

IRAN IN CHINESE DYNASTIC HISTORIES

A Study of Iran's relations with  
China prior to the Arab conquest

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اسئلو العلم ولو بالصين

Seek knowledge even unto China.

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Prophet Muhammad.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Baladhuri	Kitāb Fūtūh al-Buldān
CHS	Ch'ien Han-shu
CS	Chou-shu
CTS	Chiu T'ang-shu
HHS	Hou Han-shu
<u>HJAS</u>	<u>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.</u>
HTS	Hsin T'ang-shu
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
K	Karlgren - Grammatica Serica
LS	Liang-shu
PS	Pei-shih
SC	Shih-chih
SS	Sui-shu
Tabari	Tarikh al-Rusul wa'l Mülük
TFYK	Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei
THY	T'ang Hui-yao
TT	T'ung-tien
WS	Wei-shu

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## INTRODUCTION

This work is a study of Iran's relations with China in the time of the Sāsānian dynasty (A.D. 226 to 651). It is mainly based on the Chinese dynastic histories. (A survey of these records reveals that historico-cultural contacts between these two countries go back to the time of Emperor Wu-ti (140-87 B.C.) of the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D.9). He is said to have dispatched Chang Ch'ien, a young and zealous military officer, on a special mission to the Western Regions to secure an alliance with the Yüeh-chih (Kushans) against the Hsiung-nu (Huns), their common enemy.) On his westward journey, Chang Ch'ien was captured by the Hsiung-nu, who held him prisoner for some ten years. At last he escaped and went to Farghāna, Soghdiana and finally the land of the Yüeh-chih. To his surprise Chang Ch'ien noted that the former king of the Yüeh-chih was killed by the Hsiung-nu and his son was on the throne. Since the people were prosperous and loved peace, the young king did not wish to fight against the Hsiung-nu, and refused the request of the Chinese envoy. (Though Chang Ch'ien was unsuccessful in his attempts to obtain an alliance with the Yüeh-chih, he visited <sup>Herat</sup> Farghāna, Bactria and Soghdianā.) (He also collected information about the neighbouring countries, including An-hsi or Parthia.)<sup>1</sup> The long stay of Chang Ch'ien

<sup>1</sup> T.W. Kingsmill was the first sinologist to suggest that An-hsi 安息 is the transliteration of Arsaces or Arsak, the title of the Parthian kings, Royal Asiatic Society, North China Branch, 1879 No. 14. Hirth and other sinologists have accepted this identification. The Parthian empire is called Ashkānian by the Iranian historians. The founder of this dynasty was Ashk who was from the noble family of Arsh. The rest of the Parthian kings out of respect for him, called themselves Ashk irrespective of their own personal names.

extending for almost thirteen years enabled him to collect a great deal of geographical information and to acquire a sound understanding of the political, economic and cultural situation of the west. This went a long way to increasing China's knowledge of it.<sup>2</sup> In fact, as Laufer pointed out, the Western Regions which for the first time were revealed by Chang Ch'ien were imbued with the Iranian civilization.

(The inhabitants of Bactria, Farghāna and Soghdianā spoke Iranian languages and their culture was also Iranian.<sup>3</sup>) Thereafter, fairly regular relations were maintained between China and Iran, leading to closer and more intimate political, cultural and commercial contacts between these two countries.

#### The Sources:

The Chinese were the pioneers in the art of compilation of history and possess the longest and most continuous historical records.) Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145-86 B.C.), the author of Shih-chi (Historical Records) and generally known as the father of Chinese history laid the foundation of systematic historiography. His work became a model for subsequent Chinese dynastic historians and twentyfive such histories, including Shih-chi were compiled. The dynastic or standard

<sup>2</sup> SC, 123. For complete information on Chang Ch'ien's mission to the west see F. Hirth, "The story of Chang K'ien. China's pioneer in Western Asia". Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. VXXXVII, pp. 89-152 (1917). Information given by Chang Ch'ien to emperor Wu-ti was not edited by himself, but it was used by other historians such as Ssu-ma Ch'ien in Shih-chi; Pan Ku in Ch'ien Han-shu and by Fan-yeh, the compiler of the History of the Later Han. Shih-chi is, however, the most trustworthy document since the author was a contemporary of Chang-Ch'ien. Shih-chi has been translated into English by B. Watson, Records of the Grand Historian of China, 2 Vols. (New York 1961).

<sup>3</sup> B. Laufer, Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contributions to the history of civilization in Ancient Iran, with special reference to the history of cultivated plants and products. Field Museum, Publication 201, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1919), p. 11.



histories (正史) begin with the History of the Former Han by Pan Ku (completed after his death by his sister Pan-Ch'ao), which covers the period from 206 B.C. to A.D. 24. The pattern followed in the writing of histories continued to be the same. They include treatises on such matters as chronicles of the court comprising significant events in the empire; essays dealing with different subjects such as sacrifices, calendars, music, law, economic, waterworks and warfare and tables concerning the careers of nobles and the holders of the highest offices; while the main part, the Lieh-chuan 列傳 "Biographies" contain biographical notices about distinguished individuals and also descriptions of foreign lands. The history of a dynasty was compiled only after a new dynasty had replaced it. The main sources on which the historians based their accounts were probably Shih-lu 實錄 "Veritable Records", which in turn were based on the "Diaries of Activity and Repose" Ch'i-chü-chu 起居注.

Moreover, under the Patronage of Emperor Tai-tsung (627-650) and his successors, the "office of the Historiographers", was established. The newly founded office edited a large number of previous histories such as Chin-shu, Liang-shu, Ch'en-shu, Chou-shu and the history of the Sui dynasty. In this new system the diaries and other reports from various governmental offices were presented to the History Office which preserved all the information thus passed on to it.<sup>4</sup> The reports on foreign countries were usually collected by the Hung-lu-ssu 鴻臚寺 "Court of Ceremonies"

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of Chinese historiography see Historians of China and Japan. Edited by W.C. Beasely and E.G. Pulleyblank, Oxford University Press, 1961; Gardner, C.S. Chinese Traditional Historiography, Cambridge, Mass. 1938. See also Essays on the Sources for Chinese History. Edited by C. Mackerras, Wang Gung wu. Australian National University Press 1973.

for foreigners", and the Ping-pu 兵部 "the Department of Arms", The compilers of the dynastic histories in their records of foreign countries also made use of the accounts of Buddhist travellers. (The Hsi-yü-chuan in most of the dynastic histories from the Han until the T'ang provide us with a detailed account of the geography and socio-economic conditions of Iran.)

As has been shown in this thesis, the information of the authors of the Chinese dynastic histories about Iran was not based upon their personal knowledge or observation. They collected their information about the different aspects of Iranian life and history from merchants or Buddhist travellers such as Hsüan-tsang and Hui ch'ao, who themselves had never visited Iran but had collected information from the neighbouring countries visited by them. Moreover, the Chinese dynastic historians were unable to verify the information conveyed to them. They recorded the reports as they received them. This led them to incorporate baseless facts. This does not, however, mean that the Chinese dynastic histories are unreliable as far as their own histories are concerned.

This basic defect of the Chinese dynastic histories does not, however, detract from their importance, insofar as they are the only source of our information regarding Sino-Iranian trade relations. Another thing that adds to the importance of these histories is that they contain a very colourful and absorbing description of the religious activity and commercial rivalry of the Iranian immigrants to China, especially during the T'ang dynasty. In them is also mirrored the esteem in which Iran of these days was held by the contemporary Chinese historians.

Besides the Chinese histories, references to Iran are also available in some other Chinese literature. But as the compilers of these sources

derived their information regarding Iran from the dynastic histories, they too were unable to get true knowledge of facts.

The purpose of the present study is to make an appraisal of the information regarding Iran contained in the Chinese dynastic histories. For this purpose, the relevant portions of these histories have been rendered into English, (and, as no history of Ancient Iran written by the Iranians themselves survives, the Chinese accounts have been checked with Byzantine and later Perso-Arabic sources. This methodology has helped us to arrive at more definite conclusions about Sino-Iranian relations during the Sasanian Period.)

Chinese transliteration in this thesis follows the Wade-Giles system, whereas in transliterating Iranian names, I have followed the system adopted by the Historical Atlas of Iran, published by the University of Tehran.

## CHAPTER 1

Iran's Commercial Relations with China

## (a) China and the Parthians. The Stimulus of the Roman Trade.

On account of her central geographical position, Iran has throughout her history played the role of the clearing-house of cultural and economical developments between China and India on her East and the Mediterranean countries on her West.

Although our information concerning the commercial relations of Iran with the East before the historic visit of Chang Ch'ien is meagre, it is known that before the Chinese appeared in the political arena of the West commercial intercourse between Iran and the Mediterranean countries and India already existed. Thus Chang Ch'ien in his report, which should refer to a period immediately after the reign of Mithradates I (171-138/37 B.C.), went on to say that (the citizens and merchants of An-hsi using carriages and boats travelled to the neighbouring states, sometimes covering several thousand li".<sup>1</sup> This shows that the Parthians took long journeys to trade with other countries.)

In his second mission Chang Ch'ien, who never himself visited Parthia, personally despatched one of his deputies to An-hsi. Upon the arrival of the first Chinese embassy to Iran we are told that (the King of An-hsi ordered twenty thousand horsemen to meet him on the eastern frontier. This frontier was several thousand li distant from the capital. Proceeding northward one came across several tens of cities, the people of which were all allied to each other".<sup>2</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> CHS, 96, 14a.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The Ch'ien Han-shu also informs us that ("after the Chinese mission had returned, Parthia sent forth an envoy to the Chinese empire to see her greatness. The Iranian envoy offered as presents to the Chinese emperor ostrich eggs and jugglers, at which the emperor was greatly delighted".<sup>3</sup>) The motive of the visit of the Iranian envoy to China might have been the prospect of commercial opportunities, as we shall presently see.

{ The period during which Chang Ch'ien and his deputies were visiting the western regions coincided with the reign of <sup>the</sup> powerful Parthian king Mithradates II "the great" (123-87 B.C.). It was the most brilliant period of Parthian history and information recorded in the standard histories of the Han, } the Ch'ien Han-shu and the Hou Han-shu, are of considerable value for the study of the economic and political situation of Iran in the period concerned. It is well known that of all the Parthian kings who ruled before the year 123 B.C. only Mithradates II was successful against the Sakas (the Sacae or Scythians of Roman and Greek writers). Crushed by the Hsiung-nu in 176 B.C. the Yüeh-Chih (Kushans) were compelled to leave their own territory in Kan Su, in northwestern China, and to seek refuge in the northwest, in about 165 B.C., going to the country of Sai, near the shores of the Lake Issik kul, driving out the Saka who earlier controlled the area.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after this, about 160 B.C., the Wu-Sun rose in revolt against the Yüeh-Chih, and with the aid of the Hsiung-nu drove them away.<sup>5</sup> The Yüeh-Chih, being defeated, fled still further

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 14a-14b.

<sup>4</sup> McGovern, W.M. The Early Empires of Central Asia: A study of the Scythians and the Huns and the part they played in World History. The University of North Carolina Press. New York, 1939. p.127.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.128.

to the west and subjugated Ta-hsia 大夏 'Bactria'. The westward migration of the Yüeh-Chih and the expulsion of the Sakas from their lands by the Yüeh-Chih changed the political history of Iran. For the Sakas in turn began to ravage the eastern borders of Iran, and in 130 B.C. they came into conflict with the Parthians. Phraates II (138-128 B.C.) was killed in battle against them.<sup>6</sup> His uncle Artabanus, (128-123 B.C.) who succeeded him, also perished in the East, fighting the Tokhāri, perhaps the Yüeh-Chih of the Chinese records.<sup>7</sup> Mithradates II successfully broke the Saka invasion and extended his authority over the regions of Marv and Harāt.<sup>8</sup> The Ch'ien-Han-shu which says that the Chinese mission was received on the eastern frontiers of Iran by a body of 20,000 horsemen clearly indicates Mithradates' victory over the Sakas and the restoration of peace in eastern regions of Iran.

The liberation of the Iranian frontiers from the threat of the nomads encouraged the development and expansion of the international trade of that time. Definite information regarding the commercial relations of Parthia comes from the Chinese sources, which reveal that the Parthians, exploiting their central geographical position, later monopolised the silk trade and enriched themselves from the trade and commerce with China and India in the East and with the Roman empire in the West. They occupied important places on the silk road and interrupted the direct silk trade between China and Rome. The Ta-Ch'in-Chuan of the Hou Han-shu says that "the king of [Ta-Ch'in] always

<sup>6</sup> Debevoise, N.C. A Political History of Parthia, New York, 1968, p.37.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.41.

desired to send envoys to China, but Parthia wished to carry on trade with Ta-Ch'in in Chinese silk therefore cut it off from communication.<sup>9</sup> The Wei-Lüeh in its account of Ta-Ch'in also mentions Parthia's exploitation of the transit traffic through their territories and says that "they (i.e. the Romans) always wished to send embassies to China but Parthia wanted to maintain its profitable position and would not allow them to pass through its territories".<sup>10</sup> In the story of Kan Ying 甘英 the Hou Han-shu narrates that in A.D. 97 (9th year of period of Yung-yüan 永元 of Emperor Ho-ti 和帝), the General Protector (都護) Pan Ch'ao 班超 sent Kan Ying as an ambassador to Ta-Ch'in. He reached T'iao-Chih on the coast of the great sea. When he was about to embark, the sailors of the western frontier of Parthia told him that the sea was very extensive, and that with favourable winds it was possible to cross within three months. But if the ship met contrary winds it might take as much as two years. For this reason people who embarked on the sea, took on board a supply of three years' provisions. "There is something in the sea", they said, "which is apt to make a man homesick and several have thus lost their lives: Hearing this Kan Ying went no further."<sup>11</sup>

It is generally believed that the Parthians knew that if any direct commercial contact was established between China and Rome they would no longer be able to reap any advantage from their intermediary position. The difficulties of the sea voyage down the Persian Gulf and around the Arabian Sea into the Red Sea were therefore much exaggerated in an attempt to discourage Kan Ying from going beyond

<sup>9</sup> HHS, 88, 4a.

<sup>10</sup> Wei Lüeh.

<sup>11</sup> HHS, 88. 12a-12b.

the Euphrates. This story was purposely fabricated by the Parthian traders who found the trade through the sea route a threat to their monopoly of the silk trade.

The monopolization of East-West trade by the Parthians forced the merchants of other countries to discover new routes. Smarting under the pressure of the high duty on transit goods charged by the Parthians, the Romans sought to encourage direct trade with India and thus to avoid the interference of the Parthians. But until the sea-borne trade was fully developed, the Parthians and later the Sāsānians held fast to their position of dominance.

After the defeat and subjugation of the Parthian province of Seleucia by Arridius Cassis under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus in A.D. 165, the silk trade markets on the Syrian frontier passed into the hands of the Romans and for some time Parthian power was eclipsed.<sup>12</sup> Judging from the statement in the Ta-Ch'in-Chuan in the Hou Han-shu, it was about the same time that the Romans entered into closer relations with China. The Hou Han-shu informs us that in A.D. 166 (9th year of period of Yen-hsi 延熹 of Emperor Huan-ti 桓帝) of the Later Han dynasty, the king of Ta-ch'in, by name An-tun 安敦 (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus), sent an envoy who landed at Jih-nan 日南 (Annam) and offered the Chinese court ivory, rhinoceros horns and tortoise-shell. It was from this time that direct communications with this country (Rome) commenced.<sup>13</sup> The authenticity of this embassy of the Roman emperor to China has been questioned by modern scholars, who generally believe that the mission was probably headed by private

<sup>12</sup> Debevoise, op.cit., p.251.

<sup>13</sup> HHS, 88. 14a.



merchants from Rome pretending to be the envoys of the Roman emperor.<sup>14</sup> The fact, however, remains that a short-lived direct commercial contact between Rome and China was established.

(b) The silk route and the silk trade.

Prior to the full development of sea-trade between the Mediterranean countries and India, the Trans-Asian silk road was the main route between the Far East and the West. The well-known silk road connecting China with western Asia and Rome was about 5,000 miles long. It started either at Ch'ang-an, the Han capital, or at Lan-chou in Kan-su and passed along the foot of Nan-shan through modern Kan-chou, Su-chou and An-hsi-chou to Turfan. According to the Han Shu there were two routes from Yü-men-Kuan 玉門關 (The Barrier of the Jade gate) and Yang-Kuan 陽關<sup>15</sup> to the western region: the southern route and the northern route. The southern route ran from Shan-shan 鄯善 (Lop-nor) along the north side of Nan-shan 南山 (Southern Mountains) and along the river (Āmu-Daryā) and then westward up to Sha-ch'e 莎車 (Yarkand). Stretching west, the southern route crossed Ts'ung-ling 葱嶺 (the Pamirs). It then led to Ta Yüeh-Chih 大月氏 (Kushanā) and An-hsi (Parthia). The northern route ran from Ch'e-shih 車師 (Turfan) and Ch'ien-wang-t'ing 前王庭 by Pei-shan 北山 (Northern Mountains, modern T'ien-shan) and followed the course of the river (Syr-Daryā) to Su-le 疏勒 (Kāshghar). When it crossed the Pamirs,

<sup>14</sup> Hirth, F. China and the Roman Orient; Researches into their Ancient and Medieval relations as represented in Old Chinese records. Shanghai, 1885, p.176.

<sup>15</sup> Yü-men-Kuan and Yang-Kuan were the entrance doors to the Western Regions. They were situated 150 li to the West of Tun-huang.

the northern route led to Ta-yüan (Farghāna), K'ang-Chü (Soghdianā) and Yen-t's'ai 奄蔡 .<sup>16</sup>

From Kāshghar, there were two alternative routes to Marv, one via Samarqand and the other via Balkh (Bactria). From Marv (Antiochia Margiana) the western section was connected with Mashhad, Nishābur, and along the Elburz range to Ray (a few miles southeast of present Tehran) and via Ekbātanā (the modern Hamadān) to Seleucia-Ctesiphon on the Tigris, crossing the Euphrates at Zeugma, where there was a Roman legionary camp, and finally to Antioch with its harbours on the Mediterranean, whence the goods were distributed through the empire. Hudson divided these routes into four parts (1) from Kan-Su to the Pamirs (2) from the Pamirs to the oasis of Marv, the region under domination of the Kushans until the first half of the third century, when it was conquered by the Sāsānians (3) from Marv to Seleucia in modern Iraq, which was under the authority of the Parthians and then under the Sāsānians, until the Arab invasion in the seventh century (4) and from Seleucia to the border of the Roman empire.<sup>17</sup>

Silk remained the chief commodity on the highway of commerce between East and West and an ever-increasing quantity of it was carried to Rome, where as a symbol of wealth it dominated the Roman Markets and its price continued to rise steadily. About the origin of the silk trade between China and the West, Hudson says: "Silk was probably introduced into Western Asia by the Parthians when they had been made familiar with it by the presents of the Chinese embassy: after a while the Parthians bought it not only for their own consumption but also to sell further West. Silk thus first reached

<sup>16</sup> CHS, 96a.1b

<sup>17</sup> Hudson, G.F. Europe and China: A survey of their relations from the earliest times to 1800. London (1961), p.79.

the Mediterranean by an over land route, via Seleucia (on the Tigris) and Antioch, and this continued to be the main channel of the trade".<sup>18</sup> However, the consumption of a large quantity of luxury articles of high cost, especially silk from the East, and the comparatively poor demand for the Mediterranean merchandise by the Asian countries brought a visible deficit in the balance of trade on the Roman side. Pliny, a well informed adviser of Vespasian (A.D.69-79), in his book VI dealing with India, reckoned that each year the Indian trade drained Rome of not less than 55 million sesterces.<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere Pliny estimated the annual loss of 100 million sesterces to India, China and Arabia.<sup>20</sup> Such were the costs they had to pay for their luxury and to satisfy their women. The Hou Han-shu, referring to the silk trade, confirms Pliny's estimate. It says: "The people of Ta-Ch'in traffic by sea with Parthia and India; the profit of such trade is tenfold".<sup>21</sup> It may confidently be assumed that the adverse balance of Rome's Asian trade and consequently the drain of precious metals from the empire was a major factor in the economic decline of the Roman empire.

It is remarkable that, although the Iranians were actively engaged in the silk trade and made it their monopoly, they did not themselves produce the silk. For about seven centuries the Chinese exported their silk to India, Iran and the Mediterranean countries, but its cultivation and manufacture was a strictly guarded secret. The exact date of silk production in Iran is not known. It would

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.77

<sup>19</sup> Pliny. Historia Naturalis vi. 101; Quoted by Miller, J.I. The spice trade of the Roman Empire. Oxford (1969), p.223.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> HHS, 88. 14a.

seem that until the middle of the sixth century the art of sericulture was not known to Iran. Regarding the knowledge of sericulture outside China, Chinese historians of the T'ang dynasty ascribe it to the smuggling of the silk worms out of China. The accounts go on to say, "the king [of Khotan] whose country had had no silk worms asked <sup>for</sup> the hand of a Chinese princess. His request was granted. When the king went to meet his new queen, he told her that since the neighbouring countries had refused to provide him with silk, she should bring silkworms for her own consumption. The princess then had some silkworms in her headdress. The frontier guards did not dare to inspect her. From this time on, they began to produce silk".<sup>22</sup>

The introduction of sericulture into Khotan led to its further growth and expansion in a westerly direction, gradually reaching Iran towards the end of the reign of the Sāsānian dynasty. According to Theophanes of Byzantium, in the reign of Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-565) silkworms concealed in a walking stick were smuggled into Byzantium. The necessary knowledge to produce silk was acquired by a certain Iranian emigrant from the country of the Seres.<sup>23</sup> Procopios tells a slightly different story of the smuggling of the silkworms from China. According to him the introduction of silkworms into Byzantium was made by certain monks coming from the country of the Indians who claimed they had lived a long time in a country where there were many nations of the Indians and which was called Serindia. When Emperor Justinian promised them great rewards they went back to

<sup>22</sup> HTS, 221 (shang), 11a.

<sup>23</sup> Müller, *Fragmenta Histor. Graec.*, iv, 270. Quoted in Yule, H. *Cathay and the way thither*, 2nd ed., I, pp. 204-205.

India and brought a supply of the eggs to Byzantium".<sup>24</sup> Thereafter the silk industry began to flourish in the west. No doubt the introduction of this new industry to some extent reduced the Western dependency on the Chinese silk. But since the demand exceeded the supply, Chinese silk, which was superior both in quantity and quality, did not loose its Western markets.

(c) The Sāsānian Economic Expansion.

Although the Parthians and later the Sāsānians interrupted the direct transportation of the Chinese silk to the Mediterranean markets, they only monopolized the Western end of the silk route. Chinese silk, before reaching Iran, had to pass through the merchants of Central Asia, particularly the Soghdians and the Bactrians. The majority of the inhabitants of these regions were of Iranian origin, but they had been governed by foreign rulers. These foreign rulers were the Kushans, the Hephthalites and the Turks, who reigned in Central Asia one after another. To secure the supply of the Chinese silk the Sāsānians had to fight with these nomads. The Kushans were crushed either by Ardashir or Shāpur I between 225 and 250.<sup>25</sup> In the second half of the fifth century, a new empire, that of the Hephthalites, emerged in Central Asia which in a short time conquered Soghdiana, Khotan, Kāshghar and Bukhārā.<sup>26</sup> This led to a prolonged war between the Hephthalites and Iran. The Sāsānian king Firuz A.D. 459-484, who, according to Irano-Arabic sources, won his throne with the aid of the Hephthalites, now turned against them and lost his life in 484 fighting

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pp.203-204.

<sup>25</sup> Sykes, S.P. A History of Persia. London (1951) Vol.1., p.394.

<sup>26</sup> PS, 97, 23b.

them.<sup>27</sup> Thereafter, Iran became tributary to the Hephthalites, who had become a menace to Iran. Firuz's successors had also to fight with them. Finally Khosraw Anushirwān (531-579) allied himself with the new rising power, the western Turks, and with their collaboration defeated the Hephthalites. Consequently the Hephthalite territory was partitioned by the two allies. Soon after this the pattern of political power changed. The Turks, marching southwards, conquered the region of Bactria which had previously gone to their allies, the Sāsānians. Simultaneously Khosraw, trying to contain the Turkish expansion in the west, succeeded in imposing an embargo on all trade with them. As a result the Soghdians, who had become subject to the Turks, lost their commercial interests. They besought their new lord to send an embassy to Iran in order to negotiate with Khosraw Anushirwān and ask him to lift the ban. This request was met and a party of Soghdian delegates went to Iran. The mission, however, failed to secure a free passage for their silk through Iran, and returned home unsuccessful.<sup>28</sup> A second embassy was sent for the same purpose but the result was disastrous. Most members of the Turkish party were poisoned by the order of Khosraw I, who pretended that they had died because of the hot Persian climate.<sup>29</sup> This was a cause of conflict between the two countries and led to the exchange of envoys between the Turks and Byzantium. Maniach, the Soghdian chief, took the occasion to suggest to the Khāgān Dizabulus that it would serve the interest of the Turks better, were they to cultivate the friendship

<sup>27</sup> Sykes, *op.cit.*, p.438. Also Chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> Yule, *op.cit.*, P.206.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

of the Romans, (i.e. the Eastern Roman Empire of Byzantium) and transfer the sale of silk to them, for Rome consumed more silk than any other country. Maniach went to the extent of adding that he was prepared to accompany a party of Turkish ambassadors, in order to promote the establishment of friendly relations between the Turks and the Romans.<sup>30</sup> Dizabulus approved the idea and Maniach accompanied by a Turkish party was despatched to the court of Constantinople. To avoid the Sāsānian blockade, the Turkish party seems to have taken the route along the northern borders of the Caspian and the Aral and by a mountain pass in the Caucasus. On their arrival ~~to~~ in Constantinople, they found that Emperor Justin II was keen to secure the Turkish alliance against Iran, and the party received a warm welcome.<sup>31</sup> In 565, when the embassy returned home, Justin II ordered one of his officers named Zamarchus to accompany Maniach and his party to the Turkish court. On its arrival the party of Zamarchus was immediately granted an interview by Dizabulus in his tent. Zamarchus and his party were lavishly entertained and an alliance was concluded against Sāsānian Iran. While the Byzantine delegates were still there, the Turkish chief asked Zamarchus to accompany him on an expedition against the Iranians. On their way to Iran, in a place called Talas, an Iranian envoy came forward to meet Dizabulus. The Turkish Khāgān received him coldly and declared war against Iran.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.207.

<sup>31</sup> Grousset, R. L'empire des steppes. Paris (1948). English transl. by Walford, N. The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia. New Jersey, 1970, p.84.

<sup>32</sup> Yule, op.cit., pp.210-211.

Meanwhile the Byzantine party which had succeeded in cultivating friendly relations with the Turks was escorted home accompanied by a new Turkish party.<sup>33</sup>

Economically, the exchange of envoys between the Byzantium and the Turks, which had been engineered by the Soghdians in order to open direct communications for the transportation of Chinese silk to Byzantium, was a failure. The main reason was that by then Byzantium itself was self-sufficient in the production of raw silk, thanks to the Iranians who smuggled the silkworms from China to Byzantium. The Soghdian party was in fact very disappointed when the Roman Emperor showed them the technique of hatching and the production of silk.<sup>34</sup>

Politically, the short-lived alliance between the Turks and Byzantium<sup>35</sup> led to a long drawn out war between the latter and Iran which endured for twenty years. Finally, with Emperor Justinian's declaration of war against Iran in 572, the Turks attacked Iran from the East. But, Iran was too well-defended for the Byzantines and their allies the Turks to conquer her.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the Hephthalite and the Turkish occupation of Central Asia and their prolonged enmity against Iran, both diplomatic and

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<sup>33</sup> To persuade the Turks to attack Iran from the East, Byzantium sent Eutychios, Valentinus, Herodian and Paul of Cilicia as envoys to the Turkish Empire. For the most reliable translation of Chinese accounts of the Turks see Chavannes, E. Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux, St.Petersburg (1903).

<sup>34</sup> Yule, op.cit., p.204.

<sup>35</sup> The brief duration of the Turko-Byzantine alliance was due to the fact that at the accession of Tardu, the son and successor of Istami (Dizabulus) to the throne, the Byzantine empire had concluded a treaty with the Avars (Juan-Juan), the enemy of the Turks who at that time had settled in southern Russia. This greatly aggravated Tardu who not only terminated further negotiations with Byzantium, but later his troops attacked the Byzantine town of Bosphorus in the straits of Kerch and captured it. Chavannes, op.cit., p.241.

<sup>36</sup> Sykes, op.cit., p.456.



commercial relations between Iran and China were maintained.

Embassies from Qobād and Khosraw I continued to visit China through the caravan routes of Central Asia. Iranian merchants also managed to hold their predominant position in East-West trade, often resorting to most ingenious means in order to do so. The closeness of the ties between the two countries during the occupation of Central Asia by these nomads is shown in the dynastic history of the T'oba Wei, and the annals of the Sui. The Hsi-Yü-Chuan of the Wei-shu, the first Chinese dynastic history to use the name Po-ssu for Sāsānian Iran, gives a long list of thirty seven products brought to China by the Iranians. The most important of these were gold, silver, coral, amber, pearls, glass, agate, crystal, diamonds, iron, pewter, cinnabar, mercury, damask, copper, embroidery, cotton, frankincense, turmeric, storax, black and long pepper, stone-honey, dates, aconite.<sup>37</sup>

Obviously most of these articles attributed to Iran were the produce of India and countries of south-eastern Asia. It would follow from this that, by the sixth century, Iran had become the centre of international trade and was the only country in the west which was held in great or high esteem by the Chinese for its wealth and prosperity. The Turks, however, continued to give the Sāsānians much trouble. From Irano-Arabic sources we learn that in 588-89 the Turks with a body of 30,000 cavalry advanced as far as Harāt, but were defeated at the hands of Bahrām Chubin, the great Iranian general.<sup>38</sup>

This synchronized with the reign of Emperor Wen, the founder of the new Sui dynasty (581-618), who finally, with the conquest of Ch'en in 589, unified China, bringing the whole country under a single

<sup>37</sup> WS, 102, 15b.

<sup>38</sup> Tabari, Vol.2, p.992; Chavannes, op.cit., p.249.

authority,<sup>39</sup> His successor, Yang-ti who has been described as an extravagant and pleasure-loving emperor, greatly desired to expand his sphere of influence and to promote diplomatic and commercial relations with the countries in the west and south. To achieve this missions were sent in every direction to open up closer relations even with the farthest countries. The Sui-shu opening its account of the Western regions says: "In the era of Yang ti (605-618) [of the Sui dynasty (581-618)] Wei Chieh<sup>40</sup> and Tu Hsing-man<sup>41</sup> were sent out to the various countries in the Western regions. In Chi-Pin<sup>42</sup> they were given an agate cup, in Wang-She-Ch'eng,<sup>43</sup> the manuscript of a Buddhist

<sup>39</sup> Bingham, W. The founding of the T'ang dynasty: The fall of the Sui and rise of the T'ang. Baltimore (1941), p.4.

<sup>40</sup> The biography of Wei Chieh 韋 節 is not available in the Chinese records. It seems, however, that after returning from his ambassadorial mission he compiled a geographical work entitled Hsi-fan chi 西蕃記, "Records of the Western Barbarians", now lost. Tu Yu in his work T'ung-tien, Ch.193 and Yüeh Shih in T'ai-P'ing huan-Yü-Chi have cited it.

<sup>41</sup> 杜行滿, I have no further information on him.

<sup>42</sup> From the time of the Han dynasty to the middle of the sixth century, the descriptions of the state of Chi-Pin 罽賓 in the Chinese dynastic histories apply always to Kashmir. But from the beginning of the seventh century (Sui and T'ang periods), when using the name Chi-Pin, the Chinese authors meant Kapiśā. For the views of modern sinologists, such as Chavannes, Pelliot and S. Levi on this question see P.C. Bagchi, "Ki-Pin and Kashmir", in Sino-Indian Studies, II (1946-47), pp.42-53.

<sup>43</sup> 王舍城, Chavannes, while taking this place to be Rajagrhapura in Central India, does not deny the possibility of its being Pa-ti-yen, 拔底建 i.e. Badghis, Documents, p.224.

text and in Shih-Kuo,<sup>44</sup> ten female dancers, a lion skin and asbestos. Then they returned home<sup>45</sup>.

In the biography of Pei Chü 裴矩<sup>46</sup> in the Sui-shu we read: "At the beginning of his accession to the throne, emperor Yang undertook the construction of the eastern capital. [Pei] Chü was appointed to supervise the building of offices, which was completed in ninety days. This saw the visit of a large number of merchants from different countries in the Western regions to Chang-Yeh to explore the avenues of trade with China. The emperor commissioned Chü to go there to supervise this trade. Fully realizing the ambition of the emperor to expand his empire, Pei Chü persuaded the visiting merchants to inform him about their social customs, and the hazards and the feasibility of travelling to their countries. The

<sup>44</sup> 史國, is the transliteration of the name of the state of K'ash in Transoxiana 240 li to the south of Samarqand (modern Shahr-isäbz in present-day south Uzbekistän). According to SS, its capital was situated 10 li south of the Tu-mo-shui 獨莫水 (Karshi river), and it was the old territory of K'ang-chü. Their customs were similar to those of K'ang. SS, 83. 13b.

<sup>45</sup> SS, 82. 4a-4b. In 607 Emperor Yang also sent Ch'ang-chun, the secretary for military colonies, as an envoy to South-East Asia. He successfully sailed down the south China sea and went to the kingdom of Chih-t'u (on the south-eastern Malay Peninsula) and reached Lo-ch'a (an island east of Sumatra and south of the Malay Peninsula). For details of China's intercourse with the countries of South-East Asia in these times see Wheatley, P. The Golden Kheronese: Studies in the historical geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500. Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur 1961; Wang Gung-Wu, "The Nanhai Trade": A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea", in JMBRAS, 31, 2, (1958) pp.1-135.

<sup>46</sup> He was a celebrated man of letters and an influential Political adviser to Emperor Yang. Biography in SS, 67; CTS, 63 and HTS, 100.

information thus gained was compiled by him in a geographical book named Hsi Yü t'ü Chi 西域圖記.<sup>47</sup> After completing it, Pei Chü presented his book to the Emperor Yang".<sup>48</sup>

The work aroused the Emperor's interest to such an extent that he personally asked Pei Chü to give him more details about the Western regions. Pei Chü, particularly mentioned the affluence of the Western treasures. He also suggested that the conquest of T'u-yü-hun was not difficult. Emperor Yang then ordered Pei Chü to plan the conquest of the barbarian tribes on the western borders. Pei Chü was commissioned to go back to Chang-Yeh and induce the Western countries to come to pay homage at his majesty's court.<sup>49</sup>

In 608, when emperor Yang went to Heng-Yo<sup>50</sup> to perform ritual ceremonies the western barbarians offered assistance to him. The emperor again commissioned Pei Chü to proceed to Tun-huang. The latter sent out emissaries to the kings of Kao-Ch'ang<sup>51</sup> and I-Wu<sup>52</sup> and others in an attempt to entice them by generous reward to send

<sup>47</sup> "Report illustrated by maps (drawings) about the people in the Western Regions". It was in 3 volumes.

<sup>48</sup> SS, 67, 10a; HTS, 100, 3b.

<sup>49</sup> SS, 67, 12a.

<sup>50</sup> The Sacred Mountains, also known as the northern mountains, situated between Hopeh and Shansi provinces.

<sup>51</sup> 高昌 i.e. Turfan, the region of the present-day Chinese province of Hsin-Chiang. It was an important trade centre and a flourishing site of Indo-Iranian civilization. For its history at this time see SS, 83. The Chinese accounts of Turfan have been translated by Chavannes in Documents, pp.101-110.

<sup>52</sup> 伊吾 modern Hami. The account of Hami in the HTS has been translated by Chavannes, Documents, pp.169-170.

envoys to the court. Later, during his western inspection trip, the emperor arrived at the Yen Chih mountains. The kings of Kao-Ch'ang and I-Wu and (representatives) of twenty seven barbarian states petitioned at the left side of the road and the Emperor was pleased to give them audience".<sup>53</sup>

Although Pei Chü's work on the western countries is now lost, the short notices of his report scattered in the dynastic histories of the Sui and the T'ang clearly show emperor Yang's concern to promote relations with the outside world. It cannot be ascertained whether Pei Chü himself visited Iran, but the Sui history in its account of the Po-ssu mentions that emperor Yang sent Li Yü to Iran and that Li Yü was accompanied back by an Iranian envoy bringing tribute.<sup>54</sup> In T'ien-Chu-Chuan of the Hsin T'ang-Shu we are told that: "During the reign of Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty Pei Chü was sent to open relations with the various countries in the western regions. All but T'ien Chu and Fu Lin, to the great regret of the emperor, consented".<sup>55</sup>

In Hsi-Yü t'u-chi a lost work on the western countries Pei Chü described the important routes leading to the Western regions. The authors of the Sui and the T'ang histories who utilized this work mention three routes leading to the West. They are as follows:

"From Tun-huang, there are three routes to the western sea. The northern route which runs from Hami, passes by Barkul, the Tolos tribes and the court of the Turks, then passing a river running north (Syr Daryā) goes to Byzantium and ends at the Western sea. The middle

<sup>53</sup> SS, 67. 12a-12b; HTS, 100, 4a.

<sup>54</sup> SS, 83. 15a-15b.

<sup>55</sup> HTS, 221 (shang), 12a.

route passes Turfan, Karāshahr, Kuchā and Kāshghar. It then goes across the Pamirs and again through Farghāna, Sutrishna, Soghdianā, Kebud, Bukhārā and Marv, and reaches Iran. Then it goes to the Western sea. The southern route starting at Lop-nor goes to Karghalik and Tashgurgan; then it crosses the Pamirs and goes on through Wakhān, Tokhārestān, the land of the Hephthalites, Bamiyān Jaguda and Zābulestān, and reaches northern India and then the Western sea.<sup>56</sup> The various countries along these routes have their own roads".<sup>57</sup>

Of these three routes, the northern one, which is mentioned for the first time in the Chinese records, was the most difficult and the longest route connecting the East to the Byzantine empire. When going to the great confederation of Turkish tribes, known to the Chinese as the Western Turks, Zamarghus, the Byzantine envoy, took the same route in an attempt to find a new passage for the eastern trade in order to avoid the Iranian blockade. Owing to its geographical impracticability the northern route was not frequented by the merchants. The middle and the southern routes, which were utilized from the time of the Han dynasty, are the so called 'silk road'.

Emperor Yang, however, attempted to gain too much in a short time. Peasant discontent at the government's conscription of labour for public works and the unsuccessful war against Koguryō (i.e. Korea)<sup>58</sup> led to a revolt against him, and the newly established

<sup>56</sup> The term hsi-hai 西海 "the Western Sea" in the dynastic histories has been applied to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean as well as the Mediterranean Sea. Here, in describing the three roads leading to the Western Countries, "the Western Sea" refers to the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean respectively.

<sup>57</sup> SS, 67. 11a; HTS, 100. 3b-4a.

<sup>58</sup> For Emperor Yang's Korean campaign see Bingham, op.cit., pp.37-46.

dynasty which had only reigned for thirty seven years was overthrown by Li Yüan, one of the revolutionary leaders.<sup>59</sup> Li Yüan succeeded in consolidating his power over the whole empire and established the great T'ang dynasty (618-906).

At the commencement of the Seventh Century, China under the T'ang dynasty entered on the most brilliant era in her history. On the contrary, exhausted by the long drawn out war with the Byzantine empire, Sāsānian Iran had sunk to an exceptionally low level of decline and was soon to be conquered by the growing Arab empire. The period of the T'ang dynasty was thus not only an important turning point in the economic and cultural life of China, but also in that of Central and Western Asia. Close contacts with the outside world made China the rendezvous of all kinds of foreigners. Among them there were merchants, entertainers, ambassadors, monks, scholars and priests, and even a few refugee princes from Central Asia and Iran. Of all these visitors Iranians were particularly popular because of their wealth and riches. Traces of Iranians who resided in China permanently or temporarily may be found in the chief cities of the T'ang such as Ch'ang-an (the capital), Kuang-chou 廣州, Hung-Chou 洪州 and Yang-Chou 揚州.<sup>60</sup> Most of these residents were Iranian merchants trading with China both by the land and sea routes.

In the first half of the Seventh century T'ang China extended its sphere of influence in Central Asia. T'ai-tsung (627-649) destroyed both the Eastern and the Western Turks. This made China

<sup>59</sup> Li Yüan (565-635) was born at Ch'eng-chi in Shansi of a noble family. Although claiming to be of Chinese descent, the Li family had intermarried with the Tu-Ku family, descended from the "Barbarian" house of North China. For his early life and reign see CTS, 1; HTS, 1. Giles, Biographical dictionary No.1239.

<sup>60</sup> Hsiang Ta. T'ang-tai Ch'ang-an yü hsi-yü Wen-ming. Peking (1957), pp.24-25.

very powerful in Asia. Many petty princes and chiefs of Central Asia who had previously been subordinate to the Turks acknowledged China's overlordship and became her loyal subjects. During the 7th and early part of the 8th centuries, the extension of the protectorates as far as the Eastern border of Iran accelerated the pace of trade across Central Asia. "In the beginning of Chen Kuan era (627-649) [the state of Bukhārā] sent an envoy to the Chinese court with tribute. Emperor T'ai-tsung told the ambassador that since the Western Turks had submitted, caravans of merchants might start travelling. The various barbarians [hearing] this became very delighted!"<sup>61</sup> At the end of the 8th century China's domination in Central Asia, however, weakened because of the Tibetan struggle.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, the importance of the overland trade also declined, and was replaced by the sea trade, in whose expansion Iranians played a predominant role.

(d) Sāsānian maritime trade in the Indian Ocean.

Although there are no contemporary Iranian sources to indicate the extent of Sāsānian maritime trade, it would seem that they did not ignore it even during the time when they were so active in the trans-continental trade through the caravan routes of Central Asia. Since the dynasty originated in the region very close to the Persian

<sup>61</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 1b.

<sup>62</sup> Shortly after the middle of the eighth century, the Tibetans took advantage of China's internal unrest (that of the An Lu-shan rebellion) and of the disastrous defeat of Kao Hsien-chih, the Korean-born Chinese general, at the hands of the emerging Arabs in Talas (751) to extend their power in the Tarim basin. They continued to give the Chinese a great deal of trouble, so much so that the Chinese were compelled to make common cause with the Arabs, the Uighurs and the Princes of India against their troublesome neighbours. S.W. Bushell in his "The Early History of Tibet". Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society XII(1880), pp435-41 has translated the monograph on the Tibetans in the two T'ang histories. See also Chavannes, Documents, pp.287-299.



Gulf it was naturally interested in the use of the sea for commercial purposes. The Sāsānians built many ports and improved others, and encouraged the local people to take to the sea. The ports built by the Sāsānians were: Wahasht Ardashir, on the river of Khuzistān; Bahan Ardashir on the Tigris; Batn Ardashir, opposite the island of Bahreyn; Rishahr, on the peninsula of Mesembria, six miles to the south of the modern Bushahr; and Sirāf, a port on the northern shore of the gulf which in the ninth and tenth centuries was an important centre for commercial exchange between the Persian Gulf, the East African coast, the Indian Ocean and the Far East.<sup>63</sup>

Manuchehr, the head priest of the Zoroastrian communities in Pārs and Kermān, writing in the ninth century says, "And myself, I shall have to retire from the countries of Iran and to wander forth to far distant realms, where I shall not hear a rumour about your evil deeds. In my occupation, moreover, my fortune may be to wander forth by water even to China or by land even to Arum".<sup>64</sup> This late Pahlavi literature obviously hints at the existence of an established sea route between the Persian Gulf and the China Sea.

From what the Muslim writers in later times have collected about the Sāsānians it becomes clear that the Sāsānians, unlike their predecessors, the Parthians, were active seafarers in and out of the Persian Gulf. Hamza Isfahāni, the Iranian geographer of the tenth century, informs us that Ardashir Pāpakān, the first Sāsānian king,

<sup>63</sup> For recent studies of Sirāf, a Sāsānian Port in the Persian Gulf see Whitehouse, D. "Excavations at Siraf", published in Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian studies. Vol. VI (1968) pp. 1-22; Vol.VII (1969), pp.39-62; Vol.VIII (1970), pp.1-18; Vol. IX (1971), pp.1-17; and Vol. X (1972), pp.63-87.

<sup>64</sup> Modi, J.J. "References to China in the Ancient Books of the Parsees", Journal of the Bombay Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, XXI (1904), pp.525-536.

erected eighteen cities, of which as many as eleven were sea ports, either on the coast itself or on rivers navigable by seagoing craft.<sup>65</sup>

According to Tabari, during the reign of Shāpur II (A.D. 309-79) the Arabs of Bahreyn and adjacent districts crossed the sea (i.e. Persian Gulf) and plundered the Iranian ports.<sup>66</sup> When Shāpur reached his majority he personally crossed the sea and commanded a naval expedition against the Arab raiders in the Persian Gulf, slaying many of the inhabitants of Bahreyn.<sup>67</sup> We are told by Tabari that Bahrām Gur (A.D. 421-439) travelled to India, where he married an Indian princess and received as a dowry the port of Daibul, Makrān, and the adjacent parts of Sind.<sup>68</sup> Elsewhere Tabari says that Khosraw Anushirwān led a successful expedition against Ceylon.<sup>69</sup> The reliability of this information, which was written years after the Sāsānian dynasty came to an end, might at first sight be suspect, but we should keep in mind that the accounts of the Sāsānians given by Arab writers at a later time are mostly based on the official archives of the kings, no longer extant. This information indisputably

<sup>65</sup> Quoted by Hadi Hasan in his A History of Persian Navigation, London (1928), p.62.

<sup>66</sup> Tabari, 2. p.836; Hasan, op.cit., p.64.

<sup>67</sup> Tabari, 2, p.839; Hasan, op.cit., p.64; Hourani, G.F. Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times. Princeton University Press (1951), p.38.

<sup>68</sup> Tabari, 2. p.868; Hasan, op.cit., p.65; Whitehouse, D. "Sasanian Maritime trade". Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian studies, Vol.XI (1973), p.43. Rawlinson, G. in his The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy, p.426, does not accept this evidence from Tabari.

<sup>69</sup> Tabari, 2. p.868; The Sinhalese chronicles do not mention the alleged conquest of Ceylon by Khosraw Anushirwān. Tennent, J., in his Ceylon (London 1860), Vol.I., p.580 and Reinaud, M., Géographie d'Aboulféda, (Paris 1848), Vol.I, introduction CCCLXXXIII agree with the evidence of Tabari.

reveals the zeal of the Sāsānians in carrying on sea trade between the East and the West. The reason for the Sāsānian's becoming interested in the expansion of their sea trade in the Indian Ocean lay in the fact that, from the fifth century onwards, trade by the land route was much affected by the Hephthalites and the Turkish occupation of Central Asia. Consequently the Iranians were deprived of the trading centres used by the 'Seres'.<sup>70</sup> Therefore the Sāsānians had to take to the sea to foster trade with Southern India and Ceylon, where they could have access to both Chinese silk and Indian products. This is supported by Cosmas who, writing in the middle of the sixth century A.D., supplies us with valuable information regarding the commercial activity of the Sāsānians in the Indian Ocean. In describing the island of Ceylon as a busy entrepot in the Indian Ocean, Cosmas Indicopleustes in his 'Christian Topography' says:

"This is a large oceanic island lying in the Indian sea. By the Indians it is called Sielediba, but by the Greeks Taprobane.... The island, being, as it is, in a central position, is much frequented by ships from all parts of India and from Persia and Ethiopia, and it likewise sends out many of its own. And from the remotest countries - I mean Tzinista and other trading places, it receives silk, aloes, cloves, sandalwood and other products."<sup>71</sup>

The written evidence clearly shows that the Sāsānians from the sixth century A.D. onwards greatly influenced commercial activities in the Indian Ocean. They were the leading intermediaries of the Byzantines and their allies the Ethiopians in the Indian markets. This commercial rivalry is also shown in the story of Sapatrus, a

<sup>70</sup> Yule, op.cit., pp.204-205.

<sup>71</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, The Christian Topography. Translated from the Greek, and edited, with notes and introduction by McCrindle, (Hakluyt Society, London 1897), pp.365-66.

Byzantine merchant, and an Iranian trader at the court of the Sinhalese king.

"Now I must relate", says Cosmas, "what happened to one of our countrymen, a merchant called Sapatrus, who used to go thither (i.e. Ceylon) on business, but who to our knowledge has now been dead these five and thirty years past. Once upon a time, he came to this island of Taprobane on business, and as it chanced a vessel from Persia put into port at the same time with himself. So the men from Adulê, with whom Sapatrus was, went ashore, as did likewise the people of Persia, with whom came a person of venerable age and appearance. Then, as the way there was, the chief men of the place and the custom-house officers received them and brought them to the king...." <sup>72</sup>

The story goes on to say that in the presence of the Sinhalese king the two merchants competed with each other in magnifying the greatness of their respective kings. <sup>73</sup> During the sixth century A.D. the commercial rivals in the Indian Ocean were the Iranians and the Ethiopians. The latter were the allies of the Byzantines in a commercial conflict with Iran.

Another historian whose information is of considerable value for the study of the Sāsānian commercial situation in the Indian Ocean at that time is Procopius, the historian of Justinian's reign (A.D. 527-565). According to Procopius, the Romans, who were badly hit by the high duty on transit charged by the Iranians, approached the Ethiopians in an effort to oust the Iranians from their profitable trade in the Indian Ocean. The Romans urged the Ethiopians to trade direct with Ceylon and India. Emperor Justinian, as Procopius says, sent an ambassador to Ethiopia demanding that 'they should make common cause with the Romans in the war against the Persians'. <sup>74</sup> Justinian also

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 368.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 368-70.

<sup>74</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, Book I. XX., 9-12, translated by Dewing, H.B. (London and New York 1914), pp. 193-94; quoted by Hasan, op.cit., p. 69; Hourani, op.cit., p. 43.

proposed that the Ethiopians should purchase silk from India and sell it to the Romans, thereby enriching themselves. The Romans' gain in the scheme was that they were no longer going to be compelled to pay money to their enemy.<sup>75</sup> The Ethiopians agreed to follow the suggestion, but were unable to carry it out "for it was impossible for the Ethiopians to buy silk from the Indians, for the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbour (of Ceylon) where the Indian ships first put in (since they inhabit the adjoining country) and are accustomed to buy the whole cargoes".<sup>76</sup> Both Cosmas and Procopius wrote their books at the time of Khosraw Anushirwān, who, according to Muslim writers such as Tabari and Hamza of Isfahān, extended his territory in the east as far as Ceylon. They also claim that invasion of the island (Ceylon) by him to redress the wrongs done to some of the Iranians who had settled there for trade.<sup>77</sup>

The information recorded by Procopius clearly shows that the sea trade between Iran and the Indian ports of Male in Malabar and Calliana near Bombay and Ceylon was organized by the Sāsānian government and that the Iranians trading in that region were fully supported by their kings, or else it would have been difficult for the merchants themselves to challenge the commercial rivalry of the Byzantines and the Ethiopians in the Indian Ocean.

Whether Ceylon was conquered by Khosraw Anushirwān, as is claimed by Muslim writers, is another question. The fact is that Khosraw must have had some influence in that region. In other words there

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Tennent, op.cit., Vol.I, p.580.

must have been at least some compromise with the southern Indian and Sinhalese rulers which had caused them to force their respective merchants to sell their entire cargoes to the Indians. As we mentioned above, Khosraw Anushirwān, in an attempt to stop Turkish expansion, imposed an embargo on trade by the land route.<sup>78</sup> The reason which prompted Khosraw Anushirwān to cut off the land trade with the Turks was that he had already established a flourishing sea trade and had no difficulty in obtaining Chinese silk and Indian spices.

Sometime between A.D. 570 and 579 Khosraw Anushirwān sent out eight ships, each with one hundred condemned prisoners on board, under the command of Vahrez, to conquer Yemen.<sup>79</sup> At that time Yemen was ruled by the Ethiopians who in 524-525 had seized it with the help of Byzantium.<sup>80</sup> Of the eight Iranian ships two were lost at sea and the remaining six reached the coast of Yemen, and, in collaboration with Yemenites, defeated the Ethiopian king.<sup>81</sup> Thereafter, Yemen became an Iranian dependency and was governed by Iranian rulers until the Arab conquest.<sup>82</sup> The conquest of Yemen by Vahrez was a great achievement for the Sāsānians, for it enabled them to strengthen their control over Bab-al Mandab, the entrance to the Red Sea, preventing the trade of South Arabia from reaching Byzantium. All these sources

<sup>78</sup> See p. 11

<sup>79</sup> Tabari, 2. p.948-50 ; Hasan, op.cit., p.72.

<sup>80</sup> Hasan Ibid, p.71

<sup>81</sup> Tabari, 2. p.949 ; Hasan, op.cit., p.74; Hourani, op.cit., p.44

<sup>82</sup> Hourani, op.cit., p.44.

suggest that, towards the end of the sixth century of our era, like the overland trade, the sea trade between the east and west was also dominated by the Iranians, who reaped immense profits from it.

(e) Sāsānian direct sea trade with China

In the foregoing pages we noted that the profitable trade of the east attracted the hardy Iranian sailors from the Persian Gulf to the ports of India and Ceylon. There they exchanged their goods and purchased the merchandise of the merchants coming from the furthest countries, possibly South-east Asia and China.

Now the question arises whether the Iranian merchants who monopolized the trade of the Indian Ocean ever crossed the bay of Bengal and reached China. Our evidence regarding Sāsānian maritime trade east of Ceylon is most defective. The accounts of Cosmas and Procopius, which are our main sources on the subject, do not throw any light on the Iranian maritime trade east of Ceylon. We should bear in mind that Cosmas, who gives a fairly detailed description of Sāsānian maritime activity in the island of Ceylon, is more concerned with the spread of Christianity in the island than with its trade. He speaks of Ceylon as having a church of Persian christians and a presbyter who is appointed from Persia.<sup>83</sup> Elsewhere, he says, "But I know not whether there be any christians in the parts beyond it."<sup>84</sup> He also knew of the country of Tzinista,<sup>85</sup> which produced the silk, but had no information at his disposal to describe it. Did he have

<sup>83</sup> Cosmas, op.cit., p.365.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.119.

<sup>85</sup> This is undoubtedly a name meaning China. The transcription is, however, Iranian in form; "Tsinistan".

no knowledge of the activity of the Iranian merchants east of Ceylon? While his account obviously gives evidence of flourishing Sāsānian trade in the Indian Ocean, it does not take us further than Ceylon.

The evidence of Irano-Arabic origin regarding Sāsānian maritime trade with China is far from adequate. Yet early Muslim writers, like Tabari, Balādhuri and Dināwari, refer to the presence of Sufun min al-Sin, "Ships from China", Marākib al-Sin, "Ships of China", and Sunfun Siniyah, "Chinese ships". These Arabic phrases do not necessarily suggest Chinese participation in this lucrative maritime trade. These expressions can well mean, "Ships on the China Trade", or simply, "Ships with China-type commodities".<sup>86</sup> The "ships of China" according to Mas'udi used to visit Omān, Sirāf, Ubullah and Basra, while from these countries ships sailed directly to China.<sup>87</sup> Since the Chinese were slow to enter the seagoing trade and were ignorant even of the names of Aden and Sirāf down to the close of the twelfth century, it is improbable that these ships, even if constructed in China, were owned or manned by the Chinese.<sup>88</sup>

Our information on the direct sea trade between Persian Gulf and China Sea comes from the Chinese sources which refer to the Po-ssu ships. Unfortunately the term Po-ssu, which is derived from the Iranian word Pārs پارس or Parsa پارسا, i.e. Sāsānian Iran, has also been applied by some writers of the vintage texts to another people

<sup>86</sup> Hourani, op.cit., pp.46-50.

<sup>87</sup> Mas'udi, Muruj al-Dhahab, Vol.I, p.216. Quoted by Hourani, op.cit. pp.75-76.

<sup>88</sup> Hirth and Rockhill, Chau Ju-Kua: His work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, entitled Chu-fan-Chi. St. Petersburg (1911), 15, note 3.



or tribes inhabiting Southeastern Asia, probably in or in the vicinity of the Malay archipelago.<sup>89</sup> The two uses of the term have created a great deal of confusion. For nearly a century, modern scholars have concerned themselves to find a satisfactory interpretation of the term Po-ssu in its proper geographical setting, but have failed to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion.

Hirth and Rockhill, in their translation of the *Chu-fan-chi* 諸番記 (A Description of Barbarian People) developed the middlemen theory. According to them, "from the end of the fourth century to the beginning of the seventh century, we find all the products of Indo-China, Ceylon, India, Arabia, and the east coasts of Africa classed as products of Persia (Po-ssu), the country of the majority of the traders who brought these goods to China".<sup>90</sup> In 1919, B. Laufer, rejecting Hirth's explanation, introduced the theory of the "Malay Po-sse".<sup>91</sup> He refused to accept any pre-T'ang references to Po-ssu in the context of Persia and asserted that all the references to Po-ssu trade with China from the south refer to the Malay Po-ssu and not to Persia. His assumption was based on some isolated references in the vintage texts believed to have been written

<sup>89</sup> Two Sung writers, Chou Chü-fei and Chao Ju-kua, in their works entitled *Ling-wai tai-ta* and *Chu-fan-chi*, mention a Po-ssu country which was obviously not Persia, but a country in or near the Malay Peninsula. The inhabitants of this country were of Negro origin. For English translation see Hirth and Rockhill, *op.cit.*, p.152.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, p.7-8.

<sup>91</sup> For Laufer's view on this subject see his *Sino-Iranica: Chinese contribution to the history of Civilization in ancient Iran, with special reference to the history of cultivated plants and products*. Field Museum (Anthropological Series, Publication 201, Vol.5, No.3 (1919), pp.468-487.

before A.D. 527,<sup>92</sup> and still later some works of the T'ang and Sung periods. Laufer's new theory led many sinologists, though not all, to follow him. Chang Hsing-lang bitterly criticized the theory of the Malay Po-sse and considered his handling of the Po-sse question as "too scientific" and "too accurate".<sup>93</sup> He thought that because of the difficulties of means of communication, the ancient Chinese authors had no clear report at their disposal which could enable them to establish the correct geographical position of the foreign countries, and their texts, therefore, must not be interpreted literally.<sup>94</sup> The interpretation of the more important sinologists regarding Po-ssu, may be classified into three groups. First those who, following Laufer, agree with the existence of a different Po-sse in Southeast Asia. The second group consists of those according to whom Po-ssu meant Persia. The third group believes that Po-ssu was originally a transcription of Parsa or Persia, but at different times it could have meant both Persia and a place in Southeast Asia.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> These texts are Kuang-chih 廣志 of Kuo I-kung 郭義恭, (written before 527), and Nan-chou-chi 南州記 of Hsu Piao 徐保, (written under the Chin dynasty A.D. 265-419). According to Laufer, the latter work was quoted in the Ch'i-min yao-shu 齊民要術, by Chia Szu-hsieh 賈思勰 who lived under the Hou Wei dynasty, A.D. 386-534. Chang Hsing-lang is of the opinion that, since many ancient Chinese texts were revised by the succeeding generations, it is probable that these works might also have undergone some revision. On the other hand, the non-appearance of the name Po-ssu in the Chinese dynastic histories before the Wei dynasty does not suggest that the Chinese had no knowledge of Iran before that. Chung-hsi chiao-t'ung shih-liao hui-P'i en, published by the Catholic University of Peking (1930), Vol.4, pp.185-193.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.188.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Recently O.W. Wolter has investigated the Po-ssu question and the activity of Iranians in the maritime trade of South-East Asia and the Far-East. After quoting and discussing different views of modern scholars, he rejects Laufer's argument for the existence of two

The evidence of the Iranian ships in the Chinese ports in the seventh and eighth centuries, even as late as the tenth century, is undisputable. B. Laufer holding that Iranians always reached China by land through the caravan routes of Central Asia, rejects the existence of the pre-T'ang Iranian shipping in the China Sea.<sup>96</sup> He admits, however, the presence of the Iranian ships in the seventh century. "Only from the Mohammadan period" he says, "did really Persian Ships appear in the Far-East".<sup>97</sup>

Though the Sāsānian empire vanished at the hands of the Arabs during the reign of Caliph Umar ( 634-644 ), the Iranian

95 (contd)

Po-ssu countries in two separate geographical contexts. Instead, he assumes that to the Chinese writers the term Po-ssu always meant Persia. But when it was used by some writers in the context of the southern seas, they referred to a flourishing seaborne trade in which during the fifth and sixth centuries the Indonesian shippers were acting as middlemen for Persian merchandise. Although he is reluctant to agree that Persian shippers ever went east of Ceylon, he admits, however, the presence of Persians in the southern seas in Sasanian times. Early Indonesian Commerce: A study of the origin of Srivijaya, Ithaca, New York. See specially Ch.10, pp.139-154. Wang Gung-Wu, in his criticism of Hirth's Pre-T'ang text, says that the period in which these Sasanian envoys visited Southern China (530, 533 and 535) coincided with the break up of the Northern Wei dynasty, and it was therefore possible for the envoys to travel overland to South China; "The Nanhai Trade", JMBRAS, 31, Part 2 (1958), pp.124-127. Hadi Hasan defended Hirth's theory on the grounds that Hirth was aware of Chao-Ju-kua's reference to a Po-ssu country of negro origin, op.cit., pp.81-83. K. Yamada took the name Po-ssu to refer always to Persia and proposed that the Southern Ocean Po-ssu means "New Persians coming across the Malayan Sea" in T'ang and later times; "Introduction of An-hsi hsiang in China and that of gum benzoin in Europe", in Report of the Institute of World Economics, 5, Kinki University (1954-1955), 1, 23. To P. Wheatley, "The name Po-ssu originally applied by the Chinese to Persia, became increasingly associated with Products which found their way to China along the southern sea route, so that by T'ang and Sung times the old association of the name with the Middle Eastern Country had been forgotten and it came to stand as a collective name for the countries of the South Seas and the Indian Ocean, though not for Indian Subcontinent", "Sung Maritime Trade", JMBRAS, 32, 2 (1959), p.15. E. Schafer also rejects Laufer's theory of the Malay Po-ssu and says that Po-ssu ships can only mean "Persian Ships". The Golden Peaches of Samarkand, note 50, p.281.

<sup>96</sup> Laufer, op.cit., p.471.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p.470, note 4.

shippers continued their navigation in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. We have an eye witness of Iranian navigation to Southeast Asia and China Sea less than a quarter of a century after the collapse of the Sasanian empire. ((The Chinese pilgrim I-Tsing, 義淨 en route to southern Asia in A.D. 671, made arrangements for his passage with a Po-ssu shipmaster. His account reads as follows:

(( "In the beginning of autumn, I met unexpectedly an imperial envoy Feng Hsai-chuan of Kung-chou; by help I came to the town of Kwang-tung, where I fixed the date of meeting with the owner of a Persian ship to embark for the south.... At last I embarked from the coasts of Kwang-chou (Canton) in the eleventh month in the second year of the Hsien-heng period (A.D. 671), and sailed for the southern sea.... At this time the first monsoon began to blow, when our ship proceeded towards the Red south. )) The ropes a hundred cubits long, suspended from above, two by two. In the beginning of the season, in which we separate from the constellation Chi, the pair of sails, each in five lengths, flew away, leaving the sombre north behind. Cutting through the immense abyss, the great swells of water lie like a mountain on the sea. Joining sideways with a vast gulf-stream, the massive waves like clouds dash against the sky. (Before sailing twenty days the ship reached Bhoga (Palembang?) where I landed and stayed six months.... 98)

I-Tsing's account obviously shows that the Iranian sailors not only set sail to the China Sea, but also conducted the shipping between south China and the regions of the Southeast Asia. ) In 717 an Indian Buddhist monk Vajrabodhi, visiting Ceylon, found thirtyfive Persian ships which had come to trade in precious stones. ) After one month's stay in Ceylon, Vajrabodhi travelled to Palembang in a convoy

98 This passage quoted by Hasan from Takakusu's translation of I-Tsing is very obscure in its nautical descriptions. The ropes referred to are evidently those used for raising and lowering the sails. Obviously the sails of I-Tsing's ship were not carried away by the winds, and it seems likely that he merely implies that the ship sailed very rapidly as though flying on two wings. The "five lengths" may refer to five sails held one below the other on separate arms, forming a single composite sail. "The red South" and "The Sombre north" refer to the colours traditionally associated with these two quarters. "The Constellation Chi" (leopard) consists of four stars in the Sagittarius of Ptolemaic astronomy. See Takakusu, J. A Record of the Buddhist Religion (1896), pp. XXVII-XXX.

of Persian ships and eventually reached Canton.<sup>99</sup> From Wang-wu-t'ien-chu-kuo-chuan 往五天竺國傳 by Hui Ch'ao 慧超, another Chinese Buddhist priest who, after travelling through India and Tokharestan, returned home in 727, we learn that the Iranian shippers dominated the sea trade in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. His observation on Iran is as follows:

Again, if from Tokharestan we go westward and travel for one month, we shall reach the country of Po-ssu 波斯. This kingdom had previously held sway over Ta-shih 大食 (Arabs) who had been camel drivers to the Iranian kings. Afterwards, they (the Arabs) revolted and killed this king (Yazdagird III) and themselves became the lord. Now this country (Iran) has been by force annexed to the Arabs. Their garment is the old one, a wide cotton shirt. They trim beard and hair. They only eat pastry and meat, they also have rice which is ground into pastry and eaten. The land produces camels, mules, sheep, horses, big donkeys, cotton cloth and treasures. The people speak different languages and are naturally bent on commerce. They are accustomed to set sail into the Western sea. They enter the south sea to the country of Ceylon to obtain all kinds of precious gems, for which reason that country is said to produce treasures. They also head for the K'un-lung country (i.e. Malaya) taking gold. Furthermore, they sail in big craft to the land of Han (China) and directly to Canton, where they get various kinds of silk and the like. The country produces fine textiles. The people enjoy the killing of living creatures (cattle). They worship T'ien (i.e. Allah), and do not know the law of Buddha.<sup>100</sup>

The final piece of information which refers to the presence of the Iranian ships at the Chinese port has been preserved for us in the annals of the T'ang dynasty, "At the beginning of Ch'ien-yüan (758), the Arabs together with the Persians attacked Canton, burnt all the Warehouses and fled away by sea".<sup>101</sup> This proves the settlement of a considerable number of foreign merchants in Canton,

<sup>99</sup> Ferrand, G. Voyage de Vajrabodhi, given in relations de Voyages et Textes Geographiques, relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient. (Paris 1914). Vol.2, p.637, quoted by Hasan, op.cit., p.98.

<sup>100</sup> Hui Ch'ao. Wang-wu-t'ien-chu-kuo-chuan 往五天竺國傳. Taisho Tripitaka. 51, p.978.

<sup>101</sup> CTS, 148. 15b ; HTS, 221 (hsia) 10a.

strong enough as to attack and burn the city. From this time onwards the name Po-ssu disappeared from the Chinese dynastic histories. In A.D. 748, Chien Chen 鑑真, an eminent Chinese priest on his way to Japan for missionary purposes, found a large Po-ssu village in the island of Hainan.<sup>102</sup> They are mentioned along with P'o-lo-men 婆羅門 (Brahmans-Indians) and K'un-lun 崑崙 (Malayans).<sup>103</sup> Laufer refers this Po-ssu settlement on the island of Hainan to the Malay Po-ssu and not to the Persians.<sup>104</sup> His rejection of the alleged Persian Settlement there is unjustified, for in the T'ang era numerous Iranian merchants were trading in precious objects in the Chinese markets. And, apart from the Zoroastrian and Manichean communities in the chief cities of the T'ang, there settled a large number of pro-Ali Iranian refugees who had fled to China during the Ummayyad period (A.D. 661-750) to avoid persecution.

After the establishment of their rule over Iran, the Arabs took the Iranian sailors in their service and exploited their navigational skill and maritime trade experience to their advantage. From the use of many Iranian navigational terms in the works of the Muslim geographers in later times, it is obvious that it was the knowledge of the Iranian sailors and merchants that enabled the Arabs to become the masters of the maritime trade in the Far-East.

G. Ferrand has collected several Arabicized forms of navigational terms of Iranian origin which support the priority of

<sup>102</sup> This island is in South China Sea off the south coast of Canton Province, southeast China and east of the Gulf of Tonkin.

<sup>103</sup> Abstract of a diary translated by Takakusu, quoted by Laufer, op.cit., pp.469-470.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Iranian navigation.<sup>105</sup> His apposite comment is that the Arabs followed the routes already used by the Iranians and that, "the voyages (to China) made before the ninth century were made solely by the Persian sailors and the Persians were the initiators of the Arabs in the trade with the Far-East".<sup>106</sup>

From the information noted above, we may deduce that commercial activities in the East, both overland and by sea, were dominated by the Iranians, who played an outstanding role in their expansion. In the middle of the eighth century the name Po-ssu was replaced by the term Ta-shih, i.e. Arabs, and Chinese dynastic histories after the T'ang annals cease to give any information on Iran. Owing to the conversion of the Iranians to the religion of the Arabs, the Chinese had difficulty in distinguishing between these two different nationalities. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the Chinese indiscriminately applied the new term Ta-shih to both converted Iranians (speaking either Persian or Arabic) and Arabs.

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<sup>105</sup> Some of these common terms are; (a) Nakhodā, "ship's captain", (b) Baghur or Faghur, the Arabic title for the Chinese emperor which is an Arabicized form of the Iranian word Baghur meaning "Son of God" and is simply a literal translation of T'ien-tze 天子 "Son of Heaven", the Chinese title for their emperors, (c) Dar-Sini, the Arabic word for cinnamon is composed of the Iranian word Dar meaning "wood" and therefore, "Chinese wood", (d) To Ferrand's collection we can add some more examples of Iranian technical navigational terms used by the Arabs such as (e) Raban "pilot", (f) Rāhmāni "sailing directories" (g) Angar "Anchor", (h) Didbān "look out boy" and (i) Bandar "port". The first three are the Arabicized forms of the original Iranian words Rāhbān, Rāhnāmāh and Langar respectively. The other two are in their original forms. Ferrand, G. Relations de Voyages et Textes Géographiques, Arabes, Persans et Turks, relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient, du VIII au XVIII siècles (Paris 1913) Intro. Vol.I, pp. 1-3. Quoted by Hasan, op.cit., pp.77-79.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

The diplomatic relations of the Sasanians with China

## (a) China's tributary system and Iran.

It is well-known that the Chinese always considered their own country as the largest and greatest in existence and their institutions more advanced than those of any other country. Their nation, according to their belief, was situated in the middle of "all under Heaven", and was the centre of civilization for all people. Foreigners were called Man 蠻, Ti 狄, Jung 戎 and Hu 胡 all meaning "barbarians". This so called "Confucian World Order" took it for granted that relations between China and other countries should be those of suzerain and vassals, at least in the cultural, if not in the political sense.

If this was true of the relations between China and such countries as Korea, Annam and Japan, which were its closest neighbours, what about China and Iran, a more distant, ancient and culturally independent country? And how did Iran in turn regard China?

The first Iranian envoy from Parthia, known to the Chinese as An-hsi according to the dynastic histories, arrived at the court of China during the reign of Emperor Wu-ti (140-87 B.C.) of the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C. to 8 A.D.).<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, fairly regular contact was maintained and the Sāsānians followed this example, sending numerous ambassadors to China. The frequency and importance of these contacts are revealed not merely by the Chinese historical records, but also by various discoveries of Sāsānian coins in China.

(The Iranians kept up relations with China for several centuries, mainly for commercial purposes, except for one or two occasions when the later Sāsānian princes sought Chinese aid and protection.) However, when reading Chinese history one must keep in mind that China always

<sup>1</sup> CHS, 96a, 14a.



claimed foreign emissaries to be "tribute bearers" and the gifts received by the Chinese emperor as "tribute".

The terms Hsien 獻, Ch'ao 朝, Feng-piao 奉表, Piao-tsou 表奉, and Kung 貢 have all been used to describe the mission of the foreign envoys. These words were used to show the inferiority of the foreign ambassadors, because these terms mean "to offer gifts", "to pay tribute", "to respectfully memorialize the emperor" or, "to seek the audience of the sovereign of the world, the son of Heaven" respectively.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, this Chinese traditional tributary system regarded the sending of envoys to China as an admission of the superiority of the Chinese civilization, and a recognition of the Chinese emperor's mandate over the world. On the day of reception all the foreign envoys had to recognize China's claim to superiority by performing the prescribed Confucian ritual. The ritual, which was called "k'ou-t'ou" 叩頭 (To knock the head on the floor to show great deference), anglicised as "Kowtow" or "Kotow", was very important, since in the mind of the Chinese emperor and his court, it indicated the inferiority and submissiveness of the persons performing it, and of the country they represented. Refusal to perform Kotow was an insult to the emperor and those who objected to performing it were subject to punishment.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Wang Gung-wu, "The Nanhai trade: A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea", JMBRAS, 31, part 2 (1958), p.118.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on the function of the tributary system, see The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations, edited by J.K. Fairbank, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1968; and also J.K. Fairbank and Teng Ssu-yu, 'On the Ch'ing tributary system', HJAS, vol.6, no.4 (1941), pp.135-148. For general background of the system see O.Lattimore, Inner Asian Frontiers of China, Beacon Press, Boston (1962).

The Ta-shih-chuan in the Hsin-T'ang-shu says that "When an Arab envoy was received by emperor Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 (A.D. 713-756), the Arab envoy refused to observe Kotow, saying that in his country, people only bow to T'ien-shen 天神 (i.e. God of Heaven - Allah), and never to an earthly ruler. The Chinese officers intended to punish him, but one of the ministers pleaded on behalf of the ambassador and said that in view of the difference of custom, the ambassador's refusal should not be taken as an offence."<sup>4</sup>

As is the case with missions from other countries, the real nature of the Iranian embassies to China is not easy to understand. It is, however, impossible to distinguish and isolate economic from political motives and it is safe to conclude that embassies sent by Iran to China had both political and economic missions. J.F. Fairbank aptly explains the two indivisible and intricate aspects of the tributary system as follows:

.....trade and tribute were cognate aspects of a single system of foreign relations, the moral value of tribute being more important in the minds of the rulers of China, and the material value of trade in the minds of the barbarians, this balance of interests would allow mutual satisfaction and the system would continue to function.....it seems impossible at present to make more than one generalization that tributary system was a framework within which all sorts of interests, personal and imperial, economic and social, found their expression.<sup>5</sup>

In view of the facts that the civilization of Iran was also highly developed, and the country never had any conflict with China, it is reasonable to assert that their gifts which were received by the Chinese emperors as "tribute", were not in fact given with the latter motive in mind. It would seem that Iran sent embassies to China in

<sup>4</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia), 12a.

<sup>5</sup> Fairbank and Teng, op.cit., pp. 140-41.

order to cultivate friendly relations with the Chinese emperors and to obtain commercial privileges. They were not intended to acknowledge China's superiority.

The historical reasons for Chinese feeling of superiority lay in the fact that Chinese culture grew in something of a vacuum. None of her immediate neighbours, save India, made any major contribution to Chinese culture, while all, again with the exception of India, borrowed from China. Situated at the cross-roads of the advanced civilizations, such as Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Assyrian, the development of Iranian culture, as opposed to Chinese, was a rather different process.

(b) Iranian Embassies to China:

Either in A.D. 226 or 227, Ardashir Pāpakān, the founder of the Sāsānian dynasty, defeated Artabanus V, the last Parthian king, bringing the whole of the Parthian territories under his control. Ardashir and his successors succeeded in expanding Iran into a world power and ruled for five centuries. On the other hand, towards the end of the second century, Han China was plunged into the thick of frequent disturbances and rebellions including a great peasant revolt in A.D. 184.<sup>6</sup> The political instability disintegrated Han China, and from A.D. 220, for the next half century, China was divided into three states. The kingdom of Wei 魏 (A.D. 220-265) founded by Ts'ao Ts'ao's son in the north, that of Wu 吳 which controlled the Southeast from A.D. 222 to 280, and that of Shu Han 蜀漢 in Ssu-chuan, where Liu Pei, a scion of the Han family, governed from A.D. 221 to 264.<sup>7</sup> This period was marked by territorial segregation, continual hostility and civil wars. Then in A.D. 263, the kingdom of Wei annexed Shu Han

<sup>6</sup> K.S. Latourette. The Chinese: Their history and culture; two volumes in one. New York (1960), p.120.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.145-46.

and in A.D. 265 Ssu-ma-Yen, the great general of Wei, seized power and by conquering the state of Wu in A.D. 280 united China once more and founded the Chin dynasty. In the early part of the fourth century, as a result of wars waged by the Chin princes against one another and of the barbarian pressure, the new dynasty was forced to retreat to Chien-k'ang (Nanking), south of the Yangtse. There a national empire of the south was set up which lasted with comparative peace until A.D. 420.<sup>8</sup>

In the north, the various Turko-Mongol states were unified by the Wei, or T'oba Wei as the Chinese called them. They formed a dynasty which ruled the northern China from A.D. 386 to 557. They rapidly abandoned Tatar ways, assimilated Chinese culture and became quite Chinese. In A.D. 500 the Wei Emperor issued an edict forbidding the use of the Tatar language, dress and customs in favour of those of China.<sup>9</sup> Because of the confusion, China's diplomatic relations with Iran were completely broken off. No recorded account of Iran from the downfall of the Later Han till the rise of the T'oba Wei and its conquest of the north in the early part of the fifth century is available in the Chinese dynastic histories. The lack of information in those troubled periods may also be due to the scrappy records which have come down to us from the period of disunity. Undoubtedly many of the Chin records were lost when the dynasty took refuge south of the Yangtse in 317. Some twenty Chin histories are

<sup>8</sup> The Chin dynasty was divided into two parts: the Western Chin which reigned from A.D. 265 to 317, with its capital at Lo-Yang (towards the end at Ch'ang-an), and the Eastern Chin A.D. 317-420, with its capital at Chien-K'ang (modern Nanking).

<sup>9</sup> W. Eberhard. A History of China, California (1950), p.154

known to have been preserved, complete or in part, down to the seventh century.<sup>10</sup> Having criticized all available works on the period, emperor T'ai-tsung (627-650) commissioned a new history of the Chin dynasty to be written. The T'ang Chin-shu thus prepared became the standard history of the Chin.<sup>11</sup>

Although diplomatic relations between China and Iran seem to have been suspended, recently discovered coins of Shāpur II (A.D. 309-379), Ardashir II (A.D. 379-383), and Shāpur III (A.D. 383-388) in China prove that commercial links between two countries were maintained.<sup>12</sup> The annals of T'oba Wei, the first Chinese dynastic history to use the name Po-ssu (波斯 Persia), give a fairly detailed account of Iran. The word Po-ssu which is most probably derived from 'Parsa' did not appear in the Chinese dynastic histories until the middle of the fifth century A.D. Although the Sāsānian rulers established their empire in A.D. 226, the Chinese for some unknown reason continued to use the old name An-hsi 'Parthia' for the new dynasty.

The Chinese sources tell that during the reign of the T'oba Wei in the north, diplomatic relations between Iran and China became more regular. It was in the first year of T'ai-an 太安 (A.D. 455) that the first Sāsānian envoy, after a long period of loss of diplomatic contact between the two countries, appeared at the Chinese court.<sup>13</sup> He was followed by four more embassies.. They arrived respectively in the second year of Ho-p'ing 和平 (A.D. 461), in the first year of T'ien-an 天安 (A.D. 466), in the second year of Huang-hsing 皇興 (A.D. 468), and in the first year of Ch'eng-ming (A.D. 476). The next

<sup>10</sup> LS. Yang: "Notes on the economic history of the Chin dynasty". HJAS 9.2(1946), pp.107-109.

<sup>11</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> For the Sāsānian coins found in China see Hsia Nai "Tsung-shu chung-kuo ch'u-t'u ti Po-ssu sa-shan ch'ao yin-pi" K'ao-ku hsueh pao Vol.1(1974)91-110.

<sup>13</sup> WS, 5, 5b.

mission is recorded in the fourth year of Cheng-shih 正始 (A.D. 507) a gap of more than thirty years. Since the years 461, 466, 468 and 476, in which the Iranian envoys were received by the Chinese court, coincide with the reign of Firuz in Iran (A.D. 459-484), they must have been sent by him. The closeness of relations with China in the time of Firuz, apart from the record of the Chinese sources, is further confirmed by the discovery of a hoard of Firuz's silver coins in China.<sup>14</sup> Why did Firuz send four successive embassies to China? It appears that the reason for his increasing interest was mainly political as explained below.

At the beginning of the fifth century A.D. a new and powerful nomadic empire was established in Transoxiana that of the "Hephthalites".<sup>15</sup> They were at first vassals of the Juan-Juan, or Avars, who dominated Mongolia. But in the middle of the century, they founded a new empire strong enough as to challenge the Sāsānian empire and to shatter the peace which had flourished under the Gupta dynasty in India.<sup>16</sup> After a series of fights with the Sāsānians, the final

<sup>14</sup> Hsia Nai. "Chung-kuo tsui-chin fa-hsien-ti Po-ssu Sa-shan-Ch'ao yin-pi", K'ao-ku hsüeh Pao, Vol.16 (1957), pp.49-60.

<sup>15</sup> The Hephthalites are known in history by various names in the accounts of different countries. To the Chinese they are known as Yeh-ta 耶達 I-ta 挹怛 Hsien-ta 獻達 I-t'ien 挹閼 and the Arab and Persian refer to them as Heyātel, Hayātalāh ھیاتل. The classical writers designate them in such diverse forms as Ephthalites, Nephthalites, Abdele, Heithals, Hephtal. They were generally known to the Oriental scholars as Turks. The above-mentioned forms are probably the abbreviated form of Yen-tai-i-li-t'o 厭帶夷栗陀 which according to the Liang Shu, 54, 416, was the name of the royal clan. The Hephthalite history has been studied by numerous modern scholars, but their origin has still remained in obscurity. Various theories regarding the ethnology of the Hephthalites have been proposed, but none can be accepted as beyond criticism. K. Enoki in his article published in Toyo Bunko, (1959), pp.1-58 under the title, "On the nationality of the Hephthalites," has tried to prove that they belonged to the Iranian stock. For more information see, R. Ghirshman, Les Chionites-Hephtalites, Cairo (1948).

<sup>16</sup> For recent studies on the Hephthalites in India see, A. Biswas, The political history of the Hunas in India, India (1973); and also U. Thakur, The Hunas in India, India (1967).

victory was gained by the Hephthalites, who in A.D. 484 defeated and killed the Sāsānian king Firuz.<sup>17</sup> Then, Iran became tributary to them.<sup>18</sup> Thereafter, hostility between the latter and Iran was continued and the Sāsānian kings Valāsh (A.D. 484-488), Qobād I (A.D. 488-531), Zāmāsp (A.D. 496-498), and Khosraw Anushirwān (A.D. 531-579) had to fight with them. Finally, sometime between A.D. 563-568, with the help of the new rising power in Central Asia, the Western Turks, Khosraw Anushirwān crushed the empire of the Hephthalites. As a result of the victory gained by the Iranians and the Western Turks, they partitioned the Hephthalite territories.<sup>19</sup> Although Chinese sources are silent and give no reason why Firuz sent four successive missions to the Chinese court, it is very likely that his main intention was to avert the Hephthalite threat to Iran by seeking the help of the great power on their Eastern borders.

Po-ssu chuan in the Wei shu informs us that during the period of Shen-kuei 神龜 (A.D. 518-519) an embassy from Iran arrived at the court of T'oba Wei. "During the period of Shen-kuei", says the Wei-shu, "an Iranian embassy carrying a personal letter of the king addressed to the Imperial throne reached the Chinese court". The letter reads: "May the Son of Heaven of the most magnificent country in existence continue to reign where the sun comes out, as the Son of Heaven of the Central Han. The king of Po-ssu, Chū-ho-to 居和土,<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> S.P. Sykes, A history of Persia, Vol.1, pp.437-38.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.438.

<sup>19</sup> Ghirshman, op.cit., p.94; A. Christensen, L'Iran sous les Sassanides, p.396. This book has been translated into Persian by R. Tasami, 3rd. edition, Tehran (1966). The pagination followed in this thesis is that of the Persian version.

<sup>20</sup> Ancient pronunciation kiwa-yuâ-tâ (K,49-c, 8ê, 3a), a transliteration of the name of the Sāsānian king Qobād I, (A.D. 488-531)

makes ten thousand of times his respectful obeisance". The (Chinese) court accepted with approval, and thereafter, they repeatedly sent ambassadors to the court bearing tribute.<sup>21</sup> From this time onwards the exchange of embassies between the two countries became more regular. In fact between A.D. 455 and 553 more than ten Iranian missions arrived at the court of the T'oba Wei. In A.D. 534 the T'oba Wei dynasty split up into the eastern Wei in the northeast with what is now Chang-te as capital, and the western Wei in the northwest with its capital at Ch'ang-an. These rival rulers were soon to be replaced by the Northern Ch'i (A.D. 550-577), and the Northern Chou (A.D. 557-581) respectively. At last, in 581 a vigorous Chinese, Yang Chien, known to history as Emperor Wen, overthrew the Northern Chou which had destroyed the Northern Ch'i in A.D. 577. Subsequently in 589 with the conquest of Ch'en, the last of the Southern dynasties, he reunited all China once more and founded the powerful Sui dynasty (A.D. 581-618). Further embassies were received by the emperors of the Sui dynasty (A.D. 581-618), and the emperors of the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-907). Even after the collapse of the Sāsānian dynasty, Iranian embassies continued to arrive at the Chinese court.<sup>22</sup> As mentioned above, the Chinese always claimed superiority over the other nations, for this reason they received more missions than they sent.

In the reign of Khosraw Anushirwān, as Iranian tradition states, an embassy from the Chinese emperor, bringing valuable gifts arrived in Iran. Among the presents, there were the image of a panther covered with pearls, and with eyes formed of rubies; a silk robe on

<sup>21</sup> WS, 102, 17b.

<sup>22</sup> According to the CTS and HTS, between A.D. 713-755 the country of Po-ssu sent more than 10 embassies to the Chinese court. These envoys might have been sent by the remnant of the Sāsānian princes or they might have been some private merchants pretending to be Persian envoys.



which represented in gold the Iranian king Khosraw Anushirwān with his attendants round him each holding a cloth of gold in his hand. The robe was Ultramarine blue; it was enclosed in a golden box which also contained a female figure, whose face was veiled by her long hair, through which her beauty showed as a flash of daylight in a dark night.<sup>23</sup>

The history of the T'oba Wei mentions that a Chinese envoy, named Han Yang-p'i 韓羊皮 was sent to Iran.<sup>24</sup> Li Yü, 李昱, the military officer of emperor Yang (A.D. 604-617) of the Sui dynasty, was also sent to Iran. Li-Yü on his way back to China was escorted by an Iranian envoy who offered presents to the Chinese emperor.<sup>25</sup>

Ibn-Balkhi (12th century) in his work Fārsnāma which has probably borrowed information from Khudāynāma "the Royal Sāsānian books" says that in the court of Khosraw Anushirwān, three golden seats were specially placed for the emperor of China, the emperor of the Roman empire, and the king of the Khazars respectively. The seats could not be occupied except by these three kings.<sup>26</sup>

The sum total of the above evidence suggests that friendly relations existed between China and Iran at the time.

According to the Chinese records some small districts of Iran maintained their independence against the Arabs for a considerable time and continued to send ambassadors to China.

The following table shows the number of the Iranian embassies to China.

<sup>23</sup> Mirkhond, Rauzat-us-safa, vol.1, pp.784-85.

<sup>24</sup> WS. 102, 7a.

<sup>25</sup> SS, 83, 15a-15b.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn-Balkhi. Fārsnāma. Edited by G. le Strange & R.A.Nicholson, London, 1962.(E.J.W. Qibb Memorial Series, New Series, 1), p.97.

LIST OF THE SĀSĀNIAN EMBASSIES TO CHINA

No.	Year of Arrival	Sāsānian kings	Sources
1	455	Yazdagird II (439-57)	WS 5.5b; TFYK 969, 3b
2	461	Piruz (459-84)	TFYK 969. 4a.
3	466	" "	TFYK 969. 4b.
4	468	" "	TFYK 969. 4b.
5	479	" "	TFYK 969, 5b.
6	507	Qobād I (488-531)	TFYK 969. 9b.
7	517	" "	TFYK 969. 11b.
8	518	" "	WS 102. 17b.
9	520	" "	TFYK 969. 12b.
10	522	" "	TFYK 969. 12b.
11	536	Khosraw I (531-79)	LS 54.41a; TFYK 968. 20a.
12	553	" "	CS 50. 17b.
13	555	" "	PS 97. 18a.
14	606-616	Khosraw II (591-628)	SS 83, 15b; TFYK 970. 3b.
15	638	Yazdagird III (632-51)	HTS 221(hsia) 9b; TFYK 970. 9a.
16	647	" "	CTS 148. 15b; TFYK 970. 11a.
17	648	" "	TFYK 970. 13a.

(c) The collapse of the Sāsānians according to two T'ang histories

Though numerous embassies had been exchanged between China and Iran over the five centuries of the Sasanian period, only the two T'ang histories give a short account of the political affairs of the later Sāsānians. The authors of the standard histories before the T'ang (i.e. the Wei-shu, Chou-shu, and Sui-shu)<sup>27</sup> have devoted much more space to the geography and socio-economic conditions of Iran than to its political situation. The prominent role played by the Iranians in the economic and social activities of the T'ang led the compilers of the two T'ang histories to devote more space to their political affairs.

The political accounts of the later Sāsānian dynasty in both standard histories of the T'ang, the Chiu T'ang-shu 舊唐書 and the Hsin T'ang-shu 新唐書 are very brief and the chronological order of the Kings of the Sāsānian dynasty in these two histories is slightly different from that given in the Irano-Arabic and Byzantine sources. Moreover, the political accounts of the Po-ssu chuan in other Chinese sources such as T'ang hui-yao 唐會要, Wen hsien T'ung-k'ao 文獻通考, T'ung tien 通典, Ts'e-fu Yüan-kuei 冊府元龜 and other isolated references are all identical to the notices given in the two T'ang histories. It seems that the authors of the above sources had little fresh material to add to the original sources and simply copied the earlier writings.

Both the Chiu T'ang-shu and the Hsin T'ang-shu state that "at the end of the Sui dynasty, the Western Turks attacked and devastated the empire of the Sasanians and killed their king K'u-sa-ho 庫薩知."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> For a full translation of the Po-ssu-chuan in the Wei-shu, Sui-shu, Chou-shu Chiu and Hsin T'ang-shu see ch.4.

<sup>28</sup> Ancient pronunciation k'uo sao (Kat) yuâ. is definitely the Chinese transcription of Khosraw Parwiz. Laufer disagrees with this

K'u-sa-ho may<sup>be</sup> confidently identified with Khosraw Parwiz (A.D. 591-628), the most victorious as well as the most unfortunate king of the Sāsānian dynasty.

The Turks, or T'u-chüeh 突厥 as the Chinese called them, were probably of Hsiung-nu (Hun) descent and were subject to the Juan-Juan 蠕蠕 (Avars).<sup>29</sup> In the fifth century A.D. they were dwelling in the Altai mountains where they gradually became powerful. In A.D. 546, the Turkish chief I-li k'o-han T'u-men 伊利可汗土門 (Bumin in the Turkish inscription) successfully repulsed the attack of the T'ieh-le 鐵勒 or Tolos on his overlords the Juan Juan.<sup>30</sup> After his victory over the Tolos, T'u-men demanded the hand of a Juan-Juan princess. This aroused the anger of A-na-hui 阿那瓌, the ruler of the Juan-Juan, who in reply sent a message to T'u-men saying, "you are nothing but one of my slaves, how dare you then ask for my princess".<sup>31</sup> T'u-men killed the envoy and lost no time in rising in

28 (contd)

identification and says that this Chinese transcription is not a personal name, but is the title Tzu 子 of the Iranian king and it is based on the Iranian word Xsaova or Xsarva which means "King". B. Laufer, Sino-Iranica: Chinese contribution to the history of civilization in ancient Iran, with special reference to the history of cultivated plants and products. Chicago (1919), pp.529-30. E. Chavannes, identifies this Chinese name with Khosraw, Chavannes, Documents sur les T'ou-kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux, Saint Petersburg (1903) - (hereafter referred to as Documents), p.171. Chang Hsing-lang in his Tung-hsi chiao-t'ung shih-liao hui-p'ien, vol.4, p.75, while rejecting Laufer's view says that, according to the Chinese grammar, K'u-sa-ho in the SS and two T'ang histories is a personal name and not a title. In addition the period of Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty (A.D. 605-617) coincided with the reign of Khosraw II (A.D. 591-628).

29 Juan-Juan were also called Ju-Ju 茹茹 and were probably of Mongol origin. At the beginning of the fifth century of our era, their territory extended from Eastern Turkestan to Manchuria, even as far as Korea, see R. Grousset, The Empire of the Steppes: a history of Central Asia, English translation by N. Walford, New Jersey, 2nd Printing (1970), pp.171-176.

30 PS, 99, 1b. CS, 50, 3a. *The identification of T'ieh-le has been a matter of controversy and different explanations have been offered by modern scholars. For its identification with Toquzoghuz see Edwin G. Pulleyblank. "Some Remarks on the Toquzoghuz Problem." Ural-Altische Jahrbücher, xxviii (1956) pp. 35-42.*

31 CS, 50, 3a-3b, PS, 99, 2b.

revolt against his overlords. The Turks defeated the Juan-Juan and put an end to their military power in Central Asia.<sup>32</sup> Superseded by the Turks, the Juan-Juan moved West where they appeared as Avars, Abares, and Abaroi in Greek; and Avars, Avari in Latin. In Europe they set up a powerful state with independent diplomacy<sup>and</sup> army and became a menace to the Byzantine Empire.<sup>33</sup> The Turks then set up the extensive empire such as had never been formed by a nomad people in Central Asia up to that date. Their empire extended from the frontiers of China to the Black Sea, but in about A.D. 581-582 they split into two political groups, "the Western Turks", and "the Eastern Turks".<sup>34</sup>

After the destruction of the Juan-Juan, the Turks, who had become neighbours of a formidable enemy in the Hephthalites, turned their forces against them. The Hephthalites were the enemies of Iran and had at various times waged several wars with the Iranians. Shih Tien-mi 宣點密 or Istami-Khāgān, the ruler of the Turks, taking advantage of the hostility between the Iranians and the Hephthalites, allied himself with King Khosraw Anushirwān, and, sometime between A.D. 563 and 567, the combined Iranian and Turkish forces attacked and crushed the Hephthalites and divided the Hephthalite territories between themselves. The Turks for their share took Soghdianā and Farghāna,<sup>35</sup> and the portions lying south of the Oxus, i.e. Bactria and Tokhārestān, went to Iran.<sup>36</sup> Then, for a short period the Oxus became

<sup>32</sup> PS, 99, 1b, CS, 50, 3b.

<sup>33</sup> For Avars in Europe see Ch. Kadlec, *The Empire and its Northern neighbours*, in Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Chavannes, Documents, pp. 49, 220.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 226

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 224

the boundary between the Sāsānians and the Turks.<sup>37</sup> Soon after their victory over the Hephthalites, and owing to the gradual weakening of Iran, the Turks extended their authority further towards the south and occupied the whole of the Hephthalite lands north of Hindu-kush.

At the time of the accession of Hormuzd IV (A.D. 579-590) to the throne, peace negotiations between Iran and Byzantium were under way, but Hormuzd IV broke off the negotiations and continued the war with Byzantium.<sup>38</sup> The Turks took advantage of the political situation and raided the eastern part of Iran. According to Tabari, Hormuzd commanded Bahrām Chubin, the hero and the great general of the Iranian army, to stop the Turkish aggression. Bahrām chose twelve thousand veterans, all aged between forty and fifty, and defeated the Turks.<sup>39</sup> Khāgān himself was killed in the battle. In a second raid Bahrām badly defeated the Turks and took <sup>the</sup> Khāgān's son captive. Bahrām seized huge booty from the Turks and sent it to King Hormuzd.<sup>40</sup> Beyond this, Tabari's information on the clash between Bahrām and the Turks is very vague. The ruler of the Western Turks at the time of Hormuzd IV was Ta-t'ou K'o-han 達頭可汗 known to Byzantine historians as Tardu, son of Istami Khāgān. He raised the Western Turks to the height of their power, attacking both the Byzantines and the Sāsānians simultaneously. He certainly survived until A.D. 603, when he perished after fighting against China. In A.D. 598, according to the Byzantine historian Theophylactos, Tardu sent an arrogant letter to the Byzantine emperor Maurice calling himself "ruler of seven races and seven

<sup>37</sup> H.A.R. Gibb, The Arab conquest in Central Asia, p.3.

<sup>38</sup> Christensen, *op.cit.*, p.464.

<sup>39</sup> Tabari, 2, p.992.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p.993, Sykes, *op.cit.*, p.471.

regions", <sup>41</sup> and in A.D. 601 Tardu's forces were threatening the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an. Suddenly in A.D. 603 one of the chief western tribes, the Tolos rose in revolt against him. Tardu took refuge in KokoNor, where he disappeared. <sup>42</sup> The Turkish Khagan who according to Tabari lost his life fighting with Bahrām could not have been Tardu, who at that time had created the mighty confederation of the Western Turks. The Turkish chief whom Bahrām killed seems to have been some feudatory of Tardu, probably the Hephthalite chief.

The defeat of the Hephthalites by Irano-Turkish alliance and later their subjugation by the Turks did not mean their disappearance from the scene. Under the authority of the Western Turks, they formed their own principalities and continued to send missions to the Chinese court. The authors of the Sui History had this information about the Hephthalites at their disposal.

The capital of the state of I-ta 挹怛 is about 200 li south of the Oxus river. They are a branch of the Great Yüeh-chih. The country has five to six thousand talented soldiers. They are good fighters. Because of previous confusion in the country, they were replaced by the Turks. The capital is about 10 li in area with many temples and pagodas, ornamented with gold. Brothers jointly marry one wife. If a wife has one husband, she puts one horn on her head and if she is married to several brothers, the number of horns on her head show the number of brothers she has married. It is 1500 li south of the state of Ts'ao<sup>43</sup> and 6500 li east of Ku~~u~~ chou. In the

<sup>41</sup> Chavannes, Documents, p.246.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.261.

<sup>43</sup> The state of Ts'ao in the SS is the country of Hsieh-yü (Zābulestān) in the HTS. According to the HTS "The state of Hsieh<sup>43</sup> is in the southwest of Tokhārestān. It was originally called Ts'ao-chu-cha 吐火羅 (T) or Ts'ao-chu 吐火羅 'Jaguda'. In the east it borders on Chi-piu (Kashmir), in the north on Fan-yen (Bamiyān), in the south on P'olo-men (Northern India) and in the west on Po-ssu (Persia). The king has his seat in the walled city of Hou-hsi-na. 嚠悉那 (Ghazna). There are in this country people of Turkish, Kashmiri and Tokhāri stocks who dwell together".

~~the~~ Ta-yeh era (A.D. 605-616), they sent embassies to the Imperial court, bringing tribute. <sup>44</sup>

Thereafter, the name Hephthalite practically disappears from the Chinese dynastic histories as an independent country. The last reference to them in the Chinese histories is as follows. In describing the country of Tokharestan, the Hsin T'ang-shu narrates that "The country of I-ta is a stock of the Great Yüeh-chih in Han times. When the Great Yüeh-chih were turned out by the Wu-sun, they crossed west over Farghana and subjugated Ta-hsia which is now called Tokhārestān. Yeh-ta 耶達 is the king's surname, but later descendents applied it to the country itself. It has now been changed to I-ta 挹怛 or I-t'ien 挹闐. Their manners are similar to those of the Turks. During the period of T'ien-pao ( 742-756 ) they sent embassies to render homage to the court. <sup>45</sup>

The Hephthalites, however, under their new masters, the Western Turks, continued their hostility with Iran throughout the reign of Khosraw II (A.D. 591-628). According to the Armenian writer Sebeos (writing in 661) during A.D. 597-598, the nomads of the east who were the heirs of the Hephthalites and were under the sovereignty of the Western Turks raided the eastern frontier of Iran, but they were pushed back by Sambat Bagratoni, Khosraw's Armenian general. <sup>46</sup>

During the period A.D. 603-630, The Western Turkish empire grew rapidly. Tardu's grandson She-kuei 射匱 (A.D. 603-618), was once more able to extend his rule across Asia and recreate the empire of

<sup>44</sup> SS, 83, 12b-13a.

<sup>45</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 6b.

<sup>46</sup> Ghirshman, op.cit., p.97.



Tardu. His empire was bounded by the Altai in the east and by the Caspian Sea in the west.<sup>47</sup> She-kuei was succeeded by his younger brother T'ung Yeh-hu 統葉護, (T'ung the Yabghu or Yabghu Khāgān). He was even more successful and managed to regain control over the Tolos, who had revolted against Tardu in 603.<sup>48</sup> He extended his authority westwards up to the border of Iran.<sup>49</sup> Yabghu Khāgān established friendly relations with China, Turfan, and the Byzantine Empire, but continued his hostility towards The Eastern Turks and the Sāsānians.

In connection with Yabghu Khāgān's relations with China, the Chinese sources give a very detailed account of the Western Turks. With the founding of the T'ang dynasty A.D. 618-907, the Yabghu Khāgān, in the third year of Wu-te 武德 A.D. 620, sent ostrich eggs from Mesopotamia as a goodwill gift to emperor Kao-tsu 高祖 A.D. 618-627, the first ruler of the T'ang dynasty who sought the Yabghu's aid against Chieh-li 頡利, the Khāgān of the Eastern Turks.<sup>50</sup> The Yabghu promised to attack the Eastern Turks. Chieh-li who was intensely afraid of a possible alliance between his two enemies, the Chinese and the Western Turks, succeeded in assuring Yabghu of his peaceful intention and secured his neutrality.<sup>51</sup> In the third year of Chen-yüan (A.D. 627) Yabghu again sent valuable presents to the Chinese emperor which included a girdle studded with thousands of gold nails

<sup>47</sup> CTS, 144 (hsia) 2a.

<sup>48</sup> HTS, 215 (hsia) 3b.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 3b.

<sup>50</sup> CTS, 144 (hsia) 2a.

<sup>51</sup> HTS, 215 (hsia) 3b.

and five thousand fine horses.<sup>52</sup> At this time he was probably the dominant ruler in Asia, for the preoccupation of Khosraw Parwiz with his wars against the Byzantium enabled the Western Turks to extend their sphere of influence in the West.

The Yabghu Khāgān also maintained friendly relations with Byzantium and allied himself with it against Khosraw II. When in A.D. 590 Khosraw II, ascended the throne, Bahrām Chubin, the great general of the Iranian army, did not recognize Khosraw's sovereignty and proclaimed himself the new king.<sup>53</sup> Khosraw fled to Byzantium and sought the Emperor Maurice's help (582-602). Maurice agreed to assist him with the help of the Byzantine army, and thus Khosraw defeated Bahrām and seized ~~the~~ power.<sup>54</sup> Khosraw maintained friendly relations with Byzantium which enabled him to promote the economy of his country. He remained loyal to <sup>the</sup> Byzantine empire until the year 602, when the Emperor Maurice and members of his family were brutally slaughtered in a revolution led by the Byzantine general Phocas.<sup>55</sup> The news of Maurice's murder deeply affected Khosraw, leading to a long drawn out war between Iran and Byzantium which lasted for about twentyfour years, exhausted Iranian resources, and drove the great Sāsānian dynasty to the verge of extinction.

The exact date of the beginning of the war with Byzantium is not known. But, it would seem that Khosraw, who had no reason to fear pressure from the East after Tardu's death in 603, started the war. His generals were victorious in almost all the battles against Byzantium.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 3b. CTS, 144 (hsia) 2b.

<sup>53</sup> Sykes, op.cit., p.478.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.479.

<sup>55</sup> A.N.Stratos, Byzantium in the seventh century, vol.1, p.52.

In 611 Shahr-Barāz, the best Iranian general, known as "the wild bear of the empire" invaded Syria and captured the cities of Antioch and Apaema.<sup>56</sup> In 614, Iran captured Damascus and 26,000 Jews were enlisted in the Iranian army against the Christians. Shahr Barāz seized Jerusalem, took the "Holy Cross" and carried off all the treasures of the city.<sup>57</sup> In 616 Shahr Barāz marched towards Egypt and captured Alexandria. The fall of Alexandria which had been conquered by the Achaemenids 900 years previously, was a great victory for Iran.<sup>58</sup> These victories made Iran the master of all the territories previously ruled by the Achaemenids. Emperor Heraclius repeatedly sued for peace, but Khosraw, proud of his achievement, did not respond favourably. Then, in A.D. 622, Emperor Heraclius started war against Iran. In the wars between the two countries, Khosraw used the Avars tribes against Byzantium, and Heraclius responded by using the Khazars against Iran.

In 625 the Khazars, another Turkish tribe of the north-western shore of the Caspian Sea, marching under the leadership of the Western Turks, attacked Iranian Armenia and seized Āzarbaijān.<sup>59</sup> Heraclius, hearing of this attack, sent the patrician Andreas with valuable gifts to the ruler of the Khazars. A meeting was then arranged between Ziebel, ruler of the Khazars, and Heraclius at the end of which an alliance against Khosraw I was engineered.<sup>60</sup> In 627 Ziebel with Chad, his son

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p.104. Apamea was a strong fortress in Syria which was destroyed by Khosraw.

<sup>57</sup> Sykes, op.cit., p.482.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.443, Stratos, op.cit., pp.113-14.

<sup>59</sup> Chavannes, Documents, p. 253.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

or nephew, attacked and captured Bardha, the capital of Albania.<sup>61</sup> Heraclius himself marched towards Tiflis and in 627 arrived there and awaited Ziebel and the Khazar army.<sup>62</sup>

Upon Ziebel's arrival at Tiflis, Heraclius warmly welcomed him. Ziebel according to the Turkish custom kissed Heraclius on his throat. A royal robe and many other precious gifts were given to him by Heraclius.<sup>63</sup> Yet Ziebel for some unknown reason declined to accompany Heraclius on his onward campaign but gave him a body of forty thousand picked warriors under his son.<sup>64</sup> Heraclius at the head of a very strong army attacked Dastgerd, Khosraw's residence about 70 miles north of Ctesiphon. Heraclius is said to have proposed peace to Khosraw, but Khosraw rejected it, went to Ctesiphon and immediately crossed the Tigris and settled at Veh-Ardashir (i.e. Selucia).<sup>65</sup>

In those troubled periods the Yabghu Khāgān extended his sway to the west and south of the Oxus. In 630, when Hsüan-tsang, an eminent Chinese pilgrim was visiting the lands of the Turks, Yabghu Khāgān was at the peak of his power and held hegemony over the western lands, thanks to the continuing wars between Iran and Byzantium. Hsüan-tsang's description of Yabghu Khāgān obviously shows that at that time he was dominant ruler in Asia. "The Khāgān wore a coat of green satin... He was accompanied by two hundred officials wearing embroidered robes and had long hair. The rest of the troops consisted of riders mounted

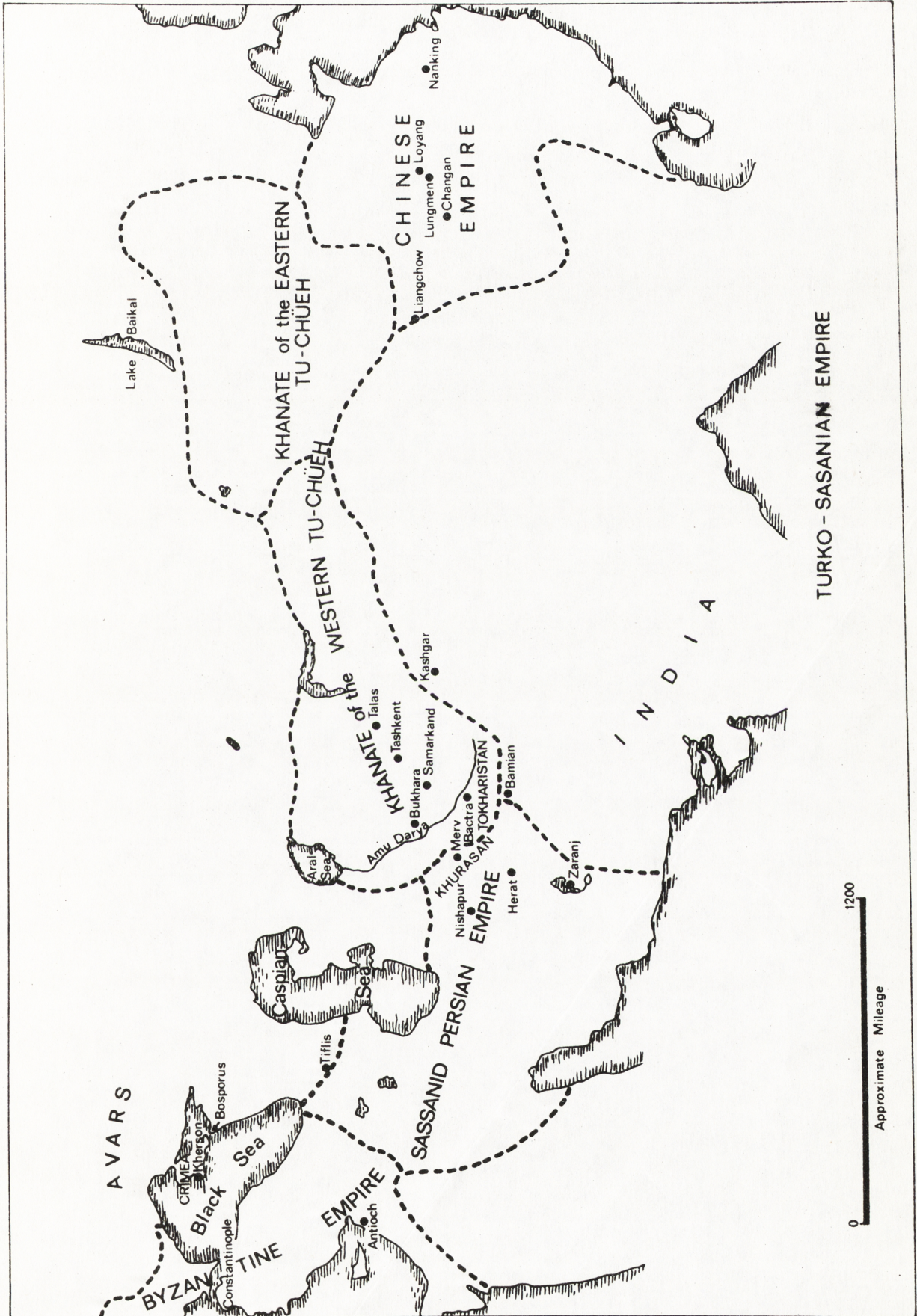
<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 254. Albania was situated east of Caucasus region on the east side of the Caspian Sea. To the west it bordered on Iberia (the present-day Georgia), and to the south on Āzarbaijān. It is the present day region of Shirwān and Dāghestān.

<sup>62</sup> Chavannes, Documents, p.254.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid,

<sup>64</sup> Ibid,

<sup>65</sup> Christensen, op.cit., p.515.



TURKO - SASANIAN EMPIRE

0 1200  
Approximate Mileage

"on camels or horses; they were clad in furs and fine woollen cloth and carried long lances, banners and bows". Hsüan-tsang was taken to the Khan's tent, which he describes as follows: 'The tent was decorated with golden flowers that dazzled the eye'.<sup>66</sup>

Hsüan-tsang gives the following description of Iran:

Po-la-ssu 波刺斯 (Persia) is several myriads li in circuit. The chief city (i.e. the capital) is called Su-la-sa-t'ang-na 蘇刺薩儻那 (Suristan Ctesiphon) and is about ten li in circumference. There are many rivers with different climates, but it is generally warm. Water is piped to irrigate the fields. The people are prosperous and affluent. It produces gold, copper, rock-crystal, rare pearls and special treasures. Their artists weave fine brocade silk, wollen fabrics, carpets and the like. There are many fine horses and camels. In commerce, large silver coins are in circulation. The inhabitants are by nature cruel and discourteous. Their writing and their language differ from those other countries. They are ignorant but are good in arts. All they make are valued by their neighbouring countries. Their marriages are confused (incestuous marriage). When one dies, the corpse is mostly abandoned. The people are tall with their hair dressed and uncovered. Their robes are either of skin, or wool, or felt, or figured silk. Taxes are levied on each family and everybody is subjected to a poll-tax of four silver coins. There are many shrines which are worshipped by the pagans. There are two or three Buddhist temples with several hundred priests who learn the lesser vehicle (Hinayana). The patra (bowl) of Sakya is kept in the king's palace. The walled city of Ho-mi (Hormuz?) is in the eastern border of the country. The city inside the wall is not spacious, but the external walls cover about 60 li and the people living there are very wealthy. The country of Fu-lin (Byzantium) is in its northwest, and the manners and customs of its people are similar to those of Po-la-ssu (Persia), but they differ in countenance and language. This country also has many precious objects and the people are rich. <sup>67</sup>

Hsüan-tsang, who did not visit Iran personally, may have based his account of Iran on the information supplied by the Turks. The hostility

<sup>66</sup> Hsüan-tsang, Ta-T'ang-hsi yü-chi li (Ssu-pu Ts'ung-K'an, pages not numbered). For English translation of this work see, S. Beal, Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World, two vols in one. New York (1968) Vol.2, pp.277-279.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

of the Turks towards Iran is indirectly reflected in the account of Hsüan-tsang, who describes the Iranians as being defective in civilized manners and violent by nature.

Frequent defeats during the last years of Khosraw's reign, his ill-treatment of the generals, and his rejection of peace with Byzantium crippled the Iranian army. In this critical situation a revolution was inevitable. Consequently the generals and some nobles decided to put an end to this long drawn out war and united themselves against Khosraw II.

Meanwhile Khosraw was urged by his beloved wife Shirin to put their son Mardān Shāh to the throne. Qobād, Khosraw's eldest son, with the help of Gushansp, the commander-in-chief of the Iranian army, Shamata<sup>68</sup> and Nev-Hormuzd<sup>69</sup> opened the prisons at Ctesiphon and liberated some twenty thousand political prisoners who all became the supporters of Qobād.<sup>70</sup> They arrested Khosraw and imprisoned him for a short time in the treasury.<sup>71</sup>

Although there are different versions of Khosraw's death, these differences are only in the description of how he was treated before

<sup>68</sup> Shamta was the Son of Yazdin, a Nestorian of Syrian origin. Yazdin was a landlord and possessed a large estate in Karkha de Slokh (modern Kerkuk). He was in charge of the economic and fiscal affairs of Iran. Khosraw for some unknown reason arrested him and put him to death. Later, when Khosraw was executed, Shamta was accused of a plot and Qobād ordered the amputation of his right hand. Christensen, pp.471-72, p.519.

<sup>69</sup> Nev-Hormuzd was the son of Mardānshāh the great Satrap of Nim-rooz (the south). Mardānshāh was Khosraw's most faithful friend. Tabari says that Khosraw was told by his astrologers that his death would come from Nim-rooz. He then suspected Mardānshāh and was determined to kill him, but Mardānshāh's generous services and his devotion to him, won Khosraw's sympathy. Then the king decided only to amputate his right hand to prevent him from a possible conspiracy. After the amputation Khosraw gave him enormous wealth, but Mardānshāh, who could not survive in such a humiliating state, asked the king to behead him, which he did. Tabari, 2, pp.1058-60.

<sup>70</sup> Christensen, op.cit., p.516.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p.516.

being murdered. Both Irano-Arabic and Byzantine sources affirm that Khosraw suffered the same fate as he himself meted out to his father, that is to say, was put to death by Nev-Hormuzd on the order of his son Qobād.<sup>72</sup> But the Chinese tell a different story.

The authors of the two T'ang histories say that Khosraw was killed by Yabghu Khāgān of the Western Turks. As already mentioned, in 627 Heraclius allied himself with the Khazars, a branch of the Western Turks, against Khosraw, but there is no evidence whatever to indicate that Yabghu Khāgān or even Heraclius himself had any part in the murder of Khosraw. In fact, Heraclius was not aware of the revolt against Khosraw.<sup>73</sup>

The Chinese historians owing to great geographical distances, seem to have confused the situation in Iran, and to have mistakenly stated that at the end of the Sui dynasty (581-618) Yabghu Khāgān of the Western Turks killed Khosraw. This is a curious statement since the deposition and death of Khosraw did not take place until A.D. 628, ten years after the Sui dynasty was replaced by the newly founded T'ang dynasty (618-907). On the other hand at the end of the Sui dynasty, the ruler of the Western Turks was She-kuei (603-618) and not Yabghu Khāgān, who came to power in 619.

However, when Khosraw was arrested, an indictment was arranged by his son Qobād and the nobles, in which Khosraw was accused of many crimes, such as the murder of his father Hormuzd IV, imposing heavy taxes, loyal oppression of the generals, the inordinate expenses of the court and so on.<sup>74</sup> The impeachment took a few days, and then he was executed by Qobād's order.

<sup>72</sup> It is said that Qobād refused to execute his father, but the army declared that he must either kill Khosraw or give up the kingship. Finally Qobād ordered his execution, which was carried out by Nev-Hormuzd.

<sup>73</sup> Stratos, op.cit., p.225.

<sup>74</sup> Christensen, op.cit., p.517.



Immediately after the arrest, Qobād II was proclaimed the new king. Realizing the disastrous results of the long war, he came to terms with Byzantium and his peaceful intentions were welcomed by Heraclius. Though we are not furnished with a full account of the peace treaty, the release of war prisoners and the evacuation of the occupied territory by Iran might have been the basic condition of the negotiations.

During the six months which Qobād II spent on the throne, this unworthy king killed many of his brothers and the nobles. He did not reign long and probably died of the plague, which at that time was raging in Iran.<sup>75</sup>

In what follows, both the Chiu T'ang-Shu and the Hsin T'ang-Shu state that Shih-li 施利<sup>76</sup> was succeeded by the daughter of Khosraw II, who was also murdered by the Turks, after which Tan-Chieh 單羯,<sup>77</sup> the son of Qobād was made the king. Here again the Chinese authors give a different picture of affairs. The situation in Iran, from the death of Qobād II till the accession of Yazdagird III (632-651), is entirely confused. Unrest continued for some years and anarchy then began to prevail through Iran. In four years no less than ten kings came to the throne, most of them reigning only for a short time.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Tabari, 2, p.1061. Ibn-Balkhi says that Khosraw who knew he would be slain by his son, put a deadly poison in his golden-pot and wrote "this drug benefits sexual intercourse". Qobād ate it and died. On the other hand Ibn-Balkhi himself says that the report of his death by plague is more reliable. Ibn-Balkhi, op.cit., p.108.

<sup>76</sup> Ancient pronunciation Sie-lji (k41', 519a) is identical with Shirviah or Shirue, the other name of Qobād.

<sup>77</sup> Ancient pronunciation tân(?) 147a. We do not know why the Chinese called him by this name. He was, however, Ardashir the son of Qobād. For the same passage says that when he came back from Byzantium, he was proclaimed the king of Iran under the name I-ta-chih 'Ardashir'.

<sup>78</sup> Christensen, op.cit., p.522.

The Chinese were informed about the unrest, either by their ally the Western Turks or by refugees who eventually arrived in China. But due to the paucity of material which was handed to the Chinese historians, they seem to have been unable to check any possible distortions of the reports and, being incapable of giving a clear and accurate picture of conditions, they put the reign of Purāndokht, the daughter of Khosraw II, preceding that of Ardashir, the son of Qobād II, who in fact succeeded his father. The Chinese have also missed a few short-lived rulers of this period.

According to Tabari, Ardashir, the seven-year old son of Qobād II, was installed in throne, but the responsibility for running the administration rested with Māh-Āzar Gushansp, an Iranian noble. Shahrbarāz, the Iranian general, revolted, killed the young king, and crowned himself as the new king. He did not last long and was killed by his own guards.<sup>79</sup> Then came Queen Purāndokht, the daughter of Khosraw II. Presumably she is the princess whom the Chinese annals refer to. Tabari narrates that she died after six months,<sup>80</sup> but does not mention the cause of her death.

The Chinese reports of Purāndokht's death by the Turks and the return of Tan-Chueh, the son of Qobād II from Fu-lin (Byzantium), where he took refuge can hardly be reconciled with the Perso-Arabic sources. According to Tabari, Purāndokht was succeeded by Gushnasp? Then came Āzarmidokht, a sister of Purāndokht, and Khosraw, the son of Mihr Gushnasp, Khurrazād Khosraw, Firuz, the son of Gushnaspdeh, and Farrukhzād-Khosraw.<sup>81</sup> These ephemeral rulers are all missed by the

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.521.

<sup>80</sup> Tabari, 2, p.1064.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, pp.1064-67.

Chinese historians. Then they say:

"When I-ta-chih 伊担支 died, I-ssu-~~支~~ 伊嗣侯 'Yazdagird' the son of Ardashir's eldest son was made king. He did not act as a ruler should and was driven out by one of the great nobles. Yazdagird fled towards T'u-ho-lo 吐火羅 (Tokhārestān), but was attacked and killed by the Arabs on the way".<sup>82</sup>

This Chinese version which makes Yazdagird the great-grandson of Khosraw II is less probable than the Perso-Arabic account which makes him the grandson of Khosraw II ( یزدجرد ابن شهریار ابن خسرو )

Yazdagird the son of Shahriyār the son of Khosraw). Although Khosraw died an old man, it seems unlikely that the ruler who succeeded him only a few years later was his great-grandson. According to Ibn-Balkhi, when Qobād II started the annihilation of his brothers, Yazdagird, the son of Shahriyār, the son of Khosraw II, was taken by his governess to Istakhr where he settled. When in 634, the news of the accession of Farrukhzād reached Istakhr, the nobles proclaimed Yazdagird the new king of the disintegrating empire.<sup>83</sup>

Yazdagird's reign was one of the most tragic periods of the Sāsānian empire. At this time a new power appeared in Arabia, which in a short time brought about the downfall of the Sāsānian. In 636 the Iranian army under the command of Rostam met the Arabs at Qādesiyya. The battle went on for four days and ended in Arab victory. Rostam himself was slain.<sup>84</sup>

After his defeat at Qādesiyya, Yazdagird collected a considerable part of his treasury and sent it to Nehāvand.<sup>85</sup> According to

<sup>82</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 9b.

<sup>83</sup> Ibn-Balkhi, op.cit., p.111.

<sup>84</sup> Balādhuri, p.259, Sykes, op.cit., p.495.

<sup>85</sup> Ibn-Balkhi, op.cit., p.112.

Ibn-Balkhi, Yazagird also sent the crown of king Khosraw Anushirwān, which is said to have been of enormous size and set with many precious jewels, to China for safe-keeping.<sup>86</sup> Then he set off towards Jelula.<sup>87</sup> In the same year 637 the Arabs took possession of Ctesiphon and its treasures.<sup>88</sup> After spending a few days there, the Arab general Sa'd pursued Yazdagird, and a body of twelve thousand cavalry was despatched to meet him. Khorzād, a brother of the unfortunate Rustam, led the Iranian army against the Arabs. But, torn by frequent and disastrous defeats, the Iranians were no longer capable of resolute resistance, and again lost the battle at Jelula.<sup>89</sup> After the fall of this capital in June 637, Yazdagird fled to Holvān and thence to Istakhr.<sup>90</sup>

Yazagird was deeply depressed. Nevertheless he did not give up efforts to regain his empire from the Arab invaders. He sent emissaries to Ispahān (Esfahān) Qom, Kāshān, Tabarestān and other provinces which were still under his control, urging them to rise in revolt against the Arabs. A force of 150,000 warriors under Firuzān was assembled at Nehāvand,<sup>91</sup> some fifty miles south of Hamadān. Umar, the second Caliph, appointed Numan-ibn-MoQran to repulse the Iranian attack. Firuzān was beaten and no less than eighty thousand Iranians perished. As after the previous victory, vast booty fell into the Arab hands.

<sup>86</sup> Ibn-Balkhi, op.cit., p.112, according to him the crown was still used by the Chinese Emperors at the time when he wrote.

<sup>87</sup> Sykes, op.cit., p.497.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p.496.

<sup>89</sup> Belādhuri, p.264,

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p.315.

<sup>91</sup> Mikhond, 2, pp.692-3.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p.699.

The disastrous defeat at Nehāvand forced Yazdagird to flee to Istakhr, with the Arabs hotly chasing him. The governor of the well-fortified Tabarestān urged him to proceed to that province. Yazdagird however declined the invitation and preferred to go to Kermān.<sup>93</sup> As he was one day sitting in Kermān, its Marzbān (Lord Archers) came in, but Yazdagird felt it below his dignity to look at him. Consequently, the Marzbān ordered his men to drive out Yazdagird. The unfortunate king then left for Sistān and finally went on to Marv.<sup>94</sup>

In A.D. 642 Caliph Umar ordered an expedition into Khorāsān, where the royal fugitive was organizing another attack against the Arabs. The Arab general al-Ahnaf successfully repulsed Yazdagird's army at Marvshāhijān.<sup>95</sup> The emperor now withdrew to Marv-al-rud and urged the Chinese Emperor and the Khāgān of the Turks to help. The Chinese Emperor declined to assist, but the Turks generously supported him and put a big army at his disposal.<sup>96</sup> The Arabs again inflicted another defeat on the Sāsānian king, who fled to Balkh.

The author of the Po-ssu-chuan in the Chiu T'ang-shu informs us of an embassy sent by Yazdagird to the Chinese Court in the twentyfirst

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.701. Balādhuri, p.315. Christensen, op.cit., p.530.

<sup>94</sup> Balādhuri, p.315.

<sup>95</sup> Tabari, 5, p.2690.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p.2690-92. The word "Turk" in Arabic sources has been mistakenly applied to all non-Iranian people of the Eastern Iran who resisted the Arabs' invasion. In fact, the people who fought for a century in the east against the Arabs, were people of Iranian origin and not the Turks. The Turks did not come to their help until A.D. 720. Their army was composed almost entirely of Iranians except on one or two special occasions when the Turks may have intervened. Gibb, op.cit., p.10.

year of Chen-kuan<sup>97</sup> (647) but is silent about the purpose of the mission. It is likely that it was part of a bid to seek Chinese aid. The Hsin T'ang-shu mentions that Mu-sa-pan 沒似羊 (Marzbān?), Yazdagird's ambassador in the twelfth year of Chen-kuan (638) came to the court.<sup>98</sup>

Chang Hsing-lang 張星烺, believes that the character 二 (two) has been wrongly placed in the Po-ssu-chuan of the Hsin T'ang-shu and the date A.D. 647 given in the Chiu T'ang-shu is correct. The basis of his statement is that although the capital of the Sāsānians fell into Arab hands in June 637, the situation was not so serious as to necessitate an appeal to the Chinese emperor, whose country was at such a long distance from Iran.<sup>99</sup> A study of the available evidence and the background of the political development tends to show that the two missions recorded in both the Chiu T'ang-shu and the Hsin T'ang-shu are correct. Tabari says that when Yazdagird sustained a severe defeat at the hand of Ahnaf at Marvshāhijān and fled to Balkh, he met his envoy who was on his way back from China.<sup>100</sup> The Chinese emperor according to Tabari had refused to help. If we take the year (22th Hijri = 642) given by Tabari as correct, the presence of Yazdagird's envoy at the Chinese court in the year A.D. 638 would be tenable. It would seem that the communicational and geographical impediments extended the return journey of Mu-sa pan to four years.

However, in the middle of the seventh century, the political situation was so favourable to the Chinese emperors as to permit them to challenge the power of the Western Turks. The Chinese were then in

<sup>97</sup> CTH, 148, 15b.

<sup>98</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 9b.

<sup>99</sup> Chang Hsing-lang, op.cit., vol.3, part 2, pp.17-18.

<sup>100</sup> Tabari 5, p.2690.

a position to control a large area previously in possession of the Western Turks. In A.D. 630, the tribes of the Western Turks rebelled against Yabghu-Khāgān and put him to death.<sup>101</sup> Internal strife then followed amongst them. In A.D. 630 T'ai-tsung (A.D. 627-650), the Chinese emperor, adopted an aggressive policy and subjugated the Eastern Turks.<sup>102</sup> Ten years later the Chinese occupied Turfan and in A.D. 644 Karāshahr was attacked by them. In A.D. 647-48, the victorious Chinese sacked K'uchā and seized Khotan, Kāshghar and Tāshgurgān from the Western Turks.<sup>103</sup> Finally in A.D. 657-59 the Chinese with the aid of the Uighurs crushed the Western Turkish empire and brought all its territories under their control.<sup>104</sup> At this time the eastward advance of the Arabs had become a threat to the countries of Central Asia. Unable to meet the Arab menace, they turned to the Chinese emperor for help, and acknowledged his overlordship. The Chinese then became the masters of large areas in the Western Regions. In A.D. 661, the Chinese emperor appointed Wang Ming-yüan 王名遠 as commissioner to set up a regular system of the provincial administration there. The vast area west of Khotan and east of Iran (i.e. east of Khorāsān) was divided into 16 provinces, 72 prefectures and 110 districts.<sup>105</sup> In all these 16 provinces, the administration remained in the hands of the native rulers who accepted investiture and Chinese seals of office.

<sup>101</sup> CTS, 144 (hsia) 2a. He was killed by his uncle Mo-ho-tuo who succeeded him.

<sup>102</sup> Chavannes, Documents, p. 264.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 266.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, pp. 267-68.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, pp. 268-79.

Meanwhile the Arabs seized the greater part of the Iranian plateau and it is not unlikely that in such circumstances successive defeats prompted Yazdagird to seek the assistance of the Chinese. Yazdagird finally went to Marv. Māhvīeh, the governor of Marv, warmly welcomed the royal fugitive. But Yazdagird's ill-treatment of Māhvīeh, whom the king expected to hand over the bulk of the taxes, alienated the governor against him. Māhvīeh immediately opened negotiations with the Hephthalite chief Nizāk-Tarkhān,<sup>106</sup> and provoked him against Yazdagird. Tarkhān crossed the Oxus under the shadow of the night and entered the city. Yazdagird escaped the unexpected raid and took asylum in a miller's house on the payment of four dirhams per day. The miller, coveting the jewels and precious royal robe, killed his sleeping guest and threw his corpse into the Murghāb river.<sup>107</sup>

With the death of Yazdagird, the resistance of the supporters of the Sāsānian empire was virtually liquidated. Petty kingdoms in the Caspian region and Tokhārestān held out, but the main cities surrendered. The submission of Khorāsān was also very slow.

Pi-lu-ssu 卑路斯,<sup>108</sup> the son of Yazdagird, made some efforts to restore the Sāsānian kingdom with the help of the rulers of

<sup>106</sup> Balādhuri, op.cit., p.316. Nizāk-Tarkhān was the principal opponent of the Arabs in Bactria and was killed by Qotaiba-Ibn-Muslin. Tarkhān is identical with Tarqān or Tarkhāi of the Orkhon Inscriptions and other Central Asian Records and is derived from Chinese Ta-kuan 達官, "high official", and may be borrowed by the Hephthalite from some Central Asian people or directly from the Chinese. Chavannes, Documents. p.239 f2.

<sup>107</sup> Tabari V, pp.2872-2874, Mirkhond II, op.cit., p.715. The next day the people of Marv began a search in order to discover their monarch whose body was thrown into the river. They found his corpse and transported it to Istakhr where he was deposited in the tomb of the Iranian kings.

<sup>108</sup> k.874a 746 1<sup>869a</sup> Ancient pronunciation pje-luo-sie "Firuz". Balādhuri op.cit p.316, says that Fituz, the son of Yazdagird fell into the hands of the Turks. He married and settled among them.



Tokhārestān who were strongly hostile to the Arabs, but he did not succeed. From Tokhārestān Pi-lu-ssu sent a mission to the Chinese court in order to seek their help. Emperor Kao-tsung sent a reply to the effect that Iran was too far from China to send an army to his help.<sup>109</sup> Tokhārestān, the last stronghold of the Sāsānian dynasty, warmly received Pi-lu-ssu and recognized him as the king of Iran.

At this time the power of the T'ang dynasty had reached its peak in Central Asia, and China was the dominant power of Asia. Threatened by the Arab onslaught, Pi-lu-ssu again appealed to emperor Kao-tsung. The Chinese emperor was sympathetic to his claim and made the walled city of Chi-ling 疾陵 the office of the governor-general of Iran, with Pi-lu-ssu as its head.<sup>110</sup> Ultimately the Arabs attacked Pi-lu-ssu and the prince was constrained to take refuge at the Chinese court. The Chinese emperor received him kindly and bestowed on him the title of Yu-wu-wei Chiang-chün 右武衛將軍 "The general of the Warrior Guard of the right". Pi-lu-ssu died in China.<sup>111</sup> The date and circumstances of his death are unknown.

<sup>109</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 9b.

<sup>110</sup> H. Yule in Cathay and the way thither, Vol.1, p.99 localized this place with Zarange 齶 the capital of Sistān. Ting-Chien 丁謙 in his T'ang-shu 唐書西域傳考證 in Che-chiang t'u-shu kuan 浙江圖書館叢書, 1st series, 1915) identifies Chi-ling with Su-li (Ctesiphon), which is of course unacceptable, since the Sāsānian capital fell into the hands of the Arabs in their early days of invasion (June 637) and was not restored again. It was under the control of the powerful Arabs. How then could the Chinese have made it the administrative city of Iran? M. Pauthier, identifies Chi-ling with Shirāz (Yule, op.cit., p.99). This identification could also be rejected, because the city of Shirāz in the province of Fārs, is an Arab foundation and was founded in the year A.D. 684, by a certain Mohammad, brother of the cousin of Hajjaj, the famous governor of Irāk (under the Umayyads). See, Le Strange, The lands of the Eastern Caliphate, p.249.

<sup>111</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 9b.

The Chinese, who resented the Arab expansion in Central Asia, took steps to instal Ni-nieh-shih 泥涅師<sup>112</sup>, the son of Pi-lu-ssu, who was at the Chinese court as a hostage, to the throne of Iran. General Pei Hsing-chien 裴行儉<sup>113</sup> was commanded to escort Ni-nieh-shih to his fatherland, but the general stayed in Tokmak and refused to go any further. Ni-nieh-shih went to Tokhrestān and remained there for twenty years. At the beginning of the Ching lung era (A.D. 707), Ni-nieh-shih paid homage to the Chinese court and was given the title of Ts'o wei-wei Chiang-chün 左威衛將軍 "The General of the Majestic Guard of the Left". It is recorded that he was taken ill and died, but the date and other detail are not known.<sup>114</sup>

The reaction of the Iranians to the Arab invaders was very complex. Although the Islamization of the region did not take place through the sword, the economic advantage which the Irani dihqāns or rural chiefs foresaw under the new rulers turned them to the religion of the conquerors. Many religious elite smarting under the domination of the Zoroastrian Magi found Islam a liberating force. To the seekers of monotheism in Iran, Islam was a blessing, but what appealed to them most was the mysticism and the social ethics of the prophet Mohammad's

<sup>112</sup> Ancient pronunciation niei ? sie is identical with Narses. The CTS says that "In the year of I-feng (A.D. 678) Pei Hsing-chien was ordered to accompany Pi-lu-ssu, Firuz and not Ni-nieh-shih". This, however, is a mistake by the author of the CTS. The account of Pei Hsing-chien in both T'ang histories state that he escorted Ni-nieh-shih and not Pi-lo-ssu.

<sup>113</sup> He was a native of Wen-hsi, in Shansi who distinguished himself as a military commander under the Emperor Kao-tsung of the T'ang dynasty. He waged successful campaigns against the Turfan and Turkish tribes of Central Asia for which services he was made president of the board of Rites and ennobled as Duke. He was also famous for his skill in Calligraphy and was often employed by the Emperor to write inscriptions on white silk.

<sup>114</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 10a.

companions such as Salmān, who was himself an Irani,<sup>115</sup> and Abu Zar al-Ghifāri.<sup>116</sup> The fourth Caliph Ali was the sort of charismatic personality whom the Iranis loved wholeheartedly.

However, the political domination of the Arabs was never acceptable to the Iranians. They continued to give the Arabs a great deal of trouble and the subjugated territories, particularly Khorāsān, rose in revolt every time the Arabs were marching to other districts. The rulers of Tabarestān did not give up resistance for almost two centuries. They bravely resisted the Arab invaders, who lost many lives in their attempts to conquer the hilly area of Tabarestān.

The Hsin T'ang-shu discloses the fact that the district of T'o-pa-sa-tan 陀拔斯單 (i.e. Tabarestān), which is encircled on three sides by mountains and in the north by the little sea (i.e. Caspian Sea), maintained her independence. It continued its relations with China and more than ten embassies were sent there.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Salmān Fārsi was a native of a small place in Isfahān. Though Iranian by origin, he was one of the closest and most faithful followers of Mohammad. He was a man of letters and a distinguished scholar in comparative religions. Hearing of the rise of Islam in Arabia, he went to Mecca and became a devoted Muslim. His close association with the prophet Mohammad prompted the heathens to spread rumours that Salmān was teaching the prophet. With the approval of Caliph Ali, he was appointed the governor of Madāin where he died in A.D. 653.

<sup>116</sup> He was also one of the saints of early Islam. He travelled to Mecca to make enquiries about the new religion. There, he met the Prophet and, being at once convinced of the truth of his mission, accepted Islam. Upon the death of the Prophet, Abu Zar and Salmān sided with Ali, while the majority of the Meccans consented with Abu-Bakr who was elected as Caliph. Abu Zar died in A.D. 652-3.

<sup>117</sup> HTS, 221 (hsia) 10a.

## CHAPTER III

## Religious Impact of Iran over China

Almost simultaneously after the establishment of the so-called 'silk road' between the East and West, China entered into regular contact with the civilizations of the countries from Central Asia to Byzantium. These regular contacts inevitably led to the exchange of ideas and thoughts in all branches of knowledge. Iran's active commercial relations with China both overland and through the sea route which we have already mentioned, led to intensive cultural exchange between the two countries. These relations were also responsible for the dissemination of the Iranian religions such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism and non-Iranian religions like Buddhism and Nestorianism. We should not, however, be surprised to find the names of Iranians who had gone to China, nor need to be amazed at our sources, which have preserved for us the names of a number of Iranian Buddhist scholars who actively took part in introducing Buddhism into China during the second century of our era.

## (a) Buddhism

Of all the religions which came from the West and made a very deep impact on the Chinese civilization and became an integral part of their national culture was Buddhism. During the Former Han dynasty, the political unity and social structure of China remained undisturbed, and Confucianism was intellectually the dominant creed. No great change took place until Wang Mang's usurpation of power in the first century A.D. from A.D. 9 to 23.<sup>1</sup> The disintegration of the Former

<sup>1</sup> The Han China was politically divided into two parts. The Former Han with its capital at Ch'ang-an from 206 B.C. to A.D. 9, and the Later Han with its capital at Lo-yang from A.D. 25 to 221. In the intervening period China was ruled by the usurper Wang Mang from A.D. 9 to 23.

Han dynasty and the political and economic changes that took place in its wake opened the road for the introduction of Buddhism. In A.D. 65, in the reign of Han Ming-ti of the Later Han dynasty, Buddhism appeared in China for the first time.<sup>2</sup> During the first centuries of the fall of the Han empire, there was much activity in translating the Buddhist texts into Chinese. The Chinese sources inform us that a number of Iranian Buddhist scholars had gone to China to help in the translation of the original Sanskrit sutras into Chinese. The most distinguished amongst them according to the Chinese sources, was An Shih-kao 安世高 who arrived in China in A.D. 148. An Shih-kao is said to have been a Parthian Crown Prince who abdicated the throne in favour of his uncle, the younger brother of his father, and became a Buddhist scholar at an early age. He died at Lo-yang in A.D. 170. An intelligent and hard working scholar, he managed to master the Chinese language and soon after began to translate the important Buddhist texts into Chinese. He laid the foundation of a school for systematic translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. According to the Chinese Buddhist historians, An Shih-kao himself translated about 176 texts.<sup>3</sup> As to the identity of this Iranian prince, Wieger believes that he was Parthamasirs or Psarmatossorim, the son of the Parthian king Pacorus II (A.D. 78-115/116).<sup>4</sup> It has been suggested by modern scholars that he might have been a Prince of one

<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald, C.P., China: A short cultural history. (London 1942), p.237.

<sup>3</sup> For his biography and his works see Kao-seng chuan in Taisho Tripitaka 50, pp.323-324.

<sup>4</sup> Wieger, Leo. A History of the religious beliefs and philosophical opinions in China from the beginning to the present time. Translated by E.C. Werner. New York (1969), pp.351-53.

of the petty kingdoms within the Parthian empire.<sup>5</sup> Other Iranian Buddhist scholars of less importance also participated in the task of translating Buddhist texts into Chinese. Of these An-hsüan 安玄 and Chi-tsang 吉藏 are known to us from the Chinese sources.<sup>6</sup> Besides the Iranian Buddhist scholars, there were many Indian and Kushan Buddhist scholars who took interest in transmitting Buddhism into China. In the following <sup>Century,</sup> and specially during the T'ang dynasty, Buddhism reached its peak of influence, and numerous native Chinese priests like Hsüan-tsang, I-tsing and Hui Ch'ao bore the hazards and perils on their long journey across Central Asia to India in search of better understanding and inspiration.

Although the official religion of Iran during most of the period of the Sāsānian dynasty was Zoroastrianism, Buddhist monasteries and Nestorian churches continued to flourish in the eastern and western part of the empire respectively. We have the testimony of Hsüan-tsang, an eminent Chinese Priest who, in his report of Iran, mentions that there were (in Iran) two or three Buddhist temples with several hundred monks following the Hinayana or the Little Vehicle (of salvation).<sup>7</sup> Iran's long and intensive cultural relations with the countries in Central Asia, above all with the province of Bactria, which during the period of the Kushan empire had become the stronghold of Buddhism, resulted in the penetration of Iranian arts across

<sup>5</sup> Zurcher, E., The Buddhist Conquest of China. pp.32-33; N.G. Debevoise, A Political history of Parthia, New York (1968), p. 245.

<sup>6</sup> For biography of Chi-tsang see Taisho Tripitaka 50, pp.513-14, and for An husan see *ibid.*, p.324.

<sup>7</sup> See p.58.

Central Asia as far as China. From archeological excavations in the regions of Afghānistān, Qizil, Khotan and Turfan, it becomes clear that Sāsānian Iran made an important contribution to the Buddhist art. According to Grousset, the influence was so great that an Iranian stylistic school along with Græco-Roman and Gupta (Indian) schools could be found in those regions.<sup>8</sup> This influence is well illustrated in the frescos of Bamiyān and Dokhtar-i-Nushirwān which are characteristically Iranian in style.<sup>9</sup>

(b) Zoroastrianism

The first Iranian religion which penetrated to Central Asia and from there even to China was "Zoroastrianism", the state religion of the Sāsānian dynasty. The exact date of the introduction of Zoroastrianism to China is not known. But from Chinese dynastic histories it appears that Zoroastrianism became known to the Chinese in the time of T'oba Wei dynasty (A.D. 386-534) in the north and the Liang dynasty (A.D. 502-556) in the south. It was then known in several different forms such as T'ien-shen 天神 "God of Heaven", Hu T'ien-shen 胡天神 "Barbarian (foreign) "God of Heaven" and Huo-shen T'ien-shen 火神 天神 "Fire-God, the God of Heaven". According to the history of T'oba Wei, in the middle of Shen-kuei period (517-519), the country of Po-ssu opened relations and sent

<sup>8</sup> Grousset, R., The Civilizations of the East. New York (1967) pp.168-176. For an account of Sasanian artistic influence on the formation of Buddhist Art in those regions see Von le Coq, Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan: An account of the activities and adventures of the second and third German Turfan expedition. English translation by Anna Barwell. London 1928. See also J.G. Mahler, The Westerners among the Chinese Figurines of the T'ang dynasty of China. Roma, 1959.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.171.

presents to the court of T'oba Wei,<sup>10</sup> and it was in the fifteenth year of the T'ien chien period (516) of the Liang dynasty that the king of the state of Hua 滑, who worships "God of Heaven, the God of Fire", sent emissaries to present gifts.<sup>11</sup> The different designations of the religion practised in the Western regions undoubtedly refer to Zoroastrianism. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that it was during this time (516-519) that Zoroastrianism made its first appearance in China and was welcomed by the Chinese emperors. For, according to the history of T'oba Wei, Emperor Ling T'ai-hou, on his visit to Sung-kao mountains (in Honan), abolished various irregular religious rites, but the Foreign God of Heaven was spared.<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere we read that, at the end of his reign (576), Emperor Hou-chu of the Northern Ch'i worshipped the Foreign God of Heaven,<sup>13</sup> and that the emperors of the Northern Chou (557-581), trying to entice people from the Western regions, regularized the worship of the Foreign God of Heaven and themselves participated in its ritual ceremonies.<sup>14</sup> During the Sui and T'ang periods, Zoroastrianism became more popular. The Sui emperors appointed a special official,

<sup>10</sup> WS, 102. 15a-17b. For full Chinese references to Zoroastrianism in China, see Ch'en Yüan, 陳垣 "Huo-hsien chiao-Ju chung-kuo k'ao 火祆教入中國考" published in Kuo-hsüeh chi-k'an 國學季刊 Vol.1, No.1. pp.27-48 (1923); See also F.G. Drake "Foreign religions of the T'ang dynasty" Chinese Recorder, Vol.LXXXI No.6, June (1940), pp.343-354.

<sup>11</sup> LS, 54, 41b-42a.

<sup>12</sup> WS 13. 21b-22a.

<sup>13</sup> SS, 7, 25a.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



namely Sa-fu 薩南 or Sa-Pao 薩保<sup>15</sup>, to control the religious ceremonies of foreigners dwelling in China, particularly the Zoroastrian communities. At the beginning of the seventh century, China under the T'ang dynasty entered the most glorious period of her history. The early emperors of the T'ang, particularly T'ai-tsung and his son and successor Kao-tsung, succeeded in carrying their new-founded power deep into Asia and expanded their sphere of influence as far as the western frontiers of Iran. With the defeat of both the Western Turks and the Eastern Turks, China reached its peak of power and became the master of a large area. Many foreigners of different nationalities with different commercial, political and religious motives came to China and settled there. The religious policy of the early T'ang emperors was of toleration. Buddhists, Confucians and Taoists along with Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Jews, Nestorians and Muslims all mingled in the main cities of China. Ch'ang-an, the capital, became a meeting-place for many different cultures. Amongst the foreigners in China, Iranians were very popular and their numbers beyond reckoning.<sup>16</sup> From the religious point of view, quite a few Chinese documents hint at the presence of Zoroastrians and their fire-temples in China. In the T'ang period a new Chinese term Hsien 祆 was introduced to distinguish the Iranian religion of Zoroastrianism from other religions coming from the same direction, especially Manicheism and Nestorian Christianity. Before the term Hsien came to existence, the term T'ien-shen "God of Heaven", as we

<sup>15</sup> Hsiang Ta, in his T'ang-tai Ch'ang-an Yü hsi-yü Wen-ming 唐代長安 與西域文明, p.90, identifies Sa-Pao with the Uighur word "Sarpua", a caravan leader. For its tentative identification with the capital of the state of K'ang, see Ch'en Yüan op.cit., p.39.

<sup>16</sup> For popularity of Iranians in T'ang China see E. Schafer, "Iranian Merchants in T'ang Tales", University of California Publications in Semetic philology, Vol. XI (1951), pp.403-422.

mentioned earlier, was used to designate Zoroastrianism. But from the commencement of the T'ang dynasty onwards, T'ien shen lost its reference to Zoroastrianism and came to refer to the other religions. In the Ta-shih chuan of both the Chiu T'ang-shu and the Hsin T'ang-shu, T'ien shen was used to designate the Mohammadan religion.<sup>17</sup> However, the term Hsien is composed of two graphs Shih 示 "to indicate" and T'ien 天 "Heaven" and is an abbreviated way of writing God of Heaven.<sup>18</sup> It was called thus in order to differentiate clearly the Foreign God of Heaven. Hsien 祆 or 祆神 "Hsien God" and Huo-shen 火神 "Fire-God" in the Chinese literature of the T'ang are therefore T'ien-shen of the early period. The T'ang emperors following the policy of the Sui, appointed government officials to supervise the foreign religions. The officers in charge of the Zoroastrian religion were called Sa-Pao 薩寶, having the same sound as Sa-Pao 薩保, given in the Sui literature, but the second character is a different word. The officials connected with Zoroastrian religion were mainly the Hu people 胡人, that is to say, Iranians, Soghdians and natives of Western Turkestan. This, however, reveals that Foreigners in early T'ang era enjoyed a sort of extra-territoriality which enabled them to look after their own affairs. From isolated references in Chinese literature, the Zoroastrian fire-temples could be found in T'ang cities such as Ch'ang-an, Lo-yang, Liang-chou, Tun-huang and I-chou. According to the Hsin T'ang-shu, in two capitals and several western provinces, the "Fire-Hsien" was worshipped twice a year, but the native Chinese were not allowed to participate in praying and sacrifice ceremonies.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> CTS, 148-12a; HTS 221. (hsia) 11b.

<sup>18</sup> Ch'en Yüan, op.cit., p.27.

<sup>19</sup> HTS, 46. 9a.

The Po-ssu chuan in two T'ang histories narrate that the Iranians worship heaven, earth, sun, moon, water and fire, and that the various barbarians in the Western regions who worship the Hsien fire learnt it from them. From Chinese sources, it can be inferred that Zoroastrian religion made itself felt in Samarqand, Kāshgar, Khotan, Bukhārā, Khwārizm and Tāshkand.

It is interesting to see that the Chinese endorse the reports of the Greco-Roman writers that Next-of-kin marriage was not an uncommon practice in Iran. From the isolated references in the classical Greek and Roman literature, it would seem that incestuous marriage was practiced in the time of the Achaemanian Empire. According to Herodotus, Achaemanian king Cambyses took his sister as wife.<sup>20</sup> When we come to the Sāsānian period we have Chinese, Byzantine and Iranian evidence which shows that the alleged custom of incestuous marriage did actually exist in Iran.

With regard to the Chinese sources, the author of the Wei-shu in his article on Iran says that: "They (Iranians) commonly marry or take as concubines their sisters, and, for the rest of their marriage union they do not discriminate between nobles and inferior, and are the most disgraceful of all barbarians."<sup>21</sup> The Sui-shu also mentions that Iranians marry their sisters.<sup>22</sup> Other Chinese literature such as T'ung-tien<sup>23</sup> and Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao add to the alleged existence

<sup>20</sup> G. Rawlinson: History of Herodotus, London (1862), Vol.2.p.358

<sup>21</sup> WS, 102. 17a.

<sup>22</sup> SS, 83. 15a.

<sup>23</sup> TT, 192.

of consanguineous union between brothers and sisters, the marriage of mothers and sons,<sup>24</sup> Hsüan-tsang's note to the confused state of matrimony in Iran<sup>25</sup> seems to refer to such a custom.

Quite a few Pahlavi documents such as Ardâ-vîrâf, Dînkard, Dâdistân-i-Dînik bear witness to the practice of Next-of-kin marriage in Iran. E.W. West, a distinguished scholar of Pahlavi literature, in his article on the meaning of Khvêtûk-das appended to Vol. XVIII of M. Muller's "Sacred Books of the East", has thoroughly investigated the references to Khvêtûk-das in the abovementioned Pahlavi books. His research left him in no doubt as to the existence of Next-of-kin marriage in the Sāsānian period:

"Unless the Parsis determine to reject the evidence of such Pahlavi works as the Pahlavi Yasna, the book of Ardâ-vîrâf, the Dînkard and the Dâdistân-i-Dînik, or to attribute those books to heretical writers, they must admit that their Priests, in the later years of the Sasanian dynasty, and for some centuries subsequently, strongly advocated such Next-of-kin marriages, though, probably, with little success".<sup>26</sup>

The basic idea of incestuous marriage was, however, a desire to enhance the compatibility of husband and wife and to maintain the purity of the race. It was also an attempt to prevent the matrimonial associations with strangers particularly during the Arab domination of Iran.<sup>27</sup> Al-Biruni in the account of Bahāfirid b.

<sup>24</sup> WHTK, 337.

<sup>25</sup> See p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> E.W. West. Pahlavi Texts, Vol. XVIII (1964), p.428

<sup>27</sup> For more on incestuous marriages in Sasanian times see, M.S. Prha "The Sasanian Matrimonial Relations", published in Archiv Orientalni, No.39 (1971), pp.322-345; also B. Spooner, "Iranian Kinship and Marriage", Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, Vol. IV (1966), pp.51-59.

Mahfurudhin who proclaimed himself as a new Prophet says that though Bahāfirid believed in Zaradusht, his teaching was different from those of Magians. He composed a book in Persian in which he ordered the people not to drink wine, not to eat the flesh of animals that have died a sudden death, and not to marry their mothers, daughters, sisters and nieces.<sup>28</sup> It is true that the above unimpeachable evidence induces us to agree with the practice of such a custom in Iran, but it is inadequate to make the generalization that incestuous marriage was indiscriminately practiced by the majority of Iranians. The only specific examples quoted in the sources tend to show that Next-of-kin marriage was restricted to some aristocratic individuals or some special tribes in the eastern region of the Sāsānian empire.

(c) Manichaeism

Towards the end of the seventh century Manichaeism, the second Iranian religion, appeared in China. Mani, the founder of this religion was born in A.D. 216 and at the end of his 24th year, he was instructed to preach the true religion.<sup>29</sup> While holding the religion of his forerunners in great esteem, he considered his religion the last and best of all. In the beginning of his book *Shāhburagān*, as quoted by Al-Biruni, Mani explains how Heavenly Messengers have from time to time brought the wisdom and works of God by Apostles. In one age it came through Buddha to the territories of India; in another period by Zaradusht to Persia; in another epoch by Jesus to the countries of the West; and finally this revelation descended and this

<sup>28</sup> E.S. Sachau, The Chronology of Ancient Nations (1879), pp.193-194.

<sup>29</sup> For more on Manichaeism and its history see specially Geo. Widengren. Mani and Manichaeism, translated by C. Kessler. London, 1965; L.J.R Ort, Mani: A Religio-Historical Description of His Personality, Leiden, 1967.

prophecy took place in this last era in the figure of Mani himself, the messenger of the God of truth to Babylonia.<sup>30</sup> Mani's religious teachings were characterized by the dualism of Light and Darkness, good and evil. The right path to salvation lay in strict asceticism; and the soul is only valuable part of man. However, Mani suffered deep humiliation at the hands of the Zoroastrian Priests who induced king Bahrām I (273-276) to put him to death.<sup>31</sup> Despite their harsh treatment by the Zoroastrian Priests, Manicheans survived as a secret society.<sup>32</sup> Being persecuted, large numbers of the adherents of Mani migrated to the eastern region of the Sāsānian Empire, especially to the Soghdian territories where they formed a great community and resumed their religious practice.

However, the beginning of the 20th century was a turning point for a deeper understanding of Manichæism. Systematic excavations carried out by modern scholars such as P. Pelliot, von Le Coq and Sir Aurel Stein led to the discovery of many Manichean texts and manuscripts. The sites of these finds were Turfan in Chinese Turkestan and Tun-huang in the Western part of Kansu. The preserved Manichean documents were written in different Asian languages like Middle Persian, Uighurian, Turkish and Chinese. In 1908 P. Pelliot, the French scholar, visited Tun-huang where he discovered a fragment of a Manichean manuscript in Chinese and transported it to Paris. About the same time another and still much longer manuscript in

<sup>30</sup> Sachau, op.cit., p.190.

<sup>31</sup> Widengren, op.cit., p.41; also Christensen, L'Iran sous les Sassanides. Persian translation by R. Yasami, Tehran (1966), pp.203-31.

<sup>32</sup> Christensen, p.225.

Chinese was found in the same place, E. Chavannes and P. Pelliot studied these and other related documents and translated them with a commentary.<sup>33</sup>

Manichaeism came to China later than Zoroastrianism. In Fo-tsu-t'ung-chi 佛祖統紀, a Buddhist work of the twelfth century, it is recorded that in A.D. 694, a Persian named Fo-to-tan 佛多誕 came to the court to pay homage, bringing a copy of the Er-tsung-ching 二宗經 "the Scripture of the Two Principles",<sup>34</sup> probably one of Mani's canonical texts. Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei, another Sung text, informs us that in 719, Ti she 帝賒 (Tês), the king of Chih-han-na 支汗那 (Chaghāniyān) of the state of Tokhārestān, sent a Senior Mu-she 大慕闍, a distinguished astronomer, to the Emperor of China saying that this Mu-she would be pleased to answer any queries and religious questions, and if he found him capable, the emperor could give orders for his support and for the construction of a temple in which to follow his teaching.<sup>35</sup> It was probably through these Manichean missionaries that the Western calendar found its way to China.

In A.D. 732 an Imperial decree was issued in which Manichaeism was accused of falsely adapting the name of Buddhism and deluding the people; it was therefore forbidden and only the Western Barbarians

<sup>33</sup> E. Chavannes and P. Pelliot, "Un traité Manichéen retrouvé en Chine" Journal Asiatique 10e, Sér., XVIII, pp.499-617, November-December (1911), and 11e Sér. 1, pp.99-199, 261-394. An abridged Chinese translation of this work was published by Feng Ch'eng-chun Mo-ni-chiao liu-hsing-chung-kuo-k'ao 摩尼教流傳中國考. Commercial Pre Press, Shanghai, 1931. For Chinese references see also Ch'en Yüan "Mo-ni-chiao-Ju-chung-kuo-k'ao", 摩尼教入中國考, Kuo-hsüeh chi-kan, Vol.1, No.2, (1923)

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Ch'en Yüan, op.cit., p.205.

<sup>35</sup> TFYK, 971. 3b.

were permitted to practice their native religion,<sup>36</sup> The edict obviously shows that in translating their canonical texts into Chinese Manichean Priests utilized many Buddhist terms in an attempt to entice the Chinese; and that by the year 732, there were some Chinese converts among the Manichean. The introduction of Manichaeism to China was, however, done by Iranians who until the middle of the eighth century actively preached their religion there.

In the second half of the eighth century, a new powerful tribe that of the Uighurs appeared in the political arena, dominating Mongolia and a large portion of Central Asia. The Uighurs, Hui-ho 回纥 or Hui-hu 回鹘<sup>37</sup> as the Chinese called them, were of Hsiung-nu origin and in the sixth century A.D. were subject to the Turks, then the supreme power in Central Asia. They gradually became powerful and in about A.D. 744 they founded the Uighur Empire. The Chinese maintained close relations with the Uighurs, who offered their generous assistance to the Chinese emperor against the An Lu-shan rebellion (755-763) and later against the Tibetan invaders. Having helped the Chinese emperor to restore the Eastern capital Lo-yang, Mou-yü, the Uighur leader, became acquainted with Manichean tenet, and embraced the new faith.<sup>38</sup> The conversion of the Uighurs to Manichaeism, which was made the state religion, came to be an asset to its further diffusion in China. Since the Chinese emperors

<sup>36</sup> TT, 40.

<sup>37</sup> The account of the Uighurs in both the Chiu T'ang-shu and Hsin T'ang-shu have been translated with an introduction and full notes by Colin Mackerras. The Uighur Empire according to the T'ang dynastic Histories. The Australian National University, Asian Publication Series No.2, Canberra, 1972.

<sup>38</sup> Ch'en Yüan, op.cit., p.212.



enjoyed the support of the Uighurs in times of crisis, they adopted a tolerant policy towards the religion of their new neighbours. The Uighurs sent successive Manichean Priests to China to get permission to build temples there. To please the Uighurs, in A.D. 768, an edict was issued permitting them to found "the Great-Cloud-Bright-Light temple" (大雲光明寺) in the capital.<sup>39</sup> Three years later they obtained further permission to build one temple in each of the administrative districts of Ching 荊 (in Hupeh), Yang 揚 (in Anhwei), Hung 洪 (in Kiangsi) and Yüeh 越 (in Che kiang).<sup>40</sup> In A.D. 807, the Uighurs again were given permission to establish temples in Ho-nan-fu 河南府, i.e. Ho-yang and T'ai-yüan 太原 (in Shansi).<sup>41</sup> Our texts tend to show that Manicheans who in 732 lost the right to preach their religion, now became free to propagate it even amongst the local Chinese. Some Manicheans enjoyed high prestige among the Uighurs and were politically influential at the Uighur court. To the surprise of the Chinese officials, the Uighur embassy to China at the beginning of T'ian-ho period (806-21) included some Manicheans who always participated in state affairs of the Uighurs.<sup>42</sup> The toleration of Manichaeism in China endured as long as its strong supporter, the Uighur Empire, remained powerful. Towards the middle of the ninth century (840), the Kirghiz<sup>43</sup> attacked them and ended their military power. As a result, Manicheans lost favour in China. In A.D. 843,

<sup>39</sup> Ch'en Yüan, op.cit., p.212.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.214.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.215.

<sup>42</sup> Mackerras, op.cit., p.109.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.124.

almost immediately after the destruction of the Uighur Emperor, Wu-tsung issued an edict ordering the persecution of the Uighurs, confiscation of their property, and the burning of all Manichean texts and images. Accordingly, Manichean temples were all shut down; seventytwo Manichean nuns died; and many of them were banished to the various places, where they mostly perished.<sup>44</sup> Thereafter, Manicheans went underground and resumed the role of a Secret Society.

(d) Nestorianism

Among the foreign religions which came to China during the course of the seventh century was Nestorian Christianity. Although this religion did not originate in Iran it was introduced into China by Iranians. In A.D. 635, the Nestorian Priest, A-lo-pen 阿羅本 reached China; and Emperor T'ai-tsung received him in person and enquired about his religion. A-lo-pen's audience with Emperor T'ai-tsung was very successful, for an Imperial decree was issued approving his religious books for translation into Chinese.<sup>45</sup> Three years later in 638, the first Nestorian church was founded in Ch'ang-an by Imperial command. Our texts clearly show that A-lo-pen was an Iranian Priest, and that for nearly one century, Nestorian Christianity was considered an Iranian religion and their churches were called Po-ssu-ssu 波斯寺, i.e. Persian monasteries. It was not until 745, that another Imperial edict ordered the re-naming of Po-ssu-ssu to Ta-Ch'in-ssu. Thus T'ang Hui-yao, quoting this Imperial decree says that "the original homeland of Po-ssu-ching-chiao 波斯經教 is

<sup>44</sup> Ch'en Yuan, op.cit., pp.218-19.

<sup>45</sup> For a detailed study on Nestorianism in China and a full translation of references, documents, inscriptions, see P.Y. Saeki, The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China, Tokyo 1951; and A.C. Moule, Christians in China, London, 1930.

the country of Ta-ch'in (Roman Orient), It has been preaching ever since it was established here; and has many followers in the Middle Kingdom (China)... Now the Po-ssu-ssu in two capitals (i.e. Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang) should be called Ta-ch'in-ssu 大秦寺 . Those which have been built in all parts of the Empire should follow suit".<sup>46</sup>

From the available sources, we may conclude that the introduction of the Iranian religions and Nestorianism to China was the result of the close diplomatic relations between Iran, the Central Asian countries, India and China. The role played by the Iranians and specially merchants in popularizing the Western religions as well as diffusing Iranian culture as far as the Chinese frontiers and deep to the Chinese soil was of far-reaching importance.

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<sup>46</sup> THY 49, Saeki, op.cit., p.457.

## TRANSLATIONS \*

Wei-shu (102) 15a-17b

Pei-shih (97) 16b-18b

The capital of Po-ssu 波斯<sup>1</sup> is the walled city of Su-li 宿利 west of Niu-mi 怛密,<sup>3</sup> which corresponds to the former T'iao-chih 條支<sup>4</sup> state. To tai 代<sup>5</sup> it is 24,228 li. Its capital city has an area of ten square li, and the city has more than 10,000 households. A river flows southwards through the middle of the city.

The land is fairly level, and produces gold, silver, t'ou-shih 金 石<sup>6</sup> coral, amber, ch'e-chu 車渠<sup>7</sup>, agate, big pearls, glass, opaque glass, crystal, se-se 瑟瑟,<sup>8</sup> diamonds, red beads, steel, copper, tin, cinnabar, mercury, gold brocade, tieh-ho 疊曷毛,<sup>9</sup> ch'u-shü 毳 俞毛,<sup>10</sup> woollen rugs, red roebuck, hide, frankincense, saffron, storax, dark wood, and other aromatics, black pepper, long pepper, stone honey, edible dates, monkshood and wolfbanes, myrobalan, oak galls, salty green, oripiment and other products.<sup>11</sup>

The climate is hot and sultry, and the people keep ice in their houses. The land has many deserts, both sandy and rocky. Water is conducted by canal for irrigation. The five cereals, birds and beasts are more or less the same as those in China. However, they lack rice and millet. The land produces famous horses, large asses and camels which often travel seven hundred li a day, the rich families will have as many as several thousand head of them. In this land is also found the white elephant, lions and ostrich eggs.<sup>12</sup> There is also a bird shaped like a camel but with two wings, which is able to fly, but not very high. It eats grass and flesh, and can eat fire.<sup>13</sup>

The king has the surname Po 波 and the personal name Ssu 斯

.<sup>14</sup> He sits on a golden sheep couch,<sup>15</sup> wears a cap ornamented

\* For notes see end of this Chapter.

with gold and he is clad in a brocade gown and a woven skirt, both decorated with pearls and other precious things.

As for their customs, the males clip their hair, and wear a white leather hat, pinned across the top of the head, and coats which are slit at the sides near the bottom. They also have woven caps and hoods. Women's clothing consists of a long shift and a great shawl. Their hair in front is made into a chignon, but allowed to lie dishevelled at the back. They adorn themselves with gold and silver, and for ornaments, string together five coloured pearls and fasten them to the arms above the elbow.

The king, in his country, has, in addition (to his places), ten or more lesser camps like detached palaces in China. Every year in the fourth month, he goes on a tour and dwells in these, then in the 10th month he returns. When the king ascends the throne he chooses the most talented of his sons, secretly writes down his name, and seals it in the archives. Neither his sons nor the Great Ministers are aware of it. When the king dies, it is opened and read in the presence of all. He whose name has been sealed then becomes the new king.<sup>16</sup> The rest of the sons are sent out for duty on the frontiers, and the brothers never see each other again.

The people of the country style the king *i-tso* 醫 味夫<sup>17</sup> and the queen *fang-pu-shuai* 防 步率<sup>18</sup>. The sons of the king are called *sha-yeh* 殺 野<sup>19</sup>. Among the high officials there are the *mo-hu-t'an* 摸 胡壇<sup>20</sup>, who handles domestic legislation, the *ni-hu-han* 泥 忽汗<sup>21</sup>, who controls the opening and closing of treasuries and store houses, and the *ti-tsaot'iao* 地 早<sup>22</sup>, who is in charge of documents and various other matters. Next comes the *mo-lo-ho-ti* 過 羅 訶 地<sup>23</sup>, who takes care of the king's private affairs, and the *shieh-po-lo* 薛 波 勃<sup>24</sup>, who controls the infantry and cavalry

of four quarters. Each of these men has his subordinates amongst whom affairs are divided.

Their military equipment includes, armour, spear, array, swords, Crossbow, bows and arrows. Elephants are used in combat, each elephant being followed by one hundred men.

Under their penal laws, those guilty of serious offences are suspended at the top of a pole and shot to death. Those who have committed offenses somewhat less serious, are confined in prison and when a new king ascends the throne, they are freed. Those guilty of lesser offenses have their noses cropped and their feet cut off, or they trim half of the beard and place it on the top of their head to disgrace them. Those who commit violent robbery are imprisoned for life. Those who are found guilty of adultery with the wife of a noble are banished, while the women have their ears and noses cut off.

For taxes, they measure the land and silver coins are paid accordingly. It is their custom to worship Huo-shen 火神 "the Fire-God", and T'ien-shen 天神 "the God of Heaven". Their script is different from that of other barbarians. They commonly marry or take as concubine their sisters, and for the rest, in their marriage union, they do not discriminate between noble and inferior, and are the most disgraceful of all barbarians. When any of the men of the land have beautiful daughters <sup>more than 10 years old</sup>, they are collected <sup>and brought up</sup> by the king. These girls are distributed as gifts among those persons who have rendered him meritorious service.

The corpses of the dead are put on the hills, and mourning is worn for one month.<sup>25</sup> Outside the city, there are people who live separately and are in charge of the matters of funerals, and mourning. They are called "Unclean-men". If they enter the city, they ring a bell in order to make themselves known.<sup>26</sup>

The sixth month is taken to be the beginning of the year. Specially important are the seventh day of the seventh month, and the first day of the twelfth month.<sup>27</sup> On these days every one from the common people on up, invite each other to their homes and hold festivals at which music is performed with the greatest rejoicing. Also, on the twentieth day of the first month in each year, everyone sacrifices to his departed ancestors.

During the period Shen-Kuei 神龜 (518-519) their state sent an envoy carrying a letter from the king addressed to the imperial throne, besides sundry articles of tribute, the letter said:

"May T'ien-tzu 天子<sup>28</sup> (the Son of Heaven, i.e. title of the Chinese Emperor) of the most magnificent country in existence continue to reign where the sun rises, as the heaven born T'ien-tzu 天子 of the central Han. This homage is humbly offered by the king of Persia Chu-ho-to 居和多, who makes his respectful obeisance ten thousand times. The court accepted with approval and from this time onwards they often sent envoys to the court bearing tribute".<sup>29</sup>

## Liang-Shu (54) 406-41a.

The country of Po-ssu had a former ruler king Po-ssu-ni, his descendants took his title as a family name, and it became the name of the country.<sup>30</sup> The land has a walled city which is thirty-two li in circuit. The walls are four feet high and all have watch-towers. Inside the city there are several hundred thousand <sup>U</sup>houses. Outside the city walls there are two ~~to~~ three hundred Buddhist monasteries. Fifteen li in a westerly direction from the city, there are hills which are not so high, but are extended over a long distance. The vultures living in these hills eat sheep and give much trouble to the people. The country has a beautiful and fresh flower named Yu-p'u-tan<sup>31</sup> 優鉢曇. The land produces dragon-colt horses. Its salt lakes have coral trees which are one or two feet high. There are also amber, agate, roses, and other things. These are not regarded as precious in the country. Gold and silvers are the mediums of commercial exchange. According to their marriage customs, when the arrangement is completed, the bridegroom takes with him several dozen men to welcome the bride. He (i.e. bridegroom) wears a golden-threaded robe, silk trousers embroidered with design of lions, and <sup>a</sup>crown on his head. The bride is ~~not~~ dressed like ~~the~~ bridegroom. Her brother is there to hold her hand and give the sister away (to her husband), then the wedding ceremony is completed.

On its east is the state of Hua.<sup>32</sup> On the west and south the country adjoins the state of P'o-lo-men 波羅門.<sup>33</sup> In the north it has as its neighbour the country of Fan-li.<sup>34</sup>

In the second year of Ta-t'ung of the Liang dynasty (536), they sent envoys to offer the Emperor the teeth of Sakya. They first had contacted Chiang-tso.<sup>35</sup>



Sui-shu (83) 14b-15b.

Po-ssu has its capital in the walled city of Su-lin 蘇蘭 west of the Ta-ho river 遼水<sup>36</sup> which corresponds to the former territory of the T'iao-chih 條支.

The name of the king is K'u-sa-ho 庫薩和.<sup>37</sup> The capital city has an area of <sup>more than</sup> ten square li. There are over twenty thousand capable soldiers. In warfare they ride to battle on elephants. The country has no capital punishment.<sup>38</sup> They either cut off the hands or the feet (of the guilty), taking away the family wealth, shave the beard, or they tied a placard to the neck as a distinguishing mark.

Men over three years of age pay a tax of four coins. They marry their sisters.<sup>39</sup> The dead are left on the mountains, and mourned for one month.

The king wears a gold-flowered hat, and sits on a golden-lion throne. He puts gold dust on his beards as ornament. He wears an embroidered robe with a necklace of precious stones over it. The land has many excellent horses, large asses, lions, white elephants, ostrich eggs, pearls, glass, 獸魄,<sup>40</sup> coral, ceramic glass, agate, crystal, se-se 瑟瑟, hu-lo 呼洛,<sup>41</sup> deer's skin, lu-t'eng 呂騰,<sup>42</sup> red beads, diamonds, gold, silver, t'ou-shih, copper, iron, tin, embroidered cotton, fine cloth, fine woollen cloth, woollen rugs, hu-na 護那,<sup>43</sup> yüeh-nu-pu 越諾布,<sup>44</sup> sandalwood, textiles with gold thread,<sup>45</sup> red roebuck hide, cinnabar, mercury, frankincense, yü-chin 欖金,<sup>46</sup> storax, dark wood and various other aromatics, black pepper, long pepper, stone honey, half honey, edible dates, aconite, myrobalan, oak galls, salty green and orpiment.

The Turks <sup>are</sup> unable to reach their land, and the kingdom (of Persia) itself keeps them (i.e. The Turks) at bay. Po-ssu often sends envoys to offer tribute. From Po-ssu to the sea is several hundred li in a westerly direction, while from Po-ssu to the land of Mu <sup>穆</sup> is about 4,000 li to the east. Fu-lin <sup>拂菻</sup> is 4,500 li to the northwest and Kua-chou <sup>瓜州</sup> is 11,700 li.

The Emperor Yang <sup>煬</sup> (604-617) sent Li Yü <sup>李昱</sup> an officer of the Cloud Cavalry on a mission to communicate with Po-ssu, and later Po-ssu sent <sup>an</sup> envoy along with Li Yü to tribute local articles.

## Chiu T'ang-shu (148) 146-15b

Po-ssu 波斯 is situated 15,000 li west of our capital.<sup>47</sup>  
 In the east, its territory adjoins that of T'u-huo-lo 吐火羅,<sup>48</sup>  
 state of K'ang 康,<sup>49</sup> and in the north with the K'o-sa tribe of the Pa-chieh 突厥之  
 可薩部.<sup>50</sup> Fu-lin 拂菻<sup>51</sup> is on its northwest. On the west  
 and the south its borders are the seas.

It has *several hundred* thousand households. The king has his seat  
 in two fortified towns. It has in addition more than ten large walled  
 cities like detached palaces in China.

When the king ascends the throne, he chooses the most capable  
 of his sons, secretly writes down his name and seals it, and keeps it  
 in the archives. When the king dies the nobles and sons open the  
 letter. He whose name appears in the letter then becomes king.

The king wears a cap ornamented with gold, and sits on a  
 lion-shaped couch. He wears an embroidered robe with a necklace.

They worship heaven, earth, sun, moon, water and fire. The  
 various barbarians in the western regions who worship Huo Hsien  
 learnt this practice from the Persians. When performing worship, they  
 daub their beards, foreheads, ears and noses with musk and su 蘇.<sup>52</sup>  
 They invariably cross their legs when they perform obeisance. Their  
 writing is similar to that of the other barbarians. Men and women  
 remove their shoes. The men cut their hair, wear a white <sup>leather</sup> hat and do  
 not make an opening for the collar. They also have a turban for which  
 mostly white and green colours are used.

The women wear a long shift and shawl. Their plaited hair is left  
 at the back. They adorn themselves with gold and silver.

In warfare they ride to battle on elephants. There are one hundred  
 men following every elephant. When defeated all are punished with

death.<sup>53</sup> When any of the men of the land have beautiful daughters, they are collected <sup>and brought up</sup> by the king. These girls are distributed as gifts among those persons who have rendered him meritorious service. The right is the position of honour over the left.

The first day of the sixth month is taken to be the beginning of the year. They don't put in writing the judicial decisions which are made in court. Life imprisonment is applied as punishment. They are freed only when the new king ascends the throne. In the case of suspected rebels, a trial by ordeal is given according to which a Zoroastrian red-hot iron is applied to their tongues. If the wounds are white they are judged right, if black they are found guilty.<sup>54</sup> Their punishments include cutting off the <sup>hands or</sup> feet, shaving the beard, and pulling out the teeth. For small crimes, they trim the beard and place it on the top of their head to disgrace them, and they are freed in a month. Bandits are imprisoned for life. Pilferers are fined.

The corpses of the dead are put on the hill ~~and~~ mourning is continued for one month.

The weather is hot and sultry. The land is wide and level. The people know tilling and pasturing. There is a kind of bird like a camel which is able to fly but not very high; it eats grass and flesh and can swallow dogs and seize sheep, and gives trouble to the people. The land also produces many white horses and dogs which often travel seven hundred li a day. The swift golden dog is known as the Persian dog.<sup>55</sup> The country has also mules, big donkeys, lions, white elephants, coral which is one or two feet tall, amber, ch'e-chu, agate, red pearls, glass, ceramic glass, oak galls, monkshood, and wolfbanes, myrobalan, black pepper, long pepper, stone honey, edible dates, sweet dew (甘露) and peaches.

At the end of the <sup>Ta-geh Period (605-17) of the</sup> Sui dynasty (581-618), T'ung-ye-hu 統葉護, Yabghu Khāgān of the Western Turks, attacked and devastated their country (Persia), and killed the king K'u-sa-ho 庫薩和. Then his son Shih-li 施利 became king. Yabghu divided this land (Iran) and sent one of his lieutenants as a kind of resident to the Iranian court, to superintend and control the country. Po-ssu then became subject to Yabghu. When Yabghu Khāgān died, the lieutenant whom he had appointed to govern this place refused to maintain his submission to the Western Turks, on the grounds that his territory had been established by Po-ssu. Shih-li died after one year, and the daughter of K'u-sa-ho was put on the throne. The Turks killed her too. The son of Shih-li, Tan-chieh 單翊 had at that time taken refuge in Fu-lin, but the people of Iran welcomed him back and put him on the throne, under the name of I-ta-chih 伊怛支. He ruled for two years and died. Then I-szu-ho 伊嗣候, the son of his elder brother (Ardashir) was made king.

(615)

In the twenty first year, I-szu-ho sent an envoy to the court and offered the emperor an animal named Huo-ju-she 活禰虫也. This (animal) was shaped like a rat. It was green in colour, eight to nine feet long and could catch rats in their holes.<sup>56</sup>

I-szu-ho became feeble and was driven out by one of the great leaders. He fled to T'u-hō-lo. But before reaching there he was killed by the Arab soldiers. His son Pi-lu-ssu 卑路斯 also fled to T'u-hō-lo. The Khāgān (of Tokhārestān) spared his life.

In the first year of Lung-shuo 龍朔 (661), Pi-lu-ssu complained he had been attacked by the Arabs and asked for military aid. The emperor sent Wang Ming-yüan, the district magistrate of Nan-yu-hsien 南由縣 in lung-chou 隴州<sup>57</sup> to the Western Regions to set up a regular system of provincial administration. The walled city of

Chi-ling was made the administrative capital of the military region of Po-ssu with Pi-lu-ssu as its Governor-General. Thereafter, they sent many ambassadors to the court, bringing tribute.

In the middle of Hsien-heng 咸亨 (670-74), Pi-lu-ssu himself came to the court to pay homage. Emperor Kao-tsung received him with grace and appointed him as Yu-wu-wei-chiang-chün 右武衛將軍 "General of the Warrior Guard of the Right".

In the third year of I-feng 儀鳳 (679), the emperor ordered Pei Hsing-chien 裴行儉 to escort Pi-lu-ssu under the protection of men of arms, and re-install him as the king of Po-ssu. Pei Hsing-chien considered the distance too far, and when they arrived at An-hsi suei-chiang 西碎襄, <sup>58</sup> Pei returned home. Pi-lu-ssu went unaccompanied. Unable to go to his country, because of the Arab invasion, Pi-lu-ssu went to T'u-ho-lo as a guest and remained there for more than twenty years, and his several thousand people becoming disorganized and scattered.

In the second year of Ching-lung 景龍 (709), he again paid homage to the emperor and was bestowed the title of Ts'o-wei-wei-chiang chün 左威衛將軍 "General of the Majestic Guard of the Left." When he died of sickness, his country was completely destroyed and only a part of it remained.

From the tenth year of K'ai-yüan 開元 (723) to the sixth year of T'ien-pao 天寶 (748), they sent ten embassies to the court and offered valuable gifts. In the fourth month, they sent an envoy bringing a throne made of agate. In the fourth month of the ninth year, they offered Huo-mao-hsiu-wu-yen 火毛繡舞筵 <sup>59</sup> "fire hair embroidered dance mat", Ch'ang mao-hsiu wu-yen 長毛繡舞筵, <sup>60</sup> "long hair embroidered dance mat", and pearls.

In the first year of Ch'ien-yüan 乾元 (758), the Persians and Arabs attacked Kwang-chou 廣州 (Canton) and robbed the warehouses, burnt the cottages and fled away by sea.

In the sixth year of Ta-li 大曆 (772), they again sent an envoy to the court, offering pearls and other things.

Hsin T'ang-shu. 221, (hsia), 9a.-10b.

The state of Po-ssu 波斯 is situated west of the river Ta-o 遼河水 more than 15,000 li away from our capital. In the east its territory adjoins that of T'u-huo 土火羅 and the state of K'ang 康. In the north, it has as a neighbour 突厥 the K'o-sa tribe of the T'u-chüeh 突厥. On the West and the south it is bordered by seas. The country of Fu-lin 拂菻 is over 4,000 li to its northwest. It has a population of several hundred thousand. Its former ruler (i.e. ancestor), king Po-ssu nî was a cadet prince of Yüeh-chih. The ruling king took it as a family name and it became the name of the country.

The government has its seat in two fortified towns and there are more than ten large walled cities (in the realm).

According to their custom, the right is the position of honour over the left. They worship heaven, earth, sun, moon, water and fire. On the Eve of performing worship, they mix musk with Su-tse 蘇澤. They anoint their faces, noses and ears. The various barbarians in the Western Regions learnt from them how to worship Hsien 袂. They invariably cross their legs. When they perform obeisance, they remove their shoes. The men cut their hair. In garments they do not make an opening for the collar. They wear green and white turbans. Their cloaks have brocade edges. The women wear their hair in braids which hang behind them.

Elephants are ridden to battle. There are one hundred men to every elephant. When defeated, all are punished with death. They do not put in writing the judicial decisions which are made in court.

In the case of (suspected) rebels (a trial by ordeal is given) according to which red-hot iron is applied to their tongues. If the



wounds are white, the men are judged innocent, if black they are judged guilty. Punishments include shaving the head, pulling out the teeth, cutting off the <sup>feet</sup> or nose. For small crimes, they shave off the side whiskers, or carry a piece of yoke around the neck for a period of one month. Robbers are imprisoned for life, thieves lose the property they had acquired. The dead are put on the mountains and mourned for one month.

The weather is dry and hot, the land is a plateau. The people know tilling and pasturing. There is in that country a kind of eagle which <sup>can</sup> eat sheep. There are many excellent dogs, mules and big donkeys. The country produces coral which is less than three (Chinese) feet tall.

In late Sui dynasty (581-618), Yabghu Khagan of the Western Turks attacked and ruined this land (Iran), and killed the king K'u-sa-ho 庫薩和 (Khosraw II). Then his son Shih-li 施利 became king. The Turkish Khagan <sup>Yabghu</sup> sent one of his lieutenants [as a kind of resident to the Iranian court], to superintend and control Shih-li. When Shih-li died, the Iranians were unwilling to remain subject to the Turks any longer, so they put the daughter of K'u-sa-ho upon the throne. The Turks killed her too. The son of Shih-li, Tan-chieh 單羯 had at that time taken refuge in Fu-lin, but the people of Iran welcomed him back and made him their king, under the name I-ta-chih 伊怛支 (Ardashir). When he died, I-szu-ssu 伊嗣俟 (Yazdagird III), the son of his (Ardashir's) elder brother was made king.

In the twelfth year of Chen-kuan era 貞觀 (638), the Iranian envoy Mo-ssu 潘 came to the Imperial court and offered an animal named Huo-ju-she 火蜃蛇. This (animal) was shaped like a rat. It was a true green in colour, nine inches long and could catch rats in the holes.

I-szu-ssu did not act as a ruler should, and he was driven out by one of the great nobles. He fled towards Tokhārestān, but ~~was~~ <sup>on the way</sup> the Arabs attacked and killed <sup>him</sup>. His son Pi-lu-ssu went to Tokhārestān for the sake of his life, and sent off an envoy to the court (of China), and informed the Chinese Emperor of his difficulties. Emperor Kao-tsung 高宗, (650-683), considered the distance (involved) too great, declined to help, and sent the messenger back. Just then the Arabs abandoned the campaign and Tokhārestān sent troops to receive Pi-lu-ssu.

In the early time of Lung-shuo 龍朔 (661-664) Pi-lu-ssu complained that he had again been attacked by the Arabs. At that time, the son of heaven (Chinese Emperor) was sending a commissioner to the Western Regions to set up a regular system of provincial administration. The walled city of Chi-ling was made the administrative capital of the military region of Iran, with Pi-lu-ssu as its commissioner. Shortly afterwards it was swallowed <sup>up</sup> by the Arabs. Although he no longer had any kingdom, in the middle of Hsien-heng (670-674) Firuz still came to the court and was appointed as Yu-wu-wei chiang-chün 右武衛將軍, "General of the Warrior Guard of the Right". Pi-lu-ssu died and his son Ni-nieh-shih 泥涅師 served at the court as a hostage.

In the first year of Tiao-lu 調露 (679), the emperor ordered Pei-hsing-chien 裴行儉 to escort him (Narses) back under the protection of men of arms, and re-establish him in his (ancestral) kingdom. Because the way was long, when they arrived at An-hsi suei-yeh 安西碎葉 Hsing-chien returned home. Narses remained in Tokhārestān for twenty years, his people becoming increasingly disorganized and scattered.

At the beginning of Ching-lung era 景龍 (707), Narses <sup>again</sup> paid homage to the emperor and was given the title of Ts'o-wei-wei Chiang-chün 左威衛將軍 "General of the Majestic Guard of the Left". When he died of sickness only the Western part of his state remained.

In the periods of K'ai-yüan 開元 (713-742) and T'ien-pao 天寶 (742-755) they sent ten embassies to the Imperial court with valuable gifts such as a throne made of agate and fire hair embroidered dance mat:

At the beginning of Chien-yüan 乾元 (758-759) the Arabs and Iranians attacked Kwang-chou 廣州 (Canton), burnt all the warehouses and fled away by sea. In the Ta-li period (766-779) they (Iranians) again sent tribute to the emperor.

The state of T'o-pa-ssu-tan 陀拔斯單 or T'o-pa-sa-tan 陀拔薩單 <sup>61</sup> is encircled on three sides by mountains and to the north by a little sea. The king lives in the walled city of P'o-li 婆里. <sup>62</sup> In the time of the kings of Po-ssu this land was the seat of an officer called the Great General of the East. When Po-ssu was destroyed (by the Arabs), the people of this territory refused to acknowledge Arab overlordship.

In the fifth year of T'ien-pao (746), the king Hu-lu-han 忽魯汗 <sup>63</sup> sent an envoy to the court. He was enfeoffed as "king who has returned to fidelity" (i.e. he has surrendered). Eight years later, the king sent his son Tzu-hui-lo 自會羅 <sup>64</sup> to the Imperial court (of China) to pay homage. He was appointed (with the honorary title of) Yu wu-wei-yuan wai chung lang-chiang 右武衛員外中郎將 "the Outside Colonel of the Majestic Guard of the Warrior Guard of the Right", and was presented with a purple robe and a gold fish, and an escort of household guard. He perished at the hand of the black-cloth Arabs. <sup>65</sup>

After the Chen-kuan period, the rulers of the small distant countries sent envoys to the court with tribute. The senior ministers at the court did not know anything about them. They now transferred the matter to their advisers.

The advisers said Huo-tz'u-mi 大辭弓爾<sup>66</sup> is bordered with Po-ssu. In the eighteenth year of Chen-kuan (645), their envoy along with that of Mo-lo-yu 摩羅游 (Marv?) was given audience by the emperor. In the twentyfirst year (of Chen-kuan), the state of Chien-ta 健達 sent a plant from the land of Buddha which had five leaves, red flowers and purple stamens (?).

In the first year of Lung-shuo period (661), the king of To-fu<sup>67</sup> 多福 named Nan P'o-hsiu-chiang-i-shuo 難婆修彊宜說 sent an envoy to the court to render homage.

In the first year of Tsung-chang (668) and in the fifth year of K'ai-yüan (718), the king of Mo-t'o-t'i 末陀提 and the king of Hsi-a-sa-pan 習阿薩般<sup>An-sha</sup> sent envoys to the court to pay homage. In the seventh year (of K'ai-yüan, 719), Na-se the king of Ho p'i shih 言可毗施 and the great Chief of the T'u-huo-lo 吐火羅 named Lo-mo 羅摩 offered as tribute lions and <sup>variegated</sup> parrots with five colours. Eight of the countries which in the period of T'ien pao (742-756) came to the court to pay homage are Chü-lan-na 俱大闌那, She-mo 舍摩, Wei-yüan 威遠, Su-chi-li-fa Wu-lan 蘇吉利發屋蘭, Su-li-hsi-tan 蘇利悉單, Chien-ch'eng 建城, Hsin-ch'eng 新城, Chü-wei 俱位. Chü-wei or Shang-mi 商弓爾 has its capital in the walled city of A-She-yü<sup>shih</sup> 阿舍餘師多 which is situated in Ta-hsüeh-shan 大雪山 north of the river P'o-lü 勃律. The land is cold and has the five grains (rice, wheat and barley, the common millet, glutinous variety and soy bean), grape and bitter pomegranate. In the winter

they live in caves. The men of that country always helped  
 Hsiao-P'o-lü 小勃律 to be auxiliaries of China. The state  
 of Hsin Ch'eng is situated 500 li to the north<sup>east</sup> of Shih. There is  
 Nu-shih-chieh-ch'eng 弩室錫城, Hsin Ch'eng 新城 and  
 Hsiao-shih-kuo-ch'eng which were later annexed by Ko-lo-lu 葛  
 邏祿 (Karlucs).

## Notes to the Translation

<sup>1</sup> Ancient Pronunciation\* Puâ-Sie (K 251, 869a). This Chinese transcription is a transliteration of the Iranian word Pārs 𐬰𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 or Parsa 𐬰𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀. It is strange, however, that the Wei-shu besides Po-ssu gives a brief account of An-hsi (Chinese name for Arsaces or Arsak, i.e. Parthian empire), which reads, "An-hsi lies west of Ts'ung-ling (the Pamirs). Its capital is the walled city of Wei-sou 蔚搜 (unidentified). In the north, it adjoins K'ang-chü and in the west Po-ssu. It is situated northwest of Ta-yüeh-chih. To Tai (the Wei capital) it is 21,500 li. WS,102.10a.

It is an undeniable fact that the Parthian empire, which ruled Iran for five centuries (247 B.C. to 226 A.D.), had passed away in the period which our text was written (middle of the sixth century) and there could have been no An-hsi at this time unless in the sense of Persia itself. But, since the Wei-shu locates this An-hsi northwest of Ta-yueh-chih and west of Ts'ung-ling, it must have been a petty state on the northeastern frontier of the Sāsānian empire, probably Bukhārā.

The Sui-shu says that "The country of An is what was An-hsi in the Han times. The king is surnamed Chao-wu-shih (昭武氏) and belongs to the same race as the king of the K'ang (this name is, by the period of our text, used for Samarqand), and his personal name is She-li-teng (設力登). He is married to the Princess of K'ang. Its capital is situated south of the Na-mi river" (Zarafshān) SS, 83, 9a. The information recorded in the Sui shu definitely refers to the district of Bukhārā, but it is not clear why the compilers of the Sui shu identify this An with An-hsi in the Han period. An, as an abbreviated form of An-hsi in the Han times as it is stated here, can hardly be referred to the Ancient An-hsi and Sui shu's statement is erroneous. However, from the middle of the fifth century onward An-hsi survived as a name for the district of Bukhārā.

According to the Hsin T'ang-shu "The state of An, sometimes called Pu-huo 布豁 or Pu-ho 補囉 is the country of Niu-mi in the Yüan Wei period. Tung an 東安 (Kharghān) is on its northwest and in the southwest it borders on Pi 畢 (a Principality, 400 li to the west of Bukhārā) The Wu-hu river 烏許河 (Amu-Daryā) is on its west. Its capital is the walled city of A-lan-mi 阿濫言監 (Aryamethan, the name of the ancient capital of Bukhārā) which is the former seat of the king of Chi, a petty Prince of K'ang-chü...." HTS, 221 (hsia) 1b.

Pu-huo or Pu-ho which the Hsin T'ang-shu mentions as alternative names for the country of An (Bukhārā) all represent the medieval Iranian word Bukhārāg and Arabic Bukhārā (see Le Strange, The land of the Eastern Caliphate (1930), p.460-63. For much information on the medieval history of Būkhārā see Frye, R.N. The history of Bukhārā. Cambridge, Massachusetts (1954).

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese historical records such as Wei-shu, Chou-shu, Sui-shu and Ts'e-fu Yüan-kuei, all give the name of the capital of the Sāsānian empire, but in different forms. Wei-shu says, "The walled city of Su-li 宿利", Chou-shu calls it "The walled city of Su-li 蘇利", Sui-shu and Ts'e-fu Yüan-kuei mentions it as "The

2 (contd)

walled city of Su-lin 蘇隄", in which the second character has a different sound, but it seems that this is a corruption. The three names all refer to Ctesiphon-Seleucia, the capital of the Sasanians and the residence of most of its kings. Ctesiphon was situated south of Baghdad on the Tigris river. Seleucia was situated on the western bank of the Tigris and it was destroyed by Avidius Cassius, the Roman general, in A.D. 165 (Sykes, A History of Persia, p.384). The Sāsānian king Ardashir rebuilt it as Veh. Ardashir. Christensen, A. L'Iran sous les Sassanides, Persian translation by Yāsami, R. (Tehran 1966), p.115. Muslim geographers call it Madāin (cities). It was called such, because it was composed of seven towns.

3

This might be a transliteration of Numijkath, an alternative name for Bukhārā. See Le Strange, The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate. Cambridge (1930), p.460.

4

The identification of T'iao-chih has been a matter of controversy and different explanations have been offered by modern scholars. Hirth in his China and the Roman Orient, pp.144-45, identifies it with Chaldaea. Chang Hsing-lang in his Chung-hsi chiao-t'ung shih-liao hui-pien, Vol.3 p.2, identifies it with Tājik or Tāzi, i.e. Arabia. Shiratori, K. in his article, "A study on T'iao-chih", Toyo-Bunko (1956), pp.1-23, identifies it with Mésène-Khararacène at the mouth of the Tigris.

5

Capital of the Northern Wei.

6

"Zinc ore". This Chinese name is a transliteration of the Iranian word "tutiya" توتیا, in English "tutty" and in French "tutie". It was used by the court Artisans and was employed for ornamenting the girdles of the officials of the eighth and ninth grade. See Laufer, Sino-Iranica, pp.511-55.

7

"Clam". Chao Ju-kua in his Chu-fan-chi writes this name in different style, i.e. 石車石葉. According to him it was a very large sea shell which the inhabitants of Chiao-chih 交趾 (Tong-king) grind to make cups which, owing to their (scalloped) form, are called "Lotus-Leaf Cups". See Hirth and Rockhill, Chau-Ju-kua, a fully annotated translation of Chu-fan-chi: (St. Petersburg, 1911), p.231.

8

The word se-se is not Chinese but is a transliteration of a foreign word which so far has not yet been identified. Laufer believes that the word is of Iranian origin (most probably Soghdian), but can not establish a theory as to what word se-se is derived from. He takes it to be emerald. See Laufer, Sino-Iranica, pp.516-519.

9

This is also a foreign word; but its origin is unknown. The Cho-shu mentions Po-tieh 白氍 as a Persian product which Laufer Sino-Iranica, p.490, connects with the Middle Persian word Pambak "cotton". Tieh-ho of our text might also refer to cotton stuff.

10

For its identification with Felt see Schafer, E. The Golden Peaches of Samarkand (1963), p.200.

11 For a detailed and scholarly discussion of the Persian Products and explanation of the non-Chinese words of Iranian origin mentioned in the Chinese texts see Laufer, Sino-Iranica.

12 Ostrich eggs were first known to the Chinese when the Parthians sent one as a present to the Chinese emperor. Later they were called T'o-niao 駝鳥. See following note.

13 The description of this animal seems to match the ostrich eggs. The phrase 噉火 "eats fire", in our text must be a mistake. The account of the Po-ssu in the Chiu T'ang-shu gives a similar description of a bird which is clearly the same animal as in the Wei-shu. It says that "there in Po-ssu is a kind of bird like a camel which is able to fly but not high; it eats grass and flesh and can swallow dogs and seize sheep 噉火攬羊".

Textual comparison of the two shows that the character ch'üan 犬 "dogs", which is very similar to Huo 火 "fire", has mistakenly become corrupted in the Wei shu and "swallow dogs" is the correct form. The Hsin T'ang-shu in its account of Tokhārestān says that "in the first year of Yung hui (650), the state of Tokhārestān offered to the court a big bird 大鳥. This bird was seven feet high, black in colour, with feet like a camel, shaking its two wings the while and was able to travel 300 li in a day; it could eat iron and the native people called it t'o-niao, i.e. 'Camel-bird' ". HTS 221 (hsia) 6a-6b. This Chinese name is a literal translation of the Iranian word Shotor-murgh, ushtor-murgh, "Camel-bird". Li shih-chen in his Pen-ts'ao kang-mu says that the original homeland of the Camel-bird like that of the camel is the land of the western barbarians. Its feet were very strong and it can severely injure people (Ch.49). The Ming-shih, p.214, 14b., mentions the bird under the name T'o-chi 駝雞 and says its original home is Hu-lu-mo-ssu 忽魯莫斯 (Hurmuz) in the Persian Gulf.

14 Chou shu says that the king's surname is Po-ssu-shih 波斯氏. See also note 30.

15 Whereas Wei-shu and Chou-shu describe the throne as "The golden-sheep throne (couch)" 金羊床(牀), the Sui-shu and Chiu T'ang-shu call it "the golden-lion throne" 金獅子座(床). The different descriptions of the throne of the Sāsānian kings by Chinese authors all seem to refer to the distinguished and famous throne, "the Tāqdis" (Arch-like), which was in the possession of Khosraw Parwiz (591-628). Tāqdis was a most remarkable throne which Irano-Arabic writers frequently described. Firdausi gives a long and detailed description of this throne. The "Tāqdis", as he states, was first constructed by order of king Feridun by a designer named Jāhn Barzin. The kings who succeeded him adorned it with precious jewels and made it more fashionable and beautiful. When Alexander invaded Iran, he destroyed it. Later when Ardashir founded the Sāsānian dynasty he heard of it and ordered another throne to be made from the remaining parts of the original. When Khosraw II ascended the throne, he decided to reconstruct it. Then, by his order, after two years Tāqdis was reconstructed with the assistance of 1,160 skilled carpenters, each with thirty apprentices. These carpenters came to him from China, Rome, Baghdād and Makrān as well as Iran. Three other thrones, all



of which were richly studded with jewels, were set on the steps of "Taqdis". The first of these was called "Mish-Sar", <sup>میش سر</sup> i.e. sheep-like, because the head of a sheep was figured on it; the second was called "Lajward", i.e. Lapis Lazuli; the third was made of Turquoise, see Firdausi, *Shāhnāma*. Persian text published by Amirkabir Press, 3rd edition (Tehran 1967), pp.525-26. However, by "golden-sheep throne" and "golden-lion throne", the Chinese authors meant a throne adorned with a sheep or lion made of gold.

16 In choosing the heir to the throne, a very serious matter, the Sasanian kings had to consult the high officials of the court and religious leaders. Ardashir, the founder of the Sāsānian dynasty in his book Ahdi Ardashir, has mentioned, regarding the election of the Crown prince, a method which is very similar to that of the Wei shu and the Chiu T'ang shu. According to him, when choosing his successor the monarch should consider what is the best for God and the people, not what is the best for himself. He then chooses the successor, writes down his name in four copies and after sealing them, gives one each to four highly trusted officials. Henceforth he (the king) has to be careful both in action and speech not to show who the successor will be. When the king passes away, the sealed letter should be opened and the one whose name has been sealed becomes the new king. See Ahdi Ardashir, translated by M.I. Shushtari (Tehran, 1969), p.84. However, the election of the Crown prince was his Majesty's choice. Ardashir himself chose his successor, Shapur I. The king usually chose one of his sons, but also had the power to elect someone else. If the king had no son<sup>or</sup> the named successor was unable to carry out his duties, the matter was discussed in a special committee composed of Mobadān-mobad (head priest), Spahbad (commander-in-chief) Marzbāns (Lord-marchers) and Dabirbad (Chief Secretary). The Committee was presided over by the head Priest. It was the duty of this elective body to designate the new king. See Christensen, op.cit., p.287-88.

17 Laufer takes this Chinese transcription to be Ixsed or Ixsidh of Al-Biruni, meaning "title of the king of Sughd and Farghāna", which corresponds to the old Persian word XsayaŌiya. See Laufer, Sino-Iranica, p.530.

18 Ancient Pronunciation\* b'iwang-b'uo-siuet (KG 740-z, 73-a, 498-a). The Chinese transcription stands for the middle Persian word banbusn, banbisen or banbishn, "Consort of the king of Persia". Laufer Sino-Iranica, p.531; Christensen, op.cit., p.123, note 2.

19 Ancient Pronunciation\* Sat-ia (K 319-d, 83 ), transcribing Shahrdār or Shahriyāran, "the kings of various countries under the control of the Sāsānian empire". In Sāsānian times it was a custom to appoint the sons of kings to rule Provinces attached to the empire. See Christensen, op.cit., pp.120-122. Laufer, Sino-Iranica, p.530.

20 Ancient pronunciation\* muo (or mak not in KG) yuo-d'an (K 49-a, 148-d). Laufer (Ibid, pp.533-34) suggests that this refers to Mobedān mobed, "Chief Mobed", and relates this Chinese transcription to the Middle Persian magudān, magutān and the Armenian Մովսէս, who was in charge of religious affairs as well as handling domestic

20 (contd)

legislation. For a general account of the functions of Mobedān mobed see Christensen, op.cit., pp.136-143.

21 Ancient Pronunciation\* niei-Xuet-Yan (K 563-d, 503-1, 139-t). This Chinese transcription according to Laufer stands for the Pahlavi word Nixuryan or Nexuryan which Firdausi mentions under al-Naxirajan "the Treasury of Khosraw II". Sino-Iranica, p.532; Christensen, op.cit., p.35, n.3.

22 Ancient Pronunciation\* d'i-tsau (K 4-b, 1049-a) The Chou-shu mentions this office with different wording, i.e. Ti-Pei-Pai (po) 地卑字力 (d'i-Pjie-b'uet) (KG4-b, 874-a, 491-b). This Chinese transcription is a good transliteration of the Middle Persian Dibirbad or Dabirbad, "Chief Scribes". Christensen, op.cit., pp.153-156.

23 Ancient Pronunciation\* at-la-ka-d'i (K 313-1, 6-a, 1-r, 4-b). It is difficult to trace the original Pahlavi word from which the Chinese transcription is made. Laufer (Sino-Iranica, pp.532-33) connects this office with the Argabides or the Argbad family which, according to Theophylactus, possessed royal dignity and was in charge of placing the crown on the king's head. See also Christensen, op.cit. p.127.

24 Ancient Pronunciation\* siat-pua-b'uet (K 289-c, 24-1, 491-b). The Chou-shu has sa 洒 for the first character. This refers to the Pahlavi word Spahpat, Modern Persian Sepahbad. The commander-in-chief of the Sāsānian army was called Eran-Spahbad. Christensen, op.cit., p.151. Laufer, Sino-Iranica, p.533.

25 It is the custom of the Zoroastrians to leave the dead body in a special place known as, "The tower of silence", Persian (dakhmas). The tower is usually built on the top of a hill where the corpse is exposed and left uncovered, so as to attract the vultures. Inside the tower, there is a deep well and after the corpse is completely peeled of its flesh by the flesh-eating birds, the dry bones are thrown into this well where they gradually pound to dust. In modern Iran, the Zoroastrians have modified their custom and bury the dead body instead. Regarding the Zoroastrian customs, see J.J. Modi, The religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees, 2nd edition, Bombay (1937).

26 I was unable to verify this traditional Chinese report. The funeral ceremonies of the Zoroastrians were conducted by the Priests, and were regarded as a sacred matter. It seems, however, that the "Unclean men" here in our text refers to the Chan-t'u-lo 方荼羅 of Fa Hsien, a transliteration of the Sanskrit word Chandala meaning "untouchables". According to Fa-Hsien "these (Chandala) live away from other people; and when they approach a city or markets, they heat a piece of wood, in order to distinguish themselves. The people know who they are and avoid coming into contact with them". See Giles, H.A. The Travels of Fa-Hsien (399-414) or Records of the Buddhist Kingdoms, 2nd imp. London, p.21.

27 On Iranian festivals see specially Al-Biruni, The Chronology of Ancient Nations. English translation by Sachau, E.D. London (1879) pp.199-219, Christensen, op.cit., pp.196-202.

28 The Chinese title for their emperor T'ien-tzu 天子 "the Son of Heaven", was known to the Iranians during the Sāsānian period. We may say most confidently that the Iranian word Baghpur and its Arabicized form Faghfur or Baghbur (i.e. Heaven-Son), which is the title of the Chinese emperors in the Perso-Arabic works, is a literal translation of T'ien-tzu.

29 The text followed is that of the Wei-shu. The Pei-shih adds practically nothing new to the above-mentioned account except as follows: "In the second year of Kung-ti (555), their king again sent an envoy bearing tribute. Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty sent Li Yü an officer of the Cloud Cavalry on a mission to communicate with Po-ssu, and later Po-ssu sent an envoy along with Li Yü to offer local articles as tribute". PS.97, 18a.

30 Pārs was a place-name in modern Fārs Province. It is not known whether the Persians took their name from this place, or whether, as our text says, it was an ethnic name Parsa, an Iranian people who moved to Fars giving it their name. Most scholars favour the former theory. See Frye, N.R. The Heritage of Persia: A history of Civilization. London (1962), pp.47-48.

31 Unidentified.

32 The Liang-shu is the first Chinese dynastic history to give an account of the state of Hua which had never been mentioned in any earlier or later histories (only Nan-shih has copied the account from the Liang-shu. According to the Liang-shu, "The state of Hua 滑 is a branch of the Ch'e-shih (i.e. Turfan). In the first year of Yung-chien of the Later Han (A.D. 126) Pao-Hua 入滑 (apparently a prince of Ch'e-shih) helped general Pan Yung 班勇 (son of Pan Ch'ao) against the Hsiung nu.... In the periods of the Wei and Chin dynasties they had no relations with China; but in the 15th year of T'ien-chien (A.D. 517), their king Yen-tai-i-li-t'o sent an envoy bearing tribute. In the first year of P'u-t'ung (520), they again sent an envoy with presents of yellow lions, white sable furs, Persian brocades and other things. When the capital of the Yuan Wei was at Sang-kan 桑乾 (at present Ta-t'ung-hsien) the Hua was a petty state subject to the Jui-Jui 茹芮 (Avars), but later it became powerful and conquered neighbouring countries such as Persia, P'an-P'an (Warwaliz?), Kashmir, Karāshahr, Kucha, Kashghār, Aksu, Khotan, Karghalik, extending its domain by more than a thousand li...." LS54, 41b-42a. The Liang-shu locates Hua to the west of Po-t'i 白眉 (i.e. Balkh, LS, 54. 42a) and east of Iran. The locality of the above-mentioned account tend to show that the Hephthalites were known to the Liang under this name, while other histories speak of them as Hsien-ta, Yen-ta, Yeh-ta and I-ta-E-Enoki in his article, "on the nationality of the Ephthalites", Toyo Bunko (1959), pp.1-58, identifies Hua with Ghor. Ghur, a country under the control of the Hephthalites.

- 33 Brahman-India. The Liang shu locates India on the west and south of Po-ssu which is obviously a mistake. India is situated east of Po-ssu.
- 34 泛山栗 Ancient Pronunciation\* P'iwan-liet (K 625-f, 403-d). Shiratori says that the character li 栗 is an error for lin 栗 and identifies it with From. "A new attempt at the solution of the Fu-lin Problem", Toyo Bunko (1956), No.15, p.252.
- 35 江左, was the region of Nanking where Chien-K'ang the capital of the Southern dynasty was situated.
- 36 Ancient Pronunciation\* d'at-Yat (K-217-b, 313-d) Tigris river.
- 37 Cf , Ch.2. note 28.
- 38 "No capital punishment". This is a curious statement, since methods of capital punishment in Sāsānian Iran were both many and fierce. The account of the Po-ssu in the Wei-shu and the Hsin T'ang-shu in which severe punishments are mentioned refute this statement. For more information on this subject see Christensen, op.cit., pp.327-338; also C. Huart, Ancient Persia and Iranian Civilization, London (1972), pp.158-160.
- 39 See Ch.3.
- 40 See Laufer, op.cit., p.521, note 9.
- 41 This product has not been identified; for its tentative identification with Middle Persian furak = New Persian burak, bura, "borax" see Laufer, op.cit., p.503.
- 42 Unidentified.
- 43 The Persian equivalent of this word is unknown. Laufer,(op.cit., p.496) says, it might be the Sanskrit goni, Anglo-Indian gunny, gunny-bag.
- 44 The word is of foreign origin, but it cannot be identified. For its tentative identification with the Persian word barnu or barnun (brocade) vala which means, "a kind of silken stuff", see Laufer, Sino-Iranica, pp.493-95; see also Hirth & Rockhill, Chau Ju-kua, p.220.
- 45 金縷織成 , "textiles worn with gold threads". This is a translation of the Persian word Zarbaft, "woven with gold" (brocade).
- 46 Chao Ju-kua in his account of Malabar says that, "Great numbers of Ta-shih (Arabs) live in this country. Whenever they (i.e.inhabitants) have taken a bath, they anoint their bodies with Yü chin, as they like to have their bodies gilt like that of Buddha". Translation by Hirth, op.cit., p.89. Hirth identified this with Persian Karkam (botanical name Curcuma). کرکم

47 Ancient Pronunciation\* Miuk (K.1035-a). The account of the state of Mu in the Sui-shu reads: "The capital of the state of Mu is situated west of the Wu-hu river (Āmu-Daryā), and is also the ancient territory of An-hsi. It borders with Wu-na-ho 烏那曷 (?) The king is surnamed Chao-wu, and from the same line as the king of K'ang, his name is A-lan-mi. The capital city is 3 square li, and has 2,000 talented soldiers. 500 li in a north-easterly direction is the country of An (Bukhārā); to the east it is over 200 li to Wu-na-ho. Po-ssu is over 4,000 li to its west, and Kua-chou (in Kansu) 7,700 li to the east. In the middle of Ta-yeh period they sent a mission bearing tribute of local products. SS, 83, 146. The identification of Mu is the most difficult among the nine countries of Chao-wu clan mentioned in the Sui-shu. Marquart, relying on the authority of Al-Biruni who gives the distance from Bukhārā to Āmuye 19 farsang (500 Chinese li), identifies Mu with Āmuye, Āmul or Āmui in the middle ages (modern Charjuy). cf. Chavannes, Documents, p.137, n.1. Chang-Hsing-lang, following Ting Chien, identifies Mu with Mu-lu (Marv) in the Han times. Chung-hsi chiao-t'ung shih-liao hui-pien, Vol.5, pp.97-98.

48 Ancient Pronunciation\* t,uo-xua-la. This term was known to the Chinese with different translations such as 吐呼羅, 都貨羅, 覩貨邏 and 吐谷羅. These terms with their Arabic-Persian equivalent طاهراستان or تاهراستان (Takhārestān) are considered to be from the same origin. In the Hsin T'ang-shu we read that, "T'u-hō-lo is situated west of Ts'ung-ling (the Pamirs); south of Wu-hu river (Āmu Daryā), which is the ancient territory of Ta-hsia (i.e. Bactria). They (Tokharians) mingle with I-ta (Hephthalites); and have 10,000 capable soldiers; the land is fertile. There are few girls and many boys.... The king bears the title of Yeh-hu 葉護 (Yabghu-Jabghu). During the periods of Wu-te (618-627) and Chen-Kuan (627-649), they came to the court with tribute. In the first year of Yung-hui (650), they sent a big bird to the court. The bird was seven feet high, black in colour, with feet like a camel, shaking its wings the while, and was able to travel 300 li in a day, it could eat iron and the native people call it t'o niao (camel-bird) cf.n. 13. During the Hsien-ch'ing (656-660), the walled city of Warwaliz was made the administrative capital of the Yüeh-chih; the smaller towns were divided into 24 districts; and king A-shih-na was appointed as its governor-general...." HTS, 221 (hsia) 6a-6b. See also Chavannes, Documents, pp.155-160. Tuan-ch'eng-shih in his Yu-yang tsa-tsu attributes the construction of the walled city of Fo-ti-yeh (Bactria) of the kingdom of Tokhārestān to a certain Iranian king named Wu-se-to-hsi 烏瑟多習 (?). "When the walled city reached the height of 2 or 3 feet, it was then destroyed. The king said: 'I would be unjust if the order of Heaven to erect this city was not carried out'. His daughter named Na-hsi noting her father's sadness, inquired about its cause: 'There is an enemy of the king in the neighbourhood; I am the king of Po-ssu and I rule over 1,000 states. Now in the middle of T'u huo-lo I wish to build this walled city. But even if I multiply my efforts for a thousand generations, it cannot be done. This is what makes me feel sad'. His daughter said: 'I want the king not to be sad. At dawn, order the workmen to follow my footprints, and build upon them; then the walls will stand up'. The king was astonished at her remarks. At dawn the girl began walking in a north-westerly direction; she cut the little finger of her right hand and dripping blood made traces on which the workmen followed the construction. The girl then changed into a sea-goddess whose pond

still exists at the foot of the ramparts (of the city); it is bright and clear as a mirror and its circumference is over 500 paces.

49 "The country of K'ang", says the Hsin T'ang-shu, "is sometimes called Sa-mo-chien 薩末鞏 or sa-mo-chien 薩末鞏 and is the Hsi-wan chin 悉萬斤 in the Yüan-Wei period. (these different transcriptions are all alternative names of Samarkand). To its south is Kish, 150 li away. Hsi ts'ao (Ishtikhan) is situated to its northwest over 100 li away. The domain of the Maymurch lies 100 li to its southeast. Chung-ts'ao 中曹 (Kabudhān) is on its north at a distance of 50 li. It is situated south of Zarafshān river; and has 30 big walled cities and 300 small places. The king is surnamed Wen and by origin he is a man of Yüeh-chih...." They were defeated by the Turks and moved southwards to the Pamirs.... HTS 221 (hsia) 1a. However, Soghdianā was an Iranian region, and its population consisted of two groups; the ruling class and the governed class. The latter were almost, if not entirely, Iranian, while the former were of foreign origin such as the Greek soldiers, the Kushanā, the Hephthalites and the Turks who occupied the region one after another. The region was conquered by the Arab general Qotaiba ibn Muslim. For further information on the conquest of Qotaiba see Gibb, H.A.R. The Arab conquest in Central Asia. New York (1970), pp.29-58.

50 Khazars a branch of the Western Turks who, towards the middle of the 7th century, held hegemony over the immense part of the Russian land, occupying the area between the Ural and Danieper; having Itil (at the mouth of the Volga) as their capital. A bibliography on the Khazars is to be found Minorsky, Hūdūd Āl-Ālam, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, New Series XI, London (1937), p.450. See also Dunlop, D.M. The History of Jewish Khazars, Princeton University Press, 1954.

51 Byzantium. For a full discussion of Fu-lin and the usage of this term in earlier Chinese sources see Shiratori, K. "A new attempt at the solution of the Fu-lin problem", Toyo-bunko, No.15. (1956), pp.158-329.

52 Su 蘇 has been identified with "Storax", Laufer, Sino-Iranica pp.456-60. I was, however, unable to verify this report.

53 To escape from battle was an unforgivable offence and a division of special soldiers under a high commander was formed in the Iranian army under the title "Dizhbān", commander of a fortress, whose duty was to look after soldiers' conduct during battle. This division was always placed in the rear of the army, and had the extraordinary power to kill those soldiers who were escaping from the battle field.

54 Trial by ordeal or war in Pahlavi was often used in ancient Iran and in Sāsānian Times when the nature of certain cases made judgment difficult. There were two different methods of ordeal; cold سرد and hot گرم. The most popular one was hot ordeal (i.e. fire - or heat). Firdausi in the story of Siyāvoush gives a detailed description of his fire ordeal; describing how saintly Siyāvoush, who was accused by Queen Sudābah of a wicked offence (trying to seduce her), protected his purity by passing through a "mountain of fire". The blazing fire which had turned the night into day did not harm him at all, and he cheerfully came out of the fire with a smile on his face.

54 (contd)

His innocence pleased the king and his supporters. Firdausi, Shāhnāma, p.123. Another method was pouring molten metal on the accused person or giving him sulphurous water when about to take an oath. These ordeals had to be performed in the presence of witnesses and were sometimes presided over by a Chief Mobed in special ceremonies. See Christensen, op.cit., p.327.

55 For a variety of domestic animals in T'ang China see E. Schafer, The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics, California University Press (1963).

56 The identity of this animal is unknown. It was possibly a member of the mammalian families Viverridae (including mongooses) or Mustelidae (including polecats, ferret, weasels). Some of these have most of the general features described in this text and were at one time used for rat catching. Another possibility is the renowned Persian cat.

57 Present-day Lung-hsien in Shan-hsi.

58 The last character is somehow corrupt and should read Yeh 葉. Sui-yeh is Tokmak in the Protectorate of An-hsi in Kan-su.

59 大毛繡 has been identified as asbestos. It would seem that this Iranian present to the Chinese court was probably a carpet made of asbestos. On asbestos see B. Laufer, "Asbestos and Salamandar: An Essay in Chinese and Hellenistic Folk-lore", T'oung Pao, 16 (1915), pp.299-373; Schafer, op.cit., pp.199-200.

60 This is probably a carpet too.

61 The Chinese transcription is a transliteration of the Iranian word Tabarestān "The Mountain Lord", a Sāsānian Province situated to the north of the Elburz chain, lying along the south coast of the Caspian Sea (the little sea of our text). Now this region is called Māzandarān.

62 婆里, the first character is somehow corrupt and it should read So-li 婆里 which is closer to the Iranian word Sāri, the capital city of Tabarestān. The Ti-li-chih of the Yüan-shih mentions this city under the name Sa-li-ya 撒里牙 which is a transliteration of the name Sariya (i.e. Sari).

63 Unidentified.

64 Unidentified.

65 "The black Arabs" refers to the Abbasids dynasty which ruled from 750-1258.

66 "Huo-hsin 大羣, Huo-li-hsi-mi 貨利智彌 or Kuo-li 過利 says the Hsin T'ang-shu is situated south of the Āmu-Daryā. 600 li to

66 (contd)

its southeast is Hsu-ti (Batik). On the southwest it borders on Po-ssu; in the northwest on T'u-chüeh ho-sa (Khazars Turks); and it is the old territory of the walled city of Ao-chien 奧鞏, a small kingdom of the state of K'ang. Its capital is the walled city of Chi-to-chu-che 急多爾產 (Turjāniyā). They are the only people amongst the various barbarians to attach oxen to carts; and their merchants, riding these carts, travel to many countries. In the tenth year of T'ien pao (751) the chief of this land sent an envoy to present black salt to the Imperial Court. During the Pao-ying period (762), they again sent an ambassador to pay homage to the court". HTS 221 (hsia), 3b. T'ang Hui-yao says "Huo-tz'u-mi has borders with Po-ssu, and their customs resemble those of the Po-ssu". THY, 100.P.17<sup>o</sup> Huo-Tz'u-mi, Huo-hsin, Huo-li-hsi-mi and Kuo-li all refer to Khwārizm, a country south of the sea of Aral, now in the Soviet Union. For more information on Khwārizm see, Le Strange, op.cit., pp.445-459; Barthold, W. Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion. E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, New Series, V, London (1968).

67 Most of the names in the following paragraphs are unidentified.



c	b	a
河經其城中南流土地平正出金銀鍮石珊瑚	二万四千二百二十八里城方十里戶十餘万	波斯國都宿利城在忸密西古條支國也去代

a 4 都  
a 5 宿  
a 6 利  
a 8-11  
a 12-16  
b 11 城  
b 14 里  
c 1-11

:CS 治  
:CS 蘇  
:CS 蘭  
: not in CS, SS  
:SS 即條支之古地也  
:SS 都城  
:CS, SS 餘里  
: not in CS

i h g l e d c b a

琥珀車渠馬腦多大真珠頗黎瑠璃水精瑟瑟  
 金剛火齊鑛鐵銅錫朱砂水銀綾錦疊氍毹  
 毼毼赤麀皮及薰陸鬱金蘇合青木等香胡椒  
 畢撥石密千年棗香附子訶梨勒無食子鹽綠  
 雌黃等物氣候暑熱家自藏冰地多沙磧引水  
 溉灌其五穀及鳥獸等與中夏略同唯無稻及  
 黍稷土出名馬大驢及駝往往有日行七百里  
 者富室至有數千頭又出白象師子大鳥卵有  
 鳥形如橐駝有兩翼飛而不能高食草與肉亦

a 3-4  
 a 5-6 馬 月  
 b 10 石 沙  
 c 8 陸  
 d 1 畢  
 d 6 年  
 f 7 鳥

; not in Cs, SS  
 ; CS 馬 石 齒 , :SS 碼 石 齒 , CTS 瑪 瑙 HTS 碼 石 齒  
 ; CS, SS 沙 六  
 ; CS, PS 畢  
 ; CS 年  
 ; CS 大 鳥 卵

i h g f e d c b a

能噉火其王姓波氏名斯坐金羊牀戴金花冠  
 衣錦袍織成帔飾以真珠寶物其俗丈夫剪髮  
 戴白皮帽貫頭衫兩廂近下開之亦有巾帔緣  
 以織成婦女服大衫披大帔其髮前為髻後披  
 之飾以金銀花仍貫五色珠落之於膊王於其  
 國內別有小牙十餘所猶中國之離宮也每年  
 四月出遊處之十月乃還王即位以後擇諸子  
 內賢者密書其名封之於庫諸子及大臣皆莫  
 之知也王死衆乃發書視之其封內有名者即

- a 15 戴 :CS 着前
- b 17 剪 :CS 箱
- c 9 廂 :PS 披
- d 18 披 :CS 華
- e 6 花 :CS 終
- e 12 珠 :CS 仍
- g 9 乃 :PS 發
- i 7-8 發 :PSB 發

i h g p e d c b a

立以為王餘子出各就邊任兄弟更不相見也  
 國人號王曰醫噴妃曰防步率王之諸子曰殺  
 野大官有摸胡壇掌國內獄訟泥忽汗掌庫藏  
 開禁地早掌文書及眾務次有遏羅訶地掌王  
 之內事薛波勃掌四方兵馬其下皆有屬官分  
 統其事兵有甲稍圓排劍弩弓箭戰兼乘象百  
 人隨之其刑法重罪懸諸竿上射殺之次則繫  
 獄新王立乃釋之輕罪則剗刑若髡或剪半鬚  
 及繫牌於項以為恥辱犯彊盜者繫之終身姦

b 6 醫  
 c 13 泥  
 d 1 開  
 d 3-4 地  
 e 4-6 薛波勃  
 f 4 兵  
 i 8-9 恥  
 i 11 彊  
 i 14 繫

: CS 醫  
 : CS, PS 泥  
 : CS 開  
 : CS 地  
 : CS 薛波勃  
 : CS 兵  
 : SS 恥  
 : PS 彊  
 : CS 繫

i h g f e d c b a

貴人妻者男子流婦人割其耳鼻賦稅則準地  
 輸銀錢俗事火神天神文字與胡書異多以姊  
 妹為妻妾自餘婚合亦不擇尊卑諸夷之中最  
 為醜穢矣百姓女年十歲以上有姿貌者王收  
 養之有功勲人即以分賜死者多弃屍於山一  
 月著服城外有人別居唯知喪葬之事號為不  
 淨人若入城市搖鈴自別以六月為歲首尤重  
 七月七日十二月一日其日人庶以上各相命  
 召設會作樂以極懽娛又每年正月二十日各

b 6-9 大神天神

"Fire-God, the God of Heaven" :CS 大神天神  
"Fire-Hsien God"

b 10-15 文字與胡書異

"Their script is different from those of other barbarians".  
: CTS 文字同於諸胡 "Their script is similar to those of various barbarians".

d 5-6 百姓

:CS 民

f 2-3 著服

:CS 治服 , PS 著服 , SS 持服 , CTS 制服

h 12 合

:CS 民

i 8 惟

:CS 歡

d	c	b	a
使朝獻	斯國王居和多千 萬敬拜朝廷嘉納 之自此每	國天子天之所生 願日出處常為漢 中天子波	祭其先死者神龜 中其國遣使上書 貢物至天

波斯國其先有波斯匿王者子孫以王父字爲  
氏因爲國號國有城周迴三十二里城高四丈  
皆有樓觀城內屋宇數百千間城外佛寺三  
百所西去城十五里有土山山非過高其勢連  
接甚遠中有就鶩鳥噉羊土人極以爲患國中有  
優鉢曇花鮮華可愛出龍駒馬鹹池生珊瑚樹  
長一二尺亦有琥珀馬腦眞珠玫瑰等國內不

以爲珍市買用金銀婚姻法下聘訖女壻將數十人迎婦壻著金線錦袍師子錦袴戴天冠婦亦如之婦兄弟便來捉手付度夫婦之禮於茲永畢國東與滑國西及南俱與婆羅門國北與汎慄國接中大通二年遣使獻佛牙



c            b            a

波斯國都達曷水之西蘇蘭城即條支之故地也其王字  
 庫薩和都城方十餘里勝兵二萬餘人乘象而戰國無死  
 刑或斷手則足沒家財或剃去其鬚或繫排於項以為標異

a 5 曷  
 b 16-19 乘象而戰  
 b 10-ca 國無死刑  
 c 17 排 :CTS 牌  
 c 20-24 以為標異 :CTS 以志之

:HTS 過  
 :WS 戰 乘象  
 :not in other texts.  
 :HTS 木

j i h g f e d c b a

人年三歲已上出口錢四文妻其姊妹人死者弃屍于山  
 持服一月王著金冠冠坐金師子座傳金屑於鬚上以為  
 飾衣錦袍加瓔珞於其上土多良馬大驢師子白象大鳥  
 卵真珠頗黎獸魄珊瑚瑠璃碼碯水精瑟瑟呼洛羯呂騰  
 火齊金剛金銀瑜石銅鑛鐵錫錦疊細布氍毹毼毼護那  
 越諾布檀金縷織成赤麀皮朱沙水銀薰陸鬱金蘇合青  
 木等諸香胡椒畢撥石蜜半蜜千年棗附子訶梨勒無食  
 子鹽綠雌黃突厥不能至其國亦羈縻之波斯每遣使貢  
 獻西去海數百里東去穆國四千餘里西北去拂菻四千  
 五百里東去瓜州萬一千七百里煬帝遣雲騎尉李昱使

a 1-11

:not in other texts.

b 11-14 金師子座  
金羊牀

'The golden-lion throne' :WS and CS

'The golden-sheep throne (couch)

g 10 蜜

:WS 蜜

h 6-16

: not in other texts.

i 21-j3 四个五百里

: HTS 四个里

通波斯尋遣使隨昱貢方物

k j i h g f e d c b a

波斯國在京師西一萬五千三百里東與吐火羅康國接北鄰突厥  
 之可薩部西北拒拂菻正西及南俱臨大海戶數十萬其王居有二  
 城復有大城十餘猶中國之離宮其王初嗣位便密選子才堪承統  
 者書其名字封而藏之王死後大臣與王之群子共發封而視之奉  
 所書名者為主焉其王冠金花冠坐獅子牀服錦袍加以瓔珞俗事  
 天地日月水火諸神西域諸胡事火祆者皆詣波斯受法焉其事神  
 以麝香和蘇塗鬚點額及於耳鼻用以爲敬拜必交股文字同於諸  
 胡男女皆徒跣丈夫剪髮戴白皮帽衣不開襟并有巾帔多用蘇方  
 青白色爲之兩邊緣以織成錦婦人亦巾帔裙衫辨髮垂後飾以金  
 銀其國乘象而戰每一象戰士百人有敗衄者則盡殺之國人生女  
 年十歲已上有姿貌者其王收而養之以賞有功之臣俗右尊而左

a 12-13 三百

: not in HTS

a 21 國

: not in HTS

b 1 之

: not in HTS

b 25 有

: HTS 之

c 16-17 初嗣

: WS 即位

g 2-13 麝香

和蘇塗鬚點額及於耳鼻

: HTS 麝香蘇塗鬚點額

麝香

n m l k j i h g f e d c b a  
 卑以六月一日為歲首斷獄不為文書約束口決於庭其繫囚無年限唯王者代立則釋之其叛逆之罪就火被燒鐵灼其舌瘡白者為理直瘡黑者為有罪其刑有斷手則足髡鉗則輕罪剪鬚或繫牌於項以志之經時月而釋焉其強盜一入獄至老更不出小盜罰以銀錢死亡則棄之於山制服一月而即去氣候暑熱土地寬平知耕種多畜牧有鳥形如橐駝飛不能高食草及肉亦能噉犬獲羊土人極以為患又多白馬駿犬或赤日行七百里者駁犬金所謂波斯犬也出驥及大驢腦子白象珊瑚樹高一二尺琥珀車渠瑤瑠火珠玻璃琉璃無食子香附子訶黎勒胡椒華撥石蜜千年棗甘露堯隋大業末西突厥葉護可汗頻擊破其國波斯王庫薩和為西突厥所殺其子施利立葉護因分其部帥監統其國波斯竟臣於葉護及葉護可汗死其所令監統者因自擅於波斯不復役屬於西突厥施利立一年卒乃立庫薩和之女為王突厥又殺之施利之子單羯方奔拂菻於是國人迎而立之是為伊恒支在位二年而卒兄子伊嗣候立

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15a

- a 11 信文 ; HTS 罪
- c 1 理 ; not in HTS
- c 7-8 有罪 ; HTS 曲
- h 18-124 ; not in HTS
- j 10-11 頻擊其部 ; HTS 討 殘
- k 8-11 因分其部 ; not in HTS
- k 17-23 波斯竟臣於葉護 ; not in HTS.
- n 15-18 在位二年 ; not in HTS

n m l k j i h g f e d c b a

二十一年伊嗣候遣使獻一獸名活禱地形類鼠而色青身長八九  
 寸能入穴取鼠伊嗣候懦弱為大首領所逐遂奔火吐羅未至亦為  
 大食兵所殺其子名卑路斯又投吐火羅葉護獲免卑路斯龍朔元  
 年奏言頻被大食侵擾請兵救援詔遣隴州南由縣令王名遠克使  
 西域分置州縣因列其地疾陵城為波斯都督府授卑路斯為都督  
 是後數遣使貢獻咸亨中卑路斯自來入朝高宗甚加恩賜拜右武  
 衛將軍儀鳳三年令吏部侍郎裴行儉將兵冊送卑路斯為波斯王  
 行儉以其路遠至安西碎裝而還卑路斯獨返不得入其國漸為大  
 食所侵客於吐火羅國二十餘年有部落數千人後漸離散至景龍  
 二年又來入朝拜為左威衛將軍無何病卒其國遂滅而部眾猶存  
 自開元十年至天寶六載凡十遣使來朝并獻方物四月遣使獻瑪  
 瑙牀九年四月獻火毛繡舞筵長毛繡舞筵無孔真珠乾元元年波  
 斯與大食同寇廣州劫倉庫焚廬舍浮海而去大曆六年遣使來朝  
 獻真珠等

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15  
20  
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b 10-11 懦弱

c 3 矣

d 10-25

e 20 援

f 1-7 是後數遣使貢獻

f 11-17 卑路斯自來入朝

f 18-23 高宗甚加恩賜

i 17-19 數千人

l 13-17 長毛繡舞筵

: HTS 不君

: not in HTS

: not in HTS

: HTS 拜

: not in HTS

: HTS 猶入朝

: not in HTS

: not in HTS

: not in HTS

e d c b a

波斯居達過水西距京師萬五千里而言厥東與吐火羅康接北隣  
 突厥可薩部西南皆瀕海西北言厥四千里拂菻也人數十萬其先  
 波斯匿王大月氏別裔王因以姓又為國號治二城有大城十餘  
 俗尊右下左祠天地日月水火祠夕以麀射揉蘇澤而顏鼻耳西域  
 諸胡受其法以祠祆拜必交股俗徒跣丈夫祝髮衣不刮襟青白

b 6-10 西南皆瀕海

: CTS 正西及南俱臨大海

b 13-16 贏四千里

: not in CTS

b 18 尸

: HTS 人

b 24-c17

: not in CTS

d 24-e8 西域諸胡受其法以祠祆

: CTS 西域諸胡奉火祆

者皆詣波斯受法焉

e 18 祝

: CTS 前

n m l k j i h g f e d c b a

爲巾帔緣以錦婦辨髮著後戰乘象一象士百人負則盡殺斷罪  
 不爲文書決於廷叛者鐵灼其舌瘡白爲直黑爲曲刑有髡鉗別  
 劓小罪形或系木于頸以時月而置劫盜囚終老偷者輸銀錢凡  
 死棄于山服閱月除氣常歎熱地夷漫知耕種畜牧有就焉鳥能  
 羊多善犬驢大驢產珊瑚高三三尺隋末西突厥葉護可汗討殘  
 其國殺王庫薩和其子施利立葉護使部帥監統施利死遂不肯  
 臣立庫薩和女爲王突厥又殺之施利之子單羯方奔拂菻國人  
 迎立之是爲伊但支死兄子伊嗣俟立貞觀十二年遣使者沒似  
 半朝貢又獻活禡蛇狀類鼠色正青長九寸能捕穴鼠伊嗣俟不  
 君爲大酋所逐奔吐火羅半道大食擊殺之子卑路斯入吐火羅  
 以免遣使者告難高宗以遠不可師謝遣會大食解而去吐火羅  
 以兵納之龍朔初又訴爲大食所侵是時天子方遣使者到西域  
 分置州縣以疾陵城爲波斯都督府即拜卑路斯爲都督俄爲大  
 食所滅雖不能國咸亨中猶入朝授右武衛將軍死始其子泥涅

- a 10 著
- d 22-c1 鷲鳥能噉羊
- h 7 但俟
- h 14 俟
- h 18-19 十二道
- j 11-12 半道
- k 3-L4
- :CTS 毳
- : not in CTS
- : CTS 恒
- : CTS 候
- : CTS 二十一
- : CTS 未至
- : not in CTS



n m l k j i h g f e d c b a

師為質，調露元年詔裴行儉將兵護還將復王其國，以道遠至安  
 西碎葉行儉還泥涅師因客吐火羅二十年部落益離散景龍初  
 復來朝授左威衛將軍病死西部獨存開元天寶間遣使者十輩  
 獻碼碯牀火毛繡舞筵乾元初從大食襲廣州焚倉庫盧舍浮海  
 走大曆時復來獻又有陀拔斯單者或曰陀拔薩憚其國三面阻  
 山北瀕小海居婆里城世為波斯東大將波斯滅不肯臣大食天  
 寶五載王忽魯汗遣使入朝封為歸信王後八年遣子自會羅來  
 朝拜右武衛負外中郎將賜紫袍金魚留宿衛為黑衣大食所滅  
 貞觀後遠小國君遣使者來朝獻有司未嘗參考本末者今附之  
 左方曰火辭彌與波斯接貞觀十八年與摩羅游使者借朝二十  
 一年有健達王獻佛土菜莖五葉赤華紫須龍胡元年多福王難  
 婆修疆宜說遣使者來朝總章元年有末陀提王開元五年有習  
 阿薩般王安殺並遣使者朝貢七年訶毗施王捺塞因吐火羅大  
 酋羅摩獻師子五色鸚鵡天寶時來朝者曰俱爛那曰舍摩曰威

b 7-9 泥涅師  
 b 25 初  
 c 1 復  
 c 11 死  
 c 16-21 開元天寶間  
 e 2-4 大曆時  
 (10a) e8-(10b) d25

:CTS 卑路斯  
 :CTS 二年  
 :CTS 又  
 :CTS 卒  
 :CTS 開元十年至天寶元載  
 :CTS 大曆六年  
 :not in CTS

遠曰蘇吉利發屋蘭曰蘇利悉單曰建城曰新城曰俱位凡八國俱  
位或曰商彌治阿賒廕師多城在大雪山勃律河北地寒有五穀  
蒲陶若榴冬窟室國人常助小勃律爲中國候新城之國在石東  
北言廳百里有穹室羯城亦曰新城曰小石國城後爲葛邏祿所并

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