

REVIEWS

***WEI XIE Yizhu* 《韦协》译注 (*Annotated Translation to Dbav-Bzhed*) by Basang Wangdui 巴桑旺堆. Lhasa: Xizang Renmin Publishing House, 2012. 192 pages.**

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Basong Wangdui, the distinguished Tibetologist in China, has dedicated himself since the early 1980s to the study of Tubo history, ancient Tibetan literature, stone sculptures and monuments, sites of ancient tombs, etc. He was once the dean of the historical institute and of the nationality research institute of Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences. He did research as visiting scholar at Cambridge University, Columbia University and the Austrian Academy, and he has visited these universities a number of times. Besides he had been the vice President of the Association of the Studies of the History Chinese Nationalities, the council member of 9-10th Conferences of the International Association of Tibetan Studies. Now Basong Wangdui is a lecturing professor of Sichuan University, the Chairman of Academic Committee of the Institute of Chinese Tibetan Studies (Sichuan University). Cooperated in Austria in 1990s with Dr. Hildegard Diembergr, he translated *Dbav-bzhed*, the famous history book in Tibetan language, into English

(published by Austrian Academy of Sciences in 2000). To make up the shortage of a Chinese version, *The Dbav-bzched* (Chinese Version) translated and annotated by Basong Wangdui was published by the Tibetan People's Publishing House in 2012.

I

Dbav-bzched 韦协 is the first book systematically recording of the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet earlier in history (from the first half of 7th century when Buddha was worshiped during the reign of *Khri Srong-btsan [sgam-po]* to the 2nd half of the 8th century when Bsam-yas Temple was built during the reign of *Khri-srong Sde-btsan*). First drafted around the end of the 8th century, the main part of *Dbav-bzched* is about the historic events as the invitation of the two Indian senior monks of Bodesatwa and Pedma Sambhava to Tubo to preach Buddhism, the building of the 1st temple *Bsam-yas* in Tubo, Buddhism-Bon Debate, and the debate of abrupt awakening and graduate awakening. The book is extremely valuable as a mine of historical sources. In terms of the *Dbav-bzched* in Tibetan, *dbav*, the short form for *dbavs*, was one of the 6 well-known family names in Tubo. *bzched* means opinion, argument, assertion, etc. *Dbav-bzched* is the writing of the opinions and assertions of the *dbavs* family. Here *Dbav*, referring to Dbav Gsal-snang, the senior minister of Khri-Srong Sde-btsan the king of the ancient Tibet (Tubo), during the 2nd half of the 8th century, was a historic figure of great contribution to the dissemination of Buddhism in Tubo. Repeatedly advised Khri-srong Sde-btsan to honor and encourage the spread of Buddhism in Tubo, Dbav Gsal-snang was mandated to escort Bodesatwa and Pedma Sambhava to Tubo to preach Buddhism. Later he became a monk in front of the image of Bodesatwa and was given the Buddhist name of Ye-shes Dbang-po. He was once among the first group of *Kalyana-mitras* and one of the earliest official monks in Tubo.

In mid 9th century, Btsan-po Dar ma practiced the policy of honoring Bon and eliminating Buddhism. Buddhism was badly destructed and documents about the history of the period of the early spread of Buddhism were severely scattered and lost. At the beginning of the 11th century, Buddhism was once again disseminated in Tibet. The few preserved historical materials from the Tubo period were rewritten and efforts were made to retell the history of the early spread of Buddhism in Tubo. Consequently, *Dbav-bzched* was the first one to be rewritten. From the 10th to the 14th century, its matrix had been continuously changed. Some historical events in the original had been rewritten, deleted, or amplified. Stories about Tibetan kings like Mu-ni Btsan-po, Khri-gtsug Lde-btsan, Dar-ma, Wosong had been added; the history about the re-spread of Buddhism had been included.

As a result, there appeared variegated versions of it with similar basic structure but discriminating in contents, historical narration and a blending of false and authenticity. Among the versions but *Dbav-bzched*, the title of the book evolved into *Sba-bzched*, *Rba-bzched* or *Vbav-bzched*, transliterated into Chinese as *Baxie* 拔协 was the most popular one handed down. *Baxie* is further classified into the broad version, the mid version, the shortened version, and enlarged version. The main contents of *Weixie* 韦协 (*Dbav-bzched*) or *Boxie* 拔协 (*Sba-bzched*, *Rba-bzched* or *Vbav-bzched*) is to narrate the establishment of Buddhism and the building of *Bsam-yas Temple* during the reign of Khri-srong Sde-btsan in the late half of the 8th century. The book is also called *The Annals of Bsam-yas Temple*. On the other hand, written under the command of Khri-srong Sde-btsan or in accordance to his edict, the book was called The Scripture of Btsan-po (btsan-po bkav-mchid, bkav gtsikga yi ge).

For nearly a century, *Dbav-bzched* seems to disappear and many scholars believed it hardly accessible. In the 1990s, Basang Wangdui heard of a copy of *Dbav-bzched* preserved by the Literature Branch of Culture and History of Lhasa Political Consultative Committee. The copy, stored for over 300 years, belongs to the Hall of Library of the 5th Dalai Lama Awangluosangjiacuo of Drepung Monastery in Lhasa. In 1980s, the copy was borrowed by the Literature Branch from the temple and has been kept there ever since. Thanks to the generosity of the Branch, Basang Wangdui gained access to the original and was permitted to reprint and photograph the book in 1995. He was frequently invited to do research work at the Research Institute of Tibetan Studies and Buddhism in Austrian Academy of Science since 1996. Collaborating with Dr. Hildegard Diemberger, he translated *Dbav-bzched* into English and the English version prefaced by Per K. Sorensen, the well-known scholar of Tibetan studies, was published in 2000 by Austrian Academy of Science. Back at home, he has translated it into Chinese, regarding it significant to the study of ancient Tibetan history and religion.

Dbav-bzched (Chinese version) mainly consists of the following 5 aspects of contents: 1) accounts about the early spread of Buddhism in Tubo from the reign of King Lha Tho-tho-ri-snyan-btsan to the reign of Khri-lde Gtsug-btsan; 2) accounts about King Khri-srong Sde-btsan in Tubo sending envoys to Tang Dynasty for the introduction of Buddhist scripture and to India to invite Bodesatwa and Pedma Sambhaba to Tibet, about the building of Bsam-yas, the first Buddhist temple during the reign of Khri-srong Sde-btsan in the 8th century in Tibet, which was completely qualified to be a temple with “three treasures” (i.e. Buddha, Doctrine and Monks), and about the translation of the Buddhist scriptures and the