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 width 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 publication, 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 (1948), 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-sam-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 acquisitions. This was a posthumous gift from Swang Rag-kha-cha 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. 15,000 (≈3,500 US Dollars). We applied for a Special Grant to the Govt. of India. When Prof. Hansayam Kabir mentioned this to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru the latter readily recommended issue of Rs. 15,000. The Special Grant was received in 1960 and we went into production in 1961.

We chose the latest photo-mechanical process (i.e. offset) just then available in India. We checked and cleaned 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 1961. 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 reproductions 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 impressed in admiring our achievements vis-a-vis Japanese and Western publications earlier.

RED ANNALS

Kungr Dorji's RED ANNALS was written in 1346 the author's title was HULAN DEBTHER. A revision and reduction was published in 1338, this edition carried the title DEBTHER 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. Bamshok Ating Denpaa located a copy with a Tibetan family in Gyainkho in 1959. She Kusko Phurkhang 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 Takan Tada. Most happy were the Mongol scholars. From Ulan Bator, Academician Richte sent his greetings and Prof. Jima made an appreciative review hailing this publication as a distinct "gain for the sciences 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 Khans.

RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS

Along with PRAJNA and the RED ANNALS, we had a plan to describe a set of Thangka (painted scrolls) depicting RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS (the Six Ornaments and the Two Exemplars), that is, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Gampopa and Shekayopa. At the time of our opening in October 1951, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had very much admired a set of Thangka depicting these great saint-scholars. He exclaimed as deep
interest in the philosophy of these masters as in the iconographical
details of their portraits. In commemoration of this we planned in
1966 to bring out the book RGYAN-DRIUG MCHO-Q-NTIS and had the

We intended the volume to be as grand in its contents as in
its production. For the text (in English) exploiting the iconographical
details of the exotic Thankas we had advice and guidance of Lama
Jamyang Khentse Rinpoche, Lama Gyatso Tulku, Lama Dedup Rin-
poche, Lama Lhudo Tsangpo and Bennyesh Bhattacharyya. For presen-
ting the philosophy of Ngro-jina and other Abhayas we had advice and
guidance of Nalnakha Dutt, Omkar Tada and Sakti Mederjee as also
from the eminent scholars mentioned above. A faithful reproduction
of the Thanka was made; no retouching of portions were cut out or dam-
aged (by too use trower) was attempted.

Readers found the magnificent portraits magnificently reproduced;
and the layout and get up of the volume were, in readers’ opinion, in
union with the grandeur of the theme. Scholars like Swami Prayjananda
and Lama Anangkika Govinda wrote in appreciation of the text presen-
ting the Mahayana philosophy. Art critics like Abit Ghose and M.S.
Ramaswama wrote in appreciation of the text presenting iconographical
details. The volume went into a reprint in 1971. Funds permitting,
we have to go into a second reprint early.

SANSKRIT / TIBETAN BILINGUALS

Tibetan scholars as well as Lamas who had retired in our
library Asiatic Society of Bengal’s Sanskrit-Tibetan bilingual works,
like Avalana Kalpala, suggested such publications by us. Our two
publications, namely, PRAJNA (lexicon portions) and BHADRACHARI
(ed. Sunil Pathak) were in high demand. So in 1964 we published
Vambhandu’s CUSCA Vijnapti-Matratra-Siddhi with its Tibetan
translation and introduction and notes by the eminent scholar
Aiyaswami Sastri, who has recently given us the privilege of pub-
lishing, in our Bulletin for 1964, a similar edition of Dignaga’s ALAM-
BANAPARIKSHA.

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 reason to be proud. Among the contributors are... AIYASWAMI
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 CHOS (Pharma) 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 1987 will come out early in 1984.

TIBETAN TEXTS

Tibetan scholars and Lama, associated with us, advised publication of Tibetan Texts. We made a beginning with Chan Ijea Khutokh’s Commentary on Bhavavati edited by Lodshok Chantra, in authority on Sanskrit learning in Tibet and Mongolia, with introduction in 1965. This edition went a long way in elucidating the great Mahayana lyric.

In 1966 we published Jetun Dopa Gyaltshen’s treatise on medicine, SOCHA GYALPG KORZOI, 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 Ugyen Tseing’s work on poetics, SNYAN NGAG, edited with a preface by Ating Barmi K Dunsapa; the production was also in the same manner as that for the treatise on medicine. A learned but little known work by a Sixth Lama was thus out for the wide world.

We have a few Tibetan tracts on grammar, literature etc; these are xylographs printed on handmade paper. An interesting item in 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 Chumi Dorje and Sonam Gyalts. We had the woodcarved blocks as gift from Rani Chumi Dorje.

In 1956 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 1956 a programme of direct photo-mechanic reproduction of ancient and classic works as in the case of the Prajna xylegraph was taken up.

RNCHEN TERZOD

RNCHEN TERZOD (Pulung, Khare), 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 Rimpoché and Atithing Barnamick Dorapa advised and supervised checking and cleaning the pages (handmade paper). His Holiness The Dhal Lama and His Holiness The Gyalo Karmapa blessed the project. So far 4 volumes have been published. The demand for speedy completion is reaching us both from Lamas and modern scholars.

KADAM PHACHO

KADAM PHACHO, the principal authority on Srijana Dipa-kara Atisa (c.982-1054) was taken up for direct photo-mechanic reproduction in 1973. This production, in 1 volumes, was completed in 1981 when Lamas and scholars, both Tibetan and non-Tibetan, were planning the Sahara Yarshiki (illuminated) of the great Indian Bodhita 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 spiraling 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 H神圣 J.H. Tseykhankha, a great admirer of Buddhist philosophy and learning, has given us his wholehearted support for extra-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 H神圣 J.H. Tseykhakha, we look forward to a brighter future in publications relating to Buddhism and Inner Asia.