The Monastic Education System in Tibetan Buddhism
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I Preface. II An Establishment of Sangha. III New and Old Schools. IV Gelugpa Tradition. V Conclusion.

Summary [Key words: Gelugpa, Lam Rim Instruction, Geshey Degree, Tsongkhapa, Dalai Lama, Ganden Tripa]

The Gelugpa tradition lays special emphasis on the place of monastic rules as the ideal foundation for religious education and practice. There were more than five thousand monks in each of the monastic colleges around Lhasa, Ganden, Drepung and Sera. The Gelugpa also regards sound scholarship as a prerequisite for constructive meditation. So, the teachings of both Sutra and Tantra are subject to analysis by means of dialectical debate. A monk who has completed a Geshey’s training is respected as being a fully qualified and authoritative master worthy of devotion. This tradition remains dynamic even coming into exile.

I. Preface

The aim of this article is intended to survey the educational system in Tibetan monastery, especially the Gelugpa’s monastic colleges. Tibetan monasteries ranged in size from small temples to cities monastic colleges, for example, the three big monasteries around Lhasa and Tashilumgpo in Shigatse.

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The Buddhist Sangha community provided a model of social organization. The Buddha developed monasticism as the institutional system of his spreading Dharma. It was profoundly original in its development and refinement in India alone for many centuries and swept throughout Asia transforming the landscapes, the cultures, and the politics of all its countries. The great monastic universities of India were the archetypal institutions which still existed in Tibet into this century. With the growing influence of the Mongolians in Tibet, the priest-patron relationship was allowed to develop further in the sociopolitical realm. It reached its high in the Fifth Dalai Lama era of Tibet, consolidated in 1642, and maintaining until the Chinese occupation in 1949–50. The growth of the monastic institution is fundamental to any discussion of Tibetan Buddhism.

In Tibet, many monasteries are comprised of several monastic colleges (Grva tshang). Each of these colleges contains a number of smaller institutional units or regional sections which are based on a monk’s native province. An involved hierarchical system evolved to maintain discipline, oversee education and to create an atmosphere conducive to spiritual development. Daily monastic life consisted of prayers, study etc. and it functions as centers of religion and culture. Scholarship was greatly prized. Many monks wrote commentaries on the philosophical treatises of Indian Buddhist masters, others composed formal poetry or studied medicine and astrology. The monasteries also fostered art, which was mainly religious and commissioned many works of art. Tibetans developed the monastic institution to such an extent that it changed the social fabric and came to dominate the
political and cultural life of Tibetan.

Hence an understanding of the monastic system is very important matter to explain Tibetan Buddhism. Before we are going to deal the subject, it is our pleasure to look the crucial events of the Buddhism’s dissemination in Tibet.

In the pre-Buddhist period Tibet’s indigenous religion and culture was "Bon". It came originally from Zhang Zhung, an ancient land located either in the region now known as Western Tibet or somewhere between Mount Kailash and Tagzig (ancient Persia). It is vaguely defined as collection of shamanistic and animistic practices by some scholars. When Buddhism entered Tibet, Bon faiths became infused with Buddhist elements, yet it still remains distinct attitude in the minds of men, primarily concerned with propitiation of the spirits and intended to bring mundane benefits. These practices are prevalent in all levels of Tibetan society.

Despite Bon’s adoption of Buddhist principles, the development of its monastic order proceeded slowly. The first Bon monastery was Yeru Ensakha founded in 1072. Following the Chinese invasion of 1950, they fled to India. Today there are about 450 Bonpos at Dolanji, where there is a monastery and a temple. The Dalai Lama made a statement at the 1988 Tulku Conference in Sarmath, in which he expressed the importance of preserving the Bon tradition. As sign of acknowledging the major role it has had in shaping Tibet’s unique religious culture.1)

II. An Establishment of Sangha

Buddhism became Tibet’s state religion only later. It was gradually assimilated, disseminated and finally integrated into the Tibetan way of life due initially to the efforts of the religious kings (Chos rgyal, Dharmaraja), such as Song Tsen Gampo, Trisong Deutsen, and Ralpachen.

During the reign of King Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde btsan, 740–798) Buddhism was spread with great zeal. He was invited the Abbot Shantrakshita (Zhi ba mtsho) and Acharya Padmasambhava (Padma ‘byung gnas) from India. Traditionally speaking, the king invited many scholars as many as 108 from India, Nepal, China, etc. They were engaged with Tibetan translators (Lo tsa ba) in the translating Buddhist texts into Tibetan working at the Dankhar Place (Pho brang Idan mkhar).

Shantrakshita was the first to expound in Tibet the essentials of Buddhist ethics, but there stirred up great resistance. It is said that the new codes of moral conduct preached by him were directly opposed to the Bon religion. So he advised the king to invite Padmasambhava, who was a Tantric master, better equipped to tackle the situation which obtained in Tibet at that time. Up to Trisong Detsen’s reign no Tibetan had taken mastic vows and with the help of these masters the king introduced the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. He was responsible for the foundation of the Samye (bSam yas) on the model of Otantpuri mahavihar in 779. Taranatha (1573–1615)\(^2\) accounts about the building of Odantapuri monastery with the gold from the corpse by the
upasaka who helped the yogi in his practice. The upasaka flew in the heaven over the Mt. Sumeru, saw these structures and built the temple on that model. The architectural design of this monastery was based on the three different traditional styles. The lower storey was built on Tibetan model, the middle storey was on Chinese pattern and the top storey built on Indian style. Shantarakshita then returned again to Tibet, and he has performed the ordination to the 7 selected ones. According to sSa bzhad, the Chronological Records of Samye Monastery written by Yeshe Wangpo, these monks were: Basalnang, Batiser Samsita, Pagor Vairocana, Nyanlam rgyalba, Chog whang Khonlu'i wanpo, Marinchen chog and Tsanladub. This event is marked to be the inauguration of monastic Buddhism in Tibet.

Toward the end of 8th century there occurred the religious controversy regarding doctrinal differences between the disciples of Shantarakshita and the Chinese teacher. In his Minor Buddhist Texts II, Tucci believes that the debate held at Jongchubling(Byung chub gling), which is one of the most important in Samye monastery. Kamalashila had been invited from India and successfully defeated Chinese teacher, who expounded the process of enlightenment ascents suddenly. Buton (Rin chen grub, 1290–1364)3) used the Chinese term, sTson min pa as the sudden path. On the contrary, the word rTsen min pa was translated as the gradual path. Some scholars have remarked the convent of this debate partially motivated by political considerations. After two years of debate Trisong Detsen proclaimed himself in favour of the Indian

Buddhist’s view. Henceforth the system of Nagarjuna thought was practised as the established form of Buddhism.

III. New and Old Schools

The period AD 841–978 represents a gap in the Buddhist doctrine, owing to king Lang Darma’s persecution. He did not support the Buddha’s teaching. Monasteries were emptied and the monks made to disrobe. Foreign monks were expelled from Tibet. Unfortunately, the golden period known as the era of the Tibet’s Religious Kings came to an end. Tragically, the life of Tri Ralpachen, whose reign produced marvelous feats of scholarship, was cut short. Tibetan Buddhist culture entered a dark period.

Once the teaching of the Vinaya, Monastic Rules, was destroyed in the Central Tibet for more then seventy years. However, the continuity of the Doctrine was somehow maintained outside Central Tibet by three fugitive hermits—Mar shakya Yeshi, Yogejung and Tsang Rabsel. They escaped to the Domey, north-eastern region of Tibet, where with the assistance of two Chinese monks they gave full ordination to Gongpa Rabsel. This event marked the revival of Tibetan monastic community.

The most vigorous revival of Buddhism, however, was taking place in western Tibet where Lha Lama Yeshe O, whose tremendous zeal for Buddhist renaissance eventually culminated in the coming of Atisha to Tibet. He built the monastery Tholing, after the conceptual and architectural model
of Samye. According to Nagwang Dragpa, the author of mNga 'ris rgyal rabs, Yeshe O died at Tholing in 1024. Atisha invited to this monastery more than fifty years later by his nephew Jangchup O (Byang chub 'od, 984–1078) and composed the famous text, A Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment, which set the pattern for all the graded path, Lam rim.

Among Atisha’s many disciples, Drom Tonpa (‘Brom ston pa rgyal ba’i ’byung gnas’1004–1064), who later consolidated Atisha’s teachings. In 1057 he founded Reting (Rve sgreng) monastery, which became the main centre of the Kadampa school. During this period, Tibet’s contact with the Indian Buddhist tradition was restored. The influence of different masters led to diversity of teaching lineages. Gradually three major New Orders (gSal ma), Sakya, Kagyu and Kadam arose. Nyingma (Old Order) was identified as the form of Buddhism introduced since Guru Padmasambhava’s arrival in Tibet.

This distinction of Old and New is made principally by a manner of the spreading of the Tantric doctrine. Indian Tantric tradition was totally transferred into Tibet by the end of the thirteenth century. However, Tibetan Tantric tradition evolved in an almost exclusively Buddhist religious environment which had not existed in India. The monastic rule was the preferred view for the safe practice of the Tantric method in Tibet.

4) some more information on this subject, An(2001) p. 10.
IV. Gelugpa Tradition

The Kadampa tradition founded by Atisha (982–1054) was the direct source of inspiration for the development of the Gelugpa tradition. This school stressed the importance of strictly observing monastic discipline and the need for a sound education as a basis for religious practice. Hence, the teachings of both Sutra and Tantra are subject to rigorous analysis through the medium of dialectical debate. The Gelugpa (dGe lugs pa) came into being in the early fifteen century as a result of the extraordinary insights of Tsongkhapa (1357–1419). He was born in the Tsongkha region of Amdo province, eastern Tibet. His novice name Lobsang Drakpa (bLo bzang grags pa) was given by Chojey Dhondup Rincen at the age of seven. He traveled extensively in search of knowledge and studied with masters of all the existing traditions. In addition to his studies and teachings he engaged in extensive meditation retreats. He also wrote a great deal. Tsongkhapa’s collected works, comprising 18 volumes, contain all aspects of Buddhist teachings. Major works among them are: the Great Exposition of the Stages of the path (Lamrim chenmo), the Great Exposition of Tantra (sNgag rim chen mo), the Essence of Eloquence on the Interpretive and Definitive Teaching (Drang nges legs bshad snying po) etc.

Of the major Gelugpa monasteries in Tibet, Ganden monastery founded by Tsonkhapa. Jamyang Chojey Tashi Pelden founded Drepung monastery in 1416. Jamchen Chojey Shakya Yeshi established Sera monastery in 1419. Similarly,
Gyalwa Gendun Drup founded Tashi Lhunpo monastery in 1447, which becomes the seat of the successive Panchen Lamas. Gyume and Gyuto Tanric Colleges founded.

1. Lam Rim Instruction

The subject matter of the Lam rim teachings can be includes in the various paths of the three scopes. The Small Scope covers the causes to achieve the high rebirth states of the gods and humans. These causes are the ethics of abandoning the ten non-virtues, etc. The Medium Scope includes the practices that will cause one to achieve the definite excellent of liberation, such practices as abandoning the first two of the four truths, working towards the last two of these truths, and following of three kinds of training. The Great Scope contains the practices that bring about the definite excellent of omniscience, such practice as development of bodhicitta, the six perfections, etc. In his the Lam rim chen mo, Tsongkhapa writes the four greatness of study in Lamrim. The formal reciting runs: All scriptures should be realized free of contradiction, and their teachings emerge as transformative precepts. Then, the Buddha’s intention is easily understood, and the pitfall of abandoning the Dharma is avoided.

There are many traditional lineages that come from Tsongkhapa concerning the Lam rim. Since he reunited all

5) Tsongkhapa(1991) p. 12. bsTan pa thams cad ‘gal med du rtogs pa’I che ba/ gsung rab thams cad gdams ngag tu ’char ba’I che ba/ rghan ba’I dgongs pa bde blag tu myed pa’I che ba/ nyes spyod chen po rang ’gags su ’gro ba’I che bao/
three Kadampa linesges—Zhungpaba (the Classics), Lamrimpaba (the Stages of the Path), and Mannagpa (the Guideline Instructions). Grolungpa, the disciple of Lodan sherab (1059–1109), wrote the bTan rim chen mo, as Chokhi nyima (1737–1802) records, which represents the gist of Atisha’s A Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment. From this work, Tsongkhapa conceived the plan of his future text, the Lam rim chen mo.

In 1406, Tsongkhapa started to write the Lam rim chen mo at Reting monastery of Kadampa. He organized an elaborate hierarchy of headings and establishing each point by reasoning. The work abounds in quotations from many Indian texts. He also accepts as authoritative the sayings of Tibetan teachers cited from works such as Kadampa Geshey Potoba’s dPe chos rtsa ba. His massive and complex work is more an exposition of the theoretical basis of the practice than an actual meditation. Therefore, many shorter and practical texts have been written.

Later, Tsongkhapa composed the Medium Stages of the Path to summarize the essence of the matter not discussed in the Great Lam rim. It is less encyclopedic. While in his Condensed Points is a summary in verse from his experiences in Lamrim training. This work is known as the Small Lam rim. The Third Dalai Lama (bSod nams rgya mtsho, 1543–1588) wrote the Essence of Refined Gold as a direct commentary to Tsongkhapa’s the Condensed Points. The Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) composed the Manjushri’s Own Words, as a commentary to this. Both these works discuss the material according to the Sutra system. Two Panchen Lamas also composed Lamrim commentaries according to the Tantra system. The First Panchen Lama (1565–1662) wrote the Easy
Path and the Second Panchen Lama (1663–1737) composed the Swift Path as its commentary. And the early nineteenth centuries, Ngagwang Dagpa wrote the Pith of Excellent Scripture. These are eight most famous instructions on the Lam rim. However, we prefer to mention that the text is named the rnam grol lag bcangs. It was compiled by Trijang Lobsang Yeshe (1901–1981) and is based primarily on a discourse given by Pabongkha Rinpoche (1878–1943) in 1921, at Sera monastery near Lhasa. While Pabongkha Rinpoche was giving this discourse he combined various traditions on the Lam rim, regardless of schools. He concerned to the practical aspects that need for trainees. For the next 24 days around 700 people listened to what has become one of the most famous teachings ever given in Tibet. Today, the most learned Gelugpa Lamas and Gesheys do put much emphasis on the Lamrim teachings as easy to follow the Buddha–dharma to everyone.

2. The System of Ganden Tripa

Ganden (dGa' ldan, Tushita) monastery was founded by Tsongkhapa himself in 1409. Eventually he passed away at this monastery and his remains were kept there. Ever since its foundation, this monastery has been the seat of the Ganden Tripa (Khri pa), the Holder of the Golden Throne of Ganden and head of the Gelug Tradition. It represents Tsongkhapa, the master of the Gelugpa teachings and is one of the highest

6) This work has been translated into English by Michael Richards, Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand. Boston: Wisdom Pub., 1991.
religious leaders. The Ganden Tripa carries on in a likeness to the model life of Tsongkhapa as exemplified by his bearing the responsibility of the doctrine through exposition and practice. The term of office is seven Years. To become a being Gandern Tripa requires a great qualification of both knowledge and spirituality through such long standing education. Unlike other systems such as the institution of Dalai Lamas or Panchen Lamas, the Ganden Tripa is not a Tulku\(^7\) lineage. The first Ganden Tripa was Gyeltsab Dharma Rinchen(1364–1432), to whom Tsongkhapa gave his robe and staff before he passed away. The second was Khedrub Geleg Pelsang(1385–1438). The present Throne Holder, is Tri Pinpoche Lurig Namgyal from the Dharma master of Shartsey.

Ganden monastery is comprised of two colleges, Shartsey (Shar rtse, east peak) and Jangtsey (Byang rtse, north peak). Both of these colleges study Sutra and Tantra in a combined programme. This contrasts with the two other main Gelugpa monasteries in Lhasa, Sera and Drepung, at which the studies of topics are kept separate.

In common with Sera Jey College, Jangtsey College curriculum for the five major topics follows the textbooks (Yig cha) of Jetsun Chokyi Gyeltsen (1469–1544). While Shartsey, like Drepung Loseling College, uses the textbooks of 15th Ganden Tripa, Penchen Sonam Dragpa (1478–1554). On the whole Jangtsey is primarily responsible for the Guhyasamaja rituals,

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7) The term tulku (sprul sku, Nirmanakaya) originally meant the Emanation Body of a Buddha. Later, it referred to all incarnations of high lamas. The tulku lineage began with the recognition of the Second Karmapa (1206–1283), as the reincarnation of Dusum Khyenpa (1110–1193). Since then this system has spread widely throughout Tibet.
while Shartsey maintains primarily the Vajrabhairava rituals.

During the early Summer Retreat (dByar gnas, Varshika) a discourse is traditionally given on Tsongkhapa’s the Great Exposition of the Stages of the path (Lamrim chenmo). The section concerning Persons of Small Scope is taught by the junior of the Jangtsey and Shartsey Chojey (Dharma master), the section for Persons of Intermediate Scope by the senior of the two, and the section concerning Persons of Great Scope is taught by the Ganden Tripa.8)

Only Geshey Karampas who have passed their Tantric debate examinations may become Geko (dGe bskos) or Disciplinarian of the Tantric colleges. The Lama Umzey (dBu mdzad), or Vice-Abbot, is chosen from among the former Gekos. He serves for 3 years and then becomes Abbot (mKhan po) for 3 years. Since the time of 8th incumbent, the position of Ganden Tripa has alternated between the Jangtsey Chojey (Chos rje, Dharma master) and the Shartsey Chojey. The Jangtsey Chojey is the most senior Retired Abbot of Gyumey Tantric College and his seat is at Jangtsey College. The Shartsey Chojey is the most senior Retired Abbot of Gyuto Tantric College. Successively by turn they obtain the Ganden Tripa for seven years.

3. A Typical Curriculum of Monastic College

The way of studying in the colleges of the three monastic centers, Ganden, Drepung, Sera, is for the most part the same.

8) Pedron Yeshi (1991) p. 82.
I shall follow the information regarding this topic from Lectures on Tibetan Religious Culture by Geshe Lhundup Sopa of Sera Je College. A monk’s curriculum is divided into five principal subjects organized into 16 classes (‘Dzin grva). These subjects were: Collected Topics (bsDus grva); the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita, Par phyin); the Middle Way, (Madhyamika, dBu ma); the Monastic Discipline, (Vinaya, ‘Dul ba); Metaphysics, (Abhidharma, mDzod).

In these classes the primary study are logic from the Pramana (Tsha ma), which consists of memorizing, listening to explanations, and debating definitions with classmates. There are three Collected Topics, elementary, intermediate, and highest. Colleges such as Gomang in Drepung, spent as long as eight years on Collected Topics alone, though this period could be abbreviated by special permission for monks coming from afar. The actual studying of the long texts on logic student must do afterwards gradually. In the case of Sera Je College⁹) there is no separate class in logic. However, the end of every year, there is a place where many students of the three monastic centers, in assembly together, study only the logical texts. The basis for study are the Compendium of Right Cognition (Pramanasamuccaya) written by Dignaga (Phyogs glang) and its auto-commentary, etc. and in particular one does chiefly the Seven Treatises by Dharmakirti (Chos grags). In addition to this, Tibetan scholars have composed many commentaries relevant to subjects as known Yigcha (monastic textbook) which are exclusive to each of the monastic centers. Dialectics are an integral part of Tibetan Buddhism. Through

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debating a student can examine a philosophical point from various angles, establishing its validity through reasoning. Student thereby gains a deeper understanding of the subjects, particularly of their subtler points, which are crucial to a full comprehension of Buddhist philosophy.

Then during the 5 classes on the Prajnaparamita, the root text taken for a basis is the Abhisamayalamkara (mngon par rtags pa'i rgyan) written by Maitreyanatha (Byams mgon), Student takes its commentaries, principally the 20 commentaries composed by Indian scholars and many works written by Tibetan scholars.

Then, in the classes on the Madhyamika, one studies chiefly the Six Logical Works written by Nagarjuna (kLu sgrub), in particular Candrakirti’s Madhyanakavatara and its auto commentary, and similarly the Yigcha written by Tibetan scholars.

At the time of studying the Vinaya, one takes principally the Vinaya texts, the Pratimoksasutra and the Caturagama, etc. In particular one studies the Agamamula of Gunaprabha (Yon tan 'Od) and its auto commentary as well as the Tibetan Yigcha.

Then during the two classes of the Abhidharma one studies chiefly the commentaries written by Indian scholars in general, and in particular the root text composed by Vasubandhu (dByig gnyen), the Abhidharmakosa, along with auto commentary.

Then, when student has reached the so called Karam (bKa' ram) class, he has to take a long examination. This examination is extremely important, for depending on the quality of this, he will get the rank of the four higher or lower degree of Geshey (Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy), according to the grade of the examination.
In 1419, after Tsongkhapa had taught his Four Combined Commentaries to the Guhyasamaja Tantra (gSang 'dus rtsa rgyud kyi 'grel pa bzhi sbrags) at Sera Choding retreat, he asked who among his disciples would take care of his Tantric teachings. Gyu Shrab Sengay (1383–1445) volunteered. So Tsongkhapa entrusted to him his own copy of the text he had just taught, the mask of Cholgyel and skull-club he had unearthed from on a hill behind Ganden monastery, as well as his skull-cup inner offering vessel, a Guhyasamaja statue and seven special tangka paintings.

Sherab Sengay, by following Tsongkhapa's wishes, spread the Tantra teachings. In 1433, he founded Gyumey (rGyud smed), the Tantric College of Lower Tibet. In 1474, Gyuchen Kunga Dondrub (1419–1486) established Gyuto (rGyud stod), the Tantric College of Upper Tibet. The main topic of at Gyumey, as in Gyuto, is of the Tantric systems of the Akshobhya form of Guhyasamaja (gSang 'dus), the Luipa tradition of Chakrasamvara (bDe mchog), and the 13 deity Vajrabhairava ('Jigs byed). The textbooks followed in Gyumey are by Sherab Sengay, while those in Gyuto are by Kunga Dondrub.

There are several ways of entering Tantric Colleges. If one has received either the Lharampa or Tsogrampa Geshey degree at Ganden, Drepung or Sera monastic colleges, having passed examinations before all three assembled monasteries at the Monlam Festival, one can enter Tantric Colleges as a Geshey Karampa. They engage in intense study and debate of the Tantric commentaries and take examinations on them to become Tantric Gesheys. One can also enter Tantric Colleges without qualified as a Geshey, but then he does not engage in
Tantric debate. He is examined on memorization of Tantric ritual texts and receives the degree Kyerimpa. After receiving this degree, they may join one of the large monasteries to study for a Geshey degree if they wish.

The 13th Dalai Lama made it compulsory for Geshey awarded ranks to enter one of the two Tantric Colleges, Gyuto or Gyumey, in order to raise the standard of education in the Tantric Colleges. The Geshey obliged to complete their education with a thorough study of the Tantras. He also reformed that to become Abbot of one of the three Gelug monasteries, or its colleges, or a Debating Assistants (mTsan zhabs), one must have received the Geshey Karampa Tantric degree.

4. The Geshey Degree

The Tibetan Buddhist tradition conferred a degree at the conclusion of the course of studies. On graduation, for example Sakyapa, one is granted the degree of Kazhipa, Kachupa and Rabjampa, on the bases of proficiency in dialectical debate. It was called Kazhi which means four subjects etc. Likewise Gelugpa monastic colleges is giving the Geshey(dGe bshes) degree. The subjects were examined together, so one exhibitory debate could prove a candidate’s proficiency in all the subjects. Several of these were held. In Tsongkhapa’s time this degree was a warded at Samphu, Kyormolung and Dewachen monasteries.

The Geshey degree was formally established at the time of the 5th Dalai Lama (bLo bzang rgya mtsho. 1617–1682) in the
17th century, but by the 20th, like other long standing institutions its conferment had began to be regarded as a merely customary event. This came to the attention of the 13th Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatso (1876–1933) during a visit to Mongolia, where he was greatly impressed by the performance of local scholars. He returned to Tibet determined to reform the GesheY system and raise the standard of scholarship. Until these reforms, Lharampa and Tsogrampa GesheY degrees were awarded entirely at the discretion of the abbots of the respective colleges. Sometimes elderly monks were awarded the degree merely on their seniority. In the year preceding the reforms, the 13th Dalai Lama remarked that several Lharampa GesheY candidates were not sufficiently qualified. And he informed that in future only worthy candidates should present themselves. The following year, the abbots were obliged to consult the Debating Assistants (mTsan zhabs) and the Norbulinka examinations were established. Several candidates were judged unsuitable, were disqualified.

In general, the curriculum of fifteen classes, was basically similar to that of other Gelugpa Monastic Colleges. The five major topics are studied meticulously by the dialectical method. Monk also utilizes methods of concentration and meditation especially used for the advanced study and practice of religion. Memorization is considered an essential tool as well. A student may have memorized over three thousand pages by the time he completes his studies. After completing all these studies, monks would be awarded degrees respective to their own traditions.

Monks who had completed their studies, but were waiting to take their GesheY examination spent the time perfecting their debating skills and studying the last two subjects. Tulkus who
recognised as reincarnate lamas, were allowed to take their examination as soon as they had completed the curriculum and returned to each in their own monasteries in other parts of Tibet.

Each year the monk raised one class and an annual examination was held for those who had completed their subjects, in which their performance was evaluated by the abbot of the particular college. The topics for their dialectical examination were drawn from the whole course of study, but students were unable to do any specific preparation because the topic to be debated was selected by the abbot on the spot. Thus, it was a real test of a student’s abilities and the depth of his study. At the conclusion the abbot assigned each candidate to a category of Geshey according to his ability. There were four such categories\(^{10}\)–the Lingsebpa, the Rigrampa, the Tshogrampa, and the Lharampa. The best students obtain the degree of Lharampa.

Both the Rigrampa and the Lingsebpa arrange their disputations in their own individual monasteries, and they are given their Geshey status from there. Therefore, these kinds have the so-called lower Geshey level. In the second Tibetan month at the Tshogcho festival, three monastic colleges of monks stay in Lhasa, the Tsogrampa arrange their Geshey disputations. Tsogcho (Tshogs mchod) festival was originally established by Sanggye gya tso, the minister of the Fifth Dalai Lama in commemoration of the death of him. Similarly, during the Great Prayer Festival, all the monastic congregations of Sera, Drepung and Danden in assembly together in Lhasa, the

\(^{10}\) Sopa(1983) p. 42.
Lharampa arrange their Geshey disputations. The Great Prayer is a festival the Buddha’s competition in the magical power with the six non-Buddhist teachers. In 1409, Tsongkhapa instituted the Great Prayer Festival at the Lhasa Jokhang Temple.

In the fifth month the Lharampa and Tshogrampa candidates received a notice from the Dalai Lama’s Debating Assistants to present themselves for examinations at the Norbulingka. These debates began at day break and continued until sunset.

Ballots were drawn to determine the order in which the candidates would be challenged. The first candidate was then challenged by the second, he by the third and so on in succession. The same procedure was followed for each of the five subjects, the whole examination lasting six to seven days. The order of the debaters was regularly rearranged to ensure that each monk did not always face the same challenger.

At the conclusion, the Debating Assistants discussed candidate’s performances amongst themselves and assigned them ranks from one to seven, which were kept secret. On the third day of the New Year, the Geshey who had been assigned to the first two ranks were generally required to debate before the Dalai Lama, leaving little doubt as to who would receive the highest honour at the formal conferment of the degree during the Great Prayer Festival. The actual day during the Great Prayer Festival on which the Geshey was to give his exhibitory debate was decided during the preceding 12th month. The candidates went to Drepung where one of the two abbots collected their strings of beads, shuffled them owners rose to collect them he was requested to take a slip of paper from a ballot box, on which was written the date of his exhibitory
debate. This was done by the Debating Assistants who received the lists from Drepung.

In the 11th month, at great personal expense, the candidate offered a meal to the rest of his college to mark what was to be the most momentous event of his academic career. This is known as Geshey Tonggo(gtong sgo). He held the offering ceremony which traditionally precedes the Geshey examination, during which the prospective Geshey is expected to offer a meal of heavily buttered rice piled high with dried fruit to the whole college. Immediately prior to the meal, led by the head of his hostel, he circled the assembly of monks, holding a stick of incense and a banner inscribed with verses. Originally these verses were composed by the monk himself to demonstrate his erudition, but later became a mere formality for which any auspicious verse was acceptable.

The Geshes were awarded their degrees on the 24th of the first month, at the end of the Great Prayer Festival. If the Dalai Lama was in Lhasa, he presided over the event which took place in the upper storey of the Jokhang. If the Dalai Lama was not in Lhasa for the Great Prayer Festival, the conferment of the Geshey degree took place in the Potala.

V. Conclusion

In March, 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama fled to India due to the forces of the Chinese Communist. He established his headquarters in Dharamsala, in the hills of north India. Among the refugees were 7,000 monks and nuns. Tibetan people
depending upon their religion for guidance have survived many difficulties with little. They place great trust in their lamas. Hence, the strength of religious institutions is vital to the survival of the Tibetans. The members of Sangha who had escaped Tibet provided hope, but the problem was how to reestablish these monasteries in exile.

At the request of the Dalai Lama, the Indian government granted permission for 1500 monks and nuns to build a monastic camp at Buxa, in Assam. This camp, built on the site of a former British prison, was founded in 1959. This place was situated in a jungle where the hot, humid climate placed great demands on the Tibetan’s health. By 1970, a re-location had been arranged with the help of Indian government in Karnataka. Monks had to learn to grow food and sought the advice of Tibetan farmers and various Indian agricultural advisors. By 1974, sufficient buildings had been constructed to support a monastic routine, which was resumed. Through great effort Tibetan’s religious traditions are successively preserved.

In addition to the monasteries, which also serve as colleges for higher Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, the Tibetan administration in exile has also established a number of institutions for the study of Tibetan religion, art and culture. They include the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath; the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharansala; the Tibet House, New Delhi etc.

The Gelugpa tradition lays special emphasis on the place of monastic rules as the ideal foundation for religious education and practice. There were more than five thousand monks in each of the monastic colleges around Lhasa, Ganden, Drepung and Sera. The Gelugpa also regards sound scholarship as a
prerequisite for constructive meditation. So, the teachings of both Sutra and Tantra are subject to analysis by means of dialectical debate. A monk who has completed a Geshey’s training is respected as being a fully qualified and authoritative master worthy of devotion. This tradition remains dynamic even coming into exile. The major Gelugpa monasteries have been reestablished in various Tibetan settlements in Karnataka, and Gyuto has been reestablished in Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh, all in India.

Reference

국문 초록

티베트 불교의 사원 교육 제도

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티베트에서는 사원을 따로 둔고 학문의 발전을 기할 수 없었다. 사원은 대학교와 같은 기능을 하며 학문을 존중하는 전통이 있다. 따라서 승려들이 대부분은 인도 학승들의 철학적 논문에 주석을 가하거나, 시를 짓거나, 의학, 점성술 등을 공부하거나 나름대로 어느 한 가지 학문에 종사한다. 또한 티베트의 사원은 회화와 금속 공예, 건축에 두루 걸친 불교 예술의 독창적인 전통을 키워 나갔다.

사원 공동체는 부처님의 가르침을 따르려는 사람들을 보호하고 가르치는 역할을 하였다. 티베트에서 이러한 사원은 티송데첸(Khri srong sde btsan, 740~798)왕이 인도의 스승 파드마삼바바(Guru Rinpoche)의 도움으로 삼예(bSam yas) 대사원 건립과 함께 했다. 사원이 완공된 후(755) 날란다 대학의 대학승 산타락쉬타(Zhi ba 'tso)를 초빙하였다. 그는 일곱 명의 티베트인들(sad mi mi bdun)에게 최초로 승려계(僧侶契)를 주는 의식을 베풀었을 뿐만 아니라, 불교계율의 요체를 설법했다. 따라서 산타락쉬타는 티베트의 승가 공동체를 실질적으로 성립시킨 불교 흥법의 큰 은인으로 후대 사가들은 기록하고 있다.

8세기 말경, 티베트에서는 수행의 방법론을 놓고 중국불교의 가르침을 따르는 톤민파(sTon min pa: 頓悟派)와 인도의 방식을 지지하는 천민파(rTsen min pa: 漸進派) 사이에 갈등이 발생하였다. 이 문제를 해결하기 위해 티송테첸 왕은 산타락쉬타가 남긴 사리의 유고를 참조하여 그의 제자 카마라실라(700~750) 논사를 초빙한 후 중국인 마하연 대사와 논쟁을 하게 된다. 이 유명한 사리 토론의 결과로 인도불교가 전통 불법의 수행으로 티베트에서 공식적으로 정착
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It was during the Da Marpa's time that a system of teaching and learning was established in the monastic community of Tibet. This system, known as Krama-bhavana, was developed by Da Marpa to provide a structured approach to the cultivation of insight through meditation. Da Marpa's treatise on the practice of meditation, embedded in the system of teachings, was entitled _Krama-bhavana_.

It is important to note that the concept of meditation was not new to the Tibetan religious community, as it had been practiced for centuries. However, Da Marpa's contribution was significant in systematizing the practice, making it accessible and understandable to a wider audience. His work formed the basis for the development of the Gelugpa (bge-lugs-pa) tradition, which is one of the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Da Marpa's work was further developed by his successor, Tsongkhapa (Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa), who was able to integrate the teachings of the different schools into a coherent system. He is known for his synthesis of various Buddhist traditions into a single, unified teaching, which he presented in his _Lamrim Chenmo_ (Bodhipathapradipa, Lam-sgron), a comprehensive guide to the stages of meditation. This work is considered a cornerstone of Tibetan Buddhist practice and has been widely studied and commented upon by scholars and practitioners alike.

The Gelugpa tradition, which was established by Tsongkhapa, is known for its strict adherence to the monastic regulations and its emphasis on the importance of training in the oral tradition. This has led to the development of a rigorous system of education, where students are trained in various disciplines, including logic, grammar, and debating skills. These skills are seen as essential for a well-rounded education, which is necessary for the development of spiritual insight.

The Gelugpa tradition has been influential in the development of educational institutions in Tibet, which have been modeled on the Indian monastic systems. The success of these institutions is evident in the number of students who have graduated from them, and the contributions they have made to the development of Tibetan Buddhist thought.

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다. 이러한 지적 훈련은 여러 가지 관점에서의 미묘한 철학적 문제들을 검토하며, 추론을 거쳐 그 타당성을 확인한다. 암기 또한 주요한 훈련 도구로 인식된다. 이 다섯 과정을 모두 마친 학생은 대략 삼천여 장의 경론을 암기 할 수 있다. 과목을 완전히 종결한 후에는 각기 전통에 따라 그에 상당한 학위가 수여된다.

일반적으로 계세 학위는 네 등급으로 나뉘진다. 림설파와 림람파는 낮은 단계의 계세 학위로 개별적인 사원대학에서 수여된다. 촉람파와 림람파는 상위 단계에 속하며 전자는 촉초(Tshog mchog) 행사 중에 촉람파 계세 시험이 치러지며, 최고의 점수를 받은 학생에게는 계세 림람파(Lha ram pa) 학위가 주워진다.

계세 학위는 제5대 달라이 라마(bLo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617~1682)에 의해서 형식적인 제도로서 처음 시작되었다. 하지만 현재의 형태로 개정된 것은 제13대 달라이 라마(1876~1933)가 몽고를 방문한 후 그곳 학생들의 능숙한 논쟁 모습을 보고 큰 감명을 받은데 기인한다. 또한 그는 규모 혹은 규제 탄트릭 대학의 입학을 필수적으로 상위 등급의 계세들로 하여금 이수하도록 개혁하였다. 이러한 현교와 밀교의 교육과정을 다 완수한 승려는 겔룩파의 삼대 사원 중의 한곳에서 방장(mKhan pa)이 될 수 있거나 혹은 최고의 영예인 간덴 티파가 될 수 있는 자격을 구비하게 된다.

계세 시험을 치르기 전에 계세 통고(gTong sgo)라고 하는 관례가 있는데, 지원자는 소속 사원의 전교생들에게 음식 공양을 배포하게 되어 있다. 실제적인 계세 림람과 시험은 삼대 겔룩파 사원 대학의 간첸, 데풍, 세라의 모든 학생들이 모인 가운데 대기도(dMon lam chen mo) 축제기간 중에 공개적으로 진행된다. 대기도제가 끝날 총의 시험의 결과에 따라서 림람과 계세는 달라이 라마로부터 직접 학위를 수여받는다. 이렇게 오랜 세월 동안 교학적 혹은 영적 훈련을 통해서 공부를 다 마친 승려는 스승으로서 대단히 존경을 받는다.

겔룩파의 대표적인 사원들은 망명국인 인도의 여러 곳에서 재확립 되었으며, 이러한 사원 교육 전통도 그대로 유지되고 있다.

주요어 : 겔룩파, 림림 교육, 계세 학위, 촉람파, 달라이 라마, 간탱 티파.