

COULD THE MONGOL EMPERORS READ AND WRITE CHINESE?*

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After the conquest of China the Mongols were faced with the problem of governing a state with a highly complicated administration. The difference between the educational standards of the Mongol ruling class and the Chinese literati was obviously very wide in the beginning. Knowledge of Chinese language and writing among the Mongol and other Central Asian officials was frequently rather poor. We are informed that in the middle of the fourteenth century even senior officials occasionally still read or wrote certain characters wrongly¹ and were unable to sign the official documents with brush and ink so that facsimile stamps for the signatures had to be carved for them.² Conditions among the multilingual administration of Yüan China, therefore, called for a trained staff of translators and interpreters.³ As higher Chinese officials could often not speak Mongol, oral reports to the emperor or senior ministers had to be translated. Under Qubilai the famous Chao Meng-fu 趙孟頫 had drafted a decree which he read aloud in the presence of other dignitaries. Arȳun Sarȳy 阿剌渾撒里, an Uigur who, according to his biography in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 130, was well versed in Chinese literature, acted as interpreter.⁴ Also the lectures on interpretation of the classics (*king-yen* 經筵) held in presence of the emperor had to be translated into Mongol. Yü Tsi 虞集 (1272-1348) gives some details on these lectures in a postscript to a memorial submitted by Chao Kien 趙簡. The text⁵ mentions the translations which had to be

* Quotations, if not stated otherwise, refer to the *Si-pu-ts'ung-k'an* and *Po-na* editions.

¹ For examples see Li Chung 李翀 (ca. 1360), *Yih-wen-lu* 日聞錄 ed. *Han-hai* 函海 fasc. 68, ch. 1, p. 7a/b (誰 mistaken for 醜, 便檢 for 辨驗, etc.).

² Yang Yü 楊瑀 (1285-1361), *Shan-kü sin-lua* 山居新話, ed. *Chih-pu-tsu chai ts'ung shu* 知不足齋叢書 p. 33a. A similar passage occurs in T'ao Tsung-yi's 陶宗儀 *Cho-keng-lu* 輟耕錄 ch. 2, p. 10b.

³ The various offices for diplomatic intercourse and foreign languages under successive dynasties have recently been studied in great detail by P. Pelliot, *Le Sseu-yi-kouan et Honei-t'oung-kouan*, *T'oung Pao*, Vol. XXXVIII (1948), p. 207-272.

⁴ Cf. Yang Tsai's necrologue on Chao Meng-fu, in Chao's *Sung-sie-chai wen-tsi* 松雪齋文集 Appendix, p. 5a.

⁵ Coll. Works of Yü Tsi, *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku-lu* 道園學古錄 ch. 11, p. 10b.

prepared for exegetical purposes, adding a list of scholars who distinguished themselves in this field.¹

It is well known that a fair number of Mongols, Uigurs and other people of non-Chinese origin have won literary fame and distinguished themselves as authors, calligraphers and painters, a fact which lies outside the scope of this article and has been brought to attention long ago by Ch'en Yüan 陳垣.² It has, however, been believed that the Mongol emperors themselves had no knowledge of Chinese culture, language or script. As late as 1933, Yao Shih-ao expressed this view in his otherwise valuable paper *Ein kurzer Beitrag zur Quellenkritik der Reichsannalen der Kin- und Yüan-Dynastie*³ "... daher verstanden die Herrscher meistens kein Chinesisch und hatten ebenfalls wenig Interesse für chinesische klassische Bildung". This statement may be correct as far as earlier rulers are concerned; it is certainly far from true regarding the later emperors from Jen-tsung (r. 1312-1321) onwards. Many details showing that the later emperors had, in fact, knowledge of and were interested in Chinese language, script and literature can be found in Yüan works, and the calligraphic achievements of the Yüan emperors are mentioned together with those of other Chinese emperors under the heading 歷代帝王書 in the encyclopaedia *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua-p'u* 佩文齋書畫譜 of 1708.⁴ In the following a survey of such passages, particularly of those to be found in the literary works of Yüan authors, will be given as evidence for the interest of Yüan emperors in Chinese literature and calligraphy.⁵

Qubilai's (r. 1260-1294) knowledge of Chinese was rather poor, as has already been pointed out by Fuchs.⁶ He had to use interpreters when

¹ The translation of Chinese books into Mongol has been the subject of an important paper by W. Fuchs, *Analecta zur mongolischen Übersetzungsliteratur der Yüanzeit*, *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XI (1946), p. 33-64. The passage from Yü Tsi mentioned above is discussed by Fuchs, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

² 元西域人華化考下 (The sinicization of the Western People during the Yüan dynasty) *Yen-king hsüe-pao* (*The Yen-ching Journal*), II (1927), 173-232; pt. I (上) had appeared in *Kuo-hsüe ki-han* 國學季刊 Vol. I, Nr. 4 (1923). Both parts had been published together already in 1923 in mimeographed copies (稿本).

³ *Asia Major*, Vol. IX (1933), p. 581.

⁴ Ed. *T'ung-wen shu-kü* 同文書局 1883, ch. 20, p. 6b-7b.

⁵ It was only after I had finished the draft of this paper in 1948 that I could make a perusal of Yoshikawa Kōjirō's 吉川幸次郎 series of articles on the literary erudition of the Mongol emperors 元の諸帝の文學, 元史叢說の一 in *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 Vol. VIII (1943), Nrs. 3, 4, 5/6, Vol. IX (= New Series, Vol. I), Nr. 1 (1944) and Nr. 3 (1945). Although the first article in Vol. VIII, Nr. 3 has remained inaccessible so far, it is clear that Yoshikawa's results confirm my view. As the present paper and Yoshikawa's articles are not entirely overlapping, and as Japanese periodicals are still scarce in Europe, I venture to express the hope that the publication of my study in this Western periodical may be regarded as justifiable.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 38 and 50, n. 57.

receiving Chinese scholars. This fact must arouse suspicion regarding the poem attributed to him in the collection of poetry *Yü-süan Yüan-shih* 御選元詩 under the heading 帝製.¹ The title is "Record of emotions during an excursion to the mountains in springtime" (陟嶽春山紀興) and nothing in this elaborate and traditional poem of eight seven-word lines suggests an author who had a poor knowledge of even spoken Chinese. We may perhaps assume that it has been composed by some Poet Laureate on imperial order. There are, however, some passages in the *Yüan-shih* from which we might conclude that Qubilai could at least read the Uigur script. The biography of T'ie-ko 鐵哥 contains the following passage²: "After his enthronement, Shih-tsu paid a visit to the 'Temple of Eternal Peace' (永安寺) on the Incense Mountains (香山, west of Peking, near Yüan-p'ing). There he saw Uigur characters written on a wall and asked who might have written them. The monks answered: 'It is the writing of *Täkä, the nephew of our national Preceptor (*kuo-shih* 國師)'. This incident proves that Qubilai was at least able to discern handwritings. His knowledge of Uigur script is further confirmed by a passage in the annals of the *Yüan-shih*.³ The passage states that a Han-lin official proposed to prepare a Mongol version of Činggis Qan's *shih-lu* in Uigur script. Qubilai was to read it and to give his approval.

Whatever the level of Qubilai's literary interests may have been, it is certain that he provided for literary education of the imperial princes. The heir-apparent Jingim 眞金 (dynastic title Yü-tsung 裕宗) received lessons in Chinese writing and had to practice every day. We learn this fact from a very interesting text which shows that specimens of the imperial handwritings (*yü-shu* 御書) must have been quite numerous under the later Yüan rulers. They were considered to be of sufficient importance to justify the inclusion of a specific chapter *yü-shu* in the administrative and ritual encyclopædia *King-shih ta-tien* 經世大典. Unfortunately the integral text of the *King-shih ta-tien* is lost and only the short prefaces to the various chapters have been preserved.⁴ It is significant for the bias of the compilers of the *Yüan-shih* that the chapter on the imperial handwritings has been omitted in the ritual chapters of that work whereas the other monographs

¹ Ed. of 1709, introductory chapter (首卷), p. 1a.

² *Yüan-shih*, ch. 125, p. 14a. The name T'ie-ko would suggest an original *Täkä. It is tempting to see in *Täkä a Turkish *täkä* 𐰽𐰺𐰍 ("male antelope"). *Täkä's family came, however, from Ki-pin (Kashmir) so that a Turkish etymology of that name is not very probable.

³ Ch. 14, p. 11b, 23rd year chih-yüan = 1286.

⁴ In the Collection of Yüan Literature *Kuo-ch'ao wen-lei* 國朝文類. The preface to the *yü-shu* occurs in the ritual codex, *li-tien* 禮典, *Kuo-ch'ao wen-lei* ch. 41, p. 5b. Apart from the prefaces and some longer extracts in the K.C.W.L., some chapters of the *King-shih ta-tien* have been preserved in the *Yung-lo ta-tien*, cf. H. Franke, *Geld und Wirtschaft in China unter der Mongolenherrschaft*, Leipzig 1949, p. 25.

(*chih* 志) of the *Yüan-shih* usually have closely followed the text of the *King-shih ta-tien*. Important details regarding the calligraphic achievements of the Yüan emperors are thus lost. The data furnished by the *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua-p'u* can replace this omission only to some extent, as the *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua-p'u* gives only second-hand information, quoting from secondary sources such as T'ao Tsung-yi's *Shu-shih hui-yao* and neglecting many relevant passages from the works of Yüan authors. We learn from the preface to the *yü-shu* section of the *King-shih ta-tien* that "From Shih-tsu on, scholars of reputation (名儒) have been entrusted with the education of the heir-apparent."

In the case of Jingim the scholars con erned were Yao Shu 姚樞 (1219-1296) and Tou Mo 竇默 (1196-1280). Jingim's biography¹ informs us that he studied the *Hiao-king* 孝經 a copy of which had been given to him by these two literati. His studies are also mentioned in the biographies of Yao Shu and Tou Mo.² Another passage in Jingim's biography relates how his son Abaci 阿八赤 was told to go to school. The tutor Pai-pi gave him, however, a Mongol education. When Jingim asked him what books he had read and Abaci told him they were in Mongol, Jingim reminded him that his order had been to study Chinese writing.³ Jingim's interest in Chinese history is further revealed by the lectures given to him by two former officials of the Sung dynasty.⁴

Whatever Jingim's educational standard may have been, we can say with certainty that his eldest son Kamala 甘麻剌⁵ was not able to read and had to rely on an oral translation of the *Tzü-chih t'ung-kien* into Mongol in order to become acquainted with this work.⁶

Among Qubilai's successors emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1312-1321) was particularly interested in Chinese erudition. Under his reign the literary examinations were reintroduced (1313). On one occasion, in 1318, he is reported as having personally inspected the list of candidates for the *tsin-shih* 進士 degree.⁷ His ability to write is shown by the fact that he

¹ *Yüan-shih*, ch. 115, p. 4a.

² *Yüan-shih*, ch. 158, p. 4a and 23a respectively.

³ *Yüan-shih*, ch. 115, 8a: ... 諭令入學伯必即令其子入蒙古學逾年 (1286) 又見太子問讀何書其子以蒙古書對太子曰我令汝學漢人文字耳.

⁴ *Yüan-shih*, loc. cit.: 使辟宋工部侍郎倪堅于開元既至訪以古今成敗, etc.

⁵ On him see Hambis-Pelliot, *Le chapitre CVII du Yuan-che*, p. 129.

⁶ *Yüan-shih*, ch. 115, p. 10b: 撫循部曲之暇則命也滅堅以國語講通鑑. The name of Ye-mie-kien 也滅堅 who acted as translator corresponds to Mongol Ämägän; cf. the variant reading | | 干 in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 107; Hambis-Pelliot, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁷ Collected Works of Huang Tsün 黃潛 (1277-1357) *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi* 金華黃先生文集, necrologue for Qudu Udar 忽都達而, ch. 27, p. 13b: 會試京師及上親策遂爲廷試第一.

wrote himself the document appointing Kuo Kuan 郭貫 (1250-1331) as Minister of Rites. This document was still in existence in 1347, for in that year Ch'en Ki 陳基 (1314-1370) wrote a postscript.¹ We find this document mentioned in other texts as well; Teng Wen-yüan 鄧文原 composed a poem on the imperial handwriting (奉呈延祐宸翰), and gave an account of the event in the introduction.² Yüan K'ue 袁桷 (1266-1327) even wrote a eulogy to celebrate the emperor's achievement.³

Further evidence that Jen-tsung was able to read is furnished by a passage stating that he read the *Cheng-kuan cheng-yao*⁴ and ordered a Mongol translation to be prepared. This translation too is mentioned as having been read by the emperor.⁵ The emperor must have had some knowledge, however slight, of Chinese history, for he enquired about such Chinese heroes of past dynasties as Chang Liang 張良 and Ti Jen-kie 狄仁傑 and the answers which Čayan gave have been recorded in the biography of the latter.⁶ On the same occasion Čayan recited a poem on Ti Jen-kie by the Sung poet Fan Chung-yen 范仲淹 which is said to have impressed the emperor considerably. Jen-tsung was also familiar with at least the names of the major Chinese poets; he compared Chao Meng-fu with Li Po 李白 and Su Shih 蘇軾.⁷ We learn from Chao's biography that the emperor held his calligraphy in high esteem and had great admiration for Chao's poetical gifts.⁸

It is very probable that Jen-tsung's interest in Chinese literature and civilization can be traced back to the influence of Li Meng 李孟 (1255-1321) who had been his tutor when Jen-tsung was still heir-apparent. A passage in Li Meng's biography runs: "The emperor wrote with his own hand the two characters *Ts'iu-ku* 秋谷, stamped them with the imperial seal and gave them (to Li) as a present."⁹ *Ts'iu-ku* was Li Meng's *hao* and the presentation of the characters of the *hao* was a favourite way of honouring officials of merit, a custom we find also among other Yüan emperors (p. 34). The passage quoted is, however, contradicted by another biography of Li

¹ Collected Works *Yi-pai-chai kao, wai-tsi* 夷白齋藁, 外集 p. 42b: . . . 仁宗皇帝親御翰墨爲之書, etc.

² *Kuo-ch'ao wen-lei*, ch. 7, p. 5a/b: 親灑宸翰, etc.

³ Collected Works *Ts'ing-jung kü-shih tsi* 清容居士集, ch. 17, p. 6b: 仁廟御書除官贊. The fact is also mentioned in Kuo's biography *Yüan-shih*, ch. 174, p. 5a (1311).

⁴ 覽貞觀政要, *Yüan-shih*, ch. 24, p. 11b.

⁵ Biography of Čayan 察罕, *Yüan-shih*, ch. 137, p. 3a/b. Fuclis, *op. cit.*, p. 45/47.

⁶ *Yüan-shih*, ch. 137, p. 3a.

⁷ *Yüan-shih*, ch. 172, trsl. H. Franke, *Dschao Mong-fu, Sinica*, Vol. XV (1940), p. 38.

⁸ H. Franke, *loc. cit.*; O. Franke, *Keng-tsch'i-t'u*, Hamburg 1913, p. 59 f., 79 f., 108 n.4.

⁹ *Yüan-shih*, ch. 175, p. 20a: 御書秋谷二字識以璽而賜之.

Meng composed by Huang Tsin where we read that the emperor "ordered the *Tsi-hsien ta-hüeh-shih* Wang Yung to write the two big characters *Ts'iu-ku* as a present for Li Meng".¹ It must remain an open question whether both entries refer to different events or to the same. In the latter case Huang Tsin's evidence obviously must be regarded as more reliable.

Ying-tsung's (r. 1321-1324) ability to read and write is first of all proved by the *King-shih ta-tien*² where specimens of his handwriting are mentioned as presents to his favourites. Already before his accession to the throne he could write as witnessed by a eulogy of Yüan K'ue on a *gatha* which Ying-tsung had copied as heir-apparent.³ When in 1322 Yüan was ordered to write a eulogy on a portrait of the chancellor Baiju 拜住, the emperor himself wrote four lines from a poem by P'i Jih-siu 皮日休 as a present for Baiju. As the poem concerned is an appraisal of the T'ang ministers Fang Hsüan-ling 房玄齡 (578-648) and Tu Ju-huei 杜如晦 (d. 630), it becomes clear that Ying-tsung had chosen a very appropriate text in order to honour his own minister.⁴ Another example of Ying-tsung's calligraphy is referred to in Yü Tsi's collected works, viz., a scroll by emperor Huei-tsung of Sung where the four characters of the title had been written by Ying-tsung. According to that passage the emperor had written these characters in 1323 when visiting the Wu-hua shan 五華山 and presented the scroll to his chancellor Baiju who in turn gave it later to Sheng Hsi-ming 盛熙明, a famous calligrapher originating from K'ü-sien 曲鮮 (Küsan, Kuča).⁵ A further passage in Yü Tsi's works mentions imperial handwritings without giving a date. In this case the emperor wrote down a verse and an inscription on a zither (*k'in* 琴).⁶

Only one entry on specimens of T'ai-ting's (r. 1324-1327) writing can be found in the *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua-p'u*. The source quoted is the

¹ *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 23, p. 9b: 命 . . . 王顥書秋谷兩大字御置以賜公. Wang Yung was the son of Wang Shou-tao 王守道 who died in 1270, cf. *Yüan-shih*, ch. 153, p. 6a.

² *Kuo-ch'ao wen-lei*, ch. 41, p. 5b.

³ *Ts'ing-jung kü-shih tsi*, ch. 17, p. 7b: 英廟御書開經偈贊 Gloss: 時爲皇太子. The text of the eulogy itself is, as usual, without interest for our problem.

⁴ *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 24, p. 5a: . . . 御書唐皮日休吾愛房與杜 . . . 之詩以賜之. P'i's poem 房杜二相國 from which the above quoted lines are taken is contained in his *P'i-tsu wen-sou* 皮子文藪, ch. 10, p. 128b. For Yüan's eulogy see *Ts'ing-jung kü-shih tsi*, ch. 17, p. 7a: 至治丞相真贊. — Fang Hsüan-ling and Tu Ju-huei, whose biographies are in *Sin T'ang-shu*, ch. 96, are regarded as models of harmonious co-operation in office. See also Giles, *Biogr. Dict.*, Nrs. 553 and 2061.

⁵ *Tao-yüan hsie-ku-lu*, ch. 3, p. 16a: 題東平王 (= Baiju) 與盛熙明手卷 . . . 卷首題識四字我朝英宗皇帝御書也, etc. Sheng Hsi-ming is the author of a systematic treatise on calligraphy in 8 ch., *T'a-shu k'ao* 法書考.

⁶ *Tao-yüan hsie-ku-lu*, ch. 2, p. 13b . . . 藏英宗御題之句元題曰日光照吾民月色清我心又題琴曰至治之音. I could not find out where the verse comes from. Chih-chih is, of course, Ying-tsung's *nien-hao* (1321-1322).

Local Gazetteer of Hunan province, *Hu-nan t'ung-chih* 湖南通志. After having successfully carried out a diplomatic mission to the ruler of a tribe of "Southern Barbarians" (南番), Ch'en Ch'u-chou 陳楚舟 was received in audience by the emperor who, in acknowledgment of the fact that Ch'en had declined to accept bribes by the barbarian king, wrote the two characters *p'eng-süe* 蓬雪 and presented them to Ch'en. Ch'en then adopted *p'eng-süe* as his *hao*.¹

By far the most erudite emperor of the Yüan dynasty was, however, Wen-tsung (r. 1330-1333). Recently an article devoted to Wen-tsung's cultural activities has stressed the importance of his reign for the culture of the Yüan period.² We are not concerned with the more general aspect of his activities among which the establishment of the academy called *K'uei-chang ko* 奎章閣 is the most notable feature. Famous authors, calligraphers and painters like Yü Tsi, Kie Hsi-sz 揭傒斯 (1274-1344) and K'o Kiu-si 柯九思 (1290-1343) belonged to this foundation which, under a different name, survived the short rule of Wen-tsung. Yoshikawa gives a detailed description of the *K'uei-chang ko*, its functions and activities.³ He also quotes evidence that Wen-tsung liked to pass his free time there surrounded by books, paintings and calligraphy which he discussed with the officials. Attention must be drawn, however, to the Essay on the *K'uei-chang ko* composed by Yü Tsi.⁴ This essay was copied by the emperor on the 10th February 1331, and an engraved stone with his handwriting was erected in the premises. Rubbings were occasionally taken from this stone and given to certain dignitaries. Yang Yü, the author of the *Shan-kü sin-hua*, informs us proudly that he owned one of these rubbings (*loc. cit.*). This particular specimen of imperial calligraphy has obviously not failed to evoke laudatory comments from the Yüan literati. Yü Tsi wrote a postscript and other writers composed either eulogies or colophons.⁵

¹ *Hu-nan t'ung-chih*, ed. Comm. Press, 1934, ch. 164, p. 3269 f: 泰定帝嘉其廉御書蓬雪二大字賜之即以為號。

² Kanda Kiichirō 神田, 元の文宗の風流について in *Haneda hakase sōsho kinen Tōyōshi ronsō*, Kyoto 1950, p. 477-488. The author deals with Wen-tsung's collection of calligraphy and paintings and lists the items which according to their seals have been part of his collection.

³ *Op. cit.*, *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, Vol. VIII, Nr. 4 (1943), p. 21-29.

⁴ The text may be found either in the *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku-lu*, ch. 22, p. 9a, the *Shan-kü sin-hua*, ed. *cit.* p. 22b-23b or the *Cho-keng-lu*, ch. 2, p. 11a-13b.

⁵ *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku-lu*, ch. 10, p. 14b. Yoshikawa quotes in addition several other texts to which I had no access. These are: 1. Collected Works of Hsü Yu-jen 許有壬 (1287-1364), *Chih-cheng tsi* 至正集, ch. 17 (恭題太師秦王奎章閣記賜本) and 73 (恭題仇公度所藏奎章閣記賜本). 2. Collected Works of Ma Tsu-ch'ang 馬祖常 (1279-1338), *Shih-t'ien sien-sheng wen-tsi* 石田先生文集, ch. 8 (恭贊御書奎章閣記). 3. Collected Works of Su T'ien-tsüe 蘇天爵 (1294-1352), *Tz'u-k'i wen-tsi* 滋溪文集, ch. 28 (恭跋御書奎章閣碑本). This text is also reprinted in *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua-p'u*, ch. 68, p. 10b.

In 1329 the emperor wrote down a decree appointing the Minister of Rites Qara Batur 哈刺拔都兒.¹ Other specimens of Wen-tsung's handwriting were still preserved in Qara Batur's family under the reign of Emperor Shun, the last Mongol emperor.² Another Mongol official, Tolai 朶來 was honoured by being handed a decree written by the emperor which allowed him to pass the palace guards, *balayači* 入刺哈赤. The text of this decree (dated 1329) is reprinted in Yü Tsi's collected works; it is of particular interest because it is written in the chancery idiom of the Mongol period.³ A similar decree is referred to by Yoshikawa who quotes the Collected Works of Hsü Yu-jen as evidence for an autograph edict in possession of the chancellor Bayan.⁴

Several passages in Yüan works are devoted to Wen-tsung's calligraphy. He once wrote down the characters *süe-lin* 雪林 and gave them to Chao Shih-an 趙世安 who served as vice-censor in the central administration.⁵ In 1330 a portrait of Chao Shih-an was painted and the emperor wrote on the painting an order to Yü Tsi to compose an eulogy.⁶ A rather unusual way of writing is said to have been used by the emperor on one occasion. Huang tells us that Wen-tsung was a skilled calligrapher and that he even once carved the characters *yung-huai* 永懷 on a radish, with his knife.⁷

¹ The text of the decree is reprinted *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku lu*, ch. 10, p. 1a/b. In Huang Tsin's Collected Works *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 21, p. 2a/b, we find a colophon to this document (恭跋命哈刺拔都兒充捧案官御筆).

² *Op. cit.*, ch. 21, p. 2a (one document conferring Qara Batur his name, *ming*: 恭跋賜名哈刺拔都兒御書). We are not informed what his former name was, nor are any details on his career known.

³ *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku lu*, ch. 10, p. 14a/b: 抄錄御書. The postscript by Yü Tsi has the title 題朶來學士所藏御書後. For the palace guards, *balayači*, see Chavannes in *T'oung Pao* 1904, p. 430-432 and Ratchnevsky, *Un Code des Yuan*, Paris 1937, p. 26. Tolai (mong. "hare") was a member of the Salji'ut tribe, cf. Ts'ien Ta-hin's *Yüan-shih shih-tsu piao* 元史氏族表 ed. *Nien wu-shih pu-pien*, p. 830b (p. 10 of the separate pagination). Cf. also W. Fuchs, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁴ *Chih-cheng tsi*, ch. 71, ap. Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, *Tōyōshi Kenkyū*, Vol. VIII, Nr. 5/6 (1944), p. 78.

⁵ Collected Works of Kie Hsi-si, *Kie Wen-an kung ts'üan-tsi* 揭文安公全集, ch. 3, p. 7b. Presumably *Süe-lin* was a *hao* of Chao Shih-an. The short biography devoted to Chao in *Sin Yüan-shih*, ch. 143, does not, however, mention this name. See also Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁶ *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku lu*, ch. 21, p. 8b: . . . 親御翰墨書勅其上, etc.

⁷ *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 21, 2b/3a: 間嘗以佩刀刻蘆菔根作永懷二字. Copies were made and Qara Batur is said to have been presented with one of these.—The words *yung-huai* are taken from the *Shih-king* where they occur in odes Nr. 3 and Nr. 192 (Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, Stockholm 1950, p. 3 and 137, "constant anxiety").—Another copy was given to Nao-nao 嚠 | , *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua-p'u*, ch. 20, p. 7a. Copies were still in existence as late as the Ch'ing dynasty. A detailed description taken from Ch'en Cho's 陳焯 (b. 1733) Collected Works has been reprinted by Kanda, *op. cit.*, p. 482-483.

Not even the precious objects preserved in the *K'uei-chang ko* collections were safe from Wen-tsung's craze for calligraphy. He wrote on a sounding stone from Ling-pi 靈璧 (in Anhui province) the words "Black Jade of the *K'uei chang*" and Yü Tsi had to celebrate this with a poem.¹ For further specimens of Wen-tsung's writing I have had to rely on Yoshikawa who first quotes the Collected Works of Ma Tsu-ch'ang. Ma wrote a colophon to the characters *süe-yüe* 雪月 written by the emperor as a present for Kien-tu-pan 健篤班.² Yoshikawa further mentions that the name of Ya-ku 雅古 (Yaquub?) was changed by Wen-tsung to Ya-hu 朮, which implies a wide knowledge of characters on the part of the emperor.³

It is not surprising that Wen-tsung was a connoisseur of ink. Yü Tsi relates how the outstanding ink manufacturer of the 1330s, Chu Wan-ch'u 朱萬初 once supplied ink to the *K'uei-chang ko* and the emperor appointed him as a minor provincial official in acknowledgment of the quality of his ink.⁴ In addition to his interests in calligraphy which occupied a prominent place among his pastimes and sometimes gave occasion to a critical appraisal of other calligraphers' achievements,⁵ the emperor also indulged in painting. When he was still heir-apparent and sojourning in Nanking (1325), he ordered Fang Ta-nien 房大年 to paint the Wan-sui shan 萬歲山 in Peking. Fang first declined because he had never been there, but the emperor drew a sketch of the locality and Fang had to execute the painting according to Wen-tsung's drawing.⁶

The evidence supplied by the passages quoted above will be sufficient to prove Wen-tsung's familiarity with the Chinese script so that we can be

¹ *Tao-yüan hsüeh-ku lu*, ch. 2, p. 15a/b: 御書其上奎章玄玉. Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, p. 80, apparently quotes from a Ch'ing edition, writing 元 instead of 玄.

² *Shih-t'ien sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 8, *ap. Yoshikawa, op. cit.*, p. 78: 恭題御書雪月二字. The name Kien-tu-pan is probably based on a Tibetan prototype; -pan usually renders a Mongol -bal = tib. *dpal*. Biography: *Sin Yüan-shih*, ch. 121.

³ Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, p. 81, quoting the collected poems of Fu Jo-kin 傅若金 (1304-1343), *Fu Yü-li shih-tsi 傅與麟詩集*, ch. 3. Yaquub was a Nestorian, *ye-li-k'o-wen*, who distinguished himself as a poet. For a short biography see *Yü-süan Yüan-shih* 御選元詩 (ed. of 1709), ch. 1, p. 17b.

⁴ *Tao-yüan hsüeh-ku lu*, ch. 29, 22b-23a (Nr. 2 of the four poems dedicated to Chu Wan-ch'u, introduction) and ch. 2, p. 10a (poem when Chu left for his post in Kuang-tung province).

⁵ He compared Pan Wei-Chih's 班惟志 writing with a drunkard using bad language in the street 如醉漢罵街, cf. *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua p'u*, ch. 37, p. 7a.

⁶ *Cho-keng-lu*, ch. 26, p. 13b: 文宗能畫. According to Kanda, *op. cit.*, p. 484, there is a colophon to Wen-tsung's painting in the Collected Works of the Yüan monk Ta-hsin 大訢, *P'u-shih tsi 蒲室集*, ch. 13. Ta-hsin, who died about 1344, had frequently been in company with the emperor when the latter was staying in Nanking before his enthronement, cf. Ta-hsin's biography in *Yüan-shu* 元書 (ed. 1911) ch. 95, p. 23a/b.

brief about his reading. When Kie Hsi-si had presented the juridical codex, *hsien-tien* 憲典 of the *King-shih ta-tien* in 1330, the emperor read it and proclaimed his full approval.¹ For some other references I am indebted to Yoshikawa who shows that Wen-tsung liked to read Ma Tsu-ch'ang's prose² and showed interest in the works of a T'ang poet.³ A book which is said to have been frequently read by Wen-tsung is the *K'uei-chang cheng-yao* 奎章政要 (Statutes of the K.) by Kie Hsi-si.⁴

Chinese anthologies contain some poems attributed to Wen-tsung. One of these, however, is of questionable authenticity, and regarded by some critics as being composed by Ming T'ai-tsu.⁵ The poem is, in spite of the condescending attitude of literary critics (see note), rather difficult in style and its authorship would demand a thorough command of literary technique. On the other hand, the two poems on a Green Plum (青梅詩) and Looking at the Kiu-hua Mountain (in Anhui province) (望九華)⁶ are much more primitive and there is some chance that they might be genuine productions by Wen-tsung. But it is unquestionable that he did write poetry.⁷

Wen-tsung's literary and artistic interests are almost equalled by those of his successor, Emperor Shun (r. 1333-1368). As a boy, Emperor Shun had been brought up in the Ta-yüan 大圓 monastery in Tsing-kiang 靜江

¹ Biography of Kie, *Yüan-shih*, ch. 181, p. 16a/b; Collected Works of Ou-yang Hsüan 歐陽玄 (1273-1357), *Kuei-chai wen-tsi 圭齋文集*, ch. 10, p. 30a/b; *Kiu-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 26, p. 19a.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 81 (from Collected Works of Su T'ien-tsüe, ch. 9).

³ During a lecture on exegesis the conversation turned to Nie Yi-chung's 聶夷中 poems. Wen-tsung asked whether there was a collection of his works, but nobody had ever heard of an edition of his poems. Finally somebody mentioned that the Chang 章 family in Shanghai had a particularly large library and a decree was issued for enquiries to be made. It turned out that Mr. Chang's library actually contained a copy of Nie's collected poems which was presented to the emperor who rewarded Chang with a professorship in his native district. *Nung-t'ien yü-hua* 農田餘話 by Ch'ang-ku chen-yi 長谷真逸, ed. *Pao-yen-t'ang pi-ki* 寶顏堂秘笈, ch. 下, p. 3a/b; Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁴ *Cho-keng-lu*, ch. 7, p. 12a.

⁵ 自集慶路入正大統途中偶吟, *Yü-süan Yüan-shih, shou-küan* 首卷, p. 1a/b; the same poem also in *Yüan-shih süan* 元詩選 (ed. 1751), ch. 1, p. 1a. Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, p. 82, and Kanda, *op. cit.*, p. 478-479 seem to reject the poem as spurious on the authority of Ch'en Yen's 陳衍 *Yüan-shih ki-shih* 元詩紀事. Apparently a Chinese critic has disapproved of Pseudo-Wen-tsung's literary style: in the *Yüan-shih süan* copy preserved in the Cambridge University Library (Wade, Nr. D237) we find an interlineary manuscript entry stating that the phrase 客驚眼 is like children's talk, 此云 ||| 便以小兒語!

⁶ *Yü-süan Yüan-shih, shou-küan*, p. 1b.

⁷ Cf. Yoshikawa, *Tōyōshi Kenkyū* VIII, 4 (1943), p. 32, quoting a poem by K'o Kiu-si according to which Wen-tsung in 1329 sent his aunt a poem together with some presents, 上賜甚厚並御詩送之 (from *Tan-k'iu sheng tsi* 丹邱生集, ch. 3).

(i.e., Kuei-lin in Kuangsi province). His education was entrusted to the abbot Ts'iu-kiang 秋江 who made him practise Chinese script and study Canonical Books such as *Lun-yü* and *Hsiao-king*.¹ Specimens of the boy's writing are occasionally mentioned in Yüan literature. The Tangut author, Yü K'üe 余闕 (1303-1358) wrote a eulogy on characters written by the future Emperor Shun during his exile in Kuangsi.² As Emperor Shun was born in 1320, he cannot have been older than 13 years when writing these characters. He thus displayed early in his life a taste for calligraphy and many sources agree that his achievements were of no mean standard.³

Shortly after his enthronement Emperor Shun wrote the four characters *Hsien-hsien K'an-yün* 閒閒看雲 in large script as a present for the Taoist patriarch Wu Ts'üan-kié 吳全節. The sources disagree as to the exact date; Yü Tsi places it in 1334 whereas the quotation from Li Ts'un 李存 (1281-1354) in *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua p'u*, ch. 20, p. 7a gives the date 1333.⁴ Another example of calligraphy is mentioned in 1334; the characters in question were *Yüan-ch'eng kung* 元成宮, the name of a building where the Taoist Hsia Wen-yung 夏文泳 (1277-1349) used to live.⁵

During the years 1335-1340 the supreme power rested with the chancellor Bayan who tried to eliminate the influence of Chinese in the central administration. He was removed from his office in 1340 under circumstances which again show Emperor Shun's familiarity with Chinese language and script. Yang Yü tells us in his *Shan-kü sin-hua* that he was called in to assist the emperor in drafting the decree which degraded Bayan to a minor provincial office. This decree was discussed in the night of

¹ *Keng-shen wai-shih* 庚申外史, postface, ed. *Ts'ung-shu tsi-ch'eng*, p. 37. We might mention here other hobbies of the Emperor Shun referred to in the *Keng-shen wai-shih*. Sub 1358 (p. 21) the author relates that the emperor personally sketched the "blueprint" for a new palace building (自畫屋樣) and carved a wooden model for the carpenters. People in Peking, therefore, gave him the nickname of "Emperor Carpenter" 魯班天子, an allusion to Lu Pan, the legendary artisan of ancient times. He was also engaged in astronomical studies (又善觀天文).

² *Ts'ing-yang sien-sheng wen-tsi* 青陽先生文集, ch. 8, p. 3b: 御書贊... 書方谷字賜臣毛遇順. *Fang-ku* was perhaps the *hao* of Mao Yü-shun, a man on whom I can find no biographical details. He is in any case not identical with the Mao Yü-shun mentioned in the *Biographical Dictionary of the Commercial Press*, p. 71, II/111.

³ *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua p'u*, ch. 20, p. 7a, quoting the *Shu-shih hui-yao*; see further the eulogies on his writing by Yüan authors. Many passages in the *Keng-shen wai-shih* refer to Shun-ti's literary and artistic inclinations in general.

⁴ *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku lu*, ch. 22, p. 13b and 15a. *Hsien-hsien* and *K'an-yün tao-jen* 道人 were two of the Taoist patriarch's *hao*'s. His biography is in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 202.

⁵ See Huang Tsin's necrologue for Hsia, *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 27, p. 218: 今上皇... 元統二年親灑宸翰作元成宮三大字以賜. For a short biography of Hsia see also *Yüan-shih*, ch. 202.

March 14th, 1340, Yang Yü being present. A passage runs, "On the very day when the decree is received (詔書到日) everybody has to go back to his former garrison". The emperor pointed out that a day lasted from morning to evening and that he had better write "At the very moment the decree is received (詔書到時)". Yang praises the insight of the emperor who by changing one single character secured the due arrival of troops.¹

The years following the elimination of Bayan and his anti-Chinese clique were marked by an intense activity in the field of Chinese traditional civilization. The *K'uei-chang ko* (the name of which had been changed in the meantime to *Süan-wen ko* 宣文 |) was again the centre of literary and artistic life at the court of the emperor, who in 1341 called such eminent scholars as Ou-yang Hsüan, Li Hao-wen 李好文, Huang Tsin and Hü Yu-jen to assist in the meetings in the *Süan-wen ko*. Readings of the Five Classics and the Four Books were a feature of these meetings as well as calligraphy and classical music.² In painting the emperor apparently was a great admirer of Sung Hwei-tsung, a taste which was by no means shared by some of his officials who strongly objected on the grounds of Hwei-tsung's inefficiency in government affairs.³ Emperor Shun's fancy for calligraphy is responsible for his order to engrave the *Ts'ien-tzü-wen* 千字文 in the *ts'ao-shu* of *Chih-yung* 智永 (6th cent.) on stone. Some of the rubbings were given as presents to high dignitaries and comments can be found in Yüan works.⁴ Like some of his predecessors Emperor Shun occasionally wrote with his own hand appointments of officials. This, of course, was regarded as a particularly high distinction.⁵ Another favourite way of honouring officials was to write some characters for them. Emperor Shun wrote thus for his teacher Sha-la-pan 沙剌班 the characters of the latter's *hao*, *Shan-chai* 山齋. In other cases the emperor chose expressions taken from literature, or epithets thought appropriate for the person

¹ *Shan-kü sin-hua*, p. 2b; *Keng-shen wai-shih*, p. 6; *Cho-keng lu*, ch. 2, p. 12; *Yüan-shih*, ch. 40, p. 4a.

² *Keng-shen wai-shih*, sub 1341, p. 6.

³ *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 25, p. 7a. We find the same objection raised against Emperor Shun's son, who too admired Hwei-tsung and studied his calligraphy, *Keng-shen wai-shih*, p. 26, sub 1362.

⁴ *Kuei-chai wen-tsi*, ch. 14, p. 5a/b. Yoshikawa also refers to Hsü Yu-jen's *Chih-cheng tsi*, ch. 73, for additional evidence, *op. cit.*, *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, N.S. 1, 1 (1944), p. 40.

⁵ *Tao-yüan hsüe-ku lu*, ch. 10, p. 3a, mentions the handwritten appointment of Ch'ou-lü, 跋御筆除丑闕太府太監. There were two Ch'ou-lü who obtained their *tsin-shih* degree in 1333, one of Tangut and one of Qarluq origin, see *Yüan-shih shih-tsu piao*, p. 60 and 88 (8356 and 8384) respectively. The Tangut Ch'ou-lü has a biography in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 195.

⁶ *Shan-kü sin-hua*, p. 34. Sha-la-pan was Uigur, cf. his biography in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 124. The name is probably Tibetan, corresponding to *Ses-rab-dpal*.

concerned. We find the binoms *kiu-siao* 九霄,¹ *ming-liang* 明良² and *k'ing-shou* 慶壽.³ A further example is supplied by Yoshikawa.⁴ It is not surprising that Emperor Shun was also interested in the theory of calligraphy; he read Sheng Hsi-ming's *Fa-shu-k'ao* in 1344.⁵

The anthology *Yü-süan Yüan-shih* contains a poem attributed to Emperor Shun.⁶ Its authenticity is, however, not beyond doubt and also other poems supposed to have been written by the emperor can perhaps not be regarded as genuine.⁷ Whether Emperor Shun himself was able to write Chinese poetry must therefore remain an open question.

Emperor Shun's son was Ayuširidara,⁸ born in 1339. Although he was only the child of a concubine, the emperor made him heir-apparent and tried to give him a good education. At the age of 9 the boy had to learn Uigur writing;⁹ one year later he started to learn Chinese.¹⁰ Li Hao-wen 李好文, after some polite hesitation, accepted an offer to become his tutor. Li, who was an orthodox Confucianist, was a *tsin-shih* of 1321. His biography in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 183, contains a detailed account of the educational principles laid down for the young prince. He considered the *Hsiao-king*, *Ta-hsüe*, *Lun-yü*, *Meng-tzü* and *Chung-yung* as the basic texts for anybody who was desirous to learn the Way of the Ancient Rulers. Not content with the standard texts he wrote new text-books which the prince had to study.¹¹

¹ *Kuei-chai wen-tsi*, ch. 15, p. 1a: 御書九霄贊. Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, p. 37, mentions a colophon by Hsü Yu-jen in his *Chih-cheng tsi*, ch. 71. — *Kiu-siao* means the ninth and highest part of heaven. The expression apparently occurs first in the works of the poet Sun Cho 孫綽 (4th cent. A.D.), cf. *Tz'u-hai* and *P'ei-wen yüen-fu* s.v. I could not find details on Hu Chen-huan 胡震宦 to whom the emperor's calligraphy was presented.

² *Kin-hua Huang sien-sheng wen-tsi*, ch. 21, p. 1a: 恭跋御書明良二大字. *Ming-liang* is probably taken from the *Shu-king*, ch. 5 (Legge, *Ch. Cl.*, p. 90). The addressee is Dorjibal 朵爾直班 (= tib. rDo-rje-dpal) whose biography is in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 139.

³ *Ib.*, p. 1b: 恭跋御書慶壽二大字, addressed to Dorjibal. *K'ing-shou* is a common congratulatory phrase on birthdays.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 38: *hsien-k'ing* 賢卿 written for Chen Shih-liang 甄世良 (from the Collected Works of Su T'ien-tsüe).

⁵ *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua p'u*, ch. 38, p. 7b (quoting the *Shu-shih hui-yao*).

⁶ 贈吳王, ed. 1709, *shou-hüan*, p. 2a.

⁷ Yoshikawa, *op. cit.*, p. 51, on the authority of Ch'en Yen's *Yüan-shih ki-shih*.

⁸ From skr. Ayuširidhara, cf. Hambis-Pelliot, *op. cit.*, p. 142-144.

⁹ *Yüan-shih*, ch. 41, p. 15a (1348, 2nd month).

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, ch. 42, p. 2a (1349, 7th month).

¹¹ *Tuan-pen t'ang king-hsün yao-yi* 端本堂經訓要義 in 11 ch., modelled on the *Ta-hsüe yen-yi* 大學衍義 of Chen Tê-siu 真德秀; *Li-tai ti-wang ku-shih* 歷代帝王故事 in 106 p'ien. Other historical works were *Ta-pao lu* 大寶錄 and *Ta-pao kuei-kien* 大寶龜鑑, all of them interpreting history according to Confucian ethics, cf. the short characteristic of each work given in *Yüan-shih*, ch. 183, p. 11a/b.

A special studio was established for the heir-apparent, the *Tuan-pen t'ang* 端本堂. An amusing anecdote concerning his studies can be found in the *Cho-keng lu*¹: the boy complained about being constantly annoyed during his studies by the noise and disturbance caused by the courtiers riding out for falconry.

Another scholar with whom the heir-apparent had friendly relations was Ou-yang Hsüan. His works contain postscripts to characters written by Ayuširidara.² He also was presented in 1354 by the prince with the characters *king-hsün* 經訓.³ A general appreciation of Ayuširidara's calligraphy can be found in the *P'ei-wen-chai shu-hua p'u* where he is said to have succeeded in acquiring Yü Shih-nan's 虞世南 (558-638) technique.⁴

The evidence collected above certainly allows the conclusion that the educational standard of the later Mongol emperors was not as poor as has sometimes been believed. To be sure, no great artist or poet can be found among them and the flattering eulogies of various authors will certainly not prevent the modern reader from feeling that the achievements of at least some emperors can hardly have been above a schoolboy level. We may affirm, however, that the last heir-apparent had received an education which was preponderantly Chinese. The rebellions of the *chih-cheng* period, culminating in the overthrow of Mongol rule in 1368, interrupted a development which might have produced another K'ang-hsi or K'ien-lung. But the loss of the empire forced the descendants of Činggis Qan back into the steppes and to a military life. Finally we must bear in mind that the problem discussed in this paper is but a single feature of the more complicated question concerning the use of language in the multilingual society of the Yüan period. This latter deserves further investigation.

¹ Ch. 2, p. 2b.

² (a) *Kuei-chai wen-tsi*, ch. 15, p. 1b: 麟鳳二大字贊, given to the official Cheng Shen 鄭深; *lin-feng*, unicorn and phoenix, is a frequent binom which can be traced back to the *Li-ki*, ch. 9. (b) *Op. cit.*, ch. 14, p. 7b, dated 1357: 眉壽二大字跋, given to Cheng in acknowledgment of the latter's filial piety for his octogenarian mother. *Mei-shou* is an expression borrowed from the ode *Ts'i-yüe* (Nr. 154; Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, Stockholm 1950, p. 99 " . . . make this spring wine in order to increase the vigorous old age"; Legge, *Ch. Cl.*, p. 231: " . . . for the benefit of the old eyebrows") and a very appropriate quotation for the purpose.

³ *Kuei-chai wen-tsi*, ch. 16, p. 13a (*Vita* of Ou-yang Hsüan). The expression apparently occurs first in Cheng Hsüan's biography in *Hou Han-shu*, ch. 65. Cheng and Ou-yang had the same personal name Hsüan 玄; the choice of *king-hsün* as a calligraphic present was no doubt meant to be an allusion to Cheng Hsüan and therefore rather flattering for Ou-yang. Two bottles of wine from the imperial cellar emphasized the honour accorded to the latter.

⁴ Ch. 20, p. 7b, quoting the *Shu-shih hui-yao*.