GURU PADMASAMBHAVA'S CONTRIBUTION:
The Genesis of Buddhism in Sikkim.
-Chewang Arkarya

1. Some views and opinions about the time and place of Guru Padmasambhava’s birth

When the Buddha was about to pass away at Kushinagar and his disciples were weeping, He said to them, “The world being transitory and death inevitable for all living beings, the time for my own departure has come, but weep not, for twelve years after my departure, from a lotus blossom in the Dhanaeksha Lake, in the North-Western direction of the country of Ugyen there will be born one who will be much wiser and more spiritually powerful than Myself. He will be called Padmasambhava and he will transmit the Esoteric Doctrine in the world.” These were the last words predicted by the Buddha Gautama just before the day of his Parinirvana. These lines were based upon a passage in the Tibetan Canonical KANJUR Buddhist Canon of Tibet.

Padmasambhava himself is quoted as having said it was 6 years after the passing. Similar prophecies are recorded in the Sutras like “Parinirvana Sutra” and “Landavatara Sutra” and in Tantric Treatise like “La-med Thon-‘jug Dupa-rgyud” of Buddha’s teachings.

The supernormal birth of Padmasambhava from a Lotus blossom signifies immaculate emanation, that is birth unattained by a human womb. Such birth is the actuality of the Kumar accounts implies, is essential to Tantric incarnation or emanation of the Buddha-essence.

In many of his Biographies represents the great Guru as having flourished in India and elsewhere in the human world for many centuries. He being a master of yoga, lived, as been already suggested above in a non-physical body, immune to illness, old age, and death. He is thus realised living exponent of Buddhism practically applied and in this respect, the second Buddha is more powerful than the Buddha Gautama, as the Tibetan Buddhists believe.

It is uniformly mentioned in all the biographies of the Guru revealed by many Terrtons that the Guru’s Day of birth is held to be the Tenth of the Fifth Month of Tibetan Calendar. This day, the Tenth is called “The Blessed Day for the World” and correlative to the Tenth Day of every month of Tibetan Calendar is observed as the Great Guru’s Day and the Tibetan call it TNE-CUT which means “The Tenth Day.”

Amdo Gedun Choepel was a renowned scholar who spent his life in writing about and travelling almost all Buddist Holy places said that Oddyana the land of Tzegey is situated in the North-West of Bodha Gaya. He said that modern Swat Valley in Pakhawan is the right place of Guru Ranpoche i.e. Oddyana. Gedun Choepel personally visited and had seen the ruins of stupas and other evidences from the Swat Valley. Even in the memories of Alexander the Great and Fa Hien Travelogue, Swat Valley, in Peshawar was described as Oddyana where Dhanaeksha Lake was.

Note: 1. Terrton, is an accomplished being who reveals the Hidden Treasure.
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No matter where and when the great Guru was born his teachings and sacred holy places where he visited were the real living proof and evidence. Because of his Tantric teachings many of his disciples attained the highest stage of Buddhahood.

2 A brief account of the Founding Fathers of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet.

When Padmasambhava was at Bodha Gaya strengthening the Doctrine, the thought came to him that the time had come for him to proceed to Tibet, the Land of Snow and establish Tantric teaching firmly. In eight centuries, King Tri-Strong Don-Tsan, the 10th ruler of the royal lineage, took action to bring the full blessing of the Dharma to Tibet. The King invited Bodhisattva Shantarakshita from Nalanda University, India’s foremost scholar, to come to Tibet for the purpose of establishing the foundation for a Stupa and transmitting his Vinaya lineage to first Buddhist monks in Tibet. When difficulties arose in establishing Buddha Dharma, the King invited Padmasambhava the most powerful master of Oddiyana, from Buddha Gaya to dispel and subdue all evil spirits. These three Bodhisattvas built the great Monastic University-Samye and established a firm foundation for the Dharma in Tibet.

The King invited many more scholars and Pandits from India and Nepal working with Tibetan Translators had rendered into Tibetan almost the entire bulk of the Buddha’s teachings. These Translations were preserved in the Tibetan Canon; Kanjur (108 Vols.) together with a large number of commentaries and treatises (Tengyur-225 Vols.) that supported the four major Buddhist philosophical schools. During this time, the great Vidyadhars, bearers of esoteric knowledge, transmitted Mantrayana teachings to their Tibetan disciples. Guru Padmasambhava and the masters like Buddha guhva, Vimala Vajra and Tibetan Lobsang Vairochana conveyed the realisation of the Tantras, the outer Tantras of Kriya, Charya and Yoga, the inner Tantras of Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga.

Therefore Khentchen Bodhisattva, Guru Padmasambhava and Choygyal Tri-Strong, Khentzin became known as the “Khun-Lop-Chos-gSum” (Abbot Master and Dharma King) became the founding fathers of the Dharma in Tibet.

The lineages established by the early masters, transmitted unbroken from masters to disciples for nearly twelve centuries have come down to modern times through the Nyenma Tradition, the oldest of the four major Tibetan schools of Buddhism that survived today. The Tradition that preserved the lineage since Buddha, and Padmasambhava introduced earlier in Tibet is known as Nyenma, the old school and the school that developed from the lineages brought to Tibet after the 10th century became known as gSarma or the New School. The three major gSarma Traditions that continue today are the Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug.

3 Padmasambhava’s visit to Beval Demojong and His Blessings -

Demojong is purely a land of peace and prosperity since the establishment of Buddhism in the mid 17th century. It is historically known as Beval Demojong. The Sacred Hidden Land as soon as Guru Padma visited personally and blessed in 8th century by meditating in its four corners and fortifying it against all the obscurities of human existence and establishing Nyenma order of Tibetan Buddhism here. Many of his teachings compiled and left behind his teachings and guidelines in sacred safe places under the care of Dharmaapalas and Dakinis.

Jona Yeshi Tsegyal requested and received the essence of the Tantric Teachings from Guru Rinpoche. With an infallible memory, she transcribed his teachings reduced their mean-
The name of "Nal-jor Cho-Shu" is very famous in the history of Sikkim. So it is must and most important to explain its brief account, how these four legendary masters followed the guidelines given in the Holy Prophecy of Guru Padmasambhava, and establishment of their respective centres in this holy land.

As mentioned above, all the works of Padmasambhava which were secretly hidden in order to preserve them for proficency, and which were to be revealed to the world when the time was ripe. So accordingly, the time came for establishing Buddha Dharma in this part of the land when the four masters found the Terma of the Guru and opened the gate of the Dharma at Sikkim.

The first Lama Lhatse Namkha Jigme was a native of Kongono, South-Eastern Tibet. He started his mission from the Northern Sikkim traversing the Kangla Nangtri and finding no road beyond the cave, flew unerringly to the upper part of the Kabru Mountain (24,000 ft.) and opened the Northern Gate via Dzongri and reached modern Yuksum, West Sikkim. The Northern gate according to Guru was the most difficult pass among the four Gates (mentioned in the prophecy).

The second Lama Karcha Ragpa Choepo who followed the Western route, Single-La through Dorjechang and opened the Western Gate, entered the holy land and reached Yuksum, West Sikkim.

The third Lama Ngyo-Dag Sampa Choepo who opened the Southern Gate through Namchu and reached Yuksum West Sikkim. All the learned Lamas met together at Yuksum.

1. Dakini - an excited class of fairy-like spiritual beings.
2. Yeshe Kogyal - was Guru's closest disciple and who mastered the great Guru's entire teachings. She did not die but disappeared as a radiance of rainbow light. She symbolizes the splendor of the great Guru.
Bulfinch in mid 17th century.
Therefore the place where these three enlightened beings met was called by the local Lepchas "Drum" which means "The Three Superior One" or "The Three Lamas." Among the four noble brothers (Nai-jor Che-Si) the fourth one was called Phuntsog by name who was a descendent of bruce ancestors of Khiam in Eastern Tibet. He possessed all the qualities that were mentioned in the prophecy. He was found from Gangtok, East Sikkim and finally invited to the Yulgim. The three learned Lamas traditionally enthroned him as the first Chogyal of Sikkim in 1641 A.D. in the presence of many local people and named him Chogyal Phuntsog Namgyal. So the Namgyal Dynasty came into being.

5. Consolidation of Nyimgma Order of Tibetan Buddhism by establishing religious centres thereafter.

The first and the oldest monasteries Dugpe Gonpa was established in the year 1701 founded by the pioneer Lama Lhatsun Chempo at Yuksum and it is still intact and its wall painting are superb. Its sanctity is maintained for it is the oldest gonpa in the history of Sikkim. Then followed by Sang-Nga Choling Gonpa and Pema Yang-Tse Gonpa in 1703. Penyu Yang-Tse Gonpa is the biggest and the most honoured Gonpa in the history of Sikkimese Gonpas. Many Gonpas like Enchy Gonpa, 1840, Phenthong Gonpa 1840 and other also adopted the same terma of Lhatsun Chempo and Rigzin Terdak Ungra that were practised and preached by Mindroling Monastery, one of the main Nyimgma Centres in Central Tibet for their ritual practice and traditional system.

Tashioding Gonpa, 1716 A.D and Zilmol Gonpa, 1716 A.D were built by Nga-Dag Setupa Chempo in West Sikkim. Many gonpas like Namchi Gonpa and Thangmoche Gonpa followed the same ritual practice and traditional systems as Tashioding and Zilmol Gonpa. These gonpas adopted and gave pre-eminence to the Termon work of Rigzin-Gon-Dan-Can as a code of ritual which is preserved in Dorje-Dag Monastery one of the main Nyimgma Centres in South East, Lhasa.

Kathog Gonpa, 1840 A.D. was established by the follower of Katog Rigzin Chempo at Pakyong. East Sikkim and Doling Gonpa 1840 was the site of Termon Dorjechung at Sonthing, South Sikkim. These gonpas adopted the ritual system of Terma works that are preserved by Kathog Monastery at Dringt in Kham, Eastern Tibet.

Since then the incarnation of Lhatsun Chempo and other famous Lamas came into Sikkim and consolidated Buddhism among corners of this land. Till the date of 1884 it is said that there are more than 40 Gonpas all over Sikkim.

There are eight or nine main gonpas in Sikkim. They are mainly Penyu Yang-Tse and Tashioding Gonpa in the West Kalang and Doling Gonpa in the South, Rumtek Gonpa, Kathog Gonpa and Enchy Gonpa in the East, and Phodong Gonpa and Phenthong Gonpa in the North. Each of these Gonpas have their annual function during which they organize Cham, i.e. Mask Dance and Black Hat Dance to dispel obstacles and bring peace for all.

Name of the monasteries in Sikkim are mostly in Tibetan language and are of an ideal or mystic nature, but some are physically descriptive of the site. Few are Lepcha place names which are also of a descriptive character.

According to prophecy of Guru Rinpoche, there are four main holy caves where Guru had meditated and consecrated. Some of his sacred writings were recited from these caves by Termon Rigzin Gon-Dan-Can and Termon Lhatsun Chempo. These holy caves are now being
the objects of pilgrimage for all. People form all over India, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and others visit these holy places and seek blessings.

Finally, the principal abode of Sikkim is "Gang-Chen Zod-Nga" who was entrusted as the guardian God of Demchog by Guru Rinpoche. He dwells in a snow mountain. The Mt. was named after the name of the God as Khangzamang the second highest mountain after Everest.

Gangchen Zod-Nga literally means "the five repositories of the lodes of the great snow". It is clearly described in the "Demchog Lamgyi" of Guru Rinpoche revealed by Lhasan Champa. The five repositories are real shrines houses of the god's treasures: (1) The sthorostatious of salt, (2) Gold and Turquoise, (3) Secret writings of Guru and various methods of increasing wealth, (4) Different kinds of useful arms and weapons etc., (5) and the stone house of grains of every kind and all kinds of medicines. It is believed that Guru had hidden many treasures in different parts of Byal Dermoopal.

Panniarsambhava's contribution to Byal Dermoopal and Tibet cannot be discussed within a short-epoch. There are hundred of voluminous Terma of his teachings, for instance: "Renchen Terzod" is one of them. It has not less than 60 Vols which five Vols were once published from Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology.

Guru Rinpoche made detailed predictions or prophecies about the future of Sikkim as to how and by whom Buddha-s would be consolidated and preserved peacefully. According to the later centuries, Namgyal Chok-Zem, the four masters came and established Buddhism smoothly. its rules and practices which in due course of time were adopted by the inhabitants of this Holy Land becoming an integral part of their way of life onwards.

Panniarsambhava's teachings are deeply rooted in the minds of Tibetans, Sikimese, Bhutanese, Chinese, Mongolians and the like. He has deeply influenced the cultural aspects of entire Himalayan region including Nepal. Many important holy places in Nepal are directly related with Guru Rinpoche, right from the great stupa Boudha Nath, Kathmandu to Yolmo and Yanglesho i.e. Dakshinkali.

In modern times his teachings have transcended all natural barriers and reached the remotest corners of the world. There is far greater awareness and understanding of his teaching today in even the so called advanced countries of the world. It would be a commonplace and exaggeration to say that Guru Rinpoche and his teachings can be one of the main sources of peace and prosperity in today's disturbed and destabilised world. This can act as a greater cementing force among different races, creeds and nations. They do have the potential for ushering in an era of everlasting peace, prosperity and harmony.

May Buddha and Panniarsambhava bless all.
The most important seven line prayer to Guru Rinpoche

HUM
ORGYEN YUZ GYI NEB CHANG TSAM
PEMA KESAR DONPO LA
YA TSEN CHOG GI NGO DRUP NYE
PEMA JUNG NE SHE SU DRAG
KHOR DU KHANDRO MANG PO KOR
KHYE KYUE SU DAG DRUP KYI
CHIN GYI LAP CHIR SHEK SI SOL
GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

HUM

In the North-West of the country of Oddityana
In the heart of a Lotus flower
Endowed with the most marvellous attainments
You are renowned as the Lotus-Born
Surrounded by many hosts of Dakinis
Following in your footsteps
I pray to you to come and bless me with your grace! GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM