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**A New Source for J. Kowalewski's Work
on the *Mongolian-Russian-French Dictionary***

Abstract

Recently the second volume of Józef Kowalewski (or Joseph Etienne Kowalewski, or Osip Mikhailovich Kovalevskiy)'s *Mongolian-Russian-French Dictionary* along with the author's personal editorial notes was discovered in the St. Petersburg University Library. According to a small note attached to the inner side of the volume's front cover it was presented to the library by Prof. Władysław Kotwicz in 1923. The 950 pages of the volume contain thousands of the author's editorial notes that can be divided into two major groups – corrections and additions. Both types of editorial work were done by the author on all levels of the dictionary's entries, running from corrections of inaccurate transcription of Mongolian words and their equivalents in various languages to new lexical material and extensive commentaries in European languages on Buddhist terms and personal names. J. Kowalewski's editorial notes are of great value both for historians of academia and scholars of the Mongolian language and culture.

Keywords: Mongolian studies, Mongolian language, lexicography, Józef Kowalewski

The life and academic work of Józef Kowalewski (or Joseph Etienne Kowalewski, or Osip Mikhailovich Kovalevskiy, 1801–1878), an eminent scholar of Mongolian culture, are well documented in the literature of the history of Mongolian studies.¹ The same can be said about one of his major works, the *Mongolian–Russian–French dictionary*.² As the author himself admitted, it took him 20 years to prepare the dictionary, using in the course of his works extensive literary and linguistic materials, from various block-printed

¹ See for example: Alexeev, Yachontov, 1992; Čimitdoržiev, 1990; Kim, 1990: 278–281; Kulganek, Tulisow, Valeev, 2009; Poljanskaja, 2012; Šamov, 1983; Valeev, 2004.

² Kovalevskij, 1844–1849.

dictionaries and Buddhist works to the *Gesar / Geser* epic and collections of the official instructions of the Manchu government. The bulk of the materials for the dictionary were obtained by J. Kowalewski during his travels in Irkutsk, Transbaikal, Buryatia, Mongolia and China in 1828–1833. The three volumes of the dictionary were published in 1844, 1846 and 1849, respectively. It was highly valued by contemporaries of the author and is still the basic source of information for reading old Mongolian texts.³

What was unknown until recently is that J. Kowalewski did not give up his work on the dictionary even after its publication. Recently the second volume of Kowalewski's *Mongolian-Russian-French Dictionary* together with the author's personal editorial notes was discovered amongst the other volumes of the dictionary kept in the Asian Department of the St. Petersburg University Library.

A small note attached to the inner side of the volume's front cover partly explains how it reached the university library (Ill. 1). It says:

To the library of Petrograd University
I have purchased by chance a copy of the second volume of the O. Kowalewski's *Mongolian–Russian–French dictionary* with the author's autographic additions. I am presenting this exemplar to the library to add it to the literary heritage of the late O. Kowalewski that the library already has.
Prof. W. Kotwicz
November 8, 1923

It was in 1922 that Władysław Kotwicz (1872–1944), who was holding the post of the first director of Petrograd Institute of Living Oriental Languages, received two serious offers from two universities in Poland. In 1923 he repatriated himself to Poland, moved to Lvov in 1924 and got the post of the head of the Far East Department at the John Kasimir University. Most probably he presented this volume to the library of Petrograd University on the 8th of November, 1923, just before his departure to Poland.

The 950 pages of the published volume of the dictionary contain thousands of editorial notes written in a neat microscopic hand with different types of ink (mostly in black or pale brownish ink, but sometimes in blue). Even the bookmark was used as an object for writing down some information about Desi Sangye Gyatso (Tib. sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, 1653–1705), the regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama, and his works.

To describe the anatomy of these editorial notes it is helpful to envisage the following structure of the dictionary's entries. Not all the levels exist for every entry, but the ideal scheme of an entry would look as following:

A Mongolian word

1. Its equivalents in other languages
 - a. Tibetan and Sanskrit equivalents
 - b. Equivalents in Ural-Altaic languages and sometimes Arabic
2. Translation of the word

³ Kim, 1990: 280; Kulganek, Tulisow, Valeev, 2009: 41.

3. Commentaries

4. A number of word combinations and phrases with the word (for each word combination or phrase paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 can be repeated).

For each level of this construction there are two types of editorial notes: corrections and additions. The corrections are of great value for the history of Mongolian studies. The bulk of them deal with the Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents and with the translations and commentaries of Mongolian words. Thus, the inaccurate transliteration of the Sanskrit equivalent for the expression *naran-u jiriiken* (the name of one of the Buddhas) *sūryakharbha* is changed for the correct one *sūryagarbha* (= Sanskrit *sūryagarbha*).⁴

For *nasun-a tegülder* and *amin qabiyatu* ('venerable', an honorific used in addressing those who have gone into the homeless life of a monk or a nun) the erroneous transcription of a Sanskrit equivalent *ayusman* is changed for *âyushman* (= *āyusmat*).⁵

For the word *narin* ('thin') the Tibetan equivalents *gzas*, *skad phra*, *wa* that have nothing to do with the meaning of this word are correctly crossed out.⁶

In the dictionary the Mongolian expression *nayiman ajinai* was erroneously translated as 'eight tones'. For it J. Kowalewski added the Tibetan (*rta brgyad 'dzom*) and Manchu (*jakun kolouk*)⁷ equivalents and changed the translation of the word *ajinai* to 'graceful, fast and strong horse'.⁸

A considerable part of the editorial notes in the dictionary are additions. Most of them are taken from the sources already used by J. Kowalewski for compiling his dictionary and listed in its foreword.⁹ Nevertheless, some new sources were involved in the editorial work marked with corresponding sigla. For example:

1. Lal. vist. = *Lalitavistara*
2. Panc. = *Pañcarakṣā*
3. Vin. = *Vinaya*
4. Amar. = *Amarakoṣa*

The first group of additions comprises new words and expressions. Amongst them there are Buddhist terms, personal names and toponyms, words from spoken language, dialecticisms and so on. For example:

Mong. *nayiranj'na*, *nayiranj'ara*¹⁰; Sanskr. *nairanjanâ*, *nīlañtchana*, *nīlandjan* (= *nairañjanā*); Tib. *ne ran dza na*. The commentary in Russian and French says that

⁴ Kovalevskij, 1846: 621. As the purpose of the article is to report on a new source on the history of Mongolian studies and to cover J. Kowalewski's editorial work with the dictionary, in the majority of cases we do not comment on the author's interpretation of specific words and phrases. J. Kowalewski's original transcription for Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, Manchu and other languages is preserved. For the Sanskrit and Manchu equivalents of Mongolian words, the modern form of transliteration is given with an equals sign.

⁵ Kovalevskij, 1846: 610.

⁶ Kovalevskij, 1846: 623.

⁷ = *jakûn kuluk*.

⁸ Kovalevskij, 1846: 597.

⁹ See Kovalevskij, 1844–1849, Vol. I: VII–XII.

¹⁰ In the article the *j'* symbol is used for the π galik letter.

it is a tributary of the Phalgu river, and that on its shore Prince Siddhārtha became the Buddha under the Bodhi tree. Also other names and coordinates of the tributary are given.¹¹

Mong. *nau ša*; Tib. *rgya tshwa*. J. Kowalewski translates it as ‘sal ammoniac’ (i.e. smelling salts).¹²

Mong. *nabtalán*; Tib. *zangs thal*. The translation into Russian says: ‘ashes from copper, fired or oxidized copper’. The Tibetan expression has the same meaning.¹³

Mong. *najal*. J. Kowalewski indicates that in the Buryat language it means ‘a puddle’.¹⁴

Mong. *qayija*, *longqu*; Tib. *rdza ma* – ‘pottery, a pot’.¹⁵

New equivalents for Mongolian words are added in Sanskrit, Pali (very rare), Tibetan, Chinese, Manchu, Turkish, Yakut, Tungus, Hungarian, and Arabic. For example:

Mong. *nayidangyui* (‘hatred, envy’) + Sanskr. *dvecha* (= *dveṣa*);¹⁶

Mong. *nayiyuqu* (‘oscillate, vacillate, wave to and fro’) + Tib. *bsir ba*;¹⁷

Mong. *nayud* (translated by J. Kowalewski as ‘100000’) + Pali *nahuta* (defined by J. Kowalewski as a ‘million’);¹⁸

Mong. *naiman ayalyu* (translated as ‘the eight different sounds’) + Manch. *djakun moudan* (= *jakûn mudan*);¹⁹

Mong. *nayiman* (‘eight’) + Ch. *pǎ*; Manch. *tchakoun* (= *jakûn*);²⁰

Mong. *qayira* (‘favour, grace’) + Arab. *khair*;²¹

Mong. *nabtayiqu* (‘be hanging, be suspended’) + Yakut *namtā*;²²

Mong. *nabčín* (‘leaf’) + Tung. *napchi*;²³

Mong. *naran* (‘sun’) + Hungar. *nyár* (‘summer’).²⁴

New meanings of words are added not only in Russian and French, but also in German, and sometimes English and Latin. Extensive commentaries are added in Russian, French, German or English mostly for Buddhist terms, personal names and toponyms. The language of such commentaries seems to be dependent on the language of the source of information.

Thus, for the word *nanda*, which was already discussed in the dictionary, J. Kowalewski adds two extensive commentaries. The first one in English tells the story of Nanda, originally the king of Magadha who then subdued the whole of the country. The second

¹¹ Kovalevskij, 1846: 599.

¹² Kovalevskij, 1846: 602.

¹³ Kovalevskij, 1846: 608.

¹⁴ Kovalevskij, 1846: 618.

¹⁵ Kovalevskij, 1846: 711.

¹⁶ Kovalevskij, 1846: 595.

¹⁷ Kovalevskij, 1846: 595.

¹⁸ Kovalevskij, 1846: 619.

¹⁹ Kovalevskij, 1846: 597.

²⁰ Kovalevskij, 1846: 597.

²¹ Kovalevskij, 1846: 711.

²² Kovalevskij, 1846: 607.

²³ Kovalevskij, 1846: 608.

²⁴ Kovalevskij, 1846: 620.

one in German is about Nanda, the follower of the Buddha, with references to *Lalitavistara* and other sources. It also gives a Mongolian translation of this name – *bayasqulangtu*.²⁵ In the same way vast commentaries in Russian and German are added for the words *naga* ('water dragon', = *nāga*) and *nagarjuna* (the name of an eminent Buddhist philosopher, = *Nāgārjuna*).²⁶

The last group of editorial notes, comprising phrases and word combinations added to the words already included in the dictionary, is of great interest and probably the most numerous. Some of them represent new expressions and some are examples of the particular use of the word.

Thus, for the word *nabč'in* ('leaf') an entire series of expressions is added, such as:

Mong. *amtatu čayan nabč'in*; Tib. *kram skyur*. Translated by J. Kowalewski as 'fresh cabbage'.

Mong. *isgelen čayan nabč'in*; Tib. *kram skyur*. Translated as 'sauerkraut'.

Mong. *nabči qubiraqu*; Tib. *lo 'brul ba*. This expression is translated by J. Kowalewski as a 'leaf fall'.²⁷

Mong. *nabč'in kürmeli*; Sanskr. *parṇnakutikā* (= *parṇakutikā*); Tib. *lo ma'i spyil bu*. J. Kowalewski does not give any translation for this expression, but in Sanskrit and Tibetan it means 'a hut made of leaves'.²⁸

For the word *negüri* ('a nomads' camp'), the author of the dictionary adds a phrase from the Mongolian chronicle *Altan Tobči*: *γurban negüri γajar üjekü* 'to see at three migrations' distance'. He writes then: "The Mongols measured distance in roaming from place to place."²⁹

For the word *ner-e* ('name') J. Kowalewski added a phrase from the multilingual dictionary *Merged γarqu-yin oron*, namely: *ner-e-yin ayaγ-a tegimlig*; Tib. *ming gi dge slong*. He translates it as 'bhikshu by name' and comments: "that is when a lay person gets this name at birth."³⁰

For the word *nereyidkel* ('name, designation') J. Kowalewski adds an expression *nereyidkel temdeg*; Sanskr. *abhivatchanan* (should be *adhivacana*); Tib. *tshig bla dags* (= *bla dwags*) and translates it as 'a prototype word'.³¹

The group of added phrases includes a significant number of extremely interesting proverbs and wise sayings, for the most part translated into Russian by the author of the dictionary. For example:

²⁵ Kovalevskij, 1846: 602.

²⁶ Kovalevskij, 1846: 619.

²⁷ Kovalevskij, 1846: 608. A more exact translation would be 'fading of leaves'.

²⁸ Kovalevskij, 1846: 608.

²⁹ Kovalevskij, 1846: 641.

³⁰ Kovalevskij, 1846: 641. Usually this expression denotes 'a monk by name', whose ordination was not proper, or motivation for being a monk is impure.

³¹ Kovalevskij, 1846: 643. Actually, in Sanskrit and Tibetan this expression means some sort of 'appellation', a 'term' or an 'expression'.

Mong. *naran ügei ediir ügei: nayadun ügei kümün ügei* is translated by J. Kowalewski as “A day cannot be without the sun, a man cannot be without jokes.”³²

Mong. *naratai bayitala boroya oroday: blam-a-tai bayitala kümün üküdeg* is translated as “Even with the sunshine rain falls, even with a lama men die.”³³

Mong. *qanilaqu-dayan qaliyu bulayan: qayačaqu-du qamuyu jidügi*. J. Kowalewski translates: “When a friend, you give otter and sable as a present; when apart, he itches like a scab.”³⁴

Mong. *qayurmaγ üge sanayan-du ülii baytaqu: qayurai qalbayan aman-du ülii baytaqu* – “A deceitful word doesn’t get to your mind; a dry spoon doesn’t get to your mouth.”³⁵

Mong. *času kedüi ber yeke bolba naran-du qayiluday: čayaγa kedüi ču baya bolba ulam delgeredeg* – “The snow, however much there is, melts in the sun; the law, however small, spreads wider and grows.”³⁶

As can be seen from the examples given, editorial work was done by J. Kowalewski on all the levels of the dictionary’s entries, starting from corrections of inaccurate transcriptions of Mongolian words and their equivalents in various languages to the new lexical material and extensive commentaries in European languages on the Buddhist terms and personal names. J. Kowalewski’s editorial notes are of great value both for the historians of academia and scholars of Mongolian language and culture.

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³² Kovalevskij, 1846: 620. A more accurate translation would be ‘without fun’.

³³ Kovalevskij, 1846: 622.

³⁴ Kovalevskij, 1846: 721. I would interpret this in a slightly different way: “A friend is as pleasant as otter and sable fur, when apart unpleasant as a scab.”

³⁵ Kovalevskij, 1846: 749.

³⁶ Kovalevskij, 1846: 709.

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