Tibetan Studies in India (a brief survey)

V. V. Gokhale


As a Buddhist country and as a buffer-state between China and India, Tibet has been having very close cultural ties with India as well as with China. The thousands of Tibetan translations of Indian books on religion, philosophy, history, art, medicine, etc. made over a period of about a thousand years, and enshrined in the famous collections of ‘Tenjur and K’anjur, are a standing monument to the Indian legacy, which Tibet has zealously and carefully preserved to this day. During this period, Indian Pandits and Tibetan Lotsavas sat side by side in Tibetan and Indian monasteries and engaged themselves in mutual intellectual cooperation almost till the 17th century. For the present, we leave aside this inspiring period, of which much of the materials is still to be critically investigated in all its richness and variety.

Coming to the modern times, the first name we come across is that of the devoted Hungarian scholar, Csoma de Körös, who continued the ancient tradition of Indo-Tibetan studies and brought them out of the seclusion of specialized learning into the open field of world-scholarship. After him come Jäschke and Franke, whose work on the West-Tibetan languages and history are well-known. Jäschke’s Tibetan-English Dictionary may be regarded as the first one prepared on scientific lines, surpassing all previous efforts in this direction by scholars in India or Europe. Among scholars in Bengal, where interest in Tibet was first aroused in the educated classes of India, the name of Sarat Chandra Das stands out prominently. His Dictionary, based upon his intimate contacts with Tibetan religious traditions, may still be found indispensable to scholars of Tibetology. After the beginnings made at the Calcutta University, Tibetan was introduced as a subject for comparative research in Indology at Santiniketan, where the Poet Rabindranath Tagore had established a centre for international cultural studies, called the Viśva-Bhāratī, with the collaboration of scholars like Sylvain Lévi, G. Tucci and others, in the early twenties of this century.

It may be noted, that during this early period, the Buddhist Sanskrit literature, represented in Tibetan translations, proved to be the most convenient starting point for Tibetology in India and even Western scholars had to accept this Buddhistic approach to Tibetology, because Tibet with its theocratic polity was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Indian Buddhism, and the Tibetan religious literature was acknowledged to be the standard literature of Tibet—apart from the fact, that in the meanwhile the Tibetans had practically forgotten the Sanskrit origins of their religious inspiration. These traditional Sanskrit-Tibetan studies were given a big hand by Pandit Rāhula Sāṅkrātyāyana of the Uttar Pradesh around 1930, who through his great love for ancient Indian culture and undaunted spirit of adventure succeeded in discovering about
300 mss. of Sanskrit Buddhist works in the monasteries of Western and Central Tibet, many of which were considered to be lost for good. He managed to photograph some of them—although not always successfully—and these photographs have been deposited now in the K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute at Patna along with his collection of some important Tibetan books, including the Sakya Sūtra. This Institute has already published some of the important materials in its Tibetan Sanskrit Texts Series. Some of the photographs are still being deciphered. Most of the Sanskrit mss. in this collection are found to have been written on palm-leaves, in various Indian scripts current in the period from about the 10th to the 14th centuries A.D., and the photographs not being always legible, the Tibetan versions of some of the works contained in this collection are of inestimable value in deciphering them. It has thus been brought home to the Tibetologists that not only Nepal, but Tibet also has been a great repository of Sanskrit mss. since at least the 10th century, and that one of the tasks awaiting them is to discover further stores of Indo-Tibetan learning, like the unexplored mss. Library of Atśa of the 11th century, whose tomb is found at Net'ang near Lhasa, but whose whole collection of books is reported to have been deposited at Reting, about eight miles to the north-east of Lhasa.

In so far as Tibetan publications in India are concerned, Tibetan type for printing is now available at various places, particularly after the arrival of the Tibetan scholars in India. The International Academy of Indian Culture, founded by Dr. Raghu Vira and promoted energetically by Dr. Lokesh Chandra and his associates in Delhi has been publishing a series of important Tibetan books on history and philosophy, like the works of Bu-ston, the history of dPao-tsug-lag, etc., which are now difficult to procure from Tibet. A similar series of Tibetan works, with erudite introductions by Gene Smith is also being published at Delhi, which is fast developing into a center of Tibetan learning. At Varanasi, where the Sanskrit Viśvavidyālāyā is taking keen interest in Tibetan studies, a new centre of Tibetan publication is coming into being. In the older centers of Tibetan learning, Tibetan journals, bulletins and textbooks are being published at Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Gangtok and Calcutta, among which the Institute of Tibetology at Gangtok in Sikkim deserves a special mention for its propagation of Tibetology through the establishment of a big Tibetan library under the royal patronage of the Chos-rgyal of Sikkim. A publication project of important Tibetan works and textbooks is also being efficiently carried out at Dharamsala under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Let us now turn to the more recent tendencies in the Tibetan studies in India. Political interests of the British rulers in India as well as the modern trends in area-studies all over the world have led the scholars to direct their attention from the religious to the sociological, historical, geographical, linguistic, economic and such other aspects of Tibetan life. Especially, since the large scale migrations of Tibetans into India in 1959, these aspects of Tibetan life, particularly in the border regions of the tribal areas near Assam, Bhutan, Sikkim and Ladakh are attracting greater attention. The presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India along with his associates have led to the opening of a college for high Tibetan Lamas in Leh (Ladakh) and another at Sarnath with the object of providing them with the necessary training in theory and practice of Tibetan Buddhism. Although these are modelled on the Tibetan pattern, they are bound to absorb some of the modern technical knowledge from their Indian surroundings. The settlement of thousands of Tibetan refu-
We are aware of the excellent work done by scholars in Japan especially in the traditional Tibetan studies, some of which have become indispensable to any worker in Buddhist research and also in modern area-studies among the Tibetan population on the borderland of India. There has already been a certain amount of collaboration between the Japanese and the Indian scholars in research work on Tibetology, and an effort is being made at present to intensify this collaboration at the postgraduate level in the Tokyo University. I have no doubt, that the *Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies* will find it worthwhile encouraging and supporting such mutual cooperation in every possible way, because the scholars in both countries cannot but hold identical views regarding the scientific pursuit of knowledge concerning this important subject.

Thank you.

(This paper was read at the 19th annual meeting of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies held at Rissho University on November 11, 1971.)
昭和47年3月31日
日本西藏学会研究報 第十八号

ヨガ・タントラは真気の身・口・心のバランスをとることで、内面的な三昧を追求するため、インドの仏教の一部として、特にチベット仏教の一部として知られている。

第三のクラス・タントラは、内面的な身・口・心のバランスをとることで、内面的な三昧を追求するため、インドの仏教の一部として、特にチベット仏教の一部として知られている。

アンニタヤ・タントラは、身・口・心のバランスをとることで、内面的な三昧を追求するため、インドの仏教の一部として、特にチベット仏教の一部として知られている。

Yoga-tantraには、ヨガ・タントラと呼ばれる。ヨガ・タントラは、身・口・心のバランスをとることで、内面的な三昧を追求するため、インドの仏教の一部として、特にチベット仏教の一部として知られている。

Kriya-tantraの分類には、次のものがある。

D.No.370 P.No.18 (112) D.No.393 P.No.38 (479) D.No.415 P.No.59 (44) D.No.443 P.No.83

Yoga-tantra
Kriya-tantra
D.No.437 P.No.76 456 91 461 97 486 118 502 134 726 390
D.No.497 P.No.112 432 71 493 125 496 130 497 196 543 162 544 163 556 184 604 291 724 469 746 402 747 404 805 428

Mahayoga-tantra
D.No.363 P.No.5 566 184 604 291 724 469 746 402 747 404 805 428

Kosho ch'en buga poの分類のために、内の分類は次の通りである。

D.No.154 P.344-1-1のNor chen Kun dgal bza'i poの分類の仕方に従う。