

Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus

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History of Buddhism

(Chos-ḥbyung)

by

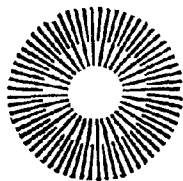
Bu-ston

I. Part

The Jewelry of Scripture

Translated from Tibetan by

Dr. E. Obermiller



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Dr. E. Obermiller

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With an Introduction by

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Introduction.

To European readers Tibetan historiography is known from Tārānātha's History of Buddhism in India, translated simultaneously by two members of the St. Petersburg Academy of Science, W. P. Wassilieff into Russian and A. Schiefner into German.¹⁾ But this is not the only work of this kind which the Tibetan literature contains. There are many others. Among them „The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet”²⁾ by the great scholar *Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub-pa* (pronouce Budon Rinchenḡub), also called Budon Rinpoche, is held in great esteem by Tibetan and Mongolian learned lamas. It is distinguished from the work of Tārānātha by the plan of its composition. It consists of three parts. The history proper is preceded by a systematical review of the whole of Buddhist literature so far as preserved in Tibet, and it is followed by a systematical catalogue of works, authors and translators of all the litterature contained in the Kanjur and Tanjur collections. The first part is of an overwhelming scientific value. It represents a synthesis of everything which directly or remotely bears the stamp of Buddhism, that synthesis which is also the ultimate aim of the European investigation of that religion. The whole of its litterature, sacred and profane, is here reviewed as divided in periods, schools and subject-matter. No one was better qualified for such a task than Budon, for he was one of the redactors of the Kanjur and Tanjur great collections in their final form. As a matter of fact his “History“ is but an introduction and a systematical table of contents to the Narthañ editions of the Kanjur and Tanjur.

His work has not failed to attract the attention of European scholarship. Wassilieff quotes it in the first volume of his Buddhism, Sarat Candra Das has translated some excerpts out of it. I myself have published a translation in French, in the Muséon 1905 (“Notes de littérature bouddhique. La littérature Yogācāra d’après Bou-

ston”), of the part devoted to the literature of the Yogācāra school, and, in English, of the part dealing with the Abhidharma literature of the Sarvāstivādins, included in Prof. Takakusu’s work on the Abhidharma literature of the Sarvāstivādins. In the years 1927 and 1928 I have interpreted the work to my pupil E. E. Obermiller making it the subject of our seminary study. He then has made an English translation which was revised by me and is now published, thanks to the kind attention accorded to it by the Heidelberg Society for the Investigation of Buddhist Lore and by its president Professor M. Walleser.

The translation of the first part, now published, was not an easy task, since it consists predominantly of quotations, many of them having the form of mnemonic verse (*kārikā*’s). They had to be identified and their commentaries consulted. With very few exceptions all has been found out by E. E. Obermiller in the Tanjur works. The high merit of this self-denying, absorbing and difficult work will, I have no doubt, be fully appreciated by fellow scholars who have a personal experience of that kind of work.

Budon Rinpoche was a native of Central Tibet. He lived in the years 1290—1364. He consequently belongs to the old school of Tibetan learning, the school which preceded the now dominant Gelugpa sect (the yellow-caps) founded by *Tsoṅkhapa*. Besides the History he has written many other works. A full block-print edition of all his works in 15 volumes has recently appeared in Lhasa. No copy of it has as yet reached Leningrad. Among his works there is one on logic, *Tshad-ma-rnam-ñes-pai-bsdus-don* = *Pramāṇa-viniścaya-piṇḍārtha*, with his own commentary. A block-print containing his biography (*rnam-thar*) is in my possession. It will be analyzed by E. E. Obermiller in the Introduction also dealing with the sources of Tibetan historiography, which will be attached to the translation of the whole work. The Translation is made from the text of the old block-print edition, a copy of which is found in the Asiatic Museum of the Academy of Sciences of the U. S. S. R.

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[Salutation to Buddha 1. 1—2 a. 4.]

Saluted be the blessed Buddha, the Lion of the Çākya clan.

1. (a) [Victorious be the Buddha], the Sun,¹⁾ who, nourished by the nectar of His Creative Effort²⁾ and of His virtuous deeds,³⁾ has appeared, shining with the beautiful lustre of unthinkable forbearance,
 (b) and has attained the limits of His Three Bodies,⁴⁾ a precious jewel of immeasurable value, swiftly moving by the force of His previous vows, and who, being (the Absolute), free from the attire of differentiation into subject and object,⁵⁾
 (c) is a leader in those vast skies,⁶⁾ where the clouds⁷⁾ of both the Obscurations⁸⁾ are dispersed, whose nature it is to move from East to West in pursuit of the welfare of others in its various forms,⁹⁾
 (d) He, who by His immaculate word, — a light with millions of rays, producing heat, which he expands from region to region,
2. (a) Darkens the lustre of Brahma,¹⁰⁾ Viṣṇu,¹¹⁾ Manmatha, Çiva,¹²⁾ Ganeça,¹³⁾ Skanda¹⁴⁾, Indra,¹⁵⁾ Bṛhaspati¹⁶⁾ and the other (gods), —
 (b) a multitude of planets, that shine with great pride, claiming to be the guides¹⁷⁾ in these three worlds,¹⁸⁾ [2 a]
 (c—d) and blinds¹⁹⁾ that swarm of owls — the sages Kapila, Akṣapāda,²⁰⁾ Bādarāyaṇa,²¹⁾ the Digambaras,²²⁾ Cārvākas, Vyāsa, Dantavakra, Valmiki and the rest, stopping their course;
3. (a) at whose appearance, (like) bees, full of desire to behold (the flower), to enjoy its fragrant odour, and that exquisite honey, which gives delight to the senses, humming and infatuated with pride,
 (b) the Çrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas and Bodhisattvas, those worthy receptacles of heavenly bliss, assemble,²³⁾
 (c) As that celestial flower — the Nirvāṇa²⁴⁾, — unfolds its leaves and expands its odour through the ten quarters of the sky.
 (d) Victorious be He, this Buddha, the gem of Heaven, who has attained the double aim (of all human activity) and created the nectar of Omniscience!

[Salutation to the Compilers of Scripture and to the great Teachers of Buddhism 2 a. 4—b. 2.]

4. (a) [I bow before the Compilers of the Doctrine]²⁵⁾ who, for the sake of vanquishing the evil teachings of an Eternal Soul and of Nihilism,²⁶⁾ — though (themselves) they were free from all confusion, —
- (b) to reject the contempt of the Gods of Light²⁷⁾ — though the eight egoistic qualities of praise,²⁸⁾ censure and the rest had been abandoned (by them) before, —
- (c) and, out of compassion for living beings, to secure a long existence for the Teaching (of Buddha), — though they had renounced all worldly attachments, —
- (d) have collected the Doctrine from the mass of (Buddha's) Speeches and written it down.²⁹⁾
5. (a) I salute the Assembly of the Saints,³⁰⁾ the Teachers free from error, whose greatness the highest of Buddhas had foretold, the Propagators of the Doctrine, who, thoroughly apprehending the stainless work (of Buddha) [2 b.],
- (b) in full possession of all the great Lord's Highest Truth, have duly expounded the systems of the Three Vehicles,³¹⁾
- (c) and made the Teacher's Word perfectly clear; them, who, endowed with great wisdom and a powerful mind,
- (d) have mercifully composed elucidating works.³²⁾
- [Salutation to the Translators of Scripture, the Sages of Tibet and the Author's own Teachers. 2 b. 2—4]
6. (a) The perfect Translators of the mighty streams of Words, that descend from the snowy mountain of Buddha's Omniscience,
- (b) and those of the holy Compilers of the Doctrine,³³⁾
- (c) and of that Lake, adorned by the lotuses of explanatory works³⁴⁾
- (d) — the noble Lotsavas and Paṇḍitas, I honour with a reverential bow.
7. (a) [The Elephants], who, covered by the golden net of the Three Disciplines,³⁵⁾
- (b) the four methods of Propaganda³⁶⁾ being their powerful well-grown tusks,
- (c) have vanquished in contest their adversaries by speech, controversy and works, —
- (d) the great Sages of Tibet,³⁷⁾ I worship.
8. (a) [Those swords], which, obtained from the precious element of the Doctrine,
- (b) hardened in the fire³⁸⁾ of Perfect Analysis,

- (c) and endowed with the vigour of fine words,³⁹⁾
 (d) rent asunder the net of my mind's doubts, —
9. (a) The Assembly of Lamas,
 (b) the twelve, who are weighty by the burden of their virtue,
 (c) and, foremostly, the six Teachers full of benevolence,
 (d) I look to for protection with a devoted mind.
 [Introduction. 2 b. 5—3 a.₃.]
10. (a) Cherished by teachers, affectionate as a mother,
 (b) in that Garden of Lotuses, — the Man-Lion's perfect Word,
 (c) like a bee, full of delight, clinging to its flowers,
 (d) the mind grows wide in the boundless Doctrine.
11. (a) Therefore, the ocean of Çākya's Word,
 (b) the immeasurable, infinite, I wish to cross,
 (c) and, though unable of penetrating into its depth,
 (d) why should I not secure the precious jewel of its marvellous meaning?
12. (a) But though I have obtained it, it will be, like a jewel in a beggar's hands,
 (b) my composition, pure and stainless (by itself),
 (c) but defiled by the spirit of rivalry, hatred, and envy (of others).
 (d) Who, therefore, will accept it, as an object of appreciation⁴⁰⁾ and belief? [3 a.]
13. (a) Nevertheless, though disregarded (by enemies), why should not this nectar of the Highest Doctrine,⁴¹⁾
 (b) remove my own mental agony,
 (c) and if, moreover, it would be accepted by some (friendly critics),
 (d) would it not appease the fever of their painful doubts?
14. (a) Therefore, to relieve the poverty of my own mind,
 (b) and, amongst those that strive for religion,
 (c) to magnify the triumph of the greatest of doctrines, —
 (d) I open the doors to the Jewelry of Scripture.
15. (a) From it, of the various Vehicles, the great and the small,
 (b) the diverse jewels of their meaning shall come forth,
 (c) which I present to you without restraint.
 (d) May you, full of delight, partake of them as you desire!

Contents and Systems.

Dedicatory verses	1
-----------------------------	---

Book I.

I. The Merit of Studying and Preaching the Doctrine	8
I A. The Merit of Studying and Preaching in general. [3 b. 1.]	9
I Aa. The Merit of Study. [3 b. 2.]	9
I Ab. The Merit of Preaching. [5 a. 1.]	11
I Aba ₁ Worship of Buddha by Preaching the Doctrine. [5 a. 2.]—I Abb ₁ Preaching of the Doctrine as superior to Material Gifts. [5 a. 3.] — I Abc ₁ Good Memory — a result of expounding Scripture. [5 a. 5.] — I Abd ₁ Augmentation of Virtue and Attainment of Enlighten- ment by Preaching. [5 b. 1.]	
I Ac. The Merit of Study and Preaching taken together. [5 b. 5.]	13
I Aca ₁ Progress of Spiritual Merit through the Study of the 3 Vehicles. [5 b. 6.]— I Acb ₁ Honours of Scholar- ship. [6 a. 2.] — I Acc ₁ Attainment of Enlightenment by the Study of the Doctrine. [6 b. 1.)	
I B. The Special Merit of Studying and Preaching the Mahāyānistic Doctrines. [6 b. 6.]	15
I Ba. Prevalence over the Merit of the Hīnayānist Saints. [7 a. 1.]	16
I Bb. Superiority to every other Kind of Merit in the Path. [7. a. 5.]	16
I Bc. Certainty of Attaining Omniscience. [7 b. 3.]	17
II. General Review of the Litterature of Buddhism. [7. b. 6.]	18
II A. The different Meanings of the word “ <i>dharma</i> ”. [8 a. 1.]	18
II B. Etymology of “ <i>dharma</i> ” [8 a. 5.]	19
II C. Definition of “ <i>dharma</i> ” in the sense of “The Doctrine”. [9 a. 3.]	21
II D. The various Aspects of the Doctrine. [10 a. 2.]	23
II Da. The Doctrine from the Standpoint of the Result. [10 a. 3.]	23
II Db. The Doctrine as the Means of Realising Nirvāṇa. [10 a. 5.]	23

- II Dc. The Doctrine in its literary form 24
- II Dca₁ The Word of Buddha (*pravacana*). [10 b. 4.]
- II Dca_{1a}₂ Its Definition [10 b. 5.] — II Dca_{1b}₂ Etymology of “*subhāsita*” (including the 60 Qualities of the voice of a Buddha). [11 a. 1.] — II Dca_{1c}₂ Varieties of the Word of Buddha [B a. 5.]
- II Dca_{1c}_{2a}₃ Varieties of the Word with regard to Time. [13a.5.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2b}₃ Varieties with regard to the Subject-Matter. [13 a. 6.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2c}₃ Varieties of Form. The 12 Classes. [13 b. 3.]
- II Dca_{1c}_{2d}₃ Varieties of the Word from the standpoint of its being an Antidote against Sin. — The 3 Codes. [14 b .3.]
- II Dca_{1c}_{2d}_{3a}₄ The 12 Classes of Scripture as contained in the 3 Codes. [14 b. 5.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2d}_{3b}₄ Etymology of the word “*piṭaka*”. [15 a. 3.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2d}_{3c}₄ The Motives for the Establishment of the 3 Codes of Scripture. [15 a.4.]
- II Dca_{1c}_{2d}_{3c}_{4a}₅ The Codes of Scripture as purifying from different forms of Sin. [15 a. 5.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2d}_{3c}_{4b}₅ The 3 Codes as corresponding to the 3 Disciplines. [15 b. 2.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2d}_{3c}_{4c}₅ The 3 Codes with regard to the Subject studied. [15b.4.]
- II Dca_{1c}_{2d}_{3d}₄ Etymology of “*Sūtra*”, “*Abhidharma*”, and “*Vinaya*”. [16 a. 2.]
- II Dca_{1c}_{2e}₃ Varieties of the Word with regard to the different converts (Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, Philosophy and Tantra). [16 b. 5.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2f}₃ Varieties of the Word of Buddha with regard to the opportunity, at which it was pronounced (its principal Cause). [17 b. 5.]
- II Dca_{1c}_{2f}_{3a}₄ The Precepts delivered by the Buddha personally. [17 b. 5.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2f}_{3b}₄ The Word as the Result of the Buddha’s Blessings. [17 b. 5.] — II Dca_{1c}_{2f}_{3c}₄ The Passages containing the Expression of the Will of Buddha. [18 a. 2.].
- II Dcb₁ The Exegetical Treatises (*śāstra*). [18 a. 4.] . 41
- II Dcb_{1a}₂ Definition. [18 a. 4.] — II Dcb_{1b}₂ Etymology of “*śāstra*”. [18 a. 5.] — II Dcb_{1c}₂ The Varieties of Exegetical Treatises. [18 b. 3.]
- II Dcb_{1c}_{2a}₃ Varieties as regards Quality. [18. b. 3.] — II Dcb_{1c}_{2b}₃ Varieties from the standpoint of the Aim. [18 b. 6.] — II Dcb_{1c}_{2c}₃ Varieties of Subject-Matter [19 a. 1.].
- II Dcb_{1c}_{2c}_{3a}₄ Works, referring to Empirical

Reality (*nīti-śāstra* and the 5 Sciences). [19 a. 2.] — II Dcb₁c₂b₃ Works, referring to Absolute Reality. [21 a. 5]. —

II Dcb₁c₂c₃c₄ Works, showing the Way to Salvation and Omniscience. [21 a. 6.].

II Dcb₁c₂d₃ Varieties with regard to the Interpretation of Scripture. [21 b. 1.]. —

1) Treatises, interpreting Early Scripture. (Hinayāna). The Works on Vinaya and Abhidharma. [21 b. 2.] — 2. Treatises on Mādhyamika and Prajñāpāramitā. [22 a. 3.]

— 3) Treatises, interpreting Scripture of the latest period. The Yogācāra literature. [23 a. 3.]

II Dcb₁c₂e₃ The various classes of Exegetical Treatises. [24. b. 5.]

III. The Consideration and Fulfillment of the Rules, prescribed for Study and Teaching. [25 a. 6.]	58
III A. Character of the Doctrine to be taught. [25 b. 1.]	59
III B. Character of the Methods of Teaching. [26 b. 6.]	62
III Ba. Definition of the Teacher. [26. b. 6.]	62
III Baa ₁ The High Wisdom of the Teacher. [27. b. 3.]	64
III Baa ₁ a ₂ The Teacher's Knowledge of the Subject to be taught. [27 b. 4.] — III Baa ₁ b ₂ The Teacher's Skill in the Means of expressing himself. [27 b. 5.] — III Baa ₁ c ₂ His Knowledge as to his own behaviour and as to the Guidance of his Pupils. [29 a. 2.].	
III Bab ₁ The Teacher's Great Commiseration. [29 a. 6.]	68
III Bac ₁ Correct Methods. [29 b. 4.]	69
III Bb. The Means of Teaching. [30 a. 2.]	70
III Bc. The Character of Teaching. [31 a. 5.]	73
III Bca ₁ The Character of Teaching with regard to the students. [31. a. 5]	73
III Bcb ₁ The same, with regard to the Aim. [31 b. 4]	73
III Bcc ₁ The manner of conducting the Teaching. [31 b. 4.]	74
III Bcc ₁ a ₂ Preparations. [31 b. 4.] — III Bcc ₁ b ₂ The Teaching itself. [32 b. 5.] — III Bcc ₁ c ₂ The Conclusion of Study. [33 a. 2.]	
III C. Character of the Methods of Study. [33 a. 3.]	76
III Ca. Character of the Student. [33 a. 3.]	77
III Caa ₁ The Student of acute faculties. [33. a. 3]	
III Caa ₁ a ₂ His Defects. [33 a. 4.]	77
III Caa ₁ a ₂ a ₃ 13 Defects according to Vyākhyāyukti [33 a. 4] — III Caa ₁ a ₂ b ₃ 6 Defects. [33 b. 3]. — III Caa ₁ a ₂ c ₃ 3 Defects [34 a. 1.]	
III Caa ₁ b ₂ Definition of the Student of acute faculties [34 a. 6.]	

	III Caa ₁ b ₂ a ₃ The Student's Intelligence. [34 b. 1.]	
	— III Caab ₂ b ₃ Zeal and Desire to study. [34. b. 4.]	
	— III Caa ₁ b ₂ c ₃ Devotion and Absence of Arrogance. [34 b. 5.]	
	III Cab ₁ The Hearer of mediocre Faculties. [34. b. 6.]	81
	III Cac ₁ The Hearer of feeble Faculties. [35. a. 3.]	82
III Cb.	The Means of Study. [35 a. 6.]	82
III Cc.	The Manner of Studying. [36 a. 1.]	83
	III Cca ₁ Preparations. [36 a. 1.]	83
	III Ccb ₁ The Study by itself. [36 b. 3.]	85
	III Ccc ₁ Conclusion of the Study. [36. b. 4.]	85
IIID.	The Instructions for realising the Aim of the Doctrine.	
	[36. b. 5.]	85