

IV.—Translation of a Tibetan Passport, dated A. D. 1688. By M. Alex. Csoma de Körös.

[Read 24th April, 1833.]

In Hyde's *Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum* (2nd edition, page 552-3), there is an engraving of a passport granted by the governor (or grand Lama) of *Lassa*, to an Armenian, of which, at the time of its publication, no European was able to decypher the characters. The learned author's account of it is in the following words :

"Secundò damus *Scripturam Tatarorum de Boutan** (al. *Boutunt*) citra *Imaum supra Indiam*. Hujus lectio est á dextrâ†: et hocce ejusdem elegantissimum specimen est, id quod vulgò sonat, *un passport, seu subconductis literis*, à principe urbis et provinciæ de *Boutan* datæ, nuperis annis, *Chogja Ouanni* (i. e. Domino Joanni) mercatori *Armeno* ibidem negotianti: et dictus princeps nomen suum (ut vides) *sigilli* loco et forma majusculis et implicatis characteribus infra apposuit. Talis sigilli impressio *arabibus* dicitur *توقيع tauktá*; *Persis et Turcis* *طغرا tográ*, unde, apud eos, talis majusculorum characterum scriptor, aut talis sigilli factor, vel appositor seu principis subsignator, vocatur *Tográt*. Hanc chartam nobiscum communicavit singularis amicus D. Joh. Evans S. T. D. nuperis annis ex India redux."

The character of this curious manuscript proves to be the small running-hand of the Tibetans, written and engraved with hardly a single error. The following is a version of it in Roman characters, which may be interesting to those who possess Hyde's very learned volume.

Chhos-Åkhor dPal-gyi Lha-sa nas.—rGya-gar Åphags-yul bar-gyi Sa-lam-du Åkhor-pahi Ser, skya, drag, zhan, Lhahi mi-rje rdsong dsodod gnyer las-Ådsin, Sog, Bod, Hor, ÅBrog, ir-Åchhihi Ågrul Ågrims, lam Åphrangs Åsrung Åkag, rgan mi Åmangs bya-va zhi drag-gis sné slébs Åchas mthah-dag-la springs-pa.—Lha-sa p'hun-ts'hoge Åchang-lo-chan-gyi Ågron-po mGo-Åkar‡ It'hang-na-chan mi Åbhi zhon khal Åcha-drug Åchas nyé-khohi ts'hong gyur grubs-nas rang yul-du log Ågro-var stahur-gyi (? Lhabur-gyi) mts'hon gang spyihi par rog nyan-du gang Ågro-las sné gor Åp'hrog Åchom sogs gnod Ågol-du log-par Ågro-va nyan ma byed-par phar phyr-du Åde-var Ågrims-chhug.—Zhes sa-Åbrug zla ts'hes-la lugs gnyia kyi Ådun-sa Chhos-Åkhor chhen-po dPal-gyi Lha-sa nas bris.

* *Boutan*, though applied by Europeans and Mohammudans to Tibet generally, is properly the name of one of the southern provinces, called in Tibetan *Llopato*: *Lhasse* is the capital of Tibet Proper or *U-tsang*. [See Journ. As. Soc. i. 123.]

† This is of course a mistake: the Tibetan reads like the Sanskrit from the left hand.

‡ The name mGo-Åkar (properly white-headed, but rendered by me, above, by Mohammedans) formerly was applied in Tibet both to the Muhammedans of India and to the Europeans. But of late the Tibetans have commenced calling the Europeans by the name of Philing-pa, and an European of British India by that of rGye-Philing (-pa) or Indo-European.

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Bod-pahi zla Adres med-ching lo-thog mi-khal-gyi Akhari agrub dés Agré byang phyin bdé-var Agrims chhug.

A square seal.

Translation.

“ From the noble (city) Lhasa, the circumambulating race of religion.—To those that are on the road as far as *Arya Dèsa* or India, to clerical, laical, noble, ignoble lords (or masters) of men; to residents in forts, stewards, managers of affairs, to Mongols, Tibetans, Turks, and to dwellers in tents in the desert; to ex-chis (or el-chis, envoys, or public messengers, vakils or ambassadors, &c.) going to and fro; to keepers and precluders of bye-ways (or short-cuts); to the old (or head) men, collectively, charged to perform some business of small or great importance; to all these is ordered (or is made known). These four foreign (or travelling) persons residing at Lhasa, Ichang-lo-chan, Mohammedans of It’hang-na, after having exchanged their merchandize, going back to their own country, having with them sixteen loads on beasts; having nothing for their defence except some Lahori-weapons,—do not hinder, rob, plunder, et cetera, them; but let them go to and fro in peace.

Thus has been written from the noble Lhasa, the great religious race, from the senate-house of both ecclesiastical and civil affairs, in Sa-Abrug* (in the year of T. ch. 1688). On the day of the month. (These dates are wanting).

Note.—There is no Tibetan joined with them. They have about a man’s load of victuals wrapped up in a bundle; with that there has been made an increase (of packages), but let them go in peace.”

A square seal.

* Sa-Abrug (*earth’s dragon*) is the title of the second year of the Tibetan cycle of sixty years: it corresponds with *Vibhava* of the Indian and *Vá Dâta* of the Chinese cycle. The Tibetan reckoning commences from February, 1026: as therefore Hyde’s first edition was printed in 1701, and he uses the expression “*superis anni ex India redus*,” the MSS. has been referred to the twelfth cycle, then current, which fixes its date to the year 1688.

Colonel Warren in the *Kala Sanakâita* (Chron. tab. xxi.) has given a full description of the Indian system;—a catalogue of the Tibetan cycle, which is two-fold, one following the Sanskrit, the other following the Chinese system, will be published in the Tibetan Dictionary now preparing for the press.