

INTRODUCTION.

For nearly eighty years the Library of the A. S. B. has held half-hidden among its treasures a thick folio volume written throughout in the careful hand of Alexander Csoma de Körös, the pioneer of Tibetan studies. This manuscript, upon which the great Csoma spent so much time and pains, contains an extensive systematic vocabulary in Sanskrit, Tibetan and English, the Sanskrit being in Roman letters. From time to time, no doubt, scholars have had this precious folio in their hands, and some indeed may have made practical use of its contents, but it is only quite recently that the proposal to print the whole manuscript has been seriously considered: and in 1908 the Council of the Society appointed Dr. Satis Chandra Vidya-bhusana and myself—the joint-philological Secretaries—to see this long-neglected work through the Press.

The original work on which Csoma based his edition is a Sanskrit-Tibetan vocabulary occupying 154 folios (ff. 223-377) of the Go volume of the MDO (or Sūtra) Division of the *Tanjur*. The full title of this vocabulary, as we learn from Csoma's *Analysis*,¹ is *Lo-pan-mang-pos-mdzad-pahi-bye-brag-tu-rlogs-byed-chen-mo*: and it is commonly known as *Che-ta-tu-log-che*.² It is a curious circumstance that in the course of the many allusions which Csoma makes to his work on this vocabulary he never mentions either the Tibetan or the Sanskrit title.

My object in this Introduction is to explain the genesis of this Manuscript, and, as far as possible, in the Author's own words.

Csoma first came to Tibet in 1822 when he was 38 years of age: and he remained in that country or its vicinity till 1831, when he realised his long-cherished desire to visit Calcutta. He spent altogether nine years in this town, first from 1831-35, and secondly from 1837-1842. In April 1842 he died in Darjeeling of fever contracted in the Terai. It was, as we shall see, during his first stay in Calcutta that he prepared the manuscript which is now being published.

The first allusion to the vocabulary occurs in the Report which Csoma sent to Captain Kennedy, Assistant Political Agent in Subathu, dated January 28th, 1825.³

¹ Asiatic Researches, vol. xx, pt. 2, p. 534. See also Annales du Musée Guimet, vol. II (1881).

² The Sanskrit title is *Mahāvṛtṣṭhā*. The Sanskrit text alone was published by Minayeff in his *Buddhism*, vol. i, pt. 2, St. Petersburg, 1837. The editors owe an expression of thanks to Dr. Thomas, Librarian at the India Office, for kindly lending them Minayeff's work, which is to-day quite unprocurable in the market. While the first 16 pages were passing through the press we had not the advantage of consulting this work. An abridgment of the present vocabulary is mentioned in Csoma's *Analysis* under the title of: *Bye-brag-tu-rlogs-byed-hring-po*.

³ This Report is printed *in extenso* in Mr. Duka's *Life*. It appeared in an abridged form in the first number of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1834.

“During my residence in Zanskar, by the able assistance of that intelligent man (the Lama) I learned grammatically the language and became acquainted with many literary treasures shut up in 320 large printed volumes, which are the basis of all Tibetan learning and religion. These volumes, divided into two classes, and each class containing other subdivisions, are all taken from Indian Sanskrit, and are translated into Tibetan. I caused to be copied the contents of these immense works and treatises in the same order as they stand in the printed indexes. Each work or treatise begins with the title in Sanskrit and Tibetan, and ends with the names of the authors, translators, and places wherein the author has written or the translation was performed. As there are several collections of Sanskrit and Tibetan words among my other Tibetan writings, I brought with me a copy of the largest, taken out of one of the above-mentioned volumes, consisting of 154 leaves, every page of six lines.”

The next allusion to the vocabulary occurs in the second Report, dated 25th May, 1825:

“It was this man (the Lama) who in the course of three months after my arrival at that place (Zanskar) wrote down at my request some thousand words arranged after certain heads, and since he had many books with him containing collection of words and could easily procure others from the neighbouring monasteries, he gave me so much account of technical terms used in arts and sciences that I acquired sufficient information to be interested in Tibetan literature and to pursue in certain order the study I was engaged in. . . . In a word, there is a full enumeration of whatever we can meet within the region of the elements, as they are called, namely, earth, fire, water, air, ether, and in the intellectual kingdom. These were all arranged after my direction and plan.¹

“Besides this vocabulary of the most necessary words which I have now with me, all written by the same Lama in the Tibetan capital character, I have another large collection in Sanskrit and Tibetan (the Sanskrit also being written in the Tibetan capital character, as they early adapted their alphabets to express properly every Sanskrit word), copied from the Stangyur, Do division, Go volume, from the 223rd leaf to the 377th, consisting of 60 sheets of common Cashmerian paper, having writing but on one side, and having on every page 32 lines. This vocabulary, arranged after certain matters or subjects under general heads, contains many thousand words of every description; several distinctions and divisions highly interesting in order to understand better the whole system and principles of the Buddhist doctrine.”

Soon after his arrival in Calcutta in April 1831, Csoma reported himself to Mr. Swinton, the Secretary to Government, and placed all the literary treasures in his possession at the disposal of the authorities. From 1831 to 1835 he resided in the Asiatic Society's rooms and was principally engaged in the publication of his famous Dictionary and Grammar. He was also employed by the Society to make a *catalogue raisonné* of the Tibetan works forwarded from Nepal by Brian Hodgson. On the 26th December, 1832, H. H. Wilson writes that besides the Dictionary and Grammar a translation of a Tibetan vocabulary, containing a summary of the Buddhist system, was ready for publication and at the disposal of Government, “to whom the author considered his works to belong, in return for the patronage it had been pleased to afford him. Should it be the pleasure of Government to defray the cost of publication, which has been estimated at from 3,000 to 4,000 rupees, Mr. Csoma will be happy to conduct them through the press in Calcutta, or he is willing, should the Government think it proper, to send them through me to England, where, perhaps,

¹ I believe this manuscript is now in the British Museum.

the Honourable the Court of Directors or some literary Association may undertake their publication.”

Government agreed to defray the cost of publishing the Grammar and Dictionary, and these duly appeared in 1834.

In 1835 Csoma again set out on his travels, reaching Maldah in January 1836. Early in March he was in Jalpaiguri, and after a sojourn of nearly two years in Eastern Bengal and in the neighbourhood of Sikkim, Csoma returned to Calcutta. During this period he seems to have been chiefly engaged in learning Bengali and perfecting his knowledge of Sanskrit. From the end of 1837 to the beginning of 1842 he again resided in the Society's house, and in the capacity of Librarian, was partly occupied in arranging the Tibetan works he had himself presented. He also at this time wrote and published a number of articles in our Journal,¹ and was furthermore employed by Dr. Yates and other missionaries in the translation of the Liturgy, and Psalms, and the Prayer Book into Tibetan.

Two further allusions to the vocabulary remain to be quoted. In the Preface to his Dictionary Csoma writes as follows:—“Sanskrit terms seldom occur in their books [*i.e.*, the Buddhist Literature of the Tibetans] with the exception of a few proper names of men, places, precious stones, flowers, plants, etc., where the translators could not determine what their proper signification would be in Tibetan. But the technical terms in arts and sciences found in Sanskrit have been rendered (not as European nations have done with their translations out of Greek and Latin) by their precise syllabic equivalents in Tibetan, according to a system framed expressly for the purpose by the pandits who engaged in the translation of the sacred works of the Buddhists into the latter language; as may be seen in the several vocabularies extant of Sanskrit and Tibetan terms, of which a large one has been translated into English by the author of this Dictionary and presented to the Asiatic Society; the same he afterwards found had been previously made known to the learned of Europe by the late Mons. Abel Remusat.”² Then again, in Csoma's Analysis of the *Kah-gyur* (Asiatic Researches, vol. xx, p. 397) we read: “All the 21 volumes of the *Sher-p'hyin* [*i.e.*, the Prajñā-pāramitā] treat of speculative or theoretical philosophy, *i.e.*, they contain the psychological, logical and metaphysical terminology of the *Buddhists*, without entering into the discussion of any particular subject. There are collected one hundred and eight such subjects (*dharmas*), terms or phrases, with several subdivisions or distinctions; of which if any predicate be added to them, affirmative or negative judgments may be formed. These terms have mostly been introduced into the Sanskrit and Tibetan Dictionary also, that was prepared by ancient Indian pandits and Tibetan interpreters, and which may be found in the *Bstan-hgyur* (Mdo Class, Go volume).”

¹ The Dictionary appeared in January and the Grammar in December of that year.

² In honour of the 125th Anniversary of Csoma's birth, the Society are about to reprint all these articles in a collected form. As an Introduction to this volume I propose to print the substance of a lecture I delivered before the Society on January 5th, 1910.

³ This evidently refers to “Un vocabulaire philosophique en cinq langues imprimé à Peking,” *Mélanges Asiatiques*. Paris 1825, vol. i, pp. 153—183.

It is evident that his anxiety to be off again on his travels prevented Csoma pressing for permission to publish the vocabulary in 1834; it is, however, very strange that, as far as we know, he made no effort in this direction during his second period of residence in the Society's rooms. One would have thought that a man of his capacity for work might have found time during these five years to give to the world a work which had cost him such infinite pains to prepare.

In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it may be presumed that the non-appearance of the vocabulary during Csoma's life-time was not owing to any lack of encouragement on the part either of the Society or of Government. The Society cannot, however, be so easily exonerated from the charge of having left this precious document for so many years exposed to the risks of the Bengal climate, not to mention the ravages of white-ants and fish insects. By good chance the manuscript has suffered little or no damage from these sources; on the other hand, the ink in which it is written has begun to fade very rapidly, and I have no doubt that in a few years many pages will be illegible.

THE PRESENT EDITION OF CSOMA'S MANUSCRIPT.

The method adopted for our edition has been the following:

The Tibetan portion of the Manuscript needed little or no revision. With regard to the Sanskrit in Roman character it has been necessary first of all to change the transcription of Csoma to that adopted by our Society, and here and there also to correct the reading of the Sanskrit.

It has also been necessary to make certain changes in the English translations. No one perusing the vocabulary could fail to be struck by the mastery which Csoma had gained over this language. In nine cases out of ten his explanation has been allowed to stand; but there are nevertheless some surprising lapses for which it is difficult to account having regard for the perfection and accuracy of the rest.

The manuscript, though a fair copy, can hardly be regarded as ready for printing: for on every page we find what may be called tentative synonyms which, in passing the book for the press, would not all have been allowed to remain. The editors have, however, thought it proper in most cases to retain all these synonyms, because they offer valuable insight into the writer's mind and reveal the processes by which he

¹ For example: "to take the religious character" for "to enter the religious life" or "to take holy orders." "Shame-faced" as synonymous with "modest." "Transcendal" for "Transcendent." "Void from" for "devoid of."

James Prinsep, writing to Government in 1833, says: "On the part of the Society I beg also to tender my own services, in inspecting and correcting the English portion of the volume (*i.e.*, the Dictionary)." I suspect that his reports to Captain Kennedy must have undergone some revision at the hands of an Englishman, for they are better written than many subsequent letters of Csoma. In the Preface to the Dictionary Csoma says that "he gratefully acknowledges the favours which Mr. J. Prinsep, present Secretary to the Asiatic Society, continues to confer on him, in correcting and smoothing the English part of these works during their progress through the press."

² Rajendra Lal Mitra wrote in 1883: "from the general appearance of neatness and absence of erasures, corrections and interlineations, it is evident that the volume is a fair copy."

arrived at his interpretations. It will be observed that where any difference arises between the Sanskrit and the Tibetan, the English translation is usually on the side of the Tibetan.

A great many phrases have to-day become absolutely stereotyped among writers on Buddhism, which were altogether new to Csoma and his contemporaries, and many words which he thought fit to explain are now-a-days familiar to all students of that religion. In cases where we have improved on Csoma's English without affecting his meaning, we have not thought it necessary to make any remark; but where we have altered or added to what Csoma wrote, the portion for which we are responsible has been placed within crochets. The editors are responsible for all the footnotes.

I have to thank Babu Surendra Nath Kumar, Librarian of the Asiatic Society, for his constant help in reading the proofs of the Sanskrit portion, while Dr. Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana was absent from Calcutta; and I must also acknowledge my indebtedness to my teacher Lama Lob-Zang Ge-Gen who read all the Tibetan portion before it was dismissed to press.

Finally, I have to thank my wife for many hours of patient labour spent in transcribing Csoma's MS. and in noting the variant readings in Minayeff's version.

The present instalment represents about one-third of Csoma's manuscript. When the whole work has been printed we propose to add Alphabetical Indices to all the Sanskrit and all the Tibetan words and phrases contained in the Vocabulary.

Calcutta :
October, 1910.

E. DENISON ROSS.

[NOTE.—The Roman numbers given to the sectional headings have been added by the editors. The numbers in brackets are those of Csoma's manuscript. In the Tanjur the groups are not numbered; but Csoma's numbers represent the order in which the groups occur in the Tibetan original.

In the body of the work the English translations of the headings have been allowed to stand very much as Csoma gives them; but in the table of contents these headings have for the sake of convenience been somewhat curtailed or modified. The variant readings which have been found in Minayeff's work are prefixed by the letter M.]

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