

GURU RINPOCHE AND HIS VISIT TO SIKKIM

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Guru Padmasambhava or Guru Rinpoche, as it dearly called by Tibetans, was not only a learned scholar, but also a Siddha. He visited Tibet in the Eight century, he is further regarded as an Emanation in human form the Buddha, the master of secret Practices for the taming of Gods, spirits, and demons.

In Biography of Guru Rinpoche, it is said that he was the adopted son of the King of Mandi, now in modern Himachal Pradesh. One day while a servant of the king was sleeping inside the Palace, a fly came and settled on his forehead, prince was at that spot at that time. In order to scare away the insect, he picked up a small stone and threw it, the stone however hit the servants on the forehead causing him instant death. Alarmed at the uncommon incident, the King's servants and men thought that the stay of the orphan child at the palace would bring more disasters and decided to kill him. The servant took the orphan outside the palace and set fire to his body. The fire miraculously turned into Tso or lake where a lotus stalk suddenly sprang up. There on the stalk was seated the child Pema Jugnay or Padmasambhava on a lotus flower. The lake known as Tso-Pema or Lotus Lake is now located at Riwalsar within the jurisdiction of Mondin in H.P. and is a favourite place of pilgrimage for Buddhists.

Later Padmasambhava took mandarawa a sister of another great Indian religious teacher as his spouse. Very soon Padmasambhava rose to prominence as a tantric Master. In order to establish Buddhism on a firm footing in Tibet, King Trisong Dheutsan, invited the great Indian teacher Santarakshita to the country. The invitation was accepted and during Shantarakshita's sojourn in south Tibet place called Dakmar yunpoy tsal, gave a discourse on Abhidharma. The Gods, spirits, and demons opposed to Buddhism, caused untold hardships to the country and the people. Shantarakshita was convinced that unless the forces opposed to Buddhism are brought to book, Propagation of the religion would be a far cry and therefore suggested to the king that the great tantric master Padmasambhava should be brought to Tibet for the propose.

So, the minister Basal Nang was deputed to India carrying the invitation message of the king Thrisong Deutsan with lots of gold and riches. The Indian Master however came to know of the King's invitation by foreknowledge and before the Tibetan messenger arrived at Nepal, he had already arrived and camped in that country. After meeting and receiving the king's invitation, Padmasambhava proceeded to Tibet in the company of basal nang. As he was inside Tibet and moving via Keyrong, a place near Nepal, he all of a sudden declared that 'to me all earthly phenomena appear like gold, I have no need of the metal'. Saying so, he threw the gold on the ground, later traditions hold that the scattering the gold was Guru Rinpoche's blessings for abundant gold in the country. In course of time, Guru Rinpoche and Basal nang arrived at Tolung and thereafter at a place near to the modern Kyomolung Monastery where they were received by another minister Denga Paylon. As the place was full of sands and extremely dry, the minister thought that the landscape had an unpleasant impact on the mind of his distinguished guest. Strangely however, Guru Rinpoche knew what was agitating the mind of the Minister. He advised the Minister to fetch a bowl (shongpa in Tibetan) if he needed water. So saying he planted his staff on the ground and suddenly spring

water came gushing from the underground. The spring is still popular by the name of Shongpa lhachu (divine water). Inside the spring water, fishes with the different shapes and sizes are visible (Since Tibetans believed in non-violence, fishes lived in a state of peace and fearlessness. I wonder now what might happened to the animal under the changed situation). A portion of the water over flowing the spring has formed into a big lake near by which gives out hot vaporious steam even in winter. It is interesting to note that animals like horses and cattle suffering from scabies get cured if they are given a wash with the water of the lake. I still possess a vivid recollections of the place and experience I had in frequenting the place as a picnic spot. In course of time, there came into being a religious society in perpetuating the memory of Guru Rinpoche and in organising pujas and rites invoking Guru Rinpoche and other of wrathful and peaceful deities. They organise the religious Dance called Lo Khor chu nyi specially or the Cycle of 12 years on 10th day of the Tibetan 5th month. There after the dance troupe pays a visit to different places in the country performing the said dance. It is believed that if the dancer wearing the mask of a monkey excels in his performance then the prospect of the harvest during the year will be extremely bright. Guru Rinpoche, after having arrived at the place Dakmar Yumbuy Tsal, in South Tibet where he was warmly received by the King Thrisong deutsan. In the meantime, Shantarakshita was also invited to the country for a second time and thus the three Khanlop Cho sum out of the three Khan stood for the great scholar Shanta Rakshita, the great teacher Padma Sambhava and the darmaraja Thrisong Deutsan. The portraits and status of the three "Khanlop Chosum engraved on the surface of caves are still visible at the place, during their sojourn at Dakmar Yumbuy Tsal. Guru Rinpoche build the monastery, known as Samye Migyur Shungi Dubpay Tsuklag Khang on the model of ottantpuri, the place of meditation of Sri Naropa, situated on the top of Phula Hari Hill at Bihar. The above monastery was the first one ever built in Tibet. Shanta Rakshita, organised the religious ordination of seven Tibetan children in order to test whether the Tibetans would be able to abide by the religious vows and discipline. Later on, it was at this Monastery of samye, which become the centre of learning and which housed thousands of Bikhus, that Tibetan Scholars and Indian Pandits worked together to render the 108 vols. of the Kagyur and 216 vols. of Tangyur preserved in the Sanskrit language into Tibetan. This is a fact now universally accepted. However, a sections of scholars hold the view that Kangyur and Tangyur works include other works of native Scholars, This is however not correct. In course of his stay in Tibet, it is believed that Guru Rinpoche paid a personal visit to many places in the country. There are many meditation cells established by the Guru Rinpoche which are spread through out the country. The most outstanding among them is the Shedak situated in the southern part of the country. The cell is located at the side of a very mountain which is easily not acessible. The cave has a small aperture for the prepose of a door. It is believed however that a man with a pious heart and no trace of sin can get through the cell door whatever be the size of his body. But a man given to all kinds of vices, cannot get into it no matter how small and skin he may be. Once inside the cave, one will come across a big empty space somewhat like a assembly hall, is uneven and rocks with different sizes and shapes appear hanging down under it like religious objects. A slight stone of the hanging rocks with hand will cause the resonant sound of music.

The visitors will have another experience in cave, is that of a curious feeling of rain falling inside the cave. In fact, after staying for some time inside, one's body get wet and

damp. Further, while walking inside the cave, one has the impression of moving inside the water. But outside the cave is dry with no trace of moist. People believe that the unusual experience inside the cave is due to the occult powers of the Guru. In a monastery retreat called Ngodup-Tse retroy near about in the vicinity my own native village. There is a 10 inch long Dorje, the Lama's sceptre, which is said to have been used by the Guru while conducting the ground blessing Puja for building the Samye Monastery. A very strange thing about the Dorje is it's middle portion which in fact a triangular shaped blue stone but which appear very much like bronze, the main material of the Dorje, I have however personally witnessed a most uncommon phenomena connected with the Dorje during my stay in Tibet. On one occasion, there was wide spread hail storms in our country threatening large scale damage to standing crops. Finding that there was no other alternative a prominent Lama of the place brought out the Dorje from the Monastery and waved the sacred object towards the sky for some time, strangely enough, soon the hail storms started receding and further damage were averted. There is no doubt that Guru Rinpoche has also visited Sikkim, known to the Tibetans as bayul Demojong. The widely Known hot spring at Khandro Sang Phug in South Sikkim was the place visited and consecrated by the Guru. It would not be incorrect to say that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has remarked that there are many places in Sikkim which were graced and consecrated by Guru Rinpoche. In fact His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama Tenzing Gyatso is the incarnation of Guru Rinpoche himself. According to the historical records of Tibet, When Guru Rinpoche was about to proceed to the Country of Rakshsas in the South West of Asia, now known as Sri Lanka, Muni Tsanpo, the son of King Thrisong Deutsan approached the Guru and said "If you proceed to the country of the Rakshsas, we Tibetans will be left helpless and defenceless behind, Hence under no circumstances Please do not go away". At that the Guru said "As for the revelation of Buddha himself, Lobsang Dakpa the Incarnation of Atisha will appear in Dhokham of Tibet and there will prevail happiness and prosperity in the country". Lobsang Dakpa is no other person than the Monk celebrated teacher Lord Tsong Khapa. The fact that the great Indian Teacher Atisha and Tsong Khapa were the Incarnation of Guru Rinpoche is something which the Guru himself had foretold in his book of Revelations hundreds of years ago. Hence it is unfortunate that there should be difference of opinions between the old and new Schools of Buddhism in Tibet. I would therefore appeal to all concerned to think that all of are the disciples of the same teacher Guru Rinpoche and follow his path.

In the same revelation it has also been stated by the Guru Rinpoche, I quote "having reviewed from Bumthang, for some time I shall hold the throne. I will incarnate myself and manage both the religions and secular affairs of the country. Personally I feel that the above revelation unmistakably refer to the events that have taken place in the life of the 14th Dalai Lama, the wording, Bumthang stands for Kubum and triyi surcha-non, refer to the events of His Holiness taken reins of Government which was cut short by the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Hence, we are lucky in the sense that we have the opportunity of seeing the Guru Rinpoche in the form of His Holiness, the great epitome of non-violence and Peace. Similarly, the establishment of the Pemayangtse, sangngag choling and Tashi Ding Monastery in Demo Jong is no doubt the blessing of the Guru. Apart from this, the legend of the Gangchen Zodgna mountain is connected with religious activities of the Guru. In a treatise called Chenden of the Jomo Tshering Chegna, there is the mention of the Mountain called Gang-Jomo thonthingi

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Phodong on the Tibeto-Nepal border, is non other than Kanchen Junga itself. As mentioned above, Guru Rinpoche made journey to Tibet passing through Nepal. When the Guru had his first visions of Kanchen Junga mountain, from the Tibeto-Nepal border, the five sisters of the Tsering chenga manifested themselves in the form of Demons in order to frighten away the unusual visitors to their dominion. But the Guru, being the master of occult tantric powers, easily brought the Demons under control and later they become Goddesses. Later these five sister Goddesses brought with others formed the group of 12 Goddesses known as Zamling Tema chunyi who is said to have the vow of protections of the Buddhism in Tibet. Venerable Lama Gedun Chopel, the great Tibetan scholar of the recent times has said I have translated the chapter the Song of Faith from the Bhagavat Gita. So the Twelve She-De-vils had taken the vow before the Guru not to allow other religions to flourish on the soil of Tibet and as such this appear to me as a punishment. There were stories of Guru Rinpoche of having subjugated similar other worldly deities like Gangkar shamik and Nyanchen thang lha. It was because of the Guru's kindness, the Doctrine of the Buddha was established and propagated in Tibet in a large scale. He is therefore the great religious pioneer, deserves every respect and adoration from all the sects of the Tibetan Buddhism like the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Geluk. The people of Sikkim pay high respect to Guru Rinpoche, we should arrange for the special recitation of Guru's Soldep as often as possible in this degenerated times. By doing so, I am sure, that will not only bring peace and solace to the suffering humanity but also help the cause of Buddhism to develop and grow further with more and greater vigour.