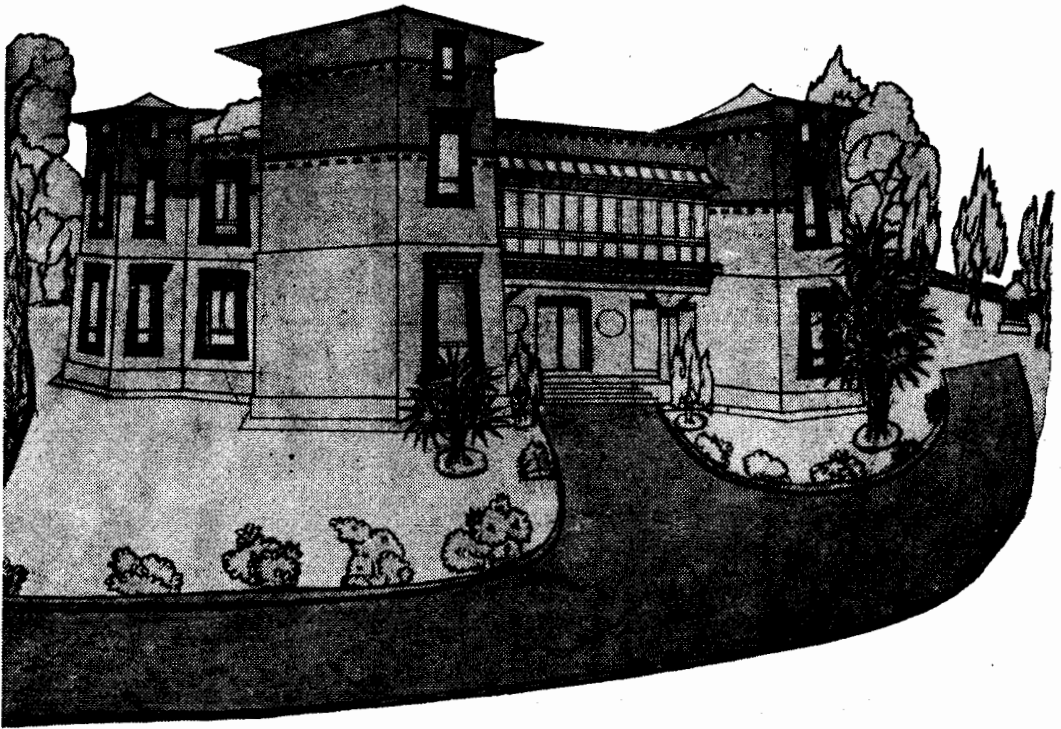


# BULLETIN OF TIBETOLOGY



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1981

NO. 4

18 NOVEMBER 1981  
SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY  
&  
OTHER BODDHIST STUDIES  
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 picture portrays Tibetology's massive building in the typical Himalayan Architectural Style.

Editor :

Dr. A. C. Banerjee

Director : SRIT

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## P R E F A C E

Since the inception of the *Bulletin of Tibetology*, more than a decade and a half years back, it has been carrying on its eventful existence as one of the leading Journals on Tibetology and Buddhism. It covers a wide range of subjects dealing with Tibetology, Central Asian and Indological Studies. Learned papers from the pens of distinguished writers on a variety of subjects have been featuring in the pages of this Journal.

Its popularity has gained prominence so much so that enquiries and demand for the Journal have been constantly pouring in. It has now a fair circulation in India and abroad

The Journal which was formally published thrice a year is now being published as a quarterly Journal as per direction of His Excellency Shri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, the Governor of Sikkim, President, SRIT, who has been taking keen interest in the overall activities of the Institute.

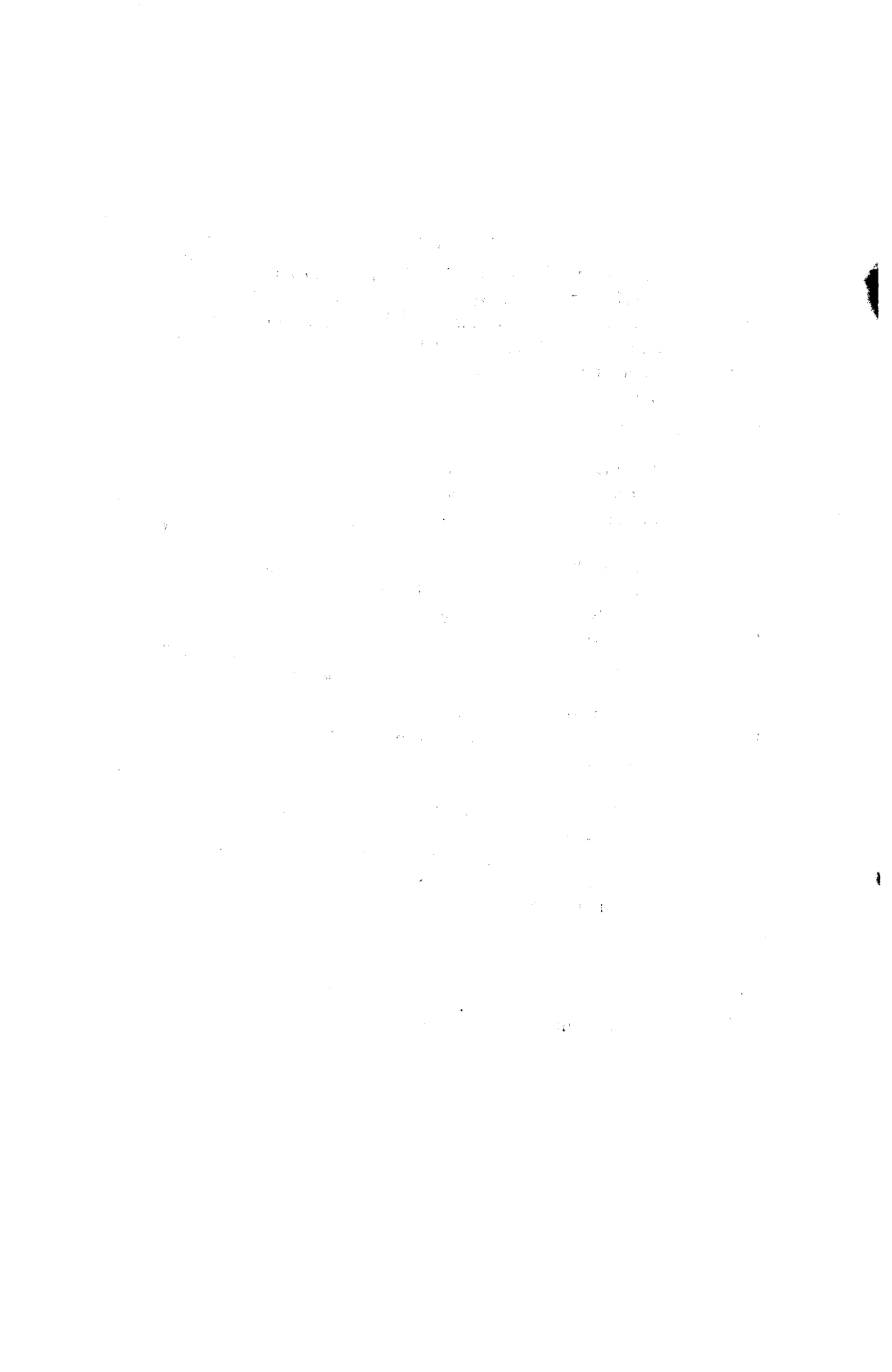
Three issues of the Quarterly Journal have already been published. This is the fourth, which is now being presented to our members, subscribers and the like.

Two learned papers apart, it contains an account of the functions and activities of SRIT and a list of books published so far.

Lastly, I must thank Shri Sukumar Bose of Impression (Press), Gangtok for the publication of this Journal.

Dr. Anukul Chandra Banerjee

Director,  
Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology,  
Gangtok.





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# Bon-The Primitive Religion of Tibet

Prof. Anukul Chandra Banerjee,  
Gangtok.

Tibet, the "Land of Snows" is marked off by encircling great sky-scraping snowy mountains and the rugged rocky ranges, always covered with snow, high and perilous. Such natural geographical conditions help her people to develop their religious ideas and practices in a peculiar way. The variety of landscape had its influence further on the Tibetan mind and produced a faith, furious and mysterious, peculiar to Shamanistic cult.

The Tibetan historical sources provide us with materials which prove the existence of another religion, known as Bon, a kind of Shamanism, prior to the advent of Buddhism. The meaning of the word 'Bon' still remains unknown. This is also corroborated by Waddell.<sup>1</sup> In dictionaries is not found the meaning of the word Bon, simply a vague account of this religion is given.

In his 'A Tibetan-English Dictionary'<sup>2</sup> S. C. Das writes that "Bon is the ancient religion of Tibet which was fetishism, demon-worship and propitiation by means of incantation. The word Chos which ordinarily means religion is used as antithesis to Bon. Bon signifies the kind of Shamanism which was followed by Tibetans before the introduction of Buddhism and in certain parts still extant". Jaschke<sup>3</sup> holds the view that Bon is the name of the early religion of Tibet, concerning which but very imperfect accounts are existing; so much is certain that sorcery was the principle feature of it.

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1. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. XXXII, 333.

2. P. 879.

3. A Tibetan-English Dictionary-P, 372.

When Buddhism became the religion of State, the former was considered heretical and condemnable and Lha-cos and bon-cos, or shorter cos and bon, were placed in opposition, as with us Christianity and Paganism ; at the present time, both of them seem to exist peacefully side by side, and the primitive religion has not only numerous adherents and convents in C (Central Tibet) ; but manifold traces of it may be found still in the creed of the Tibetan of today". H Hoffmann<sup>1</sup> writes that "origin of the word 'Bon' to describe it lost in the past, and it is not readily definable, but in all probability once referred to the conjuring of the gods by magic formulas".

Rockhill observes<sup>2</sup> that "Mr. Brain Hodgson connects it with the primitive Turanian superstitions and the doctrines of Caivism 'but' he adds, in the Himalayas even the Bon-po priests themselves can tell nothing of the origin of their belief". He<sup>3</sup> further observes that "the word Bon-po is unquestionably derived from Punnya. one of the name of the Swastikas or worshippers of the mystic cross swastic, which in Tibetan is called "gyungdrung".

It would not be irrelevant to point out in this context that the word 'Bon' signifying seed, usually found in the scriptures with the word 'Sa' (ground) shows some affinity with the word vija, the Sanskrit word frequently employed in the Indian Tanticism in a symbolic sense of the cult.

Bon, the earliest religion of Tibet, was, according to early writings, founded by Gshen-rab or "Gshen-rab mi-bo or Gshan-rab, the man".<sup>4</sup> Opinions differ as to the time, place and life of Gshen. Some followers of Bon-religion (Bon-pos) maintain that he appeared some 1055 years before Buddha, while others claim that he was a contemporary of Buddha.

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1. The Religions of Tibet, P-14.

2. The Life of Buddha, P-206.

3. Ibid, P-206.

4 According to Hoffmann (The Religions of Tibet, P-85)-the word Gshen-rab itself is not really a name at all, but a descriptive appellation meaning the most excellent of the Shamans (Gshen Priest) something of which, the Bon-pos always remain aware.

There are also some others who hold that he was an incarnation of Buddha. Contrary to this is the claim that he was an incarnation of ardent Buddhist teacher who subsequently opposed Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> According to some non-Bon-po Tibetan historians<sup>2</sup> Gshen-rab was most probably a contemporary of King Pute-Kong- yal, son of King Gri-Gun-tsen-po of Tibet, while others<sup>3</sup> maintain that he appeared at the time of the sixth successor (6th king of the lineage) of King Nyakhri-tsen-po and was known as king Khri-lde-tsen-po. But it should be noted here that the name of the 6th king was Dag-khri-tsen-po (or Shril-khri-tsen-po) and not Khri-lde-tsen-po as mentioned above.

The followers of the Bon religion ( Bon-pos ) agree that Gshen-rab was born in Ol-mo-lung-ring valley of Zhang-Zhung country. Zhang-Zhung is identified with Guge, one of the three districts of Nga-ri province of Tibet. It lies on the other side of the Indo-Tibetan border. Some Buddhist Tibetan historians,<sup>4</sup> however, maintain that Gshen-rab was born in Central Tibet at a place called Am-shod-on-it still lacks identification.

Gshen-rab who was born as the son of king Thod-kar and queen Yo-chhi-rgyal-zhed of Guge was married to Hos-za rgyal-med. He had sons and daughters. He could control the spirits under his power and exhibit miracles. He had the fore-knowledge and also could prophesy. He preached in his own way the rituals of the gods which subsequently became the Bon of Gshen-rab.

From the gZer-myig<sup>5</sup> ( Kpey memory ) we learn that the sons became the disciples of the father Gshen-rab and helped much in propagating the teachings. In their early youth the sons who were very learned and wise used to hold discussions with their father on simple matters, such as the mystic-etymological interpretation of

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1. Tibet : A Political History by Tsepon W. D. Shakapa, P 13.
  2. Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682), Sod-nam-gya-tshan (1270-1312), Dph-bo-gtsug-lag-preng-ba (1503-1565).
  3. Thos-kvan-chhos-kyinima chhos-kyi-dorje, (1680-1736), Gig-tongc-npo.
  4. Thos-kvan-chhos-kyi-nima ( Chhos-kyi-Dorje ) (1680-1736) and Jig-ten-gam-po (1143-1217).
  5. Chapter, VIII.

names, a pastime very popular in Tibet. In this case the names are those of Gshen-rab, of his parents, of his palace, and so on. And from there the discussions proceed over the five moral poisons and various questions of Bon cosmology to the metaphysical heights of the doctrine of Shun-yata or Voidness.<sup>1</sup>

There are many sects among the followers of Bon ( Bon-pos ) in Tibet. Of them two are mostly well-known—the Bon-chhal-nag the ( Black Bon ), the original Bon and the Bon-chhal-kar with Bon-terma ( White Bon and treasured Bon ), the transformed Bon.

According to some non-Bon-po historians<sup>2</sup> when Gshen-rab was only twelve years old, he was taken away by the demon and was with them for long twelve years. But when he came back he could tell the whereabouts of the spirits as also which kinds of offerings would be beneficial to the people. He pointed out to the people the way of performing such rituals which gradually developed into a ritualistic system, and people respected him as a great teacher. It is to be seen that rituals were chiefly concerned with the way of making offerings to the worldly gods ( mostly local spirits ), taming the evil spirits, subduing the enemies ( by black magics, etc ), curing illness, predicting and displaying minor miracles and the like. They did not refer to any kind of philosophy or religion. Such was the actual state of Bon of Gshen-rab, which is commonly known as Bon-Chal-nag ( black Bon ).

The Bon-pos ( adherents of Bon ) assert that Bon was first started by Gshen-rab himself when he visited Tibet, but preached there only a part of Bon-chhal-nag ( black Bon ). Later on, his followers preached extensively and translated from Zhang and Tazig into Tibetan. According to Hoffmann,<sup>3</sup> the two language names ( Zhang and Tazig ) are really one and the same. He further observes that 'the Zhang-

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1. The Religions of Tibet, Hoffmann, P-89.

2. Thos-kyan-chhos-kyi-nima (Chhos-kyi-Dorje) (1680-1736), Jig-ten-gon-po (1143-1217).

3. The Religions of Tibet, P. 109.

Zhung tongue is obviously intended to serve the Bon religion as Sanskrit serves Buddhism and the supplementary Zhang-Zhung title is intended both to increase the authority of the texts and to vouch for its authenticity.'

With the gradual spread of Buddhism in Tibet the Bon-pos ( adherents of Bon ) lost their popularity and influence among the people. They were further persecuted. In order to make Bon a strong and meaningful doctrine, they transformed many Buddhist texts as Bonism for the benefit of the future Bon disciples. They also produced a number of works. They deal mainly with meditational practices, rituals, theology and philosophy. They are but 'wholesale plagiarism of Buddhist Canonical works' and that is why they fail to give us the true nature of Bon religion.

King Khri-srong-lde-btsen ( 755-797 A D. ) is regarded by the Tibetans as an incarnation of Manjusri even today. He received a strong religious impulse for Buddhism from his mother, the Chinese princess, who was a devout Buddhist. His rule made the zenith of Tibetan power and the affirmation of Buddhism as the Chief religion of the State. But he found the existence of Bon being still a creed in Tibet.

There were thus many followers of Bon with their sorcery, exorcism, enchantment and devil-dancing. He had even Bon officials. He wanted Buddhism strike deep roots in Tibetan soil and flourished as an indigenous mode of religion and philosophical thoughts. So he attempted to overthrow Bonism and ruthlessly persecuted the Bon-pos ( adherents of Bon ). But his attempt did not meet with desired success.

He then issued a proclamation, enjoining all the followers of Bon in Tibet to give up their faith and adopt Buddhism, His minister Rgyal-bai-byang-chub further requested Rin-chen-mchog, the great Bon teacher to embrace Buddhism. But he stubbornly refused to yield to his request. At this the king became highly enraged and punished the teacher for his obduracy.

This, of course, created deep resentment and the consequence had been that Rin-chen-mchog became a more professed enemy of Buddhism further. Along with his followers and other Bonpos he composed many Buddhist texts secretly on the pattern of Buddhism and Hinduism with but few elements of original Bon so that Bon teachers would be in a position to offer their followers all that Buddhism could. And these writings he passed as genuine Bon scriptures.

It may be recalled here that the Nying-ma-pa, signifying the old ones, was then the original sect of Buddhism established by Padma-sambhava in Tibet. It proved more attractive to the people but was actually opposed by the followers of Bon. People suspected the genuineness of the books as Bon scriptures.

They believed that these works levelled up as authentic Bon scriptures were but plagiarism from Buddhist works. They were, therefore, the transformed texts of Buddhism. The Bon scriptures were rather the texts of the 'Earlier translated Buddhism' of the Nying-ma-pa sect whose teachings were then prevalent. This created deep resentment among the believers in Buddhism.

The king, the royal protector of Buddhism, having been apprised of it, felt that the prestige of Buddhism would suffer a setback there, wanted to suppress the Bon religion. He further issued an order to punish too severely the Bon teachers because of their conversion of the sublime teachings of Buddhism into the Bon scriptures.

Thus ensued an open conflict with the Bon-pos for the first time in the Tibetan history, during his reign. The Bonpos did not yield. They offered active resistance.

Many of the Bon-pos were killed as also a few Bon teachers were beheaded. Such severe measures notwithstanding, the transformation of the works continued secretly by the remaining Bon teachers. But through the terror or severe punishment, they con-



cealed the scriptures, i.e., the transformed texts in the caves of the various places. They are thus known as the Bon-gter-ma ('The Hidden Treasures of the Bon-pos').

These texts, of course, include the well-known Prajnaparamitas, rDzogs-pa chen-po (Mahasandhi) and the like, and there are many texts which have no difference excepting technical terms and pattern—this is the "Bon-chal-kar" (or Bon-kar-White Bon), the transformed Bon.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be seen how the king suppressed the Bon religion and persecuted the non-believers in Buddhism. He is highly glorified by the Tibetan historians for its unique success in the making of Buddhism the State religion by suppression of the Bon religion. The Rgy l-rabs-bon-gyi-hbyung-gnas, a Bon chronicle, gives us an account of the downfall of the Bon religion under king Khri-srong-lde-btsen.<sup>2</sup>

It would not be irrelevant to point out in this context that opinion differs among the Tibetologists like Tucci Snellgrove, Hoffmann and others about the relation between the Nying-ma-pa and Bon of Gshen-rab. Some hold that there are many aspects of the Nying-ma-pa doctrine which, it seems, might have come from Bon or the Bon influenced the Nying-ma-pa doctrine.

We do not like to enter into a polemic here. But it may, however, be said that it was Nying-ma-pa sect which opposed the Bon and defeated the Bon teachers in the debate and the king thereafter launched his offensive against the followers of Bon. King Khri-srong-lde-btsen is rightly looked upon as the great royal patron of Buddhism.

Indeed, it was through his sincere efforts that Buddhism came to occupy the prominent position it did in Tibet, because of his ruth-

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1. J. A. S. B. 1881. P. 19.

2. A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Ptii, 80n.

less suppression of the Bon-pos, the strong adversaries of Buddhism. He was thus an avowed enemy of Bon and did his utmost to uproot it. His overthrow of Bon was not, however, fully effective, for some of the Bon teachers advocated Bonism surreptitiously.

Thus the prohibition of Bon and expulsion of the adherents of Bon by the king could not deter the zeal of the Bon teachers to carry on the work of transformation and adaptation of Bon texts. This, however, went on secretly. It would be pertinent to point out in this connection what Tucci writes, "the Bon-po priestly class could not set back while its prerogatives and prestige were being curtailed, and they were soon joined as allies on the pretext of defending the old traditions, by those aristocrats who resented the power of the king and of the noble families supporting him. Their resistance smouldered for a long time before it exploded little more than half a century after Thrisong detsen's edict which proclaimed Buddhism the State religion".<sup>1</sup>

Buddhism fell on evil days with the king Glang-dar-ma's accession to the throne. "His reign was marked by his undoing of everything his predecessors had done. He and his ministers did their best to destroy Buddhism and the customs of Tibet". He was described as "Devil in his role of 'Julion the Apostate' of Buddhism". Buddhism thus lost the royal patronage. Its followers were ruthlessly persecuted and furthermore the king wanted to have the old religion (Bon) revived. This gave an opportunity to the Bon teachers to enrich their religious scriptures further.

From the Chhos-kyi-rdo-rjes—grub-mthah-shel-gyi-melong,<sup>2</sup> we learn the subsequent overthrow of Buddhism, a man named Gahedrgur-klu-dgah of Tsang-pya who converted many Buddhist texts as Bon at Dar-yul-dro-lag, a place of Bon pilgrimage. He transformed the words (technical terms) as also the materials differently from

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1. Tibet : The Land of Snow, G-Tucci, 29.

2. A rough and abridged translation of the Chpt. IX, see also J. A. S. B., 1881, p. 199 ff.

many Buddhist texts. Even the names of several most widely known Buddhist works were changed. For instances, the detailed (or long) Prajnaparamita (Yum-chhen) came to be known as Kham-chhen, the Nyi-shu-nga-pa in 25 chapters as Kham-chhung, the Gtan-lad-bad-pa as Bon-mdo, the five classes of Mantras (gZungs-sde-lnga-Panca-dharani) as Klu-hbum-dkar-na-khra-gsun. These writings he hid in the rocks of the Mtsho-linga-hdren-chhung. Afterwards the texts which had been hidden were discovered as if they were chance discoveries.

Similar conversion of texts was subsequently made by Bon-zhigig of Khyung-po and others. The Bon of these transformed ones—earlier, middle and latter—are called 'Chhla-dkar' (white water) and 'Bon of effect'. In these texts, there are topics on impermanence of all things (anityata), deed (karma), (consequence phala), love (maitri), compassion (karuna), thought of enlightenment (bodhicitta) and six perfections (paramitas). Also there are peculiar substitutes for the five paths (ways of emancipation), ten stages (dasabhumis), the three divine bodies (trikaya), Tantric measures, initiation and meditation; vows, consecration, burnt offering (home), offering diagrams (mandalas), rites for the dead, arhat, bodhisattva, sunyata, Tathagata Buddha, Vairacana, Sariputra, Maudgalyayana, etc. Many kinds are to be found therein—some resembling Buddhism and others not.

From the above it is apparent, that the Bon "scriptures" as actually available, are nothing but plagiarisms of Buddhist works. The Bon-pos borrowed too freely from the vast stores of the Buddhist works. They created their own scriptures by mere imitations of Buddhist writings, like the Buddhist they codified their secret works in two collections - the Kanjur and the Tanjur. The former contains the authoritative utterances of Gshen-rab, while the latter deals with the explanatory and expository works. The Kanjur comprised hundred and forty volumes and the Tanjur hundred and sixty as against hundred and six or hundred and eight and two hundred and twenty-five volumes of the Buddhists.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Roerich-Traits inermost Asia, New Haven, 1931 P, 357.

The Bon-pos founded a number of monasteries in the Buddhist fashion for the residence of the monks "who lived according to rules of an order along the lines of the Buddhist Order, and went in for philosophy, mysticism and new fashioned magic, religious festivals and the carrying around the sacred objects in procession".<sup>1</sup> The Bon-pos used the holy objects in the opposite direction, instead of clockwise direction, as in Buddhism. Their Swastika, the mystic cross called in Tibetan Gyung-drung 'and did not turn dextrously as that of Lamaism do, but symmetrically, to left instead of right'. They used to chant the famous formula, 'Om Matri Muye Sale du' in place of the sacred Avalokitesvara formula of the Lamas 'Om Mani Padme hum'. Rockhill writes<sup>2</sup> that "the Buddhist influence is so manifest in it (Bon) that is impossible to consider it as giving us very correct ideas of what this religion was before it came to contact with Buddhism."

The Bon-po religion has repeatedly been said to be the same as that of the Tao-sse and it is remarkable that these two religions have drawn so largely from Buddhist ideas that they have nearly identified themselves with it. "The Bon-pos had no literature of their own. They took over the Buddhist excerpts and symbols on a vast scale, thereby creating a literature and an iconography very similar to those of the Buddhists as to be almost indistinguishable to casual observers."

In the G-Zer-myig is given a broad survey of the world of gods, i.e., the pantheon of the Bon-pos. The pantheon of the Bon-pos has been very much enlarged like that of Lamaism. Hoffmann writes<sup>3</sup> that "...in addition to the pantheon of the later Bon religion created primarily in Zhang-zhung under Western Asiatic and Buddhist influence, the old, so to speak anonymous gods of the animist, shamanist era have remained alive in the minds of the common people. The highest principle of this religion and at the same time the transcendental Urguru from which all enlightened understanding comes, and

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1. The Religions of Tibet, PP. 97, 98.
  2. The Life of Buddha, P. 206.
  3. The Religions of Tibet, P. 101.

which in type is similar to the 'Adibuddha of many of the Vajrayana system is called Kun-tu-bzang-po, in Sanskrit Samantabhadra, in other words, it bears the same name as the Adibuddha of Padmaism, to which, of course, the syncretic Bon religion bears a close resemblance. Philosophically considered, this Samantabhadra represents the ultimate absolute, the Dharmakaya, called here the Bon substance (Bon-sku) a concept which despite many positive characteristics (conscious bliss) seems to be largely the same as the Mahayana 'Voidness'."

In the Bon pantheon Bon-sku-kun-tu-bzang-po is the supreme deity and Bon-skyong (Dharmapala), a guardian deity, a nine headed enormity,<sup>1</sup> as his sister Srid-pai's rgyal-mo who has three eyes and six arms is taken to be Sri devi ( Tara ) of Lamaism. There are numerous dreadful gods with human or animal heads. There are further other gods with heads of various animals, such as, pigs, horses, bulls and tigers. Those apart, there is a special group of gods dwelling on the tops of the sacred mountain Kailāsa.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note in this connection that in the Bon-pantheon, goddesses take precedence over the gods and the female priests are regarded superior to the male priests in this religion.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, the Bon-pos have monasteries of their own in which there are many images of gods, saints and demons like those of Lamaism, but with different names thereof.

Sacrifices of animals and even human beings and such other practices were openly indulged in and they formed an important part in the religious observances of the Bon.<sup>4</sup> A fair idea about the original character of the Bon-po rituals can be had from the ancient manuscripts ( 9th or 10th cent. A. D. ) where the Tibetan rites are described.<sup>5</sup> "The officers are assembled once every year for the lesser

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1. S C. Das, J.B.T.S., I, iii, appendix I, 1881, P. 197.

2. Hoffmann, The Religions of Tibet, P 104

3. J. B. T. S. I, iii, appendix I, and Journal of the Asiatic Society, 1881, 197n.

4. Cf. J. A. S. B. 1881, 198n.

5. R. A. Stein, Tibetan Civilization, P. 25.

oath of fealty. They sacrifice sheep, dogs, and monkeys, first breaking their legs and then killing them, afterwards exposing their intestines and cutting them into pieces. The sorcerers having been summoned, they call on the gods of heaven and earth, of the mountains and rivers, of the sun, moon, stars, and planets, saying : "should your hearts become changed, and your thoughts disloyal, the gods will see clearly and make you like these sheep and dogs." Every three years there is a grand ceremony during which all are assembled in the middle of the night on a raised altar, on which are spread savoury meat. The victims sacrificed as men, horses, oxen and asses, and prayers are offered in this form : "Do you all with one heart and united strength cherish our native country. The gods of heaven, and the spirit of the earth will both know your thoughts and if you break this oath they will cause your bodies to be cut into pieces like unto these victims."<sup>1</sup>

As already observed, the offering up of the animal sacrifices was the most important feature of the old Bon religion. When Buddhism became the state religion the Bon-pos were prohibited to indulge further in such practices. But this form of sacrifice could not be entirely eradicated because of the deep conviction of the people. Substitutes for living animals were sacrificed instead representations of yaks and sheep, and wooden curving of deer heads.

We have further from the gZer-myig <sup>2</sup> 'the description of a human sacrifice for the recovery of a sick prince. It writes : 'the soothsayer seized the man by the feet whilst the Bon-po took his hands. The black Han-dha then cut open the life orifice and tore out the heart. The two, the soothsayer and the Bon-po, then scattered out the blood and flesh of the victim to the four corners of the heaven'. It should be mentioned that with the light of Indian civilization introduced by Buddhism the adherents of Bon were obliged to give up their human and animal sacrifices, and instead use little statue made

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1. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1880, P. 441.

2. Hoffmann, The Religions of Tibet, P. 22, c/ Albert Tafel, Meine Tibetreise, Vol. II, PP. 153, 198, Notes-2, 232, 236.

of dough containing barley-flower butter and water. "Bonpos were now prohibited making human and other bloody sacrifice as was their wont; and hence is said to have arisen the practice of offering images of men and animals made of dough." Its mythology is exceedingly complicated. It enumerates an endless number of spirits or divinities, all hostile to man and it is necessary to propitiate them by continual sacrifices. Even down to the present day some Bon practices still exist in parts of Eastern and South-Eastern Tibet; the most populous part of the country. Dr. Hoffmann<sup>1</sup> writes 'that followers of Bon religion are still using the blood of cocks to conjure peace'.

According to Chos-kyi-ni-ma, a famous Tibetan scholar, there are three stages in the history of Bon religion. The first stage, i. e. the earliest stage is known as the Hdsol-Bon (wild-Bon). It started from the time of Gnah-khri-btsan-po, the first of the early legendary kings of Tibet of the Bon period, and continued upto the reign of king Khri-sde-btsan-po. From Bu-ston<sup>2</sup> we also learn "the worship called Mdol-bon was spread" upto the time of Khri-sde-btsan-po. The second stage called the Hkhyar-bon (corrupt bon) began in the reign of king Dri-gum-btsan-po and extended upto the time of the introduction of Buddhism under the king Srong-btsan-gam-po who is regarded as the first king in whose reign Buddhism first succeeded in penetrating into Tibet. The third stage the final stage named Bsgyur-bon (a reformed bon) covered the period from the reign of king Srong-btsan-gam-po down to Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419AD) who "reorganised Atisha's reformed sect and altered its title to the Virtuous Order", or Gelug-pa. This sect soon eclipsed all the others; and in five generations it obtained the preist-kingship of Tibetan, which it still retains to this day."<sup>3</sup>

Further, "from the view point of modern Tibet, no one can be more important in its history than Tsong-kha-pa." Lastly, it will be

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1. The Religions of Tibet, P. 22.

2. A History of Buddhism in India and Tibet, translated by Ober Miller Vol. II, P. 182.

3. Weddel, Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism, P. 38.

worth mentioning here that 'with the foundation of the reformed Yellow Church by Tsong-kha-pa in the fifteenth century, and its gradual development into the dominating spiritual and secular power in Tibet, the Bon-po found themselves increasingly restricted in their movement, and finally exposed to violent persecution.'"<sup>1</sup>

A study of the earlier stages of Bon religion Hkhyer Bon and Hdsol-Bon is indeed interesting as it helps us to understand the struggle between the new-coming Buddhism and Bon. But the original character of Bon cult cannot be obtained even from the second stage (Hkhyer Bon—corrupt Bon) which seems to have made ample use of the Saiva and the Sakta doctrines. The introduction of such peculiar form was necessitated with the death of the first king of Tibet.

'The Tibetan Bon-pos<sup>2</sup> were not sufficiently acquainted with the appropriate rites and therefore, had to bring in three Bon priests from the West, from Kashmir, Gilgit and Guge, one of them was possessed of the necessary knowledge. This man carried out an operation known as the 'Taming of the Dead' apparently with a magic knife. The rites in question are probably connected with the idea of preventing the dead from returning and harming the living i. e., they are obviously related to similar ceremonies such as can be met with amongst most primitive people.'

It is thus apparent that such rites were previously quite unknown in the Bon religion. They owed their origin to those Bon priests brought for the purpose, 'this stage of the Bon religion, called 'erroneous bon' were mixed up with the Saiva doctrine of the Tirthika."<sup>3</sup> These rites have since been used.

The Bon-pos, however, subsequently codified all the principal rites. They laid down '360 ways of death,' '4 ways of preparing graves and '81 ways of taming evils'. Unfortunately, only the names

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1. Hoffman, *The Religions of Tibet*, P. 99.

2. *Ibid*, P. 23.

3. J. A. S. B., 1881, P. 198.



of these texts have come down to us<sup>1</sup>. Like the second stage of the Bon [Hkhyer Bon—corrupt Bon] the third and the final stage of Bon [Bsgyur Bon-reformed Bon] also does not help us much in forming correct ideas about the original nature of Bon i. e., its first stage Hdsol Bon [wild Bon].

Thus we know very little about the original nature of the Bon religion because of dearth of positive evidence. Our knowledge of its actual nature is rather vague and fragmentary. Hoffmann<sup>2</sup> writes : “What the original Bon religion was like before it came into contact with Buddhism, but this is made difficult by the great dearth of authentic documentary evidence. In fact, actual documents from those early days are unknown, and they can hardly have existed in any case, because it was not until the first half of the seventh century that, under Buddhist influence, Tibet received a written language and a literature.” “The Buddhist influence”, observe Rockhill, “is so manifest in it [Bon] that it is impossible to consider it as giving us very correct ideas of what this religion was before it came in contact with Buddhism”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, F. A. Stein<sup>4</sup> says : “The history and characteristics of this religion [Bon] are still subject to considerable uncertainty at least as far as the early period is concerned.”

Let us now turn to the theory of Bon. There are many sections [sects] of Bon, such as southern, northern and central. We propose to give here in broad outline, the views advocated by the Bon Dbus-gter [“centre-treasured one”] which is the most widely spread sects. According to it there are four Yanas of “Bon of characteristic cause”, four Yanas of “Bon of effect”, “the Tantrayana”, and one Yana of “summit and supreme”.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE FOUR YANAS OF (CHARECTERISTIC CAUSE) :—

i] The Yana of god and man. According to it the followers of this Yana cannot realise the theories of the other Yanas. They have but

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1. J. A. S. B., Vol. 50, 1881, Pt I, P. 204.
  2. The Religions of Tibet. P. 15.
  3. The Life of Buddha, P. 206.
  4. Tibetan Civilization, P. 229.
  5. Yanas carry here the essence of theory.

attachment to the eight Bōns.<sup>1</sup> They keep the precepts of taking refuge perfectly as also observe the virtuous Bōn practices. Further, they depend on others for understanding the profound doctrines. According to this Yana fundamental teachings can be comprehended only with the aid of the preceptors. None can himself realise its truth. Proper guidance of the preceptor is absolutely necessary in this regard. It may compare favourably with the Buddhist conception of Sravakayana "which is meant for common monks aspiring for Arhata".

ii) The Yana of self realised Gshen. It has two aspects :—

- a) The Sravakayana - according to which external materials are true [real] and
- b) The Pratyekabuddhayana - according to which external materials are not true [real].

The principal views of the former are the wisdom of realisation of non-atman of person [Nirpudgalaman] and the rejection of the defilement of misery [Kleavntsi] and ten demeritorious actions [dasaakusalapatha], while those of the latter realisation of non-atman of person [nirpudgalatman] and the emptiness of both grasper and to be grasped [subject and object] as also observing virtuous vows of body, speech and mind. This Yana agrees fairly with the Buddhist Sravakayanas and Pratyekabuddhayanas. We have already seen the Sravakayana in Buddhism is meant for ordinary monks longing for arhatship. But the Pratyekabuddhayana is meant only for those monks who like rhinoceros live a lonely life in the forest and obtain enlightenment without the assistance of a teacher.

iii) The third Yana known as the Yana of "Compassionate mind" or 'Sems-tsam' [Yogacarin] has two aspects :—

- a) Those who accept the organs of the senses pure or true.
- b) Those who accept the organs of the senses as illusory.

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1. They are the eight worldly doctrines or principles viz :—

1) Gain (labha), 2) Loss (alabha) 3) name (yasa) 4) bad name (ayasa) 5) Scandal (ninda) 6) praise (prasamsa) 7) happiness (sukha) 8) misery (duhkha).

It compares favourably with the Buddhist conception of Yogacara which "denies the existence of the phenomena, but yet, in a certain sense, recognises an existence containing thought and consciousness".

iv) The fourth Yana known as the Yana of Swastikasattvayana<sup>1</sup> or Madhyamika. It has two aspects :—

- a) Svatantrika Madhyamika and
- b) Prasangika Madhyamika corresponding to those of the Buddhist Madhyamika system.

#### THE FOUR YENAS OF EFFECT :—

- i) The Yana of premeaval Gshen, pure action [Kriyayoga]. It compares to the Buddhist Kriyatantra which deals with the constructions of the temples, buildings and images of gods, etc.
- ii) The Yana of fulfilled fore-knowledge [Carya-yana]. It fairly answers to the Buddhist Caryatantra which advocates the practical cult. The aforesaid two Yanas are called the "Outer Tantra".
- iii) The Yana of perfect development [Visualisation] or "primeaval Gshen". It agrees fairly with the Buddhist Yogatantra dealing with the practical Yoga.
- iv) The Yana of great meaningful and fully perfected or the "Great primeaval Gshen". It corresponds to the Buddhist Anuttarayogatantra dealing with higher mysticism.<sup>2</sup>

The final one [the ninth Yana] is called the Summit and Supreme Yana, the Dzogs-pa-chen-po [Mahasampanna]. It corresponds to the Dzogs-pa-chen-po of the Tibetan Nying-ma-pa sect of Buddhism.<sup>3</sup>

The last three Yanas [seventh, eighth and ninth] are called the three "Inner Tantras".

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- 1. It stands for Bodhisattva.
  - 2. C/o Winternitz, A history of Indian Literature, Vol. II, P. 389.
  - 3. The dzogs-chen at least in shape is similar to the Nying-ma-pa, Dzogs-Pachen the ninth and highest doctrine. It is that is why some maintains the Nying-ma-pa has been influenced by Bon because of Dzogs-chen and the like.

It is thus evident that all the Bon doctrines were fully designed after the model of Buddhism. It is interesting to note here that some Tibetan scholars maintain that the nine stages of the theory of Bon are embedded in the Buddhist three Yanas viz., Sravakayana, the second [Yana of self-realisation of Gshen-rab] is Pratyekabuddhayana, the first Yana [the Yana of gods and man] is Sravakayana, and the remaining Yanas [3-9] are Mahayana.<sup>1</sup>

In fine, from the sense of the Tibetan word, it may be said that Bon was originally an aspect of Tantra cult. It was amalgamated into the Buddhist esoteric faith later on. Several other reformed Tibetan sects were further brought forth thereon.

Lastly, it may be observed that "the development of Buddhism in Tibet, however, can be fitfully traced, mostly through the story of its conflict with Bon till its reform and final establishment by Atisha in 11th century."<sup>2</sup>

Further, "Bon may have, done," writes R. A. Stein,<sup>3</sup> more than has hitherto been supposed towards preparing the ground for the adoption of Buddhism, by asimilating Indo-Iranian elements before Lamaism did so."

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1. For details vide the Bon section of the book "History and Religious History" of Reader No. 9 compiled by the the Text book committee, Dharamsala, P. 976.
  2. Sukumar Dutt, Buddhism in East Asia, P. 203.
  3. Tibetan Civilization, P. 236.

# Lamaism in Tibet

## A Brief Survey

B. Ghosh.

There is no denying the fact that Buddhism spread not only in India but also in the remote countries of the world from caucasus to Kamchatka and Buryat Siberia to Ladakh, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal and played an important part in the religious life of the people of those countries for several centuries. Before the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, Bon was the sole religion there till the 7th century A. D. In this context it may be pointed out here that, Bon was a primitive type of religion with the dominating Shamaism, a kind of sorcery working on psychic levels, a form of nature worship with sacrifice to vaguely defined gods of earth and sky.

The seventh century A. D. (569-649 A. D. or 617-697 A. D.) witnessed the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet during the reign of king Srong Tsan Gam po, his two wives, one Chinese Kong-jo revered as the incarnation of goddess Tara (Tibetan Sgrol-ma—Dolma) and the other Nepalese Princess Bhrikuti Devi said to be the incarnation of goddess Sarasvati. They prevailed upon the king to introduce Saddharma i.e., Buddhism in Tibet, which in course of time became the State religion of Tibet. The king thus became very famous in the history of Tibet and was known as Chos-rgyal—Dharmaraja.

It is pertinent to point out here to a great event in the Tibetan history during his reign. One of his celebrated ministers Thomi Sambota (The noble Bhota—as Tibetan say) was sent to India with sixteen other scholars for studying the art and sciences of Brahmanas as well as the Buddhists. He along with the others studied Devanagari alphabets and literature in Kashmir and at Nalanda University under the guidance of great Indian Scholar Devavit Singha. He then

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\*It was after this Tibetan Priestly title of "Lama" (or "Aryan") that the Buddhism of Tibet has been called by European "Lamaism"- L. A. Wadell Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism, Preface P. VII.

invented the modern Tibetan alphabets modelling them after Devanagari letters, following the Tibetan phonetic system. He with his companions undertook one of the greatest literary ventures of mankind which continued for a thousand years, upto the very end of 17th century A. D.

We are told that Buddhism introduced by king Srong Tsan Gampo was not the pure form of Buddhism but was an admixture of Buddhism and Shamanism prevalent in the Himalayan regions. But Buddhism which was introduced in Tibet by Padmasambhava (Pad-ma-jung-nay) was Mahayana with elements of Tantricism therein. Padma Sambhava who was responsible for introduction of Buddhism in Tibet was invited by king Thi Srong de Tsan during the second half of the 8th century A. D. He hailed from Udiyana or Swat valley. He is still worshipped as second Buddha and his image finds place by the side of Buddha in some parts of Tibet. In Sikkim and Bhutan his image occupies the predominant place in Lhakhang or temple and Gompas or monasteries.

During his reign king Ral-pa-chen (9th century A. D) organised the Buddhist Sangha and erected many temples and monasteries. He also invited several Indian Pandits for translating religious books into Tibetan. Tibetan monks were sent to India for studying Sanskrit literature and Buddhist philosophy. His brother Lang Dar-ma jealous of the king killed him and mounted the throne. Under his reign religious practices were almost done away with and there was no peace in the country.

Not till the arrival of Atisha Dipankara Srijnana, a Bengalee monk of the 11 century ( C 910-1054 A. D. ), the condition of Buddhism in Tibet was not improved it remained practically in a moriband condition. Dipankara was highly famous for his learning, renunciation and wide travel. He also brought with him Tantrik Buddhism and reformed Buddhism in Tibet. As a consequence originated a new sect known as Ka-dampa sect.

It may be noted that two eminent Tibetan saints Marpa and his famous disciple Milarepa were born during the time. Milarepa is called cotton-clad Mila because of his living on the bare hill side in biting cold with a single cotton garment. At first Milarepa was a wizard. He then turned a saint then afterwards a renowned poet. He composed thousands of devotional songs known as gurbum in Tibetan language. These songs had made him most famous in Tibet. The sect to which Milarepa and his preceptor Marpa belonged was known as Kagyupa sect. This sect indeed originated with them.

In A. D. 1270, the great Mongol emperor Kublai Khan the grand son of mighty Chengis Khan invited Sakyapa Lama and delegated the sovereignty of Tibet to him and himself accepted Buddhism. This was the beginning of rule of Preist king in Tibet, the first phase of which lasted from 1270 A. D. to 1345. During this period many eminent Indian teachers were invited to Tibet. The King Chang-chub gyal thsen did away with the Sakyapa lineage and established the second line of monarch known as Sitya dynasty. Its lineage lasted for three centuries but, however, Mongol chieftain Ghushri Khan subdued the last king of this dynasty.

In 1351 A. D. a noble man was born in the valley of Onion (tsong) Amdo in North East Tibet popularly known as Tsong Khapa, Je Rinpoche, Lobsang dakpa (Sumatikirti), he was the founder of yellow-hat sect (Gelukpa). He reformed the monasteries and prohibited the monks to marry or to drink wine. He also founded three big monasteries Gaden, Sera and Drepung—known as the 'Three Pillars of the State'. Ganden dugpa the successor of Tsong Khapa was said to be the starting point of the system of reincarnation. In 1474 his spirit was thought to have passed into an infant born three years later.

The Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatsho (Punyasagara) is remembered as having spread the Buddhist teaching in Mongolia. He received the title of Dalai Lama Vajradhara from the devoted Mongol chief Altan Khan. It may be noted there the Dalai which is a Mongol term means "as big as ocean".

Among the Dalai Lamas the fifth the Great had a special place of honour. He invited the Mongol to assist him to subdue the adherents of the Red hat sect. The Mongols destroyed the Red hat and handed over the sovereignty of Tibet to the Dalai Lama. He built the Great Potala palace in Lhasa.

It is said that the Dalai Lama is the incarnation of Avalokiteswara - the Lord of mercy and uptill now there have been fourteen reincarnations of the Dalai Lama. He is also the head of Religious as well as temporal affairs.

The Panchen Rinpoche - The Mahapandita Maharatna has no political power. He is regarded as an incarnation of Amitabha Buddha and possesses great spiritual powers.

Various schools of Tibetan Buddhism originated by the 16th century A. D. The Gelugpa or yellow sect is the established Lamaist Sangha, next comes Kagypa sect founded by Marpa in 11th century A. D. There is another sect called Sakyapa. The last of the major schools in the Nying Mapa the older unreformed Red-hat sect of Padma Sambhava. The adherents of this sect are opposed to the monastic practices followed by the Gelugpa sect. They justify the practices on the Hidden revelation gterma claimed to be the esoteric teaching of Padma Sambhava. Apart from this sect there lies the primitive religion of Tibet known as Bon, influenced considerably by Buddhism, is extant in some parts of Tibet.





*His Holiness The Dalai Lama offering scarf to the image of Padmasambhava.*



*His Holiness The Dalai Lama flanked by H.E. the Governor of Sikkim/President SRITOBBS,  
Director, Dr. A. C. Banerjee and others*

# Function and Activities

OF

## SRIT OBS

HIS HOLINESS THE XIV DALAI LAMA'S VISIT TO THE  
SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY

It is after more than two decades of the foundation-laying ceremony of SRIT by H. H. the Dalai Lama on 10 February 1957, H. H. while visiting Sikkim paid a kind visit to Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, on 21st October, 1981. We are all most grateful to H. H. for having consented to visit the Institute and to bless it inspite of His various engagements here. It is indeed an unique and memorial event in the history of the Institute

H. E. the Governor of Sikkim Shri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, President of the Institute received him, Sarbang ( procession of monks carrying banners, incense and musical instruments ) greeted His Holiness with the melody of gyaling ( monastic clarionet ), ragdung ( monastic brass trumpet ). Hon'ble Minister, Venerable Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche, Ecclesiastical and Culture, Govt. of Sikkim, Dr. A. C. Banerjee, Director : SRIT, Yarpa T. S. Gyaltshen, and Lama scholars and other members of the staff welcomed H. H. with the offer of Khadas ( scarves ).

The Director conducted the Governor and H. H. to the General Library Hall tastefully decorated with flowers and ancient exquisite thankas (painted scrolls), when the audience stood up in the honour of His Holines.

His Holiness was then shown round the Institute by President : SRIT., the Director and Yarpa T. S. Gyaltshen.

His Holiness then offered Khada (scarf) to the Silver image of Bodhisattva Manjushri.

H. E. the Governor of Sikkim/Presidnet : SRIT..offered ku-sung-tuk-ten (representing body, speech and mind of Buddha).

Speaking on the occasion the President SRIT thanked H. H. for gracing the Institute with His presence and recalled His Holines's foundation-laying ceremony as also his contribution to this Institute. He appreciated the noble sentiments which guided the philosophy of H. H. in search of peace and harmony. His message of universal love and compassion is vital, the Governor said, in this twentieth century than ever before. He then requested H. H. to give his message.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama thanked H. E. for his welcome, Lamas and other respected guests for attending the function. He said that he was happy to come here and visit the Institute, for the first time since he laid the foundation stone of the Institute. The Institute had developed well. He further thanked the President for his presentation of the Institute's Publications.

He related that in ancient times Buddhist lore had been preserved at the monasteries like Nalanda Vikramashila etc., from where this ancient learning was widely propagated.

H. H. praised the over-all progress of the Institute within so short a period and emphahaised that this Institute should play a very important role for the propagation of wisdom and understanding. He then prayed that sentient beings might obtain vision of new wisdom through the Institute and develop compassion, loving kindness and most benevolent wish towards other beings.

His Holiness presented seven books on Buddhism and allied subjects to the Institute Library.

The ceremony was rounded up with light refreshments.

#### VISIT OF UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION

Shrimati Sheila Kaul, Union Minister of State for Education, paid a visit to this Institute on 23rd October 1981 accompanied by

H. E. the Governor of Sikkim/President : SRIT. She was given warm reception on her arrival to the Institute by the Director, Dr. A. C. Banerjee and other members of the staff.

She was shown xylographs, manuscripts and other art objects of the Institute. The President presented her the complimentary copies of the Publications of the Institute. She had a talk with President and the Director about the possibility of further development of study and research in various fields of Buddhism and Tibetology. She expressed her satisfaction over the good work done by this Institute and wrote her commendatory comment in the VIP Book.

#### THE SAD PASSING OF HIS HOLINESS THE GYALWA KARMAPA RANGJUNG RIGPE DORJE, 16th INCARNATE

It is with the greatest sense of sorrow, grief and distress that we record the sad death of His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa, the 16th incarnated Lama of Rumtek which occurred at Chicago on 6th November, 1981.

A dearly beloved figure as saintly as he was of good cheer, our Governor (President) had become deeply attached to His Holiness whom he had visited several times at Rumtek.

The Governor and Chief Minister immediately sent condolence messages. The Government of India, the State Government extended all possible assistance in transport of the body from Chicago in U.S.A. to Rumtek in Sikkim, India.

Recently His Holiness had come to Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology to present 103 volumes of ancient Buddhist manuscript when a grand function was held to welcome him.

His passing is a great loss to Sikkim, the rest of India and to humanity at large as he preached and practised the precept of pristine purity of purpose in thought, word and deed. He was greatly respected by our President, Prime Minister and other leaders,

who all sent messages of deep condolence and heartfelt sympathy. The Prime Minister has donated three acres of land in Delhi for his shrine.

How beloved he was in the Heavens was manifested by a phenomenon at the time of his last Rites during his funeral on the 49th Day after his death on 20th December, at Rumtek.

In a clear blue sky a rainbow appeared just at the time the prayers were about to start and again when the funeral pyre was lit for the cremation. A rainbow never appears except in an overcast clouded sky heralding rain. This was thus an extraordinary occurrence.

Yet one more phenomenon was that while the body was being consumed by flames, the heart of His Holiness fell down unscathed by the flames. It is now being preserved in a casket at the Monastery.

Thousands of mourners had gathered at Rumtek for many days including many from foreign countries.

The XVI Gyalwa Karmapa Rang-Byung-Rig-Pai-rDor-rje was born in 1924 at Derge (sDe-dge) in Eastern Tibet. As with all the previous Karmapas, he was discovered through a letter left by his predecessor predicting the place and time of birth of his next incarnation. From his very boyhood he displayed immense natural insight and received the complete meditational training prescribed for Karma Kagyu. His Holiness was one of the first to see clearly the implication of the Chinese movements in Tibet. He escaped to India through Bhutan in 1958 bringing with him large number of followers along with many precious ritual objects and valuable texts.

In 1962 at the invitation of the Royal family of Sikkim he founded Dharma Chakra Vihara, at Rumtek near Gangtok, Sikkim, present seat of the late Holiness.

In Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim apart, His Holiness had established more than hundred religious centres in various parts of the world.

H.H. devoted his whole life and much of his thought and valuable time like a Kalyanamitra Bodhisattva to propagate Lord Buddha's message of loving kindness to all sentient beings for achieving peace and happiness among mankind on this earth.

It may be recalled in this context, that H.H. had presented a complete set of Tibetan Canonical Literature Kanjur (bKah-hgyur, Derge Edition), consisting of 103 volumes as also 45 other valuable Tantric texts to Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology on 24th February, 1981. He also promised to present a complete set of Tanjur (bstan-hgyur, Derge Edition) to the Institute.

His Holiness used to take great interest in the affairs of this Institute.

H. H. had been suffering seriously for a long time and at the advice of his physician was taken abroad for proper treatment. But unfortunately, despite all possible medical treatment, he passed away in Chicago (U.S.A.) at 8 A.M. on 6th November, 1981. Immediately on receipt of this sad news the Institute sent a telegram expressing profound sense of grief at the passing away of His Holiness.

The President ; SRIT., Director and the staff of SRIT offered Khadas (scarves) as a mark of respect to His memory to the mortal remains of His Holiness when it arrived at Libing Helipad at 1.30 P.M. on 10th November, 1981.

#### **OBSERVANCE OF LHABAB THUCHEN FESTIVAL**

Lha-babs-dus-chen (Lord Buddha's descent from the heaven) is one of the great festivals of Buddhists all over the world of Buddhism. With great pomp and grandeur it is also observed here in all the monasteries where Lamas and devout Buddhist offer butter lamps, incenses and khadas (scarves) to the deities therein.

The Pali texts like the Atthasalini, Sammohavinodini and Manorathapurani, etc. recorded that Lord Buddha first preached the Abhidhamma to the Tavatimsa gods (heaven of thirty-three gods), while living among them on the Pandukambala rock at the foot of Paricchattaka tree in the Tavatimsa heaven during his visit to his mother Mahamaya Devi.

On 18th November 1981 the Lamas and other staff members also observed this Festival in our Tibetan Library hall on the first floor of the Institute by chanting prayers, offering khadas (scarves) and burning butter lamps etc. Several Buddhist devotees also attended the ceremonial function.

#### **VAJRACARYA CHOJE TRUNGPA RINPOCHE'S VISIT TO SRIT**

Venerable Surmang Choje Trungpa Rinpoche, the founder and Vajracarya (spiritual leader) of Naropa Institute in Colorado USA., paid a visit to Sikkim Research Institute, Gangtok along with his several disciples from USA on 7th December, 1981.

Venerable Rinpoche was received by Dr. A.C. Banerjee, Director : SRIT and Yarpa T.S. Gyaltsen and other members of the SRIT staff.

Thereafter, he was taken round the Institute by the Director : SRIT, Yarpa T.S. Gyaltsen and others. He took keen interest in the collections of antique objects and made a few suggestions for the improvement of this institute.

#### ***SRIT MEMBERSHIP DRIVE :***

During this quarter (October-December 1981), our membership drive had produced good results. So far 36 persons have become members of the Institutes. Their names have been published in the Third quarterly of the Bulletin of the Institute. Below are given the names of new members in different categories.



<i>Name</i>	<i>Category</i>
1) Miss Premlata Puri, Director, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, Room No. 22, Bahawalpur House, Bhagwandas Road, New Delhi-110 001.	Institutional
2) Shri A. N. Dhawan, Secretary, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, Feroz Shah Road, New Delhi-110 001.	Institutional
3) Shri Budhiman Tamang, Asst. Engineer, Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Gangtok.	Ordinary
4) Shri Kailash Prasad, Business Proprietor, M/S Ramdasram Ramphalram, M. G. Marg, Gangtok-737 101.	..
5) Mr. Jayk Longacare, Fund Raising Consultant, 424 Central Avenue, San Francisco, CA-94117. USA.	..

During the period under review the Institute was visited by—  
people including from various countries abroad like.

**DISTINGUISHED VISITORS TO THE SRIT  
( OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1981 )**

During this period many distinguished persons visited the Institute of Tibetology. Here are given their names along with their observations :-

Shri A. P. Sharma, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Govt. of India on 2.10.81 ; Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherji, Ex-Vice-Chancellor, University of Calcutta on 10.10.81 ; Shri S. C. Pratap, Judge, High Court, Bombay, 20.10.81 ; His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama on 21.10.81 ; Mr. Mohammad Amin, Transport Minister of West Bengal on 22.10.81 ; Shrimati Sheila Kaul, Union Minister of State for Education on 23.10.81 ; Shri Ram S. Tarneja, Managing Director 'The Times of India Publications', Bombay on 6.11.81 ; Shri Lalo Chibber, Shri Lama Lobzang, Shri L. R. Naik, members of the High Power Panel on Minorities, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India on 16.11.81 ; Shri A. N. Dhawan, Secretary, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi on 18.11.81 ; G.V.G. Krishnamurty, Additional Legal Adviser and Arbitrator, Govt. of India, New Delhi on 28.11.81 ; T.R. Sharma, PA/Speaker, Punjab accompanying the MLA's on 1.12.81 ; Vajracarya Choje Trungpa Rinpoche (Spiritual leader), Naropa Institute in Colorado, USA on 7.12.81 ; Shri P. N. Chopra, Editor, Indian Gazetteers, Chief Editor Who's who Indian Martyrs, New Delhi on 18.12.81 ; Shri S. P. Malhotra, GOC-in-Chief, Northern Command on 18.12.81 ; Shri Kaul Singh Thakur, MLA Chairman, Estimates Committee, Himachal Vidhan Sabha, Simla, Along with 7 MLA's on 19.12.81 ; Shri B. B. Lal, former Governor of Sikkim on 21.12.81.

## OPINIONS OF THE DISTINGUISHED VISITORS TO SRITOB'S

**UNION MINISTER SHRI A. P. SHARMA**

This is a few rare collections that I have seen. I am sure they will be very useful for understanding and knowing the Buddhist Culture.

Sd/- A. P. SHARMA  
Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation,  
Govt. of India.  
2.10.81

**Dr. SUSHIL KUMAR MUKHERJI**

This is a fantastic collection and a paradise for research workers. The devotion of the authorities of the Institute is highly laudable.

Sd/- Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherji,  
Ex-Vice Chancellor, University of Calcutta,  
Calcutta.  
10. 0.81

**Mr. JUSTICE S. C. PRATAP**

Visit here has been an interesting as also an exhilarating experience! This Institute has one of the world's best collection of distilled wisdom in the field of Buddhism, study, mastery and practise whereof may as well take one swiftly and certainly to the ultimate realisation ; Nirvana.

The aims and ideals governing this Institution transcend all materialism and embody the eternal values of life. May the great Buddha bless this Institution with great and outstanding success. And may His message spread far and wide through all those so sincerely and devotedly working here.

A visit here will never be forgotten. I personally will always remember it.

My pronams to all doing the great and ennobling work here.

Sd/- S. C. Pratap  
Judge, High Court, Bombay.  
20th October 1981.

His Holiness THE DALAI LAMA

I wish and pray that many sentient beings may obtain vision of new wisdom through this Institute and develop compassion, loving kindness and most benevolent wish towards other beings.

Shakya Bhikshu,  
Dalai Lama Tenzing Gyatso,  
21.10.1981.

Mr. Md. AMIN, Transport Minister, West Bengal.

I am very happy to visit the Institute of Tibetology which has very ancient things and very fine paintings. The Institution is well maintained and kept clean.

Sd/- Mohammed Amin,  
Transport Minister of West Bengal,  
22.10.1981.

Union Education Minister Mrs. SHEILA KAUL,

One must not leave Gangtok without visiting this Research Institute of Tibetology where ancient manuscripts are kept. It shows the nearness of Sanskrit and Tibetan & the influence of one on the other. I am happy I came here.

Sd/- Sheila Kaul,  
Union Minister of State for Education,  
Government of India  
23.10.1981.

Times Managing Director SHRI RAM TARNEJA

A well managed Institute depicting the rarest of material specially manuscripts on Tibet. A delight to meet a dedicated Director and staff who make the Institute lively and interesting.

An excellent place for learning and knowing about our ancestral traditions in this remote part of our country so close to the borders of China—one of the countries influenced by Buddhism born in India.

Sd/- Ram Tarneja,  
Times Managing Director,  
November 6, 1981.

SHRI LALOO CHIBBER

At the instance of H. E. the Governor of Sikkim Shri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan we visited the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology and we were fortunate enough to enter into the realm of Tibetology and all its stand for. No doubt the founders of the Institute have rendered a yeoman service to humanity by creating an opportunity for scholars drawn from all over the world to know the ancient civilisation created, preserved and maintained by Lord Buddha.

No doubt the Institute has to carry on further research in this respect and help the world for its mobilisation more so at the present juncture when there is race between high powers to destroy the world and ancient civilisation like what we witness in this Research Institute. We are extremely grateful to Dr. Banerjee a renown scholar for enhancing all that we ever grasp about Tibetology.

Sd/- Laloo Chibber,  
2. Lama Lobzang  
3. L. R. Naik

Leader and Members of the High Power Panel  
on Minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled  
Tribes, Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Govt. of India, New Delhi.

SHRI A. N. DHAWAN

Quite a fruitful and educative visit through which I have learnt a good deal about the work done here. This is not my first visit. Everytime I come I see & learn more. Good wishes.

Sd/- A. N. Dhawan,  
Secretary, Sangeet Natak Akademi,  
Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi,  
18.11.1981.

SHRI B. S. WALIA

We have enjoyed our visit to this Institute. It is a rare Institute which one should not miss. We have learnt a lot about Tibetan literature from here. We wish a nice future for this Institute.

Sd/- B. S. Walia,  
Punjab Vidhan Sabha, Chandigarh.  
27.11.81.

SHRI G. V. G. KRISHNAMURTY

I am extremely happy to visit this Institute which is preserving the richness of Tibetology and providing an opportunity for visitors to be enlightened. I consider this a real privilege to be here. The work undertaken here is of very great value to the scholars not only of India but other countries in the world who are interested and devoted to Buddhistic Studies. I wish all success for all the efforts here.

Sd/- G.V.G. Krishnamurty,  
Additional Legal Adviser &  
Arbitrator, Govt. of India  
New Delhi.  
28.11.1981.

SHRI T. R. SHARMA

We have visited the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Sikkim and have learnt much regarding the ancient Buddhist literature

and belief. The staff of the Institute has been very helpful in explaining various aspects of the Institute. We appreciated their behaviour and devotion to duty. We have learnt much about the Dalai Lama and His visit to Sikkim and finally the take over of Tibet by the Chinese. Our ancient heritage has been preserved in a fine way.

Sd/- T. R. Sharma  
For Speaker, Punjab Legislative Assembly  
Accompanying the MLA's.  
1.12.81.

**VAJRACARYA CHOJE TRUNGPA RINPOCHE**

Searching happiness begets misery,  
Truth (Dhamma) has no suffering,  
There may be an incarnation like shining sun  
(It) May destroy the obstacles of Barbarians,  
By deeds of Karmapa, we have no danger of evils/ignorance.

Vajracarya, Choje Trungpa Rinpochee  
Spiritual teacher Naropa Institutue  
in Colorado, USA.  
7.12.81.

**Dr. P. N. CHOPRA**

It was really a privilege and pleasure to visit the Tibetan Institute which is a treasure house of rare manuscripts and books. Dr. Banerjee is really a great asset and I am sure under his dynamic leadership the Institute will make progress and celebrate its Jubilee Celebration.

Sd/- P. N. Chopra,  
Editor, Indian Gazetteers,  
Chief Editor, Who's Who Indian Martyrs.  
New Delhi.  
18.12.81

**SHRI S. P. MALHOTRA**

I am so very glad to have been able to visit this prestigious

Institute. The time spent here has been most educative and enlightening.

Sd/- S. P. Malhotra,  
GOC-in-Chief, Northern Command,  
18 December '81.

**SHRI KAUL SINGH THAKUR**

The Committee on Estimates of Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha visited Tibetan Institute and was much impressed by the collection and the manner in which arranged. The Tibetan preaching and teaching are very rich. The Director and his staff deserve the appreciations of my Committee.

Sd/- Kaul Singh Thakur, MLA,  
Chairman Estimates Committee,  
Himachal Vidhan Sabha, Simla.  
(along with 7 M.L.A's.)  
19.12.81.

**SHRI B. B. LAL**

I was delighted to have the opportunity to visit the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology again today. The very valuable collection of books and ancient Buddhist literature which the Institute has, is being looked after very well and I was glad to see that is being put to good use. There are plans to expand the activities of the Institute for the success of which the Institute has my best wishes.

Sd/- B. B. Lal,  
Former Governor of Sikkim,  
21.12.81.



**SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY  
NEW PUBLICATIONS**

Srl. No.	Year	Subject and Author	Folio	Price
1.	1957	SKU PHRENG BCU BZHI PAI GSER KHRI NGA GSOL. Corona- tion story of H. H the XIV Dalai Lama.  Rani C. Dorjee (trans)	57	15,00
2.	1961	<i>History</i> THE RED ANNALS part 1 (Tibetan text ) Red annals Hu lan deb ther ( Deb-ther dmar po ) as composed by Kunga Dorjee in 1346 A. D. underwent a redaction in 1538 A. D. While this revised version has been available in xylograph, hand- made copies of the original have been rare.  Kunga Dorjee	79	15,00
3.	1961	<i>Prayer Book</i> BHADRACHARI (BZANGSPYOD) Bhadrachari the Mahayana prayer book, well-known for its antiquity and popularity is presented in mo- dern format with Indian text in Sanskrit scripts and translation in Tibetan scripts based on a xylo- graph from Nepal with certain features of its own; with an appen- dix extracted from Bodhisattva- charyavatara.  Suniti Kumar Pathak	41	5.00

Srl. No.	Year	Subject and Author	Folio	Price
4.	1961	<b>PRAJNA (LEXICON)</b> Prajna the Sanskrit - Tibetan thesaurus cum-grammar, was completed by Tenzing Gyaltshan in 1771 A.D. The Lexicon portions are now presented in modern format with Sanskrit words in Sanskrit script and Tibetan words in Tibetan script. Tenzing Gyaltshan	223	25.00
5.	1962	<i>Art Book</i> <b>RGYAN-DRUG-MCHOG-GNYIS (ART BOOK)</b> rGyan-drug-mchog gnyis ( Six ornaments and two Excellents ), on Mahayana Philosophy. ( 1670 A. D. ) reproduces ancient scrolls depicting Buddha, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu. Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha and Sakyaprabha reproductions are as per originals, 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 readers with an interest in Mahayana Buddhism. A Sanskrit-Tibetan glossary, a key to place name and a note on source-materials are appended. Five colours monochromes.	54	
		1) Silk binding		80.00
		2) Cloth binding		73.00

Srl. No.	Year	Subject and Author	Folio	Price
6.	1962	PRAJNA ( Xylograph ) The entire xylograph containing both Lexicon and grammar parts is presented by offset ( photo-mechanic ) process. Tenzing Gyaltsan	648	50.00
7.	1963	'PHAGS PA BZANG PO SPYOD PAI SMON LAM GYI RNAM PAR BSHAD PA KUN TU BZANG PO'I DGONGS PA GSOL BAR BYED PAI RGYAN. The commentary on Samantabhadra-caryapranidhanaraja. Lcangkya Rolpa'i Dorjee	61	3.00
8.	1964	<i>Philosophy</i> VIMSATIKA VIJNAPTIMATRATA SIDDHI Originally composed by Vasubandhu ( 4-5 Century A. D. ) consists of two parts: Karika(verse) and Svavritti ( Autocommentary ). This work was rendered into Tibetan by Jinamitra and Shilendrabodhi and Lotsava Zhuchen, Lotsava Bande yeshes sdes. The object of the treatise is the establishment of the Idealistic doctrine of the Yogacara School of the Mahayana.	109	8.00
9.	1966	<i>Medicine</i> GSO DPYAD RGYAL POI DKOR MDZOD. This offset print of So Chad Gyal poi Kor zod is made from the	167	

Srl No.	Year	Subject and Author	Folio	Price
		set preserved in the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology. Jetsun Drags pa Gyaltshan completed this volume on medicine (12 Century A.D.). This treatise consists of 43 tracts and pamphlets on different diseases, the prescriptions covers not only medicines from soil, rock, plants and processes like massage and Venesection but also spells and charms.		
		Jetsun Dagpa Gyaltshan.		
		1) Cloth binding		30.00
		2) Paper binding		25.00
		<i>Poetics</i>		
10.	1968	RGYAN GYI BSTAN BCHOS ME LONG GI HGREL CHEN. The commentary on the first chapter of Kavyadarsha of Dandin, a work of Sanskrit poetics.	115	
		Ugyan Kunzang Tenzing		
		1) Cloth binding		30.00
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11.	1976	GSANG SNAGS SNGA n'GYUR THUN MIN LUGS KYI BISLAB BYA. Tantric Doctrine according to rnyingmapa School.	41	6.00
		rDo grub Chen Rinpoche (Kham Golok)		
12.	1976	A SHORT ACCOUNT OF MONASTIC LIFE IN RDO GRUB ( Golok )	66	6.00

Srl. No.	Year	Subject and Author	Folio	Price
		Khritsho Derge and Kyibuk tshang Monasteries.		
		1) rDo grub Chen Rinpoche		
		2) Khenpo Lodos Zangpo		
		2) Kyibuk Rinpoche		
13	1979	SO SOR THAR PA'I MDO'I RNAM BSHAD THAR LAM BZANG PO'I THEM SKAS. The Vinaya text dealing with the rules and regulations guiding the life of the monks.	82	6.00
		Khenpo Lodos Zangpo		
		<i>History/Philosophy</i>		
14.	1976-78	RINCHEN TERZOD ( Palpung Khām ) in 61 volumes of Xylographs, palm leaf pattern of which only set available outside Tibet in Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology Collections. Rinchen Terzod (precious Hidden Treasures) contains the teachings of Guru Padmasambhava and others is Encyclopaedic Nyingmapa canonical works.		
		Five volumes of RINCHEN TERZOD including the index vol. in ( Karchag ) were reproduced per photomechanic process.		
		Index volume ka	1976	891
		" "	Kha 1977	843
		" "	Ga 1977	919
		" "	nGa 1978	876
		1) Cloth binding/copy		450.00
		2) Paper binding/copy		350.00

Srl. No	Year	Subject and Author	Folio	Price
15.	1977-81	KADAM PHACHO : Teaching of Atisa Dipankara Shrijnana and his Biography by his chief Tibetan disciple Dom Tonpa-hbrom ston Gyal'ba'l byung gnas.		
		Part—I,II & III.	895	
		1) Cloth binding per copy		125.00
		2) Paper binding per copy		100.00
		<i>Bulletin of Tibetology</i> ( A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION ) 1964-81 (English) It contains learned papers on various aspects and topics of Buddhalogy, Tibetology, Buddhist Philosophy, Hymes & the like notes & topics, book reviews etc. Sanskrit-Tibetan texts are also published herein. Price Rs. 10/- per copy & Rs. 40/- for annual subscription.		
		Total copy in a set	39	
		Total price per set		Rs. 390,00

## A GUIDE TO S. R. I. T.

A Guide to Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology has already been printed to enable the visitors to understand what he is seeing and to carry back with him a good Guide pamphlet to help him to recall his visit to the world- famous Institute.

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