

Note on the Pronunciation of the Tibetan Language.—By the Rev. H. A. JAESCHKE of *Kyèlang*.

[Received 1st February 1865. Read 1st February, 1865.]

The Tibetan language is known to possess a very rich literature, though the smaller part of it is original, most of the Tibetan works being translations from the Buddhistic part of the Sanscrit literature. The whole is not of an older date than the 7th century, as that king of Tibet who despatched one of his ministers to India, in order to learn Sanscrit and create an alphabet for the Tibetan language, was a contemporary of Mohammad. It is incredible, of course, that he should have loaded his writings with a great many superfluous signs, especially when his only pattern was the Sanscrit, with its perfect accommodation of the sign to the sound. On the contrary, he is likely to have expressed in writing, with a few exceptions perhaps, every sound of the language, as it was pronounced at his time. At present, however, the Tibetan mode of spelling differs nearly as much from the actual pronunciation in the greater part of the country as in the English, or rather in the French language, for the discrepancy mostly rests in the consonants, many of which have changed in certain cases their original sounds, or are dropped in speaking, though they are, considered etymologically, essential elements of a word, and therefore appear in writing, in a proportion similar to such French words as : *ils parlent* ; *qu'est cela* &c., *e. g.* *bkrashis*, pronounced *tashí*. In French, the cause and history of this discrepancy is clear, as we know the Latin mother as well as the Gallic child, and possess specimens from all ages, by which we can trace the gradual changes. In Tibetan, nothing of the kind exists, or at least very little has yet been discovered ; nor is there much reason for hoping that in their own literature anything has been preserved that might throw light on the history of the language, since the grammatical as well as the historical powers of the Tibetan mind seem to be developed to a very small degree, and the ancient orthography has been, with few exceptions, scrupulously left unchanged, since its invention 1200 years ago. Csoma de Körös and other grammarians, especially Cunningham

in his work on Ladak, mention some dialectical differences in the pronunciation of various districts, which in some instances agree more accurately with the way of spelling, and the latter states that the more learned Lamas, but these only, pronounce distinctly, though rapidly, the initial letters which are usually silent. But a closer inquisition shows the interesting fact, that in the most western extremity of Tibet in the province of Purig and the northernmost part of Ladak, nearly all the consonants and the ancient pronunciation of the language, as it was at the period of the invention of the alphabet, has been preserved by *the illiterate*, not by a few learned Lamas only, in the case of whom we could not be sure whether their accommodation to the ancient spelling were not merely artificial—a capricious imitation of what they are trained to revere as the dialect of their sacred writings. Let me mention some instances. The letters here in question are more especially those compound consonants, consisting of two or three elements, which are in Tibetan, as in many cases in Sanscrit also, denoted in writing by putting the following consonant *below* the preceding one. Now *e. g.* the letter *s* as initial, with a following *k, t, &c.* is spoken distinctly in Ladak, as in *skud*, language; *stan*, mat; *skarma*, star; *l* in the same case is pronounced even in Lahoul, *e. g.* *ltawa*, to look at; *lchangma*, willow; *r* in the same case, in no instance in Lahoul, but in many in Ladak, *e. g.* *rdowa*, the stone, and in still more, perhaps in every word where it appears in writing, in Purig, *e. g.* *rgyalwa*, victorious, or more commonly, good, excellent, which is pronounced by Ladakees, and I think everywhere else in Tibet: *gyalla*; and so are words as: *rdzogs*, *rdza*, *rdzun*, &c. In a similar way a villager of Purig will call a knife, *gri*; washing, *lchruwa*; rice, *bras*; child, *phruqu*; whereas even in Ladak these four words are heard like *dri*, *thruwa*, *dras*, *thruqu*, in Lahoul and more to the East like *di*, *tuwa*, *dai* or *de*, *tugu*, with little or nothing of the innate *r*, and the *p* and *k* sounds changed into *t* sounds with a more or less lingual pronunciation. Again: those connected with what would be spelled *y* in English are pronounced according to their spelling only in Purig and Balti in all cases, *e. g.* *byang*, north; *phyag*, hand (in respectful language); *phyugpo*, rich; these are spoken like *jang*, *chhag*, *chhugpa* already in the southeastern part of Ladak, and in Lahoul; whereas in the case of the *k* sounds,

in words like *khyi*, the dog, *gyelwa*, to fall down, *Kye-lang*, the name of the village in Lahoul where the Moravian Mission is established, the correct pronunciation has been preserved even in that province, and *chhi* instead of *khyi* is only used by still more Eastern Tibetans. Upon the whole, it may be said that, if not perfectly, still to a certain degree, the different changes which the pronunciation of the language has undergone in the course of upwards of one thousand years, may be traceable even at the present day in the different districts of Tibet from Purig and Balti in the west to the capital town of Lhasa near the Chinese frontier, where the deviation, or we may justly say, the degeneration has reached its highest pitch, in introducing assimilations, dissolving certain consonants nearly into vowels, dropping others entirely, confounding two or three cognate sounds into one intermediate, and mingling the short vowels with one another. Assimilations as in the Latin *compono* instead of *con-pono*, are unheard of in the written Tibetan language, as also in the spoken dialect of the western provinces; the word *gompa* will in Purig mean nothing but a step; a different idea, that of custom, practice, which the Lahoulee will include, being connected with the spelling: *gomspa* or *'sgompa*. In the pronunciation of Lhasa two more, *gonpa* to dress, to put on, and *gonpa*, monastery, are mixed up with the two former, by means of assimilation of the *n*. Again: *s* in the end of a syllable is pronounced in Purig and Ladak, but dropped in most other districts, not without a prolonging or changing influence on the preceding vowel. Thus the word *chhos*, religion, law, (*dharma* in Sanser.) is pronounced *chhös* in Ladak, *chhoi* in Lahoul, *chhō* in upper Kunawur, *chhō* in Lhasa; *d* and *g*, in the end of a syllable, are melted into semivowels or nearly liquid consonants in a similar way as in Danish (though not exactly the same): *skad*, the language, loses its *s* even in Southern Ladak, but in Lhasa it is mutilated into *kě'*; *smad*, the nether part, into *mě'*; *Bod*, proper name of Tibet, the Bhota of Sans., into *Bö'*; *lehags*, iron, into *chä'*, scarcely different in pronunciation from *ja*, tea; *sringmo*, sister, is pronounced *shringmo* in west Tibet, *singmo* or nearly *simo* in Lhasa; *sa* and *za*, *shi* and *zhi* (the latter like *ji* when pronounced as in French,) which are as accurately distinguished by every Lahoulee or Ladakee, as *s* in seal and *z* in zeal, are confounded in Lhasa.

But all this would leave the linguist hopeless as to the question of the historical periods *when* these changes took place, as it only adds the *à posteriori* proof, that the pronunciation has once agreed with the spelling, to the *à priori* conclusion which everybody may infer from the mere fact of the present discrepancy. A step towards the solution of this question may perhaps be possible by the study of the languages of some frontier districts. An instance of peculiar interest in this respect is found in the Boo-nan language, spoken in a small district of Lahoul, and in part of Kunawur, where it is called Tibar-skad, Tibar-language. It is the familiar tongue of the Lahoul villages in the Bhaga valley, just above the junction of the Bhaga and Chundra rivers, over an extent of about 10 miles on both sides, whereas Tibetan is understood and spoken fluently enough in intercourse with genuine Tibetans by the adult men, but more or less imperfectly by women and children, and many Tibetan words, very common in books, and generally known in Ladak, are not understood by any one in this district. The fact of this language existing in two different provinces, like two islands separated from each other by the pure Tibetan population of Spiti and the pure Hindu nationality of Kooloo, renders the theory of a wider diffusion, of the Tibarskad language in former times probable, and agrees with the assertion of the Lahoul people, that even within the remembrance of the present generation, its district was greater than it is now, and has been more and more encroached upon by the Tibetan. Now in this language a great many Tibetan words are to be met with, which may have induced General Cunningham to class this Tibarskad under the head of dialects of the Tibetan; but I think the great difference of the grammatical structure of both languages (the Boo-nan being at least as elaborate as the Hindi, the Tibetan nearly devoid of inflections at all) and even a closer examination of the lexical stock of the language, must lead to a different opinion. Nearly all the words of primary necessity (an inference against which Latham objects, I do not see exactly with how much reason), and many others are not borrowed from the Tibetan, any more than from Sanscrit, but have an original character. Here is a small list of words all of which seem to be original, or at least I know not from what other language they might be derived.

<i>Kati</i> , scissors.	<i>Debu</i> , snake.
<i>Kirti</i> , basket.	<i>Deg</i> , leather.
<i>Kutulu</i> , bag.	<i>Deska</i> , lie, falsehood.
<i>Kundrang</i> , tub, basin.	<i>Dompa</i> , blacksmith.
<i>Kumtsi</i> , bow, for shooting.	<i>Pug</i> , roasted grains.
<i>Kurkutrig</i> , ant.	<i>Peltsi</i> , milk.
<i>Kyugs</i> , ashes.	<i>Phos</i> , garment, dress.
<i>Koang gul kwang gul</i> , neck (<i>gul</i> is Tib.)	<i>Phyutsi</i> , hole.
<i>Koar</i> , <i>kwar</i> , jug, jar.	<i>Ba</i> , wall.
<i>Khu</i> , smoke.	<i>Bang</i> , foot, leg.
<i>Khudrub</i> , fist.	<i>Bitang</i> , door.
<i>Khug</i> , meal of roasted barley.	<i>Bitsi</i> , thread.
<i>Khur</i> , knife.	<i>Bed</i> , younger brother.
<i>Khul</i> , bag.	<i>Betse</i> , twin.
<i>Khoartum</i> , <i>khwartum</i> , egg.	<i>Botri</i> , buttermilk.
<i>Khoa</i> , <i>khwa</i> , raven.	<i>Botsi</i> , finger.
<i>Gara</i> , donkey.	<i>Byanja</i> , can, pot.
<i>Gogs</i> , spittle.	<i>Byenmo</i> , wife.
<i>Gyugs</i> , dust.	<i>Byerbu</i> , trowsers.
<i>Gyum</i> , house.	<i>Byutsi</i> , mouse, rat.
<i>Gyen</i> , spring (as a season).	<i>Mashung</i> , wife.
<i>Gram</i> , stone.	<i>Mir</i> , fat (melted).
<i>Gring</i> , beam, timber.	<i>Mu</i> , snow.
<i>Goanu</i> , <i>gwanu</i> , fox.	<i>Mutsa</i> , mustachio.
<i>Chatram</i> , sickle.	<i>Me</i> , <i>labs</i> , flame.
<i>Chi</i> , grass.	<i>Me</i> , <i>lum</i> , fire-place.
<i>Nyugtsi</i> , monkey.*	(<i>Me</i> , is Tib. and means fire.)
<i>Tigs</i> , cover, lid, cork.	<i>Tsitsi</i> , child.
<i>Thagadrang</i> , spark.	<i>Tsemel</i> , daughter ; girl.
<i>Thigi</i> , leather bag, purse.	<i>Tsam</i> , wool.
<i>Thopo</i> , drinking cup.	<i>Tsog</i> , thornbush.
<i>Dan</i> , belly.	<i>Watsi</i> , clue (of woollthread).
<i>Diptsi</i> , top.	<i>Wal</i> , shovel.
<i>Diskar</i> , thirst.	<i>Wampu</i> , yellow bear (the only bear occurring in Lahoul.)

* Monkeys are not in Lahoul ; in the Koonawur Tibarskad, Cunningham mentions only the terms *gonas* and *brandras* ; What may the origin of *nyugtsi* be ?

<i>Zad</i> , barley.	<i>Sagsa</i> , grasshopper.
<i>Yushi</i> , meal, flour.	<i>Sampa</i> , meat, eatables.
<i>Rangtsi</i> , sleeve.	<i>Sibi</i> , flute, pipe.
<i>Rig</i> , field.	<i>Sēshi</i> , friend, acquaintance.
<i>Rindri</i> , lead (plumbum).	<i>Soti</i> , water.
<i>Rētsi</i> , ear.	<i>Skyugtrong</i> , breast.
<i>Roang</i> , <i>rwang</i> , hill, mountain.	<i>Sta</i> , vein ; artery.
<i>La</i> , goat ; rock, cliff.	<i>Stagorwa</i> , neck.
<i>Lama</i> , sheep.	<i>Smutig</i> , flea.
<i>Lala</i> , song.	<i>Awa</i> , father.
<i>Lang</i> , dung.	<i>Ag</i> , mouth.
<i>Lan</i> , wind.	<i>Amphang</i> , carrot.
<i>Lab</i> , leaf.	<i>Amtsi</i> , road.
<i>Las</i> , price.	<i>Kyüi</i> , long.
<i>Lis</i> , ice.	<i>Khai</i> , black.
<i>Len</i> , work, action.	<i>Khyei</i> , sweet.
<i>Lo</i> , carpet.	<i>Khyoi</i> , dry.
<i>Lha</i> , moon.	<i>Gadgad</i> , rough.
<i>Lha Kham</i> , month.	<i>Golweï</i> , blind.
<i>Lhe</i> , tongue.	<i>Grangi</i> , <i>grani</i> .*
<i>Lhegs</i> , villager ; community.	<i>Ngai</i> , straight.
<i>Shag</i> , birch-tree.	<i>Chung gor</i> , deep.
<i>Sharpa</i> , youth, boy.	<i>Chuini</i> , few.
<i>Shirti</i> , rain.	<i>Chhei</i> , warm.
<i>Shirped</i> , broom.	<i>Chhoi</i> , fat, well-fed.
<i>Shu</i> , blood.	<i>Nyeme</i> , nice (to the taste).
<i>Shugtsi</i> , comb.	<i>Tai</i> , being, having, possessing, rich.
<i>Shel</i> , summer.	<i>Tingi</i> , blue.
<i>Shosha</i> , heart.	<i>Tunig</i> , short.
<i>Shrag</i> , shame.	<i>Thi</i> , wet, thin (in case of liquids).
<i>Shrang</i> , horse, pony.	<i>Damshi</i> , pure, clean, fine.
<i>Shrig</i> , louse (Tib. <i>shig</i> .)	<i>Dezi</i> , great.
<i>Shrim</i> , arrow.	<i>Nui</i> , new.
<i>Shoantsi</i> , <i>shwantsi</i> , dove.	<i>Noi</i> , much, many.
<i>Sazha</i> , hukka.	

* It is not *ng* in sing, but the nasalised vowel as in the Hindustani *men*, *meñ*.

<i>Pari</i> , broad.	<i>Kyulchum</i> , to rob.
<i>Punji</i> , hot, pungent.	<i>Kyormen</i> , to discharge (an arrow).
<i>Pëtsëtsi</i> , little, small.	<i>Khugchum</i> , to find.
<i>Phrei</i> , rough.	<i>Khyuchum</i> , to cover.
<i>Byai</i> , thin (of cloth, paper &c.).	<i>Galchum</i> , to liberate.
<i>Mangi</i> , red.	<i>Gyagsmen</i> , to listen.
<i>Wus</i> , moist.	<i>Gyarchum</i> , to fear, be afraid of.
<i>Zhili</i> , bright (opp. dark).	<i>Grechum</i> , to bite.
<i>Yuü</i> , old (as clothes and other things).	<i>Goalchum gwalchum</i> , to hang up.
<i>Lai</i> , thin, fine (as thread &c.).	<i>Chächum</i> , to smear, paint.
<i>Loi</i> , easy.	<i>Chüchum</i> , to press, squeeze.
<i>Lhei</i> , yellow.	<i>Chhingchum</i> , to rob.
<i>Shangtre</i> , old (as men &c.).	<i>Chhülchum</i> , to select.
<i>Shi</i> , white.	<i>Chhurchum</i> , to squeeze out.
<i>Shiri</i> , rough.	<i>Chhuinchum</i> , to bind, fasten.
<i>Shuri</i> , sour.	<i>Tigchum</i> , to cover.
<i>Sil sil</i> , smooth.	<i>Tidmen</i> , to irrigate.
<i>Soi</i> , cold.	<i>Toamen, twamen</i> , to mow, cut grass.
<i>Ebbo</i> , good.	<i>Toanchum, twanchum</i> , to borrow (money).
<i>Gyi</i> , I.	<i>Thugchum</i> , to break.
<i>Han</i> , thou.	<i>Thüchum</i> , to melt.
<i>Dal</i> , he, she, it.	<i>Thirchum</i> , to send (a man).
<i>Hingsore</i> , we.	<i>Thogchum</i> , to put off (a coat).
<i>Hantsore</i> , you.	<i>De</i> , is.
<i>Daltsore</i> , they.	<i>Dodmen</i> , to meet.
<i>Tsore</i> , all.	<i>Ni</i> , is.
<i>Thazu</i> , this.	<i>Niza</i> , was.
<i>Thë</i> , that.	<i>Panchum</i> , to fly.
<i>Gyo</i> , which } interj.	<i>Pinchum</i> , to fill.
<i>Kha</i> , what }	<i>Punchum</i> , to grow.
<i>Tiki</i> , one.	<i>Phanchum</i> , to sew.
<i>Bi</i> , four.	<i>Phochum</i> , to put on (clothes).
<i>Kachum</i> , to turn.	<i>Phyamen</i> , to speak.
<i>Kunchum</i> , to look at.	<i>Bruchum</i> , to wipe.
<i>Kugchum</i> , to arrest.	<i>Tsagchum</i> , to put in.
<i>Kyichum</i> , to wash.	<i>Tsabchum</i> , to cleave.

<i>Zhedmen</i> , to sit.	[istence. <i>Alchum</i> , to take away.
<i>Yagsmen</i> , to arise, come into ex-	<i>Elmen</i> , to go. .
<i>Yen</i> , is.	<i>Tha</i> , not (in prohibitive and nar-
<i>Richum</i> , to bring.	rating sentences.)
<i>Rochum</i> , to roast.	<i>Thazung</i> , <i>tharang</i> , there.
<i>Ligchum</i> , to do, make.	<i>Thang</i> , to-day.
<i>Lochum</i> , to say.	<i>Thing</i> , <i>thin</i> , (nasal) here.
<i>Shanchum</i> , to rise.	<i>Thindzug</i> , thus.
<i>Smyadchum</i> , to touch.	<i>Thong</i> , therein, within.
<i>Hirchum</i> , to fall.	<i>Nung</i> , there.
<i>Helchum</i> , to carry away.	<i>Hya</i> , yesterday.
<i>Hyugschum</i> , to throw.	<i>Ire</i> , again.
<i>Hoangsmen</i> , <i>hwangsmen</i> , to go out,	<i>Odchi</i> , to-morrow.
come out, flow out, &c.	<i>Chi</i> , from.
<i>Hoanchum</i> , <i>hwanchum</i> , to take out,	<i>Mang</i> , in (-meñ Hind. ?)
bring out, draw out, &c.	

The great multitude of Tibetan words, however, which are adopted in the Boo-nan language can be divided into two classes: 1, those in which the present Boo-nan pronunciation agrees with the Tibetan *spelling*, i. e. the *ancient* Tibetan pronunciation, though this pronunciation is not preserved in the Tibetan of Lahoul itself, in many cases not even in Ladak, perhaps in some instances not anywhere else. The Boo-nan people themselves, whenever they speak Tibetan, use the modern pronunciation according to the custom of Lahoul, which often widely differs from the written letters.

2. Those words in which the Boo-nan pronunciation agrees with the *modern* Tibetan.

To No. 1 belong:

Kres, hunger, in modern Lahoulee, Tibetan unknown.

<i>Khams</i> , appetite,	kham.
<i>Khral</i> , tax,	thal.
<i>Khrutsi</i> , arm (elbow)	(vacat.)
<i>Khrui</i> , cubit, (ib.).....	thu.
<i>Khaspa</i> , wise, skillful,	khaiṣa.
<i>Gyogspa</i> , quick,.....	gyogpa.
<i>Grampa</i> , cheek,.....	ḍampa.
<i>Groypo</i> , river,	ḍogpo.

<i>Ngospo</i> , truth (in Tib. thing, reality)	ngoipo.
<i>Chespa</i> , dear, cherished,	chepa.
<i>Snyingrus</i> , industry, in Tib. courage,	nyingru.
<i>Snyema</i> , ear (of corn,)	nyema.
<i>Dus</i> , time,	dui.
<i>Stan</i> , carpet,	tan.
<i>Stong</i> , thousand,	tong.
<i>Spu</i> , hair,	pu.
<i>Ugs</i> , breath,	ug, u.
<i>Phyagphulchum</i> , to make reverence, adore,	chhagpulwa.
<i>Phyugpo</i> , rich,	chhugpa.
<i>Brawobrao</i> , buckwheat,	ḍawo.
<i>Brag</i> , rock, cliff,	ḍag.
<i>Brangsa</i> , dwelling-place, habitation,	ḍangsa.
<i>Brichum</i> , to write,	ḍiwa.
<i>Myangchum</i> , to state,	nyangwa.
<i>Zugs</i> , body,	zug.
<i>Yas</i> , right (not left,)	yai.
<i>Ras</i> , cotton cloth,	rai.
<i>Rigs</i> , kind, sort,	rig.
<i>Ruspa</i> , bone,	ruipa.
<i>Sman</i> , medicine,	man.

To No. 2.

Tam, cabbage, Tib. literally; kram.

Kad, language, lit. skad.

Karma, star, lit. skarma.

Thim, judgment jurisdiction, lit. khrims.

Du, corner; ship, lit. gru.

Doi, counsel, advice, lit. gros.

Nyingzhe, compassion, benevolence, lit. snyingzhe.

Tontog, harvest, lit. stontog.

Jungwa, element, lit. byungwa.

Chodpa, behaviour, lit. spyodpa.

Digpa, sin, lit. sdigpa.

Lobma, pupil, *lobpon* teacher, lit. slobma and slobdpon.

This would seem to indicate two different influxes of Tibetan words and ideas, one at a very early period, the other much later,—so many

centuries after the invention of the alphabet, that the pronunciation was already altered to that of the present day. It is not impossible that a more complete dictionary of this language in both its dialects, that of Kunawar and that of Lahoul, and perhaps also of other unwritten Himalayan dialects and languages, situated as they are between the great Tibetan and Indian families, might afford more than one interesting result with regard to the history of the Tibetan language and the histories of the people of these countries, in their political situations as well in their civilisation. If such investigations happened to be aided by the discovery of local records of such a kind as formed the history of Sikkim, destroyed by the Nepalese soldiery (v. Hooker's *Him. Journ.* I. p. 331) it might be possible to clear up parts of the history of these countries hitherto very obscure.

It would seem to me as if the collection of words given above, might suggest the conjecture that the first of the two irruptions of Tibetan power and influence into these valleys, inhabited by Boonan-speaking mountaineers, was merely of a political nature, carrying with it such institutions as *taxes*, very probably the first thing which the small population of a secluded valley is likely to be taught by a foreign invader,—some new articles of manufacture (cotton cloth, carpets, &c.), words for the higher numerals, and some others; whereas the second,—perhaps going on in a more quiet and slow way,—brought with it judicial and governmental institutions of a somewhat higher order, and the religious and philosophical ideas as well as usages of Buddhism.

