

OM MANI PADME AUM, OM MANI PANI
SACRED WORDS,
NOTES AND HYPOTHESES

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Dedicated to Alexandra David Néel. Her books introduced me to Tibet and India, lands with very ancient memories, to be studied by many generations.

ABSTRACT

We propose that the four ancient words, sacred for Buddhists – *Om mani padme aum* – which are given various symbolic meanings, are derived from three more ancient words: *Om mani pani*, widespread within the Indus Valley, between Kashmir and Tibet. We propose for these three words the meaning: *Praise to the wise man (Noah), sailor of the waters (of Deluge)*.

1. OM MANI PADME AUM, FOUR SPECIAL WORDS.

Within the Buddhist world, and not only there, see Tourniac (1979) for such words being written on a clock in an Armenian Cathedral, there are four words, of six syllables, that are particularly sacred. They are repeated by the faithful even thousands times, directly or through the so-called Prayer Wheels. The four words are:

Om Mani Padme Aum

Many different interpretations exist about the meaning of such words, considered of Sanskrit language, see the hundreds of books and articles dealing with them. Google refers about them in 165.000 voices... Here we give only a few. Klaproth (1835) proposes:

Oh, the jewel in the lotus, Amen.

Same in Huc (1854), one of the first western travelers in Tibet. The variants are many, particularly in Tibet. There the formula possibly

arrived with Buddhism, in the 7th century AD, brought by Padmasambhava.

In Tibet, before that period, the Bön magic-shamanic religion prevailed; today Bön survives in limited areas, in a modified form. It was still recently the religion of the Ngolok people, who were nomads, bandits and warriors, see Clark (1996). They lived in the region of Anye Machen, near the sources of the Yellow River, north-west of the Ser river (wherefrom the origin of the name Seri of ancient Chinese?). The Chinese empire had this river as a border, Chinese never completely controlling the Ngolok. Ngolok fought against the Chinese communists, being exterminated up to the 99%.....

Among the variants in the interpretation of the four words we quote the following: Hopkirk (2008) is close to Klaproth

Hail jewel in the lotus flower!

and declares that its meaning is unknown. Angelini (2008) gives a somewhat different meaning:

Hail the great lama of the lotus flower.

Still more different is the interpretation by the well-known guru Osho, see Google, 3-10-2012:

The sound of silence, the diamond in the lotus flower.

Evans-Wentz (1989) associates the formula to Manjushri, who was born from the lotus flower, without father and mother. Manjushri, Buddhist patron of China and Nepal, is a divine being of complex and various features, that may be compared to what is described in the four sacred words. See finally the treatise by Blofeld (1948) about the *jewel in the*

lotus. We remark that when sacred texts are dealt with by an essentially symbolic or metaphorical approach, then the interpretations are unlimited, subject to the personal opinion and fantasy of the scholar who studies them.

The purpose of this paper is not to review the interpretations of the four sacred words. In the following section we present three words, looking at them with our usual approach, not from a symbolical point of view, but using a historical and geographical interpretation, that leads to a special event in the past on our planet. Such three words may be at the origin of the most famous four words in the previous section.

2. OM MANI PANI, THREE SPECIAL WORDS.

In 1860 two officers of the English army in India, a certain Night (personal name not given) and a mate whose initials are only given, started from their seat at Kampur to reach Kashmir. Kashmir then was autonomous, under a maharajah, from whose family comes, I believe, the physicist and mathematician Subhash Kak. With Kak I have been in contact for some years; he is also the author of important studies on the ancient India.

Their expedition is stated as a cultural voyage, but its purpose was certainly to collect information of military interest. After a month in Srinagar very beautiful region (Srinagar was then named *Sirinugger*, the town of the sun), the two officers went on towards the closed Tibetan frontier, along the valley of the Indus river, in the provinces of Little Tibet and Ladakh. The Indus is called in Tibetan *Senge* (river of the lion... maybe referring to the gigantic, extinct Himalayan lion, to be associated to the mythological manticore, quoted in Ctesia's *Indikà*). In

Pakistan the river is called *Sundh*. In the little known Pseudo-Aethicus *Cosmographia*, for the first time translated and annotated by Spedicato (2013), and in a fragment by Nearchos, it is called Euphrates. Euphrates, related to Bharat = India, is probably the original name of Indus, before the Aryan invasion. Its name was given by the Sumerians, who migrated from east, to the homonymous river of the Middle East, that flows almost parallel to the Tigris (another name of Indian origin...). The Euphrates = Indus has greater length and water flow

The trip along the Indus valley was often rough, but not very difficult and known from antiquity. It brought the two officers near the border of prohibited Tiber. They traveled during summer and came back at the first snow. The valley was rich of apricots, plums, vine, peaches, pomegranates, strawberries, mulberries... also of wheat, barley, peas, beans and sheep. Villages had stone walls, Buddhist monasteries were found the way; the last monastery reached, and the most important, was that of Hemis.

Hemis monastery is well known owing to the assertion of the traveler Nicolas Notovitch (1894) that it was visited by Jesus, according to a statement of the chief lama. A false but widely believed statement. After some years Notovich confessed his fabrication. Other falsities are found in the book *The third eye*, written by a self-claimed lama Rampa Lobsang. He was an English merchant who did not know the Tibetan language, as verified by Heinrich Harrer, the man who conquered the northern face of Eiger and was the teacher of Dalai Lama.

On the return, the two officers passed through Uri, a little town lying on the Jhelum River, abounding in water; this town was known for the special wood of deodara cedar. Word Uri may derive from Sanskrit *Ur* = *water*. That is a special water, as the cosmic waters that can be

associated with the Orion Constellation, see Spedicato (2016); or also with the water produced by the human body, like the urine, used in India as urine therapy and also in other ways. In Spedicato (2016b) it is claimed that such Uri in Kashmir corresponds to the *Genesis* town Ur, from which Abraham moved to the land of Canaan ... Remember also that according to Clearchus of Soli *the Hebrews come from the wise men of India*. A statement related by Josephus Flavius, who refers to a meeting between Clearchus and Aristotle. Clearchus had traveled widely in Persia and India.

During his voyage Night noted, on stones along the way, or on stone belonging to heaps similar to Tibetan chorten, or on the walls of monasteries, certain inscriptions in a writing unknown to him. By asking the local inhabitants – particularly the monks – such inscriptions are read as the following three words (Night, 1984, page. 161):

UM-OM-PANEE.

He also notes these words being repeated many times by a fat local lama. Night comments: *Such were the quantities of the inscribed stones... that in one long wall I estimated there must have been upwards of 3000 and this in a country where inhabitants of any sort are few and far between, and where none appear who seem at all capable of executing such inscriptions.*

Such three words immediately remember the first three words of the sacred four words, examined in the first section, with the variant from PADME to PANI. Night then observes (page 171), on the base of the information given him by the gopa, or chief of the village of Kulchee (in an oasis of apricots and walnuts, with cereals and milk, and only about fifteen huts) that the three words may appear in three different writings. The most common writing, used in recent times, is called Romeeque;

another one, with square characters, out-of-date, is called Lantza; the third one and most known to the gopa, and that did not appear on the local stones, was the Tyeeque.

We leave to other scholars, more expert, a discussion on the three writings and on possible other writings of the extensive Indo-Tibetan region. We recall however that, according to Daniélou (2016), in ancient India, a greater country than modern India, there existed as many writings as the number of the provinces. We also note that Buddha became famous for his culture, when, still young, he showed to be familiar with all the 64 writings... may be those of Sanskrit, in 64 Indian provinces? The number 64 is a special number in India: 64 are the virtues, 64 the love technics of Kamasutra...

We can explain the three words by giving them a historical content, specially adapt to their presence within the Indus valley.

OM has the same meaning of the four words, in the sense of *praise, celebration...*, corresponding to Arabic *Hamma*, to Hebrew *Amen*...

MANI can be interpreted as one of the many variants where the consonants are M and N and the associated vowels may change, by adding sometimes another consonant, for un-semantic motivation. So MN = MAN, MENS, MANI, MANU, MANNU, MINOS, MENES, MINIAS... the general, well-known meaning is *intelligence, wisdom, knowledge*.

PANI may be interpreted in two important and associable ways:

-As *water*, from Sanskrit (where there are also other words for such concept, in different contexts, as the already seen UR, or AP like the Persian AB...). PANI, meaning water, is used also in the modern Hindi,

Urdu, Bengali, Sinti (the language of one of the Tzigane nationalities, believed to be the language closest to Sanskrit)... and probably also in other languages...

As *seamen*, it appears in the name of one of the two great groups of shipmen of ancient India, the *Pani Tirani*, two words that mean the *powerful seamen*, see Sahai (2002) and Spedicato (2014). These seamen had their harbours in southern western India, where from, thanks to monsoons, they easily reached Egypt. They could circumnavigate Africa, and probably also reach America, thanks to the stream from the Gorgonid Islands, now Capo Verde, moving towards Trinidad. From them – who ruled the Red Sea, that once corresponded to all the Indian Ocean – the Phoenicians were descended, as Herodotus states on the first page of his histories. Probably they had founded harbour cities also within the Mediterranean Sea (Tyre, Tiryns, Taranto, Tharsis...), that later were associated with the Phoenicians. They entered into the Mediterranean from Egypt, through the land way of Wadi Hammamat, and descending the Nile. Probably they had ports in the Red Sea of today: Safaga, Marsa Gawasis... their most important port was probably that one which in the *Book of Exodus* appears as Baal Sefon. Such harbour – whose name may be interpreted as *Lord Shiva*, is identified in Spedicato (2014) with the Ras Muhammad area, near Sharm el-Sheik, not far from the southern Sinai point.

India eastern coast was instead the seat of Tamil seamen, the so-called Maya; their most important port was in the great city of Puhar, the seat of most famous Tamil epics, a city that was destroyed by a great tsunami, at the times of Alexander the Great. It's possible to assume some contacts between Maya seamen and America, from very ancient times, contributing to the Mesoamerican Maya civilization: see Flavio Barbiero (2016), in Spedicato (2016c).

3 AN INTERPRETATION OF OM MANI PANI

In this section we propose an interpretation of the three words *Om mani pani*, present in the Indus Valley (possibly also elsewhere, e.g. in the Sutlej Valley). It is an interpretation of historical nature, which is connected with the explanation – to be developed in a following paper – of the Universal Deluge in *Genesis* and in other ancient texts.

Om mani pani can be interpreted, starting from precedent section, as *praise to the wise man that navigated on the waters*.

We see such man as the Biblical Noah, well distinct from Ziusudra or Utnapishtim of the Sumerian or Akkadian tradition: see Spedicato (2001, a, b), where a new geographic analysis appears of Gilgamesh voyage. There also it is argued that Ziusudra survived in a place quite far from Noah. We identify that place with the sacred Anye Machen Massif, the Sumerian Mashu, surrounded on three sides by the Yellow River, not very far from its sources. There lived the quoted Ngolok, the mountain being sacred for them possibly from a memory of Ziusudra.

According to our interpretation the three words would mean:

Praise to Noah, the wise man, that navigated on the waters (of the Deluge).

While for details the reader should peruse the quoted papers, we give here the fundamental facets of our analysis on the Deluge. We note that the data of *Genesis* agree with those found in other ancient texts, such the Ethiopian Henoah, and with recent findings in the proposed region:

- 112 years before the Deluge Noah meets Henoah, getting from him information on the expected catastrophic event and on how to survive, see Tretti (2007). Such date has a particular meaning in the context of the new VAS – Velikovsky-Ackerman-Spedicato – paradigm, see Spedicato (2016). It corresponds to the penultimate near passage, every 56 years of Mars close to the Earth (after the deluge, every 54 years).

- In 3161 AC, 17th of Nissan, a month when spring begins, the Deluge arrives. It's characterized by waters from the bottom and from the heaven. The waters from underneath correspond to rains produced by the magma emergent in the oceanic ridges; the waters from top derive from Mars oceans, which were definitely lost at such passage. Interaction with Mars probably caused an inversion of the Earth rotation axis, implying a passage from spring to autumn, and a change of the year length from 360 to 365 days. Noah was waiting for summer, after the end of the 40 days of rains, but he finds himself in winter. Details of the event as celestial mechanics are probably found in the tradition of Khima, an object whose orbit appears has a loop, a very special type of orbit only recently observed and studied.

- Noah builds the Ark within 110 years, working on one of the Manasarovar lake shore. Manasarovar means *The lake of the wise man*. This lake is Tibet, at about 4600 meters elevation, on the southern side of the sacred Kailash mountain (the terrestrial Meru), within a region rich in gold mines, wherefrom Solomon imported great quantities: see Spedicato (2012). Noah's choice of Manasarovar is based not only on the distance from the dangerous continental coasts, that were ravaged by very strong tsunamis, but on the presence of hot sources. These sources, notwithstanding the elevation, prevent the water from freezing where they gush out, also in full winter, with about 50 degrees below zero.

- Our location of the Ark is different from the usual locations proposed in Anatolia or in Middle East, but agrees with that given by Nicolas of Damascus, maybe the greatest historian ever after. According to Nicolas the Ark was built in the *Land of Minias and berthed on Mount Baris*. We leave the explanation of Baris to a forthcoming paper, but we note that *Urartu*, in *Genesis*, is a non-Sumerian name (Giovanni Pettinato, personal information) and non-Semitic (Elio Jucci). We will give elsewhere a meaning for Urartu that is compatible with the Manasarovar region. We also recall that the Syriac text *The Treasure cave*, see Albrile (2009), about the voyage of the three Magi, gives a stopping place near the *Tura Nud*, the landing mount of the Ark; such a name may be interpreted – from *Tur* – as *potent* in the Sanskrit language, also *Etruskan*, thus giving the meaning: *mount of the strong Noah*.

The Ark was built using timber of the deodar cedar, a sacred tree all over Asia, the only one admitted for temples and statues; it resists to three centuries of immersion in water, without damage. Deodara has the best areal in Kashmir, and particularly near the city of Uri; it can be found – in recent past with gigantic examples – also in Tibet, up to 4000 meters. The Ark was bituminized to be protected: bitumen sources are known in some valleys that bring to the region of the Manasarovar.

- Noah, according to *Genesis*, brought into the Ark at least one couple of all the beasts. Such phrase is acceptable if referred to the animals of the area, where he was building the Ark, that is of the Manasarovar. Now in this area there are few species of animals, how many in 3161 AC cannot be said, but probably a few tens. Note that now no insects are now found. Also note a tradition: Noah was injured by a lion, probably the Himalayan lion that was sighted until a pair of centuries ago.

- The region of Manasarovar is special, owing to its holiness, also its beauty and richness in gold and other minerals. It may be reached from India through the Indus Valley, since the Indus rises near the Kailas; or also via the Valley of the Sutlej, that rises from Manasarovar; also, but more difficult, through the valleys of Brahmaputra, which rises from the Kailash, and of the Karnaly river, considered the sacred source of Ganges, rising south of the Manasarovar. The most simple and most used access in the past was probably through Indus, now called Senge in its Tibetan part. It's a longer than through the Sutlej, but less difficult. Notice that such valleys often are real canyons, of difficult passing, with sides subject to landslides. This easier access could explain the abundance, in the valley of the high Indus, of references to Noah. Notice moreover that, from some traditions, he traveled, after the Deluge, to the west. So probably through the valley of Indus, reaching Italy, where he died. The place where Noah built the Ark probably became a place of pilgrimages. The Ark, in deodara cedar wood, that has a fine color, and good smell when recently cut, deteriorated with the time; or it was cut into little pieces and taken away by the pilgrims. Study of the bottom of Manasarovar, and near Rakhasa, could give some interesting results.

3. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Starting from the little known discovery, in the Indus Valley, of some inscriptions with three sacred words: *Om mani pani*, we have given the interpretation: *Praise to Noah, navigating on the waters*. Noah survived, from our scenery, in the area of Manasarovar Lake. An interpretation of

realistic and historical kind, different from symbolical interpretations, which refer to the well known four words *Om mani padme aum*. We can consider such four words a variation of the other three, originated possibly not long after Buddha's times, some 2400 years ago, against the 5000 years of antiquity of the three words, if our scenery is correct.

Another study should consider the presence of the three words in other places of access to the Manasarovar Lake; then study if within the Tibetan and Indian traditions, particularly from the Kashmir, references exist to a person who survived the Deluge there.

Below a reproduction of the three words, from a page of Night's book, and a map of the area including Little Tibet and Ladakh, from the Lowry's Table Atlas, by Chapman and Hall, London, 1850 edition. Properties of the author.

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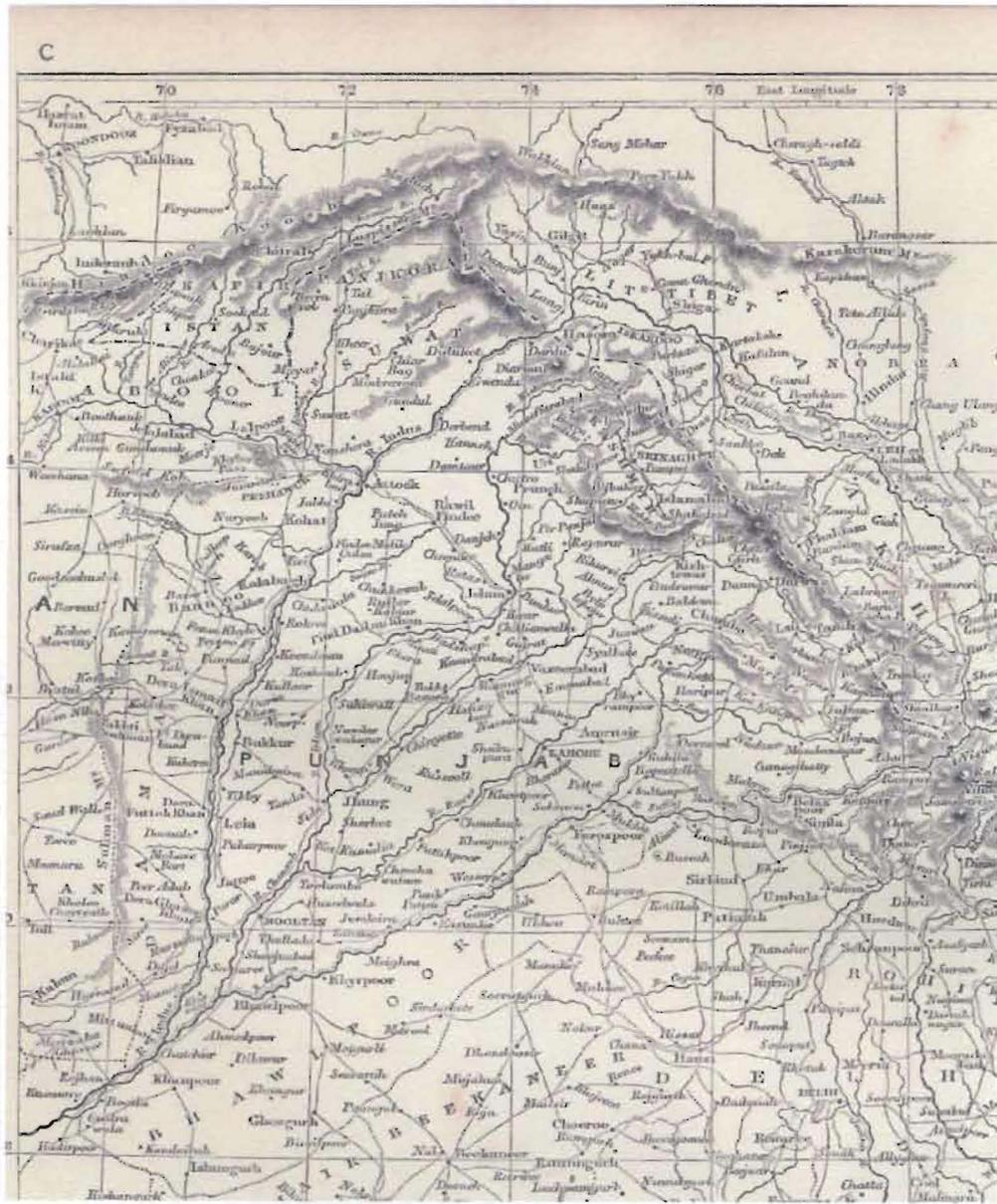
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supply us with apricots and milk, as whatever they could produce. The Gopa, or head-man of the village, could speak a little Hindostanee, besides being able to read and write his own language in two characters, and as he seemed unusually sharp and intelligent, I was very glad to have a chat with him while waiting for the commissariat to come up. The character most common on the inscribed stones, and one of



those now in actual use, he told me was Romeeque; the other, the square character on the



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