CHAPTER III

ROYAL PATRONAGE TO BUDDHISM

At the very outset I may be permitted to say that Karl Marx in his Philosophy established a relation between the ruling class (king or dynasty) and religion. But Marx took religion as an instrument of oppression. Agreeing partially with Marx we can state religion can play a formative role also.

The foregoing two chapters of the same book state clearly that Buddhism helped the Tibetan masses for their emergence from the dark age of Bon religion and the savage Tibetans became civilised through the influence of that religion. The same thing is true not only in case of Tibet, a systematic investigation will surely reveal that the rise and fall of dynasty creates a similar change in the religious progress of a certain land, i.e. kings are generally found to take active part in religious activities of his country i.e. for the moral cultural and social
upliftment of the general mass of his land. The above view may be confirmed from the History of the development of the dynasty and the History of the development of the religion of the world.

A systematic study of the introduction and development of Tibetan Buddhism also reveal that there is a correlation between dynastical and religious development of Tibet. Truly speaking the pre-Buddhist Tibet i.e., Tibet of the Bon-age is not historically recorded because of the absence of language. Due to this short comings, we do not get any real picture of the Bon religion i.e. How that primitive religion of Tibet was patronised by the then kings. But in the second chapter I have discuss that with the introduction of Buddhism literacy also entered into Tibet, and the historical events began to be recorded.

It is learnt from the Tibetan History unanimously

1. See 2nd chapter - page -
It is learnt from the Tibetan History unanimously that the material introduction of Buddhism happened at the time of the great Tibetan king Sron-btsan-agam-po. I used the word, material introduction only to mention a supernatural event which destined Buddhism to come into Tibet. On one fine morning the fifth predecessor of Sron-utsan, Lha-the-the-pi received some Buddhist scriptures and he heard a prophecy that his fifth successor will reveal the inner meaning of that thing. Scholars interpreted that supernatural event in various ways and they are very reluctant to give any importance on that thing. Our present endeavour is not also to deal with anything supernatural. But we should agree on one point that the actual appearance of Buddhism and its promotion under the patronage of the Tibetan kings began from the time of Sron-btsan-agam-po. So from Sron-btsan-agam-po's time Buddhism received royal

2. See F.N. 26 of Chapter II.
patronage. But before discussing the Sron-btsan-agam-po's patronage I should describe in short
The political Geography of Tibet of his time — According to Tibetan history, Sron-btsan-agam-po was born in 629 A.D. and he ascended the throne in 642 i.e. when he was only 13 years of age. He by his might united the whole Tibet and established —
his influence in the adjacent territories. From the records of history we learn that he married several times and two among his prominent wives were the princes of China and Nepal with whom he had some sort of contact. These marriages were of political nature, and with these two pious princes Buddhism was introduced into Tibet.

The Barbarous kind was also influenced with the noble mode of living of his newly married wives and adopted their religions as his own. He was content not only in adopting the religion of
his wives for his own, he also felt the need to spread it into the Tibetan masses. He also felt the need of a higher culture as a ground to suit the superior religion. For that purpose he sent his minister Thommi-Sambhota to India to learn their language (script) and to invent a new one for their own.

So, the above history leaves us in no doubt

3. Thom-mi-sambhota, was one of the two prominent ministers of sron-btsan-sgam-po. He became famous for his knowledge and ability. At the initiative of the king Sron-btsan-po, was send to India to study the Indian alphabet and was ordered to invent Tibet a new one for the Tibetans. Thom-mi performed it successfully and is regarded as the inventor of Tibetan script.
to conclude that it was Sron - btsan who first patronized Buddhism in the Tibetan soil. Within this period Tibetans found as their own script and the work of Translating the heavenly scriptures, received at the time of Lha - tho - tho - ri, i.e. the fifth predecessor of Sron - btsan, started. Sron - btsan for the first time in the Tibetan soil built two Buddhist temples at Ra - Sa - and Ro - mo - cho. He placed the images of Sakyamuni as a young prince, which was brought by the Chinese prince, at Ra - Sa and the image of aksobhya Vajra, brought by the Nepalese princes at Ra - mo - cho. The construction of Potala palace started during the reign of Srom -

4. Potala Palace is the official residence of Dalai Lama, and is regarded as the Head quarter of Tibetan Buddhism. It is a palace temple near Lhasa on a hill. It was constructed at the style of the
btsan. Potala palace is regarded in Tibet as the Head Quarter of Tibetan Buddhism.

From the above activities there is general tendency among the Tibetan scholar to depict the great Tibetan king as the Aoka 'THE CONSTANTANING OF BUDDHISM' of India. Truly speaking Sron-btsan was engaged through out his whole life in bloody struggles. Neither he developed an intellectual standard nor had he any time to devote himself in religious activities as a true lover of any religion. He could very well understand the voice of arms not the voice of intellect. Still he is considered in the Tibetan History as an incarnation.

4. (conti..) mythic indian residence of his divine prototype 'Avalokita', the Lord who looks down from the High. Its huge structure contains the marks of Architecture and sculpture of that age.
of Akalokitesvara and the two wives who converted him into Buddhism are regarded incarnations of Avalokitesvara's consort Tara. The Chinese princes as white

5. Avalokitesvara — Or Avalokita or Mahkaruna is the keen seeing lord, the great pillar and lore of mercy. He is the spiritual son of the celestial Buddha Amitava, and is the most powerful and popular of all the Bodhisats. Dalailama pretent to be the incarnation of Avalokitesvara. Avalokita being a purely mythological creation, is seldom like Buddha represented as a mere man, but is invested usually with monstrous and supernatural forms and attributes. Earliest Indian image of Avalokita of about 6th century A.D. bears similarity with the Hindu creator prajapati or Brahma. In Tibet Avalokita has got many forms.

6. Tara — White & Green — Tara the consort of Avalokita is one of the two chief and most active supernatural female Bodhisats. She is very popular deity both among the lamas and laity. She corresponds to the
and the Nepalese as green, and that they bore no children confirm their divinity.

Tibetan history became more and more obscure after the death of great Sron-btsan-agam-po and it remained so at least for fifty years. The son of Sron-btsan-agam-po, Gun-aron-Gun-itsan died in the lifetime of his great father. So his grand son Man-aron-Man-btsan ascended the throne. Tibetan history is very confusing about the real recognition of the two above mentioned royal personalities. Some opinion that they are brothers; some differ, saying the first as father and the second as son.

6. (contd.) Goddess of mercy and queen of Heaven of the Chinese and has her literal analogy in biblical mythology and has several analogies with the Virgin, but she is essentially Indian in origin and form. At least twenty-one form of Taras are known to the Tibetans and different forms indicate their different attributes, white and green are two among them.
and the rest synthesises saying the just apposite
My conclusion after studying all the related his-
tory is that what I have stated above clearly
i.e., Gun Sron is the father of MAI Sron.

Tibetan historians took no interests on
these two personalities because they did actually
nothing for Buddhism and the above is an indirect
confirmation of my comment which I have pass in the
early part of this chapter that Tibetan History
is nothing but the history of Buddhism. And the
same history i.e., the History of Tibetan Buddhism,
in other words The History OF THE royal patronage to
Buddhism started again from the reign of Khri - Ide
gtsug - brtan and the real pace to it was added
from the reign of the next king Khri - sron - Ide -
btan.

We should say more specifically that the
entrance and advancement of Buddhism in the Tibetan
soil started at the patronage of Sron - btsan,
remained static for the next two generations which was in year J was from 650 to 679 and from 679 to 704. It just got back its life and began to move with tremendous force, from 705. Let me now give a clear picture of it. After Mon-aron- or gun-aron- Khri-du-aron-btsan, the son of the former become the king. He became very powerful king and expanded his kingdom. Tibetan document says that he was a great king and died in a battle against some rebellious of Nepal and Indian frontiers. Lack of interests on this king of the Tibetan historical helps us to conclude that he actually did nothing for the promotion and advancement of the foreign religion in his own land. So he deserves no space here in this chapter.

Next king the son of the above i.e. Khri-du-aron-btsan, was Khri-lde-gtsug-btsan. From the reign of this king we find renewed interests of the Tibetan. In the Tibetan history he is better known in the name of Ras-ag-tabom.
As a great patron of Buddhism he has some specific contribution. Firstly, "he extended invitation through his messenger to Kailasa to invite the two Indian Masters Buddha-guhya and Buddha-santi (see page 40) to Tibet." He also invited Buddhist priests who had been expelled from Li-yul and many Buddhist monks (ho shang) from China.

7. Kailasa: a mountain in Tibet lying North of the Sacred lake Mansarover. It is a sacred mountain both to the Hindus and Buddhist.

8. Buddha Guhya & Buddhasanti - are the two Buddhist pandits of India. They were invited to Tibet at the reign of King Bes-ag-tshoms, while they were engaged in meditation and conjuration. These two pandits ultimately did not step into the Tibet instead they taught the messangers some important Mahayana sutra.


10. Ho-shang or Hwa-shang - was Chinese Buddhist monk who came to Tibet to preach Buddhism there his teachings
Secondly, it was in his time that literary activities of Tibetans received a new impetus, among many other Buddhist texts, the legends of Karmasutaka and the famous gold lustre sutra (Subhasnapobhasa) were worth mentioning.

Thirdly he married a Chinese prince and through this matrimonial link Chinese Buddhism came close to the Tibetans, and enriched Buddhism.

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10. (cont.) came in conflict with that of the Indians preached by the Indian monks under the leadership of Saka Baka and Kamalasila. The conflicts between the two schools of thought disturbed the religious progress of Tibet and to remove it a debate was organised at the initiative of the king to judge the superiority. In that debate Indian side was represented by Kamalasila and his opinion was proved superior. In this way Ho-shang was defeated and was forced to live the country and to stop religious activities.
Lastly be made many new Buddhist temples.

Khri-srong-btsan died in 755 and his son Khri-sron-de-btsan ascended the throne at his very early age. In the early part of his reign due to his young age the royal affairs were controlled by his ministers, and they were divided into two groups. According to Tibetan history the division was on the basis of religion. Some were followers of Buddhism and the others were of Bon. The young king himself was almost neutral, i.e. he had no positive affiliation to Buddhism till then. Within a very few years the king concentrated the royal power within his grip by killing one of his wicked but powerful minister In-shan by trick.

11. In-shan was the wicked minister of the king Khri-sron-de-btsan. He was a follower of Bon-religion and anti Buddhism. He was always any sort of progress of Buddhism in Tibetan soil. For the promotion and development of Buddhism in the Tibetan soil the Buddhist minister of the king's cabinet murdered him.
who was a follower of Bon religion and was against Buddhism.

Khri-sron-Ido-btsan became a Buddhist. The following two factors perhaps played their role in turning him into a Buddhist. He had before him the task to curb the power of his opponents who were followers of Bon religion, and so he had to take the other way. Or, secondly his Chinese (Buddhist) mother somehow or other may have influenced her in making him into a Buddhist. But the Tibetan history does not confirm the second view, because we can very well guess that the Chinese mother of the king who was a Buddhist by birth was not so pious as the Chinese wife of sron-btsan was. If she would have been a zealous Buddhist she would get a good amount of space as we find to get in case of sron-btsan’s wife.

However the young king with the help of his Buddhist minister buried la-shan who became famous for
his anti-Buddhist activities. Frusely speaking persecution of Buddhism reached its climax at the time of the king. So he had to die in a very Buddhist fashion, the result was favourable to Buddhism and it got a new impetus under the patronage of the new king.

Assuming absolute royal powers the king organised few campaigns against China and conquered few parts of India. He had to kill some other Tibetan Nobles who stood in the way of the progress of Buddhism in other words, were against him. He patronised the new religion not only by killing his appointments. He is noted in Tibetan History for killing the Sam-ye Monastery, which is

12. Unbuddhist fashion means Buddhist believe in Ahimsa but the minister was a victim of Ahimsa of the king and his friendly ministers who were Buddhist i.e., being Buddhist they did an unbuddhist job.

13. Sam-ye monastery is the oldest monastery of
considered to be the first monastery of Tibet. One
more thing he did and that is perhaps greatest
contribution was that he invited, and brought the
great, Indian Buddhist philosopher Sontā - Raksita 14
to Tibet and later at the recommendation of the
great Guru he also brought the famous Buddhist
ascetic Padmasambhava. 15 One more thing he did,
and which should be considered to be the turning

13. (cont) Tibet The English meaning of the full
name of the monastery is . The academy
for obtaining the heap of unchanging Medita-
tion. It was built after the model of
Chintapuri under the supervision of Padma-
Sam Sambhava and Sontā Raksita. Its total
architecture, though lost to-day great
contained within it a large temple four
colleges, several other big building a very
rich library and a huge area surrounded by
high walls.

14. Sontā Raksita See 54th chapter of this book page-

15. Padma Sambhava see 4th Chapter of this book page-
points of the History of Tibetan Buddhism and that was, he organised a debate between SANTA Kamala-sila and Boa-ting i.e. between Chinese and Indian school, who were working in Tibetan soil then, in which Kamala-sila won and the Chinese teachers were bonished from his country, and from them onwards Indian teachings preached in the Tibetan soil.

From the above account we may say that Khri-sron-lda-btan was not only a sympathiser of Buddhism but actually did lot for its promotion and development. Lha-tho-tho-si did his virtuous noble job perfectly in preserving and worshipping the sacred Buddhist scriptures which fell into his palace from heaven, from btsam-agam-po actually introduced it into Tibet, and khri-sron-lda-btan laid its real foundation. Tibetan History regard those three Tibetan religions
Heroes as Samanta Bhadra Avalokitesvara and Mauyuri respectively.

16. (a) Samanta Vadra - Or the All good In Tibetan he is pronounced as Kuntu - Bzan - po. He is the son of the celestial Buddha Vairocana and is to be distinguished from the adibuddha of the same name. He is of the mild type and usually mounted on an elephant and he is frequently associated with majuaris as attendant on Buddha.

(b) Avalokitesvara - See F. N. 5 of this chapter.

(c) Mauyuri, or the sweet voiced is the god of wisdom. He is wisdom deified and seems a purely metaphysical creation unconnected with any of his later names. He is the special patron of Astrology.
After the death of Khri-sron-lde-btsan, his eldest son Mi-ne-btsan-po ascended the throne. He lived for a very short time and was poisoned to death by his own mother.

Mi-ne-btsan-po was unquestionably loyal to Buddhism but he is recorded in Tibetan History for one of his peculiar action. He thrice equalised the rich and poor Tibetan peoples. Historians are not unanimous in interpreting this action of the king. This sort of action was absolutely unforeseen in the history of Tibetan dynasty. Historical evidences are not clear enough to come to a conclusion about the real motive of the king behind such action. Ret-echoes explain some historian tried to explain, saying that Mi-nes father i.e., Khri-sron-lde-btsan subdued the Tibetan nobles by his might but that was not a permanent solution of the threat that might come from the nobles. The actual power of the Tibetan nobles rested on economic ground and Mi-ne actually tried to hit the aristocrats on that point, and he
was murdered by his mother who belonged to the nobles and was working for their interests, before the experiment was applied for the fourth time.

We cannot reject the above interpretation given by some Tibetan historians. But some question may arise, what is that thing that inspired Mú - Ne to take such a socialistic action? If Mú - Ne's motive was only to curb the aristocracy economically he could do it by adopting some other means similar to his predecessors. But selection of such a revolutionary step induces us to think that perhaps he might have been influenced and inspired by the idea of equality preached by Buddha.  

Now we may say that the influence of Buddhism

17. Idea of Equality in Buddhism implies that Buddhism was no doubt a revolt against the caste distinctions of Brahmanism, they believed in the equal social states of every individual from the point of view of their birth.
Now we may say that the influence of Buddhism on the dynasties of Tibet can be divided into two phases. From eron-btsan to Kri-eron-lde-btsan we find that the kings are favouring Buddhism because it imports with it higher culture, improving their mode of living and it is at the same time serving their political interests. But we do not find that Buddhism has created any change in the mode of living in the life of the above mentioned kings, as we find in case of Asoka in India.

But from Nru-erno-btsan-po onwards, we shall find that the kings are adopting or favouring Buddhism not because they are serving some of their specific interests, rather they have become Buddhist, and from an inner urge to develop their favorite religion they are trying for its full fledged development. And probably due to this reason Nru-ne might have taken that revolutionary socialistic steps. And if this explanation is true then we
may conclude that Mi-nee's contribution i.e., his patronage to Buddhism is really worth mentioning.

After Lha-no-btsan-po his youngest brother i.e., the youngest son of Khri-sron-lde-btsan, Lha-tig-btsan-po also called Khri-lde-sron-btsan—alias se-mu-le—ascented the throne. He reigned longer than his elder brother and actually did nothing to enlist himself in the History of the religion patron of Tibet as a great of Buddhism patron. But his son who succeeded him in his throne occupies a prominent place in the Tibetan History.

In discussing the Lha-no-btsan-po contribution in Buddhism I mentioned about two phase. The second phase began from the patronage of Lha-no— and we find a clear picture of that phase in the reign of Bal-pa-can. He being inspired by the message of Buddha took active steps to stop —

military activities. It was surely not an outburst of his military inferiority. He fought against the Chinese, defeated them and concluded a peace treaty at his own initiative. In this way he closed all the war fronts opened by his predecessors and brought an end of enmity with all his neighbours. This is surely an ideal expression of the ideals of Buddhism. Same thing we found to happen in case those the great ' the constant

The best sign of his love towards Buddhism is that he was the first king of Tibet to give predominance to the clergy. He housed them in various temples and assisted them financially by giving a small amount of revenge to them. He built a nine storied building, containing scriptures, images, model shrines, and housed in that temple the prominent pundits and a translators.
He took some new and scientific measures for translating the Buddhist scriptures perfectly. Before this endeavour the Buddhist scriptures were not clearly translated by the Tibetans because of the literary languages of the Indian pandits and for the dependence on Chinese sources. Realising these practical difficulties, he appointed efficient translators to translate into Tibetan directly from the Sanskrit. They obeyed all the rules of translation i.e. - formed index and translated in a very plain and lucid language. In the reign of Kāl-pa-conn, almost half of the existing Kha-gyur and bstan-gyur translation were done.

19. Kan-gyur & bstan-gyur - are the two lamaist scriptures. Kan-gyur and bstan-gyur consist of two great collections, the canon and commentaries. Kan-gyur or the 'Translated canon' is so called on account of its
Dal-pa-chan is probably the last Buddhist king of Tibet. He enjoyed the sovereignty of the

19.(contd) text having been translated from the ancient Indian language ( Sanskrit ) and a few from the Chinese, by a prominent Indian and Kashmiri pandits and few Chinese monks assisted by the Tibetan scholars. Kan-gyur extends to one hundred or One hundred Eight volumes of about one thousand pages each, composing one thousand and eighty three distinct works.

Bstan-gyur on the other hand is a great cyclopedic of all sorts of literary works, written mostly by anciently Indian scholars and few learned Tibetans in the first few centuries after the Introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. It has two hundred and twenty five volumes. It may be divided into tantra and sutra. Tantra contains in (87) Eighty seven volumes containing Tantrika rituals and ceremonies. Sutra hold one hundred and thirty six (136) volumes containing -
sovereignty of the whole of Tibet united by Gnam-ri-ron-btsan the father of great ron-btsan-agam-po who united the Tibetan clans into whole Tibet by his military might. After the death of Ral-pa-chan his superseded elder brother Glang-dar-ma ascended the throne.

In the Tibetan History of Buddhism Glan-dar-ma has been depicted as the enthusiastic supporter of Bon faith and a combination of his faith Nero and Julian the apostate; the Tang-shu, because of his faith on the Bon religion he was superseded with the help at Buddhist minister by his younger brother and again because of his faith in Bon he was favoured by the Tibetan nobles as their king.

19. Science and literature One separate volume contains hymns or praises on several deities and saints. And one volume is the index of the whole work.

20. Glang-Dar-ma — see F. N. chapter II.
Because of his wicked character, addiction to wine and many other bad habits he never became a very powerful king as his predecessors were. He is mentioned in Tibetan history because of his anti Buddhist activities. He did his level best to uproot Buddhism from the Tibetan soil. But one more thing is remarkable in the reign of Glaw-dag-ma that was he was the last king of united Tibet.

So from the death of Glaw-dar-ma actually ends the Royal patronage of Buddhism in Tibet.

The descendants of Glaw-Dar-ma failed to keep Tibet united and the United Tibet again-

21 United Tibet meant, Tibet before the reign of Srom-btsan-agam-po was divided into different parts under different rulers. Srom-btsan father by his military might united them and made united Tibet. This unity lasted untill the reign of Gland Dar-ma, and
reduced to his previous form i.e. of the age of Gnam-rin-bron-btsan. But some of the provincial kings of Tibet did a lot in favour of Buddhism.

So here in this chapter I shall also mention their activities which helped Buddhism to regain its own position.

That Glong-dap-ga failed to root out Buddhism from the Tibetan soil neither by force nor with the help of his intellectual weapon Bon-religion, is known to everybody. The rebirth of Buddhism i.e. the influence of Glong dar-ga and his followers in the Tibetan soil, lasted for only seventy years (opinion differs in this respect and some say it is about 78 seventy eight years) However, the attempt

22. (contd) after his reign for few sculuries political geography of Tibet got back its previous form.
for the revival of Buddhism started simul manously
from the Eastern and western parts of the country.
Lhasa which was once the centre of all religious
activities became the place of conspiracy and per -
secution. The rulers of Eastern and western parts of
Tibet who were strangely enough the direct descendents
of Glang dar - ma, patronised the foreign religion -
(Buddhism) by inviting the learned monks once ban -
ished by their forefather. Truely speaking these pro-
vincial kings gave the final finishing touch to est -
ablish Buddhism in the land of snow as a national
religion. Now, I am trying to give a description
of the contribution of some of them.

After Bal - pa - can, as the Buddhist king of
Tibet come the name of Ye - ges - od - khor - ide .
Ye - ges - od was not a king of Tibet in the sense
the Bal - pa - can was .22 Again he along with his sons

22. Because yes ges - od was a provincial ruler, while
Bal - pa - can was a ruler of united Tibet.
were ordained and became known as yes-se-sod or jnanaprabha, and handed over his government to his younger brother ron-lde, himself remaining the commander in chief of his army. Though we cannot reconcile the two contradictory posts of Ye-sap-se-sod from Buddhist point of view,23 however Ye-sap-se-sod built a great monastery in Gu-ge (shan shun) invited many Buddhist pandit from India and also sent many (21) promising young Tibetans for study in India, Rin-chen-bzan-po 24 was one of them. As a true Buddhist he was really worried about the corrupted tantrik development and he thought all these things, i.e., indulgence in sex and wine cannot have any place in true Buddhism. So he wanted to make direct contact with the head quarter of Buddhism (India), his attempt in this field failed. (The 23. Because from Buddhist point of view a monk can never hold any military portfolio. 24. Rin-chen-bzan-po see P. K. chapter V.)
reason behind this (Tantrik descent in Buddhism)
may be that the time of the development of Tantrik
Buddhism in India and the time of penetration of
Buddhism in Tibet was same), and after then he wan-
ted to invite some eminent Indian Buddhist pundit to
his land. In order to do this he even sacrificed his own life. In Tibetan History we find a detailed
description of how he was captured by the Gar
log while he was out to collect more funds for the cost of Indian teachers and remaining in the
prison how he convinced his nephew Byang chub - od not to bow down before the Gar log and to use the
Gold for the noble cause of inviting Indian pundits instead of his own release. In this way Lha - bla-
ma - ye - sos - od died for the cause of Buddhism.

One of the nephews of Ye - ssa - od,
Byang chub - od also inherited these pious sent-
iments of his uncle and fulfilled the desire of
Ye - ssa - od by inviting Atisa in the land of snow.
After Bal-pan-cha predynastic rule virtually ended and gradually both religious and political power shifted from the hands of the provincial rulers to the priests, and ultimately priest kingship i.e. Lamaism was introduced in Tibet.