

Bulletin of Tibetology



1984

NO. 3

15 November 1984

SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK INDIA

-The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in this field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field-

EDITORS

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IN MEMORIAM



Smt. Indira Gandhi is no more. Born on 19 November 1917 at Allahabad she passed away on 31 October 1984 at New Delhi.

Indira Priyadarshini had as a child imbibed from her father Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru a deep reverence for Buddha Sakyamuni and his Teachings. Later as a pupil of Gurudev Tagore she developed an abiding interest in the spread of Dharma in India and abroad.

In 1958 (1 October) Smt. Indira Gandhi was present at the opening of the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology by Pandit Jawaharlal' Nehru. Her interest in Mahayana and Tibetan studies was so deep that she had a sustained concern in the work of this Institute even when she was all too busy in the high office as Prime Minister of India. Whether in Gangtok, New Delhi or elsewhere, whenever she came across any scholar or officer connected with this Institute, Indira Gandhi would enquire about our progress or fund requirements.

In 1975 November she visited Gangtok for a stop of 24 hours and the official programme did not include a visit to the Institute. She noticed this omission while just sitting for a quiet dinner at Raj Bhavan, had the dinner cut short and visited the Institute in the cold evening; the date was 20 November.

In the midst of an extremely heavy routine in July 1983 Indira Gandhi agreed to be in Gangtok for 36 hours to inaugurate the Silver Jubilee of this Institute. In the morning of 29 July she left New Delhi at 7 for Bagdogra where she changed into a helicopter, arriving Gangtok some time after 10. She was at the Institute campus before 11.30, she exchanged greetings with the Lamas and authorities of the Institute, planted a sapling,

accepted the Triple Auspicious Objects from the Lamas, went round our collections of icons, art objects, manuscripts and xylographs evincing much interest in many items and later addressed the assembled Lamas, dignitaries, scholars and other invitees to the Silver Jubilee Inauguration. Indira Gandhi spoke extempore for nearly half an hour. The extempore speech, in our submission as in the opinion of the audience, was a rare combination of emotion and intellect. The speech was reproduced in extenso in this Bulletin No 1 (1984). A few extracts are made here.

"But in the journey towards fulfilment, we must be, we are, alone. We have to undertake this journey and we have to bear its hardships alone. Gurudev Tagore has said that if no one walks with us we must walk alone -- "EKLA

CHOLORE". And the Buddha said it much earlier to Ananda, "Be a lamp unto yourself". So we have this light within ourselves, it is a question of being able to see it or being able to reveal it or being able to use its strength and energy for good.

"Nothing in the world is purely good or purely bad. It is what use you make of it. Whether it is science, whether it is knowledge, whether it is any tools that we have, we can use them for constructive purposes, we can use them for destructive purpose.

"Buddhism spread from India far and wide and it is influencing now a very large portion of the world's population. And although India at one stage seemed to have forgotten it in part as Buddhism, although many of its ideals and values were adapted and absorbed, we find now resurgence here and abroad.

"It is a light which can guide our path and can take the world away from the destructive, the greed, the looking towards the superficial rather than the deep which can be with us always.

"Dr. Radhakrishnan once said that 'to be an Indian doesn't merely mean to be born in India or to have the citizenship of India. It means allegiance to certain principles, certain ideals, certain values'. And these, of course, are found in full measure in the teaching of this Great Soul, Gautama Buddha".

A notice of the Silver Jubilee Inauguration by Smt. Indira Gandhi on 29 July 1983 appearing in the *Tibetan Review* (New Delhi) for September 1983, as appended here expresses the reverential esteem of the Lamas and scholars in the discipline designated Tibetology.

"The Prime Minister was welcomed at the entrance of the Institute by the Lamas of the Institute who had lined up outside with religious, musical instruments like rolmo, dhungchen, gyaling and nga. Monks, scholars and officials of the Institute offered ceremonial scarves to the Prime Minister. But the most respectful gesture of welcome was presentation to her of Tensum (Triple Object): the Buddha image, the scripture and the Stupa. The image represents the body of the Buddha, the scripture stands for his Word, and the stupa for his Mind. The presentation of the Tensum is the highest honour that Lamas can do to a high dignitary. It is a well-known custom in Mongolia and Tibet. In my opinion the presentation of Tensum to the Indian Prime Minister is the first instance of such honour bestowed on a non-Buddhist. She on her part viewed the icons and images of the Institute with interest worthy of a Buddhist devotee. She also expressed this interest later in an extempore address in the Institute.

"The three items of Tensum on this occasion were a small Buddha image in bronze; the writings of Nagarjuna and Atisa now lost in Sanskrit; and a Kadam stupa in bronze. The presentation was made by the Institute's Lamas, Khenpo Lodo, Sangpo

J. Ngawang Rinpoche, and Kunga Yonten Hochotsang. The cost of the items was borne entirely by monks, scholars and other staff of the Institute from voluntary subscriptions. These items and other objects, manuscripts and xylographs were explained to the Prime Minister by the Institute's Director, Professor Nirmal Sinha, and the Deputy Director, Rechung Rinpoche. The Prime Minister wrote on the visitors' book a lengthy appreciation and concluded : "With good wishes to all those working in this Institute and those connected with it".

The Lamas, scholars and members of staff mourn the passing away of one whose warm and weighty patronage will ever remain a source of strength

The Lamas, scholars and members of staff mourn the passing away of one whose warm and weighty patronage will ever remain a source of strength and pride for all working here.

JKR : NCS

ON TIBETOLOGY

Nirmal C. Sinha

The Sikkim Institute of Tibetology was inaugurated by Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 1st October 1958. It is thus relevant to talk on Tibetology this evening.

As Indology studies culture, history and language of India, as Sinology studies culture history and language of China, Tibetology studies culture, history and language of Tibet. As an academic discipline the expression Tibetology came into usage in the second quarter of this century. The statute incorporating the Sikkim Institute defines Tibetology thus: "The word Tibetology is used as a convenient and conventional term meaning the study of Chhos, and the culture and all arts and sciences associated with Chhos. Tibetology has thus linguistic and cultural connotations not limited to any regional boundaries."

The same statute defines Chhos thus: "Chhos in Tibetan is equivalent to Dharma in Sanskrit but is generally used among Tibetan speaking

Broadcast on AIR, Gangtok, on 1.10.84

people in a special sense as the Doctrine of Buddha". This makes clear that the main thrust in Tibetology is the Dharma expounded by Gautama Buddha and recorded in Tibetan language. Most of Buddha's teachings and commentaries of Acharyas and Sthaviras are lost in Sanskrit and can be found in faithful systematized translations in Tibetan. Saints and scholars of Tibet, however, did not rest with the translation of Sanskrit works. They delved deep into the contents of both the teachings and the commentaries and made their own expositions. The contributions of Tibetan saints and scholars were not only lucid expositions of the original texts but also added considerably to learning and thought about the Dharma.

Being the medium of propagation of the Dharma all over Trans-Himalayas Tibetan eventually became a major language from the Himalayas in the south up to the Altai Karakorums in the north. The Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Koros whose bi-centenary is observed this year had found in the first half of the last century that with its dialectical variations Tibetan was the lingua franca over the greater part what was then known as High Asia. Its religious associations combined with its linguistic associations thus make Tibetology an extremely vast field of study.

Alexander Csoma de Koros was the first non-Tibetan scholar to probe into the treasures of Tibetan literature. Csoma Koros spoke to an astonished modern world about the diverse contents of Tibetan literature. He unveiled besides those on Dharma and Darsana Tibetan books on very mundane subjects like medicine and geography. Two generations later an Indian scholar Sarat Chandra Das had opportunities to visit Central Tibet and study Tibetan texts on the spot with the monks and scholars in Lhasa and elsewhere. Sarat Das wrote on all aspects of Tibetan life and culture. He wrote on Geography and History, Language and Literature, Religions and Cults, and in fact revealed the depths and dimensions of this field of study.

The depths and dimensions of Tibetology are primarily because of two facts. Prior to the introduction of Buddhism Tibetan religion was Shamanism or Bon in which occult mystic rituals dominated; besides there was some associations with Chinese Confucian civilization. So contacts with Shaman world in the west and north and with Han world in the east have to be studied for proper investigation into the history or culture of Tibet. In the seventh century A.D., Tibet adopted Dharma and Akshara from south, that is India. The rejection of ancestor worship and pictograph

thus marked the Tibetan identity as quite distinct from the Han. Later towards the end of eighth century, Tibetans expelled Buddhist monks from China and banned preachings of Dharma by Chinese monks for all time. This completed the alienation of "barbarian" Tibet from "civilized" China. With the religion and alphabet from India came a world of learning and science which released Tibet from the closed world of Han pictograph into the open world of Brahmi phonetic.

The phonetic script provided Tibet with a key to translate not only from Sanskrit but also from Iranian, Arabic and even Greek writings. To illustrate this point I must refer to the development of Ayurveda in Tibet with additional knowledge of Unani medical texts, the translation of Aesops Fables and the exchange between Sufism and Sunyata. So Indology and studies relating to West Asia have associations or interconnections with what we call today Tibetology.

Within the time limits for this talk I can highlight a few treasures of Tibetan literature on which is based Tibetology. The progress of Indian learning in Tibet and later in Mongolia is well known. Not so well known is that Tibetan chronicles and historical writings throw much light on the history of neighbouring countries

like India in the south and Mongolia in the north and even China in the east. Much knowledge about geography of India from Buddha's time till the first quarter of nineteenth century can be gleaned from Tibetan works.

The renowned fact about Tibetan literature is that it preserves the lost treasures of Sanskrit literature. The translations made by bilingual scholars, that is Tibetan scholars with adequate knowledge of Sanskrit and Indian scholars with adequate knowledge of Tibetan, covered nearly three centuries. Such planned scientific translations are now admitted to anticipate the modern UNESCO Translations in which bilingual scholars with mastery of each other's idiom and imagery, grammar and syntax have to agree and testify to each other's satisfaction. From these translations modern world learns that many centuries before Hegel, Kant and Bradley Indian thinkers like Nagarjuna, Dignaga and Vasubandhu examined the question of God or Creator with a fearless mind typical of modern West.

The gain for India from the studies of Csoma Koros, Sarat Das and their successors is, however, much wider and much deeper than academic. Intelligentsia of modern India discovered some lost chapters of our ancient history from Tibet.

As we know the story of our past glory had much to do with the renaissance in India under foreign imperialism. Evidence from monasteries and monastic universities of Sakya, Lhasa, Tashilhunpo Kumbum and Urga contributed considerably to the recovery of our past and to our renaissance. Tibetology for us in India is not merely an academic discipline. It is of great moral if not spiritual interest for any Indian who cares for the past as well as the present.

I now strike a sad note. Tibetology as an academic discipline is not as valued in India as in the West. With a good number of Tibetan scholars now settled in India we should do even better than the Western scholars. Besides, one of the three largest collections of Tibetan literature is in India at Gangtok with the Sikkim Institute, the others are one with Oriental Library of Lenin-grad and the other with Toyo Bunko of Tokyo. But the Sikkim collection is far more representative and comprehensive than the other two. The Sikkim Institute has preserved the texts in a manner convenient to both traditional and modern scholars. Our direct photo-mechanic reproductions of rare Tibetan texts and *Bulletin of Tibetology* covering the diverse contents of Tibetology should attract greater notice at home. It is high time Indian Pandits and Tibetan Lamas jointly work again in what is now called Tibetology.

TIBET AND BENGAL

A Study in Trade Policy and Trade Pattern (1775-1875)

Arabinda Deb

The East India Company's relations with Tibet was initiated by Warren Hastings, 'the greatest of the great Governor Generals of India'. The first contact was begun by the Tibetans. Immediately on the news of the defeat of the Bhutanese king Desi Shidariva (1) by the British forces in the battle for Cooch Behar (1772-1774), Palden Yeshe (the third Panchen Lama) addressed his historic letter of mediation to the Governor General (2). Warren Hastings seized the opportunity and in reply proposed a general treaty of amity and peace between Bengal and Tibet. He could now be more generous in his settlement with Bhutan (Anglo-Bhutan Treaty of 1774) once he had secured control over Cooch Behar. He wrote and obtained passport for a European to proceed to Tibet for negotiation of a treaty. He chose George Bogle for the purpose. On grounds of "intelligence," "exactness," "coolness," and "moderation of temper," there could not be a better choice. Once he outlined the "purpose" in his instructions to Bogle the Governor General left his agent perfectly free to do as he liked and time and

money were freely at his disposal. In his letter of appointment Bogle was told "The design of your mission is to open a mutual and equal communication of trade between the inhabitants of Bhutan (Bhote=Tibet) and Bengal and you will be guided by your own judgement in using such means of negotiation as may be most likely to effect the purpose"(3).

Apart from the unique appointment and instructions, Warren Hastings sought information about trade between Tibet and Siberia, Tibet and China and Tibet and Kashmir. The envoy was armed with a memorandum on the history, religion and hierarchy of Tibet. Perhaps a better beginning in trade with Himalayas and Trans-Himalayas could not have been made. The first British mission to Tibet and Bhutan (1774-1775) was an exercise in commercial diplomacy par excellence.

While at Tashichhodzong in Bhutan, Bogle pointedly noted the monopoly trading interests of the Bhutanese officials including the Deba Raja and the Paro Penlop. He sought to secure their co-operation by allowing them greater privileges (through a Parwana or order of the Governor General) and security of trade at Rangpur and Dinajpur in North Bengal with the intention of extending it to Calcutta. In 1775 he succeeded in concluding a commercial treaty with the Deba

Raja, granting the Bhutanese "exclusive trade in sandal indigo redskin tobacco betelnut and pan (leaves)". His idea was to promote trade with Bhutan and Tibet and ensure market for English broadcloth through "accustomed" native agency without arousing the suspicions of hillmen after the British political ascendancy in Bengal(4).

Bogle travelled only in a small part of Tibet proper and had audience with the third Panchen Lama with whom he built up a good rapport. Within his limited experience in Tibet he did not fail to record a graphic summary of the scope and pattern of Tibet's trade with other countries. The Tibetans traded with the Chinese, the Mongols and the Kalmuks in the north and Bengal, Assam Nepal and Bhutan bordering Tibet on the south. He gave the information that no duties were levied on goods and trade was protected and free from exactions (5). This was one reason for a large number of foreign merchants like the Kashmiris and the Nepalese to settle in Tibet. The Kashmiri merchants had establishments in all the principal towns of Tibet. They also took part in the Tibet-China trade through Selling. The Gossains "the trading pilgrims of India," traded in articles of great value and small bulk.

Tibet's trade with China was the most considerable. Imports from China consisted of coarse

tea, silk and satins, porcelain, glass and cutlery and knives, talents of silver and some tobacco. Tibet paid in gold, pearls, coral chanks (shell) and broadcloth. The Kalmuks brought Siberian products like furs, hides, cowtails, bastard pearls and silver. They were paid in broadcloth, coral and amber beads, spices and gold. The predominance of China in the Tibetan trade, the importance of broadcloth for the Tibetans, both for exchange and consumption, are two firm intelligence which emanated from Bogle's mission. This was no mean achievement for a man who never visited Lhasa, the seat of Tibetan authority, and who could not lay hands on any Tibetan official statistics. The pattern of Tibet's trade given by Bogle was confirmed by Turner's Report (1784) where broadcloth and spices were mentioned as the most important items in the export trade from Bengal to Tibet through Nepal and also in Bhutan's export to Tibet (6). Most of Bhutanese exports like rice, tobacco, indigo, sandal wood and munjeet were secured from the adjoining Dooars and the Bengal districts. These were exchanged for tea and other Chinese commodities, rock salt, wool, sheep's skin and narrow friezes for other home consumption (7). Bogle also recorded how the trade between Bengal and Tibet through Nepal suffered due to high duties on trade imposed by the Gurkha king to meet his military expenses. The principal articles of merchandise between Bengal and Tibet were

"broadcloth, otter skins, indigo, pearl, coral, amber and other beads, chank shells, spices and tobacco sugar, malta, striped satins and a few white cloths, chiefly coarse". The returns were made in gold dust, musk and cowtails" (8).

Bogle's report for the first time made Englishmen aware of how China and Nepal had extensive trading interests in Tibet and, therefore, were important factors in the Tibetan issue.

Acknowledging the "intricacy" of the subject, Bogle did not fail to record informations about the current specie which, as he said, was of "capital importance towards understanding the nature of its trade"(9). Prior to Gurkha conquest of Nepal the three Newar Kingdoms of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon used to export coins to Tibet which was a "source of considerable profit" to them. During the rule of the last ruler of Bhatgaon the coins were debased which caused a decrease of nearly one half of their intrinsic value. The problem of debased coins proved intractable as later events showed. This led to desertion of the Nepalese mints and there was no other currency. Only the silver mohurs ("identical with Muhammedan half rupee"), Chinese brass money and a few specimens of silver coinage known as "Tsang Money" were in use. This silver was procured from China in stamped lumps.

In Turner's list specie is given as the first item of export from Nepal to Tibet.

The Tibetans raised the issue of debased silver coins with Prithinarayan, the founder of the Gurkha dynasty in Nepal. It was one of the main issues which led to the first Tibet-Gurkha War (1788-1792) in which China came in as an "ally of long standing" on the side of the Tibetans (10).

After this war Chinese "jealousy and influence" became more pronounced in trade policy in Tibet. British frontier officials and the reports of the envoys very often refer to it. Along with Gurkha restrictions on trade this explains a steady decline in Tibet-Bengal trade.

Indeed, Warren Hasting's policy towards Bhutan and Tibet, the Anglo-Cooch Behar Treaty (1772) the Anglo-Bhutan Treaty (1774); George Bogle's mission to Tibet and his trade treaty with Bhutan (1775); brought about a structure of relationship which had great potential for the development of Himalayan and Trans-Himalayan trade. It is the case of a lost horizon in history that this structure was not nurtured for a century. The cost to the British-Indian treasury was a war against Bhutan (1864-65) and a military mission

against Tibet (1904).

In 1786 Purangir Gossain arrived in Calcutta from Tibet. On being questioned he stated that "merchants had already found their way from Bengal to Tashilhumpo where the markets were being represented as being well supplied with English and Indian manufactures". This flow of Indian and English goods to the markets of Tashilhumpo was the outcome of Bogle and Turner's mission to Tibet.

At the time of the Anglo-Gurkha war in 1815 David Scott, the Collector of Rangpur, sent Krishnakanta Bose to Bhutan to negotiate disputes between Cooch Behar and Bhutan. Krishnakanta's Report, translated by David Scott in English, in part confirmed the pattern of Tibet's trade through Bhutan as given earlier by George Bogle besides furnishing new and crucial commercial information.

Bhutan's foreign trade was carried on almost entirely with Tibet and Bengal and Krishnakanta underlined that almost the whole trade was monopolised by the officialdom in Bhutan, beginning with the Dharma Raja. He wrote, "The Dharma Raja trades with a capital of twentyfive or thirty thousand rupees" besides drawing annual income from the land to the south of the hills (11). The Paro Penlop and the western Bhutan chiefs had

monopoly interests in the Tibet-Bengal trade through Bhutan and also in the inter-dooars trade. Similarly, the Tongsa Penlop (the eastern Bhutan chief) had his trading interests spread in Assam Dooars through Dewangiri. The chief of Thimpu "trades to a greater extent" than the Punakha chief and "feeds" the court for six months.

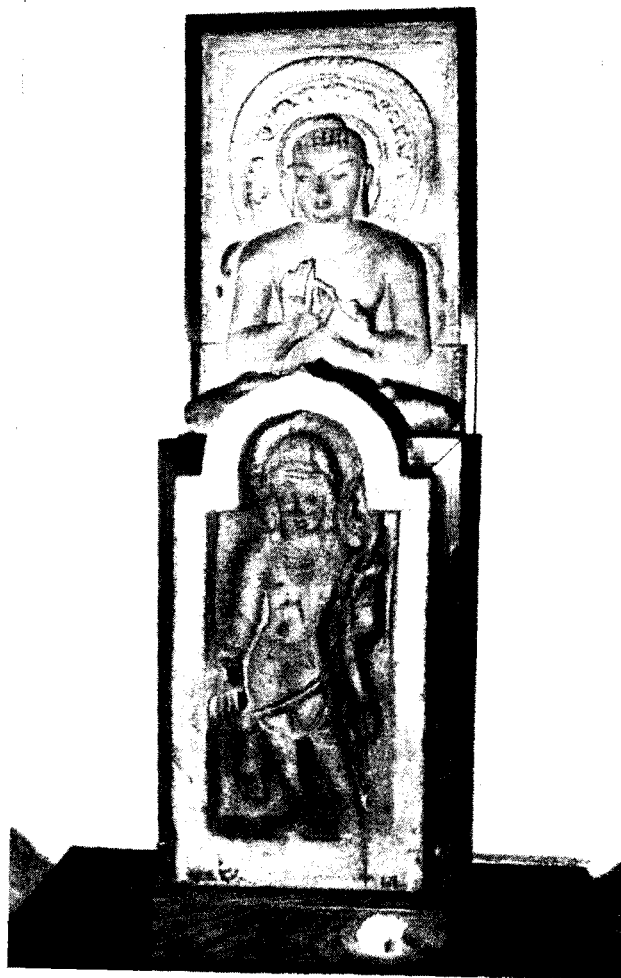
No wonder that the Kashmiri merchants of Tibet could not make a dent in Bhutan to compensate for the losses which they sustained due to Gurkha policy of exclusiveness in Nepal in respect of the Nepal-Tibet trade. In the list furnished by Krishnakanta of Bhutan's exchange trade with Tibet the following four groupings can be made. The food items exported to Tibet consisted of rice, parched rice (drawn from the Dooars) wheat and flours of dhemsu. Secondly, woollen and cotton clothes (broadcloth is not specifically mentioned). In the third category can be placed spices (nutmegs and cloves) and indigo along with sandal, red sandal and asafoetida. In the fourth category of exports to Tibet fall the stones, precious and semi-precious. Excepting rice, a similar grouping of trade items could be made in Turner's list of the export trade from Bengal to Tibet through Nepal. Among Bhutan's indigenous products which became trade items Krishnakanta mentions tanga horses (strong little pony of Bhutan and Tibet used in the carrying trade), blankets, walnuts, rock-salt (exported

PLATES

1. Guru Padmasambhava
2. Gautama Buddha/Avalokiteśvara
3. Sambara
4. Vijayā
5. Mañjuśrī
6. Avalokiteśvara
7. Tārā



ONE



TWO



THREE



FOUR



FIVE



SIX



SEVEN

to Nepal and Assam also), oranges and munjeet (madder). He wrote. "Besides the officers of government and their servants no person can trade with foreign country nor can the inhabitants sell tungan horses without the Deba Raja's permission. All the horses and blankets are monopolised at a low price by the officers in whose jurisdiction they are produced (12). From Tibet the Bhutanese imported tea silver and gold and embroidered silk goods in that order. The tea the Bhutanese consume themselves, the greater part of the silk goods for clothing and hangings in their temples and with silver they mix lead and coin into narayanees rupees. Tea and silk goods which the Bhutanese imported were obviously of Chinese origin.

In 1838 R. B. Pemberton led the next British mission to Bhutan in the context of a series of territorial disputes in the Dooars of Bengal and Assam. In his report Pemberton spoke of the imperfect nature of materials available in respect of the Tibetan trade. Quoting from *Hakluyt's Voyages* about the travels of Ralph Fitch, the English merchant to Cooch Bihar in 1583 Pemberton comments that the trade between Tibet and Bengal was "almost exactly as it exists at the present day". It would appear from the small table of exports and imports given of the Rangpur-Bhutan trade that in Pemberton's time this trade was in a depressed condition. In his words, "the whole foreign

trade of Bootan which is almost entirely confined to Thibet on the one side and Bengal and Assam on the other can hardly amount to fifty thousand rupees per annum although at one time it was estimated at two lakhs for Assam alone and there is little hope either of any relaxation in the jealous restrictions now imposed upon it or of the admission of our merchants to Bootan and Thibet as long as Chinese policy and influence reign supreme".

(13). Pemberton says that the Bhutanese brought almost every article of consumption and luxury "from Dooars plains under Bhutanese control.

Among these, cotton and rice were exchanged in barter for the "silks of China and woollens of Tibet"(14). the manufacture of Bhutan was almost "entirely limited to dark coloured blankets". The coloured variety was brought from Tibet. At Rangpur these blankets were sold at rupees two per piece (15) and a hill poney fetched rupees thirtyfive. The far most important of all commercial intercourse "between Tibet and Bengal at the time took place through the Paro Penlop's territory in western Bhutan. He spoke of the "monopolizing spirit" which prevented the "admission of British produce to the boundless regions of Tartary and Thibet". It is to be noticed that in Pemberton's description of the exports from Tibet to Bhutan tea is absent though it occupies the second place in Turner's list and first place in Krishnakant Bose's description.

Pemberton's mission was mainly concerned with the regularisation of political relations with the central Bhutanese authorities and collection of miscellaneous information. Incidentally it throws some light on the pattern of the Tibetan trade. Particularly, his report links up the Dooars (of both Assam and Bengal) with the Tibet-Bengal trade system through Bhutan. Secondly Pemberton's report highlights for the first time that the "system of tributes in kind" prevalent in the Dooars under Bhutan's control was closely linked with the "system of trade". The British insisted on payment in cash of the "tribute" from the Assam Dooars as also in trade. This started a systematic process of monetising the system of exchange. Thirdly, Pemberton's report confirmed earlier observations that the monopoly interests, be that of the hill chiefs or of the Chinese, was a main hurdle in the way of the pioneering free traders of the nineteenth century.

The next British mission under Ashley Eden entered Bhutan in the winter of 1863. In his letter of instructions Eden was told "...further to endeavour to secure free commerce between the subjects of the British and Bootan governments and protection to travellers and merchants"(15). The draft treaty which Eden carried included in Clause IX:

"There shall be free trade between the two governments. No duties shall be levied on Bootanese goods imported into British territories nor shall the Bootan government levy any duties on British goods imported into or transported through the Bootan territories" (16).

The intransigence of the Tongsa Penlop led to the failure of the mission and incidentally the document which Eden signed "under compulsion" contained no provision for trade (17).

The mission's concern was overwhelmingly political and Eden only occasionally mentions of the Tibetan trade and of the great commercial prospects of the Dooars. While describing the market at Paro Eden wrote "...it ought to be the entrepot of the trade of Tibet Tartary China and India. It should be full of depots of broadcloths cotton goods cutlery rice coral tea spices kin-cabs leather and miscellaneous articles of European manufacture brought there to be exchanged for rock-salt, musks gold dust borax and silk but under its present rulers not a Tibetan ever ventures to cross the frontier". The lower portion of the valley is "richly cultivated with rice which is procurable in considerable quantities at about two rupees a maund". During his travels he had noted at Ambiok that "the place was so situated in regard

to the hills and the plains that it seemed a sort of natural exchange for the trade of Tibet with that of Bengal. Under a good government there could have been "cotton fields and tea fields and timber depots and countless acres of rice".(18) The Dooars were not as unhealthy as the Terai and the "surplus population of Cooch Behar and Rungpore would readily migrate into this rich tract". In a contemporary English Daily it was stated that the Dooars was rich in "tea soils lime and timber". The Dharma Raja of Bhutan prevented "cultivating tea lest the profitable trade with Tibet be affected"(19).

The treaty of Sinchula (1865) which ended the Dooars War secured "free trade and commerce (Clause IX) between Bhutan and India" (20). The way to Tibet was still closed.

The Bengal Administration Report for 1873-74 stated: "English Wollen and Broadcloth are still much sought after-----notwithstanding the policy of exclusiveness which Chinese influence dictated and imposed upon Tibet"(21).

Already all along the hills tea plantations were providing an outlet for British and Indian capital. These had provided employment for many thousands of Indian labourers. Just across the frontier there were no less than three million

tea drinkers in Tibet. The local government of Bengal became concerned for the tea produced in Darjeeling and the Dooars and wanted to find ways to the Tibetan market. Though members of Parliament scoffed at the idea of pressing tea upon the Chinese to the Bengal Government it was an important point. But the Lieutenant Governor stated: "The Tibetans or their Chinese governors will not, on protectionist principles admit our tea across the passes. An absolute embargo is laid on anything in the shape of tea"(22). Besides tea the Bengal government thought that Manchester and Birmingham goods and Indian indigo had a good market in Tibet. The Chinese remained obstinate in regard to the admission of tea and eventually agreed to admit Indian tea" at the rate of duty not exceeding that at which Chinese tea is imported into England"(23). The duty imposed in England was 6d per pound and the tea drunk in Tibet was very inferior. It was in reality imposition of an ad valorem duty of 150 to 200 percent. This concession was, therefore of the slightest value.

At a later date and after experience of failure the whole idea of negotiating with the Chinese for entry into the Tibetan market proved infructuous. It was realised by men like Francis Young-husband that negotiations with the Tibetans would certainly have produced much better results.

This was to say that the need was now felt after more than a hundred years that the thread should be taken up where Warren Hastings and George Bogle had left it.

Notes

1. A.DEB : *Bhutan and India - A Study in Frontier Political Relations 1772-1865* (Calcutta 1976) pp. 72-74
2. This letter received on 29 March 1774 has been reproduced several times.
3. Clements MARKHAM : *The Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (London 1876/New Delhi 1971) p.6
4. A.DEB : "George Bogle's Treaty with Bhutan (1775)" in *Bulletin of Tibetology* Vol. VIII No 1 (Gangtok 1971)
5. C.MARKHAM : Op Cit. p. 124 Trade of Tibet
6. *Bulletin of Tibetology* 1984 No 1 pp 21-22
7. C.MARKHAM : Op. Cit. p. 126
8. Ibid p. 128
9. Ibid pp. 128-129
10. Tsepon W.D.SHAKABPA : *Tibet - A Political History* (New Haven 1967) pp 156-170

11. *Political Missions to Bhutan* __ (Bengal Secretariat 1865/New Delhi 1972)p.342
12. Ibid p. 350
13. Ibid p. 230
14. Ibid p. 245
15. Ibid p. 225 Chart
16. Ibid p. 148
17. Surgeon David RENNIE *Bhutan and the Story of the Dooar War* (London 1866/New Delhi 1971) Appendix C p. 407
18. *Political Missions to Bhutan* p.262
19. *Friend of India* for 13 July 1865 quoted in author's *Bhutan and India* p. 120
20. Author's paper 'Cooch Behar and Bhutan in the context of the Tibetan Trade' in *Kailash* (Journal of Himalayan Studies Kathmandu) Vol.1 (1973) p.88
21. *Quoted in Bhutan and India* p. 163
22. Quoted in Francis YOUNG HUSBAND *India and Tibet* (London 1910/Delhi 1971) p.44
23. Ibid p.52

TEN PRICELESS IMAGES

Nirmal C. Sinha

I

On 1 October 1958 when the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology was opened we had only one piece of bronze and a few painted scrolls. And in fact our principal programme was for collection and procurement of Tibetan literary sources in manuscripts and xylographs. Yet within three years our collection of icons and scrolls had numbered nearly a hundred. All these were old (some very old) and authentic, that is, these were from temples, monasteries and ancient households. Far more interesting was the fact that about fifty items were free and unsolicited gifts. A few donors were frankly poor refugees from Central and Eastern Tibet and refused any payment; they firmly asserted that they were not sellers of images and that they donated these for safe custody in a place which was to them a sacred repository of scriptures and icons; the donors, rich and poor alike, would not call this Institute a library or museum as we do.

I seek to present here TEN PRICELESS accessions during the first three years. Before I enumerate or describe these gifts I should state that in Mahayana/Northern Buddhist tradition an icon

or scroll is not donated in the ordinary sense of the term. A donor proposes to transfer the custody of his dear treasure to a friend, disciple or relative and from the date of transfer the donor and the donee share the sacred object jointly.

The Institute was opened in October 1958 and in January 1959 a mystic saint, a Lama from Kham, had predicted to me in the course of a dialogue that this Institute would in near future be a place of traditional veneration, a site of pilgrimage for the believers. I need not go into details of this prophecy but must confess that though not much of a believer in the right sense of the term I have been witness to fulfilment of this prophecy in many ways, particularly about the accession of icons. In 1961 summer a Tibetan refugee brought to us a rare and exquisite bronze, the image of Prajna-Paramita, consort of Manjusri. He wanted me to quote a fair price. I consulted our Lamas for their opinion and our funds and appropriation figures. I told the Tibetan that we could offer only up to Rs. 1200/- while this image (3") would sell easily for Rs. 2500/- in Calcutta and we were not interested to cheat him. The Tibetan refugee said "I know that your scholar friends, Indian or American, may pay even Rs. 5000/-. But I want a proper custody for my household icon which is more than 300 years old. Take

this image for Rs. 1100/- which I require for journey to Dorjedan (Bodhgaya) and my Puja there". We most readily "bought" the image. Experts would price this today for Rs. 10,000/-.

I refer to these events to focus attention of readers today to the network of Western Foundations all over Tibetan refugee colonies like Misamari and Mussoorie in 1959-62. These Foundations would offer fantastic, I should say fabulous, prices for Tibetan icons and art objects and this Institute could not join the race. Our laws banning export of antiquities and art treasures were not framed to meet the contingency. An example of American pricing was provided by a set of 18 woven scrolls (tapestry style) depicting the Panchen Lineage from Adi Buddha Amitabha, Buddha Sakyamuni and Subhuti to the Sixth Panchen (d 1937). The three sets were made in 1933 to mark the Birth Anniversary of the then Panchen. One was kept by the Panchen for the Tashi Lunpo Nangten and two were returned with blessings to the donor devotee. These two sets were brought in 1960-62 to Misamari-Buxa camps. An American Foundation paid more than Rs. 8000/- for a set and we had the other for less than Rs. 2000/- as requested by the party concerned.

A few words are necessary before the Ten Images are described. The term "bronze" is a

conventional expression for all images in metal: gold, silver, copper, brass or alloy. According to tradition, original Indian or later Tibetan, an ideal image should contain Asta Dhatu, that is, eight metals. The eight metals are gold, silver, copper, nickel, iron, lead, zinc and tin; one particular metal, say gold or copper, may be the principal material but a little quantity of each of the other seven should be accommodated. Thus "bronze" would not necessarily mean an alloy of copper and brass or copper and tin. Another point to note about iconography in Tibet is that nearly all images would be in metal, some would be in sandalwood from India or some sacred wood from Tibet, and a few would be in sacred clay from select sites. In Tibet or Mongolia images in stone would not be generally made as any attempt to compete with the masters of Sarnath, Gandhara or Amaravati would be blasphemy or arrogance.

Tibetan equivalents of Sanskrit words are here transcribed phonetically, as for example Lama (for Bla-ma) or Chenrezik (for Spyan-ras-gzigs). The ten accessions are listed here in a chronological sequence and no comparative evaluation is intended. Dating of the images in this article is in Christian era.

II

GURU PADMASAMBHAVA

Our very first accession in icons was a bronze of Guru Padmasambhava. Vide Plate One. This was the gift from the Maharaja who had chosen the image from Palace Chapel and had issued this for the main altar of this Institute even a fortnight before the scheduled date of our opening.

The image, 42 inches high, is in copper and painted in gold. The image was made to special orders in nineteen thirties by the sculptors of Tsang and installed in the Palace Chapel around 1935. The Guru is seated on a Double Lotus (Vajrasana), holds in his right hand Vajra (Dorje) and in his left hand Kapali (Skull), containing Pot of Ambrosia with Amitayus Buddha on the lid. The Trident with Three Heads (Khatvanga) rests on the left shoulder. The Guru may be depicted in eight different forms. The form here is Upaya Prajna (Thab-dang-Sherab).

Pandit Nehru was most pleased to learn that the Maharaja had offered "to share with the Institute from that day" a prized icon from the family chapel and that the custody of the image would be that of the Institute for the rest of time. Pandit Nehru had before the opening ceremony informed the Maharaja that the Relics of Asokan Sthaviras recently retrieved from London would

be presented to the Institute after the formality of the concurrence of his Cabinet colleagues was gone through. The Maharaja and authorities of the Institute thanked the Prime Minister and added that an ancient image of Gautama Buddha would be most highly prized for the altar of the top floor. Pandit Nehru readily offered to follow the Mahayana practice of sharing an image and promised to obtain concurrence of his Cabinet colleagues. In the event the Institute got transfer of a Buddha image and an Avalokitesvara image from Sarnath Museum in May 1960 Vide Plate Two.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA/AVALOKITESVARA

The image of Gautama Buddha, 26 inches high, in sandstone seems to have been carved towards the middle of ninth century. The Buddha is depicted in Dharmachakra Mudra: Turning the Wheel of Law, that is, expounding the Dharma.

The image of Avalokitesvara (Chenrezi) 25 1/2 inches high, in sandstone, seems to have been carved towards the middle of ninth century. Though one of 108 forms, Avalokitesvara standing in Padmapani Mudra was not very commonly sculptured. For 108 forms Bhattacharya: *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (Calcutta 1958) may be seen.

The two images representing Sarnath school and carved in stone have proved of great attraction to Tibetan visitors.

SAMBARA

The image of Chakrasambara, Sambara or Mahasukha (DeChog) is a gift from Yarpa Tempo Namgyal Barphungpa who had it for safe custody from Kundeling monks and kindly offered to share this with this Institute. Vide Plate Three. The image, 40 inches high, is in copper and painted with gold. The execution of the details is exquisite; some of the instruments and symbols were damaged/lost during the hazardous journey from Lhasa to Gangtok through different agencies. A description of this Yab-Yum with the symbolic meaning is appended at the end of this article.

VIJAYA

The image of Ushnisha Vijaya, Sarvajaya or Vijaya (Namgyalma) is a gift from Yarpa Tempo Namgyal Barphungpa, collected from a Kundeling temple. The image, 30 inches high, is in brass and painted with gold. The deity has Three Heads and Eight Arms. Though this icon does not depict the symbolic objects for all arms, except the Double Thunderbolt in the two normal ones this also is an exquisite work. Vide Plate Four.

The two gifts, Sambara and Vijaya, which came to us in early 1960, are known to have been sculptured at the end of the nineteenth century.

MANJUSRI

The image of Manjusri, on the altar of the ground floor, was gift from Maharajkumari Pema Chokyi on behalf of her father-in-law Kalon Yothok, Governor of Chamdo. The image, seven feet and seven inches high including the Lion Throne pedestal, is in copper and painted in silver. It is the most popular representation of the Buddha of Knowledge, with Sword of Knowledge in the right hand and Book of Transcendental Knowledge above the left shoulder on a lotus. The pedestal adds to its attraction. The workmanship is of high order. Vide Plate Five.

I should add that the image was ordered in Chamdo for the old Yuthok House (Lhasa) which was often visited by the Tenth Dalai Lama, Tshulthim Gyatso (1816-1837).

AVALOKITESVARA

The copper image of Avalokitesvara, 10 inches high, is a gift from Padmashri Lachchman Singh

Jangpangi. The donor had worked first as Assistant Trade Agent and later as Trade Agent at Gartok for more than 25 years and afterwards for about 5 years as Trade Agent at Yatung. He got this icon in Buddha Jayanti Year (1956) from Lamas connected with Tholing monastery. The image was brought to Western Tibet from India before 1800. It is a beautiful bronze as the details of the Four Handed figure on Lotus Seat would bear out. Vide Plate Six.

TARA

Plate Seven depicts three icons of Tara (Dolma), two in brass and one in sacred clay. The brass pieces are 3 inches and 4 inches high and the clay one 2 inches. The clay piece was presented by a Lama; one bronze was gift from Maharaj-kumari Pheunkhang Lhacham, and the other was from a pauper Tibetan. Tara image, from monastic or household altar, is not available for sale. The pauper had sold us a few other images on the price we could offer but made a gift of the Tara image.

III

YAB-YUM

For the general reader interested in the symbo-

lism of Yab-Yum I cannot do better than quote Marco Pallis about Sambhara/Mahasukha from the famous book *Peaks and Lamas*

"The Chief Divinity, "Circle of Higher Bliss", has four faces symbolizing fourfold sets of ideas, among them the Elements of earth, water, fire and air which with ether constitute the material Universe and the Four Boundless Wishes which are Compassion, Affection, Love, and Impartiality; but there are several other sets of a still more profound character. The body is blue, to symbolize that He never changes from "the Wisdom which knows that the things which are coloured differently and the like are really not so but they are all of a single nature and taste." Each face has three eyes to show that the Three Worlds—the Sensual, the World of Form but without sensual craving and the Formless Spiritual World—are under His vision and also that He knows the Three Times—past, Present and future. He has twelve arms that represent His knowledge of the Twelve Interdependent Origins of the Round of Existence.

To prove that Perfected Mind (the mind of a Buddhist, the ideal to which all should aspire) is both the Void (that is the Absolutely Real, which we can only indicate through a privative word, since for us the Real cannot but be void

of determination, form, relativity and all that we can possibly conceive of) and Compassion (the pure sacrificial Love which characterizes the Bodhisat, the highest goal of Buddhism), He holds in the upper hands a dorje (thunderbolt sceptre) and a bell. To show that Method and Knowledge are ever in union the first pair of hands clasp His Spouse or Shakti. The next two hands hold a raw elephant hide which they are tearing asunder: this is the emblem of Ignorance. The third right hand holds a drum, proclaiming the most joyous tidings. The fourth hand brandishes a battle-axe by which He cuts off births and deaths. The fifth holds a dagger to show that the six sins of pride, disbelief, want of serious devotion, distraction, inattention and boredom are cut off. The sixth right hand grasps a trident showing the destruction of the Root-Poisons of Anger, Desire-Attachment and Sloth (the inertia of Ignorance?).

"Now to turn to the left hands: the third holds a staff surmounted by a dorje, sign of supreme bliss, and the fourth holds a blood-filled skull, signifying that all ideas which regard things as either material or immaterial are done away with. From the fifth hand dangles a noose, the knowledge that grasps the nature of sentient beings. In the sixth left hand is the head of four-faced Brahma, showing that all the delusions of

the Round have been finally shaken off.

"Under His feet He tramples an emaciated figure of Time, proving that out of His boundless Compassion He voluntarily remains in the world of sentient beings as Saviour. His bent left leg spurns the form of a Black Destroyer, for Wisdom has got rid of every antithesis such as subject-object and enjoyer-enjoyment. His hair is tied in a knot on the crown of His head because merit has been acquired in the fullest measure. Each of His heads is adorned with a chaplet of five skulls, standing for the five kinds of Wisdom. His face frowns and His teeth are set, for by Him all heresies are overcome. His ear-rings are Fortitude, His necklace Charity, His bracelets Chastity, His girdle Energy, the Wheel of bone over His Head is Meditation.

"Round His waist is draped a tiger-skin, not tightly fastened, because He is released from all beliefs in the real distinction of Body and Mind. His limbs have symmetry and grace, His visage is heroic, stern and severe, He is full of energy, He is awe-inspiring and yet He is compassionate and His features are of a peaceful cast. (This form belongs to a type called semi-wrathful, not one of the "terrible" forms nor yet wholly "peaceful").

"We now come to His Consort—Energy who clings to Him in inextricable embrace. She is red in colour, because She is devoted to the service of all beings. She has only one face, because all things have but one taste--they are basically one. She possesses two hands, for She comprehends both aspects of Truth, the apparent and the real. Her right hand holds a curved knife which is Wisdom-Consciousness, that cuts away qualifying thoughts and passions. This weapon She thrusts in all directions. With her left hand She clasps Her partner. To show that She has untied the knot which holds all things to be what they appear Her hair is loose and flowing. She is naked for She is free from the obscuring veil of Passion. He like Her Male partner is three-eyed and crowned with the Five Wisdoms shown by skulls. He should be regarded as Appearance (that is the Phenomenal Universe), as Method and as Boundless Compassion; while She is the Void (the symbol of the Absolute, the Empty of all relatives), Wisdom, Tranquillity and Bliss. The pair are inseparable, so they are shown interlocked in sexual union, touching at all possible points of contact. The marriage is consummated in the midst of a halo of flames, the fire of Supreme Wisdom which burns up all obstacles."

NOTES & TOPICS

RELICS OF ASOKAN MONKS

In 1860-70 Alexander Cunningham and a team of British engineers found the relics of ten Arhats in four steatite caskets within a big casket of white sandstone beneath a Stupa in which the relics of Sariputra and Maudgalyayana were found. The names of the ten Arhats inscribed on the caskets included those of Madhyama and Kasyapagotra, while the *Memoirs and Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India* preserve the details of the discovery and identification of the relics the general reader will find a good account in Valisinha: *Buddhist Shrines in India* (Calcutta: 1948-).

These relics were later taken to London and kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The relics of Sariputra and Maudgalyayana were returned to India a few years after India became independent and are now enshrined in Sanchi. The relics of Madhyama and Kasyapagotra were returned in 1958. There were many applicants for custody of the relics. *Pandit* Jawaharlal Nehru accepted our argument that since the two Asokan missionaries had preached the Dharma in the Himalayas their relics should be entrusted to the custody of a Himalayan institution devoted to preservation

of literary texts and other records of the Dharma. (The presentation of these relics is referred to in the article TEN PRICELESS IMAGES in this issue of the Bulletin.)

NATIVITY OF MANUSHI BUDDHA

While believers and admirers of the Buddhas in human form consider the saints as belonging to all mankind antiquarians and historians do often find investigation about the race or language of a Manushi Buddha an important issue.

In the previous issue (1984 : 2) of this Bulletin a writer contended that whether Dipankara Atisa (c. 982-1054) was a Bengali or not was of little importance in the story of Dharma in the Trans-Himalayas. This has not pleased many readers from eastern India. The writer does not find any reason to reconsider his contention.

Nagarjuna's greatness has nothing to do with the place he was born or with the language he spoke. Nagarjuna was known to be a Vidarbha Brahmin who built his famous seat of learning in what is today Guntur Distt, Andhra Pradesh. It would be wild and useless speculation to discuss whether a saint scholar flourishing in first century Deccan was a Maratha or a Telugu scholar. What is important about Nagarjuna is that nearly two thousand years before Hegel, Kant or Bradley a Brahmin of South India spoke with a fearless

logic which Hegel, Kant or Bradley have not excelled.

Speculations about nativity of a saint may sometimes raise unnecessary controversies. Buddha Sakyamuni, the greatest of Manushi Buddhas, was from Jambudvipa. Quite harmful polemics are now set to prove or disprove whether Buddha was from Nepal or India!

Tibetan legends and literary texts follow the nomenclature Phagyul, that is, Aryabhumi, for the entire Indic sub-continent : from the Karakorum in the north to the Kanya Kumari in the south ; from the Indus in the west to the Brahmaputra in the east. The Tibetan tradition holds Buddha as Arya par excellence and would refuse to indulge in any research on ethno-linguistic affiliations of any Manushi Buddha.

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