

## A FEW TIBETAN CUSTOMS AND A FEW THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THEM. THE PRAYER-BEADS OR ROSARIES.

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In my two preceding papers on Tibetan customs, read before the July and September Meetings of the Society, I dwelt on two of the Prayer-machines of the Tibetans, seen in Darjeeling, *viz.*, Prayer-flags and Prayer-wheels. To-day, I want to speak on Prayer-beads or Rosaries, the last of the three divisions in which I divided the Prayer-machines. We are more or less strangers to the Prayer-flags and Prayer-wheels but not so to the Prayer-beads or Rosaries which form a part of the paraphernalia or apparatus of the places of worship of many religious communities—the Hindus, Buddhists, Mahomedans, Zoroastrians and Christians.

As Colonel Waddell<sup>1</sup> says, “the rosary is an essential part of a Lama’s dress ..... Its use is not confined to the Lamas. Nearly every layman and woman is possessed of a rosary, on which at every opportunity they store up merit.”

Rosary, a part  
of a Lama’s dress.

The instruments of ritual in a Tibetan Monastery, or, as Mon. L. De Milloué speaks of them, the utensils of worship,<sup>2</sup> are various. Among these, the rosary or the chaplet is one of the most important. They call it *Tenva*<sup>3</sup> (*Prenba lit.* a string of beads). During the course of the ritual, it is generally placed on a low wooden platform on the left of the officiating Lama, who occasionally lifts it and turns its beads. Colonel Waddell gives an interesting and exhaustive description of the Tibetan rosary.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism, p. 202

<sup>2</sup> “Ustensiles du culte” (“Bod-Youl ou Tibet” par L. De Milloué (1906) p. 252. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p. 255.

<sup>4</sup> “The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism” by L. A. Waddell (1895) pp. 202-10.

I produce before the Society, a rosary, which I purchased for 12 annas from a Bhutia at a house in the village of Bhutia Basti. In itself, it is not worth that price, but its owner parted with it with some hesitation at that price, because as he said, it had the additional value of being consecrated by a pious Lama. The house-wife did not part with hers, with which she had said many a prayer before the household altar, whereat all the arrangements were well-nigh of a kind similar to that of the altar of the monastery, though on a very small scale.

The rosary of a Tibetan Buddhist Lama has 108 beads. It has two additional strings, each of 10 beads, which act as counters. Every time the 108 beads are turned, one of the beads of the first counter, which marks "units", is turned to note the recital of 108 repetitions. That string has, at its end, a *dorjé* which, representing a thunderbolt, serves as a symbol of authority in the hands of the Lamas, and which has, as such, given its name to Darjeeling, which means the seat of the *dorjé* or the ecclesiastical authority. The second string marks dozens, *i. e.*, on the recital of  $12 \times 108$  prayers, one of the beads of this second string is turned. This second string has a small bell, called *drilbu*, attached to it.

Several reasons are assigned for the fact of a Tibetan rosary containing 108 beads. 1. One is, that, the names of two of the Tibetan gods, whose names are told on the rosary, are 108. 2. The second reason is that the number of the volumes of their *Kâgyur*, one of the two divisions of their scriptures, is also 108. 3. The third reason is that the footprints of Buddha contain 108 sub-divisions. So, the number of beads, symbolize, as it were, all these sacred facts. 4. It is believed by some, that the number 108 was borrowed by the Tibetan Buddhists from India, where the Vaishnavas have a rosary of 108 beads. 5. Colonel Waddell assigns another reason. He says:—"The reason for this special number is alleged to be merely a provision to ensure the repetition of the sacred spell a full hundred times, and the

extra beads are added to make up for any omission of beads through absent-mindedness during the telling process or for actual loss of beads by breakage".<sup>1</sup>

The materials of which the beads of a rosary are made vary according to the god or gods in whose honor, or with whose name or names, the prayers are repeated.<sup>2</sup> The materials generally used are crystal, turquoise,<sup>3</sup> wood, amber, coral, bone, conch-shell, etc.

The Tibetan Buddhists attach a good deal of importance to the bones and skulls of their Lamas, especially to those of pious Lamas, and use them for various purposes. The thigh-bones and the leg-bones are used for trumpets. The skulls<sup>4</sup> are used as bowls for drinking purposes. Other bones are used for making beads of their rosaries.

I remember a morning (22nd June 1913), when, on my way to Rangarong, about 8 miles from Darjeeling, I met two begging Lamas on the road. I also remember having met one such Lama one morning on my way to Lebung. These itinerant Lamas were, as it were, roving monasteries in themselves, that is to say, they carried over their body almost all the requisites required in a monastery for ritualistic purposes. They carried the following articles on their bodies :—

1. A drum.
2. A bell (drilbu).

<sup>1</sup> "The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism." p. 203. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>3</sup> Turquoise, so called, because it first went to Europe from Turkey, was known in Tibet from olden times. It was known in Persia as *pirouzeh* (پيروزه) since the 7th Century. From there, it came to India and from India it went to Europe *via* Turkey. *Vide* Mr. B. Lamper's interesting article on Turquoise in the East in "The Field Museum of Natural History Publication, 169, Anthropological Series Vol. XIII."

<sup>4</sup> "Of the skull he maketh a goblet, from which he and all of the family always drink devoutly to the memory of the deceased father (Friar Odoric. "Cathay and the way thither" by Yule, revised by Cordier (1913) Vol. II, p. 254.

3. A dorjé or dorche, an instrument with two knobs at both the ends. It represents a thunderbolt which is an emblem of power. Often, it resembles a sceptre.
4. A rosary in the hand.
5. A Prayer-wheel (k'orlo).
6. A conch.
7. A flag. At times, the flag was put on a long stick, which also acted as a hill stick.
8. A rosary on the neck like a necklace.<sup>1</sup>
9. A trumpet made of a thigh bone.
10. A spear-like instrument (p' ourbon).
11. A mitre on the head.
12. A trident.<sup>2</sup>
- 13. A Prayer-book.

Of all the instruments, the bone trumpet drew my special attention. One of the Lamas said, that it was made out of the bone of the leg of a pious Lama, and added, that the departed souls of the Lamas, instead of being offended,

The use of bone in rosaries, trumpets, etc.

were pleased at the use of their bones for musical instruments

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sven Hedin, in his description of these wandering Lamas, refers to these rosaries on their necks. (*Trans-Himalaya*, Vol. I, p. 362.)

<sup>2</sup> The mention of a trident among the Buddhist instruments of worship may strike one as strange. But one must know, that the latter day Buddhism and especially the Tibetan Buddhism has been a strange mixture. The early religion of Tibet was known as Bon religion. It was in the 8th century, that Padma Sambhava introduced Buddhism into Tibet. This Buddhism is also known as Lamaism. It is a corrupted form of Buddhism. One sees in it, together with the outward Buddhistic symbolism, a mixture of Shivaistic element and of pre-Buddhistic superstitions, wherein, as said by Rai Sarat Chandra Das Bahadur, fantastic devils and demons and their rites and sacrifices take an important part. The pre-Buddhistic blood-sacrifice also continued to a certain extent.

On the Buddhist altar on the Observatory Hill at Darjeeling, one sees a number of Hindu tridents. Again, among the numerous worshippers at this altar, one sees a number of Hindus, especially the Shaivites. Not only that, but the priest who looks after this shrine is a Hindu priest, and it is under his guidance that both the Hindus and the Bhutia Buddhists present their offerings, and it is under his presence that the Lamas say their prayers.

during the rituals. Colonel Waddell refers to such thigh-bone trumpets.<sup>1</sup> M. Bonvalot also refers to blowing "into human thigh-bones with leather bags at the end."<sup>2</sup>

It is not only the Lamas in the monasteries that use the rosaries but all the religiously inclined Bhutias, male and female, also use them. It is not unusual to see many a Bhutia on the hill or in an adjoining village, moving about with rosaries in their hands and turning the beads while reciting their prayers.

As said by Colonel Waddell, even pedlars and traders "produce all sorts of things for sale with one hand, while they devoutly finger the beads of their rosary with the other."<sup>3</sup> M. Bonvalot refers to some sanctimonious old lamas "quickly turning mills or telling their beads" in the midst of ordinary work.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. G. Clarke Nuttal, in his interesting article on "The Rosary and its History"<sup>5</sup> says: "It (rosary) . . . is a link with the days behind History, its origin is lost in the mists of the dawn of civilization in the Far East, and though many now feel, it is a hindrance rather than a help to their devotions, it has undoubtedly played a definite and real part in the chief great religions that have moulded the minds of men."

The antiquity of its use.

It seems, that in many religious communities, certain prayers had to be repeated several number of times.

The origin of the use of a Rosary.

That repetition seems to have been enjoined for several reasons:—

At one time, as in the case of the philosophy of Pythagorus, numbers were believed to have certain efficacy. So, certain small

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Col. Waddells' "Lhasa and its Mysteries," p. 220, for the figure of a Lama holding "a trumpet of human thigh-bone in right hand, and a skull-bowl in left."

<sup>2</sup> "Across Tibet," Vol. II, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> "Lhasa and its Mysteries" by Col. Austine Waddell (1905), p. 213.

<sup>4</sup> Across Tibet, Vol. II, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> "Great Thoughts" February 1911, p. 359. I am indebted to my assistant, Mr. R. N. Munshi, for kindly drawing my attention to the article.

prayers, or prayer-formulæ were required to be recited a number of times, say a hundred or a thousand. That was to be done in the midst of their longer prayers.

I would illustrate, what I have to say on the subject of these repetitions of prayers, by instances from the prayers of my own community.

a. A Parsee has to recite in the midst of his larger prayer of Ahuramazda Yasht, 10 Ahunavars or Yathâ-Ahu Vairiyos.

b. In the midst of the recital of the Vendidâd, even the fast recital of which takes at least about six hours from midnight to morn, at one place in the long service, the officiating priest has to recite 200 Ahunavars and 100 Ashem Vohus.

c. In the recital of the Yaçna, in the *paragnâ* or the preliminary part of the service, the officiating priest has to recite the 100 names of Ahura Mazda 10 times.

All these recitals would require some mode of calculation and some instruments for counting.

Irrespective of the belief in the efficacy of numbers, certain prayers were enjoined to be repeated, on account of their own efficacy. For example, a Parsee is asked to repeat his Vispa Humata prayer<sup>1</sup> three times, his Nemo-âonghâm prayer four times. That seems to have been enjoined for the purpose of the efficacy of the prayers themselves.

3. Certain long prayers had to be recited during the different parts of a day, of a month, or a year, or on particular occasions. At times, people did not know these prayers by heart. They even

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<sup>1</sup> This short prayer can be rendered thus :—

“I would entertain good thoughts, good words and good actions with my (*i.e.*, as enjoined by my) reason. I would not entertain evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions with reason. All good thoughts, good words and good actions lead to the best (state of) life (or paradise). All evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds, lead to the worst (state of) life (*i.e.*, Hell). All good thoughts, good words and good actions are apparent (*i.e.*, have apparent efficacy).”

did not know to read them. In that case, they were enjoined to recite shorter prayers a number of times in lieu of the long prayers. For example, a Parsee who did not know the Khorshed and Meher Nyâishes, in honour of the Sun and Mithra, the Yazata of Light, which he was enjoined to recite thrice during the three *gahs* or periods of the day, was allowed to recite so many Ahunavars or Yathâ Ahu Vairiyôs in their stead. The recital of these short prayers a number of times,—at times twelve hundred, for example, in the case of the non-recital of the Gâthâs on the Gâthâ Gâhambâr days, required a counting machine or instrument like the rosary.

Thus, we see, that rosaries or chaplets first came to be used to count up the number of prayers that were enjoined to be recited a number of times.

The above view of the case is supported by what the emissaries of the Pope, who went as missionaries under St. Francis Xavier to Japan in the sixteenth century, said. They said "The Japanese pray on beads as we do; those who can read use little books, and those who pray on beads say on each bead a prayer twice as long as the Pater Noster"<sup>1</sup>. This fact shows that those who knew their ordinary prayers recited or read from books. They had no need of rosaries. But, it was only those who did not know the ordinary obligatory long prayers that required the help of rosaries to say short prayers, which they were expected to know by heart.

Thus, the principle underlying this process seems to be this : At first, it was enjoined by the priest that the worshippers had to say certain prayers, either as atonements for crimes or for removal of certain difficulties, sicknesses or calamities or for the fulfilment of a certain desire. At times, the worshippers did not know these prayers by heart, or did not know to read them from the prayer books. In such a case, the priest enjoined as substitutes the recitation of shorter prayers or short prayer-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Mr. C. Nuttal, in "Great Thoughts" of February 1911, p. 359.

formulæ a number of times. Thus, the Zoroastrian Mobad enjoined the recital of so many Ahunavars, the Christian Padre of so many Pater-Nosters, the Buddhist Lama of so many *Om mani padme hum*, the Hindu Brahmin of so many mantras, the Mohamedan Mullah of so many *kalamâs*.

This is the first stage in the evolution of what we would term the "shortening process." For long prayers, short were substituted and enjoined to be said so many times.

Then we come to the second stage. There were many who did not know even the short prayers, enjoined to be said in lieu of the long ones whose recital was impossible for them. They, proceeding in the downward line of the shortening-process, rested satisfied with the recital of only the first words of the Prayers. For example, instead of reciting the whole of the *Om mâni padme hum*, a Tibetan remained satisfied with the utterance of the first word *Om*.

The most common use of beads in prayers among the laity in some religious communities seems to have crept in at this stage. Some means to count the number of prayers—the Ahunavars, the Pater Nosters, the *Om mani padme hums*, the Mantras, the Kalamâs, were to be found. The beads supplied the means.

Then came another stage, where even the recital or repetition, of any scriptural word whatever, was dropped, and simply the turning of beads was continued as a part of one's religious life. Hence it is, that we see many a religiously inclined person turning his beads in the midst of other work, or even while moving about.

Again, it must be noted that this shortening process did not remain confined to the illiterate or to those who did not know their prayers. Others, who were in a position to say their long prayers also began to resort to this shortening process. Thus the use of beads or rosaries seems to have come into greater use in what may be known as the shortening-process or the substitution-process in the recital of prayers.



These processes have, as it were, their parallels in other kinds of "substitution-process", of which we find many instances in various communities. For example, it is meritorious to give board and lodging to travellers and to supply them with horses for going from one stage to another. So, in China, people, going on tops of hills or mountains, throw paper tents, paper horses and paper articles of food down below, with the belief that, by being wafted all round, they may bring them the meritoriousness of the charity of free lodge and board for travellers.

It is said, that in China if the drugs named in some medical man's prescriptions are not to be had, some burn the prescriptions, and dissolving the resulting ash in water, drink the solution believing that the efficacy of the drug is thereby transferred to the water.

I had the pleasure of seeing a Chinese temple at Calcutta on the evening of 3rd July 1913. I saw there a number of coloured papers containing short Chinese prayers. The worshipper purchased these papers and burned them, believing, that with the rising smoke the prayers written on the papers ascended on his behalf to the high Heavens. It is with such a similar idea of the substitution-process that they either burn paper-horses and articles of food or fling them into the air, believing that thereby they provide animals of transport and articles of food to travellers and thus collect for themselves in the Heavens the meritoriousness of giving hospitality to travellers. I produce before the Society here a few prayers purchased at the above Chinese temple.

Number of beads  
among other com-  
munities.

Among different religious communities,  
the number of beads in the rosaries varied.

1. The Buddhist rosary has 108 beads with two strings each of ten beads, one counting the units and the other the dozens.

2. Among the Brahmins, the Vaishnavites like the Buddhists have their rosaries of 108 beads, but the Shaivites have those of sixty-four.

3. The Mahomedans have rosaries made of three chaplets, each of 33 beads. These 99 beads are turned with the recital of each of the 99 names of God. There is one bead extra, the hundredth, which represents the name of God himself.

4. The Christian Catholic rosaries consist of 150 small beads with ten large ones at the interval of every 10 beads. They are turned at each recital of Ave Maria, *i.e.*, Hail Mary. After the recital of every ten Ave Maria prayers they recite one Pater Noster, whose recital is noted by the large bead placed after every group of 10 small beads. The number 150 represents 150 Psalms. It was the duty of the pious to recite, or read during the course of every day these 150 Psalms. But in the early days of Christianity, there were hundreds and thousands who neither knew their Psalms by heart nor knew to read them. So, they were enjoined by the priests to recite one Pater Noster or Lord's Prayer—a short prayer which could be easily committed to memory,—for every Psalm which they could not recite. Hence, it was to count these Pater Nosters that the rosaries first came into use among them.

In those early days, the Knights who formed religious orders—for example, the Knights of St. John—were, to a certain extent, illiterate, more illiterate than the clerks or the clergy. So, when the latter were, as a matter of course, required to recite the 150 Psalms, the Knights, not happening to know them by heart or to read, were required to repeat 150 Pater Nosters in their stead. In order to be able to do so properly, they had to carry with them rosaries.

5. The *tasbih* or rosary which a Parsee priest uses for counting the 200 Yathá-Ahu-vairyos, and 100 Ashem-vohu prayers during the celebration of the Vendidad (Chap. XIX) is made of 100 beads.

We find, that in many cases, it is the first words of the short prayers, which the rosaries enumerate, that have given names to the rosaries.

1. The old name of a Christian rosary is Pater Noster, which forms the first word of the Pater Noster prayer recited with its help. Those who made rosaries were called Pater Nosterers. The Pater Noster Row in London is said to have derived its name from the fact that the old Pater Nosterers manufactured their Pater Nosters or rosaries there.

2. The Mahomedans called their rosaries *tasbih* (تَسْبِيح) from the fact that their "most meritorious ejaculation," Subhâna 'illâh! (i.e. 'I extol the holiness of God'! or 'O Holy God'!) was known as *tasbih*. This ejaculation, "if recited one hundred times, night and morning, is said by the Prophet to atone for man's sins, however many or great. Vide Mishkât Bk. X, ch. II.<sup>1</sup>"

The rosary is also spoken of as *subhah* (سُبْحَة) among the Mahomedans. It consists of 100 beads, and is used by them for counting the 99 attributes of God, together with the essential name Allâh (God); or the repetition of the *tasbih* ("Oh! Holy God"), the *Tahmid* ("Praise to God"), and the *Takbir* ("God is Great!) or for the recital of any act of devotion."<sup>2</sup> The Mahomedans use rosaries in their *zikrs* (ذِكْر) lit. remembering, which is a "religious ceremony or act of devotion, practised by the various religious orders of Faqirs or Darweshes."<sup>3</sup> Meditation, holding breaths for a long time, and dancing are included in these practices.

3. The Zoroastrians of India use for rosary the Arabic word *tasbih*, which seems to have come down to them through the Persians. But the Zoroastrians of Persia use the words Band-i-

<sup>1</sup> Hughes' Dictionary of Islam; vide the word 'Tasbih'.

<sup>2</sup> Dictionary of Islam, by Hughes (1885), p. 546. Vide the word "rosary."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 703. Vide the word *zikh*.

Yathâ Ahu Vairyô (lit. the knot of Yathâ Ahu Vairyô) for their rosary. Here also, we find, that the words Yathâ Ahu Vairyo, which begins the Yathâ Ahu Vairyo prayer, recited a number of times, have given its name to the Zoroastrian rosary. It is said that the beads of this rosary are made of knots of fine woollen thread. It is made up of 100 or at times 1,000 knots. Now-a-days the Persian Zoroastrians have also begun using glass beads which they call Mohreh (مهره).

In some communities, their words for the rosaries explain the purposes for which they are used. For example, among the Ceylonese Buddhist monks, a rosary is called *Nawaguna Mâté*, i.e. a string or garland for counting the nine virtues.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in modern Persia, a Zoroastrian speaks of his rosary as a "Band-i-Yathâ Ahu Vairyo, i.e., the knots (بند) for counting the Yathâ Ahu Vairyo prayers.

We have no authentic account of the use of rosary in ancient Iran. The Parsees have no original word in the Avesta, Pahlavi or old Persian for a rosary. The word they use for it is, as said above, the Arabic word تَسْبِيح (tasbih) used by the Mahomedans. Another word which they use for it is *hârdi* (هاردی), which is Gujarati and which literally means (beads) arranged in a row (*hâr*). The use of these foreign words shows that they had nothing like rosaries at first. Its use came in afterwards from other communities. We do not find the word *tasbih* in the old Persian dictionary *Burhân-i-Kâteh*. This also shows the later use of the word by the Persians and the Parsees. Of course, they had, like other religious communities, to recite some short prayers in the midst of the ritual for a number of times. But the number of recitals was not unusually long. It was 200 the most in the Vendidad. But latterly, a larger number began to be enjoined for recital in lieu of several long prayers. It is then that its use seems to have been introduced.

<sup>1</sup> Col. Waddell, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1896, p. 576.

We find that many an article, first used for religious purposes, has latterly begun to be used as an article of toilet or dress. The Cross is an instance of this kind. It was, as it were, transferred from the Church to the body of the votaries of the Church, at first, as an amulet or a thing of religious efficacy. It then gradually formed the part of the dress and began to be used as a decoration in the safe-guard of a watch or in a brooch on the neck, etc.

I have seen in Italy, and especially in Naples, during my visit of the country in July 1889, many an Italian lady and gentleman carrying on their body, in some form or another as decoration, articles of ancient phallic worship, especially those found in the ruins of Pompei or Hercules.

The same is the case with the rosary. It has passed from the Church to the dressing-room as an article of dress on the necks of ladies. It is so in Tibet and elsewhere. The present *dânâ-roki sânkri* (दानरोकी संकरी) *i.e.*, the grain-shaped necklace, hanging from the neck of many a Parsee or Hindu lady, seems to have evolved from the original use of the rosary as an article of decoration. One speaks of a *moti-ni-mâlâ*, *i. e.*, a pearl necklace on the neck of a lady, and *mâlâ jahpvi* or *feravvi*, *i. e.*, to turn a string or rosary. The latter phrase has proverbially come to mean to say prayers. The word *mâlâ* is common in both the phrases.

Mr. Nuttall says of the Christians, that "the use of rosaries for personal adornment was, later, carried to such an extent that its religious office was in danger of being forgotten. So, the Church exerted its influence to put an end to this unbecoming state of affairs, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we find various laws passed against this abuse by the ruling bodies of different Continental towns. Thus Nuremberg forbade its citizens to use any Pater Noster of above a certain value, while somewhat later Regensberg put a limit (namely, three or four) to the number of rosaries which a single individual might

possess, and, moreover, limited the value of each of those to ten guelden."<sup>1</sup> Though latterly rosaries began to form a part of the dress, the grains which formed them continued to be spoken of as beads, which was originally a religious term, derived from the word "bidden" to pray.

The rosary has given a name to one of the Catholic feasts, *viz.*: "The feast of the Blessed Rosary."

We find, that in many religious communities, flowers, or some vegetable products, at first, formed the beads of rosaries. Other materials came to be used latterly. As flowers play an important part in the religious services and ritual of many communities, it is natural that they served as beads at first. The very words for rosaries in most languages seem to prove this fact. Col. Waddell, says of the Burma Buddhist rosaries:—

"Among the Buddhists of Burma, the rosary is known as *Tsi-puthi*" which literally means 'the mind-garland,' *i. e.*, the meditation rosary. . . . It consists of 108 beads, corresponding, it is alleged to the 108 symbols in Buddha's sole or foot-prints. . . . A most rare and costly rosary found occasionally among the wealthy lay devotees is formed of compressed sweet scented flowers, pressed into cakes of a wood like hardness and then turned on a lathe into beads. Such beads retain their perfume, it is said, for ages. This is the nearest approach to the more primitive rosary, *viz.*, a garland of flowers."<sup>2</sup>

Again take the English word "rosary." It originally meant a "rose-bed." The German word "*rosenkranz*" similarly means both, a "garland of roses" and a "rosary." The Sanskrit word for a rosary is (माला) *mâlâ*, which means a garland of flowers as well as a rosary. Our Indian word *mâli* originally

<sup>1</sup> "Great Thoughts" of February 1911, p. 360.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Waddell, Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, December 1892, p. 190.

means a garland-maker. Again the Indian word ( हार ) *hâr*, when used in connection with flowers, means a garland of flowers, but as *hârdi* ( हार्दि ), it is used by Parsees for a rosary. So all these words indicate, that, at first, beads were made of flowers or some such garden-productions.

Entering into "the mists of the dawn of civilization" while tracing the origin of the use of rosary, Mr. Nuttall begins with the Brahminic faith and says :—

"The falling tears of Siva became transformed into the rough berries of the Rudraksha tree. So, .....the Hindoo had his rosary of Rudraksha berries to aid him in his petitions to Siva the terrible, or a rosary cut out of the wood of the Tulsi shrub to assist him recite the praises of Vishnu, the preserver. To this day the Brahmin believes that abstraction—detachment from the world around—is best attained by counting and repetition ; so, he, still uses his Siva rosary of sixty-four beads, and his Vishnu rosary of one hundred and eight beads to attain the desired attitude of mind by endlessly reiterating his invocations over it."<sup>1</sup> This shows that in India also flowers or plants served as beads.

Colonel Waddell says of the Ceylonese rosaries that "the material of which the beads are composed varies with the wealth and caprice of the owner. The commonest rosaries have their beads of cocoanut shell, or of a seed, .....Some rosaries are of *Sandal* wood, and a few are of precious stones. But no importance seems to be placed upon the particular material of the beads, as is done in Tibet, where the rosary has attained its highest development."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Nuttall relates the following interesting legend which is  
 A Christian legend about the first use of the word 'rosary'. believed to have introduced the use of the words, 'rosary' for a 'Pater Noster':

<sup>1</sup> "Great Thoughts" of February 1911, p. 359.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of London for 1896, p. 576.

“A certain pious lad found his chief delight in making a wreath of flowers—roses for choice—to adorn a figure of the Virgin. This he did until he entered the Cloister as a Monk, when to his grief, he found that henceforth it would not be possible to continue his offering. But an old priest to whom he told his trouble advised him to repeat fifty special ‘Ave Marias’ every day and offer this exercise to ‘Our Lady’ in lieu of the flowers. She would know and understand his motive and accept his offering. This advice the young novice followed most faithfully. One day his duty took him through a wood where robbers were lying in wait for him. As they watched a favourable opportunity to attack him, they saw him suddenly stand still and repeat his customary Aves. To their surprise a beautiful vision of a woman took the prayers as they fell from his lips, each prayer being changed into a lovely rose, and she wove them into a garland or rosary. Needless to say, this sight convinced, the robbers of their sin and converted them to a better life”<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Nuttall also gives another tradition about the origin of the name ‘rosary’. He says: “A favourite appellation of the Virgin Mary in those days was *Rosa Mystica*, and since the old Pater Noster had become by this time almost exclusively used in the glorification of the Virgin, it was more aptly termed a *Rosarium* or Rosary than a Pater Noster”<sup>2</sup>.

The use of the rosary seems to have come down to the Tibetans from their own ancient religion—the Bon religion—in a synod of which even Persia and India had sent their sages, and whose many practices they have preserved in spite of their Buddhism. According to the teaching of that religion, the rosaries varied in form and colour according to the degree of meditation and according to the kind of offerings.<sup>3</sup>

Buddhism giving the use of rosaries to others.

<sup>1</sup> “Great Thoughts” of February 1911, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Bodh-Youl ou Tibet*, par L. de Milloué, p. 156.



Buddhism confirmed its use. India knew the use of rosaries from very ancient times.

It is said on the authority of Abdul-Haqq, a great commentator that the early Mahomedans counted their prayers in praise of God by the use of pebbles.

Mr. T. P. Hughes, the author of the Dictionary of Islam,<sup>1</sup> thinks that it is probable that the Mahomedans borrowed the use of rosaries from the Buddhists, and latterly, during the Crusades, gave it to Christianity through the Crusaders. Its use is said to have been introduced in Christianity in A.D. 1221, by Dominic, the founder of the Black Friars. It is said of an Egyptian ascetic named Paul of Pherma who lived in the fourth century, that when ordered to recite 300 prayers, he counted the prayers with 300 pebbles which he had previously collected. He threw out the pebbles, one by one, at every prayer.<sup>2</sup>

This, in my opinion, explains the use of the pebbles in the Vendidâd, recited during the Nirangdin ceremony of the Parsees, wherein, at the end of the recital of 200 Ahunavars, pebbles are thrown on the recital of each Yathâ Abu-Vairyô in the vessels containing the sacred *gao-mez* (urine) and water.

The Lamas often use their rosaries to drive off the evil spirits.

The Tibetan rosary used as a devil-driving instrument.

On the morning of 4th June 1913, I happened to be in one of their annual devil-driving processions, wherein they carried all the books of the monasteries through the village, believing that the carrying of religious books through the sheets exercised the evil spirits. In the march of the procession, the head Lama often flourished his rosary round about to drive away devils from the village.

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes' "Dictionary of Islam" (1885), p. 546. *Vide* the word 'Rosary'.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Revd. Kawaguchi, in his above-mentioned interesting book, entitled "Three years in Tibet<sup>1</sup>" gives an account of what is known among the Tibetans as a "hail-proof temple." Therein, he says that the priest, called Ngak-pa, pronounced an incantation and flourished his rosary to drive away the storm of hail from the adjoining fields.

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<sup>1</sup> Three years in Tibet, by Rev. Ekai Kawaguchi (1909), pp. 271—76.