

DYNAMICS IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS 8



# Transfer of Buddhism Across Central Asian Networks (7th to 13th Centuries)

EDITED BY  
*Carmen Meinert*

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## Transfer of Buddhism Across Central Asian Networks (7th to 13th Centuries)

# Dynamics in the History of Religions

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## Acknowledgements

The present volume builds on the research of almost three generations of fine scholarship in various subfields related to the study of Buddhism in Central Asia. My project idea, to study the transformation of Buddhism in Central Asia as an integrated whole (rather than from the perspective of fragmented subfields), is the result of many years of discussions with my colleagues from the *Buddhism in Motion* group at the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at Ruhr University Bochum; I am very grateful to them for our always stimulating exchanges. During a year of fellowship at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe* I was further able to organise the workshop “Between Empires—Transfer of Buddhisms between Hubs in Eastern Central Asia (9th to 13th Centuries)” ([http://khk.ceres.rub.de/en/event/all/WS\\_between\\_empires\\_eng/](http://khk.ceres.rub.de/en/event/all/WS_between_empires_eng/)). Some of the workshop participants added chapters to the present volume. Furthermore, I am most grateful for many intensive and fruitful recent discussions with Erika Forte, Kirill Solonin, Henrik Sørensen, and Jens Wilkens in unfolding my research idea on the transformation of Buddhism in Central Asia up to the research agenda as it is presented in the introduction.

When a book is about to approach the final stage of the publication process, further work awaits, which would not have been possible without many helping hands. Therefore, I am grateful to Gwendolin Arnold and Esther Hoolt for their assistance during the final editing and layout process and the preparation of the index; Iain Sinclair for proofreading the final manuscript and Jürgen Schörflinger for preparing a map for my introduction on a rather short notice. Last but not least, my sincere thanks to two anonymous reviewers who kindly offered numerous suggestions to improve the volume as a whole.

Although this volume is not as complete as I had hoped it would be (I had planned further chapters on Tangut and Tibetan agents in Central Asia as well as a broader historical overview introducing the circumstances of religious transfer processes), it is nonetheless a first step in a new direction and will certainly mark the beginning of an envisioned long-term research agenda.

*Carmen Meinert*

Bochum, June 21st, 2015



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# General Abbreviations

Arab.	Arabic
BCE	Before Common Era
c.	circa
CE	Common Era
Chin.	Chinese
ht.	height
J & K	Jammu and Kashmir
MIK	Museum für Indische Kunst (Museum of Asian Art, Berlin)
Mong.	Mongolian
MS, Ms(s).	manuscript(s)
OU	Old Uyghur
P. no.	numbering of caves in Dunhuang according to Pelliot
r.	reign
SDP	<i>Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra</i>
Skt.	Sanskrit
Sogd.	Sogdian
SPS Museum	Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar
Tib.	Tibetan
TochA	Tocharian A
TochB	Tocharian B

## Symbols

<	borrowed from
<<	indirectly borrowed from
>	borrowed into
≈	approximately

# Bibliographical Abbreviations

Beijing	Collection of Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the National Library in Beijing
CI	Commemorative Inscription (published in Geng, Shimin, and James Hamilton 1981; Balati, Kahaer and Liu Yingsheng 1984)
Derge Tōhoku no.	Ui, Hakuju et al. <i>A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons</i> (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur). Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934.
Dx	Petersburg Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved in St Peterburg
F.	Zhongguo fojiao tushu wenwu guan 中國佛教圖書文物館, ed. <i>Fangshan shijing</i> 房山石經 [Fangshan Canon on Stone Slaps]. Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 2000.
IOL Tib J	Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London (formerly in the India Office Library (IOL) in Delhi)
IOL Toch	Hoernle Collection of Tocharian Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London (formerly in the India Office Library (IOL) in Delhi)
MaitrH	<i>Maitrisimit</i> from Hami (see the edition in Geng, Shimin, and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, 1988)
Or.	Stein Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London (the old inventory nos. are referred to as Or. whereas they later changed to S.; identical to Or. xxx/S)
OTDO	Old Tibetan Documents Online
Ot. Ry.	Ōtani Collection of Turfan Manuscripts preserved at the Ryūkoku Library in Kyoto
P.	Pelliot Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris
P. Ouïgour	Pelliot Collection of Old Uyghur Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris
P. sogd.	Pelliot Collection of Sogdian Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris
P. tib.	Pelliot Collection of Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris
S.	Stein Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London

- S. tib. Stein Collection of Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London
- T. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al., ed. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [Taishō Tripiṭaka]. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1935.

Dunhuang manuscripts are partly accessible online on the following websites:

International Dunhuang Project: <http://idp.bl.uk>

Old Tibetan Documents Online: <http://aa.tufs.ac.jp> Illustrations

## Notes on Contributors

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is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History, Northwestern University. Through his field work, he has become a specialist in the Buddhist Art of the Himalayas. He has concentrated on the pre-modern mural painting of Ladakh and Zangskar (Indian Himalayas) and the contemporary revival of monastic painting in Amdo (China, Northeastern cultural Tibet). From 2002–2004, Prof. Linrothe served as the inaugural curator of Himalayan Art at the Rubin Museum of Art [RMA] which opened to the public in October of 2004. The catalog of the exhibition he curated (opening in January 2015 at Northwestern University’s Block Museum which will travel to the RMA)

entitled *Collecting Paradise: Buddhist Art of Kashmir and Its Legacies*, with contributions by Christian Luczanits and Mellissa R. Kerin. Ilford: Wisdom Books, 2015.

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*Carmen Meinert*

holds the chair for Central Asian Religions at the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany. One of her research interests focuses on the transmission of Buddhism in Central Asia, Tibet and China with particular emphasis on early Tantric and Esoteric Buddhist Traditions. Her publications include ed., *Buddha in the Yurt—Buddhist Art from Mongolia*. Munich: Hirmer, 2 vols., 2011; “Assimilation and Transformation of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet and China. Case Study of the Adaptation Processes of Violence in a Ritual Context.” In *Tibet after Empire. Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000. Proceedings of the Seminar Held in Lumbini, Nepal, March 2010*, edited by Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer and Michael Walter, 295–312. Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2013.

*Henrik H. Sørensen*

is director of the Seminar for Buddhist Studies in Copenhagen. His fields of interest covers East Asian Buddhism broadly defined with special emphasis on the relationship between religious practice and material culture including religious art. Especially various forms of Esoteric Buddhism (*mijiao*, *mikkyō* and *milgyō*) have taken precedence over other forms of East Asian Buddhism, although Chinese Chan and Korean Sŏn Buddhism continue to be fields of his major interest. Among his recent publications are: Orzech, Charles D., Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne, ed. *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. Leiden: Brill, 2011; “The Meeting and Conflation of Chan and Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang.” In *Chán Buddhism—Dūnhuáng and Beyond: Texts, Manuscripts, and Contexts*, edited by Christoph Anderl (forthcoming



2015); “Spells and Magical Practices as Reflected in the Early Chinese Buddhist Sources (c. 300–600 CE) and their Implications for the Rise and Development of Esoteric Buddhism.” In *Chinese and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism*, edited by Meir Sahar and Yael Bentor (forthcoming, 2016).

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# Introduction—Dynamics of Buddhist Transfer in Central Asia

*Carmen Meinert*

## 1 Research Agenda

Central Asia is central in understanding global historical processes—despite the fact that its role in global history is one of the most neglected even today. It is the missing link through which not only Eurasian or world history is more fully understood, but also, as this volume aims to acknowledge, of major importance in religious history. In reality, this region was not simply a transition zone through which many of the world's cultural and religious achievements, monks and mullahs, goods and ideas travelled from one civilisation to another—be it India, Persia, China or Tibet—but is the place where all those civilisations connected and interacted through the large network of trade routes best known as the Silk Road(s). Through symbiotic relation and through interactions with nomadic areas and urbanised centres of Central Asia, the neighbouring civilisations were formed and defined; in return Central Asia equally benefitted from the outlying sedentary civilisations, and their achievements and surpluses.

In order to expose these interrelations, the present volume is the initial step of an envisioned long-term research agenda which aims to understand Central Asia through the religious field, which was most successfully propagated for around 1500 years in and through (particularly Eastern) Central Asia—namely, Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> Buddhism was the backbone of this vital region, around which a multitude of ethnicities, languages, traditions, cults, and trends in material culture revolved and mingled together into a uniquely hybrid complex. The research programme proceeds from an understanding that the spread of Buddhism along a network of trade routes may be regarded as a 'pre-modern form of globalisation'—the process by which a local religious impulse (originating in this case in Northwest India) developed into one of the driving forces in a societal and cultural change which was of pan-Asian importance. One particular dimension of this 'Buddhist globalisation' was the rise of local forms

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1 I am very grateful for productive recent discussions with Erika Forte, Kirill Solonin, Henrik Sørensen, and Jens Wilkens in unfolding my research idea on the transformation of Buddhism in Central Asia up to the here presented research agenda.

of Buddhism wherever the tradition became rooted. Therefore the envisioned research proposes to examine a complementary opposition, ‘globalisation/localisation’, and intends to trace its specific forms on the basis of evidence recovered from material culture as well as textual and artistic heritages. It is an approach, which investigates the interplay of external and internal dynamics in the unfolding of localised Buddhisms, or of the way in which global trends were processed on the local level and re-launched into the global system. The focus of the research is thus on cultural and religious transfer processes in multiethnic and multilingual societies. Only interdisciplinary research will be able to look at this region as an integrated whole rather than from the perspective of fragmented sub-disciplines (e.g. Indology, Tibetology, Sinology, Turkology, Tangut Studies or even further specialised fields such as Dunhuang or Turfan Studies etc.).<sup>2</sup>

The geographical settings dealt with in this volume encompass the Eastern part of Central Asia, including Tibet and the Transhimalayan region—areas marked by shifting deserts, and high mountain ranges whose snow water run off permits, for example, habitation in desert oases at the rim of the Taklamakan desert in the Tarim basin (map 1.1).

This entire region was interconnected through a network of trade routes along which a number of urbanised oases (e.g. Dunhuang 敦煌) or main monastic sites emerged. These ‘major nodes’ generated Buddhist impacts on the surrounding area, where the smaller centres, here determined as ‘minor nodes’ (e.g. Yulin 榆林), developed.<sup>3</sup> The trade routes further connected the region to the neighbouring civilisations (e.g. Indian, Central Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese).

Buddhism began to spread to Central Asia from Northwest India at around the beginning of the Common Era. For a few centuries Buddhism coexisted alongside other religious fields, i.e. Manichaeism, Nestorianism or indigenous cults, before it became the dominant religious force in this region. Thus, the temporal span suggested for the envisioned long-term research agenda is set

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2 The idea of Buddhist Central Asia as an integrated system remains generally overshadowed by the particular specialties of Tibetan, Indian and Sinological Studies, to which it provides auxiliary materials. So far, the understanding of Buddhist Central Asia as of one integrated religious entity has been, to my knowledge, only promoted by the important Chinese scholar Shen Weirong. See Shen, Weirong, “Reconstructing the History of Buddhism in Central Eurasia (11th–14th Centuries): An Interdisciplinary and Multilingual Approach to the Khara Khoto Texts,” in *Edition, éditions: l’écrit au Tibet, évolution et devenir*, ed. Anne Chayet, Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, Françoise Robin and Jean-Luc Achard (Munich: Indus Verlag, 2010), 321–335.

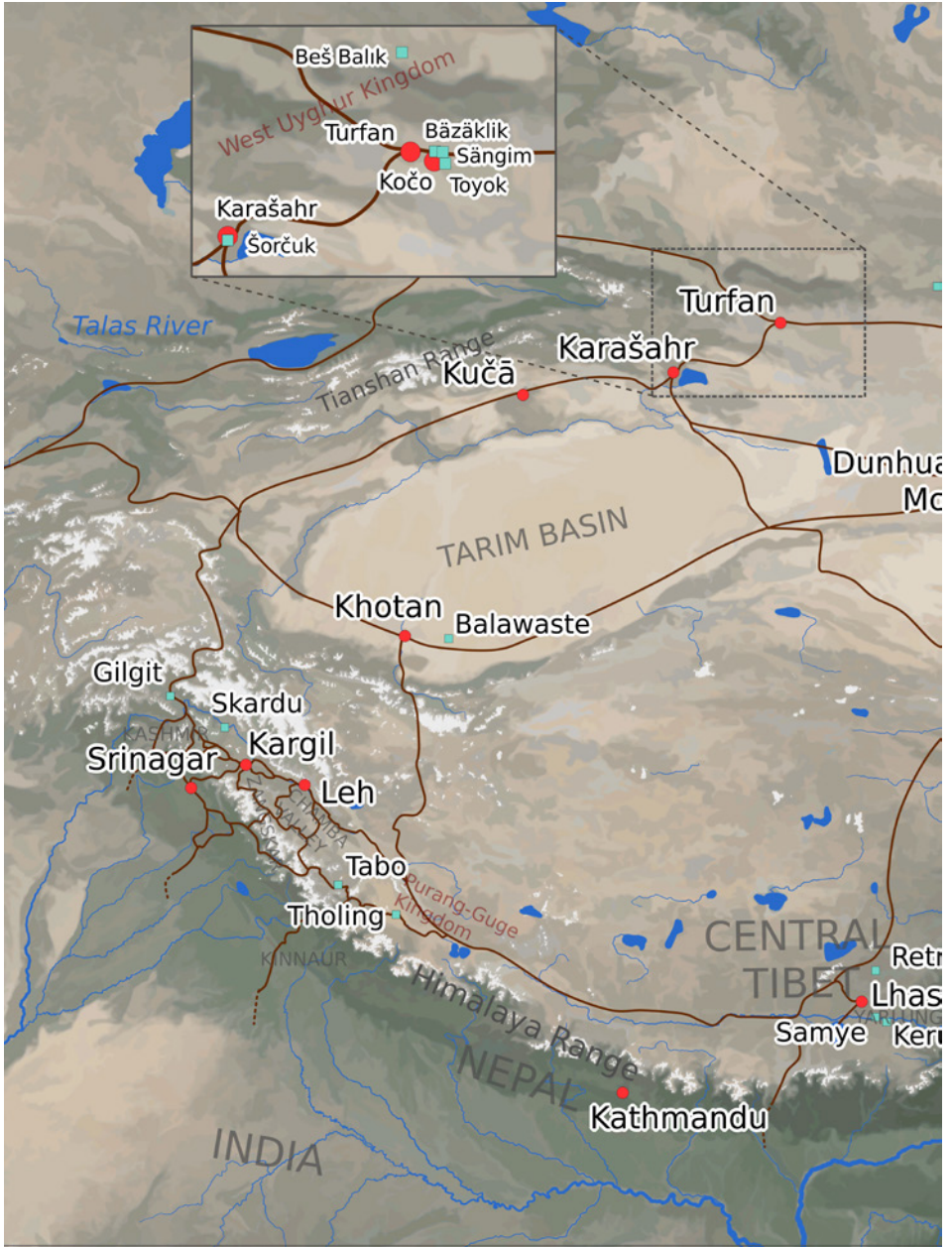
3 For a definition of the terms major and minor nodes see further below in this text.

between the 6th and the early 14th century, the period when Buddhism became the dominant religious and cultural force in this region until its gradual decline with the advent of Islam in Eastern Central Asia, including the Transhimalayan region. However, the chapters presented in this volume are confined to roughly the 7th to 13th centuries as a result of the specific materials discussed.

Within the time span of the envisioned research agenda, Central Asian cultures survived two serious crises triggering major economic, political and cultural changes, which affected every important Eurasian state and location more or less simultaneously: (1) in the mid-8th century successful political revolts occurred in many Eurasian empires, e.g. the Abbasid, the Uyghur Turkic, and the anti-Tang (Chinese) rebellions, which further coincided with the Sino-Abbasid battle of Talas in 751 (for the location of the Talas River see map 1.1). This battle divided Central Asia for centuries to come into an Islamic bloc to its West and a Buddhist bloc to its East—it is the latter, Eastern Central Asia, which is of concern for the present research; (2) a crisis in the mid-9th century which resulted in the collapse of the ancient routes of communication in Central Asia: that is, the fall of the East Uyghur Empire (roughly 744–840) to the Kirghiz in 840, the demise of the Tibetan Empire in 842, the Buddhist persecutions in China (beginning in 842) and the final demise of the Chinese Tang Empire (618–907, 唐), a little more delayed, in 907.<sup>4</sup> As an immediate result of the almost simultaneous breaking up of the three neighbouring empires (Uyghur, Tibetan, Chinese) around the mid-9th to early-10th centuries, Eastern Central Asia, the Buddhist bloc, transformed into a mosaic of fragmented political regimes whose legitimacy was based partially on their imperial heritage (real or imaginary) and partially on Buddhist political concepts. The ensuing progress of history was characterised by the balance of local kingdoms or fiefdoms in the Tarim basin around the Taklamakan desert with the power exerted between the Chinese Song (960–1279, 宋), Khitan (907–1125, 遼) and Tangut (c. 1032–1227, 西夏) empires which emerged and stabilised from the 10th century onward East of the Tarim basin; similar local kingdoms ruled the Transhimalayan region in Kashmir, Zangskar and in Western Tibet (e.g. the Purang-Guge Kingdom) during roughly the same time. This equilibrium was destroyed when the Mongols conquered large parts of the Eurasian continent around the early 13th century. From the Buddhist perspective one can generally observe during this time of political reorganisation of large parts of Central Asia a process of accumulation of religious knowledge and, more

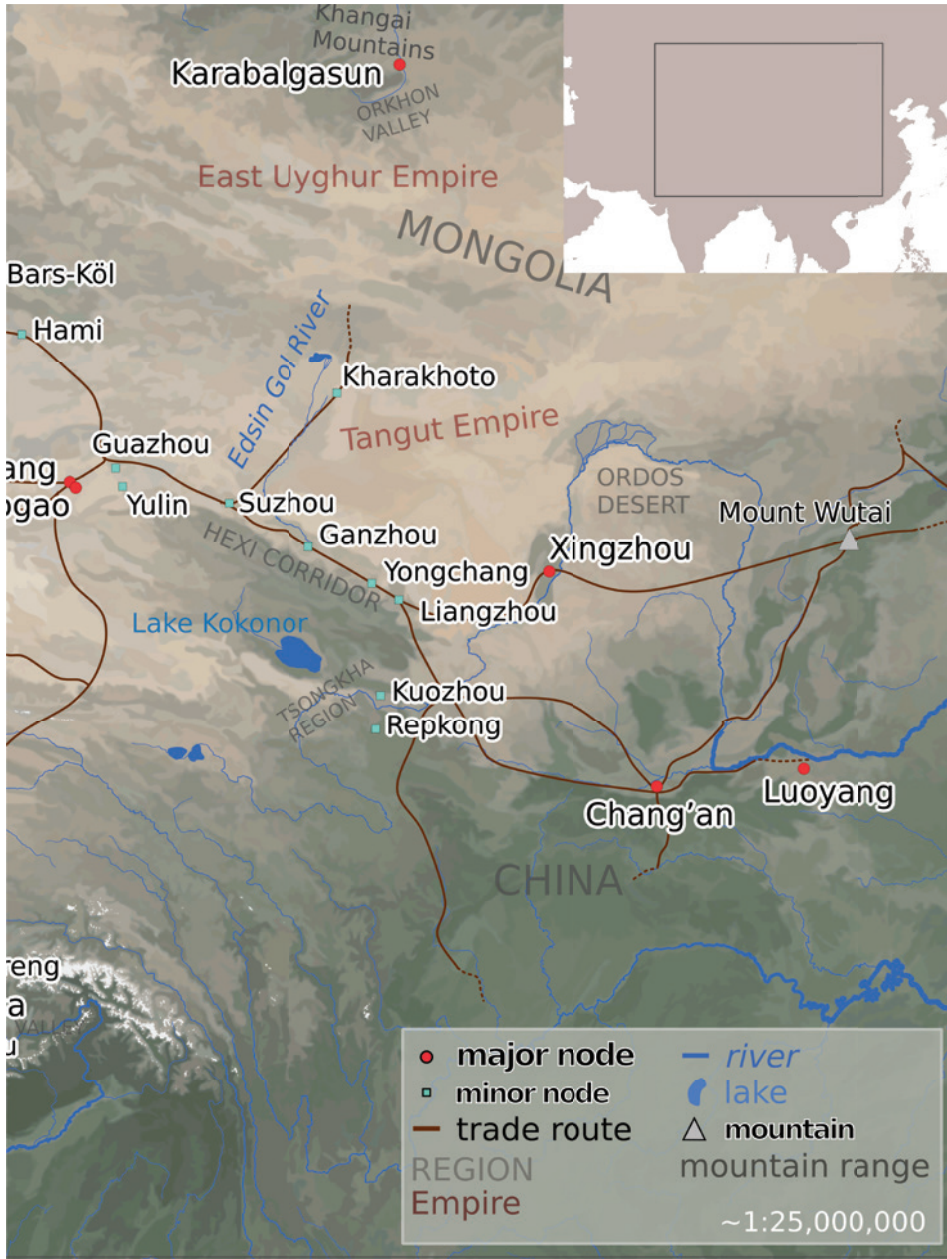
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4 Beckwith, Christopher I., *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 192.



MAP 0.1 *Network of Buddhist nodes in Eastern Central Asia*  
(MAP KINDLY PREPARED BY JÜRGEN SCHÖRFLINGER)<sup>5</sup>

5 This map includes most of the important sites (major and minor nodes), routes and regions mentioned in the chapters of this volume; it makes no claim to be complete. Also the names of various kingdoms and empires mentioned in different chapters of this volume are included—simply for a rough orientation, yet neither with strict borders nor in chronological



order. Since Rob Linrothe kindly prepared a detailed map of the Transhimalayan region he deals with (covering Zangskar, Ladakh and Kashmir), this map here does not include all minor nodes of that area. The reader is kindly invited to consult the map in Rob Linrothe' chapter on the Zangskar and Ladakh regions and this map for the remaining chapters of this volume.



specifically, the growth of heterogeneous and local Buddhisms—in many ways related to the ‘Tibetan Renaissance’,<sup>6</sup> which eventually dominated Central Asia during the 11th to 13th centuries.

Central Asia was located at the intersection of three major vectors, i.e. the spread of Indian Buddhist traditions eastward, of Chinese Buddhist influences to the Western reaches of the empire and beyond and of Tibetan Buddhism’s gradual flow to the West, North and East. These influences reached Central Asia partly at different times, partly overlapping in time and for a variety of reasons. Each of the areas to be investigated was engaged in a complex network of relationships both between each other and involving the three major Asian cultural traditions and Buddhist influences. In this respect, the set research agenda intends to study the process of the interchange between these three centres of influence and cultures, interregional contacts as well as the ability to develop intermediate, local forms.

While the three cases of Buddhism’s fundamental transformation (i.e. Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese appropriations) are relatively well known, the changes which occurred in Buddhism in the pivotal zone of Central Asia as a whole are less understood, due to:

- the multilinguistic and multicultural complexity of the region;
- the variety of its dominions (by larger empires as well as by local rulers) with varying territorial sizes;
- the diversity of historical processes, which resist any straightforward analysis;
- the limitations on research imposed by nationalist perspectives of history writing (e.g. Sino-centric, Indo-centric etc.);
- the lack of research funding in general and from Buddhist institutions in particular.<sup>7</sup>

The foregoing assessment hints to the fact that the transfer and transformation of Buddhism in Central Asia, seen as part of movements in the larger Buddhist world in premodern Asia—that is, as an entangled history—is so far only beginning to be understood. Hemmed in by modern intellectual and disciplinary boundaries, the complexities in the dynamics of cultural encounter and

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6 Davidson, Ronald, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

7 Research on Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese Buddhism is strongly supported by Buddhist organisations still alive in the respective regions whereas Central Asian Buddhism did not survive up to the present and therefore has no public stakeholders.

religious transfer in premodern Central Asia remain specialist subjects, little mentioned outside the small sub-disciplines and other disciplinary frameworks. Thus this research agenda's objective is to move beyond these boundaries and to create a new transregional and transcultural vision for religious transfer processes in Central Asian history.

## 2 A Network Approach

How to tackle the above-sketched research agenda? The transdisciplinary research in Religious Studies at Ruhr University Bochum links the perspective of religious semantics with the perspective on social structures and “focuses on relational aspects as constituents of religious formation processes enabling the characterisation of geographically-extensive networks of cultural and religious traditions as protracted processes of orientation and exchange.”<sup>8</sup> With regard to this perspective of relational religion,<sup>9</sup> the research agenda envisioned here aims to decode patterns of spatial organisation and the influence of Buddhism in complex Central Asian premodern societies on both the macro-level of interregional and intercultural exchanges as well as the micro-level of local interactions and contacts. A network approach is helpful here in order to move away from territorial assumptions towards more relational, multiscale

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8 Quotation from the website of the research consortium Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe* at the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at Ruhr University Bochum: <http://khk.ceres.rub.de/en/research/>, last accessed June 7th, 2015. For the research programme of the consortium see also Krech, Volkhard, “Religious Contacts in Past and Present Times: Aspects of a Research Programme,” *Religion* 42 (2012): 191–213. CERES is the home institution of the author.

9 The use of the term ‘relational religion’ as it is applied in CERES is defined as follows: “‘Relational Religion’ forms the theoretical framework for a perception according to which the characteristics of single components within the religious field are defined not only by the point of view of the observer, but also in relation to other religious constituents as well as to other past and present social and cultural facts. The concept of ‘Relational Religion’ does not imply an *a priori* given notion of religion that is then applied to empirical findings; rather, religion emerges and is defined by relations. The perspective of ‘Relational Religion’ does not seek to relativize its subject. Instead, stressing relationality should allow for a scientifically verifiable access to observable phenomena. [...] From the perspective of ‘Relational Religion’, the religious field is understood as a complex system whose components generate themselves in multilayered emergence processes.” For the quotation see <http://www.ceres.rub.de/en/research/research-program/>, last accessed June 30th, 2015.

perspectives.<sup>10</sup> Although a proper network analysis is not yet provided in this volume, a few remarks on the network approach in general are nonetheless useful to frame the current research agenda. In its most basic definition a network is nothing more than a collection of nodes and links with basic formal properties. Only when further investigating what nodes and links actually are—with regard to the centrality and function of nodes, and the directionality and frequency of exchange between them—are new ideas about links and dynamic relations *between* nodes allowed to emerge, rather than seeing nodes simply as static entities.<sup>11</sup>

When trying to identify the primary points of importance in the given geopolitical and intercultural network—the system linking the oasis towns along the Central Asian Silk Road, as well as their further branches into the Transhimalayan and Tibetan regions—there are locales, which carry added significance for a variety of reasons. As is common to network theories, broadly

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- 10 See e.g. the works by Monica L. Smith, who argues for the application of network approaches on mapping premodern states: “Networks, Territories, and Cartography of Ancient States,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95.4 (2005): 832–849; and “Territories, Corridors, and Networks: A Biological Model for the Premodern State,” *Wiley Periodicals* 12.4 (2007): 28–35. Moreover, network approaches have been discussed in a number of fields in the humanities in recent years. A valuable contribution which tackles the advantages of a network approach in archaeology, a view that is easily adaptable for the current research and inspired this present volume as well, is: Knappett, Carl, ed., *Network Analysis in Archaeology. New Approaches to Regional Interaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). An actual network analysis with regard to the Buddhist network in Central Asia is envisioned for the long term research agenda.
- 11 See Knappett, Carl, “Introduction: Why Networks?” in *Network Analysis in Archaeology. New Approaches to Regional Interaction*, ed. Carl Knappett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3–4. The author makes use of advances in physics and complexity science and pays particular attention to the breakthrough paper on ‘small worlds’ by Duncan J. Watts and Steven H. Strogatz (“Collective Dynamics of ‘Small-World’ Networks,” *Nature* 393 (1998): 440–442). Moreover, the idea of ‘centrality’ is further elaborated in Rivers, Ray, Carl Knappett and Tim Evans, “What Makes a Site Important? Centrality, Gateways, and Gravity,” in *Network Analysis in Archaeology. New Approaches to Regional Interaction*, ed. Carl Knappett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 125–150.

The abovementioned network approach by Monica L. Smith employs a node-corridor model based on observations in animal behaviour. In her article “Territories, Corridors, and Networks,” 28, she argues that “‘territory’ does not consist of undifferentiated use of landscape. Instead, the concept of territory can be parsed into a series of resource-rich nodes linked by corridors of access, surrounded by unutilized regions and boundaries marked at points of competition.”

speaking, these locales are widely referred to as nodes, or points of relative condensation and significance. As a working hypothesis the present research agenda distinguishes in the main between two types of nodes (although other types may be added), namely major or primary and minor or secondary nodes, as follows. A primary node is a major cultural centre,<sup>12</sup> a location where knowledge and cultural techniques of any kind are being produced and diffused. As such it creates, absorbs and conveys the spread of knowledge in a given region. In referring to a major node, i.e. when defining its relative importance in a given network, one may speak of a locale where cultural densification (German: *Verdichtung*) on a high scale occurs. In geographical terms major nodes are located along primary travel routes, often at important strategic junctions or intersections.

A secondary node is a minor cultural centre or habitation, which primarily serves as a conductor for cultural practices that have for the most part been produced elsewhere. A characteristic of both types of nodes is that they belong to a network often passing through or transversing several culture zones, as indeed is the case with the network of routes across the area dealt with in this volume, namely along the oasis towns located at the rim of the Tarim basin, the Tibetan and Transhimalayan regions.

In order to ascertain what features might dynamically *generate* centrality on networks, directionality *between* locales plays a crucial role. Important sites or major nodes may push their influence, knowledge, ideas, technologies, religious ritual systems, pantheons etc. toward their neighbours' boundaries; equally, the very same nodes might be a source of attraction for the same or further neighbours, pulling in other information or material objects.

Beyond such pull and push factors describing the degree of general inflow and outflow of major nodes, Ray Rivers, Carl Knappett, and Tim Evans, apply a network approach in archaeology to further differentiate between two types of centrality of a 'busy' site (or major node): namely a 'central place' or 'hub' and a 'gateway'. Hubs, according to the authors, are "not necessarily the busiest sites of a network as a whole, [...] but [...] those [that] are relatively the busiest within a region or neighbourhood."<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, a gateway is described as a site of high *betweenness centrality* and

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12 Some authors in this volume use the term 'hub' rather than node, as it was introduced during the above-mentioned workshop (see acknowledgements). See also the further definition of the term 'hub' below in the text.

13 Rivers, Knappett, and Evans, "What Makes a Site Important?," 129.

[...] may or may not have high rank or be a hub but, typically, could be an end of an important 'bridge' between parts of the network; a 'bridge' in the sense that, if it is broken, the connectivity of the network is damaged. It is understood as a measure of the influence a site has over the flows of people, goods, and information through the network, insofar as it lies on important exchange routes between central sites.<sup>14</sup>

This further qualification of a major node as a gateway in a network is noteworthy and, in fact, applies to some of the sites mentioned in various chapters of this volume. Gateways are particularly those major nodes, which are at the 'border' or in the 'periphery' of (former) 'greater empires', such as the Chinese, Tibetan or Indian. The Central Asian oasis of Dunhuang may serve as a prime example: it was situated at the periphery of the Chinese Tang Dynasty until the 780s, when it was conquered by Tibetans and became part of the Tibetan Central Asian periphery; then it fell, with the demise of the Tibetan Empire, under the local rule of the Zhang (張) clan in 848 and became, in fact, the centre of that clan's attention.<sup>15</sup> Thus Dunhuang may very well be regarded not only as a major node or a central place but also as an important gateway between various cultures (according to the terminology used by Ray Rivers, Carl Knappett, and Tim Evans) that enabled the crossing of cultural boundaries.<sup>16</sup> In fact, Dunhuang is a very rich locale for the study of Buddhism, where material culture and textual influences, both moved in intercultural exchange from the neighbouring former empires (Tibetan, Chinese, Indian) as well as from regional contacts (e.g. the Uyghurs at Turfan), are visible.<sup>17</sup>

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14 Rivers, Knappett, and Evans, "What Makes a Site Important?," 129.

15 For a micro-historical investigation of the role of clergy and administration in changing political and religious contexts, that is during the transition period from Tibetan to local rule in Dunhuang, see the chapter by Gertraud Taenzer in this volume.

16 Originally I chose "Periphery as Centre" as the title for the present volume. However, Chris Beckwith, in his function of an advisor for the publication series *Dynamics in the History of Religions*, rightfully criticised this title. Such a title could be regarded as a continuation of an old core-periphery assumption, misplacing directionality and implying that influence and resources of any kind radiate out from locations uniformly—from the centres of big empires to their periphery—and thereby continuing the presumption of Central Asia as a periphery, a misconception which was until recently rather persistent in academia as well. However, I always had in mind to focus on the *centrality of Central Asia* and I believe the approach discussed here, of interregional and local exchange does cover this meaning. Many thanks to Chris Beckwith for pointing out the problem with the preliminary title.

17 The chapter by Henrik H. Sørensen in this volume provides a good example of this process from the perspective of the development of Esoteric Buddhism.

However, it is crucial to understand through a network approach that several nodes within the given network may share a common material culture, a set of ideas or ritual technologies, as is visible in Dunhuang, yet these cannot serve as a direct indicator of foreign control or hegemony *per se*; individuals and groups are rather selective in what they choose to borrow from other groups. For more deeply understanding intercultural contacts it is not the mere fact of borrowing in itself which is important, but the benefit it entails for the borrower's own cultural and religious system.<sup>18</sup> How is the new (foreign) knowledge etc. used and what is its symbolic importance in the new social, political and religious context? How is it reformulated, acted upon or displaced? Local appropriations thus occur as political circumstances change and material culture, ideas or ritual systems become entangled with local polities. The present research thus envisions, to quote Nicholas Thomas from his book *Entangled Objects*, "a process of local appropriation for local ends."<sup>19</sup> Instead of interpreting this process as a simple 'diffusion' of cultural traits, a term which has little explanatory power, the research programme sketched here favours an approach of actually detecting patterns, processes and motivations.

Two further aspects shall be mentioned at least briefly in these introductory remarks when addressing interregional Buddhist interactions of complex societies in premodern Eastern Central Asia, namely ethnicity and human agency.<sup>20</sup> Ethnicity is a key dimension of variation in the multiethnic region of concern here. It is to be understood as culturally constructed rather than primordially innate and as an aspect of group identity, which is contextually dependent, subject to change and, in fact, continuously renegotiated. One concrete example also discussed in this volume is the development of Uyghur Buddhism.<sup>21</sup> As the Uyghurs settled in the Turfan region and established the West Uyghur Kingdom after the demise of the East Uyghur Empire a shift of royal patronage from Manichaeism to Buddhism gradually takes place after 840. Progressively a distinct Uyghur Buddhist identity is formed, yet once Tantric Buddhism is

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18 Two case studies provided in this volume for visual transfer processes between Dunhuang and Tabo in Western Tibet on the one hand side and Zanskar and Kashmir on the other hand side are by Deborah Klimburg-Salter and her team and by Rob Linrothe respectively. Both contributions discuss aspects of shared material cultures between regions and/or nodes and the role of material culture in negotiating cultural identity.

19 Thomas, Nicholas, *Entangled Objects* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 184. For a systematic analysis of a new paradigm of interregional interaction see Stein, Gil J., "From Passive Periphery to Active Agents: Emerging Perspectives in the Archaeology of Interregional Interaction," *American Anthropologist* 104.3 (2002): 903–916, particularly 905f.

20 *Ibid.*, 905.

21 See the chapter by Jens Wilkens on Uyghur Buddhism in this volume.

appropriated by the Uyghurs, some of the ethnic Uyghurs become part of the multiethnic Tantric Buddhism community, which eventually dominates Central Asia during the 11th to 13th centuries.<sup>22</sup>

Human agency, finally, is as important as macro-scale political reorganisation in the interregional interactions in the Buddhist network presented here. After all, ideas, ritual systems, or material objects such as images, styles or manuscripts usually do not simply fly from one node to the other by themselves; they travel along the routes in the luggage or in the minds of humans. In the chapters of this volume human agents may occur in history as artists hired in a distant location in the Transhimalayan region, Indian translators invited to Tibet, or diplomatic envoys sent between the West Uyghur Kingdom and the local rulers of Dunhuang.<sup>23</sup> All such agents contributed to the high degree of local, interregional and intercultural exchange, which constituted this Central Asian Buddhist network.

### 3 The Arrangement of this Volume

All chapters in this volume address micro- as well as macro-scale religious and socio-political formations that contribute to processes of Buddhist change in premodern Central Asia. They circumscribe historical settings that allowed the growth, during a time of reorganisation of large parts of Central Asia, of religious knowledge through local interactions as well as through interregional and intercultural contacts. The first chapter by Gertraud Taenzer highlights a micro-historical analysis of the oasis of Dunhuang during the time of political transition from Tibetan to local rule in the 8th to the 10th centuries. It is a time of social, political and economic transformation that immediately affected the religious community in Dunhuang. Whereas Tibetans had introduced a clear administrative structure in their Central Asian periphery that actively involved the Buddhist clergy and their institutions as well, the ensuing local rulers of Dunhuang, the Zhang clan, neither maintained the Tibetan administrative structures with the same vigour nor immediately introduced new ones, with the result of less governmental control of the people and religious institutions. A new intra-site dynamic allowed more freedom for the laity to

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22 Sam van Schaik in his chapter in this volume demonstrates how Tibetan Tantric Buddhism became a major religious force in Central Asia that cut across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

23 For the examples mentioned here see respectively the contributions by Rob Linrothe, Kano Kazuo and Gertraud Taenzer in this volume.

organise themselves, e.g. in worship clubs, which fulfilled both religious as well as secular functions. At the same time, inter-node exchanges were triggered on the regional level when monks were sent for religious as well as for economic purposes, maybe even as diplomatic envoys, between Dunhuang and Uyghur Turfan. This case study shows very well how changing political rules triggered new opportunities in the religious field on the local level as well.

The next section dedicated to textual transfers opens with chapter two by Sam van Schaik who—on the basis of manuscripts—like Taenzer, also argues that the distinction between the religious and political realms had been blurred by the middle of the 10th century in the former Tibetan periphery in Central Asia. The model of state-sponsored Buddhism during Tibetan rule moved to a dispersed model in which Buddhist practice and ideology was adopted in various ways by local actors. Tibetan as a *lingua franca* continued to be used for around two centuries after the demise of the Tibetan Empire; and with it Tantric Buddhism as evidenced in Dunhuang manuscripts became a flexible system for group formation cutting across boundaries of class, clan and ethnicity and reached out to various locations in the Central Asian Buddhist network. In fact, the sociolinguistic prestige of the Tibetan language—so regarded even among different ethno-linguistic backgrounds—might have very well been a consequence of the success of Tantric teachers propagating the latest ritual techniques only in Tibetan.

The next contribution in the section on textual transfer, by Kazuo Kano, is a meticulous investigation of how a collection of Sanskrit texts was said to have actually travelled through human agency throughout the Buddhist network in Central Asia and have reached various nodes. They were supposedly brought to Tibet by the famous Indian scholar and translator Atiśa in the middle of the 11th century. This collection of texts, comprising those from the Indian centre of Buddhist knowledge, Vikramaśīla, as well as texts collected en route, included the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanamaṇḍalavidhi*, part of a Tantric system which was important in various other nodes of the Central Asian Buddhist network as well (as witnessed in Tibetan and Chinese translations). The article by Linda Lojda, Deborah Klimburg-Salter and Monica Strinu mentions the related *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* in their case study on Tabo monastery in Western Tibet; furthermore, Henrik H. Sørensen in his chapter on Esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang proves the importance of the same title in the Central Asian oasis of Dunhuang as well. Moreover, while this case study investigates the transmission of a rich collection of manuscripts, it allows a more accurate picture of the actual transfer process of Buddhist knowledge to be revealed, which is often not clear when only one text or even one passage of a manuscript is investigated. Here texts are well integrated within contexts.



The following section of visual transfer includes chapter four, by Linda Lojda, Deborah Klimburg-Salter and Monica Strinu on the Tibetan Himalayan Style in Western Tibet, and chapter five, by Rob Linrothe on the origins of the Kashmiri style in Zangskar and Ladakh. Both case studies from the former periphery of the Tibetan imperial territory in the Transhimalayan region exemplify appropriations of visual Buddhist material and their local developments—in chapter four between the Purang-Guge Kingdom and Dunhuang in the 10th and 11th centuries and in chapter five between Zangskar and Kashmir between the 7th to 11th centuries.

In chapter four Linda Lojda, Deborah Klimburg-Salter and Monica Strinu investigate the paintings of Tabo monastery, founded by the king Lha Lama Yeshe Ö (Tib. *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od, 959–1040) in 996; these were painted in a style named by the authors Tibetan Himalayan Style, a regional style which had emerged during the time of the Tibetan Empire with roots in Central Asia (particularly visible in silk banners from Dunhuang). However, the main temple, except for the entry hall, was repainted just 46 years later, in 1042, in the Indo-Tibetan Style prevailing in Kashmir under the guidance of Yeshe Ö's grandnephew Jangchub Ö (Tib. Byang chub 'od). The paintings in the entry hall with an iconographic programme in the 'old' style related to Tibetan patronage may have been preserved as a tribute to the importance of king Yeshe Ö. However, from a broader perspective this case study well exemplifies further results of the disintegration of the three large empires, particularly here the Tibetan Empire, namely, the move from a regional (Tibetan–Central Asian) to a more local (and/or neighbour-oriented, Kashmiri) influence in visual arts and patronage systems. Just as the centre of political and Buddhist culture in Tibet collapsed, the former periphery reoriented itself as well.

Chapter five by Rob Linrothe explores further how Kashmir as a new reference point in visual arts gradually emerges in the Transhimalayan region, particularly after the demise of the Tibetan Empire. Zangskar and Ladakh, further West of the Purang-Guge Kingdom and an interesting gateway between Tibet and Kashmir, shared very little with the adjacent Kashmiri culture during the time of the Tibetan Empire and only gradually borrowed visual idioms from the then dominant centre of Buddhist learning, Kashmir. The case study provided by Rob Linrothe focuses on the monumental sculptures of the future Buddha Maitreya along the routes between Zangskar, Ladakh and Kashmir—namely in the minor nodes of Dras, Kartsé, Mulbek and Apati—which were carved probably by itinerant Kashmiri artists who travelled to Zangskar in search of patronage. These sculptures could loosely function as boundary markers at the edge of Kashmiri territory, beyond which were independent local states like Zangskar; the latter was, however, maybe already a feudatory to

the Kashmir Kārkoṭa power. The Zangskari might have impressed their neighbours with their degree of Kashmiricisation. From a macro-level perspective, however, the subject of transfer is of interest: the production of Maitreya sculptures. In fact, the Mahāyāna Buddhist bodhisattva cult of Maitreya was a then widespread trend not only in the Western Himalayas but also in Eastern Central Asia (and beyond). A particularly well-known example from around the same time as the Zangskar sculptures is found in the West Uyghur Kingdom at Kočo in the Turfan region where the cult was flourishing between the 9th and 13th centuries.<sup>24</sup> Among the Uyghur materials the best known and certainly most elaborate textual evidence is the *Meeting with Maitreya* (*Maitrisimit*) in Old Uyghur dating from the second half of the 10th century.<sup>25</sup> Just as the Maitreya sculptures in Zangskar served local ends in negotiating Buddhist, cultural and political alliances and identities, the Maitreya figure equally did so in the Uyghur context where it even produced hybrid forms at the Buddhist-Manichean interface.<sup>26</sup>

This brings us to the last section, on transfer agents. It looks at transfer processes from the angle of different ethnic groups and their impacts on the Buddhist field. Two case studies are provided, namely chapter six on the unfolding of Buddhism at large in the West Uyghur Kingdom, the major node around the Turfan region, and chapter seven, on Chinese Esoteric Buddhism at the major node Dunhuang.<sup>27</sup> In chapter six Jens Wilkens provides a detailed overview of Uyghur Buddhist culture, its characteristics and the relationship of Buddhism to the rulers and other important members of Uyghur society. The major impact of Buddhism among the Uyghurs occurred with their migration into the Turfan region upon the demise of the East Uyghur Empire and the founding of the West Uyghur Kingdom (847) with the capital first at Solmi

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24 The Maitreya cult was widely spread in Eastern Central Asia. Depictions of Maitreya are visible in Dunhuang murals from the 5th to the 13th centuries. The Uyghurs in Kočo were most likely influenced through the neighbouring oasis of Dunhuang around the 10th century. See Kasai, Yukiyo, "Der Ursprung des Altürkischen Maitreya-Kults," in *Die Erforschung des Tocharischen und die alttürkische Maitrisimit*, ed. Yukiyo Kasai, Abdurishid Yakup and Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 67–104.

25 Ibid., 69. For this text see also the chapter by Jens Wilkens in this volume.

26 Hans-Joachim Klimkeit (*Hymnen und Gebete der Religion des Lichts. Iranische und türkische liturgische Texte der Manichäer Zentralasiens* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989), 191) quotes the example of the Central Asian Manichean Bema liturgy where Mani, identified as Maitreya, is descending from paradise.

27 Originally, two further case studies on Tibetan and Tangut perspectives in Eastern Central Asia were planned for this volume, yet could not be realised in time. These topics will be dealt with within the larger envisioned research project.

(OU Ark/Karašahr) and later at Beš Balık (Chin. Beiting 北庭)—Kočo, which is usually referred to as the winter capital. Manichean patronage was gradually replaced by Buddhist patronage, which began to flourish at the turn of the first millennium. As already mentioned above, the cult of Maitreya becomes very important; inscriptions from Kočo (e.g. stake inscription 1 dated to 1008) mention the establishment of a monastery in order to meet Buddha Maitreya in the future. The Uyghurs gradually extended their political and religious influence as far as Dunhuang around the first half of the 11th century so that inter-node exchanges were intensified and contributed to the development of a Uyghur dominion in the region.

In the final chapter Henrik H. Sørensen addresses the peculiar nature of Dunhuang as a crossroad or, to use the abovementioned terminology, a gateway between cultures in a Buddhist network. This oasis was exposed to major Chinese as well as Tibetan Buddhist influences—depending on its respective political rule. Henrik H. Sørensen's case study traces, on the basis of an enormous variety of materials, religious art and texts, the development of Esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang between the 9th and 11th centuries. He demonstrates how a Chinese import was transformed locally and intertwined with several different Buddhist trends including a Tibetan-style Buddhism, which came to dominate large parts of Central Asia from the 11th century onwards. The materials presented demonstrate very well how a location, formerly peripheral to the centres of the major (Tibetan and Chinese) empires, was for centuries the home of a thriving Buddhist community, one which integrated the religious knowledge from neighbouring cultures for the needs of a local multi-cultural society.

*Changing Political and Religious Contexts in  
Central Asia on a Micro-Historical Level*





# Changing Relations between Administration, Clergy and Lay People in Eastern Central Asia: A Case Study according to the Dunhuang Manuscripts Referring to the Transition from Tibetan to Local Rule in Dunhuang, 8th–11th Centuries

*Gertraud Taenzer*

## 1 Introduction

Dunhuang (敦煌), although situated at the Western end of the Gansu corridor in Eastern Central Asia, had a predominantly Chinese culture. It was founded during the Han period, 111 BCE, as a Chinese garrison town, and despite the fact that it was ruled by non-Han dynasties from the fourth to the sixth centuries, Chinese culture prevailed. Before the Tibetan conquest of Eastern Central Asia in the 8th century, Dunhuang was temporarily governed by the Chinese Tang Dynasty (618–907, 唐) as a military province (Chin. *dao* 道) and its administrative system was set up accordingly. Although Tibetan rule only lasted for about six decades (from 787 to 848), it did leave a strong impact on the religious and societal fields, which will be partly discussed in this chapter. Following the demise of the Tibetan Empire (848), Dunhuang came under the local rule of the Zhang (張, 848–c. 915) and Cao (曹, c. 915–11th century)<sup>1</sup> clans. This period is generally known in Chinese sources as rule of the ‘Return-to-Allegiance Army’ (Chin. 歸義軍 *Guiyi jun*).

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<sup>1</sup> The date of the end of the rule of the Cao clan over Dunhuang is disputed. It certainly was under Tangut rule by 1072. Guazhou succumbed already in 1036. It is suggested that from 1019 onwards Dunhuang was strongly influenced by the Uyghurs: Whitfield Roderick, *Dunhuang* (München: Hirmer, 1996), 338.

Buddhism reached Dunhuang early via a network of trade routes from the West and the earliest extant cave temples were set up shortly before the Toba founded the Wei Dynasty (within the Northern Liang Dynasty, 412–439).<sup>2</sup>

The present study is based on Tibetan and Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts, which were discovered in a sealed cave within the Mogao Cave (莫高窟) complex in the vicinity of Dunhuang. As these manuscripts stem from a Buddhist cave temple, they naturally give more detailed information on administrative matters concerning the Buddhist institutions and the clergy than the Tibetan administration and the lay people. Thus some aspects are underrepresented if not absent.<sup>3</sup>

In order to get a picture of the impacts of the shift of powers in Eastern Central Asia in the 8th/9th century on a local level, this chapter will trace certain aspects of the micro-history of the oasis of Dunhuang. It is divided into two main parts: the first part outlines the administrative and economic system introduced by the Tibetans, their method of rule and their influence on the clergy and the Buddhist institutions. Furthermore, it investigates the population of Dunhuang and its relation to the Buddhist religion and institutions.

The second part focuses on the changing political and geopolitical situation of Dunhuang and its influence on society and clergy, namely with regards to developments which had already started during Tibetan rule and which were accelerated during the local rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army.

## 2 Tibetan-Ruled Dunhuang

### 2.1 *The Administrative System*

After the Tibetans had taken over Dunhuang in 787 they gradually introduced their own administrative system whereby they made adjustments by including Chinese elements. Dunhuang known as Sha cu in Tibetan manuscripts belonged to the military province of Guazhou (Tib. Kva cu *khrom*), which had its seat in oasis of Guazhou about 150 km East of Dunhuang.

The major changes implemented by Tibetans comprised the introduction of the Tibetan system of military and administrative officials as well as the

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2 Whitfield, Roderick, *Dunhuang*, 272. For an overview of its cultural history from the 4th to the 6th centuries see: Trombert, Eric, "Dunhuang avant les manuscrits: conservation diffusion et confiscation du savoir de la Chine médiévale," in *Études Chinoises* 24 (2005): 11.

3 E.g. tax-related manuscripts are rare: especially for the period of local government of the Zhang and Cao clans very little information is extant in this respect. Thus the taxation as a whole is unclear, i.e. it is not evident what kinds of taxes were exacted.

division of the population into people belonging to military units and people belonging to civil units. Monks were not excluded; even temple peasants became ‘military’ citizens in case the temple they were affiliated to belonged to the area of a military unit. Chinese officials were appointed into the ‘ministerial aristocracy’, which was distinguished through the possession of an insignia of rank. Nonetheless, Tibetan officials always were in a superior position—even if a Chinese official may have had received a higher insignia of rank.<sup>4</sup>

People belonging to the military units, apart from paying taxes, had to perform *corvé* (official duty, Tib. *rje blas*)<sup>5</sup> which included recruitment as soldiers. In the process of establishing the administrative system they were further divided into three units of a thousand families (Tib. *stong sde*) which were subdivided into ten subunits (called in Tibetan *tshan*) and—probably at a later date when a land reform was conducted—into the smallest unit (crew, called in Tibetan *rkya*). This last unit consisted only of 5–6 men (roughly the adult men of two families). From these units soldiers were recruited.<sup>6</sup> This was probably done to make sure that farming was not disturbed (if one member of a family had to go away on duty, the others could do his work). The members of the military units were tibetanised to a certain degree; they even took on Tibetan given names.

The civil units were divided into three as well and subdivided into subunits which were known by the Chinese term *jiang* (將 the Chinese equivalent to the abovementioned Tibetan *tshan*). But these *jiang* units were subdivided

4 See Dotson, Brandon, “Divination and Law in the Tibetan Empire,” in *Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet*, ed. Matthew Kapstein and Brandon Dotson (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 8.

5 Tib. *rje blas* has been identified as ‘official work/official duty’ by Takeuchi in Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, *Old Tibetan Contracts from Central Asia* (Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan, 1995), 266. This identification is accepted and linguistically verified by Zeisler and Uebach (Uebach, Helga and Zeisler, Bettina, “*Rje-blas, pha-los* and other Compounds with Suffix-*s* in Old Tibetan Texts,” in *Chomolangma, Demawend und Kasbek: Festschrift für Roland Bielmeier*, ed. Brigitte Huber, et al. (Halle: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2008), 310. The Tibetan term *rje blas* is different from the English term *corvé* in that it is also applied to persons of the higher strata of society who received an official post as their *rje blas*. See also Taenzer, Gertraud, *The Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule: A Study of the Secular Manuscripts Discovered at the Mogao Caves* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 240 for an extensive explanation.

6 It is stated in Ms. 10L Tib J 740 part II line 332 (transliterated in OTDO and transliterated and partly translated in: Dotson, “Divination and Law”) that soldiers were recruited per crew (Tib. *rkya*). A discussion of this term is found in Taenzer, *The Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 402.



into left and right *jiang*—a feature otherwise well known in Chinese military divisions.<sup>7</sup> There is neither any evidence that they were further divided, nor that a land reform was carried out in the area civil units occupied. Only one contract in Tibetan concerning members of a civil unit is extant (all the other contracts were written in Chinese). Members of the civil units did not take on Tibetan personal names<sup>8</sup> and seem not to have been Tibetanised to the same degree as members of the military units. They had to perform corvé duty such as working as watchmen, ordinary labourers and long distance messengers, however.<sup>9</sup>

In order to protect the Northern border of the Tibetan Empire two military units were established at the periphery of Dunhuang.<sup>10</sup> These units consisted of peoples transferred from other areas of the Tibetan Empire and are designated in contemporary Tibetan manuscripts as *thongkyab* (Tib. *mthong*

7 But according to Tsuguhito Takeuchi, Chinese *jiang* here is most probably the phonetic rendering of the Tibetan term *tshan*. See Takeuchi, Tsuguhito. “Tshan: Subordinate Administrative Units of the Thousand-Districts in the Tibetan Empire,” in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies held at Fagernes 1992*, vol. 2, ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), 859.

8 Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, *Old Tibetan Contracts from Central Asia*, 19; text 6 is a sales contract in which the seller is a member of the Darpa unit, which was a civil unit. All people mentioned in this contract—sellers, buyers and witnesses—bear Chinese given names. Contracts written in Tibetan are only attested from the second third of the Tibetan rule onwards (second decade of the 9th century).

9 P. 3774, line 32, transliterated, translated and discussed in Ikeda On 池田温, “Ushi doshi Jūnigatsu Sō Ryūzō chō 丑年十二月僧龍藏牒 [The Document of the Monk Longzang of the Twelfth Month of the Chou Year],” in *Yamamoto hakushi Kanreki kinen Tōyōshi Rōso* 山本博士還曆紀念東洋史論叢 [Jubilee Volume Presented to Dr. Tatsuro Yamamoto on the Occasion of his 60th birthday] (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1972), 27.

10 A member of a *mthong khyab* unit had a field in the location Pugpeu (Tib. Pug pe'u) (Takeuchi, *Contracts*, text 55A), which was the first post relay station in the direction of Guazhou. This is documented in the manuscript 0336.10–336/10.074/74, a manuscript stored in the Wenhuiyuan (文化院) in Dunhuang; see Taenzler, Gertraud, “The Registered Express Letter and the System of Official Transport in Areas during Tibetan Rule during the Old Tibetan Empire c. 786–850,” paper presented at the 13th Seminary of IATS 2013 in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia). The manuscript mentioned above is transliterated in Bsod nams Skyid, “Gna' bo'i bod kyi yig rnying las “slung tshang” dang “slungs dpon” zhes pa'i tha snyad la rgas tsam dpyad pa [Research into the Etymology of the Terms *slung tshang* and *slungs dpon* in Manuscripts of Ancient Tibet],” in *Bod kyi yig rnying zhib 'jug* [Precise Rendering of Old Documents of Tibet], ed. Kha sgang Bkra shis Tshe ring (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 270.

*khyab*). They were apparently installed to protect the borders and were not allowed to intermarry with members of the units of Dunhuang.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from imposing their administrative system in such a way that Chinese structures were embedded in it, Tibetans interfered in the economic structure of the area as well. Coins were abolished as currency and objects had to be bartered for grain and livestock for a weight (ingots?) of copper (Tib. *srang* or *dmar*).

A system of tax and tribute was introduced which seems to be entirely Tibetan, although some Chinese terminology was used as well.<sup>12</sup> During the reign of Emperor Ralpacan (Ral pa can, r. 815–c. 838) part of the tribute payment was raised by having the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpārāmitāsūtra* copied in Tibetan<sup>13</sup> as well as in Chinese. The paper on which scriptures were copied was exacted as tribute payment.<sup>14</sup> The distribution of paper and the designation

11 See Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 79, for an extensive study of these units.

12 A chapter on the various kinds of taxes is found in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 223.

13 That Tri Tsug Detsen (Tib. Khri gTsong lde brtsan, r. 815–841), commonly known as Ralpacan, commissioned the writing of this *sūtra* on a large scale is stated in Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, “Glegs-tshas’: Writing Boards of Chinese Scribes in the Tibetan-Ruled Dunhuang,” in *Scribes, Texts and Rituals in Early Tibet and Dunhuang*, ed. Brandon Dotson, Kazushi Iwao, and Tsuguhito Takeuchi (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2013), 101, where he lists as possible dates for the process referred to in another manuscript (see note below) the horse and sheep years 826 and 827. Cf. van Schaik, Sam, and Imre Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers: The Sino-Tibetan Documents of a Tenth Century Buddhist Pilgrim* (Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 24; here van Schaik and Galambos only refer to one of the last Tibetan Emperors in this respect. The proof that it must have been Ralpacan lies in P. tib. 1128 text 1, lines 16–18: (see Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 262: 225 for a transliteration, translation and discussion of the manuscript). This is a tribute related manuscript in which it is stated that in a horse year this *sūtra* had been written in Shazhou.

14 This horse year cannot be later than 838. This Emperor ruled in another horse year (826). But as this was an ongoing process he probably gave the order long before 838. It cannot be excluded, however, that the previous Emperor Tri De Songtsen (Tib. Khri lDe srong brtsan, r. c. 802–815) gave the order and that the execution of this task was carried on to the reign of Ralpacan.

Ibid. P. tib. 1128 text 11 line 4: in the course of seven years the people of Dunhuang had accrued a tribute debt of 48000 sheets of paper. According to Iwao Kazushi, “The Purpose of Sūtra Copying in Dunhuang under the Tibetan Rule,” in *Dunhuang Studies: Prospects and Problems for the Coming second Century of Research*, ed. Irina Popova and Liu Yi, St Petersburg: 2012, 103) a special format and quality of paper was used for the

of scribes were carried out by the subunit (Tib. *tshan*). When IOL Tib J 1359<sup>15</sup> was written, on average three people per *tshan*, per fifty families, could write Tibetan script. The scribes were predominantly lay people. Members of the clergy proofread the texts. The same can be said for the *Aparimitāyurnāmasūtra* (which was certainly copied for the benefit of Ralpacan).<sup>16</sup> This became evident when the subscripts of P. tib. 3503–3766 and P. tib. 3940–3998 were analysed by the present author. These manuscripts were proofread three times. For example, P. tib. 3941 reads: “Written by Bam Takzang (Tib. Bam Stag bzang); proofread by the fully ordained monk (Tib. *dge slong*) Lengcheu (Tib. Leng ce’u, probably Chin. 靈照), and proofread by Dronma (Tib. Sgron ma) and Shindar (Tib. Shin dar).”<sup>17</sup> The proofreaders bore Chinese and rarely Tibetan Buddhist given names and the same names recur.<sup>18</sup> Thus it is evident that there existed a group of monks whose task it was to proofread these scriptures.

Apparently Tibetan versions of Buddhist scriptures were already propagated at an early stage of Tibetan rule over Dunhuang since one of the manuscripts written at the end of the first third of Tibetan rule (at the beginning of the 9th century) shows that Tibetan monks were working side by side with

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*Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpārāmītasūtra* written in Dunhuang (70 × 20cm, consisting of two layers of thin paper pasted together).

- 15 IOL Tib J 1359 A/B/C is a suite of manuscripts listing the names of scribes and the paper owed after they had completed the writing of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpārāmītasūtra*. It is discussed and partly translated in: Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, “Tshan: Subordinate Administrative Units,” 849 and note 8; and transliterated and translated in: Thomas, Frederick William, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan*, vol. 2 (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1951), 80. It was written after the three military units had been established, after the second third of Tibetan rule had begun.
- 16 P. tib. 999: [...] snung lha sras khri lde gtsug brtsan gyi sku yon du // sha cur rgya bod gyi dar ma tshe dpag du myed pa bris te // [...]. “[...] Earlier on, for the benefit of the divine son Tri De Tsugtsen (Tib. Khri lde gtsug brtsan) the *Aparimitāyurnāmasūtra* in Chinese and Tibetan was copied in Shazhou [...]” This text certifies the taking out of the depot in Longxing temple of 135 Chinese and 615 Tibetan copies of this *sūtra*.
- 17 P. tib. 3941: as read on microfilm of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
- 18 According to 286 subscripts, the scriptures were written by 86 Chinese lay people; 36 of them wrote more than one, 11 more than 4 and two wrote 10–11 scriptures; 17 were written by members of the clergy, out of which 9 also appear as proofreaders; only three Tibetans, one Azha (Tib. 'A zha) and nine members of five so far unknown families wrote scriptures in Dunhuang. 36% of the Chinese lay writers bore Chinese given names, all the others had taken on Tibetan names, which is a sign that they were written not earlier than the second third of the Tibetan rule (Takeuchi, *Contracts*, 19). Among the clergy Chinese Buddhist names are prevalent.

Chinese scribes in the scriptorium.<sup>19</sup> It is to be assumed that the monks not only were teaching the Chinese scribes the Tibetan script and language but that they were ordered by the Tibetan authorities to go to Dunhuang to propagate the school of Buddhism favoured by the Tibetan Emperor.<sup>20</sup> It was taken up and among its followers was the monk Wu Facheng (吳法成, alias Tib. *Chos grub*) who also featured among the proofreaders of a number of Tibetan scriptures. Later, during the local rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army under Zhang Yichao (張議潮, r. 848–872?),<sup>21</sup> one of his pupils named Kang Hengan (康恒安) became an important personage in the Buddhist community.<sup>22</sup>

A manuscript of the later period of Tibetan rule indicates that religious duties were allocated by the administration. It is a fragment of a sequence of manuscripts in which members of the population of Dunhuang divided in subunits of hundred (Tib. *brgya' tshan*) and subdivided in crews (Tib. *rkya*) are designated as patrons (Tib. *yon bdag*) of certain temples (Tib. *gtsug lag khang*).<sup>23</sup>

The Tibetan government also introduced Tibetan law. This was a unique system, since in certain cases in which the evidence was not clear decisions could be made by rolling three four faced dice.<sup>24</sup> The meaning of the results was fixed

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- 19 Or. 8210/S. 5824 transliterated, translated and discussed in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 314, 273. It must have been written around the time when the military unit was divided in 808.
- 20 Demiéville (Demiéville, Paul, *Le concile de Lhasa* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1952) gives a description of the contest of the two schools of Buddhism incited by the Tibetan Emperor shortly after the takeover of Dunhuang. Mahāyāna, the head of the clergy (Tib. *mkhan po chen po*) of Dunhuang, is said to have argued against the Indian Kamalaśīla.
- 21 The actual dates are not evident, as he went to the Chinese court never to return. In 865 his nephew Zhang Huaishen sponsored a cave commemorating him. Thus he must have left Dunhuang already, how could he rule from a distance?
- 22 Zheng Binglin 鄭炳林, “Tang Wudai Dunhuang de suteran yu fojiao 唐五代敦煌的粟特人與佛教 [The Sogdians of Dunhuang and Buddhism during the Tang and Five Dynasties],” in *Dunhuang Guiyijun shi zhuan ti yanjiu 敦煌歸義軍史專題研究* [Studies in the Guiyijun Regime of Dunhuang], ed. Zheng Binglin 鄭炳林 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 1997), 443.
- 23 IOL Tib J 1357 A/B and IOL Tib J 575 transliterated and translated in: Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts*, 87 and discussed in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 249.
- 24 Or. 8210/S. 2228 fragment C, recto (transliterated in: Iwao Kazushi et al., “Old Tibetan Texts in the Stein Collection Or. 8 210,” in *Studies in Old Tibetan Texts from Central Asia*, Tokyo: the Toyo Bunko, 2012, 44) is a fragment of a legal document. Line 14 refers to ‘dice statutes’ (Tib. *sho tshigs*): ‘brog zhing mdzad pa’i rtsis mgo dang / sho tshigs las// [...] “According to the manual made for the conducting of the census of the fields and the dice statutes

by the dice statutes (Tib. *sho tshigs*), which were repeatedly changed by the administration. The announcements of the results were made by a goddess either a Buddhist or a pagan one.<sup>25</sup> This shows that certain religious concepts were included in the legal system.

At the beginning of Tibetan rule over Dunhuang the relationship of the Tibetan administration and its Chinese officials seems to have been an amicable one, they collaborated willingly; persons whose father already had had a post during the Tang reign were appointed as well,<sup>26</sup> Chinese officials received farm animals as remunerations.<sup>27</sup> A post in the administration was regarded as an official duty (Tib. *rje blas*), which meant that whoever could gain such a post neither had to join the army nor had to perform corvé duty or pay taxes.

The clergy also seem to have cooperated. At the end of the 8th century a group of criminals came by night to take over Dunhuang. They were captured by the clergy and questioned.<sup>28</sup>

As far as the ordinary people are concerned, there is no convincing material which directly shows that they were suffering from the tax load although the extensive copying of scriptures, the mass production of paper for these scriptures and the production of red dye from safflower petals<sup>29</sup> must have been a strain on agricultural efforts for food production.<sup>30</sup>

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[...]. This shows that the method of making decisions in legal cases by using dice alluded to in IOL Tib J 740 were indeed used in legal cases in Dunhuang.

- 25 Dotson, "Divination and Law," 22–25 finds pagan gods while MacDonald ("MacDonald, Ariane, Une lecture des Pelliot tibétain 1286, 1287, 1038, et 1290", in *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou*, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient 1971, 271–287) states that in other divination texts some pronouncements were made by bodhisattvas.
- 26 P. tib. 1089 line 59: transliterated, translated and discussed in Lalou, Marcelle, "Revendications des fonctionnaires du Grand Tibet au VIII siècle," *Journal Asiatique* 243.3 (1955): 171–212.
- 27 P. 3774 line 13: discussed, transliterated and translated in: Ikeda On, "Monk Longzang," 26.
- 28 S. 1438 contains a number of letters referring to this event.
- 29 In P. tib. 1128, text 11 line 4 it is stated that the people of Dunhuang had accumulated a tribute debt of safflower of 4722 *srang* in the course of seven years (Taenzler, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 263). On the various uses of safflower see: Trombert, Éric, "Cooking, Dyeing and Worship: The Uses of Safflower in Medieval China as Reflected in the Dunhuang Documents," *Asia Major* (2004): 59–72.
- 30 P. tib. 1085 is the answer of the Tibetan administration to a complaint of the two units of Shazhou concerning the demands of the local officials being so high that they were not able to fulfil them. See Yamaguchi Zuiho, "On the Date of the Formation of the Tibetan Military Units of the Chinese and *Tongjiaren* in Sha-cu," *Tōkyō daigaku bungakubu bunkakōryū kenkyū shisetsu kenkyū kiyō* 東京大學文學部文化交流研究施設研究紀要 [Records of Research of the Cultural Exchange Research Foundation of the University of

## 2.2 *Religious Institutions*

### 2.2.1 The Temples with their Property

The religious institutions of Dunhuang were predominantly Buddhist establishments. The organisation of the religious realm of Guazhou (Tib. *Kva cu lha ris*)<sup>31</sup> was regulated corresponding to the administration of the lay people. It was probably subdivided into the religious realm of Shazhou (沙洲), a designation of Dunhang.<sup>32</sup> In the manuscripts only the term 'religious realm' (Tib. *lha ris*) occurs. This term encompassed the temples of Dunhuang, their peasants, lands, granaries, livestock, farming and kitchen utensils. The religious and administrative head of such a religious realm was designated in Tibetan a *mkhan po chen po*, and in Chinese a *dujiaoshou* (都教授).<sup>33</sup> Each monastery was lead by a triumvirate: the dean (Chin. *shangzuo* 上座 or *zhangzuo* 長座), the abbot (Tib. *sgo mngan* (?), Chin. *sizhu* 寺主) and the general surveyor (Tib. *gzhi 'dzin*, Chin. *Duweina* 都維那). The latter was responsible for bookkeeping. Just as in the administration of the lay people the Tibetan government gradually introduced their rules. For instance from a certain date onwards, the registration of the possessions of a temple (peasants, grain and livestock) had to be carried out every seven years and written in quadruplicate: one of which was to be kept, one presented to the Emperor, and the other two were to be sent to government offices.<sup>34</sup>

The granaries of the temples lent out grain to commoners, monks and temple peasants alike. Although they did not charge interest—this only accrued when the grain was not paid back in time—the amount borrowed was small. Only occasionally were the temple peasants so hard pressed so that they had

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Tokyo, Department of Literature] 5 (1981): 9, 14; and Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 286 for a transliteration and translation.

31 The Tibetan term *lha ris* literally means 'divine region'. It has also been translated as 'ecclesiastical estate'. But as it refers to the properties of a particular temple, as in the manuscript Or. 8210/S. 7133 (Takeuchi, *Contracts*, text 25B), and as it is used in the administration of the religious institutions and their property in general to refer to an area as well (such as Guazhou 'the great administrative official of the religious realm of Guazhou' (Tib. *Kva cu gyi mngan chen*), P. tib. 997 the translation 'religious realm' is preferred.

32 As the title *Dafan Shazhou shimen dujiaoshou* 大蕃沙洲釋門都教授 (Head of the Buddhist Community of Shazhou in Great Tibet, according to Trombert, *Crédit*, 64) appears in P. 4660, it is likely that the religious realm of Shazhou had its own head of clergy (Chin. *dujiaoshou*) and forthwith was distinct from the religious realm of Guazhou.

33 The title/post was called under Tibetan rule in Chinese *dujiaoshou*. Before and after Tibetan rule the Chinese term *dusengtong*, overall ruler of the Buddhist monks, was in use. It is forthwith translated as 'head of the clergy'.

34 P. tib. 997.

to borrow all of their seeds.<sup>35</sup> It has been suggested that there existed two kinds of granaries:<sup>36</sup> firstly, the office of permanent assets (Chin. *changzhu chu* 常住處) and secondly, the sacred assets or Buddha assets (Chin. *fozhangwu* 佛帳物) which would correspond to grain of the religious realm (Tib. *lha ris gyi stsang*) and the grain of the three jewels (Tib. *dkon mchog gsum gyi stsang*) respectively. But only the latter two expressions correspond; that is, the Tibetan term 'grain of the three jewels' (Tib. *dkon mchog gsum gyi stsang*) corresponds to the Chinese term 'Buddha assets' (*fozhangwu*).<sup>37</sup> In the extant Tibetan register no such distinction is made and in another manuscript these two Tibetan terms are used synonymously.<sup>38</sup> It was not necessary to make this distinction because the Tibetan Emperors of the time were dedicated to Buddhism and all temples and their possessions were regarded as a gift for the benefit of the Tibetan Emperor and could not be interfered with, no matter who sponsored their establishment.<sup>39</sup> Thus this is a distinction, which later became important during the rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army (see below). However, there did exist a main storehouse at Longxing temple where scriptures written for the benefit of Emperor Ralpacan were kept.<sup>40</sup>

The boundaries of the lands of the commoners as well as of the temples seem to have been fixed at the land reform and no alterations were possible. This may be the reason why fields are not included in the register of the monastery's possessions mentioned above.<sup>41</sup>

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35 Taenzler, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 343.

36 Trombert, *Le crédit à Dunhuang*, 64.

37 Takeuchi, *Contracts*, 197.

38 P. tib. 1297, pièce 1, *ibid.*, 196.

39 P. tib. 2122—a fragment—implies that Yulin temple had become a permanent donation of the Emperor. The Tshurphu (Tib. mTshur phu) inscription (discussed, transliterated and translated in Li Fang Kuei and W. South Coblin, *A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1987), 302), gives a description of a procedure like this.

40 In P. tib 999 it is stated that scriptures written for the benefit of Ralpacan were kept at Longxing temple.

41 The only instance in which the religious realm gained land can be shown through the case of monk Bam Kingkeng (Tib. Bam King keng). He was a monk owning bondservants who had died, had not made a testament and forthwith his bondservants with their lands became monastic property (P. tib. 1079 transliterated and translated in Richardson, Hugh, "An Early Judicial Document from Tibet," in *High Peaks Pure Earth: Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture*, ed. Michael Aris (London: Serindia Publications, 1998), 149–166.

As most of the temples existed before Tibetan rule, temple peasants were already affiliated to their respective temples. A complete list of temple peasants dates from 794 or 806.<sup>42</sup> In this list, corvé, which had been carried out, is recorded under some names of temple peasants. The list includes records of corvé up to five years after its commencement. Apparently not only the temples but also the Tibetan administration used these peasants. One of their tasks was to guide temple peasants from Turfan to Guazhou—the seat of the administration of the area; another was to guard prisoners. The professionals among them (e.g. paper makers) were not ordered to corvé during this period. Other tasks were to work for very high dignitaries of the clergy (Tib. *mkhan po*, Chin. *jiaoshou*), both Tibetan or Chinese, or to accompany one of them to Kuozhou (廓州, near Hualong in present day Qinghai Province). Although not free to leave these peasants were responsible for their own livelihood and at times even tilled land for commoners.<sup>43</sup> They were affiliated to one particular temple and their transfer to another town must have been carried out on behalf of an order by the Tibetan administration.

The concept that religious institutions were a bequest of the Tibetan Emperor did not deter the people of Dunhuang from presenting donations to the temples. Lists in Chinese of donated gifts are extant. Apart from cloth and silk, precious items and robes are listed.<sup>44</sup> P. 2912 includes a certificate of a donation (Chin. *shi* 施) of Kang Xiuhua (康秀華). It gives the price for a privately commissioned *Mahāprajñāpārāmitāsūtra*. The complete donation amounted to three silver plates weighing 35 *liang* (Chin. *liang* 兩), 100 *shi* (Chin. *shi* 石) of wheat or barley, 50 *shi* of foxtail millet, and four *jin* (Chin. *jin* 斤) of powder<sup>45</sup>—paper, ink and writing had to be supplied by the scribe. The next text in this manuscript is a text referring to the head of the clergy (Chin. *dujiaoshou*) Zhang selling 28 *liang* (= 1,74 Chin. *jin*)<sup>46</sup> white lead powder for 228 *shi* wheat or barley.<sup>47</sup> This shows on the one hand that donations of

42 S. 542 v 8: see Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 197 for a discussion of the dates.

43 P. tib. 1112, an employment contract, is transliterated and translated in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 384.

44 For instance, P. 2567 is an account of donations received by the Liantai (蓮臺) temple written in 793.

45 White lead powder (Chin. *hufen* 胡粉) is used for the production of cosmetic powder (Trombert, "Dyeing", 66).

46 16 *liang* = 1 *jin* = c. 1.5 Eng. lb = c. 0,68kg (Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 399). A *shi* is a measure of capacity for grain; it measured about 60 litres.

47 Citation of P. 2912 according to Zheng, "Buddhism," 437.



precious items such as white lead powder were sold for grain and on the other hand how valuable one *sūtra* was (a farm-hand earned 180 *shi* grain a year).

There is one fragment of a legal manuscript<sup>48</sup> from which it can be concluded that a person had donated a house and an orchard to a temple before the land reform.

People of all walks of life donated. This can be seen in a manuscript in which temple peasants, commoners and councillors, who presented oil to Puguang temple, are recorded.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.2.2 Monks and Nuns

Before the Tibetans took over Eastern Central Asia, thirteen temples already existed in the Dunhuang region with 310 nuns and monks affiliated to them. This is evident from a Chinese manuscript dated 788.<sup>50</sup> It is complete and not only lists the names of Dunhuang's temples but also the names and families of their nuns and monks. After its completion the deaths were recorded up to the ape (Chin. *shen* 申) year, which is four years later, 792. 13% of the monks and 6.4% of the nuns died within this period. One nun and one monk transferred to the oasis of Ganzhou (甘州, present day Zhangye) East of Dunhuang, one monk went to the oasis of Yizhou (伊州, present day Hami) North of Dunhuang and of one nun it is only stated that she went East. No arrivals were recorded. The Tibetan administration commissioned this register.

Once the units were established and the inhabitants were registered in a military or civil unit it can be assumed that the Tibetan administration controlled the movement of the monastics. Arrivals in Shazhou (Dunhuang) coming from the oases of Suzhou (肅州, present day Jiuquan), Ganzhou and Kuozhou had certificates issued by Tibetan dignitaries.<sup>51</sup>

Among the Dunhuang manuscripts are quite a few scriptures, which were not written in Dunhuang. The monk Re Kong Tsuglator (Tib. Reb kong Gtsug la tor) who wrote and proofread scriptures originated from Yar mothang (Tib. Dbyar mo thang, Reb kong, Chin. Tongren in present day Qinghai

48 S. 2228, text C.

49 IOL Tib J 794 transliterated and translated in Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts*, 109 and discussed in Taenzler, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 248.

50 S. 2729 published in Ikeda On 池田温, *Chūgoku kodai sekichō kenkyū* 中國古代籍帳研究 [Ancient Chinese Household Registers and Related Documents] (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, 1979), 502.

51 P. 5579 was written during the early period of Tibetan rule because the term *sengtong* instead of *jiaoshou* is used and because among the signatories features the Tibetan prime minister Zhang Trisumje (Tib. *Zhang Khri sum rje*, Chin. *Qixiner*).

Province).<sup>52</sup> This is a characteristic of the roll type *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpārāmitā sūtra*. Rekong and Kuozhou are situated in the same region. According to the list of temple peasants cited above the Chinese *jiaoshou*, a very high dignitary of the clergy called Liu, went to Kuozhou twice within four years. Thus an exchange between Dunhuang and the Qinghai region took place already at the turn of the eighth to the ninth century.

Between 794 and 818 the number of monks and particularly the number of nuns started to rise. Although no list of enrolled monastics is extant for the end of Tibetan rule, the number of nuns of Dacheng temple is known for the year 870—roughly 20 years after the establishment of local rule in Dunhuang. By the end of the 9th century, the number of nuns had risen by 522 and the number of monks by 170 (see table 1).<sup>53</sup> The reason for this development is not evident at first sight.

After joining the clergy a monk could keep his field and plant it, he could also work on other people's fields, he was allowed to keep his bondservants. He probably could make a will.<sup>54</sup> However, if he did not do so his servants together with their belongings fell to the religious realm—and thereby to the Tibetan Empire.<sup>55</sup> A nun could keep her livestock and bondservants—it is unlikely that she could keep her fields.<sup>56</sup>

The Chinese manuscript P. 3774<sup>57</sup> gives a good example of how parts of a family joined the clergy. Two cousins lived in one household; one had one son and three daughters. The other was head of a subunit (Chin. *jiang*) and had

52 He wrote P. tib. 1571, 1573, 1595, 1600, 1614, 1634, 1591 and read P. tib. 1556. All these scriptures are marked as probably not originating in Dunhuang in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*. Iwao (Iwao, “Śatasāhasrikā-Prajñā-pārāmitā sūtra from Dunhuang”) has substantiated my findings by looking at the physical structure of the paper. He came to the conclusion that the roll type was written on paper, which was neither made in Tibet nor in Dunhuang.

53 See the table 1 at the end of this article for a comparison of the lists.

54 There is no testament extant for the period of Tibetan rule, but for the time shortly after the takeover by Zhang Yichao two testaments are extant (see below).

55 P. tib. 1079: transliterated and translated in Richardson, “An Early Judicial Document,” 149–166.

56 S. 5820+S. 5826 is a contract of the sale of a cow by a nun (published in Yamamoto, Tatsuro, and Ikeda On ed. *Tun-huang and Turfan Documents Concerning Social and Economic History: III Contracts (A) Introduction and Texts* (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, (A) 1987; (B) Plates, 1986), text 257); P. tib. 1079 proves that nuns could keep bondservants (transliterated and translated in Richardson, “An Early Judicial Document,” 149–166); there are no grain loan contracts extant, which were concluded by nuns. As it was necessary to have fields to plant to be able to get a grain loan it is likely that the fields stayed with the family.

57 Transliterated in Ikeda, “Monk Longzang,” 25–29.

two daughters. Presumably the oldest offspring of the former were allowed to marry. The youngest daughter—the third daughter—joined the clergy while the head of a subunit, after his children had married, made an agreement with his cousin about the division of their household and became a monastic. To devote the end of one's life to religion was the only way for officials to leave their post. Thus men were rather old already when they became monks. This may be the reason for the high death rate of monks in the list mentioned above.

According to a fragment of a household register<sup>58</sup> other factors must have started to become prevalent during Tibetan rule. The registers of three families are complete. The only surviving son of the Liang family had two sons and two daughters, whereby one daughter became a nun. They had five bondservants. To the Suo family eleven children were born. Two sons and possibly one daughter stayed single, two sons and two daughters joined the clergy. They had one bondservant. The history of the Guo family is quite complex. The head of the family had a wife and a second wife. With his first wife he had three sons and one daughter, they all married and had children themselves. The second wife had two daughters—one married and one became a nun. They had five bondservants; probably after the head of the family died two bondservants left (were sold?) and his second wife joined the clergy. They did not split the family nor did they choose a new head.

These registers show that the men did not join the clergy at the end of their career, but when they were still young. From the large family, which was not wealthy (only one bondservant), more young people joined the clergy than from the other two families. One reason may have been the distribution of fields. No more land may have been redistributed or newly allocated to the families of the military units after the land reform in a rat year (possibly beginning of 9th century) and to the civil units after the completion of a field count. The household register—although small—suggests some population growth. This may have resulted in the produce of the fields not being sufficient and no funds to pay the bride price for wives for all sons being available (the average bride price seems to have been 20 *shi* of grain); thus some became monks. But what about women? The family had to pay for the certificate to join a monastery, which was quite expensive—it cost one donkey and a cow;<sup>59</sup> moreover,

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58 S. 3287v, transliterated and discussed in: Yamamoto, Tatsuro, and Dohi Yoshikazu, ed. *Tun-huang and Turfan Documents Concerning Social and Economic History: 11 Census Registers (A) Introduction and Texts* (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, (A), 1985; (B) Plates, 1984), text XC b–d, 92.

59 P. 3774 line 46, in Ikeda, "Monk Longzang," 28.

it meant the loss of a worker for cloth production—spinning, weaving, etc.—and the family did not receive the bride price.

Generally speaking, encouraging one's children to become monastics may have been regarded as a kind of birth control: as a member of the clergy monastics did not produce offspring and thus a further division of the crops of the fields was not necessary.

Another reason why young people joined the clergy may have been due to the propagation of Buddhism under the Tibetan Emperor Ralpacan. Although the facts are clear, the explanations given here certainly must remain suggestions.

### 2.3 *Worship Clubs*

The way in which lay people pursued their own way of devotion to Buddhism can be seen in the formation of worship clubs (Chin. *she* 社). Originally, the Chinese term *she* derives from the worship of earth gods in spring and autumn to receive good harvests. The Chinese character consists of the pictograms 'spirit' and 'earth'. From the Sui Dynasty (581–618, 隋) onwards, however, this ritual became influenced by Buddhism. Dunhuang manuscripts, dating from the time of the Tibetan rule of Dunhuang, refer to small groups of people (14–22 members), which were organised privately to celebrate Buddhist festivals and the spring and autumn festivities or help each other during times of hardship. However, only sixteen manuscripts can be ascribed to this period with certainty.

These groups were well organised and headed by a triumvirate consisting of the president (Chin. *shezhang* 社長), manager (Chin. *sheguan* 社官, Tib. *zha co*)<sup>60</sup> and secretary (Chin. *lushi* 錄事). These positions were chosen by

60 P. tib. 1102, a circular asking for contributions for a member's funeral, proves this equation. This is not evident at first sight. The manager is not mentioned by name in the circular, written in Chinese only manager (Chin. *sheguan*) is stated. But in the list of contributions, written in Tibetan, he is listed twice. In text 1—the list of donated cereals—he appears with his full name Ba Seudar (Tib. 'Ba' Se'u dar), while in text 11—the list with contributed silk cloth—he is designated as manager Seudar (Tib. *zha co* Se'u dar). Neither of the other two members of the triumvirate bears the family name Ba (Tib. 'Ba', Chin. Ma 馬). Thus it is evident that Ma is the manager Seudar. Tib. *co* thus is short for *gco*. Therefore the Tibetan term *zha co* definitely corresponds to Chinese *sheguan* (manager) and not to Chinese *shezhang* (president) as Takata states (Takata, Tokio, "Le long rouleau chinois et la communauté sino-tibétain de Dunhuang," in *Bouddhisme et cultures locales, quelques cas de réciproques adaptations*, ed. Fukumu Fuminasa and Gérard Fussman (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1994), 143. This fact is important for the dating of another worship club (Chin. *she*) related manuscript (see below).

members, but the president was invariably the oldest person of the group.<sup>61</sup> Circulars were sent around to notify the members of the items to contribute for the festivals. Bylaws stipulating punishment—usually a jug of wine—for not abiding to them were formulated by the members. They were all written in Chinese, except that on the back of one circular concerning a funeral the incoming contributions are listed in Tibetan.<sup>62</sup> According to the latter manuscript not all members contributed. This shows that on such a short notice—two days—it was not possible for all members of the group to come up with the required material, namely one *bre*<sup>63</sup> of flour, one *bre* of millet and half a bolt (Chin. *pi* 疋)<sup>64</sup> of coloured material (Chin. *sewu* 色物).<sup>65</sup> Some brought beer instead of cereals. It seems that the person who collected the contributions on this special occasion mentioned in this manuscript was not able to write Chinese although all of the members bore Chinese given names. People who wanted to join a worship club had to hand in a petition, whereupon all members decided on their admission. Theoretically open to all citizens, membership in a worship club was definitely limited to the higher strata of society. Members had to be able to read simple sentences, pay an admission fee and be able to afford the current costs—each year around 60 litres (1 *shu*) of cereals.

The manuscripts extant from the time of Tibetan rule over Dunhuang all refer to private worship clubs which assembled not only to celebrate Buddhist festivities but also the spring and autumn festival. Moreover, its members were obliged to help each other in times of hardship. This method of organising tasks started during the time of Tibetan rule since the admittance fee was calculated in loads (Tib. *khal*)—a Tibetan measure of capacity; however, it became prominent during the following period of local rule when such groups were formed to carry out government-related work as well.

That the people of the higher strata of society of Dunhuang wished to perform the religious festivals in their way can be seen in the formation of these

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61 Yamamoto Tatsuro, Yoshikatsu Dohi, and Yusaku Ishida ed., *Tunhuang and Turfan Documents Concerning Social and Economic History: IV The Association and Related Documents (A) Introduction and Texts* (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1989), 7.

62 P. tib. 1102.

63 1 Tib. *bre* = 1 Chin. *dou* (斗); it amounted to around 6.6 litres. See Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 400.

64 The size of a bolt (Chin. *pi*) is about 54 × 120cm.

65 The coloured material consisted of blue, red, maroon, yellow and white silk of various types. Contributions of cloth were the usual demands for funerals.

worship clubs. It furthermore allowed them to recite the texts they chose—without having to pay reverence to the Tibetan Emperor as well.<sup>66</sup>

#### 2.4 *The End of Tibetan Rule*

It is well known that the private army of Zhang Yichao with the help of the head of the clergy Hongbian (洪辯)<sup>67</sup> drove the Tibetans out of Dunhuang in 848. Apart from the fact that at that time the power in Central Tibet seems to have been divided between two rulers, there is no indication that Buddhism was no longer supported in Dunhuang. In fact, the contrary is true. This is especially visible from the Tibetan manuscript P. tib. 999, which stipulates that a great donation was made for the benefit of the Tibetan infant ruler Osung (Tib. *'Od srung*, either 843–905 or 847–885) and his mother who had the power over the Eastern provinces (which included Dunhuang).<sup>68</sup> This occasion was organised by the monks and nuns of Dunhuang for 2700 lay people.

The Tibetan presence in Dunhuang itself was not strong—only a handful of officials and their servants lived there. It is known that the *tongsar* (Tib. *stong sar*) unit comprised 9.5 Tibetan crews (Tib. *rkya*), which amounts to about 20 Tibetan families, who most likely were the servants of the eleven Tibetan officials.<sup>69</sup> The members of the two military units of *thongkhyab* (Tib. *mthong kyab*) lived at the periphery of Dunhuang—at least 15 km away from the town. Moreover, not being Tibetans themselves and having been transferred from their home,<sup>70</sup> they had probably become indifferent to a revolution from inside. Thus the army of Zhang Yichao had only to deal with members of the

66 Yamaguchi, Zuiho, “The Fiction of King Dar-ma’s Persecution of Buddhism,” in *Haute études orientales de Dunhuang au Japon*, ed. Jean-Pierre Drège (Geneva: Droz, 1996), 237 transliterates and translates two such prayers: P. tib. 134 and P. tib. 230.

67 Hongbian died between 853 and 863.

68 Petech, Luciano, “The Disintegration of the Tibetan Kingdom,” in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, held at Fagernes 1992*, vol. 2, ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994).

69 P. tib. 1120 transliterated, translated in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 257. It is evident that these families did not have fields in the area. There were two other military units but it is not known whether Tibetans lived on their area.

70 The names of their units as well the names of their families show their non-Tibetan origin. See Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 90 for a detailed research as to their origin.

Tibetan army who were most likely stationed in Changle (near today's Anxi), about 80 km to the East of Dunhuang.<sup>71</sup>

Why then did the clergy of Dunhuang cooperate in the local rebellion? At the time of the overthrow of the Tibetan government of Dunhuang (848), in China the persecution of Buddhism and the closure of monasteries had already begun under Emperor Tang Wuzong (唐武宗, 814–846) in the Huichang period (會昌, 841–846). The news of these events must have reached Dunhuang as well. Thus, the clergy may have reasoned, why take any risk? All the last Tibetan Emperors were devoted to Buddhism.<sup>72</sup>

There might also have been economic reasons for the cooperation of the clergy. As the boundaries of fields were fixed and the sale of land was illegal the monasteries could not extend their lands. They could not ask for interest for the grain they lent out. The scriptures of the *pothī* type *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpārāmitāsūtra* were probably written to be distributed to other areas of the Tibetan Empire.<sup>73</sup> The *Aparimitāyurnāmasūtra*—written for the purpose to accumulate merit through writing it—was stored in Dunhuang. But as testified by P. tib. 999, which refers to the reign of Osung (after 841), merit could also be gained by taking it out of the depot on the occasion of a Buddhist celebration.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, taking the exported *sūtras* and the other tribute payments into account, a constant material drain from Dunhuang to Degam (Tib. bDe gams)<sup>75</sup> and Central Tibet apparently took place.

71 The only reference to the Tibetan army stems from a manuscript (S. 1438) in which events from the end of the 8th century are recorded. It is not known whether the army quarters were still there in 848 or whether the only defence consisted of the members of the military *thongkhyab* units (Tib. *mthong khyab*) and the 'military' citizens of Dunhuang.

72 Yamaguchi, "King Dar-ma," 231–258.

73 Iwao, "Sūtra Copying."

74 Imaeda, Yoshiro, "À propos du manuscrit Pelliot Tibétain 999," in *Sūryacandrāya: Essays in Honour of Akira Yuyama on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Peter Harrison and Gregory Schopen (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica-et-TibeticaVerlag, 1998), 91. He refers to the taking out of the depot of the scriptures for a celebration of 'grand don de la loi' (Tib. *chos gyi shyin ba chen po*). In the manuscript it is stated that it is a certificate, which should be kept so that the numbers of *sūtras* could be compared at the next census. Therefore it seems that the *sūtras* were not returned to the depot after the celebration.

75 Degam is the area South East of Dunhuang (in today's Eastern Gansu and Qinghai provinces) in which the seat of the administration of the region was situated. See Taenzler, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 34, for a discussion of its boundaries.

Apart from this, the difference, possibly even incompatibility between Tibetan and Chinese culture might have been the crucial factor. Zhang Yichao must have been sure that the population was supporting him. And Hongbian, the head of the clergy, possibly hoped for greater independence for the religious institutions.

### 3 Local Rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army

After the takeover of the local ruler Zhang Yichao—a rule, which in Chinese sources is usually referred to as the period of the Return-to-Allegiance Army (Chin. *Guiyi jun* 歸義軍) because Zhang Yichao swore allegiance to the Emperor of China and thus the area became theoretically part of China again—the Tibetan administrative system gradually broke down.<sup>76</sup> Apart from the reorganisation of the administrative system—abolition of the division into military and civil citizens and a return to the former division of the area into villages and homesteads (Chin. *xiangli* 鄉里)—the area around Dunhuang then had a completely different geopolitical position. Under Tibetan rule it was embedded in the East and South in the vast Tibetan Empire, whereas with the take over by Zhang Yichao it turned into an island between the Uyghurs in the West and North and the Tibetans in the East and South. After the initial surge during which the other oases Guazhou, Yizhou, Suzhou and Ganzhou were conquered, the territory of the Zhang clan was soon reduced to the area around Dunhuang. In order to survive, embassies were exchanged constantly with the neighbouring countries. This encouraged trade and exchange of Buddhist texts. There are a number of contracts documenting this period of flourishing interchange. The twenty-three dated manuscripts referring to embassies to the Uyghurs in Turfan and Yizhou were written between 923 and 993.<sup>77</sup> E.g. the Chinese manuscript S. 4504v(6) states: “In the first month of the second sheep (Chin. 乙未) year (935?), monk Shanyou of the Lingtu temple is sent as an envoy to Xizhou (Turfan), lacks silk and borrows from *yaya* (押衙, title of an official) Quanzi one bolt

76 In P. tib. 1081—a legal document—the Azha (Tib. *A zha*, Chin. *Tuyuhun* 吐谷渾) living in the area were still organised in units of a thousand.

77 Rong, Xinjiang, “The Relationship of Dunhuang with the Uighur Kingdom in Turfan in the Tenth Century,” in *De Dunhuang à Istanbul: Hommage à James Russel Hamilton* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2001), 275–298.



of silk<sup>78</sup> [...]”<sup>79</sup> On average a bolt of silk was borrowed to be paid back on return of the borrower with 100% interest.<sup>80</sup> Thus to cover travel expenses it must have been possible to gain more than double as profit. For monks the possibility arose to profit from their skills. For example Fabao (法寶) took with him a text of a transformation story (Chin. *bianwen* 變文).<sup>81</sup> That is, business combined with diplomatic exchange, and it appears that the lender of the silk made the profit. Silk was used as a currency to buy goods. With some of these embassies Buddhist monks went along—at times even as head of a group (Chin. *shitou* 使頭). On one occasion even the high-ranking clergyman (Chin. *sengzheng* 僧政)<sup>82</sup> Suo went to Turfan. As this information comes from a record of expenses of a Buddhist monastery, and another account in which some of the names stated in the latter manuscript, recur, declaring a visit of monks from Turfan,<sup>83</sup> it appears that at times political tasks were combined with the interests of the clergy. The question arises as to whether generally the monks went on their own accord, were sent by their monastery or whether they were ordered by the government to travel that is, were they used as diplomatic envoys?

### 3.1 *Religious Institutions*

#### 3.1.1 Temples

Only one list of temples, incomplete, is extant for the end of the ninth century (see table 1.1). The lists of the tenth century do not mention all temples. This is due to the fact that the manuscripts in which the temples are named are mostly invitations to memorial services. Apparently not monks from all temples were summoned on each occasion. Yongkang temple does not appear any longer; Jingtū temple was founded between 865 and 875. There were probably sixteen temples then—eleven monasteries and five nunneries.<sup>84</sup> Yet another manuscript refers to temple peasants of the ten temples, another one to eleven.

78 The bolt (Chin. *pi*, see above) is no longer a standard size at this time. It is always stated how long it is, that is how many feet it measures.

79 In Yamamoto, *Contracts*, text 347.

80 Silk was not always expected often cotton was demanded (Trombert, *Credit*, 150).

81 Yamamoto, *Contracts*, text 357; Rong, “The Relationship of Dunhuang with the Uyghur Kingdom in Turfan,” 293.

82 Chin. *sengzheng* was a post/title of a monastic dignitary.

83 Rong, “The Relationship of Dunhuang with the Uyghur Kingdom in Turfan,” 277, citing S. 5937 and P. 2642.

84 S. 2614 lists only 13 temples by name. As it also states the names of their monks and the numbers are added at the end, it is evident that the entries of a few temples are missing. A description and image of the manuscript is included at the end of the article.

Even if one assumes that the nunneries were excluded in the latter cases, one could suggest that possibly one temple was closed temporarily in the tenth century.<sup>85</sup> Two invitations to memorial services dating to the end of the tenth century and an undated Tibetan manuscript list seventeen temples, in all of which a different temple is not named.<sup>86</sup> Thus there were actually eighteen temples at the time. Xiande temple was founded before 979 and Qianming temple after that year.

During the time of local rule at Dunhuang, not only was a change in the administrative system of the temples carried out, but also a change in their economic situation took place. Hongbian died between 853 and 863.<sup>87</sup> In order to please the Chinese Emperor, Zhang Yichao issued an edict calling for the release of the temple peasants.<sup>88</sup> Thus theoretically there were no more workers to plant the fields of the temples. However, a few years later (yet before 867)<sup>89</sup> when Zhang Yichao had gone to the Chinese court—never to return—his decision was reversed. But quite a few temple peasants seem to have left already as there are records of commoners paying lease for monastic fields called kitchen fields (Chin. *chutian* 廚田). The reason for this unusual terminology is that in view of the situation in China a differentiation between treasures of the Buddha (Chin. *fowu*) and things necessary for the upkeep of monks and nuns (Chin. *changzhu chu*) was made; and it is in the course of this process that the fields of the temples were registered under the latter category. Thus the government could not confiscate these fields.

85 S. 5947 and P. 3556v respectively; the latter is dated to the year 936: Dohi Yoshikazu 土肥義和, “Bakkōkutsu senbutsudō to taiji to rannya to 莫高窟千仏洞と大寺と蘭若と [The Mogao Thousand Buddha Caves and the Great Temples and Āranya], in *Kōza Tonkō 3: Tonkō no shakai* 講座敦煌 3: 敦煌の社會 [Lectures on Dunhuang 3: The Society of Dunhuang], ed. Ikeda On 池田温 (Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan, 1980), 358.

86 P. 3218, P. 3156 and P. tib. 994; Puguang nunnery and Dayun and Jinguangming monasteries, respectively, are missing.

87 The last manuscript in which he is mentioned is dated to 853; the first dated manuscript with his successor stems from 863. Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, “Tonkō no Sōkanseido 敦煌の僧官制度 [The Clergy in Dunhuang in the Late Tang],” in *Tōhōgaku hō* 東方學報 [Reports of the Oriental Society] 31 (1961): 143.

88 Jiang Boqin 姜伯勤, *Tang Wudai Dunhuang sihu zhidu* 唐五代敦煌寺戶制度 [The System of Temple Peasants of Dunhuang during Tang and Five Dynasties] (Beijing: Peking Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 138 citing P. 2187. Jiang further cites P. 2222, which according to Chikusa proves that this event took place around 865 (cf. p. 139).

89 *Ibid.*, 143.

The temples charged 100% interest on grain loans, which seems incredibly high.<sup>90</sup> Far fewer grain loan contracts were concluded then than under Tibetan rule<sup>91</sup> but private agreements without written contracts seem to have prevailed.<sup>92</sup> The income of the temples thus consisted of the lease of the monastic fields, interest on loans and revenue from mills.

### 3.1.2 Monks and Nuns

At the beginning of local rule a further increase in the number of monastics seems to have taken place (see table 1.1). This becomes clear when investigating the number of nuns affiliated to Dacheng temple, which rose between the years 870 to 895 by 64 nuns.<sup>93</sup> There are no complete lists of the number of monastics for the tenth century. Thus it is not known whether this trend continued. But there is a high probability that it reversed. This can be demonstrated by looking at the development of the number of monks of Jinguangming and Sanjie monasteries. The former had 16 monks in 788, 26 at the beginning of the ninth century, is missing from the list of the end of the ninth century, and had again 16 monks in 974.<sup>94</sup> The tendency to join the clergy at an old age can be seen as well. On two manuscripts, which were written two years apart (in 947 and 949), ten dignitaries are named for Jinguangming temple each year but four of them cannot be found on the second list—presumably they had died within the previous two years.<sup>95</sup> At the end of the ninth century 17 ordained monks were affiliated to Sanjie temple while in 986 the number had fallen to 14.<sup>96</sup> Although the material is not abundant the evidence at hand gives rise to the suggestion that the number of monks started rising at the beginning of the ninth century, had its peak at the end of that century and declined in

90 E.g. S. 5811, translated in Trombert, *Credit*, 138.

91 Grain loan contracts extant: Tibetan rule 134, Zhang Guiyijun 5, Cao Guiyijun 4; see table in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 334.

92 Dx01432 is a fragment of a list of creditors and borrowers, which only states the amount borrowed. It has a painted bird seal on its back which is otherwise blank, therefore presumably the whole document dates from the time of the rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army (on painted bird seals which only occur during their late rule—dated documents stem from the second half of the 10th century): see: Eliasberg, Danielle, “Les signatures en forme de l’oiseau dans les manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang,” in *Contributions aux études sur Touen-houang*, ed. Michel Soymié (Paris, Genève: Droz, 1979), 29–44.

93 S. 2669 and S. 2614 respectively.

94 S. 2729, S. 5676, S. 2614 and S. 5855 respectively.

95 P. 3388 and S. 5718 respectively.

96 S. 5855.

the tenth century. There is no evidence whether the number of nuns declined as well.

Monastics were entitled to make testaments in which they could state what should be left to members of their family, what to their fellow monastics and what stayed with the monastery they were affiliated to. Land was among the heritable items.<sup>97</sup>

There is evidence that the monastics were paid to write for the administration.<sup>98</sup> Monks joined embassies to the surrounding kingdoms and may have taken part in the commercial side of these journeys as well.

As far as the communication between the clergy of the various oases or their rulers is concerned, Tibetan was still in use. The same can be said for the communication within Shazhou. Among others a letter written in Tibetan around 910 by a *doutou* (都頭, Tib. *to di'u*), a head, called Zhang Dzinsheng to the head of the clergy (Chin. *dusengtong* 都僧統, Tib. *sing tong ched po*), a dignitary of the clergy (*sengzheng* 僧政, Tib. *sing je*) Zhang and the monks of Lingtu temple proves this.<sup>99</sup> As Zhang (Tib. *Cang*) is a common family name among the inhabitants of Shazhou and as Dzinsheng is the Tibetan rendering of a Chinese personal name it is evident that Chinese still communicated in Tibetan in the 10th century.

## 3.2 People

### 3.2.1 Worship Clubs

Looking at the extant number of circulars distributed by worship clubs (Chin. *she*) in order to call for an assembly, one cannot but state that there must have been an increase in the already above-mentioned lay worship clubs compared to the time of Tibetan Rule. Most of the circulars summon their members to

97 P. 3410 and S. 2199. The latter manuscript is wrongly dated by Yamamoto (Yamamoto, *Contracts*, text 434) to the time of Tibetan rule as some fields are still measured in *dor* (Chin. *tu* 突)—a measure used by the Tibetans. But as a donation made to somebody referred to in Chinese as *shangshu* (尚書) (a title conferred on the local rulers Zhang Yichao 張議超, Zhang Huaishen 張淮深 and Cao Yijin 曹議金) is listed, it is evident that it was written under the rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army. Both texts are transliterated in Yamamoto, *Contracts*, texts 434 and 436, and translated and discussed in Gernet, Jacques, *Les aspects économiques du buddhisme dans la société chinoise du v a x siècle* (Saigon: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1956), 77–80.

98 Monks received 7 *shi* (Chin. *shi* 石) of flour to write a population list for the administration: P. 3490, Gernet, *Aspects économiques*, 103.

99 P. tib. 1220: see Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, "A Group of Old Tibetan Letters Written Under Kuei-i-chün: A Preliminary Study for the Classification of Old Tibetan Letters," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (1990): 185 for detailed research.

the spring and autumn banquets (45) as well as to Buddhist rituals (19) and funeral services (10). Prayer books for different festivities are also extant. Two concern the Buddha-Sand-Impression Festivity (Chin. *yinsha fo* 印沙佛) celebrated on Chinese New Year's day. This fact is interesting as the texts in these books, which were recited in front of the Buddha, follow a certain structure: first of all the Buddha is praised, then the purpose of the ceremony is explained, the atmosphere and ritual are stated and finally the content of the prayer is explained. The other prayer texts are similar in structure.<sup>100</sup> The existence of these books shows that the members of these worship clubs conducted the ceremonies together without the assistance of a monk or nun.

Worship clubs were also formed to perform other tasks than organising religious festivities. A set of manuscripts copied on a scroll<sup>101</sup> shows that people formed a worship club because they lived in the same area and may have had the same profession. Two texts refer to the Xiuwen Fangxiang worship club (Chin. *Xiuwenfangxiang she* 修文坊巷社). The name of the worship club implies that its members lived in a quarter in which workshops for scribes existed. They offered donations for the restoration of a private *stūpa*. Generally, the founding of worship clubs was not restricted to Dunhuang as some manuscripts from Turfan and Kučā attest to similar activities.<sup>102</sup>

This form of organising tasks seems to have been so successful that it was also used for work usually arranged by the administration. Thus there are circulars calling for watchmen and for carrying out irrigation work. The punishment for not attending such activities was in these cases pronounced by the teamleader (Chin. *duitou* 對頭) and consisted of lashes. This information is found in seven Chinese and one fragmentary Tibetan manuscript.<sup>103</sup> Two can

100 Yamamoto, *She Associations*, 31.

101 P. 4044 is a scroll containing five texts; it is published in transliteration in Tang Gengou 唐耕耦 and Lu Longji 陸龍基, ed. *Dunhuang shehui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu* 敦煌社会经济文献真迹释录 [Original Reproduction of the Documents of Society and Economy of Dunhuang], vol. 1 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei zhongxin, 1990), 384, but mistakenly designated as P. 4040. These five texts were copied during the reign of the Cao family, but the originals were written earlier. Two texts are dated to 887 and 899.

102 Yamamoto, *She Associations*, includes three texts, one from Turfan and two from Kučā, texts 304–306: Otani 2355, 1529 and 1535.

103 The Tibetan manuscript 10L Tib J 793 is published in Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts*, 404; Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, “Sociolinguistic Implications of the Use of Tibetan in East Turkestan from the End of Tibetan Domination through the Tangut Period (9th–12th c.),” in *Turfan Revisited—The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, ed.

be dated exactly, namely to 966 and 984.<sup>104</sup> The Tibetan manuscript seems to be a document stating bylaws. Here unusually high punishments for not abiding by the bylaws are stipulated. The Tibetan fragment does not match any of the Chinese manuscripts. It is unlikely that it belonged to a privately formed worship club. Unfortunately the first part of the Tibetan manuscript is missing which stipulates the task. From the list of names mentioned in the manuscript four names of members were physically cut out. Nine names remain. To several names positions are added: one was a manager (Tib. *zha co*), four were men of the club (Tib. *zha myi*);<sup>105</sup> furthermore, four are listed with their full name only. Thus this club seems to have had five functionaries. The members whose names were cut out either had died or left the club.

As it appears that these tasks were organised in the form of a club, that is, not by governmental order, this may be a sign that the administration of the local rulers of Dunhuang following the demise of the Tibetan Empire was rather weak. After the end of Tibetan rule over Dunhuang, administrative structures formerly introduced by the Tibetans gradually broke down. Once the local rule of the Zhang clan was established, however, no new administrative structures were installed that were fit to organise the much smaller territory. Thus communal work and the task of guarding had to be organised locally—through establishing clubs. Although the formation of teams (Chin. *dui*) headed by a teamleader (Chin. *duitou*) and his deputy (Chin. *fudui*) derives from the

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Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst et al. (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 341 indicates that it probably refers to the period of the Return-to-Allegiance Army. This is no doubt true as worship clubs (Chin. *she*) carrying out government-surveyed tasks were not known during Tibetan rule over Dunhuang. Takata, “Le long rouleau,” 141, pointed to the transliteration of Chinese names. According to him they were transliterated according to the Dunhuang dialect. There are a number of reasons why it should be dated to the period of the Return-to-Allegiance Army. During Tibetan rule communal work was carried out within the subunit (Tib. *tshan*). Thus the workers would be selected by government officials such as the head of a subunit (Tib. *tshan*). No Chinese names were written in dialect form then—not even in privately concluded loan contracts, nor in the circular mentioned above (P. tib. 1102). The paleography of the script as well as the distance between the lines point to the period of the Return-to-Allegiance Army.

104 Yamamoto, *She Associations*, 18.

105 The Tibetan term *zha myi* certainly refers to functionaries of the worship club similar to P. tib. 1102, in which they were not designated with their post, but before their name the Chinese term for worship club (Chin. *she*) is written. It appears that the Tibetan term *zha myi* in this manuscript is not equivalent to the Chinese term *sheren* (社人, members of a worship club). Yamamoto, *She Associations* 8, mentions further posts such as the sergeant-at-arms, the monthly duty officer and a sub-officer.

military, it seems likely that civil tasks were carried out—as can be seen in the Chinese manuscripts dating to the time of the rule of the Cao clan (915 to 11th century). The circulars for the three-day watch and for the irrigation work almost correspond to the circulars of worship clubs. But the phrase indicating that the circular should be passed on is missing and consequently the names of the participants do not always show the ‘acknowledged’ sign beside each name.

The Tibetan manuscript may date earlier and may thus be regarded as a model of arranging civil tasks in this particular way. In the Tibetan fragment the term worship club (Tib. *zha*) is still used and the functionaries are the same but the tasks—although not stated here—have no relation to the original idea of a worship club—which was a religious one. As the punishments of not abiding to the bylaws are unusually severe (e.g. 3 *srang* of gold and 15 lashes, compared to one jug of beer) one can be sure that this club was not organised for religious reasons.

### 3.2.2 The Economic Situation

Once local rule over Dunhuang was established in the middle of the ninth century, the laws forbidding the sale of land seem to have been abolished or at least not adhered to anymore. During the time of Tibetan domination over Dunhuang employment contracts for one year were occasionally concluded. For the period of the local rule of the Cao clan (from 915 onwards), however, a great number of these contracts are extant. In these it is stipulated that the worker has to bring his own tools and is not allowed to do any other farm work.<sup>106</sup> This shows that there were a number of people who had no more land of their own (had sold their land), but still possessed farm tools.

Generally, people were paid for the kind of work, that was during Tibetan rule performed as *corvé*. The Chinese manuscript S. 5947 is a list of payments for workers making bricks. Here, temple peasants and bondservants of the ten temples and commoners were employed for three or five days receiving 0.33 *dou* of flour daily. This is a real wage, not just nourishment; as it is known that the minimum requirement for survival was 0.2 *dou* of grain per day. Contracts for grain loans decreased and private agreements without contract were preferred.

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106 See table in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 334; 353.

These facts imply that a polarisation of the society took place.<sup>107</sup> Is there a connection to the increase of the founding of worship clubs? Was this form of organising religious duties also used to coordinate economic actions?

#### 4 Summary and Conclusion

The Tibetans had established an administrative system which was well organised. Every person had his place within a system of units and subunits. Thus it was easy to organise tasks and control the population. As tasks were evenly distributed no misgivings due to unequal treatment should have occurred between members of the society. Monks were also included and did not seem to have had special status. The temples were under strict control as well. Lists of monks and temple peasants were commissioned and at certain intervals an inventory of their possessions was required. Especially during the reign of Ralpacan (r. 815–c. 838), the Tibetans had to rely on the monks of Dunhuang to proofread copies of the *sūtras*, which were written nominally for his benefit.

Overall, the population was only to a certain extent dependent on the grain provisions of the temples, since a government granary existed and the amount borrowed was small. The benefit resulting from offering donations to temples seems to have been present in everybody's mind, as people from all walks of life made donations. But despite monasteries conducting religious ceremonies, groups started to emerge who celebrated these festivities privately. Thus festivities became fixed points in the rhythm of people's lives. The Tibetan Emperors who promoted Buddhism had the population work for their benefit by letting them copy scriptures and organised religious mass events.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, from the respective manuscripts it is unclear whether the founding of worship clubs was a local reaction to this.

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107 In Tibetan times each family of commoners was assigned fields according to the size of the family. They were not allowed to sell them. Under local rule some sold their fields and consequently had to work as farm-hands. Some even sold their offspring in order to pay their debts. Hori gives a vivid description of this process using contemporary material, but was not aware that this development did not start under the Tibetans but was a development commencing under the rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army (Hori, Toshikazu, "Social Change in Tun-huang from the Latter Half of the T'ang Dynasty," *Acta Asiatica* (1988): 48–74.

108 This was alluded to in the above-mentioned manuscript P. tib. 999.



Although only a fraction of the manuscripts extant from the time of the rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army, namely the local rule over Dunhuang, could be included in this chapter, certain tendencies are visible. Since dated manuscripts referring to the reign of the Zhang family (848–915) are not numerous, it is often not possible to know when a certain development started. Although more information is available from the time of the rule of the Cao clan (915–11th century), it does not necessarily mean that some developments had not already started under the reign of the Zhang family.

However, one thing may be concluded with certainty: after the clergy had collaborated in ousting the Tibetans, the fact that their temple peasants—a contributor of income—were temporarily released must have darkened the relationship with their regent Zhang Yichao.

Under the rule of the Zhang clan there was no reorganisation of the dignitaries of the clergy since personages who had risen under Tibetan rule continued to receive a post under the new rulers as well. As monks were paid to write for the administration, and as work which used to be *corvé* was now organised locally in worship club-like formations, there seems to have been less governmental control of the people as well as of the religious institutions.

During the Cao regime the local administration may have had to rely on the clergy accompanying embassies to other oases. This shows that political interests were attended to by the clergy.

The overall change of the political and economic situation in Dunhuang, as well as new possibilities, may have influenced the formation of worship clubs; it seems that people no longer gathered only for worship but also for discussing economic matters while eating and drinking.

With the local rule over Dunhuang, certainly a new era began as far as the conception of the rulers themselves and their relation to Buddhism was concerned. It was then that the depiction of the family of Zhang Yichao (cave 156), Cao Yijin (曹議金, r. 915–935) (cave 98) and Cao Yuanzhong (曹元忠, r. 944–974) (son of Cao Yijin, cave 61) started in the Buddhist cave temples. Hitherto no ruler had commissioned the decoration of a cave in which he and his relatives featured so prominently.<sup>109</sup> This is just one of the aspects of local rule of the Return-to-Allegiance Army which could not be included. Further research is necessary, which is not in the scope of this paper.

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109 The meaning of this has often been interpreted as legitimation of power through Buddhism but it may just as well mean that the relationship between the ruler and the clergy got closer, that is, secular elements were included in the religious realm.

### Appendix: Dunhuang Manuscript Or. 8210/S. 2614

This scroll is an example of reuse (i.e. secondary use) of paper. Originally it was one scroll containing the names of monks and nuns of the temples of Dunhuang. The back was left blank. It was taken apart after the list was written. In order to write what is now considered as recto it was reassembled whereby the middle was cut out and the beginning was cut off. It now consists of around 13 sheets with 13–14 lines on each sheet. Two sheets are extremely large: they contain c. 32 lines each.

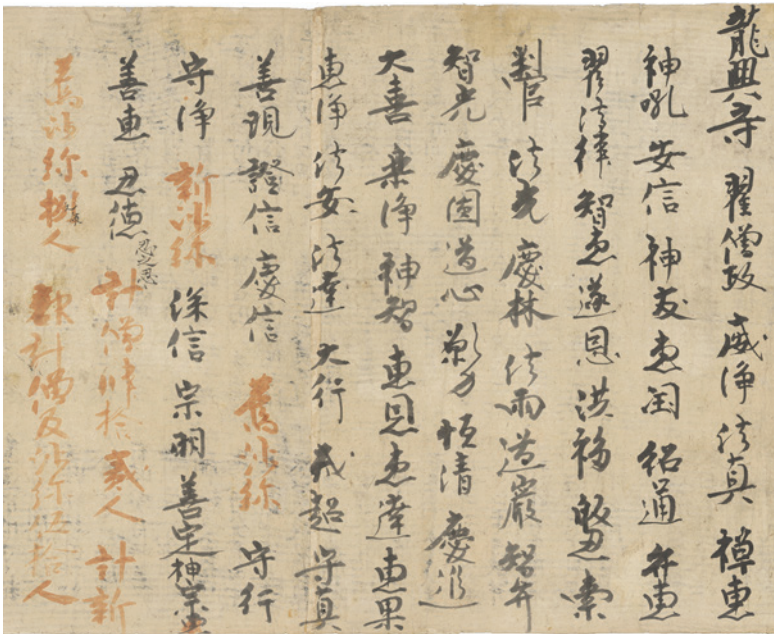
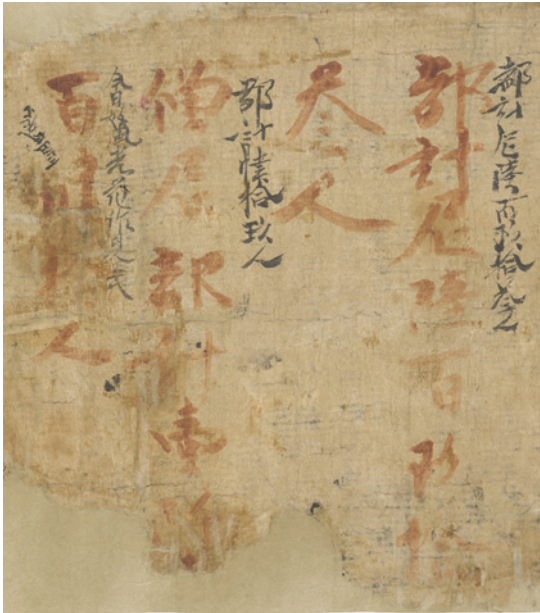
Some time after the recto was written on the first sheet (= the last sheet of verso) came off and was repasted. This can be seen as the ends of some strokes are invisible now. Recto: incomplete at the right margin; left margin: the paper is cut off but the text is complete.

This is a transformation text (Chin. *bianwen* 變文) on Mahāmaudgalyāyana rescuing his mother from the underworld; one scroll with preface and colophon: “Written by lay student Xue Anjun of Jingtū temple, in 921, forth month, 16th day; manuscript of Zhang Baoda.”

Verso: the beginning is missing, the end is frayed but complete. It is a list of the temples of Dunhuang with the names of monks and novices affiliated to them. At the beginning the name of the temple is stated, followed by the names of monks and the names of novices. At the end the number of monks and novices is stated, followed by the total. At the end of the scroll the total of monks, nuns and novices is given. They amounted to 1140 in number. Adding up the total of the various temples results in the figure 1037. Thus 97 names are missing here.

Three names of temples do not occur. At the beginning parts (2 lines?) of the entries a list of monks with the name of their temple is certainly missing. At the end of the list of Sanjie temple the two parts of the scroll are pasted together so that the last line of entries for Sanjie is now hidden (the line in which the last characters of the total number is stated). From the other part of the scroll the first few lines of the names of nuns of Puguang temple are certainly missing. Whether other sections with names of monks of the so far unstated temples are missing here is not clear—they may have been at the beginning of the scroll. There is an insertion of additional paper (between line 42 and line 43 of the list of nuns of Dacheng temple). The paper was pasted on top of the original manuscript in order to write the text on the recto side. Therefore two lines of the list of nuns became invisible.

At the end, three identical lines of a different text written by a different hand than recto and verso follow: (three times the heading of title of recto, end of first line: Zhang Baoda). The whole manuscript is dotted with writing exercises in a hand different to the aforementioned ones.



FIGURES 1.1-2

Or. 8210/S. 2614: 26 × 613cm frayed at the right margin.

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Thus one person wrote the list, Xue Anjun the *bianwen*, and Zhang Baoda probably bought the manuscript and wrote the three lines at the end of verso. The writing exercises were inserted after the list was written, but it is not clear whether they were carried out before or after the *bianwen* was written.

The depicted parts are:

- (1) 26 × 23cm: the end of the scroll verso: lines 125–130: lines 125 and 126–127 are duplicates whereby line 125 was written in black ink and the others in vermilion. Line 128 in black ink is a repetition of line 124 and states the total of nuns of the last list. Lines 125 and 128 are later additions—they were written over the vermilion and in a different hand. They are presumably writing exercises. The last two lines were written in vermilion. They state the total of monks and nuns. Between lines 129 and 130 there is an insertion in black ink, which does not belong to the list.
- (2) 26 × 33cm: the list of monks of Longxing temple: lines 27–37. The sheets are pasted together after line 33. The monks are listed with their religious names: the two dignitaries, the *sengzheng* and the *falü*, are entered with the name of their family only. This is followed by ‘old novices’ written in vermilion, the names in black ink, ‘new novices’ in vermilion, names in black ink. Afterwards the total of monks and the total of old and new novices are stated, followed by the total of persons—all in vermilion. The insertions between lines 35 and 36 and on line 37 were added later on and do not belong to the list.

TABLE 1.1 *Overview of temples and monastics*<sup>110</sup>

	1 <sup>111</sup>	2 <sup>112</sup>	3 <sup>113</sup>	3a <sup>114</sup>	4 <sup>115</sup>
names of temples					
manuscripts nos	S. 2729	S. 2669	S. 2614		S. 520
date of manuscript	788	c870	c895		
Longxing (龍興)	28 m		50	42 8	X
Qianyuan (乾元)	19 m		27	20 7	X
Kaiyuan (開元)	13 m		48	37 11	X
Yongan (永安)	11 m		?	?	X
Jinguang ming (金光明)	16 m		?	?	X
Lingtu (靈圖)	17 m		?	?	X

110 In the table a 'X' means that the temple is named in the respective Dunhuang manuscript. Numbers in *italics* refer to the numbers of dignitaries such as what is referred to in Chinese as *sengzheng* (僧正) or *falü* (法律) only. (?) means that it is not certain whether these temples already existed.

111 (1) S. 2729 complete; in Ikeda, *Household Registers*, 502. This manuscript is discussed in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 200. 'm' behind the figures means monasteries, 'n' nunneries.

112 (2) S. 2669 incomplete list of nuns c 870; 34(+?) means that it is not certain whether there were more than 34 nuns affiliated to Shengguang temple; see Ikeda, *Household Registers*, 573. This manuscript is discussed in Taenzer, *Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule*, 200.

113 (3) S. 2614 incomplete; in Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 229 and Kitahara, "Jiin keizai," 456. The total number of monastics in the manuscript states 1147 monastics. The actual number of monastic's names listed is only 1037.

114 (3a) The entries in this column also refer to the manuscript in column (3) S. 2614. The first figure shows the number of ordained monks, while the second figure gives the number of novices.

115 (4) S. 520: bears the seal of the head of the clergy (Chin. *dusengtong*) of Hexi; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 129.

5 <sup>116</sup>	6 <sup>117</sup>	7 <sup>118</sup>	8 <sup>119</sup>	9 <sup>120</sup>	10 <sup>121</sup>	11 <sup>122</sup>
S. 2575		S. 6178	P. 3218	P. 3156		P. tib. 994
928	947/969	979	979 +	979 +	992/3 986	?
X			X	X	11	X
X (?)			X	X		X
X		X	X	X		X
			X	X		
X	P. 3388 16		X	X		X
X			X	X		X

- 116 (5) S. 2575: text I 928; text II 929 is sealed by the head of the clergy (Chin. *dusengtong*) of Hexi; signed (?) by 'dusengtong' Haiyan and 'sengtong' Long Bian; a number of texts in this manuscript date from 929, most of them use Tiancheng (天成) year 4, one Jichou (己丑) year to indicate the year of issue; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 131. The manuscript only states Qian. Therefore it is not clear whether Qianming or Qianyuan temple is meant; most probably it is Qianyuan temple.
- 117 (6) P. 3388: commemoration: 947, Kaiyun (開運) year four; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 173. S. 5718: commemoration: 949, Tianfu (天福) year 10; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV 174. In it 10 monastics are named, while the actual number was probably 16 as stated in P. 3388. P. 3367: commemoration 969, Jisi (己巳) year; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV 179.
- 118 (7) S. 6178: commemoration, incomplete on the right; 979, Taipingxingguo (太平興國) year 4; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 180.
- 119 (8) P. 3218: Tang, *Dunhuang* v.
- 120 (9) P. 3156: Tang, *Dunhuang* IV.
- 121 (10) P. 3152: commemoration, dated: 992 = Chunhua (淳化) year 3; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 183 (11 dignitaries of Longxing temple); S. 5641: commemoration, dated 993 = Chunhua year 4; Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 185 (13 monastics of unnamed temple); S. 5855: commemoration, Yongxi (雍熙) year 3, Bingxu (丙戌) (3rd dog year) = 986: in Tang, *Dunhuang* IV, 181 (13 monastics), Chikusa, *Sōkansēido*, 159.
- 122 (11) P. tib. 994. On it a further 8 temples are listed. They do not occur in any of the other lists. Their Chinese equivalents are not known.

TABLE 1.1 *Overview of temples and monastics (cont.)*

names of temples	1	2	3	3a	4
Xiande (顯德)	9 m		(?)	(?)	
Qianming (乾明)	13 m		(?)	(?)	
Liantai (蓮臺)	10 m		27	20 7	X
Jingtū (淨土)			22	19 3	X
Dayun (大云)	16 n		31	27 4	X
Baoen (報恩)	9 m		47	36 11	X
Sanjie (三界)			22	17 5	X
Lingxiu (靈修)	67 n		143	128 15	X
Anguo (安國)			193	123 16	
Dacheng (大乘)	44 n	109	173	151 22	
Puguang (普光)	47 n		189	163 26	
Shengguang (聖光)		34+?	49	44 5	
Fengtang (奉唐)					
temple name not given in manuscript			35	16 19	
Panyuan (潘元)	13 n				
<b>total</b> monastics	310		1140		
monks	139				
nuns	171				
<b>total</b> temples	13		13+?		12
monasteries	9				11
nunneries	4				1

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		X <sub>7</sub>	X	X	12	X
?			X	X		X
		X <sub>10</sub>	X	X		X
X			X	X		X
X			X			X
			X	X		X
X	8/ (in 969)		X	X	13	X
X			X	X		X
X			X	X		X
X				X		X
			X	X		X
X						
			17	17		17+8
			13	12		
			4	5		





## *Textual Transfer*





# Tibetan Buddhism in Central Asia: Geopolitics and Group Dynamics

*Sam van Schaik*

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Tibetan Buddhism has played an important role in Asian politics from the 8th century to the present day. It has provided an ideological underpinning and power status to a variety of Central Asian and Chinese empires, including the Mongol empires of Činggiz Qan's (1162?–1227) heirs and the Manchu rulers of China's Qing Dynasty (1644–1912, 清). While the geopolitical influence of Tibetan Buddhism during this time has waxed and waned over the centuries, it never disappeared. The locus for this influence is in Eastern Central Asia, a crossroads of cultures situated on overland trading routes. The study of this region as a whole is hampered by the variety of cultures it has been home to, and by the dispersal of the archaeological evidence across museums and libraries worldwide.

There have been those who have argued for 'the Centrality of Central Asia' in world history.<sup>2</sup> Yet even in these revisionist histories the geopolitical influence of Tibetan Buddhism has not been much discussed. In this chapter I will give an overview of the role of Tibetan Buddhism in Central Asia, from its beginnings in the first aspirations of Tibetan emperors to propagate Buddhism across the realm in the 8th century to the development of a mature patron-priest relationship in the Tangut Kingdom in the 13th century. It was during this period that the paradigm for the political function of Tibetan Buddhism developed, one that continued to be invoked through to the 20th century.

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- 1 Some of the issues raised in this paper have been discussed on my website, [earlytibet.com](http://earlytibet.com), and I have benefited from the generosity of those who have commented on various posts, including but not limited to Dan Martin, Brandon Dotson and Andrew West. My thanks to Imre Galambos and Susan Whitfield for their comments on the text, and to David Rutherford for discussing current sociological literature about intergroup and intragroup relations.
  - 2 See Beckwith, Christopher, *Empires of the Silk Road* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), xix–xxv; Frank, Andre Gunder, *The Centrality of Central Asia* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1992).

In order to understand the development of Tibetan Buddhism's influence we can use historical texts, where they exist. But here I want to emphasise that archaeological finds can also be very informative. In fact, it is in these archaeological finds—manuscripts, paintings and other artefacts—that the continuity of Tibetan Buddhism's role in Central Asia becomes most evident. Reconstructing the social role of these objects can help us to understand the impact of large-scale political events on local practices. And local practices can indeed help us to understand the causes and conditions underlying large-scale events. This is an argument for the complementarity of micro and macro histories, an argument that has been most developed in the field of sociology. For example, Randall Collins has written that “macrostructure consists of nothing more than large numbers of micro-encounters, repeated (or sometimes changing) over time and across space.”<sup>3</sup> Donald Ellis argues that “the microworld of everyday communication is the site of meaning that both produces social structure and is produced by it.”<sup>4</sup> And Bruno Latour has repeatedly shown that larger structures are indeed only possible because of the extension of networks through the repeated practice of small-scale activities.<sup>5</sup>

In history, it is in the archaeology of texts and artefacts that these local practices—or micro-encounters—can be examined.<sup>6</sup> This essay is an experimental attempt to combine the recovery of local practice from archaeology with a *longue durée* approach to large-scale trends in the hope that it will further our

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3 Collins, Randall, “Interaction Property Chains, Power, and Property: The Micro-Macro Connection as an Empirically Based Theoretical Problem,” in *The Micro-Macro Link*, ed. J. C. Alexander et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 195.

4 Ellis, Donald, “Research on Social Interaction and the Micro-Macro Issue,” *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 32 (1999): 33.

5 See especially Latour, Bruno, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37. Latour's work owes a debt to previous sociological work on the function of practices in maintaining and changing social structures; see especially Bourdieu, Pierre, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Giddens, Anthony, *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

6 In the academic discipline of history itself, the enthusiasm for the genre of micro-history seems to have waned, perhaps due to the unrealistic expectations of the original phase of enthusiasm. Another factor in the faltering of the micro-history project may be the academic roles of its proponents within History departments, primarily in dialogue with other historians, rather than archaeologists and sociologists. See the ambivalent discussion of micro-history in by Ginzburg, Carlo, “Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It,” trans. John Tedeschi and Anne C. Tedeschi, *Critical Inquiry* 20.1 (1993): 10–35, and the ultimately negative assessment by Lamoreaux, Naomi, “Rethinking Microhistory: A Comment,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 26.4 (2006): 555–561.

understanding of how Tibetan Buddhism (in its Tantric or Vajrayāna forms in particular) became a dynamic force in Eastern Central Asia and beyond.

## 2 During the Tibetan Empire

The Tibetan Empire was first established during the reign of the Emperor (Tib. *btsan po*) Tri Songtsen (Tib. Khri Srong btsan, r. c. 605–649). The extent of the empire declined after the end of his reign, but expanded again after the Tang Dynasty (618–907, 唐) was weakened by the An Lushan (安祿山) rebellion in the middle of the 8th century, when the Emperor Tri Song Detsen (Tib. Khri Srong lde btsan, r. 742–c. 800) took control of the whole of Eastern Central Asia. From this point until the middle of the 9th century, the Tibetan Empire was not only one of the major powers of Asia, but controlled the key trade routes that ran through the heart of the continent. In this position, it became both wealthy and culturally influential.

The adoption of Buddhism as a state religion by the emperors of Tibet is traditionally said to have been an act of piety, born out of religious conviction. Modern historians have tended to see it as a political act, motivated by the significant presence of Buddhism among Tibet's powerful neighbours. Matthew Kapstein has argued that Buddhism presented a framework for universal legislation, an ideology that could be extended across an empire embracing a wide range of cultures.<sup>7</sup> Substantial imperial resources were turned to the task of making Tibet a Buddhist country, with the building of monasteries and the translation *en masse* of Buddhist texts from India and to a lesser extent from China.

While some have suggested that the Buddhism of the Tibetan Empire was an elite and primarily a court-based religion, there is evidence that the later emperors were keen to spread the Buddha's teachings across the realm. The adoption of Buddhism as a state religion occurred during the latter part of the reign of the emperor Tri Song Detsen. His second edict, probably published in 779, records the way in which Buddhism was made the state religion of Tibet. Looking very much like the official minutes of a meeting, it describes various discussions during which the court deliberated on how to establish Buddhism in Tibet, beginning with Trisong Detsen's own account of how he was converted to Buddhism:

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<sup>7</sup> Kapstein, Matthew, *The Tibetans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 61–62.

Then with the help of teachers of virtue I listened to the *dharma* and the texts were brought before my eyes. Then I deliberated upon how the Buddhist religion should be practised and spread.<sup>8</sup>

Note here the stress laid by the emperor on the spread or propagation (Tib. *spel*) of Buddhism. This concern was addressed in a later meeting convened by Tri Song Detsen, this time with lords from all over the Tibetan Empire, including the Azha (Tib. 'A zha), the former rulers of Eastern Central Asia, known by the Chinese as Tuyuhun (吐谷渾). According to the edict, at this meeting everyone agreed to an empire-wide project establishing Buddhism, with a caveat that the traditional ways of the ancestors should be followed as well.

The minor princes under our dominion, such as the Azha ruler, and the outer and inner ministers were consulted and a council was held. Together they considered in brief these things, first that trust should be put in the word of the Buddha; secondly that the example of the ancestors should be followed; and thirdly that help should be given by the power of the teachers of virtue [...]. Further to that, a council was held about how the right path should not be changed, and how it could be increased. Thus an excellent summary of the *dharma* was made.<sup>9</sup>

This summary of the *dharma* probably relates to what is written earlier in the edict, where the emperor explains the basics of Buddhism: the fact of impermanence, the inevitability of cause and effect and the need to practise the ten kinds of virtuous action in order to obtain a good rebirth. A few decades later the Emperor Tri De Songtsen (Khri lDe srong btsan, r. c. 802–815) published an edict that was carved on a stone pillar at Karchung (Tib. sKar cung) about the appointment of senior Buddhist teachers in Tibet. It says:

8 My translation; Tibetan text from Richardson, Hugh, *High Peaks, Pure Earth: Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture* (London: Serindia Publications, 1998), 97 (110b): *de nas dge ba'i bshes gnyen gyis bstangs te chos kyang gsan / yi ge yang spyen sngar brims nas / sangs rgyas kyi chos spel zhing mdzad par bsgroms so / /*

9 My translation; Tibetan text from Richardson, *High Peaks, Pure Earth*, 98 (110b): *'bangs su mnga' ba rgyal ba rgyal phran 'a zha rje la bstogs pa dang phyi nang gi blon po nmams la bka's rmas / bka' gros su mdzad nas / gcig tu na sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' lung la bsten / gnyis su na yab mes kyi dpe lugs la 'tshal / gsum du na dge ba'i shes gnyen gyi mthus bstangs pa dang yang sbyar nas mdor brtags na / [...]* *de lam legs par ni ji ltar myi 'gyur ched ni ji ltar che zhe na / chos kyi mdo ni legs su bgyi bas /*

But from the time when the emperor and his descendants are young until the time when they become rulers of the kingdom and thereafter, teachers of virtue shall be appointed from among the monks. By teaching religion as much as can be absorbed into the mind, the gate of liberation for the whole of Tibet, through the learning and practice of the *dharma*, shall not be closed.

Note here the apparently inclusive statement that the whole of Tibet will have access to the gate of liberation. This egalitarian sentiment is made even more clearly further down the pillar:

And when for the Tibetan subjects from the nobles downwards, the gate leading to liberation is never obstructed and the faithful have been led towards liberation, from those among them who are capable there shall always be appointed abbots to carry on the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>10</sup>

It seems clear that the phrase *from the nobles downwards* must include every Tibetan subject, however lowly. Thus at this point, while Tibetan Buddhism may still have been largely a religion of the elite, there was a clearly stated aspiration that everyone irrespective of social class should practice it.

If we look at the contemporary manuscript evidence from the Dunhuang cave library, there are clues as to how this wide-ranging conversion was to be carried out. During the reign of Tri Tsug Detsen (Tib. Khri gTsub lde bstan, r. 815–841) vast quantities of copies of Buddhist *sūtras* were commissioned (particularly the large *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* and the *Aparimitāyusūtra*). While such projects were perhaps less an exercise in conversion than in the generation of stores of religious merit, it did require the training of large numbers of scribes, most of them Chinese, in the Tibetan language. At this time, the Tibetan court seems to have extended the project of propagating Buddhism across different languages, not merely in Tibetan. Among the Dunhuang

10 My translation; Tibetan text from Richardson, Hugh, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1985): 78–79 (ll.33–42). | | *btsan po dbon sras / / sku chu ngur bzhuks pa yan cad / / chab srId kyi mnga' bdag mdzad pa man chad kyang / / dge slong las / dge ba'I bshes nyen bskos ste / chos thugs su cI chud chud du bslab cing / / bod yongs kyIs kyang chos slob cing spyad pa'I sgo myi gcad / nam du yang bod ya rabs man cad / bod 'bangs las thar par gzud pa'I sgo myi bgag par / dad pa'I rnam las thar par btsud de / / de'i nang nas nus pa las / / bcom ldan 'das kyI ring lugs rtag du bsko zhIng / / bcom ldan 'das kyI ring lugs byed pa'I rnam chos 'khor nas bya'o cog gI bka' la yang btags ste / /*



manuscripts there is a scroll (Or. 8210/S. 3966) with a short Buddhist text in Chinese. Its colophon says:

In the sixth month of the water tiger year, a letter was issued with the seal of the Tibetan king (Chin. *zanpu* 讚菩) to be circulated throughout the prefectures of Greater Tibet with copies of this *Sūtra of the Ten Virtues* for widespread recitation. On the 16th day of the following eighth month this note was written after the completion of the copying.<sup>11</sup>

The colophon refers to a previous edict ordering the copying of the *Sūtra of Ten Kinds of Virtuous Behaviour* across the whole of Great Tibet (that is, the full extent of the Tibetan Empire).<sup>12</sup> Similarly, a Chinese scroll containing the *Sūtra of Impermanence* (P. tib. 735) has a Tibetan colophon stating that it was copied in the reign of Tri Tsug Detsen as a religious offering of the emperor.<sup>13</sup> These two *sūtras* address two of the main themes of the summary of Buddhism that Tri Song Detsen composed after his imperial council: impermanence and the practice of virtue.

It does not seem unreasonable to link these manuscripts found at one of the further corners of the Tibetan Empire with the aims expressed by Tri Song Detsen and his successors. The manuscripts suggest that one way in which this aspiration was put into practice was in the copying of various brief summaries of the Buddhist doctrine all over Tibet, which would then have been taught orally to the non-literate through recitation, presumably, though literacy seems to have been quite widespread by the end of the empire. These clues, sparse as they are, suggest the means by which the Tibetan imperium propagated Buddhism through to the dissolution of the empire in the middle of the 9th century. In this, the imperium seems to have been very successful, planting the seeds for the further growth of Tibetan Buddhism after the empire itself ceased to exist.

11 Or. 8210/S. 3966 colophon: 壬寅六月大蕃國有讚菩印信，并此十善經本，傳流諸州，流行讀誦，後八月十六日寫畢記。

Translation made with the help of Kazushi Iwao.

12 The matter is complicated by the fact that the Chinese text on the scroll S. 3966 is not called *The Sūtra of the Ten Virtues*. It is *The Summary of the Essential Points of the Mahāyāna Sūtras* [*Dasheng jing zuanyao yi* 大乘經纂要義]. As the latter text does have a section on the ten virtues, it may have been copied as the best match, given that there is no extant *Sūtra of the Ten Virtues* in Chinese.

13 The Tibetan colophon of P. tib. 735: //dar ma 'dI ni myi rtag pa'I mdo shes bgyi'o// //bod gyi lha btsan po khri gtsug lde brtsan kyI sku rlngs la/ //lha sras kyI sku yon du sngos pa/ /sha cu'I gnas brtan dang/ 'dul dang/ /khri [...]

### 3 After the Empire

The reasons for the decline and fall of the Tibetan Empire are complex and still not well understood. Traditional Tibetan accounts blaming an anti-Buddhist purge by the Emperor Lang Darma (Tib. gLang dar ma, r. 841–842) do little to explain it, and are belied by the evidence of Buddhist patronage by his queen and sons. There does seem to have been an irreconcilable split in the ruling house after Darma's death, breaking the contract by which only one heir could be recognised as the emperor. Shortly afterwards, the further corners of the empire were claimed by others. In 848 Dunhuang was conquered by a local Chinese army and thereafter ruled by Chinese families.<sup>14</sup> Other strongholds in Central Asia fell soon afterwards.

The era following the break up of the empire is known by Tibetan historians as the age of fragmentation (Tib. *sil bu'i dus*). Traditional Buddhist historians saw the era mainly in terms of the collapse of monastic Buddhism and its eventual re-establishment in Central Tibet. In these accounts, the monastic ordination lineage was preserved in Northeast Amdo, in the modern Qinghai and Gansu provinces. Although reliable historical information about this time is difficult to come by thanks to the decline of both Tibetan and Chinese power, it is clear that this region, which had been taken by the Tibetan Empire from the Azha in the 7th century, remained a stronghold of Tibetan culture after the fall of the empire.

An important source is the Dunhuang manuscript IOL Tib J 754, which contains a series of letters of passage for a Chinese monk passing through the Tibetan confederations of Tsongkha (Tib. Tsong kha) and Liangzhou (涼州) on his way to India in the late 960s. The letters are evidence of thriving Tibetan monastic communities during this period. The annals of the minor Chinese Kingdoms that bordered on this region record regular visits by Tibetan envoys, and occasional military incursions by Tibetan armies. It is not likely that these Tibetans came from Central Tibet. More likely they were from the local petty kingdoms of Tibetanised Azha and other ethnic groups. Here I refer to them as *Tibetan* in the wider sense, referring to all ethnic groups who adopted Tibetan language and culture during the imperial period.<sup>15</sup>

14 For a micro-analysis of religion and politics in Dunhuang during the transition from Tibetan to local rule see the article by Gertraud Taenzer in this volume.

15 On the petty Tibetan Kingdoms of Northeast Amdo/Eastern Central Asia, see Iwasaki, Tsutomu, "The Tibetan Tribes of Ho-hsi and Buddhism during the Northern Sung Period," *Acta Asiatica* 64 (1993): 17–37; van Schaik, Sam, and Imre Galambos, *Manuscripts*

We have a slightly better picture of the Tibetans after the advent of the Song Dynasty (960–1279, 宋) in China. The *History of the Song Dynasty* (Chin. *Songshi* 宋史) mentions two successive rulers of Liangzhou in the tenth century, both of whom assumed the Tibetan imperial title Tsenpo (Tib. *bstan po*).<sup>16</sup> Then in the eleventh century the Tibetan city of Tsongkha came to the notice of the Song when a minor scion of the Tibetan royal family was brought there in order to establish a new ruling dynasty in the area. He and his descendants were known as Juesiluo (唃廝囉), probably a Chinese transliteration of a Tibetan word *gyalse* (Tib. *rgyal sras*) that can mean both *prince* and *bodhisattva*. Ruth Dunnell has pointed out that, since this coup was orchestrated by the local Tibetans, it is likely that the Tibetans were already ruling the Tsongkha region earlier in the 10th century, and this is confirmed by the letters in 10L Tib J 754, which contains direct evidence of the activities of local Tibetan rulers in this very area.<sup>17</sup>

The Song Dynasty grew in influence over the 10th century, but never extended across Eastern Central Asia as the early Tang Dynasty had done. Instead Song rulers courted these local Tibetan rulers to keep its borders safe. In a new and vitally important development, an increasing number of these rulers were also monks, as the *History of the Song Dynasty* reports that they were awarded the purple robe for their efforts—a traditional symbol of imperial recognition of religious leaders. The letters of passage in 10L Tib J 754 also suggest that the distinctions between political and religious roles had already been blurred by the middle of the tenth century.<sup>18</sup>

These two aspects of religio-political life in this region in the 10th and 11th centuries—the merging of religious and political roles and the increasingly successful moves by some Tibetan Buddhists to find support from powerful patrons from other cultural backgrounds—are a pattern that became increasingly important to the geopolitics of Central Asia and beyond in the following

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*and Travellers: The Sino-Tibetan Documents of a Tenth-Century Buddhist Pilgrim* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 63–67.

16 Immediately after this period, Liangzhou was ruled by Panluozhi (潘羅支, which perhaps stands for the Tibetan name 'Phan bla rje), who came to power in 1001. It is testament to the wealth of Liangzhou at this time that he was able to send 5,000 horses to the Song capital as a tribute. See Iwasaki, "The Tibetan Tribes," 18.

17 See Dunnell, Ruth, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996): 173–174; van Schaik and Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers*, 147–176.

18 On the bestowing of purple robes on Tibetan monk-rulers see Iwasaki, "The Tibetan Tribes," 22–24. On the relevant letters in 10L Tib J 754 see van Schaik and Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers*, 167–169.

centuries. Before we move on to this later period, I want to suggest some reasons how Tibetan Buddhism (and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in particular) made this possible.

#### 4 Tantric Practice in the Tenth Century

The abovementioned sources clearly show a major shift during the century after the fall of the Tibetan Empire from a Centralised and state-sponsored Buddhism to a dispersed model in which Buddhist practice and ideology was adopted in various ways by local political rulers. The manuscripts and other artefacts from the Dunhuang cave can shed light on the kind of Buddhism that was being practised at this time by these monks and rulers. They show in particular the rise in popularity of Tantric forms of Buddhism, including many aspects of what we now regard as the specifically Tibetan forms of Buddhism, such as the significant presence of the deity Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs dbang po) and the master Padmasambhava (Tib. Padma 'byung gnas). The manuscripts also show the development of some of the organisational rubrics that came to characterise the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, including the nine vehicles of Buddhist teachings and the twenty-eight Tantric vows, or *samaya*.<sup>19</sup>

But it was the practices of the Tantric genre of Mahāyoga that seem to have been most popular and influential during this period. Mahāyoga was essentially a Tibetan adaptation of a genre of Tantric texts and practices derived

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19 On the early cult of Avalokiteśvara see van Schaik, Sam, "The Tibetan Avalokiteśvara Cult in the Tenth Century: Evidence from the Dunhuang Manuscripts," in *Tibetan Buddhist Literature and Praxis (Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS, 2003, Volume 4)*, ed. Ronald M. Davidson and Christian Wedemeyer (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 55–72. On Padmasambhava in the Dunhuang manuscripts, see Dalton, Jacob, "The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: A Study of 10L Tib J 644 and Pelliot tibétain 307," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.4 (2004): 759–72. On the nine vehicles in the Dunhuang manuscripts see Karmay, Samten, *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 172–73; Dalton, Jacob, "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra during the 8th–12th Centuries," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28.1 (2005): 132–51.

On the twenty-eight vows or *samaya* (Tib. *dam tshig*) of Mahāyoga, see van Schaik, Sam, "The Limits of Transgression: The Samaya Vows of Mahāyoga," in *Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang: Rites and Teachings for this Life and Beyond*, ed. Matthew T. Kapstein and Sam van Schaik (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 63–72.

from India.<sup>20</sup> The Tantric literary background to Tibetan Mahāyoga practices includes the *Guhyasamāja* and *Guhyagarbha tantras*, and the related *sādhana* practice texts, that is, ritual manuals. These texts draw on the general framework of previous Tantric practice, but are characterised by a more explicit incorporation of sexual and violent imagery. Whether Mahāyoga practice entailed acts of sex and violence, or rather imagined or simulated versions, is still debated.<sup>21</sup> In any case, both of these aspects of Mahāyoga, known as union and liberation (Tib. *sbyor sgröl*) are techniques of power, the sexual practices resulting in power over the internal realm of the body, and the violent practices resulting in power over the external realm.

There are several hundred manuscripts containing Tantric texts in the collection from the Dunhuang cave. These have been catalogued and individual texts have been discussed at length; however, looking at some of these manuscripts as a whole, rather than extracting particular texts for study, may reveal more about actual practices. Many of the Tantric manuscripts contain multiple texts, and these are often clearly arranged in the order they would be used in a ritual. Some of the texts are narratives or sequences of questions and answers, which would be used in sermons or lectures as part of the ritual, implying the presence of a master and audience of disciples. Some manuscripts contain dedications to the sponsors of the ritual. Many of these ritual sequences conclude with the activities of offering and confession, conventional to Buddhist group practices.<sup>22</sup>

Other artefacts from the cave are items that would have been used in these Tantric rituals. We have, for example, a ceremonial five-pointed crown illustrated with the figures of the five buddhas of the *maṇḍala*, which would have been worn by the master and initiates in a Tantric empowerment ritual. We also have a small image of the deity Vajrasattva, the Central figure of peaceful

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20 On the Tibetan interpretations of Mahāyoga, see van Schaik, Sam, "A Definition of Mahāyoga: Sources from the Dunhuang Manuscripts," *Tantric Studies* 1 (2008): 45–78.

As far as we know the term was not used to refer to a genre of literature and practice in the Indian context (personal communication, Harunaga Isaacson).

21 On the violent imagery in Mahāyoga tantra, and Tibetan responses to it, see Dalton, Jacob, *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

22 An interesting example discussed in Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons*, 77–94, is a manuscript in concertina format now kept in both the Pelliot collection in Paris and the Stein collection in London: the first part of the manuscript is in Paris (P. tib. 36), the middle in London (10L Tib J 419) and the end once again in Paris (P. tib. 42). For other examples of the ritual sequence of Mahāyoga practices, see van Schaik, "A Definition of Mahāyoga," 74–75.

Mahāyoga practices. This appears to be a *tsakli*, a card used in the context of an empowerment. The ritual use of such crowns and illustrated cards continues in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to the present day. There are also many examples of diagrammatic sketches of *maṇḍalas* that seem to have been used for ritual purposes, either as models for visualisation or for the layout of a physical *maṇḍala*.<sup>23</sup>

The picture that emerges from manuscripts and artefacts such as these is of groups under the guidance of a Tantric master, supported by one or more patrons. In a ritual performance, the master would demonstrate his or her authority through explicating the ritual and its narrative context. The patron, who may not necessarily be present, makes the practice possible through sponsorship; and this patron is also the main beneficiary of the religious merit generated by the ritual. Finally the disciples perform recitation and visualisation based on the guidance of the Tantric master. Thus these sequences of texts bind their practitioners into Buddhist communities (whether lay or monastic) through the communal activities of offering, prayer recitation, and confession.

We have a few clues as to the identity of the people who inhabited these roles, in the names of patrons inscribed within some of the practices, and the names of the scribes who copied out the texts. These show the highly multicultural nature of those engaged in Tibetan Buddhist practice. Though most of the manuscripts are unsigned, of those that are, several bear the names of Chinese scribes, including a copy of a popular treatise on Mahāyoga signed by a Meng Huaiyu (孟懷玉) who served in the official post of a Vice Commissioner (Chin. *fushi* 副使), the third highest ranking official in the local government.<sup>24</sup> Other Tantric manuscripts were written by Khotanese and Uyghur scribes. Thus it is clear that Tibetan Buddhism, and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in particular, cut across cultural/linguistic boundaries.<sup>25</sup>

23 The five-buddha crown is P. 4518(7), from the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Vajrasattva implement is 10L Tib J 1364. An example of a *maṇḍala* diagram is the British Museum 1919,0101,0.173 from the British Museum. All can be seen on the website of the International Dunhuang Project ([idp.bl.uk](http://idp.bl.uk), accessed 4 February 2015). On the ritual usage of items such as these, see Fraser, Sarah, "Formulas of Creativity: Artist's Sketches and Techniques of Copying at Dunhuang," *Artibus Asiae* 59.3–4 (2000): 204, 221; Wang, Michelle, "Changing Conceptions of 'Maṇḍala' in Tang China: Ritual and the Role of Images," *Material Religion* 9.2 (2013): 198–209.

24 See Hucker, Charles, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 216 where *fushi* is translated 'Vice Commissioner'.

25 On the manuscript written by Meng Huaiyu, see van Schaik, Sam, "The Sweet Saint and the Four Yogas: A 'Lost' Mahāyoga Treatise from Dunhuang," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 4 (2008): 23–26. For other manuscripts showing evidence of

This was made possible by the widespread training in the Tibetan language and script that was enforced during the Tibetan Empire, which resulted in a generalised use of the language across different cultural/linguistic groups in official communication and religious literature. After the fall of the empire, the Tibetan language persisted as the *lingua franca* of Eastern Central Asia.<sup>26</sup> It was, for example, at one point the language chosen for communication between the Chinese ruler of Dunhuang and the king of Khotan. Thus at the point when Mahāyoga practices transmitted through the medium of Tibetan were becoming increasingly popular, there was a general knowledge of Tibetan as a first or second language across a range of ethno-linguistic groups.

## 5 Tantric Group Dynamics

The Tantric empowerment rituals of Mahāyoga are based on previous Buddhist induction ceremonies for monastic and lay practitioners—ceremonies that committed one to certain kinds of everyday practice. In a wider context, the practice of group initiation followed by daily personal observance is one of the most commonly seen ritual structures for religious and other social groups. Since Durkheim, sociologists and anthropologists have examined the social role of practices such as these. The contemporary study of the formation and functioning of such groups under the heading of group dynamics may have something to contribute to our understanding of the role of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in Central Asia.<sup>27</sup>

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the use of Tibetan among non-Tibetans, see van Schaik, and Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers*, 29–34. And on the multicultural nature of Dunhuang society, see Takata, Tokio, “Multilingualism at Tun-Huang,” *Acta Orientalia* 78 (2000).

26 This has been discussed by Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, “Sociolinguistic Implications of the use of Tibetan in East Turkestan from the End of Tibetan Domination through the Tangut Period (9th–12th c.),” in *Turfan Revisited—The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, ed. Desmond Durkin Meisterernst et al. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2004), 341–348; see also Takeuchi, Tsuguhito, “Old Tibetan Buddhist Texts from the Post-Tibetan Imperial Period (mid-9 C. to late 10 C.),” in *Old Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS, 2003*, ed. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 205–214. [Revised version distributed by the author.]

27 A classic work in the field of group dynamics is Brown, Rupert, *Group Processes: Dynamics Within and Between Groups* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

For a survey of the issues and literature, see Stangor, Charles, *Social Groups in Action and Interaction* (New York: Psychology Press, 2004).

One of the features of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet and Tibetan-speaking Central Asia is that the exponents of the most recent developments in Tantric practice were usually the most successful in gaining followers. In the 10th century this was the Mahāyoga of the *Guhyasamāja* and *Guhyagarbha tantras*, though this would soon be supplanted by a new wave of translations. Thus it seems that those who offered empowerments into these 'new' systems gained a greater following and patronage, which would have encouraged others to adopt these systems as well. The ritual of empowerment into these systems creates a group centred on the Tantric master, in theory a simple wheel-hub structure in which the master is supreme (indeed is equal to the buddhas) and the disciples are all at an equal level in their relationship with the master.<sup>28</sup>

In practice, relationships within these groups are likely to have been more complex, yet the ideal model for the Tantric group is very simple. It is inclusive, without restrictions based on gender or ethnic identities, making it a flexible system for group formation, cutting across boundaries of class, clan and ethnicity. It does not require the establishment of monasteries or other property in order to function. The primary method of sustaining its group identity is the repeated practice of rituals among which the empowerment ceremony is the most important. The latter may be seen to imbue its recipients with the 'emotional energy' that some sociologists see as crucial to sustaining group formations.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Tantric groups can have a strong economic resilience, due to the expectation that the disciples will contribute funds to the master as an offering in return for the empowerment. Crucially, this group dynamic is also self-replicating, in that disciples may become masters in their own right, creating further, often overlapping, wheel-hub structures.

After the collapse of state-sponsored monastic Buddhism in Tibet, the group dynamics of Tantric Buddhism do seem to have been particularly successful. A satirical poem found in one of the Dunhuang manuscripts (P. tib. 840) complains of the spread of Tantric Buddhism among the ordinary folk of the villages:

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It is worth noting that this modern discourse has roots in the work of Durkheim, Emil, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. by Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1912]).

28 On group structures and their modelling, see Martin, John Levi, *Social Structures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Of course, Tantric disciples are theoretically at the same level as the master in that they identify with the deity in the process of empowerment and *sādhana*; however, in structural terms, the master is supreme.

29 On the definition of emotional energy in groups, see Collins, Randall, *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 102–140.



For every hundred students there are a thousand teachers,  
 And nobody listens to the divine *dharma*.  
 For every village there are ten masters,  
 And the number of *vajra* assistants is uncountable.<sup>30</sup>

While this satire probably overstates the case, it is testament to the unease felt in some quarters at the successful self-replication of Tantric groups outside of institutional settings. Similar sentiments are expressed in the edict published by the West Tibetan King Yeshe Ö (Tib. *Ye shes 'od*, c. 959–1040), addressed to the ‘masters of mantra who live in the villages’. The increasing power of these Tantric masters was a threat to those attempting to establish their authority on the old imperial model. Yeshe Ö’s intention to re-establish the old hierarchies is clear when he compares the village masters to a beggar pretending to be a king.<sup>31</sup> It is unlikely that the situation was quite as bad as the author of the satirical poem or Yeshe Ö suggests; a major barrier to teachers outnumbering students would have been economic, as the wheel-hub system is reliant on a group of disciples giving enough to support the master.

The economic aspect of these Tantric relationships is defended in an early tenth-century treatise by the Tibetan master Nyen Palyang (Tib. gNyan dPal dbyangs):

Question: ‘When the Tantric master requests an offering at the time of empowerment, isn’t this just something they’ve made up?’

Answer: ‘The enlightened path to liberation is an eternal treasure That is found after having been lost on the road of *samsāra* for innumerable aeons. It wouldn’t be excessive to offer one’s life ten million times, not to mention anything else. The truth or falsity of this can be checked in any of the secret tantras.’<sup>32</sup>

30 P. tib. 840: */slob ma brgya la slob dpon stong//lha chos nyan pa'i myi ma chis//grong tsan gcig la slob dpon bcu//las kyi rdo rje gra[ng]s kyang myed/*

31 On Yeshe Ö’s edict see Karmay, Samten, *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet* (Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998), 3–16. For an insightful discussion of the political and religious background to the edict, see Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons*, 95–109.

32 IOL Tib J 470: [...] */slob la dbang mnod pa'i dus su/ /yon 'bul 'tshal lo/ zhes bgyi ba rang bzo ma lags sam//skal pa grangs myed 'das par lam skol gdod rnyed pa//bla med byang chub thar lam g.yung drung gter//des ni lus srog bye bas gcal kyang ma ches na//gzhan lta ci smos bden rdzun gsang ba'i rgyud la kun ltos/ [...]*

The economy of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet is also apparent in the traditional Tibetan histories, which often recount the difficulties that prospective students had in raising sufficient funds to receive instruction from a famous master. These histories also relate how certain famous figures from the 11th and 12th centuries, such as Marpa Chokyi Lodro (Tib. Mar pa chos kyi blo gros, 1012–1097) and Lama Zhang Yudragpa (Tib. bLa ma Zhang g.yu brag pa, 1122–1193), successfully formed large groups of students, became relatively prosperous, and applied their religious authority to their secular ambitions towards power and property.<sup>33</sup> We can connect these accounts with figures like Juesiluo and his followers who were ruling the Tsongkha confederation in Northeast Amdo in the 11th century. The social situation across Tibetan and Central Asia was politically fragmented, allowing the formation of small groups like these around charismatic figures. Though the Chinese sources do not mention it, it is likely that the dynamics of Tantric Buddhism were also involved in the case of the Tibetan-speaking groups of Amdo and Central Asia.

The survival of the Tibetan language beyond the tenth century is probably also due in part to its role in Tantric groups. Tsuguhito Takeuchi has pointed out that Tibetan was not only used as a *lingua franca* between people of different ethno-linguistic backgrounds, but by people from the same background, such as two Chinese correspondents. He suggests that “Tibetan evidently acquired a sort of ‘fashionable’ image, or sociolinguistic prestige, which promoted further use.”<sup>34</sup> Takeuchi did not suggest a reason for this, but it may well be that the prestige of the Tibetan language was a direct consequence of the success of Tantric teachers and their propagation of Mahāyoga practices which were only available in the Tibetan language. From the 11th to 14th centuries Tibetan Tantric practices became even more influential in Central Asia as they were adopted by emerging powers, to which we now turn.

## 6 Among the Turks

The Uyghur Turkic Empire ruled the Northern steppes from the mid-8th to mid-9th century, until their enemies, the Kirghiz, conquered them. From then onwards large groups of Uyghur Turks fled South across the mountains. The largest group settled in towns along the Northern edge of the Taklamakan

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33 For an insightful analysis of Lama Zhang’s activities, see Yamamoto, C. S., “Vision and Violence: Lama Zhang and the Dialectics of Political Authority and Religious Charisma in Twelfth-Century Central Tibet” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2009).

34 Takeuchi, “Old Tibetan Buddhist Texts,” 343.

desert including Kučā and the Turfan region; others ended up further South in the region which is now Gansu, where they established a minor kingdom based in the town of Ganzhou (甘州, modern Zhangye 張掖). By the 10th century there were Uyghurs in Dunhuang as well. Surrounded by Tibetan and Chinese Buddhists, many of these Uyghurs learned to write in Chinese and Tibetan and adopted Buddhism. Buddhist texts, especially Mahāyāna *sūtras*, were translated into Uyghur, mainly from Chinese.<sup>35</sup>

Before using their own language to write Buddhist texts, the Uyghurs used the Chinese and Tibetan languages.<sup>36</sup> Manuscripts from the 10th century in the Dunhuang collections provide a useful insight into the multilingual skills of the Uyghur Turks in Central Asia, and also their adoption of Buddhism and belief in the efficacy of religious merit generated by activities such as copying books. One illuminated manuscript (IOL Tib J 1410) has a copy of a Chinese *sūtra* (the shorter *Sukhāvatīvyūha*) in the Tibetan script. It appears that the scribe who wrote the manuscript knew spoken Chinese but not the written characters, so used the Tibetan alphabet instead. In a colophon, the scribe writes that he comes from the country of the Kirghiz (Tib. *gir kis*) though he now lives in Hexi, the region that contains Dunhuang. The colophon goes on to

35 On the Uyghurs at Dunhuang, see Moriyasu, Takao, “The Sha-chou Uyghurs and the West Uygur Kingdom,” *Acta Asiatica* 78 (2000); Russell-Smith, Lilla, *Uygur Patronage at Dunhuang* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). The first reference in a Chinese source to ‘Uyghurs of Ganzhou and Shazhou’ is in 980, and Moriyasu cites the first reference to the Shazhou (that is, Dunhuang) Uyghurs as the rulers of Dunhuang in a letter dated to 1014 (Moriyasu, “The Sha-chou Uyghurs,” 33), though the exact political role of the Uyghurs in Dunhuang is still uncertain. In the same article (Moriyasu, “The Sha-chou Uyghurs,” 39–40) he argues that the Uyghurs of Dunhuang (Shazhou) had stronger connections with those at Kočo (that is the Turfan region) than those at the nearer city of Ganzhou. After the 14th century the Uyghurs gradually converted to Islam. However, the Uyghurs of Hexi (that is of Dunhuang and Ganzhou) remained Buddhists, and today are considered a separate ethnic minority in China, known as the Sarig Yughurs.

36 An example of Uyghurs using the Tibetan script to write a Buddhist catechism has been studied by Moriyasu Takao 森安孝夫, “Chibetto moji de kakareta uiguru bun bukkyō kyōri mondō (P. tib. 1292) no kenkyū チベット文字で書かれたウイグル文佛教教理問答 (P. tib. 1292) の研究 [Études sur un catéchisme bouddhique ouïgour en écriture tibétaine (P. tib. 1292)],” *Ōsaka daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 大阪大學文學部紀要 [Bulletin of Osaka University Literary Department] 25 (1985): 1–85. On the manuscript evidence of Uyghurs using the Chinese language, see Galambos, Imre, “Non-Chinese Influences in Medieval Chinese Manuscript Culture,” in *Frontiers and Boundaries: Encounters on China's Margins*, ed. Zsombor Rajkai and Ildikó Bellér-Hann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 83–84. For the development of Buddhism among the Uyghurs see also the chapter by Jens Wilkens in this volume.

list a dozen or so Buddhist texts (mostly by their Chinese titles) that the scribe has copied and then recited in a single day as an offering to “the buddha, the gods and *nāgas* of the eight quarters, and the protectors of the four directions.” By the merit of this, he hopes that one day he will be able to return to his own country, and that after he dies, he will be born free of suffering, not in hell, and preferably in the god realms.<sup>37</sup>

Further evidence of the merging of Turkic and Tibetan languages in the Buddhist practices of the Uyghurs is found in the manuscript P. tib. 1292, a Uyghur Buddhist catechism written using the Tibetan script. The handwriting of this manuscript is an accomplished style seen in many other 10th century Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang, suggesting that the use of Uyghur alongside Tibetan was well established in the local Buddhist community by at least the end of the 10th century. These manuscripts stand at the beginning of a long period of Tibeto-Uyghur interaction, in which Tantric Buddhism played a major role. There are also Buddhist manuscripts in the Uyghur language and script from the library cave at Dunhuang dating from much later: the 13th and 14th centuries. These were not among the original cache sealed up in the early 11th century, but seem to have been taken from other caves and placed in the library cave by Wang Yuanlu (王圓籙, c. 1849–1931), the monk who sold the manuscripts to two explorers and scholars Stein and Pelliot in between the monk’s discovery of the cave in 1900 and Stein’s visit in 1907.

These later Uyghur manuscripts relate to the period of Mongol power in Central Asia. They overlap with the much more numerous Uyghur manuscripts from the Turfan region, which are now held in Berlin and generally date from the 11th to 14th centuries, so we should consider them alongside these. The Uyghur Kingdom based in Turfan was closely allied with the Uyghurs of

37 On this manuscript, see also Thomas, F. W., and G. L. M. Clauson, “A Second Chinese Buddhist Text in Tibetan Characters,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1927): 281–306.

The complete colophon is as follows: / *stag gi lo'i dbyar/ /gīr kis yul du ha se to ab 'ga den chung shi 'gi/ /khang re man gyis/ the'u kyig shi chor lha 'tso'i yid dam du bsnogs te// [a] myi 'da kyī bam po gcig dang/ par yang kyī bam po gcig [dang/] kwan im kyī bam po gcig dang/ ta sim kyī bam po gcig [dang/] phyogs bcu'i mtha yas bam po gcig dang/ /bkra shis bam po gcig dang/ /de 'bur te ci'u bam po bcig dang/ /'da la 'ji ci'u bam po gcig dang/ bzang po spyod pa smon lam dang/ /'thor bshags la stsogs te/ /gong nas smon pa 'di mams/ /yi dam du bris pa 'di/ /gdugs gcig klag ching/ /sangs rgyas dang/ lha klu sde brgyad dang/ phyogs bzhi'i mgon po la mchod cing/ yi dam du bcas te/ /lha 'tsho tshe lus la bsam pa thams cad grub ching yul du sngar phyin pa dang/ tshe slad ma la gar skyes kyang/ /sdug bsnag dang bral ching/ /na rag du myi rtung bar byin gyis skabs te/ lha yul du skye bar shog shig/ /*

Dunhuang, so contemporaneous manuscripts from these two sites derive from the same political and religious milieu.

The majority of the Tibetan manuscripts and block prints from Turfan date from after the fall of the Tibetan Empire. They show that the Tibetan language continued to be used, especially for Buddhist literature, alongside Uyghur and Chinese in Turfan.<sup>38</sup> And just as Tibetan had been the language of the most advanced forms of Tantric Buddhism at Dunhuang during the 10th century, by the 13th and 14th centuries it was the language of the new literature and techniques of the later phase of translation (Tib. *phyi dar*) in Tibet. During the period of Mongol rule (13th and 14th centuries), several of these Tantric texts were translated into Uyghur. Among the Turfan manuscripts are a *guru-yoga* composed by Sakya Paṇḍita (Tib. Sa skya paṇḍita, 1182–1251), a *sādhana* of Avalokiteśvara featuring a dark-skinned Padmasambhava, and a commentary on the Six Yogas of Nāropa (Tib. *nā ro chos drug*). The later Uyghur manuscripts from Dunhuang include a major *sādhana* for a Cakrasaṃvāra *maṇḍala*, which mentions the name of the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (Tib. *Kar ma pa Rang byung rdo rje*, 1284–1339).

The manuscript evidence for Tantric practices is complemented by some of the artistic representations in the painted caves of the Turfan region, which show Tibetan stylistic features and Tantric content.<sup>39</sup> However, since these depictions have rarely been studied by Tibetologists, this has not always been recognised. An interesting example is the clay head M III 8541, which bears the iconography of Mahākāla—dark blue skin, red bushy eyebrows, fangs and red fire streaming from the mouth—but has not been recognised as such and has been dated to 8th–9th centuries. If this is in fact a representation of Mahākāla, a more likely date range would be 12th–14th centuries.<sup>40</sup>

Although these new Tantric texts came from lineages based in Central Tibet, this was only possible because Central Asian Uyghurs were already able to use the Tibetan language and script. Study of loan words in these Uyghur translations of Tibetan Tantric texts has shown that they reflect the pronunciation of Eastern Tibet, particularly Amdo. Thus while the texts may have been transmitted long-distance, the main interface between the Uyghur and Tibetan languages and peoples was local to Eastern Central Asia. As we move

38 The catalogue of the Tibetan manuscripts in the Berlin Turfan collection is Taube, Manfred, *Die Tibetica der Berliner Turfansammlung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980).

39 Personal communication with Kira Samosiuk, St Petersburg, September 2013.

40 See Härtel, Herbert, and Marianne Yaldiz, *Along the Ancient Silk Routes: Central Asian Art from the West Berlin State Museums* (New York: Abrams, 1982), 151–153, where the head is described only as a ‘demon’ and dated to the 8th–9th centuries.

into the period of Mongol domination over Central Asia, there are clear continuities in the use of Uyghur and Tibetan languages and scripts side by side by Buddhists, and the popularity of the most recent developments of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism.<sup>41</sup>

## 7 Among the Tanguts

The Tanguts ruled over a significant Central Asian kingdom from the late 10th to the early 13th century, when they were conquered and absorbed into the Mongol Empire. They expanded from their base in the Ordos desert in Inner Mongolia through conquest of the two main Uyghur Kingdoms of the Northern Taklamakan desert, and the minor Tibetan Kingdoms to the East of Lake Kokonor, parts of the former Tsongkha confederation. They also captured territory further East from the expanding Chinese Song Dynasty. The Tangut ruler Yuanhao (r. 1032–1048, 元昊) of the Ngwemi Dynasty declared himself emperor of the Tanguts, Uyghurs, Tibetans and Tartars, and initiated state-building cultural projects including the standardisation of a Tangut writing system.<sup>42</sup>

The Tanguts spoke a Tibeto-Burman language and practiced a religion with similarities to the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet. They must also have been aware of Buddhism through contact with Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist texts and practices, and in 1038 Yuanhao followed the example of the Tibetan King Tri Song Detsen and the early emperors of the Chinese Song Dynasty in establishing a major project to translate the Buddhist scriptures into the Tangut language. The first part of this process involved mainly Chinese originals from the *tripitaka*; by the end of the 11th century 3,579 scrolls are reported to have been

41 On the Uyghur Tantric literature translated from Tibetan in the Berlin collection, see the transliterations and translations in Kara, Georg, and Peter Zieme, *Fragmente tantrischer Werke in Uygurischer Übersetzung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1976). The Nārōpa text is in the Stein manuscript Or. 8212/109, and is transliterated and translated in Zieme, Peter, and Georg Kara *Ein Uigurisches Totenbuch* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1978).

42 In Chinese sources the Tangut Empire is referred to as Xixia (西夏). These words are not found in Tangut sources, however, which refer to the empire as ‘The Great State of White and High’ and its people as Mi-nia. See Kepping, Ksenia, “Mi-Nia (Tangut) Self-appellation and Self-portraiture in Khara-Khoto Materials” in *Последние статьи и документы* [Last Works and Documents] (St Petersburg: Omega Publishers, 2003), 97–98. In Tibetan they are referred to as Mi nyag.

translated. Then from the middle of the 12th century the translation project shifted its focus more towards Tibetan texts.<sup>43</sup>

The Tangut manuscripts and block prints discovered in the ruins of Kharakoto, most of which are now in St Petersburg and London, give a sense of the kind of Tibetan texts that were chosen for translation into Tangut.<sup>44</sup> The increasing influence of Tibetan Buddhists at the Tangut court in the 12th century, and of certain Kagyu lineages in particular, is shown by the number of texts associated with these lineages translated into Tangut in the latter period of the empire. These include Mahāmudrā instructions and ritual texts of Cakrasaṃvara, Vajrayoginī and Vajravarahī. Lamdre (Tib. *lam 'bras*) and Dzogchen (Tib. *rdzogs chen*) texts are also found in the Tangut texts from Kharakoto. The non-tantric texts are mostly from Kadam lineages, with the works of Atiśa predominating.<sup>45</sup>

This range of texts in the Tangut language and script is complemented by manuscripts written in Chinese and Tibetan that were also recovered from Kharakhoto and new discoveries in the Ningxia region. The Chinese texts from the Tangut Kingdom include translations from Tibetan Tantric literature, including the *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Saṃpuṭa tantras*, Lamdre texts, a series of works related to the Six Yogas of Nāropa.<sup>46</sup> Tantric literature also predominates

43 Kychanov, E. I., "The State of Great Xia (982–1227 AD)," in *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto (10–13th century)*, ed. Mikhail Piotrovsky (Milan: Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation/Electa, 1993), 55–57. Elsewhere Kychanov, E. I., "From the History of the Tangut Translation of the Buddhist Canon," in *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös*, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó 1, 1984), 381–382 states that the earliest Tangut translation from Tibetan was *Amitābhavyūha*, completed in 1094. See also Dunnell, Ruth, "Esoteric Buddhism under the Xixia (1038–1227)," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 465–477, for an account of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism at the Tangut court.

44 For an excellent account of the discovery and study of the Tangut manuscripts, see Galambos, Imre, *Chinese Literature in Tangut: Manuscripts and Printed Books from Kharakhoto*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

45 The first serious overview of the Tibetan-related texts in the Tangut collections is Solonin, Kirill. "Dipaṅkara in Tangut Context: An Inquiry into Systematic Nature of Tibetan Buddhism in Xixia (Part 1)," forthcoming.

46 For examples of Chinese Tantric manuscripts from Kharakhoto see Shen Weirong, "Reconstructing the History of Buddhism in Central Eurasia (11th–14th Centuries): An Interdisciplinary and Multilingual Approach to the Khara Khoto Texts," in *Édition, éditions: L'Écrit au Tibet, évolution et devenir*, ed. Anne Chayet, Christina Scherrer-Schaub, Françoise Robin and Jean-Luc Achard (Munich: Indus Verlag, 2010) 1–26. On the Tibetan manuscripts from Kharakhoto in the British Library, see Iuchi M., "Bka'

in the Tibetan manuscripts from Kharakhoto, showing that the Tibetan language continued to be used in the practice of Tantric Buddhism at the same time as the texts were being translated into Tangut and Chinese. The fine paintings of Tantric deities recovered from Kharakoto (now at the Hermitage in St Petersburg) offer further evidence of the Centrality of Tibetan Tantric Buddhist networks to Tangut culture.<sup>47</sup>

Tibetan religious histories provide interesting evidence of other Tantric lineage networks that were influential in the Tangut Kingdom. The most significant Tangut figure in these histories is Tsami Lotsawa Sangye Dragpa (Tib. rTsa mi Lo tsa ba Sangs rgyas grags pa, fl. 12th c.), who travelled from the Tangut Kingdom to India and Tibet, where he was active as a translator. His translation work includes texts from the Kālacakra tradition, and a series of texts centering on the wrathful protector Mahākāla. These include one entitled *The Usurpation of Government* (Tib. rGyal srid 'phog pa), which, as Elliot Sperling has pointed out, is “a short but direct ‘how-to’ work on overthrowing the state and taking power.”<sup>48</sup> As Sperling argues, this strongly suggests that the cult of Mahākāla at the court of Qubilai Qan and his successors was directly inherited from the Tangut court.

Among Tsami Lotsawa's students was another translator, an Amdo Tibetan known as Ga Lotsawa or Galo for short (Tib. rGwa Lo tsa ba, fl. 12th century), who also specialised in Kālacakra and Mahākāla. Several of Ga Lotsawa's own compositions appear in a long Tibetan scroll in the St Petersburg collections, Dx-178, connecting him to the Tangut state as well. This scroll has been studied by Alexander Zorin, who has shown that it is a collection of mainly wrathful ritual texts, comprising thirteen texts on various forms of Mahākāla, eight texts on Narasiṅha (a form of Viṣṇu), and a *sādhana* for the *maṇḍala* of Vajrapāṇi and the eight *nāga* kings. The texts authored by Ga Lotsawa include one aimed

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gdams pa Manuscripts Discovered at Khara-Khoto in the Stein Collection,” in B. Dotson, C. A. Scherrer-Schaub and T. Takeuchi (eds.), *Old and Classical Tibetan Studies, Proceedings of the 11th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter, 2006*. Halle, forthcoming.

47 Examples can be seen in Piotrovsky, Mikhail ed., *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto (10–13th century)* (Milan: Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation/Electa, 1993), 106–249, as well as on the website of the Hermitage Museum ([www.hermitagemuseum.org](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org), accessed 4 February 2015).

48 Sperling, Eliot, “Rtsa-mi Lo-tsa-bā Sangs-rgyas Grags-pa and the Tangut Background to Early Mongol-Tibetan Relations,” in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), 805.



at the oppression of enemies, implying the same kind of martial use as the Mahākāla text translated by Tsami Lotsawa just mentioned.<sup>49</sup>

The Tibetan historical sources linking Tsami and his student Galo to the Tangut Empire have not so far been corroborated with sources in Tangut; however, the study of Tangut texts related to Tibetan lineages is still in its infancy, and it is possible that both are in fact found in Tangut colophons. For example, the colophon of Tang. 167 appears to contain Tangut characters transliterating the Tibetan *rtsa mi* as the source of the teaching, while the colophon of Tang. 308 states that the text was received from a *lhie je kia lio* (Tib. Lha rje rGwa lo?).<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the appearance of Lama Zhang Yudragpa in the Tangut colophons suggests that this particular Tantric lineage was Central to the transmission of Tantric Buddhism to the Tangut Kingdom, as Lama Zhang was also a student of Ga Lotsawa.<sup>51</sup>

The Kharakhoto manuscripts can also help us to identify figures of more local significance involved in these same lineages. A Tibetan teacher mentioned in several colophons as transmitting or compiling Tantric texts, Yarlungpa Chokyi Senge (Tib. Yar lungs pa Chos kyi seng ge) is associated with texts by Lama Zhang (Tang. 182 and 489). He is also listed as responsible for transmitting the text possibly attributed to Ga Lotsawa in Tang. 308. Though he was clearly an important figure in Tangut Buddhist networks—at least those represented by the Kharakhoto manuscripts—this Yarlungpa has not been linked to the Tibetan historical record.<sup>52</sup>

Towards the end of the Tangut Empire, the increasing influence of Tibetan lamas at the Tangut court was formalised with the appointment the Tibetan monk Tsangpopa (Tib. gTsang po pa, 1189–1258) as imperial preceptor (Chin. *dishi* 帝師) at the Tangut capital Xingzhou (興州). Tsangpopa served the emperor till his death in Liangzhou in 1218/19. His successor was Tishi Repa (Tib. Ti

49 See Zorin, Alexander, “A Collection of Tantric Ritual Texts from an Ancient Tibetan Scroll Kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences,” *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies* 17 (2013).

50 As there is at the time of writing no Unicode Tangut encoding, the phonetic reconstructions of Kychanov are used here.

51 Here I have relied on the transcriptions of Tangut titles and colophons of Buddhist texts in Nishida Tatsuo, *The Hsi-Hsia Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, vol. 3 (Kyoto: Kyoto University Faculty of Letters, 1977), 13–59.

52 The Yarlungpa mentioned in the colophons is probably not to be identified with other translators of that name discussed in Leonard van der Kuijp, “On the Vicissitudes of Subhūticandra’s *Kāmadhenu* Commentary on the *Amarakoṣa* in Tibet,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 5 (2009): 29–36.

shi ras pa, 1164/5–1236), who had studied in Tibet with several famous lamas including the above-mentioned Lama Zhang, whom he assisted in battle with the Tantric rituals of Mahākāla. Expertise in these rituals helped his rise to the position of imperial preceptor and Tibetan historical sources tell of his use of Mahākāla rites to defeat, if only temporarily, the Mongol armies of Činggiz Qan.<sup>53</sup>

The Tibetan historical accounts of Tishi Repa can be linked to some of the figures and lineages found in the colophons of the Kharakhoto manuscripts.<sup>54</sup> His association with Lama Zhang accords with the appearance of Zhang's name and the Tantric practices associated with him in the colophons. The local figure Yarlungpa Chokyi Senge also makes an appearance in these Tibetan texts. According to the *Dharma History of Lhorong* (Tib. *Lho rong chos 'byung*), Tishi Repa met a Yarlungpa in the Amdo area, while travelling through Tsongkha and Lingzhou.<sup>55</sup> That Tishi Repa met Yarlungpa in Amdo also suggests that this area was a significant hub in the transmission of Tibetan Tantric lineages to the Tangut Kingdom.

Indeed, many of the Amdo sites mentioned in the *Dharma History of Lhorong* correspond to locations in the 10th-century Tibetan letters of passage discussed above, and indicate the persistence of a network of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and teachers in this area, as hubs in wider networks extending to Central Asia, Tibet and China. The *Dharma History of Lhorong* tells us that Tishi Repa first heard of the Tangut king through a travelling Amdo mercenary, an anecdote that allows us to imagine how micro-encounters associated with

53 On Tsami Lotsawa and Sangye Repa, see Sperling, Elliot, "Lama to the King of Hsia," *The Tibet Journal* 7 (1987); Sperling, "Rtsa-mi Lo-tsa-bā Sangs-rgyas Grags-pa"; Sperling, Elliot, "Further Remarks Apropos of the 'Ba' rom pa and the Tanguts," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57.1 (2004).

54 For summary and discussion of recent work on the names of Tangut, Chinese and Tibetan translators and authors in the colophons of the Kharakhoto manuscripts, see Dunnell, Ruth, "Translating History from Tangut Buddhist Texts," *Asia Major*, Third Series 22.1 (2009). See also Dunnell, Ruth, "Esoteric Buddhism Under the Xixia (1038-1227)."

55 See Rta tshag tshe dbang rgyal, *Lho-rong Chos-byung* (Lhasa: bod ljongs bod yig dpe rmying dpe skrun khang, 1994), 214. The *Dharma History of Lhorong* was compiled in the 15th century, but contains older sources. A modern history of the Barompa Kagyu school by Mati Ratna gives the full name Yarlungpa Senge Gyaltzen (Tib. Yar lung pa seng ge rgyal mtshan); see Sperling, "Further Remarks Apropos of the 'Ba' rom pa and the Tanguts," 8, 13. However, as Sperling points out, this is a late text drawing upon other, unspecified, sources.

these networks encouraged the historically significant cross-cultural relationships established in the Tangut and Mongol courts.<sup>56</sup>

After the conquest of the Tangut capital Xingzhou (興州) in 1226/7, in which Činggis Qan also lost his life, Tishi Repa is said to have returned to Tibet.<sup>57</sup> Other Tibetan lamas soon appeared at the courts of Činggis Qan's successors, and less than twenty years later, the Mongol ruler of Eastern Central Asia and Tibet, Goden Qan, invited Sakya Paṇḍita to his court to negotiate the submission of Tibet to Mongol rule. In the following generation, Sakya Paṇḍita's nephew Pakpa (Tib. Phags pa, 1235–1280) was given the title of imperial preceptor by Qubilai Qan in 1269, on the model established in the Tangut court. The continuities also extend to the Central role of Tantric Buddhism in this relationship, as Pakpa had already established a patron-priest relationship with Qubilai in 1258 by conferring empowerment upon him, just as Tishi Repa had done for the Tangut emperor.<sup>58</sup>

With the Mongol Empire, the patron-priest relationship and the Centrality of the Tantric dynamic of master and student came to centre stage in the geopolitics of Tibet, Eastern Central Asia and China. This paradigm determined the dynamics of the relationships between Tibet and subsequent Chinese, Mongol and Manchu powers. A version of it was still being invoked by Tibetan monastics during the crucial period of negotiation with the Chinese Communist Party in the 1940s and 50s.<sup>59</sup>

## 8 Conclusion

The evidence that I have assembled here is scattered across different languages and various forms of text; yet it allows us to perceive a pattern, suggesting the wider significance of the multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic milieu of Eastern Central Asia in the larger political networks that developed across Asia. Archaeological evidence from manuscripts found in Central Asian sites

56 Sperl, "Further Remarks Apropos of the 'Ba' rom pa and the Tanguts," 15, 16.

57 On the Chinese and Tangut sources for this event, see Kepping, "Chinggis Khan's Last Campaign," 172–77.

58 On the role of Tantric Buddhism at the Mongol/Yuan court, see Shen Weirong, "Tibetan Buddhism in Mongol-Yuan China (1206–1368)," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

59 See van Schaik, Sam, *Tibet: A History* (London: Yale University Press, 2011), 196–203, 216. For a more detailed account, see Goldstein, Melvyn, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 1: 1913–1951, The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 798–813.

such as Dunhuang and Kharakoto has allowed us to explore the agency of local Buddhist teachers and patrons from this region, figures who were ignored by the compilers of historical literature in more Central regions. It may not be possible to fully trace the causes and conditions that explain why Tibetan Buddhism was so successful in Eastern Central Asia. However I will offer a tentative suggestion.

Up to the 9th century, Buddhism was primarily practised via Sanskrit as a ‘church language’ across Central Asia up to the Hexi corridor, and via the Chinese language East of there.<sup>60</sup> From the 9th century, the transitional period that Christopher Beckwith has called ‘the collapse of the early medieval world order’, the influx of new peoples into Central Asia—Tibetans, Uyghurs, Tanguts and then Mongols—brought major change.<sup>61</sup> Buddhism was adapted by the Uyghurs and Tanguts, while the old sites of Indic Buddhism—Khotan, Kučā and so on—declined in influence or began to convert to Islam. Tibetan Buddhism, with its Tantric group dynamics cutting across linguistic and cultural boundaries, performed the same function that Sanskritic Buddhism had previously. With the growth of translation and composition in vernacular languages such as Khotanese and Kuchean, there was no longer a single church language facilitating cross-cultural religious dynamics, and it was this role that was taken by Tibetan.

In any case, I hope to have shown here that manuscripts, and other artefacts made and used by the same communities, are crucial sources for our understanding of the geopolitical role of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism. The examples above show the practice of Tantric Buddhism—generally derived from Tibetan sources—across a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups. I have suggested that we can look for one reason for this by focusing on group dynamics, examining the effectiveness of Tantric Buddhist practices in facilitating the formation of social groups across ethnic and linguistic boundaries. The significant relationships described in traditional histories, such as that between Chogyal Pakpa and Khubilai Qan, were only possible due to the conditions established by a multitude of local events unrecorded by historians but accessible to us through manuscripts and other artefacts. To put it in more theoretical terms, these are the micro-histories that make the conditions for macro-history.

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60 On the use of Sanskrit in Central Asia see for example Sander, Lore, “Early Prakrit and Sanskrit Manuscripts from Xinjiang,” in *Buddhism across Boundaries: Chinese Buddhism and the Western Regions* (Taipei: Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist & Culture Education, 1993), and on Sanskrit as a ‘church language’ see Nattier, Jan, “Church Language and Vernacular Language in Central Asian Buddhism,” *Numen* 37.2 (1990).

61 Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 158.



transmission of individual manuscripts, and in the process to shed light on one historical aspect of Indo-Tibetan cross-cultural exchanges.

In the following, I shall (1) sketch the challenges faced by explorers trying to access the manuscript collection of Retreng monastery in the early 20th century, and then try to (2) trace the origin of the collection in Tibetan historical sources, (3) collect references to the manuscripts belonging to the collection, (4) draw up a title list of scriptural texts contained in it, (5) trace and identify its current location, and finally (6) evaluate the historicity of Atiśa's ownership of the manuscripts.

### 1 Challenges to Accessing the Manuscript Collection of Retreng in the Early 20th Century

In the early 20th century Ekai Kawaguchi (河口慧海, 1866–1945) heard of a Sanskrit manuscript collection once in the possession of Joboje (Tib. Jo bo rje) Atiśa<sup>2</sup> Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982–1054), the founder of Kadampa (Tib. *bka' gdams pa*) tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, that had come to be preserved at Retreng monastery, and later Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana and Gendün chöpel (Tib. dGe 'dun chos 'phel, 1903–1951) stumbled across the same information.

On 12 October 1914 Kawaguchi, having made great efforts to access the collection, managed to conduct research in three of the monastery's libraries; and on 5 August 1934 Sāṅkrtyāyana and Gendün chöpel, after careful preparations, together visited the monastery with a letter of introduction from the head lama of the monastery and regent of Tibet Thubten jampel yeshe tenpe gyaltzen (Tib. Thub bstan 'jam dpal ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1911–1947).

2 Harunaga and Sferra (Isaacson, Harunaga, and Sferra, Francesco, *The Sekanirdeśa of Maitreyanātha (Advayavajra) with the Sekanirdeśapañjikā of Rāmapāla*, (Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli l'Orientale, 2014), 70–71 n. 51) discuss problems of the word form Atiśa and state “[t]he corruption (or ‘transformation’) of Adhīśa to Atiśa seems to us not really more improbable than that of Atiśaya to Atiśa; and Adhīśa has the merit over both alternatives of being attested as a name or epithet.” His name is indeed attested in a similar form “*a dhe śa*” (or *a rhe śa*) in an interlinear gloss in a Tibetan manuscript of the unpublished *Tanjur Catalogue (bsTan bcos kyi dkar chags)* by Ūpa losel (dBus pa Blo gsal, ca. 1270–ca. 1355): jo bo rjes (*a dhe* [or *rhe*] śa: interlinear gloss) *mdzad pa'i kye'i rdo rje'i 'byung po thams cad kyi gtor chog* (fol. 11b4–5; this item in the catalogue corresponds to Derge Tōhoku no. 1295; I am grateful for the permission to refer to this passage from Prof. Mimaki and Prof. van der Kuijp). It is possible that various spellings of his name had been gradually standardised as “Atiśa” in the course of time, probably in a rather earlier period.

Both attempts proved fruitless.<sup>3</sup> A monk of the monastery told Kawaguchi that the manuscripts he was interested in might have been consumed by fire 450 years earlier during the Mongolian attack of 1240. A piece of information that will prove very valuable was provided by the regent, who described the manuscripts to Sāṅkṛtyāyana as being “half burnt.”<sup>4</sup>

Religious treasures of the monastery were later looted by troops of the Tibetan government headed by Shuköpa (Tib. Shu bkod pa, fl. 20th century), who had been sent from Lhasa in May 1947 for suppressing a rebellion there and restoring order, while still later, in 1967, the monastery itself was destroyed by the Chinese army. Today we find no trace of the collection in the monastery, restoration of which was started in the 1980s.<sup>5</sup>

## 2 Tracing the Origin of Atiśa’s Manuscript Collection

After describing his visit to Retreng in 1934, Gendün chöpel, in his *Grains of Gold* (Tib. *gSer gyi thang ma*),<sup>6</sup> discusses the manuscript collection that he himself was unable to inspect. His observations contain valuable hints regarding the contents of the collection:

3 For details of the challenges involved, see Kano, “Rāhula,” 123–136.

4 Sāṅkṛtyāyana, Rāhula, *Merī Jīvan-yātrā* (Īlāhabad: Kitāb Mahal, 1950), vol. 2, 247, 252; Sāṅkṛtyāyana, Rāhula, “Sanskrit Palm-Leaf Mss. in Tibet,” *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 21.1 (1935): 24: “I had heard from Re-ḍing-rin-po-che, the Regent King of Tibet, that his monastery possesses a half-burnt palm-leaf ms. which originally belonged to the collection of books which the Ācārya Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna (982–1054 AD) brought with him from India”; *ibid.*, p. 25: “I was informed that it was a half-burnt copy of the Prajñā-pāramitā”; Kano, “Rāhula,” 128, 131.

5 See ‘Jam dpal dge ‘dun et al., *dPal gyi ‘byung gnas rwa sgreng chos sde chen po’i lo rgyus skal ldan dang ba ‘dren pa’i pho nya* [Messenger who Inspires Devotion for the Fortunate Ones: An Account of the Great Religious Seat of Retreng, which is the Source of Glory] (no place: no publisher, no date), (composed in the 2000s), 32–33, and Kano, “Rāhula,” 135.

6 For the details of the *gSer gyi thang ma*, see Kano Kazuo 加納和雄, “Gendun chonphe cho sekai chishiki kō ōgon no heigen dai issō wayaku: 1930 nendai no chibetto ni okeru bonbun shahon chōsa kiroku (1) ゲンドウンチュンペー著『世界知識行・黄金の平原』第一章和訳—1930年代のチベットにおける梵文写本調査記録—(1) [An Annotated Translation of the First Chapter of dGe ‘dun chos ‘phel’s *gTam rgyud gser gyi thang ma* 1],” *Mikkyobunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 密教文化研究所紀要 [Bulletin of the Research Institute of Esoteric Buddhist Culture] 23 (2010): 63–103 and Thupten, Jinpa, and Lopez, Donald S. Jr., *Grains of Gold: Tales of a Cosmopolitan Traveler* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2014).

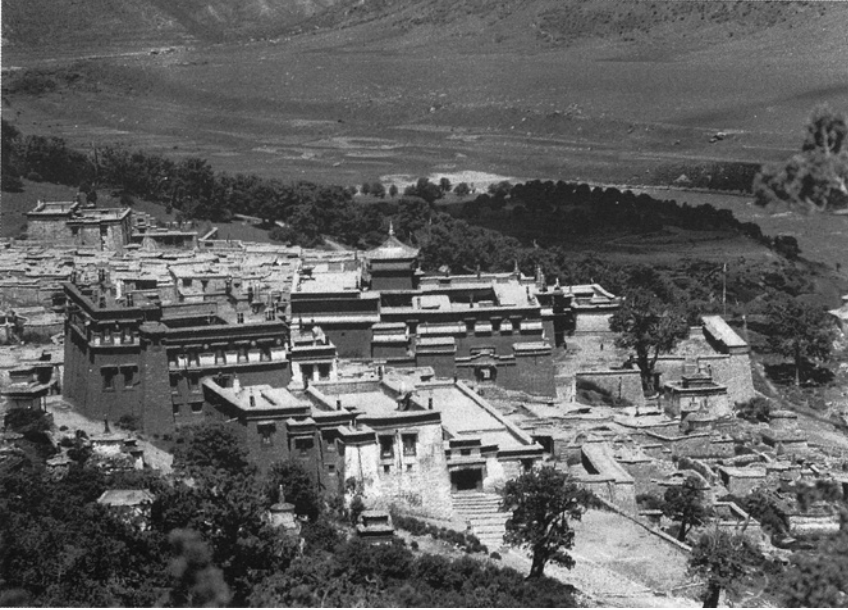


FIGURE 3.1 *Retreng in 1950 photographed by Hugh Richardson. Richardson, Hugh. High Peaks, Pure Earth (London: Serindia Publications, 1998), plate 56.*

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- [a] It is said that the Omniscient Jonang [i.e. Tāranātha, 1575–1635] saw many [manuscripts] below which the Jobo's name is written, such as Śāntipa's commentary on the *Dvikalpa* (i.e. *Hevajratantra*) and the *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra*; and that he effortlessly read the first two folios. Therefore, if [the statement] is true, the manuscripts [unavailable for our inspection] must have been these very ones.
- [b] However, [the number of the manuscripts] need not be large, because it is said in his [i.e. Atiśa's] hagiography that Drom[tön] sent the manuscripts back to India after the Jobo's passing.
- [c] They [i.e. monks of the monastery] say that the bundle of Indic manuscripts has become so small that one person can carry it. On the other hand, many foolish people think that the ten-thousand-bundles stored in a chapel (Tib. *lha khang*) are Indic manuscripts, but they are only Tibetan manuscripts (Tib. *bod dpe*).<sup>7</sup>

7 dGe 'dun chos 'phel, *mKhas dbang dge 'dun chos 'phel gyis mdzad pa'i gtam rgyud gser gyi thang ma* [Grains of Gold Composed by the Great Scholar Gendun chöpel], edited by Zam gdong pa Blo bzang bstan 'dzin (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1986), 10: *rwa sgreng du shānti pa'i brtag gnyis kyi 'grel pa dang / dgra nag gi rgyud sogs jo bo'i mtshan*



The passage makes three points: (a) the manuscripts once believed to be in Atiśa's possession were seen by Tāranātha, a great historian/master of the Jonang (Tib. *jo nang*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, (b) these manuscripts were supposedly sent back to India after Atiśa's passing, (c) the size of the manuscript collection was small. The first two points were obviously based on scriptural sources, and the last on oral information.

Point (a) is confirmed in Tāranātha's autobiography (composed ca. 1634), which details his visit to Retreng in ca. 1601:

I saw religious supports (Tib. *rten*) [in the form] of Indic manuscripts which endured fire [i.e. survived a fire]. Since there was the phrase *bhaṅgalapaṇḍitabhikṣu-dīpaṃkaraśrījñānasya pustakaṃ* ['a book of the scholar monk Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna from Bengal'] below many Indic manuscripts [i.e. in the lower margins of folios?] including Śāntipa's commentary on the *Dvikalpa*, they must be manuscripts that belonged to Joboje himself. Therefore, I shed tears of great respect, offered cloth and fragrant aromas together with jewels and the like, and uttered many prayers. I quickly read a few words in Sanskrit from two folios of the Indic manuscript of the *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra*, and expounded them, while translating them into Tibetan, one by one.<sup>8</sup>

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*gsham du bris pa mang po gzigs / mgo nas shog bu gnyis tsham tshom med par shar gyi [= gyis] bton sogs gsungs pas bden na rgya dpe de la sogs pa yin 'dug / 'on kyang jo bo grongs nas phyag dpe rnam's 'brom gyis rgya gar du brdzangs zhes nam thar las 'byung bas / mang po rang ni med nges / khong tshos rgya dpe dril ba mi khur chung ngu tsam longs pa yod zer / gzhan gsung rab kyi glegs bam khri phrag 'ga' tsam brgal ba lha khang du bzhugs pa de kun blun po mang pos rgya dpe yin par bsgom mod / bod dpe kha rkyang las med /*

- 8 Tāranātha, Kun dga' snying po, *rGyal khams pa tā ra nā thas bdag nyid kyi nam thar nges par brjod pa'i deb gter shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug pa'i rtogs brjod* [Auto-biography as Narrated by Tāranātha, Extremely Meticulous Annals, i.e. Unfanciful Straightforward Account]. *Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*. [Collated Edition of the Collected Works of Tāranātha, the Venerable of Jonang Tradition], vols. 1–2 (Beijing: dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe mying zhib 'jug khang, 2008), 164: *rgya dpe me thub ma rnam's kyi rten mjal byas pas / shān ti bas mdzad pa'i brtag gnyis kyi 'grel pa sogs rgya dpe mang po'i gsham na / bhaṅgala paṇḍita bhikṣi [= bhikṣu] dīpaṃkaraśrījñānasya pustakaṃ / zhes pa 'dug pas jo bo rje nyid kyi phyag dper nges pa'i [= pas] mos gus chen pos mchi ma 'khrug cing na bza' dang dri bzang la rin po che bsres pa sogs phul zhing smon lam mang du btav / gshin rje gshed dgra nag gi rgyud kyi rgya dpe nas shog bu gnyis tsam rgya skad du mgyogs par klogs shing / de rjes so sor phral nas bod skad bsgyur gyin bshad pas / This is followed by the next passage: *rwa sgreng pa thams* (p. 165) *cad sngar mi che dgu thams cad la rten mjal phul shing / sgra ba dang lo tsā bar btags pa mang po zhiḡ rang byung na'ang / 'bru re 'bru gnyis klog pa tsam las mi 'dug pa [= par] ngo mtshar che**

From this we learn that Atiśa's Sanskrit manuscripts, having been damaged by fire, were stored at Retreng and that they contained Ratnākaraśānti's *Hevajrapañjikā* and the *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra*. Next we shall focus on Gendün chöpel's point (b) in order to see what it can tell us about the origin of the collection.

### 2.1 *Atiśa's Sanskrit Manuscripts Sent Back to India*

Point (b) is attested in the biography of Atiśa composed by Chim Namkha drak (Tib. mChims Nam mkha' grags, 1210–1285) and in Lechen Kunga gyeltsen's (Tib. Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, 1432–1506) *History of the Kadam Tradition* (Tib. *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*). According to Gendün chöpel, it was Dromtön who sent back Atiśa's manuscripts to India, while Chim states that it was Lhodrakpa Chagtrichog (Tib. Lho brag pa Phyag khri mchog, 1042–1109):<sup>9</sup>

At that time [i.e. after Atiśa's passing], the yogin Chagtrichog (Tib. rNal 'byor pa Phyag khri mchog) repeatedly dispatched messengers with letters [to India or Nepal] in order to import silver for [making] Jobo's [that

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*zhes ngo bstod mang po byed kyin 'dug* / See also van der Kuijp and McKeown, *Bcom ldan ral gri*, xiv (they read *gdam* for *gsham* and translate the word as “on the seal” instead of “below”).

This story is integrated into Tāranātha's biography; see Ngag dbang blo gros grags pa, *dPal ldan jo nang pa'i chos 'byung rgyal ba'i chos tshul gsal byed zla ba'i sgron me* [Lamp of the Moon that Illuminates the Religious Precepts of the Victor: A History of glorious Jonang Tradition] (Koko Nor: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992), 55–56: *dgung grangs nyer drug skor / rwa bsgreng sogs su phebs skabs 'tshogs su chos 'brel dang khyad par brag seng ge'i zhul rje tsong kha pa'i bzhugs khri'i steng nas lam rim gsungs shing / rgya dpe me thub ma mams mjal tshe dgra nag gi rgyud skad gnyis kyis smra ba'i spobs pa che zhing shugs myur bas rwa bsgreng ba mams* (p. 56) *ngo mtshar bas bsnags pa sogs bstan 'gro la phan pa rgya cher byas so //*

Tāranātha mentions in his autobiography running across Sanskrit manuscripts in other monasteries as well: *bDag nyid kyi mam thar*, vol. 2, 15, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 57, 179.

- 9 He is also called sNyug rum pa brTson 'grus rgyal mtshan. For his life, see Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung gsal ba'i sgron me* [Illuminating Lamp: a History of Kadam Tradition] (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2006), 141–145; 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po* [Blue Annals] (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang), 390–391; a Japanese translation is offered in Hadano Hakuyū 羽田野伯猷, *Chibetto Indogaku shūsei daiikkan chibettohen I* チベット・インド学集成第一巻チベット篇I [Collected Papers of Indian and Tibetan Studies, vol. 1] (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1986), 169–171). He served Atiśa during the latter's last five years, and then, on Atiśa's advice, went on to serve Dromtön.

is Atiśa's] tomb and to send the Jobo's manuscripts (Tib. *jo bo'i phyag dpe rnams*) to India. And then he proceeded to Nepal [...].<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the *Blue Annals* (Tib. *Deb ther sngon po*) states that Chagtrichog thrice sent items that belonged to Atiśa (Tib. *phyag rdzas rnams*) to teachers and the Saṅgha in India (i.e. Vikramaśīla?) before Atiśa's passing.<sup>11</sup> These statements of Chim's and in the *Blue Annals* are not, of course, necessarily contradictory.

## 2.2 Succession to the Ownership of Atiśa's Manuscripts

Were the manuscripts of Atiśa all sent back to India with nothing left in Tibet? We may attempt to track them down further in historical records.

According to Lechen's *History of the Kadam Tradition*, after Atiśa's death in Nyethang (Tib. sNye thang) in 1054, Dromtön wanted nothing for himself other than the bodily relics of Atiśa, Indic manuscripts (Tib. *rgya dpe*), and a few sacred objects for worship, but one day he became distressed when someone laid claim to all of Atiśa's mementos. That night the female deity Tārā appeared to Dromtön in a dream and told him that his wish would be fulfilled. The next day Kaba Śākya wangchug (Tib. sKa ba Śākya dbang phyug) arrived and distributed items to Atiśa's disciples. As predicted by Tārā, Dromtön received the items he wished for.

And then [Kaba] said to Geshe tönpa [(Tib. dGe bshes ston pa, i.e. Dromtön)]: 'Since a son needs relics of his father, you should keep these relics of the Jobo! Since a translator needs Indic manuscripts (Tib. *rgya*

10 mChims Nam mkha' grags, *Jo bo rje dpal ldan a ti sha'i rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags, rNam thar rgyas pa: Materialien zu einer Biographie des Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna)*, 1. Teil: Einführung, Inhaltsverzeichnis, Namensglossar. 2. Teil: Textmaterialien, ed. and trans. Helmut Eimer (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), §422: *de'i dus su rnal 'byor pa phyag khri mchog gis jo bo'i gdung khang gi dngul 'don* (var. *ldon*) [= *mdon*] *pa dang / jo bo'i phyag dpe rnams rgya gar du bskur ba'i phyir* (var. *phyir dang dge bshes lo tsā ba la*) *'phrin yig dang bcas pa'i mi mang du brdzangs / phyag khri mchog gis bal yul du byon nas* [...] ≈ Las chen, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*, 141: *de nas jo bo'i gdung gang gi dngul gdon* [= 'don?'] *pa dang / jo bo'i phyag dpe kha cig rgya gar du rdzong ba'i slad du bal yul du byon / rgya gar du rgya dpe 'phrin yig dang bcas pa'i mi mang du brdzongs* | (I am grateful to Dr. Maho Iuchi for this reference.)

11 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po*, 317: *de ltar gzhan don mdzad pa'i skabs rnams su phyag tu byung ba'i phyag rdzas rnams / chag khri mchog la sogs pa'i slob ma rnams kyis rgya gar du bla ma dang dge 'dun la 'bul ba lan gsum bskyal*; 390: *jo bo la 'bul ba byung ba'i rdzas rnams rgya gar du skyel ba'i bang chen yang lan gsum mdzad /*

*dpe*), you should keep these manuscripts [of Jobo's] too! Since the most precious object of worship (Tib. *thugs dam*) of the Jobo was this small *stūpa* of Guru Serlingpa's [(Tib. gSer gling pa)] with a silver parasol, you should keep it, too.' And the items were distributed to Geshe tönpa in accordance with his wish.<sup>12</sup>

This is from the history/chronicle *A Statement about Retreng Monastery* (Tib. *Rwa sgreng gi bshad pa*) composed by Drom Sherab mece (Tib. 'Brom Shes rab me lce, fl. 14th century) in the early 14th century; similar passages are found in Chim's biography of Atiśa (§414) and the *History of the Kadam Tradition* (Tib. *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*) by Lechen.<sup>13</sup> We thus know that before establishing Retreng monastery Dromtön received manuscripts that once belonged to Atiśa. Kaba distributed other belongings of Atiśa to other disciples, including Khutön Yundrun tsöndru (Tib. Khu ston Yung drung brtson 'grus, 1011–1075) and Ngo Legpe sherab (Tib. rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab, fl. 11th century),<sup>14</sup> while leaving some sacred objects at Nyethang.<sup>15</sup>

How, then, did the manuscript collection reach Retreng? In the spring of 1055 Dromtön placed the relics and Indic manuscripts of Atiśa in the care of a disciple and left Nyethang to look for a place to establish a monastery for their housing and veneration, and eventually came upon the site of Retreng. *A Statement about Retreng Monastery* enumerates the scriptures (Tib. *gsung gi rten*) stored in the monastery, among which Atiśa's manuscripts (Tib. *jo bo'i phyag dpe*) top the list.<sup>16</sup>

12 'Brom Shes rab me lce, "rGyal ba'i dben gnas rwa sgreng gyi bshad pa nyi ma'i 'od [Rays of the Sun: A Statement about Retreng Monastery, the Victor's Hermitage]," in *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgriqs* [Collection of Tibetan Historical Works and Hagiographies], ed. dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Xining: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2010), 260.5–6: *de nas dge bshes ston pa la pha'i rus pa bu la dgos pa yin pas / jo bo'i gdung 'di rnams khyod tshogs gyis / rgya dpe' lo tstsha ba la dgos pas / phyag dpe 'di rnams kyang khyod tshags [= tshogs] gyis su / jo bo'i thugs dam rtsis che shos bla ma gser gling pa'i gdung khang dngul gdugs can chung ba 'di yin pas 'di yang khyod gyis su nas / dge bshes ston pa nyid ji ltar bzhed pa rnams phul /*

13 Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*, 126–127, 192–193.

14 We do not know if the monastic code (Vinaya) regarding a layman's succession to monastic items (Dromtön was a lay Buddhist) was followed in these cases.

15 Some of them still remain in the temple dedicated to Tārā (Tib. sGrol ma lha khang) of Nyethang today.

16 The list also refers to "an original manuscript, which is Dromtön's main object of worship" (*dge bshes ston pa'i thugs dam phyi mo*).

Accordingly, we can trace in historical sources that Dromtön inherited Atiśa's manuscript collection and kept it at Retreng. With regard to the problem dealing with the historicity of these statements in Tibetan historical sources, we shall discuss in section 6 "Evaluating the Historicity of Atiśa's Ownership."

### 3 Relevant References to Atiśa's Manuscripts

Next we shall gather relevant passages scattered in historical sources and summarise them in chronological order.

(1) Atiśa, after leaving Vikramaśīla in 1040, arrived in Nepal and stayed there for a year up into 1041. During this period he met Ngo Legpe sherab at Tham Vihāra in Kathmandu. We find several versions of the episode, among which a version found in Lechen's *History of the Kadam Tradition* (Tib. *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*) (p. 136) is as follows: Ngo offered Sanskrit manuscripts of four Yogatantra scriptures to Atiśa in return for having received his instruction on the *Guhyasamāja*, whereupon both proceeded to translate them into Tibetan collaboratively. The four are: the *Vajrodaya* (Derge Tōhoku no. 2516), *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanamaṇḍalavidhi* (Derge Tōhoku no. 2635), *Trailokyavijayamaṇḍalopāyikā* (Derge Tōhoku no. 2519), and the first half of the *Tattvālokarī* (Derge Tōhoku no. 2510).<sup>17</sup> This account relates that Atiśa's collection contained not only manuscripts brought by him from Vikramaśīla but also ones later added in the course of his journey to Tibet.

(2) After leaving Nepal, Atiśa proceeded via Mangyül Gungthang (Tib. Mang yul Gung thang) to Western Tibet (Tib. mNga' ris), where he stayed ca. 1042–1045. During his sojourn there, he showed a manuscript of a Tantric work (?) of his own to Khyungpo naljor (Tib. Khyung po rnal 'byor, 11th century), since the latter's copy was incomplete.<sup>18</sup>

17 According to Kawagoe Eishin 川越英真, "Nag tsho Lo tsā ba ni tsuite Nag tsho Lo tsā ba について(1) [The life of Nag tsho Lo tsā ba 1]," *Tōhoku fukushi daigaku kenkyūkiyō* 東北福祉大学研究紀要 [Bulletin of Tōhoku Fukushi University] 25 (2001): 293–316, there are several versions of this episode, which partially contradict each other. For Derge (Tib. *sde dge*) canon and Tōhoku numbers, see Ui Hakuju 宇井伯寿, Suzuki Munetada 鈴木宗忠, Kanakura Yenshō 金倉円照, Tada Tōkan 多田等観 (ed.), *Chibetto daizōkyō sōmokuroku* 西藏大蔵経総目録 [A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)] (Sendai: Tōhoku teikoku daigaku, 1934).

18 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po*, 857–858: *slar mnga' ris su byon pa na dī paṃ ka ra dang mjal / gsang 'dus la sogs pa'i chos mang du gnang / rang gi rgya dpe 'ga' chud zos pa'ang khong gi dpe las gsos / rin chen bzang po dang dharma blo gros kyis 'gyur yang mdzad /*

(3) After leaving Western Tibet, Atiśa visited Samye (Tib. bSam yas) monastery in Central Tibet in 1047 and stayed in a small room located North of the monastery's Pekarling (Tib. dPe dkar gling). He was surprised when he saw rare Indic manuscripts stored there, which included ones no longer available in India. They were said to have been brought by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla during Tibet's imperial period in the 8th century. Atiśa copied them and sent the copies to India (i.e. Vikramaśīla?).<sup>19</sup> According to Chim's biography of Atiśa, they include Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka*,<sup>20</sup> the *Avataṃsaka* (*rNam thar rgyas pa* §319), and Tantric works which Atiśa had never heard of before (*ibid* §76).<sup>21</sup>

Later, it is said, Śākyaśrībhadrā (1127–1225), with the permission of the local ruler (Tib. *jo bo lha*), accessed Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Guhyagarbhatanra* and the *Extensive Commentary on the Mūlāpatti* (Tib. *rTsa ltung gi rgya cher 'grel pa*) preserved in the Samye library. Still later Comden reldri (Tib. bCom ldan ral gri, 1227–1305), too, would consult the \**Guhyagarbhatanra* manuscript.<sup>22</sup>

19 Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*, 96–97: *de nas bsam yas su phebs nas pe dkar gling du bzhugs / rgya dpe mang po 'dug pa gzigs pas / shin tu dgyes te sngon bod du bstan pa byung ba 'dra ba / rgya gar du yang byung ba dka' gsungs / byang chub chen po gzigs pas ma hā bo dhi dang khyad mi snang gsungs nas / gnas dang gtsug lag khang la dgyes te /*

*Ibid.*, 172–173: *nged kyi [= kyis?] lha sa bsam yas la sogs pa'i gtsug lag khang dang / slob dpon bo dhi sa twa dang / ka ma la shī la la sogs pas gdan drangs pa'i rgya dpe mang po dang / dge 'dun stong phrag 'di tсам bzhugs pa sogs kyi lo rgyus mang po snyan du gsol / de thams cad kyang jo bo bod du byon pa la dgyes pa lags zhus pas /*

See Kawagoe, "Nag tsho Lo tsā ba," 303–304.

20 Abhayākara Gupta (d. 1125) embeds a number of passages of Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka* in his *Munimatālamkāra*. As Keira, Ryūsei, *Mādhyamika and Epistemology: A Study of Kamalaśīla's Method for Proving the Voidness of All Dharmas: Introduction, Annotated Translations and Tibetan Texts of Selected Sections of the Second Chapter of the Madhyamakāloka* (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, 2004), 8–9, points out, Abhayākara Gupta could have utilised the copy sent by Atiśa from Tibet.

21 Cf. Bya/Zul phu 'Dul ba 'dzin pa, "Jo bo chen po lha cig gi rnam par thar pa [Hagiography of the Sole Great Lord]," in *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgribs* [Collection of Tibetan Historical Works and Hagiographies] set 1 (Ca), ed. dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Xining: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2010), 380.7–381.1: *phyis bod du byon nas bsam yas dpe dkar gling gi skor mdzod gcig sgo phye nas rgya dpe gzigs pas jo bos de gong du ye gsan ma myong gzigs ma myong pa'i rgyud sde mang po bzhugs gda' bas /; interlinear note: slob dpon pad mas rdzu 'phrul gyis byin nas lha dang klu'i yul nas kyang dpal shi len tra nas rgyud sde thams cad spyān drangs pas rgya gar bas bsam yas mang ba yin gsung*. 'Dul ba 'dzin pa's (1100–1174) biography of Atiśa is one of the sources of Chim's. Cf. Hadano, *Chibetto indogaku shūsei*, 233–234.

22 See van der Kuijp, Leonard, W. J., "Review: On the Lives of Śākyaśrībhadrā (?–?1225)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114.4 (1994): 612. See also 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon

(4) Dromtön inherited Atiśa's manuscripts after his death and stored them in Retreng, where he went on to revise the Tibetan translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. The colophon refers to names of translators and revisers; the fifth and sixth revisers are:<sup>23</sup>

Later, the translator Dromtön Gyalwe jungne twice systematised [the revision of the translation] by collating three Indic *sūtras* (Tib. *rgya gar gyi mdo gsum*) at Retreng monastery, and, finally, the translator himself wrote a commentary and also ironed out subtle difficulties.<sup>24</sup>

If 'three Indic *sūtras*' is a reference to three Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*,<sup>25</sup> one of them was probably Atiśa's manuscript brought from Bodhgaya.<sup>26</sup>

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nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po*, 136: *kha che pañ chen gyis bsam yas su byon pa'i tshe gsang ba snying po'i rgya dpe rnyed / phyis de rta ston gzi brjid kyi lag tu byung nas / khong gis sha gang lo tsā ba la phul / des bcom ldan ral gri la bskur nas / bcom ldan ral gris thugs ches te gsang snying sgrub pa rgyan gyi me tog mdzad / ma mo gnas su sngags pa 'dus pa la rgya dpe bstan nas che ba brjod / slad kyis thar pa lo tsā bas sngon ma byung ba'i gsang snying rgyud phyi ma dang bcas pa la 'gyur mdzad de / dpe da'i steng nas mang rab cig zags pa'i lhag ma'i rgya dpe ni kho bo'i lag na mchis so /*

- 23 The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* was translated by Śākyasena, Jñānasiddhi, and Dharmatāśila, and revised by Subhūtiśrī and Rinchen Zangpo (Tib. Rin chen bzang po, 958–1055, the first revision in the early 11th century in Western Tibet), by Atiśa and Rinchen Zangpo (the second revision in ca. 1042–1045 in Western Tibet), by Atiśa and Dromtön (the third revision in ca. 1047–1054 at Nyethang), and again by Dromtön (the fourth and fifth revisions in ca. 1056–1064 at Retreng), and finally by Loden sherab (Tib. Blo ldan shes rab, 1059–1109). Cf. Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*, 117: *khyad par du dge bshes ston pas zhu ba phul nas / snye thang du brgyad stong pa dang mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan sbyar ba'i bshad pa zhib cing rgyas pa cig gsungs / de la phyag dar ston pas zin bris mdzad pas phar phyin khams lugs mar grags shing gtsugs che ba cig byung ba yin gsungs.*
- 24 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Derge Tōhoku no. 12, 286a4–5: *phyis ra sgren gtsug lag khang du lo tstsha ba 'brom rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas kyis rgya gar gyi mdo gsum dang gtugs nas lan gnyis gtan la phab / slad kyis yang lo tstsha ba de nyid kyis bshad pa mdzad cing phran tshogs kyang gtan la phab /*
- 25 Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet: Life and Works of Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna in Relation to the History and Religion of Tibet with Tibetan Sources* (Delhi: Motilal, 1996), 500 surmises as much. Another possibility is that the Tibetan term *rgya gar gyi mdo gsum* may be referring to three different *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, such as the *Satasāhasrikā*, *Dvāvimśatisāhasrikā*, and *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā*.
- 26 See further down in the main text: LHun grub chos 'phel, *Rwa sgren gdon pa'i dkar chag mthong ba don ldan dge legs nor bu'i bang mdzod* [Treasury of Auspicious Jewels that is Meaningful Merely at a glance: Catalogue of Retreng Monastery] (Chengdu: Si khron mi

(5) The next example is a work from Atiśa's manuscript collection translated after Dromtön's passing: the *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya* (Derge Tōhoku no. 3961). The translation has two colophons: those by the Indic scribe and the Tibetan translator. The first colophon runs:

This is a religious gift [(Skt. *Deyadharmā*) i.e., here, a Sanskrit manuscript] of the excellent Mahāyānist, elder monk of the Śākya clan [and] great scholar [Atiśa] Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna [(Tib. *dpal mar me mdzad ye shes*)]. May whatever merit arises from this result in the multitude of all beings—starting with my preceptor, teacher, father, and mother—obtaining the fruit of supreme knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

This is the scribal colophon of the original Sanskrit manuscript. It uses standard phrasing for an act of donation among Indian Buddhists,<sup>28</sup> and we can reconstruct the Sanskrit original on the basis of parallel examples: *\*deyadharmō 'yam pravaramahāyānāyāyinaḥ śākyasthaviramahāpaṇḍitadīpaṃkaraśrījñānasya. yad atra puṇyaṃ tad bhavatu ācāryopādhyāyamātāpitṛpūrvavaṅgamam kṛtvā sakalasattvarāśer anuttarajñānaphalāvāptaye*. This colophon specifies the donation of the Sanskrit manuscript as having been made by Atiśa, in whose possession it was.<sup>29</sup>

The colophon of the Sanskrit manuscript is followed by the Tibetan colophon, which mentions the patron of the translation, Sharaba Yöntandrak (Tib. Sha ra ba Yon tan grags, 1070–1141), along with the translators: Jayānanda (late 11th–early 12th century), Patsab Nyimadrak (Tib. Pa tshab Nyi ma grags, b. 1055), and Khu Dodeba (Tib. Khu mdo sde 'bar, late 11th to early 12th century).<sup>30</sup>

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rigs dpe skrung khang, 1994), no. 8: *rdo rje gdan nas spyan drangs pa'i brygad stong pa dang de'i 'grel pa.*

27 *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya*, Derge Tōhoku no. 3961, 198a4–5: *sbyin par bya ba'i chos 'di ni rab mchog theg pa chen po'i rjes su 'brang ba shā kya'i gnas brtan mkhas ba chen po dpal mar me mdzad ye shes kyi yin no / gang 'dir bsod nams su gyur pa de mkhan po dang slob dpon dang pha dang ma sngon du 'gro bar byas te / sems can gyi tshogs mtha' dag bla na med pa'i ye shes kyi 'bras bu thob par bya ba'i ched du gyur cig //*

28 See, for instance, Schopen, Gregory, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 21 (1979): 1–19.

29 The colophon does not mention any author, but Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet*, 471 ascribes authorship to Atiśa.

30 *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya*, Derge Tōhoku no. 3961, 198a5–7: *thub pa'i gsung rab rgya mtsho'i bdud rtsi'i bcud / ltung dang nyon mongs nad gso'i sman chen 'di / lnga bryga'i dus na bstan pa'i srog 'dzin pa / shā kya'i sras po yon tan grags pa yis / dpe med grong du sku 'khrungs rtsod dus kyi / mkhas pa rgyal ba kun dga' la gsol nas / ya rabs su spyod pa ma nyams dad*



The translation was done between Patshab's return to Tibet from Kashmir in ca. 1100 and Sharaba's passing in 1141. As we saw above, Atiśa's manuscripts were stored in Retreng, but according to the colophon the translation was done at Yage (Tib. Ya gad) monastery. This means that Sharaba borrowed the manuscript from Retreng. This is well attested in the *Blue Annals* (Tib. *Deb ther sngon po*):

[Sharaba] borrowed the *Sūtrasamuccaya* contained among Jobo's manuscripts preserved at Retreng, and acted as the patron of the translation, while the Kashmiri Jayānanda, the translator Patshab Nyimadrak, and Khu Dodeba translated it.<sup>31</sup>

(6) We find a reference to Atiśa's manuscript collection in the 12th or 13th century in Lechen's *History of the Kadam Tradition*:

When he [i.e. Sangye wöntön (Tib. Sangs rgyas dbon ston, ca. 1138–1210)] arrived at Retreng, he wished to see these manuscripts of the Jobo; and then Atiśa appeared to him in a dream and explained to him: 'This is so and so [...] and showed him all the manuscripts.'<sup>32</sup>

(7) In 1361, Butön Rinchen drub (Tib. Bu ston Rin chen grub, 1290–1364) borrowed the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Tārāmūlakalpa* (Derge Tōhoku no. 724) from Atiśa's collection in order to translate it. The translator's colophon runs:

*dang ldan / pa tshab ldong gi sa skor zhogs kyi stod / mkhas btsun 'byung gnas dam pas  
byin brlabs pa / dpal ldan ya gad gtsug lag khang chen du / skad gnyis smra la seng ge'i sgra  
sgrogs pa / shā kya'i dge slong nyi ma grags pa dang / khu yi ban de mdo sde 'bar gyis bsgyur  
/ des bskyed bsod nams zla ltar bsil ba yis / thub pa'i 'khor bzhi dang ni 'gro kun gyi / ltung  
dang nyon mongs gdung ba zhi gyur cig //*

31 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal, *Deb ther sngon po*, 332–333: *rwa sgrenng na mdo kun las btus pa jo bo'i phyag dpe la yod pa de blangs / 'gyur gyi sbyin bdag mdzad nas / kha che dza ma (sic) ya ā nanda dang / lo tsā ba pa tshab nyi ma grags dang / khu mdo sde 'bar rnams kyis bsgyur* / (It is possible that this passage is based on the statement of the colophon of the *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya*.) Cf. Hadano, *Chibetto Indogaku shūsei*, 109–110. Las chen's *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* attributes authorship of the *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya* to Śāntideva (ibid., 467–468: *ra sgrenng nas zhi ba lhas mdzad pa'i mdo kun las btus pa chen po'i rgya dpe blangs te 'gyur gyi sbyin bdag mdzad nas / kha che dza ya ā nanda dang / pa tshab nyi ma grags / khu mdo sde 'bar rnams kyis bsgyur bar mdzad /*

32 Las chen, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*, 264: *ra sgrenng du byon pa'i tshe jo bo'i phyag dpe 'di rnams gzigs dgongs tsa na / a ti sha rmi lam du byon nas 'di 'di skad bya ba yin gsungs nas / phyag dpe rnams cag ge bstan /*

[...] the monk of the Śākya clan, Rinchendrub, completely translated it on the fifteenth day of the first month of the *plava* year (1361), having borrowed Atiśa's manuscript from Retreng. The scribing of it was done by a monk of the Śākya clan, Sönamdrub [(Tib. bSod nams grub)], a attendant disciple [(Skt. *antenivāsin*)] of this great translator [...].<sup>33</sup>

(8) We can add the passage in Tāranātha's autobiography that refers to the Sanskrit manuscript of Ratnākaraśānti's *Hevajrapañjikā* and that of the *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra* seen by Tāranātha himself in Retreng in 1601 (see above). Some folios bear the following note: *bhaṅgalapaṇḍitabhikṣudīpaṅkaraśrījñānasya pustakaṃ*.

(9) In his list of Sanskrit manuscripts once preserved at Pökhang (Tib. sPos khang) monastery (prepared in the 1930s), Gendün chöpel mentions a manuscript (56×5cm) of a work titled *Great Sermon* (Tib. *Yongs kyi gtam*), which has a note at the bottom of one folio that runs: *bhikṣudīpaṅkaraśya pustakaṃ*.<sup>34</sup> The *bhikṣudīpaṅkara* may refer to Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna. This *Great Sermon* corresponds to a work titled *Parikathā* (57 fols., palm leaf) found in Sāṅkrtyāyana's list of Pökhang manuscripts.<sup>35</sup> However, neither Sāṅkrtyāyana's photograph of the manuscript preserved in Göttingen (labelled Xc14/42) nor Tucci's photograph preserved in Rome<sup>36</sup> contains the folio with the note.

In sum, examples (1) to (3) indicate that Atiśa's manuscript collection included not only manuscripts brought from Vikramaśīla but also ones obtained in Nepal or Central Tibet along the way. Examples (4), (5), (7) and (8) show

33 *Tārāmūlakalpa*, Derge Tōhoku no. 724, Tsha, 200a6–7: 'di ni jo bo chen po a ti sha'i phyag dpe rwa sgrenṅ nas dka' thub chen pos gdan drangṅ nas / shākya'i dge slong rin chen grub kyis 'phar ba'i lo cho 'phrul chen po rta'i zla ba'i tshes bcwa lnga la rdzogs par bsgyur ba'i yi ge pa ni lo tstsha ba chen po 'di nyid kyi zhabs drung du nye bar gnas pa / shākya'i dge slong bsod nams grub kyis bgyis so / paṇḍi ta la ma gtugs shiṅṅ / dpe dbaṅṅ 'grel pa ma rnyed pas / sgra don log par gyur srid na / mkhas pa rnamṅ kyis bcos par gsol / (I am grateful to Dr. Martin Delhey for this reference.)

34 dGe 'dun chos 'phel, *gSer thang*, 13: *yongs kyi gtam mdzad byang med pa dpe ring lnga thig ldebs nga drug longs pa 'di'i gsham du* (emended from *ga gsham du*) *bhikṣudīpaṅkaraśya pustakaṃ zhes jo bo'i phyag dpe yin zhes bris* / See also Thupten, and Lopez, *Grains of Gold*, 38.

35 Sāṅkrtyāyana, Rāhula, "Search for Sanskrit Mss. in Tibet," *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 24.4 (1938): 160.

36 Sferra, Francesco, "Sanskrit Texts from Giuseppe Tucci's Collection," in *Manuscripta Buddhica, Vol. 1: Sanskrit Texts from Giuseppe Tucci's Collection, Part 1*, ed. Francesco Sferra (Roma: ISIAO, 2008), 48; "Saddharmaparikathā" (ISIAO, MT 30–32).

that Atiśa's disciples, including Dromtön and Sharaba, and later scholars, such as Butön and Tāranātha, accessed and utilised manuscripts in the collection for their translations or revision of texts, such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya*, and *Tārāmūlakalpa*. From examples (7) and (8) especially we learn that Retreng was still functioning as a Sanskrit manuscript library (in 1361 and 1601) even after the Mongolian army's attack on the monastery in 1240.<sup>37</sup> Finally, example (9) indicates the possibility that Atiśa's manuscripts were preserved not only in Retreng but also in other locations. In section 6 of the present paper, we will evaluate the historicity of these examples. Further such examples arrived at in future studies will doubtless enlarge details.

#### 4 A Title List of the Manuscript Collection

From the abovementioned examples, we can conclude that Atiśa's collection of Sanskrit manuscripts was well stocked, but we still know quite little about its contents. We can gain a better idea of them, however, on the basis of the *Catalogue of Retreng Monastery* (Tib. *Rwa sgreng dkar chag*), compiled in 1989 by the Tibetan scholar Lhundrup chöpel (Tib. lHun grub chos 'phel). Though it has appeared only recently, it contains old and reliable information, for it is based on a manuscript of an anonymous old catalogue (Tib. *dkar chag*) and was collated with information supplied from other sources.<sup>38</sup> Lhundrup

37 'Jam dpal dge 'dun's *Rwa sgreng lo rgyus*, (p. 30) lists sacred objects of the monastery that escaped damage from the fire in 1240, but refrains from mentioning Sanskrit manuscripts: *rab byung bzhi pa'i lcags byi ste spyi lo 1240 lor sog dmag gis rwa sgreng lha khang mer bsreg kyang rten gtso 'jam dpal rdo rje dang / sgrol ma gsung byon ma gdung rten dngul gdugs can che chung gnyis dang sku thang bris ma sum cu lhag mes ma tshig par bdud rtsi'i zil pa khrom mer bzhugs pas kun gyi yid ches lhag par skyes zhing dad pa'i spu long dbang med du g.yos /*

38 lHun grub chos 'phel, *Rwa sgreng dgon pa'i dkar chag mthong ba don ldan dge legs nor bu'i bang mdzod* [Treasury of Auspicious Jewels that is Meaningful Merely at a Glance: Catalogue of Retreng Monastery] (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrung khang, 1994), 208–209: *ces dpal gyi 'byung gnas rwa sgreng rgyal ba'i dben gnas dang gtsug lag khang gi rten dang brten par bcas pa'i dkar chag mthong ba don ldan dge legs nor bu'i bang mdzod ces bya ba zhar byung dang bcas pa 'di sa 'brug lor (= 1988) stong sku bzhengs pa po gtso bor khur du bzung mkhan dge grags pa snyan grags lags dang / dge blo bzang brtson 'grus mam gnyis nas 'di lta bu zhig dgos zhes bskul ma yang yang byung zhing / rang nyid nas kyang sangs rgyas dngos dang ngo bo dbyer ma mchos pa pha bla ma bka' drin can de nyid kyis lo mang chos dang zang zung gnyis kyi sgo nas spyen 'bras ltar bskyangs par bka' drin*

chöpel mentions one of the sources by name: Drom Sherab mece's *A Statement about Retreng Monastery* (Tib. *Rwa sgreng gi bshad pa*), composed in ca. 1335.<sup>39</sup> The *Catalogue of Retreng Monastery* (Tib. *Rwa sgreng dkar chag*) is thus a valuable source that preserves information relating to the monastery before its destruction in 1967.

Both Drom Sherab mece and Lhundrup chöpel list religious supports/treasures (Tib. *rten*) once stored at Retreng, classifying them into sculptures/paintings (Tib. *sku rten*), scriptures (Tib. *gsung rten*), and *stūpas* (Tib. *thugs rten*). Under scriptures, Sherab mece (p. 288.5) mentions “books of the Jobo” but without supplying any details. Lhundrup chöpel (pp. 138–139), however, goes so far as to divide the collection into Indic and Tibetan volumes and present a title list of the Indic works (in the following table, left column = Tibetan title of text; right column = retranslation into Sanskrit; running numbers have been added by the present author):<sup>40</sup>

[A] <i>gsung rten ni /</i> <i>jo bo rje dpal ldan a ti sha yi rgya dpe'i</i> <i>gras su /</i>	[A] Scriptures: Indic manuscripts belonging to Joboje pelden Atiśa (Tib. Jo bo rje dpal ldan Atiśa): <i>Golden Cluster</i> (?) <i>Kṛṣṇayamāritantra</i> two <i>Hevajrasādhanas</i> an eulogy in 13 chapters <i>Cittānandapaṭī</i> a <i>Vajrayāna</i> commentary <i>Vajrapañjaratantra</i> (D <sup>41</sup> 419) <i>Aṣṭasāhasrikā</i> and a commentary on it from <i>Vajrāsana</i> (Bodhgaya)
1 <i>gser gyi snye ma</i>	
2 <i>dgra nag gi rgyud /</i>	
3 <i>kyai rdo rje'i sgrub thabs gnyis /</i>	
4 <i>bstod pa le'u bcu gsum pa /</i>	
5 <i>thugs dga' ba'i brjed byang /</i>	
6 <i>rdo rje theg pa'i 'grel pa /</i>	
7 <i>rdo rje gur gyi rgyud /</i>	
8 <i>rdo rje gdan nas spyang drangs pa'i</i> <i>brgyad stong pa dang de'i 'grel pa /</i>	

*rjes su gzo ba'i slad du / sngar gyi dkar chag rmying pa mdzad byang mi gsal ba bris ma zhig*  
*la gzhi bcol / gzhan nas kha gsab bgyi 'os rnam bsgrigs te stong sku'i dkar chag dang bcas*  
*pa phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa po ni dge mung lhun grub chos 'phel lam ming gzhan brag sgang*  
*blo bzang rdo rje dbyangs can legs bshad rgya mtshor 'bod pas / rab byung bcu bdun pa'i sa*  
*sbrul lo'i (= 1989) hor zla brgyad pa'i tshes nyer lnga dge ba'i nyin lha ldan sprul pa'i gtsug*  
*lag khang gi nye 'dabs su mjug yongs su rdzogs par sbyar ba'o // 'dis kyang sangs rgyas kyi*  
*bstan pa rin po che 'di nyid 'jig rten gyi khams su dar zhing rgyas la yun ring du gnas pa'i*  
*rgyur gyur cig / sarvamaṅgalaṃ /*

39 lHun grub chos 'phel, *Rwa sgreng dkar chag*, p. 90: 'di dag gi zhib cha ni 'brom shes rab ma  
[= me] lces mdzad pa'i dkar chag sogs las shes par bya zhing /

40 I am grateful to Prof. Dorji Wangchuk for this reference.

41 D = Derge Tōhoku no., *op cit.*

9 'grel pa dag ldan /	* <i>Śuddhimatī</i> (D 3801) <sup>42</sup>
10 tshad ma de kho na nyid kyi 'grel pa /	* <i>Tattva[samgraha]pañjikā</i>
11 dgra nag dka' 'grel /	<i>Kṛṣṇayamāripañjikā</i> (D 1921 or 1922)
12 'grel bshad chen mo /	<i>Great commentary</i> (?)
13 chos mngon pa mdzod /	<i>Abhidharmakośa</i>
14 shes rab snying po'i 'grel pa /	<i>Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya</i> commentary (D 3823?) <sup>43</sup>
15 dmyal ba nas 'don pa'i mdo /	* <i>Narakoddharaṇa</i> (D 1137?) <sup>44</sup>
16 dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bde (read dpe) gnyis rtsa 'grel /	two manuscripts of the <i>Guhyaśamāja</i> together with a commentary on it
17 ma hā ma ya'i 'grel pa	<i>Mahāmāyātantra</i> commentary (D 1622, 23 etc.)
sogs jo bo'i phyag dpe 'khrul med byin can du ma dang /	[...] and many other manuscripts that with certainty belonged to Jo bo [and so] confer blessing.
[B] lo tsā ba'i rgya dpe'i gras su /	[B] The Translator's Indic manuscripts
18 slob dpon dpa' bos mdzad pa'i skyes rabs /	Āryaśūra, <i>Jātakamālā</i> (D 4150)
19 sprin chen gyi mdo /	<i>Mahāmeghasūtra</i> (D 232)

42 Cf. Luo Zhao 罗焯, *Budala gong suozang beiyejing mulu* 布达拉宫所藏贝叶经目录 [A Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved at the Potala Palace], unpublished manuscript, 1985, 163 (82 fols., left ends burnt; Luo Zhao mentions that it is Ratnākaraśānti's *Abhisamayālamkāra* commentary). Dr. Luo Hong kindly informed me of the existence of a Sanskrit manuscript of Ratnākaraśānti's *Śuddhimatī* owned by Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna preserved on microfilm at the China Tibetology Research Center.

43 This was translated by "Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna" and "Nag tsho Tshul khrim rgyal ba" (Derge Tōhoku no. 3823, 317a7).

44 Cf. Luo Zhao 罗焯, *Luobulinka suozang beiyejing mulu, fu zhewasi xiancang beiyejing gaikuang* 羅布林卡所藏贝叶经目录, 附哲蚌寺現藏贝叶经概况 [A Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved at the Norbulingka, Together with an Appendix of a Survey of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved at Drepung monastery], unpublished manuscript, 1984, 21: "Narakaddharanastava" (for *Narakoddharaṇastava*).

20 'dod 'jo	<i>Kāmadhenu</i> (D 3067 or 4300) <sup>45</sup>
21 <i>chos yang dag par gsungs pa'i dpe</i> <i>chen drug</i>	six large manuscripts of the * <i>Dharmasaṃgīti</i> (cf. D 2374)
22 <i>dpal chen gyis zhus pa'i mdo /</i>	* <i>Mahāśrīyaparipṛcchā</i> (D 740 or 1005?)
23 <i>chos yang dag par brjod pa'i mdo /</i>	* <i>Dharmasaṃgītisūtra</i> (D 238?)
24 <i>tshad ma kun bstus kyi rtsa 'grel /</i>	<i>Pramāṇasamuccaya/vṛtti</i> (D 4203, 4204)
25 <i>sbyin pa la 'jug pa'i gtam /</i>	* <i>Dānaparikathā</i> ?
26 <i>sgom rim /</i>	<i>Bhāvanākrama</i>
27 <i>bsod nams kyi stobs brjod pa'i mdo /</i>	<i>Puṇyabalāvadāna</i> ? (D 347)
28 <i>theg chen gyi mdo bdun /</i>	seven Mahāyāna sūtras
29 <i>kyai rdo rje'i 'grel pa</i> <i>dpe tshan gnyis bcas 'di rnams ni lo tsā</i> <i>bas 'brom la phul ba'i phyag dpe byin</i> <i>can kho na'o //</i>	* <i>Hevajratantrapañjikā</i> [ <i>muktāvalī</i> ] These two groups of works, [A] and [B], are manuscripts given to Drom (Tib. 'Brom) by the Translator, all of which confer blessing.

According to the list, the collection breaks down into manuscripts that belonged to Atiśa [A] and ones that belonged to the “Translator” [B], and both [A] and [B] were at some point given to Dromtön by the Translator, who was probably Nagtso Tsültrim gyalwa (Tib. Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba, 1011–1064).<sup>46</sup>

In the list, some titles are yet to be identified, and the running numbers 1–29 assigned by the present author are only provisional.

(2 *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra* and 29 *Hevajrapañjikā*)

We have already seen these two manuscripts being mentioned as Atiśa's possessions in Tāranātha's autobiography and Gendün chöpel's *Grains of Gold* (Tib. *gSer gyi thang ma*).<sup>47</sup> The *Hevajrapañjikā* is very probably Ratnākaraśānti's *Muktāvalī* (as we will discuss below).

45 Derge Tōhoku no. 3061 is Nāgārjuna's *Kalyāṇakāmadhenu* (Sāṅkrtyāyana, “Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. in Tibet,” 46, no. 304; dGe 'dun chos 'phel, *gSer thang*, 16). Derge Tōhoku no. 4300 is Subhūticandra's *Amarakośa* commentary.

46 In biographies of Atiśa, the expression *lo tsā ba* or *dge bshes lo tsā ba* is usually used with reference to Nag tsho. If the Translator is indeed Nag tsho, he must have given the manuscripts to Dromtön before leaving Tibet in 1053.

47 Note that Lhundrup chöpel's list attributes the *Hevajrapañjikā* to the Translator.

(5 *Cittānandapaṭī*)

A Sanskrit manuscript of the same work *Memorandum about Pleasure* (Tib. *Thugs dga' ba'i rjed byang*) was photographed in Tibet by Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984), and the negatives are now preserved at ISIAO in Rome.<sup>48</sup> Its first folio has the above Tibetan title, which is virtually the same as the one in Lhundrup chöpel's list (except for the *b* in *brjed*) (no. 5). The colophon of the palm leaf gives *Cittānandapaṭī* or *Hṛdayānandapaṭī* as the Sanskrit title.<sup>49</sup> However, it is unclear whether or not this palm-leaf manuscript is identical with the one once preserved at Retreng.<sup>50</sup>

(8 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and the commentary on it from *Vajrāsana*)

The Tibetan translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* was revised six times: by Subhūtiśīrī and Rinchen Zangpo, by Atiśa and Rinchen Zangpo, by Atiśa and Dromtön, twice by Dromtön alone, and by Ngo Loden sherab.<sup>51</sup> This manuscript (no. 8) is possibly the one utilised for the revision by Atiśa and Dromtön. Moreover, as seen above, Sāṅkrtyāyana was informed by the regent (Tib. *Thub bstan 'jam dpal ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*) that there was “a half-burnt copy of the *Prajñā-pāramitā*” at Retreng.<sup>52</sup> “The commentary on it,” be it either Haribhadra's *Ālokā* or Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā*, may be the “Magadha commentary” (Tib. *yul dbus kyi 'grel pa*)<sup>53</sup> utilised by Atiśa and Rinchen Zangpo for their revision of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* translation.

(10 *Tattva[samgraha]pañjikā*)

This Sanskrit reconstruction from the *Commentary on [the Compendium of] Reality of Pramāṇa* (Tib. *Tshad ma de kho na nyid kyi 'grel pa*) is provisional.

48 Sfera, “Sanskrit Texts,” 51, No. 3.2.15, MT 80 (where the photographing took place is unknown).

49 The colophon (fol. 18r4) runs: *iti cittānandapaṭī yasyāṃ pañcadaśamaḥ paricchedaḥ samāptah // śrīmat-nāgārījunaḥṛdayānandapaṭī samāptā* / I am grateful to Prof. Francesco Sfera for permitting me to use the ISIAO material.

50 The palm-leaf manuscript photographed by Tucci is currently preserved at Norbulingka: *Luo Zhao Catalogue*, Norbulingka, Kanjur, 34, No. 10-4 “Cittānandapaṭī.”

51 See 3 (4), above.

52 Sāṅkrtyāyana, “Sanskrit Palm-Leaf Mss. in Tibet,” 25.

53 See the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* colophon, Derge Tōhoku no. 12, 286a2–3: *slad kyis rgya gar gyi mkhan po paṅḍita chen po dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna dang / zhu chen gyi lo tsṭsha ba dge slong rin chen bzang pos yul dbus kyi 'grel pa dang gtugs nas bcos shing zhus te gtan la phab /*

According to Ja Düldzinpa (Tib. Bya 'Dul 'dzin pa), Atiśa brought a Sanskrit manuscript of Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha* to Tibet, and it was preserved at Retreng:

Furthermore, [Atiśa] was also completely familiar with the tradition of Ācārya Śāntarakṣita. He had brought along Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha* treatise and tried to translate it, but did not complete it. The Indic manuscript is said to be preserved at Retreng.<sup>54</sup>

Kamalaśīla's *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* was also probably among the collection.<sup>55</sup>

(16 *Two manuscripts of the Guhyasamāja together with a commentary on it*)

Tāranātha, in his *Pañcakrama* commentary, mentions a Sanskrit manuscript that once belonged to Atiśa (Tib. *dpal ldan a ti sha'i rgya dpe*), and this is identified as a *Guhyasamājatantra* manuscript by van der Kuijp and McKeown.<sup>56</sup>

(25 *sByin pa la 'jug pa'i gtam*)

In the previous section (9), we encountered a Sanskrit manuscript from an anonymous *parikathā* collection (57 fols., palm leaf) photographed by Sāṅkṛtyāyana and Tucci at Pökhang (Tib. sPos khang). This work contains several sermons (Skt. *parikathā*) for lay Buddhists, including a *Dānaparikathā* “a sermon on giving”.<sup>57</sup> According to Gendün chöpel, this Pökhang manuscript

54 Bya 'Dul ba 'dzin pa, *Jo bo rnam thar*, 383,2–3: *gzhan yang slob dpon zhi ba 'tsho'i lugs kyang ma lus par mkhyen te / zhi ba mtsho'i bstan bcos de kho na nyid bsdus pa bya ba bod du bsnam nas byon nas bsgyur bar bzhed pa la ma grub par rgya dpe rwa sgren na bzhugs gsung* / A similar passage is found in the *rNam thar rgyas pa* by mChims (§82). See Kano, “Rāhula,” p. 148, n. 84.

55 The China Tibetology Research Center has fragments of the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* from the Potala manuscripts. See Luo Zhao, *Budala gong*, 135–136; Li Xuezhong 李学竹, “Abhidharmadīpa no jobun ni tsuite アビダルマディーパの序文について [Newly Available Opening Verses of the Abhidharmadīpa],” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究 [Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies] 62.1 (2013): 151.

56 van der Kuijp and McKeown, *Bcom ldan ral gri*, xiv. Tāranātha, *Rim lnga'i 'grel chen*, vol. 52, 89: *byin sngags sa bon dang bcas pa de nyid gsum spel lam / lnga spel du byed pa ni snying po yin zhing / phat dang spel ba yang dpal ldan a ti sha'i rgya dpe la mngon sum du mthong bas nor pa'o zhes smra bar mi nus so //*

57 The opening part of the *Dānaparikathā* runs: *tatra dānaparikathaiṣaṃ prastotavyā* (Göttingen Xc14/42, fol. 9r, cf. Sāṅkṛtyāyana 1938: 160–162). There is another work with



has the inscription at bottom (not found in photographs): *bhikṣudīpaṃkarasya pustakaṃ*.

(26 *Bhāvanākrama*)

Two Sanskrit manuscripts of Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama* are known of: The *First Bhāvanākrama*, once preserved at Zhalu Riphuk (Tib. Zhwa lu Ri phug),<sup>58</sup> and the *Third Bhāvanākrama*, gifted to Russian emperor Nicholas II (Nikolai Aleksandrovich Romanov, r. 1894–1917) by Dalai Lama XIII (1876–1933) via the Buryat monk Agvan Dorjiev (1854–1938) (today preserved at the Russian Academy Library).<sup>59</sup> The former was seen at Zhalu Riphuk in the 1930s by Tucci and Sāṅkrtyāyana, and the latter was handed to Dorjiev at the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>60</sup> The latter is a paper manuscript of probably the 12th or 13th century (dated paleographically); photographic images of it are contained

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the same title, *sByin pa'i gtam (Dānaparikathā, D 4161)*, in the Tanjurs. See also Hahn, Michael, and Saito, Naoki, "Pseudo-Nāgārjuna's Sermon about Giving (Dānaparikathā)," in: *Wading into the Stream of Wisdom: Essays in honor of Leslie S. Kawamura*, ed. Haynes, Sarah F., and Michelle J. Sorensen (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013).

- 58 Sāṅkrtyāyana, Rāhula, "Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. in Tibet," *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 23.1 (1937): 39, no. 267, Sferra, "Sanskrit Texts," 46, no. 3.1.37 (MT 42).
- 59 Obermiller, Eugene Evgenyevich, "A Sanskrit Ms. from Tibet—Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*," *The Journal of the Greater India Society* 2.1 (1935): 3–4: "The Asiatic Museum of the Academy of Sciences at Leningrad possesses a small Sanskrit ms., a gift of the late Dalai Lama, which has been brought from Tibet by the Tshan-ñid Khambo (mtshan-ñid mkhan-po) Agvan (Nag-dbañ) Dorjeyin or Dorjeev, the Head Lama of the Buriat and the Kalmuk Buddhists."
- 60 Matsuda Kazunobu 松田和信, "Dalailama 13 sei kizō no ichiren no nepālu kei shahon ni tsuite: yugaron shōkechakubun bonbun dankan hakkenki ダライラマ 13 世寄贈の一連のネパール系写本について—『瑜伽論』「撰決択分」梵文段簡発見記 [Series of Nepalese Sanskrit Manuscripts Gifted by Dalai Lama XIII: A Find of Sanskrit Fragments from the Viniścayasamgrahaṇī of the *Yogācārabhūmi*]," *Nihon chibettogakkai kaihō* 日本西蔵学会会報 [Report of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies] 34 (1988): 16–20. Dorjiev met Nicholas II in 1898 for the first time. Dalai Lama XIII's offerings of gifts to Nicholas II via Dorjiev took place in August 1900, on 23 June 1901, and in 1908 and 1912 (cf. Tanase Jirō 棚瀬慈郎, "Dorjiev jiden ドルジエフ自伝," [Japanese Translation of Dorjiev's Autobiography] *Ningen bunka: Shiga kenritsu daigaku ningenbunka gakubu kenkūhōkoku* 人間文化: 滋賀県立大学人間文化学部研究報告 17 (2005): 14–23; 18: 29–38.

Retreng's Sanskrit manuscripts were probably given to Nicholas II in August 1900, and were likely reciprocated with Dorjiev's offering of cloth coverings for canonical scriptures at Retreng in January 1901.

in the publication by Obermiller.<sup>61</sup> Three or four letters in both the right and left margins have broken off.<sup>62</sup> This paper manuscript is very likely the manuscript once preserved at Retreng (no. 26 above), as we shall discuss in the next paragraph.

## 5 Identifying the Current Location of the Collection

We have gained a rough idea of the contents of the collection from Lhundrup chöpel's list and other historical sources. Are the manuscripts still in existence somewhere? If so, can we locate them?

As Steinkellner notes, the Chinese army brought religious treasures from local monasteries to Lhasa in Tibet during the 1960s.<sup>63</sup> Sanskrit manuscripts

61 Obermiller, Eugene Evgenyevich, *Kamalaśīla Bhāvanākrama: Traktat o sozercanii* (Moscow: Izdat. Vostočnoj Literatuy, 1963).

62 Before the text of the *Bhāvanākrama*, there is a passage in the beginning part of the first folio (1v1): *ya / ity api sa bhagavāṃs tathāgato rhan samyaksambuddho vidyācaraṇasampannaḥ sugato lokavid anuttaraḥ puruṣadamyasārathih śāstā devānāṃ ca manuṣyānāṃ ca buddho bhagavān* // This is a stock phrase found in the *Dīvyavadāna* etc.

Tucci, who edited the *Third Bhāvanākrama*, said that he used a Sanskrit manuscript different from the one published by Obermiller (*Kamalaśīla Bhāvanākrama*), but his assertion is probably mistaken (as pointed out by Yuyama Akira 湯山明, "Review: Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, Part III: *Third Bhāvanākrama*. Roma: ISMEO, 1971," *Indo Iranian Journal* 17.3–4 (1975): 268); the *Third Bhāvanākrama* is a *codex unicus*.

63 Steinkeller, Ernst, *A Tale of Leaves: On Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibet: Their Past and their Future* (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2004), 20–23. According to Luo Zhao, "The Cataloguing of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved in the TAR: A Complicated Process that has Lasted More Than Twenty Years," in *Sanskrit Manuscripts from China: Proceedings of a Panel at the 2008 Beijing Seminar on Tibetan Studies October 13 to 17*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner, Duan Qing, and Helmut Krasser (Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2009), 229, some Sanskrit manuscripts of Sakya (Tib. Sa skya) were moved to Lhasa in 1962. The catalogue by Luo Zhao lists two Sanskrit manuscripts brought from Sakya (Northern Sa skya?) on 18 August 1976 (Luo Zhao, *Luobulinka*, 66, 106). It also lists manuscripts from Gorum temple (Tib. sGo rum lha khang) of Sakya (a temple in the Northern complex) currently preserved at Norbulingka and Drepung (*ibid.*, pp. 91, 130; cf. pp. 41, 64–65). On the other hand, Sanskrit manuscripts of Chagpe temple (Tib. Phyag dpe lha khang) in Sakya South (Tib. Lha khang chen mo), which was left undestroyed during the Cultural Revolution, seem to still be in Sakya today. For a list of manuscripts preserved in Gorum temple and Chagpe temple in the 1930s, see Sāṅkṛtyāyana, "Sanskrit Palm-Leaf Mss. in Tibet," 42–43; Sāṅkṛtyāyana, "Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. in Tibet," 21–32; dGe 'dun chos 'phel, *gSer thang*, 28–30. For photographic images of Sakya manuscripts preserved at ISIAO, see Sferra, "Sanskrit Texts," 48–50.

were moved to the Potala palace and Norbulingka, and catalogued by Luo Zhao in the 1980s.<sup>64</sup>

In Luo Zhao's catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts preserved in the Potala (compiled in July 1985), we find a reference to manuscript boxes (Chin. *han* 函) labelled 'Retreng' (Tib. *Rwa sgreng*). These indeed contain the manuscripts in question. The catalogue lists two boxes with the labels: (A) *Mahāyāna sūtras* and (B) *Mahāyāna śāstras*. They are currently not accessible, but we do learn some important information about them from Luo Zhao's descriptions in his catalogues.

### 5.1 *Paper Sanskrit Manuscripts of the Potala Originally from Retreng*

#### (Box A)

According to Luo Zhao, box A contains 191 folios (8 lines per folio) from paper manuscripts 68×8.4cm in size, written in 'Gupta script' (Chin. *jiduo wenzi* 笈多文字), and damaged by fire at their left edges (1/6 of the manuscript). A white piece of cloth attached to the box's surface bears the number 'no. 91' (Chin. 91 hao 号); a yellow wrapping cloth has the note "Here are Jo bo rje's monastic robe and book stand" (Tib. *jo bo rje'i sku chos snam sbyar dang / shog ka li bcas bzugs //*). A note on the box runs: *nga / 'phags pa sprin chen po'i mdo sogs / dha ri ka / rgyu 'brug shog (rwa sgreng)*. This means that the box is labelled with the letter *nga* (i.e. the fourth box), it contains the *Mahāmeghasūtra* etc., the paper of the manuscripts in it is Bhutanese,<sup>65</sup> and it was brought from Retreng. The catalogue lists five texts in the box:

64 For the *Luo Zhao Catalogue*, see Luo Zhao, "The Cataloguing of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved in the TAR," 225–233; Matsuda Kazunobu 松田和信, "Afghanistan shahon kara mita daijō bukkyō: daijōbukkyō siryōron ni kaete アフガニスタン写本からみた大乘仏教—大乘仏教資料論に代えて [Mahāyāna Buddhism as Seen on the Basis of Manuscripts from Afghanistan: In Lieu of Materials for Mahāyāna Studies]," *Sirizu daijōbukkyō* シリーズ大乘仏教 [Series Mahāyāna Buddhism] 1 (2011): 151–184. Some 379 titles listed were extracted from the unpublished catalogues by Luo Zhao for a list of Tibetan Sanskrit manuscripts published in *Dhīh*, *Journal of Rare Buddhist Texts* (no reference to author), "Tibbat meṃ upalabdha bauddha evaṃ bauddhetara saṃskṛta pāṇḍulipiyoṃ kī sūci [A List of Buddhist and Other Sanskrit MSS in Tibet]," *Dhīh* [*Journal of Rare Buddhist Texts*] 41 (2006): 159–182 (along with 216 titles extracted from the following catalogue: Wang Seng 王森, *Minzu tushuguan zang fanwen beiyejing mulu* 民族図書館藏梵文贝叶经目录 [Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved in the China Ethnic Library] (no place, 1985), published as an appendix to Hu-von Hinüber 2006).

65 Bhutanese paper is made from daphne. Its use spread in Tibet as the writing base for Buddhist scriptures from the Tibetan imperial period on.

- (1) *Āryagaganagañjapariprcchā nāma mahāyānasūtra*, 34 fols.
  - (2) *Āryamahāmegha nāma mahāyānasūtra*, 40 fols.
  - (3) title unknown, 12 fols.
  - (4) title unknown, 98 fols. (→ *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*)
  - (5) *Guṇāparyantastotra*, 1 fol.
- (Extracted from the *Luo Zhao Catalogue*, Potala, Kanjur, pp. 1–5, no. 1)

(1) The *Gaganagañja* and (2) *Mahāmegha* are Mahāyāna *sūtras* important for an understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha* and related doctrine, and the Sanskrit originals are unknown elsewhere. The second of the two matches up with no. 19 of Lhundrup chöpel's list: *Sūtra of Great Cloud* (Tib. *sPrin chen gyi mdo*). According to Luo Zhao, (3) has a colophon that contains the words: *mahāpaṇḍitaśākyasthaviradīpaṅkaraśrījñāna*.<sup>66</sup> Although Luo Zhao does not transcribe the entire colophon, the passage clearly indicates that the manuscript was in Atiśa's possession. Moreover, Atiśa's title *mahāpaṇḍitaśākyasthavira* corresponds with that found in the colophon of the Tibetan translation of the *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya*, as we saw above: *shā kya'i gnas brtan mkhas ba chen po dpal mar me mdzad ye shes kyi yin no* (D 3961, 198a4).

According to Luo Zhao, the first page of (4) bears Tibetan script: "Here is a Mahāyāna *śāstra*" (Tib. *theg pa chen po bstan bcos 'jog pa*), and Matsuda, basing himself on catalogue descriptions (such as the number of folios, format, chapter colophons), identifies these 98 folios as part of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*.<sup>67</sup>

Previously, Matsuda identified 12 of 24 folios (i.e. fols. 13–25) from the Sanskrit paper manuscripts gifted to Nicholas II by Dalai Lama XIII (preserved at the Russian Academy; see above) as being part of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*.<sup>68</sup> Later Matsuda pointed out that these 12 folios and the 98 folios of text (4), in the Potala, are two parts of the same manuscript, and thus come from the same

66 Luo Zhao, *Budala gong*, 3–4: "經尾梵文題記中有大班智達釋迦尊者燃燈吉祥智的苗字—*mahāpaṇḍitaśākyasthavira dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna* (藏文的 *paṇ chen shā kya rje btsun di paṅka ra dpal gyi shes rab l*), 此即著名的阿提峽 (*a ti sha*) 大師" (sic).

67 See Luo Zhao 罗焯, trans. Matsuda, Kazunobu 松田和信, "Chibetto jichiku ni hozon sareta bonbunshahon no mokuroku hensan: sono nijū uyonen no uyokyokusetsu チベット自治区に保存された梵文写本の目録編纂—その二十有余年の紆余曲折 [The Cataloguing of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved in the Tibetan Autonomous Region: a Complicated Process of More Than 20 Years by Luo Zhao]", *Bukkyōgaku seminā* 佛教学セミナー [Buddhist Seminar] 88 (2008): 128–117 and Matsuda, "Afghanistan shahon," 179–180.

68 Matsuda, "Dalailama 13 sei." A critical edition of the folios is under preparation by Matsuda in collaboration with Jowita Kramer and Jinkyoun Choi.

bundle. As he goes on to note, the 12 folios ( $\approx$  Taishō vol. 30, pp. 589b19–600c10) are probably followed by the 98 folios (which contain other parts of the same text, pp. 609b10, 611a17, 646b3–4).<sup>69</sup> From this we can deduce that both the 12 folios in Russia and the 98 folios in the Potala were originally preserved at Retreng.

We may further speculate whether the rest of the paper folios in the Russian Academy also come from Retreng. According to Matsuda, the set of manuscripts in the Russian Academy contains the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* (3 fols.), the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* (12 fols.), the *Samantabhadracaryānirdeśaparivarta* of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* (1 fol.), and the *Third Bhāvanākrama* (8 fols.).<sup>70</sup> They have all the same format (paper manuscripts with a similar script), their edges have been damaged by fire, and their folio size is about 56×8.5cm.<sup>71</sup>

Judging from Luo Zhao's description, the Potala manuscripts (1) to (5) have very similar and unmistakable characteristics relating to format and physical state (fire damage). The difference in width between the Russian (56×8.5cm) and Potala manuscripts (68×8.4cm) has probably resulted from different degrees of damage suffered at their edges.

Based on these considerations, the *Bhāvanākrama* manuscript in Lhundrup chöpel's list (no. 26) probably corresponds to the *Third Bhāvanākrama* (8 fols.) of the Russian Academy.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* among the Russian manuscripts is possibly the manuscript copied by Atiśa at Pekarling (Tib. dPe dkar gling) in Samye<sup>73</sup> (or else a copy of it). Accordingly, the 24 manuscript folios in Russia

69 Matsuda, "Afghanistan shahon." See Luo Zhao, *Budala gong*, 4: "skandhavastukauśalyaṃ, dhātuvastukauśalyaṃ, śiṣṭiviniścaya, [...] gurulāghavaṃcayāpacayayogaśvaphalajanmaviniścaya (for gurulāghavaṃ | cayāpacayayogaś ca phalajanmaviniścayaṃ ||)." The first two correspond to Taishō, vol. 30, 609b10 ( $\approx$  D 4308, 77b7) and *ibid.*, 611a17 ( $\approx$  D 82a3), and the last to an *uddāna* in *ibid.*, 636b3–4 ( $\approx$  D 146b2).

70 Matsuda, "Dalailama 13 sei" and "Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī: bonbun tekusuto to wayaku *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*—梵文テキストと和訳— [The Sanskrit Text and a Japanese Translation of the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*]," *Bukkyōdaigaku sōgōkenkyūjo kiyō* 佛教大学総合研究所紀要 [Bulletin of the Research Institute of Bukkyō University] 3 (1996): 89–113 (Mironov, Ms. Ind. VII, 23). The first three works were identified by Matsuda.

71 See Matsuda, "Dalailama 13 sei" and "Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī," 92. Images of 16 of the 24 folios have not been published; according to Prof. Matsuda, all 24 folios are similar in format and script. I am grateful to Prof. Matsuda for the information and for showing me photographic images of the *Samantabhadracaryānirdeśaparivarta*.

72 If so, the list reflects the situation at Retreng before the beginning of the 20th century (when the *Bhāvanākrama* manuscript was given to Russia).

73 mChims Nam mkha' grags, *rNam thar rgyas pa*, §319.

very probably come from Retreng. Some folios of the Retreng collection, then, would have been gifted to Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, while other folios were transferred to the Potala some time before 1967 (the year of the monastery's destruction).

(Box B)

According to Luo Zhao, box B contains 155 folios from paper manuscripts 64.5×8.5 cm in dimensions (10 lines per folio) written in Dhārikā script; a quarter of the right edges and some left edges have been damaged by fire.

This is labelled 'no. 091' (Chin. 091 hao 号) on a piece of white cloth attached to the outside, while on a piece of paper attached to the box is written: *ga // dgyes pa'i rdo rje'i 'grel pa sogs / dha ri ka / rgyu 'brug shog (rwa sgrenng)*. This means that the box is labelled 'Ga' (i.e. the third box) and contains the *Hevajrapañjikā* etc. written in Dhārikā script on Bhutanese paper; the manuscript itself was brought from Retreng. The label of box A ('Nga') means that it was the fourth box. We do not know the total number of boxes, but we can at least be sure that there were two boxes labelled 'Ka' and 'Kha' (the first and second ones).<sup>74</sup> According to Luo Zhao, box B contains sixteen texts:

- (1) *Nyāyamukha*, 5 fols.
- (2) *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā*, 12 fols.<sup>75</sup>
- (3) *Vyākhyāsaṃbandhavicārabhāṣya*, 8 fols.
- (4) *Hetubinduṭikā*, 31 fols.
- (5) *Nyāyabindoḥ śiṣyahitā nāma ṭikā*, 14 fols.
- (6) *Nyāyahṛdayakārikā*, 7 fols.
- (7) *Ṣaṃbandhaparīkṣākārikā*, 3 fols.
- (8) *Santānāntarasiddhi nāma prakaraṇa*, 2 fols.
- (9) *Santānāntarasiddhiṭikā*, 6 fols.
- (10) *Nyāyapraveśaka*, 2 fols.
- (11) *Nyāyabindu*, 3 fols.

74 Whether or not it belongs to the same series, there is a bundle of palm leaves (219 folios) marked volume 'Cha' listed in the catalogue by Luo Zhao (*Budala gong*, 64: "cha / rgya dpe").

75 Ye, Shaoyong 葉少勇, "A Preliminary Survey of Sanskrit Manuscripts of Madhyamaka Texts Preserved in the Tibet Autonomous Region," in *Sanskrit Manuscripts in China. Proceedings of a Panel at the 2008 Beijing Seminar on Tibetan Studies, October 13 to 17*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner, Duan Qing, and Helmut Krasser (Beijing: 2008), 316–317 discuss the details of the manuscript based on the description in Luo Zhao's catalogue.

- (12) *Pramāṇaviniścayakārikā*, 2 fols.  
 (13) *Hevajrasya yoginītantrarājasya pañjikā*, 27 fols.  
 (14) *Hevajre smṛtinīrvartana*, 12 fols.  
 (15) *Hevajre smṛtinīrvartana*, 20 fols.  
 (16) Title unknown, 1 fol.<sup>76</sup>

Here, too, we find precious works hitherto unavailable in the Sanskrit original. For the moment, however, we shall just focus on titles relevant to Atiśa's manuscripts.

The *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* was translated by Atiśa and Nagtsho in Trulnang (Tib. 'Phrul snang) monastery in Lhasa,<sup>77</sup> with (2) probably being the manuscript utilised by them.

As for (13), Luo Zhao presents its Tibetan title (probably transcribing a note on the title page of the manuscript): "the *Hevajrapañjikā muktāvalī*, composed by [Ratnākara]śānti" (Tib. *shan ti bas mdzad pa'i kye'i rdo rje'i 'grel pa mu tig phreng ba*). We have already seen, as stated by Lhundrup chöpel, and by his source (Tāranātha in his autobiography), and on the basis of Lhundrup chöpel's list, that this work was in Atiśa's manuscript collection.

The damaged condition of the manuscripts in boxes A and B is strikingly in conformity with Tāranātha's 17th-century description of them,<sup>78</sup> and also with Retreng Rinpoche's (Tib. Rwa sgreng Rin po che) in the 20th century.<sup>79</sup> The clearly burnt edges are seen in black-and-white images of the *Third Bhāvanākrama* manuscript (preserved in the Russian Academy) published by Obermiller (fig. 3.2).

Obermiller describes the manuscript material as "grey Tibetan paper";<sup>80</sup> Luo Zhao calls it "Bhutanese paper" (Tib. 'brug shog), which is also often grey. From these reports, we learn that the Russian and Potala manuscripts were written on a similar type of paper. Closer investigations (e.g. a comparison of their physical properties, including a scientific analysis of their microscopic

76 The list is extracted from the Luo Zhao's catalogue (*Budala gong*, 68–80, no. 21).

77 Derge Tōhoku no. 3855, 40b6–7: *ra sa 'phrul snang gi gtsug lag khang gi gzhir / rgya gar gyi mkhan po dī paṃ ka ra shrī dznyā na'i zhal snga nas dang / lo tstsha ba dge slong tshul khrims rgyal bas bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o //*

78 Tāranātha, *bDag nyid kyi rnam thar*, vol. 1, 164: *rgya dpe me thub ma rnams kyi rten mjal byas pas [...]*

79 Sāṅkrtyāyana, *Meri Jīvan Yātrā*, vol. 2, 247, 252.

80 Obermiller, "A Sanskrit Ms. from Tibet," 4: "The said ms. consists of eight leaves, grey Tibetan paper, in Nepalese characters, very legible and correct, the number of mistakes being quite insignificant. The edges of the leaves are singed, but the damage is not considerable (usually not more than 3 or 4 letters are wanting from both sides)."

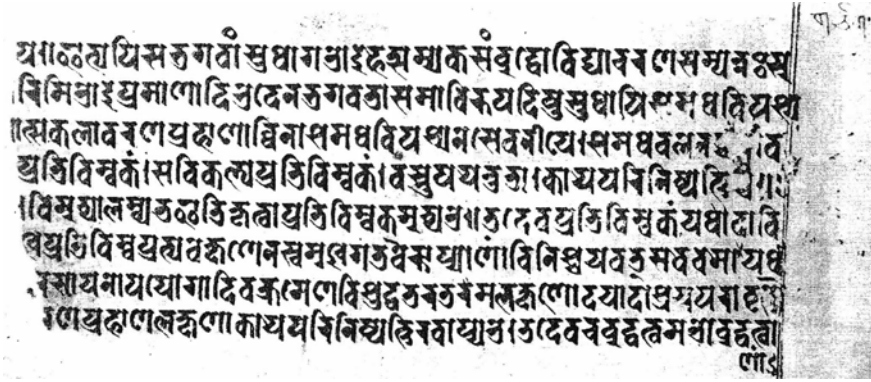


FIGURE 3.2 *Burnt edge of the Third Bhāvanākrama paper manuscript, fol. iv, left column.*  
From: Obermiller, *Kamalaśīla Bhāvanākrama*.

fibres) ought to confirm their relation once the two sets of manuscripts or photographic images of them become accessible.<sup>81</sup>

(*The Aṣṭasāhasrikā manuscript from Vajrāsana*)

The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Vajrāsana mentioned by the regent of Retreng (see above) and in Lhundrup chöpel's list (No. 8) is also found in the Potala manuscript list: According to the catalogue by Luo Zhao, the manuscript (palm leaf, 208 fols.)<sup>82</sup> has a Tibetan note on the first

81 The China Tibetology Research Center has not photographed the paper manuscripts of the Potala (see Matsuda, "Afghanistan shahon," 180). Recently all Sanskrit manuscripts in the Tibetan Autonomous Region are said to have been photographed and printed in 61 volumes. Even if this is true, these latter do not seem to be accessible. Cf. Harrison, Paul, and Hartmann, Jens-Uwe, *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), xiv–xv.

82 Luo Zhao notes its details: 090 号, 5.7×5.7cm, Gupta script, 6 lines per folio; the last folio has a Tibetan note: *mkha' rnam's gzi'gs pa'i ma rkyen du / mtshan 'di su'i yin zhe na bdag sgra pa chos kyi rgyal po'o /*

In the Potala collection there is a *Śatasāhasrikā* manuscript from Vajrāsana which has the Tibetan postscript: *sher phyin stong phra [= phrag] brgya pa 'di'i glegs bam dang po rdo rje gdan / gnyis pa zha lu ri phug na / gsum pa 'di'o / bzhi pa ni / e waṃ chos ldan bla brang na'o / kun kyang dad po sa skya nas /* (Luo Zhao, *Luobulinka*, 72).



folio: “Jobo’s sacred object; Indic *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* [manuscript] from Vajrāsana” (Tib. *jo bo’i thugs dam / rgya gar brgyad stong pa / rdo rje gdan nas byon pa*).<sup>83</sup>

## 6 Evaluating the Historicity of Atiśa’s Ownership

In this section I shall briefly discuss whether or not the Sanskrit manuscripts actually ever belonged to Atiśa.

The belief had no doubt arisen by the 12th century that the collection of Sanskrit manuscripts had indeed once belonged to Atiśa, as can be gathered from accounts by Butön, Lechen (in Sangye wöntön’s story), and Tāranātha (see section 3, [6]–[8]). These references confirm the existence of such a belief after Atiśa’s death, but do not answer the question whether or not it was based on historical fact.

Concerning the historicity of Atiśa’s ownership, we can classify the relevant materials utilised in the present paper into three groups of varying reliability:

- (a) statements in Tibetan historical sources (e.g. biographies of Atiśa) that describe individual events (e.g. Dromtön’s coming into possession of Atiśa’s manuscripts, the prophecy received by Dromtön in a dream);
- (b) marginal notes written on Sanskrit manuscripts that mention Atiśa’s ownership of them; and
- (c) colophons of Sanskrit manuscripts that certify Atiśa’s ownership.

With regard to group (a), covering passages quoted in sections 2.1; 2.2; 3, [1]–[4], we have—for all the sense of truth Tibetan authors of historical literature are able to convey from their individual subjective viewpoints or religious persuasion—hardly any external supporting evidence that would verify the historicity of the claims. I myself shall tentatively accept these statements as reflecting (or linking to) historical fact (sometimes mixed up with inventions) as long as no convincing counter-evidence emerges. Of the three groups, group (a) comprises the weakest witnesses.

(b) Notes attached to Sanskrit manuscripts are probably more reliable evidence supporting Atiśa’s possession of the manuscripts: The Sanskrit manuscript of Ratnākaraśānti’s *Hevajrapañjikā* (see section 2, [a] and section 3, [8]), the *\*Parikathā* (see section 3, [9]; cf. section 4, 25), and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (see section 5, the last item) respectively have respective notes: *bhaṅgalapaṇḍitabhikṣudīpaṃkaraśrīñānasya pustakam*, *bhikṣudīpaṃkarasya pustakam*, and *jo bo’i*

83 Luo Zhao, *Budala gong*, 73.

*thugs dam*. The last one, on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* manuscript, is obviously a later addition by a Tibetan hand. In the cases of the *Hevajrapañjikā* and *\*Parikathā*, the notes are written at the bottom of the manuscripts, and this again suggests that they were added later, but the question about the person who added them remains open (i.e. we do not know whether they were added by Atiśa or a direct disciple of his or by someone else at a later time). Accordingly, the materials of group (b) are relatively reliable indicators that Atiśa did indeed own the manuscripts, but they cannot be called rock-solid ones.

The last group (c) comprises colophons that establish Atiśa's possession. They are the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya* (section 3, [5]) and that of an unknown work preserved in the Potala (section 5, Box A, [3], 12 fols.). We may add the Sanskrit manuscript of Ratnākaraśānti's *Śuddhimatī*, whose colophon has the name of Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (see section 4, [9] and footnote 43).<sup>84</sup> Compared with materials of the other two groups ([a] and [b]), these colophons provide the most reliable evidence for establishing the historicity of Atiśa's ownership.<sup>85</sup>

## 7 Conclusion

We have seen the first fruitless attempts to access the Sanskrit manuscripts of Retreng by Ekai Kawaguchi in 1914 and Sāṅkrṭyāyana and Gendün chöpel in 1934. Gendün chöpel nevertheless drew attention to some important facts: in Retreng, Tāranātha saw manuscripts that had belonged to Atiśa, some of which were sent back to India after Atiśa's death. The first fact is stated in Tāranātha's autobiography, and the second in biographies of Atiśa. Furthermore, we also find documents telling of Dromtön's acquisition of Atiśa's Sanskrit manuscripts in 1054 and their being deposited in Retreng in 1056.

84 I am grateful to Dr. Luo Hong for having supplied this information.

85 Of course, we cannot completely exclude the possibility that some unknown person later added the colophon in order to attribute the ownership of the manuscripts to Atiśa, but it would be highly unnatural for someone to add completely new sentences to the colophon of some of Atiśa's most precious religious possessions. In general, authorship mentioned in a colophon of a work is sometimes a later attribution, whereas ownership of the manuscript appearing in a colophon is more reliable. It is necessary to question critically the historicity of a wide range of statements in Tibetan historical literature, but at the same time one should avoid excessive skepticism as offering its own pitfalls.

We have pointed out, based on relevant passages scattered in historical sources that Retreng is on record as having possessed a large collection of Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet from the 11th to the 17th century.

After the upheavals of 1947 (looting by troops of the Tibetan government) and 1967 (destruction in the Cultural Revolution), the manuscripts went missing. Fortunately, we were able to locate a title list of the collection in Lhundrup chöpel's monastic chronicle, a source of rich information relating to the time before the monastery's destruction (or before the beginning of the 20th century; see footnote 73). The list contains 29 works once in the possession of Atiśa and the Translator (i.e. Nagtsho).

Finally, we have been able to identify the current location of three items from Atiśa's Sanskrit manuscript collection. According to Luo Zhao's catalogue descriptions, two sets of paper manuscripts (Box A, 191 fols. and Box B, 155 fols.) in the Potala have scripts labelled 'Retreng' (Tib. Rwa sgreng); some colophons in these sets mention Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna's former ownership of them, while some titles correspond to ones in Lhundrup chöpel's list. The third item is the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* manuscript from Vajrāsana currently preserved in the Potala. In summary, we have confirmed the existence of Atiśa's manuscript collection, which has long been a matter of some doubt. Furthermore, 24 folios from Sanskrit manuscripts gifted from Dalai Lama XIII to the Russian emperor Nicholas II (currently preserved in the Russian Academy) turn out to come from the same collection.

That the manuscript material is paper may raise some questions. The manuscripts directly brought from Vikramaśīla by Atiśa may well have been palm leaves, but they were very likely copied in Tibet, where the use of paper as writing material was already widespread.<sup>86</sup> If so, when were they copied? Judging from the script used in the *Third Bhāvanākrama* manuscript, which displays the archaic shape often seen in Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts, it cannot have been much later than Atiśa's lifetime. There are some examples of paper Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet dating from the 13th century: e.g. one containing Manorathanandin's *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*, copied by Vibhūticandra (ca. 1170–1250),<sup>87</sup> and another one containing Prajñākaragupta's

86 There are, to be sure, examples of Tibetan manuscripts written on palm leaves. See, for instance, Zhang Hanyi 張涵毅, Shicong Pan 潘世聰, Kelin Yang 楊克林, *Xizang Budalagong: shijie wuji shang de gongdian* 西藏布達拉宮: 世界屋脊上的宮殿 [Potala Palace of Tibet: the Summit Palace on the Roof of the World] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1982), 88–89.

87 Sāṅkrtyāyana, "Search for Sanskrit Mss. in Tibet," 33 n. 1: *likhiteyaṃ paṇḍī(ta)-vibhūticandrena*.

*Pramāṇavārttikālaṃkāra* (probably copied by Vibhūticandra) currently on display in the museum in the great temple (Tib. *lha khang chen mo*) of Sakya monastery.

In order to clarify the history of the reception and transmission of Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet, one needed task is to identify previous owners of the manuscripts. The manuscripts that were brought by individuals must for the most part have originally been part of private collections<sup>88</sup> before being integrated into monastery libraries. The present paper is a case study undertaken with this assumption and focusing solely on Atiśa's Collection. The issue in question can be cleared up only by investigating examples dealing with other Sanskrit manuscript owners.<sup>89</sup>

### Appendix I: A Chronological Table of Events Relevant to Retreng Sanskrit Manuscripts

1040	Atiśa left Vikramaśīla, India
1041	Atiśa received Skt. mss. as gifts at Tham Vihāra in Kathmandu
ca. 1042–1045	Atiśa showed a Skt. ms. of his in Western Tibet
1047	Atiśa copied Skt. mss. preserved at Pekaling (Tib. dPe dkar gling) in Samye (Tib. bSam yas)
before 1053	Dromtön (Tib. 'Brom ston) received Skt. mss. from the Translator (Nag tsho?)
1054	Atiśa's death; his Skt. mss. passed into the possession of Dromtön Chagtrichog (Tib. Phyag khri mchog) sent some of Atiśa's Skt. mss. to India
1056	Dromtön founded Retreng, wherein he stored the mss.
1064	Dromtön's death

88 Another important task is to systematically clarify how Tibetans have used Sanskrit manuscripts for scholarly or devotional purposes.

89 Owners' names sometimes appear in Tibetan remarks written on Sanskrit manuscripts in Norbulingka and the Potala. E.g. Luo Zhao, *Luobulinka*, 32 ('Gos lHas btsas etc.), 36 (Po to ba), 38 ('Gos lHas btsas, Chag lo tsā ba), 96–97 ('Gos lHas btsas), 101 (dPyal lo tsā ba Chos kyi bzang po); Luo Zhao, *Budala gong*, Sūtra, 55, 56 ('Gos gZhon nu dpal), 113 (Atiśa), Śāstra, 57 (Grag pa rgyal mtshan), 62, 84, 118 (sTag lung cho rje rin po che), 138 (dPyal ston), 145 (Pad ma'i dbang po bzang po), 211–212 (Ga rod lo tsā ba), 244 (Zangs dkar lo tsā ba). Cf. also Luo Zhao, *Budala gong*, Śāstra, 62 (*bhoṭadeśīyalocayādharmaśāstra pustakam idaṃ gaudīyāvadhūtayappravajreṇa likhitam*), 65 (*likhāpitam idaṃ bhoṭadeśīyabhikṣuḥśrī-akṣobhyavajraneti* [sic]). See Appendix II below.

- ca. 1100–1141 Sharaba (Tib. Sha ra ba) borrowed the *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya* Skt. ms. from Retreng
- 1210 Śākyaśrībhadrā visited Retreng (Hadano 1986: 257)
- 1240 The Mongolian army's attack upon Retreng
- ca. 1335 Drom Sherab mece (Tib. 'Brom Shes rab me lce) composed the *Statement about Retreng Monastery* (Tib. *Rwa sgreng gi bshad pa*)
- 1361 Butön (Tib. Bu ston) borrowed the *Tārāmūlakalpa* Skt. ms. from Retreng
- ca. 1601 Tāranātha saw the *Hevajrapañjikā* and *Kṛṣṇayamāri* Skt. mss. at Retreng
- before 1900s compilation of the list of Retreng Skt. mss. later (in 1989) mentioned in the *Catalogue of Retreng Monastery* (Tib. *Rwa sgreng dkar chag*)
- begin. 1900s Dalai Lama XIII gifted Skt. mss. from Atiśa's Collection of Retreng to Nicolai II
- 1914 Ekai Kawaguchi tried to access Skt. mss. at Retreng
- 1934 Sāṅkṛtyāyana and Gendün chöpel (Tib. dGe 'dun chos 'phel) tried to access Skt. mss. at Retreng
- 1947 Tibetan government troops attack Retreng
- 1962– Skt. mss. of local monasteries were brought to the Potala and Norbulingka (cf. Steinkellner 2004: 21)
- 1967 destruction of Retreng
- 1980 restoration of Retreng
- 1985 Luo Zhao accessed two sets of Skt. mss. from Retreng in the Potala
- 1989 Lhundrup chöpel (Tib. lHun grub chos 'phel) compiled the *Catalogue of Retreng Monastery* (Tib. *Rwa sgreng dkar chag*)

**Appendix II: Materials for Studies on Ownership of Sanskrit Manuscripts Preserved in the Norbulingka and the Potala Collections: Tibetan Remarks Written on Manuscripts Extracted from the Catalogues of Luo Zhao<sup>90</sup> and the Sandhak Catalogue<sup>91</sup>**

*Luobulinka*, 32; Sandhak, 30, *Dhṛtakalpadvayālakṣamahātantrarāja* ('Gos lHas btsas etc.).

90 In the following register, I put locations of the catalogues by Luo Zhao, corresponding pages in the China Tibetology Research Center catalogue by Sandhak, Sanskrit titles, possessor's name, and Tibetan or Sanskrit texts. Sanskrit titles and Tibetan texts are exact extractions from the catalogues by Luo Zhao with no correction of typos etc. Information about details of the manuscripts is omitted. Systematical studies on these entries are yet to be done.

91 Sandhak 桑德, *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig zhib 'jug lte gnas su nyar ba'i ta la'i lo ma'i bstan bcos* (*spyin shog 'dril ma'i par*) *kyi dkar chag mdor gsal* [中国藏学研究中心收藏的

[Top page] *mgos lo tstsha ba'i phyag dpe bha dra'i yi ge shin du legs pa cig bzhugs /*  
 [Last page] *bla ma lo tsa ba mgos lhas btsas kyi phyag dpe dpal brtag pa gnyis pa'i*  
*rgyud lags so / (in dbu can); chos rje sa skya paṇḍi ta'i phyag dpe sa skya'i dpe khang*  
*du zhugs pa / drung chos kyi rje rin po che pas spyan drangs pa'i phyag dpe lags so //*  
 (in dbu med)

*Luobulinka*, 36; Sandhak, 32, *Yamānuśaṃsadānyekapañcaśata* (Po to ba).

[A piece of paper] *po to ba'i thugs dam rten rgya dpe sdeb 'khyar /*  
*Luobulinka*, 38; Sandhak, 33, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* fragments ('Gos lHas btsas,  
 Chag lo tsā ba).

[A piece of paper] *dpal mgon 'phags pa klu sgrub kyi phyag bris brgyad stong pa'i*  
*glegs bam 'gos lo chen pos rgya gar nas gdan drangs pa chag lo sogs kyi thugs dam*  
*rten du bzhes (for bzhengs?) pa'i sdeb 'khyar rje drung gong ma na rim gyi byin rten*  
*du bzhugs so //*

*Luobulinka*, 91; Sandhak, 10, *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

[Last page] *sgo rum dpe khang gi phyag dpe [...] rgol ba'i glang po'i dbang po khros*  
*nas 'ongs pa'i klad 'gems seng ge bzang po bdag*  
*paṇḍita zhi ba bzang po dang / dge slong tshul khrims rgyal mtshan bas bsgyur zhing*  
*gtan la phab pa'o //*  
*slad kyi paṇḍita ti la ka kla kṣa [= ti la ka ka la śa?] dang / sgra sgyur gyi lo tsa ba*  
*shākya'i dge slong blo ldan shes rab kyi gzhung gsum gnyis bcos so //*

*Luobulinka*, 96–97; Sandhak, 15, *Candravyākaraṇavṛtti* ('Gos lHas btsas).

[Top page] *tsandra go mi tsha bo'i gzhung // chos 'bangs zhang pos nram par 'kral //*  
*gangs can skad du skad gnyis pa // shes rab dpal gyis dpal rgyas byas //*

[Last page] *'grel bshad ratna mu ti dang // dpe dpang gnyis pa la yang gtugs // gtsug*  
*lag rtogs pa'i blo gros kyi // nyes pa'i dri ma ma lus sbyangs // btsun pa zla ba'i brda*  
*sprod kyi // gzhung lugs 'dab brgya gsal ba'i gnyen // chos 'bangs kyi sbyar glegs bam*  
*'di // gsal bar nram 'byed skad gnyis pa // bslab gsum rgyan ldan sems dpa' che //*  
*rgyud sde bzhi yi rnal 'byor pa // lnga rig paṇ chen grags pa yi // ba dan sa 'dir g-yo ba*  
*can // de yi dge legs dri bzang kyi // padma'i mtsho la ngang la (for pa?) bzhin // 'gron*  
*du bos pa'i skal ba can // dpal ldan 'gos kyi rigs skyes pa // (blo bzang dha rma pā la'o)*

*Luobulinka*, 101; Sandhak, 49, *Amaramālāvṛtti* (dPyal lo tsā ba Chos kyi bzang po).

[Last page] *a ma ra ko ṣa 'di dpyal lo tsa ba chos bzang gi phyag dpe stong (for stod?)*  
*'gyur gyi mchan lo tsa ba byang 'bum gyis btab pa yin mkhan chen ma hā lo tsa ba*  
*gsung /*

*Budala gong, sūtra*, 55; Sandhak, 127, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

[Last page] *sangs rgyas pa lo pa'i chags ped* (for *phyag dpe*) *lags mkhas pa yod na rta ba* (for *lta bar*) *zhu / yul khyad du 'phags pa'i rgya gar logs nas byon /*

*Budala gong, sūtra*, 56; Sandhak, 128, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* ('Gos gZhon nu dpal).

[Top page] *thams cad mkhyen pa 'gos lo tsa ba chen pos gnang ba'i 'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bryad stong pa tshang bar bzhugs /*

[Last page] *ma hā lo tsā ba shrī ku ma ra shrī zhal snga nas gtso ba chen pos gnang ba'o /*

*Budala gong, sūtra*, 113; Sandhak, 153, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Atiśa).

[Top page] *jo bo'i thugs dam / rgya gar bryad stong pa / rdo rje gdan nas byon pa /*

[Last page] *mkha' rnam s gzigs pa'i ma rkyen du / mtshan 'di su'i yin zhe na bdag sgra pa chos kyi rgyal po'o /*

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 57 (from Ngor), *Vyākaraṇakalāpasūtra* (Grags pa rgyal mtshan).

[Last page] *bhikṣuḥ-śrī-akṣobhyavajrasya pustakam*

*ka lā pa ni rma bya'i mdongs / cha bsags la yang nye bar 'jug / mtshon byed dum bu bzhi yis bstan / 'tshams sbyor ming dang kun bshad pa / krita'i mtshon byed dang mam bzhi / sarba wirmas* (for *warmas?*) *dang po gsum / mchog sred k'yis ni bzhi pa mdzad / le'u nyi shu rtsa lnga'o / 'di don bod kyi 'gyur mchan ni / grags pa rgyal mtshan bdag gis bkod //*

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 62; Sandhak, 147, a commentary on *Daurgasimhavr̥tti* (Dharmasena).

[Last page] *bhoṭadeśīyalocayādharmaśenasya pustakam idaṃ gauḍīyāvadhūtaya-pravajreṇa likhitam*

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 84, *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.

[A piece of paper] *'di nang nas nam 'grel gyi rgya dpe sa stag zla 5 tshe 15 la lha sar bzhes /*

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 118; Sandhak, 129, *Abhidharmakośavyākya* (sTag lung chos rje rin po che).

*mngon pa mdzod kyi 'grel pa ma tshang ba stag lung chos rje rin po ches gnang / khams bstan pa'i gnas dang po chad / gnas gnyis pa dbang po bstan pa'i yang 'ga' zhig chad / rnyed pa'i skabs nas snang yang gnas dgu pa yang mi snang /*

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 138; Sandhak, 74, a miscellaneous manuscript set (dPyal ston).

[Top page] *dpyal ston gdung rabs gser gyi 'phreng ba la / rim par byon pa'i mkhas grub ded dpon gyis / rgya gar kha spu can gyi pusta ka / ngo mtshar rnam mang spungs pa'i lhun po che / nyid yin bla ma'i drin gyis bdag nyid la / 'di dag ji bzhin klog pa'i skal bzang ldan / [...]*<sup>92</sup>

92 See Ye, Shaoyong, Li, Xuezhū, and Kano, Kazuo, "Further Folios from the Set of Miscellaneous Texts in Śāradā Palm-leaves from Zha lu Ri phug: A Preliminary Report Based on Photographs Preserved in the CTRC, CEL and ISIAO," *China Tibetology Journal* 20 (2013): 30–47.

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 145 (from Ngor); Sandhak,<sup>116</sup> *Śrīhevajramaṇḍala* [...] (Pad ma'i dbang po bzang po).

[Last page] *kṛtir iyaṃ ācāryaśrīgarbhapādānām iti*

*slob dpon dpal gyi snying po'i zhabs kyis mdzad pa'o / dge slong pad ma'i dbang po bzang po'i glegs baṃ /*

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 211–212; Sandhak, 150, *Bodhicaryāvātārapañjikā* (Ga rod lo tsā ba).

[Last page] *bla ma tsa mi'i phyag gi bris phyag dpe'o / ga rod lo tshtsha ba la gnang*

*ba'o / mkhas pa chen po su ma ti dang lo tsa ba dhar ma gir tis bsgyur ba'o /*

*Budala gong, śāstra*, 244 (from Ngor), fragments (Zangs dkar lo tsā ba).

[Last page] *zangs dkar lo tsa'i phyag dpe sgra pa blo ston gyi dper byung / dpal kha*

*che'i grong khyer dpe med du / paṇ bi dya dhā ra'i zhabs gtugs / las kyi stobs shugs mos [...] smon lam 'od la 'o' //*





## *Visual Transfer*





# The Tibetan Himalayan Style: Considering the Central Asian Connection

*Linda Lojda, Deborah Klimburg-Salter and Monica Strinu*

## 1 Introduction

This paper explores the genesis and evolution of the Tibetan Himalayan Style, and most particularly its Central Asian origins. Earlier studies have concentrated on defining this style as it was used in the Western borderlands of the Yarlung Empire (c. 600–842). This paper expands the discussion primarily to Central Asia but also to Central Tibet in order to understand the distinctive socio-political contexts in which this style appears—and disappears. Theories of cultural transfer provide an interpretive framework within which we can understand the evolution of this style and its various functions from the last phase of the Yarlung Dynasty through the initial period of expansion and centralisation of the Kingdom of Purang-Guge from the ninth to mid-eleventh century. It was precisely during the period of political fragmentation that the cultural diversity of the region flourished.

Contemporary written historical documentation for this region and time period is minimal. The only monument associated with primary historical information is Tabo monastery. Some fragmentary historical information can be gleaned from rock inscriptions associated with Buddhist imagery. But there are no secure dates for any monument except Tabo. Therefore all the dates proposed for all other paintings and sculptures represent at best a relative chronology. The paintings and sculptures of Tabo monastery provide the only historical benchmark, while the written sources from Central Asia, which have recently been the subject of important scholarly research, can be used to understand the broader cultural and political contours within which this style developed. However, the single largest body of primary documentation for the culture of the period is the art and architecture. Therefore, using a comparative art historical method we will examine the evidence for relationships between the Buddhist arts of this region and Central Asia and consider to what degree these distinctive artistic forms were influenced by contemporaneous visual media from Central Tibet.

The artistic decoration of the main temple of the Tabo monastery is the oldest completely surviving painted programme in the Western Himalaya. This programme dates from the founding phase (c. 996) of the monastery and provides valuable insight into the heterogeneous culture of the region in the late tenth century (fig. 4.1).

## 2 The Paintings of the Tabo Entry Hall (Tib. *sgo khang*)

The artistic programme of the founding phase of Tabo displays a specific style that can be defined as the Tibetan Himalayan Style.<sup>1</sup> According to the present hypothesis, this style may have originated in the Tibetan milieu in Central Asia, where the earliest example of this style has been identified in a series of paintings on silk found in cave 17 in Dunhuang (fig. 4.2).<sup>2</sup> In the Western Himalayan borderlands evidence for this early Tibetan style can be found mainly in the form of stone engravings and carvings dating from the ninth until the eleventh century.<sup>3</sup> The murals of the founding phase still preserved today in the entry hall (Tib. *sgo khang*) of the Tabo main temple are painted in a partially more elaborate Tibetan Himalayan Style than that found in the stone engravings. As we shall demonstrate, two styles can be identified in the entry hall—the majority of the paintings are painted in a simple linear style with associations with the art of Central Asia, but there are some paintings and the sculptures in the cella with features anticipating the new Kashmiri

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- 1 For a general discussion of early Tibetan styles see Rhie, Marilyn M., "Tibetan Painting Styles, Sources, and Schools," in *Worlds of Transformation, Tibetan Art of Wisdom and Compassion*, ed. Marilyn M. Rhie and Robert A. Thurman (New York: Tibet House, 1999), 45–74 and Kossak Steven M., and Jane C. Singer, *Sacred Visions: Early Paintings from Central Tibet* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998). For the first definition and analysis of the Tibetan Himalayan Style, see Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, "The Tibetan Himalayan Style. The Art of the Western Domains, 8th–11th Centuries," in *Cultural Flows across the Western Himalaya. Proceedings of the Conference in Shimla*, ed. Patrick Mc Allister, Cristina Anna Scherrer-Schaub, and Helmut Krasser (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015), 443–492.
  - 2 The caves are in Gansu province, district Mogao of Dunhuang, in present-day China. First noted in Deborah Klimburg-Salter, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path. Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes* (Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1982), 118 in the context of a discussion of the Tabo cella sculptures. This publication established a basis for the further study of trade and pilgrimage networks and their relevance to artistic production. Klimburg-Salter has recently discussed this style in greater detail (see fn. 1).
  - 3 Denwood, Philip, "The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram, Seventh Eleventh Centuries: Rock Art and Inscriptions," *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 2 (2007).

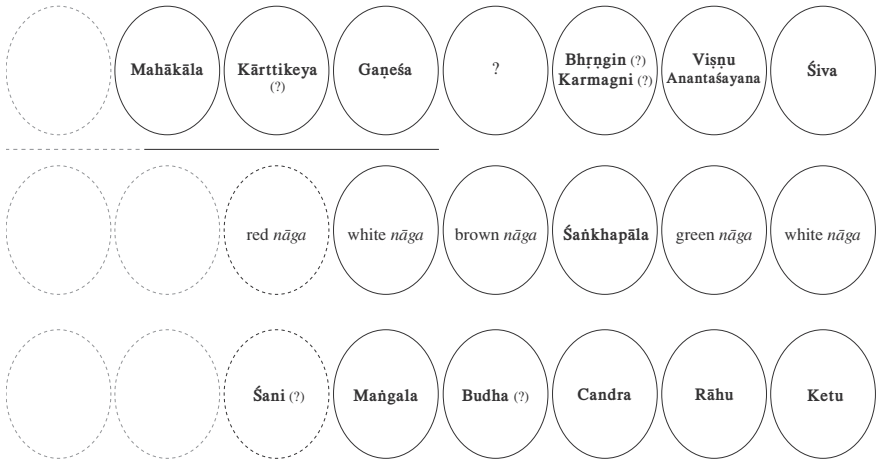


FIGURE 4.1 Upper part of South wall, entry hall (Tib. sgo khang) of Tabo main temple, 996.  
 PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LUCZANITS 1991 © WHAV. SKETCH BY MONICA STRINU 2013.



FIGURE 4.2  
*Silk banner with bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi,*  
*Dunhuang cave 17, c. ninth century.*  
 © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM,  
 LONDON.

influenced Indo-Tibetan Style that becomes dominant from the middle of the eleventh century onwards.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1 *The Tibetan Himalayan Style: The Dunhuang Prototypes*

A group of silk banners found in Dunhuang cave 17 (fig. 4.2) is unusual in that they are painted in a specific style that is distinct from painted banners found in the same cave in a Chinese style. While a precise dating of the banners is not yet possible, a working hypothesis attributes the silk banner to the middle of the ninth century.<sup>5</sup> Objects in cave 17 with Tibetan inscriptions or associated with writing in Tibetan script have usually been attributed to the time of the Tibetan rule over Dunhuang (c. 787–848), but especially Tibetan Tantric manuscripts have recently been dated up to the tenth century.<sup>6</sup> The production of visual media associated with these rituals undoubtedly also continued under Tibetan patronage after the withdrawal of the Tibetan troops in 848. According to recent research, Mogao Cave 17 was walled up at the beginning of the eleventh century, which thus serves as a *terminus ante quem* for the relics inside.<sup>7</sup>

The occurrence of Tibetan writing in *uchen* script (Tib. *dbu can*), the Tibetan block style, on some of the banners suggests that they were produced under Tibetan patronage for the Tibetan community.<sup>8</sup> Further, the oblong format and stylistic and iconographic similarities indicate that the silk banners may have been conceived as a set. Ten of them are now kept in the collections of the

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- 4 See Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, "Imagining the world of Ye shes 'od: 10th-century painting in Tabo," in *The Cultural History of Western Tibet. Recent Research from the China Tibetology Research Center and the University of Vienna*, ed. Deborah Klimburg-Salter et al. (Vienna, Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2008) and Strinu, Monica, "Götterdarstellungen aus der Gründungsphase von Tabo im kulturhistorischen Kontext: Eine kunsthistorische Analyse von Wandmalereien des 10. Jahrhunderts" (M.A. thesis, University of Vienna, 2013), 21–22, 75.
- 5 Whitfield, Roderick, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese Art from the Silk Route* (New York: British Museum Publications, 1990), 62.
- 6 Dalton, Jacob, *The Taming of the Demons. Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2011), 8.
- 7 Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons*, 8. The cave was walled up at the turn or even the beginning of the eleventh century. See Dalton, Jacob, and Sam van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Stein Collection at the British Library* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), xxi; Kapstein, Matthew, "Between *Na Rak* and a Hard Place: Evil Rebirth and the Violation of Vows in Early Rnying ma pa Sources and Their Dunhuang Antecedents," in *Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang. Rites and Teachings for This Life and Beyond*, ed. Matthew Kapstein and Sam van Schaik (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 174.
- 8 Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes* (Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1982), 117–121.



British Museum and the National Museum in New Delhi. Nicolas-Vandier was the first to identify these banners as belonging to one variant of the Himalayan style.<sup>9</sup> Due to the fact that a variant of the Himalayan style also exists in the art of Dunhuang with features deriving from Chinese art, it seems appropriate to distinguish this former group with Tibetan inscriptions as belonging to the Tibetan Himalayan Style group.

All banners of the Tibetan Himalayan Style group show standing bodhisattvas on lotus pedestals. They are painted in vibrant colours in a simple, linear and mostly two-dimensional figural style with straight, tubular legs and long arms. The figures wear tight *dhotīs* and shawls, which are richly ornamented in Indian patterns. The simply drawn faces have large, almond-shaped eyes and long corkscrew curls fall to their shoulders. These features are all typical of the Tibetan Himalayan Style. These features are also found in Tabo Phase I except for those few figures, which are depicted with a slightly more elaborate mode of representation. The deities wear similar jewellery, which consists of necklaces, bangles on the upper arms, bracelets and big earrings and are clearly Indian in style. Jane C. Singer sees the banners as “candidates for the earliest examples of Tibetan paintings: the Tibetan inscriptions, the strong Indic associations, their relatively unsophisticated execution—as one would expect of a painting tradition in its early stages—are all indications of origin.”<sup>10</sup>

Gropp’s theory, according to which these banners were in fact produced in Khotan, has been sympathetically received.<sup>11</sup> He compared the Dunhuang banners to paintings from Balawaste in East Khotan, which show similar stylistic tendencies and a frontal depiction. The textile patterns of the *dhotīs* on the paintings from Balawaste and Dunhuang include medallions or stripes with additional small rhomboidal-jagged designs.<sup>12</sup> Despite the many stylistic similarities, there are differences. In the silk banners the bodhisattvas stand on one lotus bud rather than on two as in Balawaste. Further evidence that these Tibetan banners were imported to Dunhuang is the use of a different variety of silk and weaving technique, which was woven in a narrower size than other

9 Nicolas-Vandier, Nicole, *Bannières et Peintures de Touen-Houang conservées au Musée Guimet. Mission Paul Pelliot 14, Catalogue Descriptif* (Paris: Institute d’Asie, Collège de France, 1974), xviii.

10 Singer, Jane C., “The Cultural Roots of Early Central Tibetan Painting,” in *Sacred Visions: Early Paintings from Central Tibet*, Steven M. Kossak, and Jane C. Singer (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 5.

11 Gropp, Gerd, *Archäologische Funde aus Khotan, Chinesisch-Ostturkestan* (Bremen: Röver, 1974), 94.

12 See Gropp, *Archäologische Funde*, Abb. 47 B.3.8.

silk banners found at Dunhuang cave 17. This technique was not found on the other banners from Dunhuang.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2 *The Tibetan Himalayan Style in the Western Borderlands*

The style under discussion here can also be found on artefacts across the Western borderlands of the Yarlung Empire. This geographic area extended from Gilgit (Palur) in the Northwest through Baltistan, Ladakh, Zangskar, Lahul, Spiti, upper Kinnaur, Guge, and Purang. The terms used to define this region changed with time. At the beginning of the Imperial period this region was part of Zhangzhung (Tib. Zhang zhung). Later this region is referred to in Tibetan sources as Töd (Tib. sTod)—upper regions (of Ngari, Tib. mNga' ris)—and only from the latter part of the tenth century following the rule by the dynasty of the Kings of Purang-Guge is the region described as Ngari korsum (Tib. mNga' ris bskor gsum).<sup>14</sup> Examples of this Tibetan Himalayan Style can be seen in rock carvings. Denwood discussed some early rock carvings with Tibetan inscriptions but unfortunately could not suggest any precise dating for these images.<sup>15</sup> Comparative art historical analysis demonstrated relationships between the Dunhuang banners and a large number of rock engravings and low relief sculptures: the same rigid, flat, two-dimensional figural style that distinguishes the banners from Dunhuang can also be found in the rock art, such as in Satpara (Skardu, Baltistan, fig. 4.3)<sup>16</sup> and the low relief sculpture at Naupur (Gilgit) which can be attributed to the ninth century.<sup>17</sup>

Evidence for a stylistic connection between the paintings from Central Asia and the West Tibetan stone carvings includes the peculiar stiffness of the flat, two-dimensional figures that are mostly depicted strictly frontally and standing. The legs of all the figures are absolutely straight with no joints implied, resulting in straight tubular legs with feet pointing outwards. Further the

13 Whitfield, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas*, 62.

14 In course of time, different names were used to identify this area. For a detailed analysis of these terms see: Wangdu, Pasang, "The mNga' ris and Nga' ris smad of the 11th Century," in *The Cultural History of Western Tibet. Recent Research from the China Tibetology Research Center and the University of Vienna*, ed. Deborah Klimburg-Salter et al. (Vienna, Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2008), 297–298. According to Wangdu, "The mNga' ris," 297, the three regions of Mang yul, Purang and Guge were first subsumed under the term Ngari korsum (Tib. mNga' ris bskor gsum) around the tenth century.

See also Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, "The Tibetan Himalayan Style. The Art of the Western Domains, 8th–11th Centuries," 443–492.

15 Denwood, "The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram," 52.

16 Denwood, "The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram," 50.

17 For a discussion of this style see Klimburg-Salter, "The Tibetan Himalayan Style," 443–492.

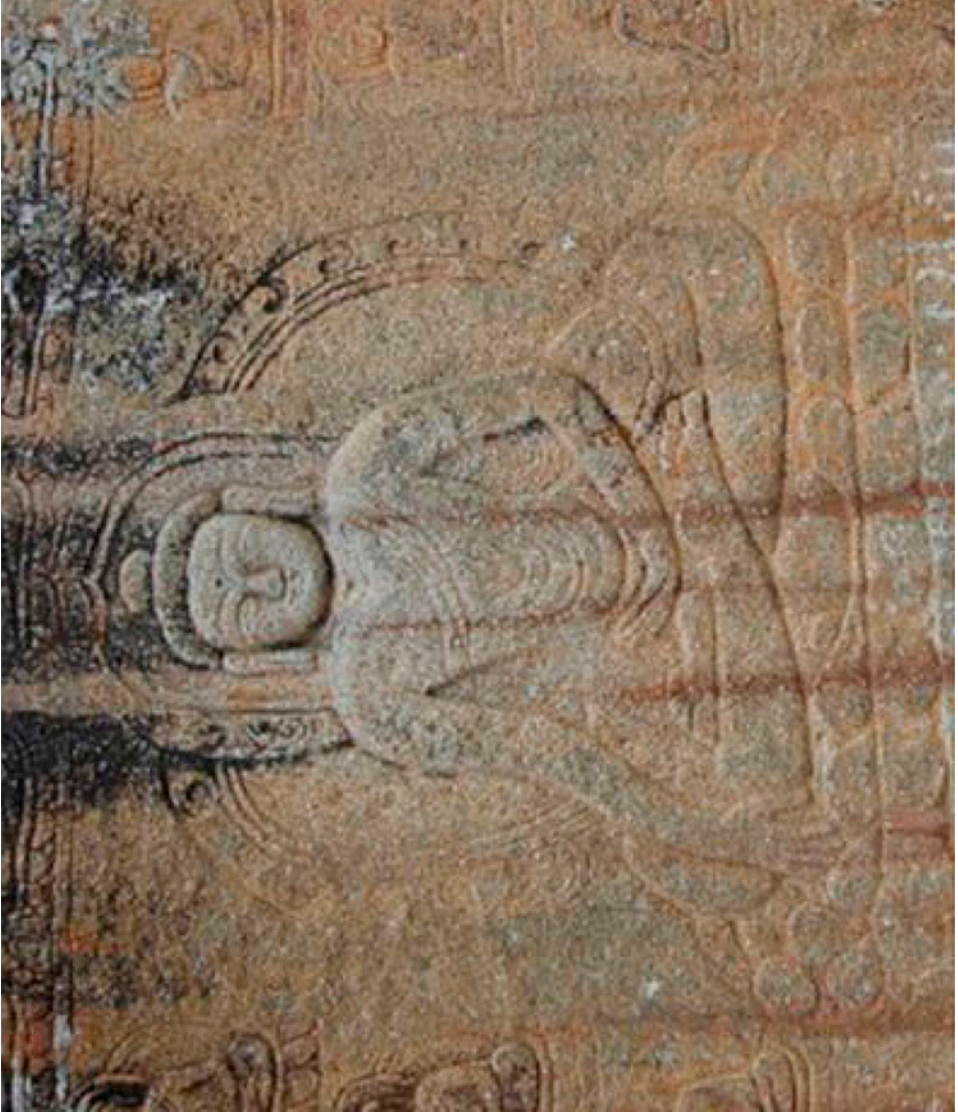


FIGURE 4.3 Stone carving of Central Buddha, maṇḍala, Satpara (Skardu, Baltistan), eighth–tenth century.  
PHOTO: DIETER SCHUH 2008 ([WWW.TIBET-ENCYCLOPEDIA.DE/BUDDHA-FELSEN-SKARDU.HTML](http://WWW.TIBET-ENCYCLOPEDIA.DE/BUDDHA-FELSEN-SKARDU.HTML)).

figures have broad, rounded shoulders and a short neck supporting a shovel-shaped head that narrows to a u-form at the chin. While the distinctive straight legged stance is of course only found with standing figures, the same puppet-like limbs, rounded broad shoulders, and shovel-shaped head depicted in a flat two-dimensional style can also be seen in seated figures, such as the seated Buddha figures in the rock engraving from Skardu (fig. 4.3) and the pan-Indian deities in the Tabo entry hall (fig. 4.1).

The Tibetan inscriptions on these stone carvings link them to the Central Tibetan Yarlung Dynasty. Denwood lists the linguistic similarities between these Western stone inscriptions and the earlier Central Tibetan pillars.<sup>18</sup> Some rock engravings also have depictions of patrons in West Tibetan dress found also in the late tenth century paintings from Tabo monastery.

The fact that the local Tibetan patrons continued using the palaeographic protocols associated with the Yarlung dynasty but a visual vocabulary associated with the Tibetan Himalayan Style suggests the rhetorical possibilities of this style.

In Tabo monastery we find both the Tibetan Himalayan Style in Phase I (c. 996) and the Kashmiri influenced Indo-Tibetan art designated as Phase II following the renovation phase after 1042.<sup>19</sup> But, as we shall see, there is also evidence for a mode of representation in Phase I, which demonstrates a transition to the Kashmiri style. The Tibetan Himalayan Style and Kashmiri style are used over the same wide geographic range and often in close proximity to each other.

### 2.3 *The Iconography of the Murals of the Entry Hall (Tib. sgo khang) of the Tabo Monastery, 996*

Tabo monastery in the remote Spiti valley in Himachal Pradesh, India was founded by Lha Lama Yeshe Ö (Tib. *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od, 959–1040) in 996. The renovation inscription indicates that the main temple was renovated only forty-six years later in 1042 by his grandnephew Jangchub Ö (Tib. Byang chub 'od).<sup>20</sup> Today we realise that this renovation left just a few parts of the decorative

18 Denwood, "The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram," 50.

19 See Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom* (Milan: Skira, 1997), 49–56.

20 Although this has become the conventionally accepted date, it should not be thought that it is definitely correct. Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom*, 46, indicates that the years 984 and 1008 are also theoretically possible as the founding dates for the monastery. Further, the book gives results of the extensive art historical research on the main temple of the Tabo monastery.

programme in their original state. The sole example from Phase I that completely survived is the old entry hall, where the founder of the temple and his two sons are depicted alongside the Tabo *saṅgha* (monks, nuns, and laymen). Other remaining parts of the foundation phase are most probably the sculptures of the cella and some fragmentary murals in the ambulatory that have been revealed in recent years. They provide evidence that the whole temple was once decorated in this style.

The entry hall is dedicated to assemblies of protective deities, most of them arranged in simple rows. Not all of them can be identified and some are destroyed, but they seem to derive from both the pan-Indian context as well as from local traditions. For example, the protectress of Tabo, depicted on the West wall, is identified with her non-Tibetan name Winyu min (Tib. Wi nyu myin). This name is otherwise completely unknown. Examining the paintings of the South and North wall, we find on the upper part of the South wall depictions of deities that are organised in three rows consisting originally of eight figures per row. From top to bottom are depicted deities that can be classified as the Eight Great Gods, the Eight Great *nāgas* and the Eight Planets (for a preliminary identification of the individual deities see fig. 4.1). On the North wall are accompanying paintings of the twenty-eight constellations (oddly in male form) and the four *lokapālas*, the guardians of the four cardinal directions. The upper part of the West wall completes this programme with depictions of eleven deities, including the *dikpālas*, the guardians of the world. Similar assemblies of pan-Indian deities can be found in texts that were popular during the ninth and tenth centuries mainly in Dunhuang.<sup>21</sup> These deities also played an important role in earlier texts from Khotan.

21 This assembly of deities can be found in Buddhist literary sources, such as the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* (SDP), and was transmitted through Buddhist tradition. It consists of different classes of deities: the Great Hindu Gods, *nāgas*, *dikpālas*, planets, and the *nakṣatras* (28 constellations). They are also found in the Tabo entry hall.

The SDP played an important role in the spread of Buddhism in Tibet after the eighth century when it was translated into Tibetan. It contains descriptions of *maṅḍalas*, each composed of a class of the aforementioned deities. Kapstein (Kapstein, "Between *Na Rak* and a Hard Place," 172) translated the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscript IOL Tib J 318 that contains a description of an arrangement of deities on a lotus *maṅḍala* with 108 petals. Kapstein regards it as a variant of the SDP. Both contain pan-Indian deities that are bound by oath to protect the Buddhist faith. The individual assemblies however consist of various deities that are not the same in both *maṅḍalas*. Also, they differ from the deities painted on the Tabo entry hall walls. "While the general morphology of the *maṅḍala* may therefore have been inspired by traditions related to the SDP, its actual population seems to have been filled in part from other sources, including perhaps generic inventories of

Shortly after the founding of Tabo, the *maṇḍalas* of the Yoga tantra class, compiled in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, became the most important source for the art of West Tibet. In the *maṇḍalas* of this class the pan-Indian deities are placed on the outside of or within the outermost circle. Their purpose is mainly protection and also to offer an accessible introduction to the sacred space of the temple for newly converted Buddhist practitioners, as explained below. Corresponding to the placement of the deities in the outer spheres of a *maṇḍala*, they are depicted in the entry hall of the temple. In the popular myth of the subjugation of Rudra these deities were in his retinue, then underwent purification and became mundane (Skt. *laukika*) gods of the Buddhist pantheon.<sup>22</sup> At the boundaries, their function is the protection of *dharma* with the prospect of gaining perfection in order to rise up to the higher transcendent (Skt. *lokottara*) realm, which is the realm of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.<sup>23</sup> In the Tabo entry hall they represent the transition zone of the temple, which prepares the worshippers coming from the human sphere for the entrance into the higher transcendent realms. According to Tucci, these deities serve as the initial teachers for the newly converted Buddhist practitioner, as they are familiar to him from his old religion.<sup>24</sup> The beliefs and deities of a Buddhist practitioner, who originally comes from a

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divine figures." (Kapstein, "Between *Na Rak* and a Hard Place", 172). For a discussion and contextualisation of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* among the Dunhuang manuscripts see also the chapter by Henrik H. Sørensen in this volume. Tibetan *dhāraṇī* collections found in Dunhuang often contain the prayer "Invitation to the Great Gods and *nāgas*" (also known in Tibetan as *rgyud gsum pa*), which was popular in early Tibet. These deities are also present in the Tibetan tradition. Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions a tradition held up by Tibetan priests describing the "75 *mgon po*" not as 75 forms of Mahākāla but consisting of pan-Indian deities, which we also find in Tabo (although only 67 of these deities). (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René de, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet. The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956), 265. To summarise, there have been various versions of the Eight Great Gods and Eight Great *nāgas* and other constellations in use, which makes it difficult to fully identify the early painted version of Tabo.

22 For a translation and explanation of one of these texts see Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons*, 159–206.

23 David Seyffort Ruegg describes in his extensive study on this topic the forms and functions of these deities that he ascribes to the substratum of Buddhism. See Seyffort Ruegg, David, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with "Local Cults" in Tibet and the Himalayan Region* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2008): viii.

24 Tucci, Giuseppe, *The Theory and Practice of the maṇḍala with Special Reference to the Modern Psychology of the Subconscious*, fourth edition (London: Rider, 1974), 82–83.

brahmanical context, are thus integrated and can be regarded as Buddhist and classified as mundane (Skt. *laukika*).<sup>25</sup>

A similar arrangement of deities is to be found in an entry hall to the assembly hall in Zhalu (Tib. Zha lu) monastery in Central Tibet founded in 1027.<sup>26</sup> The protector hall (Tib. *mgon khang*), which originally also functioned as an entry hall (Tib. *sgo khang*), displays very similar assemblies of pan-Indian gods in two of its chapels (fig. 4.4).<sup>27</sup> The arrangement of these deities in horizontal rows with decorative motifs at the top of the wall just below the ceiling, as well as the simple two-dimensional style, can also be found in Tabo Phase I. Although the iconography does not coincide completely, the categories of deities are mostly the same.

Both in Zhalu monastery and in the Tabo entry hall, the painted programmes depicting these benevolent protective deities were not repainted when other parts of the respective temples were renovated.

#### 2.4 *Tabo Monastery, Phase I*

The pan-Indian figures in the Tabo entry hall were painted in a simple style that often seems clumsily executed with brushstrokes overlapping the outline and poor quality pigments in rather muted colours. Some figures are painted in a more elaborate mode of representation—more carefully articulated facial figures and abdomen and the use of shading. All figures, except for the ones seated in the pose of royal ease (Skt. *lalitāsana*), are in *sattvaparyāṅka*, a variation of the diamond seat (Skt. *vajrāsana*) with feet crossed and directed downwards. Every deity has its left arm bent outwards with the hand lying flat on the left thigh with bent index finger. This typical position of minor deities can also be observed in earlier Khotanese depictions of these deities (fig. 4.5). A strict frontality combined with an unarticulated body structure and a u-shaped head identifies the Tabo entry hall paintings as belonging to the Tibetan Himalayan Style. Comparable seated figures in the earliest variant of this style can be found in the region of Baltistan to the West of Tabo. There, a *maṇḍala* carved

25 Seyfort Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, ix.

26 Vitali, Roberto, *Early Temples of Central Tibet* (London: Serindia Publications, 1990), 92–93 gives the date of the founding of the temple and dates the second construction phase in the year 1045. See also Ricca, Franco, and Lionel Fournier, “Notes concerning the *mgon-khañ* of Žwa-lu,” *Artibus Asiae* 56. 3–4 (1996): 359.

27 Ricca, and Fournier, “Notes concerning the *mgon-khañ* of Žwa-lu,” 343–363. These authors have also remarked on similarities between the Tabo entry hall paintings and those of the founding phase of Zhalu monastery (Ricca, and Fournier, “Notes concerning the *mgon-khañ* of Žwa-lu,” 360).



FIGURE 4.4 *Figure on East wall of chapel 1 in the protector hall (Tib. mgon khang) of Zhalu monastery, 1027.*

PHOTO: LIONEL FOURNIER 2000.





FIGURE 4.5 *Double-sided painted wooden panel with Indra, Maya-Śrī (?) and Brahma, c. sixth-century, Dandān-oīlik.*

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in stone has been preserved, which consists of twenty-one Buddhas in earth-touching pose (Skt. *bhūmisparśamudrā*) flanked by two standing bodhisattvas (fig. 4.3).<sup>28</sup> Both the entry hall figures and the *maṇḍala* display a two dimensional style with broad rounded shoulders, legs in a wide voluminous *dhotī*, and the inward curve of the torso, which slightly accentuates the waist.

The decorative motifs of the Tabo Phase I murals offer another connection to Central Asian art (top of fig. 4.1). In the ambulatory, fragments of the original Phase I murals of Tabo have been revealed beneath the later paintings through the efforts of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1991. The style and the pigments used in these murals demonstrate that they belong to the same phase as the paintings of the entry hall. One decorative motif in particular—the palmette—is similar and has been used throughout the founding phase decorative programme from the entry hall in the East of the temple to the ambulatory in the West. In Dunhuang we find a variation of these typical Central Asian palmette-motifs on the weighting boards of some banners. A paper banner with this decoration from cave 17 showing Avalokiteśvara can be attributed to the eighth or ninth century (fig. 4.6).<sup>29</sup>

28 See Tibet Encyclopedia, “Buddha Felsen Skardu,” last modified August 16, 2013, accessed July 17, 2014. <http://www.tibet-encyclopedia.de/buddha-felsen-skardu.html>.

29 According to Bhattacharya-Haesner the palmette rows are a typical Central Asian motif. They can also be observed on textile fragments from Kočo (ninth–tenth century). A later and more elaborated variation, also from Kočo (ninth–tenth century), shows staggered delicate palmettes. See Bhattacharya-Haesner, Chhaya, *Central Asian Temple Banners in the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst* (Berlin: Reimer, 2003), 413.



FIGURE 4.6  
*Paper banner, Dunhuang cave 17, late ninth-tenth century.*  
© TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.

Sculptures in the cella of the Tabo assembly hall are attributable to the founding phase of the temple and still preserve their main features, despite their appearance having been changed by later repairs and additions, such as crowns. At the time of the foundation of the main temple, the main icon, a seated meditating Buddha, was painted white and placed in the cella. Today, however, this same figure is painted red and worshipped as Amitābha. Also belonging to the original programme are the two attendant bodhisattvas in the cella (fig. 4.7) and the two bodhisattvas in front of the cella. When the style of these sculptures is compared to the banners from Dunhuang, one sees the same rather stiff bodies with hardly any articulation of the body parts. Also the straight, tubular legs and awkwardly drawn feet are similar. Also typical for this style is the hairstyle with corkscrew curls at the shoulders. The faces are u-shaped with a straight chin and two or three lines on the neck.

A pillar from Cogro (Tib. Cog ro) in Purang showing a standing figure of Avalokiteśvara<sup>30</sup> in a very flat style also connects the Central Asian style with Purang. The deity is ornamented with a three-pointed crown on its disproportionately large u-shaped head. The figure takes up most of the stele with its long arms and voluminous *dhotī* with a tight seam at the ankles. This type of clothing is comparable with the *dhotī* of the Tabo entry hall figures and also of the carved bodhisattvas from Baltistan of the eighth tenth century. A comparison with the Dunhuang banner showing Vajrapaṇī (fig. 4.2) attests to striking similarities between the two bodhisattvas. The pillar is inscribed on both narrow sides in *uchen* script, the Tibetan block style, helping to identify a donor belonging to the famous Dro (Tib. 'Bro) clan.<sup>31</sup> This clan had important possessions throughout the Western regions of the Tibetan cultural zone and was also important in Imperial Tibet. The pillar can be dated to the early ninth

30 For images of the pillar see Jahoda, Christian, and Christiane Papa-Kalantari, "Eine frühe buddhistische Steinstele (*rdo ring*) in sPu rang, Westtibet: eine Neuuntersuchung: Bericht einer österreichisch-tibetischen Feldforschung," *Asiatische Studien* 63.1 (2009): 395–396, Abb. 2–4, and Tshe ring chos rgyal, and Zla ba tshe ring, "Gsar du brnyed pa'i spu hreng gi sryan ras gzigs kyi rdo ring las byung ba'i gnam dpyad [A Study of the Newly Discovered Avalokiteśvara Stele in Spu hreng]," *Gangs ljongs rig gnas [Tibetan Culture]* 2 (1994): 5.

31 See Denwood, "The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram," 51 and Jahoda, and Papa-Kalantari, "Eine frühe buddhistische Steinstele," 349–400. The authors note characteristics of the inscription that link it to the Central Tibetan Yarlung Dynasty (372, 382). This inscription was first read and published by Tshe ring chos rgyal, and Zla ba tshe ring, "Gsar du brnyed pa'i spu hreng gi sryan ras gzigs kyi rdo ring las byung ba'i gnam dpyad," 4–20.



FIGURE 4.7 *Sculpture of Avalokiteśvara, South wall of the cella of the Tabo main temple, 996 with modifications from eleventh century.*

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LUCZANITS 1994 © WHAV.

century on the basis of palaeographic evidence,<sup>32</sup> but such an early date is also plausible on stylistic grounds.

As already noted, only a relative date can be proposed for the stone sculptures and engravings in present day Northern Pakistan and Ladakh, India.<sup>33</sup> The paintings and sculptures of Tabo Phase I are the only artefacts that can be relatively securely dated to c. 996. Tabo Phase I marks the turning point in the development from an early, Central Asian influenced style to a new Indo-Tibetan Style, as is visible in some stylistic features that include a more elaborate facial structure, the depiction of the abdomen and the use of shading. The paintings of the Tabo entry hall seem to be the result of two workshops working on Phase I. One of them displays a traditional Western Tibetan style, identified here as the Tibetan Himalayan Style, while the other already anticipates influences of the Indo-Tibetan Style.

### 3 The Early Tibetan Himalayan Style: Theories of Cultural Transfer

In order to understand the process of visual transfer of this early Tibetan style deriving from Central Asia, the contemporaneous artistic productions of other parts of the Tibetan Empire have to be examined. In the temple of Keru (Tib. *Ke ru lha khang*) in the Central Tibetan region of Öñ (Tib. 'On), a group of sculptures depicting standing bodhisattvas in this early style can be seen *in situ* in the cella of the temple (fig. 4.8).<sup>34</sup>

According to Wangdu the temple, which is called Keru, was founded in the ninth century, however there is no textual basis for the dating of either the three buildings or the paintings and sculptures.<sup>35</sup> The sculptures of the cella

32 Denwood, "The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram," 51, and Jahoda and Papa-Kalantari, "Eine frühe buddhistische Steinstele in sPu rang", 373 refer to the first studies of this stele by Tshes ring chos rgyal, and to Zla ba tshes ring "Gsar du brnyed pa'i spu hreng gi spyang ras gzigs kyi rdo ring las byung ba'i gnam dpyad," 4–20, and to a date to the beginning of the ninth century.

33 Denwood, "The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram," 52.

34 According to Vitali, *Early Temples of Central Tibet*, 19–20, the sculptures in the cella of a temple, which he calls Kwachu, were donated by the Tibetan military commander Dro Tri Sumje (Tib. 'Bro Khri gSum rje) who was active in Dunhuang during the reign of Ralpacan (Ral pa can, r. 815–c 838). However, Wangdu, Pasang, "Ke ru lha khang: Cultural Preservation and Interdisciplinary Research in Central Tibet," in *Text, Image and Song in Transdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. Deborah Klimburg-Salter, Kurt Tropper, and Christian Jahoda (Leiden, Boston: Brill 2007) identifies this temple as Keru (Tib. Ke ru). He demonstrates that the temple called Kwachu is located close to Samye (Tib. bSam yas).

35 Wangdu, "Ke ru lha khang," 49.



FIGURE 4.8 *Bodhisattvas, cella of temple of Keru (Tib. Ke ru lha khang), tenth century.*

PHOTO: DEBORAH KLIMBURG-SALTER 2004 © WHAV.

in the assembly hall of Keru temple are represented frontally, static with no implied movement, with long arms and straight legs. A date corresponding approximately to the founding period of the temple can be proposed mainly on stylistic grounds.

However, taking into consideration a comparison to other images of the Tibetan Himalayan Style, a tenth century date seems more prudent. The question here is whether Keru indicates a route of stylistic transmission from Central Asia to Tabo. Another look at the Phase I sculptures from the Tabo cella (fig. 4.7) demonstrates closer connections to the Dunhuang banners, and thus suggests the possibility of a more direct connection between the “two”

compare e.g. the *dhotīs*. There are numerous other cultural features in Tabo monastery suggesting links to Central Asia, and both Tabo and Dunhuang were part of the same nexus of transnational trade routes linking China/Central Asia with India. On the other hand there is no evidence to indicate that the Keru sculptures served as agents of cultural transfer. Moreover, the style of the Keru sculptures, to the degree that it can be determined today, has distinctive characteristics suggesting both possible connections to Central Asia as well as a local stylistic idiom.

Another local variation of this early Tibetan style can be found in a rectangular banner stored in the Yarlung Museum in Tsethang (fig. 4.9).

This banner, also depicting a standing bodhisattva, resembles in terms of style and certain genre elements, like the single lotus or the form of its jewellery, the Dunhuang banners, and should be considered to belong to the Tibetan Himalayan Style. Also, the kneeling donors are clearly depicted in the Western Tibetan mode and close to the tenth century style of Tabo. However, the crown, with its tall triangular shape, is typical for Central Asian painting and indicates a connection to Central Asia.<sup>36</sup> The banner was attributed on stylistic grounds to the eleventh century.<sup>37</sup> However, an inscription on its back, which contains consecration formulas in Sanskrit verses written in Tibetan cursive script, provides a link to similar inscriptions in the Tabo assembly hall, as well as other similar inscriptions on the back of a few very early thangkās.<sup>38</sup> Thus an attribution to the early eleventh century would be more precise. The provenance of this banner is uncertain. Recently assigned to Keru,<sup>39</sup> this association had not yet been claimed in 2000 when Klimburg-Salter documented the painting and discussed its history with Museum officials.

Although we have no direct evidence, Central Tibet could still have served as a mediator in the process of cultural transfer from Central Asia to Western Tibet, given that the West Tibetan kings of Purang Guge descended from the ancient Imperial line, and that they and the noble families who were associated with them originated in Central Tibet. It is possible that members of the Dro clan were initiators in the creation of the West Tibetan kingdom, where

36 For examples see Klimburg-Salter, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, 141, pl. 67 and 143, pl. 66.

37 Kulturstiftung Ruhr Essen ed., *Tibet: Klöster öffnen ihre Schatzkammern* (München: Hirmer, 2006), 247.

38 Documentation Klimburg-Salter 2000 in WHAV K500 13,23–13,40 and 15,5–15,30; Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom*, 111.

39 Kulturstiftung Ruhr Essen ed., *Tibet: Klöster öffnen ihre Schatzkammern*, 245.



FIGURE 4.9  
*Banner with Mañjuśrī, Keru  
temple (Tib. Ke ru lha khang) (?),  
early eleventh century. Yarlung  
Museum, Tsethang.*

PHOTO: DEBORAH KLIMBURG-  
SALTER 2000 © WHAV.



they also owned estates in Guge, Cogla, and Maryul (Ladakh).<sup>40</sup> They were also important in Purang, where a member of the Dro clan was the donor of an inscribed pillar (see above for a discussion). Significantly, members of the Dro clan served as governors administering the Dunhuang region during the Tibetan rule over Eastern Central Asia.<sup>41</sup>

The protective deity Hase Pakpa (Tib. Ha se 'Phags pa), originally popular in Dunhuang, found its way to West Tibet, where it became especially important to king Yeshe Ö. The deity served as a witness for the king's entourage as they swore an oath to abide his edicts in front of a Hase Pakpa statue. Vitali tries to establish a connection between the Dro clan and this deity. He postulated that they brought her to West Tibet during the disintegration of the Yarlung Empire.<sup>42</sup>

Tibetans were settled in many different parts of Central Asia, but a discussion of this settlement would take us beyond the boundaries of this paper; in any case, according to Tibetan sources, there was a particularly strong connection between Khotan and Tibet. Khotan was twice occupied by the Tibetans, for the first time from 670 to 692 and again from 786 to 848.<sup>43</sup> The Tibetan Empire collapsed in 842, but the Tibetan influence in Central Asia lasted up to the tenth century or even beyond. For example one part of Samye, the first Tibetan monastery, was said to have been decorated in the style of Khotan (Tib. Li yul). It is possible that Khotanese artworks or artists influenced the Tibetan style through a variety of portable arts, like banners and painted wooden panels. According to Khotanese legend the Buddhist tradition there was adopted from India. Brahmanical and local Khotanese gods were inte-

40 Petech, "Western Tibet: Historical Introduction," 231.

41 Vitali, Roberto, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang according to mNga'ris rgyal.rabs by Gu.ge mkhan.chen Ngag.dbang grags.pa* (Dharamsala: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang lo.gcig.stong 'khor.ba'i rjes.dran.mdzad sgo'i go.sgrig tshogs.chung, 1996), 196.

42 Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang*, 196–202.

43 Kossak, and Singer, *Sacred Visions*, 5 and Rhie, Marilyn M., "Tibetan Painting Styles, Sources, and Schools," 45 date the beginning of the Tibetan occupation to 787, while more recent research by Kapstein, Matthew, and Sam van Schaik, "Preface," in *Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang. Rites and Teachings for This Life and Beyond*, ed. Matthew Kapstein, and Sam van Schaik (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), x, and Dalton, and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 8, date the invasion of the Tibetan troops to 786. The Tibetan reign ended in 848, with the local Zhang clan regaining the territory and establishing the rule of the 'Return-to-Allegiance Army' (Chin. *Guiyi jun* 歸義軍), at least officially swearing allegiance to the Chinese Emperor. For a discussion of this period of local rule over Dunhuang see the chapter by Gertraud Taenzer in this volume.

grated into the Buddhist pantheon as protective deities (fig. 4.5).<sup>44</sup> As already noted, pan-Indian protective deities figure prominently in the iconographic pantheon associated with the Tibetan Himalayan Style.

Manuscripts were also an important medium for cultural transfer. Scherrer-Schaub has discussed similarities between manuscripts from the Tabo 'Kanjur', and Tibetan manuscripts in Dunhuang.<sup>45</sup> While it remains difficult to reconstruct the mechanics and chronology of the transfer of visual traditions from Central Asia to Western Tibet either directly or via Central Tibet, or both ways, there is evidence that provides hints of stages in this process, as seen in the style of the sculptures of Keru temple (Tib. *Ke ru lha khang*) and the pillar from Purang in West Tibet.<sup>46</sup>

#### 4 Patronage and the Tibetan Himalayan Style

Several recent articles already quoted above have discussed the heterogeneous religious atmosphere, which can be seen in the iconographic programme in the Tabo entry hall. Only one example, recently discussed in the literature, is the meaning of the left-turning swastika prominently displayed on the seat of many of the Tabo monks. The meaning and function of the left-turning swastika, a prominent symbol of Bön, is still not understood.

The compositions depicting the historical figures on both the North and South walls in the Tabo entry hall show a far more loosely structured political

44 Brahmanical or local gods were frequently painted on Khotanese wooden panels. According to Williams, Joanna, "The Iconography of Khotanese Painting," *East and West* New Series 23.1–2 (1973): 116, Śiva and Gaṇeśa were the first Hindu gods regularly integrated in Buddhist art in Khotan.

45 Scherrer-Schaub, Cristina, "Towards a Methodology for the Study of Old Tibetan Manuscripts: Dunhuang and Tabo," in *Tabo Studies 11. Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*, ed. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub and Ernst Steinkellner (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 1999), 27: "[...] some of the Tabo mss present striking similarities with the Dunhuang mss, both as far as formal characteristics are concerned, and as to their philological filiations and we assume that they constitute the oldest part of the Tabo collection, [...]". Both manuscript collections use mostly hemp paper.

46 For a discussion of the Avalokiteśvara pillar from Purang and the importance of the Dro clan in this context, see the explanations above and also Jahoda, and Papa-Kalantari, "Eine frühe buddhistische Steinstele (*rdo ring*) in sPu rang, Westtibet," 349–400.

and social hierarchy where the local princes (North wall) also have a prominent place.<sup>47</sup>

According to the “Renovation Inscription”, the temple was renovated in Indo-Tibetan Style only 46 years after the founding because it was considered ‘old’.<sup>48</sup> As already noted, the entry hall is the only room that was not repainted. Subdued pan-Indian gods as mundane (Skt. *laukika*) protective deities and associated *topoi* were especially popular in Tibet until the tenth century (see note 20). One hypothesis that might explain why the ‘old’ iconographic programme in the entry hall was deliberately preserved is that it depicts the important role of Yeshe Ö in the conversion of the ‘old’ gods and their worshippers. The Tibetan tradition ascribes the subjugation of pan-Indian deities to Yeshe Ö, as well as to Padmasambhava. Padmasambhava is said to have subdued and bound the twenty-eight constellations (Skt. *nakṣatras*) by oath to serve Buddhism. He is also said to have subjugated the so-called *tse*n (Tib. *btsan*) deities with the help of *phur pa* rituals, rituals that employ a ritual dagger (Tib. *phur pa*). Control of these spirits was an important mechanism in gaining and maintaining political power.<sup>49</sup>

The middle of the eleventh century marks the abrupt cessation of the Tibetan Himalayan Style. It was widely replaced by the Kashmiri influenced Indo-Tibetan Style that flourished in West Tibet. The art of the Tabo main temple enables us to trace this change. The introduction of the Kashmiri influenced style in the Western parts of the Kingdom of Purang Guge (Kinnaur and Spiti in present day Himachal Pradesh) is complex. In the ninth century, the small temple in Ribba<sup>50</sup> Kinnaur was already decorated in the Kashmiri tradition. At the end of the tenth century, however, Yeshe Ö and the artists he employed chose not to work in a Kashmiri influenced style. The artists who produced the Phase I decorative programme of 996 worked in an older style

47 For a more detailed discussion see Klimburg-Salter, “Imagining the World of Ye shes ‘od,” 231–286 and Klimburg-Salter, “The Tibetan Himalayan Style,” 485 passim.

48 Petech, Luciano, and Christian Luczanits, ed., *Inscriptions from the Tabo Main Temple, Texts and Translations* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, 1999), 23. For a discussion of the associated painting of historical figures see Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom* 137–139.

49 Cantwell, Cathy, and Robert Mayer, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra: Two Texts from the Ancient Tantra Collection* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2007), 21.

50 Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, “Ribba, the Story of an Early Buddhist Temple in Kinnaur,” in *Buddhist Art and Tibetan Patronage*, ed. Deborah Klimburg-Salter and Eva Allinger (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), 24.

associated with local Tibetan patronage. A recent study demonstrates that the Tibetan Himalayan Style was patronised by Tibetans during the same period and that, in the same region, that other patrons donated Buddhist images in Kashmiri style associated with Śāradā inscriptions.<sup>51</sup> Yeshe Ö's efforts to re-import Mahāyāna Buddhism from Kashmir began to succeed in the beginning of the eleventh century. Rinchen Zangpo's (Tib. Rin chen bzang po, 958–1055 according to his biography—but these dates are highly debated)<sup>52</sup> biography tells us that he brought artists, manuscripts and religious objects from Kashmir to the Western Tibetan borderland. Appropriately, from that time on, the art of Western Tibet began to integrate Kashmiri influence, as can be seen in the paintings and sculptures of temples in the area. The representation of the Buddhist *saṅgha*, the noble donors, and the princely patron depict a totally new social order originating in Central Tibet. The highly structured social hierarchy reflects the ecclesiastical estate formed by Yeshe Ö and strengthened by his descendants. There is neither a trace of the local styles nor of the composition's preferences, which served to depict a more egalitarian distribution of power, as seen in the Phase I programme painted in the Tibetan Himalayan Style.<sup>53</sup>

The economic affluence of West Tibet under the reign of the kings of Purang Guge is reflected in the high quality of the arts of the Tabo assembly hall attributed to the Renovation Period, as well as the eleventh to twelfth century temples from Nako village in Kinnaur.

Both the Tibetan Himalayan Style and the regional customs depicted in the art, such as dress, disappear without a trace. The few remaining monuments discussed here are the only surviving witnesses to a period in history when diverse Tibetan groups, with slightly different cultural traditions inhabited an extended area from Gilgit to Purang, and parts of Central Asia.

In the absence of contemporaneous written histories, this narrative—from the genesis of the style to its obliteration—is most clearly understood through the visual media. As we have seen, during the imperial expansion into Central Asia, Tibetan communities settled all along the routes and in several of the Central Asian oases. During this period a regional style emerged with roots in Central Tibet but a distinctive Central Asian character. Following the dissolution of the empire and the economic instability and political

51 Klimburg-Salter, "The Tibetan Himalayan Style," 465.

52 Regarding the dates of Rinchen Zangpo see Petech, "Western Tibet," 234. He dates Rinchen Zangpo's last trip to Kashmir to the first quarter of the eleventh century.

53 See Klimburg-Salter, "Imagining the world of Ye shes 'od".

fragmentation, the descendants of these Tibetan communities developed diverse cultural identities and religious practices. It is these practices that are attacked by Yeshe Ö in his edicts. Expanding economic affluence supported the ecclesiastical estate founded by Yeshe Ö with its political ideology inherited from Central Tibet and, largely, Kashmiri Mahāyāna Buddhist institutions.

This story is traced in the visual media decorating the portable arts and monuments of the region from the ninth to the mid eleventh century. Thus the artistic documents serve as unique and precious historical witnesses to an extended period of intense interaction between Tibetans and the peoples of Central Asia—not only during the period of Imperial expansion but in the following century before the founding and consolidation of the Kingdom of Purang Guge.

# Origins of the Kashmiri Style in the Western Himalayas: Sculpture of the 7th–11th Centuries

*Rob Linrothe*

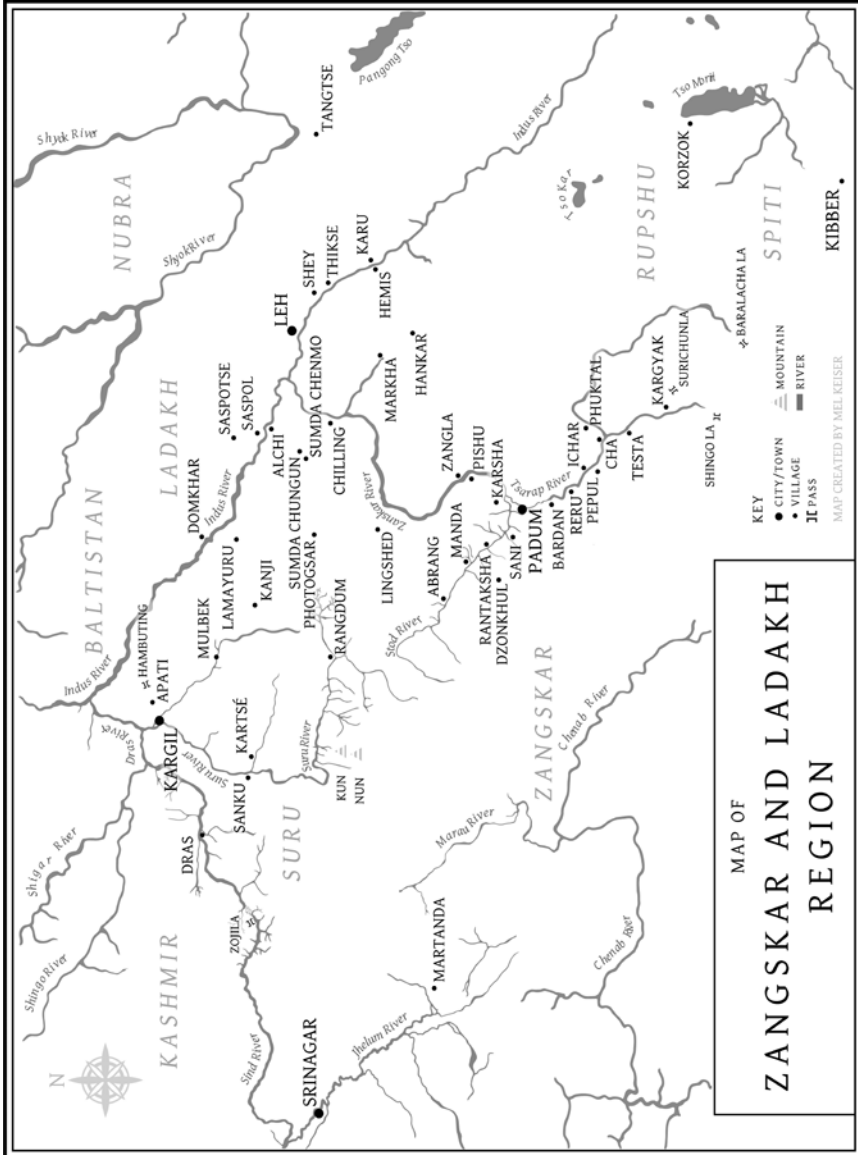
## 1 Introduction

Kashmir was one of the critical nuclei for the transmission of Buddhism(s) into Central Asia and ultimately to East Asia. The present contribution attends to Kashmir's role on a more local or regional level. The essay addresses one of the many rich themes of this volume: the transfer of Buddhist visual culture from one region to another. Despite the limited information available identifying specific workshops, artists or patrons, the study considers the connections between two adjacent regions that were fundamentally independent of each other. The Kashmir Valley and Ladakh including Zangskar shared very little at the beginning of the relevant period in terms of their respective environments, economies, languages, technologies, religious and artistic sophistication. Yet over the centuries covered here, a specific Buddhist visual tradition was transmitted East from Kashmir and grafted into Ladakhi and Zangskari visual culture. Kashmir continued to be regarded by its Eastern neighbours as one of the core centres of Buddhist learning generally, and the source of artistic production worth emulating. The Kashmiri mode was not the only developed visual idiom available to the neighbouring Western Himalayans at this time, but it was certainly the most dominant.

The importance of Kashmir for the development of art in the Western Himalaya in general, and Zangskar and Ladakh in particular, has long been acknowledged, sometimes fervently so.<sup>1</sup> One can argue on the basis of visual evidence that this orientation toward Kashmir as early as the 9th century on the part of Western Himalayan artists continued to be visible long after Kashmir

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1 Huntington, Susan L. with contributions by Huntington, John C., *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (New York, Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1985), 374; Pal, Pratapaditya, "Kashmir and the Tibetan Connection," in *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg, 1989), 57; Nawang, Tsering, "A Survey of the Spread of Buddhadharma in Ladakh," in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*, ed. Barbara Nimri Aziz and Matthew Kapstein (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985), 159–160.



MAP 5.1 Early stone sculptures in Purig, the Suru Valley, and Zangskar, Western Himalayas.

began reorienting its own visual culture towards an Islamic Persianate horizon, in the fourteenth century. In Zangskar, lingering traces of the early Khachelu (Tib. *kha che lugs*, the Kashmiri style as practiced by Tibetan-speaking artists and patrons) can be seen from as late as the end of the sixteenth century. It seems a fitting irony given the early and profound Kashmiri impact on many aspects of culture in Zangskar and Ladakh that after centuries of independence in which the cultural lodestone was Tibet, these kingdoms should return to Kashmiri bureaucratic control under the Dogra princely rulers, the Mahārājas of Jammu and Kashmir beginning in the 2nd quarter of the nineteenth century. Even after India's independence and the founding of the Republic of India in 1947, when the rule of the Dogra Dynasty formally lapsed, these regions were incorporated into the present state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In this essay I am not concerned with the later administrative return to the Kashmiri fold, nor with the tendency of many contemporary Ladakhis to downplay the early role of Kashmir for the sake of highlighting later Tibetan connections, preferable to them for present-day political reasons.<sup>2</sup> Rather, here I treat the origins of the impact of Kashmir on Ladakhi—particularly in the region of Zangskar. There were several different ways that inspiration was manifested between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. Monumental sculptures, stunning in their scale and beauty, were carved by Kashmir artists along the routes between Zangskar, Ladakh, and Kashmir. On a smaller scale but more widely distributed, numerous examples of Kashmiri or Kashmiri-Gilgit metalwork, some still of impressive size and quality, remain the prized possessions of Zangskar monasteries and private shrines.<sup>3</sup> These objects had an cumulative effect on artists within Zangskar who made works of art inspired by their aesthetic and religious power. The local artists may have had opportunities to learn directly from Kashmiri artists, either by traveling to Gilgit or Kashmir, or closer to home. Itinerant Kashmiri painters and sculptors are likely to have travelled to Zangskar in search of patronage, as we know they did to Ladakh, Spiti, and Ngari, West Tibet. The visiting artists, engaged by Zangskari royal and religious patrons, may have employed and trained local assistants, who carried on once the Kashmiri artists followed paths to richer patrons or returned

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2 The contemporary scholar Sonam Joldan sums up this attitude: “Buddhism in Ladakh first came from Kashmir and some of its remains can still be seen in Ladakh but *the real influence* came from Mahayana Buddhism from Tibet”; Sonam Joldan, *Ladakh's Traditional Ties with Buddhist Tibet* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2012), 18, emphasis added.

3 See Linrothe, Rob with contributions by Luczanits, Christian; and Kerin, Melissa, *Collecting Paradise: Buddhist Art of Kashmir and Its Legacies* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art and Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, 2015).



home. In the course of this essay, we will examine the first of these sources of inspiration, the monumental cliff carvings accessible from Zangskar.

In what follows, four benchmark sculptures for the Kashmiri style in Zangskar proper, those at Dras, Kartsé, Mulbek and Apati (see map), will be assessed in order to address an identified need for generally reconstructing Ladakhi art history, of which Zangskar can be considered a part: “A major lacuna regarding the early Buddhist artistic heritage of Ladakh is a detailed study of the numerous rock carvings found in the region and neighbouring area.”<sup>4</sup> This has been partially remedied by a recent broad survey of figural rock carvings in Western Ladakh (including the four analysed here), in the Leh area, and in Nubra.<sup>5</sup> Dorjay, the survey’s author, acknowledges the importance of Kashmir in particular, but considers them “traces of direct Indian Buddhist influence” and attributes them (with exceptions not treated here) “to the period between the ninth century and Rin chen bzang po’s foundation of the first Buddhist monastic complex at Nyarma in the early eleventh century.”<sup>6</sup> Individual dates for the sculptures are not offered. Important as it is to see them in the company of a broader movement across Nubra and Ladakh and to recognise, as Dorjay does, the non-Tibetan origins of most of them, the four examples treated here in detail are by contrast only briefly examined. They are neither placed into a relative chronology nor compared to specific examples of extant stone Kashmiri sculpture. Those are the goals of my contribution and justifies, I hope, a more detailed analysis of the key Kashmiri images accessible to Zangskaris and Ladakhis as models, illustrating one of this volume’s themes, that of examining the transmission of Buddhist visual culture.

## 2 Dras

Some fine Kashmiri stone sculptures survive near the hamlet of Tsyalbo,<sup>7</sup> near what is now the small town of Dras (alt. Tib. Hem babs), Southeast of Kargil. This is the far West of Ladakh, also known as Purig, or Lower Ladakh, along

4 Luczanits, Christian, “The Early Buddhist Heritage of Ladakh Reconsidered,” in *Ladakhi Histories: Local and Regional Perspectives*, ed. John Bray (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 67.

5 Phuntsog Dorjay, “Embedded in Stone: Early Buddhist Rock Art of Ladakh,” in *Art and Architecture in Ladakh: Cross-Cultural Transmissions in the Himalayas and Karadorum*, ed. Erberto Lo Bue and John Bray (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 35–67.

6 Dorjay, “Embedded in Stone,” 65.

7 This is the otherwise unattested spelling given in Deambi, B. K. Kaul, “The Pillar Inscription at Dras in Ladakh,” in *Recent Researches on the Himalaya*, ed. Prem Singh Jina (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1997), 53.

the Dras river upsteam of its *prayag* (auspicious confluence) with the Wakha and Suru rivers, gorged as the latter is at times with the melted glaciers of the 7000+ m Nun and Kun peaks. Dras is the first little town in a more or less flat valley East of the Zoji pass (earlier, Bul tul) connecting Kashmir, Zangskar, and Ladakh, and on the route to Baltistan and Skardu. The march from here is somewhat shorter to Padum in Zangskar than it is to Leh or Shey, the old capitals of the Ladakh Kingdom. There is a trekking path between Dras and Sanko, which reduces the distance to or from Zangskar and the Srinagar Valley by several days. The Suru Valley was important for Zangskar for trade and travel purposes,<sup>8</sup> and hosts at least two Kashmiri stone sculptures, one of which is considered here.

Almost universally considered an inhospitable, extreme and frighteningly cold place, Dras is still of great strategic importance. Because it is on the main route between Srinagar and Leh, the Kashmiri sculptures at Dras have frequently been noticed by travellers. It is possible to partially reconstruct several of the extant fragments based on the early observations of missionaries, government agents, mountaineers, and contemporary scholars, though because of space considerations, not in this venue. This is a pity, since these were, and still are to a certain extent, remarkable sculptures, in granite mica slate. Instead, I focus solely on the largest relatively complete sculpture and on an inscription on one of the other sculptures in the group. It is Sanskrit written in the Śāradā script in use in Kashmir, and according to the Moravian Christian missionary scholar A. H. Francke, “the inscription records the erection of two images, one of Maitreya, and another of [Avalokiteśvara], evidently the two larger sculptures”.<sup>9</sup>

The four-armed Maitreya Bodhisattva sculpture is more intact than any other at the site, and although still very damaged, remains impressive (figs. 5.1–5.3). Depending on where exactly one measures it, the height is roughly 177.8 cm, its width 86, and it is 40.4 cm deep. In a photograph taken in the early 1980s, the crown was still visibly a three-crest crown overlapping the top of the rounded niche, and parts of a fifteen-line inscription to the right of Maitreya’s head and the niche were perceptible.<sup>10</sup> That is also the case in Cunningham’s coloured

8 A more direct route from Panikkar in the Suru Valley to Pahalgam in the Srinagar Valley over the Lonvilad pass was also available though it has for the most part fallen into disuse today.

9 Francke, A. H., *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. 1: *Personal Narrative*, ed. J. Ph. Vogel (Calcutta: Archaeological Survey of India, Superintendent Government Printing, 1914 [1992]), 106.

10 Peter van Ham published an excellent photograph taken by Michael Henss in the early 1980s; van Ham, Peter with contributions by Linrothe, Rob; Kozicz, Gerald; and Heller,

drawing as well.<sup>11</sup> It is clear from comparing various photographs that the areas surrounding both sides of the head have been subsequently damaged. The triple-crest crown was elaborate, but the face is nearly completely unreadable because of spoliation. Long, heavy curling tendrils of hair fall along the shoulders, while a thick *vanamāla* (long garland of flowers) flows outside his shoulders, inside his forearms, and down almost to his ankles. His earlobes bear massive earrings and he wears an *upavīta* (consecrated thread) over the left shoulder to the right waist. His chest is otherwise bare, and he wears a belted or scarf-tied *dhotī* at least to his knee on his right side, perhaps shorter on his left, if the oblique line along his left thigh indicated the lower hem. A double fold at his front left suggests a belt-end, and a ripple-fold hangs down between his legs to his ankles, which bear bangles. The first pair of hands hold a vase at the left hip and make either *abhaya mudrā*, the gesture of fearlessness, or *vitarka mudrā*, the gesture of instruction, in front of the chest. The outer proper right hand once held a ring of prayer beads (Skr. *akṣamālā*), as confirmed by Francke, and the outer left hand probably grasped a *nāgapuṣpa*-flower, like the Mulbek Maitreya (fig. 5.14).

At his feet are three donor figures (fig. 5.3). They wear long outer robes apparently above pants and boots, belted at the waist. The lower hem of the robes flare outward slightly, and they end just above the ankles, unlike the Kuṣāṇa style of tunic. They need to be compared to kneeling and standing donors in rock paintings recently discovered at Chaghdo in Pakistan,<sup>12</sup> as well as to various donor figures of Zangskar and Ladakh. At any rate they are unlike the depictions of the royal figures on the 'donor panel'<sup>13</sup> of the ninth-century Avantisvāmin temple in the Kashmir Valley (fig. 5.4), whose clothing would not be suited to either the summer or winter of Dras. The male 'donor' of Avantisvāmin more closely resembles the bodhisattva himself than these Dras donors. A pair of miniature crouching lions, one on each level of the up- and down-turned lotus petal, face inward towards each other at either ends. Like the imbalance of the donors, they maintain a slightly asymmetrical tone.

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Amy, *Heavenly Himalayas: The Murals of Mangyu and Other Discoveries in Ladakh* (Munich: Prestel, 2010), 23.

- 11 Cunningham, Alexander, *Ladāk: Physical, Statistical, and Historical—with Notices of the Surrounding Countries* (New Delhi: Sagar Publications, 1854 [1970]), 382.
- 12 Khan, Nasim M., "Chaghdo Rock Paintings, Baltistan, Northern Areas," *Journal of Asian Civilizations* 21.1 (1998): 100–104.
- 13 Fisher, Robert E., "Stone Temples," in *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1989), 29–40 and caption of fig. 17.



FIGURE 5.1 *Four-armed Maitreya, stone, ht. 177.8 cm, ca. 7th–8th c. Dras, Kargil District, J & K.*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2010.



FIGURE 5.2  
*Detail of fig. 5.1*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2010.



FIGURE 5.3 *Detail of fig. 5.1*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2010.

The vase the Maitreya holds is of more than passing interest (fig. 5.2). The sculptor has gone beyond the simple iconographic requirement of a *kuṇḍikā* or *kamaṇḍalu*, a water-pot, held in one of the hands of Maitreya. Its bulbous shoulders tapering into a long neck and splaying into a wide mouth, along with the visibly fluted lower section, makes a distinct reference to Iranian



FIGURE 5.4 *'Donor panel,' stone, Avantisvāmin Temple, Kashmir, 9th c.*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2011.

silver “bird-headed ewers” such as the one excavated from a tomb dated 569 in Ningxia, Western China.<sup>14</sup> These were brought into China by Sogdian merchants who became so identified with them that in the eighth century, Tang Dynasty tomb figurines are depicted holding one as they trudged along the ramified trade routes known as the Silk Road<sup>15</sup> bringing Persian and Central Asian luxury items to China, as in the identical images of a bearded figure with a bag strapped to his back in the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum Rietberg, and one excavated from Luoyang.<sup>16</sup> Chinese white porcelain replicas of the bird-headed ewers with pearl-bordered roundels demonstrate the demand within elite circles for such products.<sup>17</sup> The Kashmiri courts participated in such tastes and their artists appropriated them into their vocabulary. Another example of a very similar, even more elaborate and delicately shaped vase is found in a late tenth-century Kashmiri painting in Tholing in Ngari, West Tibet.<sup>18</sup> It is one of many indications at the site that Kashmiri artists were directly involved even much farther East than Dras and Zangskar.

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- 14 Watt, James C.Y. et al., ed. *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 AD* (New York, New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2004), cat. no. 157.
- 15 Phuntsog Dorjay discusses the three main routes connecting Kashmir, Ladakh and Central Asia; Dorjay, “Embedded in Stone,” 39–40. See also Neelis, Jason, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 263–264. Although Beckwith (and others) have critiqued the use of the term Silk Road, he continues to use it and provides an adequate definition: “the ancient continental internal economy and international trade system”; Beckwith, Christopher I., *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), xx. Jason Neelis also provides a summary analysis of the utility of the term, and makes the point that silk was hardly the only commodity traded along the “Silk Routes”; Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission*, 291–292. For the origin of the term and an assessment of its utility, see Waugh, Daniel C., “Richthofen’s ‘Silk Roads’: Toward the Archaeology of a Concept”, *The Silk Road* 5,1 (2007): 1–10; I thank Jun Hu for bringing this to my attention.
- 16 Watt et al., *China*, cat. no. 205. Neelis’ notion, following Zürcher, of “long distance transmission” of Buddhism may appear in conflict with one of the conclusions of Valerie Hansen that trade was more often local than long-distance (in harmony with Zürcher’s “contact expansion”); Hansen, Valerie, *The Silk Road: A New History* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2012. The case at hand, of Chinese association of Persian vessels with Sogdian traders, seems to suggest that at least in the case of luxury objects, imports were in fact identified with foreign traders from distant lands, though this is possibly a matter of imagination rather than economic reality.
- 17 Watt et al., *China*, cat. no. 218.
- 18 Phun-tshogs-rnam-rgyal (彭措朗杰), and Zhang Jianlin (张建新), *Tuolin si* (托林寺), (*mtho gling dgon pa; ntho-ling* [sic] *monastery*) (Beijing: Zhongguo dabai kequan shu chubanshe, 2001), 121.

The Dras sculpture's Kashmiri origin is not in question, given the inscriptions, the iconographic references, and the formal language, despite its location outside the heartland of the Srinagar Valley. In order to suggest a date, however, a closer scrutiny of the style of the sculpture, and comparison to other Kashmiri sculptures is necessary. The naturalism of the torso and legs, which remain in legible condition, is of a particular order. The thighs are noticeably modelled, not tubular, with a swelling power. The stance is a subtle but sophisticated *contrapposto* or *déhanchement* with the left leg engaged and the right slightly turned out. The chest is flat and muscular, the shoulders broad, and the waist relatively narrow. This is quite different from the squat but powerful musculature of Gandhāran bodhisattvas or the pre-Kārkoṭa Kashmiri Bijbehara Karttikeya of the fifth or sixth centuries<sup>19</sup> that had yet to completely move out of the Gandhāran (or Hūṇa) penumbra, as demonstrated by its frontality, bulkiness and Gupta-like surface softness. Nor is the Dras sculpture of the mannered, snake-hipped mode found at the Mārtāṇḍa Sūrya Temple, the famous eighth century ruin in the Kashmir Valley, datable to the eighth century (fig. 5.5). So the Maitreya standing with such elán and patience in windy Dras is stylistically in between the massive and the mannered, the bulky and the pretty; he is muscled and springy but not swivel-hipped. He probably best fits into the seventh or very early eighth century, where Snellgrove and Skorupski originally placed it.<sup>20</sup>

Sonam Phuntsog rightly, if broadly, observes that such rock sculptures “were made by expert sculptors of Kashmir from the 5th to the 8th century CE.”<sup>21</sup> He goes on to assert that the bodhisattva and the other sculptures at Dras “were commissioned by Wastak Paldan, the king of Pashkyum.” Elsewhere in the same publication, he writes that the Śārāda inscription reveals that all of the sculptures were produced by “king Pashkum (Kargil) title[d] as Vastak Paldan in the 6th century.”<sup>22</sup> Pashkyum is a village Southeast of Kargil. There is a castle there, and it played a role in Ladakhi history, but only in the 18th century. On the other hand, Francke provides a tantalising justification for the presence of these sculptures at Dras, based on his fieldwork there in 1909. “According to

19 Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 355–357; Siudmak, John, “Early Stone and Terracotta Sculpture,” in *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1989), 42–43; Siudmak, John, *The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir and its Influences* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pl. 26.

20 Snellgrove, David L. et al., *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh, Volume One: Central Ladakh* (Boulder: Prajña Press, 1977), 1. Dorjay, without citing specific evidence, claims that there are “iconographic as well as historical reasons [the Dras images including the Maitreya] are unlikely to be much earlier than the ninth century CE”; Dorjay, “Embedded in Stone,” 40.

21 Sonam Phuntsog, *Ladakh Annals Part Two*, 4th revised edition (Delhi: Jayyed Press, 2009), 9.

22 Phuntsog, *Ladakh Annals*, 222.





FIGURE 5.5 *Four-armed Hindu deity, Mārtāṇḍa Temple, Kashmir, 8th c.*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2011.

the chronicles of Ladakh, the ancient boundary between Ladakh and Kashmir was at La-rtsa, and a ‘stone with holes’ was the boundary stone. The people of Dras told me that their village was also known by the name of La-rtsa (‘Root of the Pass’); but they did not know of such a stone”.<sup>23</sup> If indeed at one time Dras marked the border between Western Ladakh and East Kashmir, instead of the Zoji pass as is now and for long has been the case, then the presence of these sculptures along the crossroads or routes leading to and from Zangskar, Ladakh and Kashmir would perhaps have had an explicit demarcating function. Local chieftains—feudatories of the Kashmir kings, depicted wearing their own style of dress—may have simultaneously proclaimed their political allegiance and independence by employing Kashmiri artists to give the sculptures expression in the visual language of Kashmiri Buddhism and its aesthetic culture.

Peter van Ham, on the other hand, makes the intriguing suggestion that foreign merchants engaged in long-distance trade were the donors, motivated by merit-making and thanks-giving.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, it is the case that these images are set up along trade routes, and that in both style and language of inscription they reflect strong affiliations with Kashmiri culture. However, at the period when the sculptures were made, before Tibetanisation of the local culture was far along much less complete, such was generally true of the inhabitants: that their affiliations were with their dominant neighbour Kashmir and with areas of Baltistan and Gilgit which placed themselves within Kashmir’s cultural orbit. Even at the time of William Moorcroft’s travels there, in 1822, before the Dogra invasion of 1834, the “lands of Dras are the joint property of the Raja of Ladakh and the Malik, or chief landholder, of the neighbouring part of Kashmir, in consequence of a grant, in perpetuity, made by an ancestor of the Raja to a progenitor of the Malik,” an arrangement that may go back to the seventeenth century, or even earlier.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, the inscription does not resolve the question of who actually commissioned Kashmiri sculptors to make Buddhist images in a Kashmiri idiom on the Eastern frontiers of Kashmiri political and/or soft power. The many errors and irregularities of grammar and spelling seem to suggest

23 Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, 106.

24 van Ham, *Heavenly Himalayas*, 22–23. Neelis deals briefly with examples of donative inscriptions at South Asian Buddhist sites identifying “donors with commercial backgrounds”; Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission*, 24–26.

25 Wilson, Horace Hayman, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara; by Mr. William Moorcroft and Mr. George Trebeck from 1819 to 1825*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1841), 41.

to B. K. Kaul Deambi, former Director of the Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University, that is was “incised by one living in a far-flung area and not supposed to possess a sound knowledge of Sanskrit language and grammar. That is why we find in the epigraph some grammatical irregularities, incorrect language, influenced by local vernacular and orthographical mistakes”.<sup>26</sup> In Deambi’s understanding then, local elites attempted to Sanskritise themselves. Given the difficulties of interpretation, and the many places in which Deambi has resorted to “correcting” the inscription, I am rather leery of accepting the translation too literally. Deambi translates it as follows. “Homage[.] These images of Lokeshvara (i.e. Avalokitesvara) and Maitreya were installed by Kyasa for the increase of the religious merit of all living beings and for the glory of Atha who was a horseman and who belonged to the family of Tharana. The architect was Naddha, resident of Dra-ala.”<sup>27</sup> “Dra” is glossed as referring to Dras and “ala” to the Tibetan word for “la” (mountain pass), though that would make Naddha a resident of the pass, where no one would ever live. Even if one accepts all of Deambi’s emendations (including those to his own earlier version), we are left with the names of three people from two places: the main patron Kyasa, Atha of the Tharana (place name?) family to whom the merit is dedicated, and Naddha the architect or perhaps sculptor from Dra-ala. It is probably more than coincidental that “Dra” so closely resembles the present name for the place, but there is no guarantee that was the seventh century name. Since the names have also been Sanskritised, it would be guesswork to recognise Balti, Dard, or for that matter Kashmiri ethnicity in them.

One wonders at the possible intended audience(s) for the images and the inscriptions. In van Ham’s scenario, foreign merchants offer pious gifts in gratitude for survival and success in a foreign land. It would be a considerable investment, but perhaps one can speculate that trading guilds or caravans had pooled their donations to create reminders of the values of their home, to which they hoped to return. Would local merchants have done so? In Sonam Phuntsog’s scenario, a regional king produced them, possibly for religious purposes, either personal or collective. The sculptures could still function loosely as boundary markers. One can also imagine that Kashmiri Kārkoṭa frontier officials, stationed there to regulate the lucrative trade with Central Asia via either Baltistan or Nubra, or with Tibet via Ladakh or Zangskar, might have erected them at the post to which they were assigned. The sculptures would

26 Deambi, “The Pillar Inscription at Dras”, 54.

27 Deambi, “Pillar Inscriptions at Dras,” 55. For a significantly different version of the translation, by the same author, see Deambi, B. K. Kaul, *Corpus of Śāradā Inscriptions of Kashmir* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1982), 154.

have stood either literally at the edge of their territory, beyond which were independent local states, or else within a frontier state controlled and taxed during the height of Kārkoṭa power. It is hard to imagine a scenario by which local elites would create such an image at the edge of their territory unless, as suggested already, they were feudatories to the greater power with the need to signal their loyalties and impress their subjects and their masters with the depth of their Kashmiricisation.

According to Vohra's analysis of Kalhaṇa's twelfth-century *The River of Kings* (*Rājatarāṅgiṇī*), a historical but panegyric chronicle of Kashmiri kings, the Darada rulers North of Kashmir were in constant interaction with Kashmir, were sometimes allies, sometimes rivals, at times looting Srinagar itself. They welcomed "rebellious princes [who] often took refuge in Daradeśa from where they were able to pursue their ambitious plans to capture the throne of Kashmir".<sup>28</sup> Further, "the area of Ladakh, at least Purig [the region of lower Ladakh, including Dras], also formed a part of the same ethnic complex".<sup>29</sup> He makes clear that "the term 'Darada' was not always used to refer to an ethnic group but at times may also have designated a 'Politico-geographical area' inhabited by varying ethnic groups,"<sup>30</sup> and that is the sense that I would evoke here. In short, it is also possible to envision that Dardic officials were staking civilisational claims by employing (faulty) Kashmiri Sanskrit and (superb) Kashmiri artists.

It is difficult to pierce the ambiguity surrounding the historical circumstances here. What we do know is that at least two stone sculptures of bodhisattvas Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara, done in a sophisticated Kashmiri style, were carved around the seventh or eighth century by an artist steeped in Kashmiri traditions, and likely to be Kashmiri in some meaningful sense. They were inscribed in Sanskrit in the Śāradā script associated with Kashmir. There are too many grammatical mistakes to accept the inscriptions as Kashmiri court productions in both composition and execution, though one can conceive a fluent composition into which errors were introduced by a semi-literate carver. The composer and the donors might very well have been local, from the East side of the Zoji pass, though it is possible to envision foreign merchants or

28 Vohra, Rohit, "Ethno-Historicity of the Dards in Ladakh-Baltistan: Observations and Analysis," in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 4th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies. Schloss Hohenkammer—Munich 1985*, ed. Helga Uebach and Jampa L. Panglung (Munich: Kommission für Zentralasiatische Studien Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), 542–543.

29 Vohra, "Ethno-Historicity," 543.

30 Vohra, "Ethno-Historicity," 536.

officials doing so. Finally, we can depend on the fact that the Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara Buddhist sculptures, along with others originally created near Dras, would have been highly visible markers of the outpost of and gateway to Kashmir, long the dominant power in the region. For traders, missionaries, emissaries, and other travellers, whether they could read the inscriptions or not, they would have been reminders of the Kashmiri centres of power, wealth, sophisticated culture, and faith beyond the eleven-thousand five-hundred foot (3505 m) pass, at the foot of which they now stood.

### 3 Kartsé

Frederic Drew, who travelled the territories administered by the Mahārāja of Kashmir for ten years in various official capacities between 1862 and 1872, was surely among the first to publish an image of the Kartsé (also called Kartsé Khar) Maitreya in the Suru Valley (figs. 5.6–5.9).<sup>31</sup> Drew and Fontein suggest it is around twenty-five feet (7.62 m) tall, and Peissel insists it is twenty-eight (8.5 m).<sup>32</sup> Sonam Phuntsog's estimate of the height is thirty-seven feet (11.27 m), not far from Snellgrove and Skorupski's "approximate height 10 metres [i.e. nearly thirty-three feet]."<sup>33</sup> In that case it would be nearly five times the size of the Dras Maitreya.

It is now, quite frankly, in the back of the beyond. The hamlet of Kartsé (Tib. dKar rtse), or Kartsé Khar, is a few kilometers up a tributary of the Suru River joining it from the East near the village of Sanku (variously spelled Sanko, Sankoo, etc.). A distant view of the sculpture is blocked by a row of trees quite close to the cliff on which it is carved, and a wide irrigation canal is dug directly in front of it, making it impossible to see until one is right below it. The two-armed Maitreya looks out over the trees to placid barley fields below, tilled by non-Buddhists, for as in Dras, the Suru Valley inhabitants are now all Muslim.

The Maitreya stands within a niche that is shaped to his body. No other sculptures, carvings or inscriptions are in the immediate vicinity of the

31 Drew, Frederic, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories: A Geographical Account* (London: Edward Stanford, 1875), 257. A GPS reading for the location of the Kartsé sculpture is: N 34° 16.382'; E 075° 59.859'; alt. 8,722'.

32 Fontein, Jan, "A Rock Sculpture of Maitreya in the Suru Valley, Ladakh," *Artibus Asiae* 41.1 (1979): 5; Peissel, Michel, *The Ants' Gold: The Discovery of the Greek El Dorado in the Himalayas* (London: Harvill Press, 1984), 91, 134. Dorjay writes that it is more than seven metres tall; Dorjay, "Embedded in Stone," 42.

33 Phuntsog, *Ladakh Annals*, 245; Snellgrove, David L., et al., *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh, Volume Two: Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1980), caption to figure 7.

Kartsé sculpture. The thumb of the right hand is turned as if the palm is facing in, rather than out (fig. 5.7). What has until now not been remarked is that the thumb and index finger hold the stalk of a *nāgapuṣpa*-flower which can be seen against the backdrop above Maitreya's right shoulder and below the *apsaras* on that side. Perhaps originally it was coloured so as to give heightened visibility to this important iconographic marker. The left hand holds a *kuṇḍikā*, the water vessel, down alongside his leg (fig. 5.8). It is of a rather more conventional sort than the Dras ewer held at the hip (fig. 5.2). The thumb and fingers of the Kartsé bodhisattva wear rings, while chunky beaded jewellery adorn the upper arms, wrists, neck, waist and earlobes. The belt has two rows of pearl-like beads, with a floral medallion formed by the beads at the centre. The *vanamālā* hangs down somewhat stiffly after it wraps around the arms, and reaches below the knees. It is flatter, almost ribbon-like along the left upper arm, and less detailed than the one on the Dras Maitreya. Aspects that are very similar, however, include the treatment of the groin, waist and upper left thigh. As for the latter, in both sculptures there is a distinct loop of a scarf, scored with folds, just below the left side of the belt. Another similarity is the shape of the torso (fig. 5.7), which is compact and muscular, particularly around the navel, where the Kashmiri convention for soft skin over well-developed abdominal muscles can be seen—this convention can become even more stylised in later works.

Where the head and crown of the Dras Maitreya were damaged beyond recognition, with no details remaining, the face and tiara of the Kartsé bodhisattva are still relatively crisp (fig. 5.9). The irises and pupils of the eyes are scored, the cheeks plump, the nostrils and the lip-commissure drilled, and the juncture of the two planes of the upper eyes and the forehead scored. The hair has the arrangement frequently met with in Kashmiri sculpture, in which the two sides are swept up off the hairline, leaving a different arrangement of the hair at the centre, found, for instance at the ca. ninth-century Avalokiteśvara from the site of Pandrethan in Kashmir (fig. 5.10). The chin of the Suru sculpture is exaggerated because of the extreme angle of view from below, but comparison of the shapes of the very thick lips but compact mouth with Kashmiri sculptures shows them to be quite similar.<sup>34</sup> As is typical in Kashmiri stone sculptures, the lower lip is scored vertically along the middle. The crown is of the three-crest variety, loaded with swags of pearls, in higher relief across the tiara than the Pandrethan example, which also lacks the flowers above the ears. These are more pronounced than in the many other examples found in Kashmiri sculpture, both stone and metal, but the exaggeration

34 See for example Siudmak, *Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir*, pl. 62, 64, 96, 97, 119.



FIGURE 5.6 *Two-armed Maitreya, carved on stone cliff at Kartsé village, ht. approx. 8–9 m, ca. 9th c. Suru Valley, Kargil District, J & K.*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2010.



FIGURE 5.7  
*Detail of fig. 5.6*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2010.



FIGURE 5.8  
*Detail of fig. 5.6*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2010.





FIGURE 5.9

*Detail of fig. 5.6*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2010.

may be accounted for by the artist of the colossal sculpture considering both the size and the inevitable distance from the viewer. The bodhisattva from Kashmir (fig. 5.10) also provides comparable examples of the medallion found on the belt of the Kartsé figure: the earrings of the Buddha and the necklace of the Avalokiteśvara are relatable. Fontein was unable to see the crown carefully because of shade and angle of view, and was uncertain of the presence of a *stūpa* in the headdress.<sup>35</sup> It is now possible to confirm that it is not included (fig. 5.9).

The knees are scored around a circular swelling (fig. 5.6), something that Fontein asserts is “not common in the art of Kashmir,” while suggesting a parallel with a ninth century metal sculpture from the Chamba Valley in Himachal Pradesh, South of Zangskar.<sup>36</sup> In fact, however, one can find examples of similar treatment of kneecaps on sculptures at the Mārtāṇḍa Sūrya Temple, (fig. 5.11). Although there is some damage around the knees on the ninth-century “royal donor figures” from Avantisvāmin (fig. 5.4), the king appears to have been created with a similar convention. The Mārtāṇḍa figure also has a few other features visible in the Kartsé sculpture. First is the similar treatment of the

35 Fontein, “Rock Sculpture,” 6.

36 Fontein, “Rock Sculpture,” 7.



FIGURE 5.10 *Avalokiteśvara, stone, from the site of Pandrethan in Kashmir, ca. 8th c. Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, SPS acc. no. 1852.*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2011.



FIGURE 5.11 *Four-armed Hindu deity, Mārtāṇḍa Temple, Kashmir, 8th c.*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2011.

belt, second is the thick roundedness of the beads that make up the wristlets and *vanamālā*, and lastly is the presence of a diminutive, if plump, *yakṣa* at the feet of the deity.

Although not mentioned by Fontein, if one climbs up onto the small flat area immediately below and in front of the bodhisattva, one finds this *yakṣa* almost invisible from below. Directly between the feet and below the lowest part of the Maitreya sculpture is a tiny *lambodara* (big-bellied) *gaṇa*-like *yakṣa*. He makes the *vandana mudrā* of salutation, and appears to be seated with one leg up, characteristics along with the portly proportions shared by the early *āyudha-puruṣa* (attribute personification) and wrathful attendants to bodhisattvas in Indian sculpture between the seventh and tenth century.<sup>37</sup> The rotund, earth-bound imp is balanced by two floating *apsarases* above Maitreya's shoulders (fig. 5.12). Neither of them makes the *añjali mudrā*, the gesture of reverence, attributed to them by Fontein who, as he explains in a note, reached the site when the sun was casting heavy shadows over the sculpture.<sup>38</sup> These are not the ethereal heavenly wraiths found in Chinese art, but sturdy males drawing upward and back in a dynamic rush of movement culminating on, and directing the gaze towards, the face of the bodhisattva of loving kindness (Skr. *maitrī*).

Compared to the Dras bodhisattva, the Kartsé sculpture is less obviously done by a Kashmiri sculptor. The effortless naturalism accomplished by Kashmiri sculptors is hard to bring into line with the joint-less curves of the left arm, or the slightly hunched shoulder. The legs, though clearly manifesting a *contrapposto* that differentiates engaged and turned out feet, are thicker than one expects at the shin and calf, though they do maintain the supple shapes of the thighs. The most unusual aspect is the chunkiness of the jewellery and the plaits of hair that cascade down along the shoulders. Even the nipple is raised into high relief above the curving outline of the breast. All of these features can be found on Kashmir stone sculptures, however, or accommodated within a potential range of individual skills, abilities, or eccentricities. Given the extreme size of the work, for which there are no known *stone* precedents in Kashmir (only metal, as mentioned in the *River of Kings*), and the need to exaggerate some aspects in order to make an anamorphically legible image from below, I am reluctant to assume an artistic identity other than Kashmiri. Fontein is careful to state that the sculpture is “in the style generally associated

37 Linrothe, Rob, *Ruthless Compassion: Wrathful Deities in Early Indo-Tibetan Esoteric Buddhist Art* (London: Serindia, 1999), 32–131.

38 Fontein, “Rock Sculpture,” 8.



FIGURE 5.12 *Apsaras, detail of fig. 5.6*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2010.

with Kashmir,” “displays many of the stylistic features of the bronze statues that are generally thought to have been made in Kashmir or by Kashmiri artists,” and it “indicates that what is known as the Kashmir style extended deeply into the neighboring areas of Western Ladakh”.<sup>39</sup> Since the only specific visual feature he points to as rare in Kashmir—the “clearly delineated knee caps”—has in fact been shown to appear there, I see nothing that refutes the likelihood of, as at Dras somewhat earlier, local inhabitants at Kartsé engaging an ambitious sculptor or a group of them willing to cross the Zoji or the Lonvilad pass.<sup>40</sup> Only artists thoroughly ingrained in the Kashmiri sculptural style of the ca. ninth century could project it onto a tall cliff and manipulate it for the sake of clarity from a distance, to create a prepossessing monumental sculpture.

Francke’s claim that there was an inscription here was confirmed by Peissel, who noticed an “ancient inscription that stood some ten feet off the ground to the left of the Buddha’s right leg.”<sup>41</sup> He wrote further that it is an eighteen-line inscription in “archaic Tibetan characters,” in such bad condition that it ultimately proved indecipherable even to the learned Tibetologist Samten Karmay. The only things to be derived from the inscription are that it “mentioned a king but his name had been deliberately struck out” and “it was from the tenth century”. The presence of an indecipherable inscription in Tibetan is ambiguous. It could have been added at any time after the sculpture was carved. Even if it was a donative inscription, it does not necessarily indicate that the donor was of Tibetan ethnicity. It has recently been argued that after the collapse of the Tibetan Dynasty, Tibetan writing was used as a *lingua franca* in some of their former conquests—in that case in the Dunhuang area—and “was free from [indicating] any [specific] ethnic identity.”<sup>42</sup> Obviously, local rulers of lower Ladakh and Zangskar were moving towards voluntary and involuntary Tibetanisation, a gradual movement that was not complete until much later. Nevertheless, it was a process that did not preclude the employment of artists steeped in Kashmiri aesthetics and Buddhist visual ideology. My own, non-specialist evaluation of the inscription is that to me the letters and vowel signs looks as much like those of Śāradā inscriptions as ‘archaic’ Tibetan.

39 Fontein, “Rock Sculpture,” 6–7.

40 As mentioned in note 8, a more direct route from Srinagar Valley over the Lonvilad pass to the Suru Valley was also possible, avoiding the Zoji La and shortening travel time from Zangskar to the Kashmir Valley (and vice versa) considerably.

41 Peissel, *Ants’ Gold*, 138.

42 van Schaik, Sam and Imre Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers: The Sino-Tibetan Documents of a Tenth-Century Buddhist Pilgrim* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 67.

At one time the Kartsé Maitreya must have been visible from across the valley. The fact that it has not been severely tampered with or vandalised is a testament to the fact that it has been screened off, and to the tolerance of the local villagers. It would have been seen by the many travellers from Zangskar who travelled via Rangdum to Kashmir, Baltistan, and Ladakh, including the Zangskari merchants who carried on the trade in salt, for as Drew pointed out some of “the salt acquired [in Zangskar] from Rupshu goes to Surū, whence comes in exchange pattū (woolen cloth), barley, and a little cash”.<sup>43</sup> Along the way, they would no doubt stop and offer prostrations to a remarkable manifestation of Buddhist compassion.

#### 4 Mulbek

We turn next to the most prominent of the Kashmiri rock-cut standing Maitreya in Western Ladakh and Zangskar: the Mulbek four-armed Maitreya (figs. 5.13–5.18).<sup>44</sup> The two-armed Kartsé Maitreya (fig. 5.6) is certainly related in many respects to the four-armed Mulbek future-Buddha, even if the suggestion that they are “almost identical” is putting it too strongly.<sup>45</sup> Among the similarities are the use of large round beads for the decoration of the belts, armllets, necklaces and other jewellery, a rosette or flower-head medallion at the belt (fig. 5.14), the formation of the abdomen around the navel, the puffiness of the face and scored lower lip (fig. 5.15), the peculiar bend of the ringed index finger while holding the *kuṇḍikā* (fig. 5.16), the plainness of the surface of the *vanamālā*, and the raised kneecaps. There are just as many differences, however, starting with the fact that it is a four-armed Maitreya at Mulbek who does not wear a crown. His hair is instead arranged in a symmetrical “butterfly *jaṭā* [twist of hair]”<sup>46</sup> on either side of the high chignon bearing a Kashmiri-style *stūpa* with a small, rounded *aṇḍa* (dome) above a stepped terrace with staircase, and a ten- or eleven-level *chhatravālī* (stack of umbrella-like disks) above the outward slanting supports of the *harmikā* (platform with railing above the dome) (fig. 5.15). The hair is pulled back in strands, but two spiral curls adorn the high layer of hair at the centre. In its arrangement, the hair is strikingly similar to that of the ca. sixth-century Śiva Mahādeva from Fattegarh,

43 Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmir*, 284.

44 A GPS reading for the sculpture at Mulbek is N 34° 22.728'; E 076° 22.004'; alt. 10,839'.

45 Snellgrove et al., *Zangskar*, 9.

46 Pal, Pratapaditya, “An Adorred Śaiva Image from Kashmir and Its Cultural Significance,” *Art International* 24.5–6 (1981): 20.

near Baramula, Kashmir.<sup>47</sup> Other differences between the Mulbek and Kartsé sculptures include the treatment of the eyes without such sharply delineated lids, plain earrings instead of beaded ones, the more slender body type, the lesser degree of relief on the nipple, a more delicate, string-like *upavīta* (consecrated thread), the regularity of the ripple of the garment hem between the legs (fig. 5.16), and the disposition of the arms, hands and attributes. The slight shift of the stance towards his right, with the left leg engaged and the right turned out, is too subtle to register in most overall photographs, but is clear in a detail of the hips and thighs (fig. 5.16). The legs themselves are not as thick as either the Dras or Kartsé Maitreyas, suggesting an elongation of proportions. The form of the *nāgapuṣpa* flower (fig. 5.15) is quite similar to the one above the right shoulder at Kartsé), but it is held by the upper left hand, also ringed, at Mulbek, as, presumably, was the case at Dras. The *kuṇḍikā*, as already indicated, is also held in the lower left arm, outstretched but gently bent outwards. The lower right hand is in the gift-giving gesture, *dāna mudrā*, while the main right arm, instead of being placed against the chest, as at Dras and Kartsé, holds up an *akṣamālā* (string of prayer beads).

The traces of the construction of a triangular pediment-like framing device enclosing the rounded niche is quite prominent in the Mulbek composition. The rock outside the niche is cut away, so the outline projects slightly. Square and rectangular sockets were drilled into the rock, presumably to fix wooden beams by which to support a porch or façade of some sort. Triangular pediments above rounded trefoil niches is a distinctively Kashmiri approach to architecture and niche construction, found on a spectrum of scales from monumental ones at Mārtāṇḍa to small ones on wooden shrines.<sup>48</sup> This helps reinforce the Kashmiri affiliation of the image and its sculptors.

There are seven donor-like figures depicted at the level of Maitreya's ankles. They all stand in a *déhanchement*, with feet splayed at different angles and with various types of headgear. Four of them might actually be Lokapāla, guardians of the directions. Although they are of two different sizes, all seven are dressed similarly, with belted robes ending mid-shin over boots. The dress of the one on the far right is the clearest of the group (fig. 5.17), and the lapel of his robe wrapped from his right to left with a belt tied at the waist. It seems to cover a

47 Granoff, Phyllis, "Maheśvara/Mahākāla: A Unique Buddhist Image from Kaśmīr," *Artibus Asiae* 41.1 (1979): fig. 1; Pal, "Addorsed Śaiva Image," 19, fig. 6; Siudmak, *Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir*, pl. 57a.

48 Siudmak, John, "Religious Architecture (500–1200)," in *The Arts of Kashmir*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (New York: Asia Society, 2007), figs. 41–42.



tunic, which also ends at the knees. In this they are not different than the early local donors seen in Zangskar, Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit.

The Mulbek image is nearly two-thirds as large as the Kartsé Maitreya, and thus significantly larger than the Dras sculpture. Fontein writes that it is more than twenty-five feet (7.62 m) tall, Duncan that it is twenty feet (6.1 m), while forty feet (12.2 m) and eight meters (26.2 feet) have also been suggested.<sup>49</sup> Like the Dras Maitreya, it is directly along the main route from Srinagar to Leh, at the village of Mulbek (alt. Mulbe, Mulbil, Moulbé, Mul bhe, etc.), which also had a palace and a monastery, along with a number of historical inscriptions.<sup>50</sup> For these reasons—size and location—it has received more notice than even the Dras work. As early as 1820 Moorcroft noticed and correctly identified it as Maitreya, and suggested it was twenty-four feet (7.62 m) high.<sup>51</sup> George Henderson, who accompanied the Forsyth expedition from Srinagar to Central Asia in 1870, took an excellent photograph of the Mulbek sculpture (fig. 5.18), followed by Knight's of 1891, though both were preceded by Melville Clarke's photo of 1861.<sup>52</sup>

The avid Alpinist and Cambridge Professor of Art, William Martin Conway, sheds a little light on the condition of the sculpture in 1892, a year after Knight's visit: "The lower part of the legs and feet are hidden by a little temple built beneath it. There are also five or six little figures in low relief near or between the feet, but they are so rough that it is difficult to discover any identifying features about them."<sup>53</sup> Conway's account indicates that the condition of the donor figures has not deteriorated much (more) in the last 120 years.

49 Fontein, "Rock Sculpture," 5; Duncan, Jane E, *A Summer Ride Through Western Tibet* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1906), 37; Neve, Ernest F., *Beyond the Pir Panjal: Life Among the Mountains and Valleys of Kashmir* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), 179; Tchekhoff, Geneviève and Yvan Comolli, *Buddhist Sanctuaries of Ladakh* (Bangkok: White Orchid Books, 1987), 16. Dorjay gives "about seven metres"; Dorjay, "Embedded in Stone", 42.

50 Francke, A. H., "The Rock Inscriptions at Mulbe," *Indian Antiquary* 35 (1906): 72–81.

51 Wilson, *Travels*, I.344, II.19.

52 Henderson, George, with Allan O. Hume, *Lahore to Yärkand: Incidents of the Route and Natural History of the Countries Traversed by the Expedition of 1870, under T.D. Forsyth* (London: L. Reeve, 1873), opp. p. 46; Knight, E.F., *Where Three Empires Meet: A Narrative of Recent Travel in Kashmir, Western Tibet, Gilgit, and the Adjoining Countries* (London, New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1896), 144; Clark, Melville, *From Simla Through Ladac and Cashmere* (Calcutta: Bengal Printing Company Ltd, 1862), pl. xx, "An Image Carved in the Rock, Near Wukka, Ladac" and identified in the caption as "the four-armed Goddess Moolva".

53 Conway, William Martin, *Climbing and Exploration in the Karakoram-Himalayas* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894), 610–611.



FIGURE 5.13 *Cliff with rock carving of four-armed Maitreya and temple, Mulbek village, Kargil District, J & K.*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2010.



FIGURE 5.14  
*Detail of four-armed Maitreya,  
 upper half, carved on stone cliff at  
 Mulbek village, ht. approx. 7–8 m,  
 ca. 10th–early 11th c.*  
 PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2010.



FIGURE 5.15 *Detail of fig. 5.14*  
 PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2012.



FIGURE 5.16 *Detail of four-armed Maitreya at Mulbek, legs and hand holding kuṇḍikā.*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2003.



FIGURE 5.17  
*Detail of donors or Lokapāla at four-armed Maitreya sculpture in Mulbek.*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHER, 2012.



FIGURE 5.18 *George Henderson, "Image of Buddha Carved in a Rock", after Lahore to Yärkand: Incidents of the Route and Natural History of the Countries Traversed by the Expedition of 1870, under T.D. Forsyth, opp. p. 46. London: L. Reeve, 1873. Used with permission of the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Library.*

A range of commentators, representing a wide spectrum of fields of expertise, including history, religion and art history, have suggested an equally varied range of origins (Kashmiri or local) and dates. Often, the sculptures of Dras and Mulbek are lumped together. One can find dates of the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth as well as no earlier than the eleventh. Even privileging in this situation the opinions of the art historians formally trained in Asian art, we have a range of eighth-ninth (Susan Huntington), ninth-tenth (Fontein and Pal), second half of the tenth (Siudmak) and possibly eleventh, awaiting “a more secure chronology for comparative pieces.”<sup>54</sup>

My own opinion is that it was done by a Kashmiri artist in the tenth or possibly early eleventh century. First, I obviously disaggregate the Mulbek sculpture from the other related works, which need to be treated individually. The Dras sculpture I have dated above to the seventh or early eighth century, the Kartsé Maitreya to the ninth. Second, regarding the identity of the artists, there are too many tiny details, almost invisible to the unaided eyes, which can be related with the visual vocabulary of unquestionably Kashmiri sculpture, to suppose that a local artist had so thoroughly imbibed and absorbed an imported style as to create such an integrated image. We know from productions of metalwork in neighbouring areas in the eleventh century that local artists make inevitable, unconscious changes to the Kashmiri idiom, even while attempting to emulate the foreign style.<sup>55</sup> Here, the bodily proportions, the transparency of the garment, the elegance of the garment fold, the style of jewellery, the piled up hair and the corkscrew plaits, the particular treatment of the *nāgapuṣpa* flower, the length of the *vanamālā*, can all be paired with excavated objects or those collected from the Kashmiri sites for which they were made. For two examples of small, inconspicuous items that an epigone would probably not have gotten right, I point to the flower-head rosette medallion on the chest and belt and to the ears (figs. 5.14–5.15). Nearly identical rosettes are found on the sleek Vaikuṅṭha Viṣṇu of ninth century Avantivāmin in the Sri Pratap Singh (SPS) Museum in Srinagar (fig. 5.19). They appear on the crown, necklace, and belt and additionally as earrings. A related treatment of the nipples is also visible, and a similar, if less extreme punctuation of smooth surfaces with repeated high relief studs in most of the jewellery. The back of the same sculpture depicting the fourth head shows ears which are pushed forward and out at the tops like the Mulbek bodhisattvas’ ears, with heavy double rings pulling down the scored earlobes. Several other sculptures in the SPS Museum, including

54 Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 376; Fontein, “Rock Sculpture,” 7–8; Siudmak, *Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir*, 494; Luczanits, “Early Buddhist Heritage,” 68.

55 See Luczanits, Christian, “From Kashmir to Western Tibet: The Many Faces of a Regional Style,” in Linrothe et al., *Collecting Paradise*, 109–149.

the huge head of Maheśvara from Pandrethan,<sup>56</sup> push the upper ear forwards as if seen from the side, and then swing the lobes out and down. Again, these are minor Morellian details, which are scarcely required for identification but reveal an artistic vocabulary that has been internalised, not a copyist's mentality of presenting conspicuous resemblances.

Third, my dating of the tenth- to early eleventh-century for the Mulbek Maitreya is mainly based on the bodily proportions. We have seen in the Dras sculpture the agile but compact forms which grow out of the earlier, massive proportions of the Fattegarh Śiva (ca. 6th century) and the powerful, stiff Bijbihara Karttikeya (ca. 5th–6th century), as discussed above, both from Kashmir. This can be used as a developmental trend, with the Dras sculpture as an early benchmark and the Cleveland Museum standing Buddha as the other (accepting von Schroeder's dating of late tenth to early eleventh century).<sup>57</sup> The sequence then is towards elongation of both limbs and torso and as Susan Huntington points out "the emphasis on musculature lessens";<sup>58</sup> though an understanding of its invisible structure still underlies the shaping of body parts. The Mulbek sculpture definitely accords much more closely to the later elegant slender torso of the Cleveland Museum's standing Buddha than to the muscled power of the Dras bodhisattva. The torso and legs are still well formed, without the mannered geometry of bodily sections that becomes the hallmark of the Kashmiri style as practiced in Western Tibet, as seen in metalwork made by followers. This has the smoothness of parts visible, for instance in the painting of the West Tibetan Dungkar Cave 2 of Ngari, which I would similarly attribute to visiting Kashmiri artists or their very well-trained local acolytes (fig. 5.20). Contrast then the standing bodhisattvas on stone above the village of Manda in Zangskar, which we can attribute to local Zangskari artists working with such images as the Mulbek Maitreya as inspiration (fig. 5.21).<sup>59</sup> Precious as these sculptures are, and as close in many overt details (*vanamāla*, rippling hem between legs, Kashmiri-style *stūpa* above the head of the one on the right), they do not convey the naturalism and three-dimensionality which Kashmiri artists inherited from Gandhāra and Gupta, and which even their painters were able to convey in two dimensions. The Manda bodhisattvas are Kashmiri-style sculptures. The Mulbek Maitreya is Kashmiri.

56 Siudmak, "Early Stone," fig. 8; Siudmak, *Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir*, pl. 97.

57 von Schroeder, Ulrich, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 2001), 86; also Luczanits, "From Kashmir to Western Tibet," fig. 2.10.

58 Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 368.

59 A GPS reading for the site of sculptures above Manda is: N 33° 38.029'; E 076° 41.479'; alt. 12,765'.



FIGURE 5.19 *Vaikuntha Viṣṇu*, stone, from *Avantisvāmin*, ca. 9th c.  
Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, SPS acc. no. 1829/5.  
PHOTO ROB LINROTHE, 2011.





FIGURE 5.20 *11-headed Avalokiteśvara, mural painting, ca. Dungkar Cave 2, ca. 11th c. Ngari Prefecture, Tibet.*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2005.



FIGURE 5.21 *Maitreya and Mañjuśrī Bodhisattvas, stone, above Manda village, ht. 87 and 55 cm respectively, ca. 11th–12th c. Zangskar, J & K.*  
PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2010.



FIGURE 5.22 *Two-armed Maitreya, carved on stone cliff at Apati village, approx. 5.5–5.9 cm, ca. 11th c. Kargil District, J & K.*

PHOTO: ROB LINROTHE, 2012.

5      **Apati**

Northeast of Kargil towards Hambuting pass, a pass located between Kargil and Batalik, Rohit Vohra discovered a standing rock-cut bodhisattva, a two-armed Maitreya like that of Kartsé, and supposedly over seven meters tall (fig. 5.22).<sup>60</sup> I was able to visit and photograph the sculpture in 2012, and estimate it to be less than six meters in height. It is on an escarpment of friable rock above a stream about a twenty-minute walk across the fields below the small Apati village North of Kargil. cursory attempts to find other carvings nearby failed, perhaps confirming the word of local people that the Maitreya sculpture is the only one in the vicinity. The bodhisattva faces just a few degrees West of North, like the Mulbek sculpture, neither of which ever seem to get direct sunlight. The human figure stands in a trefoil-arched niche that tightly encloses him. Some ochre coloured pigments clings to the flat backdrop against which the rounded, deep relief (ca. 15 cm) forms emerge. Maitreya has long plaits of tight curls, medallion-type earrings, a long *vanamālā*, and a triple-crest crown with rosettes at the ears. On close inspection, the middle crest on his crown has an image of a *stūpa* carved on it, confirming his identification as Maitreya. Most distinctive to this form is the tightly constricted waist above the pouched abdomen at the navel. A ripple-hem hangs between his pulpy legs, and he holds the *kuṇḍīkā* alongside his leg, with a slight bend at the elbow. The right hand holds the stem of a *nāgapuṣpa* flower blooming at his right shoulder. His knees are outlined projections. A small image of what appears to be Vajrasattva appears near his proper right thigh.

The torso reveals a conception of anatomy increasingly different from those of Mulbek, Kartsé or Dras. Here the body depends less on compact solidity and organic unity than the meshing of preordained forms such as the triangular ribcage and the oval belly. Added to this is an increased frontality and loss of nuanced *contrapposto*: the figure stands more flat-footed with hips on the same level, the right knee pushed slightly forward. Vohra cites characteristics which postdate the sixth century, and suggests that it is “conceivable that

60 Vohra, Rohit, *Petroglyphs in Purig Area of Ladakh* (Grosbous: Ethnic Unlimited, 2005), 34; van Ham, *Heavenly Himalayas*, 23; Mani, Buddha Rashmi, “Rock Carvings and Engravings in Ladakh: New Discoveries,” *Pragdhara, Journal of the U.P. State Archaeological Organisation* 9 (1999): 68; Dorjay, “Embedded in Stone,” fig. 2.7. I thank Tara Sharma and Martin Vernier for useful suggestions in locating it, and Peter van Ham for providing me with a copy of Vohra’s photograph. A GPS reading for the location of the sculpture is: N 34° 33.804’; E 076° 12.610’; alt. 10,510’.

these [types of sculptures] were made over a long period beginning from the 6th–7th century.”<sup>61</sup> Van Ham links it to the Mulbekh, Kartsé and Dras sculptures and writes that they are all “no earlier than the 10th/11th century.”<sup>62</sup> If, as I argue, the Dras Maitreya can be dated to the seventh or early eighth century, the Kartsé to the ninth, the Mulbek to the tenth or early eleventh, then I see this as belonging to the eleventh century, as it joins in a larger movement of both elongation of form and abstraction of body parts away from the muscular organic naturalism inherited from Gandhāra and Gupta sculpture, begun in Kashmir in the late fifth century and culminating in the tenth or eleventh.

This mode, whether by Kashmiri sculptors or their close followers, is pursued, for example by the wooden treasures at Sumda Chun in Ladakh (fig. 5.23). Still elegant, this is one of two bodhisattvas and one Buddha which I was able to photograph in 1983. They are among “several damaged wooden images, 70–80 cm high [...] which now are standing around inside the three temples at Sumda.”<sup>63</sup> Today, if they still survive *in situ*, they are hidden away. The bodhisattva models “the three part torso with muscular upper chest, prominent rib cage and bulging abdomen.”<sup>64</sup> The wooden sculpture’s *contraposto* retains the earlier subtlety and the elongation mirrors the Mulbek carving, but the clear division of parts resembles the Apati sculpture.

As Kashmiri art was brought into Ladakh, Lahaul, Spiti, and Zangskar, it was this latter abstraction of the body that was most easily absorbed by artists without a long-standing naturalistic tradition. Many examples of this can be seen, at Saspotse in Ladakh, Sumda Chun and Sumda Chenmo on the Northern frontier of Zangskar and at Phye and Rantaksha in Western Zangskar. One example already illustrated is the sculpture at Manda in Zangskar (fig. 5.21) which manifests a number of features aligned with the Kashmiri style as it was becoming localised. In order for the Kashmiricisation of the sculpture of Zangskar and Ladakh to be fully grasped, it must be seen primarily within the aesthetic orbit circumscribed by the four sculptures in Dras, Kartsé, Mulbek and Apati.

To this extent, it is a tangible illustration of the transfer of Buddhism across borders in premodern Asia between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. The information that the art gives about the motivations of its makers and the understanding of its viewers is decidedly more limited than what it reveals about the fact of “diffusion by contact expansion” of Buddhism from

61 Vohra, “Ethno-Historicity of the Dards,” 534.

62 Van Ham, *Heavenly Himalayas*, 22.

63 Snellgrove, and Skorupski, *Zangskar*, 26.

64 Rhie, Marilyn M., “A T’ang Period Stele Inscription and Cave xx1 at T’ien-Lung Shan,” *Archives of Asian Art* 28 (1974–1975): 22.



FIGURE 5.23 *Standing bodhisattva, wood, Sumda Chun village, approx. 70–80 cm, ca. nth c. Leh District, Ladakh, J & K.*

PHOTO ROB LINROTHER, 1983.

Kashmir to neighbouring Ladakh and Zangskar. The subject matter—mainly Maitreya<sup>65</sup> but also Avalokiteśvara<sup>66</sup>—and the way of presentation—over life-size sculptures, either free-standing or embedded in a cliff—certainly suggest a bodhisattva cult in Kashmir and the Western Himalayas, one which may line up with similar patterns elsewhere in the Himalayas or Central Asia. Whether they were driven by popular understanding or by imposition of elites of political or religious power probably depends on local circumstances rather than a universal movement during this time. In the case of the Western Himalayas, the spread of systematic Esoteric Buddhism (Tantrism) did not take place until the first half of the eleventh century, well after the more exoteric Mahāyāna bodhisattva cult imagery studied here, was established. The study of these examples also underscores the fact that the Western Himalayan regions were literally on the periphery of the much more highly organised and complex Kashmiri dynasties, dictating the direction of transmission. Their geographic proximity but environmental distinctiveness fostered the processes of both transfer and localisation of Buddhism. The latter process built on imported Kashmiri foundations, but developed within an increasingly Tibetanised climate. In that sense, over time, Ladakh and particularly Zangskar found themselves uniquely centred on the periphery of both Kashmir and Tibet.

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65 The Buddhological significance of the Buddha-to-come in bodhisattva form cannot be investigated here because of space considerations. In brief, he signals present and future presence of the Buddha's teachings in the human realm, and played an important role in Kashmiri and Gandhāran Buddhism; Luczanits, Christian et al., *Gandhara, The Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan: Legends, Monasteries, and Paradise* (Berlin: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2008), 249–253.

66 In fact there is an early Kashmiri-style low relief carving of Avalokiteśvara in the Suru Valley not discussed here, and it will be recalled that the Maitreya at Dras is mentioned along with an Avalokiteśvara. Thus, there was not an exclusive emphasis on Maitreya Bodhisattva; for examples of early stone sculptures of Avalokiteśvara sculptures, see Dorjay, "Embedded in Stone," figs. 2.3, 2.4, 2.11, 2.22.

## *Transfer Agents*







# Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom and Beyond

*Jens Wilkens*

## Preamble<sup>1</sup>

During the workshop, on which some of the papers contained in this volume are based, we dealt with the spread of Buddhism in various empires in Inner Asian History, among others the so-called steppe empires. Before dealing with the topic of my paper, I would like to draw the attention to the fact that there is a certain amount of disagreement in scholarly literature regarding the relationship of these steppe empires to powerful Chinese dynasties. Barfield designated the former as “shadow empires” that “arose as secondary phenomena”<sup>2</sup> only because of military expansion of the latter to which they attached as it were “parasitically”.<sup>3</sup> Michael R. Drompp, however, has convincingly shown that this model cannot be applied indiscriminately. He brought forward several arguments the most important of which is that the rise to power of the First Türk Empire (551/552) predates the unification of China under the Sui Dynasty (589–618, 隋) in 589 by several decades.<sup>4</sup> It is also true that the East Uyghur Empire in Mongolia (745–840), also known as the Uyghur Steppe Empire or Uyghur Kaganate, arose while China was still strong and united,<sup>5</sup> but achieved its height of political influence when the Tang Dynasty (618–907, 唐)

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- 1 Conventions used in this article when citing Old Uyghur (OU) sources are as follows: square brackets [ ]: restored text; parentheses ( ): defective spellings. In my translation, the parts of them that correspond to restored text are put in square brackets [ ] whereas explanatory additions are given in parentheses ( ). A subscribed 2 denotes a synonym compound. Partly preserved words, which could not be restored are given in transliteration in small capitals.
  - 2 Barfield, Thomas J., “The Shadow Empires: Imperial State Formation along the Chinese-Nomad Frontier,” in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, ed. Susan E. Alcock et al. (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10–41.
  - 3 Barfield, “Shadow Empires,” 34.
  - 4 Drompp, Michael, “Imperial State Formation in Inner Asia: The Early Turkic Empires (6th to 9th Centuries),” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58.1 (2005): 101–111.
  - 5 Drompp, “Imperial State Formation,” 105.

nearly collapsed during the rebellion of An Lushan (755–763, 安祿山).<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, the steppe empires were connected with China, not only economically but politically, which is apparent in the Kirghiz' request of the Tang court to grant the use of the term *tänri*—the name of the sky god of the Türks and Uyghurs—as part of the royal title which the Tang declined.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, they had their own innate social dynamics based on tribal relations and depending on the personal charisma and military achievements of the ruler.

Several internal and external factors led to the establishment and dissolution of the nomadic steppe empires. The East Uyghur Empire in Mongolia had been weakened by an anti-Manichaeism movement, which led to the assassination of Bügü Kagan in 779. Struggles between clans and political factions caused instability in the empire, which was finally crushed by the Kirghiz in 840. In many ways these 'state' formations preserved cultural patterns of their predecessor states such as the division of the realm into an Eastern and a Western wing,<sup>8</sup> the establishment of the political centre in the Orkhon valley in Mongolia,<sup>9</sup> or the use of certain titles<sup>10</sup> even though the successor states brought about the collapse of preceding polities, as can be seen by the First Türk Empire replacing the Rouran (柔然)<sup>11</sup> Empire and the Uyghurs who—aided by the equally turkophone Basmils—brought about the downfall of the Second Türk Empire respectively. Thus, political changes correspond with cultural continuity on a symbolic level. The conversion of the Uyghur ruler Bügü Kagan to Manichaeism (around 761/2) is a deliberate break with the nomadic tradition, in the wake of which old forms of belief and worship were officially discarded. By the adoption of Manichaeism as a court religion, the Uyghurs

6 Drompp, "Imperial State Formation," 103.

7 Drompp, Michael, "Breaking the Orkhon Tradition: Kirghiz Adherence to the Yenisei Region After AD 840," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.3 (1999): 400a.

8 This division is attested for the first time in case of the Xiongnu (匈奴).

9 After their defeat of the Uyghurs, the Kirghiz had to abandon this Inner Asian tradition (Türk, Uyghur and maybe Xiongnu and Rouran, later Mongol). Cf. Drompp, "Breaking the Orkhon Tradition". Many older studies erroneously stated that the Kirghiz replaced the Uyghurs as rulers in the Orkhon valley. Drompp has demonstrated on the basis of Chinese source materials that this was not the case. As one of the possible reasons for abstaining from permanent control over the Orkhon valley he surmises that the apparently mixed economy of the upper Yenisei "would not have been easily transplanted to the Mongolian steppe" (Drompp, "Breaking the Orkhon Tradition," 402).

10 Cf. Rybatzki, Volker, "Titles of Türk and Uigur Rulers in the Old Turkic Inscriptions," *Central Asiatic Journal* 44.2 (2000): 205–292.

11 Also known under the name Ruan Ruan (蠕蠕). On this confederation see Kradin, Nikolay N., "From Tribal Confederation to Empire: The Evolution of the Rouran Society," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58.2 (2005): 149–169.

constructed a new identity of a powerful polity in the steppe supportive of a very influential and truly international religion. They certainly benefited from the Manichaean trade network in ancient Central Asia, which was under the control of the Sogdians. And another important cultural achievement in the history of Turkic peoples has to be mentioned: With the East Uyghur Empire the process of urbanisation began which paved the way for the spread of Buddhism which is intimately connected with sedentary urban culture in the Tarim basin.

## 1 General Introduction

When Turkic-speaking peoples first embraced Buddhism is not known.<sup>12</sup> The activities of the Buddhist Monk Jinagupta (528–605) from Kapiśa at the court of the Kagan Ta bo (他鉢)<sup>13</sup> which next to the alleged translation of a certain *Nirvāṇasūtra* into Old Turkic is the most outstanding event reported in Chinese sources for the 6th century.<sup>14</sup> But the reliability of this information is difficult to evaluate because we do not have any written records in Old Turkic from that period.<sup>15</sup> The remark that the text was translated into the language of the Tujue (突厥 = Türk/Türküt) could refer to the Sogdian language because Sogdian was the official language of chancellery in the First Türk Empire.<sup>16</sup>

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- 12 Annemarie von Gabain gave an overview of Chinese sources dealing with the First Türk Empire in a famous article published in 1954, which since then is very often quoted. Cf. von Gabain, Annemarie, "Buddhistische Türkenmission," in *Asiatica: Festschrift Friedrich Weller. Zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet von seinen Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*, ed. Johannes Schubert and Ulrich Schneider (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1954), 161–173. Klimkeit's article written in 1990 is, in fact, in parts a kind of paraphrase of von Gabain's study. See Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim, "Buddhism in Turkish Central Asia," *Numen* 37.1 (1990): 53–69.
- 13 Laut, Jens Peter, *Der frühe türkische Buddhismus und seine literarischen Denkmäler* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986), 2, gives the name Tapar for the Chinese name Ta bo. According to recent research, the Kagan's name was Tatpar (formerly read as Taspar Kagan). According to the *History of the Sui Dynasty* (Chin. *Suishu* 隋書), Tatpar was sympathetic to Buddhism after conversing with the monk Huilin (惠琳). Cf. von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission," 164.
- 14 See Zieme, Peter, *Religion und Gesellschaft im Uigurischen Königreich von Qoço: Kolophone und Stifter des alttürkischen buddhistischen Schrifttums aus Zentralasien* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), 11–12.
- 15 von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission," 164–165. On Buddhism in the Empire of the Western Türk see von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission," 166–167.
- 16 The same opinion is advanced in Tremblay, Xavier, "The Spread of Buddhism in Serindia—Buddhism Among Iranians, Tocharians, and Turks before the 13th Century," in *The Spread of Buddhism*, ed. Ann Heirman and Stephan Peter Bumbacher (Leiden, Boston:

The most important written source from the First Türk Empire, the Bugut Inscription (dated around 582), is still sometimes quoted as proof for the existence of a Buddhist *saṅgha* among the Türks.<sup>17</sup> But, as it turned out, the inscription does not speak of the establishment of a “great new sangha” (Sogd. *RBkw nwh snk'*) but only referred to the erection of a “great stone of law” (Sogd. *RBkw nwm snk'*), i.e. an inscription.<sup>18</sup> In the epigraphic sources of the Second Türk Empire, which were written in Old Turkic (or: Orkhon Turkic), there is not a single trace of Buddhism. This is sometimes attributed to a deliberate suppression of foreign influences due to a ‘nationalistic’ programme.

A very interesting fragment in Brāhmī script from the Hoernle Collection (IOL Toch 81) published recently, which contains text in three languages (Sanskrit, Tocharian B [also called Kuchean], Old Turkic), displays some Western linguistic features in the Old Turkic part.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that it predates the East Uyghur Empire and represents a more Western form of Old Turkic. Its Buddhist terminology is unique because the word for *buddha* is not *burhan* as in standard Old Uyghur texts but *bur hagan*, using the traditional title of a universal ruler of the steppes.<sup>20</sup> If the hypothesis should turn out to be correct that the text predates the East Uyghur Empire—and this is highly likely—it would be the first witness of Buddhism in a Turkic language. This would mean that in the Western part of the Tarim basin Turks were already involved in Buddhism long before the spread of Buddhism among the Uyghurs in the 9th or 10th centuries.

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Brill, 2007), 108. Kudara, too, mentions the opinion of some scholars who think that the translation of this text must rather be into Sogdian rather than into Turkic. Cf. Kudara, Kōgi, “The Buddhist Culture of the Old Uigur Peoples,” *Pacific World* 4, 3rd series (2002): 184, accessed August 26, 2013. <http://www.shin-ibs.edu/documents/pwj3-4/09KD4.pdf>.

- 17 See Laut, *Der frühe türkische Buddhismus*, 6–7. For a first in depth study of this inscription see Kljaštornyj, Sergej Grigorevič and Vladimir A. Livšic, “The Sogdian Inscription of Bugut Revised,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 26.1 (1972): 69–102. For new readings cf. Yoshida, Yutaka and Takao Moriyasu, “Buguto hibun ブグト碑文 (Bugut Inscription),” in *Mongoru Koku Genzon Iseki: Hibun Chōsa Kenkyū Hōkoku* モンゴル国現存遺蹟・碑文調査研究報告 / *Provisional Report of Researches on Historical Sites and Inscriptions in Mongolia from 1996 to 1998*, ed. Takao Moriyasu and Ayudai Ochir (Osaka: Society of Central Eurasian Studies, 1999), 122–125.
- 18 Whether *nwm* (‘law’) refers to Buddhism is still an open question.
- 19 See the edition with notes in Maue, Dieter, “Three Languages on one Leaf: on IOL Toch 81 with Special Regard to the Turkic Part,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 71.1 (2008): 59–73.
- 20 On the other peculiarities of the Buddhist terminology in this manuscript see the commentary in Maue, “Three Languages”.

## 2 The Uyghurs

When the Uyghurs first made contacts with Buddhism is not known.<sup>21</sup> A conversion story, so often encountered in the history of religions of Central Asia, is missing. One of their princes who came to power in 629—long before the establishment of the Uyghur Empire in Mongolia—received the title bodhisattva (Chin. *pusa* 菩薩),<sup>22</sup> but whether he was a devout Buddhist is rather doubtful. As to Buddhism in the East Uyghur Empire in Mongolia some scholars have speculated that a certain passage in the Chinese part of the trilingual Karabalgasun<sup>23</sup> inscription (dated around 815–820), where the destruction of idols is mentioned as an outcome of the Kagan's conversion to Manichaeism, might refer to Buddhist sculptures.<sup>24</sup> But this event rather refers to the native religion of the Uyghurs,<sup>25</sup> the idols of which would correspond most likely to the *ongyod* of the Mongols.

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- 21 There is no comprehensive monograph on Uyghur Buddhism. Still the best introduction to Uyghur Buddhist literature is Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*. Primarily a bibliographical survey is Elverskog, Johan, *Uyghur Buddhist Literature* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997). Cf. also Kudara, Kōgi, "A Rough Sketch of Central Asian Buddhism," *Pacific World* 4, 3rd series (2002): 93–107, accessed August 26, 2013; <http://www.shin-ibs.edu/documents/pwj3-4/06KD4.pdf>; and Scharlipp, Wolfgang Ekkehard, "Kurzer Überblick über die buddhistische Literatur der Türken," *Materialia Turcica* 6 (1980): 37–53.
- 22 von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission," 168. See von Gabain, Annemarie, "Zur Frühgeschichte der Uiguren, 607–745," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 72 (1952): 22 and Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 76 as well.
- 23 Karabalgasun, or Ordo Balik, was the capital of the East Uyghur Empire. The inscription found at this place bears a Chinese, a Sogdian and a Turkic part.
- 24 Cf. von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission," 168–169; von Gabain, Annemarie, "Der Buddhismus in Zentralasien," in *Religionsgeschichte des Orients in der Zeit der Weltreligionen*, ed. Bertold Spuler (Leiden, Köln: Brill, 1961), 507. See Klimkeit, "Buddhism," 56–57 as well. Tang thinks that a passage in the Chinese part of the inscription ("being ignorant in the past, we called the devil Buddha") refers to the abandonment of Buddhism for the sake of Manichaeism. See Tang, Li, *A History of Uighur Religious Conversions (5th–16th Centuries)* (Singapore: Asia Research Institute, 2005), 29. Cf. Palumbo, Antonello "La conversione degli Uiguri al Manicheismo: La versione cinese," in *Il Manicheismo, Volume 1: Mani e il Manicheismo*, ed. Gherardo Gnoli ([Milano]: Mondadori, 2003), 260, where we find a plural in the translation: "in passato eravamo ignoranti, e chiamavamo 'Buddha' dei demoni". As "Buddha" is often used in Eastern Manichaeism as a positive designation of Mani and other apostles, it is clear that the former false worship of the Uyghurs refers to their native religion.
- 25 This is the alternative interpretation given in von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission," 169.

A travelogue by the Muslim author Tamīm ibn Baḥr, which cannot be dated with absolute certainty but which was probably composed around the year 821,<sup>26</sup> describes the residential city of the Toghuzghuz, i.e. the Uyghurs, which can only be Karabalgasun (OU Ordo Balık). Tamīm ibn Baḥr's account contains some precious information on religious topics. He states, for instance, that the Manichaeans (Arab. *zindīq*) prevailed among the population but there were 'fire-worshippers' as well. This statement certainly refers to the expatriate Sogdian population who practiced a peculiar unreformed East Iranian form of Zoroastrianism not only in their homeland (Sogdiana) but in their colonies as well.<sup>27</sup> Of Buddhism among the Uyghurs there is no mention at all. As regards the presence of Buddhism in the East Uyghur Empire in Mongolia, the sources are anything but explicit, but it is doubtful that there was a sizable group of Buddhists, let alone Uyghur Buddhists, active in this period. Only after the migration of the Uyghurs to the Eastern Tianshan (天山) area and to the Gansu (甘肅) corridor does Buddhism start to play a significant role in the history of religions of the Uyghurs. Smaller groups of Uyghurs who already inhabited the oases on the Northern fringe of the Taklamakan desert before the demise of the East Uyghur Empire may have converted to Buddhism.

In the course of time, Uyghur Buddhists had to cope with adherents of other religions. First, they had to deal with rival Manichaeans who benefitted from royal patronage, later with Christians of the Apostolic Church of the East (inadequately called Nestorians) and Muslims. In Mongol times Buddhist and Muslim encounters intensified and traces of these encounters are mirrored in some Uyghur Buddhist texts.<sup>28</sup>

26 Cf. Minorsky, V[ladimir] [Fedorovič], "Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey to the Uyghurs," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 12.2 (1948): 303.

27 See Minorsky, "Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey," 283–284. Minorsky doubts the correctness of this observation: "The presence of Zoroastrians among the subjects of the Toghuzghuz is unlikely; by some aberration Tamīm's designation might refer to Buddhists or to the natural religion of the Turkish tribes." (Minorsky, "Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey," 296). But in the recent decades rich materials on Zoroastrianism in the Sogdian colonies have come to light. See, e.g., Rong, Xinjiang, "The Migrations and Settlements of the Sogdians in the Northern Dynasties, Sui and Tang," trans. Bruce Doar, in *The Silk Road: Key Papers, Part 1: The Pre-Islamic Period, Volume 1*, ed. Valerie Hansen (Leiden, Boston: Global Oriental, 2012), 338–396. Cf. as well the survey by Riboud, Pénélope, "Réflexions sur les pratiques religieuses désignées sous le nom *xian* 祆," in *Les Sogdiens en Chine*, ed. Étienne de la Vaissière and Éric Trombert (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2005), 73–91.

28 See Tezcan, Semih and Peter Zieme, "Antiislamische Polemik in einem alttürkischen buddhistischen Gedicht aus Turfan," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 17.1 (1990): 146–151; Arat, Reşid Rahmeti, *Eski Türk Şiiri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, 3rd edition),

In the following, I would like to highlight some aspects of Uyghur Buddhist culture and try to sort out some characteristics that define Uyghur Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom and beyond. A particular interest is the manner in which the relationship of Buddhism to the rulers and their family and to other important members of Uyghur society is mirrored in the sources. The following remarks and quotations should be considered preliminary because important texts such as some of the inscriptions mentioned below were published in rather unreliable editions. A revision of several sources based on an inspection of the originals would be highly desirable.

### 2.1 *After the Demise of the Uyghur Empire in Mongolia*

After the collapse of their empire in Mongolia, the Uyghur tribes split and moved into different directions.<sup>29</sup> Various groups were wiped out in a rather short time. Regarding the subject of this volume, two groups subsequently became important: one group settled in Gansu (甘肅, the so called Hexi 河西 Uyghurs) and founded the principality of Ganzhou<sup>30</sup> (甘州, around 880) which was destroyed by the Tanguts (known in Chinese sources as Xixia 西夏) around the year 1035.<sup>31</sup> Their ruler was designated as a *hagan*, the traditional title of a powerful ruler in the steppes of Inner Asia. The ruling clan of the Ganzhou Uyghurs was the Yaglakar, who formerly were the leading political

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text no. 11.155–158; Tezcan, Semih, *Das uigurische Insadi-Sūtra* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1974). On Buddhist and Muslim encounters in Central Asia in general see Elverskog, Johan, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road* (Philadelphia, Oxford: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

29 See the dramatic events summarised in Drompp, Michael R[obert], *Tang China and the Collapse of the Uighur Empire: A Documentary History* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

30 See on this principality Pinks, Elisabeth, *Die Uiguren von Kan-chou in der frühen Sung-Zeit (960–1028)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968), a monograph that deals with the Chinese sources concerning the Ganzhou Uyghurs. Yang states that there was a community of Uyghurs in Ganzhou before 840 Cf. Yang, Fu-Hsüeh, “On the Sha-chou Uighur Kingdom,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 38.1 (1994): 83.

31 Hamilton, James, *Manuscripts Ouïgours du IX–X siècle de Touen-Houang. Textes établis, traduits, et commentés*, vol. 1 (Paris: Peeters, 1986), xviii. Uyghur Buddhism still influenced this region after the destruction of the realm. The Yellow Uyghurs (Sarg Yugur) are today part of the multi-linguistic Yugur nationality in Gansu, and speak a Turkic language. In scholarly literature, they are said to be the heirs of the Ganzhou Uyghurs. The Yellow Uyghurs are quite often mentioned in Mongol sources (see, e.g., Elverskog, Johan, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra: Altan Khan and the Mongols in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 94 [English translation], 234 [Mongolian text]). The Shira Yugur who belong to the Yugur nationality too, speak a Mongolic language (Šira Yugur). Others are speakers of Chinese and Tibetan.



power of the East Uyghur Empire in Mongolia, until they were overthrown by the Ādiz in 795. The population, which the Uyghurs encountered in Gansu at that time, was predominantly Tibetan due to the Tibetan occupation of the region (786–848) and—to a lesser extent—Chinese.<sup>32</sup> The Ganzhou Uyghurs extended their political and economic influence in the region during the Five Dynasties (907–960). There was a constant struggle for hegemony in Northwest Gansu with Shazhou (沙州, that is Dunhuang 敦煌), where another group of Uyghurs had settled.<sup>33</sup> The Ganzhou Uyghur Kingdom was an important hub for trade between the Tarim basin and China proper.

The other Uyghur group founded the West Uyghur Kingdom (847)<sup>34</sup> also known as the Tianshan (天山) Uyghur Kingdom<sup>35</sup> with its capital first at Solmi (Ark/Karašahr, Chin. Yanqi 焉耆)<sup>36</sup> and later at Beš Balik (Chin. Beiting 北庭),<sup>37</sup> located at the Northern slopes of the Tianshan range. Kočo (< Chin.

32 Pinks, *Uiguren von Kan-chou*, 62.

33 Ibid., 69–71.

34 Brose, Michael C., “Uyghur Technologists of Writing and Literacy in Mongol China,” *T'oung Pao* 91.4–5 (2005): 403.

35 Also common is the designation Gaochang Uyghur Kingdom.

36 See Moriyasu, Takao, “Chronology of West Uighur Buddhism: Re-examination of the Dating of the Wallpaintings in Grünwedel's Cave No. 8 (New: No. 18), Bezeklik,” in *Aspects of Research into Central Asian Buddhism. In memoriam Kōgi Kudara*, ed. Peter Zieme (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 213 and footnote 42 (with further references).

37 Beš Balik remained the capital of the West Uyghurs for a very long time until during Qaidu's rebellion the government moved to Kara Kočo. Abe, Takeo, “Where was the Capital of the West Uighurs?” in *Silver Jubilee Volume of the Zinbun-kagaku-kenkyūsho*, ed. Shigeki Kaizuka (Kyoto: Nissha Print, 1954), dates this event to the year 1266; Biran, Michal, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), 42, however, to 1270. Yuan and Chagatay sources refer to (Kara) Kočo as the centre of the Uyghurs. See Matsui, Dai, “A Mongolian Decree from the Chagataid Khanate Discovered at Dunhuang,” in *Aspects of Research into Central Asian Buddhism. In memoriam Kōgi Kudara*, ed. Peter Zieme (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 165. For Uyghur sources mentioning Kočo as a political centre see Matsui, “Mongolian Decree,” 165 (n. 23). The late “commemorative inscription” speaks of the *kao čay oy* (< Chin. Gaochang wang 高昌王). See Geng, Shimin, and James Hamilton, “L'inscription ouïgoure de la stèle commémorative des Iduq Qut de Qočo,” *Turcica* 13 (1981): 20 (III, 50) = Balati 巴拉提, Kahaer 卡哈尔, Liu Yingsheng 刘迎胜, “Yiduhu gaochang wang shixun bei huihuwen beiwen zhi jiaokan yu yanjiu 亦都护高昌王世勋碑回鹘文碑文之校勘与研究 [Study Regarding the Uyghur Inscription of the Stele of the Family Achievements of the Idok Kut Gaochang Wang],” *Yuanshi ji beifang minzushi yanjiu jikan 元史及北方民族史研究集刊 [Studies in the History of the Yuan Dynasty and of the Northern Nationalities]* 8 (1984): 67 (line 155). The commemorative inscription is a bilingual text (Chinese and Old Uyghur, found in 1933 North of Wuwei (武威, former Liangzhou 凉州) in Gansu. It was erected

Gaochang 高昌), located near present day Turfan, is in scholarly literature usually referred to as the winter capital, Beš Balik as the summer capital. Buddhist texts in Old Uyghur were found in large quantities at several sites in the Turfan oasis and in Dunhuang, Kamil (Chin. Hami 哈密) and some at the Edsin Gol river. Buddhist archaeological remains from the West Uyghur Kingdom were excavated at Beš Balik where Uyghur wall paintings and inscriptions were discovered as well.<sup>38</sup> A strong Uyghur domination over the region of Kočo and Beš Balik dates already back to the year 803, when Tang troops in cooperation with Uyghur forces ousted the Tibetans from the Turfan region.<sup>39</sup>

The West Uyghurs became vassals of the Khitan (in Chinese sources referred to as Liao 遼) Dynasty by the end of the first quarter of the 10th century,<sup>40</sup> and—more than two hundred years later (in 1131–1132)—of the Kara Khitai Empire. Another group of Uyghurs founded a new state in the region of Kučā, which merged with the West Uyghur Kingdom of Beš Balik and Gaochang in the 10th century.<sup>41</sup> Kučā was the centre of Tocharian civilisation at that time. Sizable Uyghur groups were already present in those regions where their compatriots decided to settle down after their westward migration from Mongolia.<sup>42</sup> The city-states located in the Tarim basin were multi-ethnic and often multi-religious urban centres.<sup>43</sup> We have to assume that Uyghurs living in different

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in 1334. The author is Käkä (or: Gägä) from Čam Balık (located to the West of modern Ürümqi). See Geng et al., “Stèle commémorative,” 11–13. The Chinese literatus Yu Ji (虞集) (1272–1348) is mentioned as the author of the inscription in Atwood, Christopher P., “The Uyghur Stone: Archaeological Revelations in the Mongol Empire,” in *The Steppe Lands and the World Beyond them: Studies in Honor of Victor Spinei on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Florin Curta and Bogdan-Petru Maleon (Iași: Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2013), 320.

38 See Umemura, Hiroshi, “A Qočo Uyghur King Painted in the Buddhist Temple of Beshbaliq,” in *Turfan, Khotan und Dunhuang: Vorträge der Tagung „Annemarie v. Gabain und die Turfanforschung“, veranstaltet von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin (9.-12. 12. 1994)*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 361–378 and Shatzman Steinhardt, Nancy, “The Uighur Ritual Complex in Beiting,” *Orientalions* 30.4 (1999): 28–37 (for archaeological research).

39 Zhang, Guangda, Rong Xinjiang, “A Concise History of the Turfan Oasis and Its Exploration,” in *The Silk Road: Key Papers, Part 1: The Pre-Islamic Period, Volume 2*, ed. Valerie Hansen (Leiden, Boston: Global Oriental, 2012), 404.

40 Biran, Michal, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15.

41 Pinks, *Uiguren von Kan-chou*, 61–62.

42 For Shazhou and Guazhou (瓜州) see Pinks, *Uiguren von Kan-chou*, 63.

43 For cross-cultural contacts between speakers of both Tocharian languages and speakers of e.g. Sogdian and Turkic see Schaefer, Christiane, “Multilingualism and Language Contact

parts of the Tarim basin approached Buddhism in various ways. Some groups converted at an early stage whereas others remained faithful Manichaeans for quite a long time or adhered to their own native religion.

## 2.2 *Uyghur Buddhist Sources*

The history of Buddhism in both Uyghur polities is blurred by the fact that there has been a great amount of confusion as to the date of important documents.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes the manuscripts and inscriptions<sup>45</sup> have to be dated several centuries later than their first editors and many scholars following in their lead thought,<sup>46</sup> e.g. the famous stake inscriptions I and III or the dedicatory inscription from Toyok were dated by F. W. K. Müller and Şinasi Tekin respectively to the 8th century and therefore assigned to the East Uyghur Empire in Mongolia.<sup>47</sup>

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in Urban Centres along the Silk Road during the First Millennium AD,” in *The Urban Mind: Cultural and Environmental Dynamics*, ed. Paul J. J. Sinclair et al. (Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 2010), 441–455 (with a rich bibliography).

- 44 The same is true for Uyghur paintings which are usually dated much too early. The Buddhist paintings from Bāzāklik, for instance, are often dated to the 8th or 9th century. See e.g. Golden, Peter, *Central Asia in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 46, dating the portraits of two female donors to this period, or Shatzman Steinhardt, “Uighur Ritual Complex,” fig. 14, who dates a painting from cave 1 kept in the National Museum in New Delhi to this period.
- 45 Next to wall inscriptions (longer texts, which are sometimes related to literary works, and short texts, e.g. in cartouches), texts on movable objects (stakes, wooden plaques, temple banners) are to be mentioned. Similar to colophons in manuscripts and block-prints, inscriptions on temple banners sometimes testify to the personal piety of worshippers. An edition of the Old Uyghur Inscriptions on temple banners housed in the former Museum of Indian Art (now: Museum of Asian Art) in Berlin is found in Moriyasu, Takao and Peter Zieme, “Uighur Inscriptions on the Banners from Turfan Housed in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin,” in *Central Asian Temple Banners in the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst*, Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner (Berlin: Reimer, 2003), 461a–474a.
- 46 Tekin dates one manuscript of the *Maitrisimit* to the 8th century. See Tekin, Şinasi, *Maitrisimit nom bitig. Die uigurische Übersetzung eines Werkes der buddhistischen Vaibhāṣika-Schule*. 1. Teil: *Transliteration, Übersetzung, Anmerkungen*. 2. Teil: *Analytischer und rückläufiger Index*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980), 8–9. This early dating cannot be correct. Cf. already Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 20–21, who ascribes to a dating to the 9th century.
- 47 See Tekin, Şinasi, “Die uigurische Weihinschrift eines buddhistischen Klosters aus den Jahren 767–780 in Tuyoq,” *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 48 (1976): 225–230; also published

We have five stake inscriptions from the Turfan area, four in Uyghur script and one in Chinese. The first three stakes are housed in the Museum of Asian Art (Berlin), the fourth in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum (Ürümči) and the fifth in the British Library in London. The fourth stake was found in 1965 in a *stūpa* at Yingsha (英沙) near Turfan.

The dedicatory inscription from Toyok is regarded even in a recent study as the “earliest dated Turkic Buddhist monument” and the date is given as 760/780.<sup>48</sup> This would mean that the inscription belongs to the East Uyghur Empire. Based on the language—which is standard Old Uyghur without any archaisms—and on paleographic observations<sup>49</sup> this inscription rather belongs to the 11th century at the earliest.<sup>50</sup> Stake inscription I found in ruin α at Kočo is, for instance, to be dated to the year 1008, stake inscription III to 1019.<sup>51</sup> The stake inscriptions are highly important documents of local Buddhism in the Turfan oasis.

Stake inscription I was commissioned by a high-ranking lay couple, the *upāsikā* (OU *upasanč*) Tānrikān Tegin Silig Tärkän Kunčuy Tānrim and her

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under the same title in *Eurasia Nostratica: Festschrift für Karl Menges, Volume 2*, ed. Pentti Aalto et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977), 225–230.

48 Tremblay, “Spread of Buddhism in Serindia,” 108. But see already Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 11 (n. 7): “die Datierung ist zweifelhaft.”

49 The published facsimiles are far from satisfactory so this would have to be corroborated by checking the original. The inscription was first published in Huang Wenbi 黃文弼, *Tulufan kaoguji* 吐魯番考古記 [Record of the Archaeology of Turfan] (Beijing: Zhongguo kexueyuan, 1954), 116, pl. 99.

50 Moriyasu is of a similar opinion (“an older inscription from Toyoq dated around the 11th century”). Cf. Moriyasu, Takao, “Uighur Buddhist Stake Inscriptions from Turfan,” in *De Dunhuang à Istanbul: Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, ed. Louis Bazin and Peter Zieme (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 166.

51 Numbering according to Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 150. Stake inscription II is in Chinese and can be dated to 983 (Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 151). Other datings of stake inscriptions I and III are summarised in Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 151–152. The new datings of stake inscriptions I and III were discovered independently by Hamilton and Moriyasu (see bibliographical references in Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 152, footnote 14). Stake IV is roughly dated to the 11th century in Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 156 and stake V to the 13th–14th centuries (Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 157). Stake inscriptions I and III are edited with translation and commentary in Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 159–199. Some years later, a study of philological details including some new readings of stake inscription III was published in Hamilton, James, “Remarks Concerning Turfan Stake Inscription III,” in *Turfan Revisited—The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst et al. (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 121a–124b.

husband, the *upāsaka* (OU *upase*) Külüg Inanč Šaču Sañun.<sup>52</sup> The inscription speaks of the establishment of a monastery (OU  $\nu(i)rhar$  < Sogdian  $\beta r \gamma r$  < Skt. *vihāra*) by means of driving the stake into the earth<sup>53</sup> in order to meet Buddha Maitreya in the future.<sup>54</sup> The two lay followers express their hope that after having received the prediction (Skt. *vyākaraṇa*) for future buddhahood from Maitreya they will later reappear as Buddhas in the world (OU *keniḡä burhan yertinč<ü>dä bälgürmäkim(i)z bolzun*)<sup>55</sup> after having fulfilled the six *pāramitās* in a hundred *kalpas*, eons, and three *asaṃkhyeyakalpas*, incalculable eons. A long enumeration of noble women and male dignitaries who are said to have practiced *anumodanā*, rejoicing (in the good actions of other people), with the couple follows.<sup>56</sup> A list of persons who all seem to be craftsmen, who were involved in the construction of the monastery, is appended.<sup>57</sup> The list includes the name of a scribe (OU *petkāči*) Bäg Arslan as well. After the wish is expressed that they may all attain buddhahood, further persons are mentioned among others the harpist (OU *kuykawči*) Bogunču and again the scribe Bäg Arslan and maybe the people who had driven the stake into the earth.<sup>58</sup> It is likely that the scribe Bäg Arslan was the person who inscribed the text on the stake and that the musician is mentioned because the consecration of the place was accompanied by music.

The third stake inscription commemorates a similar event: a family—the *upāsaka* Tarduš Tapmıš Yayatgar Čaṅši Yälü Kaya and the *upāsikā* T(ä)ṅrikän Körtlä Hatun T(ä)ṅrim together with their daughter Yügätmiš Hatun T(ä)ṅrim and their son, the name of whom is only partly preserved as [. . .] κ Inal—commissioned the erection of a statue of Maitreya and of a monastery the name of which is damaged in the inscription ([. . .]LYQ *čandradas*).<sup>59</sup> Note that contrary to stake inscription I, where the wife is mentioned first, in this inscription the husband comes first.

In stake inscription III, a long list of people who rejoice together with the donors over the merit they acquired (OU *bu ädgülüg išimizkä anumodit eyin*

52 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 161 (lines 4–5).

53 On the expression *šat ıgač tokı-* in line 10 as a parallel to Chinese *dacha* (打剎) see Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 173.

54 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 161 (lines 9–10).

55 Moriyasu thinks that *burhan yertinčüdü* is a compound and translates “in the Buddha world” but this is impossible because this type of a nominal compound would require the possessive suffix at the second constituent. Cf. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 163.

56 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 161–162 (lines 12–19).

57 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 162 (line 19).

58 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 164.

59 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 186–187 (lines 4–11).

*ögirdäči*) follows. The persons are for the most part relatives of the donating family enumerated according to the degree of relationship.<sup>60</sup> The list includes some names of the Buddhist clergy related to the monastery. Finally, names of spiritual friends (Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*) who are said to rejoice with the couple are mentioned. These people are presumably not related to the couple. The deceased persons, to whom the merit accrued by means of the erection of the statue and the construction of the monastery, are mentioned as well.<sup>61</sup> Afterwards a list of craftsmen who contributed to the erection of the monastery is appended.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the structure, content and purpose of stake inscriptions I and III are quite similar. As Hamilton has observed,<sup>63</sup> the *idikut* (< *idok kut*)<sup>64</sup> mentioned in both inscriptions under the title Köl Bilgä T(ä)ṅri Elig is one and the same person. What makes stake inscription III all the more precious is that in the introductory part, which contains the dating and the name of the Uyghur ruler, the frontiers of the West Uyghur Kingdom are defined:<sup>65</sup> it stretches as far as Šačiu (< Chin. 沙州| Shazhou) in the East and as far as Uč (i.e. Uč Turfan) and (Upper) Barshan in the West.

Both inscriptions are outstanding documents of the transitional phase in the West Uyghur Kingdom, which is characterised by the loss of political influence on the part of Manichaeism to the benefit of Buddhism.<sup>66</sup> In the case of ruin α in Kočo—formerly an important Manichaean building where numerous texts of the Religion of Light were discovered—we find that by means of stake I, which was unearthed in ruin α, the structure had been consecrated as a Buddhist building.<sup>67</sup> The inscriptions further confirm the importance of the

60 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 187–188 (lines 11–24).

61 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 188 (lines 24–27). Note that in line 25 we can read *ärtmä barma* “the deceased” (followed by *kaṅmüz* “our father”). These two words have not been deciphered correctly yet. See Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 188 (only transliterated as ’T(MN) (K)’(MN)). Cf. Hamilton, “Remarks,” 124a: “The forms *atma buma* (or *atmn bumn*) remain as yet unexplained.”

62 Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 188 (lines 01’–15’). This list is clearly written as a text separate from the main one.

63 Hamilton, “Remarks,” 122a.

64 This title of the Uyghur king was borrowed from the Basml.

65 On the names of the cities see the translation in Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 188 and the note to *uč barshan* on p. 192.

66 This process had already begun in the late 10th century. See Sundermann, Werner, “Der Manichäismus an der Seidenstraße: Aufstieg, Blüte und Verfall,” in *Die Seidenstraße: Handel und Kulturaustausch in einem eurasiatischen Wegenetz*, ed. Ulrich Hübner et al. (Hamburg: EB-Verlag, 2001), 164–165.

67 Sundermann, “Manichäismus,” 165.

cult of the future Buddha Maitreya among the Uyghurs at the turn of the first millennium.<sup>68</sup> This is corroborated by literary sources such as the *Maitrisimit*, a translation from Tocharian A [= Agnean], and by colophons etc.

### 2.3 *The Transfer of Buddhism to the Uyghurs*

The stake inscriptions bear witness to a longer process of a gradual spread of Buddhism among the Uyghur population. Buddhism obviously was the unifying factor on a religious level in view of to the otherwise motley and highly complex local cultures in ancient Central Asia.<sup>69</sup> Access to other hubs in order to exchange goods and knowledge was facilitated after the Uyghurs became Buddhists. As Manichaeans they were perceived as a separate religious group. And a predominantly Buddhist population in the West Uyghur Kingdom may have harboured feelings of reserve and mistrust with regard to a ruling elite which followed a different religious tradition. One of the leading historians of the West Uyghur Kingdom, Takao Moriyasu, thinks that only in the second half of the 10th century Uyghur Buddhism began to spread significantly, a view that seems to be confirmed by the extant manuscripts. Buddhists active in the West Uyghur Kingdom in the previous period were—according to him—Tocharians and Chinese.<sup>70</sup> He is “strongly opposed” to what he calls the “old theory”, the so-called “Sogdian Hypothesis”, that it was the Sogdians who propagated Buddhism among the Türks, Western Türks, TÜRGEŞ, Karluk and Eastern Uyghurs in Mongolia and made converts.<sup>71</sup> I agree with him in many respects but Sogdian Buddhism<sup>72</sup> certainly contributed to a certain degree to the development of Uyghur Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom and very likely in Gansu as well.<sup>73</sup> To what extent still has to be explored more thoroughly.

In the early period during the development of Uyghur Buddhist culture, the Indo-European impact is most significant.<sup>74</sup> Tocharian Buddhist culture made

68 Maitreya is mentioned in the ancient text in three languages referred to above (10L Toch 81). See Maue, “Three Languages”.

69 On Buddhism as a unifying factor in Eastern Central Asia see also the article by Sam van Schaik in this volume.

70 Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 193.

71 Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 193.

72 A survey of Sogdian Buddhism and its literature is found in Walter, Mariko Namba, *Sogdians and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania, 2006).

73 A similar view is expressed in Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 19.

74 Annemarie von Gabain assumes an influence of (Khotanese) Saka on Uyghur Buddhism but this view does not find any supporters today. Cf. von Gabain, “Buddhistische Türkenmission,” 171.

a deep impact on the Uyghurs. Many Sanskrit terms were transmitted via a Tocharian (A or B) intermediary. Tocharian A in particular was a written language of high prestige among the Uyghurs who studied and commissioned texts in this language.<sup>75</sup> As spoken languages both varieties of Tocharian ceased to be used after ca. 800.<sup>76</sup> One should bear in mind that after the foundation of the West Uyghur Kingdom it was not only a local form of Tocharian Buddhism in the Turfan oasis that helped shape Uyghur Buddhism. Two important centres of Tocharian civilisation on the Northern edge of the Taklamakan desert, Kučā and Šorčuk, were also part of the West Uyghur Kingdom.

When, after 840, many Uyghurs reached the Turfan region, they encountered a multilingual society, with Chinese and Sogdians as the most significant communities.<sup>77</sup> But linguistic and cultural contacts of the Uyghurs with Sogdians started earlier, at the very latest in the East Uyghur Empire in Mongolia. Uyghur Manichaeism and its literature—which is not only influenced by Sogdian Manichaeism but also based on Parthian and Middle Persian literature—paved the way for the spread of Buddhism among the Uyghurs in various ways:

- the Manichaeans created for the first time a highly specialised literary Turkic language,
- the Manichaean Uyghurs were accustomed to translate from Indo-European languages because most Manichaean texts in Old Uyghur are translations from Middle Iranian languages (Sogdian, Parthian, Middle Persian),
- they had educated scribes, painters and architects,<sup>78</sup>
- they had strong ties with the ruling elite,

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75 See especially Pinault, Georges-Jean, “Le Tokharien pratiqué par les Ouïgours. À propos d’un fragment en Tokharien A du Musée Guimet,” *Études de Dunhuang et Turfan*, ed. Jean-Pierre Drège (with the assistance of Olivier Venture) (Genève: Droz, 2007), 327–366. On the impact of Tocharian literature see Zieme, Peter, “Some Notes on Old Uigur Translations of Buddhist Commentaries,” *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2011* 15 (2012): 148: “The texts were translated at a time when Tocharian was still used as a ‘church’ language at least. At the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century the Tocharian tradition ended and probably also its use as a vernacular, although new studies want to draw a different picture.”

76 Hansen, Valerie, *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 77.

77 Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 83.

78 On the importance of scribes and painters in Central Asian Manichaeism see van Tongerloo, Alois, “The Importance of Writing in the Central Asian Manichaean Milieu,” in *Writing in the Altaic World (Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Permanent*



- the relationship between the religious and the political sphere had been already defined by the Manichaeans (on which see below),
- Eastern Manichaeism was considerably buddhicised.

Sogdo-Uyghur Manichaean civilisation reached its peak after the establishment of the West Uyghur Kingdom, and especially in the Turfan region where numerous Manichaean manuscripts and works of art were found.

### 2.3.1 Uyghur Buddhist Texts (Sogdian Influence)

Uyghur Buddhist texts were translated from several source languages. This is a highly significant and complex process of implementation of Buddhist culture: texts were translated first from Tocharian, then from Chinese and later from Tibetan<sup>79</sup> and Sanskrit.<sup>80</sup> The impact of Sogdian Buddhism is still subject to scholarly debate. But Tocharian, Chinese and Sogdian Buddhism must have

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*International Altaistic Conference [PIAC]*, ed. Juha Janhunen and Volker Rybatzki (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 1999), 253–261.

- 79 On translations made from Tibetan see Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 40–42. There is also one text called “The History of the Buddha Statue of Sandalwood in China” which was translated from Old Uyghur into Tibetan by Anzang and Dhanyasena in the year 1263. See Kudara, Kōgi, “Uigur and Tibetan Translations of ‘The History of the Buddha Statue of Sandalwood in China,’” in *Turfan Revisited—The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst et al. (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 149a–154b.
- 80 On colophons which mention a translation from an Indian original, see Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 42. A fragment of a late wordlist in Sanskrit and Old Uyghur is preserved in U 1419 (see Zieme, Peter and György Kara, *Ein uigurisches Totenbuch: Nāropas Lehre in uigurischer Übersetzung von vier Traktaten nach der Sammelhandschrift aus Dunhuang British Museum Or. 8212 (109)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1979), 56, n. 27. To the last phase of Uyghur Buddhism in the Mongol Empire belongs a stratum of ‘learned’ loanwords, which are closer to the original Sanskrit terms than those which entered the Uyghur vocabulary via Tocharian or Sogdian. See Röhrborn, Klaus, “Zum Wanderweg des altindischen Lehngutes im Alttürkischen,” in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients: Festschrift für Bertold Spuler zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Hans R. Roemer and Albrecht Noth (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 340–341. Röhrborn speaks of a kind of renaissance of Sanskrit learning in Mongol times (Röhrborn, “Wanderweg,” 340). This new westward orientation in terms of religion is certainly due to the growing influence of Tibetan Buddhism in Yuan times and is complementary to the eastward orientation of the Uyghurs as far as politics and social processes are concerned. Oda thinks that it was Indian Buddhists who carried out missionary work among the Uyghurs and were responsible for the spread of the Brāhmī script. Cf. Oda, Juten, “Uighuristan,” *Acta Asiatica* 34 (1978): 40. However, this scenario is not very convincing. Sinicisation of the Uyghur elite made progress especially during the 14th century.

influenced Uyghur Buddhism on different levels,<sup>81</sup> the impact of the former being the most significant in the early period, i.e. in the tenth century, and probably already in the second half of the ninth century. Chinese Buddhism became the hallmark of Uyghur Buddhism around the turn of the first millennium. The classical phase of Uyghur Buddhist culture (11th–early 13th centuries) is characterised by translations from Chinese Buddhist works (Mahāyāna *sūtras*, commentaries, apocryphal texts, *dhāraṇīs*, narrative and hagiographical literature etc.).

It has to be underlined that there is not a single Old Uyghur text which was demonstrably translated from Sogdian.<sup>82</sup> It is, however, true that a significant amount of words which belong to the basic Buddhist vocabulary in Old Uyghur were borrowed from Sogdian or via Sogdian.<sup>83</sup> Some of these terms such as *č(a)hšap(a)t* ('precept' << Skt. *śikṣāpada*), *nom* ('teaching' < Sogd. *nwm* ~ *nwmh*, corresponding to Skt. *dharma*), *nizvani* ('defilement' < Sogd. *nyzβ'ny* [Manichaean script] ~ *nyzβ'n'k* [Sogd. script]), corresponding to Skt. *kleśa*) go back to a Manichaean Uyghur intermediary and cannot be regarded as directly influenced by Sogdian Buddhism,<sup>84</sup> but this is not true for all Buddhist concepts of the basic vocabulary.<sup>85</sup> Old Uyghur glosses are found in Buddhist Sogdian manuscripts; a Uyghur scribe (named Kutlag) was responsible for copying a *Vajracchedikāsūtra* manuscript in Sogdian from Turfan.<sup>86</sup> In a Uyghur colophon to a Sogdian text from the Turfan Collection in Berlin (So 18274) the scribe El Tutmiš says that he wrote down the Sogdian text.<sup>87</sup> And furthermore, some Old Uyghur Buddhist texts are written in the formal Sogdian script, a fact inexplicable if only Tocharian and Chinese Buddhism had made an impact on Uyghur Buddhism in the preclassical and classical phase of Uyghur literature. Thus, it is obvious that Sogdian Buddhist texts were held in high esteem among the Uyghurs. Studying and copying these texts certainly was regarded as a meritorious deed.

81 A similar view is expressed in Kudara, "Buddhist Culture," 188.

82 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 23–24, discusses a possible Sogdian source text of some Old Uyghur *Saddharmapundarikāsūtra* fragments and remains sceptical. However, Sogdian elements are discernible in these fragments.

83 Cf. Laut, *Der frühe türkische Buddhismus*, 143–148.

84 Moriyasu rightly underlined this fact in several articles.

85 See, e.g., OÜ *karte* 'a person who lives at home; householder' < Sogd. *k'rt'k* < Skt. *grhastha* (cf. TochB *kattāke* / TochA *kātak* / Khotanese *ggāṭhaa*).

86 Yoshida, Yukata, "Die buddhistischen sogdischen Texte in der Berliner Turfansammlung und die Herkunft des buddhistischen sogdischen Wortes für *bodhisattva*," trans. Yukiyo Kasai in collaboration with Christiane Reck, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 61.3 (2008): 341.

87 Yoshida, "Die buddhistischen sogdischen Texte," 342–343.

Formerly it was assumed that the Uyghur Buddhists celebrated a New Year's festival, which had Iranian (i.e. pre-Buddhist) roots, but this hypothesis was based on an incorrect interpretation of the term *yaŋı kün* ('festival, feast, wonder').<sup>88</sup>

### 2.3.2 Uyghur Buddhist Art (Sogdian Influence)

One field which, in my opinion, should be further explored, is the impact of Sogdian Buddhism on Uyghur Buddhism in the field of art. Even before the rise of the East Uyghur Empire, Sogdian influence on Uyghur architecture can be surmised as far as the archaeological complex of Khukh Ordnung in the Khangai mountains in Mongolia (ca. 650)<sup>89</sup> is concerned and it is conceivable that Sogdians contributed to the construction of Karabalgasun (OU Ordo Balık),<sup>90</sup> the capital of the East Uyghur Empire. That the Sogdians and Chinese built Baybalık at the Selenga for the Uyghurs, as is often stated,<sup>91</sup> is not sufficiently proven because line 5 (West) in the Šine Usu Inscription in runiform characters (OU *sugdak tavgac̣ka säläjädä bay balık yapıtı bertdim*) is best understood as "I [i.e. the Uyghur Kagan] had Bay Balık built at the Selenga for the benefit of the Sogdians and Chinese".<sup>92</sup>

Uyghur Manichaean art is closely related to Sogdian Manichaean Art, a considerable part of the Manichaean community in the Turfan region being surely bilingual (Sogdian and Old Uyghur). Thus it is almost impossible to tell, judg-

88 Hans-Joachim Klimkeit proposed this hypothesis. See on this problem Wilkens, Jens, "Der 'Neutag' und die Maitrisimit: Probleme der zentralasiatischen Religionsgeschichte," in *Die Erforschung des Tocharischen und die alttürkische Maitrisimit: Symposium anlässlich des 100. Jahrestages der Entzifferung des Tocharischen, Berlin, 3. und 4. April*, ed. Yukiyo Kasai, Abdurishid Yakup and Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 375–410. References to Klimkeit's works on p. 377, footnote 8.

89 See Kolbas, Judith G., "Khukh Ordnung, A Uighur Palace Complex of the Seventh Century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15.3, 3rd series (2005): 303–327.

90 Kolbas, "Khukh Ordnung," 307. The presence of Sogdians in the East Uyghur Empire is discussed in Stark, Sören, *Die Alttürkenzeit in Mittel- und Zentralasien: Archäologische und historische Studien* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2008), 310–314.

91 Cf., for instance, Haneda, Akira, "Introduction," *Acta Asiatica* 34 (1978): 9 and Zieme, Peter, "Die Uiguren und ihre Beziehungen zu China," *Central Asiatic Journal* 17 (1973): 289.

92 This interpretation is given in the new edition in Moriyasu, Takao 森安孝夫 and Kōsetsu Suzuki 宏節鈴木, Shigeo Saito 茂雄齊藤, Takeshi Tamura 健田村, Bai Yudong 白玉冬, "Šine Usu hibun yakuchū シネウス碑文訳注 [Šine-Usu from the Uighur Period in Mongolia: Revised Text, Translation and Commentaries]," *内陸アジア言語の研究 Nairiku ajia gengo no kenkyū [Studies on the Inner Asian Languages]* 24 (2009): 31, as well. Cf. also the Turkish translation in Mert, Osman, *Ötüken Dönemi Yazıtlarından Tes—Tariat—Šine Us [Inscriptions from the Ötüken Period: Tes, Tariat, and Šine Us]* (Ankara: Belen Yayınclık Matbaacılık, 2009), 262.

ing from the language of a given Manichaean text alone, whether it was copied or used by a Sogdian or a Uyghur.

A field which has to be investigated more thoroughly is Uyghur Buddhist art and its possible Sogdian antecedents. The illustrations of the Buddhist cycle of stories *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* are especially interesting in this respect. There are monochrome miniatures, which all belong to one manuscript, but there are polychrome illustrations from different manuscripts as well. One example from the East Asian Library in Princeton (shelf mark: Peald 6r) is reported to be from Dunhuang (fig. 6.1).<sup>93</sup> It is highly likely that it was imported from Turfan.

The illustrations to the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* are remarkable in many respects. First, they resemble the wall paintings from Šorčuk in style (cf. Stein painting 279d; fig. 6.2),<sup>94</sup> especially the Princeton fragment. Some mural paintings in Šorčuk (i.e. those housed in the Hermitage, St Petersburg), show the use of gold,<sup>95</sup> as does one of the illustrations of the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* (III 6324; fig. 6.3) as I could confirm by recourse to the original in the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. Here the attire and jewellery of the gods and the clothes of the bodhisattva, the Brahmin, and a monk are executed in gold. It is remarkable that the sitting posture of the Brahmin on the right can be compared to a Sogdian mural from Penjikent known as a depiction of the 'Wise judge' (first register room 41/v1).<sup>96</sup> It is conceivable that Sogdian Buddhist art transmitted this kind of depiction to the Uyghurs. The illustration found on III 6324 can now be identified as referring to the Kāñcanasāra-Avadāna. The depiction of deities floating on a cloud is more elegant than on the wall painting from Šorčuk but nevertheless both examples are quite similar in style.

Another, in this case, monochrome illustration to a manuscript of the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* in Old Uyghur shows several scenes of the Udayana-Avadāna.<sup>97</sup> One of the king's concubines is dancing (fig. 6.4), and

93 The piece was published in Bullitt, Judith Ogden, "Princeton's Manuscript Fragments from Tun-huang," *The Gest Library Journal* 3.1-2 (Spring 1989): fig. 6.7, and erroneously identified as belonging to the "Diamondsūtra".

94 These are housed in the Hermitage (St Petersburg) and the British Museum (London).

95 Russell-Smith, Lilla, *Uyghur Patronage in Dunhuang: Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), 117.

96 Cf. Marshak, Boris, *Legends, Tales, and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana*. With an Appendix by Vladimir A. Livshits (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2002), 66, fig. 33.

97 Shelf mark U 417 (Turfan Collection, Berlin). See Plate x1 in Wilkens, Jens, "Studien zur alttürkischen *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* (1): Die Udayana-Legende," 内陸アジア言語の研究 *Nairiku ajia gengo no kenkyū* [*Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*] 18 (2003): 151-185, in which the Udayana-Avadāna is edited.



FIGURE 6.1 *Peald 6r (detail)* (Courtesy East Asian Library, Princeton), Dunhuang illustration to the Old Uyghur work *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā*.



FIGURE 6.2 *Stein Painting 279d* (Trustees of the British Museum, London), Šorčuk (after Lilla Russell-Smith, *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang*, colour plate 19).



FIGURE 6.3 III 6324 Yarkhoto illustration to the Old Uyghur work  
 Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā  
 © STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, MUSEUM FÜR ASIATISCHE KUNST/  
 JÜRGEN LIEPE.



FIGURE 6.4  
 Tracing of a concubine dancing the Sogdian  
 swirl (sketch by Jens Wilkens).

this depiction exactly parallels Chinese art from the Tang Dynasty portraying women dancing the Sogdian swirl.<sup>98</sup>

But dancers are depicted on panels in Sogdian tombs as well.<sup>99</sup> Zhang Qingjie has dealt with Sogdian dances in detail and concluded that the dances called *hutengwu* (胡騰舞) and *huxuanwu* (胡旋舞) in Chinese sources are two different styles, the former mostly performed by men, the latter by women.<sup>100</sup> It is possible that some manuscripts of the Sogdian version of the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā*, of which only one leaf has been identified yet,<sup>101</sup> contained illustrations as well and that these inspired the illustrators of the Old Uyghur version.

The similarity between the wall paintings in Šorčuk and the illustrations of the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* found in the Turfan region can be explained not only by referring to the chronology of Uyghur Buddhism but also by recourse to the school affiliation. Traditionally, Šorčuk was a centre of the Sarvāstivāda;<sup>102</sup> the Old Uyghur work *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* belongs to the Vaibhāṣika branch of the Sarvāstivāda.

In the early period of Uyghur Buddhism, Manichaean and Buddhist art seem to have been closely connected and the use of gold in early Uyghur Buddhist art shows the influence of Manichaean workshops as Lilla Russell-Smith has rightly stated in her monograph *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang*.<sup>103</sup> Sogdian Buddhist art has to be considered as having contributed to the formation of Uyghur Buddhist art as well.

Illustrations of Buddhist Sogdian texts are rare but some examples have survived. An illustration of a narrative work on paper is found in the collection of the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin (III 10; fig. 6.5).<sup>104</sup> It is not as refined in style as the illustrations of the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā*, but the use of

98 See Rong, "Migrations," 240 (fig. 2, especially the left girl).

99 Cf. Hansen, *The Silk Road*, colour plate 14.

100 Zhang Qingjie, "Hutengwu and Huxuanwu: Sogdian Dances in the Northern, Sui and Tang Dynasties," in *Les Sogdiens en Chine*, ed. Étienne de la Vaissière and Éric Trombert (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2005), 93–106.

101 Sundermann, Werner, "A Fragment of the Buddhist Kāñcanasāra Legend in Sogdian and its Manuscripts," in *Proceedings of the 5th Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europaea, held in Ravenna, 6–11 October 2003*. Vol. 1: *Ancient & Middle Iranian Studies*, ed. Antonio Panaino and Andrea Piras (Milano: Mimesis, 2006), 715–724.

102 Some Mahāyāna manuscripts in Sanskrit were found here as well. See Tremblay, "Spread of Buddhism in Serindia," 106.

103 Russell-Smith, Lilla, *Uygur Patronage*, 116–117, 141–153, and *passim*.

104 To the same manuscript belong the fragments III 4941, III 4942, and So 10100q, which are illustrated as well.





FIGURE 6.5 *III 10 Kočo illustration to a narrative text in Sogdian*

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PAPADOPOULOS.

gold next to the colours red and blue is remarkable here, too. And the layout of text and illustration is similar to the Uyghur examples. Another illustration that belongs to the Sogdian *Araṇemi-Jātaka* (III 4948; fig. 6.6)<sup>105</sup> shows great similarities as regards the depiction of the ascetic's robe made of tiger's skin, if we compare it with the Uyghur example on III 6324 (fig. 6.7). Both Brahmins are clutching a staff. In my opinion art historians should explore the subject in greater detail. The illustrations of the Sogdian *Araṇemi-Jātaka* are particularly important for the subject of the formation of early Uyghur Buddhist art. They display a close affinity to Manichaean aesthetics as regards the use of gold and the selection of colours.

### 2.3.3 The Early Uyghur Buddhist Texts

But let us return to the period when Uyghur Buddhism started to play a significant role. A view to which I cannot subscribe is that the early Uyghur Buddhist texts were translated only by Tocharians (in case of the texts translated from Tocharian) or Chinese (in case of the texts translated from Chinese) respectively. The Japanese scholar Moriyasu advanced this hypothesis.<sup>106</sup> He takes it for granted that there were virtually no Uyghur Buddhists when the translations were made. Further, Moriyasu can conceive of Buddhist missionary activity only as a top-down movement fueled by royal patronage—which was in fact largely true for Manichaeism—but why should there not have been converts among the Uyghur population before the official shift in religious politics at the beginning of the 11th century? The demise of Manichaeism began already at the end of the 10th century.<sup>107</sup> The ruler's decision to support Buddhism could have been partly due to the observation that it had spread considerably among the Uyghur population, a process which must have begun in the early

105 The illustrations to the Sogdian *Araṇemi-Jātaka* are dealt with in Ebert, Jorinde, "Sogdische Bildfragmente der Araṇemi-Legende aus Qočo," in *De Dunhuang à Istanbul: Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, ed. Louis Bazin and Peter Zieme (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 25–41 (planches I–XIX). III 4948 is reproduced on planche II, a tracing on planche XVIII.

106 So Moriyasu, "Chronology," 216. The argument is to a large extent based on chronological considerations and lacks linguistic backup. Why the *Daśakarmaphāvadānamālā*, for instance, should have been made known by the Tocharians to non-Buddhist people because it was easy to understand (so stated in Moriyasu, "Chronology," 216) escapes my grasp. The text styles itself as a *kāvya* work and the introduction to the version from Hami is possibly the most sophisticated Old Uyghur text as regards knowledge of Indian mythology. These facts show that the text was intended for highly trained Buddhist specialists.

107 The same is true for the Ganzhou Uyghurs where Buddhism became the official religion of the state by the end of the 10th century. See Pinks, *Uiguren von Kan-chou*, 113–114.



FIGURE 6.6 III 4948 (detail) *Kočo*

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FIGURE 6.7 III 6324 (detail)

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10th century at the very latest. Several Chinese sources record a legation of the Uyghurs in the year 965.<sup>108</sup> One of the precious items was a tooth relic of the Buddha. It is likely that this mission came from the West Uyghur Kingdom.<sup>109</sup> This would mean that Buddhism already had a strong impact on the ruling house of the West Uyghur Kingdom in the middle of the 10th century. Already the Qu (麴) family, who founded the Gaochang Kingdom (502–640), patronised Buddhism.<sup>110</sup> Before the arrival of the Uyghurs from the East Uyghur Empire, Buddhism surely was the dominating religion in the region. As Manichaeism was hardly more than a court religion in the East Uyghur Empire, supported only by the ruling elite and by Uyghur and Sogdian merchants, it was kind of ‘superimposed’ on the predominantly Buddhist population of Turfan.

The considerable amount of various Uyghur Buddhist texts in the Library Cave no. 17 in Dunhuang, which was probably sealed at the beginning of the 11th century,<sup>111</sup> points to the fact that Buddhism had struck roots among

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108 Pinks, *Uiguren von Kan-chou*, 26.

109 Pinks, *Uiguren von Kan-chou*, 123–124.

110 Shen Weirong, “Tibetan Buddhism in Mongol-Yuan China (1206–1368),” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 540, confuses this kingdom with the West Uyghur Kingdom and erroneously states that “Tibetan esoteric Buddhism was widespread in all three regimes that successively dominated the region, the Uighur Gaochang Kingdom (460–640), the Tangut Xia Kingdom (1038–1227), and the Mongol-Yuan dynasty.”

111 Some later manuscripts were moved to this cave by the monk Wang. But it is certainly true that, as James Hamilton has stated, over 99% of the manuscripts found in this cave date to the period prior to 1035. Cf. Hamilton, James, “On the Dating of the Old Turkish Manuscripts from Tunhuang,” in *Turfan, Khotan und Dunhuang. Vorträge der Tagung „Annemarie v. Gabain und die Turfanforschung“, veranstaltet von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin (9.-12. 12. 1994)*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 138. Hamilton refutes several arguments of Doerfer’s unbalanced view, which he stated in an article and in a book, that several texts edited in Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, are to be dated to Yuan times. Cf. Doerfer, Gerhard, “Bemerkungen zur chronologischen Klassifikation des älteren Türkischen,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 18 (1991): 170–186 and Doerfer, Gerhard, *Versuch einer linguistischen Datierung älterer osttürkischer Texte* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993). Several different explanations were given regarding the reasons for sealing the library cave in Dunhuang and the date of this event. Rong Xinjiang has proposed that the cave was sealed after the fall of Khotan to the Islamic Karakhanids in 1006. See Rong, Xinjiang, “The Nature of the Dunhuang Library Cave and the Reasons for its Sealing,” in *The Silk Road: Key Papers, Part 1: The Preislamic Period, Volume 2*, ed. Valerie Hansen (Leiden, Boston: Global Oriental, 2012), 645–666.

the Uyghur population in the 10th century,<sup>112</sup> be it in Dunhuang or in the West Uyghur Kingdom, depending on whether the Uyghur manuscripts discovered in the cave are local products or mainly imported texts. One of the manuscripts, the *Araṇemi-Jātaka* (P. Ouïgour 1),<sup>113</sup> seems to be particularly old. It mirrors Manichaean book culture in many respects (codex format, red punctuation, palaeography) and was possibly imported from the West Uyghur Kingdom. And we have to take into account the Turkicisation of parts of the Sogdian, Tocharian and Chinese speaking population in the Turfan region, which must have begun already in the 8th century<sup>114</sup> and was intensified by the Uyghur migratory movements after the fall of their empire in Mongolia. Multilingualism must have been very widespread in the oases on the Northern rim of the Tarim basin and in Dunhuang.<sup>115</sup> Marriage ties of the ruling Uyghurs with the local people must have boosted the spread of Buddhism among the former.

#### 2.4 *Turfan and Dunhuang*

Beginning with the turn of the first millennium, contacts between Turfan and Dunhuang became very close.<sup>116</sup> The 'Return-to-Allegiance Army' (Chin. *Guiyi*

112 al-Birūnī who wrote his work *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* (Arab. *Ātār al-bāqīya ʿani l-qurūn al ḥāliya*) around the year 1000 speaks of the presence of Buddhism among the Taghazghar, i.e. the Tokuz Oguz, a term used in Muslim sources to designate the Uyghurs. The passage is quoted in Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 51. This statement cannot only refer to Chinese or Tocharian Buddhists in the West Uyghur Kingdom.

113 Ed. Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, vol. 1, 2–9.

114 Tocharian ceased being a written code in the Kučā and Turfan regions by the 8th/9th century. See Schaefer, "Multilingualism," 451. Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 42, too, writes that during the period of Turkicisation in the Turfan oasis, Indians and Tocharians played only an insignificant role. Haneda forwarded the hypothesis that the number of Uyghurs migrating from their homeland in Mongolia to the Tarim basin after 840 was sufficient to Turkicise this region but not Transoxania. See Haneda, "Introduction," 8. Uyghur predominance in the Western part of the Tarim basin is mirrored in various sources. They vanquished the Tibetans in 798 in the region of Kučā and swept to Kašgar in 802. See Yoshida, Yutaka, "The Karabalgasun Inscription and the Khotanese Documents," in *Literarische Stoffe und ihre Gestaltung in mitteliranischer Zeit: Kolloquium anlässlich des 70. Geburtstages von Werner Sundermann*, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Christiane Reck and Dieter Weber (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2009), 349–362.

115 On multilingualism in Dunhuang see Takata, Tokio, "Multilingualism in Tun-huang," in *The Silk Road: Key Papers, Part 1: The Pre-Islamic Period, Volume 2*, ed. Valerie Hansen (Leiden, Boston: Global Oriental, 2012), 545–562.

116 See especially Moriyasu, Takao 森安孝夫, "Uiguru to Tonkō ウイグルと敦煌 [English title: The Uighurs and Tun-huang]," in *Kōza Tonkō 2: Tonkō no rekishi* 榎一雄 (編) 講

*jun* 歸義軍) established diplomatic contacts between Dunhuang and the West Uyghur Kingdom, which are mirrored in Chinese economic documents.<sup>117</sup> From the 1020s until the Tanguts came to power in this region (around 1035), Dunhuang was under direct control of the Western Uyghurs.<sup>118</sup>

It is common opinion in Turkic studies that at least some of the literary Old Uyghur manuscripts from the library cave at Dunhuang<sup>119</sup> are not local products of Dunhuang scriptoria but were rather imported.<sup>120</sup> The unusual small format of a Uyghur codex booklet containing the story of Kalyānaṃkara and

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座敦煌 2 敦煌の歴史 [*Lectures on Tun-huang, Volume 2: The History of Tun-huang*], ed. Kazuo Enoki 一雄榎 (Tokyo: Daito shuppansha, 1980), 297–338. Contacts in the tenth century are summarised in Rong, Xinjiang, “The Relationship of Dunhuang with the Uighur Kingdom in Turfan in the Tenth Century,” in *De Dunhuang à Istanbul: Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, ed. Louis Bazin and Peter Zieme (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 275–298. On the connection between Turfan and Dunhuang see as well Moriyasu, Takao, “The West-Uighur Kingdom and Tun-huang around the 10th–11th Centuries,” *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berichte und Abhandlungen* 8 (2000): 337–368.

- 117 See Rong, “Relationship,” 276–280. In the first half of the 11th century the West Uyghurs extended their political dominion as far as Dunhuang (*pace* Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 192). Prior to this the Cao (曹) dynasty kept up marriage ties only with the Uyghur principality at Ganzhou and with Khotan and not with the West Uyghur Kingdom. See Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, vol. 1, xviii; Russell-Smith, *Uyghur Patronage*, 58–68. Dunhuang was located between the West Uyghur Kingdom in the West and the Ganzhou Uyghur principality in the East.
- 118 See Moriyasu, Takao, “The Sha-chou Uighurs and the West Uighur Kingdom,” *Acta Asiatica* 78 (2000): 29. The view of some Chinese scholars who put forward the hypothesis that there was an independent Shazhou Uyghur Kingdom is refuted with sound arguments in Moriyasu “Sha-chou Uighurs,” 40–45. One of the proponents of an independent Shazhou Uyghur Kingdom is Yang who stated in article that the Kagans of Shazhou came to power only after the Tanguts (Xixia) destroyed the Guiyi jun Regime (Yang, “Sha-chou Uighur Kingdom,” 81). He assumes that the Uyghurs repopulated Shazhou in 1036 after the victory of the Tanguts. He further expressed his opinion on p. 82 that the Old Uyghur documents edited in Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, belong to this Kingdom. He consequently dates them to the middle of the 11th century. Hansen (*The Silk Road*, 190), however, thinks that the Ganzhou Uyghurs took control over Dunhuang after 1002.
- 119 Some late Uyghur Buddhist texts were moved to the library cave by the guardian Wang as already Aurel Stein surmised. See Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, vol. 1, s.
- 120 The same is true for some Sogdian texts. Yoshida (“Die buddhistischen sogdischen Texte,” 337, n. 14) summarises the information given in the colophons to Buddhist Sogdian texts found in Dunhuang. P. sogd. 2 was translated in Chang’an and Intox. (British Library) was translated in Luoyang. Both texts were brought to Dunhuang whereas P. sogd. 8 was translated in Dunhuang.

Pāpaṃkara (P. 3509) may point to the fact that it could easily be carried by its owner on a journey for private usage.<sup>121</sup>

Secular documents which mainly belong to the environment of caravanners<sup>122</sup> are more explicit in many ways but the religious affiliation of the people involved is often obscure: One document (P. Ouïgour 2988 and P. 2909) which was most likely written in the middle of the 10th century belongs to a mixed (Sogdian and Uyghur) legation from the Turfan area.<sup>123</sup> One of the participants seems to be a Christian because of his name Yohnan (< Syriac *Yōḥanan*). But they explicitly state in one line “And we stayed in this *saṅghārāma*” (OU *biz ymä bo s(ä)ḡrimtä tüšt(i)miz*)<sup>124</sup> which could mean that most of them were Buddhist visitors from the West Uyghur Kingdom who brought texts to Dunhuang.<sup>125</sup>

The reverse flow of Buddhist texts has to be considered as well because Dunhuang was in all probability the source of some specimens of commentarial literature in the West Uyghur Kingdom. The commentary on the *Lotussūtra* by Kuiji (632–682, 窺基) with the title *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanzan* (妙法蓮華經玄贊, T. 1723) was very popular in Dunhuang. The Uyghur translation was based on a Chinese original, which may have been imported from Dunhuang.<sup>126</sup> The recently published Old Uyghur commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*

121 P. 3509, a manuscript which bears on one leaf the name Kūsān čor on the margin, was according to Rong (“Relationship,” 295) copied by people from the West Uyghur Kingdom. Moriyasu writes “that the Uighur manuscripts discovered at Tun-huang were clearly the work of people from the West Uighur Kingdom [...]” (Moriyasu, “Sha-chou Uighurs,” 36). Conversely, Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, vol. 1, 175, thinks that most of the “religious manuscripts” (i.e. his texts 1–12) were written at Shazhou.

122 Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, vol. 1, 176.

123 Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, vol. 1, 83.

124 Line 1’ (ed. Hamilton, *Manuscripts Ouïgours*, vol. 1, 86).

125 As already mentioned, the illustrated leaf of the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* from Princeton is likely to be an import from the Turfan region as well. This manuscript was produced in the late 10th or early 11th century. The transmission of Chinese popular narratives from Turfan to Dunhuang is attested as well. See Rong, “Relationship,” 296–297 (with further references).

126 See Kudara, Kōgi, “Uigurische Fragmente eines Kommentars zum *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra*,” in *Der türkische Buddhismus in der japanischen Forschung*, ed. Jens Peter Laut and Klaus Röhrborn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 34–55 (and plates on pp. 102–106) and Zieme, “Some Notes,” 149–151. Zieme comments in his edition of the leaf Mainz 342 that the number of the scroll (*juan* 卷) is nine in the Uyghur version whereas in the Chinese it is five (Zieme, “Some Notes,” 150). The Chinese numbering of scrolls can change in the course of time and the Uyghur version reflects such a different numbering. The name of the translator is given in the colophon as Širmir Biži T[utuŋ] who translated the text from



is not a direct translation of any known Chinese original but rather a compilation of selective excerpts from various Chinese commentaries. It was probably influenced by Daoye's (~ 7th century, 道液) commentary *Collected Commentaries on the Vimalakīrtisūtra from 'inside the Passes'* (Chin. *Jingming jing jijie guanzhong shu* 淨名經集解關中疏, T. 2777) which Buddhists from Turfan got to know via Dunhuang.<sup>127</sup>

But the adoption of commentarial literature from Dunhuang is not the only area of influx of new Buddhist texts into the West Uyghur Kingdom. We can detect the transmission of a typical genre of Dunhuang literature, namely the 'transformation texts' (*bianwen* 變文), in Uyghur manuscripts as well. One manuscript from Berlin's Turfan Collection (Mainz 71a,b) is a slightly shorter version of the Chinese Maudgalyāyana *bianwen* specimens from Dunhuang. As the editor has rightly pointed out, this provides further evidence for the connections between Turfan and Dunhuang.<sup>128</sup> In Turfan, some fragments of *Praise of Mount Wutai* (Chin. *Wutaishan zan* 五臺山讚) texts have been discovered, which equally underline the importance of Dunhuang Buddhist culture in Turfan.<sup>129</sup>

Thus, in the course of time, the Uyghurs translated texts from different source languages but the need for texts belonging to a particular genre could arise as well. Obviously, not all Chinese texts were available in the West Uyghur

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Chinese on request of a certain Sinkau, an otherwise unknown person. The colophon is translated in Zieme, "Some Notes," 150–151.

127 See Kasai, Yukiyo, *Der alttürkische Kommentar zum Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 14–15.

128 Cf. Zieme, Peter, "Buddhistische Unterweltsberichte—alttürkische Varianten aus der Turfan-Oase," in *Life and Afterlife & Apocalyptic Concepts in the Altaic World. Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference (PIAC) Château Pietersheim, Belgium, September, 3–8, 2000*, ed. Michael Knüppel and Aloïs van Tongerloo (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 145. Further fragments (Mainz 290, U 1905, U 1906, U 1903, U 5058, S1 Kr 2/51) are edited by Zieme as well.

129 See Zieme, Peter, "Three Old Turkic 五臺山讚 *Wutaishanzan* Fragments," 内陸アジア言語の研究 *Nairiku ajia gengo no kenkyū/Studies on the Inner Asian Languages* 17 (2002): 236–237. Pilgrimages to Mount Wutai (五臺山) were extremely popular in the 9th century. Dunhuang was an important post on the road from Tibet to Mount Wutai. See Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 187. Inscriptions relating to the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in the Dunhuang caves were studied in Matsui, Dai, "Tonkō shosekkutsu no Uigurugo daiki meibun ni kansurun sakki (2) 敦煌諸石窟のウイグル語題記銘文に関する筈記 (二) / Notes on the Old Uigur Wall Inscriptions in the Dunhuang Caves (11)," *Jinbun shakai ronsō (Jinbun kagaku hen)* 人文社会論叢. 人文科学篇 *Studies in the Humanities (Volume of Cultural Science)* 32 (2014): 37–40.

Kingdom,<sup>130</sup> so the Uyghurs received some texts from the Central dynasties in China, but the bulk of texts were certainly imported from Dunhuang.<sup>131</sup>

It is probable that in later times, namely in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368, 元), some of the Uyghur texts translated from Chinese were re-imported to Dunhuang. One example is the just mentioned Uyghur version of a commentary to the *Lotussūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing xuanzan* 妙法蓮華經玄贊, T. 1723), because two manuscripts were in all probability unearthed from Dunhuang Cave 446 (P. no. 181) at Mogao.<sup>132</sup> This version in Old Uyghur probably came from the Turfan region.

With the decision to translate Buddhist texts from different source languages (Tocharian A, Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit), and due to the ever-increasing need for new texts and genres of Buddhist literature, Uyghur Buddhist culture was in a state of constant flux. It is still not certain whether this ever led to the compilation or translation of a Buddhist canon in Old Uyghur.<sup>133</sup> The adoption of new ideas and new religious movements did not mean that the traditional Buddhist culture was abandoned. Older forms of worship persisted next to new ones.<sup>134</sup>

130 But see the remarks in Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 23, which are, broadly speaking, to the point: “Für die alttürkischen Übersetzungen waren in den meisten Fällen die damals neuesten oder die gängigsten Versionen maßgeblich. Daß bisweilen aber auch auf ältere Fassungen mancher Sūtratexte zurückgegriffen wurde, spricht dafür, daß die alttürkischen Buddhisten aufs engste mit den verschiedenen Versionen und Überlieferungen vertraut waren.”

131 See Rong, “Relationship,” 284–285. According to Rong the “Return-to-Allegiance Army” was “very familiar with the collection of Buddhist texts in Turfan” in Chinese. Cf. Rong, “Relationship,” 287.

132 Kudara, “Uigurische Fragmente,” 50 and Rong, “Relationship,” 289.

133 The problem is dealt with in Wilkens, Jens, “Hatten die alten Uiguren einen buddhistischen Kanon?” in *Kanonisierung und Kanonbildung in der asiatischen Religionsgeschichte*, ed. Max Deeg, Oliver Freiberger and Christoph Kleine (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011), 345–378.

134 In the early phase of Uyghur Buddhist literature, the cult of the Buddha Maitreya was highly important. Although other Buddhist teachings and practices came up in the course of the centuries, to be reborn in the *tuṣita* heaven remained an important religious goal expressed in poetic colophons of the late phase of Uyghur Buddhism. See Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 86. The *Insadisūtra*, one of the very late texts in Uyghur Buddhism, contains a long section which is comprised of a hymn to Maitreya. See Zieme, Peter, “Zur Interpretation einer Passage des alttürkischen Maitreya-Lobpreises (BT III, 1014–1047),” in *Turkologie heute—Tradition und Perspektive: Materialien der dritten Deutschen Turkologenkonferenz, Leipzig 4.–7. Oktober 1994*, ed. Nurettin Demir and Erika Taube (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 317–324 and Zieme, Peter, “Ein alttürkischer Maitreya-Hymnus und mögliche Parallelen,” in *Die Erforschung des Tocharischen und die*

Whether these different approaches were complementary<sup>135</sup> or whether they caused friction and dissent is not mirrored in the texts known so far. Interreligious polemics are attested in the manuscripts, but intra-religious dissent is a field yet to be explored.

Another important issue neglected so far is whether different varieties of Buddhism developed not only chronologically but also geographically, viz. on account of the diaspora situation of various Uyghur groups. The exploration of this problem is a future task, but we may refer here to Hong Hao's (1088–1155, 洪皓) work *Travelogue of the Pine-tree and Desert Lands* (Chin. *Song mo ji wen* 松漠紀聞) which he committed to writing from memory. In this text it is stated that the Uyghurs in Hebei (河北) had their own temples and statues

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*alttürkische Maitrisimit: Symposium anlässlich des 100. Jahrestages der Entzifferung des Tocharischen, Berlin, 3. und 4. April*, ed. Yukiyo Kasai, Abdurishid Yakup and Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 403–416. However, the cult of Maitreya in Uyghur Buddhism was many-faceted and had different sources. See Kasai, Yukiyo, “Der Ursprung des alttürkischen Maitreya-Kults,” in *Die Erforschung des Tocharischen und die alttürkische Maitrisimit: Symposium anlässlich des 100. Jahrestages der Entzifferung des Tocharischen, Berlin, 3. und 4. April*, ed. Yukiyo Kasai, Abdurishid Yakup and Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 67–104. Röhrborn states that the cult of the future Buddha Maitreya continued to flourish until the late phase of Uyghur Buddhism mainly among laypersons. By recourse to a late *avadāna* text he demonstrates how Maitreya Buddhism was replaced by Pure Land Buddhism. Cf. Röhrborn, Klaus, “Maitreya-Buddhismus zwischen Hinayāna und Mahāyāna,” in *Turfan Revisited—The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst et al. (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 265a–266a. The supporters of Pure Land Buddhism were active in the Turfan Region (especially at Toyok) already in the 6th and 7th centuries (cf. Yamabe, Nobuyoshi, “An Examination of the Mural Paintings of Toyok Cave 20 in Conjunction with the Origin of the *Amitayus Visualization Sutra*,” *Orientalia* 30.4 (1999): 38–44). These obviously were Chinese Buddhists according to the Chinese inscriptions in cave 20 in Toyok, but Uyghur Buddhist texts belonging to this school are not earlier than the 11th–12th centuries. Toyok remained one of the centres of Pure Land Buddhism in the Turfan oasis, as three lines in Old Uyghur added to a Mongolian manuscript mention Sukhāvati as the place where the Buddhas are supposed to settle down and where the bodhisattvas are supposed to sit. The manuscript, housed in the Ōtani Collection of the Ryukoku library under the shelf mark Ot. Ry. 8126, was acquired in 1912 by Yoshikawa at Toyok. The Mongolian part, however, is not necessarily connected to Pure Land Buddhism. It contains the formula *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*. See Murayama, S., “Zwei mongolische Manuskripte aus Ost-Turkestan,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 4.3 (1959): 279–288.

135 In a late colophon, Tuṣita and Sukhāvati are indeed mentioned as two alternative religious goals. See Zieme, Peter, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen der Uiguren* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), 169 (text no. 46.37–41).

of the Buddha and recited *sūtras* in an Indian language. During their religious feasts they often slaughtered a sheep, and if they had drunk wine they spread blood on the lips of the Buddha's statue.<sup>136</sup>

## 2.5 *The Mongol Empire*

Important changes came up with the rise of the Mongol Empire. Two events at the beginning of the 13th century made a deep impact on Uyghur history from then on. First, the adoption of the Uyghur alphabet by the Mongols in 1204<sup>137</sup> after the defeat of the Naiman and the employment of Uyghur specialists of writing and learning in Mongol service; second, the submission of the Uyghur ruler Barčuk Art Tegin to Činggiz Qan in the year 1209.<sup>138</sup> Both events forged strong ties between Uyghurs and Mongols in the following years.<sup>139</sup> Barčuk Art Tegin was regarded as Činggiz Qan's fifth son and he took part in several military campaigns. Marriage alliances between the Mongol imperial family and the Uyghur ruling house ensued. Uyghurs became tutors to members of the imperial family and introduced them to literary culture or were part of the administration in the Mongol Empire.<sup>140</sup> Uyghur Buddhism became a

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- 136 See Pinks, *Uiguren von Kan-chou*, 115, who sees a connection with shamanistic rites recorded in the region of Kukulunor in the 20th century.
- 137 The Uyghur Tatar Toŋa, who introduced the Uyghur script to the Mongols, was in charge of the imperial seals at the Naiman court. On his biography see Ögel, Bahaeddin, *Sino-Turcica: Čingiz Han ve Çin'deki Hanedanın Türk Müşavirleri* (Taipeh: IQ Kültürsanat Yayıncılık, 1964), 153–157. Judging by their attested names and titles, the Naiman were Turkic speaking. See Murayama, S. "Sind die Naiman Türken oder Mongolen?" *Central Asiatic Journal* 4.3 (1959): 188–198. Although names and titles can certainly be borrowed, this is unlikely in case of the Naiman.
- 138 A summary of the dramatic events is provided in Biran, *Empire*, 74–75. Cf. also Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 12–13. The Kara Khitai appointed a Buddhist monk as supervisor. The Uyghurs loathed him because of his arrogance, and the Uyghur *idok kut* finally decided to have him murdered in Kara Kočo. See Allsen, Thomas T., "The Yüan Dynasty and the Uighurs of Turfan in the 13th Century," in *China Among Equals*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1983), 246.
- 139 But cf. Allsen, "Yüan Dynasty," 251, who reports the events which led to the enthronement of Möngke as Grand Qan. The Uyghur *idok kut* Salındı had supported the rival candidate Şiremün, and was beheaded at Beş Balık.
- 140 See Brose, "Uyghur Technologists," and Brose, Michael C., *Subjects and Masters: Uyghurs in the Mongol Empire* (Bellingham, Washington: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2007) (with biographies of eminent Uyghurs in the Mongol Empire). On the Uyghurs and other Turks in the Mongol Empire see de Rachewiltz, Igor, "Turks in China under the Mongols," in *China Among Equals*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 281–310, and Ögel, *Sino-Turcica*, as well.

landmark for Mongol Buddhism and Uyghur Buddhist culture a mediator of Buddhist terminology comparable to the influence that Tocharian Buddhism exercised with regard to Uyghur Buddhism in its early phase.<sup>141</sup> The Uyghurs were equipped with various skills, which came in useful in a newly founded empire, which spanned large parts of Eurasia. They had a long tradition of translators,<sup>142</sup> scribes and literati and were gifted traders. They had experience in dealing with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Through centuries of cultural contacts with other peoples they had developed intercultural competence.

But the situation of the Uyghurs under Mongol dominion was not always easy. A period of great insecurity affected the Uyghur ruling house during Qaidu's (1235/6–1303) rebellion, which ended in 1302.<sup>143</sup> First, the Uyghurs had to leave Beš Balık (~1270–1275) in order to withdraw to Kara Kočo. The formerly quasi-autonomous West Uyghur Kingdom came under strict Yuan control in the late 1270s,<sup>144</sup> but this was subsequently challenged by Qaidu's army so that large parts of Central Asia, including the former West Uyghur Kingdom, came under his power. Later, in 1283, the *idok kut* Ne'üril Tegin and his entourage was established by the Yuan in Yongchang (永昌) in Gansu.<sup>145</sup> These events certainly had a bearing on Buddhism in Beš Balık and Kara Kočo because royal patronage was difficult to extend to these cities from exile,<sup>146</sup> not to mention the effects of the ensuing economic crisis.<sup>147</sup> While the line of *idok kuts* in Gansu remained under Yuan control and protection, the Chagataids installed a new Uyghur ruling house in the Turfan region in the 1330s.<sup>148</sup> Buddhism still continued to flourish until the Chagatay Ulus disintegrated and the Moghul ruler Tughluq Temür (1329/30–1363) embraced Islam in 1354. He was converted

141 See Kara, György, "Late Mediaeval Turkic Elements in Mongolian," in *De Dunhuang à Istanbul: Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, ed. Louis Bazin and Peter Zieme (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 73–119 and Shōgaito, Masahiro, "Uighur Influence on Indian Words in Mongolian Buddhist Texts," in *Indien und Zentralasien: Sprach- und Kulturkontakt. Vorträge des Göttinger Symposions vom 7. bis 10. Mai 2001*, ed. Sven Bretfeld and Jens Wilkens (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 119–143.

142 On Uyghur scholars who were active as translators during the Yuan period see de Rachewiltz, "Turks," 305 (endnote 50).

143 Qaidu was the son of Ögödei's fifth son Qaši. See Biran, *Qaidu*, 19.

144 Biran, *Qaidu*, 42.

145 Allsen, "Yüan Dynasty," 254–255.

146 On religious policy under Qaidu see Biran, *Qaidu*, 92–95.

147 On the decline in agricultural productivity and famines during Qaidu's rebellion and its aftermath, see Allsen, "Yüan Dynasty," 257 and Biran, *Qaidu*, 57.

148 Allsen, "Yüan Dynasty," 260.

by two *ṣūfis*, Jamāl al-Dīn and his son Arshad al-Dīn, and “their descendants exercised strong influence in the court of the Moghul Qans and formed a *ṭarīqa* (‘path’) called Katakī. This local *ṭarīqa* was later divided into two branches based on Kučā in the west and on Turfan in the east.”<sup>149</sup> Under his youngest son Xiḍr Khwāja (reigned from 1389–1399) Turfan and Beš Balık became gradually islamised.<sup>150</sup> It is reported in the 16th century work *History of Rashīd* (Persian *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*) that the population was forcefully converted.<sup>151</sup>

The attitude of the Mongol rulers towards the various religious groups active in their empire and their personal religious commitment has been much debated.<sup>152</sup> In the consolidation of power, the religions were regarded as essential, and—if loyal to the ruling house and praying for the ruler’s well-being—patronised.<sup>153</sup> Mongol rulers and members of the royal family are often mentioned, according to their rank, in Old Uyghur colophons of the 13th and 14th century.<sup>154</sup> In one colophon, we even find the Mongol emperor mentioned as the patron of the text.<sup>155</sup> It is highly likely that the spread of Tantric Buddhism in the late phase of Uyghur Buddhism is due to the keen interest members of the ruling clan of the Mongols took in Tantric rituals. Recently Johan Elverskog has highlighted a Buddhist trade network, which he connected with the revival of Buddhism in Tibet in the 11th century. He calls this network the “Tantric block”<sup>156</sup> which encompassed Tibet, Northeastern India under the Pāla Dynasty (c. 750–1161), the Tangut Kingdom, the Khitan Liao Dynasty in North China and the Song Dynasty and Japan. The Uyghurs were not affected by the Tantric block until Mongol times although some translations of *dhāraṇīs* which were made from Chinese originals may belong to an earlier period (possibly to the 12th century).<sup>157</sup> But these belong to esoteric or rather ‘*dhāraṇī*’

149 Kim, Hodong, “The Early History of the Moghul Nomads: The Legacy of the Chaghatai Khanate,” in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 302.

150 Zhang, Rong, “Concise History,” 406.

151 Foltz, Richard C. *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1999), 141.

152 See Jackson, Peter, “The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered,” in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads in the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), 268–275.

153 On religious politics of the Mongols and the privileges granted to various religions see Jackson, “Mongols,” 262–268 with further references.

154 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 73–74.

155 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 50.

156 Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 84 (see map 10).

157 On these texts see Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 40.

Buddhism, and not to Tantric Buddhism in the strict sense. A careful evaluation of Uyghur Esoteric Buddhism and Tantra is still a desideratum.<sup>158</sup>

The Chagatay Ulus was also involved in Tantric Buddhism,<sup>159</sup> although many members of the Chagatay nobility embraced Islam. A decree issued by Kedmen Bayatur (fl. second half of the 14th century) who acted as governor of the Turfan region<sup>160</sup> under the Chagataids is a permit on behalf of a Tibetan lama named Dorji Kirešis Bal Sangbo (Tib. rDo rje bkra shis dpal bzang po)<sup>161</sup> and his pupils to carry out Buddhist rituals on their pilgrimage mission in Kara Kočo, Bars-Köl (= Lake Barkul) and Beš Balık.<sup>162</sup> Very instructive as regards Eastern Chagataid patronage of Tantric Buddhism is a colophon in a Uyghur manuscript from the British Museum (Or. 8212 [109]) found at Dunhuang which contains four Tantric works, three of which belong to Nāropa's (1016–1100) teachings.<sup>163</sup> In this colophon it is stated that the manuscript was copied in the year 1350 at Prince Asudays (14th century) instigation. Asuday was the son of Sulaymān (14th century), the ruler of Xining (西寧, in present-day Qinghai 青海).<sup>164</sup>

158 A survey of the sources would have to include the definitory approach in Sørensen, Henrik H., "On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 155–175. For an analysis of Esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang see also the chapter by Henrik H. Sørensen in this volume.

159 See Kara, G[yörgy], "Mediaeval Mongol Documents from Khara Khoto and East Turkestan in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies," *Manuscripta Orientalia* 9.2 (2003): 28–30, for a Uyghur colophon concerning the translation of a Tibetan *yantra* on the verso side of a decree of protection of a Buddhist monastery issued by the Chagataid ruler Yisün Temür. Cf. also Matsui, "Mongolian Decree," 167.

160 See Matsui, "Mongolian Decree," 161–162.

161 He bears the Chinese title 'National (Buddhist) Preceptor that administrates initiation' (*guanding* = Skt. *abhiṣeka*) (Chin. *guanding guoshi* 灌頂國師) (cf. Matsui, "Mongolian Decree," 162). Matsui ("Mongolian Decree," 163, n. 15) points out that the expression *abišek bermiš idok bahši* attested in Uyghur colophons is likely to be the equivalent of the Chinese title *guanding guoshi*. rDo rje bkra shis dpal bzang po is according to Matsui ("Mongolian Decree," 164) mentioned in Ming sources as well. On *abhiṣeka* see Davidson, Ronald M., "Abhiṣeka," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 71–75.

162 See the annotated edition of this Dunhuang manuscript B163:42 in Matsui, "Mongolian Decree".

163 Edited in Zieme, Kara, *Totenbuch*.

164 Matsui ("Mongolian Decree," 168) remarks that Asuday and his family are mentioned in two Chinese inscriptions from Dunhuang, one of which makes use of the mantra *om maṇi padme hūm* in six scripts (Tibetan, "Sanskrit", Uyghur, Phags pa, Tangut, Chinese). See

Sulaymān himself is praised in a Uyghur alliterative poem.<sup>165</sup> The number of Uyghur Buddhist inscriptions, manuscripts and block-prints with a Tantric background found in Dunhuang suggests that Uyghur Buddhism in its last phase in the Gansu corridor (14th century) was dominated by a Tantric ‘mainstream’ of Tibetan descent.<sup>166</sup> In Turfan, too, Tantric texts prevail in late Uyghur manuscripts; and even as far as Kharakhoto, located in modern day’s Inner Mongolia, Tantric texts in Old Uyghur were found.<sup>167</sup> One fragment bears on the verso of an Islamic text on sand divination a colophon of a Lamdre (Tib. *lam ’bras*, Skt. *mārgaphala*) treatise.<sup>168</sup> This tradition is well known from Tangut sources found in Kharakhoto.<sup>169</sup> Contacts between Uyghur and Tangut Buddhists have to be studied in greater detail in the future. Recently it was argued by Ruth Dunnell that Uyghur monks from Ganzhou and from the Western borders of the Tangut Empire spread Esoteric Buddhist doctrines among the Tanguts.<sup>170</sup> Lilla Russell-Smith has detected “simultaneous regional influence” of Uyghur and Tangut artistic styles in a Dunhuang painting from the Pelliot Collection in the Musée Guimet known as Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai.<sup>171</sup>

Personal names bear witness to the importance of Tibetan Buddhism among the Uyghurs. The name of a Uyghur ruler (OU *idok kut*) at the beginning of the 14th century, Kōnčök (reigned from 1309–1334), in all probability derives

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Kasai, Yukiyo, *Die uigurischen buddhistischen Kolophone* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 214 (n. 794), as well with additional references.

165 Cf. Yakup, Abdurishid, “Two Alliterative Uighur Poems from Dunhuang,” *Linguistic Research* 17–18 (1999): 11–12. The princes of Xining, Sulaymān and Sulṭān Šāh, were Buddhists despite their Muslim names. Cf. Matsui, Dai, “Revising the Uighur Inscriptions of the Yulin Caves,” 内陸アジア言語の研究 *Nairiku ajia gengo no kenkyū* [*Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*] 23 (2008): 26.

166 Matsui (“Mongolian Decree,” 169) concludes “that Uigur Buddhists of Gansu played the role of a bridge between Tibetan Buddhism and the Eastern Chaghataids”. For a survey of Old Uyghur manuscripts and wall inscriptions of Buddhist content from the Mogao Caves many of which are Tantric see Yakup, Abdurishid, “Uighurica from the Northern Grottoes of Dunhuang,” in *Shōgaito Masahiro sensei tainin kinen ronshū* 庄垣内正弘教授最終講義録 [*A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Masahiro Shōgaito’s Retirement*] (Kyōto: Yūrashia shogengo no kenkyū, 2006), 4–8.

167 See Kara, “Mediaeval Mongol Documents”.

168 See Kara, “Mediaeval Mongol Documents,” 32 (and fig. 6.17).

169 See Dunnell, Ruth, “Esoteric Buddhism under the Xixia (1039–1227),” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 469.

170 Dunnell, “Esoteric Buddhism,” 472.

171 Russell-Smith, *Uyghur Patronage*, 215–221 (reproduced on colour plate 54).



from Tibetan *dkon mchog*.<sup>172</sup> This ruler and his family are mentioned in several colophons,<sup>173</sup> and Könčök even appears as the patron who commissioned the texts.<sup>174</sup> Even the name of his father, Kirašiz, derives from Tibetan *bkra shis*.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, Tibetan monastic names appear in Uyghur colophons.<sup>176</sup> All this points to the strong dominance of Tibetan Buddhism in the Uyghur cultural sphere.

Mongol dominion over Turfan, Hami<sup>177</sup> and Gansu<sup>178</sup> and Mongol–Yuan–Chagatay patronage of Tantric Buddhism are certainly important factors in this development. Pilgrimage between Buddhist hubs<sup>179</sup> was facilitated under Yuan and Eastern Chagataid rule.<sup>180</sup>

### 2.5.1 The Yulin (榆林) Caves

Important religious sources are Old Uyghur inscriptions in the Yulin Caves (榆林, located ca. 100 km East of the Mogao Caves).<sup>181</sup> Most of them can be

172 Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, note to no. 40.30. According to Oda, “Uighuristan,” 24, this ruler was a vassal of the Yuan and not, as it is sometimes claimed, of the Chagataids.

173 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 52. All colophons referring to Könčök and his family were republished in Nakamura, Kentarō 中村健太郎, “14 seiki zenhan no uigurugo insatsu butten no okugaki ni arawareru Könčög Idukkut öke wo megutte 14 世紀前半のウイグル語印刷伝典の奥書に現れる『Könčög イドウクト王家』をめぐる [Könčög İduq Qut Family as Seen in the Colophons of Buddhist Uigur Texts Unearthed in Turfan],” 内陸アジア言語の研究 *Nairiku ajia gengo no kenkyū/Studies on the Inner Asian Languages* 24 (2009): 131–171.

174 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 80–81, 83.

175 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 52.

176 E.g. Kasai, *Kolophone*, 216 [text no. 116], 217 [text no. 117].

177 The translator of the manuscript Or. 8212 (109), Ārya Ācārya, came from Hami, the scribe, Sarig Tutuŋ, from Üč Lükčünj (Turfan oasis).

178 On the connection of Tibetan-influenced Buddhism in Gansu with Uyghur Buddhism in Hami see Matsui, “Mongolian Decree,” 170. In the 15th century, the Uyghur population of Hami was comprised of Buddhists and Muslims. See Oda, “Uighuristan,” 23.

179 Especially between Hami, Napčik (= Lapčuk, West of Hami) and Gansu. On further toponyms in the Yulin and Mogao inscriptions see Matsui, “Revising the Uighur Inscriptions,” 27.

180 According to Oda, “Uighuristan,” 24, the Turfan district was dominated by the Eastern Chagataids in the period 1417–1432.

181 19 inscriptions were edited by Hamilton, James, Niu Ru-Ji, “Inscriptions ouïgoures des grottes bouddhiques de Yulin,” *Journal Asiatique* 286.1 (1998): 127–210. The numbering of the inscriptions mentioned below follows this edition. Some inscriptions have been recently revised in Matsui, “Revising the Uighur Inscriptions”. He also authored a study of wall inscriptions from Dunhuang. See Matsui, “Tonkō shosekkutsu”. An important survey of pilgrim inscriptions (monolingual and bilingual) of Uyghur Buddhists in

dated to the middle of the 14th century and are important witnesses of the caves as places of pilgrimage.<sup>182</sup> Some wall paintings in the earlier caves are the work of the West Uyghurs.<sup>183</sup>

In some inscriptions in later times, the holy place is referred to by the Mongolian loan *süm* (< Mong. *süme*) meaning ‘temple, monastery, shrine’.<sup>184</sup> The inscription H,<sup>185</sup> for instance, relates that a group of pilgrims headed by prince Buyan Kuli<sup>186</sup> visited the monastery at the Yulin site and transferred their merit. Inscription D gives a long list of persons from the district of Shazhou (OU *šaču čölge*) who came to visit the place.<sup>187</sup> The inscriptions H, I,<sup>188</sup> J,<sup>189</sup> K,<sup>190</sup> L,<sup>191</sup> O,<sup>192</sup> P<sup>193</sup> and Q<sup>194</sup> equally specify the composition of the group of pilgrims who visited the Yulin Caves. Sometimes the date of the visit is given.<sup>195</sup> Occasionally, the purpose of the visit to the caves is expressed:

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different scripts found in Xinjiang (新疆) and Gansu is the article by Porció, Tibor, “Some Peculiarities of the Uygur Buddhist Pilgrim Inscriptions,” in *Searching for the Dharma, Finding Salvation—Buddhist Pilgrimage in Time and Space*, ed. Christoph Cueppers and Max Deeg (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2014), 157–178.

182 Several inscriptions (A–N) are to be found in cave no. 12. Inscription G (ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 142–143) can be interpreted as being in alliterative verse:

ädgüli ayıǵlı nomlarnıǵ  
 aǵızı amraǵlı köñül ol  
 ädgüti aǵı kim bilsär  
 ädgün barmış ymä ol ok ol

183 Moriyasu, “Sha-chou Uighurs,” 32.

184 Inscription A (ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 129), inscription E (ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 139). In inscription I (line 4, ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 146) the term *buhar süm* for the monastery is attested.

185 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 144. Reedited in Matsui, “Revising the Uighur Inscriptions,” 18.

186 The name of the prince is partly restored.

187 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 134.

188 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 146–147.

189 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 148–149, reedition in Matsui, “Revising the Uighur Inscriptions,” 22.

190 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 150–151.

191 Ed. Matsui, “Revising the Uighur Inscriptions,” 25.

192 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 156–157. The editors think that four persons are mentioned: Sarıǵ from Suzhou (OU *sügčülüǵ*) and his three sons: D(a)rma Širi, Säǵä Širi and Bilgä. However, the last word, which had been read *bilgä* could be interpreted as *birlä* (‘together with’) so that only two sons remain.

193 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 158.

194 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 160–161.

195 Inscriptions H (line 1), J (line 1), L, M (ed. Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 155). A date is given in inscription F, too. See Hamilton, Niu, “Inscriptions ouïgoures,” 142.

- meditation,<sup>196</sup>
- worship,<sup>197</sup>
- or even more specific: burning of incense,<sup>198</sup>
- purification of offenses,<sup>199</sup>
- the attainment of buddhahood,<sup>200</sup>
- or the performance of a ritual offering.<sup>201</sup>

Some pilgrimages seem to have had a Tantric background. Inscription S was first written in Old Uyghur and then in Tibetan. A single person coming from Hami (OU *kamullig*) expresses his worship; he bears the Tibetan title 'Venerable' (OU *tsunpa*, < Tib. *btsun pa*).<sup>202</sup>

Important Uyghur epigraphic sources relating to Tantric and Esoteric Buddhism in the Gansu corridor have been discovered. Some inscriptions bear some similarities with colophons as regards contents and form. There is one bilingual inscription from the Mañjuśrī monastery (Chin. Wenshu si, 文殊寺, Southwest of present-day Jiuquan 酒泉 in Gansu) dated to the year 1326. The recto of the stone tablet contains an inscription in Chinese consisting of 26 lines. The verso bears the Uyghur version also in 26 lines written in alliterative verses beginning with the Sanskrit introductory formula *om svasti*

196 Inscription B, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 131.

197 Inscription C, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 133, inscription F, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 142, inscription I, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 146–147, inscription K, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 150–151, inscription N, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 156, inscription O, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 156–157, inscription Q, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 160–161, inscriptions S and T, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 166. On the worship of Mañjuśrī in the pilgrim inscriptions from Dunhuang cf. Matsui, "Tonkō shosekkutsu," 30–37.

198 Inscription E, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 139, inscription P, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 158, inscription J, ed. Matsui, "Revising the Uighur Inscriptions," 22.

199 Inscription P, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 158, inscription Q, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 160–161.

200 Inscription Q, ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 160–161.

201 Here in inscription J the Tibetan term for 'ritual offering' (Tib. *mchod pa*, > OU *čodpa*) is used. See Matsui, "Revising the Uighur Inscriptions," 22 (line 6) and commentary on pp. 24–25.

202 Ed. Hamilton, Niu, "Inscriptions ouïgoures," 166.

*siddham*,<sup>203</sup> which is attested in colophons as well.<sup>204</sup> Next to a highly interesting genealogy of the Chagatay rulers starting with Činggiz Qan and ending with the donor of the inscription, Nomḍaš ('companion in the *dharma*'), the text informs us about the construction of a monastery (OU *sāṅrām* < TochA/B *saṅkrām* < Skt. *saṅghārāma*) dedicated to Mañjuśrī. It also mentions the erection of the inscription (OU *pi taš*) itself.<sup>205</sup>

The Chagataid prince Nomḍaš (14th century) is credited with having repaired and subsequently embellished the dilapidated monastery and provided the monks with all necessary provisions. He was financially assisted by members of his family, who provided gold, silver and paper money to decorate the monastery.<sup>206</sup> The embellishment of the statue of Mañjuśrī is mentioned as well.<sup>207</sup> The monks mentioned in the Chinese part of the inscription bear Tibetan or Tangut names.<sup>208</sup> By the burning of lamps and incense in the shrine, a long life of the *hagan han*, i.e. the Yuan Emperor, is wished for.<sup>209</sup> The wish is expressed that by virtue of these good deeds (OU *buyan* << Skt. *puṇya*) the powers of the local protective deities (Skt. *naivāsikas*) may increase and that they in turn should protect the donor, his family and his realm.<sup>210</sup> Similar expressions can be found in early colophons from the West Uyghur Kingdom where the protection of Buddhism is entrusted to the *naivāsikas* and

203 Edited by Geng Shimin 耿世民, Zhang Baoxi 張寶璽, "Yuan huihuwen 'Zhong xiu wenshu si bei' chushi 元回鹘文《重修文殊寺碑》初释 [A Preliminary Interpretation of the Uyghur Version of the *Stone Inscriptions on the Rebuilding of the Mañjuśrī Temple*]," *Kaogu xuebao* 考古学报 [*Acta Archaeologica Sinica*] 2 (1986): 253–262 and 2 plates (reedited in Geng Shimin 耿世民, "Yuan huihuwen 'Zhong xiu wenshu si bei' chushi 元回鹘文《重修文殊寺碑》初释 [A Preliminary Interpretation of the Uyghur Version of the *Stone Inscription About the Rebuilding of the Mañjuśrī Temple*]," in *Xinjiang wenshi lunji* 新疆文史论集 [English title: *Collection of the Papers on Language-Literature and History of Xinjiang*] (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2001), 383–399. An improved edition would be highly desirable. Even by using the poor reproduction of the rubbing several new readings are possible.

204 See, e.g., the block-print edited in Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, text no. 46.1. On other introductory formulas in colophons see Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 48.

205 Geng, "Zhong xiu wenshu si bei," line 5.

206 Geng, "Zhong xiu wenshu si bei," line 20.

207 Geng, "Zhong xiu wenshu si bei," line 21.

208 See Matsui, "Mongolian Decree," 168 (n. 33).

209 Geng, "Zhong xiu wenshu si bei," line 22.

210 Geng, "Zhong xiu wenshu si bei," lines 22–23.

other deities.<sup>211</sup> So there is a remarkable degree of continuity in this field over the centuries.<sup>212</sup> One well-known example comes from a colophon to a confession text, where the *naivāsikas* are mentioned first:<sup>213</sup>

This merit<sub>2</sub> (Skt. *puṇya*), its share<sub>2</sub>, I humbly transfer to the female and male *naivāsika* gods in heaven above and on earth below, who feed on *dharma* (Skt. *dharmāhārika*)<sup>214</sup> and to the gods (residing) nearby such as Taihan Han, Kūmsā Hatun T(ä)ṅrim, Mišan Han and Čaisi Wang Bäg. By virtue of this merit<sub>2</sub> (Skt. *puṇya*) may their heavenly powers<sub>2</sub> and their hosts<sub>2</sub> (Skt. *parivāra*) increase and may they protect<sub>2</sub> inwardly the (Buddhist) teaching<sub>2</sub> (Skt. *śāsana*) and outwardly the realm<sub>2</sub>.<sup>215</sup>

211 Cf. Kasai, *Kolophone*, 224 (text no. 122.5–9). See also *ibid.*, 179 (text no. 81.47–61), 99 (text no. 35.3–7, fragmentary) and 229 (no. 124.6–11, partly restored). Klimkeit has correctly stated that an old idea of sacrifice lives on in the strengthening of the protective deities. See Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim, “Der Stifter im Lande der Seidenstraßen: Bemerkungen zur buddhistischen Laienfrömmigkeit,” *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 35.4 (1983): 304. We may add that the concept of the share (OU *ülüš, ülüg, öṅ ülüg, öṅ ülüš*) allotted to the deities derives from the practice of nomadic societies. In modern Kyrgyz *ülüš* means ‘banquet’. In the “Memoirs of *Bābur*” (Chagatay/Persian *Bāburnāme*, fol. 31a), the memoirs of the first Moghul ruler in India written in Chagatay Turkic, we find the following important statement:

“The *ülüsh*, the champion’s portion, is an old custom among the Mughuls: at every banquet and feast, whoever has distinguished himself with the sword receives the *ülüsh*”

(*bahādurluq ülüši Muğulda qadīmī rasm dur. Har toy va aš bolğanda harkim ki eldin uzup qılıç yetkürgän bolsa ol ülüšni ol alur*).

Transcription and translation are taken from Thackston, W[heeler] M., Jr., *Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur Mirza: Baburnama. Chaghatay Turkish Text with Abdul-Rahim Khankhanan’s Persian Translation, Vol. 1* (Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1993), 61.

212 On protective deities in Uyghur Manichaeism and Buddhism see Zieme, Peter, “Manichäische Kolophone und Könige,” in *Studia Manichaica. II. Internationaler Kongreß zum Manichäismus, 6.-10. August 1989, St. Augustin/Bonn*, ed. Gernot Wießner and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 321–322.

213 In a text known under the title “The glorification of *gurus*” (shelf mark: U 5678, line 25) different kinds of deities are enumerated as follows: *pıntsun burhan dakini naivasikelar* “*devatās* (< Chin. *benzun* 本尊), Buddhas, *dākinīs* and *naivāsikas*”.

214 This term is also attested in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, as Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 65, remarks.

215 Müller, F[riedrich] W[ilhelm] K[arl], *Uigurica II* (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1911), 80 (lines 63–67): OU: *bo buyan ädgü kılınçg öṅ ülüg ävirä ötü täginär m(ä)n üstün kökdäki altun yağıztaki tiši erkäk nom ašlğ naivazike t(ä)ṅrilärkü*

One gets the impression that in Central Asian Buddhism and especially in Uyghur Buddhism the role the *naivāsikas* are entrusted with—i.e. the protection of the realm and the royal lineage—is much more pronounced than in other Buddhist hubs.<sup>216</sup> There are also hints in narrative literature that the *naivāsikas* are guardians of the royal palace. They have to be asked for permission before a prince can become a monk.<sup>217</sup> But there are colophons where the protective deities of the realm are enumerated without mentioning the *naivāsikas*.<sup>218</sup>

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*yaguta taihan han kümsä hatun t(ä)ñrim mišan han čaisi wang bäg ulatu t(ä)ñrilärkä bo buyan ädgü kulnč küčintä t(ä)ñridäm küčläri küsünläri parivar kuvragları asılıp üstälip ičtin sıyar nomug šažing taštın sıyar elig ulușug küyü küzädü tutmakları bolzun.*

A similar translation into German is found in Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 69. He has convincingly shown that Taihan Han (or: Taišan Han), Kümsä Hatun T(ä)ñrim, Mišan Han and Čaisi Wang Bäg are minor protective deities. See Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 66–69.

- 216 The *naivāsikas* are only rarely dealt with in the Sanskrit dictionaries. See Schopen, Gregory, “Counting the Buddha and the Local Spirits: A Monastic Ritual of Inclusion for the Rain Retreat,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30.4: 373. It is remarkable that in Tocharian B, which is so important for the formation of a literary language of Uyghur Buddhism, the word is not attested yet. There is no entry in Adams, Douglas Q[ueentin], *A Dictionary of Tocharian B*. Revised and Greatly Enlarged, vols. I–II (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2013). In stake inscription III (line 19), the proper name transcribed *navašingi* (in Hamilton, “Remarks,” 122a) is probably that very word. See Hamilton, “Remarks,” 122b: “*Navašingi* probably represents a form borrowed from Tocharian meaning ‘a good spirit.’” Even in the *Book of Oguz* (OU *Oguzname*) in Uyghur script, which otherwise shows little Buddhist colouring, the term is attested. See Clauson, Sir Gerard, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 775a s. v. *névašigi*.
- 217 Cf. manuscript Kr II 1/2 /v/16–29/, ed. Shōgaito, Masahiro 庄垣内 正弘, Lilia Tuguševa and Setsu Fujishiro 節勝代, *Uigurbun Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā no kenkyū. Sankuto Peteruburuğu shōzō Jūgōdō monogatari* ‘ウイグル文 Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā の研究サソクトペテルブルグ所蔵『十業道物語』 [English title: *The Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā in Uighur from the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences*] (Shokado: Nakanishi Press, 1998), lines 632–645.
- 218 E.g. in a colophon to the *Meeting with Maitreya (Maitrisimit)*: “Brahmā, Indra, the four *mahārāja* gods, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Skandakumāra, the protective deity<sub>2</sub> of the holy realm of Kočo, Asiloman, Śrīloman and [the other gods]” (*äzrua hormuzta tört m(a)harač t(ä)ñrilär višnu mahašv(a)re sakandakumare kutlug kočo uluș kuti [wahaš]iki asilome širilomeda [ulatu t(ä)ñrilär]*) (ed. Kasai, *Kolophone*, 182 [text no. 82.31–34]). It can be surmised that the Uyghurs knew very well the function of the “Hindu” gods. As the god of war, Skanda or Skandakumāra is of course highly suited as a protector of the realm. In a colophon to an *Avalokiteśvarastava* (reedited in Kasai, *Kolophone*, text No. 124) we find Skandakumāra

## 2.6 *Similarities between Epigraphic and Manuscript Sources*

If we compare the inscriptions from the Gansu corridor with manuscripts from Turfan or Hami, we can detect more similarities or parallels, especially as regards the presentation of Uyghur rulers and their families in connection with Buddhism.<sup>219</sup> Many literary and epigraphic sources reflect the intimate links of the Uyghur ruling family with Buddhism.<sup>220</sup> Epithets of Uyghur or Mongol rulers and members of their family are instructive in this respect.<sup>221</sup> Before going into details a short remark can be made: In the symbolic representation of the political sphere the Uyghurs were rather conservative. One example is the designation ‘realm of the ten Uyghurs’ (OU *on uygur eli*) which occurs in inscriptional<sup>222</sup> and manuscript sources.<sup>223</sup> This reflects the old division into ten Uyghur tribes at the time when the Uyghurs were part of the Tokuz Oguz

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mentioned next to the two *yakṣas* Kapila and Mañibhadra (line 7). The remark by Zieme (*Religion und Gesellschaft*, 67–68), that these deities appear in a bilingual text in Sanskrit and Tocharian A from Šorčuk (T III S 78.4), is highly important. We may add that Mañibhadra, a *yakṣa* associated with Kubera, was the patron of merchants. See Coomaraswamy, Ananda K[entish], *Yakṣas*, vol. 1 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1928–1931), 7. This must have had a special appeal to the Uyghurs who were active in overland trade. The *Buyan Ävirmäk* (“Transfer of merit”) in the Old Uyghur *Sūtra of Golden Light* is cited in translation in Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 69–70. Here, it is mentioned, that even the planets and stars protect Buddha’s teaching.

219 See in this respect Zieme, Peter, “Titulaturen und Elogen uigurischer Könige,” in *Religious and Lay Symbolism in the Altaic World and Other Papers*, ed. Klaus Sagaster and Helmut Eimer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989), 443–450.

220 A Buddhist hymn dedicated to the ruler of the West Uyghur Kingdom and to the Uyghur realm was written in strophic alliteration in Mongol times. Cf. the edition in Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, 154–155 (text no. 39).

221 On epithets of the rulers in colophons see Zieme, Peter, “Bemerkungen zur Datierung uigurischer Blockdrucke,” *Journal Asiatique* 269 (1981): 394–396 [reprint: *Fragmenta Buddhica Uigurica: Ausgewählte Schriften von Peter Zieme*, ed. Simone-Christiane Raschmann and Jens Wilkens (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2009), 521–523].

222 Cf. the expression *on uygur han* “king (of) the Ten Uyghurs” in stake inscription III, line 2, as read in Hamilton, “Remarks,” 122a.

223 Inscription: CI III, 47 (ed. Geng, Hamilton, “Stèle commémorative,” 20); manuscript: e.g., Kasai, *Kolophone*, 198. See the adjective *on uygur elilig* (Kr II 2/39 /r/15/ = ed. Shōgaito, Tuguševa and Fujishiro, *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā*, line 15) as well. In the “Uyghur hymn” we find the expression “O our realm, which is (divided) into ten (tribes)” (OU *onlar uygur elim(i)z-a*). See Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, text no. 39.11. In a manuscript in Uyghur script, we even find *on uygur* transferred into Sanskrit as *daśa-hathura* in Brāhmī script. See Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 77.

confederation.<sup>224</sup> Taking into consideration the importance of genealogies and tribal origins among Turkic speaking peoples of Modern Central Asia—for instance in Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan—it is likely that the Uyghurs still had a good knowledge about their tribal affiliations even after they became sedentary.

### 2.6.1 The Religious and Political Sphere

In the colophon to the confession text cited above,<sup>225</sup> the division of the world into two spheres is mentioned. Already in Manichaean texts we find a similar expression that points to the concept of two systems, which is known from Tibetan and Mongol sources: “[...] may inwardly religion and outwardly the realm prosper and thrive.”<sup>226</sup> In the trilingual inscription (Chinese, Sogdian, Old Turkic) from Karabalgasun (OU Ordo Balık), this terminology is found in the Sogdian part, but in reverse order: “outwardly with respect to the realm, inwardly with respect to religion.”<sup>227</sup>

As we have already observed, in Buddhist texts the same expression is applied in the context of the protective deities. We may cite another example:

By virtue of this *puṇya* may their heavenly powers<sub>2</sub> and their *parivāra*-crowds increase and grow, and may they protect and guard inwardly the *dharma* and *śāsana* and outwardly the realm<sub>2</sub>.<sup>228</sup>

The terms *dharma* (OU *nom*) and ‘teaching, (Buddhist) religion’ (Skt. *śāsana* >> OU *šazin*) pertain to the religious sphere whereas ‘realm’ (OU *el*) and ‘land’ (OU *uluš*) belong to the sphere of political power.<sup>229</sup> In the Uyghur version

224 See Hamilton, James Russell, “Toquz-Oγuz et On-Uyγur,” *Journal Asiatique* 250 (1962): 23–64.

225 See page 234. Cf. the reference in footnote 215.

226 [...] *ištīn nom tašt(ī)n el kejin alkıgn turzun*. Cf. Le Coq, A[lbert] von, *Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho. III. Nebst einem christlichen Bruchstück aus Bulayiq* (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1922), no. 27 (v/16/). More Manichaean attestations of this concept are cited in Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 70 (footnotes 367 and 368) and 71.

227 “[...] all'esterno rispetto al regno e all'interno rispetto alla religione”, fragments 1–7, line 16, trans. in Provasi, Elio, “La versione sogdiana dell'iscrizione trilingue di Karabalgasun,” in *Il Manicheismo, Volume 1: Mani e il Manicheismo*, ed. Gherardo Gnoli ([Milano]: Mondadori, 2003), 241.

228 OU *bo buyan ädgü kilnč küčintä [tä]ñridäm kücläri küsünläri parivar kuvragları asılıp üstälip içtin sıjar nomug šazing: taštın sıjar elig ulušuğ [kü]ü küzädü tutmaqları bolzun*. Cf. Kasai, Kolophone, 224 (text no. 122.7–9).

229 Further attestations of the two complementary concepts are cited in Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 69 (footnote 362).



of the *Biography of Xuanzang* this dichotomy is expressed by using the words ‘dharma, religious sphere’ (OU *nom*) and ‘politics, government’ (OU *törö*):<sup>230</sup>

Denn in diesen beiden Geleitworten lobt man die Innere Lehre und das Äußere Gesetz sehr.<sup>231</sup>

It is not likely that the Manichaeans in the Uyghur Empire in Mongolia have invented this concept of the two systems. Because of the Tibetan and Mongol parallels we can infer that the Manichaeans built upon an indigenous Central Asian tradition, which was adapted to the exigencies of Manichaean politics.<sup>232</sup>

The Mongols had a parallel concept known under the Mongolian terms *qoyar törö*, *qoyar yosun* or *qous yosun*, which has been described in great detail by Klaus Sagaster in the introduction to his edition of the *White History* (Mong. *Čayan teüke*).<sup>233</sup> He compared medieval European concepts such as *duo ordines*, *duae potestates*, *duo gladii* etc.<sup>234</sup> and, most importantly, referred to the Tibetan terms *lugs gnyis* and *lugs zung*.<sup>235</sup> Tradition ascribes the division

230 *törö* can as well have a religious connotation, e.g. as an equivalent of Skt. *dharmā*. Furthermore, *nom* and *törö* can be synonymous. Therefore, I translate with ‘teaching<sub>2</sub>’ in the following: MaitrH I 15b6–10 *anta tągip arate udaraketa ulatu ulug küčlüg aržılarnu nomn törösin taplamadn altı yul alp kulsıg iş işlädi* (Geng Shimin, Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Das Zusammentreffen mit Maitreya. Die ersten fünf Kapitel der Hami-Version der Maitrisimit in Zusammenarbeit mit Helmut Eimer und Jens Peter Laut herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert*. Teil I: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar. Teil II: Faksimiles und Indices (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), lines 1336–1340) “After having arrived there, he did not accept the teaching<sub>2</sub> of the great and powerful seers such as Ārāḍa (Kālāma) and Udraka (Rāmaputra) and during six years he performed ‘the deed which is difficult to perform’ (Skt. *duṣkaracarya*).”

231 For the edition and translation cf. Röhrborn, Klaus, *Die alttürkische Xuanzang-Biographie VII. Nach der Handschrift von Leningrad, Paris und Peking sowie nach dem Transkript von Annemarie v. Gabain herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), lines 282–284: *kim ol iki süölärdä iç nomug taş [tö]rög üküş küläyür*.

232 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 71, thinks that this concept was introduced by the Buddhists and refers to the Pāli terms *dharmacakka* ‘wheel of dharma’ and *ānācakka* ‘wheel of government’. But, on p. 72 Zieme cites authors who also think that we are dealing with an Inner Asian conception.

233 Sagaster, Klaus, *Die Weiße Geschichte (Čayan teüke). Eine mongolische Quelle zur Lehre von den beiden Ordnungen Religion und Staat in Tibet und der Mongolei* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976), 9–49.

234 Sagaster, *Weiße Geschichte*, 9–10.

235 Cf. the complementary terms *lha chos* (‘religious order’) and *mi chos* (‘social order’) as well as *chos* (‘religious sphere’) and *srid* (‘political sphere’) in Tibetan as documented in

into a religious and a political sphere to an agreement between Qubilai and Pakpa (Tib. Phags pa) in the 13th century, but this ascription rather belongs to the realm of religious hagiography. In Mongolian texts, we find, for instance, the ‘system of religion’ (Mong. *nom-un yosun*) vs. the ‘system of the state’ (Mong. *törö-yin yosun*). Here, *törö* designates—such as in the Old Uyghur *Biography of Xuanzang*—the non-religious sphere. In a deviating terminology, *törö* stands for ‘system, order’, viz. the religious sphere is termed *nom-un törö* whereas we find, e.g., *qayan törö* ‘order of the king’ as a designation of the ‘secular’ sphere.<sup>236</sup>

A source such as the *White History* is missing in Old Uyghur Buddhist literature, thus it must remain an open question whether the two systems were ever dealt with systematically. It is more likely that the division into an inner and an outer sphere belonged to an inherited tradition of Uyghur rulership and religious politics and was thus taken for granted. The early epigraphic source from Karabalgasun confirms that it must be an old Central Asian concept and not an invention from the Yuan period.

In epigraphic sources and in manuscripts, the transfer of merit evokes different complementary binary concepts—most of them spatial—such as inside (religion) vs. outside (politics),<sup>237</sup> above (heaven, associated with blue colour) vs. below (earth, associated with brown colour), male vs. female, far and near etc. The assignment of religious and political functionaries to an inner or outer sphere of the Uyghur realm respectively not only draws a highly significant line of symbolic demarcation but also was important in terms of the more practical employment of the concept during almsgiving.<sup>238</sup>

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Roesler, Ulrike, “Die Lehre, der Weg und die namenlose Religion: Mögliche Äquivalente eines Religionsbegriffs in der tibetischen Kultur,” in *Religion in Asien? Studien zur Anwendbarkeit des Religionsbegriffs*, ed. Peter Schalk et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2013), 139–140.

236 Further terms in Sagaster, *Weißer Geschichte*, 10. On the meaning of *törö* in Mongolian see Skrynnikova, Tatyana, “Die Bedeutung des Begriffes *törö* in der politischen Kultur der Mongolen im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Asiatische Studien* 63.2 (2009): 435–476.

237 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 70, cites a text (U 3528 verso 8–11) which names ‘the pure and holy *dharma* and teaching’ (OU *arig udok nom šazin*) for the inner sphere and ‘the realm and the land’ (OU *el uluś*) with the addition of ‘their kings and chiefs’ (OU *eligläri bāgläri*) for the outer sphere.

238 See Zieme, Peter, “Stifter und Texte von der Seidenstraße nach Zeugnissen des altuigurischen Buddhismus,” in *Stifter und Mäzene und ihre Rolle in der Religion. Von Königen, Mönchen, Vordenkern und Laien in Indien, China und anderen Kulturen*, ed. Barbara Schuler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 43.

2.6.2 Epithets<sup>239</sup>2.6.2.1 *The Designation of Rulers as Bodhisattvas*<sup>240</sup>

It is well known that Mongol emperors are often presented in Mongol sources as Cakravartins, universal rulers, or bodhisattvas.<sup>241</sup> In Old Uyghur inscriptional sources, Uyghur or Mongol rulers and even members of their families are designated as bodhisattvas. We will see that some other epithets are attested in manuscript sources as well:

‘the bodhisattva Nom Kuli’<sup>242</sup>

‘the bodhisattva prince Nomdaš’<sup>243</sup>

‘our charismatic ruler, the bodhisattva’<sup>244</sup>

A female member of the royal family is presented as a bodhisattva:

the bodhisattva Oŋ Tegin Bägi,<sup>245</sup> (who was) delicate from her infancy<sup>246</sup>

The ruler may have other epithets which are typical for bodhisattvas or Buddhas such as ‘merciful, compassionate’.<sup>247</sup>

In a colophon of the laywoman Šaraki to the *Avalokiteśvarasūtra*, a chapter from the *Lotussūtra* which was transmitted as a separate text, we find the

239 On epithets of Mongol emperors in Uyghur Buddhist texts (mainly in block-prints) see Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 74–80. He mentions epithets depicting the Mongol emperor as a universal monarch or as ruling according to the *dharma*.

240 See already Klimkeit, “Stifter,” 290.

241 E.g., Elverskog, *Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 130, 152, 173, 175.

242 Geng, “Zhong xiu wenshu si bei,” line 19: OU *bodis(a)t(a)v nom kuli*, inscription on Mañjuśrī Hill.

243 (OU *bodis(a)t(a)v nomdaš* taysi, inscription on Mañjuśrī Hill) Geng, “Zhong xiu wenshu si bei,” line 24.

244 (OU *bodis(a)t(a)v idok t(ä)ŋrikänüniz*) (CI I, 22) Geng, Hamilton, “Stèle commémorative,” 18.

245 This is the daughter of the ruler named El Yigmiš Bägi. The name is reconstructed according to the Chinese part of the inscription (Geng, Hamilton, “Stèle commémorative,” 33–34). Differently in Balati, Liu, “Yiduhu gaochang wang,” 64 (line 75): *känčindinbärü oglagu bodis(a)vi täg el yigmiš bägini*.

246 (OU *känčindinbärü oglagu bodis(a)t(a)v oŋ tegin bägi*, CI I, 24) Geng, Hamilton, “Stèle commémorative,” 18.

247 (OU *t(ä)ŋrikän*) (OU *y(a)rlikančuči köŋüllüg*, CI III, 3). Cf. Geng, Hamilton, “Stèle commémorative,” 19; Balati, Liu, “Yiduhu gaochang wang,” 65 (line 105).

Mongol emperor<sup>248</sup> Tuγ Temür (reigned from 1329–1332) and his wife designated as belonging to the lineage of bodhisattvas:

May the emperor and empress who belong to the lineage of the bodhisattvas live many tens of thousands (of years).<sup>249</sup>

Similarly, in the text known under the title “Uyghur Hymn”, an unidentified ruler is designated as belonging to the lineage of the bodhisattvas.<sup>250</sup> The expression ‘belonging to the lineage of bodhisattva(s)’ (OU *bodis(a)t(a)v ugušlug*) is found many times in the cycle of stories *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* as an epithet of animals and persons when they are identified as former births of the Buddha. It is attested as an epithet of the Mongol or Uyghur ruler in several colophons.<sup>251</sup> In Mongolian texts, we find the calque ‘belonging to the lineage of the bodhisattva(s)’ (Mong. *bodistw törölkitiü*).<sup>252</sup>

The image of the ruler as being close to the future Buddha Maitreya can be expressed by another epithet, which emphasises the fact that he descended from the *tuṣita* heaven.

[...] [the Mongol emperor] by showing once again favour to our ruler who descended from the *tuṣita* heaven [...],<sup>253</sup> (CI V, 13)<sup>254</sup>

Different is the statement found in an inscription that members of the Chagataids ascended to the *tuṣita* heaven (i. e., after their death, in order to stay with the future Buddha Maitreya):

248 On the Mongol emperor as bodhisattva see Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 76–77.

249 Kasai, *Kolophone*, 57 [text no. 6.19(68–69)].

250 (OU *bodis(a)t(a)v ugušlug hagan hatun tüg tümän yašazun*) Cf. Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, text no. 39.17: “O our [ruler], who belongs to the lineage of the bodhisattvas” (OU *bodis(a)t(a)v ugušlug [han]im(t)[z-a]*).

251 Zieme, “Bemerkungen zur Datierung,” 394 (reprint: 521) quotes two more attestations in colophons (*Rājāvādaka*-colophon, a *Buyan ävirmäk* to the 圓覺經 *Yuanjue jing*). The first colophon was reedited in Kasai, *Kolophone*, 207 [text no. 109], the second in Kasai, *Kolophone*, 116 [text no. 41]. See the hymn to the Uyghur ruler (*han*) and to the Uyghur realm edited in Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, text no. 39.17.

252 E.g., as an epithet of Altan Qan in the *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur* (Elverskog, *Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 242).

253 (OU *tušittin enmiš t(ä)yrükänimizni yänä soyurka[p][...]*) Balati, Liu, “Yiduhu gaochang wang,” 69 (line 219) read *soyurkadap*.

254 Geng, Hamilton, “Stèle commémorative,” 22.

Beginning with Aļu until Nom Kulı,  
 the charismatic ones with ample *puṇya*,  
 all Qans ascended the throne of Čagatay  
 and ascended to the *tuṣita* palace (after death).<sup>255</sup>

The Chagataid ruler Aļu is a grandson of Čagatay's (reigned from 1260–1265/6). According to Rašid al-Dīn, Nom Kulı is a brother of the donor Nomdaš and both are sons of Čübei, the second son of Aļu.<sup>256</sup> But in line 19 of the inscription it is stated that Nomdaš was the son of Nom Kulı and Av(a)lčay Hatun.

#### 2.6.2.2 *A Lotus Flower Which Traces its Origin to Bokok*<sup>257</sup>

In the Commemorative Inscription, a woman is referred to by this epithet:

‘the lotus flower Oñ Tegin Bägi<sup>258</sup> who traces her origin back to Bokok’<sup>259</sup>

255 Geng, “Zhong xiu wenshu si bei”, line 12:

*alugu başlap nom kulka tägi*  
*agir buyanlıg idoklar*  
*alku han čagačay oronın olurup*  
*agtıntılar tužit ordoka*  
 (Inscription from Mañjuśrı Hill)

With reference to a person belonging to the Uyghur ruling house whose name is not preserved: *ašnuki oronu tušitka [bar]dı* (CI IV, 21, ed. Geng, Hamilton, “Stèle commémorative,” 20) Balati, Liu, “Yiduhu gaochang wang,” 68 (line 175) do not give a transcription of a verb in this sentence.

256 See Boyle, John Andrew, trans. *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 143–144.

257 The name is spelled differently in scholarly literature. As later myths equate the name of the ruler—perhaps by folk etymology—with the word *bokok* ‘swelling, bird’s crop, bud, goitre’, one can assume that it had the same pronunciation. On this word see Erdal, Marcel, *Old Turkic Word Formation: A Functional Approach to the Lexicon*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), 230. It is also possible that originally *bokok* was not a personal name but a title. In the famous Xiongnu couplet preserved in the *History of the Jin Dynasty* (Chin. *Jinshu* 晉書) in Chinese transliteration the title \*Bok-kok occurs. See Vovin, Alexander, “Did the Xiong-nu speak a Yeniseian Language?” *Central Asiatic Journal* 44.1 (2000): 93. As titles are often borrowed from one language of the Inner Asian steppes into another, an old loan word from Xiongnu—obviously a Yeniseian language according to Vovin—in a Turkic language would not come as a surprise.

258 The reading *oñ tegin bägi* is not certain. Cf. the proposal to read *täg tegin bäg* instead in Zieme, Peter, “Uyğur yazısıyla yazılmış uyğur yazıtlarına dair bazı düşünceler,” *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı—Belleten 1982–1983* (1986): 234. Then one would assume that the person referred to must be male.

259 Reading in Balati, Liu, “Yiduhu gaochang wang,” 64 (line 81): *bokok tözlüg pundarik čäčäk täg tegin bägini*. In Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, note to text no. 20.70, *bokok*

This epithet testifies to the long-term memory of dynastic origins of the Uyghurs because Bokok Kagan is the founder of the Ādiz dynasty<sup>260</sup> of the East Uyghur Empire in the late 8th century (reigned 795–808).<sup>261</sup> The West Uyghurs are descendants of Bokok, whereas the Ganzhou Uyghur rulers trace themselves back to the Yaglakar Dynasty, which preceded the Ādiz. The Commemorative Inscription preserves mythical accounts about Bokok and his family as well as about the dynastic origins of the Uyghurs which have a close parallel in the account given by the Persian historian Juwainī (1226–1283) dealing with an inscribed stone tablet discovered in Qara Qorum during Ögedei's reign (1229–1241).<sup>262</sup>

A very close parallel can be found in a manuscript which is conspicuously several centuries older because it was translated from Tocharian (B):

T(ä)ḡrikän<sup>263</sup> Takın Kız T(ä)ḡrim, the lotus flower of Bokok origin<sup>264</sup>

The epithet comprises, in fact, more elements. Before the word *bokok* we find among others four words which have been read 'WD// *ugušnuḡ ud[u]mbar len[hua]sı* in Kasai's edition. After checking the manuscript, we can now

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*tözlüg* is rendered as "knospen(tragende)". Similarly, in Zieme, "bazı düşünceler", 234, it is assumed that *bokok tözlüg* does not refer to the famous ruler but rather as an attribute describes the lotus flower. But the attestation in U 971 with the genitive *bokok töznüḡ* quoted below shows that Geng's and Hamilton's old interpretation is correct. The same opinion is expressed in Clark, Larry, "Manichaeism Among the Uygurs: The Uygur Khan of the Bokug Clan," in *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism Organized by The International Association of Manichaean Studies*, ed. Jason David BeDuhn (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 64; OÜ *bokok tözlüg pundarik čäčäk oḡ tegin bägi*, CI I, 29) Geng, Hamilton, "Stèle commémorative," 18.

260 A preliminary chronology of the Ādiz dynasty is found in Moriyasu, Takao, *Die Geschichte des uigurischen Manichäismus an der Seidenstraße: Forschungen zu manichäischen Quellen und ihrem geschichtlichen Hintergrund*, trans. Christian Steineck (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 222.

261 On the numismatic attestation of this ruler see Thierry, François, "Les monnaies de Boquq qaghan des Ouïgours (795–808)," *Turcica* 30 (1998): 263–278. There is an allusion to the story of the five princes known from the legend of Bokok Kagan in III, 12 of the inscription (see Geng, Hamilton, "Stèle commémorative," 37).

262 See Atwood, "The Uyghur Stone".

263 On *t(ä)ḡrikän* as a title of female persons see Moriyasu, "Stake Inscriptions," 166.

264 (OÜ *bokok töznüḡ pundarik čäčäki t(ä)ḡrikän takın kız t(ä)ḡrim*, U 971 [T II S 20] /v/15–16/) Ed. Kasai, Yukiyo, "Ein Kolophon um die Legende von Bokug Kagan," 内陸アジア言語の研究 *Nairiku ajia gengo no kenkyū* [Studies on the Inner Asian Languages] 19 (2004): 15–16. See also the new edition with the joined fragment U 2105 in Kasai, *Kolophone*, 204 (text no. 107).

establish the reading *udan*<sup>265</sup> for the word which has been heretofore only transliterated and translate the whole phrase as follows: “T(ä)ŋrikän Takın Kız T(ä)ŋrim, the lotus flower of Bokok origin, the *udumbara* blossom<sup>266</sup> of the *udan* clan.”<sup>267</sup>

The epithet ‘like a lotus flower’ (OU *pundarik čäčäktäg*) can be used with reference to a prince as well, as attested in the colophon of the laywoman Šaraki:

the prince of Yan (燕) who is like the lotus flower<sup>268</sup>

A partly damaged occurrence of the epithet is ‘[...] Turčisman Aka who is pure and handsome like the lotus flower’<sup>269</sup>

### 2.6.2.3 Like a *Cintāmaṇi Jewel*<sup>270</sup>

This epithet is attested in an introduction to a cycle of stories, where the ruler is even compared to the Buddha:

I, Tükätmiš Totok, together with (my wife) Alkatmiš, [now] kneel down before the majesty of the Buddha-like *cakravartin*-king<sub>2</sub> who is just like the priceless *cintāmaṇi*-jewel<sup>271</sup>

265 Further attestations of the *udan* clan in Old Uyghur manuscripts are now discussed in Zieme, Peter, “The West Uigur Kingdom: Views from Inside,” *Horizons* 5.1 (2014): 14–15. Atwood, “The Uyghur Stone,” 329 mentions *udan* as an ‘epithet’ of Bokok.

266 The Chinese loan word *lenhua* (Chin. *lianhua* 蓮華) literally means ‘lotus’ as well, but the *udumbara* is a fig tree the blossom of which is prized in Indian literature as something marvelous and outstanding, on account of which I translate with ‘blossom’. Line 331 in Shōgaito, Masahiro, “Drei zum *Avalokiteśvara-sūtra* passende Avadānas,” in *Der türkische Buddhismus in der japanischen Forschung*, ed. Jens Peter Laut and Klaus Röhrborn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 98, speaks of the “noble *udumbara*-blossom (lit. lotus) of Maitreya Buddha” (OU *tözün maitre burhanluğ udumbar lenhua*).

267 A very interesting interpretation is given in Clark, “Manichaeism,” 66. Clark concluded that Bokok must be the name of a clan or a family and not the name of a ruler. He also proposed that this clan is identical with the second of the Nine Oguz tribes called Buku in Chinese sources and with the ethnonym *bākū* in the Staël-Holstein scroll in Khotanese. Although this hypothesis is tempting, the newly restored epithet *udan ugušnuj* in the manuscript U 971 clearly proves that Bokok is not the name of a clan.

268 (OU *pundarik čäčäktäg yin wang taysı*) Kasai, *Kolophone*, 57 [text no. 6.20(70)].

269 (OU [...] *pundarik čäčäk täg arıg körlä turčisman aka*, CI IV, 31–32) Balati, Liu, “Yiduhu gaochang wang,” 68 (line 186), read *körtlä*, which does not alter the semantics;

270 This epithet is also attested in the Great Hymn to Mani with reference to Mani himself. Cf. Clark, Larry V., “The Manichean Turkic *Pothi-Book*,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 9 (1982): line 251.

271 (OU *ol antag törlüğ bulunčsuz čintamani ärdini täğ burhanluğ č(a)kr(a)a)rt elig han kutuğa: [amtı] m(ä)n tükätmiš totok . alkatmiš birlä [tiz]im(i)zni čökütip*, ДКРАМН/1

It is found as well in a eulogy to a Uyghur chief (OU *bäg*):

[The *bäg* is] the *cintāmaṇi*-jewel, which fulfils the wishes of being rich of those (people) suffering from being poor<sup>272</sup>

A Uyghur ruler bears this epithet in an inscription:

after His Majesty, the Kagan *ḷiyagatu*, having conversed earnestly<sub>2</sub> with our ruler who is like the *cintāmaṇi*<sup>273</sup>

In the bilingual inscription on Mañjuśrī Hill a slightly damaged epithet including the reference to the *cintāmaṇi* jewel can only refer to Činggis Qan:

after he ascended to the throne of Činggis Qan who honestly<sub>2</sub> [fulfills] all [wishes] like the *cintāmaṇi* jewel<sup>274</sup>

In a Mongolian text, the epithet is attested with reference to the Dalai Lama:

The Wishing-Jewel-like Dalai Lama proclaimed, [...] (Mong. *čindamani erdeni metü dalai lam-a jarliḷy bolḷu ügüler-ün* [...])<sup>275</sup>

During the Mongol period contacts of Uyghur Buddhists from the Turfan area with other hubs intensified. In the 13th and 14th centuries printing became

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fol. 2 /v/4–7/) Geng Shimin, Jens Peter Laut, Jens Wilkens, "Fragmente der uigurischen *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* aus Hami (Teil 1)," *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* N.F. 19 (2005): 79.

272 (OU *čigay üzä ämgänmišlär[niḷ] bayumaklıḷ küsüšlärin kanturdači čintamani ärdnisi*) Ed. Zieme, Peter, "Eine Eloge auf einen uigurischen *Bäg*," *Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları* 3 (1993): 275 [reprint: *Fragmenta Buddhica Uigurica: Ausgewählte Schriften von Peter Zieme*, ed. Simone-Christiane Raschmann and Jens Wilkens, 554. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2009].

273 (OU *ḷiyagatu kagan süüsi čintamani täḷ t(ä)ḷrikänimiz birlä čny(a)rp sözl[ä]šip*, C1 V, 7–8) Geng, Hamilton, "Stèle commémorative," 21–22.

274 (OU *čintamani ärdnikä oḷḷatü čin kertü alku* [...]) *činggiz hagannuḷ ornunta olurmiš*, inscription on Mañjuśrī hill) Geng, "Zhong xiu wenshu si bei", lines 1–2. Also attested is the comparison with reference to the Buddha: "our hope [i.e. the Buddha] who is as difficult to meet with as the *cintāmaṇi*-jewel" (OU *alp tušuḷguluk čintamani ärdini täḷ umugumuz*) (ed. Kaya, Ceval, *Uygurca Altun Yaruk: Giriş, Metin ve Dizin* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1994), § 680.14 = reedition in Kasai, *Kolophone*, 103 [text no. 39a.57(14)]. Further attestations of the comparison between the Buddha and the *cintāmaṇi*-jewel e.g. in MaitrH I, 15a7–8 (Geng, Klimkeit, *Zusammentreffen*, lines 1307–1308), MaitrH II, 2a29 (Geng, Klimkeit, *Zusammentreffen*, line 1509), MaitrH III, 5b30 (Geng, Klimkeit, *Zusammentreffen*, line 2505).

275 Elverskog, *Jewel Translucent Sūtra*, 149 (translation), 152 (Mongolian text).



a means widely used to facilitate the spread of Buddhist texts. As far as we know, blockprints were usually fabricated in Yuan times at Dadu (大都), since 1272 the official designation of the capital of the Yuan Empire (present day Beijing).<sup>276</sup> As the colophons tell us, some works were printed in thousand or even ten thousand copies and distributed in order to acquire merit (Skt. *punya*).<sup>277</sup> But another aspect is certainly noteworthy. A centralisation of duplication of Buddhist texts also meant that the government could exert control over their respective contents.

Contemporary with the rise of Tantric Buddhism and the spread of the printing technique in the Mongol period, intensified Sanskrit studies emerged as can be gleaned from several texts. Through recourse to several loanwords from Sanskrit, Uyghur Buddhists writing poetry in strophic alliteration now were able to use verses ‘rhyming’ in letters not found in native Old Uyghur words such as n-, p- or d-. Strophic alliteration is attested already in early Manichaean texts, but it seems that there was a mutual influence between Old Uyghur and Mongol poetry at work. On the one hand, it has been stated correctly that Mongol colophons with strophic alliteration were modeled on Old Uyghur colophons.<sup>278</sup> On the other hand, it is significant that the usage of strophic alliteration in Uyghur Buddhist texts increased considerably in Mongol times.

## 2.7 *Titles of the Buddhist Clergy*

An issue yet to be explored is how the different monastic titles and official ranks in Uyghur Buddhism are to be interpreted.<sup>279</sup> Such a study would have to include a wide selection of sources in different languages. This problem

276 See Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 51, with further references in footnote 239. The printers themselves presumably often were of Chinese descent because of the Chinese pagination of most blockprints (cf. Kudara, “Buddhist Culture,” 186). This would explain why some mistakes were made while the handwritten model of the text was carved into the wooden mould. That monasteries of the Turfan region were themselves places where “a highly and widely extended printing industry” flourished “for several centuries”, as stated by Carter, is not corroborated by hard facts. See Carter, Thomas Francis, *The Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward*. Revised by L[uther] Carrington Goodrich (New York: Ronald Press, 1955, 2nd edition), 144.

277 Thousand copies: e.g. Kasai, *Kolophone*, 56–57 [text no. 6], 116 [text no. 41], 133 [text no. 50]. Ten thousand copies: Kasai, *Kolophone*, 121–122 [text no. 43]; 124 [text no. 45] both colophons refer to the *Sitātapatrādhāraṇī*. A text printed in 110 copies was edited in Kasai, *Kolophone*, 118–120 [text no. 42], one printed in 108 copies is edited in Kasai, *Kolophone*, 122–123 [text no. 44]. Furthermore, 100 and 500 copies are mentioned as well. See Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 97.

278 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 48.

279 See Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 56, that this is a desideratum.

can only be outlined in this article. From Old Uyghur colophons and inscriptions we know that there were official posts in the West Uyghur Kingdom that directly related to the administration of Buddhism. A high-ranking official was the ‘preceptor of the (Buddhist) teaching’ (OU *šazin ayguči*) who was directly answerable to the Mongol Emperor in the second half of the 13th century.<sup>280</sup> From inscriptional and manuscript sources we know some people who held the post of the ‘preceptor of the (Buddhist) teaching’, e.g. a certain Sambodu, whose name appears in an inscription from cave 8 (according to the new numbering: 18) in Bāzāklīk.<sup>281</sup> The inscriptions in this cave almost certainly belong to the Mongol period.<sup>282</sup> Further evidence of persons holding this post comes from Chinese sources.<sup>283</sup> The title *šazin ayguči* corresponds to Chinese *zong-tong* (總統) and was second as a religious rank only to the ‘preceptor of the state’ (Chin. *guoshi* 國師).<sup>284</sup> Maybe the title was in use already in the pre-Yuan period.<sup>285</sup> However, the title of the highest clerical Buddhist rank in the West Uyghur Kingdom in the 10th and early 11th centuries was evidently *tutuy* (< Chin. 都統 *dutong*).<sup>286</sup>

As to the administration of monasteries, there is evidence from literary sources that the Sanskrit title *saṅghasthavira*, ‘abbot’ was borrowed

280 See Röhrborn, Klaus, *Uigurisches Wörterbuch. Sprachmaterial der vorislamischen türkischen Texte aus Zentralasien*. Fascicles 1–6 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977–1998), 299 s.v. *ayguči* with further references and Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 204–207.

281 See Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 197–199.

282 See Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 203–204, who opts for the 12th century when the repair work of cave 8 was carried out. The repair work and the inscriptions are interrelated.

283 Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 205.

284 Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 205.

285 Cf. Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 205, quotes two Old Uyghur documents (U 5304, U 5319) in which the title appears and which according to him are likely to be pre-Yuan. The first document, which refers to the economic administration of a monastery is now to be joined with U 5591. See Raschmann, Simone-Christiane, *Altürkische Handschriften Teil 13. Dokumente*. Teil 1 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007), 79 (Catalogue number 62). The second document was issued by the government of the West Uyghur Kingdom and guarantees the tax exemption of a monastery in Murtuk. See Raschmann, *Altürkische Handschriften Teil 13*, 45 (Catalogue number 26) with references. A new edition with German translation is given in Moriyasu, *Geschichte des uigurischen Manichäismus*, 158–159. A revised English translation can be found in Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 206–207. Moriyasu (“Chronology,” 207) draws the conclusion that the title ‘preceptor of the (Buddhist) teaching’ (OU *šazin ayguči*) appeared in the 11th century.

286 Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 207–210. See also the chapter by Gertraud Taenzer in this volume for the use of the term ‘head of the clergy’ (Chin. *dusengtong* 都僧統, Tib. *sing tong ched po*) in Dunhuang under Tibetan and local rule.

via Tocharian (Toch. A/B *saṅkāstere*), yielding Old Uyghur *saṅgist(e)re*,<sup>287</sup> *saṅastere*,<sup>288</sup> *saṅast(e)re*<sup>289</sup> or *saṅgastere*.<sup>290</sup> Closer to the Sanskrit form is *saṅast(a)vre* attested in the Old Uyghur translation of the *Biography of Xuanzang*.<sup>291</sup> As this foreign title is not translated in these texts, readers were clearly familiar with it. Below the abbot ranked the *iš ayguči*, a Uyghur title corresponding to Skt. *karmadāna*, and referring to a person who assigns labour in the monasteries.<sup>292</sup> Interestingly, this title was used in the administration of Manichaean monasteries as well.<sup>293</sup> Other titles such as *nomči bilgä* are related to Buddhism but it is uncertain whether it is a clerical title or whether lay people held the post.<sup>294</sup>

Two monastic titles, “[...] of the discipline, the venerable one possessing moral behaviour, the teacher<sub>2</sub>”<sup>295</sup> and “venerable and excellent teacher<sub>2</sub>”<sup>296</sup> contain the Tocharian element *käṣṣi* ‘teacher’, which appears in colophons of Old Uyghur Buddhist texts translated from Tocharian. The title is only rarely mentioned in later texts,<sup>297</sup> when the influence of Tocharian Buddhism on Uyghur Buddhism had long come to an end. The element *šilavanti* in the first title derives from Skt. *śīlavat*, possessing moral behaviour,<sup>298</sup> but the word final shows that the term was borrowed via Tocharian.<sup>299</sup> The element *ačari* in the second title ultimately derives from Skt. *ācārya*. The title also appears as a loan from Chinese in the form *šāli* (< Chin. (a)*sheli* (阿)舍梨 < Skt. *ācārya*).<sup>300</sup>

287 Manuscript Berlin Turfan Collection Mainz 95 + U 1800 + U 1697 /v/20/.

288 Manuscript Berlin Turfan Collection U 1961 /A/3/.

289 Manuscript Berlin Turfan Collection U 1096 /v/8/.

290 Manuscript Berlin Turfan Collection U 1961 /B/2/.

291 Ed. Röhrborn, *Xuanzang-Biographie VII*, line 1845.

292 See Röhrborn, *Uigurisches Wörterbuch*, 299 s.v. *ayguči* with further references. Cf. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 179: “This is a person of rather lower rank who simply arranges work in the daily life or in a ceremony . . .”.

293 See Moriyasu, *Geschichte des uigurischen Manichäismus*, 71–72.

294 Moriyasu, “Chronology,” 201–203 with further attestations of the title.

295 (OU *šazin ///L// t(ä)ṅri šilavanti keši ačari*). Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 187 (line 17).

296 (OU *t(ä)ṅri k(a)lan(a)badre k(e)ši ačari*). Ed. Moriyasu, “Stake Inscriptions,” 187 (line 18).

297 One example from Yuan times is Zieme, *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen*, text no. 50.15: *ačari k(e)ši karunadaz sidu*.

298 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 56.

299 Cf. Tocharian B *šilavānde*. In Adams, *Dictionary*, 691, where the word is quoted as an adjective and as a personal name, another Sanskrit etymology is proposed: “*šīla-* + *vanda-*” (“extolling moral behavior”).

300 Hamilton, James Russell, “Les titres *Šāli* et *Tutung* en ouïgour,” *Journal Asiatique* 272 (1984): 425–437.

Further titles derive from Chinese ones such as *vapšü* (< Chin. *fashi* 法師 ‘dharma master’ = Skt. *dharmabhāṇaka* ‘the one who proclaims the dharma’),<sup>301</sup> *samtso* (< Chin. 三藏 *sanzang* ‘(master of) the *tripiṭaka*’)<sup>302</sup> or *bahšü* (< Chin. *boshi* 博士 ‘teacher’), the latter title being copied into Mongolian.<sup>303</sup> We even find a Sogdian title *moč(a)k* (< Sogd. *mwck*), slightly damaged in the manuscript.<sup>304</sup>

### 3 Conclusion

The summary of Uyghur Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom and its adjacent regions given in this article could not touch upon other important issues such as the role of lay Buddhists in general and the importance of donors in particular. Doctrinal peculiarities were only briefly mentioned. A future history of Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom would have to include an attempt to evaluate the relationship between Buddhist centres in the Turfan region and their respective differences on a local level. What, for instance, was the relationship between the winter capital in Kara Kočo and the monastic dwellings in rather remote places such as Toyok, Sängim or Bäzäklik? Are there certain characteristics of Buddhism at the different sites such as a predilection for Pure Land Buddhism or for certain genres of texts? Was the influence of lay Buddhism more pronounced at one place than at another?

301 Zieme, *Religion und Gesellschaft*, 44.

302 Mirsultan, Aysima, *Die alttürkische Xuanzang-Biographie x, nach der Handschrift von Paris, Peking und St. Petersburg sowie nach dem Transkript von Annemarie v. Gabain ediert, übersetzt und kommentiert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 315.

303 On the semantics of this title in later texts see the excellent treatment in Doerfer, Gerhard, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit*. Vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1965), 271–277 (No. 724).

304 Zieme, Peter, “Zwei neue alttürkische *Saddharmapuṇḍarika*-Fragmente,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 16.2 (1989): 377–378 [reprint: *Fragmenta Buddhica Uigurica: Ausgewählte Schriften von Peter Zieme*, ed. Simone-Christiane Raschmann and Jens Wilkens (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2009), 74–75]. Further titles are dealt with in Zieme, Peter, “Sur quelques titres et noms des bouddhistes turcs,” in *L’Asie Centrale et ses voisins. Influences réciproques*, ed. Rémy Dor (Paris: Inalco, 1990), 131–139 [reprint: *Fragmenta Buddhica Uigurica: Ausgewählte Schriften von Peter Zieme*, ed. Simone-Christiane Raschmann and Jens Wilkens (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2009), 574–582].

# Esoteric Buddhism at the Crossroads: Religious Dynamics at Dunhuang, 9th–10th Centuries

Henrik H. Sørensen

## Introduction

More than two decades ago I published an article on the development of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang and its iconography as reflected in the wall paintings at the Mogao Caves (莫高窟) and the bannerpaintings recovered from Cave no. 17.<sup>1</sup> Being dissatisfied with current studies, especially the then recently published two-article installment by the Chinese expert Su Bai (宿白) in the Chinese journal *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics],<sup>2</sup> which across the board ignores the textual and contextual background(s) of Esoteric Buddhist art, not only in China but also at Dunhuang, provoked me to rework the then available material in order to produce a more up-to-date study giving more attention to the written sources. At that time Esoteric Buddhism as a distinct form of Chinese Buddhism at Dunhuang had been largely overlooked by the members of the scholarly community.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, only superficial attention had then been accorded its place in the local art.<sup>4</sup> Nowadays this situation has

1 Sørensen, Henrik H., “Typology and Iconography in the Esoteric Buddhist Art of Dunhuang,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 2 (1991–92): 285–349.

2 The two articles were later compiled as one and published in Bai Su 宿白, *Zhongguo shiku si yanjiu* 中國石窟寺研究 [Studies in Chinese Cave Temples] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), 279–310.

3 One exception being the groundbreaking essay by Eastman, Kenneth, “Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-huang,” *Bukkyō bunkan kenkyūkiyō* 佛教文化研究所紀要 [Bulletin of Buddhist Textual Studies] 22 (1983): 42–60; and that by Kimiaki, Tanaka, “A Comparative Study of Esoteric Buddhist Manuscripts and Icons Discovered at Dun-huang,” in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies Narita 1989*, vol. 1, ed. Ihara Shōren and Yamaguchi Zuihō (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), 275–279. In both cases, unfortunately, the implications of their work have been largely overlooked in broader, scholarly circles.

4 An attempt to redress this problem can be seen in the exhibition catalogue, Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, ed., *The Silk Road and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist art on the Trans-Himalayan trade routes* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1982).

changed dramatically, and many studies have appeared in recent years partly redressing this oversight.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, we are still largely in the dark as to how the local developments came about and to what extent they relate to the developments in the Central provinces, since many of the features they characterising Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang differ on a number of significant points from that which developed in the heartlands of China during the late medieval period.

By way of a number of representative examples, this presentation will investigate how Esoteric Buddhism was shaped and transformed at Dunhuang from the second half of the Tang and up to the advent of the Tanguts in the region during the first half of the 11th century. Given the abundant primary sources, it is not possible to go into too great detail with regard to the relevant scriptural sources, in particular the numerous ritual texts, and their relationship with salient iconographic motifs and the relevant religious art. Hence, in what follows I shall primarily seek to identify the various strands which made up Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang and the manner in which they became intertwined and transformed through sustained intercultural contacts and exchanges which lasted more than three centuries. Since it is obvious that paintings and images form part and parcel of Esoteric Buddhist practice, in particular ritual practices, I will treat religious art and texts together rather than dividing my discussion into textual and art historical segments. I hope that the reader will bear with me for this digression.

## 1 Conceptual and Contextual Issues

Before setting out to define what Esoteric Buddhism in the context of Dunhuang entailed, we first need to be precise about the usage of certain terms and designators in this regard. Let us therefore begin our investigation by looking more

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Unfortunately, poor texts and a general confusion as to what entails Esoteric Buddhism/Vajrayāna, etc., greatly invalidated this otherwise noble project.

- 5 Su Bai's work has now been superseded by several recent studies including those of Wang, Michelle, "From Dhāraṇī to Maṇḍala: A Study of Mogao Cave 14 and Esoteric Buddhist Art of the Tang Dynasty (618–907)" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 2008); and Kimiaki, Tanaka, *Tonkō mikkyō to bijutsu 敦煌密教と美術 [Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang and Art]* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2000). See also Peng Jinzhang 彭金章, *Shenmi de mijiao 神秘的密教 [Divine Secrets of Esoteric Buddhism]*, *Jiedu Dunhuang 解读敦煌 [Interpreting Dunhuang]*, ed. Dunhuang yanjiu yuan 敦煌研究院 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010). Although not a scholarly work per se, this book is nevertheless useful for providing images and data of many of the wall paintings relating to Esoteric Buddhism at the Mogao Caves.

closely at what would be the more useful way of describing what we shall be dealing with here.

As for the use of terminology, we need to be relatively precise when defining the religious phenomena behind ‘Esoteric Buddhism,’ otherwise we run the risk of obfuscating the issue under discussion. As we progress, the importance of terminological precision will become increasingly obvious.

The designators ‘Esoteric Buddhism,’ ‘Vajrayāna,’ ‘Tantra’ and ‘Guhyavāda’ should be used neither indiscriminately nor interchangeably. The reason for this is, that while they can be used to describe phenomena which are closely related, religiously as well as historically, each designator in fact covers different aspects of the same religious formation. ‘Esoteric Buddhism’ as used here is a modern construct loosely based on the Chinese concept of *mijiao* (密教, lit. ‘secret teaching’). As such it signifies a distinct form of Mahāyāna Buddhism, a religious and doctrinal tradition as it were, on a par with *mādhyamika*, *yogācāra*, *tathāgatagarbha*, etc. However, in contrast to these philosophical systems of thought, the primary concern of Esoteric Buddhism is the practical effectuation and actualisation of divine power brought into play through various forms of ritual manipulation, primarily through the use of spells/mantras, hand gestures (Skt. *mudrās*), altars/*maṇḍalas*, fire ritual (Skt. *homa*), special offerings, special taboos, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Historically it makes sense to speak of the early phase of Esoteric Buddhism as ‘proto-Esoteric Buddhism’ as a way of designating the secondary presence of various types of ritual magic, especially the use of spells/*dhāraṇīs* in Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Furthermore, this term is useful for describing those forms of early Esoteric Buddhism that developed in China as expressed in various apocryphal scriptures from the period Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–581, 南北朝). One might also apply the term ‘Dhāraṇī Buddhism’ for this phase of Esoteric Buddhism, referring to the class of scriptures referred to as ‘*dhāraṇī-sūtras*.’ This is a distinct type of Mahāyāna scriptures in which spells play a primary role, and as such it differs from that in which the *sūtras* only feature

6 From the perspective of the Chinese sources, see Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, ed. Bernard Faure (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). For specific practices, see Charles D. Orzech and Henrik H. Sørensen, “Mudrā, Mantra and Maṇḍala,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 76–89; Richard K. Payne and Charles D. Orzech, “Homa,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 133–140. See also Henrik H. Sørensen, “Spells and Magical Practices as Reflected in the Early Chinese Buddhist Sources (c. 300–600 CE) and their Implications for the Rise and Development of Esoteric Buddhism.” In *Chinese and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism*, ed. Meir Shahar and Yael Bentor (forthcoming, 2016).

spells for added-on efficacy. We may refer to this later developed class of scriptures as representing early Esoteric Buddhism. These scriptures place exclusive emphasis on ritual practices and the workings of magic, in other words their primary discourses center on ritual magic.

Developed Esoteric Buddhism is based on scriptures, which feature elaborate ritual programs and techniques. It is also in this material that comprehensive ritual programmes occur in which mantras, *mudrās*, *maṇḍalas* and *homa* are used together. This formation of Esoteric Buddhism starts to be evident in China during the Sui and early Tang Dynasties (late 6th/early 7th centuries). The scriptures representative of this phase show consistent Indian Buddhist influence, even in those scriptures which were composed or compiled in China.

Mature Esoteric Buddhism in China is synonymous with the middle and late Tang, i.e. the 8th–9th centuries. Like ‘developed Esoteric Buddhism,’ the related scriptural material is heavily influenced by Indian Buddhist norms, although salient features from Daoism and Chinese culture are also evident. Normally this formation is associated with the activities and translations of the three Ācāryas from India, Śubhākarasimha (善無畏, 673–735), Vajrabodhi (金剛智, 671–741) and Amoghavajra (不空, 705–774). It was this form of Esoteric Buddhism which in Heian Japan (平安 (794–1185)) became known as the Shingon School (Jap. 真言宗).

Tantric Buddhism is a tradition which developed in India during the late Gupta period, c. 6th century. It represents a highly developed form of Esoteric Buddhism (early forms of which are discernible in mature Esoteric Buddhism).<sup>7</sup> As far as China goes, one may argue, and with good reason, that some Tantric Buddhist aspects are already present in the Mature Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang, however only in incipient form. Full-blown Tantric Buddhism only arrived in the Chinese heartlands during the early Northern Song (960–1127, 北宋) and Liao (907–1125, 遼) Dynasties and was later re-introduced by the Mongols under the Yuan (1206–1368, 元). However, in Dunhuang as well as in the nearby oasis of Anxi (安西), Tantric Buddhism was introduced to the Chinese Buddhist communities during the Tibetan rule over Eastern Central Asia of the late 8th and first half of the 9th centuries.

The Esoteric Buddhist material from Dunhuang consists of manuscripts, wall paintings, votive paintings, designs, etc., most of which reflect trends prevalent in the Central provinces during the Tang Dynasty, of course with the

7 For an attempt at addressing the various problems surrounding the use of ‘Esoteric Buddhism’ and its limitations, see Sørensen, Henrik H., “On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 155–175.



exception of the influence afforded by the Tibetan dominion. Although the related manuscripts are in some cases multilingual, Esoteric Buddhist scriptures are mainly dominated by Chinese and Tibetan texts.

The Chinese textual material reflects by and large the historical development of Esoteric Buddhism in China, excluding the full-blown Tantric texts, as mentioned above. The Tibetan material consists mainly of Tantric texts, but has also standard canonical scriptures relating to earlier formations of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>8</sup> Some cases of religious and cultural crossover took place among the Buddhist communities at Dunhuang.

Generally speaking, examples of Esoteric Buddhist art are not discernible at Dunhuang and among the votive paintings, sketches, etc., until the early 8th century with the 9th century being the most prolific period. The early forms of Esoteric Buddhism on the Chinese side are mainly represented in the manuscripts, but rarely in iconographical examples.

Before going to a discussion of the special characteristics of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang during the period under investigation, let us briefly back trace what we know about the early developments. Beginning in the 7th century, Esoteric Buddhism was primarily represented at Shazhou (沙州) through texts, with very few examples of related iconography available.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang deviated somewhat from that current in the Central provinces of China, where the tradition had become increasingly important in the course of the 6th century. In contrast to this, we do not begin to see strong Esoteric Buddhist features in the manuscripts or in the local religious art until well into the 8th century. In fact, it would appear that the appearance of wall paintings depicting Ekādaśamukha, the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, or illustrations of scenes from the *Uṣṇīṣavijāyadhāraṇīsūtra*,<sup>10</sup> are among the earliest, *bona fide* indicators of Esoteric Buddhist presence at Dunhuang.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, but perhaps not so surprisingly given the wide spread popularity of this scripture and its powerful spell, it has occasioned a number of wall paintings in the form of scriptural tableaux (Chin. *jingbian* 經變), similar to those we know from non-Esoteric Buddhist *sūtras* such as

8 The reader is referred to the chapter by Sam van Schaik elsewhere in this volume.

9 For a general discussion of early Esoteric Buddhist art in China, including that of Dunhuang, see Sørensen, Henrik H., "Esoteric Buddhist Art up to the Tang," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 255–62.

10 T. 967.19. There are different translations of this important scripture, but the one ascribed to Buddhāpalita is the most important among the manuscripts from Dunhuang.

11 See Peng, *Shenmi de mijiao*, 18, 31, 60, 116.

the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikā*<sup>12</sup> in which the highlights of the *sūtra*'s narrative is presented in great detail.<sup>13</sup> The importance of the *Uṣṇīṣavijāyadhāraṇīsūtra* as an illustration of ritual procedures is matched by the relatively large amount of manuscript copies found at Dunhuang.<sup>14</sup>

## 2 Esoteric Buddhist Cults and Iconography during the Second Half of the Tang

When surveying the Chinese Esoteric Buddhist material from Dunhuang broadly, including scriptural sources as well as the religious art, cults relating to the various forms of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara tend to dominate. As such the overwhelming focus on the various Esoteric Buddhist forms of Avalokiteśvara and their related practices conform very well with both the extant scriptural sources as well with the religious art known from the Central provinces of the empire. When looking at the Tibetan manuscripts reflecting Tantric Buddhism, the cults are more variegated and polyvalent, reflecting a great variety of *sādhana*-type texts, that is, ritual manuals, as well as canonical and non-canonical scriptures.<sup>15</sup> For some reason, however, this diversity is not reflected in the surviving examples of Buddhist art from the period of the Tibetan rule over Shazhou, which—although a few cases of Indo-Tibetan

12 T. 262.9. For a study of the tableaux relating to this important *sūtra*, see Wang, Eugene Y., *Shaping the Lotus Sūtra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).

13 A detailed and perceptive study of the depictions of the *Uṣṇīṣavijāyadhāraṇīsūtra* at Dunhuang can be found in Schmid, Niel, “Whosoever Writes this dhāraṇī . . .’ The Ritual Use of Dhāraṇī Lecterns in Medieval East Asia,” *Pacific World Journal* (forthcoming).

14 For an overview, see Hou Chong 侯冲, “Mijiao Zhongguo hua de jingdian fenkai: Yi Dunhuang ben *Jingangding yingqing yi*, *Jingangding xiuweng yujia yi* he *Tanfa yize wei chuchu dian* 密教中國化的經典分析：以敦煌本《金剛頂迎請儀》，《金剛頂修習瑜伽儀》和《壇法儀則》為切入點 [A Discussion of Esoteric Buddhism with Chinese Characteristics based on Esoteric Buddhist Manuscripts found at Dunhuang such as the *Jingangding yingqing yi*, *Jingangding xiuweng yujia yi* and *Tanfa yize*],” *Yuanguang foxue xuebao* 圓光佛學學報 [Research Journal of Yuanguang Buddhist Studies] 19 (2012): 141–172. See also Schmid, Niel, “Dunhuang and Central Asia (with an Appendix on Dunhuang Manuscript Resources),” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 365–78.

15 See van Schaik, Sam, and Dalton Jacob, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

iconography can indeed be found—is nevertheless dominated by representations done in Chinese style, whether created under Chinese rule or not.<sup>16</sup>

One feature, which would appear special for Buddhism at Dunhuang during the second half of the Tang and up to the advent of the Tanguts in the first half of the 11th century, is the apparent integration of various cults which had not been connected previously. Due to the fact that surviving examples of Buddhist banner paintings and designs are both unique and abundant, whereas they have not survived elsewhere, we can of course not be entirely certain that this material is special to the Shazhou region. However, a qualified guess would be that it probably is. Not because comparable material has not been found elsewhere, but because of the highly characteristic nature of the votive art of Dunhuang in which artistic expression, iconography, styles and imagery reflect the input of several diverse cultures and Buddhist traditions. Below we shall look at a few examples with which to underscore this aspect of Buddhism at Dunhuang.

Like elsewhere in Tang China, the cult of Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of Medicine, was important among the Buddhist communities at Dunhuang as can be testified to in numerous manuscripts featuring canonical scriptures as well as in the votive paintings associated with this cult. The example to interest us here is a representation of the paradise or pure land (Chin. *jingtu* 淨土) of this Buddha. Generally such paradise representations, variously categorised as scriptural tableaux (Chin. *jingxiang* 經相) or transforming tableaux (Chin. *bianxiang* 變相), depending on their function and/or angle of interpretation, invariably depicts a Central Buddha surrounded by bodhisattvas, *devas* and other figures against a backdrop consisting of city-like scene with towers, halls, walls, moats and ponds rendered in typical, medieval Chinese architecture. As such there are very few distinctive differences between, say, the Pure Land of Amitābha, Maitreya or Bhaiṣajyaguru. Often the identifying markers consist of minor iconographical features or sub-scenes such as the inclusion of special images or additional illustrative panels directly linking the painting with the contents of a special scripture.

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16 During the 10th century Uyghur influence on Esoteric Buddhist iconography is being felt, both as regards wall paintings as well as the votive, scroll paintings. For a detailed study of this development, see Russell-Smith, Lilla, *Uyghur Patronage in Dunhuang: Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005).

In the painting under discussion here,<sup>17</sup> we see such a paradise scene including all the structures and images, with Bhaiṣajyaguru flanked by the bodhisattvas Sūryaprabha and Chandraprabha on either side surrounded by a large host of secondary bodhisattvas and *devas*. The panel flanking the tableaux features individual scenes from the *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra*<sup>18</sup> (T. 450.14, etc., fig. 7.1).<sup>19</sup> It goes without saying that we are essentially dealing with a typical, if not mainstream, representation of this iconographical theme. What sets this painting apart from similar renderings of Bhaiṣajyaguru's paradise is the pair of secondary images at the top of the painting. On the right side (from the viewer) there is an image of the Thousand-armed Mañjuśrī (fig. 7.2), and on the other side, the image of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (fig. 7.3).

The primary scripture of the Thousand-armed form of Mañjuśrī is the lengthy *Royal Scripture of the Great Teaching on the Yogā of the Great Vehicle Vajra Nature Ocean of Mañjuśrī with Thousand Arms and Thousand Bowls* (Chin. *Dasheng yuqie jingang xinghai Manshuzhili qian bei qianbo dajiao wangjing* 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經),<sup>20</sup> the translation of which has been attributed to Amoghavajra, while that of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, is the *Nilakanṭhakasūtra* already encountered above. Both forms of these bodhisattvas represent important Esoteric Buddhist divinities, each with their own cults, as documented in the Dunhuang material and elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> Now, the integration of the cults of these two bodhisattvas with that of the Medicine Buddha represents a new development to be widely seen in the latter half of the Tang, namely the increasing 'esoterification' of mainstream Buddhism—or, said differently, the growing 'infiltration' of Esoteric Buddhist practices and beliefs into Chinese Buddhism across sectarian and cultic divi-

17 British Museum, nos. 1919, 0101, 0.361919, 0101, 0.36.

18 T. 450.14, etc.

19 For a published example of this painting with details, see Ma Wei 马炜, and Meng Zhong 蒙中, ed., *Xicheng huihua* 西城绘画 [Paintings from the Western Regions], vol. 7 (*jingbian* 經變 [Scriptural Tableaux]) (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2010), 10–15. The *Xicheng huihua* series reproduces most of the images found in Whitfield, Roderick, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982–85).

20 Cf. T. 1177A.20.

21 For examples of both bodhisattvas in the wall paintings at the Mogao Caves, see Peng, *Shenmi mijiao*, 35, 63, 73, 95, 128–129.



FIGURE 7.1 *Votive painting depicting the paradise of Bhaiṣajyaguru, 9th century. BM no. 1919. Courtesy British Museum.*



FIGURE 7.2 Detail of fig. 7.1, BM no. 1919. Thousand-armed Mañjuśrī.



FIGURE 7.3 Detail of fig. 7.1, BM no. 1919. Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara.

sions of that time.<sup>22</sup> A development, which played out in distinctive ways in the Buddhist communities at Dunhuang as seen in the example given here.<sup>23</sup>

The other example of a votive painting displaying the integration of different cults of Buddhism can be found in the collection of Musée Guimet. The painting in question features the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara seated above Kṣitigarbha in a double composition, which divides the painting in two equally large halves.<sup>24</sup> This painting does not so much reveal the infestation of Esoteric Buddhism in the mainstream tradition as showing the proper merger of two originally distinct cults.<sup>25</sup> There are actually antecedents in earlier Chinese Buddhist art for depictions of Kṣitigarbha and Avalokiteśvara appearing together, but not with the latter in his Thousand-armed form, i.e. no cases where an Esoteric Buddhist form of Avalokiteśvara occurs. In the case of the painting from Musée Guimet, which contains a 10th century donor inscription at the bottom, revealing that the adoration and supplication of both bodhisattvas were intended, we may therefore understand paintings with such dual, cultic function as a reflection of a common trend in which Esoteric Buddhist cults, especially those devoted to the various forms of Avalokiteśvara, had begun to gain increasing importance among the Buddhist practitioners in Dunhuang.

As for the impact of Tibetan Buddhist cults on the Buddhist community at Dunhuang, let us take a look at one illustrative case in what follows. Many

22 See Sørensen, Henrik H., "The Presence of Esoteric Buddhist Elements in Chinese Buddhism during the Tang," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 294–303. For another example of Esoteric Buddhist infiltration into the cult of Bhaiṣajyaguru, see Whitfield, Roderick, and Farrer Anne, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese Art from the Silk Route* (London: British Museum Publications, 1990), 85, 88–89. In that case Sūryaprabha and Candraprabha, the canonically established attendants of the Medicine Buddha, have been transplanted by Cintāmaṇicakra and Vajragarbha, two major bodhisattvas in the Esoteric Buddhist tradition—not iconographically, incidentally, but by name only.

23 To my knowledge no example of a corresponding ritual text has so far been found among the Dunhuang manuscripts, although there are several which features the entire Buddhist pantheon or parts of it, blending mainstream divinities with distinctly Esoteric Buddhist ones.

24 Cf. Vandier-Nicolas, Nicole and Hambis Louis, *Bannières et peintures de Touen-Houang: conservées au Musée Guimet*, planches, Mission Paul Pelliot 15 (Paris: Musée Guimet, 1976), 80, pl. 118.

25 For a comprehensive study of the cult of Kṣitigarbha, see Zhiru, Ng, *The Making of a Saviour Bodhisattva Dizang in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). See also Yin Fu 尹富, *Zhongguo Dizang xinyang yanjiu 中國地藏信仰研究 [A Study of Kṣitigarbha Faith in China]* (Chengdu: Sichuan chuban jituan Bashu shushe, 2009).



years ago the American scholar Kenneth Eastman presented a summary of the research he had done on the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang with special focus on Tantric Buddhism. Part of this concerned his identification of two manuscripts, IOL Tib J 419 and P. tib. 42,<sup>26</sup> which he proved belonged to one and the same text.<sup>27</sup> Among the practices of this long but incomplete text, consisting of a lengthy Tantric Buddhist ritual, appears the group of Ten Wrathful Protectors (Skt. *mahākrodha/vidyārājas*).<sup>28</sup> While this group would have been current in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism during the time of the Tibetan Empire, it was as yet unknown in Tang China, where we can only identify groups of five or eight of these wrathful protectors in the context of mainstream Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>29</sup> Eastman's discovery therefore indicates that the cult of the Ten Wrathful Protectors was current among practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang well before it was introduced to China proper. It also throws light on the process (or processes) by which the original group of Five Vidyārājas, one for each of the Five Dhyani Buddhas of the Mahāvairocana-cycle, was gradually expanded to a group of ten due to religious developments beyond China's borders.<sup>30</sup> Although this may appear to be a minor detail, it nevertheless underscores the importance of intercultural exchanges between the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist communities on the local level, and how these

26 For a correlation of these manuscripts and a description of their contents, see Dalton, Jacob and Sam van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Stein Collection at the British Library* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), cat. no. 134.

27 Eastman, Kenneth, "Tibetan Tantric Texts at Dunhuang" (paper presented at the conference "The Esoteric Buddhist Tradition Conference," Samsø College Denmark, August 21–24, 1989) (unpublished paper).

28 These appear in IOL Tib J 419, lines 11b3–10b2 according to Eastman's numbering.

29 For a brief discussion of the Ten Vidyārājas in later Chinese Buddhism, see Sørensen, Henrik H., "The Life of the Lay-Buddhist Saint Liu Benzun as Sculptural Tableaux," in *Embodying Wisdom: Art, Text and Interpretation in the History of Esoteric Buddhism*, ed. Rob Linrothe and Henrik H. Sørensen (Copenhagen: SBS Publications, 2001), 57–100 (esp. 68–69).

30 By the time of the Northern Song the group of the Ten Vidyārājas would appear to have become standard in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism, something which can be testified to among the carved images at Mt. Baoding (寶頂山) in Dazu (大足) in Sichuan from the Southern Song and in the votive paintings accompanying the Ritual for Water and Land (Chin. *shuilu zhai* 水陸齋) of the Ming Dynasty. Cf. *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫 [Eng. subtitle: Ming Dynasty Shui Lu Paintings at Bao Ning Si—Painting of Buddhist or Taoist Rituals], comp. Shanxisheng Bowuguan] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1988), pls. 20–31. Obviously the iconography seen in these later paintings only match partly with the earlier examples.

in the course of the 9th and 10th centuries spread eastward to the Central provinces of China.

Despite the presence of Tantric Buddhism during the sixty or so years the Tibetan rule over Shazhou lasted, there are surprisingly few explicitly Tantric Buddhist images to be found in the extant Dunhuang material. The reason for this is not clear, but it could be taken as an indication that there were no, or at least very few, Tibetan Buddhist artists available in the area.<sup>31</sup>

### 3 Esoteric Buddhist Scriptures Reflecting Interculturality and Interreligiosity

Interculturalism, not only of the Tibeto-Chinese variety, but also of the Indo-Chinese kind, is also evident among the Dunhuang manuscripts pertaining to Esoteric Buddhism. Moreover, we also have examples of interreligiosity, in so far as a number of Chinese Esoteric Buddhist texts reflect strong influences from Daoism.<sup>32</sup> While some of these developments document currents going from the West to the East, we certainly also find examples of influences going in the other direction.

Some speculation has been presented concerning the extent to which Tibetan rulers of Shazhou tried to steer or control religious practices among the population there.<sup>33</sup> Beyond the usual concern for regulation of the

31 For a survey of Esoteric Buddhist art and iconography at Dunhuang during the Tang, see Wang, Michelle, "From Dhāraṇī to Maṇḍala: A Study of Mogao Cave 14 and Esoteric Buddhist Art of the Tang Dynasty (618–907)" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 2008). It is worth noting, in this connection, that full-blown Tantric Buddhist imagery is also largely absent from the Indian tradition during the same period (in effect not being documented until well after the beginning of the first millennium). The exact reason for this is not known, and has so far not been properly investigated. However, there may be two answers to this: (1) either they did not exist at this time, or (2) they have not been found. Personally I tend towards the first answer, but further research into this interesting and so-far, enigmatic question, will have to be done, before a serious solution to this question can be had.

32 This material is relatively extensive covering proper scriptures, ritual texts, panegyrics, invocations, prayers: cf. P. 3810, P. 3270, P. 3874, P. 3835, S. 2498, etc.

33 See Hao Chunwen 郝春文, *Tang houqi Wudai Song chu Dunhuang sheng ni de shehui shenghuo* 唐后期五代宋初敦煌僧尼的社会生活 [*The Living Conditions of Monks and Nuns Societies at Dunhuang during the Late Tang, Five Dynasties and Early Song*] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), 6–73. For a useful compilation of Tibetan

monastic populations, which was a concern shared by both Chinese and Tibetan authorities in the late medieval period, I remain unconvinced that Buddhist orthodoxy in more than a very loose form was ever imposed by either. On the contrary, virtually all the sources I have worked with indicate that the opposite was actually the case. Moreover, as far as the period under Tibetan rule is concerned, it would appear that both the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist communities worked actively towards mutual accommodation. It is not the place here to dwell on this issue at length, but for good measure let me present a few examples reflecting the Esoteric Buddhist perspective which unmistakably point to this.

A great many ritual texts and ritual manuals reflecting both Chinese Esoteric Buddhism and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism can be found among the manuscripts, revealing that such practices enjoyed considerable popularity at Dunhuang. Since ritual practices and ritual concerns are almost synonymous with Esoteric Buddhism, broadly speaking, it is perhaps not so surprising that we find these texts and scriptures in such abundance. Given the central place of ritual in Esoteric Buddhism, a full study of the ritual texts and manuals found at Dunhuang would require a book-length manuscript. Obviously, here it must suffice to discuss a few examples from the vast repository. Let us therefore concentrate on two examples, which—each in its own way—allows us an insight into those special features characterising Esoteric Buddhist practice in Dunhuang during the latter half of the Tang. The first is a text in which Chinese and Tibetan cultural and religious aspects have been combined.

P. 3861 is a ritual manual consisting of several, individual works in the form of a folding booklet. While there are indications that this manuscript is not unique, it is the most comprehensive yet discovered among the Dunhuang material.<sup>34</sup> As a ritual manual it provides us with an interesting example of

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edicts and regulations from the period of occupation rendered in modern bi-lingual Tibetan and Chinese, see Wang Yao 王尧, and Chen Jian 陈践, comp. *Dunhuang Tubowen shulun wenji* 敦煌吐蕃文书论文集 [Collection of Texts of Clerical Writings in Ancient Tibetan from Dunhuang] (Chengdu: Sichuan minshu chubanshe, 1988). For a study of the monastic codices at Dunhuang during the Tang, see Zhanru 湛如, *Dunhuang fojiao luyi zhidu yanjiu* 敦煌佛教律儀制度研究 [A Study of Vinaya and Ritual Regulations in Dunhuang Buddhism] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003).

34 That the manual may not be unique is corroborated by another manuscript, *Beijing dan* 北京 淡 4, which features both *The Twenty-eight Vajra Precepts* (Chin. *Jingang ershiba jie* 金剛二十八戒) and the *Method for Dispensing Food* (Chin. *Sanshi fa* 散食法) as seen in P. 3861. This indicates that the format of this Esoteric Buddhist manual could have existed in a more or less fixed form and possibly in several copies.

the ritual merging of the Tibetan and Chinese Esoteric Buddhist traditions. Seemingly without any great obstacles, it features the following:

- An untitled opening invocation in Tibetan with open slots for the corresponding names of the deities in Chinese characters (fol. 1).
- Twenty-eight Vajra Precepts (Chin. *Jingang ershiba jie* 金剛二十八戒) (fol. 1–10).
- *Method for Dispensing Food* (Chin. *Sanshi fa* 散食法) (fol. 10–16). This text belongs to the ritual tradition of feeding the hungry ghosts (Chin. *shishi* 施食), and is structurally related to Amoghavajra's *Feeding all the Hungry Ghosts together with the Water Method* (Chin. *Shi zhu egui yinshi ji shuifa* 施諸餓鬼飲食及水法).<sup>35</sup>
- *Methods of the Rite for the Three Regulations* (Chin. *Sanke fayi* 三窠法儀) (fol. 16–34). This is a rather long text on how to practice the *dharma* in accordance with Esoteric Buddhist precepts. The *Vajracheedikā*<sup>36</sup> is referred to on fol. 31.
- Two consecutive *dhāraṇīs*, an unidentified invocation to a *vidyārāja* or *mingwang* (明王), a wrathful protector: Great Destructive Dhāraṇī Held by the Vajra Great Cleaner<sup>37</sup> [of Filth] (Chin. *Jingang dahuchi dasui tuoluoni zhenyan* 金剛大摠<sup>38</sup>持大碎陀羅尼),<sup>39</sup> having some similarities with the type of mantras used for the invocation of Vajrayakṣa, Vajrakumara, etc.<sup>40</sup> (fol. 34–38), and the Great Compassion Dhāraṇī of the *Nilakanṭhakasūtra*, the leading scripture on the worship of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, in two parts (fol. 38–48).<sup>41</sup>

35 T. 1315.21.

36 T. 235.8.

37 This could refer to Ucchuṣma, whose epithet is 'Remover of Impurities.' The cult of this wrathful protector was popular in Dunhuang during the second half of the Tang, and his primary scripture, the *Mahābala-vajrakrodha sūtra*, T. 1227.21, was translated into Tibetan at this time. See Bischoff, F. A., *Ārya Mahābala-nāma-mahāyānasūtra*, *Buddhica X* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1956).

38 I have exchanged *hu* (惚) for *hu* (摠).

39 No spell with this name can be found in either the *Taishō* nor the *Zokuzōkyō*.

40 Cf. eg. T. 895B.18, p. 744a.

41 The Text is roughly identical with the *Nilakanthaka dhāraṇī* as found in T. 1060.20, but with numerous variations. It is possible that the Chinese transcription has been based on a Tibetan translation.

- The Mantras and Mudrās of the Great Compassion *Sūtra* (Chin. *Da bei jing zhenyan yin* 大悲經真言印) in 1 ch. (fol. 48–55).<sup>42</sup> This section features the mantras and *mudrās* according to the *Nilakanṭhakasūtra*.
- A long untitled invocation of most of the divinities in the Buddhist pantheon in Tibetan with the names of the invoked deities also given in Chinese (fol. 55–66).

Here it must be noted that both the *Twenty-eight Vajra Precepts* and the *Methods of the Rite for the Three Regulations* appear to have been based on Tibetan rather than Chinese texts. Of these texts, the *Twenty-eight Vajra Precepts* immediately takes our attention for a number of reasons. First of all it is a Tibetan work translated into Chinese, hence it should be dated to some time between 786 and 848; secondly it is very rare; thirdly it provides us with an insight into a special and separate type of Esoteric Buddhist or Tantric precepts conceptualised to be above and beyond those followed by mainstream monastics in Tang China.

The Buddhist precepts as defined here differ on a number of points from the ordinary precepts of the Buddhist Vinaya. Not only are the normal precepts not mentioned in the text—the *Vajra Precepts* are defined in direct correspondence with Esoteric Buddhist doctrine and belief. The severity associated with taking and keeping these precepts is stressed repeatedly throughout the text, and the resulting *karma* for violating them, such as disrespecting one's teacher or failing to perform the rites diligently, will result in immediate descent into the deepest hells. The elucidation accompanying each precept is followed by a warning: 'Do not abandon this precept' (Chin. *bushe zhi jie* 不捨之戒)! Moreover, the text warns that only qualified persons may receive the precepts. Without these, one is not allowed to receive initiation or ascend the altar. The text also points out that a person of shallow comprehension can not receive the necessary oral instructions (Chin. *chuanshuo* 傳說), given in addition to the written word, a defining aspect of transmission in Esoteric Buddhism. Those violating the injunctions against unqualified practice will invoke the anger of all the Buddhas and protecting spirits, and receive the most severe punishment in the hells. Interestingly, the text refers to this injunction stating 'this is the root precept' (Chin. *ci shi jie zhi genben* 此是戒之根本), indicating the hermetic nature of the instructions set forth in Esoteric Buddhism.

Interreligiosity, in particular that which persisted between Chinese Daoism and Esoteric Buddhism, is abundantly evident in the Dunhuang material. One

42 Like the preceding *dhāraṇī* this section has been lifted more or less verbatim from *T. 1060.20*.

example, in which talismanic seals for healing and protection can be found in abundance, is the scripture *Cintāmaṇīcakrarāja Manibhadra's Alternative Practice with Seals* (Chin. *Ruyilun wang monizhu batuo biexing fa yin* 如意輪王摩尼拔陀別行法印)—hereafter referred to as *The Alternative Practice*.<sup>43</sup> It belongs to the cult of Cintāmaṇīcakra-Avalokiteśvara and gives evidence of the sometimes close relationship that persisted between Esoteric Buddhism and Daoism during the Tang.<sup>44</sup>

Another example of the interactions between Esoteric Buddhism and Daoism can be seen in *Nāgarjuna Bodhisattva's Spells for the Mysterious Lady of the Nine Heavens* (Chin. *Longshu pusa jiutian Xuannu zhou* 龍樹菩薩九天玄女咒),<sup>45</sup> where Daoist alchemical practices have been incorporated into a Buddhist ritual for healing tetanus or blood poisoning. This case is particularly strange, as it is difficult to comprehend how the materials concocted during the rite were supposed to affect a cure. In any case while the text of the spell follows the norms for Daoist incantations and curses, the *mantra* parts are clearly a reflection of Esoteric Buddhist concerns.

#### 4 On the Five Buddhas-Template and Other *Maṇḍalas* from Dunhuang

As the use of *maṇḍalas* is fundamental to mature Esoteric Buddhism as well as to Tantric Buddhism, as represented by the Chinese and Tibetan traditions of the 8th to 9th centuries respectively, their presence at Dunhuang provides us with important information as to the rituals and ritual texts which were current there. Numerous *maṇḍalas*, in the form of votive paintings, wall paintings, designs and charts, have been found. Both their diversity as well as the obvious lacunas they show tells us something about Esoteric Buddhism in and

43 This text, and some of its variants, have been studied by Paul Copp, "Manuscript Culture as Ritual Culture in Late Medieval Dunhuang: Buddhist Talisman-Seals and their Manuals," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 20 (2011): 193–226.

44 For an example of an Esoteric Buddhist manual which integrates talismanic practices into its rituals, see S. 2498. I discuss a relevant passage from this manual in Sørensen, Henrik H., "The 'Transferred Secret': On Religious Exchanges between Daoism and Esoteric Buddhism in China," (forthcoming in Di Giacinto, Licia et al., ed. *Space of Secrecy—Secret in Contact: Perspectives from the East and the West*).

45 P. 3835V<sup>o</sup> (4). For a modern edition of this spell-text with annotation, see Gao Guofan 高國藩, *Dunhuang gusu yu minsu liubian: Zhongguo minsu tanwei* 敦煌古俗與民俗流變: 中國民俗探 [Ancient Customs in Dunhuang and the Transformation of Folk Customs: Investigating Chinese Folk Customs] (Nanjing: Hehai daxue chubanshe, 1990), 158–173.

around Shazhou. At this point it is important to distinguish between those depictions of *maṇḍalas* which were means for display during rites, similar to those we know from later Tibetan Buddhism, those sketches which were meant as designs for copying, i.e. for the transmission of the correct forms and iconography,<sup>46</sup> and those which served as instructions for the construction of altars with *maṇḍalas*, i.e. as templates for the ritual space.<sup>47</sup>

As far as iconography goes, the scheme of the Five Dhyanī Buddhas, so Central to mature Esoteric Buddhism, occurs in wall paintings as well as in votive paintings and designs at Dunhuang, indicating the presence of either or both the *Mahāvairocanasūtra*<sup>48</sup> and the transmissions of the cycle usually referred to as *Vajraśekhara*.<sup>49</sup> Given that only one fragment of the former of these scriptures has been found at Dunhuang, it would appear that the local renditions of the Five Buddhas template were chiefly based on the latter or its derivatives (cf. figs. 7.4 and 7.5).<sup>50</sup>

The absence of the full-blown tradition of the so-called *Dual Maṇḍalas* of the \**Garbhadhātu* and *Vajradhātu* at Dunhuang is noteworthy of our attention at this point.<sup>51</sup> Textually as well as iconographically, the tradition of the

46 For a good example of one such *maṇḍala*, see S. 4690.

47 For such a *maṇḍala*, see Peng, *Shenmi mijiao*, 23.

48 T. 848.18. See also Giebel, Rolf W., trans., *Vairocanābhisambodhi Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2005).

49 T. 865.18. See Giebel, Rolf W., trans., *Two Esoteric Sutras: The Admantine Pinnacle Sutra—The Susiddhikara Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001), 19–107. This scripture only consists of a fraction of the actual scripture, the various parts of which can be found as separate texts scattered throughout the Esoteric Buddhist Section of the *Taishō Canon*.

50 One *maṇḍala* representing the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* can be found on the Northern wall of cave no. 20 at Yulin (榆林), a cave site near Dunhuang. However, it dates from the Five Dynasties Period (907–960/979, 五代). Cf. Peng, *Shenmi de mijiao*, 29.

51 There has been an ongoing discussion of the issue of the *Dual Maṇḍalas* for quite some time. Out of this discussion have emerged two major positions, one that holds that the tradition including the rituals of which the two *maṇḍalas* are templates, and the related iconography, developed in China prior to Kūkai's arrival and study under Huiguo (惠果) in 804. The other position rejects the *Dual Maṇḍalas* as a reality in Tang China, and sees them as a purely Japanese invention. This argument has credence primarily because no comparable examples of the standard *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* we know from the Shingon tradition has ever been documented from the Tang period, neither textually nor as cultural artifacts. For a summing up of these positions, see Bogel, Cynthia J., *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2009), 71–78. Nevertheless, in my understanding there are indications that Huiguo, as well as other adepts of Esoteric Buddhism in the post-Amoghavajra era, did indeed

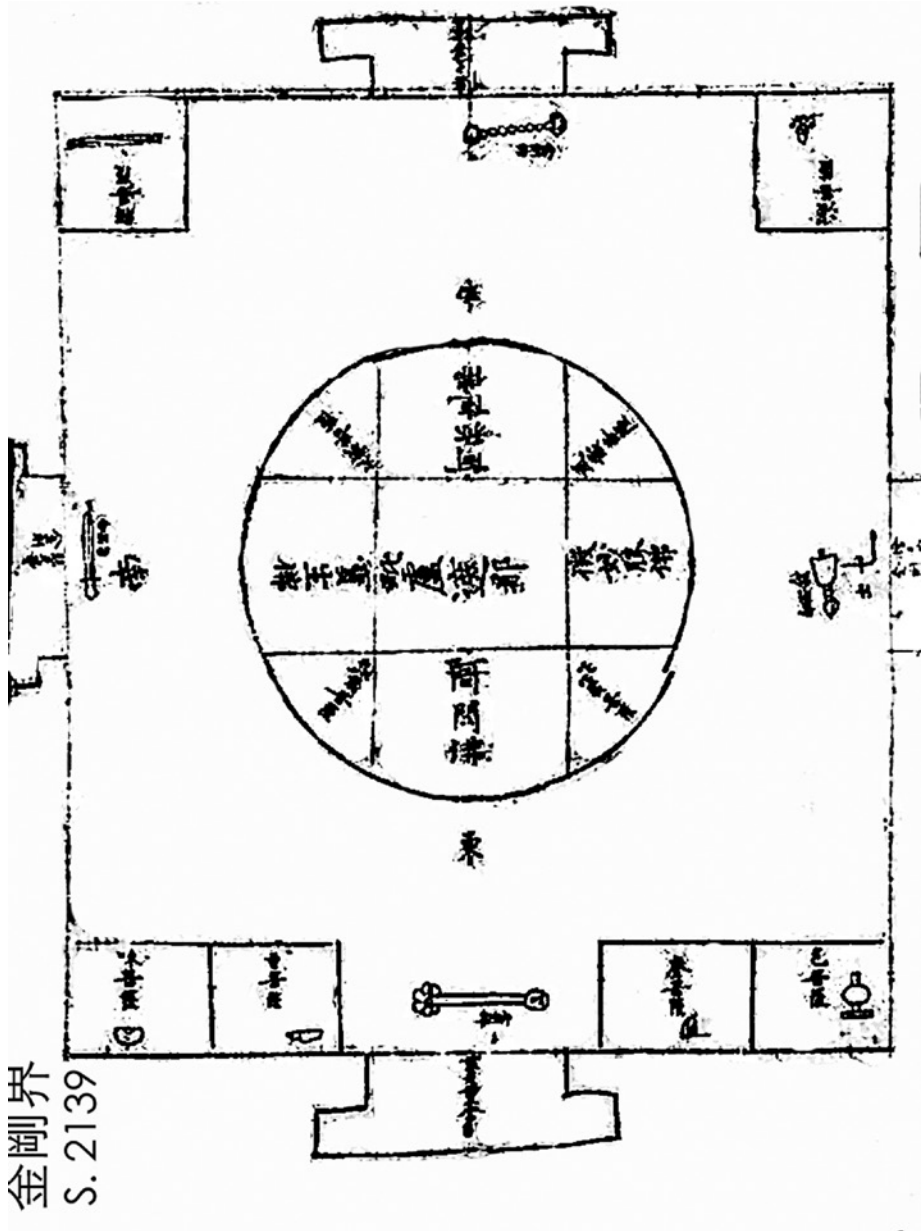


FIGURE 7.4 Vajradhātu maṇḍala. Probably 9th century. S. 2139. Courtesy, British Library.



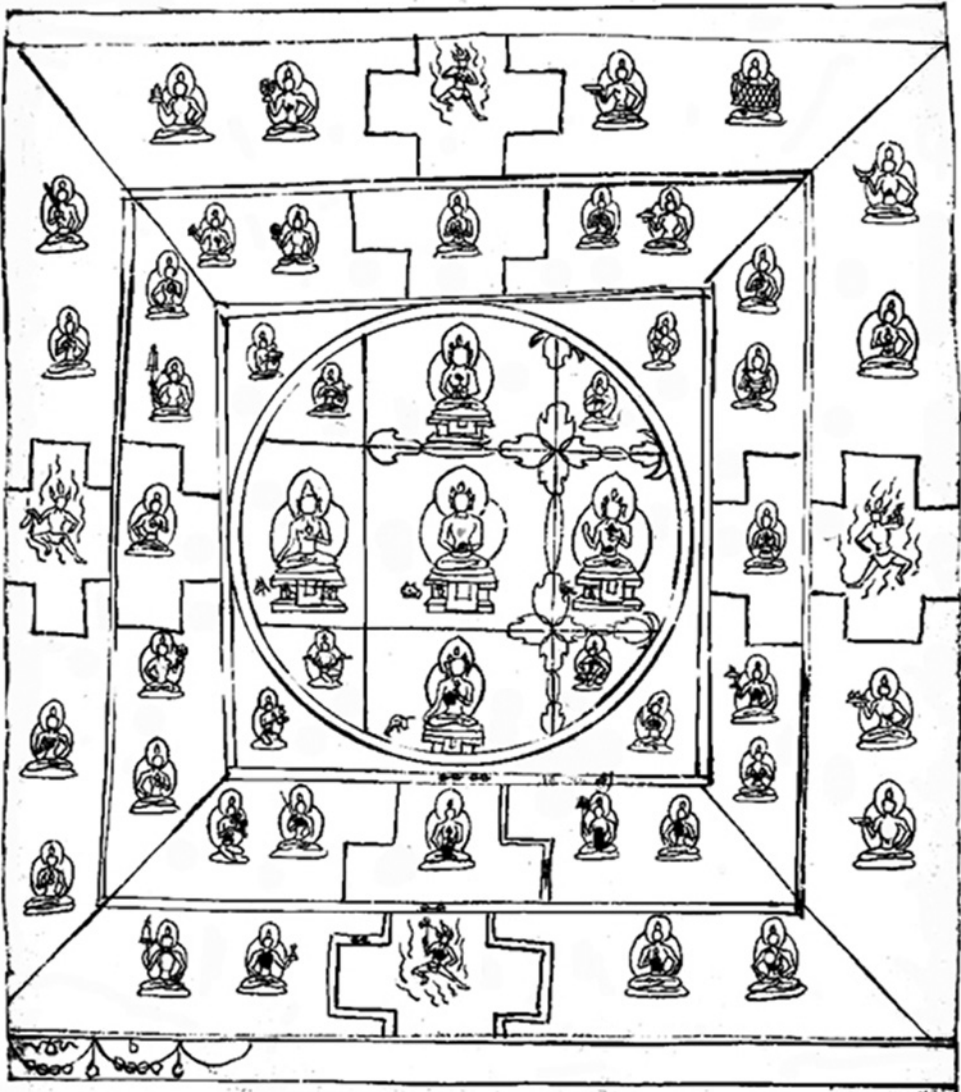


FIGURE 7.5 Vajradhātu maṇḍala. Probably 9th century. P. 4518 (33), Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale.

*Dual Maṇḍalas* represents the high point of mature Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang, and it was in this form the *maṇḍalas* were transmitted to Japan by Kūkai (774–835, 空海), Saichō (767–822, 最澄), Ennin (794–864, 圓仁), etc. in the course of the first half of the 9th century. While it is possible that the full ritual and doctrinal integration of the *Dual Maṇḍalas* took place in Heian Japan, most, if not all the materials on which this development took place were already present in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang prior to the arrival of the Japanese monks around 800.<sup>52</sup> In this regard it is therefore interesting to note that among the Dunhuang material, which otherwise contains a relatively large number of *maṇḍalas* and *maṇḍala* designs, there are no, directly comparable examples of *Garbhadhātu* and *Vajradhātu maṇḍalas* similar to those of mainstream Esoteric Buddhism as reflected in the material brought back to Japan by Kūkai. Essentially all the evidence reflecting the presence of these *maṇḍalas* and the primary scriptures describing them, are incomplete or in any case partial.<sup>53</sup>

Provided that we reject the belief that the *Dual Maṇḍalas* were constructed in Heian Japan, at the same time we need to provide a good reason for their absence among the Dunhuang material. We already know that the lore and ritual formulations surrounding their combined use were not formalised until after Amoghavajra's death in 774, as no such indication can be found in the scriptural corpus he left behind. Therefore it is obvious that this new and grandiose formulation of Esoteric Buddhist ritual and doctrine, including

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try to combine the teachings of the *Garbhadhātu* and the *Vajradhātu maṇḍalas*, for which reason I would be hesitant to attribute the *Dual Maṇḍalas* as an integrated unity to Kūkai's creative mind alone. In any case it is clear that the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* as such was transmitted widely in Tang China in more rudimentary and different forms than the nine-fold type we see in the Shingon tradition of Heian Japan. For a perceptive and lengthy discussion of the transmission of Esoteric Buddhist iconography from Tang to Heian, see Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 63–138.

52 If the *Dual Maṇḍalas* had indeed been created by Kūkai after he returned to Japan in 806, there is no explanation to account for the fact that he mentions them several times in his inventory list. Cf. *Go shōrai mokuroku* 御請來目錄 [Catalogue Compiled on Imperial Request], T. 2161.55, 1064b, 1064c, and 1065b. Moreover, the manner in which they are described in this list indicates that they represented the layout of the standard types as transmitted in the Shingon tradition. In addition to this, the earliest extant examples of the *Dual Maṇḍalas* kept in Tōji in Kyoto, the so-called *Ten Shingon-en mandara* (伝真言院曼荼羅) set, has been documented to be 9th century copies based on the Chinese *maṇḍalas* in Kūkai's list. For these paintings, see *Eros + Cosmos in Mandala: The Mandalas of the Two Worlds at the Kyōō Gokoku-ji*, The Seibu Museum of Art, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1978).

53 For these examples, see Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 78–106.

its developed iconographical programme, hardly had time to reach Shazhou before the area was over-run by the Tibetans during the 780s and thereafter closed off from further contacts with the Central provinces of the Tang Empire for more than half of century. Added to this is the fact that many of the great Esoteric Buddhist institutions of the twin capitals, Chang'an (長安) and Luoyang (洛陽), were damaged or ceased to function during the Huichang (會昌) Buddhist suppression of the 840s. This meant that when Dunhuang was 'liberated' after the disintegration of the Tibetan Empire in 848, Esoteric Buddhism in the twin capitals of the Tang, together with Buddhism in general, was busy reestablishing itself and trying to repair the extensive damages its temples and organisation had sustained. In such a situation it is hard to imagine that a transmission of the most recent Esoteric Buddhist teachings to such a far-flung place as Dunhuang would have had high priority. In combination, these two events prevented the tradition of the Dual Maṇḍalas and their iconography from gaining foothold in Shazhou during the late Tang. On the other hand, a whole series of rites and their texts featuring the ritual template of the Five Buddhas arrived in neighbouring oasis of Anxi directly from the heartland of Tibet, representing various forms of early Indo-Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, forms, which were unknown to the Chinese at that time.

A representative of such new type of *maṇḍala*, one frequently encountered at Dunhuang, is that related to the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*,<sup>54</sup> a Tantric Buddhist development of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-uṣṇīṣavijayadhāraṇī-sūtra*, of which both Tibetan and Chinese examples have been identified (fig. 7.6).<sup>55</sup> The relatively large number of *maṇḍalas* for use in performing the ritual of this *tantra*—designed for the expiation of evil *karma*—provide us with an insight into the ways in which intercultural Buddhist practices impacted and transformed Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang.<sup>56</sup> The example of P. tib. 389 is especially noteworthy because the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* itself was not translated into Chinese until much later.

54 For a study and translation of this tantra, see Skorupski, Tadeusz, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra: Elimination of All Evil Destinies, Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts with Introduction, English Translation and Notes* (Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass, 1983).

55 A fine example with Tibetan annotation can be seen in P. tib. 389. See Tanaka, *Tonkō: Mikkyō to bijutsu*, 91, fig. 60.

56 For a study of *maṇḍalas* used in rituals of confession, see Kuo, Li-ying, "Maṇḍala et rituel de confession à Dunhuang," *Bulletin de L'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 85 (1998): 227–56. For some reason she fails in making a connection between the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, its *maṇḍala* and the practice of confession, which is one of the scripture's primary objectives.

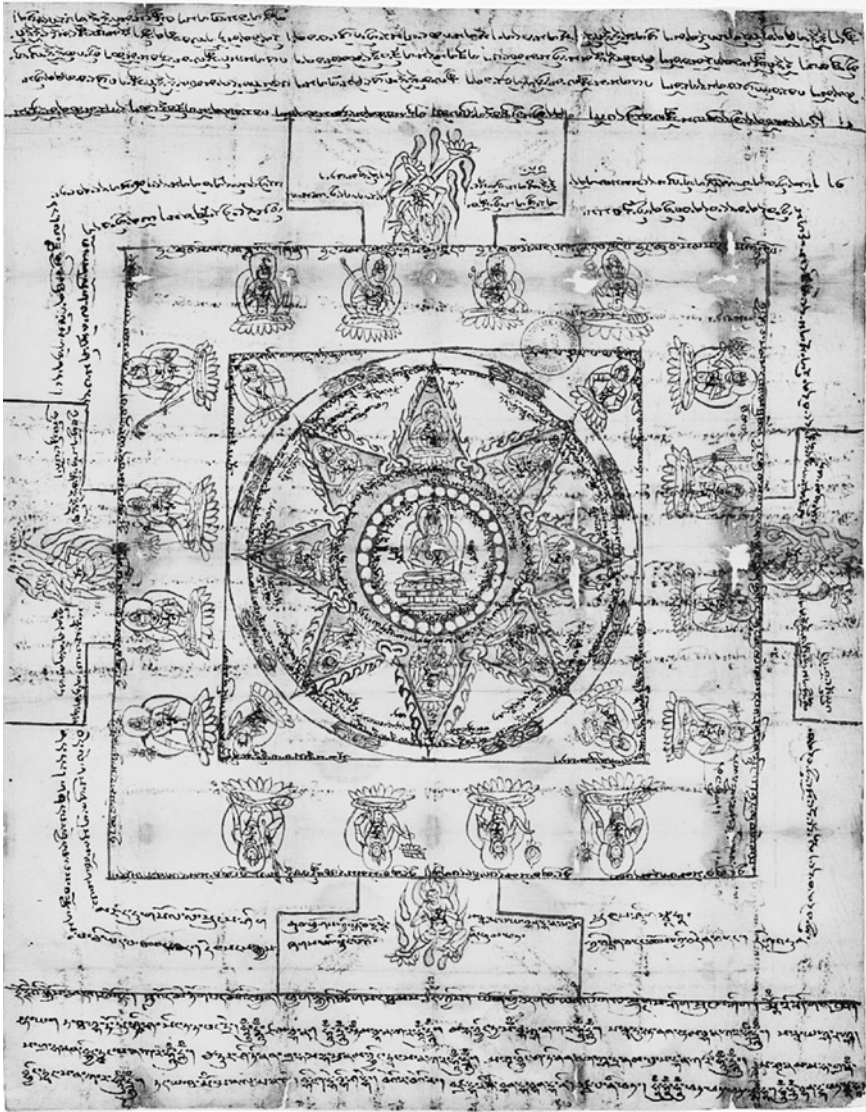


FIGURE 7.6 *Maṇḍala of the Sarvagatipariśodhanatantra. P. tib. 389. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale de France.*

A Chinese example corresponding to P. tib. 389 is that found in P. 3937 (fig. 7.7). I would consider the identification of this *maṇḍala* fairly certain due to the fact that the number of bodhisattvas it features corresponds exactly to that seen in P. tib. 389 and related examples. Apart from the simpler structural arrangement of the *maṇḍala* in question, it is also noteworthy that the Central Buddha has no distinct Esoteric Buddhist attributes, such as the Five Buddha crown, adornments, etc.

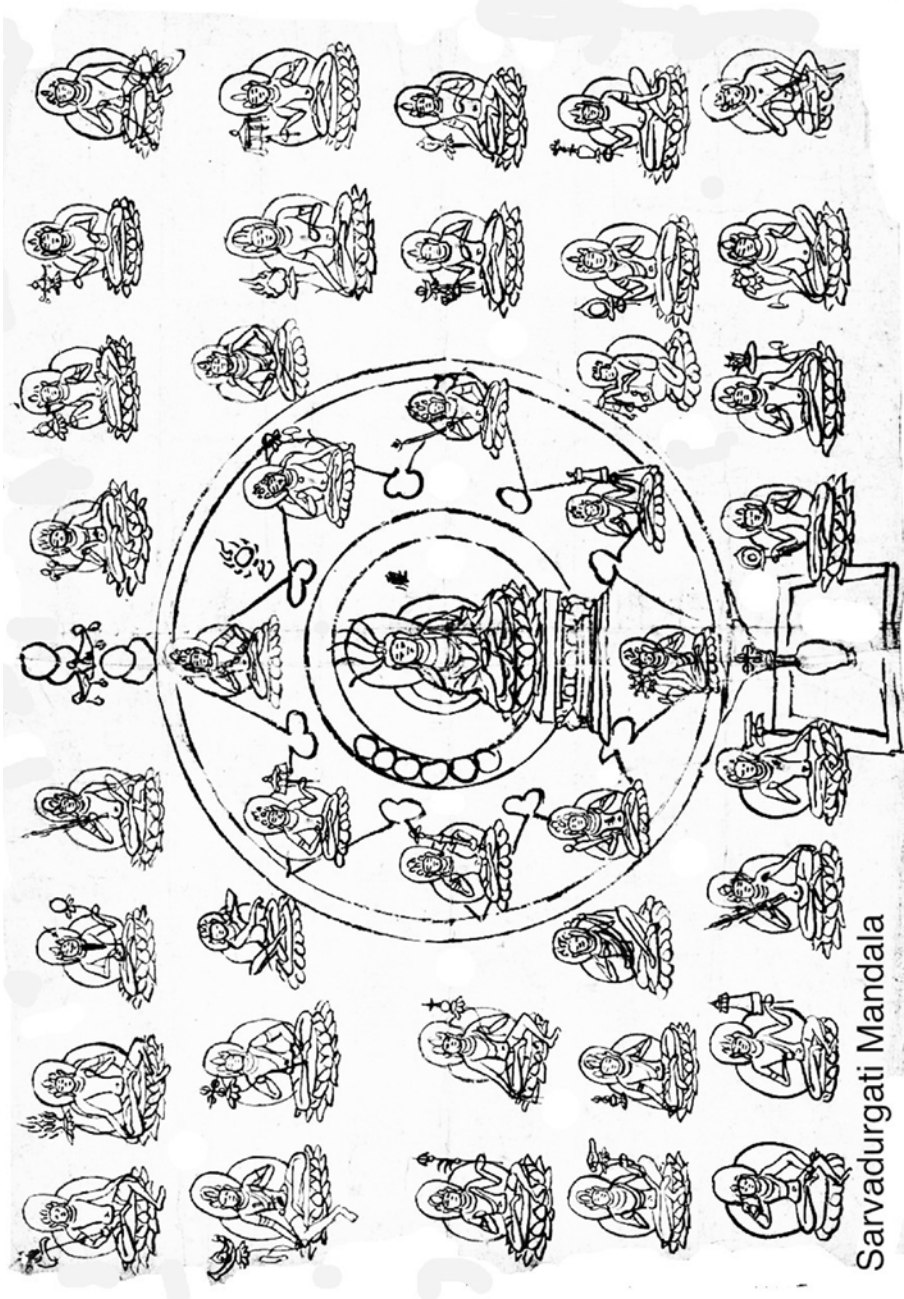
As a last, yet more complex example of conflation and intercultural blending, we have the elaborate and highly textual *maṇḍala* represented by P. 4519 (fig. 7.8). While the *maṇḍala* itself clearly represents the *maṇḍala* of the *Sarvadurgati-pariśodhana-tantra*, its added textuality represents a hybrid construction. The various excerpts and spells represent several distinct Esoteric Buddhist scriptures and cults including those of Mahāpratisarā, Avalokiteśvara, Sitaṭāpatrā, Tārā, Cundī, etc.<sup>57</sup> As such this hybrid *maṇḍala cum* text anticipates structurally the composite, printed *dhāraṇī*-charts of the 10th century.<sup>58</sup>

## 6 Chan and Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang

One of the special features of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang during the later Tang period is its conflation with other forms of Buddhism, both Chinese as well as foreign, and even with Daoism. While we still have too little evidence to postulate that this trend was particular to Buddhism in Dunhuang, it is evident that this trend was fairly common there, especially during the second half of the Tang. Cases of such inter-sectarian development can be documented

57 For a listing of the scriptures from which many of the excerpts have been lifted, see *Catalogue des manuscrits Chinois de Touen-Houang, Fonds Pelliot chinois de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. 5 (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1995), 158–159. The compilers of this otherwise excellent catalogue have failed in identifying the *maṇḍala* itself, probably due to the confusing context and array of scriptural sources it invokes.

58 I am here especially referring to the talismanic prints associated with the cult of Mahāpratisarā. Cf. Whitfield, Roderick et al., ed. *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese art from the Silk Route* (New York: G. Braziller, 1990), 106–107. See also Su Bai 宿白, *Tang Song shi ji de diaoban yinshu* 唐宋时期的雕版印刷 [Eng. subtitle: *Studies on the Block Printings and Woodcuts of the Tang and Song Dynasties*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1999), 140, 194. pl. 27. For examples of such talismanic spell charts in Korea of the Koryŏ period, see Sørensen, Henrik H., “On the Empowerment of Buddhist Images and the Use of Printed Maṇḍalas and Dhāraṇīs during the Koryŏ Dynasty (936–1392),” in *Esoteric Buddhist Tradition in East Asia: Text, Ritual and Image*, ed. Youngsook Pak and Roderick Whitfield (forthcoming).



Sarvadurgati Mandala

FIGURE 7.7 Mandala of the Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra. P. 3937. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale.

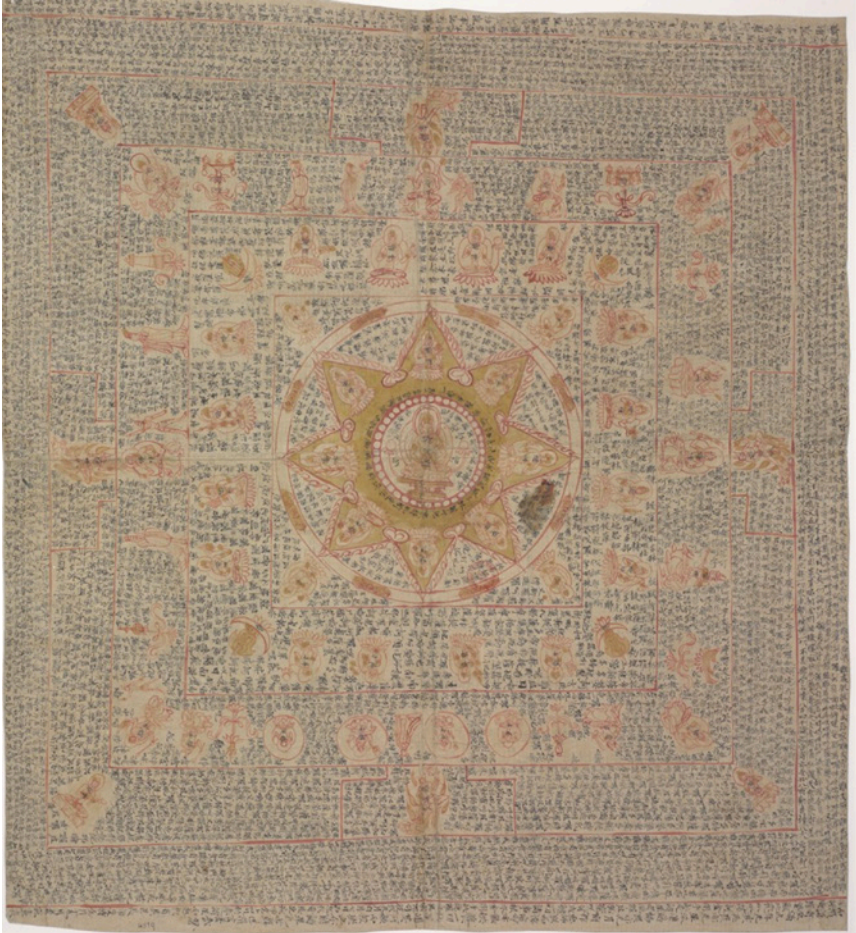


FIGURE 7.8 *Maṇḍala of the Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra. P. 4519. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale.*

in the extensive and important Chan Buddhist (Chin. *chanzong* 禪宗) material, where imprints of Esoteric Buddhist beliefs and practices crop up with a certain frequency. It is not the place to present a full discussion and documentation of this development here; hence I shall limit myself to three representative cases in what follows.

It would appear that the earliest traces of Esoteric Buddhist influence on Chan Buddhism in China stem from material relating to the Northern School (Chin. *beizong* 北宗), in particular as it unfolded with the 2nd generation lineages descending from the important patriarch and leader Shenxiu (605?–706, 神秀).<sup>59</sup>

A good example of Esoteric Buddhist influence on Northern Chan, is represented by a pair of *mantras*, the Mantra for Getting Rid of Drowsiness (Chin. *Chushui zhou* 出睡咒) and the Mantra for Entering Samādhi (Chin. *Ruding zhou* 入定咒), both of which can be found in manuscripts featuring texts on Chan meditation and doctrine.<sup>60</sup> This pair of *mantras* is accompanied by a short note which states that they were “translated by Śubhākarasiṃha” (Chin. *Wuwei sanzang yi* 無畏三藏譯).<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the notes say, that they are to be “recited every day one hundred and eight times.”<sup>62</sup> A passage in the text quotes from the *Mahāparinirvanasūtra*, a canonical scripture popular in the Chan tradition, stating that “Only to contemplate one’s own body is right, otherwise it will not be right cultivation.”<sup>63</sup> As the context in which the *mantras* occur provides a clear connection to the Northern School of Chan, we know that they must have been used by monks somehow affiliated with this brand of Chinese Buddhism. There are no such *mantras* in the extant writings of Śubhākarasiṃha, therefore it is questionable whether he had anything to do with them. What is important is that he is credited with them, and that they were integrated into the meditation-program of Chan monks. The *mantras* read as follows:

59 For his life and career, see McRae, John R., *The Northern School and the Transformation of Early Ch’an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press and Kuroda Institute, 1986), 44–56.

60 Cf. S. 266gV<sup>o</sup>, etc.

61 Cf. S. 266gV<sup>o</sup>, etc.

62 Cf. S. 266gV<sup>o</sup>, etc.

63 T. 374.12, p. 426c. The original meaning as given in the *sūtra* is of course rather different than the way body contemplation (Chin. *guanshen* 觀身) has been interpreted in the text of the manuscript, which reflects a more Esoteric Buddhist view of the body.



- a: *Namo, jīte, mīte, Vyākaraṇa ja[?]te, buddha, svāhā!*  
 (Chin. 南謨 吉帝<sup>64</sup> 伊帝, 毗伽羅<sup>65</sup> 賦帝, 娑陀, 薩婆訶.)
- b: *Om, sabhamite, svāhā!*  
 (Chin. 唵 薩婆彌帝 薩婆訶)

So far there are no other Northern Chan scriptures—outside the Dunhuang manuscripts—which actually contain any of these two *mantras*, but the way they occur and the fact that they appear more than once in the manuscripts may allow us to consider them part of some Northern Chan-related curriculum. It is not possible to be too precise as to the date when this may have taken place, but it may not have happened until late in the Kaiyuan period (713–741), if not slightly later.

One interesting case of Chan influence on Esoteric Buddhism, and not the other way around, can be found in the manuscripts of a lengthy scripture recovered from among the manuscripts at Dunhuang, namely the *The Lofty Vajra Scripture, Vajroṣṇīṣa of All the Tathāgatas, the Deep and Wonderful, Secret Vajradhātu, Great Samaya, the Scripture for Cultivating the Forty-two Kinds of Methods [for Setting up] the Altar Employing the Awesome Methods of Ritual Proceedings, The Mahāvairocana Vajra Mind Ground Dharma Door, Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar Methods of Ritual Proceedings* (Chin. *Jīngang junjing jīngang ding yijie rulai shenmiao bimi jīngang jie da sanmeiye xiuxing sishier zhongtan fa jing zuoyong wei tanfa yize—Da Piluzhena jīngang xindi famen mi fajie tan fayi ze* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威法儀則大毘盧那金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則)—hereafter referred to as *Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar Methods of Ritual Proceedings*—, falsely attributed to Amoghavajra.<sup>66</sup> In this apocryphal, ritual scripture, which is loosely based on the *Vajrasekhara*, the historical section of the *Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar Methods of Ritual Proceedings*, entitled the *Chapter on the Transmission of the Dharma* (Chin. *Fufazang pin* 付法藏品) features the orthodox patriarchal lineage of Southern Chan Buddhism in verseform, integrating it with the formal transmission of both the *Vajrasekhara* and the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* as well as Amoghavajra's

64 This segment occurs as part of a string of identical, meaningless sounds in a spell found in an early translation of the *Saptabuddhakasūtra*. Cf. *T.* 1333.21, 563a.

65 This part of the spell is identical with the name of Vyākaraṇa, one of the twelve zodiacal spirits in the entourage of Bhaiṣajyaguru. Cf. *F.* 88.3, 2b.

66 Fang Guangchang 方廣錫, ed., *Zangwai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻 [*Buddhist Texts Outside the Tripiṭaka*] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2008), 17–231.

brand of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>67</sup> This has been done by inserting the phrase “Ascend Mahāvairocana’s Vajradhātu” (Chin. *deng dapilu jingangjie* 登大毘盧金剛界) into each verse of transmission. By doing this, the patriarchal succession of Chan Buddhism from Mahākāśyāpa to Huineng (638–713, 惠能),<sup>68</sup> was being consciously used to enhance the transmission of the *Vajrasāekhara* tradition. Furthermore, the verses themselves refer both to the ‘secret transmission of the Buddha Mind’ (Chin. *michuan foxin* 密傳佛心), i.e. Chan Buddhism, and to the ‘highly secret and comprehensive transmission’ (Chin. *bimi xuan chuan* 祕密宣傳), i.e. Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>69</sup> This conflation of Chan and Esoteric Buddhism may have been the result of lacking knowledge at Dunhuang of the history of the correct transmission of Esoteric Buddhism during the second half of the Tang, perhaps occasioned by the interruptions in information and teachings caused by the Tibetan rule over Dunhuang on the one hand and that of the Huichang suppression of Buddhism in Tang China on the other.

Another interesting aspect of the interchange between Chan and Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang has an interface to the Tibetan Tantric tradition. Kenneth Eastman, whose name I have invoked several times, was among the first to understand the significance of the collapse and integration of certain aspects of Tibetan Tantric lore and Chinese Chan in his presentation of the issue.<sup>70</sup> He envisaged the conflation between the two traditions as an exam-

67 Amoghavajra is mentioned as the translator of the *Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar Methods of Ritual Proceedings*. Cf. *Zangwai fojiao wenxian*, vol. 11, 99, etc.

68 *Zangwai fojiao wenxian*, vol. 11, 106, etc.

69 *Zangwai fojiao wenxian*, vol. 11, 105; 113.

70 This issue has also been discussed with varying degrees of success and erudition in the past by Broughton, Jeffrey L., “Early Ch’an Schools in Tibet,” in *Studies in Ch’an and Hua-yen*, ed. Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 1–68; Luis O. Gómez, “The Direct and Gradual Approaches of of Zen Master Mahayana: Fragments of the Teachings of Mo-ho-yen,” in *Studies in Ch’an and Hua-yen*, ed. Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 69–167; and more recently in Meinert, Carmen, “Chinese Chan and Tibetan Dzogs Chen: Preliminary remarks on two Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts,” in *Religion and Secular Culture in Tibet*, ed. Henk Blezer (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 289–307; “Structural Analysis of the *bSam gtan mig sgron*: A Comparison of the Fourfold Correct Practice in the *Aryāvikalpaprapvesa-nama-dhāraṇī* and the Contents of the Four Main Chapters of the *bSam gtan mig sgron*,” in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26.1 (2003): 175–195. See also Faber, Flemming, “A Tibetan Dunhuang Treatise on Simultaneous Enlightenment: The *dMyigs su myed pa tshul gcig pa’i gzhung*,” in *Acta Orientalia* 46 (1985): 47–77. For a somewhat apologetical and essentialist discussion of this issue see also Norbu, Namkhai, *Dzog Chen and Zen*, ed. and annotated by Kennard Lipman (Oakland: Zhang Zhung Editions, 1984).

ple of the influence of Tibetan Mahāyoga Tantrism on that of Chan and provided various examples drawn directly from a number of manuscripts.<sup>71</sup> In this process he misread or otherwise overstated his case, such as when he interpreted the lengthy text of the *Esoteric Dharma Precepts Altar Methods of Ritual Proceedings* as an example of Mahāyoga influence on Chan. As we now know, this important Esoteric Buddhist scripture was composed by Chinese practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism on the basis of purely Chinese texts. It does not have any overt traces of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in it, as it were, but reflects more or less directly mature Esoteric Buddhism current during the second half of the Tang.<sup>72</sup>

While practitioners of Chan adopted certain terms, concepts and even practices from both Tibetan Tantric Buddhism as well as from Chinese Esoteric Buddhism, it would appear that the influence went both ways.<sup>73</sup> In other words we find several examples of Chinese Chan texts as well as those relating to Chinese Esoteric Buddhism adapted for a Tibetan-reading audience, not to mention texts written in bilingual Sino-Tibetan.

## 7 Guhyavāda at Dunhuang?

Before ending this brief excursus on Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang, let me address the issue of Guhyavāda, i.e. ‘Secret Doctrine,’ a Sanskrit term which has appeared in recent scholarly writing and debate on the Chinese side in order to provide a better way of identifying Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang. In the works of especially two Chinese scholars, Zhao Xiaoxing (赵晓星) and Kou Jia (寇甲), this term has been used as a substitute for Esoteric Buddhism,

71 See the groundbreaking study by Eastman, Kenneth, “Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-huang,” in *Bukkyō bunkan kenkyūkiyō* 佛教文化研究所紀要 [Bulletin of Buddhist Textual Studies] 22 (1983): 42–60 (esp. 57–58).

72 I discuss this text and its relationship with local Chan at some length in Sørensen, Henrik H., “The Conflation of Chan and Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang as Reflected in the Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts,” (forthcoming in *Chán Buddhism—Dānhuáng and Beyond: Texts, Manuscripts, and Contexts*, ed. Christoph Anderl). See also Huo, “Mijiao Zhongguo hua de jingdian fenkai,” 141–172.

73 One interesting example of Tantric Buddhist influence on Chan is the presence of the famous *mantra*, *Oṃ maṇi padme huṃ* (Chin. *an moni bote ou* 唵磨尼特鉢吽), which appears in the *Nan tianzhu guo Putidamo chanshi guanmen* 南天竺國菩提達摩禪師觀門 [Meditation Methods of the Chan Master Bodhidharma from Southern India], S. 6958.

or perhaps better of Tantric Buddhism.<sup>74</sup> By introducing a new term such as ‘Guhyavāda,’ which has a distinct contextual meaning and significance in the Indo-Tibetan material relating to Tantric Buddhism, they commit the error of cultural transposition without a proper explanation or indeed, elucidation. Of course ‘Guhyavāda’ is only new in the context of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang. The term is commonly found as a substitute for Tantric/Esoteric Buddhism in Indo-Tibetan texts. Added to this relatively significant problem is the fact that none of them are able to distinguish clearly between what constitutes Tibetan Tantrism on the one hand and what constitutes Chinese Esoteric Buddhism on the other. This mainly rests on their inability to understand the different religious and historical contexts underpinning the developments of these Buddhist traditions not to mention their intersection at Dunhuang, which of course is crucial in this case as it obfuscates the way they read the local developments during the late Tang. This last point is significant, as it is precisely the conflation and mutual integration of these two traditions which made the local forms of Esoteric Buddhism so special, if not unique.

A quick glance at the scriptural material appearing under this rubric reveals that these Chinese scholars have simply applied the term ‘Guhyavāda’ as a fancy substitute for ‘Esoteric Buddhism,’ i.e. *mijiao*, broadly speaking. Such a fumbling with the terminology is both confusing and reflects a fundamental misunderstanding as regards the local forms of Esoteric Buddhism. If anything, Guhyavāda may, and I stress ‘may,’ be used to characterise local Tibetan Tantrism. Nevertheless, it is not an entirely appropriate marker, as it is unclear whether the term was actually used by members of the Buddhist community at Dunhuang to identify themselves, or whether it was only used to identify certain Esoteric Buddhist teachings, as the sources seem to suggest.<sup>75</sup> However,

74 See Zhao Xiaoxing 赵晓星 and Kou Jia 寇甲, “Tufan tongchi shiqi Dunhuang de mijiao yu chi tuo xinyang zhi guanxi 吐蕃吐蕃统治时期敦煌的密教与其他信仰之關係 [Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang under Tibetan Rule: A Study of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang under Tibetan Rule and Its Relationship with Other Beliefs],” in *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [*Dunhuang Studies*] 1 (2008): 47–55; Zhao Xiaoxing 赵晓星, “Tufan tongchi Dunhuang shiqi de mijiao yuanliu yu yishu fengge: Tufan tongchi Dunhuang shiqi de mijiao yanjiu zhi san 吐蕃吐蕃统治时期敦煌的密教与其他信仰之關係 — 吐蕃统治敦煌时期的密教研究 [The Origins of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang during Tibetan Rule and Its Artistic Style: A Study of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang under Tibetan Rule III],” in *Dunhuang xue jikan* 敦煌學集刊 [*Bulletin of Dunhuang Studies*] 4 (2007): 279–89.

75 Kenneth Eastman has used the term ‘Mahāyoga’ to characterise certain features of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism at Dunhuang, a term which makes much more sense from the perspective of religious practice than Guhyavāda. In contrast to ‘Guhyavāda,’ ‘Mahāyoga’

if one uses it as a general term to designate Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang during the Tibetan rule of Shazhou, and even after, it is both wrong and misleading. Esoteric Buddhism of the Chinese variety as a whole can and should not be identified as belonging to the Guhyavāda, as it represents an entirely different, historical and religious transmission, and one which was moreover strongly influenced by Chinese cultural and religious concerns as has already been noted. Added to this we may also argue that by all indications Chinese Buddhism was the dominant factor at Dunhuang, even during the Tibetan rule. Hence, during the Tibetan rule, local forms of Esoteric Buddhism were a blend of Chinese and Tibetan forms of practice and doctrine, also including elements of Indian and even Uyghur origin. Essentially we are dealing with features of Indian Tantric Buddhism as represented by translations and original works in Tibetan, which in turn was mixed with mainstream Chinese Esoteric Buddhism to form the rather unique tradition we see unfold at Dunhuang during the late 8th to 10th centuries.

### Conclusion

Although the examples presented here only constitute the proverbial tip of the iceberg, it should by now be sufficiently clear that Esoteric Buddhism as it developed at Dunhuang from the middle of the Tang and onwards, represents a rather unique case in the history of Buddhism—a development, which reflects a tightly woven web of intercultural and interreligious strands of several different Buddhist traditions including even religions. This multifaceted interaction brought about a form of Esoteric Buddhism which in many ways was a precursor for the persuasive ascendance of Tibetan-style Buddhism that dominated extensive parts of Central Asia and Western China from the 11th century onwards.

The integration of certain Buddhist cults is evident in many examples found among the surviving religious art at Dunhuang, documenting on the one hand the close relationship that existed between texts, ritual practices and

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occurs on several occasions in the Tibetan manuscripts. Cf. eg. P. tib. 837, P. tib. 42, etc. However, Eastman also applied the term 'Vajrayāna' as a common denominator for Esoteric Buddhism, thereby committing the error of conflating Indo-Tibetan and Chinese traditions without explaining their distinct religious and historical features. Moreover he was of course wrong in insisting that "there was virtually no Chinese Vajrayāna tradition at Tun-huang." This was precisely what changed with the arrival of the Tibetans in the region during the late 8th century. Cf. Eastman, "Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-huang," 57.

iconography, and on the other hand a common openness to religious adaptation. Even so, the identification of isolated examples of Indo-Tibetan, Tantric Buddhist and Esoteric Buddhist art at Dunhuang continued to mainly reflect Chinese styles and norms. Even when the presence of the Gansu Uyghurs was being felt in the 10th century, we continue to see many iconographical motifs rendered in a manner reflecting Chinese styles and interpretation.

Interculturality and interreligiosity are concepts which we may readily apply to the Esoteric Buddhist material from Dunhuang. Bi-lingual scriptures with integrated teachings, Tibetan texts in Chinese rendering or vice versa are common occurrences. *The Twenty-eight Vajra Precepts* is a unique work in which a Tantric Buddhist codex of Indo-Tibetan origin delineating correct attitude and behavior is spelled out in considerable detail. As such it serves as a concrete proof that Tibetan Buddhist leaders were actively teaching their brand of Tantric Buddhism to the members of the Chinese Buddhist communities in Shazhou, thereby paving the way for the new and foreign types of Esoteric Buddhism which arrived in China with the Tanguts after the 11th century.

When discussing the various *maṇḍalas* and their ritual traditions at Dunhuang, those based on the *Vajraśekhara* and *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* would appear to have been of the highest importance. Their importance is highlighted by the great variations displayed by surviving examples of both *maṇḍalas*. Furthermore, their respective importance may partly be understood in relation to the absence of the ritual tradition of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra*, which up to the time of Amoghavajra dominated mature Esoteric Buddhist practices in the area of the twin Tang capitals. The complete absence of the tradition of the Dual Maṇḍalas at Dunhuang, primarily associated with Kūkai's Shingon School, is in itself not sufficient evidence to dismiss their creation as a ritual unity during the late Tang.

The conflation and/or integration of Chan with Esoteric Buddhism, including certain aspects of Indo-Tibetan Tantra, is one of the defining characteristics of Buddhism at Dunhuang during the late Tang. The meeting and partial merger of the two traditions are indicators of the level of popularity their respective teachings and rites enjoyed among the Buddhist communities at Shazhou.

In the light of the data presented here, the application of the term 'Guhavāda' a neologism, as designating Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang during the late Tang and Five Dynasties Period seems not only superfluous, but also mistaken. Being both narrower in scope than Esoteric Buddhism and Tantric Buddhism, its application is really the result of unnecessary speculations, for which reason it is better ignored. That is not to deny the possibility that certain forms of Esoteric Buddhist practice, especially those of the Tantric

dispensation, may have been classified as ‘*Guhyavāda*.’ However, to use the term as a general classifier for Esoteric Buddhism is nothing less than absurd.

On the basis of these findings we are in the position to conclude that Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang during the period in question was made up of several strands of Esoteric and Tantric Buddhist transmissions of both Chinese and Indo-Tibetan origins. Moreover, this form—or in some cases those forms—of Esoteric Buddhism interacted with other Buddhist schools and traditions as well as with Chinese Daoism to form a unique if not singular local tradition lasting the better part of three centuries.

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