

PADMASAMBHAVA AND HIS MISSION IN TIBET

-Ajay Kumar Agarwal

Introduction; Padmasambhava was the founder of lamaism and he is now deified and celebrated in lamaism as Buddha himself.¹ Even more than this, he is considered by the lamas of all sects to be the founder of their order and by the majority of them to be greater and more deserving of worship than Buddha himself. He is known by several names, besides his Indian name of Padmasambhava such as uggan Guru, Lo-pon, Padma, Guru, Padma-Jungne etc. But his most popular name is Guru Rin-poche.

The precious Guru Padmasambhava was no an ordinary person. According to the biographies it is said that when the Buddha was about to pass a way at Kushinagara, and his disciples were weeping, he said to them the world being transitory and death inevitable for all living things the time for any departure, from a lotus blossom on the dhanakosha lake in the north-west corner of the country of urgyan (which in the swat valley in Pakistan). There will be born one who will be much wiser and more spiritually powerful than myself. He will be called Padmasambhava and by him the esoterine will be established.

BIRTH OF PADMASAMBHAVA

What is said in the above prophecy regarding the birth of Padmasambhava all the facts are not correct. In fact he was born in Urgyan³ (Uddyan) as all the sources agree on this point but the exact data about his birth is not available anywhere being contemporary with the Tibetan king Khvi-srong ide-tsan and having helped in the establishment of Samya monastery in the year 749 A.D.⁴ it may be said that he was born during the first quarter of the Eight Centuary A.D.

A cursory galnce of the foregoing story of the birth of Padmasambha would reveal that it resembles very much in style, leaving aside the contents with the common Indian mythological stories and folktales. This gives rise to the idea that there existed some Indian language which may also have been one of the sources of the present biographers, what confirms the beliefs further in that lama Tranath, the author of the famous book "History of Buddhism in India" has also written a biography of Padmasambhava based on the common tradition of India. His work is styled as slobupon Padma'l mam thar rgya-gan lugs yid-ches grum ldan (Biography of the acharya Padma according to the Indian tradition, supported by three bases for faith.)

The king Indrabudhi adopted the child as his son and made him heir to the throne. The child was given education and training in all subjects of learning according to the tradition suitable to the princes. The boy was very intelligent and he exhibited his interest in studing and learning.

In the course of time the king Indrabodhi and his minister observed the boy was losing

1. Waddell, L.A. Buddhism and lamaism of Tibet. Heritage publishers New delhi, 1979, p.24

2. Ibid, p. 24.

3. Ibid, p. 26.

4. Ibid, p. 28.

interest in the worldly things and was showing increasing interest in mediative life. He feared that in this manner the prince would eventually renounce the kingdom. Efforts were soon made to find a girl suitable for the heir prince the lotus born. Ultimately a girl named Bhasdhava, daughter of king Chandra Kumar was found and considered as suitable bride, and was married to the prince. However marriage proved to be too weak a fetter to keep the prince off the thoughtful and meditation.

HOW HE BECAME A RELIGIOUS LEADER

At last the eventful day came and the prince announced to the kingfather his intention to abdicate and enter the Sangha. The king could not oppose for he understood that his resistance will not prove fruitful. While parting with the king Queens, ministers and servants who were all waiting with sorrow, the lotus born one proclaimed. This worldly life is transitory and separation is inevitable. As in a market place human beings come together and then separation; This is the wheel of the world, let us renounce it and fix our thoughts upon attaining liberation.

Padmasambhava then proceeded towards Bodh-Gaya. There he chose a place named "cool sandal wood" Cemetery for staying and he remained there for five years practising meditation. During this period he observed strict discipline of meditation. His food was offered to the dead and his clothing the shrouds of the corpses. Soon Padmasambhava felt need of studying the time secret Doctrines and searched for a Guru.

Accordingly Padmasambhava went first to a saint Guru who was a "LOka-Sidha" at Benaras. From him he learned the Kalachakra Doctrine and became master of astrology. From a Physician he learned medicines. From a learned Yogi he learned Sanskrit and several other languages. Vishwakarma, a great artist, taught him the art of making of images, painting, Engraving and many other useful art.

Guru Prabhanasti taught Padma the means of attaining Buddhahood, of avoiding spiritual retrogression of gaining mastery over, the three Biogions and concerning the paramitas and Yoga.

In this manner Padmasambhava finally received ordination into the Sangha and became possessor of the Doctrine. After becoming master of all the known arts and fully possessed of the dharma Padma started his mission of preaching the dharma both exoterically and esoterically, his mission in the human world takes him to all parts of India, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet he was invited to Tibet by venerable Santarakshita¹ to assist him to preach Buddhism there as he was unable to face the opponent priests who followed the corrupt Bon religion.

MISSION IN TIBET

Before proceeding to Tibet Padmasambhava made a study of the "Bon" religion of Tibet. On his way to Tibet in the year 746 A.D. The twelve guardian goddesses at first made

1. Bapat P.V. 2500 Years of Buddhism, Government Publications of India 1987, P. 67.

2. William Carey, Travel and Adventure in Tibet, Mittal Publication, New Delhi P. 74.

Bulletin of Tibetology

an attempt to harm him, but he subdued them, and then after initiating them he entrusted to them the guardianship of the doctrine, all along the route he then travelled subduing the demonical being. His first resting place was at Tod-lung, about 16 kilometers from Lhasa. On reaching Lhasa he was received by the King and the people with great honour and respect. The Tibet king sent the two chief ministers of state to meet Padma, with letters and presents and 500 mounted followers. The king's own horse, saddle with a golden saddle, was sent to fetch Padmasambhava. After sometime on his arrival in Tibet in 747 A.D. Padmasambhava visited Samye, on the first day of the eighth Tibetan month. The king escorted Padma to the place at Samye and placed him on a gold Throne and the Bodhisatva Padma's companion who was a professor in Nalanda on a silver Throne and made religious offerings.²

Padmasambhava consecrated the site and appeased the evil spirits by teaching to them the precepts. While performing the consecration ceremony, Padma manifested himself in one hundred and eight bodies. During the period the image of the Buddha of Jo-Khang in Lhasa was again brought and Bonpos in Tibet publicly debated, and the Bonpos being defeated, the king expelled most of those who would not embrace Buddhism to the deserts of north and west Nepal, Mongolia and other sparsely populated countries. Buddhism was then introduced into all parts of Tibet many Sanskrit works were translated into Tibetan. Samye, meaning "Academy for obtaining the heap of unchanging meditation" is started to be the first Buddhist monastery built in Tibet after the Potala I at Lhasa near the bank of Tsangpo river, at an altitude of about 11,430 feet.

In the compound completion of the mastery the Guru, assisted by the Indian monk Shantarakshita. There the order of the lamas, Shantarakshita was made the first abbot and worked there for fourteen years.

PADMAISM (LAMAISM)

Shantarakshita succeeded in founding the Dharma in Tibet again. The great respect in which Tibetans hold the memory of Padmasambhava to this day is the testimony of the success he achieved in accomplishing the undertaking of re-establishment of faith among the Tibetans in the undertaking of re-establishment of faith among the Tibetans in the enlightened teaching of Buddhism.² Now as the object of coming to Tibet was accomplished fully, Padma decided to take leave from Tibet. While departing from Tibet he said "Hereafter the Doctrine will be disseminated by attendants, mounted on horses accompanied Padma to Gung-than-la where all the party camped for the night. Next day Padma, after having pronounced his final blessings, in the name of the Buddha the Dharma and the Sangha, set out on his long missionary work in other countries.

Leaving Tibet left behind twenty-five disciples all able to continue the good work that he had started. These men by vigorous campaigns, popularised Buddhism in Tibet and by the time of Ral-pa-chen the grandson of Khri-srong-Lde btsan, Buddhism became the estab-

1. Ibid, P. 76.

2. Waddell L.A. The rise of esoteric Buddhism, in Tibet Moti Lal Banarsidass, Delhi India, 1977, P. 66.

lished religion of the country.

Padmasambhava also had five women disciples who compiled several accounts of the teachings of their master and hid them in various places, for the benefit of future believers. One of these disciples Khandro (Dakine) Yeshe Tso-gyal, was a Tibetan lady who is said to have possessed such a wonderful power of that if she gathered what she had heard from her Guru into book i.e. the biography of the Guru named earlier as Padma-Kni' Thang-yig. It was hidden away and was subsequently revealed under inspiration by a Stor-Ston.

Padma is also stated to have composed several works. He also translated some books with help of Tibetan Lo-tsa-bas. In the old index of the bsTan-rgyur there are only two texts (translators).² In the Sutra class ascribed to Padmasambhava.

- They are :- 1. Sramanerava sgraprecha, and
2. Bhikshurarsagraprecha.

The latter one was translated into Tibetan under the title dge-slong-gidang-po'i Lo-dri-beby Dipankara Srijnan (Acharya Atisa) and Nag-tsho-lo-tsa ba. Another work of Padmasambhava named Vajramantra-bhirusandhimula tantra was translated into Tibetan by Sa-Skya Pandita Kun-dga "rgyal-mtshan (1182-1252 A.D.) the work named Zla-gsang-thig-le was translated into Tibetan by Padmasambhava and dpal-brtsegs. The debt that Tibet owes to Padmasambhava is great, but the return made by the faithful Tibetan is for than they really owe. They have produced a vast amount of literature which wheel round his name. Several rites are performed in his name periodically, that may be yearly, monthly and even daily, people recite mantras for him incessantly countless times. He is revered in every Buddhist temple to whichever sect the temple may belong. How great faith, People put in his name can be seen from the remarks of revered khanatru Rinpoche. "The making of one hundred thousand images of Guru Padmasambhava the repeating of his mantra one hundred thousand time etc. are like the cool shade cast by five hundred Thousand layers of cloud in hot weather. It is like shower of nectar, like the rain producing harvest it benefits both oneself and others."

Though the Lamaism founded by Padmasambhava was later reformed by the Indian Missionary Atisa and thereafter by the Tibetan reformer Tsong-Kha-Pa, the teaching of Padmasambhava have been followed by the Nying-Ma-Pa or old school, commonly known as red Hats. Though many Indians had gone to Tibet after Padmasambhava non is held in greater esteem and he is as rule reverently referred to as the Guru of Tibet. No Indian teacher has ever attained examine in his country by more wizardry and Padmasambhava could not have been an exception. An ardent Buddhist brought up in the Indian tradition a student of Nalanda and a well travelled man, Padmasambhava was not possibly a mere exorcist. In all probability he was that rare phenomena, the mystic and man of affairs combined that appears in the world once in many years.

1. Willim, P. 76.

2. Ibid, P. 77.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ARIS MICHAEL AND AUNG SANKYI. EDS. TIBETAN STUDIES IN HONOUR OF HUGH RICHARDSON. NEW DELHI 1980.
2. BAPAT, P.V. Ed., 2500 YEARS OF BUDDHISM. GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS OF INDIA. 1987.
3. WILLIAM. CAREY. TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE IN TIBET, MITTAL PUBLICATION. NEW DELHI.
4. WADDELL, L.A. BUDDHISM AND LAMAISM OF TIBET MERITAGE PUBLISHERS. NEW DELHI. 1979.
5. WADDELL, L.A. THE RISE OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN TIBET, MOTILAL BANARSIDASS DELHI, INDIA. 1977.