

ISSN 0970-5368

THE

Vol. XXV

No. 1

Spring 2000

TIBET

JOURNAL



a publication for the study of Tibet

The Tibet Journal

a publication for the study of Tibet

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SPRING

VOL.XXV No.1

2000

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Announcement

We welcome the submission of research papers (typed and doubled spaced, or on IBM-PC diskettes) by western and Tibetan scholars focusing on Tibetan and Buddhist studies.

Also, we welcome and encourage the readers' comments on articles published in recent issues.

—MED.

Hechter, M., *Internal Colonialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

—P. Christiaan Klieger

***Tibetan Nomads: Environment, Pastoral Economy, and Material Culture*, Schuyler Jones with a contribution by Schuyler Camman, The Carlsberg Foundation's Nomad Research Project, Thames and Hudson, London, 1996, 463 pp., 280 illustrations, 100 in color, hardcover £32.**

Tibetan Nomads is a large format, well bound, coffee table volume with many fine photographs. Printed on high quality glossy paper the images contained within are presented with good effect. The name of the book, however, is somewhat of a misnomer as most of it is devoted to Tibetan material culture and not specifically to pastoralists.

The Forward to the book (pp.19-35) states that the aim of the work is to record the Tibetan collection of the National Museum of Denmark and "...to provide a brief account of pastoral nomadic life in Tibet." *Tibetan Nomads* does precisely this and thus admirably meets its objectives. The work is particularly successful as catalogue of Tibetan material culture and it is of considerable value as a record of everyday objects and utilitarian implements. Consequently it will prove an important reference for museums, art historians, archaeologists and anthropologists.

Tibetan Nomads aptly notes that the pastoralists use daily objects obtained through trade with townsfolk and agriculturists and therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between artifacts owned by pastoralists, agriculturists, monasteries and urban communities (p.22). This non-specificity in material culture serves as a kind of bridge between the two main subjects of the book, herders and artifacts.

Only Chapter Two ("High Altitude Pastoralism and the Pastoral Nomad Economy") and Chapter Three ("Domestic Production") focus on nomads, a scant 45 pages, or 10% of the book. And even in these two chapters a significant portion of the photographs depict non-pastoral life in southern Tibet (see pp.54, 59, 64, 65, 67, 70, 73, 76, 77, 83, 84, 85, 86). This underlies a fundamental weakness: nearly all data on pastoralists comes from secondary sources (particularly from Goldstein and Beall, Rockhill, Hermanns and Ekvall). As such, the book contributes virtually nothing new to the studies of pastoral culture in Tibet. The author who according to the jacket is an "...anthropologist who has carried extensive field research in Central Asia" would have done well to have interviewed pastoralists or at least bothered to go to where they are living and taken some photographs.

While lacking scholarly innovation, *Tibetan Nomads* does however, contain an entertaining, well written account of pastoralists in Tibet. Perhaps in a book of this type the technical inaccuracies that cropped up are unavoidable and even understandable. Less understandable in all but commercial terms is the title of the book, *Tibetan Nomads*. It is misleading for all but a very small group of pastoralists living north of 34 degrees latitude, and mendicants and vagrants having a fixed home base. This home base is called a *dgun sa* ('winter land'), *gzhi ma* ('place of residency') or *skye yul* ('land of birth'), and although it may be nothing more than a tent site, defines the geographic identity of its occupants. This fixed base gives Tibetans a sense of belonging to a particular place which is often conceived of in genealogical terms. The Tibetan pastoralists of the grasslands therefore, are not true nomads but follow a cyclical pattern of migration with their livestock. For the herders of the high pastures the annual beginning and end point of this regulated movement is the home-base. Jones mentions the home-base (*gzhi ma*) of pastoralists in the context of research conducted by Goldstein and Beall as if it is an isolated cultural phenomenon (pp.64, 65) rather than the norm.

Tibetan Nomads contains 85 photographs not exclusively pertaining to artifacts, only 15 of which deal with pastoralists. In addition, there are four other photographs that depict people whose geographical and economic origins are in question. One of these images is of a woman who in the caption is mis-designated a nomad (p.86) when in fact she is predominantly an agriculturist from central Tibet (dBus gTsang). This is demonstrated in her sleeveless *phyu pa* and manner of tying her hair. A female religious practitioner from eastern Tibet shown in a full page color photograph may be from a pastoral region (p.176). A couple from eastern Tibet with their wide-brimmed hats and manner of wearing their *phyu pa* most probably hail from a herder's camp (p.378). A lama reciting prayers in Lhasa may also come from pastoral regions as indicated by his fleece-lined clothing and the knife worn on his waist (p.430).

These ambiguities are symptomatic of captions which lack information on the regional and occupational identities of the subjects of the photographs. The book would have been significantly more valuable as a reference work if basic journalistic standards of who, where and what had been followed. This oversight is especially unfortunate in photographs taken by the author in Lhasa, in August and September of 1986 as such images are now historically valuable with the systematic demolition of the traditional city in the ensuing years.

The "Editor's Preface" (pp.9-16) reviews Danish studies of Old World nomads. We also learn that this book is the eighth published in a series on studies and collections pertaining to pastoral societies sponsored by the Carlsberg Foundation's Nomad Research Project (p.10). The Forward informs us that the National Museum of Denmark's Tibetan collection was acquired in part from the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia (1947-1955) and the efforts of HRH Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark during and after the expedition (p.19). The Collection was enriched from other sources prior to and after the Danish Scientific Expeditions to Asia (p.19).

The map of Tibet is based on the cartography of Sir Charles Bell and suffers a lack of detail (pp.20, 21). Moreover, it should have been updated reflecting modern cartographic resources. Prince Peter collected more than 600 items but except for certain costumes, information on the source of the objects and background ethnographic data is absent (pp.22, 34). This is unfortunate because Prince Peter was in a unique position to obtain this kind of data. Had he done so the Tibet collection of the National Museum of Denmark would have attained a caliber that would have been emulated the world over. A biographical sketch of Prince Peter records that he was in Kalimpong in the early and mid 1950s, a very crucial time in Tibetan history (pp.24-34).

Chapter One, "The Land of Tibetans" (pp.35-54) provides a little background information on the culture, geography and history of Tibet. Jones comments that there were crops he could not identify from the road (p.35), highlighting the cursory quality of the chapter. The author states that annual rainfall in the Byang thang may be less than 25 millimeters (p.36), when in fact it varies greatly from east to west and south to north, and can exceed 250 millimeters. The author also states that the Byang thang "... is a cold desert region..." (p.38) when in reality, it is far more varied with steppes, alpine biomes, and wetlands (see *Atlas of the Tibetan Plateau*, Science Press, Beijing, 1991). Jones also writes that the average altitude of the road across the Byang thang to Golmud is 4000 meters (p.38). The average altitude of this road is in fact, approximately 4500 meters, considerably higher than his figure.

Jones writes "...the establishment of the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism did not occur until the year 747 with the Hindu theologian known as Padma Sambhava" (p.41). This is a gross error in that Padma Sambhava was a Buddhist who was instrumental in the spread of the Vajrayāna form of the religion.

Chapter Two (pp.55-74) contains an account of the economic life of the pastoralists beginning with a general discussion of marginal environmental conditions that favor pastoralism (pp.55, 56). Its major weakness is that it does not differentiate between those

who derive their livelihood primarily from livestock (*'brog pa* / *byang pa*) and those Tibetans who belong to transitional agricultural and pastoral communities (*sa ma 'brog*). The statement that "The region which is exploited by pastoral nomads lies above the upper limits of arable agriculture..." (p.56) is an over-generalization. Regions above 4400 meters elevation are often exploited by both agriculturists and pastoralists and even in the heart of the Byang thang, farming is carried out at Dang ra g.yu mtsho at elevations up to 4700 meters. Jones also miscalculates when he claims that the limit of agriculture in the north of Tibet is 2800 meters (p.56)—it is significantly higher.

This garbling of facts is continued when it is written that the vertical movements of nomads in southern Tibet are restricted to about 600 meters (p.56). First of all, the predominant pastoralists of southern Tibet are the *sa ma 'brog*, not nomads and secondly, it is normal through the course of the seasonal migrations to cover upwards of 1500 vertical meters. One among the many examples are the pastoralists of Has po ri (well known village on the trekking route between dGa' ldan and bSam yas) who routinely hike more than 1300 vertical meters over the Jo dkar la.

Jones finally defines what he means by pastoral nomadism on page 57 and writes "...is an economic system which combines animal husbandry with impermanent settlements involving the use of tents or other types of portable dwelling, and a seasonal movement of both people and livestock." This is followed by a balanced observation on the conflicts inherent between pastoral self-sufficiency and dependency on grain producing areas (pp.57-59). In two separate references the author mentions gNam mtsho and Tengri Nor but does not note that they are one and the same body of water (p.62). In reference to pastoral economics Jones comes closer to the mark when he speculates that transhumance defined as "...economic system based on both arable agriculture and livestock herding..." exists in parts of southern and southeastern Tibet (pp.63, 64). In actuality, the transhumant *sa ma 'brog* are found over an extensive area covering much of Tibet south and east of the Transhimalaya ranges above an elevation of 4400 meters. Such an incomplete picture may be inevitable for as Jones points out, no in-depth study of transhumance in Tibet has been undertaken.

Jones' assertion in reference to pastoralists that, "...biannual visits to a market are necessary to obtain some of their basic requirements in both food and materials by disposing of surplus produce" (p.66) is not entirely true. The *'brog pa* of the Byang thang often trade locally with their fellow pastoralists or with itinerant traders from other parts of Tibet saving them long journeys to county and prefectural centers. It is curious that Jones states that along with barley, rice, tea and sugar, dried fruits are a staple of the pastoral diet (p.66). As much as the herders love dried fruit it is far from a dietary staple. The author falls back on a stereotype when he refers to the Byang thang as a "treeless landscape" (p.68). While it is true that there are not a lot of trees on the northern plains of Tibet they do exist in isolated stands of juniper, willow and tamarisk.

Jones dutifully records that western writers have spelled *'brog pa*, "aBrog Pa", "drok-pa" and "drokba" (p.74, note 6) without noting that the former is a transliteration of the Tibetan spelling and the latter two spellings phonetic approximations. Another indication that the author lacks fluency in the Tibetan language is his uncritical use of transliterations and phonetic approximations in the chapters cataloguing the acquisitions of the National Museum of Denmark.

Chapter Three "Domestic Production" (pp.75-89) reviews major foodstuffs and the diet of the Tibetans. Jones remains a passive observer when he fails to reconcile two disparate ethnographic accounts of the freshness of butter (p.82). About butter, Goldstein and Beall wrote, "...stays fresh about a year..." while Ekvall claims that "...butter begins to get rancid very quickly..." In reality, both accounts are valid in that the rancidity rate of butter depends on the type (sheep and goat butter is much more perishable than *'bri* butter) and storage conditions (Byang thang versus lower lying areas). As regards the

spinning of yarn the author gives an incomplete account by not mentioning fine yak wool (*khu lu*) and goat hair along with wool (*bal*) and yak hair (p.85).

Jones gives a good account of felt making (pp.87-89) and mentions weaving (pp.86, 87) but fails to talk about knitting, an important craft. Hats, socks, sweaters, long-johns and other essential clothing are made in this fashion by both the *sa ma 'brog* and *'brog pa*. As regards the products of looms, he notes bags, clothes and belt fabrics but not blankets, a most essential item.

Chapter Four, "Craftwork, Tent-Making, and Domestic Artifacts" (pp.90-139) constitutes the first chapter of the catalogue of material culture. Here, Jones, the director of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, emerges on firmer academic ground. He begins with a little background on crafts and metal working in places like sDe dge (which he misspells Sder-gi). This chapter includes a good description (with photographs and diagrams) of the pastoralist's black hair tent (*sbra nag*) (pp.93-106). It should be noted that Rockhill's description of the tent hearth as "....long, narrow stove made of mud and stones with a fireplace in one end and a flue passing along its whole length ..." is relevant for Khams and Amdo provinces but not for the Byang thang where open fireplaces still prevail.

From the tent, the book proceeds to vessels of diverse functions, styles and materials, beginning a fascinating visual journey into the physical emblems of traditional Tibetan culture. Non-lamaist material culture has been largely neglected by Tibetologists yet it has great potential for elucidating the social and cultural history of Tibet. Moreover, by not neglecting the possessions of the peasantry the catalogue attempts to provide an unbiased view. Photographic reproductions give a good feel for the objects and each acquisition is carefully described providing high quality documentation.

It has been incorrectly speculated that Catalogue Number 13, an elaborately carved cow horn, was probably used as gun powder container. The carved religious designs and inscription clearly mark this as a container used in monasteries probably to create sand mandalas. Catalogue Nos.48 and 49, are also mis-designated, in this case as tea pots (pp.125-127). They are actually liturgical vessels used for libations (*gser skyems*). This is demonstrated in their conical shape, highly elaborate crown-like lids, and lavish designs of bodhisattvas, *lokapālas*, *makaras* and *garuḍas*. In short, they are very distinctive from teapots. Catalogue No.53, a brass pitcher is also a libations vessel. Catalogue Nos.54, 55 and 56 are also liturgical vessels used to decant water into offering bowls (pp.129-131). Catalogue Nos.65-75 describe various types of spoons (pp.137-138). In keeping with the excellent photographic coverage it would have been useful to have one or two illustrations of Tibetan spoons, some of which are works of art.

Chapter Five, "Caravan Trade and Transport" (pp.140-147); Chapter Six, "Riding Accoutrements and Accessories" (pp.148-153); Chapter Seven, "Agricultural Implements" (pp.153-166); and Chapter Eight, "Equipment for Livestock" (pp.166-170) confer on the reader an insight into the everyday impedimenta of the Tibetan subsistence economy. Herein lies one of the strengths of the National Museum of Denmark's Tibetan collection; it bridges the divide between the traditional class divisions of Tibetan society by devoting judicious coverage to objects belonging to the peasantry, aristocracy and clergy. By examining items in the collection one gains a perspective on how class differences were played out in Tibet through the symbolism and design of its rich material culture.

The author observes that the pattern found on a sling (*'ur rdo*) is "...strikingly reminiscent of the dark brown and white pattern found on dZi beads" (p.167). This braiding design is called *chu mig dgu sgrel*, and the 'eyes' on the sling and *gzi* stones are called *chu mig*. Jones also cannily observes that the price of bullets has come down significantly in one hundred years (p.171) and one might add that this has had deleterious consequences for wildlife. Spears (*mdung*) are mentioned as weapons (pp.172, 173) but specimens like Catalogue No.145 with its silver inlay was probably used as an offering for indigenous and / or wrathful protective deities.

Chapter Ten, "Costumes and Accessories" (pp.177-264) evinces that clothing is one of the strongest components of the National Museum of Denmark's Tibetan collection. This chapter includes nine wonderful photographs, three in full color, of aristocrats and one of a nomad girl, taken by Charles Bell in 1915 and 1920, and by F. Spencer Chapman in 1936. The system of rendering the names of costumes in this chapter was not standardized. For example, 'Tibetan oracle' was rendered "Ch'hō kyang" and "Chō-kyong" for Chos skyong, an appellation for Pe har. Strangely, the feline-like creature known as *tsi pa ta* is described as a "monster mask" (p.248), a misleading epithet.

Chapter Eleven, "Jewellery" includes the ornamental shrine boxes called *ga'u*. Two historically valuable photographs grace this chapter, that of a noble woman in rGyal rtse taken by Charles Bell in 1920, and that of silversmiths in Lhasa shot by F. Spencer Chapman in 1936 (pp.266, 300). Conspicuously missing in the collection are *thog lcags*, ancient metallic talismans which traditionally, were very popular in Tibet. Catalogue No.477 is mis-designated an amulet case (pp.294, 295). The shape, design and particular closure consisting of a chain demonstrate that this is in actuality, a betel nut container which was produced in Bhutan or Sikkim. In Tibet it may have served a variety of storage purposes.

Chapter Twelve, "dZi Beads" (pp.301-315) sums up the scant German and English language literature on this interesting subject. Only two authentic *gzi* beads are shown plus four smaller ones in the preceding chapter (Cat. No.442) and treatment of the subject would have been considerably enhanced by the inclusion of more specimens. Jones describes circular designs on the beads as "chimi," "earth eyes" (p.362) when he should have described it as *chu mig* or 'water eyes.'

Chapter Thirteen, "Other Personal Accessories" (pp.315-332) looks at a wide range of artifacts including knives, sewing equipment and tinder pouches. Many of these items are still being used by Tibetans, especially by the pastoralists.

Chapter Fourteen, "Tibetan Buddhist Images" (pp.333-377) was written by Schuyler Camman with additional notes by Schuyler Jones. Dr. Camman catalogued part of the collection of sacred art in 1963 and therefore, could not benefit from the extensive work done in this field in the last 35 years. Jones excuses himself as an amateur in this highly specialized field (p.377, note 1) and perhaps the publishers should have found someone better qualified to amend the chapter. Jones' additions to the chapter are in bold print. Better yet, the National Museum of Denmark might have considered devoting a separate volume to sacred art.

The wrathful head (a form of Mahākāla) among the 11 heads of Avalokiteśvara is inaccurately described as an "angry demonic head" (pp.343, 344) when in fact, this iconographical attribute has nothing to do with demonism. It is written in regards to *thang kha* that the "...finest blue comes from lapis lazuli in Badakshan..." ignoring that most blue pigments were made from native azurite. The authors argue that style is not a reliable indicator for dating paintings or assigning provenance (p.355), which is only partially correct as advances in the field of dating have shown. See for example, *Tibetan Art: Towards a definition of style* (eds. J.C. Singer and P. Denwood, London, 1997). The description of Buddhist statues takes up 28 pages (pp.334-362) yet only three are illustrated.

The authors write in reference to Tibetan statuary that, "The basic substance of the metal images was bronze" (p.333). This is simply not true as a categorical statement as research has shown that many statues were made of a zinc-copper alloy (brass). For references to the composition of statues see Schroeder's *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Chapter Eight (Hong Kong, 1981), and *Aspects of Tibetan Metallurgy* (eds. W.A. Oddy and W. Zwalf, British Museum, 1981). In describing Buddha, the authors seem to have confused him with Brahman, the supreme god of the Hindu pantheon. They write, "...symbol of the One, something inexpressibly greater, which any human symbol is inadequate to convey, what—again using symbolic language—might be called the 'Supreme Mind', Creator

and Preserver of all, as well as potential destroyer" (p.374). Chapter Fifteen, "Other Religious Objects and Related Material" (pp.378-430), presents a range of ecclesiastical objects. The first sentence in the chapter, "The basic plan of a Tibetan temple is not greatly different from a Christian Church" may be an attention-grabber but it simply is not accurate. There are fundamental differences in architecture between the two types of religious edifices which do not permit such a statement. The authors again slip when they call Hayagriva an indigenous pre-Buddhist deity (p.389) and by consistently referring to the deity Phur pa as Phur bu (pp.388-391). Hayagriva is very much a member of the tantric pantheon and Phur bu is a Tibetan name for Vṛhaspati. One might conclude that if the book would have been written by an individual with a background in Tibetan studies these niggling mistakes would have been avoided.

Categories are confused by the addition of a silver and wooden drinking cup in this chapter on religious paraphernalia (pp.398, 399, Cat. No.646). Catalogue Nos.653, 654, and 655 may also be drinking cups and not offering bowls—it depends on whether they were made with a partially convex bottom. Also for the sake of coherence the wooden statues of bodhisattvas (pp.410, 411) should have been placed in the preceding chapter. Catalogue Nos.674, 675, 676, silver and jade drinking cups also belong in Chapter Four and not with the selection of religious items featured in this chapter. Chapter Sixteen, "Musical Instruments: Temple and Lamasery," (pp.430-438) presents a fairly wide range of Tibetan instruments, however, the 'spike fiddle' (pp.431, 432) is played by balladeers and not by monks. *Tibetan Nomads* concludes with an appendix of Buddhist symbols, bibliography and an index.

Despite some technical errors *Tibetan Nomads* is a valuable reference work. It contains historical photographs, a resume of Tibetan pastoral culture and extensive treatment of Tibetan material culture. Lavished with photographs it rewards even those in this busy world who do not have time to read.

—John Vincent Bellezza

***Engaged Buddhist Reader*, Arnold Kotler (ed.), Parallax Press, Berkeley, California, 1996. 264 pp. US \$18.**

Religious souls, prophets, saints, seers, philosophers and thinkers of all kinds have striven hard to make the earth a more habitable place and human life a more meaningful existential paradigm. But the world is going from bad to worse. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and mad arms race all over the world are posing a threat to the very survival of life on earth. Man's greed resulting into mindless rape of nature has raised the spectre of ecological holocaust. Man in the modern world is an atomised, alienated and disoriented being always writhing in pain that is being assuaged by inflicting injury on others. Alienated souls seek refuge into violence, drugs and promiscuity that provide a momentary escape, an evanescent thrill followed by a long spell of unspeakable agony. Knowledge has grown tremendously in modern times but it is largely devoid of wisdom. Knowledge is power available to a tiny minority that controls levers of knowledge, productive and distributive systems. Man's bloated ego has acquired unprecedented dimensions, making consumerism a new-found god.

The latest phenomenon of globalization, liberalization and privatization in the world economy, if pursued mindlessly, is likely to prove a global extension of man's ego and the consumerist culture. If no serious efforts are made to give a new qualitative thrust to man's advance in future, the third millennium is likely to push mankind into a veritable hell. Is this the end result of the efforts of those who founded great religious and philosophical systems in the world? To think along these lines would be cynicism of the worst order. But for these great souls, the world would have been much worse. Whatever