

## SHORT REVIEWS

*Tantra in Tibet.* The Great Exposition of Secret Mantra. By Tsong-ka-pal, introduced by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Translated & edited by Jeffrey Hopkins. The Wisdom of Tibet Series-3. London. George Allen & Unwin Boston, Sydney. 1977. pgs. 252.

This book consists of three parts: I, a number of small sections written by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and presenting what the aspirant should know about the preparation for, and then the actual entrance into the Mantra path. II. a translation by Jeffrey Hopkins of the first part, the introductory section of Tsoñ-kha-pa's *Snags rim chen mo*, which is a bulky compendium on the stages of the tantric path. III. a supplement by Jeffrey Hopkins, based on his own studies of the four-*siddhānta* literature and miscellaneous texts.

The best part of the book is the first part. Here His Holiness displays a subtle though clear, and warm though sharp, type of discourse that gets to the heart of the matter. Those who have had the memorable pleasure of an audience with His Holiness in Dharamsala, India, know there was time for only a few questions. Here we can read the replies to the questions we should have liked to ask for hours and hours. Certainly the book is worth getting for this first third of the whole. While we must depend on the translation team, it seems to have done its job well.

As to the second section, not speaking of the original Tibetan, which inaugurates a masterful survey of the Tantric path, but of Hopkin's rendition of it, it is decidedly inferior to the first third by His Holiness. This is not

said on account of Hopkin's calculated disregard of, or else lamentable ignorance of all scholarly work done in this field--although this is bad enough. This is not said on account of his bibliography practice of mentioning a Tibetan work by an English equivalent, as though the work were available in English translation and it is not--although this is bad enough. It is said because, while Hopkins does reasonably well with Tson-kha-pa's own prose, he has continual difficulty with the citations in prose or verse, and despite the labor of tracing out these passages in the canon--taking up most of the notes--he still exhibits a result which is more typical of language beginners, of giving an obscure and non-cogent rendition as though it represents the original, while in truth the translator does not understand the original. To treat these matters adequately would take up much space and not be worth the effort, so I shall mention only one prose and one verse passage.

Here (p. 129) is Hopkins' version of a citation of the author Ratnākara-śānti: "If one cultivates only [a path] having the nature of a deity, one cannot become fully enlightened merely through that because the fulfilment of [yogic] activities is not complete. Or, if one meditates on the suchness of a deity and not on that deity, one will attain Buddhahood in many countless aeons but not quickly. Through meditating on both, one will attain the highest perfect complete enlightenment very quickly because to do so is very appropriate and has special empowering blessings". The Tibetan for this (from the Peking popular blockprint f. 22b-2,3,4) is:

ཡང་ན་གླུ་འཇུག་ཤིང་ཅན་ལའང་ཉེ་གཟུགས་བསྐྱེད་པ་དང་ལྷ་ན་ན་  
 ར་ཅོམ་གྱིས་འཚང་རྒྱ་ལ་ཉིང་དུ་མི་འགྱུར་དུ་ལས་རྫོགས་པ་མ་  
 ཚང་བའི་ལྷ་རྩེ་རྟོག་ཡང་ན་ལྷ་རྩེ་ལྷ་རྩེ་དེ་ལོ་ན་ཉིང་བསྐྱེད་ལྷ་  
 ལྷ་རྩེ་ལྷ་རྩེ་ལྷ་རྩེ་དེ་ལྷ་ན་ཡང་བསྐྱེད་པ་གྱུར་པ་མང་པ་  
 མང་པོར་སངས་རྒྱས་ཉིང་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་གྱི་རྒྱུར་དུ་ནི་མ་ལྷ་ན་གྱི་  
 ཁྱེད་ལས་ན་གཉེས་ས་མེད་པ་ནི་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཡིད་དུ་འོང་བ་ལྷ་ན་ལྷ་  
 ལྷ་རྩེ་དང་ལྷ་རྩེ་གྱིས་བསྐྱེད་པ་ལྷ་རྩེ་ལྷ་རྩེ་ལྷ་རྩེ་ལྷ་རྩེ་ལྷ་རྩེ་  
 ལྷ་རྩེ་ན་མང་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་ལྷ་རྩེ་རྒྱུ་ཐོབ་པར་  
 འགྱུར་རྟོག་

In my following corrected version I shall underline the portions which disagree with Hopkins' rendering.

"If one cultivates only with adoption of the ego of a deity, one cannot become fully enlightened merely through that, because the completion of the ritual part is not fulfilled. Or, if there are no deities in the sense of cultivating the reality of deities, one might attain Buddhahood in many countless aeons but not quickly. Hence, the cultivation of both [reality of deities and ritual part], because it is highly gratifying, and because it has special empowering blessings, quickly achieves the highest perfect complete enlightenment."

For a verse example, here from his p. 160 is Hopkin's attempt at a citation from the Vajraśekhara-tantra:

Clasped round the waist, the vajra  
Goddess makes sounds. To his side  
His own goddess turns her head.  
Smiling and looking intently  
She holds the Blessed One's hands.

And the Tibetan (f. 37a-3,4):

ལྷ་མོ་རྩི་རྩི་ཅ་ཅ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་  
 རྩི་མོ་རྩི་མོ་རྩི་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་རྩི་  
 རྩི་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་  
 ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་  
 ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་

Notice first that Hopkins translates as words of the sentence what is the proper name of the goddess, the original being probably Vajrakilikilā. Besides, there is no Tibetan word for his 'waist,' since the word *dbus* means only 'middle,' but here probably should be construed as instrumental of *dbu* 'head.' Again underlining the disagreed-upon portions, here is my corrected version:

Uniting with (or, intent upon) by his head  
 the Goddess Vajrakilikilā, that goddess of  
his At his side turned her head; and looking  
 intently with a smile, seized the hand of  
 the Blessed One.

The third part of the book with Hopkins' own essay based upon his larger studies of the four *siddhānta* systems, meaning the four doctrinal systems of Buddhism, again makes no reference to any other Western work done in this field. It is a kind of soliloquy.

Alex Wayman

*Autobiographies of Three Spiritual Masters of Kutang*, by Michael Aris (ed.), Thimpu 1979. 9pp+789 folio pp. (reproduced five to a page).

In 1973 Dr. Michael Aris was invited by the University of California at Berkeley to lead an expedition to the districts of Kutang and Nubri, situated along the upper reaches of the Buru Gandaki river. He subsequently published a "Report on the University of California Expedition to Kutang and Nubri in Northern Nepal in Autumn 1973" in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* (Journal of the Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies), Vol. 2 No. 2, Kirtipur 1975, pp. 45-87. One of the objects of the expedition was to photocopy manuscripts and blockprints in Tibetan relating to the local history of the area. The present volume presents in facsimile five texts from among the finds announced in the above-mentioned article. The texts are autobiographical, relating to three Nying-mapa lamas of Kutang and spanning a hundred years, from 1668 to 1767.

The interest of these texts are manifold. They provide first hand insight into the process of expansion of Tibetan Buddhism in the Himalayan area. Further, to quote Dr. Aris, "Apart from the mass of incidental information these works contain on the local life of Kutang and its neighbouring districts, another major source of interest lies in the accounts of the lamas travels which took them as far west as Kailash and as far east as the Tsa-ri sanctuary, also to the Kathmandu valley and many places in Central Tibet" (p. 5). The texts, written in "a sort of ruralized literary Tibetan", (p. 2) are "marked by a refreshing simplicity of style . . . . Uncluttered by pious reworkings and the usual fanciful

embellishments, the total effect rings earthy and true"  
(p. 4).

Dr. Aris, whose forthcoming *Bhutan. The early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* will confirm his position as a leading authority on the history and culture of those parts of the Himalayas coming within the cultural sphere of Tibet, has placed a valuable collection of texts at the disposal of a wider public, including, one may hope, eventually the people of Kutang themselves. He has also provided a short but extremely useful introduction.

P. V.

*On Sanskrit Education*, by Mahes Raj Pant, published by author, Kathmandu, 1979 n. Rs 25.

It's a pity that scholars don't indulge more often in a 'cri de couer', for it is in such moments that we can get the clearest glimpse of their field of study. This little book is just such a cry, in the words of the author, "an embodiment of ideas that have been haunting an obscure Sanskritist, now in his mid-thirties, for more than a decade and a half."

The book contains brief and lucid descriptions of both the traditional approach and the western critical and analytical approach to the study of Sanskrit language and literature. It ends with a fervent plea that neither be neglected in Nepal.

The making of a pandit in traditional India was a long and extraordinarily laborious process, based largely on endless memorization exercises in the aspirant's chosen field of study. Pant treats the reader to marvellous details of this process and the attitudes it encouraged. A traditional scholar who recited his texts with the aid of a book, for instance, was regarded as one of the six worst kinds of reciters; indeed, reliance on a book was classed with gambling and association with women as a hindrance to learning. Pant remarks that a recitation of all the aphorisms of Panini, the great grammarian, "takes no more than six hours", undoubtably short considering the ground covered, but from a western point of view a considerable feat of memorization (to a pandit, however, nothing remarkable). The education of a traditional Indian scholar was a process that ideally had no end; once

the student had finished his course with his guru, he was expected to continue his studies on his own, and be ready at any time for a 'literary affray (Sastrartha)', a kind of debate to test scholars' learning. It goes without saying that even today a traditional Indian Sanskritist is expected to be able to read, write and even speak this complex language fluently and correctly.

With the discovery of Sanskrit by Westerners in the 16th and 17th centuries, another method of Sanskrit scholarship was born. This aims not at an impecable personal command of Sanskrit as a medium, but at a critical understanding of the language and literature largely in terms of historical development. This critical and analytical approach to language, begun in the 15th century with the birth of Biblical scholarship, "enabled scholars to discover the affinity of Sanskrit with the ancient languages of Europe, to penetrate into the formation of human speech and also the development of myths, thereby developing such new sciences as linguistics and mythology". Scholars working with this method have produced many valuable works, such as comprehensive catalogues of the literature, etymological dictionaries and critically edited editions of the great works of Sanskrit literature.

Pant states the differences between these two approaches succinctly: "(The traditional approach) aims at maintaining the Sanskrit civilization, while (the western approach) studies it as a museum exhibit". Essentially the two are both complementary and antithetical. They complement one another in that the areas of learning one ignores the other covers; they are antithetical in that the study of a culture as a 'museum exhibit' is not supportive of efforts to keep



the culture alive and creative. Every native pandit who approaches Sanskrit exclusively from the western critical point of view is one less pandit fulfilling his traditional role. (Of course there are pandits who fill both roles; the author of this book is an example).

Pant argues that "an intergrated system of Sanskrit learning" be vigorously pursued in Nepal. He recommends that the traditional method of learning Sanskrit be encouraged here, where children are familiar with the Devanagri alphabet and can be trained from an early age. In Pant's view, it is essential that pandits be traditionally trained in order to preserve and regenerate ancient areas of learning, such as medicine, astronomy and astrology, the dharmashastras and architecture. The areas of medicine and architecture in particular are of interest from a perspective broader than that of Hindu culture itself. Many westerners are turning away from highly technological western medical techniques and showing interest in alternatives, of which Ayurveda is one of the most important. As Pant points out, there is much Ayurvedic wisdom which has been lost and needs to be uncovered, and there is a need for traditionally trained Sanskritists to begin this task. As for architecture, the fact that two severe earthquakes could "only slightly shake the (Taleju of Kathmandu) temple's golden pinnacle" is evidence enough of the value of traditional architectural knowledge, which is being sadly neglected in favor of imported and often less durable techniques and materials (not to mention less beautiful).

Pant also argues for the importance of encouraging the western approach in Nepal. Nepal has one of the greatest treasuries of Sanskrit manuscripts in the world, and is unrivalled in it's store of Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts

often found nowhere else. Scholars are needed to examine and edit this material, and there is no reason why Nepalese should not participate in this work.

Essentially, this book is the emotional plea of a scholar who is dedicated to a body of learning which no amount of modern progress can satisfactorily replace. That his love, Sanskrit, is threatened in Nepal is doubtless; Pant's remarks on the present state of Sanskrit learning here make this abundantly clear. If his recommendations are followed and his enthusiasm kindles interest in others, perhaps this trend can be reversed.

My only criticism of this book is that it deserves a wider audience than its present format and distribution allow.

I. Alsop