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Gangtok, India
The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in this field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field.

EDITORS
NIRMAL C. SINHA
JAMPAL K. RECHUNG
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CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE:

TURRELL V. WYLIE Scholar in Chinese and Tibetan languages; began as a Sinologist; later studied Tibetan history and culture with Professor Giuseppe Tucci in Rome and learned Tibetan language with Lamas in Darjeeling; well known for his work in Tibetan geographical literature; specializes in social, economic and administrative history of Tibet. Associate Professor of Tibetan Language and Civilization and Executive Chairman of Inner Asia Project, University of Washington, Seattle, USA. (Bio-data as in 'Bulletin' 1963:1)

BUDHSHA PRAKASH Well-known scholar in ancient Indian history and culture, authority on ancient geography of India and adjoining countries; has been Professor of Ancient Indian History in several Indian Universities; at present Director; Institute of Indic Studies, Kurukshetra University, Punjab. (Bio-data as in 'Bulletin' 1965:1)

NIRMAL C. SINHA Founder Director, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology; recipient of PADMA SHRI Award from the President of India 1971; recipient of ASIATIC SOCIETY BI-CENTENARY PLAQUE 1986.

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WHAT CONSTITUTES THE IMPORTANCE OF ATISA?

- Nirmal C. Sinha

The above question is from a young Tibetologist, Helmut Eimer. Eimer has made wide study of Tibetan literary sources, and in my knowledge is the only non-Tibetan scholar to have probed deep into the life and works of Srijana Dipankara Atisa (982-1054). In 1982-83 millenary of Atisa was celebrated in India. The scholarly or academic output of these celebrations however did not go much beyond what the Indian pioneer Sarat Chandra Das (1849-1917) wrote. Indian scholars celebrating ATISA SAHASRA VARSHIKI were not even aware of many Tibetan sources come to light after Sarat Das, and all our seminars and talks boiled down to the old, already known, conclusion that Atisa was the great Pandita who brought learning and light to Tibet when Dharma was in danger there. The ATISA SAHASRA VARSHIKI did not impress the interested scholars even in India.

Helmut Eimer does not refer to the muddle among Indian celebrator's but has written a critical article on "Life and Activities of Atisa Dipankara Srijana" in Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol XXVII No. 4 (Calcutta 1983). Eimer frames the question "What constitutes the importance of Atisa?" in this article. With my limited acquaintance of Tibetan literary sources, a fair knowledge of Tibetan oral tradition and good on-the-spot knowledge acquired in Central Tibet in 1955-6, I had posed nearly twenty years ago the same question in Bengal Fast & Present: Diamond Jubilee Number (Calcutta 1967). As my question did not attract any serious notice in our country at the moment and later, I take the liberty of reproducing below the relevant portions of my article (1967).

II

"A decade ago the present writer had visited the temples and monasteries of Central Tibet in the company of some Ladakhi Lamas. The writer did not, as he still does not, suffer from the complex called Greater India and was
not particular in tracing the Indic origins of the objects noticed. An event from this itinerary constitutes a historic experience for this writer, a student of history. This happened in the first month of Tibetan year.

"Besides being the time for new garments, luxury dishes and merriments for all, the first month is a special celebration for the Yellow Sect (dge-lugs-pa, pronounced Gelugpa). The Yellow Sect originating with Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1417), a great Lama from Kokoer region, captured political power in Central Tibet in the sixteenth century and by the middle of the seventeenth century made their hierarchy, the Dalai Lama, the undisputed sovereign of Tibet. Though in actual administration lay element (members of ancient royal/feudal houses and the like) was taken into power and in fact at every level of administration a monk-official and a lay-official worked together, the ruling Lamas at the top maintained that the power belonged to the Sangha (dge-dun, pr. Gedun).

"Tsong-kha-pa, the founder of the Yellow Sect, had instituted a special prayer for the new year month. This prayer (smon-lam, pr. Monlam) was to invoke the advent of the Buddha Maitreya. The Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1697) enlarged the Prayer to the form in practice till the Flight of the Fourteenth (1959).

"During the month of Monlam the entire administration of the metropolis, that is, Lhasa, was taken over by the Lamas from the three monasteries around Lhasa. These monasteries had captured political power in the sixteenth century and the exclusive Lama administration of the metropolis was a token of the residuary powers or ultimate sovereignty of the Sangha.

"In the Monlam month no Lama high or low was to bow to a layman, particularly a stranger. Another protocol prescribed riding on the road around the Cathedral (Jo-khang = Skt. Bhattarakagraha) during the Monlam as the Dalai Lama usually resided in the Cathedral at the time. Horse as an engine of power first emerged in Inner Asia, and appropriately riding around the seat of the Imperium came to be banned during the period.

"A few days before the commencement of the New Year, the writer had left Lhasa to visit Gun-den (dgah-Idan = Skt. Tushita), one of the three monasteries and the one
with the mausoleum of Tsong-kha-pa. When he returned
the New Year had set in and the special rules of the road
were effective. Though his Ladakhi companions affirmed
that a visitor from India - Phag-yul (phags-yul) or Aryabhu-
mi - would be permitted riding because at the moment
the Dalai Lama was not inside the Cathedral, the writer
dismounted on reaching the ring. Some Lamas noticed this
and were delighted at the observance of propriety.

"One Lama asked the writer whether he was also a
Ladakhi. On answering in the negative he wanted to know
the exact place - the city - from where the writer hailed.
The writer said "Kata" (Kata or Kalikata is Tibetan for
Calcutta). The inquisitive Lama burst out "Kata Kalikata.
That means Vangala". He collected quite a few of his friends
and bowed thrice (Namaskar in Indian fashion) and said
"Look, this man is come from Vangala from where Jo-Atisa
(Prabhu Atisa) came to Tibet". Then followed this dialogue.

Lama : Are you a Buddhist?
Writer : No.
Lama : Then you will not know Jo-Atisa.
Writer : I do know his name.
Lama : How is that for a non-Buddhist?
Writer : In Vangala many know him and know his full name
Dipankara Srijana Atisa. His name lives as the
mark of intellect.
Lama : I do not fully accept your word. Is the name current
today in your country?
Writer : Yes, I have my son named Atisa.
Lama : I am surprised. I am surprised.

"The Lama's peroration still rings in the ears of the
writer. "Today is a most auspicious day for me. I come
from Mongolia and this man comes from Vangala. I have
taken nearly two years to reach Lhasa. I arrived only this
morning a few hours ago to participate in Monlam and
what a happy augury that I meet a native of the land of
Jo-Atisa. Jo-Atisa came to preach the correct Doctrine
nine hundred years ago and his preachings spread from
Tibet into Mongolia. Friends, join me in a salutation to
this man from the south. We salute the land of Jo-Atisa!"
The Lama bowed thrice again and departed.

"This strange conduct of a Lama during the Monlam
was an inscrutable sight to the non-Buddhist traders on
the street. Monlam is also the season when Muslim merchants
from India (Ladakh) and Turkestan (Sinkiang) along
with the Tibetans and Newars throng the streets of Lhasa.
Most confounded were the Chinese, the civilians in blue
as well as the soldiers in khaki.

"Though not a devotee of the fetish of Greater India,
this writer quite naturally felt a gratification on being
honoured as a companion of Atisa. He, however, felt more
interested to know the place of Atisa in the history of
Inner Asia, Tibet and Mongolia. Atisa (b. 982) came to
Tibet in 1042 and passed away in 1054 near Lhasa".

iii

Ten years later I visited the Bajkals and was more
surprised to note that the Burjats esteemed Adisa Dibangkara
(Atisa Dipankara) as second only to Gautama Buddha. I
was told that the Burjats shared such sentiment with the
Mongols in general. All Mongols reportedly admitted the
greatness of Nagarjuna as the authentic exponent of Buddha’s
Transcendental Teachings and that of Tsong Khapa as the
Teacher of the Dharma. The tradition among the Mongols,
as I could understand, was that though Atisa indeed never
travelled beyond Central Tibet his teachings in their purest
form reached the Mongols through Tsong Khapa and his
disciples.

Atisa had visited Tibet and worked there till his death.
Atisa had indeed consolidated Dharma in Tibet and the
great remission was the outcome of Atisa’s work in
Tibet. Atisa’s name as a household word in Tibet is no
puzzle for anyone, a Buddhist believer or a modern scholar.
But why and how Atisa became a prized figure in the north,
in Mongolia or Siberia? Clearly Atisa left a legacy not
for Tibet only but for all Mahayana or Northern Buddhist
peoples.

This important question has net however interested
scholars and intellectuals in the land of Atisa’s birth. The
Atisa-Sahasra-Varshiki (milennary) was celebrated in India
in 1982-83. The consensus among Indian scholars and in-
tellecuals was that Atisa was a great son of India and that
nothing much about Atisa can be found from records in
India. There was however much noise about the precise
spot where Atisa was born. Was Atisa a Bengali or a Bhari in modern sense of the terms? I would contend that we in India – Bengalis, Biharis or others – need not shout to claim Atisa as our compatriot. Atisa is indeed a lost figure of Indian history while he is a live tradition of Asian history.

I have not much claims to scholarship yet as one with nearly 35 years close associations with Northern Buddhists I dare record my observations on Atisa’s role in Inner Asian history. I would make some preliminary remarks before I offer my observations. It is a sad fact that after Sarat Chandra Das and Rahul Sankrityayan not much worthy work on Tibet has been done in India, that is, by Indian scholars. Indian scholarship regarding Tibet is a gloss of patriotic verbiage to conceal our poor knowledge of the subject. The Western scholars, on the other hand, have derived deep into the literary and archaeological data available and have made original and outstanding contributions. I owe much of my knowledge about Tibet to several Western scholars as well as to Rahul Sankrityayan and a large number of Lamas and scholars of Tibet and Mongolia. I am however constrained to submit that Western scholars in general, barring a few like Hugh Richardson, have misunderstood or misinterpreted certain facts and features of the Northern Buddhist countries.

A point to illustrate would be the Western view about the origin and development of the Incarnations and Incarnate Rulers in Tibet and later Mongolia. Despite considerable positive data in Buddhist and pre-Buddhist Brahmanical literature, there is a notion among Western scholars that the institution of incarnations commenced in Tibet under the auspices of the royal patrons of Dharma. For a brief authoritative account of the concept of Nirmanakaya (Sprul-sku/Tulku) in Sankhya, Yoga and even Rig Veda, Western scholars should read Goshinath Kaviraj in the Sarasvati Bhavan Studies (Sanskrit College, Benaras) or Aspects of Indian Thought (University of Bradford). If a great lot of poetic imagery and idiom migrated to the Trans-Himalayas along with Akshara and Dharma, the concept of Nirmanakaya was undoubtedly an important import.

The inventor of the script, Thonmi Sambhota was apotheosized as the incarnation of Manjusri while Songtsen
Gampe as that of Avalokitesvara. Later tradition dated before Atisa's arrival in Tibet, recognized Lha Tho Thori, the ancestor of Songtsen Gambo, as an incarnation of Samantabhadra in commemoration of the event that the first Buddhist book, Karanvisvavha, came in Lha Tho Thori's reign. Likewise, Lhalung Paigyi Dorje, who killed the heretic king Langdarma (c. 839), was apotheosized as an incarnation of Vajrapani. A monk resorting to murder and regicide to protect the Dharma was no doubt worthy of veneration as Vajrapani. The act of regicide by a monk anticipated by centuries the rule of Lama as Dharmapala (Chos-skyo/ Chokyog) or Dharmaraja (Chos-rgyal/Chogyal).

IV

The regicide however could not prevent the decline of Dharma. Two centuries later Srijana Dipankara, celebrated as Jo Atisa in Tibet, arrived in Western Tibet in response of repeated invitations and later settled and propagated in Central Tibet. The Dharma was in decline and only a Shavirarum Pandita like Atisa could fully retrieve the lost position and even enrich in a period of renaissance. In regenerating and rebuilding the Sangha, Atisa enjoined stern discipline for the monks and, though himself old and come from warm plains, he refused any comforts which he considered to be luxury. Atisa's disciples (the Kadampa monks) and their successors (the Gelugpa monks) were renowned for their austere living and naturally commanded respect from all people. A Guru (Blama/Lama) or a Nimma-nakaya (Spurul-skhu/Tulku) would no longer be just an object of ritualistic veneration but a protector par excellence (Skyab-naggon/Kyam-gyon) for the common man when the remnants of monarchy or the feudal lords failed in their duties.

Atisa's experience in Suvannavipa must have inspired him to strive for a Sangha as the leading force in the land and for a Sangharaja as the leader of the people. The institutions of Lama and Tulku were thus handy. Atisa recalled the old Indian adage—"The Guru is the Buddha: the Guru is the Dharma: the Guru is the Sangha" and confirmed the refuge formula, popular in Tibet — "I take refuge in the Lama (Guru): I take refuge in the Sangye (Buddhas): I take refuge in the Chos (Dharma): I take refuge in the Gedun (Sangha)". Later this refuge in the Four became
universal from the Himalayas to the Altai Karakorams. The concept of Tulku (Nirmanakaya) was further sanctified by Atisa. He not only confirmed the recognition of Songtsen Gampo as incarnation of Avalokitesvara but recognised his disciple Domton (brom-ston) also as in the same spiritual lineage. Atisa, according to Kadampa and Gelugpa sources, even prophesied that centuries later the lineage of Domton would produce in succession the incarnations of Avalokitesvara. The hierarchs of the Gelugpa Sect, later called Dalai Lamas by the Mongols, are the incarnations in fulfilment of Atisa’s prophecy. An epithet of Avalokitesvara is Sangharatra, and who could be a better Sangharaja for the Land of Snow than the incarnation of Avalokitesvara.

Fifty years after Atisa passed away, the Sakya hierarch Sa-ch’en Kunga Nyingpo (1092 – 1158) was found to be incarnation of Avalokitesvara. The first Karmapa hierarch Dusum Khenpa (1110–1193) was the next find. The Karmapa lineage was claimed as the lineage of Avalokisvaraj; later his claim was contested by the Gelugpa Sect. The Gelugpa won the battle, when all the four main sects (Nyingma, Sakya, Kargyu and Gelug) accepted the Gelug hierarch, the Dalai Lama, as the paramount incarnation for all Nangpa (Buddhist). Various theories have been propounded by Western scholars to account for the victory of the Gelug hierarch. This is not the occasion to discuss that question.

In ancient India, as in Tibet later, the legacy or heritage of a saint would be best preserved or continued by saintly disciples and the successive abbots or hierarchs were to be celibate, so the lineage was known as spiritual lineage. Such lineage could be in one or more pitha/ashrama. The most famous such lineage surviving to our days is the spiritual lineage of Sankaracharya in four different seats in four directions of the country. In Buddhist Tibet also we have records of one or more incarnations of the same deity or saint.

Western scholars have taken great pains to find better English equivalents for the terms “spiritual” and “incarnation”. For the former terms like “metaphysical” and “non-biological” have been coined and for the latter terms like “re-incarnation” have been used. I would stick to the old
usage "spiritual" and "incarnation" and simply submit that
with all their proficiency in Tibetan language the Western
scholars ignore or lack the context of Sanskrit originals.

It was the spiritual lineage represented by the Kadam
and later the Gelugpa hierarchs who preserved and continued
the legacy of Atiśa. This legacy stood for the rights of
the Sangha and the authority of the Sangharaja.

It may be noted that from the very beginning in China
there was an open confrontation between Buddhism and
Confucianism and except during the Tang regime, Buddhism
had all through a precarious existence in China. As an
accident of history, Buddhism had made its first hold in
Tibet while the Tang dynasty was ruling in China even
Chinese princesses are known to have brought to their
Tibetan consorts Buddha images.

Nevertheless the confrontation between Buddhism and
Confucianism was continued in Tibet, and eventually Bu-
ddhism became the identity mark for the barbarian Bod-pa
visavis the civilised Han. When a "barbarian" or "conqueror"
dynasty like the Mongol or the Manchu ruled China, the
close relationship between the Grand Lamas of Tibet and
the Emperors of China was a matter of the common Dharma.
The Lama was the highly honoured Priest/Teacher and
the Emperor was the highly prized patron. Tibetans did
not become "civilized" and Tibet continued as a "barbarian"
country. That is to say, Tibet did not become during the
regimes of "barbarian" emperors "Tibet Region of China".
Besides there was no question of Mongols becoming submis-
sive or civilized either.

Sino-phile scholars roundly describe the Manchu emperor
as the suerain, if not sovereign over Tibet and Mongolia.
True facts are not to be found in the Chinese Annals which
as a rule omit events of misdemeanor or rebellion in Tibet
or Mongolia. The fact of the matter is that the Great
Fifth (Dalai Lama V) was prevailed upon by his imperial
patron to keep the Mongols under control and within their
boundaries. The Mongols under the advice of the Dalai's
second -- the Hambo lama -- agreed to keep peace if they
were left alone. It is interesting to note that while the
so-called Tribute Missions from Tibet were sometimes
too frequent and had to be banned by the Confucian diplo-
mats, such Missions from Mongolia were not even very regular.

The great economic gain for the Mission bearers was not a good incentive for the Mongol traders who retained their ancient spirit of war and freedom. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Mongols, Kalmuks and Buruts chalked out new trade channels in Tibet (and through to India) and in Turkestan (and through to Russia and Poland).

Earlier, that is, previous to Dalai Lama Manchurian alliance, sword was the instrument for freedom in Tibet and more so in Mongolia. Now Dharma was the symbol of national identity or independence. The great merit of Gelugpa ascendency was that the barbarians had a new consciousness of being civilized and superior, and even the most illiterate or superstitious could notice material and temporal power in the religion. For such illiterate or superstitious, the teachings of Buddha, Nagarjuna and Padmasambhava found their logical justification in Kadam Phacho's, Kadam Bhuchos and the trail of tracts and treatises.

Legacy of Dharma propounded by Gautama Buddha and espoused by Atisha, may be summed thus. One who takes refuge in the Three Jewels does not and cannot owe higher allegiance to any mundane superior. In China, a Buddhist was often accused as being disrespectful or insubordinate to the Son of Heaven on the Dragon Throne. In India, the Buddha (after Nirvana) and the Dharma were transcendental and intangible objects; the Sangha was immemorial and tangible and refuge in the Sangha evoked spontaneous devotion and faith. The Sangha under favourable circumstances could be the sole refuge in matters spiritual as well as temporal. The Sangha had a mission from the Master, "for the profit of the many, for the bliss of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the profit, the bliss of devas and mankind". It was the Sangha which under favourable auspices, could take the Dharma abroad and build permanent and glorious home for the Dharma spread from the sunny south to the cold north. In the new home the Sangharaja would be the Refuge or Protector par excellence and would thus not bow to any temporal power. Thus for Tibet and Mongolia, submission to any external temporal power, even if that be the Son of Heaven, would be blasphemy as well as treason. It was this non-religious
gious or non-spiritual consequence of the teachings of Atisa’s followers which had a popularity of its own for the Tibetans as well as the Mongols when the Manchu empire was at its apogee and the first British envoy to China was dismissed as a Red Barbarian.

Gautama Buddha and Dipankara Atisa are prized figures in Tibet and Mongolia for moral as well as material reasons no doubt.

VI

I have written this article to draw the notice of Indian elite and to divert the attention of Indian scholars to a truly viable subject for research. Helmut Eimer is thirty years junior to me in age but considerably senior to me in scholarship, I shall be the last to find fault with Eimer’s Tibetan scholarship.

I however seek Helmut Eimer’s indulgence to say a few words on proper reading and proper review of Tibetan literary sources and a millennium old tradition. He has cited a number of German authorities on science of history and historiography as guides for correctly presenting Tibetan history, history of the sects (Kadampa and Gelugpa) and lives of saints and scholars as found in Tibetan literary sources. I do not read German but am well aware of the inhibitions of Western scholars regarding historical source materials of Eastern countries. I began my career as a student of history, particularly modern history, and submit the following comments about history, eastern and western.

Persistent century old tradition, even if not recorded in paper on stone, cannot be totally rejected. Theodore Mommsen, the first Nobel Laureate in literature, wrote his monumental book on Rome based on innumerable sources in paper and stone. Mommsen’s main theme, namely, idolization of the state was not always based on epigraphic or literary sources. Later researches found much to criticize Mommsen. For instance Brutus in later research was apotheoized as the champion of liberty. But the age old Roman veneration for paramount position of the state remains a firm fact of history.

In Britain historians of old, down to the end of last century, adored Magna Carta (1215) as the bedrock of
"rule of law" and "liberty of subject". Later historians like Tout and Pollard found the Magna Carta as a mere charter of rights of the barons visavis the king. It was found to be 'a charter of liberties' for vested classes and not 'a charter of liberty' for the people. But Magna Carta remains a Bible with the common man and the elite in Britain as the document was the first contract between a king and his subjects to define and limit the authority of the king. It was not blind veneration for a totem when during the German air invasion of Britain, British authorities decided to deposit the document, Magna Carta, in the vaults of the United States Congress.

A great figure of Indian history - I should say of universal history - is Asoka, Maurya. Indian literary sources had very little to say about Asoka though literary sources of Sri Lanka, Tibet, and Mongolia kept alive the name Asoka. Even after the Asokan edicts came to be read by European scholars like Fussaep and Hultzsch, there was great reluctance in Europe to admit that the Maurya Empire stretched beyond Hindukush to Afghanistan, though ancient Greek writers bore testimony. It was in 1956 that the Kandahar Edict was discovered and deciphered. Western scholarship now admits that the oral tradition of India or Tibet was no myth.

Tibetan literary texts and oral traditions no doubt contain many legends and apocryphal narratives but display no pompous claims as in Chinese Annals, e.g., kings of West sent Tributes to the Son of Heaven. It took quite long time for modern Western scholars to realize that Tibetan Tributes, recorded in Chinese Annals, did not render Tibet a domain of the Celestial Empire. Western scholars had greater shock to discover that in pre-Buddhist time Tibetan kings carried their victorious arms to the heart of China, Sian (Chang-an). The Tibetan inroads and such uncomfortable events are blacked out in Chinese Annals. It will therefore be waste of time to look for any confirmation or corroboration about the rise to temporal power of the Tibetan and Mongol hierarchs in Chinese Annals.

That story has to be found in Tibetan texts, not all discovered so far nor much may be expected. Three decades after Tibet became Tibet Region of China. Even then the trail of tracts and treatises, following Kadampa.
and KAGAM BHUCHO, would in my contention, confirm the Gelugpa tradition of Tibet and Mongolia that Dipankara Atisa’s spiritual child was the Lama Protector, Kyemgon Chempo. Many of my Lama teachers and Lama students, including Sakya and Kargyu, read and speak English. I have discussed with them the modern disciplines, history and historiography. These Lamas are optimistic like me that as in the past so in the present, history will bear out that Atisa was a great scholar and a great monk but was greater as a statesman with the vision of a prophet.

Celebrators in India were confident in their sole conclusion that Dipankara Atisa was the greatest of Indian monk scholars visiting Tibet. The older sects, particularly Nyingma, would not place Atisa above Guru Padmasambhava (750–) while all sects, including Gelugpa, would claim Santarakshita, the celebrated contemporary of Padmasambhava, as the greatest scholar from India. All the sects, including Nyingma, adore Jowo Atisa as the monk-statesman who came to the rescue of Dharma in Tibet (1042) and preached there till he passed away (1054). For nine centuries since his Nirvana, Jowo Atisa has remained the embodiment of Tibet’s identity.
THE TIBETAN TRADITION OF GEOGRAPHY

TURRELL V. WYLIE

Geography, as a scientific description of the physical world, did not develop in Tibet in a manner analogous to that of western civilizations. Physical geography with its study of the earth's surface, climate, and the distribution of flora and fauna did not emerge as a branch of learning. Historically speaking, only two traditions evolved: political geography and religious geography. The commonly used term, "political geography" requires no special clarification here, but the concept of "religious geography", which is as familiar to Tibetans as it is strange to foreigners, needs some explanations. The term "religious geography" is used in this article to refer to that corpus of Tibetan literature which describes the geographic location and the religious history of sacred places and things without reference to the physical features of the region or its flora and fauna.

Since religious geography is a characteristic of the Tibetan tradition and is substantiated by various autochthonous monographic studies, it will be discussed first in this article. The tradition of political geography, which reflects the historical evolution of the Tibetan state, is not found in such monographic studies and must be reconstructed from diverse data found in unrelated textual materials. In view of the fragmented and often hypothetical nature of the "political geography" tradition, it will be discussed last in this article.

RELIGIOUS GEOGRAPHY

There are various examples of Tibetan literature which may be grouped together and classified as religious geographic literature. These texts are intended primarily to describe the geographical location and religious history of pilgrimage places, sacred objects, and the hermitages of former Buddhist holy men. They are devoid of specific information on physical geography per se and are better understood when thought of as "guide-books" for pilgrims visiting unfamiliar places and things.

The corpus of this geographic literature may be divided, for the sake of convenience and discussion in this article, into the following general types:

- Dkar-chag ("Register")
- Gnas-bshad ("Guide-book")
- Lam-rig ("Passport")
- Gu-la'i tha-byang ("Global-description")
The first type, the "register", is limited to the description of a single pilgrimage place with an account of the various sacred objects to be found there.\(^2\) A lengthy example of this type is the *Lha-lidan sgrul-pa'i yang-lag khang-po sgar-khang she-dkar me-lang* ("The bright mirror register of the emanated temple of Lha-lidan (=Lhasa)") by the V Dalai Lhamo Blo-gros rgya-mtsho (1617-1682). This register is a detailed account of the sacred objects found in the Jo-khang temple in Lhasa and comprises the entire volumes *Dez* of the V Dalai Lhamo's collected writings (*gyung-bum*).\(^3\)

In contrast to this detailed register by a famous author, there are many short registers by anonymous authors. An example of this type is the *Blo-bul mchod-rten* "Phags-pa ching-kun dang gyi gnas-gzhung-cham-bi-dam-dang* ("Register of the Nepalese stupa *Phags-pa shing-kun* (=Swayambhunath) and other pilgrimage places"). This text is a xylograph of only ten folios and is printed in the Sgro-lma'i lha-khang, a temple near the Swayambhunath stupa itself. No author is mentioned in its colophon.\(^4\)

The second type, the "guide-book", describes more than one pilgrimage place and offers terse directions how to travel between them. A very short example of such a guide-book is the *Blo-bul gnas-yig*, a xylograph of only eleven folios, which lists the various significant pilgrimage places one encounters when traveling from India northward to, and including, the Kathmandu valley.

Perhaps the most distinguished and detailed guide-book found in religious geographic literature is the *Dhgo-gtsang gi gna-rten sags-rim-kyi mtshan-byang nor-ba'i dus-pa'i sa-bon*." Short summary of the pure names of some of the holy places and images of Dhgo and Geotang; called the "Second of Faith"." by Jam dbyang mkhyen-brtse dbang-po kun-dga' bstav-pa'i tgyal-mtshan (1620-1802).\(^5\) This guide-book in twenty-nine folios gives directions to pilgrims how to travel from one to another of the more famous pilgrimage places in the central Tibetan provinces of Dhgo and Geotang. It is an excellent source of proper orthography of place names as well as a survey of the significant monasteries, temples, images, and hermitages together with a brief historical account of them. This valuable guide-book like the others of the "religious geographic type" is devoid of special information on flora, fauna, and topography.

The third type, the "passport", as indicated by the term implies a guide-book for pilgrims whose pilgrimage involves
travel between two or more countries. The most famous example of the passport type of geographical text is the Shambhala-la'i lam-yig ("Passport to Shambhala") by the III Panchen Lama Blo-bzang dpal-lсан ye-shes (1738-1780). This passport-type of guide-book involves international travel for it describes the way in which one must proceed in order to travel to the paradise of Shambhala. Shambhala is the realm ruled by the Kulika kings, who have preserved the teachings of the Dus-kyi 'khar-lo rgyud (Kalacakra-tantra) and who will eventually destroy the heretics and a new age of Buddhism will begin.

The last type, the "global-description", is unique and represented by a single text, the 'Dzam-pi-ling chiem po'i rgya- brtug smad-lod kun-ge'i me-long ("The mirror which illuminates all inanimate and animate things and explains fully the Great World") by Bla-ma Bstan-po Sin-mi rol sral-khu 'Jam-dpal chos-kyi bstan-'dzin 'phyin-les (1789-1838). This comprehensive geography in 146 folios is a description of the known world and was compiled in 1820 by the Bla-ma Bstan-po during his residence in Peking, where he had access to European geographies as well as Russian and Chinese ones. His accounts of the western world, which were based on inadequate secondary sources, are interesting and at times amusing. The chief value of his work is the section on Tibet (folios 38-81) which surveys the religious geography of Tibet from Stod Mnga-ris in the west, to R-nam-lu of Dbus-Gsang in the center, and to Khams and A-mdo in the east. This section is unique in Tibetan geographical literature because it is a "guide-book" to all regions of Tibet, not just one or two.

On the other hand, this "global-description" by Bla-ma Bstan-po should not be considered a true type within the Tibetan tradition of religious geography. Every chief monastery and temple has its own register (lkare-chog) and guide-books (gnas-brtug) available for various regions of Tibet and bordering areas. The passport (lam-yig) type, although involving international pilgrimage particularly to a Buddhist paradise, is adequately substantiated in the geographic tradition; but the global-description (gda'i khe-dzong) is evidenced only by the text of the Bla-ma Bstan-po. Moreover, there is an inconsistency in the geographical writings of the Bla-ma Bstan-po, which indicates that he viewed Tibetan geography from the traditional "religious" function, but viewed the western world through the eyes of the foreign geographers.
whose works he used. For example, his description of Tibetan

topography is concerned exclusively with pilgrimage places,
as seen in the following passage: "In the region southwest

of there is Yar-lung. There are such things there as

the three receptacles (reten-gsum) namely; the method-ten called

Gung-chang-bum-po-che, Tsergyidal-bum-pa, and Thegchen-

bum-pa, .......

but his description of the western hemi-

sphere arrives at physical geography. Compare his passage:

"......[in South America]......due to the excessive warmth,

there are many kinds of fruits and many kinds of crops

(obtained) without plowing, such as so-la (maize). Since

there are a great many birds, such as domesticated fowls

which change color, and fish and game animals, the people

of those countries always have a livelihood and so there is

no poverty." From this contrast between his "religious

geography" for Tibet and "semi-physical geography" for foreign

countries, it may be postulated that the Bla-ma Buan-po,

who was living in Peking at the time, had to rely upon

written Tibetan geographical literature; all of which reflected

the "religious" tradition of geographic description. Since the

Bla-ma Buan-po’s monumental work is unique in Tibetan

literature, it should perhaps not be considered a true type

of geographical text, but rather an exceptional type.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

As noted earlier, "political" geography—unlike "religious"
geography—was not the subject of singular studies in Tibet

and thus there are no available monographs on this type of

geography: however, data relating to the political areas of

Tibet are found in various and diverse sources which pro-

vide an insight into the Tibetan tradition of "political"
geography.

For the sake of convenience, Tibetan political history

may be divided into four major periods—(1) legendary,

(2) dynastic, (3) hegemonic and (4) theocratic. The legendary-

period, as implied by the name, represents the pre-historical

period characterized by fact, legend, and myth. There are

no sources—indigenous or foreign—to shed light on Tibetan

concepts of political areas prior to the development of a

written script in the seventh century A.D.

Dynastic Period (629-842)

The "dynastic" period began with the reign of Songtsan

Gampo (assumed 629—died 649) because it was duri
his time that the nucleus of the Tibetan kingdom began to expand into a royal empire. The kingdom inherited by Srong-bzan sgam-po included the regions of Dzags-po, Zhong-yul, Nag-po and Rung-bred, as well as the country of Sum-po, which had been subjugated in the time of his father. As the division of the kingdom in central Tibet into the "Four Banners" (Ru-bshis) appeared early in the dynamic period and is attested by documents found at Tum-tsong, the nucleus of royal power was expanded into an empire, various regions were brought under Tibetan domination. The Yung-tung people in the northeastern were subjugated first, then the "A-zha", who occupied the area near Lake Kokonor. Next defeated were the Tang-hsiang, who lived to the east of the "A-zha", which extended the Tibetan empire over the region known as Amdo and brought it up to the frontier of T'ang China. Zhang-zung, the region lying to the west of central Tibet, was subdued in the time of Srong bzan sgam-po as well.

The empire was expanded northwesterly into Li-val (Khotoan) and the "Four Garrisons of An-hsi", which controlled the area currently known as Chinese Turkestan, were captured during the reign of Küh-Mang-don mar-pa-tsan (ascended 650-died 676). Following the death of this king, Zhang-zung revolted and its re-subjugation eventually led to its incorporation into the Tibetan empire to such an extent that its own language and cultural identity died out.

Although the Tibetans lost control of the Chinese Turkestan region to the Chinese in 692, they retained domination over most of the other subjugated regions until the middle of the ninth century. That region, comprised of the areas known as Sod, Ming-te-s, Dhus, Gyang, Kham, and Amdo, was under Tibetan control for over 200 years resulting in the firm establishment of the Tibetans with their language and culture. This, then, was the origin and extent of the geographical area referred to in later times as "ethnic" Tibet in contrast to "political" Tibet.

Hegemonic Period (842-1642)

The Tibetan empire collapsed in the middle of the ninth century for various reasons, not the least of which was the assassination of the anti-Buddhist king, Glung-dar-ma, in 842, which led to schisms in the royal lineage and subsequent fragmentation of the kingdom and loss of "political"
unity. Thus began a period of “hierarchical” rule that endured for centuries.

A nebulous form of political unity was restored in central Tibet in 1247, when Saska-pa Pan-dita Kun-dga’ rgyal-mushtan (1162-1251) was invested with authority over the Khro-skor bu-gsum (Thirteen Myriarchs) by the Mongol Prince, Gadan son of Ogodai Khan. It is to be noted that the Thirteen Myriarchs did not comprise all of “ethnic” Tibet; only the regions of Dhuq, Guang and Yar-brog. Saska-pa Pandita, as head of the Saka-pa sect, became the first lama to rule central Tibet—in theory, if not in fact—and his investiture marked the beginning of that unique form of government found in Tibet where the secular authority is held by an ecclesiastic.

‘Phags-pa (1235-1280), a nephew of Saska Pandita, became the religious teacher of Qubini Khan, who first invested ‘Phags-pa with authority over the Thirteen Myriarchs and then over the Cho-kha Guum (Three Provinces, namely: (1) Dhuq-Guung, 2) Mdo-stod and (3) Mdo-snag. These last two provinces are the areas of Khami and A-mdo respectively; therefore, ‘Phags-pa was invested with authority over “ethnic” Tibet. Although the Saka-pa sect lost its political supremacy in Tibet by the middle of the 14th century, the ensuing rulers considered themselves as masters over “ethnic” Tibet as a “political” unit.

Theocratic Period (1642-1959)

The theocratic period of Tibetan political history began with the rise to political and religious supremacy by the V Dalai Lama and the resultant form of government endured until the occupation of Tibet by the Communist Chinese in 20th century. The Tibetan traditional concept of “ethnic” Tibet remained generally consistent during the theocratic period; however, the extent of “political” Tibet was reduced by the loss of border regions to China.

In 1724, the province of Mdo-snag (A-mdo) was integrated into the Manchu empire as the province of Ching-bai by the Yang-sheng Emperor (reigned 1723-1735) following the suppression of a Mongol revolt against the Manchu throne.

In 1728, the eastern portion of Mdo-stod (Kham) was taken under Manchu rule when the Sino-Tibetan frontier was moved from Ta-chien-lu (at 102 degrees east longitude) west-
ward to the Ram Pass (at 99 degrees east longitude) and the area was known as province of K'i-liang. After this, "political" Tibet extended from Ladakh in the west to the upper reaches of the Yangtze River in the east; a geographical region that remained generally constant until the overthrow of the Manchus and the fall of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1911.

Disagreement between Tibet and China over the location of the Sino-Tibetan frontier was one of the primary factors which caused the rupture of the tripartite meeting at Simla in 1913-1914. The meeting was held to resolve various questions relating to the mutual interests of the governments of Tibet, China, and Great Britain. At the meeting, Bin-chen Baladgra, the plenipotentiary for Tibet, demanded that the frontier be moved back to Ta-chien-lu where it was prior to 1726, and the Chinese plenipotentiary demanded the frontier be moved further westward to Rgya-mda', a village about one hundred miles east of Lhasa itself. The Chinese demand was based upon the fact that the military expedition of 1910 under the command of Chao Erh-feng had established an outpost there for the assault on Lhasa.

Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, the British plenipotentiary, sought to resolve the disagreement by suggesting that the 1726 Sino-Tibetan frontier at the Ram Pass be retained and the area known as the Hsi-l'ang province would be called Inner Tibet and administered by the Chinese. The area west of the Pass would be called Outer Tibet and would remain autonomous. This compromise solution was acceptable to the Tibetan Government, but not to the Chinese, which refused to ratify the Simla agreement, thereby forfeiting its rights of suzerainty over Tibet as specified in the agreement itself.

The governments of Tibet and Great Britain ratified and adhered to the Simla agreement, which established and controlled trade relations between the countries of Tibet and British India as well as demarcated the frontier between those two countries by the so-called McMahon Line, which ran from the northeastern border of Bhutan eastward to Burlea. Although not specifically resolved by the Simla agreement, because of the Chinese refusal to ratify the agreement, the Sino-Tibetan frontier of 1726 continued to be regarded by the Tibetans as the de facto boundary between their country and China.
CONCLUSION

As stated at the beginning of this article, there are two traditions of geography in Tibet—"religious geography" and "political geography". There are several textual examples of "religious" geography, but no monographic studies by Tibetans on "political" geography. This is easier understood when it is remembered that the written language served the primary didactic purpose of transmitting Buddhist teachings and most Tibetan literature is devoted to "religious" subjects. Although there are no books on "political" geography, the Tibetans have a definite tradition of "political" areas and boundaries which reflects their historical concepts of "ethnic" and "political" Tibet. Perhaps because of the domination of subjectivism over the Tibetan intelligentsia, other types of geography—physical, economic, and topographic—did not develop because they represent an objective description of the phenomenal world.

NOTES

2. For a detailed discussion on dkar-chag and the value of such registers, see Giuseppe Tucci, Tibet in Painted Brocades, Vol. 1 (Rome, 1939), p. 130 ff.
3. This dkar-chag by the V Đrali Lama was the basis for Waddell's description of the Jø-lang. See L. Austine Waddell, The Cathedrals of India, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (1885).
4. A similar guide to the other major stupa in the Kāśmirāndu valley, namely Bodhnath, goes beyond the usual limits of a dkar-chag. This guide, called Mahatmā chungpo Phyang Shékpaṅg bstan 'grel, gran b exploiting the influence of which one is saved") is a forty-five line yixlography, which includes an historical account (bgo 'gnyas) of the stupa, an anonymous work printed in a temple near the stupa itself. Although titled a "history" (bgo 'gnyas), it should be considered one of the dkar-chag type.
5. This valuable guide-book was compiled with footnotes by Atiuso Ferri (1918-1954), whose work was completed and edited by Professor Ludovico Petech under the title: "mNam 'khor brtags Guide to the holy places of Central Tibet", Jôna Onlay Khrum, Vol. XVI (Rome, 1956) pp. 199, and 53 photographic plates.
6. This work has been translated by Grunwedel under the title: "Der Weg nach Shambhala", Abhandlungen der Kriegsleit. Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, XXIX, Band 5 (Munchen, 1915).
8. The Tibetan section (folios 38-41) of this work have been translated with footnotes by Turrell Wylie under the title: "The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam-gling-rgyas-lbas'," Zens Orients Asia, Vol. XXX (Rome, 1962) xxvii, 280 and a map.

* Reproduced from 'Bulletin' 1965 ; ;
According to the earliest geographical conception of the Puranas, the earth was taken to consist of four continental regions, viz. Jambudvipa, Ketumala, Bhadravarsa and Uttarakuru. Jambudvipa stood for India proper, Ketumala represented the Oxus region, as the river Svaraksa (Vaksa) flowed through it, Bhadravarsa signified the Jaxartes region, as the river Situ watered it, and Uttarakuru denoted the country beyond it. In Buddhist texts these continental regions are differently named as Jambudvipa, to the south of Mount Semera (Simeru), Aprapagayana (Aprapagayana) to the west, Puravahideha to the east, and Uttarakuru to its north. Both these traditions agree on the fact that Uttarakuru was the name of the region to the north of India.

The name Uttarakuru of northern Kurus is used in contradistinction to Dakinukuru or southern Kurus. In the Mahabharata the Uttarakuru are juxtaposed with the Dakinukurus. The distance between their countries can be measured by the marches of Arjuna described in the Subhagaram. After crossing the White Mountain (Subhagaram), he marched through Kimpuruvarasa and reached the Manasarovara Lake, in the country of the Hatakas, dominated by the Gandharvas. From there he entered into the region called Harivarsha, beyond which lay the land of the Uttarakuru. Elsewhere in the epic, the region to the north of India, corresponding to Svaraparvata and Kimpuruvarasa, is called Haimavata, and the site of the Manasarovara Lake is indicated by the mountain Hemakuta, beyond which is said to lie Harivarsha. The Kailasa Range, running parallel to the Ladakh Range, 50 miles behind it, is, thus, the dividing line between Haimavata and Harivarsha. According to Bana, Arjuna reached the Hemakuta mountain, whose caves were echoing with the twangs of the bows of the irritated Gandharvas, after traversing the territory of China. Here the use of the word China seems to be intended to denote the Mongoloid peoples of the Himalayan regions, also called Kurta, a word derived from Kirati or Kirati, the name of a group of people in eastern Nepal. Beyond Harivarsha, including the territories of Tibet, lay the idyllic and utopian land of the Kurus, called Uttarakuru. This was the land of mystery.
and solitude, where nothing familiar could be seen, and it was useless to wage war. According to a tradition, the head of the demon Mahisâ, severed by Skanda, formed a huge mountain, that blocked the entry into the Uttarakuru country. Yet Arjuna is said to have reached its frontier and conquered the northern Kuruâ living there. The result of this campaign was that the people of the mountainous regions presented themselves with the offerings of garlands of japa, characteristic of Uttarakuru, and the powerful herbs of the Trans-Kaiyasa territory at the Rajasuya sacrifice of Yudhishthira.

It is clear from the above account of the location of Uttarakuru that it lay to the north of the Himalayas, possibly beyond Tibet, in the vicinity of the mountain Meru, which seems to represent the Parnâ, as shown by Sylvaen Levi. According to the Great Epic, this land was marked by idyllic pleasure, bucolic beauty and sylvan silence. The trees produced fragrant fruits and flowers; the earth yielded gold and rubies; the seasons were agreeable; the people were healthy and cheerful and had a life-span of 11,000 years; they passed their time in song, dance and merrymaking and among them sexual relations were promiscuous and unbridled. It was a verdant land of gods (devaloka). There the righteous people were born to enjoy the fruits of their meritorious deeds. In particular, the warriors, losing their life on the battle field, were transferred to that region. Even those, who made gifts of houses to Brahmanas, were entitled to be born in that country.

These data show that Uttarakuru cannot be the bleak mountainous country of the Himalayas, but the region to the north of it, watered by the Tâtim and its tributaries, where the oases-states of Bharatâ, Kuru, Karashahr and Turfan, on the northern route, and Khotan, Niya, Endere, Calmadosa, Kroraina, Charlik and Mirau, on the southern route, flourished in ancient times. Chinese travellers and pilgrims have testified to the prosperity and richness of these regions and the religiosity and righteousness of their people and Indian writers have described their luxury, affluence, wealth and bliss by the terms Manikana- canavara, Bhadranavara, Gandharvaloka and aparagodana.

The names Kuru and Uttarakuru came into vogue in the Brahmana period. It is significant that the word “Kuru” is conspicuous by absence in the earliest strata of the Rigveda. Only once in the tenth mandala there is a reference to Kururavâna Tretadâraya, but he is called the King of the Purus. Even in the territory of the Drasavati, Sarasvati and Apaya, later known

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as Kuruksetra on account of the association of the Kurus, the
Bhaeton kings are said to have kindled the sacred fire.19 In the
Apri hymns Sarasvati is mentioned with Bharati, the glory of the
Bharatas. In the \textit{Prajapati Sambhita} the Bharatas appear in place
of the Kurus-Pancalas.20 But in the Brahmana texts the Kurus
become very prominent and are usually associated with the
Pancalas.21 They are also said to be in occupation of the
territory, through which the rivers Damodari, Sarasvati and
Aparas flowed, and which, consequently, came to be known as
Kuruksetra.22 It was the home of later vedic culture: its speech
was best and purest and its mode of sacrifice was ideal and
perfect.23

Besides the Kurus, there are references to the Uttarakurus
in Brahmana literature. in the \textit{Aitareya Brahmana} (VIII, 14),
it is stated that the people, living beyond the snowy regions, like
the Uttarakurus, anoint their kings for \textit{Bhujga}, who, as result,
are called \textit{Piris}. At another place, in the same text (VIII, 23),
Vasishtha Sutahavya is stated to have anointed Jananatapi
Atyarati, according to the ritual of Aisvra Mahabhikika, who, in
consequence, went over the whole earth and conquered it unto
the oceans. Thereupon, Vasishtha Sutahavya demanded his fees.
Atyarati replied that when he would conquer the Uttarakurus, he
would confer the whole empire on him and himself become the
commander of his army. Sutahavya retorted that the country of
the Uttarakurus was the land of gods, whom no body could
conquer, and, since he had deceived him, he would snatch
everything from him. As a result, Atyarati lost his prowess and
Sun-slipon of Sutahya, killed him.

It is clear from the above data that the Kurus came
into the limelight in the later vedic period. They migrated
from their homeland to the north of the Himalayas, and
entered into India, driving away the Bharatas and occupying
their habitat between the Dravaddi and the Sarasvati. Gradu-
ally, the Kurus and the Bharatas mixed with them and
became one people, as is clear from the expression \textit{Krura
Nama Bharat} occurring in the Mahabharatta (XII, 348, 44).
In the beginning their relations with the Pancalas were good,
but, in course of time, differences appeared among them
and culminated in the famous Mahabharata war.24 Though
settled in the fertile and prosperous country of the Sarasvati
and the Yamuna, they preserved the memory of their idyllic
home in the northern region and treated it as the abode of
the gods. Another section of the Kurus reached Iran and
Western Asia and penetrated into Armenia. \textit{Traces of the}
ulkuman\u0101g of the Kurus in these regions are found in a series of place-names and personal names current there. A town in Sogdiana still bears the name Kerkath; two kings of the Parnaves Aman branch of the Achaemenian family of Iran were named Kur; a river in Transcaucasia, to the north-west of Panis, is called Kur (Cyrus of Hellenic geographers); the region round the confluence between the river Hemus and its right bank tributary, the Phrygus, just to the north of the city of "Magnesia under-Sipylos", is known as Korupedion, meaning the Kurus Plain or Kurukiva, which, like its Indian namesake, was the scene of memorable wars, like those between Seleucus Nicator and Lydiamachus in 281 B.C. and the Romans and Antiochus III in 190 B.C., which decided the fate of empires in that region.\footnote{It appears that a wing of the Kurus left their homeland for the west, swept through the corridor between the southern foot of the Elburz Range and the northern edge of the Central Desert of Iran and reached the pasture-lands in the basin of Lake Urmiyeh and, beyond that, in the steppe country in the lower basin of the river Aras and Kur, adjoining the west coast of the Caspian Sea. From there they travelled on still farther westward over the watershed between the basins of the Aras and the Qyzyl Irmaq (Hyas) and debouched into the Anatolian Peninsula to settle in the region called the Kurus Plain after their name. Another detachment of the Kurus found its way to Loristan and joined the Early Achaemenids; whilst a third one swung to the southeast and through Bactriana and the Hindu Kush moved into the Panjab and occupied the Saravani-Yamuna region. It is significant that one section of the Kurus, called Pratipaves, are known as Balikas, since one of the sons of Pratipa was called Balikha. According to the Kanavana, Puravasa Aila, the progenitor of the Ailas, with whom the Kurus were associated, migrated to the middle country from Bahl or Bactriana. Thus, we observe that, starting from their northern homeland (Utarakuru), the Kurus moved to the west, and, breaking into several branches, migrated into Amaulia, Luristan and the Panjab. As I have shown elsewhere, the painted grey ware, which succeeded the yellow-coloured ware, at more than fifty sites in U.P. and the Panjab, and may be dated 1200-1100 B.C., was associated with the Kurus.\footnote{We may, thus, date the ulkuman\u0101g of the Kurus about the middle of the second millennium B.C. or a bit later.}}
The Manabhariva connects India with the land of Utrar-kuru through Himalayan regions rather than the north-western passes. As shown above, Arjuna is said to have gone there via Kimpurnavartika, Gandharvavikrta, Haikavan, Hemakuta and Harivarsa, corresponding to different Himalayan regions. From early times the people of the Indian plains have been in contact with the Kaita region through many routes. Some of them are:

1. From Almora via Askot, Khalra, Gobhayan, Laxu Lakk Pass (16,750 ft.) & Talkhatar to Kailas (Tarchhen) 235 miles,
2. From Almora via Askot, Khalra, Damar Pass (18,519), and Gyanima Mandi 247 miles,
3. From Almora via Bageshwar, Mihir, Una-Dhata Pass (17,500), Jyanti Pass (18,502), Kangri-Bingni Pass (18,300) and Gyanima Mandi-210 miles,
4. From Joshimath via Queila-Niti Pass (16,600), Nabro Mandi, Silchilin Mandi and Gyanima Mandi-200 miles,
5. From Joshimath via Dassjan Niti Pass (16,500), Thungan La (16,350), Silchilin Mandi and Gyanima Mandi-170 miles,
6. From Bedinath via Mako Pass (15,402), Thungan Mithra, Daga, Nabro, Silchilin and Gyanima Mandi-220 miles,
7. From Mukthara-Gangotri via Nilang, Jokhna Pass (17,491), Tuing Mandi, Thungan, Daga, Silchilin and Gyanima Mandi-243 miles,
8. From Simla via Rampur, Silpi Pass, Shiring La, Thungan, Daga, Silchilin, and Gyanima Mandi-293 miles,
9. From Simla via Rampur, Silpi Pass, Shiring La, Loache La (15,900), Ganok (15,100), Chang La (16,200), and Tirthang Pass-455 miles,
10. From Simla via Rampur, Silpi Pass, Shiring La, Thungan, Daga, Silchilin, and Gyanima Mandi-220 miles,
11. From Siriagar (Kashmir) to Zoja (11,578), Namnuk (13,390), Fotu La (13,491), Lho (Lachakh), Taglang La (17,960), Damboldi, Gangotri, Ganok, Chang La (16,390), and Tirthang Pass-660 miles,
12. From Kathmandu via Nepal, Pharagat, Silchilin and Gyanima Mandi-543 miles,
13. From Kohatu and Talkhatar-525 miles,
14. From Kaila in Kangra District through Rampur Bashahr state to Tuing.

In the past there were routes connecting Assam with Tibet and China. One route passed through Yung-ting-shung and Wanching and correspond to the Burma Road. Another route led from Shzechuan to Lhassa and Acam. Often pilgrims used to bypass Tibet in the north by following the Yung-ting-shung route. The twenty Chinese monks, who, according to T'ang, arrived in India during the reign of Sriguma, who constructed for them a temple called Chinese Temple (Chinamando). 40 Yoganas in the east of the famous Mahashweta Temple at Nalanda, come by one of these routes. Chinese books, lacquer and silks reached India along these routes, whereas they
were carried to Bactriana before the journey of Chang-K’ien in the second century B.C. Later, the Chinese adventurer Wang-
hsuan-Tsche advanced along one of these routes to capture
Kanaq after the demise of Hara and the usurpation of Arjuna
or Arjunavina in the seventh century. According to the Mahabha-
ratra (VII, 177, 11-13) the Pandava brothers advanced north of
Badri and, scaling the Himalayas, probably via Mana Pass,
Thüng Math, Dapa, Nabur, Sibchhim and Gyanima Mandi,
and passing through the lands of the Chinas, Tusaras, Daradas,
Kulindas etc. reached the kingdom of the Kirata king Subahu.
It is noteworthy that in subsequent Indian traditions, embodied
in the Great Epic, the routes leading to Uttarakuru are said to
pass through the Himalayas rather than the passes of the Hindu-
Kush and the Pariars. It appears that either there was an
infiltration of people from Uttarakuru to Kurukshetra along the
Himalayan routes, besides the immigration of these peoples from
Bactrian quarters along the north-western passes, or, after the
settlement of the Kurus in India, the tradition of their coming
from the north-west was forgotten and a connection between
their Indian abode and their archeo beyond the Himalayas
was established through Himalayan routes, that were regularly
in use.

NOTES

1. Mahabharata VI, 7, 11

G. P. Mahalakshmi, Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, Vol. II p. 236,

3. Anakhatharaya, I, 102, 10.


5. Ibid VI, 7, 6.

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8. Maabhastara II, 25, 12.


10. Ibid III, 231, 14612.

11. Ibid V, 22, 8

12. Ibid II 48, 6.

13. Ibid VI, 6, 23.


15. Mahabharata XI, 25, 17

16. Ibid XIII, 57, 2958
17. Rigveda X, 33, 4.
18. Rigveda III, 23.
20. Aitareya Upanishad Brahmana III, 7, 6; VIII, 7; Kausitaki Upanishad IV, 1; Gopaka Brahmana I, 2, 9; Kathala Suktika X, 6.
21. Pancavimsha Brahmana XXV, 10; Satapatha Brahmana IV, 1, 5, 13; Aitareya Brahmana VII, 95; Jaiminieya Brahmana III, 126.
22. Satapatha Brahmana III, 2, 9, 15; Saucyagana Sramanautra XV, 3, 15; Layagana Sramanautra VIII, 13, 16.
25. Mahabharata II, 65, 2112.
27. Buddha Prakash, Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab p. 23.

* Reproduced from Bulletin 1965: 1
Notes & Topics

UTTARAKURU IN TIBETAN TRADITION

The world in Tibetan written and oral tradition is composed of four continents on four sides of Mount Ri-rab, (†kṣa Skt शून्यक) Sar Lo-phag (†kṣa Skt शून्यक) in the east, Dzam-ling (†kṣa Skt शून्यक) in the south, Ba-lang-chyo (†kṣa Skt शून्यक) in the west and Jhang-daminen (†kṣa Skt शून्यक) in the north.

It is not possible, in the present state of our knowledge at least, to construct any satisfactory geography out of the available data about these continents. Besides Dzam-ling (Jemvu-dvipa), which was a firm geographical reality, the other three continents were, if not altogether fabulous lands, largely terra incognita. All information from Kanjur, Tanjur, other literary texts and oral traditions may be fitted for excellence into what Turrell Wylie designates “Religious Geography” (supra p. 17).

Ri-rab (Sumera) for instance is a concept more useful and necessary for rituals and meditations than for travel, trade or even pilgrimage in physical sense. For location of this traditional focal point of the universe a modern researcher has to trace a line stretching from Mount Kailas in the east to Pamirs in the west. From the data in Chinese Buddhist cosmography, obviously built on Indian Buddhist tradition, Needham firmly identifies Mount Sumeru with the Kun Lun Mountains (Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. III, Cambridge 1959, pp. 565-568).

For location of Jhang-daminen (Uttarakuru) we have a few premises to start with. It was on the north of Ri-rab (Sumera), that is, far north of Dzam-ling (Jemvu-dvipa). Dzam-ling in Tibetan tradition included India as well as Tibet. Therefore Jhang-daminen (Uttarakuru) was on the north of Tibet as well.
Now if the Kun-lun be the Mount Sumeru there can be no objection to locating Uttarakuru (Jhang-daminen) in the Tarim basin as Buddha Prakash suggests (supra p. 28).

The picture of Uttarakuru drawn from Sanskrit literature tallies broadly with that of Jhang-daminen in Tibetan literature. In both, this is a paradise on earth: a weird land with a bracing climate and a kind soil; a people with promiscuous morals and high longevity. In comparison with the cold and desolate plains in the south (Jhang-thang) and the sandy waste (Samo) in the north (Gobi) the Tarim valley with its oasis townships and wandering lakes was indeed a paradise. According to Buddha Prakash the emigration of the Kuras from their northern home began in the middle of second millennium B.C. It is a well-known fact that even in historical times the contour and soil of Eastern Turkestan have changed considerably. There was more of water and less of sands in prehistoric and proto-historic times. It is not unlikely that the invasions of sandy waste began in the second millennium B.C. only and led to dispersal of the Kuras. Even with the present conditions Tarim valley is a rich land surrounded by less fortunate ones. Its crops include barley, wheat, rice and cotton. The fruits which appear at all tables are melons, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, nectarines, pomegranates, plums, cherries and mulberries. Mineral wealth is not inconsiderable. The items which concern us here are jade-stone and gold from the Kunlun range. Garlands of jade and gold came from Uttarakuru to the court of Yudhisthira (supra p. 28). Tarim valley was the meeting ground of races and cultures, commodities and concepts. Perhaps all this accounted for diverse morals and lax morals.

The Tibetan tradition adds a curious piece of information about the Uttarakuru people, etc., that this people possessed an unpleasant speech or coarse voice. Otherwise the Sanskrit tradition about Uttarakuru, the Tibetan tradition about Jhang-daminen and modern travel accounts about Tarim valley (e.g. Merton: Delhi-Changing, Oxford 1947) agree in describing the people concerned as strong and sturdy, gay and pleasure-loving. From the Cho-ling (*"e* in history of the religion) two important facts about Jhang-daminen (Uttarakuru) have come down to us. (i) One of the Sixteen Arhats, Vakula, settled down in Jhang-daminen to uphold the Sacred Shrine there. (ii) People of Jhang-daminen could become Buddhists.
but were debarred from entry into monastic discipline. This second point is no doubt of great interest.

In view of their promiscuous morals people of Juang-damimen have been all through considered to be unfit for ordination. They were in fact branded to be as untit as the hermaphrodites, on the authority of Vaccumdhana. 11285

Presiding officers and abbots of Tibetan monasteries were rather circumspect in implementing this ban. Enquiries about a monk candidate’s qualifications and antecedents contained a specific question as to whether he was a native of Juang-damimen. An instance may be cited from Sakya Lama Phag-pa (1235-1280). A great proselytizer though he was, Phag-pa in his Instructions for Ordination laid down this specific question: ‘Are you or are you not from Juang-damimen?’ 11285 (Sakya-Kabum Vol. 15. This reference has been traced for me by my pupil Mynak Tulku Jamyang Kunga). It is evident that, though today few Tibetan scholars and monks can make any guess about its location, from about 815 A.D. (when Abhidharmakosa was translated into Tibetan) till about 1260 A.D. (when Phag-pa died) Juang-damimen was a reality, a part of this phenomenal world and not a mythical land.

It is however a riddle why people of Tarim valley or its neighborhood came to suffer from such disability at the hands of Tibetan Lamas. One is tempted to add to this the fact that a Tun-huang document entitled The Religious Annals of the Li-Country even indicates Uttarakuru in the direction of Tarim valley somewhere in the Eastern Turkistan (Thomas: Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents, Part 1, London 1935, page 318, fn 11).

It is to be noted that the Eastern Turkistan was a famous Buddhist country long before Tibet became Buddhist. This land not only nursed and nourished Buddhist but was instrumental in its passage to China. Much of the Tantric practices—which characterize Tibetan Buddhism—was earlier in prevalence in the Eastern Turkistan. Yet ironically enough the natives of the land which had produced Dharmanarindhi, Dharmanrendhi, Komara-bodhi and Kumbargasa were reduced ordination in Tibet later.

It is also a fact that Buddhism began its decline is the Eastern Turkistan from about 800 A.D. and by the time of
Phagpo in Tibet (1235-1290) it had become an insignificant element in the Tarim valley. Even the community of Indian merchants (? Sartha = Sart) settled there embraced Islam and became the elite of the new Muslim population.

It is not unlikely that the Mongol tradition may preserve useful data for drawing a clearer picture of Jhang-damimen. The Tibetan tradition developed out of Indian Buddhist traditions and obstinately adhered to the ban for entry into monastic discipline in respect of aatives of Jhang-damimen. It is to be noted that Mongolia, a country on the north of Tibet, did not suffer from such disability. The Mongol recruits to Tibetan monasteries (first Sakyapa and then Gelugpa) were esteemed agents for propagation of the Mahayana in a laffl where Shamanism, Christianity and Islam counted their priests also and where eclecticism was a characteristic feature of the people's life. This Bulletin expects to publish in a later issue findings of eminent Mongol scholars on Mongol tradition about Jhang-damimen.

The Classical writers (of the West) referred to a people called Attakorae or Oktokorus. Some scholars identify Attakorae with the Uttarakuru and locate them in Turkestan, preferably the eastern Turkestan. This would place the habitat of the Uttarakuru on the north of Mount Meru. But the attempt to identify the Hyperboreans with the Uttarakuru has no encounter the theory of Tomasbek as developed by Hudson. This theory places the Hyperboreans in the neighbourhood of what is today Peking (Hudson: Europe and China, London 1931, ch. 1). Peking is in the direction of Sar Lu Phag or Purvavideha of Buddhist tradition. Jhang-damimen or Uttarakuru has so be found somewhere on the north both of India and Tibet.

NIRMAL C. SINHA

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