

## AN ESSAY IN MONGOLIAN ON MEDICINAL WATERS

by NICHOLAS POPPE

The collection of Mongolian manuscripts and xylographs belonging to the British Museum contains a rare specimen of Mongolian medical literature, viz., an essay on the curative powers of a mineral spring in Transbaikalia.<sup>1</sup> The document in question is of Buriat origin and is probably one of the very few of this kind outside of Russia. It was donated to the British Museum by Theodore L'voff<sup>2</sup> in 1871 and bears the registration number P N 10 131 of the 28th of August 1871, and is kept under the call number Or 1064. L'voff's letter accompanying his present gives the circumstances under which the manuscript donated came into his possession.<sup>3</sup>

Le 25 d'Août 1871,

London, 21 Norfolk Street, Strand

En quittant Londres, je prie l'administration du Musée Britannique, où j'ai passé plusieurs heures bien instructives pour moi, de vouloir bien recevoir et accepter dans sa riche bibliothèque l'offre d'un manuscrit en Mongol, que j'ai trouvé dans un lieu bien désert de la Sibérie à 60 milles anglaises environ de la route qui passe de Verchne-Oudinsk à Nertchinsk vers l'orient, nommé Courba Khassartou *rachian* (prononcé archan) qui veut dire source minérale.

<sup>1</sup> The author takes pleasure in expressing his gratitude to the Director and the librarians of the Division of Oriental Manuscripts of the British Museum for their assistance during the author's studies at the Museum which were conducted under a research grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1956).

<sup>2</sup> Theodore L'voff, in Russian spelling Федоръ Николаевичъ Львовъ, (1823-85) graduated from an artillery school in Russia and specialized in chemistry. Later he became a professor of chemistry at the same school. In connection with the trial of the revolutionary group of the so-called Petrashevtsy he was exiled to Siberia in 1849. In 1870 he returned from exile. One of his learned works is О сврънстомъ запахъ, замъченномъ въ нъкоторыхъ источникахъ Восточной Сибири, Записки Сибирскаго Отдѣла Императорскаго Русскаго Географическаго Общества 1864, книга 2 (On the sulphuric smell noticed in some springs in Eastern Siberia, Memoires of the Siberian Division of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society, 1864, book 2). Some additional data on L'voff is found in Ф. А. Брокгаузъ и И. А. Ефронъ, Энциклопедическій словарь, томъ XVIII, Санктпетербургъ, 1896, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> In reproducing L'voff's letter verbatim, the author of this article has only supplemented the *accent aigu* and *accent grave* lacking in a few words.

On m'a offert ce manuscrit justement parce que j'ai été envoyé par l'administration de la Sibérie Orientale de faire l'analyse des sources minérales sur les lieux-mêmes.

Certes ce n'est pas un document historique et ne date que de 1840, mais il est intéressant comme un spécimen de la médecine lamaïque—c'est une instruction pour les malades écrite par un lama (prêtre-médecin) nommé Vanchik Saguieff qui s'honore aussi de savoir inoculer la petite vérole. Il est à remarquer que ce lama a déterminé tout à fait juste la qualité de l'eau en mettant dans la catégorie des eaux alcalines, la manière de s'en servir dans certaines affections et les règles hygiéniques qu'on doit servir pendant le traitement—de sorte qu'un docteur en médecine européen n'aurait pas hésité à souscrire sous cette instruction son nom.

Théodore de L'voff.

The document reproduced in phototype<sup>1</sup> and transcription is a typical specimen of Literary Buriat, *i.e.*, Written Mongolian in Buriat adaptation. This kind of Written Mongolian abounds in Buriat colloquialisms, its spelling reflecting the Buriat pronunciation, mainly the phonetic features of the Khori dialect which is spoken in most parts of Transbaikalia.<sup>2</sup> Numerous typical Buriat grammatical forms are found in this language and its vocabulary contains Buriat words and Russian borrowings.

In Vanchik Sagiev's Essay the following deviations from traditional Written Mongolian are found:

In spelling

*kii* = Bur. *χī* instead of *kei* "air, wind; vital functions";

*tobšilabasu* = Bur. *tobšilo-* instead of *tobčila-* "to abbreviate, to speak in brief";

*atiriqu* = Bur. *atirχa* instead of *aturiqu* "to be cramped";

*qoboyo* = Bur. *χobō* instead of *qobuy-a* "gutter";

*ügsün* instead of *ügsen* "rotten";

*üjibei* instead of *üjebei* "(I) saw";

*ayuqu* instead of *uyuqu* "to drink";

*niryu* = Bur. *nurgan*, Khalkha *nurū*, instead of *niruyun* "back, spine";

*ireysen* instead of *iregsen* "he who has come";

*rašya* or *rašyan* instead of *rašīyan* "mineral spring, mineral water";

*rašīya-i* instead of *rašīyan-i* (accusative) "mineral water";

*küitün-ü* and *küitün-iyer* instead of *küiten-ü* and *küiten-iyer* respectively

"of the cold", "through the cold";

*qaniyadan* instead of *qaniyadun* "cough";

<sup>1</sup> The original size is 14 × 5½ in. or 36 × 14.5 cm.

<sup>2</sup> The Khori-Buriats are the most civilized group among the Buriats. They became Buddhists at an early date and created a rich literature. On the Khori dialect vide A. Д. Рудневъ, Хори-бурятскій говоръ, выпускъ I, Опытъ изслѣдованія, Петроградъ, 1913-14.

*tosa* instead of *tosu* "butter".

In vocabulary

*yašila-* = Bur. *gašila-* "to be spoiled";

*kimayatai* = Bur. *χimgatai* "thrifty, careful";

*adagla-* = Bur. *adagla-* instead of *ašīyla-* "to make observations, to observe, to notice".

Mongolian Text

(1) ene kürbi-yin qasuurtai-yin rašīyan-u čidal-i. qori-yin qudai otoy-un (2) albatu kiged. čėčeg-ün üšiniy vangčiy sa-a-giin ber. egün-dür ireysen (3) ken kümün-ü amur medekü-yin tula ilerkeyilekü anu.

(4) köke biidury-a kernegdekü nom-un dотора tabun jüil em-tü usun kernegdekü (5) bui-ača. angq-a inu kii-yi arilyayči rašya-nu belge inu: amtatai (6) büged. kündü ba. jögelen kernegsen bolai: basa tere ber dabu-suliy (7) amtan bui bolbasu badgan-dur kii qabsuraysan-a tusa-tai kernegsen (8) bolai: tegüber bolbasu ene rašīyan ber amtatai jögelen dabusuliy tula. (9) badgin ba kii-dür tusalamui j-a: (10) basa ber niyur degere üfejü adagla-basu. nigen kedün jil-ün čay bolqun-a. (11) jüil büri-yin ebečiten-e ayulyaqu ba oroyulqu kiged ugiyalyaqu (12) terigüten-ber šinjileysen anu. inadu jaq-a-yin usun-u čidal inu: (13) bučalyaqu metü sayitur qalayaju örlüge erte rašīya-i čidaqu činege- (14) ber ayuyad. tegün-ü šinggigsen qoyina 1) čay ülü udaqu-yin tedüi-ber (15) ayuju. mön tegün-ü šinggigsen qoyina rašīya-i ayuqu. mön šinggigsen (16) qoyina 2) edür-ün idege. mön šinggigsen qoyina rašya. mön šinggigsen (17) qoyina čai. mön šinggiged 3) rašya-i ayuyad. mön šinggigsen qoyina (18) üdeši-yin 4) idege idemüi: tere metü-ber edür-ün dörben čay-tur (19) kümün öber öber-ün ayuqu čidal-un jerge-ber ayuysan-iyar. ese (20) šinggigsen ebečin ba badgin kiged. uruyu arilyayči kei qayaydaysan (21) terigüten tobšilabasu idege ese šinggigsen ba küitün-ü jüil-dür tusalaqu-(22) yi üjebei: mön usun-i qalayaju saba dотора orobasu čidal inu. (23) bögeren-ü küitün-iyer niryu köl ebedkü ba. küitün kerükü kiged. kii- (24) yin jüil-iyer köl yar köčikü atiriqu terigüten-e tusalayad: tobšila- (25) basu čidal inu qalayun bolai.

(26) ene rašya-dur ülü jokilduqu ebečin-ü jüil-nüd inu qalayun šira ba boro-yin (27) qalayun-u jüil kiged. kijig ba ayuškin-u qalayun qaniyadan kiged (28) üderegsen ba gemtegsen terigüten tobšilabasu qalayun ebečin-ü jüil-dür (29) ülü jokiqui üjebei: qoyaduyar činadu jaq-a-yin usun-u (30) čidal inu: nidü ebečiten ugiyaqu ba üčüken qoboyo-bar urusqal do-(31)tora nidün-i qaraqqu ba büliyen-iyer yü küitün-ber ayubasu tusa-tai-(32)yi üjibei: : idegen inu qoni üker-ün miq-a ali jokiqui-yi (33) qalayun-bar jokimui. tosa ba örmö. talq-a čai terigüten ba qalayun (34) ba büliyen čidal-tu em-üd ču tusalalčamui: imay-a ba görügesün-ü miq-a (35) ba ügsün yašilaysan-u jüil ülü jokimui. küitün idegen umdayan-i (36) ču tebčigdeküi: bey-e-i dulayan-iyar kimayatai-bar amur sayuqu (37) bolai: : kerbe salkin-ača gemtejü dотора dügürekü ba (38) basa ču

ebečin bolbasu mön rašya-i qalayun-iyar ашуqu ба. (39) qalayun usun-a oroqu-bar jasaγdamui: kerbe ese jasaγdabasu (40) ba busu ebečin ködölbесү em-iyer jasaqu bolai:

(41) 1840 on-du diqaburi sarayin 12-un edüre mongyol-iyar ebül-ün  
(42) dumda sarayin nigen edür:

#### Translation

The tax-payer<sup>1</sup> of the Khudai clan of the Khori,<sup>2</sup> and apprentice of smallpox vaccination,<sup>3</sup> Vanchik Sagin,<sup>4</sup> elucidates the power of this mineral spring<sup>5</sup> of Khasurtai-on-Kurba<sup>6</sup> for the sake of peace of anyone who has [ever] come here.

In the book called *Köke Vaidurya*<sup>7</sup> five kinds of medicinal waters are named.

First. It is said of the marks of a mineral spring which removes the

<sup>1</sup> "Tax-payer" translates *albatu* "subject, payer of tribute" and is here equivalent to the Russian word *податной*.

<sup>2</sup> The Khori are one of the four major Buriat tribes, the others being the Ekhirit, Bulagat, and Khongodor (*Xongödör*). The Khori tribe was originally divided into eleven clans: *galzüd*, *xuāsai*, *xübdüüd*, *gušad*, *šaraid*, *čargana*, *xudai*, *bodongüüd*, *čal'bin*, *sagān*, and *batanai*. At a later time the *čargana*, *xuāsai*, and *xübdüüd* clans were divided into six clans, eastern and western, and the total number of Khori clans became fourteen.

<sup>3</sup> "Apprentice" translates the word *üšiniy* < Russian ученик "pupil, disciple, apprentice". At the beginning of the XIX century, the Russian authorities introduced preventive smallpox vaccination to the natives of Siberia. For this purpose special medical aides called "apprentices of vaccination" were trained. The author of the Essay was one of such apprentices.

<sup>4</sup> The correct transcription of this name is *Vančiy* (or *Vančuy*) *Sāgin*. He was *emči bayši*, i.e., the "medical preceptor" of the Khori Buriats and in 1865 he compiled also a brief history of his native Khudai clan, cf. Н. Н. Поппе, *Летописи хоринских бурят*, вып. 1, Хроники Тугуддур Тобоева и Вандана Юмсунова, Москва-Ленинград, 1935, p. 47; В. А. Казакевич, *Летописи хоринских бурят*, вып. 2, Хроника Шираб-Нимбо Хобитуева, Москва-Ленинград, 1935, p. vi. Казакевич gives his name incorrectly as Vanchin Sakhiev.

<sup>5</sup> "Mineral spring" translates Written Mongolian *rašūyan* < Sanskrit *rasāyana*. It has become *aršān* in Buriat and has two meanings, viz., "consecrated or holy water" and "mineral water or mineral spring", cf. К. М. Черемисов, *Бурят-монгольско-русский словарь*, Москва, 1951, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> The river Kurba, in Russian Курба, in Buriat *Xurbe*, is a right-hand affluent of the river Uda (in Buriat *Üde*). At the confluence of the Uda and Selenga, is located the capital of the present Buriat-Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Republic, Ulan Ude (*Ulān Üde*), formerly Verkhneudinsk.

The place Khasurtai (in Buriat *Xasūrtai*) is located on the river Kurba. The name *Xasūrtai* means "having (or covered with) firs", derived from *časūr* or *časūra* "fir".

<sup>7</sup> *Köke Vaidurya*, in the original *Köke Būdurya*, "Blue Vaidurya", i.e., "Blue Lapis lazuli" is the Mongolian translation of the Tibetan title *Bai-čü-rya snon-po* "The blue lapis lazuli". This is a very famous work on medicine compiled by Saṅgyas rGya-mts'o between 1745 and 1750. Its full title is given by W. A. Unkrig, cf. his "Zur Einführung" in P. Cyril v. K. Krassinski, *Tibetische Medizin-philosophie-Der Mensch als Mikrokosmos*, Origo Verlag, Zürich, 1953, p. xxii.

[disturbance of] vital functions<sup>1</sup> that it is sweet, heavy, and mild. If it also has a salty flavour it is said to be useful against [disturbance of] vital functions combined with a catarrh.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, as this mineral spring is sweet, mild, and salty, it certainly brings relief from catarrh and [disturbance of] vital functions. In addition to seeing it in person<sup>3</sup> and making observations,<sup>4</sup> I investigated it over a period of several years by making various sick people drink it, bathe in it,<sup>5</sup> and make ablutions with it [and I have arrived at the following conclusion].<sup>6</sup>

The power of the water on this side [of the spring manifests itself in the following manner].

One heats it well to the boiling point and drinks, in the early morning, as much mineral water as one can, and after it has been digested 1) one drinks not wasting any time.<sup>7</sup> After this has been digested, one drinks mineral water [once again]. After this too has been digested, 2) the day meal [is eaten]. After this too has been digested, mineral water [is taken]. After this too has been digested, tea [is had]. 3) After this has been digested, one drinks [some more] mineral water and after it has been digested, 4) one has supper.<sup>8</sup>

It has been observed that when people started drinking in this manner, in accordance with their capabilities, four times a day, it brought them

<sup>1</sup> The verb *arilya-* means "to purify, cleanse" and "to remove". The spelling *hei* corresponds to classical Mongolian *kei* "air, wind" and to Tibetan *rlun* "air, wind". In the vocabulary of Buriat lamas it means also "vital functions" and "disturbance of vital functions".

<sup>2</sup> *Badgan* is Tibetan *bad-kan*, Sanskrit *chlechnā* "mucus, phlegm". Tibetan *bad-kan-rlun* "phlegm and air" is a medical term. Thus the mineral springs of the kind described are believed to bring relief from "phlegm and air". Buriat *badagan* means "gastric catarrh" and "cancer", cf. Cheremisov, *op. cit.*, p. 81. The same word is pronounced *bet'ege* in Ordos and means "a gastric disease", cf. Antoine Mostaert, C.I.C.M., *Dictionnaire ordos*, tome I, Peking, 1941, p. 67. Therefore, *badgan* in this text has the same meaning as it has in Modern Buriat, viz., "gastric catarrh, cancer". One should keep in mind that the author of the essay was a Buriat.

<sup>3</sup> "In person" translates *niγur degere* = Buriat *nür dère* literally "on the face".

<sup>4</sup> The word *adaglabasu* is a conditional form of *adagla-* = Written Mongolian *ajiyala-* "to notice, to observe", Buriat *adagla-* "to observe", cf. Cheremisov, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> The original has *oroyulqu* "to make enter". The expression *usun-dur oro-* "to go in the water" means "to bathe, to swim, to take a bath". Accordingly, the causative stem *oroyul-* is translated as "make take a bath".

<sup>6</sup> The words in brackets have been supplemented by me.

<sup>7</sup> The words *čay ülii udaq-yin tedüi-ber* literally mean "as much as not to delay the time". The verbal form "drinks" does not have a direct complement. It is obvious, however, that tea or any beverage other than mineral water is meant here.

<sup>8</sup> The word "supper" translates *üdeši-yin idege* "the evening meal".

relief from indigestion<sup>1</sup> and catarrh, constipation,<sup>2</sup> and so forth, in brief, from indigestion of food and from [all] kinds of cold.<sup>3</sup>

When one heats this water and takes a tub bath<sup>4</sup> its power is [as follows]. It gives relief from pain in the back and legs caused by the cold of kidneys,<sup>5</sup> from cold rheumatism,<sup>6</sup> stiffness of and cramps in the arms and legs caused by various kinds of disturbances of vital functions, etc. In brief, its power is [that of] heat.

The kinds of diseases in the case of which this mineral spring is not suitable are fevers, [all] kinds of fevers of yellow and grey substances,<sup>7</sup> influenza,<sup>8</sup> pneumonia, relapses of diseases,<sup>9</sup> and injuries,<sup>10</sup> in brief, it has been observed that it is not suitable in the case of diseases accompanied by high temperatures.

Second, the power of the water on that side. It has been observed that it is useful when eye patients wash and keep their eyes open under the stream<sup>11</sup> [running] down a small pipe,<sup>12</sup> and when they drink it warm or cold.

The diet. Mutton or beef, whatever suits best, is appropriate when served hot. Butter, boiled cream,<sup>13</sup> bread, tea, and so forth, and hot or lukewarm strong drugs also help. The meat of goat or deer, or whatever is

<sup>1</sup> "Indigestion" translates *ese šinggiḡsen ebečin* "the disease of not absorbing, not digesting".

<sup>2</sup> "Constipation" translates the expression *uruyu arilyayči kei qayaydaysan* "the shutting off of the vital functions of removing in the downward direction".

<sup>3</sup> *Küiten* means literally "cold" but in Buriat *küiten* is also "gonorrhoea". I am not sure about which is meant here and translate *küiten* tentatively as "cold".

<sup>4</sup> I translate *saba dotora orobasu* as "when one takes a tub bath". It means literally "when one gets into a vessel".

<sup>5</sup> "Cold of the kidneys" translates the expression *bögeren-ü küitün*. The word *küitün* = Wr. Mong. *küiten*, also means "gonorrhoea" but the meaning "cold" looks more suitable.

<sup>6</sup> "Cold rheumatism" is the literal translation of *küitün kerükü*, the latter word corresponding to Buriat *ḡereḡe* "rheumatism", cf. Cheremisov, *op. cit.*, p. 629.

<sup>7</sup> "All kinds of fevers of yellow and grey substances" translates *šira ba boro-yin qalayun-u jüil*. The word *šir-a* means in Written Mongolian "bile, gastric acid", cf. Kowalewski, *Dictionary II*, p. 1517, and "heartburn" in Buriat, cf. Cheremisov, *op. cit.*, p. 691. It is hard to say what disease is meant by "bilious" or "acid fever". The other kind of fever, *viz.*, "the fever of the grey substance" is still more obscure.

<sup>8</sup> Mongolian *kijig* "infectious disease, epidemic" is Buriat *ḡeḡeg* "influenza", cf. Cheremisov, *op. cit.*, p. 623.

<sup>9</sup> "Relapses of diseases" translates *ügdereḡsen*, cf. Written Mongolian *ügdere-* "to become again sick with the same disease", Kowalewski, *Dictionary I*, p. 574, Khalkha *ügdere-* "to have complications" (said of diseases), cf. A. P. Ривчинэ, *Краткий монгольско-русский словарь*, Москва, 1947, p. 239.

<sup>10</sup> Mongolian *gemteḡsen* means "damaged, crippled".

<sup>11</sup> "Under the stream" translates *urusqal dotor-a* "in the stream, within the stream".

<sup>12</sup> "Down a small water-pipe" translates *üčüken qoboyo-bar*. The word *qoboyo* means "gutter, water-trough". It is possible that an eye-dropper is meant here.

<sup>13</sup> "Boiled cream" is *örömö* = Written Mongolian *öröm-e* < *örem-e*, Khalkha *örmö*, Khori-Buriat *üreme*. Milk is put in a big pot and slowly boiled, the cream rises and becomes a thick skin which is removed and dried. This is a Mongolian delicacy.

rotten or spoiled is not suitable. Cold food and drink must also be avoided. The body is to be carefully kept warm and one must live in quiet.

When one gets damage from wind,<sup>1</sup> when the intestines are full, and when a disease occurs again, it is to be cured by drinking this mineral water hot and by bathing in hot water. If it is not cured and another disease begins one must be treated with drugs.

On the 12th of December 1840,<sup>2</sup> according to the Mongolian [calendar] on the 1st of the middle month of winter.

<sup>1</sup> Mongolian *salkin* means "wind", but it can be "cold" here.

<sup>2</sup> Buriat *diqaburi* is a Russian loan word, cf. декабрь "December".