

# THE TIBETAN CONNECTION

Gordon Creighton

WHEN the Editor of *Flying Saucer Review* passed on to me a letter from Mrs. J. Kirby of Bradford, Manchester, he told me that he felt it warranted a detailed reply. This is an extract from what Mrs. Kirby had to say:

"Your article *These Cunning British: the Truth at Last!* (FSR July-August 1973) had me in stitches.

"But the reference to the Biblical Flood in *Another Look at the Moon and Mars* by Kenneth Bayman, in the same issue, made me think you might be interested in yet another explanation, as given on page 147 of *The Hermit*, by T. Lobsang Rampa (Corgi Books), when cosmic invaders, under their leader Satan, arrived from elsewhere and caused vast devastation, including collisions between planets.

"Lobsang Rampa states that all his books are true."

As I tried to indicate recently in my article *But I Read it in a Book!* (FSR January-February 1973), the existence of a story in print has nothing whatsoever to do with the problem of whether that story is true, and the prevailing idea of what is "true" has never been more "elastic" — to use no stronger term — than it is today.

I have on my files a copy of the full report on "The Lama Lobsang Rampa" compiled by the Liverpool detective Clifford Burgess.

"Lobsang Rampa", the son of a Devonshire plumber, was born in rural Plympton in 1911, and for the first few decades of his life bore the somewhat un-Tibetan name of Cyril Henry Hoskins. By 1948, when working as a clerk with a time-and-motion study firm in Weybridge, Mr. Hoskins had decided to become a Chinese, and gave himself the name of Carl Kuon Suo, born in Tibet. The name is not a correct Chinese name, anyway, and Mr. Lorraine Sutton of East Molesey was a bit surprised by this at the time. He knew Mr. — pardon me, Dr. — Kuon Suo very well, and was puzzled since the good "Doctor" both talked and looked remarkably like the Englishman that he quite clearly was.

The "Lama", bent on self-improvement, began reading books about the fascinating and mysterious land of Tibet, and finding in them such words as *Rampa* and *Lobsang*, decided that it would now be nice to be *Lobsang Rampa*.

"Lobsang" (in Tibetan written འཇམ་འགྲུབ་, meaning "good mind") is one of the commonest Tibetan names that exist; about equal to our *John*. He had evidently seen the word "*Rampa*" at the end of the name of some Lama in a book, and thought he rather liked the sound of that for his new surname. No doubt he failed to recall the well-known phrase "that's a bit of a 'rampa' for, unfortunately, he came very badly unstuck here. How indeed was the good Lama of Plympton and Weybridge to know—utterly ignorant

as he is of all things Tibetan—that *Rampa* in Tibetan is not a name at all, but a monastic degree of learning granted by the Lamaseries, written *Rams-Pa* རམས་པ་ཡི་པོ་ and roughly equal, I suppose, to our ordinary B.D., Bachelor of Divinity.

This was to prove a particularly unfortunate choice of "name", because, spurred on by the steam-roller success of his best-selling "Books about Tibet", Mr. Hoskins was later tempted to romance in one of them about dear old grandmother back home in Tibet, calling her "Grandma Rampa" ("Grandma B.D." or "Grandma M.A."!).

At the time when, against the advice of the leading British experts on Tibet, a London firm of publishers launched his first hoax, *The Third Eye*, the Lama of Plympton and Weybridge had never been beyond the shores of this, his native island. Later, to escape unwelcome publicity, when his hoaxing activities were receiving considerable coverage in both the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* of London, Mr. Hoskins withdrew, not—as one might pardonably have surmised—to the fastnesses of Hlasa, City of the Gods, but to Dublin of all places, and then later, when Dublin proved no refuge, to Canada. These were his first journeys abroad.

Mr. Hoskins had, however, already been for cosmic trips in flying saucers (*My Visit To Venus*), and a former Editor of FSR displayed an incredible degree of gullibility by receiving a couple of articles from the Hand of the Master and publishing them in our journal.

My advice to Mrs. Kirby would therefore be: *Never accept anything as true just because you see it in print.* For, current ethical standards unfortunately being what they are, if it is a modern book then it has a good 50% chance of being the work of the type of individual whom, in an immortal phrase in a memorable speech to the House of Commons, Mr. F.E. Smith (later the great Lord Birkenhead) once described as "a terminological inexactitudinarian." Or, for those who prefer good old Anglo-Saxon four-letter words, a liar.

YOUR CLIPPINGS of newspaper items are very welcome. We apologise here for being generally unable to acknowledge these items as the pressure of work on our tiny staff and on our postage resources is too great. However, please do not be deterred by this seeming lack of courtesy. We really do appreciate anything you care to send.