

## Millenarianism, Utopia, and the Founding of the Bhutanese State

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*This article investigates Tsang Khenchen Jamyang Palden Gyatso's (Gtsang mkhan chen 'Jam dbyangs dpal ldan rgya mtsho, 1610–84) enunciation of the Bhutanese theocracy in his celebrated biography of Bhutan's founding figure Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, 1594–1651), entitled The Song of the Great Dharma Cloud. In particular, it pays attention to the medium of prophecy and how prophecy acts as an important discursive avenue for Tsang Khenchen to articulate two distinct yet interrelated cosmological models for Bhutan: the conception of Bhutan as the privileged field of activity of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara incarnating during an age of strife for the millenarian purpose of ushering a new fortunate eon (bhadra kalpa) in the region, and the conception of Bhutan as a hidden land (sbas yul) consecrated by the Indian siddha Padmasambhava during the eighth century—a utopian paradise conducive to the flourishing of the Dharma. By exploring the contours of these two models, pointing to the ways in which they are simultaneously congruous and in tension with each other, this article seeks to underscore the central role of prophecy as a medium for the conception and realization of new visions of governance in the greater Tibetan world. Further, it emphasizes the ways in which such a medium is intimately connected to conceptions of space as much as of time.*