

FURTHER FRAGMENTS FROM TUN HUANG

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In vol.II no. 3 of this Bulletin I examined a fragment which has been omitted from the end of the Annals section of *Documents de Touen Houang relatifs a l'Histoire du Tibet*, Bacot, Thomas and Toussaint, 1946 (THD). The passages to which I now draw attention come from the beginning of the short section on Ancient Principalities etc. (pp.80-82) and from the end of the Chronicle (p 122). These fragments provoke more questions than they answer; but the historical and semi-historical documents from Tun Huang are of such rare value that every available sentence deserves to be studied.

The editors of THD state that the 5 lines which they omit from the beginning of the Principalities section are much damaged and are separated from the main body of the text by a considerable interval. The late Mlle Lalou has transliterated 3 of the lines in no. 1286 of her *Inventaire des manuscrits tibetains de Touen Houang* (LINV) and has quoted them at p-161 of an article in *Journal Asiatique* 1959 (JA). As I have no photographic or other copy of the mss I can refer at present to those 3 lines only. The Tibetan text as given by Mlle Lalou is as follows; the attempted translation is mine.

(1) //gna gnyen mtha' bzhi'i rabs la//lde'i gang bar na//lde za'i gang rag ma/skyi la mda' na/ skyi za'i 'd (2) //dags kyi bshen mkhar na/dags za'i gyim pang ma'//mchims yul gyi dngul khur na/mchims . . . (3) . . . sha tshang ma' // gnyen ni mtha' bzhi // chab ni

“As for the lineage of those who of old were associates on the four borders : in the midst of the snows of the lDe, the lDe lady Gang rag ma; in the valley of sKyi, the sKyi lady ‘D. . . . ; in bShen mkhar of Dags, the Dags lady Gyim pang ma’ ; in dNgul khur of the mChims country, the mChims lady Sha tshang ma’ . As for the associates on the four borders, their dominion.”

The several different versions of the lists of principalities bordering on the territory of the Tibetan kings have been analysed by Mlle Lalou among her many memorable contributions to the study of the Tun Huang documents (JA 1965); I am concerned here only with some of the problems which this small fragment adds to an already complicated subject.

In some of the lists the princes, their capitals, consorts, and ministers are variously named. This fragment, which perhaps has no direct connection with the remainder of the *ms* reproduced at pp 80-82 of THD, mentions only the consorts and their residences. The form *za'i*, rather than *za*, may strictly mean "in the capacity of consort" but I have translated it simply as though it were *za*.

lDe is one of the dynastic names of the kings of Tibet whose seat was in the Yar-lung valley. The lady Gang-rag-ma does not figure in any of Mlle Lalou's lists but a lDe-za Gag-kar is named in LINV 1039 and a lord of Ga-gar ltangs in Yar-lung is named in LINV 1285 which Mlle Lalou has edited in JA 1959.

The lady of sKyi, whose name is effaced here, appears in other lists simply as sKyi blag gi btsun mo — the queen of the master of sKyi. The mChims lady, Sha-tshang-ma is named in LINV 1039 but the place dNgul khur (Load of Silver), which recalls dNgul-mkhar in Zhang-zhung, is not mentioned elsewhere.

Dags has been left for special mention. bShen-mkhar appears to be a place name; but in other lists the capital of Dags is called Shing-nad, Shing-nag, or Gru-bzhi. The name of the lady, here given as Gyim-pang, appears in other lists as Khung-phangs. The reading Gyim turns ones thoughts to two documents in *An Ancient Folk Literature From N.E. Tibet* by F.W. Thomas (AFL pp 16-19, 40-41) in which there are lengthy but obscure stories about a Gyim-po family. Where they lived is not clear but since names in the documents are given both in "the language of sPu-rgyal Tibet" and in "the language of Nam-pa" the Gyim-po must have had close connection with those two regions. Nam, which Thomas placed to the S.E. of the Kokonor region, has also been identified with the Nan Chao kingdom (R.A. Stein. Deux Notules, JA 1963, note. p. 335). That is a long way from Dags-po; but the ruler may well have been supposed to have taken his consort from some other country. Gyim-po is also mentioned in a fragmentary inscription on the remains of a stone pillar from a site near Zhwa'i Lhakhang which was the territory of the Myang clan (JRAS April 1953 pp. 10-11). There it is associated with ancestral tribal names connected with Eastern Tibet—Cho phyi; mDa ' ; Tse : and Phyug-po (See AFL. 6,30, 40; and R.A. Stein, *Les Tribus Anciennes des Marches Sino-Tibetaines*, Paris 1959, pp 5,12,16,57).

Although the lists of principalities contain at least one name—viz. Lig Snya-shur—which it appears possible to place approximately in the early seventh century, other names go back to the legendary past and there is no way of fixing the lists in any particular period. That applies to the lady Gyim-pang in the fragment; but the syllable Gyim appears also in the names of persons who can be assigned to a historical setting.

For example, sPug Gyim-tang rmang-bu was a vassal of Nag-seng of Tshes-pong, one of the nobles who combined to establish the grand-father and father of Srong-brtsan sGam-po in power. sPug Gyim-tang killed his wife for fear that she might betray the conspiracy in which he was engaged (THD 104, 105 and 136). Those events can be put c 580 A.D. Later, one sPug Gyim-rtzan rma-chung is recorded in the Tun Huang Annals as being sent in 653 to take charge of the administration of Zhang-zhung (THD. pp 13, 31). He is presumably the same as sPug Gyim-rtsang rmang-cung who went to help the sister of the Tibetan king who had been married to Lig myi rhya, ruler of Zhang-zhung, and was badly treated by him. The visit ended in the subjugation of Zhang-zhung (THD. pp 115-117, and 155-158). Although the rulers' names do not agree exactly, that event is probably to be placed c 645 about which time as the Annals record "Lig snya shur was destroyed and all Zhang-zhung subjected" (THD pp 13 and 29). A later subjugation of Zhang-zhung in 677/678 (THD p 15) will not fit because the affair took place during the life time of Srong-brtsan sGam-po. If that is so, sPug Gyim-rtzan's experience in the affair of the princess may have been rewarded later by the appointment as governor. The name sPug, which has an un-Tibetan ring appears in the lists of principalities as that of a minister of sKyī (whose ruler's name was rmang-po). The capital of sKyī is given as lJang, a name associated with Nan Chao (Nam). sPug also appears in the name of a monk apparently of non-Tibetan origin in the time of Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan (LINV 996). The name may derive from some branch — perhaps an eastern one — of the widespread complex of peoples known as Zhang-zhung, whose western extension was in the kingdom of Lig snya shur in the neighbourhood of Lake Manasarowar. There would be nothing unusual in the use of such a person for dealing with others of similar racial origin. Another example can be seen in the activities of the cunning minister Spung sad Zu-tse who took part in the subjection of some Zhang-zhung peoples to Srong-brtsan sGam-po's father (TLTD II 54 and THD 139). The description of him as Khyung-po identifies him as belonging to a Zhang-zhung tribe; and the syllable sPung appears in other Zhang-zhung names e.g. Ra-sang-rje spung-rhye ryung (THD 34) - and cf. sNya-shur spu-ngas rye rkyug (THD 33). Spung-sad Zu-tse was responsible for the fall of the great Minister Zhang-snang of Myang, whom he supplanted c. 632 A.D. Associated with him in that coup was a man named Pa-tshab Gyim-po who was a vassal of Myang. The reason for Pa-tshab's hostility to his overlord can be seen in the events leading to the establishment of the Yar-lung dynasty. The father of Myang Zhang-snang, a minister of a local prince probably in the upper valley of the Lhasa river, found himself on the losing side in warface with the prince of Ngas-po and was subjected to the overlordship of one of the ministers of his conqueror. The minister, Mnyan Ji-zung, was married to a lady of Pa-tshab who proceeded to humiliate the new vassal. Myang, therefore, organised a

conspiracy against his new masters and in favour of the ruler of Yar-lung, The venture was successful. The prince of Ngas-po was signally defeated; and Mnyan and his lady were made subjects of their one-time vassal Myang. A Pa-tshab was, therefore, ready for revenge when an opportunity presented itself to help in the destruction of Myang Zhang-nang. (See Bulletin II. 1 and II. 3).

Mention of a person with the possibly eastern name of Gyim-po, who was also a member of the Pa-tshab clan brings us to the second fragment which is printed at the end of the Tun Huang Chronicle (THD p 122), but has not been translated there owing to its damaged condition. It is a typical example of the Chronicle style, a historical incident being illustrated by songs which are packed with allusion and aphorisms in language very similar to much of AFL. The transcription which follows has been revised slightly on the basis of a photostat of the *ms* which is fairly clear for the first half; for the rest I have generally accepted the version in THD although some of its readings are dubious. I have inserted in *italics* a few conjectural readings for which there seems adequate basis; and I have attempted a translation of those parts of the fragment which can be put into a historical setting or which are long enough to provide some meaning.

(1) *mgar mang po rje stag rtsan dang pa tshab rgyal to re rgya la bro* pa'i
tshe// pa tshab rgyal to res klu blangs pa' (2).....na las//
sman sha ni la 'da's kyang/ sha bkra' ni slad lus/na ning (3)
gres bu ni spad bzangs nas/ ma srin ni sdug gis bskyel/ tsong ka ni che su (4)
 /rje'i ni skal pog pa rgya rje ni bsam lang zhiq
 /pur myi ni skal pa ru rgya.. (5).....chag pa// mgar mang po rje
 stag rtsan kyi mchis brang//cog ro za khyo dang ldan chig rgya la (6).....
 mchid blangs pa'//nyen kar ni stag rtse nas/ lcags kyi ni khyim. zhiq rgya ni
 na lo dra nas (7).....dud brda btang/ meg le ni glang
 mar nas/ gser gyi ni sha la 'drongs// ...ogs so ni (8) 'da's
 so ni hab chen gong/ 'drims so ni so go rtsa/brkyang so ni/ /yang dang steng
 (9).....ning snga/ jo pho ni stag rtsan dang/ rgya rje ni bsam lang
 gnyis/ bstcd.....ni do re (10)..... ni sang lta na//
 'brong bu ni rkos brag te/ na rtsi ni bgor....la.... ..(11) sgrol //

“When mGar Mang-po-rje sTag-rtsan and Pa-tshab rGyal-to-re fled to China Pa-tshab sang this song ”
 Even if medicine has been put on the flesh, leprosy remains ever after. When they are old, even if their menfolk are wise, mother and daughter are pursued by sorrow. In great Tsong-ka.....
 The one whose lot it is to be ruler is Emperor of China. As for the man of Tibet*, in his lot, China.....is broken.” The wife

* *pur myi* = *spur-my* ? referring to sPu-rgyal Bod.

of mGar Mang-po-rje sTag-rtsan, the lady of Cog-ro.....to China, spoke like this : "From Nyen-kar sTag-rtse, a dwelling of iron (or" in lCags ?). In China itself ... from the net. sent smoke signals (or " sent signs of submission ?).. From Meg-le glang-mar. (about one and half lines omitted). The lord sTag-rtsan and the Chinese Emperor bSam-lang, these two. Praised....." (the remainder is too obscure to attempt)

In spite of the damaged nature of the passage it can be seen to refer to the fall of the mGar family in 698/699 after some 50 years as effective rulers of Tibet. The Chief Minister at the time was mGar Khri-bring bTsan-brod, son of Srong-brtsan sGam-po's great minister, sTong-rtsan yul-zung. In the Tibetan Annals Khri-'bring alone is named as involved in the disaster to his family (THD 39) but from the T'ang Annals it is learnt that when his troops would not fight against the Tibetan king Khri-'bring committed suicide together with many of his entourage. Other members of the family fled to China, among them a brother of Khri-'bring named Tsanpo, and Mangpuchich, the son of his elder brother. This can hardly be anyone but the mGar-po-rje sTag-rtsan of the fragment. In *Deux Notules*, referred to above, Professor Stein in a note, which deserves to be developed into an essay, quotes the T'ang Annals as recording the great honours given to a son of Khri-'bring, named Louen Kong-jen, who submitted to China in 699 bringing with him 7000 tents of the 'A-zha. This too must be the Mang-po rje of the fragment. The influence of Khri-'bring in the 'A-zha country is seen in many entries in THD and there is mention of other members of the mGar in that region including one mGar Mang-nyen; but the family, or clan, was too extensive to attempt to identify him with Mang-po-rje.

The name of the Chinese Emperor bSam-lang appears also in line 26 of the East face of the Lhasa Treaty Inscription (rgya rje sam lang. . . .) where it certainly refers to the Emperor Hsuan Tsung (713-756) though how the name came to be applied to him is not clear. Nor is it clear why that name is mentioned in connection with the flight of mGar Mang-po-rje which took place 14 years before his accession, during the reign of the usurping Empress Wu. Although her activities are known to the author of the Blue Annals, they have made no impression on contemporary Tibetan records; or it may be that by the time when the song came to be recorded, the memory of the Emperor who had sent the Chinese princess Mun-sheng as bride to Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan had effaced most others.

The association of the Pa-tshab clan with the mGar is seen in (THD p 37) which records joint operations in 690 by mGar 'Bring-rtsan rtsang-ston and Pa-tshab rGyal-stan thom-po. A common interest

may have existed for some time. Pa-sthab, as has been seen, were associated with a minister of Ngas-po who was hostile to Myang. The lists of principalities show that mGar were also ministers of Ngas-po and although there is no evidence that mGar took an active part in opposing Myang and his protege the ruler of Yar-lung, they were not among his supporters. Later, although there is nothing to suggest that mGar joined with Pa-tshab and Zu-tse in the plot against Myang-sang, they were waiting in the wings and as soon as the alien Zu-tse, who seems to have had no clan to support him, was removed from the scene, mGar sTong-rtsan was ready to take up a position similar to that formerly enjoyed by the Myang.

Returning to Mang-po-rje sTag-rtsan : it emerges from the fragment that his wife was from Cog-ro. That clan first appears in Tibetan history as sharing in the fall of Myang Zhang-snang, and therefore on the other side from Pa-tshab. It is not named in the lists of principalities nor among the legendary ministers of early Tibet and may, therefore, have been of very remote or of humble origin. On the fall of the mGar a lady of Cog-ro became the wife or mistress of the Tibetan king 'Dus-srong. Although allusions to that union in the Chronicle are obscure, it appears to have been distasteful to one Khe-rgad mdo-smang who, after the death of 'Dus-srong, took part unseccessfully in what must have been strife about the succession (THD 165-167, and 40). Later histories state that a Cog-ro minister escorted the body of 'Dus-srong back to central Tibet from the east. Thereafter, the clan appears as active in 'A-zha country and perhaps as being allied in marriage to the ruler of the 'A zha (TLTD. II 8-10). It continued to take a prominent part in Tibetan affairs down to the death of Ral-pa-can who married a lady of that clan and among whose murderers was one Cog-ro lha-lhod. The original home of the clan is uncertain but their association with the 'A-zha and the description of the lady of Cog-ro as 'Da', Cog-ro za suggests an eastern home, perhaps connected with the Tshwa'i-'dam marshes. It is unfortunate that the fragment lacks the one word which would have shown whether the lady of CorG Cog-ro did (as one might expect) or did not accompany her on his flight to China. As she and the lady associated with 'Dus-srong at about the same time are both described simply as Cog-ro za it is possible that they are one and the same and that the wife of mGar sTag-rtsan was either captured by the king or joined him willingly. The tone of Khe-rgad's song — calling her a "widow" and apparently abusive of her — suggests the latter. At all events, the fragment makes it appear that re-examination of the connected songs in THD might be fruitful. The translators have missed the point that Khri gDa's (THD p 921) is the name of a noble of the 'Bro clan who was associated with the Cog-ro at the 'A-zha court about the years 706 to 710 in connection with the arrival of the Chinese princess as bride to the Tibetan king. One further speculation about the Cog-ro lady of the fragment suggested

by the name of the Chinese king who reigned from 713 to 756. The two songs may relate to two different occasions and it might be that the lady of Cog-ro became the wife of mGar Mang-po-rje after the death of 'Dus-srong; but this seems to be an improbable strain on the construction.

The allusion to Nyen-kar raises another crop of speculations. A place of that name was almost continuously the residence of the Tibetan king 'Dus-srong from the first year of his life in 677 until his sixteenth year (693) during which time the power of the mGar was supreme. Nyen-kar had been the residence of an earlier king, Mang-srong, in several years of his minority when mGar sTong-rtsan yul-zung was in power. In the case of 'Dus-srong, hints of a movement against the authority of the mGar, which culminated in their overthrow in 698, can be seen almost as soon as the king ceased to reside at Nyen-kar. Although the home of the mGar appears from the Chronicle (THD 163-165) to have been Bya pu and it was in Bya-tshal of sGregs that 'Dus-srong took possession of the property of Khri-i 'bring after his fall, the power of the family at its peak must have extended over much of Tibet, and Nyen-kar may have been a mGar strong hold in which the young King lived under their care. There were probably several places of that name but the Chronicle shows that Nyen-kar rnying-pa was in Ngas-po and it was of that principality that mGar were originally ministers.

Of other names mentioned in the song of Cog-ro za, if *lcags* does not mean "iron" it could refer to the fortress of lCag-rtse on the Szechwan border. Meg-le is mentioned several times in LINV in a context — the copying of religious books—which seems to place it on the eastern borders.

The overthrow of the mGar in 698/699 virtually eliminated them from Tibet. From Chinese records the slaughter of the clan and its associates seems to have been extensive. Others, as has been seen, took refuge in China where they became honoured and valuable officials. Professor Stein in his note referred to above identifies members of the exiled mGar family in China of the borderlands in 793 and as late as 929; but in the records of the Tibetan kingdom the name does not figure again except for one appearance of a mGar-brTan kong as a minor official (*bka'i yi-ge-pa*) in LINV np. 1959. There are no more mGar ministers in the Annals, nor among the witnesses to the *bka'-tshigs* of Khri lDe-srong-brtsan or to the Lhasa treaty of 822. Later histories, it is true, sometimes mention mGar in connection with the consecration of bSam-yas but this is not convincing without any contemporary support. *sBa-bzhed* does not mention the name at all, while the reference in *rGyal-po bka'-thang* (f. 36) is cursory; and no mGar figures in the description of the military organization of Tibet in the *bLon-po bka'-thang*.

From the XIth century onwards religious personages with the name mGar, or more usually 'Gar, are not infrequent. Noble families also claimed descent from that clan, in particular the Tshal-pa, the rLangs-from which the Phag-mo-gru dynasty originated - and the princess of sDe-dge. Those genealogies, which are full of obvious legend, do not refer to Ngas-po but assign to the mGar a divine or heroic origin usually of indeterminate location but in the case of the sDe-dge legend apparently in the region of Tachienlu.

It is often assumed that mGar and 'Gar are simply alternative spellings. If so, the form 'Gar, which is more frequent in later works, may have been adopted to avoid confusion with the despised caste of blacksmiths (*mgar-ba*); but might not mGar indicate that the clan did have a remote ancestral connection with that craft? Professor Stein tends to dismiss this because the claim is not made by Tibetan writers, who love that sort of etymology. Nevertheless, the possibility may be allowed to remain open. In the earliest documents the name is invariably written mGar. The occurrence of 'Gar' in the Annals of Khotan, quoted by Professor Stein with reference to TLTD, is not from a Tun Huang *ms* but from a late xylograph and the recent edition by Mr Emmerick shows that two out of four of the available xylograph versions read mGar. Although the early Tibetans certainly had the services of skilled metal workers, there is no suggestion that smiths were then regarded either with the aversion which became their lot later in Tibet or with the awe that in some other countries surrounded the worker in metal. Nor, for that matter, is there any hint of special treatment of those other occupations which later appear as outcaste in Tibet — butchers, potters, cutters-up of dead bodies. But the existence of a superior attitude towards smiths in Central Asia is seen in the special reputation of the Turks as blacksmiths and their subjection in that capacity to their Juan Juan overlords (Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue Occidentaux* p 222) And it may be noted, for what it is worth, that when the ruler of Ngas-po who was the the overlord of the mGar, was defeated his son fled to the Turks.

Even though the mGar family ceased to count for anything in the affairs of the early kingdom the well merited fame of their former greatness and achievements has never been forgotten. mGar sTong Yul-zung is still the favourite hero of story drama it is remarkable how much space and what favourable treatment are given to the mGar in the Tun Huang Chronicle which is principally a eulogy of the Tibetan kings whose authority the mGar overrode for a period. Two rather dubious members of the family are introduced into the lists of early ministers (THD 130); sTong-rtzan yul-zung is suitably honoured (pp 159-160) but it is Khri-'bring btsan-brod who gets the most praise. It is true that the chastisement of the disloyal minister is mentioned (p 149) and 'Dus-srong's long song of triumph after he had overthrown

Khri-bring is given full value; but the voice of the critic Khe-rgad is also heard even if indirectly (pp 161-167) and one long section (pp 167-169) is devoted to the skill and courage of Khri-bring in debate and in war. The Tibetans of that day appear to have enjoyed, without partisan feelings, the achievements of any great man. In later histories there is no mention of the fall of the mGar; only the good is remembered.

In comparison with the great men of mGar, Pa-tshab were of small stature; and in spite of the connection of one of them with the mGar, they survived in Tibet as junior ministers connected with the external administration and with military duties (*Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*. Tucci, Rome 1950. p. 55). The name Pa-tshab occurs also in later religious histories and in recent times it has been held that the clan was connected with Pa-snam between Gyantse and Shigatse. That would not necessarily hold good for ancient times; and Professor Thomas identifies them with the Pang-tshab clan which he locates in East Tibet. Whatever their origin they do not figure as ministers in the early lists of principalities nor are they named in that later Almanac de Gotha of Tibet, the *bKa' thang sde-linga*. Whether the combination of the names Pa-tshab and Gyim-po, mentioned above, points to an eastern origin or not, the early legend and the Tun Huang Annals indicate clearly the extent to which the peoples and affairs of the eastern and north-eastern borders bulked in the story of the Tibetan kingdom. The persistence with which folk-memory preserved that traditions is shown by the determination with which any family that later attained to greatness traced its origin and ancestry to that direction.
