I.—Translation of a Tibetan Fragment, by Mr. Csoma de Koros, with remarks by H. H. Wilson, Secy.

(Read, July 4th.)

In the 9th volume of the Gyut class of the Kahgyur occurs the original of a Tibetan fragment, which created in the beginning of the last century a lively sensation amongst the learned men of Europe, and the history of which furnishes an amusing instance of the vanity of literary pretensions, and of the patience and pain with which men of talent and erudition have imposed upon themselves and upon the world.

In the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century, the Russians in their incursions into Siberia came upon various deserted temples and monasteries, in some of which considerable collections of books were deposited. These were in general destroyed or mutilated by the ignorant rapacity of the soldiery, but fragments of them were preserved, and found their way as curiosities to Europe.

Amongst these, some loose leaves, supposed to have been obtained at the ruins of Ablaikit, a monastery near the source of the Irtysh, were presented to the emperor Peter the Great. Literature being then at a low ebb in Russia, no attempt was made to decipher these fragments, and they were sent by the Czar to the French Academy, whose sittings he had attended when at Paris, and who deservedly enjoyed the reputation of being the most learned body in Europe. In 1723, the Abbé de Bignon, on the part of the Academy, communicated to the Czar the result of their labour, apprising him, that the fragments sent were portions of a work in the Tibetan language, and sending a translation of one page made by the Abbé Fourmont with the help of a Latin
and Tibetan Dictionary in the Royal Library. The letter was published in the Transactions of the Academy of St. Petersburgh, and the text and translation reprinted by Bayer in his Museum Sinicum. Müller in his Commentatio de Scriptis Tanguticis in Siberia repertis—Petroploli, 1747, criticised Fourmont’s translation, and gave a new one of the first lines, prepared with the double aid of a Tangutan priest, or Gelon, who rendered it into Mongol, and a Mongol student of the Imperial College, who interpreted that version to Müller. The original was also engraved in the Transactions of the Leipsic Academy. It was reprinted with corrections and additions and a new translation by Giorgi in his Alphabetum Tibetnum, and has recently been made the subject of animadversion by Mons. Remusat, in his Recherches sur les Langues Tartares. Of the previous performances, M. Remusat thus speaks: “On avoit d’abord admiré la profonde erudition qui avoit permis à Fourmont de reconnoitre seulement la langue dans laquelle le volume etoit ecrit: on a vanté depuis celle de Giorgi, qui avoit rectifié et le texte et la traduction. Je ne sais comment on peut traduire ou corriger un texte qu’on n’est pas même capable de lire. Il n’y avoit rien d’admirer dans tout cela: interprétes et commentateurs, panegyristes et critiques tous etoient presqué également hors d’état, je ne dis pas d’entendre une ligne, mais d’epéler une syllabe du passage sur lequel ils disertoient.

The consequence was what might have been expected, and the attempts at translation and correction were most ludicrously erroneous. The greatest liberties possible were taken with the words, and letters were inserted or omitted at pleasure, in order to make them approximate to those terms which appeared most like them in the imperfect dictionaries possessed by the translators. After all, the translation was not only unlike the original, but unlike common sense; and as was remarked of Fourmont’s version by the President de Brosses, the Latin was quite as unintelligible as the Tangutan. The following specimen of the first lines of the different versions will show that the remark was applicable to all as well as to the first.

Fourmont’s Translation.

“Attritâ fortitudine quismam brevis equis frigoris vita destruatur (pro) spiritu inest putredo. Contribus oratne? hoc est irissio onmes vident: orat avia contrita? morbida? non scit (non potest amplius) on aperire legis (ratiocinationis).”

This must have puzzled the Czar and his academy quite as much as the original; and as Remusat observes, the Latin was of marvellous use to the translator. Fourmont would not have dared to write a syllable of such nonsense in French.
Translation of a Tibetan Fragment.

The manner in which Fourmont was led to such a strange misrepresentation of the original is explained by Mons. Remusat, from whom we may take one instance as a specimen—Thus of the word brevis equus. The MS., M. Remusat says, was read by Fourmont *Talu pa te* (Mr. Csoma has cb'hud-pa-dez.) He found in the Dictionary chung-pa signifying 'short' and r-ta meaning 'a horse', and these being the nearest approach to the syllables before him, he adopted as essentially the same, and rendered them accordingly.

**Müller's Translation.**

"Firma conscientia mediante omnia parvi pendendo in principio vivente cuicumque auxilium oritur inde. Quibus consummatis futurum quid nemini notum est. Religio tota namque religionis explicatio. Magnates autem intellectu (su) ea non comprehendunt."

The matter has not been made much more distinct by the aid of the Tangutan monk and Mongolian student.

**Giorgi's Translation.**

"Misericordia recreat et a cruciantibus absolvit Summus protector viventes omnes qui eam adoratoribus suis revelat. Benefici largitoris virtutem sciunt omnes, sed orationis invocationisque vim et efficaciam exponere et aperire nesciunt: homen ea exprimit arcanum illius legis quae lex est spirituum, &c."

How far either of these expresses the sense of the opening of this fragment, may now be duly appreciated by the perusal of the following.

**Mr. Csoma's Translation.**

[Chom dan dus] "addressed his mind to meditation upon the affairs of animate existences. The ignorant do not perceive the moral signification of moral things."

Not a word of this appears in the preceding versions. Its accuracy speaks for itself; but in confirmation of its correctness, the original Tibetan, both in Tibetan and Roman characters, is here reprinted, as well as the translation of the entire passage. Those to whom the prosecution of the subject is of interest may readily estimate for themselves the superiority of Mr. Csoma's labours, by comparing them at length with the text and translations of Fourmont and Giorgi in the Alphabetum Tibetanum. Before proceeding to the new translation, however, a few further remarks upon the subject of the old are necessary.

The Society is apprised of the general character of the contents of the Gyut portion of the Kahgyur, to which our original belongs, and will not be surprised, therefore, to learn that a great part of the extract consists of Mantras, or mystical formulæ, or invocations, and these not
in Tibetan but in Sanscrit. Now, neither of the former translators had any knowledge of Sanscrit, nor was aware that these passages were in that language. Fourmont considered them to be Tibetan, as well as the rest, and very deliberately translated the Sanscrit words with the help of his Tibetan Dictionary. As he could not find the exact words, however, he was content to take those most like them; and at the expense of a few letters omitted or inserted, he contrived equivalents for the mantras equally satisfactory with those he had devised for the other sentences of his text. Thus he converts the Mantra Nama Samanta Buddhánam, Sámantamugate, varaja, Dharmamirgata, Mahá Mahá Swáhá, into Na-ma Sam-tam Pou-tra Nan-hi-tsi cha-ya r-pa sa-n-ha, which he translates, "Ægrotavit (restitit morbo) Samtam pou-tra per annum dum hujus mundi evanesceret, &c." The same importing, as far as such things admit of being translated, "Salutation to the chief Buddhas. Obtainer of pre-eminence; best born; who proceeded from virtue. Great great adoration."

Giorgi is more upon his guard, and discovers that the mantras are not in ordinary Tibetan. He has no suspicion however of their real character, and calls them magical expressions. He prints them therefore without any translation, but nevertheless pretends to explain their purpose in his notes on the text, in which he assembles a crude mass of extravagancies from Hebrew, Chaldaic, Coptic, and Syriac, and compares these Tibetan characters to the mystic numbers and letters of the ancient Scythians and Egyptians, and of some of the early Sectarians and Heretics of the Christian Church. This display of unprofitable erudition is in fact only a shelter for his ignorance, and he knows no more about the matter than did Fourmont, without having the merit of his blundering simplicity.

We shall now proceed to the translation.

Translation of an Extract from the T. or 9th volume r, Gyut class of the Kāh-gyur, the 337—339 leaves.

Ignorant men do not know that all these (doctrines) have been thus explained by Chom dan dās (the Supreme), the knower of all and possessor of all, who in remote ages, through compassion for all living beings, addressed his mind to meditation upon the affairs of animate existences. (a Stanza) The ignorant do not perceive the moral signification of moral things. It has been distinctly taught (by Buddha), that the essential principle of morality is the non-entity of matter.

The performer of mystic rites must always dwell upon that idea, and discharge his duty accordingly.
This was a gradual and comprehensive explanation of the means by which noxious things (or evil spirits) may be appeased.

Then Chakpa Dorje (S. Vajrapāni) and other Dorje bearers, (Vajradharas, bearers of thunderbolts), Kuntu-Zangpo (Sāmantabhadra), and other Chang chub sempo (Bodhisatwas) having adored Chom dān das, Nam par-shang-drat (the Bhagavān or Lord Vairo- chana), being desirous to express each in his own mantra or invocation, his mystic praise, and how they judged in this great circle the source of infinite mercy, of the pure way of access to the root of all things, requested permission from Chom dan das.

Then Chom dan das having granted them permission, and bestowed his benediction upon them, thus spake, "Illustrious children, accordingly as you judge of the root of things (the first moral being), utter your mystic sentences for the purification of all animate existence."

Then the Bodhisatwa Kuntu Zangpo, being immersed in that profound meditation, which is called the region of the ornamental (characteristic) of a Buddha, uttered this mystical sentence (mantra) of irresistible efficacy.

Nama Sāmantabuddhānam, &c. Glory to the exalted Buddhas; obtainer of eminence; best born; who proceedest from virtue—great, great adoration. This is the mantra of Kuntu Zangpo.

[For the rest of this, and for the Sanscrit of the other Mantras, see the passages in Italis in the Tibetan extract in Roman character.]

Then the Bodhisatwa Champa (Maitreya) after being immersed in the profound meditation called "the universally manifested beneficence," thus uttered his own radical prayer (vīya mantra), Nama Sūmānta Buddhānam, &c. Glory to the exalted Buddhas; conqueror of the invincible; possessor of the fame of all purity—adoration. This is the prayer of Champa.

Then the Bodhisatwa Nam-khe nyimg po (Ākāsa gerbha) being immersed in the profound meditation called "the purest region," uttered through mystery, Glory to all the Buddhas; wonderful holder of blessings; who art possessed of equal elevation with the heavens—sulutation. This is the prayer of Nam-khe nyimg po.

Then the Bodhisatwa Grippa tham chet nam-par selva (S. Sarva Anavaran Vishkambhi) being immersed in the meditation, called "the power of great mercy," uttered his mystery, Glory to the exalted Buddhas; thou who art not separated; connected with the Aswatththa tree. Trām Trām, Rām Rām—sulutation.

[This is one of the Mantras, of which there is no making any sense; some allusion is implied probably, a knowledge of which is necessary to explain the words. The concluding syllables are merely ejaculatory monosyllables.]
Then the Bodhisatwa Kuntu Chenresik Vangchuk (S. Avalokitesvara) being immersed in the meditation called (after him) Kuntu Chenresik, or “looking everywhere with clear vision,” thus together with his followers uttered his own radical mystery, Glory to the exalted Buddhas: universal Tathāgata, Avalokita; abounding with clemency—Ra-ra-ra-hum-jah—salutation. This is the mantra of Chenresik.

Glory to the exalted Buddhas, Jang-jang sa,—salutation. This is the mantra of Thu-chhen t'hop (S. Maña St hana Prāpta).

Glory to the exalted Buddhas; offspring of clemency, Tārā, by whom existence is traversed—salutation. This is the Mantra of the Lhamo Grol ma, (the goddess Tārā.)

Glory to the exalted Buddhas; frightener of every fear. Hum, Sphotaya—salutation. This is the mantra of Kronyer Chen Má (S. Bhrikuti.)

Glory to the exalted Buddhas: born from all the Tathāgatas; decorated with a chaplet of Lotus flowers—salutation. This is the Mantra of Kos Kar Chen (S. Pändura vāsini), the goddess clothed in white garments.

Glory to the exalted Buddhas: Hum-Eat-bind-Sphotaya. This is the Mantra of a Ta-grin. (S. Kinnara).

Then the Bodhisatwa Sahi nyin po (S. Kshiti gerbha) being immersed in the meditation called “the region of reasoning,” uttered this mystery, Glory to the exalted Buddhas, Ha ha-ha Putanu—salutation. This is the mantra of Sahi nyin po.

Then the Bodhisatwa Jam-pal Zhon nur gyurępā (S. Manju Sri Kumara Bhatta bhuta) being immersed in the deep meditation called “the miraculous transformation by the blessings of Buddha,” thus uttered his own radical mystery, Glory to the exalted Buddhas. He-he-he, the young prince, Liberation. Communion.—Remember, remember! Swaha. This is the Mantra of Jam-pal.

Then Chañna Dorje (S. Vajrapāñi), the lord of those who deal with mysteries, being immersed in the deep meditation called “the invincible,” thus uttered together with his followers his own radical mystery, Glory to the exalted Vajras, fierce and greatly wrathful. Hum. This is the mantra of Chañna Dorje.

(Similar mantras by the goddess Māmakī and five others follow, occupying three lines).

Then the Lord Sakya Thup-pa (Muni) being immersed in the deep meditation called “the mine of precious things,” thus with his attendants uttered his own mystery, Glory to the exalted Buddhas; reliever
of all distress; master of all virtue. Equal, equal to the heavens—salutation. This is the Mantra of Sakyatrupa).

(Similar mantras are continued through the following page of the same leaf.)

The Tibetan Text in Roman Character.

Note.—The letters in italics at the commencement of any syllable, are omitted in the pronunciation. The Sanskrit passages or mantras are printed in italics.

Mi blun po dé dag gis hdi itar bchom-ladan-hdas thams chad mkhyen pa chhos thams chad la mi ah brn yes pa Sems chan gyi don thogs "par thugs su chhud pa dês sion sms chan rnams la phan par Bshed nas hdi dag thams chad bsad do zhes byas var ni mishes so.

Chhos rnams kyi ni chhos kyi mts'han bLun po dês ni dé mi zhes; Chhos rnams kun gyi mts'han nyid ni, stong pa nyid du yang dag gsungs sâags pa rtag tu der gnas nas, rab tu âes par las byaho. Bgegs zhi var bya va rim par phyé và sté rgyas paho.

Dé-nas phyag na rdo rje la sogs pa rdo rje hdsin pa dé dag dang Kun tu bzang po la sogs pa byang chhub sms Dpah di rnams kyi bchom-ldan-hdas rnam-par-snang-mdsad la phyag hts'hal nas snying rje chhen po hbyung vahi dkyil âkhor chhen po hdir chhos kyi dvyings rnam par dag pahi Sgo ji ltar rtags pa rang rang gi ta'hig tu brjod pahi ta'hig gis gsang sâags rnams smra var hdom nas bchom-ladan-hdas la gsol vo btab po dé nas bchom-ldan-hdas rnam par snang mdsad kyiis byang chhub sms dpah dé dag dang rdo rje hdsin dé dag la mi nyams pahi chhos nyid ni byin gyis brlabs nas âkha stsal pa: Rigs kyi bu dag chhos kyi vyings ji ltar rtags pa bzhin sms chan gyi khams rnam par sbyang vahi gsang sâags kyi ta'hig rnams smra-shec-


* The Tibetan fragment of Giorgi commences here.
Translation of a Tibetan Fragment.

Dé-nas byang-chhub sems dpah sgrib pa thams chad rnam par sel va
Snying rje chhen pohi Stobs zhes bya vahi ting gé hdsin la snyoms par
zhugs- nas gsang sngags smras pa: Nama Samanta Buddhánám,
A’swaáta hríta, Auyudgata, Trám Trám, Ram, Ram, Swáhá. Sgrib
ba thams chad rnam par sel vahi ho.

Dé nas byang chhub sems dpah kun tu spyan ras gzigs dvang phyug
spyan ras gzigs zhes bya vahi ting gi hdsin-la snyoms par zhugs nas
rang gi snying po hkhor dang bchas par smras pa: Namah Samanta
Buddhánám, Sarvoa Tathágata, Avalókita, Kárañá, Mâyá, Ra Ra
Ra, Hum jah, Swáhá. Spyan ras gzigs dvang phyug gi ho.

Nama Samanta Buddhánám, jang jangza, Swáhá. Mthu-chhen-
thob pahi ho.

Nama Samanta Buddhánám, Karnnodhávé Túri Tarání, Swáhá.
Lhá mo sgrol ma hi ho.

Nama Samanta Buddhánám, Sarvoa Bhaya Trásáái Hum spoh-

Nama Samanta Buddhánám, Tathágata Vîshwâyá, Sambavé,
Padma máling, Swáhá.

Gos dkar-chan gyi-ho. Nama Samanta Buddhánám, Hum khada
bandha sphon-taya, Swáhá. RTa NGrin gyi ho.

Dé nas byang chhub sems dpah-sahi snying po rdo rje mishigs pa
rjug pahi yul zhes bya vahi ting gé hdsin las snyoms par zhugs nas
gsang sngags smras pa: Namah Samanta Buddhánám Ha Ha Ha,
Putánu, Swáhá. Sahí snying pahi ho.

Dé nas byang chhub sems Dpah njam dpal gnéhon nur gyur pas
sangs rgyas kyi byin gyis brlabs rnam par hphrul pa zhes bya vahi
ting gé hdsin la snyoms par zhugs nas rang gi snying po smras-pa:
Nama Samanta Buddhánám, Hé Hé Hé, Kumaraka, Vimukti,

Dé nas gsang va pahi bdag po Phyang na rdo rje mi hpham pahes
bya vahi ting gé hdsin la snyoms par zhugs nas rang gi snying po
hkhor dang bchas pa smras pa: Namah Samanta Vajráannée,
Chánda Máká°*°° Ros’hána Hum. Phyakna rdo rjéhi ho.

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Dé-nas dehi ts’hé. Chom-drán-kjas Shákya Thub pas rin po chhehi
hayung gnas zhes bya vahi ting gé hdsin la snyoms par zhugs nas
nyid kyi snying po hkhor dang bchas pa gsungs pa: Namah Samanta
Buddhánám, Sarvoa klésha nishuddhána, Sarvoa Dherma vahi praptá,
Gagana sama sama, Swáhá. Shákya Thub pahi ho.

* Giorgi’s fragment ends here in the middle of the word máhá, the remaining
passage is added to complete the sense.