One of the most provocative examples of the tactical placement of an Islamic seal can be seen in the letter of 1830 from the Javanese rebel Prince Dipanagara, now feted in Indonesia as an early nationalist and Islamic hero, to two Dutch military commanders, Colonel Cleerens and Major Buschmans. His large octagonal seal is impressed in red ink right in the middle of the letter. The receipt of this letter caused consternation in Dutch circles: they consulted senior Javanese officials in Yogyakarta, who confirmed that they had never seen a seal thus positioned before, and the acting Dutch Resident interpreted the placement of the seal as implying that Dipanagara, who ‘stood in the centre of Java with his arms [outstretched], as it were, wished to draw everything to him and take it under his protection.’ But in his later memoir, Dipanagara wrote that he had explained to Cleerens that he had placed his seal in the middle of the letter because that was the position of the city of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Mecca, in the centre of the world: ‘You may not wish to pay your respects to the Prophet, who is most excellent, but it is my duty because in truth I am a believer in the religion of the Prophet.’

'Carey 2007: 671.

Right Letter written in Javanese from Pangrango Dipanagara to Col. Cleerens and Major Buschman, concerning a meeting to negotiate peace terms, 17 Shaba '1245 (14 February 1830). The octagonal seal is inscribed: 'In the hand of Sultan Abdul l-Hamid Efendikah bi 'ala ismika sayed putraguna Khalifah nabi Allah ing tanah Jawa Javan'. 'This is His Highness Sultan Abdul l-Hamid Efendikah, the first among the believers, lord of the faith, regulator of religion, caliph of the messenger of God in the land of Java', with a further inscription in the border: National Arch. Collectie M.M de Kerck, 228-1997.15, inv. no: 208
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ed in Indonesia as an early nationalist and
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world. You may not wish to pay your respects to the Prophet, who is
most excellent, but it is my duty because in truth I am a believer in the
religion of the Prophet.


Right Letter written in Javanese from Pangeran Dipangaga to Col. Cleerees and
Major Buschbake, concerning a meeting to negotiate peace terms, 17 Sh_al-
1241 (14 February 1830). The octagonal seal is impressed: "Synggah Sultan Yach-
Kencuang dike Unudah. Almarif Sylhah, kaher al-munirun sebagai pantunama
khadijah rashid Allah sng tawaf jaca jan," This is His Highness Sultan Abdi-
al-Hamid Erujak, the first among the believers, head of the faith, emir of
religion, caliph of the messenger of God in the land of al-Jawi, with a further
inscription in the border. National Arch. Colectif M.M. de Koch, 2.11.1892, 33, inv nr. 368.
تاریخ قدردانی این مورد می‌باشد که نمایشگاه تاریخی این مورد می‌باشد.

این مورد نشان دهنده مفاد اصلی این مورد می‌باشد.

اگر نهایتاً این مورد به صورت اصلی اولین نسخهٔ اصلی این مورد می‌باشد.

برای اثبات این مورد، نظریه پایه این مورد می‌باشد.

در این نظریه، بخش اول این مورد می‌باشد.

با توجه به این نظریه، بخش دوم این مورد می‌باشد.

در حالتی که این نظریه نیز در بستگی به این نظریه باشد، بخش سوم این مورد می‌باشد.

در این بخش، موضوع اصلی این مورد می‌باشد.

در صورتی که این موضوع باشد، بخش چهارم این مورد می‌باشد.

در حالی که این موضوع نیز باشد، بخش پنجم این مورد می‌باشد.

در حالتی که این موضوع نیز باشد، بخش ششم این مورد می‌باشد.

در صورتی که این موضوع نیز باشد، بخش هفتم این مورد می‌باشد.

در حالی که این موضوع نیز باشد، بخش هشتم این مورد می‌باشد.

در حالتی که این موضوع نیز باشد، بخش نهم این مورد می‌باشد.

در حالی که این موضوع نیز باشد، بخش دهم این مورد می‌باشد.
Originating from the Xinjiang Uyghur region of China is a collection of ten legal documents with impressive seals. The documents as well as the seals are written in the Turkic language which is strongly influenced by Persian and Arabic. The legal documents are written on fibrous rice paper, and range in content from inheritance deeds to sale transactions and contractual agreements. They were mostly composed by the Akhund, the designated high-ranking religious cleric or Imam, as indicated in the documents, and on some at a later period a Chinese revenue stamp was imposed for tax charging purposes. Most of the seal impressions belong to important individuals who may not have witnessed the actual writing of the document but attest to its legality. The Uyghur documents are dated in the Chinese lunar years, named after animals, while the seal impressions bear dates in the Hijra calendar.

Volume 2004.23.29 - 38. Three of the documents are reproduced here, together with a selection of seals, some from other documents.

Left (A) Land charter, dated 1262/1846, in the year of the tiger. IAMM 2004.12.50
Right Seal of Sayyid Ahmad. Headpiece: Qal' al-dhar wa ilha jaqat, 'Say the truth, otherwise keep silent'. 1343/1924-5. Centre: az 1240
Mabn na'ad shara', 'nadi Sayyid Ahmad ibn 'Am al-Din.' Granted by God. Who makes all things manifest, [it] was legitimated ... ratified Sayyid Ahmad ibn 'Am al-Din'. S7. 237 IAMM 2004.12.12-1
Among the documents are several land charters. One is dated 1282/1866, in the year of the tiger, and confirms the sale of a land lot, registers its legal boundaries and records the name of the neighbours as well as the names of witnesses to the transaction (A). Among the witnesses were Khoja Sham Yusuf, Khoja Akar and Mullah Aymine Mullah Musa. The document bears seven seals, all of which date to the same period as the document yet none of the seals are in the names of the witnesses, because those are the seals of the officials who confirm the legality of the document, rather than of the actual witnesses to the transaction. Five of the seal impressions are of the same shape: a polished circular body with trefoil headpiece, a design which was popular in Iran and the Mughal empires (see §2). The seal impressions all give a date in the Hijra era and a religious phrase of praise, including 'The forgiver', 'Praise be to Allah', 'Allah the Eternal' and 'O Muhammad'. They also give the title and name of the owner accompanied by positive attributes such as 'with plenty of knowledge' or 'the best an eye could see', and honorific titles such as khoja, z Persian title, and khadin, meaning here the servant of God and His Prophet.

Similarly, another legal contract dated 1325/1907 confirms the sale of a land lot, and indicates its value in silver (mithqal gümüş).
S allam 2e fadd-i Hayy-i Rahim ... Mulla, knowledge by the grace of the Alwe and xal al-Karim. 44 mm. IAMM 1884.12.32

Seal of ‘Abd Allah. 1268/1851-2, praise to the Mighty God, granted knowledge, dearest to the eyes, ‘Abd Allah’. 38 mm. IAMM 1884.12.33

Seal of Khwajah Farid al-‘Ala. ‘Allah Huwaiw Al ‘alim qamit ya’is... Ishaq Khwajah Farid al-‘Ala. Granted high rank and esteem... the seal of Khwajah Farid al-‘Ala. 41 mm. From document (A). IAMM 1905.12.38


There are several land charters. One is dated 769/1368, and records the sale of a land lot, and records the name of the neighbours in the transaction (A). Among the seal, Khwaja Akbar and Mullah Aymine bears seven seals, all of which are in the same seal. These are the seals of the officials in this document, rather than the actual list of the seal impressions are of the seal type with trefoil headpiece, a design which was popular in Iran and the Safavid empire (see 5.2). The seal impressions all date from the year 1281 and are religious phrases of praise, including 'The forbear', 'Praise be to Allah', 'Allah the Eternal', and 'O Muhammad'. They also give the name of the owner accompanied by positive attributes such as 'with plenty of knowledge' or 'the best an eye could see', and honours titles such as 'Khwaja', a Persian title, and 'Khudai', meaning here the servant of God and His Prophet (A).

Similarly, another legal contract dated 1325/1907 confirms the sale of a land lot, and indicates its value in silver (mutilg jamis).

The transaction took place at a council (majlis) called by the Akhund Niaz-‘Ali Yusuf Rash. Yusuf Rash is a title given to a military ruler or commander, indicated that he was in charge of one hundred persons (or soldiers, or households). The document has two round seal impressions, both with decorative borders. On both seals in the inscription is divided horizontally by the word 'ilm meaning knowledge, which may form part of the title of the sealholder. The seal impression recalls a Persian poem, 'When God grants you generosity and knowledge, the tongue and heart will be tools of perfection'.

In another document, dated the 27th day of the fifth month in the year of the monkey, Hajj Idris ibn Mizban requested the recording of his will (C). In the margin of this document is a note by his son, testifying that he has collected his share of the inheritance, and endorsing his signature with his seal which he refers to as tughras. The term 'tughras' refers to a calligraphic emblem most usually associated with the Ottoman sultans, but it was also commonly used in the Mughal empire in India, when a tughras containing the emperor's name and titles was drawn in red or gold ink on the document next to his seal. The seal impression gives the name of Hajj Idris and is dated 1356/1937 – 8. The document was written in 1932, the year of the monkey, and his son received his share five years later.