Of the Bonpa literature the only text which has been made accessible to Western scholars is a sutra translated by A. Schiefner in Mém. de l'Acad. de St. Pétersb. (xxviii., No. 1) called Gtsangma klu hbum dkar-po (“ The holy white nága, the hundred thousand ”) ; but Buddhist influence is so manifest in it that no correct idea of the primitive Bon religion can be derived from it. In a native account, dating from the 18th century and translated by Sarat Chandra Das, the following are enumerated—three works on philo­sophy and metaphysics, four meditative works, nine ritual serials, six series of epistles, and four mystic works of a late period, in all of which the title of the translated sutra is not made known. It is stated in the translation that these Bon scriptures originally consisted of wholesale plagiarisms, subsequently altered in ortho­graphy and terminology from Buddhist canonical works. The Bonpo are said to have got the counterparts of the Kah-gyur in general. As a correlative of the six-syllable prayer of the lamas om mani pad-me hūm (vulgarly “om-mani pémé-on ”), they have one in eight syllables, which they pronounce ma-tri-mu-tre-sa-la- dzu. The Bonpo are now frequently confounded with the Red Lamas or Buddhists of the Old school, who are distinguished from the Yellow or Reformed sect by their garments.

History.

From the 11th century B.c. the Chinese used to call by the name of Kiang the tribes (about 150 in number) of nomads and shepherds in Koko-nur and the north-east of present Tibet ; but their know­ledge continued to be confined to the border tribes until the sixth century of our era. In the annals of the T’ang dynasty it is said that the population of the country originated from the Bat-Kian or Fah Kiang; and, as the information collected in the first part of the notice concerning Tu-bat, afterwards Tu-ban, the modern Tu-fan, dates partly (as is proved by internal evidence) from a time anterior to the T’ang dynasty (618 a.d.), some degree of reliance may be placed on its statements. There we are told that Fanni, a scion of the southern Liang dynasty of the Tu-bat family (which flourished from 397 to 415 at Liang-chu in Kan-suh), who had submitted to the northern Liang dynasty, fled in 433 with all his people from his governorship of Lin-sung (in Kan-chu) westwards across the Yellow river, and founded beyond Tsih-shih (“heapy stones ”) a state amidst the Kiang tribes, with a territory extend­ing over a thousand li. By his mild and just rule he was soon enabled to establish his sway over an immense territory. His original state was apparently situated along the upper course of the Yalung river, an affluent of the Kin-sha-kiang. The foregoing statements, which are most probably genuine history, are preceded in Tibetan chronicles by a mass of legends invented by the native Buddhist historians for the purpose of connecting their monarchy with India.

Through the exertions of Prinsep, Csoma de Körös, E. von Schlag- intweit, and Sarat Chandra Das we possess five copies of lists of kings, forming the royal canon of Tibet from the legendary begin­nings between the 5th and 2d century B.c. down to the end of the monarchy in 914. But the serious divergences which they show (except as to later times and in general outlines) make their un- authentic character plain. As the last published list is accom­panied by a commentary, it is the easiest to follow, and requires only to be supplemented here and there from the other lists and from the Chinese sources. The first king, Gnya-khri btsan-po, is said to have been the fifth son of King Prasenadjit of Kosala, and was bom with obliquely drawn eyes. He fled north of the Hima­layas into the Bod country, where he was elected king by the twelve chiefs of the tribes of southern and central Tibet. He took up his residence in the Yarlung country south of Lhása. This Yarlung, which borrowed its name from the Yalung of the state of Fanni Tu-bat, is a river which flows into the Yaro-tsanpo. The first king and his six successors are known as the seven celestial khri ; the next series consists of six kings known as the earthly legs ; and they were followed by eight terrestrial ldé. This three­fold succession is apparently an imitation or a debased form of the ancient legend of heavenly, earthly, and human rulers, which was carried into Persia and China, and from the latter country into Japan and Tibet,—the relative number of kings being altered in the last-named countries to suit local convenience and the small amount of truth which they contain. Whilst giving an Aryan descent to their first kings, the ancient Tibetans assigned to their princesses a divine origin, and called them lhamo, “goddess.” The gynæcratic habits of the race are manifested in the names of all these kings, which were formed by a combination of those of their parents, the mother’s generally preceding that of the father. The ldé kings were followed by four rulers simply called btsan (“mighty”).

Then occurs a break in the lineal descent, and the king next in order (c. 461) may be the Tatar Fanni Tu-bat, but most probably his son and successor. His name was Lha-tho thori gnyan-btsan, otherwise Gnyan-btsan of Lha-tho thori, according to the custom usual in Tibet of calling great personages after the name of their birthplace. Lha-tho means “heaps of stones,” and therefore appears to be a translation of Tsih-shih, “heapy stones,” the country mentioned in connexion with the foundation of a state by Fanni Tu-bat. It was during his reign that the first Buddhist objects are reputed to have reached Tibet, probably from Nepal. Little is said of his three immediate successors. The fourth was gNam-ri srong btsan, who died in 630. During his reign the Tibetans obtained their first knowledge of arithmetic and medicine from China ; the prosperity and pastoral wealth of the country were so great that “ the king built his palace with cement moistened with the milk of the cow and the yak.” To the same king is attributed the discovery of the inexhaustible salt mine called Chyang-gi- ts’wa (Byang-gi-ts'wa=“northern salt”), which still supplies the greater portion of Tibet. The reign of his illustrious son, Srong btsan sgam-po, opened up a new era ; he introduced Buddhism and the art of writing from India, and was the founder (in 639) of Lha-ldan, afterwards Lha-sa. He was greatly helped in his pros­elytism by his two wives, one a Nepal princess, daughter of King Jyoti varma, the other an imperial daughter of China ; afterwards, they being childless, he took two more princesses from the Ru-yong (=“left corner”?) and Mōn (general appellative for the nations between Tibet and the Indian plains) countries. As a conqueror he extended his sway from the still unsubdued Kiang tribes of the north to Ladak in the west, and in the south he carried his power through Nepal to the Indian side of the Himalayas. How far southward this dominion at first extended is not known ; but in 703 Nepal and the country of the Brahmans rebelled, and the Tibetan king, the third successor of Srong btsan sgam-po, was killed while attempting to restore his power. It is rather curious that nothing is said of this Tibetan rule in India, except in the Chinese annals, where it is mentioned until the end of the monarchy in the 10th century, as extending over Bengal to the sea,—the Bay of Bengal being called the Tibetan Sea. J. R. Logan has found ethno­logical and linguistic evidence of this domination, which was left unnoticed in the Indian histories. Mang-srong mang btsan, the second son and successor of Srong btsan sgam-po, continuing the conquests of his father, subdued the Tukuhun Tatars around the Koko - nur in 663, and attacked the Chinese ; after some adverse fortune the latter took their revenge and penetrated as far as Lhasa, where they burnt the royal palace (Yumbu-lagang). Khri Ide gtsng-brtan-mesag-ts’oms, the grandson of Mang-srong and second in succession from him, promoted the spread of Buddhism and obtained for his son, Jangts’a Lhapon, who was famous for the beauty of his person, the hand of the accomplished princess Kyim- shang, daughter, otherwise kung-chu, of the Chinese emperor Juy- tsung. But the lady arrived after the death of her betrothed, and after long hesitation became the bride of the father. She gave birth in 730 to Khri srong ldeu btsan, in the Buddhist annals the most illustrious monarch of his country, because of the strenuous efforts he made in favour of that religion during his reign of forty- six years (743-789). His son and successor Muni btsan-po, being determined to raise all his subjects to the same level, enacted that there should be no distinction between poor and rich, humble and great. He compelled the wealthy to share their riches with the indigent and helpless, and to make them their equals in respect of all the comforts and conditions of life. He repeated this experi­ment three times ; but each time he found that they all returned to their former condition, the rich becoming still richer and the poor still poorer. The sages attributed this curious phenomenon to the good and evil acts of their former lives. Nothing of im­portance occurred during the following reigns, until that of Ral- pachen, who won glory by his care for the translations of the Buddhist scriptures which he caused to be completed, or rewritten more accurately when required. In this reign a severe struggle took place with China, peace being concluded in 821 at Ch’ang- ngan and ratified at Lhasa the following year by the erection of bilingual tablets, which still exist. Ralpachen was assassinated by the partisans of gLang-dharma and the country fell into dis­order. gLang-dharma instituted a violent persecution of Buddhism ; but he was soon assassinated in his turn, and the kingdom divided into a western and an eastern part by his two sons. The partition did not, however, prevent internecine wars. The history for some time now becomes rather intricate, and requires some attention. Pal K’or tsan, the second western king, after a reign of thirteen years died leaving two sons, Thi Tasi Tsegpa-pal and Thi Kyida Nyimagon. The latter went to Ngari (Mngari) and founded the capital Purang ; he left three sons, of whom the eldest declared himself king of Mang-yul (the Monhuil of our maps), the second seized Purang, and the youngest, Detsud-gan, became king of the province of Shang-shung (the modern Ghughè). The revival of Buddhism began with the two sons of the last-named, the elder of whom became a monk. The younger, Khorré, inherited his father’s throne, and was followed in his authority by twenty successors. Tasi Tsegpa also had three sons,—Palde, Hodde, and Kyide. The descendants of the first made themselves masters of Gung-t’ang, Lugyalwa, Chyipa, Lhatse, Langlung, and Tsakor, where they severally ruled as petty chiefs. The descendants of Kyide spread themselves over the Mu, Jang, Tanag, Yarulag, and Gyaltse