Review

Reviewed Work(s): Dictionnaire des Formes Cursives des Caractéres chinois by Stanislas Millot

Review by: Ernest Satow

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It is, I believe, a serious error (p. 26) to follow Sir H. Risley in placing Dravidians in Northern India. The Asoka inscriptions are not written in Pāli (p. 85), in the sense usually attributed to that term. It is not quite correct to write "Taxila or Taksha-sila (now Rawalpindi)" (p. 114). Pāṭaliputra stood on the Son, not on the Ganges (p. 123). Pushya-gupta was not "the king's brother-in-law" (p. 124). Professor Kielhorn corrected that translation. The names of the Kanauj kings were Chakrāyudha and Indrāyudha, compounds of *āyudha*, "weapon," and not Chakra-yuddha and Indra-yuddha (pp. 227, 232). I am not aware of any reason for regarding the Andhras or Āndhras as "an Aryan tribe" (p. 243). Chandragupta *Maurya* (p. 244) is an obvious slip. There is no authority for the assertion that "Bānāvasi is mentioned by Asoka in his inscriptions" (p. 254). The reference to the Vatsas (p. 269) is erroneous; the king conquered was Vatsarāja Gurjara.

A book which presents no mistakes worse than those noted deserves the highest commendation for its laborious accuracy. Even if it should prove to be too elaborate for schoolboys it will have permanent value as a scholarly short history for independent students.

V. A. S.

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DICTIONNAIRE DES FORMES CURSIVES DES CARACTÈRES CHINOIS. Par STANISLAS MILLOT, Lieutenant de Vaisseau. Paris: Ernest Leroux, Editeur, 1909.

"LUBIN. Oui, je sais lire la lettre moulée, mais je n'ai su apprendre l'écriture."

The importance of an acquaintance with the cursive forms of the Chinese written character was recognized at a comparatively early period. Already in Dr. Morrison's great dictionary of the Chinese language, the publication of which was completed before 1825, we find an extensive

collection of these forms. In 1861 R. J. de St. Aulaire and W. P. Groeneveldt, pupils of the well-known pioneer in Japanese studies, Dr. Hoffmann, brought out at Amsterdam *A Manual of Chinese Running-hand Writing, especially as it is used in Japan.* It was divided into two parts, the first containing "square characters" arranged according to the radicals, with the corresponding cursive forms: while in the second part were presented the cursive forms, arranged according to the shape of the first and last strokes, either of the whole character or of one of the elements, radical and phonetic, of which it is composed. In this way the characters dealt with were distributed under sixty-six classes. The scheme was not carried out quite consistently, because the authors did not always know which was in reality the first stroke, and it must have been difficult to apply with certainty of a correct result. To the student in Europe who found himself in the presence of a text in cursive writing it may perhaps have proved useful, but to the learner who resided in China or Japan its utility was less marked, inasmuch as he would only have to refer to any ordinarily well-educated Chinese or Japanese in order to obtain immediately the answer to his question, what is the corresponding square character.

Cursive writing in China (and Japan) is usually called *hsing* or *ts'ao* (*giō* or *sō*) according as it departs more or less from the standard form usually employed in printed books. But in practice this distinction is not observed. A document may be written partly in the one and partly in the other, according to the caprice of the calligraphist. In a well-known Japanese dictionary, the *Shinsō Jibiki*, or *Dictionary of the True and Hasty Characters*, first engraved on blocks in 1707 and reissued in 1820, the greater part of the forms given are *hsing-shu* (*giō-sho*), and the compilers of the work just referred to followed the same practice. So that a help to the study of the Chinese

character, as used in both countries in ordinary correspondence, i.e. the *ts'ao shu*, was still wanting.

The work of M. Millot shows a remarkable advance on that of his predecessors, and is calculated to stimulate the study of these forms, which has been a good deal neglected by students of Chinese. He relates in his preface that in 1900, after the capture of the Taku forts on the 17th June, a letter was intercepted which was addressed to a Chinese admiral, then a prisoner on one of the foreign men-of-war. Not even the Japanese officers were able to decipher it, but the author was enabled, by the study which he had made of cursive writing, to furnish, though with some difficulty, the desired interpretation. His dictionary contains far more *ts'ao shu* than that already mentioned, and is arranged on a better system, since, instead of endeavouring to refer the characters to their first and last strokes, he classifies them by the form of their most prominent parts. It contains altogether 7259 cursive forms, some of them duplicate variations, considerably more than are in common use, which may safely be estimated at not more than 2000 in number. These characters, with their corresponding "square" forms, occupy the first 119 pages. They are succeeded by twenty tables, of which the first ten give characters classified in their entirety, as not being easily decomposed into two parts, the second ten supplying those of which the radical is at once distinguishable from the phonetic. A careful study of these tables ought to enable the student to find the corresponding square form of any cursive character he meets with. On p. 136 the author has thought it necessary to set forth the Japanese *kana*, analysed in the same fashion as the Chinese cursive characters. This seems rather superfluous, since the whole number, including variants of the *hiragana*, is not greater than can be learnt by heart in a fortnight. These are succeeded by various useful tables calculated to assist the decipherer, and at

p. 197 will be found an instructive example of the method to be followed in using the dictionary.

It is impossible to withhold a tribute of hearty appreciation of the untiring labour devoted by the author to the compilation of this work, which cannot fail to be of the greatest assistance to students either of Chinese or Japanese who may wish to complete their knowledge of the written language of those tongues, though it is sincerely to be hoped they may never be confronted with a task similar to that which, as he has told us in his preface, he encountered on an occasion of the liveliest interest to the forces of civilization.

ERNEST SATOW.

THE SHĀHNĀMA OF FIRDŪSĪ, translated from the Persian by ALEXANDER ROGERS, M.R.A.S. London: Chapman and Hall, 1907.

I am afraid that the *Shāhnāma* never will be popular in the West. Firdūsi was a great genius, and some of his tales are as exciting and as well told as those rehearsed by Ulysses to the Phaeacians, but for Western readers they lack the charm of association. For Persians and Orientals generally the work will always have a charm, and there are many lines in it which haunt their memories and are often quoted by them. Thus we find Bābar, on the eve of his battle with Rānā Sānga, quoting to his officers the couplet which says—

"If I die famous, 'tis well
A name I must have, for my body is Death's";

and Jahāngīr, in his *Memoirs*, quotes, after Sa'dī, a couplet from Īraj's pathetic appeal to his brothers, and which has been thus rendered by Sir William Jones—

"Ah! spare yon emmet, rich in hoarded grain,
It lives with pleasure, and it dies with pain."

Sa'dī invokes a blessing upon Firdūsi's tomb for this