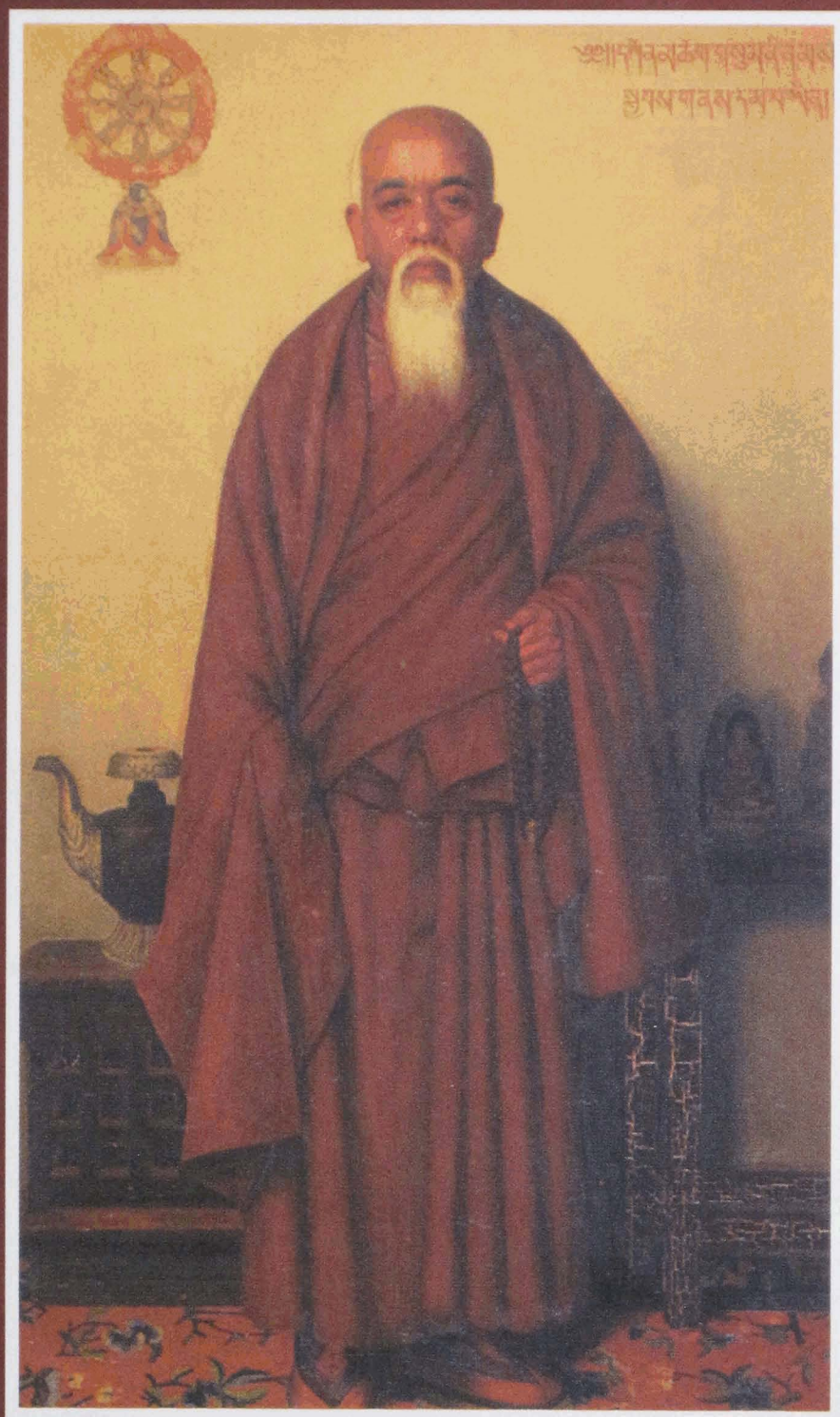


EKAI KAWAGUCHI: THE TRESPASSING INSIDER

ABHI SUBEDI



MANDALA BOOK POINT

Route followed
by
Ekai Kawaguchi



Temples	Mountains	Line of Tour	Towns	Railway	Rivers	Frontier Line

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1999

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Kawaguchi and the Context

One hundred years have passed since Ekai Kawaguchi left his country to explore a world that he did not know much about. From the study of materials, interviews with people and observation of his collections, it becomes evident that he was a very remarkable monk, a humanist and poet who deserves to be studied both by what he called “his fellow countrymen” as well as by people from outside. His writings and above all, his messages have assumed greater significance today than ever before.

The title I have chosen for this monograph tells about my own position also. By taking up a study of the life and works of a Zen monk, I have trespassed from the territories of my own disciplines of study which lie mostly in the domain of humanities and linguistics, as also in certain areas of the social sciences as part of interdisciplinary studies.

The contexts of my interest in Kawaguchi studies are cross-cultural in nature. I belong to the Department of English literature and language studies at Tribhuvan University where the postgraduate programmes include courses on cultural studies as well. Cross-cultural studies are used to open up new avenues in the area of literary studies today. For example, the studies of literature written in English use certain familiar tropes as part of the literary cultural studies of the West. These tropes are mainly those related to discoveries and perspectives because they make up the canons not only of literary studies but also of literary critical studies.

Travel or exploration was an important Western metaphor of narrative structure. The Nepali exposure to these tropes has come through Western norms via the English literary studies in our part of the world. These norms of cultural studies and perspectives have been canonized in literature departments that have remained outside the domains of the native cultural influences.

When I came across Kawaguchi’s book *Three Years in Tibet* I immediately knew that I had made a discovery. I was struck by the

Asian monk's adventure, his crossing the tropes and domains even by using the very Western modes of travel narrative for recording his experiences. This offered me a wealth of materials to look for an alternate mode of the canons for the study of the above trope and of cultural studies in the literature and language department.

Cultural studies have another important aspect. They open the interdisciplinary domains of studies. I saw in Kawaguchi, at the first encounter itself, several modes of interdisciplinary studies in his description of a culture that he had come to find his own identity with, and his Japanese consciousness and culture epitomized in the writings, especially in his *uta*. This would have been called a contradiction for want of a better terminology, but this very contradiction struck me as the most important trope in the configuration of his studies.

Another very important trope to my mind is one of trespassing. He was a trespasser into a culture that was his, a domain of Mahayana Buddhism, into an area that was kept well guarded both by the intruders and people who did not want to be intruded upon like the Tibetan sacerdotal state, and even Nepal to some extent. He was in other words a trespasser who was an insider. He had claims to 'insider' because his was a message of peace realized from within the Buddhist faith.

Kawaguchi was a non-descript monk in the Imperial Eyes of British India and Meiji Japan. He had to undertake a very important journey which needed overcoming the legendary so called Japanese shyness. Out of this need he made a colossal rise. He mastered the Tibetan language, knew English very well, read Sanskrit well and spoke Nepali well enough for his purpose. On overhearing some people discussing in Nepali, at the palace of the Nepali Maharaja, he could gather that they suspected he was a spy. Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher Rana who knew English very well, wanted Kawaguchi to speak in English when he gave audience to Kawaguchi in the King's presence because he did not want to enlighten the King on the Asian developments and politics. The Rana Prime Minister kept King Prithvi Bikram Shah in the dark.

Imperial Japan made excursions into Asia from the eastern coast of the continent. Kawaguchi made excursions of peace and openings from the western, and north western parts. In the long run Kawaguchi proved the winner. Now Japan follows his trail because the trail the

country followed towards the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and later during the thirties and forties ended in a nightmare. So Kawaguchi remains a strong metaphor of peace and diplomacy for Japan today. It was therefore not merely a matter of coincidence when I got great co-operation in my pursuit of Kawaguchi studies from the cultural department of the Japanese mission in Kathmandu, Nepal.

I came to Tokyo University of Foreign Studies as a visiting Professor under Japan Foundation fellowship to follow studies on Kawaguchi at the invitation of Prof. Hiroshi Ishii, the Director of the Institute, in May 1997 for a period of one year. With Prof. Ishii's help, I was able to establish contacts with people, places and museums. So my Kawaguchi studies grew metaphorically speaking, like Kawaguchi himself. My one dimensional perception of this monk became more complex every day as new avenues of studies opened up and I encountered Japanese culture directly. Senior Kawaguchi scholar, Prof. Ryuzo Takayama of Kyoto Bunkyo University took me to places where Kawaguchi has gone down as an archival construct, and provided me with valuable reference materials in English and Japanese. My friends helped me with the interpretation of Japanese texts. In due course, Kawaguchi assumed a different dimension to me. He became my monk. Gustaff Houtman, a London University scholar working at the same time at the same Institute on his book on Burmese Buddhism and its political pragmatism, called Kawaguchi my monk. I found that trope very acceptable and relevant to my own studies about him.

Another empathetic metaphor that I have been using here is one of a trespassing insider. I too am a trespassing insider into the domains of the monks, which to use another Kawaguchi scholar Kimiaki Tanaka's expression, is still exclusively guarded from the intruders belonging to other academic disciplines. Kawaguchi himself led me into these domains because his discourses, works and pursuits drew heavily from all these areas. My monk rises like a Nietzschean hero, and I have tried to follow him across his avatars in this study, but I know very well that I have trespassed into domains other than those warranted by my own.

But as a literary writer, I have, through all the horrendous details and murky evidence, sought to find the human and creative side of Kawaguchi, and my misreadings have rewarded me sufficiently enough

to feel the silence of creative potentiality behind the turbulence that my monk saw and experienced, and the moments of discoveries he recorded in his poetry, and the message of peace he shared with poet Rabindranath Tagore, who became his great friend and a close compatriot in search of peace.

I would like to introduce the various aspects I have sought to cover in my study in the following pages. The discourses that emanate from the travel accounts and the historical contexts of Kawaguchi's visit to Nepal and Tibet can be seen roughly under the following rubrics. The model is proposed only as a heuristic device with all its delimitation for the study of the life and works of a person so complex and so important as the Zen monk Ekai Kawaguchi.

1. An Independent Explorer Monk
2. Border-less Borders
3. A Holy Nomad with a Tradition
4. A Poet-Seeker with Avatars
5. Museum and Power
6. A Pragmatic Monk

The above rubrics roughly address the complexity of his travels, the contradictions between narcissism and science, fluid meanings and unstable discoveries, Asian perception and the Western imperial interpretations, *samadhi* and ambitions of power, individuality pitted against the power of the state and empires, cosmopolitanism and the Pan-Asian outlook, and salvation and dogmatism. Attempts will be made in the following pages to discuss each of these discourses that do not emanate as Foucault says from the state, but from the journey which is a trope, to describe a monk's search for authenticity, and also for the power of a different order.

It was a matter of good coincidence for me that the only film about Kawaguchi, an hour long metafilm made by NHK was shown on 23 December 1997. I met the Kawaguchi actor Ujiki in Tokyo little before he went to Nepal, and had the chance to discuss with him about Kawaguchi's human side. I tried to present to him the impressions I had formed about Kawaguchi as a humanist and poet through my meetings with Emi Miyata, Kawaguchi's niece and his last progeny. The film does

not cover many aspects of Kawaguchi's complex life and travels. But to me it gave the example of the postmodernist perspective that modern Japan has taken about him. I have discussed this topic at various places in the monograph.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the institutions and individuals, and to those persons who are like institutions, for all the help and encouragement that I received from them without which this study would not have been possible. I thank the Japan Foundation for granting me the Fellowship to pursue my studies about Ekai Kawaguchi and also for providing publication subsidies, and to Prof. Hiroshi Ishii and the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies for giving me not only the affiliation but also all kinds of human and material assistance. Prof. Ishii made available his own room rich with the collections of books about Nepal, Tibet and Japan, all the computer and communication facilities and other logistics at the ILCAA.

The encouragement and help I received from the former cultural consul of the Japanese Embassy and a scholar of Nepali and Indian culture Mr. Hojun Kekuchi, and Prof. and poet Tulasi Diwasa of Nepal have been invaluable in enabling me to pursue the Kawaguchi studies.

Prof. Ryuzo Takayama's help has been very important. He helped me with materials, guidance and suggestions. I am also grateful to the senior most and pioneering anthropologist Prof. Jiro Kawakita for the encouragement and insights I got from him. Kawaguchi Ekai's niece and his progeny Ms Emi Miyata helped me by granting long interviews and giving materials for reference. The human side of the monk's life and works would have remained opaque to me if I had not met her. Dr. Kimiaki Tanaka who has written a very important book about the interpretation of Kawaguchi's art collections at Tohoku University discussed with me various subjects regarding the archival aspect of Kawaguchi's collection. Prof. Hajime Kitamura, Buddhist scholar and Director of Toyo Bunko, and Mr. Yoichi Fukuda, a Tibetan scholar at Toyo Bunko itself, and Prof. Nara of Komazawa University helped me by answering my queries and giving me help in the course of the research.

To develop a model for study, to get access to current approaches to the study of travels and culture, Tibetan and Japanese cultural and literary traditions, I established contact with Prof. Herbert Lindenberger

of Stanford University whom I had known at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Study Centre in Italy in 1996, who suggested reference materials especially on the subject of the study of travels, archives and the attitude towards Tibetan studies at the turn of the nineteenth century. I am very grateful to him for his suggestions.

My friend from Edinburgh University, Britain, in the last years of the seventies, Dr. Tadashi Nagata, is now in Tokyo. Though a scientist by training and profession, he found time to sit for hours together with me and translate the gist and sometimes texts of the Japanese materials written about the monk Kawaguchi to me in English. I am very thankful to him for his patience and cooperation. Similarly, I am grateful to Ms Sachio Komaki for her all-round help and interpretation of the interviews, and to Ms. Makiko Miyamoto and Ms Kimi Tamura for translating and interpreting Japanese texts to me. Mr. Seiji Ichibori helped me with translations of the Japanese texts and guided me to Tohoku University collections where Prof. Yoshitaka Ariga and Mr. Yasuroti Hata very kindly showed me all the items of the Kawaguchi collection, and Madam Yoko Abe interpreted the Japanese texts at various times. I am very grateful to them.

I greatly appreciate Bindu Subedi's help—her patience and encouragement during the course of my study and the preparation of the monograph in Japan. Mr. Kamal Mani Dixit and Kanak Dixit, editor of *Himal* magazine of Nepal were very kind to send me the copy of Kawaguchi's letter to Chandra Shamsheer Rana just in time when I needed it. The Nepali Ambassador to Japan Mr. Kedar Mathema was very helpful too in making contacts with people, and finding materials. I am very grateful to Mr. Takashi Ato the Cultural Secretary, the Japanese Embassy, for his encouragement and cooperation in matters related to my application for the Japan Foundation Grants that has made the publication of this book possible. Mr. Ato also helped us get the permission of Prof. Ariga of Tohoku University to reproduce paintings and photos from Tibetan Materials in the Collection of Kawaguchi Ekai (TMCKE, Japan), Tohoku University. I am also thankful to Mr. Baruwa and Mr. Silwal of the Japanese embassy for their cooperation. I am thankful to Miss Biswhow Kamal Tuladhar for translating the photo captions from Japanese. By agreeing to undertake the responsibility of the publication of this book and by giving all his careful and sincere

attention to all the details of publications, the Mandala publisher Mr. Madhab Lal Maharjan who has published books that meet the quality of any standard publication of books anywhere, has brought this book to its present shape. I am very thankful to him.

I remember with a sense of gratefulness the help of scholars in Japan, and the museums that opened their collection rooms to show me the Kawaguchi collections and gave permission to reproduce the photos of some of the art objects in their collections. The cooperation of Tohoku University has been very important in this connection.

I have incorporated suggestions received from scholars at my presentation of the monograph at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in March, 1998. My discussions with the Japanese and foreign scholars have been very helpful. The information about the visit made by an architect named Ito Chuta (1867-1954) to China around the same time as Kawaguchi was visiting Tibet was particularly very interesting.¹ Ito Chuta recorded his impressions not in *uta* like Kawaguchi but in

¹ I discussed about the early twentieth century Japanese travellers with Dr. Christian Daniel, professor of Chinese at this Institute. He has taught in Japan for 20 years after earning his Ph.D. from Tokyo University. He said that since we had discussed the question of individuality within a tradition where group is important 10 months ago, he had started thinking about the Japanese concept of individuality. He confessed that he had never thought about it from the outside. He had almost become an insider. He said, "yes, there are individuals too in Japanese society like the monk Ekai Kawaguchi, but you cannot easily meet them. They are invisible. In contemporary Japan also, I know several of them who have their own individualities outside the 'group,' but they are difficult to approach." I found this interpretation very interesting.

Daniel gave me the name and brochure about the travelogue of an early Japanese traveller who had visited China in 1902, and also crossed over to other countries of Asia as far as Burma. His name was Ito Chuta (1867-1954), he was an architect who was sent out by the government. His book with all his paintings and architectural details about China and places he visited entitled *Shinkoku* was published in Japanese. Priced at 48,000 yen, it is a very expensive book, with very limited circulation. That is why these travellers, or explorers are not known outside Japan, and only a small number of readers are familiar with them inside Japan itself. In that sense, Kawaguchi has received a comparatively wide audience both in Japan and outside.

In his book entitled *Modern Japanese Diaries* (1995) Donald Keene does not mention about the travels of Ito Chuta. Chuta's visit shows the other mode of recording the travelogue, that of painting and drawings as he was not a poet but an architect.

architectural drawings and paintings which shows the Japanese mode of travel writing which is not just a narration of events and records of places, but also an artistic recreation of their impressions.

I take the entire responsibility for my interpretation of the suggestions I received from scholars and all the errors that have stayed in spite of all the attention we gave. I must apologise for the errors in Japanese names, which I am sure must have stayed in spite of my extreme care.

Central Department of English
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu
November, 1999

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Abbreviations

- TMCKE, Japan *Tibetan Materials in the Collection of Kawaguchi Ekai*
 Edited by Department of Oriental and Japanese Art History,
 Faculty of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University, Japan, 1986.
- SCM, Japan *Sakai City Museum, Ekai Kawaguchi Memorial Publication*
ILCAA *Institute for the Study of Language and Cultures of Asia and Africa*

CHAPTER ONE

An Independent Explorer Monk

BACKGROUND

Preview

Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese Zen monk who travelled to Tibet at the turn of the last century represents among other things various levels of discourses. The nature of each of the discourses that emanates from his travels is decided by the times he lived in and the places he visited. The discourses come into existence as a result of his life that was ostensibly going against the tide of times in his own country and in other countries of Asia. But in reality, he followed the winds of time. Time seems to move with him as it were. His country fought a war with China when he set out on this lonely and hazardous journey with 530 Yens “swelled” to this amount “by the generosity” of people, in his pocket. The NHK film shown on 23 December 1997 presents this lonely departure as a strong wind—*kazeminatta otoko* or “man becomes wind.”¹

In reality, Kawaguchi left the winds and typhoons behind and embarked on a ship in Osaka on the fine morning of June 25, 1897. He went out in search of meaning, authenticity of Buddhist texts, peace and

¹ The film ends with a verse:

There was a man who became the wind
across the Himalayas
for only one dream
he risked his youth
for this wind.

This film has apparently used details from the description of Kawaguchi’s visit to the Nepali Himalayan region in a recently published book by Makoto Nebuka with beautiful photographs showing the places, temples and the remains of a choten in Tsarang that Kawaguchi visited and saw, entitled *Harukanaru Tibet* (Tokyo: Yamato Keikoku, 1994) with a whole chapter devoted to discussions with Prof. Jiro Kawakita on the subject. The purpose of this book was to confirm the routes taken by Kawaguchi.

personal salvation. The year after he returned to Japan, the British mounted an attack on Lhasa. Sometime after he left Japan in 1904 to go back to that part of Asia for the second time, his country went to war with Russia, later engendering the mood of victory over a Western power among the populace. He metaphorically always left the turbulence behind him. But in one important sense, to use the NHK metaphor, he himself underwent transformations by his dramatic relationship with the winds of the times. The colossal changes he perceived, and the hardships he went through and learned from, the emotional and physical turmoil he suffered moved him from one stage to another, one discovery to another.

Living with History

Kawaguchi was both living with history and making it. Both at home and abroad he was living with the history wrought with swords and annexations, modernization and colonial invasions. He was not a party in any of them, yet he was a witness to all that, and the ruling powers, both the Western and native ones, tried to and did make use of his discoveries. He himself never lent anything for the cause of war or expansion. He turned down a call by the military in Japan to supply them with information about Tibet in the late thirties or early forties whereas other compatriots like Aoki Bunkyo and Tada Tokan complied with it.² Most important of all, he trespassed the territories of the British colonial powers in the Indian subcontinent and walked into the forbidden land, the ancient space that even the great land and forest explorers of the remote African regions, the Western powers had not been able to sufficiently explore. But Tibet opened like a book to him.

The great surveyors, the British, who even scaled and named Mt. Everest,³ were not able to measure this land and write its map. For that reason, this space was a pain, a curiosity and an Achilles' heel for the giant Western Empire. A young Royal Engineers officer, Captain Montgomerie came up with an idea. He selected some young native

² Scott Berry, *Three Years in Tibet* (Delhi: Harper's Collins, 1992), p. 293.

³ L.A.Waddell *Among the Himalayas* (Kathmandu: Bibliotheca Himalayica, 1977, first published 1899), pp 345-359. Waddell describes the episode of naming Everest and includes native resistance to that.

explorers and trained them with “the clandestine surveying technique.”⁴ He sent these Hindu pundits thus trained in the use of basic survey gadgets disguised as Buddhist monks in 1862. Wearing robes that had secret pockets, carrying staffs with compasses fitted on the knobs, a motley group of fakir James Bonds, the surveyors for the British raj, what Richards calls “a data pilgrimage utilizing a rapid deployment force of monks” proceeded to this exploration. The method employed was “a state nomadology.”⁵

Kawaguchi who came several years later, did not have any access to these survey reports except of course the information he received from his lifelong friend, the ‘scholar/spy,’ Sarat Chandra Das (1849-1917), the British agent, the replica of “Hurree Chunder Mookerjee—R. 17 on the Great Game payroll”⁶ who was addressed as Baboo⁷ in Kipling’s *Kim*, who had made secret visit to Tibet in 1879. Kawaguchi was not equipped under any state nomadological programme. He had a pair of compass and a watch that one of his porters, a neurotic sheep dropped over the plateau and got lost, after which Kawaguchi embarked on a truly nomadic mission without a sense of direction or idea of time.

His was not a state-sponsored nomadology. His nation with more bellicose ambitions and greater degree of modernization zeal than he could have ever perceived, did not espouse the idea of a “state nomadology.” Kawaguchi had a dough of flour, butter hardened from cold, tea, salt and most remarkably he was the first vegetarian to travel on these cold and harsh conditions passing harsh judgments on people’s eating meat whenever he encountered it. He had some papers and pens, and very importantly what he almost considered a magic potion, the

⁴ Peter Hopkirk. *Trespassers on the Roof of the World*. Oxford: OUP, 1982.

⁵ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 19. Richards gives a picture of the Montgomerie expedition of the year 1862 as described in Montgomerie’s article “On the Geographical Position of Yarkund, and Some Other Places in Central Asia,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 36 (1866): 157 and others in the Survey of India Department, *Explorations in Tibet and Neighbouring Regions*, Part 1, 1865-1879, Part 2, 1879-1882 (Dehra Dun, India 1915).

⁶ Peter Hopkirk. P 27.

⁷ Waddell, *ibid*, p.356. Waddell writes Das’ name as “Baboo Sarat Das.” His position as a learned person under British rule is evoked by this form of address. It also refers to the social position enjoyed by English educated Indians.

clove oil which like children's comic-script heroes he massaged taking off his entire clothes over the Himalayan plateau with temperature well below zero, just coming out of the river, and felt better, at least textually.

Kawaguchi as he had to travel against the odds, in the forbidden land which would not have been approved of even by the British raj, who would have considered him a spy of Meiji Japan as some Japanese scholars consider him to be one even today⁸ though no such proofs exist.

⁸ I discussed various points about Kawaguchi's visit to Tibet and Nepal with Prof. Musashi Tachikawa of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka on 16 September, 1997. Tachikawa's views about Kawaguchi were very straightforward. He said Kawaguchi was a spy for Meiji Japan. Many Buddhist monks in those days offered themselves for that task. Kawaguchi had contributed nothing to Buddhist studies. He was a little thug, a person who had gone to Tibet illegally, disguised as a Chinese person, a charlatan who had no knowledge of Tibetan language and customs. I said Kawaguchi had studied Tibetan properly in Darjeeling under Saratchandra Das' arrangements, and he had survived because he spoke the language very well; he preached the gospels in Tibetan to travelling groups of Tibetans whom he found on the way, and they saw him as a monk who could interpret the Shastras and Sutras and helped him. His medical practice and learning went down very well in Lhasa, how could he do all that without a sound knowledge of Tibetan? Tachikawa was not interested in all those details. He appreciated the travels of the monk, nevertheless. "I would have respected him as a true monk if he had revealed his identity in Lhasa and died to save the lives of all those people who had helped him. But he did not do so. Instead he escaped," he said. To show the brutal way in which Kawaguchi's helpers were killed in Lhasa after he left, Tachikawa-san made a gesture of throat slitting. He looked very serious and angry while making the gesture.

Kawaguchi himself was very disturbed by this fact. He had held meetings with high monks and friends seeking advice on whether he should write to the Dalai Lama showing his identity or flee the country. He was advised to leave the country. He was definitely very troubled by this happening. This becomes clear from his travelogue and the *utas* that he composed during his travel back to Kalimpong incognito. He was so worried by news of the persecution of his friends that he even met the Nepali prime minister, a very strong dictator who had also closed his country to foreign visitors, and convinced him to send his appeal to the Dalai Lama to spare the lives of those who had helped him. In fact, none of his friends were killed as biographers and friends revealed later. He himself met them later in Lhasa when he visited it in the year 1914. But for some time, they were imprisoned and harassed. Younghusband's accounts also suggest this. Tachikawa did not seem to believe this, or had not bothered to read all those

details about the problem. He strongly believed that his helpers were killed and persecuted.

This point about travelling to the forbidden land is important because all those who visited Tibet had either political or missionary interest. But Kawaguchi's visit was prompted by his textual passion, passion for authenticity which was strongly felt in the tradition of religious and poetic travels in Japan. Details abound about these early Tibetan visits.

Tibetans were wary of Sarat Chandra Das's secret visit to Tibet which took place many years before Kawaguchi's. Many people who helped him were persecuted or executed. They were worried about the British infiltration, and Sarat Chandra Das, a Baboo in the service of the British Raj, was definitely a person whose intention was to make the hands of the British Raj strong in India. But Kawaguchi's mission was different.

Kawaguchi was not the only person to go to Tibet incognito. Many explorers before and after him also had made journeys to Tibet in disguised forms. Apart from Sarat Chandra Das' travelogue, Montgomery McGovern's book *To Lhasa in Disguise: an Account of a Secret Expedition through Mysterious Tibet* (1924), and even Fosco Maraini's book *Secret Tibet* that gives an account of him as a wanderer and describes Tibet in different ways are worth mentioning.

To Prof. Tachikawa, Kawaguchi's visit was an euphoria of the Meiji era—he was the expression of modernization, opening and expansion of Japan. He saw Kawaguchi's travels as a mission like C.G. Rawling's *Military Report on Western Tibet including Chang Tang and Rudok* (1905) and similar other accounts. Kawaguchi was not a politically minded person like the Japanese visitor to Tibet of the same time named Teramoto Enga who was more politically-minded than Kawaguchi.

Tachikawa then turned to the other side of Kawaguchi, his contribution to Buddhist studies. I made a point about the need to study Kawaguchi's texts, his accounts of the most creative side of the journey in which he could be seen in the tradition of Japanese travellers—the monks and poets, in which he combines his personal discovery, his moments of *satori*, with the factual account of his journey. His discovery of the land and his responses to its challenges, and his linking of the experience with his being a Japanese man in a disguised state, all tend to put him in a unique position. In this position he sees himself with multiple roles, but everything has got to do with his discovery. To record that tension, Kawaguchi takes recourse to *uta*. Tachikawa too recognized that his textual accounts were readable. "There is no problem as far as that goes but giving him a status as a great Buddhist scholar is not acceptable," he said. Kawaguchi never wanted to become a great Buddhist scholar himself but he certainly was concerned about the authenticity of texts.

Prof. Tachikawa's belief about learning is strong. To him, Kawaguchi was not a scholar, so he did not have a purpose, and he only collected junk. He also believed that

Paul Hyer, an American historian after reading the “diplomatic Japanese files of the day”⁹ found another person, not Kawaguchi, as a spy of Meiji Japan. His name was Narita Yasuteru who followed Kawaguchi and his stay in Lhasa was very short.

No access would have been granted by the Nepali government to a foreign visitor under the rule of the Ranas who had closed the country to foreigners, but Kawaguchi though easily passed as a Nepali because he looked like one. Tibet was also closed to foreigners. So Kawaguchi had no choice but to assume a false disposition and project a false *modus vivendi*. He found it easy to call himself a Chinese monk out on a pilgrimage. He dwelt on a world of the duality of identity and the singleness of purpose. In course of time he even seemed to get used to this image of himself as a Chinese monk named Serai Amchi. This becomes evident from the way he glibly describes himself as one in his textual accounts. As his identity was that of a monk he underwent changes and conflicts of mind every now and then between the true self and the disposition of a Chinese monk. An image, to save which, was part of his vigilance.

He entered into a discourse, a dialogue with this other self every now and then. The best way to resolve this duality, to let this merger take place smoothly he took recourse to *uta* writing which he has written in plentiful. His *uta* writing is treated as a simple matter, a factor that is often dismissed by scholars as a matter of secondary importance. But in reality, through *uta* he expresses his creativity, a unique blend of tradition and current reality, and evokes the whole tradition of literary travels which Donald Keene calls “*Travels of a Hundred Ages*” in his book of the same title.¹⁰

the junk would have great value if, supposing Nepal, or a Kawaguchi Centre wanted to buy them.

⁹ Peter Hopkirk. P. 150.

¹⁰ Donald Keene, *Travels of a Hundred Ages* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989). In this book Keene has given an overview of the “writers’ daily engagements, but others are without question, works of literary significance. This has been true in Japan for over a thousand years” (1). He classifies the diaries as “Heian Diaries”, “Diaries of the Kamakura Period,” “Diaries of the Early Tokugawa Period,” “Basho’s Diaries” and the “Diaries of the Later Tokugawa Period.” This shows a strong

Three Years

The other aspect of Kawaguchi's travels is that through the course of the times, his simple impulse changes into a big passion for collection not only of Buddhist texts but also of other art objects, scrolls, images, sculptures and flora and fauna. He very strongly trespassed the colonial corridors in his passion for collection. The British passion for building up what Richards calls *The Imperial Archive* of knowledge as a new source of power and consolidation of the otherwise too large an empire, "the opening and closing of a utopian space of comprehensive knowledge in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries"¹¹ made Tibet a coveted space, a living and pristine archive to possess. This was one important impulse.

Kawaguchi's passion for collection like his travels took the British by surprise. They sought to befriend him rather than dismiss or offend him. Kawaguchi in his last stay in the Indian subcontinent was treated as an important person. The translation and publication of his travel accounts was treated with great interest by the British. The translation of the Japanese book of his travel accounts in two volumes entitled *Chibetto Ryoko Ki* ('A Tibetan Travel Diary,' 1904), a compilation of his articles serialized earlier in 139 issues in "a famous paper in Osaka, called *Mainichi*," and in 155 issues in *jiji Shinpo*, another newspaper published in Tokyo, into English by Kawaguchi himself, as he says in *Three Years in Tibet* (1909) with the help of three persons, "some well-known gentlemen in Japan"¹² thus made the story of his travels accessible to the world. This text was thus personally translated and supervised by Kawaguchi himself. The sample of his English, which is quite remarkable, can be seen in the letter that he wrote to Chandra Shumsher Rana, the Prime Minister of Nepal in 1905. The translated text was brushed up by an Englishman, Professor Lloyd George.¹³ But the fact

tradition of diary writing in Japan. Monks and poets and poet monks and even rulers have maintained diaries of their travels. *Uta* writing is part of such travel accounts.

¹¹ Richards, p. 11.

¹² *Three Years*,. p. xii.

¹³ Scott Berry, *A Stranger in Tibet* (New Delhi: Harpers Collins, 1992) p. 251-252. Berry says the basic translation work of the text was done by an unacknowledged person named Takahashi of the *Japan Times and Advertiser*. But since Kawaguchi says that he himself did the main translation, and that he was a hard worker and a dedicated

that a translated copy of the book had reached the War Office in London three months before Younghusband's mission mounted an attack on Lhasa in 1904¹⁴ shows how the British had been viewing and giving importance to the travels of this unique Asian monk, the self-sponsored nomad Kawaguchi, to that forbidden land, that archive state to explore, which was one of the main goals of the British empire.

What is more, the monk's travel accounts surpassed any other earlier Western travel accounts because of its sheer length and details and its recreation of the land, people, the feel of geography, and the very participation of the individual in every movement over this vast space that lend these accounts a sense of immediacy and plausibility, the poetic sensibility and capacity that writers about him dismiss as "being indulgent with his poetic frame of mind,"¹⁵ and allowing "his poetic fancy a free rein."¹⁶

The language and method employed by the monk to describe his travels available in *Three Years in Tibet* running into 719 pages can sufficiently throw light on the various levels of discourses that I plan to discuss in this monograph. The discovery of his letter written to the Nepali Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher Rana in 1905 that has been received thanks to the efforts of Kanak Dixit, editor and publisher of *Himal* monthly magazine, and the random translations of his accounts and poems from his second visit to Tibet, memoirs and articles written by the Japanese scholars, done for my advantage by friends and postgraduate researchers, interviews with his niece Emi Miyata, Jiro Kawakita, Ryuzo Takayama, Kitamura, Tachikawa, Tanaka and other scholars and persons and my direct encounters of the scale, size and the variety of his collections spread over different places of Japan have dramatically changed my earlier one-dimensional perception of this Zen

person, it is very possible that the basic translation of the work was done by the writer himself. Takahashi's name is not acknowledged but he must have been one of the helpers whose name Kawaguchi has not mentioned among others for some reason which is difficult to understand.

¹⁴ Berry, p. 252.

¹⁵ H.K. Kuloy, editorial introduction to *Three Years in Tibet* (Reprint, Kathmandu: Bibliotheca Himalyica, 1979,1975), p. vi.

¹⁶ Berry, p. 271.

monk's accounts of his travels to Nepal and Tibet at the turn of the last century.

Kawaguchi was much more complex, and his works much more significant than considered so far. In the letter written to the Nepali Prime Minister, in the intimate accounts of his travels, in the poems, *uta*, written over the roof of the world when he was certain that they were going to be his swan songs in the face of these difficulties, in his sheer sense of beauty and his moments of *satori*, the monk becomes a replica, a living embodiment of the cultural, aesthetic, spiritual and material (geared to the well-being of mankind) aspects and spirit of Japan itself leaving aside the bellicose periods of its history and such events that Kawaguchi so strongly resented himself.

CHAPTER TWO

Border-less Boarders

BETWEEN TWO PILLARS

Geographical spaces and times are measured in few kilometers between two pillars in Nankai. Ekai Kawaguchi's *umareta tokoro*, his birthplace, is a section in the Sakai city near Osaka. The Kawaguchi scholar Ryuzo Takayama takes us from one lane to another in that lovely but non-descript part of the city. Once we enter the lane we forget that we are anywhere near modern Japan. But the vertexes of the postmodernist and modernist buildings jam the sky line little farther out. This place itself has the look of nineteenth century Japan. Small one storied houses in brown and mauve colours stand on either side of the narrow clean lane. The roofs are low and bear resemblance with houses in early twentieth century Nepali towns. Inside the lanes you enter a different world, the world of a living museum as it were.

Takayama asks an old lady the site of Kawaguchi's house. She shows the next lane, and says "the house where he was born does not stand any more. But the house looked like this." She points to her own long house, and other houses on the lane. "If you photograph these houses they will give you the picture of the house Ekai Kawaguchi was born in."

Kawaguchi was born in 1866, two years before the Tokugawa regime came to an end, and the Meiji imperial rule took over state power. That was an era when Japan was undergoing tremendous changes both in terms of modernization and open contacts with the world. The commercial city of Sakai had already awoken to the new light of hope and opening. Ten years before Kawaguchi was born, Commodore Matthew Perry's four "Black Ships" had come to open its borders, and Japan had already established its contact with the wide world.

We move to the next lane. Takayama looks around and finds a corner. His face brightens up, as he says, "this is the place!" A vertical

monument in marble is placed in the corner with the same veneration as a *kitab* in Nepal or an epitaph in Britain or a memorial stone is erected on a place where a person's relics are consecrated to mother earth. It even looked like a stone slab put on a building site, or a mile-stone by the side of a less used highway. Kawaguchi's stone marks the inverse order, the highlighting of the *umareta tokoro* of a monk who had transcended the space of his birth, and had entered into a dramatic relationship with the space of a bigger and more precarious nature—the Nepali Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau, renouncing as it were, the world represented by this native space, along with it his responsibilities as the eldest son born into a mercantile family pursuing the profession of manufacturing and marketing barrels in the famous port city of Sakai. His father who would have wanted Ekai, or Sadakiro, his given name, to take up the family profession, died before his son returned with the tale of a spectacular land that he would have loved to hear about, and see his son rise in stature as a free monk.

Kawaguchi was very inspired by what he read at school at the age of 15 about the Buddha. His transformations are presented as those of the Gautama by his biographers. He woke up to the realities of life in his mid teens. He quietly suffered from a sense of pain he acquired to see the world. But he did not have to follow the blind alley. He had before him certain very clear options to follow. The path taken by Gautama was the model, a referent for him. Thus the story of his devotion to the Buddha and his adoption of the Buddhist way of life is charged with feelings, beliefs and hopes, and which also explains the strength, resilience and tenacity that we encounter in his avatars. Thus his transformations came quite early in life through his decision to follow the course of a devout Buddhist. His encounter of the sufferings of the people of the world remains the theme of his story. But he searched the answers to the questions that troubled him interestingly more in the Indo tradition of spiritual quest than in the Japanese tradition of realizing it through a combination of aesthetics and spirituality. But that he became a poet and an aesthete later in life shows that he was not a complete drifter from the path of the Japanese tradition of search for salvation through arts, meaningful silence and mysticism.

Kawaguchi decided to choose a *modus operandi* of austerity from his mid-teens only. He vowed never to drink. But he broke it in his

early twenties for some time, but about having sexual relationship with women we are given to understand that he refrained from it all his life. But he gives an interesting assessment of his own dilemma in these words, "I am neither a block of wood, nor a piece of stone, and I should have been supernatural if I had not felt the power of temptation. But to yield to such a folly would be against my own profession."¹

Kawaguchi was not a naïve person about the ways of the world, but he had a very strong sense of self discipline which he considered essential in the life of a monk. He was imaginative, sensitive and motivated to go out in search of salvation and meaning in life. He had the fire of a rebel seeker from his teens, but he was not Herman Hesse's Siddhartha, a fictional hero, a Buddha seeker who had to go through a series of so called oriental exotics. He neither has the uncertainty and creative madness of the hero of a fiction, nor the need to renounce a world of luxury, a beautiful wife and charming son like the Sakyamuni's Rahul. His choice was a career, a path of learning through authentic texts. But it was more important than that. He acquired the strength from the great within, and not only from a theological construct. His parents quietly noticed that the young man was searing in the flames of the unique spiritual longing. They granted his wish to enter the world of this search, initially by entering the cloister. They could only see as far as that. Realizing that his involvement in Buddhism was total, they gave him permission to be ordained in 1890.

His first major impulse was to seek salvation and meaning through the Buddhist texts constructed by the assemblies of scholars at different times in the early millennia by giving the orality of the great Buddha's teachings a form of *écriture* and interpretations. The texts that Kawaguchi wanted to read were naturally in Chinese and Japanese languages. He wanted to dig into the source of the original *écriture*, the authentic texts. Reading was his passion. At the age of nineteen he studied for some months at a Zen temple in Osaka. He also studied English and about Christian religion with an American missionary in Sakai. He kept up his English language learnt at this time which proved to be an asset later in his life.

¹ *Three Years*, p. 156-157.

Ekai's sense of righteousness was very strong. That sense turned him into a rebel, if not an *avant garde* monk. There is not much room for *avant gardism* in the life of a devout monk. But Ekai could not accept the hypocrisies and what he considered as corruption practised at public institutions and religious establishments. His experience of an expulsion as a result of his rebellion came at a grammar school in Sakai where he taught grammar, which dramatically altered the course of his life later. He spoke against what he thought was the corruption that the Headmaster was involved in, for which he earned a dismissal.

As his first response to this dismissal was a desire to make further studies, to become more enlightened for which purpose he came to Tokyo. He joined Toyo University supporting himself by doing various jobs. He made good progress in Tokyo. During his stay in Tokyo, a city which was going to be the main centre for all his life and works in future, his association with the Buddhist temple assumed a new dimension. He was made the abbot of Gohyaku Rakanji in Tokyo. It was a temple of Obaku Zen tradition that was first introduced in Japan in the mid-seventeenth century by Ingen, the Chinese monk named Yin-yuan. But Kawaguchi continued to find it hard to accept what he saw as corrupt practices and intrigues among his Obaku sect of Zen Buddhism. So he asked to be released from the responsibilities but continued to associate himself with the other activities that he appreciated as reform oriented.

Kawaguchi went to Mampukuji Zen monastery in Kyoto, the biggest in Japan, to quietly study Tripiṭaka and Chinese Buddhism. The main aspect of Chinese Buddhism is a movement towards syncretism. The concept of Pure Land from the time of Ming Dynasty has been its dominant impulse. This has remained the impulse of the lay Buddhists. The monastery seems to address the aspiration of the laity which becomes manifest in the daily practices of worships and the memorial services performed for the laity. Kawaguchi's main impulse was to become the Buddhist monk of the laity, the common man, which seems to have emanated from the spirit represented by this temple.

The Mampukuji, which bears the features of a Ming-style temple "contains twenty-three main buildings, the cloister between the Hatto and Tennoden, and attached buildings dating from the mid-seventeenth century and almost perfectly preserved, numerous important images,



1 *Amitābh Buddha*

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 98, photo no. 144)



2 *A Tibetan Statue*

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 98, photo no. 143)



3 *Karuṇāmaya*

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 97, photo no. 141)



4 *Harita tāṛā (Green Tara)*

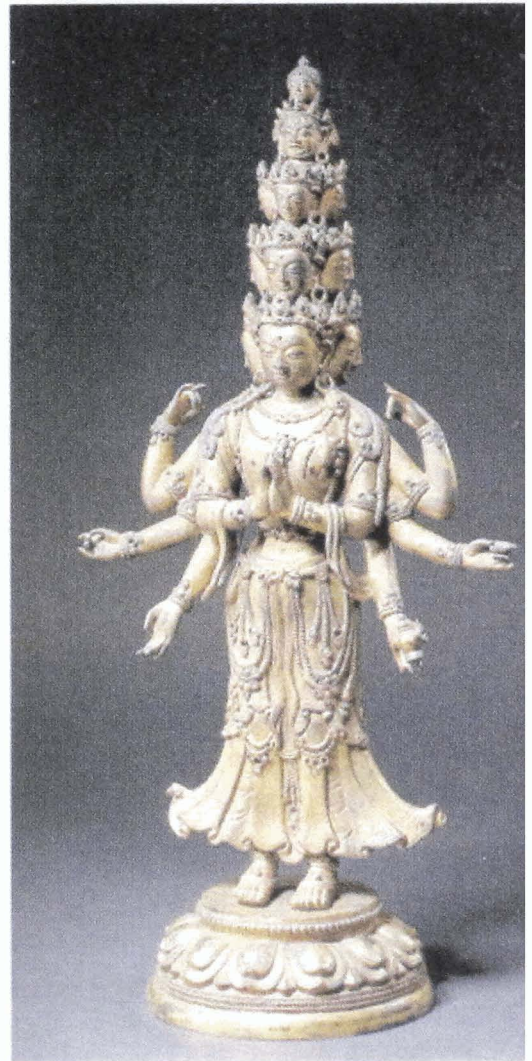
(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 97, photo no. 142)



5 *Thousand Armed Buddha (Tibet)*
(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 96, photo no. 139)



6 *Bodhisattva*
(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 43, photo no. 58)



7 *Eleven Headed Avalokiteśvara*
(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 96, photo no. 146)



8 *Māhākālī*

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 95, photo no. 137)



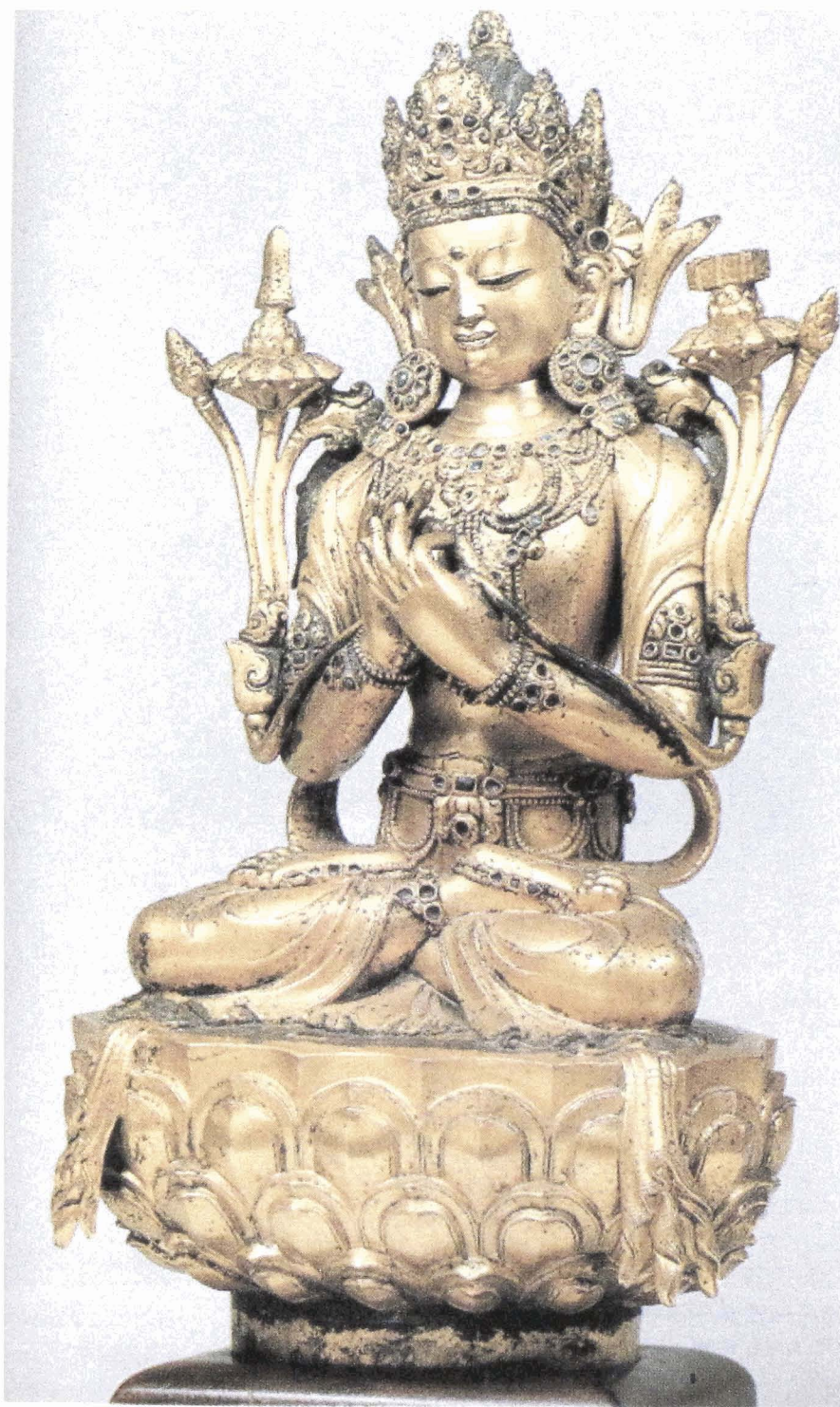
9 *Mahakali*

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 95, photo no. 138)



10 A Buddha statue of sixteenth century.

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 94, photo no. 135)



11 *Tārā* (Tibet)

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 93, photo no. 136)



12 Śweta Tārā (White Tara, Tibet)

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 65, photo no. 91)



13 Painting of Śivaśakti, Māhākāla and Gaṇeś specially made to celebrate Jāku, when the person reaches the age of 77 years, 7 months and 7 days, not 66 years etc. It is a very well-known Newari ritual.

(Source: SCM, Japan p. 63, photo no. 89)

hanging wooden boards with carved calligraphy, paintings, wood-block copy plates of the Tripitaka.”²

We went to see the room at Mampukuji temple where Kawaguchi stayed reading the Chinese Tripitakas as a young monk. A woman in her forties welcomed us to a ground floor room in this old and traditional looking house. Everything inside was done in traditional Japanese style—the *tatami* floor, low wooden tables, screens, plates and scrolls bearing sayings or mantras in Chinese or Kanji, a cozy and calm atmosphere suitable for meditation and studies, a close yet distinctly solitary space, the garden with low green plants and flower trees, low windows placed in such a way that the light flooded into the room giving rare light to the old icons and paintings there. The woman was responsible for the upkeep of this place. The room looked quite preserved and carefully kept to project the *modus vivendi* of the monks there.

The woman showed the angle in the room where Kawaguchi must have posed himself as reading near the window while an artist drew his picture in the Zen style monochromatic washes.

I imagined, in the quietude of this room how Kawaguchi must have felt after rebelliously renouncing the position of the rectorship of the large Gohyaku Rakanji (the temple of five hundred Buddhas) in Tokyo, where he had been ordained. I also imagined how he must have burnt in the fire of anxiety, and by his sense of rebellion against what he considered as the malpractice at this temple also, like the Abbot returning to the monastery to regain funds he had lost in the election which he had unsuccessfully contested, monks keeping women, diapers hanging in the temple precincts, and Kawaguchi’s possible disquietude when he received death threats sometimes inside the temple itself. This was the same room where he had found fault with the lack of authenticity in the Tripitakas, the early Theravada texts, the Mahayana scriptures and other works of Chinese origin, and had taken the decision to leave this temple also to go in search of the authentic texts to Nepal and Tibet where they were taken by those fleeing the Muslim invasion in India, and preserved carefully.

² Brochure.

He was also struck by the remarks made by the Hungarian Alexander Csoma de Koros, considered as the Father of Tibetan Studies who died in Darjeeling in 1842 on his way to Lhasa, not in Tibet as written in some books, that “the Tibetan scriptures were the most faithful translation of the Indian texts.”³ Kawaguchi does not say much about his familiarity with this Hungarian scholar’s writings but Csoma’s dissociation with any implication of the Western colonial associations in his research bear a remarkable resemblance with the spirit and nature of Kawaguchi’s own travel and research. In his preface to the Dictionary, Csoma de Koros says:

And he begs to inform the public, that he had not been sent by any Government to gather political information; neither can he be accounted of the number of those wealthy European gentlemen who travel at their own expense for their pleasure and curiosity; but rather only a poor student, who was very desirous to see the different countries of Asia, as the scene of so many memorable transactions of former ages; to observe the manners of several people, and to learn their languages, of which, he hopes, the world may see hereafter the results; and such a man was he who, during his peregrination, depended for his subsistence on the benevolence of others.⁴

³ Alexander Csoma de Koros (1784-1842) remains an authentic scholar of Tibetan language. He was the first European to visit Tibet. Impelled as he was by his passion to go to the “Orient in search of the ancient homeland of the Magyars,” he walked “many thousands of kilometers, quite alone and forsaken” (Jozsef Terjek p.i); like Kawaguchi himself, but with different objectives. His *Tibetan Grammar*, *Tibetan-English Dictionary* and *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology* were published by the Asiatic Society in India in 1834. One could guess that Csoma’s works must have already been brought to Japan by the time Kawaguchi came across what he says “a statement” in his recollections published in “Chibetto no omoide,” *Gendai Bukkyo* 105, as referred to by Kitagawa (“A Pious Adventurer 282”).

⁴ Jozsef Terjek, qtd. *Alexander Csoma de Koros: A Short Biography*, a supplement publication of the 200th anniversary of his birth for *Collected Works of Alexanderr Csoma de Koros*, ed. J. Terjek (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1984), p. xxvii.

Kawaguchi read that the manuscripts were safely preserved in Tibet. He also learned that Brian Hodgson, the British residency in Nepal, had collected Sanskrit texts in Nepal.⁵ His plans for building a small archive and a base of authentic Buddhist studies in Japan was thus informed by the news of the new British programme of constructing a new power structure based on the collection and morphology of knowledge. In later sections we will discuss more about the clash of Kawaguchi's interest with that of Brian Hodgson, and its significance. Kawaguchi presents these above factors as very instrumental in his decision to go to Nepal and Tibet in search of the authentic texts. His desire began to grow every day after these encounters until he was not able to sit quietly any longer.

On the Fringe of Utopia

The time when Kawaguchi was struck by the information about the utopian archives of knowledge, state sponsored and independent travellers had already started going round the world. The search for utopian lands and the need to report about one's own findings back to the Japanese had been the main thrust behind these historically significant movements.⁶ These travellers have kept diaries of their travels which have been mostly published in Japanese. Most of them still remain un-translated. They neither seemed to have been read by people outside Japan, nor did they have the proficiency in English that

⁵ Ekai Kawaguchi, "Chibetto no omoide," *Gendai Bukkyo* 105 (Tokyo: 1933) pp. 483-484. qtd. in Joseph Kitagawa, "Ekai: A Pious Adventurer and Tibet." In L. Epstein R.F. Sherburne (eds.) *Reflections of Tibetan Culture* (Edwin Mellen, Lewiston, 1990) pp. 279-294.

⁶ Donald Keene in his book *Modern Japanese Diaries: The Japanese at Home and Abroad as Revealed through Diaries* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995) introduces the travellers' diaries under the rubrics, "The Early Missions to Foreign Countries," "Travels in Asia," "Writers Abroad," "Diaries by Politicians," "Diaries by Women," "Poets and Novelists," and "The Early Twentieth Century." These readings reveal the continuation of the old tradition of diary writing in Japan, and the use of this unique genre for dissemination of information acquired by these travellers among the Japanese, as part of their responsibilities which appear to be the case with a great number of them.

Kawaguchi had acquired, to be able to translate their works by themselves.

Kawaguchi was not sent on a mission by the court like Muragaki who made his journey to America in 1859, who met the American President Buchanan at the White House and even visited the widow of Commodore Perry who had convinced Japan into opening its doors to the world. Being a state sponsored journey, Muragaki's trip included many Japanese people. But Kawaguchi was not an ambassador. His trip was not something like the "embassy sent by shogunate"⁷ of missionaries other than Muragaki around that time. Other travellers of the nineteenth century who also travelled to Asian countries in the early years of the Meiji era, like Takezoe who made his trip to China in 1876, and others who were sent out as "explorers" inside the country like Mamiya rinzo and Takeshiro sent to explore the islands of Hokkaido and Chyishima (Kuril) archipelago to the north, and the Ryukyu Island far to the south, though considered to be "Japanese territory," awaiting exploration,⁸ represented very different mode of search and exploration. Kawaguchi Ekai was not a state sponsored traveller, but the impulse behind his travels to discover the diversities of human civilizations, cultures and faiths was no lesser than those of the so called "explorers." But his journey was essentially that of a monk's. That is why he represents the concepts of peace, cooperation and deeply felt respect to each other that are being valorized today.

The search for utopia was coloured with the imagination of travellers. These writers created a base for the utopian construct in their texts. The basis of such utopia was either wonder or a sense of inadequacy with one's own world. Napier finds in the estrangement between the real world and the Utopian world the source of the element of "fantastic" in Japanese imagination as reflected in literature. The travel narrative is thus a highly conscious form of estrangement because, "The contrast of Utopian idealism with a defective reality is always implicitly in the background of any Utopian or fantastic work."⁹ This

⁷ Donald Keene, *Modern*. p. 43.

⁸ Donald Keene, *Modern*, p.148.

⁹ Susan J. Napier, *The Fantastic in Modern Japanese Literature* (London: Routledge, 1996),p. 147.

element of the fantastic according to Napier, seems to pervade the real travelogue as well as the world of literature.

But there is a little subversion of the Japanese reality in this hypothesis. Travel is a biographical construct in Japanese travel literature where the pragmatic division between the world of imagination and that of aesthetic perception is very thin. Such a tenuous division between the world of imagination and reality makes the Japanese sense of aesthetics a construct very close to life and living as epitomized in the travels of the Zen poets and poet-priests. We should turn to Buddhist aesthetics and the acceptance of Buddhism in Japan through its semiotic manifestations of the merger of the native sense of nature worship and theological construct as acquired through Buddhist art, poetry, music, drama and architecture. Ekai Kawaguchi's travels very interestingly epitomize that type of melange of the two poles of consciousness—love of pristine nature and spirituality.

The other important point regarding travel literature, or the travel narrative is the writer's conscious construction of the self as the protagonist within that construct. The writer puts himself or herself in the narrative in such a way that the travelogue though it spans a short period of his or her life can be valorized as a biographical structure and it becomes something usable as reference in life. In many cases, the one travel narrative, the *magnum opus*, seems to be a valid construct both before and after the time in the life of the writer that it covers. Ekai Kawaguchi puts himself in his narrative, and his life after the travelogues seems to be shaped by the same. Therefore to see how Kawaguchi himself has constructed his own travel biography we should look at the structure of his own story that he has created for himself.

His travel biography has been constructed and deconstructed by others also. Among them are his native scholars, Western and Tibetan interpreters. The author of his travel biography is himself as well as his "countrymen" as he loved to call them, in retrospect. By reading his narrative and recreating the memories that he has been identified with, we can enter Kawaguchi's world.

From *Chibetto* to Chichibu

At the age of thirty-two Kawaguchi started his journey to Tibet quietly after a tearful send off given by his close friends at the Osaka

harbour in 1897. He arrived in Calcutta where he was given advice by Chandra Bose of the Mahabodhi Society to go to Darjeeling and meet Sarat Chandra Das, the famous British government appointed Tibetan explorer. Das made arrangements for his Tibetan lessons with a Mongolian priest, Serab Gyamtso. He lived with a Tibetan family and learned Tibetan with the Headmaster of the government school, Tumi Orden.

He chanced to meet a Nepali official named Jibbahadur K.C. who knew about Lhasa very well. He got two letters of introduction from Jibbahadur to visit Nepal in return for Cosma's Tibetan-English Dictionary. Kawaguchi entered Nepal after visiting Bodhgaya via Sugauli where he met Buddha Bajra himself, for whom he was carrying a letter of introduction from Jibbahadur by accident.

In Kathmandu, at Buddha Bajra's temple in Baudha, Kawaguchi got an opportunity to meet Tibetan pilgrims and get some useful information about the country and route. He took a route through northwest Nepal to the high mountains. He travelled under a pseudo name Serai Amchi and the false identity of a Chinese monk, and said the purpose of his visit was to see Mt. Kailash by the side of the sacred lake Manasarovara.

After a month he reached Tukche. There he stayed as guest of the *sardar*, the governor where he met a Mongolian lama who was very learned but little temperamental. His name was Serab Gyaltzen. At Gyaltzen's invitation he went to his home in Tsarang in Lo. He stayed there for ten months studying Tibetan Buddhism, rhetoric and Tibetan sciences. He practised mountain climbing with Gyaltzen. They were great friends but used to come to heated discussions, and almost fought physically after the lessons, a spectacle which the villagers must have watched in great amazement. He also proved to be an effective physician there and became very popular among villagers. His memories of this place are very good. Kawaguchi always complains about the filth that he so abhorred. Out of the sixty Lamas and fifty nuns in the village, only two lamas and one nun practised celibacy. Kawaguchi was deeply shocked by what he thought as their debauched ways. Kawaguchi, who was critical of Padmasambhava, ascribes all these to his teachings that

“sanctified the sexual relations of mankind.”¹⁰ Serab Gyaltzen was one such scholar doomed to seclusion because of this even after getting the precious doctorate from twenty years of work at Sera.

Kawaguchi was a careful planner. His stay at Tsarang itself was the wisest planning and preparation for his Tibetan visit.

Kawaguchi left Tsarang in March 1900 at the invitation of Adam Naring, chief of the village of Malba to read sacred texts for him. He had a blissful stay in that village for three months which came to an end after the rumour that he was not after all a Chinese monk, but a British spy spread around. He left the village on June 12 for Dhaulagiri with a porter. Both Kawaguchi in his accounts and the NHK film present this departure from Malba in June 1900 as a tearful send off.

On the first of July 1900, he announced to the porter, who was his only companion and his addressee, good-bye. The porter knew that the journey was never going to materialize. He chose a different style from this point onwards. He pushed his way north and walked along the river Kaligandaki and ascended towards the village of Thorpo, a village of the followers of Bon.

Kawaguchi opened a new chapter in his travel biography.

He entered into a different pragmatic situation. He was his own addresser and his own addressee in this one man drama. His survival lay with his *écriture*, his faith and the construct called the true written text, the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha in his mind. He truly entered a new phase in his travel biography. The new stage was magnanimous. A motif of the new drama was woven round the conflict between human impulse and theological construct, between love and ethics, true identity only known to himself and the identity which others saw. And one girl even tried to enter into this false identity but got repulsed back by the monk's other self.

Kawaguchi was invisible to himself and wanted to be so to others too. But it was not possible. He was too conspicuous a visitor.

He lived with his textual knowledge, his proficiency in Tibetan. He felt the expanse of the space, the identity of the land. He knew he had crossed the Nepali territory to enter Tibet on 4 July, 1900, nearly three years after he left the port of Kobe. His luxury was of an

¹⁰ *Three Years*, p.53.

introverted lama. He used it to appreciate the land, the borders and the people of Nepal and Tibet. This luxury was different from that of Austin Waddell. In a book published a year before Kawaguchi was crossing the twilight borders of space and faith Waddell said:

During the past fourteen years I have traversed portions of this region nearly every year, sketching, shooting, collecting, and especially exploring the customs of the people on the frontiers of Tibet, and of Nepal—the land of the warlike Goorkhas—where I lived in tents for four or five months of several successive years.¹¹

Kawaguchi was awed by the land, the Roof of the World. It was a pilgrimage to him. I could imagine the metamorphosis of the Japanese monk's sense of space, geography and the dramatization of his Zen aesthetics and faith, the farthest limit of which was epitomized by Mt. Fuji, the height that has awed the poets and monks and pilgrims alike for millennia. It was very interesting for me to go back and read the *waka* and *haiku* poems and travelogues written by wandering poets and pilgrims about Fuji-san to get the feel of the sense of space after being on its summit on a clear August morning.

Once he was on the Roof, Kawaguchi knew that there were caves and monasteries over that rugged terrain and there was the Buddha and spots for spiritual awakenings in this land. He led himself towards one of these caves where the disciple of Lama Gelong Rimpoche sat in meditation, and held heated arguments about Buddhism as practised in Tibet and Japan. He confessed to the Lama:

True, all Buddhism is in the Self, but in ancient days Jenzai doji travelled far and wide in search of fifty-three wise men, and we, the Buddhists, are all taught to derive lessons from the great hardships then undergone by him. I am far from being a Jenzai Doji, and yet I am privileged to imitate him: it is thus that I have called on you.¹²

¹¹ L.A. Waddell, *Among the Himalayas* (Kathmandu: Bibliotheca Himalayica, 1977, first published 1899), p. v.

¹² *Three years*, p. 88. Kawaguchi said this to the disciple of Gelong Rimpoche where he sat "saving the souls of the multitude." Kawaguchi read the gospel and apparently

He openly called the mountains and the rivers the great Buddha, the Vairochana in his *utas*. This cave was the first stage in Tibet where his theological impulse was dramatized with his Japanese sense of land, aesthetics and faith.

He wandered along to the opposite direction of Lhasa and on the 6th day of August 1900, reached Mt. Kailasa and Mansarovara, the legendary lake. To him they represented nature's Mandala. The ripples in the lake were larger than those cast by Basho's frog. He accepted the magnanimity of nature and accepted its awe, about which we will discuss in the following sections.

The following journey in which he was helped by both the Buddhists and Bons alike, was fraught with dangers, and was a bizarre combination of romance, spirituality, assaults and sufferings. He met a young Tibetan lady named Dawa, daughter of his travelling friends who had accepted him as a companion and revered him as a Guru. His account of how he resisted her proposal for marriage and sexual union is very interesting to read. On the road ahead, he met one man praying to God to be forgiven for the crimes he may commit in the future saying:

O Saint Kang Rinpoche! O great Shakyamuni! O all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the ten quarters of the world and in the time past, present and future! I have been wicked in the past. I have murdered a number of men. I have taken a great deal that did not belong to me. I have robbed husbands of their wives. ...I also perform here penance for my prospective sins, for I may in future repeat them, may rob people of their goods and wives, or thrash and beat them.¹³

He also met three highwaymen who asked him to divine which way they could get businessmen, was robbed of everything, had eye ailment and dog bites and wounds. Somehow, he reached the monastery of Sakya Kongma Rinpoche. To his chagrin, he found that the abbot was a married person.

loudly argued with him about the differences between Tibetan Buddhism that the Tibetan Lama represented and Japanese and Chinese Buddhism that Kawaguchi represented.

¹³ *Three Years*, p. 175.

He had developed a method of stopping on the way to Lhasa, a *modus operandi* he had adopted right from his stay and study of the Tibetan language in Darjeeling. After reaching Shigatse on the fifth of December 1900, he lurched his way towards Rong Romba to the house of Dorje Gyalpo whose son he had treated and cured. He was a messiah image for Gyalpo, his wife and son. Remained there from mid-January until mid-March, 1902. He left the place on March 14 and entered Lhasa.

He maintains a calm about reaching Lhasa. But he becomes a great observer after reaching there. He describes his surprises and disapproval. He entered Sera College after passing an entrance test. He describes the priests as people who were engaged in agriculture, cattle-breeding, manufacturing Buddhist articles and other crafts as tailors, masons, cobblers and stone-layers. Kawaguchi found the apparatus of a sacerdotal state as very unique and strange. He had carried with him his own sense of how to run a modern state about which he had very clear concepts with occidental base. He had reached the sanctuary of the archive, the heart of the theocratic state, but he could not record his surprise nor his sense of reaching this closed haven of Buddhist studies to achieve which he had staked his life.

Kawaguchi with his rudimentary knowledge of medicine became famous as physician and got the favour of the “warrior priests.” He was invited at the house of the Dalai Lama to be his physician and to the house of the ex-Minister of the Treasury. This person was a scholar as well as a diplomat. He was kind and nice to him. Kawaguchi says, he was living with the nun, a fault they had admittedly done when they were young and foolish. The ex-Minister’s half-brother, the Ganden Ti (Khri) Rinpoche was the highest ranking priest in Tibet. Kawaguchi got his best Tibetan education from this man. That was also his best education on Buddhism.

One day Kawaguchi walked into the store of Tsa Rong-ba, a merchant he had known in Darjeeling, by accident. That was a turning point in his stay in Lhasa. He got invitation to visit his home where he met Dalai Lama’s caravan chief who advised him to reveal his true identity to the Dalai Lama for his own good. He told this matter to Dalai Lama’s elder brother who considered him to be a Japanese spy. Kawaguchi with the help of the ex-Minister and friends left Lhasa on 29

May, 1902 using the time of celebration in Lhasa that was engaged in preparing for the investiture of the Panchen Lama.

By crossing five guard houses including the formidable fortress of Nyatong, he reached Kalimpong on 19 June 1903, and in July, arrived at the home of his friend Sarat Chandra Das in Darjeeling where he lay with a strange illness called hegira. It took him three months to recover.

RECIPIENT OF HIS OWN NARRATION

Kawaguchi began to hear the echo of his legendary travel, education and escape. He became the reader of the copybook hero, that was himself. He was the recipient of his own discourse, his own addresser and addressee. There emerged his own images as a spy and a magician who could fly over the guarded houses that he had crossed so skillfully, and by treating the beautiful wife of the “henpecked” man in-charge of the ultimate fortress.

But other characters also emerged as important human images. Now he saw that he was responsible for the safety of the people other than himself. He began to see the consequences of his pseudo identity. His disinterested passion for Buddhist knowledge were cast in the anthropomorphic patterns on the screen of this theological construct. The Shangri-La was burning. It was a moment of great pain to him. His sense of remorse and responsibility grew in proportion everyday. Now he set out on a different kind of journey. He decided to seek the office of the Nepali Maharaja, Chandra Shumsher Rana, who he had read, had a leverage on the Tibetans.

He returned to Calcutta, and on his way to Kathmandu met his compatriots in Gaya in 1903, including the famous monk from Osaka named Koso Otani who had also gone to Tibet supported by the great Japanese monastery Honganji. Emi Miyata, Kawaguchi's niece and the last progeny told me with a very genuine sense of pique that on his return Otani had slandered Ekai, by saying that he had never reached Tibet and he was a fraud. By tarnishing the image of Kawaguchi he had wanted to become the first Japanese to visit Tibet. Otani had spent a lot of money, he was just interested in fame, and wanted to become the first Japanese explorer of Tibet. He published his slander in a newspaper

called *Tsugainippo*. But he could cite no evidence. Otani was tried later for squandering away the money.¹⁴ Kawaguchi was introduced to the same famous Otani, an anti-hero in the narrative of Kawaguchi who is remembered as one by readers of Kawaguchi's saga and his family members and compatriots today.

Kawaguchi told them that he wanted to go to Delhi to meet the Japanese General Oku representing Japan then attending the Durbar being held for emperor Edward VII, to convince him into making the British government write to the Nepali prime minister Chandra Shumsher Rana to write to the Dalai Lama to pardon his friends, ex-Minister of Treasury and his wife, Tsa-Rong-ba and his wife and his teachers at Sera College, who were put in prison and tortured for helping him, and were treated in the same ways like those who had helped Sarat Chandra Das in his disguised visit in 1879.

After a humiliating treatment he received from Japanese compatriots in Delhi, Kawaguchi pained by the sufferings of the human beings, his friends, proceeded to Nepal. By accident, he met the Nepali Prime Minister Chandra Shamsheer Rana and King Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah in Birgunj, Nepal on their way back from a hunting trip on a fine day in January, 1903. He met the Prime Minister again in Kathmandu on 12 March and received assurances that he would forward his letter to the Dalai Lama. He also got from the 'Maharaja' important scriptures, now kept mainly at Tokyo University Library, and left Kathmandu on 16 March arriving in Calcutta on 22 April.

Leaving behind him a vast panorama of the fleeting space, meaning and a sense of having achieved something, some uncertainties, and feeling in his heart and feet the throbbing sensation of the vast journey, he set sailing from Calcutta harbour on April 24, and reached Japan on 20 May, 1903 and landed quietly without any fanfare of an explorer as he was not a state sponsored explorer but a monk, a holy nomad character in his own saga which he forthwith wrote down in Japanese and also in English translation. He wanted to create his addresses, and unburden himself from that role as soon as he could. He had seen an audience and a world outside Japan also. Therefore he

¹⁴ Emi Miyata, recorded interview.

translated this saga, this travel autobiography, with the help of friends within a short time.

He received a mixed response in Japan. But the greater part of it was a celebration of his exploration. But a number of people remained suspicious of his accounts. When I talked to his niece Emi Miyata in 1997 in Tokyo she was full of very bitter memories about how he was misunderstood and neglected in Japan after his return. Her feeling is that he remained misunderstood all his life, a belief not fully shared by other Kawaguchi scholars.

Miyata said she knew from her heart that he had a hard life—misunderstood by his fellow countrymen, blackmailed and almost excommunicated. Her explanation for this hostility is that they must have been worried by their suspicion that Ekai was trying to develop his own cult and create followers. But the reality was far from real she said. Miyata's explanation seemed to allude to a situation inside the monastery and its areas of influence. But she touched upon the important transformations that Kawaguchi underwent as a Buddhist monk after he settled down in Tokyo after his journeys to Tibet and Nepal.

Kawaguchi had developed his own concepts of Buddhism. He was a seeker after authenticity and was making efforts to make Buddhism accessible to the common people. His non-adherence to any cult tends to make this quite evident. She cited examples to show how in spite of Kawaguchi's sincerity and good intention, people tended to tarnish his image and tried to force him into oblivion.

Miyata's belief is that after Kawaguchi's death Prof. Jiro Kawakita and his group followed the trail that Kawaguchi had taken. Most probably she was referring to Kawakita's book *The Hill Magars and their Neighbours*¹⁵ which records the findings of a period of research in that part of Nepal where Kawaguchi had passed through. In this book Kawakita mentions about Kawaguchi's description of the place and its vegetation which provides evidence to prove that Kawaguchi's travel accounts were real. Miyata said that they had even come across some people who had met Kawaguchi. It was discovered by people that he was

¹⁵ Jiro Kawakita, (Tokyo: Tokai University Press, 1974). On pages 152, 201, 226, 260 & 380 of this book Kawakita mentions about Kawaguchi's presence in the area of his field research.

an authentic explorer. Miyata's only regret is that all this did not happen during Ekai's own life time.

Miyata-san was almost showing a pique while telling us about a book called *Shoshin Bukkyo* that Ekai had given to a high school run by Okura, his benefactor, with words of donation that was later found by one of his disciples in a secondhand bookstore. The book donated in Meiji era 42 was recovered from the book shop in the Sowa era 8. She considered that as an example of how Kawaguchi was misunderstood in his own life time. When a British person came to see him he was discouraged from meeting Ekai because they dismissed him as an eccentric and fraud. I could not find out who this person she referred to could have been. Kawaguchi must have had many friends from Britain who could have come to see him. But it is difficult to understand how anyone who wanted to see him could have been dissuaded easily from meeting him. Even his friend poet Rabindranath Tagore met him when he visited Japan after Kawaguchi's second visit. But it is very easy to understand the intensely felt feelings of a niece who loved him as her own father, and who played an important role in establishing her uncle's image as a true monk and a great humanist and essentially a layman's Buddhist philosopher and a guru without any cult. She was witness to that avatar of the holy nomad who settled down in Tokyo to build the archive of knowledge of Tibetan studies.

Kawaguchi's younger brother, Emi Miyata's father Hanzui Kawaguchi established Ekai's contacts with the businessmen because of which she said he was able to collect funds to travel to Nepal and India for the second time. This second trip lasted for more than ten years. The year Kawaguchi spent in Japan Youngusband's mission mounted an attack on Lhasa in the summer of 1903. Youngusband in his accounts of the mission says, they released the people who were put in prison and tortured for helping Das and Kawaguchi. Kawaguchi got a letter from Colonel W.F. O'Connor, the staff officer of the British expedition forces, in August, 1904 giving Kawaguchi the news that Gaden Ti Rimpoche, the ex-Minister's half-brother who had been his greatest guru of Buddhism had become the acting head of Tibet in the absence of Dalai Lama who had fled the country. Kawaguchi was overjoyed.

ALIEN KIM AND ALIEN LAMA

Younghusband was not Kawaguchi's Kim, the protagonist in Kipling's novel. But there are some sharp resemblances. In the words of Irving Howe, "Kim's mission for the British service leads him toward Tibet, in a pleasantly exciting rigmarole about chasing off Russian spies; his mission as the lama's *chela* leads him toward Tibet..."¹⁶ Kawaguchi was not like Kim's Lama in Kipling's novel but his sense of elation was no lesser than that felt by Kim's Lama as the latter expresses in one breath when he meets his *chela*:

Yes, my soul went free, and, wheeling like an eagle, saw indeed that there was no Teshoo Lama nor any other soul. As a drop falls into water, so my soul drew near to the Great soul which is beyond all things. At that point, exalted in contemplation, I saw all Hind, from Ceylon in the sea to the Hills, and my own painted rocks at Suchzen; I saw every camp and village, to the least, where we have ever rested. I saw them at one time and in one place; for they were within my soul. By this I knew the soul had passed beyond the illusion of Time and Space and of Things. By this I knew that I was free.

The degree of Kawaguchi's elation matches that of Kim's Lama. However, Kawaguchi was not a quixotic fictional monk. But he was unable to fully extricate the fiction from reality in his narrative biography about his exploration of Tibet and the British India, which he was set to encounter shortly afterwards. Younghusband, the imperial textual Tibet conqueror, surrogate Kim too after achieving success in Lhasa remembered the Lama, the textual construct Kawaguchi and looked at this archive state from Lama Kawaguchi's perspectives. He called this textual Lama "the courageous Japanese traveller Kawaguchi, himself a Buddhist," who had produced "his most valuable work, "Three Years in Tibet,'... living in the Sera Monastery,"¹⁷ and had given

¹⁶ Irving Howe, "The Pleasures of *Kim*" (pp. 31-41) in Harold Bloom ed., *Rudyard Kipling's Kim* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), p. 39.

¹⁷ Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (Delhi: Orient publishers, reprint, 1971; first publication, 1910), p. 311.

important information about the Russians to find out which was the main goal of Kipling's Kim too.

As the Lama in Kipling's Kim, Kawaguchi was a distinctly identifiable Asian Lama from the European point of view, a Japanese avatar of the Tibetan monk Taranath (1575-1634) whose "incarnation begins long time ago in India, moves to Tibet, and then moves back to India for one lifetime only, then back to Tibet in the form of Taranath himself."¹⁸ He constructed an autobiography based on the memories of his previous birth in India. Kawaguchi's memories were not those of the previous avatar but of the ancient memories of the great Buddhist *ecriture* to acquire which, like Taranath himself, Kawaguchi shuttled between the Indian and Tibetan interludes of his avatars. His next avatar came later in Japan where he lived by creating a *Chibetto* construct. Kawaguchi too, like Kim's Lama, saw the entire Indian sub-continent, Nepal and Tibet. He jumped to grasp this new opening. But he found that Tibet was closed for him this time, by orders from Europe.

It was a complete turn of the events, an ironic twist of history. Tibet was discovered as a sacerdotal state, the archive state with a territory but after the discovery it was lost again. Richards says:

Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 stipulated that Tibet be removed from international circulation; except by arrangement between England and Russia, scientific expeditions were barred from entering Tibet for three years. Tibet had been traversed by pundits and reduced to a relief map, infiltrated by spies in search of other spies, encroached upon and finally invaded, and now, by provision of treaty, it had been formally relegated to the horizon of knowledge, 'lost' by fiat. Though mapped, Tibet now disappeared from the map, nationally dislocated, transformed into an international reservation for potential knowledge accessible only to the disinterested. A utopian space of comprehensive knowledge had been lost, but after a brief interregnum it would

¹⁸ David Templeman, "Memories of Past Life" in Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Ed. *Religions of Tibet in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 212.

again be found, perfectly preserved, an archive-state under a bell jar at the roof of the world.¹⁹

Kawaguchi was disinterested, but he would not get access to this land that had lost the force that it presented to Kawaguchi earlier. During the interregnum the Dalai Lama was there, but Kawaguchi could not get access to the knowledge in that “archive state under a bell jar at the roof of the world.” He had no option but to wait and wait for another opportunity to enter that sacerdotal state that he had to flee under the fear of the Tibetans earlier but now could not enter under the new situation created by agreement between the giant powers of the West.

Kawaguchi had returned with better arrangements this time. His first port of call was Calcutta at Shantiniketan where Kawaguchi became a guest of poet Rabindranath Tagore in December 1904. As soon as the Tripitaka (or three baskets in Sanskrit containing *Vinaya pitaka*, *Sutra pitaka*, and *Abhidharma pitaka*) were printed from the wood-block plates of the Tetsugen Tripitaka at Hozoin, a subtemple of Obakusan²⁰

¹⁹ Richards, pp. 31-32.

²⁰ On 16 September 1997, we went to Honzoh-in, a subtemple of the great Zen temple Mampukuji to see the Tripitakas which the brochure claims are “the only set of scripture printing blocks now in the world.” The “complete collection of all the sacred writings of Buddhism” are cut in 60,000 woodcuts or engraved blocks. “The total number of pages are 400,000 in total. Each printing block is 9.9 inches long, 32.3 inches wide and 0.7 inches thick with 1.2 inches margin on both ends.” These blocks are made of cherry wood which is most suitable for permanent use. “To this end, giant cherry trees in Yoshino were cut down by special permission “ (Brochure).

The original text was brought to Japan by Ingen, the founder of the Mampukuji Temple. Tetsugen (1630-1882), one of his disciples completed this project after 18 years of arduous devotion and collection of funds to this end from all over Japan. Hence the name *tetsugen Tripitaka*. The copies printed by these wood blocks were exported to America, England, Germany, Thailand, Burma, Siam and other countries. Kawaguchi took one hundred Tripitaka prints from here to the Nepali prime minister Chandra Shumsher Rana in 1905, whom he had promised to give in return for his permission to take Buddhist manuscripts, Buddhist scrolls, and paintings from Kathmandu with him in 1903. We traced down the complete 175 packets of the Tripitaka at the National Archive, Kathmandu and Prof. Takyama has catalogued all the 2100 books this year in Kathmandu.

in Kyoto, that he had promised to give to the Nepali prime minister Chandra Shumsher in 1903 arrived, Kawaguchi went to Kathmandu in March 1905, and presented them. In return he got more Nepali Buddhist manuscripts, scrolls and paintings from Chandra Shumsher Rana. In October of the same year, he submitted his suggestions to Chandra Shumsher about modernizing the country, preserving the environment and spreading education among the people. That text was found recently at Madan library in Kathmandu.

Kawaguchi remained in India and Tibet until 1915. Ironically, the Dalai Lama fled to India under British protection after the Chinese military attacked Lhasa to quash the Lama's declaration of independence from Manchu rule. Kawaguchi met the Dalai Lama in Darjeeling in 1909. The British assisted the Dalai Lama to chase away Chinese forces and return to Lhasa in June, 1912. But as mentioned above, the British closed entry of foreigners to Lhasa.

So Kawaguchi awaited his time in India studying Sanskrit which he learned quite well. He could write well as could be seen in the scripts he had written. I could see some samples of his writings and the notes he made in the museum in Sakai and under the custody of his niece Emi Miyata in Tokyo.

The Panchen Lama had assured Kawaguchi that he would give him some set of Tibetan scriptures. So he left Calcutta for another Tibet visit in December 1913. He took the least known route over Sikkim along the eastern side of Mt. Kanchunjunga and crossed into Tibet, this time ironically not as a Chinese but as a Tibetan. His travel was not hazardous. He had got Panchen Lama's letter and had become very well used to travelling incognito. It had almost become his way of life as far as travelling was concerned. He presented the Japanese scriptures to the Panchen lama in Shigatse.

The brochure says there are 6,956 bound volumes of the Tripitaka. We saw two printing experts printing by hand the front and back of the plates. The calligraphy is the source of Mincho-letters used in every Japanese newspaper and book at present, claims the brochure. We said goodbye and thanks to the printers, both of whom looked ancient and part of the wood blocks as they sat crossed legged on the floor between the walls of which were blocks stacked systematically on racks about 8 feet high. The big log rooms were full of these racks.

He left for Lhasa in July 1914. This time he made a very different kind of collection. He collected specimens of flora, fossils, and insects. They too, like the scripts, were donated to Tokyo University and also to the Botanical Garden in Tokyo and others were given to Tohoku collection by Akira Kawaguchi where I saw them alongside the collection of the art objects. The Dalai Lama gave some Buddhist scriptures as presents for the University of Tokyo. In Lhasa he met Japanese priests from Nishi Honganji, Aoki Bunkyo and Tada Tokan studying Tibetan Buddhism at Sera, and Yajima Yasujiro serving as military instructor to the Dalai Lama's guards at that time.

Kawaguchi met the Dalai Lama for the last time in January 1915 before leaving Lhasa for Darjeeling. Then he returned to Japan accompanied by Sarat Chandra Das and his son, carrying the whole load of scriptures received from the Prime Minister, Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama, and the samples of flora and fauna. I was amazed to see the size of the monk's collection, his passion for building a centre of knowledge about Tibet in Japan.

The monk who had set out first in June 1897 in search of authentic Buddhist texts came back for good with a large corpus of religious texts, scroll paintings, statues and sculptures, now preserved in the Tokyo University library, Tohoku University, Taisho University, Sakai city museum, National Museum in Ueno and Toyo Bunko. The last one houses most of the Tibetan scripts that he had brought with him at different times and donated to this Centre where he himself used to go and work on his Japanese-Tibetan dictionary which never got completed.

He spent the last thirty years of his life mostly in Tokyo actively engaged in the dissemination of knowledge about Tibet—its language, culture and Buddhism. In this manner he made contributions to the promotion of Buddhist learning. But the entire journey, the whole life he devoted to his faith was for a self-discovery which he attained by renouncing priesthood and leading the life of a lay Buddhist. In 1926, the year he renounced the priesthood of the Obaku Zen sect, he published a book entitled *Zaike Bukkyo* ("Lay Buddhism"). In this book he calls upon the believers to follow the path of Sakyamuni Buddha.

He led a simple life with the family of his younger brother Hanzui who, according to his daughter Emy Miyata, was a well-known

journalist who established Ekai's contacts with the businessmen. In her memoirs recently²¹ published sections of which she read out to me in the interviews, she recalls him as a true human being who was in favour of individual freedom, and was a believer in the individual's own responsibility for his or her own salvation. She cited the case of her husband Teru Miyata, the well known NHK personality, who understood in his last days what Kawaguchi had stood for, and was overwhelmed with that discovery.

Kawaguchi led a very active life in Tokyo until his death in February 1945. But he often retreated far from the madding crowd to a temple at the foot of Chichibu hills west of Tokyo. I could imagine Kawaguchi's sense of deep seated fulfillment and his moments of *satori* achieved at this temple preserving the memories of Kawaguchi in his lovely calligraphy and paintings inside, matching the colourful waves of cherry blossoms outside, a floral symbol, "the aesthetic sensibility of the Japanese mind," that D.T. Suzuki says is helped by the Zen to "deepen."²² This must have provided Kawaguchi opportunity for the "disinterested enjoyment of Nature" or the feeling of *furyu*.²³ Visiting this place at the invitation of a Japanese friend, I had a feeling of *furyu*, too.²⁴ I remembered the sixteenth century poem that Shingen composed while visiting the monastery at the invitation of a friend even in the midst of his busy worldly activities:

If I had not had this invitation from my friend,
How greatly I should have missed this magnificent sight of the
cherry blossoms!
The monastery might be found all swathed in snow next spring
When I proposed to visit it.²⁵

²¹ A collection which includes a long article by Emi Miyata on Kawaguchi with coloured paintings about the travel was published in 1997 by Sakai Toshi Seisaku Kenkyujo (sho).

²² D.T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1988.) p. 386.

²³ D.T. Suzuki, *ibid*, p. 81.

²⁴ I was invited to visit this temple Kannonji in Hanno to enjoy the cherry blossom by my Japanese friend in April, 1998.

²⁵ Quoted in D.T. Suzuki, *ibid*, p. 81.

“If I had not had this invitation” I too would have missed not only the cherries but also the Kannonji temple of Esoteric Shingon sect where Kawaguchi’s student was a priest, and where Kawaguchi used to go and meditate from time to time. Japanese Esoteric Buddhism was by far the closest form of Buddhism to the Tibetan Vajrayana faith which Kawaguchi did not approve of, like any other sects of Japanese Buddhism. But Tibet had become a nostalgia for him, a lost Shangri-La, the fabrics of which he had been seeking even inside the texture of Japanese Buddhism, in the practices of the Shingon sect.

Undoing Erasure

Kawaguchi’s narrative biography moves from one magnanimity of space to another, one power context to another, one big event to another and one stage of experience to another. He saw the bold lines on the Tibetan map drawn and erased. In his narrative biography Tibet was under erasure, to use Jacques Derrida’s terminology, in the hands of the Western powers. It is under erasure now under Asian power. Kawaguchi’s passion was to undo the erasure—to preserve the Buddhist *écriture* from disappearing, to save Tibet from being rubbed off the copy book, to save the archival state in the constellation of art objects, and to save his own story of hair raising travels from being forgotten. Kawaguchi’s passion was thus one of preservation and protection. He saw the Shangri-La of Tibet lost, and its lines toyed with on the desks of the cartographers of the Western powers. As part of his desire and passion for writing, drawing the map of a state, foregrounding its territories, he turned to the next Shangri-La, Nepal. He saw the borders of this country intact. Only *Neparu* was a continuum in the system of the *écriture* of border lines which he perceived through the course of events. He offered his good office to work with the Maharaja of Nepal to make its borders formidable, by suggesting ways of modernizing the country to its prime minister who was least interested in that, developing its economic infrastructure and creating a military force that would defend these lines, this *écriture* on the geographical space, which was the pattern of a defense system in his times. Though his suggestions for military build up sound impractical, his passion for writing, drawing distinct lines on the map of a small Asian nation, a haven of culture was part of the utopia he describes in his narrative biography.

His narrative biography was thus the continuous activity of drawing lines, and preserving. He projected himself as a protagonist in this narrative of action which we saw above in his movements between the unstable borders. His biography is thus the search for spiritual meaning across the textual spaces, and authenticity and tangibility of identity across geographical borders. To see how the textual biography evolves we should carefully look into the nature of his journey itself.

CHAPTER THREE

A Holy Nomad with a Tradition

*My roof will be the sky; my bed, the earth;
The grass my downy pillow soft at night;
Thus like the hovering clouds and wandering streams,
These lonely wilds alone I must traverse.¹
Upon these plains of snow, my bed is snow,
My pillow, snow; my food also the same;
And this my snowy journey, full of pain.²*

BACKGROUND

Kawaguchi's travels to Nepal and Tibet have both vertical and horizontal dimensions. He comes from a background and a culture where Buddhist monks have undertaken travels and produced their diary accounts with biographical details in some cases. The monks have combined Buddhism with aesthetics—poetry and art, and poets and artists have combined their works with meditation, concentration and spirituality that has its worldly and aesthetic basis. Out of this culture have come the travelling monks, poets and artists. But the travelling monks have taken liberty to become individuals and create poetry and art independent of their daily duties as monks.

Kawaguchi had distinctly two different traditions of travels inspired by spiritual and aesthetic search. On the one hand, there was a tradition of religious mass pilgrimage such as the *okage-mairi* ("blessings pilgrimage")³ that is related to the faith of the mass rather than those of

¹ Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, p.67-68.

² *Three Years in Tibet*, p. 197.

³ Winston Davis, *Japanese Religion and Society* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992) p. 48-80. Davis takes several movements of pilgrimage of the Tokugawa period, those of 1705 "when children aged seven through fifteen left their homes in Osaka, Sakai, and Kyoto to go to Ise" (49). The number of people who joined this movement from places as far as Edo and Hiroshima numbered about 3,620,000. The other pilgrimage which took place in the same century that Kawaguchi was born was of

individual seekers, poets and monks to which category Kawaguchi did belong; on the other, there were the individual poets and monks who travelled extensively and to long distances. The purpose of the travels was to discover and find moments of *satori* and feel a sense of spiritual fulfillment. The travels described by Keene as discussed in the previous section, belong to this group of travels.

Kitagawa classifies three kinds of pilgrimage in Japan.⁴ They are as follows-

- a. Pilgrimage to the mountain
- b. Pilgrimage based on divinity and faith
- c. Pilgrimage based on the charismatic personality representing faith

The first type of pilgrimage is made to the sacred mountains. Mountains are always venerated by Japanese Buddhists. Pilgrimage to the mountains brings them the foretaste of the Pure Land and the "Shinto *kami* of those mountains were in reality the manifestation of Buddhist divinities."⁵ Such belief brings the blessings of Shinto and Buddhism together, and it has great similarity with the Tibetan pilgrims' faith in the sacrality of the mountains that combine the holiness of both the Bon-po and Buddhism. The main difference is that women were not allowed to join the groups of mountain pilgrim in Japan because travel involved hardships. Whereas in Tibet, women too join the parties of pilgrimage and travel with male pilgrims. Kawaguchi met such women. Some extremely fond of him, and others who were married to the monks and those who helped Kawaguchi survive by trusting him inside their tents by consenting to his request made "smiling... to the beauty of the wilderness for a night's lodging."⁶

A large number of people visited the holy places and shrines located on the plains and within access. Kannon (Avalokitesvar), Amida (Amitabha) and Yakushi (Bhaisajyaguru), the healing god and Miroku

the year 1830. This was a big phenomenon. Group dancing as gesture of protest became a strong force during this time.

⁴ Joseph M. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) pp. 128-136.

⁵ Kitagawa, p. 129.

⁶ *Three Years*, p. 99.



14 Buddhas with Tārā (Tibet).

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 62, photo no. 88)



15 Tārā

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 61, photo no. 87)



16 This is a painting done for Ekai Kawaguchi by his friend. Now this picture hangs on the wall of Emi Miyata's drawing room in Tokyo.

(Courtesy: Emi Miyata-san. Photo: Salil Subedi).



17 *Kālacakra*
(Source: SMC,
Japan, p. 59,
photo no. 84)



18 *Guhyatantra*
Posture
(Source: SCM,
Japan, p. 59,
photo no. 85)



19 *Milarepa*
(Source: SCM,
Japan, p. 59,
photo no. 83)



20 A tantric posture with the Panca Buddhas.

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 53, photo no. 76)



21 A wooden Bodhisattva

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 45, photo no. 61)



22 *Wooden Bodhisattva*

(Source: *SCM, Japan*, p. 44, photo no. 60)



23 Śākyamuni Buddha

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 42,
photo no. 55)



24 Dipaṅkar Buddha

(Source: SCM, Japan, p. 42, photo no. 54)

(Maitreya), the Buddha to come, are the main Buddhist divinities for such pilgrimage.

The great Pilgrimage to Ise called *okage-mairi* also belongs to the category of going to a holy temple or shrine.

Charismatic persons have also attracted pilgrims at different times. These practices are common in many religions. In Japan, the holy men's places have also been centres of faith. The most important name in this connection is that of monk Kukai or Kobo Daishi (774-835). People visited his birthplace, the island of Shikoku around the ninth century. But the other aspect of the charismatic person is that the person himself becomes an important pilgrim. For example, Kukai himself has gone down in the legends as a great traveller, a pilgrim who moves around the country, as the legend says he is still alive, helping people in need. So in the Japanese concept of pilgrimage poetry, legend, faith and history are blended, sometimes inextricably. The following poems by Kukai, Ryokan and Kawaguchi show this blend of faith and aesthetics in a way which is uniquely Japanese in character:

Within the quiet forest,
 Alone in the straw-thatched hut,
 So early in the morning
 I hear the sound of a bird.
 It sings of the Triple Treasure,
 The Bu-po-so⁷
 The bird has a voice for singing,
 A man has a mind for thinking,
 The voice and mind,
 The cloud and the stream,
 Express the Buddha-wisdom.⁸

The serenity of nature and the sound of silence merge to create a spiritual feeling here. The monk's philosophy is projected here through sound, sense and serenity. Similarly in the following poem of Ryokan:

⁷ Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

⁸ Quoted in Kitagawa, p. 191. Beatrice Lane Suzuki, "Poems by Kobo-Daishi," p.312.

SPRING—slowly the peaceful sound
 of priest's staff drifts from the village.
 In the garden, green willows;
 Water plants float serenely in the pond.
 My bowl is fragrant from the rice of a thousand homes;
 My heart has renounced the sovereignty of richness and
 worldly fame.
 Quietly cherishing the memory of the ancient Buddhas,
 I walk to the village for another day of begging.⁹

The fragrance of thousand homes in the rice of the bowl, and the memory of the ancient Buddhas mingle and move with the priest's staff that drifts across the village in this poem. The context is one of discovery and ecstasy, of beauty and the reality of life. In the following *uta* Kawaguchi composed after reaching the great and legendary lake Manasarovara with Mt. Kailash standing with all its rare beauty on the rear we can find similar feelings:

Among these mountains high here sleeps the lake
 Serene—"Devoid of seething cares"—so named
 By native bards; its broad expanse appears
 Like the octagonal mirror of Japan.
 The grand Kailasa's majestic capped with snow,
 The Moon o'orhanging from the skies above,
 Bestow their grateful shadows on the lake.
 Its watery brilliant sheen illumines me;
 All pangs of pain and sorrow washed away.
 With these my mind besoothed now wanders far
 E'en to Akashi in Japan, my home,
 A seashore known for moonlight splendors fair.¹⁰

Kawaguchi's poem uses the Japan image because the space represented is located very far from his native country. Japanese travels

⁹ John Stevens, *One Robe One Bowl: The Zen Poetry of Ryokan* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1977, 1996) p.24.

¹⁰ Ekai Kawaguchi, *Seven Years in Tibet* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1909. Reprint, Kathmandu: Bibliotheca Himalayica, 1995) p. 143.

are made inside the land, familiar cultural, linguistic and geographical surroundings. So the sense of space here is that of a person who has opted for the life of a self-imposed nomad. But the spirit of poetry essentially remains Japanese. We will discuss more on this subject in the next section.

Kawaguchi's encounter of an alien space gives him the status of a very non-Japanese like Japanese traveller. To quote Kitagawa-

Japanese Buddhism, unlike its Chinese counterpart, did not produce such men as Fa-hsien, Hsuan-tsang and I-ching, who dared to visit India, crossing the desert or ocean, to set foot on sacred spots which were sanctified by the blessed memories of the historic Buddha."¹¹

It is interesting to note that Kawaguchi had not only trespassed the territories of the British empires to reach this beautiful zone of the roof of the world, but had also trespassed the bounds represented by the trope known as travel in his own country. He has taken this trope to a space which in the sense described by Kitagawa is not part of Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage and travel traditions. In this connection, it is also interesting to recall the NHK film shown on 23 December, 1997 in which Kawaguchi's crossing the bounds of cultural, religious and poetic trope called travelling is presented through some images and dialogues. The actor who plays Kawaguchi¹² asks in one of his metafilmic moods "is

¹¹ Kitagawa, p. 132.

¹² On the 19th of June, 1997, a teacher of Tibetan language at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Hoshi-san, introduced me to the artist who was going to act Kawaguchi in this NHK film on Kawaguchi. She was teaching the actor Ujiki Tsuyoshi, Tibetan which he has used a lot in this one hour long metafilm. At the first meeting itself, I called him 'Kawaguchi incarnate.' He laughed. He represents Japan's growing interest in the semiotic force of Kawaguchi's journey to Nepal and Tibet. I very much liked meeting him. He looked to me like a very sincere person who knew how difficult his task was going to be. He told me that he was going to be the only Japanese actor and all the others were going to be Nepalese and Tibetans. I said, that was just as well because that would put him in the situation that Kawaguchi had found himself. I got the right person to talk to about my own readings of what Ekai Kawaguchi must have been like— poetic, sincere, his face showing a hard resolution

Tibet beyond the hill?” The Nepali guide conversant in Japanese replies “no, that will still be in Nepal. Tibet is thousands of miles away from there.” The actor expresses big surprise at the reply and imagines the unbelievable adventure of this holy nomad, which he acts in different imagined conditions as recreated from Kawaguchi’s textual accounts. The other scene that struck me was the actor Ujiki imagining while flying over the Himalayas about the difficulties and harsh conditions that he had to encounter.

Except for this imagination about the monk’s difficult travel over the highest plateau on earth modern Japan is not interested in his adventurous journey. On the metafilmic recreation of this holy nomad’s journey to Tibet in the manner of Heinrich Harrer’s book *Seven Years in Tibet* which was recreated in the film of the same title by Jean-Jacques Annaud in 1997, Kawaguchi scholar Takayama expressed his displeasure at such neglect, in a review of the film *Seven Years in Tibet* in which he says that the NHK film on Kawaguchi does not highlight the goal, to achieve which, Kawaguchi had gone out on this exploration.¹³

When Kawaguchi walked as a self-made nomad into this area the big giants both at home and where he had been to were preoccupied with wars and treaties, consolidation of empires and annexation of more territories. But Kawaguchi remained a Japanese, a nostalgic patriot, a monk with great attachments to his country. After passing a cold night in the open air over the Tibetan plateau with sounds of snow leopard and other animals around, Kawaguchi writes *uta* in the memory of his country:

and withdrawn to his inner world at the moments of great crises. I gave him the photocopy of the routes that he had taken. He said he was very “benefited” by this meeting with me and was happy with the conversation, though I was not of any significant help to him as I was myself trying to understand the visit and the historical encounters of this monk with the people and times in this part of the world. In fact I was happy to see him, who was in the style of a metafilm, as he said, he was going to look both at the history of Kawaguchi, and himself doing it. That was also going to be a blend of fiction and reality. I said I would be waiting to see this film which was going to be shown after about 4 months, I saw the film on 23 December, 1998, in Tokyo.

¹³ Ryuzo Takayama, *Tsugai Nippo*, 10 February 1998.

When rising slow among the mountain heights,
 The moon I see in those Tibetan wilds,
 My fancy views that orb as Sovereign Lord
 Of that Celestial Land, my country dear,
 Those islands smiling in the far-off East.¹⁴

The charismatic monks, the travellers blend spirituality, poetry and patriotism even when exposed to conditions such as those endured by Kawaguchi, a Zen monk out in search of the authenticity of Buddhist texts. But he does not have the simple and spontaneous ways of the Zen monk-poet Ryokan. His scale is large, his scope is bigger and his journey more fraught with dangers. The sheer undertaking of the pilgrimage is bigger. In this sense, Kawaguchi has trespassed the native boundaries of a traditional monk-poet traveller and has taken himself to a land that was still a mystery and the seat of authentic Buddhist scripts and monastic practices.

Kawaguchi's travels thus combine the native tradition with his search for authentic Buddhist texts, a personal salvation, because, frustrated everywhere, he was looking for meaning and revelation through the medium of Buddhist texts. But he is often awed by the mountains and continues to express his devotion and faith to the sacrality of the mountains. In his journey we encounter some important contradictions with regard to his faith in the sacrality of the space, the land and mountains and the awe they had inspired in his mind because he had taken himself out of the boundaries of the trope called travel back home. We can see that in his interpretation of the Bon religion and the followers' faith in the sacrality of the mountains.

OUTSIDE THE NATIVE BOUNDARIES

Kawaguchi was a traveller on a land where travelling was part of people's faith, livelihood, love and romance. Outside the boundaries of the native trope, Kawaguchi finds himself in this alien yet familiar space. To him the mountains are still venerable, the flora, fauna and the wildlife part of the great holy vision. However filthy Tibetan travellers

¹⁴ *Three Years*, p. 94.

may appear to him, they were his clients, saviours, people who shared a faith with him, and who too were pilgrims like him out in search of meaning and salvation in their own ways, and also a means of livelihood—intercepting travellers and getting hold of their belongings. Kawaguchi was a great experiencer of all that. He was robbed, he was given shelter, he felt the warm breathing of a young woman in one sided love with him, he was venerated as a guru, a doctor and a messiah. He had no difficulties in moving from one level of experience to another except to that of love even which he does not let go without a great debate in his mind. He questions the meaning of being a monk and a man:

It happened, however, that Dawa's father and brothers were out shopping one day, and that the girl and I remained alone in the tent. She thought probably that she could not get a better opportunity for her purposes and she tried to make the most of it. Just then I was mending my boots, and she almost frightened me with her boldness. I am neither a block of wood, nor a piece of stone, and I should have been supernatural if I had not felt the power of temptation. But to yield to such a folly would be against my own profession.¹⁵

When Dawa comes close to him with her sincere desire to know him, his sense of anger and frustration to see women's diapers hanging in the precincts of the monks' quarters in the Mampukuji monastery in Kyoto appear remote, because she was a real person, "a comely little thing" who shakes him out of the high pedestal of a priest and makes him confess, "But I, though not old, had had my own experiences in these matters in my younger days, and I was able to conquer temptations."¹⁶

He spent days reading sutras inside the tents of those he considered semi-nomadic pilgrims. Kawaguchi's travel across this land was thus a phenomenon in that a monk was out on a pilgrimage there for the sheer purpose of getting educated. With a mind open to

¹⁵ *Three Years*, p. 156-157.

¹⁶ *Three Years*, p. 150.

everything, though full of mistakes and misjudgment about the direction he should be taking, Kawaguchi was a traveller, a pilgrim like everyone else. The nature of his pilgrimage becomes clear in one important sense, in that the ecology, the space was holy and venerable to him. His contradiction was that he strongly disliked people who had faith in Bon religion, the worship of nature and mountains. But to Kawaguchi, the land was not one of a big hunt and big games as it was to the Western traveller Hamilton Bower who visited Tibet in 1891. He is interested in the games. Bower describes the big games in this land with a great relish and the thrill of discovery in these words, "The *Ovis ammon* (Tibetan *Nyan*) is the noblest of all Tibetan game, and with the *Ovis poli* of the Pamirs, claims kingship over all the sheep tribe."¹⁷ Richardson in the introduction to this book outlining the purpose of Bower's visit says:

Journeys beyond the frontier usually had other motives as well as sport and travel. They were part of The Great Game, with the eye open for signs of Russian or other foreign activities.¹⁸

Kawaguchi's sense of veneration for the land he visited is very non-European in character and it becomes very evident from the monk's feel of the land, his knowledge of their religion and the cultural traditions which are presented in his accounts with some conspicuous contradictions. Kawaguchi in his accounts of the people, land and faith veers from his sense of cleanliness, civilization and moral preoccupation to his intimate feel of the same. His description of the people's *modus operandi*, their marriage practices and morals, the treatment of socially disadvantaged people of the time, their treatment of foreigners and what he considered their greed for money and property are essentially different from those of British travellers and Baboo scholars like Das' accounts of the same phenomena.

Kawaguchi was one such traveller who came from a country across the seas to learn from the teachers there, and from the scriptures and the monastic life. His description of the religion is thus one of a scholar, a

¹⁷ Hamilton Bower, *Diary of a Journey Across Tibet* (First published 1894. Reprint, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1976). p. 288.

¹⁸ Hugh Richardson, "Introduction to the 1975 Edition," p. V.

person who knew about it. When he describes Buddhism, he does so by involving himself in the culture, in the spiritual practices and finds the manifestation of god, the Buddha in natural splendour. His description is thus naturally one of an involved person, a Buddhist monk who went there for a pilgrimage as well as to explore the land and religious practices. So it was bound to be different from that of a Western visitor who wrote in his accounts of Tibet in a book published a few years before Kawaguchi was visiting:

In the North-West provinces of India, about 2500 years ago, Siddhartha Gautama, surnamed Buddha, or “the enlightened one,” originated the religion called after him...Buddhism is a religion of a decidedly mild and negative character.¹⁹

Bower somewhat curiously but approvingly considers the Tibetan practice of marrying several men to one woman as part of the Buddhist tradition and thinks “Buddhism and plurality of husbands lead to comparative plenty.”²⁰ Kawaguchi remains critical of that practice in his description and also of monks marrying and religious and ordained people giving in to the ways of family life. To the Tibetans who practice polyandry, he says, “they are quite insensible to the shame of this dissolute condition of matrimonial relations, which can scarcely be even imagined by people with a civilized moral sense.” He also says, the “wife’s authority over her husbands is something surprising,” and in a very interesting way observes, “If she happens to find any of her husbands keeping back his earnings, she will break out in anger, and give him slaps instead of caresses. In short, a wife generally exercises a commanding authority over her husbands.”²¹

Kawaguchi involves himself in his description because he feels in a curious way part of the culture—a Buddhist, a monk who has been reading Sastras and Sutras to these men whom he considers as filthy and half-nomadic, and unreliable even though they save his life many times, but also rob him of everything leaving him to die in a situation when:

¹⁹ Bower, p. 271.

²⁰ Bower, p. 277.

²¹ *Three Years*, p. 352-352.

I had had no food for nearly four days, and was so weak that the smallest stone lying in the snow would bring me down. Fortunately I sustained no injury, owing to the softness of the snow and the lightness of my body. There was a time, however, when I got quite exasperated by hunger, the pain in my eyes, and the weakness of my legs, and sat down in the snow, feeling that I was fated to die. Intellectually, however, death was far from my thoughts.²²

But he says, "there was no use in hating them as they had robbed me because I deserved to be robbed."²³ Next moment he was helped by the Tibetans and he thought those were the ways of the Buddhas.

Kawaguchi's description is full of a sense of involvement in both love and anger, wrong and forgiveness. He describes Tibet and its customs and rituals in an objective manner like the Western visitors or Sarat Chandra Das of India, his lifelong friend whose visit was made, according to Bidya Nand, "on behalf of the Survey Department of India. His mission was primarily a reconnaissance mission."²⁴

Kawaguchi's description of Tibet and its people sometimes surpasses the description of Western visitors in terms of expressing his negative remarks about their cultures and ways of life. Das is very careful about his description and about voicing of his likes and dislikes of Tibetan manners. He remains behind his terse and cool description of them. But Kawaguchi describes with a full abandon, as it were, in which he even surpasses Bower who says—

The Tibetan ... is the most suspicious person in the world.²⁵ ... It is a long time before one thoroughly understands what a mistake it is ever to be polite, or assume any affection of friendliness, with Tibetans²⁶

²² *Three Years*, *ibid* p. 197.

²³ *Three Years*, *ibid*. p.197

²⁴ Bidya Nand, *British India and Tibet* (New Delhi: Oxford IBH Publishing Co., 1975), p. 37.

²⁵ Bower, p. 60.

²⁶ Bower, *ibid*, p. 139.

Kawaguchi is rather unobtrusive. He makes his remarks in a more direct manner than either Bower or Younghusband. He does not feel that it is necessary to be discreet about a description of the people and its culture. Some of the remarks are made in such a way that we feel perhaps he was speaking without any sense of discreteness. He could have said that in a different way. He makes the following observations regarding the habits of Tibetans-

The Tibetan does not wash his plates and dishes. He does not even wash or wipe himself after the calls of nature, but behaves like the lower animals in this respect. To this there is no single exception, from the high priest down to the shepherd; every one does the same.²⁷

He makes extreme remarks to express his displeasure at what he considers the Tibetans' lack of cleanliness. He makes such remarks, "He never washes his body; many have never been washed since their birth." He even goes to the extent of making such racist remarks which sound very extreme today when we talk in terms of political correctness in our discourses about the use of colour and racial terms, "They are quite as black on their necks and backs as the African Negroes. Why then are their hands so white? It is because they make dough with their own hands with flour in a bowl, and the dirt of their hands is mixed with the dough. So Tibetan dishes are made of dirt and flour."²⁸ Berry thinks perhaps such views "are in fact disturbingly like those of a Victorian Englishman."²⁹ But the pre-Victorian Englishman, the great researcher and British Residency for Nepal from 1820 to 1843 who collected a large number of manuscripts in Sanskrit and Tibetan puts the same into the mouth of a Nepali Buddhist from Patan as in this indirect narration about the theme of cleanliness in which Shankaracharya, the Hindu priest, was defeated by the Tibetan Lama in discourse. He puts it in this manner:

²⁷ *Three Years*, p. 264.

²⁸ *Three Years*, *ibid*, p. 265.

²⁹ Scott Berry, *A Stranger in Tibet*, p. 300.

The Lama, who never bathes, and after natural evacuations does not use topical ablution, disgusted him to that degree, that he commenced reviling the Lama. The Lama replied, "I keep my inside pure, although my outside be impure; while you carefully purify yourself without, but are filthy within..."³⁰

Berry also feels that "What was needed to save both the Japanese and English editions was a good editor: a discreet, understanding person to sit down with the scatterbrained priest and help sift the gems from the rubbish."³¹ No doubt, these errors could have been avoided in the hands of a skilled editor but the real Kawaguchi, his own perceptions would have been all lost and the text would project "his best observations." But since such a clever editor was not working with the monk so his—what Berry calls—blurring "poetic turn of mind" is preserved and the journey saved from being a mere, to use Berry's own words, an uninteresting junk with perhaps the Victorian discreteness as seen in Sarat Baboo's unobtrusive observation about the behaviour of Tibetans which he with all the skill of a good editor puts into the mouth of another Tibetan-

His holiness graciously touched my head with his palms, and in solemn tones said, "Sarat Chandra, Lhasa is not a good place. The people there are not like those you meet here. The Lhasa people are suspicious and insincere. You do not know, and, in fact, you cannot read their character."³²

But a review published in *Geographical Journal* in the next year of its publication said:

Mr. Kawaguchi's book is put together with more literary skill than Sarat Chandra Das's older narratives, and its fuller and more recent information combine to make it probably the best and

³⁰ Brian Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* (New Delhi: Manjushree Publishing House, 1972, first edition, 1877), p. 48.

³¹ Brian Hodgson, *ibid*, p. 296.

³² Sarat Chandra Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet* (New Delhi: Bibliotheca Himalayica, 1970. First published 1902), p. 126.

most up-to-date description of a country which is bound for some time to come to exercise a mysterious fascination over the time to come to exercise a mysterious fascination over the Western reader.³³

Kawaguchi's racial and derogatory remarks about the Tibetans are certainly not pleasant to read. But what is important to remember in this context is that Kawaguchi travelled 2490 miles from Darjeeling to Lhasa³⁴ to learn, to visit the holy land and to be exposed to authentic texts. He venerated the land, the gurus he met, the monks, prayed in the monasteries and felt that his mission was accomplished. He was in that sense travelling to a domain interestingly alien yet familiar to him. His total involvement with the land, the people and the culture and religion comes out in every section of the long travelogue. That is the most important point about his visit to Tibet and his travel accounts.

However, Kawaguchi's problems remain at the level of contradictions between his devotion to the holy land of Buddhist culture and his failure to appreciate the spiritualism of the people whose religion is the great blend of the Bon-po and Buddhist religion. He also does not seem to be able to appreciate the true pilgrimage of people who travel across the plateau, whom he accompanied himself several times and parted ways saying that they had to attend to their worldly duties so they had to say good-bye to him. Kawaguchi fails to appreciate that the true spirit of pilgrimage of the people of Tibet as in his own country Japan comes from their respect of the sacrality of the mountains, their true abodes of God. His total refusal to understand the spirit of Padmasambhava and the Tibetan mode of Buddhism is one such example.

Kawaguchi knew very well that he was making a journey from the world of *sutras* to *sastras* as Tibet always kept closer to Indian Buddhism than to Chinese Buddhism. Indian Tantric Buddhism, which travelled to Tibet quite early around the fourth century, in Lopez's words, "offered a speedy path to enlightenment, radically truncating the eons-long path set forth in the earlier discourses attributed to the Buddha,

³³ *Geographical Journal* 35-3: 325.

³⁴ *Three Years*, p. 652.

called sutras.”³⁵ Under this mode of practice, the meditator transforms himself into the Buddha “with a resplendent body seated on a throne in the centre of marvelous palace (called Mandala), with speech that intoned sacred syllables (called mantras), and with a mind that saw the ultimate reality directly.”³⁶

Tibetan Buddhism remained a haven of Sastra based Buddhist practices because of its direct communication with the Indian traditions. To promote this tradition Indian gurus were also brought to Tibet and Tibetan translators went to Bengal, Kashmir and Bihar in the eleventh century. As a result these became the early travels of the Asian monks to and from this holy land. Kawaguchi was following the trails of these gurus who went to leave the Sastras and make translations and to be exposed to them, to learn. This was Kawaguchi’s main objective.

Kawaguchi speaks very disapprovingly of the impact of the tantric guru Padmasambhava, the Rimpoche, but since he was in the land of these tantric Buddhists, surrounded by the power and awe of their traditions, he had to pray in the monasteries (the first one was interestingly built around 779 by Santaraksita and Padmasambhava), had to be with the followers of both Bon-po and Buddhist faith, had to survive and travel with the people who carried these traditions together whose culture in the most part has been a melange of these two traditions, Kawaguchi’s accounts of this texture forms an important part of his writing about Tibet. This displeasure and tension is at the core of some of the misunderstandings that we encounter in the travalogue.

³⁵ Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Ed. *Religions of Tibet in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 10.

³⁶ Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Ed. *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, *ibid.* Lopez says, the East-Asian Buddhism remained predominantly Sutra-based because these traditions were based on single texts like the *Lotus Sutra* or the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. The reason why the works of the Middle Way Indian philosophers like the Candrakirti (c. 600-650), Santideva (early eighth century) and Dharmakirti (seventh century) could not gain access to the East-Asian Buddhist tradition was because with the writings of Xuanzang (596-664), no further Indian Sastras could make inroads into the Buddhist traditions of this part of the world. Tibetan experience was different. It kept its doors open to the Indian Sastra-based Buddhist philosophers until very late. So Tibet remained an important centre, an archive of the authentic Buddhist texts and translations.

Though we find the disapproving accounts of the impact of Padmasambhava, known in Tibet as Guru Rimpoche, frequently in the travelogue, we find comparatively lesser description of the incarnations of the Lamas and female power in Tibetan Buddhist tradition in their peaceful and angry manifestations in the travel accounts. For example, Tara, who originated from the tear shed by Avlokitesvara and is thus a symbol of compassion and who always stands by his side as his consort, the female Bodhisattva who protected the Indian Guru Atisa (982-1054) in his travel (c. 1037) with Nagatso Lotsawa sent to India to fetch Atisa to Tibet, do not find so much space in Kawaguchi's textual accounts of the spirit of Tibetan Buddhism. His protector in his journey was the Sakyamuni Buddha. He invokes the power of the Buddha in very difficult moments and draws strength from meditation. In such moments, he appears to me like a Japanese Zen monk with the high degree of concentration and reliance on the inner power because as Suzuki says, "Zen is the religion of *jiyu* (*tzu-yu*), 'self-reliance' and *jizai* (*tzu-tsai*), 'self-being,'"³⁷ a mood that becomes manifest through his *uta* to which we will return in the next section.

Kawaguchi had walked into the land of the Buddhists where the mountains are the centres of pilgrimage, and the pilgrim guides through the real yet mythic mountains form an important part of Tibetan literature. Biographies and stories of incarnations, the Dalai Lama being the most important example of that phenomenon in the theocratic society, also form important texture of Tibetan literature. The literature abounds in the description of the Bon-po as well as the Buddhist faith. Essentially, Tibetan literature shows the unique relationship between the land, culture, legends, faiths and biographies.³⁸

³⁷ Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1988), p. 6.

³⁸ See Lopez, ed., *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. In this collection of articles written about the various aspects of Tibetan Buddhism and important specimens of Tibetan literature about "Time and Space," "Remarkable Lives," "Rites and Techniques," and "Prayers and Sermons" we can see the unique blend of the Bon and Buddhist faiths. The debates between the two faiths, and the creation of counter myths regarding the origin of Buddha and the defeat of a deity with a name similar to that of Shankara, the Hindu deity of the Himalayas, form the texture of these literary themes. This unique coexistence of the two faiths is a feature of the Tibetan religious system based on

Kawaguchi was single minded as a traveller and survived by the sheer faith in his mission and his unflinching devotion to the Buddha. What distinguishes him from Western travellers is that his displeasure with the Bon practices and the teachings of Guru Rimpoche stems from his being a Buddhist who represented one set of beliefs regarding right conduct, morality, sex and food. His conflict is thus the conflict of an insider, an Asian traveller who came from a country where Buddhism has formed the fabric of aesthetics--poetry and art, for nearly two millennia.

Bower, Younghusband, Sarat Chandra Das and other travellers led missions to explore the possibilities of trade, and to keep political information regarding the expansion of Russian colonialism, a strong rival of Britain on land. The other main purpose was to explore the possibilities of trade in this region.³⁹ Kawaguchi himself describes the trades and business that the Tibetans were practising but the main purpose of his travel was not to explore business prospects with Tibet. Except for a thrill he got to see Japanese matches, bamboo blinds with pictures of women, *kutani* porcelain and scroll pictures, he does not have anything to recommend to his own country as far as trade with Tibet is concerned. To him the images were more of a poetic significance than anything that a British traveller would find. To him, "These inanimate Japanese articles are more daring than the people who made them!"⁴⁰

Kawaguchi's travel accounts are taken favourably by British travellers and the information that Kawaguchi gives in the big books is sifted and taken according to the needs of user especially by those who reach Lhasa. Younghusband more or less takes Kawaguchi's mission as another British explorer's work. He summarizes Kawaguchi's

Buddhism, because, as Lopez says, "Bon is not a pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, not Tibetan "folk religion," and not a primitive animism. It is best described as a heretical sect of Tibetan Buddhism, with its own creation of myths, cosmology, and pantheon (sometimes with obvious Buddhist correlates and sometimes without them), which does not accept the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha and his tradition as the true dharma" (30).

³⁹ See Bower, pp. 282, 284. Das, p. 193. Das indirectly describes the Tibetan attitude and convenience of trade with India which is favoured by Tibetans to that with China.

⁴⁰ *Three Years*, p. 339.

description of Tibet and its people in one whole chapter acknowledging in this manner:

These impressions, which in themselves would not have much value, as my period for observation was so very limited, are borne out by the courageous Japanese traveller Kawaguchi, himself a Buddhist, and once Rector of monastery in Japan, who lived in the Sera Monastery, and in his most valuable work, "Three Years in Tibet," *written since we were in Tibet, has given to the English public the results of his study* (my emphasis).⁴¹

Charles Bell too describes the scenario in Lhasa in the aftermath of Kawaguchi's visit there. He too values information that Kawaguchi gives about the Russian spy Dorjief.⁴²

Kawaguchi's life and journey becomes a force to reckon with to detractors and admirers alike.

A JOURNEY IN RETROSPECT

Kawaguchi filled out his travel with his own bodily experience. But as he encounters other physical presence, that he supposes pose a threat to his own experiences, he recoils back to his own self, that of the monk. He travels as a human being but has to reject some of the human encounters. His pilgrimage was his nomadism, a self-imposed form of travel that he claims was made possible by his devotion and the Buddha's blessings. He was thus a hero who was involved in his own self-preservation and protection. He was not sentimental nor too nostalgic a traveller except occasionally, he sat to pray for his emperor, the Crown Prince "and also for the glory of the Empire of Japan."⁴³

His journey was a search for a systematized theological construct but the space that preserved it was a chaos at times—a Bon-po influenced murky, semi-civilized construct. But there was the Sera

⁴¹ Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (Delhi: Orient publishers, reprint, 1971; first publication, 1910), p. 311.

⁴² Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 63.

⁴³ *Three Years*, p. 464.

monastery, there were gurus and the authentic texts at the sanctuary, at the Centre of this land. So his journey was made from the periphery to the centre and from the centre of civilization and cleanliness as he thought his own world represented, to the periphery. His search thus represented a Mandala, a unique journey of the mind and body. He travelled as a monk, a seeker, a poet and a humanist, who also became a herbarium collector, a geographer, and an anthropologist.

Kawaguchi was not "the apparatus of a state" to use Mary Louis Pratt's expression.⁴⁴ His state was not interested in his travel to this unexplored land. But without being too aware of it he was collecting most important information for the use of the British raj in India. He was a medicine man who treated people for his own survival, and was surprised every time the person got cured, and thought that must be the Buddha doing it to save him. Kawaguchi believed in helping people in need, but there is a certain inversion phenomenon that seems to work in the case of giving and receiving. Kawaguchi becomes a recipient, the experiencer of charity. For example, he gives medicine to people, but he gets security and sometimes even life in return, he gives the Maharaja of Nepal suggestions about modernizing the country and he becomes an experiencer of the charity himself.

There is no concrete evidence to show his own position about the state of Buddhism in Japan which was undergoing a momentous period of adjustment, accommodation and protest following the famous declaration of the state in the early eighteen seventies separating Buddhism from Shinto and making priests free to get married and go non-vegetarian, which in the words of Davis "struck a deep blow to the dignity of the priesthood and its sense of discipline."⁴⁵ But by the time Kawaguchi was in Tibet, Buddhism had already worked out important adjustments with the state and institutions in Japan. Kawaguchi was an active recluse, out in search of answers to his own personal questions. He had no big institutions to represent. He was his own Buddhist, a layman's Buddhist, a lay Buddhist himself in spirit and practice which he maintained practically always since he left the Mampukuji Zen temple in Kyoto in 1897. According to his niece Emi Miyata, he was a free person

⁴⁴ Mary Louis Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 78.

⁴⁵ Davis, p. 161.

and did not represent any cult nor did he ever like to develop one but people who were wary of him feared that he might develop one.⁴⁶ According to Mibu Taishun, his lay Buddhism, *Zaike Bukkyo*, did not make any headway after his death. He says it finished with his death.⁴⁷ Emi Miyata's arguments sound more plausible than any other because Kawaguchi did not really seem to preach or represent a cult of his own. He was speaking for the laity, and by renouncing the priesthood he himself was leading the life of a lay Buddhist. Moreover, lay Buddhism was already established as a popular form of Buddhist practice by the time Kawaguchi published his book on lay Buddhism. His book was published the same year as he renounced his priesthood in 1926.

Kawaguchi remains an orthodox male, who maintains a priest's austerity with the words. For example, when confronted with the discontented and adoring woman whom he calls "my little Dawa ...adept in the art of love-making" and her pleas for love and life together in the pristine Himalayan land, the Shangri-La, he took recourse to a monk's rhetoric, his pseudo-clairvoyance about her mother's illness and frightened her away. He was a travelling monk in the land of the Bon-po and maintained the duality of his existence. He had to maintain the duality of, a) a learner and, b) the pseudo-Chinese self of a Serai Amchi. This pseudo self overwhelmed him sometimes. He extends this duality to another avatar to interpret civility and spiritualism and passes judgement on people's ways of life, civilities and habits.

Kawaguchi's difficult travel is destination bound to achieve which he had to enter into incessant negotiations by using his linguistic skill which was often a subject of scrutiny to which he had to testify. That was the best language laboratory one can ever enter. Apparently, he acquired a native-like proficiency in that language including its slang and dialectal variations. He settles disputes between husbands, brothers and friends. He makes people drunk and avoids the risk of being attacked. He had to do so like every other explorer anywhere in the world.

⁴⁶ My interviews with her.

⁴⁷ Mibu Taishun (b.1913), recollecting Kawaguchi in *Kawaguchi ekai no sekai* or "The world of Kawaguchi" (Tokyo: Taisho Daigaku Kang, 1995), p. 10.

He befriends the local chiefs, the *sardars* over in the Nepali Himalayan villages some of whose families the pioneering Japanese anthropologist Jiro Kawakita met in the early sixties, the gurus who gave him lessons on Tibetan Buddhism with whom he discussed, shouted and brawled in anger, a spectacle watched by people of the village, and calmed down and sat for the lesson again. All these relationships were components of his ongoing travel discourse.

He was a hero of non-cognizance and assumed self, a copybook Chinese monk named Serai Amchi created out of exigency, a monk representing holy nomadism. He endures and survives his self-induced Diaspora. He is very resilient. He is a calm person who moves glibly from one discovery to another without too much reaction. Except for his *uta*, nothing would have recorded his moments of epiphany. When he arrives at Lhasa after staking his life and travelling thousands of miles, he does not express his sense of having reached there or achieving a great goal. He describes this event in the book *Three years* as if he had reached another village. When he leaves the city, he does not break that poise in too significant a manner either, except for the expression of his devotion to the Buddha and his confession at the temple that he could not bring the two Mahayana schools of Japan and Tibet any closer due to this karma that befell him.

He was an Asian monk, a devout Buddhist who wandered to Nepal and Tibet to learn authentic Buddhist philosophy. But he was also equipped with some symbolically different set of skills and knowledge than people were familiar with in the part of the world he was travelling through. He had some skills in medicine, which had always remained a leverage of the Europeans. But Kawaguchi shoots in the dark, and he confesses, gets credit for no input of any particular medical skill. It was his survival strategy and it helped him make a meteoric rise to the position of the Dalai Lama's physician, which also eventually ensured him a safe passage out of Tibet.

Kawaguchi was a unique traveller. While his predecessors saw a place and met people and documented everything, he exchanged his own wishes and needs with these human beings primarily with "nomadic" pilgrims whose behaviours are scrutinized under the moralistic canons of a monk. But ironically, his greater lessons are learnt in tents than in monasteries; these "nomads" tents were like mobile

temples in the Bon-po plagued cultures. Ironically, he travelled like a Bon himself. He spontaneously did so. Such was the exigency of the land and space which he fully participated in and experienced. His narrative is thus a very humanized and poetically charged account of a great journey which he himself would shy away from affirming.

Kawaguchi's travel had a rich diversity. To quote Pratt, "Every travel account has this heteroglossic dimension; its knowledge comes not just out of a traveller's sensibility and powers of observation but out of experience usually directed and managed by 'travelees' who are working from their understandings."⁴⁸ The travelees play important role in shaping Kawaguchi's narrative written down on the basis of his diaries in Japan both in Japanese and English

The landscape that he travelled across was bare, beautiful and cold but because of the participation of the travelees it was full of drama which brought the monk face to face with life and forced him to reflect upon the true meaning of spirituality and personal salvation, a vision which he later recreates in his quiet times and the most turbulent period in the history of mankind and his own country.

Kawaguchi's journey to Tibet assumed an epic proportion to those who liked it and to those who did not feel comfortable about it. He himself continued to write about the journey even after he came back to Japan. He wrote about his second journey, and wrote more poems in this one. He continued to live in the Tibet he brought with him. He tried to make it a great and meaningful world. He spread his Nepal and Tibet across the libraries, museums, geological and zoological laboratories and the quaint and quiet corners of Toyo Bunko library where at the far corner he stands, in the life-size statue of him made by a sculptor named Fujioka Koden in 1935. This is a place where he went to give a concrete shape to his long and thrilling history of language adventure, his success in using the Tibetan language with native proficiency in the form of a Tibetan-Japanese dictionary in his seventy-fifth year.⁴⁹ The dictionary most probably never got completed, and says

⁴⁸ Pratt, p. 135-136.

⁴⁹ Kawaguchi gave many Tibetan manuscripts to Toyo Bunko in return for their commitment to provide finance to get the Japanese Tibetan dictionary published once it was completed. Kawaguchi went to work at the far corner of the Centre. The

Emi Miyata, nobody knows what happened to the manuscript on which Ekai worked either.⁵⁰ The room where he worked very hard (*sensing jyuji*), as his nephew Akira Kawaguchi says in his what is believed to be the authentic biography,⁵¹ has also gone down in history as part of the collection. I can imagine Kawaguchi at his old age walking across to Komagome, to this centre, his last journeys, with the rumbling sounds of the war bombs and people fleeing in panic, houses and streets devastated and fires raging around. He remained unruffled by the War. He was safe and sound in his Tibet, his highest plateau where he had spent days on end walking on the snow without food hobbling with the wounds of dog bitten legs and weakened by vomiting blood but also getting the best of the affections, and the moments of *satori*, his visions of salvation for him as well as for others. His niece, his last progeny, Emi Miyata confesses, thus provided a source of strength and meaning of freedom to the people who came close to him or to those who understood the spirit of his journey to Tibet and Nepal, which, to appreciate better, we should turn to the other avatar of the monk, that of a poet seeker.

building where he worked does not exist any more. I was able to get a photograph of the old building.

⁵⁰ Interviews.

⁵¹ Akira Kawaguchi, *Kawaguchi Ekai—Nihon saisho no Chibetto nyukokusha* (Kawaguchi Ekai: The first Japanese to enter Tibet, Shunjusha, 1961), p.227.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Poet-Seeker with Avatars

*How beautiful
It is to see grass dead, but blooming yet
With frost, upon a high plateau.¹*

IDENTITY, POETRY AND SURVIVAL

Background

Kawaguchi's poems record the moments of his epiphany, crises and visions. In that sense he stands in line with other Monk poets of his country like Kamo-no-Chomei, Ryokan, or Kukai² if not with Basho, Sora and other poets *par excellence*. But even with them he shares a tradition, a tradition of travel and recording moments of discoveries in short poems.

Kawaguchi never aspired to be a poet. But he wrote poetry in the most beatific moments of his life and at such turns of fate in which ordinarily a person may not survive. His biographers and commentators, the western writers about his works and travels, his friend and "guru" Sarat Chandra Das, his own nephew the late Akira Kawaguchi, his niece Emi Miyata and the pioneering anthropologist Jiro Kawakita whom Kawaguchi's niece credits with being the first Japanese to find out and report the authenticity of Kawaguchi's travels to Tibet via Nepal, all have the same opinion about his poetry. They either do not consider the poems as important or consider them as aberrations and think he would have written his travel accounts with greater clarity without this poetic bent of mind.

Sarat Chandra Das, when writing to the Geographical Society in Tokyo to answer the query of the latter about the authenticity of

¹ *Three Years*, p. 232.

² The poets and collections referred to here are Kamo-no-Chomei (1155-1216), *Hojoki Visions of Torn World*, trans. Yosuhiko Moriguchi and David Jenkins (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1996); Ryokan (1758-1831), *One Robe One Bowl the Zen Poetry of Ryokan*, trans. John Stevens (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1977, 1996).

Kawaguchi's travels in 1903 considered his poetic mind as a problem to the records of the facts. He wrote to the Society, "he is a truthful narrator, but he is not a scientific discoverer... You will have to sit down with him for days, otherwise his imagination will run away with him. He has a poetic turn of mind. This you will have to check, because the Geographical Society wants stern facts and figures."³ Das is certainly correct in his observation because Kawaguchi's travel accounts are full of passion, facts and imagination, and more importantly, his vision of life, meaning and salvation that he records in his *uta* is so substantially different from Das' own scientificity because Kawaguchi's travels were poetic travels made on his own with no obligation to report to anybody with facts and figures.

Kuloy, H.K. the editor of the Kathmandu edition of *Three Years in Tibet* says, he "was indulgent with his poetic frame of mind" a quality he puts at par with his "haughty asceticism" and "obsession with cleanliness."⁴ Scott Berry, another biographer of Kawaguchi who has written an interesting and readable interpretation of Kawaguchi's visit to Tibet and has opened up some new interests in Kawaguchi studies too dismisses his poetic bent of mind as aberration. He regrets that Kawaguchi wrote more poems in his second visit to Tibet in the book called *Setsuzan Uta Ryoko* ("Poetic Travels in the Snow Mountains") "one third" of which "is in verse," or "allows his poetic fancy free rein."⁵ But this regret is not necessary because as the title suggests, the author was making poetic travels, because after his long travels across the Roof of the world, after a prolonged meditative encounters with nature, as a monk who came from the poetic-spiritual tradition of *uta* writing, he had considered recording the awe, power and beauty of the mountains and the moments of discoveries—the moments of *satori* as the most important thing to do.

But it is also a little strange that Berry, who made some very important and frank assessments of the monk's achievements and seen the authenticity of his accounts of these travels to Tibet and Nepal being

³ Quoted in Berry, p. 258.

⁴ H.K. Kuloy, ed., *Three Years in Tibet* (Kathmandu: Bibliotheca Himalayica, 1979,1995; first edition 1909), p. vi.

⁵ Scott Berry, *A Stranger in Tibet* (Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992, 1993), p. 271.



25 *Varuṇa*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 79, photo no. 2-025)



26 *Śākyamuni-Buddha*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 79, photo no. 2-011)



27 *Ratnārcis*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 79, photo no. 2-013)



28 *Vīrasena*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 79, photo no. 2-015)



29 This memorial slab stands at Kawaguchi's umareta tokoro, his birthplace, inside a lane in Nankai area of Sakai city where the house stood before. (Photo: Author)



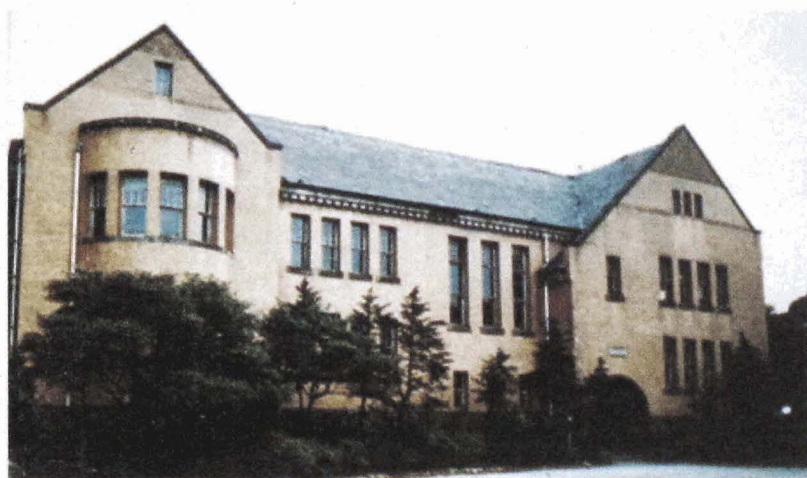
30 This statue of Ekai Kawaguchi dedicated to his memory by the people of his native city of Sakai stands by the side of a wide street in Nankai. In this statue Kawaguchi is shown as climbing the Himalayas under the weight of his luggage with his sheep carrying the rest of it. At the bottom of the column words written by Prof. Jiro Kawakita about Kawaguchi are inscribed. (Photo: Author)



31 Picture of one of the main Zen temples inside Mampukuji. Kyoto. (Photo: Author)



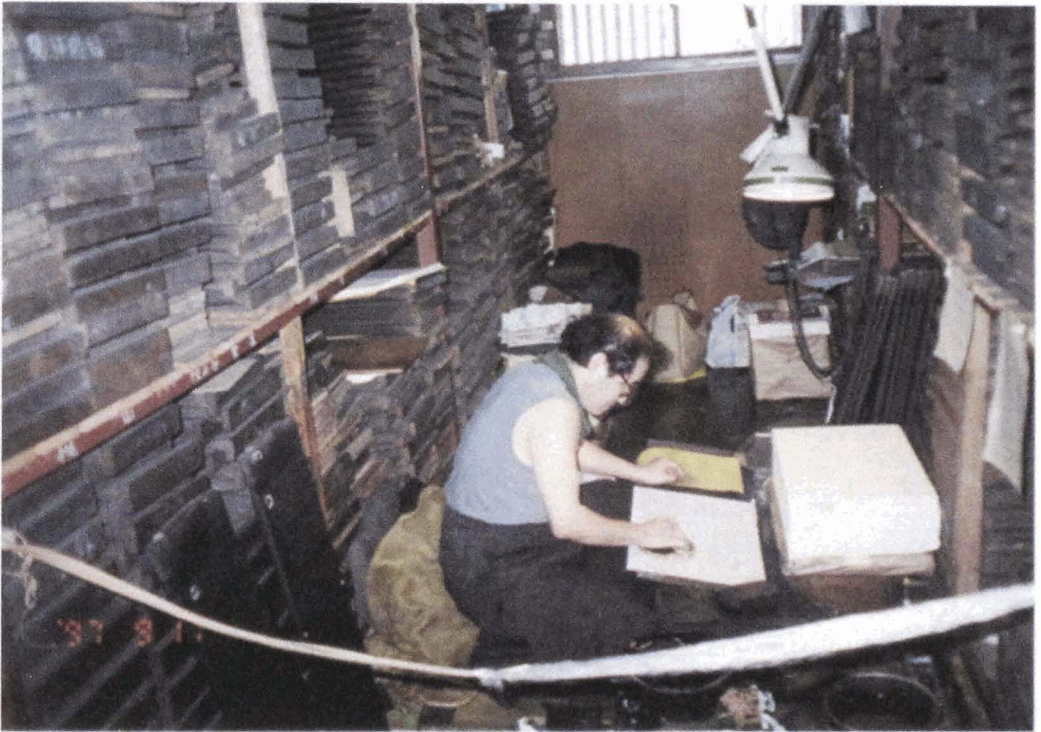
32 *These trees inside the Mampukuji temple in Kyoto are supposed to be the saplings brought in by Kawaguchi from Nepal. Prof. Takayama does not agree with this theory. But these Himalayan cedar trees remind people of Kawaguchi's trip to Nepal and Tibet.*
(Photo: Bindu Subedi)



33 *This is the picture of the former building of Toyo Bunko where Kawaguchi came to work on his Tibetan-Japanese dictionary project during the last years of his life, in the forties. The present building exists in its place.*
(Courtesy: Toyo Bunko, Photo from photo: Author)



34 In the Kawaguchi collection room at Tohoku University in Sendai with Prof. Ariga on my left and Hata-san on my right. The items in the collection were brought in trunks like those put on the top of the cabinet. (Photo: Seiji Ichibori)



35 This picture shows the room at Honzoh-in, a sub-temple at Mampukuji. This is claimed to have "the only set of the scripture printing blocks now in the world." Kawaguchi had the Tripitakas he gave to Maharajah Chandra Shamsher, now kept at the National Archive Kathmandu, printed here. (Photo: Author)



36 The two scrolls show Kawaguchi's calligraphic skill. His calligraphy in Sanskrit and Japanese is excellent. The Sanskrit mantra reads "I bow to the great Shakyamuni Buddha." The same mantra is written in Japanese also. (Courtesy: Sakai City Museum. Photo: Bindu Subedi)



37 According to a senior lady the houses in the picture looked like the house where Kawaguchi was born. (Photo: Author)



38 Ekai Kawaguchi's monument made in November 1997 on the façade of the house of Buddha Bajra Lama. Kawaguchi had stayed in this house when he first entered Nepal in 1899 and later in 1905 when he wrote 'Memorial' to Chandra Shamsher Rana. This monument was unveiled by his niece Emi Miyata and is dedicated to Kaoru Sumiyoshi (d: 1995) for his promotion of Nepal-Japan friendship. (Photo: Madhab L. Maharjan)

the reflections of an insider's feelings, should ignore the creative aspect of the monk's journey as reflected in *uta*. Berry himself quotes two *uta* that Kawaguchi wrote on the second trip called "the poetic travels" which speak a great deal about the mode of his travels and the stage the monk-poet traveller outside the familiar Japanese space had reached now:

The sky, the snow mountains,
 Reflected in the Tista,
 Are but a symbol of my happiness⁶

The monk identifies his happiness in nature now. In most of his poems written in his first travel to Tibet via Nepal his poems record the moments of joy but each such moment is a surprise, an epiphany in them. But now the tone is different which the next verse he quotes makes even more clear:

Voices of peasant women,
 Singing as they work,
 Mingle with the sounds of cattle;
 And, over all, one hears
 The great peaceful voice of the snow-covered peaks.⁷

The last line is the culmination of the mood, the *satori*, the moment of discovery. It is very characteristic of Zen poetry. The monk-poet hears voice of silence, a Zen, a moment away from books and cloister, like the monk poet Shutaku in the following verse:

For all these years, my certain Zen:
 Neither I nor the world exist.
 The sutras neat within the box,
 My cane hooked upon the wall,
 I lie at peace in moonlight
 Or, hearing water plashing on the rock,

⁶ Scott Berry, *A Stranger in Tibet*, *ibid*, p. 274.

⁷ Scott Berry, *A Stranger in Tibet*, *ibid*

Sit up: none can purchase pleasure such as this:
Spangled across the step-moss, a million coins!⁸

Kawaguchi had walked out of the bounds of a Zen trope. He does not have small props like the cane, wall, and small images like step-moss, a feature we will discuss in the following pages, but he has the same mood of active withdrawal, and acquires the same Zen when he can hear the voice of the peaks. His range and images are broader and bigger than conceived of within the Zen tradition of travel poetry in most of the poems in this book. One-third of the book is occupied by them.

But interestingly, there is another difference. Shutaku packs all his sutras within a box and acquires this state of Zen whereas Kawaguchi has gone out again to acquire more Sastras not Sutras from the high priests and Lamas of Tibet in this trip made for the same purpose. The Japanese mode of textual affinity with Sutras more than Sastras which is the Tibetan, Nepali and Indian mode of Buddhist philosophy and religion also suggests how he had chosen a path of the Sastras different from the emphasis of his native Zen monks on Sutras. But he remains basically a Zen monk whose moments of discoveries are arrived at by the same process as those of other native Zen poets in Japan.

Kawakita, however, does not find so much poetic quality in his poems. In an introduction written to the more recent Kudansa edition of his report of the second trip to Tibet, Kawakita says:

Utaniki has especially a fine taste that cannot be described well. This does not mean that his poems are good. In fact, his poems are frankly speaking very poor in both this book and "The Trip to Tibet." Good poems are extremely rare. Those poems that I was impressed as good ones are only two or three. For example:

Running clouds
now I realize
it is sleeting
as they go along
beating rocks and smokes

⁸ Shutaku (1308-88), quoted in Lucien Stryk and Takashi Ikemoto ed., trans., *The Penguin Book of Zen Poetry* (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 67.

This poem reflects the feeling of a traveller who stayed at a rocky hut on a mountain in the grandiose Himalaya. Despite the poor quality, one can feel the good taste of this poem if it is read together with an account of a journey. Because this is the poem that can only be read by a person who actually travelled there.’

Kawakita does not entirely dismiss his poems as eccentricities or the poetic accounts of his travels as “disturbingly disorganized tome that reads at times more like a stream-of-consciousness novel than an important record of travels in an unknown land.”¹⁰ Kawakita considers the reading of his *uta* as an important part of appreciating the spirit of Kawaguchi’s travels. He also recognizes the poetic quality of some of his *uta*. But it is also true to say that one who has been there can enjoy the descriptions of a place better. But the very pleasure of reading a travel is to encounter the unknown land and meet unfamiliar people through the medium of the text. More interesting than that would be to read the poetic accounts of a particular place because the complex moments of experience find expression in the poems, in the *uta* in the case of Kawaguchi.

Kawakita makes a very right observation that Kawaguchi’s poems should be read in the light of his travel experience. His poems are the true records of his moments of discoveries. It is this so called stream-of-consciousness, these poetic wanderings, these irrational moments that make Kawaguchi’s travel accounts very non-Western narratives of the time when Western countries were exploring new archival spaces to collect not only the archives that a place had to offer but also to study other possibilities of trade and territorial expansions. This makes him an independent Asian explorer who was out in search of authenticity and thrill of spiritual discoveries.

Kawaguchi’s demerits as gleaned from the interpretations of various peoples of his travels and writings are that he remains a poetic traveller, a non-colonial, a non-commissioned nomad, who extends his search beyond the ken of not only his own compatriots but also those of

⁹ Jiro Kawakita, “Introduction to Kawaguchi Ekai,” *Daini-kai Chibetto Ryoko Ki* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1981), p. 9. The translation is done for me by Tadashi Nagata in Tokyo.

¹⁰ Berry, *ibid.*, p. 295.

others who would not understand the language, or the description of a place which failed to give any information about the archives, correct information about the movements of colonial rivals, or the possibilities of trade with that country. That is why Kawaguchi's demerits remain that of a person from whose accounts such information could not be gathered, and the authenticity of whose accounts about the rivals of the British empire in India, the Russians, was not found to be correct and useful for working out a military strategy, although Younghusband summarizes the monk's entire chapter to describe the Tibetans and their culture as mentioned earlier.

Western and Western-based scholars even today tend to "dismiss him as a spy who sent misleading information to the British."¹¹ For various reasons "Today he is little read, and appreciated even less"¹² but interestingly new editions of Younghusband's missions are coming out every now and then because his information about Tibet ring true even today as they did yesterday because the interest in Tibetan archives still remains high in the West. But to my mind, Kawaguchi's demerit remains his strength; the greatest point of his demerit, his poetry is an important trope of a creative and independent Zen monk-poet explorer's strength. Paradoxically, Kawaguchi's relative obscurity also remains a point of his strength because by not becoming part of, to use poet Ooka Makoto's expression "the banquet," by remaining an individual worker, he chose to be left alone rather than being of use to the state whose war policies he did not condone. As he was not a poet *par excellence*, he did not belong to any group. He could not have just remained a poet either because there was a great deal of interest in his experience as a Tibet explorer in his own home country and some in the Indian subcontinent.

Kawakita rightly observes that Kawaguchi's poetry is best understood, and I think should be read, against the background of his travels. Like a poet whose main objective is to write poetry and use that

¹¹ "Tibetan historian W.D. Shakabpa (who was under the impression that Kawaguchi went disguised as a Ladakhi), who dismisses him as a spy who sent misleading information to the British" (p. 306) in his book *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1984). The other curious point according to this account is that one great demerit of Kawaguchi was, he gave the British raj in India incorrect information.

¹² Berry, *ibid*, p. 306

medium to express his or her sense of creativity and discoveries by remaining either as a rebel or a conformist within a tradition, Kawaguchi does not undergo a painful process of adjustment with his tradition. For that matter, he does not aspire to write and make corrections and hold up the mirror of the father figures, the predecessor poets to see his own image, which is common phenomenon in writing. He did share the Zen tradition of realizing the Nirvanic moments, the moments of the sudden flash of *jnyāna*, what they call *satori* in the Zen vocabulary referring to the tradition of attaining enlightenment not through heavy doses of Sastras but through the aesthetic perception of the faith realized in a flash, which we want to briefly discuss below.

Tradition of Travel and Poetry

Poetry

Japanese Monk poets inherited a tradition of aesthetics because it was part of the spiritual awareness, like the Sufi tradition of identifying beauty which became manifest in the physical objects, food, drink and love. The more Sastra-based schools of Buddhism would find it difficult to appreciate and fully understand the spirit of the religious awakening and ways of appreciating beauty and the mystic process of merging the identity to the universe, to nature and to the creation of God as becomes manifest in the palatable, tactile and sensual images, the means to establish a contact with the infinite source of beauty and strength.

The Monk poets combined individualism, the original moments of creativity with the broader spiritual and communal harmony, a mode of unique communication, a literary partnership, a unique brotherhood not seen in any other poetic spiritual tradition. It was the sharing of the moments of poetry-- sharing of the moments of *satori*, or that of the flash of the *jnyāna* with fellow Monks or poets. It is very relevant and revealing to quote two Monk poets of the Later Medieval Age here to see this phenomena of *uta* writing, and the sharing of the moments of discovery with a fellow poet in the form of *renga*, loosely translated as linked verse. But in the following extracts we can only see the pragmatic space created by each poet for the other poets to enter and not the *renga* link of poetry. Two prominent poets of this form Monk Zenna (late

thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries) and Monk Gusai (d. 1376)¹³ express this grand confluence of aesthetics and spiritual awareness in the following poems:

In a test of endurance
I would prove the weaker
Sooner to fall
than the cherry blossoms
will be my tears.

-Zenna, *Spring*¹⁴

In this poem two states of mind and two levels of awareness are merged together. But each stanza is independent yet linked by the poetic awareness between spirituality and the sense of beauty as semantically linked by 'weaker' in the first stanza and 'tears' in the second. There is an opening for a link, a pragmatic context engendered by the first stanza, whereas the second stanza draws its context anaphorically from the first. This is a great spirit of the *renga* as realized at the level of the pragmatic relationship not only between two modes of poetic experience but also at the more subtle levels of spiritual and poetic consciousness.

The other poem by Monk Gusai expresses similar unity of spirituality and poetic discovery of the moments of love which in other words, is the moment of spiritual consciousness:

In the pond, a rock
where waterfalls become a spray.
The tears I shed
come down in a cascade
on my inkstone.¹⁵
Gusai, *Love*

¹³ For more discussions about *uta* and Monk poets and their poems see Steven D. Carter, trans. and intro., *Traditional Japanese Poetry An Anthology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp 275-344.

¹⁴ Steven D. Carter, trans. and intro., *Traditional Japanese Poetry An Anthology*, *ibid*, p.277

¹⁵ Steven D. Carter, trans. and intro., *Traditional Japanese Poetry An Anthology*, *ibid*, p. 279.

There is the pragmatics of *renga* in these two stanzas, a communicative link between two different physical experiences. In the stanza which comes as part of the chain, the experience created by the constellation of pond, rock and waterfall becomes a powerful spiritual awareness of love in the second stanza which looks dissimilar at its face value, at the level of the constellation of different images such as tears, cascade and inkstone, with tears as waterfall and inkstone as pond. The picture after this chain realization becomes that of a lover, a Monk here, writing with a pen dipped in the inkstone with tears. This is the moment of epiphany, a flash of *jnyāna* arrived at after moments of meditation where love and spirituality merge to create this consciousness.

Kawaguchi's *uta*, which are always not so subtle, expresses a Monk's process of unifying aesthetics with spirituality. Place is an important element in his poetry because as we discussed earlier, he had come out of the trope-- a canonical limit for space put by his cultural tradition, to the roof of the world. Therefore, we should be prepared to see the level of *satori*, the *jnyāna* he acquires at various moments of physical and psychological conditions of experience and turn of events. The following *uta* for instance records one such moment, the moment which defines its own *raison d'être*:

How beautiful
It is to see grass dead, but blooming yet
With frost, upon a high plateau.¹⁶

Here Kawaguchi uses the subtlety of the poetry of the Monk poets. He creates a gap between two dissimilar experiences; the grass is dead yet it is blooming. But since Kawaguchi's poems record the moments of reaching a place and experiencing an event or occasion, they do not remain within the subtle limits of the Monk poet's *uta*. But like Ryokan and Kukai he keeps recreating the spiritual experience by quite obtrusively bringing in the reference of Buddha and his divine strength that is depicted as powerful yet benign.

The drama of life makes inroads into his writing of poetry and travel accounts because places and events are too real to be ignored.

¹⁶ *Three Years*, p.232.

Japanese Buddhism has a strong aesthetic base and the sensation of life is too strong to be given a secondary importance. Therefore, however greater the lure of the Sastras and the impact of their readings may be on Kawaguchi, he was a Zen Monk, a devout Japanese Buddhist whose ways of realizing spiritual awareness emanated from a tradition of experiencing the subtle objects of nature. And however austere and strict he may be, he had seen life and had realized that he could not easily ignore it, as we can see in the following confession written after a woman on his Tibetan journey calls him 'stupid':

You call me stupid; that am I, I grant
 But yet in love-affairs being wiser grown,
 Tis safe for me to be more stupid still.¹⁷

In his poetry Kawaguchi inherits the traditions of both Zen poetry and the Japanese sense of aesthetics. Prominent modern Japanese poet Ooka Makoto says that in modern times there is a strong tendency for the revival of the short verse writing and the Japanese sense of aesthetics, the revival of the tradition of *haiku*, for example, which is very close to the concept of the meaningful silence as creatively used as a form of poetic writing by the Zen poets. Makoto identifies the following characteristics of Japanese poetry:

1. its intimate involvement with the details of daily life and its consequent "earthiness;" its dynamic role as a force in the society and as a presence in the experience of the people;
2. the resulting tension it reveals between the claims of the mundane and of the elevated or refined; and, within that tension,
3. the continuing interplay, sometimes struggle, between the "banquet" of communal involvement and the private vision of the "solitary mind."¹⁸

¹⁷ *Three Years*, p. 156.

¹⁸ Ooka Makoto, *The Colours of Poetry*, translated by Takako U. Lento and Thomas V. Lento (Michigan: Katydid Books Oakland University, 1991), p. 28.

Makoto says that Japanese poets write privately but share their creative experiences collectively. They take part in what he calls “banquet.” The poet’s individual creative strength is by no means diminished by the participation and sharing. The *renga* which stems from the tradition of sharing poetic experiences reflects the same tradition. Very interestingly Makoto says that the poet should not sacrifice the “solitary self” but should find one’s place in the world of banquet which he calls, “the world of the collective spiritual body.” The individual seeker, the poet who draws strength from his very individual act of creation has to undergo a process of tension with “the world of the collective spiritual body.” But “if they cut themselves off from the world of the “banquet” and withdraw into the solitary mind alone, their works mysteriously lose power.”¹⁹

Kazuko Shiraishi, a prominent woman poet of modern times presents an alternate perspective of that. Her own poetry writing and her internationally oriented vision of life is a unique example of this alternate mode of creation, of Japanese poetry. In her recently published book *Kuroi Hetsujino Monogatari*²⁰ or “The Black Ship’s Story,” she tells the story of her poetic life and reminiscences of adjustment in Japan after her parents moved back to Japan from Canada when she was only eight years old. Since then she remained for the most part of her early career outside the “banquet” culture, living a poet’s life that was full of difficulties as a result of being on her own, outside the banquet. What she had to undergo for being on her own is the main story. Her predicament was that she became either too visible or invisible in her own country. But as a result, she created powerful poetry and has become one of the most internationally known poets of Japan today. But Makoto’s banquet analogy still holds. A poet has to undergo serious and series of tribulations being out of it, but as Kazuko Shiraishi’s case has shown, that does not diminish the power of writing. It becomes in a sense like the struggle of writers everywhere in the world, but in Japan,

¹⁹ Ooka Makoto, *The Colours of Poetry*, *ibid*, p. 35.

²⁰ Kazuko Shiraishi, *Kuroi Hetsujino Monogatari* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1996). She identifies herself as the black sheep that stood out from the others. She narrates her story of not being accepted for a long time. But she told me that the situation was different now. She has overcome this problem of being invisible or being too visible in her own country.

the group, the banquet, definitely plays a bigger role than in other countries.

Kawaguchi shared a tradition of poetry writing with the Zen monk poets but he practised it as a solitary experience. His solitary practice was not that of a poet *par excellence* but that of a monk who had to record the moments of his epiphany, and he found the poetic form very convenient and appropriate for recording moments and events. He did not participate in the banquet of the poets as such, nor was he interested in keeping himself in the company of poets. I asked his niece Emi Miyata who I thought could tell something about this aspect of the tension if he had experienced it in any way that could have been conspicuous especially in terms of keeping company with poets and writers and expressing his frustrations and hopes.

She was all the time dismissive of my curiosity about his poetry. She said people in Japan just do that as a matter of interest. He wrote *uta* not with passion but as a matter of habit she thought. To prove her point she said he wrote *uta* even in his diaries. She took my meaning for passion very literally. She said how would she know if he wrote poems in moments of passion or not. She was absolutely right about this. How could she perceive Kawaguchi's moments of tension between his solitary self and his desire or failure to participate in the 'banquet', the social aspect of sharing his moments of creation. She considered that writing *uta* was guided by the same impulse as writing sketches of the scenarios.

Emi Miyata did not consider the poetic mind of Ekai as a subject to be brought in for discussion. But she gave me one important information. She said he had poet and artist friends. The closest of them was poet Kotaro Takamura. He often visited him. When the poet came, Ekai made tea for him with so much care that it took him a long time to fix it. At that time she thought what a difficult thing must this art of making a cup of tea be. Kotaro Takamura was the son of a sculptor named Koun (?) who also visited him. It appears that Kawaguchi must have exchanged visits with the poet and sculptor quite often. Kawaguchi also had a painter friend named Keigetsu Matsubayashi, a very well known Japanese painter in monochrome,

whose house in Nigata did the family visit from July to September every year. He led a very unique life, Miyata recalls.²¹

A friendship with the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore was part of the monk's sense of affinity with the poets and his particular relationship with Tagore with whom he must have shared his concept of exploring a Pan-Asian culture based on art and poetry, which will be discussed later.

Kawaguchi's poetic self and his relationship with society, with the cohort of poets who formed the "banquet" is not recorded. It is appropriate to quote Makoto's remarks concerning Basho's problem of keeping his "isolated self" and his participation in the "banquet" here.

The tradition of recording the moments of poetic epiphany was not only limited to monks who were also poets. The tradition was also followed by travellers who were not monks. We can take the example of Takezoe Shin'ichiro (1842-1917), a Japanese traveller who in his travel to China in 1876 has written many striking poems in *haiku* style in the following manner:

Bridge along the cliff—
 Clinging for their very lives
 Ivy and maple leaves.²²

This *haiku* very interestingly reminds us of the famous *haiku* Basho wrote in his journey to the north, at Yamadera, at the "Hilltop Temple:"

In this hush profound,
 Into the very rocks it seeps—
 The cicada sound.²³

²¹ Interview with Emi Miyata.

²² Quoted and translated in Donald Keene, *Modern Japanese Diaries: The Japanese at Home and Abroad as Revealed through Diaries* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995) p. 143.

²³ Quoted and trans, in Dorothy Britton, *Haiku Journey: A Narrow Road to a Far Province* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974), p. 62.

Basho's practice reveals his conviction that his own "solitary mind," rooted in his own isolation was made most truly active and creative when supported by the lively response of others. Like Takezoe he recorded his moments of aesthetic awareness. But he was different from Takezoe. Kawaguchi was a monk and not a diplomat. So he stands more in line with the monk-poets than with travellers who also wrote poems. In other words, the genuine creativity of a "solitary mind" materializes only in the middle of the "banquet."²⁴

Kawaguchi did not apparently seek the lively or any other kind of response from others to his *uta* written on different occasions. His mind was, to use Makoto's phrase again, "in his own isolation." He did not seek to or exercise to create "verse in concert with others through a repeated question-and-answer-like exchange."²⁵ He did enter into a dialogue of a different order. His poetry was written as the exigency of his existence and was thus a trope of his long, arduous and devoted search for personal salvation and his own unique process of identification with nature, and the efforts to link his Sastra-based Buddhist faith with his Sutra-based and aesthetic Zen mode of perceiving the moments of discovery.

His search for personal salvation and meaning exposed him to different kinds of hardships. The long journey through the roof of the world was the epitome of this search. To achieve this goal he first of all entered into a dialogue with himself—opened a discourse with himself. He became his own addresser and his own addressee. He created his own pragmatics. He found this pragmatics too meaningful to dismiss as passing experience. He was thrilled by his own self that entered from one stage to another and came up with different moments of epiphany. He thus developed a strong urge to record such moments, to write them down. His *uta* records such moments.

As a prerequisite to this pragmatics and as a need to create the environment for the merger and his aesthetic self at par with the Japanese tradition established by the Zen poets, Kawaguchi created a pseudo self. He became a Chinese monk, Serai Amchi. Gradually, out of necessity,

²⁴ Makoto, *Colours of Japanese Poetry*, p. 134.

²⁵ Makoto, "Antidote for Anomie: Poetry for the Computer Age," in *Japan Foundation Newsletter*, Vol. xx/No. 1, p. 6.

he learned to enter into a dialogue with this alien self--his solitary creation.

The process of achieving personal salvation for Kawaguchi was to gradually withdraw to his own self and open this self for communication with the wider world, with a different space than he was ever familiar with. So the process of his search was paradoxical. On the one hand, he withdrew to himself, resorted to his very esoteric practices and evoked the earlier moralistic attitude of an orthodox monk to judge things; on the other, as he did so, he became wider and wider, his consciousness broader and broader and his thrill and sense of merger with the great, the big, beautiful and the wild, the rare beauty, the awe-inspiring nature which he calls by the name of Buddha, more and more powerful:

The distant clouds about the snowy range
 Pour forth the mighty Brahmaputra stream
 That darts into the farthest skies which meet
 The far horizon of the distant lands.
 The river in its pride majestic seems
 The waving standard of the Buddha, named
 Vairochana, all Nature's Brilliant Lord.²⁶

He calls the beautiful and strong currents of the river Brahmaputra called *sanpo* in Tibet "The waving standard of the Buddha" and evokes the mighty image of Vairochana, familiar in Japan, to address the great river.²⁷ I recall the great statue of Vairochana, the Daibutsu

²⁶ *Three Years*, p. 112.

²⁷ I went to see the *Todaiji* Temple the *Daibutsu* Buddha in Nara in September 1997. This was my long cherished dream. The sheer height of the Buddha's body is 48.9 ft., the length of the face 17.49 ft., length of eye 3.34ft., height of nose 1.64ft., length of ear 8.33ft., and the height of the lotus-petal 10 ft. The magnificent Buddha image is awe-inspiring.

The *Todaiji* is the headquarters of the Kegon sect of Buddhism founded in the Nara period fulfilling the wish of Emperor Shomu (c. 724-749). The *Daibutsu* Buddha, the *Vairocana*, as said in the brochure of the temple "shines light of wisdom and mercy and offers salvation to all beings in the universe."

Buddha in Nara, its sheer majesty, its size and the awe so very carefully created by the Japanese artists in the eighth century to reflect the Japanese concept of the Vairochana.

Through the evocation of the concept of the mighty, reached here from his awe of the space that he encounters, he transcends the narrow limits of his dialogue with the self. With a spiritually informed narcissism, Kawaguchi surpasses the native tropes, the boundaries laid down for a Zen poet for recording the moments of *satori* in poetry.

His discoveries thus emanate from the above duality, from the tension not between the 'banquet' and the 'solitary self' but between the self and the bigger world that he explored by means of this solitary self. But the toll of not recognizing the 'banquet' culture was quite heavy. He was not accepted for his poetry, for his moments of epiphany recorded in these short verses. But that mode of discourse with his own self, the incessant process of self-search and discovery continued to be the nature of his search. In fact, it became in course of time his *samadhi*, his realization, his *koan*, his *za-zen*, or his Zen, the first being the discipline of the Soto sect based on the dialogues between the old masters and disciples called *mondo*, and the second that of the Rinzai sect based on the use of meditation problems. Kawaguchi combines both processes, in what Suzuki calls the process of mysticism, and which Jung interprets on the basis of Western scientism as a state of undecidability, of "subtle moral suffering" or the "gloomy feeling of self-accusation" and the *satori* acquired thus as a psychic occurrence²⁸

The help of all the Japanese and people from outside Japan was solicited to construct this Buddha statue which transcended the barriers of religions and regions. This statue housed in the biggest wooden hall in "the world" suffered under different wars, in 1180 and again in 1567. Soon after it was enshrined the head of the Buddha fell off in an earthquake but was soon restored to its original position. The Daibutusu-den was burnt down and reconstructed in 1708. It is now only two third its original size but is still the largest wooden building in the world. Kawaguchi's comparison of the Brahmaputra with the Vairocana thus reflects the Japanese imagination of the awe and magnanimity of Daibutsu.

²⁸ D. T. Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1983, 1991), p. 35. In his introduction to this book, Jung interprets the enlightenment as a state of mind when we can not say whether a person really feels redeemed or it is his imaginary

Kawaguchi's moments of *satori* cannot be interpreted merely on the basis of this scientism. It can be identified as a unique process adopted by an individual for broadening one's horizons of creative and spiritual perceptions. The Japanese mode of artistic expression that combines spiritualism with aesthetics offers a unique example of this process. Suzuki, in yet another book about Zen and Japanese culture, calls the simplicity of such expressions as the "innate longing for primitive simplicity, close to the natural state of living."²⁹

In the case of Kawaguchi, the *koan* takes place between his very privately created pseudo self and that of a monk who inherited the Japanese tradition of merging aesthetics with spiritualism, small and narrow with what is big and broader, and the self with the great nature that he likens with the power of the Buddha as seen above in the Brahmaputra image and the apostrophized descriptions of the mighty mountains and landscape, rivers and animals. Some of his poems go like this:

Among these mountains high here sleeps the lake
 Serene—"Devoid of seething cares"—so named
 By native bards; its broad expanse appears
 Like the octagonal mirror of Japan.
 The grand Kailas' majestic capped with snow,
 The Moon o'rhanging from the skies above,
 Bestow their grateful shadows on the lake.
 Its watery brilliant sheen illumines me;
 All pangs of pain and sorrow washed away.
 With these my mind besoothed now wanders far
 E'en to Akashi in Japan, my home,
 A seashore known for moonlight splendors fair.³⁰

The 'grand Kailas' majestic is similar to his evocation of the power of the river, the next *uta* about river Brahmaputra:

enlightenment. Jung's perception is based on the Western concept of pain that is believed to emanate from what he calls "gloomy feeling of secret self-accusation." (15)

²⁹ D.T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1988, 1994), p. 23.

³⁰ *Three Years in Tibet* p. 143.

Like to the Milky Way in Heaven at night,
 With stars begemmed in countless numbers decked,
 The Brahmaputra flashes on the sight,
 His banks, fit haunt for Gods, appear
 In gorgeous splendours from the snowy height.³¹

The monk is awed not only by the scenic splendours but also by the more subtle expression of the power of nature, the manifestation of the divine in yet another form:

the night sleeps still and calm,
 the moon shines bright,
 What ho!--so loud a roar
 the stillness breaks,
 Vibrating—ah! It is a tiger fierce!
 In ripples rough his roar terrific throws
 The surface even of the mountain stream.³²

The power of the tiger is depicted here as the expression of the mysticism of nature. The calm and quietness of the moonlit night broken by the vibrating fierceness of the tiger that even throws the surface of the mountain streams is part of the monk's new and wider mode of realizing the epiphenic moments. The monk's transcendence of the bounds of the native trope becomes clear if we compare the ripples caused by the tiger with that caused by frog in Basho's famous *haiku*, by its jumping in the ancient pond:

The old pond, ah!
 A frog jumps in:
 The water's sound!³³

Kawaguchi is neither Basho's equal nor a contemporary as a poet. That is not the point here. But the point is that Kawaguchi shared the

³¹ *Three Years*, p. 185.

³² *Three Years*, p. 33.

³³ Quoted in Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, p.227.

same tradition of Zen mysticism as Basho. Nature is represented by the ancient pond, and the frog's jump into it is a merger of the poet or of the individual into it. This is dramatized in this epic of seventeen syllables. But Kawaguchi has extended that very Zen mysticism to encounter the grand, what he calls the powerful and majestic aspects of nature. The dynamic conditions of the monk's experience acquired through his travels--his development, his merger with the bigger nature--with its various manifestations which are the objects of worship for him through what he thinks their sacrality--are recorded in his *uta* more than in any other forms of discourse.

To cope with the problems he has to encounter with the physically strong and mighty nature, its harshness and beauty, Kawaguchi takes recourse to *za-zen* which eventually becomes his survival strategy. He thinks he survived bivouacking on the Himalayan plateau by means of his *dhyana*, his *za-zen*. He combines the meditation with poetry, his survival strategy, and feels that he was at once combining three things--*za-zen*, poetry and the tradition of *uta* in Japanese language. The following description of his most painful and disastrous night in the open over this high Tibetan freezing cold is very eloquent about this combination of the different dimensions of the spirituality, aesthetics and tradition.

A very remarkable example of how poetry becomes his survival instinct and strength—a reality that records not only his moments of epiphany but also the very spirit of his poetry:

My eyes felt as if they would burst, and I could not remain quiet. Moreover, the snow recommenced falling in the evening, and the cold was extreme and when I lay down I felt the biting coldness of the snow on my head. I pressed the snow on my eyes, but it did not lessen the pain in the least. A cold sweat broke out all over me from the pain and cold, and, in trying to calm myself, I found that my body was becoming benumbed by the frost. I tried keeping my eyes shut, and anointed them abundantly with the oil of cloves. But slumber was far from me. I riveted my thoughts on Buddhism, and was doing my best to keep down the pain, when, quite unexpectedly, I was inspired with an *uta*, which runs:

Upon these plains of snow, my bed is snow,
 My pillow, snow; my food also the same;
 And this my snowy journey, full of pain.

The effusion soothed my heart, and I felt more than ever thankful
 for the beauty of the Japanese language.³⁴

That is why, in his second journey to Tibet he writes more poetry than in the previous, which his biographers, critics and reviewers dismiss as his eccentricity. To my mind, they miss the very mode of his search for salvation, the very power that led him through the difficult journeys. His biographers try to depict him as yet another familiar archetype of a traveller to a foreign land. The image, the trope they seek to evoke through him is that of a Western traveller, an explorer of the colonial times, whom Younghusband considers almost like another Englishman, an agent of the state, a person out to gather information. I am not saying that Kawaguchi did not gather information, or people did not benefit from his information, or he did not develop a great lure for accumulation of props himself, but he did all these out of his personal taste, as part of his search for meaning, authenticity and credibility. We will discuss this aspect of his journey in the next section.

In the context of his poetry writing, it is important to see his unique process of making the Japanese tradition of combining spiritualism with creativity, with aesthetics, and above all doing it with a manner uniquely his own.

To see how he projects the duality of his self, how the tension between the two circles--one of his almost narcissistically secluded self, and the other of the broader self, and the merger of these circles in the nature he saw and lived with, in the culture he experienced and studied about, and in the places he visited, which provided a stage for the drama of this tension between the two selves to take place, we should carefully read his *uta* and the literary and creative quality of his travel narration because his *uta* is a unique construct of a combination of creativity and tradition. They represent, to use Jacques Derrida's expression, the *écriture* phenomenon, because when he was freezing and close to death

³⁴ *Three Years, 196-197.*

he would not have written a *uta*, but he very confidently says that he wrote an *uta* at that critical moment. By saying so with confidence as if he wrote it on the occasion, Kawaguchi was evoking the tradition. Thus his *uta* is an *écriture* phenomenon that he inherited from the tradition of the travelling Zen monk poets. But the textual construct before and after it was written down epitomizes his blending of creativity and tradition. Survival itself is at stake in such blending in the case of Kawaguchi, which also shows a unique feature of the Japanese sense of creativity and poetry writing.

TRAVEL

Trope and Tradition

Travel as a trope in the Zen tradition has been discussed earlier. Kawaguchi was treading on the path of his predecessors as well as carving out his own map on the terrain of the ancient Buddhist land. In *uta* writing he was following the tradition of his predecessor Zen monk poets but without suffering from the intertextual tension with the predecessor's works or from what Bloom calls the "anxiety of influence."

According to Harold Bloom, an individual poet establishes intertextual relationship with his or her predecessor poets. A strong poet has another predecessor poet whose presence is strong. The poet tries to overcome the influence of the predecessor and carve out his or her own space in the poetic tradition. The precursor text still stands as a strong influence. An "anxiety of influence" results from this tension. By using the Freudian theory of oppression of the past or that of the influence that an individual incessantly tries to overcome to achieve one's freedom. Bloom develops a theory of a more embattled approach to intertextuality. Strong poets try to counter the tropes of limitation with tropes of restitution.³⁵ The other aspect of this process is that the strong poet often misreads the works of the predecessor poet. The misreading

³⁵ Harold Bloom has developed the theory of the "anxiety of influence" in the intertextual study of literary writers' works in his tetralogy, the three now very well known books—*The Anxiety of Influence* (1973, 1997), *A Map of Misreading* (1975), *Kabbalah and Criticism* (1975), and *Poetry and Repression* (1976).

thus constitutes an important part of the intertextual relationship mentioned above.

In an article in the recent collection of articles about Japanese culture and the studies of the “translation and transformations” of it Haruo Shirane makes a very interesting study of the anxiety of influence in an article entitled, “Matsuo Basho’s *no hosomichi* and the Anxiety of Influence.”³⁶ According to Shirane the Bloomian “Anxiety of Influence” works differently in Japanese literary culture. “The strong poet neither suffers from the anxiety of influence nor resists the influence of the predecessor, but pays tribute to him. Shirane does not mention the Zen tradition of the role of a Guru working behind this culture, which in fact seems to be working behind this tradition. He says Basho pays tribute to Saigyō (1118-1190) whom he venerates as his guru. In the Japanese medieval *kikobun* literature the traveller “gravitates towards the familiar, especially towards *utamakura* (poetic places).”³⁷ By visiting the far north, for example “Basho was able to come into contact with the heart of the ancient poets” and was able to “pay tributes to the dead.”

In the Western concept of travel the discovery of the unknown, the thrill of discovery is the uppermost concern. But in Japanese tradition it does not work that way. It is like treading on familiar places to pay tribute to the predecessor. Thus the path of the travel provides “nodes in the poetic tradition and links to poetic ancestors.”³⁸ But the point of interest is that by doing so, Basho carved out a route for himself. His impact altered the map of the route considerably. His disciple Sora who was travelling with him is an interesting case in point.

Sora was at once travelling through the routes of the grand-father and father images, that of Saigyō or that of his Guru, Basho with whom he was travelling. This provides another point of difference between the Western and Japanese traditions. The individual poet or the traveller retains and even enhances his individuality and originality by treading on the path of his predecessor poet or paying tribute to him.

³⁶ Haruo Shirane, “Matsuo Basho’s *no hosomichi* and the Anxiety of Influence,” in Amy Vladeck Heinrich, ed., *Currents In Japanese Culture Translations and Transformations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 171-183.

³⁷ Haruo Shirane, *ibid*, p. 171.

³⁸ Haruo Shirane, *ibid*, p. 172.

In a comparative study of four writers—Basho and Sora made in 1689 and Boswell and Johnson in 1773, all went to the far north of their countries, Earl Minor makes a study of the personalities and roles of the two other persons Sora and Boswell in the journeys.³⁹ Sora was a junior disciple *par excellence* but Boswell was not a disciple to Johnson in the same sense. But he needed Johnson for his own identity. Sora did not care so much about his identity as to be a partner in his creative journey about which he wrote later. “Sora took as his responsibility the recording his poetic master’s journey with a solemn self-denial concealing certain genuine merits.” In the case of Boswell “he were a handful of quicksilver, he finds himself slipping through his own grasp.” But whereas Basho intended to make his journey a trope of his *haiku* journey and wrote for himself. Johnson did not write as much as Boswell did about the journey himself. There is thus an important difference. But the point of interest for us is not so much for comparison of the writers as the role of the individual poet in the tradition, and his handling of the anxiety of influence which it is noticed works differently in Japanese literature than in the Western or other literary traditions.

We should not stretch this generalization to include all phases of Japanese literature, especially the modern one where the trope of a literary travel and the tradition of paying tribute to the Guru no longer holds so comfortably as we tend to think it does. But to use Ooka Makoto’s description, Japanese literature has a tendency to evoke the tradition again, especially in the context of the “control and standardization mechanisms of the computer-age society.” Makoto’s theory is that “this same social circumstance is responsible for the current boom of short verse poetry.”⁴⁰ That is why, there is so much boom of *tanka* and *haiku* today. “An estimated one or two million amateur poets are thought to be composing and enjoying these traditional poems all over Japan today,” of which “at least 100-150 volumes arrive in the mail every month, and under their increasing weight the floor of” his “small

³⁹ Earl Minor, *Naming Properties* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996). Miner’s main focus in this book is an intercultural study of the phenomenon of naming things. The comparison has significant section on the literary merit of the intercultural study.

⁴⁰ Makoto, “Japanese Poetry,” *ibid*, p. 5.

workroom is gradually sinking.”⁴¹ The poet says, there is revival of traditional poetry, that Basho and Sora wrote in their travels. It is a different journey back to tradition but made as a response to the massive standardization and computerization of the information structure and people’s yearning “for the richness to be found in silence.”⁴²

Kawaguchi’s travels to Nepal and Tibet and his poetry do not emanate from the anxiety of influence. He did not make his travels as part of the resistance to the predecessors’ journeys nor did he write *uta* to resist the influence of his predecessors, the monk-poets. Interestingly, Kawaguchi did not write his *uta* as part of paying tribute to his Gurus either. He certainly had a long tradition of the monk poets, the Gurus whom he did not follow in any strict sense of the term. But his poems are created out of this tension between independence from and loyalty to tradition. They serve more of an existential function than a traditional one. But the tradition is still a very strong force behind his mode of describing and even undertaking the travel. Therefore to answer why Kawaguchi wrote *uta* to record the momentous moments of his travel, we should go back to the tradition of travelling monk poets in Japanese culture itself.

The tradition of travel to acquire the Buddhist canons and Sastras goes as far back as the ninth century when priest Ennin (793-864) made a trip to China (838-847). His travel account is also the first diary account of the monk traveller. But Ennin does not make any records of his moments of adventure and epiphany in *uta*. We do not get any access to Ennin’s self through his diary accounts.⁴³ But Keenes shows the tradition of recording the travels in *uta* or poems in Japanese as early as the tenth century. The diary of Tsurayuki (870?-945) written in 934-35 is the first recorded travel diary written in Japanese, written under the guise of a woman. The following extract shows the poetic tradition going as early as that of recording the moments of travel ecstasy:

⁴¹ Makoto, “Japanese Poetry,” *ibid*, p. 3.

⁴² Makoto, “Japanese Poetry,” *ibid*, p. 5.

⁴³ Keene, *Travellers of a Hundred Ages, 1000 Years of Diaries* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), p. 19.

When I gaze over
 The blue fields of the sea,
 I wonder if the moon
 Is the one that rose above
 Mikasa Mountain in Kasuga? ⁴⁴

Of the other poetic records of the moments of travel Keene describes among others, are those very moving accounts of Lady Daibu and the poems that record her grief, the power and function of which she recognizes. Her metalinguistic awareness is an important part of the travelling poets who record their emotions in their poems:

If not myself,
 Who, then, will be moved by pity
 As they gaze upon my words,
 Should they be handed down
 To later days?

After this metalinguistic awareness of her poetry we find the very moving nature of her grief that is best expressed in the poem in which nature enters her world, the world of the traveller. In fact, in a traveller's world, nature and the visitor merge into one consciousness, and that consciousness is expressed in poetry. Kawaguchi belongs to that old and powerful tradition. Lady Daibu's merger with nature or nature's merger into her world of travel is so brilliantly recorded in the following *uta*:

Here above the clouds,
 I gaze upon the brilliance
 Of such a sun and such a moon,
 And I can only feel
 How blissful is this fate of mine. ⁴⁵

The diaries of plebeians and feudal lords, mendicants and fakirs all belong to that grand tradition of diary entries of the travels which

⁴⁴ Keene, *Travellers of a Hundred Ages, 1000 Years of Diaries* ibid, p. 22.

⁴⁵ Keene, *Travellers of a Hundred Ages, 1000 Years of Diaries* ibid, p. 85.

record the moments of poetic epiphany. From the diaries of Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241), those of the Shoguns like Ashikaga Yoshinori (1394-1441), the honest and passionate confessions of ladies like the nun Abutsu's diary of 1240, to the diaries of strong Zen monk poets like Sogi written in 1499 and that of his disciple Socho recorded in his notebook (1522-1527), and the famous travel accounts of poet Basho and Sora as discussed above, all make up this great tradition of recording moments of ecstasy and discovery, passion and compassion, sadness and elation, beatific and gloomy moments, in short poems. Such tradition is very uniquely Japanese. The poets follow the tradition without any sense of ignominy or the pride of position or the anxiety of overcoming the influence. Kawaguchi's *uta*, his moments of realizations of the opening up of the new avenues of creativity and discovery thus belong to this great tradition. There is no need to isolate his *uta* from his actual travel experience. To do so would be a serious flaw in the study of his travel accounts and his sense of aesthetics and spirituality.

Kawaguchi's Poetic Trope

Kawaguchi's travel accounts though somewhat stylized by assisting editors and friends were personally supervised by the monk himself. With his sense of recording the moments of this great travel which became his surrogate life, the presence of the writer, the authenticity of the travel accounts cannot be doubted.

Kawaguchi's accounts of the moments of poetic ecstasy are also recorded in his prose as in this one taken from his English travelogue:

Once before the Tibetan New Year I was reading as usual at my desk, while the people were busy preparing for the New Year. I looked out of my window to see the snow. Oh the splendour of the sight! You can little imagine how much I was delighted when a crane appeared, strolling along in the snow, and filling me with sentimental and poetical reminiscences of my native land.⁴⁶

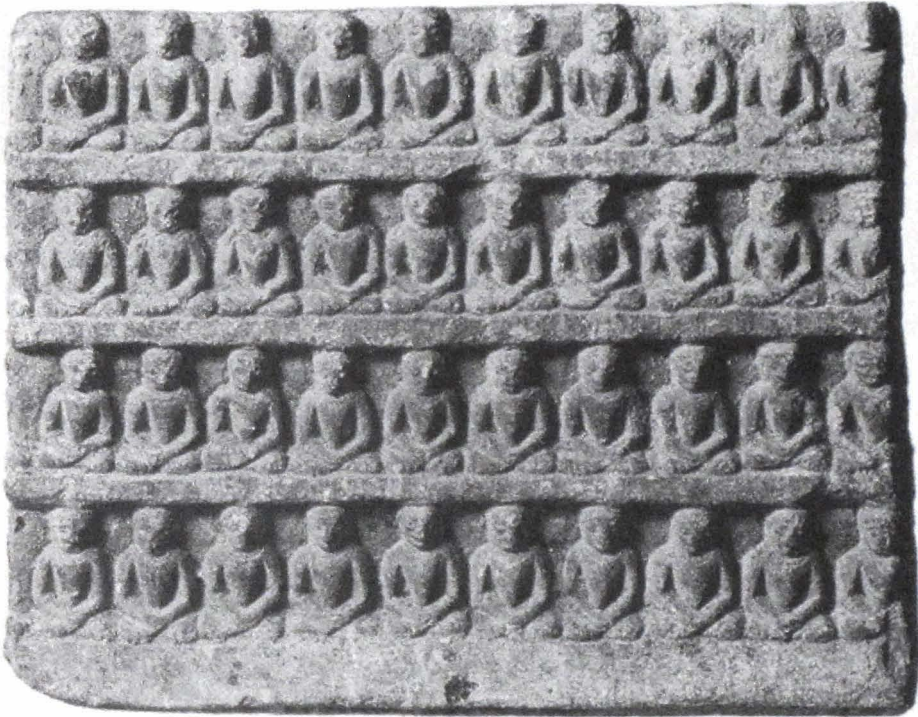
Kawaguchi finds the moments of silence not always epiphanic like other Zen poets. He is too honest to tell that he did feel so when

⁴⁶ *Three Years*, p. 267.



39 *Dream of Queen Māyā.* (218 mm)

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 67, photo no. 1-130)



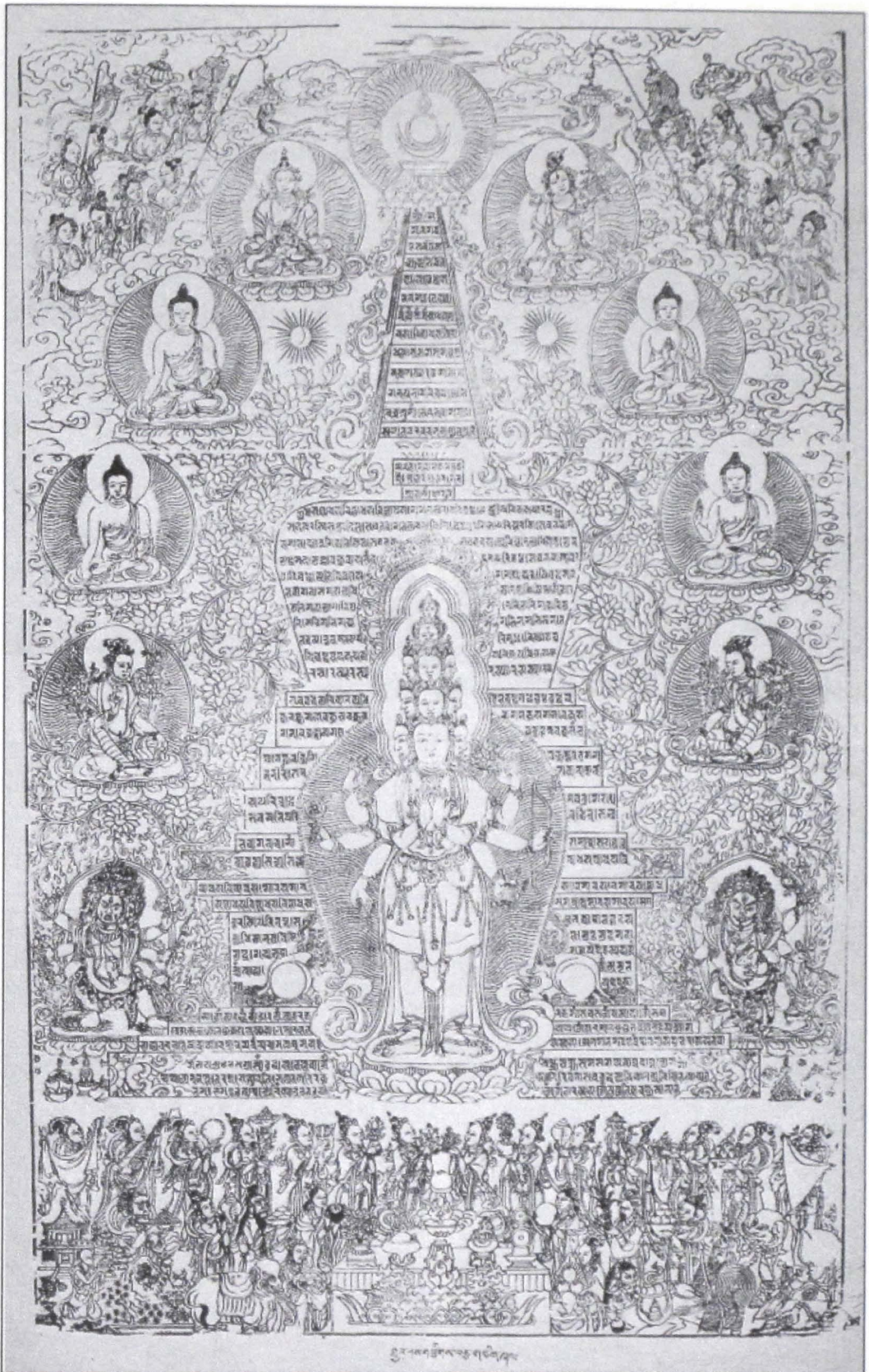
40 *A part of the statues of one thousand Buddhas.*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 68, photo no. 1-133)



41 Sūrya

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 71, photo no. 1-143, 513 mm)



42 Eleven headed Avalokitesvara

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 146, photo no. 2-112-1)



43 Śākyamuni-Buddha

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 99, photo no. 2-011)



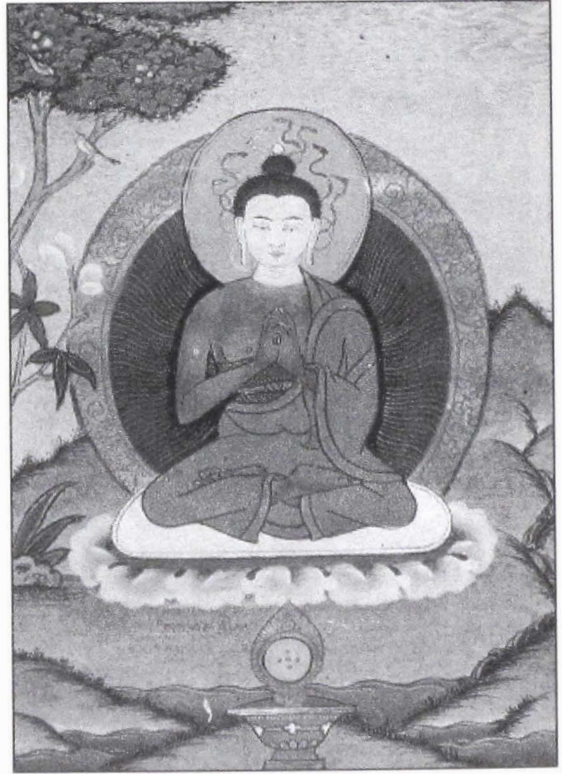
44 Vajrapramardin

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 99, photo no. 2-012)



45 Ratnārcis

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 99, photo no. 2-013)



46 Nāgésvararāja

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 99, photo no. 2-014)



47 *Tshe Iha rnam gsum*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 115, photo no. 2-051) Size 595 mm x 425 mm



48 Kālacakra Dhārāṇī - A Tantric mystic monogram

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 168, photo no. 2-152-1) Size: 590 mm x 360 mm)



49 *Wooden book cover*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 199, photo no. 3-008)

Size: 282 mm x 72 mm)



50 Kishor Narasingh Rana

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 272, photo no. 5-036) Size: 287 mm x 207 mm)

actually he did not. He was very close to the experience of a new life of a self-appointed explorer. If we study all his poems from the one below in which silence haunts him to the ones he wrote at the climax of his realization of the moments of the beauty of life, we can see how truly the *utas* record the moments of his journey. In the following *uta* written early on, he feels the awfulness of silence:

In tortuous paths my lonely way now lies
 Among rough mountain tracks and scenes all wild;
 The rocks and giant trees in silence stand,
 With naught to break the silent depths around
 Except the solitary cuckoo's notes,
 That makes the awful silence more profound.⁴⁷

His sense of loneliness lends a very personal quality to his poetry, for that matter, to his travel. The poems record his adventure and trespassing of not only the territories of the British empire and those of Nepal, a country closed to the foreign visitors, but also the trope of the native travels. Here is another example of the very honest and beautifully moving record of the loneliness experienced by the poet monk before he embarked on the unknown journey:

The spotless sky is bathed in light serene
 By that cold moon with her all-tranquil ray;
 This pleasant scene fires me with memories sweet
 Of that dear mother-land now far away.
 Here on these lonely steppes the grass is dry,
 No reeds, no autumn flowers show their smiles;
 On high the moon shines on these wilds alone,
 Enhancing thus the loneliness' profound.⁴⁸

However, this was the path he had chosen not only for himself, but also for others. He was convinced of the purpose of this travel. He

⁴⁷ *Three Years* *ibid*, p.43.

⁴⁸ *Three Years* *ibid*, p. 202-3.

was in this manner expanding his visions and his perspectives of such a travel. He says:

Whate'er my sufferings here and dangers dire,
 Whate'er befalls me on my onward march,
 All, all, I feel, is for the common good
 For others treading on Salvation's path.⁴⁹

Kawaguchi's moments of physical and psychological progression are recorded in his *uta*. They are very eloquent. He did not write them just for the sake of writing them. His *utas* are not his idle ramblings. They are the records of his creative moods, new experiences, and like those of the other monk poets, they are the poetic constructs that capture his moments of *satori* as we can see in the following beautiful *uta* which is reminiscent of the great *haikai* of the Zen poets, and Basho and Sora:

Of these high plateau here no sound is heard
 Of man or beast, no crickets sing their tunes,
 The moon above, and I, her friend, below.⁵⁰

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⁴⁹ *Three Years* ibid, p. 137.

⁵⁰ *Three Years* ibid, p. 113.

CHAPTER FIVE

Museum and Power

BACKGROUND

Ekai Kawaguchi travelled to Nepal and Tibet with two objectives—to collect authentic Buddhist texts and to be educated in the Indo-Tibetan school of Mahayana Buddhism. We can say in retrospect that he did not go only as a submissive disciple, but also as a vigilant collector. Therefore, he had adopted two different modes and styles of travelling. He travelled as a devout follower of Sakyamuni Buddha who ‘saved’ him at difficult moments of his journey. He also travelled as a collector who had to employ different techniques to either look for the archival collections in the form of manuscripts with or without colophons and other art objects, or more importantly, to acquire them. Through arduous efforts and dedication he becomes richer on each of these aspects of his journey. As a spiritual explorer he feels that he becomes an enlightened one for which he feels grateful to the lord.¹ Such gratefulness is expressed for the spiritual success and his survival in

¹ Kawaguchi closes the English translation of his *magnum opus*, his epic saga *Three Years in Tibet* (p.713) with the following note and a poetic reply to a friend’s concern also expressed in *uta* when he set out on a travel to Nepal and Tibet:

“When I left Japan for Tibet, a friend of mine, Mr. S. Shimamura, had sent in farewell a prophetic *uta* which had been fulfilled, so I mention it here with my reply.

The path for you, you’ll find as you proceed

Across the pathless mountain-passes drear;

The Universal Leader, Buddha Great, your Guide

Shall be in all your rambles in Tibet.

Reply:

My heaped up sorrows and calamities

Now all are melted like th’ eternal snows

With that unfailing Beacon-light, my Guide;

The Universal Leader, Buddha Great, my Guide

Has been in all my rambles in Tibet.”

the long and difficult journey. But he does not express his gratitude to the Buddha for the success in acquiring as a collector of the archives.

Kawaguchi as a collector also returned richer, with more trophies than he could have imagined he would collect. Kawaguchi's one man collection is huge. The massive collection has spread around in the universities and museums inside Japan. Tokyo University library alone houses 390 Buddhist manuscripts in Sanskrit donated by Kawaguchi in 1915 out of the 570 together with the 390 manuscripts donated by Juniro Takakusu (1866-1948) who had accompanied Kawaguchi to Nepal in search of Sanskrit manuscripts.²

Toyo Bunko

Toyo Bunko had very important connection with Kawaguchi in the last years of his life. He knew about this centre because that was the only famous centre of this kind in Japan. This is not the centre of Tibetan studies only. It also houses the collections of the Chinese, Korean, Tibetan, Japanese documents and materials.

Kawaguchi had made contacts with Iwai Taikei, the then Director of the Centre in 1940. Toyo Bunko made contract of 15 million Yen with Kawaguchi for the publication of the dictionary and the manuscripts apparently, some of which included the original ones also. Kawaguchi was given a room to work on the dictionary project, preparing cards of entries, at the library itself. Kawaguchi and others were compiling entries from Sarat Chandra Das' Tibetan dictionary and other Tripitakas.³

Kawaguchi had as his assistants in the dictionary project several competent persons. One of them was Mibu Taishun (b.1913) of Taisho University. But Kawaguchi was the main person of this project. Compiling this dictionary without him must have become difficult. He

² *A Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts* compiled by Seiren Matsunam, Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy, Kyushu University (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1965) gives this information. The catalogue records the variety of the texts and the nature of colophons and other information about the manuscript.

³ Prof. Hajime Kitamura, the present Director of the Centre, and student of Tada Tokan, Kawaguchi's contemporary, and a Buddhist scholar gave me all the information presented here about Toyo Bunko and its historical contexts about the Kawaguchi collection.

was a source of the living Tibetan language that he had encountered through the course of his real existence in that land, and had experienced the very feel of a living language that Tibetan had been for him. There is no reason to doubt that. So Kawaguchi himself was an item of his own collection. He brought all the manuscripts to Toyo Bunko including his own wooden statue which stands there now.

The dictionary never got completed let alone published. The library could not keep its agreements with Kawaguchi. The dictionary fell like the house of cards. A *Tattva Sangraha* was published out of them.⁴ It must be very true to speculate that Akira Kawaguchi, the custodian of Kawaguchi's collection and inheritor, must have been very upset by the library failing to pay his uncle according to the commitment. But regarding his dealing with Tohoku University, according to Kitamura, Toyo Bunko had no connection whatsoever. He discounts a theory that Akira Kawaguchi had withdrawn his collection and carried it over to Tohoku. Kitamura came to Toyo Bunko as a research fellow in 1958, and he knows very well that the theory is not true. In fact, Akira Kawaguchi had directly sold his collection to Tohoku for about 300 million Yen.⁵

Toyo Bunko at Komagome thus houses the major collection of Tibetan manuscripts, including more than 550 works of Tibetan writers and five sets of *kangyur* Tripitaka with 108 volumes in each that he brought with him.⁶ For the reason of the Kawaguchi collection and those

⁴ Kitamura sensei and Fukuda-san of Toyo Bunko told me that the *tattva sangraha*, part of the index system, was completed by Watanabe Soko and published by Sigeaki.

⁵ Hajime Kitamura, recorded interview.

⁶ Toyo Bunko lists all these manuscripts in a catalogue entitled *Provisional Title-Index of the Toyo Bunko Collection of Tibetan Works*, ed. Seminar of Tibet (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1978). Yoichi Fukuda of the Seminar on Tibet section of Toyo Bunko told me that the Library did not have any special connection with Kawaguchi Ekai. How the Centre acquired the large body of the manuscripts, he did not know. That contradicts the descriptions of Emi Miyata and other writers including his nephew and biographer the late Akira Kawaguchi who had contacts with Toyo Bunko and who later withdrew his collection and bequeathed it to Tohoku University. To my mind the reason is, as Fukuda confessed, he was not born when all this happened, therefore he was not in a position to tell. The name of the great donor Kawaguchi is not specifically mentioned or even remembered today by the Library and the young generation. Fukuda said they

of Tada Tokan, several of which according to Kimiaki Tanaka, seem to have been printed from the same blocks as they had brought them from the same place at Sera,⁷ and other materials and publications Hisashi Sato calls it “the Mecca of Tibetan studies in Japan.”⁸

In this Mecca Kawaguchi is not much remembered as a principal and historical donor of manuscripts. The great passion with which he had gone to acquire them, the hardships that he had suffered walking with difficulty and staking his life, the safety of which was his greater worry than his own life now sit in the half-lit selves of the Toyo Bunko under the original wooden covers. At the far corner of the selves hidden behind the rows stands Kawaguchi in the dim light holding a monk's staff in an exquisite wooden full life size statue made by the famous sculptor Fujioka Koden in the thirties, where he too has gone down as an artifact of his collection, and with it his dreams about setting up a mechanism for the control of knowledge.

Kawaguchi before making an escape from Lhasa in 1902, had most of these manuscripts collected over the years sewed up in a skin case and sent to Darjeeling through a Chinese mule service. These manuscripts and art objects that we see in the museums and libraries of the universities in Japan today came mostly on these horse backs, for the safety of which Kawaguchi was immensely worried when he heard the news in Kalimpong of horses falling off the cliff into the river with the cargo. And when they arrived safely also, he was worried lest he should die of the Tista malaria fever that he caught as soon as he arrived in the house of his friend Sarat Chandra Das, before he was able to send them to Japan “either to the Japanese Imperial University or to any other great library within easy reach of my fellow-countrymen. Therefore though in an almost insensible state I told my teacher to write a will for me, and began to talk in English.”⁹ This shows the great importance he had

did not have the manuscript of the dictionary that Kawaguchi worked on around 1940, reportedly in one of the rooms at the Toyo Bunko.

⁷ Kimiaki Tanaka, recorded interview.

⁸ Hisashi Sato, “The Origins and Development of the Study of Tibetan History in Japan,” in *ACTA ASIATICA*, Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture, 64 (Tokyo: The Toho Gakkai, Tokyo, 1993), p.107 (81-109).

⁹ *Three Years*, p. 668.

attached to his collection. His museum was carried by exhausted mules across the Roof of the world. These occupy important places in the Universities and museums in Japan today. How much they are used by his fellow country-men today is another matter, but they all arrived safely including those he was able to collect in the next visit to Tibet and Nepal. Summing up the nature of his collection and their locations in Japan, Sato says:

In the course of his travels he collected an enormous number of Tibetan works, including the bKa'-'gyur and bsTan-'gyur divisions of the sNar-thang edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka, the bKa'-'gyur division of the sDe-dge edition and extra canonical Tibetan works on Buddhism, as well as Sanskrit scriptures, Buddhist ritual implements, and even specimens of plants and minerals, and these he all brought back to Japan, where they are at present preserved at the University of Tokyo, Taisho University, Tohoku University and the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library).¹⁰

Sato's list does not include the sculptures, ancient folk carvings on wooden plates, metal bangles, stones with the famous *Om mani padme hum*, exquisite statues of the Buddha in gold, copper and bronze—the lovely thousand armed Buddha—*Sahasrabhuja-Avalokitesvara*, the tantric manifestations with the ecstasy of cosmic orgasm, of the Nirvanic moments that Kawaguchi found as blasphemous and unacceptable done under the baneful influence of Padmasambhava, amphora and vase with intricate patterns carved round the brims, horse saddles, whips and horse bells, human thighbone trumpets, bowls bearing the lovely images of blue dragons against the yellow background, miniature casks and reliquary placed at the sanctuaries where gods are enshrined, prayer bells and thunderbolts known as *bajras*, prayer wheels with beautiful red handles, lovely wooden book covers with exquisitely done detailed carvings of the Buddha and his manifestations and others with illuminations and texts with colophons, big and small Mandalas, and Tankas of both Buddhist and Hindu orientations, mostly of tantric origins executed by very skilled artists showing the awe inspiring deities

¹⁰ Sato, p. 82.

engaged in cosmic copulation and achieving culmination in *Vajrayana* postures--showing the states of Buddhahood acquired by the meditator through what is known as the *sadhaka's* quick path to enlightenment through an imagination that he or she has become a Bodhisattva with the enlightenment achieved in this body, in this mortal frame and life time. Others show calm and serene images, some very old and others comparatively new tablets and paintings bearing the images of a wide range of the pantheon of Hindu deities--Ganesh attending on Shukavati, Lokesvara, ferocious *hayagriva* like the ferocious goddess riding a lion, Saraswati--goddess of learning, and the serene Sakyamuni Buddha in meditation, lovely stone images and wooden statues of Padmapani with the front arms lost, tapestries and scrolls bearing the beautiful calligraphy of Kawaguchi himself with mantras written in both Japanese and Sanskrit which reads *namasakyamuni Buddhaya*, and Tibetan, to take a few examples from the beautiful catalogue of the Sakai city museum entitled *Kawaguchi Ekai bukkyo no genten o motometa hito* (Kawaguchi Ekai out in search of the origin of Buddhist knowledge) published in 1993 with the above samples of his collection and words of gratitude to various institutions, collections, individual collectors and academicians.

We should turn to Tohoku University's massive collection of "Tibetan religious artifacts"¹¹ which does not include only Tibetan but also a good number of Nepali artifacts. The Tohoku Kawaguchi collection includes 1,200 such artifacts. Uehara describes the original motives of Kawaguchi as to "research, collect and forward the Tibetan Tripitaka which was said to render the original form of the Mahayana Sutras, and Sanskrit Buddhist sutras which had vanished long ago in its home country, India."¹²

Describing the nature of the collection as listed in the catalogue, various Japanese writers who have written introduction to the catalogue describe the nature and significance of the collection. In his long article entitled "Kawaguchi Ekai: His Travels and Life"¹³ According to Takayama, Kawaguchi in his first encounter with the Nepali Maharaja

¹¹ Soichi Uehara in *Tibetan Materials in the Collection of Kawaguchi*, ed., Department of Oriental and Japanese Art History, Faculty of Arts and Letters (Tohoku: Faculty of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University, 1986), p. 8.

¹² Uehara, p. 8

¹³ Ryuzo Takayama, *Kawaguchi Ekai Gudono Tabito Shogai*. in Uehara, pp. 347-359.

Chandra Shaumsher had acquired some statues of Buddha, prints and drawing of Buddha and tools used in Buddhist faith.¹⁴ He had also collected some statues of the Buddha during his long stay in India for six years from 1906. By citing Kawaguchi himself from *Ryokoki*,¹⁵ Takayama says that Kawaguchi thought very highly of the old Tibetan artifacts—they were superior to modern ones. He was thus very interested in Tibetan arts and local handicrafts which he wanted to introduce to the Japanese people.

In fact, according to Takayama, Kawaguchi wanted to convince the Japanese people that he had visited Tibet. Therefore, he brought with him not only art objects but also specimens of plants, animals and minerals. At the request of Naohiko Masaki, Dean of the Tokyo Arts College, who was brought up in the same town and studied at the same school as Ekai, an exhibition was held on November 3, 1903 to show those thing that Ekai had collected during his first trip. After his second trip, an exhibition was held in October 1915 again at the Tokyo Art College. Ekai gave a lecture on the nature of his collection in which he shows the impact of grandiose, desperate and solitary nature. Kawaguchi thought that Tibetan architecture was influenced by India and China and the prints, drawings and tools were influenced by India.¹⁶

Japanese scholars like Takayama and Naoji Okuyama¹⁷ believe that Kawaguchi's collection has played a very important role in introducing traditional Tibetan culture to the Japanese people. According to Okuyama, his collection provides an indispensable cultural reference.¹⁸

However, the monk's collection of articles and artifacts is a little puzzling considering his nature and the original purpose of his mission, that was to collect, and render the original form. His passion for collection appears to be very strong. To add to the variety of articles mentioned above, we can add a few more curious artifacts like wooden nose ring used for taming yaks, Nepali sword *Khukri*, lady's cap, Chuba,

¹⁴ Takayama, *Kawaguchi Ekai Gudono...* 352.

¹⁵ Vol 4. p.19-20.

¹⁶ Takayama, ...*Ekai Gudono...*pp 355-356. Translated by Tadashi Nagata.

¹⁷ Naoji Okuyama, "*Kawaguchi kolleksan no shiryoteki kachu*" or "Value of Kawaguchi's Collection" in Uehara, pp 360-365.

¹⁸ Naoji Okuyama, p. 364.

Tibetan lady's wear, fox skin, women's hair ornament, bangles, bracelet, and lovely turquoise and agate quartz items. Professor Uehara rightly says that these collections grew as a result of "the memories of the Reverend Mr. Kawaguchi's long journey and he collected them as his personal necessities."¹⁹ But it is difficult to see what personal necessities women's ornaments fulfilled for the monk and what memories are they the apt tropes of. Uehara says that the Kawaguchi collection consists of "irreplaceable articles" collected by the monk "one by one with his own eyes and hands" and is the "precise result of his actual field trip and has a totally different character than that of an ordinary collector's specimens."²⁰ That is a very valid observation about the monk's collection but the range of the collection and their sheer size, including all those now known and preserved at various places, gives rise to a number of important questions regarding the purpose and semiotic representation of these collections that I wish to discuss briefly in the following lines.

Kawaguchi does not mention his collection of religious artifact in a manner "as if he had no interest in it" while he describes the botanical collection and mineralogical samples made at the request of Tokutaro Ito, and of the Tripitaka given by the Dalai lama in *Nyuzo-ki*, his account of the second visit to Tibet (1915).²¹

Kawaguchi's "fellow country-men" have different outlooks regarding his collection. Some scholars think that he only collected junk,²² which does not appear to be the case considering the quality and quantity of the monk's collection, and other scholars think that they were very important collections brought by Kawaguchi to create an

¹⁹ Uehara, p. 9.

²⁰ Uehara, *ibid.*, pp. 8-9. Prof. Musashi Tachikawa of the Osaka Museum of Ethnology believes that his collection does not contribute to the study of Buddhism whatsoever. But now that the nature of his collection is known and everything is systematically presented, this does not appear to be the case. These artifacts certainly do contribute to the study of certain aspects of Tibetan Buddhism.

²¹ Uehara, *ibid.* Uehara mentions this to highlight the greater importance of religious artifacts.

²² Musashi Tachikawa told me in an interview on 17 September, 1997 at the Museum.

atmosphere and possibility of Buddhist studies in Japan.²³ In fact, Kawaguchi and Tada Tokan were very important pioneers in Tibetan studies in Japan for which they provided a base. Some of the objects and manuscripts they brought with them would have been completely lost as similar objects were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in china. Now, Japanese scholars possess manuscripts twenty times more than what Kawaguchi and his compatriots and contemporaries had brought with them. But they should be given their due place as pioneers.²⁴ Kawaguchi's collection is broad based. His collection of manuscripts, supplemented and complemented by his collection of art objects as well, has given his collection the meaning and signification represented for example by a museum. In the early years, there even seemed to have arisen a controversy among monks about the destination of these materials. But that is immaterial today as Kawaguchi's collections are in the right hands. This dispute had arisen earlier because of the simultaneous presence of other Japanese monks in Lhasa during the second visit of Ekai Kawaguchi. Takayama in an English summary of

²³ Prof. Ryuzo Takayama considers the collection as very important. Dr. Kimiaki Tanaka, who is a scholar on Tibetan Vajrayana and the editor of the big catalogue of the Kawaguchi collection at Tohoku University and a writer of a very important analytical study of the "Ekai Kawaguchi Collection of Tibetan and Nepalese Art," told me in an interview that Kawaguchi had brought back very important and valuable collections. Tanaka has written about their nature and significance in his introduction to the catalogue. He also told me what his teacher's teacher, the compatriot of Kawaguchi, Tada Tokan (1890-1967) who has also written a book called *Chibetto* (Tibet, 1942, 1982) and *Tibetto taizaikai* (Records of Tibetan Sojourns, 1984) entered Tibet as a student in 1913 and returned in 1923 after earning a high degree at Sera monastery where Kawaguchi also studied, always contended that the manuscripts that the thirteenth Dalai Lama had ordered to be given to Kawaguchi in his second visit to Tibet in 1914-1915, claimed apparently on the basis of his close relationship with the Dalai Lama, were given for Tokyo University library. The same manuscripts were there at Toyo Bunko, which, according to Tada Tokan, Kawaguchi had covetously withdrawn by employing another person's help as they were valuable golden Tripitaka, which are now under the custody of Tohoku university collection. Tanaka thinks that Tada Tokan was probably wrong. Today, that debate does not matter so much as the nature of these materials.

²⁴ Kimiaki Tanaka, recorded interview.

his long article in Japanese gives the background to this scenario like this, in his own words:

As for Kawaguchi's personal connections with other travellers and Indologists of his age, he is known to have had a new year lunch in Lhasa with three other Japanese, Tada Tokan, Aoki Bunkyo and Yajima Yasujiro, during his second visit to Tibet. Tada Tokan was suspicious of Kawaguchi, however, especially regarding his audience with the Dalai Lama.²⁵

Among his progenies, his late nephew Akira Kawaguchi has written what is considered as the most authentic biography of his uncle based on the original sources in which he gives the records of what he collected in his journeys. The next and now the last progeny of Kawaguchi Ekai, Emi Miyata also gives some idea of Ekai's massive collection. Her information regarding the background to Ekai's collection is very interesting. We will return to that later.

Among the two inheritors, Akira Kawaguchi made his deal with the Tohoku University in 1954 to 1955 thanks to the farsightedness of professors and the management there.²⁶ Emi Miyata donated her share

²⁵ Prof. Ryuzo Takayama, in the summary of his article "Kawaguchi Ekai: Evaluations and Personal Connections" that he gave me on the day I was presenting my monograph on Ekai Kawaguchi at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies on 11 March, 1998, refers to the new year lunch that Kawaguchi had with his compatriots in Lhasa in 1915.

I heard from some other scholars, stories about Tada Tokan's criticism of Kawaguchi. I put that to Prof. Hajime Kitamura who was a student of Tada Tokan, and he said, Tada Tokan was very critical of the attitudes and methods of many people, but he never spoke anything bad about Kawaguchi. Tada Tokan was a serious scholar, who, according to Kimiaki Tanaka, had gone to Lhasa to study because he had been asked by his teacher to go, and he did precisely that during his life time and was a scholar par excellence and not a man of multiple interests like Kawaguchi, but he never spoke ill of Kawaguchi.

²⁶ Soichi Uehara mentions the farsightedness of Professor Hakuyu Hatano and Professor Tsutomu Kameda who negotiated with Akira Kawaguchi, who according to Tanaka, withdrew the artifacts from Toyo Bunko because they failed to fulfill their commitments. He later negotiated with Tohoku University. As a result, a total of 1,400 articles, "including religious artifacts, botanical and mineralogical samples" were bequeathed to the Tohoku collection and apparently saved these collections from being

of the collection to the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno. Only some of these art objects are on display at the museum today.²⁷ I had a chance to see the collection at Ueno,²⁸ which very interestingly is a collection of very exquisite, small and older statues and icons not open to public.

The Tohoku University classification gives a picture of the Kawaguchi collection. There are Buddhist images of metal wood, clay and stone, as well as coloured plates, drawings and printings in the forms of Tankas and wooden block prints, wooden book covers, religious artifacts represented by reliquaries, altar fittings and monk's robes and finally those items that are recorded under the rubric "ethnology and others" in the forms of inscriptions, necessities, clothing, handicraft and miscellaneous items. But the other major form of Kawaguchi's

scattered and lost. Soichi Uehara's own role seems to be significant in the preservation of the artifacts.

²⁷ Information acquired from Tanaka in an interview.

²⁸ I was able to see about 19 pieces, which is nearly the entire collection, like the following:

Kasyapa Buddha Stupa which according to Kimiaki Tanaka was given to Kawaguchi by his friend Buddha Bajra from Boudha, Kathmandu at whose house he used to stay. This is the only Padmapani with arms. All the others I saw at Tohoku university collection were without arms.

Wooden four headed Buddha 7c.m/10.4 c.m, 15th or the 16th century.

Lumbini Shakya a copper statue 11.4/17.7 c.m (15-16 c.).

A copper Bodhsattva Samanta Bhadara riding an elephant 6.9/12.7 c.m., c.16-17th century.

A Tibetan statue of Shakayamuni bronze in gilded bronze of 17.0/14.0 c.m. c.18-19th century.

Shakyamuni Buddha (Tibetan?) 10.2/19.5 c.m. 12-13th century.

Kubera (copper) 16.2/24.3 c.m. 12-13th century.

Samanta Bhadra Bodhisattva (painting) 18-19th century.

Wooden Saraswati 9.8/14.2c.m. 18-19th century.

Stone Shakyamuni 28.3/17.5 c.m. .

Manjushree 33.5/40.0 c.m. .

Terra-cotta figurine

Avlokitesvara 25.7/17.0 c.m. 17-18th century.

These images are old, small and beautiful. According to Takayama, Kawaguchi used to worship them. That is why they remained under the custody of Emi Miyata, his niece, who donated them to the Ueno Museum at a later date after her uncle's death.

collection is the one represented by the manuscripts. This was the main and original passion of his mission. The botanical and mineralogical samples also provide the other aspect of his collection.

Kawaguchi never gave up his passion for collection. Even when he made his way with great difficulty to Nepal for the second time in January, 1903 to see the Nepali prime minister Chandra Shumsher Rana to forward his petition to the Dalai lama for the release of his friends, the ex-minister of finance and his wife, Tsa Rong-ba and his wife and his teachers at Sera from prison where they were put for helping him. News of their torture and punishment had made him very worried. The first thing Kawaguchi said, to the prime minister was that the purpose of his mission was to collect Sanskrit manuscripts on Buddhism which he was able to do with quite a success in this and the next visit in 1905 when he went to give Chandra Shumsher Rana the 100 copies of the Tripitakas in Japanese versions. He apparently collected various things from Nepal, Buddhist scrolls, manuscripts, sculptures, paintings and religious objects, which we can see in the above mentioned collections though quite curiously he does not mention about the Nepalese collection. In the words of Soichi Uehara:

What I could find was only one very simple description of Nepal. It says, "Most of their arts are Buddhist arts. there are wood-carved or cast-copper Buddhist images and Brahma-Deva images, and paintings. Some are quite good old ones." Moreover, he did not write anything about how he actually obtained these kinds of artifacts. Probably it is not well-known to most of the people that he was given many religious artifacts which he brought back to Japan.²⁹

Why should Kawaguchi choose not to mention about his collection of the exquisite art objects, the Tankas, images, and the colophons and Buddhist narrative art in the form of text illuminations that appear in the manuscripts he acquired from Chandra Shumsher Rana is not known. However, scholars have found these items very useful for their studies in Buddhism and Nepalese art. One such

²⁹ Uehara, p. 8.

outstanding example is Kimiaki Tanaka's book in Japanese listed in English as *A Catalogue of Ekai Kawaguchi's Collection of Tibetan and Nepalese Buddhist Art* (1990).³⁰ This book makes an analytical study of the exquisite Nepalese art objects from Kawaguchi collection at Tohoku university—Tankas, Buddhist images and sculptures along with Tibetan art objects, where they are kept in a sizable room with proper treatment to each of these objects. Since it is not a museum, it is not open to public. But my impression after seeing the collection is that if spread properly, with proper positioning and annotation of each of these items, including those from his mineralogical and botanical collections which are also kept in the same room, they would cover several rooms of that size.

Kimiaki Tanaka's book includes almost all major art objects of this collection in the above book. The organization is made according to the variety of the art objects Kawaguchi had brought with him. It is arranged according to the history and iconography—Mandala, assembly of deities in the shape of a tree, Tathagata Shakyamuni, Bodhisattvas, female deities and protective deities and the blessed amulets with mantras. In fact, Kawaguchi brought some very valuable art objects, especially paintings from Nepal, Tanaka told me. We can clearly see the Nepali arts on the basis of the iconography and colophons. There is, one painting, Sristikanta Lokesvara, a popular deity in Newari Buddhism. It is a genuine Newari motif. Similarly, in another painting about Sukhavati Lokesvara we can see very distinct Newari iconography. In this beautiful Newar Buddhist art, the motif is the *jankhu* celebration of a woman reaching the age of 77, who in the painting looks younger than she should. The charming combination of not too strong yet prominent warm colours is very close to the Newari aesthetic experience. This is a dominant piece in Kawaguchi's collection. The treatment is Tibetan. The woman sits at the bottom of the painting. And very interestingly, this woman is dressed in her best with the objects of worship and ritual all around her, and four men in the front of this woman and four women behind her are sitting on the same floor. Every combination lends it a pleasant milieu of the Newari interior. The Tibetan treatment shows the interchange of skills between the Tibetan and Nepali artists.

³⁰ Kimiaki Tanaka, *Kawaguchi Ekai Korekushon* (Tokyo, 1990).

The colophon that occurs in the painting is interesting. The misspelling of the deity's name and the typical Newari writing definitely makes it a Nepali art.

Outside Tohoku also, Kawaguchi's collections include exquisite Nepali art objects. I saw one such piece of art, a *Harittara Mandala* at the Taisho University collection. It was a Newari painting of the 18th or early 19th century Kathmandu. *Harittara* is at the centre of the Mandala with 27 manifestations of Buddha and other deities all around, and the patrons, lovely women and some men in the milieu of a Newari room seated in the consecrating ceremony at the foot of the Mandala which shares the same stylistic configurations as the exquisite painting of Sukhavati Lokeshvara in Kawaguchi's Tohoku collection, this is a very distinct Nepali painting. Even a Nepali name Harsha Man appears in the colophon of the Taisho painting.

The reason why Kawaguchi did not mention Nepali art in his collection is difficult to understand. According to Tanaka, he could not distinguish between Nepali and Tibetan arts, he probably thought that most of his collections were from Tibet. But according to Takayama, Kawaguchi was not naïve about the arts. He had received important orientations about art from his erstwhile Sakai city compatriot named Nahihiko Musaki who later became the Dean of Art University in Osaka.³¹

Kawaguchi never spoke about his collections, especially about the paintings. Once he had spoken briefly about them at *Geijutsu Daigaku*, the National Art College in Ueno where the art objects that he had brought were being displayed. The Director of the Tokyo Art College was Kawaguchi's very intimate friend.³² He gave a short speech about his collection, especially of Buddhist art. This lecture was recorded and also published in a monthly journal of the Institute of the Arts, Tokyo or *Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku*. It was a very rare record. This talk is the only proof which shows Ekai Kawaguchi's attitude towards Tibetan art. Though he frequently talked about Buddhism, he did not talk about Buddhist art. At that time he said that he had some vulgar art objects in

³¹ Ryuzo Takayama, "*Kawaguchi Ekai-Guido no Tabi to Shogai*" ("Ekai Kawaguchi: His Travel and Life"), in Uehara ed *Tibetan Materials in the Collection of Kawaguchi*, *ibid.*, p. 358.

³² Kimiaki Tanaka, recorded interview.

his collection which he had brought for the sake of the researchers' interest. His art collections were exhibited twice, after his first and second return from Tibet and Nepal. A catalogue was also published of the first exhibition of his collection in March 1904. This catalogue records 56 objects that include five of his photographic portraits in different postures. It is very interesting to see the somewhat stylized photographs of the monk in his thirties, showing him as one who has not wholly renounced the worldly ways and was much in love with his own personality. He looks more attached to the notion of a self that should be accentuated in this photograph. Among the other notable items of the collection are the Sanskrit manuscripts with illuminations given to him by Maharaja Chandra Shumsher in 1903 in Kathmandu.

The next exhibition which was held in October 1996 at the Gajutsu Daigaku itself, was richer in collection. Kawaguchi was an avid collector of art objects. He could speak about nature, objectivity and structuralism and significance of the collection. His own comments are carried in a bulletin published on that occasion giving samples of his collection, among which are the images of Buddha, vase and a Tibetan horse saddle.

He did not have much opportunity to talk about his collection. In this rare comment about the art objects in his collection, he emphasized his priority as being the collection of texts, not art objects. But judging from his collection, it can be said that Kawaguchi appears to be a very meticulous and informed person about the collection of art objects.

His problematic with Vajrayana Buddhism is epitomized in his collection of the arts. He knew deep down that the art objects he collected had a base on Buddhist aesthetics, and their motif was very Buddhist and spiritual. They represented the Mandala, the cosmic enlightenment and energy. Kawaguchi himself was not unaware of tantrism, known as esoteric Buddhism in Japan. In fact, Kawaguchi liked esoteric Buddhism. But he did not approve of the last of the four tantric sutras, *Anuttara Yogatantra*. He approved of esoteric Buddhism up to the *Yogatantra* stage. He also said that Tibetans were mistaken. They were deceived by the devil called the *Anuttara Yogatantra*. Sometimes Kawaguchi himself quoted from *Vairochana sutra*. He also translated this *Sutra* from Tibetan into Japanese and got it published. In discussions with the Tibetan monks he quoted from it. He says so in

his travel accounts. Their answers, however, are not mentioned. In Tibet itself very few people knew about the *Vairochana sutra*. Probably only two or three monasteries knew about them and there were very few 'experts' who could read or interpret them.³³

³³ Tibetan Buddhism has a very strong tantric base and it has produced some very important art objects to represent this mode of Buddhism. Talking about the background to the Tantric mode of Tibetan art, a brief discussion about its origin may be relevant here.

Esoteric Buddhism has four parts. Each part is represented by the four very well-known Tantras: *Kriyatantra*, *Caryatantra*, *Yogatantra* and *Anuttara Yogatantra*. The last in the chronological series, the *Anuttara Yogatantra* developed after the ninth century in India, but Ekai Kawaguchi was averse to this version of Tantra. Tibetan Buddhism merits the last one as superior to all the others, and puts the paradigm of superiority of these Tantras in a reverse order. For example, *Yogatantra* is higher than *Caryatantra* and *Anuttara Yogatantra* is higher than *Yogatantra*. Thus, the *Anuttara Yogatantra* enjoys the highest position among the tantric Sutras. It was just the opposite of Kawaguchi's own system of belief. That was the main reason of the difficulties that Kawaguchi had with the Tibetan mode of tantrism, and the art was the manifestation of that oddity to him.

The later phase of esoteric Buddhism, so called Vajrayana was the highest form of tantrism, according to the Tibetan interpretation. To Kawaguchi, the first three forms of tantrism were explained by Buddha himself. The last one was a fake system probably made by *mara*, the devil.

Kawaguchi always attacked Padmasambhava, the Rimpoche, as the exponent of the tantric mode with a strong sexual element. Kimiaki Tanaka is reading the early tantric texts found in the Chinese territory in Turkistan which was occupied by the Tibetan King in the eighth century. He had occupied several oasis cities along the Silk Road. Several esoteric Buddhist texts were discovered in those territories afterwards. While deciphering these, he found that the sexual element was very strong in Tibetan tantrism in the eighth century. The Tibetan royal family did not like this tendency and Vajrayana was officially prohibited, but Tibetan esoteric practitioners secretly continued to practise it.

This form is not practised in Japan, Tibet and Nepal, though initially, the Vajracharyas practised this form, sexual intercourse was represented by symbols in the later phase. These practices had already been substituted by more discreet manifestations. But several such practices are explained in the texts.

Initially, the sexual rites were practised in real life, not in art. Really speaking, even priests must keep the *shilashambhara*. But they could not practise sexual intercourse. Lay-practitioners would select several girls or women from among groups of devotees as

their counterparts or consorts. The tradition goes back to Padmashambhava who selected a Tibetan princess as his consort. She was a very beautiful girl and was very talented. After Padmashambhava returned from Tibet, it was revealed that she had concealed several of his teachings in the caves. They are called *nidhi* in Sanskrit. In Nepal also there are several such *nidhis*, near Jomsom which Padmasambhava had hidden. They are known as the five treasures of the mountains. He took the route of the Kaligandaki river to return, it was the same route that Kawaguchi took on his first visit to Tibet. Even now, many Tibetan people go on pilgrimage to these areas. To Kawaguchi, such a pilgrimage was an illusion and a deviation from the true path of Buddhism.

From the 7th to the 8th centuries, *Yogatantra Sutra* was famous in India but it was later forgotten in Indian Buddhism. A disciple of Shantarakshita has quoted from it. By the time Atisha visited Nepal, this text was no longer so important. But this text existed in Tibet. Tanaka says with resolution mixed with hope that "We are very eager to reconstruct it. We have reconstructed about 30 to 40 pages of it by means of phonetic transcriptions from Tibetan." Unfortunately, we do not have the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Vairocana Sutra*. Tanaka-san said, "We, the Japanese scholars have discovered quite a number of quotations from it as well."

Esoteric Buddhism is a generic term for Tantra in Japan. The later generic nomenclature is Vajrayana. So, in Japanese Buddhism also, Vajrayana is an important element and has its own school.

The only copy of *Sarbatattvasangraha* is preserved in Keshar Mahal, Kathmandu, which is available now in microfilm. "For a long time we did not have any photography of it as this was registered under a different title. He (Keshar Shumsher Rana, the founder of this library) had hired some Vajracharyas and got a copy of it made. G. Tucci, the Italian scholar, got it microfilmed. Later, we discovered the original Sanskrit text in the library itself," Tanaka-san said.

So, Kawaguchi, in this lecture, giving reason about the collection of this baser form of tantric arts, said that he had collected them for the interest of researchers only as specimens of the works of art. He had collected them regardless of his faith and liking. That shows how curious he was about it.

Kawaguchi's main objective was not to collect art objects but to collect Buddhist Sanskrit texts from Nepal and Tripitakas or Buddhist canons from Tibet. That is why, talking about his collection of the art objects, especially with tantric motifs, he openly confessed that they were not important for him. They were collected as 'curio' pieces. In fact, under this principle, he had collected many things which included botanical and mineral specimens as well in which scholars of those areas would be naturally interested. In fact, he was asked to collect those materials for them. To help somebody

Kawaguchi's collection was far too big for a holy nomad, an individual seeker, an Asian Buddhist explorer and a person who had gone out on a pilgrimage and for learning. His collection semiotically represents power—power emanating from information and through the creation of a system of control. Kawaguchi had a desire to build a structure of Buddhist study in Japan. What was needed for this structuration and what he brought with him and what he had to face when he made his collection deserve careful attention today more than ever before.

Interestingly, Kawaguchi's time nearly clashes with the times of Brian Hogdson, his predecessor about whose collections he had heard in Japan itself, a British Resident in Kathmandu from 1820 to 1843, and the first Western person to collect the complete *Kangyur* and *Tangyur* and Nepali Sanskrit manuscripts which are preserved in the Asiatic Society in London and also in Paris. Kawaguchi was the only non-European person coming from outside this part of the world interested in collecting Sanskrit manuscripts after Brian Hogdson.

The visit of Kawaguchi, a Zen monk poet of an Asian country was an unexpected one. He had taken personal stake to collect Sanskrit texts of the religion that had become his life and faith, his passion for the sake of which he had exposed himself to all kinds of hardships, and his main friend was his hard resolution and his self-styled holy nomadism. His passion grew in course of time for the control of knowledge, to make Japan the haven of Mahayana Buddhist studies and Tibetan studies. But there was no empire behind him. But who was behind him? Can we pursue this subject in any meaningful way today? I think the answer to this will be important in one sense, in that the monk presented an alternate mode of collection to that of the Western empires. His position was that of a person who had no backing of the state and did not aspire to create a construct that could be semiotically representative of the mood of the Japanese nation at that time opening up in all fronts, from modernization to war with Asian and European nations.

was the duty of a monk, he must have thought. He was a Buddhist monk with a sense of charity and duty.

PATRONAGE AND “CONTROL OF KNOWLEDGE”

Who was behind Kawaguchi? Who supported his mission if at all. This subject has not received the attention of scholars. I had not come across anything written on the subject except the mention of some collections and assistance either offered to him in his next visit which is mentioned in his travel accounts also, and also of some help he received from people whom he tended to reject. He was almost brusquely dismissed by the Nepali Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher when he met him in 1903 in the southern plains of Nepal for rejecting the financial help given to the monk so that he would be able to go to Kathmandu and wait for the prime minister there. He is even said to have written to Hanzui, his brother, Emi Miyata's father, from India not to send him any money, he would find safe haven in the Himalayas. But as his brother was more than familiar with the situation, he did not care about the content of the letter and the money came in handy for Kawaguchi to pursue his studies and move to Darjeeling for contacts.

Emi Miyata gave me an alternate and frank assessment of the patronage situation. According to her, “Ekai-san's” travels were supported by Japanese businessmen. She does not see anything wrong with that. From Kawaguchi's own description of his attitude to the monetary help for the travels, and from those of the others, we tend to get the impression that he was loathe to take money. But if it came by he used it for the purpose of making his travels easier. But Miyata very confidently said to me that he had to accept the money because the government or the monasteries did not help him. “How otherwise,” she asked me, “do you think he would have managed such expensive travels?” I asked her about the possible interests of businessmen in supporting the monk. She said they “wanted him to bring things from Nepal.” Perhaps she meant Tibet also, if that was the case. The founder of Hotel Okura was his patron, she said.³⁴

Miyata-san's confidence reminded me of Kawaguchi's own recollection of the remarks made by the Nepali Maharaja when he met him in 1903. The Maharaja asked Kawaguchi:

³⁴ In my first interview with her in June 1997 at her residence in Tokyo, Emi Miyata-san gave some different perspectives of looking at Kawaguchi as a person and as an explorer and monk.

But you must know that one cannot travel abroad for six years, unless he is well provided with money; and when you have given me, as well as to our Commander-in-Chief presents which must have cost you no small amount of money. Altogether the amount of money involved cannot be such as is likely to be found in the pocket of a mere Buddhist priest with no worldly possessions.³⁵

Kawaguchi does not mention his answer to this curiosity of the Maharaja. In any case, according to Miyata, Kawaguchi's travels did involve some money, and his collection involved certain commitments. That reminds us of a possibility. The Okura hotel had a good collection of Tibetan and Nepali art objects that was destroyed in the American bombings of the Second World War in Tokyo. A scholar I talked to felt happy that Kawaguchi did not give his art objects to this collection. But I think, after listening to Emi Miyata's confessions about Kawaguchi's commitments to them as his patrons, and given Kawaguchi's sense of righteousness and his belief in keeping his word as exemplified by his fulfillment of the promises he had made to the Nepali prime minister Chandra Shumsher Rana, we can easily guess that he certainly must have given Okura a certain and important portion of his collection, which unfortunately must have been destroyed. Given the context of patronage as mentioned by Miyata, it is but natural for us to guess so.

Miyata's father Hanzui Kawaguchi worked for a newspaper called *Jiji-shinpo*. He was an economic correspondent. So he had contacts with businessmen, and one can guess that he must also have had contacts with other influential people of society. According to Miyata, her father had thus established links between Ekai and the businessmen, and perhaps with some influential people of his times. Since no help was to come from the government or the monasteries, Ekai had very little choice but to accept the patronage offered by businessmen. But one tends to ask from what Miyata said and also from the large assortment of things he brought from "Nepal," did Ekai Kawaguchi have this sense of responsibility towards the patrons at the back of his mind while he was collecting those artifacts as we can see today? But since his main

³⁵ Kawaguchi, *Three Years*, p. 707.

passion was of religio-textual and cultural nature, and the things he brought from his visits did not seem to have much commercial value, it is very hard to imagine why businessmen kept up their interest in offering him patronage.

However, the main point of curiosity here is this. Ekai did not go on a mission for the government, but he did go carrying certain responsibilities that his acceptance of the donations, and his brother's contacts must have necessitated. Was he also doing something other than what he says in his journey he did? But there is no reason to doubt the sincerity to his own spiritual goal and mission, and no textual evidence shows that his interests were other than that of a Zen monk dedicated to the fulfillment of his religio-cultural, artistic, and textual passion. According to Miyata, Kawaguchi believed that poor people should not give, but richer people should because they possess the resources. Kawaguchi states this justification at the beginning of his first travelogue in English *Three Years in Tibet* also. He accepted assistance from richer people without any qualms for a purpose which he thought was noble and something, as his descriptions and nostalgic *uta* show, he was doing for his "fellow countrymen."

Kawaguchi's collection was massive for an individual. He achieved it by combining personal ambition with the encouragement he received from some of his fellow countrymen. What is clear however is that to bring home such a good quantity of artifacts and items intact, he needed some financial assistance from some people. Though he had left for the first time with only five hundred Yen in his pocket he kept receiving assistance as the accounts show at least during his second visit and his long stay and travels during that time.³⁶

³⁶ Berry, pp. 266-267. Kawaguchi was sent some help from his brother Hanzui and others. There is no particular mention of any significant financial assistance he had received from people, but the fact that Kawaguchi was able to manage his travels in the subcontinent, pay for the fares and book tickets for himself and friends and pay for the cargo substantiates Emi Miyata-san's claim that he was supported by businessmen and other people that he was introduced to by his brother Hanzui, a well-known journalist.

MUSEUM AND POWER

Questions

Before discussing the relationship between museum as the new construct of power we should ask the following questions with regard to Kawaguchi's collection and its background:

Was Kawaguchi's concept of collection formed with an awareness that the Asian cultural heritage should be preserved in the wake of the Western countries taking art objects back to their countries where the concept of a museum was apart from the aesthetic awareness, a construct developed to establish superiority and patronage?

Since Kawaguchi's initial interest was to search for authentic texts, was his passion for the massive collection of objects other than manuscripts also guided by a concept of setting up a museum of Asian and Buddhist materials that would be a symbolic representation of the Pan-Asian cultural collection, an expression that he uses in his suggestion given in the form of a long letter written to Chandra Shumsher Rana during his third visit to Nepal in 1905?

Or, did he become more aware of this need of a museum—"collection" for him, after he directly encountered the British raj style of a museum?

Is the concept of an archive, or museum Western?

What does it mean to set up a museum in Nepal or set up a Kawaguchi museum in Kathmandu, for that matter?

Did Japan, as a colonial power for many years, like Western countries follow the Western style of collection of art objects from the countries she conquered? Did Kawaguchi have something of that at the back of his mind behind his idea of collection?

Or, can his search be problematized as a trope of the creative journey of a Japanese Zen monk whose output of *uta* and travelogue place him among the good Japanese creative travel writers and poets? But with a difference because his pragmatic approach to problems and his initiation of a cultural dialogue even with an inaccessible Nepali prime minister like Chandra Shumsher Rana make him more than a mere cultural mendicant. But a related question is, can he be considered a symbol of the Japanese spirit of a quest for cultural meaning and co-operation among Asian nations, especially Nepal? But neither in the first

nor in the second visit did he represent his government that was at war with China and Russia respectively, nor did his government have any interest in the kind of Pan-Asianism based on the Buddhist teachings of non-violence and peaceful co-existence that Kawaguchi was trying to foster when he was writing a letter to the Nepali prime minister. In short, he was a pragmatic monk fully aware of the socio-political and cultural predicament that the Asian nations were going through under colonial rule and their own growing ambitions for the same making it a period of great confusion and uncertainty. But the question is, can his museum collection be considered as part of this cultural awareness?

Did Kawaguchi understand the meaning of the power that cultural artifacts represented for the British in India or other Western colonial powers at that time?

These questions are not too easy to answer. We should examine carefully the socio-cultural and historical background to Kawaguchi's search for the cultural objects and the assistance he received from people and companies for that purpose as discussed above to answer at least some of these questions.

Of Empire and Individual

Hogdson and Kawaguchi

Ekai Kawaguchi's history before he left for Nepal and Tibet was one of turbulence—of tension with the monasteries and the order of priests. He had an ambition of establishing an alternate power structure one based on knowledge and authenticity. So though the amount of money he had in his pocket the morning he left the port city of Kobe in 1897 was very small, he had a great body of dreams, not clearly classified and schematized, tucked carefully behind his monk's non-descript *modus vivendi*. But little did he know that he was setting out that morning to trespass into the territory of the British empire that, had also chosen the new mode of consolidating the otherwise vast empire by means of knowledge, and archival collections which provided that and not by military means which had become impossible because of the size and

expanse of the empire. The only option then was to unite the empire “not by force but by information.”³⁷

Kawaguchi directly walked into the territories of the great collectors of the British raj, of Brian Hogdson, for example, who collected manuscripts in Nepal and India, and the Raj that provided patronage to such collections and shipped them to London or to other European destinations like Paris.

Kawaguchi’s predecessor, Brian Hogdson, was very intelligent and enlightened as a scholar and very astute and meddlesome as a diplomat. But Kawaguchi landed in that area incognito in his pseudo self, a fictive James Bond Chinese pilgrim Serai Amchi with “handful of love and pocketful of dreams”³⁸ to build an empire of the knowledge of Mahayana Buddhism in Japan, his home country, that he kept missing even in his most difficult hours, and wished for the glory of the empire that had little knowledge and interest in what he was going to die for on the Roof of the world sleeping under the cold stars with two neurotic sheep snoring uncomfortably on either side of him protecting this man who was their unique companion. The British empire’s collection used ship not sheep, pun intended, to transport the artifacts to the museums in Europe.

It was very moving to see the befitting tribute paid to this trespasser by his native people in Sakai by placing his life-size statue stooping under the weight of his back pack, supported on either side by these two sheep over the Tibetan plateau, on a high column at one of the broad squares of his native city at Nankai with the inscriptions carved out at the pedestal--words of introduction written by Professor Jiro Kawakita whom his niece credits with being the first man to discover the footsteps of this lonely and what she called misunderstood and neglected explorer by his native country.³⁹ Kawaguchi scholar Professor Ryuzo Takayama who took us to the site said we were the first Nepalis to see the statue with the obvious implication that Kawaguchi’s study was an important subject for Nepalese scholars as it is for the Japanese.⁴⁰

³⁷ Richards, p. 1.

³⁸ Lines of a famous song.

³⁹ My interviews with her.

⁴⁰ Prof. Ryuzo Takayama of Kyoto Bunko University is a well-known Kawaguchi scholar who has prepared an exhaustive catalogue of articles about Kawaguchi in both Japanese

Hogdson was the representative of the British empire, a symbol of nineteenth century British or European mode of collecting information and knowledge, developing its morphology and reconstructing the “roots of lost languages, tracing the origin of species, tracking down the ten tribes of Israel and locating the source of the Nile.”⁴¹

Brian Hogdson, is a nineteenth century collector, considered as the first to collect Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts. According to Philip Denwood, “From 1824 onwards, Hogdson assiduously collected Sanskrit and Newari manuscripts, and Tibetan block prints, and manuscripts, with a view to discovering the main features of Buddhism. He sent a steady stream of texts to Calcutta, which were divided between Calcutta, London, Oxford and Paris. The Sanskrit manuscripts totalled over 400 works including most of the fundamental Mahayana texts, and the Tibetan books included two copies of the entire canon and one of the large *Prajñāpāramitā*.”⁴²

Hogdson was in a very good position to collect the manuscripts. He was the ambassador of the British empire who could “meddle” in the political structure of the country, dissuade the Gorkhalis who the British Governor General Lord Auckland thought were preparing to wage a war against the British with a “formidable army and that the British could not have contained it at that time,” by using “persuasion and bluff” of all

and English at different times, and has written many articles about Kawaguchi-- his Tibet-Nepal visit, and his life before and after he visited this part of Asia. Takayama was one of the early explorers of Kawaguchi's routes in the Nepali Himalayas along with Professor Jiro Kawakita in the late fifties. He took us to see Kawaguchi's birthplace in Nankai in Sakai city on 18 September, 1997. Now that the house where he was born no longer exists, a pillar has been erected at the site of the old house. However, other houses, simple and lovely, built horizontally along the narrow lanes that exist today look like the one where Kawaguchi was born, said one old lady to us. It is interesting to imagine a young man born in that quarter of the city where people usually led a simple life and lived on their traditional skills, cherishing dreams of spiritual exploration. Kawaguchi's parents and other family members were still living there while he was in Tibet, and his father died when he was in Lhasa.

⁴¹ Richards, p. 38.

⁴² Philip Penwood in Brian Hogdson, *Essays on the Languages Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* (New Delhi: Manjushree Publishing House, 1972, first edition, 1874), introduction, p. 4.

kinds.⁴³ Hogdson thus very successfully represented the new form of power of the colony, one based on the “control of knowledge” rather than the “control of empire”⁴⁴ which Western countries were developing then as the new mode of consolidating territories. The “Serai Amchi” Kawaguchi appeared in this haven of Sanskrit texts, in this land, a repository of archives like Tibet in many ways, with a personal mission as gigantic as that of the British empire without being familiar with the new mode of control that the Empire had adopted and successfully carried out through this astute scholarly diplomat several years before he came.

To get an idea of the *modus operandi* of the scholar diplomat Hogdson, we should read the following lines from his own description of how he got into this task of collecting:

Soon after my arrival in Nepaul..., I began to devise means of procuring some accurate information relative to Buddhism: for, though the regular investigation of such a subject was foreign to my pursuits, my respect for science in general led me cheerfully to avail myself of the opportunity afforded, by my residence in a Baudha country, for collecting and transmitting to Calcutta the materials for such investigation. There were, however, serious obstacles in my way, arising out of the jealousy of the people in regard to any profanation of their sacred things by an European, and yet more, resulting from the Chinese notions of policy adopted by this Government. I nevertheless preserved, and time, patience, and dexterous applications to the superior intelligence of the chief minister, at length rewarded my toils.⁴⁵

He employed methods, the likes of which can be seen in those employed by Montgomerie though on a small scale, in collecting the manuscripts. He “privately instituted inquiries in various directions” and “cheerfully sent them to Calcutta” at a fast pace. Kawaguchi appeared as a monk at the door of the Nepali prime minister Chandra

⁴³ Hogdson, introduction, p.3.

⁴⁴ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 5.

⁴⁵ Hogdson, p.35.

Shumsher Rana, he almost intercepted him, was thrown out by his guards, but met him again, stated his purpose as one of collecting Sanskrit manuscripts and promised to return their Japanese versions and returned with them again after some years and got more manuscripts in return.

The methods of collection and the system of patronage of these two collectors are different. To Hogdson collecting manuscripts was part of possessing a new domain, acquiring control of information because he was a representative of the British empire. Kawaguchi was a holy nomad, not a diplomat; he had no pretensions of a scholar nor was he any sure of the shape and size of his collection which grew in size through the years like a coral reef. He became more conscious of the power that knowledge could bring. But the nature and scale of such knowledge was totally different from that of Brian Hogdson's. To review the nature and mode of Kawaguchi's collection a brief comparison of his attitude to the space, to the Himalayas and the people of Nepal with that of Brian Hogdson is important.

Hogdson's collection was part of the system building for a museum, one of transferring the many centres to one centre and preserving, controlling, extending, and preparing the morphology of knowledge so that the colony could set up a new mode of power structure. The collection was thus part of the colonial programme of information based on power structure. Describing the nature and objective of this new development Thomas Richards says:

To administer its Empire Britain had developed an open economy of local knowledge within which its operatives, working both in and out of the British Museum, produced and published so much information—linguistic studies, orientalist tracts, ethnographies, geographical reports—that only a large corporate or governmental entity could possibly possess the resources necessary to comprehend Britain's comprehensive knowledge.⁴⁶

The building up of knowledge was thus part of the responsibilities of the missions and administrations all over the world--part of the

⁴⁶ Richards, p. 112.

imperial programme. Looking at a space for colonizing had thus a symbiotic relationship with the acquisition of archival resources. Hogdson's time was a little before the actual "formation and consolidation of an imagined organization of global knowledge and power."⁴⁷

Hogdson looked at the Himalayas, for example, from the point of view of a colonial architect. But Kawaguchi saw them as god, or the abode of his god. He felt them with his feet, swam across its freezing rivers, lived with its mobile population, spoke their language, prayed for life and wrote *uta*, poetry of the moments of discovery. We can see the difference in the following extracts from the writings of each of them. Hogdson wrote:

As the interesting subject of the fitness of the Himalaya for European colonization is beginning to excite the attention of individuals and of the Government it may be worthwhile to state distinctly my own conviction on the subject...because I have resided some thirty years...

I say, then, unhesitatingly, that the Himalaya generally is very well calculated for the settlement of Europeans, and I feel more and more convinced that the encouragement of colonization therein is one of the highest and most important duties of the Government.⁴⁸

By Government, Hogdson means the British government in London or in Delhi. In this section written in 1856, Hogdson clearly evokes the current priorities and what was considered as the possibility of colonizing the Himalayas, a policy which stands in line with Montgomerie's employment of Hindu pundits after six years under the programme of state nomadology to discover the Himalayan theocratic Kingdom, Tibet, an ideal state where knowledge and power worked in an integrated form.

⁴⁷ Richards, p.72.

⁴⁸ Hogdson, p. 83.

Kawaguchi's perception of the Himalayas was very different from that of Hodgson's. He acquired a "non-ego" and granted the "reality" of the Himalayas when he was awe-stricken:

Mount Kailasa itself towers so majestically above the peaks around, that I fancied I saw in it the image of our mighty Lord Buddha, calmly addressing His five hundred disciples. Verily, verily, it was a natural Mandala. The hunger and thirst, the perils of dashing stream and freezing blizzard, the pain of writhing under heavy burdens, the anxiety of wandering over trackless wilds, the exhaustion and the lacerations, all the troubles and sufferings I had just come through, seemed like dust, which was washed away and purified by the spiritual waters of the lake; and thus I attained to the spiritual plane of Non-Ego, together with this scenery showing Its-own-Reality.⁴⁹

He forgets the pain of the long and rough travels to see the Himalayan grandeur. He becomes part of that Mandala, a monk who gets this *satori*, this epiphany. He at once feels that he enters a temple with Buddha preaching his disciples. He is an insider who quarrels with the influence of Guru Rimpoche over such beautiful Buddhist manifestation, his weak point in the entire journey that mars his sense of aesthetics. He grumbles:

I should have been deeply impressed by this unique grandeur of nature, had it not been that I was scandalised by the sight of the misguided veneration, if not worse, paid to the memory of Lobon Rinpoche.⁵⁰

However, it is very easy to see that his anger is that of a Hinayani Buddhist monk like a Tibetan, who enters the space, feels it and shows his prejudices and tantrums. The other point is that he does not furnish suggestions to his government to colonize the Himalayas. Actually, he was out of step with the policies of his own government. He did not feel

⁴⁹ *Three Years*, p. 141.

⁵⁰ *Three years*, p.165.

in any way responsible to his 'Government'—with the large capital G as used by Hogdson.

But Kawaguchi's collections include the exquisite images of *Vajrayana* Buddhism, the Tantric postures. He found them exquisite, the crystallized tropes of the "misguided veneration ...paid to the memory of Lobon Rimpoche." His collections thus did not represent the grand scheme, like that of Hogdson, the great morphology of archival knowledge, which is only beginning to emerge now slowly under the efforts of the competent Japanese scholars on subject as mentioned in this and other chapters of the monograph.

Tibet and Archive

Tibet was the archive state for the West. According to Richards, it represented "recuperation of exhaustive knowledge" a repository of "complete knowledge" that the West had lost. So it represented the utopia of an "archive state" a Shangri-La where there existed a symbiotic relationship between state and knowledge.⁵¹ What Richards calls the Shangri-La is represented by the discourses of Tibetan teachers and exiled Lamas even today who address this subject of the relationship between "complete knowledge," and the non-violent archival state. The sacerdotal archive-state symbolized the utopia of a lost state for Victorian Britain, the state that was "always in danger of entropy," an ideal Shangri-La, a "fortress of solitude." The series of attempts to discover this land by English explorers thus received the support of all those institutes and organizations in Britain who were doing important works towards the exploration, preservation and preparation of a great morphology of knowledge like the Darwinian morphology of evolution, important work for the systematization of science and culture that the museums symbolized. The British Museum as it stands today is a spectacular example of how the knowledge of the world is preserved in this museum. When we enter the museum a gigantic stone Buddha from Indonesia welcomes us showing us to the passages at the back that lead to different worlds of exploration, accumulation and preservation. Similar, but in a lesser degree, is the situation of the other great museums

⁵¹ Richards, p. 12.

in the West. But none are like the British Museum that houses the archival artifacts collected under the sun that never set.

Everyone who explored Tibet was given a hero's welcome. When Hamilton Bower returned after exploring Tibet the Royal Geographical Society did not lose any time to recognize his achievements and honour him in 1894.⁵² But Kawaguchi was not so lucky, he did not receive such quick recognition. After he returned to Japan from his first trip to Tibet in 1903, The Tokyo Geographical Society made an "outcry" and called him a fraud.⁵³ Therefore the onus of preparing the morphology of Kawaguchi's collection, his archive of the hieratic Buddhist state, lay on the scholars, who I found are still busy with that today.

Tibet represented an ideal Shangri-La for the reversal of the assumption that "the local was included in the global" into that of the inclusion of "the local, the marginal, the forgotten, in preparation of the day when Western culture can move once again into an encompassing and hegemonic configuration."⁵⁴ Kawaguchi's ambition was no lesser than that. He had a dream to set up a centre, a base for an authentic and "encompassing" albeit on a smaller scale, Buddhist studies which his compatriots today, eminent scholars on the subject tend to believe that he did.⁵⁵ His disciple and his colleague at Toyo Bunko and Taisho University, the senior Buddhist scholar Mibu Taishun evaluates his achievements mainly in terms of the foundation of Tibetan Buddhist studies in Japan, the collection of the important manuscripts and

⁵² Hugh B. Richardson, Introduction to Hamilton Bower, *Diary of a Journey Across Tibet* (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak, 1976, first published 1894), p. vi.

⁵³ Berry, p.248.

⁵⁴ Richards, p. 41.

⁵⁵ Among them scholars like Mibu Taishun, Jiro Kawakita, Ryuzo Takayama, Soichi Uehara, Hajime Kitamura, Kimiaki Tanaka, Naoji Okuyama and his own niece Emi Miyata and writers about Kawaguchi in foreign languages and papers and cultural emissaries like Hojun Kekuchi (who have written about Kawaguchi in the Nepali press in Kathmandu, and helped people including myself to find ways of undertaking the Kawaguchi studies) and others, believe that Kawaguchi's collection of Tibetan manuscripts and archival artifacts represent his desire to establish a base for a proper Buddhist study in Japan.

advocacy of the virtue of lay Buddhism⁵⁶ in the language not of the elite but of the laity.

Kawaguchi too employed to some extent, as a matter of exigency, the local practices, and as said earlier, his own nomadism to acquire the archival objects of the locale, representing the complete knowledge to achieve which, Montgomerie had employed state nomadism a few decades before he came to this part of Asia.

Tibet was full of cultural artifacts for him. It had authentic Buddhist texts that he collected in large numbers by convincing the leaders of the theocratic state into giving him these objects. He maintained his duality in this domain also. He despised the Rimpoche orientation of Tibetan Buddhism as a monk, but as a collector, he did not make any such discriminations. He found the artistic manifestations of the *Vajrayana* school very exquisite and something that could contribute to the setting up of a hegemony of an encompassing Buddhist studies in Japan. Today, his collection clearly shows this.

Tibet as an archive was too real for Kawaguchi. It was different from the Western perception of the same objects. As Mary Louis Pratt says, "The European imagination produces archeological subjects by splitting contemporary non-European peoples off from their precolonial, and even their colonial, pasts. To revive indigenous history and culture as archeology is to revive them as dead."⁵⁷ To Kawaguchi it was a new life. The objects that he collected by employing all means were close to his faith and the life he had been leading, and represented an alternate perspective of salvation to the Zen monk poet. Nevertheless, he was a collector, a Brian Hodgson, a Hamilton Bower of a different order. He too did dislodge the archival artifacts from the locales, from their seats. But he had carried different kinds of dreams into the archival land and this land of "complete knowledge" did not disappoint him. The Rimpoche's land filled his lama-bag, a little too oversized, and his *bhikshyapatra*--his begging bowl, with the trophies of the dreams of perfection and authenticity which he carried across the Roof of the World and across the *saatsamudra* or the "seven seas" as they are called in

⁵⁶ Mibu Taishun (b.1913), recollecting Kawaguchi in *Kawaguchi ekai no sekai* or "the world of Kawaguchi" (Tokyo: Taisho Daigaku Kang, 1995), pp. 10-11.

⁵⁷ Mary Louis Pratt, *Imperial Eyes Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992,1995), p. 134.

Nepal, with great love and respect for the use of his “fellow countrymen.” Western collectors and representatives of the Empire kept looking at this unusual trespasser with surprise. Greater still was their surprise at the zeal for the exploration and collection of the archival pieces of this non-European, this Zen monk, a self-imposed nomad, a resilient fakir and a cultural mendicant who made a voluntary Diaspora for that purpose to this Shangri-La.

Nepal as Next Shangri-La

The Trespassing Insider

Nepal has remained the next Shangri-La of collectors. Kawaguchi's other destination was Nepal from where he was able to collect a good number of manuscripts, Buddhist scrolls, paintings and sculptures. His size of the collection is not much smaller than that of Brian Hodgson. To see what Tibet represented for the collector we should see what Nepal represents for them.

Nepal has been another haven for collectors and travellers from Europe and Asia since the early years of the Christian era . It remains so even today. The following extract from Richards' book *The Imperial Archive* presents the lure that Nepal has offered to collectors as an alternate Shangri-La where there is a great repository of archival objects, and its Sacramental and aesthetic objects are recorded and coded in papers, stones and metals, and walls and woods, and in the very architectural designs of the houses and towns:

With Tibet now under Eastern rather than Western domination, today's Nepal plays a comparable role as a sanctuary of comprehensive knowledge, a place for New Age wanderers in search of an elusive but hegemonic construction of knowledge. What these tourists seek there is the impossible space of archive and utopia, a repository of total knowledge elevated above the blur of contingency, an idea bequeathed to us by the collective political and ideological machinations of the British military

functionaries who first mapped Tibet and created the world's first store of positive mythological knowledge.⁵⁸

Colourful, light and serious books written in Western languages, most of them in English, covering the various spatio-temporal manifestations of this total knowledge, this utopia, flood the book market today. They are too numerous to include in ordinary catalogues. The lure of this surrogate Shangri-La, this haven of archives was equally strong in Kawaguchi's times. The country was closed to foreign visitors, like Kawaguchi's own Japan during the Tokugawa period until 1867, that is, until the beginning of Meiji era. People who could get access to this land were Western residents like Brian Hodgson; even they were kept beyond a certain wall. But Kawaguchi visited the land openly, without hiding his identity because he knew at heart that he was a Buddhist monk, a pilgrim to Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, a trespassing insider, the first unaccredited envoy of Japan to this Shangri-La. In that sense, very different from Brian Hodgson, but a very avid collector of artifacts and manuscripts that the latter had not got access to for some reason. The passion of collection was so strong in Kawaguchi's mind that he would not mind doing it even it had meant doing it even little too enthusiastically if need be like his predecessor Brian Hodgson.

CONCLUSION

Going to different places in Japan to see Kawaguchi's collection after reading his travelogue is a unique experience. His visit to Tibet and Nepal transcends its own limits, the limits of a trope known as travel in Japan. The most tangible memories of his visit to Tibet are enshrined in these artifacts. To Kawaguchi, as to the Europeans, Tibet and Nepal represented whole knowledge, a complete symbiosis of power and faith, poetry and power. His archival collections are the tangible manifestations of this utopia, this integration.

Kawaguchi's collection does not occupy a position of great importance in today's postmodernist Japan where everything is a museum, as Andre Malreaux said, without walls. The vast props that

⁵⁸ Richards, p. 13.

surround life today call for recognition. The great passion of Kawaguchi's fellow countrymen for information, for knowledge and exposure to new developments has driven the society, to use poet Ooka Makoto's expression, towards "control and standardization mechanisms of the computer-age society." Kawaguchi's collections fulfill some part of this passion, fill a very small corner of the big Tokyo National Museum, for example, in metropolitan Tokyo where as of 1993 more than 193 museums are recorded which "include the collection of Oriental antiquities at the Tokyo National Museum and an old Tokyo neighbourhood recreated in the Fukugawa Edo Museum... from poetry to parasites—Tokyo has a museum..."⁹⁹

These museums reflect Japan's modern times, its fast adoption of Western modes of communication and the morphology of diverse acquisitions both of native and Western origins. The Tradition, cultural artifacts and the very modes of rituals and norms having a direct relationship with the past, the aesthetic objects that still form a part of the daily life make Japan itself a very unique and shifting museum, an open village where the entire history of culture and aesthetics is not only recorded but also lived. Kawaguchi stepped outside this museum just for a little but brought back with him too many familiar and unfamiliar archival objects. The Pan-Asianism that he advocated in the famous letter he wrote to the Nepali prime minister in 1905 has a symbiosis with his archival collection.

But Japan's modernity is also unique. Its Westernization of culture is unique, from the point of view of other Asian nations. Its modernist and postmodernist fervour of adopting Western *modus operandi* in its management of economy, science and even its rich culture has given rise to certain caveats. One important caveat at least from the Asian point of view is summed up like this:

In its attempt to catch up with the West Japan began to identify with it. At the same time, it has peripheralized cultural links with

⁹⁹ Thomas and Ellen Flannigan, *Tokyo Museums* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1993).

its Asian neighbours whose influence on Japan waned with the expansion of Euro-American power in the Pacific.”⁶⁰

Kawaguchi's utopia was different. He felt peripheralized himself with the main Buddhist studies and went to the centre in search of them. His archival collection, his museum is the tangible representation of that search. The religious artifacts and manuscripts symbolize this movement from the periphery to the centre and from the centre to the periphery. Therefore his archival artifacts neither exoticize nor peripheralize Tibet and Nepal, the great centres of Mahayana Buddhism. Instead, they represent the centre, which, according to Kimiaki Tanaka, a Buddhist scholar and expert on Kawaguchi collection, Kawaguchi was trying to create in Japan also for the Buddhist studies,⁶¹ and his museum was supposed to create the space for the representation of complete knowledge, for a surrogate Shangri-La. His entire life was thus a meaningful movement between what he thought as the centre and the periphery and vice versa.

Kawaguchi's collection, looking in retrospect, creates its own media. It represents prints, paintings and calligraphy. The power of the indigenous and hand prints is different from the power of the printed prints. Local prints have global significance, as the British collectors round the world seemed to realize. They symbolized the antiquity and history of knowledge. Other religious artifacts complemented that power, that strength of the handwritten texts.

Kawaguchi's collections definitely represent the contours of his memories as they do represent his ambition. Though he unknowingly stumbled into the imperial dreams of the Western empires to build a new hegemony of knowledge through archival collections, Kawaguchi did neither have the morphology of such knowledge nor a clear idea of what his museum was going to evolve into. According to his last progeny today, Emi Miyata, these dreams of the Museum remained packed in several trunks for years. But the sheer diversity of these collections from the images of the esoteric Buddha, the *vajrayana*

⁶⁰ John G. Russell, "Race and Reflexivity" in John Whittier Treat ed., *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* (Richmond: Curzon, 1996, pp. 17-40), p. 29.

⁶¹ My interviews with him.

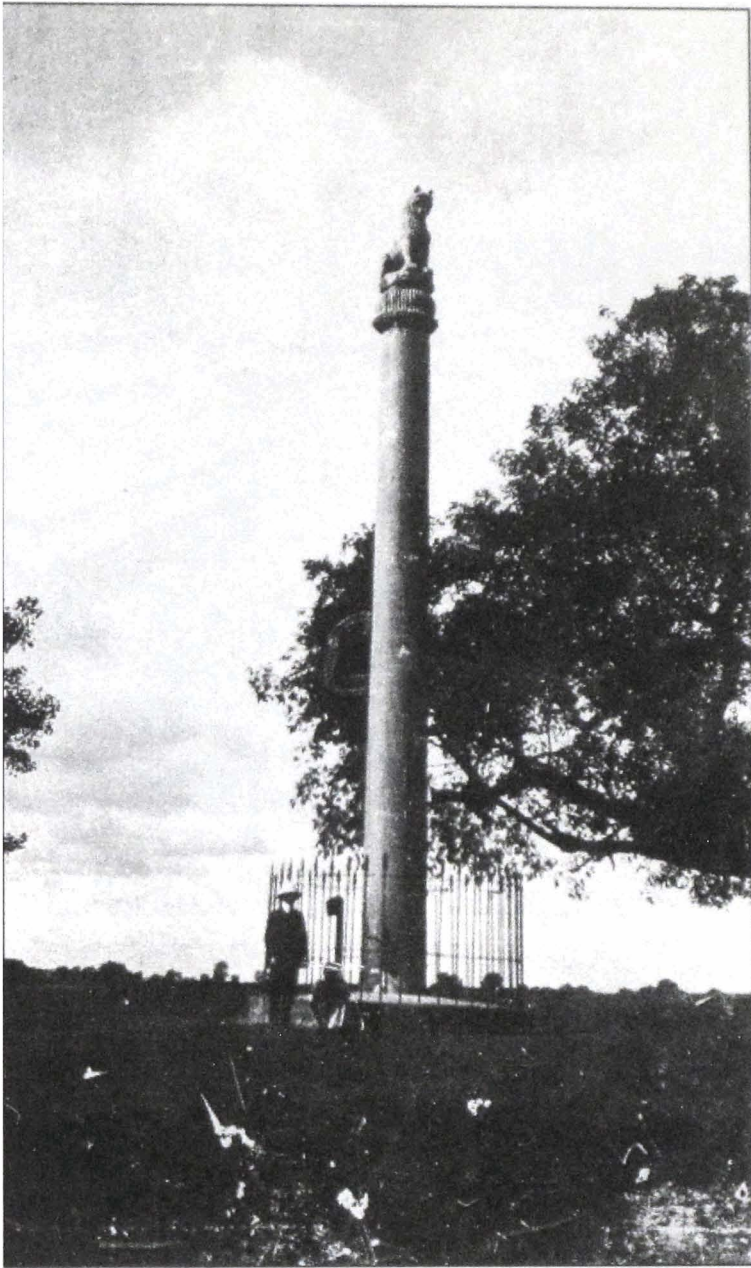
postures of cosmic copulation to the bangles and *chuba* of women, all represent the collage of a Zen monk's choice. The meaning of the diversity does not become so clear from an archive expert's eyes as from the eyes of a lover of poetry and art.

The constellation of these art objects represents the story of a Zen monk poet's *samadhis* which were held even on the Roof of the World, the fables and realism of history that he lived through.

All the items in his collection, be they bangles, the Bodhisattvas, horse saddles and bells, Tankas and thighbone horns, all represent a Zen in their diversity, a power of a different order unlike that imagined by the British empire. They create the environment for the *kyana*, the moments of discovery of a Zen monk poet, the *satoris*, and represent his moments of pain, and joy, of epiphany, the power of silence realized through a long course of search and meaning.

It may appear difficult to imagine the monk carrying them home as a "dream merchant," and to imagine him scattered through these archival dreams, and closed in trunks and shelved in half-lit rooms of libraries. That would be bizarre. What is important to consider is the solution he worked out, his emphasis on love and poetry. People who were close to him felt this love. Emi Miyata says her husband, the very worldly and famous Teru Miyata of NHK, realized in the last days of his life how great the love Ekai represented in his life after years of search and experience was.

Kawaguchi renounced his priesthood and remained a layman's Buddhist, refused to share his information with the military, and continued to traverse till his old age through the contours of the dreams of salvation and peace not only for himself but also for others. The archival objects distributed in different places of Japan today represent not any imperial ambition, nor that of the patrons, but the token of a Zen monk poet's vision of the paths of peace and brotherhood that will be the only and best option for the future of his country and those of Asia and the rest of the world.



51 *Ashokan pillar.*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 278, photo no. 5-057)

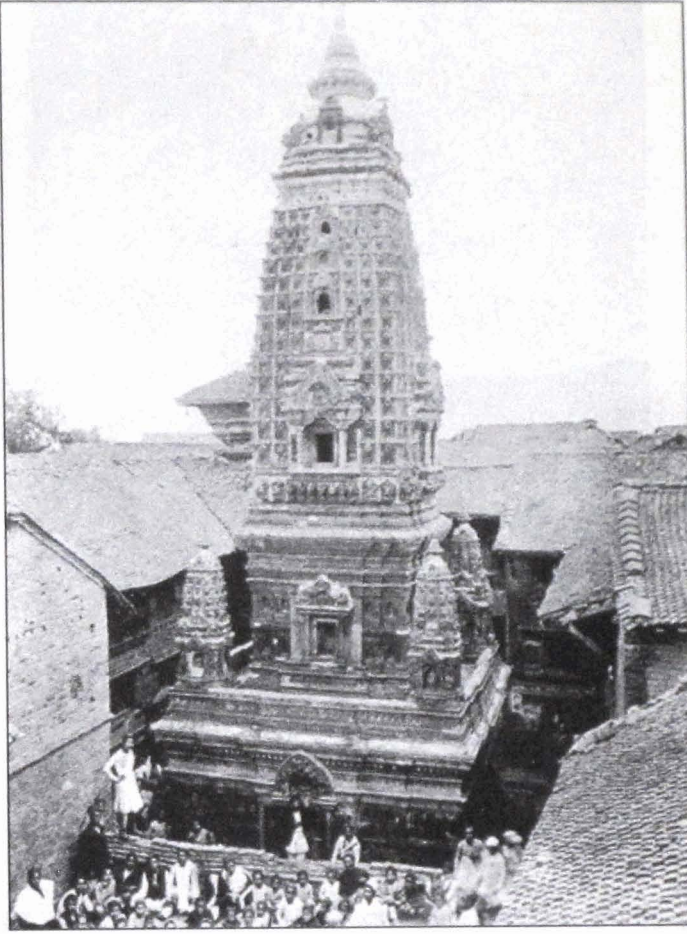


52 Pashupati Āryaghāt

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 286, photo no. 5-083)

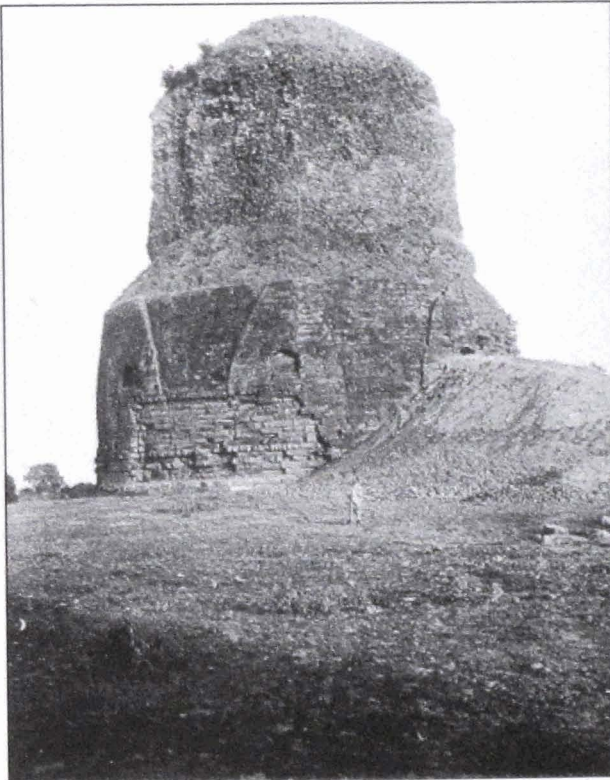


53 Kawaguchi at Lumbini in 1912. Seated next to Kawaguchi is Pandit Hem Rāj Pāṇḍay. (Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 281, photo no. 5-064, 120 x 165 mm)



54 Patan
Mahāboudha,
Nepal

(Source: TMCKE,
Japan, p. 285,
photo no. 5-077,
331 x 258 mm)



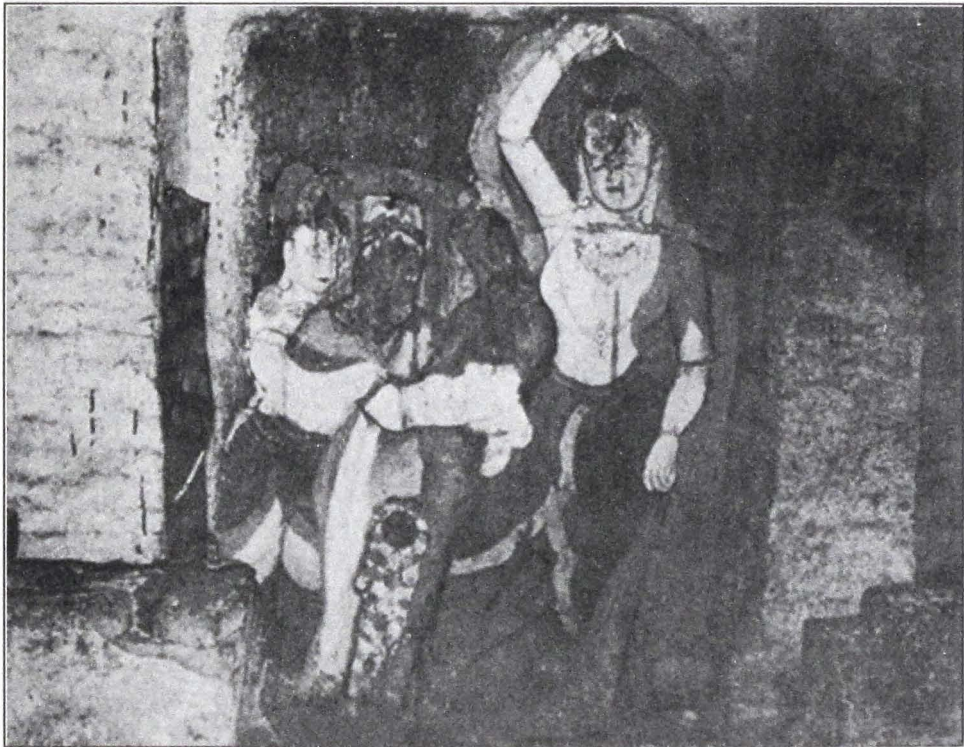
55 Sārnāth,
Banaras men-
tioned as
"Buddhagaya"

(Source: TMCKE,
Japan, p. 287,
photo no. 5-086)



56 Śvoyambhunāth Stupa

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 287, photo no. 5-084, 317 x 260mm)



57 Statue of Māyādevī at Lumbini

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 288, photo no. 5-089, 71 x 95 mm)



58 Taleju Temple, Kathmandu, mentioned only as
"Temple near Kathmandu," in the Catalogue
(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 285, photo no. 5-5080, 268 x 210 mm)

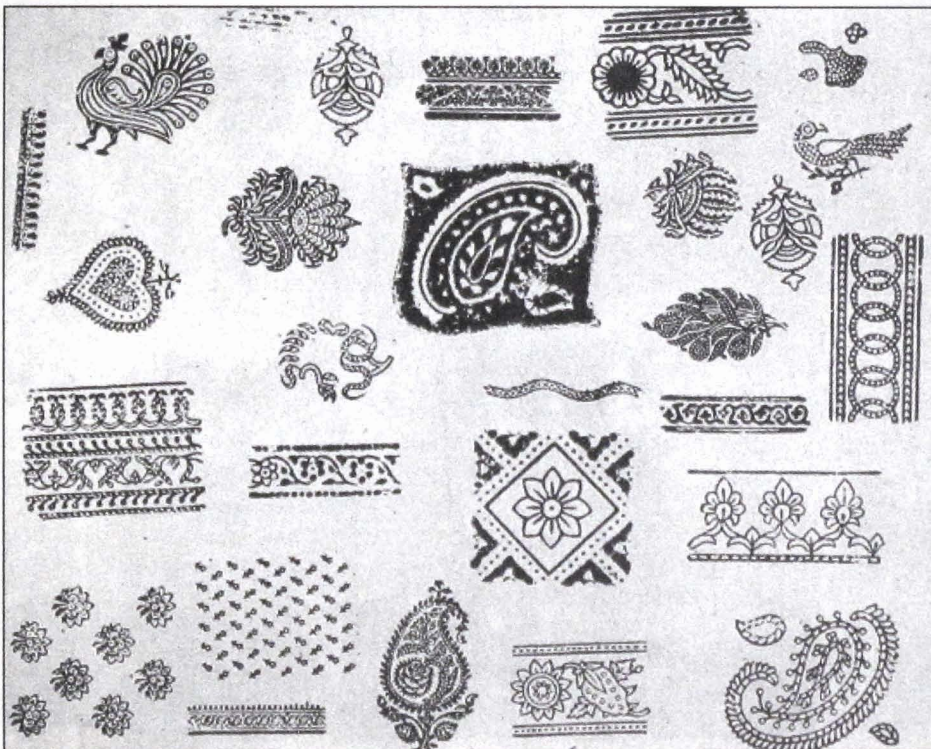


59 Kṛiṣṇa Mandir, Pātan
(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 287, photo no. 5-085, 272 x 212 mm)



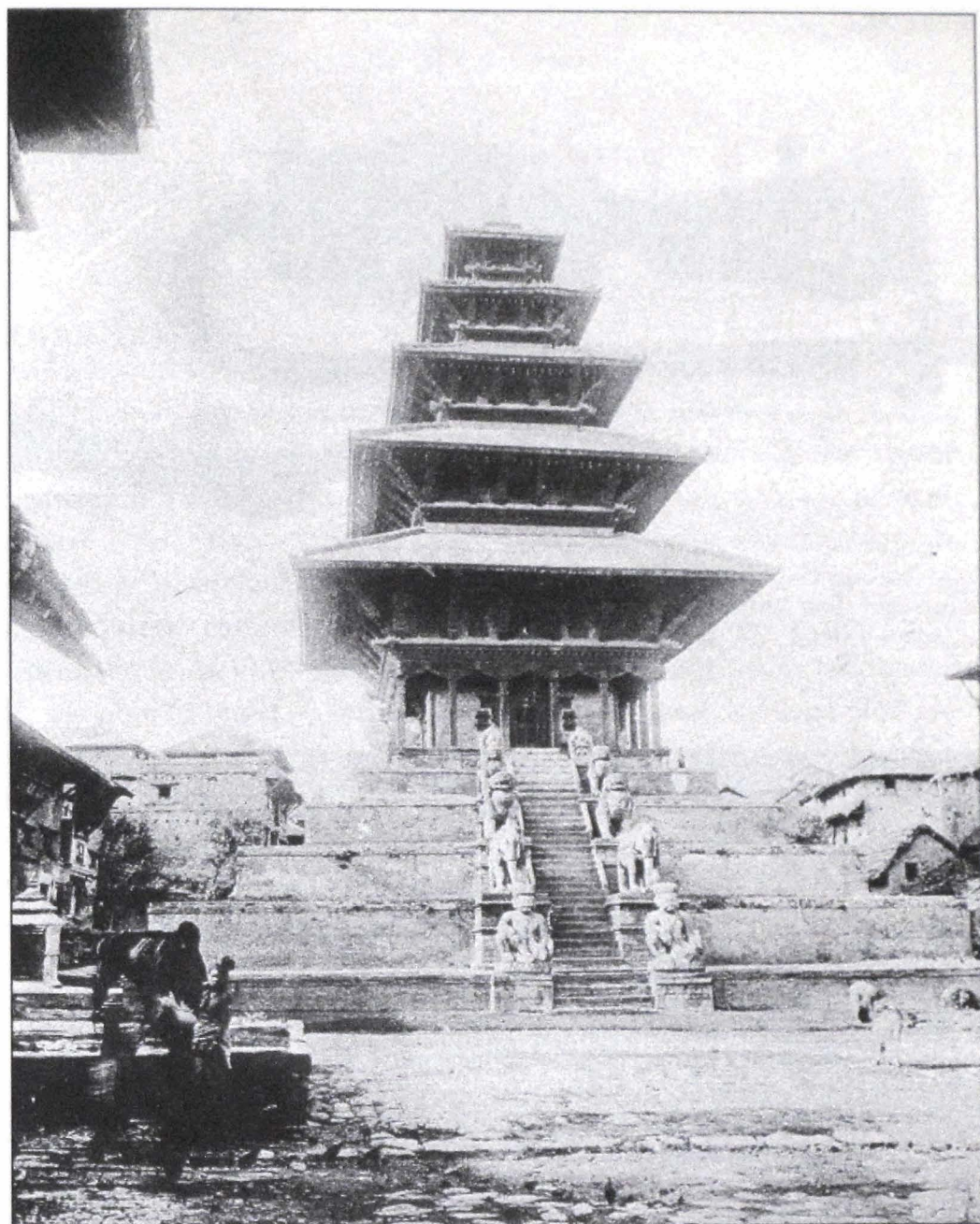
60 Rabindranath
Tagore

(Source: TMCKE,
Japan, p. 283,
photo no. 5-071)



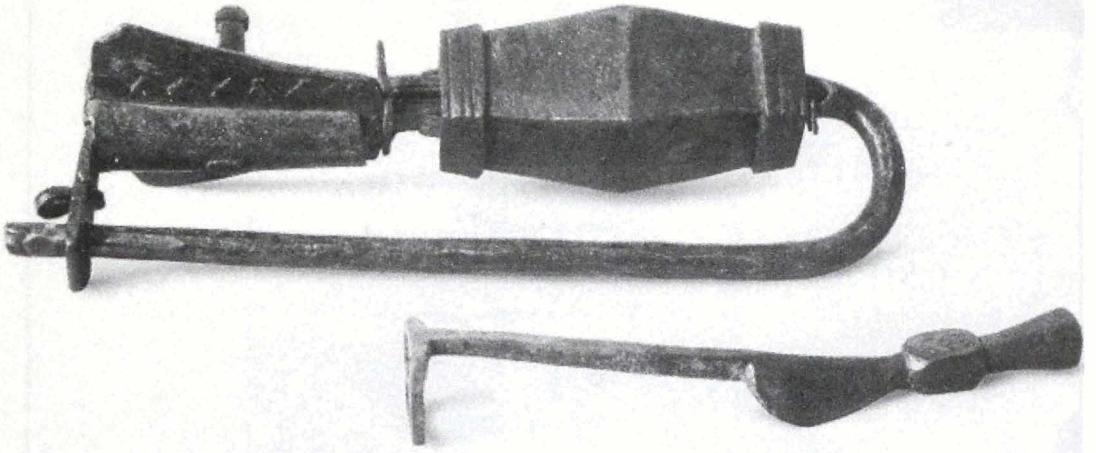
61 Different designs of printed copy of Indian Sarasa (Sāris ?)

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 340, photo no. 5-334)



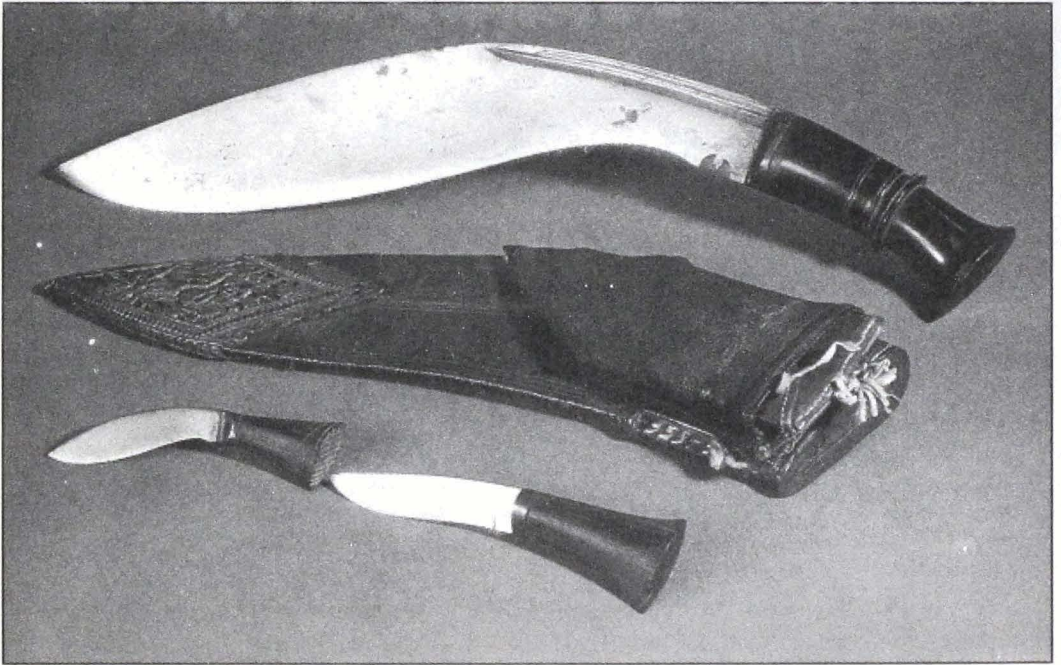
62 Nyatapola Temple at Bhaktapur

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 289, photo no. 5-092, 270 x 210 mm)



63 *Bhoṭetālcā* (Iron Lock and Key)

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 306, photo no. 5-027)



64 *Khukurī, Karda Cakmak*

(Source: TMCKE, Japan, p. 310, photo no. 5-222)

A Pragmatic Monk

INTRODUCTION

Kawaguchi began his career as a quiet monk interested in reading the classic Buddhist texts, but he soon discovered that he had a strong desire to search for the original sources of Buddhist texts and to create an atmosphere for their studies in Japan which required plan, determination, motivation and a little nostalgic vision. The entire scheme requires careful planning and support from people and institutions coupled with the determination and motivation of persons like Kawaguchi himself. But nobody was prepared to work for the ambitious schemes of an obscure monk in his early-thirties. Therefore Kawaguchi had to carry the entire burden of his own dreams. He was his own manager and his own dreamer. Out of necessity he became a pragmatic monk; out of need he made a colossal rise; out of what he saw as the adventure and sacrifice necessary for the creation of an atmosphere for Buddhist studies of the kind he envisaged, he walked over the perilous rugged terrain of the Roof of the world, befriended leaders and head priests of a sacerdotal state and the raja and maharaja of a nation closed to foreign visitors. Such was the background to Ekai Kawaguchi's pragmatism which was mostly the natural outcome of his dynamic life and experience. But he utilized the native traditions and experiences as well to bolster his pragmatism.

Paradoxically, Kawaguchi as said in the previous sections, transcended the native tropes--boundaries set for the responsibilities of a monk and the conventionally familiarized sense of space to be covered by a Zen Buddhist traveller, because of which reason, according to Kitagawa, Japanese Buddhism did not produce people like Fa-hsien, Hsuan-tsang and I-ching, "who dared to visit India, crossing the desert or ocean, to set foot on sacred spots which were sanctified by the blessed

memories of the historic Buddha.”¹ Thus to cross this native trope Kawaguchi had to use pragmatism as his most important companion which did not leave him ever since he left the quiet bay at Kobe in 1897.

On the face of it, his pragmatism may appear, as said above, at odds with the native expectations of a Zen monk and the traditions he is supposed to follow, but in reality it marked a semiotic representation of his own country’s dreams of modernization through the emulation of Western modes and methods for the same which remains a subject of debate among native and foreign scholars even today. Without being a direct participant in that process of modernization, Kawaguchi represented that spirit in his own characteristic way which at times sounds anachronistic but on the whole, presents an interesting construct for the creation of an environment for the modernization of a country.

In the eyes of the state, Kawaguchi was a nondescript monk like any other, with a body of amorphous dreams and plans the shape of which was not clear to himself, let alone to others. Born and brought up in the periphery of metropolitan Japanese culture and the milieu created by the polity in Tokyo, into the simple household of the wooden barrel makers, nobody would have imagined that he would end up opening the doors of the Nepali maharaja which were shut to all foreigners except the carefully invited British raj Englishmen, and those of the Dalai Lama whose theocratic state, the Shangri-La was closed even to the Western colonial powers who wanted to enter its sanctuary and look for a model of the unity of knowledge and power to make up for the entropy of their own utopia.

Kawaguchi entered the above domains and held important discourses with these monarchs or pseudo-monarchs who certainly wielded power to change the shape of things within their own well-guarded territories. Kawaguchi recognized the powers they wielded. He was an intruder but not very alien culturally because he was a devout Asian Buddhist monk who was on a kind of pilgrimage and did not represent any institutions or government. The Dalai Lama felt better with this monk’s treatments, and Chandra Shamsheer Rana, though not keen on the aspirations of a Buddhist monk, found it naturally easy to hold a discourse with him—a familiar figure who turned up at his door

¹ Kitagawa, p. 132.

speaking both Nepali and English. The irony of the pragmatics was that this monk in shabby robes represented Imperial Japan, Meiji Japan that had been fighting wars with the great land powers like China and Russia to Chandra Shamsheer and to the Dalai Lama, and was either given audience or interpreted as a persona non grata and unaccredited diplomat for the same reason. But to his own government, to the military representative of his own country he was a disgrace. When he reached the Japanese General's camp in Delhi, the Japanese military was horrified to see what looked like a beggar compatriot monk outside the tents of the Japanese Lieutenant General Oku, representing Japan at the great Durbar of the British Emperor Edward VII being held in Delhi in 1903. Colonel Yui ordered his men to throw him out. They wanted to see him disappear before anybody saw him there and suspected that he was a spy handing in reports. Colonel Yui told him the state would have nothing to do with the bizarre visions and personal interests of a wandering monk. He was insulted, but as he was so hungry he had, to add to his already unbearable humiliation, ask his compatriots for food and satiate it. Put on a horse-drawn *tanga*, he was whisked out.² Kawaguchi himself wanted to omit the story of this insult by the Japanese military in his English account of the journey.

Kawaguchi settled scores with the military later in the late thirties or early forties by turning down point blank their call to supply them with information about Tibet and that part of Asia. According to Takayama *sensei* Kawaguchi had nothing to do in terms of support either with the Japan-China or the Russo-Japanese wars.³

But with the same dress he appeared outside the tents of the inaccessible Nepali Maharaja and the prime minister and was welcome as a person, albeit little enigmatic, representing modernization and power in Meiji Japan—a monk who could analyze the situation and offer

² Kawaguchi Ekai, ed. Ryuzo Takayama, *Chibetto Ryoko Ki* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1978), vol. v, pp.134-135.

³ Ryuzo Takayama in his article "Kawaguchi Ekai, before and after his travel to Tibet" published in *Obaku Bunka* 115 (1995) says that the Nepali prime minister asked him questions about the causes of the Russo-Japanese war. This question was asked probably to enable Nepal to adopt a strategy towards Russia. I guess Nepal must be sharing the same apprehensions about Russia as the British in India. Kawaguchi said he had nothing to do with either the Japan-China war or the Japan-Russia war (p.36).

suggestions to the man looking for clear directions to be taken in matters of policies to be adopted in a continent which was at the crossroads of changes in various modes of life including relations among the nations.

Kawaguchi ironically saw in Chandra Shamsheer Rana and the country he ruled in absolute terms, possibilities for presenting a model of a non-colonized Asian country, the land of the Buddha's birth, where Pan-Asian non-occidental ideals based on the teachings of the Buddha could be the guiding principles of the state. But Chandra Shamsheer was neither a Prince Shotoku who proclaimed Buddhism as the state religion of Japan in 593, nor King Ashoka of the 3rd century BC, hailed as the greatest Buddhist King. Kawaguchi too was too pragmatic a monk to expect Chandra Shamsheer to play either a Shotoku or an Ashoka. He gave the prime minister suggestions about modernizing the state and working under the principles of Pan-Asianism guided by the teachings of the Buddha. How much Chandra Shamsheer himself was interested in the modernization of his country under these principles is a different matter, but what is important is Kawaguchi's vision of an ideal state, a utopia where there is the unity of knowledge and power, ironically, something that Britain too was trying to create as discussed in the previous section by means of a new mode of power to be acquired by balancing knowledge with authority or rule, for which reason, Tibet the sacerdotal state represented a semiotically important archival construct and space.

Kawaguchi's own pragmatism of how an ideal state should be run does not entirely go along the lines discussed in the Buddhist principles of unity between the state and Buddhism, polity and the principles of the Sangha, but along the nineteenth century Western models of modernization which Japan was already emulating at that time. However, behind Kawaguchi's ideas about how a state should be run, how modernization should be carried out, there is a Buddhist concept of the ideal or utopian state, and the ideal is represented by the current developments in his own country in relation to the role of the Buddhists in the socio-political structure. Kawaguchi's ideas contained in the recently found letter thus deserve careful attention.

A very interesting document handwritten by Ekai Kawaguchi entitled "*Memorial*" which he must have meant to be a memorandum submitted to the Nepali prime minister or who is referred to as Maharaja

Chandra Shamsheer, on 22 October 1905 is discovered at Madan Library in Patan, Kathmandu.⁴ Kawaguchi befriended the Nepali prime minister in his first meeting with him in 1903 itself when he went to see him and make a request to forward his petition to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama asking for clemency to his friends in Lhasa who were jailed and reportedly tortured for helping him after his identity was revealed following his safe escape from Lhasa.

Kawaguchi interestingly valorized the creation of an Asian state outside the sphere of Western influence and he saw such a possibility in Nepal with Chandra Shamsheer Rana as its ruler. To see the origin of this pragmatism we should also briefly look at Kawaguchi's own background as a Japanese Buddhist who strongly advocated lay Buddhism. In 1926, the year he renounced priesthood of the Obaku Zen

⁴ This 57 page document is written horizontally on pages carefully folded into the size of a book. Kawaguchi's calligraphy is remarkable. I saw his calligraphy in Sanskrit and Japanese with predominantly Kanji characters at the house of his niece Emi Miyata-san, and at Sakai city museum. This letter written to Chandra Shamsheer Rana on 22 October, 1905, shows his calligraphic skill with Roman scripts also. I was able to acquire the copy of this manuscript from Kanak Mani Dixit, editor of *Himal* magazine with notes in Nepali written about it by Kamal Mani Dixit who has taken special care to preserve and get this manuscript microfilmed.

Giving details about this manuscript, Kamal Mani Dixit, in his notes to the Nepali translation of this text published in the quarterly magazine *Nepali* (Feb-March, 1992):2-19, says that this memorandum was submitted in a 205x130 millimeters size book form secured with rolled Nepali paper thread. Special care seems to have been taken to make it handy and attractive so that the Maharaja would treat it like a book, which according to Dixit, seems to be the case as Chandra Shamsheer did not send it to the collection room but kept it in his personal library. This document reached the Pulchowk Shreedarbar (or Shree Mansion) along with other papers that were under the custody of Balkumari Devi, the 'youngest queen' of Chandra Shamsheer Rana, in the year 1930, from where, or from the collection of lady Jagadamba, this manuscript was acquired by the library. The history of this manuscript shows that this memorandum must have enjoyed a certain place of importance in the personal collection of Chandra Shamsheer Rana. Dixit even says that Chandra Shamsheer Rana must have taken these suggestions seriously and implemented some of them (p. 3). A thorough review of the works done during Chandra Shamsheer Rana's rule of twenty-nine years and the points raised by Kawaguchi would be an interesting study in its own right, which is beyond the scope of this book.

sect, he published a book entitled *Zaike Bukkyo* ("Lay Buddhism"). But lay Buddhism was an important term that had a pragmatic origin in Japan. Though Kawaguchi, advocated a more devotional aspect of lay Buddhism in the book, while talking about the involvement of a priest in running the state and the role of Buddhism in socio political affairs, he applied the pragmatism of the lay Buddhist movement in Japan at the turn of the century.

PRAGMATISM AND LAY BUDDHISM

Lay Buddhism and Statism

Kawaguchi inherited a recent memory of adjustments and rebellions Buddhists experienced in the last quarter of nineteenth century Japan. The period was momentous for Buddhists because during this time they had to face unprecedented challenges as a result of government decrees separating the Shinto and Buddhist lands, and "purging Shinto of its Buddhist accretions."⁵ The early seventies were especially worst for the Buddhists because of the intensified purification movement. In the first six years of the eighteen seventies the number of temples and priests declined alarmingly.⁶ Buddhist priests sounded their own alarm at one point. The government decree allowing priests to marry and eat non-vegetarian meals was another blow to the self-respect of the priests. The impact of this change on both the Buddhist elite and laity was dramatic. This followed a period of readjustment and rebellion. The Buddhists realized that pragmatism was the only course to be taken for the survival of a religion which cannot be called an ethnic movement but a dominant influence on the cultural life of the nation for nearly two millennia.

Buddhists in Japan adopted various modes and methods for adjustments in the changed context. The "persecution miraculously transformed the religion into a supporter of the political and military

⁵ Winston Davis, p. 160.

⁶ Winston Davis says that the reduction of temples that occurred following the persecution of the Buddhists presents an alarming scenario. An estimated 465,049 temples reduced to 71,962 and the number of priests too declined in the same proportion, i.e. they declined from 75,925 in 1872 to 19,490 in 1876.

policies of the Meiji state and made it a collaborator in the development of Japanese capitalism.”⁷ The subject itself is beyond the scope of the book, but one movement of that period deserves importance as a background to understand Kawaguchi’s own concept of the role of the Buddhist elite and laity alike in the modernization of the country and creating a referential construct for the Buddhist religion’s pragmatic orientation. The movement which had started little before Kawaguchi’s own time and was still a popular movement, must have left its impact on the Buddhist monks who advocated the importance of the role the lay Buddhists could play to instill life into the religion. The lay Buddhists took a more pragmatic stance in matters of running the affairs of the state and its cultural policies which at times took a hostile stand towards Western cultures and religions

The laity became the ‘active Buddhist apologists’ who took a policy of attack on Westernism. But they were equally critical of the elite Buddhist priests whose degenerate behaviours were responsible for the loss of prestige and popularity of Buddhism in Japan. Kawaguchi’s background was truly that of a rebel laity who criticized the behaviour of elite priests who were responsible for the erosion of faith in the religion.

In the late eighties people expected the Buddhist priests to play an important role in the sociopolitical life of the country . But they also strongly believed that since the Buddhist elite did not play any pragmatic role in matters of convincing or influencing the government and people in adopting a nationalistic cultural stance, the laity should play the role. A movement known as *Dainippon Kodakai* or National Religio-ethical Society of Japan, was launched in 1888. This movement was launched by lay Buddhists who wanted to give more pragmatic orientation to Buddhism by uniting Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism as the triad with common interests in promoting a state religion. The Society described its purpose as:

The national religion is the spirit of the country. The spirit of Japan has three components: Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. We call the combination of these three “the great way.” Shinto excels in love for our Emperor and country.

⁷ Winston Davis, p. 161.

Confucianism directs public morality. Buddhism relieves anxiety. The songs of old developed a religion which united all three.⁸

This movement launched by the laity drew a large group of supporters. By about 1902 its members swelled to 35,000 and its magazine sold 10,000 copies of each issue. This movement encouraged Buddhists to take part in politics and become members of *Diet*. The image of Shotoku Taishi as the first great Buddhist ruler was projected and idealized. The main objective of this movement was the fusion of Buddhism with statist philosophy.⁹ Buddhism pitted against Westernism and Christianity did not continue with its original fervour nor did the movement's call for the fusion of Buddhism with state and its avowed goal to encourage Buddhist monks to take political interest succeed as expected. But it certainly left its own impact on the movement. The very origin of the movement had pragmatic basis.

According to Kitagawa such a politico-nationalistic character of Japanese Buddhism has its history. He says that "two main threads that run through the colourful tapestry of Japanese Buddhism" are "national Buddhism which tends to depend on, ally with, and accept the control of the ruling regime" and "folk Buddhism which tends to ally itself with shamanistic folk religion."¹⁰ The nationalistic ethos of Japanese Buddhism are traced as far back as the early period of the Korean influence, with its nationalistic bias.¹¹ Interestingly, a strong lay Buddhist movement almost similar to the Japanese lay Buddhist movement became a force in China only later in the early decades of this century.¹² This shows that the Japanese Buddhists' pragmatic option was not any outside influence but the exigency of its own political historical context and a survivalist movement.

⁸ Matsutani Fumio and Undo Yoshimichi in Kishimoto Hideo, compiled and edited, and John F. Howes translated, *The Japanese Culture of Meiji Era* (Tokyo: Obunsha, 1956, pp 101-167), p. 152.

⁹ Fumio and Yoshimichi, *ibid.* p. 152.

¹⁰ Kitagawa p. 209.

¹¹ Kitagawa p. 267.

¹² Holmes Welch, "Buddhism in China Today," (pp.164-178) in Heinrich Dumoulin ed, *Buddhism in the Modern World* (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1976) p. 169.

As a young Buddhist priest, Kawaguchi was critical of what he thought as the decadent behaviour of Japanese monks. With a strong inclination towards the revivalist approach taken by the laity and its champions in the last decades of the century, something of the nature of a fusion between Buddhism and statism took place. But little did he seem to understand the politico-religious situation in Nepal. To him Nepal was a Shangri-La, the birthplace of the Buddha and a great repository of Buddhist texts in Sanskrit. In fact, he found a surfeit of it—the Buddhist art objects and Sanskrit manuscripts left behind by Hodgson and kept under the custody of the government's cultural archives and the Buddhists. For Kawaguchi, it was a Buddhist land. There were monasteries, monks, friends and ancient Buddhist temples. Its natural resources and a Maharaja ready to listen to him, it must have appeared to Kawaguchi that as the ideal country to put across his ideas about the pragmatism of running the affairs of the state under Buddhist principles by emulating the Western style of modernization as his country was experimenting at that time without necessarily under the Buddhist principles. After a series of meetings with Chandra Shamsheer, Kawaguchi must have become convinced that he listened to him. For example, in this Buddhist country of Kawaguchi, people were offering *bali* or the blood of animals to Buddha's mother in Lumbini. Buddhist elite or laity and devotees did not seem to notice it, or did not have courage to complain to Chandra Shamsheer about it. Kawaguchi put an end to this practice of sacrificing animals at the temple of Mayadevi by asking Chandra Shamsheer Rana who promptly responded.

Kawaguchi saw a great similarity between Nepal and Japan, the Nepalese and the Japanese. He created a surrogate Japan, an utopia of a Buddhist state in Nepal. The strong affinities he saw between Nepal and Japan right from his first visit bear a testimony to that. Kawaguchi said to Bhim Shamsheer, the brother of Maharaja Chandra Shamsheer Rana:

...not only your natural scenery, trees and plants, but even your people look very much like those of my own country, and I cannot help feeling quite at home here—a feeling which makes me forget the difficulties of travel I have come through.¹³

¹³ Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet* p. 697.

It is not clear what Chandra Shamsheer thought of the monk's pragmatism, his ideas about modernizing the country and 'transforming' it as Japan by means of 'education' and 'patriotism' which Kawaguchi saw were the two factors required for the modernization of the country.¹⁴ According to Kamal Dixit, Chandra Shamsheer must have read the monk's suggestions with great care which becomes evident from his keeping it with him as one of the accessible documents.

But Kawaguchi had other ideas too. On the one hand, he advocated patriotism, on the other, he proposed the concept of a greater Asia, which became a very debatable subject in the later decades, and made people take a cautious attitude towards neighbours, the British empire in India and Tibet. Chandra Shamsheer was not perhaps too keen on promoting Buddhism as the political force in his country. It would be tantamount to encouraging people to take a critical attitude towards his own regime and the Rana policy of closing the avenues of education, which Kawaguchi did not understand very little about while telling him that the secret of Japan's success lay in education and patriotism.

Kawaguchi was thus looking for a reference to his concept of an ideal state. He had at the back of his mind, the principles of the statism which had its referential construct not only in the recent history of his country's Buddhist movement of adjustment but also in the Buddhist canons of running the affairs of state and society, a subject beyond the scope of this monograph. He must also be aware of the overt political role of Buddhism in countries like Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos and Cambodia. He emphasized time and again on the importance of the unity of Mahayana Buddhism as against Hinayana Buddhism which he does not discuss explicitly but is implied in his valorization of the evocation of the principles of Mahayana Buddhism and his making it, the guiding principle of the statism of the type he conceived. Kawaguchi's Pan-Asianism was based on this orientation of Mahayana Buddhism. In his letter to Dalai Lama that he asked Chandra Shamsheer to forward and exercise his influence to secure the release of his friends from prison, he said:

¹⁴ *Three Years*, p. 687.

Your Holiness that knoweth all generously to overlook Ekai's entry into your land and impart to him the grand mysteries of your religion. Your Holiness knoweth as well as I that the only two countries in the world that maintain the Mahayana teaching of Buddhism are the Empire of Japan and Tibet. There are others indeed, but they are insignificant and are in decadence now. The time is come when these two countries of Mahayana Buddhism shall become acquainted and open intercourse with each other, and join in sending forth to the world the light of true Buddhism.¹⁵

The foundation of his pragmatism is thus Mahayana Buddhism. He wanted to see such a faith in practical terms. He wanted to make Buddhism as the light of not only the world but also of a nation that could draw its strength from the teachings of the Buddha. The first step in this regard was to unite Mahayana Buddhists because such teaching of the Buddha contained in it both power and applicability. His mission to Tibet was guided by this spirit of pragmatism. When he had to flee the country, he muttered these words at the Sera temple before leaving, "I Ekai Jinko, bound by the chain of deeds done in the previous world, have not been able to accomplish the union and conformity of the Japanese and Tibetan Buddhists, and now am obliged to leave the country" and wish for "the union of the Japanese and the Tibetan Buddhists at some future time, and also of illuminating the whole world with the light of Buddhism."¹⁶ He also believed that the cause of his country's progress was the teaching of Mahayana Buddhism. For that reason, he thought that Japan had an obligation to help Nepal as the place from where the Buddha sprang. In the letter he said:

I could desire nothing more in my heart than that this nation shall have the same union and enlightenment that has raised my country to this greatness, more-over (sic) it is meet (sic) for us—that the land in which Buddha had sprung—the land that sent us light and moderation should receive back from us science and

¹⁵ *Three Years* p.715

¹⁶ *Three Years* p. 594.

wisdom so that it may retain its pristine glory and be worthy of it.¹⁷

Kawaguchi's pragmatism was a unique combination of faith and science. To implement the benefits of this union, he saw the role of the laity, or the lay Buddhists as against the elite as it required the combination of action and vision, for which the lay Buddhist could play an important role.

In the memorandum, Kawaguchi does not elaborate on the Buddhist principles of running a state machinery. Nor does he identify the role of the monasteries. Kawaguchi knew very well that the Hindu prince would not bother to read or listen to the relationship of Buddhism and politics—the Mahasummata or the fall from perfect society, Buddhist concept of the relationship between the state and society, nor would he be interested to know about the righteous conduct of a king from the Pali Canon and the Jataka Commenos, nor was there any possibility or need of identifying the king's relationship with the Sangha. Kawaguchi's pragmatism was thus of a lay Buddhist who understood the addressee's nature and intention very well, but it was fully charged with the vision of an utopia that did not have any direct referent

Pragmatism

Kawaguchi's pragmatism has a metatextual basis. He combined the Japanese and the Western modes of discourse structure to create his pragmatism. He started his career as a monk interested in reading the Tripitakas in a quiet room inside the Mampukuji temple in Kyoto. Like his predecessors he left the temple to go to Tibet and Nepal to acquire authentic Buddhist texts. He adopted the Japanese tradition of diary writing. His best model must be Ennin's Travels to T'ang China in 838, his long stay there, his struggle to convince the authorities and laity and his search for authentic Buddhist canons. Ennin's diaries now available in English translation record his travels as important documents of

¹⁷ Ekai Kawaguchi, *Memorial* (sic) written on 22 October, 1905, preserved at Madan Pustakalaya, Patan, a memorandum given to Chandra Shamsheer Rana, prime minister of Nepal also called Maharaja, p. 2.

historical and cultural accounts. His description of the Korean trades, festivals and culture are remarkable accounts of travels which should surprise readers of Western travel literature.

Reischaner makes an interesting comparison between Marco Polo and Ennin. He says Marco Polo was not an educated person as Ennin, but his oral accounts of the journey shaped history, but Ennin's all vivid records were not even read in his own country because his diaries were written in medieval Chinese.¹⁸ The other reason was that Marco Polo's accounts were useful for colonial purposes as well as for the records of history and culture of different places. So they got more widely disseminated than the diaries of Ennin.

Kawaguchi adopted a Western model of discourse structure. He chose a genre called travel accounts and produced descriptive records of his journey. He was too aware of the audience, his addressee. He received a great audience in Japan itself who took it with admiration and his stories of adventure with a little pinch of salt. He decided to send his memoirs to a wider addressee and got the text translated with his own involvement. His addressee was the English language using world in Britain, America and India. He used the help of the British and Indian scholars and friends to put his accounts across to this audience. He was accepted by Younghusband almost like an Englishman on that score, who gave the English people useful reading material on the unexplored country called Tibet.

Kawaguchi's creation of the genre is very important. He transcended the limits of biography writings of the monks and made quite a bold use of the occidental mode of textual structure. Kawaguchi transcends the limits inherited from tradition of writing about oneself by creating various levels of discourses in his travel accounts from the descriptions of scenes to those of cultural practices, festivals and anthropological accounts of people's identities and behaviours. He makes his own presence felt in this body of discourses in two ways, by *uta* writing and by literary description of place and nature. So a third element comes into his discourse structure—the space. All these various

¹⁸ Edwin O Reischaner, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: The Roland Press Company, 1955) is done in two volumes. This is a complete translation of the diary. In his introduction the Harvard professor draws the comparison between Ennin and Marco Polo (pp 3-5).

levels of discourses merge to create an ongoing body of discourse called his travel biography. I want to call it travel biography. Though the temporal dimension of this biography is not very significant as it covers only a limited period of his life, it encompasses a time in his life that preceded this journey and what followed it. In retrospect, we know what Kawaguchi naturally could not, that his short biography shaped his entire life afterwards. He devoted the rest of his life in creating tangible discourses backed by the icons he brought and the speeches he gave at different monasteries and universities. The Tibet construct was made through the combination of writings, icons and speeches.

But the most important element in Kawaguchi's pragmatic construct was his own self. He put the author function very strongly in his travel accounts. Kawaguchi liked to keep the travel as a narration that unfolds a landscape, a changing time on the threshold of a Western colonial power that was India and the events in his own life. He does not depict the changing life of a monk but through this Serai Amchi persona, this tangible real character, the author enters the biography and writes it with all earnestness and in that process creates an ongoing, flowing and dynamic biographical construct.

Ekai Kawaguchi, the monk and the art collector, the manager with a sense of determination, dominates the biographical construct. This character remains a monk whose passion for learning and the dissemination and preservation of knowledge become the most remarkable features of his identity. The travel biography unfolds his persona as acquiring skills that enable him to enter into new modes of dialogues with people and places. Depicting the outer events and pictures to depict which are not his priorities. He only uses them as background in his picture. These however project as important elements in his discourse. So he realizes that in his travel biography the difficult terrain, altitudes, gorges, rivers, towering Himalayas and the sweltering Indian summers, women, looters, maharajas, generals, priests, his own compatriots, Nepalis, Indians and Tibetans, all assume new dimensions through the course of events and become important characters. His pragmatism is thus a matter of contingency. They take their own roles and become important in the life of the monk out of contingency. His travel biography becomes an epic saga where everything assumes new importance and proportion.

Maharaja Chandra Shamsher was similarly a persona that grew out of the contingency of pragmatism. He was not his priority previously. Meeting him and talking with him was not on the cards when he quietly entered this country on his way to Lhasa in 1898. But everything including his own friends became larger than life. His slow journey to enter Tibet or Lhasa became a hasty one while returning. His quiet and nice Tibetan friends became a very dominant atmosphere of his mind when he began to worry about their pain in prison. So out of this new contingency rose the new persona called Maharaja Chandra Shamsher. After meeting this man, new areas of interest and possibilities opened up. He befriended this astute and most feared dictator. Chandra Shamsher became more and more important as a person in whom he saw the ideal ruler who could bring about changes in the country and organize its policies according to the teachings of the Buddha under the spirit of pan Asianism.

Thus, the mode of description and the discourse itself is a pragmatic construct in Kawaguchi's travel biography. Kawaguchi projects himself as the chief persona in this construct. He is the addresser and is fully aware of the addressee, the recipient of his discourse. His pragmatism is the natural evolution of his experience with the Asian space and culture. He chooses the travel metaphor, the semiotics of exploration to project his genre inherited from Ennin's travel accounts, but with a very conspicuous Western slant.

To describe Kawaguchi's textual pragmatism by using Mary Louis Pratt's trope "contact zone"¹⁹ we can find a number of features that seem to relate to the canons of Western travel literature. Kawaguchi created his own contact zones. He prepared a character, worked it out quietly in Darjeeling for more than a year, created a surrogate construct, a Tibet in Darjeeling, learned the language which he enriched after entering Nepal and staying at Tukche, Tsarang and Malba. He created his own accouterments for this one man performance and practised climbing. What the Kawaguchi actor Ujiki does in preparation for the metafilmic representation for Kawaguchi's travels for the NHK film shown in

¹⁹ Mary Louis Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* introduces a concept of contact zone that people during great colonial movements found to be the most important point of contact among people speaking different languages. See for more discussion "Introduction" in the above book (pp. 1-11).

December 1997 is a postmodernist Japanese interpretation of his textual pragmatism, which according to the Kawaguchi scholars mockingly toys with the feelings of the monk. Kawaguchi too like Ujiki in that half-serious NHK film full of *jouissance*, and the mockingly serious representation of his travels, prepared himself as an actor and projected himself across the space, time and the texts in Japanese and English. Ujiki sits on the brick for the Nepali barber to shave his head and turn him into a monk in a manner Kawaguchi must have done, but laughs to look at his own monk avatar into the mirror and becomes conscious of his metamorphosis, and slips into the robes of a monk, fumbles with the loose garment and gets people to work out and find a fitting size for him.

The exotic was an important element in the NHK interpretation. The same TV crew which went with Ujiki stayed on to shoot another film about salt trade in the Himalayas, an exaggerated subversion of information, an exteriorized exotic version of life in the Himalayan land. Kawaguchi's travels in that area were made in the hoary past, too remote to be created convincingly today for the Japanese audience. So a bit of subversion is used to create the matrix of a postmodernist high media. The interesting part is the Kawaguchi avatar's message to the Japanese audience to look for a reference, to search the signifiers. He says, we live a very easy life in a peaceful country. So we have become a little spoilt. Can we ask for any meaning or goal of life? Do you have anything that you would like to risk your life for? What is the meaning of youth? You don't have to go too far to seek it. You must have already found the meaning in this, by which he means Kawaguchi's life as created in the metafilmic representation. There is a subversion of values, and an attempt to engage the Japanese audience's attention to the surrogate referential construct, the media Kawaguchi.

The subversion in the postmodern Japanese information structure, the semi-serious interpretation of Kawaguchi's pragmatism and its merger with the popular discourse of a NHK metafilm brings to focus Kawaguchi's own preparation of the real drama of his life in Darjeeling and Nepal.

Kawaguchi was preparing a semi-Western metaphor of a travel which had become a strong colonial genre. In his memorandum to Chandra Shamsheer, he creates a mini-*Three Years in Tibet*, an amulet made from his vast experience of travel and exploration and gives it to

this helpful prince for his personal well-being and those of his country and people. Kawaguchi uses Western modes of pragmatic discourse like collecting and systematizing knowledge about religion and science, mineral and botanical specimens. In his memorandum, every piece of such knowledge finds a place of importance. He is aware of the power of the knowledge with which he was fully equipped. Developing technological capacities, preserving nature, developing transportation facilities, improving agriculture and livestock, creating jobs, developing patronage system, delineating power and improving bureaucracy, modernizing the army, changing the pattern of the inheritance of power were the components of this knowledge. Chandra Shamsheer must have been quite impressed by this power, this knowledge.

Kawaguchi now proficient in English and Nepali languages had extended his contact zone to Nepal, which he wanted to see as, to use Pratt's expression, "a site of intellectual as well as manual labour, and installed there the distinction between the two" through the text, the "Memorial" with detailed outlines for the scientific management of economy, environment, culture and administration.

The memorandum submitted to Chandra Shamsheer thus offers the most interesting example of his pragmatism, and also gives a picture of the priorities of a Zen monk who came from a country which was experimenting with modernization, bringing about changes in different spheres of life at home and redefining its international role through modernization, arbitration and wars.

THE 'MEMORIAL'

The memorandum entitled as "*Memorial*" opens up a unique side of the Zen monk who appears to have had not only a deep interest but also a strong inclination for and experience in statist ideas. We do not have any evidence of his involvement in any political activities or state affairs, but the pragmatism of the monk as seen in this document is a little puzzling at first sight. In reality it is not. We will return to this subject later. But presently let us take a closer look at the document itself.

The document except for some spelling errors is written in excellent English with a proper pragmatic construction of a discourse

with Maharaja Chandra Shamsher Rana as the addressee. The tone of the letter is very formal yet very intimate. Since the letter was not supposed to be read by Abhi Subedi, and the memorandum was not to be accessible to anybody except the iron ruler of Nepal, it contains some suggestions that may appear a little difficult to accept for people in Nepal today. However, on the whole, the document shows the strong desire of the monk to see Nepal as a strong nation ready to defend its borders even against big neighbours like British India, though he does not mention it by name. But on the other hand, the monk seems to contemplate ways of making the rule of Chandra Shamsher safe and sound by taming both intrigues inside the court, defending the borders, and also quelling down any other rebellion.

Nowhere in the document does Kawaguchi mention about religious institutions, need for the state to adopt cultural policies that could include guarantees of the rights of Buddhist monks to work freely within and without the monasteries and the creation of Nepal, the Shangri-La, as the haven of Buddhist studies alongside Hindu studies. But interestingly, Kawaguchi says that the guiding principle of the modernization of the state should draw its main strength from the teachings of the Buddha. He develops a rhetoric which covertly introduces the concept of Buddhist ideals by means of analogy. He says that the secret of Japan's progress is Buddhism, and since Buddha sprang from Nepal, it is Japan's duty to let this country share the benefits of the progress which owes it to the Buddha.

Addressee: Maharaja Chandra Shamsher

Kawaguchi employs the speech act of persuasion in his rhetoric. He knows his addressee is hard to pursue because of his position and his nature as a detached and inaccessible person who would not be interested to listen to any suggestions of reforms. He was too cautious about accepting suggestions. Kawaguchi must have sensed that in his first meeting with the Maharaja in 1903. But he also seems to have liked his nature and the nature of his rule in the country. In the use of the speech act of persuasion Kawaguchi describes what he liked about Chandra Shamsher. He says:

I am moved very deeply with the lucky chance that has enabled me to offer my heart-felt wish—my desire to your Highness who has the sole power in the land and desires earnestly to keep up with the times. In this laudable intention I see sire much you have done but more yet remain. No doubt in this out of the way corner unaided, unadvised without a model to copy from, to shape one's destiny in among un-sympathetic if not hostile nation is hard ! but your determination to carry on, to move on, in spite of all the obstacles fighting manfully is noble indeed. O maharajah it gives me a thrill of pleasure to imagine how posterity will think about you the father of life and liberty—you who braved all storms for them—you who brought orders where none was before—you who saved them from foreign yoke and you who taught them the meaning of home, their native-land, their King and their Gods. Your memory in school will be engraved on their heart and a monument there-in will be raised to it shedding light and glory not less further and wider than that given out by the proposed Tsushima light house, admired and revered alike by outsiders that come across its way. Such, O sire, such potentialities are in your hands.²⁰

In this rhetoric Kawaguchi employs an illocutionary force of persuasion to convince the prime minister not willing to open schools and give people opportunities of education by creating a lure for Chandra Shamsheer to go down in history as a great reformer and much respected prime minister. It is interesting to note that Chandra Shamsheer lay the foundation stone of Tri-chandra college in 1918 and is remembered for that. But it is also said that he was not too happy to have done that as it was tantamount to breeding the discontent with Rana rule among educated persons. He had made a correct prediction and so had Kawaguchi.

Kawaguchi maintains this technique of persuasion by using the language of eulogy like “you are wise and you understand what I mean.” After this sentence he puts his suggestion , “you can not develop all these

²⁰ Kawaguchi, *Memorial* pp. 3-5.

yourself. You must encourage people and help them on.”²¹ No Nepali however intimate he may be would have the courage to make such suggestions to Chandra Shamsher. Kawaguchi’s method is very persuasive and direct. His memorandum uses imperative sentences like you should do this or should not do that. But he creates context in which each such imperative statement creates a very sincere condition which the addressee however high his position may be, cannot complain of being pushed around by the addresser.

Chandra Shamsher was an accessible person to foreign visitors and could convince them into writing good things about him, or hold them in confidence. A British journalist named Perceval Landon was commissioned by Chandra Shamsher to write a comprehensive history of Nepal during his reign. He has written favourably of his rule and his personality and policies. When Kawaguchi met him the Maharaja was suffering from remorse for helping the British in the Younghusband mission to Lhasa in 1904 because the Younghusband mission did not benefit Nepal. It opened an alternate trade route to Lhasa through India known as the Kalimpong route which harmed Nepal’s trade interest. According to Rishikesh Shaha:

Chandra Shamsher had sought to impress his countrymen as the person who had played the grandiose role of a peacemaker between British India and Tibet, but Lord Curzon would never have let him perform that function. Chandra was merely used as an agent for carrying out wishes in disregard of his own country’s own interests and also despite Nepal’s solemn treaty obligations towards Tibet.²²

When Kawaguchi met him in October 1905 Chandra had not quite overcome this sense of humiliation. When the monk came to his door Chandra must have found him a very useful person to talk to about the Tibetan experience and what the monk would think of British India’s attitude towards Nepal. The monk must have found his addressee very receptive and in need of advice. The monk’s suggestions

²¹ Kawaguchi, *Memorial* p. 22

²² Rishikesh Shah, *Modern Nepal* Vol. II (New Delhi: Manohar, 1990) p. 42.

to Chandra Shamsher about building up a good defense system, a well-trained army without the knowledge of neighbours perhaps dramatize Chandra Shamsher's mood and sense of being betrayed by the British in India following the Younghusband episode. He makes references to his neighbours' attitude again and again. He says, "Again your neighbours might not like to see you put your house in order and they might have something to say on it and might even try to interfere with it."²³ It is very curious to read about this scenario as expressed in Prithvi Narayan Shah's trope of "yam sandwiched between two boulders,"²⁴ and the monk's perception of the neighbours' concern in Nepal's affairs, which is very much a familiar scenario even today. Kawaguchi repeats the same point about trade relations and economic planning also which do not go without experiencing the interference of neighbours.

Army for Defense or Reference?

Kawaguchi's advice to Chandra for building a good army ready to defend the borders is a little curious. He says he should get Japan to help him train the army. In that case, nobody would suspect him. Although he does not name the British and only says 'neighbours,' his obvious reference is British India, not China because he says that he should get Japanese trainers who would look like Nepali, if not, he should bring the Chinese. And very interestingly even from today's experience, Kawaguchi says, "With electricity and Japanese Engineers (if you are afraid of the friction with your neighbour you may bring them through China with your mission) you may do wonders."²⁵ The obvious reference is that he should be afraid of the neighbour, not neighbours perhaps, he should get them from China because obviously the reference is that the Chinese also would look like Nepalis.

Kawaguchi's suggestions show Nepal's predicaments at that time. He must be very closely monitoring the precarious position of Nepal in

²³ Kawaguchi, *Memorial*, p. 37.

²⁴ Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of the present day Nepal spoke of the geo-political position of the country like that of a yam sandwiched between two boulders, the giant neighbours, India in the south and China in the north. This metaphor has become the ever relevant trope of the geo-political situation of Nepal and is often quoted by historians, politicians and ordinary people.

²⁵ Kawaguchi, *Memorial*, p. 42.

maintaining independence vis-à-vis British India which ironically has continued to be the prominent trope of Nepal's relationship with her neighbour even today. He comments in these closely monitored words about the difficulties experienced by Chandra's regime in relation to British India, "I could understand your peculiar position and the careful and cautious way, you are managing things hold out a lot of hope to me."²⁶

Kawaguchi's suggestion is somewhat amusing to read. He says:

My country-men will do for you anything. Once they have put on Nepalese dress and picked up Nepalese language it is hard to find out who they are so closely they resemble your people. Your men are clever imitators so I think a small number of staff will be sufficient. I think the whole cost of the scheme will not be much. I think you can not do this without out-side help, as for the army instructors, these could be trained in Japan.²⁷

Kawaguchi's suggestion for building a standing army does not sound very practical for Nepal at any time. But it is very curious to read how he puts emphasis on building a strong army. He sounds like a guerrilla army commando trainer, a freedom fighter guru who wants to make Nepal competent for fighting not to expand but to guard the territories of an independent nation. He sounds like a guerrilla defense strategist. He told Chandra:

"If you think over this problem carefully you will wonder why you have kept the present number of the army. It is too large for the resources of the state and it cripples its development and as a fighting machine its value is nil—however much you may rely on your old tradition and valour."²⁸

He was in favour of keeping a small well-trained army and a well-trained reserve force behind the screen. He says, "you should have

²⁶ Kawaguchi, *Memorial*, p. 44.

²⁷ Kawaguchi, *Memorial* p. 43.

²⁸ *Memorial*, p38.

reserves well-trained that could be called out in times of war arranged in such a way that you could draw more than a hundred thousand easily.”²⁹ His important strategy would be, according to Kawaguchi, to reduce “the number of costly regular troops.” He refers to the suspicion of neighbours again. “In doing this,” he says, “your neighbour might think that you are politically not ambitious and may not be so suspicious and vigilant.”³⁰ His use of the singular “neighbour” is significant. He is not however in favour of totally doing away with the old system.

Kawaguchi seems to be sharing the Japanese sense of victory over the Russians in the Manchurian war, the defeat of the Russian Baltic fleet in the decisive naval battle of Tsushima, the *Nihonkai kaisen*, which took place on 27-28 May 1905, only five months before he was writing this memorandum to Chandra who must also have been awed by this Japanese power. That also must be one of the reasons why he might have taken Kawaguchi as the representative of that country which had defeated a great Western power when he suggested to Chandra that he should learn what can be done with a well-trained army from the Japanese experience. He says, “The Manchurian war shows clearly what I mean. The Russians were equally armed and even then the result was so disastrous to them.”³¹ The memory of the Russo-Japanese treaty signed just one month before he met Chandra as updated to him by his compatriots in India, was fresh in Kawaguchi’s mind. Kawaguchi had heard about “the mass rally at Hibiya Park in Tokyo, followed by a march to the Imperial Palace with demands that the treaty should be rejected,” and the resulting clash with police and Imperial guards, widespread disorders, destruction of police buildings and churches, casualties and the declaration of Martial law to quell down the uprising and chauvinist fervour of the populace.³²

Kawaguchi’s reference to the lighthouse of Tsushima that was not yet built but that was already “shedding light and glory” is very significant. A great decisive battle against a great Western power was won over at Tsushima, and the building of a lighthouse must have been

²⁹ *Memorial*, p. 40.

³⁰ *Memorial*, p. 41.

³¹ *Memorial*, p.39.

³² Hugh Cortazzi, *The Japanese Achievement* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1990), p. 216.

proposed there. But the span of time between the battle and this suggestion is so short that it is interesting to imagine how Kawaguchi must have come to know about the proposed light-house. His description of Chandra Shamsheer's glory shedding light like this lighthouse that was not yet built is very interesting and empty of tangible reference. But the image itself is very significant. Kawaguchi in his utopian state of mind could not use the image of the beautiful lighthouse like Nojimamishaki Todai, built in 1869, that stands buffeted by pleasant sea wind on a calm seashore in Chiba prefecture at the Kamogawa sea, a symbol of Japan's opening its doors to the wide world, as such a symbol of peace.

The monk's plans to prepare Nepal to face the British power in India does not sound practical. His referential construct was Japan. His way of reacting to Western powers could be Japanese. But surprisingly, from studies and interviews with people in Japan, it becomes evident that Kawaguchi was not at all interested in these Wars. He tried to keep himself away from these associations, and avoided sharing either the glory of victory or the dismay of defeat. Therefore his suggestions to Chandra is only a textual construct, a shape with borders drawn with bold lines as part of his impulse to undo the erasure, that he was trying to give to his own imagination of a free state where he saw himself for the moment as the Buddhist priest, a guru who knew all about it and the Maharaja who did not know, and whose duty it was to bestow on him a complete and clear picture of both the present scenario and that of futurity which he sounds as though he could see. He seems to like to project the image of himself as a seer. That is why he speaks with so much confidence and a sense of knowing it all.

Pan Asianism: Innocence and Experience

Kawaguchi's concept of Pan-Asianism evokes two states. The best analogy is that of the English poet William Blake's concept of Innocence and Experience from the collection of poems of that title.³³ Pan-

³³ William Blake (1757-1827) . English poet, artist and mystic who illustrated his own poems collected in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. He says that the state of innocence gives way to the state of experience which is characterized by deceit and harshness. But the message as learnt from the state of innocence can be revived and consolidated. But knowing about the transformation and a vigilance is essential for

Asianism grew into a very important political terminology in the first half century in Japan. Kawaguchi could hardly see the political interpretation of Pan-Asianism and its implication in the later decades. Kawaguchi's Pan-Asianism belonged to the domain of Innocence, not of experience which is usurped by darker forces like the worms that hide inside the rosy petals of utopia and make it a "Sick Rose."

Innocence

Kawaguchi says that he was giving advice to Chandra Shamsher in the spirit of Pan-Asianism, another subject which he understood only in terms of Buddhist culture, and the sense of being beleaguered by Western culture. Even while going to Tibet, he must always be conscious of the fact that he was walking into the domains of British power, even in Tibet that was a Shangri-La and a symbol of knowledge and power for them by which token, a much coveted place, and waiting for a 'mission,' like the 'Younghusband mission' in 1904.

From reading his letter to Chandra, Kawaguchi cannot be dismissed as a mere monk out in search of authentic texts only and not aware of what was going on. His suggestions to Chandra Shamsher, however, were made not so much against the British raj as for the sake of the prince he knew so well and the country that had maintained its freedom, to use his words again, "in this out of the way corner, unaided, unadvised without a model to copy from, to shape one's destiny in and among un-sympathetic if not hostile nations," and for a country where he felt at home.

Kawaguchi's Pan-Asianism was not a military construct, a rallying of force to defeat Western powers but a vigilance which can be acquired through education. He tries to convince Chandra that he was saying all these because "we are anxious that the Asiatics are up to the Europeans in civilization and other kindred matters to attain which we are willing to under-go any amount of trouble for them."³⁴

achieving such a goal, for which reason the analogy to his poetry becomes very relevant in our own times.

³⁴ *Memorial*, p. 7.

Experience

The concept of Pan-Asianism was evoked many times during the first decades of the twentieth century by Japanese leaders and the army. It was known as the concept of Greater Asia. It was coined in Japan to express solidarity with other countries of Asia who were under the control of the Western colonial powers. The utopia of forming a grand community of the people of Asia with the Asian spirit was not clearly defined even in Japan itself but his concept can be traced back to nineteenth century Japan.

Japan's approach to Pan-Asianism has remained ambivalent and divided between Asianism and Westernization even to this day. Meiji Japan saw it more pragmatic to concentrate on the Westernization of Japan than of indulging in the concept of greater Asianism. So even those who wanted to see Asianism work used Western modes of modernizing the state—bureaucracy, education and economy. Even Kawaguchi, in his letter to Chandra Shamsheer buys all his accouterments for this utopian state from the Western bazaar.

Much happened after Kawaguchi's Pan-Asiatic ideas had taken nebulous shape in his *Memorial*. His country's military excursions in the early decades of the twentieth century, the sense of victory and loss, the invasion of China in 1931 and the Manchurian incidents gave a different meaning to the concept of Asia. Education minister Matsuo Yosoke (1880-1946) declared in 1940:

Our present policy will aim at establishing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, linking Japan, Manchuria, and China, based on the great spirit of the Imperial Way... It is natural to include French Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies in the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.³⁵

³⁵ Shunsuke Tsurumi's book *The Intellectual History of Wartime Japan* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), p. 34. In this collection of lectures he gave in Canadian Universities 1979-80, Shunsuke Tsurumi analyses the intellectual situation of Japan during the time of war. He shows many historical twists of fate of both the Japanese and other people of Asia during this time and the irony involved in the concept of Greater Asia. His discussions about "Greater Asia" (pp. 33-41) are particularly illuminating.

Tsurumi says that the creation of this sphere was a military need which was based on the consolidation of the military's achievements of that time. The following period saw a great flurry of intellectual activity and the formation of study associations on the Asian theme.

The policy was actually changed to giving the Asian countries independence, like the declaration of the independence of Burma in August 1943, and of the setting up of the provisional government of Free India in Singapore in October of the same year and Japanese assistance to the Dutch East Indian leaders to resist the Dutch reoccupation. But Tsurumi says, "We should not conclude from the granting of independence, there, that the Japanese Government worked for the liberation of the people in Asia from Western imperialism."³⁶

But Japanese intellectuals through their writings kept echoing the concept of Asia in the sense Kawaguchi used it in his *Memorial*, by creating a peaceful and cooperative atmosphere for the independence of Asian nations and cooperation among them.³⁷

Kawaguchi's Pan-Asianism appears to be a complex concept. The very nomenclature today evokes a sense of space that needs to be identified in terms of an identity that is different from either the Western based perspective of the geographical space called Asia, the orient or a complex pattern of hegemonic relationships from within like India and Nepal that exists in more or less the same form as Kawaguchi saw then, occupied territories like Tibet and Sikkim not by Western powers but by the Asians themselves. The Japanese perspective of Greater East Asia can be dramatized in the cultural hegemony of consumer goods and toys. In the words of Leo Ching:

Throughout Asia, Japan is in vogue. From fashion to food to leisure, Japanese cultural commodities are ubiquitous, casting wooing glances at the Orient's nouveaux riches. This is especially prominent in the region collectively known as the NIEs (Newly Industrialize Economics)... These signs of regionalization of culture suggest a cultural (or consumerist?) integration process

³⁶ Shunsuke Tsurumi, *The Intellectual History*, p. 41.

³⁷ For detail see Shunsuke Tsurumi, *The Intellectual History*, p. 41.

that transcends national boundaries but that is confined, for the moment, to specific region of the world system.³⁸

Kawaguchi's Pan-Asianism with commodities and Japanese expertise was the imagination of a utopia of a different order. But little did he hide the dichotomy of the nineteenth century Japanese mind in search for a reference to its economy in the West and of a greater Asia with fiascoes and unprecedented tragic events. But Kawaguchi's utopia is not at all a bizarre construct if we see Japan's interest and contact with Nepal today, much in the path of the vision that Kawaguchi saw. The Nepalese feel more comfortable today to hear Japan speak in the language of Kawaguchi's *Memorial* but definitely without reference to the building of a military strength. But in the present context of the pragmatics the addressees have changed so have the addressers in Japan.

Education Like It or Not

Kawaguchi considered education as the "foremost" priority to see this "great Pan-Asiatic feeling fostered every-where." That is why he says to Chandra "I am interesting (sic) myself so much in your affair." He had a utopia of this Asianism which was an opening and freedom. He gets carried away while writing this letter. He says, "We want to see the day when the Asiatic will be combined (sic) and act as a body in concert and be a guarantee to the independence of Asia."³⁹

Kawaguchi's concept of education sounds very pragmatic. It is very interesting to see how much Kawaguchi must be aware of the educational structure of the Meiji Japan. He sounds like a good educationist whose advice can be taken without much doubt. He says, the objective should not be education for the sake of education. It should serve the purpose. Educated manpower should be utilized for the development of the country. Education should be given in areas of both humanities and social sciences as well as in the fields of science and technology. Nepali should be made the medium of education, a method adopted by Japan since the opening of Japan to Western influences to

³⁸ Leo Ching, "Imaginations in the Empires of the Sun" (pp.169-194) in John Whittier Treat ed, *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* (Richmond Surrey: Curzon, 1996), p. 170.

³⁹ *Memorial*, p. 10.

the present day when everything gets translated, from a small brochure about western art exhibition and soprano singing to high technology, where Shakespeare experts take the university chairs without knowing much English. It has worked successfully where modern and postmodern conditions have worked without being either Anglophonic or Francophonic. But Kawaguchi himself found the knowledge of English so very useful, in fact, the most useful means of communication with both Europeans and Asians alike in that part of the world.

He advised Chandra to send students to Japan. In fact, eight students had already been studying in Japan since 1902. But after they returned completing their education in Japan they were seen with suspicion, ironically during Chandra Shamsher's regime itself. People cite extreme examples, like some mechanical engineers were posted to horticultural departments and some were even exiled. But despite that, these experts made their impact in Kathmandu where no such expertise existed in those days. So we can easily guess what Chandra Shamsher must have thought about Kawaguchi's suggestions. But again, many educational institutions were opened during his reign and many books of foreign literature were translated. Ralph Lilly Turner's *Nepali Etymological Dictionary* was published in London with "due subvention" from Chandra Shamsher in 1931. That was a lukewarm attitude taken to Nepali language. But other languages of Nepal did not receive even that much attention. His regime did not encourage writings in them. Chandra Shamsher knew as much as Kawaguchi the value of education. That is why he and his successors or even predecessors did not encourage education in Nepal.

Kawaguchi said English should be taught as the second most important language in educational institutions, and gradations should be made in the salary system according to the number of languages they were educated in. Thus the person who knew English language would naturally earn the highest salary. Kawaguchi too echoes the kind of elitism that was there in India, by creating a situation something like an unnatural diglossia between English and Indian languages that was emerging in Nepal also under the impact of the Baboo culture in India.

Besides education, Kawaguchi said, the state should open a good banking system, promote trade and involve the bank in that process, explore mines and utilize the indigenous resources and flood the Indian

market with end products. He saw that Nepal was sending natural resources and raw materials to India which could be utilized inside the country itself. But he also saw—a reality as of today—that the attitude of the neighbouring country would be instrumental in that process.

He saw the Himalayas as the source of Nepal's wealth as he knew there was mine, and the water resources were Nepal's wealth. The bidding on Nepal's waters and the politics of market and commission under the market system today was something Kawaguchi could not perceive, but surprisingly he hinted at the waters as the perennial source of Nepal's income, if utilized. Kawaguchi makes a list of various cash crops and vegetable products, and precious stones as sources of income to Nepal. His encyclopaedic knowledge must be remarkable. No doubt, he was a great collector of mineralogical and botanical specimens which are distributed among the best laboratories of Universities and natural history museums in Japan today.

Kawaguchi makes some very interesting suggestions to Chandra Shamsher. He says in the letter that he saw a *chakari* or the flattery or attending system in the bureaucracy. Chandra Shamsher himself was surrounded by these sycophants. The *chakari* system remains a syndrome of Nepali bureaucracy even to this day. Kawaguchi tells Chandra that people who are always attending him would cultivate familiarity and take liberty to indulge in corrupt practices and exploit this familiarity. It was remarkable for Kawaguchi to notice this scenario which is still a problem in Nepal today and was at its height during the Rana regime.

Kawaguchi's suggestion to Chandra to change the system of succession from brothers to son is curious. Kawaguchi had met the King and knew very well that the Ranas were taking power from the King. A succession of that nature would have created political problems of duality in the pattern of primogeniture. The reason he gives for such succession is that when brothers succeed they are like birds of passage and can only take time to indulge in amassing wealth. But Kawaguchi, without knowing it, was talking exactly what Chandra was also doing because Rana rulers considered the property of the state as their personal property. He says when new "party" comes it will try to do away with the management of the old and will only waste property and money in that process.

Irony Ruler

Kawaguchi innocently makes suggestions to Chandra which in retrospect look like irony. Apart from the amassing of wealth the other suggestion he gives to Chandra is about people's involvement in the process of development. He says "You cannot develop all these yourself. You must encourage your people and help them on." Or more interestingly, "You cannot expect your people work all for the Government."⁴⁰ Chandra Shamsher is known to have used people more than any other Rana prime minister. He built a huge personal house and palace after the style of the palace of Versailles in France, known as Singh Durbar, most part of which was gutted by fire in 1972. No motorable road linked Kathmandu to the Indian railhead in Raxaul. Thousands of people were forced to work, carrying what appears to be so surprising today, everything required to construct such a huge palace on their backs including the reported first Rolls-Royce car in Asia that came on human backs along the steep climbs of Kulekhani outside Kathmandu. A film shot by a British Everest expedition team then gives the glimpse of this scenario. So Kawaguchi's advice to Chandra Shamsher and its discovery today is a bit of an irony.

But Chandra Shamsher as we said earlier certainly found Kawaguchi a very important person and some of his suggestions very valuable. Dixit thinks Chandra must have utilized some of these suggestions.⁴¹ He must have found some of Kawaguchi's suggestions such as strengthening his authority and keeping the people in control very palatable. It is ironical to think of controlling people who could not even raise their heads before the Ranas. The people according to Kawaguchi, were intelligent, industrious, obedient and brave like the Japanese. Kawaguchi himself had inherited the tradition of obedience, silence and industry and could see in obedience and industry the virtue necessary to build the nation and make it prosperous.

In short, Kawaguchi's letter to Chandra Shamsher was written by a Zen monk who inherited a tradition of nationalism, interest in statism, dedication and pragmatism in running the affairs of state and close association with the court and its patronage. He had also inherited the recent historical experience of adjustment with state authority. But most

⁴⁰ *Memorial*, p. 22.

⁴¹ Kamal Mani Dixit, *Nepali* (Feb-March, 1992):2

importantly, Kawaguchi was using Nepal as a space, surrogate Japan, a construct. To him Chandra Shamsheer was the ideal monarch to reign in that domain for he could present a model of an Asian nation evolving from scratch into the modern era which could fit as a trope into the paradigm of the Pan-Asianism, which to Kawaguchi was a non-Western concept but nebulous and amorphous as a construct. Nepal was an important signifier with no direct reference in his system of political structure. Kawaguchi's own reference to Japan is tenuous as he had no authority in any of the state policies, nor was he asked by any agency of the government to make a diplomatic breakthrough. But if asked, he would have made very important diplomatic breakthroughs in the Indian subcontinent, specifically Nepal and Tibet better than any military generals at that time.

CONCLUSION

Reference

Kawaguchi's letter entitled *Memorial* found in the murky attic of the Rana palace speaks of contemporary Nepali history and gives a picture of the psyche of the ruler that he understood through personal contact. But it also speaks of Kawaguchi's own search for reference as a Japanese Zen monk. Was this letter insubstantial or empty? Was it not the iconic representation of the monk's search for authenticity and his experience as an explorer in the dreamland of the big powers of the West and East? The answers are not easy to find.

Kawaguchi was trying to understand history on 'spatial' or 'relational' basis. His understanding of Asianism as spatial construct was borne out of the relational value—the Western as against the Asian. The valorization of Asian space, though not a clear construct was part of the Japanese or Asian sense of redefining historical value in familiar spatial terms. In this context, it is very relevant to mention the Pan-Asianism of Okakura Tenshin (1862-1913) and Natsume Soseki (1867-1916).

Okakura valorized the Asian space as universe which, according to Karatani, he considered as a cultural sphere, and Japan by severing its ties with Asia had lost that universe. Okakura saw the revival of this lost utopia through arts. The first sentence in his important work *The Ideal of the East* is "Asia is one." His type of Pan-Asianism influenced the

Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore who also advocated Pan-Asianism through the means of art and literary expression showing Asian values. Okakura reversed the Hegelian Eurocentric value of dialectics and struggle and “counterposed to this the philosophy of Advaita (non-dualism), which had its origin in Indian Buddhism.”⁴² In this manner Okakura substituted the universality of the West with the universality of the East.

But, according to Karatani, Natsume Soseki, who interpreted the Asian mode of modernism in literature and values, “while refusing to recognize the universality of the West, never attempted to idealize the universality of Asia” whose concept of Asia was not “poetic” or artistic like that of Okakura, and he “continued to think from the unstable position of one who finds himself ‘between’ East and West, seeking refuge in neither pole of the opposition.”⁴³

Kawaguchi was different from either Okakura or Soseki. He was a monk, an explorer and a critic of what he thought as the corrupt practices of the priesthood in Japan. He was also a little orthodox but a flexible monk, and his Pan-Asianism was not substantially different from either that of Okakura, and his evocation of the Advaita, or that of Soseki. But in Kawaguchi’s pragmatism, Western modes of modernizing the state economy, creating a defense system, banking and trade systems were acceptable. His pragmatism evolved out of experience—his difficult travels, meeting people and facing hazards and also experiencing blissful moments. But he was always seeking a reference to his twilight consciousness, to his vision.

Okakura, Soseki and Kawaguchi were looking for different categories—poetic, literary theoretical and geographical. But in their evocation of Asianism all these categories tend to merge. The former two had not experienced the tangible Asian space as Kawaguchi had done. His understanding of the geo-political situation of a small Asian nation was the expression of that experience. The following extract from Naoki Sakai’s essay in which he critiques the valorization of modernist values and shows the Japanese position of instability in relation to the

⁴² Joseph Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (London: Duke University Press, 1993) p. 43.

⁴³ Karatani, p. 44.

referential construct of the sphere of value as Okakura saw it, is relevant in this context:

However, toward the nineteenth century, Koyama claims, the non-Western world began to move toward its independence to form a world of its own. As a consequence of this transformation, what had hitherto been taken for the entire world was revealed to be merely modern (*kindai*) world, a world among many worlds. This possibility for historical cognition and praxis, informed by the fundamental historical transformation of the world, was then called "world History." In this *world history*, it was assumed that historical changes simply could not be comprehended without reference to the already established spatial categories: climate, geography, race, nation, culture, etc. Only within the framework set up by those categories was it possible to understand historical developments and make sense out of various changes which were to be incorporated into a larger unit of narrative. What this simple but undeniable recognition pointed to was that history was not only temporal or chronological but also spatial and relational.⁴⁴

Okakura, Soseki and Kawaguchi were seeking spatial and relational categories. Kawaguchi was seeking the categories in terms of climate, geography, race and nation though he adopts the perspectives of Western colonial travel writers in making politically incorrect remarks about Tibetans and their faith in his description of them in the travelogues. But he nevertheless remains an insider as has been discussed before, a learner and seeker, an intruding insider in the Shangri-La.

Kawaguchi's sense of space as represented by his Tibet or Nepal remains a textual construct, a landscape. Talking about the Japanese concept of "landscape," Karatani quotes Usami Keiji's observations:

By contrast to this *place*, the landscape painting we now call *sansuiga* is not concerned with relationship between the individual

⁴⁴ Naoki Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism" (pp.93-122), in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian ed, *Postmodernism and Japan* (London: Duke University Press, 1989, 1997) p. 106.

and “things,” but presents a transcendental metaphysical “model.” This mode of existence of place, and its transcendental nature, is something *sansuiga* has in common with medieval European painting. In the former, the transcendental place is an ideal realm to which the enlightened sages awakened; in the latter, it is the realm of Scripture and the divine.⁴⁵

From the evidence available so far, Kawaguchi was not a political monk, a person who had anything to do with the turbulent history of his own country and those of Asian nations. As seen through his travels and encounters and his suggestions for the modernization of an Asian nation non-colonized by Western powers, he was basically a seeker, one who tried to get “awakened” as much as he could “in the realm of Scripture and divine,” which also he failed to achieve fully. Kawaguchi’s *Chibetto* was a great signifier, his *Neparu* was another signifier, a surrogate mini-*Chibetto*, and also being independent of the Western control and as a place from where Buddha “sprang,” it was a surrogate native land of dreams.

Searching for the signified, the referent, he gave a series of lectures in Japan about his time and space, entered the Toyo Bunko library carrying all the manuscripts which fill many racks now in the half-lit library room, and his own wooden statue, and prepared index cards to make a referential construct—to compile a dictionary which was a semiotically important activity for him. For this purpose, he went there almost every day, according to Kitamura,⁴⁶ till the last days of his life, apparently, even at the time of the war when Tokyo was burning. He was creating an index to his reference. The index cards are not to be located anywhere now. They have become diffused. Other books have emerged out of them but not his own referential construct. The index cards were signifiers, the last monuments of the time and space he had created—the walk through the trails of the dreamland performed earlier by Montgomerie’s Hindu Pundit James Bond monks, his walks into the utopia, his attempts to create a tangible space in Nepal, the uneasily positioned geo-political land to experiment with his Pan-Asianism. I went looking for these cards at Toyo Bunko. I was told they were lost.

⁴⁵ Karatani, pp. 20-21.

⁴⁶ Prof. Hajime Kitamura, Director of the Toyo Bunko now, recorded interview.

Kawaguchi's attempts to create a tangible reference had fallen like the house of index cards.

He was very aware of his times, but he ignored their tides, did not care which directions they were blowing from. Ironically, he tripped over something in one of the war shelters in Tokyo, and fell down, after which his niece Emi Miyata-san sadly recalls, he never really gained his strength to cope with his age. He succumbed to it at the age of eighty. His student, and fellow compiler of the dictionary at Toyo Bunko, the senior Mibu Taishun, the high ranking priest at Asakusa now, recalls the day of his death in terms of a very dismal experience. When Kawaguchi died, Tokyo was experiencing the horror of American bombings. Mibu somehow managed to escape the conflagration after paying his last tribute to his guru and colleague Kawaguchi. He finds the two events happening concurrently very difficult to forget.⁴⁷ Such was the time. The man he recalls as a devoted guru, a person who believed in the Karmic principles or action passed away before having to see even more devastating consequences of the war like the Hiroshima and Nagasaki conflagrations a year later.

Kawaguchi's history is the history of an individual. He had weaknesses and strengths like any other human being. He lived and searched for meaning and references like the character in a modern Japanese novel. His dream was to awaken in the realm of divine and scripture. But being too pragmatic a person, he failed in that, and he did not regret it. In short, he was a round character in the grand narrative that he wrote himself in a very Japanese style leaving a message that modern Japan has no choice but to follow—that is the message of peace, love and light.

⁴⁷ Mibu Taishun (b.1913), recollecting Kawaguchi in *Kawaguchi Ekai no sekai* or "The world of Kawaguchi" (Tokyo: Taisho Daigaku Kang, 1995), p. 6 says that when Kawaguchi died there was no means even to perform the last rites. Life was getting more and more difficult. Tokyo was under the spate of bombings. In this recollection, Mibu says that a word in Kanji, *Mumyo IchiGen* or illusion (p.11), or something like the Sanskrit word *Maya* occurs very often in Kawaguchi's writings. Mibu's observation indicates the search for answers to the questions Kawaguchi had about life and salvation. Kawaguchi sought the answers evidently through textual and scriptural readings as well as through the ways of living and what he considered as the right attitude to life.

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Route followed by Ekai Kawaguchi

Temples	Mountains	Towns	Railway	Rivers	Frontier Line

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24

26

28

30

32

80

82

84

86

88

90

92

94

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30

26

24

22

BAY OF BENGAL

BURMA

ASSAM

BHUTAN

SIKKIM

NEPAL

HIMALAYAS

TIBET

Pretapuri
Gya Marko
Gya no

Mt Kailas
Nagchen
Tokchen
Basarowara
Nyok che
Cham tsai
L. Honggyu tso

Tak sun
Tadun
Nyu ku
Torbo

Sok ka Zong
Sernak
Gya to
Sang sang
L. Larong
Senggerong
O. Larje

A. Brahmaputra
Tande
Nanla
Gyan tse
Raktung
Mt Hechi

Dhaulagiri
Tukye
Pokhra

Nagar Zing
Nak moluejin
Mt Gauri sanwar

Patna
Bett
Sagauli

Gaya
Buddhagaya

Darjeeling
Kaj Leng
Tom

Mt Kanchenjunga
Phari
Wangy

Sera
Rebon
Phar to
Ganden
Samsa-e
L. Yamab

Cham tse
F. gon
Shigatse
Washeng
Phar to
Chu Shek
Namkasa

R. Brahmaputra

Calcutta