

Bulletin of Tibetology



NEW SERIES

1978

NO. 1

8 FEBRUARY 1978
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

ATHING BARMIOK T.D. DENSAPA

PROFESSOR NIRMAL C. SINHA

Bulletin of Tibetology



1978

NO. 1

8 FEBRUARY 1978
SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, INDIA

SA TA : LOSAR

8 FEBRUARY 1978

Price per copy Rs. 7.50
For supply overseas (including air
postage) £ 1.00 (British Sterling)

3/78

PRINTED AT THE RADIANT PROCESS, 6A, S. N. BANERJEE ROAD,
CALCUTTA 700 013 AND PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR, SIKKIM
RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY, GANGTOK 737 101.

CONTENTS

	Page
BUDDHIST RELIGION IN BURMA, BEFORE AND AFTER 1885 TREVOR LING	5
INDIA AND TIBET NIRMAL C. SINHA	13
A SCANDAL AT TASHILHUNPO H. E. RICHARDSON	24
NOTES & TOPICS NIRMAL C. SINHA B. GHOSH M. P. PRADHAN	27
BOOK REVIEWS NIRMAL C. SINHA	31

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE—

TREVOR LING Professor of Comparative Religion : University of Manchester; well-known scholar of Buddhism, specializing in social and temporal aspects of Dharma; lived for several years in Burma and has visited several times India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

HUGH EDWARD RICHARDSON leading English speaking specialist scholar on history and language of Tibet; spent more than two decades in Asia-China, India and Tibet; speaks and writes several Asian languages; his proficiency in Tibetan was a household word in Tibet; held diplomatic posts at Lhasa and Chungking.

BHAJAGOVINDA GHOSH Sanskrit teacher at Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology and Nyingma Sheda Gangtok; had Sanskrit lessons with Sadhus and Tibetan lessons with Lamas in eastern Himalayas.

MOHAN PRATAP PRADHAN Financial Adviser, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology; Finance Secretary, Government of Sikkim; currently Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim.

NIRMAL C. SINHA Founder Director, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology; was Centenary Professor of International Relations : History at Calcutta University.

Views expressed in the Bulletin of Tibetology are those of the contributors and not of the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology. An article represents the private individual views of the author and does not reflect those of any office or institution with which the author may be associated. The editors are the publishers of the article(s); copyright of an article belongs to the author, unless otherwise indicated.

BUDDHIST RELIGION IN BURMA, BEFORE AND AFTER 1885

—TREVOR LING

BUDDHIST ECCLESIASTICISM IN 19TH CENTURY BURMA

An account of Buddhist life in Burma during the reign of King Mindon is contained in the Pali chronicle entitled *Sāsanavaṃsa*. This is the work of the King's own tutor, Paññasāmi, whose account of Burmese Buddhist history takes the reader as far as the year 1860, three years after the founding of the city of Mandalay by King Mindon. As the author says, in almost the last words of his account: "This is the founding of the *Sāsana* in the city of Ratana-puṇṇa (i.e. Mandalay)".(1)

The '*Sāsana*', whose history he has been writing, the *Sāsana* which he had now seen established in the new capital city of Mandalay, consisted of a particular pattern of relationship between Burmese King and Buddhist monks in which Paññasāmi himself had a special interest. Elsewhere in his chronicle he declares that "under the patronage of the righteous kings this religion of the supreme Buddha (*Sammāsambuddhassa sāsanaṃ*) in the Maramma country (Burma) was made to shine greatly, and it came to growth, prosperity and full development. And the religion as it is called (*sāsanañ ca naṃ etaṃ*) endures under the patronage of kings". He adds that its prosperity was not only the work of kings, but of all the loyal people as well: "also all the inhabitants of the kingdom, who were obedient to their kings, and supported by the righteous kings, were the helpers of the religion (*sāsanaṃ upakārā*)".

The word *sāsana* is here given a somewhat more specialised meaning than that which it bears in the canonical literature, where it means generally, the message, or teaching, or instruction, or doctrine of the Buddha.(2) From that primary meaning a more specialised usage follows, in which the 'ninefold Buddha-sāsana' is spoken of; this is a way of distinguishing nine types of canonical literature in which the doctrine is contained.(3)

The word *sāsana* as it is used by Paññasāmi, however, clearly indicates a particular kind of Buddhist polity. Sometimes *sāsana* is virtually equivalent to 'Sangha', as in the account of the reform of the Sangha by Mindon in 1858, when the king asks who, in the *Buddha-sāsana*, are the monks and novices whose way of life does not conform with the Vinaya.(4) At other times it appears to indicate as we have first seen a polity which kings and lay-people also co-operate in building up.

It is in the *sāsana* in this sense that Paññasāmi's interest appears to lie. It is this which he sets out to chronicle: "the history of the *sāsana* in the Aparanta country", that is, in Burma. In doing so, one of his major concerns is to show that orthodoxy has to be distinguished from unorthodoxy, and it is quite clear that he regards himself as tutor of the king and chief Buddhist monk, as representing orthodoxy. Since the king's teacher was holder of the title "head of the *sāsana*", or, in Burmese *thathana-baing*, it is evident

that the royally supported Buddhist establishment was regarded as representing orthodoxy. This term was well known to the French Bishop, Bigandet, who recorded in a work written and published in Burma in Mondon's reign, in 1866, that the keystone of the Buddhist fabric "is the superlatively great master residing in the capital or its suburbs. His jurisdiction extends over all the fraternity within the realm of his Burmese Majesty. His position near the seat of Government and his capacity of king's master, or teacher, must have at all times conferred upon him a very great degree of influence over all his subordinates. He is honoured with eminent title of *Thathanapaing*, meaning that he has power and control over all that appertains to Religion. It does not appear that peculiarly shining qualifications or high attainments are required in him who is honoured with such dignity. The mere accidental circumstance of having been the king's instructor when he was as yet a youth, is a sufficient, nay, the only necessary recommendation for the promotion to such a high position. Hence it generally happens that each king, at his accession to the throne, confers the highest dignity of the order to his favourite *phongyie*".(5) It was this fortuitous way of making *thathanabaings* that the British administrators in Burma after the annexation of 1885, were not in a position to appreciate. As we shall see later, part of the trouble over the appointment of a new *thathanabaing* was that the British Governor was too conscientious in trying to get, as he thought, the right man.

The system within which the *thathanabaing* functioned was one which can be described as royal state Buddhism, or in the sense in which the word is used by Paññasāmi, the *sāsana*. It was a system in which the king had become the final authority in ecclesiastical affairs, as Mabel Bode observed on the evidence of the *Sāsanavamsa*,(6) and in which the higher members of the Sangha had 'become councillors of State or dignitaries of a Church supported and enriched by royal bounty'. But also at the lower levels especially, the monks acted as a 'social force, an upholder of humanity and justice against barbaric tyranny, a grave, strenuous influence in the midst of a careless people'.(7) This function the monks continued to fulfil after the British usurpation of royal power, and in spite of the absence of an effective *thathanabaing*. So far as the royal system and its exalted Buddhist officials were concerned, however, Bode comments that there was "in the religious history of *Mramma* a striking departure from the Master's (that is, the Buddha's) conception of the true *Samaṇa*, the monk-philosopher, with his intense spirituality and his detachment from all".(8)

It was a system in which the Buddhist monk depended to a very large degree for his well being upon the king's power. Such was the nature of this royal power that it amounted to despotism, sometimes benevolent, sometimes not, and under such rule 'no man's property or labour is his own; the means of supporting the Sangha may be withdrawn from any subject who is under the royal displeasure'. Thus, Bode points out, "the peaceful, easy life dear to the Burmese bhikkhu the necessary calm for study or the writing of books, the land or water to be set apart for ecclesiastical ceremonies (a fitting place for which is the highest importance), all these are only secured by the king's favour and protection".(9) In her view it is this which explains 'the general loyalty of the Sangha to the head of the State'. But it is not certain that all monks were subject to ecclesiastical authority or supported this royal Buddhism. Paññasāmi himself gives plenty of evidence of 'dissent' monks who refused to bow to official rulings made by *thathanabaing* and king in concert, as, for one example in the famous robe-wearing controversy.

Paññasāmi's interest was, as we have noted, to emphasise the distinction between orthodoxy and unorthodoxy among Buddhist monks. This is in itself also an acknowledgement that monks in Burma in mid-19th century differed considerably in their views of what it was to be a Buddhist. In this version of the matter orthodoxy consisted in the ability to prove one's position by showing that it was derived from some great Buddhist teacher of the past, by the only recognized method for doing so, which was appeal to the canonical Pali texts. As in many other cases in the history of religion the politicisation of religion is accompanied by the need for a definitive standard of orthodoxy, in order to try to ensure unity within the ranks of the professionals of the state religion. Such orthodoxy is likely to be in greater or lesser degree arbitrary, and possibly even a matter of historical chance. It becomes in effect a type of prejudice, and can sometimes be very rigid. Certainly, as Bode recognises there are, woven into Paññasāmi's work considerable "orthodox prejudices".(10) His historical record is one sided and is marked by some glaring and significant omissions.(11) What is perhaps most indicative of the fact that here we get a picture of only one element in the Buddhist religious life of Burma in the nineteenth century, alongside which it is necessary to set others, is the writer's apparent total lack of interest in what may be called popular religion, even of a Buddhist kind. We "rarely hear of popular movements and feelings" comments Bode in her introduction.(12)

Yet it is certain that there were other varieties of Buddhist religion. By his concern for orthodoxy against unorthodoxy Paññasāmi tacitly recognises this; other witnesses are more positive and explicit. As a modern Burmese writer puts it: "Buddhism had never in any place been a single canonical religion and Burmese Buddhism was no exception". Every monk was encouraged 'to debate any point of doctrine or monastic usage, and only when the discussions resulted in serious controversy did it become necessary for the whole congregation of monks to vote and to express the view of the majority. Even at that point, the minority could leave the congregation and form a group of their own'.(13)

The existence of such variety as would be likely to result from the working of this principle is well attested. Michael Mendelson, in particular has emphasised this, especially in his recent work, *Sangha and State in Burma*.(14) Moreover, Mendelson's own field work in Burma in 1958-1959 was effective in revealing the existence of Buddhist 'Messianic' associations, or *gaings*, which, since their basis is one which runs back into the medieval period, are likely to have been a feature of Burmese Buddhist life for some centuries, even although they did not receive much mention in written documents, at least until the British period.(15) There was, moreover, what he has called the 'passive' Sangha that is, communities of monks who were content to take the Vinaya as their sole arbiter, and to dispense with any royal patron or controller.

On the basis of all these considerations, Mendelson would seem to be justified in concluding that "the *thathanabaing* was never regarded by the whole, fundamentally ungovernable, Sangha as its head".(16) And it is clear that while one kind of religion, the royal state Buddhism or *sāsana*, in which Paññasāmi had a vested interest, had 'endured under the patronage of kings' this by no means constituted the Buddhist community in Burma in its entirety. What has befallen Buddhist religion in Burma in the modern period cannot, therefore, be regarded simply as a question of what befell the *sāsana* in 1885

and afterwards. It is this latter question which has monopolised much of the discussion of the condition of Buddhist religion in Burma during the period of British rule and after. A better balance needs to be struck between this one element and others which are equally important, notably those which existed outside the network of royal Buddhism; local Buddhist communities, independent, not conforming to state orthodoxy, but possibly more faithful to the Vinaya in some cases, or to the essential conceptions of the Buddha-sāsana in India.

The nature of the crisis which the Burmese people experienced on 1885 was, strictly, national and psychological rather than religious. There is evidence that religious belief, practices and institutions continued very much as before, outside the capital city. Bode records that 'the changes brought about in Burma by the annexation ... affected the Buddhist religion and the Order very little', and quotes Fielding Hall's testimony that while the monks of Burma ceased to have the direct influence upon public affairs which some of them had exerted before 1885, nevertheless in general the status and prestige of the monks among the people was by no means lessened, 'and of their literary activity we have abundant evidence'.(17) Commenting on the condition of what he calls 'the elusive Sangha majority' in Burma in 1885 Mendelson suggests that this overwhelming 'passive' majority (politically and sociologically passive, that is) was not much affected by the change of government. It was, he says 'elusive in so far as it lacked a high degree of organization and leadership and elusive also in that it had a great turnover of personnel'. Moreover, he adds, 'in its very nature, the Sangha is a body which simply does not need self-government, or government of any kind ... Its simple strength, residing in the patron-monk relationship, still enables a great number of monks to survive today in the way in which it appears the Buddha once wished them to survive'.(18)

One aspect of the British annexation of 1885 which has received some attention in connection with Buddhist religion in Burma is the failure to appoint a new *thathanabaing*, in the way that Burmese kings had done. This, it is sometimes argued, had a serious, adverse effect on the condition of Burmese Buddhism. Various comments on this argument can be made.

In the first place the influence and power of the *thathanabaing* was already in decline by 1886, for we have Bigardet's evidence to that effect. 'In our days (i.e. at the time of writing), the power of the *thathanabaing* is merely nominal; the effects of his jurisdiction are scarcely felt beyond his own neighbourhood. Such, however, was not the case in former times'.(19) When eighteenth century accounts of the power and activities of the *thathanabaing* are compared with those of the nineteenth century the general impression conveyed by the comparison is that by the latter period the power and importance of the *thathanabaing* was in decline.

The British administrators of Burma from 1885 onwards were not unwilling to appoint a successor to the *thathanabaing* of the last Burmese king. The difficulty in doing so lay in the fact that they misunderstood the nature of the task which had devolved upon them. An account of the events of the period written by a British administrator, Sir Henry Thirkell White, records that the Chief Commissioner recognized the importance of enlisting the support of the *thathanabaing* and of offering him whatever help and encouragement it was open to the new Government to give, in order to maintain the

traditional system. 'At the time of the annexation the *Thathanabaing* was a weak but well-meaning person who had been King Thebaw's tutor. The Chief Commissioner interviewed him in person and essayed to excite his enthusiasm for the new Government ... The Thathanabaing was induced to visit Rangoon with a view to the extension of his authority over Lower Burma. Government provided for his journey, which was made in some state with a long train of monks. He was received with rapture at Prome and in Rangoon; and a rest-house (*Zayat*) for him and his successors was built on the slope of the *Shwe Dagon Pagoda*'. In spite of all that could be done, however, the result only emphasised the extent to which ecclesiastical power had declined in Lower Burma between 1852 and 1885, when many of the more ecclesiastical monks had fled from the British-controlled area to the security of Mandalay. 'The effort (by the Chief Commissioner) was ineffectual. Neither that Thathanabaing nor his successors have exercised any power in Lower Burma, which still remains in a state of reprobation The Thathanabaing had not the authority, even if he had the will, to control and direct his monks by moral force alone'.(21)

When this *thathanabaing* died the problem of appointing a successor faced the Government. Not wishing to take the positive action of naming a successor, which would have been contrary to what had become the British policy of neutrality in matters of religion, the Government indicated that it would be willing fully to *recognise* any successor whom the Buddhist leaders might wish to name. But this was not the way things had been done by the kings. The Chief monks of the Sangha would inevitably disagree, it seems, about whose name should be put forward. The kings had always *declared* who was Thathanabaing. As one of the chief monks said, 'What was the use of the Uparaja (vice regent) asking *us* to decide who shall be Thathanabaing? The pupils of each great Thera will always think it to be wrong to vote for anyone else than his own teacher, and all the Theras will never agree. If the Uparaja, like our Burmese kings, had said, 'So and so *is* the Thathanabaing' then we should accept his selection and everyone would be very pleased'.(22)

If there was a single major factor in the change which occurred in the political status and influence of the *Sasana* during the British period it was not in the absence of a thathanabaing but the absence of a king. The traditional ecclesiastical Buddhism at the pre-1885 days rested heavily on the presence and power of the king, the reflection of whose glory was seen in his *thathanabaing*. The British conquest, the exiling of the king, and the removal of the royal throne from Mandalay Palace to a museum in Calcutta meant for many Burmese Buddhists the collapse of a cosmology and the system of morality that was largely associated with it. It was this national psychological crisis which was one of the most potent causes of the social and moral upheaval of the period following 1885.

Another crucial factor was the change brought about in the nature of the education which now replaced the traditional, monastery-centred schooling which village boys and girls had received in the old days. At the beginning of the first Anglo-Burmese war, Burma had a higher rate of literacy than England, thanks to the monk-teachers in every village. And at the same time as they learnt to read and write, Burmese children had also absorbed the attitudes and values of their religion. When the new Government began to set up schools the education offered was as Thirkell White records, 'rigidly secular'. Commenting on this, he says, 'It is now felt by many that this policy,

however well intentioned, was mistaken, that in allowing, or even encouraging education to be exclusively secular, government had done much to sap the foundations of morality and loyalty, to undermine the basis of character. Probably the right course would have been not to stand aloof from the diverse creeds of the Empire, but to take an active interest in all, and to see that each had fair play and encouragement.(23) But such a policy, so far as the Indian Empire was concerned, had to wait until the establishment of the 'secular', or religiously plural independent republic of India in 1947. Any attempt by the British Government of Burma to pursue a policy of this sort would, observed Thirkell White, not have been tolerated by Christian public opinion in England. In words that are well worth recalling, for they have not entirely lost their force, he observed: 'So far as India is concerned the tiresome thing about public opinion in England is that, where interest might be beneficial, it cannot be roused; while in some vital matter in which only the man on the spot had materials for judging, the British public, or its spokesmen, insist on interfering.'(24)

With the establishment of British rule in Burma, forms of employment were being offered in Rangoon and other towns, in commercial and government offices, for which the traditional education, namely, reading, writing, and study of the scriptures, was not an appropriate preparation. Burmese Buddhist parents began sending their children to missionary and government schools. The devaluation of monastic education resulted in a reduction in the amount of religious and moral instruction being given to the young, and predisposed them to look down on the excessively traditionalist learning of the monks. On the other hand, the new style of education had consequences for Burma which Protestant missionaries may not have foreseen: it produced a new type of Buddhist layman, who was able to bring to bear upon the hitherto excessively text-centred religious teaching of the monks something of a wider-world. However, had the monks in village monastery-schools been given adequate opportunities and encouragement it is possible that they might have co-operated in expanding the scope of village education. A British memorandum of 1868-9 had already recognized this possibility. It noted that "the best method for reaching the masses in British Burma" was the village monastery school. It proposed that books dealing with subjects such as arithmetic and land-measuring should be made available to the village schools. If these "were furnished to the Chief *Phongyee* of each monastery, and a qualified Burmese teacher engaged to superintend the studies occasionally" then it was likely "that the books supplied would be willingly used".(25) Had such a policy of co-operation with Buddhist monks at village level in the work of education been vigorously followed, it might well have prevented the alienation of many Burmese children from Buddhist religion and culture, and there might have been a significantly different sequel to British rule in Burma. But the general policy towards Buddhism which was forced upon British administrators by the religious arrogance of some nineteenth century Englishmen, and the pursuit of money which began under British rule, together ensured that Buddhist monastery education declined. Moreover, in the event, many monks were unwilling to co-operate.

The subject is a large one, and hasty generalisation in such a complex area are dangerous, but perhaps a tentative conclusion may be suggested at this point. In the case of British *political* irruption into the life of Burma it was mainly the ecclesiastical form of Buddhism (that is, the *sāsana*, which flourished under the patronage of Kings) which suffered, because of the extent to which royal power was, so to speak, its life-blood; other, local forms, the

'passive' or Vinaya-ruled and Vinaya-following Sanghas would not have been greatly affected by political interference. But in the case of British *educational* irruption into the life of Burma it was the entire fabric of Buddhist religion that suffered; the damage was more widespread, and was felt in thousands of villages and towns throughout Buddhist Burma. R. Grant Brown, who worked in Burma for 28 years from 1889, opens his account of education there by pointing to "the remarkable fact that the Burmese had universal education of a sort long before anything of the kind existed in any European country".(26) He ends his account with the sad observation that British educational policy in Burma had brought about a reversal of that earlier, happier condition of things : "What it has done is to equip, or attempt to equip, with knowledge the children of a tiny group of people who happened to have money or to live in Rangoon. As a result we have a handful of Burmese who are both educated and intelligent, a great many who are educated but not intelligent, and a great many more (sc. outside Rangoon) who are intelligent but not educated".(27)

Buddhist values could have survived the destruction of state Buddhism in Burma. What they were less easily able to survive was the destruction of the religious element in education.

NOTES

1. *Sāsanavamsa* 164 : *Idam Ratanapūṇṇa-nagare sāsanaṣṣa patitthanam.*
2. E. g. *Digha Nikaya* I. 110; II 206; *Sutta Nipata* 482 etc.
3. See Nyanatiloka, *Dictionary of Buddhism*, 1956 p. 150 for details.
4. *Sāsanavamsa* 154f.
5. P. Bigardet, *The Life or Legend of Gaudama, the Budha of the Burmese*, Rangoon, 1866, p. 501.
6. Mabel Bode, *Sāsanavamsa*, London, 1897, p. 54.
7. *Op. cit.* p. 58.
8. *Ibid.* p. 57.
9. *Ibid.* p. 53.
10. *Ibid.* p. 57.
11. *Ibid.* p. 53.
12. *Ibid.* p. 35.
13. Maung Htin Aung, *Burmese Monk's Tales*, 1966, p. 14f.
14. E. M. Mendelson, *Sangha and State in Burma*, Cornell 1976; see especially Chapter 11.

15. E. M. Mendelson, "A Messianic Buddhist Association in Upper Burma" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London, Vol. 24, 1961, 560-580; "The King of the Weaving Mountain", in *Royal Central Asian Journal* Vol. 48, 1961, 279-287; "Observations on a Tour in the Region of Mount Popa Central Burma", in *France-Asie*, Vol. 179, 1963, 786-807; "The Uses of Religious Scepticism in Burma" in *Diogenes*, Vol. 41, 1963 94-116.
16. Mendelson, *Sangha and State in Burma*, p. 195.
17. Mabel Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma*, 1909 (repr. 1966) p. 94.
18. Mendelson, 1976, p. 117f.
19. Bigardet, *Op. cit.*, p. 502.
21. Sir Herbert Thirkell White, *A Civil Servant in Burma* 1913, p. 189f.
22. Cited in Mendelson, 1976 p. 183.
23. Thirkell White *Op. cit.*, p. 188.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Vol. XLVI, Pt. II. Dec. 1963, p. 89.
26. R. Grant Brown, *Burma as I saw it*, 1926, p. 90.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

INDIA AND TIBET

—Historical Considerations—

—NIRMAL C. SINHA

I

EARLIEST CONTACTS

Exchange of ideas like exchange of commodities between two neighbouring countries is the ideal norm of nations. Relations between India and Tibet in the past amply illustrate this ideal. Even the Himalayas were not sufficient barriers and the Indo-Tibetan relationship was not a one-way traffic in commerce or culture.

While much is on record regarding India's influence on Tibetan culture, Tibet's impact on Indian culture remains obscure. With the antiquity of Tantra traced back to the Indus civilization and with Mount Kailas as the focal point in Tantra, regular contacts and exchanges between the Siddhas on both sides of the Himalayas in pre-Buddhist and even pre-Vedic times are no longer ruled out. Some scholars surmise that even Indian Tantra was developed from the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet called Bon.

Sufficient literary evidence is there to suggest fair knowledge of Himavat or Trans-Himalayan regions in North India in Buddha's time. Arjuna had reached Uttarakuru, beyond the Kun Lun mountains, by way of Lake Manas which was the country of the Hatakas. The offerings of gold at Yudhisthira's court included the variety recovered from the Pipilika in Western Tibet. The Gold-digging Ants of Herodotus and the Pipilikas of Mahabharata were no doubt the same obscure fauna. The traffic of pilgrims and merchants to and from Kailas-Mansarovar area was indeed a busy traffic in the Maurya period and Asokan missionaries like Kasyapa and Madhyamagotra might have scaled the Himalayas to acquire on-the-ground knowledge of the Himavat.

Advent of Buddhism in Tibet opened a fresh chapter not only in the history of Tibet but also in the history of Asia and this chapter closes in the middle of the current century.

II

BUDDHISM IN TIBET

The first kings of Tibet reputedly came from Magadha, the home province of Asoka, at a time when the Maurya Empire was breaking up. These kings down to 27th generation followed the old Tibetan religion Bon. During

This article presents the author's second lecture on "India and Tibet—a study in interdependence" at Calcutta University on 21 July 1977. The first lecture was published in *Bulletin of Tibetology* (1977 : 3); the third and concluding lecture will come out in the next number of the *Bulletin*. A synopsis of the three lectures is appended at the end.

the reign of Lha-tho-tho-ri, the 28th king, a volume of Buddhist canon reached the court; the Kushanas were then ruling over northern India and Inner Asia. The book, when deciphered later, was found to contain the exploits and virtues of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. As the Lord of Compassion, Avalokitesvara was the leading deity of Mahayana pantheon. In Tibet he came to be regarded as the father of mankind and adored as the Sole God of the Land of Snow.

Firm evidence about Buddhism in Tibet, however, dates from the time of Song-tsen Gampo (c. 605-650) whose two queens, one from Nepal and one from China, were devout Buddhist. He had a scholarly minister, Thomi Sambhota, who devised an alphabet from Brahmi script and founded the systematic translation of the Buddhist canon. Temples were built and images of the Buddha and Mahayana deities were installed. The principal temple was located in the newly founded capital at Lhasa. Monks and scholars from Nepal and India were invited to expound the Buddha's Doctrine. The king drew up a code of customs and morals which believers down to our time have acknowledged and observed as integral parts of the Cho or Dharma.

GURU RIMPOCHE

The progress of Buddhism was by no means smooth for the first two hundred years as it had to reckon with the hostility of the native religion. The Bon was deeply rooted not only in the mind of the common man, it was strongly entrenched in the court itself. Ministers and even members of the royalty were often ambivalent and some continued die hard. The Bon priests disputed the authority of the Indian monks and challenged them to polemics and mysteries. Victory in doctrinal debates was easy for the scholar-monks who no doubt emphasized the doctrine of salvation for all. The field of magic was however not convenient for the monks from India as few of them were adepts in Tantra. In the second half of the eighth century, during the reign of Trisong De-tsen, the Buddhist monks failed to meet the Bon priests in an encounter of miracle. The Bon elements in the court proclaimed the foreigners' defeat and reconverted the bulk of the population into their native faith. But the king did not yield and invited the famous master of Tantra, Guru Padmasambhava, to visit Tibet. The Guru answered the call, reached Lhasa overcoming en route the demons set up by the Bon magicians and in a number of bouts conclusively proved the superiority of Buddhist Tantra. For example he could divert a hail storm conjured up by the native priests while the native priests could not contain a similar scourge set by the Guru. In short the superiority of Buddhist magic was indisputable and the Dharma emerged victorious in the field of mysteries also. Ambivalent believers soon sought refuge in Buddhism.

The saviour of Dharma came to be adored as Guru Rimpoche, that is, Guru Ratna. Guru Rimpoche was indeed the saviour of Buddhism in Tibet. While his miracles are a matter of belief, his achievements are solid facts of history. Besides proving the superiority of Buddhism over Bon, the Guru handled the great problem of a foreign religion with high statesmanship. He felt the imperative need of nationalizing the church and with the aid of Santarakshita, who was already in Tibet, he ordained the First Seven natives into the Sangha, thereby, founding the Lamaist Order. The Guru and Santarakshita helped the king to build a monastery on the river Tsang-po (Brahmaputra); it was modelled on Odantapuri and named after Achintyapuri as Samye. Significantly enough the Guru tolerated some Bon

mystic practices which, if not identical with, were not unlike the rituals of Tantra.

Buddhism as a universal religion acclimatized itself to the native genius of the country and the Guru's cult of Vajra (Dorje) no doubt became the national cult of Tibet. Under this impact even the Bon priests had to admit ideas and images of Buddhism into their creed, though a contra or wrong meaning was read into each such adaptation. Thus Buddhism had come to stay in Tibet in one form or other.

The few Chinese exponents of Dharma who used to visit Tibet from the time of Song-tsen Gampo's marriage with a Chinese princess failed to comprehend the moral and spiritual needs of the Barbarian of Tibet. A few years after Padmasambhava and Santarakshita, two conflicting opinions about attainment of Enlightenment were being expounded, one by the Indian Kamalasila and other by the Chinese Hashang. In a final debate, the assembly of believers voted for the Indian exponent. Both views, it is now found, were correct but the Indian master had spoken the Tibetan mind. The Tibetans ceremoniously expelled the Chinese exponent and banned for ever propagation of Dharma in Tibet by the Chinese. Nearly three centuries later when Atisa came to propagate the Sat Dharma, he also would not altogether reject the Tibetan sentiments.

LIVING BUDDHAS

The historic reason for the success of Buddhism in foreign lands was the promise of universal salvation through Love, Compassion and Spirit of Tolerance. The Mahayana ideal of collective endeavour, in which devotees morally and intellectually superior would share their Punya with the handicapped ones, sharpened the edge of Dharma for the nomadic and pastoral communities. The Bodhisattva thus played the role of a hero in society in Tibetan sense of the term 'hero'. The Tibetans prayed, as they still pray, for the repeated rebirth of a Buddha in the making, or of one who is already a Buddha, or even of a celestial being. Thus there are incarnations of Padmasambhava and Atisa: the Buddhas in mundane form, and of Avalokitesvara and Amitabha: the Buddhas in celestial form. Such incarnations, known as Tulku, are wrongly described in Western idiom as Living Buddhas. Early European visitors to China picked up this nomenclature from confused Confucian literati.

THE RED AND THE YELLOW

Another Western usage is to divide Tibetan Buddhism into Red and Yellow. By Red is meant the three earlier sects, Nyingma, Kargyu and Sakya and by Yellow is denoted the later Gelugpa. The Nyingma dates back to the advent of Padmasambhava, that is, the second half of the eighth century. The Kargyu traces their heritage to a great Siddha of eastern India named Naropa (died 1040), the Sakya to a scholar and patron of learning from Central Tibet named Khon-gyal (1034-1073) and the Gelug to a great monk-scholar from Kokonor named Tsongkhapa (1357-1419). There is a sharp difference of opinion regarding esoteric practices and monastic discipline between the so-called Red Sects on one hand and the Yellow on the other. For laity in general, all temples and monasteries of all sects are equally holy and good both for congregation and pilgrimage. Incarnations connected with Red

have been found in Yellow households while some highest Yellow incarnations have come from Red families. All incarnations of all sects, however, render obedience to the incarnation of Avalokitesvara—the Dalai Lama—as the Sole God of the Land of Snow.

III

LANGUAGE OF INDIA IN TIBET

“The waters of Ganga made fertile the arid steppes of Inner Asia”. That is how a German scholar had described the great efflorescence of Buddhist literature in the sands and snows of Inner Asia. The Bhagiratha who took the stream to the arid north was in the grateful imagination of Northern Buddhists, come from Varanasi, where Buddha Sakyamuni had turned the Wheel of Law. In Trans-Himalayan legend the Sacred Lotus after it withered away in Varanasi blossomed in Lhasa, and the Master’s “body, speech and mind” made a reappearance in the Trans-Himalayan highlands. Lhasa in welcoming Sanskrit was no doubt sheltering the language of the Land of Enlightenment and Bod-skad (Tibetan) as the medium of the Dharma became as sacred as Sanskrit. The layout, content and presentation of Tibetan canon and all later works down to the last days of Lamaism have been such that a Nepali Vajracarya, proud of his country having been the refuge of Sanskrit learning, has no hesitation to describe Bod-skad as Lhasa Sanskrit. By the label Lhasa Sanskrit a Nepali Buddhist would not merely imply that the Tibetan script is derived from Sanskrit source but also acclaim that Tibetan literature preserves the treasures of Sanskrit literature. Much of the originals are lost to the world today while most of the remnants in Sanskrit the world owes to the care and zeal of Nepali scholars during the centuries when Sanskrit learning in the Land of Enlightenment was in shade. Western scholarship would testify that the monastic universities in Tibet and Mongolia not merely preserved the treasures of Sanskrit but also developed the Sanskrit traditions in their seats. Thus Logic and Metaphysics, Medicine and Chemistry from India flourished in Sakya, Tashilhunpo, Drepung, Derge, Kumbum and Urga.

Why the legendary author of Tibetan alphabet, Thomi Sambhota, did not seek inspiration for a script from the great neighbouring country in the east, has puzzled many Sinologists today. As the medium of expression in the Celestial Empire, the Chinese script had a sanctity of its own. Mastery of the ideograph was a hall-mark of academic and bureaucratic power inside the Middle Kingdom while beyond the outermost frontiers of the Middle Kingdom the ideograph was a symbol of culture. A barbarian speaking the Celestial language was a lesser barbarian and if a barbarian could read and write the script his access to power and privilege in the Celestial court was ensured. Besides dissemination of Chinese language and Chinese script beyond the Han frontiers was a fundamental principle of imperial statecraft throughout history. Thus the Manchu, the Mongol and even the Turki (Uighur) had to accept Chinese language and script for varying periods to varying degrees and the vertical form was adopted in Manchu and Mongol scripts. An American Sinologist has therefore described the Tibetan escape from Chinese language and script as an inexplicable phenomenon. The truth of the matter is that the Tibetan speech is not as near the Han as many Sinologists presume. If the term Mongoloid is used in a wide sense both Tibetan and Chinese languages are Mongoloid languages. Tibetan is also a

tonal speech like Chinese but Tibetan is not so predominantly monosyllabic as Chinese. Even if there are affinities, as presumed by some Sinologists, an ideograph established in one language is not necessarily adequate for the imagery and idiom of another. While linguistics and morphology conceal the secrets of failure of Chinese ideograph in Tibet, Tibetans have their own explanation for the success of Sanskrit Aksara. Twenty years ago in Tashilhunpo and Drepung I made enquiries as to why the pictograph was found unsuitable for transcription of Tibetan speech and how did Thomi Sambhota and his colleagues adjudicate the claims of different Indo-Iranian and Mediterranean scripts. I had in mind that the Brahmi script was possibly an import from the west of Saptasindhu and that in the first half of the seventh century Kharosthi and several other scripts were prevalent in the regions west and northwest of Tibet. The answer of the Tibetan scholars was, however, as simple as the Tibetan mind. I was told that there was no need to adjudicate the merits of different phonetic scripts known to Thomi and his friends. The need for a script had arisen out of the need for translating Buddhist texts in Tibetan language. It was thus "a good act" or "a natural process", interdependent on the other processes of Dharma as in Pratyiasamutpada. Thus the script had to be looked for in the same region from where came the Sacred Books. The process did not end with the Svara Vyanjana of Sanskrit or the horizontal Rupa from left to right. The Tibetan book, though made of paper, did not follow the format of Chinese scroll but adopted the palm-leaf format of India. An honorific designation for a Tibetan loose-leaf book is Poti derived from Sanskrit Punthi/Pustika. Indic or Sanskritic sentiments for books and learning have influenced Tibetan mind ever since.

To start with, the invention of alphabet was treated as a divine gift as in Sanskrit tradition; Brahmi was reputed to have come from the mouth of Brahma. It is not certain whether Thomi Sambhota, the formulator of alphabet, devised his set of thirty letters from the archaic Nagari (Ranjana/Lantsha) or from Kashmiri (Sarada) characters. What is certain and indisputable, both among Tibetan believers and modern scholars, is that the Tibetan alphabet was of Brahmi origin. It is curious that while the words Brahmi and Nagari were obsolete in many Indian vernaculars by the beginning of the nineteenth century, these words were current among the Lamas and other learned people all over the Tibetan-speaking world. It is relevant to point out that in India the term Brahmi was a re-discovery towards the middle of the nineteenth century, thanks to archaeologists and epigraphists. In Tibet terms like Aksara, Sabda, Vak or Varna came to be sanctified exactly as in India and each term was most meticulously translated to convey the different meanings under different contexts. The veneration for Aksara as in traditional India was fully reflected in Tibet in handling of books as if they were icons. I was surprised to notice such usage in Tibet in 1955-56. A Tibetan book, even if it be on a mundane matter, cannot be left on the floor or cast away like an old pair of shoes. The Imperishable Object, as the Sacred Letter or Aksara, is the heart of the matter. The Tibetan veneration for Nagari as the kin of Brahmi should be an enlightenment to those scholars who champion transcription of Sanskrit works in Roman and would discard Nagari as internationally less honourable than Roman. I am not a linguist nor by any means am good in reading scripts obsolete in our country today. But for me the most important evidence of Indian culture in Tibet and even the Baikals has been the most ubiquitous presence of the Six Mystic Syllables OM-MA-NI-PAD-ME-HUM on rocks and boulders, stupas and temples, prayerwheels and altars; and I had not the least doubt on my first sight of Six

Mystic Syllables that the Tibetan Aksara was a Rupa of Sanskrit Aksara.

The Tibetan veneration for the Sacred Letter from the Land of Enlightenment was also expressed in calling the vowels and consonants as *Ali* and *Kali*, the two mystic terms used in Tantra but can be traced back to the Veda. The learned Tibetan unhesitatingly affirms that Aksara goes back to pre-Buddhist times in the Veda. The adoration of *Vak* and *Aksara*, *Brahman* and *Sarasvati* in *Rg Veda* and later literature needs no presentation here. What needs emphasis here is that *Sarasvati* is the only Vedic deity and for that matter the only Brahmanical or Hindu deity who is held in highest adoration in Mahayana pantheon and therefore in Northern Buddhist countries like Tibet and Mongolia. While other Hindu deities like *Brahma*, *Indra* or *Ganesa* were incorporated into Mahayana pantheon simply as accessory deities aiding and serving Buddha *Sakyamuni* or other Buddhas and while even some Hindu deities were depicted under the feet of a Buddha or held in utmost ridicule, *Sarasvati* was admitted as a goddess on her own right. The Mahayana veneration for *Sarasvati* progressed across the Himalayas, and as *Yangchen* in Tibet and Mongolia *Sarasvati* is the deity for scholars and laymen alike irrespective of any sectarian considerations. The Tibetan literature from *Thomi Sambhota* down to the twentieth century abounds with utterances and remarks about the significance and sanctity of *Sabda Brahman*.

LITERATURE OF INDIA IN TIBET

The translation of the Buddhist canon from Sanskrit into Tibetan has been universally admitted as the most scientific and yet lucid ever before the present day UNESCO programme. The national endeavour in *Bod-yul* (Tibet) running through four centuries may be best described in esoteric diction as the union of *Prajna* (Wisdom) of India and *Upayakausalya* (Ingenuity) of Tibet. Infinite wealth and refinement of Sanskrit had to come to terms with the originality and independence of Tibetan. Western scholars who have mastered *Iranic*, *Sanskritic* and *Sinic* languages have not discovered any affinities between Tibetan and any of these groups. *Basil Gould* and *Hugh Richardson*—speaking, reading and writing Tibetan almost like the Tibetan—wrote in 1943 that “Tibetan is widely separated in vocabulary, grammar and mode of thought from any language with which the learner is expected to be familiar”. Earlier a renowned master of languages, *Denison Ross*, had admitted the same, though he felt that his mastery of Russian was complementary to his mastery of Tibetan and vice-versa. Knowledge of Sanskrit, which *Denison Ross* and *Hugh Richardson* had acquired before beginning Tibetan, did not determine the proficiency of such eminent Tibetologists.

To obtain the exact meaning of Sanskrit words and phrases *Thomi Sambhota* and his successors had first resorted to a servile imitation of Sanskrit layout and style and ignored the claims of Tibetan syntax. This resulted in monstrous compositions which misrepresented the grandeur of Sanskrit and denied the genius of Tibetan language. These translations were later on considerably revised or altogether replaced; a few survive in the manuscripts discovered from the Caves of *Thousand Buddhas* and other sites in the north and north-west of Tibet. In the later or revised translations imagery and idiom of Sanskrit underwent welcome Tibetanization along with honourable acceptance of native idiom and imagery.

No effort was spared to probe into the etymology of a *Sabda* or to unravel

the aphorisms of Vyakarana. Panini and later Sarasvata Vyakarana were studied with the same zeal as in the Tols in India. Thus while each word of the original was rendered into its exact appropriate in Tibetan, the Tibetan syntax was complied with. For every translation there would be one (or two) Indian scholar knowing Tibetan and one (or two) Tibetan scholar knowing Sanskrit. For support to translators, compilation of grammars and lexicons was also taken in hand. For widely used or commonplace terms like Buddha, Dharma or Sangha uniform sets of equivalents were fixed by a central council of translators. The result of the translations from the time of Thomi (c. 650) till the propagation by Atisa (c. 1050) were later incorporated into two encyclopaedic collections called Kanjur and Tanjur. Kanjur stands for Buddhavacana and Tanjur for Sastra. Thus Abhidharma, Prajnaparamita and Vinaya, the treatises of Nagarjuna, Asanga and Dignaga or the latest Mahayana tracts from Pala Bengal are all enshrined in these collections. But for this faithful and yet idiomatic translation many of the Buddhist Sanskrit works would have been lost forever.

Through such scientific translations and regular exchange with Nepali and Indian scholars, imagery and idiom of Sanskrit became a part and parcel of Tibetan literature and later, when Mongols embraced the Dharma, of Mongol literature. This impact is noticed most in the art of dialectics, science of poetics, and historiography. Buddhist logic with Indian art of polemics and Indian logician's mannerisms flourished in refuge in Sakya, Drepung and Urga. For models of rhetoric and prosody, men of letters in Tibet and Mongolia invariably referred back to Kavyadarsa and such works from India. Dialectics or poetics were, however, not much developed in Tibet before the advent of Dharma; therefore such Indic elements in Tibetan literature were more in the nature of innovations than revolutions. For a true revolution in Tibetan literature one has to notice the historiographical writings in Tibet. In the beginning, that is, before Sanskrit made its impact, the annals and chronicles of Tibet were inspired by the Chinese tradition of Shih-chi (the Record of the Scribe—the Record of a Historian). The Chinese method of record-keeping meant a meticulous regard for events and their dates. The Indian tradition of historical writings, as is well known, was indifferent to mundane happenings and their chronological sequence. The victory of Buddhism in Tibet was eventually the victory of Indian attitude to objects mundane. Men of letters including historical scholars, submitted to the Indian tradition. The Tibetan nomenclature for records, Yig-tshang, yielded to a new form Chon-jung (Chos-bhyung) or the Growth of Religion. As the new nomenclature suggests the subject-matter of history was now the Dharma, its origin in India and its growth in the Trans-Himalayas. The Dharma was eternal and everything else was transitory; therefore the story of Dharma was history par excellence. The ideal history was no longer the Records (Yig-tshang) or the Line of Kings (Rgyal-rabs) but the Dharmakahini (Choshnyung). The lives and thoughts of the saints and scholars, the doctrinal debates and the constructions of temples and monasteries were now the stuff for the historiographer. Even then a strong sense for historical sequence and a high regard for firm chronology continued to characterize the chronicles of Tibet. It cannot be denied that Tibetan historical writings contained much useful data for history of the neighbouring countries. Taranatha's 'History of Buddhism' abounds with legends and myths but provides some unimpeachable evidence where Indian literary sources are silent.

A measure of Sanskrit impact on Tibetan and Mongol languages is

provided by the wide currency of loan-words from Sanskrit. While a most faithful and yet perfect translation of the entire corpus of Sanskrit vocabulary was achieved and even many proper names like Asoka and Vaisali were rendered into Tibetan, for academic as well as sentimental grounds the Sanskrit forms of certain words were preferred. Thus while Buddha, Dharma and Sangha or Veda and Vijnana were always expressed in Tibetan forms, terms like Guru and Muni or Sakyamuni and Panini have been used in the original form down to our times. Not that good Tibetan equivalents could not be coined but that such coinage could not satisfactorily convey the full context of the term. It will be interesting to give a few examples of Sanskrit loan-words : Om, Mani, Padma, Varanasi, Nalanda, Taksasila. Some Sanskrit words underwent sea-change in spelling and pronunciation. Five such loan-words common to Tibetan and Mongol would be—Arya, Dharma, Pandita, Ratna, Vajra. In Mongol there was a greater zeal to have as many Sanskrit words as possible for the Mongol translators rightly found that in the relay of Dharma from Sanskrit to Mongol via Tibetan the original context would be more obscure. I need also record my most pleasant experience in the Baikals regions to hear the Buriat Mongols uttering the words like Adisa (Atisa), Bandita (Pandita) and Erteni (Ratna) without any efforts in their prayers in Mongol and their talks in Russian.

If I tell a Lama that modern researches have proved that there are substantial non-Aryan elements in Sanskrit vocabulary and that such words as Candana, Danda, Pandita and Bilva are probably of Dravidian stock the Lama would retort that whatever is Sanskrit is Arya. If I argue further I may offend the Trans-Himalayan believer be he a monk or a layman, a scholar or a muleteer. I had on several occasions told Lamas that in modern Indian opinion Buddha Sakyamuni would be traced to Tibeto-Mongoloid stock and not Indo-Aryan. Far from pleasing the Lamas my statement was a sort of blasphemy which pained them considerably. To a Northern Buddhist all moral and spiritual values are from Aryabhumi and Buddha Sakyamuni could not but be Arya and the language of Prajnaparamita was indeed Arya par excellence.

IV

ROLE OF INDIAN SCRIPT

The role of the script in the evolution of Tibetan civilization has been as historic as that of the religion. The most amazing story of Tibet—as the only neighbour of China—to have gone out of the bounds of pictograph has been narrated above. Firm adherence to phonetic script not only ruled out any further association with Confucian literati or Han court but also opened wide the doors on the south as well as the west. With this new instrument of learning Tibet would not only absorb all that could be had from India but would also go west to Iran, Arabia, Byzantium and Rome. Under the auspices of AKSARA, the intelligentsia of Tibet could enjoy the Aesop's Fables and Sufi poems. Tibet was no longer a Barbarian neighbour of China and could now freely exchange ideas as well as commodities with a much wider world than the Celestial Middle Kingdom. As the Lamas would say the AKSARA made Tibet morally and materially independent of China. Tibet's intellectual as well as economic salvation lay in the AKSARA.

Political salvation of Tibet was also served in Tibet's rejection of the

Chinese script or refusal to have any adaptation of the Chinese script. Chinese anxiety to propagate their script in eastern regions of Tibet, particularly in Kokonor (Tsinghai) region, throughout the nineteenth century was both a symbol of Han colonial expansion and a move to liquidate the script as well as the language which distinguish the Bod-pa from the Han.

In ancient India, the Imperishable Object or Aksara was considered a divine gift come out of the mouth of Brahman. This Aksara migrated to the Land of Snows in the seventh century after Christ. In both India and Tibet the phonetic script was adored as most convenient and systematic form for expression of ideas.

For Tibet the phonetic script was also the symbol of identity and independence vis-a-vis China. An anxiety to disown any Chinese association with matters relating to DHARMA determined the Tibetan preference for Kamalasila and expulsion of Hashang from Lhasa. Propagation of DHARMA by Chinese scholars and monks was banned for ever after the Lhasa Debate. A mystery play which celebrated the Expulsion of Hashang was a favourite item in the New Year Month in different parts of Tibet till the middle of this century.

ROLE OF INDIAN RELIGION

The entry of Buddhism from India was the most decisive event in the history of Tibet, China as well as India. Significantly enough the Chinese annals do not record much and are quite silent about the first Tibetan king's conversion. On the otherhand the contacts with Chinese Buddhism, both before and after the official adoption of Indian Buddhism, feature in Chinese annals.

Denigration of Buddhism from China could not be defended on any metaphysical or theological grounds for the Chinese expositions were, at least in the contemporaneous Tang times, most faithful to the original Indian patterns. The Sino-phile scholars therefore describe Tibetan antagonism to Chinese Buddhism as bigoted servility to the scholars and monks from India. The Sino-phobe scholars would call this a natural tendency to have the religion direct from the land where it originated.

The truth of the matter lies in considerations other than metaphysical or theological. We have to find the truth in extra-spiritual or secular considerations which eventually led to decline and near-extinction of Buddhism in China. Buddhism could never become a national religion in China for three simple reasons. The Buddhist monks would not kowtow to the Son of Heaven while the Confucian literati did. Buddhism preached negation of soul and proscribed ancestor worship. Buddhism preached equality: equality between man and woman, and equality between 'barbarian' and 'civilized'. Buddhism was in short 'a barbarian religion' with priests in 'barbarian dress'. Thus except the Tang emperors, no Han Son of Heaven ever subscribed to Buddhism. Shrewd Tibetan statesmen were no doubt seized of the precarious position of Buddhism in China and when they had a choice between China and India they would go in for India. For Tibet, they rightly apprehended, Chinese Buddhism would be the Trojan Horse.

As later events proved, the DHARMA gained for Tibet freedom at home

and freedom abroad. Feudal lords and kings made room for the Lamas and Grand Lamas. In Tibetan (and Mongol) belief the emergence of the Lama as Protector (Kyabgon) was prophesied in *Saddharmapundarika Sutra*. When Atisa (Srijnana Dipankara) visited Tibet (1042-1054) he confirmed this; he prophesied the fall of monarchy in the Land of Snows and the advent of Sangharatna Avalokitesvara as the Dharmaraja.

Fourteen incarnations of Avalokitesvara—the fourteen Dalai Lamas—are known to have ruled Tibet in fulfilment of ancient prophecies. “As the supreme civil and religious ruler of Tibet the Dalai Lama enjoyed a real divine right and unlimited prestige”. There were no restraints, internal or external, on the Dalai Lama’s sovereignty.

Tibet owed her identity and independence to the DHARMA. Tibet acknowledged that DHARMA, the gift from India, had saved Tibet from Sinification.

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTS

Constitution of Tibet Promulgated by His Holiness The Dalai Lama on March 10, 1963 : Original Text in Tibetan with an English Translation (Dharamsala 1963).

Tibetan Precise by H. E. Richardson (Printed for Official Use by Government Press 1945).

PUBLICATIONS

- DAS, S. : *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow* (Calcutta 1893)
DEMIEVILLE, P. : *Le Concile de Lhasa* (Paris 1952)
ELIADE, M. : *Shamanism* (London 1964)
HOFFMANN, H. : *The Religions of Tibet* (London 1961)
PALLIS, M. : *Peaks and Lamas* (London 1974)
SINHA, N. C. : *Prolegomena to Lamaist Polity* (Calcutta 1969)
SINHA, N.C. : “Sanskrit across the Himalayas” in *Proceedings of the First International Sanskrit Conference* (New Delhi 1975)
SNELLGROVE, D. E.
& : *A Cultural History of Tibet* (London 1968)
RICHARDSON, H. E.
STEIN, R. A. : *Tibetan Civilization* (London 1972)
TUCCI, G. : *Indo-Tibetica* (Rome 1932-41)
TUCCI, G. : *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome 1949)

INDIA AND TIBET

—A STUDY IN INTERDEPENDENCE—

SYNOPSIS

The theme will be presented in three lectures under the captions: (1) India and Tibet—Geographical Considerations; (2) India and Tibet—Historical Considerations; and (3) India and Tibet—Material Considerations.

The first lecture presents the theme of India and Tibet being a geographical unit, a unit of physical interdependence; India being more at the receiving end than Tibet. The second lecture presents the fact of India and Tibet in the past being in the same world of cultural, moral and spiritual values; Tibet being more at the receiving end than India. The third and concluding lecture contends that neither India nor Tibet could afford to have a hostile, indifferent or non-cooperative neighbour. Both for economic considerations and security reasons, Tibet and India have to cultivate active mutual aid in the race for survival.

The expressions India and Tibet in these three lectures would generally refer to the two geographical entities as known till the middle of this century. For India the terminal date is 1947 and for Tibet the terminal date is 1951. India and Tibet are in these lectures, by and large, terms of human and cultural geography and either expression (India or Tibet) stands more for the soul of a people than for the soil of a country. The three lectures in totality, however, trace the inter-relationship between the matter and the spirit.

The pioneer scholars and leading authorities whose works are being drawn upon are listed at the end of each lecture. Specific and detailed references to their works and publications are not made for the simple reason that the author has weighed fully the data provided by these pioneers and authorities with his own findings and therefore this author takes full responsibility for the facts stated and the opinions expressed in these three lectures. This responsibility is entirely personal or individual on the part of this author and no office or institution with which this author is or was ever connected should in any way be associated with the facts and opinions expressed in these lectures. NCS 19.7.77

A SCANDAL AT TASHILHUNPO

—H. E. RICHARDSON

In 1946, while I was at Lhasa, when Tibetan guests were looking with me at illustrations in various books on Tibet we came across the photograph in Younghusband's *India and Tibet* (1910) of "the Shigatse Abbot" who visited him at Kampa Dzong in 1903. He was identified by my guests as the Skyabs-dbyings, the highest-ranking monastic official of Tashilhunpo and the equivalent of the Spyi-khab Mkhon-po of the Lhasa administration. Someone remarked that he had been dismissed from his post after his visit to Younghusband; and supposing that to have been due to the failure of his mission, I thought no more of it until, many years later, I came across the inside story in the papers of Sir Charles Bell, now in the India Office Records, where he relates the account given him in 1914 by the famous Lonchen Shatra (Bshad-sgra) of a notorious scandal at Tashilhunpo early in the present century. With the permission of the Director of the India Office Library and Records I have used that note as the basis of this article.

Some time before the British Mission to Lhasa it was reported to the Dalai Lama's government that the Panchen Lama's father had been murdered and that the Skyabs-dbyings was engaged in sorcery against the Lhasa administration and was also trying to usurp the authority of the Panchen Lama. The Panchen on being asked about this replied that he wanted a thorough enquiry to be made; and accordingly a party of officials headed by Gsar-byung Shappe was sent from Lhasa for that purpose. It was discovered that the Panchen Lama's father had had an affair with the wife of another prominent Tashilhunpo official, the Gnyer-tshang Chen-po. The woman attempted to poison the Panchen Lama's mother who, as David Macdonald records in *Twenty Years in Tibet*, was a deaf mute so that she could marry the father. But the plot miscarried and it was the Panchen's father and some of his servants who ate the poisoned food. They were saved only by the skill of a doctor known as Badu Amchi who, as I learnt somewhere (perhaps in another note by Bell) had accompanied the Skyabs-dbyings on his visit to Younghusband at Kampa Dzong. A dog which ate some of the poisoned food was less fortunate. It died. The Gnyer-tshang Chen-po's wife tried to put the blame on her daughter but was found guilty and was banished and heavily fined. The record does not say so but she was probably flogged as well. The Panchen's father, who must at least have been innocent of the poisoning attempt, was fined and imprisoned in Phuntsholing Dzong. These proceedings were presumably carried out by the Panchen Lama's ministers headed by the Skyabs-dbying; but Gnyer-tshang Chen-po, who was even more influential than the Skyabs-dbyings, wanted further vengeance and persuaded the Skyabs-dbying to send orders to the Phuntsholing Dzongpon to have the Panchen Lama's father killed, which was done by clubbing him to death. In addition to this grave offence of which he was found guilty by Gsar-byung Shappe and his colleagues the Skyabs-dbying was shown to have sought to bring the Dalai Lama's government under his influence by means of written magical charms which he kept beneath his seat and also of attempting to usurp the authority of the Panchen Lama. He and the Gnyer-tshang Chen-po were heavily fined and degraded. There were probably other lesser figures who received

similar punishment. All the fines were made over to the Panchen Lama.

The official enquiry must have taken place sometime between November 1903 and July 1904. The "Shigatse Abbot's" visit to Younghusband lasted from July to October 1903. Younghusband to whom the Tibetan mind and Tibetan ways were a new experience describes him as courteous, kindly innocent-minded and lacking in intellect. That judgement seems to underestimate the Tibetan ability to conceal shrewdness and strength of mind beneath a genuine calm and self-control and an assumed air of simplicity. Incidentally, W. D. Shakabpa states in his *Tibet* that the Shigatse delegation's visit to Younghusband was made on the instruction of the Lhasa government. Shakabpa's history also shows that Gsar-byung Tshe-brtan dbang-phyug rdo-rje was appointed Shappe towards the end of 1903. In July 1904 he left Lhasa with the Dalai Lama in flight to Mongolia and, later, China. There is no indication how long before the enquiry the various crimes had taken place.

A possible sequel to those events may be seen in Macdonald's *Twenty Years in Tibet* where he mentions two dismissed officials of the Panchen Lama who took service under the Lhasa government and were responsible for a great deal of the trouble between the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.

So far as I know, Bell's is the only account of the affair but examination of Chinese records might find some trace of it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Sir Charles Bell Collection. India Office Records: MSS Eur. F.80 5a.17
YOUNGHUSBAND, F. *India and Tibet* (London 1910)
MACDONALD, D. *Twenty Years in Tibet* (London 1932)
SHAKABPA, W. D. *Tibet, A Political History* (New Haven/London 1967)
-

RINCHEN TERZOD

RINCHEN TERZOD (Palpung : Kham) in 61 volumes of xylographs, of which the only set available outside Tibet is in Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology Collections, is under print. RINCHEN TERZOD contains the Teachings of Guru Padmasambhava, Lopon Pemajungne.

Price per volume (paper back) : Rs. 450/-

Pre-publication subscription per volume (cloth binding): Rs. 350/-; last volume (Index) issued free with the first volume. First volume and Index issued, for a subscription for three volumes; for subsequent issues subscription for a volume will be charged on delivery of a volume; last two volumes will thus be issued to a pre-publication subscriber without any further payment.

Pre-publication subscription (Rs. 1,050/-) may be deposited with:

Director
Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok 737 101

Liaison Officer
Government of Sikkim
Sikkim House, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110 021

Manager
The Radiant Process
6A, S. N. Banerjee Road, Calcutta 700 013

NOTES & TOPICS

BUDDHASASANA IN TIBET

The term *Buddhasāsana* as description for polity or ecclesiastical polity, as known in Theravada countries like Burma, is not known in Buddhist Sanskrit usage and in Tibetan language. A system of polity in which the presiding abbots or incarnates wielded temporal authority was however known in Tibet for eight hundred years till the middle of the twentieth century. The Sakya Lamas, the Karmapa Lamas and the Dalai Lamas have ruled Tibet, it is said, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Atisa (c982-1054) who propagated the Sacred Doctrine there between c1042-1054. Atisa is known to have made a specific prophecy about the advent of Avalokitesvara in his spiritual lineage.

Atisa had visited the Suvarnadvipa (identified with Burma-Malaya-Java) before he visited Tibet. Did the political concepts of Buddhasasana and Sangharaja travel with Atisa northward into Tibet and later Mongolia? The article 'Buddhist religion in Burma, before and after 1885' is thus relevant to this field of study.

NIRMAL C. SINHA

INVENTION OF TIBETAN ALPHABET

The date of invention of "Ali" and "Kali" in Tibet has so far not been settled to the satisfaction of modern scholars. Tibetans simply affirm that King Song-tsen Gampo's minister Thonmi Sambhota went to India—possibly Kashmir and Nepal, studied the prevalent Brahmi scripts and returned with a set of alphabet and a form of script sometime around 630/635 A.D. Tibetans apotheosised the minister and called him incarnation of Manjusri. Good translations of Indian Buddhist texts are dated from 650-660 A.D.

Formulation of the alphabet, coining of the script and good translation—all these are in Tibetan imagination achievements of one generation. Modern scholars cannot accept this and find evidence from the Tung Huang records that the Tibetan scholars and nobles were in deep contact with literature and science both from China and India for long. The contacts began evidently before Song-tsen Gampo's time; for alphabet and script, grammar and compositions flowing from Ali and Kali could not but be the outcome of hard and systematic work spread over more than one generation. In Tibetan legends, the need for alphabet arose only when King Song-tsen Gampo had imported Buddhism from India and Buddhist texts had to be made available in Tibetan language. Modern scholars agree that Tibetan nobles and scholars had good acquaintance with Chinese pictograph and had rejected the Chinese alphabet because of sentimental attachment to the language of the Land of Enlightenment.

Tibetans merely say since the Dharma was from India, Aksara, which had to record the Teachings, was also from India. This however, cannot

satisfy the modern scholars. They say "The Tibetans were not so 'stupid' and 'barbarous' as their tradition points them. They were both worthy and intelligent" (R.A. Stein). In an article entitled "India and Tibet—Historical Considerations" in this issue of the *Bulletin*, N. C. Sinha supports the same view that the Tibetans were worthy and intelligent and propounds the thesis that the rejection of Chinese script and the adoption of Indian script were political acts. The new Dharma and the new Aksara demarcated the culture and identity of the Bod-pa from those of the Han.

In this view adoption of 'Buddhism from India' was a cool calculated act. Scholars and nobles of Tibet had come into contact with Buddhism in China for decades before Song-tsen Gampo. But when the King's conversion was effected it was not at the instance of Chinese Buddhism; the monks and scholars from the south were invited to convert Tibet into Buddhism. The expulsion of Hashang after the Lhasa debate as this author points out was a political act and could not be justified on grounds of theology. This political act was affirmed and confirmed by ban on Buddhist scholars and monks of China.

The veneration for phonetic alphabet vis-a-vis Chinese pictograph became an article of faith for Tibet. In Tibetan opera depicting the story of Song-tsen Gampo, the first act (or scene) is that of introduction of Ali and Kali by Thonmi Sambhota; the later acts narrate the marriage of the king to the Buddhist princesses—one from China and other from Nepal—and the advent of the monks from India and propagation of Dharma by these monks riding the Snow Lion. The precedence for alphabet, in Tibetan drama, gives support to modern scholars' contention that the Aksara was migrating to Tibet quite before the rise of Song-tsen Gampo. In orthodox Tibetan view the act (or scene) depicting the story of Thonmi Sambhota would be like the *mangalā-carana* of Indian drama. What could be a better subject of the *mangalā-carana* than obeisance to Manjusri who was incarnate in the minister Thonmi Sambhota? Thonmi in his grammatical work makes salutations first to the Buddha then to Manjusri, Sadasiva (rtag-ziva) and gurus. Sadasiva as the primordial revealer of the imperishable sound was as much venerated in Buddhist Tibet as the Buddha. Situ Rinpoche's commentary is quite explicit on this point.

Whether invention of phonetic alphabet from India was made before the introduction of Buddhism as the logic of history demands, or it was made after the introduction of Buddhism as the Tibetan legends affirm, the fact can not be denied that choice of phonetic alphabet from India determined the course of history in Tibet.

B. GHOSH

STUPID BARBARIAN

Stupid Barbarian was the customary designation for a non-Han (e.g. Tibetan, Mongol or Manchu) in the language of the Middle Kingdom. The expression 'barbarian' had gone so deep that even the Conquering Emperors used it about their own Majesties. In the proclamations of the Conquering Emperors such expressions like "I being a barbarian I am free to follow a barbarian religion like that of Buddha" occurred. A Han Emperor is said to have remarked (c 477) "Foreign potentates cannot be compared even with

Chinese underlings : the T'ang-chang king, although he counts among frontier potentates, is not equal even to a Chinese clerk". Chi'en Lung's description of Lord McCartney as "The Red Barbarian from the King of the Small Islands" (1793) was in same style.

The Tibetans, who carried raids into the central plains of the Middle Kingdom in the seventh and eighth centuries, however, adopted the expressions 'stupid' and 'barbarian' with great advantage in their diplomatic correspondence with the Chinese. The Tibetan protestations of 'innocence' and 'stupidity' served them well in diplomatic encounters with the seasoned Confucian literati. In a previous number of the *Bulletin* (Vol VII, No 1) Hugh Richardson wrote about the 'honour' of Fish Bag which the 'stupid barbarian' declined. The article in this number (A Scandal at Tashilhunpo) cites an instance of Tibetan "shrewdness concealed under an air of simplicity".

NCS

ANIMAL SYMBOLS IN BUDDHIST ART

In a previous number (1977: 2) we had an article on 'Animal Symbols in Maurya Art' from Niharranjan Ray. Illustrations (copyright : Archaeological Survey) are repeated in this number. An article on the same symbols as in Tibetan tradition will be published in the next number.

NCS

SRI MOTICHAND PRADHAN

Born on 30 July 1893 at Haridas Hatta, Darjeeling, Motichand Pradhan died on 7 May 1977 at his Kalimpong residence. He was the first son of Lambodar Pradhan, the wellknown citizen of Turuk in Sikkim. He had while quite an infant read in Turuk Mission Primary School and when nine was admitted into Darjeeling Government School from where he passed the Matriculation Examination (Calcutta University) in the first division and with Hindi as vernacular. He then joined the Scottish Churches College, Calcutta and passed the Intermediate in Arts and Bachelor of Arts examinations (Calcutta University) with credit. He was the first Nepali—"from India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim" in the words of Sir Charles Bell—to be a graduate of a modern university.

In 1916 Motichand Pradhan was selected for the Bengal Provincial Civil Service and was first appointed Sub-Deputy Collector. He had his training at Darjeeling, Comilla and Malda. In 1920 he was second officer in Kalimpong, and was in charge of Kalimpong Khas Mahal. Later he worked in Murshidabad for special training in land revenue settlement work. His proficiency in revenue administration in Rajshahi (1931) and Rangpore (1934) was much appreciated. As Deputy Magistrate cum Deputy Collector he was often requisitioned for the training of probationers in the Indian Civil Service. As Treasury Officer in Darjeeling (1938) and later Sub-Divisional Officer at Kurseong and Kalimpong (1948) he was much sought after by his Senior (ICS) Officers for his knowledge and experience. When he retired in 1952 as SDO : Darjeeling, Motichand was a figure highly respected for his integrity and rectitude; he was as much dreaded by corrupt elements in society.

Wellknown for his honesty and his vast experience, Motichand was called back a year later from retirement by the government of his home state, Sikkim. For about a decade he worked as Chief Magistrate and Chief Executive Officer and for quite sometime as Transport Manager. After he retired from Sikkim Government service, he was on several occasions asked to advise on administrative problems in Sikkim.

Motichand Pradhan was an embodiment of our ancient adage—"plain living and high thinking". Well versed in Nepali and Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi he was given to deep and wide readings particularly on Religion and Philosophy. His knowledge of Vivekananda, Gandhi and Aurobindo was astounding, and though a staunch follower of Krishnamurthi he was ever open to different schools of thought. He was a master of Yoga practices and lived an ascetic's life after retirement.

Motichand Pradhan was an active patron of arts and letters. He was for long President of Nepali Sahitya Sammelan, Darjeeling and President, since inception, of Nepali Sahitya Adhyayan Samiti, Kalimpong; he was a member of Himalayan Kala Mandir, Darjeeling.

With his interest in Buddhism and his knowledge of Sanskrit and Tibetan, he was an enthusiastic Founder Member of the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology. He was a member of the General Council and of the Executive Board of this Institute for successive terms. Founder Director of the Institute, Professor Nirmal Sinha, tells the writer that late Sri Motichand Pradhan's material and moral support was indispensable in building up this Institute.

M. P. PRADHAN

The obituary on Ven Rigzing Lharipa could not be published in this number as the photographs illustrating some of his works were not available till this number was going into print.

NCS

BOOK REVIEWS

PERCEVAL LANDON : *Lhasa* 2 Vols. London: Hurst and Blackett 1905. Photomechanic Reprint 1978. Delhi Kailash Publishers 1978. Rs. 300/\$60.

Author's subtitle runs thus: An Account of the Country and People of Central Tibet and of the Progress of the Mission sent there by the English Government in the year 1903-4, written with the help of all the principal persons of the Mission. Publishers of the reprint put the subtitle 'The Mysterious City' on the dust cover. This reviewer would have suggested a subtitle thus: Travel Diary cum War Diary cum Political Commentary of the Times Correspondent with the Younghusband Expedition.

The two volumes (pp 414 & 426) may not be classed with specialist works like Waddell's *Lhasa and its Mysteries* reviewed in the previous issue of this *Bulletin*. Yet they have great value both for the specialists and the general readers. The author, Perceval Landon, had travelled widely before he was destined to visit Lhasa and Central Tibet and in reporting his travels he wielded his pen like a man of letters of the late Victorian era. "He took the keenest interest in the mysteries of Tibet and appreciated to the full the wonderful scenery which to my mind was infinitely the most fascinating of all our experiences" as Francis Younghusband wrote in his Introductory Note.

Landon's exquisite accounts of the wonderful landscapes from the rail-head Siliguri to the destination Lhasa are quite many, while limited space for review would not permit extracting more than two.

The foliage of the Tista valley from Sevoke onwards covers several pages.

"The Himalayas' southern front ends with an abruptness which is almost startling, and five or six miles away it would have been difficult to point out a fissure in the great wall of mountains which stands untopped across the wide flat waste of northern Bengal. Through this curtain there is this one narrow channel and India ends at its jaws. The towering cliffs, clothes suddenly with vegetation wherever root-hold can be found, spring sharply upwards, and the first turn in the track by the river hides the plains, with their blue lines of trees fifteen miles away beside the levelled water. Sevoke, planted at the water-side just where the sticks of the fan diverge, is a little street of grubby. Dust hangs heavy in the air, and dryness dulls the leaves. The only wet thing at Sevoke is the water itself, as it slackens way and gently swerves outwards at the foot of its long stair. Even the rough dugout boats, moored to the pebbly bank, are coated with dust, and the lumps of camphor are almost indistinguishable in the boxes in the shops from the inevitable Pedro cigarettes beside them. From Sevoke onwards the beauty of the road begins to grow. The track runs on the westward bank of the Tista, fifteen or twenty feet above the snow-green water. Almost from the first mile post it is a gradually increasing riot of foliage such as Hooker himself admitted to be unparalleled

in the world. There is no colour on God's palette which He has not used along this road. There is no variety of vegetation which He has not permitted to find its own place somewhere beside the slowly chilling path. Sal and gurjun lead on through teak to kapok and bamboo, then on through tree fern and rhododendron to the pine. Beyond these last, birch-trees alone survive among the frozen rocks of the upper snows. At their roots, or from the hill-side above their tops, round their stems, or springing from their wood is almost every flower known to man, here wasting its luxuriance along the loneliest and liveliest two hundred miles on earth. Pepper ferns, with their dark green glossy foliage, vines and bind weeds, begonias and asphodel tangle themselves about the undergrowth of gorgeous shrubs, or stumps gay with scarlet fungus and dripping moss. Overhead the bald scarp of the rock, orange and ochre and cinnamon rarely broke through the trailing glories of smilax and other creepers. Once or twice down on the road itself, where a passage had been blasted years ago, the deep crystalline garnet rang not only with the echoes of the sweeping water below, but with the tiny persistence of the drip-well from its roof. Ferns lurk in every cleft, and, higher up, the majesty of some great osmunda thrusts itself clear of the green confusion round its roots. Of greens, indeed, from the dark moss myrtle of some varnished leaf that ought to have been a magnolia, but probably was not, to the aquamarine of the young and dusted bamboo grass, from the feathery emerald of some patch of giant moss to the rich olive of a crown-vallary of orchid, none is unrepresented.

“Where the valley vegetation lies in the ugliest putrefaction there you will find the living jewels of this long fillet—a flash of emerald and chrome glazed with chocolate; a patch of brown, shot through with sapphire in the sun; a swallow-tail with olivine and black velvet where we may rarely see, beside some Norfolk broad, the dun and cream of his poor English cousin. Strong in the wing, zigzagging unballasted in ten-foot swoops of pure colour, the butterflies lace the sunlight. And underfoot in the deep soft white dust the kidney footmark of the brown ox, or the kukri-like print of the high in-stepped native are the only reminders in that hot world of colour that there are other things as graceless as oneself.”

“The colour of Tibet” in Landon's knowledge “has no parallel in the world. Nowhere, neither in Egypt, nor in South Africa, nor even in places of such local reputation as Sydney, or Calcutta, or Athens, is there such a constancy of beauty, night and morning alike, as there is in these fertile plains inset in the mountain backbone of the world. Here there is a range and a quality in both light and colour which cannot be rendered by the best of coloured plates, but which must always be remembered if the dry bones of figure and fact are to be properly conceived.

“During the mid-hours of a summer day, Tibet is perhaps not unlike the rest of the dry tropical zone. Here, as elsewhere, the fierce Oriental sun scares away the softer tints, and the shrinking and stretching shadows of the white hours are too scanty to relieve the mirage and the monotony. All about Chang-lo the contemptuous shoulders of the shadeless mountains stand blank and unwelcoming. All along the plain as far as the eye can see the stretches of iris or barley and the plantations of willow-thorn are dulled into eucalyptus grey by the dust; the trees lift themselves dispirited, and the faint droop of every blade and every leaf tires the eye with unconscious sympathy. Far off along the Shigatse road a packmule shuffles along, making in sheer

weariness as much dust as the careless hoofs of a bullock, that dustiest of beasts. One does not look at the houses. The sun beats off their coarse and strong grained white-wash, and one can hardly believe that they are the same dainty buildings of pearl-grey or rose-pink that one watched as they faded out of sight with the sunset yesterday evening. Everything shivers behind the crawling skeins of mirage. There is no strength, there are no outlines to anything in the plain, and even the hardthorn trees in the plantation are flaccid. As one passes underneath them a kite or two dives downward from the branches. He will disturb little dust as he moves, for your kite mistrusts a new perch, and the bough he sits on must be leafless both for the traverse of his outlook, and for the clear oarage of his wide wings. Also, you may be sure he has been to and fro fifty times to-day. See him settle a hundred yards away near that ugly significant heap of dirty maroon cloth, and mark the dust thrown forward by the thrashing brake-stroke of his great wings. It hangs in a pretty cloud still when we have come up to him and driven him away in indignation for a little space.

“Under foot the dwarf clematis shuts in from the midday heat its black snake-head flowers, and the young shoots of the jasmine turn the backs of their tender leaflets to the sun, dropping a little as they do so. Veronica is there in stunted little bushes; vetches, rest-harrows, and dwarf indigolike plants swarm along the sides of the long dry water channels; and here and there, where the ditch runs steep, you may find, along towards the southern face, what looks for all the world like a thickly-strewn bank of violets. Violets of course they are not, but the illusion is perfect, in colour, growth, and size alike. Near them tall fresh-looking docks have found a wet stratum deep below the dusty irrigation cut, and away in a sopping water meadow by the river stunted Himalayan primulas make a cloudy carpet of pink.

“Late in the afternoon the change begins. Details of flowers and fields and trees vanish—and surely one is content to lose them in the scene that follows. First, the light pall of pure blue which has all day gauzed over the end of the valley towards Dongtse deepens into ultramarine ash. Then in a few minutes as it seems, the fleeces of white and silver in the west have gathered weight, and a mottled company of argent and silver-grey and cyanine heaps itself across the track of the setting sun. The sky deepens from blue to amber without a transient tint of green, and the red camp-fires whiten as the daylight fades. But the true sunset is not yet. After many minutes comes the sight which is perhaps Tibet’s most exquisite and peculiar gift: the double glory of the east and west alike, and the rainbow confusion among the wide waste of white mountain ranges.

“For ten minutes the sun will fight a path clear of his clouds and a luminous ray sweeps down the valley, lighting up the unsuspected ridges and blackening the lurking hollows of the hills. This is no common light. The Tibetans themselves have given it a name of its own, and indeed the gorse-yellow blaze which paints its shadows myrtle-green underneath the deepened indigo of the sky defies description and deserves a commemorative phrase for itself alone. But the strange thing is still to come. A quick five-fingered aurora of rosy light arches over the sky, leaping from east to west as one gazes overhead. The fingers converge again in the east, where a growing splendour shapes itself to welcome them on the horizon’s edge.

“Then comes the climax of the transformation scene. While the carmine

is still over-arching the sky, on either side the horizon deepens to a still darker shade, and the distant hills stand out against it with uncanny sharpness, iridescent for all the world like a jagged and translucent scale of mother-of-pearl lighted from behind. Above them the ravines and the ridges are alike lost, and in their place mantles a pearly underplay of rosepetal pink and eau-de-nil green, almost moving as one watches. Then the slowly developed tints tire and grow dull; the quick evening gloom comes out from the plain, and a sharp little wind from the south-east is the herald of the stars.

“These sunsets are as unlike the “cinnamon, amber, and dun” of South Africa as the high crimson, gold-flecked curtains of Egypt, or the long contrasting belts of the western sky in mid-ocean. So peculiar are they to this country that they have as much right to rank as one of its characteristic features as Lamaic superstition, or the “bos grunniens” itself; and to leave them unmentioned, however imperfect and crude the suggestion may be, would be to cover up the finest page of the book which is only now after many centuries opened to the world. That alone is my excuse for attempting what every man in this expedition knows in his heart to be impossible.”

Landon was as good an observer of Nature as of War. His admiration of 32 Pioneers (Sikhs) and of the Indian clerk may be quoted in this connection.

“... What the hardship must have been of climbing up to an altitude which could not have been of less than 18,500 feet it is difficult for the ordinary reader to conceive. Hampered alike by his accoutrements and by the urgent anxiety for rapidity, Wassawa Singh still gave his men but scanty opportunities of rest. It was such a climb as many a member of the Alpine Club would, under the best circumstances, have declined to attempt, and the Order of Merit which was afterwards conferred upon Wassawa Singh was certainly one of the most hardy earned distinctions of the campaign.”

“... But, well or ill, every man reached for his rifle and came out to his place. The members of the Mission—Colonel Younghusband, Lieut.-Colonel Waddell, Captain Ryder, and, it should not be forgotten, Mr Mitter, the confidential clerk of the Mission—immediately manned the upper works, and a certain number of the followers displayed considerable martial energy in positions of more or less personal danger.”

The first passage describes the capture of Karo La and the second refers to the siege of Gyantse camp. There are passages appreciating the bravery and skill of the Gurkhas and Pathans. About the Pandit Surveyors Landon wrote “I do not know that there are many feats in the world of adventure, endurance and pluck that will compare favourably with that of the Indian native entrusted with the work of secret exploration in Tibet.” Such secret explorations had made the task of Younghusband Expedition less difficult.

Landon’s observations on the political and diplomatic affairs were profound.

“Chinese supremacy over Tibet nominally dates from the year 1720, and as about that time the policy of isolation was adopted, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Chinese pressed it upon the Tibetans with the idea of making a “buffer state” of the most impenetrable description between their province and the unknown but growing power of the foreigners in India.

Perhaps it was not the white foreigners alone that they dreaded; Nadir Shah's invasion of India in 1727 must have been the cause of some anxiety to the Middle Kingdom. In any case we may fairly accept the definite statement of many travellers that the isolation of Tibet was in its origin a Chinese device. But they taught willing pupils, and the tables are now so far reversed that the Chinese are unable to secure admittance into the province even for the strangers to whom they have given official permission..."

In the concluding pages we read about the hostile demonstration, and stone throwing, over the Chinese escorting Claude White, F.C. Wilton and Perceval Landon around the Lhasa Cathedral.

"The real significance of this incident must not be mistaken; in itself it was of no very great moment, but as indicating the utter contempt felt by the Tibetans for the suzerain power of Tibet, it is something which we cannot entirely ignore. The more we acquit the actual guardians of the temple from all complicity in it, the more spontaneous and popular does this outburst of indignation against the normal overlords of Tibet become. Even when their suzerainty was supposed to be supported by the presence of our troops, outside, it was possible that this could occur in the heart of Lhasa, and it is in itself a convincing proof that no action of the Chinese with regard to Tibet will, in the future, have any real importance, or be regarded by the Tibetans as binding upon themselves in any way."

Prophetic words indeed; for till the middle of the century Tibet remained independent. Landon, like Waddell, was not objective about the Dalai Lama XIII, the architect of Tibet's independence. Nor could he be fair or painstaking about Lamaism. Later British scholars like Charles Bell redressed the imbalance to a considerable degree.

About 250 illustrations—photographs, drawings/sketches and colour paintings—and 6 maps add substantially to the pen pictures of Landon. Eleven items in the Appendix detail the composition and personnel of the Young-husband Mission, the history and political background of the events, the governmental system of Tibet, the natural history of Southern Tibet etc. Later researches have amended many of the findings in Landon's book. Even then the book should be of use to specialists. For the general readers the book provides access to the grandeurs and wonders of nature which only sponsored tourists can enjoy today.

The binding and stitching of the two precious volumes should have been stronger and better.

NIRMAL C. SINHA

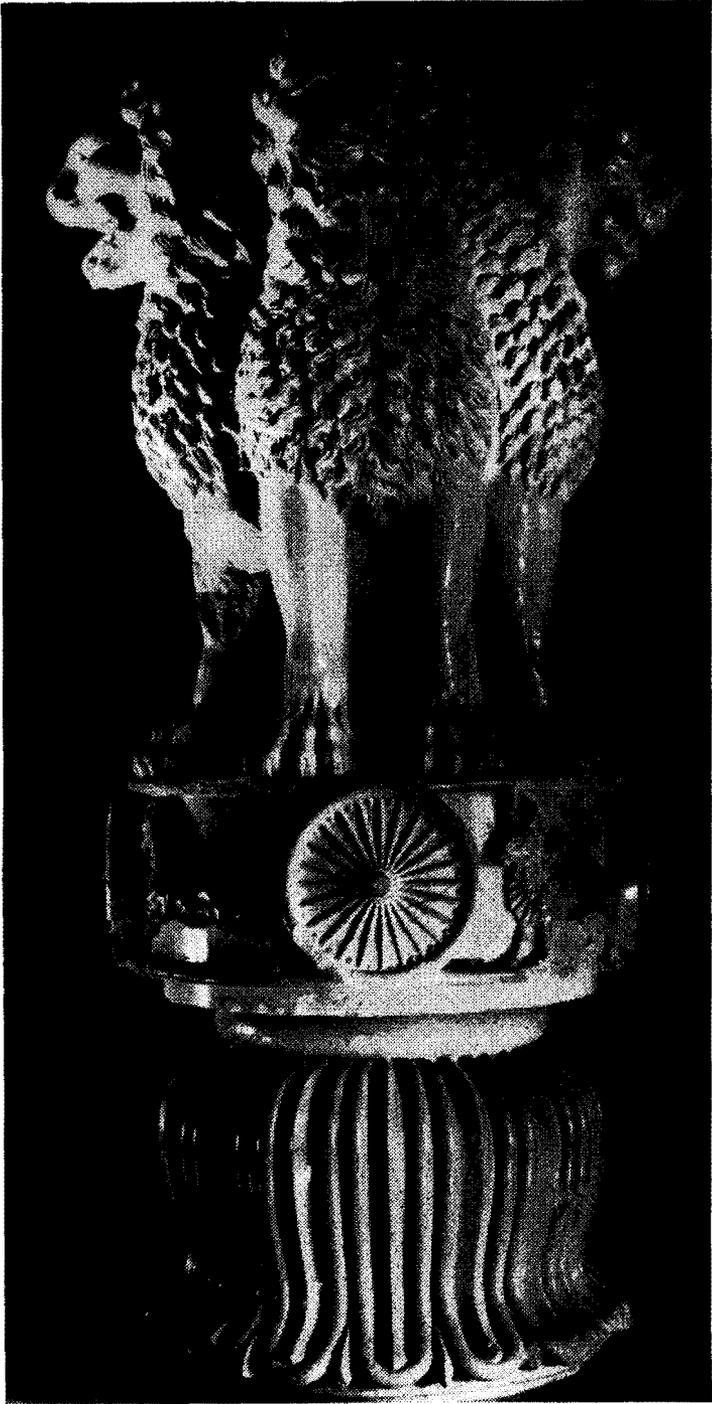
The following publications will be reviewed in the next number of the *Bulletin*.

ARABINDA DEB : *Bhutan and India* (Calcutta 1976)

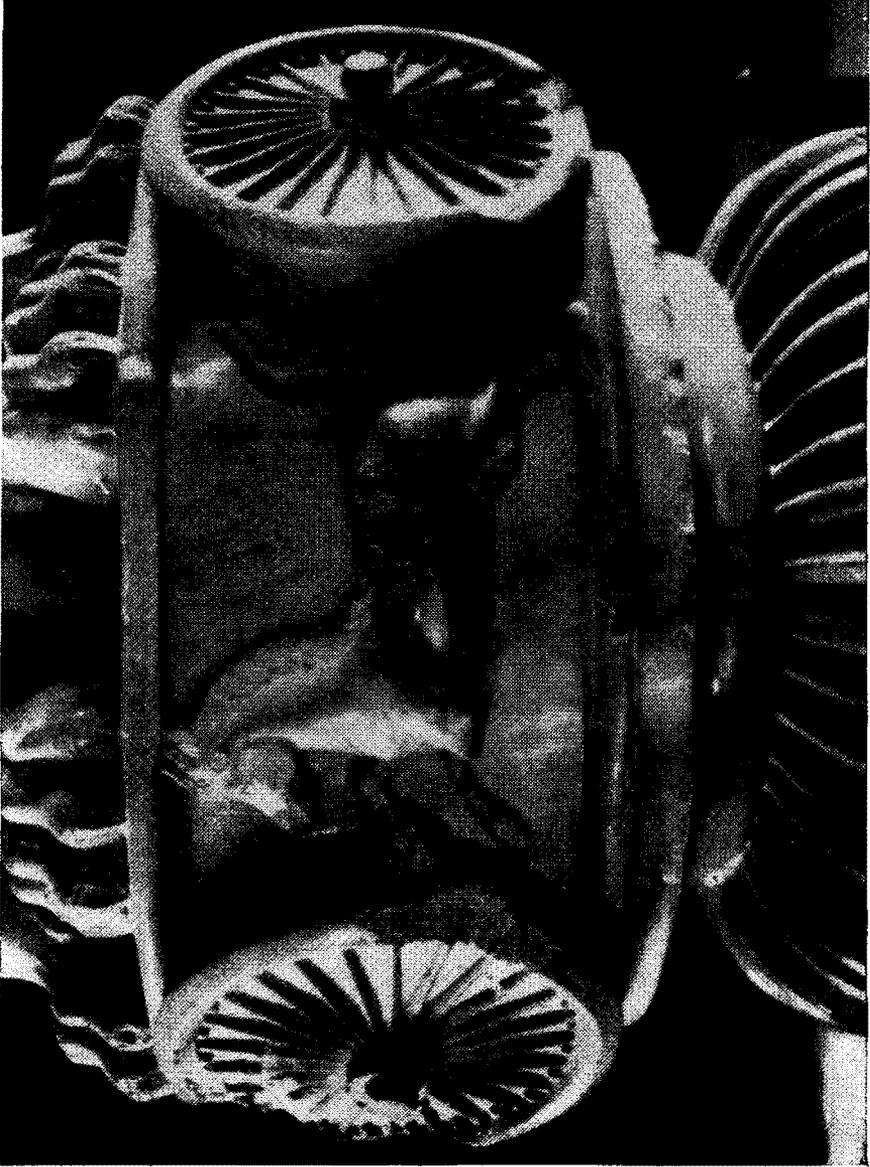
JAHAR SEN : *India-Nepal Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Calcutta 1977)

NIRMAL C. SINHA : *An Introduction to the History and Religion of Tibet* (Calcutta 1975)

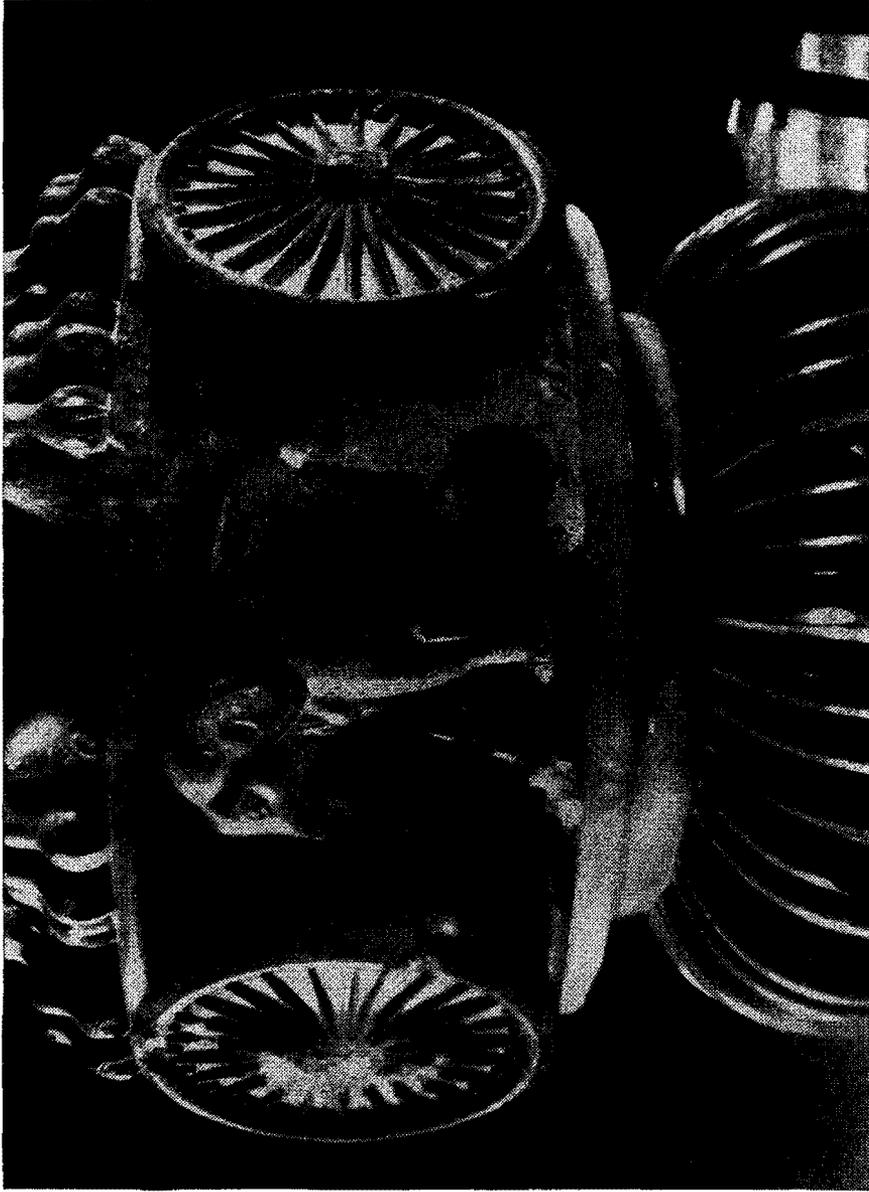
BG



The Lion capital, Sarnath



The Horse (on abacus), Sarnath



The Elephant (on abacus), Sarnath



The Bull (on abacus), Sarnath



The Elephant (rock-cut), Dhaulvi

RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS

An Art Book (Six Ornaments and Two Excellents) reproduces ancient scrolls (1670 A.C.) depicting Buddha, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, 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 Seventy Five.

April 1962/1972

BULLETIN OF TIBETOLOGY

Three issues a year. Price per copy (each issue)
Rs 7.50; for supply overseas (including air postage)
£ 1.00 (UK Sterling)

Available with

Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta 12

and

all leading booksellers

ATISA JAYANTI

To mark the Thousandth Birth Anniversary of Srijnana Dipankara Atisa (c.982-1054), Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology has programmed several publications.

KADAM PHACHO, containing the Life and Teachings of Atisa in Tibetan, is reproduced per photo-mechanic process direct from the original. It is published in three parts. Part 1 was published in March 1977; Part 2 is under print for publication in March 1978; Part 3 is scheduled for publication in October 1978. Each part (bound in cloth along palmleaf format) is priced at Rs 100/-.

SOUVENIR VOLUME (in English), containing essays and papers on the life of Atisa and on topics connected with the life, teachings and works of Atisa, written by eminent scholars and specialists is scheduled to go into print in summer 1978. Contributors include Manoranjan BASU, Debi Prasad CHATTOPADHAYAYA, Vidya Prakash DUTT, Helmut EIMER, Myrcia ELIADE, Helmut HOFFMANN, Trevor LING, Marco PALLIS, Niharranjan RAY, Hugh E. RICHARDSON, Klaus SAGASTAR, Gene SMITH, Giuseppe TUCCI, Jagannath UPADHYAYA and Turrell V. WYLIE.

SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, SIKKIM, INDIA