



Research Paper

## Bhutan-Tibet Relations: Historical Perspective

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### I. INTRODUCTION

As being the last *Shangrila*<sup>1</sup>, Bhutan has always tried to preserve and maintained its culture and tradition. The state has adopted Buddhism as its national religion and frequently talks about the significance of the principles of Buddhism in the nation building process; Tibetan influence in Bhutan also can be seen on religion per se. The monastic Buddhism, which provided the institutional dynamism and foundation for the eventual unification of the country under the first Dharma Raja (Shabdrung Nawang Namgyal) has imparted from Tibet. Both the countries profess the same religion i.e. Mahayana Buddhism<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, the relationship between Bhutan and Tibet is cemented based upon the common cultural and religious ties. Before the advent of first Shabdrung, Bhutan was divided into many small provinces ruled by different kings and it has been written that some of them were Tibetan. To understand the historical roots of the relations of Tibet and Bhutan, this study examines the early history of Bhutan. The paper also discusses the impacts of Tibet upon Bhutan through analysing the meaning of the country's different names. Since the political history of Bhutan is closely linked with the religious history, this study also discusses the relationship between Bhutan and Tibet from the perspective of diffusion of Buddhism into the Bhutan.

Bhutan and Tibet shares a very special historical link. Tibet has undeniable historical legacy over the existence of Bhutan as a country. It has been claimed especially by many western scholars Richardson and Snellgrove (1968) and Aris (1997), that Buddhism in entire region of Eastern Himalayan (Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, and Arunachal Pradesh) is spread through Tibet. Tibet is also considered as the cultural capital of Bhutan because it has been believed that Buddhism in Bhutan originally spread through Tibet (Sinha, 1991; 73). Ever since the development of Buddhism in Tibet, the country has earned the religious leadership by sending Buddhist missionaries or monks to other regions including Bhutan and Sikkim. The Tibetan origin of Bhutan's traditional elites and its theocratic political system has symbolised a strong cultural and political ties between the two countries. Most of the Bhutanese civil and ecclesiastical officials' lineage can be traced to Tibet. Therefore, Tibetan influence had been of great importance in Bhutan from several centuries which remained as a critical factor in the evolution of its political and social cultural institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> It is a fictional place described by a British author James Hilton in 1933 in his novel Lost Horizon. He described the term Shangri-la as a mystical, harmonious valley, gently guided from a lamasery, enclosed in the western end of the Kunlun Mountains. It is also mentioned in the ancient Tibetan scriptures as *Nghe-beyuls*, according to scriptures there are seven such hidden lands similar to Shangri-la, which was created by Guru Padmashambhava in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as idyllic, sacred places of refuge for Buddhist during the time of strife. At present there are four such places in the Himalayan region which are considered as the centre Buddhism they are Ladakh, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim. First, Ladakh in 19<sup>th</sup> century came under the rule Dogra King of Kashmir and later as the part of Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1959, China took over the Tibet and Sikkim was annexed into Indian Territory in 1975. Bhutan is the only one which has survived as an independent state till today.

<sup>2</sup> After the death of Buddha, Buddhism was divided into two sects namely Mahayana and *Hinayana*. The Mahayana sect of Buddhism believes in the heavenliness of Buddha and believes in the idol worship. This sect is spread from India to several other nations such as China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Mongolia. It believes in mantras, its main principles were based on the possibility of universal liberation from suffering from all beings it allows salvation through having faith and committing oneself to Buddha.

The *Drukpa Kagyupa* school of thought (the prominent religious) has been practiced by the elite community in Bhutan and considered it as the national religion. The rise of *Gelyugpa* in A.D 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and its vigorous proselytising activities undermined the strongholds of old sects like *Nyingmapa* (commonly known as the red hat sect because of the red hats of their adherents) and made them migrate toward the south of the Himalaya, particularly to Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal. Hence, the Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651)<sup>3</sup>, a scion of the house of *Gya* of *Druk* and *Ralung* and the head of the *Druk* sub-sect of the *Kargyupa*, had fled to Bhutan and founded the southern branch of *Drukpa* in Bhutan called *Lho Drukpa* (Rahul, 1969, 102). He proclaimed Bhutan a theocracy and himself as its supreme spiritual head.

Bhutan had also developed close trade relations with Tibet in the past, where Tibet provided a free market for Bhutan's surplus rice and other items like woollen materials and musk. However, with the Chinese occupation in Tibet in 1959-60, the trading pattern has been changed entirely and almost all kind of trade with Tibet and China came to an end. Bhutan has blocked her northern border permanently and started exporting her products into southern neighbour (India), which in return also supplies items required for it (Coelho, 1971; 91).

The political history of Bhutan is closely interlinked with its religious history. As it is in Tibet, the Government of Bhutan has always been the guardian and patron of Buddhism and has always ruled by its principles. It was monastic Buddhism imported from Tibet and provided the institutional liveliness and foundation for the ultimate unification of the country under the first *Rimpoche* (Rose, 1977; 24). The title Dharma Raja as the Shabdrung Namgyal (*Rimpoche*) of Bhutan was mostly known to the East India as, "King of righteous law", which means, a King who rule according to the tenets of Buddhism<sup>4</sup>. The first Dharma Raja (Shabdrung Namgyal) travelled all the way from Tibet and, established the Tibetan pattern of theocratic system in the country. Like Tibet, Bhutan was also a theocratic state from 1616 to 1907, and Shabdrung *Rimpoche* was the supreme authority with religious and political powers. The Shabdrung *Rimpoche* was succeeded as an incarnation like in the Dalai Lama of Tibet. Unlike Tibet, Bhutan was not a total theocracy as there were some powerful aristocratic families usually dominated the political affairs of the country.

Despite the familiarity in the political system, the political relationship between Bhutan and Tibet was not very smooth. The rivalry between Bhutan and Tibet were the common features, even before and after the advent of Shabdrung Namgyal. In the Anglo-Tibetan war of 1888-89, Bhutan supported the British East India Company against Tibet. There are several factors responsible for Bhutan's to support British India against Tibet (Kharat, 2005; 124)<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, the Bhutanese cooperation with British India against Tibet made the Chinese to proclaim that Bhutan directly came under their jurisdiction. So, they insisted that the Chinese *Amban* in Tibet should be allowed to check the resources of Bhutan. Although Bhutan has never allowed any Chinese *Amban* into the country but on the basis of such historical claim China still stress its historical suzerainty on Bhutan. Apart from the impact of Chinese proclamation in Tibet, there are other areas where we find the Tibetan influence in Bhutan including the country's name.

The origin of the name Bhutan has been explained by various scholars. Some claimed that the name Bhutan is derived from the Sanskrit word *Bhotanta* meaning the end (anta) and the border land of *Bhota* (i.e Tibet) (Chakravarti, 2003; 1). There is another group of scholars who claim that the name Bhutan is derived from the word *Bhutanam* means the country of the *Bhotas*, the people who speak Tibetan dialects.

According to traditional Bhutanese historians, before the advent of Buddhism in Bhutan the country was known by the name *Lhoyul* (southern country) or *Lhomon* or *Mon Yul* (country of the Mon). Earlier, the meaning of *Mon Yul* refers to 'dark country', where the Tibetan believed that the countries of the southern Tibet is in darkness because they did not received the light of Buddhism (Chakravarti, 2003; 2). The inhabitants in the southern part of the border were known to the central Tibetans as *Mon pa* or dark people because they were considered to live in a condition of socio-spiritual darkness. Unlike central Tibet, where Buddhist civilisation

<sup>3</sup> For his religious work in Bhutan Ngawang Namgyal came to be known as Shabdrung Rimpoche (Dharma Raja and spiritual ruler). The name was used in his own life lifetime both by lamas and laymen. It has been believed that he took rebirth frequently generation after generation. He had several aliases, but the name Ngawang Namgyal was the one commonly used. The expression Dujom Dorji was more an honorific than the part of his name.

<sup>4</sup> Buddhism requires that a king, if he is fond of Dharma, should find the path to happiness both in this and in future lives by acting in accordance with its tenets. Subsequently, the subject will as the ruler and therefore the ruler should strive to learn Dharma

<sup>5</sup> According to J.C White, Tibet failed to support Bhutan in the latter war against British in 1864, even they didn't opposed the annexation of the *Doars* by the British. Other one, during the period between, 1869-1907, there were ongoing civil war situation in the country, so the *Tsongsa Penlop* Ugyen Wangchuk (first hereditary king of Bhutan) decided to solicit British support against such political rivals, therefore adopted a conciliatory policy toward them.

had reached its peak by the middle of the eighth century A.D, in the eyes of them, the people in the southern borderland were in darkness without the light of Buddha's wisdom (Phuntsho, 2013;2)

The term *Mon* and *Monpa* are names used with no fixed referent. The use of the name *Mon* for ancient Bhutan and its etymology are based on a very Tibet centric worldview. Since, Tibet is assumed to be the centre of Buddhist civilisation Bhutan and other Himalayan hinterlands are assumed to be at the peripheries of this civilised world. As the superior country describes its smaller neighbours condescendingly, the term *Mon* also carries a derogatory connotation to Bhutan.

However, until 1765, in spite of Jesuits report of 1627, the European explorers and cartographers did not really know about the separate geopolitical existence of two separate states. They used the names *Boutan* and *Thibet* interchangeably and were not aware of a small *Drukpa* state to the north of Bengal but independent of Tibet. It was in 1774, when the first British mission to Tibet led by George Bogle and his team made their journey through modern Bhutan, where they stayed for about four months and met the 17<sup>th</sup> Deb Raja, and finally reached the place of 3<sup>rd</sup> Panchem Lama (also called the Teshoo Lama after his monastic seat of *Tashilhunpo*) (Phuntsho, 2013; 13).

It was during the course of the mission, which Bogle learnt that there were two different countries with distinct political jurisdictions, and referred to the first one initially as the Deb raja's country and the other as the Teesho Lama's country. Then, he seems to have fluctuated between the Deb Raja's country and *Boutan*, perhaps not being able to make up his mind about which name to choose, and turned towards using *Boutan* for the Deb Raja's country and Tibet for the Teesho Lama's country. In the report dated 30 September 1775, which he wrote after returning from Tibet and while staying in Bhutan, that he determinedly secured the name of the country. He wrote, 'this country, which I shall distinguish by the name *Boutan*', referring to the Deb Raja's country (which is now call Bhutan) (Phuntsho, 2013; 13).

### Early History of Bhutan

The early history of Bhutan is uncertain and vague. There are contradictory claims on the existence of the country and its early history. J.C White and Coelho have talked about the natural calamity like fire, earthquakes and flood and internecine war are some reliable reason behind the gloominess of Bhutan's early history (White, 2005; 99). According to White, the accidental burning of *Punakha* in 1832 and the widespread destruction of building by the earthquake of 1897 were particularly responsible for the vagueness of the Bhutan's early history. There were total destruction of the library of the present *Tongsa Penlop* and only a few of the manuscripts were saved, from which White was able to gather some information (White, 1909; 99). He talked about the legends of early Bhutan named Sagaldip who came from the region of *Kooch*. In 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D Sagaldip conquered the countries of Bengal and Bihar, fighting against Raja Kedar of *Lakhnaute* or Gaur and was later defeated by Piran Viash, General of *Afrasaib*, and King of *Turan* or Tartary. The later part of the early history of Bhutan is dominated by the diffusion of Buddhism in the Himalayas especially in Tibet.

The pre-Buddhist religion of Bhutan was *Bon* and it has believed that it originally come from *Zanzun* (a country near to the mountain *Kailasa* and *Manas Sarovar*) (Chakravarti, 2003; 30). Initially the religion was brought into Tibet by Senrab. It is believed that, the religion had come to Bhutan through the mountain passes of Tibet or from India through *Duars*. The old Tibetan 'Bon' has following meanings; (1) to invoke (a verb); (2) to seed (a noun). Again *Bon* is said to be the Tibetan synonym of the *Shanshung* word 'gyer' which means chant (Ramphel, 1999; 15).

The *Bon* religion included the local divinities (*sa-bdag*) in its pantheon from the indigenous religion is evident from the reproach of the *Bon* text *gzibrjid* not to forget these old divinities. Hence, the contemporary Bhutan's Buddhism accepted and included such divinities as the protective deities of the faith. It is the ancient belief of about the mountain *Chomolhari* or *Jomolhari* was seat of the goddess *Jo-mo-lhari*<sup>6</sup>, which is still share by the many Bhutanese today (Chakravarti, 2003, 31).

Significantly, the history of Bhutan is one or other way interrelated to Tibet. Ram Rahul in his book *Modern Bhutan* (1971), argue that there is incomplete information and uncertainty of early history of Bhutan. According to him, Bhutan as a country came into existence, when the political instability shook in north-eastern part of India after the death of *Bhaskaravarman* of *Kamarupa* in A.D. 650 after this, Bhutan, which had till then been part of *Kamarupa*, became separate entity (Rahul, 1971; 18). In this regards, Rose wrote that the *Kamaruppa* Empire who used to controlled the north eastern region of India to the south of Bhutan until the seventh century A.D and that subsequently was incorporated into the Tibetan empire (Rose, 1977; 24). However, there is no oral tradition, much less reliable documentary or archaeological evidence available on this,

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<sup>6</sup> *Jomolahari* or *Chomolhari* is known as the bride of Mt. Kangchenjunga, it is mountain in the Himalayas with 8,900 ft above the plains and straddling into the border between *Yadong* country of China, and *Thimpu* district of Bhutan. The mountain is the source of the *Paro Chu* (*Paro* river) which flows from the south side and *Amo Chu* (*Amo* river) which flows from the north side.

and lack of any historical record, both with the *Kamaruppa's* and Tibetan's as supporting evidence specifically on this point.

According to Karma Phuntsho (2013), very little has been written on the history of Bhutan and to a large extent of what is written is reproduction of earlier works. There is deficiency of a comprehensive study on the specific period of the Bhutanese history. According to him, the time before the mid-eighth century is not characterised as much by historical features due to- the lack of history. Apart from scattered *lithic* tools, there is hardly any historical evidence tied to a historical place, time and person. Since, there is lack of known historical record, either in writing or oral forms, which is or is alleged to be from this period. The year before the introduction of Buddhist culture and the acclaimed founding of the two famous temples of *Jampa Lhakhang* in *Bumthang* and *Kyerchu Lhakhang* in *Paro* in the middle of the seventh century can be referred as the pre-historic period of Bhutan (Phuntso, 2014; 64).

### Diffusion of Buddhism

The claim of ancient connections between Bhutan and Tibet is mostly mythical or conjectural due to the lack of substantive material evidence. However, there is a plethora of historical evidence, including oral accounts, written works and material artefacts, which help to confirm Bhutan's early link with Tibet. The history of the emergence of Buddhism in Bhutan is directly linked to Tibet. The first of the important Buddhist sects to make its appearances in Bhutan was the *Nyingmapa* (the old sect of Himalayan Buddhism).

The popular claim of the Tibetan influence on Bhutan is traceable during the reign of the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo<sup>7</sup> (630-649 A.D) who built the two temples of *Jampa Lhakhang* in *Bumthang* and *Kyerchu Lhakhang* in *Paro* (Das, 1973; 5). The Tibetan sources claim that the King *Sronstsen Gampo* had declared Buddhism as the State religion of Tibet.

He had constructed 180 monasteries in and around Tibet, out of which two monasteries are situated in Bhutan (*Kyichu Lhakhang* in *Paro* and *Jampe Lhakang* in *Bumthang*) in 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D<sup>8</sup>. The story of the foundation of these monasteries by the Tibetan king is so well known to the Bhutanese that Bhutan's known history has began with this event. The monasteries are also the important part of the Bhutan's historical and religious consciousness, because they are standing as a prominent place of religious worship (Phuntsho, 2013; 76).

The book *Ma ni bka bum*<sup>9</sup>, a written sources which promotes the idea of Songtsen Gampo as an incarnation of *Avalokitesvara*, the Bodhisattva of compassion along with his two queens from Nepal and China who were presented as incarnation of two versions of the female deity called *Tara*. The book contain accounts of *Avalokitesvara's* career as a Bodhisattva, the genesis of the Tibetan people, the life story of Songtsen Gampo and a large number of his testament. On the basis of the information from this book we can portray the Songtsen Gampo as a great Buddhist King and the pioneer of Tibetan Buddhist civilisation and Bhutanese temples are attributed to such a religious king.

The history of two temples in Bhutan is related with advent of Songtsen Gampo's Chinese wife in Tibet. The story of Wencheng's (the Chinese queen of Songtsen Gampo) journey from Tang court to Lhasa and her arrival in Tibet is told very poignantly in the later Tibetan written and folk oral literature (Phuntsho, 2013; 78). Even in Bhutan, folk songs and stories about Wecheng, locally known as *Ashe Jaza* (Chinese Lady) was famous. According to the traditional Tibetan accounts, when Wencheng arrived in Lhasa, she brought a Buddha statue with her as a parting gift, which got stuck in the marshlands of Lhasa. The cart, it was said that pulled by two strong Chinese men (who later become the ancestors of the family to which the founder of Bhutan belonged). Unable to move the cart despite all efforts, Wencheng spread out the geomantic and divination

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<sup>7</sup> Songtsen Gampo was one of the greatest kings of ancient Tibet. The old Tibetan sources such as the Old Tibetan Chronicle and Old Tibetan Annals, deals with his great military successes as an imperial ruler. Songtsen Gampo became the King of Tibet just as Tibet was emerging as a strong military power in the region. Under his rule, the Tibetan empire rose to become a powerful player in Central Asia along with China and Arabs. He was able to extend his dominion across the entire Tibetan plateau and beyond.

<sup>8</sup> The legendary version of this fact is that a malignant demoness were used to cause fear and suffering to the ignorant people in Central Asia, therefore, the King got her nailed to the ground with the help of thunderbolt (*Phurbus*) at the twelve places and built twelve temples over the outstretched body of the huge demoness lying with her heart at Lhasa and grasping the border lands. The left hind foot of the demoness is supposed to have stretched over Bhutan (Charravarti, 2003, p 91).

<sup>9</sup> The book is a rediscovered treasure, a text which is believed to have been written and hidden in earlier times and later discovered by a treasure discoverer. Today, the book is the result of cumulative compilation, its core part dates back to at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century.



chart<sup>10</sup>, which she carried with her from China and conducted a geomantic survey of the land. Wencheng's geomantic analysis revealed that the country of Tibet lay on a supine *demoness*. The *demoness's* body stretched across the Himalayan landscape causing it to breed savagery and diabolic forces (Phuntsho, 2013; 79).

Wencheng describe the lake of *Othang* was the blood of her heart, the two hills around Lhasa symbolised her breast and her limbs extended to the distant territories. For any prospect of civilisation in Tibet and particularly for Buddhism to flourish, the demonic landscape had to be tamed through building a series of temples. The lake of *Othang* had to be suppressed by a pivotal chapel and the *demoness* pinned down with temples on her vital points and limbs. It led Songtsen Gampo and his Nepali and Chinese queens to build a series of temples. The first temple of *Rasa Thrulnang*, popularly known as the *Jokhang* and as *Tsuglhakhang* to local resident of Lhasa, was built on the lake of *Othang* by Songtsen's Nepali wife<sup>11</sup>. Wencheng built her temple, known as *Ramoche*, facing China and installed her Buddha statue in it<sup>12</sup>. Today, the *Jokhang* cathedral, which was built by Nepali queen but which houses the Buddha brought by Chinese queen is, to put it in the word of Hugh Richardson, 'the Tibetan Holy of Holies' and the most popular destination of Buddhist pilgrimage after Buddhist sites in India (Phuntsho, 2013; 80).

To subdue the *demoness*, further twelve temples were built: four to pin down the keys points of the shoulders and hips known as 'four suppressing the districts', four on the elbow and knees known as the 'the four taming outer frontiers'. The temple in *Jampa Lhakhang* in *Bumthang* is listed among the temples taming the borders and *Kyerchu Lhakhang* in *Paro* is among the temples taming outer frontiers. *Jampa Lhakhang* falls on the left knees and *Kyerchu Lhakhang* on the left foot of the *demoness*.

The next milestone of diffusion of Buddhism in the history of Bhutan is the arrival of Guru *Padmasambhava*, the famous Buddhist teacher of India, which took place sometime in the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. *Padmasambhava*, or Guru *Rimpoche* (precious teacher) as he popularly known in Bhutan, is without any doubt the most important and universal of all historical and religious figures in Bhutan. Even he holds a central position in Bhutan's religious history. He occupies a special place in the history of Bhutan, that he can be considered as the patron saint of Bhutan. To most of the Bhutanese, he is like both a precious<sup>13</sup> teacher and the quintessential divinity. He is often describe as the second Buddha<sup>14</sup> and perceived as the embodiment of the enlightened wisdom, compassion and power of all *Buddhas*. A great number of Bhutanese religious festivals, ceremonies and prayers have him as their focal point of worship or meditation. In fact, traditional Bhutanese historians unanimously argue that Bhutan is the destined field of activity for *Padmasambhava* just as Tibet is for *Avalokitesvara*.

According to *Kathang* (a biographical account of *Padmasambhava*), *Padmasambhava* is said to have travelled to China and some *Kathang* also claim that he appear in the form of a Buddhist monk to convert the war mongering Emperor of *Ashoka* to a peace loving Buddhist. However, it was while he was in a meditation retreat in the *Yangleshod* cave in Kathmandu valley in the middle of eight century A.D. that his journey to Bhutan and Tibet purportedly took place (Phuntsho, 2013; 88).

The Bhutanese have generally accepted the multiple visit of Guru *Padmasambhava* in Bhutan. However, there are no material evidences for his several visits in Bhutan, not even in early Tibetan sources.

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<sup>10</sup> Himalayan Buddhism is heavily ridden with geomantic and divination practices, much of which originated in China. Tibetan view China as a major source of astrological, geomantic and divinatory sciences and Wencheng is often attributed with the introduction of these sciences to Tibet, although the scholars now think that it was not her but Princess Jincheng who followed her a few generations later and promoted the Chinese culture.

<sup>11</sup> According to the narrative the Nepali queen demanded her right to build the first temple as she was the senior. Being granted the right and after many difficulties, she successfully built her temple facing Nepal.

<sup>12</sup> The statue was swapped at the later times to confuse the Chinese soldiers who came to recover Wencheng's Buddha statue.

<sup>13</sup> There are about a dozen of *Kathang* hagiographies, all of which are considered to be treasure text hidden in the eight century and revealed in later times.

<sup>14</sup> *Kathang* the biographical account of *Padmasambhava's* life and miracles claim that, he is an emanation sent forth to this world by the Buddha *Amithabha* to help the sentient beings after the historical Buddha passed away. The first mark of his transcendental status is his miraculous birth on a lotus in a middle of a lustrous and immaculate lake, unsullied by the ordinary human womb. He described as a self born emanation without father and mother and his name *Padmasambhava* or *Padmakara* (Lotus Born) ids derived from this source. The *kathang* literature further reinforced this with a prophecy attributed to the historical Buddha, stating that he would return after eight years in the form of *Padmasambhava*. Thus, the *Padmasambhava* is seen as the immediate incarnation of the Buddha and often given the epithet 'the second Buddha'.

Thus, the only existing written source called *tercho* or treasure text from the early 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D onwards<sup>15</sup>. The texts are supplemented by a mixture of oral accounts, a number of which may predate textual records. The oral narratives of the texts on Padmasambhava's visits in Bhutan are very rich and diverse. They are generally localised stories drawing on local legends, *toponyms* and other aspects of life in the communities. There are many places in Bhutan associated with Padmasambhava's journey in Bhutanese oral accounts. Ugyen Drak in *Zhemgang* is a cliff named after Padmasambhava (the master from Ugyen or Oddiyana), because he blessed it. Phrumzur said to be an aberration of phurzung or piercing with the dagger, is a spot in the same area where he pierced his dagger into the rock. *Ura*, for which the archaic term is *Urbay*, is said to be the *beyul* or hidden land, named after the Ugyen Padmasambhava. The list of such legends and narratives goes on, but it does not leave us any wiser historically.

Apart from the miraculous journeys of Padmasambhava, the majority of texts speak about the two visits of Padmasambhava to Bhutan: first from India before he visited Tibet and subsequently from Tibet. The two treasure texts discovered by Molmokhyil and Ugyen Zangpo, virtually there is no information about them. Molmokhyil has talked about the story of a king of Mon name Sedarkha, who was engaged in a devil deeds. The eight classes of non-human spirits, led by Shelging Karpo, punish the king by sending forth diseases, drought and other natural calamities in his country. King Sedarkha falls seriously ill and after hearing about the power of Padmasambhava<sup>16</sup>, he dispatches messengers to invite Padmasambhava.

Hence, when Padmasambhava arrives at Sedarkha's bedside, he didn't ask for any material gain rather he proposes that the king and his country to avoid negative deeds engage in virtuous actions and follow his spiritual ways. The king agrees to do so and Padmasambhava meditates for three days at the red cliff of *Dorji Tsegpa*. Using his power through a circular magical chart, he subjugated Shalging Karpo and his coterie of eight classes of spirit. Later the chart is worn by the king, who is freed from the harms done by him by the spirits and the country flourishes (Phuntsho, 2013; 92). However, from the name of the cliff (Dorji Tsegpa), the Mon country that the *Molmokhyil* is talking about is modern day *Bumthang*. The name is used in many other sources to refer to the cliff-cave in *Kurjey in Bumthang*.

The second source i.e. Ugyen Zangpo recount the story of Padmasambhava's visit in Bhutan and unlike *Molmokhyil* his version has become the dominant narrative of Padmasambhava's arrival in Bhutan (Phuntsho 2013; 93). The history of the existence of Buddhism in Bhutan is during the period of Sindharaja (ruler of *Bhumthang*)<sup>17</sup> in the middle of 9<sup>th</sup> century. The story tells about the King Nawoche or Nabudara (literally big nose in classical Tibetan), who invite Padmasambhava to their country and the great master blesses the country by 'turning the wheel of dharma', that is teaching the Buddhist doctrine (Phuntsho, 2013; 93). It was at that time the Sindharaja became ill and invited the Buddhist saint Padmasambhava to thwart the evil forces and re-established peace in his Kingdom which was lost during a prolonged hostility with Nawoche or Nabudara (the king of plains, whose domain seemed to include *Suryapahar*) (Ramphel, 1999; 10).

Ugyen Zangpo has *described the* details of the iron castle without door of *Bumthang*, which was built by the King Sindharaja. It was from that palace that he started to extent his domain as far as *Dorjidark* in Tibet and *Sindhbari* in India. There were growing hostility between the king Sindharaja and Nabudara/Nawoche over the question of the border between India and Mon (present Bhutan). The Sindharaja took up his arms against the king Nawoche, during the war followed by the king's son, Tala Membar settled his people in the following lands- *Dorje Drag* in Tibet, *Khansar* in Mon, *Lingor* in *Hor* and *Sindhpari* in India. In the age of twenty years *Tala Membar* was killed by King Nawoche in Indian plain. In retaliation, the king Sindhraj drew up his forces and put to fire a thousand of settlement belonged to king Nawoche, who in turn, captured twenty stronghold of Sindhraj (Chakravarti, 2003; 96). Sindhraj had a great affection for his son and could hardly accept the loss. It has crippled his initiative and desire to live. He fell ill and was doubted, if he would ever recover from the sock and sickness.

<sup>15</sup> The treasure text are traditionally claimed to have been composed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D and buried by Padmasambhava or one of his disciples to be revealed by a destined *terton* or treasure discoverer when the time is ripe.

<sup>16</sup> After falling seriously ill, the King proclaim that he will share his country and court with anyone who can cure him of the ailments imposed by the eight class of spirit. A minor ruler from the border district offers to find someone, who can cure him in exchange for a measure of gold. When he was given the measure of gold, he reported that in the *Yangkeshod* cave in Nepal, there is someone called Padmasambhava, who is the master of secret mantras and who can subjugates entire existence with his power.

<sup>17</sup> Sindhraj was born a Prince Kunjom to King Singala of *Kapilavastu* in northern India. Due to his wild character and his harassment of the subjects, he was asked to leave the court and pursue a religious life. He initially accepted the proposal but influenced by his wives and attendants, he later rejects it and destroys the thirty villages belonging to the minister who presented the proposal. As a consequence, he and his retinue are banished to the region of *Sindha* which he rules, assuming the new title Sindhraj.

At this point a Vassal king (who might be a Buddhist himself) from the border suggested that the great lama Padmasambhava<sup>18</sup>, who was the preceptor of Nabudara, should be called to propitiate the angry deities of *Bumthang* and save the soul of the ailing king and restore peace to the people. At that time the King Trhisong Detsen of Tibet, on the advice of his priest *Santaraksita*, invited saint Padmasambhava to Tibet for the propagation of Buddhism. Guru Padmasambhava visited Tibet in 747 AD and preached Buddhism there. On his return to India, he paved to visit his disciple Nawoche around the time of the conflict between Nawoche and Sindhuraja (Chakravarti, 2003, 97).

Sindhuraja from his sick bed promises to offer anything in return for his health but the saint or guru ask only for consort with whom he can carry out his spiritual practice to retrieve the *la*. The king has four daughters who bear the mark of *dakini* or spiritually potent women. Bumden Tshomo, the most virtuous of all, is given as a tantric consort to the guru and the guru starts his retreat in the cave of red cliff, *Dorji Tsegpa* (Phunsho, 2013; 94)<sup>19</sup>.

After seven days of meditation, Padmasambhava left an imprint of his body in the rock face of the cave. Shalng Karpo (chief of the spirit) appears to the Guru and offers an inflated leather pouch in which Sindhuraja's *la* and *srog* or life force was trapped<sup>20</sup>. Padmasambhava and *Bumden* return to the iron castle and placed the pouch next to the King's nostrils, reinstate the King's life essence and life force. The luminous white spider disappears into the King (Phunsho, 2013; 94).

Some of the oral accounts gives a slightly more dramatic story of Padmasambhava's final subjugation of the King evil spirits. It has been said that in order to destroy the evil power he staged ritual dances of eight forms for over a week, which as the legend goes, attracted the chief of the local Bon deities Shalng Karpo. As the guru enters into a deep meditation to use psychic power to subdue the evil spirit, the chief of the spirits, remain in hiding unwilling to challenge the master. The chief local deity came in the disguise of a lion. The saint immediately realised that it was the lion demon who stolen the king's vital strength. He quickly transformed himself into Garuda (the divine king of birds) and fought out the lion wresting from him the king's vital strength. He subjugated the lion but did not destroy him; instead he made him a guardian of the faith (Chakravarti, 2003; 97).

Aftermath guru imparts Buddhist teaching to the king and his court and instructs them to live a virtuous life, by following the Buddhist religion. After hearing the grievances of Sindhuraja against Nawoche, *Padmasambhava* persuades Sindhuraja and his ministers to come to the border with him to seek conciliation with Nawoche. Both the kings and their cortege meet on a spacious ground at the border between Mon and India. Padmasambhava give them Buddhist teachings and oversees a ceremony of oath taking. Finally, Guru Padmasambhava successfully restored peace by converting both Sindhuraja and Nabudara to Buddhism and set a pillar at *Mua-Thang* (in *Khem*) to demarcate the boundaries. Stone pillar is erected and the two parties take vows to live in peace and to not let their troops cross the border demarcated by the pillar (Phunsho, 2013; 96)<sup>21</sup>. Guru had acquired great fame and established a Buddhist sect in Bhutan called *Nyingmapa*. The Bhutanese still consider him an incarnation of Buddha (Das, 1973; 4).

Padmasambhava tells them that he will return to *Bumthang* to give further teaching in the future but he will come from Tibet rather than India. According to Ugyen Zangpo, that Padmasambhava is said to have returned the *Bumthang* the year after his first visit. That time he was accompanied by his young Tibetan disciple, Denma Tsemang (whose rebirth Ugyen Zangpo claims to be)<sup>22</sup>. Padmasambhava came to Bhutan from

<sup>18</sup> Padmasambhava hailed from *Uddiyana* which is believed was situated to the north-west of Kashmir. He was a renowned teacher of tantric School of Buddhism in the University of *Nalanda*.

<sup>19</sup> It has been believed that the cliff was the main base of the chief of the spirit, Shalng Karpo, who took the king *la*.

<sup>20</sup> The air in the pouch is the life force and the white spider in it is the life essence (*la*), the spirit said, 'tell the King not to repeat the bad actions. His bad action has led to the punitive illness.'

<sup>21</sup> The place, where the peace deal was made, is today identified with the name of *Nabji*, literally 'the open ground of oath', which lies in the southern end of the *Mandgechu* valley. A stone pillar known as *nado* or stone of oath, which is believed to have been erected at the meeting, is still found standing on the site.

<sup>22</sup> According to Gedun Rinchen and Kongtrul Lodoe Thaye (Bhutan's first modern historians), Ugyen Zangpo has received the prophesy to build a three dimensional *mandala* in *Kurjey* for the welfare of *Bumthang* valleys. In order to clarify the doubts he had about the *mandala*, he transport his consciousness to the presence of Padmasambhava, leaving behind his human body temporarily. Since his returns get delayed by a week and in course of the delay, his attendant discards his corpse in confusion. Unable to re-enter his own body, Ugyen Zangpo desperately looks for a medium. Finally, using the technique of *drongjug* or transference of consciousness into another body, he enters into the body of a young girl who has just died.

Tibet via *Khenpalung*,<sup>23</sup> a region in the northeast corner of modern Bhutan, from where he was also followed by the Tibetan King Khikha Ratho and his subject. Padmasambhava and the royal entourage seem to approach through the valley of Tang where Padmasambhava bestows teachings to the royal party. Most of Khikha Ratho's group settle around *Genye Lhakhang* but the Tibetan king and his queens and seniors officials continue to *Kurjey*. When Padmasambhava arrives in the area of *Kurjey*, he was received by Sindhraja with much pomp and ceremony. Padmasambhava gives teachings to the two kings and their subjects at *Kurjey*.

The narration of the legend of the advent of Padmasambhava during the reign of Sindhraja has been found the Indianisation in pre-history of Bhutan, the legend advocate that the King was an Indian refugee and a patron of Padmasambhava and the founder of the short lived kingdom of *Bumthang*. Apart from such claim there is no any textual evidence or source predates of Ugyen Zangpo's text supporting the account of Sindhraja except the toponyms of iron castle of Chagkhar. In the names of structural remains there left nothing visible in Chagkhar. In 1905, when British political agent J.C. White visited the place, he report that the ruins of a square structure with surrounding ditches. But the time when Michael Aris visited the Chagkhar in 1970s, there was nothing left of such structure but only fallow fields which used for grazing cattle. Historically, such claims are difficult to establish.

The account of Ugyen Zangpo and Molmokhyil accounts mostly deal with the arrival of Padmasambhava in the context of Indian King Sindhraja, not the Tibetan King Khikha Ratho. Especially the Ugyen Zangpo accounts portraits the King as an amiable and deeply religious character. There are two different version of Pema Lingpa works; a short one of is *Guide to the Hidden Lands of Sikkim and Khenpalung* and the longer one is the *Guide to the Hidden land of Khenpalung* (Lingpa, 1975; 464-65). However, the Pema Lingpa's detailed accounts of to hidden land of *Khenpalung* presents Khikha Ratho as an inimical and diabolical prince with dog's mouth and a goat skull as his name indicates.

The story about Khikha Ratho is begin in the court of Tri Songdetsen, the 37<sup>th</sup> King of Tibet, who invited Padmasambhava and Bengali monk *Santaraksita* to Tibet and established Buddhism as the formal religion of the court. It also begin with the completion of the *Samye* monastery around 779 A.D. and the project of translate the Buddhist scriptures into Tibetan text. One of the great translators of that time was Vairocana of *Pagor*. He was trained as a translator and sent to India to bring back the Buddhist doctrines. It has been recorded in Pema Lingpa's account that Vairocana was accused during his return by *Za Marjen*<sup>24</sup> (one of the queens of Tri Songdetsen) and by anti-Buddhist ministers for bringing with him dark magic and harmful spells in the guise of Buddhism. Then the King was forced by the court to send Vairocana into exile (Phuntsho, 2013; 102).

However, Queen *Za Marjen*, has failed to get King's favour and he avoids her for many years. In course of that time, the Queen has been overcome by strong sexual urges, copulates with a dog and a goat. The result of that connection was the birth of Prince Murum Tsenpo (Khikha Ratho), who had canine mouth and caprine skull. On hearing of prince birth and his inhuman parenthood and appearance, the King asked the Queen to bring the Prince to him. Subsequently, he exiled the Prince with some followers and subjects as a *lu* (scapegoat) to the southern borderland<sup>25</sup>. Murum Tsenpo or Khikha Ratho suffered such a fate and was first settled in *Lhodark Gyud* but he was again expelled from there to *Khenpalung*<sup>26</sup>.

After establishing a prosperous community in *Khenpalung*, Khikha Ratho launched a military invasion to Tibet using the Indian support he had garnered. By then in Tibet, King Tri Songdetsen had passed away and his son, brother of Khikha Ratho, Mutig Tsenpa was installed as the ruler of the Tibetan empire. Under the threat of Khikha Ratho's invasion Mutig Tsenpa sought after the intervention of Padmasambhava, who in turn, commanded the god Namthil Karpo to create a heavy storm and lightening. Terrified by the lightning flashes, the troops returned to *Khenpalung*. However, Mutig Tsenpo continued to worry that Khikha Ratho might strike again and destroy the Buddhist shrines built by his father and ancestors unless Khikha Ratho was forced out from *Khenpalung* and further away from Tibet, for that end the King again sought after Padmasambhava help.

<sup>23</sup> *Khenpalung*, literally means 'the valley of *Artemisia*', evokes a sense of mystery and awe to the Bhutanese. Pema Lingpa (treasure discoverer) and the people who followed him commonly identified *Khenpalung* with the highlands northeast of *Bumthang* and northwest of *Kurtoe* district of Bhutan extending across the current border with China.

<sup>24</sup> Some accounts have it that the queen made up the accusation as Vairocana, who was handsome but one of the first seven monks to be ordained in Tibet, defied her wish for a sexual liaison with him. Embarrassed by his defiance of her seduction, *Za Marjen* falsely accused Vairocana of raping her.

<sup>25</sup> There were the ritual of sending away scapegoat and ransoms, mainly in the forms of effigies of dough, in order to cast away evil harm doers and misfortunes.

<sup>26</sup> The literally meaning of *Khenpalung* is 'the valley of *Artemisia*', evoke a sense of mystery and awe of Bhutanese, Pema Lingpa identified it with the highlands of northeast of *Bumthang* and northwest of the modern *Kurtoe* district of Bhutan extending across the current border with China.



The oral account gives a mystical story about how Padmasambhava has brought out the Khikha Ratho and his entourage from *Khenpalung* to the place called *Karnya* with the help of a magical wooden bird<sup>27</sup>. Then Padmasambhava returned to *Khenpalung* and bury all the property of Khikha Ratho and his court. He sealed the entire hidden land so that no one could find the place until the right time had come. Unable to find their place again, Khikha Ratho and his court settled in *Kyizum* village in Tang. Today, there are still a household who claims the descended from Khikha Ratho (Phuntsho, 2013; 105). Apart from the mystical narration of the story, there seems to be traces of historical events which can justify a claim that a Tibetan prince lived in the north-eastern part of Bhutan around the beginning of 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. There are many references in the Tibetan historical events, which talk about the stories of Vairocana's exile and the notoriety of Queen Za Marjen of *Tsepong* are well known among Tibetan historians.

In fact the idea of *Khenpalung* was not only limited to Pema Lingpa's work, rather about a half century before him, Godkyi Demthruchen (1337-1409 A.D), opened a hidden land of *Khenpalung* near the Everest region of north of the *Arun* valley and south of the *Lato Lho* region of Tibet. The people across the southern Tibet and the Himalayan areas are still believed that the hidden land associated with the name of the Tibetan King Khikha Ratho is waiting to be opened by a destined person. It has been seems like both Godkyi Demthruchen and Pema Lingpa were also exposed by this idea and went on to identify it in different location.

On the basis of these narrations one can understand that there were no mutual relations among the Kings of the entire region. The areas of Bhutan were became the subject of incursion and battle field for the Kings of north as well as south. It was only after the advent of Buddhism and Guru Padmasambhava which make calm and established harmonious relation between them. However, the story of the legends like Khikha Ratho and Sindhrāja is still popular in Bhutan's history but it does not hold any strong evidence. On the basis of above narrations it will be wrong to *Indianise* or *Tibetanise* the Bhutan or can established the historical relationship between Bhutan and Tibet or Bhutan and India.

Unlike the legends of Sindhrāja and Khikha Ratho, the legends of Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo hold the strong evidence about his control over Bhutan. There is no disagreement among the scholars regarding the origin of the monasteries *Jampa Lakhang* and *Kyerchu Lakhang* as the early diffusion of Buddhism. Even the architectural and iconographical styles of the temple which shares close resemblance with other temples of Tibetan dynasty, which clearly proclaim their foundation during the reign of Songtsen Gampo. The Tibetan rule over Bhutan is also discussed in the reign of *Kamarupa*, where the political instability that shook north-eastern India after the death of Bhaskaravarman of *Kamarupa* in 650 A.D has exposed Bhutan to incursions from the north and became the ultimate Tibetan occupation<sup>28</sup> (Rahul, 1971; 18).

It was during the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, when Bhutan was occupied by the followers of King Tri Ralchan of Tibet. Bhutan during the reign of Tibetan King Tritsun Desten (commonly known as Ralaphchen 816-836 A.D)<sup>29</sup> came to be known as *Milog*. During King Tritsun Desten era Tibetan troops came to Bhutan on the invitation of some Bhutanese who wanted the Tibetan assistance to drive out some of the invaders from the neighbouring kingdom. The Tibetan sway in Bhutan ended with the collapse of central authority in Tibet in around 840s A.D during the reign of King Lang Dharma.

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<sup>31</sup> Padmasambhava travelled to *Khenpalung* and transformed himself into a fearsome black man. He deceived Khikha Ratho into believing him to be a non Buddhist rival of Padmasambhava called Hara *Nagpo*, who wished to destroy the works of Padmasambhava. Being convinced by Padmasambhava, Khikha Ratho requested the black man to help him to build a temple as great as the temple built by his father and Padmasambhava in Tibet. The black man, however, offered to build something even more wondrous than the temple: a wooden bird holding five hundred people to party with all kinds of enjoyments. Immediately carpenters were gathered and the large wooden bird was built. For the inauguration, the king and his entourage were all invited to the party in it. When all the Khikha Ratho's court was in it, the black man went on the top of the wooden bird and hit with a hammer the nail, which triggered the unsettling wind. The wooden bird soared to the sky and Khikha Ratho duly discovered that the black man was none other than Padmasambhava had tricked him. The wooden bird flew out of *Khenpalung* to *Bumthang* and when the nail which triggered the settling wind was hit, it landed in a place called *Karnya*.

<sup>28</sup> The centuries old arrangement was thus disturbed after the death of Bhaskaravarman and Kamarupa itself got disintegrated. No single king was able to impose their authority over the whole Bhutan and the country split into several small and big units which fell as easy prey to the Tibetan incursion.

<sup>29</sup> Songtsen Gampo, Tri Songdetsen and Tri Ralaphchen are remembered by posterity as the royal trio, who respectively introduced, widely propagated and consolidated the Buddhist system in Tibet. With Khikha Ratho Tri Songdesten had three sons they are the Prince Tsangma who was eldest among the three, since, he have the strong religious inclination which made him to pass the throne to his brother. The second brother Udum Tsenpo alias Lang Dharma is said to have been denied the throne on the grounds of his character. However, the throne went to Tri Ralaphchen, the last among the three sons.

A war took place in 824 A.D between the Tibetan King and Indian ruler of Bhutan. Tibetan troops successfully drove out the Indian ruler from Bhutan and named it *Milog*, that they will not return (Dash, 1973; 7). Ralpachen and Lang Dharma were brothers, and it has been believed that Lang Dharma murdered his brother and became the king of Tibet. During his reign King Lang Dharma indulged a large scale of Buddhist persecution in Tibet, which leads to a considerable influx of Tibetans in Bhutan. Then the Tibetan influence began to grow in Bhutan and slowly Bhutan came under the Tibetan cultural influence. This was the beginning of changes in the ethnic and cultural transformation of Bhutan.

Later, number of Tibetan increased in Bhutan. During 12<sup>th</sup> century AD, many Lamas started pouring into Bhutan. The name of first Lama was Gyalwa Lhanangpa of the *Nyo* lineage, who was a student of *Drinking Jigten Gonpo's* (Rahul, 1971; 18). Lhanangpa was the originator of *Lhapa Kagyupa*, a sub sect of the *Drinking Kargyupa*. First, *Lhapa* controlled only *Paro*. Later, the *Lhapa Kagyupas* became active around *Thimphu* and near *Bumthang* in the east (Rahul. 1971; 19). *Lhapa Kargyupa* applied the *Dzong* system of Tibet in Bhutan subsequently and built the famous *Tangu* monastery which (Chakravarti, 2003: 24). Fatter

### **Lineages of Drukpa School of Buddhism**

The history of the emergence of Buddhism in Bhutan also concerned with the origin and spread of *Drukpa* sect which was founded by Yeshe Dorji (1160-1210 A.D) at *Ralung*. His Guru Pema Dorji, came from *Lingpa* and founded the *Lingpa Kaju* sub-sect. When Yeshe Dorji was building a monastery called *Seva Chang Chhup* a dragon appeared in the sky. From this he changed the name of his sub sect *Lingpa Kaju* to *Drukpa Kaju*. Lamas of *Drukpa* (red hat sect or the offshoot of *Nyingmapa* school of Buddhism) also get started coming into Bhutan partly for missionary work and partly due to the persecution suffered by them from the rival yellow hat sect of *Gelukpa* in Tibet. The red hat sect of *Drukpa* Buddhism was founded by Yeshe Dorji<sup>30</sup> at *Ralung*, a famous monastery about 30 miles east of *Gyantse*.

Yeshe Dorji was succeeded by a young Lama Sangye-on who was given the name of Phajo-Druk gom-Shigpo. He was the student of Wonre Darma Senggee (1177-1237 A.D) and studied at *Ralung* at first and later sent to Bhutan where he settled at *Cheri Dordam*. In a brief period of time he became famous, which lead jealousy from the Lhapa Lama who was settled in Bhutan. After the unsuccessful attack on Cheri, Lhapa Lama came down to the *Am-mp-chu* valley where the villagers accepted him. At the very time Phajo-Druk aroused in power and further assisted to the conversion of Bhutanese from other parts of the country into Buddhism. Shigpo and his companion succeeded in establishing themselves in Bhutan and by the end of 13<sup>th</sup> century, he had built a small *dzong* named *Dongon Dzong* (blue stone *dzong*) on the right side of the upper *Wang-chu* (Das, 1973, 14). This can be the starting point of the emergence of separate and distinct church of Bhutan which persisted through the centuries and still remain as the dominant Buddhist sect in Bhutan.

The tradition of spiritual line of famous *Drukpa* School is still alive in every corner of the monastery of Bhutan. In fact, the Royal Government of Bhutan has declared the *Drukpa* as the national religion of Bhutan in the Citizenship Act of 1978 (Ahmed, 2013; 162-3). If we look into the major steps taken to the introduction of the *Drukpa* school of Buddhism in Bhutan, they were mostly accomplished by the devoted spiritual descendants of the 'Great Man of Mar', i.e. Marpa (*Mar-pa*) (1012-1097) (Rampel, 1999; 51). He was the disciple of Mahasiddha Naropa and the spiritual ancestor of the leading religious school in Bhutan.

With his disciple Marpa, Naropa began the tradition of *Kagyü* (*bKah-Brgud*), the holder of the 'Thread of the word of Buddha'. Milrapa was the most famous disciple of Marpa, who lived from 1040 to 1123 A.D. Among other disciples of Marpa, two were special, first was Rachungpa (*Ras-chung-pa*), who lived from 1084 to 1161 A.D and whose spiritual light shone like the moon, but he doesn't have time for organisation. For this, Milrapa's second most famous disciple became important. He was Gampopa<sup>31</sup> (1079-1153), who was known by the name as the 'Physician of Dakpo'. He became the initiative guru of different branches of the *Kagyü* tradition (Rampel, 1999; 52).

Four main branches sprang from Milrapa's disciple Gampopa and his spiritual follower Phagmo Dupa: the *Karma Kagyupa* (*Kar-ma-bKah-brgyud-pa*), founded by *Gampopa's* disciple Chodzin Gephe (*Chos-hdzin dGe-hphel*) of *Kham*, the founder of the *Tshurphu Monastery* (*mTshur-phu*) in *sTag-lung* to the northwest of Lhasa, the original seat of Karma hierarchy. The *Digung Kagyupa* (*hBri-gung bKah-brgyud-pa*), who had their centre in *hBri-gung* situated to the northeast of Lhasa, were founded by *hjih-rten mGon-po*, a disciple of Phagmo Dupa. The *Dakpo Kagyupa* (*Dvags-po bKah-brgyud-pa*), which was the branch of the *Digungpa*, which was developed in *sTag-lung-pa* of *Kham*, their founder was Talung Thangpa (*sTag-lung Thang-pa*), who was also a disciple of Phagmo Dupa. Finally, the *Dukpa Kagyü* sect (*hBrug-pa bKah-brgyud*), founded by Tsangpa Gyara or Yeshe Dorji (*gTsang-pa rGya-ras*) and became decisive in the religious development in Bhutan (Rampel, 1999; 53).

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<sup>30</sup> Yeshe full name was Gro-Gong-Tshangpa-Gyal-ras, was born in 1160 and died in 1210 AD.

<sup>31</sup> Gampopa was said to be an incarnation of the religious king Songtsan Gampo.

Tsangpa Gyara founded the monasteries of *Longdo* near Lhasa and *Ralung* east of *Gyanste* in Tsang. The name *Ralung* stand as 'Goat's percept' or 'Goat's omen', is derived from a typical legend describe the foundation of this holy place (Ramphel, 1999; 54). It talks about a wonder working goat. This goat strayed off, and when she found by a shepherd she was bursting her milk onto a stone. After the milk had dried up, the three holy syllables became visible '*Om a Hum*'. And the goat omen was taken as for good sign, the vary place was chosen by the Tsangpa Gyara as the site for a new monastery (Ramphel, 1999; 54).

Tsangpa Gyara's foundation of *Druk* monastery became critical for the future development of the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan. *Druk*, the word standing for 'thunder and lightning' as well as the mystical winged dragon, the roaring symbol of these natural phenomena. According to the legend, a fantastic thunderstorm arose during the construction of the monastery, threatening the growing walls of the edifice. In commemoration of this thunderstorm, which miraculously abated without destroying the partly built monastery, the name *druk* was given to that holy place. Then the monastery of *Druk* became a great attraction for new disciples and adherents to the developing *Drukpa* teaching (Das, 1973; 9).

Pemakarpo incarnation of Tsangpa Gyara, who lived from 1527-1592 became the leading spirit of the *Kagyü* school of Buddhism. According to the tradition of the line of the *Kagyü* gurus he was twenty fourth in direct succession to the Mahaguru Marpa. His religious name, by which he is said to be better known, is 'Jewel of the Power of Speech', Ngawang Norbu. He was indeed bestowed with the power of speech (Ramphel, 1999; 59). He was also a gifted writer and polygraph said to have compiled five thousand volumes. In his rich and distinguished prose many words of the dialects of eastern Tibet and Bhutan are included.

Pemakarpo was a native of the valley of *Yar-klung*, born in *Chonggya*, the original residence of the kings of old Tibet (Ramphel, 1999; 60). He also wrote, biographies and countless brief treaties, and he even compiled guides to holy places for ascetics and neophytes, like the previously mentioned guide to *Ralung*. His life and work was important in an epoch during which the ancient sects including the *Kagyüpa*, were involved in religious and secular fighting in the struggle for domination and had finally to retreat to the southern Himalayan regions. The fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682 A.D), the victorious leader of the reformed Yellow Cap sects of the *Gelugpas*, celebrated Pemakarpo as a prominent *Drukpa* incarnation (Ramphel, 1999; 59).

The list of his long journey is given and also the names of the monasteries and principalities where he resided. He has wrote the description of the religious life of the best known *Siddha* of the *Kagyüpa*, i.e. 'Biography of the protector of – living being Tsangpa Gyara' is full of mystic songs, and being a narration of the spiritual path on the ascetic. It follows the esoteric thread introduced by Milrapa. Pemakarpo two well-known works 'Great Symbol' and the 'Memory Book on the Six Tenants' comprises the basic teaching of *Naropa*. His 'Diadem of the three Obligation' is a handbook on monastic rules and the '*Kagyükyi Kabbum*' gives a list of the famous *Kagyü* masters beginning with Dukpa Chenpo, the founder of the *Drukpa* school, Tsagpa Gyara, his 'History of Buddhism' is based on many rare sources, giving information not to be found in the usual publication<sup>32</sup>. The founder of Bhutan, the first religious king (Dharma Raja) Ngawang Namgyal Dujom Dorjee, as being his followers, was venerated as the true incarnation of Pemakarpo (Ramphel, 1999; 60).

Besides major influence on the advent of the first Dharma raja on Bhutan's religion (Ngawang Namgyal Dujom Dorjee) there are several facts before his arrival which is in a limited region, there was a constant movement of lamas to Bhutan and the period was mostly devoted to spread of Buddhism and its various sects. The traceable fact of the existence of Buddhism through Tibetan lamas in Bhutan was reclined with Gyalawa Lhanampa of *Nyo-Lineage*, who started the *Lhapa Kargyüpa* sect and applied the Tibetan *Dzong* system in Bhutan.

He started living in *Cheri Dordam*, one of the rival lama called Lhapa (belongs to *Dri-Gong-Kargu* sect), attacked him in Cheri but was defeated and flee to *Amo Chu* Valley. After defeating Lhapa, Sangyeon has sent his disciples to other parts of Bhutan to spread the cult of *Drukpa* sect. He died in 1251 A.D; today most of the aristocracy in Bhutan claim their lineage from him.

The subsequent history of Bhutan also talks about the *Sakya* Lama Thimbe Rabyang, who came in Bhutan during 1152 A.D and had built many monasteries including *Chising Gompa* and *Langkar Ritsog*. Unfortunately the *Sakya* sect in Bhutan had limited success and faded away after a short time. During 13<sup>th</sup> century a group of Tantric lama called Torton or Tertonpas came in Bhutan and settled down in *Paro* Valley. The word '*Ter*' stand for hidden treasure and '*tonpa*' for to reveal and they called themselves Tertons because they could ravel the hidden treasure of Guru Padmasambhava (Das, 1973; 9).

Many prominent Lamas came from Tibet to Bhutan, and one prominent among them was *Ne Nyinpa*, who came in 1361 A.D and built two *Dzongs* called *Changtsa* and *Jhase*. He had also established the monastic

<sup>32</sup> His 'Hundred Thousand Precepts' became the religious encyclopaedia of the *Drukpas*. The edition of ten volumes, printed in Bhutan, is very rare, because the wooden printing blocks were destroyed by fire. This was the fate of many irreplaceable treasures of the famous Bhutanese printing centres, situated in *Punakha* and in *Simthokha Dzong*.

school for propagating the *Nyingpa Kargyupa* teachings. Later, his monasteries changed its affiliation to *Gelugpa* sect, the yellow hat sect of the Dalai Lama. Another prominent Lama who had come in Bhutan and has effective influence in Bhutan was Drukpa Kinley. He came in Bhutan in 15<sup>th</sup> century and his name is correlated in several places in Bhutan, especially in *Paro* Valley. The legend credit him with supernatural power and his statue is still there in the temple *Chimi Lakhang* situated between *Wangdiphodrang* and *Punakha*.

In spite of number of Lamas having visited Bhutan, they had only served as indication to symbolise the final advent of the Nawang Namgyal, who brought the whole country under one rule and unified it. Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal came to Bhutan in 1616 from *Duk Sanga Choling*, a *Drukpa Monastery* in the south of Tibet with few hundred of his adherents-monk as well as mighty knights (Ramphel, 1999; 60). He was the reincarnation of Lama Lunchen, Pema Karpo, and his origin was from nobility, being the son of Dorji Lenpha Mephram Tempa Nyma, a direct descendent of Lhabom, brother of Yeshe Dorji (Das, 1973; 11).

During childhood, Nawang Namgyal studied under the *drukpa* Lama, Padma Karpo at *Ralung*. He was the best among the students of *Ralung* and was supposed to succeed to the hierarchy's chair. But a rival petitioner Karma Tenkpong Wangpo, backed by Deba Tsangpa spun so many plotting that *Zabdrung*-disgusted by this revelation of bitterness and phony ambitions, turn his back to *Ralung*<sup>33</sup>. He left for a long pilgrimage and ultimately landed in Bhutan at the age of 23 (Das, 1973; 13). The new waves of political and religious development around the region<sup>34</sup> facilitated him to build up a new home land for his religious school, its followers and its supporters.

He has brought the whole of the 'Four Southern Mon Districts' under his supremacy and became the first spiritual as well as secular head of Bhutan (Ramphel, 1999; 61). With the title of 'Shabdrung', he has introduced the spiritual line of the Shabdrung<sup>35</sup> dynasty of *Drukgyul*, the 'Dragon country'. It has been claimed that the Dharma Raja from Tibet entered into Bhutan through *Lingzhi* Pass (Ramphel, 1999; 61), from where he proceeded to the mountain bordering *Thimpu* Valley. There are living evidence of half destroyed monuments, which remind the heroic times of the consolidation of the Dragon Kingdom. *Lingzhi* Pass reminds one of the fights of the Bhutanese against the invading Tibetan troops in 17<sup>th</sup> century, where the Bhutanese successfully pushed back Tibetan army to the *Chumbi* Valley (Sinha, 1991; 85). The first Shabdrung lived for 35 years and died at the age of 58. During those years, he was continuously engaged in wars to consolidate his temporal as well as spiritual hold of the country. While he was staying at a place *Dansa Do Chholing* of *Paro*, the *Depa Tsangpa* sent an invading army against him. With the help of local people, he was able to defeat the invaders. It is also said that due to the repeated harassment by *Deb Tsangpa* ruler of Tibet, he had performed a Tantric ritual at *Yulsarkha*, which annihilated the *Deb* and family (Das, 1973; 13).

In 1636, Shabdrung started building the famous *Dzong* called *Druk Poong Thang Dechen Phodang*, later known by *Punakha Dzong* (*sentence wrong*). It was here where he started his dual system of Government called '*Chossi*' and made *Punakha* the capital. He had also appointed one of his Tibetan monks Payker Jugnay, as the chief *Kenpo* or *Nayten* whose duty were to enforce the strict observance of priestly vows amongst the monks, direct their studies and preside at religious ceremony. Another monk called Tenzin Drukgyal (*Uzme*) was also appointed as the first *Dug Desi* or *Deb* Raja, whose main duties were to attend to the general administration of the state, to deal with foreign affairs, to manage all the financial and economic matters and to look after the needs of Lamas.

Under his rule Nawang Namgyal was able to maintain peace with Tibetan in 1639. As a consequence the son of his adherent rival Lt. *Deb* Raja (*Tsangpa*), his Council of Ministers and a number of Lamas came to visit *Punakha* to pay their respect to Shabdrung (Nawang Namgyal) (Das, 1973; 15). After a short time of peace, Gushi Khan (King of *Kham*) proclaimed his authority over Tibet and appointed the fifth Dalai Lama as the sole spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet. In order to influence Dalai Lama and yellow hat sect, Gushi Khan sent a large army of Mongol and Tibetan to the border of Bhutan. A vicious clash raged with the Bhutanese army near *Kabang Dzong*, led by Nawang Namgyal himself and the invading army was defeated (Das, 1973; 15).

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<sup>33</sup> The *Ralung* establishment and its followers promoted Sabdrung as the incarnation of Pema Karpo based on the *prophecies* which the late master is said to have left behind; the Chogye ignored *Ralung's* decision and formally installed Pagsam Wangpo as the successor of Pema Karpo at *Tashi Thongmon* monastery. The relationship between the two groups turned sour. In 1610, the *Chongye* governor appealed to the *Tsangpa* ruler of Tibet to intervene in the dispute, which the ruler promptly did. Being an important political ally, the *Tsangpa* ruler understandably sided with the *Chongye* governor.

<sup>34</sup> There were number of *Drukpa* monks including Shabdrung's father had already established their monasteries and converted the local population into their faith, during his arrival he has been received in grand manner by the local

<sup>35</sup> Sabdrung mean 'Power of speech', 'The Fearless', 'The Victorious Banner of Buddhism', 'The Lion of *Shakya*' and 'The Mighty'.



By that time Shabdrung Nawang Namgyal was considered as the undisputed ruler of Bhutan. After suppressing his enemy, he had promulgated a new law based on King Songsten Gampo (a Tibetan King) including ten religious and sixteen secular edicts (Das, 1973; 17). He ruled Bhutan effectively with this new law. The dual system of government has greatly influenced the subsequent history of Bhutan. Though system worked effectively only under the rule of Nwang Namgyal, later it subsequently led the civil wars on the question of succession and the control of power. The history of Bhutan remained full of strife until 1907, when the hereditary monarchical system came into existence.

The history of the emergence of *Drukpa* school of thought from the period to Yeshe Dorji (1160 A.D) to Shabdrung Nawang Namgyal (1616 A.D), it has become clear that the Tibetans whether missionary monks, greatest guru and refugees have strong impact on the religious development of the country. However, in these four centuries the *Drukpas* lamas were succeeded in establishing in most part of the country. A large number of Bhutanese especially from the western part became the patrons of *Drukpa* School and they used to go *Ralung* for training, which has been stopped after the outbreak of Cultural Revolution in Tibet during 1950s. It can be analysed that Bhutan and Tibet or *Ralung* shared very close and formal connection, which can be described as the relationship between priest and patron, which has firmly built a hierarchical relationship between *Ralung* and the people of Bhutan.

### **The Tibetan Refugees in Bhutan**

The Tibetan refugees who are mostly in exile from Tibet, arrived and settled in Bhutan also have some impact on contemporary Bhutan. Bhutan has been a well-known destination for Tibetans, those who were banished from their country, escaping into exile, searching for Buddhist devotees or simply seeking to start a new life. The southern and eastern borderlands of Tibet being used as the main destination for political exile or deportation. If one can analyse the history of Bhutan with such an understanding or immigration per se, it will be easier to escalate the traditional claim that there was a significant Buddhist culture established in Bhutan during the Tibetan dynastic period through the work of Padmasambhava.

It has been recorded in the *Testament of Ba*, the Padmasambhava visit in Tibet during the reign of King Tri Songdetsen, his works of spiritual subjugation of malevolent forces, religious conversion, his socio-economic project of creating agricultural land and irrigation schemes and his close relation with and influence on king made many in Tibetan court jealous and worried. Due to the misgiving about his presence in Tibet, he was asked to return to India and they even plotted a failed ambush on the way to eliminate Padmasambhava. It was recorded when he was asked to leave the country, he did so by coming to Bhutan and connection up with Sindharaja who was his former devotee in *Bumthang*.

The two prominent stories in this context are the story of the arrival of Khikha Ratho and his subject and the arrival of Prince Tsangma<sup>36</sup> in Bhutan. The story of Khikha Ratho might have seen identically mystical, however, the arrival of Prince Tsangma in Bhutan must be recounted in the context of the Tibetan political and religious conflicts. Prince Tsangma's- younger brother, King Tri Ralpachen has turned out to be a strong ruler who held fast Tibet's territorial integrity and almost fanatically promoted its new court religion<sup>37</sup>. He was a follower of Buddhism. It has been recorded in later stories that he showed uncompromising support for Buddhism, where he attached two stretches of cloth of his tresses and have the monastic and lay Buddhist clergies sit on them as a mark of his deep respect to them. Tri Ralpachen is proudly remembered by later Buddhist for his draconian laws concerning the treatment of Buddhist clergy (Phuntsho, 2013; 111).

During the reign of Tri Ralpachen, monks were appointed as royal tutors, advisers and ministers and monasteries were granted immense privileges. It has been recorded in the later sources that each monk was given seven households for his support and the tradition of monastic estates is supposed to have started during his reign (Phuntsho, 2013; 112). Much of the taxes collected from the people was used to support the monastic community, build monasteries and fund the large Buddhist script translation projects. Those costs for monastic and intellectual projects and expenses for endless military campaigns exhausted the royal resources. As a consequence, such economic crisis generated tensions and conflicts between the Buddhist and followers of old Bon religion.

The supporters of the old religion plotted to oust the king and thereby end the unreasonable privileges enjoyed by the Buddhist clergy. In order to do so, they thought that those who supported the King had to be eliminated first. Therefore, it was decided that the king's brother Prince Tsangma, who used to ascend the throne in the absence of Tri Ralpachen had to be eliminated first. Then, they bribed the renowned astrologers of

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<sup>36</sup> King Desongtsen brother of Murum Tsenpo (Khikha Ratho) had three sons, the modern historian of Tibet generally claim that he was the eldest one. History of Tibet is also agreed that he had a strong religious inclination, which made him pass the throne to his brother Tri Ralpachen.

<sup>37</sup> Today he is well known for the bilingual treaty which he signed with China around 821 or 822, which established the Sino-Tibetan border and pillar erected with inscription of the treaty in Tibetan and Chinese.

the country to exclaim unanimously that if Prince Tsangma were to remain in Tibet, a great calamity would occur in nation. This forced the King to send Tsangma into exile and Tsangma as a virtuous figure have happily accepted the proposal (Phuntsho, 2013; 113).

There are various stories, including oral and testaments, available on the arrival of Prince Tsangma in Bhutan after he has been banished from Tibet. According to some account, he was sent off with a number of following and gifts, all of which he sent back when he crossed the *Tsangpo* river. According to many Tibetan sources, he was exiled to *Lhodrak*, *Bumthang* or thereabouts and the subsequent death through poisoning. However, some claim that he went to the modern Bhutan and left a family line there. According to Nyangral Nyima Ozer<sup>38</sup>, Tsangma has brought a lot of Buddhist texts from Tibet and buried them in the remote places around *Paro* for posterity (Tshewang, 1994; 116).

Text entitled *The Clear Lamp Which Illuminates the History of Royal Clans*<sup>39</sup> written by a monk named Nawang, is considered as the main source for the Bhutanese version on Tsangma story. The author of the text claims to be from the Jar clan which is said to have descended from Prince Tsangma (Phuntsho, 2013; 113). According to the text, Prince Tsangma was asked by his brother King Ralpachen to travel along the southern Mon corridors on a tour when the fortune-tellers proclaimed that he had to be banished. He has entered Bhutan via *Chumbi* Valley with five attendants. In *Paro* he cohabited with a local lady who gave birth to a son. This gave rise to two ancient aristocratic clans in *Paro* and *Thimpu*, which seem to have existed even today.

Tsangma continues his journey toward eastward, at *Mizimpa*, he met Ami Dhondup Gyal, a Tibetan from Lang clan who had left the country due to family disputes. He took Ami Dhondup Gyal's daughter as his wife who gave birth two sons Trimi Lhayi Wangchuk and Chebu Thonglegtsun<sup>40</sup>. Tsangma's grandson Gongkar Gyal had four sons among whom three gave rise to the clans of *Yede*, *Tungde* and *Wangma*. Nawang gives a fairly detailed genealogy of these different lines which spread out across the eastern Bhutan and *Tawang* (Phuntsho, 2013; 114).

After Prince Tsangma was banished, the anti-Buddhist ministers in Tibet court focused their plot against Drenka Palgyi Yontan (the strong Buddhist minister supporting the King). It has been said that they had spread a rumour the Drenka was having an illegal affair with the queen Ngangtshulma. After removing all the allies of King, the plotters then attacked the King. King Tri Ralpachen was strangled to death in his *Meldro* palace around 841 A.D. The King Ralpachen was succeeded by his brother Udum Tsenpo or Lang Dharma.

The later Tibetan histories would describe him as the apostate king who sided with the followers of the old religion and brought down the Buddhist civilisation of Tibet. Under the rule of Udum Tsenpi, the policy toward the Buddhist clergy has been shifted radically. Monk are said to have been disrobed, sent to hunt, and forcibly married or to do things which were contrary to those allowed by the Buddhist monastic code of conduct (Vinaya). In the midst of strife, many Tibetan people are said to have moved to the southern valleys of Bhutan.

Again, the suppression of Buddhist monastic practice and destruction of the Buddhist tradition had led the Buddhist monk Lhalung Palgyi Dorji to take the course of action to change the Tibet's future. In such a disguise, he had performed a dazzling dance for the King in his honour and in the course of his dance; he shot the arrow from his long sleeves and killed the King. Buddhist in the Himalaya including Bhutan remembers Palgyi Dorji's assassination of the King Lang Dharma as a great act of defending the faith and the victory of good over evil.

Aftermath, his sister one of the Queen of the dead King came to know about the truth and she advised Palgyi Dorji to escape from Tibet and also informed her other brother to clandestinely the country at the earliest opportunity. Palgyi Dorji fled toward the eastern Tibet and his six brothers as the Dorji brothers are said to have come southward to Bhutan. According to Nawang, the first three brothers entered into Bhutan from the west along the *Chumbi* and *Paro* valleys. The first one, Lawa Dorji, became the chieftain of *Tang*; the second, Treu Dorji became the chieftain of *Chokhor*; and the third, Kheu Dorji, settled around the border between Tibet and Bhutan in order to control the trade mart and he became the forerunner of the aristocratic pastoralists of *Tshampa*.

<sup>38</sup> Ngadak Nyangrel Nyima Ozer was born in 1124 in *Lhodrak*., who traced his ancestry back to at least the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD when the members of *Nyang* clan was populated the inner circle of emperors. Having learn to read at a very young age, he showed an uncanny propensity to memorize the various tantras and sadhanas that formed the basis of the *Nyang* clan's practice lineage. According to hagiographies, he experienced numerous auspicious dreams and visions from the age of seven whereby various magical emanations—including Padmasambhava confirmed his identity and his destiny as a future treasure revealer.

<sup>39</sup> It is basically a genealogical text, transmitted orally or in fragmentary chronicles with the aim at recording the family histories.

<sup>40</sup> Trimi was sent as the ruler for *Laong Yulsum* in the modern *Tawang* region. The *Jowo* clan, the line of the kings of this area, according to *Nawang*, descendent from him. Chebu inherited the castle of *Mizimpa* and had three sons: Triten Pel, Gongkar Gyal and Palkye Dar.

Other three of the six Dorji's brothers made their escape from Tibet through *Lhodrak* and reached the *Kurichu* valley. They agreed to split up and go in separate directions to build their own fiefdom. Leki Dorji settled in *Tongphu Zhangtshang* and gradually extended his dominion over the communities of this region. Drakpa Dorji extended his control along the *Kurichu* river valley and the aristocrats in the *Kurelung* area are said to originate from him. Changrig Dorji went on to rule the *Molpalung* area around present day *Mongar* and gave rise to the clan of *Khengpo*. According to Nawang who wrote these accounts in the seventeenth century, most of the ruling nobilities of the eastern districts and some in central Bhutan by the end of first millennium are descended from Prince Tsangma and the six Dorji's brothers.

Another story of Tibetan exile into Bhutan, which also have a prominent impact on the modern history of Bhutan and the country's existence is the advent of first Dharma raja Shabdrung Nawang Namgyal. The arrival of Shabdrung Namgyal in Bhutan during 1616 became a historical and political milestone of the country. The story began with the same fate, the persecution of Buddhist monks in Tibet. But when the Lang Dharma died, Buddhism was once again made welcome in Tibet, and this time it was never lose its footholds again (Ahmad, 2013; 30). During the second flourishing of the faith Tsangpa Gyre Yeshe Dorji founded a monastery at *Ralung*, in western Tibet. The school of Buddhism which is derived from this *monastery* came to be known as *Drukpa Kargyupa*, which mainly focuses on meditation and experience.

In the early seventeenth century, there was a great dispute over the question of who exactly could legitimately continue to lead the sect and control the assets (the Tsangpa Gyare family, physical descendent of the founder of the *Ralung* monastery or his reincarnation). Consequently, the *Drukpa* follower were split into two camp, where the *Ralung* establishment and its followers recognized Shabdrung who was from *Gyare* clan as the incarnation of Tsangpa Gyare based on the prophecies which the late master is said to have left behind, and the group to supported the Governor Chongye who supported Pagsam Wangmo a bastard son of Governor were ignored the *Ralung's* rejection and formally installed him as the successor of Pema Karpo (last reincarnation) at *Tashi Thongmon* monastery(Phuntsho, 2013; 214).

The relationship between the two group were turned up bitter. It was in 1605, the leader of *Ja* province attempted to reconcile the two reincarnates, but the Shabdrung party denied to meet his rival. Later in 1610, the *Chogye* governor appealed to the Tsangpa ruler within whose realm the *Ralung* monastery was located to intervene in the dispute. On the invitation of Tsangpa ruler, Shabdrung visited Tsangpa court in modern day *Shigatse* in 1614 (Phuntsho, 2013; 215). Although Shabdrung and his party were received with great respect and hospitality and the meeting was cordial, but it failed to yield any positive result. On their way back to *Ralung* Shabdrung and his entourage were coming across an incident in *Rongsathang*, where a woman who was alone was being robbed of her jewellery by some soldiers. Shabdrung's attendants went to rescue her and thrashed the soldiers who were happened to be men under a general of the *Tsangpa* ruler.

The incident irreparably ruined the relationship between Shabdrung and the *Tsangpa* ruler, which was already in heavy strained from the dispute of reincarnation. However, Shabdrung possessed a powerful vertebra relic-an image of *Avalokiteshvara*, the compassionate Buddha, which was said to have emerged from the cremated remains of Tsangpa Gyare (Phuntsho, 2013; 211). This image was the lodestone of the *Drukpa* community, who believed that it had the ability to predict the correct reincarnation. *Tsangpa* ruler being an important political ally of *Chongye* governor, by taking the side of governor, he demanded the Shabdrung all the important relics including the vertebra relic to be submitted to him or face serious reprisals. Shabdrung refused to comply with the order, in a move with far-reaching consequences, he fled with the relic to Bhutan in 1616 (Ahmad, 2013; 46). He was welcomed with open arms and established his court in a new land.

After some years, while Shabdrung was busy in strengthening his base in Bhutan, Tibet was going through a tumultuous political period. Gushri Khan of the *Khoshot* Mongols swept through Tibet taking full control of the country and putting the Tsangpa ruler under arrest. Stripping the Tsangpa ruler of political power, Gushri Khan offered the supreme leadership to Tibet to his spiritual master, the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. This event of 1642 brought the rule of Dalai Lama in Tibet, and *Ganden Phodrang* or *Ganden* Palace the private residence of Dalai Lama in *Drepung*, formally became the centre of Tibetan government.

Hence, the *Kagyupas*, especially the *Karmapa* group, and *Jonangapas* who were closely associated with the former rulers and previously at the forefront of sectarian campaigns against the *Gelugpa* school faced a serious retaliation from the *Gelugas*. Their monasteries were converted to *Gelugas* centres and their properties expropriated. In the midst of such conflictual situation in Tibet, Bhutan was once again, as it was often in the past, a safe heaven and place for some Tibetan refugees. It has been said that Shabdrung's biographer and Karma *Kagyü* monk, Palden Gyatsho and his sister were journeyed toward Bhutan from *Tsang* in order to escape from the sectarian strife under the new *Gelugpa* rule. However, the situation was different in this time, Tibetan refugees and travellers were no allowed to enter freely in the southern valleys (Phuntsho, 2013; 238). While Palden Gyatsho and his sister as being the children of a longstanding patron of the *Ralung* establishment were allowed to enter, but their travelling partners were refused to enter to Bhutan by Shabdrung, thus they went to Sikkim.

Shabdrung has been considered as the epitome of the existence of Bhutan as an independent state. After unifying the country Shabdrung made himself the sovereign ruler head in both secular and religious areas. He established the administrative and legislative system in the country based on the Tibetan court (Sinha, 1991; 85). However, according to Nawang, before the unification of Bhutan, the people those who arrive in the land before Shabdrung has been said that they have formed their principalities and ruled the locals, with their authority and legitimacy based on their Tibetan royals and aristocratic roots.

In order to made the Nawang claim in some sort of true, as we discuss earlier that Tibet is more civilised than Bhutan in ancient time and Bhutan has been viewed as barbaric, backward and uncivilised (Phuntsho, 2013; 3). The Tibetan royals or aristocratic ancestry was considered important for the people of Bhutan. The Tibetan who arrived in Bhutan and their Tibetan royal connection may gave some kind of a divine ancestry, which justified their rule and gave the subjects a reason to submit themselves to the ruler. And it must have also been the case that the figure that came into exile was clever and experienced in political and administrative affairs given their exposure to and experience in Tibetan court life.

Not only the nobilities and elites of Bhutan are the descendent of Tibetan elites. However, Ngawang makes a very interesting claim with regards to the origin of the commoners of Bhutan. By using the standard Tibetan story about how the Tibetan race started from the *Bodhisattava* monkey and the clans which descended from his offspring, he claims that the commoners of especially eastern Bhutan are the descended of Tibetan clans. He had listed some twenty-six different clans or groups (some of which we have discuss in the previous portion of the chapter) of common people which are supposed to have made up the demography of eastern Bhutan.

## II. CONCLUSION

The foundation of Bhutan-Tibet relation is based on religion. It is undeniable that Bhutan is closely linked with Tibet in its religious culture, Bhutan is even considered as the last bastion of the Tibetan Buddhist civilisation. Every Buddhist sects existed in Bhutan has their origin in Tibet or came from Tibet. Tibetan origin of Bhutan's traditional elites and the theocratic political system of the country has symbolised the strong cultural and political ties between the two countries. Bhutan has always look up to the Tibet as their religious centre, while sending their children to *Ralung* for training Bhutanese people has accepted the formal connection of priest and patron between them.

However, the legends of Songtsen Gampo's two monasteries spontaneously claim Bhutan as the expansion of Tibet. It was not only the building of monasteries, rather Songtsen Gampo hold the legacies which have palpable cultural impact on the entire Himalayan region including Bhutan. He was the one who invented the Tibetan scripts, which is used in the entire Buddhist Himalayan region. Songtsen Gampo's major contribution was the system of law and structure of governance, which has been followed by Bhutanese even today. Lastly, his legacy was the creation of efficient civil and military administration. The *dzong* constructed by Shabdrung Nawang Namgyal, which may look like temple but it were not merely a religious sites built for Buddhist piety but rather hold the political statements marking the imperial domain under Songtsen's rule.

On the basis of the historical background of Tibet- Bhutan relationship, it can be observe that the antagonism of past has still impact on their relations. The old days reference to Bhutanese *Monpa* (barbarian, uncivilised, and people living in the dark) by Tibetan still gave the Bhutanese the antipathy toward their northern neighbour. The entrenched rivalries between the *Gelugpa* sect of Tibet and the *Drukpa* sect of Bhutan under the Shabdrung Nawang Namgyal in past, still posses the sense of inferiority among the Bhutanese ruler and people. Tibet is considered as the mother of Buddhism and Tibetan lamas were highly revered and enthusiastically welcomed in Bhutan in the past. Such dimension of reverence and loyalties for Tibetan lamas became significant in the past, which has led awkwardness among the Bhutanese. They feared that the country's independence could be undermined.

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