

CHAPTER I

Preliminaries

Introduction

Sui-Tang phonological reconstructions, which are nowadays usually called "Ancient Chinese" or "Middle Chinese", tend to take as their basis the Qieyun 切韻 system (QYS), as viewed through the structural framework of rime tables such as the Yunjing 韻鏡. There has been relatively little consensus over the years regarding the linguistic basis of the QYS. On the one extreme, there are those who have held that it represents an actual spoken dialect. Bernhard Karlgren to the end of his life considered it to have been based on the early Tang dialect of Chang-an 長安. Certain scholars today believe that it reflects the pronunciation of Luoyang 洛陽. On the other hand there are those who view the QYS as a maximally differentiated amalgam or conflation of the standard or upper-class dialects of various important sixth century cities of east-central China, such as Jinling 金陵, Ye 鄴, and Luoyang. And there are some who feel that this conflation encompasses certain already obsolete sound distinctions inherited from earlier rime books, poetic rime traditions, etc. There is in addition a further cleavage between those who think the QYS represented an actually utilized, if admittedly artificial, reading pronunciation and others who believe it was an abstract system which was never really verbalized in all its complexity by anyone. Given this range of views on the nature of the QYS, it is clear that there must be fairly marked differences of opinion today regarding what the terms "Ancient Chinese" or "Middle Chinese" really mean. That the charts in the rime tables are in some way connected with the Qieyun is clear because they explicitly incorporate the Qieyun rime categories into their structural nomenclature. But when, why, where, and by whom they were compiled is unknown. The currently popular hypotheses regarding these questions are really no more than conjectures.

What does seem fairly clear is that the rime tables date from after the completion of the Qieyun and cannot have been written by anyone who actually lived in Qieyun times or heard with his own ears any language spoken in those times.

There are in print today no fewer than a dozen different systematic reconstructions based on the QYS. The extent to which any of these really represents the phonology of any form of actual speech of ca. 600 A.D. can be no more certain than the likelihood that the QYS reflects such speech. And this question, as we have seen, is a moot one as of the present time at least. Qieyun studies may thus be said to constitute a special field within sinology which deals in essence with the internal structures of particular texts and with the traditions deriving from those texts. This field actually lies primarily within the realm of philology rather than linguistics.

In the present monograph we undertake investigations which deal with phonology of Tang and pre-Tang times but are not viewed as part of the field of Qieyun studies. Our concern is on the contrary with the dialects of northwest China, ranging from the modern vernaculars of Gansu, Qinghai, and Shaanxi to the ancient dialects of the Chang-an and Dunhuang areas in the fifth and sixth centuries. In the present chapter we survey the materials which will serve as the primary basis for our reconstructions. In Chapter II we deal with syllable initials. In Chapter III we proceed to a discussion of various topics which are of general import for the reconstruction of the syllable finals. In Chapter IV we present a group by group discussion of these finals. The reconstructed system at this point will be semi-phonemic, in that certain sounds which were probably allophones of the same phoneme will still be distinguished in the provisional transcription. In Chapter V the system will be more rigorously phonemicized, and a synoptic table will be given for the reconstruction as a whole.

1.1 The Northwest Dialects of Late Tang and Five Dynasties Times. The starting point of our discussions will be the sound systems of a number of late Tang and post-Tang dialects of Shazhou 沙州 (i.e. the area around modern Dunhuang 敦煌) and of Chang-an (modern Xi'an 西安). The Shazhou reconstructions have been presented in four studies

(Coblin Ms. 1, Ms. 2, Ms. 3, Ms. 4). They are based primarily on three types of material: 1) the sound systems of various modern dialects of Gansu and Qinghai, 2) erroneous loangraph substitutions in the Dunhuang bianwen texts, as studied by Shao Rongfen 邵榮芬 (Shao 1963), and 3) Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese texts found at Dunhuang and studied by a number of modern scholars, most notably Luo Changpei 羅常培 (1933), B. Csongor (1960), and T. Takata (1988). It has been assumed that each transcriptional text represents the sound system of an ancient dialect, and each such dialect has been named for the text which embodies it, i.e.

| Dialect | Text Source (abbreviations after Csongor 1960 and Takata 1981a, 1981b, 1988) |
|--------------------|---|
| Shazhou C (SZC): | Text C: <u>Qianziwen</u> 千字文 (P.T. 1046) |
| Shazhou K (SZK): | Text K: <u>Jingangjing</u> 金剛經 (IOL C 129) |
| Shazhou O (SZO): | Text O: <u>Emituojing</u> 阿彌陀經 (IOL C 130) |
| Shazhou T (SZT): | Text T: <u>Dasheng zhongzong jianjie</u> 大乘中宗見解 (IOL C 93) |
| Shazhou TD (SZTD): | Text TD: <u>Tiandi bayang shenzhoujing</u> 天地八陽神咒經 (P.T. 1258) |

Elements or forms shared by all the Shazhou dialects or for which reflexes in all the dialects can be regularly derived will be characterized as "Common Shazhou" (CSZ). CSZ can be thought of historically as the proto-language from which the various Shazhou dialects developed. The Chang-an dialect of ca. 820 A.D. is represented by the Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese names in the Sino-Tibetan Treaty Inscription of 821-822 and conversely by the less easily interpreted Chinese transcriptions of Tibetan names in the same text. This text was drafted at Chang-an in 821 (Li 1980:123), and the transcriptions found in it probably represent the pronunciation of the capital dialect. It is likely that the Treaty Inscription is contemporary with or slightly earlier than the oldest Shazhou transcriptional materials.

1.2 The Amoghavajra Transcriptions. Moving back to a somewhat earlier period we have the very extensive transcriptional corpus of Amoghavajra (hereafter Am; Chinese name: Bukong [jingang] 不空 [金剛]), an Indian monk who lived from 705 to 774 and worked in the northwest area, in or near Chang-an, for approximately the last forty years of his life (Liu 1984:45, note). The *dhāraṇī* transcriptions of Am are best known to Western sinologists through Maspero's monographic-length article, "Le dialecte de Tch'ang-ngan sous le T'ang" (Maspero 1920). Concerning Am's work and influence, Maspero remarked (1920:20): "L'école d'Amoghavajra a inventé un véritable système scientifique de transcription du sanscrit en chinois, de façon à permettre la restitution absolument exacte du texte original; ce système que sa régularité rend supérieur à tous ses prédécesseurs, remplaça rapidement ceux-ci, et devint le système unique de transcription des *dhāraṇī* jusqu'à l'époque mongole." Thus, the transcriptional system of Am, which is so commonly encountered in later Tang and Song Buddhist texts, may be increasingly anachronistic for the time after he lived. But it should be a fairly accurate reflection of the sound system of Chang-an during his active period there. The initial system reflected in the Am data has been studied by Liu (1984), who took as his corpus texts from T vols. 14, 18, 19, 20, and 21. Liu's material can, to a certain extent, also throw light on the finals. We shall use his findings here and shall supplement them with our own data gleaned from T 982 and T 1000.

1.3 Early Tibetan Transcriptions. For the period between the mid-seventh and mid-eighth centuries we have a very different source of information in the early Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese names found in the Old Tibetan Annals (OTA; Bacot et al. 1940-46:13-72; Spanien and Imaeda 1978-79, plates 579-595) and the Old Tibetan Chronicle (OTC; Bacot et al. 1940-46:97-170; Spanien and Imaeda 1978-79, plates 557-577). These forms differ in interesting ways from those found in the Treaty Inscription and the Shazhou texts and seem to reflect earlier stages of the underlying

language. They are in many cases fairly accurately datable. Coinciding with them one also finds in the Tang histories Chinese transcriptions of Tibetan names; and these, though more difficult to interpret, can also throw light on the underlying Chinese sound system.

1.4 The Yan Shigu Fanqie. The fanqie 反切 glosses and direct sound annotations included by Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581-645) in his commentary to the Hanshu 漢書音義 (completed 641) are an important source of information on the Chang-an dialect as it stood at ca. 600 A.D. Yan, who was the grandson of the famous Yan Zhitui 顏之推, was born in Chang-an and, with no significant interruptions, spent his entire life there (Dong 1978:555-567). It is generally thought that his phonological glosses reflect the sound system of the Chang-an area. These materials were studied in detail by Ōshima (1969-71; 1971), whose conclusions are widely cited as the standard interpretation of the Yan Shigu data. There have, however, been two further treatments, by Dong (1978) and Zhong (1982). Zhong's study is short and cryptic; but Dong's work is very detailed and discursive; and his analysis is in our opinion sometimes superior to that of Ōshima. The positions of all three investigators must be carefully compared in establishing the sound categories of Yan Shigu's language.

1.5 The Jñānagupta Transcriptions. For the late sixth century, i.e. the period during and immediately before Yan Shigu's childhood, we turn to the transcriptions of Jñānagupta (hereafter Jn; Chinese name: Shenajueduo 闍那崛多), an Indian monk who learned Chinese well and worked in China between 560 and 604. Most of this time was spent at Chang-an, though during the early part of it there was also a sojourn at Chengdu 成都 in modern-day Sichuan (Yuchi 1982:19). The work of Jn is perhaps best known in the sinological literature through an article on certain of his Lotus Sutra (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka) dhāraṇī transcriptions by Shinjō Mizutani (Mizutani 1960). These materials and Mizutani's work on them have subsequently been mentioned and discussed a number of times by E.G. Pulleyblank (e.g. 1965, 1983, 1984). More re-

cently a much broader corpus of Jn's work has been used by Yuchi (1982) to discuss the late sixth century Chang-an sound system as a whole. Yuchi's approach has been criticized by Liu (1984), who objects that since the sound system reflected in the Jn data is different in certain respects from that found in the Am transcriptions, the former cannot possibly represent a Tang-time northwest dialect. Yuchi has replied to this and other points in a spirited rejoinder (1985). Without entering into the details of the exchange, we must agree with Yuchi that the differences between these sixth and eighth century systems can and probably should be attributed to evolution within one and the same dialect rather than to different dialect bases for the two transcriptional corpora.

The Jn data can be divided into two types. The first of these is the dhāraṇī. As has often been noted, it can be assumed that a high degree of phonetic accuracy was sought in transcribing these mantras, because their magical efficacy was held to depend on correct oral renditions. It was certainly this intense concern with accurate pronunciation which led to the insertion of the so-called "special fanqie " into these dhāraṇī texts. Where a particular Sanskrit syllable was in some way not amenable to satisfactory representation in Chinese, the first step was to select an existing Chinese syllable which best approximated the target entity and then write down a character for this syllable. The use of this character, which I shall call here the "place-holder," was necessitated by the nature of the Chinese script. Once the place-holder was in position, a special fanqie gloss could be appended to it, and the sound spelled by the fanqie formula would then become the new reading of the place-holder. These special fanqie by their very nature often yielded combinations which violated the syllable canon of the underlying form of Chinese; and the reader was thus in effect instructed to produce phonotactically foreign combinations, much as a foreign language learner is taught to do today. Other conventions prescribed the use of an oblique tone (usually shang 上) for Sanskrit short vowel syllables; added the mouth radical to characters representing Chinese l-initial syllables to indicate an initial trill, etc., etc. The place-holders, together with their special fanqie , provide invaluable bits of information about the underlying Chinese dialect with which Jn was working.

The case of the "non-dhāraṇī" transcriptions is on the contrary troublesome. For example, if one compares Jn's translation of the Lotus Sutra (T 264) with that of Kumārajīva (T 262) one finds that, with the exception of the dhāraṇī sections, the former is virtually a verbatim copy of the latter, text, transcriptions, and all. (Note the comments of Hurvitz 1976:ix on this matter.) It was only in dealing with the dhāraṇī that Jn put aside Kumārajīva's text and reworked the material himself. Thus, in the Lotus Sutra it is only Jn's dhāraṇī versions which can validly be used to study his variety of Chinese. This problem must be constantly kept in mind when any of the non-dhāraṇī material of Jn is used.

Yuchi's findings have been freely drawn upon here. In addition, we have first of all examined the Lotus Sutra dhāraṇī found in T 264 and T 1337. It should be noted that all earlier treatments of these materials, from Mizutani to Yuchi, have apparently been based for the most part on comparison with the Sanskrit version of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka by Kern and Nanjio (1912) or the closely related recension reproduced in the notes to T 262. In the present study we have in addition used the Gilgit manuscript versions, Texts A and B, published by Shoko Watanabe (1975). These texts shed considerable light on a number of heretofore vexing problems in the data. We shall cite T 262 Sanskrit forms without further identification; but the Gilgit text forms will be marked as GA and GB respectively.

In addition to the Lotus Sutra dhāraṇī materials we have also examined Jn's Suvarṇaprabhāsa dhāraṇī, which are found in Chapters 11-12 of the composite translation of this work (T 664.386.1-387.3). These forms can be compared with the Sanskrit notes appended to T 665. Unfortunately, there are at numerous points significant differences between the various source versions, making these data rather difficult to interpret. We have therefore used them sparingly, and only where the various Sanskrit versions are in essential agreement.

1.6 The Kumārajīva Transcriptions. For the period of ca. 400 A.D. we have the transcriptional corpus of Kumārajīva (hereafter Km; Chinese name: Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什). This man was an Indo-Iranian (son of an Indian father and a Kuchean mother), born into a noble family at Kucha in 344, who studied in Kashmir and Kashgar and arrived at Chang-an in 402. Hurvitz gives the following appraisal of his work: "Kumārajīva....was the head of the most elaborate state-sponsored translation bureau yet to exist on the soil of China. However, not only did he have his collaborators, but in all likelihood they were indispensable to him, for it is extremely improbable that he could read or write Chinese at all. Whether or not he could, the fact remains that in the course of the years his bureau worked out a method of translation that, to judge from the clarity of the style, must have been very efficient indeed" (1976:ix). Hurvitz' view that Km was probably illiterate in Chinese is perhaps not the generally accepted one, but it is likely that Km did follow the well established practice of dictating translations to assistants (Weinstein 1977:90). We can therefore suppose that Km's translations were in fact products of a "translation team" rather than of a single individual. We may guess that the variety of Chinese underlying the transcriptions was in the main northwestern, but we cannot rule out the possibility of internal inconsistency where teamwork of the sort envisaged here was involved. Regarding the language of the original texts, Pulleyblank (1983:87) remarks, "The Indian language seems to reveal some Prakritic features still, especially the intervocalic voicing of single consonants." Whether these peculiarities were due to the spelling of the original texts, to the idiosyncrasies of a reader who had a Central Asian pronunciation, or to a combination of such factors, the fact remains that these materials often seem to reflect something other than Sanskrit, a point which distinguishes them from the Am and Jn data. Km's œuvre was enormous, and our survey has of necessity been limited to the following:

1. The Lotus Sutra dhāraṇī of T 262, as compared with the appended Sanskrit notes and the GA and GB originals.

2. The Lotus Sutra transcriptions from T 262, exclusive of the dhāraṇī, identified primarily with the aid of Hurvitz (1976).
3. The dhāraṇī and other transcriptions from T 988 (Mahāmāyūrī), identified by comparison with Takubo (1972).
4. Transcriptions from T 366 (Lesser Sukhāvativyūha), compared with the appended Sanskrit notes.
5. Transcriptions from T 235 (Vairacchedikā), compared with the appended notes.

In working with these materials, every effort has been made to exclude items which appear in Han-time Buddhist texts (for which we have published data elsewhere) and Three Kingdoms texts (our data as yet unpublished). The large list of transcriptional syllables published by Yu (1984) has also been used to sift out Han and Three Kingdoms forms. But besides all these earlier sources we have also to contend with the large body of Wei-Jin period texts, which has never been systematically surveyed for transcriptions. There remains, therefore, the unfortunate possibility that material from these sources has been adopted by Km's translation team and has consequently been falsely included in our study. For the moment I know of no way to avoid this difficulty. But I think we can accept Pulleyblank's contention (1983:87) that the dhāraṇī, at least, must represent new transcriptions of Km's own time.

1.7 The Dharmakṣema Transcriptions. To supplement our Km data we shall draw on works of another old northwest translator, Dharmakṣema (hereafter Dk; Chinese name: Tanwuchen 曇無讖; biographies: Gaoseng-zhuan 高僧傳, T 2059.335.3-337.2; Bukkyō Daijiten 3971.3-3972.2; and Yamada 1968.I:15-16). This man was an Indian monk who lived and worked in the Bei Liang 北涼 state (401-439), headquartered in the area of modern Zhangyi 張掖, western Gansu. He was born in central India in 385, traveled to Central Asia, and arrived at Bei Liang in 412. After studying Chinese for three years he began his translation work by

delivering oral renditions to Chinese note-takers. He was murdered in 433. Our sources for Dk's transcriptions are the following:

1. T 157, a translation of the Karuṇapūṇḍarīka. The rather large number of dhāraṇī in the second chapter of this work have been compared with the Sanskrit edition of Yamada (1968), which is in turn based on six Sanskrit manuscripts and two Tibetan versions. Also of use for comparative purposes is T 158, an anonymous Chinese translation of the same Indic text, probably datable to the Six Dynasties period. Proper names and "non-dhāraṇī" forms in T 157 have been compared with the appended notes and Yamada's readings.
2. T 663, a translation of the Suvarṇaprabhāsa. In addition to this there is also T 664, the composite translation of the Suvarṇaprabhāsa, compiled in Sui times but containing a number of chapters taken from Dk's earlier translation. There are slightly different readings in certain passages of the two versions. The Chinese forms have been compared with Sanskrit equivalents in Nobel (1937) and the notes to T 665, a Tang-time translation of the Suvarṇaprabhāsa by Yijing 義淨.
3. T 192, a translation of the Buddhacarita of Aśvaghōṣa, with Sanskrit notes. Some of the Sanskrit forms in these notes have been compared with the text of Johnston (1972). I am grateful to Professor S.I. Pollock for his help in using this Sanskrit source.

At this point it can be noted that the transcriptions in these Chinese texts show some of the same Prakritic features noted by Pulleyblank in the Lotus Sutra dhāraṇī of Km. The Dk material may reflect a Gansu Corridor variety of ONWC, which, unlike the Chang-an data of Am, Jn, and Km, could be directly ancestral to the Shazhou dialects that have served as the basis of our CSZ reconstructions.

1.8 Conventions. The transcriptions of Km and Dk mark the approximate date of Old Northwest Chinese (ONWC) as we conceive of it, and our goal will be to project our reconstructions back to their time, i.e. 400

A.D., wherever possible. In this study we shall star all reconstructed early northwest forms, from the Shazhou period back to ONWC. For convenience of reference Karlgren's QYS forms, as revised by F.K. Li, will be given for all Chinese characters cited in the discussion. Division III and IV chongniu 重紐 finals will be redundantly identified with superscripts "3" and "4". The QYS forms will not be starred, and our use of them does not constitute an endorsement of their historical accuracy or correctness. All Indic forms are Sanskrit or Hybrid Sanskrit unless otherwise indicated. For Tibetan forms, the letter ཨ, sometimes called a-chen, and left untranscribed in the Wylie system, will be represented as ?-.