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WILLIAM TROUSDALE

A CHINESE HANDLE-BEARING MIRROR  
FROM NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

During a sojourn in Afghanistan in the spring and summer of 1960, my attention was directed to a bronze mirror in the collection of Mr. Mohammad Ali of Kunduz, Kataghan Province, by Dr. Klaus Fischer who was then conducting an archaeological survey of the Kunduz area. Fortunately Dr. Fischer was able to obtain a photograph of this mirror, which later was inaccessible.<sup>1</sup> According to the available information the mirror was found in the vicinity of Kunduz.

The mirror of itself (fig. 1) is not an especially handsome piece; its poor state of preservation precludes appraisal of the quality of its workmanship. But as it is, to my knowledge, the first handle-bearing mirror of its type found in Afghanistan,<sup>2</sup> it has some historical importance that should justify the following remarks.

The Kunduz mirror is of bronze and appears to have been cast in one piece with the handle (more clearly seen by comparison with the Dzhambul mirror, fig. 3 — for description see n. 3). The mirror disk is 9 cm. in diameter and the overall length, including handle, is 17 cm. The surface of the recessed panel between bordering ridges on the handle was evidently occupied by some design in relief in the manner of the other mirrors illustrated here. Like the handle, the mirror disk is so badly corroded that the subject of its décor is barely visible. Fortunately, there exists a nearly identical and better preserved mirror, reputedly from the Kochkor Valley, Kirghiz S.S.R., in the State Hermitage, Leningrad (fig. 2),<sup>3</sup> enabling us to decipher the basic

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Klaus Fischer for permission to reproduce his photograph here. See K. Fischer "Preliminary Notes on Some Ancient Remains at Qunduz", *Afghanistan*, vol. XVI, 1 (Kabul 1961) pp. 12–26, Kunduz mirror fig. 24. In a communication of December 26, 1960, Fischer informs me that this mirror has been acquired by the Kabul Museum.

<sup>2</sup> The Sarvar collection, Kunduz, contains a large bronze mirror with a short tang cast in one piece with the disk (Fischer, *op. cit.*, fig. 26). Doubtless it was once fitted with some form of wooden, horn, or ivory handpiece. At any rate, its affinities have nothing in common with the mirror under discussion; it is to be related possibly to mirror types with socketed handles evidently widely used, whether for magical or more mundane purposes, in Transoxiana at times earlier than it is possible to date the Kunduz mirror: see L. I. Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe, k istorii material'noi kul'tury i iskusstva Tokharistana*, Tashkent, 1960, figs. 100–109, 112, and p. 198f., wallpaintings from a structure near Termez on the Oxus, dated 5th to 6th century, in which many figures hold tanged mirrors, plain or with simple linear patterns, fitted with long, slender handles. The diameter of the Sarvar mirror is 14.6 cm.; the back surface is undecorated but has a raised, rounded bordering ridge and a rounded peak in the center back. The provenance of this mirror is not known.

<sup>3</sup> The Hermitage possesses three mirrors of this type: (1) CA-13743, found in 1892, diameter 9.5 cm., overall length (the tip of the handle is broken) 17 cm. — fig. 2; (2) CA-13756, found in 1889 in the former Aulie-Ata district of the former Syr-Darya region, now the Dzhambul region of the Kazakh S.S.R. (about 180 miles southwest of the western end of Lake Balkash, between Frunze and Tashkent), diameter 8.7 cm., overall length including the handle, here complete, 16.1 cm., more worn and corroded than the first mirror — fig. 3; (3) CA-14269, found in Central Asia, exact place unknown, in the pre-revolutionary period, diameter 9.3 cm., handle missing but a fragment adhering to the disk indicates disk and handle were cast as one piece, more corroded than the first mirror — unpublished. The décor of the three mirror disks is identical; the handles, insofar as they are preserved, differ slightly in décor. I wish to express my gratitude to

subject matter of the Kunduz mirror. Within a conventionalized rinceau border, probably identical to that of the Kochkor and Dzhabul mirrors and similar to that on a bronze mirror in the Musée Louis Finot, Hanoi (fig. 4),<sup>4</sup> a landscape scene in low relief with personages and animals may be seen. Moving from right to left we may discern: the trunk of a tree; a small human figure bearing an umbrella and in attendance upon a larger personage in loose, flowing robes; a bird with wings spread in flight facing toward the right, and below the bird a tortoise facing and peering up at the larger of the two personages. Above these figures spreads the foliage of the tree, which is possibly of a flowering variety. Presumably a pool of water is indicated at the bottom, directly above the juncture of handle with disk.

Lowermost on the handle of the Kochkor mirror is a conventionalized cloud scroll. In the center is an opening lotus blossom, set sideways. The uppermost element of décor on the handle has been obliterated by corrosion.

The style of the composition as a whole and the treatment of the individual elements are so thoroughly Chinese that even though I have been unsuccessful in efforts to find its counterpart among other extant Chinese mirrors (or in other media), its Chinese origin can hardly be questioned. Probably the landscape scene of the Kunduz mirror is to be connected with the Taoist themes of the worthy or recluse in a wild setting, or with the repertoire of scenes from mythology, which during late T'ang and post-T'ang periods in China became an increasingly popular subject not only on mirror backs but in carved lacquer, textiles and ceramics as well. The flying bird (crane?), tortoise and pool of water, and on the handle of the Kochkor mirror the opening lotus blossom, all traditional elements of Taoist representational symbolism, strengthen the connection of the Kunduz mirror with such scenes. The design may also be considered as a close counterpart of the typical Buddhist picture of the Lo-han in a natural setting, with human and animal attendants, which enjoyed such widespread popularity from the Five Dynasties period on.

But one element especially distinguishes the Kunduz and Kochkor mirrors from their nearest Chinese analogies — the handle. That the handle-bearing mirror as a type did not originate in China is beyond doubt. The earliest known Chinese handle-bearing mirror, of Later Han date, from Szechwan Province,<sup>5</sup> is several centuries later in date than the Greek handle-bearing mirror types retrieved from the South Russian Scythian tombs.<sup>6</sup> The tanged silver mirror with horn handle recovered from the second Pazyryk kurgan antedates the Chinese Han

Boris Stavisky of the Central Asian Section and to G. N. Balashova of the Medieval Islamic Section of the State Hermitage, Leningrad, for the above information, and to the officials of the Museum for photographs of these mirrors and permission to publish them here. The Kochkor mirror was first published by A. N. Bernshtam, *Istoriko-arkheologicheskie ocherki Tsentral'nogo Tyan'-Shanya i Pamiro-Alaya*, Materialy i issledovaniya po arkheologii SSSR (hereafter MIA), No. 26, Moskva-Leningrad, 1952, p. 159, fig. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Léon Vandermeersch, *Les miroirs de bronze du Musée de Hanoi*, Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, vol. XLVI, Paris, 1960, pl. LIII, B.

<sup>5</sup> Chêng Tê-k'un, *Archaeological Studies in Szechwan*, Cambridge, 1957, p. 153 and pl. LXII, 2. This mirror is remarkably similar in form to later examples and provides tangible support for the tradition recording the presence of handle-bearing mirrors in the hands of dancers in China during the Former Han, at the court of Wu-ti 武帝 (F. Hirth, "Chinese Metallic Mirrors", *Boas Anniversary Volume*, New York, 1906, p. 223). The circumstances of their appearance at this earlier date, however, suggest that they would have been foreign importations.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, Cambridge, 1913, p. 65 f., p. 178, fig. 73, p. 191, fig. 83. Handle-bearing mirrors of Greek type are the most frequently encountered variety: MIA, No. 69 (1959), p. 67, fig. 36 and p. 129, fig. 24; MIA, No. 64 (1958), p. 44, fig. 8.



Fig. 1

Bronze mirror formerly in the collection of Mr. Mohammad Ali, Kunduz, now in the *Kabul Museum*. Diam. 9 cm; length 17 cm.  
(photo by Klaus Fischer)



Fig. 2

Bronze mirror from the Kochkor Valley, Kirghiz S.S.R., in the *State Hermitage, Leningrad*. Diam. 9.5 cm.; length 17 cm.  
(courtesy of the State Hermitage, Leningrad)





Fig. 3

Bronze mirror from the Dzhambul region, Kazakh S.S.R., in the *State Hermitage, Leningrad*. Diam. 8.7 cm.; length 16.1 cm. (courtesy of the State Hermitage, Leningrad)

Fig. 4

Bronze mirror from Indo-China in the *Musée Louis Finot, Hanoi*. Diam. 11 cm.; length 20 cm. (after L. Vandermeersch, *Les miroirs de bronze du Musée de Hanoi*, Pub. de l'École fr. d'Extrême-Orient, vol. XLVI, Paris, 1960, pl. LIII, B)

Fig. 5

Bronze mirror from the Suiyüan region. (after Egami and Mizuno, *Inner Mongolia and the Region of the Great Wall*, Archaeol. Orient., B Ser., vol. I, Tōkyō and Kyōto, 1935, pl. XXII, 4)

mirror by at least four centuries,<sup>7</sup> and mirrors with plain or anthropomorphic handles from the cemetery of Khūrvīn, northwest of Tehran, Iran, seem to date from the end of the 9th century B.C., almost a millennium before the earliest Chinese handle-bearing types.<sup>8</sup>

There is at present no certain evidence that handle-bearing mirrors constituted an element of Chinese fashion before the late T'ang or early Sung dynasty.<sup>9</sup> Few, if any, aspire to the elegance of the traditional Chinese mirror with back loop,<sup>10</sup> and those produced by the Chinese for their own use could only have been esteemed as fascinating, if useful, curiosities.

The handle-bearing mirror, on the other hand, seems to have been more favored by China's neighbors — Japan, Korea, Indo-China — where it constitutes a more substantial portion of the extant mirrors.<sup>11</sup> Of a total of thirty-nine bronze mirrors in the Hanoi museum ascribed by Léon Vandermeersch to a period corresponding to late T'ang or early Sung in China, twenty-five, possibly twenty-seven, bear handles cast in one piece with the mirror disk. Vandermeersch, furthermore, is of the opinion that all of these mirrors were manufactured in China.<sup>12</sup> While it may not be, as Vandermeersch suggests, that all of these mirrors were imported or brought by Chinese civil and military authorities as personal possessions — extraordinary would be so high a percentage of handle-bearing mirrors for use by Chinese — the agreement of their décor in nearly every instance with well-known Chinese types does support his assumption of their Chinese manufacture. It is, therefore, perhaps no mere coincidence that certain of the Hanoi mirrors reflect exactly the shape, design and décor of handle-bearing mirrors from Korea.<sup>13</sup>

We are thus led to a tentative conclusion that handle-bearing mirrors were made in China, probably for the purpose of exporting them to other lands. While it seems possible that some such mirrors were made locally outside China, but in copy of Chinese originals, it would seem that the majority were produced in China.

A unified landscape scene with elements placed in relation to a horizontally conceived space, or plane, is not well suited to the round surface of the mirror back. It is especially unsuited to the traditional Chinese types with the cast metal loop as an integral part of the mirror, directly in the center of the back. Regardless of the ingenious methods employed by the Chinese to incorporate the loop into the landscape by fashioning it in the form of some element of the

<sup>7</sup> S. I. Rudenko, *Kul'tura naseleniya Gornogo Altaya v skifskoe vremya*, Moskva-Leningrad, 1953, pl. XXIX, 3.

<sup>8</sup> L. Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie de l'Irān ancien*, Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui VI, Leiden, 1959, p. 124 and pl. CLVII, b and d.

<sup>9</sup> O. Kümmel, *Chinesische Kunst*, Berlin, 1930, description for pl. CXV; M. Rupert and O. J. Todd, *Chinese Bronze Mirrors*, Peiping, 1935, p. 32: "Mirrors cast with ordinary handles... came into occasional use in the T'ang dynasty though this type was never popular." An engraved stone slab of T'ang date from Ch'ang-an, 長安 Shensi Province, depicts a woman holding a handle-bearing mirror, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih-k'ê-hua hsüan-chi* 中國古代石刻畫選集 (Collection of ancient Chinese engraved stone pictures), ed. by Wang Tzū-yün, 王子雲 Pei-ching, 1957, pl. XX, 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> E. g., Rupert and Todd, *Chinese Bronze Mirrors*, pls. XII, no. 83, XXI, nos. 124, 211.

<sup>11</sup> For Japanese handle-bearing mirrors see: Seki Shintarō, *Tōinro wakan kokan zuroku* 關信太郎，桃陰廬和漢古鑑圖錄 (Illustrated catalogue of the Tōinro collection of Japanese and Chinese ancient mirrors), vol. II, Nara, 1925, pl. LXXXVI (3 mirrors); Gotō Shuichi, *Kokyō shuei* 後藤守一，古鏡聚英 (The pictorial catalogue of ancient mirrors), vol. II, Tōkyō, 1935, pls. LXXIX-LXXX (17 mirrors); *Chin-shih so* 金石索 (Illustrated treatise on inscribed metal and stone objects), Shanghai: Chi shan shu chu 積山書局, 1893, chin-so 6, p. 441, b. For Korean handle-bearing mirrors see: Gotō, *op. cit.*, pl. XXX, 1-5. For Indo-China see: Vandermeersch, *op. cit.*, pls. XLI-XLVIII, L-LIV, LXIII.

<sup>12</sup> *Les miroirs de bronze du Musée de Hanoi*, pp. 2, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Vandermeersch, *op. cit.*, pls. XLVI-XLVII, with Gotō, *op. cit.*, II, pls. XXVI, 7 and XXX, 3. Gotō identifies the former as a Chinese mirror, but the distinction is of no importance here. See also n. 28.

composition, it remained obtrusive in appearance and inflexible in position.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, from the late T'ang on, the single, integrated landscape appeared with increasing frequency on Chinese mirrors.<sup>15</sup>

The landscape scene, especially that including Taoist or mythological subjects, developed on Chinese mirror backs during the late T'ang and Sung periods, seems to have been particularly favored by the users of the handle-bearing mirror, both in Korea<sup>16</sup> and in Indo-China.<sup>17</sup> These mirrors are customarily ascribed to late T'ang or early Sung. Probably the majority of them, as regards Indo-China and Korea, are Sung.<sup>18</sup>

If it is true that the handle-bearing mirrors were largely produced in China in accordance with the tastes and usages of neighboring regions to which they were mainly exported, it is probably likewise true that the Kochkor, Dzhambul and Kunduz mirrors were not made with the intention of exporting them to such remote and, insofar as China was concerned, relatively insignificant places. Some intermediate place must be sought, and in this case, and for a number of specific reasons, the region north of China proper seems the most probable intermediary. Little information is available regarding the mirrors used during the T'ang and Sung dynasties in the regions north of China, but Korea, where they are somewhat better known, doubtless reflects to some extent forms common to this larger area. I have summarized below what may be the course of events that brought the Kochkor and Kunduz mirrors, as well as the other similar examples in the State Hermitage, to the places where they were found.

The Khitan Turks had shared the territories along the northern border of China with the Uighurs, principally, throughout most of the T'ang dynasty. With the collapse of T'ang, the Khitan became ever stronger and their menace to China grew in proportion. In the second quarter of the tenth century they occupied much of North China and established the Liao dynasty north of the Yellow River, receiving a considerable tribute from the beleaguered Sung dynasty. Figure 5 illustrates a handle-bearing mirror from the Suiyüan region. Though possibly somewhat later in date than the Liao dynasty, the form and ornamentation of its handle have obvious affinities both to the Kochkor and Dzhambul mirrors (figs. 2 and 3) and to one from Indo-China (fig. 4).<sup>19</sup>

In the early twelfth century the Juchen overran the Khitan domains of North China, and in 1125 brought the Liao dynasty to an end. A group of the Khitan, led by a member of the ruling

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Gotō, *op. cit.*, II, pl. XIII, 2-3 (loop as a tortoise), pl. XIII, 4 (loop as a burl).

<sup>15</sup> Shên Ts'ung-wên, *T'ang Sung t'ung-ching* 潘從文, 唐宋銅鏡 (T'ang and Sung bronze mirrors), Pei-ching, 1958, pls. III, L; Gotō, *op. cit.*, II, pl. XIII, 1-4; Ch'ên Chieh-ch'i, *Fu-chai tsang-ching* 陳介祺, 簠齋藏鏡 (Mirrors in the Fu-chai collection), n.p., 1925, pt. 2, p. 26b.

<sup>16</sup> Seki Shintarō, *op. cit.*, II, pl. LXXXVIII; Gotō, *op. cit.*, pls. XXIX, 3-5, XXX, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Vandermeersch, *op. cit.*, pls. XLII-XLV, LII, C, pp. 41 (nos. 17.950 and 25.494), 54 (no. 1.399).

<sup>18</sup> Recent Chinese studies and the excavation of Sung tombs tend to confirm the Chinese origin of these mirrors and to indicate that their popularity in China is hardly earlier than the Sung: cf. Wang Shih-lun, "Shih-t'an chung-kuo t'ung-ching wên-shih-ti fa-chan" 王士倫, 試談中國銅鏡紋飾的發展 (Remarks on the development of Chinese bronze mirror décor), *Wên-wu ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* 文物參考資料 (hereafter *Wên-wu*), 1957, no. 8, p. 31, fig. 11 (Sung), with Vandermeersch, *op. cit.*, pls. XLVI-XLVIII (considered late T'ang). Cf. also *Wên-wu*, 1956, no. 9, p. 76, from a Northern Sung tomb, Chekiang Province, and *Wên-wu*, 1959, no. 10, p. 85, with Vandermeersch, *op. cit.*, pl. LIV.

<sup>19</sup> Egami Namio and Mizuno Seiichi, *Inner Mongolia and the Region of the Great Wall*, Archaeologia Orientalis, B Series, vol. I, Tōkyō and Kyōto, 1935, pl. XXII, 4. On most mirrors the recessed panel of the handle leads directly into the decorated panel of the mirror back. Here, as with the Dzhambul, Kochkor and Kunduz mirrors, the border of the mirror disk interrupts the recessed handle panel. See also: *Wên-wu*, 1959, no. 8, p. 79, Sung landscape mirror with similar handle.



family, fled westward, and within a decade had re-established themselves in the Semirechyé region with their capital at Balāsāghūn,<sup>20</sup> to be henceforward known to the historians of western Asia as the Kara-Khitay. Semirechyé was not entirely unfamiliar territory to the Kara-Khitay; their incursions into this region had begun as early as 1017/18, at a time when it was the chief domain of a Turkic people, the Kara-Khanids.<sup>21</sup>

The exact location of Balāsāghūn has not been irrefutably established, but it is certainly to be located in the Chu Valley.<sup>22</sup> This valley, near to which Frunze, present capital of the Kirghiz S.S.R., is located, is not over seventy-five miles distant from the Kochkor Valley, some thirty miles southwest of the western end of Issyk Kul, and communication between them, by means of Chu tributary valleys, presents no difficulties.<sup>23</sup>

Bronze handle-bearing mirrors have been retrieved as chance finds and by excavation in the Semirechyé region since the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> In 1952 the late A.N. Bernshtam published two handle-bearing mirrors (one of them our fig. 2) along with three indisputably Chinese handleless mirrors of late T'ang and Sung type, all found in the vicinity of the Chu Valley.<sup>25</sup> Bernshtam confined his discussion of these bronze mirrors to his outline of the art of Semirechyé under the Karluk Turks (8th–10th centuries) whose principal seat of authority was the Chu Valley. But he is silent on the more numerous Chinese mirrors, and discusses only the handle-bearing mirror of manifest Islamic type which in all probability is correctly placed in Karluk times.<sup>26</sup> The Karluk Turks, though reluctant converts to Islam, were strongly influenced by Muslim civilization.<sup>27</sup> At any rate, the Karluks, falling to the Kara-Khanids in A.D. 940, or some twenty years before the establishment of the Sung dynasty in China, could hardly have had in their possession a handle-bearing mirror which seems to be a product of Sung China.

The extent of Kara-Khanid relations with China is little known. A trade route between China and western Turkestan passed through Semirechyé, doubtless along the upper course of the Chu River (the Ch'u 垂 of Chinese sources) where the chief centers of the area were located, as it had for centuries whenever political conditions met the requirements of commercial relations. But communications were often broken or disrupted by the frequent military and political

<sup>20</sup> "All Muslim sources agree on the fact that the first Muslim ruler to submit to the Khitay was the khan of Balāsāghūn." V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. by V. and T. Minorsky, vol. I, Leiden, 1956, p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> Barthold, *op. cit.*, pp. 92ff.

<sup>22</sup> Barthold, *op. cit.*, p. 92. It was described by the tenth-century geographer Muqaddasi as "large, populous and rich".

<sup>23</sup> E. M. Murzaev, ed., *Srednyaya Aziya: fiziko-geograficheskaya kharakteristika*, Moskva, 1958: Chu, pp. 46, 47, fig. 10; Kochkor, p. 551. A. N. Bernshtam, *Trudy semirechenskoï arkeologicheskoi ekspeditsii: "Chuiskaya Dolina"*, MIA, No. 14, Moskva-Leningrad, 1950, pl. I (map) locates Balāsāghūn region about 45 km. southeast of Frunze.

<sup>24</sup> I. I. Tolstōi and N. P. Kondakov, *Russkiiya drevnosti i pamyatnikakh iskusstva*, vol. III, St. Petersburg, 1890, p. 93, fig. 98, handle does not appear to have been cast in one piece with the mirror disk, but the disk was intended to be fitted thus; G. N. Balashova, "Bronzovoe zerkalo so stsenoi okhoty", Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh, *Trudy otdela vostoka*, vol. III, Leningrad, 1940, pp. 257–262. Two handle-bearing mirrors were recently found by Soviet archaeologists in the Kochkor Valley (G. F. Debets, ed., *Trudy kirgizskoi arkeologo-etnograficheskoi ekspeditsii*, vol. II, Moskva, 1959, p. 76). Both are badly broken and corroded, but the larger appears to have had a ridged handle (p. 73, fig. 6) similar to our figure 2.

<sup>25</sup> Bernshtam, MIA, No. 26, p. 159, fig. 69.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158; Balashova, *op. cit.*, believes that a similar Islamic mirror is of the 10th or 11th century, hence either of Karluk or Kara-Khanid times.

<sup>27</sup> For the summary of events in Semirechyé during the Karluk, Kara-Khanid and Kara-Khitay periods, I have relied principally on the works of Bernshtam cited above and Barthold, *Four Studies*; id., *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 2nd ed., London, 1958.



cataclysms that made the tenth and eleventh centuries a period of general decline in Semirechyé.

The Kara-Khanids seem to have entered Semirechyé from the south and were early converted to Islam. Had they been frequent recipients of Chinese handle-bearing mirrors, we might expect them to have left some behind in the Kashgar region where they remained reasonably influential. Such does not appear to be the case. Two handle-bearing mirrors only were found by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan, and these at Kara Khoja.<sup>28</sup> Both of them are decorated with landscape scenes and both were found in association with a hoard of metal objects among which were a large number of Chinese copper coins which permit the mirrors to be rather reliably dated to the first quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>29</sup> But even without the date provided by the coins, the Sung character of the better preserved mirror could hardly be disputed.

The date of these mirrors, then, corresponds almost exactly to the defeat of the Khitan, and their location at a site along the route taken by at least a portion of these people further suggests that they may have formed a part of the Chinese trappings brought by the Khitan westward to Semirechyé.<sup>30</sup> The Kochkor mirror is presently considered to date from the eleventh or twelfth century.<sup>31</sup> If it was brought by the Khitan, a date early in the second quarter of the twelfth century might thus be tentatively advanced.<sup>32</sup>

It is not necessary to expand here on the political vicissitudes of the Kara-Khitay empire in the West. After establishing their government in the Chu Valley they soon fell into conflict with the peoples to the west and in a series of successful military engagements by 1141 had extended their power as far west as Khwarezm. The Kunduz mirror probably found its way to northern Afghanistan shortly after this date.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> A third handle-bearing mirror was found by the Sino-Swedish Expedition at Charchan, southwest of Lop-nor (Folke Bergman, *Archaeological Researches in Sinkiang*, Sino-Swedish Expedition, Reports, Section VIII, Archaeology, vol. I, Stockholm, 1939, p. 212 and pl. XXXIII, 23). The shape of the mirror, handle form and landscape subject correspond exactly to mirrors in the Hanoi museum (Vandermeersch, *op. cit.*, pls. XLII, XLIV) ascribed to late T'ang. Bergman relates the Charchan mirror to those found by Stein at Kara Khoja (see n. 29), concluding that it "can hardly be older than the Sung dynasty for stylistic reasons; it may be still younger". It was conceivably carried into Central Asia at the same time and by the same people who brought the handle-bearing mirrors to Kara Khoja.

<sup>29</sup> Sir M. A. Stein, *Innermost Asia*, Oxford, 1928, vol. III, pl. LXXI. Curiously, Stein refers to the mirrors as bronze in his discussion of the site (vol. II, p. 593), but in the list of finds (vol. II, p. 601) they are labeled brass. F. H. Andrews, *Descriptive Catalogue of Antiquities Recovered by Sir Aurel Stein...*, Delhi, 1935, p. 273, lists only one of the mirrors and labels it brass. It is most unlikely that the handle with "a small suspension-hole", common on Japanese mirrors but not on those of China, found in the ruins of a house 12 ½ km. northeast of Khara-Khoto, was associated with a mirror (B. Sommarström, *Archaeological Researches in the Edsen-Gol Region, Inner Mongolia*, Sino-Swedish Expedition, Reports, Section VIII, Archaeology, vol. VIII, pt. 1, Stockholm, 1956, p. 124, K. 13717:3).

<sup>30</sup> Barthold, *Four Studies*, pp. 101, 103; Bernshtam, MIA, No. 14, p. 139f.

<sup>31</sup> Thus labeled at the Hermitage.

<sup>32</sup> The more advanced, sophisticated, painterly landscape on a Yüan dynasty handle-bearing mirror recently excavated in Sian Province would seem to further corroborate a Sung date for the Kochkor mirror: "Hsi-an ch'ü-chiang ch'ih-hsi-ts'un Yüan-mu ch'ing-li-chien-pao" 西安曲江池西村元墓清理簡報 (Report on the Yüan dynasty burial at Ch'ih-hsi, Ch'ü-chiang district, Sian Province), *Wên-wu*, 1958, no. 6, p. 59, fig. 12 and p. 61. The relief design on the handle is similar to those illustrated here; the juncture of handle with disk is of the type described in n. 19.

<sup>33</sup> The actual bearers of the mirror to Kunduz remain, of course, unknown. The Kara-Khitay conquest provides a workable date, but the bearers might have been any of several tribes. Remnants of the Karluks may still be found in Kataghan and Badakhshan provinces of northern Afghanistan according to Gunnar Jarring, *On the Distribution of Turk Tribes in Afghanistan*, Lunds Universitets Årsskrift, N. F., Avd. 1, Bd. 35, Nr. 4, Lund, 1939, p. 72.

*Summary:* A handle-bearing mirror with distinctive Chinese décor recently found in the region of Kunduz, Afghanistan, was probably made in China toward the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century. Since the handle-bearing mirror has never been the preferred Chinese form, it was doubtless made for export to the Liao kingdom then occupying the northern part of China. Possibly it was made in North China in a shop under Liao patronage. With the defeat of the Liao in 1125, the Kunduz mirror, together with other similar ones, was carried by the Khitan refugees westward to Semirechyé. After a rapid adjustment to their new environment, eased by the earlier infiltration of this region by their numbers, the Khitan, now the Kara-Khitay, spread their new empire by 1141 as far west as Khwarezm. The Kunduz mirror is possibly a material record of this conquest.