CHAPTER VI

AN ESTIMATE OF THE INDIAN CONTRIBUTIONS
Early history of Tibet is steeped in obscurity. Tibetan chroniclers, however, trace their history back to 127 B.C. when they caught hold of a person and enthroned him as their first king. Nobody knows what was his real name, but he was given the name of Nya'-khri btsan-po, "the neck-throned king". This lucky man is believed to be an Indian carrying royal blood in his veins, who had strayed into Tibet or perhaps, had been driven out of his kingdom by his parents because of his grotesque looks. Thereafter, we come across a long line of successors of this Indian-turned-Tibetan king till we reach Lha-tho-tho-ri, who is believed to have lived during fourth-fifth century or even earlier.

Now the traditional Tibetan history traces the first Indian contact with Tibet during the reign of Lha-tho-tho-ri, when certain Buddhist texts are believed to have been dropped on the roof of the king's palace by a mysterious hand. This happening was considered an auspicious augury for the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet and was attributed to the boundless compassion of Avalokiteśvara which he showered on the Tibetans. The theory of falling of books from the heaven is, however,
unacceptable to modern mind. But if we analyse this apocryphal statement in strictly mundane terms, we may find a clue to the early entry of Buddhism in Tibet. We are told that during the reign of Lha-tho-tho-ri, certain Buddhist scholars were found to have been roaming about in Tibet, and Buddhaśri happens to be one of those early intruders into the highly sheltered Bon citadel. Mission of this solitary campaigner obviously failed because of language barrier or presumably opposition from the Bon adherents. Though this Indian Buddhaśri and his lo-tsa-ba Li-the-se are supposed to be the harbingers of Buddhism in Tibet, their bonafides still continue to be doubtful because nothing is known about their past activities.

Official Tibetan history divides the entry of Buddhism into Tibet into two major diffusions, the first taking place between the seventh and ninth centuries A.D., and the second beginning after a period of political and religious destabilization, in the late tenth century and lasting nearly three centuries. During the first spreading, Buddhism gained an important entry into Tibetan culture through the royal court. India and Tibet came into contact with each other in the first half of seventh century during the period of Srong-btsan sgam-po when they started to interact with each other very actively. Thon-mi Sambhota's visit to India, armed with an explicit writ from the king, to evolve a system of writing based on Sanskrit,
produced, what Ekvall has rightly remarked, "a set of three
hallowed practices - the reciting, the writing and reading of
chos - a threefold verbalization", which gave a tremendous
thrust to the missionary effort and helped, though on a very
limited scale in the beginning, the establishment and spread of
Buddhism among the Tibetans.

During this period, India's role, though indirect, cannot be underestimated in so far as introduction of literacy in
Tibet is concerned. India groomed and equipped Thon-mi with the
wherewithal which helped him in catapulting his country from a
pre-literate stage to a literate stage. India, through Thon-mi,
set the process of converting a primitive Bonist - Shamanic
society into a literate society, notwithstanding the fact that
literacy never became a mass movement in Tibet, and remained
confined to the royal house or at the most it percolated to the
members of nobility. Introduction of literacy sowed the seeds
of cultural revolution on the high plateau which later sprouted,
blossomed and fructified into the richest cultural heritage of
Tibet.

During this period, Indian scholars, Brahmana Śankara,
Kusara, Li-byin ha-ra, Tanu and Ananda visited Tibet. But only
two Panditas Brahmana Śankara and Kusara translated works of
Abhidharma, Vinaya, Prajñāpāramitā and Tantrā relating to
Kāriyāyoga in collaboration with Thon-mi and Dharmakośa.
Li-byin ha-ra, Tanu and Ananda (or Ananta) did not participate in the translation work. The missionary work was confined to the translation of few Buddhist texts which had been taken to Tibet by Thon-mi Sambhota. The Indian scholars did not preach the gospel of Buddha in Tibet. Perhaps, it was not an opportune time for them to indulge in such high-profile activities because the whole political atmosphere in Tibet was dominated by Bon adherents, who opposed the new doctrine and the king had to mollify their feelings by appointing a Bon teacher for the propagation of their faith on par with Buddhism.

The claim of the Tibetan historians that "except for the monastic ordination, the remaining part of the doctrine received a great circulation, and the kingdom of Tibet became virtuous," should be taken with a grain of salt. It is doubtful if Srong-btsan Sgam-po was able to propagate the new faith and achieve a measure of success in a short period because the king hardly lived for ten years after Thon-mi's return to Tibet. Moreover, it was not an easy task for the king to encourage and boost a new religion openly against Tibet's primitive Bon which was so well entrenched and deeply ingrained in the minds of Tibetans. It is again doubtful whether Srong-btsan Sgam-po ever preached any religious texts in Tibet, as he is mentioned to have done, by the traditional Tibetan historians. We know that Srong-btsan Sgam-po was basically a warrior. He was one of the greatest conquerors of all times on a par with Alexander the Great and
Genghiskhan, who ruled over a gigantic empire stretching from Afghanistan to half of China, from Siberia to Burma, and from Mongolia to Bengal. Notwithstanding the fact that he is deified as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara by the devout Tibetans, his role as propagator of Buddhism in Bon surroundings appears to be limited. No doubt, his foreign spouses who had brought Buddha's images to Tibet, might have exercised a measure of influence on the king to adopt Buddhism as the state religion but since he was hamstrung by the Bon factor, he could not be expected to take drastic measures to push through Buddhism.

However, the greatest contribution made by the Indian Panditas during this period lies in the fact that they were able to break the ground for entry of Buddhism in the extremely hostile climate prevailing in Tibet.

After the death of Srong-btsan Sgam-po in 650 A.D., cultural relations between India and Tibet remained cut off for about one century. During this period development of Buddhism in Tibet remained static though sporadic efforts were made by Khri-1de gtsug-brtsan to promote Buddhism and invite Indian Panditas, Buddhaguhya and Buddhāsānti, to Tibet but having failed to secure their cooperation, the mantle of establishing the new faith in Tibet fell on the young head of Khri-srong lde-btsan, who was still a minor when his father died. During the initial period of Khri-srong lde-btsan, the anti-Buddhist clique headed by Ma-Zhang gained upper hand and tried to suppress
Buddhism throughout the country. The monks were banished and temples were desecrated. The famous image of Lord Buddha was pulled out of Lhasa and sent away to Skyi-rong, near the Nepalese border. Ultimately, Ma-Zhang met his violent end at the hands of pro-Buddhist enthusiasts and Śāntarakṣita was invited from India to boost and propagate Buddhism in Tibet. But unfortunately, the first visit of Śāntarakṣita to Tibet was not successful. His Buddhist code of morality consisting of ten basic ingredients of virtuous life, his teachings and exposition of eighteen component parts of the individual and twelve parts of the Pratityasamutpāda fell on deaf ears of the Tibetans. On the other hand, Śāntarakṣita's teachings provoked strong resistance to Buddhism from the diehard protagonists of Bon religion. Incidentally, during the stay of Indian Upadhyaya, Tibet witnessed worst ever natural calamities. This natural phenomenon was interpreted as an expression of displeasure by the native deities of Tibet on the new philosophy of Indian teacher. The king could not resist the pressure of pro-Bon faction, and he politely requested the Bodhisattva Śāntarakṣita to withdraw from the scene. The Indian teacher, however, advised the king to invite Padmasambhava from India, for quelling the malignant anti-Buddhist deities of Tibet, and silently retreated to Nepal.

Now, the story of Padmasambhava's visit to Tibet is highly fascinating which makes a fairy tale reading. One has to strain one's imagination to believe his incredible acts he
performed to vanquish and subjugate the villainous forces standing in the way of Buddhism. Traditional Tibetan accounts of Padmasambhava reveal that he subdued various Srin-mos(ogresses) and 'Dres (demons and ghosts) and harnessed some of them into active service of Buddhist faith, and recruited them as guardian gods of the doctrine. Thus, he did not crush the native deities of Bon completely but he effected synthesis by absorbing them into the grand Buddhist pantheon.

Padmasambhava, while in Tibet, played multifarious role in the propagation of Buddhism. He helped Śāntarākṣita in raising the huge complex of bSam-yas monastery by subduing malefic elemental powers which were obstructing the construction of monastery. Later, on completion of the Vihara, he performed consecration ceremony of the temple. He collaborated with the Bodhisattva Śāntarākṣita in the installation of various Mahāyāna deities and sacred images in the monastery. It was not only that Indian architecture was alone imported from India for the construction of bSam-yas monastery but the entire Indian Buddhist iconography with all types of divinities right from Buddha, Bodhisattvas, feminine deities, tutelary gods (yi-dam) defenders of the dharma (Chos-skyong) and the "eight terrible ones" (Drag-mched), and finally the minor deities of the four cardinal directions etc. were transplanted on the Tibetan soil.

Later, when Rin-chen bzang-po founded Tho-ling monastery
around 1020 A.D., he, too, adopted the Odantapuri architectural model for his Lha-khang.\(^1\) The interior decoration was done by thirty-two Kashmiri artists, who were brought to western Tibet by the great lo-tsa-ba.\(^2\) In fact, the "whole art was clearly received from India, and the Tibetans added very little indeed to it - a few local saints, a few local divinities supposedly converted to Buddhism, their own hierarchies of religious superiors (lamas), and that is about all."\(^3\) Lumir Jisl has very pertinently observed that as far as Tibetan art is concerned, the Indian roots remained much more obvious and, therefore, in many ways Tibetan works of art differ comparatively little from their Indian patterns.\(^4\)

Now, reverting to Padmasambhava's role again, it may be observed that Guru Rin-po-che took keen interest in the mundane affairs and undertook translation of Buddhist works which he brought from Nalanda and Uddiyana. He translated mostly Tantric texts, which have been compiled in *rHyin-ma'i rGyud-'bum* consisting of twenty-five volumes.

Padmasambhava, being a great tantric authority, propagated Tantras in Tibet. He himself bestowed on the king

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and the queen, the initiation of Vajrakila and Hayagriva. He taught the art of mandala making to his twenty-five chief disciples. He also initiated twenty-five members of royalty including king and the ministers, into the secret teachings of Śrūb-ch’en dka-brgyal—eight gods who are difficult to propitiate. Padmasambhava is also credited with the renovation of 108 temples. This number, however, appears to be fictional. No doubt he might have given a new look to certain temples. He alongwith Santarakṣita taught Sanskrit to the sons of noble families who later became great lo-tsa-bas of Tibet.

Padmasambhava, however, could not win the hearts of Tibetans. He failed to win the confidence of Tibetan nobility. Even his miraculous deeds were not appreciated. Conversion of desert into green fertile land, effecting change in the course of Brahmaputra river, and flinging of silver urn into the air and getting holy water from the gods etc. and a host of other such miracles performed by Guru-Rin-po-che could not impress the incorrigible pro-Bon feudal nobility. The queen and anti-Buddhist faction expressed their displeasure and told the king frankly that the doctrine preached by Santarakṣita and Padmasambhava was an encroachment on their religious freedom. Consequently, plans were made to kill him but he escaped deadly attempts on his life. Padmasambhava was disappointed and he gave vent to his frustration during the course of his conversation...
with one of the king’s ministers. He admitted his failure to control Bon deities completely. Thus, the 'digavijaya' of distinguished tantric scholar, as he had proclaimed to accomplish, could not be consummated, and his proselytising mission met a partial success.

Padmasambhava set into motion Maharahasyavajrayanacakra and started the lineage of rNying-ma-pa. He converted entire warrior race into peaceful Buddhist country. For taming of primitive gods and demi-gods of Tibet, he had to take resort to occultism which is sometimes taken as magic.

There are some scholars who label Padmasambhava as a mere exorcist or a miracle working man whose deeds have been inflated out of proportion by his Tibetan biographers. But to dub Padmasambhava as a simple magician, as his detractors try to paint him, would amount to trivializing or vulgarizing Buddhism. Since, he was a great siddha, he was endowed with all those supranormal powers which are described in the Bhumi literature. In contrast to the more convenient Bodhisattva, the siddha is Bodhisattva considered to have already achieved the fullness of enlightenment, but he is one who works continuously for the welfare of sentient beings and all his supranormal prowess is harnessed to uplift the suffering beings in an effective manner.  

Indian traditions show that enormous potentialities lie hidden in man and his innate mental power can work miracles. These limitless capabilities lie locked inside of the human personality and only spiritual person can unlock these boundless treasures. Padmasambhava was one of those liberated souls whose consciousness/awareness had risen above the body and merged into the cosmic consciousness/awareness. We, the ordinary creatures are bound with the flesh of the body because our consciousness/awareness is attracted to the body. But the blessed one whose consciousness has merged into the divine, is free from the shackles of body, senses, desires and mind.

We, the ordinary mortals, look at Padmasambhava, as a mortal being as ourselves, but we fail to look at or comprehend his transcendental experience. We, the creatures of modern age with its scientific ethos are incapable of comprehending the spiritual reality of Padmasambhava. We must keep in mind that scientific-cum-historical approach to the world of spiritual reality is bound to lead us to scepticism. In fact, we are incapable of judging him because our own capacities of understanding are limited by our senses and the mind. Thus to judge and test the capabilities of Padmasambhava in the crucible of mundane history will be an act of tomfoolery.

Again, from the Buddhist point of view, it is impossible
to consider Padmasambhava as a mere historical figure whose role in the mundane affairs may be limited but in the matters of spiritual domain his role remains unparalleled. In this context, the great Indian yogin must be understood as the undying vidyādhara (Chi-med rig-'dzin) who works ceaselessly for the welfare of sentient beings. It depends upon our attitude whether Padmasambhava, the second Buddha, is to be regarded as pure incarnation of Amitabha or as doubtful historical entity. It is a question of faith and attitude with which the Tibetans view the great tantric teacher. If one has faith, liberation will be possible (Dad-pa yod-na thar-ba thub rgyu-red). If one does not have faith, there is no avail (Dad-pa med-na rang-red).

As already mentioned, Śāntarakṣita's first mission to Tibet failed but he was again invited by Khri-srong lde-btsan and this time Indian acārya cooperated with Padmasambhava in laying the foundation of bSam-yas monastery and later, after its completion in its consecration and installation of various idols in the newly built complex. With the building of monastery, equipped with requisite infrastructure, a permanent nucleus for the propagation of Buddhism came into existence. It was

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really a great moment for the Indian genius and a great tribute to the Indian learning when 'Santaraksita was appointed as the first upadhyaya (mkhan-po) of the Vihara. 'Santaraksita ordained seven sons of the soil as monks with the assistance of twelve monks belonging to the Mulasarvāstivadin School invited from India. Thus, he became the first Indian to introduce monastic system in Tibet. Again, he is the first Indian scholar-monk who explained to his pupils the Vinaya and Madhyamaka philosophy. 'Santaraksita laid the foundation of monastic system in Tibet and many Tibetans came forward to take the vows of monks and nuns.

'Santaraksita, apart from discharging his functions as head of the monastery, found some time to translate a few Buddhist texts relating to Prajñāpāramitā, Ratnakūta, Avantaka Sūtra, Kriyā and Caryā-yogatāntra and Hetucakra of Dīnāga.

'Santaraksita, an upadhyaya from Nalanda and a follower of distinguished Svātantraka Madhyamaka school, was basically a bhikṣu. He was a sheer contrast to the flamboyant, grandiose and charismatic personality of Padmasambhava, who was a renowned Tantric professor of India. But this combination of two masters deeply rooted in their respective spheres played a great role in the dissemination and propagation of Buddhism on the high plateau of Tibet.

After some time, a team of five Indian Panditas
consisting of Vimalamitra, Buddhaguhya, Viṣuddhasimha and Santigarbha joined their Indian colleagues Santaraksita and Padmasambhava at bSam-yas. But their missionary activities were impeded by the Bon element in the royal court. Khri-srong lde-btsan taking stock of the situation, permitted the Bon adherents to promote their own religion on equal footing with the Indian missionaries. The Bon-pos were allowed to translate their own works. It is interesting to note that the rivalry between the Indian Buddhists and the native Bon-pos was not based on doctrinal differences as such. Bon-pos themselves had been busy for a long time learning what they could from the tantric teachings and adapting their own teachings accordingly but Buddhist tantric was a red herring for them. The root cause of their enmity lay some where else. The followers of Bon realized that predominance of Buddhism in Tibet, and ultimately its adoption as state religion might jeopardise their privileged position.

The Indian missionaries did not take the things lying down. The resentment in the Indian camp had come to a boiling point. They protested to the king against his decision to allow the translation of Bon works along with the Buddhist texts. At one stage, they threatened to quit the country, if the king failed to contain the anti-Buddhist activities of the Bon-pos. They warned the king that it was impossible for two religions to coexist. Then after some time, a debate took place between
Santaraksita, Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra defeated the Bon-pos and it was publically declared by the king that Bon would no longer enjoy the position of universal state religion in Tibet. This was perhaps a great win for the Indian missionaries. But the Bon factor could not be exterminated. It did not die.

Vimalamitra was a great specialist of Mahāmudrā (rdzogs-chen). In the Tibetan Tripitaka, four works are attributed to him of which he is the author and translator. He is the originator and transmitter of several tantric lineages to his Tibetan disciples. bDud-rtsi is one of the eight rNying-ma Tantras which the Indian tantric master preached in Tibet. Having taught the precepts of sNying-thig, he laid the grounds for the preservation and transmission of the texts and of the oral precepts belonging to the rNying-ma-pa tradition.

Buddhaguhya, another Indian luminary, who was guru of Vimalamitra, played a great role in spreading the teachings of Lord Buddha. It was the same Pandita who was earlier invited to Tibet by Khri-lde gtsug-brtan, while he was meditating at the Mount Kailash. He was a leading authority on three lower Tantras - Kriyā, Carya and Yoga and wrote extensive commentaries belonging to the Carya Tantra. While in Tibet, he actively participated in the translation of few Buddhist texts. We do
not know if he preached the doctrine in Tibet except that he taught the Mayajala cycle to Vimalamitra.

'Sāntigarbha is another colleague of Vimalamitra and Buddhaguhya who is known to have performed the consecration ceremony of bSam-yas monastery. But one of the most important tasks he performed in Tibet was the propagation of Jam-dpal-sku, one of the eight rNying-ma-pa Tantras. He also translated a few works of Nāgārjuna and Vidyājnāna. Another learned Pandita Dharmakirti performed the consecration and initiation ceremony of Yogavajradhatu in the bSam-yas monastery. Viśuddhasūntha is yet another Indian missionary who made significant addition to the Tibetan Buddhist Canon by translating eighteen Sanskrit works. He also participated in the preaching of Karmavipaka teachings in Tibet, in which he had specialized.

In the meantime, Śāntaraksita died. It was a great blow to the missionary efforts of the Indian contingent. Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra had already left Tibet. The Indian Panditas were now left without a leader of the stature of Śāntaraksita. The Tibetan counterpart of the Indian Bodhisattva who became the inheritor of Śāntaraksita's mantle did not enjoy much prestige or status. This time the challenge to the Indian scholars came from the Chinese Buddhists who were preaching their own brand of Buddhism, which laid much stress on
perfect inactivity and meditation and gave scant regard to the
practice of virtue. This nihilistic conception of Buddhism as
propounded and propagated by the Chinese Ho-shang Mahayana came
into sharp conflict with the Indian concept of Buddhism which
put great emphasis on monasticism and practice of virtue.
Before his death, Śāntarakṣita had predicted that in due
course of time doctrinal differences would arise and the Church
of Buddha will split into two sects. He had also advised the
Tibetan authorities that Kamalaśīla from India be invited who
would be instrumental in restoring the pristine glory of
Buddhism in Tibet. The supporters of the Chinese instant method
of meditation were already hobnobbing with the nobility in
connivance with the Chinese maternal relations of Khri-srong
lde-btsan, who were openly extending their moral as well as
material support to the system of their country represented by
Ho-shang Mahayana. The Chinese propagator had already converted
a large number of Tibetans to his creed. Śāntarakṣita, being a
great Svatantrika Madhyamaka philosopher, might have telescoped
the entire scenario and realized that unless the activities of
Ho-shang Mahayana were not curbed, he would continue to pose a
grave threat to the establishment of true form of Buddhism in
Tibet.

Kamalaśīla, who was a professor of Tantra and a distingui-
shed pupil of Śāntarakṣita at Nalanda, visited Tibet to defend
the system of his guru. Kamalasila being a great logician,
floored his adversary Ho-shang Mahayana in the great bSam-yas debate and his victory led to the establishment of Buddhism on permanent footing in Tibet. The king formally declared that henceforth Buddhism, as established by Śāntarakṣita and confirmed by Kamalasila, was to be adopted as the sole religion of Tibet.

While in Tibet, Kamalaśila wrote a three-volume treatise on meditation called Bhāvanākrama which explained the intricacies of meditation and its results, and advantages to the practitioner. He also wrote Madhyamakaloka (dbu-snang-ba) which is devoted to the detailed exposition of Bhāvanākrama. During his stay in Tibet, Kamalaśīla did not translate any Buddhist work.

After the death of Khri-srong lde-btsan, it was Ral-pa-can who gave tremendous push to the translation of Buddhist works into Tibetan. The period of this Buddhist Zealot can be most appropriately called as the age of translation. It was during this period that translation was taken up on scientific lines. New guidelines for the translators were framed and a commission for the standardisation of terminology was set up. Indian Pandits Jinamitra, Śilendrabodhi, Surendrabodhi and Dānaśīla put in their heart and soul in devising lists of equivalents for Sanskrit theological, ritual and philosophical terms, which were later compiled into separate booklets, called Mahāvyutapatti. The terminology was fixed once for all and this was done so successfully that lost Sanskrit originals can
be convincingly reconstructed from their Tibetan versions.

One is bewildered at the sheer magnitude and quantum of translations accomplished by a team of fifteen Indian Panditas during the reign of Ral-pa-can. Enormous quantity of translation creates doubt in the minds of scholars whether the visitors from India actually did translate the Sanskrit works into Tibetan or they simply revised the earlier translated works in the light of newly standardised terminology. But this misgiving seems to be unfounded because many fresh manuscripts of Buddhist texts were procured from Magadha, Ujjayani, Nepal and China, and translated by the Indian Panditas.

No two Tibetan sources agree with each other in regard to the number and names of Indian Panditas who visited Tibet during the reign of Ral-pa-can. There is a lot of overlapping and interlarding. But a list of Indian translators culled out from the Tibetan works, who present themselves repeatedly, includes Jinamitra, Prajñāvarma, Śilendrabodhi, Surendrabodhi, Munivarman, Vidyākara (Vidyākaraprabha or Vidyākarsimha) and Dānasīla. These scholars have been most active participators in the translation work of Buddhist texts during this period. It is, however, intriguing to note that in certain important works, such as Satasāhasrikā, Aṣṭadasaśāhasrikā and Pañcavigśatiśāhasrika, the names of Indian translators have been omitted. Whether this lapse has occurred due to inadvertence or has been
committed deliberately can not be determined. Probability of inadvertence, however, appears to be stronger. As we know, Indian Panditas were held in high esteem by their Tibetan counterparts, and exclusion of their names from the translated works can not be construed as a deliberate act to attenuate their contribution.

Top priority was given to the translation of works on Vinaya. It was the team of Jinamitra and Sarvajnādeva, who executed the translation of Vinayasamuccaya running into 1774 pages. A big volume consisting of 1872 pages of Dharmamitra's Vinayasūtratīkā, 500 pages of Vinitideva's Vinayavibhangadvyākhyāna, and 376 pages of Guṇaprabha's Ekottarakarmaśātaka were translated by Jinamitra and Sarvajnādeva. Four volumes of Vinayavastu, two volumes of Vinayakṣudrakavastu, four volumes of Vinayavibhang and one volume of Pratimokṣasūtra were rendered into Tibetan by a team of Sarvajnāmitra, Dharmārībhadra, Vidyākaraprabha, Dharmakara and Jinamitra.

Similarly, numerous works on Abhidharma, Madhyamaka, Vijnānavadin school, Prajñāpāramitā, Sūtras and Dhāraṇīs were translated by Dūnaśīla, Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, Munivarman, Vidyākarasimha, Śilendrabodhi, and Prajñāvarma. Prajñāvarman alone translated and revised as many as 70 major and minor texts. No preachings outside the precincts of monastery are reported to have been done by the Indian missionaries during this period.
Missionary activities of the Indian savants, however, suffered a great setback during the regime of gLang-dar-ma (836-842 A.D.). Though, his reign was short-lived, yet the damage caused to the cause of Buddhism was tremendous. The Indian Panditas were expelled from Tibet and the translation work was stopped, and with this Indo-Tibetan cultural and intellectual relations forged for the last two centuries came to an abrupt end. It was only in the beginning of eleventh century that religio-cultural relations between India and Tibet were revived.

Religious scenario of Tibet in the beginning of eleventh century presents a dismal picture. When gLang-dar-ma launched his offensive against Buddhism, it was monastic order which he hit hard, and with the demolition of monastic infrastructure, he perhaps achieved his objective. With the passage of time, a new class of monks known as 'ar-tsho-bande' or 'a-ra-mo bande' emerged which tarnished the fair name of Buddhism by indulging in ritual killings and sexual orgies. This distorted image of Buddhism propelled Ye-shes-sde to seek inspiration and guidance from India, the birth place of Buddhism. In a bid to refurbish the image of Buddhism, and to establish monastic order in Tibet, he invited Dharmapāla, a great authority on Vinaya, from Magadha. This leading Vinayadhar assisted by a reputed trio of Sadhupāla, Guṇapāla and Prajñāpāla, launched a campaign in the western Tibet where many Tibetans took religious vows and entered the monastic order. The lineage established by these
Indian monks came to be known as 'sTod-'dul-ba' or 'Upper Vinaya'.

Some time during this period, two Indian Panditas Sūkṣmadirgha and Smṛtijnānakirti landed in Khams. Sūkṣmadirgha is stated to have taught the art of Grong-'jug (Parkayāpraveśa) to one Chos-bzang, and translated commentary on gSang-snyin-rgyud, a work of Tantra. Smṛtijnāna, however, played a leading role in initiating the translation of new sets of tantric works, which were later classified as "new Tantras" thus distinguishing them from the "Old Tantras" belonging to the earlier period. This Indian scholar prepared numerous translations of Manjuśrīnāma-saṅgīti, Śricatuhnimahāvīkṣitānta-rāja-nāma, the cycle of Guhyasamāja, the cycle of Manjuśrīghyapaṇṇa and many others. Smṛtijnāna is perhaps the first Indian Pandita who translated the Sanskrit texts into Tibetan without a lo-tsa-ba because of his mastery in the Tibetan language. He is responsible for launching a school for the study of Abhiḥarmakosā in Tibet and thus becoming the first Indian to originate the exposition of this text outside the country.

In the meantime, flow of Indian Panditas migrating to Tibet picked up. A large number of Indian scholars was operating at Tholing monastery before the arrival of Dipankaraśrījñāna in the western Tibet in the year 1042 A.D. All these Panditas were contemporaries of Atīśa and Rin-chen bzang-po, the great lo-tsa-ba
of Tibet. All of them, however, did not collaborate with Rin-chen bzang-po in the translation of Buddhist works. Sraddhākāravarman, Kanakāvarman, Kamalagupta, Tathagatarakṣita, Jnanabhadra, Vijayaśridhara, Dharmaśribhadra, Janārdana, and Devakara appear to be the most active participators who assisted Rin-chen bzang-po in his translation activities.

Other Panditas such as Padmakaravarman, Vijayaśribhadra, Ratnavajra, Bodhiyadra, Guhyaprajñā, Janānasri, Subhūtiśrisānti, Somanātha, Chandrarahula and Dānaśri, translated Sanskrit Buddhist works in concert with other lo-tsa-bas. It was not only the works of Tantras which were given top priority for translation, though bulk of them belonged to the Tantra class, but other genres of literature were also not left untouched. Janārdana, a Kashmiri Pandit and himself a physician, translated medical works of Vagabhatta and Chandranandana. The contribution of these Panditas towards the enrichment of Buddhist literature is tremendous. They not only translated fresh works but also revised, corrected and edited a large number of texts already translated by their predecessors.

It was on very rare occasions that the Indian missionaries found time to propagate the doctrine by verbal expression among the people. Perhaps, they did not venture out of the holy premises of the monastery. However, Guhyaprajñā propagated Annutrayoga Tantra, besides transmitting the precepts of
Sampappakrama. Somanatha who made two visits to Tibet, is known to have introduced Kalacakra in the Land of Snow. He also preached the secret meaning of the sGrong-gsal (Pradipodyatan) and taught the rTsa-ta shes-rab (Prajñānāma-mūlamadhyamakakarikā). During this period, a lady from Kashmir, known as bhikṣuni Lākṣmi also accompanied Somanatha to Tibet, where she transmitted the lineage of "detailed exposition" of the cycle of Mahākarupikā to one dPal-gyi bzang-po and he, in turn, to Rin-chen bzang-po. Ratnavajra, an intellectual giant of India, deeply rooted in Mantrayana and Pramāṇa, and one of the six Dvara-panditas of Vikramāśīla University, apart from taking part in translation, taught Mahāmudra. Later, he is said to have supervised the repair and renovation of the circular terrace of bSam-yas monastery which was destroyed by fire in 986 A.D.

Atiśa is one of the most resplendent stars in the galaxy of Indian Panditas who went to Tibet despite stiff opposition from the University authorities at Vikramāśīla. At the time of his departure for Tibet, Atiśa was working as Upadhyaya and was holding heavy administrative charge. This might have been the cause of opposition by the Mahavihara management. But the monastic community and the patrons of Buddhism in India were also not in favour of sparing the services of Atiśa for furthering the cause of Buddhism in Tibet. The Sthavira of the Mahavihara, however, relented and permitted Atiśa to leave the University on
an explicit condition that he would join the Vihara after three years. The Sthavira told Nag-tsbo lo-tsa-ba that it was his responsibility to escort back the Indian Pandita after the expiry of three years.

When Atiśa migrated to western Tibet on the invitation of Byang-chub-'od, religio-spiritual environment of the country was highly polluted. As far as Buddhism was concerned, climate was highly promiscuous and chaotic. Two rituals, sByor and sGrol, which involved sexual aberrations and ritual killings, were being widely practised by the so called tantric masters. These distortions had tarnished the fair name of Buddhism. Byang-chub-'od, therefore, sought the help of Dipankara Śrijñāna to purify the vitiated atmosphere of Tibet through his authoritative interpretation of Buddhism.

Atiśa undertook this gigantic task of reformation on two levels. Firstly, he travelled extensively throughout Tibet and met a large number of people both lay and monks, and spread the gospel of Buddha in layman's language. Secondly, he wrote Bodhipathapradīpa in which he compressed the quintessence of his philosophy and attitude towards the tantric aspect of Buddhism. Cardinal point of Atiśa's reform in Tibet was rigid monastic discipline. He always strove to avoid extremes. He taught for thorough development of the whole being of man, physical, emotional and mental - all three together making for genuine
spiritual advancement. He was a great synthesizer guarding against intellectual and physical extremes.

Atiśa’s attitude towards tantrism was that of a non-aligned. Neither did he condemn tantrism openly nor did he support it vocally. He always supported or criticized it on principles. Dipankaraśrījñāna having been through the entire gamut of tantric practices and all sorts of secret initiations connected with it, could not be expected to denounce it wholeheartedly. Again, having taken the vows of a bhikṣu, he could not be expected to degrade himself to accept all those extraneous elements, which had crept into Mahayana. He, therefore, clearly declared that tantras should only be followed by those who were blessed with a high degree of intellectual refinement and power, and had passed through the previous stages of ethical training and philosophical reflection. In fact, tantras were never meant for all and sundry. They were only meant for a few fortunate persons endowed with the highest mental powers. The practitioners of Kriyātantra and Cāryātantra were required to observe strict celibacy and restriction of food and drinks. It was only at the stage of Yogatantra that woman was allowed for the purpose of practising yoga. In Tibet, however, the practitioners of tantras had taken them literally and that was why sexual aberrations and other deformities had crept into the system.

It will be an exaggeration to state that Atiśa was totally successful in restoring the spirit of classical Buddhism.
in Tibet. Though he could not fully wean away the Tibetans from tantric practices because of their excessive fascination for tantrism, yet in all fairness to him, it may be argued that he was able to halt the process of degeneration of Buddhism in Tibet. His appeal for a real Buddhist outlook based on puritanism and injunctions of Vinaya did not fall on deaf ears and its far-reaching impact was to be felt and seen after a period of three centuries when Tsongkha-pa (1357-1419 A.D.), the founder of a new school called dGe-lugs-pa, emerged on the scene. Recognizing the contribution of his worthy Indian reformer he assimilated all the teachings of Atiśa, and enshrined them in his Byang-chub lam-rim (1403 A.D.). In this work, Tsongkha-pa like Atiśa lays much stress on the importance of Pāramitā teachings which are essential for man's spiritual cleansing. According to the principle of the Pāramitā teachings, one takes the shelter of a spiritual teacher and finally lands in the highest spheres of profound spiritual peace. Tsong-kha-pa like Atiśa laid great emphasis on the step by step way to moral purification which was also binding on the followers of Tantras. From Tsong-kha-pa's teachings, as expounded in his Lam-rim, it becomes amply clear that Bodhipathapradīpa was uppermost in his mind. In fact, the basis of Tsong-kha-pa's Lam-rim can be directly traced to Bodhipathapradīpa.

The teachings of Atiśa and his associates contributed to
the renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet. It led to reformation movement as a result of which a new school of Buddhism called bKa'-gdam-pa came into being. Though Atīśa himself did not found any school or sect in Tibet, yet 'Brom-ston-pa who was his spiritual heir, was entrusted "the responsibility of preserving all the Mahāyana śāstras as interpreted by Nāgārjuna and Asanga". The sect which 'Brom-ston-pa founded received the name bka'-gdam-pa because, according to Sum-pa mkhan-po, it held fast to the authoritative word (bka'-gdam) of Atīśa as laid down primarily in his work Bodhipathapradīpa. This new sect constitutes the nucleus of Tibetan religion which was later on renamed dGe-lugs-pa. His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, now a resident Indian, is the high priest and chief spokesman of this sect.

Atīśa's contribution to Buddhism in Tibet is not, however, confined to mere cleansing the contaminated religious atmosphere by preaching and systematizing anew the basic teachings of Buddhism. As we know, he was a great Mahāyānist scholar, he made a valuable contribution to enrich the Tibetan literature by producing original works as well as by participating in translation, and revision of earlier works. Most of the writings of Dipankaraśrijñāna are smaller and are easily understandable. It is said that even a shepherd used to keep a copy of a book carrying Atīśa's message in his pocket. That was why Atīśa became very popular and his voice reached far beyond the Tibetan
Aśīsa wrote and translated seventy-nine works, out of which thirty-eight works are his original writings. All these works in their translated form are included in the bstan-'gyur. Perhaps, because of this stupendous literary output, the grateful Tibetans regard Aśīsa as the incarnation of Manjuṣrī who ranks highest among the Bodhisattvas and is revered for divine knowledge, purity of life, and character.