

The Chronological History of Tibetan Buddhism

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Tibetans were generally referred to as Bhotas or Bhauttas in Sanskrit since post-Buddhist period. There is no reference of Bhotas or Bhauttas in Ramayana and Mahabharata. Ancient Tibet was called as Bod or Bod-yul. Mahabharata mentions that a tribe of Bodhas residing in the northern and north-eastern side of Magadha fled westwards along with Shurasenas, Bhadrakāras, Shalvas, Patachcharas, Sustharas, Sukuttas, Kuninthas and Kuntis out of fear of Magadha emperor Jarasandha.

उदीच्यभोजाश च तथा कुलान्य अष्टा दशाभिभो
जरासंध भयाद एव परतीचीं दिशम आश्रिताः ॥ 2.13.24
शूरसेना भद्र कारा बोधाः शाल्वाः पतच चराः
सुस्थराश च सुकुट्टाश च कुणिन्दाः कुन्तिभिः सह ॥ 2.13.25

The Bodha tribe (Bodo people in modern times) was traditionally living on the north bank of Brahmaputra river (Assam and Arunachal Pradesh) and in the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh since pre-Mahabharata era. The Bodha people living in the foothills of Bhutan had to immigrate to western and central Tibet fearing the oppression by King Jarasandha. Thus, western Tibet and central Tibet was gradually populated by the Bodha tribe of India. Western Tibet emerged as the kingdom of Zhang Zhung after Mahabharata era and the central Tibet came to be known as Bodh or Bod. The word “Bodh” became “Bhota” in Prakrit and “Bhautta” in later Sanskrit literature. Evidently, Tibet and Bhutan names derived from the Prakrit word “Bhota”. Kalhana mentions that King Lalitaditya defeated Bhauttas. A copper plate of Vijayanagara kings also refers to Bhauttas and Maha-Bhauttas. Though there is no literary evidence but my speculation is that western, central and eastern Bhotas were collectively known as Tri-Bhotas (Three regions of Bhotas). Most probably, Tri-Bhota word evolved into Tibet. It may also be noted that the region of Tibet, Bhutan, and Arunachal Pradesh was indeed an integral part of ancient India since pre-Mahabharata era. Therefore, India has more genuine claims over this region than China.

Modern historians generally believe that Buddhism was introduced in Tibet around the 7th and 8th centuries. According to Tibetan sources, Bon or Bonpo was the ancient religion of Tibet but it cannot be distinguished from Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, historians reject the historical account of Bon sources. In reality, historians mistakenly fixed the date of Buddha nirvana in 483 BCE which led to numerous chronological inconsistencies in the history of Tibetan Buddhism.

Let us discuss the Tibetan Buddhist chronology considering the true epoch of Buddha nirvana in 1865 BCE.

The Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism

There are four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism namely Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug. Nyingma or Ngangyur school is the oldest. In fact, Nyingma means ancient in Tibetan language. The earliest Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts are apparently influenced by Mahayana Buddhism. According to Nyingma school, Samantabhadra taught Dzogchen (Mahayana/Vajrayana Buddhism) to Vajrasattva. Prahevajra or Garab Dorje learnt Dzogchen from Vajrasattva. The Nyingma school also refers to Padmasambhava, the second Buddha, as the founder of their tradition. Evidently, Samantabhadra and Padmasambhava were the same person. It is also recorded that Garab Dorje was the first human teacher of Dzogchen in Tibet.

The Bon or Bonpo Tradition of western Tibet

Most probably, the Bon or Bonpo tradition is older than the Nyingma tradition. In fact, the Bon is the ancient Tibetan religion that transformed later into Buddhism whereas the Nyingma school is originally belonged to Mahayana Buddhism. According to Bon tradition, there are four transcendent lords.

1. **Satrig Ersang or Yingkyi Yum Chemma:** The female deity of Bon tradition ranks with the highest of all Bon deities. This deity has mainly three manifestations as a meditational deity (Like Saraswati), a deity of healing (like Lakshmi) and a protector deity in horrific appearance (Like Durga or Kali).
2. **Shenlha Okar:** This deity represents wisdom of white light. The deity has also many manifestations as a creator deity, a deity of compassion etc.
3. **Sangpo Bumtri:** The creator deity of Bon tradition like Brahma.
4. **Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche:** According to Bon tradition, Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche was the earliest teacher who introduced Terma (Dharma = Religion) in Tibet.

Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche, the first religious teacher of Tibet

Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche was the founder of Bon religion in the western Tibet. According to Bon mythology, three brothers, Dagpa, Salba and Shepa studied Bon religion in heaven and visited Shenlha Okar, the god of compassion. Shenlha Okar advised them to become religious teachers of mankind. Following the God's advice, Dagpa was born in the past age and taught religion to mankind. Salba born in the present age and took the name of Shenrab Miwoche. Thus, he became the first teacher of Bon religion in the present age. Shepa will be born in the future age.

The biographical account of Shenrab Miwoche indicates him to be a historical person. According to Bon tradition, Shenrab Miwoche lived much before Gautama Buddha and Padmasambhava.

He might have born in Olmo Lungring, a part of Tazig country which is located to the west and the north of Tibet. Shenrab Miwoche was also a prince but he renounced his kingdom at the age of 31 and embraced the path of Bon religion. After spreading the doctrine of Bon in India, Kashmir and China, Shenrab Miwoche arrived in the land of Shang Shung near Mount Kailash.

Many Tibetologists have calculated the date of Shenrab Miwoche based on the traditional chronologies but there is a divergence of opinion still exists. Kvaerne (1990) says that Shenrab was born 23000 years ago. Lopon Tenzin Namdak places him 18000 years back. Another Tibetan scholar says that he was born 13500 years ago. Some of the Tibetologists say that he was born 8000 years back. Namkhai Norbu (1995) has fixed the birth of Shenrab in 1917 BCE (Wood Male Mouse Year) whereas some others say that he was born in 1857 BCE (Wood Male Mouse Year). Thus, it is extremely difficult to arrive a date of Shenrab Miwoche but undoubtedly, he might have born in remote past and much before the birth of Gautama Buddha and Padmasambhava.

Most probably, Shenrab Miwoche was a Vedic Rishi who migrated from the land of Mount Meru to Mount Kailash and founded Terma (religion). Interestingly, Vedic Swastika (Yundrung) is the symbol of wisdom of Bon religion. Shenrab was also called as Buddha Shenrab. Seemingly, Shenrab had been transformed as a past incarnation of Buddha. In fact, the Bon scriptures were written in the language of Zhang-Zhung and translated later into Tibetan. Bon religion also faced persecutions when Tibet annexed Zhang-Zhung. Consequently, the practice of Bon religion went underground. Later, the Bon religion was revived as a school of Buddhism. Therefore, it is now extremely difficult to separate the pre-Buddhist biography of Shenrab Miwoche.

The Date of Samantabhadra (1641-1541 BCE)

According to the Nyingma tradition, Samantabhadra Vajradhara or Padmasambhava, the second Buddha was the founder of Dzogchen. I have established in my article "The Chronological History of Buddhism" that Bodhisattva Nagarjuna Vajrapani was the founder of Mahayana Buddhism. He was also referred to as Padmapani, Padmasambhava, Samantabhadra etc. According to Gilgit Manuscripts, Vajrapani attained nirvana 400 years before King Kanishka. Samyuka-Ratna-Pitaka-Sutra of Chinese Suttapitaka records that King Kanishka flourished 700 years after Buddha nirvana. Thus, there was at least 300 years difference between the date of Buddha nirvana and the date of nirvana of Vajrapani.

The Tibetan Phug-lugs school of chronology gives a date of nirvana of Bodhisattva. Western historians have calculated it to be 881 BCE. As I have pointed out, there was a chronological error of 660 years in the Sino-Tibetan chronology. If we correct this error, the date of Nirvana of Bodhisattva works out to be 1541 BCE. The date of 1541 BCE also closely reconciles with the date given in the Gilgit Manuscripts. I have already explained in my article cited above that King Kanishka reigned around 1131-1090 BCE and Bodhisattva Vajrapani attained nirvana 400 years before King Kanishka. Now, we can conclusively fix the date of nirvana of Vajrapani not later than

1541 BCE and not earlier than 1565 BCE. Thus, Bodhisattva Vajrapani or Samantabhadra Vajradhara or Padmasambhava lived around 1641-1541 BCE.

Most probably, Samantabhadra or Bodhisattva Vajrapani introduced Buddhism in Tibet for the first time. Tibetan sources also indicate that the Dzogchen teachings first appeared in Tibet during the reign of Triwer Sergyi Jyaruchan, the king of Zhang-Zhung. John Myrdhin Reynolds states in his book "The Golden Letters" that some 3600 years have elapsed from the time of King Triwer Sergyi Jyaruchan until the present time (1990). Most probably, King Triwer Sergyi Jyaruchan was ruling in Zhang-Zhung around 1600 BCE and Bodhisattva Vajrapani or Samantabhadra was his contemporary. Evidently, Mahayana Buddhism or Dzogchen was introduced in the western Tibet for the first time in the beginning of the 16th century BCE.

Padmasambhava, the second Buddha vs Padmasambhava, the disciple of Shrisimha

Modern historians have mistakenly considered Padmasambhava, the disciple of Shrisimha as the founder of the Nyingma tradition and propagated that Tibetan Buddhism has the history starting from the 8th century. In reality, Padmasambhava, the second Buddha was none other than Bodhisattva Vajrapani or Samantabhadra who lived around 1641-1541 BCE whereas Padmasambhava, the disciple of Shrisimha visited Tibet during the reign of Tibetan King Trisong Detsan (82-137 CE).

The contemporary Tibetan king of Samantabhadra

According to Tibetan sources, King Nyatri Tsenpo was the first emperor. Interestingly, most of the ancient Tibetan sources mention that the first Tibetan king was descended from an Indian royal dynasty. The history of Bu ston Rinpoche informs us that the first king of Tibet was either the third in the lineage of King Prasenajit of Kosala or the third in the lineage of Bimbisara. According to bKa-Chems Ka-Khol-ma, King Pandu and Satanika were born simultaneously after Dharmaraja in the lineage of the Mountain Sākya. Satanika's youngest son, Rupati became the king of Tibet. Seemingly, the first king of Tibet was a descendant of Indian King. The reference of King Satanika's youngest son indicates that the dynastic history of Tibet starts from the post-Mahabharata era because Satanika was the son of King Janamejaya.

Ancient Tibet before King Nyatri Tsenpo was divided into many small kingdoms but seemingly, Zhang-Zhung kingdom of western Tibet dominated in the 2nd millennium BCE. It appears that King Triwer Sergyi Jyaruchan of Zhang-Zhung of the 16th century BCE was the contemporary of Samantabhadra Vajrapani because Tibetan sources say that the Dzogchen teachings first appeared in Tibet during the reign of King Triwer Sergyi Jyaruchan. In all probability, Zhang-Zhung Kings of western Tibet were the descendants of King Rupati, the grandson of Janamejaya.

The Date of Garab Dorje, the first human teacher of Dzogchen in Tibet (1321-1221 BCE)

According to Mahayana Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, Samantabhadra or Padmasambhava (the second Buddha) and Manjusri were the divine trinity of Bodhisattvas. This is the reason why Tibetans say that Garab Dorje was the first human teacher. The Nyingma school of Tibet mistakenly believes that Samantabhadra is also the name of Adi Buddha (the first Buddha). In fact, Amara-kosha of Amarasimha (1st century BCE) mentions Samantabhadra as another name of Gautama Buddha. Evidently, Mahayana Buddhism started believing that Samantabhadra Vajrapani and Gautama Buddha were the same person much before the 1st century BCE. This mistaken identity led to a chronological error of 300 years because there was a difference of 300 years between the nirvana of Gautama Buddha and the nirvana of Vajrapani.

Garab Dorje was the founder of ancient Tibetan Buddhism. Most probably, he was the first who taught Buddhism to his Tibetan students. According to the rNying-ma'i Chos-'byung of Dudjom Rinpoche, Garab Dorje is said to have been born 166 years after the parinirvana of Adi Buddha or Samantabhadra (1541 BCE). The Tibetan hagiography of Garab Dorje (Lo-rgyus-chen-mo) informs us that Garab Dorje was born 360 years after parinirvana of Buddha. According to Pali tradition of Dzogchen, Garab Dorje attained nirvana in the 544th year elapsed from Buddha nirvana. Since the Pali tradition is the most ancient, the date of 544th year elapsed appears to be more authentic. I have already explained in my articles that Theravada separated during the second Buddhist council (1765 BCE) held 100 years after Buddha nirvana (1865 BCE). Theravadins traditionally followed an epoch of 1765 BCE as the era of Buddha religion or Jinachakka. Therefore, the 544th year elapsed must be counted from the epoch of 1765 BCE. Thus, we can fix the date of Garab Dorje's nirvana in 1221 BCE.

Garab Dorje was known as Prahevajra, Praharshevajra or Pramodavajra in Sanskrit. According to Tibetan sources, Garab Dorje was born in the region of Dhanakosha in the country of Uddiyana. Kudharma, the daughter of King Uparaja, became Bikshuni but she became pregnant after seeing a divine dream. Thus, Nirmanakaya Buddha incarnated as Garab Dorje. He became a great Buddhist scholar and came to be known as Acharya Vetalkhema. The Blue Annals give the following lineage of the Anuyoga Tantra.

1	Vajrapani (1641-1541 BCE)
2	King Dza
3	King Indrabhuti
4	King Kukaraja or Uparaja
5	Vetalakshema
6	Vajrahasta
7	Prabhahasti

8	Shakya Simha (a senior contemporary of Kanishka)
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We can also validate the date of Vetalakshema or Garab Dorje with reference to the lineage of Anuyoga Tantra. Vajrapani attained nirvana 400 years before King Kanishka. Kashmiri Buddhist scholar Shakya Simha was the senior contemporary of Kanishka (1131-1090 BCE). In fact, Sakya Simha was a king of Kashmir who renounced the throne to become a Buddhist monk. Kanishka went to Kashmir to meet him. According to Kashmiri sources, Shakya Simha preached Buddhism in Kashmir before Nagarjuna (1100-1030 BCE). Seemingly, Shakya Simha lived around 1190-1110 BCE. Thus, it is evident that Acharya Vetalakshema or Garab Dorje lived in the 13th century around 1321-1221 BCE.

There is a controversy about the identification of the birthplace of Garab Dorje. Tibetan sources give the name of the birthplace as O-rgyan or U-rgyan or Uddiyana which is located in North-western India. Historians have identified it to be Swat valley. It may be noted that Nagarjuna Vajrapani or Padmasambhava and Garab Dorje were born in the same country. Nagarjuna was a king of Naga kingdom of Kashmir before he renounced the throne. Naga kingdom of Kashmir existed close to Wular lake. Wular lake was called as Mahapadmasaras in Sanskrit. This lake had big lotus flowers. Since Nagarjuna was born in the city close to Mahapadmasaras, he was also called as Padmasambhava.

Kudharma, the mother of Garab Dorje was also living close to the Wular lake. According to Tibetan sources, King Indrabhuti was the king of Sambhola or Shumbhala. He had a sister named Lakshminkara. She married the son of King Jalandhara but later she became Bhikshuni. King Indrabhuti placed his son Uparaja or Kukaraja on the throne and became a Buddhist monk. Garab Dorje or Vetalakshema was the son of Kudharma, the daughter of Uparaja. Most probably, King Indrabhuti and Uparaja were the Naga kings. In Sanskrit, Naga kings were also called Urugas. The Tibetan word O-rgyan or U-rgyan might have derived from Sanskrit word Uruga. Therefore, the Naga kingdom of Kashmir was the birthplace of Garab Dorje not Swat valley. Sumbal is an ancient town of Kashmir. Lalitaditya probably built the city of Parihasapura in the same town. The Village Sumbal is presently located in the Gandarbal district of Kashmir. Seemingly, the Asura named Shumbha was killed in this region, therefore, the village came to be known as Shumbhala.

The History of Early Tibetan Buddhism (1300-600 BCE)

According to Tibetan legends, Tibetan valleys were under water in ancient times. When water receded, Bod (Tibet) became habitable. Rupati, the youngest son of Satanika and the grandson of King Janamejaya became the king of Western Tibet (Zhang Zhung) around 3050-3000 BCE. King Triwer Sergyi Jyaruchan reigned in Zhang Zhung in the 16th century BCE. Tibetan sources say that Nyatri Tsenpo was the first emperor who reigned over entire Tibet. Tibetan Buddhists speculated

Nyatri Tsenpo to be a descendant of the Sākya branch of Ikshvaku dynasty. The author of Blue Annals mentions that King Nyatri Tsenpo was probably a descendant of Lichchavi dynasty.

Evidently, ancient Tibet was ruled by the descendants of Sakya or Lichchavi clan of Ikshvaku dynasty. Therefore, the religion of ancient Tibet may not be different from Hinduism. The basics of the Bon religion of western Tibet were also influenced by Hinduism. Though Buddhism was introduced in Tibet during the time of Samantabhadra (16th century BCE) but Acharya Vetalakshema [Garab Dorje] (1321-1221 BCE) was the first teacher of Tibetan Buddhism. It appears that early Tibetan Buddhists followed Indian Buddhist scholars like Vetalakshema (13th century BCE), Shakya Simha (12th century BCE), Nagarjuna II (11th century BCE), Aryadeva (11th century BCE), Vasubandhu (960-880 BCE), Sthiramati (925-850 BCE) and Dharmapala (7th century BCE). Interestingly, Mantrayana and Vajrayana Buddhism evolved under the influence of Tantrism starting from 11th century BCE. The rise of the Tantrism of Natha Sampradaya from 9th century BCE also influenced the Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism. Seemingly, ancient Tibetan Buddhism was limited to some scholars & their followers and it did not get royal patronage till 600 BCE.

The Yarlung Dynasty of Tibet

Traditional Tibetan sources mention that ancient Bod or Tibet consisted of twelve states ruled by twelve chieftains. King Nyatri Tsenpo from India (Magadha) arrived in Tibet and became the emperor of entire Tibet. Thus, King Nyatri Tsenpo was the progenitor of the Yarlung Dynasty. Modern Tibetan scholars have fixed the date of enthronement of King Nyatri Tsenpo in 127 BCE considering the beginning of Tibetan Royal calendar but there is no ancient literary evidence to support this theory. Ancient Tibetan sources clearly indicate that King Nyatri Tsenpo reigned few centuries after the reign of King Triwer Sergyi Jyaruchan of Zhang Zhung (16th century BCE). Taranatha mentions that Tibetan King Lha-tho-tho-ri-gnan-btsan was the contemporary of Vasubandhu. King Lha-tho-tho-ri was the fifth in succession. Vasubandhu lived 900 years after the epoch of Buddha nirvana (1865 BCE) around 960-880 BCE. Thus, Taranatha states that King Lha-tho-tho-ri-gnan-btsan must be dated 933 years after Buddha nirvana i.e. 932 BCE. Many Sanskrit Buddhist texts including Karandavyuhasutra have been introduced in Tibet for the first time during his reign. Most probably, Buddharakshita has brought Sanskrit Buddhist texts to Tibet. Since King Lha-tho-tho-ri-gnan-btsan was the fifth in succession, King Nyatri Tsenpo, the first king of the Yarlung dynasty must be at least dated in the beginning of the 11th century BCE. Historians have mistakenly considered him to be the 28th king of Tibet. Interestingly, Nyang-ral and Bu ston stated that King Nyatri Tsenpo should be the off-spring of King Udayana of Vatsa kingdom. King Udayana was the son-in-law of Chanda Pradyota who died in the same night of Mahavira nirvana (1189 BCE). If the first Tibetan emperor Nyatri Tsenpo was the son of Vatsa King Udayana, we can conclusively fix the date of Nyatri Tsenpo in the 2nd half of the 12th century BCE.

Though King Nyatri Tsenpo was the progenitor of the Yarlung dynasty, King Gri-gum btsan-po (Drigum Tsenpo), the eighth king was probably the real founder of the powerful Tibetan Kingdom. Therefore, the history of Tibet begins with the reign of King Gri-gum btsan-po. Pu-de kun-rgyal (Pudekungyal) was the 9th king and the successor of King Gri-gum btsan-po. He was the contemporary of the Han King of China, Han Wudi or Liu Che Wudi (801-747 BCE).

The Date of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po, the first royal patron of Tibetan Buddhism (571-491 BCE)

Taranatha mentions that Dharmakīrti was the contemporary of Tibetan King Srong-btan-gampo who married a Chinese princess Kong-Cho who came to Tibet. The King Srong-btan-gampo’s period is given in the works of Bai’Du’rya dkar-po, which have been cited in ‘Tibetan Grammar’ by L Soma de Koros. Modern historians have mistakenly fixed the date of Dharmakirti in the 7th century and arrived the date of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po around 604-648 CE.

I have conclusively established in my previous articles that Dharmakirti lived around 610-520 BCE considering the date of Buddha nirvana in 1865 BCE and he was the contemporary of Kumarila Bhatta (617-550 BCE) and Adi Sankara (569-537 BCE). The erroneous dating of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po in the first half of the 7th century led to numerous inconsistencies in the Tibetan history. Historians say that Srong-bstan-sgam-po was the 33rd King but Tibetan sources do not confirm it. In fact, historians have mistakenly considered Srong-bstan-sgam-po and Khri-srong-bstan, the 33rd King as the same person but King Srong-bstan-sgam-po flourished at least 500 years before Khri-srong-bstan, the 33rd King.

William Woodville Rockhill has compiled a book titled “Life of Buddha” derived from Tibetan works in Bkah-Hgyur and Bstan-Hgyur in 2007. According to this Tibetan source, Srong-bstan-sgam-po was the 7th successor of the King. Though Nyatri Tsenpo was the first king but Tibetan dynastic history starts from Gri-gum btsan-po, the 8th King. Therefore, Srong-bstan-sgam-po was the 7th successor of King Gri-gum btsan-po and not Nyatri Tsenpo. Thus, Srong-bstan-sgam-po was the 8th king from Gri-gum btsan-po and the 15th King from Nyatri Tsenpo. King Pu-de kun-rgyal was the 9th and a contemporary of Chinese King Han Wudi (801-747 BCE). There were five Tibetan Kings between Pu-de kun-rgyal (790-750 BCE) and Srong-bstan-sgam-po (558-491 BCE). We can roughly arrive the following chronology of early kings of Yarlung dynasty:

1	Nyatri Tsenpo (The son of Vatsa King Udayana)	1100-1060 BCE
2-4	----	1060-932 BCE
5	Lha-tho-tho-ri-gnan-btsan (The contemporary of Vasubandhu)	932-900 BCE
6-7	----	900-830 BCE

8	Gri-gum btsan-po	830-790 BCE
9	Pu-de kun-rgyal	790-750 BCE
10-14	----	750-558 BCE
15	Srong-bstan-sgam-po	558-491 BCE

Most probably, Srong-bstan-sgam-po was born in the Ox year (571 BCE) and ascended the throne in 558 BCE when he was thirteen years old. He married Bhrikuti Devi (Lha-mo Khro-gnyer-can-ma) a Nepali princess and Wencheng Kong-Cho, a Chinese princess. Most probably, Wencheng Kong-Cho was the daughter of a Chinese King of later Han dynasty (635-440 BCE). According to Tibetan sources, Chinese princess was a Buddhist. Nepali princess Bhrikuti Devi also brought with her an idol of Ashobhya-Buddha. It appears that Chinese Princess influenced her husband King Srong-bstan-sgam-po to make Buddhism as state religion. Many Buddhist monks from Li-yul (Khotan) came to Tibet and Chinese princess provided royal patronage of them. Chinese sources starting from time of the Tang dynasty (42 BCE – 242 CE) record that princess Wenchung introduced Chinese culture into Tibet. The Tang emperor Zhongzong had admired Wenchung for civilizing Tibet in the year 50 CE.

Historians say that Chinese princess belonged to a minor branch of Tang dynasty but Tibetan sources clearly record that she was a daughter of the sovereign king of China. The kings of Tang dynasty were militarily and economically powerful since the establishment of their dynasty. Actually, earlier Chinese kings (before the reign of Tang dynasty) followed a diplomacy that also included granting of Chinese princesses to the neighboring Kings. According to the diplomatic standards, the granting of a princess in marriage implied an equal or greater status of the neighboring King. Srong-bstan-sgam-po was superior in military power than the kings of Han dynasty. But later Tibetan Kings were neither greater nor equal to the status of the kings of Tang dynasty. Moreover, Tang dynasty fought a war with Tibetans when a later Tibetan king Khri-srong-bstan demanded a Chinese princess in marriage. Tibetan king Khri-srong-bstan was defeated in this war but the King of Tang dynasty probably offered a Chinese girl who may not belonged to the reigning royal family. This is the reason why historians have concocted that the Chinese princess Wenchung belonged to a minor branch of Tang dynasty.

In reality, the chronological error in dating of Srong-bstan-sgam-po and Khri-srong-bstan led to this concoction. Historians think that both are the same person but King Srong-bstan-sgam-po was the contemporary of Dharmakirti and lived in the 6th century BCE whereas Khri-srong-bstan lived in the 1st century BCE and a contemporary of the Tang dynasty of China. Thus, king Srong-bstan-sgam-po was the contemporary of Later Han dynasty and not Tang dynasty. king Srong-bstan-sgam-po did not wage war for Chinese princess. A King of Han dynasty himself offered his daughter Wenchung to Tibetan king Srong-bstan-sgam-po. It appears that marrying a Chinese princess became a symbol of political power after the reign of king Srong-bstan-sgam-po. Many

descendants of king Srong-bstan-sgam-po might have married Chinese royal girls. When the Tang dynasty started ruling China, they refused to give Chinese princess to Tibetan King Khri-srong-bstan leading to a military conflict. Though the Tibetans and the Chinese claimed the defeat of each other but the Tang king sent a Chinese girl of second rank royal family to ensure peace with Tibetans. Seemingly, Chinese rulers of Tang dynasty hated Tibetan King Khri-srong-bstan. According to a Tibetan tradition, the red palace of Lhasa was burnt down by Chinese troops after the death of King Khri-srong-bstan. Historians have rejected it because there is no such reference in the annals of Tibet and China.

In fact, King Srong-bstan-sgam-po (15th King) died in 491 BCE whereas King Khri-srong-bstan (33rd King) died in 11 BCE. Evidently, Chinese troops burnt the palace of Lhasa immediately after the death of Khri-srong-bstan, the 33rd King in 11 BCE. This event did not occur after the death of Srong-bstan-sgam-po, the 15th king. Therefore, there is no such reference in Tibetan and Chinese annals. It is the blunder of historians who considered King Srong-bstan-sgam-po (15th King) and King Khri-srong-bstan (33rd King) as identical. Historians fix the date of the death of Khri-srong-bstan, the 33rd King in 649 CE because there is also a chronological error of 660 years in the history of Tibet and China as I have already explained in my previous articles.

Srong-bstan-sgam-po, the 15th king was the first who patronized Buddhism under the influence of his Chinese wife. Tibetan Buddhists consider him to be an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara Buddha and his both wives to be an incarnation of Tara. King Srong-bstan-sgam-po sent his minister Thonmi Sambhota to Kashmir. He learnt Buddhism, Sanskrit and Siddhamatrika script of Brahmi from Devavitsimha and devised the Tibetan script for classical Tibetan language. He also translated Ratnamegha Sutra into Tibetan language. Thus, King Srong-bstan-sgam-po was credited with the invention of Tibetan script.

King Srong-bstan-sgam-po also founded the city of Lhasa and constructed Potala Palace on mount Marpori in 539 BCE. According to Tibetan sources, King Srong-bstan-sgam-po lived for 80 years. Thus, we can fix his lifetime around 571-491 BCE. Blue Annals state that "The year Earth-Male-Tiger was in the 50th year of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po and in the preceding year, he had completed his 49th year." According to the rGyal-rabs Bon-Gyi Byungnas, the king (Khri-srong-bstan) was short-lived and is said to have died at the age of 36. The manuscript No. 252 found in Dunhuang, China mentions that Chinese princess spent six years in Tibet before being presented to the King. She could live with the king for three years only. Evidently, King Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BCE) lived for more than 50 years (up to 80 years) and married to the Chinese Princess Wenchung for long time whereas Khri-srong-bstan (47-11 BCE) lived for 36 years and married to a Chinese princess at the age of 33 for only three years. Thus, Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BCE) and Khri-srong-bstan (47-11 BCE) should not be identified as the same king.

The evidence of Old Tibetan Chronicle and Old Tibetan Annals

Ancient Tibetans had no script for their language till the reign of Dharmaraja Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BCE). Seemingly, the historical account of ancient Tibet was orally transmitted for many centuries. The old Tibetan Chronicle of Yarlung dynasty that found in the 7th cave of Mogao, near Dunhuang, China is the oldest historical document of ancient Tibet. A fragment of Old Tibetan Annals is also found in the same cave. Historians have declared that Old Tibetan chronicle is a less-reliable document because it contradicts with the chronological account given in the old Tibetan Annals. In reality, old Tibetan chronicle gives the account of ancient Tibetan kings starting from Nyatri Tsenpo, the 1st king to Srong-bstan-sgam-po, the 15th king and his immediate successors whereas the old Tibetan Annals give the chronological account starting from Khri-srong-bstan, the 33rd King to King Trisong Detsen. This is the reason why the old Tibetan chronicle defers from the old Tibetan Annals.

The extant fragment of Old Tibetan chronicle consists of 16 paragraphs and 536 lines. In the beginning, the chronicle gives the account of eight kings starting from Nyatri Tsenpo (11th century BCE) to Grigum Tsenpo (830-790 BCE). It narrates the overthrow of the prince Zingpoje. It appears that prince Zingpoje succeeded his father Grigum Tsenpo but Pu-de kun-rgyal (790-750 BCE) overthrew him to take over the reins. Thereafter, the chronicle gives the historical account of Srong-bstan-sgam-po, Khri srong lde brtsan and Khri dus-srong btsan. Historians have mistakenly identified these three Tibetan kings with three later kings and disputed that Tridu Songtsen (Khri dus-srong btsan) must be placed between Khri-srong-bstan (Srong-bstan-sgam-po) and Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde brtsan).

Actually, Khri srong lde brtsan succeeded Srong-bstan-sgam-po after his death in 491 BCE whereas Khri-srong-bstan died in 11 BCE and Trisong Detsen ascended the throne in 95 CE. The old Tibetan chronicle also records the victory of Khri srong lde brtsan over King Lig-Myi-rhya of Zhang Zheng. According to early Tibetan accounts, King Srong-bstan-sgam-po and King Lig-Myi-rhya of Zhang Zheng had married each other's sisters for political reasons but the sister of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po complained of ill-treatment later. Seemingly, Khri srong lde brtsan ambushed and killed King Lig-Myi-rhya of Zhang Zheng during the lifetime of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po. Thus, the kingdom of Zhang-Zheng (western Tibet) was annexed to Central Tibet.

The old Tibetan chronicle did not record that King Srong-bstan-sgam-po established Buddhism but it clearly mentions that "The incomparable religion of the Buddha had been received during the reign of Khri srong lde brtsan and there were Viharas in the central Tibet as well as the borderlands of the country." Khri 'dus-srong btsan succeeded Khri srong lde brtsan who had subjugated the Gar clan, one of the twelve kingdoms of pre-imperial Tibet. The list of the Tibetan emperors given in the chronicle ends with U'l dum brtan. Historians again mistakenly identified U'l dum brtan with Langdarma.

Shameless concoctions by historians

Evidently, the chronological account of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po and his successors given in the Old Tibetan chronicle differs from the distorted Tibetan chronology presented by the historians. Geza Uray has floated an idea that the scroll of Old Tibetan chronicle was cut up and rearranged sometime after it was originally written. In this process, the paragraphs could not be rearranged in original sequence and the chronological problem results from this.

In fact, historians, the followers of the distorted chronology, have puzzled with the order of the paragraphs 10, 11 and 12. The text of the Paragraphs 10-12:

Para 10: It contains the praise of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po's reign and a short estimation of his military campaigns.

Para 11: It tells about the conflict between the Tibetan sovereign and the king of Zhang Zhung, Lig-Myi-rhya (western Tibet) and the defeat of the latter.

Para 12: It describes the celebration of the victory over the king of Zhang Zhung. The ritual chants are performed by Khri srong lde brtsan. The celebration ends with the praise of the reign of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po.

According to ancient Bon chronicles, King Lig-Myi-rhya was the last king of Zhang Zhung. King Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BCE) sent the army under the leadership of Khri srong lde brtsan who ambushed and killed Lig-Myi-rhya. Thus, the kingdom of Zhang Zhung (western Tibet) was annexed to Central Tibet. Evidently, Srong-bstan-sgam-po and Lig-Myi-rhya were contemporaries. Khri srong lde brtsan was the junior contemporary of them. It may be noted that the kingdom of Zhang Zhung ceased to exist after 500 BCE. It became an integral part of Tibetan. Kalhana mentions that King Laitaditya (0-36 CE) defeated Bhauttas. Evidently, there was no kingdom of Zhang Zhung in the east of Kashmir valley by the time of Karkota dynasty of Kashmir because it had already been annexed by central Tibet long back.

Since historians have mistakenly identified Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BCE) with Khri-srong-bstan (56-11 BCE) and Khri srong lde brtsan (515-465 BCE) with Trisong Detsen (95-144 CE), it is now impossible to establish the contemporaneity of Khri-srong-bstan and Trisong Detsen because there was a gap of 100 years between the death of Khri-srong-bstan and the beginning of the reign of Trisong Detsen. Moreover, the chronicle narrates the account of Khri 'dus-srong btsan in Paragraphs 13-16 which unambiguously indicates that Khri 'dus-srong btsan was the successor of Khri srong lde brtsan. Historians again wrongly identified Khri 'dus-srong btsan with Tridu Songsten who was the predecessor of Trisong Detsen. Clueless historian Geza Uray has conspired to change the order of Paragraphs of the chronicle to defend the distorted chronology as shown below:

The paragraphs			The reign
Place		Subject	
original	present		
*6.	6. (VI. 1.)	Beginning of the reign of <i>Sroñ-brcan sgam-po</i>	<i>Sroñ-brcan sgam-po</i> , alias <i>Khri Sroñ-brcan</i> (629?—649)
*7.	7. (VI. 2.)	The history of <i>Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce</i> (part II)	
*8.	11. (VIII. 2.)	The quarrel between the Tibetan king and <i>Lg Myi-rhya</i>	
*9.	12. (VIII. 3.)	The celebration of the victory over <i>Lg Myi-rhya</i> ; the eulogy of <i>Khri Sroñ-brcan</i>	
*10.	13. (IX. 1.)	The song of 'Dus-sroñ about the disloyalty of <i>Mgar</i>	<i>Khri 'Dus-sroñ</i> (676—704)
*11.	14. (IX. 2.)	<i>Khe-rgad Rgyal-to-re Mdo-snañ's</i> song about the <i>Ög-ro</i> wife of <i>Khri 'Dus-sroñ</i> and the reply of the woman	
*12.	15. (X. 1.)	<i>Mgar Khri-'brññ Bean-brod's</i> victory at <i>Stag-la Rgya-dur</i>	
*13.	16. (X. 2.)	The flight of <i>Mgar Mañ-po-rje Stag-rcañ</i> and <i>Pa-chab Rgyal-to-re</i> to China	
*14.	8. (VII. 1.)	Eulogy of <i>Khri 'Dus-sroñ</i>	
*15.	9. (VII. 2.)	The reign of <i>Khri Lde-gcug-brcañ</i>	<i>Khri Lde-gcug-brcañ</i> (704—754)
*16.	10. (VIII. 1.)	The reign of <i>Khri Sroñ-lde-brcañ</i>	<i>Khri Sroñ-lde-brcañ</i> (755—79?)

It is nothing but another example of intellectual dishonesty of modern historians. It is shocking that many Tibetologists have admired the methodology of Geza Uray. It may also be noted that the traces of similar narrative of the old Tibetan chronicle are found in the *Mkhas-Pa'i Dga-ston* (on the history of Buddhism in India and Tibet) written by Pawa Tsuglag Threngwa (844-906 CE?). Evidently, there is no reason to doubt the order of the paragraphs in the old Tibetan chronicle because similar narrative is given by Pawa Tsuglag Threngwa, a later Tibetan historian.

The Chronology of Srong-bstan-sgam-po and his successors

1	Srong-bstan-sgam-po (15 th)	571-491 BCE
2	Khri srong lde brtsan (16 th)	490-440 BCE
3	Khri 'dus-srong btsan (17 th)	440-390 BCE
4	U'l dum brtan (18 th ?)	390-350 BCE

According to Tibetan sources, Lichchavi King Narendradeva (391-351 BCE) wrested the throne from Vishnugupta with the aid of Tibetans. Narendradeva's son Shivadeva II mentions in his inscription that Nepal paid tribute to Tibet. We need to study the diplomatic and political relations between Tibet Kings and Lichchavi kings of Nepal.

The Chronological inconsistencies in Tibetan sources

The chronological Tibetan history given in the later Tibetan annals like Blue Annals etc., has many inconsistencies. The main reason is that there was no consensus about the exact date of Buddha nirvana among Tibetan scholars. Bu ston, who wrote his work on the history of Buddhism in India and Tibet at least 150 years before Blue Annals, mentions that from the point of view of the Kalachakra system, 2198 years should be reckoned to have passed from the time when Buddha preached Mulatantra of this system to 662 CE (1322 CE – 660). According to Blue Annals, Sakyasribhadra of Kashmir was the originator of a major branch of Tibetan Buddhism and using his own chronology, the date of Sakyamuni's nirvana is established to be 2020 years prior to the writing of Blue annals in 816 CE (1476 CE – 660). Interestingly, the author of Blue Annals, Buddha was born during the reign of the 4th Emperor Chao Wang of Zhou dynasty and the Chinese sources say that 1566 years had passed up to the year 42 BCE (618 CE – 660). Though the author of Blue Annals knew about the more ancient dates of Buddha nirvana but he followed Sakyasribhadra's chronology and presented the chronological history of Tibet considering the date of Buddha nirvana around 1204 BCE (544 BCE + 660). Thus, the author of Blue annals erroneously fixed the date of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po around 91-11 BCE which led to a chronological illusion of identity of Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BCE) and Khri-srong-bstan (47-11 BCE).

The Date of Buddha Nirvana in Tibetan sources

In fact, a divergence of opinion about the date of Buddha nirvana existed in Tibet starting from the date of the revival Tibetan Buddhism in the beginning of the 2nd century CE. The entire Tibetan literature came into existence from the 2nd century onwards. Almost thirteen different dates of Buddha nirvana are found in the Tibetan literature.

Following the date mentioned in the famous Sino-Tibetan treaty, a school of Sa-skya pa scholars claim that Buddha attained nirvana in 2134 BCE considering 2955 years elapsed up to 821 CE. Another tradition of Sa-skya pa records that 3862 years had passed to 1442 CE which indicates the date of 2420 BCE. Nel Pa Pandita mentions that 3588 years had passed to 1442 CE which leads to the date of 2146 BCE. According to the calculations made by Yid Bzan rtse ba, 2750 years had passed from the nirvana to 1442 CE. Thus, Buddha attained nirvana in 1308 BCE.

Tibetan scholar Sum pa-mkhan-po (1704-1788), the author of Dpag-Bsam Ljon-Bzan (the history of Doctrine) mentions that Bu-ston dates the birth of Buddha to 915 BC (Fire Horse year) and the Nirvana to 833 BC (Fire Tiger year). The astronomers of Jo-nan-pa school (Kalachakra doctrine) state that Buddha was born in 915 BC (Fire Horse Year) and attained nirvana in 834 BC (Fire-Hare Year). In his work titled "Chos' Byung", Bu ston states that from the point of view of the Kalachakra system, 2198 years should be reckoned to have passed from the time when Buddha preached Mulatantra of this system to 1322 CE when the Chos'Byung was written. He indicates the year 876 BC in which Buddha preached Mulatantra. Another Tibetan text refers to the date

of Nirvana in 881 BC (Earth Dragon year) and the Birth in 961 BC (Iron-Monkey year). According to another Tibetan source, Buddha attained nirvana in 651 BCE.

Sakyasribhadra and his Tibetan followers calculated the date of Nirvana around 544 BC. Brug pa Padma- dkar-po says that 2650 years had passed from the Nirvana to 1592 CE. Thus, Buddha Nirvana around 1058 BCE. The author of Blue Annals records with reference to the Chinese Annals that 1566 years elapsed up to 618 CE from the date of nirvana which leads to the date of 948 BC.

Let us summarize the following 11 dates of Buddha nirvana as calculated by modern historians:

	Source	Nirvana of Buddha	Birth of Buddha
1	Sa-skya pa tradition	2420 BC	2500 BC
2	Sa-skya pa tradition	2134 BC	2214 BC
3	Nel Pa Pandita	2146 BC	2226 BC
4	Yid Bzan rtse ba	1308 BC	1388 BC
5	Kalachakra Doctrine	834 BC	915 BC
6	Bu Ston	833 BC	915 BC
7	Phug-lugs	881 BC	961 BC
8	Sakyasri Bhadra tradition of Tibet	544 BC	1284 BC
9	Another Tibetan Tradition	651 BC	731 BC
10	Padma Karpo or Brug pa Padma- dkar-po	1058 BC	1138 BC
11	Chinese Annals quoted by the author of Blue Annals	948 BC	1028 BC

I have already established that there is a chronological error of 660 years in the history of Tibet and China. We have to add 660 years to the dates mentioned above as shown below.

	Source	Nirvana of Buddha
1	Sa-skya pa tradition	3080 BC
2	Sa-skya pa tradition	2794 BC
3	Nel Pa Pandita	2806 BC
4	Yid Bzan rtse ba	1968 BC
5	Atisa and Kalachakra Doctrine	1494 BC
6	Bu Ston	1493 BC
7	Phug-lugs	1541 BC
8	Sakyasri Bhadra tradition of Tibet	1204 BC

9	Another Tibetan Tradition	1311 BC
10	Padma Karpo or Brug pa Padma- dkar-po	1718 BC
11	Chinese Annals quoted by the author of Blue Annals	1608 BC

The Dates of 3080 BC, 2806 BC and 2794 BC: After the fall of the royal dynasty of Tibet, Sa skya pa Buddhist spiritual leaders of the noble family of Khon became the de-facto rulers of Tibet. Seemingly, they have studied the old Sino-Tibetan treaties to update themselves about the history of diplomatic relations between Tibet and China. The famous Sino-Tibetan treaty refers to the year 2955 of unknown era. The Sa skya pa scholars of Tibet mistakenly assumed it to be the date of Buddha nirvana. In fact, this treaty was signed in the Chinese capital of Changan. Most probably, the Sino-Tibetan treaty referred to an epoch of ancient Chinese calendar. *Xiaojing Goumingjue*, an ancient Chinese chronicle, records, “At the time of King Yu (the founder of Xia dynasty), the five planets were strung together like a necklace. They shone as brilliantly as chained jade disks.” This conjunction took place around 26th / 27th Feb 2806 BCE (Chaitra Pratipada). A Chinese calendar used this conjunction as an epoch.

Similarly, Hong Fan Zhuan (8th century BC) mentions that the “Ancient Zhuanxu calendar” began at dawn, in the beginning of the spring, when the sun, new moon, and five planets gathered in the constellation Yingshi (Pegasus). The Bamboo chronicle records that King Zhuanxu introduced the calendar in his 13th regnal year. King Zhuanxu was the grandson of the legendary Yellow Emperor who reigned before the reign of Xia dynasty (2865-2426 BCE). In all probability, Yellow Emperor reigned around 3200-3150 BCE and his grandson Zhuanxu started his reign around 3114 BCE. Chinese astronomers probably learnt the basics of Indian lunisolar calendar and introduced the new Chinese calendar from the epoch of Kaliyuga i.e. 18th Feb 3101 BCE when the sun, moon, and five planets all lined up in the constellation Yingshi (close to Revati nakshatra) in the sky at dawn. Since King Zhuanxu was the reigning king in 3101 BCE, the ancient Chinese calendar came to be known as Zhuanxu calendar.

Evidently, Sa skya pa scholars mistakenly assumed the epochs of two ancient Chinese calendars as the epoch of Buddha nirvana.

The Date of 1968 BC: Most probably, the text of Yid Bzan rtse ba calculated the date of 1968 BC based on the Kashmir tradition (Rajatarangini of Kalhana). Kalhana mentions that 150 years had elapsed from the date of Buddha nirvana to the time of Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka.

The Date of 1718 BC: Evidently, Padma Karpo calculated roughly this date based on the tradition of Theravada of Burma and Sri Lanka. In fact, Theravada separated from Mahasanghikas during the second Buddhist Council held around 1765 BC. This epoch was traditionally referred to in the Burmese inscriptions and Sri Lankan chronicles like Mahavamsa.

The Date of 1608 BC, 1541 BC and 1494 BC: According to ancient Gilgit manuscripts, Nagarjuna Vajrapani of Kashmir, the founder of Mahayana Buddhism and the author of Mulatantra (Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita sutra) attained nirvana 400 years before Kushana king Kanishka. Kalhana indicates that Nagarjuna of Kashmir lived in the third century after Buddha nirvana. In all probability, Nagarjuna Vajrapani or Samantabhadra or Padmasambhava or Padmapani (the second Buddha) lived around 1650-1550 BCE considering the date of Buddha nirvana around 1865 BCE. Evidently, Tibetan and Chinese Mahayana traditions referred to the nirvana of Vajrapani around 1541 BCE but mistakenly assumed it to be the date of Buddha nirvana later.

The Date of 1204 BC and 1311 BC: This date of nirvana was undoubtedly introduced in Tibet by Sakyasribhadra of the 6th century. He was the teacher of Vikramasila before Muslim invasion on the Buddhist viharas of Bihar and Bengal. A Gaya inscription is dated in the year 1817 of Buddha nirvana. It refers to King Ashokachalla of Gaya region. This inscription refers to the epoch of 1204 or 1200 BCE. A Nepali manuscript also refers to the epoch of 1200 BCE as Buddha nirvana. In fact, Jain scholars mistakenly identified Chandragupta Maurya with the disciple of Bhadrabahu. This mistaken identity led to a chronological illusion that Buddha and Mahavira were contemporaries. Thus, Jains and Buddhist started believing from the 2nd century onwards that Buddha attained nirvana in the 8th regnal year of Ajatashatru and Mahavira attained nirvana in the 20th or 24th regnal year of Ajatashatru or Kunika. Since Mahavira attained nirvana in 1189 BCE, Theravadin Buddhists of Gaya calculated the epoch of Buddha nirvana around 1204-1200 BCE. This is the reason why Sumatitantra (218 CE) mentions that Nandas reigned 2000 years after Yudhishtira though Puranas clearly record that Nandas reigned 1500 years after Yudhishtira.

Sakyasribhadra has introduced the date of Buddha nirvana (1204 BC) in Tibet in the 2nd half of the 6th century. Tibetans had no knowledge of the date of 1204 BC before the arrival of Sakyasribhadra. Tibetans had great respect for Sakyasribhadra and started following the date of Buddha nirvana (1204 BC). Most of the Tibetan annals and historical works were written after the 6th century. They have to reconcile the chronological history of Tibet with reference to the date of 1204 BC which led to numerous inconsistencies. This is the reason why the author of The Blue Annals (816-818 CE) mentions that 849 years had passed from the date of birth of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po to 816 CE.

The Date of King Trisong Detsen (95-144 CE), the second patron of Buddhism

When King Srong-bstan-sgam-po annexed the kingdom of Zhang Zhung, Tapihritsa was the teacher of Bon religion. Seemingly, Tapihritsa has transformed Bon Religion into a Buddhist sect to protect the heritage of Bon due to the changed political circumstances. He was the disciple of Dawa Gyaltsen, the Bon practitioner. Tapihritsa was the contemporary of King Srong-bstan-sgam-po and his successor Khri srong lde brtsan. According to the scholars of Bonpa

tradition, Tapihritsa's disciple Gyerchen Nangzhar Lodpo (5th century BCE) was the first who introduced the teachings of Dzogchen in Tibet.

Though King Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BC) patronized Buddhism under the influence of Chinese wife Wenchung and Nepali wife Bhrikuti devi and his successor king Khri srong lde brtsan (490-440 BCE) built Buddha viharas but Tibetan Buddhism declined after 450 BCE. In fact, the fall of Buddhism in India after Adi Sankaracharya (569-537 BCE) has also affected Tibetan Buddhism.

During the reign of King Khri-sron-deu-tsari or Trisong Detsen (95-144 CE), Indian Buddhist monks Shantarakshita, Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra were invited to Tibet which led to the revival of Tibetan Buddhism. According to Tibetan sources, Śāntarakṣita visited Tibet at the invitation of King Khri-sron-deu-tsari who was born around 67 CE. Śāntarakṣita worked in Tibet for 13 years. Most probably, Śāntarakṣita was born during the reign of Pāla King Gopāla and died during the reign of King Dharmapāla. Thus, we can fix the date of Shantarakshita around 50-130 CE.

According to the 'Dra 'bag Chen-mo, Vairochana, the Tibetan translator and the traditional biographer went to India and studied Buddhism under Srisimha. Maha Pandita Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava II and Jnanasutra were also the disciples of Srisimha. Padmasambhava II or Padmakara was the founder of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism who came to be known as Guru Rinpoche. Later Tibetans mistakenly assumed him to be the second Buddha considering Padmasambhava I (Samantabhadra, Vajrapani) and Padmasambhava II as identical. In reality, Padmasambhava or Samantabhadra Vajrapani lived in the 16th century BCE and founded the Mahayana Buddhism whereas Padmasambhava II lived in the 2nd century CE and established Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet.

Later Tibetan Kings:

1	Namri Songsten (32 nd)	90-31 BCE
2	Khri-srong-bstan (33 rd)	31-11 BCE
3	Mangsong Mangtsen (34 th)	10 BCE – 16 CE
4	Tridu Songtsen (35 th)	16-44 CE
5	Mes Ag Tshoms (36 th)	45-95 CE
6	Trisong Detsen (37th)	95-144 CE
7	Tride Songsten (38 th)	144-155 CE
8	Ralpacan	155-178 CE
9	Langdarma	178-186 CE

Langdarma was assassinated by a Buddhist monk named Pelgyi Dorje around 186 CE. After the death of Langdarma, the Tibetan empire collapsed. There was no central power in Tibet till the

Mongol conquest of Tibet in the 2nd half of the 6th century. This period is known as the era of fragmentation in Tibetan history. Mongol Yuan dynasty reigned over Tibet from 546 CE to 1354 CE. In fact, Mongolian Yuan dynasty reigned over China and Tibet for ~800 years but modern historians inadvertently cut short the period of Yuan dynasty for ~140 years only due to the chronological error of 660 years. During the reign of Mongol Yuan dynasty over Tibet, Sakya Lamas became the de-facto autonomous rulers of Tibet.

The Date of Atisa Dipankara Srijnana (321-393 CE)

According to Taranatha, Atisa Dipankara Srijnana was the contemporary of Pala Kings Bhejapala and Nayapala (360-400 CE). He became the head of Odantapuri Vihara and Vikramasila Vihara. He preached Buddhism in Suvarnabhumi (Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia and Indonesia). He stayed 12 years in Sumatra.

Atisa was the key figure in establishment of Tibetan Buddhism. He revived Vajrayana in Tibet. According to the Blue Annals, Yeshe-O, the monk king of the Guge kingdom of western Tibet sent his followers to learn and translate some of the Sanskrit Buddhist texts. Nagtso, one of the followers of Yeshe-O, studied Sanskrit Buddhism at Vikramashila under Atiśa. He on behalf of his king persuaded Atisa to visit Tibet. Atisa came to Tibet in 381 CE and died in Tibet in 393 CE.

Kalachakra school of Vajrayana and Tibetan Calendar (367 CE)

Kashmiri scholar Pandita Somanatha introduced Kalachakra school of Vajrayana in Tibet around 367 CE. At the same time, an Indian Buddhist Chandranath introduced lunisolar calendar and Indian cycle of 60 years in Tibet around 367 CE. Tibet and China borrowed the 60-year cycle from India.

The Date of Sakyasribhadra (466-565 CE)

Sakyasribhadra was born in 466 CE in Kashmir. He learnt grammar from Lakshmidhara and went to Magadha. He became Buddhist monk and studied Buddhist texts from Santakaragupta, Dasabala and Dhavasaka. He was the last head of Odantapuri and Vikramasila viharas. Muslim invaders destroyed the viharas of Vikramasila, Nalanda and Odantapuri around 540 CE. Sakyasri had to flee towards east to save his life. Tibetan young scholar Tropu Lotsawa Jampa Pel who studied with Buddhashri, an Indian Guru in Bhaktapur, Nepal, met Sakyasri in the town of Vanesvara and invited him to Tibet. Sakyasri travelled to Tibet in 544 CE and taught Buddhism at Tropu Monastery for ten years. He left Tibet in 554 CE and went back to Kashmir. Sakyasri died in 565 CE at the age of 99 years.

The Bon Religion and its transformation into Tibetan Buddhism

As already discussed above that Bon or Bonpa religion of western Tibet was an offshoot of Hinduism. When King Srong-bstan-sgam-po (571-491 BCE) annexed western Tibet, Bon religion has gradually been evolved as a sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Tapihritsa and his disciple Gyerchen Nangzhar Lodpo (5th century BCE) have transformed Bon or Bonpa religion into Buddhism by preserving the fundamentals of Bon Religion. Swastika is the sacred symbol of this sect. Today, ten percent of Tibetans follow Bon Buddhism.

The four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism are:

1. Nyingma school
2. Sakya or Sa skya school
3. Kagyu school
4. Gelug school

The Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism

Nyingma is the oldest school. Guru Rinpoche or Padmasambhava II, a Tantric Vajrayanist brought the Nyingma teachings to Tibet during the reign of Trisong Detsen (95-144 CE). Evidently, the Nyingma school was founded in Tibet in the first half of the 2nd century. Vimalamitra and Vairochana were the earliest teachers of Nyingma tradition. Vairochana translated many Buddhist texts into Tibetan. Interestingly, no one served as the head of Nyingma tradition.

The Sakya or Sa skya school of Tibetan Buddhism

Sakya is a city of Tibet. Atisa Dipankara travelled through this city. Khon Khonchog Gyalpo built the Sakya monastery in 413 CE (1073 CE – 660). Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, the son of Khon Khonchog Gyalpo was born in the Sakya monastery. He was the first of the following five Patriarchs of Sakya school. Sonam Tsemo, the son of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo was born in 482 CE.

1. Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (432-498 CE)
2. Loppön Sonam Tsemo (482-522 CE)
3. Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen (487-556 CE)
4. Kunga Gyaltsen or Sakya Pandita (522-591 CE)
5. Drogön Chogyal Phagpa (575-620 CE).

Interestingly, Sakya Lamas became the de-facto autonomous rulers of Tibet during the time of Mongol Yuan dynasty. Prince Goden the grandson of Genghis Khan sent a letter to Kunga Gyaltsen or Sakya Pandita requesting his presence in the court. Mongolian rulers had great respect for Sakya scholars. Chogyal Phakpa, the successor of Sakya Pandita, devised a new script for Mongolian language.

Heyvajra is one of the principal deities of Sakya tradition. Though Sakya school founded in the 5th century but the teachings of Sakyas originated from Indian masters Virupa, Krishna, Damarupa, Avadhuti, Gayadhara and Sakyamitra II. Drogmi Lotsawa translated the teachings of Indian masters into Tibetan language. Most probably, Virupa lived around 837 CE and Gayadhara lived in the 11th century. Drogmi Lotsawa is dated around 992-1072 CE. Sakyamitra II was in Tibet around 1387 CE. There is a controversy about the chronology of Guru-parampara of Sakya school. The following two lists clearly indicate the chronological inconsistencies.

From: Rigpawiki.org	From: Sakyaling.de
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Khön Könchok Gyalpo (1034-1102) 2. Bari Lotsawa^[1] (1040-1111) 3. Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158) 4. Sönam Tsemo (1142-1182) 5. Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216) 6. Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen^[2] (1182-1251) 7. Chögyal Pakpa^[3] (1235-1280) 8. Chung Rinchen Gyaltsen (1238-1279) 9. Dharmapala Rakshita (1268-1287) 10. Sharpa Jamyang Chenpo (1258-1306) 11. Dagnyi Chenpo Sangpo Pal (1262-1324) 12. Shyithokpa^[4] Khetsun Chenpo (1305-1343) 13. Jamyang Donyö Gyaltsen (1310-1344) 14. Dampa Sonam Gyaltsen (1312-1375) 15. Lhakhang^[5] Labrang Tawan Lodrö Gyaltsen (1332-1364) 16. Shyithokpa Tawan Kunga Rinchen (1339-1399) 17. Shyithokpa Lodrö Gyaltsen (1366-1420) 18. Rinchen^[6] Gangpa Jamyang Namkha Gyaltsen (1398-1472) 19. Shyithokpa Kunga Wangchuk (1418-1462) 20. Rinchen Gangpa Dakchen Gyagarpa Sherab Gyaltsen (1436/9-1495) 21. Rinchen Gangpa Dakchen Lodrö Gyaltsen (1444-1495) 22. Düchö^[7] Labrangpa Salo Jhampai Dorje Kunga Sonam (1485-1533) 23. Düchö Labrangpa Ngagchang Chökyi Gyalpo Kunga Rinchen (1517-1584) 24. Düchö Labrangpa Jamyang Sonam Sangpo (1519-1621) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virupa 2. Krishnapa 3. Damarupa 4. Avadhutipa 5. Gayadhara 0694-1043 6. Drokmi Lotsawa 0992-1072 7. Seton Kunrig 1025-1113 8. Shangton Choebhar 1053-1136 9. Sachen Kunga Nyingpo 1092-1158 10. Loppon Sonam Tsemo 1142-1182 11. Jetsu Drakpa Gyaltsen 1147-1216 12. Sakya Pandita 1182-1251 13. Choegyal Phakpa 1235-1280 14. Shang Konchok Pal 1240-1308 15. Naza Drakphugpa 1277-1350 16.. Lama Dhampa Sonam Gyaltsen 1312-1375 17. Lama Palden Tsultrim 1333-1399 18. Buddha Shree 1339-1419 19. Ngorchen Kunga Sangpo 1382-1456 20. Muchen Sempa Chenpo 1388-1469 21. Dhagchen Lodue Gyaltsen 1444-1495 22. Doring Kun Pangpa Chenpo 1449-1525 23. Tsarchen Losal Gyatso 1502-1566 24. Jmayang Khyentse Wangchuk 1524-1566 25. Khenchen Labsum Gyaltsen 1526-1577

25. Düchö Labrangpa Dragpa Lodro Gyaltsen (1563-1617)	26. Dorje Chang Wangchuk Rabten 1559-1636
26. Düchö Labrangpa Ngawang Kunga Wangyal (1592-1620)	27. Gonpo Sonam Chogdhen 1603-1659
27. Düchö Labrangpa Jamgön Anye Shyap Kunga Sönam (1597-1659)	28. Rinchen Sonam Chokdrup 1602-1681
28. Düchö Labrangpa Jamgön Sonam Wangchug (1638-1685)	29. Khyenrab Jampa 1633-1703
29. Düchö Labrangpa Jamgön Kunga Tashi (1656-1711)	30. Morchen Kunga Lhundrup 1654-1728
30. Düchö Labrangpa Jamyang Sonam Rinchen (1705-1741)	31. Nesarwa Kunga Lekpa 1704-1761
31. Düchö Labrangpa Sachen Kunga Lodrö (1729-1783)	32. Sachen Kunga Lodroe 1729-1783
32. Düchö Labrangpa Jamgön Wangdü Nyingpo (1763-1809)	33. Jampa Namkha Chemi 1765-1820
33. Düchö Podrang Pema Dündul Wangchuk (1792-1853)	34. Jampa Kunga Tenzin 1776-1862
34. Phuntsok Podrang ^[8] Jamgön Dorje Rinchen (1819-1867)	35. Jampa Kunga Tenpei Gyaltsen 1829-1870
35. Drolma Podrang ^[9] Thegchen Tashi Rinchen (1824-1865)	36a. Ngawang Sonam Gyaltsen 1830-1890
36. Phuntsok Podrang Ngawang Kunga Sonam (1842-1882)	37a. Ngawang Lodroe Nyingpo 1840-
37. Drolma Podrang Kunga Nyingpo Samphel Norbu (1850-1899)	38a. Ngawang Lodroe Shenphen Nyingpo 1876-1953
38. Phuntsok Podrang Zamling Chegü Wangdü (1855-1919)	39a. His Holiness Sakya Trizin 1945
39. Drolma Podrang Dragshul Thinley Rinchen (1871-1936)	39b. Jamgon Loter Wangpo 1847-1914
40. Phuntsok Podrang Ngawang Kunga Thutop Wangchuk (1900-1950)	37b. Dakpa Choekyi Nyima
41. Kyabgon Gongma Trichen Rinpoche (b.1945)	38b. Ngawang Lodroe Seh“nphen Nyingpo 1876-1953
42. Kyabgon Gongma Trizin Rinpoche (b.1974)	39b. His Holiness Sakya Trizin 1945

There is need of further study of the Guru-Parampara of Sakya Lamas to establish the true order and chronology.

The Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism

This school is also a branch of Vajrayana. Drupgyu was an ancient Buddhist lineage of Tibet. Kadampa lineage was founded by Atisa. Gampopa (419-513 CE) brought Drupgyu and Kadampa

lineages together and founded Dakpo Kagyu school. Later, Dakpo Kagyu school subdivided into the following four schools:

1. Karma Kagyu
2. Barom Kagyu
3. Tsalpa Kagyu
4. Pagdru Kagyu

Karma Kagyu school was founded by the first Karmapa Lama Dusum Khyenpa. The Guru-parampara of Karmapas:

1. Düsüm Khyenpa (1110-1193)
2. Karma Pakshi (1206-1283)
3. Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339)
4. Rolpé Dorje (1340-1383)
5. Deshyin Shekpa (1384-1415)
6. Thongwa Dönden (1416-1452/3)
7. Chödrak Gyatso (1454-1506)
8. Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554)
9. Wangchuk Dorje (1556-1603)
10. Chöying Dorje (1604-1674)
11. Yeshe Dorje (1676-1702)
12. Changchub Dorje (1703-1732)
13. Düddul Dorje (1733-1797)
14. Thekchok Dorje (1797-1867)
15. Khakhyap Dorje (1871-1922)
16. Rangjung Rigpé Dorje (1924-1981)

There are currently two incarnations who hold the title of Seventeenth Karmapa:

- Ogyen Trinley Dorje (b. 1985) and
- Trinley Thaye Dorje (b. 1983).

The Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism

The Gelug school is the latest school of Tibetan Buddhism. It has its origins in the Kadampa lineage founded by Atisa. Tsongkhapa was the founder of the Gelug school. The followers of Tsongkhapa came to be known as Gelugpas or New Kadampas. According to legends, Gendün Drup and Khedrup Gelek Pelzang were the main disciples of Tsongkhapa. Gendun Drup became the 1st Dalai Lama and Khedrup Gelek Pelzang became the 1st Panchen Lama.

There is need of further study of the Guru-Parampara of Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas to establish the true order and chronology.