

NOTE III

PHALLIC SYMBOLS

In the Bulletin of Tibetology Vol IX No 2 dated 14th July 1972, Mr Hugh E. Richardson has made some observations on the Phallic Symbols in Tibet. In this note I humbly make some observation on the same subject.

In the manuscript, Khyad-par-phags bstod (vishesa-stava) written by Slob-dpon-tho-brtsun-grub-rje (400 B.C.) and in its commentary by Slob-dbon-shes-rab-go-cha from Bengal, the reason for the Hindus worship of the linga is given.

It is said that long ago, in the jungle covered with pine trees there lived many Rishis with their families following strictly the practice of asceticism. Goddess Uma having seen them, approached Mahadeva, and requested Mahadeva to help the Rishis obtain Nirvana as they were following the strict rule of ascetics. Mahadeva replied that the Rishis could not obtain Nirvana as they had not freed themselves from the three poisons—lust, hate, ignorance.

Goddess Uma insisted that they be helped to obtain Nirvana as they had freed themselves from the three poisons.

In order to test the Rishis, Mahadeva appeared to them in a beautiful, handsome, sexy form. The wives and daughter of the Rishis saw the handsome man and came out from their huts made from leaves in the jungle. They looked at him, touched all over his beautiful body and gained such great pleasure and excitement that some fainted.

The Rishis came out from their huts made from leaves and seeing the condition of their wives and daughters were very angry and told the handsome man that he was evil and lustful. The Rishis put a curse on him for his organ to fall off on to the earth. Just then his sexual organ fell off.

Goddess Uma went to the Rishis and told them that the handsome man was no other but Mahadeva who had appeared in that form to test them. On knowing this they picked up the linga, placed it erect, worshipped and made offerings to it. Since then the linga was worshipped in India. The above is also mentioned in the manuscript, 'Lha-las-phul-byung-gi-bstod-pa, written by slob-bde-byed-dga'-ba.

Tantric

In the manuscript namely, Bde-mc-hog-spyi-rnam-don-gsal written by Bu-ston Rinpoche it mentions that Dbang-phyug-drag-po-'jigs-byed-nag-po and his wife goddess Dus-mtshan ma (kala-rati) remained clasped in sexual embrace in the centre of the world-Magadha. At that time twentyfour powerful god and demon attendents of Dbang-phyug-drag-po came from the sky and took charge of twenty-four sacred places. They worshipped Dbang-phyug-drag-po daily and requested him to come to the sacred centres.

Dbang-phyug-drag-po, being always clasped in sexual embrace with his wife was unable to visit the sacred centres. With miraculous powers he made stone lingas and placed one in each sacred centre to represent himself. The god and demon attendents worshipped the stone linga as it represented Dbang-phyug-drag-po.

The gods and demons of the twenty-four sacred centres being filled with lust could not live without sex; they being full of hate always ate human flesh and drank their blood, and due to ignorance they had no idea of the Doctrine of retribution and true nature. The attendents of the twenty-four gods and demons were venomous, and they together with the gods and demons ruled the world, and did a lot of harm to beings who suffered a great deal.

At that time Rdo-rje-'chng (Vajradhara) came on top of Ri-rab (Sumeru) and in order to suppress the Gods and demons and protect the suffering beings He took the form of tutelary diety Bde-mchog (Samvara) Buddha Mi-bskyod-pa (Akshobhya) presented Rdo-rje-'chang with a palace and a throne, and Dhyani Buddha Ratnasambhava presented emanations of himself in the form of twenty-four Dpa-bo (VIRA) Dpa-mo (VIRANGNA). Finally Dbang-phyug-drag-po and his attendents were suppressed and overcome.

In the manuscript, Bde-mchog bskyed-rim by Rje Shes-rab-rgya-mtsho, it is said that Dbang-phyug-drag-po and his wife ruled the world from the top of ri-rab (Sumeru). From among his gods and demon attendents the twenty-four most venomous attendents took control of the twenty-four sacred centres. In each of the twenty-four sacred centres they placed a linga to represent Dbang-phyud-drag-po for worship. The gods and demons were perpetually harming the beings and so the five Dhyani Buddhas requested Rdo-rje-'chang (vajradhara) to control Dbang-phyug-drag-po. Rdo-rje-'chang took the form of Bde mchog (Sumvara) suppress dbang-phyug-drag-po and his wife dus-mtshan-ma under his feet. The five Dhyani Buddhas presented emanations

of themselves in the form of twenty-four Bodhisattvas and their Shaktis. The Bodhisattvas and the Shaktis controlled the gods and demons. In many Tantric manuscripts the above is stated. Phallic symbols are not worshipped in Tibet.

On the east of Lhasa there is a hill which has the shape of the private part of a she demon. The evil emanating from this hill had to be opposed by setting up phallus representing Dbang-phyug-drag-po pointing in that direction.

In Tibet, phallic signs representing the male organ made from wood surrounded by a bush of yak hair, is often seen hanging from the ceiling in several mills, to ward off evil.

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