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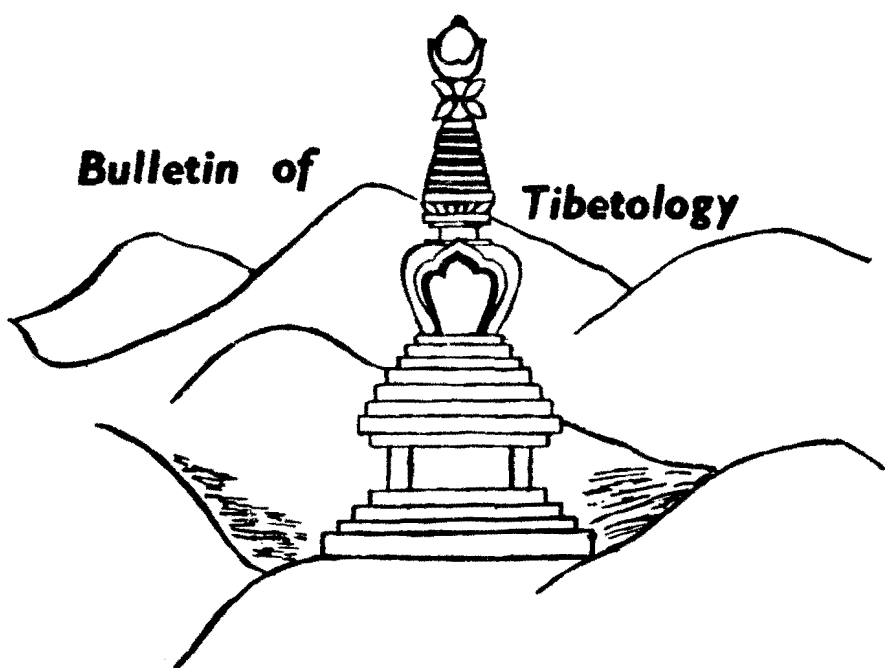
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# TANTRIC BUDDHISM

—NALINAKSHA DUTT

## INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM INTO TIBET

It is a matter of common knowledge that a few centuries before the reign of King Srong btsan-sgam-po, the warlike Tibetans were extending their sway over Kashgar, Kucha, Karashahr, and Khotan, and had occupied, though temporarily, these four garrisoned cities by defeating the Chinese army. Their occupation of Central Asia upto the borders of China is amply proved by the existence of a large collection of Tibetan manuscripts in the Chinese cave temple of Tun-huang. The dialect of the Central Asian inscriptions of the 7th Century A. D. discovered at Niya and other sites is also intermixed with Tibetan words. Now there can be no doubt that the Tibetans extended their territory before the 7th century A. D. not only to Central Asia but also upto Baltistan and Gilgit ( Bru zha ). Here evidently they came across Buddhist monks and monasteries, and realized the importance and wide popularity of the religion. At this period, the form of Buddhism prevalent there was mainly Tantric; and so it is quite likely that Tantric Buddhism percolated into Tibet before King Srong-btsan-sgam-po established it in his realm formally. His Nepalese queen brought with her the images of Akhsobhya, Maitreya and Tara, that is, the gods worshipped by the Tantric Buddhists, and so it is evident that the form of Buddhism first introduced into Tibet from Nepal and Central Asia was Tantric. King Srong-btsan-sgam-po's descendant Khri-srong-lde-btsan at the advice of Santaraksita invited the famous Tantric teacher Padmasambhava from Uddiyana of the Swat Valley on the N. W. borders of India ( now West Pakistan ). In order to re-orient the religion in his realm the sect started by Padmasambhava, known as *Nying ma pa*, thenceforth became the recognized and state patronized religion of Tibet.

## TANTRIC BUDDHISM IN INDIA

In India, Tantricism has a long history. It may be as old as Vedism, for in the *Atharvaveda* there are incantations which are believed to produce supernatural effects. The belief in the efficacy of *mantras* has been prevailing in India from time immemorial and it is still prevalent widely among the Indians.

The *mantras* (मन्त्र *gsang-sngags*) do not perhaps always carry a meaning

but their correct intonation was and is still considered and believed to have an effect. The earliest form of such *mantras* in the Buddhist literature is known as *Dharanis* (धारणी *gzungs*) which are found in very early Mahayana texts. The corresponding compositions in Pali are called *Parittas* (परीत-*yongs-su-skyobs-pa*)

Asanga in his *Bodhisattvabhumi* (Ch XVII, p.185) offers an exposition of the term *Dharani*. He writes that *Dharani* means that a Bodhisattva preserves in his memory *Dharma*, its *artha* and the *mantras* for an unlimited period of time. The first and second, *Dharma-dharani* and *Artha-dharani* mean that a Bodhisattva remembers the texts (*granthas*) as well as their meaning (अर्थ *don*) on account of their sharp and excellent memory. The third is *Mantra-dharani*, by which is meant that a Bodhisattva on account of his control over meditations, can relieve the sufferings of beings by uttering spells (*mantras*), and the fourth is *Ksanti labhaya dharani* (क्षान्तिलाभाय धारणी *bzod-pa-thob pa*) by which is meant that a Bodhisattva, who leads a highly restrained life, learns some spells by which he perfects himself in perseverance (*Ksanti*). The spells are like *Iti miti kiti-bhih ksantipadani svaha* (इति मिति कितिभिः क्षान्तिपदानि स्वाहा). Though the words of the *mantras* do not convey any particular meaning, a Bodhisattva realizes their intrinsic value, viz., the nature of their indescribability (निरमलाप्य समावृता), and hence he does not seek their literal sense. From such interpretations, it appears that the efficacy of a *mantra* depends more on the will-power of the mantra-reciter, who knows how to control his thoughts, than on the actual words composing the spells. The intonation and repetition of the spells may have a value of their own.

## TANTRICISM

Tantricism is essentially an esoteric form of religion in which meditation forms the core. The meditations were not of the type found in early Buddhist texts but needed many artificial aids under close and direct supervision of a perfect spiritual guide (गुरु *bla-ma*). There are five sections in the Tantric spiritual culture viz (i) rites and ceremonies (क्रिया *byed-pa*), (ii) meditational practices and observances for external and internal purity (चर्या *spyod-pa*), (iii) finger gestures and physical postures (मुद्रा-*phyag-rgye*), utterance of spells (मन्त्र *gsang-sngaygs*), (iv) meditations (योग *rnal-'byor*) and (v) higher type of meditations (अनुत्तरयोग *bla-na-med-pai rnal-'byor*) to realize the oneness of the diverse beings and objects of the universe, that is, वज्र *rdo-rje*).

The minimum requirements of a Tantric adept are the knowledge

of spells and their correct intonation, the various fingerposes and sitting postures and various diagrams ( मण्डल *dkyll-'khor*) for the purpose of meditations as also for security from evil forces and lastly formal initiation (अभिषेक *dbang skur*) by a spiritual preceptor (Guru) into form of spiritual culture.

According to the Tantrics, the human body is the microcosm which contains the lowest and highest form of conceivable worldly existence. It can be turned into a hellish or a heavenly state. The process by which a human being can be raised spiritually is centred round the three veins in the backbone (cerebro-spinal axis) called in Hindu Tantras: Ida (इडा), Pingala (पिङ्गला) and Susumna (सुषुम्ना), of which the corresponding Buddhist terms are Lalana (ललना), Rasana (रसना) and Avadhutika (अवधूतिका). Ida is on the left side and Pingala on the right side of the central vein Susumna. The two side veins entwine the central one, Ida from left to right and Pingala from right to left without touching the Susumna. All the three, two of which in a spiral form rise from the anus (मूलाधार) to the centre of the eye-brows, that is, Pineal Gland (आज्ञा). In between the two there are four stations known as Lower Lumber region (स्वाधिष्ठान), Lumber region (मणिपुर), Middle Thoracic region (अनाहत) and cervical region (विशुद्ध). The two side veins in Buddhist Tantras represent knowledge (प्रज्ञा *shes-rab*) and expedient or compassion (उपाय/करुणा *thabs/snying-rje*). The latter is dynamic representing worldly forces and the former is static (inactive, pure knowledge). The central vein Susumna or Avadhutika, represents Bodhicitta or Vajra, in which the functions and effects of the two side veins are united into one, the perfect unity taking place when the mind force reaches through the central vein to the centre of the eye-brows. At this point oneness of the worldly forces and the Truth is fully realized. The Tantric adepts practise meditation with the artificial aids to push up the mind-force from the lowest (*muladhara*) to the highest (*ajna*) point and thereby achieve perfect knowledge or salvation. The merging of the two, Prajna and Upaya, at the top in Avadhutika (*Kun-'dar-ma*) is represented by the image of Yabyum in Tibet. It denotes the perfect Bodhicitta or Vajra, in which disappears the distinction between worldly activity and transcendental knowledge.

What has been stated above briefly may be explained in further details. The central object of Tantricism is the realization of worldly existence (संसार *'khor-ba*) as nonexistent in reality (निर्वाण *mya-ngan-las-'das-pa*) by means of breath control and regulation (प्राणायाम) combined with concentration of thoughts. The philosophy of the identity of Samsara and Nirvana was first propounded by Nagarjuna in his *Madhyamaka-karika*

XXV. 20). The Tantric saints adopted this philosophy and devised the psycho-physical process of identifying *samsara* and *nirvana* with the two veins on the right and left of the central vein. The right vein Rasana (रसना/ पिङ्गला—*ro-ma*) represents worldly existence (*samsara*). It is this vein through which a Bodhisattva exercises his compassion (उपायकौशल्य—*thabs-la-mkhas pa*) for his own spiritual advancement as well as for the good of the worldly beings, which really have only conventional existence. Without the assumption of such existence a Bodhisattva cannot develop his compassionate mind, which must have a basis. The left vein Lalana (*brkyang-ma*) represents Nirvana, the culmination of soul-lessness (अनात्मता—*bdag med-ma*) and substancelessness (शून्यता—*stong-pa nyid*) of worldly existence. The means for attaining Nirvana is knowledge (Prajna) of real state of worldly objects and beings. A Bodhisattva develops Prajna through the left vein. By means of breathing exercises a Tantric Bodhisattva makes compassion and knowledge descend along the two veins to commingle at the bottom of the cerebro-spinal axis and ascend upwards through the central vein, Avadhuti (=Susumna) to the Brahmarandhra where the two forces, *karuna* and *prajna*, in union, produce the Bodhicitta (बीज *sa-bon*) for supreme enlightenment. It is this seed which fructifies into Sambodhi, making a fully enlightened Samyak Sambuddha.

In the Tantric texts the above mentioned process of the union of compassion and knowledge has been explained by metaphors, similes and symbols taken from unsophisticated and vulgar language, bewildering to an average reader, who is prone to interpret them literally or etymologically. For example the term Candali does not mean a woman of Candala caste but the highest stage of perfection. Candali is a combination of Candra (moon = उपाय = कर्णा) and Ali (vowel system—प्रज्ञा). It denotes the union of Upaya and Prajna or Samsara and Nirvana, producing the Bodhicitta, for which the term Bija is used. In short, Bija is produced by the union of Candra and Ali. The saintly authors of the Tantric texts did not adhere also to the grammatical rules, particularly those of gender. They used, as and when necessary to suit the purpose of expressing their ideas, feminine terms for masculine and vice versa. A few instances of such uses are given below:—

- i. रसना कालि—उपाय—कर्णा = चन्द्र—हे (of हेवज्र) —ग्राहक ।
- ii. ललना—अलि—प्रज्ञा—सूर्य—वज्र (of हेवज्र —ग्रहच ।
- iii. अवधूती—चण्डाली—बोधिचित्त—बीज (सत्त्व)—चित्त  
(Pure Mind)-विज्ञप्तिमात्रता ।

[ हेवज्र is rendered in Tibetan in three forms : *skye-rdo-rje*, *dges-pa-rdo-rje*, *dgyes-pa-rdo-rje* ].

## IDENTITY OF THE WORLDLY FORCES AND THE TRUTH

The Buddhist Tantricism may have borrowed the lines of spiritual practices from the Hindus but it retained the Mahayanic philosophy of शून्यता / *stong-pa-nyid* (Characteristics-lessness) or तथता / *de-bzhin-nyid* (Thatness / Sameness) or बिज्ञप्तिमात्रता / *rnam-par-shes-pa-nyid* (Pure Consciousness apart from Sense-consciousness). In the *Guhya-samaja*, an early Tantric text, Vajra is defined as the Reality or the highest Truth. It is explained as the oneness of the diverse objects and beings of the universe, i.e. Thatness of the Madhyamiks. It says that in reality, there is no such distinction as male and female, good and bad, foul and sweet. The distinction made between one object or being and another is conventional. Likewise the distinction made between a householder and a recluse is conventional. This realization of oneness of everything of the universe is the aim of a Vajrayanist, to whom the phenomenal world of desires derived through the six sense-organs is identical with the Reality/the Truth /the Sunyata. As space exists everywhere and is neither contaminated nor uncontaminated by foul odour or sweet scent so does the Truth/the Vajra, which remains ever unaffected by worldly enjoyments or aversion to same. A Bodhisattva must attempt to develop a mental state (Bodhicitta=Vajra) in which will vanish the distinction between the two opposite extremes. He should realize that acts of passion are not apart from the Truth and so it is stated in the Tantric texts that hatred, delusion and attachment as well as the practices (*dharma*) for realizing the Truth and the Truth (Vajra) constitute the five means of escape from the world of desires (कामघातु *'dod pa'i-khams*).

The *Guhya-samaja* offers a detailed exposition of the oneness of the diverse universe and the highest Truth. Its contention is that the universe with its multifarious objects and beings as also their activities good or bad is an emanation of the Adi-Buddha, Vairocana. Hence, a person's acts of merit or commission of offences have only a conventional value of their own in this world of existence, though they have none in reality. It is this fact that the text wants to drive home into the minds of Tantric adepts and ascetics. The text abounds in passages depicting the most unsocial and immoral life of a person as well as the extreme life of asceticism of a Tantric adept to show that in reality there is no difference between the two modes of life. A few extracts are given here by way of illustration :

प्राणातिपातिनः सत्त्वा मृषावादरताश्च ये ।  
ये परद्रव्याभिरता नित्यं कामरताश्च ये ।  
विष्णुत्राहारकृत्यर्था भव्यास्ते खलु साधने ॥

मातरं बुद्धस्य विभोः कामयेन्न च लिख्यते ।  
सिद्धते तस्य बुद्धत्वं निर्विकल्पस्य धीमतः ॥

(गुह्यसमाज. GOS. p. 20)

[ Transl. A Tantric ascetic, who can partake of urine and excrement as food becomes spiritually advanced even if he kills living beings; speaks falsehood, becomes prone to stealing other's properties and keeps himself immersed in worldly pleasures.

The wise, who is free from all misconceptions, attain Buddhahood by desiring to enjoy the mother ( *i.e.* Prajna or Prajnaparamita ) of the Lord, the Buddha but without clinging to her ( *i.e.* wisdom knowledge ) as something to be attained. ]

The underlying idea of these extracts is that killing and stealing are as much conventional ( non-existent ) as is the acquisition of knowledge ( prajna ).

In the same text there are also numerous passages giving an exposition of the Madhyamika philosophy. One or two extracts are given below by way of illustration :

अनुत्पन्ना इमे भावा न धर्मा न च धर्मता ।  
आकाशमिव नैरात्म्यमिदं बोधिनयं दृढम् ॥  
अभावाः सर्वधर्मास्ते धर्मलक्षणवज्रिताः ।  
धर्मनैरात्म्यसम्भूता इदं बोधिनयं दृढम् ॥  
अनुत्पन्नेषु धर्मेषु न भावो न च भावना ।  
आकाशपदयोगेन इति भावः प्रतीयते ॥

( गुह्यसमाज. GOS. p. 12 )

[ Transl. All that exist are without origin, hence there are neither objects nor their inherent nature. Substancelessness is similar to open space; this is the firm law of Bodhi. All objects are non-existent and bereft of characteristics as they are produced from "non-substance" (नैरात्म्य); this is the firm law of Bodhi. Objects without origin can neither have existence nor be objects of thought. It is by using the word "open space" (आकाश) that existence is attributed to it.]

## APOTHEOSIS OF PHILOSOPHICAL CATEGORIES

The important terms used in Buddhist philosophy like स्कन्ध, धातु, भूमि, प्रज्ञा, कुशलधर्म and अकुशलधर्म (constituents of a being, elements and sense-organs, stages of spiritual progress, knowledge, and moral purities and impurities) have been apotheosized into Buddhas, Vajras, Saktis, goddesses and Bodhisattvas. By such apotheosis it is indicated that everything worldly issued out of Adi-Buddha. It can be compared to Vedantic conception of the identity of the universe and the Brahman.

In the *Guhya-Samaja* and *Nispannayogavali* almost all *Dharmas* of any importance have been apotheosized and their location in the Mandalas have been determined with description of their forms, colour and mudra. A few of these are mentioned here :

### ELEMENTS (धातु = *Khams*)

पृथिवी is represented by	लोचना / <i>spyan</i>
जल	-do- मामकी / <i>bdag-gi-ma</i>
वह्नि	-do- पाण्डुरवासिनी / <i>gos-dkar-ma</i>
मरुत्	-do- समयतारा / <i>dam-tshig-gi-sgrol-ma</i>

### SENCE OBJECTS (आयतन = *skye-mched*)

रूप is represented by	वेरोचन / <i>rnam-par-srang-mdzad</i>
शब्द	-do- रत्नाकर / <i>rin-chen-'byung-ldan</i>
गन्ध	-do- रागधर्मधर / <i>'dob-chags-chas-'dzin-ma</i>
रस	-do- अमोघवज्र / <i>don-pod-rdo-rje</i>
स्पर्श	-do- अक्षोभ्य / <i>mi-'khrugs-pa</i>

### CONSTITUENTS OF A BEING (स्कन्ध = *Phung-po*)

रूप is represented by	वेरोचन / <i>rnam-par-srang-mdzad</i>
वेदना	-do- रत्नसम्भव / <i>rin-chen-'byung-ldan</i>
संज्ञा	-do- अमिताभ / <i>o'd-dpag-med</i>
संस्कार	-do- अमोघसिद्धि / <i>don-yod-grub-pa</i>
विज्ञान	-do- अक्षोभ्य / <i>mi-'khrugs-pa</i>

### DOORS OF ACTION (कर्मद्वार = *las-kyi-ngo*)

काय is represented by	वेरोचन / <i>rnam-par-srang-mdzad</i>
वाक्	-do- अमिताभ / <i>o'd-dpag-med</i>
चित्	-do- अक्षोभ्य / <i>mi-'khrugs-pa</i>

## ROOT CAUSES OF IMPURITIES (अकुशल-मूल=dug-gsum)

राग	is represented by	अमिताभ / o'd-dpag-med
द्वेष	-do-	अक्षोभ्य / mi-'khrugs-pa
मोह	-do-	वेरोचन / rnam-par-s nang-mdzad

In this way there are apotheoses of the Bhumis (stages of spiritual progress), Paramitas (perfect virtues), Vasitas (controls obtained by a Bodhi-sattva) and so forth.

By making worldly forces and factors as emanations of the Adi-Buddha attempt has been made to impress upon the Tantric adepts that they should develop such a mental state that they would not distinguish between *samsara* and *nirvana*. In order to realize such oneness an adept should be well trained in meditation. As a matter of fact, the Tantrik method produced quick effects and helped many saints to realize the Truth. It also conferred many supernatural powers on many adepts who could not rise up to the highest spiritual stage. Many of these succumbed to the worldly temptations and indulged in drinks and debauchery. It is this class of false Tantrics who debased the religion and its sublime esoteric practices.

### *Bla-ma*

To guard against the pitfalls, to which a Tantric adept is liable, directions are given in the texts about the duties and functions of a spiritual guide (*guru=acarya=sastri*). An *acarya* specializes in certain Tantric methods and practices, and so he is directed to take only those disciples, who are inclined to the Tantric practices followed by him. The preceptor is required to put forth his best energies to protect his disciples from evil forces by *mantras* and *mandalas* and to train them up in the rituals and forms of worship, in which he is proficient. He is to watch his disciples closely so that they may not slip away from the right course. He is to impart instruction to them in meditational exercises and in the philosophy of the oneness of the universe and the Truth.

Padmasambhava succeeded in training up a number of Tibetan Lamas who rose to the highest stage of perfection. For his saintliness and masterly expositions Padmasambhava is revered by the Tibetans as the Second Buddha. Through the help and guidance of these Lamas the Tantric religion became popular all over the country.

In later times many of the adepts failed to imbibe the true spirit of Tantricism and abused their privileges. To counteract such abuses in Tibet, Tsong-kha-pa made an attempt to reform the religion by eliminating the chances of lapses and making monks observe strictly the ecclesiastical laws of the pre-Tantric period of Buddhism. Tsong-kha-pa did not decry Tantricism as a whole and was fully aware of its noble ideal and quick method of realization but he felt that it would be difficult for the young trainees to keep the actual object in sight, and hence the esoteric system might do more harm than good for the lack of true spiritual guides. For this reason he and his disciples started the Ge-lug-pa sect.

### MANTRA OF SIX SYLLABLES *y-ge-drug-ma*

The wide prevalence of Tantricism in Tibet is proved by the fact that the Mantra *ॐ मणिपद्मे हूँ* / *Om-ma-ni-padme-Huṃ* is on every body's lips and is found to be written at all religious sites. The Mantra appears for the first time in the Sanskrit text *Karandavyuha* in which the following interpretation of the Mantra is given : Mani=Perfect Knowledge (Prajna or Vajra) the producer of Tathagatas, who are seated on Padma=Lotus=Avalokitesvara. The Mantra of six syllables is the innermost core (*हृदय / spyang-rje*) of Avalokitesvara. It is also called *षडक्षरीमहाविद्याराज्ञी* "the queen of knowledge consisting of six letters". It is believed that its repeated utterance induces concentration of mind and brings about spiritual elevation and leads even to the highest knowledge. To the householders its utterance confers all the conceivable earthly and heavenly blessings.

### TANTRIC IMAGES

In India from the 7th century onwards Perfect Knowledge (Prajna) derived from the well-known text *Prajnaparamita* was deified into a goddess called *Prajnadevi* (*yum-chen-mo*). An alternative name of this goddess was Tara, that is, she who rescues beings from the ocean of misery. Thus Prajna which makes a being a Buddha became the goddess Tara and was regarded as the mother of Buddhas. In consequence of such deification there was at this time an exuberance of Tara stotras.

Another very popular god of the Tantrics was Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara the embodiment of amity (*मेत्री / byams-pa*) and compassion (*करुणा / snying-rje*). The Bodhisattvas after initiation are asked to develop *Bodhicitta* i.e. the resolution to attain Bodhi and for that to dedicate the life to the service of others, in other words, they are not only to fulfil the first

five perfections (*paramitas*) but also to exercise amity and compassion to all beings. So long they exercise these two functions they retain the notion of the world (*samsara*) and its beings and objects. By gradual extension of the scope of amity and compassion towards all beings of the four corners of the world, they realize the sameness of all beings. Through this realization they are in a fit and proper mood to acquire perfect knowledge (*prajnaparamita*) or the Bodhi. In early Buddhism there is the prescription for monks to practise 'four immeasurables' (अपमान = अप्रमाण / *trad-med-pa*) viz. love (मैत्री), compassion (करुणा), joy at others' success (मुदिता / *dga'-ba*) and equanimity (उपेक्षा / *btang-snyoms*). A monk is required to extend these four mental states towards all beings including his enemies and thereby realize that he is identical with others. Out of these four immeasurables, the Mahayanists picked up only the first two. All of these are meant for adepts only who are struggling to rise above worldly discrimination. The Tantrayanaists retained the underlying principles and magnified their importance and deified them as Avalokitesvara who is believed to have preferred to remain a Bodhisattva in order to be able to render service to all worldly beings through the exercise of amity and compassion. Consequently he continues to be ever in Samsara and does not aspire to attain Nirvana or Sunyata in which case he would cease to be active. He therefore represents worldly altruistic activity. All Bodhisattvas aspiring to attain Bodhi must at first go through this training of exercising universal amity and compassion, which practices are called Expedient (*upaya*) in Tantric texts. In other words, he engages himself in altruistic functions in the world. It is after attaining perfection in these that he may unlike Avalokitesvara aspire to attain perfect knowledge (*prajna*) represented by the goddess Tara. It follows therefore that the worldly means (*Upaya*) end or merge in perfect knowledge (*Prajnaparamita*) when one is said to attain Bodhi and become a Buddha. This merging of *Upaya* in *Prajna* is the ideal of the Tantrayanaists, who, however as explained above, widened the scope of worldly activities but retained the underlying principle.

In Hindu Tantra also there is similar conception. Sakti, the female goddess, is represented as the cause of liberation while Siva, the male god, represents the forces of bondage (*samsara*) corresponding to Tara and Avalokitesvara respectively of the Buddhist Tantra. These two parallel conceptions in the Hindu and Buddhist Tantric systems brought about the coalescence of the two systems in South-East-Asia. In India particularly it is one of the many causes for the merging of Buddhism in Hinduism leading ultimately to the disappearance of Buddhism from

[ With this introductory paper by Professor Nalinaksha Dutt we open in these pages a symposium on the Tantras : the different systems and their contents, their origins and affinities. Contributions on the various issues and facets will be published from time to time.

Dutt is categorical about exchange of ideas between mystics of different schools, Buddhist and Brahmanical (later Hindu). Some Western scholars (e.g. Lama Anagarika Govinda : *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, London, 1959) reject the possibility of exchange between Buddhist and Hindu systems as in their opinion the nature and the purpose of the two are fundamentally different. Such scholars reject the description of the deity Prajna as Sakti (e.g. Snellgrove : *Hevajra Tantra*, London, 1959). On the otherhand some Western scholars describe the female consort of Buddhist Tantra as Sakti without any reservation (e.g. Hoffmann : *The Religions of Tibet*, London, 1961, Marco Pallis : *Peaks and Lamas*, New York, 1949, and Nebesky-Wojkowitz : *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, London, 1956 ).

Scholars who reject the possibility of the two Tantras influencing each other do not notice the coalescence in South-East Asia and the active exchanges between mystics of India and Tibet independent of their denominational labels, as pointed out by many Indian scholars (e.g. Bagchi : *Studies in the 'Tantras*, Calcutta, 1939 ).

Recently exchanges between Indian (Buddhist as well as Hindu) and Chinese ( Tao ) esoteric systems have been emphasized (e.g. Needham : *Science and Civilisation in China*, Cambridge, 1954-56 and Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's Address at the XXV International Congress of Orientalists, Moscow, 1960 ). Dutt's 'A Note on Mahacinatara' is appended at the end of this issue of the *Bulletin*.

Our obituary on Dr, Benoytosh Bhattacharyya also contains relevant matter.—NCS ]

## RECENT RUSSIAN STUDIES ON TIBETOLOGY

—A Bibliographical Survey—

—JEAN M. PERRIN

Following in the steps of Tibetologists and travellers like I. J. Schmidt, G. T. Tsybikov<sup>1</sup>, P. K. Kozlov, N. Y. Kuehner, F. I. Stcherbatsky, N. A. Nevsky and others, a new generation of Tibetan scholars has arisen in Russia, chiefly under the influence of the late George Nikolavevich Roerich (1902-1960). That is why most articles or books on Tibetan studies have been published since his return from India in 1957.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

Russian libraries contain important collections of Tibetan and Tangut manuscripts and xylographs. Most of them are kept in Leningrad and at Ulan Ude.

The library of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR contains up to 30,000 Tibetan titles. The first Tibetan manuscripts were brought there in 1720 from the Ablayn-hit monastery. In 1902, the Tibetan fund enriched itself with 333 books, which constituted G. T. Tsybikov's collections, gathered in Amdo and Central Tibet. Soon after, the collection brought by B. Baradin from Kumbum and Labrang was added to the fund. G. N. Roerich himself has left a collection of about 250 manuscripts and xylographs in the cabinet which bears his name at the Institute of the Peoples of Asia in Moscow.

A summary list of the contents of the above mentioned collections is given by V. A. Bogoslovsky in a volume devoted to "the oriental funds of the main public libraries in the Soviet Union"<sup>2</sup>. The Leningrad fund possesses several editions of the Tibetan Tripitaka from Peking, Derge and Narthang<sup>3</sup> and also many *gsung-'bum*.

1. Gonbojab Tsybikov (1873-1930) was a Buriat.
2. Vostokovednye fondy krupnejshikh bibliotek Sovetskogo Soyuza, Moscow, 1963, pp. 57-59.
3. M. I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya-Tibetskiye perevody Tripitaki i ikh izdaniya v sobranii ksilografov Leningradskogo otdeleniya Instituta Narodov Azii AN SSSR, in: "Dalnij Vostok" Moscow 1961, pp. 225-232.

However, the most interesting collection of Tibetan works is the one gathered at Ulan-Ude, in the Buriat Institute for Scientific Research. This Institute was reorganized in 1958. It has now become one of the main if not the most important centre for Tibetan studies in the Soviet Union. The first task of the specialists working at the Institute—B. V. Semichov, B. D. Dandaron, G. N. Rumyantsev—is to make an inventory and a description of the collection which amounts to more than 6000 titles. edited in Tibet, China, Mongolia and Buriat Mongolia.

The fund contains almost 150 catalogues (*dkar chag*), editions of the *bka'-gyur* from Peking, Narthang and Derge as well as one of the three manuscript editions of the Mongolian *bka'-gyur* known to exist in the world. It contains treatises on language grammar, dictionaries, works on Buddhist philosophy, logic, ethics, *Vinaya*, history of Buddhism<sup>4</sup>, biographies, arts and medicine. A catalogue of the first 126 titles to be listed and analysed has been edited by B. D. Dandaron<sup>5</sup>.

Some Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs may also be found at the Saltykov-Shehedrin public library in Leningrad. These, which include two chapters of Gesar, were presented by G. N. Potanin. Some other 350 titles are also kept in the Leningrad University Library, at the Oriental Dept. of the Gorky Library.

In the post-war period, Soviet specialists have devoted their time mostly to the study of modern geography and history of Tibet. However since 1960, mainly under the inspiration of the late G. N. Roerich, more works have been published on the history of Tibet, the structure of the traditional society, ethnography and language.

## HISTORY

Among Russian scholars, V.A. Bogoslovsky takes a prominent place in the field of analysis of the structure of the Tibetan society since ancient times. In a few articles he tries to define the social terminology of ancient Tibet, for instance such words as *khol-yul*.

4. For instance *yul-mdo-smad-kyi-ljongs-su-thub-bstan-rin-po-che-ji-lar-dar-ba'i-tshul-gsal-bar brjod-pa-deb-ther-rgya-mtsho-zher-bya-ba*. The book called "deb-ther rgya-mtsho" (ocean of books) in which is already explained the diffusion of the religion by "thub-bstan rin-po-chhe in the country of lower Amdo" (410 p.)
5. *Opisaniye tibetskikh rukopisej i xylografov Buryatskogo kompleksnogo Nauchno-issledovatel'skogo Instituta, v. I, I. Moscow, 1960 (70 p.)*

which he describes as a land given in tenure. He criticises Richardson's and Tucci's translations "servants and property" and agrees with Bacot's translation by the word "fief". He defines other terms as *rje-shing* (pp. 74-79) *phying-ril* (pp. 75-78).

In another article "Two extracts of the Tibetan apocryphal book : The Five Tales", he translates and analyses the contents of the *bka'-thang-sde-nga* and especially two texts : *rgyal-po bka'-thang-yig* ( legend on the kings ) and *blon-po bka'-thang-yig* (legend on the councillors). The first of these was reputedly written by order of King Tri-de-song-tsen.

However, Bogoslovsky's main work is his "Outline of History of the Tibetan people", published in 1962, in which using the matter of his previous articles and analysing again historical texts some of which were translated by European scholars (Laufer, Tucci, Thomas, Roerich Bacot, Miss Lalau), he gives a comprehensive picture of the social structure of ancient Tibetan society from the VIIth to the IXth centuries. At the same time he analyses sources made available by such Hungarian scholars as Uray and Rona Tas<sup>6</sup>. The main subjects studied in the book are land property and land tenure, the situations of the 'bangs ( free subject ) and the bran ( dependent subject, later "servant" ) and the political structure of the society.

Bogoslovsky draws the following conclusions from his study : "In the field of social- economic relations, the Tibetan society is characterized by the appearance and the consolidation of private property with regard to tools and means of production taking into account the primary factor in production which is land. Landed property can be envisaged as state property ( the *rje-shing* lands and the *khol-yul* lands : these being transmitted as a possession to persons under conditional holding ), and as inherited clan property of various aristocratic families,

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6. A. Rona Tas—"Social terms in the list of grants of the Tibetan Tunhuang chronicle". *Acta Orientalia*, Budapest, 1955, vol. 5, fasc. 3. (pp. 249-270)

"Tally-stick and divination-dice in the iconography of Lhamo" *Acta Orientalia*, Budapest 1956, vol 6 fasc. 1-3 (p. 163)

Uray—"The Four Horns of Tibet according to the Royal Annals" *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* t. X, fasc. I. (pp. 39-52).

which formerly was the property of the whole 'clan-tribe' (rod-plemya) and at end of the period under consideration appears as monastic ownership on land. In the VII-IXth centuries, a class of exploiters—land owners—and an exploited class, the natural producers, tilling state lands as well as privately owned lands (the *bran*) are formed. The forms of exploitation of the natural producers allow us to deduce the presence in the VII-IXth centuries of a class society where relations of production, peculiar to a feudal society, predominate.

"In the field of political relations, Tibetan society in the VII-IXth centuries characterized by the following main features; the country which was divided according to clan-tribal system becomes divided into territories; one observes a radical change in the function of the old ruling elements inherent to the "clan-tribe" structure with the creation of new ones, typical of a class society, with the appearance of a particular category of officers and institutions in charge of various sectors of the economic and political life of the country; the creation of a fixed law, the presence of a sufficiently elaborate tax system, and the registration of people liable to pay taxes. All these signs allow us to consider Tibet in the VII-IXth centuries as a state in possession of all the attributes inherent to a state no longer as a tribal organization.

"During this period, the first state in the history of the Tibetan people plays an important role in the history of the whole Central Asia. It is also the time when Buddhism is introduced and obtains its first successes."

In 1961, B. I. Kuznetsov published a translation of the "Brilliant mirror of the history of Buddhism and of the royal genealogies" (*rgyal-rabs chos-'byung gsal ba'i me-long*), the author of which is Sa-skya Bsod-nams Rgyal-mtsán (1312 - 1375). Though the xylograph, which belongs to the library of the Leningrad University, is dated 1478, Kuznetsov is of the opinion that the manuscript was completed in 1368. In this his opinion differs from Tucci's who thinks that it was written in 1508 (*The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, Rome, 1950, p. 79). The work consists of eighteen chapters the last of which is devoted to a description of historical events in Tibet from the middle of the VIIth century till the XIVth century, including a history of Sino-Tibetan relations between the VIIth and the IXth century.

However the main study to be published on Tibetan historical texts is without doubt "Tibetan Historical Literature", by A. I. Vostrikov

(1904-1937), published posthumously in 1962. The author who, during his life-time, published only a few articles, had become a great specialist of the history and philosophy of India, Mongolia and Tibet when he died untimely in 1937. He has left a work, which, edited under Roerich's direction, brings an immense contribution to research in the field of Tibetan historical literature. The writer devotes the first chapter of his book to the most ancient historical literature of Tibet, then analyses the contents of apocryphal books (the *gter-chos* or hidden books) such as :

*bka'-chems ka-khol-ma*

*padma bka'-thang*

*thang-yig gser-phreng*

*bka'-thang sde-lnga*

*mani bka'-'bum*

In a third chapter, he endeavours to establish a distinction between the various genres in historical literature, which he divides as follows : historical works on genealogy (dynastic and clan chronicles) *rgyal-rabs*, *jo-rabs* and *gdungs-rabs*; monastic chronicles (*gdan-rabs*); histories of reincarnations (*'khrungs-rabs*) chronological literature (*bstan-rtsis*); history of the religion (*chos-'byung*); biographies : the *rnam-thar*, the *thob-yig* and the *gsan-yig*; list of names or titles (*ming-gi grangs* or *mtshan-tho*); and finally, historical tales or legends (*lo-rgyus* and *gtam rgyud*). The last two chapters of the books are devoted to the catalogues (*dkar-chag*) of the *bka'-'gyur* and of the *bstan-'gyur* and to a particular form of the historico-geographical literature which describes monasteries, temples, icons, stupas, etc. These last texts bear the same name of 'catalogues' (*dkar-chag*). The book contains a table of conversion from Tibetan into European calendar from 1027 to 1926. Tibetan names are transcribed with their pronunciation.

Still in the historical field, two articles by G. N. Roerich are devoted to Mongol-Tibetan relations in the XIIIth and XIVth centuries, and later in the XVIth—XVIIth centuries (see bibliography).

## ETHNOGRAPHY

With the help of Chinese sources, Russian specialists have tried to classify the ethnic groups of Tibet itself and neighbouring areas and have started to make an ethnographic study of these areas. Zhuravliov's articles provide us with figures indicating the number and the distribution of the Tibetans and related minorities, mostly taken from the 1953 Chi-

nese census. These data furnish elements for making an ethno-linguistic map of these people. A description is given of the people living in the Sino-Tibetan marches, that is, the Si-Fan, the Jyarung whom Chinese scholars distinguish from the Tibetans while Russian specialists believe that they constitute a section of the Tibetan ethnic group, the Chiang the Nu, the Tulung and the Lo-pa (*klo-pa*). Zhuravliov thinks that from an ethnographic point of view the Tulung, the Lo-pa and to a certain extent the Nu tribe are rather related to the Burmese and the Yi (former Lolo) group, though their languages may be nearer to Tibetan. An abbreviated translation of Zhuravliov's articles was published in the *Central Asian Review*, 1962, vol. X No. 4 under the title "The Ethnography of Tibet" (pp. 383-397).

## LANGUAGE

As G. N. Roerich points out in an article devoted to the classification of Tibetan dialects<sup>7</sup>, the fundamental problems of Tibetan language studies are :

- (1) The study of modern dialects and the preparation of a linguistic map of the area;
- (2) The phonetic structure of ancient Tibetan;
- (3) The evolution of literary Tibetan and its relation to the colloquial language;
- (4) The Tangut problem; and
- (5) The comparative study of Tibetan dialects.

In this article and also in a book on the Tibetan language<sup>8</sup> Roerich endeavours to establish a classification of Tibetan dialects with the aim of drawing up a linguistic map of Tibet, (pp. 19-25.)

1. Dialects of Central Tibet : U (*dbus*) and Tsang (*gtsang*). The U-ke (*dbus-skad*) or Lha sa'i ke (*Lha-sa'i-skad*), the Lhasa language, in its turn is divided into several local dialects such as the Phen-yul (*'phan-yul*), valley dialect to the North of Lhasa and the Lho kha the southeastern valley dialect. The Tsang-ke spoken in Shigatse offers very archaic features. It is nearer to the Tibetan literary language; Buddhist scrip-

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7. G. N. Roerich "The fundamental problems of Tibetan philology" in : "Sovetskoye Vostokovedenie" 1958, No. 4 (pp. 102-112)

8. "The Tibetan language". Moscow, 1961. (152 p.)

tures were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan mostly by natives of Tsang. A special epistolary style was also developed in Tsang under the influence of officials of the Sakya (*sa-skye*) monastery, former residence of the Tibetan governors in the Yuan period.

2. Dialects of Southern Tibetans: Lho-ke (*lho-skad*), the dialects spoken in Tromo (*gro-mo*), also known as Yatung, in Sikkim and in Western Bhutan, West of the Pele-la (*dpal-la-la*).

3. South-Western Dialects: spoken in the North-Eastern part of Nepal, such as Sherpa. It is to be noted that these dialects have been subjected to the influence of the environment either local Tibeto-Burman languages or Munda languages. In the article (p. 104), Roerich explains that Tibetan tribes settled in Nepal in the VII-VIIIth centuries at the time of Tibetan expansion. Therefore, according to him the name "magar" is actually *dmag-sgar* or a military camp whereas "Tamang" means *rta-mang* or cavalry. This etymology is much subject to dispute but no final explanation has been found yet.

4. Western Tibetan Dialects: they are divided into two sub-groups the To-ke (*stod-skad*) or language of Upper Tibet, spoken in Ngari (*mng'a-ris*) and the Spiti dialect, which are intermediary between the Central Tibetan and the Far-Western dialects. These dialects, which constitute the second subgroup, are those spoken in Baltistan, Ladak, Zanskar, Purig and Garja (upper course of the Chandrabhaga), Balti being the most archaic.

5. Dialects of Northern Tibet: they are spoken in the Chang-thang (*byang-thang*) and include those spoken by the Nub Hor or Western Hor, the nomads of Jyade (*rgya-sde*), Nangchen (*nang-chen*) and the Chang-pa (*byang-pa*) nomads in the Nag-tsang (*nag-tshang*) area. The dialect of the Dam-sok (*'dam-sog*), literally the Mongols of Dam, descendants of Gushi Khan's Hoshut Mongols in the XVIIth century, belongs to this group.

6. The North-Eastern Dialects: this group is said to consist of three dialects: Amdo (*yul-mdo*), Danag (*sgra-nag*) and Golok (*mgo-log*), which in Roerich's opinion may be called Tangut dialects<sup>9</sup>. These dialects

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9. "Tangut" is a Russian distortion of the Mongolian word "Tangat" which designates the nomads of North-Eastern Tibet known to the Chinese as Si-hsia.

have retained many archaic features. Roerich thinks that their study is important for solving the problem of the Tangut-Minyag (Si-hsia) kingdom, which since 1037 had its own hieroglyphic script. Their descendants, the Chang Minyag (*byang-mi-nyag*) are still nomadizing in the Nan-shan mountains.

7. The Dialects of Eastern Tibet : they are known to other Tibetans under the general appellation of Kham language or Kham-ke (*kham-skad*) They include the dialects of Chamdo (*chab-mdo*) Traya (*brag-gyab*), Markham (*dmar-khams*), Derge (*sde-dge*). Hor<sup>1</sup> (Hor-sde-Ingä) and Ba-li-thang (*'ba'-li-thang*) that is, Bathang and Lihang.

8. The Far-Eastern Dialects : these may be considered as peripheral Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in Western Szechuan, between K'ang-ting (Dartsendo) and Sung-pan. They constitute what Chinese scholars call the Ch'iang languages. Jyarung (*rgya-rung*) belongs to this group. Jyarung and especially Rme or Rma (Ch'iang) differ considerably from Tibetan.

9. The South-Eastern Dialects : they are spoken in Kong-po, Mon-yul, Upper and Lower Po "spo-stod" and "spo-med" and also in Za-yul (*bya-yul*). The Southern Kong-po dialect is distinguished by the archaism of its vocabulary<sup>10</sup>. These dialects have been little studied or not at all.

The languages spoken by what the Tibetans call the Lo-pa or Lo-wa (*k'lo-pa*) that is, the people living on the North-Eastern Frontiers of India (Mishmi Abor, Miri, Dafia, Aka, etc.) offer a special interest, being languages of an intermediary type.

There is also what is called *drok-ke* (*'brog-skad*) or language of the nomad herdsmen. All over Tibet, it is known for the archaic type of its phonetic structure and of its vocabulary,

As far as grammar is concerned, we disagree with Roerich presenting Tibetan with an inflected morphology of noun with eight cases for which moreover only four "case-endings" are given. These "case-endings" are in fact separate particles. Even if it is convenient for a Russian speaker to think in terms of declension and if also Tibetan

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10. for instance, the use of the form "dong-wa", written 'dong-ba 'dong-ba, instead of the usual "dro-wa" written 'gro-ba

garmmarians have borrowed their terminology from Sanskrit, this description can hardly be accepted, and the principle of establishing grammars of languages of the Sino-Tibetan family on the model of Latin grammatical frame should be abandoned as contrary to the expression of the particular genius of these languages. A special study of Tibetan particles should be made within the frame of the language itself. This does not make Roerich's remarks less valuable.

## DICTIONARIES

The Siberian Institute of Scientific Research of Ulan Ude published in 1963 a Tibetan-Russian Dictionary, under the direction of Y.M. Parfionovich. It is come more than a century after the Publication in 1843 of Y. Schmidt's Tibetan-Russian Dictionary in St. Petersburg.

The new dictionary contains 21,000 words. Its novelty consists in that it is chiefly aimed at reflecting the Tibetan language as it is spoken and written to-day. The authors have gathered vocabulary from the new periodical press published from 1955 to 1961, from literature edited in Lhasa or Peking, and also from Tibetan dictionaries recently published in China, especially the Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary by Tsenden Jephchung (Tes-tan Zhabs-drung), published in 1955<sup>11</sup>. To meet the needs of contemporary life, new words have been created either by using Tibetan roots or by borrowing phonetically from the Chinese language administrative, political and scientific vocabulary. The Dictionary does not contain the philosophical and religious terminology used in the classical Tibetan literature. A phonetic transcription of the Tibetan words should have been added, but Roerich's death prevented it. On the other hand Roerich's own dictionary remains to be published.

Prof. A. F. Gammernan and B. V. Semichov have also published at the Buriat Institute of Ulan-Ude a Tibetan-Latin-Russian dictionary of medicinal plants. Following the example of India and China, the Russian Research Institute on Medicinal Plants has created a laboratory in order to study Chinese medicine. In 1958, the Medical Council of the Ministry of Health decided to study Tibetan medicine.

The tradition says that king Songtsan Gampo's physician Jaba Gonbo, having received a medical education in India, decided to unify the medical schools of India, China and Iran. He as well as the Chinese

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11. *dag-yig-thon-mi'i dgongs-rgyan / tshe-brtan-zhabs-drung nss-brtsams / mtsho-sngon-mi-dmangs-dpe-skrun-nas-bsgyur spyi-lo* 1955.

physician Hente-Linhan<sup>12</sup> and the Persian physician known as Dagtsigla<sup>13</sup> established a common pharmacopoeia to which many more items were added later by Chinese physicians. This tradition is known as the "old medical school". A "new medical school" arose under the influence of Indian medicine on the occasion of the translation of the Sanskrit Buddhist canon into Tibetan.

The present dictionary is the result of collective work started in the nineteen-thirties. It gives the names of plants used in Indo-Tibetan medicine. These names were gathered during expeditions in Buriat-Mongolia and by the study of botanical collections kept in Leningrad.

### TANGUT (SI-HSIA)

Russian scholars have become great specialists in Tangut studies. The greatest of them is without doubt Nikolay Alexandrovich Nevsky (1892-1938). More than twenty years after his untimely demise, the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies edited some of Nevsky's published and unpublished papers under the title "Tangut philology research and dictionary". The main part of the work is his Tangut dictionary, reproduced photographically. This monumental work consisting of two books bring us a sum of knowledge about the ancient Si-hsia kingdom, its civilization and its language.

Book I contains reprints of articles published before the Second World War and difficult of access. Among them are "On the name of the Tangut kingdom" (pp. 33-51), "The clut of heavenly bodies in the Tangut kingdom of the XIIth century" (pp. 52-73)<sup>14</sup> and some articles on the Tangut language, its script, its pronunciation and its grammar.

G. N. Roerich has also paid some attention to the Tangut problem. In his article "Fundamental problems of Tibetan philology" p. 112, he expresses the opinion that the Tangut language was akin to the Dialects of North-Eastern Tibet, and he adds: "The Tibetans them-

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12. Mongolian transcription.

13. Mongolian transcription; "Dagtsig" means Tadjik.

14. Analysis of several texts, including a Tangut translation of the महामायूरीविद्याराज्ञी one of the sutras contained in the पञ्चरात्र.

selves have always felt a blood kinship with the Tangut-Minyag people whom they called "Po-Minyag" (*Pod-mi-nyag*), that is, the Tibetan Minyag people. Tangut culture was a Tibetan culture, which was introduced at the time of Tibetan expansion into Eastern Turkestan and Western Kansu in the VIII-IXth centuries".

Nevsky's pioneer work is being continued by a new generation of Russian scholars, among whom are Mrs Z. I. Gorbacheva and E. I. Kychanov.

Their first task was to compile a catalogue of the manuscripts and xylographs kept in Leningrad at the Institute of the Peoples of Asia. These books were found by P. K. Kozlov in, 1909, at Khara-Khoto. The fund contains 8090 texts of which 3000 have been inventoried. In a catalogue published in 1963, Gorbacheva and Kychanov give us a description of 405 books<sup>15</sup>.

Lately E. I. Kychanov has published an article "On the structure of the Tangut script", which constitutes a guide for the study of this script.<sup>16</sup>

The following bibliography of titles<sup>17</sup> published after the Second World War shows that the last years, especially the period from 1958 to this day have been very productive in the field of Tibetan studies and also that the young generation of scholars continues with no less success the task undertaken by the elders.

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15. "Tangut manuscripts and xylographs" Moscow, 1963 (170 p.)

16 In: "Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta Narodov Azii" No. 68, Moscow, 1964 (126-150 pp.)

17. Works of Russian scholars entered in the bibliography or mentioned in the body of this paper are in Russian, whether cited under original Russian titles or in their English translations. If any item is in English or is available in English translation it is thus indicated.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY OF POST-WAR RUSSIAN WORKS ON TIBET

##### GENERAL

V. S. VOROBYOV - DESYATOVSKY -

Tibet, in: "Great Soviet Encyclopedia" (2nd. ed.) vol. 42  
Moscow, 1956 (pp. 406-415)

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V. A. BOGOSLOVSKY—

Tibetan manuscripts and xylographes ( pp. 57-58 )

B. D. DANDARON, G. N. RUMYANTSEV and B. V. SEMICHOV—

The Tibetan fund of the Department of manuscripts of the Buryat Institute of Scientific Research of the Siberia Section of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. ( pp 142-145 )  
( See also : p. 167 and p. 222 )

Z. I. GORBACHEVA—

Tangut manuscripts and xylographes ( pp. 53-55 )

B. D. DANDARON—

Opisaniye tibetskikh rukopisej i ksilografov buryatskogo kompleksnogo nauchno-issledovatel'skogo instituta ( Description of the Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs of the Buryat Institute of Scientific Research—Part I ) Moscow, 1960 ( 70 pp )

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## HACHA FOR LHASA

The records of the East India Company contain a good number of letters in Bengali addressed by the kings and chiefs of Eastern Himalayas to the British authorities in Bengal. Several letters are from Bhutan. The Deb Raja's letter dated Vaisakh : Royal Year 303, corresponding to April 1812, refers to the journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa. In this letter, however, the destination of Manning is described as HACHA. While editing the Bengali letters from the Company's records (*Prachin Bangala Patra Samkalan*, University of Calcutta, 1942), Surendra Nath Sen sought to identify Hacha as Lhasa (Ibid, Part I page 239; Part II, page 85). A well-known historian and archivist, Sen was also a competent and careful scholar of early Bengali literary forms. He had deciphered the letter correctly but would not dogmatically assert that Hacha was identical with Lhasa. He only suggested this.

In Bhutanese language Lhasa is known as Lhasa and the usage Hacha in the letter was no doubt in conformity with the then Bengali style. The letter for instance, begins thus—7 Sri Sri Hareramah Saranam.

If Hacha is identical with Lhasa we have to attribute the change to acclimatization and corruption in the course of migration of the word from north to south. Besides in different Bengali dialects 'sa,' 'sha', 'cha' are often pronounced with local accent. So Lhasa becoming Lhacha is not strange. But one has to account for Laa (Hla) turning into simple He.

In the Shol ( *zha* ) inscription on the south there is a reference to the Tibetan conquest of Ha-Sha ( *ha-zha* ) from the Chinese. This territory of Ha-Sha, according to Hugh Richardson, "may have extended from the Lop country to the Koko Nor" ( *Ancient Historical Edicts at Lhasa*, London, Royal Asiatic Society, 1952 page 23 ). It is not certain whether this Ha-Sha ( *ha-zha* ) can be called Ha-Sag ( *ha-sag* ), that is, the country of barbarians ( *kla-klo* ). For the Central Tibetans of the time of Shol edict ( 764 A. D. ) the entire region from the Lop Nor to the Koko Nor could have been the land of barbarians.

At the time of British exploration across the East Himalayas (1770s) the Indian merchants, Hindus and Muslims, had extensive contacts with Central Tibet from where goods of Indian origin were transmitted farther north ( up to Mongolia ). It is not unlikely that these merchants knew the destination of their goods as Ha-Sa or Ha-Cha for Lhasa and beyond.

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*Hacha* / हाचा

This is however a conjecture and this point is submitted to provoke a discussion on this matter.

Shabbi-La, an Indian ( aged 71 ) settled in Sikkim and doyen of Indian merchants trading between Kalimpong and Lhasa, tells me that in his boyhood he had known Indians failing to pronounce Hla-Sa and saying instead Ha-Sa. Shabbi-La would not confine this habit to Bengal or eastern India and affirms that this was not unknown even in his home, Kashmir.

'Sa' or 'Sha' is often pronounced 'Cha' in eastern most India. Hasa could have easily become Hacha in Dooars ( Assam and Bengal ).

NIRMAL C. SINHA

## OBITUARY : BENOYTOSH BHATTACHARYYA

Dr. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, generally known as Bhattacharyya of Baroda, died on 22 June 1964 at his residence near Calcutta.

Born on 6 January 1897 in a family devoted to Sanskrit learning, Bhattacharyya had his first lessons in Sanskrit with his father Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri—a great scholar in different branches of Sanskrit literature and an antiquarian. In 1919 he took a first class M. A. in Sanskrit from Calcutta University and in 1925 Ph. D., the first such, from Dacca University. While his father had guided him through the different branches of Sanskrit literature, young Bhattacharyya had in Professor Alfred Foucher his preceptor in matters relating to ancient art forms and archaeology of India. He spent some years studying Sanskrit manuscripts in Nepal. While just thirty he made his mark as a scholar of Tantra and Pratima.

In 1924 Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad, a great patron of learning and scholarship, took Bhattacharyya to Baroda to be the General Editor of Gaekwad's Oriental Series and after three years made him the Director of Oriental Institute, Baroda. As the General Editor of the Oriental Series and the Director of the Oriental Institute, Bhattacharyya showed extraordinary organizing abilities as well as erudition. Part of his time was devoted to lectures to degree students. The Gaekwad recognized his merits by conferring on him the titles of Rajya Ratna and Jnana Jyoti. He retired in 1952.

Among his publications are : *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* ( Oxford 1924 ; revised edition Calcutta 1958 ) ; *Sadhanamala* ( Vol. I Baroda 1925 and Vol. II Baroda 1928 ) ; *Two Vajrayana Works* ( Baroda 1929 ) ; *Guhyasamaja Tantra* ( Baroda 1931 ) ; *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism* ( Oxford 1932 ) ; and *Nispannayogavali* ( Baroda 1949 ).

In his study of the Tantras Bhattacharyya began with no particular sympathy for the mystic practices and rituals as is evident from his earlier writings. With the progress of his studies in Brahmanical, Jain and Buddhist sources he came to an acceptance of the higher values of the Tantras. While he was among the first to assert that the Hindu Tantra borrowed much from the Vajrayana and even debased many Vajrayana practices, Bhattacharyya very firmly held that later Mahayana pantheon deliberately and consciously incorporated a number of Hindu

deities. From medieval Hindu tradition he identified the Mahayana deity Prajna with the Hindu deity Sakti. He was as firm on this as about the nomenclature Dhyani Buddha being ancient and correct.

The symposium on Tantras opened in this number of the *Bulletin* will no doubt be poorer because Bhattacharyya can no longer join issue. He had also advised us to organize in our pages a probe into the nomenclature Dhyani Buddha. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology benefited much from his advice regarding identification of images and figures on scrolls. The publication RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS had his guidance as our next publication on iconography was to have the same.

In retirement, that is since 1952 Bhattacharyya spent his time on finding remedies and systematic cure for physical and mental ailments in the Tantric lore. A large number of difficult cases were cured. Bhattacharyya claimed to have freely used Hindu and Buddhist, Indian and Tibetan, formulae and spells. He published some books on teletherapy: *The Science of Tridosha* ( New York 1951 ), *Gem Therapy* ( Calcutta 1958 ; 1963 ), and *Magnet Dowsing* ( Calcutta 1960 ). For strictly academic class he wrote a paper entitled "Scientific Background of the Buddhist Tantras" in Buddha Jayanti Special Number of the *Indian Historical Quarterly* ( Calcutta 1956 ).

As an academician of highest discipline and as an authority on Indian esoteric systems and iconography Bhattacharyya was held in esteem in connected circles all over the world. Those who came into intimate contact with him found him more a Bodhisattva than a Pandita.

NCS

## A NOTE ON MAHACINATARA

The goddess Tara or Prajnadevi is worshipped both by the Hindus and the Budhists. In Buddhism, deification of Prajnaparamita into the goddess Tara is not at all unusual, but the inclusion of a non-Vedic goddess into the Hindu pantheon indicates apparently partial absorption of Buddhism into Hinduism in the early medieval period. The Hindu authors have tried to explain, how the worship of the non-Vedic goddess Tara came into vogue among the Hindu Tantrics. The explanation is found in the तारातन्त्रम् ( Rajshahi, 1913 ) : रुद्रयामलतन्त्रम् ( Ch. XVII ), ब्रह्मयामल तन्त्रम् ( Ch. I-II ), and महाचीनाचारक्रम. The tradition preserved in these texts is as follows :

Ascetic-sage Vasistha took the necessary instructions from his spiritual preceptor Brahma for visualization of the goddess Tara, but he failed to visualize the goddess, inspite of his long and arduous attempts through severe austerities and deep meditations in the Himalayas. He made another attempt on a sea-coast, probably in Assam and he could not succeed this time also. In disgust he began to curse the goddess Tara, when the goddess condescended to appear before him and advised him to go to Mahacina, where he would find Buddha, an incarnation of Visnu ; it is from him, that he would obtain the necessary instructions. Sage, Vaisistha then proceeded to Mahacina and found there his right spiritual preceptor, Buddha. Evidently this Buddha, referred to in late texts of the medieval period cannot be the founder of Buddhism, but very probably a Buddhist saint like Bodhidharma, who became famous in China in the 6th Century A. D. as a pastmaster in esoteric practices. The conversation that sage Vasistha had with the so-called Buddha is given in these words in the रुद्रयामल-तन्त्रम् ( Ch. XVII बुद्धवशिष्ठवृत्तान्त ) :

वशिष्ठः । कथंवा जायते सिद्धिर्वेदकार्यं किंवा प्रभो ।  
बुद्ध उवाच । वशिष्ठ ! शृणु कक्ष्यामि कुलमार्गमनुत्तमम् ।  
येन विज्ञानमन्त्रेण रुद्ररूपी भवेत् क्षणात् ।

— — — — —  
एकाकी निर्जने स्थितः कामक्रोधादिरहितः ॥  
सदा योगाभ्यासरतो योगशिक्षाध्वजः ॥

[Vasistha asked Buddha how can a person attain perfection without recourse to Vedic rituals.

In reply Buddha said, O Vasistha listen, there is the excellent path of the Kaulas ( a Tantric system ), by knowing which a person becomes in a moment a god with a frightening look.]

[ A person should stay in a lonely place and get rid of desires and anger, and practise meditations without a break and remain always firm in accumulating experiences of meditations. ]

The above tradition evidently has no historical basis but it has been invented to explain the importance of the *Taratantram* as also to offer an explanation for incorporating a non-Vedic goddess into the Hindu pantheon. This will be apparent from the stanzas quoted below from the *Taratantram*, in which Siva explains to Parvati how the *Taratantram* was learnt by Buddha and sage Vasistha and what benefits they derived from the same.

भैरव उवाच ।  
 स एव परमो देवी बुद्धरूपी जनार्दनः ।  
 उग्रतारा मरुमन्त्रं पञ्चार्णं (?) परिजप्य च ।  
 सृष्ट्यादिकर्मकर्ता च अजरामरतां ययौ ।  
 वशिष्ठो ह्यप्येनमारुध्य नक्षत्रलोकमागतः ॥

[ He is the greatest god, Visnu (Janardana) in the form of Buddha. By meditation and repetition of Ugrataramahamantra, he became the Lord, the Creator of the Universe and attained immortality. Vasistha also by invoking her ( through her mantra ) was reborn in the sphere of stars ]

In his *Indian Buddhist Iconography* ( pp. 189-190 ) Dr. B. Bhattacharyya has referred to the Buddhist and Hindu conceptions of the image of Mahacinatara, that is, Ugra-Tara as given in the *Sadhanamala* and the *Tantrasara* of Krishnananda Agamavagisa of the 16th Century. He points out how the Buddhist conception was modified by the Hindu Tantrics.

In a few hymns invoking Tara and particularly in the hymn of *Tarahasya* it is clearly indicated that Tara was identical with Prajnaparamita and this was recognized by the Hindus and the Buddhists alike.

The Hindu Tantras may have borrowed a few gods and goddesses from the Buddhists but their ways and methods of practices were different from those of the Buddhists. The propounder of the Hindu Tantras was invariably Siva, who is referred to in these texts as Bhairava. Likewise the interlocutor was always Parvati or Sakti who is referred to as Bhairavi. Hence the Hindu Tantras owe their origin solely to Bhairava and Bhairavi. In later days there appeared a number of authors and saints, to whom also is attributed the authorship of many Hindu Tantric texts,

NALINAKSHA DUTT

AN  
ART BOOK  
FROM  
NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY

༄༅།རྒྱལ་ཏུག་མཚོག་གཉིས། །

RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS (Six Ornaments and two Excellents) reproduces ancient scrolls (1670 A. C.) depicting Buddha Nagarjuna Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dinnaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha and Sakyaprabha; reproductions are as per originals today after 300 years of display and worship with no attempt at restoration or retouching. The exposition in English presents the iconographical niceties and the theme of the paintings namely the Mahayana philosophy the treatment is designed to meet also the needs of the general reader with an interest in Trans-Himalayan art or Mahayana. A glossary in Sanskrit-Tibetan, a key to place names and a note on source material are appended Illustrated with five colour plates and thirteen monochromes. Price : Rupees Twenty Five (India, Pakistan Ceylon Nepal Bhutan and Sikkim) or Fifty Shillings (other countries).

*April 1962.*



