

## Some Observations on Buddhism and Lexicography

Lata Mahesh Deokar

As is well known, Amarasiṃha, the author of the celebrated lexicon Amarakośa, was a Buddhist. However, the contents of the Amarakośa are not Buddhist. More or less, the same is the case with two other Buddhist lexicographers, namely, Puruṣottamadeva, the author of the Trikāṇḍaśeṣa and Śrīdharasena, the author of the Abhidhānaviśvalocana. Though these three lexicographers were undoubtedly Buddhist by faith, there is no significant influence of Buddhism on their works; nor can those works be called characteristically Buddhist. There is convincing evidence to show that among the commentators of the Amarakośa, at least three were Buddhist by faith. They were: Jātarūpa, Subhūticandra and Sarvānanda. However, they too have not made much use of the Buddhist concepts, philosophical terms or vocabulary in their commentaries.

Against this background, it is significant to note that there exist some characteristically Buddhist bilingual lexicons, where for Sanskrit words their Tibetan equivalents have been given. The earliest lexicon viz. The Mahāvyutpatti (8-9<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.), was an outcome of the historical joint activity of translating Buddhist Sanskrit works into Tibetan.

Subsequently, the Tibetan scholars, inspired by the composition of the Mahāvyutpatti, composed several lexicons. Among these, a special mention must be made of the Prakāṣaratnādarśadvibhāṣākośa by Mi-pham Rinpoche (19<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.), who followed the method of the Mahāvyutpatti and composed a Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon.

It may be pointed out that the major feature of these "Buddhist Lexicons" is that they are written in prose. They bear a stronger similarity to the Vedic Nighaṇṭus than to the classical lexicons as they include all the four parts of speech, viz. *nāman*, *ākhyāta*, *upasarga* and *nipāta*. These encyclopaedic lexicons prepared by the Tibetan savants also include necessary portions of Sanskrit grammars and metres.

The present paper discusses following four points:

- I. A brief survey of Sanskrit-Tibetan / Tibetan-Sanskrit bilingual lexicons
- II. Content-Analysis of these lexicons
  - i. Arrangement
  - ii. Division
  - iii. Topics covered
- III. Lexicographical principles followed in compiling the Mahāvyutpatti
  - i. How do they differentiate between homonymy and polysemy,
  - ii. What could have been the problems faced by the compilers
  - iii. How did they translate the words that have the cultural / philosophical content
  - iv. Some interesting translations found in the Mahāvyutpatti
- IV. Concluding Remarks