

EAST AND WEST

BON
THE EVERLASTING RELIGION OF TIBET

TIBETAN STUDIES IN HONOUR OF
PROFESSOR DAVID L. SNELLGROVE

Papers Presented at the International Conference on Bon
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	— <i>Archives of Asian Art</i>
AAH	— <i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
ACASA	— <i>Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America</i>
ActaO	— <i>Acta Orientalia</i> , Copenhagen
ActaOH	— <i>Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
ADMG	— <i>Abhandlungen der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
AION	— <i>Annali dell'Istituto (Universitario) Orientale di Napoli</i>
AJA	— <i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AMI	— <i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i>
ArOr	— <i>Archiv Orientální</i>
ASIAR	— <i>Annual Reports</i> (Archaeological Survey of India)
BEFEO	— <i>Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient</i>
BMC	— <i>Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum</i>
BMFEA	— <i>Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities</i>
BMMA	— <i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>
BSO(A)S	— <i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</i>
CAH	— <i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CAJ	— <i>Central Asiatic Journal</i>
CHC	— <i>Cambridge History of China</i>
CHInd	— <i>Cambridge History of India</i>
CHIr	— <i>Cambridge History of Iran</i>
CIIInd	— <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum</i>
CIIr	— <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum</i>
CIS	— <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i>
CRAI	— <i>Comptes rendus des séances</i> (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres)
EW	— <i>East and West</i>
HJAS	— <i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i>
HR	— <i>History of Religions</i>
IJJ	— <i>Indo-Iranian Journal</i>
JA	— <i>Journal Asiatique</i>
JAH	— <i>Journal of Asian History</i>
JAOS	— <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>

- JAS — *Journal of Asian Studies*
- JASB — *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
- JESHO — *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
- JGJRI — *Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute*
- JLABS — *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*
- JISOA — *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*
- JNES — *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
- JRAS — *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*
- JUPHS — *Journal of the Uttar Pradesh (formerly: United Provinces) Historical Society*
- KSIA — *Kratkie soobščeniya Instituta Arheologii*
- MASI — *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*
- MCB — *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*
- MDAFA — *Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan*
- MIA — *Materialy i issledovanija po Arheologii SSSR*
- MTB — *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tôyô Bunko*
- NTS — *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*
- OLZ — *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
- PSAS — *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*
- REI — *Revue des Études Islamiques*
- RepMem — *Reports and Memoirs (IsIAO [formerly IsMEO], Centro Studi e Scavi Archeologici)*
- RHR — *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*
- RSO — *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
- SA — *Sovetskaja Arheologija*
- SAS — *South Asian Studies*
- SOR — *Serie Orientale Roma (IsIAO [formerly IsMEO])*
- TOCS — *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*
- TP — *T'oung Pao*
- TPS — *Transactions of the Philological Society*
- VDI — *Vestnik drevnej istorii*
- WZKM — *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
- WZKS — *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie*
- ZAS — *Zentralasiatische Studien*
- ZDMG — *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

Preface

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the publication of this Special Volume in the East and West collection. The unique series of articles contained in the present Volume definitely show the state-of-the-art in terms of research carried out by first-rate scholars in a great variety of fields pertaining to the ever-flourishing discipline of Tibetan Studies; however, their value becomes even greater, if we consider that they were all written to honour the geniality and the pioneering work of the great scholar to whom the Volume is wholeheartedly dedicated: Professor David Llewellyn Snellgrove. I take this opportunity to express my admiration and respect for his scholarship, and also for his personal character, which I have both appreciated in various occasions, occasions that have also progressively become the locus of our longstanding relation and friendship.

Prof. Snellgrove was the first Western scholar to embark, during the second half of last century, in the daunting task of presenting the Bon religion and its multi-faceted expressions in a way that eschewed biased cultural superimpositions, thus allowing this religious tradition to finally speak for itself, by way of some of its most knowledgeable representatives. In the touching Introduction written by Prof. Karmay, readers will be able to understand the ways in which such a seminal task was undertaken. The results and effects of David Snellgrove pioneering endeavours, as well as the influence of his far-reaching vision can now be assessed through the philological and field researches, publications, and conference panels focused upon the Bon religion and Bonpo traditions, which have multiplied during the course of time, and which continue to shed light and deepen our understanding of one of the most valuable components of the Tibetan culture, especially as far as its foundation and origins are concerned.

In this regard, we cannot but gratefully turn our minds to the memory of Giuseppe Tucci, who in addition to his innumerable outstanding accomplishments, founded the East and West Review in 1950. I believe that the prestige of this historical Review is confirmed and enhanced by this Special Volume, and I hope that in future times it will also come to be considered as a preferred interface for many more scholarly works in the field of Tibetology, such as the ones presented here.

GHERARDO GNOLI

Introduction

From the 22nd to 25th of June 2008 an international conference on the Bon religion was held under the auspices of the Bon religious centre Shenten Dargye Ling at Blou, France. It was Rev. Tenpa Yungdrung, the Abbot of the Tritan Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu and the head of Shenten Dargye Ling who wished for a conference of scholars of Bon studies to be convened. This was part of his project to foster the development of Bon studies by scholars in parallel with the spiritual practices which the religion professes, and whose centuries old spiritual tradition brings benefits to modern practitioners. An Organizing Committee consisting of four members, the Abbot himself, Isabelle Catona, Stéphane Arguillère, and myself was formed. The conference was entitled: Bon, the Indigenous Source of Tibetan Religion and Culture. The conference was attended by internationally renowned scholars in the field, and by a number of young Ph.D. candidates from The Netherlands, Japan, China, and Taiwan. Twenty-seven out of thirty-three, who were invited, participated in the gathering. They were from twelve countries.

It turned out to be a very enjoyable occasion, blessed with good weather, and the calm of the country-side of the Val de Loire.

However, this was not the first time such an international conference on the Bon religion had been organized. In 2002 Professor Yasuhiko Nagano of The National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan convened a similar one under the title of *New Horizons of Bon Studies*. It was the first of its kind. Its proceedings were published in 2000 (*New Horizons of Bon Studies*, Bon Studies, 2, Senri Ethnological Reports, 15, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka).

European Bon studies date back to the nineteenth century, but it was only in the 1960s that a serious attempt was made for the first time to understand the religion, its history, and literature with the first-hand knowledge of the indigenous sources, a rarity outside of Tibet before 1959.

It was Professor David Llewellyn Snellgrove, who having developed a strong interest in the Bon religion after his field trip to Dolpo in 1956, embarked on a research project of this religion. In 1961, with the financial assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation, he invited Lupon Tenzin Namdak, Sangye Tenzin, now the Abbot of the Menri Monastery (Dolanji, Himachal Pradesh, India), and myself to the University of London to work with him. We were refugees in India.

Although this volume is published in his honour, it is not my intention to give a detailed account of David's life here: this is far beyond our scope, and also beyond the too many facets of this great traveler-scholar, who covered almost every field of oriental studies. Moreover, Dr Tadeusz Skorupski has written an excellent account

of David's life entitled 'The life and Adventures of David Snellgrove' in *Indo-Tibetan Studies*, which is dedicated to him (*Indo-Tibetan Studies*, Buddhica Britannica, Series continua II, The Institute of Buddhist Studies, Tring, U.K. 1990, pp. 1-21). David himself has also published a major account of his own life (*Asian Commitment, Travels and Studies in the Indian Sub-Continent and Southeast Asia*, White Orchid 2000).

I met David in India in March 1961. One early morning around six o'clock somebody woke me up. I was sleeping on a long table in a printing house in Old Delhi where my companion Sangye Tenzin and I were having Bon texts printed. I was completely taken by surprise by his sudden incursion. He was the first Western man I had come across then. He said something to me which I could scarcely understand, but finally I managed to work out that he would come and see me later on that day. It was a few months later on the green lawn near the edge of a swimming pool in the Claridges Hotel's garden in New Delhi that for the first time he began to teach us the Roman alphabet, after giving an exercise book and a pencil to each of us.

In order to help us open our minds to other non-Tibetan religions, he often led us to visit Churches, Christian monasteries and to attend Masses on Sundays in the local church, where we used to light candles. After arriving in England from India in 1961, he let us all lodge in his house in Berkhamsted for more than six months. He himself being a bachelor, there were no other family members at his home. This gave us a unique chance to know David, who in a very short time had become somewhat of a father-figure for all of us, particularly for myself, since I was the youngest one in the group.

From the very beginning of our meeting he began to initiate us into Western education by teaching us such subjects as geography, history of religions, and science, not in formal college classes, but through conversations at meal times, or during afternoon walks in the woods.

* * *

Later David began to work with the assistance of Lupon Tenzin Namdak on the translation of excerpts from the twelve volume, fourteenth century compendium called *gZi brjid*, The Glorious One. It was an experience to watch the two working side by side at the same desk. Most of the time they worked very calmly, but there were moments when they stumbled over difficult passages, and you could feel their frustration and hot temper. Later, in his Introduction to the volume, David wrote:

Tibetans who can help with these texts are now very rare indeed [...] They know their monastic liturgies and the names of their own *bonpo* gods, but very rarely indeed are they at all experienced in reading the sort of *bonpo* texts in which we most need assistance, namely material which represents 'pre-Buddhist' traditions. This lack of familiarity on the part of present-day *bonpos* with what Western scholars would regard as real *bonpo* material, may come as a disappointment.

It was true: we totally lacked the modern philological method of critical reading and explaining which we were then learning from him.

In 1967 the fruit of this cooperation was later published under the title of *Nine Ways of Bon* (London Oriental Series, Vol. 18, Oxford University Press, London).

This publication, which prompted further academic interest in the subject, laid a solid foundation for future studies of the Bon religion. Since then, a number of works has been published, and it is most encouraging to see that more and more young scholars have taken up Bon studies. This is not just an isolated development, but falls within the general upward trend of Tibetology. At the Conference in Blou, when it was proposed that the proceedings be published in honour of David in recognition of his pioneering work, all the participants unanimously agreed.

In October 2008, when I was writing this introduction, a *Festschrift* was very kindly published in my honour by Françoise Pommaret and Jean-Luc Achard in *Revue Tibétaine (RET)*, 14, 15, 2008). David contributed to the volume by writing an article entitled 'How Samten came to Europe'. Naturally, I thanked him for his kind contribution. Later, I received an e-mail message from David, who is now 88 years old, reading:

Thank you for your kind message. I have led a quiet summer here, swimming every day so long as the weather was good. I shall leave here for Cambodia on October 27th (2008), and intend to stay at my house in Siem Reap until mid-March. I lead a very quiet life, made up of reading, writing, swimming, and short walks around Angkor [...]

It is encouraging that he is still carrying on his intellectual life.

* * *

The present volume contains most of the papers presented at the conference, and it shows various aspects related to Bon studies.

The first part begins with a discussion whether Bon has any connection with Shamanism. This is followed by a presentation of Zhang zhung which was regarded as the place where the Bon religion originated. That leads to the study of the concept of the 'sacred'. A recent discovery of ancient Bon manuscripts is then discussed.

The second part begins with the study of the monastic discipline. It is followed by the study of rDzogs chen tradition and the philosophical concept of the 'two truths'.

The third part deals with history and practice of medicine. These are followed by the studies of the ancient yogic practices, and the concept of the 'intermediate state'.

The fourth part contains an anthropological study of the 'Soul-retrieval ritual', accounts of reconstructions of monasteries, aspects of the local culture and language of the Sharwa people in Shar khog (Amdo), a full account of Bon studies in modern China, and an overview of the collection of Bonpo texts of the Giuseppe Tucci Fund preserved at IsIAO.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Gherardo Gnoli, President of IsIAO, for graciously accepting to publish the proceedings of the conference in the *East and West* journal.

The two editors also owe many thanks to Dr Francesco D'Arelli, Director of IsIAO Library, who very kindly gave us much advice for the preparation of this publication, and to Dr Beniamino Melasecchi, Art Director of *East and West*, for his precious cooperation.

SAMTEN GYALTSEN KARMAY
Kyoto, October 2008

*Brief Notes
and Items for Discussion*

An Autobiography by David Snellgrove

by CHIARA BELLINI

The autobiography of the English scholar David Snellgrove, *Asian Commitment. Travels and Studies in the Indian Sub-Continent and South-East Asia* ⁽¹⁾, starts with his first contact with the culture of the Indian sub-continent and follows him through the study and research which have been central to his life. The result is a literary and historical work of the greatest interest.

Stretching to over five hundred pages, this impressive autobiography provides the reader not only with informations regarding the intellectual and professional experience of a great scholar, but also furnishes an insight into the life of a man who first visited India at a very delicate time, when the country was a base for British operations during the Second World War, and thus witnessed the momentous changes of the last and the present century.

Snellgrove takes the reader back to his youth, his first posts at London University and recalls his numerous trips to Asia, not only recounting his memories, but reproducing letters written to his family and friends throughout his life. So, in other words his reminiscences bring us not just a description of the episodes which filled a rich and intense life, but let us share the emotions he experienced at the time.

The enthusiasm and on occasion the callowness of a twenty-two-year-old, shine out from his first letters written in the nineteen-forties, when he finds himself on a ocean liner bound for India to do his military service during the Second World War. The ship weighed anchor on 10 March 1943 and took two months to reach its destination. But the strong possibility on such a long journey that it would be attacked by an enemy submarine did nothing to dampen Snellgrove's youthful excitement at the prospect of at last seeing a country that had long fascinated him.

The very first things to stir his interest in Central Asia were some photos of the Himalaya shown to him in 1938 by his college friend Denis Wood and the experience of reading *After Everest*, by T. Howard Somervell ⁽²⁾. This book has remained his favourite mountaineering book, and his curiosity about its author led him to discover that Somervell spent most of his life as a medical missionary in Kerala, prompting him to remark, 'I know him only from his writings, but my admiration for him has remained with me all my life' (p. 1).

Chapter one is divided into two sections and deals with the three years Snellgrove spent as a lieutenant in India during the Second World War. He describes the discomfort of

⁽¹⁾ D. Snellgrove, *Asian Commitment. Travels and Studies in the Indian Sub-Continent and South-East Asia*, Orchid Press, Bangkok 2000, 587 pp., numerous b/w and col. ill., maps. ISBN 9748299317.

⁽²⁾ T. Howard Somervell, *After Everest: The Experiences of Mountaineer and Medical Missionary*, London 1936.

military life in a letter to his family dated 23 July 1943: reading between the lines, one can detect the outlines of a bright young man with a sense of humour who adapts easily in unfamiliar circumstances. In spite of the obvious difficulties associated with the war, his first letters are full of excitement. Upon arrival in Bombay, Snellgrove headed straight for the Prince of Wales Museum, which impressed him enormously, and it was during this visit that he fell in love with Buddhist and Hindu art.

After a period spent in Calcutta, Snellgrove was sent to the cooler climate of Darjeeling for reasons of health and thus saw his dream of seeing the Himalayas come true. A visit to a Tibetan Buddhist monastery made a deep impression on him, which he goes into in detail in a letter dated 10 October 1943. He rhapsodizes about the colours of the paintings and the details on the statues decorating the temple, and it was probably this first exploration which laid the foundation for what was to be a life spent studying the Tibetan world. He was promised a 'book of some of their prayers' (p. 15) by one of the monks of the monastery, little knowing that what seemed an exotic gift would become, like many other similar texts, an object of daily study in the not too distant future.

During these first years in India, Snellgrove taught himself classical and modern Tibetan, which he was able to practise thanks to the new friends he made, such as Lha Tsering, David McDonald, the journalist and intellectual Gergan Tharchin, Lama Wangyal and the 'jack of all trades' Lha Chen, who accompanied him as his assistant all the way to Sri Lanka, when Snellgrove was sent there on assignment. Here he had the opportunity to visit some important temples and pilgrim sites, such as the Buddhist temple near Kandy, which according to tradition holds a precious relic of the Buddha, described in a letter dated 16 April 1944. He also visited Sigirya Rock, the Dambulla caves and the ancient capital of Ceylon, Anuradhapura.

On his return to India, he stayed briefly in Delhi then headed for Siliguri. From here, together with Lha Chen, he organized a trekking expedition from Kalimpong to Namchi. The people he encountered in the villages were astonished to hear the Tibetan of Lhasa spoken by an Englishman.

During the last years of the war, Snellgrove was assigned the sensitive role of liaison officer to the US Commanding Officer, passing on 'top secret' information. This short interlude would lead in the years just after the war to him being viewed with suspicion by the Indian authorities when he made his first research trips. However, this new job was soon curtailed by the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan, which Snellgrove 'deplored' in a letter home dated 15 August 1945.

In mid-October 1945 he was transferred to Delhi, where he stayed until 11 March 1946, when he returned to England.

The last pages of chapter one include some well-observed descriptions of the chaotic capital of India, in which Snellgrove writes with more than a trace of nostalgia about his swims in the Jamuna and afternoons spent alone beneath the walls of the Old Fort, 'feeling at peace with the world and myself (p. 33).

During these last months spent in India, Snellgrove also had to negotiate some awkward moments: Gandhi's brave defiance meant every Englishman was unwelcome in the eyes of the Indians and it appears the young Snellgrove was sensitive enough to feel hurt by this attitude, especially in view of his relationship with Indian culture. The colonial administrators passed the time in their private clubs, to which Indians were normally not admitted and Snellgrove's natural curiosity and respect for the native culture and desire to blend into it must have seemed extraordinary at the time.

His last month in India was partly spent reading the works of Charles Bell, which evidently got his pulse racing: 'Apart from my own journeys in Sikkim, these books have provided most of what I know so far about Tibet. I sense a slight impatience which is now creeping into my life, after all the war is now over, and I am in my 26th year' (p. 48).

He left India in February 1946, with the hope of returning after a few months. In the event, he was informed at the end of May that his application had been accepted by the Indian Civil Service (ICS), but his joy was short-lived as the British Government decided it was inappropriate to recruit civil servants for postings to India now that India and Pakistan had been granted independence.

Tibetologists whose training, like the present reviewer's, owes so much to Snellgrove's books have good reason to thank the British Government for this decision, leading as it did to Snellgrove completing his studies and dedicating his life to furthering his research into the history, philosophy and religion of Tibet.

So he went to Cambridge to study under Harold Bailey (later Sir Harold), Professor of Sanskrit and Pali and Fellow of Queen's College. Chapter two, one of the most enjoyable in the book, is devoted to Snellgrove's education, revealing the origin of the solid scientific grounding found in his writings and disclosing the commitment, sheer hard work and innate brilliance underlying his study and research. The range and depth of knowledge in the fields of languages, philosophy, history, religion and art exhibited by scholars of the intellectual calibre of Giuseppe Tucci, David Snellgrove and Luciano Petech makes them nowadays seem unapproachable models.

In all, Snellgrove's university education covered six years: three years in Cambridge, one year in Rome studying under Giuseppe Tucci and a further two years at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), in London. In Cambridge he studied Sanskrit with Harold Bailey and Chinese with Professor Haloun, while at SOAS he followed the courses of Walter Simon. At the same time he took private tuition in Tibetan with Dr D.R. Shackleton Bailey, who although a classicist, had taken up Tibetan.

While still at university, Snellgrove took a trip to Paris in 1947 with Duff Mellis, a fellow student interested in theosophy, and met Jacques Bacot and Marcelle Lalou. Over the years, it became gradually apparent to him that although undeniably competent, his teachers all approached Tibetan exclusively from the linguistic standpoint. By contrast, for Snellgrove learning the language was a means of acquiring a deeper understanding of the doctrinal and philosophical content of the texts, aspects which had always fascinated him and also brought into play a knowledge of art and archaeology. It was at this time of musing dissatisfaction that he came across the works of Giuseppe Tucci⁽³⁾, 'at that time the greatest scholar-traveller of all things Tibetan' (p. 55). What most attracted Snellgrove to Tucci was his research in the field, which was an essential accompaniment to the theoretical study of the textual sources, a *modus operandi* which Snellgrove himself was to adopt and pass on to his pupils.

He therefore decided to head for Rome after his Finals. With his immediate future arranged, during his last year at Cambridge, Snellgrove took up again the study of Italian⁽⁴⁾,

⁽³⁾ Tucci's name had already cropped up in conversation with Tharchin and Raja Dorje in 1943, when Snellgrove was in Kalimpong. In order to reach Gyantse and Lhasa in his journeys in 1937 and 1948, Tucci had to pass through Darjeeling and Kalimpong, the last town in India on the road to Gyantse.

⁽⁴⁾ He already spoke French and German, which he had studied before the War.

which he had begun in India with an Italian prisoner of war, as he mentions in a letter of 20 November 1945. His main motive was to be able to read Tucci's *Indo-tibetica* ⁽⁵⁾, available then only in Italian, and to discuss it with the author directly – this alone gives an idea of Snellgrove's standing as a scholar and needs no further comment.

In 1949 he made his first trip to Italy to meet the man who was to become the single most important influence in his professional life. But the journey also gave him the chance to admire the valleys around Monte Rosa, Venice, Florence and even the monastery of Camaldoli. He finally reached Rome, where he expected to meet Tucci, but found he had to undertake another journey to Campo di Giove (hardly a hardship to Snellgrove), near Sulmona, in the Abruzzi mountains, where Tucci was spending his holidays in the company of Francesca Bonardi. This was a crucial encounter for Snellgrove. Tucci himself was evidently struck by the promise this young scholar displayed and agreed to teach him privately, inviting him to return to Italy the following year.

On his way back to England from India, Snellgrove had not given any thought to the possibility of an academic career, unaware of the fact that the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, had asked for a detailed report to be drawn up on the state of oriental studies in England, with the intention of providing government funds to invest in further research and establish new chairs in various British universities. The aim was to promote improved cultural relations between the United Kingdom and her former empire. At the time there was not a single chair in Tibetan studies in the entire country, so it was decided that the first should be established at London University and David Snellgrove was to be its first incumbent.

This key moment in Snellgrove's biography, which marks his entry into the ranks of post-war oriental scholars, once again illustrates his stature as an academic. Anyone hoping to vault the walls of academe would hail an imminent appointment of this kind as a triumph; not so Snellgrove, who accepted it on one condition: that he be allowed to spend part of that year – 1950 – in Rome, imbibing Giuseppe Tucci's learning.

In October 1949, Snellgrove moved to London, staying in a flat in Bayswater Road, near Hyde Park. His letters from this period reveal a certain sense of bewilderment, so far from his new-found master. However, in a letter of 13 December, in which he makes liberal use of exclamation marks, Snellgrove cannot restrain his happiness at having been invited once again to Rome to study with Tucci.

On 11 January he sent an enthusiastic letter from Rome, in which he writes of afternoons spent studying in Tucci's private library in via Ungheria. The lure of Rome and probably the intoxicating experience of working cheek by jowl with a great scholar bowled him over and his euphoria is palpable in his correspondence. Tucci devoted far more time to his pupil than had been agreed beforehand, even inviting the young David to spend his holidays with him on the snow, in Abruzzo. Judging by Snellgrove's letters, Tucci was always talking about Tibet, India and his travels, constantly giving him advice on what to read. And it was reading the life of sGam po pa with Tucci that he became aware of the importance of the Hevajra Tantra, which he promptly decided to translate as his doctoral thesis ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ G. Tucci, *Indo-tibetica*, 4 vols., 7 parts, Reale Accademia d'Italia, Roma 1932-1941.

⁽⁶⁾ When this thesis was included in the Oriental Series published by London University, the publishing committee had Snellgrove's dedication to Tucci removed, as it did not seem proper to them to dedicate a book to a foreign professor. However, he later did manage to dedicate both *Buddhist Himalaya* and *A Cultural History of Tibet* to Tucci.

Snellgrove returned to London in October 1950, but he kept in touch with Tucci throughout his life. They continued to meet in Rome right up until the Italian Tibetologist's death in April 1984.

The years leading up to 1954 were devoted to his first books, such as *Buddhist Text through the Ages* ⁽⁷⁾, together with Edward Conze, followed by *Buddhist Himalaya* ⁽⁸⁾, *Himalayan Pilgrimage* ⁽⁹⁾ and *Four Lamas of Dolpo* ⁽¹⁰⁾, which were published by Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, where he became firm friends with the publisher George Hill.

This period marked the beginning of Snellgrove's research trips, which became an essential part of his life right up until his most recent journey to Cambodia undertaken in 2008 at the age of 87 ⁽¹¹⁾.

At the beginning of July 1953 a ship of the Lloyd Triestino line weighed anchor in Naples bound for Bombay, carrying Snellgrove back to the India he loved. He arrived two weeks later for what was to be the first of a long series of trips to the sub-continent, the Himalayan region and south-east Asia. These experiences were all scrupulously recorded in his journals and letters, selectively included in the book, providing fascinating insights into the history, philosophy and religion of the regions visited, as well as more strictly personal observations and passing moods. At times one can sense the changes that are being wrought in his life by this constant stimulus and his growing maturity.

It is also interesting to discover how expeditions to the Himalaya and in India which could last months were carried out in the fifties, sixties and seventies: on mule- or horse-back, on a motorbike delivered specially from England and in slow, overcrowded trains. These vivid accounts give the reader the sense of reliving real adventures, made all the more evocative by the encounters along the road with people who over the years were often to become good friends: the Prime Minister of Bhutan Raja Dorje, the Nepalese statesman Kaisher Bahadur, Peter Aufschnaiter, Tenzin Namdak, Gene Smith, Rolf Stein, Lokesh Chandra, Per Kværne, Namkhai Norbu, Tashi Lakpa, Kusho Bakula, Tashi Rapgyas, Pope Paul VI, the Dalai Lama and many others, too many to mention.

But the encounter which was most important to Snellgrove, certainly the most affecting, was with Pasang Khambache, a Sherpa he met in Kalimpong when Snellgrove was unable to leave the town owing to a long illness. Pasang became a good companion and their friendship lasted until his death on 13 May 1996, at the age of 72. Pasang had received an excellent education and demonstrated his resilience and initiative on several occasions, essential qualities when helping Snellgrove on his forays, even cooking genuine "pasta" with eggs and flour in the best Italian manner' (p. 90), which appears to be one of the author's favourite dishes. His great affection for Pasang is expressed again in several other passages, even outside the section dedicated to him in chapter two.

⁽⁷⁾ E. Conze, I.B. Horner, D. Snellgrove & A. Waley, eds., *Buddhist Text through the Ages*, Philosophical Library, New York 1954.

⁽⁸⁾ D.L. Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya: Travels and Studies in Quest of the Origins and Nature of Tibetan Religion*, Oxford 1957.

⁽⁹⁾ Id., *Himalayan Pilgrimage: A Study of Tibetan Religion by a Traveller through Western Nepal*, Oxford 1961.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Id., ed. and transl., *Four Lamas of Dolpo: Tibetan Biographies*, Oxford 1967.

⁽¹¹⁾ Private conversation with Erberto Lo Bue.

After a year spent in India and Nepal, Snellgrove returned to England, and it would be fifteen months before he would return to Asia. This time he spent fulfilling his university commitments, completing *Buddhist Himalaya* and taking part in his first conference in Rome, at Tucci's invitation, which he described as his 'baptism into the international world of scholarship' (p. 123).

At the end of December 1955 Snellgrove organized another journey in India with Pasang, with the intention of visiting ancient Buddhist and Hindu sites in central India. They saw Ellora, some sites near Aurangabad, Sanci and Khajuraho, returning to Varansi on 9 January 1956. After visiting Nalanda and Rajgir a second time – they had already been there in 1954 – they caught the train from Patna to Kathmandu. Here Snellgrove worked on the translation of a manuscript of the yoga-tantra '*The Symposium of Truth of all the Buddhas*', *Sarvatatbagata-tattva-samgraha*, held in the private library of Kaisher Shamsheer Rana, together with John Brough, Professor of Sanskrit at London University, whom he met at the airport on his arrival in the valley. The introduction to the anastatic copy of the manuscript was published in 1959 by Oxford University Press. During this same trip, Snellgrove visited Dolpo for the first time, returning in the winter of 1960-61 and again in the summer of the same year. His research and discoveries in Dolpo were set out in *Four Lamas of Dolpo*.

The Chinese occupation of Tibet, which occurred during this period, and consequent exile of the Dalai Lama and surge of Tibetans emigrating to Nepal and India took a cursory hold on public opinion in the West. The Rockefeller Foundation in New York decided to earmark funds for Tibetan research carried out at the chief European, American and Japanese universities and to enable them to invite Tibetan scholars to visit. Snellgrove took advantage of this to invite promising young students, such as Samten Gyaltzen (Karmay), Sangye Tenzin Jongdong and Tenzin Namdak, a Bon po master 'who also impressed me by his learning, his cordiality and his cheerful good humour' (p. 191). Working closely with this learned figure led to one of Snellgrove's most interesting books, *Nine Ways of Bon*, published in 1967⁽¹²⁾, which has become a fundamental work in the study of Bon, a kind of unorthodox Buddhism taken by some to be the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet – a question which is still a matter of controversy among scholars.

In 1968 he published another highly important work, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, written together with Hugh Richardson⁽¹³⁾, who had been in Tibet as British Representative from 1936 to 1940 and as Representative of the Indian Union from 1946 to 1950⁽¹⁴⁾.

Snellgrove's seventh research trip to India, which opens chapter five, was a long overland journey undertaken with Philip Denwood, Peter Cuming and Tashi Lhakpa.

The group left England in a Land-Rover on 17 March 1967 and crossed France, Italy, northern Greece, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, reaching India on 3 May and Nepal a week later. Snellgrove continued to wander far and wide, covering huge distances in his vehicle and carrying out research on archaeological sites and temples in northern and

⁽¹²⁾ D.L. Snellgrove, ed. and transl., *The Nine Ways of Bon; Excerpts from gZi-brjid*, London, New York [etc.] Oxford U.P., 1967.

⁽¹³⁾ D. Snellgrove & H. Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, London 1968.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Some British officials remained in India after independence in 1947. One of them was Richardson, who remained at his post in Lhasa until 1950 and had to leave it following the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

southern Indian and visiting Tibetan refugee communities. After a brief stay in Nepal to catch his breath, he was off again to Bhutan, to which the last section of the chapter is dedicated. He didn't leave India until 24 January 1968.

Six years passed before Snellgrove was able to return to Asia. The pause (if such it can be described) coincided with a period spent in Rome and ensuing commitments, described in Chapter six under the title 'Vatican Affairs'. He was assigned the task of joining the missionary priest Marcello Zago and Cardinal Marella in producing a study of the great religions of the world aside from Christianity. In 1971 he was even granted an audience with Pope Paul VI.

In this phase of his life, Snellgrove felt increasingly attracted by the idea of taking up holy orders, and although he never actually took this step, this brush with religious commitment affected him profoundly. On the other hand, Snellgrove's syncretistic tendencies with regard to Christianity and Buddhism would certainly have disturbed the placid waters of rigid Roman Catholic orthodoxy.

It was in Rome in December 1970 that he met the twenty-five-year-old Pole Tadeusz Skorupski, who was to become a student of his at London University and travelling companion on his first trip to Ladakh, recounted in chapter seven. The research he carried out in the field on this journey was the raw material that went into the two volumes of *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, the first of which was published in Warminster in 1979⁽¹⁵⁾.

Before this trip, Snellgrove had agreed to find the time from his university commitments to edit *The Images of the Buddha*⁽¹⁶⁾ under the auspices and with the support of UNESCO, which occupied him from 1972 to 1974. In 1973 he was one of the examiners when his friend Per Kværne presented his doctoral thesis and also had the opportunity to meet the Dalai Lama during his official visit to SOAS.

On 24 August 1974 he left for India with Tadeusz Skorupski. When they reached Delhi after a long overland journey, they were told by Gene Smith that Ladakh, so long closed to foreigners by the Indian authorities, was once again open to travellers. The two scholars jumped at the opportunity and immediately made plans to go there via Kashmir. After an initial brief reconnaissance trip to the State of Jammu and Kashmir and an equally short spell in Nepal, Snellgrove and Skorupski decided to spend the entire winter in Ladakh, taking on the polar temperatures in this region, which sometimes drop close to minus forty.

They were the first to photograph the Alchi enclave, especially the wonderful Kashmiri-style paintings decorating the walls of the gSum brtsegs and 'Du khang temples, the earliest dating from the 11th century. In order to get at the paintings in one of the temples, they had to remove a parasol which was preventing them from taking a photograph from an acceptable angle. The result was that they had to donate a new one as a replacement, an unexpected episode which entailed Skorupski taking a few days off his research to go to the capital Leh to buy the necessary materials.

The work required for the second volume of *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh* was completed by Philip Denwood⁽¹⁷⁾, who spent the summer of 1976 in Ladakh copying inscriptions, part of which were never published.

⁽¹⁵⁾ D.L. Snellgrove & T. Skorupski, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*. Vol. 1, *Central Ladakh*, Warminster 1979.

⁽¹⁶⁾ D.L. Snellgrove, gen. ed., *The Images of the Buddha*, Serindia Publications, London-Paris 1978.

⁽¹⁷⁾ D.L. Snellgrove & T. Skorupski with Ph. Denwood, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*. Vol. 2, *Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh*, Warminster 1980.

In all these fascinating accounts of his various journeys, Snellgrove never forgets his fellow scholars, Hugh Richardson and Tadeusz Skorupski, as well as some of his more brilliant pupils, such as Philip Denwood, Michael Aris, Ricardo Canzio and Erberto Lo Bue. And it was thanks to a period spent at Lo Bue's house in Val Pellice, which reminded him of Dolpo, that Snellgrove had the idea of moving to Italy. So it was that on March 20 1984 he finally occupied a suitable property he had found at Torre Pellice, some fifty kilometres from Turin.

The years from 1984 to 1987 were spent completing his monumental work *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* ⁽¹⁸⁾, which was published in 1987 and marks the end of his Tibetan studies.

Moving to Italy was also the signal of a profound change in Snellgrove's life and he himself explicitly viewed it as the beginning of a second phase, deserving of a second section in the book, too. In this part, he takes the reader through his subsequent interests centring on journeys to south-east Asia.

A first journey in March 1987 took in the great stupa at Borobudur, in Java, ushering in another long series of journeys to this hitherto unvisited part of the east: Indonesia, from 1987 to 1994, the Malay Peninsula from 1995, Cambodia, again first visited in 1995 and the destination of his latest trip in 2008.

In this second part of the book, taking in Chapters 9 to 12, Snellgrove sets aside his previous travel journal style, with its reliance on original notes and letters included virtually *verbatim*, and turns to more reflective historical, philosophical and religious musings. Although his conclusions are occasionally out of date, his considerations are never less than interesting, fruit as they are of years spent delving personally into Asia's mysteries.

Every trip becomes an opportunity for Snellgrove to investigate some historical, cultural, religious or artistic matter. His biography is in fact an inexhaustible treasure trove of personal knowledge and experiences. His profound and perfectly digested understanding of the areas visited has been distilled into a clear style and lucid exposition, which make this book an invaluable resource for many students and just plain enthusiasts to come. It is a book that teaches what it takes to become truly competent and is a window on how dedication and determination can turn a passion into a career and this in turn into a way of life.

In the epilogue, Snellgrove turns his back on narrative altogether in order consciously to attempt to draw some conclusions about the Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Christian and Manichean religions which have formed so much of the background of his life and which have always been a consuming interest. Indeed, he has since gathered his thoughts together more systematically in *Religion as History, Religion as Myth*, published by Orchid Press in 2006 ⁽¹⁹⁾.

This book is a priceless chronicle, a historical document of the greatest importance, but at the same time a handbook of history, art, and philosophy, as well as, of course, a highly personal and candid diary.

⁽¹⁸⁾ D.L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, Boston 1987.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Id., *Religion as History, Religion as Myth*, Bangkok 2006.