

25. *A short history of the House of Phagdu, which ruled over Tibet on the decline of Sakya till 1432 A.D.—By Rai SARAT CHANDRA DAS, Bahadur, C.I.E.*

When in former times the Sakya hierarchs enjoyed the proud privilege of being the spiritual instructors of the Tartar Emperors of China, the envoy Situ Akyid took a census of the households of the agricultural Tibetans and also of the *Hor* Tibetans (so called from their leading a nomadic life like the Mongols). Within the *Thikor* or governorship of Phagmodu in Central Tibet, there were included two thousand four hundred and thirty-eight families, out of which six hundred belonged to Lhasa City, and five hundred to Taglúng. When *Hor* Jam, one of the Tartar Commissioners of China, visited the Chyañgkhā (the northern province, including Nom-tsho or lake Tengri Nor), he included the numerous tribes of herdsmen that dwelt there in the political province of Phagmodu. The Emperor of China, in consultation with the spiritual authorities of Sakya, placed this large division under an able *T'hipon* or provincial governor. Formerly, when both Dikhúng Di-gūñ and Dansa-thil hierarch amalgamated their temporal and monastic possessions, Gompā Shagrin, the abbot of Dikhúng, with the general consent of the clergy and laity of Tibet got one of his relations, named Gomtson, appointed as *T'hipon* who, under the patronage of the Chiefs of Kang-yeng and lower Mongolia built the government house (*T'hikhang*) of Tshong-du-tāgkhar. Thereafter, Khanpo Ringyal, the Tolpon of the famous hierarch Chyan-ñā Rinpoche, became the chief of Lhobrag Shong-de. About this time a native of Kham, named Dorjepal, by his ability, energy and accomplishments, attracted the notice of Chyan-ñā-Rinpoche. This young man, introducing himself to that Grand Lama as one sprung from the noble family of Dag Lah-zig, and as very anxious to be his disciple, so insinuated himself into his confidence, that the Grand Lama, struck with his general efficiency in all matters of importance, sent him to China to represent the interests of his grand hierarchy. There he took the opportunity of securing for himself and his heirs the governorship of Central Tibet, together with a state seal and decorations. Returning to Tibet in the year *Tree-tiger* (1192 A.D.), he built the *T'hikhang* (government houses) of Yarlúng, called Namgyal-ling and Nedong-tse. During his rule, which extended over thirteen years, he enjoyed the goodwill both of those who were above and under him. He was renowned for his liberality. His governorship extended over twelve important places, besides Nedong-tse, which was the chief seat of his government. These were Halayang, Namó, Chag-tse-tugu, Thangpo-chin-ling-me, Choi Slukha, Monkhar, Tashi-dong, Gya-thang, Tshong-dui-tag-kha, Zangri-Phodang-gang, Khortog-cha, and Kardo. After his death, his younger brother named Shon-nu Gyal-tshan, discharged the duties of *T'hipon* for three or four years. He was succeeded by one of his relations, named Chyang-

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shon (born of the family of Kya-ya-dag-chu), during whose administration the Sakya and Dikhung hierarchies fought with each other. Chyang-shon had the good wishes of the Sakyapa authorities, but owing to some cause having incurred the displeasure of Ponchen (chief Governor) Anglen of Sakya, he was ordered to be burnt alive, but on explaining matters he was exonerated and his life spared. After his death the grandson of Shon-nu Gyal-tshan, named Shon-nu Yontan, became *T'hipon*.

At this time Thumer Bukhoi, a Mongol prince of the Imperial family, with his wife, came on a pilgrimage to Tibet. The *T'hipon* having failed to show his efficiency in military as well as in civil matters, and being reported to have oppressed his subjects, the younger brother of Chyan-ña Rin-pochhe, nicknamed Gyavo, or the bearded, recommended his dismissal to the Mongol chief. During this time the State affairs of *T'hikhor* were conducted by a council formed of the following: The governor of Sakya Monastery, named Rin-chen Tashi, Tsou-ñui Pal, a relation of Chyan-ña-Rin-poche, the second cousin of Shon-nu Yontan, Tagpa-Phozzer, the son of Gogochu, named Dorje of Yarlung, Joro Tagpa Rin, and others. In the meantime, with the sanction of the Emperor of China, Taisri Tagpa-hodpa became governor. By bringing Gyavo, the brother of Chyan-ña-Rin-poche, over to his side, he also assumed the spiritual power. He gave the ex-governor, Shon-nu Yontan, the villages of Tenpora and Chomon-khar for his personal maintenance. On the death of Gyavo, the elder brother of Chyan-ña-Rin-pochhe, named Gyal Shonpal, proceeded to Peking, and with the sanction of Lhaje Phagmodu, (Phag-du heirarch) assumed the office of *t'hipon*. Shortly after, he was deposed by the Sakyapa authorities, who placed his younger brother in charge of the government. From him the office descended to Gyal-tshan Kyab, the son of Shon-nu Gyal-tshan.

When Disri Kuntob-pa proceeded to China, Gyal-tshan Kyab was discharged from the governorship. Ritsi Wang Gyalpo then became *t'hipon*, and received the title of Tai Situ. He was succeeded by Sonam Gyal-tshan, the grandson of Gyal-tshan Kyab, who performed the duties of *T'hipon*. He was very popular with his subjects. He was so very resolute that no one could oppose his views or outdo him in anything. He brought all Tibet under his sway. Situ Chyan-tshan, from his early age, became skilful in war, literature, and religion. At the age of fifty-five in the year *Water-monkey*, in the 15th of the second month, he undertook the task of rescuing the Sakya regent, Ponchen Gyal-tshang, who had been kept in durance by the abbot Lhakhong Labrangpa of the great temple of Sakya; and for this purpose he placed himself at the head of the troops of Ü and Tsang and waged war with Sakya. On the 5th of the fifth month of the same year, with the assistance of the minor chiefs, he besieged Sakya and delivered the chief from the hands of his enemies. Before dispersing his army he compelled the heirarch to appoint him as chief *t'hipon* of Tibet, and was supported by his nephew, Situ Lodoi Gyal-tsan,

in his works. He was presented with a hexagonal seal, and the people of Tsang distinguished him by raising white silken banners in his honour. He encouraged both literature and religion.

Chyañ-chub Gyal-tshan (the younger brother of Rinchen Tagyal) was born in the year *Tree-tiger* 1302, A.D. In the fourteenth year for his age (*Hare-year*) he took his admission into the monastery of Sakya, where he stayed with the heirarch Dag-nidchenpo. He was entrusted with the office of keeping the Government seal. Once the Grand Lama asked if he (Chyañ-chub) would go up for the church, so as to be called a Rinpoche, or for the State to be called *T'hipon* or governor. On his wishing to be a Rinpoche, the Grand Lama said, "No, you are destined for the State. In order to qualify yourself for a governorship you should study the work called 'Yul-Jyal' and some works on political ethics." Thereafter, taking leave of the Grand Lama, he became a pupil of Lama Nam-mé-chenpo and learnt the two parts of logic. In the autumn of *Tiger-year* Chyañ-Chub and his elder brother Lopon Tagzang were respectively invested with the temporal and spiritual offices. At the investiture, people were entertained with tea boiled in the same cauldron. Lopon Tagzang expounded the sacred laws and delivered sermons, while Chyañ-Chub assumed the dignity of *T'hipon* or governor.

When Chyañ-Chub became known all over the country, with the help of all other minor *T'hipon*, he besieged Sakya. He occupied Chya-zang-gang, which was then called Cha-zang-kang, and from some good action done in it, it became known by the name of Chyazang Jong (or the place of good action). During his reign the house of Lha-zig became very powerful. Having achieved many exploits in temporal matters, he (Chyan Chhub) resolved upon doing pious actions. He built the monastery of Tse-thang (Chethang) and established a college there. He made Nedong-tse the chief seat of government. Inviting the Grand Lama Sonam Gyal-tshan, he consecrated the religious establishment founded by him and appointed his cousin, Shakya Gyal-tshan, as the head of the church and president of the ceremonies to regulate the order of precedence. Thus the government of Phagmodn, for its efficiency both in temporal and spiritual matters, became very famous, and excelled those preceding it. At the age of 63, in the year *Fire-dragon*, he retired from this existence at the palace of Nedong (Gahdan-tse). His cousin, Cakya Gyal-tshan, succeeded him in the throne of Nedong-tse, and assumed both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the State. By his able administration of the church and the secular laws, he increased the prosperity and peace of Ü and Tsang. On account of his being ever thoughtful for the happiness of his subjects, he was praised by all men and called Jan Yang Cakya. The Tartar Emperor, Thugan Themur, conferred on him the title of Chang-kung. After his death, his younger brother Shakya Rinchen, became chief the *T'hipon* and filled the throne of Nedong-tse. He was very fond of inspecting the works of local officers and inquiring after the condition of his subjects. Once while on tour in Ü and Tsang, he

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stopped at the village of Gya-mo-Shong. Here the house that he and his party occupied, accidentally caught fire, which quickly spreading so surrounded him that he and his servants very narrowly escaped from being burnt. On his return he founded the monastery of Khartag Gonsar, and stayed there to avert the calamities that, according to his fortune-tellers, hung over him. He always roved from one place to another. Chyang-tag Chyan presided at the head of the State Church for a few years.

After Çakya Rinchen's death his younger brother, Tagrin, filled the throne of Nedong-tse. For some time the state affairs were in the hands of Gyal-tshan-Zang and his cousin. The control of the government remained with Chyan-ña till Gyal-tshan Zang, also called Tagrin, came in a state hide-boat from Gongkar to relieve him of the charge. He was succeeded by Tagpa Gyal-tshan, a boy of eleven, the son of Çakya Rinchen, in the year *Tree-bird*.

From his boyhood Tagpa Gyal-tshan took to athletic and intellectual exercises. When he advanced in age he began to show his ability and fortitude. Within a few years of his attainment of youth, he established his authority over all the governors of Ü and Teang. The Emperor Tā-Ming bestowed on him the decorations of *Konting Gushri* and *Tshan-ha Wang*, and presented him with a gold seal. He also from time to time received other titles of honour, besides kind instructions from the Emperor himself. Power, fortune, and wisdom were ever attached to him. His reign extended from the 11th to the 59th year of his age. The State under his rule progressed very much in wealth and prosperity. Of all the rulers of the Phagdu dynasty, his reign was the longest. He died at Nedong-tse in the 59th year of his age in the year *Water-mouse*.

From the foundation of Nedong-tse and Namgyal Jong of Yarlung by *T'hipon Dorjpal* in the year *Tree-tiger* to the present year *Tree-tiger* (1432 A.D.) 240 years have elapsed. Nedong-tse was therefore founded in the year 1192 A.D.

Another account of Chyañ-Chub Gyal-tsan and his successors.

In the year 1302 A.D. Chyañ-Chúb Gyal-tshan, of the well known family of Lhazig, was born in the town of Phag-du in Central Tibet. After subjugating all the thirteen (*Thikor*) provinces of Tibet proper and also Kham, he had established his sway over Tibet. At the age of eighteen he was appointed to the command of 10,000 soldiers under orders from the Emperor of China. This sudden elevation excited the jealousy and enmity of the chiefs of Di-guñ, Tshal, Yažsañ and Sakya authorities, who spared no pains in devising means to ruin him. At last, they drove him to war. In the first battle he met with some reverses, but was victorious in the second. The war lasted for many years, when ultimately victory attended the arms of the chief of Phagdu, who captured almost all the hostile chiefs and threw them into prison. After

this discomfiture, the chiefs, nobles and Lamas of Ü and Tsang jointly petitioned the Emperor to degrade the upstart. But the irrepressible Chief proceeded to Peking; there, presenting the skin of a white lion, besides other rich and rare presents to Emperor Thugwan Thumer, he represented the circumstances connected with the case. Pleased with his sincere statements, the Emperor decided in his favour and appointed him hereditary noble of Tibet, assigning the whole of Ü to him with the exception of the province of Tsang which continued to remain under the heirarchy of Sakya.

After his return to Tibet from Peking, Chyañ-Chüb organized a regular form of government for Central Tibet. He reformed legislation, and revised the ancient laws and regulations. He built the castle of Nedoñg-tse and a large fortress with three gates to the ramparts. Inside it he founded a monastery. He endeavoured to observe the *Dasa Çila* (ten moral virtues). By his exemplary morals and pity, and above all by his beneficial rule, he won the sincere esteem of his subjects. He founded the town of Tse-thang with a monastery in it. He built thirteen forts such as Gongkar, Tagkar, &c. Later on, he induced the Tartar Emperor to confer on him the high distinction of Tâi-Situ together with authority over the whole of Tibet. By his able rule he increased the happiness and prosperity of his people.

The fourth in succession from him was Sakya Rinchen,¹ who became a favourite of the Emperor, by whom he was entrusted with the collection of revenue from one of the great provinces of China, and also with the charge of guarding the Imperial palace. Sakya Rinchen, instead of showing his gratefulness, took part in a conspiracy matured by the Chinese prime Minister named Kyen-Hün, to usurp the throne. He sent many wagons, loaded with armed soldiers, concealed under heaps of silk clothes under cover of darkness inside the imperial city. The Emperor, fortunately, having got scent of the matter secretly fled towards Mongolia. Sakya Rinchen proclaimed the minister's son, Li-Wang, as Emperor of China. Thus through the help of a Tibetan chief the Tâ-Ming dynasty was established. Yung Ming presented Tag-pa Gyal-tshan, son of Sakya Rinchen, with a gold seal and the additional possession of ulterior Tibet. He was made the undisputed sovereign of all Tibet, which extended from Nagah-rikor-sum to Sze-chuan. Tag-pa Gyal-tshan was succeeded by his son Wang-Jung-né, whose appointment was confirmed by the Emperor Kyen Tai Li-Wang. He built the fortresses of Hug-Yüg-ling and Karjong. His grandson, Rin Dorje, obtained the title of Wang (king) from China. Nag Wang Tashi was a very impartial and just ruler. He shewed great veneration for the Dalai Lama So-nam Gyatsho, whom he greatly patronized. The celebrated Dharma Raja named Padma Karpo of Bhutan was also a friend of his. He several times fought with his rebel minister Rinchenpûpa and was every time successful. He was decorated with the title of *Kua-tin Kau Sri* by the Emperor.

¹ Son of Rinchen Kyab.

During the reign of the Phagdu dynasty all Tibet enjoyed peace and prosperity. People became rich in money and cattle. The country enjoyed immunity from famine and murrain, and was not harassed by foreign invasion. Although, some petty fights and quarrels with some of the disaffected and rapacious ministers now and then disturbed the peace of the country, yet on the whole, the dynasty was beneficial to Tibet.

