

Resume

The National Seminar first of its kind held at Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok on 29th and 30th March, 1995 ever since the inauguration of this august and world famous Institution by Lt. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1958. In the foregoing years on several occasion authorities took decision to hold Seminar which could not be materialized. But after the appointment of the present Director, the Executive Board and General councils in its meeting, the President and member accepted and approved the proposal placed by the Director for holding a National Seminar as preliminary to another proposal to transfer the Institute into Deemed University after full deliberation in this respect. The Academic council of SRIT had chosen two following important themes to inspire scholars and researchers in this field of study.

1. Guru Padmasambhava's contribution to Sikkim.
2. Cultural Aspects of Sikkim.

In pursuance of decision, general circular were sent to different universities, learned institutions and individuals. The Scholars quickly responded to the call for National Seminar and learned papers started to pour in. Some scholars even attended the Seminar as Observers.

Following the inauguration of 'Tsho-Pema' Lotus Lake, which has historical and religious significance to the Mahaguru Padmasambhava's life by the President SRIT, H.E. The Governor of Sikkim Shri P. Shiv Shankar who in his inaugural address, highlighted on multifaceted aspects of Guru's life and esoteric teachings and his everlasting contribution to Sikkim. Mahaguru blessed this enchanted land of Sikkim crowned with majestic Khangchendzonga.

The theme selected for the first day Seminar was Guru Padmasambhava's contribution to Sikkim. The theme is very much relevant in the field of research and assertion of historical and divine personality of Guru.

The Guru who flourished in Uddiyana/Urgyen Yul, modern Swat valley, is still an unexplored area with no sustained research conducted so far. Scholars hold different view on the origin of Guru, some asserts the valley of Swat, whereas one in Orissa and others in Kanchi in South. Veteran Indian scholar Prof. Benoytosh Bhattacharya, Dr. Lokesh Chandra and illustrious Italian Tibetologist Lt. Jeuseppe Tucci hold different views supported by Indian, Tibetan and Chinese sources. This is irrelevant to highlight provenance of Guru in this context. Guru's contribution consist of vast geographical area-India, Tibet and Central Asia. In conclusion, we may say Guru has great contribution in the area of esoteric system in Buddhism. This required sustained research by the group of scholars in historical perspective.

The first paper read out by Prof. Ahmad Saced of Jamia Milia University, New Delhi on Guru Rinpoche's contribution to Sikkim, the learned author expressed his view that before the advent of Guru, the indogenous people of this land (Sikkim) lived with shackles of primitive life-style and superstitious belief and practices. After the advent of Guru in Sikkim,

Bulletin of Tibetology

Mahayana Buddhism, assimilated with Vajrayana and spread far and wide of the land and following with the royal patronage during seventeenth century, Nyingma (ancient) order of the Guru Padmasambhava and Kargyudpa sect of oral tradition took firm foundation and edifices of Buddhist monuments, like monasteries, stupas etc. holding the victorious banner of Buddhism were established.

The Guru is said to have concealed several hidden 'Treasures' (gTer) in the form of precocious scripture, many other reveler (gTer-sTon) made an earnest endeavour following the prediction of Guru to trace out the source of these treasures for the benefit of posterity. Guru's different manifestations which adore the sacred alters of monasteries in Sikkim are of great importance in overall aspects of rituals, Lama dances and Thanka paintings. These figures of Guru actually inspired the devout followers to follow the trodden path and recapitulating heroic and courageous deeds of Guru in subduing the malevolent forces which create obscurities in the path of mystic awakening expounded by Gurus in vast literature. The eight different manifestations are:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Padmasambhava | 5. Loden Chokesh |
| 2. Nima Hoser | 6. Padma Gyalpo |
| 3. Dorji Drolu | 7. Shakya Senge |
| 4. Senge Dadok | 8. Pema Jungne |

The significance of the eight forms are explained in Guru's Biographies, ritual ad prayer books which are daily recited all over Sikkim by monks and laity.

Some lama scholar from different institutions of Sikkim made efforts to explain how this compassionate Guru entrusted the protective divinities of 'Gangchen zodnga' as guardian deity of Dharma and material for the posterity.

He converted Tek-Kong-salong, a Lepcha chief of Sikkim in Buddhism and made him in charge of Dharma centres of the land. Consequently the land of Sikkim was sanctified as 'Bayul Demojong', literary meaning of which is the hidden valley of rice/or bounty. Urgyen Rinpoche, the second Buddha after over 1400 years of the Parinirvana of Buddha Sakya Muni blessed the land.

The pride of Sikkim has been her god-fearing, peace loving, deeply religious, humble and gentle people. They worship Guru with utmost devotion for external peace and happiness and internal awakening.

Among other contribution of Guru is discovery of four major caves, namely (1) Chang Lhari Nyingphug, (2) Sharchok Byaphug (3) Lho Khandro Sangphug and (4) Nub Dechen Phug which are located in four direction around Sikkim to facilitate Sadhakas to go to retreat in meditative contemplation in the solitary caves.

The monastery Dhakkar Tashiding as the centre of pilgrimage and religious place of worship was blessed and consecrated by the Guru. The stupa at Tashiding specially honoured as the 'Thongwa Rangdrol' meaning one is released from the cycle of existence by mere sight of this stupa.

The holy water-vase 'Bumchu' festival on the 15th day of 1st month of Tibetan almanac was also blessed by the Guru. 'Khechopalri', the holy lake, occupies a special place in the history of religion of Sikkim and holy sphere of divine play of female divinities.

The mission began by Guru and pursued by other saints, prominent among whom is the Lepcha Chief 'Thekong-Theg' and his finance 'Nye-kong-Gnel' who appear from 'Kabi'

in North Sikkim. The memorial event took place when the process of king making was finally accomplished following the prophecy of Guru in 17th century, with the meeting of the 'rNal-'bYor Mched bZhi' the four brother yogins at Yuksam in 1641 A.D., and enthronement of first Chogyal Phuntshok Namgyal of erstwhile Namgyal dynasty at Norbugang.

Gyalwa Lhatsun Chenpo, Kathok Rigzin Chenpo and Nadak Sempa Chepo were among the nobles present on the occasion of enthronement and consecration of Denzong Chogyal. With their centralized administrative setup under the four jewels, the establishment of Buddhism was assimilated and the construction of several monasteries were commissioned as the centres of learning of Mahayana Buddhism.

In recognition of Guru's contribution towards promotion of Dharma, he is worshipped in the monasteries, where side by side of Buddha Shakyamuni, Guru and his consorts' images are enshrined and worshipped on every tenth day of the month. Even in Sikkim and other himalayan region, special 'Tshe-Chu' associations are organized by the Buddhists for performance of ritual worship.

One paper made interesting analytical study of Shiva and Buddhist tantra in reference to Guru. It is a fresh attempt of the author on archaeological, geographical perspective but assertion of topics required to be based of historical texts. One of the most important features of Seminar was the active participation of noviciates as well as elderly Sikkimese monks for the first time in Sikkimese history in lively deliberations at the National Seminar. They came into contact with veteran scholars of Indian Universities and had exchange of thoughts. The Sikkimese monks divulged many so far unknown data, chronology of purely Sikkimese siddhas like Rigzing Goeydemcan, Lhatsun Namkha Jigme, the revealers of northern hidden treasure/changter about which very little is known in the modern literature. The monks also shed new light on monastic education from original indigenous Namthar (Biographies) scripture mystic literature for modern scholar which established a new dimension in the field of research, close collaboration of traditional and modern scholar for sustained research.

- B. Ghosh