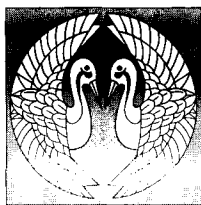


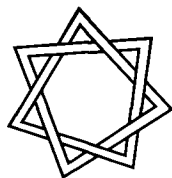
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## EARLY MEDIEVAL UIGHUR RECORDS FROM EAST TURKESTAN\*

The one-page short texts of different contents from the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies collection, which is published here, belong to the marginal area of literature and business. They can be conventionally described by the term “records” neutral in relation to their genre. Among them are an incantation written on a leaf of paper, household records of expenses and income, writing exercises. Taking into account the scarceness of evidence on the life of the region (especially in the early medieval period), from which they come, records of this kind may serve a valuable source of information.

Four texts are presented in this publication. The first one contains the names of persons in whose name, as we may suggest, the text was written. It contains a wish to overcome difficulties in the earthly life (*samsāra*). It appears in the form of an elegant verse composed according to all the rules of versification accepted at that time. The text is supplemented with a Sanskrit incantation (*dhāraṇī*) transformed after the Uighur fashion. It is titled “The Jewel of Chintāmaṇi”, probably after the name of the famous incantation cited in Buddhist works. It starts with the usual elements characteristic of this kind of incantations: *oom* (Skr. *ōm*) — the solemn confirmation of a prayer [1] and *šrin* (Skr. *śrī*) — the sign of the beginning of the lit-

urgy [2]. The text is interesting, first of all, as a characteristic example of East Turkestan poetry and an evidence of the use of poetic forms in the everyday language of that time.

The second text can be defined as a literary exercise. It consists of seven repeated lines (which can be reconstructed as two) expressing the admiration on seeing the mount of Karakorum. The Karakorum range is located in the southwestern part of East Turkestan. From the early medieval Uighur dominion in East Turkestan with its principal cities of Turfan and Beshbalyk it was separated by the Takla-Makan desert. Nevertheless, as we see, this mountain range was at that time well known to the Turkic population of the region. It bore the same name as it bears now and was the source of the equal admiration. It should be taken into account that the name of Karakorum could be a metaphor applied to any high mountain. But even in this case the presence of the name in early medieval texts is noteworthy.

Texts 3 and 4 may be attributed to the category of household documents, records of income and expenses of certain people and communities. Many of the persons named in text 4, as well as in text 1, bear the title of *šila* — “monk, priest”. It is possible to suggest that the text deals with the distribution of property belonging to some religious community.

### TEXT 1 (SI KR I 6) [TEXT A AND B]

#### Text A

- (1) *qīysingdu šila*
- (2) *bošuy baxši*
- (3) *taybido šila*
- (4) *šabido šila*
- (5) *čintamani čin ārdini mindä bar ārip*
- (6) *čīyay ämgägin täginmiš-mn sansar-ta*
- (7) *yorip činin bilip tamumiš*
- (8) *ārsār-mn qaqlaqlı yārip*
- (9) *čīyay ämgägin kidgäy ārdi*
- (10) *bodum-tin ariy*

#### Text B

- (1) *oom šarin trma ... anba-a anba-a y///(?)*
- (2) *yışuda vačir-a-a-a naz-a(?) birakirdi*
- (3) *barisuda šrin nama yatuda*
- (4) *šrin tatağada nirvana xr-a mančuširi*
- (5) *bari sutidan ubaday-a iti(?) xa-a*
- (6) *šarin tatağada xatay-a xar-a xar-a(?)*
- (7) *oom xta xiri bakina nirvana ///*
- (8) *murti yng (?) išv(a)r-a mx-a vača(? ynč?) šarin ///*
- (9) *drama krka alana su barisuda ///*
- (10) *drma tatu nirvana xrva-a ///*

\* The article was written with a financial support of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Fund.

**Translation**

(1) Kyisyngdu-shila

(2) Boshugh-bahshi

(3) Taibido-shila

(4) Shabido-shila

(5—10) Being in possession of the true jewel of Chintāmaṇi but (still) remaining in *samsāra* I have experienced the suffering of the unhappy ones. If I could comprehend the truth to become [perfect (?)] renouncing rage, then suffering would have left my pure body.

After that follows the text of the transformed Sanskrit incantation.

The verse and the incantation are written on a leaf of rough paper 26.0 × 22.0 cm, of medium density, darkened by time, with no water marks.

The alliteration and rhyme allow to divide the text into versified lines in the following way:

(1) *čintamani čin ārdini mindā bar ārip*(2) *čīyay āmgāgin tāginmiš-mn sansar-ta yorip*(3) *činin bilip tamumiš ārsār-mn qaqmaqī yārip*(4) *čīyay āmgāgim kidgāy ārdi bodumtin arīy*

The verse is composed professionally. Not only all the requirements of the versification technique are answered,

but there are even traces of refinement: the initial alliteration covers not one but the first two tunes of the line, the intersecting accord involves the first three tunes of corresponding lines, which allows to speak of a kind of initial rhyme: *čin* (lines 1 and 3) and *čīy* (lines 2 and 4). The intersecting final rhyme involves, besides affixed accords, also the elements of the stem. One of the inventions of the author was the juxtaposing in the row of rhymed elements of the verb *yorip* with the adjective *arīy* — the accord *rip//rīy* was a rare type of rhyme in the verse of that time. As a rule, all the lines have the same number of stressed syllables.

All but one names enumerated at the beginning include the element *šila*. From East Turkestan Uighur business documents of the corresponding period it is known that this word was used in two meanings: a) as a proper name; b) religious title, monk [3]. Three of the persons named in the text have this element in their names, which means that it appears here not as a proper name but in its second meaning — “monk”. It is possible then to suggest that this benevolent poem, strengthened by incantation called *Čintamani ārdini* (“The Jewel of Chintāmaṇi”), was composed by those in religious service. (In *sūtra* “Altun Yaruq” is given another text of the *dhāraṇī* with similar name [4]). It confirms that such knowledge as the technique of versification, etc. was an essential part of the education of this social group.

**TEXT 2 (SI KR I 145)**(1) *sī kūsančig tanglančiy qra qorum*(2) *taγ ārūr . ol qra qorum taγ ārip***Translation**

(1—2) ... appears the wonderful, bringing into amazement the mountain of Karakorum. (2) This mountain of Karakorum ...

The text is written on white thin paper, 21.5 × 19.5 cm, with dense vergé — 8 lines per 1 cm.

The repetition of the same lines possibly indicates that it was an exercise in writing. At the same time it is evident that the text is written in clear well-developed cursive script, following all the rules of orthography including the omission the sign for the vowel *a* before sonorous consonants (*qra* in the name of Karakorum), which suggests a certain level of familiarity with the rules of spelling.

The text is too fragmentary to understand whether it was simply an expression of admiration or was it connected with the cult of mountains practiced in Central Asia. The absence of any additional indications makes both variants possible.

**TEXT 3 (SI KR IV 606)**(1) *künčit-kā iki satir*(2) *tört baqir kümüş birti .*(3) *[kü]ši-kā sākiz yarim baqir*(4) *kümüş birti yana toquz*(5) *baqir küši-kā birti***Translation**

(1) To (buy) sesame (= on sesame) he gave two satyrs

(2) and four bakyr of silver,

(3) to (buy) incense (= on incense) he gave

(4) eight and a half bakyr of silver, and nine more

(5) bakyr he gave on incense.

The record is made on light thin non-glossy paper with vergé (4 lines per 1 cm) and sealed. The size of the fragment is 14.5 × 15.5 cm. It becomes clear from the text that the word *baqir*, which in many Turkic languages occurs in the meaning of “copper”, was already used in the early medieval Uighur not only in its main meaning but also as a definition of a money unit. Halves of this denomination could be used in transactions. The specific feature of this particular record is that it was made not in the name of the first, but of the third person, probably someone in charge of similar transactions.

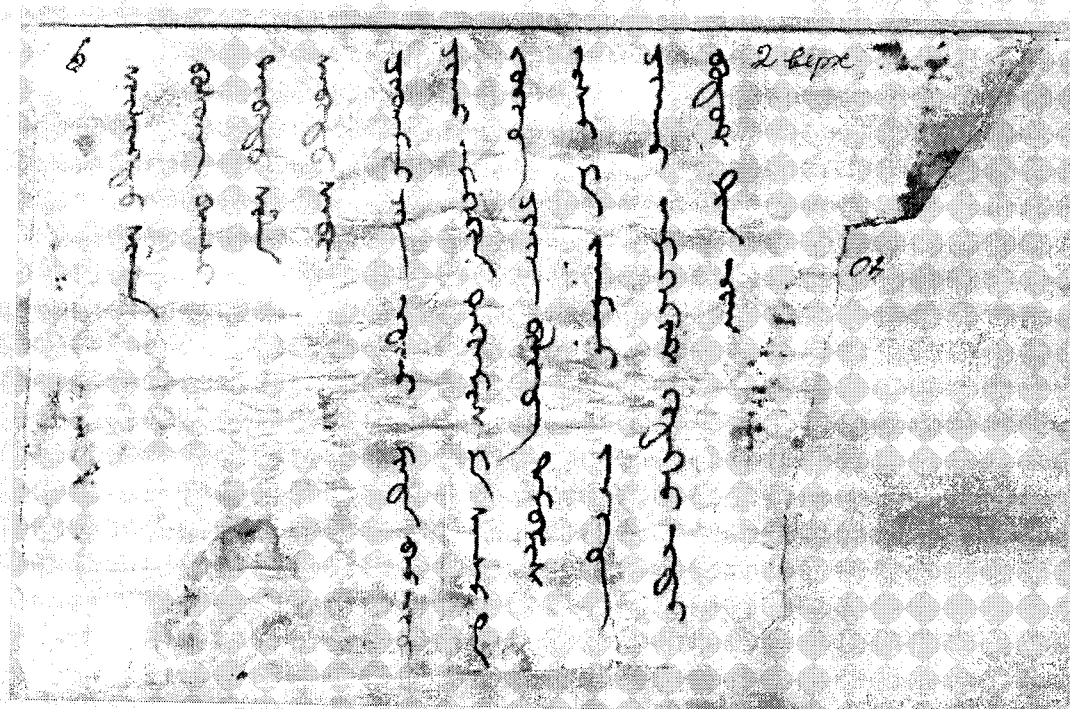
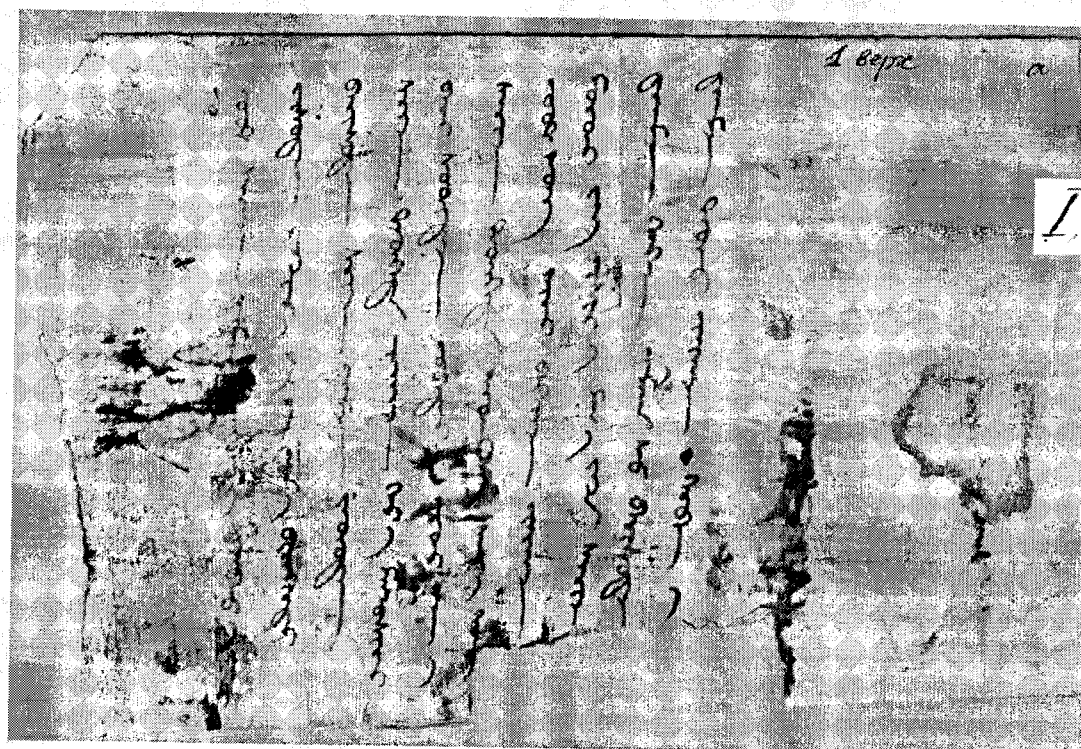


Fig. 1

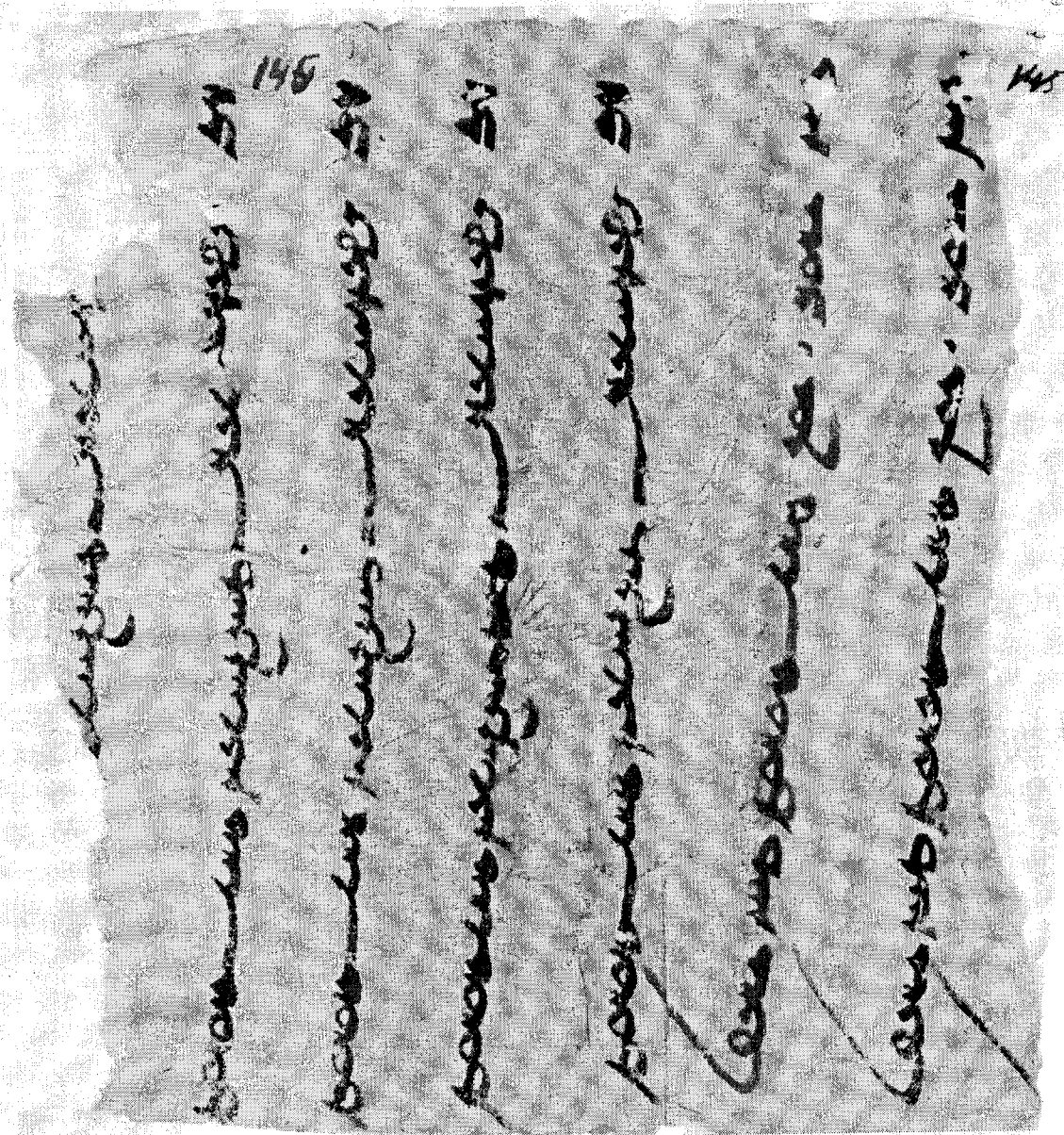
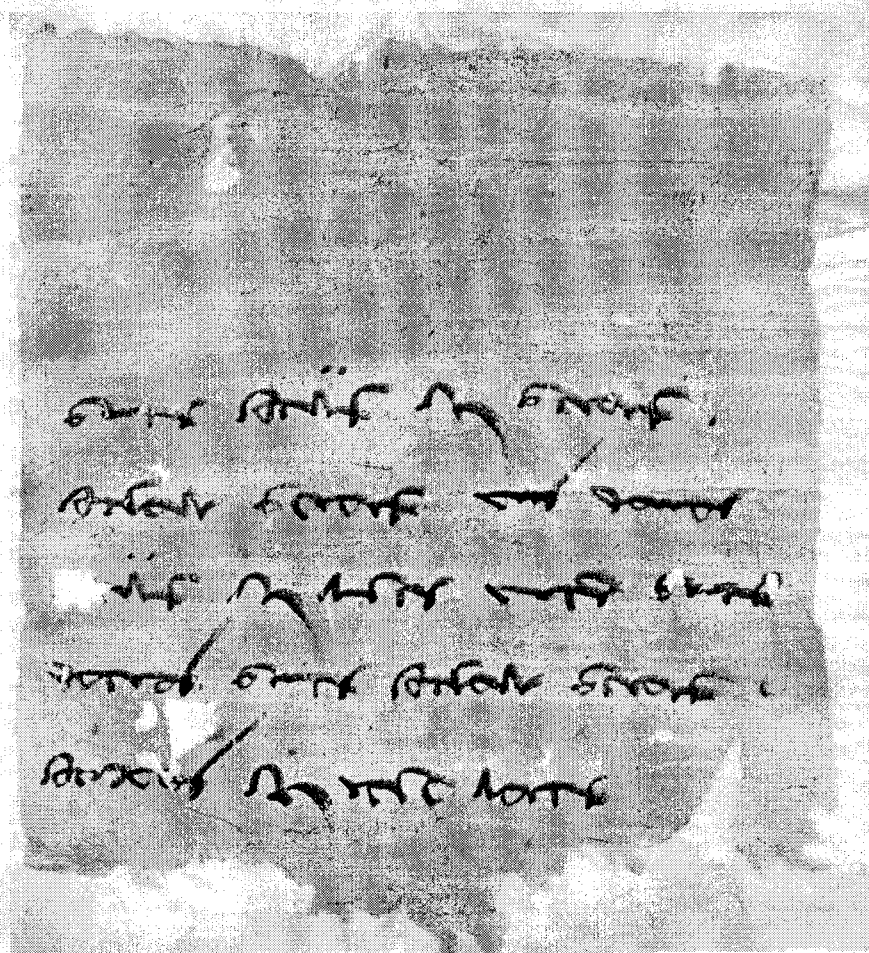


Fig. 2





*Fig. 3*

420  
The first part of the text is written in a very old Uighur script, which is a variant of the Old Uighur script. The text is written in a cursive style, with many ligatures and abbreviations. The script is very difficult to read, but it is believed to be a record of a historical event. The text is written on a piece of parchment, which is now in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS.

Fig. 4

## TEXT 4 (SI KR I 420)

- (1) *singünsün šila-taqi qon-niŋ bir ygrmi ming iki yüz t///*  
 (2) *mış yüz yana ygrmi qoyn on sākiz ming biş yüz qaunpu bi(r)lä t///*  
 (3) *ygrmi ming sākiz yüz ygrmi qaunpu-ta öz läbi tisi(?) läbi ü///*  
 (4) *lüg tört ming altı yüz altmış biş qaunpu šib sävigsuraz(?) šila t///*  
 (5) *ming biş yüz tatar a(n)gsi(?) -qa üç yüz sāmiz šila-qa üç ming iki t///*  
 (6) *qırq (?) . nom quli a(n)gsi(?) -qa üç yüz altmış . bodula šila-qa tä(?) t///*  
 (7) */kā ming biş (?) tamada šila-qa obudi šila-ka mungsāšila-qa t///*  
 (8) *ming üç yüz borıybay(?) -qa tört yüz yitmiş . satrba t///*  
 (9) *šila-qa ming üç yüz altmış šäli quli šila-qa ming*  
 (10) *yüz älig . qasudu šila-qa ming altı yüz yitmiş*  
 (11) *biş . qasudu tu-qa üç yüz . taqi ming qaunpu*  
 (12) *mängä birsär yätär (?)*

## Translation

(1—4) Of the remaining by Sengyun-sun-shila, belonging to Kon (?) eleven thousand two hundred ... one hundred, and also (due) for twenty sheep eight thousand five hundred measures of cloth, also along with twenty thousand eight hundred twenty measures of cloth, his share and the pupil's share (is) four thousand six hundred sixty five measures of cloth, (4—6) to Shib Sevigsuraz Shila (5) (should be given) one thousand five hundred, to Tatar Angsi (?) — three hundred (measures), to Semiz-shila — three thousand thirty two, (6—8) to Nom Kuly Angsi (?) —

three hundred sixty, to Bodula-shila and Te... — one thousand five (?), to Tamada-shila, Obudi-shila and Mungsha-shila ... — one thousand three hundred, (8—10) to Borygh-bai — four hundred seventy, to Satrba///-shila — one thousand three hundred sixty, to Shelikuly-shila — one thousand one hundred fifty, (10—11) to Kasudu-shila — one thousand six hundred seventy five, to Kasudu-tu(tung) — three hundred, and (11—12) if they give me one thousand measures of cloth in addition, it will be enough (?).

The text is written on grayish non-glossy paper of medium density, vergé — 5 lines per 1 cm. The size of the leaf is 26.0 × 13.5 cm.

To indicate the amount of property due to the people mentioned in the text the term *qaunpu* is used, which is most probably one of the graphic variants of the corresponding term *quanpu* (*qanpu qunpu*) indicating the unit for measuring textiles which occurs in Uighur documents

of that time [5]. Textiles were often used as means of payment, the equivalent of money. In one Uighur document it is mentioned that the price of a plot of land which required one *šiγ* and four *küri* of seeds was equal to 3,500 measures of cloth [6]. The comparison of this data with the records published here shows that shares due to some of the persons mentioned in the document could exceed the price of such valuable property as a plot of arable land.

## Commentaries

Text 1(A), line 7. The meaning of the verbal stem *tamu-* has not been established so far. It could be connected with the affirmative *tamu* recorded in the *Divān* of Maḥmūd Kāshgharī, see Kāshgarlı Mahmud, *Divānū lūgati't-türk* (Tıpkıbasım) (Ankara, 1990), 211.

Text 1(A), line 8. *qaqmaqı* is considered here as a later modification of the standard form *qaqımaqıy*, but it is just one of the possible variants of the version of its origin.

Text 4, line 1. *qon* in the *Divān* of Maḥmūd Kāshgharī (see Kāshgarlı Mahmud, *Divānū lūgati't-türk*, 156, 504) is recorded as a dialectal variant of the standard *qoyn* “sheep”. It is hardly possible, however, that a dialectal form appears along with the standard one (line 2) in one text.

Text 4, line 3. *lab* “donation, offering”, see P. Zieme, “Uigurisch lab “Spende””, *Altorientalische Forschungen*, VI (1979), pp. 275—7.

Text 4, line 6. In the word *šila* the arch of the letter *l* is omitted.

Text 4, line 7. The word *ming* is written by the side of the line.

Text 4, line 11. Judging by its position *tu* is possibly an abbreviated form of the title *tutung*, see P. Zieme, “Sur quelques titres et noms des bouddhistes turcs”, *L'Asie Centrale et ses voisins* (Paris, 1990), p. 136.

## Notes

1. W. E. Soothill and L. Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London, 1937), p. 343b.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 101a.

3. N. Yamada, *Sammlung uigurischer Kontrakte*, herausgegeben von Y. Oda, P. Zieme, H. Umemura and T. Moriyasu (Osaka, 1993), ii, p. 284.



4. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* (Sutra zolotogo bleska). The text of the Uighur version, eds. V. V. Radlov and S. E. Malov, fasc. 1—2 (St. Petersburg, 1913), p. 130, lines 10—19. — Bibliotheca Buddhica, XVII.

5. Yamada, *Sammlung*, ii, p. 277.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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### Illustrations

**Fig. 1.** Text 1 (*A* and *B*), call number SI Kr I 6, 26.0 × 22.0 cm (13.5 × 22.0 cm; 12.5 × 22.0 cm).

**Fig. 2.** Text 2, call number SI Kr I 145, 21.5 × 19.5 cm.

**Fig. 3.** Text 3, call number SI Kr IV 606, 14.5 × 15.5 cm.

**Fig. 4.** Text 4, call number SI Kr I 420, 26.0 × 13.5 cm.