

## **Rulership under the sway of the Number Thirteen: a key aspect of the Tibetan concept of rule**

*Karl-Heinz Everding*

During my study of the history of the petty kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang, which stretched out between sPu rang in West Tibet and dPal khud mtsho 200 km to the west of Sa skya, I came across information to the effect that the Gung thang king administered his domain with the aid of 13 centuries and a 13-member council of administrators (Tib. *las tshan bcu gsum*). Further, it is said in the chronicle Gung thang rgyal rabs that he performed the so-called 13 deeds of an ox and that his fortress, Khyung rdzong dkar po, had 13 towers. That these details are purely coincidental is a possibility that can be ruled out in view of the many other occasions in which the number thirteen is mentioned in the Tibetan sources.

In the planned talk, therefore, I shall be delving into the meaning of this number in the sphere of Tibetan cultural influence. A systematic attempt will be made to draw together the contexts and numeric configurations in which the number thirteen was evidently of particular significance. My special focus will be to show the significance of the number in the historical field and to raise the question of its ideological background.