An Analysis of the Simple Kitai Characters

by Gorō TOYODA

In the autumn of 1939, a Mukden curio shop displayed what appeared to be a set of tombstones with inscription, consisting of a square top part boaring a legend in Chinese, '*Ku t'ai shih ming shih chi* (Epitaph of the Late Grand Preceptor)', and the main body on which the inscription was written in strange characters somewhat resembling Chinese, interspersed with ordinary Chinese characters. Dr. Iwakichi INABA identified the new script as Kitai characters and emphasized its importance. Mr. Li Wen-hsin, then at the National Central Museum of Manchoukuo, however, denied the stone's authenticity, and the script was to be left unheeded for more than a decade.

In the summer of 1951, the epitaph of a Hsiao Hsiao-chung was un-earthed from an old tomb at Hsi-ku-shan, Chin-hsi County, Liao-ning Pro-vince, and it was the second time that an inscription in that strange script was known to the world. Mr. Yen Wan-chang, a Chinese scholar, studied this epitaph and published in 1957 his Chinese translation of the date borne by the inscription. An accompanying inscription in Chinese con-firmed the date as the fifth year of Ta-an era of the Liao Dynasty, i. e. 1089, thus corroborating INABA's theory.

It is stated in the *Liao-shih* that a kind of Kitai characters called *ta-tzu* (major letters) were created by A-pao-chi, the first Emperor of Liao, in 920 by 'modifying half of the Chinese *li-shu* (plain square characters).' This seems to mean that the new characters were somewhat similar to the Chinese in nature. Later another kind of script was introduced, prior to the death of A-pao-chi in 926, by Prince Tieh-la who had acquainted himself with an Uighur ambassador and thence obtained a hint. His in-vention was called *hsiao-tzu* (minor letters), and is commonly believed to have been phonetic characters as it is said in the *Liao-shih* that they were 'small in number but complete and consistent.'

In 1922, Father L. Kervyn found several inscribed tombstones at the Liao Imperial Mausolea at War-in Mangkha, Northern Jehol, and published a handmade copy of two Kitai texts. Again in 1932 several similar Kitai tombstones, which had been carried away by T'ang Tso-jung, son of Gene-ral T'ang- Yü-lin, in 1930, were rediscovered by Japanese scholars. Those tombstones had inscriptions in characters totally different from those on

the Chin-hsi epitaph. Thus it was clear that there were two kinds of Kitai characters and they were easily so identifiable. This fact has inevitably led the students of Kitai characters to conflicting views as to which kind of script is the major or the minor letters. To avoid confusions, the present author prefers to call the characters on the imperial tombstones 'the compound characters' and those on the Chin-hsi epitah 'the simple characters,' for the latter are nothing but simplifications of Chinese characters.

The Chin-hsi dates in the simple characters published by Mr. Yen are nine in number. In them the characters denoting the concepts of 'month' and 'day' are Chinese *yüeh* and *jih*, while 'year' is expressed by Jurchen character *a-nieh* (year; Manchu *aniya*) with one stroke less. Using them as clues, the author has been able chronologically to establish the meanings of the characters denoting eras, numbers, and the sixty cycles.

Despite the clear statment in the *Chin-shih* that the Jurchen characters were adaptations of the Kitai characters, the great difference between the former and the compound Kitai characters in which the Liao imperial tombstone inscriptions were written has long hindered us from accepting this legend. The discovery of the Chin-hsi epitaph, however, has brought out several simple Kitai characters that look to have been prototypes of the Jurchen characters, and this is a strong testimony to the factualness of the *Chin-shih*.

In the conclusion, the author expresses hope for more new materials that would supply us with more clues to further decipherment of this relatively little known script.

Reconstruction of the Original Text of
Chang-tzǔ Hsiao-yao-yu-p'ien 莊子逍遙遊篇

by Shizuo AMANO

The author makes a study into the four fables which are told in the present text of *Hsiao-yao-yu-p'ien* 逍遥遊篇 of *Chuang-tzǔ* 莊子. In examining the phraseology, such as the continuation of words, the sequence of themes and the sentence structure, the author notices first of all that in the first fable so many insertions were added to the text by later writers that the original meaning is likely to be misunderstood. Secondly, some parts of the original text of the second and third fables may have been left out in the course of time. Finally, there are considerable number of misplaced sentence in the fourth fable. Consequently, the author believes that the first three fables represent the philosophy of Chuang Chou 莊周 himself, but that the fourth one does not.

Lu Tê-ming 陸徳明 wrote in his *Ching-tien-shih-wên-hsü-lu* 経典釈文序録 that the principal philosophy of *Chuang Chou* can be explained in four concepts— *hsiao-yao* 逍遥, *tzǔ-jan* 自然, *wu-wei* 無為 and *ch'i-wu* 斉物. Among 33 extant chapters of *Chuang-tzǔ*, there are two entitled *Hsiao-yao* and