



SAPAN FOUNDATION (FOR SPITI VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT)

(Registered under the Societies Act 1860)

V.P.O. Kaza - 172114
Distt. Lahul & Spiti
Himachal Pradesh (India)

Ref.....

Date

A Brief historical Note on The Sakya Tradition

The Sakyapa Tradition is one of the major traditions that arose in Tibet, being a significant force in the development and spread of the new Tantras, which came to Tibet in the eleventh century. It was also the principal political power that ruled Tibet during parts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Its political stature then declined and remained in eclipse over the succeeding centuries but its religious importance remained immense, producing many great scholars, practitioners and saints.

When the Indian Mahapandita Atisha Dipamkara reached Ponpori Mountain, a mirror like patch of white earth was visible on the mountain's dark slope. Near it two wild black yaks were grazing. On seeing them, Atisha prophesied that in the future two emanations of Mahakala, the Protector of Dharma, would appear in that place. He then saw seven shining letters of DHIH, one HUM and one HRIH. Atisha explained to his disciples that the visions of these letters signified that seven emanations of Manjushri, one of Avalokiteshvara and one of Vajrapani would appear for the benefit of sentient beings. Through many centuries of Tibetan history, indications were found that led to the fulfillment of this prophesy. The word "Sakya" Literally means "white earth" and so the Sakya Tradition is named after that patch of white earth where Atisha saw these visions.

The history of the Sakyapas is found within the lineage of the Khon. A noble family whose members proved to be outstanding adepts of the Buddhist path. Three brothers of a celestial race descended from the Abhasvara heaven and settled on a peak of a Mountain. Although the Two Brothers returned to celestial region, the youngest remained on earth together with his family.

His great grandson married Yadrung Silima, who gave birth to a boy. This boy was named Khon Bharkye. He was the first in the earthly lineage that was later known as the Khon Dynasty. During the eighth century Khon Lue Wangpo and others of the family became disciples of the renowned Indian Master Guru Padmasambhava, and for the next few centuries the Khon family remained followers of the Old School. However, during the eleventh century, when the new Tantras began to reach Tibet and the pure practice of the Old School had declined, Khon Konchok Gyalpo decided that the Khon family should seek out new tantras. Under his leadership a monastery was built near the white spot on Ponpori Mountain where Atisha had seen his visions and was named Sakya. This Monastery quickly became a leading centre for the study, practice and dissemination of many Tantras, as well as for the Mahayana teachings on ethics philosophy, metaphysics, logic and other branches of Buddhist and Indian thought. In the year 1092, Khon Konchok Gyalpo's Wife gave a birth to a boy Named Sachen Kunga Nyingpo. From early childhood this boy showed signs of great wisdom, way ahead of his age, especially with regard to teachings. At the age of eleven, he practised Arapacana Manjushri's Sadhana under the guidance of Bari Lotsawa. After meditation



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On the subject for six consecutive months, Arya Manjushri appeared and gave him teachings together with the essence of the "Zenpa Zindel" doctrine (parting from the Four Attachments).

Sachen Kunga Nyingpo handed all the doctrines down to his two sons Lobpon Sonam Tsemo and Jetsun Dakpa Gyaltsen. They then passed the doctrine on to Sakya Pandita (sapan) who later transferred them to Chogyal Phakpa. In this way these teachings in their original version have been handed down to each Sakya successor. Of "The five Great Sakya masters", Sakya Pandita was the most outstanding and his scholarship and wisdom were known far and wide. He wrote extensive treatises and scholarly commentaries on various topics of Buddhist Philosophy. He was well versed in Sanskrit and wrote many Sanskrit texts. During Sakya Pandita's and Chogyal Phagpa's time, the Sakya Tradition reached its zenith in terms of religious and temporal importance. In 1252, Chogyal Phagpa was invited to the court of Emperor Kublai Khan who was converted to Buddhism. They developed a patron-priest relationship. The Emperor received teachings from Chogyal Phagpa for many years and he was given the title of several generations.

Throughout its history, members of the Sakya tradition have been considered outstanding masters who have brought the aspects of study and practice into a proper balance. Although these masters taught and practised various teachings found in both the Mahayana Sutras and Tantras of various lineages, the heart of the Sakya tradition- the Lamdre- makes fit a distinct entity and which has sustained its vitality over the centuries- is the teaching known as "Lamdre" or "the Path Including its Result". The special Philosophical view in Lamdre is called the "Non-differentiation of Samsara Nirvana". The Lamdre teaching originated in India with one of the great Mahasiddhas known as Virupa. Although the date of birth is uncertain, Virupa was born into a royal family in the eastern part of India. At a fairly early age he entered the Buddhist University of Nalanda, where he was given the name Sri Dharmapala. Being very intelligent, he was able to master the various branches of Buddhist Knowledge and eventually became one of the abbots and leading teachers of the university. It was his custom to teach the different subjects found within the Hinayana and Mahayana schools of thought during the day, while secretly practising the meditation techniques of Vajrayana at night. Before being brought to Tibet, the Lamdre teaching was transmitted from Virupa through four successive Indian masters. Once in Tibet, the great translator Dromi Lotsawa rendered it into the Tibetan language. However, it was not until Sachen Kunga Nyingpo that the tradition of the commentaries on the Lamdre began to grow. Sachen himself wrote eleven commentaries on various aspects of the teaching, and his son Jetsun Dakpa Gyaltsen wrote extensive commentaries, instructions and treatises concerning the Lamdre. Subsequently, the

Lamdre teaching continued to be passed on from each successive Sakya master up to the 41st and present throne-holder, His Holiness Sakya Trizin.



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A Brief biography of His Holiness Sakya Trizin

His Holiness Sakya Trizin is the supreme head of the Sakya Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and is the 41st in an unbroken lineage, of masters that stretch back to 1073AD. He is a direct descendant of the secret Khon lineage, In which hundreds of luminaries have appeared, including "The five Great Sakya master". His Holiness is the emanation of Arya Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

Born in 1945, His Holiness Sakya Trizin studied under eminent scholars in Tibet:

His own father vajradhara, The Great Vajradhara Abbot Shenphen Nyingpo.Lama Nawang lodoe Rinchen ,Khenchen Jampal Sangpo, Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, Khenpo Appey, Khenpo Rinchen as well as others. After the 1959 exodus from Tibet, He settled in Rajpur and further broadened His knowledge of Dharma. His Holiness has immense practical experience of meditation and is an example to all who aspire to follow the ways of Bodhisattva. He is the Sutras and Tantras. He is one of the very few prominent Buddhist masters of Vajrayana, who has a complete grasp of both the Sutras and Tantras. His Holiness is also well versed in English, enabling him to transmit precious teachings to an international audience.

In an effort to preserve and promote the rich religious tradition and culture of Tibet, His Holiness has established the Sakya Centre and Sakya College in Rajpur. Amongst the Tibetan Community in exile, Sakya College is one of the oldest and the best institute for specializing in Higher Buddhist Studies. He has also established the Sakya Thubten Namgyal Ling Institute and the Sakya Tibetan Society, in Puruwala, Himachal Pradesh.

His Holiness travels regularly in India and Nepal where there are about twenty-five Sakya monasteries, institutes and retreat centre under His guidance. All are actively involved in religious studies and meditation. Apart from this, His Holiness has travelled the world a number of times with the objective of spreading the Buddha Dharma far and wide for the benefit of all. Outside Tibet, there are many Dharma centres taking firm root, namely in North America, Australia, Europe and South-East Asia.