

How should *bökli* or *bükli* be transcribed and interpreted?

By Masao MORI

I

According to the descriptions in the so-called Köl-Tegin and Bilgä-Qayan Inscriptions, it is evident that during the eighth century a kingdom and people known as *bökli* or *bükli* were located to the east of the T'u-chüeh 突厥 Khaghanate and the king was entitled *bökli* or *bükli* $q(a)y(a)n$.

Various opinions have been put forward as to how this *bökli* or *bükli* should be transcribed and interpreted by such philologists or linguists as W. W. Radloff, V. Thomsen, W. Bang, P. M. Melioranskij, H. N. Orkun, A. von Gabain, S. E. Malov, T. Tekin, G. Aydarov, M. Ergin etc., and an ethnologist L. P. Potapov.

It may be fairly claimed that Seiichiro Iwasa 岩佐精一郎 was the first historian to propose a theory on this question apart from these philologists, linguists and ethnologist.¹⁾

His theory is as follows: The script *bökli* or *bükli* have to be transcribed as *bökli* and can be identified with the Kao-chü-li 高句麗 people and its kingdom which dominated the southern part of Manchuria and north Korea, if we take into consideration the facts that *bökli* and Kao-chü-li were located to the east of the contemporary T'u-chüeh Khaghanate and that the latter had either hostile or diplomatic relations with Kao-chü-li.

But we cannot disregard a noticeable phonetic difference between *bökli* and Kao-chü-li. How can this difference be explained? Iwasa answered this question in the following way: The Kao-chü-li people belonged to the Mo 貊 race originally, hence they were called Mo people at the time of the Han 漢 Dynasty. Furthermore, we can infer that the Pai-chi 百濟 people called Kao-chü-li by the name of Mo from an account of *Pai-chi chi* 百濟記 cited in the *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀 or *Chronicles of Japan*. On the basis of this we are able to identify *bö(k)* in *bökli* with Mo (*m¹ak. Baku and haku in Japanese pronunciation) and *-kli* with chü-li, probably the state name of Kao-chü-li (the root of Kao-chü-li was Chü-li without doubt). Consequently, we can possibly surmise that *bökli* means Chü-li of the Mo race, that is Mo-chü-li (M¹ak-kjiu-liäi. 貊句麗).

Thus, Iwasa considered *bökli* to be Mo-chü-li and the latter to be Kao-chü-li.

Iwasa referred to the Moukri people, who Theophylactos Simocattes, a Byzantine chronicler, described as inhabiting the neighbourhood of China and being very warlike. Taking into consideration the fact that the Kao-chü-li people dwelt close by the lands of the Northern Chou 北周 and the Northern Ch'i 北齊 Dynasties and were said to have been "very energetic and warlike 有氣力, 習戰鬪", too, Iwasa concluded that the only people who can be identified with the Moukri people mentioned by Theophylactos Simocattes were the Kao-chü-li, and the name Moukri which the Byzantines had learned from the T'u-chüh people was surely a corrupted form of the name *bökli*, the term by which the T'u-chüeh people referred to the Kao-chü-li people.

This theory of Seiichiro Iwasa may be highly appraised.

Nevertheless, we cannot find any such people or kingdom known as Mo-chü-li 緡句麗 which Iwasa identified with *bökli* and Kao-chü-li in any historical source.

As for the Moukri referred to by Theophylactos Simocattes, it deserves attention in this connection that there is such an expression as "Kao-li Mu-chü-li (Mokuri in Japanese pronunciation) 高麗 畝俱理" in the *Fan-yü-tsa-ming* 梵語雜名. Dr. Gimpu Uchida 内田吟風, following the opinion of E. Chavannes, put forward a theory that identified the Moukri mentioned by Theophylactos Simocattes with the Wu-chi 勿吉 or the Mo-ho 靺鞨.²⁾ But, according to B. Karlgren, the two Chinese ideographs, 勿吉 and 靺鞨, might be pronounced as *mjuət-kiët and *muät-yat respectively during the T'ang 唐 period. These sounds are out of accord with Moukri as Iwasa has already pointed out. It seems that Moukri in Theophylactos Simocattes indicated Kao-chü-li and may be related to Mu-chü-li (Mokuri) in the *Fan-yü-tsa-ming* so far as the pronunciation is concerned. In other words, it can be safely claimed that Kao(-chü)-li was called Moukri and such like. This problem shall be touched upon later.

Leaving aside the Moukri referred to by Theophylactos Simocattes for the moment, the present writer cannot agree with the theory as presented by Iwasa that *bökli* may be identified with the Chü-li of the Mo race, that is Mo-chü-li 緡句麗, and Mo-chü-li with Kao-chü-li on the grounds of the afore-said evidence.

Thereafter, Ts'en Chung-mien 岑仲勉, supposing that *bökli* is the transcription of Mo-li 莫離 of the Mo-li-chih 莫離支, a title name of the Kao-chü-li Kingdom, and taking into consideration not only the aforementioned account of the *Fan-yü-tsa-ming*, but also the description about "the land called Mug-lig by the Drugu (namely the T'u-chüeh people) and Ke'u-li 高麗 by the Chinese" in a Tibetan document (8 century) (Pelliot collection, No. 1283),³⁾ asserted that the fact that b- and m- sounds are interchangeable with each other confirms fairly well that *bökli* is nothing other than Mo-li, Mu-chü-li (mokuri 畝俱理), Mug-lig and Kao (-chü)-li.⁴⁾ But, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the T'u-chüeh people indicated the Kao-chü-li Kingdom

by its title name, Mo-li, and the king of the Kao-chü-li Kingdom, by *bökli quyan*, namely Mo-li Qayan.

The word Mug-lig in a Tibetan document shall be referred to later, too.

Then, H. W. Haussig, identifying *bökli cöl* with fu-li-chü 伏利具 in the sentence that "in the 3rd year (of Jên-shou [仁壽]) (603), more than ten T'ieh-lê tribes including Ssü-chieh, Fu-li-chü, Hun, Hsieh-sa, A-pa, P'u-ku etc., rising in revolt against Ta-t'ou, begged to be allowed to surrender (to the Sui 隋 Dynasty)";

[仁壽] 三年，有鐵勒思結·伏利具·渾·斜薩·阿拔·僕骨等十餘部，盡背達頭，請來降附。

presumed that *bökli* might be the land of the so-called "Sung-mo 松漠", which was located among the Qitany (Ch'i-tan 契丹), the T(a)t(a)bi and the Chinese.⁵⁾ But, this seems to be a groundless argument.

II

Then, how should *bökli* or *bükli* be transcribed?

The present writer while reexamining the so-called Orkhon Inscriptions, was deeply impressed that the almost all scholars who researched the Inscriptions were too heavily influenced by the theories of W. W. Radloff and V. Thomsen. This applies to the script in question. Since they transcribed *bökli* or *bükli* as *bökli*, nobody seems to have doubted this transcription. Although A. von Gabain transcribed this word as *bökli* (*ü* ?) and H. N. Orkun and T. Tekin as *bükli*, it may be said that their opinions were also under the influence of W. W. Radloff and V. Thomsen.

Since the *bökli*-theory was expounded by them, almost all philologists, linguists and historians have followed this transcription and the like, and tried to find the meaning of *bökli* on the basis of it. But, it seems that these efforts have failed to realize any result with the exception of Iwasa whose opinion is very suggestive.

The present writer would like to advance a theory to transcribe *bökli* or *bükli* not as *bökli* but as *bök eli* (or *ili*) (<*el+i*, *il+i*). It is a matter of common knowledge that there are many cases where the word *el* (or *il*) is expressed in only one script *l*.

Then, what did the T'u-chüeh people designate by *bök eli*? Needless to say, *bök eli* means "the state or land of *bök*".

In such a case, what does *bök* mean? It is a matter of course that *bök* is the transcription of Mo 貂 as Iwasa supposes.

That the kingdom of Kao-chü-li was founded by the Mo 貂 people is apparent from, for example, a passage in the *Hou Han-shu* 後漢書, vol. 85, *Tung-i Ch'uan* 東夷傳 which reads as follows;

“Another name of (Kao-)chü-li is Mo. There is another tribe of them, who dwell along a small river. Hence, they are called Small-River-Mo. The Mo people produce an excellent bow. This is the so-called bow of Mo”

[高] 句驪，一名貂耳。有別種，依小水爲居，因名曰小水貂。出好弓，所謂貂弓是也。

It is apparent that Kao-chü-li was “the state of Mo” from this sentence. The soldiers of Kao-chü-li, namely the Kao-chü-li people, are expressed under the name of “the Mo people 貂人” in a passage in the *San-kuo-chih* 三國志, vol. 30, *Tung-i Ch'uan* 東夷傳. Furthermore, passages in the *Ts'e-fu-yüan-kuei* 冊府元龜, vol. 957, *Wai-ch'en Pu* 外臣部, *Kuo-i* 國邑 and *Pei-shih* 北史, vol. 94, *Pai-chi Ch'uan* 百濟傳 read respectively as follows;

“If one goes from the land of Pai-chi toward the west for two days, you arrive at the state of Mo

……百濟自西行二日，至貂國”，

and “it is said that one travels (from the land of Pai-chi) toward the west for three days for (a distance of) more than thousand li, you arrive at the state of Mo

……西行三日，至貂國千餘里云”。

“The state of Mo” in these passages is nothing other than that of Kao-chü-li.

We can safely conclude from these passages that the Kao-chü-li state and people were called Mo by the Chinese at various periods. Taking this into consideration, it would not be mistaken to say that the T'u-chüeh people called the Kao-chü-li Kingdom “the state of Mo” as the Chinese did.

According to B. Karlgren, the Chinese ideography Mo 貂 was pronounced as *mæk during the T'ang 唐 period, while Dr. Rokuro Kono 河野六郎 told me in a personal conversation that Mo was pronounced as *m^bak at Chang-an 長安 during the T'ang period. And according to a study by Dr. Kono, the pronunciation of Mo was *m^vik in Middle Korean.⁶⁾ Since there were various relations between the T'u-chüeh Khaghanate and the Kao-chü-li people and its Kingdom as Seiichiro Iwasa pointed out, it is quite probable that the T'u-chüeh people realized very well that the Kao-chü-li people were the Mo people. Hence, to the T'u-chüeh people the Kao-chü-li Kingdom was “the state of Mo”, and they transliterated the sound of *m^vik, m^bak or mæk and such like as bök, and called the Kao-chü-li Kingdom as bök eli (or ili) namely “the state of bök”.

As for Mug-lig, in an account about “the land called Mug-lig by the Drugu (namely the T'u-chüeh people) and Ke'u-li 高麗 by the Chinese” in a

Tibetan document, it consists of Mug and +lig which denotes "mit etwas versehen, zu etwas gehörig." In that case, Mug-lig means "the land of Mug" or "the land which belongs to Mug", and it seems that this Mug is also the transcription of the sound Mo (𧯛. *m^vik, m^bak or m^ɛk) and the like. But the present writer supposes that "the land of Mug (Mo)" or "the land which belongs to Mug" does not refer to Kao-chü-li itself.

G. Clauson, identifying this Mug-lig with *bükli*, his transcription of the word in question, and stating that it must be the transcription of Mo-ho 鞞鞞, quoted the opinion of E. G. Pulleyblank that it must have referred to the Po-hai 渤海 state.⁷⁾ The present writer cannot agree with the theory of G. Clauson that *bükli* (*bökli*) can be identified with Mug-lig as well as Mo-ho. But he does think that it is evident that Mug-lig, namely "the land of Mug (Mo)" or "the land which belongs to Mug", means the Po-hai state. The reason why he thinks so is that Ta Tsu-yung 大祚榮 who founded the Po-hai state might have originally come from the Kao-chü-li people, namely Mo people, and because the Po-hai state was established on the former land of Kao-chü-li, that is Mo. He supposes that Mu-chü-li (Mokuri 敵俱理) which is stated as referring to "Kao (-chü)-li" in the *Fan-yü-tsa-ming* is not *bökli* as Ts'en Chung-mien put it, but a corrupted form of Mug-lig, and can also be identified with Po-hai.

In short, the present writer's opinion is that the old Turkic peoples including the T'u-chüeh people pronounced the Chinese ideograph Mo 𧯛 as *bök* or Mug and so forth, and indicated the Mo state and people, first those of Kao-chü-li and then Po-hai, with the words *bök eli* (or *ili*) or Mug-lig and such like, and Moukri mentioned by Theophylactos Simocattes is an inexact expression of the sound Mug-lig as well as Mu-chü-li (Mokuri) in the *Fan-yü-tsa-ming*, and indicates Kao-chü-li.

All things considered, the present writer would like to propose a theory that *bökli* or *bükli* should be transcribed as *bök eli* (or *ili*) and that it means "the state of Mo" which refers to the Kao-chü-li Kingdom. In that case, it is a matter of course that *bök eli* (or *ili*) *qayan* means "the qayan of the state of Mo", that is to say "the king of the Kao-chü-li Kingdom".

This brings me to the same conclusion as Seiichiro Iwasa in the sense that we both suppose that *bök* is a transcription of the original sound of Mo and *bökli* or *bükli* refers to "the state of Mo", namely the Kao-chü-li Kingdom, although the present writer transcribes *bökli* or *bükli* not as *bökli* as Iwasa did, but as *bök eli* (or *ili*). This is why he stated that the opinion of Seiichiro Iwasa may be highly appraised and is very suggestive.

NOTES

- 1) Seiichiro Iwasa, "Ko-Tokketsu-hibun no Bökli oyobi Par Purm ni tsuite", in *Iwasa Seiichiro Ikō* ("On the Bökli and Par Purm in the Inscriptions written in the old T'u-chüeh lan-

- guage", in *Posthumous Works of Seiichiro Iwasa*, Tokyo, 1936, pp. 62-64.
- 2) Gimpu Uchida, "Ju-zen (Zen-zen) Avaru dozokuron kō", in *Kita-Ajia-shi Kenkyu* ("On the Problems of the Identity of the Jou-jan (Juan-juan) and the Avars", in *Studies of North Asian History*), Kyoto, 1975, pp. 402-403.
 - 3) J. Bacot, "Reconnaissance en Haut Asie Septentrionale par cinq envoyés Ouigours au VIII^e siècle", in *JA*, Tome CCXLIV, 1956, pp. 141, 145.
 - 4) Ts'en Chung-mien, "T'u-chüeh wên Ch'üeh-t'ê-ch'in pei", in *T'u-chüeh Chi-shih II* ("The Köl-Tegin Inscription written in the T'u-chüeh Language", in *Collected Historical Materials about the T'u-chüeh II*), Peking, 1958, pp. 880, 892-893, 1133.
 - 5) H. W. Haussig, "Theophylakts Exkurs über die skythischen Völker", in *Byzantion*, Tome XXIII, 1953, SS. 331-348, 349, 352, 384.
 - 6) Rokuro Kono, "Shiryō on-in-hyo I", "Materials: A Table of Vowels and Consonants", in *Chosen Kanji-on no Kenkyu* (*Studies in the Korean Readings of Chinese Characters*), Tenri, 1968, p. 53. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Kono for his help with the Korean Readings of Chinese characters.
 - 7) G. Clauson, "A propos du manuscrit Pelliot Tibétain 1283", in *JA*, Tome CCXLV, 1957, pp. 19-20.