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THREE 'PHAGS-PA SEAL INSCRIPTIONS
—RE-EXAMINATION OF DR. E. HAARH'S READINGS—

by MIYOKO NAKANO Sapporo

Dr. Erik Haarh's article, "L'écriture 'Phags-pa vraiment carrée des sceaux chinois des Yüan", *Acta Orientalia*, XXIV, 1–2 (1959), pp. 59–64, deals with five Chinese seals inscribed in 'Phags-pa script. Three of them are clearly in need of a re-examination in accordance with 'Phags-pa orthography used in Chinese documents. Reproductions of the seal inscriptions concerned are set out here below.

Figure 1 (Dr. Haarh's Fig. II): Stamped on the *Ža-lu* documents, whose photo-reproduction is given in Professor G. Tucci's *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Roma, Libreria dello Stato, 1949), vol. II.

My reading of this seal inscription is shown in my Table (Nos. 1–16), along with Dr. Haarh's reading. The meaning of it is "Seal of the Imperial Preceptor, [who] controls monks and nuns over the countries, [and who] revives Buddhism, of the Great Yüan", while Dr. Haarh gives the meaning to it: "Sceau officiel du président du département bouddhique, ministre du bureau impérial centrale (*sic*), du rang et d'emblème d'instructeur de l'état de la dynastie des Grands *Yüan*". Dr. Haarh seems unfamiliar with the terms of Chinese official posts and bureaux. It is extremely difficult to understand his reading of the words *sung-ling* (Nos. 5 and 6), *jyu-gui* (Nos. 7 and 8), *shing-ža* (Nos. 9 and 10), and *jung-hying* (Nos. 11 and 12), which are extremely far-fetched. His reading *gya-kha* for No. 14 is probably caused by resemblance of letter shapes between the 'Phags-pa *w* and *kh*.

As to this seal, the *Yüan-shih* 元史, vol. 202 (="Shih-Lao chuan 釋老傳") states: "In the thirty-first year [of the Chih-yüan 至元 reign] (1294), Ts'e-la-shih-pa-o-erh-chia-le 策喇實巴顎爾嘉勒 succeeded [as *ti-shih* 帝師 (Imperial Preceptor)]. Ch'eng-tsung 成宗 (Öljeitü Qan) made a jade pentagonal Buddhist crown specially for him and invested him with it. . . . In the first year of the Yüan-chen 元貞 reign (1295), [Ch'eng-tsung] again invested him with a jade seal with a seal ribbon bearing a two-dragon ornament, whose inscription is 大元帝師統領諸國僧尼中興釋教之印."

The post of *ti-shih* was held in the seventh year of the Chih-yüan reign (1270) by Qubilai Qan and was given to 'Gro-mgon 'Phags-pa Blo-gros

Table

Figure	No.	reading of inscriptions by Nakano		reading of inscriptions by Dr Haarh		Dragunov	Wade-Giles
1	1	tai > dai	大	tay	太	34a	te
	2	yüen	元	ayen	元	37b	yüan
	3	di > ti	帝	di	帝	35a	ti
	4	shi > si	師	shi	師	32a	shih
	5	t'ung	統	sung	究	44a	t'ung
	6	ling	領	ling	令	39a	ling
	7	dzyu > tsyu	諸	jyu	爵主	43a	chu
	8	guk > kuk	國	gui		46a	kuo
	9	shing > sang	僧	shing	聖	(38b)	sêng
	10	ni	尼	ža	署	32a	ni
	11	dzung > tsung	中	jung	中	44a	chung
	12	hing	興	hying	卿	39a	hsing
	13	si	釋	ši	釋	46a	shih
	14	gyaw > kyaw	教	gya-kha	迦科	40b	chiao
	15	dzi > tsi	之	ji	旨	33a	chih
	16	yin	印	yin	印		yin
2	17	see 11	中		中		
	18	seu > syu	書	ju	書令	43a	shu
	19	li	禮	li		35a	li
	20	(pi > bi)	部	pi	秘		pu
	21	see 15	之		旨		
	22	see 16	印		印		
3	23	see 1	大		太		
	24	shi > si	司	shi	侍	33b	ssu
	25	tu > du	徒	tu	讀		t'u
	26	see 16	印		印		

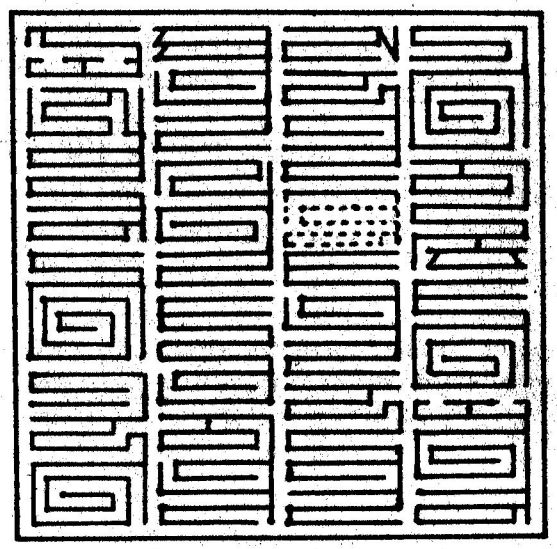


figure 1

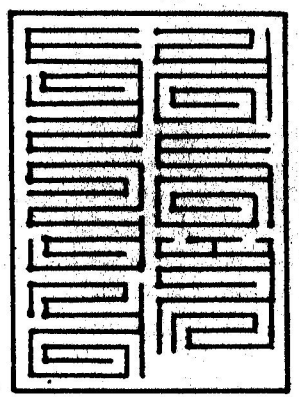


figure 2

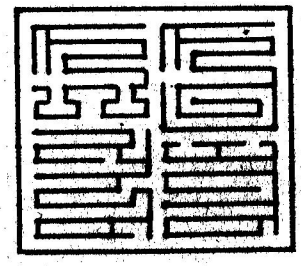


figure 3

rgyal-mtshan, or shortly Bla-ma 'Phags-pa, who had just devised a Mongolian script, the so-called 'Phags-pa script, and had offered it to the throne.[1] After Bla-ma 'Phags-pa returned to Tibet (1276?), the post was again given

[1] For further detail of a biography of Bla-ma 'Phags-pa, see Nakano, *A Phonological Study in the 'Phags-pa Script and the Meng-ku Tzu-yün* (=*Oriental Monograph Series*, No. 7) (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1971) [in press], esp. Chapter I; Id. "Ti-shih Pa-ssu-pa Hsing-chuang Chiao-cheng", *Hsin-ya Hsüeh-pao* (Hong Kong), IX, 1 (1969), pp. 93–119.

to a Tibetan. Ts'e-la-shih-pa-o-erh-chia-le, whose Tibetan name can be identified as Grags-pa 'od-zer, was appointed to the fifth *ti-shih* and was invested with the seal mentioned above.[2] This seal can be regarded as an especially important one because its inscription is described in the *Yüan-shih*, which does not give any detail of the seal given to Bla-ma 'Phags-pa by Qubilai Qan.

Figure 2 (Dr. Haarh's Fig. III): Stamped on *Proclamation of 1306*, whose photo-reproduction is given in Professor N. Poppe's *Mongolian Monuments in hP'ags-pa Script* (edited and translated by Professor J. R. Krueger) (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1957), Plate VI.

Dr. Haarh's reading and the re-examined reading by me of its inscription are shown in my Table (Nos. 17–22), and the meaning of it is "Seal of the Department of the Imperial Household in the Imperial Secretariat", while Dr. Haarh's is "Sceau officiel du président du secrétariat impérial". In Dr. Haarh's reading *li* (No. 19) cannot be identified with 令. He reads *ling* for No. 6. This also reveals his inconsistency in reading the inscriptions.

The 'Phags-pa spelling for No. 20 seems to be *pi* (>*bi*) as Dr. Haarh reads. In this case, however, this spelling is supposed to be a mistake for *pu* (>*bu*), because the seal-script forms of *i* and *u* are quite similar to each other apart from directions of their vortexes.

Figure 3 (Dr. Haarh's Fig. V): Stamped on a painting drawn by Liang K'ai 梁楷 (1201?–1265?), "Li Po yin-hsing t'u 李白吟行圖", which is now in the possession of the National Museum of Tokyo.

Dr. Haarh's reading and the re-examined reading of it are shown in my Table (Nos. 23–26). Dr. Haarh gives a meaning "Sceau du grand instructeur (du prince héréditaire)", resulting from his unfamiliarity with Chinese official terms. "Grand instructeur du prince héréditaire" was called 皇太子侍讀 and was never abbreviated to 太侍讀. This seal inscription means "Seal of *ta-ssu-t'u* 大司徒". The post of *ta-ssu-t'u* was originally held in the Chou dynasty. In the Yüan dynasty, however, this post was regarded as an honorary post without any actual authority to which the non-Chinese were mainly appointed. Professor S. Hasumi proposes the actual owner of the painting, and consequently of this seal, was Anigo (1244–1306), a Nepalese architect who was appointed to this post in the fifteenth year of the Chih-yüan reign (1278).[3]

[2] As to Grags-pa 'od-zer, see the *Ža-lu* documents No. II (Tucci, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 670, 747) and Kun-dga' rdo-rje, *Hu-lan deb-ther* (=*The Red Annals*) (Gangtok: Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, 1961 ed.), fol. 24a. For further detail of *ti-shih*s including Grags-pa 'od-zer in the Yüan court, see Professor S. Inaba, "Gen no teishi ni kansuru kenkyū", *Ōtani Daigaku Kenkyū Nenpō* (Kyoto), XVII (1964), pp. 79–156.

[3] S. Hasumi, "Liang K'ai hitsu *Li Po yin-hsing t'u* no Pasupa moji *Ta-ssu-t'u-yin* to Anigo ni tsuite", *Tōhōgaku*, 35 (1968), pp. 83–97.

In my Table, 'Phags-pa spellings of Nos. 1 (23), 3, 7, 8, 11 (17), 14, 15 (21), 20, and 25 reveal the alternation between voiced and voiceless initials other than fricatives. This phenomenon has not yet been explained with absolute exactitude, although Professor B. Karlgren,[4] Professor S. Hattori,[5] Mr. E. R. Hope,[6] and Professor N. Poppe[7] have made to some extent references to it. My tentative explanation of this phenomenon is as follows.

In Mandarin dialects of Chinese, there has been a phonological opposition between aspirated and non-aspirated voiceless initials since ca. thirteenth century, while there were two phonological oppositions between voiced and voiceless initials and between aspirated and non-aspirated voiceless initials in Ancient Chinese. In Mongolian, on the other hand, there was a phonological opposition between voiced and voiceless initials, although the Mongolian voiceless initials, e.g. *p*, *k*, *t*, etc., can be phonetically regarded as strongly aspirated voiceless sounds, e.g. [p'], [k'], [t'], etc., as Professor Poppe explains.[8]

In transcribing Chinese in 'Phags-pa script, the Mongols might have confused the difference between the two phonological oppositions of the two languages, thus the Chinese aspirated voiceless initials were regarded as identical with the Mongolian voiceless initials because of their phonetical aspiration. This may be illustrated as follows:

	Chinese	Mongolian	'Phags-pa
1.	*p'*	*p* (=[p'])	*p'*
2.	*p*	*b*	*b*
3.	*b*		*p*

That is to say, the phonological opposition of *p'* : *p* in Chinese was replaced by the phonological opposition of *p* : *b* in 'Phags-pa orthography influenced by Mongolian, and the voiced *b* of Chinese, which is retained in southern dialects, had to be transcribed by the 'Phags-pa *p*.

Nos. 4, 9, and 24 of Table also need to be commented upon. In these 'Phags-pa spellings the glottal *h* appears in non-initial position. This

[4] B. Karlgren, *Études sur la phonologie chinoise* (=*Archives d'Études orientales*, 15) (1915–26), p. 360.

[5] S. Hattori, *Genchōhishi no Mōkogo o arawasu Kanji no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ryūbun shokyoku, 1946), pp. 67–68.

[6] E. R. Hope, *Karlgren's Glottal Stop Initial in Ancient Chinese, with particular reference to the hPhags-pa alphabet and to certain points of linguistic psychology* (Ottawa: published by the author, 1953), sections 167–191. Also see reviews of this book by P. L. M. Serruys, *Oriens*, VIII (1955), pp. 135–141 and K. Whinnom, *Journal of Oriental Studies*, II (1955), pp. 158–172.

[7] Poppe, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34.

[8] Poppe, *Grammar of Written Mongolian* (=*Porta Linguarum Orientalium*) (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1964), pp. 12–14.

phenomenon has been discussed by A. Dragunov,[9] Professor L. Ligeti,[10] and Sir Gerard L. M. Clauson.[11] I have no further comments to make, but it may be useful to generalize these contributions as follows concerning Nos. 4, 9, and 24.

No. 4 : *shi*=*s*+*hi*=*s*+*ï*=*sï* (=[sɿ])
No. 9 : *shing*=*s*+*hi*+*ng*=*s*+*ə*+*ng*+*səng* (=[səŋ])
No. 24 : *shi*=*s*+*hi*=*s*+*ï*=*sï* (=[sɿ])

P.S. While this paper was printing, the author was able to consult the two contributions to this subject by Professor D. M. Farquhar[12] and Dr. M. J. Hashimoto.[13] The former provides a number of the 'Phags-pa Chinese seals, including *Ta-ssu-t'u-yin* (my Figure 3), and the latter deals in great detail with the puzzle of alternation between voiced and voiceless initials in 'Phags-pa Chinese documents. At this stage I regret I am unable to make any comments on these articles.

[9] A. Dragunov, "The *h*Phags-pa Script and Ancient Mandarin", *Izvestija Akademii Nauk SSSR* (1930). Chinese translation by T'ang Yü is *Pa-ssu-pa-tzu yü Ku Han-yü* (Peking: K'o-hsüeh Ch'u-pan-she, 1959). See Chinese ed. p. 30. The column of Dragunov in my Table refers to pagination of the Chinese ed.

[10] L. Ligeti, "Le *Po kia sing* en écriture 'phags-pa", *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, VI (1956), p. 14.

[11] G. L. M. Clauson, "The *h*P'ags-pa Alphabet", *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, 22 (1959) p. 320.

[12] D. M. Farquhar, "The official seals and ciphers of the Yüan period", *Monumenta Serica*, XXV (1966), pp. 362–393+36 figures.

[13] M. J. Hashimoto, "The *h*P'ags-pa transcription of Chinese plosives", *Monumenta Serica*, XXVI (1967), pp. 149–174.