

EXAMPLES OF TIBETAN SEALS

BY

E. H. WALSH

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I

EXAMPLES OF TIBETAN SEALS

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THE subject of Tibetan seals has already been discussed in this Journal in connexion with the seal of the Dalai Lama, the reading of which was first given by Dr. Bushell in JRAS. 1906, p. 476, referring to the illustration of the seal in Colonel Waddell's *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, in his review of that book. But he gave no examples of the character.

The Rev. Dr. A. H. Francke in his "Note on the Dalai Lama's Seal and the Tibeto - Mongolian Character" (JRAS. 1910, p. 1205) has deciphered the inscription on the seal, and has also given the alphabet of the Tibetan seal character which he obtained from a Tibetan wood-print discovered in Ladakh. He also gave the inscription on the seal of the rNam-rgyal dynasty of Western Tibet. In the present article I give some further examples of Tibetan seals in the above character, and also of others in which the inscriptions are in Indian character, or which merely bear an ornamental design.

Tibetan seals generally bear an inscription in the above character, which is known as *Hor-yig*, viz. "Mongolian letters". It is, as Dr. Francke has shown, an archaic



square form of the Tibetan character with the letters arranged one below the other in vertical columns, and "was invented by the Saskya hierarch Kun dga rgyal mtshan, A.D. 1182-1252, who presented it to the Mongolians. They were to use it for their newly started literature. The characters were, however, too clumsy for general use, and the Mongolians preferred a form of the Uigur alphabet which was founded on the Syriac characters of the Nestorians".



Dr. Francke gave a corrected copy of the Dalai Lama's seal, with certain letters amended according to the Ladakh alphabet, from two reproductions of the seal which formed illustrations, the one to Waddell's *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, p. 448, and the other to a paper of mine on the Coinage of Tibet,¹ in both of which certain letters which had been indistinct in the original impression of the seal had not been correctly reproduced. As I have already pointed out,² the illustration of the seal which I gave in my paper referred to was copied from the facsimile of the seal given in Landon's *Lhasa*; as an impression of the seal which I then had was very indistinct, which is frequently the case with Tibetan seals, and as the purpose of the reference to the seal in that paper was not concerned with the meaning of the characters on the seal or their precise form, I had not thought it necessary to compare it with other illustrations.


I have, however, since obtained an absolutely clear impression of the seal, which was given me by the Dalai Lama himself on a copy of his portrait which he gave me when he was in Darjeeling. A drawing of it will be found in Fig. 1 of the Plate facing p. 15. The characters are as shown by Dr. Francke in his corrected drawing of the seal, with the exception of the bottom word of the middle column, which was not clear on the previously published

¹ MASB., vol. ii, p. 16.

² JRAS. January, 1911, p. 207.

impressions, and which Dr. Francke gives in his corrected reading of the seal as  *ru*. This word is really  *rtsa*, "original authoritative," as was afterwards noted by Colonel Waddell (JASB. 1911, p. 204), and means the "official" seal. The inscription on the seal is therefore (snake-ornament) *Talai blamai rtsa thamka rgyal*, namely, "The royal official seal of the Dalai Lama." He has also his private seal, which is a different one.

The form  of the letter *tsa* differs from the form of that letter  given in the Ladakh block-print alphabet.

I am unable to agree with Colonel Waddell, who reads the last character as *wa* and the last word as *rgyal-wa*, and translates "The original seal of the Dalai Lama, the Jina". I agree with Dr. Francke (JRAS. 1911, p. 529) that the word *rgyal* from its position must refer to *thamka*, "the seal," and not to the Dalai Lama. I may also say that this is the sense in which the Tibetan Minister read the seal, and also Dr. Bushell, who reads it "The royal seal of the Dalai Lama", as the word *rtsa* was illegible and had therefore to be omitted. The last character on the seal,  which Colonel Waddell reads as *wa*, is merely to fill up the line. Such stops are common in Tibetan seals. Examples will be found of this identical form of stop to fill up a column in both the seals of the Prime Minister of which I give illustrations further on, namely, at the bottom of the fourth column of the Prime Minister's first seal and at the bottom of the second and fifth columns of the Prime Minister's second seal, at the bottom of the right-hand column of the seal of the two Jong-pöns of Gyantse, and at the bottom of the left-hand column of the recent seal of the Joint Tibetan Trade Agent at Gyantse, in all of which places, as will be seen from the reading of those seals, the word *wa* would be quite meaningless. Also in an earlier form of the

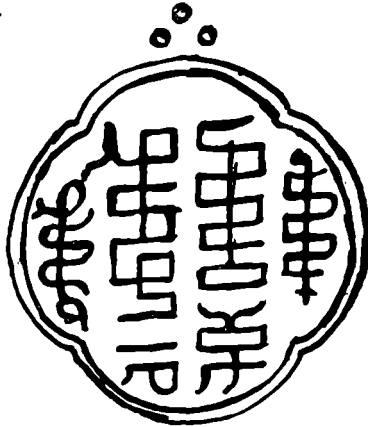
Dalai Lama's seal, which Dr. Francke has published in JRAS. 1912, p. 747, this character does not appear at the end of the seal, as it would do if it were part of the inscription.

With regard to the initial character which Colonel Waddell reads as *Om* (JRAS. 1911, p. 822), I would remark that, whatever the origin of the initial character which is placed at the commencement of all documents and which is commonly known in Tibetan as *mgo-shad* ("head mark" or "initial mark") may be, it is not, as a matter of practice, read at all. I have never heard it read as *Om*, and in an explanation of the meaning of the Dalai Lama's seal, word by word, given me by one of the Tibetan ministers of his own accord when I was inquiring about the matter, there is no reference to this sign, as would be expected, if it is considered to be *Om* and to be part of the inscription, but the explanation as written by him commences with the word *Talai*.

The inscription on the earlier form of the seal, published by Dr. Francke (JRAS. 1912, p. 747), is *Dorje 'achang: Talai blama-yi tham-ku rgyal*. This seal appears on a letter of the Dalai Lama which Mr. F. Becker Shawe, a Moravian missionary of Leh, found preserved in the archives of one of the old noble families of Ladakh, and photographed between the years 1891 and 1895. It would be interesting to know what is the date of the letter. But, owing to the Tibetan system of sixty-year cycles, the date cannot be ascertained from the letter itself, which will only give the year within the cycle. It will therefore have to be obtained from external sources.

Besides the Dalai Lama's official seal he has also a private seal, which is given in Fig. 3 of the Plate. This seal was impressed in sealing-wax on the outside of a letter, and therefore differs from the other seals illustrated, as the design is cut into the seal, and is not in relief, as in the case of the other seals, which are

sealed in ink. An enlargement of the design on the seal is given below.



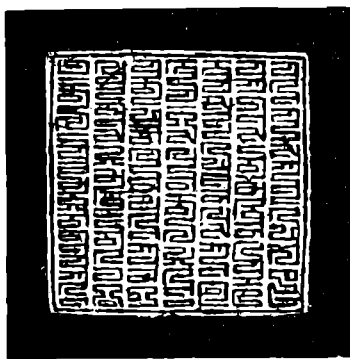
The characters on this seal, though resembling the Hor-yig in general appearance as being of square form and written in vertical columns, are quite different, and appear to be merely ornamental and without meaning.

As the three dots outside the central enclosure indicate the top of the seal, the characters therefore appear to be quite meaningless. If, however, the seal be read the other way up, the bottom group of characters in the third column might be *rgyan*, namely "ornament", though they would be a form of square character different to the Hor-yig, which is used on all the other examples of seals. But, even then, I am unable to suggest any meaning for the other characters; and the two outside columns are somewhat rounded in form and appear to be only ornamental designs. I think, however, that the characters must have some significance, and may possibly be imitations of characters or symbols on old Mongolian seals.

The seals of the Lön-Chhen or Prime Minister of Tibet are an interesting example of the seal character.

The impression of the first seal was given me by the Prime Minister, Srid-dzin Lön-chhen Shattrā, when he was with the Dalai Lama in Darjeeling in 1911, and the impression of the second seal this year in Delhi. The

inscription on both the seals is mainly the same, though somewhat shorter in the second seal, seven words being omitted, and the character is consequently larger. I give below a facsimile of the first seal.



This seal consists of seven columns; there are five words in each of the first six columns and four in the seventh, the space remaining in the bottom of any column being filled in with meaningless signs.

The inscription, written in the printed character, is as follows :—

ཕྱེ ལ	ལྷེ ར	པ ཕྱེ	ཐ པ	ཀ བ	པ ལྷ	པ རྩ
ད བ ར	གྱི མ	ལྷ བ	ཀོ མ	ལྷི ར	གྱི མ	པ རྩ
མ ཀོ བ	ཏོ	དྲ ན	དྲ ན	ཤ ལྷི ན	ད བ	ཕྱེ ར
གྱི	མ ཀོ ར	པ རྩ	ཕྱེ ལ	པ མ	མ ཀོ ན	ཤ ལྷི ལ
པ ལ རྩ	ད བ ར	ལྷ ན	པ རྩ	ལྷི	ཤ བ རྩ	

The vertical columns of the inscription read as follows¹:—

1. (Snake-ornament) *rgyal dbang mchhog. gi. bkai.*
2. *lung. gis. ngo. mtshar dgah.*
3. *brgya. phrag ldan pai kun.*

¹ In this article ར has been transliterated as *h*, as in Rai Sarat Chandra Das's Dictionary, except where it forms the vowels *i*, *u*, *e*, and *o*. It has, however, no aspirated sound and should accurately be transliterated by *a*; རྩ has been transliterated as *ng*, and ཤ as *sh*.

4. *khyab. chhos ldan rgyal pai.*
5. *Chhab srid hphrin las kyi.*
6. *bkra shis dge mtshan 'abur.*
7. *bai bde skyid hphel.*

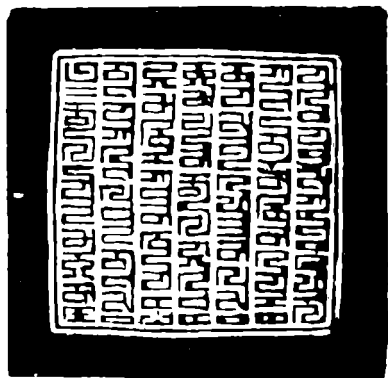
The translation is as follows:—

“By the precepts of the orders of the most powerful king may the good luck and prosperity of the affairs of the kingdom of the all-embracing religious king blaze forth into a hundred thousand pleasures (and) their felicity increase.”

The spaces at the bottom of the columns are filled up with the following apparently meaningless characters:—

Second column	}	𑀧𑀢𑀺𑀓
Third column		
Fourth column		𑀧𑀢𑀺𑀓
Fifth column		𑀧𑀢𑀺𑀓
Sixth column		𑀧𑀢𑀺𑀓
Seventh column		𑀧𑀢𑀺𑀓

The second seal of the Prime Minister is given below.







There are three words in the first column and four in each of the others. The words *dgah brgya hphrag ldan pai* in the second and third columns of the first seal are omitted, and also the words *bkra-shis* at the top of the sixth column of the first seal. The inscription written in the printed character is as follows:—

ཨ	ག	དོ	ཚོ་ས	ཆ་པ	ཀྱི	པ་འི
ཚུ་ལ	པ་ཀ་འི	མ་ཚོ་ད	ལྷ་ན	ལྷི་ད	ད་གེ	པ་དེ
ད་པ་ད	ལྷ་ད	ཀྱ་ན	ཚུ་ལ	འ་ལྷི་ན	མ་ཚོ་ན	ལྷི་ད
མ་ཚོ་ག	གི་ས	ཅུ་པ	པོ་འི	ལ་ས	འ་པ་ད	འ་ལྷེ་ལ

The vertical columns read as follows:—

1. (Snake-ornament) *rgyal dbang mchhog*
2. *gi bkai lung gis*
3. *ngo mtshar kun khyab*
4. *chhos ldan rgyal poi*
5. *chhab srid hphrin las*
6. *kyi dge mtshan hbar*
7. *pai bde skyid hphel.*

The space at the bottom of the first line is filled up with a character  and of the second and fifth lines with a plain stop,  like the one at the end of the seal of the Dalai Lama, the third with a character  which is rather indistinctly stamped, and the fourth and sixth with a character .

Illustrations of other seals are given in the Plate.

Tibetan official seals are generally square; all the more important ones, which are in the Hor-yig seal character, are so, though less important official seals and private seals are round and much smaller. Examples of these are the private seal of the Dalai Lama already mentioned, and those of the Private Secretary of the Tashi Lama and of

the Treasurer of the Tashi Lama (Figs. 3, 4, and 5 of the Plate).





The seals of the three great monasteries, Sera, Depung, and Galdan, are also round.

Some Tibetan seals are always stamped in red and others in black. The official seals of the Dalai Lama (Fig. 1), of the Tashi Lama (Fig. 2), and of the Kyab-ying, viz. the Prime Minister of the Tashi Lama (Fig. 10), and the small seals (Figs. 3, 4, and 5) are always stamped in red, and those of the Council (Fig. 6), the National Assembly (Fig. 7), the Kalon Lama Minister (Fig. 8), the Jong-pöns of Phari (Fig. 9), and of the Abbot of Gyantse Monastery, the Tibetan Trade Agent, and the Jong-pöns at Gyantse, illustrated below, and also those of the three great monasteries are stamped in black.

The seal of the Tibetan Council of Ministers (Fig. 6) bears the usual snake-ornament and the words *sde skyid*, "happiness, felicity," in the centre column. The two side columns are ornamental square characters. This seal was given to the Council by the seventh Dalai Lama (A.D. 1708 to 1758) when the Council was constituted, and the motto was given as showing that the Council was to secure the happiness of the people. The Council, which is known as the Kasha (བཀའ་གཤམས་), from the name of the Council House in Lhasa where it meets, consists of the Shapes (འབྲས་པར་) or Ministers, one of whom is always a Lama. The Prime Minister is known as the Lon-chhen, whose seals have been already described, and the Lama Minister as the Ka-lön Lama (བཀའ་ལྷོན་ལྷ་མ་), whose seal is shown in Fig. 8. The seal of the Council was one of the seals affixed to the Tibetan Treaty of 1904.

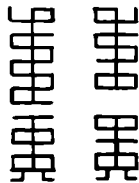
The seal of the National Committee, or Tshong-du Düpa (ཚོགས་འདུ་དུའ་པ་ *Tshogs-hdu dud-pa*), is shown in Fig. 7 and contains two columns. The first column is the snake-ornament and the word *rgyal*, and the second column *zer*

sa. *rGyal zer sa* may mean either "the place known as victorious" (or "royal"), or "the place of victorious (or 'royal') light", or "the place of victorious (or 'royal') speech".

In the word  *zer*, the letter  *z*, is different from the form in the Ladakh alphabet, which is . The form of the letter  *e*, also differs from the Ladakh alphabet, but is the same as that which occurs in the older seal of the Dalai Lama, JRAS. 1912, p. 747.

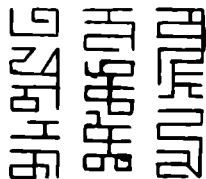
The characters in the right-hand column are distinct on the seal; those in the left-hand column are rather blurred, but they are, I think, as shown.

The seal of the Lama Minister is shown in Fig. 8. In the centre column are the words *bde legs*, "blessing." The two outer columns are square characters, which appear not to represent letters but to be merely ornamental. These characters are as follows:—


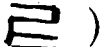


The form of the letter *e* in this seal differs from that in the Ladakh alphabet.

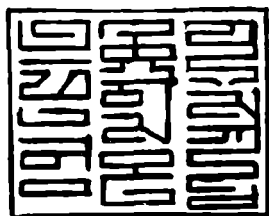
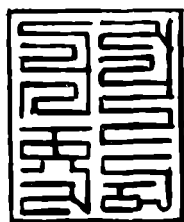
The official seal of the Phari Jong-pöns is shown in Fig. 9. The Jong-pöns (ཇོང་པོན་) are District Officers in charge of a district, at the head-quarters of which is a Jong, or fort. The seal consists of three columns. The inscription is as follows:—



The first column is snake-ornament and the word *phag*, followed by two characters which appear to have no meaning; the second column is *ri*, followed by two characters which appear to have no meaning; and the third column is *bdzongs*. The whole inscription is therefore *phag-ri bdzongs*, namely, "Phari dispatched."

The form of the letter  *dz* differs somewhat from that given in the Ladakh alphabet ()

Three further examples of Tibetan seals are given below. These seals are stamped in black.





Seal of the Abbot of the Gyantse Monastery.

(Modern) Seal of the Tibetan Joint Trade Agent at Gyantse.

Seal of the Jong-pöns of Gyantse.

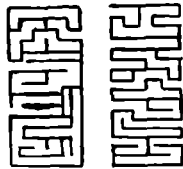
The first is the official seal of the Abbot of the *dPal-hKhor-Chhos-sDe* Monastery at Gyantse. The inscription is: first column, *dpal-chhos*; second column, *spyi dag*. The inscription is abbreviated for *dPal-hKhor-Chhos-sDe spyi-khyab dag-po*, "the pure Head Official of the *dPal-hKhor-Chhos-sDe* Monastery." The Abbot also has a private seal, which, like other private seals, is a small round seal.

The second is the seal of the Tibetan Joint Trade Agent at Gyantse, and is therefore quite modern.

The inscription is : first column (snake-ornament), *Phun*, and a character  to fill up the column ; second column, *Tshogs* and a character  to fill up the column ; third column, *bde skyid*. The whole inscription being, *Phun-Tshogs bde skyid*, "sublime blessing" or "the blessing of Heaven".

The third seal is the official seal of the Jong-pöns of Gyantse. The inscription is : first column (snake-ornament), *rgyal* ; second column, *rdzong*. It is literally "the Royal Fort", but is intended for *rGyal-tse rdzong*, "Gyantse Fort" (i.e. "Royal Peak Fort").

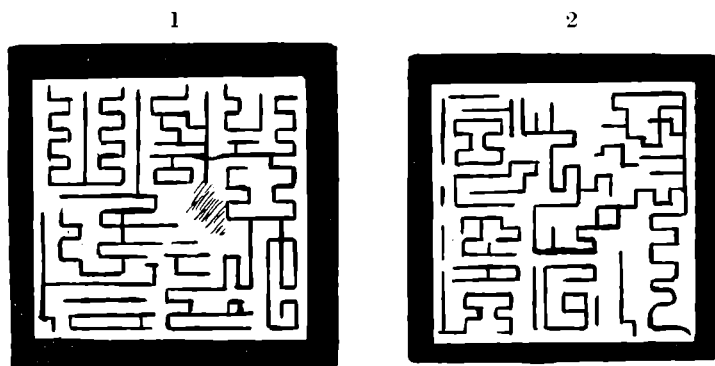
The official seal of the Khyab-ying (ཐབ་འབྲིང་ "the Protector of the Spheres"), who is the Prime Minister of the Tashi Lama, is shown in Fig. 10. The inscription in this seal is as follows :—



I am unable to find any meaning for the design on this seal. The bottom character of the left-hand column might be *ku*, but none of the others bears any resemblance to any letter. I have inquired from the Khyab-ying, but have not yet received his reply.

As I have already suggested, the apparently meaningless characters on Tibetan seals may be imitations of characters or symbols from old Mongolian seals. Four examples of such seals are illustrated in Yule's *Travels of Marco Polo*. One of these is on a photograph of a letter of Arghun Khan sent by him to Philip the Fair of France in 1289 A.D., another on a letter sent by Oljaitu to Philip

the Fair in 1305¹; the other two are on a photograph of a bank-note of the Ming Dynasty, which carried on the paper currency of the Mongols.² I give a tracing of the two latter seals below.



Two Seals from a Bank-note of the Ming Dynasty.

The character at the bottom of the left-hand column of the lower seal on the bank-note, which is shown as Fig. 2, is the same as the character at the bottom of the third column of the first seal of the Prime Minister, and the character at the top of the left-hand column of the lower seal on the bank-note (Fig. 2) is the same as the penultimate character in the right-hand column of the seal of the Jong-pöns of Gyantse. None of the other characters correspond with those on the Tibetan seals, but there is a general sort of resemblance between them and some of the characters on the seal of the Khyab-ying.

Besides seals in the Hor-yig seal character some Tibetan seals have the inscription in Tibetan U-cha characters. The seals of the Sera and Gandan Monasteries are examples. The seal of the Depung Monastery has its inscription in the Hor-yig character.

¹ *Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by Colonel Sir Henry Yule, edited by Henri Cordier, vol. ii, p. 474, 1903. The letter of Arghun Khan bears three impressions of his seal and that of Oljaitu bears five impressions of his seal. The two seals are different.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 426.

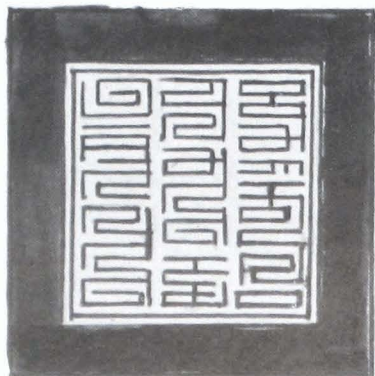
The official seal of the Tashi Lama is shown in Fig. 2. It is known as the *hJa-Sa bKah-tham* (འཇམ་ས་བཀའ་ཐམ་), “seal of heaven (lit. rainbow) and earth.” It is in the Old Indian Lantsa character, and bears a monogram in the centre, and the word *mangalam*, the equivalent in Sanskrit for *Ta-shi* (བཀྱ་ཤེས་). The monogram is made up of the ten letters *o, u, m, h, k, sh, l, w, r,* and *y*. It is supposed to have mystic power as a charm, and is, in consequence, called *Nam-chu-wang-dan* (ནམ་བཟུ་དབང་ལྷན་), “the ten powerful letters.” Illustrations of this and other similar monograms are given by Rai Sarat Chandra Das Bahadur in pl. v of “The Sacred and Ornamental Characters of Tibet” (JASB. 1888, vol. lvii, pt. i, p. 41).

As an example of seals which bear no inscription but only a design the seal of the Tashi Lama’s Secretary, which is affixed to the address on the outside of letters which bear the official seal of the Tashi Lama to the letter, is shown in Fig. 4. The design is a conch-shell, which is one of the eight lucky symbols of Buddhism known as *Tashi-ta-gye* (བཀྱ་ཤེས་རྟམ་ས་བཟུ་ཏ་ *bkra-skis rtags-brgyad, astamangala*). It is the symbol of the preaching of the doctrine; as its sound spreads far and wide.

Another seal which bears no inscription but only a design is that of the Treasurer (ལྷག་མཛོད་) of the Tashi Lama, which is shown in Fig. 5. The design is an emblem of prosperity.

I have not given any examples of seals in which the inscription is in the ordinary Tibetan character. The seals of the Sera and Gahdan Monasteries bear the names of the monastery *sera* and *dgah-ldan po-brang* in the U-chan character, while that of Depung (འབྲས་ལྷུང་ *'aBras-spung*) bears the name of the monastery in the seal character. The seals are round, and there is a floral design in the centre of each seal. Illustrations of these three seals, which were affixed to the Tibet Treaty, will be found in

1



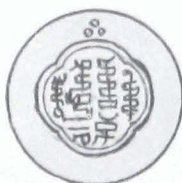
2



4



3



5



6



7



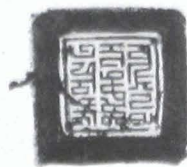
10



8



9



the illustration of the Treaty which is given by Sir F. Younghusband in *India and Tibet*, p. 306. The impressions are, however, indistinct for the purpose of reading the inscriptions. Mr. B. C. Gould, Political Officer in Sikkim, has kindly had these seals photographed for me in their full size.

The inscription on the seal of the Depung Monastery is clear: *hBras-spung*.

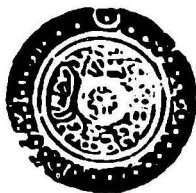
The inscriptions on the other seals are, however, too indistinct to be read. That on the Sera seal appears to be *Se* (at the top), *ra* (on the left side), illegible (on the right side), *chhen* (at the bottom).

The inscription on the Gahdan seal appears to be *dGah* at the top; illegible, probably *ldan*, on the right side; *pho* on the left side, and *bra(ng)* at the bottom, viz. *dGah-ldan pho-brang*, the Gahdan Palace.

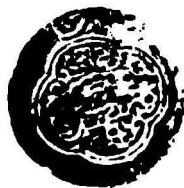
Although the inscriptions are indistinct, I give the seals below as examples of this class of seal.



Seal of
Depung
Monastery.



Seal of
Sera
Monastery.



Seal of
Gahdan
Monastery.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATE

1. Official seal of the Dalai Lama.
2. Official seal of the Tashi Lama.
3. Private seal of the Dalai Lama.
4. Seal of the Secretary of the Tashi Lama.
5. Private seal of the Khyab-ying, which is affixed to letters signed by the Treasurer of the Tashi Lama.
6. Seal of the Tibetan Council of Ministers.
7. Seal of the National Committee (Tshong-du Dūd-pa).
8. Seal of the Lama Minister of the Tibetan Government.
9. Seal of the Jong-pöns of Phari.
10. Official seal of the Khyab-ying, the chief Minister of the Tashi Lama.

EXAMPLES OF TIBETAN SEALS
SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

BY
E. H. WALSH

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EXAMPLES OF TIBETAN SEALS: SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

By E. H. WALSH

IN my paper on Tibetan Seals in the last number of this Journal (JRAS., 1915, p. 1) I regret that, owing to there not being time for a second revision of the proof, on account of my being in India, there are certain misprints, which I correct below.

For 'abar in line 6 of the inscription of the seal on p. 7, read hbar.

For རྩ the top word of the third column of the seal on p. 8, read རྩ.


For མཚོར the second word in the same column, read མཚོར.


For འབར the bottom word in the sixth column of the above seal, read འབར.

These letters are correctly given in the transliteration of the seal on the same page.

The last letter on the seal of the Abbot of the Gyantse Monastery appears to be རྩ, which I took to be an unusual form of རྩ g. From further inquiries, however, I gather that the letter is meant for རྩ m, and is either a mistake in the cutting of the seal or a strangely clear misimpression of the seal. The last word is therefore *dam*, and stands for རྩམ་ཁ་, *dam-kha*, "a seal," similar to རྩམ་ཀ་, *tham-ka*. The inscription is therefore "The seal of the Head Official of the dPal hKhor-Chhos-sDe Monastery".

The reading of the second column of the seal of the Jong-pöns of Gyantse which I have given on p. 12 as "rdzong" is not correct. I cannot think how the mistake

occurred. The word, which is correctly shown in the drawing of the seal on p. 11, is  *rtsa*, "official."

The form of the letter differs from that at the bottom of the second column of the Dalai Lama's Seal (Fig. 1 on the Plate) , but is the same as that in Dr. Francke's Ladakh block-print alphabet (JRAS., 1910, p. 1211). The inscription on the seal is, therefore, *rGyal-rtsa*, and stands for "*rGyal-Tse dzong rtsa thanka*", "The official seal of Gyantse Fort".

A *Dzong* in Tibet is not merely the fort, but a district, of which the fort is the headquarters of the administration under the *Jong-pöns* (*Dzong-pöns*).

With reference to the seal of the Khyab-ying, who is the Prime Minister of the Tashi Lama, referred to on p. 12, I have since received the reply of the Khyab-ying, which is that the seal is an old one, and he does not know the meaning of the characters.

Since I wrote the above paper, I have obtained, through the courtesy of the Rev. Father Felix, O.M.C., a copy of the Dalai Lama's seal, and also that of the *Mi-dbang*, the Regent of Lhasa, affixed to two documents of the year A.D. 1741, granted to the Capuchin Fathers at Lhasa, allowing them to preach freely the Christian religion, and allowing the Tibetans to embrace it unmolested. These documents have been described by the Rev. Father Felix in an article "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", in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*,¹ as follows:—

"II. The second category shows two Tibetan diplomas in 'Umin' or 'Umin chuk'² characters. The larger one



¹ JASB., vol. viii (n.s.), p. 325.

² དུ་མེད་ or དུ་མེད་རྒྱུག་

is of Mi-Vang, 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,¹ 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.”²

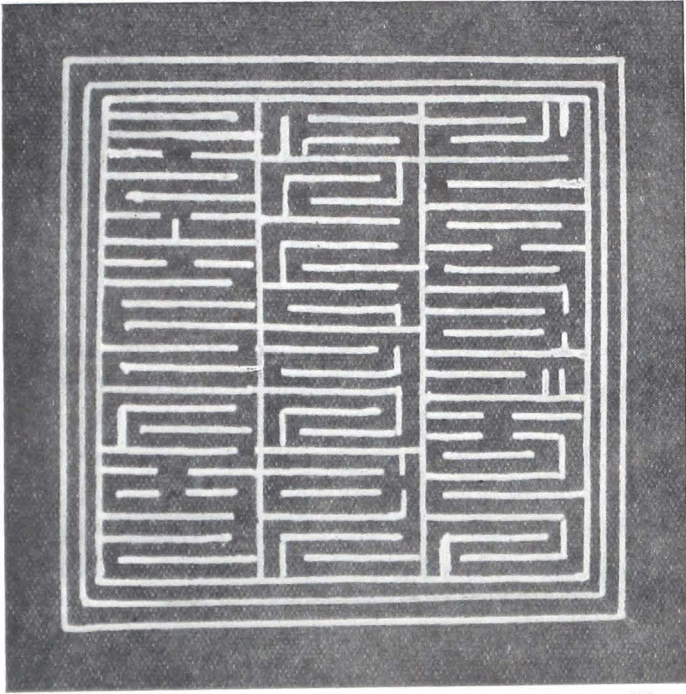
I would note that as both documents are dated in the same year, that of the Iron Bird, which corresponds to 1741 A.D., the date of 1751 A.D. assigned to the document granted by the Dalai Lama appears to be a mistake.

A reproduction of these seals is given below (p. 468). The seal of the Dalai Lama is interesting as being different from the seal at present in use, both in the size of the seal and in the inscription.

The inscription on the seal is the same as that on the seal of the Dalai Lama on a letter preserved in the archives of one of the noble families of Ladakh, an illustration of which has been given by Dr. Francke in *JRAS.*, 1912, p. 747. The seal is, however, much larger than the one illustrated by Dr. Francke. The only difference in the characters on the two seals is the initial letter, which is  on Dr. Francke's seal and  on the present seal.

¹ ལྷུམ་སྟོད་ *khrum-stod* or ལྷུམས་སྟོད་ *khrooms-stod*. The Twenty-fourth Constellation, corresponding to the seventh month.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 329.



Seal of the Dalai Lama on a permit to the Capuchin Monks at Lhasa in the year A.D. 1741.



The inscription is as follows :—

First column *rDo-rje hChhang*.

Second column *Ta-lai blamah*.

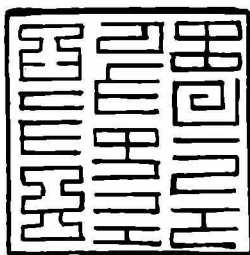
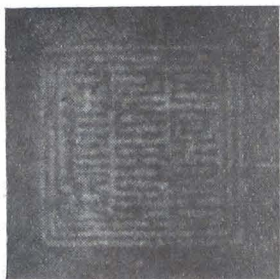
Third column *Yi-tham-ka rgyal*.

Namely : "The royal seal of *rDo-rje hChhang*,¹ Dalai Lama."

There is no final character  to fill up the column at the end of the seal after *rgyal*, which clearly shows that the  which occurs in the present seals of the Dalai Lama is not intended for *wa*, and the inscription is not "*rgyal wa*".

¹ *hDo-rje Chhang* is the Tibetan form of the Sanskrit Vajradhāra, the Bodhisattwa Reflex of the Celestial Buddha Akshobya. In Tibetan Buddhism, however, it is considered that he is the Reflex of Śākyā Muni, and that he is the chief Celestial Buddha, and that he is incarnated in the Dalai Lama.

The document granted by the Regent of Lhasa to the Capuchins bears two seals, a smaller one at the head of the document and a larger one at the end.



Smaller seal of the Regent of Lhasa on a permit granted to the Capuchin Monks at Lhasa in the year 1741 A.D.

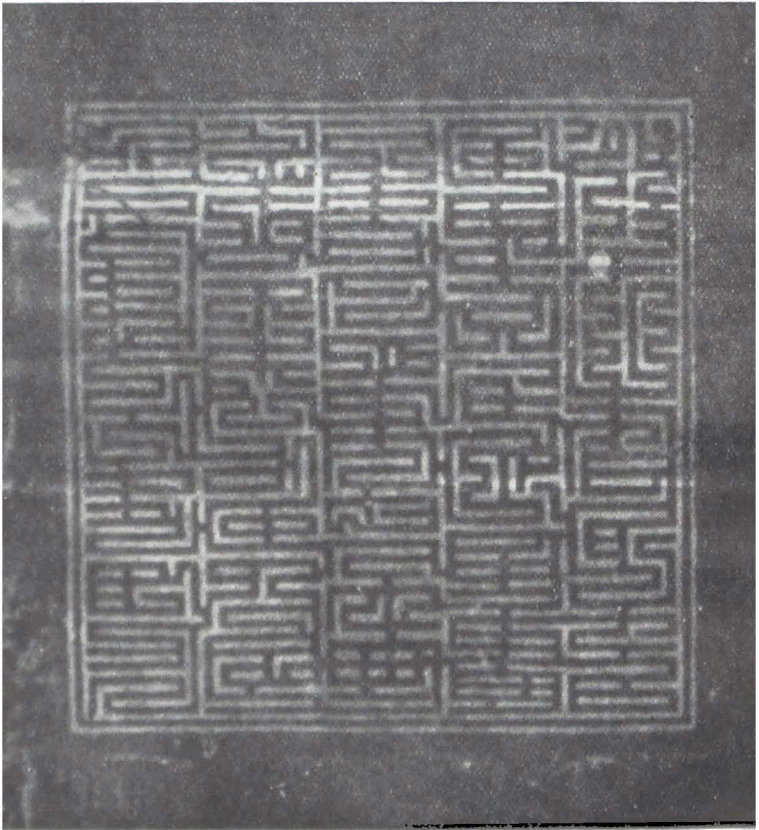
Inscription on the seal enlarged.

I am unable to attach any meaning to the characters on the smaller seal. The second character in the first column resembles *d* and the third *j*; the top character in the second column resembles *b*, the second *dz*, and the bottom one *r*. The top character in the third column resembles *th*, the penultimate character *ng*, and the bottom one *rd*. The other characters appear to be Mongolian seal characters or imitations of them.

The impression of the larger seal of the Regent of Lhasa (p. 470) is very clear. It appears to be in old Mongolian seal character, or an imitation of it.

In my former paper I gave for comparison a drawing of two seals on a bank-note of the Ming Dynasty, which is illustrated in Yule's *Travels of Marco Polo*. Mr. H. B. Morse has kindly sent me a reproduction of another bank-note of the Ming Dynasty, which was found in 1900 in the pedestal of a Buddha in the grounds of the Summer Palace outside Peking, and which is illustrated in his *Trade and Administration of China*, in which the seal characters on the note itself and of the seals on the note are much clearer than on that illustrated in Yule's *Travels of Marco*

Polo. It would be interesting if some Chinese scholar would examine the Tibetan seals I have mentioned, which appear to be an imitation of the Mongolian or Chinese seal character, to see whether they can be deciphered on that basis.



Larger seal of the Regent of Lhasa on a permit granted to the Capuchin Monks at Lhasa in the year A.D. 1741.

