

The Tibetan Literature And Its Development

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A literature communicated the socio cultural status of a group of human beings to describe its mind and face. The tibetan literature becomes thematically diverse. It maintains oral traditions as well as the written materials which developed through specific periods, such as:

- (i) Early period of tibetan literature (upto cent. 10 A.D.)
- (ii) Middle period of dimensional diversity (cent. 11-18 A.D. and, which may be sub divided in two epochs (a) Epochs of radical progress upto cent. 15 A.D. and (b) That of momentum of creative diversity (cent. 16-18 A.D.)
- (iii) Modern period (upto 1950 A.D.) of the literature.
- (iv) Contemporary Literature (1950 A.D. downwards) in Tibetan.

The above periodic distribution is based on thematic relevance in the time context.

The perimeter of Tibetan literature happens to be somewhat distinct in its dimensional growth.

EARLY PERIOD (UPTO CENT. 10 A.D.)

The heroic tales of Gesar Ling which had been popular in oral traditions, may claim to be the conspicuous evidence of the early phase of creative composition among the Tibetans and other Tibetan speaking peoples of Mongolia, China and those of the Indian Himalayas.

The tale regarding the falling the scriptures on the roof of the royal palace of Lha tho tho ri (c.4th century A.D.) probably was as symbolic myth. The script was not communicable to then seers and onlookers. In which language those scriptures were? Zhang-zhung? Urygan? Buruski?

The entrance of Bon, carried by the priests in the southwest Tibet, as the tradition speaks, during the early consolidation of Yar lungs leadership leaves meagre literary records to construct a seperate chapter. A chapter dealing with the tibetan literature regarding the ecclesiastic Bon precepts does not narrate its early period. The use of Zhang-Zhung scripts in the model of lanchana (ranjanalipi) or lancha, as claimed by the Bon po priests prior to the innovation of Tibetan scripts (cent.7th A.D.), may be hard to substantiate. Neither the Iranian source, nor the Chinese materials of the Wu dynasty records the detail about their neigh-

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bouring people of the Trans-Himalayas. The folklores and myths which have come down uptill now suggest the prevalence of verbal communication as they were then understandable to the listeners residing in the valleys and ravines of the high plateau.

The ecclesiastical hierarchy which developed subsequently, whether Bon or Buddhistic, did not appreciate such popular outlook. An emphasis was laid upon regulated vows of the human life towards the higher achievement where the mundane becomes secondary. A camera study of the Tibetan literature reveal those facts.

The Bon-po priests in 'Bru dza (zha) might claim their semblance with the speech Brukshi (or zhi) which might have been in vogue by cent. 2 A.D. in the western (praticya) country in between the down course of the Sind (hu) and the northeastern border of Iran. The specimens, as referred by Siddheswar Verma (1920), require further probing. Zhang Zhung and Brukshi or Puruski were probably in usage prior to the systematisation made by Thon mi Sambhota the 7th cent A.D. In course of systematisation Thon mi Sambhota probably took care of the then prevailing speech specimens used in popular tales, folk lores as Panini endeavoured in Western Himalayas by 400 B.C.

The Dun huang documents which refer to the Yar luns are silent about the Olmo lun/fnin Bon tradition. The latter generated in the remote areas like 'Bru dza, (S)purans and Gu ge in the northwest Himalayas. It was admixed with the local rituals of nature-worship which subsequently became a kin to pre-Vedic Siva cult of Kashmir. Prior to the consolidated state formation in Tibet many sporadic groups of the Trans-Himalayas used to practise thier indigenous rituals. No systematisation of the faith was ventured. The Dun huang documents substantiate them. Nebesky- Wojkowitz (1956) and R.A. Stein (1957) refer to some Pre-Bon local faiths resembling to Mother Tantra which might be indigenous. Egon Von Eiekstedt (1926): the Man in India (Vol. VI pp. 237-74) traced them among some ethnic types of Western Himalayas. Moreover several edicts and inscriptions come in the purview.

Thon mi Sambhota (7th cent. A.D.) otherwise named Anu, is accredited with the authorship of Sum cu pa and Rtag 'jug pa as he endeavoured to systematise the Trans-Himalayan speeches spoken by the inhabitants of Stod bod. Its linguistic study may not be relevant in the present context. The Proto-Tibetan literature requires further researches in contrast to the speeches belonging to the neighbouring peoples of Tibet. Numerous oral traditions about 'dre, srin, khi, gdon, btsan mo, sgra gtsam, snam, a phyi lho khyun, 'bran etc. make one inquisitive regarding the nomenclature of the early Tibetan Literature prior to the growth of ecclesiastism in Tibet. Guiseppe Tucci (1980:165) aptly remarks : "In general it can be asserted that the religious practice of the layman is still strongly under the influence of the pre-Buddhist and folk heritage. he is familiar from his childhood with the epic deeds and marvellous happenings with which the literature and traditions deriving from this heritage are filled. The particular kind of religious feeling which gives life to them regulates all the relationship between

the Tibetan people and the immense, uncertain world of the demonic and the divine".

The advent of Buddhist literature in Central Tibet and its predominant role through the patronisation of the Btsan rulers was well documented. Also the support of the T'ang emperors of China, the assistance of the Buddhist teachers from Nepal with the source materials and the influx of the Buddhist erudition for centuries paved the path for the Early spread (sna dar) of Buddhism in Tibet. It was the glamorous period of the Tibetans when they could control over the Central Asian silk routes on the north and the Uigurs and the Arabs in the west. As a result of that the Tibetan language and literature obtained a wide scope to grow.

The Buddhist literature in Tibetan extends in three sections e.g. Yig bsgyur (translation work), Gter ma (revelations) and Bstan bcos (elucidatory compilations) by the Tibetan Buddhist scholars.

Pad ma 'byun gnas (Padmasambhava) is said to have been initiated by Thisong detsan (Khri sron lde btsan cent. 8 A.D.) to visit Tibet for facing the severe challenges from the Bon-po priests when the Tibetan chieftains adhered to the Pre-Buddhist Bon tradition prevalent then in 8th cent. A.D. Pad ma 'byun gnas succeeded in application of the Rnin rgyud to subdue his opponents. He therefore ensured the base of Buddhism in Tibet by installing the Bsam yas monastery in Tibet (750 A.D.).

Padmasambhava is said to have carried some Sanskrit Tantric texts from India. The Drag snags 'duspa rdo rje rtsa-ba'i rgyud (Vajramantra-bhiru-sandhimula-tantra) which was translated by Padmasambhava in collaboration with Vairocana, was one of those texts.

After the model of Odantapuri vihara of magadha, the Bsam-yas (Samya) monastery was built in 749 A.D. Padmasambhava and Santaraksita took active part in building the monastery and the latter was made the first abbot (mkhan po) there. He laboured thirteen years for the spread of the Indian thought, especially Buddhism. On account of his continuous efforts for good and welfare of beings he has been epitheted Bodhisattva.

Regarding the visit of Santaraksita in Tibet, the Pad ma'i bka' than refers to a story regarding the request made by Sba gsal snan, (also known as Ye shes dban po) to Santaraksita for preaching the Buddha's teaching in Tibet. Santaraksita is said to be present in Nepal then (c. 40 A.D.). They had taken a vow, saying : "We should establish the Doctrine of the Buddha in Tibet". And, thereafter, Santaraksita is said to have proceeded to Tibet for the cause of the Tibetan people.

The teachings of Sakyamuni the Buddha were carried to Tibet in Indian original since the introduction of Buddhism by the Indian Buddhist missionaries. The Tibetans also paid high regard to those sayings by preserving them in Tibetan translation and by codifying them as the sacred texts of the Indian. Those texts are generally known as the the kanjur (bka' 'gyur : Buddhavacana) and the Tanjur (bstan 'gyur : Sastra). The latter collections consists of the works composed by

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the Indian Buddhist exponents like Nagarjuna (1st - 2nd Cent. A.D.), Aryadeva (2nd Cent. A.D.) Asanga and his brother Vasubandhu (4th cent. A.D.), Padmasambhava and his contemporaneous Santaraksita (8th cent. A.D.) Kamalasila (8th cent. A.D.), Naropa (9th cent. A.D.) Birupa (10th cent. A.D.), Atisa Dipankara (11th cent. A.D.) and many other Indian teachers. Thus the bilateral relationship was established between the Indian and the Tibetan Buddhists.

The Kanjur (bka' 'gyur) collection includes the Vinaya texts belonging to the Mulasarvastivada nikaya of schismatic Buddhism which is partially available in Sanskrit from Central Asia and that from Gilgit in western India.

The Sutra and the Tantra texts as preserved in Tibetan translations have great importance in the Indological Studies. Actually speaking, the demarcation between the Sutra and the Tantra, as we understand now, did not prevail in olden time. The ideal of Bodhisattva who takes the vow to dedicate himself for the cause of redressing suffering of others has been elaborated in theory and in practice in the Sutra and the Tantra texts respectively. The latter has more acceptance among the common people through esoteric and spiritual achievements and their application through rituals and modalities in observances. Thus ritualistic prayers, songs and incantations of mystic Sanskrit and Dramil syllables mantra (arya and anarya respectively, invocations, physiological ritualistic dances with gesticulations (mudra), music, oracles, and mystic rites are preserved in the rgyu(d) Tantra, snag (mantra) and gzuns (dharani) texts translated from Sanskrit original.

The Tantra texts preserved in Tibetan comprised of four main traits, namely, rituals (Kriya), vowed livelihood (carya), esoteric (yoga) and higher esoteric (anuttarayoga) practices. The texts are arranged in the Kanjur in reverse order of the said four traits; while the arrangement in the Tanjur collection is occasionally based on deities with the ritualistic formulae and modalities of worship.

But what was the case of the lay people outside the Yar Luns valley ? In Mna ris 'khor gsum the Bon priests took care of them. They undertook a competitive task to provide ethno-cultural nourishment in the Tibetan literature of the Bon. Because they had no access into the Buddhist monastic environment for socio-economic background. They reproduced Gsen rab glorification at par with that of Sakyamuni the Buddha. The healthy competition lost its fervour after being loathed by potenical powergame during Glan dar ma and subsequent Yum brtan regime in Central Tibet and in Western Tibet. The diversity of the Tibetan literary history become explicit herein.

The Tibetan zhang zhung (bsang sung) Dictionary published from New Delhi (1960) preserves an Old Tibetan map of the world with Pasargadae (byrus) city at the centre. In this regard David Stronach observes the following : "Turning to the details of the map at large we not only find Pasargadae at the centre of the composition-at the navel of the world to employ an expression more commonly used of Jerusalem-but we discover that the map is more or less confined to the geographical limits of the Achaemenian Empire, running from Egypt in the west

to possibly the Pamirs of Central Asia in the east. There can be little doubt therefore that the original map which the Tibetan cartographer copied or adapted was a 'world map' composed in Iran during the period of Achaemenian rule". (Tibetan Review XIII, No. 1 Jan. 1977 p 15).

Ervest Hetney, Director of Alexandar Csoma de Koros Institute, Budapest (Hungary) points out the following "From the fact that the centre of the map is occupied by Pasargadae, (the capital of Cyrus Empire) and other regions of Iran, we can obtain the result, that the map was created in Iran, and a Tibetan cartographer copied or adopted it. (But only after the 7 century A.D. since the Tibetan alphabets from the Lan-cha alphabet were adapted by Thon-mi-sambho-ta, Minister of the Tibetan King Sron-Bstan-sgam-po)". The above fact goes in favour of supporting the antiquity of Tibet during the Achaemenian rule.

MIDDLE PERIOD OF DIMENSIONAL DIVERSITY

As usual the creative intellectual of Tibet were engaged to produce in multifarious directions, which had then been known to them. The patronage of the Sa skya hierarch enhanced the inquisitiveness of the Tibetan scholars when the Buddhist of Bharatavarsa got their asylum either in Nepal or in Tibet. The diverse literary production of the Bon teachers deserves a separate mention.

On the other hand, the inhabitants of Central Tibet had the occasion to be in touch of the Yuan emperors of China as well as the vast population of the Kokonor Mongols. Again, a fusion in the Tibetan culture could generate a new dimension of the Tibetan literature through patronage and hostility. the geography of Tibetan expanded in the north and northeast of China.

Besides the translation works from the Indian, the Chinese and the Central Asian sources, the Buddhist teachers and authors belonging to Tibet and Mongolia are accredited with the literary contribution in Tibetan about different aspects of the Buddhist thought. Those may be broadly divided into five heads.

(i) Annotations, elucidations and commentary works of the Tibetan translated works which led to further division in the Buddhist order of Tibet. Among them,

(a) Rnin ma School advocated by Padmasambhava in the 8th Cent. A.D.

(b) Kargyu School reformed by Lama Marpa (Cent. 11 A.D.)

(c) Sa-skya School founded by Dkon merag gyal po (Cent. 11 A.D.)

(d) Ge lu School propounded by Tson Kha pa (Cent. 15 A.D.) are major. Other minor schools like Karmapa founded by Rin chen dorjee, Dikhung pa, Talung pa, Shije pa grew subsequently.

(ii) Esoteric experiences (sgrub thabs) with or without ritualistic formulae (cho/ ga) prescribed in the Tantra as related to deities in singular or in multiple. Such as, lam rim, ra khrid, sgrub dkyil texts were composed by eminent Buddhist teachers in their collected works (gsun 'bum). Occasionally they preserve the exposition on the particular Tantra practice. For instance, Mi bskod dkyi 'khor gyi choga and Dban don rab gsal ascribed to Tson Kha pa (Toh. 5287) belong to the Guhyasamaja class. Similarly, Dbyans can dga' ba'i blo gros composed on the

Guhyasamaja practice in his work lam gzhag leg bsad.

In propitiation of multiple deities several works are also written by scholars according to their personal experience. Tson Kha pa's work entitled (i) Rin po che'i 'phren ba and (ii) Dpal gzhin rje gsed lha beu gsum ma rnam kyil khor du dban bskur ba sgrub pa'i thabs kyil cho ga (Toh. 5339) are followed by the Dge lugs pa practitioners.

(iii) Epistemological analysis and doctrinal interpretations for general understanding. Several Buddhist philosophers like Maitreynatha, Vasubandhu, Santrarakṣita and Kamalasila have comprehended in conformity of the logical ground of nonsubstantiality (nairātmya/sunyata) among the Abhidharmika, the Madhyamika and the Yogacara-Vijnaptimatrata standpoints. Resultantly, some philosophical texts basing on the Prajnaparamita-Sutras were composed with a tendency of compromise in Madhyamika Sautrantika, Yogacara-Madhyaika (Svatantrika) standpoints. For example, Abhisamayalankara (Toh 3786) ascribed to Maitreyanatha lays emphasis on such assimilation of Yogacara-Madhyamika. Tattvasamgraha (Toh 4266) of Santarakṣita (Cent. 8 A.D.) with its commentary Kamalasila (Toh 4267) a comprehensive attempt in this respect.

Similar endeavours are also observed among the Buddhist philosophers of Tibet like Sa Skya Pan chen (12th Cent. A.D.), Nag Lo tsa ba (13th Cent. A.D.) Tson kha pa (15th Cent.) Gyal-ba nga ba (16th cent A.D.) who followed the legacy of the Buddhist philosophers of India.

(iv) Historical annals (deb ther) including biographies (mam thar) didactic deliberations (man nag) spiritual correspondence ('phrin yig), those of pilgrimage account (lam yig) on Buddhist culture were composed. With reference to four major tenets of Buddhist thought which developed in Tibet since the 11th century A.D. the Tibetans showed their excellence in preservation of historical records carefully. Thus an awareness of historiography could grow among the Tibetans.

A momentum in the Tibetan popular writings may be traced in snan nag (poems), sgruns (tales), tshigs bcad (metrical verses), rtsom tshig (essays) and mam thar (biography) in the Tibetan literature.

The triangular political struggles among the Chinese, the Mongols and the Tibetans in the mediaeval period could bring forth a new dimension of the Tibetan literature when ecclesiastical authorities like Gyalwa ngapa produced important political memoirs through epistles and correspondence.

It was a fact that orthodox fundamentalist of Mediaeval Tibet decried the sentimental songs of egoideal mind of the Sixth Dalai Lama by charging them as sensuous expressions of erotic love laden mind. Yu Dawchuan (1930) remarked that the structure was labelled as the preconditions in respect of a Yellow robed one. Presumably, the lucid expressions from such exalted high ecclesiastical dignitary became instrumented. The monkish garment of the poet could not hide his poetic skill and aesthetic awareness.

Innumerable metrical compositions and devotional songs could provide the mental food of the monks and nuns with a vow of attaining the aesthetic value of impulsive sentiment of *santa-rasa* overwhelmed with the Bliss (rab tu dga 'ba).

The spontaneous songs of Milarepa become the classic in the Tibetan literature.

The history of literature in Tibetan has a wide scope to cover various aspects of literary contributions. In that respect the historical writings and philosophical texts of the Buddhists and the Bon po teachers enrich the literature during its Middle period. The grammatical compositions and lexicons in Tibetan provide the base in building up the elevated literary spread in Tibet. The erudition on the traditional scriptures of the Buddhists including the Tantra (authors) and those of the Bon priests surpassed in exquisiteness.

The teachings of Sakyaputra Gautama the Buddha flourished in Mongolia since the inhabitants accepted Buddhism from the Sa skya pa teacher Sakya panchen Kun Dga' rgyal mtshan (1182-1251 A.D.) and his nephew 'Phags pa (1235-86 A.D.).

Prior to that, the sayings of the Buddha are said to have reached Mongolia as early as in the 4th century A.D. when the Chinese monks used to cross the Mongol-Chinese boundary. In olden days the national boundaries were not so defined as they are now. The Chinese inscription located at Yenissei of Mongolia-Chinese border shows the evidence of prevailing Buddhist thought there. The silk route crossing over Central Asia was the source of inquisitiveness to know more about the world outside Mongolia. The archaeological evidence of the murals installed in the Uighar palace in Karakorum, the Mongol capital are believed to have been collected from a nearby Buddhist temple.

The Tibetan monks were the source of inspiration to the Mongols erudites who devoted to extensive translation of the Buddhist scriptures, especially those of the Kanjur (bka' 'gyur) and the Tanjur (bstan 'gyur). The royal family members preferred to hold the Buddhist faith avowedly at the early phase. In due course Buddhism became so popular as many authors in Mongolia composed indigenous Buddhist texts in Tibetan as well as in Mongolian.

As a result of that, the Buddhist literature in Tibetan focused in a new dimension for no less than seven hundred years upto the current century.

The lineages of ecclesiastical heirarches belonging to different monastic schools and sub-schools of Buddhists in Tibet have grown for about thousand years. The unique process of re-incarnation in succession becomes an important features in the Buddhist society of Tibet and Mongolia. The literary contributions of the eminent Mongolian teachers like Spyansha rin poche (Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1390-1448 A.D.), Leon skya Hutuqtu (Nag dban blo bzang chos ldon) 1642-1714 A.D., 'Jam dbyans bzhad pa (Nag dban brtson grus) 1648-1721 A.D., Lcan Skya Hutuqtu (Rol po'i rdo rje) 1717-1786 A.D. achieved prominence.

In spite of shouldering the ecclesiastical responsibility of carrying out the task laid down by the predecessor teacher (dge rgan) to the junior one (dge phrug) or successor devoted to elucidate the ideas inherited in spiritual generation. The expansion of creative outlook therefore continued with the tenets of thoughts to which an author subscribed. For instance Rgyal dban rje kun dga' dpal 'byor (1428-1476 A.D.) who is said to be tenth spiritual generation of Ye ses rdo rje (1161-1211 A.D.) belonging to the Rgya clan of 'brug pa Bka' brgyud. His incar-

nation (sprul sku) 'Jam dbyans kyi grags pa (1478-1823) and his successor Pad ma dkar po Nag dban nor bu (b. 1527) became an eminent creative author in Tantric Buddhism. Similar instance may be the cases of the Dpal chos kyi grags pa 1110-1193) of the Zhwa nag Karmapa lineage and that of Bkra sis grags pa (d. 1282) of the Zhwa dmar Karma pa lineage succeeding to Situ of Lho Karmapa lineage succeeding to Situ of Ka' thog lineages. Subsequently, Rje ran 'byun rdo rje a prominent literary personage appeared among the Karma pa lineages in 1284-1339 A.D. Also Situ Panchen deserve a special mention here.

Among the Jo-nan pa lineage which was founded by Grub chen yo mo mi bskyod rdo rje (11th cent. A.D.) Taranatha (b. 1575 A.D.) became well known for his Gsun 'bum or Collected works.

In respect of the Dge lugs pa lineage Tson kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419 A.D.) was the mastermind personality accredited with a large number of Buddhist works in different aspects. Among the successor of the lineage the collected works (gsun 'bum) of Rgyal ba Dge 'dun grub (Dalai Lama I, 1391-1474), Rgyal ba Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (Dalai Lama II, 1475-1542 A.D.), Rgyal ba Bsod nams rgya mtsho (Dalai Lama III, A.D.) Rgyal ba Ina ba Nag dban rgya mtsho (Dalai Lama V, 1617-1682 A.D.), Rgyal ba bdun pa Blo bzang bskal bzang rgya mtsho (Dalai Lama VII) enrich the Tibetan Buddhist literature. H.H. the Dalai Lama XIV Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho manifests his literary excellence by his recent works in Tibetan on universal brotherhood among the human beings with the suggestions to achieve the peace in the world. His Sgrub mtha snin po is an attempt to integrate the differences in Buddhist tenets prevailing in Tibetan.

Miscellaneous writings (thor bu sna tshogs) cover manifold subjects of Buddhist Studies, such as, Sgra rig (grammar), tshigs bcad (rhetoric), tshig mdzod (lexicon), gso-rig i.e. texts on medicine and therapeutics and bzo rig i.e. treatises on the arts like Buddhistic visual art, sku thang or than ka painting, temple and monastic architectural design drawing, iconometry, decorative art for internal beautification and Buddhistic performing art like 'cham, du 'khor.

The Tibetan Literature also preserves important materials on the popular sciences like astronomy, mathematics, mensuration, calculus, accountancy, chemical knowledge of the organic and inorganic matters, animal husbandry and agricultural know-how etc. Moreover, the excellence of the Tibetan workmanship in masonic technique is unique. In the field of the applied arts like painting, leather work, carpet weaving, paper making, wooden block carving, litho printing, wool processing, mineral and herbal dye preparation, wood craft, metalware technique weaving designs the Tibetans manifest their basic knowledge of sciences behind the arts. Their artisan methodology in written form delineate the extensive perimeter of the Tibetan literature. The texts on performing arts deserve mention here. Thus rig gnas Ina could not exclude the therapeutical science, and craftsmanship howsoever improvised it might be from the monastic curriculum in Tibet.

It is to mention that the Tibetans came in touch of the Arabs since the 9th cent. A.D. and they faced threats from the Muslim Chiefs of Khasgar in Central Asia

since then. In due course the inhabitants of Central Asian-principalities embraced Islam while the Tibetans adhered to either Buddhism or Bon until Baltistan was invaded by Shihabuddin (1359-78) and Sultan Sikander (1394-1416) of Kashmir. Inspite of repeated attempts by the Muslim rulers of Kashmir, Tibet and Central Asia to conquer Ladakh, the inhabitants of Ladakh maintained their seperate identity. Meanwhile the sectarian conflicts between Rnin ma pa of Ladakh and Dge lugs followers of Guge worsened the situation. Deldon Nam gyal (1648-75) had to compromise lastly with the Mughal ruler of Kashmir and accepted Islam by assuming the name of Aqabal Khan. He ordered to build a mosque at Leh in 1665. The attempts for translation of the Qurran with other writings like Kha che pha lu could lead the Tibetan literature towards a new development.

MODERN PERIOD UPTO 1950 A.D.

The proselytism of Christianity and Islam (Aminuddin 1989) leaves a room for diversion in the Tibetan literature. As a result of that the Buddhist and the Christian translation of literature in Tibetan from extrenal sources tended to mutual tolerance and harmony. Such tendency makes the Tibetan literature not only comprehensive but also universal.

The Christian Missionaries in India took an active part by translating the Bible in Tibetan for the Tibetan speaking people in India. It may be mentioned that the first Tibetan Dictionary in European Languages in India was composed by an Indian Missionary from Serampur of Bengal in 1926. A Roman Catholic Indian Missionary while working in the frontiers of Bhutan, ventured to collect Tibetan vocabularies with brief grammatical notes for the use of the Europeans. The name of the said Indian missionary has been now lost but his papers were edited by Mr. Schroter, a missionary of Bengal. H.A. Jaschke, a member of the Moravian Missionary, who worked at Kyelang of British Lahoul published his Tibetan English Dictionary in 1881. And his Tibetan Grammer was printed later on in 1890. In this connection, the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta played an important role for printing the Tibetan materials in those days.

The Tibetan literature had a new turn when the Gospel of Mathew of the Holy Bible was translated in the first half of the 19th cent. A.D. by Rev. William. The Scandinavian Alliance Tibet Mission at Ghoom translated the New Testament in seventeen fascicules (1903). The contributions of Joseph Gergain, Eliyah Tsetan Phuntshog show the continuity of the trend.

Special characteristic of the translations of Bible shows the development of the literature in the following lines.

- (i) In many cases the translations use local words and expressions from the colloquial language in the Kanauri translation of the Bible.
- (ii) The Tibetan script in the case of dialects is modified to show peculiarities of the local pronunciation by exhibiting many phonetic changes in Tinan, Bunan, Manchand translations.
- (iii) Conscious attempts at creating written froms of the respective dialects

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which have otherwise been written in the Standard Literary Tibetan spelling and idioms in the case of Ladakhi, Zanskari, Dzongka translations.

(iv) A lot of materials for the study of different scripts for the same phonetic system as found in translating the Bible in (a) Balti (in Arabic script), (b) Kanauri (in Tinkari & Nari script), (c) Purigskad trend., (d) Balti in Romani script.

On the other hand, the Tibetan Scholars like Mi Pham, Phyogs las nam par rgyal ba (1846-1914 ?) of Khams, Dge 'dun chos 'phel, Gyalwa cusumpa (1876-1933 A.D.) start reformation against the orthodox outlook. Dge 'dun chos 'phel and Don sgrub rgyal (1953-1985) had to suffer for that.

Several Mongolian Buddhist authors however continued the tradition of earlier composition. Such as, Mkhan Chen rab bstan pa Chos 'Phel (1840-1908), Mkhyan brtse'i dban po 'Jam dbyans (1820-1892), Sgo man mkhan Chen Mkhyen rab bstan pa Chos 'phel followed the tradition. Such as, Lokesh Chandra has enumerated thier literary works in his Materials of the Tibetan History of Literature. The Dalai Lama XIII continued in the field of Dge lugs and the Rnin ma authors like Gter Ston Mchog gyur glin pa (1829-1908).

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD (1950 DOWNWARDS)

The Contemporary Tibetan Literature bifurcates from the traditional trends by the change of human values as one Worldism expands with the halo of modernity. Economic disparity, tendency of equality in social strata and urge for socialisation have prompted the Tibetans to accept Marxian thoughts after sharing the political ideology of the People's Republic of China.

Ven. Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama XIV administration in exile and the traditionally learned Tibetans outside Tibet endeavour to maintain the standard literary trend by adapting some reformed style in composition as far as practicable, in their writings by compromise with the modernism. Obviously, that makes them aware how to adjust the literary style in the changed conditions. Thus a transitional phase goes in the Contemporary Tibetan literature for the last few decades. The diversity in approaches may bring forth a new horizon with tendency towards the adaption of modernity with tradition in the human values.

Some verses may be relevant to cite here from the Contemporary Tibetan Literature.

Rgya mtsho : Bkra sis dban rgyal
rgya mtsho'i gru la brten nas su/
phan tshun 'brel bzan brtan po 'gyur/
so so'i skad dan ses rig la/
yar rgyas ni ma sprin 'bral sar//
den san tshan rig pa kun gyis/
dpyad nas sa snum mtsho las rned/
rig gnas rgya mtsho thugs rje can/
khyed kyi bka' drin sus brjed thub//

gans ris bskor ba'i yul ljons 'dir/
 yon tan bdud rtsi char babs nas/
 gzhon nu pho mo'i sa gzhi la/
 rig gnas lo tog smin par sog//

The translation work from the Indian works of Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru speak about the interaction of young generation with the modern Indian Literature.

Again, the Tibetans residing in TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) have also been enthusiastic in creative composition with their latest political trend towards socialism and Marxism. Several Journals and news papers which have been published since 1950 from Lhasa and Beijing show their literary merits with creative excellence. Moreover, Tibetan translations of Marxian works from Chinese have been popularly distributed among the Tibetans minorities of PRC.

In fine, the propensity of a literature, as it is generally understood, is elaborated by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan in the following.

"Literature is a sacred instrument and through the proper use of it we can combat the forces of ignorance and prejudice and foster national unity and world communion. Literature must voice the past, reflect the present and mould the future. Inspired language, *tejomayi vak*, will help readers to develop a human and liberal outlook on life, to understand the world in which they live, to understand themselves and plan sensibly for their future.

In that respect the Tibetan literature may claim its distinction from that which a literature refers to. A contest between monkish rigourity and the commoners in expressing the human feelings and emotions tends to a broad bifurcation in the Mediaeval Tibetan literature.

As one of the prominent literatures of the world, the Tibetan literature has a multidimensional growth within the span of about one thousand five hundred years in East Asia. The Tibetan literature becomes a varied exposition of a culture-complex which has been contributed by diverse ethnic groups. The inhabitants of Tibet since the olden days in the highland of Trans-Himalayas preserve a tendency of cultural integration in spite of their ethnic plurality. Tibet (Bod Yul) which is now politically TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) of China, has been strategically important for being surrounded by the countries like Li yul (Khotan), Khasgar, Karasar, Horyul of Central Asia, China, Mongolia, Iran (Persia), Arab, Nepal, Bhutan (Bhotanta) and India (Bharatavarsa).

The Tibetans also endeavoured to enrich their ways of life by assimilation and compromise with the neighbouring peoples. Those are varily presented in classical Tibetan literature.

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