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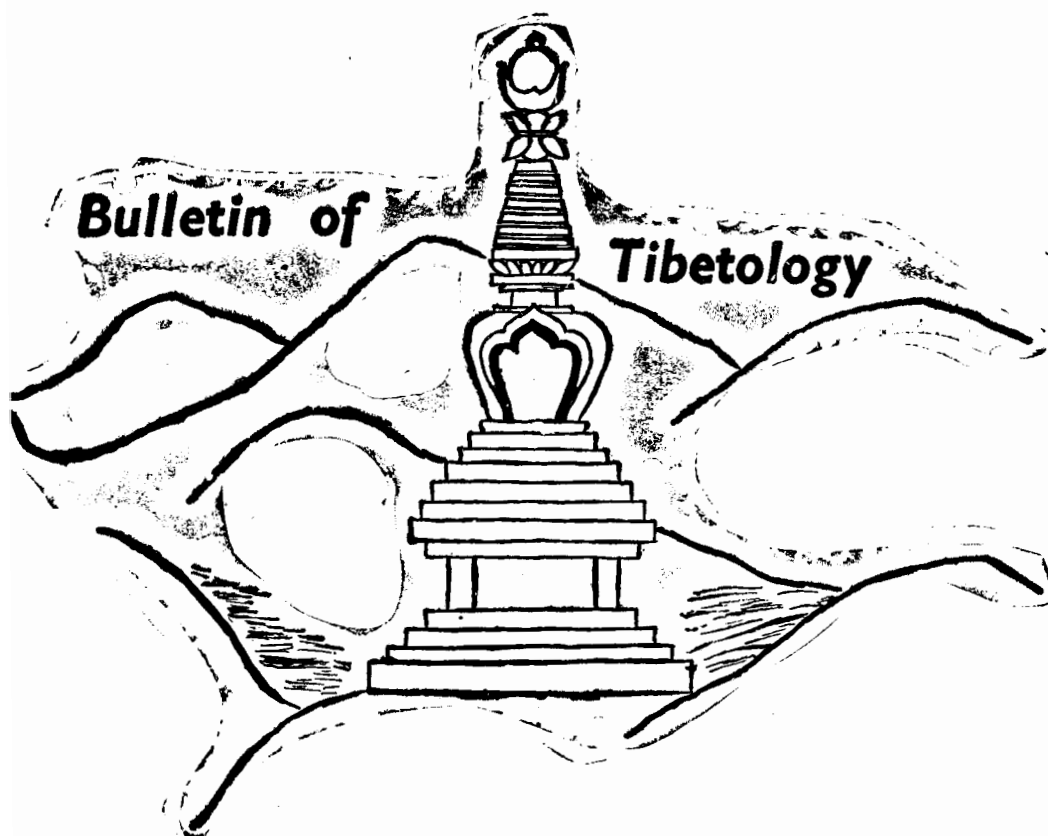
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12th July 1975.

**NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, SIKKIM.**

The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the readers with an interest in this field of study. The motive portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field.



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SUNYATA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN BUDDHISM

By—N.A. Sastri.

The concept of Sunyata is one of the main topics in Buddhism. Its early reference has been found in the *Majjhimanikaya*, III, p. 104 in connection with the elucidation of Sunyata-vihara (शून्यताविहार). It is stated there that the monastery is *Sunna*, devoid of elephants, cows and horses, etc. but not devoid, *asunna* of monks and their common characteristics. One dwelling in the forest may be devoid of the village and its men, but not devoid of the forest existence. In the same way when a meditator meditates on the earth as one object without its rivers and mountains, etc. he remains devoid of men, forest or hills, etc. but not devoid of the earth-oneness. When the meditator rises up to the fifth meditation concentrating his mind on infinite space, this much remains in his mind as a real object, *asunna*. Similarly in his subsequent higher meditations on infinite consciousness, on the state of nothingness, *akincanya*, and on the state of neither consciousness nor no-consciousness his meditations become devoid of every other object but not devoid of the meditated objects. In his last meditation on the absence of any object *animittaceto-samadhi*, he finds that even this concept is not everlasting and permanent and thus he gets rid of his three *asavas* of thirst, rebirth and ignorance. Even though the meditator in this last concentration is freed from the three impurities, *asavas*, he, however, retains the sense of his body as constituted of the six organs up to the end of his life. Thus we find explained in this Discourse the internal voidness *Sunnata* and the external voidness, *Sunnata*, viz. the former is the deliverance of one's mind from the said impurities, whereas the latter is the absence of something else in a particular place or object, e.g. monastery, etc. It is most likely that this internal *Sunnata* is conveyed in such passages like: *Suttanta gambhira Sunnata-patisunyutta*, "Discourses are very deep... and concerned with *Sunnata*, internal purification" *Samyutta*, II, p. 267.

A new interpretation of the term may be traced in *S.m.* IV p. 54. Ananda makes a query to Buddha on the meaning of the world empty and Buddha's answer is that it is empty because of the absence in it of the self and of anything of the self. This new interpretation is kept up throughout the later Pali texts like the *Suttanipata* and other Sanskrit texts as well.

A new expression has been formed in *S.m.* I, p. 135 to convey the absence of soul in man in a stanza attributed to Arya Bhikṣini. It

reads: "To conceive a permanent living being in this body is a wrong view coming from the god of death, Mara. For, this body is pure collocation of the manifest elements, and there is not found a permanent living being, Sattva" *Suddhasamkhara-punjo'yam nac'eha Sattva upalabhyati*/The same expression in the Theragatha, 719: *Suddham Samkhara-samtatim*/The idea that *Suddha* stands in lieu of *Sunya* has been suggested from the Sanskrit counterpart of the cited Pali stanza found in the *Abhidharmakosa-bhasya* of Vasubandhu, p. 466:

शून्यः संस्कारपुण्ड्रोऽयं न हि सत्त्वोऽत्र विद्यते

Thus the term, *Sunya* assumed a new definite significance which fact will be more and more confirmed in the subsequent citations.

Sunyata-Samadhi is mentioned along with *animitta* and *apranihita* in *Vinaya IV.93*. *Digh.III*, 219, *Sam.IV*, 360, *Ang.I*. 299 (*Lamotte, Histoire*, p. 47).

The above three *Samadhis* occur sometimes under three *Vimoksas* (emancipation) and sometimes under *Vimoksa-mukhas* (channel of emancipation). *Sunyata-vimoksa* (शून्यताविमोक्ष) is when one's mind is completely from the three impurities (*Dhammapada*, Sect.7, ver. 4). *Dhammapada* has only two *vimokkhas*, viz. *Sunnata* and *animitta* as in the *Cula-Sunnata-sutta* of *Majjhima-nikaya*.

S. vimoksa-mukha results from the contemplation on the non-soul-conception (*Compendium*, p. 216, *Abh. San. IX*, 39) The *Vimuttimagga* of *Upatissa*, (p. 313) also makes clear how the void-emancipation is fulfilled through penetration into no-soul-thought. One dwelling on the no-soul-thought obtains *Sunnata-vimokkha-mukha*, says the *Pati-sambhida* (cited in *Abh. Dipa*, p. 424, n.3). This specified import of *Sunyata* has been much amplified by other Pali authors like *Nagesena* and *Buddhaghosa*. The former comments: "the self-character of all the manifest elements, the supreme voidness, i.e. absence of any living being and intention the extreme voidness should be made bright" *Samkharanam Sabhavam parama-Sunatam niriha-nijjivitam accantam Sunnatam adiyitabbam* ² (*Milinda*, *Bombay Univ. Series*, p. 404); while the latter remark: Just as a wooden mill is void, i.e. free of any living being and intention. (*nijjivam niriham*) and yet it acts as if it walks and

1. Note it is *sunya* (शून्य) because there is no *Sattva*, a sentient being in it.

2. संसारानं सभावं परमसुष्ठवं विरीहं निज्जीनवं ।
अच्रन्तसुष्ठवं आदित्यत्वं ।

stands, just so is *Nama-rupa*, man; he is void, i.e. free from any living being and intention (*nijjivam niriham*), yet he looks as if he has a self and intention and discharges duties, etc. (*Vis. magga*, ch. 18).

Even certain Mahayana Sutras have favoured the idea that Sunyata concept counteracts *Satkaya-drsti*, belief in soul (*Lamotte*, *Vimalakirti*, p. 148, n. 16 and *Surangamasamadhi*, p. 22) as against the *Samadhiraja-Sutra's* saying:

“Voidness does neither arise nor die as all these things are devoid of their self-characters”

न शून्यता जायति नो च म्रियते ।

स्वभावशून्या इमि सर्वधर्माः ॥

(ch. 7. Ver. 28 cited in *Buddhagama-Sangraha*, p. 239).

Let us see now what Nagarjuna, the great champion of the Sunyata thesis says. He makes several statements on different occasions rendering the problem rather mystified than clarified. However it should be noted that he is a *Prasangika*, that is a *Prasajya-pratisedhin*, viz. he would combat strongly and ridicule every proposition relating to any metaphysical topic put forward by his opponent. When, e.g. the proposition is presented, viz. certain cause produces certain result, he finds fault with every part of the proposition asking whether the cause and the result are existent or non-existent and concludes ultimately that both the cause and the result are Sunya, void. This conclusion he makes eloquently in this stanza:—

“This world is a mere continuity of causes and effects; there is no *Sattva*, a sentient being (except in the empirical talk). For more void things come out of void things”.

Void - Sunya - *atmetmya-rehita* (अत्मात्मीयवर्हित), bereft of the Self and of anything of the Self. (*Pratitya-Samutpada-hrdaya*, Ver. 4 in *Bulletin, Tibetology, Gangtok*, Vol. V, 2, p. 16).

The idea implied here that the process of causes and results continues for ever without the aid of any conscious agent is the fundamental topic of the *Slistambu-Sutra*. Note the causation formula stated in the *Sutra*:

“The seed while producing the sprout does not think ‘I am producing it’; the sprout also, while being produced does not think ‘I am produced by the seed’; etc.” (p.4). Thus the entire process of causation is free from any conscious agent, *cijiven nirjivam* (p.3). Compare the Theragatha: *Suddham dhannasamuppadam Suddham samkharasamuppadam*

samtatim 1 "Pure is production of things and pure is the continuity of the manifest elements" substituting an old terminology *Suddha*, pure for *Sunna*, void, (*Adhimutta*-thera's ver. 12) and note his another saying : *Suddham anissaram etam*, "This is all pure and without an verlord" *Ibid.* 9).

We can now see that the comments on *Sunnata* (शून्यता) made by *Nagasena* and *Buddha-ghosa* as noted above (p.18) are quite in keeping with the traditional thinking of the early Buddhists.

Thus the cause, effect and the act of production being void, *Nagarjuna* declares :

"What is the dependent origination,
We call it voidness" (*Madh. Sastra*, ch. 24, Ver.18).

The same idea he spells out in another context :

"Dependent origination is nothing but voidness, and (so) accepted by you"

यः मतीत्यसमुत्पादः शून्यता संव ते मता

Cited in *Bodh-Panjika*, p. 414 from his *Lokatita-stava* 20).

In all these passages the original idea of *nissattva*, self-lessness intended in the term must not be overlooked by us. So the premises made by the *Madhyamika* authors as *dharma*s are *Sunya*, void and *nissva-bhava*, non-substantial are quite sensible and suggestive. Although one may plead with *Bhavaviveka* (*Karatala*. p 36) that these two terms are synonyms, they have their own primary ideas and significances.

Some early Buddhists raise objection to such a wide application of *Sunyata* on the plea that *Buddha* preached it as a means to gain insight into no-soul-idea, (अनत्ता). *Nagarjuna* replies in this celebrated stanza :

"*Sunyata* has been preached by *Buddhas* with a view to removing all wrong speculations. But those who resort to it as an ultimate end are to be declared as incorrigible fellows". (*Madh-Sastra*, XIII, 8).

The above introductory statement by *Candrakirti* in his *Prasanna-pada* makes clear that it was *Nagarjuna* who widened the application of *Sunyata* to the entire field of philosophical speculation. However, the

fact that the Sunyata-doctrine must be viewed as a suitable weapon to check all the wrong views and opinions has also been well stressed by Nagasena, a predecessor of Nagarjuna (See Milinda, p. 404).

Doctrine of Sunyata (शून्यता) is a fundamental topic of the Satyasiddhi which adopted it as an antidote against the reality-notions of separate elements including the concepts of *Usmagate*, etc. Sunyata is not applied to prajñapti dharmas, empirical things like chariot, house, etc. reality of which is negated by means of studies of the scripture. Sunyata-concept is not an end by itself, it is also put a stop to at the Nirvanic state (Ch. 141).

The S. Siddhi employs the term Sunya along with other three terms with reference to the elements in this order: *anitya*, *duhkha*, *Sunya* and *anatman*. Sunya has been made into 'selfless' in keeping with its early usage. Now the idea of *anatman*, 'selfless' becomes redundant; hence the term is treated as conveying the idea of non-substantial (chs. 189, 190, 192). The Siddhi presumably implies thereby the theory of two-fold soullessness, *nairatnya* of the Maha-Yanists.

We may now try to find out whether we have any early authority employing all the four terms in parallel as in the S. Siddhi. The Theragatha (Talaputa's ver. 27). refers to them thus:

अनिच्चं दुक्खंति विपस्स योनिस्सो
सुञ्जं अनत्तेति अघं वधंति च

We have here two more characteristics, *agham*, sinful and *vadham*, destructive. The Thera addresses his mind to be watchful of things in their true characteristics in order that it may remain aloof from them.

The mind's watchfulness over the separate personality elements is one of the four ways of mindfulness, *Satipatthana*. It is explained in the Nikayas as to keep watch over the fact that dharmas like the removal of the hindrance, *niivarana*, seven factors of Bodhi and four noble truth, etc. are elized and so on. But *Vasubandhu* gives a different meaning of *Dharmasmriti*. "The person engaged in it penetrates into the elements under four aspects: *anitya*, impermanent, *duhkha*, sorrowful, *Sunya*, void and *anatman*, selfless" (Abh. Kosa, VI. 19). This interpretation should not be viewed as *Vasubandhu*'s own, but it is, in fact, based on that of the early Sarvastivadin authors as many other topics of the Kosa are. Cfr. the same interpretation in the Abh. dipa with Vitti, p. 316-17. We have the same four aspects stated in another context. The Sarvastivadins' *Abhidharma*, e.g. *Panca-vastuka*, p. 10, insists that the comprehension of the four Aryan truths must be effected

under four aspects each. The first truth, *dukkha-Satya* is characterized as *anitya*, *dukkha*, *Sunya* and *anatman*. Since *Dukkha-satya* covers the entire Universe (S. Siddhi, ch. 17) the authors of Euddhism made a great capital of such topics and proved their ontological outlook well founded. It was probably Nagarjuna and his followers who picked up one important aspect of the elements, dhammas, i.e. *Sunya* and built out of it a stupendous philosophy of their own (v. my paper on Gaudapada, Bulletin, Tibetology, Vol. VIII, 1, pp. 28ff. and *Prajnaparamita* in my forthcoming Buddhist Idealism).

The Ratnagotra probably refers to the four characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of dharma: *anitya*, *dukkha*, *anatman* and *śāntanirvāṇa* (IV. 32) and in its comment to four aspects (*ākera*) under *nairyaṇika*: *anitya*, *dukkha*, *sunya* and *anatman*. Though these four are not spoken of here under *dukkhasatya* the context implies that they are described as characteristics of things under that truth (p. 103). Four perversions (*वियसि*) are mentioned as related to the phenomenal things: per-nan-tion-idea towards impermanent things, happy-notion towards unhappy things. Self-notion towards selfless things and auspicious-notion towards ugly things. Since the norm body of Tathagata is freed from the said perversions, converse of them are attributed to the norm body, viz. *nitya-paramita*, permanent-climax, *sukhap*, happy-climax, *atnap*, self-climax and *subhaparamita*, auspicious-climax.

According to Vasubandhu these four perversions are to be checked by their four antidotes (*pratipakṣa*), viz. four ways of mindfulness thus: The mindfulness on the body checks the pure-perversion, *Suci-viparyasa*, on the feeling, happy-perversion, *Sukha-vi*, on the mind, permanent-perversion, *nitya-vi* and on the separate personality-elements the soul-perversion, *आत्म वियसि* (Kosa, VI, 15 with Bhasya and Abh. Dipa, p. 316). By exercising the fourth mindfulness the said four aspects are to be observed in order to check the soul-idea, a perversion. The poet Asvaghosa who preceded the Satyasiddhi employs the terms in parallel and explains thus: The elements are *sunya*, void because there is neither producer nor enjoyer in them; they are *anatman*, (soul-less) because the universe is desireless and independent (Saundarya, XVII, 20-21. It becomes now evident that the S. Siddhi and Asvaghosa have faithfully kept up the earlier tradition in interpreting *sunya* into soulless or selfless; but in respect of *anatman*, the S. Siddhi made it into *nissvabhava*, non-substantial, presumably following Nagarjuna and his school whereas Asvaghosa put it into desireless. The above four characteristics of things are also mentioned by Nagarjuna in his *Pra. hrdaya* without explaining them (op. cit. p. 16).

A CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE YOGACARA AND THE MADHYAMIKA

The Yogacara Idealists maintain that the objective world that we experience is a false reflection of our mind. It is unreal because it does not stand our critical and logical test as Dignaga has proved (Alambana-pariksa). It is one phase of the store-consciousness which is an accumulation of beotic forces from immemorial time (अनादिकालवासना). The store-consciousness must be checked and substituted by a pure ultra-mundan knowledge. To do away with it is to acquire *somnum bonum* (v. तत्क्षयान्मुक्तिरिष्यते, M. Vibhaga, I, 5, तस्य व्यावृत्तिरहत्वे Trimsika, 5).

Maitreyanatha calls it Sunyata, voidness on the ground that it is cleansed of all defiling forces which generate illusive appearance of the external things as well as attachment to them. Voidness is not an absolute non-entity but something more. His plea is that the liberation is secured as a result of cleansing one's own mind of its misconceptions and perversions.¹ Because our consciousness presents an illusive show before us, we cannot deny its existence altogether. We deny its illusive characters; its self-substance remains there. The illusive characters are graspable and grasping aspects (ग्राह्यग्राहक भाग). Its self-substance is beyond the reach of the ordinary mind, hence it can hardly be denied (v. m. Vibh. Tika, p. 16, 10-13).

This conception of Sunyata differentiates them from the Madhyamikas. For Nagarjuna, propounder of the Madhyamika School, Sunyata, voidness conveys the idea of non-substantiality (*ni svabhava*) and serves as an antidote against all misconception and false notions. It has also been equated with the idea of relativity, i.e. some contingent existence of things. Nagarjuna says: whichever is brought about by causal relations is not really produced, and hence non-existent. He sometime raises

1. Cfr. Majh. III, pp. 104ff; Culasunnata-Sutta. The purport of this Sutra is summed up thus: "The true solitude is not to be found in forest-dwelling nor in the Concentration of heart from all ideas, but from in attaining to the deliverance from asavas."

Malala Sekhara, Pali Proper Names, p. 904-5.

the concept of Sunyata to the status of the Absolute Truth, which he defines as free of four categorical attributes, *ens.* etc. (v. M. Vrtti. pp. 176, 491 & 375); but he never says that Sunyata by itself is the Truth.

The Idealists do not agree with Nagarjuna's line of thinking. Maitreya, leader of the school has presented convincingly his case and shown how the concept of Sunyata should be viewed in order to accomplish the cherished purpose. He asks: How is voidness to be viewed? His reply is:—

When something is absent in a place, that place is devoid (शून्य) of that something; what is left out there over and above that something, exists there forever. Perceiving it in this manner

one is said to have grasped voidness in a true perceptively. Grasping this, one is said to have penetrated deep into voidness. This point is further illustrated as follow :

Suppose, we have here some object (*vastu*) specified as Rupa. etc. When its aspect coming under category of designation does not at all exist as it is imposed thereon, that object is devoid of the aspect that is designated as rupa, etc. What is seen there is the object designated as rupa, etc., and what serves as the basis of the designation : this *rupadi* (रूपादि) (serving simply as accessory to such designation) is something real. When one understands truly well these two: the basic object and the designation, he does not impose anything that is not there, does not negate the basic truth (भूत), neither exaggerates nor belittles, neither removes nor imposes, but understands the truth well; that is the Tathata (तथता) which is indiscrible in its nature: This is known as well grasped voidness.

The fact that every element is indiscrible in its nature is to be ascertained from the scripture also. Buddha says in the Bhava-Sankrantisutra :

Whichever thing is designated with whichever designation (नामन्) that (designated) thing does not at all exist in them : this is true law of elements (धर्मता). (v. I. 5. ver. 5)

1. The same idea is expressed in M.jh. III, p. 106:

यं हि बो तत्थ न हो ति । तेन तं सुञ्जं समनुपस्सति । यं पन तत्थ अवसिट्ठं हो ति । तं सतं इदं अत्थीति पजानाति । एवं पिस्स एसा आनन्द यथाभञ्च अविपल्लत्था सुपरिसुद्धा सुञ्जतावक्कंति भवति ।

Dharmata according to Kamalasila is *prakṛti*, true characteristic of all elements that remains outside of all discursive talks :

सर्ववाद्ययानीस्तुत्वं वतनां स्वाम'व :- Panjika.

How one is said to have ill-grasped voidness is also elucidated by Maitreya thus : If any ascetic or Brahmana does not wish to concede that what is devoid of something that something is non-existent and what is left out there is existent, then voidness becomes ill-understood. Why so? Because it is proper to say that when there is something absent, that something is non-existent; wherein it is absent, that basic element is existent. If every thing (i.e. both) is non-existent, how will it be ? What is it that is devoid? Of what it is devoid? Nor is it proper to say that it is devoid of itself. Therefore the concept of voidness in this manner becomes ill grasped (IF.Q. IV, 161, ff, L.V. Pous.in: Note on Sunyata with an extract from Bodhisattva-bhumi).

Speaking earlier of the Nihilists (Vaiṣiṣṭika) who denies absolutely any fundamental basic principle underlying our talks and designations Maitreya observes: We shall disclose how a Nihilist who challenges the very basic principle hidden beneath the surface of things like *rupa*, etc. (matter) shall be fallen from this spiritual discipline (*dharma-vinaya*). To the person who denies even the basic principle (*yastumatra*) in such things it is impossible to speak of the basic truth and the designations. For example, the talk of the soul (*pudgala*) is possible only in the presence of five aggregates of elements, matter etc. but not in their absence. Likewise in the presence of the basic truth underlying the matter, etc. the designations of such things are possible but not otherwise. In its absence one makes a baseless talk. When there is no basic principle, the baseless talk also will not be there. Thus there are certain people who on account of their ill understanding, having heard the discourses that are inclined to Mahayanic ideas and attached to the elucidation of voidness and intentional meanings, do not grasp the true meaning of what is preached there, speculate wrongfully, and with the help of improper and ill formulated logic conceive wrong ideas thus: Designation is only one principal truth; one who conceives in this manner conceives not well. For them the basic principle that serves as substratum of designation is absent and the designation also by no means is possible. How can there be the designation itself as the basic principle? In this manner they destroy both the principle as well as designation. The basic principle being denied, he is to be declared as a principal Nihilist (*Pradhana-nastika*). As such he deserves neither conversation nor co-existence with the wise men. He not only dupes himself but dupes others too. Buddha with

this idea in view says: Every thing is possible for certain person of the soul-view, but nothing is possible for him who mis-conceives the voidness. Why so? A man of soul-view may be deluded in respect of one knowable reality (*jneya*): but he does not dispute every knowable reality. Nor will he, due to that view, fall into unhappy state of life. He will neither dispute with any seeker of truth, nor will he dupe him. He may on the other hand, make the person secure a true dharma. But a man of misconceived voidness will be deluded in respect of knowable reality and neglect it. Due to that he will fall into unhappy state of life and destroy the seeker of truth and the end of misery. He will become finally negligent in his religious duties (*sikṣapade*). This person negating the truth (knowable reality) will fall from the spiritual discipline (*dharma-vinaya*) (I bid.)

Prof. Louis de Vallee Poussin thinks that the absolute Nihilist (*Vainatika*) referred to in the passage cited above is perhaps Bhavaviveka of the Madhyamika school or the Madhyamika system itself which maintains the views similar to those expressed in the passage. It is most likely that the passage criticizes Nagarjuna's school which holds the view that everything including Nirvana is absolutely void. Nagarjuna, too warns that voidness being ill grasped will destroy the seeker of the truth; e.g. the serpent when one catches it improperly destroys the person (M. Sastra, XXIV. II).

It is interesting to note that the above passage throws among other things a new light on the origin of the Idealistic thought is Buddhism. Maitreya makes absolutely clear that his school was started with a view to reinterpret the concept of Sunyata (शून्यता) which was elaborated in the Prajnaparamita Sutras and which was made again the subject matter of the Madhyamikasastra. It was the Madhyamika who upheld the view that Sunyata stands for an absolute negation of any conceivable thought about the ultimate truth. He never speaks of any fundamental principle (अधिष्ठान) underlying our daily experiences. The Idealist characterizes it as *sat*, existent whereas the Madhyamika keeps it clear from such characterization. For him the absolute is free of any attribute, existence or non-existence.

It is quite logical to plead with the Idealists that there ought to be some basic principle on which our illusory talk is founded. This point is well elucidated by Candrakirti in course of presenting the Idealistic position in his Madh. Avatara as follows:

“The relative existence (*paratantra*) ought to be upheld since it is considered to be the basis of entire chain of imaginations. The illusion of snake arises on the support of a rope. No such illusion would arise in the absence of rope. Likewise the idea of blue, etc.

arises on the support of some basic mind. If this basic fact is absent, what would be the basis of the idea of blue, etc.? Therefore we ought to uphold *paratantra*, the basic mind as basic cause of the blue-idea, etc. It is also causing agent of defiling elements as well as purifying ones. In this manner one realizes that what is absent in a place is non-existing truly. This (realization) is what is called truly entering into voidness. By realizing thiswise voidness becomes well conceived" (v. my S. nskrit text. p. 42. f. publ. in JOR. M. Supplement, 1930).

Candrakīrti earlier remarks that the advocate of God holds that He is creator of the universe; likewise the advocate of the store-consciousness pleads that it is the seat of seeds and hence it produces the appearance of the world. But there is one difference between these two schools, viz, God is permanent for the former and the store-consciousness is impermanent for the latter (I bid.).

This argument set forth by the Idealists in favour of one basic principle tallies remarkably with one presented by the Advaita Vedāntin. The universe for the Vedāntin is an illusion and imposed on the impersonal Brahman which is eternal and serves as basis of all illusions and illusory talks. The Buddhist Idealists agree with the Advaita Vedāntin in so far as one basic reality (अधिष्ठान) is concerned, but differ from the latter in viewing it as momentary. Since the basic store-consciousness is momentary and saturated with seeds, creative of universal consequences it is gradually to be eliminated and substituted finally or converted into a permanent ultramundane knowledge.

Vasubandhu's definition of the perfect knowledge is that when the basic consciousness, *paratantra* is made shorn of all imposed ideas (*parikalpa*), it becomes perfect knowledge (*pariniṣpanna*). Since the latter is evolved from the former, the former is considered as a real entity. In Maitreya's terminology *saṃalā Tathata* (समला तथता) is *paratantra* and *Vimalā Tathata* (विमला तथता) is *pariniṣpanna* or again *Tathagatagarbha* is *paratantra* and *Dharmakaya* is *pariniṣpanna*, or according to *Madhyanta-vibhanga Abhūtaparikalpa* (अभूतपरिकल्प) is *paratantra* and *Tatra Sunyata* (तत्र शून्यता) is *pariniṣpanna*.

Maitreya remarks that the Absolute is sometimes contaminated with impurities and sometimes freed from them. Owing to its contamination man strongly adheres to the idea of subject-object relations in his mind and entertains a misgiving about the concept of *Sunyata*, i.e. ideation alone, *cittamātrata*. When he gives up that idea and acquires the true knowledge, then the true concept of voidness dawns in his mind and he is said to be freed from impurities. Thus the pure or

impure state of mind is contingent (आपेक्षिक) or conditioned and does not affect its own nature; for it is forever shining in its nature (*praktiprabhaswaran*). The water or gold, e.g. is pure in its nature but becomes impure on account of its contamination with impure elements. Likewise is the mind. But the contaminated state is something actual and not our guess. Otherwise all people would become at once wise and noble (M. Vibh. Tika, p. 42-3). Its original purity also cannot be questioned; otherwise all our efforts for our spiritual betterment would be in vain and produce little effect. A Bodhisattva takes to the spiritual path in order that he should serve people and fulfil their desires. That is the primary purpose in his life.

Now let us note the Ratnagotra's comment on Sunyata. Tathagatadhatu is void of the accidental impurities which are of separable character, and non-void of the highest virtues of inseparable character (I. 153). There is nothing to be removed, nor is there anything to be imposed upon it (absolute). The absolute (भूत) should be viewed as such; one who views it in its true perspective gets released. In these statements the characteristic of Sunyata is elucidated as a middle path (*aparyanta*) since it has been denied of either imputation or amputation. The author further denounces the Madhyamikas and their mode of thinking; Those whose thought is distracted from the enunciated import of Sunyata or not composed or concentrated upon it are declared to be drifted from the Sunyata. In the absence of true comprehension of sunyata of the highest import (*paramartha*) the indiscriminated absolute element (धत्तु) cannot be comprehended or cognized introspectively. With this intention it is stated (by Buddha): Tathagatas' comprehension of Sunyata is no other than that of Tathagatagarbha which is unknown or unrealized by the Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas, etc. (P. 76). The same treatise decries those who profess and adhere to the Sunyata-concept itself are maddened in the doctrine. Buddha declares towards such persons: Far better is the belief in soul (सत्कान्यदृष्टि) of Sumeru mountain dimension than an abessed sunyata-concept (p. 28. I. II). Nagarjuna too is not less emphatic in denouncing such obsession: Those who adhere to the Sunyata-concept by itself, we call them incorrigible (M. Sastra, XIII, 8). These two statements make it plain that each school holds its own interpretation *prima facie* correct and condemns other's one a fallacious. An interesting parallel to this idea of Sunyata, not ideal by itself can be traced in the Isopanisad, mantra 2.

Bone of contention between the Yogacara and the Madhyamika schools is the question of *Paratantra*. The Yogacara (Vijnanavadin) holds it as real and existing, because it serves as a basis of our designations and imputations. However Bhaviveka, a champion of Svatantrika Madhyamika school refuses to accept its reality. He has also

criticized the interpretation of Sunyata as has been shown in the above cited passage (of the Yogacarabhumi: येन शून्यं तदसत् etc.), Read his Karatalaratna (Visvabharati pub 1949, pp 15-16 57-59). He has been accused by Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan Tsang and others that he has made Mahayana lacking in laksanas, paratantra, etc. (y. My Intro.p. XII-III, Karatala).

For the Vijnavadin, *paratantra*, relative entity may be unreal only in so far as its imposed aspect is concerned कल्पितरूपेण असत् but not absolutely unreal. It is an entity which consists of eight consciousness elements (अष्टविज्ञान वस्तुक परतन्त्रः) M. Vibh. Tika I, p. 15).

This point has been emphasized in the first stanza of his treatise by Maitreya:

There is a (foundation of) unreal imputations, but in it duality (of the subject-and-object-aspects) is not there. There is, however, Sunyata, voidness; in that voidness even there is imputation. (Madhyanta, I, 2).

Here the foundation of imputation is the mind and mental states (verse 9) ;; they continue by way of causes and conditions upto the time of Nirvana and cover the three spheres of existence (Madh. Tika, p. 12. L-10-11; also Trimsika, p. 41).

The later schools of Buddhism in Tibet and Mongolia which sprang from the Yogacara school have admitted the mind as the ultimate principle and viewed it as *sunya* with the implication of *advaya*, non-dual. Note, for example, Tibet's great Yogin Milarepa's statement (Lama Kazi Dawa Samdup's translation) "I understood the Samsara and Nirvana to be dependent and relative states and that the Universal cause is mind which is distinct from ideas of interestendness or partiality. This universal cause, when directed along the path of Disbelief (or selfishness) resulteth in the Samsara; while, if it be directed along the path of Altruism, it resulteth in Nirvana. I was perfectly convinced that the real source of both Samsara and Nirvana lay in the voidness (of the Supra-mundane Mind) '—p. 209. Previously Milarepa is said to be well versed in the exposition of the science of the clear void of mind, wherein all forms and substances have their course and origin. Here the mind is viewed as the void which however is not the void of nothingness, but the primordial uncreated, unformed, incapable of being described in terms of phenomenal experience (pp. 36-7). The primordial cause is pri-

mordial Mind, the one unity. All pairs of opposites being but concepts of mundane mind - when viewed by the supra-mundaneness of enlightenment merge in at-one-ment, and Duality is realized to be Illusion' (p.35. n. 1. v. Evans wentz, Milarepa, Oxford, 1958).

Note

The term, Sunya in the following instances indicate the absence of people or some person :—

सुठ्ठागार Dhp. XXV, 14, Milindap. Bombay edn. p. 360

सुठ्ठागाम, Sam-Nikaya, IV, 192ff.

सुञ्जवन (= रहः) Jataka, Vol. III, No. 305.

शून्यं वासगृहम्, Amarusataka, Ver. 82.

Again let us note Vasubandhu's comments on these two terms, Sunya and Anatman :—

आःमीयदृष्टिविपक्षेण शून्यम् ।

आत्मदृष्टिविपक्षेण अनात्मा ।

.....

अन्तर्व्यापारपुष्परहितावात् शून्यम् ।

अकामकारित्वात् अनात्मा ।

.....

आत्मरहितात्वात् शून्यम् ।

स्वयमनात्मत्वात् अनात्मा ।

Kosabhasya, p 400.

N. A. Sastri,
Santiniketan.

Introduction

I am writing this short article from Tibetan sources as a remembrance of the great efforts and sacrifices that the people and Kings of Tibet made to bring over Pandita Atish Dipamkara Sri-Jnana so that he might reform and re-invigorate the old religion of Tibet which had become lax and corrupt at that time, by infusing the strength and wisdom of the vigorous then flourishing schools of Indian Buddhistic philosophy. I hope to write a separate paper on the work of the great pandita at a future date.

Rechung Rimpoche Jampal Kunzang.

HOW THE TIBETAN BODHISATTAVA KINGS INVITED ATISHA DIPANKARA SRI—JNANA TO TIBET

Buddhism was first introduced in Tibet in the year 331 A.D. during the reign of the 28th King of Tibet, King Lha-tho-ri-snyan-btsan. Later in the seventh century at the time when Srong-btsan-sgam-po, a re-incarnation of Avalokitesvara and the 33rd King of Tibet was reigning, the art of writing and Buddhist Sanskrit literature was brought to Tibet.

The religion spread rapidly and it is recorded that by the 8th century during the reign of Khri-srong-lde-btsan, the 38th King of Tibet and founder of the BSam-yas monastery, it was flourishing throughout the whole of Tibet.

The 44th King of Tibet, King mNga'-bdag-dpal-hkher-btsan had a son named sKyi-lde-nyi-ma-mgon, who on his way to the western most province of mNga-ris-tod was escorted till gTsang-bye-ma-gyung-drung by the two minister zhang-pa-tshab-rinchen-lde and Chog-ro-legs-sgra-lha-legs. When the ministers were seeking their leave the Prince told them that if he were made king of the northern province of Tibet, each of them were to send a daughter to be made his queens. The people of the northern province of Tibet, mNga-ris-stod, on hearing of the Princess arrival, requested him to be their King and on accepting their request he became King of the northern province of Tibet. The two ministers kept their promise and sent their daughters, Pa-tshab-bza and Chog-ro-bza to be his queens.

Queen Pa-tshab-bza had no issue, but Queen Chog-ro-bza had three sons, bKra-shis-mgon, dPal-gyi-mgon and lDe-gtsug-mgon. The

three were known as the Lords of the upper country, sTod-gyi-mgon-gsum.

The district of Pu-rang was given to Prince bKea-shis-mgon and the district of zhang-zhung and mang-yul to Prince dPal-gyi-mgon and Prince lDe-g'sug-mgon respectively. The three provinces were known as mNga' res-skar-gsum.

bKra-shis-mgon had two sons, mNga-bd-g-kho-re and Srong-nge. mNga-bd-g-kho-re, in turn had two sons, Deva-raj and Nagaraj. Srong-nge's son, Lha-lde had three sons, Hod-lde, Pho-brang-zhi-ba-hod and Lha-bt'an-byang-chub-hod.

When mNga-bd-g-kho-re (11th century) became King he was aware of the great works done by his ancestors in the preaching and spreading of Buddhism. He gave up his worldly life along with his two sons, and was thereafter known as Lha-lama-ye-shes-hod. Lord Buddha prophesied as mentioned in the manuscript, Tsa-rgyud, that there would come a ruler in Tibet by the name of Lha-la-ma-ye-shes-hod.

Lha-la-ma-ye-shes-hod became very religious (Dharma-Raja) and learnt the Sutra and Tantra. During his time there was a great controversy going on between those practising the Tantra and those practising the Sutra, each stating that the other form of practise was incorrect.

Ye-shis-hod, in order to correct this misunderstanding selected seven most intelligent boys of the age-group of ten, and taught them how to read and write. They were ordained as monks and each escorted by two attendants, were sent to Kashmir in search of religion and to study the doctrine of Vinaya (hDul-ba) and Guyasamach (gS.ng-ba-hdus-pa). They were told to invite Pandita Dharmapala from east India and Biamze-rin-chen-rdo-rje of Kashmir no matter what it cost them in gold to bring the Panditas to Tibet. They were also to invite to Tibet other Panditas whom they felt would be of benefit to the Tibetan people. The seven monks along with their attendants, totalling twentyone, started on their mission to India. The journey being long and difficult, nineteen of the members died on the way leaving only Lo-chen-rin-chen-bzang-po and Lo-chung-legs-pa-his-his-rab. In the course of time these two became very learned having taken instructions on Buddhism from many Indian Panditas. As the time came for their return to Tibet they were in search of the Panditas to invite to Tibet. They hired beggars to get informations for them regarding Panditas who would teach Buddhism to the Tibetan people and lead them in the right direction.



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DIPANKARA SRI-JNANA

They went to Vikramasila monastery and made enquiries about Panditas from whose teachings the Tibetan people would benefit. The name of Atisha Dipankara Shri-jnana was mentioned as being the most renowned Buddhist Pandita and the most suited to be invited to Tibet, but who they said would decline the invitation to Tibet. Lo-chen-rin-chen-bzang-po and Lo-chung-legs-pahi-shis-rab knowing the name of the Pandita who could be invited to Tibet, but whom they then could not invite, returned to Tibet. On their return they reported to King Ye shis-hod about their failure to find any Pandita from whose teaching the Tibetan people would be benefitted, except Atisha Dimpankara, who meanwhile had been invited from Bodhgaya to Vikramasila monastery by King Mahapala.

King Ye-shis-hod having been impressed by the information given about Atisha, sent Lotsava-rGya-stson-drus-seng-ge along with a hundred attendants to India, giving him a lump of gold weighing sixteen sRangs (53 tolas roughly) and several other pieces of gold, to invite Atisha to Tibet. Lotsava-rgya-btson-senge (Viryasimha) proceeded to India and on arriving at the Vikramasila monastery had an audience with Atisha. He presented the lump of gold to Atisha from King Ye-shis-hod and conveyed Ye-shis-hods message requesting Atisha to come to Tibet.

Atisha refused to accept the invitation inspite of the tears of Lotsava-rGya-stson-seng and returned the lump of gold. Many of the attendants who accompanied Lotsava died in the meantime due to heat, and much of the gold pieces were utilized. Lotsava returned to Tibet and returned the lump of gold to King Ye-shis-hod. He related to him his unsuccessful mission to India. Ye-shis-hod was very grateful to Lotsava for having undertaken the hazardous journey to India and risking his life. He said he would try to invite Atisha again, failing which, some other renowned Panditas would be invited.

During that time Nag-tsho Lotsava Tshul-khrim-rgyal-va (Jaya-sila) requested Lotsava-rGya-bton seng to teach him Avidharma. The request was declined as Lotsava rGya btson seng was proceeding to India to obtain religious instructions from Atisha. Nag-mtsho pleaded to be allowed to accompany Lotsava-rGya-btson-seng to India and so he along with four or five other attendants went to India with Lotsava-rgya-btson seng. At this time King Ye shishod made a visit to the Nepalese border to collect gold for inviting Atisha. The King of Garlog being aware of the purpose of Ye shis hod's visit, and knowing that King Ye shis hod's ancestors were responsible for the introduction and spreading of Buddhism in Tibet, had Ye-shis-hod captured and imprisoned.

King Yeshehod's nephew, learning of his uncle's arrest and imprisonment, went to his rescue with a hundred horsemen.

The King of Gar-log said, "I will offer you an alternative choice. You must either refrain from inviting Pandita and surrender to me as my subject or you must bring gold equal in weight to your uncle's body as ransom for his release". Lha-btsan-byang-chub-hod chose to pay gold to the king of Gar-log. He offered the king of Gar-log a hundred srang gold and asked for the release of his uncle but the king refused and insisted on having gold equal in weight to his uncle's body. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod thereon offered more gold but still the king of Gar-log was unsatisfied and asked for additional gold equal in size to the captive's head.

Thus failing to appease the king of Gar-log, Lha-byang-chub-hod visited the jail where his uncle was, and looking through the chink in the door said, "Oh my gracious Uncle, this is an unfortunate event that has befallen you due to your former karma. If I was to fight and defeat this evil king then there would be much bloodshed and the result that we would both be reborn in undesirable states. On the other hand it is better for you to give up your life rather than to become a subject of this heretical king of Gar-log. I have chosen to buy your release with gold and have already offered a quantity equal to your body's weight. However, the king wants more gold equal in size to your head, which I shall now go and collect and offer to him for your release. Until then I request you to think that this is the fruit of your former karma and pray to the three jewels (dkon-mchogsum) to strengthen your moral courage".

His uncle king Yeshehod laughed and said, "I thought you were a spoilt child with the disposition of a glutton and unfit to do difficult tasks with diligence, but now I see that even if I die you are capable of continuing the excellent customs established by our ancestors. Moreover, what you have said is very impressive and has a great meaning and I am satisfied with it. Formerly I thought that I should not die before I established perfect religious customs in this country, but now I am an old man and even if I do not die this time, I will have only fifteen years to live. In none of my former lives have I died for the sake of the Dharma and now it is very good to die for it. It is very amazing that you have found gold as much as my body's weight but now it will not be possible to find additional gold equal to the size of my head. Do not give any gold to this heretical king, rather take the gold to India and try to persuade Pandita Atisha to come to Tibet. Please convey this message to the Pandita, that, "I have sacrificed my life to this heretical king of Gar-log for the sake of you and the Dharma so please look upon me and bless me wherever I shall be in the future and grant

me the boon of meeting you during my immediate re-birth. It is my principle intention that you should come to Tibet and make Buddhism flourish here and I request you to graciously fulfill my wishes". He told his nephew to convey this message to Atisha and forget about him but to think of the doctrine of Buddhism. The nephew looking through the crack in the door saw that his uncle king Yeshe-hod was bound by a rope. His voice had become feeble and his body was shrunken and unrecognizable. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod much grieved by this sight, said 'Ho-lag-so' (yes) and departed. At that time Nag-mtso Lotsava Tshul-khrim-rgyal-ba was residing at Gung-thang gser-gyi-lha-khang and learning about this Lha-stsun-byang-chub-hod called on him. He requested Nag-mtso Lotsava to sit on a high pedestal and he offered him praise for his learning, goodness and nobility. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod then said "My ancestors were kings and ministers who were re-incarnations of Bodhisattvas. They introduced Buddhism into Tibet and under them it flourished. However, nowadays Buddhism in Tibet has greatly deteriorated and men with evil minds are on the increase. Most of the learned and venerable people have passed away and this situation brings great distress to us. To remedy matters my Uncle and I selected many men whom we sent to India with presents, and at least hundred Slangs of gold, to invite Atisha to Tibet. Unfortunately most of them died during the journey due to snake-bite and heat and all the gold was lost. Hence could you please carry my Uncle King Yeshe-hod's message to Atisha and tell him that my uncle has given his life to the heretical king of Gar-log for Buddhism and for Atisha. Please also tell him that we have lost many men and much property and if we common men have so much moral courage, then what about him Atisha, most gracious one of boundless mercy and protector of living beings." Then Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod gave him seven hundred Slangs of gold (equivalent to 239 tolas) and said "Please take this gold to Atisha. Tell him how difficult it is to find gold even of the size of a flea without great effort in a poor country like Tibet, that this is the last of our men and gold and so if he does not come this time even, then he is without mercy and we will have to go our way without the guidance of Buddhism". He repeatedly requested Nag-mtso-Lotsava to convey this message to Atisha even if he did not want to come. While speaking he was shedding tears. On hearing all that was said to him, Nag-mtso Lotsava wept till his own face was covered with tears and his body shivered and he could not bring himself to face Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod as he knew what he said was the truth. Hence forgetting about the difficulties and dangers to his life he agreed to undertake the hazardous journey and said "Ho-lag-so". (Yes). The Nag-mtso Lotsava took seven hundred gold Slangs and started his journey to India with six attendants. Lha-btsun-byang-chod went a long distance to see them off and said "Most venerable one, you have done me a great service by accepting this mission

and I shall return this favour when you come back to Tibet. Please pray to Avaloketeshvara continuously for your safe return.”..On the way to Nepal, Nag-mtso Lotsava met a man who said, “It appears to me that you are undertaking a long hazardous journey of great importance. Recite, therefore, the following mantras and you shall have a safe journey and success in attaining your objective. The mantras is as follows, ‘I bow before the Buddha, Dharma and Sanga and bless the sources of all the Buddhas, the doctrine of Buddhism will spread in the snow faced land of Tibet’. The Nag-mtso Lotsava asked him who he was and he replied ‘You shall know later on’. Journeying onwards Nag-mtso Lotsava reached a place bordering Nepal. There he asked an Acarya for shelter and was accommodated along with his attendants in a bamboo house. The Acarya knew that Nag-mtso-Lotsava had gold. He was planning to set fire to the bamboo house at night. While they were asleep, a white robed man entered the bamboo house, and said, “Please do not sleep here, go away immediately otherwise your life will be in danger, I am a patron deity of all the Tibetans”. The Nag-mtso Lotsava and his attendants offered prayers to Avaloketishvara and immediately fled from there. At day break they met a petty king from Nepal who was on his way to Vikramashila monastery and Nag-mtso Lotsava accompanied him. When they reached the river Ganges, the King, using his influence, boarded a boat first with his attendants and departed leaving the others behind. By then night was approaching and Nag-mtso Lotsava got worried as he was carrying much gold. He concealed the gold in the sand and slept somewhere else after praying to the Three Jewels (dkon-mchong-sum). After some time a white robed boatman came and said, “I have come to fetch you all.” So taking the gold they boarded the boat and crossed the Ganges. When they reached the other side of the river Nag-mtso Lotsava asked the boatman “who are you ? I think you are not an ordinary person”. The boatman replied, “You will know me afterwards. To-night you can sleep under the portico of Vikramashila monastery and you will not be robbed”. Hearing this they departed and at midnight reached the gate of Vikramashila. Lotsava rgya-btson-seng knowing that they had arrived, looked out from a window above the gate and asked them where they had come from. On being told that they from mNgaris-stod, he told them to entrust all valuables with the gate keeper boy and to go to sleep and that in the morning the gate would be opened. The Nag-mtso Lotsava entrusted all the gold to the boy. Whereon the boy said, “The best friend is one who can be trusted. Please do not worry and sleep well”. Early next morning the gate was opened and a Tibetan boy wearing clothes made from herdman’s blanket came and said, “We Tibetans are very talkative and cannot keep secrets but you know that if one wishes to achieve a very important task, one must be extremely cautious and secretive. Now, Lotsava rgya-btson-seng is at the Tibet Hostel, so please inquire where that is, and go there”.

Saying this the boy left. Nag-mtso lotsava went in search of the Tibet Hostel. While passing a narrow road he met an old saintly Rishi having long orange hair and beard and carrying a walking stick of drift-wood. The Rishi asked him where he had come from and the purpose of his visit. Nag-mtso Lotsava said, "We have come from mNga-ris-tod to invite Atisha to Tibet. Could you please tell me where the Tibet Hostel is?" Thereon the Rishi said "This morning what the boy told you was the truth. There is no hope of achieving your objective because you Tibetans tell the truth even to strangers in the street. This time no harm has been done as you have spoken to me. However, in future do not tell anyone of your mission except to Atisha himself". Then showing the Tibet Hostel he departed. Nag-mtso Lotsava was surprised and perplexed by the Rishi's appearance. When he reached Lotsava rgya-btson-sengs residence, he presented him some gold and told him the purpose of his visit to India. Then Lotsava rgya-btson-seng advised him not to disclose to anyone the purpose of his visit, but to say that he had come to further his studies. This advice was given because Atisha had a powerful patron called Sthavira Ratnakara who would not allow Atisha to leave India. He further advised Nag-mtso Lotsava to call on Sthavira Ratnakara with a presentation of half Sring of gold and tell him, that they had come from Tibet and requested permission to get a perfect education in Buddhism from Atisha as they had not succeeded in inviting him to Tibet. Then they should relax, study, and be patient and later on when Atisha came there, they could make their request to him.

Nag-mtso-lotsava did as he was advised and accompanied by Lotsava rgya-btson-seng visited Sthavira Ratnakara, paid him his respects and presented him half of a Sring of gold. He spoke as he had been told to, and Sthavira Ratnakara replied, "It is very good that you have come to study. We are not short of men but if there is no Atisha then the other Panditas cannot convert beings into perfection. India the source of Buddhism will deteriorate if Atisha leaves the country, otherwise we have great affection towards the Tibetan people. We know how much wealth and men have been lost by the Tibetan Dharma Raj and we are greatly ashamed of this. It is wonderful that you Tibetans have such great respect for Indians". he further added many sweet words.

One day Atisha was distributing food offerings among the beggars. Nag-mtso Lotsava was present and asked a beggar "Is this Atisha?" One of the beggars replied, "What are you talking about? We shall not allow you to take Atisha to Tibet. We are not going to sacrifice our food share as we are poor and unprotected. This is not Atisha. He is a great person and lives elsewhere." The next day Atisha was again distributing bread offerings among beggars. One beggar boy

not getting a share, ran after Atisha calling him 'Atisha, bhalo bhalo ho'! Nag-mtso Lotsava saw Atisha and thought, this Pandita must be Atisha and ran after him. Lotava Shedding tears and disappointment, he seized Atisha robe. Then Atisha said, "Do not cry. What you speak is indeed the truth. I am most ashamed at not being of help to the king and people of Tibet. But now as you see I am becoming old and moreover. I am holding many keys for the Monastery. However, I am still thinking of you so please pray to the Three Jewels." When Atisha spoke these words, Nag-mtsho Lotava was filled with hope and could not speak for sometime. Atisha then said, "Let us go the Buddha Gaya" and they went. On reaching Buddha Gaya, there suddenly appeared before them a boy wearing white clothes and holding a crystal rosary and arrow in his hands. He bowed before Atisha and said "Oh, Lord, please go to Tibet for these Tibetan venerables are indeed much to be pitied". Saying this the boy departed. Nag-mtso Lotsava asked Atisha, "who was that beautiful boy who spoke Tibetan". Atisha replied, "You Tibetans are very hard to satisfy. Tomorrow there will be a Yogini at the North of Buddha Gaya, ask her". The next day Nag-mtso Lotsava went to the Northern part of Buddha Gaya and after some time a Yogini holding a drum in her hand came dancing along. Lotsava went to her and asked her about the boy. She replied that it was very surprising that he a Tibetan, should ask her an Indian, such a question and went away.

One day Atisha went to Nalanda Monastery and Nag-mtso Lotsava followed him. He saw Atisha sitting in front of the Maha Bodhi statue. On his right was the same boy who appeared previously and on his left a greenish blue coloured girl. Both were resting their elbows on Atisha's knees and glancing at each other. Then the boy said, "This is the time for Atisha to go to Tibet," and went away. Nag-mtso Lotsava knew that some deities had appeared in the form of the boy and the girl and was delighted to have seen them but was sorry that they had now left. He told Atisha, "The last time I asked the Yogini about the boy who spoke Tibetan, but my doubts remained unclear. Today too I am still ignorant of his identity. Since I started on my journey to India, there have been many emanations of protectors who have appeared to me and given me guidance and protection but I do not know who they are. I request you to tell me all about them and to make preparations for your journey to Tibet". Atisha told him that there was a girl weaving cotton yarn at the Southern gate of Vikramashila Palace whom he should go and ask. Nag-mtso Lotsava went to the Southern gate of the Palace and asked the girl all about what had happened in the past. The girl asked him "Who is the celebrated dGe-bshyen upasika in Tibet?" He replied, "There is a celebrated Upasika called dge-bshyen-chos-hphel from Central Tibet (dBus) residing in East Tibet (Kham)". The girl asked him, "Which race does he belong to?"

and Nag-mtso Lotsava replied, "He is called hBrom-ston-pa". The girl thereon told him that this was the person whom he was asking her about and told him not to pretend he did not know as he knew the persons name, place and race. Then Nag-mtso Lotsava knew that all those who had helped him were emanations of hBrom-ston-pa. The man who got him out of the bamboo house in Nepal, the boatman, the gate keeper boy, Lotsava rGya btson-seng, on the night of his arrival at Vikramashila Monastery, the boy who was wearing clothes made of herdman's blanket, the Old Rishi in the narrow street of Vikramashila, the beggar boy, the boy who was holding the crystal arrow and also the boy and girl with Atisha in Buddha Gaya were all emanations of hBrom-ston-pa, who himself was a real re-incarnation of Avalokitesvara (the patron deity of Tibet). Nag-mtso Lotsava prayed to him deeply and was relaxed.

After some time he went to see Atisha and told him, "Today we are earnestly requesting you to have pity on us and come to Tibet". Atisha replied, "You Lotsavas are very truthful. Moreover yesterday, Lotsava rGya-btson-seng too, came to see me and made an insistant request telling me about all that the Tibetans had undergone. After hearing him there came to my mind a picture of those Tibetan Dharma Raj Boddhisattavas and I felt deeply sorry for them. That sinful heretical king of Gar-log will have no place other than hell to go to. Those noble Bodhisattavas who have faced great hardships must by now be in Tuktita Paradise (dGe-ldan). What Dharma Raj Lha-btsun-Byang-chub-hod has said is very true". With tears in his eyes he further added, "Now I shall think of those Dharma Rajas and Lotsavas and not permit all their sacrifices to have been in vain".

After three days the Lotsavas again repeated their request to Atisha at rGya-btson-seng's house and by this time Atisha had decided to go to Tibet. It took some time for Atisha to finish his work for the Monastery. Finally when they were ready to start their journey they had a problem regarding their loads. There were so many loads and if all of it accompanied them, then Sathavira Ratnakara would know that Atisha was going to Tibet and may stop him. Besides, to transport the sixty loads, they needed beasts of burden and so Nag-mtso Lotsava was very worried. Suddenly two Tibetan herdmen, father and son, wearing long pointed caps came with thirty Yaks, and they suggested that all the loads should be loaded quickly so as not to attract the peoples' attention. At about midnight all the loads were loaded on the Yaks and sent on their journey towards Tibet. It is not known how they crossed the Ganges river. The next morning Atisha went to see Sathavira Ratnakara and told him that he would like to show the holy places to the Tibetan venerables and at the same time offer prayers at those places and he asked his permission to leave. Sathavira Ratnakara said it was a

very good idea but requested Atisha to wait for a few days as he also wished to join the party. So later on they all went together to see the many pilgrimage centres. Finally Atisha said to Sathavira Ratnakara, "Now I am going to see the Mitra Temple which is very far away from here and hence it will be very difficult for you to come". Sathavira Ratnakara then realized that Atisha now wanted to go to Tibet. He turned to Nag-mtso Lotsava and said, "You told me that you had come to study but you have come to steal my Pandita. This time I can stop Atisha if I desire, but will not since I love the Tibetan Dharma Raj Bodhisattava who has sacrificed many men and much wealth for the sake of the Pandita. Besides you are also connected to me as my pupil. Therefore you can take Atisha for three years and then you must bring him back to me, otherwise the contract between us as tutor and pupil will cease".

Nag-mtso Lotsava was very unhappy at what Sathavira. Ratnakara said, for he knew that the journey to, and from Tibet alone, would take about three years; besides, even if he were to spend three years in Tibet it would not be sufficient time for the Tibetans to obtain perfect knowledge of Buddhism. He was very worried by this but at the same time they had to proceed onwards to Tibet. After passing the Mitra Temple they reached a border region between Nepal and India. There eighteen Tirthika Tantrikas came and, using their miraculous powers, tried to harm Atisha and his thirty four disciples because they were jealous that he would spread Buddhism in Tibet. Atisha performed a series of rites propitiating the SGoddess Tara (sGrolma) and made their bodies stiff like idols. Later on when they had entered Nepalese land he set them free by uttering mantras on a handful of sand.

One day an emanation in the form of a herdsman came with a Buddha image (Jo-wo-hjam-dpal-rdo-rje) and a letter from the king of Khoten (Liyul) to Atisha. When they reached Swayambhu, the celebrated Buddhist sanctuary (hPhag-pa-shing-kun) all the loads were piled one above the other and beautiful cushions and tables were laid out. Six horsemen who were sent by Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod to receive Atisha held a big ceremony and served him and his party with food and tea in the Tibetan manner. They set up a high cushion for Atisha under the shade of a Palmyra tree, and other beautiful cushions were arranged in three rows to the left, right and beside Atisha. A ceremony was held on the right side where Lotsava rGya-btson-seng and other Tibetans were seated. Pandita Virya Chandra and other Indians were seated on the left and at the head of the middle row was seated the great king Samgha of Nepal on a throne especially prepared for him.

Atisha was served with a big bowl of white molasses, and tea in a valuable cup decorated with a dragon by the chief mNga'-ris-pa

named Sumpa. After this a beautiful white horse, called mThong-smon-rlung-gshog, lead with a piece of white silk in the manner of Prince Siddhartha's horse bSngags-lDan (KANDHAKA), was brought to him by the head of the six mNg'-ris-pa. They had decorated the forehead of the horse with ornaments of pearls, a big turquoise and gold coins. They presented this horse to Atisha. He was delighted at the offering and said that it was very auspicious.

During this time in Nepal Lotsava rGya-btsan-seng took ill and died suddenly. Atisha was very much grieved. When Atisha's party reached the plain of Palpa called Bal-pai-thang, he offered his elephant Glang-po-che mthong-smon (Drsta-Uadhi-basti) to the king Drag-pa-mthah-yas (Anantakirti) of Nepal and asked him to use the elephant only to carry building material like wood and stones for the construction of the Thang Vihara Temple and for other religious purpose. He forbade him to use the elephant for war and other sinful ends, but told the king that by keeping this elephant all his enemies would be subdued. As a compensation for the elephant Atisha told the king that he would have to bear all the costs incurred for building the Thang Vihara.

The king was very happy to hear what Atisha told him and promised to fulfil Atisha's wishes. King Anantakirti offered his son prince Pai-mai-hod (Padma Prabha) to Atisha for ordination. Atisha ordained him and called him Lai-dbang-po (Devindra). He was the first to be initiated by Atisha since he left India. When the party reached Bal-po-rzong, three hundred horsemen wearing white robes and white ornaments and holding religious articles were sent by Lha-btsun-dyeng chub-hod to receive Atisha. Leading them was the minister Lhai-lo-dros (Devamati) who presented a newly made painting of Avalokitesvara to Atisha. Each of the other officers offered Atisha a white silk scarf. The party then proceeded on till they reached mTsho-ma-pham, (Manasarovara) where he was warmly and lavishly welcomed by Tibetan monks. While Atisha was staying at mTsho-ma-pham, Lha-btsan-byang-chub-hod decorated the monastery of Yang-gling-gSer-gyi-lha-kangs and the village and road leading to the monastery in preparation to welcome Atisha. When Atisha's party reached mtholing-gSer-gyi-lha-kang the people of mNg'-ris came to welcome him. Atisha was accompanied by king Anantakirti of Nepal and his officers Nag-mtsho and other learned monks clad in Pandita's robes. There were in all five hundred men on horseback. In the middle of the procession was Atisha riding his white horse mThong-smon-rlung-gshog. At the sight of him the people of mNg'-ris were struck with wonder and uttered the words "skyabs-su-mchi-ho" (meaning I take refuge in you) and "O Lord Atisha, master of Buddhist teaching's, please look upon us Tibetan

people with compassion". Atisha was delighted by the deep faith shown by the Tibetan people in him.

Later on Atisha asked king Anantakriti of Nepal to return to his country and start building the Vihara at Bal-poi-thang. He gave him full instructions concerning the building and furnishing of the Vihara and installation of icons and paintings. On hearing that the king of Nepal was about the leave, the minister Lhai-dBang-phug sent a messenger to Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod asking him to come immediately to receive Atisha and to meet king Anantakriti of Nepal. When Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod got the message he at once left for mTholing with six hundred and fifty attendants on horseback. At mTholing he said his respects to Atisha and king Anantakriti and gave them a grand reception. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod presented thirty two horses to the Nepalese king and a gold Ssang to each of the Pandita who were returning with him to Nepal. He accompanied the party a long distance, to see them off. Before parting he requested three of the Panditas to meet him again in the near future. Returning back Lha-btsun-dyang-chub-hod invited Atisha to his Palace mTholing-gtsug-lag-khang. The party that proceeded hence consisted of about nine hundred horsemen carrying different religious banners.

Thereafter, for the next six months and twenty five days, Atisha fulfilled Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod's wishes by giving religious instructions. Following this he returned to Yang-ling-g'er-gyi-lha-khang. There he met hBrom-ston-pa who had come there from dBus. Many deities and saints had prophesied that hBrom-ston-pa would become his chief disciple. hBrom-ston-pa cleverly delayed Atisha's immediate return to India, by requesting him to teach him many subjects one after the other. Meanwhile hBrom-ston-pa wrote to scholars (Geshe) in dBus asking them to come "mNga-ris immediately to see Atisha. Thereafter many great scholars (Geshe) came to mNga'-ri one after another and requested Atisha to visit dBus and gTsang. Fortunately for the Tibetans just at that time the border between Tibet and Nepal was closed due to internal feuds in Nepal and so Atisha being unable to return to India consented to visit dBus and gTsang. Thereafter he never returned to India, but spent the rest of his life in Tibet, spreading and consolidating the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism.

He founded the excellent teachings of bKa-gdam-pa sect which soon spread throughout the country.

AN
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RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS (Six Ornaments and Two Excellents) reproduces ancient scrolls (1670 A.C.) depicting Buddha, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dinnaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha, and Sakyaprabha; reproductions are as per originals today after 300 years of display and worship with no attempts at restoration or retouching. The exposition in English presents the iconographical niceties and the theme of the paintings, namely, the Mahayana philosophy; the treatment is designed to meet also the needs of the general reader with an interest in Trans-Himalayan art or Mahayana. A glossary in Sanskrit-Tibetan, a key to place names and a note on source material are appended. Illustrated with five colour plates and thirteen monochromes.

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October 1961.

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TANTRIC DOCTRINE

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page. 41,

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