PREFACE

ALEXANDER CSOMA DE KÖRÖS AND HIS MAHAVYUTPATTI

The year 1784 which marked the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, also witnessed the birth of two eminent scholars who made the name of the Society famous by their valuable researches. Dr. Horace Hayman Wilson, born in 1784, joined the services of the East India Company and served the Asiatic Society for nearly a quarter of a century and finished his academic career in England as the first Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, the University of our Founder-president Sir William Jones. Before leaving Calcutta, Dr. Wilson had the satisfaction of receiving the celebrated Hungarian Orientalist (also born in 1784) Alexander Csoma de Körös and drawing him into close co-operation with the learned members of the Asiatic Society during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Alexander Csoma had his early education in the school of his native village Körös. At the age of fifteen (1799) he was sent to the famous college of Nagyenyed. very poor parents he had to accept the position of a servant-pupil in the college, thus paying his educational charges by personal service. In 1807 while Napoleon was at the peak of his glory, Csoma came into contact with Adam Herepei, his beloved Professor whom he interrogated about the Asiatic Cradle of the Hungarians. 1815 he passed successfully the public examinations permitting him to join foreign universities. The same year he got a fellowship of fifteen pounds from some English foundation and with that money in his pocket he joined the University of Göttingen with a view to preparing himself for an ecclesiastical career. But fate decided otherwise. For he met at Göttingen Prof. Eichhorn, the celebrated Orientalist who nurtured the seeds already sown into the heart of Csoma by Prof. Herepei and gave him much positive information about Asia and her culture, specially while discussing some rare Arabic manuscripts. Csoma now took a definite decision to explore Asia. Towards the end of 1818, he returned to his college at Nagyenyed which offered him a post but refusing that comfortable academic career he decided to welcome the thousand inconveniences and dangers of an Asiatic journey. He spent some time in Croatia mastering the Russian language for he decided to enter Asia via Russia. In 1819, at the age of thirty-five, with only two hundred florins in his pocket, he plunged into the unknown, in search of 'the early zones inhabited by the Hungarians, collecting the documents of their history and observing the similarities which exist between Hungarian and the different Oriental languages'.

Abandoning his project of passing through Odessa and Moscow, he came to Bucharest and thence to Sofia (Jan. 1, 1820); in the company of Bulgarian merchants he came to Philippopolis but knowing that epidemic was raging near Constantinople he avoided the Turkish capital, sailed in a Greek boat from Enos and landed in Alexandria where he hoped to study some valuable books by Arab geographers, but the pestilence raged there also. So he left Egypt in haste and passing via Cyprus, Tripoli and Latakia, he reached Aleppo and thence the city of Mosul whence he took a boat and reached Baghdad on July 22, 1820. Thus it took nearly seven months

for Csoma to travel from Bucharest to Baghdad. Joining again a caravan he came to Kermanshah and Hamadan finally reaching Teheran where, during his Persian sojourn, he spent four months improving his knowledge of Persian with the help from the British embassy. Leaving his books, certificates and some of his writings in Teheran, he took to the costume of the Armenian and came to Meshed (April 18, 1821). Civil war was raging there and so he could continue his chequered journey towards Bokhara only in October 1821. Rumours of war were everywhere and so he changed his route and came to Kabul (Jan. 6, 1822) via Balkh and Bamian.

Coming thence to Peshawar, the first city of India proper that he visited, Csoma met there two French soldiers of fortune, Allard and Ventura. • In March 1822, he left Lahore and via Amritsar and Jammu entered Kashmir.

On June 9, 1822, Csoma found himself at Leh, the capital of Ladakh in Western Tibet, and began his direct relations with a country which, thanks to his researches. would be made famous in the academic world and, in return, would give him immortality. He tried to enter Central Asia via Yarkhand (as his fellow-countryman Sir Aurel Stein did nearly a century after) but the risk was too great, as his advisers told him. and he returned to Lahore. Meanwhile in the Dras Valley, Csoma met the famous British officer Moorcroft to whom for the first time he confided the aims of his journey and that was a turning point in the career of Csoma; for Moorcroft urged him to take up the study of Tibetan seriously and offered him some help from British authorities. Moorcroft brought to the notice of Csoma a book called Alphabatum Tibetanum by the Italian Jesuit missionary Georgi. When Moorcroft left, his companion Mr. Trebeck introduced Csoma to a native scholar who knew Persian and Tibetan and thus through Persian he began acquiring the Tibetan idiom. On Nov. 26, 1822, Csoma returned to Kashmir near Moorcroft and remained there till May 1823. Thence, furnished with letters of introduction and some subsidy, he started (May 2, 1823) for the Monastery of the Lamas where he worked for nearly a decade to complete the Dictionary and Grammar of the Tibetan language. At Zanskar he worked in a monastery named Zangla (June 26, 1823—Oct. 22, 1824). He shifted to Sabathu (Nov. 20, 1824) where he was arrested as a spy, but thanks to the letters furnished by Moorcroft he overcame his difficulties and continued his studies with official support. He continued working in different Lamasaris till November 1826 and received fresh subsidies from the Government of India and from the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He began exploiting the rich manuscript collections in the district of Bouchahir (Aug. 1826—Oct. 1830). He was throughout helped by the learned Lama of Zanskar, Sangs-rgyas Phun-chogs. Recently we have found the name of another teacher, Kun-dga' Chos-legs. identified by Mr. Shuttleworth in a Tibetan manuscript commented by A. H. Francke. Another name of Csoma's teacher was Chul-khrims Rgya-mcho, who copied a philosophical text at the request of Skender Beg (Alexander Csoma). This manuscript was acquired by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences which remembered very appropriately the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great Hungarian Tibetalogist. (Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie, Budapest, May 1935.)

Meanwhile we find that some of his valuable researches drew the attention of the eminent scholars of the Asiatic Society of Bengal which began to take interest in Csoma since the publication of his letter dated May 1825 to Capt. C. P. Kennedy.

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(Vide Life by Duka.) The Society now sent a formal invitation to Csoma and he came down to Calcutta (1831) and worked indefatigably till 1835 to get his Grammar and Dictionary of the Tibetan language published under the auspices of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In 1835 he applied for a passport to enable him to pursue his researches in North Bengal. In 1837 he returned to Calcutta where he continued working till 1842 as Librarian of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and arranging its rich collection of Tibetan MSS. Towards the beginning of 1842 Csoma left Calcutta for Darjeeling hoping to reach Lhasa by that route and thence to the direction of the country of the Yugars (Yugour Turks who were reputed by several scholars to be the progenitors of the Hungarians). Arriving at Darjeeling (March 24, 1842) he contracted Malaria and died April 11, 1842, completing twenty arduous years of his pilgrimage in Asia.

II. THE MAHAVYUTPATTI

As early as Jan. 28, 1825, Csoma made the first allusion to this Sanskrit-Tibetan Vocabulary in his Report addressed to Capt. Kennedy, Assistant Political Agent in Sabathu. In that Report we find the following significant words: 'As there are several collections of Sanskrit and Tibetan words among my other Tibetan writings, I brought with me a copy of the largest, taken out of one of the above mentioned volumes, consisting of 154 leaves, every page of six lines.' In his second Report dated May 25, 1825, Csoma again alludes to the above Vocabulary: 'This Vocabulary, arranged after certain matters or subjects under general heads, contains many thousand words of every description: several distinctions and divisions highly interesting in order to understand better the whole system and principles of the Buddhist doctrine.' Arriving in Calcutta in April 1831, Csoma reported himself to Mr. Swinton, Secretary to the Government, and placed all his manuscripts at the disposal of the authorities. He resided in the Asiatic Society's rooms from 1831 to 1835, attending primarily to the publication of his Tibetan Dictionary and Grammar. He was also employed by the Society to make a Catalogue Raisonné of the Tibetan works forwarded from Nepal by B. H. Hodgson. Dr. H. H. Wilson wrote on Dec. 26, 1832, that besides the Dictionary and Grammar, a translation of a Tibetan Vocabulary, containing a summary of the Buddhist system, was ready for publication. But while the Government bore the cost of publishing the Grammar and the Dictionary, the Vocabulary was apparently ignored. Between 1835 and 1837, Csoma was travelling in Maldah, Jalpaiguri, North Bengal and Sikkim, perfecting his knowledge of Sanskrit and learning Bengali. From the end of 1837 to the beginning of 1842, he again resided in the Society's premises, served as a Librarian, arranged the Tibetan works, which he had himself presented to the Society, and contributed many valuable articles to our Journal. But it is very strange that during the second period of his residence he could not find time to publish the Mahavyutpatti which had cost him such infinite pains to prepare, as observed by the late Sir E. Denison Ross who took up that work for publication, delivered a lecture on the topic before the Society on Jan. 5, 1910, and announced that the Asiatic Society of Bengal was about to reprint all Csoma's articles in a collective form, 'in honour of the 125th Anniversary of Csoma's birth'. What Sir Denison wrote in 1910, was supplemented by him in his recently published autobiography from which we quote the following passage: 'One day I came across a large

folio volume in the Society's Library which proved to be an unpublished work by Csoma de Körös.... the work was the *Mahavyutpatti*, the Sanskrit Vocabulary of all the technical terms of Buddhism with a Tibetan translation and English rendering added by Csoma. Having learned all I could about the great scholar, my chief source of information being the admirable Life by Duka, I was consumed with shame that so much labour and devotion as the manuscript represented should lie unregarded in the book-devouring climate of Bengal. I determined to move the Society to undertake the publication.'

Sir Denison Ross while presenting the first fascicule of the book wrote in his preface dated Calcutta, Oct. 1910, that about one-third of Csoma's manuscript would be printed in the first fascicule (pp. ix +127). Dr. Satish Chandra Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who had then made a name by reconstructing the history of Indian logic with the comparative study of Tibetan (Buddhistic) and Sanskrit (Brahmanical) Texts, was already associated with Dr. Ross in the editing of Mahavyutpatti. Csoma's continental English, as a matter of course, was capable of improvement as we know already from a note written by James Prinsep to the Government in 1833, when he definitely said that he inspected and corrected the English portion of Csoma's Dictionary. Dr. Ross likewise remarked in his preface: 'In cases where we have improved on Csoma's English without affecting his meaning we have not thought it necessary to make any remark; but where we have altered or added to what Csoma wrote, the portion for which we are responsible has been placed within crotchets. The editors are responsible for the foot notes.'

Dr. Ross hoped that when the whole work would be printed, there should be alphabetical indexes to all the Sanskrit and all the Tibetan words and phrases contained in the *Vocabulary*.

The second fascicule was prepared by the joint editors and published by the Society (Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 129-251) and was dated Jan. 24, 1916. Meanwhile Dr. Ross left India and within a few years Dr. Vidyābhūṣaṇa passed away. As we find in Dr. Ross' autobiography: 'I was fortunate enough to enlist the services as co-editor of MM. Satish Chandra Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Only two fasciculi have been published, as shortly after I left India the co-editor died and no Sanskrit scholar has been found to take his place.'

The importance of the *Mahavyutpatti* could be appreciated further if we remember that as early as 1825 M. Abel Remusat, who occupied the first chair of Chinese in Paris, referred in his *Melanges Asiatique* to 'a philosophical Vocabulary printed in five languages in Peking'. The eminent Russian Sanskritist Minayeff also published his version of the text and variant readings therefrom were carefully noted by Dr. Ross and signalized by the letter M.

Searching in the archives of the Society we luckily discovered a file on *Mahavyutpatti* dated 1900 which contains a neat hand-written copy of the title-page of Minayeff's edition published in 1887 at St. Petersburg. The title-page naturally was written in Russian script but it contained a Sanskrit couplet (probably in the handwriting of Minayeff himself) which I quote below:

Ahamapi kṛtaśaktir naumi sambuddhamāryam Nabhasi garuḍayantaḥ kin na yānti dvirephāh. PREFACE. v

In the file I found some pages of notes in the Russian language followed by a crude French translation with the help of which we can understand that our Society was probably trying towards 1900 to bring out an edition of Csoma's Mahavyutpatti and knowing as they did that Minayeff had already published a portion of the text, the Society probably engaged some French-knowing Russian to enable the editor of the Society's version to utilize the Russian edition. Sir Herbert Risley was the then President of the Society and the eminent Tibetalogist Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das was publishing his papers in our Journal keeping himself in close contact with MM. Haraprasad Sastri, Dr. Oldham and other members of the Council. Sir Denison Ross would join our Society in 1901 and joined the Council in 1909 as Philological Secretary and would help its cultural activities considerably through his official relations with the Government of India and as Secretary he was making financial contributions to the Society. When actually the work of editing Csoma's manuscript was taken up by Dr. Ross is difficult to ascertain. But from our file we can say that some member of the Council interested in Csoma's manuscript took special care to bring down to Calcutta the first edition of T. P. Minayeff's work Buddhism: Investigations and Materials (published in the Hist.-Philolog. fasc. of the Imperial University, St. Petersburg, 1887). Minayeff's preface was translated into French, but it was discovered that a second Russian edition was being prepared under the instruction of Dr. Serge Th. Oldenburg, member of the Academy. The second editor, N. Mironov, was commissioned by Dr. Oldenburg in 1905 to issue a new edition of the text and an index. The progress of the work was slow due to unforeseen difficulties, as admitted by the Russian editor who makes the following significant comment right at the end of his preface:

'When the printing of the third issue of our edition was almost completed, there appeared another edition of the same text (Sanskrit-Tibetan-English Dictionary by A. Csoma de Körös edited by E. Denison Ross and S. Ch. Vidyabhusana, Memoirs, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1910). We are not prepared to express our opinion as to the significance of this edition, prior to the issue of volume two which is to contain the Sanskrit and Tibetan Indices.'

The Society's edition must have been out by October 1910 when Dr. Ross completed his preface, and that first fascicule may have reached St. Petersburg by the end of 1910, when it was noticed by Mironov, who gave a few interesting details about Mahavyutpatti: (1) That the text was full of corrupt readings and grammatical errors as it is often found in the northern Buddhist texts. (2) That the manuscript used by Minayeff belonged to the Library of the Imperial University of St. Petersburg and written on thick Chinese paper in four languages: Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese The Sanskrit text is written in two different alphabets: Upper line in and Mongolian. Luncha, and the lower line in Tibetan. Below the Sanskrit text follows the Tibetan, then Chinese and finally Mongolian. (3) As to the origin of this manuscript we are referred to the Russian scholar Vassilieff's remarks in The Notes of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, Vol. III, p. 30. (4) That according to a Peking Xylograph of the eighteenth century Mahavyutpatti was prepared in the ninth century A.D. under the Tibetan king Ti Ralpbachjian (circa 866-901) by three scholars or Lotsavas: (a) Khava Phaltseg, (b) Chhogro Luigialtsian, and (c) Shjan Gialnian niavsan.

Publishing the first and second fasciculi when Sir Denison Ross established himself in London as first Director of the School of Oriental Studies, he noted with regret the passing away of MM. Satish Chandra Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the third in hierarchic succession in developing Tibetan studies in India through the Asiatic Society of Bengal: the first, Csoma de Körös (1784–1842), the second Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das (1849–1917) and the third MM. Satish Chandra Vidyābhūṣaṇa (1870–1920).

In 1914, the Society was fortunate to have Mr. Johan van Manen as its General Secretary. He was interested in Tibetan studies, and naturally we find the Council deciding in 1926 to bring out a new edition of Mahavyutpatti. The Council requested Mr. van Manen to undertake the completion with necessary re-edition and re-arrangement of Csoma de Körös' Mahavyutpatti. But as we know from the previous editions of Minayeff and of Ross-Vidyābhūṣaṇa that knowledge of Tibetan alone was not sufficient for an editor of such a work. He must be thoroughly familiar with the terminologies of Buddhistic and Brahmanical philosophies. This difficulty baffled Mr. van Manen and his colleagues of the Bibliotheca Indica for a long time. In 1921, Prof. Sylvain Levi of Paris came at the invitation of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to inaugurate the comparative study of Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese at Santiniketan. Vidhuśekhara Śāstri was the first to take full advantage of such a course of lectures and a group of young Indian scholars led by Dr. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi of the Calcutta University flocked to the lectures of Prof. Levi. Prof. Durga Charan Chatterjee who secured the Government of Bengal scholarship in 1929 was attached to the Asiatic Society of Bengal and he began to explore the Tibetan manuscripts of the Society. In 1939, Prof. Chatterjee was requested to revise the Sanskrit portion of the Mahavyutpatti, and he had the satisfaction of completing the third and the last fascicule which was ready for the press in the year marking the centenary of the death of Csoma de Körös (1842-1942).

All the available information about Csoma's MS. has been given by Sir E. Denison Ross in the Introduction to the First Part of the Sanskrit-Tibetan-English Vocabulary. The method for editing Csoma's MS., as laid down in the Introduction (pp. iv-v) to the First Part of the Vocabulary, has been adhered to with the following innovation:

- (1) Sanskrit words in the first column are always given in their inflected forms instead of their being sometimes inflected and sometimes uninflected as in Parts I and II (e.g. Buddha Vihāreṇa Vihara, LXII. 4). It may be noted that the Sanskrit words are throughout put in their inflected forms in the Xylograph of the text of the Mahavyutpatti.
- (2) Hyphens have been used in the Sanskrit column to indicate the component parts of the compounded words.
- (3) The Sanskrit titles of the chapters, as they are found in the edition of Minayeff and Sakaki have been added. It is curious that the Sanskrit titles are not to be found in the Xylograph of the Narthang edition.

Foot-notes have been inserted by the editor.

As it is not possible just now to bring out any Index of the *Vocabulary*, a comparative table of the sections of the *Mahavyutpatti* as in the edition of Minayeff, Sakaki and Csoma has been appended to facilitate reference to the present volume with the help of the Index of either Minayeff or Sakaki.

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In this work Prof. Chatterjee was guided by the valuable criticisms and suggestions of Dr. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi and Dr. Nalinaksha Dutt. Dr. Dutt, a specialist in Fuddhist Philosophical Literature, who is also a Tibetan scholar, very kindly helped the Council, as well as Prof. Chatterjee, in completing the book. Owing to war emergencies we could not celebrate adequately the death centenary of the illustrious Hungarian scholar, but we have the satisfaction of at least fulfilling our pledge by presenting to the public the entire Mahavyutpatti in three fasciculi and dedicating the same to Alexander Csoma de Körös with a panegyric in Sanskrit śloka composed by Prof. Chatterjee. We thank and congratulate him on the successful termination of an arduous work. Mahavyutpatti was reputed to have been composed in the ninth century A.D., used by Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist scholars who were eager to learn Sanskrit during the middle ages and it was first discovered and transcribed in early nineteenth century by Csoma nearly one thousand years after its composition. He completed the transcription but did not live to see the Asiatic Society of Bengal publishing the whole work as custodian of his unique manuscript. He enjoyed the hospitality of the Society for some years but in exchange he gave to the Society his priceless researches and studies which we hope the Society will now get ready to publish, in a collected edition of Csoma's works, with the dawning of better days.

> KALIDAS NAG, General Secretary.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL, September 1944.