

XXI.

THE SILVER COINAGE OF TIBET.

NEPAL and China have always provided for the wants of Tibet in regard to the coinage, and their influence is conspicuous even when the coins were struck within the Tibetan frontiers. As the series of these coins illustrates in the most interesting manner the chief political events of the end of the last century in those countries, the present notice has been compiled from the coins which I have classified in preparing my catalogue of the Coins of Far-Eastern Asia in the Collections of the British Museum.

Previously to the extension to Tibet of the Indian Rupee, which gradually supersedes the old system, the silver currency consisted of ancient mohurs (= 8 anna piece, the Mohammedan half rupee) of the last century, struck in Nepal by the former Râjas of Kathmandu, Bhatgaon, and Patan,¹ of rare silver pieces Tibeto-Nepalese,

¹ For practical purposes the Nepalese mohurs were in Tibet cut in pieces of $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{2}{3}$, and Father Huc has brought back in 1847 to the Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, a set of the fractions and an entire mohur. The impressions, which have been kindly sent to me by Mr. Ernest Babelon, of the Cabinet des Médailles, with their names, *Karmanga*, *Tcheptchet*, *Chogan*, and *Tchangka*, as written by Father Huc (in French orthography), show that the parts are from Patan coins, and the entire is a Bhatgaon one. The British Museum Collection contains a set of the same kind, one entire and three pieces, but without indication as to the traveller who brought them back. Pundit Nain Singh, in the report of his journey to Lhasa (1867), says: "The current coin of the country is a silver piece called Naktang, $2\frac{1}{2}$ of which pieces being the equivalent of one rupee. The silver pieces are cut into halves or into three pieces, the half-pieces are called *Chikyah*, and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Naktang is called *Karma*, and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Naktang is called *Shokang* or *Miscal*. There is also a large lump of silver, bearing the seal of the Chinese Emperor, the value of which is equal to 333 Naktangs called *Dojah* or *Kuras*." See *Report of a Route-Survey made by Pundit * * **—*from Nepal to Lhasa, and thence through the Upper Valley of the Bramapoutra to its source*, by Capt. T. G. Montgomerie, in *Journ. R. Geogr. Soc.* vol.

of silver pieces Tibeto-Chinese, and of silver lumps of Chinese origin used by weight.²

xxxviii. p. 173. This information from independent sources is so far exact, that with the help of the two dictionaries of Rev. H. A. Jaeschke (*A Romanized Tibetan and English Dictionary*, Lith. Kyelang in British Lahoul, 1866, 8vo., and *A Tibetan and English Dictionary with special reference to the prevailing dialects*; prepared and published at the charge of the Secretary of State for India in Council, London, 1881, 4to.), I have been able to trace back to their written original form, these spoken words so widely differentiated from their orthography. *Tchangka* (Huc) or *Tchran-ka* (Baber) is (with the phonetic decay of the lingual \dagger) the word *ťang-ka* borrowed from Hindustani, used in Eastern Tibet for a coin having a value of about six annas. (See *Rom. Dict.* p. 129). On the extension of the word, see the interesting remarks of a well known scholar Mr. A. Wylie, in *Journ. Shanghai Lit. and Scient. Soc.* (Shanghai, 1858, 8vo.) pp. 68-69.—*Naktang* of the Pundit is *Nags-rkyang* used in Western Tibet for cash. (See Jaeschke, *Rom. Dict.* p. 82).—*Karmanga* of F. Huc, *Karma* of the Pundit, show the process by which the real word *skar-lñá* = $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee (see *Dict. Tibet.*, p. 20), receives a popular etymology by attraction from *skar-ma* = star.—*Tcheptchet* of F. Huc, *Chikyah* of the Pundit, is *p'yed-brygad* for *p'yed-dan-brygad*, hence subst. half a rupee, in central provinces (*ibid.* p. 352). The extraordinary alterations of this word are regular according to the phonetic laws of alteration on the two sides of the country.—*Chogan* of F. Huc, *Shokang* of the Pundit, is *šo-gañ* = $\frac{2}{3}$ rupee (*ibid.* p. 478). *Miscal* is probably according to Col. Yule a transfer of the Arabic.—*Dojah* of the Pundit is the *rdó-t'sád* (= *yám-bu, rta-rmig-ma*), a bar of silver-bullion, of about 156½ *tolas* (4 pounds) in weight, the common medium of barter in Central Asia (*ibid.* p. 287.)

² Csoma Körösi in 1833 states that the English rupee circulates freely through *Western Tibet*. (Prinsep and Thomas, *Indian Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 31, U.T.) Father Desgodins on the *Eastern* side writes: "La Chine reçoit du Thibet: de l'argent en grande quantité, et dans cet argent beaucoup de roupies anglaises de l'Inde qui sont fondues et remises en globules ou lingots par les Chinois; elles n'ont plus cours à l'Est de Ta-tsién-lou. Sur la grande route du Thibet elles ne se pèsent pas; elles comptent pour $\frac{2}{10}$ d'once chinoise, ce qui vont 2 fr. 25, 2 fr. 30; ailleurs elles se pèsent comme tout autre argent." See *La Mission du Thibet de 1855-1870* (Verdun, 1872, 8vo.), p. 304.—Mr. Colborne Baber, of H. B. M. Legation at Peking, who has travelled lately on the Eastern borders of Tibet, says (MS. note of Col. Yule): "A coin is called in Tibetan *Tchran-Ka*. Rupees are called *Pei-ling Tchran-Ka*, i.e. English coins." I find in Rev. H. A. Jaeschke's *Dictionary of the Tibetan Language*, art. *rgya*, p. 106, an interesting note on this expression, spoken *pei-ling*, written *p'yi-glin*. He writes: *rgya-p'i-lñá* name of the country, *rgya-p'i-lñá-pa* name of the people, through which the Tibetans heard first (probably at the beginning of the eighteenth century) of the civilized nations of the Occident, hence name for British India, for Englishman, or European resident of British India, and also (sometimes without *rgya*) for Europe and Europeans in general. The word is of course not to be found in literature. Some derive it from "Feringhi," which term in the slightly altered form of *p'a-rán*, *p'e-rán*, is current in Central Provinces, along with the above-mentioned *rgya-p'i-lñá*; it is therefore not improbable that *p'i-lñá* represents only the more vulgar pronunciation of the genuine Tibetan word *p'yi-glin*, an out-country, a distant foreign country, and especially Europe." On *tchranka*, see note above.

1. *Nepalese Coins.*

By special agreement³ which had been imposed by the Nepalese Râjas, the silver lumps were sent by the Tibetan to the Nepalese mints,⁴ with a small proportion of gold dust,⁵ to be exchanged weight for weight against the mohurs of Nepal. The profit derived from the

³ The date of the beginning of this agreement does not appear, but it was in force in the early years of the seventeenth century.

⁴ "The silver anna piece now called Mohr, and Adtheeda, was formerly denominated Mehnder Mulie, after the Prince who first struck it, and by treaty established its currency in the neighbouring kingdom of Tibet; this prince would appear to have been one of the successors of Hur sing Deo and of the dynasty of Khatmanda, which city is said to have exclusively enjoyed for some time the privilege of supplying Tibet with coin, a privilege the more singular as it was from this very country that Nepal obtained her silver bullion. The origin of this practice is ordinarily referred to the superstitious reverence in which the Valley of Nepaul, and more especially the North-West parts of it (highly celebrated for their sanctity), has been wont to be held by the spiritual sovereigns of Tibet. . . . The Mehnder Mulie exhibited anciently a representation of Lehassa on one side, and on the reverse the name, titles and emblems of the reigning sovereign of Khatmanda. Since the conquest of Nepaul by Purthi Nerain, no allusion to Lehassa has been preserved. . . ." See Kirkpatrick's *An Account of Nepal*, pp. 217, 218 (London, 1811, 4to.).—Mehnder Mulie is Mahindra Malla, Purthi Nerain is Prithwī-Nārāyaṇa Sāh.—In the *History of Nepāl* by Vamsāvali, translated from the Parbatiyā, edited by Dr. Wright (Cambridge, 1877, 8vo.), we read, p. 207: "He (Mahindra Malla, Rajah of Khatmandu) went to Delhi with a present of a swan and hawks for the Emperor, who being much pleased therewith, granted him permission to strike coins in his own name, in weight six māshas. He struck this coin and called it mohar, and made it current in every part of his country."—The British Museum Collection does not contain any coin of this Raja, who, according to the above quoted *History of Nepal*, was ruling in N.E. 669 and 686 (= A.D. 1548 and 1565). As to the plan of Lhasa, it is difficult to know, on the old Nepalese coins, which shape is intended to represent it. According to Pundit Nain Singh the city of Lhasa is circular, with a circumference of 2½ miles (see *Journ. R. Geogr. Soc.* vol. xxxviii. p. 167). But the plan published by Klaproth from Chinese sources does not answer to that shape (see his *Notice sur H'Lassa, capitale du Tibet*, in *Nouv. Annal. de Voyag.* vol. xi. 1829, pl.). Now besides the eight flower-leaf lotus pattern which occurs everywhere, and a complicated *Svastika*, we find the star with eight points (= two squares crossing) or one square and two triangles intermingled, a simple square, a circle, and on the Patan coins a square having the four corners smaller, which may have been intended for the said plan.

⁵ Gold dust separated into Phetangs, each tied up in a bit of cloth, still figures in the Trans-Himalayan commerce with Northern India and with Indo-China. In Traill's *Report on the Bhootea Mahals of Kumaon* (*Asiat. Res.* xvii. p. 24), we read that those curious little bags filled with crude gold to the amount of one phetang (= Sarswo = 7½ Māsas) are current as coin at eight rupees. See Edw. Thomas, *Ancient Indian Weights*, pp. 25, 33, in Marsden's *Numismata Orientalia*, new edition, Part I.—The British Museum collections possess

transaction was very satisfactory to the Râjas, amounting to 12 per cent., four per cent. being derived from the gold dust, and eight per cent. arising from the alloy of the mohur.⁶

Before its conquest by the Gurkhali (Newar Era 888 = A.D. 1768), the Valley of Nepal was governed by three dynasties of Râjas, who all coined money.⁷ These coins were generally distinguished by a shell for Bhatgaon, a trisúl (trident) for Patan, and a sword for Kathmandu.

We have a proof of the use of coins of the Nepalese Râjas in Tibet, by the engravings of so-called Tibetan coins published in 1736 by Du Halde⁸ from information given to him by the Missionaries.⁹ The three coins figured on his plate, which I have compared with those in the British Museum Collection, are: the first, of Bhatgaon,¹⁰ of Jaya Bhupati Indra Malla, Newar Era 815 (=A.D. 1694); the second, of Kathmandu, Jaya Bhaskara Malla, N.E. 821 (=A.D. 1700); the third, of Patan, Yoga Narendra Malla, N.E. 810 (=1689).

three of these little bags, one only is entire.—On one of the water-coloured drawings of rude tribes of China in an album lent to me by Dr. W. Lockhart, formerly of Peking, I see that the 財 歌 Sih-Ko in the prefecture of K'ai-hwa (Yun-nan) use the same gold-bag currency.—Capt. Jules Favre, formerly of Hai-phang (Tong-King), has reported to me that such little bags were found on the junks captured in November, 1874, at Pun-lun from the pretender Lê.

⁶ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of Nepal*, pp. 212-213.

⁷ The British Museum Collection contains specimens of: the Khatmandu series from Newar era 739 to 874 = A.D. 1618—1753; Bhatgaon series from Newar Era 782 to 842 = A.D. 1661—1721; Patan series from Newar Era 771 to 873 = A.D. 1650—1752. After the Gurkha conquest the old system of reckoning years from the Newar Era (= A.D. 879—880), was superseded by the Vikrama Era for ordinary purposes, and the Sâka commonly used in Indûstân has been introduced upon the coins.

⁸ *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, t. iii. p. 268 (ed. fol.)

⁹ Father Desideri, writing from *Lassa*, 10 April, 1716, to F. Ildebrand, says that the coins used are those of the Mogol, and are worth five Jul. Rom. See *Lettres Edifiantes*, 1722, t. xv. p. 194.—Father Desideri was not aware that the coins in use were struck in Nepal.

¹⁰ Bhâtgaon or Bhaktapur, Kâthmândū or Kântipur, Patan or Lalitapur.

The custom was kept till the time of the last reigning Râja of Bhatgaon, Ranjit Malla,¹¹ who sent such base coins¹² as to cause a decrease of nearly half of the value of the mohurs, a decrease which led to a desertion of the Nepalese mints.¹³

As soon as he had his authority established in Nepal, the first Gurkha Prithwī Nārāyaṇa Sāh endeavoured to introduce his coin into Tibet, and to avail himself of the important profits which ancient custom had procured to the old Râjas of Nepal. For this purpose, he sent a deputation to Lhasa with a large sum in rupees struck in his name, and requested the sanction of Government to circulate them through the country. The merchants, aware of the Gurkha Râja's bad faith, refused to accept them.¹⁴

2. Tibetan Coinage.

Thus matters came to a stand-still, and nothing more seems to have been done as long as the first of the Gurkhali lived; the Tibetans being intimidated by his power. But soon after his death we see a change in the situation. Availing themselves of the comparative weakness of his successor, Pratapa Sinha Sāh, the Tibetan rulers issued, in 1772, a fine silver coin,¹⁵ which was

¹¹ He ruled from N.E. 842 (= A.D. 1721), and was the first to treat with Gurkhas, who finally overthrew him after more than 40 years reign.

¹² The amount contracted for on this occasion was ten lakhs of silver mohurs, exactly similar to those current in Nepal (see Prinsep, ed. Thomas, *Indian Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 32, U.T.). The Parbātīyā *History of Nepāl*, p. 196, says only this: "Ranjit Malla was very prudent and economical. He sent a great quantity of his coins to Lhāsā, in exchange for which he got a large quantity of gold and silver."

¹³ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of Nepal*, p. 170.

¹⁴ See Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of G. Bogle to Tibet*, pp. 128-129.

¹⁵ Three specimens exist in the British Museum, and four in the India Office Collections. But two of the B.M. Coll. are of a lower standard, and weigh only 81 dwt. 80 gr., and as metal are more like the Tibeto-Nepalese coinage. See below. They have the appearance of bad casts of the good coin.

struck at the Palace of Galdan, near Lhasa (pl. xv. fig. 1), in imitation of the good mohurs of the former Râjas, but with sufficient alterations to show their independence. They chose the pattern¹⁶ used by Jaya Bhaskara Malla of Kāthmandu in N.E. 821 (=A.D. 1700), bearing on the obverse eight fleurets containing the eight Vitaragas or Mangals,¹⁷ and on the reverse in the same number of fleurets the Devānagari characters of his name and date. The shape of the fleurets of the obverse had been borrowed from the linga pattern. The Tibetan coin is in general character the same. With the exception of several of the Buddhist symbols which are different, and the legend in Tibetan letters, it is the same design drawn with the remarkable skilfulness and taste which is conspicuous on the Nepalese coins, and which we fail to find in any other Tibetan production. The flowery emblem of the *gada* (mace) in the centre of the obverse exhibits a delicacy and harmony which are perfect. It is certainly not of Tibetan workmanship, but the work of a Nepalese artist. The size is 8 of Mionnet's scale, and the average weight of five specimens is 83·5 grains. The legend, which is more or less defaced on any single specimen, can be restored by comparing several of them. It reads as follows: རྣམ་རྒྱལ་དགའ་ཕྱན་པོ་ཐང་ཕྱོད་ལས་ *nam rgyal dgah ldan pho brang phyogs las*.

“*nam rgyal*” is the name of the twenty-seventh year

¹⁶ The same pattern has been partially used on their coins by the Râjas Jaya Mahindra Sinha Malla of Kāthmandu in N.E. 836 (=A.D. 1715), and by Jaya Yoga Prakasa Malla of Patan in N.E. 852 (=A.D. 1731). We do not find it on any coins of Bhatgaon, probably because of the discredit which had fallen on that name.

¹⁷ On the Vitaragas, see B. H. Hodgson, *Naipāliya Devata Kalyana*, p. 401, in *J. As. Soc. Beng.* 1843, vol. xii. pp. 400-409. The late H. A. Oldfield has given a list of the eight Mangals in his *Sketches from Nipal* (London, 1880, 8vo.), vol. ii. p. 179.

of the Vrihaspatitchakra or Jovian cycle, and the Tibetan translation of the Sanscrit Vidjaya.¹⁸ This cycle was introduced into Tibet from India in A.D. 1025.¹⁹ So taking 1025-6 as the first year for the sake of the current year of the events, we find that a twenty-seventh year happened during the last century, the only one possible, in 1711-2 and 1771-2. The first is out of the question, as we know from the Missionaries at Lhasa²⁰ that no special coinage existed at the time, and that the specimens communicated to Du Halde have proved to be Nepalese. Besides this fact, we know that Tibet was too narrowly entangled under Nepalese yoke during these years to have issued any coinage when the Nepalese currency was altogether satisfactory. Later on, this last reason, as we have seen, disappeared by the avidity of the Râjas, and the death of the bold and energetic Prithwi Narayana Sah in Saka year 1693 (=A.D. 1771) was the occasion of the new issue of money in Tibet. The very year therefore after this they issued (in all probability not without some sort of an approval on the part of his successor Pratapa Sinha Sâh) the coin we now describe, and of which no other issue is known in later years, perhaps because there was a new Gurkha ruler, the said Râja's reign lasting only three years, as he died in Saka year 1697 (=A.D. 1775).

“*dgah ldan*” = “Celestial beatitude,” is one of the great monasteries near Lhasa at 50 *li* E. on the mountain

¹⁸ See Ph. Ed. Foucaux, *Grammaire Tibetaine*, p. 152 (Paris, 1858, 8vo.).—Csoma Körösi, *A Grammar of the Tibetan Language*, p. 149.

¹⁹ See Prinsep, ed. Thomas, *Essays on Indian Antiquities*, vol. ii. U.T. p. 161.—E. Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*, pp. 47, 276.

²⁰ Father Desideri, in 1716, from Lassa, writes: “il n’y a point de monnaie particulière.” Cf. trad. Du Halde, *Lettres Edifiantes*, loc. cit.—Cf. Stewart, *Account of the Kingdom of Tibet* (*Philosophical Transactions*, 1777, p. 486).

of the same name, founded by Tsongkhapa, uncle of the first Dalai Lama, about the year 1407.²¹ The other words of the legend on the coin, "*pho-brang phyogs-las*," mean "palace region from." So the whole legend is to be read: "(In the year) *rnam rgyal* from the palace of *dgah ldan*."

3. *Tibeto-Nepalese Coinage.*

During the fifteen following years there is no evidence of coins in the Collections of the British Museum and India Office. We have specimens dated 1788-9, 1790-1, 1791-2, 1792-3, of which we shall speak further on, of another pattern (pl. xv. fig. 2), and progressively inferior in workmanship and quality of the metal. They are imitations of the preceding one, more roughly made with the following differences:—The eight fleurets of the obverse have no longer the *linga* pattern; they are like those of the reverse, and contain the same eight Buddhist emblems as does the coin of Galdan. The flowery emblem of the *gada* (mace) is very roughly and more simply drawn, even hardly recognizable in the two last ones, the most base of all as the proportion of alloy is considerable in them. The weights of those dated 1788-9, 1790-1, are 80·5, 81, and 83·5 grains, and of the two last dated 1791-2, 1792-3, are 66 and 66 grains, but with no diminution of the size, which is still 8 of Mionnet's scale. The reverse no longer has the flower with eight petals nor the eight fleurets of the Galdan coin. The design is a square surrounded by a pattern imitating the

²¹ See J. Klaproth, *Description du Tibet*, pp. 275, 290, in *Journal Asiatique*, 1829.—Csoma Körösi, *Geographical Description of Tibet*, p. 123, in *Journ. As. Soc. Bengal*, April, 1832.—Köppen, *Die Religion des Buddha*, ii. p. 345.—Jaeschke, *Dictionary of the Tibetan Language* (1881, 4to.), p. 83.—Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*, p. 152, says 1417.

Sri, Sri, Sri²² of former Nepalese coins, and in the square under a fanciful form of ཨྲི ཨྲི ཨྲི, the mystical interjection, are in Tibetan figures the numbers of the year according to the cycle of sixty, but noted in a peculiar manner, viz.

$$\begin{array}{cccccccc} 72 & 72 & 72 & 72 & 13 & 13 & 13 & 13 \\ \text{ཨྲི} & \text{ཨྲི} & \text{ཨྲི} & \text{ཨྲི} & = & 44 & 46 & 47 & 48 \end{array}$$

The upper figures indicate the running cycle, and the lower ones the number of the year of that cycle during which the coin was issued. Thus we have the 44th, 46th, 47th, and 48th years of the 13th cycle. Of the 45th year I have not seen any specimen, and I do not know if that coinage began earlier than the 44th year. We may be pretty sure that the specimen of the 48th year is the last, for it was superseded by the Sino-Tibetan coinage the following year or at the end of the same year. The first year of the first cycle of 60 in Tibet being, as we have seen, A.D. 1025, we have to add 720 years to 1024–5 for twelve cycles elapsed since that date, and respectively 44, 46, 47, 48 years for each specimen, making A.D. 1788–9, 1790–1, 1791–2, 1792–3 as the years of emission of these coins. Their general Nepalese appearance speaks for itself, and their progressive baseness confirms what we know from Kirkpatrick, Hamilton, and others²⁴ that the war of Nepal against Tibet was occasioned by the rapacity of the Nepalese Râjas, which culminated by the plunder of Tashilunpo.

²² The British Museum possesses a coin or rather a medal or token with that pattern and nothing else.

²³ The figure ཨྲི = 3 is very well drawn on the specimens ¹³ 44, ¹³ 46, but on the two others so badly made as to resemble ཨྲི za with a tail.

²⁴ Speaking of the Nepalese Mintage for Tibet, Kirkpatrick says: "There is not a doubt that the present Nepal Government made the departure of the Tibetans from ancient usage in this respect, the pretext for the war which it waged about four years ago against the confederated Lamas; as evidently appears from a memorial transmitted to me from Nepal on this subject, an extract of which is given in the Appendix." See his *Account of . . . Nepal*, p. 217—Cf. Francis Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (1819, 4to.), p. 213.—S. Turner, *Acc. of an Embassy in Tibet* (1800, 4to.), p. 438.

After the death of Pratapa Sinha Sāh in Saka year 1697 (=A.D. 1775), his son Ran Bahadur was the legal Rāja, but being under age, his mother Rajendra Lakshmi dēvi assumed the regency. She seems to have ruled very quietly without interfering with Tibet. After nine years she died, and the regency was in the hands of the uncle of the young Rāja, Bahadur Sāh, whose restless rapacity caused the evils of the war against Tibet, and eventually of China succouring the Dalai-lama against his own country, which was obliged to submit to the Chinese rule after several defeats, and a humiliating treaty at the beginning of 1793.²⁵ It is obvious that these coins are those which were the occasion of the war waged by Bahadur Sāh, who imposed them upon Tibet, as they show by their increasing baseness the growth of his armed influence. The specimens of 1788-9 and 1790-1 are not of so low a standard as those dated 1791-2 and 1792-3, issued after his victories over the Tibetans. The last is the worst of all.

4. *Tibeto-Chinese Coinage.*

The intervention of the Chinese, who endeavoured to repair the disasters caused by the last base standard, is illustrated by the coinage they issued, in 1793, from a mint they established at Lhasa.²⁶ It is a pure silver

²⁵ The Chinese army was twenty miles from Kathmandu in September, 1792. Captain Kirkpatrick arrived the 1st of March, 1793, when the Treaty by which the Nepalese recognized their vassalage to China was signed. The *Parbatiya History* for that period is nothing but lies. The British, to whom they had applied to interfere, are represented several times as trembling in the south, and the Chinese, who inflicted upon them a terrible defeat, are represented as cut in pieces.

²⁶ These coins are not altogether unedited. Prinsep-Thomas in their *Indian Antiquities* have published one of the second size. Dr. Bushell of Peking, a distinguished Numismatist, has also published one of the same size, with description, in the *China Review*, 1878, vol. vi. pp. 348-349, and the smallest one in the same periodical, 1880, vol. viii. p. 392.

coinage, of which specimens until 1822 exist in the British Museum and India Office Collections. The first issue was made of four sizes, but of three different weights, and the following issues seem to have been made only of the second weight, if we may infer this from the absence of any other in the said collections. According to the Regulations of the Chinese Board of Works,²⁷ which are not applicable to the issues of the first year, but only to those of the years after, two series of coins only ought to be regularly issued, one coin weighing one *tsien*=58·3 grains, and another one smaller weighing five *fön*=29·1 grains. It is this last one which is wanting.

The first coins issued, in 1793, are beautifully cast, the others of the following years and reigns are very bad. An ornamental characteristic of this last coinage is, on the obverse and reverse, four fleurets like those of the Tibeto-Nepalese base coins, but turned, by the usual Chinese process of modifying the emblems, into the early shape of their character for *nose*, symbolizing the beginning, the ancestor. It bears all around the border a pearled ornament like all the other three coinages here mentioned.

²⁷ The rules of this Mintage are detailed in the regulations of the Board of Works 欽定戶部則例 ch. xxxiv. ff. 35-36. It is under the superintendence of four officers jointly appointed by the Chinese Resident and the Dalai Lama. The coins directed to be cast from standard sycee silver, unmixed with other ingredients, and to be of two sizes respectively, one *ch'ien* and five *fen* respectively; one *taël* of silver to exchange for nine of the former, eighteen of the latter, the difference being retained to pay for the expense of coinage, so that the seignorage amounts to ten per cent. The inscription on the obverse in Tanguth (Tibetan), and on the rim the date of the year. See Bushell, *China Review*, 1878, vol. vi. p. 348.

The specimens I have seen are the following :

I.—Obv. ཅན་ལུང་པུ་གཙང་གཙང་ཅན་ལུང་ *Ch'an Lung pau gtsang*²⁸ = Tsang (=Tibet) coinage of Ch'an Lung. On the rim ལྷ་བཙུ་རྩ་བརྟེན་ *lga bchu rtsa brgyad* = Fifty-eight.

Rev. 乾隆寶藏 *Kien Lung pao Tsang* (same meaning as the Tibetan legend). On the rim 五十八年 *Wu shih pah nien* = Fifty-eighth year (of the Emperor's reign begun in 1736) = 1793. (Pl. xv. fig. 3). Size 8·5. Average weight 86 grains. 4 specim. India Off. Collect.

II.—Obv. and Rev. same as preceding.

(Pl. xv. fig. 4). Size 7·5. Weight 85·5 gr. India Off. Coll.

III.—Obv. and Rev. same as I.

(Pl. xv. fig. 5). Size 6. Wt. 57 gr. Ind. Off. Coll.

IV.²⁹—Obv. and Rev. same as I.

(Plate xv. fig. 6). Size 4·5. Weight 28 gr. Ind. Off. Coll.

These four coins are exactly the same and of excellent casting.

V.—Obv. and Rev. same as I., but of an inferior casting, and do not seem to have been issued with the preceding ones.³⁰

Size 7·5. Weight 2 spec. 57 and 55 gr. B.M.

VI.—Obv. *Ch'an Lung pau gtsang* (as I.). On the rim :

ལྷ་བཙུ་རྩ་དགུ་ *lga bchu rtsa dgu* = Fifty-nine.

Rev. *Kien Lung pao tsang* (as I.). On the rim : 五十九年 *Wu shih kiü nien* = Fifty-ninth year (= 1795). Size 7. Weight 5 spec. 58, 57, 53, 59, 56. 4 B.M. 1 Ind. Off.

²⁸ The central legends are to be read from top to bottom and from right to left, those of the rim from left to right.

²⁹ Published by Dr. Bushell, see note ²⁶.

³⁰ This peculiarity is explained by the fact that for the mint of I-li as well as for the silver coinage of Tibet, the regulation was made in succeeding reigns that one-fifth of the coins issued should have the inscription *Kien Lung* in memory of the great Emperor's conquest. Cf. S. W. Bushell, *Coins of the present dynasty of China*, p. 197, in *Journ. North China Branch R. As. S.*, 1880, vol. xv. pp. 195-308.

VII.—Obv. Same. On the rim: ལྷ་ལྷ་ཐམ་པ་ *drug chu tham pa*=Sixty.

Rev. Same. On the rim: 六十年 *Luh shih nien*=Sixtieth year (=1796).

Size 7. Weight 52.5. B.M.

VIII.—Obv. ཅམ་འཕྱོད་པུ་གཅིང་ *cha htsin*³¹ *pau gtsang*=Tsang coinage of Cha Ts'in. On the rim: བྱུང་པ་ *brgyad pa*=Eighth.

Rev. 嘉慶寶藏 *Kia K'ing pao Tsang*. Same meaning with the difference of pronunciation of the proper name. On the rim: 八年 *pah nien*=Eighth year (of the Emperor's reign begun in 1796)=1803. Size 7. Weight of 3 spec. 57, 57, 57. B.M. (Pl. xv. fig. 7.)

Those coins of the eighth year of Kia King are the worst of all this coinage, as castings. On the Chinese side the four fleurets have been dropped altogether.

IX.—Obv. བཅའ་འཕྱོད་ *bcha htsing* . . . the remaining *pau gtsang* as the preceding.³² On the rim: ཉི་ལྷ་ཙ་ལ་ *ñi shu rtsa lnga*=Twenty-five.

Rev. Same as preceding. On the rim: 二十五年 *Œi shih wu nien*³³=Twenty-fifth year (=1820).

Size 7. Weight 3 spec. 56, 57, 58 gr. B.M.

X.—Obv. ར་འཕྱོད་པུ་གཅིང་ *rdao guong pau gtsang*=Coinage of Dao Guong for Tsang.³⁴ On the rim: གཉིས་པ་ *gn̄is pa*=Second.

Rev. 道光寶藏 *Tao Kuang pao Tsang*. Same meaning as Tibetan obverse. On the rim: 二年 *Œi nien*=Second year (of Tao Kuang's reign begun 1821)=1822.

Size 7.5. Weight 6 spec. 57, 58, 56, 58, 59, 58. 3 B.M. 3 Ind. Off. (Pl. xv. fig. 8.)

³¹ The orthography of the first two words is wrong, cf. No. IX., but there is no doubt about the reading. The analysis of one of these coins is given in Prinsep-Thomas, *Indian Antiquities*, vol. ii. U.T. p. 130, as weight 58 grains; touch 79.2; pure contents 45.91 grains; intrinsic value of 100, 27.827 Furukhabad rupees.

³² On some issues of this coin the last letter of *gtsang* ང་ *ng* is missing.

³³ In contradistinction with the others, reads top, bottom, right, left.

³⁴ Dr. Bushell, *loc. cit.*, has published the coin No. VI., and also a specimen of Tao Kuang, but dated on the Tibetan side ར་འཕྱོད་ *rdao po*=first, and on the Chinese side 元年 *yuên nien*=first year.



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8



SILVER COINS OF TIBET.

The Tibetan transcriptions of proper names on these coins exhibit, when compared with the Mandarin pronunciation and with the present pronunciation of the Pekinese, the rapidity of the progressive phonetic decay of this dialect. Of course the Chinese officers brought with them to Tibet the pronunciation of the Court. So *Kien-Lung* in Mandarinic is *Ch'an Lung*³⁵ on the Tibetan coins in 1793-96, and is now *Ch'ien Lung* in present Pekinese pronunciation. *Kia K'ing* (M.) was *Cha Ts'ing* (T.C.), and is now *Chia Ch'ing* in the more and more corrupted pronunciation of the Court dialect.

TERRIEN DE LA COUPERIE.

LONDON, Dec. 1881.

³⁵ Wrappers with coins sent from Peking the last century have *Chen Lung*.