

### THE LĀMAIC LIBRARY.

The larger monasteries in Sikhim all try to possess a copy of the two great lāmaic encyclopædias, (a) the *Kāh-gyur* or vulgarly *Kān-gyur*,<sup>1</sup> i.e., "The translated Commandments," and (b) the *Ténggyur*<sup>2</sup> or "Translated doctrinal Commentaries" by reputed saints. All of the treatises contained in the *Kah-gyur* and most of those in the *Ténggyur* were translated from the Sanskrit of the later Buddhist Church in India and Kashmir, and a few from the Chinese, mostly in the 9th and 12th centuries; but the *Ténggyur* contains also much later works. The translations were done by the Indian Pandits and Tibetan translators (*lōtsāvas*) and Chinese priests. They were collected in their present form only about the beginning of the last (18th) century of our era.

Lāmaic encyclopæ-  
dias.

*Kān-gyur.*

The common edition of the *Kah-gyur* is printed from wooden blocks at Narthang, about six miles from Tashelhunpo,<sup>3</sup> and fills 100 bulky volumes of about 1,000 pages each. A later edition, printed at Der-ge in Eastern Tibet (Kham), contains the same matter distributed in volumes so as to reach the mystic number of 108. The *Ténggyur* contains 225 or more volumes, and has treatises on the Indian philosophic schools, grammar, logic, astrology, medicine, &c. The cost at the printing establishment is about ten rupees *per* volume.

*Ténggyur.*

The expense of such a library being so great, Pemiongchi and Labrang are the only monasteries in Sikhim which possess a complete set of both encyclopædias. But several monasteries possess a full set of the *Kah-gyur* scriptures.

Divisions of *Kah-  
gyur.*

The *Kah-gyur* as regards its contents is divided into three great sections, viz.—

I.—The *Dulva* (Skt. *Vinaya*) or Discipline, in 13 volumes.

<sup>1</sup> *ḍkah-gyur.*

<sup>2</sup> *ḍstan-gyur.*

<sup>3</sup> The capital of Western Tibet (Tsāng), and head-quarters of the Panchhen (= great teacher) Grand Lāma, the incarnation of the mythical Buddha Amitabha.

II.—The *Dó* (Skt. *Sutra*) or Sermons of the Buddhas, in 66 volumes.

III.—The *Sher-chin* with its divisions (Skt. *Abi-dharmma*) or Transcendental Wisdom, in 21 volumes.

These divisions broadly correspond to the classification of the Southern Buddhist Canon into the *Tripitakā* or ‘three baskets or collections;’ but the *lāmaic* versions are all of a highly inflated and *tantrik* type, and the *Gyut* or *tantrik* charms and incantations to the number of 22 volumes, which has no counterpart in the Southern scriptures, has been introduced into the *Dó* class of the *Kah-gyur*.

As might be supposed from the leading part which mysticism plays in the *lāmaic* creed, the sections of the *Kah-gyur* which are most highly prized are the *Dó* and the *Sher-chin* or Transcendental Wisdom of the *tantrik* kind.

The monasteries which cannot afford to buy the full *Kah-gyur*—and these in *Sikhim* form the majority—possess the following parts of the *Sher-chin*, viz., the 12 volumes called *Bum*, literally “*Bum.*” “100,000” precepts of Transcendental Wisdom, forming the main body of the *Sher-chin*. Also the abridged edition of the same in three volumes called *Nyi-thi*, literally “*Nyi-thi.*” “the 20,000” precepts, adapted for those individuals who are unable to peruse the full text. And for the common use of the junior clergy a still smaller abstract in one volume exists under the name of *Gyé-tong-ba*—literally, “the 8,000” precepts of Transcendental Wisdom. This is the volume “*Gyé-tong-ba.*” which is carried on the lotus of *Jam-pal*, the God of Wisdom. The *Dorje-chöpa* or the “Diamond cutter” is a *sloka* which is commonly printed in separate form. And for “*Dorje-chöpa.*” the youngest boy-novices is prepared a tract of about six leaves containing the most popular portions of the *Sherchin*.

From the *Dó* division of the *Kah-gyur* are culled out those mystic formulas, mostly in unintelligible Sanskrit, “*Dó-mang.*” which are deemed most potent as charms, and these form the volume named *mDo-mang gzung<sup>1</sup> bsdus* or curtly *Dó-mang* or “assorted aphorisms”—literally “many *sutras*.” These formulas are not used in the worship of the Buddhas and superior gods, but only as priestly incantations in the treatment of disease and ill-fortune. Being thus the forms of worship of which the laity have most experience, small pocket editions of one or other *Sutra* are to be found in the possession of all literate laymen, as the mere act of reading these charms suffices to ward off the demon-bred disease and misfortune.

<sup>1</sup> *gzungs* = Skt. *dharani*, which is a mystic spell like the Hindu *mantra*.

The books of ordinary worship and ritual, and the school-text books for the boy-probationers and novices, are also an essential part of the monastic library. And they must be daily repeated till their contents are fully learned by heart.

Each monastery also possesses one or more of the legendary accounts of the great wizard-saint of the Nyingmapa lāmas, viz., Lō-pön Rimbochhe, or Pédmajungné, who is believed to have visited

Sikhim. These are entitled *Pédma kah-thang* (The *Pédma kah-thang*,  
displayed orders of the Lotus-born One) or  
&c. *Tang-yik Sertheng* (The golden Rosary of plain

Epistles); also more or less fragmentary bits of the works of the pioneer lāma of Sikhim—Lha-tsün Chhembo, especially his *Né-yik* or “Story of the Sacred Sites of Sikhim,” and his manual of worship of the great mountain god Kangchhendsönga (Ang. *Kānchinjingna*).

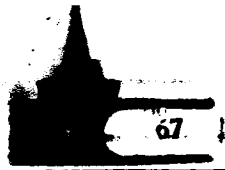
Monasteries of the Karmapa and Dukpa sects contain the “Kargyupa Golden Rosary” and the *namthars* or biographies of the special lāma-saints of the Karmapa or of the Bhutan lāma-saints. And each monastery possesses a manuscript account of its own history (*deb-ther*), although this is kept out of sight.

A few Lepcha sacred books are to be found in the Lepcha monasteries and in the possession of a few Lepcha laymen. They are mostly translations from the Tibetan. The titles of the chief ones are (1) *Tāshi Sung*, a fabulous history of Guru Rimbochhe; (2) *Guru Chhō Wang*, a tertön work of Tibet; (3) *Sākun de-lok*, the narrative of a visit to Hades by a resuscitated man named Sākun; (4) *Ek-doshi manlom*—forms of worship.

Individual lāmas possess special books according to their private means and inclinations, such as the *Manikābum*, a legendary history of Ché-ré-si, the patron god of Tibet, and of the origin of the mystic sentence “Om Mani,” &c.; the songs of the great mendicant sage *Milarépa*, books on the worship of Dölma and other favourite and tutelary deities. The specialist in medicine has one or more fantastic medical works, and the *Tsi-pa*<sup>1</sup> or astrologer has the *Baidyur karmo* and other books on astrological calculations.

The books are deposited in an open pigeon-holed rack-work. Each book consists of several hundred leaves, and each leaf is of tough unglazed country paper, about two feet long by half a foot broad. The leaves forming the volume are wrapped in a napkin; and the package then placed between two heavy wooden blocks, as covers, which bear on their front border the name of the book in letters graved in relief and gilt. The whole parcel is firmly bound by

<sup>1</sup> This is the “*Chebu Lama*” of Hooker’s *Himalayan Journals*.



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a broad tape and\* buckle tied across its middle. These ponderous tomes are very unwieldy and not easy of reference. When being read the book is held across the knees, and the upper board and the leaves as read are lifted towards the reader and repiled in order in his lap. Before opening its fastenings, and also on retying the parcel, the monk places the book reverently on his head, saying, "may I obtain the blessing of Thy Holy Word."