

A Note on the Lijiang Tibetan Inscription

INTRODUCTION

In 1992, a stone monument was discovered at Gezi 格子, in Shigu 石鼓鎮, Lijiang district 麗江縣, Yunnan province.¹ (See figure 1, overleaf.) Shigu is located at the point known as the first bend of the Yangtze River and has been a strategically important place from ancient times. It was especially so in Tang times, during a triangular struggle for power between China, Tibet, and Nanzhao 南詔. Thus far, very few Tang-era materials have been discovered in Yunnan. The Tibetan inscription on this stone monument is probably the first and thus worth a careful study, although it contains only a total of five lines. Fortunately for us, Prof. Wang Yao 王堯 recently published an article in which he provided a Chinese translation of the inscription with historical notes.² He elucidated many of the questions that this inscription might raise. Nevertheless, it appears necessary to conduct further investigation.

INSCRIPTION

The inscription can be transliterated as follows (figure 2, over).³ In the transcription, a double *tsheg* (two vertical dots) is used in most cases instead of a single *tsheg* to separate each syllable. It is a common-

UNLESS OTHERWISE indicated, all citations of standard histories use the punctuated Zhonghua shuju edns. published in Beijing. The symbol “□” means in each case that one character is missing or erased.

¹ Li Xi 李錫, ed., *Lijiang Dongba wenhua bowuguan lunwenji* 麗江東巴文化博物館論文集 (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 2002), p. 3. The monument was placed in a glass case and is now on display in an exhibition hall at the Dongba Museum.

² Wang Yao 王堯, “Yunnan Lijiang Tubo gubei shidu zhaji” 雲南麗江吐蕃古碑釋讀簡記, in *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 7 (2001), pp. 421–27.

³ For his edition of the text, Prof. Wang Yao used photographs provided by Dr. Li Yumin 李玉珉 of the Palace Museum in Taipei. Dr. Li traveled in Yunnan in 1997 and took photographs of the inscription carved on the stone monument, which had not been placed in the glass case at the time. I was able to examine it at the Dongba Museum in 2000 and 2002. My transliterated text made use of both my direct observation and the photographs that Dr. Li was kind enough to provide me. My text is different only in the following points from that of Prof. Wang, whose reading is placed in parentheses: l. 1 ma (ma’); l. 2 myi (mi); l. 4 ni (mi), and lo (pho). Prof. Wang gives *la* after long *la dag* at l. 4 and inserts dots between *gum* [with dot under] and *ba’i* at l. 5, although there is nothing there.



Figure 1. Stone Monument at Lijiang

Photographed by Dr. Li Yumin in 1997; digitized version used by permission.

place feature of the famous Lhasa “Zhol rdo-rings” (ca. 764),⁴ and may provide clues with regard to the date of the inscription. Here, relying only on what can be observed in the photograph, I mark this device with a colon, however, if we could carefully examine the original inscription, we would expect it to appear in the rest of the text.

Transliterated Text

- Line 1. Mtsho: rum: long: la dag:
thog: ma / rgya: 'bangs: las:
Line 2. Rgya: rje: gtan: gyi: rjer: myi:
rung: nas // btsan: po: lha: sras: la:
Line 3. Glo: ba: nye ste // blon:
skyes: bzang: la: / phyag: 'tshal:
nas: pho: tshed zang
Line 4. Mang: ni / gser: chen pho:
stsald // long la: dag gtsang cen
stsald pa: las lo
Line 5. Dgu bcu lon de gumba'i
mchad pa

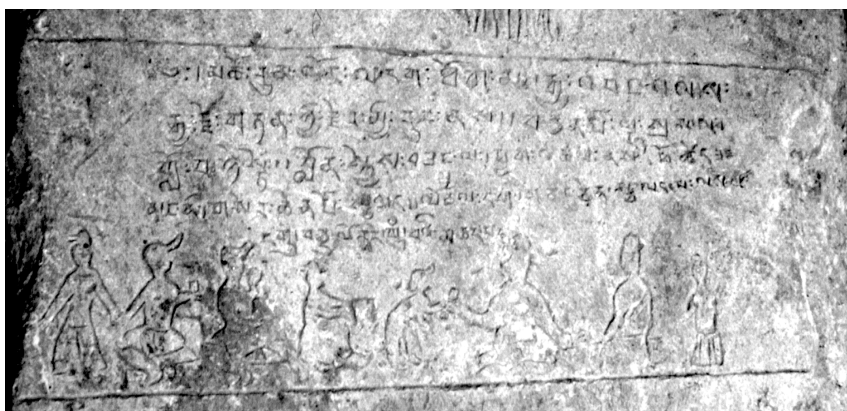


Figure 2. Stone Monument at Lijiang, Detail

Tibetan text located between the two inscribed horizontal lines of the stone monument.

⁴ H. E. Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1985), pp. 1–25.

Translation

[Tombstone of] Long-la-dag of mTsho rum. The origin [of the affair is as follows]: the Chinese people no longer accepted the Chinese emperor as being qualified to be a stable ruler; therefore, [Long-la-dag] made a pledge of allegiance to the Tibetan btsan-po, son of heaven, and paid reverence to the councilor sKyes-bzang. As a result, Pho Tshed-zang-mang was granted a great gold letter (medal) and Long-la-dag was given an official rank of gtsang-chen. Later, having attained the age of ninety, he died. [Here is] his tomb.

Notes: Line One

mtsho rum. Probably the name of a place (mtsho, “lake”).

long la dag. Personal name of the tomb-owner.

thog ma. “Origin, beginning.”

rgya ’bangs. “Chinese people, Chinese subject.” In the Dunhuang manuscript (Pelliot tibétain 1287) we read, “rgya mkhar ni mtho’ bshig cing / rgya ’bangs ni mang bsdus nas” (Abattu les hautes forteresses chinoises, et réduit maints sujets chinois).⁵

Notes: Line Two

rgya rje. “Chinese king, emperor.”

gtan gyi rje. “Stable ruler.” *gtan* is to be read as *brtan*.

myi rung. “Not qualified.” In the same Dunhuang manuscript: “skol kyi srid ni srid du ma rung / chos ni chos su ma rung ste” (Le gouvernement en effervescence ne gouverne plus. La loi n’a plus force de loi).⁶

btsan po lha sras. Corresponds literally to Chin. *zanpu tianzi* 贊普天子. The theory of F. W. Thomas that the title derives from Skt.: Devaputra is no more sustainable.⁷

Notes: Line Three

glo ba nye ste. “To be loyal, pledge allegiance to.” In the Pelliot ms., “dbyi tshab glo ba nye bas / gum na mchad pyag dar te brtsig par gnang / rta ni brgya’ dgum bar gnang. bu tsha gang rung ba gchig // gser gyi yi ge myi chad par stsald par bka’ stsal to” (Parce que le dpyid-tshab m’est fidèle, quand il mourra, je lui battrai un tombeau sur un sol purifié et je sacrifierai cent chevaux. Je choisirai un de ses

⁵ Jacques Bacot et al., *Documents de Töwen-houang relatifs à l’histoire du Tibet* (Paris: Geuthner, 1940), p. 152.

⁶ Ibid., p. 133.

⁷ Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents concerning Chinese Turkestan*, part 2 (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1951), p. 82; part 3 (1955), p. 38; in S. 2736, *btsan po* alone is glossed by *then tse* 天子; see F. W. Thomas and Lionel Giles, “A Tibeto-Chinese Word-and-Phrase Book,” *BSOAS* 12 (1948), p. 757.

filis pour porter les lettres écrites en or);⁸ In the Pelliot ms., “rgyal ’bring lan ton gyis blang ste pyag du gsol nas / gor ma dkar po dngos ni // dbyid tshab kyis mchad pa’i rmang du brtsigso.” (Rgyal-’bring lan-ton la prit et la remit aux mains du roi, qui posa cette pierre blanche elle-même comme fondation du tombeau du dbyichab);⁹ also, in Lhasa *Zhol rdo-rings*, South ll.4, 20, 22.¹⁰

blon skyes bzang: Tibetan minister of the time Khri-srong lde-brtsan, Blon Skyes-bzang Rgyal-kong. He died in 757. In the Stein ms., “blon skyes bzang rgyal kong blon che’i ’og dpon ’tshal ’tshal ba las gum.” (Councilor Skyes-bzang Rgyal-kong died after being repeatedly required as deputy [in the office] of Great Councilor).¹¹

pho tshed zang mang. A person’s name, probably a chieftain of the Mtshorum area.

Notes: Line Four

gser chen pho. Great gold letter (medal), third of the twelve Tibetan court ranks. In ancient Tibet, an official was bestowed with the *yig-tshangs* “diploma,” which corresponded to the Chinese *gaoshen* 告身, and his rank was always designated with a kind of *yi-ge* “letter.” According to *Chos ’byung mkhas pa’i dga’ ston* of dPa’ bo gtsug lag ’phreng pa, the “letters” are placed in the following order: *g-yu* “turquoise,” *gser* “gold,” *phra-men* “silver inlaid with gold,” *dngul* “silver,” *zangs* “copper,” and *lcag* “iron,” with each being further divided into “great” and “small.” Nonetheless, since Dunhuang manuscripts omit the last *lcag* and instead insert *ra-gan* “brass” between *dngul* and *zangs*,¹² there might have been some changes over the years. Chinese sources enumerate the following five ranks: *sese* 瑟瑟 “turquoise,” *jin* 金 “gold,” *jin shi yin shang* 金飾銀上 “silver inlaid with gold,” *yin* 銀 “silver,” and *shutong* 熟銅 “copper” (*Tongdian*,¹³ *Tang Huiyao*,¹⁴ *Cefu Yuanguai*,¹⁵ *Xin Tangshu*,¹⁶ with the slightly different expression *jin tu yin* 金塗銀 for *phra-men*). With regard to the difficult term *phra-men*, it might be advisable to translate it as mentioned above, if the Chinese equivalent expressions are taken into consideration.¹⁷ Further,

⁸ P.t. 1287, l. 264; Bacot et al., *Documents*, p. 144.

⁹ Ibid., p. 145; see P.t. 1287, l. 274.

¹⁰ Richardson, *Corpus*, pp. 6 ff., esp. p. 7, n. 3.

¹¹ Bacot et al., *Documents*, p. 64; S. 8212.

¹² P.t. 1071, 1089.

¹³ *Tongdian* 通典 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988), p. 5171.

¹⁴ *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1991) p. 2050.

¹⁵ *Cefu yuanguai* 冊府元龜 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989) 961, p. 11308. It also records another tradition: *sese* 瑟瑟, *yin* 銀, *toushi* 鎗石, and *tong* 銅, each being divided into “great” and “small” (p. 11309). However, the omission of *jin* “gold” here appears to be a mistake.

¹⁶ *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 216A, p. 6072.

¹⁷ Giuseppe Tucci, *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings* (Rome: I.M.E.O., 1950), pp. 18 and 79, n. 45, translates it as “gilt silver.” It is not easy to accept Yamaguchi’s new interpretation “opal” based on the hypothesis that the ancient word *phra-men* is the same as the currently used word *khra-men* “a kind of gemstone”; see Yamaguchi, *Toban ôkoku seiritsushi kenkyû* 吐蕃王國成立史研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1983), pp. 473 and 496, n. 56.

on a wall of a Dunhuang grotto, we can read an inscription such as this one: 夫人蕃任瓜州都□(督)□倉□曹參軍金銀間告身.¹⁸ Here, *jin yin jian gaoshen* “gold and silver alternate placing diploma” could be the contemporary translation of Tibetan *phra-men kyi yi ge*, and it provides some more evidence. Incidentally, “Nanzhao dehua bei” 南詔德化碑 (766 AD),¹⁹ using phonetic transcription, pronounces it as *pomi* 頗弥.²⁰

stsald. “Gave.” It is the past tense of the verb *stsol-ba*, accompanied by an archaic ending –d.

gtsang cen. Gtsang chen. An official title just behind the twelve ranks, which were provided in the regime of the ancient Tibetan Empire. It appears in several places in the Pelliot mss.²¹ Wang Yao and Chen Jian offer a translation *dazang* 大藏 for this title, but there is little reason to give it too much attention because it is nothing more than a literal rendering of *gtsang chen*.²²

Notes: Line Five

lo dgu bcu lon. “Attain the age of ninety.”

mchad pa. “Tomb.”²³

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE DATE OF THE INSCRIPTION

It will be useful to give first of all a very concise history of Nanzhao's relations with China and Tibet. The Nanzhao kingdom made its appearance historically in around the middle of the seventh century, when Xinuluo 細奴羅, chieftain of Mingshe-zhao 蒙舍詔, one of the Six *zhao* 六詔, which existed as independent political powers, brought tribute to the Tang court. Gradually, Nanzhao gathered strength and outstripped the other five *zhao*. Nanzhao came to hold dominion over the entire area around Lake Erhai 洱海, located in the northern suburbs

¹⁸ Grotto no. 144, on the southern side of the east wall. See Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji* 敦煌莫高窟供養人題記 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), p. 65.

¹⁹ See Wang Chang 王昶, *Jinshi cuibian* 金石萃編 160; Sun Taichu 孫太初, *Yunnan gudai shike congkao* 雲南古代石刻叢考 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1983), pp. 29–68.

²⁰ E.g., on the 5th column of the back side of the stele, one reads 大軍將前法曹長大頗弥告身賞二色綾袍金帶楊□□.

²¹ See P.t. 1071, l. 247; and P.t. 108, ll. 8, 25, 60, 61. Cf. Marcelle Lalou, “Revendications des fonctionnaire du Grand Tibet au VIII^e siècle,” *JTA* 243.2 (1955), p. 195; Yamaguchi Zuiho 山口瑞鳳, Sashu Kanjin ni yoru Toban ni-gundan no seiritsu to mKhar tsan gundan no ichi 沙州漢人による吐蕃二軍團の成立と mKhar tsan 軍團の位置 (“Foundation of Two Tibetan Army Military Settlements consisting of Chinese at Sha cu and an Attempt to Locate mKhar tsan”), *Bunka kōryū sisetsu kenkyū kiyō* 文化交流施設研究紀要 (U. of Tokyo) 4 (1980), pp. 14 and 37, n. 14.

²² Wang Yao 王堯 and Chen Jian 陳踐, trans., *Dunhuang Tubo wenxian xuan* 敦煌吐蕃文獻選 (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1983), pp. 9, 39.

²³ Refer to the above-cited quotation from P.t. 1287, ll. 264 ff.

of Dali 大理 city in the western part of Yunnan province. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that the Nanzhao kingdom faced difficulties in maintaining independent sovereignty because it was bordered by two great powers – China and Tibet.

The fourth king, Piluoge 皮羅閣, strengthened the alliance with Tang China and was conferred the title Guiyi 歸義 “Allegiance” in 738 and in no time was invested as king of Yunnan 雲南王. However, Tang control over Yunnan was so intense that there was little hope of complete independence. After Geluofeng 閣羅鳳 succeeded Piluoge in 748, Nanzhao began to shift its policy in favor of Tibet, with the turning point being the misconduct of a Tang supervisor-in-chief of Yaozhou 姚州, Zhang Qiantuo 張虔陀.²⁴ After much hesitation, Geluofeng finally pledged allegiance to Tibet; in 752 he was appointed “junior btsan-po” (*btsan-po chung*) with the appellation “Emperor of the East.”²⁵ Thereafter, he repeatedly defeated Tang troops in alliance with Tibet. Geluofeng’s distinguished services are mentioned in the Tibetan “Annales” and “Chronique” discovered at Dunhuang.²⁶

The alliance with Tibet did not hold for long. In 779, Geluofeng died and his grandson Yimouxun 異牟尋 ascended the throne. Nine years later, around 788, friendly relations between Nanzhao and Tibet began to deteriorate, as Tang political activities gained increasing importance. In 794, Yimouxun defeated the Shenchuan 神川 based Tibetan army,²⁷ and returned to an allegiance with Tang. Subsequently, Yimouxun con-

²⁴ Yaozhou was raised to Area Command (*dudu fu* 都督府) in 721 (*Tanghuiyao* 73, p. 1568), and the arrogant and immoral behavior of Zhang Qiantuo was described in *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 197, pp. 5280–81.

²⁵ *Jiu Tangshu* 197, p. 5281: 吐蕃令閣羅鳳為贊普鍾, 號曰東帝; *Xin Tangshu* 222A, p. 6271: 吐蕃以為弟, 夷謂弟鍾, 故稱贊普鍾, 給金印, 號東帝. According to “Nanzhao dehua bei” (766), the investiture ceremony was held in Dengchuan 鄧川 situated at the north coast of Erhai on the first day of the first month in the 11th year of Tianbao (752). 天寶十一載正月一日於鄧川冊詔為贊普鍾南國大詔. See Sun, *Yunnan*, p. 47.

²⁶ “Annales” 756 AD: “blon khri bzang dang zhang stong rtsan dang / kag la bong gsum gyi dmagis / se cu phab // tse ci man cad ’bangsu bkug / (S. 8212, ll. 21–22) (“The armies of Councilor Khri-bzang, Zhang Stong-rtsan, and Kag La-bong reduced Se-cu 巂州. As far as Tse-ci, all were submitted” (Bacot et al., *Documents*, p. 63); “Chronique,”: “mywa’i rgyal po kag la bong zhes bya ba / ’bangs su pyag ’tshal nas” (P.t. 1287, l. 345) (“Kag-la-bong, le prince de Myava, fit acte d’hommage”), “ung nas btsan po khri gtsug btsan gyi zha sgar // phang dang gi khang mo cher // kag la bong gi blon po / dwan cung kog / pyag ’tshal ba ’i tshe /” (l. 350) (“Ensuite, quand Dwan-cung-kog, ministre de Kag-la-bong, vint à Phang-dang-gi khang-mo-che présenter au roi Khri-lde gtsug-brtsan l’hommage”); Bacot et al., *Documents*, pp. 150–51.

²⁷ Shenchuan, northwest of Lijiang, on the east bank of the upper reaches of Jinsha jiang 金沙江, was an advanced base of Tibet in Yunnan. To the west of Shenchuan, the Tibetans had built strong fortresses on both sides of the Iron Bridge 鐵橋, which was laid across Jinsha jiang. After the victory, Nanzhao established Tieqiao 鐵橋節度 at West castle. Manshu 蠻書, j. 6: “貞元十年 (794) 掠吐蕃鐵橋城, 今稱鐵橋節度”; “鐵橋城在劍川北三日程, 川中平路

tinued his battles against the Tibetans with such remarkable success that Nanzhao gradually became an independent country.

Now, with regard to the Lijiang inscription, it is obvious that the text relates to the political disorder in China during the reign of Xuanzong 玄宗, which led to the rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 and the reactions of Yunnan ethnic groups unified under the Nanzhao leadership. As mentioned previously, Nanzhao entered into an alliance with Tibet as late as 750, and king Geluofeng was bestowed with the title “junior *btsan-po*.” It is stated in the inscription that Pho Tshed-zang-mang was granted a great gold letter and Long-la-dag was given the rank of *gtsang-chen*. Undoubtedly, these rewards were given in association with Geluofeng’s allegiance to Tibet. Geluofeng’s elder son, Fengjiayi 鳳迦異, was granted a great turquoise letter on the occasion of the investiture ceremony of 752.²⁸ Unfortunately, we have no historical data that could provide any information about Pho Tshed-zang-mang. However, we could speculate that he was a chieftain of the area of present-day Shigu, the Tibetan name of which was mTsho-rum. According to *Manshu* 蠻書, this area was inhabited by various Moman 磨蠻,²⁹ as is currently the case, and since the beginning they had been in close relations with the Tibetans. It is no wonder that Tshed-zang-mang obtained a rank as high as the great gold letter.³⁰ However, what is surprising is the fact that the tombstone was erected for Long-la-dag, who held only the rank of *gtsang-chen*. Therefore, if he indeed lived to ninety years of age, it is possible that the monument was erected in order to celebrate his longevity.³¹

What then is the date of the inscription? The text mentions the name of the Tibetan councilor blon sKyes-bzang. On the basis of the fact that blon sKyes-bzang died the same year,³² Prof. Wang Yao claims that the stone monument was erected before 757. Nonetheless, if we

有驛。貞元十年，南詔異牟尋用軍破東西兩城，斬斷鐵橋，大籠官已下投水死者以萬計。今西城南詔置兵守禦，東城至神川已來，半爲散地。” Xiang Da 向達, *Manshu jiaozhu* 蠻書校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962), pp. 126, 153–55.

²⁸ “Nanzhao dehua bei”: “授長男鳳迦異大瑟瑟告身”; Tib.: *g.yu chen po'i yi ge* (“great turquoise letter”) is of the highest among the twelve ranks.

²⁹ *Manshu jiaozhu*, p. 96.

³⁰ As far as we know from the list engraved on the reverse side of “Nanzhao dehua bei,” the great gold letter was granted only to the matrimonial relatives of the royal Meng 蒙 family, who were privileged with the title of *zhaoqin* 詔親 “royal relative.”

³¹ Wang Yao believes that it was Pho Tshed-zang-mang who lived for 90 years, not Long-la-dag. However, since this is the tombstone of Long-la-dag, there is no choice but to attribute that to Long-la-dag.

³² S. 8212; Bacot et al., *Documents*, p. 64.

consider that the inscription relates past events in retrospect after the death of Long-la-dag, we do not have to place the date of the inscription prior to 757. It is a matter of fact that it cannot be later than 788, when relations between Tibet and Nanzhao took a sharp turn for the worse. It is true that the Moso men, the inhabitants of this area, traditionally held a pro-Tibetan attitude.³³ Even if the special relations between the Moso men and Tibet are taken into consideration, it is beyond any possibility that the inscription was written after the fall of the Tibetan base at Shenzhou in 794.

A NOTE ON THE TITLE “ZHAO”

The Nanzhao kingdom was obliged to follow a long and difficult course before achieving autonomy. Nanzhao was originally nothing more than one of the Six zhao, or Eight zhao, that were distributed in the area around Erhai. It gradually absorbed other *zhao* and formed a federated kingdom. The ruling class of this federation is now considered to have been the Lolo people.³⁴ Yet, in the early days of studies of Nanzhao, a Thai theory was prevalent, and therefore scholars searched Thai languages for the etymology of the title of the Nanzhao king “zhao 詔.”³⁵

What, then, is the title *zhao*? Is it a special term that can be applied exclusively to the Nanzhao king of Yunnan? As far as we know, the word ranged rather widely among the Lolo and related people not only in Yunnan but also in northern provinces such as Sichuan and Qinghai.

Some years ago, archeologists discovered four Tibetan tombs in Dulan district 都蘭縣, Qinghai province. This important discovery was reported in *Zhongguo wenwu bao* 中國文物報,³⁶ according to which four stone monuments were excavated among others from the third tomb

³³ E.g., when the Tang government sent an envoy with a secret letter to Yimouxun in 791 by way of the Moso men, the Mosos' *kuizhu* 魁主 (*guizhu* 鬼主) informed Tibet about it. 貞元七年, 又遣間使持書喻之, 道出磨些蠻, 其魁主潛告吐蕃 (*Jiu Tangshu* 197, p. 5282). This episode reveals a great deal about the strong relations between the Moso and the Tibetans.

³⁴ Currently in China, the term Yi is generally used instead of Lolo, but I employ the latter as an ethno-linguistic term of wider comprehension.

³⁵ E.g., Chavannes, “Une inscription du Royaume de Nan-tchao,” *JA* (Nov.–Dec. 1900), p. 383: “Le mot tchao est un mot de la langue thaïe qui signifie ‘roi’; on le retrouve encore aujourd’hui dans le titre du roi de Siam et dans celui de tous les chefs laotiens de l’Indo-Chine centrale. Il est probable que, comme on l’admet généralement aujourd’hui, la famille princière du Nan-tchao, sinon toute la population de ce pays, appartenait à un rameau de la race thaï.” It is P. Pelliot who questioned the Thai theory; Pelliot, “Deux itinéraires de Chine en Inde à la fin du VIII^e siècle,” *BEFEO* 4 (1904), p. 154: “On suppose que ces peuples du Nan-tchao étaient des Thaï; mais cette question d’origine est encore enveloppée de graves incertitudes.”

³⁶ No. 94, 1999 (Dec. 1). A report in a more condensed form but with some color plates can be seen in 1999 *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian* 1999中國重要考古發現 (Beijing: Wenwu

(M₃). The report also states that the Tibetan title *blon* is written on the surface of a stone (figure 3), and another Tibetan title *zhang* appears on a wooden slip. What is of most interest, however, is that the inscription of the title *she'u* is found on another stone (figure 4). Although the existence



Figure 3. Tibetan Title “blon”

Inscribed on the surface of a stone (99DRNM₃: 157-1) discovered in Dulan district, Qinghai province. Based on Dulan Tubo mu (cited n. 37) color pl. 29.

of this inscription does not seem to have been reported officially,³⁷ I had the opportunity to witness personally the rubbing of it.³⁸ The title appears to correspond to *zhao* of Nanzhao, which must have been phonetically transcribed as *ce'u* in Tibetan script.³⁹ The initial consonant does not agree perfectly, but the difference is so minor that one could attribute it to a dialectal variation. Judging from the rubbing, “*she'u*” was carved on a

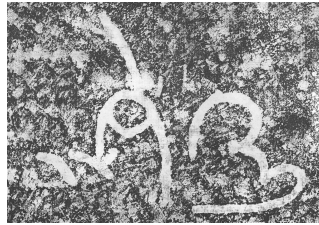


Figure 4. Tibetan Title “she’u”

Inscribed on the surface of a stone (99DRNM₃: 157-3) from same site as fig. 3; Dulan Tubo mu, fig. 69, p. 109.

stone in the same manner as *blon*. Therefore, we can speculate that the tomb-owner of Dulan M₃ would have been a Lolo chieftain incorporated as a *blon*, a “councilor” in the Tibetan regime. It is not surprising that Lolo tribes in this region, maintaining their fundamental social structure, subjugated themselves to the Tibetans.

The Tanguts, who established a mighty Xixia 西夏 kingdom in Ningxia in the eleventh century, have an interesting ancestral legend in which the founder is called *se'u*.⁴⁰ In my opinion, this name is also derived from *zhao*, the Lolo title for a king or chieftain. The Tanguts’

chubanshe, 2001), pp. 135-15.

³⁷ The official excavation report was published only recently: Beijing daxue kaogu wenbo xueyuan 北京大學考古文博學院 and Qinghaisheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 青海省文物考古研究所, eds., *Dulan Tubo mu* 都蘭吐蕃墓 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2005).

³⁸ I had the opportunity to be present at a briefing session organized by the Archeological Department of Beijing University in January 2000.

³⁹ 詔 (*Guangyun*’s 廣韻 *fangie* spelling: 之少切); M. Ch.: *tōiäu. There are evidences in the Chinese texts in Tibetan script from Dunhuang that the character of the same sound is so transcribed.

⁴⁰ Rolf A. Stein, “Mi-ñang et Si-hia,” *BEFEO* 44.1 (1951), pp. 238 ff. One finds the legend in

homeland is Mi-ñag, west of present day Kangding 康定 (Tib.: Dar-tshe-mdo), Sichuan, and linguistically they belong to the Lolo-Burmese group. It is only natural that the Tanguts conferred a national title of “*zhao*” for king on their founder. In this regard, it appears to me that a later legend about Nanzhao attributes their first ancestor to a son of the mythic figure Chiyu 蚩尤, who was defeated by Xuanyuan 軒轅 in the war of Zhuolu 涿鹿. The son was called Youzhao 尤詔, which contains the title *zhao*.⁴¹ While this is nothing more than a myth,⁴² the matter of naming a founder is the same.

According to Chinese dynastic histories, the title *zhao* dates back to the end of the fourth century. In *Jinshu* 晉書 (compiled in the seventh century), there is the following passage:

As the attendants of (Huan) Xuan 桓玄 addressed him as Huan-zhao 桓詔, Huan Yin 桓胤 remonstrated with him and said: “The term *zhao* is applied to an order or edict, and not to be used as a term of address. None of the rulers of Han and Wei have ever used this term. I hear that only the northern barbarians call Fu Jian 苻堅 “Fu-zhao.” Allow me to make a request that Your Majesty follow the emperor’s old style and become an example for all ages.”⁴³

The following prophecy is also transmitted in dynastic histories: 河水清復清, 苻詔死新城 (“When the Yellow River becomes clearer, Fu *zhao* dies at a new castle”).⁴⁴ This backs up the account given in *Jinshu*, above. Fu Jian originated from the Di 氐 ethnicity, which shares roots with the Qiang 羌 ethnicity – the predecessor of Chinese Tibeto-Burman minorities. It is easy to assume that the title was prevalent among these ethnic groups in ancient times. The title “*zhao*” was no less important to them than, so to speak, “kaghan” was to Northern nomadic peoples.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- P.t. Pelliot tibétain ms.
S. Stein ms.

some Tibetan historical texts and the name has the following variants according to the sources: *se-hu*, *si’u*, *gsi’u*. Although Stein tries to find an independent element *se* in this name, here we find instead a single word with a diphthong.

⁴¹ It is also interesting that the naming follows the Lolo sequential system.

⁴² One can find it in newly discovered material from early-Ming, the authenticity of which is somewhat doubtful: Li Hao 李浩, *Sanyi suibi* 三迤隨筆, in *Dali guyishu chao* 大理古佚書鈔 (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 2002), p. 7.

⁴³ *Jinshu* 晉書 99 (“Biog. Huan Xuan” 桓玄傳), pp. 2599–600: 玄左右稱玄為桓詔, 桓胤諫曰, “詔者, 施於辭令, 不以為稱謂也。漢魏之主皆無此言, 唯聞北虜以苻堅為 “苻詔” 耳。願陛下稽古帝則, 令萬世可法。

⁴⁴ *Jinshu* 114, p. 2929; *Songshu* 宋書 31, p. 920.