

31. On the Persian Farmans granted to the Jesuits by the Moghul Emperors, and Tibetan and Newari Farmans granted to the Capuchin Missionaries in Tibet and Nepal.

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My principal object in coming to Calcutta was to search for the manuscripts on the Geography, History, Customs and Literature of Tibet and Nepal, left by the Capuchin Fathers, who for more than half a century laboured in those countries from the beginning of the 18th century.

While I am still in pursuit of some of these manuscripts, I discovered a few years back, in the Mission Archives of Agra, a good many Persian *farmāns* connected with the Jesuit Mission in Mogor. On exhibiting these privately to some members of your Society, I was asked by one of them to lay before you, for inspection and examination, the fruits of my researches. I readily accepted the offer: first, in order that by doing so I might remove from the minds of not a few learned Orientalists the doubts they may have on their real existence; and secondly, to find means to bring them to light, and thus to rescue them for ever from the dust of inaccessible libraries in which they have been buried for centuries.

Now the documents, which I have the pleasure to lay before you, Gentlemen, belong to different countries and are written in various languages.

Before dealing with the Persian *farmāns*, which all belong to the Moghul epoch, and spread over a period of two hundred years, it will not be out of place to state first the nature of a *farmān* and give a brief description of it.

Any paper authenticated by proper signatures is called a *Sanad*. Some *sanads*, which my collection exhibits, have nothing but the royal seal; others were first authenticated by the seals and signatures of the Ministers of State and afterwards ratified by affixing the royal seal; while a third class have only the seals and signatures of the Ministers without the royal seal. A *farmān* has the signatures of the Ministers together with the royal seal. *Farmān* is a Persian word derived from *farmūdan*, 'to order,' and when put in the mouth of Kings and Superiors, it signifies 'to say,' 'to speak.' Its origin may easily be traced to the Sanskrit word *Pramāṇa*, *pramān* and *parmān*, which means 'authority,' 'attestation' or 'scriptural assertion.' Hence, the Persian word means 'a command,' 'a mandate,' 'a royal patent,' and it is the general

term applied to royal mandates. According to Gladwin (*Ayeen Akbery*), it denotes a 'command of the emperor,' a royal commission. In Bengal the term was used for a patent to trade duty free. By way of eminence it means the charter which the East India Company obtained from Emperor Farrukh Siyar, granting them the liberty of trading, and other privileges. (Cf. H. Beveridge, *Comprehensive History of India*, Tom. I, p. 388). The expression *farmān-i Shāhī*, meaning the 'royal mandate,' is commonly used in the Persian and Urdū languages, the Arabic equivalent being *Manshūr*.

The *farmān* usually takes the following form, as may be seen on the mandates :

1. It begins with the holy name of God, such as *Allāhu Akbar*, 'God is great.' This formula reminds us of Akbar's name *Jalāl-ud Dīn Muḥammad Akbar*. The words *Allāhu Akbar* are ambiguous: they may mean 'God is great,' or 'Akbar is God.' There is no doubt that Akbar liked the phrase for its ambiguity, for it was used on coins, the imperial seals, and the heading of books, *farmāns*, etc. (See Blochmann's *Āin-i Akbarī* by Abul Fazl, Book I, Āin 77, p. 16; *Badāūnī*, p. 210).

2. Then, according to Abul Fazl, the *Muhr* or seal of his Majesty is put. The imperial seals of Akbar and Shāh 'Ālam, as may be inferred from the *farmāns*, have a turnip shape with a decorative border of conventional flowers. These seals cut in *riqā'* characters contain the emperor's name with those of his predecessors up to Timūr. His Majesty's own name is to be found in the centre and is encircled by the names of his forefathers.

3. Under this seal comes the *tughrā*,<sup>1</sup> or imperial signature, which contains the full name and titles of the king, written in a fine ornamental hand in the *Naskh* character.

4. Lastly, the text of the *farmān* is given in *Nasta'līq* (a fine round hand) or *shakastah* (a broken writing, a running hand) with date at the end, usually the Persian or Turkish month and the year of accession of the reigning king. The practice of

<sup>1</sup> *Tughrā* is the imperial signature. The royal titles prefixed to letters, diplomas or other public deeds are generally written in a fine ornamental hand. The great men of the East have long been admirers of calligraphy, or elegant writing. Some of the most distinguished Vizirs have prided themselves on being the finest penmen of the age; amongst the most remarkable was the celebrated *Husain* or '*Abi-Ismael* (Vizir to the Seljukian Sultan *Mas'ūd*) surnamed *Tograi*, on account of his excellence in this species of writing, but better known in Europe by his admired Arabic poem entitled *Carmen Tograi*. Being taken prisoner in a battle, wherein his sovereign was defeated by his brother *Mahmūd*, he was put to death (A.D. 1120) by that prince's Vizir, who hated him for his great abilities, but particularly, it is said, for his uncommon superiority in writing the *Tughra* character. (Ch. Wilkins' *Persian, Arabic and English Dictionary*.)

issuing *farmāns* dates from time immemorial. It was the practice of kings addressing their subjects on any point or matter. Though, presumably, very ancient *farmāns* may still exist, they are scarce and rare; some may be found which belong to the early Muḥammadan Kings of Delhi; but old *farmāns* and documents of the later Muḥammadan Kings, especially of the Moghul Emperors, are very common.

On the back of the *farmāns*, particularly of those belonging to the Moghul period, are inserted explanations of various offices: hence, we may reasonably conclude that the offices connected with the imperial mandates were in order, and several in number. Another striking feature worthy of note is that the *farmāns* were written on paper of different quality and size, some on simple paper, others on illuminated paper decorated with flowers and foliage, according to the position or rank of the people to whom they were addressed.

I do not intend, Gentlemen, to give you at present a detailed description of each of these *farmāns*; I reserve for the near future their publication: clear and legible impressions, their transliterations and English translations, with the necessary commentary notes as to the time and circumstances in which they were issued.

I. To begin with the first category which contains, as you will observe, Persian scripts, some are *Sanads*, also called *Parwānas*, of the different orders described above: but the collection exhibits also *farmāns* of different kinds, shapes, forms and quality, called *Farmān-i-'Āli Shān*, 'the exalted or the imperial mandate': *Farmān-i-Wājibu-l imtisal*, 'ordinances necessary to be obeyed': *Farmān-i-Jalil-anwān*, 'diplomas with the illustrious imperial signature' and other similar names. This collection begins with *farmāns* from the greatest of the Moghul Emperors in India. In his time the greatest monarch in the world, Akbar. Having become dissatisfied with Muḥammadanism, the religion of his ancestors and of his country, he sent repeatedly messengers to Goa, requesting that some qualified Christian teachers would come to him, and assuring them of a safe journey and an honourable reception. On their arrival at the imperial court, Akbar treated them with much respect and gave them liberty freely to propagate their religious sentiments, assuring them of his protection of themselves and their proselytes. The history of this Mission, the vicissitudes it had to undergo, the persecutions on the part of the Muḥammadans which it had to endure, will ever make us admire the moral courage, the zeal, and the perseverance of the Jesuit Fathers at the Moghul court. In fact, there is no part of the history of Catholic missions in India which exhibits scenes of more interest than some which occurred at Fatehpur-Sikri, Lahore, Agra and Dehli. The publication of these *farmāns* will form a firm basis, an immovable ground-work upon which the

history of the Catholic missions in the Moghul Empire must be written from the '*litterae annuae*' of the Jesuit missionaries. These *farmāns*, I am glad to say, confirm and corroborate the Jesuit letters even in their minutest details. Is it not remarkable, that we should meet in the heart of Hindostan, under the shadow of the only two imposing structures of Moghul might and supremacy which escaped the ravages of time and the devastation of successive invasions,—the Agra Fort, that powerful bulwark of the Moghul Empire, and the Tāj, that marvel of Muḥammadan architecture, that tomb unique in the world, where Shāh Jahān lies buried near his favourite Sultāna,—that we should meet, I say, in that very city, the only two remaining Christian buildings of that epoch, proclaiming in their decent modesty the history of the Jesuit Mission in Northern India: Akbar's Church in the Mission compound and the Martyrs' Chapel, that resting place, dating back as far as 1611, where most of the Jesuit Fathers who laboured in Moger lie interred?

It was under Akbar, the most tolerant as well as the ablest of the Moghul Emperors, that this church was erected. It has now existed more than 300 years, a long period when the important revolutions of that interval, the absolute authority of the monarchs, and the characteristic intolerance of their religion are considered. Is it not remarkable, too, that this unprotected altar of a faith equally obnoxious to the Muḥammadan and Hindū rulers, which the slightest breath of displeasure from either might have swept away, should have remained untouched amidst convulsions which have subverted monarchies and changed religions of state? It is true Shāh Jahān, after the fall of Hugli, had this church pulled down, but the altar remained. Aurangzeb, always jealous of whatever might diminish or disturb the unprecedented extent of his power, viewed the Christian edifice with some degree of disapprobation, and yet an order to remove the bell, which might interfere with the prayers of the Mussulmans, may be considered as an act rather of moderation than of intolerance or persecution.

Among the Persian *farmāns* we find one of Akbar, granting the building of a church in Cambayat town, and ordering that the administrative authorities of that place should not stand in the way. Churches also were built during his time at Lahore and Agra. Other documents belonging to the reign of Jahāngir either corroborate the permissions granted by his father in favour of the missionaries, or bestow land on the Firingīs for making gardens and cemeteries. One was issued in the 10th year of his reign with regard to providing accommodation for the English who were put up in the house of the Padres in Jawahari Warah at Ahmadābād. We find even a *Sanad* of the staunch Muḥammadan Aurangzeb, dated the 37th year of his reign and bearing the seal of his minister Asad Khān, exempt-

ing the Christians and the priests from the capitation tax. Others on the same subject from Bahādūr Shāh, Muḥammad Shāh, and 'Alamgīr are common.

'Alī Gauhar, son of 'Alamgīr II, known under the name of Shāh 'Alam, was still more liberal. He granted the Dervish Padre Gregory, for his maintenance, the village Imadapur of the Amlah Hawaili Palam, in the Province of Dar-ul Khilafah of Shāhjahānābād, free from all vexations of the revenue department and imperial taxes.

II. The second category shows two Tibetan diplomas in 'Umin' or 'Umin chuk' characters. The larger one is of Mi-Vagn, King of Tibet, at his residence of *Kadem Khanzar* in the year of the Iron Bird, the 30th of the seventh moon, which corresponds to the 9th September 1741 of the Christian era. The second is from the hand of the Dalai Lama, written and given at his great palace of Potala, the 28th of the first month of the star, called *Thrumto*, in the year of the Iron Bird, which is according to our reckoning October 7th, 1751. Both these instruments were given by the King and the Dalai Lama to the Capuchin Fathers, and allowed them to preach freely the Christian Religion, and their Tibetan subjects to embrace it unmolested. The original mandates are still preserved in the Archives of the Propaganda in Rome, where I found them written in a beautiful hand, on large yellow silk sheets, as is the custom at the Court of Lhasa. Both are duly authenticated with red-ink impressions of the seals of the King and the Dalai Lama. And yet who would believe it? Rash critics, French and English, have not only doubted their authenticity, but radically denied it. They considered them as '*impudent forgeries*,' styled the simple missionaries '*impostors*,' and applied to them the unwarranted epithet of '*sycophants*.' Now, learned Gentlemen, I present to you photos of these '*impudent forgeries*,' of these autograph letters, and as a monk myself and an historian, I am in duty bound to refute on behalf of these '*detestable Orders of Friars*'<sup>1</sup> the false accusations and calumnies made against them by unscrupulous critics. If the slightest doubt remains about them, I would invite you, honorable members of this famous and erudite Society, to go to Rome, and inspect for yourselves the autograph letters, exhibited in the library of the Urban College de Propaganda Fide, where Stephen Borgia, Secretary to that Congregation, wished them to be kept.

III. Here are three Newari or Nepalese inscriptions, one from King Jaya Ranagita Malla Deva, King of Badgao in Nepal, dated in the Newari year 858, 7th moon, or 31st October 1737.

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire Générale des Voyages*, Tom. XXVII, p. 290 et sqq. among the notes; Astley's *New Collection of Voyages and Travels*, London, 1747, Tom. IV, p. 620, among the notes.

The second is a deed of Jaya Prakas Malla Deva, Prince of Katmandu, dated 862, of the Nepal era, dark half of the moon, or November 10th, 1740. Both these were engraved on copper plates, and are grants of houses, gardens and wells, made in perpetuity to the Capuchin Fathers. I myself placed the originals in our *Museo delle Missioni* in the Capuchin Convent of Via Buon Compagni, Rome.

The third is a writ by King Jaya Ranagita Malla, King of Nepal (Badgao), and is a deed of freedom of conscience to the same Capuchin Fathers. The autograph is preserved in the Propaganda Archives, Rome.

IV. Finally, the Hindi script is an autograph letter of the King of Bettiah to the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV, asking him for missionaries to preach the Christian Religion in his Kingdom. After the expulsion of the Capuchin Fathers from Tibet, some retired to Nepal. Fr. Giuseppe Maria de' Bernini went to Bettiah, where under the patronage of the King he opened a new mission, which still exists in a most flourishing condition. The original letter exists also in the Archives of the Propaganda, Rome.

Now, Gentlemen, I have at great cost, arduous toils, and tiresome journeys tried to collect all the materials connected with the Catholic Missions in Tibet and Nepal, and I must now find means to publish them in English. This publication will be the more important because it includes in one volume all that the Catholic missionaries have written or said on Tibet and Nepal, from the 13th century down to the middle of the 18th. Who among you heard of Fr. Joseph d'Ascoli who entered Lhasa on the 19th of June 1707 with his companion Fr. Joseph Francis de Tours and stayed there till 1712? He left us an '*Itinerario de' Cappuccini dal Mogol al Nepal nel 1707.*' Domenico da Fano, another Capuchin, wrote a Latin-Tibetan dictionary as early as 1712, which is preserved in the '*Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*' (*Recherches sur les langues Tartares* Tom. 1, p. 336). Clements R. Markham rightly remarks that "Horazio della Penna studied Tibetan at Lhasa for twenty-two years," and Emil Schlagintweit in his *Buddhism in Tibet* (pp. 146-147) says: "The most important event for our knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism was the Capucini mission under the superintendence of Horacio de la Penna.... They (the Capuchins) collected much valuable information concerning the geography of the country, and the history, religion, manners and customs of the inhabitants. Horazio della Penna was particularly distinguished by an ardent zeal in the cause of Christianity; he translated into Tibetan a catechism of the Christian faith; the *Doctrina Christiana* of Cardinal Bellarmini; the *Thesaurus Doctrinæ Christianæ* of Torlot, and he also compiled a Tibetan-Italian dictionary." But, Gentlemen, the Propaganda Archives contain many other valuable and un-

known accounts of the religion of Tibet, written by this very able friar, all of which I have copied. He translated moreover from Tibetan into Italian :—

- I. *Sakya-tuba namtar*, or the History of Sakya Tuba.
- II. *Lam-Rim cembe*: the three great ways which gradually lead to perfection
- III. *Chiap-su-Drova*, or Principles which the Lamas have to follow.
- IV. *Sozar tharbe*, or prescriptions to escape the manifold transmigrations.

He wrote besides the Tibetan-Italian dictionary referred to by Schlagintweit, an Italian-Tibetan dictionary composed of 33,000 words. These two last MSS. were found last year in “*Bishop’s College.*” Calcutta, where I inspected them and found them to be in Fr. Orazio della Penna’s handwriting.

Who among you ever read the marvellous account of a journey to Lhasa by Cassiano de Beligatti of Macerata in 1741, lately discovered in the Municipal Library of Macerata in Italy, and published at Firenze, 1902, by Professor Alberto Magnaghi under the title “*Relazione inedita di un Viaggio al Tibet del Padre Cassiano Beligatti da Macerata (prima meta del secolo XVIII)*” ?

Who heard of the Jesuit Father Ippolito Desideri’s voluminous account of the geography, history, religion, and customs of Tibet, edited by Professor Carlo Puini in the ‘*Societa Geografica Italiana,*’ Rome, 1904, *Memorie*, volume X? (*Il Tibet, Geografia, Storia, Religione, Costumi, secondo la relazione del viaggio del P. Ippolito Desideri, 1715-1721*).

When in 1828 the able oriental scholar, Mr. Hodgson, first attempted to make known to the English the Nepalese language, and the literature and religion of that country, he had been preceded in the field half a century before, in Italy. The Capuchins of the Tibetan Mission had penetrated into Nepal at the dawn of the 18th century, and many among them had mastered the language and literature of that country as is evidenced by the publication of various ascetic works and translations of some Nepalese books. The latter essays suppose rather developed notions and more advanced studies than even the actual ones we possess of the Nepalese language. Voluminous dictionaries in manuscript, Italian-Newari, etc., were still extant at Bettiah some six years ago.

In 1771 the Library of the Propaganda was endowed with five manuscripts in the Nepalese tongue and character, about which nobody now feels the least concern, and the most interesting of which, however, deserves the honour of publication. Four of them are ascetic treatises on the Catholic Religion. They were brought to Rome by Father Anselm de Ragusa of the Capuchin Order, and Superior at that time of the Tibetan

Missions. These precious volumes were offered the same year to the Propaganda and placed by the Secretary of that Congregation, later Cardinal Borgia, in the Bibliotheca Collegii Urbani de Propaganda Fide. It is the more important to call the attention of Indianists to these MSS., because they are simply mentioned by Amaduzzi in his preface to the *Alphabetum Bramhanicum*, published in 1771 (p. 17), a work which is now obsolete. The donor deposited at the same time another volume, infinitely more precious. The manuscript, *ex charta radicis arboreæ*, contains a description of the deities, customs, ceremonies, etc. of that country, written in Nepalese, with a transliteration and an Italian translation, by Constantin d'Ascoli, and ends with a Nepalese Alphabet.

These few notes, Gentlemen, which I could easily multiply, will give you an idea of the vast amount of unpublished materials in my possession, and will afford ample proof that I need help for publishing them.

