

Introduction

I am writing this short article from Tibetan sources as a remembrance of the great efforts and sacrifices that the people and Kings of Tibet made to bring over Pandita Atish Dipamkara Sri-Jnana so that he might reform and re-invigorate the old religion of Tibet which had become lax and corrupt at that time, by infusing the strength and wisdom of the vigorous then flourishing schools of Indian Buddhistic philosophy. I hope to write a separate paper on the work of the great pandita at a future date.

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HOW THE TIBETAN BODHISATTAVA KINGS INVITED ATISHA DIPANKARA SRI—JNANA TO TIBET

Buddhism was first introduced in Tibet in the year 331 A.D. during the reign of the 28th King of Tibet, King Lha-tho-ri-snyan-btsan. Later in the seventh century at the time when Srong-btsan-sgam-po, a re-incarnation of Avalokitesvara and the 33rd King of Tibet was reigning, the art of writing and Buddhist Sanskrit literature was brought to Tibet.

The religion spread rapidly and it is recorded that by the 8th century during the reign of Khri-srong-lde-btsan, the 38th King of Tibet and founder of the BSam-yas monastery, it was flourishing throughout the whole of Tibet.

The 44th King of Tibet, King mNga'-bdag-dpal-hkher-btsan had a son named sKyi-lde-nyi-ma-mgon, who on his way to the western most province of mNga-ris-tod was escorted till gTsang-bye-ma-gyung-drung by the two minister zhang-pa-tshab-rinchen-lde and Chog-ro-legs-sgra-lha-legs. When the ministers were seeking their leave the Prince told them that if he were made king of the northern province of Tibet, each of them were to send a daughter to be made his queens. The people of the northern province of Tibet, mNga-ris-stod, on hearing of the Princess arrival, requested him to be their King and on accepting their request he became King of the northern province of Tibet. The two ministers kept their promise and sent their daughters, Pa-tshab-bza and Chog-ro-bza to be his queens.

Queen Pa-tshab-bza had no issue, but Queen Chog-ro-bza had three sons, bKra-shis-mgon, dPal-gyi-mgon and lDe-gtsug-mgon. The

three were known as the Lords of the upper country, sTod-gyi-mgon-gsum.

The district of Pu-rang was given to Prince bKea-shis-mgon and the district of zhang-zhung and mang-yul to Prince dPal-gyi-mgon and Prince lDe-g'sug-mgon respectively. The three provinces were known as mNga' res-skar-gsum.

bKra-shis-mgon had two sons, mNga-bd'g-kho-re and Srong-nge. mNga-bd'g-kho-re, in turn had two sons, Deva-raj and Nagaraj. Srong-nges' son, Lha-lde had three sons, Hod-lde, Pho-brang-zhi-ba-hod and Lha-btan-byang-chub-hod.

When mNga-bd'g-kho-re (11th century) became King he was aware of the great works done by his ancestors in the preaching and spreading of Buddhism. He gave up his worldly life along with his two sons, and was thereafter known as Lha-lama-ye-shes-hod. Lord Buddha prophesied as mentioned in the manuscript, Tsa-rgyud, that there would come a ruler in Tibet by the name of Lha-la-ma-ye-shes-hod.

Lha-la-ma-ye-shes-hod became very religious (Dharma-Raja) and learnt the Sutra and Tantra. During his time there was a great controversy going on between those practising the Tantra and those practising the Sutra, each stating that the other form of practise was incorrect.

Ye-shis-hod, in order to correct this misunderstanding selected seven most intelligent boys of the age-group of ten, and taught them how to read and write. They were ordained as monks and each escorted by two attendants, were sent to Kashmir in search of religion and to study the doctrine of Vinaya (hDul-ba) and Guyasamach (gS'ng-ba-hdus-pa). They were told to invite Pandita Dharmapala from east India and Bramze-rin-chen-rdo-rje of Kashmir no matter what it cost them in gold to bring the Panditas to Tibet. They were also to invite to Tibet other Panditas whom they felt would be of benefit to the Tibetan people. The seven monks along with their attendants, totalling twentyone, started on their mission to India. The journey being long and difficult, nineteen of the members died on the way leaving only Lo-chen-rin-chen-bzang-po and Lo-chung-legs-pahi-shis-rab. In the course of time these two became very learned having taken instructions on Buddhism from many Indian Panditas. As the time came for their return to Tibet they were in search of the Panditas to invite to Tibet. They hired beggars to get informations for them regarding Panditas who would teach Buddhism to the Tibetan people and lead them in the right direction.



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DIPANKARA SRI-JNANA

They went to Vikramasila monastery and made enquiries about Panditas from whose teachings the Tibetan people would benefit. The name of Atisha Dipankara Shri-jnana was mentioned as being the most renowned Buddhist Pandita and the most suited to be invited to Tibet, but who they said would decline the invitation to Tibet. Lo-chen-rin-chen-bzang-po and Lo-chung-legs-pahi-shis-rab knowing the name of the Pandita who could be invited to Tibet, but whom they then could not invite, returned to Tibet. On their return they reported to King Yet shis-hod about their failure to find any Pandita from whose teaching the Tibetan people would be benefitted, except Atisha Dimpankara, who meanwhile had been invited from Bodhgaya to Vikramasila monastery by King Mahapala.

King Ye-shis-hod having been impressed by the information given about Atisha, sent Lotsava-rGya-stson-drus-seng-ge along with a hundred attendents to India, giving him a lump of gold weighing sixteen sRangs (53 tolas roughly) and several other pieces of gold, to invite Atisha to Tibet. Lotsava-rgya-btson-senge (Viryasimha) proceeded to India and on arriving at the Vikramasila monastery had an audience with Atisha. He presented the lump of gold to Atisha from King Ye-shis-hod and conveyed Ye-shis-hods message requesting Atisha to come to Tibet.

Atisha refused to accept the invitation inspite of the tears of Lotsava-rGya-stson-seng and returned the lump of gold. Many of the attendents who accompanied Lotsava died in the meantime due to heat, and much of the gold pieces were utilized. Lotsava returned to Tibet and returned the lump of gold to King Ye-shis-hod. He related to him his unsuccessful mission to India. Ye-shis-hod was very grateful to Lotsava for having undertaken the hazardous journey to India and risking his life. He said he would try to invite Atisha again, failing which, some other renowned Panditas would be invited.

During that time Nag-tsho Lotsava Tshul-khrim-rgyal-va (Jayasila) requested Lotsava-rGya-bton seng to teach him Avidharma. The request was declined as Lotsava rGya btson seng was proceeding to India to obtain religious instructions from Atisha. Nag-mtsho pleaded to be allowed to accompany Lotsava-rGya-btson-seng to India and so he along with four or five other attendents went to India with Lotsava-rgya-btson seng. At this time King Ye shishod made a visit to the Nepalese border to collect gold for inviting Atisha. The King of Garlog being aware of the purpose of Ye shis hod's visit, and knowing that King Ye shis hod's ancestors were responsible for the introduction and spreading of Buddhism in Tibet, had Ye-shis-hod captured and imprisoned.

King Yeshehod's nephew, learning of his uncle's arrest and imprisonment, went to his rescue with a hundred horsemen.

The King of Gar-log said, "I will offer you an alternative choice. You must either refrain from inviting Pandita and surrender to me as my subject or you must bring gold equal in weight to your uncle's body as ransom for his release". Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod chose to pay gold to the king of Gar-log. He offered the king of Gar-log a hundred srang gold and asked for the release of his uncle but the king refused and insisted on having gold equal in weight to his uncle's body. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod thereon offered more gold but still the king of Gar-log was unsatisfied and asked for additional gold equal in size to the captive's head.

Thus failing to appease the king of Gar-log, Lha-byang-chub-hod visited the jail where his uncle was, and looking through the chink in the door said, "Oh my gracious Uncle, this is an unfortunate event that has befallen you due to your former karma. If I was to fight and defeat this evil king then there would be much bloodshed and the result that we would both be reborn in undesirable states. On the other hand it is better for you to give up your life rather than to become a subject of this heretical king of Gar-log. I have chosen to buy your release with gold and have already offered a quantity equal to your body's weight. However, the king wants more gold equal in size to your head, which I shall now go and collect and offer to him for your release. Until then I request you to think that this is the fruit of your former karma and pray to the three jewels (dkon-mchog-gsum) to strengthen your moral courage".

His uncle king Yeshehod laughed and said, "I thought you were a spoilt child with the disposition of a glutton and unfit to do difficult tasks with diligence, but now I see that even if I die you are capable of continuing the excellent customs established by our ancestors. Moreover, what you have said is very impressive and has a great meaning and I am satisfied with it. Formerly I thought that I should not die before I established perfect religious customs in this country, but now I am an old man and even if I do not die this time, I will have only fifteen years to live. In none of my former lives have I died for the sake of the Dharma and now it is very good to die for it. It is very amazing that you have found gold as much as my body's weight but now it will not be possible to find additional gold equal to the size of my head. Do not give any gold to this heretical king, rather take the gold to India and try to persuade Pandita Atisha to come to Tibet. Please convey this message to the Pandita, that, "I have sacrificed my life to this heretical king of Gar-log for the sake of you and the Dharma so please look upon me and bless me wherever I shall be in the future and grant

me the boon of meeting you during my immediate re-birth. It is my principle intention that you should come to Tibet and make Buddhism flourish here and I request you to graciously fulfill my wishes". He told his nephew to convey this message to Atisha and forget about him but to think of the doctrine of Buddhism. The nephew looking through the crack in the door saw that his uncle king Yeshis-hod was bound by a rope. His voice had become feeble and his body was shrunken and unrecognizable. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod much grieved by this sight, said 'Ho-lag-so' (yes) and departed. At that time Nag-mtso Lotsava Tshul-khrim-rgyal-ba was residing at Gung-thang gser-gyi-lha-khang and learning about this Lha-stsun-byang-chub-hod called on him. He requested Nag-mtso Lotsava to sit on a high pedestal and he offered him praise for his learning, goodness and nobility. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod then said "My ancestors were kings and ministers who were re-incarnations of Bodhisattvas. They introduced Buddhism into Tibet and under them it flourished. However, nowadays Buddhism in Tibet has greatly deteriorated and men with evil minds are on the increase. Most of the learned and venerable people have passed away and this situation brings great distress to us. To remedy matters my Uncle and I selected many men whom we sent to India with presents, and at least hundred Sraṅgs of gold, to invite Atisha to Tibet. Unfortunately most of them died during the journey due to snake-bite and heat and all the gold was lost. Hence could you please carry my Uncle King Yeshis-hod's message to Atisha and tell him that my uncle has given his life to the heretical king of Gar-log for Buddhism and for Atisha. Please also tell him that we have lost many men and much property and if we common men have so much moral courage, then what about him Atisha, most gracious one of boundless mercy and protector of living beings." Then Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod gave him seven hundred Sraṅgs of gold (equivalent to 239 tolas) and said "Please take this gold to Atisha. Tell him how difficult it is to find gold even of the size of a flea without great effort in a poor country like Tibet, that this is the last of our men and gold and so if he does not come this time even, then he is without mercy and we will have to go our way without the guidance of Buddhism". He repeatedly requested Nag-mtseo-Lotsava to convey this message to Atisha even if he did not want to come. While speaking he was shedding tears. On hearing all that was said to him, Nag-mtso Lotsava wept till his own face was covered with tears and his body shivered and he could not bring himself to face Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod as he knew what he said was the truth. Hence forgetting about the difficulties and dangers to his life he agreed to undertake the hazardous journey and said "Ho-lag-so". (Yes). The Nag-mtso Lotsava took seven hundred gold Sraṅgs and started his journey to India with six attendants. Lha-btsun-byang-chod went a long distance to see them off and said "Most venerable one, you have done me a great service by accepting this mission

and I shall return this favour when you come back to Tibet. Please pray to Avaloketeshvara continuously for your safe return.”..On the way to Nepal, Nag-mtso Lotsava met a man who said, “It appears to me that you are undertaking a long hazardous journey of great importance. Recite, therefore, the following mantras and you shall have a safe journey and success in attaining your objective. The mantras is as follows, ‘I bow before the Buddha, Dharma and Sanga and bless the sources of all the Buddhas, the doctrine of Buddhism will spread in the snow faced land of Tibet’. The Nag-mtso Lotsava asked him who he was and he replied ‘You shall know later on’. Journeying onwards Nag-mtso Lotsava reached a place bordering Nepal. There he asked an Acarya for shelter and was accommodated along with his attendants in a bamboo house. The Acarya knew that Nag-mtso-Lotsava had gold. He was planning to set fire to the bamboo house at night. While they were asleep, a white robed man entered the bamboo house, and said, “Please do not sleep here, go away immediately otherwise your life will be in danger, I am a patron deity of all the Tibetans”. The Nag-mtso Lotsava and his attendants offered prayers to Avaloketishvara and immediately fled from there. At day break they met a petty king from Nepal who was on his way to Vikramashila monastery and Nag-mtso Lotsava accompanied him. When they reached the river Ganges, the King, using his influence, boarded a boat first with his attendants and departed leaving the others behind. By then night was approaching and Nag-mtso Lotsava got worried as he was carrying much gold. He concealed the gold in the sand and slept somewhere else after praying to the Three Jewels (dkon-mchong-sum). After some time a white robed boatman came and said, “I have come to fetch you all.” So taking the gold they boarded the boat and crossed the Ganges. When they reached the other side of the river Nag-mtso Lotsava asked the boatman “who are you ? I think you are not an ordinary person”. The boatman replied, “You will know me afterwards. To-night you can sleep under the portico of Vikramashila monastery and you will not be robbed”. Hearing this they departed and at midnight reached the gate of Vikramashila. Lotsava rgya-btson-seng knowing that they had arrived, looked out from a window above the gate and asked them where they had come from. On being told that they from mNgaris-stod, he told them to entrust all valuables with the gate keeper boy and to go to sleep and that in the morning the gate would be opened. The Nag-mtso Lotsava entrusted all the gold to the boy. Whereon the boy said, “The best friend is one who can be trusted. Please do not worry and sleep well”. Early next morning the gate was opened and a Tibetan boy wearing clothes made from herdman’s blanket came and said, “We Tibetans are very talkative and cannot keep secrets but you know that if one wishes to achieve a very important task, one must be extremely cautious and secretive. Now, Lotsava rgya-btson-seng is at the Tibet Hostel, so please inquire where that is, and go there”.

Saying this the boy left. Nag-mtso Lotsava went in search of the Tibet Hostel. While passing a narrow road he met an old saintly Rishi having long orange hair and beard and carrying a walking stick of drift-wood. The Rishi asked him where he had come from and the purpose of his visit. Nag-mtso Lotsava said, "We have come from mNga-ris-tod to invite Atisha to Tibet. Could you please tell me where the Tibet Hostel is?" Thereon the Rishi said "This morning what the boy told you was the truth. There is no hope of achieving your objective because you Tibetans tell the truth even to strangers in the street. This time no harm has been done as you have spoken to me. However, in future do not tell anyone of your mission except to Atisha himself". Then showing the Tibet Hostel he departed. Nag-mtso Lotsava was surprised and perplexed by the Rishi's appearance. When he reached Lotsava rgya-btson-sengs residence, he presented him some gold and told him the purpose of his visit to India. Then Lotsava rgye-btson-seng advised him not to disclose to anyone the purpose of his visit, but to say that he had come to further his studies. This advice was given because Atisha had a powerful patron called Sthavira Ratnakara who would not allow Atisha to leave India. He further advised Nag-mtso Lotsava to call on Sthavira Ratnakara with a presentation of half a Sring of gold and tell him, that they had come from Tibet and requested permission to get a perfect education in Buddhism from Atisha as they had not succeeded in inviting him to Tibet. Then they should relax, study, and be patient and later on when Atisha came there, they could make their request to him.

Nag-mtso-lotsava did as he was advised and accompanied by Lotsava rgya-btson-seng visited Sathavira Ratnakara, paid him his respects and presented him half of a Sring of gold. He spoke as he had been told to, and Sathavira Ratnakara replied, "It is very good that you have come to study. We are not short of men but if there is no Atisha then the other Panditas cannot convert beings into perfection. India the source of Buddhism will deteriorate if Atisha leaves the country, otherwise we have great affection towards the Tibetan people. We know how much wealth and men have been lost by the Tibetan Dharma Raj and we are greatly ashamed of this. It is wonderful that you Tibetan have such great respect for Indians". he further added many sweet words.

One day Atisha was distributing food offerings among the beggars. Nag-mtso Lotsava was present and asked a beggar "Is this Atisha?" One of the beggars replied, "What are you talking about? We shall not allow you to take Atisha to Tibet. We are not going to sacrifice our food share as we are poor and unprotected. This is not Atisha. He is a great person and lives elsewhere." The next day Atisha was again distributing bread offerings among beggars. One beggar boy

not getting a share, ran after Atisha calling him 'Atisha, bhālo bhālo ho'! Nag-mtso Lotsava saw Atisha and thought, this Pandita must be Atisha and ran after him. Lotava Shedding tears and disappointment, he seized Atisha robe. Then Atisha said, "Do not cry. What you speak is indeed the truth. I am most ashamed at not being of help to the king and people of Tibet. But now as you see I am becoming old and moreover. I am holding many keys for the Monastery. However, I am still thinking of you so please pray to the Three Jewels." When Atisha spoke these words, Nag-mtsho Lotava was filled with hope and could not speak for sometime. Atisha then said, "Let us go the Buddha Gaya" and they went. On reaching Buddha Gaya, there suddenly appeared before them a boy wearing white clothes and holding a crystal rosary and arrow in his hands. He bowed before Atisha and said "Oh, Lord, please go to Tibet for these Tibetan venerables are indeed much to be pitied". Saying this the boy departed. Nag-mtso Lotsava asked Atisha, "who was that beautiful boy who spoke Tibetan". Atisha replied, "You Tibetans are very hard to satisfy. Tomorrow there will be a Yogini at the North of Buddha Gaya, ask her". The next day Nag-mtso Lotosava went to the Northern part of Buddha Gaya and after some time a Yogini holding a drum in her hand came dancing along. Lotsava went to her and asked her about the boy. She replied that it was very surprising that he a Tibetan, should ask her an Indian, such a question and went away.

One day Atisha went to Nalanda Monastery and Nag-mtso Lotsava followed him. He saw Atisha sitting in front of the Maha Bodhi statue. On his right was the same boy who appeared previously and on his left a greenish blue coloured girl. Both were resting their elbows on Atisha's knees and glancing at each other. Then the boy said, "This is the time for Atisha to go to Tibet," and went away. Nag-mtso Lotsava knew that some deities had appeared in the form of the boy and the girl and was delighted to have seen them but was sorry that they had now left. He told Atisha, "The last time I asked the Yogini about the boy who spoke Tibetan, but my doubts remained uncleared. Today too I am still ignorant of his identity. Since I started on my journey to India, there have been many emanations of protectors who have appeared to me and given me guidance and protection but I do not know who they are. I request you to tell me all about them and to make preparations for your journey to Tibet". Atisha told him that there was a girl weaving cotton yarn at the Southern gate of Vikramashila Palace whom he should go and ask. Nag-mtso Lotsava went to the Southern gate of the Palace and asked the girl all about what had happened in the past. The girl asked him "Who is the celebrated dGe-bsnyen upasika in Tibet?" He replied, "There is a celebrated Upasika called dge-bsyen-chos-hphel from Central Tibet (dBus) residing in East Tibet (Kham)". The girl asked him, "Which race does he belong to?"

and Nag-mtso Lotsava replied, "He is called hBrom-ston-pa". The girl thereon told him that this was the person whom he was asking her about and told him not to pretend he did not know as he knew the persons name, place and race. Then Nag-mtso Lotsava knew that all those who had helped him were emanations of hBrom-ston-pa. The man who got him out of the bamboo house in Nepal, the boatman, the gate keeper boy, Lotsava rGya btson-seng, on the night of his arrival at Vikramashila Monastery, the boy who was wearing clothes made of herdman's blanket, the Old Rishi in the narrow street of Vikramashila, the beggar boy, the boy who was holding the crystal arrow and also the boy and girl with Atisha in Buddha Gaya were all emanations of hBrom-ston-pa, who himself was a real re-incarnation of Avalokitesvara (the patron deity of Tibet). Nag-mtso Lotsava prayed to him deeply and was relaxed.

After some time he went to see Atisha and told him, "Today we are earnestly requesting you to have pity on us and come to Tibet". Atisha replied, "You Lotsavas are very truthful. Moreover yesterday, Lotsava rGya-btson-seng too, came to see me and made an insistant request telling me about all that the Tibetans had undergone. After hearing him there came to my mind a picture of those Tibetan Dharma Raj Boddhisattavas and I felt deeply sorry for them. That sinful heretical king of Gar-log will have no place other than hell to go to. Those noble Bodhisattavas who have faced great hardships must by now be in Tuktita Paradise (dGe-ldan). What Dharma Raj Lha-btsun-Byang-chub-hod has said is very true". With tears in his eyes he further added, "Now I shall think of those Dharma Rajas and Lotsavas and not permit all their sacrifices to have been in vain".

After three days the Lotsavas again repeated their request to Atisha at rGya-btson-seng's house and by this time Atisha had decided to go to Tibet. It took some time for Atisha to finish his work for the Monastery. Finally when they were ready to start their journey they had a problem regarding their loads. There were so many loads and if all of it accompanied them, then Sathavira Ratnakara would know that Atisha was going to Tibet and may stop him. Besides, to transport the sixty loads, they needed beasts of burden and so Nag-mtso Lotsava was very worried. Suddenly two Tibetan herdmen, father and son, wearing long pointed caps came with thirty Yaks, and they suggested that all the loads should be loaded quickly so as not to attract the peoples' attention. At about midnight all the loads were loaded on the Yaks and sent on their journey towards Tibet. It is not known how they crossed the Ganges river. The next morning Atisha went to see Sathavira Ratnakara and told him that he would like to show the holy places to the Tibetan venerables and at the same time offer prayers at those places and he asked his permission to leave. Sathavira Ratnakara said it was a

very good idea but requested Atisha to wait for a few days as he also wished to join the party. So later on they all went together to see the many pilgrimage centres. Finally Atisha said to Sathavira Ratnakara, "Now I am going to see the Mitra Temple which is very far away from here and hence it will be very difficult for you to come". Sathavira Ratnakara then realized that Atisha now wanted to go to Tibet. He turned to Nag-mtso Lotsava and said, "You told me that you had come to study but you have come to steal my Pandita. This time I can stop Atisha if I desire, but will not since I love the Tibetan Dharma Raj Bodhisattava who has sacrificed many men and much wealth for the sake of the Pandita. Besides you are also connected to me as my pupil. Therefore you can take Atisha for three years and then you must bring him back to me, otherwise the contract between us as tutor and pupil will cease".

Nag-mtso Lotsava was very unhappy at what Sathavira Ratnakara said, for he knew that the journey to, and from Tibet alone, would take about three years; besides, even if he were to spend three years in Tibet it would not be sufficient time for the Tibetans to obtain perfect knowledge of Buddhism. He was very worried by this but at the same time they had to proceed onwards to Tibet. After passing the Mitra Temple they reached a border region between Nepal and India. There eighteen Tirthika Tantrikas came and, using their miraculous powers, tried to harm Atisha and his thirty four disciples because they were jealous that he would spread Buddhism in Tibet. Atisha performed a series of rites propitiating the Goddess Tara (sGrolma) and made their bodies stiff like idols. Later on when they had entered Nepalese land he set them free by uttering mantras on a handful of sand.

One day an emanation in the form of a herdsman came with a Buddha image (Jo-wo-hjam-dpal-rdo-rje) and a letter from the king of Khoten (Liyul) to Atisha. When they reached Swayambhu, the celebrated Buddhist sanctuary (hPhag-pa-shing-kun) all the loads were piled one above the other and beautiful cushions and tables were laid out. Six horsemen who were sent by Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod to receive Atisha held a big ceremony and served him and his party with food and tea in the Tibetan manner. They set up a high cushion for Atisha under the shade of a Palmyra tree, and other beautiful cushions were arranged in three rows to the left, right and beside Atisha. A ceremony was held on the right side where Lotsava rGya-btson-seng and other Tibetans were seated. Pandita Virya Chandra and other Indians were seated on the left and at the head of the middle row was seated the great king Samgha of Nepal on a throne especially prepared for him.

Atisha was served with a big bowl of white molasses, and tea in a valuable cup decorated with a dragon by the chief mNga'-ris-pa

named Sumpa. After this a beautiful white horse, called mThong-smon-rlung-gshog, lead with a piece of white silk in the manner of Prince Siddhartha's horse bNgags-lDan (KANDHAKA), was brought to him by the head of the six mNg'-ris-pa. They had decorated the forehead of the horse with ornaments of pearls, a big turquoise and gold coins. They present this horse to Atisha. He was delighted at the offering and said that it was very auspicious.

During this time in Nepal Lotsava rGya-btsan-seng took ill and died suddenly. Atisha was very much grieved. When Atisha's party reached the plain of Palpa called Bal-pai-thang, he offered his elephant Glang-po-che mthong-smon (Drsta-Utsadhi-basti) to the king Drag-pa-mthah-yas (Anantakriti) of Nepal and asked him to use the elephant only to carry building material like wood and stones for the construction of the Thang Vihara Temple and for other religious purpose. He forbade him to use the elephant for war and other sinful ends, but told the king that by keeping this elephant all his enemies would be subdued. As a compensation for the elephant Atisha told the king that he would have to bear all the costs incurred for building the Thang Vihara.

The king was very happy to hear what Atisha told him and promised to fulfil Atisha's wishes. King Anantakirti offered his son prince Pai-mai-hod (Padma Prabha) to Atisha for ordination. Atisha ordained him and called him Lai-dbang-po (Devindra). He was the first wanto be initiated by Atisha since he left India. When the party reached Bal-po-rzong, three hundred horsemen wearing white robes and white ornaments and holding religious articles were sent by Lha-btsun-dyang chub-hod to receive Atisha. Leading them was the minister Lhai-lo-dros (Devamati) who presented a newly made painting of Avalokitesavara to Atisha. Each of the other officers offered Atisha a white silk scarf. The party then proceeded on till they reached mTsho-ma-pham, (Manasarovara) where he was warmly and lavishly welcomed by Tibetan therds men. While Atisha was staying at mTsho-ma-pham, Lha-btsan-byang-chub-hod decorated the monastery of Yang-gling-gSer-gyi-lha-kangs and the village and road leading to the monastery in preparation to welcome Atisha. When Atisha's party reached mtholing-gSer-gyi-lha-kang the people of mNga'-ris came to welcome him. Atisha was accompanied by king Anantakriti of Nepal and his officers Nag-mtsho and other learned monks clad in Pandita's robes. There were in all five hundred men on horseback. In the middle of the procession was Atisha riding his white horse mThong-smon-rlung-gshog. At the sight of him the people of mNga'-ris were struck with wonder and uttered the words "skyabs-su-mchi-ho" (meaning I take refuge in you) and "O Lord Atisha, master of Buddhist teaching's, please look upon us Tibetan

people with compassion". Atisha was delighted by the deep faith shown by the Tibetan people in him.

Later on Atisha asked king Anantakriti of Nepal to return to his country and start building the Vihara at Bal-poi-thang. He gave him full instructions concerning the building and furnishing of the Vihara and installation of icons and paintings. On hearing that the king of Nepal was about the leave, the minister Lhai-dBang-phug sent a messenger to Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod asking him to come immediately to receive Atisha and to meet king Anantakriti of Nepal. When Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod got the message he at once left for mTholing with six hundred and fifty attendants on horseback. At mTholing he said his respects to Atisha and king Anantakriti and gave them a grand reception. Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hod presented thirty two horses to the Nepalese king and a gold Ssang to each of the Pandita who were returning with him to Nepal. He accompanied the party a long distance, to see them off. Before parting he requested three of the Panditas to meet him again in the near future. Returning back Lha-btsun-dyang-chub-hod invited Atisha to his Palace mTholing-gtsug-lag-khang. The party that proceeded hence consisted of about nine hundred horsemen carrying different religious banners.

Thereafter, for the next six months and twenty five days, Atisha fulfilled Lha-btsun-byang-chub-hods' wishes by giving religious instructions. Following this he returned to Yang-ling-g'er-gyi-lha-khang. There he met hBrom-ston-pa who had come there from dBus. Many deities and saints had prophesied that hBrom-ston-pa would become his chief disciple. hBrom-ston-pa cleverly delayed Atisha's immediate return to India, by requesting him to teach him many subjects one after the other. Meanwhile hBrom-ston-pa wrote to scholars (Geshe) in dBus asking them to come "mNga-ris immediately to see Atisha. Thereafter many great scholars (Geshe) came to mNga'-ri one after another and requested Atisha to visit dBus and gTsang. Fortunately for the Tibetans just at that time the border between Tibet and Nepal was closed due to internal feuds in Nepal and so Atisha being unable to return to India consented to visit dBus and gTsang. Thereafter he never returned to India, but spent the rest of his life in Tibet, spreading and consolidating the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism.

He founded the excellent teachings of bKa-gdam-pa sect which soon spread throughout the country.