

PREFACE OF THE *ANNOTATED INVENTORY OF TIBETAN MANUSCRIPTS*

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In the early twentieth century, a British named Aurel Stein (1862-1943) and a French named Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) successively sneaked into Dunhuang and took away amounts of treasure in tricky ways. Consequently, plentiful precious documents and manuscripts of Dunhuang are scattered in various countries. Among the manuscripts collected by India Offices Library¹ and Bibliothèque Nationale de France, there are more than 5000 scrolls of Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts, which have been owned and monopolized by western scholars for a long time. “Few scholars in China know the contents of those scripts, let alone conducting research,”² recalled by Mr. Wang Yao (1928-2015) once with deep emotions. Like many other pioneers of Dunhuang Studies, Mr. Yu Daoquan (1900-1992), the father of modern Tibetan Studies in China, also studied in Europe in the 1930s. While studying with Professor Jacques Bacot (1890-1967) of Sorbonne University in France, he had tried to duplicate or take photos of those Tibetan manuscripts so that he could bring them back to China for academic research. However, after endless efforts, the result was that he “had experienced all sorts of obstacles but was not allowed to access. The French prevaricated, equivocated, so

¹ In 1991, Library of India Office and Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts in the British Library merged into Department of Oriental and India Office Collection, which collected all Tibetan-script Dunhuang documents afterwards.

² Preface of *Facang Dunhuang Zangwen Wenxian Jieti Mulu* 法藏敦煌藏文文献解题目录, chief-edited by Wang Yao, the Ethnic Publishing House, Beijing, 1999, p. 1.

Mr. Yu was not able to make it finally. During his lifetime, whenever this matter was mentioned, Mr. Yu was very much indignant and embittered.”³

After the new China was founded in 1949, Mr. Yu Daoquan, Mr. Ji Xianlin (1911-2009) and other scholars established a Tibetan Language Branch (TLB) in the Department of Oriental Studies of Peking University, which was the beginning of formally setting up Tibetan courses in the universities of new China and officially opened a new chapter of Tibetan Studies in China as well. Immediately after the founding of the Central Institute for Nationalities in Beijing in 1951, under the direct concern of the Party and the government, the Department of Ethnic Languages and Literature (DELL) was established, in which the Tibetan language was the first major developed. In addition to incorporating teachers and students from the TLB of Peking University, the DELL also selected some backbone talents from colleges across China, centralizing them to learn Tibetan intensely. Objectively speaking, this was primarily for meeting the need of the work in Tibet and adjacent provinces where Tibetan people dwell. But simultaneously, many talented persons were also cultivated for the development of Tibetan Studies in new China. Mr. Wang Yao and Mr. Hu Tan were the most representative scholars among them.

To bring up talents in traditional Tibetan culture, the Central Institute for Nationalities opened training courses in ancient Tibetan language in the 1960s according to instructions of Premier Zhou Enlai. It was supposed to be a good time for proceeding with research on Dunhuang Tibetan Documents, but due to many historical reasons, there was no regular academic communication between China and overseas academia. It was very difficult for Chinese scholars to acquire the necessary research materials. Fortunately, no matter how difficult it was, there were still some scholars who quietly held onto their studies. It was in those arduous years that Mr. Wang Yao began his study of Dunhuang Tibetan documents with the *Documents de Touen- Houang relatifs à L'histoire du Tibet (Dunhuangben Tubo Lishi Wenshu 敦煌本吐蕃历史文书)*⁴ written by Bacot et al., which his mentor Mr. Yu

³ Ibid. In order to bring the Dunhuang documents back to China, previous scholars of China tried all possible ways to search, copy, photocopy and even transcribe the documents. Besides Mr. Yu Daoquan, there were also scholars like Wang Chongmin, Liu Fu, Hu Shi, Xiang Da, Jiang Liangfu and Pan Chonggui, etc., and we shall remember them.

⁴ Bacot, J., Thomas, F. W. & Toussaint. Ch. Bacot, J. [ed. and tr.] [1940-1945] *Documents de Touen-Houang relatifs à L'histoire du Tibet*. (Ministère de l'Education nationale et des Beaux-Arts, Annales

Daoquan brought back to China in the early years and later presented to him as a gift. Wang carried the book with him all the time, and tried to secretly read it during his “leisure” time when he studied and labored at the “May 7th Cadre School”. Mr. Wang Yao did not change his original intention, so he furtively did his research on farmland of reformation by laboring at the “May 7th Cadre School”, and thus I deem that Mr. Wang Yao’s work manifested the representative meaning of Dunhuang Tibetan documents and the origin of the common practice of conducting Tibetan Studies as a leading force of using Dunhuang Tibetan documents after the Reform and Opening-up Policy was implemented in China. In this regard, Mr. Wang narrated an account by himself:

Until being demoted to the “May 7th Cadre School” as a body of sin waiting for judgement, I was in trepidation and confusion without knowing how to end the situation. Nevertheless, what accompanied me was this *Documents de Touen- Houang relatifs à L’histoire du Tibet* (Dunhuangben Tubo Lishi Wenshu 敦煌本吐蕃历史文书). In the intermittence time between writing endless criticism and self-criticism, I took breaks from working in the kitchen and orchard that I was allocated to, recovering the transliterated Tibetan texts of the book, on and off. Then I transcribed them onto portable small cards and hid them in pockets for the convenience of chewing and polishing when I grabbed some moments from peasantry and kitchen work. For three years of being ravaged and beaten repeatedly, though I felt mentally and physically exhausted, it was like a miracle that I unexpectedly translated the whole book into Chinese. Privately I was happy with it and thought that I did not come to the Cadre School in vain...⁵

Many other people experienced similarly like Mr. Wang Yao in that special historical period. Today we read such words left by scholars of previous generations not just for remembering and reviewing but more for seeing that predecessors did not change their original intentions, though they tasted all sorts of humiliation. They held their ground and strove for research of new China’s academic career and cultural development of the country. We shall carefully learn their academic spirit and perseverance.

du Musée Guimet Bibliothèque⁹ Études—Tome 51). Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1940-1946. 205 p. 4 plates. 25 cm.

⁵ Same as footnote 2.

Out of question, due to historical and social reasons, and more due to accessibility of original documents and materials, China's Dunhuang research once fell behind overseas for quite a long time. Mr. Chen Yinke said, "Dunhuang was a sad history of academia in our country." Other sayings, such as "Dunhuang is in China but Dunhuang Studies is in Japan", objectively described the historical situation of the domestic Dunhuang Studies. Such a condition started to change after new China was founded, but the speed of development was severely hindered owing to the influence of multiple issues. Under some conditions, it even went backward. Since the Reform and Opening-up, circumstances began to change substantially along with the pace of time that China developed its career of politics, economy, society and culture. But honestly, when China opened up in the 1980s, we found ourselves lagging behind greatly. Because we lag behind, so we learn. We can only grow ourselves stronger by learning from others. We can only close the gap by learning from others. We can only surpass the old-timers by learning from others.

Essentially, the development of studies of Dunhuang Tibetan documents is a process of learning, reflecting, chasing and preparing to overtake. In those years, what Mr. Wang Yao learned in secret at the "May 7th Cadre School" was some materials from overseas, which was a book written by a French scholar. When writing his own book, Wang Yao referred to the Dunhuang Tibetan documents compiled and published by foreign scholars. There were no alternatives because those materials were not in our hands. Here comes a severe question, which is how to promote the development of Tibetology in China by helping Chinese scholars refer to and use those materials, while learning research theories, methods and achievements of practice from the overseas Tibetan Studies. Mr. Wang Yao thought about it for a long time. Therefore, after the Reform and Opening-up Policy, as one of the few Tibetologists who earliest went overseas for academic communication, he knew that he carried a heavy mission of academics, which is to introduce the advanced results of overseas Tibetan Studies into China to help Chinese scholars understand the profile of Dunhuang Tibetan documents kept in foreign countries. Thus, he successively edited and published 20 volumes of *Guowai Zangxue Yanjiu Yiwendi* 国外藏学研究译文集 (the Translated Collections of Foreign Tibetan Studies), which exerted a positive impact on the development of Tibetan studies in China. He published amounts of research papers on Dunhuang Tibetan documents. By himself or working with other scholars like Chen Jian, Mr. Wang Yao compiled,

translated, commented and published a series of important books that significantly impacted the academia, such as *Dunhuangben Tubo Lishi Wenshu* 敦煌本吐蕃历史文书 (1980, first edition; 1992, revised edition), *Tubo Jinshi Lu* 吐蕃金石录 (1982), *Tubo Jiandu Zonglu* 吐蕃简牍综录 (1986), *Tubo Wenxian Xuandu* 吐蕃文献选读 (1983), *Dunhuangben Zangwen Xuandu* 敦煌本藏文选读 (1983), *Dunhuang Tubo Wenxuan* 敦煌吐蕃文选 (1983), *Dunhuang Tubo Wenshu Lunwenji* 敦煌吐蕃文书论文集 (1988), etc. Of course, he never forgot, or in other words, he always managed to introduce a full view of Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts, especially the Tibetan documents preserved in France, back to China. The priority was to systematically translate, comment, edit and publish *Inventaire des manuscrits tibétains de Touen-houang, conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale (Fonds Pelliot tibétain)*, which was compiled and edited by Marcelle Lalou. In the early 1990s, when Mr. Wang Yao visited France, he finally acquired the original French version of the catalogue. Afterwards there appeared the book *Facang Dunhuang Zangwen Wenxian Jieti Mulu* 法藏敦煌藏文文献解题目录, which was chief-edited by Mr. Wang Yao.

Based on the foundation laid by the predecessors, future learners could stand high and see far. According to incomplete calculation, there were about hundreds of articles and books published at home and abroad in recent years, on cataloging, organizing and exegesis of Dunhuang Tibetan documents. While these achievements were gratifying, we also found that the existing catalogs were far from meeting the needs of the academic community. Dunhuang Tibetan documents collected in France have a large number, huge scale and much content, so it is very difficult to make an annotated inventory of the documents. Even so, it was an unavoidable fundamental job for scholars to edit a better inventory of Dunhuang Tibetan Manuscripts stored in France. Therefore, in 2014 I applied for the National Social Science Foundation project “A Complete Annotated Inventory of Tibetan Manuscripts from Dunhuang Kept at the National Library of France” (*Faguo Guojia Tushuguanfang Dunhuang Zangwen Wenxian Mulu Jieti Quanbian* 法国国家图书馆藏敦煌藏文文献目录解题全编). The original plan was to form three volumes, but actually, it was finished in five volumes, which was far more than my expectation. According to the page numbers of each book, those five volumes were accordingly adjusted to eight. The title is abbreviated as *Mulu Jieti Quanbian* (目录解题全编).

This book has collected the existing inventory of Dunhuang Tibetan documents kept at the National Library of France as foundation and also gathered the catalogs or bibliographies of relative research documents published at home