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KHOTANESE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS
IN THE TENTH CENTURY A.D.

Hiroshi Kumamoto

A DISSERTATION
in
ORIENTAL STUDIES

Presented to the Graduate Faculties of the University of
Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

1982

Mark J. Dresden

Supervisor of Dissertation

Eric Hoffer

Graduate Group Chairman

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1982

[Signature]
Professor of Mathematics

[Signature]
Associate Professor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	v
Abbreviations	viii
Map of Chinese Turkestan	xii
Introduction	
Chapter I. Study of the Khotanese documents; its History and present problems	2
Notes to Chapter I	15
Chapter II. The date of the MSS.	37
Notes to Chapter II	52
Texts	
Text I	67
Text II	84
Text III	99
Notes to the Texts	104
Translation	
Text I	116
Text II	125
Text III	132
Commentary	
Text I	138
Text II	206
Text III	253
Notes to the Commentary	278
Index	303
Bibliography	307

PREFACE

Khotan is an oasis town on the southern edge of the Taklamakan desert in Chinese Turkestan. The Kun-lun mountains to the south separate it from Tibet, and across the Pamirs its south-western neighbor is Kashmir. It has been throughout centuries one of the most important cities on the route from China to Persia, the so-called Silk Road. However, until the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century, when new linguistic materials came to light from the ruins around the Taklamakan, and notably from the Hidden Library of Tun-huang (where the three MSS studied below come from), nothing was known of the native language of Khotan, which we now know to be an Iranian language, and little of the culture of the Buddhist kingdom of Khotan up to the 10th century A.D.

When we consider relative scantiness of Old and Middle Iranian linguistic materials, importance of the Khotanese texts is evident. They represent the oldest fully vocalized texts in Iranian languages, as the oldest Avestan MS does not go back beyond the 13th century A.D. Their abundance is comparable to the texts of Zoroastrian Middle Persian (Book Pahlavi), which represents a much advanced stage of development compared with archaic Old Khotanese.

It was Professor Dresden who first suggested the Khotanese documents as the dissertation topic, indicating that they are much more interesting than some of the Khotanese religious texts which remained to be worked on, but not without warning that they would be very difficult for someone with little experience in the language. Professor Bailey, when I met him in October 1979 at Columbia University, kindly encouraged me in my work. The actual work for the dissertation took three years from the winter of 1979 to the summer of 1982. The first two years were spent in indexing the texts and studying other documents with the help of Professor Bailey's work (see p.26-28 below). It was in the last year when I started to work on these three MSS that I realized both fascination and difficulty Professor Dresden predicted were true.

After the first draft was made in the spring of 1982, many people kindly commented upon it. I am especially grateful to Dr. Victor Mair and Dr. Wilma L. Heston. Professor Emmerick kindly sent me two long letters (1982.4.12 and 8.18), pointing out mistakes and suggesting many points of improvement (the latest one dated 1982.9.7, which contains remarks on Chap.II of the Introduction, unfortunately came too late to be included below). I hope all of them see that I have greatly profited from their comments in the present form of

this dissertation.

My thanks are also due to the Department of Oriental Studies for the financial support I received during the course of my work, and, above all, to my teacher Professor Dresden, who did everything he could to facilitate my study.