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Laurence Austine Waddell

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The Buddhism of Tibet

Laurence Austine Waddell (1854–1938) qualified in medicine and chemistry at Glasgow University and in 1880 embarked on a successful career in the colonial Indian Medical Service which took him to Darjeeling, Burma and Tibet, and eventually an academic post at Calcutta Medical College. In addition, Waddell studied Sanskrit and published extensively on Tibet (his books *Among the Himalayas* (1899) and *Lhasa and its Mysteries* (1905) are also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection). This landmark study of Tibetan Buddhism first appeared in 1895. Waddell cites earlier European scholarship, including that of Burnouf (also reissued), but emphasises that his book is based on original field research at temples and among the lay population. It covers the history of Tibetan Buddhism, its relationship with other branches of Buddhism, doctrine, places of worship, rituals and festivals, popular religion and the occult. It also includes around 200 illustrations and a substantial bibliography.

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

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LAURENCE AUSTINE WADDELL



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Frontmatter

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Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

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THE EUCHARIST OF BUDDHISM.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE
BUDDHISM OF TIBET

OR

LAMAISM

WITH ITS MYSTIC CULTS, SYMBOLISM AND MYTHOLOGY,
AND IN ITS RELATION TO INDIAN BUDDHISM.

BY

L. AUSTINE WADDELL, M.B..

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SURGEON-MAJOR H.M. BENGAL ARMY.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

TO

WILLIAM TENNANT GAIRDNER, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.,

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS NOBLE CHARACTER,
PHILOSOPHIC TEACHING, WIDE CULTURE, AND
MANY LABOURS DEVOTED WITH EXEMPLARY FIDELITY TO
THE INTERPRETATION OF NATURE AND THE SERVICE OF MAN,

THIS BOOK
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E .

NO apology is needed for the production at the present time of a work on the Buddhism of Tibet, or “Lāmaism” as it has been called, after its priests. Notwithstanding the increased attention which in recent years has been directed to Buddhism by the speculations of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, and the widely felt desire for fuller information as to the conditions and sources of Eastern religion, there exists no European book giving much insight into the jealously guarded religion of Tibet, where Buddhism wreathed in romance has now its chief stronghold.

The only treatise on the subject in English, is Emil Schlagintweit’s *Buddhism in Tibet*¹ published over thirty years ago, and now out of print. A work which, however admirable with respect to the time of its appearance, was admittedly fragmentary, as its author had never been in contact with Tibetans. And the only other European book on Lāmaism, excepting Giorgi’s curious compilation of last century, is Köppen’s *Die Lamaische Hierarchie*

¹ Leipzig and London, 1863. That there is no lack of miscellaneous literature on Tibet and Lāmaism may be seen from the bibliographical list in the appendix ; but it is all of a fragmentary and often conflicting character.

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Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*und Kirche*¹ published thirty-five years ago, and also a compilation and out of print. Since the publication of these two works much new information has been gained, though scattered through more or less inaccessible Russian, German, French, and Asiatic journals. And this, combined with the existing opportunities for a closer study of Tibet and its customs, renders a fuller and more systematic work now possible.

Some reference seems needed to my special facilities for undertaking this task. In addition to having personally studied “*southern Buddhism*” in Burma and Ceylon; and “*northern Buddhism*” in Sikhim, Bhotān and Japan; and exploring Indian Buddhism in its remains in “the Buddhist Holy Land,” and the ethnology of Tibet and its border tribes in Sikhim, Asam, and upper Burma; and being one of the few Europeans who have entered the territory of the Grand Lāma, I have spent several years in studying the actualities of Lāmaism as explained by its priests, at points much nearer Lhāsa than any utilized for such a purpose, and where I could feel the pulse of the sacred city itself beating in the large communities of its natives, many of whom had left Lhāsa only ten or twelve days previously.

On commencing my enquiry I found it necessary to learn the language, which is peculiarly difficult, and known to very few Europeans. And afterwards, realizing the rigid secrecy maintained by the Lāmas in regard to their seemingly chaotic rites and symbolism, I felt compelled to purchase a Lāmaist temple with its fittings; and prevailed on the officiating priests to explain to me in full detail the symbolism and the rites as they proceeded. Perceiving how much I was interested, the Lāmas were so oblig-

¹ Berlin, 1859.

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Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*PREFACE.*

ix

ing as to interpret in my favour a prophetic account which exists in their scriptures regarding a Buddhist incarnation in the West. They convinced themselves that I was a reflex of the Western Buddha, Amitābha, and thus they overcame their conscientious scruples, and imparted information freely. With the knowledge thus gained, I visited other temples and monasteries critically, amplifying my information, and engaging a small staff of Lāmas in the work of copying manuscripts, and searching for texts bearing upon my researches. Enjoying in these ways special facilities for penetrating the reserve of Tibetan ritual, and obtaining direct from Lhāsa and Tashi-lhunpo most of the objects and explanatory material needed, I have elicited much information on Lāmaist theory and practice which is altogether new.

The present work, while embodying much original research, brings to a focus most of the information on Lāmaism scattered through former publications. And bearing in mind the increasing number of general readers interested in old world ethics, custom and myth, and in the ceaseless effort of the human heart in its insatiable craving for absolute truth ; as well as the more serious students of Lāmaism amongst orientalists, travellers, missionaries and others, I have endeavoured to give a clear insight into the structure, prominent features and cults of this system, and have relegated to smaller type and footnotes the more technical details and references required by specialists.

The special characteristics of the book are its detailed accounts of the external facts and curious symbolism of Buddhism, and its analyses of the internal movements leading to Lāmaism and its sects and cults. It provides material culled from hoary Tibetan tradition and explained to me by Lāmas for elucidating many obscure points in primitive Indian Buddhism and its later symbolism. Thus

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Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

a clue is supplied to several disputed doctrinal points of fundamental importance, as for example the formula of the Causal Nexus. And it interprets much of the interesting Mahāyāna and Tāntrik developments in the later Indian Buddhism of Magadha.

It attempts to disentangle the early history of Lāmaism from the chaotic growth of fable which has invested it. With this view the nebulous Tibetan "history" so-called of the earlier periods has been somewhat critically examined in the light afforded by some scholarly Lāmas and contemporary history; and all fictitious chronicles, such as the Maṇi-kah-'bum, hitherto treated usually as historical, are rejected as authoritative for events which happened a thousand years before they were written and for a time when writing was admittedly unknown in Tibet. If, after rejecting these manifestly fictitious "histories" and whatever is supernatural, the residue cannot be accepted as altogether trustworthy history, it at least affords a fairly probable historical basis, which seems consistent and in harmony with known facts and unwritten tradition.

It will be seen that I consider the founder of Lāmaism to be Padma-sambhava—a person to whom previous writers are wont to refer in too incidental a manner. Indeed, some careful writers¹ omit all mention of his name, although he is considered by the Lāmas of all sects to be the founder of their order, and by the majority of them to be greater and more deserving of worship than Buddha himself.

Most of the chief internal movements of Lāmaism are now for the first time presented in an intelligible and systematic form. Thus, for example, my account of its

¹ *E.g.* W. R. S. Ralston in his *Tibetan Tales*.

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Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xi

sects may be compared with that given by Schlagintweit,¹ to which nothing practically had been added.²

As Lāmaism lives mainly by the senses and spends its strength in sacerdotal functions, it is particularly rich in ritual. Special prominence, therefore, has been given to its ceremonial, all the more so as ritual preserves many interesting vestiges of archaic times. My special facilities for acquiring such information has enabled me to supply details of the principal rites, mystic and other, most of which were previously undescribed. Many of these exhibit in combination ancient Indian and pre-Buddhist Tibetan cults. The higher ritual, as already known, invites comparison with much in the Roman Church; and the fuller details now afforded facilitate this comparison and contrast.

But the bulk of the Lāmaist cults comprise much deep-rooted devil-worship and sorcery, which I describe with some fulness. For Lāmaism is only thinly and imperfectly varnished over with Buddhist symbolism, beneath which the sinister growth of poly-demonist superstition darkly appears.

The religious plays and festivals are also described. And a chapter is added on popular and domestic Lāmaism to show the actual working of the religion in everyday life as a system of ethical belief and practice.

The advantages of the very numerous illustrations—about two hundred in number, mostly from originals brought from Lhāsa, and from photographs by the author—must be obvious.³ Mr. Rockhill and Mr. Knight have kindly permitted the use of a few of their illustrations.

¹ *Op. cit.*, 72.² But see note on p. 69.³ A few of the drawings are by Mr. A. D. McCormick from photographs, or original objects; and some have been taken from Giorgi, Huc, Pander, and others.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

A full index has been provided, also a chronological table and bibliography.

I have to acknowledge the special aid afforded me by the learned Tibetan Lāma, Padma Chhō Phél; by that venerable scholar the Mongolian Lāma She-rab Gya-ts'ô; by the Ñin-ma Lāma, Ur-gyän Gya-ts'ô, head of the Yang-gang monastery of Sikhim and a noted explorer of Tibet; by Tun-yig Wang-dan and Mr. Dor-je Ts'e-ring; by S'ad-sgra S'ab-pe, one of the Tibetan governors of Lhāsa, who supplied some useful information, and a few manuscripts; and by Mr. A.W. Paul, C.I.E., when pursuing my researches in Sikhim.

And I am deeply indebted to the kind courtesy of Professor C. Bendall for much special assistance and advice; and also generally to my friend Dr. Islay Muirhead.

Of previous writers to whose books I am specially under obligation, foremost must be mentioned Csoma Körösi, the enthusiastic Hungarian scholar and pioneer of Tibetan studies, who first rendered the Lāmaist stores of information accessible to Europeans.¹ Though to Brian Houghton Hodgson, the father of modern critical study of Buddhist doctrine, belongs the credit of discovering² the Indian nature of the bulk of the Lāmaist literature and of procuring the material for the detailed analyses by Csoma and Burnouf. My indebtedness to Köppen and Schlagintweit has already been mentioned.

¹ Alexander Csoma of Körös, in the Transylvanian circle of Hungary, like most of the subsequent writers on Lamaism, studied that system in Ladāk. After publishing his *Dictionary*, *Grammar*, and *Analysis*, he proceeded to Darjiling in the hope of penetrating thence to Tibet, but died at Darjiling on the 11th April, 1842, a few days after arrival there, where his tomb now bears a suitable monument, erected by the Government of India. For details of his life and labours, see his biography by Dr. Duka.

² *Asiatic Researches*, xvi., 1828.

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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

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xiii

Jaeschke's great dictionary is a mine of information on technical and doctrinal definitions. The works of Giorgi, Vasiliev, Schiefner, Foucaux, Rockhill, Eitel, and Pander, have also proved most helpful. The Narrative of *Travels in Tibet* by Babu Śaratcandra Dās, and his translations from the vernacular literature, have afforded some useful details. The Indian Survey reports and Markham's *Tibet* have been of service; and the systematic treatises of Professors Rhys Davids, Oldenberg and Beal have supplied several useful indications.

The vastness of this many-sided subject, far beyond the scope of individual experience, the backward state of our knowledge on many points, the peculiar difficulties that beset the research, and the conditions under which the greater part of the book was written—in the scant leisure of a busy official life—these considerations may, I trust, excuse the frequent crudeness of treatment, as well as any errors which may be present, for I cannot fail to have missed the meaning occasionally, though sparing no pains to ensure accuracy. But, if my book, notwithstanding its shortcomings, proves of real use to those seeking information on the Buddhism of Tibet, as well as on the later Indian developments of Buddhism, and to future workers in these fields, I shall feel amply rewarded for all my labours.

L. AUSTINE WADDELL.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism

Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Preface	vii
Note on Pronunciation	xvii
List of Abbreviations	xix
I. INTRODUCTORY—DIVISION OF SUBJECT	1-4
<i>A. HISTORICAL.</i>	
II. CHANGES IN PRIMITIVE BUDDHISM LEADING TO LĀMAISM	5-17
III. RISE, DEVELOPMENT, AND SPREAD OF LĀMAISM	18-53
IV. THE SECTS OF LĀMAISM	54-75
<i>B. DOCTRINAL.</i>	
V. METAPHYSICAL SOURCES OF THE DOCTRINE	76-131
VI. THE DOCTRINE AND ITS MORALITY	132-154
VII. SCRIPTURES AND LITERATURE	155-168
<i>C. MONASTIC.</i>	
VIII. THE ORDER OF LĀMAS	169-211
IX. DAILY LIFE AND ROUTINE	212-225
X. HIERARCHY AND RE-INCARNATE LĀMAS	226-254
<i>D. BUILDINGS.</i>	
XI. MONASTERIES	255-286

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

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
XII. TEMPLES AND CATHEDRALS	287-304
XIII. SHRINES AND RELICS (AND PILGRIMS)	305-323
<i>E. MYTHOLOGY AND GODS.</i>	
XIV. PANTHEON AND IMAGES	324-386
XV. SACRED SYMBOLS AND CHARMS	387-419
<i>F. RITUAL AND SORCERY.</i>	
XVI. WORSHIP AND RITUAL	420-449
XVII. ASTROLOGY AND DIVINATION	450-474
XVIII. SORCERY AND NECROMANCY... ..	475-500
<i>G. FESTIVALS AND PLAYS.</i>	
XIX. FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS	501-514
XX. SACRED DRAMAS, MYSTIC PLAYS AND MASQUERADES	515-565
<i>H. POPULAR LĀMAISM.</i>	
XXI. DOMESTIC AND POPULAR LĀMAISM	566-573
<i>APPENDICES.</i>	
I. Chronological Table	575-578
II. Bibliography	578-583

INDEX	585-598

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

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PRONUNCIATION.

The general reader should remember as a rough rule that in the oriental names the vowels are pronounced as in German, and the consonants as in English, except *c* which is pronounced as “ch,” *ñ* as “ng” and *ṅ* as “ny.” In particular, words like *Buddha* are pronounced as if spelt in English “Bööd-dha,” *Śākya Muni* as “Shā-kya Möö-nee,” and *Karma* as “Kur-ma.”

The spelling of Tibetan names is peculiarly uncouth and startling to the English reader. Indeed, many of the names as transcribed from the vernacular seem unpronounceable, and the difficulty is not diminished by the spoken form often differing widely from the written, owing chiefly to consonants having changed their sound or dropped out of speech altogether, the so-called “silent consonants.”¹ Thus the Tibetan word for the border-country which we, following the Nepalese, call Sikhim is spelt *'bras-ljoms*, and pronounced “Dén-jong,” and *bkra-s'is* is “Ta-shi.” When, however, I have found it necessary to give the full form of these names, especially the more important words translated from the Sanskrit, in order to recover their original Indian form and meaning, I have referred them as far as possible to footnotes.

The transcription of the Tibetan letters follows the system adopted by Jaeschke in his Dictionary, with the exceptions noted below,² and corresponds closely with the analogous system for Sanskritic words given over the page. The Tibetan pronunciation is spelt phonetically in the dialect of Lhāsa.

¹ Somewhat analogous to the French *ils parlent*.

² The exceptions mainly are those requiring very specialized diacritical marks, the letters which are there (JAESCHKE'S *Dict.*, p. viii.), pronounced *ga* as a prefix, *cha*, *nya*, the *ha* in several forms as the basis for vowels; these I have rendered by *g*, *ch'*, *ñ* and *'* respectively. In several cases I have spelt words according to Csoma's system, by which the silent consonants are italicized.

Cambridge University Press

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Laurence Austine Waddell

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For the use of readers who are conversant with the Indian alphabets, and the system popularly known in India as “the Hunterian,” the following table, in the order in which the sounds are physiologically produced—an order also followed by the Tibetans—will show the system of spelling Sanskritic words, which is here adopted, and which it will be observed, is almost identical with that of the widely used dictionaries of Monier-Williams and Childers. The different forms used in the Tibetan for aspirates and palato-sibilants are placed within brackets :—

<i>(gutturals)</i>	k	kh(k')	g	gh	ṅ
<i>(palatals)</i>	c(c')	ch(ch')	j	jh	ñ
<i>(cerebrals)</i>	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	dh	ṇ
<i>(dentals)</i>	t	th(t')	d	dh	n
<i>(labials)</i>	p	ph(p')	b	bh	m
<i>(palato-sibil.)</i>	(ts)	(ts')	(z & ds)	(z')	
	ṣ	ṣ	r	l	
<i>(sibilants)</i>	ś	sh(s')	s		
	h				aṃ

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 Laurence Austine Waddell
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ABBREVIATIONS.

- B. Ac. Ptsbg. = Bulletin de la Classe Hist. Philol. de l'Academie de St. Petersburg.
- BURN. I. = Burnouf's *Introd. au Budd. indien.*
- BURN. II. = „ „ *Lotus de bonne Loi.*
- cf. = confer, compare.
- CSOMA An. = Csoma Körösi *Analysis in Asiatic Researches*, Vol. xx.
- CSOMA Gr. = „ „ „ *Tibetan Grammar.*
- DAVIDS = Rhys Davids' *Buddhism.*
- DESG. = Desgodins' *Le Tibet*, etc.
- EITEL = Eitel's *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism.*
- JAESCH. D. = Jaeschke's *Tibetan Dictionary.*
- J.A.S.B. = Jour. of the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal.
- J. R. A. S. = Journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc., London.
- HODGS. = Hodgson's *Essays on Lang., Lit.*, etc.
- HUC = *Travels in Tartary, Tibet*, etc., Hazlitt's trans.
- KÖPPEN = Köppen's *Lamaische Hier.*
- MARKHAM = Markham's *Tibet.*
- MARCO P. = Marco Polo, Yule's edition.
- O.M. = Original Mitt. Ethnolog. Königl. Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin.
- PANDER = Pander's *Das Pantheon*, etc.
- pr. = pronounced.
- ROCK. L. = Rockhill's *Land of the Lamas.*
- ROCK. B. = „ „ „ *Life of the Buddha*, etc.
- SARAT = Śaratcandra Dās.
- S.B.E. = *Sacred Books of the East.*
- SCHLAG. = E. Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Tibet.*
- Skt. = Sanskrit.
- S.R. = Survey of India Report.
- T. = Tibetan.
- TĀRA. = *Tāranātha's Geschichte*, etc., Schiefner's trans.
- VASIL. = Vasiliev's or Wassiljew's *Der Buddhismus.*