



FIG. 1. Landscape with deer. Drawing on the wall of Hsing-tsung's tomb; sketched by Miss Midorii Torii (Torii 36 III, pl. 208).

TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

HELD AT PHILADELPHIA
FOR PROMOTING USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

NEW SERIES—VOLUME 36
1946

HISTORY OF CHINESE SOCIETY
LIAO

(907–1125)

KARL A. WITTFOGEL and FÊNG CHIA-SHÊNG

With the assistance of

JOHN DE FRANCIS, ESTHER S. GOLDFRANK, LEA KISSELGOFF, and KARL H. MENGES

THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
INDEPENDENCE SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA

MARCH, 1949

TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

HELD AT PHILADELPHIA
FOR PROMOTING USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

NEW SERIES—VOLUME 36
1946

HISTORY OF CHINESE SOCIETY
LIAO

(907-1125)

KARL A. WITTFOGEL and FÊNG CHIA-SHÊNG

With the assistance of

JOHN DE FRANCIS, ESTHER S. GOLDFRANK, LEA KISSELGOFF, and KARL H. MENGES

THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
INDEPENDENCE SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA

MARCH, 1949

Copyright 1949 by
THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
held at Philadelphia
for promoting useful knowledge

Library of Congress Catalog
Card No. 49-8472

Published with the cooperation of the
American Institute of Pacific Relations

LANCASTER PRESS, INC.

Reprinted 1961

Reprinted 1970

CONTENTS

	Page
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	
I. Liao—Ch'i-tan—Cathay	1
II. The historical position of the Liao dynasty	2
1. Temporary oblivion	2
2. A pattern of conquest	3
3. The history of Liao as part of the history of Chinese society	4
4. The institutional significance of Liao history	4
<i>a.</i> The traditional thesis	4
<i>b.</i> New results	4
<i>c.</i> A new methodological approach	5
<i>d.</i> Liao society and Liao culture	6
III. Similar tendencies in other Chinese dynasties of conquest	8
1. The Chin dynasty (1115–1234)	8
2. Marco Polo, exponent of the dual order within the Yüan dynasty	8
3. The Manchu dynasty (1616–1912)	10
IV. A new working hypothesis	14
V. New light on the civilization of Inner Asia	16
1. Economic features	16
2. Tribal morphology (a complex tribal society)	17
3. Women—kinship—marriage	17
4. Sacred and secular concepts and ceremonies	18
5. Military organization and techniques	18
6. The ordo ("horde")	19
VI. New light on the history of Chinese culture	19
1. Sidelights on Chinese military history	19
2. Miscellaneous data on the history of Chinese institutions	19
VII. A third culture	20
VIII. Diversities in Inner Asiatic tribal culture	20
1. Cultural subdivisions	20
2. The historical background of the Ch'i-tan people	21
3. The later history of the Ch'i-tan	23
IX. Basic patterns of Chinese society	24
X. How an institutional history of China may be written	25
1. The growth of a concept	25
2. Basic sources and guided selection	26
<i>a.</i> The dynastic histories	26
<i>b.</i> Guided selection	27
<i>c.</i> Supplementary sources	28
<i>d.</i> Selection—annotation—integration	29
<i>e.</i> The contours of truth	30
XI. Cooperation and cooperators	32
TECHNICAL INTRODUCTION	
I. The translation	36
1. General principles	36
2. Titles	36
3. Administrative units	37
II. Proper names	37
1. Not translated	37
2. Romanization	37

	Page
III. Chinese dynasties, emperors, reign periods	38
IV. Chronology	39
V. Inner and Central Asia—names of Asiatic peoples	40
VI. Measurements, abbreviations	40
VII. Literary references	40
 SECTION I. ADMINISTRATIVE GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION	
Introduction	
1. Geography and history	41
2. The geographical data of the <i>Liao Shih</i> rearranged	41
3. Some data on the physical and economic geography of the Liao empire	41
4. The administrative divisions	44
a. The order of presentation	44
b. The five circuits	44
5. The tribes	46
a. Tribes and lineages	47
b. Tribal morphology	47
c. Tribal topography	49
d. Subordinate, semi-subordinate, and independent tribes and states	49
e. The geographical horizon of the Liao world	50
6. Population	52
a. Methodological considerations	52
b. Sedentary population	53
c. Conclusion	57
 Translation	
1. Territorial divisions	59
2. Tribes	84
3. Population	112
 SECTION II. PASTORALISM AND AGRICULTURE	
Introduction	
1. Ch'i-tan pastoralism	115
a. Sources of wealth in animals	115
b. Changing values	116
c. The herds	117
2. Hunting	119
3. Fishing	120
4. Liao agriculture	120
a. Its two roots	120
b. Technical elements	121
c. Land tenure	124
d. Agricultural policy of the Ch'i-tan rulers	125
 Translation	
1. Pastoralism	126
2. Agriculture	135
 SECTION III. INDUSTRY	
Introduction	
1. The problem	141
2. The tribal industries	141

CONTENTS

vii

Page

3. Importation of techniques and technicians	142
4. Industrial raw materials	143
5. Production	143
<i>a.</i> Government and private enterprise	143
<i>b.</i> Technical features	145
<i>c.</i> Labor	146
<i>d.</i> The products	147

Translation

Industry	149
--------------------	-----

SECTION IV. COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

1. Means of communication	150
<i>a.</i> Roads and waterways	150
<i>b.</i> Animals and vehicles	150
2. Communications	151
<i>a.</i> Governmental service	151
<i>b.</i> Private communications	152

Translation

Communications	164
--------------------------	-----

SECTION V. COMMERCE

Introduction

1. More products than merchandise	170
2. Trade and traders	170
<i>a.</i> Tribal trade	170
<i>b.</i> Trade in the agricultural centers	171
<i>c.</i> Measures and prices	171
<i>d.</i> The traders	173
3. Commercial policy	173
<i>a.</i> Internal trade	173
<i>b.</i> Foreign trade	174

Translation

Commerce	175
--------------------	-----

SECTION VI. CURRENCY AND MONEY-LENDING

Introduction

1. The currency of Liao	181
<i>a.</i> Origins	181
<i>b.</i> Expansion of money economy	182
2. A dynasty without an inflationary policy	184
3. Money and grain lending	185
<i>a.</i> Grain-lending	185
<i>b.</i> Money-lending	186

Translation

1. Currency	188
2. Money-lending	190

	Page
SECTION VII. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, KINSHIP SYSTEM, CUSTOMS, AND TRADITIONS	
Introduction	
1. Social stratification	191
<i>a.</i> The Ch'i-tan	191
<i>b.</i> The non-Ch'i-tan tribes	193
<i>c.</i> The Chinese	194
<i>d.</i> The Po-hai	195
<i>e.</i> Special groups: the monks	196
<i>f.</i> Special groups: the slaves	196
<i>g.</i> Trends toward social change	197
<i>h.</i> Changing relations between Ch'i-tan and Chinese	198
2. The position of women	199
3. The kinship system of the Ch'i-tan	202
4. The two ruling clans	206
<i>a.</i> Tribal roots and imperial changes	206
<i>b.</i> Un-Chinese marriage features	207
5. The Chinese family	212
6. Ch'i-tan tribal religion	213
<i>a.</i> The four doctrines of the Liao empire	213
<i>b.</i> Powers and spirits	214
<i>c.</i> Treatment of the supernatural powers	215
<i>d.</i> Religious functionaries	216
7. Secular tradition	218
<i>a.</i> Political traditions	218
<i>b.</i> Tribal tradition in personal life	218
8. Cultural contacts and cultural transfer	219
<i>a.</i> New elements accepted	221
<i>b.</i> Modifications and limitations	222
Translation	
1. Social organization	226
2. Customs and traditions	237
SECTION VIII. POWERFUL FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS	
Introduction	
1. Powerful families in bureaucratic societies	285
2. Powerful families in a dynasty of conquest	285
<i>a.</i> Po-hai and Chinese	285
<i>b.</i> Ch'i-tan powerful families	286
3. Dignitaries, good and bad	286
Translation	
Powerful families and individuals	288
SECTION IX. TEMPLES AND MONASTERIES	
Introduction	
1. Liao Buddhism	291
2. The influence of Buddhism in the Liao empire	294
3. The economic aspect of Liao Buddhism	295
4. The great investment	296
Translation	
Temples and monasteries	298

CONTENTS

Page

SECTION X. THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Introduction

1. The power aspect of Liao society	310
2. The financial organization	310
<i>a.</i> Its development	310
<i>b.</i> Its structure (the tribal world)	310
<i>c.</i> Its structure (the five capitals)	310
<i>d.</i> Stratified taxation	311
3. Taxes from the settled regions	312
<i>a.</i> Terms	312
<i>b.</i> The land tax	312
<i>c.</i> Other taxes and revenues	313
<i>d.</i> The assimilation of the former Po-hai kingdom	314
4. Income from the empire's tribes	314
<i>a.</i> Terms	314
<i>b.</i> Animal taxes	315
<i>c.</i> The Hsi tribes and the Five Nations	315
<i>d.</i> The acceptance of offerings from abroad	316
5. Tributes and "tributes"	317
<i>a.</i> Diplomatic offerings	317
<i>b.</i> Tributes from Silla and Korea	318
<i>c.</i> Tributes from various states and tribes	319
<i>d.</i> China Proper (the smaller countries)	325
<i>e.</i> China Proper (the Five Dynasties)	325
<i>f.</i> China Proper (Sung)	326
6. The total income of the Liao empire	327
<i>a.</i> Grain	328
<i>b.</i> Money	330
<i>c.</i> Textiles	330
<i>d.</i> Precious metals	330
<i>e.</i> Miscellaneous products	331
<i>f.</i> Horses	331
<i>g.</i> Other animals	331
<i>h.</i> Furs	331
<i>i.</i> Felt	332
<i>j.</i> Miscellaneous taxes and contributions	332
<i>k.</i> Additional revenues	332
7. Government outlay	332
<i>a.</i> The imperial house	333
<i>b.</i> The officialdom	333
<i>c.</i> The army	334
<i>d.</i> Government construction	334
<i>e.</i> Relief	334
<i>f.</i> Gifts	334
<i>g.</i> Diplomatic presents	334
8. Conclusion	334

Translation

1. Taxes	335
2. Tribute	345

	Page
SECTION XI. LABOR SERVICE	
Introduction	
1. The adoption of the Chinese <i>corvée</i>	363
2. Terms	363
3. The laborers	363
4. Seasonal distribution	363
5. Organization	364
6. The <i>corvée</i> of the empire's sedentary subjects	365
7. The tribal <i>corvée</i>	365
8. The changing form of the Liao <i>corvée</i>	366
Translation	
Labor service	367
SECTION XII. CALAMITIES AND GOVERNMENT RELIEF	
Introduction	
1. The historical aspect of natural calamities	375
2. The economic and political background of calamities in the Liao empire	375
<i>a.</i> The calamities	375
<i>b.</i> Limited understanding	375
<i>c.</i> Limited means of support	377
3. Forms of government relief	378
<i>a.</i> Fiscal and charity measures	378
<i>b.</i> The granaries	378
<i>c.</i> Other forms of relief	379
<i>d.</i> Migrants, refugees, and resettlement on the land	379
<i>e.</i> Magic devices	380
4. The rise and fall of institutionalized relief in the Liao empire	380
Translation	
Calamities and government relief	382
SECTION XIII. REBELLIONS	
Introduction	
1. The morphology of rebellions	398
2. Ch'i-tan rebellions	398
<i>a.</i> Struggle for imperial power	398
<i>b.</i> The dynamics of Ch'i-tan succession (the tribal pattern)	398
<i>c.</i> Contested primogeniture (the struggle for the throne)	400
<i>d.</i> Ch'i-tan commoners, amenable even when discontented	404
3. Subject and dependent peoples	404
<i>a.</i> Sedentary peoples: the Po-hai	404
<i>b.</i> Sedentary peoples: the Chinese	405
<i>c.</i> Adjusted and semi-adjusted tribes	407
<i>d.</i> Dependent and semi-dependent tribes	408
<i>e.</i> Who rebelled when?	409
<i>f.</i> A-ku-ta refused to dance	409
Translation	
Rebellions	410

CONTENTS

Page

SECTION XIV. GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Introduction

1. Political and military organization	428
2. From tribal chieftainship to dynastic rule	428
a. From chieftainship to khaghanate	428
b. A complex tribal nomenclature	428
c. A complex tribal hierarchy	434
3. The government of the Northern Region	434
a. "North" and "south"	434
b. The court	436
c. Court officials	436
d. Officials of the distinguished lineages	437
e. The officials of former ruling families	439
f. The "northern" central government	440
g. The tribal officialdom	443
h. The <i>shih-lieh</i> and <i>mi-li</i>	443
4. The government of the Southern Region	445
a. Its growth	445
b. The center	446
c. The government of the five capitals	448
d. The regional government	448
e. The local government	449
f. Concluding remarks	449
5. The selection of officials	450
a. Hereditary prerogative among the Ch'i-tan	450
b. The selection of Chinese officials (by examination)	454
c. The selection of Chinese officials (through the <i>yin</i> system)	456
d. The functions of the Chinese officials	463
e. Eunuchs	464
f. Po-hai officials	464
6. Special functions of the Liao government	465
a. Laws, Ch'i-tan and Liao	465
b. Astronomy and calendar-making	467
c. Historiography	468
d. Literary pursuits	469

Translation

1. The Northern Region	470
2. The Southern Region	483
3. Selection of officials	490
4. Specific government functions	496

SECTION XV. ARMY AND WARFARE

Introduction

1. The Army—weapon of conquest and domination	505
a. The military aspect of conquest society	505
b. An era of cavalry superiority	505
c. Two aspects of Liao military history	508
2. The Liao military machine	508
a. The ordo	508
i. Pre-Liao ordos	508
ii. The growth of the Liao ordos	509

	Page
iii. The composition of the ordos	510
iv. Regular, barbarian, and Chinese households	511
v. Status and treatment of the ordo households	512
vi. Ordo economy	513
vii. The location of the ordos and mausoleums	513
viii. Attached prefectures and counties	513
ix. The control bases	514
x. Attached tribal divisions	514
xi. Location of the ordo troops	515
xii. The size of the ordo armies	515
xiii. Functions of the ordo armies	516
xiv. Contemporary and post-Liao ordos	517
b. Tribal armies	517
i. Their organization	518
ii. Their significance	518
c. The militia	519
i. Size and command	519
ii. Recruitment and scope	520
d. Special armies	521
i. The Shu-shan and P'i-shih Armies	521
ii. Personal armies	521
iii. The Shê-li Troops	521
e. The frontier garrisons	522
f. Over-all command	522
3. Equipment and training	523
a. Equipment	523
b. Evaluation of handicraft	524
c. Training (cultural conditioning)	526
d. Training (moral and military)	526
4. Supplies	526
5. Liao warfare	527
a. Wars against the tribes	528
b. Campaigns against China Proper	529
i. Organization (command)	529
ii. Organization (subdivisions)	530
iii. Scouts, vanguards, signals	530
iv. Organization of invasion—tactics of battles	531
v. Sieges	532
vi. Two pre-Mongol achievements of Liao warfare	532
vii. The great stumbling block	534
6. Stagnation and decay of the Liao army	537
a. The standstill	537
b. Decay of the fighting spirit	537
i. The fighting spirit of the elite troops	538
ii. Loyalty among the non-Ch'i-tan soldiers	539
 Translation	
1. The army	540
2. Warfare	559

SECTION XVI. THE MAIN EVENTS IN LIAO HISTORY TABULATED CHRONOLOGICALLY

Introduction

1. A chronological survey of the main events in Liao history.....	571
2. The five main periods of Liao history.....	571
The tables.....	573

APPENDICES

I. Chronology of the Liao dynasty.....	599
Reign periods.....	600
II. Names and titles of the Liao emperors.....	607
III. Weights and measures.....	609
IV. History of the text, editions, supplementary researches.....	610
A. History of the <i>Liao Shih</i>	610
1. Liao historiography.....	610
2. Progress made under the Chia dynasty.....	610
3. Completion under the Mongol dynasty.....	611
B. Editions.....	611
C. Supplementary researches.....	614
1. Chinese studies.....	614
2. Japanese studies.....	615
3. Western studies.....	616
V. Qarā-Khitāy.....	619
A. Introductory remarks.....	619
1. The significance of Hsi Liao.....	619
2. Arrangement of sources.....	619
3. Chronological problems.....	620
a. Dating the five imperial reigns.....	620
b. The time-table of Yeh-lü Ta-shih's conquest.....	621
c. Sundry problems.....	622
4. The career of an empire-builder.....	622
5. Qarā-Khitāy society and culture.....	624
6. Kirmān.....	626
B. Main events chronologically arranged.....	627
1. The beginnings of Yeh-lü Ta-shih's career.....	627
2. The growth of the Qarā-Khitāy empire.....	632
3. Qarā-Khitāy from 1144 to 1211.....	643
4. The Qarā-Khitāy dynasty of Kirmān.....	655
C. Qarā-Khitāy society and culture.....	657
1. The size of the Qarā-Khitāy empire.....	657
2. Population.....	659
a. Number.....	659
b. Composition.....	660
3. Economic features.....	661
a. The traditional indigenous pattern.....	661
b. The economy of the Black Ch'i-tan.....	662
c. The economic policy of the Hsi Liao government.....	664
4. The political organization.....	664
a. The new task.....	664
b. The supreme government of Hsi Liao.....	665
c. The vassals "supervised".....	665
d. Vassalage in action.....	666

	Page
5. Army and warfare.....	668
<i>a.</i> Size of armies.....	668
<i>b.</i> Nomenclature and organization.....	668
6. Miscellaneous aspects of Qarā-Khitāy culture.....	669
<i>a.</i> Language and script.....	669
<i>b.</i> Religion.....	670
<i>c.</i> The pattern of marriage.....	671
<i>d.</i> Position of women.....	672
7. How Chinese were the Qarā-Khitāy.....	672
8. "Enlightenment" and limitation of Qarā-Khitāy rule.....	673
BIBLIOGRAPHY	675
Chinese and Japanese.....	676
Western.....	684
INDEX	
Reference.....	696
Analytical.....	702

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
FIG. 1. Landscape with deer	<i>frontispiece</i>
FIG. 2. Three inscribed Ch'i-tan tablets	169
FIG. 3. Fish-tallies with Ch'i-tan characters	169
FIG. 4. The two divisions and the main lineages of the Yeh-lü Clan	192
FIG. 5. Marriages between distinguished members of Yeh-lü and Hsiao Clans	210
FIG. 6. Ch'i-tan dignitary	229
FIG. 7. Persons dressed in Chinese style	229
FIG. 8. Ch'i-tan dignitary holding a staff	229
FIG. 9. An inscription written in Ch'i-tan seal script from the stele of Tao-tsung's tomb	241
FIG. 10. Epitaph from Tao-tsung's tomb—Ch'i-tan characters	242
FIG. 11. Five types of Ch'i-tan script	244
FIG. 12. Two bronze mirrors with Ch'i-tan characters	245
FIG. 13. (a) Ch'i-tan inscription from a jade vessel; (b) Two seals with Ch'i-tan characters	245
FIG. 14. Ch'i-tan epitaph for Hsing-tsung	246
FIG. 15. Ch'i-tan epitaph for Empress Jên-i	247
FIG. 16. A broken brick, showing a large character and a sentence in smaller characters, both in Ch'i-tan	248
FIG. 17. Ch'i-tan inscriptions accompanying figures of Ch'i-tan dignitaries drawn on the walls of Hsing-tsung's tomb	249
FIG. 18. Inscription from the tomb of Empress Hsüan-i written in Ch'i-tan characters	250
FIG. 19. Epitaph on the stele of Empress Hsüan-i written in Ch'i-tan characters	251
FIG. 20. Tablet with Ch'i-tan inscription erected in 1134	252
FIG. 21. Vase with pictures of Ch'i-tan wrestlers	260
FIG. 22. The game of Double Sixes	260
FIG. 23. Chinese inscription from an octagonal stone found at Ch'ing-chou	281
FIG. 24. Interior of Tao-tsung's tomb	281
FIG. 25. Dolmen-like stone chamber found at foot of Mt. Monchok	281
FIG. 26. Three views of a wooden dog found at the entrance to Tao-tsung's tomb	282
FIG. 27. Pottery discovered in the imperial Liao tombs at War-manha	282
FIG. 28. Lower part of an octagonal brick tower	299
FIG. 29. Liao stele. On the shaft is an inscription concerning the "Stone Buddhist Sūtra."	299
FIG. 30. Two Buddhas from a Liao temple	300
FIG. 31. Two crosses found in the "Temple of the Cross," Shih-tzŭ Ssŭ, near Peiping	300
FIG. 32. Tribute paid by subordinate states and tribes	319
FIG. 33. Draft of a letter to the Liao emperor T'ai-tsung	351
FIG. 34. Chinese inscription from an octagonal stone found at Ch'ing-chou	356
FIG. 35. Site of the Liao Supreme Capital	368
FIG. 36. Ruins of the city wall of the Liao Supreme Capital	368
FIG. 37. The chieftainship within the I-la tribe as held by Su-tsu and his descendants	399
FIG. 38. The struggle for the throne	401
FIG. 39. Flowers and birds painted by Hsiao Yung, a Liao artist	498
FIG. 40. The front and back of a Liao stone "screen"	525
FIG. 41. Ch'i-tan dignitary holding a bow	525
FIG. 42. Two Sung catapults: (a) simple type, (b) machine on wheels	567
FIG. 43. Picture of a "Black" Ch'i-tan	625

MAPS

The Empire of Western Liao (Qarā-Khitāy)	658
The Liao Empire	<i>at end of volume</i>