

PUBLICATIONS THROUGH TWENTYFIVE YEARS

— JKR: NCS

A quarter of a century is a fragment in the history of letters. In modern period, particularly in the current century, learning finds speedy expression in wide and varied forms. Number or quantity of books or publications come out in a quarter of the current century would be many times than that come out all over the last century; the rate of increase is in a geometrical progression. Yet the publication of new books or original works would not be even in any arithmetical progression. If we add to this, the difficulties or disadvantages of Tibetan publications, a quarter of the prolific twentieth century would be too small a period to account for.

The first two publications planned in the first two years, since inception (1958), were the famous language book on Sanskrit/Tibetan and the original version of the RED ANNALS.

PRAJNA

The language book, generally referred to by its sub-title PRAJNA, is a Sanskrit-Tibetan Thesaurus-cum-Grammar compiled in 1771. Though the book was preserved in xylograph, few copies of the block prints were found outside Tibet: one copy was in the British Museum in Charles Bell Collection. We had a copy among our first accessions. This was a posthumous gift from Sawang Rag-kha-sha who besides being the Senior Minister of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, was a great scholar and a patron of scholarship. PRAJNA was in good demand among Western Orientalists; and the American Foundations failing to locate the copy in the British Museum sent word to the Tibetan refugee camps in India for a copy for a thousand dollars. We had no funds for photo-mechanic reproduction though the cost for this in India was at that time less than Rs. 25,000 (=3000 US Dollars). We applied for a Special Grant to the Govt. of India. When Prof. Humayun Kabir mentioned this to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru the latter readily recommended issue of Rs. 25,000. The Special Grant was received in 1960 and we went into production in 1961.

We chose the latest photo-mechanic process (i.e. offset) just then available in India. We checked and cleansed the pages (handmade paper) of the xylograph and took nearly a year over this. The pro-

duction, with modern binding on the head (i.e. spine), was completed in November 1962. Meanwhile the lexicon portions, with Sanskrit words in Sanskrit type and Tibetan words in Tibetan type, were published by us in modern format in October 1961. The two publications were hailed by both modern scholars and Tibetan scholars. Production of this xylograph gave the academic world the first bright and clear reproduction of a Tibetan book anywhere in the West or the East. The Lexicon portions, as we published, formed the first such bilingual (Sanskrit/Tibetan), work in the respective scripts. The scholars of Japan were unreserved in admitting our achievements vis-a-vis Japanese and Western publications earlier.

RED ANNALS

Kunga Dorje's RED ANNALS was written in 1346 the author's title was HULAN DEBATHER. A revision and reduction was published in 1538, this edition carried the title DEBATHER MARPO. 'Hulan' is a Mongol loan word in Tibetan while 'Marpo' is pure Tibetan diction. While the revised text was available in xylograph, the original was not; the original became so obscure that in 1950s only three authenticated copies could be found in Lhasa. Barmioak Athing Densapa located a copy with a Tibetan family in Gangtok in 1959. She Kusho Pheunkhang checked and confirmed the copy as authentic. The book was produced by letterpress composing and put in traditional (i.e. palm leaf) format with binding on the head.

This publication of RED ANNALS in April 1961 was an event in academic circles. The Tibetan scholars were as happy as modern scholars like Hugh Richardson and Token Tada. Most happy were the Mongol scholars. From Ulan Bator, Academician Rinchen sent his greetings and Prof. Bira made an appreciative review hailing this publication as a distinct "gain for the science of history". The original book has not only Mongol usage in the title and text, the original is a valuable source of history of the Mongols in the period of the Ka Khans.

RGYAN - DRUG MCHOG - GNYIS

Along with PRAJNA and the RED ANNALS, we had a plan to describe a set of Thankas (painted scrolls) depicting RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS (the Six Ornaments and the Two Excellents), that is, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha and Sakya-prabha. At the time of our Opening in October 1958, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had very much admired a set of Thankas depicting these great saint-scholars. He evinced as deep

interest in the philosophy of these masters as in the iconographical details of their portraits. In commemoration of this we planned in 1960 to bring out the book RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS and had the volume published in 1962.

We intended the volume to be as grand in its contents as in its production. For the text (in English) explaining the iconographical details of the exquisite Thankas we had advice and guidance of Lama Jamyang Khentse Rimpoche, Lama Gyaston Tulku, Lama Dodrup Rimpoche, Lama Lhodo Zangpo and Benoytosh Bhattacharyya. For presenting the philosophy of Nagarjuna and other Acharyas we had advice and guidance of Nalinaksha Dutt, Tekan Tada and Satkari Mockerjee as also from the eminent scholars mentioned above. A faithful reproduction of the Thankas was made; no retouching of portions worn out or damaged (by incense smoke) was attempted.

Readers found the magnificent portraits magnificently reproduced; and the layout and get up of the volume were, in readers' opinion, in unison with the grandeur of the theme. Scholars like Swami Prajnanananda and Lama Anagarika Govinda wrote in appreciation of the text presenting the Mahayana philosophy. Art critics like Ajit Ghose and M.S. Randhawa wrote in appreciation of the text presenting iconographical details. The volume went into a reprint in 1972. Funds permitting, we have to go into a second reprint early.

SANSKRIT / TIBETAN BILINGUALS

Tibetan scholars as well as Lamas who had noticed in our library Asiatic Society of Bengal's Sanskrit/Tibetan bilingual works, like Avadana Kalpalata, suggested such publications by us. Our two publications, namely, PRAJNA (lexicon portions) and BHADRACHARI (ed. Suniti Pathak) were in high demand. So in 1964 we published Vasubandhu's classic VIJNAPTI-MATRATA-SIDDHI with its Tibetan translation and introduction and notes by the eminent scholar Aiyaswami Sastri, who has recently given us the privilege of publishing, in our Bulletin for 1980, a similar edition of Dignaga's ALAMBANAPARIKSA.

BULLETIN OF TIBETOLOGY

In 1964 we started the Bulletin of Tibetology. This Bulletin has —within two decades and with occasional breaks— turned out to be a landmark in studies relating to Buddhism and Inner Asia. For a journal devoted to an obscure discipline 'Tibetology' its record gives us reasons to be proud. Among the contributors are:— AIYASWAMI

SASTRI; Michael ARIS; Harold W. BAILEY; BUDDHA PRAKASH; Bijanraj CHATTERJI; M.N. DESHPANDE; Nalinaksha DUTT; Lama Anagarika GOVINDA; Ernest HENTENY; Siegbert HUMMEL; Nathan KATZ; Josef KOLMAS; KRISHNA DEVA; Lobsang LHALUNGPA; Swami LOKESWARANANDA; MARCO PALLIS; Jean M. PERRIN; Niharranjan RAY; Hugh E. RICHARDSON; Toni SCHMID; Sukumar SEN; Tsepon SHAKABPA; C. SIVARAMAMURTI; Richard K. SPRIGG; Valentina STACHE ROSEN; Wangchen SUR-KHANG; Marianne WINDER; and Turrell V. WYLIE.

We are proud as much of the names of our contributors as of the variety of topics covered in the Bulletin. Twenty five years ago Tibetology was mostly either CHHOS (DHARMA) or BOD SKAD (BHOTA BHASA). Today Tibetology is a discipline covering Geography and History, Language and Literature, Religions and Cults as well as Aesthetics and Iconography. Claims of Tibetology are now admitted in the universities and academic circles all over the world. Modern scholars, particularly of Japan, UK and USA, recognize the role of the Bulletin of Tibetology in expansion of the frontiers of Tibetology to its furthest limits. Funds permitting, an anthology of select articles from the Bulletin between 1964 and 1982 will come out early in 1984.

TIBETAN TEXTS

Tibetan scholars and Lamas, associated with us, advised publication of Tibetan Texts. We made a beginning with Char kya Khutuktu's Commentary on Bhadrachari edited by Lokesh Chandra, an authority on Sanskrit learning in Tibet and Mongolia, with Introduction in 1963. This edition went a long way in elucidating the great Mahayana lyric.

In 1966 we published Jetsun Dagpa Gyaltshen's treatise on medicine, SOCHA GYALPO KORZOD, in palm leaf format photo-mechanically printed from a calligraphed text. This publication was appreciated by British, German and Russian scholars engaged in work on old schools of medicine.

In 1968 we published Lama Ugyan Tenzing's work on poetics, SNYAN-NGAG, edited with a preface by Athing Barmick Densapa; the production was also in the same manner as that for the treatise on medicine. A learned but little known work by a Sikkim Lama was thus out for the wide world.

We have a few Tibetan tracts on grammar, liturgy etc; these are xylographs printed on handmade paper. An interesting item is the Coronation Story of His Holiness The Dalai Lama. The Tibetan text is translation from Sir Basil Gould's narrative in English; the translation

was by Rani Chuni Dorje and Sonam Gyalpo. We had the woodcarved blocks as gift from Rani Chuni Dorje.

In 1976 we decided to produce important Tibetan works direct from the original prints. The practice of transfer into Calligraph Copy, and thereafter into print, on palm leaf format, is not free from errors and omissions in copying process. For authentication of the text a direct photo-mechanic reproduction of the original is thus indispensable, even though this may be costlier. So in 1976 a programme of direct photo-mechanic reproduction of ancient and classic works as in the case of the PRAJNA xylograph was taken up.

RINCHEN TERZOD

RINCHEN TERZOD (Palpung, Kham), in 61 volumes of xylographs, of which the only set available outside Tibet was in our Collection was the first item in this ambitious programme. Lama Dodrup Rimpoche and Athing Barmick Densapa advised and supervised checking and cleansing the pages (handmade paper). His Holiness The Dalai Lama and His Holiness The Gyalwa Karmapa blessed the project. So far 4 volumes have been published. The demand for speedy production is reaching us both from Lamas and modern scholars.

KADAM PHACHO

KADAM PHACHO, the principal authority on Srijnana Dipankara Atisa (c.982-1054) was taken up for direct photo-mechanic reproduction in 1977. This production, in 3 volumes, was completed in 1981 when Lamas and scholars, both Tibetan and non-Tibetan, were planning the Sahasra Varshiki (millenary) of the great Indian Pandita whose life spanned the Buddhist lands from the Golden Chersonese in the south to the Land of Snows in the north. Lamas and non-Tibetan scholars request us for early production of the succeeding source book KADAM PHUCHO.

FUTURE

Due to spiralling cost of printing and stationery and other unavoidable circumstances, our programmes for publications had to be cut down or halted. Present President of the Institute, His Excellency Homi J.H. Taleyarkhan, a great admirer of Buddhist philosophy and learning, has given us his weighty support for extra or special grants from the Government and on his recommendation already such grants are under issue. With such prospects in our Silver Jubilee Year and with deepest thanks to His Excellency Homi J.H. Taleyarkhan, we look forward to a brighter future in publications relating to Buddhism and Inner Asia.