Notes on Early Tibetan History—Marriage Relations between the Ancient Tibetan Royal House and the T’ang Imperial Family

By Zuihō Yamaguchi

The author establishes, on the basis of the text of the Lhasa Treaty Monument and the Tun-huang Documents, that the relationship of ‘chhi sheng’ or ‘elkon shan’ said to have existed between Tibet and T’ang China was the one between the maternal grandfather and his grandson or that between their descendants, and points out that the relationship came into existence only after the marriage of the Chinese princess Wen-ch’eng Kung-chu to a Tibetan king, on the strength of Chinese records. Tibetan historians of later times, however, ascribe the origin of the relationship to the marriage of another Chinese princess Chin-ch’eng Kung-chu, though their assertion is easily refuted by what the Tun-huang Documents report. The author then advances the hypothesis that Khon co maṅ mo rje khrī skar mentioned in the Tun-huang Documents is nobody but Princess Wen-ch’eng. Upon this basic assumption the author makes an attempt at rearranging chronology concerning the reigns of King Guni sron guṇ britsang and his son Man slon maṅ rtsan born to Khon co khrī skar, by critically comparing the reports of later Tibetan historians on their ancient kings, and arrives at the conclusion that Gun sron guṇ britsang was born in 623, succeeded to the throne in 638, married in 640, begot his eldest son in 642 and died in 643. He also points out that in 643 Khrī sroṅ britsang ascended the throne for a second time at the age of 63. The reason why the later historians confused facts are, according to the author, the ubiquitous legend of ‘ascending the throne at the thirteenth year of his life’, the abridged title or Khon co common to both princesses and another name of Khrī sroṅ britsang being Sroṅ lde britsang, easily mistakable for Khrī sroṅ lde britsang. As for his sources, the author, besides Lho brag chos bkyuṅ, pays special attention to Rgyal rabs rnams kyi byuṅ tshul gsal bāgli me loṅ, which he thinks to have been written by Bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan in 1328.