Tsung-le's Mission to the Western Regions in 1378–1382

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The Ming-shih-lu records under the twelfth month of the eleventh year of Hung-wu (December 9, 1378 to January 26, 1379) that in this month (the Emperor) sent the monk Tsung-le[1] and others to the Western Regions[1] and under the day of i-mao of the twelfth month of the fourteenth year of Hung-wu (December 29, 1381) that the monk Tsung-le and others came back from the Western Regions, accompanied by ambassadors of the E-li-ssü Chün-min yün-shuai-fu[3] and Pa-chê wan-hu-fu[3], who brought with them tribute (to the Emperor)[2]. Tsung-le (1318–1391) was one of the leading monks of the Ch'an sect. He enjoyed the profound respect of the Emperor Hung-wu who sent him to the Western Regions to collect Buddhist sutras[3] not available in China[3]. Some of his biographies record that he came back to China not in the fourteenth year of Hung-wu but in (the third month of) the...
fifteenth year, that is to say, (April 22 to May 21 of) 1382. It seems that this date is correct, because Tsung-lé writes about one of his friends who went to the Western Regions that they shared the hardships of travelling for five years.

According to the I-wên-chih of Ming-shih, c.99, Tsung-lé wrote two books: Ch'üan-shih wai-chi in ten chüan and Hsi-yu-chi in one chüan. As to the

4 Tsêng-chi Hsü Ch'uan-têng-lu, p. 431a. The Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 9b, also records that Tsung-lé came back from the Western Regions in the fifteenth year of Hung-wu.

5 In his poem entitled Sung Fu Chang-lao or “Seeing off Fu Who is a Senior Member of Temple” (Ch'üan-shih wai-chi, Vol. B, I, fol. 22b), he writes: “I travelled with him to the West for five years and I shared the hardships with him.” In the preface to the Ch'üan-shih wai-chi, fol. 3b, Hsü I-k'uei writes to the effect that by the imperial order he went to the West and travelled tens of thousands of li in uninhabited regions and came back (to China) after five years. According to the Ching-chih-chü shih-hua, c. 23, fol. 20b, Tsung-lé was appointed Yu-shan-shih in the fourth month of the fifteenth year of Hung-wu (May 5—31, 1382). So he must have come back to Nanking before that date.

6 Ming-shih (ed. Po-na-pên), p. 1061b. Also see the Ch'ien-ch'ing-t'ang shu-mu, c. 28, fol. 48a. In the Wên-yüan-ko shu-mu, c. 10, fol. 30b (ed. Tu-hua-chai ts'ung-shu), two works of Tsung-lé are mentioned under the name of Sêng Ch'üan-shih kao, one set in one volume complete and Lê Chi-1'an chi, one set in one volume incomplete. Chi-t'an is the tsê of Tsung-lé, while Ch'üan-shih is his hao. The former must be identical with Ch'üan-shih wai-chi and the latter probably with Hsi-yu-chi. The Ch'üan-shih wai-chi is also named Ch'üan-shih-chi, as is seen from Hsü Po, Ch'ung-pien Hung-yü-lou ti-0-pa, fol. 43b, as well as from the so-called Gozanban edition of Japan published at the end of the fourteenth century. As to the Gozanban edition of Ch'üan-shih wai-chi, consisting of nine chüan, of which a copy is available at the Toyo Bunko (Iwasaki Bunko Mokuroku, pp. 14, 20), see Kazuma Kawase, Gozanban no kenkyû, I, Tokyo, 1970, pp. 195, 209, 404, II, Pl. 372. Besides this Gozanban edition, there are two other editions. One is printed in Japan in 1669, which is preserved at the Naikaku Bunko (see the Kaitai Naikaku Bunko Kanseki Bunru Bunkuroku, Tokyo, 1971, p. 345) and the other is a Chinese manuscript kept at the Seikadô Bunko (see the Seikadô Bunko Kanseki Bunru Mokuroku, Tokyo, 1930, p. 714). The 1669 edition is the same as the Gozanban edition in content, both containing a preface written by Hsü I-k'uei, but the manuscript edition has got some lacunae in the text and, instead of Hsü I-k'uei's preface, a short biography of Tsung-lé is placed at the top. The biography is obviously taken from the Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 9b—10a. Moreover, the manuscript edition is supplemented by nine poems which are described as having been taken from the Lieh-ch'ao shih-hsüan. Of these nine poems, seven are in the present edition of Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 21b—22b, while the rest can not be located in the same book. It seems, therefore, that the Lieh-ch'ao shih-hsüan is different from the present edition of Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi. Incidentally, the Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi is registered as Ch'ien Mu-chai's (i.e. Ch'ien Ch'ien-i's) Lieh-ch'ao shih in Chiao Hung, Kuo-shih ch'ing-chih-chi, ed. Ming-shih I-wên-chih lu-pien, Peking: Commercial Press, 1959, p. 1284, but nothing is known about the relationship between the Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi and the Lieh-ch'ao shih-hsüan. The Gozanban edition is divided into nine chüan, while the 1669 edition consists of two volumes in four parts, Shang 1 and 2 and Hsia 1 and 2, pagination being consistent in each volume.

[26] 徐堯：重編紅雨樓題跋  [27] 川瀨一馬：五山版の研究
[28] 錢牧齋  [29] 焦竑：國史經籍志
latter, the following comment is made: "During the Hung-wu period, Tsung-le was appointed Yu-shan-shih and went to the Western Regions to collect sutras not available (in China). (This book) contains literary works written by him while travelling. Unfortunately, the Hsi-yu-chi has been lost, but we can trace the itinerary of his journey in part on the basis of some of his poems in the Ch’üan-shih wai-chi which is extant and in the Lieh-ch’ao shih-chi, Pt. Jun 1, edited by Ch’ien Ch’ien-i. Ch’ien Ch’ien-i edited an anthology of Tsung-le’s poems on the basis of both the Ch’üan-shih wai-chi and Hsi-yu-chi, as is obvious from comparison of the content of the anthology with that of Ch’üan-shih wai-chi.

So far as poems contained in the Ch’üan-shih wai-chi are concerned, it is known that Tsung-le arrived at K’ai-fêng (from the capital at that time, or what is now Nanking) by way of the Grand Canal and proceeded to Hu-

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7 The Yu-shan-shih, together with Tso-shan-shih, is the highest official of Seng-lu-ssü which controlled Buddhist monks during the Ming. (These two were also called Yuchieh-shan-shih and Tso-chieh-shan-shih respectively.) It was established on the day of hsin-su of the fourth month of the fifteenth year of Hung-wu (May 23, 1382), see the Ming-shih-lu, ed. Academia Sinica, T’ai-szu, c. 144, pp. 1b—2a (Bk. 5, pp. 2262—2263). The Shih-shih chi-ku-lüeh hsü-chi, c. 2 (Tripitaka Taishô, Vol. 49, p. 931) dates its establishment as the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the fourteenth year of Hung-wu (July 24, 1381) and also the Ching-chih-chü shih-hua, c. 23, fol. 20b, is wrong when it dates the establishment of Seng-lu-ssü as the sixth month of the fourteenth year of Hung-wu (July 1—29, 1381). It is the Tsêng-chi Hsi Ch’üan-têng-lu, c. 5 (Dainihon Zoku Z6ky6, I, 2, i, Vol. 15, Bk. 2, p. 431a) that dates the establishment as the sixteenth year of Hung-wu (1383). However, I would like to follow the dating of the Ming-shih-lu and to consider, according to the Ching-chih-chü shih-hua, c. 23, fol. 20b (see Note 5), that Tsung-le was appointed the Yu-shan-shih on the same date.

8 This explanation is chronologically wrong. It was after his coming back from the Western Regions that Tsung-le was appointed Yu-chieh-shan-shih. As to the date of his appointment, the Ching-chih-chü shih-hua, c. 23, fol. 20b, states that it was in the fourth month of the fourteenth year of Hung-wu, which is the date of establishment of Seng-lu-ssü, and the Shih-shih chi-ku-lüeh hsü-chi, c. 2 (Tripitaka Taishô, Vol. 49, p. 931c), dates it as the twenty-second day of the fourth month of the fourteenth year of Hung-wu (June 12, 1382).

9 As to the Ch’üan-shih wai-chi, see Note 6. I use the 1669 edition as the basis of my study, because it is the same in content as the Gozanban edition and it is more widely used than the latter.

10 Another anthology of Tsung-le’s poems is edited by Chu I-tsun in his Ching-chih-chü shih-hua, c. 23, fol. 20ff., as well as in his Ming-shih-tsung, c. 90, fol. 4b ff. But, as is noted below, the Lieh-ch’ao shih-chi contains a few poems which clarify Tsung-le’s visit to Tibet (dBus), Nepal and India.

11 Cf. his poem entitled Têng Hsiang-kuo-ssü lou or “Ascending the Tower of the Hsiang-kuo-ssü Temple”, Ibid., Hsia, fol. 6b. The Hsiang-kuo-ssü is a famous Buddhist temple which existed in what is now K’ai-fêng, called Ta-liang in the poem.

12 Cf. his poem Sui-ti or “The Bank of Sui (Canal)”, Ibid., Hsia, fol. 21a-b.
where the inhabitants were still (leading the) simple (life).

According to the poems contained in the *Lieh-ch’ao shih-chi*, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 22a, he passed the country of I-pa-li [45] or Nepal [23], that is to say, Kathmandu, and went to north-eastern India where he climbed Ling-chiu-shan [52] or Grdhrakūta in the region of Patna [24] and Chi-tsu-shan [54] or Kukkuṭapāda-giri.

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17 Cf. *Ch’ang-an-lao* [59] or "The Streets of Ch’ang-an", *Ibid., Shang*, fol. 8a; *Ch’ang-an Shao-nien-hsing* or "Youngsters in Ch’ang-an", *Ibid., Shang*, fol. 13b—14a; *Ch’ang-an hsüeh-chung* or "In the Snow of Ch’ang-an", *Ibid., Hsia*, fol. 7a.
21 Cf. *Wang Ho-yüan* or "Commanding a Distant View of the Source of the Yellow River", *Lieh-ch’ao shih-chi*, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 22a-b: *Ming-shih-tsung*, c. 90, fol. 10b. However, it is not clear whether this poem was written on his way going or on his way back.
22 *Ch’uan-shih wai-chi*, *Hsia*, fol. 16b—17a. This may also be a work composed on his way back.
23 The character i is pronounced as i, gi, ji, ki, ri, ngi in modern Chinese, see Section of Chinese Language and Literature, Department of Linguistics, University of Peking, *Hanyu Fangyin Zihui*, Peking, 1952, p. 71, and *Ch’uan-kuo chu-yao lieh-yen-chü lieh-yin tui-chao-piao* [47], Peking, 1954, p. 99. As to the dialectical pronunciation of this character, also see B. Karlsgren, *Etudes sur la phonologie chinoise*, Leyden et Stockholm, 1915—1926, pp. 362, 725. In Chê-chiang Province from which Tsung-lê came out, the character is now pronounced ngi. In other records of Ming, Nepal is usually transcribed as Ni-pa-la [48]. But, here Nepal is the only country to be identified with I-pa-li. The poem entitled *I-pa-li kuo-wang ch’ien-shih chih-kuan* or "The King of I-pa-li sent an Envoy to the House Where I stayed to inquire after My Health". In the poem it is said that the envoy wore a turban of woolen cloth (*tieh-pu*) [49] and that his forehead was dotted with oil of sandalwood (*tan-kao* [41]). Actually, there is no clue to clarify which part of the valley of Nepal this I-pa-li represents. Tentatively, I take it to be Kathmandu.
24 In the poem entitled *Têng Ling-chiu-shan* or "Climbing Grdhrakūta", it is written that the mountain commands a view of Wang-shé-ch’êng [53] or Râjaghrâ where the inhabitants were still (leading the) simple (life).
between Gaya and Bihar. Both of them are noted places of Buddhism. This means that, after passing the source region of the Yellow River, he turned to the south and crossed the country of Tibet. Under the circumstances, the so-called Western Regions to which Tsung-lè was sent means Tibet, Nepal and north-eastern India.

On his way back, it seems that he took the same route as he had in going. In the Lieh-ch'iao shih-chi, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 22a, there is a poem entitled Chung-ch'un l-pa-li kuo tao-chung or On the Way to Nepal at Mid-Spring, in which he says that he is on his way home. In the same book, another poem, entitled On Returning to My Former Residence in the Country of Pieh-li-chia-chu, tells us that he came to the place again, that he had stayed there already for three months, and that everything was the same as when he came there before. So, on his way going he had visited the country of Pieh-li-chia-chu, which I propose to identify with Birganj. There is also a poem entitled Tao Ho-chou or Arrival at Ho-chou, in which he says: "A few months have passed since I left Wu-ssü-ko or the country of dBus (Central Tibet). In the (white) snow, I went by the side of the Black River and crossed the Yellow River which was frozen." This may also show that on his way going he passed dBus.

It is recorded that his party consisted of about thirty people, but the names of his companions are unknown except one and even that one is only known in abbreviated form. The E-li-süs Chün-ming yüan-shuai-lu, whose ambassador came to the Ming court together with Tsung-lè, is the Field-marshall Government to control both military and civil men established in E-li-süs, that is to say, mNa'ris (-skor-gsum), in February, 1375. As to Pa-chê wan-hu-lu, it must

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25 In the poem entitled Ti Chi-tsu-shan or "Arrival at Kukkuṭāpāda-giri", it is written that there was standing a gigantic, shining stūpa which even the demons could not destroy though they defaced it badly with their axes. The demons here mean Mohammedans who invaded the place at the beginning of the thirteenth century. At the end of the poem the author writes that it is just at the time the traveller is returning to the East.


28 Birganj lies about 46 miles to the south of the valley of Nepal. It is situated on the route which connects north-eastern India and the valley of Nepal, and until recently it has played an important role as the gate city from India to Kathmandu.

29 As thirty people in the Tseng-chi Hsü 'uan-teng-Ju, also Ming-shih-tsung, c. 90, fol. 10b.

30 As thirty-odd in Tsung-lè's biography in the Lieh-ch'iao shih-ki, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 9b-10a, which is reproduced in the manuscript edition of Ch'üan-shih-chi, fol. 1a.

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51 See Note 5.

52 Ming-shih-lu, ed. Academia Sinica, T'ai-tsu, c. 96, p. 1b (Bk. 4, p. 1650), under the day of keng-wu of the first month of the eighth year of Hung-wu (February 19, 1375). Thirteen wan-hu-lu or k'ri-skor were established on the first day of the second month of the sixth year of Hung-wu (March 3, 1372) see the Ming-shih-lu, T'ai-tsu, c. 79, p. 1a (Bk. 4, p. 1437), and four more on the day of jen-ch'én of the twelfth month of the seventh year of Hung-wu (January 11, 1375), see the Ming-shih-lu, T'ai-tsu, c. 95, p. 1a (Bk. 4, p. 1641). The description of the Ming-l'ung-chih, c. 89, under Hsü-lan which lists only five wan-hu-lu established in 1372 and 1375, is not accurate.
be an inverse of Che-pa which is an abbreviation of P'a-mu-chu-pa. Actually, according to the Ming-shih-lu, the P'a-mu-chu-pa wan-hu-fu is a wan-hu-fu or k'ri-skor established at the same time as E-li-ssu Chün-ming yün-shuai-fu and no wan-hu-fu named Pa-chê was set up before 1381 or 1382 when Tsung-lè came back to China. P'a-mu-chu-pa is a Chinese transcription of P'ag-mo-gru-pa which is a well known place in dBu.

Tsung-lè's mission resulted in a collection of such sutras as Chuang-yen, Pao-wang, Wên-shu and others. However, it is not clear what kind of sutras these abbreviated titles actually represent.

In 1370, the monk K'o-hsin and two other monks were sent to the Western Regions in order to urge Tibetans to pay tributes to the Ming (newly established in China) and they were ordered to draw a map of mountains and rivers which they passed. The objective of K'o-hsin's mission was purely political, while Tsung-lè's entirely cultural. Nevertheless, Tsung-lè was suspected to have arranged for Tibetans to rise up against the Ming government in conjunction with Hu Wei-yung. Hu Wei-yung was said to have prepared to revolt against the Emperor Hung-wu, and he was executed in 1380. Many of Tsung-lè's friends were arrested and executed, but, because of the Emperor Hung-wu's respect for him, Tsung-lè himself was spared execution.

33 P'ag-mo-gru(-pa) is famous for the monastery of gDan-sa-mt'il founded by 'Gro-mgon P'ag-mo-gru-pa in 1158. Later on, during the rule of the P'ag-mo-gru-pa dynasty over central Tibet in the 14th to 15th centuries, gDan-sa-mt'il became their religious capital, while sNe'u-gdon was their political capital, the k'ri-k'ân or the seat of k'ri-dpon (governor) of the K'ri-skor P'ag-mo-gru-pa having been set up at sNe'u-gdon. The establishment of P'a-mu-chu-pa wan-hu-fu under the Ming dynasty may well be dated back to 1372, see Note 32. In 1381/2 when Tsung-lè took with him their tributary ambassador to the Ming capital, the k'ri-dpon or governor of the P'a-mu-chu-pa wan-hu-fu was bSod-nams-grags-pa, the fourth sDes-rdi or Regent of the P'ag-mo-gru-pa dynasty. For the P'ag-mo-gru-pa, see G. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, Rome, 1949, Vol. I, pp. 17—39, and for descriptions, see S. Ch. Das, Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet, London, 1904, pp. 298—299; G. Tucci, To Lhasa and beyond, Rome, 1956, pp. 127—129.

34 Ming-shih-lu, ed. Academia Sinica, T'ai-tsu, c. 53, p. 2b (Bk. 3, p. 1036), under the day of kuei-hai of the sixth month of the third year of Hung-wu (July 8, 1370). K'o-hsin's biography is in the Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 50a; Ming-shih-tsung, c. 90, fol. 21a-b; Ch'ien-ch'ing-t'ang shu-mu, c. 28, fol. 48b. He is the author of Hsieh-hu-kuo [60] or, according to the Ming-shih-tsung and Ch'ien-ch'ing-t'ang shu-mu, Hsieh-kuo nan-hsin-kuo in one chuan. The Gozanban edition of this work is available in Japan, see Kazuma Kawase, Gozanban no Kenkyû, Tokyo, 1970, pp. 208, 476—477. A copy of the Gozanban edition is available at the Naikaku Bunko in Tokyo, but I cannot have access to it because of temporary closure of this library. However, seeing that the book has got a preface of Chou Po-ch'î of 1364 (Kawase, Ibid., p. 476), it is quite unlikely that it has anything to do with his Tibetan mission.

35 Ching-chih-chê shih-hua, c. 23, fol. 21b; Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi, Pt. Jun 1, fol. 9b; Hsü Téng-ts'un-kuo (Dainihon Zoku Zokyô, I, 2, i, Vol. 18, Bk. 1, fol. 72a); and Ch'ien-ch'ing-t'ang shu-mu, c. 28, fol. 48a.
The mission of Fu An[67] and Ch'en Ch'eng[68][69] to Central Asia at the beginning of Ming is very well known, while no mention has ever been made by scholars about Tsung-lè who preceded the above two. This is the reason why I wrote this short article[67].

[67] Concerning Fu An's mission, a brief note is given by E. BRETSCHNEIDER, Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources, London, 1910, Vol. II, pp. 144—145, on the basis of the Yeh-huo-pien, pu-i[68] (c. 4, fol. 46a-b). However, Fu went to the Western Regions six times, of which the description of the Yeh-huo-pien concerns the first one. As to Ch'en Ch'eng (and Li Ta)'s[69] mission, besides BRETSCHNEIDER, op. cit., pp. 147—148, there are researches made by L. C. GOODRICH, Ch'en Ch'eng, in the Ch'ing-chu Chiang Wei-t'ang Hsien-shèng Ch'i-shih Jung-ch'ing Lun-wén-chi[70], Taipei, 1968 pp. 426—420 (1—7); Hsiang Ta ("Hsi-yü hsing-ch'eng-chi"[71], Yü-kung, Vol. II, 3 and 4, 1934, pp. 31—41, 16—28); Kichirō KANDA[72] ("Min no Chin Sei no Shisei kiki ni tsuite", Tōyō Gakuhō, Vol. 16, 1927, pp. 351—372, which is later included in his Tōyōgaku Zeirin, Tokyo, 1948, pp. 25—56); Jun MATSUMURA ("Minshi Senkiden U-ten kō"[73], Tōyō Gakuhō, Vol. 37, 1955, pp. 78—103); and Takayuki MITSUI ("Min no Chin Sei no Seishi ni tsuite", in the Yamashita Sensei Kanreki Kinen Tōyōshi Ronbunshū[74], Tokyo, 1938, pp. 589—614. Cf. Shige kuni HAMAGUCHI's review in the Rekishigaku Kenkyū, Vol. 8, 1940, pp. 105—107). Before Fu An's mission, K'uan Ch'ê and his companions were sent to Hami, Beshbalik and Samarkand, and K'uan Ch'ê[75] was detained at Beshbalik. The Ming-shih-lu records T'ai-tsu's edict to the king of Beshbalik commanding him to return K'uan Ch'ê to China, see the Ming-shih-lu, ed. Academia Sinica, T'ai-tsu, c. 249, p. 4a-b (Bk. 8, pp. 3611—3612), under the day of ting-ch'ou of the third month of the thirty-third year of Hung-wu. It is said that Dr. Morris Rossabi's English translation of Ch'en Ch'eng's reports of his Central Asian mission will appear shortly, see L. C. GOODRICH's introduction to A Persian Embassy to China, being an Extract from Zubdatu't Tawarikh of Hafiz Abru, translated by K. M. Maltra, New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp, 1970, p. iii. I myself am preparing to publish an article on Fu An's mission on the basis of several Ming sources which were not utilized by BRETSCHNEIDER.

[68] According to the Ming-shih-lu, a group of Indian monks (Kumāraśri and others) left China for their native country on the day of kuei-wei of the ninth month of the fourteenth year Hung-wu (September 28, 1381) after their six years' stay in Wu-t'ai Shan, see the Ming-shih-lu, ed. Academia Sinica, T'ai-tsu, c. 139, p. 2a-b (Bk. 5, pp. 2187—2188). It is quite probable that Tsung-lè obtained some information about India from these people. Because of the loss of the Hsi-yu-chi in which Tsung-lè wrote in poem form of his various experiences in the Western Regions, we know nothing about what Tsung-lè actually did in the regions. Considering that he was suspected to have made some arrangement between Tibetans in Tibet and Hu Wei-yung (see Note 34), one of his missions to the Western Regions might have been to inspect the condition of Tibetans in Tibet.

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[74] 松村潤：明史西域傳于闐考
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