

GURU PADMASAMBHAV'S CONTRIBUTION TO SIKKIM

-Acharya Duggay Lepcha

I, consider it as a rare privilege for me being in the midst of distinguished gathering at the sacred location Deorali-Sanga Dhul-Dul-Ling chorten monastery. May I also take this opportunity to felicitate the organiser of this National Seminar for choosing the topics on Sikkim Cultural Aspect and the Guru Padmasambhava's contribution to this Himalayan region. I feel honoured to find myself in this seminar to join you all for the accumulation of good deeds, especially with the topics of Lord Padmasambhava. In fact, this occasion not only brings awareness about the rich heritage of culture and spiritual aspect of this hilly state, but also inspire to follow strict human nature among our generation for the development of our society through love and compassion.

Buddhists all over the world agree in defining Dharma as the teaching of Lord Gautam Siddhartha who preached about 2500 years ago. When Lord Buddha was about to pass away at Kushinagar, Buddha told to his grief-stricken disciples about the birth of Lord Padmasambhava, who would be the more powerful and established Esoteric or Vajra Yana doctrine in the world.

Accordingly after 12 hundred years of Lord Buddha's Mahaparinirvana Padmasambhava was born from a lotus blossom in the Danakosha lake in the north western corner of country of Uddhiyana. Soon Lord Padmasambhava spread the secret doctrine all over the Asian countries as well as in the world. He spent day and night in preaching for the welfare of all being and also established the Vajra Yana doctrine. Sometime meditating in a cave and rock in the form of very common saint. When he was meditating in a cave and was preparing to spread the same doctrine at Rewalsar in mandi H.P., Lord Padmasambhava was punished to be burnt alive on the pyre of ferocious fire by the then King Indrabhudi of Shahor, at present commonly known as mandi. But all of a sudden after 7 days one of the king's man found the crematorium where the Padmasambhava was burnt alive was completely turned into beautiful lake where on the lotus flower 8 year old young boy was found playing. When the king Indrabhudi heard this along with his all ministers and royal subjects rushed to the spot and regretfully payed salutation and at once invited to the royal palace and placed him on the lion throne and offered invaluable things including kingdom as a great atonement. This great historical spot still visible today where many pilgrim visit from time to time in commemoration and to pray and pay respect to this holy place of great Guru. From that day onward the Guru is known as Lotus-born teacher, in Sanskrit Guru Padmasambhava, and Guru Chokhye Dorje or Pema Zungney in Tibetan.

The growth of Buddhism and its journey across the Himalayas is no doubt started when the 37th king of Tibet Thi-song Deu-can invited Lord Padmasambhava to remove all sorts of hindrance put by the evil spirits and to established firm Buddhism in Tibet. The Guru accepted the king's invitation and along with the great Indian scholar, Pandit Acharya Shanta Rakshita started Dharma work for the development and prosperity of Tibet.

When the Dharma work was being progressed in Tibet Lord Padmasambhava at the same time visited Sikkim in 8 century. Sikkim is known to its inhabitant as Dremojong. The state recount its history from the 8th century A.D. When Guru Padmasambhava named it as

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“Bay-Yul Demojong” which means the hidden valley of treasures. The Guru personally consecrated this land and concealed a great deal of major and minor treasure including holy scriptures. The treasure are to be preserved for the future use when the Dharma will reach at the edge of destruction due to the calamities from the stir of five impurities. Maha Guru left these words in some secret scripture that in that dark age of distress living being of this land will enjoy over these hidden treasures in the future. The great Tantric Guru converted the demons of Sikkim, dakini of space, goddess of medicine, gods of land and water, arrogant spirits and bound them under solemn oath. The demons were appointed as guardian deities of hidden treasure and protector of holy Dharma. The converted evil spirits were not only instructed to grace the land with good harvest and timely rain but also to prevent all sorts of natural calamities. Guru Padmasambhava also warned the people that the worship of these local deities would prevent unnatural calamities and wars in “Bay-Yul Demojong” and ordered the people to observe the rituals with faith and sincerity. Guru told that as long as people keep up to this order and observance would keep the land of Hidden country of Demojong peaceful where religion will flourish and harvest be bountiful.

After the visit and blessing of Guru Padmasambhava in this Himalayan kingdom primitive religion called Bonthingism continued to be followed by the thin community of Lepcha. Later in accordance with Guru Rinpoche’s prophecy four saints appeared in 1604 and enthroned Chogyal Pentso Namgyal as a first righteous ruler of Sikkim. Under his leadership Sikkim spiritual democracy was established in the year 1642. In the due course all the communities converted into Buddhism and its way of living. The Sanskrit word Dharma is an omnibus term meaning Law, Religion or way of life. In local view Dharma is not only way of every aspect but also the very breath of life. Lord Guru Padmasambhava came to be adored as saviour of Dharma especially in our snowy land or hilly country. Though Guru Rinpoche is not seen anywhere but his nectar of speeches and scripture is enough to represent the foot of our identity or precious Dharma. An incarnation is timeless and its manifestations are countless. I may mention here in this Bay-Yul-Demojong or Sikkim we are fortunate enough to have still the true incarnation of Maha Guru Padmasambhava who have dedicated their lives to this holy Dharma for the benefit of living being and progress of every aspect in one’s life span. We pray and still pray for the repeated rebirth of Guru Rinpoche who is already a Buddha. Thus Guru Rinpoche or previous teachers play the very important role in our society.

Therefore in all the time past present and future there is need for the message of Guru Padmasambhava. It is deserved that we should remember the message today, and we should study it fully in all its implication. In this way we can spread a greater understanding of the Guru’s message.

With these words, I once again would like to extend my thanks to the organiser under the presidentship of His Excellency the Governor.

And I pray the blessing of Guru Rinpoche rest on this institute and the living being of this hidden valley of treasure, of Bay-Yul Demojong-Sikkim. Lead to the path of peace and understanding.