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# HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

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*Sama Haq*

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## HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

**Editor : K. WARIKOO**  
**ASSOCIATE GUEST EDITOR : BAATA U. KITINOV**

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### *Editor's Page*

Abutting the borders of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and India and being situated in close proximity to Central Asia, the Himalayan region has been an important constituent of India's trans-Himalayan communication network and the Silk Route in the continent and beyond. The Himalayan region acted as the cradle from where ancient Indian culture and particularly Buddhism spread to different directions in Central Asia, East Asia and South East Asia. The movement of people, trade, ideas, Buddhist philosophy and culture enriched the horizons of human development and left a deep imprint on the society and culture in the entire region.

Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation has been engaged for the past twenty five years to bring into focus various issues pertaining to the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, connected with its history, art and cultural heritage, language and literature and social structures. The principal concern has been on its focal area, i.e. from Afghanistan to Myanmar including the Central Asian Republics of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan; China; Siberia; Mongolia; Nepal; Bhutan and the Indian Himalayan states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttaranchal and North East states, i.e. the Buddhist belt in the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia.

With the objective of promoting Buddhist heritage and values in the region, the Foundation has undertaken special studies of the history, culture and society publishing over 20 books on varied subjects and has organized over 20 national and international seminars. The main publications which provide well considered and expert analyses of the Buddhist heritage include (i) *Society and Culture in the Himalayas* (New Delhi, 1995. 316pp), (ii) *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Linguistic Predicament* (New Delhi, 1996. 224pp), (iii) *Bamiyan: Challenge to World Heritage* (New Delhi, 2002. 313pp.61 photos), (iv) *Mongolia-India Relations* (New Delhi, 2003. 228pp) (v) *Cultural Heritage of Jammu and Kashmir*. (New Delhi, 2009. 350pp), (vi) *Mongolia in the 21st Century* (New Delhi, 2010. 374pp).

The Himalayan Foundation has also been publishing a quarterly research journal *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* since 1997 quite

regularly and in time. This journal has devoted special attention to the study of society and culture in India's North-East, Myanmar, Mongolia, Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, Siberia, Buryatia, Altai, Tibet, Bamiyan, which regions have been under the deep influence of Buddhism through history. For instance the journal has brought our Special issues on *Kyrgyzstan* (in 1998, 155pp; in 2006, 156pp; in 2012,82pp), *Mongolia* (2001,101pp), *Aurel Stein* (2001, 97pp), *North East India* (2001,167pp), *Kazakhstan* (2003, 115pp), *Buryatia* (2007,144pp), *Tibet* (2009, 110pp), *Khakassia* (2009,125pp), *Siberia* (2010, 133pp), *Roerich* (2011, 85pp), *Bamiyan Buddhas* (2012,107pp), *Myanmar* (2014, 225pp) and *Altai* (2014, 273pp), mostly providing indigenous research inputs on the subject.

The Himalayan Foundation also completed two Documentaries (each of 40 minutes length ) showcasing (i) *Architectural Heritage of Temples of Jammu* and (ii) *Shrines and Pilgrimages of Kashmir*, thereby making a tangible contribution to the actual video-documentation and dissemination of Buddhist heritage in Jammu and Kashmir. Soon after the tragic demolition of Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in March 2001, the Foundation organized a week long Exhibition of rare photographs, lithographs and paintings on the theme *The Colossal Buddhas and the Buddhist Heritage of Bamiyan* at India International Centre on 15-20 September 2001. The Exhibition was accompanied by a two day Seminar at India International Centre in collaboration with Ladakh Buddhist Association on the theme *Bamiyan: Challenge to World Heritage*, which attracted eminent scholars from India and abroad and also the UNESCO Representative .The seminar proceedings were later on published as a book titled *Bamiyan: Challenge to World Heritage*.

The Foundation organized a special exhibition of paintings by a veteran artist Suman Gupta on the theme *The Mountain Mysteries* at Palais des Nations, United Nations Geneva from 5-16 August 2002. The exhibition was patronized by the Government of Mongolia and also the UN Office at Geneva. The paintings clearly brought home the Buddhist influence on the society and culture of the Himalayan mountains.

The Foundation organized a music cum cultural festival on the theme *Sounds of Eurasia* in Buryatia Republic of Russia, in association with Siberian Academy of Art and Culture from 25 September to 1 October 2007. The festival brought together the musicians and artists from Indian Himalayas and Siberia (Buryatia, Altai, Tuva, Irkutsk, Chita etc. which share Buddhist cultural and religious affinities with the peoples of Indian Himalayas).

The Foundation also organized an Exhibition of photographs and publications of *Hungarian Explorers in Indian Himalayas* at Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre, Delhi on 3-4 October 2007. This exhibition relived the experiences of the famous Hungarian explorers like L. Berzenczey, Alexander Csoma de Koros, Aurel Stein, K. Ujfalvy etc., who had followed the Buddhist trail in the Himalayas and Central Asia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Subsequently a book titled *Hungarian Explorers and Travellers in India* was published. It is in pursuit of our efforts to bring into focus the indigenous culture and traditions, that this special issue of *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* is devoted to Buddhism in South and Central Asia.

**K. Warikoo**





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## A TRACT ON BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY

A.D.P. KALANSURIYA

The interweaved conceptual categories in current analytical philosophy analyse the concept of 'perception' together with such other empirical ones as 'sensation', 'truth', and 'knowledge'.<sup>1</sup> The conceptual technique of 'conceptual family' is noted here.<sup>2</sup> It is possible to have 'conceptual families' pertaining to given arguments in ethics, religion, aesthetics, politics, etc., but contexts are envisaged as impenetrable.<sup>3</sup> In Aristotle, juxtapositionally, a penetration is the case, for instance, from Ethics to Psychology, a balanced personality comprising ethical norms and psychological propensities.<sup>4</sup> That is, Aristotle pierced the domain of Ethics to enter that of Psychology in his *De Anima*. The Buddha did a similar penetration but very differently from Aristotle by entering into Ethics by introducing a complex continuum of psychological phenomena comprising sensation, feeling, hope, will, determination-personal self culture. The complex continuum of psychological phenomena – Psychology – and determination by interplay of Buddhist eightfold noble path – Ethics. Either a settled psychological life is accomplished with (e.g., Punna) or an ethical accomplishment is envisaged (e.g. Kisagotami). In Buddhism, hence, the technique is to move from psychological concepts to ethical values envisioning a qualitative difference in contemporary analytical philosophy in the English speaking world. For example, Aristotle set out to discover the basis of value in a wider psychology-oriented human nature – ethics to psychology. To Aristotle, the virtue of courage – the relative mean – ethics to psychology. Virtue, hence is concerned with various feelings and actions characteristic of excess and defect (ethics to psychology). Contrary to both, however, the value-talk in current analytical philosophy comprises an analysis of value-words, value-terms, value-statements and so on aiming at a logical separation of the value category – ethics, from the psychological or empirical category. A value orientation in this sense is

not entwined with criteria of truth or falsity – Epistemology.

Hopelessness, pain, anxiety, misery can strike us, humans, at any moment. They have struck humans in the history bringing indescribable grief and distress. Should our attitude-formations be altered or changed by way of a mental culture, then, pain, hopelessness, anxiety and misery can also be diminished, if not totally extinguished. Today, an expressive significance of a tinge of Buddhist psychology is felt to be all the more suggestive. This paper attempts to give heed to the expressive significance of human kindness as depicted in the Buddhist canonical texts.<sup>5</sup>

Buddhism, the doctrine of the Buddha, is entwined with some significant elements of psychology though not made explicit sufficiently. The aim of this paper is to emit a ringing note of Buddhist psychology by way of data found in the Buddhist literature. This paper, hence, does not take one on a conducted tour of man of the curiosities of Buddhism but an element of its psychology in outline alone.

#### BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY MADE EXPLICIT

First, the story of Punna, the little girl in Buddhist India, is noted and made known. Punna, as the story unfolded, was a servant girl about eight years old, hired during the time of the Buddha. One day when the Buddha was by passing a public cemetery there, a small girl was seen at the cemetery premises struggling to tighten a rope round her neck, apparently in a bid to commit suicide. Out of sympathy and compassion, the Buddha hurried his feet to free the miserable girl from the death trap. Once unfastened and untied, the Buddha stretched his hand for the little girl to hold on and to get up; and she did so. For a while, Punna was stunned, so also was the Buddha. To esteem highly the Master's act of saving her life, while still holding his hand, she uttered, faintly, after due salute, that she was sorry to hold the Buddha's hand thus:

Punna said: "Master, I am very sorry to hold your sublime hand, for I should not have done so: this is the first time in my life, I felt, I am affectionately treated. Thank you Master, for your kind attention."

The Buddha replied: "You were trying to hurt yourself; for what reason you, little daughter."

Punna: "Master, this is the first time in my life I heard I am called a 'daughter'. I am very pleased to hear it. Hereafter I do not attempt such mischievous acts, Master, because at the very least, you affectionately, will treat me."

Rest of the story is as follows: An illegitimate child, Punna, was a miserable servant girl in a rich household whose mistress often illtreated her for the slow pace of work. The illtreatment gave way for her sordid impulse to end life which episode now took a dramatic turn due to the Master's sublime kindness—radiant compassion. Word was sent to the mistress of the household to accompany Punna back, with firm promise of avoiding child cruelty. Moreover, Punna, now a positive recipient of the Master's sublime compassion and kindness, at least for the time being, not only was psychologically reawakened but was also beaming with determination to do her work efficiently and quickly. The new life-pattern of Punna made possible by the Buddha's sublime compassion and kindness, brought great satisfaction to her mistress whose glorious decision, subsequently, was the adoption of Punna as her own daughter. Although simply narrated in the Canonical literature, Punna's story is earnestly enveloped in a genuine psychological base comprising emotion, hope, will and determination of the dispositional side of human life. The Buddha's attitudinal behavior pattern was not associated with 'politics' aimed at gaining popularity wrapped in increasing membership, but simply an expression of deep kindness due to an understanding of the very depth of human inferiority which dismally lacks in people today, in general. It shows above all, the significance of praiseworthy human kindness, psychologically, in contrast with lousy power of projecting one's hollow personality. Genuinely blooming happiness is thought to be impossible, very specially today, in the absence of material greed as well as money-craving propensity which rocks modern societies at large. Yet, the power of genuinely blooming happiness is susceptible enough to kindle the flame of efficiency and honesty even in a miserable human person of the caliber of Punna, the servant girl as depicted in the annals of classical Buddhist psychology.

Secondly, I take the story of Princess Kisagotami, a contemporary of the Buddha in Buddhist India, made known in the Buddhist canonical literature. When Kisagotami's one and only child died suddenly, she got into a hysteria – a psychological trauma. The death of her only son was alarmingly a disturbing mental shock to her. She ran here and there but of no avail. Once she particularly recovered from the shock, inmates of her household intimated her to reach the Buddha, thought to be the unique "physician" at the time who could "give life back" to her son. She ran hence to the Buddha and begged him to inject life back into her dead son. The Buddha, cleverly understanding the mental shock of Kisagotami,

promised to give life back to the dead son provided she would bring the prescribed medicine. This was agreed upon and the prescribed medicine was a few mustard seeds from any household in which no one has died. Thinking about the simplicity of the matter at hand, Princess Kisagotami began to move with urgent feet, from one household to another in search of this miraculous medicine. She visited a few hundred homes in the first instance but the replies were unyielding negatives. Kisagotami, then, formally called on her friends and relatives in hundreds, if not in thousands. But of no avail; everywhere the answer was a blunt negative. Because of the negativism-oriented ordeal, though she was grief-stricken and mentally shocked, two clever questions came to her mind. They are as follows:

1. "Why wasn't a single household available around in which no one has died?"
2. "Why did the Buddha suggest this way?"

Kisagotami was immediately awakened to the very nature of human decay and death on the one hand and on the other pain and misery involved – the inevitable. She returned to the Buddha, who in turn, with a compassionate mood, expounded the psychological base of a human person: no one escapes death. All the more so because the psychological continuum of the fathom-long mortal frame can be disrupted at any moment – child, youth, elderly person – which is but death. It is the very nature of the human bio-chemical system; more one rationally thinks, more one rationally understands its nature. The human person stretches himself not only to an unknown past but also to an unknown future in which the Buddha brought about his astounding concept, namely rebirth. The story ends with a positive note entwined with an acceptance by Kisagotami, of the fragile psychological base of human life which her dead son also shared.

Two tales interweaved in psychological material, project two very different psychological explanations yet at the end take us beyond psychology into, for instance, Ethics. More precisely, the Buddha's technique is clearly embedded here. Very differently from Aristotle, the Greek genius – philosopher – who pierced the domain of Ethics to enter that of Psychology in his *De Anima* (Ethics to Psychology). The Buddha entered into Ethics by introducing a complex continuum of psychological phenomena comprising sensation, feeling, hope, will and determination (psychology to Ethics). In ethical problems, we are on a basis of psychology,

depending on our material, very largely upon the psychology of conation or will, with its coefficients of feeling, emotion and intelligence. The gist of these two tales is a psychological understanding of human pain, anxiety and misery whose logical end is ethical. That is the eventual therapy. The rationale of its practical discourse is sought on the results of a psychological analysis (Psychology to Ethics or ethical norms). A given psychological fact coalesces with a given value without committing a category violation which is characteristic of the Buddha's discourse. There is free passage from fact to value and vice versa which is not the case in current analytic philosophy though the latter strangely makes explicit the second-order discipline's analysis which makes clarity possible in Buddhist psychology also. All in all, expressive significance of human compassion and kindness is envisioned which in turn makes us feel a stir of interest in practicing it towards diminishing if not totally eliminating human hopelessness, pain, anxiety and misery.

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## BUDDHISM AND THE GLOBAL PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT TIME

M. S. ULANOV

Buddhism is the oldest world religion, which influenced the cultural development of many peoples of the East. It is practiced traditionally in the countries of South, South-East, East and Central Asia. Nowadays one can see the revival of Buddhism in Russia. Buddhism began to spread across Europe and America at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the western society began to enrich its business activity with great spirituality of the Eastern studies. Society was and is still interested in Buddhism due to its tolerance to alien cultural and religious values, ability to assimilate the best ideas created by other civilizations, absence of pretensions to exclusiveness, readiness to broad inter-confessional dialogue. The image of the alternative spirituality, created by contrast with the values of the modern secular West, is perfectly enrolled in the atmosphere of pluralistic globalization. Thus, Buddhism isn't a pure eastern religion nowadays. The European Buddhist Union regularly organizes congresses in many capitals of Europe.

Gradually the so-called "global Buddhism" is created in the West. Buddhism, which is free of the context of any concrete cultural traditions, is quite transnational. At the same time, traditional Buddhism rather passively joins the "global world". This type of Buddhism acquires, somehow, the variant of "museums and archival" existence, or becomes the source of the symbolic identity for neophytes. Traditional teachings of Buddhism, as the scientist remarks, don't accept globalization, but there isn't any "organized cruel anti-globalization", "pathological anti-modernistic strains" in Buddhism as in Abrahamic religions.

A. Adajanyan notes, that due to numerous peculiarities of the religious teaching (absence of the notion of dogma, the dualism of righteousness and sin) the word combination "Buddhist fundamentalism" seems to be

inappropriate. Nevertheless, Buddhism resists globalization in the form of ethnonational reaction, criticism of globalization as secular ideology, and the western culture as the embodiment of materialism and rationalism.<sup>1</sup>

There is another point of view on this problem. Some scientists think, that Buddhism is neutral to modern “perspective”, European- Atlantic variant of globalization, owing to the fact that Buddhism may spread across the countries with western mentality. Most modern movements for religious revival from Islam to the Christianity are antiwestern and antisocial. Buddhism has never been against liberal values and has appreciated personal freedom, which follows “westernization”.

How do Buddhists characterize globalization? Let’s study the ideas of the leader of Buddhists His Holiness Dalai Lama 14. Dalai Lama 14 remarks in his work titled *Ethics for the new millennium*, that “people acquire growing independence owing to the achievements of science and technology”, but as a result “we feel a great deal of loneliness and alienation instead of the feeling of community and unity”.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, religion and sociology point to the crisis of personal identification in modern society. As the global space has been widening due to information and communication technologies, traditional relations between people in local communities were superseded by relations in global scale, numerous, impersonal and functional. As a result, the mechanism of transmitting the highest moral values, interpersonal relations in primary communities, from one generation to another is destroyed. The crisis of national cultures isn’t the only negative influence of globalization. According to the opponents of globalization, it threatens culture as a whole, as modern popular culture lets people be satisfied with primitive level of moral needs. This process produces individuals with antisocial perception of the world. It is more dangerous, as this new culture with the help of modern information technologies can penetrate everywhere. One of the negative consequences of globalization is the widening gap between developed and developing countries.

So, naturally, another question arises-how to overcome the contradictions of the globalization, of this complicated process of making the modern world? How religion can help us? We can mention the works of His Holiness Dalai Lama 14, where he notices that “the world has become too small, and now we all depend on each other. Pursuing their own interests, not philanthropy, nations have to care about each other. Under these circumstances, undoubtedly, people should establish mutual understanding and practise overall responsibility. The key element to



achieve these ideals is to foster goodheartedness".<sup>3</sup> "In spite of contradictions between more or less developed countries, rich and poor sections of population inside this or that country", the leader of Buddhists remarks—"the strengthening of the global dependence and responsibility can overcome such economical barriers".<sup>4</sup>

The famous American Buddhist and Buddhologist Robert Turman, criticizes the U.S.A. for selfishness and isolationism and notes, that "our modern society should accept the global, but not the isolationistic point of view. We should agree with the fact that we cannot be an independent unit in the world community. We should practise the spirit of the Great Enlightenment of Bodhisattva, caring well of other nations. I mean changes in our life on the international level, transformation of pride into compassion both in politics and in private life. Where is our compassion? We shouldn't avoid problems, but face them; we shouldn't build up walls, but be open hearted to the world. To lighten the suffering of humanity, every nation should take responsibility for the well being of all nations. If we cut expenses on armament, we should be able to help without damaging our welfare. Giving up only unnecessary things, which are useless for us and only cause nightmares, we can significantly improve the quality of our life. It will be full of happiness, which we'll give to our contemporaries and a lot of descendants. We shall only gain benefits in this situation".<sup>5</sup>

The global problems of modern world, in particular, ecological problem, significantly depreciate and discredit the ideas of the new European liberal project of personal self-sufficiency, rationalism, individualism. Many scientists connect the global ecological problems with the peculiarities of people's mentality, in particular, with the spread of consumerist approach to life. The religions of the Far East, especially Buddhism, are considered to be highly-ecological, so that they underline the importance of respect not only to man but also to all living beings. That's why ecological principles of Buddhist culture may be required in the nearest future.

In this connection, we should pay much attention to the way Buddhist culture treats moral activity of modern men, including education and science. Can Buddhist idea give anything new to modern education and science? As it is well known, the development of science in the West led to constant deepening of specialization. The Humanities and the Sciences were taught individually. Approaches, methods, terminology and nature perception differed. Only at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century people began to understand, how dangerous it was to mankind, so as the opposition of

man to nature, science to religion, the Humanities to the Science could cause ecological disaster. The efforts to clone a man also appeared due to the gap between ethics and science.

Buddhist approach to science and education is based on the interaction between different forms of cognition, the unity of man and the world. It gives Buddhist education encyclopedic, universal nature. Philosophy, logic, linguistics, medicine, poetry and other disciplines were taught at bonzeries. Science wasn't opposed to religion, it served it. The reason being the fact that Buddhist teaching counts more on cognition than on belief. That's why Albert Einstein appreciated Buddhism greatly. He wrote, "The religion of future will be the cosmic religion. It should change the conception of God existing personally, avoid theology and dogmas. Comprehending both nature and spirit, it will base on religious feeling, caused by understanding the unity of all things-natural and spiritual. That is how Buddhism should be characterized. It is Buddhism that will meet all the requirements of modern science".<sup>6</sup>

Thus, one can note that Buddhism is closely connected with the principles of modern science, due to this fact, students, cultural and scientific-technical intelligentsia in Russia and in the West find this religion very attractive. Buddhist education differs from western one because of its purposefulness. Western tradition is directed, mainly, to cognition and change of the outward world. So we see striving for reforms and revolution in social life. Buddhist culture leads man to cognition of himself, his inner world. That's why there are the efforts of people to change not the world, but themselves, their attitude to the surrounding world. The famous Indian scientist and Buddhist Shantideva once noticed, that though we can't even hope to find enough to cover the whole world, to protect our feet from thorns, it isn't necessary in fact. It's quite enough to cover our feet. In other words, though we can't change circumstances which don't satisfy us, we can change our attitude to them.

Globalization of modern life and culture, realization of other values make us find new guiding lines of the world-outlook; take a serious view of interaction between civilizations. Harmonious relations between different religions are the main conditions for peaceful and stable existence of humankind. Inter-confessional dialogue becomes an integral part of the dialogue between countries and civilizations. We more often come across the term "tolerance" in the literature devoted to confessional and ethic problems. Tolerance is not quite the same as patience. Patience is the feeling or the action of someone, experiencing pain, violence or other forms

of negative influence; tolerance means respect to other people or admission of their equality, refusal of domination or violence. Unfortunately, intolerance has become one of the numerous global problems recently. We observe ethno-national conflicts, acts of xenophobia, especially towards refugees and immigrants, facts of religious extremism in different parts of the world and even in our country.

In this connection tolerant approach, developed by Buddhism, also may be very useful. As His Holiness Dalai Lama 14 remarks: "The variety of the world religions is necessary to enrich the experience of mankind and world civilization. Man's mind, varied in its width and inclinations, needs different approaches to the world and happiness. It is like food. Some people find Christianity more attractive, others prefer Buddhism. So, the idea is quite clear: all world religions are necessary for mankind, they conform to the style of life, various spiritual demands and inherited national traditions of individuals".<sup>7</sup>

Thus, appeal to socio-cultural potential of Buddhism, analysis of interaction of tolerance ideas, overall responsibility, ethics of non-violence in Buddhism with development trends in the modern world, to our mind, can contribute to the search of new models of solving most global problems of the present time.

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ESTABLISHING THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE  
BUDDHA IN *PRAMANASIDDHI* –  
*PARICCHEDA OF THE PRAMANAVARTTIKA*

NAWANG TSERING

The monasteries in Ladakh and other Gonpas in the Himalaya are filled with statues and painting-scrolls of six ornament of *jambhudipa*. The philosophy of these Indian Acharyas has formed a core of syllabi in these monasteries. Acharya Nagaarjuna and Aryadeva belong to Madhyakika school of thought. Acharya Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Asanga and Basubandhu were *vijnanavadin*, the mind only school. The lamas of Tibet and the Himalaya study five major subjects of Buddhist philosophy and ethics, viz. *Madhyamika*, *Prajnaparamita*, *Abidharma*, *Binaya* and *Pramana*. After years of study of these subjects, the candidate is awarded the degree of Geshe. Present paper deals with study of *Pramanavarttika* an important text on *Pramana*. Tibetans have written dozens of commentaries on the *Pramanavarttika* particularly, the second chapter of *Pramanasidhi Pariccheda*. The discussion in the present paper is based on the commentary of rGyal-tsab-rje (AD. 1362-1432) on the second chapter of *Pramanavarttika*.

Acharya Dignaga (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) is regarded as the father of Buddhist *Pramanaa*. Among all his compositions on Buddhist *Pramana*, the *Pramanasamuccya* is his magnum opus. "Both in matter and in manner his works marked a distinct departure from those of his predecessors. The keeness of his insight and the soundness of his critical acumen combined to stamp in an individuality all his own."

Acharya Dharmakirti (7<sup>th</sup> century AD) who had appeared in the fermanent of Indian scene of *Pramanas* almost a hundred years after Dignaga was pupil of Acharya Isvarasena. He felt proud of his pupil and acknowledged Dharmakirti's understanding of Dignaga's *Pramanasamuccya* better thnt himself. On his Teacher's advice Dharmakirti

wrote the *Pramavarttika*, a metrical commentary on *Pramanasamuccya*. The study of *Pramanavarttika* has gained immense popularity and the subsequent scholars have taken the *Pramanavarttika* as an independent work rather than a mere commentary on the *Pramanasamuccya*. Dharmakirti wrote seven treatises on *Pramanas*, viz. (i) *Pramanavarttika*, (ii) *Pramanaviniscya*, (iii) *Nyayabindu*, (iv) *Hetubindu*, (v) *Sambadan-Pariksa*, (vi) *Vadanyaya*, (vii) and *Santanatarasiddhi*. The *Pramanavarttika* is the lengthiest work consisting of 145 metrical verses.

According to the Tibetan sources, Dignaga is believed to have written (i) *Pramanasamuccya*, (ii) *Hetu-cakra*, (iii) *Nyaya-pravesa*, (iv) *Alambana*, *Pariksha* and (v) *Trikala-pariksa*. He also wrote auto-commentaries on the *Pramanasamuccya* and *Alambana-pariksa*. But none of these works is available now in Sanskrit, except the first chapter of the *Pramanasamuccya*, the *Pratyaksa-pariksa* and *Nyaya-pravesa*. *Pramanasamuccya* consists of six chapters, viz. *Pratyaksa*, *Svarthanumana*, *Prarthanumana*, *Drstanta*, *Apoha* and *Jati*. The *Pramanavarttika* is divided into four chapters, viz. (i) *Pramana-siddhi*, (ii) *Pratyaksa*, (iii) *Savarthanumana*, (iv) *Pararthanumana*. There is a considerable controversy among scholars regarding the order of chapters of the *Pramanavarttika*. Tibetan tradition put the order of the chapters like (i) *Svarthanumana*, (ii) *Pramana-siddhi*, (iii) *Pratyaksa*, (iv) *Savarthanumana*. But Th. Stcherbatsky and A. Vastrikov do not accept the Tibetan way of arranging the chapters, saying that this is contrary to the arrangement of chapters made by Acharya Dignaga in his *Pramanasamuccya*. Also Dharmakirti followed the traditional way of arranging the chapters in his *Nyayabindu* and other works, which is like *Pratyaksa*, *Svarthanumana* etc. As the chapter *Pramana-siddhi* is the commentatorial explanation of the initial stanza of the *Pramanasamuccya*, there is every justification of placing this chapter in the beginning. Manarathanadin who has written a commentary on the *Pramanavarttika* also follows the traditional order of the *Pramanasamuccya* in the arrangement of the chapters in his commentary. Rahul Sanskritayan also does not accept the Tibetan tradition. He thinks that the confusion perhaps started, because Dharmakirti wrote an auto-commentary on the *Svarthanumana* chapters and the commentary on the rest of the chapter was written by Devendrabudhi, a direct disciple of Acharya Dharmakirti.

The pivotal points of discussion in the treatises of Acharya Dignaga and Acharya Dharmakirti are actually eight logical reasonings. The *Nyayapravesa* of Dignaga and the *Pramanavarttika* of Dharmakirti enumerate them in the following verses:

Immediate perception and inference together with (their) fallacies (are) in view of understanding for one's sake.

Verbal proofs and refutations together with (their) fallacies (are) in view of understanding for other's sake.

*mngon-sum dang ni rjes-su dpag,  
Itar-smang bcas-pa bdag-rig phyir,  
Sgrub-pa dang ni sun-'byin ngag,  
Itar-snang bcas-pa gzhan-rtos phyir.*

The *Pramanavarttika* which is itself a metrical commentary on the *Pramanasamuccya*, many commentaries and sub-commentaries were written by the Indian scholars belonging to Dharmakirti's school of Buddhist logic. Out of these, only few are now extant in Sanskrit, but almost all of them are preserved in Tibetan versions. Among the commentators only Manorathandin wrote a commentary on all the four chapters of the *Pramanavarttika*, whereas other commentators covered only three chapters, excluding the chapter on *Svarthanumana*. The reason for the exclusion of the *Svarthanumana* chapter in their commentaries might be that Acharya Dharmakirti himself wrote an auto-commentary on the *Svarthanumana* chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*. The list of commentators and sub-commentators of *Pramanavarttika* is as follows:

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Name of the commentators</i>	<i>Chapter on which commentary written</i>	<i>Available in Sanskrit or Tibetan</i>
1.	Devendrabuddhi (Panjika)	On three chapters excluding <i>Svarthanumana-pariccheda</i>	Tibetan
2.	Sakyabuddhi (Panjika-tika)	-do-	-do-
3.	Prajnakaragupta (Bhasya)	-do-	Sanskrit and Tibetan
4.	Jayananta (Bhasya-tika)	-do-	Tibetan
5.	Yama (Bhasya-tika)	-do-	-do-
6.	Ravigupta (Bhasya-tika)	-do-	-do-
7.	Manorathandin (Vrtti)	On all the four chapters <i>Svarthanumana-pariccheda</i> only	Sanskrit
8.	Dharmakirti (Svavrtti-tika)		Sanskrit and Tibetan
9.	Sankarananda (Svavrtti-tika)	-do-	Tibetan
10.	Karnagomi (Svavrtti-tika)	-do-	Sanskrit (incomplete)
11.	Sakyabuddhi (Svavrtti-tika)	-do-	Tibetan (incomplete)

As there has been a long tradition spreading over several centuries, of studying Buddhist logic specially that of Acharya Dharmakirti school of thought, numerous commentaries on the work of Acharya Dharmakirti were written by different authors in Tibet itself. Some of the important commentators of Tibet who wrote commentaries on the *Pramanavarttika* of Acharya Dharmakirti are as follows:

Sr. No.	Name of Tibetan Commentators	Chapter on which commentary was written
1.	Rigs-pai'i Seng-ge	All the four chapters
2.	Ren mda-wa	-do-
3.	rGyal-tsab rje	-do-
4.	mKhas-grub rje	-do-
5.	rGe-'dun grub	-do-
6.	Shanti-pa	-do-
7.	Pan-chen bsod-grags	-do-
8.	Stan-tar lha ram-pa	-do-
9.	'Jam-dbyang bzad-pa	On three chapters (excluding <i>Pararthanu- mana-pariccheda</i> )
10.	Sakya-Chogdan	On all the four chapters
11.	Pad-ma dkar-po and many more	-do-

The source material for the present topic is based on the commentary of rGyal-tsab rje's rNam-'grel thar-lam gsal-byed. The commentary of rGyal-tsab rje, who was a direct disciple of rje Tzong-kha-pa (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) is one of the first exhaustive commentaries in Tibetan belonging to the *rGe lugs-pa* sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

The task before Acharya Dignaga and Acharya Dharmakirti was not only to discuss the logical topics, but also to justify the feasibility of logical discussions in comprehending the philosophical niceties of Buddhist thought which basically centre around the fourfold truth, preached by the Buddha. The fourfold truth consists of (i) misery, (ii) the cause of misery, (iii) the cessation of misery, (iv) and the path to the cessation of misery. The first two are prescribed as undesirable (*heya*) whereas the last two as desirable (*upadeya*). The fourfold truth actually purports to refer to (i) the cause of misery and (ii) the cessation of misery (i.e. *nirvana*) because the former implies the truth of misery and the latter implies the truth of the way to the cessation of misery. The cause of misery can be apprehended

when one, after going through the prescription of the scriptures (*aganma*) which are not contradictory among themselves, investigates and examines the origin of misery applying reasonings (*yukti-bala*). Besides, there are certain other points which can be comprehended only after hearing and believing faithfully the scriptural prescriptions, because they are very much hidden (*atyanta-paroksa*) in nature and are, therefore, subject to inference (*anumana*). The cause of misery whose nature is impermanence is subject to examination and verification (*pariksana*), whereas the cessation of misery (i.e. *nirvana*) which is very much hidden (*atyanta-paroksa*) in nature is subject to inference. All these points have been discussed by Dharmakirti in the *Pramanavarttika*.

The chapter on the *Pramanasiddhi-pariksa* of the *Pramanavarttika* deals with "The doctrine of *Pramanabhuta-buddha*" which aimed at establishing the Buddha as embodiment of valid knowledge (*Pramanabhuta*). The Buddha is *Pramanabhuta*, because he is great compassionate (*jagadhitaisin*), teacher (*sasta*), all round perfection (*sugata*), and saviour (*tayin*), and this has been expressed in the invocatory verse of Acharya Dignaga in his *Pramanasamuccya*. The purpose of logical discussion of the invocatory verse of Dignaga by Dharmakirti in the *Pramanavarttika* is to ascertain the authenticity of flawless doctrine (*Buddha-sasana*), and the authority of its perfect teacher (*sasta*) in order to strengthen faith in (*Buddha-sasana*) and *sasta* for the seeker (*mumksa*), or spiritual perfection (*abhyudaya*) and of summum bonum (*nihsreyas*, i.e. *nirvana*). To attain the goal of spiritual perfection and summum bonum, it is the Buddha himself who is the means or the way thereto. The Buddha himself is the final test, hence, the establishment of the Buddha as *Pramanabhuta* is necessary for realizing the goal of spiritual perfection and summum bonum.

The doctrinal teaching of the Buddha (*Buddha-sasana*) which are the result of his personal experience are grounded in logical reasonings. Though the Buddha is regarded as final test for the seekers, he however never advised his disciples to accept and follow his prescriptions blindly. Rather he advised to test and investigate them on logical reasons as he himself did.

For the comprehension of the *Pramanabhuta-buddha* and transcendental knowledge acquired by the Buddha, the twofold method, viz. *anuloma* (regular sequence) and *pratiloma* (reverse sequence), is employed in the *Pramanavarttika*. This also removed the following doubts:

- (a) What is the cause of the emergence of the Buddha as embodiment



of valid knowledge (*utpatti-hetu*)

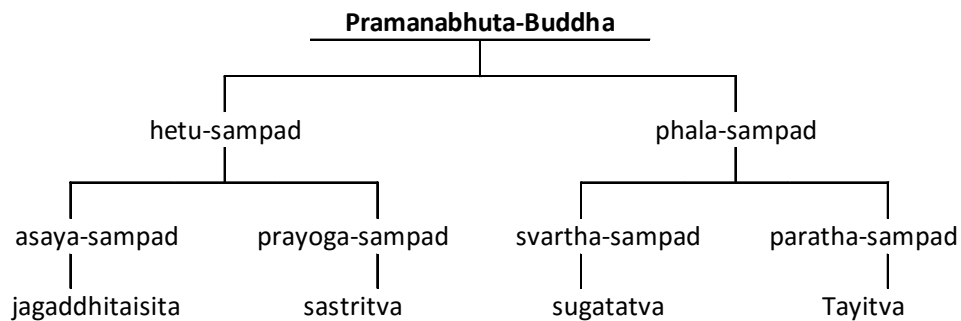
- (b) Even if it is established that the Buddha is embodiment of valid knowledge, there is no means of conveying (*jnapa-ketu*), the transcendental knowledge acquired by him.

The doubts are removed thus. Buddhism does not believe in an uncaused effect; so there should be some cause of the *Pramanabhuta-budha*. And the answer to the above mentioned first question is that the *Pramanabhuta-budha* is not an uncaused effect, but is an effect caused *jagadhitaistva*, *sastritva*, *sugatava* and *tayiva* which are essentially the *utpatti hetu*, (caused of origination) of the *pramanabhuta*. Again, *jagadhitaistva*, *sastritva*, *sugatava* and *tayitava* are not discretely different from each other, but are themselves causally connected in succeeding causal sequence (*anuloma*), as *jagadhitaistva* is the cause of *sastritva*, *sastritva* is the cause of *sugatava* and *sugatava* is the cause of *tayitva*.

The second doubt is removed when we take into account the doctrinal preaching preached by the Omniscient Buddha who is embodiment of valid knowledge *Pramanabhutta-buddha*. His doctrinal preachings are essentially the means of conveying to others (*jnapaka-hetu*), the transcendental knowledge he has himself acquired (*sarvajnana*). These are the causes of the Buddha being called *tayin*, *sugata*, *sasta* and *jagadhitaistin* which may also be reversely causally connected in preceding causal sequence (*pratiloma*) as *tayitva* is the cause of *sugatava*, *sugatava* is the cause of *sastritva* and *sastritva* is the cause *jagadhitasintva* together become the cause of the *Pramananabhuta-buddha*.

Thus is established the Buddha as *pramanabhutta*. Acharya Dharmakirti defines Pramana as uncontradicted knowledge (*avisamvadi-jnana*) and also as knowledge hitherto uncognized (*ajanatartha-prakasaka*). Here the four noble truths preached by the Buddha, are uncontradicted experience. The Buddha's knowledge comprises all things, transcendental as well as empirical. As his knowledge is uncontradicted experience, the Buddha is *pramana*. The distinctive characteristic of Pramana is *avisamvadi-jnana*, uncontradicted knowledge, which means *artha-kriyasthiti*, causal efficiency. When an object (*arhta*) is endowed with efficiency (*kriya*), it is objectively real, and that signifies uncontradicted (*avisamvadana*) nature of object which is the meaning of valid knowledge (*prama*). In other words the means of valid knowledge should be uncontradicted or non discrepant in the sense that there should be no conflict between the cognition of an object and the practical activity or

efficiency meant to obtain it, for example, fire has its causal efficiency of burning and cooking which is attested by experience. Moreover, his knowledge is immediate and is free from any thought-construction (*kalpana*) and illusion (*bhranti*), because whatever he knows is the knowledge of the first moment of his omniscient consciousness. As his knowledge is thus uncontradicted experience and is not known by others the Buddha is the means of valid knowledge. The word '*bhuta*' is suffixed to the word '*pramana*' in order to exclude eternality (*abhuta*) eternal *pramana* does not exist. According to the theists, God is eternal and the eternal means of valid knowledge. Buddhists maintained that God is or cannot be the eternal means of valid knowledge, because eternal and static mind cannot cognize the external objects which are non-eternal and are in constant change. Knowledge arises in succession owing to the successive order of cause and conditions. If God is eternal and omniscient, he at once knows all the causes and conditions of knowledge, and his knowledge is thus simultaneous. Hence, there is no justification of his knowledge being arisen in succession. Again, if we assume that God is eternal, but his knowledge is non-eternal, this will also not serve the purpose, because the knowledge of non-eternal objects does not arise out of something eternal but arises in succession and the eternal God is also not depending on cause and conditions. If we suppose God as non-eternal (*anitya*), then it will mean that there should be some causes (*sadhana*) of this supposed non-eternal beings. But this non-eternal being has not experienced any sort of good or bad actions nor has he eradicated the afflictions (*klesas*) in his past lives. Hence, the apprehension of such non-eternal being does not have any justification (*pramana*) in the absence of any cause. Validity always consists of dependence on productive factors (*utpada-ka-hetus*). The productive factors of the validity of the authority of the Buddha are *jagadhitaisitva*, *sastritva*, *sugatatva* and *tayitva*. Following explanation illustrates how the Buddha is being born as *pramanabhuta Buddha*.



The Buddha is possessed of both the means of attainment *hetu-sampad* as well as the fruition of attainment, *phala-sampad*. The means of attainment comprises his compassion (*karuna, asaya*) and his spiritual practice (*prayogo*), whereas the fruition of attainment results in personal attainment (*svārtha-sampad*), as also attainment for others (*parārtha-sampad*). His compassion (*karuna, asaya*) gives rise to attainment for others (*parārtha-sampad*) which justifies the epithets, *jagadhitaśin* and *tayin*, while his spiritual practice (*prayoga-sampad*) gives rise to personal attainment which justifies the epithets, *sasta* and *sugata*.

### *Jagadhitaśitva*

The great compassion (*mahakaruna*) is the prime cause for the establishment of the Buddha as embodiment of valid knowledge (*pramanabhuta*). The desire to remove the miseries of beings along with the causes of misery is the meaning of compassion. The Buddha realizes that the cultivation of compassionate mind for the sake of others' well-being is inevitable for him, as the immediate task before him is to liberate all beings from *samsara*. In order to carry out his mission successfully, he undertakes incessant practices and training in compassion so that he may will be equipped with all necessary means i.e. wisdom (*prajna* etc. to remove the sufferings of others. The compassion does not arise in absence of cause or that of affiliated causes, but it is caused by incessant practices and training in compassion in its homogeneous series of previous consciousness in several lives.

Incessant practices make the consciousness rise spontaneously out of its own homogeneous previous consciousness. Such a being of high rank never lives for a single moment without a compassionate mind, because he has already eliminated adverse causes, like hatred etc. since long. Though every being is capable of possessing compassionate mind, yet since he has not eliminated all adverse forces like hatred etc., he is destitute of compassionate mind. It is due to the existence of adversaries, like hatred etc., which come in the way of a man putting obstructions to exercise the noble ideal of wisdom etc. for the sake of other beings. Though wisdom etc. which could be seen in all beings as their seeds are present in consciousness due to their own previous homogeneous causes, yet they are devoid of uninterrupted wisdom etc. as they have not undergone thought incessant practices. Incessant practices cause the spontaneous rise of its own nature. For instance, passionate mind of a common folk breeds passionate love, but in the Bodhisattva there arises only dispassionate love

for which the Bodhisattva attains the great compassionate mind directed towards others' well-being (*jagadhitaisitva*) through long practices. Through incessant practices arises homogeneity of compassion in consciousness, and finally the Bodhisattva attains the stage when the great compassionate mind rises spontaneously without any further exertion. And the Buddha possesses such mind of great compassion.

### *Sastrtva*

The Bodhisattva who is full of compassion always endeavours for the welfare of others and strives to redeem the suffering beings. He earnestly wishes that the living beings who are constantly suffering from miseries in the world should get rid of such miseries. But before he desires to liberate the suffering beings from their miseries he should himself first know what is misery, the cause of misery, the cessation of misery and the way to its cessation, i.e. the fourfold truth. If he does not realize the truth, whatever he preaches to the suffering beings for redemption from their miseries would remain a hidden fact for him too. That is why he undertakes incessant spiritual practices and meditation for the realization of the truth which results in the knowledge of impermanence etc. Thus, the Bodhisattva himself first knows the cessation of misery and finds the way to the cessation of misery, otherwise it would be difficult to know the hidden truth of the cessation of misery and the way to the cessation of misery.

The antidote to the cause of misery can be determined, if the cause of misery is known. Misery is caused by the notion of 'I' and 'me' or ego-clinging (*atmatmiyagrahana*) which results in the attachment towards objects (*panacaskanda*) and that (*attachment*) also gives birth to craving (*trsna*). The antidote to the cause of misery (*karma-klesa*) is egoity (*nairatmya*). The false belief in the existence of egoity is eliminated by the force of the antidote to the existence of egoity, i.e. the realization of non-existence of egoity. Thus at the root of the cause of misery is ego-clinging and the eradication of ego-clinging by its antidote (i.e. *nairatmya*) which leads to the cessation of misery. Once the root of ego-clinging is rooted out, misery will have no leg to stand. Understanding its importance, the Bodhisattva undertakes incessant spiritual practices and meditation by adopting infinite means in several lives to realize non-egoity for the eradication of misery, not for himself alone but for the welfare of others too, so that even a trace of the sub-conscious impulses and drives may not be left in his mind. Such Bodhisattva finally attains the stage of *Samyag-*

*sambuddha*. The Sakyamuni Buddha is the *Samyag-sambuddha* who has thus perfectly eradicated what is undesirable (*dosa duhkha-hetutrsna-atmatmiyagrahana*) and has incontrovertibly realized the knowledge what is desirable (*nairatmya-darsana*). The means of the incessant spiritual practices and meditation imply *sastritva*, which ultimately refers to the realization of non-egoity.

### *Sugatatva*

The Sakyamuni Buddha is *Sugatatva*, because he is endowed with the three qualities, gained after eradicating completely the cause of misery. The three qualities are *prasatata*, *apunaravortti*, and *nihsessata*. The Buddha's efforts to eradicate the misery is commendable (*prasastata*) which is different from that of an ego-believers (*atmadarsi*) who also wants to destroy the pleasant feelings caused by the attachment with their ego. The ego-believer cannot eradicate the misery, rather he creates a miserable life for himself as he is always conscious of his ego.

Attachment caused by ego-clinging gives rise to defilements which makes a further chain of defilements. Eradication of the repeated recurrence of the defilements (*apurnaravortti*) is possible only when the notion of ego-clinging, the root of all ills, is destroyed. The realization of non-egoity which is the antidote to non-clinging caused the eradication of the repeated recurrence of defilements, that means eradication of *klesavarna*. He is different from a *srotapanna* who has to take seven births just for the eradication of the repeated recurrence of defilements. The *Sravakas* and the *Pratyekabuddhas*, though having attained *Arhathood*, are yet to eradicate the impure thoughts of past habits (*dusthula*), ingrained in mind as subconscious impulses and dirves (*vasanas*). They have realized non-egoity but are subject to rebirth, because they are free from worldly afflictions. However, they are handicapped so far as preaching to others is concerned. The Sakyamuni Buddha, on the other hand, has eradicated all such obstacles, both *klesavarna* and *jnyayavarana*, without leaving any residuum through perfect realization of non-egoity. For him there is nothing left to be eradicated. What is eradicable has been eradicated leaving any residuum 6 *nihsesa*. He is thus *Sugatatva*.

### *Tayitva*

The Sakyamuni Buddha is *Tayin*, because he preaches others the path of eradicating the cause of misery which he has himself perfected. He proclaimed the way to *summum bonum* for others without expecting any

kind of rewards or fame in return for himself. Even his personal accomplishment is for the benefit of others. He has followed the path from the very start of his journey step by step like a learner (*saiksyā*), and he has to undertake various means of incessant spiritual practices and meditation for the realization of impermanence, non-egoity etc. with an intention to benefit others with his achievement. His entire achievement for attaining the highest stage of spiritual perfection is for the sake of others. He is thus a savior of others, a *Tayin*.

The above discussion in different sections is aimed at justifying the fact that *jagadhitaivā* is the base of *sastrtva* which is itself the base of *sugattatva* and *sugatava*. The base of *tayitva*, *jagadhitaivā*, *sastrtva*, *sugatava* and *tayita* are the entailing preconditions of *Samya* of *sambuddhatva* of Sakyamuni Buddha who is thus privileged with the embodiment of valid knowledge (*pramanabhuta-Buddha*).

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## BUDDHISM AND POLITY IN CASPIAN REGION

BAATR U. KITINOV

Though Buddhism originated far beyond the Caspian region, it still managed to gain a foothold on its banks. In this region which had virtually all known Eurasian religions, Buddhism inevitably had an impact on many areas of public life in social, cultural and political terms. The political factor was deeply involved in the strengthening of religion. The current dominant culture in the Caspian Sea region is the Islamic culture; at least, majority of nationalities of the Caspian, except Russians, follow various branches of Islam. However, the specificity of religious situation in the Caspian region shows that it has the traces and heritage of various influences, over centuries and which continue till now.

The specific position of Russia in the Caspian region is determined by very unique factor: the Russian civilization is represented there by three world religions: Christianity (in Astrakhan region), Islam (in Republic of Dagestan), and Tibetan Buddhism (in Republic of Kalmykia, Astrakhan region). Buddhism has had three waves of propagation in the Caspian region: in 2<sup>nd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Buddha's teachings covered whole of Asia from China to Syria, including the Caspian shores; in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the Persian Dynasty of Il-Khanids; the third wave began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Oirats, Western Mongolians, also known as Kalmyks, moved to the lower steppes of the Volga River (North Caspian) from Dzungaria (modern Xinjiang of China). Kalmyks while adopting Buddhism, developed the new specifics in the political structure. First of all, despite having the same culture of nomads, the polity of Kalmyks during their stay in Central Asia (Dzungaria) changed from the polity after their migration to Russia and settlement on the north lands of the Caspian region.

The first data on Buddhism among Oirats is traceable to mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, when one can trace some main events, important persons and

dates. However, deficiency of sources does not allow to suppose the wide spread of Buddhism among these nomads. More complete and profound information is related to post-Yuan period (after 1368 AD), i.e. to the time, when China was under the rule of Ming dynasty(1368-1642), which substituted the Yuan emperors, and Oirats did appear in the Ming chronicles.

Usually scholars suppose, that Oirat leaders accepted themselves as the Yuan Emperors' political heirs, and tried to adopt the relations, which had been developed in Yuan court between religion and politics (the restoration of the "Pupil – Teacher" alliance). The main symbol of this type of relations – title of the State Tutor – usually had been presented to be the most influential lama of Khanate. For instance, Essen Khan, the leader of Choros Dzungar Oirats, in mid-15<sup>th</sup> century had an ambition to restore the Yuan Empire. It was demonstrated not only by his self-proclamation as the Khagan of the newly founded Yuan dynasty,<sup>1</sup> according to Ming shi,<sup>2</sup> but also by his appropriate religious policy. Like his father Toghon Khan, Essen appreciated Buddhist monks as highly-educated people and their responsibilities were not limited to the performance of religious ceremonies. They were often sent to the Ming emperors' court as ambassadors and served as advisors to other Oirat khans. Actually any Tibetan Buddhist school, which had an influence among Western Mongolians, also visualized its political role – to be as close as possible to the secular rulers, and have an influence on the political decisions.

The Chinese emperors were well aware of the importance of the lamas' influence on Oirat Khans. That's why, to limit Oirats' ambitions, the Chinese leaders made efforts to exert their influence over the Oirat Khans through monks – a strategy used quite successfully by the Ming court in their relations with other "barbarians": Tibetans and Mongolians.

The rivalry between Western and Eastern Mongols in their attempts to restore Genghis Khan's Empire resulted in hostilities between them for many centuries. Representatives of different Tibetan Buddhist traditions were also involved in this struggle in their attempts to establish their influence both in Tibet and among Mongolian speaking peoples. As early as the mid-thirteenth century Tibetan Buddhism was divided in accordance with their patronage by different Mongolian groups. Thus, Oirats were close to the Kagyu sub-schools while the Mongols had special relationship with the Sakya School. Buddhism was seen by the Mongolian leaders as the necessary component in rebuilding Genghis Khan's empire.



An active promotion of the idea of the unity of the secular and religious powers led to considerable involvement of the clergy in political campaigning.

The Ming dynasty, and then Manchu Qing dynasty (1642-1911), strove to become an exceptional religious ("Celestial") center for all its neighboring and distant nations. The Qing dynasty continued the practice of patronage of different schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Besides, to further ensure its authority it proclaimed that the Blessed Empire had been restored by the dynasty with the Dharma-Raja (i.e. the patron as the protector of the faith) at its head and went so far as to take over some of the functions of the Tibetan clergy (for example, "finding" the right "reincarnations").<sup>3</sup>

Thus, after the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368 AD almost two hundred years had passed before the Buddhist traditional concept of the "two laws" started spreading again among the Mongolian rulers. The restoration of this very specific concept had a decisive role in the success of different schools of Tibetan Buddhism among West and East Mongolian tribes, and further contributed to the development of the state ideological institutions, which strengthened the secular power.

#### OIRATS AND THE DALAI LAMA

The new level of interaction of Oirat polity and Buddhism happened in 1640, and three main events influenced the increasing role of religion in the nomadic society. First was connected with the Oirat internal events. Of crucial importance was the Congress of all the Mongolian princes which was held in Tarbagatai region on the territory of the Dzungar Khanate in September 1640. The Mongolian side at the Congress was represented only by the Khalkha Khans, Subudi and Gombo. Far greater was the number of the Oirat nobility: the Khoshout Gushi Khan arrived from Kukunor (North Tibet) with several sons and relatives and Torgout Kho-Urlyukkhan from the Russian Volga region with his sons. There was also a large group of Khans representing the Dzungar Khanate itself. The representatives of the Dalai Lama were also present. This Congress was one of the most important events in the Oirat history. It was also one of those that clearly demonstrated that in taking decisions on crucial matters concerning the sustainability of their states, the Oirat nobility always strove to work out a general policy agreeing on their plans and objectives and finding compromises; lamas played an important role in such events. The important result of the Congress was the confirmation of a number of

rules known in the historical literature as Oirat-Mongolian Laws of 1640 (*Tsaajinbichig*). These Laws are a first-rate primary source giving an insight into both the inside life of the Mongolian society, its polity and international status, and role of Buddhism. They had three basic objectives: to regulate potentially conflicting situations to avoid any possibility of internal strife; to agree on conditions for uniting forces and providing aid to each other against any possible threat from outside; to strengthen the existing order and traditions. Laws again confirmed the role of Buddhism as the state religion of all the Mongolian people, their Khanates and territories; a war was proclaimed against shamans and conversion to lamas was approved of. The long standing de facto unity of the State and *Sangha* had its judicious form in the Mongolian-Oirat laws. Thus the legal basis for Khan's power was built by formulating the interaction of secular and religious powers as the condition *sine qua non* for the administration of a nomadic state. That law has been traditionally recognized by the Mongolian speaking people as an important instrument for regulating the conduct of both *khans* and their subjects (including lamas).

Second event is connected with the figure of the Dalai Lama, who became the ruler of the whole Tibet with the support of Oirats. At the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century the struggle between Geluk and Karmapa red-hat schools in Tibet was so strong, that the leaders of yellow-hat tradition, i.e. Geluk, decided to ask Oirats to help them against Karmapa and their supporters – East Mongols.

The choice of the Oirats to prefer Geluk school was not accidental as at the time “of all the numerous clans of Mongolia, the Elet (i.e. Oirat – B.K.) Khans followed only Tsongkhapa's [Geluk] religion”.<sup>4</sup> Introduction to *The autobiography of the first Panchen Lama* states, that the situation resulted from the fact that “the older sects (existing in Mongolia at the time – B.K.), especially the Karmapa, seem to have largely devoted the greater part of their energies to the more cultivated tribes of territories like Chahar”. According to the same source, “those areas were richer, and they expected that the growing patronage of these tribes would help to make up for the religious revenues that were being lost through the progressive displacement of Lamaism in the western hills of Nepal”.<sup>5</sup> The close relationship between Oirat Khans and hierarchs of Geluk School allowed the West Mongolians to participate in Tibetan affairs.

The general meeting of the Oirat Khans took a decision to support the Dalai Lama and thus Gushi Khan of the Khoshout (1582-1655) in 1637 AD set off with his army to Tibet. Gushi Khan's military activities

have been given enough attention in historiography.<sup>6</sup> In early 1642 the main fortress of Geluk enemies was taken by Oirats which meant Gushi's final victory over the Geluk rivals. In Shigatse monastery, in a solemn and festive atmosphere, Gushi Khan proclaimed the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsan Gyatso as the spiritual and secular ruler over the whole of Tibet.<sup>7</sup> When the "Pupil - Teacher" (or "Patron - Lama") relationship was established between them, Gushi Khan received the name of Chogyal (*chosrgyal*), that is the Ruler (Patron) of the teachings, and had been praised as the reincarnation (embodiment) of *Vajrapani*, or the Ruler Who Had Achieved One of the Stages of Bodhisattva perfection.<sup>8</sup> Thanks to activities of the Geluk lamas, the position of this school was strengthened significantly and the lamas started to have a growing influence on the domestic and international policy of the Oirat Khans. The Dzungar Khanate grew into a center for the unification of all Mongolian speaking people.

Third event was connected with the Manchus, who in 1644 AD seized Beijing and established the new Chinese Qing dynasty. Due to the actions and victory of Oirat (Khoshout) Gushi Khan, the influence and importance of the Geluk School sharply increased throughout the Mongolian-speaking world and in Tibet itself. Dalai Lama's significance was highly estimated by the Manchu Khans, and the convergence of Qing emperors with Tibetan hierarchs marked the beginning of the new role of Buddhism as the necessary and significant part of state administration and polity in China. The influence of the lamas from the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century was so high among Manchus, that Nurhaci, the founder of the Manchu dynasty, met Lama Erdeni as one of his major guests at his grand ceremony devoted to his proclamation as the Khan in 1616 AD. Abahai (? – 1643), Nurhaci's son, continued the development of the "Patron - Lama" relationship and started the construction of the temple of Mahakala deity in Mukden in 1635 AD. According to a number of scholars, the Abahai Khan's edict of 1634 AD to the effect that the population under his rule should be called Manchu was justified by the association between the ethnonym "Manchu" and Manjushri, the name of the Buddhist deity Bodhisattva.

Since the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Oirats had gone through a long phase of the social-political crisis, which led in 1640s, to the disintegration of their united state and formation of the three separate Oirat states on the Eurasian continent: the Dzungar Khanate in Central Asia, the Khoshut Khanate in Northern Tibet and the Kalmyk Khanate

on the Caspian shore within the Russian Empire. Since the late 16<sup>th</sup> century the situation in Tibet itself was also characterized by a systemic crisis, growing tension and greater involvement of Mongolian peoples in the Tibetan internal strife. The influence of the Kagyu sub-schools on the Dzungars continued which was demonstrated again in the events of 1717-1720 AD, when Tibet was occupied by Dzungar Oirats.

Long standing and steady ties of the Torgout and Khoshout with the Geluk School led to the predominance of “Yellow hats” in their *khanates*. The syncretic, to a certain degree, character of the Geluk teachings contributed to the increase of the social basis of the followers of this teaching among Oirats. Different schools of Tibetan Buddhism in favor of particular groups of Oirats is one of the most characteristic features in the history of the spread and establishment of this religion among Western Mongolians.

Throughout their history (including both the Central Asian and Russian periods) the Oirats were permanently in a state of war against neighboring countries. Some of the reasons for those military conflicts were of an economic nature (control over the trade routes, exchange of goods, etc.), partly political ambitions (the building of a strong united empire) and, obviously, the need to survive in the hostile environment. But those wars had never been waged for the sake of the spread of religion or its enforcement on other cultures and nations.<sup>9</sup>

#### SPECIFICS OF BUDDHISM AMONG KALMYKS

Geluk School’s predominance among Russian Kalmyks had become quite obvious: missions sent to the Dalai Lama were frequent, the Kalmyk lamas went for the education mainly to the “Yellow hat” monasteries. It was the Dalai Lama who handed to tribal leaders the regalia of the Khan power, etc. The reception of the Khan title from the highest Tibetan hierarch was interpreted by the society as an act of sanctification of the chief Khan’s right to power. It was this way that the Khan’s personage and power underwent sanctification while in the past it used to take the form of the State Teacher (Tutor) institution for the Khan (Khagan). Now it was the Dalai Lama who granted the right to become the Khan of all Oirat tribes. Y.Kichanov, the reputed Russian Sinologist, was right when he noted that with Mongolian speaking peoples the central authority uniting both religious and political powers was embodied in the personage of the ruler.<sup>10</sup>

The sacralization of power was an objective necessity – Kalmyks lived

far away from their religious center (Tibet) among the Muslim and Christian communities. Thus, if the Khan received his regalia in the Dalai Lama's name, it meant the approval by the superior spiritual authority of the Khan's right to rule over his people and state, as well as to protect the religion. According to the Japanese scholar Ishihama Yumiko, the first Oirat Khan to be granted the title and royal regalia was Gushi Khan who received his title from the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. The same approval was also granted to Gushi's descendants – Dayan and Dalai in 1663 and 1671 respectively. In 1678 the title was granted to Galdan Boshogtu Khan. As Ishihama Yumiko points out the full form of the title of these Khans was "tenzin khan" (*bstan 'dzin*), or the Khan-protector of Buddhism. Besides, approximately at the same time when Gushi received his title of "tenzin khan" the title "Khan" was received by Daichin of the Russian Torgouts (Kalmyks). But some internal discord among the leaders of Kalmyk Khanate influenced the new choice of Dalai Lama: in 1657 he granted the title "Khan" to Ochirtu Cetsen of Khoshout whose people were roaming in Qinghai (Northern Tibet). "On the basis of this fact, we would suggest that the title of Khan without "bsTan 'dzin" had the meaning of Oyirad khan... as khan of the Oyirad".<sup>11</sup> Later, because of internal strife among Oirats and Kalmyks, as well as problems in Tibet itself (the death of 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama in 1682), it was only in 1697 AD that the title "Khan of the Oirats" was granted to Ayuka of the Russian Torgouts, and since that time his descendants up to the last Ubashi Khan, who departed with the majority of Kalmyks back to China in 1771, had been regarded by the Dalai Lama as Khans of the Oirats.

The leading Oirat lamas were, as a rule, born into nobility. For example, Neijji Toin (1557-1653), son of Mergen-Tebene, the rich noyon of Torgout tribe. In 1616, when Neijji Toin visited his father in Dzungaria, the sons of famous Oirat Khans were ordained as lamas by him, including the Dzungar Khan Khara-Khula's, the Derbet Khan Taishi Dalai's, the Khoshout Khan Kudulen-Ubashi's and other royal families. The majority of outstanding Buddhist preachers came from these families.

The Oirats did not know the *khubilgan* (reincarnation) institution and the number of monasteries and monks was far less numerous than those of Eastern Mongolians. The reasons we need to see in the specifics of polity of these nomads, in military-political and geographic circumstances of the Oirats as their territorial distance meant less close interactions with Tibet while a stronger position of the autocratic Oirat Khan promoted a gradual concentration of all the secular power in his hands.

The migration of the Torgout Kalmyks to Caspian region led to changes in the geopolitical, religious and civilizational situation of the region, and had significant impact on the cross-regional political and ethno-religious processes. According to G. Roth, the appearance of the Kalmyks near Caspian shores was the source of overall instability in the region.<sup>12</sup> It also led to a change in the mental orientation of local ethnic groups. The lifestyle of new community was similar to the way of life of other local nomads, but only religion and language became the centripetal force in the preservation of the Oirat religious identity.

**BUDDHISM AND POLITY AMONG RUSSIAN KALMYKS**  
(*Case of Shakur Lama*)

With the beginning of the Russian period of the Oirat history (when they became known as Kalmyks, or Torgouts, due to the name of the main Kalmyk tribe), the new religious institution appeared in the Kalmyk Buddhism: Shazhin lama. These high lamas, regarded by the rest of lamas and all the Kalmyks as the supreme spiritual leader of people, nevertheless, recognized only the Dalai Lama as their superior religious authority and worshipped him as the head of the Kalmyk Buddhist Sangha. Thus, being in the zone of influence of Christianity and Islam (for example, in Russia), Buddhism continued to develop the new attitudes to the local polity within the framework of its principal doctrines.

As one of the most significant and important examples of the pointed situation one should accept the life and deeds of Shakur Lama – the famous Kalmyk cleric, who was educated in the Drepung Gomang monastery, and later had been appointed as the head of Shakhor college, the separate division of Drepung. Around 1715-1716 AD he had been asked by the Kalmyk Ayuka Khan to return to the Kalmyk territory, perhaps, due to the death of Bukang Lama, the spiritual leader and influential person in the political life of the Khanate.

While being back to Kalmyks in the fall of 1719, Shakur Lama as Shazhin Lama, became involved in the local political affairs. The main issue to discuss at that time was the future of the Khanate: in 1713 Tulishen, the Chinese Ambassador to Kalmyks, met with Ayuka khan and the Kalmyk clergy, and tried to convince the Kalmyk Khans to help Qing dynasty in its struggle with the Dzungars, or, at least, not to support them, when China would decide to fight with this last nomadic state. Besides, Tulishen discussed the possibility of Kalmyks to come back to

homeland. The issue, as to who will be the next Kalmyk Khan, was also important for Chinese side.

Donduk Ombo (a grandson of Ayuka khan, son of his son Gundzhap), was going to lead the Kalmyk Khanate by the opportunity presented after the death of Ayuka's son Chakdordzhap on February 19, 1722, who earlier was appointed by Khan as his successor, and Ayuka's death in February 1724. Actually, last death had an extremely negative impact on the power and future existence of the Kalmyk Khanate, because Ayuka's numerous descendants were engaged in mutual feud. The problem of succession became the main issue taken by Shakur Lama. It's possible to assume, that his role as the spiritual leader of the Khanate was of outstanding importance, and the religious matter could play significant role in improving the troublesome situation.

Shakur Lama supported Tseren Donduk, the eldest son of Ayuka, and thus two major candidates, Donduk Ombo and his uncle Tseren Donduk, struggled for power. Soon Tseren Donduk was recognized by the Russian authorities as Ayuka's heir. Ayuka in his religious policy, while supporting Buddhism, maintained religious peace among his dependents; thus, he did not insist on the conversion of the local Muslim Tatars, Turkmens, Nogaes, and other Muslim nationalities to Buddhism, though they were under his jurisdiction. After his death the matter of religion must be seen as important for Shakur Lama. For instance, Baksaday Dorji, son of Chakdordzhab, in the spring of 1724, was baptized and he received the new Christian name, Peter Tayshin. In a year he returned to the Kalmyk steppe and declared that the late Tsar Peter the Great had promised him to build a city for the baptized Kalmyks near Astrakhan town, very close to the Kalmyk roaming region. Later, wary of the religious conflicts, and wishing to prevent the "return" of the newly baptized back to Buddhism, the Russian government decided to build a fortress for baptized Kalmyks and to bring them under the control of Peter Tayshin's widow Anna Tayshina. The fort was named Stavropol and was built in 1738 on the left bank of the Volga River, above the town of Samara, also close to Kalmyks. Another issue that troubled Shakur Lama was the growing influence of various forms of Islam among the Kalmyks due to Tomuts, who, being born in the mixed families (father – Muslim man, mother – Kalmyk Buddhist woman), had great influence during the reign of Donduk Ombo.

Moreover – there was a plan to create the united Kalmyk-Crimean Khanate. Thus, because the Crimean Tatars were Muslims, Shakur Lama

faced the threat of the spread of Islam among Kalmyks, and he had to undertake all possible deeds to stop the spread of this idea.

Once again the issue of returning to Dzungaria was raised by Dharma Bala, a widow of Ayuka Khan, in 1724-1725. But Shakur Lama and some nobles opposed that idea and convinced Tseren Dondukto to stay in Russia. When on January 13, 1731, new two Chinese delegations arrived at Moscow, one of them, led by Mergen Zangi Mandai, was going to Kalmyks to meet with the new Kalmyk Khan. Perhaps, it was going to discuss various issues related to the return of Kalmyks, but due to the efforts of Russian authorities this embassy didn't move to Caspian shore.

In my recently published article<sup>13</sup> I discussed the role of Dorji Nazarov, another descendant of Ayuka, in the Kalmyk mutual feud, his wish to meet the leaders of China and Tibet, and his intention to create *nutuk* (some type of state with specific political structure), founded on the principles of two laws (the lama-patron relationship between Shakur Lama and him). When the project of creating a coalition failed, Dorji Nazarov began to pursue an active anti-Khan (anti-Tseren Donduk) and anti-lama (anti-Shakur Lama) policy. After clashes of 1730 and 1731, in 1733 Shakur Lama acknowledged the defeat of his ideas to unite the Kalmyks. According to him, "Earlier they, Kalmyks ... all trusted each other ... and now they are not people, but dogs, and eat each other; and although they see this, they cannot be corrected because of the disagreement and instability."<sup>14</sup>

The victory of Donduk Ombo over Tseren Donduk in 1735 and the death of Shakur lama in 1736 meant the beginning of a new phase of its history, when Buddhism and the Buddhist lamas no longer had an active political role in Kalmykian affairs. Since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, negative tendencies had increased in the Dzungar and Khoshut Khanates; their conflicts with China had started afresh which finally led to the destruction of those states by the Qing dynasty between 1730s-1750s.

Last Chinese-Dzungar war began in 1753, and after two years of endless fighting, this Oirat Khanate was destructed, a lot of people were persecuted and killed. Those, who survived, ran away mainly to Russia. Among them there were the Altai peoples, who were the vassals of Dzungar Oirats. Escaping from the punitive expeditions of Emperor's army, they appealed for the protection by the Russian army. They had to move to Kalmykia. Of course, the Altai lamas also went to Caspian region, and one of them was elected as Shadzin Lama of Kalmyks - that was an exceptional case. This personage, known as Delek lama, came to Kalmyks



somewhere at the end of July 1758 along with the Kalmyk Khan Donduk Dashi's mission returning after its visit to the Dalai Lama. Upon his arrival, Delek lama proclaimed himself to be a "senior reincarnation", i.e. a *khubilgan*, and tried to be involved into political affairs. But he was arrested by Khan and later sent to St. Petersburg, and he passed away en route.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism among Kalmyks was closely intertwined with the situation in Tibet, where religion was a serious competitor to civil policy. The events of the 1720-1730's in Tibet and among Kalmyks, and later the collapse of Dzungar Khanate marked the beginning of a further crisis in these regions, where the influence of Manchu and Russian authorities over these territories and nationalities began to rise.

#### BUDDHISM AND POLITY IN THE NEW CONDITIONS

The deep crisis started in January 1771, with the exodus of the Kalmyks to former Dzungaria. The development of Buddhism among Kalmyks in a newly organized Xinjiang province was largely determined by the policies of Beijing rulers. Buddhism among the Kalmyks, who remained in Russia, lost its political potential in the new harsh conditions, especially after the abolition of the Kalmyk Khanate in 1771, when its territory was incorporated into the Russian Astrakhan province, which was mainly populated by the Muslim peoples.

In 1805 Kalmyks were under attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in 1825 under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Astrakhan Commission as its branch. On March 10, 1825, "Highly Approved Rules for the Management of the Kalmyk people" were issued. It approved the Commission of the Kalmyk Affairs, where one of its members was lama. This document transferred Kalmyks from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Kalmyk land got new status as a part of the Astrakhan province, equal to Russian *oblast* – the administrative-territorial unit, introduced in Russia in 1822.

The Government sent Senator Engel to examine the condition of Kalmyks, and after his report the new Regulation of 24 November 1834 transformed the control mechanism for the Kalmyk people. This Regulation established Curatorship, i.e. the former Institute of Chief Police Officer of Kalmyk people was replaced by the Institute of the Chief Curatorship. It should be noted that this document took into account the fact that the Kalmyks were Buddhists, so they could not be under the guidance of those requirements which had been published by the Committee for the

administrative settlement of Muslim provinces, organized in 1828 by the Order of Tsar Nicholas I. On June 23, 1833, a new law changed the specifics of governance of Muslim nationalities in South Russian regions.

The Regulation of 24 November 1834, made changes to the existing system of governance. Council of the Kalmyk Administration was established, chaired by the Chief Curator; the spiritual matters were controlled by the specially organized office – so-called *Lamayskoe Dukhovnoye Pravleniye* (the Lamaist Spiritual Board), consisting of four members of the Kalmyk clergy chaired by Lama of the Kalmyk people. There was established Zargo court, which, apart from judicial functions, distributed the roaming (migration) spaces and grazing lands between the individual groups and families, members of different *Ulus* (group of families, belonging to one tribe).

Members of the Zargo court were called *tusalakchi* (advisers) and *zarguchi* (judges); besides, each *Ulus* had its representative there, a person of noble birth, for a period of one year. Zargo addressed the most important affairs of the Khanate, and made decisions collectively, although the final verdict remained for Khan.

Since the problems in the management of Kalmyks had been persisting, on April 23, 1847, the new “Regulation for the Management of the Kalmyk people” was approved. According to this document, the supervision of the Kalmyks was entrusted to the Administrator of the Astrakhan Chamber of State Property, he also became the Chief Curator. The newly formed Horde Office which was dealing with the Kalmyk affairs, became the branch of the pointed Chamber.<sup>15</sup> The Lamaist Spiritual Board and Zargo court were abolished. Functions of the first office became the duties of Lama of Kalmyk people, and Zargo court cases had been taken by the general judicial institution of the province - the House of Criminal and Civil Court. Lama of Kalmyk people was appointed by the Russian Senate with the consent of the Ministry of State Property, so actually he was an official in the state administration.

The carrying out of administrative reforms was aimed, in particular, to the weakening of Buddhism, but however, it often brought the opposite results. Lamas actually had become irremovable, and because of their equality with the government officials, they had high status. For Kalmyks, Lama became the representative of the Russian authorities, and this acceptance made difficulties in the missionary policy of the Orthodox Church. Thus, the organization of one-man management in the Buddhist clergy, i.e. the establishment of position of Lama of Kalmyk people, actually

helped in uniting the Kalmyk Buddhist Sangha, eliminating the disagreements in it.

The relative isolation from Buddhist centers resulted in some conservation of Buddhist traditions in political sense, besides developing new approaches. Some representatives of the Kalmyk clergy deified the Russian Tsar dynasty. For instance, Lama Dumbo Ulyanov, author of *The predictions of Lord Buddha on the house of the Romanovs, and a brief outline of my travels to Tibet, 1904-1905*, printed in St. Petersburg in 1913, concluded, that the founder of the Romanov dynasty - Mikhail Fedorovich - was the embodiment of one of the prominent figures of Buddhism,<sup>16</sup> and Russia was identified with the sacred land of Shambhala.

Thus, the Buddhist political concept of power of the ruler – Chakravartin, because of the political dependence of the local rulers on the Russian Tsar, began to spread over the Russian monarchy, and led to the sacralization of state power. The legend of Shambhala and its embodiment into Russia, the worship of Russian Tsars as the incarnations of the White Tara Bodhisattva fostered the development of positive attitude towards the Russian state among the Russian Buddhist peoples. Not surprisingly, the Kalmyks made significant investments in the construction of the Kalachakra temple in the capital of the Russian empire in St. Petersburg.<sup>17</sup>

The need to recreate the new roaming lands, holding in mind the geographical stereotype of the former homeland, reflected in the explication of the newfound space near Volga River and the Caspian Sea as *Khalmag Tangchi* (Kalmyks of Tangut) by Kalmyks themselves. The definition *Khalmag Tangchi* can be understood in the following features: population is of Buddhist religion, nomads and have established their own state. Quite soon the territory, where Kalmyks had settled, were perceived as non-Muslim. Thus, there has been significant structural transformation of the entire geographic and geopolitical space in the North Caspian region and the Lower Volga region.

#### CONCLUSION

Lamas in the Oirat society were completely dependent on their tribal Khans. There was another aspect to the interest of secular power in Buddhism: this was an idea of unity which had special importance in terms of the Oirat Confederation. Therefore, it may be concluded with a certain degree of confidence that Buddhist preachers, when among Oirats,

tried to win their Khans' support and thus contributed to the growth of their centralized states. This very feature of Buddhism helped to sanctify a united state against factionalism and was an advantage at its early stage of establishment in various regions, where Buddhists were allies of the rulers in their struggle against clan autonomy.

The interaction of different regional-economic and ethno-political structures, religious spheres and values of the Tibetan and Oirat societies, and later Kalmyks and Russians, led to certain transformations of the Buddhist religion and customs. The nomadic lifestyle and warlike nature of Oirats resulted in small number of lamas, absence of *khubilgans* ("reincarnations"), in the priority of the secular power over the religious one, peaceful coexistence of different Buddhist schools, the superior position of the Dalai Lama (including his right to grant the Khan regalia), etc. One should also point out such particular features of the Oirat ideology as glorification of episodes of their past serving as ideal models, the attempts to follow the Genghis Khan's *Yasa* (worked out into the Law Code of 1640), maintaining allies' relationship with Tibet and restoration of Genghis Khan's Empire; even a long history of their hostile relations with China can be seen as an example of "eternal rivalry".

The conflict between Tibetan Buddhist doctrines and the polity of Kalmyks resulted in considerable transformations in the organizational structure of the clergy, as well as in greater involvement of Russian state structures in the local Caspian religious and political affairs, on the one hand, and in the development of the new Kalmyk polity and ideology, on the other hand. Polity and ideology were aimed at providing the sustainability of the people in a complicated situation characterized by political, economic, social and religious turmoil in Central Asia and Russia in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and finally, led the society to a new stage of its development.

The development of the local Buddhist society of Kalmyks actually became conserved after 1771. The sacralization of Tibet continued, and there was a creation of the local sacred geography, designed to compensate the lack of communication with the spiritual center. Considerably weakened after the exodus, the Kalmyks found themselves in a constant struggle for survival, and this struggle once again actualized the phenomenon of military affairs (warrior spirit) of Kalmyks.

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17. Kalachakra is the deity closely associated with the teachings of Shambhala.

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## BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY OF B.D. DANDARON

SERGEY YU LEPEKHOV

The name of Bidiya Dandarovich Dandaron is well known among experts, Buddhologists and Tibetologists. During the period 1960-1965, the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union published several editions of the "Descriptions of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs" prepared by him. Together with Yu.M. Parfyonovich and B.V. Semichev he wrote the *Tibetan-Russian Dictionary* (Moscow, 1963) – the second one after Ya. Schmidt's famous dictionary issued in 1843. A.M. Pyatigorsky recalls that Yu.N. Roerich's first question when they first met was: "Have you met Dandaron?". Having received the negative answer he smiled and said: "But I have".

For a long time Dandaron the philosopher was familiar to a few people who had the opportunity to read his unpublished articles and main work, the *Buddhist's Thoughts*, in the form of manuscripts. Not long ago there came an opportunity to publish these works. In 1997 the *Buddhist's thoughts* and *Black textbook* were published within the prestigious series "Russian philosophers of the 20th century" which can be assumed as the "official" recognition of the great Buddhist thinker's philosophic heritage, since the editorial board is comprised of such well known Russian philosophers as A.A. Ghuseinov, A.F. Zotov, V.A. Lektorsky, L.A. Mikeskina, A.P. Ogurtsov and headed by the director of the Institute of Philosophy RAS Academician V.S. Stepin. Also it can be regarded as a start of the broad reading public's acquaintance with his works.

There exists an opinion that the main idea of the *Buddhist's thoughts* was to convey Buddhism's philosophic postulates in the form which could be understood by Europeans. In the annotation of the above mentioned work it is written that the *Buddhist's thoughts* is an "original philosophic encyclopedia for Europeans written in 1970 in the Russian language but practically unknown to the contemporary reader".<sup>1</sup> To some extent it is

correct because nearly the most important aspect of the whole scientific activity of B.D. Dandaron was to explain and clarify Buddhism's main principles in the Russian language by means of translations as well. But at the same time this is not absolutely true since it is not for nothing that the book is entitled the *Buddhist's thoughts* and not the *Buddhists' thoughts*.<sup>2</sup>

In this respect the following remark by V.M. Montlevich made in the preface to the "99 letters" is of interest: "Thinking back of the camp, Dandaron once said : "It is good for a Buddhist to be born in Russia". And after another thought he added: "For a Buddhist but not for Buddhists".

The title itself stresses that this is exactly the author's viewpoint and not an objective scientific presentation of the existing concepts or concepts that used to exist. It is not for nothing that B.D. Dandaron himself called his teaching "neo-Buddhism" thus underlining his specific personal understanding of Buddhism itself and the whole world from a Buddhist viewpoint. The *Buddhist's thoughts* cannot be regarded as a simple gradual presentation of the viewpoints of *Vidjnyanavadinovyogachar* but nevertheless much can be taken from this work in this respect. If this was the task of the work it was certainly not the main one. Moreover it is not an ordinary compilation or a commentary in its classical form. In our opinion the author saw the main task of his work as to systematize his own philosophic views the way they were formed during all his life and finally by 1970. At the moment of finishing the work B.D. Dandaron himself regarded it exactly like that. The last lines of the book testify to this fact: "Now, having experienced an unbearable repulsion towards the *Sansara*, leaving for the deep taiga alone, having completed the blissful Dhjana in the self-appearing sphere, for the good of all living beings I wish to obtain the state of *Samantabhadra*".<sup>3</sup> From the final lines it is also clear that the author positions his book as a manual for the others developing in this direction. The last and unfinished one remained the *Black textbook* written in the camp. Under such conditions it was hard to count not only on its publication but simply that these last notes would be read by anyone but the camp administration and investigators. At the same time everyone who read the manuscript had a peculiar feeling of the text's integrity and completeness as if the author had felt the fate of his work. The first publisher of the *Black textbook*, V.V. Barayev, writes about it: "Turning the pages I was greatly surprised not only by the clear even handwriting but also by the composition if not stately presentation though it was written at night on the prison plank bed. There are no

crossed out or rewritten lines which speaks of the author's exceptional creative composure, clear understanding of the goal, ability to clearly express his thoughts".<sup>4</sup>

V.V. Barayev notes on the difficulties that took place when the *Black textbook* was being prepared for printing. They were caused by numerous insertions. The first impression of the "smoothness" of the text was false. "But when a xerox copy was taken from the manuscript and the preparation for publication began it appeared that there were many insertions at the end of the textbook. Say, in the middle of page 33 of the main text there appears a sign and number 190. You search for it and find new insertions in it – on pages 191, 167 where there is space left. But there are additions there as well which pile up one upon another in such a way that it is hard to find the beginning and continuation".

The fact that the *Black textbook* was not the notes made only for oneself is also testified by numerous insertions representing nothing more but the preliminary editorial preparation of the manuscript.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to agree with V.V. Barayev saying that "the manuscript presents an enormous interest for scientists as an example or phenomenon of something that could not take place under any circumstances".<sup>6</sup>

The first systematic work on philosophy was evidently written by B.D. Dandaron in the prison as well. According to V.M. Montlevich who served a sentence together with Bidiya Dandarovich in the camp, a Polish called Kokoshka managed to take outside the camp the manuscript of the *neo-Buddhism* hidden in the plaster put on a fake fracture of the arm. The manuscript was signed with the name of Zidabazar which is the Buryat form of Sanskrit Chittavadzhra – the second name of Dandaron given to him by his Teacher during the initiation. The further destiny of the manuscript is unknown but the letters to N.Yu. Kovrigina (Climanskene) by Dandaron contain a general plot and plan of the *neo-Buddhism* which can probably to some extent reproduce the essence of the work taken by Kokoshka to the West. At the same time it is not simply a reproduction of the old thoughts but their new reinterpretation based on the necessity to make them understandable to an unfamiliar person. And the person was an absolutely concrete one – N.Yu. Kovrigina. From the very beginning B.D. Dandaron's thoughts are presented in such a way that the correspondent becomes not just a reader but also a coauthor of the "system" unveiling in front of her. The general plot of the work is contained in letter 14. In this letter there lies a "brief scheme of neo-Buddhism's metaphysics", as Dandaron himself writes about it. It begins with the



concept of god. "All philosophic systems from the ancient times till our days have been trying to explain what the world as a whole is; whether it is something accidental, meaningless like a thing the existence of which has no sense or whether it lives, evolves and is directed towards an already defined goal dictated by the Intelligent Will".<sup>7</sup>

From the very beginning Dandaron defines his position as that of religious teleology and does not assume a single possibility that the world is accidental and meaningless. Passing on to the Marxist viewpoint of this question he finds it necessary to immediately point out that Marxism as well considers the development of the world as a natural, not accidental, process but the reason for this ongoing natural process is not discussed by Marxism. "Marxism states that the world's integrity lies in its materiality, that this material world constantly moves and changes according to a definite law, specifically - along the ascending line, from simple to complex, from the lowest to the highest (this is Hegel's motive); but why is this kind of development and not any other inherent in the material world? Marxists can answer this saying that this kind of development is inherent in the matter itself. Why? Who has put in the matter this intelligent quality so that it moves only along the ascending line of development? Marxists cannot answer this question".<sup>8</sup>

God itself interests Dandaron not in the theological sense but as one of possibilities to answer the question – "is there anything directing the world, life of the universe; what are its qualities, etc".<sup>9</sup> Discussing the problem of god's existence, Dandaron recalls Kant about whom he learned back there in the camp attending a neo-Kantian society and then Vladimir Solovyev quoting his provision saying that "the existence of god cannot be proved but it is quite understandable to intuitive (spontaneous) perception".<sup>10</sup>

Making a conclusion that "the idea of god for man is not just an idea, a subject of cognition that is, it is also a definite feeling which takes place as a result of man's aspiration to become a supersensitive being", Dandaron gives a description of this feeling made by F. Schleiermacher – "it is a feeling of dependence on something incomprehensible, beyond understanding".<sup>11</sup> As a result defining god as something incomprehensible becomes the starting point of creating a metaphysical system of one's own.

"In spite of the basis of the world being something incomprehensible, human mind cannot be satisfied by such admission and tries to comprehend this basis, depict it as absolutely concrete and clear. But in reality this depiction is not possible: a concrete representation of god leads to

contradictions. But the founders of the theory (system) of neo-Buddhism are compelled to build their metaphysical theory which is able to explain the world's origin and the perfection of atman without contradicting modern science... This is my "system", it will be able to stand the test in case it can explain all phenomena of the spiritual world without contradictions. Yet all this is (mostly) in my head".<sup>12</sup>

In further letters there is a draft of the "system's" presentation:<sup>13</sup>

1. The individual Self;
2. Psychology;
3. The teaching of dependant origin;
4. Ethics;
5. Karma and rebirth;
6. Once more about nirvana;
7. Attitude to god;
8. Practical religion;
9. The theory of cognition;
10. Yogacharins' methods of perfection

There would be no mistake to say that the concept of god is valuable for Dandaron not as one of the Creator, Demiurge, but mostly as a concept of development, perfection, as the cause of this perfection, its initial and final point. Dandaron treats god as the Absolute, the Whole. It is not for nothing that the first chapter of the *Buddhist's thoughts* is entitled "Inscrutable are the god's ways!" – which is a Christian saying which evidently did not embarrass Dandaron the Buddhist in the least. "The great moral and educational significance of the mankind's spiritual geniuses (Buddha, Christ and others), - he writes, lies in the fact that by their own example they cause others to imitate them, follow their way of life".<sup>14</sup> The title of the first chapter of the *Buddhist's thoughts* goes back to the following place from the letter to Kovrigina dated 20 December 1956: "Once before the existence of our material time and space there existed God (the Absolute) in some absolute space differing from ours, absolute time or pure reality flowing evenly and independently of any ongoing process.

But his ways and intentions are inscrutable to us!

Probably once he got aware of the necessity to manifest itself or saw his own imperfect echo which he wanted to attach to himself; since the light and darkness cannot be present in one body or substance simultaneously. He had to light the echo; for this purpose the echo had to

get rid of its darkness. There certainly could be no impetus from outside. It intentionally passed from the state of rest to the active state or, as we put it, it began moving in the absolute space".<sup>15</sup>

"Understanding the obvious evolutionary character of the world, Orthodox priest E. Strugovshikov, writes, "Dandaron had to strain from the classical Buddhist paradigm of the sansara having no starting point."<sup>16</sup> Let us see how really truthful this conclusion is. Strugovshikov refers to the 99 letters and the collection of articles *Buddhism*. But one must remember that the "Letters" are primarily the letters to a private person, and the level of narration of the Buddhist concepts is adapted to the level of knowledge and understanding of the addressee. Dandaron himself is aware of possible mistakes and misunderstandings in his letters: "I write in a hurry and do not read what have written".<sup>17</sup> That is why the presentation of Dandaron's theoretical viewpoints should be based not on the "Letters" the way it is done by E. Strugovshikov but on the works intended for printing by the author himself. Since E. Strugovshikov refers to the collection *Buddhism* he should have paid attention to the following place from Dandaron's article "The content of the famous mantra *Om-mani-pad-me-hum*" published back in 1971 in the "Scholarly notes of the Tartu University": There is not a single Buddhist text mentioning the beginning of the world, everywhere it is spoken that the disturbance of dharma has no beginning. The arguments among various trends of the *vaisheshik* school were only about the finality and endlessness of the disturbance of dharma that is the sansara.<sup>18</sup> Another article published in this collection says: "From what has been said it is clear that the life of an individual is full of ignorance; it is also the preceding condition of any existence. And what is the cause for the beginning of ignorance? Buddhists' answer to this question is that ignorance was not preceded by anything, that its existence has no beginning, just like the universal process has no beginning".<sup>19</sup> As it seems E. Strugovshikov unfortunately confuses *nidanas* or *bhavangas*, *ptatitjasamutpadas* and *skandhas*.

For the reason that everything is interdependent, as great Buddhist philosopher Nagarajuna sees it, nothing can exist as a separate independent entity and moreover be the cause for anything's beginning. Nothing appears or disappears because it is "empty". Or – everything is "empty" because as a matter of fact it neither appears or disappears.

In texts including the ones of *Pradjnyaparamita* and *Vadajrayana*, all the genetically heterochronous aspects of emptiness, *shunyas*, have existed simultaneously as the object, process and result of the religious practice.

But due to the peculiarity of Mahayana's concept which was created by Buddhism the "shunya" being an extremely generalized notion nevertheless is not a new independent category". As B.D. Dandaron has noted: "Nothing" is not recognized as a fact "different from" an instant event. The comprehensible reality is unchanging. A thing that can be defined is the only one that changes and it lies in something invariable which is the "shunja". It serves as a background against which everything changing is highlighted. Thus the *shunya* becomes such a category in which its own categorization dissolves. Characterizing the school of *madhyamics* in his letters, Dandaron writes that "this school's viewpoints are the closest to those of mine".<sup>20</sup>

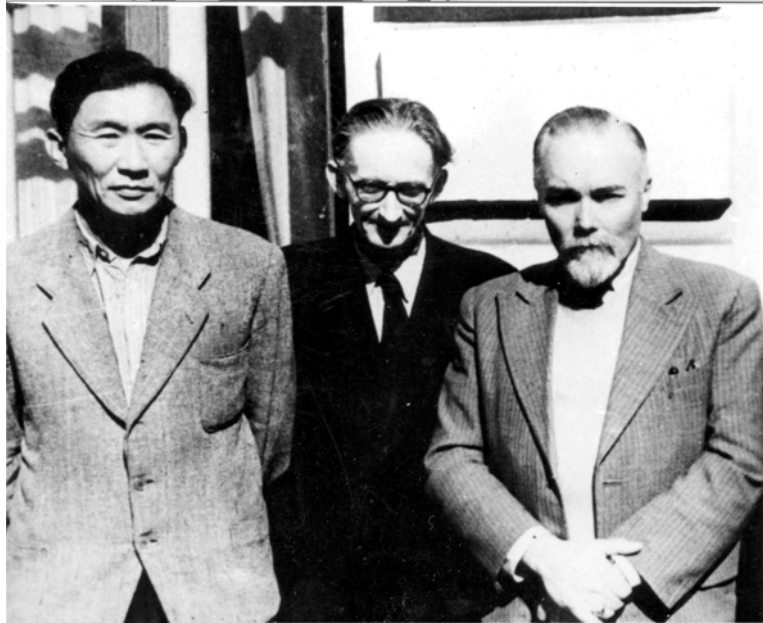
Analyzing the teaching of the school of yogachars, Dandaron focuses on the main categories: *alaya-vidzhnyana*, *tatkhata* and the types of *nirvana*. Philosophic concepts are significant to Dandaron only as approaches to practice. At the same time the progressing development of the world must be considered indissolubly with the process of development of the personality and consciousness of the one practicing the teaching. Then the meaning of the final lines of the "Buddhist's thoughts" becomes clear:



1. Bidiya Dandaron, 1971



2. Lubsan-Sandan Tsydenov



3. B. Dandaron, B. Semichov, Yu. Rerikh

“Now our *Alaya-vidzhnyana* has made a circle around the *Sansara* which has no beginning, having lost all the multiplicity, conventions, causes, coordination and returned to its initial source – Nirvana. And the great Nagarajhuna exclaims: “Separate things are coordinated or causative. We call this world phenomenal. But we call Nirvana exactly the same. If we consider it without causality, without coordination”. If the phenomenal world is purified from its Causality, Coordination, Multiplicity then there remains only a purified part of *Tatkagata* or *Alaya-vidzhnjana* in its pure form the nature of which is the *shunja*”.<sup>21</sup>

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## KALMYKIAN DISCOVERER OF TIBET

E.V. BEMBEEV

In the 19th century (especially in the second half of it), the Russian geographical science was taking extensive measures for the study of Central and East Asia. The scientific expeditions which were sent, made a great contribution to the world's geographical literature. Particular attention of travelers was drawn to mysterious Tibet, access to which was closed for Europeans. That's why travel of Kalmyks to Tibet to visit Buddhist holy places justifiably aroused great interest not only of the Kalmyks, but also became the object of attention of the Russian Geographical Society. Among those who made the pilgrimage to faraway Tibet were Baaza Menkedzhuev, Purdash Dzhengurov, Ovshe Norzunov and Dumbo Ulyanov.

Composed descriptions of their travels to Tibet, China, Mongolia being the valuable field materials for geographers of that time, served as a basis for the emergence of an Old-Kalmyk literature genre which was in its subject matter and composition close to the typical of the medieval literary genre.<sup>1</sup> The only surviving example of the original genre is the description of a trip to Tibet by Baaza Menkedzhuev.

Life and work of Baaza-bakshi are still poorly researched. In Kalmyk literature he is usually portrayed as a traveler, made a journey to the center of the world of the Buddhists and composed later a brief description of his pilgrimage. However, there are many reasons to believe that such an interpretation of the role of the Baaza-bakshi in the history of the Kalmyk people is not quite true. Moreover, in the people's memory, he is, above all, a prominent member of the Kalmyk clergy, who zealously preached the teachings of the Buddha. He is also well-known for his social activism. But it should be noted that this can be judged only by his actions, because we don't know about his oral or written statements on the problems of the public life of that time.

Menkedzhuev Baaza was born in 1846 in Maloderbet Ulus Kalmyk family Dund khurul *aimag*. He was the eldest son of his father, who had 10 children by two wives. In his family was not *zaisangs* and *noyons*, but several members of his family occupied a prominent position in Dund khurul monastery. So his name was highly respected by his neighbors and Maloderbet Kalmyks in general. His grandfather Dzhaltsan-bakshi was very revered abbot of the monastery, and his uncle Balchir-bakshi was so famous for his scholarship that *khuvaraks* (clerics) from other *ulus* came to listen to his interpretation and preaching. We know that Dund khurul was a center of *zurach* (painters), who decorated altars with painted tables "widening". At 7 years of age Baaza was in a generic monastery, where he received the first monastic degree of *Manji*. Curious and inquisitive, he soon managed to acquire knowledge in various areas of the Buddhist doctrine and rites, and in his youth studied the secrets of Tibetan medicine under the leadership of famous emchi Dzhamtso-gelyung.

Family ties allowed him to use the library treasures of Dund khurul, and he eagerly read all the books: historical works, letters, manuscripts. Here he became acquainted with the documents proving the relationship of Kalmyks with Tibet, and first saw the letter of the Dalai Lama VII (1708 - 1757) issued to Kalmyk Embassy Galdan Tseren in 1756. After that, the thought of the opportunity to visit the shrines of Tibet and worship Buddhism gave him no rest. In 1879 Baaza received official authorization for the title *Manji* in 1895 and gelyung Bagsha of Dund khurul. His secular name was Badma, as Baaza he was called in his childhood by parents and relatives, and since then the name was confirmed for him for life, and the monastic name Lobsang-Sharab was almost not known. It is noteworthy that at the end of his work, he signed the name "Baaza Menkedzhuev" which is most common. Implementation of his main dream - a pilgrimage to a remote and little-known Tibet - Baaza Bakshi made in July 1891, along with his companions (Manji Ligi Iderunov and Kalmyks commoner Dorji Ulanov). Huge material and financial assistance in this difficult enterprise was given to them by a possessing *noyon* of Maloderbet ulus Tseren-David Tundutov, who not only subsidized, but gave a magnificent farewell, and then met the pilgrims.

After more than two years on the road, travelers experienced many difficulties associated with the "mountain sickness", hiring riding and pack animals, finding leads and purchase provisions. On 26 July 1892 Baaza-bakshi reached Lhasa and, bowing to many shrines, received the blessing of the Dalai Lama. In addition, he traveled to the main monasteries



Galdan, Gumbum, Lake Okon Tengri, visited the Nartan monastery, where there was a printing house for printing *Kanjur* and *Dandzhur*. Wintering in Lhasa, he left for the return journey, and in August 1893 he returned to his native Dund khurul, where, he began to write a book on his long journey. He concludes his essay with these words: "Let the Buddha descend salvation, but will enjoy the tranquility of all animate beings, to revive the spirit of virtue".

True story about a pilgrimage to Tibet has caused huge interest not only among the Kalmyks, but also in the scientific community. As soon as the manuscript as was finished, it was acquired by Professor A.M. Pozdneyev,<sup>2</sup> who published it with a translation and commentary in a year under the title *The Tale of the pilgrimage to Tibetan country of Maloderbet Baaza-bakshi*. Faculty of Oriental languages of the University of St. Petersburg dedicated this edition to the XI International Congress of Orientalists in Paris.

No doubt, the visit of B. Menkedzhuev to Tibet has made him known and respected person. In his spiritual career he reached the rank of senior Bakshi - *akh Bakshi* which gave him the right to manage all *khurul* of Maladerbet ulus, the total number of which was 41.

Baaza-bakshi actively involved in public life. In the "Report of the Russian Geographical Society for 1903" he is called a member-employee. It also indicated that his stories "in addition to interest, caused by a simple description of the covered places, have and the value that they are, for the Europeans, the first model of the description of the Kalmyk works, represent a perfect example of the living language of modern Kalmyk literature".

Baaza-bakshi actively took part in the exhibition "Historical and contemporary costumes", which took place in 1902 in the Tauride Palace in St. Petersburg. He sent his personal items: gebco cap, gown gebco *kumachovy* Time *orkomdzhi*, tanka *Burhan Bakshi*, the prayer *Dordzh Dzhodva* (Diamond Sutra). After the exhibition, he donated many of the exhibits, to the Russian Museum, for which he was awarded the silver medal "For diligence." Baaza-Bakshi met with prominent scientists. So several times at a party he had known Orientalist G.Ramstedt who visited Kalmykia with a scientific purpose.

There is evidence that Baaza Bakshi and his closest associates held in 1900 a general meeting of the Kalmyk bakshi and gelong in summer in Dund khurul, in the tract Umantsy. Apparently, in order to prevent separation of *ulus*, he put forward a program for the "Unification of

khurul's space" in the encampments of the Kalmyks. The construction of "Oran bulg" khurul's complex,<sup>3</sup> with mandatory higher education institution "Chorya" and the gradual transformation of the place in the center of all the "bag Derbets", was planned in the area. This area extends from the "Oran bulg" to Aksai in the west and towards modern Krasnoarmeisk district of the Volgograd region, where at that time was a rate of Tseren David Tundutov. But the plan could not be fulfilled.

After having taken the first steps in the development of the area, the general meeting of 41 khurul opponents, stated that *Oran bulg* is located on the edge of the Kalmyk nomad camps. They were opposed to the program of the Association. For him it was a big hit, and end of the goal of his life, as a noble idea was rejected. After that he became ill, and the prince Tundutov took Baaza-Bagsha for treatment by mineral water. But nothing helped, and Baaza Menkedzhuev died there in 1903. Noyon Tseren-David Tundutov brought his body and buried it in a place called "Oran bulg" which means "Hill Spring", where it was planned to build khurul's complex. In the place of cremation of the deceased cult monument religious monument Suburghan (*stupa*) was erected.

In conclusion, we note that the Baaza-bakshi, having carried out a cherished dream of his life, and having created this remarkable work, "erected" a monument for the benefit of his descendants.

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## THE BUDDHIST TRADITION IN GESHE VANGYAL'S TRANSLATION STUDIES

ELLARA OMAKAEVA

All world religions have common problems beyond the purely religious, that can and should be the subject of dialogue. We are not talking about the doctrine, but about the perception of ideals and values embodied in the Buddhist tradition. Buddhism is popular not only with its rituals, but first and foremost as a system of spiritual and moral values. So it is a prospective field of research. Buddhism and science have much in common. After all, the Buddha himself urged students to approach him critically, take nothing for granted, and to conduct a thorough investigation and experimentation, to pass through mind, experience, as you test gold before you buy it. Rabindranath Tagore said: "If you close the door to all errors, truth will also remain outside".

Buddhism is a religion of about 300 million people around the world. A unique historical path of each individual nation, including the history of religious development, shows not only consolidation, but also conflict potential of historical knowledge. In today's multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural world harmonious relations between people of different religions are necessary. Therefore, the necessary baggage of modern man must be a proper understanding of religion.

One can see the positive changes in the Republic of Kalmykia which is the only Buddhist republic of the European part of Russia. The ancestors of the Kalmyks (Oirats – Western Mongols) first became acquainted with Buddhism through the Uyghurs in the 9th century, and later in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and at the end of the 16th - early 17th century gained access to Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays Buddhist calendar, astrology, and prayers are very popular among the Kalmyks.<sup>2</sup>

The present-day Buddhology is characterized by expansion of

empirical base of scientific researches, interest in studying different traditions, creation of large fundamental works, inter-disciplinary researches in this field, intensive scientific contacts between centers of Russia, Mongolia, and Western countries. Today, people, including in the West, are increasingly interested in the history of Buddhism, its philosophy, ethics, Buddhist culture. But how to talk about Buddhism in a different language (English, Russian), so as not to distort the true essence of Buddhism? A brilliant example of this are lectures and books of prominent Tibetan Buddhist monks, bright thinkers of our time.

Tibetan Buddhism today is the most common and popular form of Buddhism in Russia and in foreign countries. The growing interest in the Buddha around the world came largely due to travel and the efforts of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the great Buddhist lamas, among which we proudly call the name of our countryman, scholar and translator Geshe Vangyal (Boota Lidzhiev), who received an excellent religious education in the Drepung Gomang monastery and made great contribution to the spread of Tibetan Buddhism among Americans. At a young age, the Kalmyk boy became interested in translating Buddhist works into the Kalmyk language. This, of course was facilitated by the fact that his elder brother was a monk in the Kalmyk khurul.

Geshe Wangyal at the age of 6 years received the vows at Bagshin-Shebener khurul, continued his studies at Cheerya-khurul. But his main dream was to get into Tibet. It was realized thanks to Aghvan Dorzhiev, who predicted a great future for the young Kalmyk boy.

At 21, Boota went to the cherished "Land of Snows", spent more than a year on the road, but reached the goal. A simple intention to make a pilgrimage already created virtue (Kalm. *buyan*), that means accumulation of affirmative action, and overcoming the difficulties during the long journey only increased it. In Tibet, he entered the famous Goman College of Drepung monastery and demonstrated outstanding abilities in learning.

After 15 years, he received the Buddhist Geshe degree in 1938. The same way as Geshe Wangyal were other Kalmyk Lamas - Geshe Yampel, Geshe Kalda, who are well known in the Buddhist world. The Dalai Lama, by his own admission, had a teacher, Kalmyk Geshe Choedak. But Geshe Wangyal was the first monk of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, who in 1955 moved to the U.S. at the invitation of Kalmyk diaspora and founded there the first Tibetan monastery *Labsum Shedrub Ling*. The first Buddhist temple in America was founded in 1853 in San Francisco by the

fraternal community of Chinese settlers. Another temple was built a year later, and by 1875 their number had risen to eight. The first Japanese Buddhist temple was built in San Francisco in 1899. Today, Buddhists in America are as vast as the Asian diaspora, including Kalmyks, and followers among the Americans. And this is the great merit of Geshe Wangyal. He and his students have contributed to the invitation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to America in 1979. In 1983 Geshe-la left this mortal world. It's a pity, he had not a chance to go back home to Kalmykia. But his followers still have a good memory of him. To all of us is his legacy, his wonderful works written in English.

In the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, mankind has entered the era of the globalized world. Consequently, there is a need in the language of inter-ethnic and international communication, which has now become the English. The world, in fact, entered into an era of global bilingualism "mother tongue + English language".

In this regard, it is legitimate to question the role and place of Buddhist literature translated in English in the context of national literatures. Since the translated literature actually refers to any of the national literature, it is important to scientists on the one hand, the definition of its ontological status, but on the other - to elucidate the role of existing translations of works in creating new translations.

Translated literature in the English language is, apparently, the third type of literature along with the literature of the original language (Tibetan) and the literature of the target language (American). This fact demonstrates the Buddhist translations of Geshe Wangyal by his American students.

Translations not only bring together different people, but also enrich them, as millions of people get linked to what others have done. In this regard, the translation of Buddhist texts is a kind of visiting card of Buddhism in the world community, as each religion as a cultural phenomenon is particularly valued for the contribution to the world treasury. Any translation will never be absolutely identical to the canonical text of the original. Equivalent to the original is always a relative term. And the level of relativity can be quite different. The degree of convergence with the original depends on many factors: the skill of the interpreter, the characteristics of the compared languages and cultures, the period of time of creation and translation, the translation method, the nature of translated texts, etc. This work requires a lot of time, effort, energy, and, above all, people, who can translate in a proper way.

An excellent example is Geshe Wangyal, who translated a number

of important Buddhist works from Tibetan into English, became truly best-sellers: "The door of Liberation",<sup>3</sup> "The Jewelled Staircase",<sup>4</sup> and "The Prince, who became a cuckoo: The Story of Liberation".<sup>5</sup> He also in collaboration with Brian Kutillo translated the book "Illuminations of Sakya Pandita".<sup>6</sup> In my opinion, the name of the second book is symbolic, Buddhism has "many floors", and just constantly running up the stairs, you can improve your mind. "The Jewelled Staircase" is the culmination of Geshe Wangyal life's work. In this book he reveals the essence of the text of Lamrim using simple language, easy to understand.

The contents of the book introduce us to the pre-Buddhist practices necessary to achieve a higher level of spiritual development, such as the practice of taking refuge (fifth chapter), the four main methods of concentration of mind on the Dharma, and the four noble truths. This work can be viewed as a sort of introduction to Buddhist teachings. Apparently, this was one of the reasons why this book of Geshe Wangyal first became available to Russian readers, and in two translated versions. The first one is *Staircase, adorned with jewels* (1993), the second is *The Jewelled Staircase* (1994).<sup>7</sup>

The book consists of 10 chapters. The first chapter of "The Origin of doctrine" is based on the famous book *Pagsam-chzhonsan* (Beautiful wish-fulfilling tree), telling the history of Buddhism in India, Tibet, China and Mongolia. Its author is Kukunor (Amdo) scholar Sumba Hambo Eshey-Balchzhor (1704-1788), Oirat batud. Of particular interest are the author's reflections on the rare good fortune of finding a human birth (Chapter Four - "Precious Human Life"), reflections on death and impermanence, what Geshe-la has been particularly inclined to judge by the memoirs of his students, as well as reflections on the life cycle, the law of cause and effect (the sixth chapter, which provides a detailed account of 10 non-virtuous deeds).

Geshe Wangyal turned in the writing of this book to the most famous and authoritative product of spiritual practice and philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism in the world. It is "Great guide to the stages of the path of Awakening" (*Lamrim chempo*), authored by the great Tszonkhava, the founder of the Gelug tradition of Buddhism, called the "second Buddha". Its full name is *Skyes bu gsum gyi nyams su blang ba'i rim pa thams cad tshang bar ston pa'i byang chub lam gyi rim pa*, which means "Stages of the path to enlightenment, which shows all stages of practice for the three types of personalities".

The text of *Lamrim* is traditionally divided into five parts by

commentators as the doctrine to be explained in the correct sequence. This is one of the brightest gems in the world treasury of sacred literature. *Lamrim* is the essence of all 84,000 volumes of the Buddha's teachings.

Geshe Wangyal had a special reverence for the personality and legacy of Tszonkhava first of all because his teacher was Manjushri, who inspired *Lamrim* writing, and under whose influence Tszonkhava paid special attention to strengthening the close relationship between teacher and student in the transmission of the Buddhist tradition.

Recognizing the importance for a true understanding of *Lamrim* Buddhist teachings Geshe-la instructed his disciples to take up a project to complete the *Lamrim* translation in English. In different years there were several attempts of translating the works into various languages, including English. The translation was carried out by a large group of people under the leadership of one of Geshe Wangyal followers Joshua Cutler and published after the death of the Teacher.

It is interesting to note, that three hundred years ago Mongol Lamas wrote: "In Jambudvipa there are many teachers, lamas, but choose Lama Tszonkhava. In Jambudvipa there are many exercises, but choose Lamrim Chenmo. "In Jambudvipa there many thoughts, but remember karma". Today these words are more relevant than ever. Mongolian lamas translated *Lamrim* from Tibetan into modern Mongolian and *Notes on Lamrim Chenmo* by Pabonki Rinpoche and Patrul Rinpoche.

In the Russian language, *Lamrim* also has its history as outlined by A. Terentyev.<sup>8</sup> The first five-volume edition was completed in the year 2000 and has become a rarity. The second revised edition consists of two volumes, and also has a re-edited full reference device.

On the problems of morality (Kalm. *shagshavd*), Geshe Wangyal's book states: "The Prince, who became a cuckoo: The Story of Liberation". The legend on which it is based, was written in 1857 by a monk Lodro (Sanskrit Mati) of the Drepung Monastery, almatmater of Geshe-la. This is a historical description of one's previous lives as a prince in India. It is not just a story about Prince Dharmananda and his subsequent life as Nilakantachandra cuckoo, but also is a clear view of way of practicing Buddhism, using a special approach of Tibetan Buddhism, which combines *sutrayana* and *tantrayana*. After reading this book, everyone can get acquainted with all phases of the practice.

A fragment of Geshe Wangyal's book first appeared in Russian translation in 1994 in *Shambala* – the Buddhist magazine published in Russia.<sup>9</sup> A full translation has not been published, but hopefully will soon

see the light. I would like to note that the choice of this book for translation was inspired not only by original Tibetan and Mongolian versions of the work, but also by the figure of the legendary ruler of India - the great Indian king Ashoka, whose name is inscribed in golden letters not only in the history of Indian Buddhism, but also in world history. Ashoka said: "All people are my children. In total what I wish for the children, and I wish them wealth and good luck in this world and in the following, I wish that also for all people".

Geshe Wangyal always emphasized the need for a firm basis in the fundamentals of Buddhist doctrine. The works of Geshe Wangyal clearly show that Tibetan Buddhism carefully preserves and develops the ancient Indian Buddhist tradition. The most important thing is not that Geshe Wangyal was bilingual, well-versed in two languages. More importantly, he knew the actual teaching - the *Dharma*. The purpose of his translations is to create a solid foundation for understanding the teachings of the Buddha. He sought to give the reader the fullest possible understanding of the Buddhist tradition, starting with the earliest philosophical texts of Buddhism.

Geshe Wangyal's Buddhist translations play an important role in the awareness of the unity of world religions, despite different forms. Geshe Wangyal, being a classic gelugpa, a great supporter of Tszonhava, paid much attention to other Tibetan traditions. All of his books can be read at one go as a single text. One could argue that his legacy has common invariant features.

In these works the author drew as a source not only the original text, but also a text-donor. The text-donor is considered as a particular text and a collection of texts of a similar topic (hypertext), it helped the translator in solving the problems encountered when working with the respective original.

Moreover, the basic ideas of Tibetan writers in the adapted Geshe Wangyal's translation, although designed in the context of the Buddhist tradition, provide food for thought to representatives of other religions, other cultures. The phenomenon of Geshe Vangyal as a Buddhist monk, scholar and translator is a key to the problem of harmonious relations between teacher and student in the transmission of the Buddhist tradition. Geshe Wangyal's translation activity was continued by his followers. Among his students are celebrities: Robert Thurman, Richard Gere, etc.

In 1997 the *Time* magazine included one of the disciples of Geshe-la in the top 25 most influential Americans. It was Robert Thurman, who



was the first American to take full monastic vows from the Dalai Lama. It was Geshe Wangyal who in 1964 introduced Thurman to Dalai Lama in Sarnath, India, during a meeting organized by the World Fellowship of Buddhists, where the Dalai Lama was invited as an honored guest.

In 1967, Thurman took off his monastic vows in order to come with the study of Buddhist philosophy, collecting material for a future thesis. The choice of thesis topic, "The Translation and analysis of Lama Tsongkhapa's" treatise. The essence of fine sayings and later research, translation and teaching, of course, was influenced by the example of his teacher Geshe Wangyal. Geshe Wangyal was engaged in teaching at Columbia and Princeton universities. In 1973 he participated in the opening of the University of Massachusetts.

In 1979, Robert Thurman became Professor of Buddhist studies at Columbia University. He heads the American Institute of Buddhist studies. In 1987, after the retirement of his teacher, Robert Thurman, Richard Gere and Philip Glass, founded the Tibet House in New York - a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the living Tibetan tradition, including the translations of Buddhist works into English.

Robert Thurman is a brilliant translator, the author of two dozen, scientific and journalistic works, which include books such as *Golden words Tsongkhapa: reason and enlightenment in Tibetan Philosophy*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, *Endless Life*, *Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty and the search for true happiness*.<sup>10</sup> Some of them are known to the readers through a Russian translation. A striking example of this is the presentation in Moscow in April 2012 of the Russian-language edition of his book with a somewhat unusual and rather intriguing title *Why the Dalai Lama Matters* which was published by the Save Tibet Fund, whose spiritual leader is the head lama of Kalmykia, Telo Tulku Rinpoche. This book is a significant result of many years of fruitful cooperation and close friendship of Professor Thurman with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in whose optimism and altruistic ideas he sees the key to a positive solution of many pressing problems of mankind.

In conclusion, I would like say that the great Jonkhava at the end of his life asked students not to be upset that they have not met him personally. Instead they should get acquainted with his works, that would amount to a personal meeting. The same can be said about Geshe Wangyal: reading his works, we can assume that we met with him. So Geshe Wangyal has laid the essential foundation for further work in Buddhist studies which will lead, to proper and complex results in future. The study of biography and works of Geshe Wangyal allows me to feel and enjoy all the charm

and charisma of this great personality, to assess the scale of his activity and his contribution to the development of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as a fresh look at his spiritual heritage, which undoubtedly requires new thinking.

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**“THE BIOGRAPHY OF SAINT TSONGKHAPA”  
AS THE MONUMENT OF  
MONGOLIAN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE**

ELZA BATYREVA

The subject of our current research is “The Biography of Saint Tsongkhapa” as the monument of Mongolian medieval literature. The biographies of honourable Buddhist teachers, heads of the largest monasteries and reincarnations of famous Buddhist saints are called *namtar*. *Namtars* are very popular with Buddhists in Mongolia and Tibet. They narrate about the life of outstanding teachers and saints, their deeds and spiritual merits, thus explaining and praising moral and ethical principles of teaching. Such kind of literature takes special place in the religious and philosophical works of Buddhism.

The full name of Tsongkhapa’s biography is “The source of all kinds of good thriving”, which is paraphrasing the biography of great wise Tsongkhapa easily to understand. The author of the biography is the famous medieval Mongolian scientist Lobsan Tsultem, whose name in Sanskrit is Sumati Shila, in Mongolian – Sayin Oyuta. His valuable work on history of Buddhism in Tibet in the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries has been studied by a number of outstanding orientalist.

The object of our research is the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of this enormous work. This chapter tells us about “the period of arranging Great Prayers (*Monlam Chenmo*) in honour of Juu (Maitreya) statues, the establishment of Galdan monastery and briefly about other deeds which were of great use for living beings and religion”. The subject of our research is the peculiarities of language of translation from Tibetan to Mongolian. The novelty of the research is that for the first time we are trying to compare the text of Mongolian manuscript with the Tibetan original text. Having compared the language of these two versions we’ll be able to reveal the morphological,

lexical and syntactic peculiarities of the medieval literature monument.

The materials of our research are the original text of the Mongolian manuscript, which is kept in the Manuscript fund of Library of the Oriental Department of St. Petersburg State University, and the authentic text of Tibetan xylograph (wooded engraving). We've done the transliteration of summary of the Mongolian manuscript and translated it into Russian. Also we have done the technical description of Tibetan xylograph. From all chapters we have extracted the summary to compare it with the Mongolian translation. Some disparities in the narration have been found. In all probability, we deal with the unique written monument, which is not a literal translation of the Tibetan text. Translation of such kind of texts requires the knowledge of Buddhist terminology.

The Mongolian manuscript tells us about Tsongkhapa's life and deeds. There are a lot of facts about his birth and childhood, his becoming a monk and studying; how he became wise in all fields of knowledge, especially in *Sutra*. After taking gelong's vow Tsongkhapa studied *Gandjur* and *Dandjur* and expounded the teaching to many lamas and wise men. Having seen Saint Manjushri, Tsongkhapa comprehended a lot of teachings and attained wisdom in *Tantra*. The biography narrates about how Tsongkhapa while practicing contemplation in a secluded place attained perfection in exceptionally high cognition. Tsongkhapa's greatest deeds include the arrangement of Great Prayers in honour of Juu statues, the establishment of Galdan monastery, helping living beings and religion with his written books.

The *namtar* contains biographies of Tsongkhapa's disciples Jaltsab and Khaidub, who widely spread his teaching. It's briefly said about abbots of Galdan monastery, about the founder of Braibung monastery – Jamyan Tsordji (1379-1449), the founder of Sera monastery – Byamchen Tsordji, the founder of Tashilhunpo monastery – Dalai Lama Gedundub. The biography of Shirab Senge (Khaidub Shirab Senge – died in 1445), the founder of Tantric monastery is also included in Tsongkhapa's *namtar*.

Sera monastery, one of the four main monasteries in Tibet, contains two faculties of Philosophy and one of *Tantra*. The largest Gelugpa monastery Braibung established by Jamyan Tsordji in 1416 consists of three faculties of Philosophy and one of *Tantra*. Tashilhunpo monastery was founded in 1447 after Tsongkhapa's death by his faithful disciple Jalvan Gedundub (1391-1474). Another close disciple was Khaidub Geleg Balsanbo (1385-1438). The first biographer of Tsongkhapa was Jaltsab Darma Rinchen (1364-1432), his most faithful disciple. In the conclusion

the biography describes how Tsongkhapa was immersed in Nirvana. It ends with a chapter of wishes which is entitled as “Evoking rain deeds”.

The special place in the narration is given to *Vajradhara* (sanskrit “the Holder of Vajra”) Bodhisattva in Mahayana and Vajrayana mythology. *Vajradhara* is particularly honoured in Vajrayana, where he is considered as one of the main characters of the pantheon together with Avalokiteshvara and Manjushri. His main duty is to eradicate ignorance.

The differences between Tibetan and Mongolian versions found during translation can be explained by the wish of the Mongolian author to decorate the narration. Thus, in the extract about Baldan Lhamo, the goddess-patroness of Lhasa, her statue is described as magnificently decorated with a lot of precious adornments. In the Mongolian manuscript we can find the name of Sakya scientist Remdaba Kumaramati or Reddava Shonnu Lodoi (1349-1412), who acquainted Tsongkhapa with principal works on Logic and *Madhyamika*. Tsongkhapa’s biographers paid a lot of attention to the process of his attaining knowledge in Buddhist sciences with the assistance of Umapa lama, who was a mediator in Tsongkhapa’s negotiations with Manjushri Buddha. Umapa lama had a name Tsondui Senge and his tantric name was Babo Dorje. He improved his knowledge of Buddhist philosophy about Emptiness and Tantra, he was taught *Vinaya* and *Madhyamika* by Remdaba lama in Sakya monastery.

In the text of the *namtar*, Manjughosha is particularly mentioned as a representative of “Deep contemplational tradition”, to which Nagarjuna, Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti belonged. *Madhyamika* as a system of knowledge was taught by Nagarjuna and Aryadeva. Among the latest authors Chandrakirti, Shantideva, Shantirakshita, Kamalashila and Bhavaviveka were mentioned. *Madhyamika* system is mainly considered as the true basis of religious mentality in Mahayana. Nagarjuna was one of the greatest Indian philosophers and a theorist of *Mahayana*, the founder of *Madhyamika* philosophy and the author of *Shuniyata* theory. Evidently, he lived in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. In Tibetan Nagarjuna means “turned into a dragon or turning dragons”. Manjushri Bodhisattva, the personification of Wisdom, is honored as one of the three main Bodhisattvas with Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani. In lamaist school of Gelugpa, Tsongkhapa is considered as Manjushri’s earthly incarnation, whose biography is described in our Tibetan and Mongolian literature monuments.

It’s necessary to mark difficulties of translation of such kind of literature. In the research it’s important to translate the meaning of the

narration as accurately as possible. This work is being done according to the technical standards of translation with the purpose of further deep research of the original monument.

Thorough comparison of two versions of Tsongkhapa’s biography gives us the opportunity of finding ethnic peculiarities of the written monument. These can be observed in the structure of sentences, emotional side of narration, some local details of the text, which are conditioned by traditional culture of Mongolian and Tibetan peoples.

Working on two texts we observe how medieval Mongolian scholars understood the original Tibetan text. Understanding the difficulty of literal translation of passages will allow us to get trustworthy scientific information. “The biography of Tsongkhapa” in this aspect presents an interesting subject for Tibetan and Mongolian philology researchers.

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## THE BUDDHIST IMAGES IN KALMYK FINE ART OF 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

SVETLANA BATYREVA

Kalmyk fine art of 20<sup>th</sup> century developed as a part of artistic culture born in the twists and turns of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian history. However, it would not be enough to confine oneself to Russian bounds perceiving contemporary Kalmyk fine art. The creative potential of Kalmyk artists has been nurtured by ancient prehistory of a Mongol-speaking nation dating back to the remote past of Central Asia and featuring European, Eurasian to be precise, continuation.

Painting, architecture, graphic art, decorative and applied art, as well as theatre and decorative Kalmyk art combine different artistic traditions interpreted through the prism of ethnic self-consciousness of a creative personality. Contemporary fine art of Kalmykia is mostly characterized by a synthesis of Eurasian artistic traditions. These include realistic form-expression of the plot stipulated by professionalism school, folk-like tendencies dating back to traditional nomadism typical of the nation in the past, and their spirituality embodied into moral and ethical essence of Buddhist philosophy. Transition to a settled lifestyle in a new ethno-cultural environment led to loss of folklore in the ethnic culture, which resulted in the virtual dying of language. So, no wonder that the archetype of mythological and poetic thinking is integrally and harmoniously recreated in oeuvres by an older generation. Sadly, this generation is already gone.

Garya Rokchinskii (1923-1993) was a prominent Kalmyk painter, People's Artist of Russia. His creations such as *Mother-Native land*, *Dzhangarchi Eelyan Ovla*, *Crane song* and many others are well-known. Most of them are dedicated to Kalmykia, native land, its history and modernity, its people and folklore. Canvases of the artist are easily

recognized. Their distinguishing features are in the individuality of the Master, who was able to show his distinctive vision of the world with the facilities of painting. Born in *Kibitka* (nomad's dwelling), the Master with mother's milk soaked up the nomadic attitude to the world. Nomadic lifestyle implies this organic unity with the Nature, never opposing her to the person. The graphic memory of ancestors is embodied in Garya Rokchinskii's works.

The amazing joy of the discovery is in the canvas *Mother-Native Land*, which became the starting period in the development of the modern Kalmyk fine art. Such creation was to appear as a symbol of life steadfast of original culture of people with complex dramatic fate. The composition of the picture is simple as the Life: old Kalmyk woman with the uncovered head is walking on the native steppe, newly found Motherland. This woman personifies the image of Motherland. "Motherland as a living being has its own soul", the Artist said and he managed to create this great image on the canvas. This masterpiece became the shocking revelation for the generation of Kalmyks, returned after 13 years deportation to the Motherland. The idea of this work and laconic capacity of painting merged together in the sacred name *Mother-Native Land*.

The following works of the Master can be considered as the development of the main idea of his creative life. The Artist noted: "Without the Motherland, without the close relation with the Motherland you cannot discover yourself". Rokchinskii discovered himself completely, having touched by life springs in the image of Mother - Nature. His steppe landscapes are animated by his love, they're really beautiful. The artist finely felt the beauty of Motherland. "The image of Nature is inimitable in any life manifestations: in noonday mirage of summer heat "In Kalmyk steppe", in velvet reconciliation of twilight *Warm evening*, in hazy and humid breathing of awaking land in the canvas *Spring time in Kalmykia*.

The finest colour gradation creates quivering picturesque fibre of the canvases. One can look at them for a long time, sinking in aura of colour stroke with great admiration. Let's imagine the artist at the moment of superimposing the next dab on the canvas: he passionately created music in the colour, obtaining accuracy of colour chords, anticipating bright contrast or calm harmony of close tone relations.

The Master could not be indifferent to the historic fate of Kalmyks. He was not just a chronicler, his creation is most likely a philosophical comprehension of history and closely connected to the fate of folk. And that's why his historic images are so capacious. The canvas *Tso-Mandzhi*



*Buratov - Hero of Great War 1812* appeared nearly at the same time with *Mother- Native Land*, continuing the patriotic line in artist's creation.

Today ancient figurative traditions of Buddhism are in great demand. Canonic design suggests icon-painting origins of the image that imbibes modern interpretation of a Buddhist canon in search for form expression. This is how traditions communicate and interact in today's Kalmyk culture.

Meditating on the past, Master came to the important conclusion: People do History. This simple thought is in the basis of historic compositions - portraits. As a rule, it is a bright personality, which attracted the Artist's attention with his peculiarity of image and spiritual world. Such is a portrait named "Zaya-Pandita, the founder of Oirat-Kalmyk writing" *todo bichig* (Kalm. clear writing). Dainty image of the Buddhist priest is reconstructed with flexible contour drawing. The picturesque manner of painting, assonant to the flat decision of the scroll, had iconography in detail. Frontal sitting scientist is represented at the moment of formation of Oirat-Kalmyk alphabet: his concentrated face, thoughtful glance, a feather in fine and long fingers. Kalmyk middle age – 17<sup>th</sup> century - came alive in the image of Zaya-pandita, a prominent politician.

Artistic embodiment reconstructs a complex diverse world which to one extent or another expresses traditional heritage with art being a language to translate and preserve collective artistic experience. The object of contemplation is now Man and the Steppe, as well as their special relationship in unique traditional culture. It forms qualitatively new world-view of a Kalmyk artist who is eager to learn new trends of modern civilization.

The canvas *Dzhangarchi Eelyan Ovla* (Kalm. rapsode, story-teller) created in 1969, is the continuation of the historic portrait gallery of Master. His appeal to the epic theme is quite logical. It was a period of artist's comprehension of the past and the present, of Motherland and its cultural heritage. On the background of multistaged composition one can see the singing *dzhangarchi*, standing on the hill, from which the vast panorama of fairy-tale blessed country Bumba is opened. The singer of the Motherland presents people its treasure - the epics. The historic memory of folk is concentrated in the image of Eelyan Ovla. And more exactly, Kalmyk folk - the creator of *Dzhangariad* is represented in this image. This heroic epic is the everlasting people's dream about happiness. The small Kalmyk people are great because they offered the world their own original variant of thousand-year dream of Mankind.

The colour range of painting is assonant to the rhythm and colour

organization of the Kalmyk embroidery named *zeg*. While studying the folk art and its soul – an ornament, Rokchinskii could fill his every work with the originality. The richest tone colour gradation of folk pattern is consecutively applied by the artist. National theme found in this canvas original expression: manner and matter merged together.

Continuation of the epic theme is a symbolic composition *Dzhangrin jindmn* (Kalm. 'The heritage of Dzhangar'). Thoughts about universal harmony and the man found the great power of the cosmic expression. This canvas was created in 1990, 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of epic *Dzhangar* (the year of White Horse by Oriental calendar). The artist could synthesise the symbology of the traditional Kalmyk chronology with the epic narration. Ancient cosmogonic people's ideas inspired by the immortal epics have found a new life in Master's interpretation.

The Artist deeply realized the eternal connection of ages in folk history. Mongolia, ancestor's land is a subject of many works, which present the collection named *Dzhungaria*. The ancient motherland of Kalmyks is beautiful having various mountain landscapes. The colour is saturated and clean, penetrated with mild and smooth light. The condition of the daytime and the season in *Shin buure, Vision, Ancestor's Land* is finely represented by exquisite colour harmony and flexible drawing. The canvas *Dzhungaria* is like an poetic ode to primordial freedom, a memorial to the lost harmony of Being. The Master emerged in the role of a storyteller, praising the nomadic lifestyle with ecstasies and in details.

Powerful Being is in the indissoluble ties with Nature in sonorous sunshine spectrum of paints. When one looks at *The Eternal Blue Sky of Mongolia*, one can really feel the epic patriotic power. This feeling is initial, subconscious and its generously getting out to the fathomless bottomless blue space. This creation makes everybody to recall the simple and dignified beginning - *Mother- Native Land*. The Land and the Sky are always together, they're the main notions for each person, any folk. And it is completely proved by the canvas *The Eternal Blue Sky*. The Master philosophically connected the Land and the Sky by the life experience and creative search of his whole life. This landscape is simple and full of wisdom, carrying us breathing of Eternity. The past, the present and the future of folk are organically connected in Master's works. And by this reason they are in great value even nowadays.

The theme of lotus flower is represented in multiple variants of Artist's creations. The miraculous lotus is a particular subject of the author. The white colour of the saint in Buddhist flower is symbolic. The lotus,

sprouting its roots from the dirty silty soil, personifies the sacred purity of the Buddhist teaching. Many moral-ethical criterions are concentrated in this symbol and the Artist followed them all his life long.

Having possessed the form and the colour of realistic painting, Rokchinskii logically appealed to the abstraction. He was eager to know the eternal truths of Being and he made his own conclusion on them. The Artist was deeply worried about dramatism of human life and he showed it by abstract creations. The opposition of *Two Powers of Universe* (Kalm. *Yirtmjın khoir undusun*) is quite thrilling and it calms down in harmony of white and rose colours in the center of the composition. Hope for the future... What can we hope for? Contradictions of the modern world, its cataclysms, the destruction of original harmony of the Nature are denominated in the composition and colour range of this canvas.

Master's life was in the creation. He often spoke: "What I do, only I can do". And it was not the exaggeration of his own possibilities: He created a lot in his life. This Artist is an epoch of the national culture, in his creation the graphic memory of folk is commemorated. Sunshine painting of People's Artist of Russia, Garya Rokchinskii is surely a precious stone in the peculiar Kalmyk culture and art.

Kalmyk fine art cannot be separated from the historical fate of Russian art culture. It unites the collective and the individual, general and specific cultures, and its spiritual pilot is ethnic identity of the authors that created Kalmyk fine art of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Traditions and modernity make up the inspiring basis that harmoniously combines the Past, the Present and the Future of the nation.



FIGURE 1. MOTHER-NATIVE LAND



FIGURE 2. DZHANGARCHI EELYAN OVLA



FIGURE 3. ZAYA-PANDITA, THE FOUNDER OF OIRAT-KALMYK WRITING *TODO BICHIG* (CLEAR WRITING)



FIGURE 4. DZHANGRIN JINDMN (KALM. THE HERITAGE OF DZHANGAR)



FIGURE 5. DZHUNGARIA



FIGURE 6. THE ETERNAL BLUE SKY OF MONGOLIA

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THE MONASTERY-FORTRESS OF LADAKH:  
A CASE STUDY OF BASGO GOMPA  
(15<sup>TH</sup> – 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CE)

SAMA HAQ

INTRODUCTION

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Ladakhi terrain and its people were laid bare to the western world through the paradigmatic curiosity of its scholars, explorers and emissaries, both colonial and political. This marked the beginning of the popular westernized notion of the sacred and profane Ladakh – that which is safely tucked in the lap of the mighty Himalayas, governed by the spirits and strange gods (esoteric to its core). To understand the religious historicism of Ladakh (away from the dichotomy of Western and Central Tibet), one has to understand that the spatio-temporal topography of Ladakh has always been coterminous with the religious development in Tibet. More significantly, around the second transmission of Buddhism in the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE, the revival of Buddhist praxis from Western to Central Tibet created an inter-cultural context between the two kingdoms. Keeping aside the territorial conquests for supremacy, strangely enough, the religious and spiritual ascendancy in Ladakh and Tibet has been pretty parabolic in nature, converging at the vertex of Buddhism as a potent signifier. The focus of this paper is to study the sacerdotal aspect of Buddhist art in Ladakh through the patronage of Namgyal rulers from 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century CE. The art historical trope selected for discussion in this study is the Chamba Lakhang of Basgo.

### HISTORICAL EVALUATION

Before we begin, the paper briefly discusses as some political and social milestones from Ladakhi history, in order to generate the spatio-temporal co-ordinates within which this study is located. Ladakh or (Tib. *Maryul*<sup>1</sup>) is home to a unique blend of some of the prominent ethnic groups of the Western Himalayan region. While the majority of the population follows Tibetan Buddhism, a sizeable population comprises of Kargil and Balti Muslims. Although Ladakh is sparsely populated, it is further divided into three sub-sections – the Upper, Central and Lower regions – adjoining the mighty Himalayan ranges in the west. The Upper region is strategically important since the effervescent river Indus (Tib. *Senge Khabab*) runs through it. Over the ages, the course of the river has come to define the course of its historical and political context as well. The Indus has been present throughout important historic centers and sites, such as Shey, Leh and Basgo.

For the sake of brevity, we will try to limit the hyperbolic foretelling of Buddhist history in the Western Himalayan region and limit it to two, rather broad, phases. During the first phase, the earliest historiographers were the monks and travellers who gave due credit to the Buddhist circuit of Central Asia along the Silk Route; this documentation continues through oriental travelers like Al-Beruni (973-1048 CE) in *Tarikh-al-Hind*; and also through the writings of royal chroniclers of the Hindu kings in India, such as that of Kalhan in *Rajatarangani*, a 12<sup>th</sup> century CE Kashmiri chronicler.

The second phase of anthologizing Ladakhi history is based on the works of scholars, chroniclers, travellers and explorers from the west. A large corpus of data collated through the survey of the Himalayan region from 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards through the colonial, militaristic, and expansionist zeal of western scholars has contributed much to our understanding of Ladakh. Art and archeology of the Western Himalayas came to light through the works of scholars like Csoma de Koros, Alexander Cunningham, H. Schlagintweit, A.H. Francke, G. Tucci, J. Hutchinson, Dr. Marx, J. P. Vogel, Luciano Petech etc. And Ladakhi history and archeology once again found a place in the wider nexus of world history. Various texts including *The Royal Chronicles of Ladakh* or (Tib. *La-dvags-rgyal-rabs*<sup>2</sup>) were extensively translated and studied to provide a long, yet succinct, list of Ladakhi kings hailing from the historical kings of Tibet from the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE onwards up till the Dogra wars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>3</sup>



After the assassination of Bonpo king Langdarma (842 CE), Tibet was fragmented between two ruling factions of Central and Western Tibet. Under King Yeshe-Od (10<sup>th</sup> century CE) from Western Tibet (comprising the three kingdoms of Guge, Purang and Ladakh), the second transmission or (Tib. *Bstan-pa-phyi-dar*) of Tibetan Buddhism began with the efforts of the great teacher or (Tib. *lotsaba*), Rin-chen-bzang-po from Guge and Lekpai Sherab, a disciple of Atisa and the founder of Sangpo Neuthok monastery in Lhasa. Rin-chen-bzang-po's arduous journey to Kashmir resulted in an ecclesiastical awakening for Western Tibet, which found a new meaning for the newly established monastic order or *lamaism*. The monastic settlement of Alchi Choskhor (11<sup>th</sup> century CE) stands as a visual repository of religious and social interaction between Ladakh and Kashmir. This period marked a dynamic and productive phase for Tibetan monks and artists causing a surge of monastic wealth (art and architecture) in Ladakh, Guge, Purang and areas in Himachal Pradesh. The wealth of craftsmanship that travelled via Kashmir to Ladakh came to be known as *Khache-Tibetan style*.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE RISING SUPREMACY OF THE NAMGYAL DYNASTY

By 15<sup>th</sup> century CE, the smaller kingdoms of Ladakh were unified under the militaristic guidance of Lhachen Bagan, who established the famous Namgyal Dynasty. This is also the time when two Islamic forces – the Mughals and the Mongol Turks – were threatening the royal lineage and religious suzerainty of Ladakhi kings. In a rare account of the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, written by a Mughal military general Mirza Haider Dughlat, the military general has recalled, “*Wherever I went in Tibet, I either took the country by force or made peace, on the inhabitants paying tribute. Among these [places may be mentioned] Balti, Zanskar, Maryul, Eudok, Goga, Lu...*”<sup>5</sup>

While Mirza Dughlat valorizes his military conquests, the extent of his account also mentions the Islamic proselytization during his military campaign since the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century CE onwards, when the Mir Hamdani<sup>6</sup> order had already commenced a spiritual discourse among the Baltis and Ladakhis. This brings us to an important historical junction in the forging of a social and political alliance between Balti Muslims and Ladakhi Buddhists in the history of Namgyal kings, resulting in possible wedlocks between the royal families. The famous love story of a Balti princess Gyal Khatun, daughter of King Ali Mir (fifteenth chief of Skardu),

with an imprisoned Ladakhi king, Jamyang Namgyal, also finds a mention in *La-dvags-rgyal-rabs*.

A. H. Francke, in his formative work, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, mentions the Balti king, dreaming of a lion disappearing in the body of his daughter, Gyal Khatun, who later came to be known as an incarnation of Tara or (Tib. *gdrol-ma*). Francke has translated the following verse from the original manuscript as, “Yetserday in a dream, I saw a lion [emerging] from the river in front [of the castle]; And, jumping at Rgyal-Kha-thun, he disappeared into her body, At the same time also, that girl conceived. Now it is certain that she will give birth to a male child, Whose name ye shall call Sen-ger-nam-gyal!”<sup>7</sup> To the modern reader, the dream seems like a carefully planted political foil against the social backlash waiting for the chieftain’s daughter. The child conceived out of wedlock was named Senge Namgyal. This is the first recorded incident in Ladakhi history that chronicles towards a political and legitimate annunciation between the two powerful kingdoms. As a matter of fact, a number of Ladakhi Buddhists and Balti Muslims continue to co-habit Leh till this date, as a reminder of their shared history. Senge Namgyal (1590-1642 CE) grew up to be the prototypical ruler of the Namgyal dynasty, annexing the entire Western Tibet including Guge and Purang.<sup>8</sup>

The long surviving palace complex, monasteries and watch towers at Leh, Basgo and Hemis, stand as testimony to his expansionist and enterprising nature. Not only religious but also secular architecture was also built under the patronage of the king such as “a wooden bridge across the Indus was constructed under Senge Namgyal, at Alchi”,<sup>9</sup> according to an inscription and most prominently, the building of the famous *Khache Masjid* in Leh. Although, an inscription in the mosque dated to A.H. 1077 (1677 CE), reads that it was built under the rule of Deleg Namgyal (heir apparent to King Senge Namgyal), perhaps the land was granted during the reign of Senge Namgyal and his heir completed the construction.<sup>10</sup>

#### BASGO COMPLEX: ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

So far, this paper has tried to historically summarize major events in Ladakh up till the Namgyal rulers, which is significant to establish the role of patronage in religious art in Ladakh. Basgo was the capital from where the Namgyal rulers established their supremacy. Even before the construction of the Leh Palace, the fort area of Basgo was considered the seat of Namgyal apogee. It is a significant historical site in Ladakh along

the river Indus, in between the Himalayan and Karakoram ranges, approximately 11,000 feet above sea level and nearly 35 kilometres from Leh on the Leh-Srinagar highway. It consists of a mud-brick fortress on the eastern side of the cliffs, also known as *Basgo-Rabtan-Lhartsekhar*, at the top of a hill with an adjoining Basgo Gompa. The fort and the temple are popularly remembered as being built by King Senge Namgyal during 16<sup>th</sup> century CE in commemoration of the militaristic zeal of his father King Jamyang Namgyal. But, contrary to popular perception, the three temples of the Basgo complex were built in various stages under the supervision of various Namgyal kings.



PLATE 1: VIEW OF THE BASGO COMPLEX. (PHOTO COURTESY: PROF. K.T.S. SARAO)

The Basgo circuit consists of a palace (now in ruins), three *lakhangs* and vestiges of the fortification wall. The three temples within the ruins of Basgo are Chamba Lakhang, Serzang Lakhang, and Cham Chung Lakhang. The site itself is considered as the first political and royal center of stronghold for the Namgyal Dynasty built between 1445-1650 CE. The construction of the temple took place during the reign of King Drakspa Bumde in 1450-1490 CE and the remaining development around the reign of King Tsewang Namgyal during 1580-1600 CE. The fort and the temple were further renovated during the reign of King Senge Namgyal during the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE, in commemoration of the military achievements of

his father, King Tsewang Namgyal. Dr. Lozang Jamspal (patron of Basgo Welfare Community) mentions an accurate genealogy of the Namgyal kings.<sup>11</sup> According to him, King Grag-s-pa-bum-lde (1450-1490 CE) laid the original foundation of the Maitryea Temple at Basgo. Even A.H. Francke points out, "it was probably also Dragspa who improved the ancient fortifications at Basgo, to make them a stronghold of the first rank".<sup>12</sup> King Tshe-dbang-rNamgyal (1580-1600) got the Maitreya temple painted,<sup>13</sup> King Jam-dbyang-rNamgyal (1600-1615) started the construction of the golden image in the Serzang Lakhang and finally King Senge-rNamgyal (1616-1642 CE) completed the previous work undergoing in Maitreya temple.

Like the important monastic centers at Shey and Thikse, Basgo, also finds a mention in early works of Francke, Cunningham, Tucci, Hutchinson etc. In one such exploratory writing we find a descriptive account of the physical beauty of Basgo. "*It is an arid waste, with hardly a blade of vegetation to vary the bare nakedness of the soil. From the plateau we descended to the Basgo hollow; it is a fertile and populous tract, and picturesque in the clusters of its Buddhist monuments and neatly-built dwelling houses amidst a general spread of fields and fruit trees.*"<sup>14</sup> From the fertile plains of Alchi to the arid lands of Basgo, the ever-expanding plurality of monastery culture of Ladakh has long fascinated scholars and travellers.

Even in the twentieth century, famous artists like Nicholas Roerich, have been spiritually and philosophically inspired by the unsung glory of the Basgo monastery. Based on his travels, Roerich wrote several works related to his gruesome yet picturesque travels and trails across the mountain peaks in the Himalayas, while painting the stark beauty of Basgo amidst the Ladakhi landscape in the 1930's.<sup>15</sup> In his memoirs, Roerich has recalled, "*An impression of majesty was conveyed by Basgo. Ancient half-ruined towers and endlessly long walls sat atop the peaks of rocks, where they mingled with present day temples.*"<sup>16</sup> Of these writings, *Trails to Innermost Asia – Five Years of Exploration with Roerich Central Asian Expedition*, mentions his journey crossing Basgo and witnessing the treasure trove of sculptures, wall paintings and the sublime beauty of its landscape.

### THE RISE OF MONASTERY-FORTRESS

Besides its complicated historical lineage and various issues of safeguarding of tangible cultural heritage, Basgo complex also recalls the *raison d'être* of monastery-fortresses in the Western Himalayan region. The monasteries

built during the early period, i.e. from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century CE were constructed in fertile plains, away from village settlements and palatial structures like the monastic complex of Alchi. The early period construction was an amalgamation of local and traditional building styles with an Indian influence of detailing and ornamentation (brought back by Rinchen bzangpo). Furthermore, the style and architecture of temples from Martand, Parihaspura, Pandrethan, Avantiswamin etc. bore a direct influence for early monastic architectural construction and artistic continuity from Kashmir to Ladakh.

In the later period, beginning from 13<sup>th</sup> century CE onwards, the monasteries were constructed on a height and included palace fortifications and houses for people. Due to a politically charged climate and threats from the surrounding kingdoms, many monasteries were constructed on mountain or hilltops. An integral part for this shift was a result in the change of the feudal and economic structure of the monastic orders, which allowed land rights to the monasteries of a number of villages and asserted the role of religious establishments in peace keeping and safeguarding their territories. *“The share-cropping role of the monastery was to bring to it tremendous wealth...This naturally made them a target of attack not only by iconoclastic invaders but others in search of booty. Basgo, for instance, was attacked and laid under siege for three years by a Tibetan army in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and it was able to hold out successfully because of the reserves of food and valuables that were at its disposable”*.<sup>17</sup>

As a result, hilltop monasteries became homogenized structures that were a safe and secure model of habitation in the mountains and valleys throughout the Western Himalayan terrain. In order to create architecturally sound structures, the monasteries built on a mountain top followed the ebb and flow of the landscape resembling the impenetrable mountain itself, hence the term ‘monastery fortress’.<sup>18</sup> The tall and tapering architectural wonders of the religious and political might embodied the rocky outcrop of the desolate landscape. With time, the multistoried structures mushrooming along the hill became overtly complicated with the intricate networking of various rooms, alleys, storage houses, libraries, kitchens, nunnery etc. The site of the Basgo complex was also constructed to serve as a monastery fortress, to protect and safeguard the temple from the surrounding threatening forces. Even today, the isolated and dilapidated watch towers of Basgo’s defense wall have withstood the ravages of time and stand as a testimony of its glorious past.

INSIDE CHAMBA LAKHANG

The way to Chamba Lakhang or the Maitreya Temple is approached through a series of stairwells. Inside the monastery, the restored murals<sup>19</sup> provide a visual delight for ardent devotees and art enthusiasts that have been restored to its former glory. Even though the traditional Ladakhi technique of painting over the previous layer of murals has caused more problems to the conservationists than to bring any respite. The assembly hall or *dukhang* at the temple faces east and it is square in plan, supported by richly decorated wooden pillars, beams and rafters from the inside. The illustrious wooden ceiling, painted with various decorative motifs and textile patterns bears a direct influence from the treatment of the ceiling at Alchi (See Plate 2). The central deity inside the temple is a 14 meters high sculpture of Maitreya, the future Buddha, making *dharamacakra mudra* or the gesture of turning the wheel of law, in clay and stucco with a gilding of gold, adorned with colourful brocade and precious jewelry (See Plate 3). He is seated in *bhadrāsana*, his characteristic posture of royal ease in the Tushita heaven. Maitreya's head looks out from a clerestory into the Basgo village, blessing the worldly realm. While Gyal Khatun is considered as the patron of the Chamba Lakhang, it is also believed that she donated the ornaments for the Maitreya image in the second temple, Serzang Lakhang, as well. In the assembly hall, the colossal image of a golden-bodied, highly bejeweled Maitreya, in his *sambhogakaya* or celestial form, is flanked by two attendant *bodhisattva* figures, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani. The walls are adorned with illustrious murals of Buddhist gods and goddesses, religious leaders and events from the Buddha's life.

Stylistically and aesthetically, the Chamba Lakhang takes heavily on from its illustrious predecessor, the Alchi *choskhor* or the Alchi complex built around the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE by the great *lotsaba* Rin-chen-bzang-po. Although the architectural features are quite different, the painting style and nuances are similar. With regard to the artistic style, technique and even the colour composition, Basgo bears a striking similarity to Alchi. The painting and aesthetic tradition forwarded by the lyrical style of the Alchi murals became a benchmark of 'early Ladakhi style'. Due to the spread of Islamic forces from 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the decline in Hindu and Buddhist art led to a decline in interaction with the Indian kingdoms. As a result, Ladakh looked to Tibet for spiritual and artistic discourse. Even though the expression was evidently Indianized, the schematic and



PLATE 2: VIEW OF THE CEILING DESIGN. (PHOTO COURTESY: SAMA HAQ)



PLATE 3: MAITREYA SCULPTURE INSIDE THE CHAMBALAKHANG.  
(PHOTO COURTESY: SAMA HAQ)

iconographic style imbibed from Tibetan art was more sophisticated, partially Sinicized and different from the previous blend of local and indigenous element. The Maitreya Temple of Basgo also bears an imprint of this Tibetan influence, which is also seen in another monastery at Phyi-dbang, built in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. To further prove the prevalence of this new style, the name and inscription of one of the artists – Don-grub-legs-pa, was found at the both the monasteries.<sup>20</sup>

The iconographic and iconological schema and compositional pattern in every Buddhist monastery is very carefully selected. Inside every *gompa* lies the intricate yet elusive universe of the Vajrayana Buddhist pantheon painted on three sides of the wall. At Basgo, the entrance wall is marked with the auspicious presence of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, a bodhisattva of compassion and wisdom and a patron deity of Tibet. He is surrounded by his consorts, Green and White Tara, the spiritual emanations of Avalokitesvara. A blue-bodied Vajrapani, who is a guardian deity and a wrathful emanation of Avalokiteshvara in Vajrayana Buddhism, is assisting the triad. Guardian deities of the four directions and other wrathful deities safeguarding the sacred realms further accompany the Bodhisattva. In the cosmological order of the sacred precinct of the temple, wrathful and beneficial deities heavily guard the entrance. Through the *samsaric* doors of the physical world, full of desire and affliction, a lay devotee is beseeched by the divine figures to enter the sacred, metaphorical and philosophical realm of the gods. The entrance doors mark the symbolic shift in the karmic balance for those who enter inside to purge their sins.

Some of the prominent murals on the right hand side of the wall are of White Tara, *dhyani* Buddhas like Amitabha in *dhyana mudra*, and Ratnasambhava in *varada mudra*; followed by Je Tsongkhapa, the religious head of the Gelug sect or the yellow hat sect in his typical yellow pointed conical hat and *dhyani* Buddha Akshobhya in *bhumisparsha mudra*. Amitabha Buddha is the cosmic Buddha of the west, he is red in colour and he holds a vase of ambrosia (in his celestial aspect). He sits in the Sukhavati Paradise. Ratnasambhava is the cosmic Buddha of the south, he is yellow in colour and he dispels pride and ego through wisdom and generosity. Akshobhya Buddha resides in the east and his left hand holds an upright *vajra* sitting in adamantine posture. He is always shown in blue colour and he belongs to the *vajra* clan of stability and a firm *bodhicitta*. The transcendental Buddhas of the different directions are also richly adorned and eloquently represented in their *sambhogkaya* or celestial forms adhering to their different iconographic stands. The representation of head



priests or revolutionaries of a certain order also mark the religious affiliation of the various monastic orders in Tibetan Buddhism.

On the opposite side of the wall are also equally vibrant murals of Buddhist gods, Bodhisattva figures and spiritual leaders (See Plate 4). These are *sadakshari* Avalokiteshvara or the six syllabled form of Avalokiteshvara, prominent in Tibet, Ladakh and Nepal. *Sadakshari* Avalokiteshvara is also known as the lord of six-syllabled mantra. As mentioned in Buddhist texts such as *Karanda Vyuha* and in the sixth *sadhana* or prayer of the *Sadhanmala*, this form of Avalokiteshvara is a ritual manifestation and deification of the seed syllable, *om mani padma hum*. Next to him is a seated image of the great monk Padma Karpo, the propounder of the Drukpa Kagyud sect in Tibetan Buddhism, which hails back to the Kagyu-pa lineage of the great Indian guru Tilopa (988-1069 CE) himself. It is believed that Maitreya temple was built in the honor of the teachings of Kun-mkhyen Pad-ma-dkarpo (1525-1590 CE). In Ladakh, the Drukpa Kagyud sect was reinstated during the reign of King Senge Namgyal when the lama Tag Tsan Raspa gave an ordination to the royal family including the Balti queen, Gyal Khatun. At present, the Maitreya temple is governed by the Hemis Monastery of Ladakh, which also belongs to the red hat sect of the Kagyud order.



PLATE 4: VIEW OF THE MURALS INSIDE THE CHAMBA LAKHANG ON THE LEFT SIDE WALL.  
(PHOTO COURTESY: SAMA HAQ)

Following the mural of the great lama is the mural of Amoghasiddhi Buddha in *abhaya mudra*. He is the transcendental Buddha of the north direction and he is shown in green colour. He represents mental and spiritual accomplishment. Next to him is Vajrasattva or the primordial Buddha, representing the unshakable adamantine essence of being. He is shown holding a *vajra* or a thunderbolt and a *ghanta* or a bell as his attributes. Vajrasattva is the adamantine wielder of Adibudhha in the elemental creation of the void.

Apart from the sacredotal rendition of monks and deities on the three walls, there is also a vibrant visual narrative of scenes from Buddha's life in a continuous narrative. The story unfolds on the bottom register from the left side of Maitreya, with the auspicious dream of Buddha's birth and culminates with his descent to heaven on the right side wall. The narrative circumambulates in a clockwise movement inside the temple. Apart from various scenes related to Buddha's birth, his descent from heaven, the great departure, enlightenment and various other scenes of post-enlightenment miracles, his *mahaparinirvana* (See Plate 5), division of relics etc. are elaborately adorning the walls. The band of narrative running around the entrance doorway also shows the Namgyal kings along with their retinue being a part of this cosmological order.

#### BASGO: THROUGH THE LENS OF TIME

The heterotropic role of Basgo as a cultural repository, just like the other important architectural sites in Ladakh, was also seriously undermined. In fact, the World Monument Fund recognized the Maitreya Lakhang or Chamba Lakhang of Basgo, among one of the hundred most endangered heritage sites in the year 2000-2001. The murals and sculptures of *dukhang* and the rare manuscripts of *tangyur* and *kangyur* in the temple library exemplified a rich past and even more, a tradition, a history and continuity, which was at the verge of being forgotten. A condition assessment report prepared by INTACH in 2003, Serial No: JK/ Lad/ Fo/ 59, labeled Basgo fort within the "danger of disappearance".<sup>21</sup> The report read, "*The fort complex is in extremely dilapidated condition. Most portions have decayed beyond any reconstruction. Even the existing portions are not looked after by anyone. The structure lies abandoned.*"<sup>22</sup>

By 2004, thanks to the effort of the Basgo Welfare Community, World Monument Fund, and the Namgyal Institute for Research on Ladakhi Art and Culture, the two small temples were repaired and given a much-



PLATE 5: A PANEL DEPICTING BUDDHA'S CREMATION FROM THE NARRATIVE SCENES OF HIS LIFE.  
(PHOTO COURTESY: SAMA HAQ)

awaited face-lift and restoration for the main temple was carried out with the help of various international organizations and the initiatives of the local community. In 2009, Chamba Lakhang won the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award for Excellence as a reminder of the ingenious hard work of the Basgo people. The temple showcases a curious blend of the social and religious merit and activism of the Basgo Welfare Committee<sup>23</sup>, which took the task of reinstating the Chamba Lakhang to its grandeur. Once the main temple was restored, the ordained priests reinstated the religious and spiritual importance of the temple by performing certain purification rituals for opening the temple for public worship and other rituals.<sup>24</sup> While the vestiges of the fort complex still lie in ruins without any hope for preservation, its ramshackled walls stand as an ever-watchful

guard overlooking the Basgo village.

To conclude, the archaeological site of the Basgo Gompa represents the multifaceted aspect and life of a monastic establishment. From being the religious and political center of the Namgyal kingdom to housing the long-standing temples with colossal sculptures and sacred murals, Basgo has come a long way. With the effort of organizations like the Basgo Welfare Committee, UNESCO, World Monument Fund, Namgyal Institute for Research on Ladakhi Art and Culture and many others who have aided the conservation and restoration of the site, Basgo complex struggles to withstand the vicissitudes of history, memory and time. Through this paper, an attempt has also been made to create a scope for art historical assessment, analysis and interpretation of the complex iconographic art form seen in Vajrayana Buddhism. While there are many historical facts and dates to adhere to when discussing the archaeological site, an art historical study creates a significant texture of cross-cultural and inter-textual references, which helps in understanding the various facets of a civilization and its people.

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