

## **HISTORY OF HAS (HA) VALLEY**

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*Ven. Lam Pema Tshewang \**

Has (Ha) is situated in the west of the sandalwood Kingdom near Sikkim or the Hidden-Land Rice Valley. It is blessed with the presence of the three Boddhisatvas-Manjusri, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani - the manifestations of all the Buddhas, who protect the three classes of beings, namely, the gods, the demi-gods and the humans that reside here. From this valley came forth sages who constructed two temples here, one of which was black and the other white. This sacred site, with its three ridges, is called Miri Punsum, meaning 'The Three Brothers' of Hills.

When the statue of Amitabha Buddha was in the process of being erected as the main sacred object in the White Temple, a visitor came to sell the head of the statue. The sculptor tried to fit the head to the torso, to which it straightaway stuck as if drawn by a magnet. The head, as can be seen even today, is slightly bent and somewhat large in proportion to the body.

The main object in the black Temple - Jovo (Buddha) - is likewise very sacred. It is said that both the Temples were built by a carpenter who was the manifestation of the Tibetan King Srongtsan Gampo. According to the story, the Temples were built at the same time as the Kyerchu Temple. However, it is certain that the Temples were constructed miraculously.

Just near the rock called Ri-chabkha of Ha Gonpa, a long time ago, a man was making farm implements when he heard some orchestral sounds comprising oboes, trumpets, etc. coming from inside the rock. On looking at the rock, he saw seven pigeons feeding on grains. He carried on his work till he heard the sounds again. Looking up, he once more saw the

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seven pigeons. The whole process was repeated once again, at which the man hurled the fork of a plough at the pigeons, turning one lame while the rest flew away.

In the evening the man returned home, and at night he saw a fire burning at the other side of his house at a place called Simipang. The next night he saw the same thing, so on the third morning he visited the site of the fire to find out what was happening. There he saw the lame pigeon and brought it home. He built a temple and offered the pigeon as the Jnanasattva of the main statue of the temple.

It is said that the lame pigeon was one of the Bodhisattvas, but that in view of our ignorance it was not seen as such. Similarly, in earlier times Asanga (Thogme) saw Lord Matreya in the form of a diseased dog.

Every year on the 10th day of the 11th month, liturgical ceremonies of Amitabha Buddha and Dharmapala Mahakala of old tradition, along with its dance, are performed at the temple of Ha Gonpa.

Sri Kila Vajra Kumara, a tutelary deity, appeared with wings at the ground floor of a house at a place called 'Kipri' (corrupted form of Yipri, which derives its name from the phenomenon of the people there hiding themselves in shyness from the sight of Guru Rinpoche). The man in the house being unlucky and having no accumulation of merit threw some sticks to chase the deity away. The deity flew away and landed on an oak (bJishi) at Chubarna near the Black Temple. From there he again took off, flying above the Ha Dzong and perched on another oak tree at a village called Banyena.

The inhabitants from two houses located in front of this oak tree invited Sri Vajra Kumara to their homes. The deity went to the upper house, at which the owner of the lower house became jealous and began quarrelling with his neighbour from the upper house. During the ensuing fight, one man

from the upper house was killed; and to compensate for the murder, a plot of land in front of the lower house was handed over to the owner of the upper house.

Therefore, mystical practices of Kila Vajra are performed every year in the upper house for a week in the 11th month.

Likewise, another Kila Vajra came flying to the Zang Lhakhang at Hechu. These miraculous Kila Vajra can be seen till today.

On the left of Miri Punsum is a remarkable cave, from which, it is said that drops of real nectar can be seen falling when one prays there.

On the upper side of the chorten, at a place called Kipri Buedokha, there is a big lump of stone on whose side there is a clear impression of Guru Padmasambhava's body and hat. The impression is exactly similar to that at the Kurje in Bumthang. It is also believed that the Guru's riding horse Balaha was tied to this stone, and the mark of the hold used for the purpose is still visible on the stone.

In olden times, there was a demon who changed into a serpent and attempted to create obstacles in Guru Rinpoche's path. Guru Rinpoche subdued the demon and transformed the serpent into a smaller stone next to the big one mentioned above. Hence, Jungneydrag of Ha is also a part of Paro Bumdrag which is said to be the sacred residence of 100,000 dakinis.

Below the bridge of *Has* (Ha) Samarpudung, there is the lake of a wishing cow containing a stone on which udders can be seen. Below this, at about the range of an arrow shot, there is the lake of the ox. One ox appeared from this lake and spread its breed in the five areas of Samar valley. That is why, even now, Samar has more cattle than other valleys of Ha.

On the other side of the rocky precipice of Has (Ha) Kartsho temple is another monastery called Tagchu monastery. If one looks out from Tagchu towards Kartsho rock, the shape of the rocky precipice is that of a lion sitting up with its head towards Kartsho and its tail towards Dumchog Dzong.

The word 'Has' connotes esoterism: the valley was blessed as a hidden land by Guru Rinpoche, and is therefore like a mirror covered by the vapour of one's breathe. That is why phenomena like the hearing of orchestral sounds from the rock of Ri chabkha have been possible here.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. or towards the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Guru Rinpoche performed the 5<sup>th</sup> series of Avalokitesvara's abhisekha ceremony at the cave of Gyon-yul-pal. At that time the local deity Chungdue, accompanied by many other evil deities, created miraculous disasters like the falling of meteors, cyclones, fires, burning lakes, splitting of rocks, gnashing of forests, trembling of mountains, rolling down of hills, etc. In answer, Guru Rinpoche brandished the golden Vajra in space, at which all the evil spirits fell unconscious. When Chungdue became conscious, he turned out to be a small turquoise-coloured boy wearing the Vajratira, and prostrating himself before the Guru, addressed him thus, "We are all your subjects. We pledge to dedicate our lives to your service. We shall be the protectors of the Buddhist doctrine." Guru Rinpoche accepted the offer, and with the command "So be it", gave Chungdue his blessings.

These references can be found in Pema Lingpa's book of revelations titled "Thuji Chenpo Muensel Droen-me". Since Chungdue received Guru Rinpoche's audience and his religious teachings, he is included among the deities of the Tantrik mandala. He is therefore the local deity of Has (Ha) valley at par with the local deity of Zorarakye of Hidden land of Khenpajong.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. when Drubchen Thangtong Gyelpo was staying at Phari, Chungdue invited this great siddhi to Bhutan. Drubchen Thangtong Gyelpo visited Upper and Lower Has valley, Thimphu, Punakha and Paro.

Also in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Terton Sherab Mebar came to the Has valley from Kham. While discovering treasures from the Nup-tsho-na-pa-tra (name of a lake), he took the lake into his mouth through his miraculous powers. Then he took out a trumpet, a drum, and a pair of cymbals from the bed of the lake. Also there was a golden pillar inside, which Sherab Mebar asked a carpenter to cut out for him so that he could take it to Paro Dzong. As a reward for doing the job, the carpenter was asked to take the shavings of the pillar. But the carpenter was greedy and cuts the pillar in such a way that whole chunks dropped off from it. As ill luck would have it, the lake escaped from the mouth of Terton Sherab Mebar. The lake then ran after Terton. He threw away the drum while he tried to escape from it. But the lake followed in hot pursuit. Like he did with the drum, the Terton slowed down the onward rush of the lake by flinging before it, the drumstick, the trumpet, and a part of cymbal; and as he kept running, he eventually reached the Labdza of Tshellutsho. There, Chungdue appeared in person, and negotiated an agreement of peace whereby, it is said, the Terton and his followers should never set foot in Ha Shogona. In return, the deity of the lake was forbidden from crossing Labdza. Thus the followers of Terton of Paro Pangmisa do not have any relationship with the people of Ha Shogona.

In later time, a man from Shogona married a girl from Pangmisa. The couple gave birth to a child. The couple thought that there would be no harm in going to Shogona as husband belonged to it. Accordingly, they set out. While crossing a footbridge over the river the knot of the wrapper in which the child was carried suddenly opened on its own in the middle of the wooden-bridge. The child fell into the river and was carried away.

It is therefore believed that anyone attempting to break the agreement negotiated by Chungdue does so at great personal risk.

The remaining cymbal of the pair discovered by Terton Sherab Mebar from the bed of Nuptshonapatra is one of the main internal sacred objects of Rinpung dzong of Paro. It is taken out once annually during the Tshechu festival in the second month, and can be seen on the occasion even today.

At the bank of the rivulet of rJangana under the block of Ha Samarpudung, the She-Devil of Bjengana was subdued by sacred vajra lingam of Drukpa Kunley, the impression of which, like a mark made on clay, can be seen till today on a big chunk of stone.

The tail of the Kuptshonapatra comes through the rock of Nyangtoekha. In ancient times, a boy of herdsman wearing a coarse yak-hair gho was tending cattle on the banks of the lake, when he accidentally drowned in it. The boy's gho was found three months later in the water coming through the rock of Nyangtoekha. As this place abounded in fish, many fishermen used to come here, and one day one of them caught the gho while fishing. In this way, it was proved that the water coming through the rock of Nyangtoekha is the tail of the Nuptshonapatra.

In the Ha valley, there are four great monasteries, namely, Tangchu Gonpa, Gyadue Gonpa, Kartsho Gonpa and Yangdag Gonpa, and four other small Gonpas: Goensarkha, Tsuenpitshangna, Dragnadhingka and Jungneydrag.

According to Drubthob Thangtong Gyelpo, the name of the valley is Has (pronounced Hay). Likewise, a saying of rJe Yonten Thaye has it that there is no trace of impediments of obstacles in the Hidden-Land valley of Has.

The origin of this name is further stated to have been confirmed by the Venerable Polokhen Rinpoche Dorji through his disciple Geshey Lunrig Nima.

This brief history of Has has been prepared on the command of Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Kesang Choden Wangchuck, in consultation with Geshey Lunrig Nima, Lupon Zhuedagpa, and DzoepoWangchuk.