

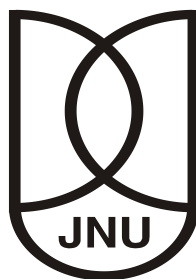
**PERSIAN AS LITERARY AND CULTURAL LINK
BETWEEN
GREATER KHORASAN AND TIBET**

*Dissertation Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Award of the Degree of*

Master of Philosophy

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Dedicated

To

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

CONTENTS

	Page No.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
PREFACE	
CHAPTER ONE	1 -18
A Historical Background	
CHAPTER TWO	19-37
Greater-Khorasan Tibet Cultural Sphere	
CHAPTER THREE	38-52
Influence of Loan Words in Tibetan Language and Literature	
CHAPTER FOUR	53-70
Bon : A Hidden Treasure In Olmo-lung-ring	
CONCLUSION	71-84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	85-96

PREFACE

"It is important to understand the past as we are trying to find solutions for the future." Holiness His the Dalai Lama.

The present work examines Persian as Literary and Cultural Link between Greater Khorasan and Tibet through Musk Route. To write the cultural history of any country may seem to be a formidable task, because the term 'culture' covers all the historical manifestations of a people's cultural interests over long periods of time. This is not an exhaustive study; such a study would be impossible to be carried out, due to its size and grade of difficulty. On the other hand, I will be modest if I affirm that my work is not a mere narration of already known facts. I have studied here several entirely new aspects of the theme, product of my own research, previously ignored.

My attempt is to relate the narrative history of early medieval Greater Khorasan and Tibet and understanding of the great role of these two great civilizations. There will be omissions in this Dissertation, undoubtedly, since I have concentrated on literary and cultural link but the political and religious movements of the eighth century were to shape the development of central Asian civilizations for many centuries to come, and can still be discerned in the societies of the region today.

The role of Muslims and of the Persian language act as an intermediary between Tibet and the West. Focusing on the use of Persian language for Portuguese missionaries, my thesis discusses its importance in shaping Western understanding of Buddhism. However, the mediation role of the Persian language, particularly as, earlier I was a student of SL/JNU in Persian department, for the dissemination of knowledge about Tibet. Although focusing in one case from the nineteenth century, many of the points of cultural intermediaries raised in this dissertation are also relevant for earlier times: the way in which my bilingual skills in Tibetan and Persian, served as important cultural intermediaries.

This dissertation work however, draws attention to some tantalizing hints at this evidence in regard to the links between Greater Khorasan and Tibet. The evidence suggests that at a very early age at least as early as the mid sixth century BC– the artifacts of horsemanship, of hunting and warfare of a type known from western Iran, became familiar to the populations of present-day Tibet. This not only highlights the place of Tibet along the Muslim trade routes, but also is interesting in locating Tibet on the route to china. Indeed Tibet can also be seen as an intermediary between China and the Islamic world in a cultural sense, a point which is reflected in my work. The study is divided into four chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter gives a background of the theme and presents the framework of the thesis, and this conceptual chapter defines some of the key concept like ‘musk’ route, origin of the Tibetan peoples, and anthropological relation with Arabian Peninsula etc.

Chapter 2: Greater Khorasan- Tibet Cultural Sphere

This chapter discusses Tibet’s knowledge of Persia. The Chapter also discusses the evidence of cultural interactions in the field of geography, art, history, medicine, history of science and education, literature, hagiography, archaeology, and anthropology and a strong Iranian presence in Tibet after the unification of the country in the 8th century and improvement of technical and military knowledge which would require an approach not only in the field of Iranian studies but also Tibetan.

Chapter 3: Influence of Loan Words In Tibetan

This chapter discusses the different (Persian) loan words in Tibetan Language. There are so many words of Persian, Arabic, Turkic, Sanskrit, Manchu origin occurring within a number of different semantic domains in Tibetan Language.

Chapter 4: Bon A hidden Treasure in Olmolungring

This chapter discusses the foundation of the ‘Bon’ religion, which ‘Bon’ tradition places in the Persian cultural zone. ‘Olmolungring’ certainly fell under the influence of Persian culture and religion throughout the history, where Persian and Tibetan influence could point to a cultural memory of exchanges that occurred between those two cultures.

Conclusion

While summarising the key findings and arguments made in previous chapters, the concluding chapter would test the hypotheses and draw some new findings of the study.

There have been at the same time certain limitations in the present study which need to be pointed out. Limited availability of materials on Greater Khorasan and Tibet relations, especially after 8th century, has been a major constraint. Many civilizations have declined and disintegrated in the past, because the civilization of the Tibetan peoples is disappearing before our very eyes, but Tibet’s story is both rich with tradition and filled with promise. However an honest attempt has been made to draw conclusions from the sources available. If this study gives a panoramic and precise vision of the theme to future researchers, I would consider my effort as fulfilled.

CHAPTER: ONE

Introduction

A Historical Background

Greater Khorasan (خراسان بزرگ) is a historical region spanning North-Eastern Iran, Northern Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan. The name “Khorasan” is derived from middle Persian Khor “Sun” + Asa “meaning arising from”, hence the meaning “land where the Sun rises”. The Persian word Khaver-Zamin (خاور زمین) meaning “the Eastern Land”, has also been used as an equivalent term.

Khorasan in its proper sense comprised principally the cities of Nishapur and Tus (now in Iran), Balkh and Herat (now in Afghanistan), Merv (now in Turkmenistan), and Samarqand and Bukhara (now in Uzbekistan) as well as the Bactrian regions (in Afghanistan and Tajikistan). However, Khorasan has been widely used encompassed all of Transoxiana and Soghdiana in the North, extended Westward to the Caspian Sea, Southward to include the Sistan desert and eastward to the Hindu Kush mountain in Afghanistan.



Historical overview

Greater Khorasan is one of the regions of Greater Iran. Before being conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 BC, it was part of the Achaemenid and Median Persian

Empire. In 1st century AD, the eastern regions of Greater Khorasan fell into the hands of the Kushan empire. The Kushans introduced to a high grade Buddhist culture (though they were also Zoroastrians) to these regions and from where Buddhism began to spread by Khorasanian monks to China and even to Japan. Numerous Kushanian fire temples and buddhist temples and buried cities with treasures in the northern and central areas of Khorasan (nowadays mainly Afghanistan) have been found. However the western parts of Greater Khorasan remained predominantly Zoroastrian as one of the three great fire-temples of the Sassanids "Azar-burzin Mehr" is situated in the western regions of Khorasan, near Sabzevar in Iran. The boundary was pushed to the west towards the Persian Empire by the emigrating Kushans. The boundary kept changing until the demise of the Kushan Empire where Sassanids took control of the entire region by conquering and merging with the Kushans (Kushano-Sassanian civilization). In Sassanid era, Persian empire was divided into four quarters, "Xwawaran" meaning west, **apAxtar** meaning north, **Nimruz** meaning south and Xurasan (Khorasan) meaning east. The Eastern regions saw again some conflict with Hephthalites who became new ruler of entire Khorasan but also for a short time of the entire Iranian plateau, but the borders remained much stable afterwards until the Muslim invasion.

Being the eastern parts of the Sassanid empire and further away from Arabia, Khorasan quarter was conquered in the later stages of Muslim invasions. In fact the last Sassanid king of Persia, Yazdgerd III, moved the throne to Khorasan following the Arab invasion in the western parts of the empire. After the assassination of the king by his Marghian vassal and sub-ruler of Marghiana (modern-day Mary/Merv) Mahuy Suri, western parts, including Herat, Sistan and Ghor, of Khorasan was conquered by the Islamic troops in 647. In 811 also Kabul (istan), ruling by Hindu-Shahis fell to the Islamized Persians (Saffarids) and Arab soldiers. Like other provinces of Persia it became one of the provinces of Umayyad dynasty.

The first liberal movement against the Arab invasions was led by Abu Muslim Khorasani between 747 and 750. He helped the Abbasids come to power but was later killed by Al-Mansur, an Abbasid Caliph. The first independent kingdom from Arab rule was established in Khorasan by Tahir Phoshanji in 821. But it seems that it was more a matter of political and territorial gain. In fact Tahir had helped the Caliph subdue other

nationalistic movements in other parts of Persia such as Maziar's movement in Tabaristan.

The first dynasty in Khorasan, after the introduction of Islam, whose rulers considered themselves Iranian was the Saffarid dynasty (861-1003). Other grand Iranian dynasties were Samanids (875-999), Banu Ilyas (officially from 932-968), Abdullayids (9th century), Farighunid (9th, 10th and early 11th centuries), Ali Muhtajs/Chaghanids (their rule took place in the 10th and early 11th centuries), Simjurids (Iranian dynasty with a slave background that ruled at the same period as the Ghaznavids in north-eastern Khorasan, morely as a sub-ruling elite) and Ghaznavids (962-1187), Ghurids (1149-1212), Seljukids (1037-1194), Khwarezmids (1077-1231), Kartids (1231-1385), Mihrabanids (1200-1537), Sarbedars (1337-1394) and Timurids (1370-1506). It should be mentioned that some of these dynasties were not Persian by ethnicity (the marked houses were originally of Non-Iranic origin but became Iranized/Persianized by the native population of Greater Khorasan), so they were the advocates of Persian language, culture, civilization and were praised by the poets as the kings of Iran.

Among them, the periods of Ghaznavids of Ghazni and Timurids of Herat are considered as one of the most brilliant eras of Khorasan's history. During these periods, there was a great cultural awakening. Many famous Persian poets, scientists and scholars lived in this period. Numerous valuable works in Persian literature were written. Nishapur, Herat, Ghazni and Merv were the centers of all these cultural developments. Some eastern Khorasani regions were then parts of the Moghul Empire till the Iranian dynasty of Safavids conquering very early Kandahahr, Kabul, Ghazni ect. from them. For Moghuls, Khorasan was always a region with great economic and cultural importance (Kabul, important and famous region in Khurasan but India's own market).¹

The new Persian language emerged as the idiom of administration and literature in the ninth century in Khurasan and Transoxiana. The Samanids made Persian a language of learning and formal discourse. Samanids began to record their court affairs in this language as well as in Arabic, and they used it as the main idiom of public declaration. Under their patronage this Persian Language became, along with Arabic, an idiom of

1 [Http://tadjikam.com](http://tadjikam.com).

learning and *belles-lettres* (the earliest great poetry in new Persian was written for the Samanid court).

One effect of the wide application of Persian in this society was that the marginal Iranian peoples were incorporated into the Islamic ecumene; Iranian speakers in the marches of Islamic learned culture (Fyre 1965; 1975a; 200ff).

As new Persian appeared under the patronage.. of the Samanid court other developments, social and cultural, were taking place that the court did not foster. The ascension to power of Persianized Turks would be the main patrons of Persianate culture. They brought it with them from Transoxiana and Khurasan as they subjugated Western and Southern Asia.

The harmonious relation between Tibet and India is often described a Guru-Sisya (teacher-pupil) relationship. Around the seventh and eighth century, the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo sent the Tibetan scholar Thonmi Sanbhota with other to study in India. Based on the Sharada script (from Kashmir). With the help of Indian teachers, they created the Tibetan writing system. It is written in a phonetic alphabet that is Devanagiri derived from Brahmi and the Gupta scripts of India. In other words, Tibetan grammar originated and developed on the basis of Sarada lipi, a Kashmiri script together with the Devanagari script of the Hindi alphabet. The Tibetan script therefore has amazing similarities with the Brahmi and Gupta script.²

Umê (*dbu-med*, ; variant spellings include *ume*, *u-me*) is a cursive form of the Tibetan alphabet. The name means " headless," and is a style of the script used for both calligraphy and shorthand. A distinctive feature of *umê* compared to *uchen* is the absence of the horizontal guide line across the top of the letters. Between syllables, the *tseg* mark (།) often appears as a vertical stroke. There are two main kinds of *umê* writing:

- **Zhuza** (*'bru-tsa*), used for writing documents.
- **Bêcug** (*dpe-tshugs*), used for writing scriptures.

2 Namgyal, Tsetan (2009), "Tibetan language and cultural studies", *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, Vol.13, No.1, January-March, pp.88-101.

There is also a block form of the Tibetan alphabet, containing a horizontal line, referred to as *uchen* (*dbu-can*, "with a head")

Bod skad ("Tibetan language") written in *uchen* style. The "head" of the script is the horizontal line atop each character.

Uchen (Tibetan: *dbu-can*; variant spellings include *ucen*, *u-cen*, *u-chen*, *ucan*, *u-can*, *uchan*, *u-chan*, and *ucän*) is the upright, block style of the Tibetan alphabet. The name means "with a head," and is the style of the script used for printing and for formal manuscripts. It is used to write both the Tibetan language and Dzongkha, the official language of Bhutan.

There are also a number of cursive forms of the Tibetan alphabet, sometimes collectively referred to as *umê* (*dbu-med*), " headless

The Tibet plateau (2.5 million square kilometers, or 965,000 square miles) ranges over the highest mountains on earth, sandy deserts, immense gorges, two-mile-high fertile plains, densely forested valleys, and vast tree-less plateau. Tibet juts up like a high-altitude island rising from the lowlands around it. It is the highest, largest plateau in the world. The Himalayas line the southern edge of the plateau, the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush guard the western edge, while the Kunlun parade along the northern ramparts. Five of the planet's greatest rivers drain off the plateau to the east: the Mekong, Salween, Tsangpo/Bhramaputra, the Yellow, and the Yangtze. It has historically been sparsely populated, and remains so today. Chinese sources say the Tibetan Plateau's entire population was only six million in 1990: four and half million Tibetans; the rest Chinese and others. The Dalai Lama's exile government disagrees, saying that there are six million Tibetans and a much larger number of Chinese in Tibet. In comparison, the European Union- which is only about 40 percent larger than the Tibetan Plateau-has a population of 455 million. Tibet remains the sparsely inhabited heart of Asia, while to the south a billion people live on the Indian plains and to the east a billion people live on the Chinese plains.³

3 Laird Thomas (1953), *The Story of Tibet, Conversation with the Dalai Lama*, New York:Grove Press, , pp .18.

Tibet is located in Central Asia and it is the World's highest Country. It is therefore, known as the "Roof of the World". Tibet is located at an average height of 16,500 ft above the sea level. Its valleys are at the height of 12,000 ft to 17,000 ft, its peaks are at 20,000 ft to 24,000 ft and mountain passes located at 16,000 ft to 19,000 ft.

Chinese Turkestan lies to the North of Tibet, China to the East and Kashmir and Ladakh to the West. To the South, Tibet shares its border with India, Nepal and Bhutan. Its total area is 2,333,125 square kilometres with a population of six million.

Geographically, it is divided into four regions:

- U and Tsang (Central Tibet); the country's capital, Lhasa is located in this region.
- Kham and Chamdo (Eastern Tibet).
- Ngari Korsum (West and Southern Tibet).
- Chang-Tang (Northern Tibet).

According to the religious history of Tibet, Tibet once lay under a sea. As the time passed, the water level dropped slowly and dry land appeared. The process continued till the whole country came out of the sea. The mountain peaks then started freezing and they were slowly covered with snow. Streams and rivers originated from the snowy peaks. As the snow melted away, it made the low-lying land fertile and vegetation started appearing on the fertile land. When the land became thick with trees and grass, wild animals started evolving. And then the gods wished that human beings should now take birth. Hence, the god Chenre-Zig appeared in the form of a monkey and the goddess Doma emerged in the form of violent ogress. From them, six children were born. Of the six, three children were compassionate like their father and three displayed (bore) the mother's violent character. Their offspring made tremendous progress, and achieved development in their physical as well as mental characteristics during a big span of time, they reached the status of human beings. And in the form of human beings, they started to live in smaller groups. This description proves the geological evolution and Darwin's theory of evolution.⁴

Because of its geographical make-up and various other characteristics, Tibet has many similarities with Switzerland. The land is dotted with natural lakes, river, mountains, etc., which forms a magnificent view. Big rivers such as Brahmaputra, Sutlej, Indus, Kosi and

4 Dr. Abu Bakr Amir-uddin(2004), *Tibet and Tibetan Muslims*, New Delhi, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives , pp. 3-4.

Ganga, etc., have their source in Tibet. Besides this, big lakes are found in large numbers, Mansarover being the most famous one.

By 'Tibet' is meant more than the geographical area of the Tibetan plateau, or any current political construct such as the 'Tibetan Autonomous Region' (TAR). Regions that participated in Tibetan culture, such as Ladakh and Baltistan, are also included. Tibet's direct contacts with the Islamic World began during the early eighth century, when the Tibetan empire, Tang dynasty, Turkic tribes, and the expanding Arab Caliphate converged in a geographical struggle for power and influence in the Tarim Basin, the Pamirs and Transoxiana.

Origin of the name of Tibet in Literature:

Ancient historians have variously named this country as 'Tehbat' and 'Taibat'. The oldest references to Tibet and the Tibetan kingdom in Arabic literature have their origin in Turkish sources. Arabic history books of the time when the Tubba dynasty ruled over Yemen are full of references to Tibet-Arab relations. Therefore, Arab historians believe that it was the great Yemen ruler Tubba-ul-Agran who first colonised Tibet; the Tibetan kingdom had thus its origins in Yemen. Ancient Tibetan kings wore the title 'Tubba' with their names. It was this title which later came to be identified with the geographical boundaries of the land they administered, and the rulers assumed the title of 'Khaqan'.⁵

Yakout Al Hamui explains the nomenclature of Tibet as follows: It is said that Tubba-ul-Agran started from Yemen, crossed the Jihun river and marched up to Samarkand. Finding the area uninhabited, he founded a city there, rested for a few days and then proceeded towards China. After a month's journey he reached a fertile land with abundance of water. Here too he founded another city and thirty thousand of his men, who were not fit to travel onwards to China, were left behind to colonise the place. He named this place 'Tibet'.

The famous Arab historian, Yakout Al Hamui (ياقوت الحموي الرومي) mentioned it in his book, *Mujam Al Buldan* (معجم البلدان) in three different ways- Tabbat, Tibet, Tubbet. (Dr. Abu Bakr Amir-uddin Nadwi, *Tibbet aur Tibbati Musalman*, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow,

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 6.

India, 1979.P. 18. Scholars have speculated for some time about ancient links between the peoples of Tibet and those further West. Besides the legendary associations between the Yemeni King Tubba-ul-Agran and the name “Tibet” (there are other theories about the origins of the name “Tibet”, including associations with the place name “Turfan” and the Tuoba or Tabghach people of Mongolia, there are hints of a linguistic relationship between Tibetan and Arabic, and a remarkable similarity in what may be called.⁶

By ‘Tibet’ is meant more than the geographical areas of the Tibetan plateau, or any current political construct such as the ‘Tibetan Autonomous Region’ (TAR). Regions that participated in Tibetan culture, such as Ladakh and Baltistan, are also included. Above all, Tibet is viewed as it was conceived throughout its changing history by its Islamic neighbours. And similarly, the lands of Islam are considered as viewed in Tibetan literature. My M.Phil Dissertation is going to to highlights on Tibet in Islamic geography and cartography. What name did the Arabic Authorities have for Tibet, and what land did they mean when they referred to ‘Tubbat’ (which is taken to be the Arabic equivalent to Tibet)? How did they obtain their information?. My aim is to trace the tradition of the concept of Tibet in Arabic literature, rather than to exploit that literature for reliable information about Tibet in historical times.

Dible-bin-Ali Al-Kharai, the Arabic poet, proudly refers to this event when, in A.D. 860. He addressed the following verses to Kummet, a rival poet: “These are the people who put their imprint on the gates of Marau as also on the portals of China; these are the people who put their imprint on the gates of Marau as also on the portals of China; these are the people who first gave Samarkand its name; Tibet also was founded by them”. Ibn Khaldun also refers to Tubbs-ul-Agran in his books as the king who had left behind in China men of Hamir race whose descendants still live there. Abu Mohamed Abdul Malik bin Hushan, in his work ‘Al-tijan Fi Maluk-e-Hamir’, when referring to Tubba-ul-Agran, writes in some detail:

King Tubba-ul-Agran decided to invade China, vowed to lead his armies, organised a large expeditionary force and set out on his errand. His army also included soldiers of his own race, Banno Hamir, from Yemen. Following the footsteps of his grandfather Raish,

6 Siddiqui, Ataullah. “Muslims of Tibet,” *Tibet Journal*, vol. 16, no. 4 (Winter 1991). 71-85.

he marched east-ward along the coast. Reaching Khorasan he left his grand-father's trail, turned to the right and reached Kayak to enter China. He collected a lot of booty, reduced many to the sword, took others as prisoners and spread destruction and ruin everywhere. The entire expedition took seven years and ten months. He left a successor behind in Bach-bin Albinat, one of his highly trusted lieutenants, along with 12,000 soldiers, who settled down permanently in the land.

The accounts of all these Arab historians lead to one unanimous conclusion: King Tubba-ul-Agran had invaded China, and he had left behind remnants of Bani Hamir people as permanent settlers at some place. However, these historians have not pinpointed the area of these alien settlers. The account of Yakout Al Hamui fills this gap by saying that Tabba-al-quran had left the Hamirs in Tibet and they were the once who colonised Tibet. This assertion is corroborated by Abu Mohamed Abdul Malik bin Hushan's statement in his book: "The inhabitants are, in fact, of Arab origin and they have a holy place where they worship and circumambulate seven times. They observe the ritual of fasting for one month during the year".⁷

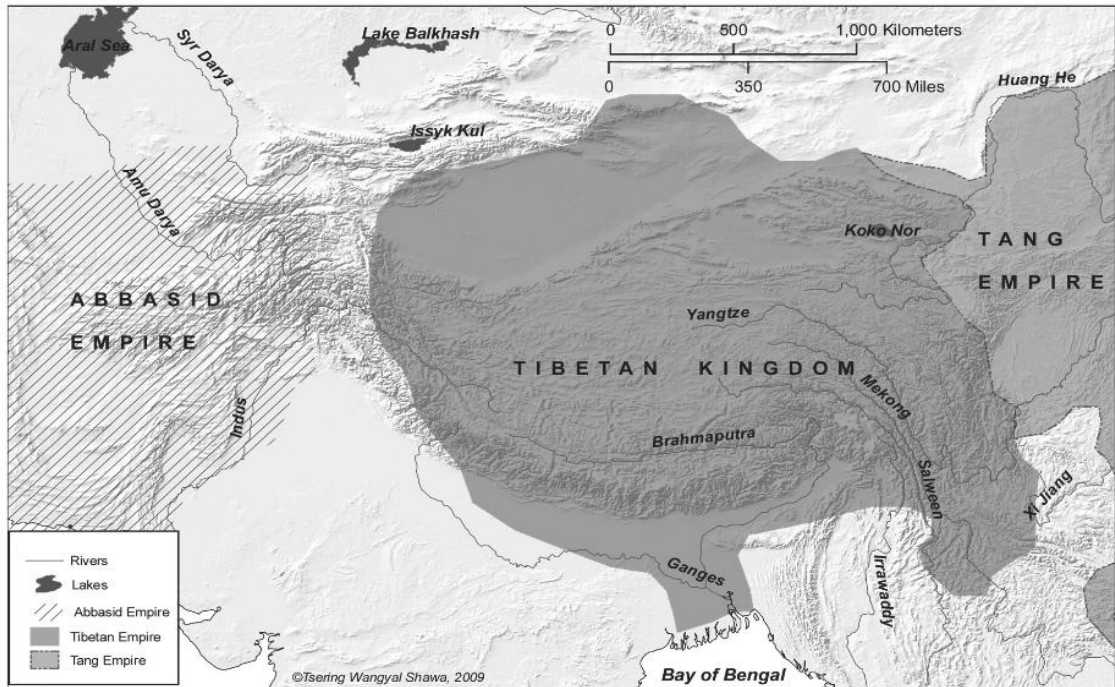
Referring to the Tubba kings, Mohamed Farid Wajdi has said: Tubba kings belong to Banno Hamirs who lived in Yemen. They are called 'Tabbaiya' from the custom of one succeeding the other. When a king died, he was immediately replaced. He was called 'Tubba' only when he became ruler of Yemen. The first king of this race was Qahtan-bin-Amar-bin-Saleh who was crowned in 2030 B.C.

When the Iranian peoples of Persia (south-western Iran) and Khurasan and Transoxiana were overwhelmed by the Arab Muslim armies in the seventh and eighth centuries, they became part of an empire much larger than any previously under Persian rule. Under the Arab caliphs, especially in the "high" caliphal period (AD 692-945), a cosmopolitan culture was wrought from the strands of many traditions: commercial and tribal law from Arabia, philosophy from the Hellenic world, architecture from Syria and Persia, and astrology, medicine, music, and mathematics from India. The language that integrated this culture was Arabic, and of it many Iranians became masters; Iranians

⁷ *ibid*.pp-7

made important contributions to the scholarship and works of fine art that were burgeoning in the Islamic empire.

The underlying stratum from which Turko-Persian Islamicate culture sprang was Persian. Two Persian empire the Achaemenids of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. and the Sasanian of the third to seventh centuries A.D. both centered in south-western Iran disseminated Persian customs and ideas across most of the region between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indus river. These customs included the veneration of sacred shrines, reverence for the spirits of the dead, and the tying of rags to sacred trees for protection and blessing.⁸



1.1 Tibetan Empire, 8th century (estimation)

⁸ Yarshater, (1988), Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. III: *Seleucid, Parthian and Sassanian Periods* (ed.). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

The influence of Buddhism on east Iranian culture must have been great although we have few sources, which give information about the spread of Buddhism in this part of the world. It is now clear, however, that Buddhist monasteries and reliquaries (viharas, stupas) existed as far west as the Merv oasis and late into Sasanian times.⁹

Some of the cultural differences between Persian and eastern Iran/Central Asia may be traced to Buddhist influences, such as the seemingly greater tolerance for religious diversity in Central Asia than in the west at the time of the Arab conquests. Buddhism was a religion of deeds rather than creeds, which probably fostered the attitude of tolerance. To the south, over the Hindukush Mountains, Indian influences were paramount. Even Buddhism had given ground to a resurgent Hinduism, as witnessed by finds dating from this period of statues of Shiva, Ganesh, and other Hindu deities in the Kabul region. The Kabul-Ghazna line was the real border between Indian and Iranian cultures, but with the expansion of Islam under Ghaznivids in the eleventh century the frontier would move down from the mountains onto the plains of the subcontinent.

The Sasanians (AD 224-651) came to power in Fars province, as did the Achaemenids, although the latter had been forgotten except for the vague conception of a great Iranian empire in the past. Nonetheless, the Sasanians developed a centralized monarchy with a bureaucracy and a new factor in history: a religion recognized and supported by the state-Zoroastrianism. The Sasanians had a distinctive art, coinage, and culture as reflected in Middle Persian or Pahlavi writings. The traditions of church and state as twins supporting each other became a veritable dogma in later Islamic Persian writings about this duality of rule (church and state) with the “king of kings” as defender of the faith came to the fore again in the ninth century and later when we see the rise of local Iranian dynasties in the eastern part of the Islamic world. Also, practices of the Sasanian bureaucracy were continued into Islamic times with only a change in language from Pahlavi to Arabic under the caliph Abd al-Malik about 699. But the new religion, Islam, was the faith of the Arabs.

9 Koshelenko, 1966

Nomadic Architecture: the Tibetan nomads employ a tent made of woven wool cloth raised on poles. In form, this Tibetan tent most resembles not the felt yurts of the Turko-Mongolians on the Eurasian steppes but the black tents of the Bedouin nomads of Arabia.

In Tibetan there are a number of terms that refer to the Islamic empire and its people, of which the most important are stag gzig, par sig, and khrom/phrom and kha cha. The earliest mentioned of those names are to be found in the Tibetan Dunhuang materials. A reference to the land of ta zig is documented in a Tibetan medical text from Dunhuang which describes methods of moxibustion and mentions the land of ta zig as a source for paper. The early renderings of the name par sig support a direct linguistic link, as suggested by Uray, between Tibetan and early middle Persian or possibly Sogdian.

The name ta zig is related to 'Tajik', now the name of Tibet's closest Persian speaking neighbours. Another Tibetan term that refers to lands in the west derives from 'Rome' (or 'Rum', Byzantium): Khrom (or: Phrom).

A study conducted by Christopher Beckwith in the late 1970s ¹⁰brought to light the significance of the medical knowledge originating in areas lying to the west of Tibet on Tibetan medicine. Beckwith mentioned references to medical influence deriving from Tazig and Khrom. The sources discussed by Beckwith, as well as other sources which have come to light, mention a certain Ga le nos, as one of the four sages who introduced medicine into Tibet.

Following the initial relations between Tibet and its Muslim neighbours during the time of the Tibetan Empire. Contacts continued predominantly via trade. There is evidence that a trade route from Arabia to Persia, via northern India and into Tibet was in operation already in the eighth century and continued to be active until modern times. Another trade route is described by Binyamin of Tudela, the Spanish Jewish traveller who appears to have travelled to Baghdad in the second half of the twelfth century. He writes that Jewish traders with Tibet proceeded from Baghdad to Persia, to Shiraz, Ghazna and

10 Beckwith, Christopher I(1979), "The introduction of Greek Medicine into Tibet in the Seventh and Eight Centuries" *journal of the American Oriental Society*,99 : pp. 297-313.

Samarkhand. From there, he says: ' it is four days to Tibet, which is the land where musk is found in its forest.'¹¹

Kashmir had already been an important cultural junction in the 7th and 8th centuries when Buddhist scriptures and scientific work were transmitted from there both to Tibet and to the emerging Islamic culture. A significant contact with Muslims was through neighbouring Kashmir. So many Muslims had arrived in Tibet through plying their trade via Kashmir that Muslim settlers in Tibet were called by a name deriving from the name 'Kashmir'. Kha-che.

A pivotal period of cultural exchanges between Tibet and the Islamic world occurred during the Mongol period, which is discussed here by Peter Zieme, Paul Buell and Arezou Azad. During the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the Ilkhan Mongol rulers in Iran maintained close relations with Tibetan Buddhism, with the help of Arabic, Persian, Tibetan, Syrian and Armenian sources we can trace the extensive Tibetan presence in the Ilkhanid court in Tabriz, where most of the rulers were Buddhist and their spiritual advisors were lamas (bakhshi).¹²

Souren Melikian-Chirvani, draws attention to some tantalizing hints in regard to links between Tibet and Iran, e.g. the artefacts of horsemanship, of hunting and warfare of a type known from Western Iran, became familiar to the populations of present day Tibet. Other, later evidence, suggests a clearer link: three types of silver wine banquet vessels made in the Iranian World which reached Tibet around in 7th and 8th centuries. He also explores the provenance of Persian silk amongst Tibetans, pictorial and material evidence indicate that Persian brocaded silks were used as royal garments in Tibet as early as the 7th century. This includes a fragment of Sasanian silk with a Pahlavi inscription establishing its Royal ownership which was recovered from a Tibetan Tomb.

An echo of trade contacts is also attested in the nature of many of the loan-words from Arabic and Persian which are found in Tibetan. These include, for example, the words in Tibetan for saffron (Tib. Kur kum gur kum or gur gum) from the Persian Arabic kur kum or the word for gold brocade; zar babs (from Persian zar baft) or the word nal, the

11 Benjamin of Tudela(1907),fol-82, *in the Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*,(ed), and trans. Marcus Nathan Adler ,London,

12 Rashid al-Din, *Histoire des Mongols de la perse*,

Tibetan word for ruby, from the Persian Lal, a much sought after commodity in the Arab World which arrived from Central Asia.

The word “Bon” itself might provide a link to the west, since the word can be found in modern Persian. In the Persian language, “Bon” had specific religious connotations. “Bon” in Persian means “root”, “foundation”, or “bottom”, and stems from the word “banu” as well as the ancient Indian word “bhanu”, both of which mean “light”. The Persian word “bun” also has similar meaning to the Persian “bon” and in 9th century Pahlavi documents, the word “ban” refers to “basic text” of Zoroastrianism. The term then could be imported and refer to the foundation of the Bon religion, which Bon tradition places in the Persian Cultural Zone. The many connotations of the word “Bon” in Persian language expresses the essence of the early Tibetan Bon. The name that the Bon tradition then gives itself could be Persian word that perhaps is an attempt to place the religion’s origins to the west of the Tibetan cultural sphere by using a foreign word from the culture of Persia.

The Musk route: In Arabic literature from 9th century onwards Tibet is frequently described as the land of Musk. A variety of sources attest to the importance of the Musk trading routes for the contacts between Islamic and Tibetan cultures. A comparison of the uses of Musk in the Islamic and Tibetan medicine revealed, for example, the alongside Musk as a trading good, ideas of its use travelled.

Tibet was an important point on the Eurasian trade routes and a source for a number of exotic goods. The most important famous among these was ‘Musk’, used both in medicine and in perfumery. We know that ‘Musk’ from Tibet was traded and used in the near East and the Mediterranean from as early as the third century CE. Musk appears as a highly desired substance in a great variety of Arabic genres (geography, zoology, medicine, religion) as well as in accounts of merchants and travellers. In most of these it is the ‘Musk’ from Tibet that is deemed the best.

There are thus three different aspects to the excellence of Tibetan Musk according to al-Sirafi: the fodder of the animal, the condition in which the Musk was procured and the condition in which it was transported. The production of Musk by the Musk deer was, in the opinion of al-Sirafi and most other writers, due to the consumption of fragrant herbs

by the animal. This belief is seen as early as Ibn Masawayh, who was quoted earlier, but in later times it became almost universally believed that the Musk deer grazed on spikenard. The various plants which are known by the Arabic name Sunbul (سنبول) have a distinctly musky quality which was then supposedly transferred to the Musk, and this is the reason for this belief.¹³

‘Musk; in addition to being a highly desired perfume, is a substance which is found both in Tibetan and Arabic Medical Literature. Based on a comparative study between the Arabic and the Tibetan used of ‘Musk’ in medical context, I have come to the conclusion that, alongside trade, there were also exchanges of ideas. Hence the overall name, suggested for the cultural exchanges discussed here: the Musk Route.

DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This proposed study acquires importance because it will investigate the possible connection between early Persian religion, in particular that of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, with Bon. It will further move to a comparison between Tibet’s oldest known religious practices and Zoroastrianism in an attempt find similarities between the traditions. Consequently, it will focus Tibet’s possible knowledge of Persia including the theme of dualism as well as a comparison between Tibet’s indigenous beliefs and Buddhism, Bon developed into a completely different type of religion than Zoroastrianism with fundamental differences in basic beliefs.

As it is well known, many Persian escaped from the Arab conquest of the Sasanian Empire and a very interesting point should be noted here about the rise of Tibet as a “world power” during 7th and 8th century, the arrival of Iranian at Lhasa gave a great impulse to the development and organization of the Tibetan military power which in a few years constituted a menace for China, the Uighurs and the Arabs.

13 King Anya(2011), "Tibetan Musk and Medieval Arab perfumery", Akasoy Anna, Burnett Charles, Yoeli-Tlalim,(eds), *Islam and Tibet: Interaction along the Musk Route*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited. pp-145.

The rationale of the study comes from the fact that Greater Khorasan-Tibet cultural interaction had witnessed rapid progress in the 8th century. Despite the fact the Silk route explore for the first time the multilayered contacts between the Islamic world, Central Asia and the Tibet.

As far as the scope of the study is concerned, it will focus on Greater Khorasan's relations with Tibet during the period of 8th century_and onwards in a variety of field, including geography, art, history, medicine, history, history of science and education,literature, hagiography, archaeology, and anthropology.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following objectives:

1. Studying the historical background and connectivity between the Tibetan and Persian Empires.
2. Analyse the role and importance of Tibet's oldest religious practices and Persian's religion.
3. Evaluate the political, strategic, economic and cultural dimensions of Greater Khorasan and Tibet.
4. Examine the importance of the "Persian cultural" factor towards Tibet.

RESEARCHS QUESTIONS

The study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What was the nature of cultural interaction between Tibet and the Greater Khorasan?
2. How the 'Bon' tradition was an attempt to place the religion's origin to the Tibetan cultural sphere by using a foreign word from the culture of Persia?
3. Is Tibet a victim of the Geo-politics and a playing piece in the Great Game?
4. Was Tibet a part of China?

5. How a paramount power like Tibet became a victim of Geo-politics?
6. Is there any basic difference between Tibetan Buddhism beliefs and other Buddhist tradition?

HYPOTHESIS

These research questions will be answered by testing the following hypotheses:

1. The Musk route between Tibet and Greater Khorasan not only acted in the trade of goods, but the trade of ideas as well as presenting a mean for Tibet to gain knowledge of other cultures throughout the time period.
2. Tibetan court of Trisong Detsan appeared to have direct knowledge of Manichaeism, which was founded by Persian Prophet Mani as a great synthesizer of religious tradition.
3. Bon (བོན) is a Persian word that perhaps is an attempt to place the religion's origin to the west of the Tibetan culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will be basically exploratory in nature. Historical-analytical and descriptive methodology will be followed while examining Tibet's relation with Greater Khorasan in political, cultural, strategic and trade fields. It will rely on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include reports, official documents, government and international publications, and secondary sources are books, article, newspaper report, etc. Internet-based sources will also be extensively used.

CHAPTER: TWO

Greater Khorasan-Tibet Cultural Sphere

Tibet is often portrayed as a country in isolation that knew very little of the modern world until the 20th century. However, Tibet has had much contact with the outside world and has been subject to its influence. For instance, Tibet's early medieval period was a time of transregional activity; Tibetans had extensive contact with the regions and culture of Central Asia, China, and India. During the 5th century B.C. there occurred a mass migration of Iranians from north-eastern Iran, i.e from Sogdiana, to the northern borders of Tibet. Probably one of the reasons for this migration was so-called religious reform of Xerxes. A large percentage of the Iranians who carried with them the ancient tradition mixed, during the first few centuries by the 6th century, the Turks had established an empire that "impinged on the borders of all the great Old World Civilization, including the Central Asia city states and India."¹

According to D.Sinor (1971), Inner Asia, the Turks made it their first order of business to inform their neighbors to the east and west that they were vitally interested in trade.

The Turks' main objective once they were established was to encourage trade between their neighbors. Once trade had begun, economic prosperity followed, allowing for stability and education to take root. A key sign for cultural progress is the development of language and literacy; Beckwith notes,"by the end of the seventh century, nearly all of settled Eurasia had become literate."²

Tibet was also subject to this trend of language development. The Tibetan king Trisong Destan set up a massive translation project where "a huge number of Sanskrit works (and some Central Asian and Chinese texts) entered Tibetan culture."³ Along with encouraging cultural development within all these regions, trade naturally encouraged intercultural contact, causing an exchange of ideas between different ethnic and religious groups. Central Asia became so fundamental to the economic powers involved that frequent wars between all interested parties, including wars fought between Tibet, Persia, and Arabia were fairly common during this time period. The fall of the Tibetan Empire around the

1 Beckwith Christopher(1993), *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp.178.

2 *Ibid*, p.180.

3 *Ibid*, p.183.

year 840 A.D is informally tied with the collapse of trade with Central Asia and the Turks. By the middle of the 9th century, Central Asia had fallen into an economic depression causing mass dissolution of the empires that were involved. In Tibetan history, this marks the beginning of the Dark Age, where the empires that were involved. In Tibetan history, this marks the beginning of the Dark Age, where the Empire fell apart and there were no forms of monastic Buddhism. Tibet clearly was subject to trends found throughout Eurasia, showing its far-flung connections with the Turkish trade routes. The trade between Tibet and Central Asia not only acted in the trade of goods, but the trade of ideas as well, presenting a means for Tibet to gain knowledge of other cultures throughout this time period.

Along with the inescapable exchanges of ideas with the Turkish trade routes, the Tibetan court of Trisong Detsan appeared to have absolute knowledge of Manichaeism.



Manichaeism (منیچیسیم) was a gnostic religion founded by the Persian prophet Mani who lived from 216 CE to 276 CE. Manichaeism from its Mesopotamian hearth at Babylon, spread westward into Roman empire as far as Spain, while also spreading eastward over the Iranian plateau into Central Asia and from there still further eastward to the very

shores of the south China sea. Throughout Central Asia and China, Manichaeism faced the older well established Buddhist tradition to which it had to respond over several centuries. It is quite possible that Mani's acceptance of rebirth, nonkilling of animals, and monasticism borrowed something to this early contact with Buddhism. Sogdian merchants and missionaries had spread the Manichaean message during the last seventh century, not only into China but also farther afield in the Altaic areas of Central Asia that were coming to be dominated by Turkish groups. Among those groups the Uighurs were prominent, establishing a powerful empire from their capital Ordu Baliq (in present day Northern Mongolia).⁴

The Sogdians were traders who spread the law of the Buddha, the Gospel of Christ and Mani's teaching eastward, beyond the banks of Huang Ho to the China Sea. The Sogdian language, a *lingua franca* of Central Asia, was of pivotal importance for that transmission.⁵

Mani viewed himself as a great synthesizer of religious traditions. He adopted "the doctrine of the fundamental struggle between Spirit and Matter as the basis for the solution of the problem of evil from Zoroastrianism, while he looked to Buddhism for "the essential lessons for conduct of life."⁶ Mani also had great admiration for the figure of Jesus and viewed him as living the ideal life. Though Mani's syncretistic teachings appealed to a wide base of people, his teachings were often deemed schismatic by the religions who influenced him with Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Christians alike viewing Manichaeism with particular suspicion. In a written defense of the choice to make Buddhism the state religion of Tibet, Trisong Destan makes a reference to this Persian religion. He states "the great Persian heretic Mar Ma ne of insatiable heresy has borrowed something from all systems in order to fabricate a system deviating from all others."⁷ R.A.Stein claims that "Mar Ma Ne" resemblance to the Chinese "Mo Mo-Ni," the name of Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, as it is found in Chinese documents from the 8th century. This vague reference indicates that the Tibetan court knew about the religion of

4 Scott, David A (1985), "Manichaean views of Buddhism", *History of Religions*, 25.2 , pp.99-115.

5 Hans J. Klimkeit (1981), "Christian, Buddhists and Manichaeans in Medieval Central Asia", *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 1, pp. 46-50.

6 Mary Boyce, (2010), "An Introduction to Manichaeism," *The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies*, <http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Religions/iranian/Manichaeism/manichaeism.htm>

7 Geza Uray, Tibet's connection with Nestorianism and Manichaeism in the 8th -10th Centuries.

Manichaeism. By the time of Trisong Detsan's rule, Manichaeism had already established itself in China. In 732, an edict by the Chinese emperor Hsuan-tsung actually denounced Manichaeism as posing as Buddhism,⁸ so Tibetan knowledge of Manichaeism could have come from China.

The source of this knowledge is difficult to determine since the Tibetan court's feelings towards Manichaeism could have been easily acceded from China's court which also viewed the religion suspiciously, however the language used in Trisong Detsan's endorsement of Buddhism seems to suggest another possibility besides indirect knowledge of Persia through China. Tibetans were certainly in the habit of borrowing words from Chinese, but in the text, the word used for "Persian" is *par sig*, which does not correspond to the Chinese word for "Persian", *po-szu*. Previous scholars predicate that *par sig* had been derived from Sanskrit. However, the Sanskrit word for "Persian" is *parasika*, which would not be transliterated into Tibetan *par sig*. This Tibetan form can only be explained as borrowing either from Sogdian or from early Middle Persian,⁹ leaving open the possibility of direct contact with the source of Manichaeism. The term *par sig* is also used as the word for "Persian" in the early 9th century translation of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosabhyasa*, suggesting that it was the common term throughout Tibet. "Parsi", similar to Tibetan *par sig*, is now a commonly used term to denote members of the Zoroastrian community in India, however these Zoroastrians did not migrate to India until the 10th century, further suggesting the term came from Persia, rather than from a secondary source. By the 8th century, Manichaeism had made itself known to Tibet to the extent that Trisong Detsan felt it necessary to comment on it in his defence of Buddhism. Much like Buddhism setting itself in opposition to the indigenous beliefs of Tibet in an attempt to gain influence on a foreign land, Buddhism again had to protect itself from the Persian religion, which seems to have also been a confronting influence in Tibet. The origin of the Tibetan word for "Persian" challenges the assumption that Tibet's knowledge of Manichaeism came secondhand through the Chinese, suggesting a more

8 Geza Uray(1983), 408.

9 Geza Uray,(1983).. Geza Uray, "Tibet's Connections with Nestorianism and Manicheism in the 8th-10th Centuries," *Contributions on Tibetan Language, History, and Culture*, (eds). Ernst Steinkeller and Helmut Tasucher, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Wien, pp- 399-429.

intimate connection with Persia, with the Tibetan court at least knowing of the existence



of a Persian religion.

Tibetan culture is outstanding in both its geographic expanse and its global influence. Although in modern times, Tibet has acquired the image of an isolated and inaccessible plateau, in fact, throughout much of its history, it was a major cultural, political, and military force in Central and inner Asia. Given Tibet's location along the Eurasian Silk Road, it played a crucial role in the transmission of material and intellectual culture across a large area of the world. An important aspect of Eurasian exchange focused on medical goods and informations, and thus an examination of Tibetan medical history contributes to our understanding of the histories of the people across the landmass of Eurassia. Medical knowledge in Tibet originated in the international contributions of

Chinese, Indian, Arab, Central Asian, and Greek physicians, and it matured through the ambidextrous contributions of Tibetan scholars.¹⁰

In the other cases of Tibet's knowledge of Persia, China acted as the conduit between the Tibetan and the Persian cultural spheres. Evidence suggests that the Tibetan royal court had been familiar with Greek Medicine. Tibetan historian's identified that a doctor of the court was named Ga-le-nos, which likely refers to the medical tradition of the Greek physician Galenos, not to the Greek physician himself. What links Galenos to Persia is his successor, Bi-ji, which seems to be a Tibetan rendering of the Sogdian word for "physician." Sogdiana was a state that existed on the eastern fringes of Persian culture. During this period, Persian doctors were generally found practicing in China. Due to the commonality of these doctors, Bi-ji would have most likely come to Tibet through China, demonstrating China's conduit function.¹¹

Tibetan medical knowledge evolved through input from scholars from every direction surrounding Central Tibet-medical scholars came from Turkic, Persian, and Kashmiri regions to the west and northwest, from Indian and Nepali regions to the south, and from eastern Tibetan, Chinese and Mongol regions to the east and northeast. When Tibet was a major imperial force throughout Asia, medicine was indeed a major object of domination. When Tibetan armies conquered lands near and far, one of the things they wanted-took-was medical knowledge. Medical historians painted a picture of the identity of Tibetan medicine that evoked the strength and cosmopolitanism of the imperial period and a tension with the ideological and political forces of Buddhism.¹²

The Byzantine or Arabo-Persian region of Khrom figures repeatedly in the medical history of the Tibetan imperial period, emphasizing the close connections between Tibet and regions to the west at a time when Muslim scholars were active in the translation and spread of Greek medical works and when many regions to the west were, in fact, paramount Buddhist.

10 Frances Garrett (2007), "critical methods in Tibetan Medical Histories", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (May, 2007), pp. 363-387.

11 Per Kvaerne, *Dualism in Tibetan Cosmogonic Myths and the Question of Iranian influence*

12 Critical methods in Tibetan medical histories.

During the period of Srong btsan sgam po, (618-641) Three doctors are invited from neighboring regions:

Bharadhadza from India,

Hen wen hang from China,

and Ga le nos from Tazig (تازگ) or “Khrom” (گیلان)

Ga le nos stays on as imperial physician, changing his name to ‘Dzo ro’ prevent to teach medicine to the sons of good families, he is assigned a group of students from the lowly families. He fathers three sons, who become doctors in the medical lineages of G yor po, H lo rong, and Sog po.

During the Reign of Khri Ide srong btsan Mes ag tshoms (712-755) Btsan pa shi la ha, or Bi ji, arrives from Khrom with a group of students.

The king tests this doctor and his students by asking them to read his pulse and the pulse of several animals by handling a thread tied to their wrists.

During the Reign of Khri srong Ide btsan (756-797). Dharmarazda, Ha shang ma haa Kyin da, and Tsan pa shi la ha work on the translation of text from India, China, and Khrom. Khri srong Ide btsan revealed that additional doctors from neighboring should be invited to continue this work. Nine doctors arrive from India, Kashmir, China, Persia, Drugu, Dolpo, and Nepal. Those doctors become known as the nine imperial physicians (rgyal po’i bla sman dgu).

When the king takes ill near the end of his life, he call for these imperial physicians, but the only one to return in the Chinese physicians, Strong gsum gang ba.

Another example of Persian culture that came to the Tibet by way of China is the use of the lion as a national symbol. The lion had always been a symbol of power and royalty in Mesopotamia and Persia that ultimately spread to India, as can be seen in many of the Ashokan pillars of the 3rd century B.C. During the 8th century, an important aspect of Iranian New Year rites was a ceremony lion dance. These Iranian New Year rites obviously traveled through Central Asia to China and eventually Tibet. In the early 9th century Chinese sources report that the Chinese army on the border of Tibet saw a

performance of the lion dance, most likely performed by Sogdians.¹³ Not only does this lion dance demonstrate the travel of the symbolism of the lion to Tibet, but it also gives a particular account of an Iranian ritual performed within Tibet. Though sources suggest that the ritual was performed by Sogdians rather than ethnic Tibetans, the fact that a Persian religious rite was practiced so close to the Tibetan cultural sphere gives reason to at least acknowledge the possibility of Persian religion penetrating the Tibetan landscape. The Tibetan court would eventually assimilated the lion into its symbolism and the symbol of the lion would generally begin to be associated with Tibet, becoming an example of Tibet incorporating elements of Persian culture into its own.



Later evidence, suggests a clearer link: three types of Silver wine banquet vessels made in the Iranian World which reached Tibet around 7th and 8th centuries. Some details of Cleveland's three vessels, particularly the imagery of the Lion and dragon, superficially recall Tang China; they have a distinctly non-Chinese flavor. The Lion, in fact, was never native to China, and winged Lions and Lion-griffins are ultimately Western Asiatic in

13 *Kvaerne*(1987), pp.164.

origin. Rampant Lions with forelegs raised on either side of the head are occasionally found in Western Asiatic art, with the example closest to Central Asia seen on a gold bowl of the Achaemenid Era from the Oxus treasure.¹⁴

Somehow this leonine pose resonated over many centuries in that region, finding expression not only in our playful Tibetan Lions, but also attacking Lions in hunting scenes on Tang metalwork. The Lion was an ancient symbol of royalty, warlike deities, and the Buddha, as immortalized on the famous Lion capital of Asoka, the earliest example of Buddhist art in India. Some Lion were guardians of tombs, well known from Hellenistic funerary monuments, and notable in the East from the huge stone Lion set up as a memorial by Alexander the Great for his comrade Hephaestion at Hamadan.¹⁵

The Tibetan empire established by Songtsen Gampo soon grew in power that extended beyond its borders, so much so, that in the year (of) 763, the Tibetan, allied with the Uighur Turks, invaded the Chinese Tang Empire, captured the Chinese capital Chang-an, and replaced the Tang emperor with a candidate of their own choosing.¹⁶

In Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Shambhala is a mythical kingdom hidden somewhere in inner Asia. It is mentioned in various ancient texts, including the Kalachakra Tantra and the ancient texts of the Zhang-Zhung culture predated Tibetan Buddhism in western Tibet. The Bon scriptures speak of a closely related land called Ol-mo-lung-ring. "Shambhala gradually came to be seen as a Buddhist pure land, a fabulous kingdom whose reality is visionary or spiritual as much as physical or geographic".¹⁷

Given that the Zoroastrian and Bon religions may have existed side-by-side in Central Asia, the Pamirs and the northern Himalayan region, it is quite possible that even during the time of the Iranian Sasanian dynasty 224-649 CE, the relation between the Zoroastrian Iranians and the Tibetan Buddhists was harmonious. There is evidence that we will examine below, that this collaboration survived even after the overthrow of the Sasanians by the Arabs..... The Yarlung dynasty appears to have continued the

14 Dalton, O.M (1964), "*The Treasure of Oxus*" (3rd edn), British Museum, London, 8-9, no. 18, pl. 8.

15 Kurtz, D.C (1971), "*Ithaca*" 248, pl. 67, New York.

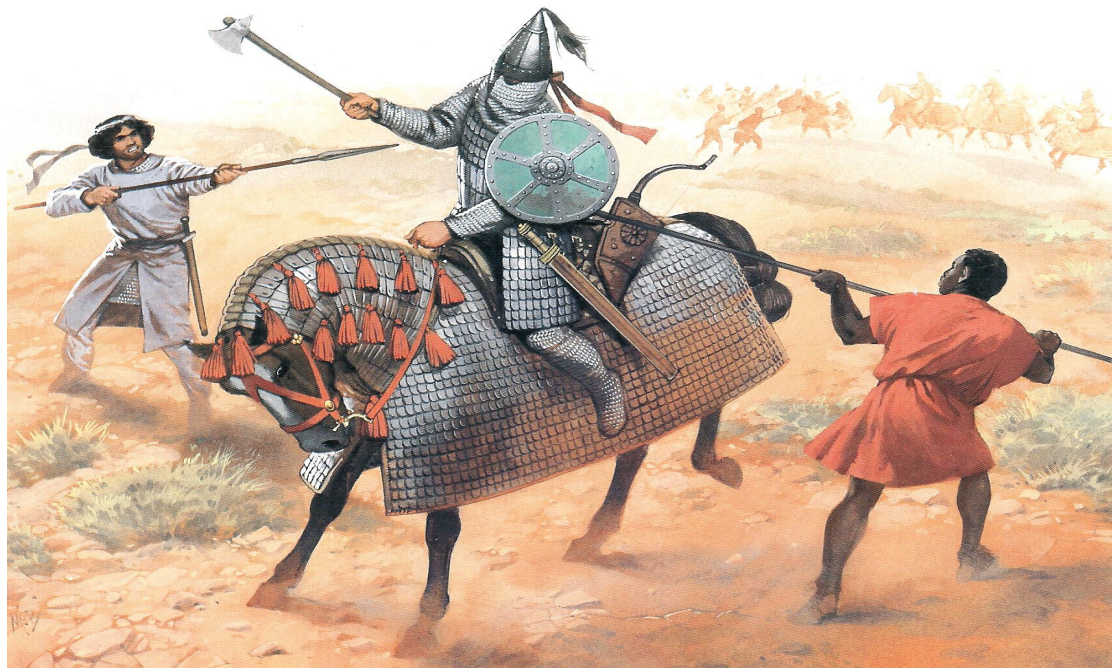
16 M. Compagni, "*Iranian Elements in Kashmir and Tibet. Sasanian and Sogdian Borrowing in Kashmiri and Tibetan Art*".

17 <http://libraryoftheancients.proboards.com>

collaborative relationship (with) the Zhang-Zhung had with the Iranian Aryans. The relationship continued even after the Arabs had conquered the Persian empire. Since it is the Tibetans who had become the dominant eastern power in the seventh century CE. It is they who provided the Persian and Sogdians....sanctury.

Author A.Nikitin has proposed that the rise of Tibetan power was because of the cooperation of Persian refugees fleeing from Arab invasion of Persia in 650s CE. According to Nikitin, when the Persian arrived in the Tibetan court, they trained the Tibetan in the art of imperial warfare.

According to the another author Beckwith, a Chinese source describes the Yarlung Tibetan warriors and horses as being completely clad in armour in the Sasanian fashion. An important military technological advance and advantage for the Tibetans was their newly acquired ability to produce chain mail for armour.



“After the Arab take over of the sasanian Iranian state, the Yarlung Tibetan fought against the Arabs together with his Turkic allies in order to expel them from Sugd (Sogdiana).The Yarlung dynasty appears to have continued the collaborative relationship

with the Zhang-Zhung had with the Iranian Aryans. The relationship continued even after the Arabs had

conquered the Persian empire. Since it is the Tibetans who had become the dominant eastern power in the seventh century CE, it is they who provided the Persians and Sogdians sanctuary.¹⁸

Evidence of Early connections between the Early Aryan and Western Tibetans- Dakhma



(Tower of Silence) and sky burials.... A unique connection shared only by the Iranian Aryan Zoroastrians and Tibetans is the method of disposing of the dead, namely the exposure of the dead bodies to birds. In addition to the exposure, other similarities

18 Eduljee, K.E. (2011), "Iranian-Aryan Connection With Western Tibet", Zoroastrian Heritage.

including the wrapping of the body in a clean white shroud and placing the body on rock. When the Zoroastrians migrated to areas that did not have rocky hills, they constructed towers made from rock and do not permit the body to contact ...soil. Perhaps what is significant when comparing this sharing of a 'burial' custom between the two cultures-one which is not shared with other culture-is the practical considerations for adopting this form of 'burial' which probably preceded the religious justification and the possible environmental implications.¹⁹

Giuseppe Tucci and Geoffrey Samuel state in their book 'The Religions of Tibet' that according to Bon tradition if anyone finds 'heaven stones', thog rd'eu, bronze artefacts, in their fields, especially nine together are assured prosperity. Some of the 'stone' are eagle shaped (khyung), while others are round or in shapes representing monkeys. Tucci and Samuel further state that the objects bear a striking resemblance to those found in the western Iran province of Luristan/Loristan indicating a connection if not a trading relationship between the Iranian and Tibetan culture along the Aryan Trade routes, Luristan straddles the Zagros mountains.²⁰

Nomadology and the practice of architecture: The black tent is thought to have originated in Mesopotamia around 3000-4000 BC which makes it one of the most ancient and timeless architectural type still in use. The black tent is used by the nomadic groups that live in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt (Aulad Ali), Arabic countries, Europe (Gypsies), Turkey (Yuruks, Kurds), Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, (Baluch), and as far east as the Tibetan plateau. Most of the area belongs to an arid belt, characterized by a hot arid or semi arid climate.²¹

Faegre (1979:9,10) assumes the black tent originated in Mesopotamia. "As it spread it was adapted to fit each particular environment it entered." Actually, the black tent type comprises a diverse range of ethnic variants. Variants of the black tent are geographically

19 Eduljee, K.E (2011), "Dakma sky burials", Zoroastrian Heritage.

20 Donald Wilber, The Discovery of the Luristan Bronzes Herzfeld, E., in 1928. *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran 1-11*, (1929-1930) Pope, Arthur U., *Illustrated London News*, June 1929 and September 6 and 13, 1930

21 Manderscheid Angela (2001), "The Black Tent in Its Easternmost Distribution: The case of the Tibetan Plateau", *Mountain Research and Development*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May, 2001), pp. 154-160.

divisible into Eastern and Western major type. The Eastern types, the oriental or Persian, are similar, constructed of parallel cloth strips.

In the mid-seventh century, the Tibetan policy became a major factor in the political and military affairs of Central Asia. Guided by a newly emergent and expansion minded monarchy, its conquests and military interventions gave direction to the course of events in the whole of Eurasia for two centuries. So great was its prestige than the pan-Eurasian Turk Empire, outside of the Turkic sphere, accorded the imperial title of 'qaghan' only to the rulers of "Tuput" (Tibet) and "Tabghach" (China). This usage was borrowed by the Islamic authors: compare Tabari's "Khaqan, King of Tibet" (Khaqan malik al-Tubbat)(Tarikh al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wal Muluk, ed.Muhammad Adul-Fadl Ibrahim (Cairo,1962-67) 8:404) or the Tubbat-Khaqan of the Hudud al-Alam. 2nd ed., trans.V.F.Minorsky (London, 1970),p.92). After this unique period in its history, Tibet, now mired in internecine strife, retired from the fray, never to return as active force in the shaping of history on a Eurasian scale. While pursuing conquests abroad ,the monarchy introduced and actively proselytized Buddhism at home, much to the distress of the adherents of the native Bon religion. Resistance to the new faith, which not unexpectedly found support among aristocratic opponents of an ever-increasing royal central authority, was one of the factors contributing to the collapse of Tibet's empire. While the cause of the fall of the early medieval Tibetan state may be conjectured from the sketchy details of the struggle of crown and nobility, the reasons for Tibet's era of aggressive expansionism are less clear. The later Islamic sources (Hudud al-Alam) depict Tibet as both a bountiful source of "musk, black fox, grey squirrels, sable-martens, ermine and khutu(horns)," products of considerable importance in trade with the Islamic world. The outposts of this world were the Irano-Muslim cities of Central Asia, whose Sogdian mercantile population had long experience in aiding the course of empire building, having played significant roles in the Tur and Uighur states.

The Iranian face of Buddhism : The most noticeable secular Iranian influence on Buddhist art came from the Sasanian dynasty (224-651), whose political power and cultural prestige reached a zenith under Khusro I 'the just' under whose reign (531-579) Sasanian direct control was exerted over Iran, Bactria and even parts of N.W.India. It is from the latter area, more specially around Kabul, that an intriguing description of a

Buddhist shrine (bot-khane) that was a vihara (bahar) comes from the pen of Asadi Tusi. His work the *Garshap Name* (comp.1048) described the arrival of the Ghaznavid conqueror at this Buddhist centre.²² According to Asadi Tusi the vihara's walls were made of marble, the doors were gilt and the flooring was of silver. On those marble walls were shown the planets, and the twelve signs of the zodiac. In the very central focal point of the vihara (the pishgah) was found an enthroned Buddha made of gold, with a 'face like moon'. According to Melikian-Chirvani, the famous Sasanian palace called the Taqdis, and in the Sasanian Taqdis the enthroned imperial ruler was shown in the centre of the monument, with identical astronomical signs being depicted (Shahname).

At the widest level Buddhism had to express itself in the different regions in the Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan (including Mongolian) world. At this micro cultural-level there was a fourth realm that Buddhism entered, the Iranian world. Historically the Iranians were found over a much wider area than just present day of Iran. Instead the ancient lands of Tarim basin, Bactria, and Sogdia were peopled by various East Iranian speakers: while the Iranian plateau (modern Iran) was dominated by west Iranian groups of whom the most prominent were the Medes and Persians.

The influences of the great imperial dynasties were evident, from the Iranian plateau those of the Achaemenids, Parthians and Sasanians, and further east that of Kushans. An early example of this came from Chamqala in Bactria where a corner pilaster capital had a Buddha/Bodhisattva sitting below decorative foliage, on which was shown a frontal lion clawing at two addorsed humped bulls.²³ The main point was to illustrate a jataka scene from the extra detail on top which can be identified as an adoption of the imagery used earlier by the Achaemenians at Persepolis.²⁴ In the pictorial field it is striking to find in Gandharan art, the focus for the encounter of Hellenic, Indian, and Iranian styles, a whole range of Buddhist Bodhisattvas whose appearance evoked the contemporary Kushan rulers.²⁵ Similarly the Indian god Vaisravana, who achieved great popularity in

22 Melikian-Chirvani(1984):pp. 273.

23 Rowland(1974):*The Dictionary of Art*,Obituary, *Artibus Asiae*, 35 (1973):. 371-3;Coolidge, Jhon,et Fogg Art Museumill,pp.10.

24 Hinnells(1973),*Persian Mythology*.

25 Rowland (1961),*The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. (Pelican History of Art).

the Buddhist circles at Balkh and Khotan, was iconographically modelled after Kushan imperial portrayals by Buddhist artists.²⁶

Buddhism entered these various Iranian zones. Its dominance of the Tarim Basin is well documented and fairly familiar as a result of both archaeological finds made at the start of this century, and by the literary testimony of pilgrims like Fa-hsien (399-413), and Hsuan-tsang (629-645) and Huei-ch'ao (726). Dominance was achieved in Bactria, with a more limited advance into Sogdia, as literary records and increasing numbers of archaeological finds are indicating (Litvinskij 1970, 1981). Buddhism even expanded further westwards along the Persian gulf (Ball 1976, 1986, 1989; Hasuri 1978) and Iranian plateau (Bulliet 1976), in the light of archaeological and topographical date, although in these more westerly areas it encountered strong opposition from the Zoroastrian hierarchy in Sasanian Iran.

This particularly wide Iranian world disappeared with the coming of Islam in the 7th century to Iran, Bactria and Sogdia; and the progressive 'Turkification' of the Tarim basin from the 8th century onwards. It is true that Buddhism was reintroduced into Iran during the 13th century by the Mongol Il-khans (Jahn 1956) certainly geographical and political factors had resulted in different historical fortunes. The Tarim basin evolved into a series of oases trading cities spaced along the Silk Route of which the most notable were Khotan (Bailey 1982), Kizil, Kucha, Turfan, and Tun-huang (the entry point into China proper). By contrast the Iranian plateau witnessed the rise of powerful successive empires of the Medes, Achaemenians, Parthians, and Sasanians. The lands of Bactria and Sogdia enjoyed varying fortunes. At times the centre of powerful East Iranian empires like the Kushans and Hephthalites, at times under the sway of the Achaemenian and Sasanian Emires, and at other times fragmented into petty principalities somewhat akin to the Tarim basin.²⁷

It is stressing the fact that the Iranian world was encountered by Buddhism before it made its way into Tibet and China. The present political conditions in Iran render archaeological excavations virtually impossible. This is more the pity since in that area

26 Granoff (1970), Tera Bezar (1976)

27 Scott David Alan (1990), *The Iranian face of Buddhism, East and West*, Vol. 40, No. 1/4 (December 1990), pp. 43-77

any Buddhist material found could give valuable insights on the characteristics of Buddhism in that strongly Zoroastrian atmosphere then prevalent. The present troubles in Afghanistan and the restricted access to the Tarim basin have also reduced the prospects for new East Iranian material emerging. Soviet Central Asia remains an ever more developing archaeological field to which we can look with hope, particularly in the Buddhist stronghold of North Bactria (southern Tajik/Uzbek SSRs). Another line of approach lies in the extensive records by early Islamic writers who in Iran, Bactria and Sogdia were actually faced with Buddhist communities.²⁸

The 'Irano-Buddhist' art phase from Bamiyan during the Sasanian zenith (late 6th -early 7th century) even had Maitreya the future Buddha shown with a crown that was identical to that portrayed in Sasanian Iran for Khusro II .²⁹Sasanian style hair ribbons also appeared on another Buddha at Bamiyan. Similar ribbons, together with massive proportions and general hieratic frontal style for the 'Blue Bodhisattva'³⁰ evoke the portrayals of Sasanian monarchs that were shown contemporaneously in Bactria at Dukhtar-i-Noshirwan, and in Iran. In the same valley as Bamiyan, at the monastery of Fondukistan³¹ Maitreya was shown with these Sasanian ribbons. Similarities can be found with Buddhist art eastwards in the Tarim basin. Maitreya appeared at Ming-oi Karashar bedecked with those Sasanian ribbons during the 6th -7th century, as did several Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the temple of Tarislark by Khotan.³²Very striking in its Sasanian appearance is the famous Persian Bodhisattva' of Khotan.

The Bon religion of Tibet is sometimes referred to as a form of heterodox Buddhism, or as the "fifth sect" of Tibetan Buddhism. As an institutionalized religious sect, it has its origins in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In its outward appearance, its beliefs, rituals, and iconography, Bon, to an outside observer, differs little from Tibetan Buddhism. Perhaps the greatest difference between Bon and Buddhism lies in their competing approaches to Tibetan history. Bon-po historiographers claim that the Bon religion was more or less fully formed when Buddhism took root in Tibet. The Bon-po claim the

28 *ibid.*.....

29 Rowland(1974)

30 Higuchi(1983-84),pp.59.

31 Rowland(1974);ill.pp.113.

32 Bussagli(1978);pp.61.

Buddha Sakyamuni as a Bon-po teacher within the lineage of the founder of Bon, Gshenrab Mi-bo. Although Buddhist historiographers, arguing from the vantage point of reigning orthodoxy, generally admit that customarily assert that Bon developed in phases, and that the modern Bon sect took form through plagiarism and mimicry of Buddhism. Reciprocally, Bon-histriography lays the same charge at the door of the Buddhists.

It is claimed that Bon prospered in a land known as Zhang-Zhung and that tis country remained the center of the religion until it was absorbed by the expanding Tibetan empire in the seventh century. There is no doubt as to the historical reality of Zhang-Zhung, although its exact extent and ethnic and cultural identity are far from clear. It does, however, seem to have been situated in what today is, roughly speaking western Tibet, with Mount Kailash as its center. The ultimate homeland of Bon, is, however, to be sought farther to the west, beyond the borders of Zhang-Zhung. The Bonpos believe that that their religion was first proclaimed in a land called Rtag-gzigs (Tazik) or Ol-mo Lung-ring. Although the former name suggests the land of the Tajiks (in present day Soviet Central Asia), it has so far not been possible to identify this holy land of Bon in a convincing manner.³³

The Bonpos do not claim to be Buddhist, but followers of Bon; Tibetan Buddhist have always looked upon the Bonpos with contempt or fear, regarding them as master of black magic. Yet, when we read the Bonpo scriptures observe their monastic or lay life, or when we study their doctrines, it becomes apparent that the bulk of Bon religion can be paralleled with the Tibetan form of Buddhism. Professor Kvaerne's book is a further contribution to research in this field.

The ritual itself involves a complex set of offerings, both real and symbolic, and recitations to and invocations of Bonpo deities and other pictorial elements of a symbolic nature that are employed in this ritual have been reproduced separately.³⁴

33 Kvaerne Per(1987), The Bon Religion-An Introduction (*Bon. I.N: Mircea Eliade.s* (ed.) .The Encyclopedia of Religion, New York (Macmillian) , 2: pp.277-281

34 *ibid*, Per Kvaerne.

CHAPTER: THREE

Influence of Loan words in Tibetan Language and Literature

The language, borrowing indicates that one language takes something from another language and makes it into a permanent part of its own system. In contrast, to the borrowing of an object from another person, the borrowing of a linguistic form or concept from another language is not implied to be temporary. This is one of the main differences between borrowing and code-switching. Borrowed forms or concepts are integrated into the borrowing language, while code-switching, implies the use of two or more different language codes within the same form of speech. Borrowing happens between a source language and a target language. In principle, any language can be a donor language and a recipient language, and probably all languages play both roles. Very often, however, the donor language enjoys higher social, cultural or political prestige than the recipient language.

Language contact is the process of interaction between two languages mediated by persons who speak both the languages and the effects over time of such an interaction on the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of each language. According to Weinreich (1968:1), "Two or more languages are said to be in contact, if they are used alternatively by the same person." In this regard Koul (2008:18) writes, "Whenever two communities come in contact, there is surely to be influence on one or both. But it does not guarantee that one will borrow from the other. Unless the speaker of one language has some motive for the borrowings, and understands the particular utterance of the second language in proper context which contain the model lexical item to be borrowed." It follows that when speakers of different languages interact closely, it is typical for their languages to influence each other with one language acting as superstratum and other as substratum. In the words of Campbell and Mixco (2007:93), language contact is "the use of more than one language in the same place. More specifically, the influence of one language upon another, and, in the sense most common in historical linguistics, any change due to influence from neighboring languages. Language contact describes the circumstances under which multilingual speakers of two or more contiguous languages facilitate the transfer of linguistic traits from one language into another. This process may affect any component of the grammar i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, lexicon, etc. The most typical consequence of language contact is lexical borrowing, and

such introduced vocabulary may serve as the conduit for other influences.” This process of language contact results in the process of borrowing. Borrowing is defined as “the process in which a language takes linguistic elements from another language and makes them part of its own. The borrowed elements are typically loanwords, but borrowing is not restricted just to lexical items taken from one language into another: any linguistic material-sounds, phonological rules, grammatical morphemes, syntactic patterns, semantic associations, discourse strategies-can be borrowed, that is, can be taken over so as to become part of the borrowing language.” In simpler terms, borrowing is defined as that process in which a language borrows words or lexical items from another language. Both these processes i.e., language contact and borrowing, are very important with regard to the lexical sources of a language. According to Malmkjaer (2004:238), “When a community of speakers incorporates some linguistic element into its language from another language, linguistic borrowing occurs. Such transferences are most common in the realm of vocabulary, where words may come and disappear with little consequence for the rest of the grammar.” The process of borrowing may be either fast or slow and there are instances when “some words are borrowed almost overnight, others go through a long intermediary stage; some words are brought in by one bilingual, others are slowly accepted by a large bilingual community before being transferred to the monolingual group”(Grosjean, 1982:334).And that these words become members of that language in an unchanged way or even after some changes in accordance with the structure of the borrowing language. The different sources of Tibetan... cultural lexicon owe a great deal to the process of borrowing. The new entries in the lexical system of a language owe their existence to a number of processes and the most important among these is the process of borrowing. Tibetan, like other languages has borrowed from many ...loan words....languages through 'Silk Route' and 'Musk Route' to meet the demands of the time and to widen its scope. These processes of language contact and borrowing have played an important role in the compilation of cultural lexicon of Tibetan. As a result of contact with different religio-political and civilizational currents, new words were borrowed from different languages into Tibetan language.

SOURCES OF TIBETAN CULTURAL LEXICON

Hence Indian, Persian, Arabic, Uighur, Turkic, Mongol, Manchu, Chinese and finally Portuguess, Anglo-Indian, and English Loan-words in Tibetan which are generally used peculiar loan-words, which remain to be studied as our knowledge of dialectic lexicography advances. The outpost language along the Western and Southern borderlands is influenced by the respective Indo-Aryan forms of speech prevailing in those regions¹.

According to A. Cunningham, Tibetan tul (ita) (egg) is a kashmiri word and doubtless there are more Kashmiri words to be found in Ladakhi on the southern frontier of Bhutan, many words and ideomatic phrases have been adopted from the Assamese, Bengali and Hindustani, while the language spoken on the Northern frontier represents a purer form of Tibetan².

The Iranian loan-words in Tibetan are all derived from Persian, not from Pahlavi or Sogdian. The only traceable Pahlavi prototype may be the tribal name Tadzik (Persian Tazik تازیک) that under lies the Tibetan transcription Ta-zig or in more Tibetanized writing sTag-gzig. The Tibetan name usually relates to Persia and the Persians, designated, though more rarely, also as par-sig. Taranatha employs Ta-zig also with reference to the Moguls of India. It is difficult to determine the route over which the Persian loan-words have migrated. Many may have come from Hindustani; other may belong to an earlier period and be due to a direct contact of Persian civilization with western Tibet. Arabic words were partially borrowed from Hindustani, partially borrowed from Hindustani, partially from Persian or were spread also by Mohammedan traders in Tibet. Several loan-words in Tibetan were formally taken for Mongol. Now that owing to the discovery of fresh material in Turkistan, our knowledge of Uighur has considerably advanced, we know that Mongol has borrowed a great deal from the Uighur and it is certain that several alleged Mongol loan-words in Tibetan are fact of Uighur origin.³

1 Berthhold Laufer, 1987, Sino-Tibetan Studies, Aditya Prakasan, Delhi, pp-

2 Rennie, Bhotan and the story of the Dooar war, p.25

3 ibid, pp.402

The relation of Tibetan to Mongol words is not always perspicuous. Both languages have a stock of words in common but while Mongol has borrowed much from Tibetan and Tibetan a small proportion from Mongol. Owing to the geographical position of the country and historical agencies resulting from it, the intellectual culture of Tibet is of a dualistic character in its absorption of foreign ideas which have flooded over its southern border from India and which have penetrated eastward from China. Of those two currents of outward influence, the infusion of Indian ideas has always been strongly emphasized and placed in the foreground of scientific interest, so much so that Tibetan studies are usually regarded as a mere side-issue or auxiliary department of Sanskrit philology.⁴

There are so many words of Persian, Arabic, Turki, Mongol, Uigur, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Hindusthani, Manchu, Chinese, Portuguese, Anglo-Indian, Russian origin, occurring within a number of different semantic domains, including the kinship terms, colour terms, pronouns, and name of body part, as well as animals' name, plants' name, verb, words for tools, clothing items, dairy products and other foods, adjectives, words related to medicine, hunting terminology, words for natural phenomena, and types of dwellings, among others are mentioned below,

PERSIAN LOAN WORDS

.....*pya-tar*, tent. From Persian *cadar* (چادر), Uighur, *cadir*, Mongol *tsatsar*, Manchu *tsatsari*, Russian *cadra* and *sater*, Polish *szatra*, Magyar *sator* etc.

.....*pe-ran*, *pa-ran*, *pi-lin* (*rgya pi-lin*), *po-ran* at present refers to British India, Englishmen, Europe and Europeans. Cites also the derivation from "Feringhi". The opinion that "*pi-lin* represents only the more vulgar pronunciation of the genuine Tibetan word *pyi-glin*, a foreign country and specially Europe," is untenable. The four forms evidently are transcriptions of the same foreign term; and since Tibetan lacks *f* and renders it by a labial surd or sonant, aspirated or non aspirated, we arrive at *fe-rani*, *fa-rani* (or *fa-lan*), *fi-lan*, *fo-lan*.

4 Ibid, pp.413

These forms are on a par with Persian, *farangi*, *firingi* (فرنگی); Arabic *al-faranj*, *ifranji*, *firanji*; Tamil *parangi*, Singalese *parangi* etc.

.....*deb-ter*, *deb-gter*, *deb-ster*, document, record, book, from Persian *daftar* (دفتر) said to be connected with old Persian *dipi*, “writing;” Sogdian *diper-t* (“one versed in the scripture;”). The same word has been adopted into Mongol *dabtar* and Manchu *debtelin* (“Chapter, Volume”).

.....*po-la*, *pu-la*, *po-la* (Ladakh ; but known also in Central Tibet), *pilau*, pilaw, a dish consisting of boiled rice with fowl or mutton, and spices, the Tibetans adding also butter and dried apricots (*pa-tin*); in Ladakh, sweet rice prepared with butter, sugar, and apricots. From Persian and Hindustani *pulao*, *pilav* (پولوا), derives Osmanli *pilaw* from Persian. The word has penetrated also into Slavic: Russian *pilav* and *plov*.

.....*pe-ban*, graft, scion, From Persian *Pewand*, *Paiwand* (پیوند) relations, allies.

.....*pugs-ta*, *pogs-ta*, *pogs-ta* (Ladakh), firm, Strong, durable. From Persian *pukhta* (پخته).

.....*San-gin*, bayonet. From Persian *sangin* (سنگین).

.....*dur-bin*, telescope. From Persian *durbin* (دوربین), Literally, “far-seeing”.

.....*kab-sa*, shoe, boot (the ordinary and general term for shoe in Ladakh). From Persian *kafs* (كفش), in all probability adopted into Ladakhi from Hindustani, as the word refers to the ordinary shoe of Hindustan, *ba-bu*, soft shoe. According to Jaschke, from Persian *papos* (پاپوش).

.....*sur-na* (Chinese *so-na*, hautboy, flageolet, From Persian *surna* (سرنا). The word seems to be known only in western Tibet.

.....*dambu-ra*, *tambu-ra*, a stringed instrument, Chinese *cen*, Mongol *yaduga*, or *yadaga*, Manchu *yatuxan*. From Persian *tambur* (تنبور) “lute, lyre, guiter; a drum”). We find the same instrument and word in Chinese *tan-pu-la*; in Eastern Turki *dambura*, Osmanli *tambur* and *tambura*; Russian *domra* and *dombra*.

.....*Nal* (precious stone), balas ruby. From Persian *lal* , Mongol *nal ardani*, Manchu *langca*. The Chinese equivalent is *pi-ya-se*, derived from Persian-Arabic *piyazaki*(

(پیازاکی), balas ruby from piyazak. S.C.Das has a term *pi-tsu la-la* as “name of a gem”, and designated as Sanskrit word. May be *la-la* stand for *lal*, and the whole term refers to a certain variety of balas ruby.

.....*san-gi-ka*, greenish stone of which Knife-handles and similar articles are said to be made. It might be permissible to connect this word with Persian *sang* (سنگ), stone. On the other hand , there is also a west Tibetan word of uncertain spelling, *yan-gi-ka*, said to be the name of a green stone wrought into handles of knives. Another form of this word is *yan-tri*, which to all appearances is identical with *g-yan-ti*, the common Tibetan term for “nephrite”, where it is equitized with Chinese *yu*.

.....*pi-si*, cat (Jaschke: "perhaps from the Persian"). In the first line, this word seems to be connected with such *picaca* forms as *pusi*, *pisi-r*, *pis*, *viso*, *pusak*, as enumerated by Grierson (*Pisaca, language*, p.66), and with corresponding Dardu words like *busi*, *pusi*, *pusak* (Leinter, *languages of Dardistan*, p.2); and these point to Persian *pusek posek* (پوشک) also *pusank*, Afghan *viso*.

.....*Sag-ri*, *sags-ri*, *shagreen*, From Persian *sagri* (صغریس) *shagreen*. The Persian word denotes properly the c..group of a horse or donkey, from which the peculiar granulated leather was originally made. Mongol *sagari*, *sarisu*; Manchu *sarin*.

.....*tsa-dar*, *tsa-sar*, *tsa-zar*, *tsa-dir* (Ladakh), shawl, plaid. According to Jaschke, from Persian Hindustani *Caddar* (چادر). But only *Cadar* with the meaning tent, pavilion, mantle, veil, shroud.

.....*sag-lad*, fine cloth of goat-wool ; European broadcloth. From Persian *saglat* (سقالات).

.....*ta-ra-tsu* (Ladakh), a small pair of scales, gold weight. From Persian *tarazu* (ترازو) also current in Turkistan, *Turfan*, a balance, scale, weight.

.....*dig* large kettle. From Persian *dig* (دیگ). Found also in sugnan.

.....*ta-bu*, *tao* iron pan. From Persian *tawa* (تاتوا).

.....*po-lad*, steel. From Persian *pulad* (پولاد).

.....*kimkhab* (Ladakh); *kincob*, *cincob*, gold brocade. The latter is given as a Tibetan term by W.W. Rockhill, and said by him to be intended for Chinese *kin-kie*; more probably, the Chinese prototype is *kin hua* as, for instance, used by cao, zu-kua with reference to the brocaded of Ta Tsin. In the history of Ladakh Tibetanized in the form *rkyen-kab*. The terms must have reached the Tibetans from Persia or India, where we find the forms with final b Persian *kimkhab* (كمخواب); Hindustani *kamkhab*, *hamkhwab*. The earliest Arabic reference to the term seems to occur in Ibn khordadbeh, who wrote between 844 and 848, and recorded it in the form *kimkhaw* (كمخو).

.....*zar-babs*, *zar-baft*, gold brocade. From Persian *zar-bafth* (زر بفت) also *zar-baf* (زر باف), *zar-bafta*; *baf*, “weaving.” Under another entry Jaschke has *sal-bab* (West Tibetan), “gold ornament, gold lace, and the like,” this, of course, is a transcription of the same Persian word.

.....*a-lu* (Ladakh), Potato. From Hindustani *alu*, which itself comes from Persian *alu* (الو).

.....*a-lu-ca* (Ladakh), plum. From Persian *aluca* (الوجه).

.....*cob-cini* (Ladakh), rot of smilax pseudo-china, Chinese *tu-fu-lin* (G.A.Stuart, Chinese *Materia Medica*, p.410) known in commerce as China root, and imported from Turkistan to Leh, Ladakh. From Persian *cubi cim* (چوبی-چینی) “china root”.

.....*alu-bakara* (Ladakh), also *bokhara*, dried plums and apricots from Bokhara. Persian *alu-bokhara* (الوبخارا) In the Tibetan written language Bokhara is transcribed *Bho-har*.

.....*kram*, cabbage. From Persian *Karamb* (کرنب) or *Kalam* (کلم).

.....*dal-cini*, cinnamon, bark of cinnamomum cassia (in common Tibetan *sin tsa*, “wooden salt”). From Persian Hindustani, *dar cini* (دار-چینی), Arabic *dar-sini*; that is wood of China (*dar* = Sanskrit *daru*, wood, tree). Pasthu *dal-cini*. Hindi *dara-cini*.

.....*se-rag dur-smān* (West-Tibetan, pronounced *serak turman*), carrot (*Daucus Carota*), From Persian *zardak turma* (زردک-ترمه). *zardak*, “carrot;” *turma*, “radish”.

.....*badam*, almond (*Amygdalus Communis*). From Persian- Hindustani *badam* (بادام). The Persian word is derived from Sanskrit *vatamra* (“wind-mango”). The Sanskrit word is *vatama* or *badama*, which, as also indicated by Boehtlingk, represents a Persian loan (or

ultimately from Pahlavi *vadam*). The home of the almond tree is not in India, but in Western Asia.

.....*zi-ra*, cummin-seed (*cuminum cyminum*). Sanskrit *jira* would be transcribed in Tibetan *dzi-ra*, but from Persian *zira* (زیره). Cumin was cultivated by the ancient Persian, and penetrated at a remote period from Iran to Egypt on the one hand and to India on the other. Sanskrit *jira*, *jira-ka*, is based on the Persian word, as is like wise Chinese *zi-ra* (*si-lo*).

.....*kur-kum*, *gur-kum*, *gur-gum*, saffron (product of *crocus sativus*). From Persian *kurkum*, *karkam*, *karkum* (کرکم), derived on its part from Semitic, Assyrian *karkuma*, Hebrew *karkom*. Tibetan word with Persian-Semitic forms *gun-gun*, Saffron was cultivated in Kashmir, where it appears to have transplanted from Iran.

ARABIC LOAN WORDS.

.....*saheb* (colloquially *sab*, *sab*), from Arabic *saheb* (صاحب), formally title of Moslem of high rank, now address of every white man in India. In the history of Ladakh it is used in connection with the names of the first Englishmen who come to Leh. The Tibetans' adaptation *sa-yeb* ("earth-father") is interesting in showing how the Tibetans adjust foreign words to their own language. *sab*, *salam*, and *baksis* are the three most important words which are hurled at the European in India daily and hourly, and also from the lips of Tibetans.⁵

.....*bag-sis* tip, pourboire. From Arabic *bakhsis* (بخشش), now a universal word in all countries of the Indian ocean.

.....*kab-za*, hilt of a sword. According to Jaschke, from Arabic *kabsa* (قبصه).

.....*ma-si-ta*, a temple of the Mohammedans. Schiefner derives the word from Arabic *masjid* (مسجد). It may have come to Tibet from Hindustani *ma-zia*, *ma-zid*, mosque.

.....*da-fan*, Mohammedan burial. From Arabic *defan* (دفن).

5 Berthold Laufer, 1987, Sino-Tibetan Studies, Vol 2, Aditya Prakasan. New Delhi, pp-564

.....*ka-bar*, Mohammedan grave. From Arabic *qaber* (قبر).

.....*ma-zar*, Mohammedan graveyard. From Arabic *mezar* (مزار)⁶.

.....*kasaba*, the red turban worn by Argon women.

.....*daon*, the white veil worn over the *kasaba*.

.....*ha-lal* (*co-ce*), to slaughter an animal according to Mohammedan rites. From Arabic *halal*.(حلال).

.....*hu-ka*, the hookah pipe, from Arabic *huka* (حقه).

.....*gyin*, name of a deity, the djinn of the Arabs (in the literature relating to padmasambhava). From Arabic *jinn* (جن). Perhaps also *gin-bdub* is the same word.

.....*a-rag*, *arak* alcoholic beverage made from barley. From Arabic *araq* (عراق). Perspiration, exudation or sap drawn from the date palm, that has become a universal word in Asia. In China this word first appears as *a-la-ki* (*a-ra-ki*), in the writer of Yuan dynasty Turkish *raki*, Mongol *araki*, *ariki*, *arki*. The forms ending in -ki are evidently based on Arabic *araq* (عراقي)⁷.

TURKIC LOAN WORDS

.....*yam-bu* (Central Tibet *yam-bu*), Chinese ignot of silver. The Tibetan form, indicates that the word was adopted from Turki *yam-bo* or *yam-bu* of Central Asia. (The *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p.256). The Turki word *Kurus* or *kurs* is used in Ladakh beside *ya-bum*. (Ramsay).

.....*Cu-ba*, *cu-pa*, *co-pa*, a long loose gown and Notes on the Ethnology of Tibet. (pp.684-685). Turki *juba* (Russian *suba*, *subka*; Polish *czuba*; Czes *cuba*, *suba*; compare also Eastern Turki *capan* (“wadded coat with long sleeves”), and Persian *capkan* (چپکن) a sort of short coat.

6 *ibid*, pp- 565.

7 *ibid*, pp 563.

.....*l-cags-mag*, *b-ca-mag*, steel for striking fire, flint-stone, tinder-box. From Turki *cakmak* (چقماق).⁸

.....*l-cags pra* (Central Tibet), a kind of musket imported from Rum (Turkey). The first element is not *l-cags* (Iron), but is the abbreviation of the preceding Turki word.

.....*top*, Cannon .Turki *top*; Persian *tob*, *tufan*.

.....*Tu-pag* (*tu-bak*), gun. From Turki *tupak* (توپک), Buriski *tumak*.

.....*pi-cag*, large butcher-knife. According to Jaschke, from Turki *caku* (چاکو). The same word occur also in Persian with the meaning “ clasp-knife, pen=knife”.

.....*u-lag* (in eastern Tibet pronounced *ula*), socage service, compulsory post-service, beast of burden requisitioned for government purposes, courier. From Turkish, *ulak* (اولاق) also *ulan*, *ulau*, *ula*, Mongol *ulaga*, Persian *ulag* (اولا), Manchu *ula*.

.....*ar-gon*, an offspring of parents not having the same rank, or the same religion, and belonging to the same nation. The proper significance of the word is "half-breed,hybrid," with reference to man and animals. In Leh, Ladakh it is the designation for the offspring of Mohammedan traders from Central Asia and Tibetan women temporarily married by them after the *nikah* ceremony.Arkawun (ارکوان). According to Yule, Argon is of Turki origin⁹.

.....*bol-gar*, and *bul-ha-ri*, West-Tibetan *bul-gar*, Russian leather, *yufst*, *bu-la-ha-ri* (S.C.Das), gived bulgar as general Tibetan term for Russian leather. From Turki-Persian *bulgar*, also in Hindustani, perhaps as such leather was first introduced to them from the region Bulgaria, that is, the Bulgar kingdom on the Volga¹⁰.

8 ibid, pp 571.

9 Berthold Laufer, Turki Loan- Words, pp-573

10 ibid, pp-570.

INDO ARYAN LOAN-WORDS

The following words belongs to the most recent phase of the Indo-Aryan language, and to all appearences have been borrowed from Hindi or Hindustani.

.....*sa-lan-gi*, a stringed instrument, with nine chords, played upon with a bow. Hindustani *sarangi* (سارنگی). This instrument seems to have originated in Nepal, and is known also in China.

.....*dan-di*, *dran-dri* (Lahuli), beam of a pair of scales; a kind of litter. Hindi *dandi*.

.....*tim-pi* (in *Mi-la-ras-pa*), kid leather imported from India.

.....*m-do-le*, *ado-li*, sedan chair. From Hindi *doli*.

.....*ti-pi*, *ti-bi*, conected with Hindustani *topi*, Anglow-Indian *topee*.

.....*tan*, a piece of cloth. From Hindi *tan*.

.....*be-za* (Ladakh), interest. From Hindi *vyaja*. Hindustani *biyaj* (بیاج).

.....*skyes-sdon*, *skyes-la-sdon* (pronounced kyedon, kyeladon), banana (only in Sikkim). From Hindustani *kela* (کیلا). From sanskrit apabhramca ka(y)alaa = Sanskrit *kadalaka*, "plantain".

That these following loan words were made long before the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet in consequence of the contact of Tibetan with Indian Tribes. Many of them, in their Tibetan forms. The number of these words, especially those designating plants and vegetable products as shown by the follwing list.

....*a-ka-ra* and *ka-ra*, sugar. From Sanskrit *carkara* (Persian *sakar*, Mongol *siker*, *sikir*). Tibetan *ka-ra*, sugar. From Prakrit *sakkhara*, Tibetan *li ka-ra* or *li ka-ra*,

....*k'a-zur*, wild date. From Sanskrit *kharjura*, Hindustani *khajur* (کھجور), Hindi *khajura*.

....*ga-bur*, camphor. From Sanskrit *karpura*.

....*pi-spal*, *Ficus religiosa*. From Sanskrit *pippala*.

...*pi-pi-lin, pi-lin*, Piper longurn. From Sanskrit *pippali*.

...'*a-pim*, opium (Tib. *Pharm.*), product of *Papaver somniferum*. In view of the history of the poppy and the product yielded by it, there are theoretically three possibilities as to how the word could have reached Tibet. It may have come from India, or from Persia, or finally from China. The Arabic form of word *afyun* (افيون). 11

...*a-ru-ra*, myrobalan (*Terminalia chebula*); from Sanskrit *haritaki*.

...*ba-ru-ra*, *Terminalia bellerica*; from Sanskrit *vibhitaka*.

...*sen-ge*, lion. From Sanskrit *simha*, Apabhramca *singhu, simghu*.

...*rma-bya*, peacock. From Sanskrit *mayara*

...*ne-tso* (colloquially also *nen-tso*), *parrot*. Presumably of Indian origin,

....*byi-ru, byu-ru*, coral . From Sanskrit *vidruma*.

....*bai-du-rya, bai-dur*, a precious stone belonging to the class rock-crystals. Transcribed according to Tibetan pronunciation *bendruie*. Sanskrit *vaidurya*, Prakrit *veluriya* .Arabic transcription *biruraj* (بيروراج) . Mongol *binduriya*.

.....*sel* (Mongol *sil*), rock-crystal; glass. Possibly from Sanskrit *cila*,

....*ke-ke-ru*, a precious stone, cat's eye, chrysoberyl . From Prakrit *kakkeeraa*, Sanskrit *karketana*.

...*ban-de, ban-dhe*, a clergyman , from Sanskrit *vandya*.

....*mar-gad* (written also *ma-rgad* and *markad*, emerald. From Sanskrit *marakata*.

....*dzo-ki, dzvo-ki, su-gi* (Mi-la-ras-pa: also *r-dza-ki*), vulgar corruption of Sanskrit *yogin*. This or a similar form appears to have existed in mediaeval India, as attested by Marco Polo's *chughi* and Ibn Batuta's *Joki* (جوکی) 12

...*cataraki*, chess. From Sanskrit *caturanga*. In Ladakh *satranj* , Bengali *satranc*, Persian *satranj* (شطرنج) and *satranj*.

11 Laufer Berthold, Sino-Tibetan Studies, Vol 2 pp-541.

12 ibid, pp-546.

....*ri bo-ta-la* (Mongol transcription *riotala*), popular pronunciation for *ri-bo po-ta-la*, Mount Potala. According to *Li-Sii gur kan*, this abbreviation is chosen in order to avoid the double closing of the lips in the production of *b* and *p*.¹³

....*ri-ram*, corporeal relics of Buddha and saints. From Sanskrit *cariram*. According to *Li-sil gur kan* the first syllable. *ca* (*sa*), was dropped in Tibetan, because Tibetan *sa* means "flesh" and interfered with the conception of *carira* as "body, bones." The word *ri-ram* is used in the sense of *rin bsrel* ("relics").¹⁴

....*sendhla-pa* (Mongol transcription *siwendhaba*). S.C.Das gives for this word the fantastic explanation "probably Tibetanized form of the word Siddha." The correct explanation is found in *Li-sii gur kan*: "*Sendha-pa* means what has originated from the sea, and is applied to salt, swords, horses, etc. (*sendha-pa zes-pa rgya-mtso-las byun-baste tsva dan ral-gri dan rta sogs la ajug-pa*)." This definition leads to Sanskrit *sinduja* (*sindhu*, "river, Indus, sea, ocean"), "originating from the Indus," which is used with reference to horses and salt.¹⁵

....*ka-ra-bi-ra*, oleander (*Nerium odorum*). Sanskrit *karavira*(*ka*).

....*kun-du-ru*, incense, frankincense, gum olibanum, resin of *Boswellia thurifera*. Sanskrit *kundururu*, *kunda*, *kunda*.

....*nim-ba*, Nim bark, *Margosa* (from Portuguese *amargoso*, "bitter") bark, *Melia indica* or *azadirachta* L.; *Azadirachta indica* Juss. From Sanskrit *nimba*, *nimbaka*. Mongol *nimbaka*. Anglo-Indian *neem*, from Hindustani *nim*. Another Tibetan term for the same product is *ag-tse*.

....*bim-pa*, from Sanskrit *bimba*, *Momordica monadelpha*.

....*ma-sa*, pea. Sanskrit *masha*.

....*ma-sa-ka*, a small gold weight and coin. Sanskrit *mashaka*.

13 *ibid*, pp-547.

14 In the *Li-hii gur kCav*, a lexicographical work written by bZod-pa and Kun-dga don-grub and printed in 1741,

15 *ibid*, pp-548.

....*mal-li-ka*, Jasminum champaca or zambac. Sanskrit *malliki*. Also Sanskrit *kunda*, Jasminum pubescens, is found in Tibetan (*kun-da*) and Mongol.

....*tsan-dan*, sandal-tree. Sanskrit *candana* Persian *candan* and *candal* (چندن).¹⁶

....*bhan-ge*, hemp, charras. From Sanskrit *bhanga*.

....*tam-ka*, *tan-ka*, *ton-ka*, a silver coin. From Sanskrit *tanka*, a weight or a coin weighing four masha or twenty-four raktika. The word is found also in Persian, *tanga* (تنگه) ("cash, coin") and *dang*, and in Turkish languages

16 *ibid*,pp-550.

CHAPTER: FOUR

Bon A Hidden Treasure in Olmolungring

The Bon (بن) religion which preceded Buddhism in Tibet, is said to have originated from Tajik (Persia). According to Dub-thah-set-kyi-me-long, twenty generations of Tibetan kings from Nya-thi-tsan-po down to Thi-je-tsan-po followed no other religion than the Bon, which prevailed in Tibet up to 780 AD, when it was persecuted by king *khri srong lde btsan*.

The word “Bon” itself might provide a link to the West, since the word can be found in modern Persian. In the Persian language, “bon” had specific religious connotations. “Bon” in Persian means “root,” “foundation,” or “bottom,” and stems from the word “banu” as well as the ancient Indian word “bhanu,” both of which mean “light.”¹

The various black arts-such as witchcraft, exorcism, magic, performance of miracles, sacrifice of animals, etc. In which the Bon-po priests were skilled must have been imported from Nisibis (نيسيبس) (Persia) (پارسيا) by the Magi priest, who accompanied the Licchavis into Tibet. Sen-rab, who was one of the most prominent Bon-teachers, had among his spiritual descendants a Persian sage, named Mu-tso-tra-he-si.²

According to Ptolemy, Arrian, Strabo, and other classical writers, Nisibis was a most notable town in Aria to the South-East of the Caspian Sea. Wilson identifies it with the modern town of Nissa (off Herat حرّات) on the north of the Elburz (البرز) Mountains between Asterabad and Meshed. Martin observes that Nisibis must have been of Median or Persian foundation, for its name is purely Iranian and figures in the cosmogenic geography of the *Zend Avesta*,

The Iranian connection connection:- The Iranian connection is fascinating. There has been much speculation about it. It has to be looked at not only from the Bon point of view, but from the Buddhist point of view as well. There is a tremendous amount of material in common between Bon and Buddhism. The Bonpos say that the Buddhist got it from them and the Buddhists say the Bonpos got it from them and the Buddhists say the Bonpos got it from them. Each side claims to be the source.

1 Stanimar Kaloyanov, Stanimar (1990), “Irano-Tibetica. Some Observations on the Tibetan Bon,” *The Tibet Journal* 15, no. 7, (1990), 77.

2 Das, S.C. (1970), *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Part 1, Vol-1, Manjushir Publishing House, New Delhi.

While admitting the kinship of the Licchavis with the early Tibetan Kings, Prof. Satish Chandra had to differ from Mr. V.A. Smith in his main theory as to the origin of the Licchavis. In his opinion the Licchavis were a Persian tribe, whose original home was Nisibis, which they left for India and Tibet in the 6th century BC and 4th century BC, respectively.³

1. The founder of Jainism, Mahavira, was likewise a Licchavi, and hence an Iranian. Consequently, Jainism is an Iranic religion. The intrinsic anti-Brahmin and anti-Sanskrit nature of Jainism, manifested through its denunciation of the Vedas and its patronage of the Ardhamagadhi language, can be logically understood as a consequence of the Iranic racial origin of Mahavira.
2. The historical Nepali Licchavi ruling dynasty was consequently also of Irano-Aryan origin.
3. The Tibetan kings, as evidenced by numerous Tibetan historical works, were descended from the Li-tsa-byi or Licchavi tribe. If the Licchavis were Persian, the long-headed Tibetan ruling caste becomes an Iranic race

A mountain of further evidence, such as the long-headedness of the Tibetan ruling caste, a feature so markedly displayed by the present Dalai Lama, as well as surviving traces of heliolatry and the haoma ritual, confirm the Iranic origin of the Licchavis. It is high time Iranians reclaimed Jainism and Later Tibetan culture as their own.

In their article "Two Traditions of Ancient Tibetan Cartography", L.N. Gumilev and B.I. Kuznetsov attempt to determine the location of Olmolungring. To do this, they examine a Tibetan map which they date to the 2nd century BCE.⁴ According to the authors, this map confirms Olmolungring's location and identity as the Persian Empire, producing a direct correlation between the Bon holy land and Persia. Gumilev and Kuznetsov translate the Tibetan names on the map and identify their locations, many of which correlated to specific places throughout the Near East and Persia to determine their conclusion. In the center of the map appears the Nine Stacked Swastika Mountain and the name Bar-po-so-

3 Chandra Satish(1985), *Persian Affinities of the Licchavis*"*The Indian Antiquary*", Vol.XXXVII, March 1908, p.78-80; Swati Publishers, Delhi.

4 L.N. Gumilev and B.I. Kuznetsov(1969), "Two Traditions of Ancient Tibetan Cartography", *Vestnik Leningradskogo Universiteta*, no. 7 (1969): pp- 565.

brgyad which they translate to Parsargadae in Greek or Parsogod in Persian, the capital of Cyrus the Great.⁵ Specifically, the Nine Stacked Swastika Mountain is Cyrus the Great's tomb. According to their interpretation, it would seem that Bon placed a certain amount of significance on Cyrus the Great, as the author of this map would have placed it in the center. The text also names many of the specific sites situated around the tomb, again contributing to the importance of this particular site. With the Nine Stacked Swastika Mountain in the middle, six different divisions appear on the map. Gumilev and Kuznetsov go on to identify on the map Babylonia (Rgya-lag-od-ma), Jerusalem (Grong-khyer-lang-ling), Alexandria (Ne-seng-dra-ba'i-grong-khyer), as well as many other sites of the ancient Near East. The authors conclude that "the coincidence of the Tibetan drawing with Hellenic descriptions removes any possible doubt about the genuineness of the map and about the correctness of our identification."⁶ This map would certainly show that Tibet had extensive knowledge of the Near East, suggesting an intimate contact with those cultures. The intimacy could be so great that the Tibetan author would feel inclined to make Cyrus the Great's Tomb the significant feature of the map, as well as the defining feature of Olmolungring.

Tracing the origins of Bon-Shenrab Miwo: The Bon tradition itself was founded by Shenrab Miwo (Tibetan: *ston pa gshen rab*), who was lived thirty thousand years ago. That would place him some where in the stone age. Shenrab Miwo lived in olmolungring. The description of this place seems to be a mixture of ideas about Shambhala; Mt. Kailash. It is the description of an ideal spiritual land. It was said to be within a larger area called Tazig

5 ibid pp-566.

6 ibid pp-571.



7 Kvaerne Per(1972), Aspects of the origin of the Buddhist tradition in Tibet, Numen, Vol.19, pp22-40.

This suggests that Bon came from Central Asia, and probably an Iranian cultural area. It is possible that Shenrab Miwo lived in an ancient Iranian culture and then came to Zhang-zhung. Some versions say he came sometime between the eleventh and seventh centuries B.C. That is also a very long time ago and, again, there is no way of proving one or the other position. What is clear is that by the time of the founding of the Yarlung Dynasty in Central Tibet (127 B.C.) there was already something of a native tradition. We do not even know what it was called at that time.

Chinese records reveal that the people known to us Tibetans (Tib. Bod) occupied a board area of eastern and northern Tibet from at least second century C.E. It is only from the seventh century, however, that we possess clear historical evidence of their activities. At that time, all of western Tibet appears to have been ruled by a non-Bod kingdom known as Zhang-zhung. The Bod must have adjoined Zhang-zhung in central Tibet (gTsang-Bod).⁸

Buddhism went from India to Afghanistan very early on. In fact, two of the disciples of the Buddha himself were said to have come from Afghanistan and to have brought Buddhism back there. In the first and second centuries BC, we do find Buddhism was there. If Bon says ideas that look very similar to what the Buddha taught came from a 'Persian' area into Western Tibet during a period long before it came directly from India, it is quite possible that it came from a mixture of Buddhism and the local Iranian cultural ideas that were present in the local Iranian cultural ideas that were present in that area. The area that seems the most logical source for Iranian Buddhist ideas is Khotan.

Khotan is to the north of Western Tibet. Tibet is a very high plateau with a lot of mountains. As we go further north to the end of that plateau, there is another mountain range, and then it goes all the way down to below sea level to a desert in east Turkistan, which is now called the Xinjiang province of China. Khotan was at the foot of those mountains as we enter the desert. It was an Iranian cultural area; people came from Iran. It was a tremendous center of Buddhism and of trade. It made a significant cultural impact on Tibet, although the Tibetans downplay this and say everything came from either India or China.

8 Zan-zun snan-rgyud,(1968), published as vol. 73 in the Satapitaka Seies, New Delhi 1968.

Even the Tibetan writing system came from the Khotanese alphabet. The Tibetan Emperor Songtsen-gampo sent a minister to Khotan to get a writing system for the Tibetan language. The trade road to Khotan went through Kashmir, and as it happened, the great teacher from Khotan that they were hoping to meet happened to be there. So, they got the writing system from him in Kashmir, and the story became that they got a writing system from Kashmir. If we analyze the writing system, we can see that it actually comes from Khotan. Of course, the Khotanese system originally came from India. The point is that there was a lot of cultural contact with Khotan.

We can see that the Bon presentation is very plausible. It certainly could be that it came from Khotan. From this point of view, we could say that Buddhism came to Tibet from two directions: from Khotan or the Iranian cultures into Western Tibet and then later from India. In the former case, it could have come in the form of early Bon. It is quite possible that Buddhism, and in particular dzogchen, came from both sides and that each side borrowed from the other. That is probably closer to the truth.

Description of the Universe and the Afterlife

One element of Bon that comes from an Iranian cultural belief is the account of how the universe evolved. Buddhism has the abhidharma teachings on Mt. Meru and so on, but that is not the only explanation. There is also the Kalachakra explanation, which is slightly different. The Bon texts also contain the abhidharma explanation, just as it is in Buddhism, but they also have their own unique explanation with certain aspects that look quite Iranian, such as a dualism between light and darkness. Some Russian scholars have seen similarities between the Tibetan and ancient Persian names for various gods and figures. This Iranian connection is what they are pointing to.

What is quite unique to early Bon is an emphasis on the afterlife, particularly on the in-between state. When kings died, they went to an afterlife. Because they needed things for their journey, there was animal sacrifice, and possibly even human sacrifice, although

that is debatable. Certainly, they buried pictures, food and all the things that a person would need on their journey after life.⁹

It is quite interesting to note that Tibetan Buddhism adopted this emphasis on the in-between state. There is mention of the bardo in Indian Buddhism but it receives very little emphasis, whereas there are a lot of bardo (The Tibetan word *bardo* means literally "intermediate state" - also translated as "*transitional state*" or "*in-between state*" or "*liminal state*"). rituals and so on in Tibetan Buddhism. We can find the emphasis on preparation of an afterlife in ancient Persian culture as well. The only aspect of early Bon that we can actually speak of with confidence is the practice of burial rituals and what is found in the tombs shows that belief in an afterlife. Other than that it is just speculation. We can actually examine the burial tombs of the ancient kings.¹⁰

The influence of Zhang-zhung went over into the Yarlung area of central Tibet and lasted from the very earliest times until the founding of the first Tibetan empire by Songstengampo. He made alliances by marrying princesses from different countries. It is very well known that he married a princess from China and one from Nepal. However, he also married a princess from Zhang-zhung. Consequently, this first Tibetan Emperor was influenced by each of these cultures.

The full teachings of Buddhism did not reach Tibet during this earliest period and its influence was actually very minor. However, the Emperor did build Buddhist temples on various "power points." Tibet was seen as a female demon lying on her back and it was thought that building temples on various acupuncture points would subdue the wild forces. Seeing things in terms of acupuncture points, subduing demons and so on is very Chinese. This is the form of Buddhism present in Tibet at that time. What is relevant here is that Emperor Songtsen-gampo, for all his adoption of Buddhism, maintained the Bon burial rituals that were practiced in Yarlung before him. This was obviously reinforced by his Zhang-zhung queen. So, the burial rituals, with the sacrifices and so on, continued into this early Buddhist period.¹¹

9 Berzin, Alexander (2001), "*Bon and Tibetan Buddhism*," The Berzin Archives,

10 *ibid*

11 Kvaerne, Per (1985), *A Death Ritual of the Tibetan Bonpos* E.J. Brill: Leiden, pp- 6

The Exile of the Bonpos

Around 760, Emperor Songdetsen invited Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava, from India. They built the first monastery, Samyay, and began a monastic tradition. They had a translation bureau at Samyay to translate texts not only from Indian languages and Chinese, but also from Zhang-zhung, which was apparently already a written language at that time. There are two Tibetan writing systems. The printed system is what Emperor Songtsen-gampo got from Khotan. According to the research of some great scholars, like Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Zhang-zhung had an earlier writing system, which was the basis for the handwritten form of Tibetan. At Samyay, they were translating Bon texts, presumably on burial and so on, from the Zhang-zhung language in its own script into Tibetan.

There was the famous debate between Indian and Chinese Buddhism at Samyay, The baby boy name Samyak comes from the India word which means, "Prefect, complete." Sanskrit word which means, "Perfect, Right, Complete, Enough, Correct, True, accurate." Sanskrit word which means, "eternal truth (completely true)." Sanskrith word which means, ("pure.")

Then a religious council was set up and, in 779, Buddhism was declared to be the state religion of Tibet. There were undoubtedly a lot of political considerations involved. Shortly afterwards, in 784 there was a persecution of the Bon faction. This is where all the bad blood begins.

Within the imperial court were a pro-China faction, a pro-India faction and an ultra-conservative xenophobic native faction. Emperor Tri Songdetsen's father had married a Chinese queen who had a lot of influence and consequently the father had been pro-Chinese in many policies. The conservative faction had assassinated the father. I think this is one of the reasons for the Chinese losing the debate. There was no way that they could win a debate anyway. The Chinese had no tradition of debating and they were matched against the best debater in India. They did not have a common language, so what language did they debate in? It was all being translated. Obviously, it was a political move to get rid of the Chinese faction. Because of the Chinese, the Emperor's father had been killed. Now, in addition, the king wanted to get rid of the anti-foreign faction as

well. The Indian faction was the least threat to the political power of the Emperor. So, the conservative political faction was sent into exile. Those were the Bonpos.¹²

What is confusing is when people say that the Bonpos were doing burial rituals in the court. Those were not the Bonpos who were sent into exile. The Bonpos who were exiled were these conservative ministers and political figures who were kicked out. Interestingly, burial rituals and sacrifice rituals continued in the court even after their exile. To commemorate a treaty with China signed in 821, a pillar was erected that described the ceremonies. They sacrificed animals. Although they no longer had imperial burials, there was still some influence there.

The conservative faction was sent to two areas. One is Yunnan, in the area of present day southwestern China, north of Burma, and the other was Gilgit in northwest Pakistan, very close to where Guru Rinpoche came from. We can infer that the Bonpos might have gotten some teachings on dzogchen from that area, where Guru Rinpoche received them as well, and that the Bonpos could have brought them back to Tibet later, independently of Guru Rinpoche. There are many possible explanations for Bon's having a tradition of dzogchen separate from the Buddhist tradition that came from Guru Rinpoche. It is not just a matter of someone says so and therefore it is true. One has to look at the history.

Bon Buried Treasure Texts

Many Zhang-zhung texts were buried at the time of exile, put into the mud walls of Samyay monastery by a great master named Drenpa-namka. Guru Rinpoche was burying texts at the same time, because he felt the time was not ripe, people were not sophisticated enough to understand them. He buried only dzogchen texts. The Bonpos buried all of the Bon teachings, including dzogchen. So, while both Bonpos and Nyingmas were burying texts at the same time, the reasons for doing so and the texts buried were quite different.

12 Kvaerne, Per(1976), Who are the Bonpos, Tibetan Review, Vol.XI, No.9, New Delhi.

The next Tibetan Emperor, Relpachen, was a fanatic. He decreed that seven households support each monk. Many of the taxes were diverted to supporting the monasteries. The monks in the religious council had a tremendous amount of political power. The next Emperor to come along, Langdarma, gets portrayed as the devil because he persecuted the religious council and stopped all the taxes from going to the monasteries. He disbanded the monasteries, but he did not get rid of the libraries. We know this because when Atisha came to Tibet in the eleventh century he remarked at how wonderful the libraries were. Langdarma basically stopped the monastic institutions because they were becoming too strong politically. So there was a time in which the monasteries were deserted.¹³

The Bon texts buried in Samyay were first discovered in 913. Some shepherds were staying in the monastery and when they leaned against a wall, it crumbled revealing some texts. The bulk of the Bon texts were discovered about a century later by a great Bonpo master named Shenchen Luga. In 1017, he codified them. They were mostly non-dzogchen material, covering what we would call teachings in common with Tibetan Buddhism. It was only after this that Nyingmas start to discover texts in Samyay and in other monasteries. A number of masters found both Bon and Nyingma texts, and often in the same place. The Nyingma texts were mostly about dzogchen. We are on a more solid historical ground when we consider the new phase of Bon, the old phase being before the exile and burial of texts.¹⁴

Comparing Bon and Tibetan Buddhism

We find that there is a tremendous amount in common with the Tibetan Buddhist traditions. This is why His Holiness calls Bon one of the five traditions. The Bonpos would not like it, but we can call them another form of Tibetan Buddhism. It depends on how we define a Buddhist tradition. Most of the terminology is the same. Bon talks about enlightenment, attaining enlightenment, Buddhas, and so on. Certain terms are different

13 Karmay, Samten.G(1972), The Treasury of Good sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon, (London oriental series, Vol.26, Oxford University, Vol.26, Oxford University Press, 1972) Tibetan and English.

14 Hummel, Siegbert(1968), Bon-Ikonographisches in Linden Museum, Stuttgart, pp.197-205.

as are the names of various deities, but the basic teachings are there. There are some very trivial differences such as circumambulating counterclockwise rather than clockwise. The type of ceremonial hat is different. The monks' robes are identical except that part of the vest is blue rather than red or yellow.

Bon has a tradition of debate, exactly as the Tibetan Buddhist traditions do. The debate tradition goes back very far, so again we have to wonder who started it. It was certainly present in the Indian monasteries much earlier than its appearance in Tibet. It could have come into the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, however, through Bon. On the other hand, it does not necessarily have to be that one copied it from the other.¹⁵

What is very interesting is that the Bonpo debate tradition follows the Gelug debate tradition very closely. Many of the Bonpo monks even train in debate at the Gelug monasteries and even receive Geshe degrees. That suggests that although Bon has dzogchen, the interpretation of Madhyamaka is closer to the Gelug interpretation than to the Nyingma one. Otherwise, they could not join in the Gelug debates. The similarities between Bon and Tibetan Buddhism are not exclusively in relation to Nyingma. It is not just a clone of Nyingma with different names. It is much more complex.

Bon also emphasizes the various traditional Indian sciences, which they study much more intensely than in the Buddhist monasteries – medicine, astrology, poetic meters, and so on. Within the Buddhist monasteries, these subjects are emphasized much more in Amdo in eastern Tibet than in central Tibet.

Both Bon and Tibetan Buddhism have monasteries and monastic vows. It is quite interesting that although many of the vows are the same in the two traditions, Bon has certain vows that one would expect Buddhists to have but they do not. For example, Bonpos have a vow of being vegetarian. Buddhists don't. The Bon morality is a little stricter than the Buddhist.¹⁶

Bon has a system of tulkus, which is the same as that in the Buddhist monasteries. They have Geshes. They have Prajnaparamita, Madhyamaka, Abhidharma, and all of the

15 Bell, Sir Charles Alfred (1931), *The Religions of Tibet*, Oxford at Clarendon Press.

16 Doston, Brandon (2008), *Complementarity and opposition in early Tibetan rituals*.

divisions that we find in the Buddhist texts. Some of the vocabulary and the presentations are slightly different, but the variation is no more dramatic than that between one Buddhist lineage and another. For example, Bon has its own account of the creation of the world, but we find a unique account in Kalachakra as well. This is a general picture. Bon is not so strange.

Tibetan Culture and Essential Teachings Comparing Bon and Tibetan Buddhism

Snellgrove states that the term bon originally referred to a class of priests that would perform religious rituals, rather than an organized religion. To Snellgrove, the word Bon, which designates the religion today, came into use “in deliberate opposition to the new use of chos, which now had the meaning of Sanskrit dharma limited specifically to the religion of Shakyamuni.”¹⁷ We find that there is a tremendous amount in common with the Tibetan Buddhist traditions. This is why His Holiness calls Bon one of the five traditions. The Bonpos would not like it, but we can call them another form of Tibetan Buddhism. It depends on how we define a Buddhist tradition. Most of the terminology is the same. Bon talks about enlightenment, attaining enlightenment, Buddhas, and so on. Certain terms are different as are the names of various deities, but the basic teachings are there. There are some very trivial differences such as circumambulating counterclockwise rather than clockwise. The type of ceremonial hat is different. The monks' robes are identical except that part of the vest is blue rather than red or yellow.

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17 Snellgrove, David (1967), *The Nine Ways of Bon*, London: Oxford University Press, London, pp- 20.

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Tibetan Culture and Essential Teachings

It is important to try to discern the aspects of Buddhism that were adopted from Bon, which reflect the native Tibetan approach, so that we have a clearer idea of what is Tibetan culture and what is essential Buddhism. It is also important to try to discern cultural aspects from the essential teachings of Bon.

A fourfold process of healing has been fully adopted by all the Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Someone comes with a sickness and the first thing one does is to throw a mo, which is a method of divination. That comes out of Bon. In ancient times, they did not do mos with dice, as they commonly do now, but with a rope tied into various knots. The mo

indicates if harmful spirits are causing the sickness and if so, which rituals to perform to propitiate them. Secondly, one consults astrology to determine the most effective time for performing the rituals. Astrology is done in terms of the Chinese elements – earth, water, fire, metal and wood. Then thirdly, the rituals are done to clear away external harmful influences. Afterwards, fourthly, one takes medicine.

The theory behind rituals is slightly different in Buddhism and Bon. From a Buddhist point of view, we work with karma and look at the external situation as being basically a reflection of karma. A ritual or puja helps to activate positive karmic potentials. Bon places an equal emphasis on harmonizing the external forces and then the internal karmic situation.¹⁸

In both cases, these pujas for healing use tormas, which are toned down remnants of the ancient sacrifice rituals. The tormas, made from barley flour, molded into the form of little animals, and used as scapegoats undoubtedly comes from Bon. They are given to the harmful spirits: "Take this and leave the sick person alone."

Pictures of various deities are used in Bonpo bardo rituals and in many Buddhist bardo rituals as well. This goes back to the Iranian/Bonpo burial rituals where things were put into the tomb with the dead person.

Another thing borrowed from Bon into Tibetan Buddhism is the "space harmony web," a spider web-like configuration of multicolored strings representing the five elements. It comes from the idea of having to harmonize the external elements before one can work on the internal elements or karma. A web is designed according to divination and so on and is hung outside. Sometimes they are called spirit catchers, but that is not quite what they are. They are meant to harmonize the elements and tell the spirits to leave us alone. It is very Tibetan.¹⁹

The concept of life spirit (*bla*), which is in Bon and Buddhism, comes from the Central Asian Turkic idea of *qut*, the spirit of a mountain. Whoever ruled the area around a

18 Karmay, Samten G, Watt, Jeff (2007), *Bon, the magic word: the indigenous religion of Tibet* RMA (Rubin Museum of Art).

19 Wangyal, Tenzin, Dahl, Mark (2002), *Healing With Form, Energy And Light*, New York, Snow Lion Publications.

certain sacred mountain was the Khan, the ruler of the Turks and later of the Mongols. The king was the person who embodied this cut or life spirit. He had charisma and could rule.

The Tibetan word for life spirit, "la," is used in the word lama. A lama is somebody who really has a life spirit. La is also used in some contexts to translate white bodhichitta, so it is a very strong material force or essence within the body.

Then there is the prosperity spirit. If it is strong, everything will go well and we will be prosperous. The Tibetan word is "yang" (*g.yang*). "Yang" is also the Chinese word for sheep. At Losar, the Tibetan New Year, one eats a sheep's head and moulds a sheep's head out of tsampa, toasted barley grain. This represents the prosperity spirit. It clearly comes in from old Bon rituals.

The idea of prayer flags also comes from Bon. They are in the colors of the five elements and are hung to harmonize the external elements so that things will be in balance and we can do internal work. Many prayer flags have the image of the wind horse (*lungta, rlung-rtā*), which is associated with the horse of fortune. China was the first country to develop a postal system, in which the postmen rode horses. There were certain places where they would stop and change horses. Those postal stage horses were the wind horses. The Chinese words are the same. The idea is that good fortune will come on a horse like the postman bringing goods, letters, money, etc. It is very Tibetan/Chinese.²⁰

Certain aspects of Bon healing came into Buddhism such as sprinkling consecrated water with a feather. In all Buddhist initiation rituals, there is a peacock feather in a vase. The burning of leaves and branches from the juniper tree, called *sang* in Tibetan, is done on the tops of mountains to greet someone who is coming. They do it along the side of the road when His Holiness comes back into Dharamsala. It is associated with making offerings to local spirits.²¹

The emphasis on oracles in Tibetan Buddhism is often confused with shamanism, but oracles and shamans are quite different. An oracle is a spirit who speaks through a medium. It is channeling. Shamans, found in Siberia, Turkey, Africa, etc., are people who

20 Berzin, Alexander(2001), *Bon and Tibetan Buddhism*

21 *ibid.*

enter a trance in which they go to different realms and speak to various spirits, usually the spirits of ancestors. The spirits give them answers to various questions. When the shamans come out of trance, they deliver the message from the ancestors. In contrast, a medium usually has no memory whatsoever of what the oracle said through him or her. Oracles became associated with protectors. The Nechung oracle is also the protector called Nechung. A trace of shamanism, however, is reflected in a division of things as being on, above and below the earth, which is prevalent in Bon material and then came into Buddhism.

Buddha taught a tremendous amount on many topics. Wherever Buddhism went in Asia, people emphasized elements that resonated with their culture. There is mention of pure lands in Indian Buddhism but it was not emphasized. The Chinese, who had the Daoist (Taoist) idea of going to the Western land of the immortals, put tremendous emphasis on the pure lands and expanded it tremendously. Thus, we get pure land Buddhism. It is one of the most significant Chinese Buddhist schools. Likewise, within Indian Buddhism, we do find discussion of protectors, of various spirits, offering pujas and so on, but the Tibetans expanded these elements tremendously because it was in their culture.

The question of Indo-Iranian influence on Bon has been open for a long time now. Seeking to explain some linguistic and cultural parallels, several scholars have brought forward different theories of how and when Bon could have been influenced by the Indo-Iranian culture and religion. These theories could be broadly summed up in four points:

1. Sun (Grungy Bon) is a stream of Central Asian Buddhism adopted from India by the Iranian speaking regions in the West (such as Kushana Empire and so on) from where it reached the Tibetan Plateau prior to the introduction of Indian Buddhism per se from the South in the 8th century AD. This Central Asian Buddhism, traceable to Buddha Shakyamuni, mixed with the native culture and religion of the Tibetan Plateau producing what is now known as Yungdrung Bon. (Snellgrove, Tucci).
2. Bon is a branch of Zoroastrianism or Mithraism and Tonpa Shenrab Miwo was a priest at the court of the Persian king Cyrus the Great of the Achaemenid dynasty. (Gumilev, Kuznetsov).

3. Yungdrung Bon is a plagiarized form of Indian Buddhism which emerged after the 8th century AD and any Indo-Iranian - and especially Indian - influence was acquired in this process. (This is the view of many Tibetan Buddhist scholars and some Western scholars who still follow this outdated and flimsy theory).
4. Yungdrung Bon is the original, authentic Central Asian Buddhism taught by the Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo who was born in 16,017 BC (according to tradition) in the Central Asian region of Tagzig (modern-day Tajikistan and surrounding Central Asian states). Tonpa Shenrab Miwo brought Yungdrung Bon teachings to the Zhang Zhung Confederation (tribal union of 18 tribes) and Tibet (at that time only U and Tsang provinces) himself, and that is the source of most Indo-Iranian linguistic and cultural traces found in Tibetan Bon. (This is the traditional Bonpo view).

CHAPTER: FIVE

Conclusion

Iran and Persian culture have an identity of its own. Greater Khorasan covers a huge geographical area encompassed all of Transoxiana and Soghdiana in the North, extended Westward to the Caspian Sea, Southward to include the Sistan desert and eastward to the Hindu Kush mountain in Afghanistan. The Persian language and the culture of Iran give the Country and its people a unique identity, but this is often overlooked.

Tibet is renowned as the most remote as well as the most inaccessible country in the World. It is surrounded to the south, the west and the north by the massive mountain ranges, ranging from six to eight thousand metres above sea-level along the Himalaya and the Karakoram, and from five to seven thousand metres along the Kun-lun range.

The two basic ways of life in Tibet are the agricultural and nomadic, and the products of the nomad-herdsmen-meat, butter, cheese and wool-complement the food supplies of the valley people.

From the seventh century onward Tibet begins to enter an entirely new period of growth and development. The political history of the period of the yarlung kings (seventh to ninth centuries) is one of constant warlike activity. China was the principal rival and the Tibetans pressed further and further into the borderlands of what are now Kansu, Szechwan, Yunan and Shansi. On one occasion they even captured Chang-an(Sian) which was then the capital of China. By occupying strategic points on the routes through Central Asia they cut China's communications with the West.

To begining in the Yarlung valley, the Tibetan should have been able to sustain so vast series of military enterprises over a period of some 250 years. For long periods they made their presence felt in Turkestan (the Takla-makan area) from Hami to Kashgar, and here they were in close contact with the cosmopolitan city-states along the great trading routes, (namely Silk and Musk routes) that passed from the west to China. These city states had themselves inherited a whole variety of cultural influences, those of Buddhist India, of the old Persian Empire and of the Hellenized satrapies of Bactria and Soghdiana. Trade brought all and sundry together, and the territories that the Tibetans now occupied

were the melting pot of all the great religions of the world. These were Zoroastrians and Manichees, Buddhist and Muslims and Nestorian Christians.¹

Tibet's recorded history dates back to first ruler of the Yarlung, King Nyatri Tsanpo in 127 B.C. And his dynasty ruled the country til 842 A.D. The reign of the 33rd King Songtsen Gampo, the 37th King Trisong Desten and the 40th King Tri Ralpachen is considered the glorious period. During this period, Tibet extended its influence over many of its neighboring countries. The 41st King Lang Darma almost wiped out Buddhism from Tibet and his assasination in 842 A.D resulted in the disintegration of Tibet into small principalities ruled by petty chiefs warring against one another. This condition prevailed for over 400 year from 842 to 1254. This period was also the time of revival of Buddhism in Tibet.

Zhang-zhung is of special interest in cultural matters for two reasons, firstly because the later followers of Bon assert that their religious teachings came from Ta-zig to Zhang-zhung and thence to the rest of Tibet, and secondly because they claim for the country a language of its own, from which their texts were in due course translated into Tibetans.²

“Bon” is not aboriginal religion of Tibet but, as with Buddhism later on in Tibetan history, was introduced from the outside. It became superimposed upon an earlier shamanistic form of religion just as most of Tibetan Buddhism was to become superimposed upon “Bon”. However, “Bon” at the time of its introduction into Tibet seemed to have a relatively complex religion which was associated with the emergence of Tibetan Kingdoms. An example of the Tibetan view of their history is a version of their position in the world at the time of their first King.

Bon, came originally from Ta-zig to Zhang-zhung, can very well be taken seriously. Later they may have plagiarized Buddhist texts, inserting artificial title “in the language of Zhang-zhung” where the Buddhist text has a genuine title “in the language of

1 Snellgrove David, Richardson Huge, 1968, A Cultural History of Tibet, Great Britain, The Trinty Press, pp-49

2 Snellgrove L.David, 2003,The Cultural Effects of Territorial Expansion, pp 444

India,”but this was done because many of their early traditions were indeed received through Zhang-zhung.³

Ta-zig refers generally to the direction to the Persia and often more specially to the area immediately west of the Pamirs, namely Sogdiana and Bactria. When the name occurs, as it often does in Tibetan inscriptions and documents of the eighth and ninth centuries, it refers to the Arabs, whom the Tibetans had already encountered there in the latter part of the seventh century. The connections that the people of Zhang-zhung had with this area would inevitably go back to the pre-Muslim period, even to the latter days of the Kushana Empire, when this whole area still provided the main routes by which Buddhism was transmitted, from northwest India across Central Asia.⁴

During the fifth century B.C. there occurred a mass migration of Iranians from north-eastern Iran, i.e. from Sogdiana, to the northern borders of Tibet. Probably one of the reasons for this migration was the so-called religious reform of Xerxes. A large percentage of the Iranians who carried with them the ancient traditions mixed, during the first few centuries A.D., with the Tibetans who thus obtained from them the religion of Iran (Tibetan:Bon), the Aramic alphabet, books which have been preserved down to the present, and the cultural heritage of the lands of, the Near and Middle East. The “Bon” religion was the traditional Iranian religion (polytheism), its chief Gods being Ahura Mazda and Anakhita (Astarte) who are worshipped under their Iranian names to this day.⁵

The founder of the “Bon” religion is believed to have been the “Perfect Priest” or Shenrab (gShen-rabs) who came from Iran -Elam. His true Iranian name, which we find in the Tibetan books on the “Bon” religion, was Dmura-which approximates the name Mathura of Taranatha’s text. When we consider the fact that by means of reconstruction this name is given in the Tibetan translation as “crown, mitre” (gtzug-phud), this is certainly the name Mithra (a possible abbreviation of Mithradat i.e, “Given by Mithra”), a name very common in the East and the Europe.⁶

3 Ibid, pp 445

4 ibid, pp 445

5 Kuznetsov, B.I(1975), Who Was The Founder Of The “Bon” Religion ? *In Tibet Journal*, Vol,1, No,1, Dharmasala, pp- 458.

6 *ibid*, pp-458

According to the Tibetan version of the Biography of Shenrab, the teacher Mithra (Mithradat) came, as did Cyrus the Great from Ilam and lived at the time of the conquest of Medea and Babylon by the Iranians (sixth century B.C.). This teacher, we believe, is to be found frequently mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with the religious policies of Cyrus and as one of the high officials of the Persian Empire. Information on the teacher (Prophet) Mithra-Mithradat has also been preserved in Medieval Greek sources.⁷

Many Zhang-zhung words are used in Bonpo texts, quite independently of textual title, and thus contribute towards giving Bonpo texts a different character from Buddhist Tibetan text. Such words are (to quote only a few random examples) *shetun*, ‘heart’ (*she thun*, Tibetan *snying*); *nyiri*, ‘sun’ (*nyi ri*, Tibetan *nyi ma*); *werro*, ‘king’ (*wer ro*, Tibetan *rgyal po*); *rang*, ‘horse’ (*hrang*, Tibetan *rta*) etc. Some Zhang-zhung words occur in the names of deities such as *tsame*, ‘women’ (*tsa med*, Tibetan *skyes dman*, cf. Kinnauri *tsame*); *se*, ‘god’ (*sad*, Tibetan *lha*, cf. Kinnauri *sat*); *ting*, ‘water’ (*ting*, Tibetan *chu*, cf. Kinnauri *ti*) etc.⁸

The fact suggested that prior to the introduction of Buddhism, Tibetan saw the world in a very similar way to that of the early Zoroastrians. Both accepted a continued existence after death, a realm of heaven and hell, and a journey needed to these particular realms of the dead. Furthermore, both traditions sought to use some form of a cosmogonical and cosmological dualism to explain the positive and negative forces apparent in their lives. Certainly the early Tibetan religion and Zoroastrianism when compared show many key differences.

So what traits of Zoroastrianism are to be found in Tibet’s ancient religion i.e, with the “Bon”? First both religions believe in an afterlife that is divided into two realms : a realm of goodness and a realm of suffering. Tibet ancient religion “Bon”, like Zoroastrianism, also believed in a dualistic afterlife where one would spend eternity upon death; Bon, upon organizing in the 11th century, adopted a karmic World view. Both religions, then

7 *ibid*, pp-458

8 Kvaerne Per, Extract from the Bon Religion of Tibet, pp-489.

provide a similar view on death and the afterlife that has disappeared from related traditions but remains in Zoroastrianism.

Along with similar views on the afterlife, both religions believe in a physical resurrection. For Zoroastrianism, this resurrection will come when Ahura Mazda defeat *druj*, creating an eschatological shift in the Universe. Scholars have pointed out that the ancient Tibetan religion too believed in a physical resurrection.

Another similarity found in both religions is a theme of journey to the next realm. Through a ritual context, each religion offers a means to prepare the individual for the trip he will undertake as he travels into the realm of the dead. Zoroastrianism performs its ritual for the beneficiary in anticipation for his eventual death while also paying homage to Ahura Mazda and his entourage. The ancient Tibetan religion as well as Bon ritual however are performed posthumously and serve to guide the soul or consciousness of the dead into the next realm, whether it is envisioned as a place or a state.

The similarities found between these religions seem to share basic common assumption about the nature of the afterlife. Both religions believe in a realm for the dead divided into two separate spheres, a resurrection, as well as a journey to the next realm.

By the 8th century, Manichaeism had made itself known to Tibet to the extent that Trisong Detsan felt it necessary to comment on it in his defence of Buddhism. The origin of the Tibetan word for “Persian” challenges the assumption that Tibet’s knowledge of Manichaeism came AS secondhand through the Chinese, suggesting a more intimate connection with Persia, with the Tibetan court at least knowing of the existence of a Persian religion. Evidence suggests that the Tibetan royal court had been familiar with Greek medicine. Sogdiana was a state that existed on the eastern fringes of Persian culture.

According to Per Kvaerne the direct source of the Greek medical tradition in Tibet was Iranian. This is supported by the title of the successor of Galenos at the Tibetan court, which is given as Bi-ji. This obviously non-Tibetan word may quite reasonably be taken as a rendering of Sogdianbyc, “Physician”

The advent of Buddhism in Tibet completely transformed the Tibetan way of life, who were otherwise once known as ruthless warriors turned into genetic practitioners of Buddhism. Tibet had only a rag-tag of an army for many centuries. Material development has been systematically neglected in favor of spiritual development.

Tibetans are broadly categorized into 'Yulwa' - the farmers, 'Drokpa' - the nomads, and 'Sama-drok', engaged in agro-animal husbandry. The monks and nuns in the monastic institutions constitute substantial number of Tibetan populace. Generally, Tibetans are deeply religious people. Whether literate or illiterate, every individual's day-to-day life is guided by the tenets of Dharma. To have at least one son ordained as monk is a matter of prestige and good deed for his family.

Tibetans live at altitude of 13,000 feet, breathing air that has 40 percent less oxygen than is available at sea level, yet suffer from very little mountain sickness. The reason, according to a team of biologist in China, is human evolution, in what may be the most recent and fastest instance detected so far. Comparing the genomes of Tibetans and Han Chinese, the majority ethnic group in China, the biologist found that at least 30 genes had undergone evolutionary changes in the Tibetans as they adapted to life on the high plateau. Tibetans and Han Chinese split apart as recently as 3,000 years ago, say the biologists at the Beijing Genomics Institute. This would be the most recent known example of human evolutionary change. When lowlanders try to live at high altitudes, their blood thickens as the body tries to counteract the low oxygen levels by churning out more red blood cells. This over production of red blood cells leads to chronic mountain sickness and to lesser fertility - than Han Chinese living in Tibet have three times the infant mortality of Tibetans.⁹

Tibetan approach to nature and its environment helped maintain the fine balance between human and nature for a sustainable future. The blend of Buddhist concept of interdependence, love and compassion; and the conditions, evolved over many centuries represents a very high level of peaceful and non-violent spiritual practice and development, organized under a very sophisticated management structure.

9 Wade Nicholas, *Tibetan's, the fastest case of human evolution*, NYT.

With the invasion of Tibet in 1949, the dismantling of the Tibetan civilization started. Every aspect or manifestation of the unique Tibetan way of life or identity was shredded with the intent of annihilation. China claims that Tibet is a minority member of the Chinese nation (sometimes they say, inexplicably, “family of nation”) with local variation of a common culture. However, it has no ground for such a sense when they share no common territory and no common laws (until China’s occupation of Tibet), no common language, no common sense of history or common literature, only marginal commonality of religious beliefs and no common racial type. However, the Tibetans are completely distinct from the Chinese people.

In exile, for nearly five decades, Tibetans under the guidance of H.H the Dalai Lama have been successful in keeping their identity alive. Though Tibetans in exile have adapted their lifestyle and economic activities as per the local conditions but the basic characteristics of Tibetans being deeply religious and strong believer of karma (cause and effect) is still very much intact. Large numbers of huge monasteries, culture and art centers, and academic institutions have been revived and are flourishing.

The environmental degradation of Tibet will continue. By the time the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol begins in 2013, business as usual emissions worldwide would have added to the existing stocks of excess green house gases in the atmosphere. The trees, soil and oceans will not be able to sequester them. Scientists are worried that a warming Tibetan plateau will change the dynamics of the Asian monsoons. Glaciers that feed rivers like the Yellow, Yangtze, Mekong, Salween, Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra which are shrinking at an average rate of 7% annually will have great impact on water, food, energy and biodiversity security. About 60 to 190 billion tons of carbon locked up in permafrost may begin to release accelerating global warming. Extreme weather events then will be a norm.

Pastures: The Russian Tibetologist Roerich has mentioned that deprive Tibet of its cattle breeding region and the country would starve. The nomads’ positive relationship with ecology will end. Animal products like skins, meat, milk and butter rather than being produced though nomads may be factory produced. Use of pack animals such as yaks, dzos (crossbreeds), goats and sheep for trade will decline. Condition(Health) of glaciers,

grasslands and the nomadic life are very delicately balanced with the ecology. In Tibet it controls Hanisation and agrees to change the capitalistic mode of growth and development by keeping in mind the people's traditional preferences. Tibetan is made the official language with priority over Mandarin to help the people. With open policies it permits return of Tibetans in exile and allows the Dalai Lama to be a spiritual leader. It accommodates the Tibetan Government in-exile in its political structure. In some ways it follows the Hong Kong model for Tibet. This results in manifold increase in international tourism simultaneously taking care of ecology. These policies also permit China to have the world's leadership role in Buddhism. It improves foreign relations with the Buddhist countries of East and South East. In ecological matters traditional practices of nomads are revived to sustain healthy grasslands. Ecological concerns top the policies, as by 2030 adverse impact of climate change would be peaking. A realisation would have dawned on public and political leadership that solution lies in cooperation with neighbours and respecting traditional ecological knowledge.

Tibetan Buddhism: The first policy suggestion is on Tibetans and Buddhism . India needs to take initiative to facilitate a dialogue between the CTA in exile in India, and the Chinese. Misperceptions that led to the 1962 border war need to be removed. India is a plural society and Tibetans have been given shelter for religious , cultural and humanitarian reasons. Real Tibetan Autonomy does not mean break up of China. It means religious and cultural rights, and growth and development on Buddhist values, and not ruthless capitalistic modes which attempt to dominate or rule nature . It is unlikely that in Scenario 1, the Tibetans will give up their external struggle even in the post Fourteenth Dalai Lama scenario. Rather, post Fourteenth Dalai Lama there may be no leader of stature for China to engage. The situation may become worse with young Tibetans shunning the path of non- violence. The ideal is scenario 2 though India will need to work hard to retain its top position in Buddhism. Scenario 3 will test India's foreign policy and diplomacy. It is unlikely that India will act like a predator, rather India will need to further cooperate over the water resources emanating from Tibet . India as a responsible power with regional and global influence will be pivotal in conflict resolution.

Ecology of Tibet: Tibet is a global ecosystem and a climate crankshaft similar to the Amazon rain forests. It is the source of all major rivers to South and South-East Asia. Narrow sovereign thinking on Tibet will do more harm than good. It is linked to the Indian Himalayas. Thus the time is ripe for the countries of the region to conduct, consolidate and record scientific studies on the degradation of the ecosystem, both due to man-made economic policies and due to climate change. The countries of the region must reach a positive conclusion and understanding of both adaptations and mitigation. This will be the first step based on hard facts and scientific evidence. India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), mentions two things. It says that available monitoring data on Himalayan glaciers indicates that while recession of some glaciers has occurred in some Himalayan regions in the recent past, the trend is not consistent across the entire mountain Range. In its National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, it "seeks to understand whether, and the extent to which, the Himalayan glaciers are in recession and

how the problem would be addressed. This will require the joint effort of climatologists, glaciologists, and other experts. India will need to exchange information with South Asian countries and countries sharing the Himalayan ecology". '2030 studies' such initiatives must now be implemented. There should be joint deliberations on the common rivers according to international norms of water sharing.

Nomads

The third policy suggestion is for a relook on the nomads. The time to call then primitive is now over. Traditional ecological knowledge has been their basic tool. That must be preserved. Pastures and grasslands must be allowed to flourish.

Mitigation of climate change by developed countries

The fourth policy suggestion is mitigation of climate change. Both the Himalayas and Qinghai-Tibet plateau are unique eco-systems. They need unique global help. Here India, China and countries dependent on the Tibet ecosystem must argue for the developed countries to limit emission to avoid tipping events. The Chinese communist takeover of Tibet in 1950 had significant effects on Tibetan scholarship. First, it closed the country to

independent observers for more than thirty years. As a result, the images of Tibet, which were largely derived from the 1930s and 1940s, became fossilized.

Second, the Chinese takeover was followed by at least 100,000 Tibetans fleeing into exile in India and beyond. These exiles came from all over Tibet and from all sections of society, although including a disproportionate percentage of the nobility and the monastic elites. Researchers could thus gain unprecedented access to Tibetans and to the vast number of texts and other items into exile. The vast storehouse of knowledge that this represented, was to have an enormous effect that was particularly marked in the religious sphere, where Tibetan texts and teachings became available to all corners and spread rapidly to the west.¹⁰

10 McKay Alex (2003), *The History of Tibet*, Vol 1, New York, Routledge Curzon, pp. 9.

The peace plan contained five basic components:

1. Transformation of the whole of Tibet into zone of peace.
2. Abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people.
3. Respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms.
4. Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear waste.
5. Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

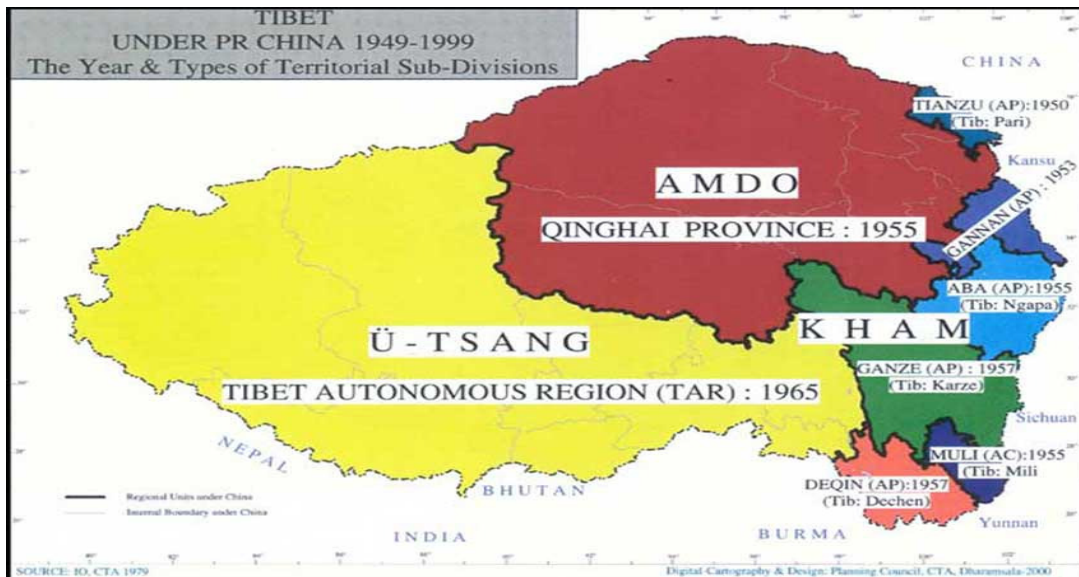
According to the Dalai Lama the central issue is that the Tibetan people must ultimately choose their own destiny. This principle was explicitly expressed by the late Prime Minister J.L. Nehru during an address to the Indian Parliament on December 7, 1950. ".....Since Tibet is not same as China, it should ultimately be the wishes of the people of Tibet that should prevail".

Since 2002, six rounds of discussion have taken place between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. The former have stated that the Dalai Lama's current approach is to "look to the future as opposed to Tibet's history to resolve its status vis-a-vis China," and that the crux of this 'Middle Way' approach is to "recognise today's reality that Tibet is part of the People's Republic of China.....and not raise the issue of separation from China in working on a mutually acceptable solution for Tibet".

The real problem arises from two demands pressed by the Dalai Lama. The first is his concept of ' high-level or 'maximum' autonomy in the line with the ' one Country, two systems' principle. The Chinese government points out that this is applicable only to Hong-Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, and that the kind of autonomy that the Dalai Lama demanded in November 2005 cannot possibly be accommodated within the Chinese Constitution.

Secondly, the 2.6 million Tibetans in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which constitutes one eighth of China's territory, form only 40 percent of the total population of

China. The Chinese government makes the perfectly reasonable point that acceptance of the demand for ' Greater Tibet' or 'One administrative entity' for all 6.5 million ethnic Tibetans means breaking up Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunan provinces, doing ethnic re-engineering, it not 'cleansing', and causing enormous disruption and damage to China's society and political system.



Since 2002, six rounds of discussion have taken place between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government.

Tibet card

Some vociferous supporters of the 'Tibet card', such as Prof. Dawa Norbu (JNU/SIS), have been criticising India for "playing it down even when it is one of India's most powerful bargaining points". He also accuses New Delhi of "sacrificing" the historical status of Tibet at the altar of Sino-Indian friendship as reflected in the 1954 treaty. The Chinese Communist regime has never been able to understand the aspirations of the Tibetan people and their deep resentment against Chinese colonial rule. The incident occurred after 30 years of 'liberation'. During the recent 11th Chinese people's political consultative conference held at the Green Hall of the people in Beijing, President Hu Jintao met a few 'Tibetan' delegates and told them, 'Tibet's stability has to do with the entire country's stability, Tibet's safety has to do with the entire country's safety'.

According to Dalai Lama "These protests are a manifestation of the deep-rooted resentment of the Tibetan people under the present governance". The protest in Lhasa is borne out of China carrying out a sort of cultural genocide in Tibet, intentionally or unintentionally.¹¹

11 Arpi, Claude, "*Brute force won't work*"

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