THE DATE OF THE STAËL-HOLSTEIN ROLL
by EDWIN G. PULLEYBLANK

Professor H. W. Bailey recently asked me if I could interpret the references to China in a certain Khotanese text. In the course of attempting to uncover the background of this, I had occasion to consider the question of the date of the Staël-Holstein roll on which the late Professor G. Haloun had promised an article. Although his untimely death prevented him from bringing this to completion, he had contributed a note to Professor Bailey's article on the miscellany in Asia Major II (1951) in which he stated that the scroll dated from 863 A.D. With the aid of information from other Khotanese documents, some at least of which was unknown to Haloun but has now been made available to me by Professor Bailey, I have come to a different conclusion, and the matter seems interesting to me, I should like to make it known here briefly at the earliest opportunity. There can be no doubt that the true date is 925.

"Of the Lion King Viṣa Śambhava the Fourteenth Regnal Year, Cock Year".

Thus begin the first two Khotanese documents on the scroll. Until we can discover the date of Viṣa Śambhava's accession this is not very helpful, but we are at least limited to one year in each twelve-year cycle. Assuming that the Khotanese animal cycle was in step with the Chinese—a reasonable assumption since it is known that this was true of the Tibetan and Turkish animal cycles as well as of those of other peoples who used this method of dating—we have the series ... 853, 865, 877 ... 913, 925, 937 ... giving us possible years. Now if the fourteenth year of a reign is a cock year the first year must be a monkey year. Do we know of the reign of any Khotanese king beginning in such a year? It happens that we do.

A Chinese embassy left for Khotan in the third year of T'ien-fu of Later Chin (918). A member of the party who wrote an account afterwards stated that they were two years on the journey and that when they arrived the "year name" (niên-hao) of the Khotanese king Li Sheng-t'ien 了聖天 was the twenty-ninth year of T'ung-ch'ing 同慶. 1 Taking this to be the Chinese year corresponding to 940 we find that the period T'ung-ch'ing began in 912, a monkey year. If the Khotanese system of year periods corresponded to the Chinese system of that time we could not simply assume from this that Li Sheng-t'ien's reign began in 912, for Chinese emperors usually had several year periods during their reigns and not only as became the accepted practice in Ming and Ch'ing times. Li Sheng-t'ien, however, lived (as I shall show below) until 966, so it is unlikely that he should have come to the throne much before 912. There is moreover a document dated in the thirteenth regnal year of a reign beginning in a monkey year and it seems reasonable to suppose that this belongs to the same long reign,viz. of Li Sheng-t'ien. As we shall see there is reason for thinking that the use of Chinese style niên-hao or year periods was simply superimposed on the native system of dating by regnal years and that there was only one niên-hao per reign.

We may, therefore, equate the period T'ung-ch'ing with the reign of Li Sheng-t'ien and say that he came to the throne in 912. May we go further and equate Li Sheng-t'ien with Viṣa Śambhava, who, on the evidence of the Staël-Holstein scroll, also began his reign in a monkey year? There is happily ample confirmation for this view.

Viṣa Śambhava, Viṣa Śura, Viṣa Durma

The document which Professor Bailey asked me to help to elucidate is dated, according to him, as follows: thynėa tōcūnā sūhye: bāḍā tōcūmye ḫuṇu asā salya ṭaṇyuṣye māsti nāmye ḫadai, "the T'ien-tsun fortunate time, fourth

between Chinese and Khotanese chronology and in fact it is clear from the notes which he left behind that he had done so. It appears, however, that he took T'ung-ch'ing twenty-ninth year to correspond to 941, not 940. This seems to be because the embassy left in the twelfth month of T'ien-fu 3 which corresponds to the beginning of 939 according to the western calendar. If we now add two years for the journey we arrive at the year 941. To bring the western solar calendar into consideration is, however, irrelevant in this context and only leads to confusion. The embassy set out in the twelfth month of a dog year and took two years (二年) to reach Khotan. The statement is imprecise but it is most natural to assume, as did Rémusat and others after him, that the party arrived in the second following lunar year, i.e. in the year corresponding to the greater part of 940, a rat year.

I should like to state here the use that I have made of the notes on this question left by Haloun after his death which are now on deposit in the Cambridge University Library. These notes were first shown to me by Mr. A. R. Davis early in 1952. They contain a large amount of material on the history of Sha Chou and adjoining regions and of the nomadic tribes connected with the Staël-Holstein documents, mostly in the form of references or quotations left in the original Chinese. There is Unfortunately very little in the way of argument or narrative to show what conclusions he proposed to draw from the material. After a cursory examination of them I felt that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to write anything from them which could pretend to represent his intentions and I therefore had to decline the task offered me. After examining the question of the date of the Staël-Holstein scroll ab initio and coming to my own conclusion about it I again looked at these notes with a good deal more comprehension than before and much profit, especially in regard to bibliographical references. Further references to these notes will be found below.

1 Bailey, Ittovaztis I, BSOS 8 (1937), p. 934, quoting Ch. 00275 (Hoernle, Manuscript Remain, pl. V, fol. 1).
regnal year, horse year, first month, ninth day. He informs me that it contains among other things references to China, to the leading of the army to Kashgar and to the presentation of various gifts, including an elephant. In reading through the records of relations between Khotan and China one finds that the last embassy to the Sung court before the fall of Khotan to the Moslems brought a letter from the king in which he told of a victory over Kashgar and offered to present a dancing elephant captured there. This was in the year 971, a sheep year, but the previous year 970 was a horse year. Considering the length of time it took the Chinese embassy to reach Khotan in 938–40 and that even in the middle of the seventh century, when the whole route was under the unified control of the Tang empire, it took seven or eight months, the Chinese record and the Khotanese document seem to correspond very well. If we assume that 970 is the date of the document, the period *T’ien-tsun must have begun in 967, a hare year.

This date for the beginning of a new king’s reign fits very well with what we know from Chinese sources. The last mention of the long-lived Li Sheng-t’ien is in connection with an embassy which arrived from him in 966. It will have taken some time to come all the way from Khotan but we can still be sure that he was on the throne as late as, say, 965. Although the Chinese sources do not mention his death or give the name of his successor, the king whose offer to send the elephant came in 971 must clearly have been this successor.

We know the name of the Khotanese king who reigned with the nien-hao *T’ien-tsun. Bailey informs me of the following date from his Khotanese Buddhist Texts, p. 152: thuyen taunh sii lye badi puthy ksaungh pas sa Lay tuanjia maste hdoasane hayad vih siiur, “the *T’ien-tsun fortunate time, fifth regnal year, sheep year, Trumajra month, seventeenth day... of Viṣṇa Sūra.” Furthermore there is evidence that Viṣṇa Sūra was the successor of Viṣṇa Santhvari, whom we wish to identify with Li Sheng-t’ien. Bailey writes the following: “Khotanese Buddhist Texts, p. 135, and Khotanese Texts II, p. 125. A colophon in the writer shares his merit with two kings: (1) raddana rada vih sahaba jaa habrirhe bhashasta bhrava, ‘I share it with the king of kings, Viṣṇa Sāvaka, who has attained to illumination.’ Hence the king has ‘become a Buddha’, that is, is deceased. (2) rada vih sūra jaa habrirhe jsana hباسa, ‘I share it with the king Viṣṇa Sūra for the lengthening of his life’. Hence the

1 Khotanese Texts II, p. 129, line 80. I need hardly say that all explanations of Khotanese texts are due to Bailey.

2 Sung-shih 490 Yü-tien kuo; Yu-hai 154.23b. This embassy is briefly mentioned in Sung Hui-yao Kao 喜夷一之. In the commentary, which is evidently taken from the Yung-lo ta-tien, the Yu-hai is quoted and also the Shan-lung K’ao-ko 山巒考索 (alias Ch’ien-shu 誅書 K’ao-ko), which I have been unable to consult. Cf. Rémusat, p. 86.

3 Stein, Ancient Khotan, p. 178.

4 Hsien ta-ch’iu ch’ang-chien chang-pien 7.16a, Ch’ien-te fourth year, Sung-shih 490 and Yu-hai 154.23b, which also record this embassy, do not mention the name of the Khotanese king, though the implication is that he is the same as in previous years. Cf. Rémusat, p. 85.

1 The earliest example seems to be that of T’so I-chin himself in 924 in “T’so I-chin Shu 書 章參與 (Haneda and Pellet, Tan-huang tshu, p. 90 ff). Cf. Fujieda Akira 魚寄 剛 Shussu Kigi gun zetsudo shi shinsatsu. 沙州故軍節度使始末, Part 3, Teyo Gakusho (Teyo) 25 (1944) pp. 70 and 71, n. 137. Professor Bailey writes, ‘tseyi hyam is Chinese ta-wang great king’. The two unusual spellings -eyi for -ai and hyw for -hyo retarded the interpretation. Professor Pulleyblank proposed from the contexts that these syllables should give ta-wang.

2 Chinese ta, t’ai (K052 from d’ai, t’ai) is written in Khotanese texts t’ai, t’ai, tae, tia, tia, tia, and with th- bha, bha, bha, thia, thia, bha, bha, bha. Once, however, in Ch. 00367.96 (Khotanese Buddhist Texts, p. 148) occurs tseyi with -eyi. In the Chinese Vajracchedika written in Khotanese Beihum script (ZDMG 91.345) kei is found for K936 jie from kai; kei for tzej K936 kai from kai; kei for tzej K366 jie from yai; tseyi, tseyi for in K024 tai from d’aii. In Tibetan script we have similarly debori for K024 taoi from d’ai; debori for K052 taoi from d’ai; leh taoi for K513 kai from lari (FRAS 1926, 535ff).

3 The hy-w of hyam for K1298 wang from jiwang shows a use found only once elsewhere, in the Chinese Vajracchedika hyw (beside gvi, vuv, and Tibetan bu) for K1313 wei from jie.


this title after his death,\(^1\) which is as we should expect for it was the posthumous title conferred on him when he died in Ch'ang-an in 872.\(^2\) This might be taken as presumptive evidence that he had not been given the title while alive, for a posthumous title normally constituted a promotion. It would appear, however, from a text quoted by Demiéville (Concile de Lhassa I, pp. 335ff.) that Chang I-ch'ao was referred to by this title as early as 869, after he had gone to Ch'ang-an but while he was still alive. This suggests that he had assumed a higher honorific than that conferred on him by the Chinese court, setting an example which we know to have been followed by other successors at Sha Chou. (A jotting in Haloun's notes seems to indicate that after his note to Bailey, in which he refers to the title as "conferred", he adopted the opinion that Chang I-ch'ao had assumed it.) There is, therefore, no obstacle, as far as the title is concerned, to identifying the-po, tse-pu with Chang I-ch'ao. He was not, however, the only ruler of Sha Chou to be called T'ai-pao.

There is no certain evidence from the Chinese side for the use of the title T'ai-pao by Ts'ai-o Ch'in, who ruled in Sha Chou from 919 (?) to 935-36, but an undated fragment noted by Dr. Lionel Giles refers to Fu-chu T'ai-pao Ts'ai-o Kung Fu-tai Kung Ts'ai-o Kung Fu-tai Kung. A dated colophon of 920 has Fu-chu Shang-shu Hsüan T'ai-pao, which must certainly refer to T'ai-o Ch'in before he was officially recognized as Chieh-tü-shih by the Later T'ang court in 924.\(^5\) Shang-shu, "President of a Ministry in the central government", is, of course, here used as an honorific title and it appears that after 920 Ts'ai-o Ch'in raised his own honorific to T'ai-pao, which was more appropriate to his status as a ruler over a whole region. Unfortunately the term Fu-chu, not a regular title but simply "head of the prefecture", is not decisive, for it is occasionally found

---

2. The Chang shih hsin-te chi ts'an-ch'ien 張氏奐德紀淵表, published by Pelliot and Hanela in Tun-huang I-shu, II, begins III安義州縣衙宜訪之私弟也 諫贈太保. The name of the man in question has been lost but it is clear from the context that it can only be Chang I-ch'ao, who died in Ch'ang-an in 872. Lo Chen-yu 羅振玉 in his "Chang I-ch'ao ch'uan" 張氏奐德 (I cite the edition in the Hsien-t'ung T'ang-k'o 順堂集) did not know of this fact, but guessed that Chang I-ch'ao had been posthumously created T'ai-pao. Cf. Fujieda, op. cit., pt. 1, T'ou-Gokoku (Kyoto) 12 (1911), pp. 384 and 393, n. 32.
5. Ty-fu yáns-huai 972.12.3 T'ung-kuang 2/4-; Chi Wu-tai shih 32 (pen-chi) T'ung-kuang 2/5-1 t'ou-chou. Cf. also Ty-fu yáns-huai 980.30. See Lo Chen-yu, "Kua Sha Ts'ai-o shih nien-pao" 瓜沙曹氏年表 (Hsien-t'ung T'ang-k'o). Giles (BSOS, 7, p. 958), following Hsien Wu-tai shih 3 (pen-chi), erroneously makes this date 926.
of other rulers of Sha Chou, even when they had been officially recognized, though of course it is more common in such cases to find the full title. An examination of the honorifics known to have been used by Ts'ao I-chin's successors at Sha Chou, however, shows that T'ai-pao seldom occurs and as the Stael-Holstein documents seem to prove that Ts'ao I-chin was known as T'ai-pao to the Khotanese envoys in 925, there is a good chance that the fragment noted by Giles refers to him.

The fact that Ts'ao I-chin was officially given the honorific Ssu-k'ung 司空 in 924 need not be regarded as an obstacle to this argument for, as T'ai-pao was the superior title, he may very well have continued to use it in preference to Ssu-k'ung—even if we assume that news of his appointment had reached Sha Chou by the middle of 925, which is by no means certain. In 931 his official honorific was changed to Chung-shu Ling 中書令 and documents of 934 and 935 refer to him by this title in the form Ling-kung 令公. At that time his heir Yüan-te 元德 was already using the title Ssu-k'ung.

Byā-yum sām-sl.

Another person mentioned in the Khotanese portion of the scroll can be identified with a fair degree of probability. Lines 25-26 contain a list of five names, the last of which is byā-yum sām-sl. This must represent Mu-jung Shang-shu 蒙容侍書 (Anc.: *mo-wong jiāng-si). Mu-jung is a well-known surname of Hsien-pi origin, common in later times among the T'u-yi-hun and also occurring as a naturalized Chinese family name. In 934 the Prefect of Kua Chou 瓜州, Mu-jung Kuei-ying 酒盈, sent an embassy to the Chinese court along with that of Sha Chou. It is recorded that he was promoted from the honorific rank of Hsing-pu 衙部 Shang-shu to that of Shang-shu Ts'o P'u-yei.⁸ It seems entirely probable that he is the

---

¹ A colophon of 933 has 府主太保及夫人. This is mysterious because the ruler of Sha Chou at that time was Ts'ao Yüan-chung 謝原中 who was already using the higher title T'ai-fu in 947. Is it possible that Lo Chen-yü misread it? See Lo Chen-yü, "jiā-pen Ch'ü-shih...mu-lu", 108, under 觀佛延壽命經; and in the "Kua Sha Ts'ao shih nien-pao", where he notes the anomalous character of the text.

² See p. 95 n. 5.

³ Chiu Wu-t'ai shih 42 (pen-chi) Ch'ang-hsing 2/ping-tsou. Cf. Lo Chen-yü, Kua Sha Ts'ao Shih nien-pao.

⁴ See Ts'ao I-chin shu cited above, p. 95 n. 2.

⁵ The i in siwò represents a peculiarity of the dialect of the Tun-huang region at this period which has been noted by Luo Changcope. He writes "The characters of the rime 週-[iwo] almost always entered the group [e]-[i]" (The North-west dialects of T'ang and Five Dynasties, Shanghai, 1933, p. ix, see also pp. xi, 43-46). Numerous examples occur in the Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese texts published by Thomas in JARS 1026 and 1027—which formed part of the material on which Luo based his study. Dr. Wales informs me that this peculiarity is also found in popular poetry from Tun-huang and he cites for me two rhyming with 後 and 居 from Cheng Chen-ting 鄭振鐸, Chung-hua su-wen huaih hsih 中國俗文學史, pp. 155, 148.

⁶ Ts'i-fu yün-kuei 655, 15a. Cf. Lo Chen-yü, op. cit. It may be of interest to note that the title p'u-yei (Anc.: h'u-k'- or b'uok-ja) also seems to occur in Khotanese texts. Cf. puha: ya (AM I, p. 50, note on line 91, and other examples there quoted by Bailey).