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ART. XI.—*On two Stones with Chinese Inscriptions.* By
E. KOCH. Epitomized from the Russian by E. DELMAR
MORGAN, M.R.A.S.

IN the last number (vol. v. parts ii.-iv.) of the *Zapiski* of the Oriental Section of the Russian Archæological Society (St. Petersburg, 1891), we find an account of two stones inscribed with Chinese characters, discovered on the Upper Orkhon, near the ruins of Kara Balgassun, among a quantity of other remains, by M. Yadrintsef, during his expedition last summer in North-eastern Mongolia, and forwarded by him to St. Petersburg. Here they were carefully examined by M. E. Koch, who reports that the stones are unfortunately only fragments of a much larger monument, and that it is impossible to say whether they both formed part of the same though they were found in close juxtaposition and their contents would apparently support such a conjecture. Most of the characters are easily legible, being very similar in style to those in present use in China, but owing to the fact of the stones being of grey granite, much weatherworn in places, and the age of the inscriptions (upwards of one thousand years old), there are difficulties in deciphering them. They refer to the period of the T'ang dynasty, or, to be more precise, to the time when the Uighurs were dominant in Northern Mongolia. The characters differ in some instances from those in general use and a few are quite illegible. Where these occur dots are inserted in the text. All the lines want both beginning and end.

The three characters of the first line are read by M. Koch as "*Shi sui ming*," a proper name, and he adds the following remark. In 755 the celebrated *An lu shan* rebelled against the T'ang Government, his insurrection soon assuming

alarming proportions and nearly causing the overthrow of the T'ang dynasty. This An lu shan in 757 fell a victim to a conspiracy of his own followers, and his son *An tsin siui* assumed command over the rebels; but in 759 he too was slain by the experienced general Shi sii ming, mentioned in the inscription, who then had himself proclaimed Emperor. In 761, however, Shi sii ming was in his turn killed by his son *Shi chao i*, whom he had intended excluding from the succession. The rebellion was finally crushed, but only with the aid of the Uighurs, who about that period several times sold their services to the Chinese throne, of course at a high price.

The second line contains a reference to the eastern capital under the T'ang dynasty, viz. the town of *Lo yang*, near the present Ho nan fu, in the province of Ho-nan, as distinguished from *Changan* the chief town, otherwise known as *Si ngan fu*.¹

Nearly the whole of the sixth line is taken up by the long title of a Khan— . . . mo Mi shi heh Gu du lu Hu lu Bi gia keh khan (khakhan), and is evidently in the Uighur or Turki dialect. Such elaborate titles were bestowed by Chinese emperors together with diplomas of princely rank only on Uighur Khans during their ascendancy in Central Asia, combined with Chinese epithets. Though all the several parts of the title of the inscription occur in those of various Khans mentioned in history, there does not happen to be one exactly corresponding with that on the monument, so that it is impossible to say to whom in particular it refers. It may here be remarked that the old and new histories of the T'ang dynasty, the chief sources for the history of the Uighurs, are frequently contradictory with regard to honorary titles; in the old history the titles of one and the same person are often rendered differently on the same page. In the eighth line the country or

¹ Cf. Sin T'ang shu (New History of the T'ang Dynasty), Geographical summary. [Chang gan "was probably the most celebrated city in Chinese history and the capital of several of the most potent dynasties." But it is chiefly remarkable as the site of the discovery of the stone Christian monument dating from the eighth century, cf. Yule's Marco Polo, second edition, vol. ii. p. 21.—M.]

kingdom of *Gian gun* is mentioned. This was the ancient name of the country inhabited during the T'ang dynasty by a people called the *Khia gia sii* (Khakas¹). According to the official history *San go chyi* the country of *Gian gun* lay to the north-west of the nation of *Kan giui*, and became known in China under this name during the period of the triumvirate (220-265). In the first half of the seventh century, when the Uighur tribes submitted to China and were organized on the Chinese system, their kinsmen the Khakas, living to the north-west near the sources of the Yenisei, also signified their wish to tender their allegiance to the Middle Kingdom, and their country was, in 648, formed into a province with the historical title of *Gian-gun-fu*, but its dependence was only nominal. The Uighurs having vanquished the *Dulgasses*² or *Tugiueh* and formed a mighty kingdom in Central Asia, also subjugated in 758 the Khakas. These, however, after a while, succeeded in freeing themselves from the Uighur yoke, and even became dangerous rivals of the Uighurs, upon whom they inflicted such a decisive defeat in 840, that the latter only saved themselves by flight to Southern Mongolia.³ But the Khakas never acquired so brilliant and commanding a position in Central Asia as that formerly held by the *Tugiueh* or *Uighurs* during the period of their supremacy. It is difficult to say what the *Gian gun* kingdom had to do with the inscription, parts of the characters in this line being wanting.

¹ Or Hakas, known in the West as 'Kazaks.' Howorth identifies them with the Oghuz Turks. (Geogr. Mag., vol. ii. p. 150.) The Hakas inhabited that part of Asia now known as the government of Tomsk and the southern limits of the government of Yeniseisk. Cf. Hyacinthe, *Svédeniya o narodakh obitavshikh v Srednei Azii*, part i. p. 443, note.—M.

² A Hunnish tribe who derived their descent from a wolf. They founded the dynasty of *Tugiu*, known to the Mongols as *Dulga*, whose principal tribe *Ashina* was settled at the foot of the Altai mountains. When the Huns were completely subjugated by the Chinese in A.D. 92, in the neighbourhood of Tarbagatai, these *Dulgasses* undertook to supply the Chinese court with iron. Hence their legendary origin from the mountains. Cf. Père Hyacinthe, *op. cit.* part i. pp. 256-266.—M.

³ Cf. Howorth's History of the Mongols, part i. p. 21.

The Second Stone.

In the first line the Uighur or Turki names *I nan chju* and *Mo kheh* occur. The former, *I nan chju*, a high functionary, was sent at the beginning of the ninth century to the Chinese court to ask the consent of the reigning sovereign to his marriage; he next appears in 821 at the head of a numerous embassy to China to receive the princess *Sheh hu*, affianced to the Uighur Khan, but the last syllable of his name is written with a different character in Chinese history. The name *Mo kheh* occurs in conjunction with other attributes (*Mo kheh Da gan*, *Giui lu Mo Kheh*) several times in the T'ang histories. The third line probably refers to the Emperor of China and his relations towards the hundred subject families (*bo sing*). The character, however, immediately preceding the syllable *tsai* is evidently *Khan* (*Keh Khan*—*Khakan*).

The Khan mentioned in the fourth line is in all probability other than *Peh lo*, the founder of the Uighur kingdom, who subdued the *Dulgasses* and extended his dominions on the east, to the nation of the *Shi vehi*; on the west, to the Altai mountains; and on the south, to the great sandy desert. In 744 he took the title of *Gu du lu Pei gia Kiueh keh khan*, and died in the following year. The word *Kiueh* only occurs in the title of this Khan, and is preceded as usual in Chinese writings by a blank space.

Upon a general review of the facts included in these fragmentary inscriptions, the following conclusion may be arrived at, that the original monument was raised during the supremacy of the Uighurs in the Mongolia of the present day, or, to speak accurately, between the years 761 (the death of *Shi sii ming*) and 840; in the last-named year the *Khakas* sacked and burnt the capital city of the Uighurs, between the *U deh gian* mountains and the river *Gun* (*Orkhon*), forcing the Uighurs to retreat towards the south. However fragmentary these inscriptions, their phraseology testifies to the fact of their having formed part of a monument erected by an Emperor of China, who condescended

to accept foreigners as his subjects, because of their "enlightenment." It is more difficult to say what induced him to do this; possibly the conclusion of a treaty: on the other hand, the fourth and beginning of the fifth line (sepulchral tower) on the first stone seem to point to the inscription having been cut in memory and honour of some deceased Khan, the more so as it goes on to say "the Khan . . . succeeded." A parallel case is actually recorded in Chinese history. In 731, when *Kiueh teh leh*, brother of the Tugui Khan Mohilian, died, the Emperor sent the commander, *Chjang tsiui i*, and the court dignitary, *Liui hsiang*, with a manifesto,¹ stamped with the seal of state, to express sympathy and offer up sacrifices. The Emperor ordered an inscription (distinct from the manifesto) to be cut on the monument, a temple to be built and a statue erected; on the four walls battle pieces were to be painted. Six skilful artists were deputed to execute these orders in the most artistic style, a thing unheard of before . . . On the death of Bi gia Khan Mohilian in 732, the Emperor expressed regret, commanded Li tsiuan, president of the princely order, to condole and offer sacrifices. Whereupon a temple was built, and the historian, Li yung, was charged with the composition of an epitaph.

One important circumstance has yet to be mentioned in connexion with these inscriptions—on the right side of the second stone three lines of characters, distinct from the rest, are evidently not Chinese. Though much obliterated by time and weather, they may be recognized as Uighur, and if so the monument is the oldest known of the Uighur writing, a proof that this nation acquired their written character before they removed from the north.

Upon the whole these fragmentary remains are more likely to arouse curiosity than allay it. A number of interesting questions are concerned in the subject, but for the present their solution must be deferred. It would be premature and unprofitable to enter upon conjectures as to the

¹ The text of this manifesto is to be found in the collection of elegant extracts of the T'ang dynasty, Tsiuan T'ang Ven.

connexion, if any, subsisting between the vast ruins of Kara Balgassun and this monument, or between the so-called runic inscriptions and the Uighur character. Careful researches into the antiquities of Central Asia and Mongolia in particular may doubtless supply historical gaps and explain many obscurities in the past history of this home of the nomadic states.

Note.—We have only translated M. Koch's historical remarks, his original paper is accompanied by facsimiles of the stones, readings of the characters and a full commentary.—M.