My article "How Old Was Srong Brtsan Sgam Po?" in Vol II, No. 1 of this Bulletin refers to a damaged passage at the beginning of the mss of the Tun Huang Annals. The present article publishes, for the first time, a transliteration of the text of that passage together with a suggested reconstruction and a translation. The importance of this fragment and the light it throws on Tibetan chronology have been examined in my earlier article.

The chronology of the early Tibetan Kingdom depends to a great extent on the annals from Tun Huang published in 1946 by Professors J. Bacot, F. W. Thomas, and C. Toussaint in Documents de Tunen Hwang relatifs à l' Histoire du Tibet (THD). There are two mss containing these annals; the longer is in two parts of which the first—and smaller—is in the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris with the number Pelliot Tibetain 1288 (formerly Pelliot 222); the larger second part is in the India Office Library at London with the number 730 (formerly Stein Tun Huang 103, 19, viii, 1). Another ms in the British Museum—Or 8218, 187—overlaps the former record at the year 743 and runs to the year 763 with a lacuna of seven years between 747 and 754. This is a quite separate compilation; it is not just a copy of the manuscript which is divided between Paris and London.

The Paris mss provides an explicit starting point for the year-by-year record of events which it contains. This is the dog year following the death of Srong Brtsan Sgam Po. That event is mentioned in the Chinese Tang Annals under the first year of Yung Hui which corresponds to 650 A.D. The Tibetan bird year, preceding the dog year, would run from about February/March 649 to February/March 650. Internal evidence in the Tang Annals suggests that Srong Brtsan Sgam Po died towards the end of that period—between January and March 650. From the dog year beginning in 650 down to the pig year 747 the mss contains a short comment on the events of each year. Before the first of those entries—that for 650—there is a passage in which the events of the preceding nine years are summarised, thus
taking the record back to 641 when the Chinese princess
Mun Cheng arrived in Tibet as bride to Srong Btsan Sgam
Po. This date accords with the account in the T'ang Annals.

On p 10 of THD the editors state "La relation commence
six annees plus tot"—i.e. six years before 650; this should,
in fact, be nine years as stated above. At p. 9 they also
comment on the mss, as follows: "Sa partie superieure est
laceree sur le cote gauche. On peut constater cependant
qu'il ne manque pas necessairement une partie superieure.
Les premiers alinées, dont les tetes marquent, ne se terminent
pas comme les alinées des annees". Examination of a
photographic copy of the mss, kindly made available by the
Bibliotheque Nationale, shows that this comment refers to a
number of fragmentary lines preceding the passage with
which the published version of the mss opens. I offer here
a transcription of that unpublished portion, followed by a
suggested reconstruction, and a translation. Both the text
and its interpretation are greatly clarified by two passages
in the Chronicle section of THD which relate to the events
mentioned in the unpublished annals fragment and which
contain very similar wording. The Chronicle makes little
or no attempt at precise dating but gives in some instances
a fuller and more popular presentation of certain events
which are summarised more systematically in the unpublished
fragment which is the subject of this essay.

Transcription

1. ............................... 'khus nas/snying drung
2. ............................... um pa'a/mtha'dig kyang
3. ............................... snang glo ba rings nas/kho na'i
4. ............................... bran pa tshab gyim po/
5. ............................... bkyon phab nas bkuno/mkhar sngur ba
6. ............................... / btsan po/khri srong rtsin gyis/shuld byang
7. ............................... dang 'a zha gnyis dpa'ya' gcaltso'
8. nā'ā/btsan po ge'n srang btsan dang/geung btsan srang gys nold nas/geung

9. l ta mchis sregs 'khu/ste/mtshio gyi ge'n ta/ geung btsan srong/zhugsu

10. so/

Notes

The number of letters probably contained in the missing part of each line, calculated by measurement, is indicated by the number of dots, which run from 30 in the first two lines to 7 in the last. The lines have been numbered for ease of reference.

1. Only part of the a bo is visible but cf. 'khu/ste' in l. 9.

2. Indications of a zhabs kyu and the lower part of ma can be seen. After pa is what I take to be a bo followed by a shad. Above the letter is a mark which might be the trace of a reversed kl gu but is probably only a smear or the intrusion of part of a letter from the line above. The reading is, therefore, not absolutely certain; but cf. the Chronicle THD p 111 'sum pa mtshis deg dangis gdabs snyi dgos po...'

3. The space between line 2 and the next surviving line shows that a short line has been completely lost owing to damage to the manuscript.

4. Only part of the superscribed r is visible but the context and comparison with THD p 111 makes sure certain.

5. In other passages of THD where this name occurs there is doubt whether it is sgrur ba or dkar ba. Here sgrur looks more probable.

10. r is not complete: mo would be a possible reading but the traces are more like so.

Reconstruction of the Text

Words and letters which have been supplied are underlined.

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1. 'khus nas/snying drung

2. ................ myang bang po tse zhang snang gi ssum pa'a/ mtha' dag kyang

3. rna marr bku gge/

4. de nas lo x x na'/myang marr po jir zhang snang glo bs rings nas/kho na' brae pa tsab gsum po

5. 'khusa/myang zhang marr la bkyon phab nas bkunom/mkhar vagur ha bshig go/

6. de nas lo x x na'/bstan po khris srong rtsas gyi'shul/ byang far du byung ste'/a sha dang rgya la

7. de dang drung/gya daang 'a zha gnyis dpra' gaiito/

8. de nas lo gsum na'/bstan po ge' srong rtsan dang/ gung btsan srong gyi's nold nas/gyan

9. bstan snyon gi zha/ ta mika's sregs 'khusa/mnyal gyi gzen fi/gung btsan srong/zhugsu

10. dgyung du rlegse/

Notes

1. The line is too fragmentary for anything but guess work. The reference may have been to events related in THD p 111 beginning: "bsnas po srong brtisan sgam po'i riegs la / / snyang ni 'khus'". In that passage the death by poisoning of the later of Srong Brtisan Sgam Po and the revolt of his subjects are mentioned. Snying Drung is a place name—see THD p 31. The Padma Bka' Thang Yig puts it in Snye Mo.

2. 2nd 3. of THD p 111 lines 1–7"myang gi 'og du myang marr po tse zhang gis/sun pa mtha' dag drags gi gsal myi dgo'par/...... real mar bku gse" Another reference to the same events is in THD p 101 "myang marr po tse zhang snang gis/sun khrus tham 'had bangs su dgeug par bka' stsal to / / ". The annals fragment seems to be closer to the former passage and I have, therefore, taken my reconstruction from there; but "bangs bku g (or dgeug) go " would be a possible alternative.
4. and 5. cf THD p 111 lines 13 sq and specially lines 22—27: ‘urg nas zhag mng gi bran pha tshab gyum po khut stel zhang snang bkum ste /

6. The formula ‘de nas lo x x na’ is found at the beginning of each section of the chronological summary with which the published text in THD opens. For the later part of the line see THD p 111 lines 10—11: ‘urg gi og du btsan po zhab kyi btsugs ste / byang lasa du na byung ma drungs par / rgya dang ‘a zhas dpya yeal lo /’. It may be noticed that the king’s name is given throughout this fragment as Stong Bratan. The form Stong Bratan is used in other parts of THD and also in several inscriptions of the 11th century. It is accepted by later Tibetan writers and I use it in the body of this paper.

7. drung drangs is a speculative reconstruction. Some such phrase seems certain. Dra ma drangs, a possible alternative, seems to be used more of an attack on a specific place rather than of the launching of a general campaign. On the analogy of THD p 111 lines 10-11 the phrase might have been doung ma drangs par, suggesting that the enemy gave in without the need for a fight, a flattering historical inaccuracy which might not, perhaps be expected in the annals portion of THD.

8. lo gsum is suggested after comparing the small remnant of the letter which precedes na’, with other possible endings: gnyis would be the only other possibility but in other sections of the summary the time intervals are either three or six years.

9. Mkha’s Sregs must, I think, be a personal name; and it is no more than a coincidence that it should contain the syllable sregs (brum) when Bratan Stong died by fire. Kha’o appears in several other names but I know no other appearance of mkha’s; sregs is found in e.g. Rgyal Sum Sregs (THD p 35) and Lho ’Dus Sregs (THD p 41). No surviving Tibetan clan name ends . . . lta; there is a personal name Rgyal Ta (THD p 63) but on the analogy of the brun (subject) Pa Tsab in line 5, zhal ta (servant) seems the best suggestion here.
The activity described as ʰхи, implying disaffection and treachery, is regularly followed by the death of the victim and there can be little doubt that Btsan Stong, of whom no more is heard, died by fire as a result of some such treachery. Deung du ggeggu would fit the gap exactly; but if the expression "went to heaven by fire" seems strange, the alternative stong ras bkavungs (or gum ma) would be possible. I prefer deung du ggeggu which is the regular usage for the death of royalty.

Translation

Passages based on reconstruction of the text are underlined.

...turning treacherous; at Saying Drung

Miang Mang Po rje Zhang brought about the submission of all the Sum pa also.

Then after x year when Miang Zhang Snang became disloyal, his subject Po Tsab betrayed him so that Zhang Snang was accused and put to death. Mkhari Sngur Dz la was destroyed.

Then after x year the Btsan Po Khri Stong Rtsan set out on the north road and made war on the 'A Zha and China. Both China and the 'A Zha offered tribute.

Then after three years, when the Btsan Po, the elder brother, Stong Rtsan and the younger brother Btsan Stong had been reconciled, Mkhad's Segs, the servant of the younger brother Btsan Stong, betrayed him and the younger brother died in his bed by fire.