

DANIEL BÄRLOCHER: Testimonies of Tibetan Tulkus. A Research among Reincarnate Buddhist Masters in Exile. Vol. I: Materials, Vol. II: Appendices. (Opuscula Tibetana, fasc. 15 a/b). Rikon: Tibet-Institut, 1982. 777/256 pages. SFr. 125.-

The present study is not a report that will prove the reality of the phenomenon or institution of Tulku. The author himself believes in its reality (p. 93, n. 237), therefore it is a report of an insider about insiders. The aim of the study is an authentic representation of the phenomenon "Tulku" from the point of view of one whom it concerns (p. 9). Tulku (lit. sprul sku, skt. nirmanakaya) is an incarnation of a Bodhisattva or great person (who attained the state of a living Bodhisattva) in the past who wants to be reborn or is begged by his pupils to reincarnate himself in order to fulfill the task of spreading the Buddhist doctrine throughout this world. The most famous representatives of the Tulku system are the Dalai and the Panchen Lama.

In his German introduction the author gives a brief account of the spread of the doctrine in Tibet as well as the history of the institution of Tulku. But this introduction is only to be understood as background to the following study. It was made at the request of his teachers; the author did not consider himself to be competent (p. 13). This seems to me no lack: rather is it a good starting point for the different interview situations. Nevertheless, Dalai Lama as "Weltmeerpriester" (note 81) simply is not appropriate! The author was interested in the problem: How does a Tulku view himself in the changed situation of exile, and is there a change of the traditional rôle and what is it. Therefore he interviewed forty-two informants who are respected as Tulkus. The outcome is a voluminous record of conversations with different informants, among them the Dalai Lama, his younger brother and private secretary, his senior and junior tutors as well as the spiritual head of the Saskya tradition. But an evaluation is not made; this remains the task of the reader of these - on the whole - very interesting reports. To help an evaluation there is a separate index volume with Tibetan personal names, places and monasteries, a Sanskrit and Tibetan index as well as one of general items.

The value of this presentation consists in the broad spectrum of different concepts of Tulku, from traditional understanding to the refutation of the traditional rôle. This the reader can only see if he reads systematically all the interviews or consults the general index for specific topics.

This broad spectrum was possible only because the author obtained interviews with different kinds of Tulkus, dignitaries and monks as well as laymen who live under secular conditions.

The conversation report was compiled from the notes made by the author and the tape recordings of the interview sessions. As introduction to every interview the name and position of the person questioned are given as well as the catchwords that accompanied the interview. The book is worth reading because it gives a broad account of the problems and self-perception of persons who are regarded and respected as Tulkus. Because of the abolition of

the privileges of the Tulkus relations are strained between the laymen who want the institution of Tulku as their spiritual support and all those Tulkus who want more or less to live undiscovered under secular conditions. It is not so much a problem of proving reincarnation itself but of the institution that requires a special kind of education for such a child at the cost of a real childhood, and a monastic style of life.

Therefore the book is a living testimony of the real and perhaps necessary change of a monastic and hierarchically structured society within secular conditions. A commendable text and source book.

Dieter Back

MARTIN BRAUEN (ed.): Peter Aufschnaiter. Sein Leben in Tibet. Innsbruck: Steiger Verlag, 1983. 304 pages. DM 48.-

As a biographical sketch, this book mainly gives an account of an eight year period Peter Aufschnaiter spent in Tibet. From May 1944, after his escape from British internment at Dehra Dun (Northern India) with Heinrich Harrer, his compatriot and fellow mountaineer, until January 1952, he lived in a country that meant freedom for him and was to become one of the most beautiful times in his life. After an eight-month march through South-Western Tibet, Harrer and he reached Lhasa, the forbidden capital of Tibet, in January 1945. He spent six years there, working as a civil engineer, agronomist and geographer; during this time Aufschnaiter gained a very intimate knowledge of the Tibetan language, customs and people. He left Lhasa only because of the Chinese Communist invasion in 1951, travelling and mountaineering a good deal in Southern Tibet, until he finally left the country that had become his second home.

Martin Brauen from the Ethnological Museum of the University of Zurich (Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich) has edited this book with a manuscript from Aufschnaiter's literary estate, illustrating it with some of the numerous black and white photographs that Aufschnaiter took in Tibet and other recent fascinating colour photographs from various sources. Brauen has arranged the material and corrected some details, but it is the true, authentic Aufschnaiter who gives an account of what he saw as worthy of noting in his diary. Thanks to Martin Brauen's ability to make Aufschnaiter's estate speak, we are now fortunate to have this interesting document which is a complement to Harrer's bestseller "Seven Years in Tibet".

This book is mostly a personal narrative of the events and thoughts of a refugee living in a culture that was less alien to him than that of the West, which had made him a prisoner and a refugee. Some letters to friends and to his mother show how he enjoyed his professional tasks and the life he lived in