they highlight the aspect of being free and uncontrollable.

It seems that the nature images are used in a way that became characteristic of new Tibetan poetry. Rather than shaping the poetry according to the *kāvya*-rules, the poet expresses his inner emotion or thoughts with powerful central images that are multilayered and possess complex features.<sup>43</sup> In general, it can be said that the nature images are used in a creative way and, as contrasted to reality, the images of the clouds and the wind could even be characterized as “creative” clouds and “creative” wind should we wish to call them so.

Discussing how the image of the cloud was first modified with a series of source domain images we also saw how the mappings from some source domain images typical of Tibetan or Indo-Tibetan culture created a certain culturally specific flavour in the representation of clouds. An example of this was mapping on a dark cloud the image of a Tibetan *ngakpa* wearing a black cloak. Some features were also shared with literature from other cultures: for example, the tendency to personify the natural elements and the image of the cloud as a messenger. Both the images are generally characterized by movement that is also connected with the idea of change.

If, based on the above, we would try to describe the relation of Dhondup Gyal to nature as reflected in his works, it could be said that in both of the works the first person voice intermingles with nature and combines with a natural element. In both works we can find alternating and intertwining at least two frames: that of a nature poem in which a first person voice located in a natural landscape addresses a natural element and then a metaphoric employment of a nature image to discuss, convey and display the ideas the poet wishes to express. The natural landscape and its characteristics are also located in the poet’s native region (or rather viewed above it as in the case of clouds and the wind) and with them the poet also seems to express a kind of feeling of love of one’s homeland. In a way the poet communicates with nature and the ideas and thoughts have been projected into the natural element and then internalized again. The merging with nature is not passive but of a more active kind. The poet projects his ideas into nature and makes use of images of natural elements to express his inner thoughts and emotions. The way in which the representations of the poetic clouds and the wind have been modified by literary means is characteristic of representations in literature but clearly differ from the physical clouds and wind in the external reality.

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43 Characterizing the young poets of the time of Dhondup Gyal, Choekyong writes that they wished to represent their inner feelings (*sems kham ngo ma*) and felt it difficult to achieve that aim with the help of traditional figures of speech (Chos skyong 2006: 240).

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