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DUNHUANG II. BUDDHIST AND OTHER TEXTS IN IRANIAN LANGUAGES

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ii. Buddhist and Other Texts in Iranian Languages

The library cave in Dunhuang has yielded a number of texts of the 8th to 10th centuries in two Middle Iranian languages, Khotanese and Sogdian.

Cave 17 of the Caves of the One Thousand Buddhas (Qianfodong) in Dunhuang (Cansu Province) has yielded tens of thousands of manuscripts of the 4th to the early 11th centuries. The great majority of them are in Chinese and Tibetan, but there are also a number of texts in Khotanese and Sogdian. They were discovered mainly by the expeditions from Europe and are currently preserved mostly in the libraries and museums in France (Pelliot collection, Bibliothèque Nationale) and England (Stein collection, British Library). Only a small number of texts are preserved in the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg (Oldenburg collection), China, and Japan.

Khotanese texts. During the 10th century, the kingdom of Khotan had a strong diplomatic relationship with the local rulers of Dunhuang, and there seems to

have been a considerable number of Khotanese people there. The Khotanese texts discovered in Dunhuang reflect the activities of the Khotanese monks and diplomats, including princes, dispatched from Khotan; in those days monks often functioned as envoys. The texts are all in Late Khotanese and many of them were produced in Dunhuang. For the history of the Khotan-Dunhuang relationship and a brief survey of the Dunhuang Khotanese texts, see the study by Hiroshi Kumamoto (1996), which also provides a handy list of the materials (see also KHOTAN ii).

Virtually all the Dunhuang texts were transcribed and published by Harold W. Bailey in the series of *Khotanese Texts* and *Khotanese Buddhist Texts* (1951). All the texts belonging to the British Library have been catalogued, transcribed, and re-edited with translation by Prods O. Skjærvø (2002), while the Paris texts are listed exhaustively and briefly described by Guangda Zhang and Xinjiang Rong (pp. 118-48). A considerable number of them have been studied by various scholars (for the latest bibliographical information, see Maggi). The scholarly surveys of the Khotanese texts by Mark J. Dresden, Ronald E. Emmerick, Skjærvø, and Maggi, are very informative, although they do not distinguish between the texts discovered in Khotan and those in Dunhuang. In principle, the manuscripts bearing the signatures Ch. (for Ch'ien-fo-tung), Or. (for Oriental collection in the British Library), S (for Stein), P (for Pelliot), and SI O (for Ser-India Oldenburg) were brought from Dunhuang. The so-called Staël-Holstein roll dated 9th March 925 CE was also discovered in Dunhuang. It is the best-known Khotanese document, containing numerous place names and Turkish tribal names; it is also of paramount historical importance, but its present whereabouts is not known (Emmerick, p. 46; see also KHOTAN iv).

Based on the morphology of the manuscripts, Dunhuang Khotanese texts are classified into two groups (cf. Kumamoto, 1996, pp. 90-98): (1) those written on the backside of Buddhist Chinese texts (some 90 mss.), and (2) "fair copies" of mainly *poṭhī* palm-leaf folios comprising Buddhist *sūtra*s such as the *Vajracchedikā sūtra* and medical texts such as the *Siddhasāra* written in formal or careful cursive script (some 30 mss.). Obviously, texts of the latter group, which often contain dates and colophons, were produced for the merit of copying and were dedicated to the local temples. The trend in those days seems to have been a type of esoteric Buddhism called *Vajrayāna* (Diamond vehicle), which is represented by a few texts (Maggi, 2009, pp. 405-6). Folio numbers of one Tibetan tantric text are written in Khotanese transcribed in

Tibetan script (Maggi, 1995). The characteristic feature of both groups, in particular the former, is that several different texts are written in the same manuscript.

Texts of the first group are those written by the Khotanese envoys for such practical purposes as entertainment, learning/training, drafting, etc. when they were sojourning in Dunhuang. Narratives such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Sudhanāvadāna* (for the latest editions, see de Chiara) and literary works such as lyric poems were copied for entertainment, while alphabet exercises and bilingual texts such as a few copies of a Chinese-Khotanese conversation manual (Takata, pp. 195-227; Kumamoto, 1996, pp. 95-96; see Emmerick and Pulleyblank for a Buddhist Chinese text phonetically transcribed in Brahmi script) reveal the copyists' schooling. Drafts of letters addressed to the Khotanese royal court are also found (Kumamoto, 1982). Some Buddhist texts, such as a metrical summary of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, the so-called *Mañjusrī-nairātmyāvatāra sūtra*, and others, are written in careless cursive script and seem to represent the work of monks studying Buddhist doctrines. A unique fair copy of the alphabet is known, which must be a teacher's model rather than a writing exercise, as an introductory sentence ("Learn, pupil, so that you do not get my stick!") seems to imply (Emmerick and Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja, pp. 165-70). Yet another unique case is a letter sent by a Khotanese king named Viśa' Śūra (r. 967-78), of which the blank side was later recycled on practical purposes to copy a Sanskrit-Khotanese conversation manual (Kumamoto, 1988).

Sogdian texts. Before the Islamization of Central Asia, in particular during the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-907), Sogdians played a leading role as international traders along the Silk Roads connecting China and the West, with the result that a considerable number of Sogdians settled in various cities in China including Dunhuang (on the history of Sogdians in general, see de La Vaissière; see also SOGDIAN TRADE).

Virtually all of the Dunhuang Sogdian manuscripts have been published (for a list of the texts see Yoshida, 1985). Fundamental editions are those by Émile Benveniste (1940 and 1945), D. N. MacKenzie (1970 and 1976), A. N. Ragoza, Nicholas Sims-Williams, (1976), and Sims-Williams and James Hamilton. The great majority of the texts are Buddhist *sūtra*s translated from Chinese originals and dated around the 8th century (Yoshida, 2009a; idem, 2015). One text entitled "Sūtra of the Condemnation of Intoxicating Drink" ends with a colophon stating that it was translated in Luoyang in 728 CE (MacKenzie, 1976,

pp. 7-11). In stark contrast with the Turfan materials which were unearthed, the Dunhuang texts are much better preserved, the longest text being that of the *Vessantara Jātaka* (P[elliot sogdien] 1 and Or. 8212/80A) comprising 29 *poṭhī* folios (out of the total 41) and 1,805 lines. In one case, a scroll of the *Sūtra of the Causes and Effects of Actions* (= P4) comprising 571 lines has survived intact (MacKenzie, 1970). So far some 20 texts have been identified, some of which are the translations of apocryphal *sūtra*s popular in contemporary China (Yoshida, 2015).

The remaining texts are miscellaneous in their contents. A few Zoroastrian (cf. Sims-Williams, 1976, Fragment 4; idem, 2000; for a similar text see Yoshida, 1979, p. 187), Manichean (Sims-Williams, 1976 Fragments 5-6; Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano, pp. 106-7 = P25, and possibly P12 as well; cf. Benveniste, 1940, pp. 130-33), and Christian (Sims-Williams, 1976: Fragment 18; idem, 2009, pp. 285-87) fragments have survived. The Manichean texts, together with the Dunhuang Manichean Uighur texts, are likely to reflect the close contact between Dunhuang and the West Uighur Kingdom situated in Turfan, where Manicheism remained a state religion during the 10th to the early 11th century (on the relationship between Dunhuang and the West Uighur Kingdom, see Rong, and for the Dunhuang Uighur texts, see Hamilton).

A unique text (P3 and Or. 8212/80B) of rainmaking magic using stones comprises four *poṭhī* folios and seems to be preserved intact (Azarnouche and Grenet; Grenet and Azarnouche, pp. 171-75). The so-called Rostam fragment, which was written by the same scribe who wrote the Zoroastrian text (Fragment 4 mentioned above), represents a Sogdian version of the *Šāh-nāma* and suggests that the Sogdian national culture survived among the Sogdian diaspora in Dunhuang (Sims-Williams, 1976, pp. 54-61; idem, 2004). One fragment of a medical treatise (P19) and one of an omen text (P22) are found (Benveniste, 1940, pp. 150, 156). The language of the texts, dating back to the late 9th to 10th centuries, betray strong Turkish influence; this variety of Sogdian is generally referred to as “Turco-Sogdian” (Sims-Williams and Hamilton; Yoshida, 2009a). They are mainly commercial documents written by those who were bilingual in Sogdian and Uighur. In view of personal names, titles, and phraseology found in them, at least three of them were written by Christians **(**Sims-Williams, 2009, pp. 285-87).

In addition to the manuscripts discovered in the library cave, there are also the so-called Ancient Letters of the early 4th century, which were also found in the Dunhuang area.

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