

The Tibetan Renaissance and Tantric Buddhism

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Abstract—The renaissance of Tibetan Buddhism in the Middle Ages was a period characterized by the unprecedented and fervent changes in religion and politics. This process is characterized by complexities of various kinds: first, the anachronisms and biases of the surviving primary sources; second, the multiplicity of Buddhist scriptures and practices that made their way to Tibet from surrounding regions, and, even more importantly, the subsequent innovations within Tibet, all of which contributed to an often fractious religious landscape; third, the extended political fragmentation, which presented challenges for Buddhist monks and teachers who needed to seek patronage through diplomatic means, as well as the opportunities for political powers to try to transcend their limited power by recruiting support from Buddhist communities.

Keywords—Tibet, Buddhism, religions, politics, power

I. INTRODUCTION

It may seem easy to perceive Tibet as an indelibly Buddhist country. However, this illusion was constructed from the works of generations of dedicated Tibetan Buddhists. Over the decades, the militaristic Tibetan empire underwent a period of social and political chaos that was referred to by Tibetan documents refer to this epoch as the period of political fragmentation or the decline of the doctrine [1]. Only after this period of social upheaval was the Tibetan renaissance possible, as only after the period of fragmentation could the distinctiveness of Tibetan Buddhism become evident, allowing it to spread amongst the local village populace of which reasons for this will be explained in due course.

It's important to recognize where Tibet stood from the 9th to 10th century, through sources mainly consisting of later and incomplete mixtures of royal lineage, the history of the Dharma, and hagiographical texts. Although there was awareness of Buddhism that penetrated through village and nomad life, the majority of Tibetans persisted in practicing the prior forms of religion and culture of Bon before the arrival of the court-sponsored Buddhist agendas. Previously, Tibetans lived in a world of animism. Their world was said to be ruled by three types of spirits: the Iha in the heavens, the Nyen in the air and on the peaks of the mountains, and the Lu in the underworld and rivers [2]. While these deities were the most powerful, there were also warrior gods of clans and spirits of the mountains, rivers, and lakes. These ideas were classified under the name Bon, although we should be cautious in calling it an organized religion, as documents indicate that Bon was more of a ritual or priestly practice that persisted even as Buddhism came to dominant Tibetan society.

Thus, the power of Buddhism was limited by the institutions of anarchic authority of the court. Trisong Detsen (755–797/804) employed Buddhist scripture to codify edicts

and the Tibetan language, and later Tsenpos used it to annex and incorporate territories and served as a diplomatic tool to establish themselves as overlords and assimilation of their alien neighbours.

The collapse of the empire in 842 C.E. was largely recorded by the publication of documents in Tibet and the West over the last three decades. These materials often reveal an extraordinary amount of variation in dates and activities, and as often observed by countries' history that has been subsumed by its religious history, the documents seem to be facilitated by religiously oriented writers.

The reign of Ralpachen (806–838) and his pro-Buddhist agenda ended in 840/1 following his assassination, with his downfall ultimately attributed to his declaration to espouse the three duties of the emperor simultaneously: the construction of imperially sponsored temples, the maintenance of happiness for its people, and the infliction of warfare on the enemies of imperial Tibet, leading to deficits in the budget and bureaucratic jealousy amongst advisors. The employment of scholars in bureaus for orthographic changes in the Tibetan language resulted in additional expenditures, not only for ink and paper but also for the gold and silver used for the creation of treasured collections. As well as the construction and refurbishment of imperially sponsored temples across the realm resulting in the consequent expansion of the Buddhist clerical order and the recruitment of monks, on a scale that seven families would support a monk.

Fueled with resentment and disarray at the increasing expenditures and changes in the culture of the entrenched powers of the clergy, Lang Darma (799–842) began his process of closing temples, burning books, and defrocking monks, causing the remaining clergy to take refuge in India, Kham, or Xining. Another factor of assessment was that throughout parts of Asia prominent under the Wuzong (814–846) emperor which began in 841. Evidently, the suppression of Buddhist institutions resulted from the combination of falling revenues from Buddhist-controlled estates, the decline of head taxes through the expansion of Buddhist ordination certificates, the erosion of aristocratic authority in the face of the charisma of Buddhist public personas, and the expenditures of Buddhist ritual and monastic activities. Therefore, these suppressions would most likely be used to redress the capital expenditures, with the declining sense of imperial authority beset by the challenges of pro-Buddhist and anti-Buddhist clans to pursue their agendas, with the dwindling of religious sites instigated by the accelerating clan hostilities.

In response to the destruction of monastic sites, Pelgyi Dorjé of Yerpa assassinated Sarma in 842 using the Mahāyānist ideology of killing a tyrant to save him from future bad karma. While the circumstances surrounding his

escape remain mythical with his clever disguise, it provoked an already polarized aristocracy. The junior queen Tsépongza gave birth to the royal heir, Namdé Osung, just before Darma's assassination, though historians are sceptical of the claim [3]. Darma's elder queen Belpen Zama gave birth to Trihde Yumten at a later date, intensifying the rivalry between the Osung and Yumten clans, especially as the rule of primogeniture has not been universally established in Tibet. Certainly, Tibet became divided as a series of revolts unfolded 845–910, designated in the documents as the 'three popular risings'.

II. THE DISINTEGRATION & CHAOS OF THE REALM

To fully understand the situation of Tibet at this juncture and understand why Tibetans looked so desperately for Buddhism, it's important to acknowledge the context of Tibet during its era of fragmentation. Following the third insurrection, greater problems occurred following the deaths of Yumten and Osung. Historians often highlight the rash temper and foolishness of Pel Khortsen, Osrung's son, which were evident in his bad attitude during his father's funerary rites. Eventually, Pel Khortsen was killed by Taktse-nyak around 910. As with much of Tibetan historical records (Great Chronicle), insurrections were often driven by signs of prognostication, calling Pelgyi Yerpa as the divine architect.

Correspondingly, the collapse was not limited to the demise of the central authority but also the disintegration of civil and social institutions as well. The loss of identity and virtue resulting from the turbulence, as the Tibetan civil life dictated by the cosmic diagram, had now become a malignant nexus. Accordingly, both the rule of law, 'golden yoke, the order of the king', and the rule of obligations, 'silk protective cord, the order of the Dharma', unraveled with the robbing of royal tombs by members of the aristocracy. The Tibetan empire was no more as the old monastic system collapsed.

The disintegration of order lasted approximately 100 years, with traditional accounts saying it to be a total of nine cycles of the twelve-year era, with the lack of concerted references indicating its fractured culture.

It can be surmised, therefore, that the civilizations and societies located in Asia strongly influenced the development of one another. It cannot have been through mere fortuitous circumstances that they all experienced the same nature of decline at the same time, with the collapse of civil institutions replaced by military warlordism. The reasons for this are complex and multi-faceted, due to the internal struggles and political instability, economic issues from increasing military pressure amidst the threat of foreign invasion, and the religious and cultural shifts due to the increasing ethnic and cultural shift, disrupting the established balance of power.

We can speculate as to the many reasons why Central Tibetans eventually looked to a Buddhist revival as a desideratum, but a large part can be attributed to the perception of grandeur and prestige of their former empire. The sense of loss and the degradation of Tibetan life meant that they were inclined to believe that empire-building was an extension of Buddhism's magical effects especially alongside the physical and cultural relics of Buddhist temples. It seemed to them that the loss of the empire was concomitant with their previous monastic practices. Thus, while political unity remained an elusive pursuit, religious revival was

attainable.

III. EARLY FORMS OF BUDDHISM

The system of Buddhism that had been supported by the hereditary aristocracy and feudal system, became known as the Nyingma (old style), handed down from a lineage of early translators named Kama. This term has been used to distinguish it from the Terma scriptures discovered during the Renaissance.

The authoritative nature of both sets is, however, similarly questionable. The Terma are sets of teachings that are initially preached by the Buddha, then concealed in Tibet by Padmasambhava, who introduced tantric Buddhism into Tibet. These teachings are often revealed through disciples of the Nyingma school, known as treasure discoverers (törons), and this is often depicted in hagiographical accounts. Kama texts, similarly, were normatively more Tibetan rather than Indian, with their often unconventional and more philosophically abstract nature compared to Indic tantric teachings as Indian Buddhism tended to emphasize the importance of rituals, mantras, the use of unusual substances, and medicinal practices.

Many Kama tantras thus revealed different philosophical ideas and meditative practices. Across the 12th and 13th centuries, it also became evident that Kadampa authors held authoritative positions in the Kham system. The majority of esoteric tantric practices were dominated by members of aristocratic clans. Therefore, it's no surprise that Nyingma lamas during the period of fragmentation transmit their teachings to their sons, which created individual lineages that eventually identified themselves with aristocratic designations. For each of the lay lamas and members of aristocratic clans, Buddhism proved to be an important religion in maintaining aristocratic identity and traditions.

The early revival of Buddhism centred around the early interactions between the aristocratic and rustic social levels in Central Tibet as depicted in the Scholars' Festival. These descriptions emphasize the lack of skill and the ineptitude of the early priests in the skill of their explanation, often looking to the rituals of the Bonpo which they practiced. Their practices were accused of aligning with patterns of decline and illicit behaviour, engaging in various disreputable activities in the name of Dharma including ritualized indulgence in sexual activity during abhiṣeka [4], singing mantras, and granting consecration without having received it. Crowds of believers would follow self-appointed teachers acting against the premises of Buddhist ideology as any would claim full enlightenment.

Religious polemics certainly felt that that this efflorescence of illegitimate practices represented a misunderstanding of the esoteric scriptures, taking tantric antinomian statements literally, instead of symbolically or figuratively. This was accentuated by the influence of the Tibetan village rites of blood sacrifice to mountain gods and their proclivity to sexual license, for although the outward forms remained, Buddhism was slowly becoming Tibetanized.

The fragmentation of political power transferred the power of court-based ideology and value systems upon the aristocratic clans meant that there was diversity amongst Buddhist practices without a central power to impose

uniformity. Thus, the Tibetanization of literary compositions, with the growing number of esoteric works of literature paved the way for the popular support for the small temples necessary for the revival of the missionary activity of the Eastern Vinaya monks.

The composition of the structure or organization of the clans remains opaque other than fact that the adoption of a young man was a common practice to maintain the properties of a celibate landholding teacher. But through generations of lineages, it's clear that the aristocratic clans became highly involved in Buddhist lineages and thus dominated religious affairs and formed the initial Tibetan Buddhist institutions.

IV. EARLY REVIVAL OF BUDDHISM

The 'later spread' or 'later translation' of the Dharma is often illustrated with the metaphor of fire springing up from seemingly cold embers. It serves as a distinction between the earlier royal diffusion (7–9th century) and the later spread of the Dharma (10th century), sometimes also understood as the early translation and the new translations.

The motivation for the reinvigoration of monasticism for Tibetans is often difficult to determine. Partly, it was a quest for economic and political security but also the result of the apparent dissatisfaction with current received practices. Four things remain in the minds of Tibetans regarding their past: the feeling of loss from the chaos of fragmentation, the feeling of loss and dishonour in the stories of the surviving imperial lineage, the physical remains of temples and relics, and the evolving religious practices of individuals.

More than a century had passed following Darma's assassination and the shifting alliances between the houses of Yumten's and Osrung's descendants. Following the 10th century, Tibet underwent a period of economic coalescence and the re-emergence of some political stability. This period of renaissance was mirrored in Central Asia and China around 960; thus, the recovery of Tibet could not be attributed to the south in India or Kashmir. The golden age of China during the Song dynasty facilitated the economic and cultural development, strength, and growth of the class of Buddhist monks in Tibet.

The developments in west Tibet during this new period favoured buildings of small temples and local institutions. This sent the message to Tibetans of their dedication to follow the instructions of the royal houses of the Indian religion, providing material evidence of the sacred times during the times of hardships from the 9–10th century, evoking memories of the past empire. Thus, the reintroduction of monastic Buddhism into central Tibet was the result of enduring political and cultural relationships between Tibetans in the northeast and central regions. The refugee monks seeking safety and accommodation used the networks of temples as their destination as they were compelled to conduct themselves in accordance with the normative methods of practices of the imperially supported clergy.

Accordingly, Ka-o Chog-drakpa, a Tibetan traveling in Nepal, brought the works of Abhidharma upon hearing the disasters in the four horns of Tibet as many more translators and Indian masters flocked to meet in Amdo [5]. The refugee monks residing in these monasteries thus became proselytizers to preserve and expand the lines of lineage they

represented. This, alongside the prosecution of monks throughout much of Asia, created fertile grounds for the expansion and distinguishment of Buddhism as the different sects of Buddhists coalesced and cultivated in remote caves and temples, giving them greater manoeuvrability to influence the populace at the village level.

Early chronicles indicate the intersection of political and religious activities present in areas of the Vinaya tradition. Thus, the existing political and economic base meant that 10th-century central Tibetans looked to the northeast in the cities of Xiliangfu in the Liangzhou area which had available vibrant trading hubs and population centres upwards of 120,000 people.

Tibetan documents also indicate the involvement of Buddhist monks in assuming leadership roles amidst the political and military activities occurring around the Central Asian pertaining to the trade routes of the silk road. Chinese annuals recorded the involvement of monks with the sending of three Buddhist monks every three years into the capital to receive purple robes of honour. This not only marked the imperial favour of the monks' success but highlighted their success in controlling their Buddhist tribes. Thus, the state-supported monasteries for the recipients of the purple robe served as institutional bases in which Tibetan and other Buddhists maintained their lineages of literature and promulgated their distinctive rituals. Consequently, the existing borders between China and Tibet represented a blend of cultures.

V. THE FOUNDATION OF RELIGIOUS REFORMATION

The resurgence of Buddhism did not stem from the endeavours of one single sect or individual; rather, it evolved gradually with numerous groups making continual contributions in the process.

The young men of U-Tsang, the remnants of the house of Yumtsen, came to the northeast for their ordination in Tsongkha. Tibetan sources claim that they are the direct disciples of the Gewasal but this is likely due to the Tibetan proclivity to associate famous religious figures with other famous religious figures. More likely, there were major chronological complications as there were multiple generational differences between Gewasal and the ordained monks.

The U-Tsang monks established Lume and Lötön as leaders, as appointed by the different teachers according to their capabilities. The priority of these men became to restore and the spirituality of the temple that was associated with the ancient emperors and had been resolved in devastating states. However, the political aura of these monasteries with the continual involvement of imperial houses in their disposition meant that the residents of lamas or chaplains would be unable to facilitate independently of that system in the period of fragmented political and religious power. Rather, it was the efforts of the clans in supporting the reconstruction of the monasteries that provided grounds of legitimacy for the residing monks. This would become the start point, not the end point of Buddhist revitalization as the formation of pious communities and the institutionalization of the Vinaya system became the basis for monastery revival and reconstruction in surrounding areas. The establishment of these temples, also, prompted other groups of real

monasteries to be built by preceding generations of missionaries.

It would be clear that, however, Lume's greatest influence was achieved with his efforts to unite the strands of hierarchical patronage which accentuated his influence beyond geographical limitations or discrete lineal importance for he did not travel far beyond U-Tsang.

Correspondingly, a prominent method for many of the missionaries became to return to their hometowns following their ordination and training, for they could build support from their political and economic connections: either to secure the keys of the old temples or to build temples anew, to form patronage groups from their prior associations with the aristocratic clans. The promises of economic recovery, the remaining nostalgia for the old dynasty, and the idea of religious revival eventually resulted in all forms of Tibetan culture subsumed and extending from religion. The consequences of this, however, meant that Tibetan politics would remain fragmented until the invasion of the Mongols. In fact, even as the silk chord of the religious law recovered, the golden yoke of the kingly law would not become united. Thus, Tibetans became increasingly reliant on religion to protect Tibet, the blessings of the silk protection, classifying the monks as 'important men'.

The influence of the Eastern Vinaya tradition extended beyond the contributions of Lome and Loton and their systems of established institutional structures, systems of relations, rules of order, and procedures for the adjudication of disputes. The monks from the northeast also brought a new curriculum of study used in the ancient imperial temples, emphasizing the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, the transcendental knowledge in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and the technical literature of Indian Buddhism.

Another group of Eastern Vinaya monks were associated with the older tantric systems from the earlier transmissions of the Dharmas of the 7th century and the works of later esoteric literature through 11th century translators. *Drapa Ngonshe* (1012–90), a preeminent Nyingma monastic tantrist was in fact a scion of one of the great aristocratic clans. He became essential in the construction and development of the Eastern Vinaya confines of tantric practices and enticed other monks to adopt the esoteric ritual systems that he elicited.

What became apparent was the power of religious forms that flourished in Tibet in the absence of monastic Buddhism. With the political and economic connections of the Eastern Vinaya monks, friction arose inevitably with the older established communities which had agendas that did not coincide with the new model. These conflicts were often carried out in the Tibetan fashion of the infliction of spells on the other group. Following the 11th century, the increasing exposure of the eastern monks only exacerbated such conflicts. Tibetans often resorted to means of violence to resolve such conflicts of religious claims, values, and models of religiosity on both sides. What the lay mantrins presented was the opportunity for the fusion and unity of sacred and secular powers grounded in the ancestral connections to the lines of descendants of quasi-divine lineages. For these men wielded both religious and temporal authority for they were inseparable in Tibetan society. Seeing the fleeing of the monks, they saw themselves as the mantrins who held their

ground and maintained their practices of their secret practices to protect central Tibet. The monks, however, represented at least in theory the values of an egalitarian society, with the obtaining of religious authority stemming from ritual authentication and ordination from the vows of celibacy rather than through familial means.

The ideology of Indian Buddhists outlines an uneasy truce between the esoteric lay, known technically as the 'articulation of the necessity of the triple discipline'. As with many of the uninformed Indian Buddhists, Tibetans were unaware of the adjudication of claims between the lay and monastic representatives. This ideology finally culminated in the invitation of *Atiśa* in the mid-eleventh century by *Gyelwa*, conveying *Jangchub-O's* invitation. It was clear that by the 1030s, Tibetan was threatened by the practices of a heterodox religion, especially those associated with *Acarya Marpo* and the heretical blue robbed groups, but these figures were anachronistically projected into the timeline through later chronicles and thus may have come at a later date.

The anachronisms and biases of the chronicles are further highlighted when considering *Atiśa* (982–1042). From the accounts of later *Kadampa* and *Gelugpa* writers, *Atiśa* is often depicted to be highly influential throughout central Tibet. However, a closer would suggest otherwise. First, the majority of monks have already received their monastic vows and *Vinaya* training at the hands of the Eastern *Vinaya* monks, with no records indicating that *Atiśa* had transmitted *Vinaya* to Tibet during his 13 years stay there. The reasons for this were straightforward, *Atiśa* practiced the *Lokottaravāda* section of the *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*; its doctrines of inherent purity and luminosity of the mind, the doctrine of reflexive behaviour and the doctrines of *prajñapti-matra*, which were prohibited under the three proclamations of *Ralpachen*, for no *Vinaya* materials other than those of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* would be translated to avoid the development of charismatic esoteric practices which would pose problems for the power distributions in its need of a quasi-independent vassal system. Thus, when *Atiśa* travelled through Tibet, all those temples that he found had already become dependent upon the *Vinaya* system for its relationships, networks, and organization. For most of *Atiśa's* stay in Tibet, sociologists tended to refer to his system of followers as an 'audience cult', the most unstable of audiences, as many of the monks simply left their monasteries following his congregations. Certainly, without the patronage of the *Vinaya* monks, *Atiśa* would have encountered difficulties which have been mentioned already in his hagiography, whilst *Pelgyi Yongten* has been considered the instigator of these moments of instability. It's no surprise therefore that early records indicate that *Atiśa* would have more likely been a pawn in the hands of Tibetan teachers, referred often to as the 'Big Men'. *Atiśa* was therefore asked to maintain a similar teaching schedule and prohibited from teaching the *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya* or the songs of realization to which he preferred.

It is also certainly considering the increase in perceived importance of *Atiśa* by the fifteenth century, most prominent following *Tsongkhapa's* embrace, transforming him from a Bengali teacher of modest influence to a physician who had the panacea for the problems outlined by *Yeshe-O*. Thus, the

certainty that history is the victory of great ideas and organizations will be more pre-eminently seen in the next section.

VI. THE TIBETAN RENAISSANCE

It may be difficult to assess the validity or reliability of Tibetan religious manuscripts following its years of disintegration. However, it is clear that classical Tibetan religious and literary culture withstood the forces of the collapse of the Tibet empire as the land slowly became the focal point of literature, ritual, and philosophy, laying across much of the Eurasian continent. The translators of the 11th centuries acted in the de facto, and sometimes de jure, positions of the feudal lords and were thus given the rights of dominion not only through familial means but also their consecration as the new lords of the Dharma. In fact, following this period of time, Buddhist monks eventually supplanted the powers of the royal lineage.

Tibetan culture by and large accepts the inevitability of this stage of the rise of translator as a figure of personality, spirituality, and political power. This process could be expected in western Tibet with its proximity to Kashmir, with the aims of this being described to 'resolve doubts'. These issues of doubt mainly stem from the difference in institutional cultures between older vested religious interests and newer monks in their disparate claims. Correspondingly, these disputes have largely come about due to the disparity between the royal standards of appropriate conduct and the inappropriate behaviour of individuals or groups often associated with esoteric lamas employing tantric texts during the royal dynasty. They claimed that they practiced antinomian statements in a literal manner through their 'misunderstanding'. What was clear was that Tibetans viewed sexual yoga or transgressions as problematic forms of esoteric Buddhism with its transgression of the vow structure. The only possible course would be to send young men to India to again receive the consecration of the teachings of Buddha to achieve the pure esoteric forms of Buddhism from India. It became obvious, however, over time that not all the scriptures were authentic translations; with many texts being newly augmented, transposed, pieced together, or invented resulting in the emergence of indigenous Tibetan ideas present in these philosophical libraries. It's difficult to distinguish the authenticity of these texts as many included apocryphal texts in pseudo-Indic which would appear to the Tibetans as authentic Indic writings. Moreover, the Indic systems tolerated the chaos and the multiplicity of claims surrounding the dense population centres of India, meaning that Tibetans would discover even more directions for their studies of Buddhism. Therefore, the transfer of heterogeneous Indic literature into Tibet only accelerated and accentuated the diverse forms of diversity and multiplicity of Buddhist practices. Vajrayāna Buddhism found a particularly fertile ground in Tibet instead of the Mahāyāna practices prominent in parts of East Asia.

The nature of Vajrayāna Buddhism, known also as 'thunderbolt vehicle' or 'diamond vehicle', was presented by 11th century translators in the form of tantric Buddhism that originated in India, marking the transition of Mahāyāna speculative thoughts through one individual life to pursue something truly indestructible in human beings. Vajrayāna

texts employ highly symbolic language to aid its disciples in evoking valuable experiences to recapture the enlightenment experiences of the historical Buddha using mantras. Vajrayāna Buddhists invokes a series of considerations that makes attracting aristocratic clans through the employment and the promise of enlightenment in one single life cycle. The following concepts are key features prominent in Vajrayāna practices before the following section on 11th century translators.

Mantra: the use of spell-like formulae or 'sacred utterances', to reach the stages of creation and perfection, sensory conscious, and protection from intellectual engagement in mundane discursive thought.

Mandala: specific designated diagrams to schematically represent the divine palace of a particular Buddha, bodhisattva, or deity accompanied with his circle of attendants symbolically correlated with the macrocosmic universe and the microcosm of the individual.

Abhiṣeka: 'aspersion' [6], whereby a disciple is initiated by the guru into the mandala of a particular buddha, bodhisattva, or deity to undertake ritual or contemplative practices of tantras.

Visualization: the creative use of imagination to afford powerful means to further meditation through the identification of a central divinity.

Sensual pleasures: sensual pleasures are to be affirmed not renounced. This, however, is not an authorization of sexual indulgence but rather to whim the distinguishment between the differences of sensual and not sensual as proclaiming celibacy would paradoxically lock yourself in the celibate way of living.

Yoga: the highest practices of the tantra, referring to the practices of meditation through which the adept would achieve union with the highest reality.

Transgressions: Adepts to indulge in substances considered unclean or polluting, but only amongst the most advanced and conform to an orchestrated routine.

Secrecy: 'esoteric', indicating that only those who are capable of receptive can gain insight into the tantras, whether they are concealed or not.

VII. THE WORKS OF TRANSLATORS

The 'conclusions' are a key component of the paper. It should complement the 'abstract' and is normally used by experts to value the paper's engineering content. A conclusion is not merely a summary of the main topics covered or a re-statement of your research problem, but a synthesis of key points and, if applicable, where you recommend new areas for future research.

These factors should be considered when conserving the sense of legitimacy, which the translators associate with themselves in their acts of translation. We know little of the journeys of young Tibetans who embarked on the journey to the subcontinent. The process was often highly challenging with several impediments, as they first had to be sponsored by their local lord, then travel to an intermediary point in either Nepal or Kashmir to find merchants who were knowledgeable in both Tibetan and the vernacular language of India to learn to study Sanskrit. Many failed at this point, but further challenges lay ahead with the pedagogical methods and culture of India. Many Indians enjoyed

ridiculing foreigners, and visitors received poor treatments, with many being deprecated for their differing sense of cleanliness, propriety, and decency. India would also pose a challenge physically with their lists of extraordinary diseases which only matched the rampant problems of banditry which generated an extraordinary rate of morality for aspiring translators.

The difficulties of the translations were also conspicuous in that Tibetans relied heavily on a system of mechanical word-for-word translation system which decreased the utility of these manuscripts. Another textual problem faced by the translators, both in terms of the Nāgarī shift in Indian scribes around the 9th century [7] as newer scripts were fundamentally different from the previous Gupta Brahmi and the efflorescent regional variations and traditions.

The authenticity of the Nyingma texts would remain more problematic stemming from the manuscript facility of the old dynasty. The ineptitude of Indian scribes posed a problem as not only were many inattentive in their business of copying, often employing a reciting scholar so the copyist would note the phonetic renderings of the Sanskrit texts often with a Bengali or Newar pronunciation [8]. Indians were notorious for 'cooking' their manuscripts, copying from either incomplete or damaged manuscript which they would fill in themselves. Tibetan translators often noted this as the basis of textual revision that perpetuated the sense of uncertainty for many.

The Tibetan translators managed to capture the wild imaginations that the earlier Tsongkha were not as they evoked the religious dynamism of the royal dynasty which transcended beyond the boundaries of temporal politics or the spheres of military. Their translations, unlike the geographical limitations of the gentry could transcend beyond the boundaries beyond Tibetan borders to establish influence across all domains of religion that allowed them to attract disciples and resources. Thus, the aura of the translators seeped into the realm of civil affairs that dissolved the hard divisions of power between the secular and sacred, much to the proclivity of Tibetans. In this process, the translators clashed not only with the pre-eminent civil authorities but also with the Nyingma religious representatives who sought similar patronage and wielding of power. This sectarian dispute was predominately at the level of individual personality and their sense of authority rather than substantive disputes over tantric doctrinal philosophies and practices.

VIII. THE PRACTICES OF TANTRIC BUDDHISM

To examine the strands of Buddhism the Tibetans were practicing, we have to acknowledge the nature of the translators and the translated texts. The 11th century translator Dorje Drak became known as one of the most seminal figures of the period. His hagiography recounts for the longest surviving narratives of the early Sama translations and depicts the line of Ralo. Ralo was born in 1016 in the area of Nyenam-Lang. Having received his consecration at 8, his hagiographer provides many accounts of his supernormal experiences. Following his betrothal to a young lady that went sour, he headed to Nepal to learn about Dharma in 1030 as he outlined the city of Patan in Kathmandu's valley as a

Buddhist pure land.

Ralo's hagiography makes King Balahasti the ruler of Patan, but our existing sources indicate otherwise. There are no records of any Nepalese king by this name in this period of their history termed Thakuri or a transitional phase by other historians. Even if historians can confirm Ralo's record in Patan and his involvement in the monastery, the colophon of 1440-41 indicates that the temple of Suryatala-mahavihara had already existed, suggesting that this record amongst others have been concocted solely for the purposes of hagiography.

Ralo learned much from his master during his visits to Patan for which he was consecrated the rituals of Bajravarahi and Vajrabhairava to ensure the securing of support of an influential Newar merchant with. According to the stories, however, Ralo engaged in magical warfare and contests against most notably Go Lotsawa Khukpa Lhetse. Though records are inclined to suggest that Go-lotwsawa was the first to study with Zurpoche, a Nyingma master in Tsang, the hagiography of Ralo implies otherwise as he defeated Go Lotsawa by conquering villagers with magic, so they vomited blood and he rolled their armour and weapons into a ball, most likely indicative of the profound impacts it sustained on local populaces.

Through the chronicles of Ralo, the young master has dedicated his life to teaching the revelations of Vajrabhairava, securing peace and prosperity amongst various areas and sponsoring scriptures and temples to protect the lives of Tibetans.

In contrast, however, are texts which depict the Buddhist masters of engaging in the secular spheres. As translators exceeded their religious parameters and wielded temporal influence, they gained a certain form of legitimacy that the landed gentry couldn't through their capital accrual and land tenure to command resources for building projects. The behaviours of esoteric translators further emulated the acts of the landed gentry as they ended their careers by renouncing their vows of celibacy, often fathering illegitimate children, and establishing harems of willing female disciples in the cases of Drokmi, Marpa and Ralo. As these lineages spread out, therefore, the progenies and members of the state fused with religion accompanied with the Buddhist rewriting of family documents to accompany new practices thus presenting the ability of translators to secure public acclaim in conjunction with the convergence of religious and secular authority.

Esoteric translators were often involved in levels of competition and conflicts. The strident claims for the quick path of the Vajrayāna, promising the awakening of the Buddhahood in this very life evidenced by the visualization of the individual as the Buddhas in the centre of the mandala. For Tibetans, India provided another layer of authenticity over and beyond their own need for complex and evocative rituals. Individuals with lineage claim to the emperor found their own desire for control and centrality in the mandala, with the drawings of Vairocana or Mañjuśrī verifying their claims to authority in this fragmented political environment, therefore sacralizing the nature of feudal authority. Moreover, the translators representing and trained within the Buddhist esotericism of the Siddha tradition understood the

religiopolitical forms. Thus, their claims to authenticity did not lay upon the mandalas of the great tantras but rather the Siddha ideal of devotion to the instructions of the perfected master known as the guru student relationship through the advanced yogic practices, often circumventing scriptural materials.

The discontinuities between the claims made and the actual records of the translators' lives were apparent. In the case of Chokyi Lotre, his hagiographical association with Naropa evidence Tibetan fictionalization as all-contemporary sources indicate that this is historically erroneous. The problem is that records suggest that Naropa died around 1040-42 and Marpa was supposed to have spent 10-12 years studying there. The Tibetan proclivity to fictionalize every aspect of its lineage is evident due to the lapse in chronological scale with the two being generations apart thus it's clear that the Kagyupa authors inflated Marpa's period of study. Thus, there have been widespread controversy as to whether Marpa actually met Naropa.

IX. APOCRYPHA TRANSLATIONS

For modern historians, from this point onwards, it would seem as though further editorial efforts at constructing an artificial lineage line appear to be counterintuitive. For despite the evidence, they were effective at sweeping away the evidence and contrary indications to dramatically redefine what constitutes an authentic Buddhist text. In the royal dynasty, certain sects of the esoteric literature were not revealed as they were guarded closely due to their problematic nature.

However, all these presumptions came into question following the new translation period. The esoteric meditative directives supplemented by the tantric scriptures although they were only supposed to be accorded to the highest authorities of Buddhist understandings. We have no evidence that many of the acclaimed texts of enlightenment or instructions actually existed in India. We do have to be considerate though that the apocrypha texts of the 11th century should not be solely dismissed as Tibetan compositions. They in fact appear to be the efforts of collaboration between an Indian Siddha/scholar with a Tibetan with high distinctions in Indic languages. Thus, this period of translations represented the unfolding of Buddhist esoteric traditions in another sociogeographical environment distinct from the normative Indic Buddhist traditions with its regional factors. Thus, these texts would represent and demonstrate the methods of continual composition under the circumstances of Buddhist insights into specific time periods and locations.

X. CONCLUSION

It is undeniable that Tibet inherited much from the remains of the ancient dynasty, but its fragmented nature of political and religious authority prompted them to seek a more authentic form of Buddhist practice. The practices of Buddhism that the Eastern Vinaya monks brought with the study of Mahayanist sutras due to its rules of ordination and allowing a straightforward sense of authority and control to the various clan leaders. These monks occupied a moral high group in supporting public order to ethical viability which the

people of Tibet have longed for over centuries. The erection of local temples scattered across the four horns of Tibet established civic virtue and religious value, becoming the reference points for the Tibetan sense of self and virtue.

This, however, became the platform for the next platform for charismatic translators in the 11th century. Indeed, the rebirth of Tibetan civilization came as a consequence of the results of Tibetan translators of Indian literature, the charismatic mantrins as the religious representatives. The Eastern Vinaya or the Kadampa systems did not provide the magical authority for the protection of Tibet in the absence of a central government, it did not consecrate the holders of its land in the way that tantrics did, and it did not provide the ideology of interlocking community organization found in tantric mandalas, and it did not transmit the teachings and conferment of Buddhahood in this very life.

Thus, in the 11th century, Tibet became obsessed with the new dispensations of the translations. The translators of the period did not simply translate for the purposes the personal aggrandizement, but more importantly, the restoration of political order was stabilized as new social values were placed on the values of the new forms of knowledge. Tibet, laying at the crossroad of civilizations, it imported every variety of discipline available from India and Central Asia as it became the locus of esoteric knowledge.

The revival of central Tibetans in ancient learning, which re-emerged from a time of psychological and physical darkness. Thus, the Tibetans had an irresistible urge to search for both empowerment and understanding as individuals and clans sought to empower themselves in a chaotic world through seeking the identity of the microcosmic yoga and macrocosmic mandala. The process of the sanctification of royal authority not only indicates the efforts of the Buddhist monks and teachers to be diplomatic in gaining patronage and in wielding political power for their progeny, but also highlights the multiplicity of Buddhist scriptures and practices which can only be seen through the biases of the sole surviving primary sources.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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