

Tibetan Documents concerning Chinese
Turkestan. VI: The Tibetan Army

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A. General Description ; B. Documents (1, Services, departments and divisions ; 2, Provisions, rations, pay ; 3, Armature ; 4, Grades and commissions ; 5, Military instructions ; 6, Incidents ; 7, Personalalia ; 8, List of Regiments)

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A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

UNDER the rule of Buddhist ecclesiastics, fostered originally by foreign (Mongol) suzerains, Tibet has not been a military power. Probably no religion is more potent than Buddhism in damping the fighting spirit ; of which development Mongolia itself has in modern times afforded a signal example. The Tibetan people, though in some districts rough and turbulent, is not warlike : the brigand tribes of the north-east belong to a region which, since the overthrow (A.D. 1226) of the Tangut kingdom by Cingiz Khan, has been largely Mongolized, as even the geographical nomenclature proves, and which in native Tibetan times must have presented a quite different aspect. The Tibetan armies, when such are required, consist mainly of levies from the great monasteries ; the creation of a small standing army in the most recent period has encountered prejudice.

In the regnal age of the *Btsan-pos*, when Tibet carried on during a hundred years and more a war, on the whole successful, with the great Chinese empire, when it annexed Chinese Turkestan and dominated states in the Pamir regions, fought with the Turks and Uigurs of the Tien-shan and Altai regions and even with the Arabs in Transoxiana,¹ a different spirit must have existed in the country and far heavier demands must have been made upon the (then larger) population. That forgotten era of Dukes

¹ Barthold, *Turkestan*, ed. 2, pp. 200, 202.

and Barons and great commanders comes to light in the Lha-sa treaty edicts, published by Colonel Waddell¹; and the Chinese notices extracted long before by Dr. Bushell² had represented the Tibetans as not merely rude, but also warlike; while a fragmentary chronicle affords evidence of an incessant military activity during a period of about seventy-six years (c. A.D. 672-747). But it is from a literary description that we have obtained the first substantial conception of the extent and organization of the armies.

On several occasions we have adverted to the fact that the Tibetan military system was territorial; for which reason the word for regiment (*sde*) has also the sense of administrative "district". But the passage in question has shown that the whole kingdom was demarked into a definite number of military areas, superimposed upon old tribal divisions, and that the regiments were named after those areas. The huge statistical totals³ show that practically the whole male population of military age was liable, as was natural in a rude civilization, to be called up for service. The country was partitioned into four "horns" (*ru*) or "brigades", each of which consisted of an Upper and Lower "brigade-division" (*ru-lag*) with an army-commander (*dmag-pon*) and a second-in-command (*sgab*). We do not in that passage hear of lower ranks; but there is mention of the divisional "records" or "secretariat" (*yig-tshans*, also in Chronicle, l. 77) and "record-keeper" (*yig-tshans-pa*) and of the selected colours of their ink; also of the divisional banner (*dar*, "silk") and ensign, and the characteristic fighting spirit of each division. Another passage affords a glimpse of a Tibetan army on the march; and a third describes a composite army, including auxiliaries, present on the occasion of a great battle with

¹ *JRAS.*, 1909-1911.

² *JRAS.*, 1880, pp. 435-541.

³ 2,860,000 men: another passage speaks of an army of a "hundred myriads". The Chinese state that Sroñ-btsan Sgam-po threatened Ssechuan with an army of 200,000 men (Bushell, p. 444).

the Chinese. The regimental commanders would seem to have been tribal chiefs or territorial barons.

Forts do not appear in these accounts; but, no doubt, they existed and were similar to the existing *rdzon's*, known (often as "jongs") from modern descriptions, or to the forts of feudal Europe. We have mention of frontier toll-stations (*so-kha* or *sva-kha*); and the Chinese speak of high towers in the interior at intervals of 20 miles. The "smoke-fires", which the Chinese state (Bushell, p. 441) to have been lighted when the country was invaded, seem to be mentioned in the Chronicle (ll. 8, 57) under the designation *zugs-loñ(n)*, "fire-tidings [corps]".

In Chinese Turkestan the Tibetan armies have left evidence of their occupation in the shape of ruined mud forts, built, no doubt, and occupied by them. From two of these, excavated by Sir Aurel Stein, come most of the documents, the great majority inscribed on wooden slips, with which we have been dealing. The information which they afford is therefore for the most part incidental to administrative business; and naturally it includes many particulars relating to actual military life. Though scrappy and allusive (the wooden documents being in many cases mere labels or passes or lists or bills or name-cards) and seldom consecutively decipherable in the faded, erased, broken, palimpsest, and misspelled records, the information may be pieced together in such a way as to convey a modicum of definite, and indeed of vivid, fact, appertaining to a very obscure period.

Concerning the structure and arrangement of the forts themselves it suffices to refer to the full and precise descriptions given by Sir Aurel Stein in connection with his excavations.¹ They dominated the areas under their observation, whether these were administered by the native rulers or were actually governed from the fort. But, beside these strongholds, we have much evidence of occupation of commanding positions, "heights" (*rtse*), on a smaller scale;

¹ *Ancient Khotan*, pp. 430-4; *Serindia*, pp. 456 sqq., 1284 sqq.

and no doubt there were numerous stations on the lines of communication with north-eastern Tibet (Mdo), the Tibetan capital, and so forth. Such positions would be under the control of the larger establishments and would depend upon these for supplies of men and provisions: which relation explains the very numerous wooden tablets from Mazār-Tāgh which record only the names of such places and amounts of wheat, barley, etc.

As the Tibetan armies lived upon the countries in their occupation, there was requisitioning of grain and other provisions and much correspondence in connection therewith. There were arrears and changes of assessment, assignments to individuals, arithmetical adjustments, threats of forcible pressure upon defaulters and so forth. A form of record especially common, as it seems, at Mīrān points to another feature in the system. These contain particulars of lands, teams (*dor*) of yaks (?), and cultivators; and they would record the supply of yaks from the military headquarters for the tillage with a view to a stipulated portion of the produce. In modern Tibet also yaks are customarily hired, not owned, by the peasants.

With a view to clarity, however, it should be pointed out that much of the business transacted in the forts, at least in Mīrān, was not of a military character. It includes civil administration of various kinds, carried on by officials having civil titles, such as *nañ-rje-po* "minister of internal affairs", councillors (*blon*) of various ranks, heads of Thousand-districts (*ston-dpon*), and so forth. As we know from the Lha-sa treaty inscriptions (for instance), the Tibetan government was organized in departments, and these will have been fully aware of their mutual limitations. What were their interrelations in Chinese Turkestan is matter for inference. Upon a survey of the exiguous evidences we may conclude (always with restriction to the several periods represented by the documents) as follows:—(1) Where the countries were left under their native rulers, the contributions of grain,

etc., required for the Tibetan armies would be levied by those rulers and furnished to the Tibetan officials in bulk. A Śa-cu document has illustrated this operation ; the Tibetan officials are apparently civilians, while there is in the region a military commander who may, in an ultimate resort to force, be called in. In Khotan also we hear of the presence of a general, without, however, being able to ascertain whether he was ordinarily commandant of the fort of Śiñ-śan (Mazār-Tāgh) : it seems most likely that the commandant of the fort would be a different person, of lower rank. The supplies of Khotan were furnished to Śiñ-śan upon a census ; whether the control was in that instance purely military or with a civil admixture (as the mention of a *nan-rje-po* suggests) is not clear. (2) In the case of the Nob region the circumstances would seem to have been different. Certainly there was a general commander who had the region under his survey ; this was the Tshal-byi general, to whom we have a number of references. But the several districts and towns in this area had their civilian administrators, who bore for the most part Tibetan names. And we have documents regulating in detail the cultivation of the lands. Accordingly it is to be concluded that in this region the whole administration had been taken over by the Tibetans (on the lines of "British India") ; and we may connect with this the statement in the Chronicle (l. 190) to the effect that in the year A.D. 727 the Tibetan king went to the Ha-ža country to take over the government (*chab-srid-la*). There would be garrisons in the fort or forts and also town-garrisons (*mkhar-tsho*, p. 394), available, under what regulations we can hardly expect to know, for the support of the civil administrators.

In view of these conditions we may, so far as the Tibetan army is concerned, dispense with any consideration of levies and supplies and general administration. Turning to strictly military matters, we must recognize, first, that we have actually but little evidence of different departments in the Tibetan army. No classification analogous to the Indian

description of the “four-membered” army, consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry, and infantry, or of feudatories, mercenaries, guild levies, and wild tribes, is here apparent. One passage refers to a “commandant of horse” (*rta-dpon*) and a “commandant of camels” (*dñi-dbon*), in the Ha-ža kingdom; and a “commandant of riding horses” (*[m]chibs-[d]pon*) is mentioned both in a document and also in the Chronicle (l. 152), which speaks further of “four regiments of horse” (*chibs-sde-bzi*, l. 218) and of a “troop of horse” (*chibs-kyi-cha*, l. 164). But there is little to dispel the impression that, in general, riders and footmen belonged to the same regiment (*sde*): in view of the abundance of ponies in Tibet and the great distances which had to be traversed it is likely that the Tibetan armies consisted largely of mounted men. In one passage, however, we have a description of a marching army with horsemen in the van, archers and “dagger-armed soothsayers” (probably the *phur-myi* of M. Tāgh. a. ii, 0089; a. v, 0015; b. i, 0095; c. iii, 0043) in the middle, and mail-clad spearmen bringing up the rear.

The most abundant and important information contained in the documents consists in the names of regiments (*sde*). Their number is large, and with the aid of a literary statement it is possible to make a definite discrimination between those locally raised and those which belonged to Tibet proper. It is indeed highly interesting to read on the wooden or paper fragments from Chinese Turkestan the names of battalions which otherwise would be entirely unknown,¹ were they not also recorded in a literary text, itself previously unexamined by scholars outside Tibet. A historical deduction also is suggested. In the Mirān documents the regiments named are almost exclusively such as were connected with the adjacent districts, those of Rgod, Nag-śod, Hdzom, and

¹ Several of the names are cited, but as names of “provinces” and without identifications, on p. 46 of Dr. A. H. Francke’s “Notes on Sir Aurel Stein’s Collection of Tibetan documents from Chinese Turkestan”, *JRAS.*, 1914, pp. 37–59 = *Serindia*, pp. 1460–6.

Kha-dro, while at Mazār-Tāgh we have mention of many belonging to Tibet proper. This supports the conclusion that the Nob region, an earlier acquisition, was under peaceful local control, whereas in Khotan, a less accessible and more recently conquered kingdom, Tibetan armed forces were required. History is involved also in the mention of foreign-raised regiments, such as the Yarkand regiment and the "Good Hor (Turk)" regiment. In the appended list the units of the two classes are distinguished in detail.

Here also we should revert to the question of the *Sluñs*. That *Sluñs* was a tribal designation is, as we have seen, certain (1927, p. 820). In connection with soldiers the *Sluñs* are not infrequently mentioned, but in such a way as to imply a distinction; and once or twice we read of persons or things being "handed over to the *Sluñs*" (*Sluñs-la-btañ*, *infra*, p. 544). It is to be inferred that the offices discharged were those of police, camp-servants, camp-followers, etc., and that the *Sluñs* were a people who had established an aptitude for such work.

Some particularity is involved, no doubt, in the expressions *spun-dmag* (M.I. xxx, 8), "brother-army", and *mun-dmag* (M.I. iv, 66 and 132, Chronicle, ll. 6, 51-2), which have a probably accidental assonance. The designation *dgyes-sde* (*infra*, p. 554) can hardly, as we have already noted, contain the word *dgyes*, "rejoicing", more especially as it recurs in the place-name *Stag-sras-dgyes-kyi-rtse* "Tiger-son-dgyes-peak". It may have denoted some *corps d'élite*. An interesting feature is the existence of a separate ambulance corps, *Mñald-paḥi-sde* (from *mñel* or *gñel*, "be sick") or *Mñal-hphan-gyi-sde* ("Fatigue-benefit corps").¹ That such was the purpose of the corps appears from the fact that it included a functionary designated "middle-rope" (*thag-bar*, M.T. a. ii, 0078; a. iv, 00122; b. i, 0075; c. iii, 0024): a frequently recurring (M.T. a. iii, 0016; v, 0015; b. i, 0059;

¹ See *infra*, pp. 558, 562.

b. ii, 0017 ; c. i, 0053, etc.) expression is *ri-zug*, which can only be rendered “mountain-sick”.

In connection with organization we may here refer also to a few other terms. The sense of augmenting or reinforcing is conveyed by the verb *snon-pa* (M.T. i, 23, 0523 ; a. iii, 0034 ; b. i, 0059), from which come *bsnan* “sent as reinforcement” (M.T. b. i, 0059), *brnañs-tsho* “reinforcements” (M.T. a. iv, 0022), and the frequently (Khad., 032 ; M.T. 0522 ; i, 0015 ; c. iii, 005) occurring *rtin(gtin)-non* “rear-guard (reserve?) man”. The general term for a body of soldiers seems to be *tsho*, whence *mkhar-tsho* (M.T. a. ii, 0076) “town-garrison” and *so-tsho* (M.T. a. iv, 0011 ; v, 007) “soldiery”. A “troop” of cavalry is *cha* (M.I. iv, 66 ; M.T. 0485). A small body detached for a special purpose is *tshugs* (M.T. 0524 ; a. iv, 00121 ; c. ii, 0042) ; a *dpuñ* is a larger force, perhaps of indefinite size (since we have the expression *ce-dpuñ* (M.I. xvi, 0013) “large force”—but note *dpuñ-dpon* “commander of a *dpuñ*”)—while an army is *dmag*.

The fort, *sku-mkhar* (or *skun-khar*), is properly “citadel” : we have also (M.T. a. iv, 0022) *dgra-zun* “guard-house”. The watch-tower, *mthoñ-khyab* (M.I., xliii, 002 ; lviii, 001, etc.) might either belong to a fort or have a separate existence. In the field a Tibetan army was known for its black tents (1931, p. 828) : a day-time encampment was a *ñin-ra* (*infra*, pp. 545, 549) ; at night it would perhaps be a *mtshan-ra*. A watch (eighth part of the 24-hour day) is *thun*, while *mel(myel)-tshe*, “watch” or “sentinel” (= *mel-tshe-pa*) is perhaps more technical (*infra*, p. 546). “Provisions” is *brgyags* (*Li-brgyags*, “Khotan goods or provisions”, p. 399 and ref.).

In regard to services and ranks we note first the general term for service as a soldier, *so* : the individual soldier is *so* or *so-pa* and often (perhaps if an officer or if marked out as a “brave”) also *stag* “tiger”, a term which is also an element in many proper names. For levying a force from a population and also for appointing to any office the regular verb is *sko-ba* (M.T. a. iv, 00128 ; c. iv, 0039, etc. ; Chronicle,

ll. 58–9. 62, etc.): the man “joins the soldiery or service” (*so-la-sdu-ba*, M.T. 0515; c. ii, 006).¹ When excused on ground of health or for other reason, he may have a substitute *skyin-pa* (or debtor, M.T. a. v, 0015); and bodies of men in forts or other employment may (like assessment lists, etc.) be changed (*spo-ba*) or relieved. He receives rations (*tshal-ma*, M.T. b. ii, 001, etc.), generally of wheat or barley, and no doubt drink (*skyems*), for which he has a cup (*skyems-rdzehu*); sometimes meat also, and wages (*gla*). When sent out on a journey, he is authorized perhaps to levy his rations *en route*. For the soldier, as for the civilian, default of travel clothes (*rad-gos*) is a hardship; and some letters, perhaps from higher ranks, refer to thick overcoats. Some means of punishment for misconduct is termed *ri-zu* (Khad., 052): cowardice in face of an enemy is, naturally, punishable by death (*infra*, p. 551); to desert or run away is *hbro-ba*.

Coming now to the matter of armament and weapons, we find mention of the *sgyogs* “catapult”, perhaps a sort of war-engine such as the ancient Indians had in their *śataghñīs* and so forth. Scales of leather armour have been recovered by Sir Aurel Stein (*Ancient Khotan*, i, p. 252, n. 9), and the documents speak of the *ya-lad* “helm-and-corslet” (in one piece?)² and of a *Rgya-khrab* “Chinese buckler or coat of mail” (*infra*, p. 540). We have also found the *zub-chen* (*žub-can*), “coat of mail,” and the *rkañ-bkris* “foot (leg)-wrapping”, i.e. puttee. Among weapons of offence we have, of course, the sword (*ral-gri*), spear (*mdun*), and dagger (*phur*); but no doubt the bow (*gzu*) and arrow (*mdah*, sometimes a “poisoned reed-shaft”) were the most usual, for which reason a list reproduced *supra* consists almost exclusively of archers (*hphoñs*) and their supports (*dgon*, M.T. b. ii, 0044; M.I., vii,

¹ Note *phyi-maḥi-so* (a. i, 0012) and *so-slād-ma* (a. iii, 0050) “later” or “subsequent” service; also *khör-žag* (p. 398 and M.T., 001) “leave”.

² According to the Chinese (Bushell, *JRAS.*, 1880, p. 442) “The [Tibetan] armour and helmet are very strong and cover the whole body, with holes for the eyes only”.

88a). In one passage (*infra*, pp. 538–9) we have apparently an outfit for a *dgon*, consisting of breast-plate, two knives, scissors (?), bow, arrow, sling, pouch for arrow and knife.

The numerous terms denoting ranks or special functions are partly expressions of unmistakable meaning and partly prefixes which, not being recognizable as clan or other surnames, seem from their occurrence to have official application. Of the former kind are ¹—

dmag-dpon, “army commander” or “general” (M.I. i, 23 ; vii, 46 ; xxi, 5, 9 ; M.T., 0503, 0515, a. v, 0017, etc.) ;

ru-dpon, “horn (or wing) commander,” probably either on a major or on a minor scale (M.I., xxviii, 0028 ; xli, 0013 ; xliii, 002) ;

dpun-dpon, “commander of a corps, troop” (or perhaps of any considerable body of men : M.I., xxiii, 009 ; M.T., 0050 ; a. ii, 00101 ; b. i, 0093) ;

tshugs-dpon, “commander of a squad or small party of men (most often, four)” (M.I., xiv, 129, 135 ; xxviii, 0021 ; M.T. a. ii, 0043 ; 0096 ; a. iii, 0076 ; 0013, etc.) ;

hog-dpon, “subordinate commander,” second to the *tshugs-dpon* (M.I., xiv, 002, 0070, 124, 127 ; M.T. a. ii, 0011 ; a. iii, 0013, etc.) ;

mchibs-dpon, “commander of riding horses (cavalry ?)” (M.I., xlii, 006 ; Chronicle, l. 152) ;

byan-po, “cook,” who, with his *byan-g-yog*, “cook’s mate,” (or “servant”), is frequently mentioned in connection with a *tshugs* or a regiment ;

dar-(n)tshan, “silk(banner)-man,” or standard-bearer (Ch. 73, xv, 10) ;

yig-tshans-pa, “record-keeper” (*supra*, p. 380).

To the second group belong—

gyab (M.I., ii, 32 ; vii, 16 ; xiv, 37) ;

or *gab* (M.I., xxi, 9) ;

¹ Several of these are noted (but *ru-dpon* as “master of a clan”) by Dr. A. H. Francke, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

- bag-rñu* (M.I., xiv, 125 ; M.T. a. v, 008) ;
bag-(r)ñu-sñva (M.I., xiv, 0012, 0062) ;
ce-rñu (M.I., iv, 16a ; xiv, 46 ; xxiii, 009 ; xxvii, 9) ;
ron-rñu (M.T. c. iv, 0036) ;
bag-ra (M.I., xxvii, 4 ; lviii, 001) ;
dbrad (M.T., 0345, 0439 ; b. i, 0097) ;
 or *sbrad* (M.T., 0050) ;
glan-sum (M.T., 0503 ; *glan-myi* (M.T. a. ii, 0096) ;
gyer-lo (M.T. a. ii, 0096) or *gyerd* (M.T. a. vi, 0020) ;
go-ñan (M.I., xiv, 007, 0029, 0057, 47, 58a) ;
 or *ko-ñan* (M.I., xiv, 0059 ; M.T. a. ii, 0031 ; iv, 0037) ;
 or *kho-ñam* (M.T., 0193 ; c. iv, 0027 ; M.I., ix, 10) ;
hjør (M.T., 0262, *infra*, p. 567) ;
lo-ñan (M.T. a. iv, 0088 ; b. i, 0095) ;
ho-nal (M.I., i, 6 ; ii, 25, 27 ; vi, 6 ; xiv, 58a ; xxvii, 11 ;
 M.T. a. iv, 0074) ;
ra-saṅs (M.T., 0515 ; a. i, 0031 ; ii, 003, 0096 ; iv, 00159) ;
ʾrje (M. Tāgh 0515) ;
ru-ña (M.I., vii, 9, 33 ; xiv, 0012), *ʾcuñ* (M.T. c. ii, 006) ;
se or *šeḥu* (M.T., 0332 ; a. iii, 004 ; c. i, 007 ; ii, 0016) ;
gšen (M.T., 0151, 0266 ; a. iii, 0026 ; c. iv, 0041) ;
sña-šur (M.T. a. ii, 0070 ; iv, 0012 ; b. i, 0095 ; b. ii, 0042 ;
 c. i, 0013, 0061 ; c. ii, 006) ;
sñe-lo (M.T. c. i, 0031) ;
sro (M.I., xiv, 41 ; M.T., 0239 ; b. i, 0095 ; c. iii, 0048) ;
stom-k(g)yañ (M.I., iv, 85 ; M.T. a. iv, 00128) ;
su-tu (M.T., 0492).

The *gyab* or *gab* may perhaps be the *sgab* whom we have found mentioned as second to the army(or battalion)-commander. In the group *bag-rñu*, *bag-(r)ñu-sñva*, *ce-rñu*, *ron-rñu*, the syllables *bag* and *ce* may mean respectively "little" and "big", while *ron* might represent *rom-po*, "big," "massive," "deep" (of sound) : hence it is possible that *rñu* is an old form of *rña* "drum", so that the persons in question would be drummers, while the *bag-rñu-sñva*, who is once styled "left-hand" (*g-yon*), implying a "right-hand"

confrère, may be a drummer officer. *Bag-ra* might mean "small enclosure" or "precaution enclosure"; but *ra* can also mean "first". On the analogy of *chen-ched*, *sman-smad*, etc., *g'sen* (Bon-po G'sen?) might be = *g'sed* "executioner". Concerning the remaining expressions conjecture seems idle. It is possible that some of them are not military, e.g. *ra-saṅs* (which with *ra-saṅs-rje*, "ra-saṅs chief," occurs in the Chronicle, ll. 19, 22), and *gyer-lo*, which may be = *sger-pa*, "a private landholder" (*sger-lo* "private").

It seems that when a man was appointed to a special function he received a "hand-memorandum" (*sug-rjed*) or commission (M.I., iv, 40; vii, 33; M.T., 0193; b. ii, 001, *infra*, pp. 541-2, 564). In M.I., iv, 40; M.T. a. ii, 0048; a. iv, 0074 we have *so-rjed*.

Of peace-time operations the most important were the summer and winter assemblages (*hdun* or *hdun-tsa*, *supra*, 1930, p. 71) of ministers and generals, constantly recorded in the Tibetan Chronicle. They were often preceded by levying of troops from particular populations or followed by official measures or warlike action. Their military aspect is represented by the reviews, *rkaṅ-ton*, which may be *rkaṅ-ston* "exhibition of bundles" (but *rkaṅ* also = "foot"), and in part by the *rtsis-mgo* "census", which, however, would have mainly a civil bearing: see *ib.*, pp. 81-2. More staple duties were, of course, the garrisoning of the forts and towns (the citadel of Khotan, *ib.*, p. 65) and the building, maintaining and supplying of out-stations, as shown in numerous documents from Mazār-Tāgh. On one occasion we hear (at Mirān, M.I., xxiv, 0031) of soldiers being sent to protect the peasants engaged upon the harvest. A preoccupation which appears rather plentifully in the documents is that of communications. We do not, indeed, hear of the towers at distance of about 20 miles or the arrangements for smoke-signalling. But we have examples of missives dispatched by various authorities, sometimes with insistence upon prompt forwarding, "day-time or night-time," and denunciation of

penalties in the event of straying or delay. There are circular communications (sometimes from parties in distress), to be acted upon or passed forward; and, similarly, parcels are sent on from stage to stage. The wooden tablet, *byañ* or *byañ-bu*, when conveyed by the soldier, is *so-byañ* (M.I., xiv, 005, 0019, 126, 134; M.T. a. iv, 00131; c. 0028), while a "soldier pass" seems to be *so-hphar-ma* (M.T. b. ii, 0052; c. iii, 0034). When it is a matter of relays (*so-res*, M.T. a. ii, 0017, 0054, 0064; a. v, 0015; b. i, 0019, 0051, 0097; or *so-rims*, M.T. c. 0028), the *so-byañ* becomes *so-res-byañ*, sometimes *so-ris-byañ* (M.T. a. ii, 0017). For the longer and more important communications the folded paper letter (*hdrul-ba*) may have been preferred: or the soldier may have a verbal or secret message.¹ When dispatched on secret service the soldier is *so-ñul* (M.I., xiv, 0012; M.T. 0257, 0380; a. iii, 0039; v, 0015): in one instance (M.T. a. iv, 005), where the expression is *so-rdzu-ñul* (also in M. Tāgh 0439), "soldier-disguise-secret," a party has been absent for nearly a year and has covered a great distance. If the word *spa-sa* (M.T. a. iii, 0067; b. ii, 0028) means "spy", it is a borrowing from the Prakrit of an earlier period, since it occurs in the Kharoṣṭhī documents (*spāsa*, Index).

An art of war is naturally professed among all peoples. The Tibetans, during their long and intense struggle with China (not to mention other powers), must have developed conceptions of strategy and tactics. In the Lha-sa inscriptions the general Klu-khoñ is versed in the "expedients of the war-god" (*dgra-lha-thabs*, *JRAS.*, 1910, p. 1277). The battles recorded year by year in the Tibetan Chronicle and the great victories (*g-yul-zlog-chen-po*) mentioned in a text

¹ As suggested by Sir Aurel Stein in a note on p. 53 of Dr. A. H. Francke's above-cited paper (*JRAS.*, 1914). It should be mentioned that Dr. Francke takes *hdrul-ba* as = *hgrul-ba*, "the runner," which, however, should be *hdrul-ba-po*. The sense of "post-runner" would indeed suit those passages where we seem to have the phrase *hdrul-ba-la-rmas-pa*, "inquired of the runner": possibly "the post" is sometimes an equivalent of "the postman".

concerning the wars with China, the Drug, and the Hjañ, must have educated the Tibetan warriors and caused them to appreciate, as in a passage cited above, the various fighting qualities of different populations. In the Turkestan documents, however, there are no references to important military events (*dgra-thabs* "fighting" or "army", M.I., xxvii, 13; M.T., 0273; a. iv, 0011; c. ii, 0042): the incidents brought to light are nothing more than a man-capturing (*myi-hdzin*, M.I., iv, 66; xxiii, 009) expedition into the Dru-gu country, a hostile raid upon the town of Ka-dag, a Kirghiz attack upon an official party in Kan-su. But we have one or two fragments of tactical instructions, addressed to parties sent out on hostile errands or where an encounter with an enemy might be apprehended.

Naturally there are divers personalia mentioned in the documents, purchases, loans, legal agreements, punishments, complaints of failure of rations, appeals for interviews, friendly gossip, deaths. Along with most of the topics discussed above such matters have appeared incidentally in the previous articles. We may now prefix to the list of regiments some further *pièces justificatives* in relation to these as well as to the more general subjects. It is probable that to the populations of the cities and kingdoms in Chinese Turkestan, with their relatively old civilizations, the Tibetan invaders appeared rude even in comparison with their earlier conquerors, the Hiung-nu, Ephthalites, and Turks. It was not a century since the Tibetans had made the first advances out of their original barbarism, and the nobles had taken to Chinese silk in place of their native homespun. There was, no doubt, as has been suggested, some malice in the parable which made the Tibetan soldiers to be reincarnations of cattle. In the forts Sir Aurel Stein has exhumed a still active redolence (*Serindia*, pp. 459-60). The devastations of Buddhist shrines in the first Tibetan invasions of Khotan are lamented in the *Prophecy* of Vimalaprabhā. But Asiatic barbarians who

have lived in the vicinity of great civilized empires such as that of China are not obtuse or innocent or unreceptive of civilized arts. They take quickly to literary and other culture and develop the formalities and graces of society. The encampments of the Hiung-nu, the Ephthalites, and the Turks are described by Chinese visitors as exhibiting much splendour¹; and the same was certainly the case with the Tibetan courts. At a somewhat later time (?) a passage which we have quoted is eloquent on the prosperity of the kingdom, the "rule of virtue and goodness", the "state-law of five divisions", "justice with its five procedures", safe frontiers, foreign conquests, "god's law, man's law both flourishing and prosperous". In Chinese Turkestan writing appears to have been in very general use among the military, as well as the civil, classes of Tibetans; and in both cases the epistolary correspondence is characterized by politenesses of expression and action²: these matters, however, being not specially military, may be exemplified in another connection.

B. DOCUMENTS

1. *Services, Departments, and Divisions*

1. M. Tāgh. c. iii, 0022 (wood, c. 15·5 × 2 cm., complete; hole for string at r.; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] ། || thag . bar . Mes . tshab³ . gyi . so . la | byañ .
Slu[n̄]s. [A 2] sma⁴ . paḥi (for smra . baḥi ?)⁵ . ḥbañs .
Rya . sdug . skyes . bḥag . [B] baḥ (bar ?) . gsol ||

"To the 'mid-rope' soldier Mes-tshab: petition for handing over (*bḥag*) a subject (servant, slave ?) Rya-sdug-skyes, stated to be a northern Sluñs."

¹ In regard to the last two see Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, i, pp. xci-ii, *Life of Hiuan-T'sang*, p. 42.

² See Francke, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-1.

³ *s* here crossed out.

⁴ *d* here crossed out.

⁵ *ḥpañ* here crossed out.

Notes

The doubt as to the readings (*smra-bahi* and *bžag-bar*) renders the translation uncertain: it is possible that Rya-sdug-skyes is the *writer* of the letter. On *Sluñs* see p. 385.

2. M. Tāgh. a. iv, 0011 (wood, c. 23·5 × 2–2·5 cm., complete, somewhat curved; hole for string at r.; ll. 3 of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[1] ༄ | : | mgyogs . bži . phrugs . gcig . so . ḥtshor . stsa[ld].pa.chab.srid.gyi.yan.lag.la.gces.te. [2] mchid. luñ.dgra.thabs.ḥog.du.stsald.pa.lags.kyis.d[e.b]žin.lcogs.par.ḥtshol.la.gñer.khum.śig |

“Four couriers in one day sent to the company of soldiers. Written orders of importance to the members of the administration having been sent after the battle, show all possible zeal in accordance therewith and carry them out.”

Notes

On *so-tshor* and *gñer-khum* see p. 386 and 1927, p. 810.

1. 1, *phrugs*: a period of 24 hours.

chab-srid = “government”; *yan-lag* = Sanskrit *aṅga*, “subordinate member.”

1. 2, *dgra-thabs* seems here and elsewhere (*supra*, p. 392) to mean “battle”. Or is it “down to the army”?

3. M. Tāgh. a. iii, 0034 (wood, c. 10–10·5 × 2 cm., complete; hole for string at r.; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] ༄ | : | dpyid . sla . ḥbriñ . po . ḥi . ño . la | [A 2] mkhar . ḥtsho . gsar . du . snan . paḥi . | [B] bsdom |

“On the first of the middle spring month decided (or appointed?) to reinforce the town garrison afresh.”

On *mkhar-ḥtsho* (also in a. ii, 0076) see pp. 383, 386.

4. M. Tāgh., i, 0015 (wood, c. 10·5–11 × 2 cm., pointed at l., somewhat broken away at top and bottom; hole for string at r.; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] ༄ | chu . ḥdus . kyi . rtsañ . ḥgram . [A 2] na . Ṃam . ru . pag . gi . gtiñ | [B] non . kyi . so . paḥ

“*Ñam-ru-pag* rearguard (reserve?) soldier in River-confluence-bank.”

Notes

On *chu-hdus-kyi-rtsaṅ-hgram* and the *Ñam-ru-pag* regiment see 1930, p. 275. On *gtiṅ-non* (= *rtiṅ-snon*) see p. 386.

5. M. Tāgh., 0522 (wood, c. 13 × 2 cm., pointed at r.; ll. 2 of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[1] ☉ | : | *Ñam . ru . pag . stsi*¹ . *rtiṅ . non . gi . Śo* .
[2] *rtsaṅ . ḥg[r]am . gyi . so . pa* |

“*Ñam-ru-pag* rearguard soldier at *Śo* river-bank.”

On *Śo* see 1930, p. 275 (where note error).

6. M.I., xiv, 005 (wood, c. 12.5 × 1.5 cm., complete; hole for string at r.; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 (a different hand) *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] ☉ || *Sbal . pa . ri . ḥi . so . bḥi . tsu[g]s . gchig*
[A 2] *ḥbrugi . loḥi . dbyar . zla . ḥ [brin (?) . poḥi (?)]* . *tshes* :
[B] *dru[g ?] . la . brdzaṅs . paḥi . so . byaṅ*

“Soldier ticket of four soldiers of *Sbal-pa-ri*, one squad, sent on the sixth day of the middle summer month of the Dragon year.”

On *tshugs* see *supra*, pp. 386, 388. M.I., viii, 75; xiv, 0019, 126 are similar.

7. M.I., xxvii, 13 (wood, c. 9.5 × 1-1.5 cm., cut away at top and bottom; hole for string at r.; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 (a different hand) *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] ☉ | : | *Sbal . pa . riḥi . so*² . *snon . du . Ña . rton* .
dgun . [z]la . [A 2] *ḥbrin . po[ḥi]* . *tshes . bchu . g[sum ?]* | *la* .
[gth]aṅ . baḥi

[B] *dgra.thabs.d[aṅ ?]d[e ?]* . . —s *su.bg[y]iḥ* |

“*Ña-rton* having been sent on the thirteenth day of the middle winter month to reinforce the soldiery of *Sbal-pa-ri*, he is [to take part in] the fighting.”

¹ *stsi* crossed out.

² Below line.

Notes

The place Sbal-pa-ri (Sbal-pa mountain), which is common to the two documents, is not otherwise known: it would belong to the Mirān region. On *dgra-thabs* see pp. 392, 394.

8. M. Tāgh. 0581 (wood, c. 10·5 × 1·5 cm., cut away to a point at l. and r.; l. 1 (+ lower part of another) *recto* + 1 (+ upper part of another) *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] . . . : -u.[t] | -u.-y- | [A 2] [sl]a.l[ñ]a : la : so.
bs[k]os . . .

[B] . . . [s]o.bs[k]os | paḥ | chu (?) [ga]m (?).

“Soldier called up.”

So-bskos: See p. 386.

9. M. Tāgh. a. iv, 0014 (wood, c. 21·5 × 1–1·5 cm., complete; hole for string at r.; ll. 2 of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[1] ༄ : | jo : co : Btsan : ba : la | Stag bḥiḥo : ḥ¹tshugs : po :
gi : mchid : gsol : ba : Li : ri [2] zug : pa : tshes : bcu : ci : gi :
nub : mo | bros : de : so : kha : ral : du : lus : śiñ : mchis

“To the great lord (*or* lord Btsan-ba): letter-petition of Stag-Bḥiḥo, sergeant. A Khotanī mountain-sick man having on the evening of the tenth deserted, the station (*so-kha*) is left insufficiently manned (*or* the soldiers (*so*) are left deficient (*kha-ral-du*)).”

Bros, from *ḥbro-ba*, is the regular term for desertion or running away: on this and on *so-kha*, see *supra*, pp. 381, 387.

10. M.I. xiv, 118b (wood, c. 16 × 1·5 cm., complete; hole for string at r.; l. 1 of cursive *dbu-can* script).

༄ | . | so.babs (?) . rkya (rgya ?) . ñi . śu . rtsa . bdun . mchis.

“Soldiers come in one hundred (?) and twenty-seven.”

If *babs* is here correctly read, the term (“come in”), which recurs below (p. 541) and in M.T. a. ii, 0054, explains the (several) documents containing only, on the same or different sides, the words *bab* and *thar*, signifying “come in” and

¹ ḥ crossed out.

“released”; but they might be records of imprisonment. Dr. A. H. Francke, who has referred (op. cit., p. 49) to such documents, has suggested a different explanation.

11. M.I. iv, 66 (wood, c. 11 × 2.5 cm., broken away at l. ; hole for string at r. ; ll. 2 *recto* + 2 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script, faint).

[A 1] . . . spuñ.sde.myi.hdzin.cha.cig.gtañ.chad (bar?)

[A 2] . . . [s].mñam.du.mchi.ba[r?].ža[ñ.l]on

[B 1] . . . žes.dgos.che[s].pa.l . . .

[B 2] . . . [h?].[m]un.mag.smad.du.h[ž.ś?] . . .

“ . . . force regiment, one man-capturing troop ordered to be (?) sent . . . to go with . . . Uncle Councillor . . . highly necessary . . . the *mun*-army . . . below . . . ”

On *myi-hdzin-cha* “man-capturing company” and *mun-dmag* see *supra*, p. 385, and 1931, p. 810.

12. M.I. xxvi, 1 (wood, c. 16 × 2 cm., broken away at l. and r. and somewhat rotten ; ll. 2 *recto* + 2 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] . . . [my]i.gsol.su.la.gsol . . . [A 2] . . . chis. ||
dbus.pa.ru.yañ.lag.paḥ.khrom.[m] . . . [B 1] . . . Nob.
[che]d.po.na.mchis.paḥ | Rgod.g-yu-.[gyi?] . . . pañ sna (?)
. . . [B 2] . . . [pha]b.la.[stsol].cig.bar.bkaḥ.[gy] . . .

Too fragmentary for continuous translation, the document speaks of a person belonging to a “brigade-division” (*ru-yañ(n)-lag-pa*) of the “Central area” (*dbus*) as being come into Great Nob. On the phrase “if request . . .” see p. 400 ; on *ru-lag* p. 380 (*ru-yan-lag*, M.I. xxx, 8).

13. M. Tāgh. b. i, 0019 (wood, c. 12 × 2 cm., complete ; hole for string at r. ; ll. 2 *recto* + 3 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] | brgyaḥ : la . [b]dag . khor : žag : du : [A 2] gnañ .
[ste?] . stag : brtsan . Gyer . bu : chuñ : [B 1] gis : ston : sla :
ra : baḥi : bdagi : so : res : bgyis [B 2] te : bdag : gi[s] :
Gyer : bu : chuñ : gi : so : res [B 3] [b]gyis : [na] : ruñ : ñam .
m[y]i . ruñ : cha : sp[r]iñ :

“ I having been granted leave (*khör-žag*) on account of a dispute, Stag-brtsan Gyer-bu-chuñ discharged my soldier-relay duty for the first autumn month. Is it proper or not proper for me to discharge Gyer-bu-chuñ’s soldier-relay duty ? Send word.”

On *so-res* see p. 391 ; on *brgyah-la* see 1930, p. 70.

14. M. Tāgh. a. ii, 0017 (wood, c. 12 × 1.5–2 cm., broken away at l. ; ll. 1 *recto* + 1 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A] . . . s. || bdag.lta.ñan.pas.rño.thogs. [B] . . . kho.la.so.ris.byañ.myi.h̄ba.na.tsheg.gchig [1].

“ A humble person like me [*not being*] able, . . . if he has no soldier-relay ticket, it is a difficulty.”

On *so-ris-byañ* see p. 391.

15. M. Tāgh. c. ii, 001 (wood, c. 16 × 2 cm., complete, stained ; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] ☉ || žaṅ : Stag . bžer : | la | skyin : Tshi : kruṅ : gyi : gslo¹ [A 2] ba : žal : . . . kaḥ : g[stsa]l : [ba] : [n]i : | sug : [B 1] rgyas : btab : ste : Li : la : bskur : žiñ : mchis |

“ To Uncle Stag-bžer : Petition of substitute Tshi-kruṅ. Orders regarding dispute (?) have been sent, signature attached, to Khotan.”

On *skyin* “ substitute ” see *supra*, p. 387. M.I. xiv, 0037, seems to speak of “ four soldier substitutes ” (*so-skyin-bži*).

16. M. Tāgh. a. iv, 0038 (wood, c. 13 × 2–2.5 cm., complete ; hole for string at r. ; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script, somewhat faint and obscured by dirt).

[A 1] ☉ | : | dbyar.sla.h̄briñ.pho | tshes.bco.brgyad [A 2] la | so.ñul | [Stag.rtsa]n.po.Khyeḥu.[c]uñ | slar [B] mchiste. | gñer.h̄gum.la.

“ Middle summer month, day eighteen. Soldier-spy Stag-rtсан Khyeḥu-cuñ returned, with task performed.”

On *so-ñul* and *gñer-h̄gum* see p. 391 and 1927, p. 810.

17. M. Tāgh. b. ii, 0028 (wood, c. 18 × 2 × .75 cm.,

¹ Compendious for *gsol*.

cut away for a tally ; incised lines *recto* ; ll. 1 (on side) + 2 (*recto*) + 1 (on side) of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A] ☉ | : | lo.sar.gi.bag.pye.dan.chañ (*space*) [s-]-s.de. |

[B 1] . cha[d] . te . sna . slad . sdoms . te . chad . pa (*space*)
chañ (*space*) bag.pye

[B 2] . khram.[stsa ?].bur.bgos.te (*kram*).bu.yañ.

[C] . yañ(r ?).spah̄.sa.de.la.stsald. |

“ Barley-meal of the new year and beer. . . . It having been decided, earlier and later, to pay it, it has been paid. Beer : barley-meal, separated in the ticket ; a ticket has also (*or again and again*) been sent up to that *spah̄-sa*.”

The translation is in part uncertain. On *spah̄-sa* (*spa-sa*) see *supra*, p. 391.

18. M.I. vii, 49 (wood, c. 11.5 × 2 cm., broken away at l. ; hole for string at r. ; ll. 2 *recto* + 2 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] . . . m.myi.m[ño]rl (?).dpon.sna.la.myi.skyin.

[A 2] . . . [ms].mchi[s].h̄[b]rel.mo.skyes.la.gcig. [B 1]
. . . ya[n̄ ?].[med].na || bran.mo.[mañ].rtse.rjes [B 2] . . .
phral.du.gtad.[par].htshol.cig ||

“ To . . . the chief in command : [*many*] men substitutes have come. There being for the males not a single female companion, the ruler-in-chief is begged to send at once many serving-women.”

The defective text allows of some dubiety in regard to this military communication.

2. Provisions, Rations, Pay

19. M. Tāgh. c. iii, 0030 (wood, c. 9.5 × 1-1.5 × 1 cm., burned away at r. ; “ neck ” for string at l. ; ll. 1 + 1 + 1 + 2 of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A] ☉ | : | jo : co : Btsan : baḥi (biḥ ?) : rmañ : s[tsi ?] . . .

[B] Li : ri : zug : chaḥi : brgyags : . . .

[C] las : phaḥ : tsa : blañs : s[t]e . . .

[D 1] so : la : byon : [s]na : kyab : . . .

[D 2] no : de : las : thugs . . .

“ A camel (horse ?)-man (*rmañ-rdzi* ?) of the chief, Btsan-ba, having received a package from . . . Khotan mountain-sickness company provisions, is come to the soldiery . . . ”

Pha-tsa (in various spellings) “ a package ” recurs several times (M. Tāgh. 0245, a. i, 0011, etc.). On *Li-ri-zug-chahibrgyags* see 1930, pp. 73, 94. In M. Tāgh. 0440 occurs *so-pa-hi-brgyag[s]*, “ soldier-provisions.”

20. M. Tāgh. a. v, 001 (wood, c. 7 × 2.5–3 cm., broken away at l. and r.; ll. 3 *recto* + 3 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] . . . [g]sol.na.su.la.gsol . . . [A 2] . . . ñand.
mañchis.te || rad.pa.dbyer.cha . . . [A 3] . . . Dbyild.
cuñ.tse.khrom.du | su . . . [B 1] . . . | htshal.ba.las ||
bad (rad ?) . . . [B 2] . . . [n ?]. | so.glas.stsold.cig . . .
[B 3] . . . po.chir mdzad ||

“ If request not made [to] . . . to whom should request be made ? [We] humble persons, travellers, a (*dbyer* ?) company . . . having desired (been sent ?) to Dbyild-cuñ-tse . . . be so good (*as to order*) the soldiers’ wages (*so-gla*) to be sent.”

On the phrase “ if request . . . be made ” and on Dbyild-cuñ-tse see *supra*, p. 397, and 1930, p. 253. *gla*, p. 387.

21. M. Tāgh. c. iii, 0036 (wood, c. 22.5 × 2–2.5 cm., complete; hole for string at r.; ll. 2 *recto* + 1 *verso* of cursive *dbu-can* script).

[A 1] ☉ || Khri.mñes(ol ?) gy[is ?]: glañ.śa.lhu.cig.zos.
bañi . myi | rñams | myiñ . smrar . bris . pa | Stag [A 2]
Btshan.ra | Khyi.hbrin | Śa[g].Hphan hbri[n] | Stag.bž[r]e |
Skyes.legs [B] Myes.tsab | Ma[n].rtsan.myi.hdi.rñams.la |
pul.bu.bži.bži | hjal.ba.lags.

“ Written by Khri-mñes (?), name-record of the men who have eaten pieces of ox-flesh. (*The names follow.*) To these men have been paid four small handfuls each.”

For references to *htshal-ma* “ rations ” see *supra*, p. 387, and 1930, p. 89.

