

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS.

SANSKRIT AS A SPOKEN LANGUAGE.

In connection with Professor Rapson's paper on the employment of Sanskrit as a spoken language, published in the last number of this Journal (pp. 435-56), and the debate to which the paper gave rise (pp. 457-87), the following passage from the Mahābhārata may be quoted as confirming the view that the use of the language in conversation was characteristic of high society. It occurs in the Ādi-Parvan lxxviii, 12-14, in the course of a conversation between Devayāni and the mythical king Yayāti.

Devayāny uvāca :

sarva eva nṛpaśreṣṭha vidhānam anuvarttate |
vidhānavihitam matvā mā vicitrāḥ kathāḥ kṛthāḥ ||
rājavadrūpaveṣau te brāhmīm vācam bibharṣi ca |
ko nāma tvam kutaś cāsi kasya putraś ca śaṃsa me ||

Yayātir uvāca :

brahmacaryyeṇa vedo me kṛtsnaḥ śrutipatham gataḥ |
rājāham rājaputraś ca Yayātir iti viśrutaḥ ||

Devayāni said :

“Everyone, my lord, complies with fate. Deeming the thing ordained by fate, make no elaborate speech.¹ Royal is your form and raiment, and the Brāhma speech you wear ; by name who are you, whence are you, and whose son—this tell me.”

¹ = ‘inquire no further.’

Yayāti said :

“As a student all the Veda has come to my hearing, and a king I am, and son of a king, Yayāti — by that name known.”

The commentator calls attention to the inversion whereby Yayāti gives first the reason for his use of Sanskrit, namely, his education; and, secondly, the reason for his royal appearance, namely, the fact that he was really a king. The two evidently go together, and Yayāti speaks Sanskrit for the same reason that most people speak correct English, namely, because he had received a good education. From this use of the word Brāhma, as applied to speech, may we make any inference concerning its application to a form of writing?

May I add a remark concerning the words *prakṛta* and *samśkrta*? The former, as an adjective from *prakṛti*, the crude unelaborated state (*δύναμις*) of anything, is a good equivalent for our word ‘natural’ in the sense of ‘unsophisticated’ or ‘uncultivated’; whence it comes to have also the sense of ‘vulgar’ or ‘low.’ It is thus applicable to the language either of a peasant or of a plebeian. *Samśkrta* is, as has been explained, that which is made pure by correctness. But the word bears a curious analogy to a term well-known to modern Anglo-Indians, namely *pakka*, literally ‘cooked’ (or ‘ripened’); for Pāṇini speaks of cooked food as *samśkrta*.

It is noticeable that the same sense reappears in the root *sādḥ* (*sidh*), whence come *sādhu* and *siddha*, both also applied to language and to persons. So persistent has been the connection between the ideas of perfection and of cooking (ripening)!

As regards the application of the term Pali to the dialects of the Aśokan edicts, to which Professor Rhys Davids regretfully yields (above, p. 459), I cannot believe that it will ever be sanctioned, especially after Professor Pischel’s recent paper on the Canon of the Northern Buddhists

(Berlin *Sitzungsberichte*, 1904, No. xxv, pp. 807-27), showing that there once existed a Māgadhī text, presumably the most ancient version.

The occurrence of the word *vihethaka*, 'malicious,' in the fragments published (*ibid.*, p. 817) is a new illustration of the lexicographical connection between the Mahābhārata and early Buddhism. The word occurs Mbh. I, v. 3076, and, with *vihethā vihethana*, in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (see B. & R.).

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'Ορβανός = RĀVAṆA ?

In the *Handbuch der Geschichte der Medizin* (Jena, 1901), the author of the article on Indian Medicine, Dr. Iwan Bloch, has pointed out (p. 126) that an Indian physician is named by Galen as the originator of a recipe for easing childbirth. The passage runs as follows:—

ἀντίδοτος ἢ 'Ορβανοῦ λεγομένη τοῦ 'Ινδοῦ, πρὸς τὸ τὰ ἐντὸς βρέφη ἐκβάλλειν ἂ σμύρνης < ἰέ. κρόκου < ἰστ'. νάρδου 'Ινδικῆς < ἰστ'. κανναμώμου, κασσίας πάνακος, ἀνὰ < ἰγ'. ἀμώμου < ἦ. σκορδίου < κέ. ἐν ἄλλῳ < έ. σχοίνου ἄνθους < ἦ. μήου ἀθαμαντικῶ < γ'. ῥόδων χύλου < ἰβ'. ὀβολοὺς γ'. φου < έ. ὀβολοὺς γ'. ὑπερικοῦ < έ. ζυγγιβέρεως < στ'.

The identity of this 'Ορβανός has not been established. Arjuna, the shorter name of Nāgārjuna, had occurred to me as a possibility. But have we not rather an equivalent for the Sanskrit *Rāvaṇa*? An old Indian tradition qualifies as a physician the ten-headed enemy of Rama, the demon king of Lankā. This is not an Indian version of the world-wide witticism against the profession of medicine, although that is fully attested in Sanskrit, the Subhāṣitāvalī giving among other lines this couplet (No. 2319):—

vaidyanātha namas tubhyaṃ kṣapitāśeṣamānava |
tvayi samnyastabhāro 'yaṃ kṛtāntaḥ sukham edhate |

For a medical work entitled *Arkaprakāśa*, consisting of a dialogue between Rāvaṇa and his wife Mandodarī (!), is