An Uigur Document Preserved in the Library of Istanbul University

Dai MATSUI

Introduction

The Library of Istanbul University (İstanbul Üniverisitesi Merkez Kütüphanesi) preserves a collection of the Old Uigur texts, which are apparently brought from East Turkestan, most probably from Turfan basin.[1] Compared with the huge collections of Berlin, St. Petersburg, London, Kyoto and China, the Istanbul collection is rather small. However, as Kōgi Kudara noted, it is not negligible, since it has close connection with the Berlin collection.[2]

Seven secular documents belong to the Uigur collection. Five of them are contracts, partly published by Reşid Rahmeti Arat and Nobuo Yamada, later revised by Hiroshi Umemura, and finally compiled in SUK as Sa11, Lo18, Mi30, Mi31, Mi32.[3] One of the remaining texts is an administrative order for delivery of wine, and has been published by Yamada and later revised by me.[4] In this paper the remaining small fragment is edited for the first time.[5]

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1 Yamada 1968, pp. 15-17; Sertkaya / Kudara, Nos. 1-14, 18.I.(a), 19-21, 27-29, 35.

2 Kudara 1992, esp. pp. 143-140. Recently Ayşe Gül Sertkaya reported the situation in which the collection was brought to Istanbul. See Sertkaya, A. G. 2006.

3 Arat 1965 = Yamada 1968, Text 1 = Umemura 1977, Text 1 = SUK Sa11; Yamada 1968, Text 2 = SUK Lo18; Mi30, Mi31 and Mi32 were not published until SUK.

4 Yamada 1968, Text 3; Sertkaya / Kudara, No. 12; Matsui 1998a, Text IV = Matsui 1998b, Text 8 = Matsui 2006, Text 1.

5 I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Osman Fikri Sertkaya (the Institute of Turkic Studies, Istanbul University) and Dr. Yasemen Akçay (the Library of Istanbul University) for their kind permission for my research.

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The document was formerly designated as “No. 3” by Yamada and “I. U. No. 10” in the provisional catalog prepared by Sertkaya and Kudara.[6] The present signature is İ. Ü. Küt. Demirbaş No. 533. The paper of the document is so-called “rice paper” with fine *vergeé* (7 / cm), 23.0 x 16.2 cm,[7] and colored beige clair ~ grisâtre. A black stamp (2.2 x 2.4 cm) is sealed after the last word of the text, [5]*ïdtïm* “I sent”. What comes after it is left blank. The reverse side has no text.

Text

[M I S S I N G]

1 [ ](..) yosunča kälin m-ä oγlan qy-a tapmïš-ńï

2 [ ] *üčün* **s**ï*q*ap-taqï uluγ aḍïz **y**ir

3 [ ]-’ tarïp y*iz*ü*n* t*i*p birt*i*m siz-lär

4 [ ] *t*onguz yïl bišinč ay ygrmi bir-kä siz

5 [ ](.) n*i*šan basïp ïdtïm •

Translation

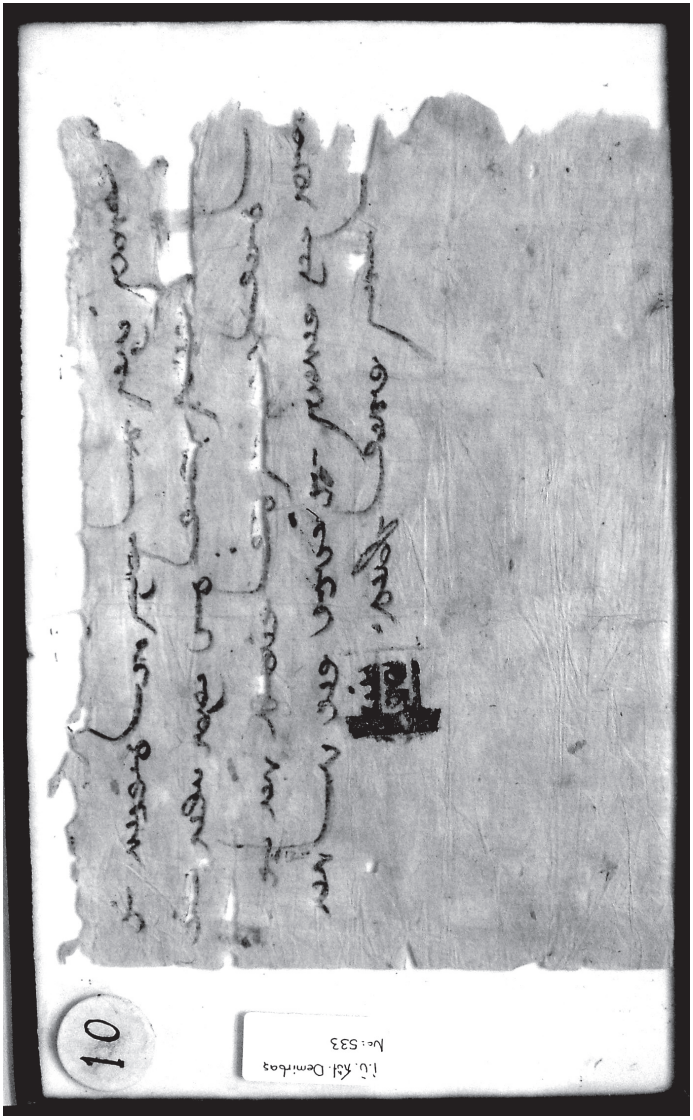
[1]..... according to the law, also the bride and the sons ..... Tapmïš [2]..... for ..... the large partition of field located in Sïqap [3]..... shall cultivate [the field] and eat (= live on) [its harvest]. Saying thus, I gave [this document]. You [4]..... The year of the Boar, the fifth month, on the twenty-first day. You [5]..... pressing the seal [on this document], I sent [it].

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6 Yamada 1968, p. 16; Sertkaya / Kudara, No. 10. The number is given to parts of glasses containing the manuscript fragment [see the photo].

7 My measurement is more or less the same as what is given by Sertkaya / Kudara (23.1 x 16.0 cm); Yamada’s measurement (23.3 x 5.5 cm) seems to be a single error.

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İ. Ü. Küt. Demirbaş No. 533

(The Library of Istanbul University)

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Notes

1a, (..): -WN ~ -WX ~ -T.

1b, yosunča: = Mong. *yosu(n)* "rule, law" + Uig. *-ča* (equative).

1c, kälin: ED, p. 719, "the wife of one's younger brother or son; bride".

1d, oγlan qy-a: Here seemingly not a personal name but a word *oγlan* "sons" with the deminutive *qy-a*.

1e, tapmïš: Here I regard it as a name of a person; It is also possible to take it for a perfective / gerund from v. *tap-* "to serve" dependent on "the bride and sons".

2a, üčün: "for, since, because of, in order to". The reading is certain.

2b, sïqap: As it stands, initial letters are damaged: [..]X'P. However I would restore this place name, which is frequently attested in the Uigur secular texts. See SUK WP04, [18]*sïqap ögän-täki yaṣï-tïn* "von den Ebenen am Fluß Sïqap"; Mi25, [4-5]*sïqap-ta üṣḍün aldïn yir-tä yarïmnï* "In Sïqap von dem oberen und dem unteren Landstück eine Halfe"; T I α (= ETHV 124/040), [4-5]*sïqap-taqï [al]tïn-qï yir-tä* "of the land at downward (downstream?) in Sïqap"; RH08, [4-5]*sïqap-taqï yarïm aγïz yir* "half mouth of field in Sïqap"; RH11, [4-5]*sïqap-taqï ilči bilä ülüš-lüg manga tägär yarïm aγïz yirin* "half mouth of field, located in Sïqap, belonging to me under joint ownership with Ilči"; U 5963 (in the Berlin collection), line 6.[8]

If the place name Sïqap is originated from Chinese, we may tentatively propose 西閘 *xi-ge* "western water gate" for its etymon,[9] since it is used as a name of an irrigation channel (Uig. *ögän*). Cf. SUK WP04 above.

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8 In the texts cited above Uig. *ängiz* "Stoppelfeld" by SUK is corrected into *aγïz* "mouth; a measure for space". See Matsui 2005a, pp. 36-47. T I α = ETHV 124/040 is to be jointed to the beginning of SUK Ex02. See Sertkaya, O. F. 2002, p. 283, though his *ängiz* is again to be read *aγïz*, and *altïn say* > *altïn-qï* "beneath, below, downward."

9 For Chin. 西 > Uig. SY = *si* / *sï*, see Shōgaito 2003, p. 128. For the ancient pronunciation of 閘 **kap*, see Pulleyblank, p. 106. The Uigur transcription of 閘 *ge* has not yet been attested, while the homophone 甲 *ge* is transcribed as X'P = *qap* ~ *qab* in Uigur. See Shōgaito 1987, pp. 85, 140.

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2c, uluγ aḍïz yir: For *aḍïz ~ atïz* "field partitioned by irrigation; Feldstück zwischen Bewässerungsgräben", see Zieme 1974, p, 303; Zieme 1980, p. 199; UW, pp. 260-261; SUK Sa03, Sa07, Sa13, RH02, Mi32. Here "the large partition of field located in Sïqap" might be related to *sïqap ögän-täki yaṣï* "Ebenen am Fluß Sïqap" of SUK WP04 as mentioned above.

3a, [ ]-': In comparison with line 1, we may restore *[oγlan qy]-a*, or other personal names as *[Buq]-a, [Qay]-a, [Qar]-a*, etc. Anyway, the word in question is a subject of the following verbs: *tarïp yizün*. See the next note.

3b, tarïp yizün: "[one] shall cultivate [the field] and eat (i.e. live on) [its harvest]". See SUK RH13[9-11] and the editors' note.

4: Note that *ygrmi bir-kä* instead of *bir otuz-qa* is used for "on the twenty-first (day)".

5, nišan basïp: Uig. *tamγa* means "a stamp, seal", while *nišan* stands for "a sign, mark, signature, written seal" (< Pers. *nišān*). This is shown also by Uigur attestations *nišan čïzïp* "drawing *nišan*" and *tamγa basïp* "pressing (i.e. putting) *tamγa*".[10] However, the scribe of our fragment here clearly uses *nišan* as a word for "stamp, seal", as is clear from the following word *basïp* < v. *bas-* "press, stamp". This usage can be an influence by Mongolian: the Mongolian decrees discovered from Turfan are

10 For the attestations of *nišan*, see SUK RH13, [14-16]*bu yirm-ni yiṣün tip nišan čïṣïp biḍig birdim* "one shall eat (i.e. live on) my land. Thus saying, and drawing [my] signature, I gave the document"; Mi25 (with modifications), [22-24]*bu yir-lär-ni sïqïdu mädiz bilä täng yiṣün tip öz nišan (.) čïṣïp biḍip*[sic!] *birür-män* "Sïqïdu and Mädiz shall eat these lands equally. Thus saying, drawing my own signature, I give the document (*biḍip* > *biḍig*)"; Mi31, [14-15]*nišan čïṣïp [bu bitig?] bitidim* "Drawing signature, I wrote [this document]"; Or 12452 (B) 9 (= *Innermost Asia* III, pl. CXXVI), [16-17]*nišan čïṣïp bitig ïdtïm* "Drawing [my] signature, I send [this] letter"; U 5935 (in the Berlin collection), [8-9]*[nišan] čïṣïp biḍig birtim*. For *tamγa basïp*, see U 5305 = USp 21, [9-11]*budaširi-qa borluq-čï birtimiz tip tamγ-a-larïmïz-nï bašïp birtimiz* "To Budaširi we gave [Altïn-Qaya as] a wineyard worker. Thus saying, pressing our seals, we gave [this document]" (cf. IUCD, No. 102); ETHV 116/031, [7-8]*tamγ-a bašïp biḍig birdimiz* "pressing the seal, we gave [this] document". Again I would express my thanks to Prof. Osman Fikri Sertkaya for offering me the photograph of the last document, whose original had belonged to the Berlin collection but was lost during the World War II.

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stamped with black or red seals and referred to by the scribes themselves as *nišan-tu* (~ *nišatu* ~ *ništu*) *bičig* "mit Siegel versehen Schreiben". See BTT XVI, Nrn. 68-76, 78, 79, 84, 86.

Preliminary Analysis

We can easily date this document to the Mongol times (13th – 14th cc.), basing on the following criteia: written in a rapid cursive script; the word *nišan* "signature" [see Note **5** above]; a loanword from Mongolian [1]*yosun* "law, rule".[11] Furthermore, noteworhty is the square black seal. Its shape is like "III" of Roman numerals and the inscription seemingly consists of three vertical lines. The inscription on the center line may be regarded as an illformed *g-e-i* = *gei* < Chin. 吉 **gei* in 'Phags-pa script.[12] If my assumption is correct, the document certainly belongs to the Mongol times later than 1269 AD, when 'Phags-pa script was invented.

The extant text is too little for one to allow the fully understanding on the contexts of the document. Yet the phrase [2-3]*[sï](q)ap-taqï uluγ aḍïz [y]ir ..... tarïp yizün* "the large partition of field located in Sïqap ..... shall cultivate [the field in Sïqap] and eat (= live on) [its harvest]" suggests that the document should authorize the ownership or usufruct of the cultivated field in Sïqap. Similar contexts also appear in other contracts (SUK Sa11[9], RH13[9-11,14-15], Mi25[2-4, 22-24], Mi28[9-10]). Nevertheless, all these contracts known thus far have the date at the beginning, in contrast with the present text which has the date at the end.[13] From the viewpoint of its format, our document is not likely to be a contract.

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11 On the criteria for dating (called "markers" by Moriyasu) of Uigur documents, see Moriyasu 2004, pp. 228-229.

12 The inscription of the seal of our fragment may be compared with that of "Qutluγ-seal D" on the Uigur administrative orders, which Kōichi Yoshiike regards as the deforamtion of 'Phags-pa *gei* < Chin. 吉 **gei*. See Yoshiike 2000, pp. 110-112.

13 Yamada 1967, pp. 88-89.

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The closing phrase *ïdtïm* "I sent" indicates that our document was a letter or correspondence, though the date is seldom given in Uigur letters, in particluar at the end.[14] On the other hand, one may compare the way our document gives its date at its end with a declaration form for census register,[15] four pledge documents submitted by the officials to the Uigur king Ïduq-qut,[16] and an official decree of tax-exemption issued under the Chaghataid ruler Duwa (r. 1282-1307).[17] They exemplify the Uigur official documents from the Mongol times and likely have been influenced by the comtemporary Mongolian chancellery practice.[18] The Mongolian usage of the word *nišan* for "seal" found in our document also lends support to my presumption.

Although we need further comparable source materials for the final decision, I am currently inclined to regard our text as an official or administarative document, or, perchance, a decree of granting privileges (*soyurgal*) on the cultivated field in Sïqap.[19]

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14 So far as I know, only the Uigur letters are dated: K 7715 = Tezcan / Zieme 1971, Text C; 4bKr 153v (in the St. Petersburg collection, unpublished); U 181 = Tezcan / Zieme 1971, Text B. The last enters the date at the end. It is written in semi-square script and is to be dated certainly to the West Uigur period (10th – 12th cc.). Cf. Moriyasu 1982, pp. 4-5, for the expression X *ay* X-*qatägi* / -*kätägi inč äsän bar turur* "(at least) up to the Xth of Xth month, I have been well and fine" as seen in the letters or correspondences.

15 U 5298 = Zieme 1982.

16 TM 244 = USp 40 = ETHV, p. 42, III = Sertkaya 1992, Text III; TM 239 = USp 41 = Sertkaya 1992, Text II; ETHV 215/67 = Sertkaya 1992, Text IV; U 5947 = Sertkaya 1992, Text V.

17 T III 253a Murtuq = ETHV77/01, lost in the World War II and not yet published. See Matsui 2005b, fn. 13.

18 For the format of the Mongolian administrative documents, see Ligeti 1972a; Ligeti 1972b; BTT XVI, pp. 165-167; Matsukawa 1995, pp. 36-44.

19 In the decree of *soyurgal* issued by Timurid Sultan Umar-Šayḫ (1469 AD) is attested a phrase similar to our text: [11]*özi alïp yisün* "[they] shall eat (i.e. live on) [the harvest of the land] by themselves". See Меліоранскій 1904, as well as the corrections placed by Ono 2006, *passim*.

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Abbreviations & Bibliography

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