ON ATISA’S ITINERARY IN TIBET
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I

According to Prof. Petech, Sum-pa-mkhan-po-Ye-shes-dup-shor-byor, the
Mongolian historiographer, completed his encyclopaedic work popularly
known as "Fag-bum-lon-kan" in A.D. 1748. The full title of the work is
‘Phags-pa-lugs-rin-chets-pa-bod-gyi-sog-yul-wa-dam-pa’s-chets-byor-shu-tshu,
Fag-bum-lon-kan-lug-po-thay (i.e. the history of Buddhism in India, Tibet,
China and Mongolia). The Re-wa-mig, i.e. chronological table, forms part
of part III of the aforesaid work as edited by Dr. Loken Chandra from the
collection of Dr. Raghuvira. Sum-pa was a prolific writer and hardly there
is any subject which has been left from the domain of his writing. He wrote
on history, grammar, mathematics, astrology, geography and almost all sub-
jects concerning Buddhist religion. Sum-pa was born in Wood-Ape year
(A.D. 1704) in the neighbourhood of dgon-lam monastery of Amdo in ulceror
Tibet. The monastery lies to the north east of Hsi-ning in the Ching-hai
(Tsinghai or Koko Nor) province of China which is inhabited by Chinese,
Tibetans and Mongolians. According to Karat Das, Sum-pa died at the age
of 73 which should be A.D. 1776 according to Tibetan way of calculating
time. Tibetologists, however, are not in agreement about the date of his
death.

In Re-wa-mig, Sum-pa describes the principal events of Tibet year by year
beginning from A.D. 1027 to A.D. 1746. He has divided the whole chronology
according to Tibetan system into 12 cycles of 60 years each. An English
translation of the portion of Re-wa-mig containing the chronology and
chronicle of Atisa’s visit to Tibet and his work there is given below.

II

FIRST CYCLE

Fire-Hare
(A.D. 1027)
Kolok-mtana Po-to-ba-rin-chets-gsal was born. The
twelfth Kulok-rhya (Rig-pid-ba-blu-ghis-pa-ni-ma) sat on
the throne of Samdala. Gyi-jo-lod-tshatsa (lo-tsa-ba)translated
Kaldarkora into Tibetan language. Since Buddha
attained Nirvana in the Fire-Hare year, this was the 361st
year of Ashadha. According to some historians who
believe that Buddha passed away in the year Iron-Dragon,
this was the 405th year of Ashadha.

Earth-Dragon
(A.D. 1028)
According to some Gyi-jo translated the great com-
mentary of Kaldarkora into Tibetan in 1st year.

Earth-Serpent
(A.D. 1029)
Se-ston-kun-rigs, the spiritual teacher of the sister
of Ma-chig-sha-ma-kham-rito and disciple of ‘Bro-mi-
lod-tsatsa was born.
Iron-Horse
(A.D. 1030)

Nir

Iron-Sheep
(A.D. 1031)

Phu-chhus-ba-phon-egyan was born. According to Deb Shon-po\(^9\) (Blue Annals), Po-lo-ba was also born during the year but the year Fire-Horse is certain\(^1\).

Water-Age
(A.D. 1032)

Stod-lhab-par-in-chhen-shihs-po, the pupil of dPyan-Sha-ba was born.

Water-Bird
(A.D. 1033)

dPyan-sha-ba-tshu-lhrin-bar was born. Deb Shon-Po (Blue Annals), however mentions that he was born in Earth-Tiger year.

Wood-Dog
(A.D. 1034)

"Khon-dkon-mchog-trsal-po of Sa-sky was born.

Wood-Hog
(A.D. 1035)

bLac-chhen-po-dgo-tsa-par-tsh-gsal passed away from this world.

Fire-Mouse
(A.D. 1036)

rNog-chhos-rdo-rje, the pupil of Mat-pa was born.

Fire-Ox
(A.D. 1037)

Nir

Earth-Tiger
(A.D. 1038)

Nir

Earth-Horse
(A.D. 1039)

According to astrology and travel accounts of Jo-bo (Atis\(^9\), he reached mNa-'ri\(^9\).

Iron-Dragon
(A.D. 1040)

Thos-pa-dga' (Mi-la-ras-pa) was born. Ba-ri-lo-tsa-rin-grags was born\(^9\). The monastery of Sha-lo\(^9\) was founded. According to written travel accounts, Atis left Nepal. Ni-ro-par-chhen died\(^9\).

Iron-Serpent
(A.D. 1041)

According to some travel books Jo-bo (Atis\(^9\) reached Nepal.

Water-Horse
(A.D. 1042)

sNe-nus-par-ye'-bar, the principal disciple of dGon-pa-pa\(^9\) was born. sMyug-rum-pa-mten-agon-brtsos-brus-bar was born. Atis reached Mda'-ri.

Water-Sheep
(A.D. 1043)

"Brog-mi-lo-tshas founded the monastery of Myug-nor\(^9\).

Wood-Age
(A.D. 1044)

rMa-lo-tsha-Chhos-bar, a native of La-Stod and famous as the male-partner of Ma-chig-sha-ma was born\(^9\). "Brom paid his respects to Atis.

Wood-Bird
(A.D. 1045)

Nir
Notes


2. A complete list of his works can be found in dPags-pa-ljung-bzhed, Part III, edited by Lokesh Chandra.


4. dPags-pa-ljung-bzhed, Preface, p. XIX.

5. JASB, 1889, I, p.39.

6. For example, S. Bira has given A. D. 1788 as the year of his death

9. Here Sum-pa is obviously referring to Bus-ton (See E. Obermiller, History of Buddhism, p. 217).


11. See B.A. I, p. 283 according to which Po-to-ba was born in Iron-Sheep year (A.D. 1031) and died at the age of 75 in the year Wood-Bird (A.D. 1105).

12. Atilla is popularly known in Tibet by the name of Jo-bo or Jo-bo-je (literally the Arja or the noble lord).

13. The year of Atilla’s reaching mNél-rin does not seem to be correct for Sum-pa himself later states that he reached mNél-rin in Water-Horse year i.e. A.D. 1042. ‘Gos-lod-itas-ba also holds that Atilla reached mNél-rin in Water-Horse year i.e. A.D. 1042 (B.A. I, p. 247; cf. Atika Chaptopadhyaya, Atilla and Tibet, Calcutta; 1967, pp. 307-11) mNél-rin is identical with mNél-sun which is the westernmost province of Tibet, also known as Ngari khorsum, containing mainly the districts of Purang, Shangphung and Mako-yul (TED, p. 382. Cf. TEL, p. 132).

14. Thos-pa-dga’ (meaning delightful to hear) was the name given to Mid-la-rsa-pa at the time of his birth by his father. Sum-pa seems to have borrowed the date from ‘Gos-lod-itas-ba who also assigns his death to Water-Horse year (A.D. 1123) and says that he died at the age of 84. Go-lo-tu-ba has arrived at these dates after making firm calculations (B.A. I, pp. 427-436). In another source, the dates of his birth and death are given as Water-Dragon year (A.D. 1052) and Wood-Bird year (A.D. 1133) respectively. This source, however, also agrees that he died at the age of 84 (W. Y. Evans-Went, Tibet’s Great Yogi Mitropa, London; 1969, pp. 52, 273).

15. The monastery of Sha-ba was, according to Bus-ton, founded by Lha-btsan-wa-rab-byun-gras. There were four primary and six secondary sects to this (Bus-ton, II, p. 206). The place was a few miles south-west of Tashi-Shun-po, the seat of the famous historian and chronicler Bus-ton Rin-po-che (TED, p. 184).

17. S. C. Das translates this passage: "Ye-des-ber of Sneju sur, the eldest son of Dgon-pa was born." He thus describes the name wrongly and translated the Tibetan word blo-chen to mean "oldest son" incorrectly here. The word means "Principal disciple" (CT BA, I, p. 311).

18. CT BA, I, p. 207.

19. S. C. Das (JASB, 1889, p. 41), however, translates the crucial text as follows: "Ma-chig sha-ma's husband was born. Rma Lo-chubs Chhos-bas of La-said was born." But in our opinion the text refers to only one person named Rma-lo-ta-sa-Chhos-bas who was not the husband of Ma-chig-Sha-ma but her male partner.

Ma-chig-Sha-ma was married at the age of 14 but being disgusted with her marriage, she fitted insanity and separated from her husband (BA, I, p. 221). Rma-lo-ta-sa-sha accepted Ma-chig-sha-ma as his Modni, i.e. female partner (BA, II, p. 219) after she left her husband.

20. Identical with the monastery of Bo-don which lies on the route from Pun-tsa-gon to bKa-ra-les-thun-po (MBHCS, p. 136n; CT. Tucci, TPS, p. 205; wherein Tucci places Pottin i.e. same as Bo-don-on on road between lha-ra and bka-ra-les-thun-po i.e. Tashi-lhunpo in the neighborhood of Zahn-ge-driin).

21. Here S. C. Das does not give the complete translation of the passage. He simply mentions "Atta wrote his work on the Buddhist Chronology" (JASB, 1889, p. 41). Water-Horse year, the year of Atta's birth given here, is equivalent to A.D. 982 (vide M.P. Pelliot, "Table of Tibetan Sexagenary cycle". Journal Asiatique, 1913, part I, pp. 666-67).

22. S. C. Das translates the whole passage incorrectly (JASB, 1889, p. 41); (BA, I, pp. 175-189 wherein names of the teachers of Dharmas-bothi were given.