

Tibetan Documents concerning Chinese
Turkestan. VII: Government and Social
Conditions

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A. General ; B. Documents (1, Officials ; 2, Classes and persons ; 3, Agriculture and crops, registration, taxation, survey ; 4, Travel and animals ; 5, Objects and presents ; 6, Burial and mourning and other ceremonial ; 7, Medicine ; 8, Law ; 9, Writing and letters).

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IN regard to civil conditions in Chinese Turkestan the documents are not much more widely informative than in regard to other matters. The states along the northern trade route, Karashahr, Kuca, Aksu, Kashgar, although from about A.D. 675 they were dominated (not indeed occupied) by the Tibetans, appear to escape all mention ; and this is the more regrettable as these states would seem from the culture objects recovered by archæological research to have enjoyed a rather fuller development of material civilization than those south of the desert. Their natural resources were not inferior, they were aligned along a more profitable route of trade and communication, they were less exposed to encroachment of the desert ; their archæological remains are more extensive and better preserved. To these states, and to the Wu-sun people of the Tian-shan valleys, we have perhaps—unless the Khu chief (*Khu Man-po-rje*) of the *Tibetan Chronicle* is really the Khu ruler of Kao-chang—not a single reference. The twin states of “ Anterior ” and “ Posterior ” Chü-shih, i.e. Turfan-Kao-chang and Gu-chen at the extreme east of the Tian-shan, do indeed seem to be indicated as goal of hostile expeditions (1931, pp. 821 sqq.). As has been made clear by Chavannes in *Ancient Khotan*, pp. 533–6, and Sir Aurel Stein, *Innermost Asia*, pp. 579–587, they maintained a precarious existence nearly to the end of the eighth century

A.D., the Tibetans failing, despite their occupation of Kan-su, to secure possession of them either by diplomatic proposals to China¹ or by force until the year A.D. 790.

Of the more southern states, Yarkand, Karghalik, Khotan, Shan-shan, the two former are hardly more than mentioned in the documents (1930, pp. 288-291). But concerning Khotan and Shan-shan, and concerning the Śa-cu region of Chinese Kan-su, we have a certain amount of information. In the case of Khotan the allusions in the documents are supplemented, not only by the particulars recorded in Chinese works, but also by general impressions (largely of religious decadence) conveyed by the ecclesiastical annals and other literary texts which we have translated. For the Śa-cu region, where the conditions were mainly Chinese, but the Tibetans were during the period A.D. 781-850 politically dominant and long afterwards naturally influential as representing Buddhism, we have from Chinese sources general and also local information, the latter carefully edited in some valuable publications by Dr. Lionel Giles.² For the Shan-shan kingdom, extending from Lop-nor westwards as far as Cer-cen and (say) Niya, the Chinese supply valuable geographical and historical indications, of which the latest summary is contained in Dr. Giles' third paper noted *supra*. On the Tibetan side we have the mass of documents extracted from the fort of Mirān and a number of references in the manuscript *Chronicle*. The area being practically identical with that covered by the Kharoṣṭhī documents of much (c. 400-600 years) earlier date, and points of contact being inevitable, it may be worth while to institute a slight comparison of the two groups of records. In number the Tibetan (about 1,500)

¹ Bushell, *JRAS.*, 1880, pp. 453-4; Chavannes, *Tou-Kiue Occidentaux*, pp. 179-182.

² "Tun Huang Lu: Notes on the District of Tun-huang": *JRAS.*, 1914, pp. 703-728; 1915, pp. 41-7; "The Census of Tun-huang", *T'oung-pao*, xvi, 1915, pp. 468-488; "A Chinese Geographical Text of the Ninth Century", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, vi, pp. 825-846.

have the advantage ; but in extent of matter, being mostly scrappy or very fragmentary, they are considerably inferior. Of the chief classes of the Kharoṣṭhī documents, (a) royal rescripts, (b) registers of persons and objects, (c) legal agreements, (d) semi-official and unofficial correspondence, the first is wanting in the Tibetan collection (there being no ruling king), which on its part presents a large number of items (lists, visiting cards, etc.) connected with the soldiery. The most sweeping difference between the two classes of documents consists in the fact that the Kharoṣṭhī records are native in character, while those in Tibetan are the work of foreigners administering an annexed country and not primarily interested in the (H̄a-ža) population. This tends to enfeeble the light which they shed upon internal conditions, except in so far as those conditions had been introduced by the Tibetans themselves.

As regards Khotan, the new information may be briefly summarized. This state, of which the population was estimated about B.C. 30 at 19,300 and about A.D. 100 at 83,000, must during that interval have effected its recorded absorption of certain minor adjacent principalities.¹ Its eastern frontier was at Phye-ma, or at times somewhat further east, at Niña, where it adjoined Shan-shan, which on its part had extended westward by similar absorption of minor intervening states. In early days it had engaged in local wars with Yarkand, Kashgar, and even Kuca ; but its constant rival in later centuries had been Shan-shan, whose Tu-yu[k]-hun conquerors had in A.D. 445 wrought great havoc in Khotan (1926, p. 312). Like all the other principalities of Chinese Turkestan, it had been normally under domination either by the Chinese, or by invading peoples from the north, Hiung-nu, Juan-Juan, and Turks. But this domination was not of an interfering character ; and so the lineage of local kings, though some of them received a surname of perhaps

¹ Grenard in Dutreuil de Rhins, *La Haute Asie*, ii, p. 61 ; followed by A. Hermann, *Die alten Seidenstrassen*, p. 76.

Juan-Juan origin (1931, pp. 831–2) and one of them was subject to the Turks¹ and some later ones had Tibetan names (*Asia Major*, ii, p. 252), is said to have persisted unbroken. A division of the country into five districts (the capital, Mdo-lo and Me-skar, Kam-séd, Ku-séd, and Koñ-séd) has been traced.² But it would be difficult to select the “five large cities” (they would perhaps include Kilian, Guma, Phye-ma, and Niya (?)), which according to the Chinese³ it contained. On the other hand, we have found (1930, pp. 50 sqq.) in Tibetan times abundant evidence of a division of the area into parishes (*tshar*)⁴ and also numerous names of places either belonging or adjacent to the country. The “five towns” which composed the capital included, no doubt, the “Nectarean City” (*Dñar-ldan*), the “Hog’s-colour city” (*Phag-gi-mtshon*), and the “Old City” (*Rñin-ma*) named in the *Prophecy* of Vimalaprabhā. Was Khu-sen “the western city”, “the city where the king resides,” a fourth? There are several indications (*Asia Major*, ii, pp. 255–7) that the country as a whole bore a name *Kuśala*, rendered in Tibetan as *Dge-ba*, the capital also being *Kuśalī* or *Kuśalavatī* (Tibetan *Dge-ba-can*).

The celebrity of Khotan (according to Firdausi’s *Shāh-nāmah*, “the most famous of cities”) rested upon its religious sanctity and its innumerable and splendid monasteries and shrines. There was some trace of Mazdaism,⁵ possibly a survival from ancient times; and references to unbelieving kings and nobles (*A. Khotan*, p. 585) may be directed at them among others. But the country, “the pocket estate of the Buddhas of the Three Times,” was overwhelmingly Buddhist, partly Māhāsaṃghika, partly Sarvāstivādin, but in later times

¹ Abel-Rémusat, *Ville de Khotan*, p. 35.

² *Asia Major*, ii, pp. 259–260.

³ Abel-Rémusat, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 28, 30–1.

⁴ Also a few districts in the vicinity of the capital with names ending in *-ti* (1930, p. 70).

⁵ Grenard, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 68; Chavannes, *Tou-Kiue Occidentaux*, p. 125.

mainly Mahāyānist.¹ Apparently (*ibid.*, pp. 581-3) there was constant communication with the Buddhists of India, especially of Kashmir. The clerics, male and female, numbered, as estimated at one period, over 11,000 (*ibid.*, p. 583), the large monasteries over 110.² The communities owned gardens and pleasantries and large estates and water-rights. The rulers and their families, men and women, were attended by pious "confessors" or "chaplains" (*kalyāṇa-mitra*, *ibid.*, pp. 581-3), under whose influence they were lavish in the foundation and endowment of shrines, monasteries, and nunneries. It was not unusual for persons of royal or noble blood to enter the Saṃgha, winning for the families the title of "Bodhi-sattva lineage".

The manners of the Khotanese were marked by mildness and ceremoniousness, which had, it was held, a humanizing effect upon foreign visitors and conquerors (*ibid.*, p. 585). Hiuan-Tsang credits the people with politeness, justice, and a love of literature and arts, which opinion, confirmed by the *T'ang-shu* (Chavannes, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-6), need not be, as Grenard suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 67), due to Buddhist partiality. The sanctity of the country attracted sightseers and pilgrims, bringing riches to the shrines and to the peaceful and contented population. The local manufacture of silk, carpets and felt, the jade workings, and the mining for gold and copper in the mountains to the south brought merchants. Like all the other regions of Turkestan, Khotan was celebrated also for its fruit. In the documents there are some references to presents of silk (*men-tri*, *°hdri*) or carpets or fruit, purchase of turquoises, and so on (1930, pp. 60, etc.). The phrase "Khotan provisions" (*Li-brgyags*) recurs with, apparently, some special sense. One of the constant troubles of the country was incursions of freebooters from Tāshkurghān and

¹ *A. Khotan*, p. 585, and Fa-hian, trans. Legge, p. 16. So, too, Hiuan-Tsang.

² Hiuan-Tsang's figures are 5,000 and 100; Fa-hian says "even several myriads".

the mountains to the south, preying upon the merchant caravans (*A. Khotan*, pp. 31, 521). We have quoted a letter from a Khotan king to the Tibetan authorities, wherein an investigation of robberies is reported, together with a reference to a donation, or fine, of fruit (1930, pp. 60 sqq.).

A feature, still noticeable, of Khotan life was the prominence of feminine interests and the freedom of women. In the religious sphere their participation was represented by numerous nunneries, founded in many cases by queens or princesses, who had feminine spiritual advisers (*kalyāṇa-mitra*) and themselves not infrequently "took the veil". The *Prophecy* of Vimalaprabhā (eighth century A.D.) proclaims perhaps the first recorded religious mission to women, inaugurated by a royal lady. A particular custom was seclusion during seven days after the death of a husband.¹

We need not dwell upon features of Khotan life already known from Chinese sources, the religious car-processions and festivals, the fondness for music, the erection of tall funeral monuments (*stūpas*) in front of the (widely spaced) dwellings. Some of these are mentioned in our texts, which also speak of religious drama (*nole*, 1925, pp. 498 sqq.). Nor can we treat of the characteristics of the popular religion, in which a Buddhist mantle was thrown over a great amount of earlier superstition, whether indigenous (cult of "Nāgas" of localities and rivers and of demons, *Rākṣasas* and *Rākṣasīs*) or imported from India (worship of relics, vestments, and sacred footprints, use of charms, *mantras*, and magico-psychological phrases, *dhāraṇīs*, orally or in script, as amulets and inscriptions on banners and buildings). The pre-Buddhist religion of Chinese Turkestan, akin to Shamanism and the Tibetan *Bon*, is a subject upon which Grenard (*op. cit.*, pp. 241-3) has some very just observations, but which is not yet ripe for discussion.

¹ Similarly in Karashahr (Grenard, Dutreuil de Rhins, *La Haute Asie*, ii, p. 246).

The government was of the personal kind, with ministers (no doubt, nobles) holding office at the king's pleasure, with occasional tragedies and troubles during minorities (*Ancient Khotan*, p. 582) and much ecclesiastical influence. As has frequently been pointed out, the Chinese, with their policy of subordinating foreign princes by conferring upon them titles of honour, awarded to some of the Khotan (Kashgar, etc.) kings the rank of *amochih*, in the Tibetan texts *a-ma-ca*, representing, as Professor Lévi was the first to remark,¹ the Sanskrit *amātya* "councillor". From the documents (1930, pp. 72-5) we see that the title was borne also, in course of time, by non-royal persons in Khotan, and the same is evident from the local *Chronicle* (*Ancient Khotan*, pp. 582-3). There is no evidence that in Khotan the title carried official functions. In regard to local administration and to law and justice we have no hints. But there was a regular assessment (*rtsis*) for purpose of revenue, and the supply of water was controlled.

The Tibetans, when, in the last half of the eighth century A.D., they occupied the country and established the fort of Mazār-Tāgh, left the general administration in the hands of the native king. There were, it is true, numerous military posts established by them in the country, especially on heights in the mountains (1930, p. 251), and even in the royal citadel a guard may have been posted (*ibid.*, p. 65). But the presence of a general (*dmag-dpon*, p. 76) and of a minister of Inner Affairs (*nañ-rje-po*, pp. 77-9) in the capital may have been merely occasional. The Tibetan headquarters must have been in Śiñ-śan (Mazār-Tāgh), whither urgent dispatches were sometimes sent from the capital and persons are recalled (1930, pp. 78, 83). The supplies demanded from the Khotanese were based upon an assessment and received in bulk (1930, p. 81). The Khotanī authorities (*Li-mñan*) in Śiñ-śan and elsewhere collected their own dues from the tenants in detail

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, XI, v, 1915, p. 191.

(M. Tāgh, a. iii, 0062). Khotanī persons (*Li*) were employed by the Tibetans, mostly, it seems, in subordinate capacities. Some served in the army, though we are not aware of any distinct Khotanī regiments. Naturally there were business transactions and legal agreements (p. 60). It seems that the natives were not esteemed by their rude conquerors (p. 278); there are several references to condign punishment of individuals, or even groups (pp. 49, 284).

The heads of Tibetan administration in Khotan were the *nañ-rje-pos* ("Interior Lords") resident in Mazār-Tāgh, of whom in two letters (one quoted p. 66) three are addressed jointly. Presumably one was usually the leader (*rtse*, p. 90); but in regard to a distribution of functions we have no indication. The office of *nañ-rje-po*, as also the titles *žañ-lon* and *rtse-rje*, recurs in the case of Shan-shan, and may be further considered in that connection.

It is probable that the Khotanīs, whose proficiency in literature, as well as their linguistic singularity, is recognized by the Chinese,¹ maintained a higher educational average than did the other states of Turkestan. It is therefore interesting to connect the story (*Asia Major*, ii, pp. 251-2) of the origination of the language, as taught to herdsmen children, with what is stated by Sir Aurel Stein² concerning unexpected smattering of education among children of nomad herdsmen along the Keriya river. For the rest, the Chinese noted³ a greater likeness of feature to themselves in the people of Khotan than was the case in other states; and the native Khotan *Chronicle* remarks that "the manners of the laity agree for the most part with China".

The Ša-cu region being a part of Chinese Kan-su and accordingly a subject of much precise information and of special memoirs, of which three have been translated by Dr. Lionel Giles, the particulars ascertainable from Tibetan

¹ Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, ii, p. 309.

² *Ancient Khotan*, p. 143, n. 25.

³ Grenard, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 31.

sources are perhaps of secondary interest. The Tibetans seem to have commenced their attacks on the city about A.D. 676 ; in A.D. 727 they captured Kva-cu Siñ-cañ (Tsin-ch'ang ?). It is very difficult to follow the vicissitudes of the struggle in this area, which must have been constantly overrun by the Tibetans ; but from A.D. 781–851 ¹ the region must have been definitely under Tibetan rule, except that during an interval of eleven years (A.D. 809–819 (?)) the city of Śa-cu was held for the Chinese.² The Tibetan information may relate mainly to the period A.D. 781–851, although the particulars connected with Buddhist monasteries would be consistent with a later date.

During this period the region seems to have been under the rule of a Dragon (*Hbrug*) dynasty, mentioned by the Chinese as Lung³ and stated to have originated in Karashahr. The two Tibetan letters quoted *supra* (1927, p. 67), relating to delivery of requisitioned grain in bulk, seem to show that the *Hbrug* chief, from whom one of them emanates, retained the internal administration of his country. He was therefore in a position similar to that of the king of Khotan ; near the end of the eighth century A.D. a king The-bo of Śa-cu, who would be a *Hbrug*, received a mission from his Khotan compeer, with a letter which has recently been published.⁴ It seems likely that the Tibetans, as their invasions penetrated further into China, took over the administration of the Śa-cu country. For in other letters (pp. 808 sqq.) relating to requisition of grain we find mention of a division into Thousand-districts, a non-Chinese and specially Tibetan⁵ organization, derived ultimately from

¹ L. Giles, *JRAS.*, 1914, pp. 705–6.

² Bushell, *JRAS.*, 1880, p. 514 : cf. *supra*, 1927, pp. 815–16.

³ L. Giles, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, vol. vi, pp. 844–5.

⁴ *Two Medieval Documents from Tun-huang*, by F. W. Thomas and Sten Konow, Oslo, 1929.

⁵ It is not implied that prior to the Tibetan occupation no "Thousand-districts" existed in Shan-shan. Elsewhere I hope to show that the *tomga* of the Kharoṣṭhī documents was really a *ston-dpon*.

India. The districts named are Rgod-sar, Stoñ-sar, Spyi-lcogs, Šiñi-tsoms, Tshas-stobs, probably a complete list. Their geographical disposition is not evident; but Tshas-stobs may contain the name of a Tsha tribe, connected with a Tsha-śod district in north-eastern Tibet, and Rgod-sar, which *prima facie* may mean "New Rgod", was probably the most westerly, adjoining the Rgod District of the Shan-shan area. We have given (1927, pp. 71 sqq.) a long dossier of appeals in connection with an appointment to the office of *stoñ-dpon* in this area.

Concerning towns in the Śa-cu region it is difficult to be precise, since from the Tibetan documents it is often not clear whether places there named belong to that region or to the adjacent parts of Tibet or to more easterly parts of Kan-su. Clearly we can leave out of account *Lem-cu* (Liang-chou) with Bog-yas, Dañ-to-kun, which is, no doubt, T'ien-te Kun¹ on the bend of the Yellow River, and the places noted 1927, p. 816, as in Skyi. Disregarding some minor localities, we are left with practically only Kva-cu, Śa-cu, Mkhar-tsan (= Khar-tsa-cin, 1927, pp. 78 sqq.), 'Im-ka-cin, Sil-gu-cin, and Khu-ñe Mon-gaṅs, and residences Hi-ma-te (p. 825), Ma-ko-cin and 'O-dol-cu (p. 78). Of these Mkhar-tsan was a great city. Kva-cu and Śa-cu are well known from Chinese sources, and we need only add that the mention of *tshi-śi* and *tu-tuq* (pp. 816-17) as titles of their magistrates seems to indicate that the Tibetans did not modify their administration, the titles being Turco-Chinese. Concerning the other places we can add nothing to what is stated *supra*, 1927, pp. 83-4.

The other information supplied by the Tibetan writings concerning this Śa-cu region is partly of singular interest. The legal agreements indeed (1927, pp. 813-14) are similar to those adduced from Khotan and Shan-shan. But other records are of a kind not exemplified elsewhere. There are lists (1927,

¹ L. Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 834 (T'ien-tê Ch'êng); the *Thianté-Kiun* of Marco Polo, ed. Cordier, i, p. 286.

pp. 826 sqq.) of personal (both masculine and feminine) names and clan-names or surnames, throwing light upon the system of nomenclature and upon the sociology ; lists (1928, pp. 66-9) of numerous shrines, probably some of the " Thousand Buddhas " of Tun-huang, with accounts of lands whereof they enjoyed the revenues ; particulars of donations, of oil, etc. (pp. 87-90), for their service ; references to their slaves (*lha-hban's* " god's servant ") ; an extensive description (1927, pp. 832 sqq.) of the operations of the monasteries in supplying manuscript copies of Buddhist canonical texts, Tibetan and Chinese, for the use of city libraries, etc., in procuring the labour and materials (paper and ink), in controlling the workers and providing for their rations, in totalling and dispatching the inscribed rolls, and in obtaining payment ; also in inspecting and reporting upon deterioration in the library collections. A growing intimacy with Tibet is illustrated by a very remarkable compilation (1928, pp. 70-87) of " messages " of felicitation, presented by the cities of Kva-cu and Mkhār-tsan (in conjunction with other authorities) upon the occasion of the foundation of a great monastery in the vicinity of the Koko-nor lake, to commemorate the pact of peace made between China, Tibet, and other powers in the years A.D. 783 and 822.

The two temples Len-ho-si and Pho-kvan-si, mentioned 1927, p. 829, we are not in a position to locate.¹ In regard to the document, 1928, pp. 63-5, containing succession-lists of the heads of certain famous Buddhist seminaries, it may be remarked that it has considerable importance in connection with ecclesiastical history. But the seminaries in question belong evidently in most cases to other provinces, and no one is demonstrably connected with the Śa-cu region.

When we come to the Nob Region, the old Shan-shan kingdom, we might hope, as the administration had been taken over by the Tibetans, to find in the *Mirān* documents rather more definite indications of the actual manner of working. And it might be instructive to compare the

¹ Are they the *Ling-hu* and *P'u-kuang* of *Documents Chinois*, pp. 62, 130 ?

information with what may be elicited from the earlier Kharoṣṭhī documents belonging to the same area. Something indeed may be noted.

The region was divided into Thousand-districts, named respectively Nag-śod, Hdzom Upper (*Stod*) and Lower (*Smad*), Rgod Upper and Lower, Rgod-lđiñ, and Kha-dro.

Of these Rgod, with Rgod-lđiñ, must, for the reason stated above in connection with Rgod-sar, have been the most easterly. Nag-śod, one of the eighteen Śods reckoned in with Mdo-smad, would be its next neighbour. Kha-dro has a name which may be connected with the *Caḍota* (the Niya site) of the Kharoṣṭhī documents; in which case Hdzom would inevitably cover some area in the region of Endere or Cer-cen, and it is perhaps no accident that a regiment or province of "Hdzom-lom-stod" is named in a sgraffito in Endere fort.¹ In the Kharoṣṭhī documents Cer-cen (Calmadana) is under a Cojhbo (chief ruler) distinct from the Cojhbo of Caḍota.

In each of the Thousand-districts we find mention of "the lord's land" (*rje-žin*), and sometimes of special arrangements for its cultivation. Originally these lands may have been private property of the Ha-ža king (*rje*) or of local chiefs, probably the former, since they were administered by the Tibetans. The phrase occurs thrice (ll. 158, 160, 163) in the Tibetan *Chronicle*, but without further indication.

The chief towns named in the documents are Little Nob, Great Nob, Ka-dag, Rtse-thon, and Cer-cen. From the character of the references it appears that Ka-dag was in the same general district as Nob; and this is in accord with the traditional location² at three days' journey south of the also ruined city of Lop. Rtse-thon, the *Ch'i-t'un* of the Chinese, was also in that quarter. Hence we have no difficulty in identifying Little and Great Nob together with Ka-dag as the "three towns" (*mkhār-gsum*, 1928, p. 569), and this triad together

¹ *Ancient Khotan*, p. 569.

² Forsyth, *Mission to Yarkund*, p. 27. Cf. Grenard, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 147.

with Rtse-thon as the "four towns" (*mkhar-bzi*, p. 571) of Nob. Concerning Byeḥu-liñ, Sta-gu, etc., see *supra*.

Whether there was a general council for the whole country is not apparent. It seems possible that the region was under the supervision of the council of the Bde region of Mdo-smad, the northern division of the north-east, Mdo, of Tibet. For the system is exhibited in the case of the felicitatory messages cited above, which are from the following in order, (a) the authorities of the realm of Mdo-gams (*Khams*), (b) the councillors of Bde, (c)–(d) the cities of Mkhar-tsan and Kva-cu, (e) the head of the Phyug-tsams Thousand-district, (f) the local people of Hbrom-khoñ. Like Mkhar-tsan and Kva-cu in the Śa-cu region, the towns of Shan-shan may have been immediately under a council (*bkah-hgros*, 1927, p. 821, etc.) presiding over the adjacent province of Tibet.

The officials in charge of the Thousand-districts, the *Stoñ-dpons*, may, like those in the Śa-cu region (1927, pp. 72–9), have been appointed directly by the *Rje-bla* "supreme lord", who would be the Tibetan minister of state, or some deputy. We have a mention also of a *Khri-dpon* "Myriad-commandant", who would be a superior of the *Stoñ-dpon*, and also of a *Stoñ-cuñ* "Minor Thousand", who may have been an inferior colleague. Sometimes we meet with the phrase *dpon-sna*, which may mean either "chief *dpon*" or "the leading *dpons*", as an undefined group.

The functions of the *chañ-kyur*, who was plainly a superior official, are not clearly determinable; they may hereafter be determined, since the title may be recognized in literature and is obviously identical with the *caṃkura* of the Kharoṣṭhī documents.¹

In the case of the towns the officials usually mentioned are the *rtse-rje*, *jo-co*, *nañ-rje-po*, sometimes in conjunction with councillors (*blon*) or uncle-councillors (*žañ-lon*) or to these

¹ See now *Acta Orientalia*, xii, pp. 68–70, where an endeavour is made to prove that *chañ-kyur* (*chañ-kyir*, *cañ-khyir*) = *caṃkura* corresponds to Sanskrit *nagara-rakṣa* or *nāgaraka*.

separately. In the Kharoṣṭhī documents the instructions are usually addressed to a *cojhbo* (sometimes plural), often associated with a *ṣoṭhaṃgha*, who may be a police officer and is in charge of granary and toll-stations (*draṅga*), and sometimes with a *tomgha*, who is concerned with post and transport. It is likely that the Tibetan *rtse-rje* or *jo-co* has taken over the functions of the *cojhbo*, and therefore that the expression *jo-co*, or *rjo-cho*, is in fact identical with *cojhbo*. *Rtse-rje* does not occur in the Tibetan dictionaries, although both its constituents are common : *jo-co* and *co-jo* are also unattested, *jo-bo* and *gtso-bo* being the usual expressions for a “chief” or “lord”. As *co* clearly means “chief”, since it appears in the phrase *Ha-ṣahi-ṣaṅ-lon-gyi-geo* (1927, p. 59) “*doyen* of the *Ha-ṣa* Uncle-councillors”, it seems likely that the older *cojhbo*, which was probably only a way of writing *co-zvo*, meant “chief-ruler” and *zvo* corresponds to Tibetan *rje*, so that the Tibetan *rtse-rje* may be a translation of this title. In the documents we have at times only the form *jo*, which means simply a “chief” or “lord”.

The functions of the Councillors (*blon*) are not clearly distinguished ; but we have special titles for some of them, who are designated *naṅ-blon*, *phyi-blon* “councillor for internal, external affairs”¹ and *dgra-blon* “councillor for enemy affairs” ; possibly these would be found only in the chief administrative centre. The *ṣaṅ-lon* “uncle-councillor”, i.e. properly an uncle of the king functioning as councillor, is characteristically Tibetan ; but, since we cannot suppose that all the *ṣaṅ-lons* recorded in Tibet and those who occur rather plentifully in the Turkestan documents are of that quality, it may be conjectured that the designation became hereditary and so acquired a wide extension ; in that case a *ṣaṅ-lon* would be a councillor who was “of the blood”, and perhaps such persons had a title to membership of councils wherever they were residing. In Turkestan the *ṣaṅ-lons* may

¹ This title occurs, along with *naṅ-blon* “councillor for internal affairs”, in the Lha-sa inscriptions (*JRAS.*, 1911, p. 434).

have been *local* nobles ; for the Khotan Chronicle mentions them with reference to pre-Tibetan times, and very likely they may be the *Ogus* (Tib. 'a-khu "uncle", the 'A-gus of the Ge-sar legend) of the Kharoṣṭhī documents from Shan-shan : see *Acta Orientalia*, xii, pp. 58-9.¹

Besides these persons of *blon*, or "Councillor", quality we hear of a number of titles of *dpons* or officials. To the *ston-dpons* and *khri-dpons* we have already referred. The *nos-dpon*

¹ I must not omit to give reasons for not accepting the view, noticed previously (1927, p. 55), according to which *zan* does not mean "uncle", but is a Chinese designation *shang* "chief". This view is carefully stated in one of Dr. Laufer's extraordinarily learned and valuable papers, *Bird Divination among the Tibetans* (T'oung-pao, 1914), pp. 103 sqq., and reinforced in another (*ibid.*, 1916, p. 430). At first sight the argument seems conclusive : Dr. Laufer adduces a number of striking cases where the Tibetan *zan* is represented in Chinese writing by *shang*. But let us first note some scruples : (1) if *zan* were an adjective borrowed from Chinese, we should expect it to occur also in some other connections, whereas it appears only as a separate title or in the combination *zan-lon* "zan councillor" ; (2) if *zan-lon* means "chief councillor", then the common phrase *zan-lon-chen-po* "great chief councillor" is rather otiose ; (3) in the Lha-sa edicts several ministers are called *blon* (or *blon-po*)-*chen-po*, and in some cases *zan* follows, and this is an indication that the *zan* here attaches not to that phrase, but to the personal name which it precedes. All this is smoothed away if we accept Waddell's original explanation (*JRAS.*, 1910, p. 1274) of *zan-lon* as "uncle minister", meaning minister of the blood royal. The employment of *shang* in Chinese as a *transliteration* of *zan* seems to have little bearing on the matter.

But really the most conclusive proof is supplied by some of Dr. Laufer's own examples. Three of these (pp. 74-8) are in the form *nan-blon-Mchims-zan* "Interior Councillor Mchims-zan", *phyi-blon-Hbro-zan* "Exterior Councillor Hbro-zan". Now *Mchims* and *Hbro* are both tribal names, and the form of the expressions is exactly parallel to *Mchims-bza*, *Hbro-bza*, *Tse-spon-bza* "Mchims wife", "Hbro wife", "Tse-spon wife", meaning [royal] wives from those tribes. Moreover, we have other similar appellations, e.g. *Ma-zan* "maternal uncle" (*Rgyal-rabs*, foll. 32b, 5, 33b, 1-2, 3, 5 of the India Office copy) and *Sna-nam-zan-dañ-Rgya-tsha* "Sna-nam uncle and China grandson", meaning that the person, whose name was Lha-snañ, was in avuncular relation to the Tibetan royal house and had a Chinese mother ; cf. also the *Hjan-tsha*-Lha-dbañ who was a son of king Khri-lde-gtsug-brtan and had a Hjan mother (*JRAS.*, 1928, p. 85). I may also refer to the *Dbon* "nephew" Hja-žas noted above (1927, pp. 55-6). Preceding a personal name, *zan* (also *zan-po*, *zan-chen-po*) is too common (1927, pp. 55, 59, 69 ; 1928, p. 72 ; 1930, p. 276 ; 1933, p. 398) to be local.

“ warden of a region ” would be, no doubt, a person similar to the Indian *anta-pāla*, in charge of the approaches to the city from outside and of border transactions. The *khriṃs-dpon* “ law-officer ” is a judge—there was one for Tshal-byi—and possibly he was identical with the *bkaḥ-luñ* and *bkaḥ-blon* mentioned 1927, pp. 73, 815 ; 1928, pp. 582–3.

What was the office of *mgo-non* (“ additional, or deputy, head ” (?)), to which an appointment is made (1928, p. 586), does not appear. The *yul-mthoñ* “ country overseer ” reports in *M.I.* xiii, 12, on the year’s levy ; probably, like the *yul-gzigs* of *M. Tāgh.* c. ii, 0011, he was a local surveyor. The *rgyal-gzigs*, whose designation translates the Sanskrit *rāja-caḥsus*, was perhaps a general representative of the king’s special interests. We find also a *khral-dpon* “ tax-master ”.

In Little Nob there was a person entitled *rtse-bla-dañ-rtse-smān* “ head-lama (?) and head-physician ”, to whom application is made in *M.I.* iv. 138 (cf. iv, 60) for a medical prescription. Elsewhere we find a *yul-smān*, “ district ” or “ village physician ”, who appears in some ceremonial, not strictly medical, connection. Since here we have an appeal to *yul-lha-yul-bdag-dañ-smān* “ district god, district lord and physician ”, it seems clear that the persons in question combined religious with medical functions. I think that Dr. Francke was right (*JRAS.*, 1914, pp. 55–6) in suggesting that the documents exhibit traces of the Bon-po religion : see *supra*, p. 90, and compare the observation of Grenard cited *infra*, pp. 107–8.

In connection with legal transactions the old Kharoṣṭhī documents supply particulars of many cases. They may be classified as relating to either offences, or disputes, or agreements, whereof the last-named may in many instances represent the outcome of proceedings under the second. The cases of the first two kinds were in all instances decided either by the local officials, often upon reference through the king himself, or at “ the king’s gate ” ; and even matters of the third kind had often been brought to the cognizance of the

officials. There seem to be some clear instances of reference to a court, ecclesiastical or otherwise. From the Tibetan documents we have cited a few cases which happen to include all the three kinds ; and here also there seems to be, though not in every instance, official cognizance. In the fact that in two instances (1928, pp. 567, 584) there are indications pointing to a trial in a *grwa-tus*, which is probably an assemblage of an ecclesiastical character (a Buddhist *pariṣad*), we may perhaps find evidence of an extension of clerical influence ; it will hardly have been due to the Tibetans, whose Buddhism was still in its infancy. There must have been some persons who acted practically as professional lawyers, since the *rtsig* Lha-rtsa-skyes, like the *divira* Tamaśpa of the Kharoṣṭhī documents, functions in a number of independent instances.

In cases not involving compatriots the Tibetans may very likely have administered not their own code, compiled for the great king Sron-btsan Sgam-po, but the local law or usage so often mentioned in the Kharoṣṭhī. This inference is suggested by citation of the "old town law" (*snoñ-gyi-mkhar-khrims-rñin*, 1928, pp. 572-3) and ancient custom (*rin-lugs*, *ibid.*). In the case of debts (*bu-lon*) and loans (or renewals of loan) it is usually laid down that in the event of default the person's goods may be summarily seized by any one in rightful possession of the deed (in one case, of the last of three deeds) without any complaint on the part of the defaulter ; often the person bound has a guarantor (*kha-hdzin* or *khas-len*), who is involved in the obligation. The document terminates with the attestations (seals, signatures, or thumb-marks) of the witnesses (*dpañ-po*), often including councillors or other officials, and of the persons bound. A debtor is *skyin-pa* (also "a substitute") and the debt is said to attach (*chags*) to him. A "pledge" is *gtah* (p. 813).

It may here be noted that banishment or exile has always been a feature of Chinese Turkestan. Banished men or refugees (*palāyanaka*) are constantly mentioned in the Kharoṣṭhī documents, and the Tibetan equivalent, *spyugs*,

has been exemplified *supra*, 1927, p. 819. Modern Turkestanī has preserved the Sanskrit term in its *palā-māq* “to exile”; and Niya and Cer-cen have been used in modern times as convict settlements.¹ The Chinese sent convicted persons to serve in Turkestan²; and we have had (1928, p. 556) an instance of a Tibetan similarly treated.

Concerning the occupations and lives of the people not much information is to be expected from the documents. Even in modern times trades are not numerous in Chinese Turkestan, and the Shan-shan kingdom was perhaps the state most undeveloped economically. Some copper- and gold-mining and jade-working, leather-work, felt and ropes, carpentry, building and pottery, these perhaps comprise all that is ever mentioned as industry practised in the Nob region, except of course what was connected with the tillage of the land. The documents cannot be said to refer to any of the industries or to persons following them, except in the case of cup-making, (*supra*, 1928, p. 556) copper, and agriculture.

Breeding and letting of animals (camels, horses, asses) for purpose of transport must have provided part-time or whole-time occupation for a fair number of persons. The troubles of such a *rmañ-rogs* or *rta-rogs* (= *arivaḡa* in the Kharoṣṭhī documents and figured in a drawing, *Innermost Asia*, pl. vii) are recounted in a letter quoted 1930, p. 290. Among minor occupations we find mention of couriers or runners (*bañ-chen* or *riñ-lu[g]*s), porters (*ltañ-sogs*), bag-men (*sgyehū-ga*), and wood-gatherers (*śiñ-thun*). The *sa-mkhan* (1928, p. 562) may be a guide, as may also *sa-stoñ*, if intended for *sa-ston*; but see *infra*. There were paid workmen or servants (*las-myi*): also slaves (*gu-rib*?), and “government-servants” (*mñan-gyi-hbañs*, apparently persons under sentence) and “god’s-servant” (*lha-hbañs*, slaves belonging to temples?), who might be employed (*karmāvita*, *karma kārīta* “made to

¹ Forsyth, *Mission to Yarkund*, pp. 34, 102.

² Chavannes, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-8.

labour", of the Kharoṣṭhī documents and the Sanskrit *Artha-śāstra*) on hire (*g-yar-por*) or lent out to individuals.

The use of money is even in modern times restricted in Chinese Turkestan, where domestic (farm) industries and barter at fairs are prevalent. In the documents wages (rations, *tshal-ma* and *gla*) were usually reckoned in grain ; where money payment was requisite, it was in the form of Chinese coins (*doñ-tse*) and copper *srañ* ("ounces"). It will be realized that a sparse employment of coin entails a resort to orders or drafts convertible locally by travellers into supplies ; and such seem, in fact, to be denoted by the expression *brgyags-byañ* "provision-ticket". We also have the expressions "attested signature of the three times" (*dus-sum-gyi-dpañ-rgya*, 1928, pp. 574-5), which seems to be a bill payable at sight, and *bkañ-rims-phye* "circular order flour" (1927, p. 819), which must be an order to levy flour at successive points along a route.

As has been previously stated, a part of the land in each district was distinguished as "the lord's land". Special arrangements (*žin-hgod*) seem to have been made for its cultivation, upon communal lines and with limited freedom on the part of the tillers.¹ The remaining land would be in the hands of private owners (*žin-pon*) or held by official titles. The actual cultivator was called *žin-pa* (Sk. *karṣaka*). The ploughing (*rmo-ba*) seems to have usually been done with the aid of teams (*dor*) supplied from or through the officials, being probably yaks of the kind still reared in places on the northern slopes of the mountain barrier²; the Kharoṣṭhī documents, however, do not seem to refer to yaks, and the teams of later times may indeed have been of oxen. One who takes care of fields is *chun-pa*. The crop (*skya*) was usually of wheat (*gro*), barley (*nas*), or millet (*khre*); whether the distinction of "white" (*dkar*) and "black" (*gnag*) was

¹ The *gan-žin* and *dbañ-thañ* of 1928, pp. 572-3, seem to mean "fixed allotments" and "special privileges" respectively.

² Grenard, op. cit., ii, pp. 182-3, 212. Forsyth, op. cit., pp. 70-1.

between different kinds of wheat or otherwise, does not appear—the white seems to be the *śuka masu* of the Kharoṣṭhī documents. The grain was *stsañ*, and those who were engaged in conveying it from place to place were called *stsañ-hdren*; flour is *phye*.

It would seem that pits (*bañ-doñ*, p. 566) were used for storage of grain, as of other objects. The government portion taken as tax (*khral*) would, when not removed to headquarters, be deposited in toll and corn-stations (*rtsañ-gam*, the *draṅga* of the Kharoṣṭhī records), whence, no doubt, couriers and other persons provided with orders would be supplied.

Taxation will not have been confined to agricultural produce. We hear of a horse levied as a tax and of a carpet demanded upon a particular occasion. It is probable that the yield of animal breeding (including wool used for making felt and ropes), and also the occupations of craftsmen, were taxed. Of the system followed in regard to irrigation and supply of water, which must always have been important and is mentioned, 1928, p. 573, and in regard to gold or copper mining and jade-working, we have no inkling.

It is obvious that for the purposes of assessment and revenue, and also in connection with levies, assignments, and orders upon the store-houses, a system of accounts must have been necessary. Accordingly we have many references to the *rtsis* “census” or “assessment” or “accounts”, both in regard to countries or districts as a whole, and in regard to estates (as well as in connection with the army, on which matter see 1933, p. 380); thus the Tibetan *Chronicle* records (ll. 158, 160, 163) a *rtsis* in connection with the demarking of certain “lord’s lands” and in many other connections; the results of a *rtsis* are reported (1930, p. 81) from Khotan to the authorities in Śiñ-śan; and the Gośṛṅga *Prophecy* speaks of the census-total of the country of Khotan. For these purposes use was made of wooden tablets such as those which have survived; we have *khram* accounts (*khram-tshan*) of revenues of monasteries in Śa-cu (1928, pp. 66–9). The Tibetan

Chronicle has many references to these *khram*'s, sometimes called red (*dmar*) *khram*'s, and their revision, and in one instance we learn (l. 246) of a transfer of records from red *khrams* to yellow paper. For illustrations and descriptions of such *khrams* see Sir A. Stein's *Serindia*, pls. clxxi-ii. Not seldom they are notched or lined for numerical purposes, and often they have been cut away to serve as a tally.

For the purpose of an assessment a survey would be an occasional or permanent necessity. The *yul-mthoñ* or *yul-zigs* would be the district surveyor or overseer ; but we have also a fragment of a long document recording a survey of an obviously preliminary character. The Tibetan *Chronicle* uses the phrase *phyiñ-ril* "circumference" (?), in connection with the *rtsis* of certain "lord's lands" ; and it seems likely that a boundary palisade of trees is meant, such as we are told¹ that the Tibetans made on the Chinese frontier at Liang-chow, posting guards along it.

The measures used in connection with grain are *khal*, "load" (= Sanskrit *bhāra* or *vāha* or *khārī*) = 20 *bre*. Sometimes there is mention of a *rkañ*, "bundle" or "truss". For oil and flesh we have the *phul*, literally "handful", = 4 *khyor* ; for wool the *phor* or *pho-re* ; for butter (*mar*), etc., the *srañ* "ounce" = 10 *zo*. Measured lengths are in fathoms (*hdom*). A roll of silk or paper is *yug*, and a "bundle" of wood seems to be *ris*. A *pa-tsa* or *pha-tsha* is a packet.

Coming to matters of a more individualist character and extending to the whole country of Chinese Turkestan, we find much evidence of journeyings covering considerable stretches. This has always been, as it still is,² a feature of Central Asia. The extent of the country of Chinese Turkestan itself, about 1,000 miles from East to West by about 600 from North to South, and the uninhabited spaces separating the settled oases, might have been sufficient to engender this trait. But the almost incredibly long trade routes, from

¹ Bushell, *JRAS.*, 1880, p. 469.

² See Grenard, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 87-8.

China to the Greek and Roman east, whereof the *traversée* of the whole country was only a stage; the dependence of the country upon distant China, interrupted only by domination of far-flung nomad powers issuing from Mongolia; the communications of China with its dependencies in and beyond the Pamirs; the passage in old days of Buddhist pilgrims from China to Bactria and India, then of Manichæans and Christians to Persia, later of Musalmans to Mecca, of Buddhists from Mongolia to Lhasa, must have accustomed the population at the several periods to contemplate a wide geographical horizon. This would certainly have undergone no contraction in Tibetan times. The mere presence in Turkestan of authorities from Lha-sa and of soldiers from all parts of the great country of Tibet, at a time when it was in military contact with the Chinese from Ssüch'uan to Kan-su, with the Turks from the Tian-shan to the Pamir countries and even with the Arabs in Transoxiana, must have dwarfed the scale of mere internal communications in Turkestan itself. We have quoted (1927, p. 546) letters of introduction given by Tibetan authorities in Kan-su to a Buddhist pilgrim from the famous shrine of Wu-t'ai-shan in Shan-si, safeguarding him as far as Śa-cu, whence he was to make the grand pilgrimage to India. A mission from a Khotan king inspects all the towns to the east as far as Kan-su and Shañ-si in China and includes in its survey the places in the Tian-shan region, and perhaps further west. A party of spies has been absent from Khotan nearly a year and has covered great distances, into Tibet (1930, p. 86); and other parties send missives to be passed on to the Nob region and then to Khotan (pp. 84-5). Certain emissaries are to follow a company of exiles from Nob as far as Kva-cu (1927, p. 819). A messenger arrives in the Khotan region with goods from remote Skyañ-ro in North-Eastern Tibet (1930, p. 273). These particulars are sufficient to account for the rather frequent references in the documents to journeys (*rad*) and to matters (*skyel*, "convoy" or "transport", *ri-skyel*, "mountain convoy"),

rad-gos "travel-clothes", *ri-zug* "mountain-sickness") and persons (*ban-chen*, *rin-lugs*, etc., 1927, p. 66), and to disputes in connection with these.

In the Kharoṣṭhī records the most frequently mentioned transport animal is the camel; but the horse and ox appear not rarely, and both are indigenous in the country. The Tibetan documents refer seldom to camels, which in Tibet itself are not liked. There is mention of riding-horses (*mchibs*, *rta*) not only in military connections, but also for private conveyance. But the place of pride in ordinary journeys belongs to the ass, the usual pack-animal. The sheep also serves (1927, p. 80) for conveyance, perhaps especially of corn; this expedient, the value of which has been estimated in modern times,¹ may have been introduced from Tibet. To wheeled transport or to sedan-chairs or palankeens there is no reference.

The only other animal mentioned is the dog, which, as in the Chinese references to the dogs of Turfan and Kuca, appears as an object of fancy (in Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p. 1087) or employed for hunting.

Some slight interest attaches to the objects, other than provisions, mentioned in law-cases or in letters, as required or received—silk, carpets, wool, cotton, ribbons, ropes, paper; oil; dress, overcoats, winter things; fire-stones, cups, baskets, copper vessels, iron, bell-metal; rings, turquoise, jade, seed-pearls, coral; medicines. There are some recipes and applications for medicines, and also inquiries addressed to the doctor, involving, it seems, divination by means of [sheep's] shoulder-blades (cf. Rubruquis' *Journey*, tr. Rockhill, pp. 187–8).

Burial was practised in Chinese Turkestan, as is proved by the archæological explorations of graves.² In Khotan the normal practice was cremation; but the kings were buried far out in the desert, temples being built and services held in their honour. Grenard has propounded the view that the

¹ Forsyth, *Mission to Yarkund*, pp. 492–3.

² Sir A. Stein, *Serindia and Innermost Asia*, s.v. burial.

present shrines of Musalman saints in Khotan are really derived from cult of the royal tombs ; and he even holds (op. cit., ii, pp. 240-3) that the Musalman sacred places in the country generally derive their sanctity from Buddhist and pre-Buddhist worship. In the documents we have reference to burial, both of soldiers and of civilians, and to a ceremony, apparently of mourning, wherein certain persons during certain days were to drink cups of liquid (? beer, *chai*) to a prescribed extent. These ceremonies may, however, have been not Central-Asian, but Tibetan.

The Buddhist religion is a subject too extensive to consider here. And so we need only refer to the decadence lamented in the translated texts. Particular matters are the mention of appropriation of the property (*rkyen*) of religious establishments, including tombs (1928, p. 580), in secular exigencies and of monks taking to mundane and undignified occupations. In the documents, both Kharoṣṭhī and Tibetan, the individual *ban-de* appears sometimes in connection with business transactions, such as loan, rent, or sale.

Of the art of writing the Tibetans, as neighbours of the Chinese and still more proximately of the Tu-yu[k]-hun, who employed the Chinese script, must have been aware from old times. Their contact with the Shan-shan kingdom, early in the seventh century A.D., may have acquainted them with developed forms of the Indian Brāhmī. It was therefore an outcome of *amour-propre* and political self-assertion when the great king Sroñ-btsan Sgam-po, about A.D. 640, dispatched a mission to Kashmir (1927, pp. 61 sqq.) with the object of designing a specially Tibetan alphabet. This alphabet, which differs widely from the Turkestan Brāhmī, developed quickly into cursive forms, normal in most of the documents, and in Kan-su was occasionally employed for writing Chinese and other languages. From the circumstance that non-cursive forms are rather more common in the documents from Mazār-Tāgh than in the (somewhat earlier) collection from Mirān it may be inferred that writing was

less practised in Tibet, whence the writers were more recently come, than in the Shan-shan area, where Tibetan rule was of older establishment upon a more cultivated local administrative basis. But in Tibet itself writing was in the eighth century very extensively practised for secretariat purposes and in elaborate systems of military (1933, p. 280) and other registration, for which, as well as for other short records, dockets, tallies, etc., for letters and visiting cards, the wooden tablets were profusely employed. The writing often continued into a second, or third, tablet, attached by a tie through the string-holes; sometimes a paper missive was inserted between the split halves of a stick or pod. The paper, coarse, unglazed, and far inferior to the thin, smooth, yellow material devised by the Chinese, was designated *śog*, usually in the re-duplicated form *śog-śog*. The scraping of the tablets for a second or third use and the inditing of letters on the *verso* of old ones or of Chinese literary MSS. show that economy was necessary in regard to both materials; paper, indeed, is sometimes selected by correspondents as an acceptable present. The ink (*snag*) was ordinarily black, as indicated by its name; but red was sometimes used for headings, and there was affectation of other sorts, gold, silver, and turquoise, for distinction or for ornamental and lapidary uses (1927, pp. 61-2). In the Buddhist monasteries there was, as we have seen, a regular business of copying MS., the hands being fairly calligraphic, though not attaining the beauty of some of the later Tibetan styles in Kan-su. The varieties of hand and of use in the documents and the *sgraffiti* in the Enderé fort prove that a knowledge of writing was widespread.

The terminology applied to postal communications has already been frequently exemplified, so that here we may be content to assemble the expressions:—

byañ “tablet”. *byañ-bu* “little tablet”. *hphrin-byañ* “missive tablet”. *bsñel* (or *rjed*)-*byañ* “reminder tablet”. *grans-byañ* “number tablet”. *bskyel-byañ* “convoy tablet”.

brgyags-byañ “ provision ticket ”.

so-byañ “ soldier tablet ”.

so-res-byañ “ soldier-relay tablet ”.

hphar-ma “ pass ” ?

hḍrul-ba “ letter ” or “ postman ”.

spriñ or *gtañ[d]* “ to dispatch ”.

mjal (in sense=Hindī *mīl*) “ arrive ”, “ be received ”.

The composition of the letters is in more or less stereotyped form. They begin with an address to the presence or feet (*ža-sña = pāda-mūla* of the Kharoṣṭhī documents) of the correspondent, a date in terms of the Twelve-Year Cycle being sometimes prefixed; then comes the name of the person from whom the communication, usually designated “ petition ” (*gsol-ba*) or “ letter-petition ” (*mchid-gsol-ba*), comes. Next follow inquiries concerning health (*sñan-sñuñs*) or expressions of pleasure or regret or hope according to news of the addressee’s good or bad health, and, *casu obtinente*, of thanks for inquiries or for the favour of a letter, often termed a “ command ” (*bkañ*, 1927, pp. 67, 71, etc.). Then, often introduced by the expression *slan-cad* “ next ” or “ for the rest ”, follows the business part of the letter, which frequently terminates with a reiteration of prayer for the correspondent’s health or for an early meeting. Sometimes there is a post-script from the writer’s wife or a member of his family, addressed either to the same person or to a relative.

The tone is highly courteous. Important persons address each other as “ brother ” (*mched = priya-bhrātu* of the Kharoṣṭhī documents) or are addressed as “ equal to a theophany ” or “ to a god ” (*hphrul-dañ-mtshuñs, lha-dañ-mtshuñs = pratya-kṣa-devatā* of the Kharoṣṭhī) or *stans-dbyal* “ of distinguished station ”. To have written is “ a favour ” (*ci-gnañ* “ what a favour ! ”). Thanks are expressed by *gtan-rag-htshal*. Trouble to be taken is *thugs-khral* “ mind-tax ”; and “ will you be so good as to attend to ? ” is *thugs-pags-cir-mdzad* (or *gzigs*). Often a present is sent, with a request for the favour of its acceptance (*bžes-na-ci-gnañ* “ do you consent to accept ? ”);

or there may be apology for the failure or the inadequacy of a gift. A rather peremptory request from a friend or superior will be in the form "not to do . . . is not good (*sman*) or not proper (*ruñ*)". An underling, servant, or agent refers to himself as "my humble self" (*bdag-ñan-pa*), makes excuses for failure, and hopes to escape punishment or reprimand. Often a friendly letter is sent merely to convey inquiries as to health, or an official one to "mark time"; and so the phrase *sñan-sñuñs* seems to be used of such mere intimations of interest or good will. Despite the formalities the tone is often practical and of human interest, with signs of familiarity or even traces of jocosity between friends.

Official or semi-official occasions for letters would include such matters as replies to inquiry as to the gossip, *bkah-mchid*, in such and such a place, questions concerning appointments or favours, requests for interviews and appeals against punishment. We have one, apparently anonymous, letter of denunciation.

The many points of resemblance between these Tibetan letters and the earlier Kharoṣṭhī ones (the Tibetan ones are, however, not so extravagant in personal eulogy) suffice to prove that they are following the, ultimately, Indian model of the latter.¹ In the Śāka-Khotanī language we possess a moderate number of similar documents, which may eventually, when read and understood, present material for comparison.

The function of the post-runner (traceable, perhaps, behind the Latin *acupediis*, Greek *ὠκύνους*, and the story of the Marathon messenger Pheidippides) was of high antiquity and importance in the east: it has curiously eluded the writers of romance, though Bāṇa does, in his *Harṣa-carita* (c. 5), depict the *dīrghādhvaga* Kuruṅgaka. For Central Asia we have the descriptions by Odoric de Pordenone and others cited in *Cathay and the Way Thither*, new ed., ii, pp. 232-3 and note; and in regard to Tibet Father Huc has a striking passage (Paris, 1850, vol. ii, pp. 443-4) concerning the

¹ See *Acta Orientalia*, xii, pp. 62-5.

short-lived couriers who had to “ travel during the night among these mountains, where frightful precipices are encountered at almost every step ”. The documents use several designations, *rkañ-mgyogs* “ swift-foot ”, *bañ-chen* “ great-speed (or leg) ”, *riñ-lu(g)s* “ distance-habit (or body) ”, *riñs-pa* “ fast ”, *h̄drul(h̄grul)-ba* “ traveller ”, none of them rendering the Kharoṣṭhī *lekhaḥaraḡa*.

To books and literature the documents from Mirān and Mazār-Tāgh do not allude (the Kharoṣṭhī has references to *pothi*'s). There are a few fragments of exercises in the alphabet, in arithmetic and in forms of address, and one or two of Buddhist quotations or expressions. But from the hidden library of Tun-huang we have, beside masses of Buddhist literary texts, some pieces of quasi-secular writing, medical, narrative, etc., including the previously (*Indian Studies in Honour of C. R. Lanman*, pp. 193–212) reported epitome version of the *Rāmāyana*.

The extent of the business of copying religious works may be judged from the hundreds of surviving duplicates of certain short texts and from the mention in one of the documents cited above (p. 95) of eighty scribes (*yi-ge-pa*) and twenty revisors (*žu-che[n]*). These might be ecclesiastics. But the numerous legal and other documents, and a record of payment for a new copy of a letter damaged (?) in transit (M. Tāgh, b. i, 0051), imply, no doubt, professional scribes, distinct from the official persons and secretariats (*tshañ-lon* “ councillor for accounts ”, in Śa-cu, 1927, p. 67). We have mention also of donations for the expense of copying, and of private persons themselves writing out texts as a work of merit (*ibid.*, pp. 282–3).

178.

(To be continued.)

