GURU RINPOCHE AND HIS VISIT TO SIKKIM

-Prof. N. Jina

Guru Padmasambhava or Guru Rinpoche, as it dearly called by Tibetans, was not only a learned scholar, but also a Siddha. He visited Tibet in the Eighth century; he is further regarded as an Emanation in human form of the Buddha, the master of secret practices for the taming of gods, spirits, and demons.

In Biography of Guru Rinpoche, it is said that he was the adopted son of the King of Mand, now in modern Himachal Pradesh. One day while a servant of the king was sleeping inside the Palace, a fly came and settled on his forehead, prince was at that spot at that time. In order to scare away the insect, he picked up a small stone and threw it, the stone however hit the servants on the forehead causing him instant death. Alarmed at the uncommon incident, the King’s servants and ministers thought that the stay of the monk child at the palace would bring more disasters and decided to kill him. The servant took the monk outside the palace and set fire to his body. The fire miraculously turned into two or lakes where a lotus plant suddenly sprang up. These two plants were called the child Pema Jigme or Padmasambhava on a lotus flower. The lake known as Tso-Pema or Lotus Lake is now located at Rivaliar within the jurisdiction of Monlim in H.P. and is a favourite place of pilgrimage for Buddhists.

Later Padmasambhava took mandalawala as a sinner of another great Indian religious teacher as his spouse. Very soon Padmasambhava rose to prominence as a tantric Master. In order to establish Buddhism on a firm footing in Tibet, King Trisong Detsan.. invited the great Indian teacher Santaraksita to the country. The invitation was accepted and during Santaraksita’s sojourn in south Tibet place called Dukmar yunpo tsal, gave a discourse on Abhidharma. The Gods, spirits, and demons opposed to Buddhism, caused unforeseen hardships to the country and the people. Santaraksita was convinced that unless the forces opposed to Buddhism are brought to book, Propagation of the religion would be a far cry and therefore suggested to the king that the great tantric master Padmasambhava should be brought to Tibet for the purpose.

So, the master Basal Nang was deputed to India carrying the invitation message of the king Trisong Detsan with lots of gold and riches. The Indian Master however came to know of the King’s invitation by foreknowledge and before the Tibetan messenger arrived at Nepal, he had already arrived and camped in that country. After meeting and receiving the king’s invitation, Padmasambhava proceeded to Tibet in the company of Basal Nang. As he was inside Tibet and moving via Keylong, a place near Nepal, he all of a sudden declared that ‘to me all earthly phenomena appear like gold, I have no need of the metal’. Swinging so, he threw the gold on the ground, later traditions held that the scattering the gold was Guru Rinpoche’s blessings for abundant gold in the country. In course of time, Guru Rinpoche and Basal Nang arrived at Tolyang and thereafter at a place near to the modern Kymolong Monastery where they were received by another minister Dongpa Paylom. As the place was full of sands and extremely dry, the minister thought that the landscape had an unpleasant impact on the mind of his distinguished guest. Strangely however Guru Rinpoche knew what was agitating the mind of the Minister. He advised the Minister to fetch a bowl of shungpa (shungpa in Tibetan) (the needed water). So saying he planted his staff on the ground and suddenly spring
water came gushing from the underground. The spring is still popular by the name of Shompa Thachu (divine water). Inside the spring water, fishes with the different shapes and sizes are visible (Since Tibetans believed in non-violence, fishes lived in a state of peace and fearlessness. I wonder now what might happened to the animal under the changed situation). A portion of the water over flowing the spring has formed into a big lake near by which gives out hot vaporous steam even in winter. It is interesting to note that animals like horses and cattle suffering from scabies get cured if their are given a wash with the water of the lake. I still possess vivid recollections of the place and experience I had in frequenting the place as a picnic spot. In course of time, there came into being a religious society in perpetuating the memory of Guru Rinpoche and in organizing puja and rites invoking Guru Rinpoche and other of wrathful and peaceful deities. They organise the religious Dance called Lo Khor chu rnyi specially on the Cycle of 12 years on 10th day of the Tibetan 5th month. There after the dance troupe pays a visit to different places in the country performing the said dance. It is believed that if the dancer wearing the mask of a monkey excels in his performance then the prosperity of the harvest during the year will be extremely bright. Guru Rinpoche, after having arrived at the place Dakmar Yamdwar Tsal, in South Tibet where he was warmly received by the King Thrisong dutsan. In the meantime, Shantarakshita was also invited to the country for a second time and thus the three Khanlop Cho sum out of the three Khan stood for the great scholar Shanta Raksita, the great teacher Padma Samthava and the dammarupa Thriong Dutsan. The portraits and statues of the three "Khanlop Chossum" engraved on the surface of caves are still visible at the place, during their sojourn at Dakmar Yamdwar Tsal. Guru Rinpoche build the monastery, known as Samye Migyur Shongi Drubay Tsaklag Khang on the model of attanpur, the place of meditation of Sri Naropa, situated on the top of Phula Hari Hill at Bhitar. The above monastery was the first one ever built in Tibet. Shanta Raksita, organised the religious ordination of seven Tibetan children in order to test whether the Tibetans would be able to abide by the religious vows and discipline. Later on, it was at this Monastery of samye, which become the centre of learning and which housed thousands of Barkhus, that Tibetan Scholars and Indian Pandits worked together to render the 108 vols. of the Kangyur and 216 vols. of Tengyur preserved in the Sanskrit language into Tibetan. This is a fact now universally accepted. However, a section of scholars hold the view that Kangyur and Tengyur works include other works of native Scholars. This is however not correct. In course of his stay in Tibet, it is believed that Guru Rinpoche paid a personal visit to many places in the country. There are many meditation cells established by the Guru Rinpoche which are spread through out the country. The most outstanding among them is the Sheyak situated in the southern part of the country. The cell is located at the side of a very mountain which is easily not accessible. The cave has a small aperture for the purpose of a door. It is believed however that a man with a pure heart and no trace of sin get through the cell door whatever be the size of his body. But a man given to all kinds of vices, cannot get into it no matter how small and skin he may be. Once inside the cave, one will come across a big empty cave somewhat like an assembly hall, is uneven and rocks with different sizes and shapes appear hanging down under it like religious objects. A slight stone of the hanging rocks with hand will cause the resonant sound of music.

The visitors will have another experience in cave, is that of a curious feeling of rain falling inside the cave. In fact, after staying for some time inside, one's body get wet and
damp. Further, while walking inside the cave, one has the impression of seeing inside the water. But outside the cave is dry with no trace of moist. People believe that the unusual experience inside the cave is due to the occult powers of the Guru. At a monastery retreat called Nagdop-Tsegya, there is a statue of Guru Rinpoche in the middle which is said to have been used by the Guru while conducting the ground blessing Pega for building the Sonam Monastery. A very strange thing about the Dorje is its middle portion which is in fact a triangular shaped blue stone but which appear very much like bronze, the main material of the Dorje. I have however personally witnessed a more uncommon phenomena connected with the Dorje during my stay in Tibet. On one occasion, there was widespread hail storms in our country threatening large scale damage to standing crops. Finding that there was no other alternative a prominent Lama of the place brought out the Dorje from the Monastery and waved the sacred object towards the sky for some time. Strongly enough, soon the hail storms started receding and further damage were averted. There is no doubt that Guru Rinpoche has also visited Sikkim, known to the Tintane as bayed Demojong. The widely known hot spring at Khando Saling Phug in South Sikkim was the place visited and consecrated by the Guru. It would not be incorrect to say that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has remarked that there are many places in Sikkim which were general and consecrated by Guru Rinpoche. In fact His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama Terming Gatsko is the incarnation of Guru Rinpoche himself. According to the historical records of Tibet, when Guru Rinpoche was about to proceed to the Country of Rakshas in the South West of Asia, now known as Sri Lanka, Muni Tsinpo, the son of King Trisong Detsan approached the Guru and said "If you proceed to the country of the Rakshasins, we Tibetans will be left helpless and defenseless behind. Hence under no circumstances Please do not go away." As that the Guru said "As for the revelation of Buddha himself, Lobzang Dalipa the incarnation of Atisha will appear in Bhuddhan of Tibet and there will prevail happiness and prosperity in the country." Lobzang Dalipa is no other person than the Monk celebrated teacher Lord Tsong Khapa. The fact that the great Indian Teacher Atisha and Tsong Khapa were the incarnations of Guru Rinpoche is something which the Guru himself had foretold in his book of Revelations hundreds of years ago. Peace it is unfortunate that there should be difference of opinions between the old and new Schools of Buddhism in Tibet. I would therefore appeal to all concerned to think all of the are the disciples of the same teacher Guru Rinpoche and follow his path.

In the same revelation it has also been stated by the Guru Rinpoche, I quote "Having received from Bunnyang, for some time, I shall hold the throne. I shall pacify myself and manage both the religious and secular affairs of the country. Personally I feel that the above revelation unpardonably refer to the events that have taken place in the life of the 14th Dalai Lama, the wording, Bunshang states for Kuhum and tris sarchen means refer to the events of His Holiness taken reins of Government which was cut short by the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Hence, we are lucky in the sense that we have the opportunity of seeing the Guru Rinpoche in the form of His Holiness the great epitome of non-violence and Peace. Similarly the establishment of the Penangangse, sanggye choeling and Tashi Dog Monasteries in Dama Long is no doubt the blessing of the Guru. Apart from this, the legend of the Gangchen Zodnam mountain is connected with religious activities of the Guru. In a treatise called Chening of the Jonang Tshering Chogna there is the mention of the Mountain called Sang Jomo thronthing.
Phodong on the Tibet-Nepal border is not other than Kangchen Junga itself. As mentioned above, Guru Rinpoche made journey to Tibet passing through Nepal. When the Guru had his first visions of Kangchen Junga mountain, from the Tibet-Nepal border, the five sisters of the Tsiring chenpo manifested themselves in the form of Demons in order to frighten away the unusual visitors to their domain. But the Guru, being the master of occult magic powers, easily brought the Demons under control and later they become Goddesses. Later these five sister Goddesses brought with others formed the group of 12 Goddesses known as Zungling Tamskunts who is said to have the vows of protection of the Buddhism in Tibet. Venorable Lama Gedun Chopel, the great Tibetan scholar of the recent times has said I have translated the chapter the Song of Faith from the Bhagavad Gita. So the Twelve She-Devis had taken the vow before the Guru not to allow other religions to flourish on the soil of Tibet and as such this appear to me as a punishment. There were stories of Guru Rinpoche of having subdued similar other worldly deities like Gangkar shirnak and Nanderon chang tha. It was because of the Guru's kindness, the Doctrine of the Buddhism was established and propagated in Tibet in large scale. He is therefore the great religious pioneer, deserves every respect and adoration from all the sects of the Tibetan Buddhism like the Nyimgma, Kajyu, Sakya and Geluk. The people of Sikka pay high respect to Guru Rinpoche, we should arrange for the special recitation of Guru's Sodlop as often as possible in this degenerated times. By doing so, I am sure, that will not only bring peace and solace to the suffering humanity but also help the cause of Buddhism to develop and grow further with more and greater vigour.

Bulletin of Tibetology