I. How did the doctrine of Buddhism spread in Tibet?

G. If one answers briefly according to Tibetan history how Buddhism spread in Tibet, from the point of view of time one distinguishes both an earlier propagation and a later propagation. As for the earlier propagation - in the period of Lha tho tho ri gnyen bstan, the 27th of the Tibetan royal line, several books of the noble doctrine, the utterance of the Buddha, Mdo sde spang gong phyag rgya pa, Zam tog bkod pa'i mdo, etc. were received, and although in that period there was no one who understood their meaning, there appeared in the king's dream an omen which declared that in five generations one would come who would understand their meaning. The king counted these (books) as of great value, and because he held them as an object of worship, it is said that (here) one finds the bare starting point of the noble doctrine (in Tibet).

Then, at the time of the pious king, Srong bstan sgam po, the 32nd of the royal line, who was born in the year 617 of the western calendar, Thommi sambhota was sent to India to study grammar and the alphabet, and later Thommi not only initiated the system of both the present Tibetan dbu can alphabet modeled on the Indian Lantscha and the present dbu med alphabet modeled on Urdu, but he also composed several commentaries on grammar, the Sum bcu pa and Rtag 'jug pa etc. This king took as his queen, Kongjo, the daughter of the king of China, and Khribsun, the daughter of the king of Nepal. The two queens each brought as her object of worship belonging to her share (of the family estate) a life-sized figure of the teacher Sakya'ummi. The pious king along with his court built many temples of which the two principal are the famous temples in Lhasa which are the dwelling place for these two lords. He invited the teacher Kumara from India and the teacher Silamanju from Nepal, etc. and translated several sutras and tantras on the teaching about Avalokitesvara etc. The king himself also studied and practiced and afterward taught the Tibetan people the doctrine on Avalokitesvara and opened up the system of the (Buddhist) teaching in Tibet.

Then at the time of Khri srong lde'u bstan, the 37th king, born in the year 730 of the western calendar, about one hundred and eight pandits were invited from India, the great preceptor Santaraksita, the great master Padmasambhava, the master Vimalamitra, Kamalasila, etc. The great pandits and translators, these (before-mentioned) pandits and the Tibetan translators, Vairocana,
Ska ba pal rtags, Cog ro glu'i rgyal mūsan, Zhan Ye shes sde, etc., translated into the Tibetan language many of the principal scriptures of the Buddha, the "three baskets", and the commentaries which explain their thought. In particular, the great teacher Padmasambhava propagated widely the teaching of the tantras. In the beginning the great upadyaya Santaraksita ordained into religious life "the seven probationers" and established (in Tibet) the system of monastic ordination. He did much explanation principally on the system of the sutras as exemplified by the Vinaya of the noble doctrine, and the teaching of the sutras and tantras was spread widely by the followers of these two great teachers. Thus, the teachings of the sutras and tantras were at the beginning made widespread in Tibet by the three, the great upadyaya Santaraksita, the great acarya Padmasambhava, and the pious king Khri srong lde'u bstan, and because this was a very great service to the people of Tibet the so-called mkhen slob chos gsum have been made an object of veneration of the Tibetan people. In order to commemorate the service of these three, the custom of making and keeping images and thang khas of the three in the various monasteries and many houses of the laity spread everywhere up to the present.

Next, in the time of the sovereign Khri ral, the 41st of the royal line, who was born in the year 806 of the western calendar, many temples were built. Out of his great religious veneration for the doctrine he offered the support of seven lay-families to every monk. Enjoining the venerable monks and laymen who held to the tantra to sit on the ends of ribbons hung from the ends of both the braids of his hair, he offered well homage and worship. He invited many Indian scholars, the upadyaya Jinamitra and others. Many scholars, the Tibetan lotsaba Ratnaraksita and others, by instituting new language (for translation) according to the expressed wishes of the king made well retranslations of the scriptures and commentaries which could not be translated exactly in the time of the former pious kings, and by way of correcting the doctrine they furthered its progress without deterioration. The time of the so-called earlier propagation of the doctrine is up to this.

Subsequently, Glang dar ma, the older brother of the pious king Khri ral, was displeased at his younger brother's having the kingdom and through envy could not endure the wide respect and service being paid to the Buddhist doctrine. In particular, the ministers who favored the way of the Bon religion, Sba stag snas and others, incited him to evil thought and action, and he killed Khri ral.
In the year 836 of the western calendar, Glang dar ma held the kingdom. During that time, many Buddhist temples were razed. Many members of the Sangha were killed or brought down to lay life or exiled from the country etc., and when it came about that there was no having of even a trace of monastic ordination in Dbus and Gtsang, a hermit of Yer pa named Dpal dor je of Lha lung shot and killed (Glang dar ma) with an arrow. Then, he took many texts of the Vinaya and Abhidharma and escaped in the direction of Mdo smad. Therefore, though Glang dar ma did not hold the kingdom over six years, once the teaching of the Vinaya was destroyed in the area of Dbus and Gtsang, (this situation) is said to have gone on for more than seventy years. At that time those holding the Bodhisattva and tantra vow (and so) having the customs of the lama did not incur injury to such an extent.

Also, three (men) Gtsang rab gsal, Cyo dge chung, and Dmar Shakya, who were holders of the discipleship-lineage of the upadhyaya Santarakṣita, took many books of the Vinaya and the Abhidharma etc., and escaped first in the direction of Mnga ris in the west. There, as the west was not tolerable, they escaped in the direction of Mdo smad along the road north and practised meditation in the monasteries of Ten tig shel etc. During their stay there, the great Lama Dgongs pa rab gsal, asked them for ordination and full Bhikṣu-ship. Then, since he requested this and since at least five monks are generally a necessity for (confering) full Bhikṣu-ship, and (that number) was incomplete, they searched for two Chinese monks. Gtsang rab gsal was made upadhyaya, Cyo dge chung, acarya, and Dmar Shakya, secret preceptor. The number for the ceremony was completed by the two monks of China, and they conferred upon the great Lama monastic ordination and the vow of a Bhikṣu successively. When afterwards the story of the continuation of ordination and of the Bhikṣu vow at Mdo smad was heard at Dbus and Gtsang, ten men, Klu mes and others, went to Mdo smad and received the vow from the great Lama. They returned again to Dbus and Gtsang, and this extensive repagation of the doctrine by way of their spreading the continuation of the ordination vow is called "the recovery of the embers of the doctrine from the east". The beginning of the "later spread" of the doctrine commences from this.

As for the way of recovery of the embers of the doctrine from the west, - it happened that the two so-called "guru kings", Ye shes 'od and Byang chub 'od, who held descent from Glang dar ma, were in the west at Mnga ris and held that small principality. During this period, pandits from the eastern part of India, Dharmapala and the others called the three Palas, went to
Mnga' ris in the west. The Zhang Zhung Rgyal ba'i shes rab took the vow from these. Similarly, the transmission of the Pratimoksha vow spread from a pandit named Sakyasri who had come to Tibet, and the spread of the Vinaya of the noble doctrine down from these into Dbus and Gtsang is called "the recovery of the embers of the doctrine from the west". Thus, the transmissions of the Pratimoksha vow from the east through the great Lama Dgongs pa rab gsal is called the eastern lineage of the Vinaya vow, and the transmission of the Pratimoksha vow from the west through the Zhang Zhung Rgyal ba'i shes rab together with the pandit Sakyasri is called the western lineage of the Vinaya vow.

Not only that, the guru-king, Ye shes 'od, sent about twenty Tibetan children to India to study for the purpose of furthering the teaching. With the exception of three, the Lotsaba Rin chen bzang po, Lo chung, and Rnogs legs pa'i shes rab, the others died of the unsuitable conditions and were unable to return. These three completed their studies in India, and, having returned to Tibet, translated many scriptures and commentaries. In particular, the great translator Rin chen bzang po translated many scriptures and commentaries of the Mantrayana of the Mahayana. The tantras translated from this point are called the "new tantras", and the tantras translated in the time of the chief 'grandfathers', the former three pious kings, are called the "old tantras".