MA HUAN’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE
HOBSON-JOBSON OF YULE AND BURNELL

BY
J. V. G. MILLS

The compilers of Hobson-Jobson originally conceived their work as a glossary of glossaries, containing Indian words recurring constantly in the daily intercourse of the English in India and certain administrative terms in familiar use 1).

Fortunately for oriental studies, they disdained to be shackled by self-imposed rules of logic or consistency, and expanded the scope of the work until it embraced words of Asiatic origin occurring in old writers, geographical names in familiar use in books on the Indies, and "sundry subjects which may seem hardly to come within the scope of such a glossary".

The result was an "invaluable source-material for the social and economic history of South and East Asia 2)".

The method of the compilers was to trace words to their true origin and follow them down by quotation from their earliest occurrence in literature. The compilers appreciated the importance of quotations from Chinese texts and utilized H. A. Giles’ A Glossary of Reference on Subjects connected with the Far East, published in 1878; the latest book which they consulted appears to be Fankwae published in 1881.

The first edition of Hobson-Jobson appeared in 1886; for the second edition of 1903 no additional Chinese texts seem to have been consulted, though the compilers might have obtained a score of relevant quotations from the writings of Phillips and Takakusu.

Orientalists cannot afford to let this classic become a 'museum-piece', and should contrive to compile a third edition, now long over-due after seventy years.

Oriental research has now brought to light several Chinese works which provide useful quotations, as well as evidence which may sometimes modify the views of Yule and Burnell; thus Pelliot has

shown that, contrary to previous opinion, it was not the Portuguese who first applied the word 'cash' (caixa) to the small money of Malayan states, for Ma Huan speaks of tin 'cash' (chia-shih 加失) at Semudera (Pasai) in Sumatra 8). Certain errors need correction; thus, (a) Ma Huan's book was not written in 1416 as shown under SUMATRA on p. 867a; (b) the 'Mahachampa' of Hsüan-tsang (Hiouen Thsang) was in India, not in Indo-China as shown under CHAMPA on p. 183b.

It is suggested that seventy-three quotations from Ma Huan, as listed below, may appropriately be included in Hobson-Jobson. These should be dated '1433', since he may have made certain observations in this year, when he returned from his last voyage; and it will be found that in thirty-one instances the quotations from Ma Huan will be the earliest of those noted. Certain doubtful identifications, such as 'Nan-p'i' for 'Nambooree' are omitted 4).

In the following list of quotations the figures after the name Ma Huan denote the number of the page in the book called Ma Huan, 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores', translated and edited by J. V. G. Mills (Cambridge, 1970).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title and page Quotation from Ma Huan in Hobson-Jobson</th>
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<td>ALOES.16a [At Dhufar] &quot;- - - they all took such things as frankincense, dragon's-blood, aloes [lu wei, 蘆薑], myrrh, benzoin, liquid storax, and mu-pieh-tzu [木別子, Momordica cochinchinensis], and came to barter them for hemp-silk, porcelain ware, and other such articles.&quot; — Ma Huan, 152-153.</td>
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<td>ANDAMAN.29a [Andaman islands] &quot;- - - one mountain is very high and large; [and] the foreign name for it is An-tu-man [案笃蠻] mountain.&quot; — Ma Huan, 124.</td>
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<td>ARECA.35a [In Champa] &quot;The people ceaselessly chew areca-nut [pin-lang, 檳榔] and betel-leaf.&quot; — Ma Huan, 82. [In Java] &quot;Men and women take areca-nut and betel-leaf, and mix them with lime made from clam-shells; [and] their mouths are never without this mixture.&quot; — Ma Huan, 92.</td>
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