THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE CHINESE FRAGMENTS FROM DUNHUANG IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY

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The Dunhuang materials obtained by Sir Aurel Stein during his second and third expeditions were divided between the British Museum, the India Office and the Indian government (this final section now being in the National Museum, New Delhi). However, most of the written material remained in Britain. When the British Library separated from the British Museum in 1973 the paintings were retained by the Museum but written materials in Chinese and other languages were deposited in the Oriental Department of the British Library. In the first part of this century, Dr Lionel Giles, Keeper of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts at the British Museum, catalogued the Chinese and some bilingual manuscripts, and printed Chinese documents. His Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tun-huang in the British Museum was published in 1957. It covered Stein manuscript numbers Or. 8210/S.1–6980, and printed documents, Or. 8210/P.1–19, from the second and third expeditions. The Chinese Academy of Science obtained microfilm copies of these manuscripts and Liu Mingshu also completed a catalogue of S.1–6980, which was published in 1962. Until recently, only this group of manuscripts had been fully studied.

However, the manuscripts numbered S.1–6980 do not cover the whole of the Stein Dunhuang collection. There are many fragmentary manuscripts which Giles omitted from his catalogue. Dr Huang Yungwu of Taiwan compiled a brief catalogue of fragments numbered S.6981–7599 based on a microfilm obtained from Japan, and Japanese scholars also carried out detailed research on some of the fragments. When I visited the British Library in May 1985, I was told that the manuscript pressmarks had reached S.11604. Funded by a British Academy K. C. Wong Fellowship, I was invited to London to compile a catalogue of the Chinese non-Buddhist texts from S.6981. Here I will give a brief survey of the sources and historical value of these manuscript fragments.

THE SOURCES OF THE FRAGMENTS

At present, the manuscript pressmarks have reached S.13989 and many of these cover several separate fragments, numbered A, B, C, D, etc. There are two sources for these
additional fragments. First, many are fragments from Dunhuang and other sites which Giles chose not to catalogue either because of their incompleteness or because of their poor condition at the time. The latter have since been conserved. Secondly, there are many fragments which have been removed from other manuscripts, paintings on silk and paper, and sutra wrappers.

Among those fragments ignored by Giles, the largest is about one metre wide and the smallest about the size of a palm. More than three thousand contain Buddhist text without beginning or end. Because there is no title or any other clear indication of the sutra or other text, they are difficult to identify. This may be one reason why Giles did not include them in his catalogue. Several hundred are, in fact, copies of the Lotus Sutra (Ch.: Miaofalianshajing 妙法蓮華經, Skt: Saddharmapundarikasūtra), which have since been catalogued by Kabutogi Shoko.7 Another group of Buddhist fragments consists of the first panels of Buddhist sutra scrolls, on which the title of the sutra, scroll number, abbreviations of Dunhuang monasteries (such as ‘en’ 恩 for Bao-en Monastery 報恩寺; ‘kai’ 開 for Kaiyuan Monastery 開元寺, etc.), and the number of sutra wrappers in each monastery are all recorded. This group is mainly found between S.10858–11280 and S.11465–11504. They are of great importance for research on the construction of the Buddhist canon at Dunhuang monasteries in the Tang and early Song periods (seventh to eleventh centuries) and the sources of the Buddhist texts in the library cave (No. 17) of the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. Professor Jean-Pierre Drège used some in his research on Dunhuang monastery libraries, but the list compiled by him does not include all these fragments.8

Redundant texts, especially the more robust official documents, were often used by monks to mount Buddhist texts and paintings – the main offerings to temples and caves. Daozhen 道真, a famous monk from Sanjie Monastery 三界寺, left notes concerning this practice among the manuscripts.9 The Dunhuang cave contained Buddhist sutras from Sanjie Monastery mounted by Daozhen using waste official and private documents. Such small pieces of mounting paper can also be found at the beginning and end of Buddhist sutras kept in St Petersburg and Beijing, but the majority of such pieces have been removed from the sutras and paintings in London and Paris. In the Bibliothèque nationale de France, these mounting papers are sequenced after the manuscript and marked with the ‘Pelliot chinois’ serial number followed by ‘pièce 1, 2, 3, 4...’. The British Library, however, has placed them at the end of the sequence of Stein numbers and assigned each a new number. The sequence, therefore, is constantly increasing. When I visited the British Library in 1985 the serial numbers ended at 11604 but over two thousand numbers have since been added. Some of the additional numbered fragments have been removed from silk paintings in the British Museum. The provenance of the fragments is shown on their versos. For example, S.8443F has the annotation ‘from Ch.0074’, which indicates that the thirteen fragments with this number have been removed from the verso of the silk painting No. Ch.0074 in the British Museum, ‘Amitābha with the Eight Great Bodhisattvas’.10 The fragment S.8516 has been removed from the British Museum’s silk painting Ch.xxxviii.005, ‘Two
Fig. 1. A manuscript praising the benevolent administration of Zhang Huaishen at Dunhuang. Or. 8210/S.3329
Avalokiteśvaras'. On the verso of fragment S.8691 there is a pencil note, ‘patch on S.5367’, which indicates it came from the Devatāsūtra (Ch.: Tianqing wenjing 天請問經) fragment S.5367. Fragment S.11352 has a note ‘from 6163’. S.11564, which contains only nine characters, fits into the hole on S.3329. Fujieda Akira has identified this latter manuscript as an inscription praising the benevolent administration of Zhang Huaišhen 張淮深 and belonging with the other manuscripts S.6161, S.6973 and P.2762 (fig. 1).

I will concentrate on those fragments removed from sutra wrappers. Sutra wrappers (jingzhi, 經帙或 經帙), also known as ‘book cloths’ (shuyi, 書衣) were used to enfold around ten Buddhist sutra rolls and were sometimes made of bamboo, brocade, satin or silk. However, in the Dunhuang region they were usually made of linen, paper and papyrus. There are many records of the making of sutra wrappers among the Dunhuang documents. In S.3565, ‘Record of an Offering by Cao Yuanzhong, Military Commissioner of the Returning to Allegiance Army District’ 歸義軍節度使曹元忠布施疏, for example, there is a clear description:

Donation of 1 bolt 艸 of red brocade and 21 new sutra wrappers to cover the Buddhist sutras at Longxing Monastery 龍興寺. Donation of 1 bolt of satin and 10 sutra wrappers to cover the Buddhist sutras at Lingtu Monastery 靈團寺. Donation of 1 bolt of raw silk and 15 sutra wrappers to cover the Buddhist sutras at Sanjie Monastery 蘇相寺.

In the colophon of S.5663 there is another account by Daozhen:

On the 15th day of the 1st month of the yiwei 己未 year (935), a copy of the Dabanruojing 大般若經 was repaired at Sanjie Monastery, together with a lesson to be read aloud in the inner temple. The monk Daozhen repaired eleven copies of various sutras and also made a copy of the Baoenjing 報恩經 and a copy of the Dafomingjing 大佛名經. With pious intent, Daozhen made sixty wrappers for the Dabanruojing of dark red embroidered silk cloth, all complete.

Stein was the first explorer to enter the Dunhuang library cave. From one of his photographs showing the Chinese manuscript rolls just after they were removed from the library cave, it appears that all the Buddhist sutra scrolls were originally covered by sutra wrappers in an orderly way. The Buddhist sutras and their wrappers were separated in the course of transferring the manuscripts and for other reasons. Stein and Paul Pelliot, who reached the cave next, chose the best of the sutra wrappers. Some have already been published. Among the Pelliot collection there is a sutra wrapper made of bamboo, EO.1208, which is preserved at the Musée Guimet. An official document concerning the assignment of Linghu Huaiji 令狐懷寂 of the Tang Dynasty was mounted on the verso and has not been removed. There are similar pieces in the British Library. In general, however, several layers consisting of official documents have been removed one by one from the sutra wrappers at the British Library, except for a few wrappers which it was decided to leave as artefacts. The removed layers sometimes contain important historical texts. The standard size of the paper panels of Tang official documents is 30 cm. by 45 cm. If the size of sutra wrapper is larger than that of the official documents, the mounting papers are almost complete; if the size is smaller, then
the edges of the mounting documents were cut off, but most of them are fairly complete compared to other fragments. The most interesting document is that removed from the sutra wrapper S.11287. It is an order by the Tang emperor, Ruizong 睿宗, to Neng Changren 能昌仁, Governor of Shazhou Province, dated the 9th day of the 7th month of the 1st year of Jingyun 景雲 (711). It is the oldest extant order of this type (Lunshi chishu 論事敕書) from the Tang Dynasty, and is useful for correcting some previous reconstructions of the form these orders took (fig. 2).

Also among the fragments are miscellaneous manuscripts from other sites. S.11585, for example, is a report by a Khotanese monastery on a contract lost by monk Dabian 丹贊僧大辦本典僧契事. On the verso is an original site number ‘D.VIII.1’ written by Stein to show that the item was discovered at Dandan-uiliq in the north-eastern region of Khotan in 1900. S.9464 has no site number but I believe that it was also found at Khotan. The text on the verso is a contract with the contractee ‘Meina’ 龍興寺 for borrowing copper coin with interest dated the 28th day of the 4th month of 15th year of Dali 大曆 (780) of the Tang Dynasty. The second character, ‘na’, of this personal name is a transliteration from Khotanese. Moreover, the sand-
encrusted paper of the document is not typical of paper from the cave but is like other paper from Khotan. The fragment of a letter, S.9222, has a covering sheet inscribed ‘Hoernle 150/32’, meaning that it belongs to the Hoernle collection in the British Library. On the recto of the two manuscripts S.9224 and S.9225 is the Chinese text of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra (Ch.: Dabanruo poluomiduo jing 大般若波羅蜜多經), and on the verso is a Khotanese Buddhist text with the pencil serial numbers ‘142’ and ‘143’. These also belong to the Hoernle Collection and have been published by A. F. R. Hoernle himself and others. S.9223 has Tibetan and Khotanese documents on its recto and verso respectively, and also belongs to the Hoernle Collection.

The text on the fragment S.11605 mentions ‘Xizhou bu’ (西州布: cloth from Turfan). This document was probably found by Stein at the Astana tombs near Gaochang, but there is no original number to confirm this. The fragments S.11606–11609 are marked with the original site numbers ‘Kao.III.0162’, ‘Kao.II.05’, ‘Kao.VII.03’ and ‘Kao.VII.05’. All of them are documents of the late Qing Dynasty (late nineteenth to early twentieth century) and were collected by Stein from the site of Gaochang 高昌 (previously romanized as Kao-chang). The two documents S.9437 and S.12597 also date from the Qing Dynasty and were found by Stein at sites other than Dunhuang.

THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE FRAGMENTS

Although most of the manuscripts are fragmentary, they are of great historical value for Chinese studies. For example, the two fragments S.9213A and B contain the Confucian text, Xiaojing Zhengshi jie 孝經鄭氏解 (The Classic of Filial Piety with commentaries by Zheng Xuan). These texts follow that on S.3993 and are supplementary to the selection considered by Professor Chen Tiefan in his study of Dunhuang editions of this text. The two manuscripts S.7003B and S.11910 are copies of Lunyu 論語 (The Analects), also with commentaries by Zheng Xuan. The former is not identified in the catalogue compiled by Dr Huang Yongwu, and the latter is a fragment attached to S.6121. There are few historical books in the new discovery, S.10591 being one exception. It contains only the title ‘Biographies of Wang Shang, Shi Dan, and Fu Xi’ from juan 82 of Hanshu 漢書 (History of the Han Dynasty).

S.12042 contains part of Liuzi Xinlun 劉子新論 written by Liu Zhou 劉晳 of the Northern Qi Dynasty, namely the end of Part 10, ‘Shendu’ 慎獨, and Part 11, ‘Guinong’ 慎農. It contains one sentence not found in other copies of this text from Dunhuang, such as P.3562, etc. What I found most interesting when cataloguing the fragments was that nineteen small fragments have been identified as the Daoist text, Liezi 列子楊朱篇張湛注 (Liezi Yang Zhu pian with commentaries by Zhang Zhan). This is probably the best represented non-Buddhist text among the Dunhuang manuscripts (see fig. 3).

S.7292 has been identified as the Daoist Sutra Taishang Yicheng Haikongzhizang Jing, juan 1 太上一乘海空智藏經. There are nine other copies of this text from Dunhuang but this new fragment is the most important as it contains a previously unknown part of the Daoist sutra. Kongzi Matou Bufa 孔子馬頭卜法, a divination text, is found on
the four fragments S.9501, S.9502, S.11419 and S.13002, totalling twenty-four lines. The beginning of the text is complete and its type and contents are almost the same as that on S.1339. There are two important manuscripts containing medical texts, S.9987C and S.9987B, entitled *Beiji Danyan Yaofang Juan* 備急單驗藥方卷 with preface. According to the research of Wang Jiqing, the two scrolls S.3347 and S.3395 contain different sections of the same text.\(^{29}\)

New discoveries have also been made concerning model or form letters (*shuyi* 書儀). The four lines on S.10595, when compared with the texts on S.329 and S.361, can be identified as part of *Shuyi Jing, Sihai Pingfanpoguo Qinghe Shu* 書儀鏡四海平蕃破國慶賀書 (Congratulatory letter on the conquest of the Barbarians and Kingdoms in the World, Model Letter), and its beginning can be linked with the end of S.6111. *Shuyi Jing* is a special form letter written during the Tang Dynasty in the Anxi region (Central Asia), concerning the Chinese attacks on the Tibetans in Cherchen 且末 in the Tarim Basin and in Bru Zha 勃律 in Gilgit. It describes the success won by the Four Chinese Garrisons in Central Asia in the 6th year of *Tianbao* 天寶 (747). This historical material was not previously known to scholars in the field of Central Asian studies.\(^{30}\)

Several envelopes were also found among the fragments. These were originally sealed and are referred to as *fengqi* 封啟 in model letters. S.11297, S.11348, S.11349, and S.11350 are all examples. Some are outgoing letters which were not sent out (for reasons now unknown), while others are letters between Guazhou (modern Anxi) and Shazhou.
(Dunhuang). All these letters have now been unfolded. While this separates the characters written across the fold and sacrifices the original shape, it helps us to read the contents of the sealed part and learn about the sealing system of this period.\footnote{31}

Chinese literature is also represented. S.9504 is a copy of the unannotated \textit{Wenxuan}. It contains a passage from Jiang Yan's \textit{Hen Fu} (Rhapsody of Hate). S.9432 is a fragment of juan 8 of \textit{Gu Chen Ziang Ji} (Collected Papers of Chen Ziang). The text follows that found on S.5971 and is, in turn, continued by the text on P.3590.\footnote{32} All three belong to the same scroll.

Dunhuang transformation texts (\textit{bianwen}) have been a subject of wide discussion\footnote{33} and the fragments provide some useful new information. Perhaps the most interesting is \textit{Zhuoji Bu Zhuanwen} (The Story of the Capture of Ji Bu), found on S.8459. This text can be placed between that on P.2648A and P.2648B, thus making one long scroll from the now separate manuscripts of P.2747, P.2648A, S.8459, P.2648B, P.3386 and P.3582.\footnote{34} S.13002, S.9501, S.9502 and S.11419 are fragments from a single copy of \textit{Xia Nufu Ci} (Words of a Waiting Maid) written in a good hand, with red ink used for the subject headings and for annotations. Compared with other copies of the same text, there are some variant readings.\footnote{35}

The fragments also include official Tang dynasty documents such as the legal text, S.11456, concerning Su Xianchao's marriage in the 13th year of \textit{Kaiyuan}.\footnote{36} These documents, written in good hands with comments and corrections in red, have great historical value for the study of Tibetan rule over Dunhuang. Original archives of the \textit{Guiyi Jun} (\textquote{Returning to Allegiance Army}) regime which ruled Dunhuang from the Tang to the early Song period have also been found. These have settled some disputes concerning the regime.\footnote{37} In addition, there are many monastic and private documents.

The examination of the fragments after S.6981 is helpful in understanding the nature of the library cave in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves. Based on the judgement that the Dunhuang documents do not comprise a complete library collection, Dr Fang Guangchang has recently reiterated the theory that the cave contents were \textquote{a deposit of sacred waste}. This was originally proposed by Professor Fujieda Akira of Kyoto University many years ago.\footnote{38} However, the materials in the library cave mainly comprise Buddhist texts and paintings from Sanjie Monastery, a small monastery near the Mogao Caves. The Longxing and Lingtu Monasteries, also in the Dunhuang area, would have had much more extensive collections of the Buddhist canon than the small Sanjie Monastery. There are many fragments from other large monasteries such as these among the cave's contents but many of them were repaired by monk Daozhen at Sanjie Monastery. A considerable number of fragmentary sutras or other texts in the library cave remain untouched. After the discovery of the library cave in 1900, the fragments of manuscripts were examined by the self-appointed custodian of the cave, the Daoist monk Wang Yuanlu, and the cream of the manuscripts were collected by Stein and Pelliot.
Material retrieved by later Chinese and Russian scholars is even more fragmentary. Those scholars advancing the 'sacred waste' theory have not adequately considered the nature of the British Library fragments. These did not enter the cave in their present form but have been removed from painting rolls, Buddhist sutras, and sutra wrappers and are therefore only an annexe to the holdings of the library cave. Accordingly it is misleading to argue that the library cave was used mainly to store fragmentary waste. The existence of a large number of sutra wrappers has fully proved that Buddhist sutras in the library cave were preserved in some sequence. As Stein and others were ignorant of the system used for the storage of scrolls by Buddhist monasteries, sutra rolls were separated from their wrappers when they were removed from the library cave. Today we find it difficult to recover their original order and this makes it easy to mistake them for a deposit of waste papers.

The history of the manuscripts following the discovery of the library cave is complex. According to Stein, monk Wang rearranged the cave's contents and between 1900 and 1907 some Uighur Buddhist texts of the Mongol Yuan period from elsewhere found their way into the archive. Sir Edward Denison Ross, who was in charge of the Stein collection in the British Museum, drew attention to this as early as 1913. Unfortunately, very few scholars have heeded Ross's warning on the mixed provenance of the documents. As various museums and libraries have collected Dunhuang manuscripts, a further admixture of documents from different sites and periods has occurred. Any study of the archival heritage of Dunhuang needs, therefore, to distinguish those manuscripts which actually derive from the cave itself from those which do not.

Apart from a few exceptions, the fragments from S.6981 onwards come from the Dunhuang library cave and are therefore closely related to those manuscripts now in Paris, Beijing, St Petersburg, Tokyo and Kyoto. Some documents preserved in these different institutions can be identified as belonging to the same scroll, text or genre. Among the items in the British Library which have been removed from sutra wrappers, S.8877, S.11450, S.11451 and S.11458 are documents of the Tang dynasty Horse Office at Beiting. To date, I have also identified fragments of the same form and date in the following collections: five in St Petersburg (DX354); two or three in the National Library, Beijing; about forty in the Yurinkan Museum at Kyoto; a few in the Nakamura Museum of Calligraphy in Tokyo; and some belonging to the former collection of Luo Zhenyu. As these documents can be identified with each other from their contents, and because the Stein manuscripts among them definitely came from Dunhuang, this helps to reconstruct the provenance of the holdings of the Yurinkan Museum, the Nakamura Museum of Calligraphy and Luo Zhenyu's collection. Because most of the fragments originally comprised sutra wrappers, the thickness and quality of these fragments was sometimes altered by the water treatment used to remove them, and doubts have therefore been expressed about whether they are genuine. But such doubts are unnecessary when they are compared in form and content with the manuscripts newly removed by the British Library.
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2 In Wang Chongmin 王重民 (ed.), Dunhuang Yishu Zongmu Suoyin 敦煌遺書総目索引 (Index and General Catalogue of Preserved Manuscripts from Dunhuang) (Beijing, 1962).
5 See Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, ‘Ouzhou Suocang Xiyu Chutu Wenxian Wenjianlu’ (Notes on Materials from Chinese Central Asia held in European Collections), Dunhuangxue jikan 敦煌學輯刊 (Journal of Dunhuang Studies), ix (1986), pp. 119–33, see pp. 120–1.
6 At the same time, Prof. Fang Guangchang 方廣 cade was invited to prepare a catalogue of the Buddhist texts.
7 Kabutogi Shoko 賀重修, Tonko Hokekyo Mokuroku 拓跋仏教総集 (Descriptive Catalogue of the Miaofalianghuajing from Dunhuang collected by Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot) (Tokyo, 1978).
10 M. Aurel Stein, Serindia, vol. ii (Oxford, 1921), p. 954; R. Whitfield, The Art of Central Asia: the Stein collection at the British Museum, vol. i (Tokyo, 1982), pl. 17, figs. 47–9, p. 312. ‘Ch.’ was Stein’s site abbreviation for the Thousand Buddha Caves at Dunhuang, then romanized as ‘Chien-fo-tung’ (now as ‘Qianfodong’).
11 The Art of Central Asia, vol. i, pl. 24, fig. 15, p. 321.
13 J. Needham, Science and Civilisation in China,


26. For a study of this text (but not including S.1042), see Lin Qitan 林其田 and Chen Fengjin 陳鳳金, Dunhuang Yishu Liuzui Canjuan Jifu 敦煌遺書劉uzzi卷juan目錄 (Collected Texts of the Liuzui in Dunhuang Manuscripts) (Shanghai, 1988).

27. S.10799, 12087, 13496, 13624, 12288B, 12951, 9928, 12285A, 12901, 12714, 13441, 12971, 12710, 11422, 12285, 12295, 13219, 777. Fifteen of these belong to one scroll (see fig. 3). Another fragment belonging to the same scroll has been identified in the National Library of Beijing collection (L.2464 unpublished).


29. Wang Jiqing 王冀青, ‘Yingguo Tushuguan cang Beiji Danyan Yoafang Yuan (S.9897) de Zhengli
30 The complete text has been edited by Zhao Heping 趙和平 in his Dunhuang Xieben Shuyi Yanjiu 敦煌寫本書儀研究 (Studies on Model Letters among the Dunhuang Manuscripts) (Taipei, 1993), pp. 265-74.

31 The original unopened envelope (S.11297) can be seen in Akira Fujieda, ‘The Tunhuang Manuscripts: A General Description’, p. 29.

32 For details of these two manuscripts, see Wu Chiyu 吳其昱, ‘Dunhuangben Gu Chen Ziang Ji Canjuan Yanjiu’ 敦煌本故陳子昂集校卷研究 (A Study of the Collected Papers of Chen Ziang) in Xianggang Daxue wushizhounian lunwenji 當代漢學五十周年記念論文集 (Symposium on Chinese Studies: commemorating the Golden Jubilee of the University of Hong Kong 1911-1966) (Hong Kong, 1966), pp. 241-303.

33 See, for example, Victor H. Mair’s several books on this topic including Tang Transformation Texts: A study of the Buddhist contribution to the rise of vernacular fiction and drama in China (Cambridge, Mass., 1989) and Painting and Performance: Chinese picture recitation and its Indian genesis (Honolulu, 1988).

34 This identification was confirmed by Helène Vetch of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in a letter to the author, 19 Aug. 1991.


