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Dates of the Compilation of

Sum cu pa and rTags kyi 'jug pa

by Zuihō Yamaguchi

Tibetan traditions say that the thirty Tibetan characters were invented by
Thon mi sañbbota, a minister under King Srong btsan sgam po, and that
the same minister composed both Sum cu pa and rTags kyi 'jug pa,
works on Tibetan grammar.

The clan name Thon mi occurs in Tibetan documents from Tun-huang,
but the name of a minister, Thon mi sañbbota or Aanü’i bu, never does,
either in the reign of Srong btsan sgam po or in later ones. There it is
said only that the Tibetan characters originated at the time of Srong btsan
sgam po.

When compared to the contents of Sum cu pa and rTags kyi 'jug pa,
the Tibetan text of the stone pillar inscription of Zhol in Lhasa reveals
some striking features, the most interesting of which is that the latter
replaces ‘k’yi’, the genitive particle explained in Sum cu pa, with ‘gyi’ in
all places. Similar examples have been found in Tibetan documents from
Tun-huang but are not conclusive as their dates are difficult to determine
and they are prone to be affected by the scribes’ education. The stone
pillar inscription, unlike them, preserves the text of a royal decree ensuring
hereditary privileges for the descendants of Ngan lam stag sgra khong lod,
thus reliable enough to prove that then ‘k’yi’ was not yet in common use.
On the other hand, rTags kyi ‘jug pa states the rule of accordance of
particles as “a neutral (ma ning) suffix (rjes ‘jug’) is followed by a final
particle that is a neutral character (ming gshi)”. This rule, which ceased
to be widely adhered to after the adoption of new translation terms (skad
gsar bcad), has left many examples in the inscription on the southern face
of the Zhol stone pillar. Should Sum cu pa and rTags kyi ‘jug pa have
been composed by one and the same person, they would fall between the
end of the eighth century and 814. Other internal evidences show that
Sum cu pa, whose grammatical explanation is incomplete, is later than
rTugs kyi 'jug pa. If we are to call the author of Sum rtags Thon mi
samshoṅa, he should be regarded not as the inventor of the thirty charac-
ters but as the composer of thirty slokas...rTugs kyi 'jug pa consists of as
many...sometime later than the reign of Khri srong lde brtsan, 742-797.

Origin and Ethics of the Northern-Sung Gentry
by Sadao Aoyama

Many of the T'ang aristocrat-bureaucrats lost their social status under
the successive military governments that came to power in the late-T'ang
and Five-Dynasties period, whose place was taken over by the local land-
lords who emerged far and wide under the Sung Dynasty. The latter
aspired to achieve scholarly excellence and eagerly practiced Confucian
ethics in order to gain respectability in the eyes of their kinsmen and
countrymen. They also entered the officialdom through the channel of the
Civil Service Examinations in increasing numbers until they completely
took over the new bureaucratic system of the Sung government. In the
second half of the Northern-Sung period and later, however, the tendency
of bureaucratic privileges concentrating in a specific layer of the society
gradually gave rise to an attitude of pursuit of selfish interests among
them.

"The Nine Bends West of the Yellow River"
by Hisashi Satō

In 710 the T'ang emperor married Princess Chin-ch'eng to the Tibetan
king and gave him the land of the Nine Bends West of the Yellow River
(Ho hsi chiü chü) as her dowry. Since then, the Tibetans used it as an
important strategic base, from which they repeatedly made inroads into the
T'ang territory. The land in question, used to be identified with the upper
reaches of the Yellow River between Kuei-te and the estuary of the Pao-an
River, was actually the Sëryol Valley farther upstream. This location can
be determined on the basis of the distance from K'uo-chou and Chi-shih-
chün, location of which are in turn determined from information in Yüan
ho chün hsien t'ü chih. The river, now known as Mang ra in Tibetan,
was called the Hsi-chih by the ancient Chinese. Other fortresses that ex-
isted in the upper reaches of the Yellow River in the T'ang times also can
be geographically identified on this basis, and they indicate that Shui chung
chu's report on this region fails to combine two separate sources of infor-
mation on the same subject.

Original Documents of Yung cheng chu p'i yü chih
by Tomi Saeki

The palace memorials bearing vermilion endorsements handwritten by
Ch'ing Emperor Yung-cheng in the possession of the National Palace
Museum, Taipei, number more than 22,300 in Chinese, published, unpublish-
ed and not to be published, and 890 in Manchu. The Chinese palace
memorials published in Yung cheng chu p'i yü chih are only about 7,000;
that is, two thirds of the documents still remain unpublished. Comparison
of the published documents with their originals reveals considerable textual
differences. The published texts frequently omit a passage and replace
words and phrases. Many of such abridgements appear to result from
political considerations. Stylistically, vernacular forms that often cloud
the text of the originals are replaced by classical, more precise expres-
sions in the published text. The same can be said of the imperial ver-
million endorsements by Yung-cheng. This must be the result of the
editing by the literate staff of the Hanlin Academy done at the time of
publication on the original text of the palace memorials that were mostly
composed by official clerks, private secretaries who were failed Civil
Service Examination candidates, and military officers who had little culture.
Also clerical errors found in the originals are corrected in their published
form. It should be noted, moreover, that the passages stricken out in the
originals by Yung-cheng's vermilion brush, which are not reproduced in
their published form, sometimes carry highly important information. Thus
the original documents of Yung cheng chu p'i yü chih are, not only su-
perior in quantity to the published edition, but extremely valuable as
primary historical sources. There is not the slightest doubt that, if the
originals are printed as they are, study of the history of the Yung-cheng
period will advance tremendously.