

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)



BELOW TANG-KAR PASS.

## INTRODUCTORY.

TIBET, the mystic Land of the Grand Lāma, joint God and King of many millions, is still the most impenetrable country in the world. Behind its icy barriers, reared round it by Nature herself, and almost unsurmountable, its priests guard its passes jealously against foreigners.

Few Europeans have ever entered Tibet; and none for half a century have reached the

B

Cambridge University Press

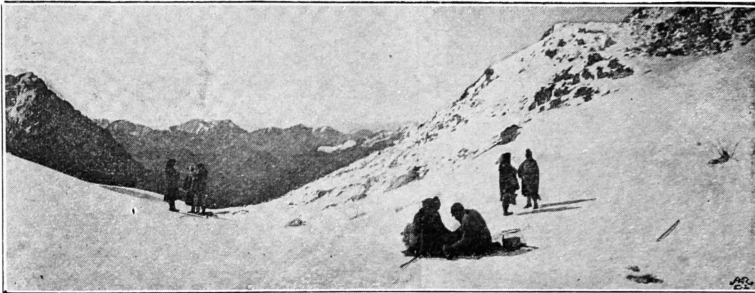
978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

sacred city. Of the travellers of later times who have dared to enter this dark land, after scaling its frontiers and piercing



VIEW INTO S.W. TIBET  
(from Tang-kar La Pass, 16,600 ft.).

its passes, and thrusting themselves into its snow-swept deserts, even the most intrepid have failed to penetrate farther than the outskirts of its central province.<sup>1</sup> And the information, thus perilously gained, has, with the exception of Mr. Rockhill's, been

<sup>1</sup> The few Europeans who have penetrated Central Tibet have mostly been Roman missionaries. The first European to reach Lhāsa seems to have been Friar Odoric, of Pordenne, about 1330 A.D. on his return from Cathay (Col. YULE'S *Cathay and the Road Thither*, I., 149, and C. MARKHAM'S *Tibet*, xlvi.). The capital city of Tibet referred to by him with its "Abassi" or Pope is believed to have been Lhāsa. In 1661 the Jesuits Albert Dorville and Johann Gruher visited Lhāsa on their way from China to India. In 1706 the Capuchine fathers Josepho de Asculi and Francisco Marie de Toun penetrated to Lhāsa from Bengal. In 1716 the Jesuit Desideri reached it from Kashmīr and Ladāk. In 1741 a Capuchine mission under Horacio de la Penna also succeeded in getting there, and the large amount of information collected by them supplied Father A. Giorgi with the material for his *Alphabetum Tibetanum*, published at Rome in 1762. The friendly reception accorded this party created hopes of Lhāsa becoming a centre for Roman missionaries; and a *Vicar apostolicus* for Lhāsa is still nominated and appears in the "*Annuario pontificio*," though of course he cannot reside within Tibet. In 1811 Lhāsa was reached by Manning, a friend of Charles Lamb, and the only Englishman who seems ever to have got there; for most authorities are agreed that Moorcroft, despite the story told to M. Huc, never reached it. But Manning unfortunately left only a whimsical diary, scarcely even descriptive of his fascinating adventures. The subsequent, and the last, Europeans to reach Lhāsa were the Lazarist missionaries, Huc and Gabet, in 1845. Huc's entertaining account of his journey is well known. He was soon expelled, and since then China has aided Tibet in opposing foreign ingress by strengthening its political and military barriers, as recent explorers: Prejivalsky, Rockhill, Bonvalot, Bower, Miss Taylor, etc., have found to their cost; though some are sanguine that the Sikhim Trade Convention of this year (1894) is probably the thin edge of the wedge to open up the country, and that at no distant date Tibet will be prevailed on to relax its jealous exclusiveness, so that, ere 1900, even Cook's tourists may visit the Lāmaist Vatican.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

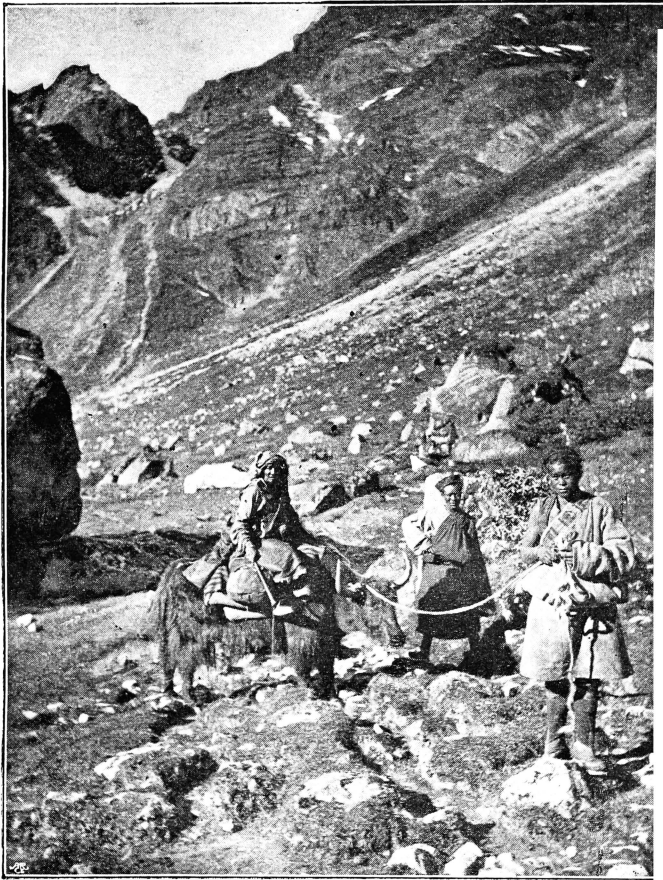
[More information](#)

*LAND OF THE SUPERNATURAL.*

3

almost entirely geographical, leaving the customs of this forbidden land still a field for fiction and romance.

Thus we are told that, amidst the solitudes of this "Land of the Supernatural" repose the spirits of "The Masters," the *Mahātmas*,



CAPTAIN OF GUARD OF DONG-KYA PASS.  
(S. Western Tibet.)

whose astral bodies slumber in unbroken peace, save when they condescend to work some petty miracle in the world below.

In presenting here the actualities of the cults and customs of Tibet; and lifting higher than before the veil which still hides its

B 2

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults,  
Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

mysteries from European eyes, the subject may be viewed under the following sections:—

*a.* HISTORICAL. The changes in primitive Buddhism leading to Lāmaism, and the origins of Lāmaism and its sects.

*b.* DOCTRINAL. The metaphysical sources of the doctrine. The doctrine and its morality and literature.

*c.* MONASTIC. The Lāmaist order. Its curriculum, daily life, dress, etc., discipline, hierarchy and incarnate-deities and re-embodied saints.

*d.* BUILDINGS. Monasteries, temples, monuments, and shrines.

*e.* PANTHEON AND MYTHOLOGY, including saints, images, fetishes, and other sacred objects and symbols.

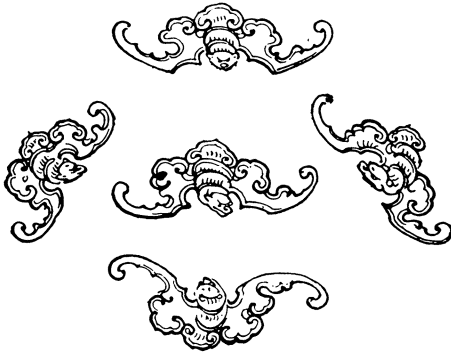
*f.* RITUAL AND SORCERY, comprising sacerdotal services for the laity, astrology, oracles and divination, charms and necromancy.

*g.* FESTIVALS AND SACRED PLAYS, with the mystic plays and masquerades.

*h.* POPULAR AND DOMESTIC LĀMAISM in every-day life, customs, and folk-lore.

Such an exposition will afford us a fairly full and complete survey of one of the most active, and least known, forms of existing Buddhism; and will present incidentally numerous other topics of wide and varied human interest.

For Lāmaism is, indeed, a microcosm of the growth of religion and myth among primitive people; and in large degree an object-lesson of their advance from barbarism towards civilization. And it preserves for us much of the old-world lore and petrified beliefs of our Aryan ancestors.



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## II.

CHANGES IN PRIMITIVE BUDDHISM LEADING TO  
LĀMAISM.

“ Ah ! Constantine, of how much ill was cause,  
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains  
That the first wealthy Pope received of thee.”<sup>1</sup>



Understand the origin of Lāmaism and its place in the Buddhist system, we must recall the leading features of primitive Buddhism, and glance at its growth, to see the points at which the strange creeds and cults crept in, and the gradual crystallization of these into a religion differing widely from the parent system, and opposed in so many ways to the teaching of Buddha.

No one now doubts the historic character of Siddhārta Gautama, or Śākya Muni, the founder of Buddhism; though it is clear the canonical accounts regarding him are overlaid with legend, the fabulous addition of after days.<sup>2</sup> Divested of its embellishment, the simple narrative of the Buddha's life is strikingly noble and human.

Some time before the epoch of Alexander the Great, between the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ,<sup>3</sup> Prince Siddhārta appeared in India as an original thinker and teacher, deeply conscious of the degrading thralldom of caste and the



ŚĀKYA MUNI.

<sup>1</sup> DANTE, *Paradiso*, xx. (Milton's trans.)

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter v. for details of the gradual growth of the legends.

<sup>3</sup> See Chronological Table, Appendix i.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

priestly tyranny of the Brāhmanas,<sup>1</sup> and profoundly impressed with the pathos and struggle of Life, and earnest in the search of some method of escaping from existence which was clearly involved with sorrow.

His touching renunciation of his high estate,<sup>2</sup> of his beloved wife, and child, and home, to become an ascetic, in order to master the secrets of deliverance from sorrow; his unsatisfying search for truth amongst the teachers of his time; his subsequent austerities and severe penance, a much-vaunted means of gaining spiritual insight; his retirement into solitude and self-communion; his last struggle and final triumph—latterly represented as a real material combat, the so-called “Temptation of Buddha” :—



TEMPTATION OF ŚĀKYA MUNI  
(from a sixth century Ajanta fresco, after Raj. Mitra).

“Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round  
Environ'd thee; some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,  
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou  
Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace” ;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The treatises on Vedic ritual, called the Brāhmanas, had existed for about three centuries previous to Buddha's epoch, according to Max Müller's Chronology (*Hibbert Lectures*, 1891, p. 58)—the initial dates there given are R̥g Veda, tenth century B.C.; Brāhmanas, eighth century B.C.; Sūtra sixth, and Buddhism fifth century B.C.

<sup>2</sup> The researches of Vasiliev, etc., render it probable that Siddhārta's father was only a petty lord or chief (cf. also OLDENBERG's *Life*, Appendix), and that Śākya's pessimistic view of life may have been forced upon him by the loss of his territories through conquest by a neighbouring king.

<sup>3</sup> MILTON's *Paradise Regained*, Book iv

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

his reappearance, confident that he had discovered the secrets of deliverance; his carrying the good tidings of the truth from town to town; his effective protest against the cruel sacrifices of the Brāhmans, and his relief of much of the suffering inflicted upon helpless animals and often human beings, in the name of religion; his death, full of years and honours, and the subsequent



BUDDHA'S DEATH  
(from a Tibetan picture, after Grünwedel).

burial of his relics,—all these episodes in Buddha's life are familiar to English readers in the pages of Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, and other works.

His system, which arose as a revolt against the one-sided development of contemporary religion and ethics, the caste-debasement of man and the materializing of God, took the form, as we shall see, of an agnostic idealism, which threw away ritual and sacerdotalism altogether.

Its tolerant creed of universal benevolence, quickened by the bright example of a pure and noble life, appealed to the feelings

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

of the people with irresistible force and directness, and soon gained for the new religion many converts in the Ganges Valley.

And it gradually gathered a brotherhood of monks, which after Buddha's death became subject to a succession of "Patriarchs,"<sup>1</sup> who, however, possessed little or no centralized hierarchal power, nor, had at least the earlier of them, any fixed abode.

About 250 B.C. it was vigorously propagated by the great Emperor Aṣoka, the Constantine of Buddhism, who, adopting it as his State-religion, zealously spread it throughout his own vast empire, and sent many missionaries into the adjoining lands to diffuse the faith. Thus was it transported to Burma,<sup>2</sup> Siam, Ceylon, and other islands on the south, to Nepal<sup>3</sup> and the countries to the north of India, Kashmīr, Bactria, Afghanistan, etc.

In 61 A.D. it spread to China,<sup>4</sup> and through China, to Corea, and,

<sup>1</sup> The greatest of all Buddha's disciples, Śāriputra and Maudgalyayāna, who from their prominence in the system seem to have contributed materially to its success, having died before their master, the first of the patriarchs was the senior surviving disciple, Mahākāśyapa. As several of these Patriarchs are intimately associated with the Lāmaist developments, I subjoin a list of their names, taken from the Tibetan canon and Tāranātha's history, supplemented by some dates from modern sources. After Nāgārjuna, the thirteenth (or according to some the fourteenth) patriarch, the succession is uncertain.

## LIST OF THE PATRIARCHS.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Mahākāśyapa, Buddha's senior disciple.                                       | 12. Maṣipala (Kapimāla).                              |
| 2. Ananda, Buddha's cousin and favourite attendant.                             | 13. Nāgārjuna, <i>circa</i> 150 A.D.                  |
| 3. Śaṅāvāsu.  | 14. Deva or Kānadeva.                                 |
| 4. Upagupta, the spiritual adviser of Aṣoka, 250 B.C.                           | 15. Rāhulata (?).                                     |
| 5. Dhriṭaka.  | 16. Saṅghanandi.                                      |
| 6. Micchaka or Bibhakala.   | 17. Saṅkhayaṣeta (?).                                 |
| 7. Buddhananda.   | 18. Kumārada.   |
| 8. Buddhamitra (= ? Vasumitra, referred to as president of Kanishka's Council). | 19. Jayata.   |
| 9. Pārṣva, contemporary of Kanishka, <i>circa</i> 78 A.D.                       | 20. Vasubandhu, <i>circa</i> 400 A.D.                 |
| 10. Suṅaṣata (? or Puṅyayaṣas).   | 21. Manura.   |
| 11. Aṣvaghosha, also contemporary of Kanishka, <i>circa</i> 100 A.D.            | 22. Haklenayaṣas.                                     |
|   | 23. Sīhhalaputra.                                     |
|   | 24. Vaṣasuta.   |
|   | 25. Puṅyamitra.                                       |
|   | 26. Prajñātāra.                                       |
|   | 27. Bodhidharma, who visited China by sea in 526 A.D. |

<sup>2</sup> By SONA and UTTARO (*Mahavanso*, p. 71).

<sup>3</sup> BUCHANAN-HAMILTON (*Acct. of Nepal*, p. 190) gives date of introduction as A.D. 33; probably this was its re-introduction.

<sup>4</sup> During the reign of the Emperor Ming Ti. BEAL (*Budd. in China*, p. 53) gives 71 A.D.



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)*BUDDHA'S RELIGION AND ITS SPREAD.*

9

in the sixth century A.D., to Japan, taking strong hold on all of the people of these countries, though they were very different from those among whom it arose, and exerting on all the wilder tribes among them a very sensible civilizing influence. It is believed to have established itself at Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> And it penetrated to Europe, where the early Christians had to pay tribute to the Tartar Buddhist Lords of the Golden Horde; and to the present day it still survives in European Russia among the Kalmaks on the Volga, who are professed Buddhists of the Lāmaist order.

Tibet, at the beginning of the seventh century, though now surrounded by Buddhist countries, knew nothing of that religion, and was still buried in barbaric darkness. Not until about the year 640 A.D. did it first receive its Buddhism, and through it some beginnings of civilization among its people.

But here it is necessary to refer to the changes in Form which Buddhism meanwhile had undergone in India.

Buddha, as the central figure of the system, soon became invested with supernatural and legendary attributes. And as the religion extended its range and influence, and enjoyed princely patronage and ease, it became more metaphysical and ritualistic, so that heresies and discords constantly cropped up, tending to schisms, for the suppression of which it was found necessary to hold great councils.

Of these councils the one held at Jalandhar, in Northern India, towards the end of the first century A.D., under the auspices of the Scythian King Kanishka, of Northern India, was epoch-making, for it established a permanent schism into what European writers have termed the "Northern" and "Southern" Schools: the Southern being now represented by Ceylon, Burma, and Siam; and the Northern by Tibet, Sikhim, Bhotan, Nepal, Ladāk, China, Mongolia, Tartary, and Japan. This division, however, it must be remembered, is unknown to the Buddhists themselves, and is only useful to denote in a rough sort of way the relatively primitive as distinguished from the developed or mixed forms of the faith, with especial reference to their present-day distribution.

<sup>1</sup> The *Mahāvanso* (TURNOUR'S ed., p. 171) notes that 30,000 Bhikshus, or Buddhist monks, came from "Alasadda," considered to be Alexandria.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08180-1 - The Buddhism of Tibet: Or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

The point of divergence of these so-called “Northern” and “Southern” Schools was the theistic *Mahāyāna* doctrine, which substituted for the agnostic idealism and simple morality of Buddha, a speculative theistic system with a mysticism of sophistic nihilism in the background. Primitive Buddhism practically confined its salvation to a select few; but the *Mahāyāna* extended salvation to the entire universe. Thus, from its large capacity as a “Vehicle” for easy, speedy, and certain attainment of the state of a Bodhisat or potential Buddha, and conveyance across the sea of life (*saṃsāra*) to Nirvāṇa, the haven of the Buddhists, its adherents called it “The Great Vehicle” or *Mahāyāna*; <sup>1</sup> while they contemptuously called the system of the others—the Primitive Buddhists, who did not join this innovation—“The Little, or Imperfect Vehicle,” the *Hinayāna*, <sup>2</sup> which could carry so few to Nirvāṇa, and which they alleged was only fit for low intellects.

This doctrinal division into the *Mahāyāna* and *Hinayāna*, however, does not quite coincide with the distinction into the so-called Northern and Southern Schools; for the Southern School shows a considerable leavening with *Mahāyāna* principles, <sup>3</sup> and Indian Buddhism during its most popular period was very largely of the *Mahāyāna* type.

Who the real author of the *Mahāyāna* was is not yet known. The doctrine seems to have developed within the *Mahā-saṅghika* or “Great Congregation”—a heretical sect which arose among the monks of Vaiśālī, one hundred years after Buddha’s death, and at the council named after that place. <sup>4</sup> Aśvaghosha, who appears to have lived about the latter end of the first century A.D., is credited with the authorship of a work entitled *On raising Faith in the Mahāyāna*. <sup>5</sup> But its chief expounder and developer was Nāgārjuna, who was probably a pupil of Aśvaghosha, as he

<sup>1</sup> The word *Yāna* (Tib., *T’eg-pa ch’en-po*) or “Vehicle” is parallel to the Platonic *ὄχημα*, as noted by BEAL in *Catena*, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Tib., *T’eg-pa dman-pa*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. HUEN TSIANG’S *S’i-yu-Ki* (BEAL’S), ii., p. 133; EITEL, p. 90; DHARMAPĀLA in *Mahābodhi Jour.*, 1892; Taw Sein Ko, *Ind. Antiquary*, June, 1892.

<sup>4</sup> The orthodox members of this council formed the sect called *Sthavīras* or “elders.”

<sup>5</sup> He also wrote a biography of Buddha, entitled *Buddha-Carita Kāvya*, translated by COWELL, in S.B.E. It closely resembles the *Lalita Vistara*, and a similar epic was brought to China as early as 70 A.D. (BEAL’S *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 90). He is also credited with the authorship of a clever confutation of Brāhmanism, which was latterly entitled *Vajra Sūci* (cf. HODGĒS., *Ill.*, 127):