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**ANCIENT CENTRAL ASIAN NETWORKS.
RETHINKING THE INTERPLAY OF
RELIGIONS, ART AND POLITICS ACROSS
THE TARIM BASIN (5TH–10TH C.)**

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THE EIGHT PROTECTORS OF KHOTAN RECONSIDERED: FROM KHOTAN TO DUNHUANG*

RONG XINJIANG AND ZHU LISHUANG

Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the group of Eight Protectors of Khotan described in Khotanese, Tibetan and Chinese literary texts and manuscripts. The paper then identifies images of this group depicted in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang, where they appeared from the late 9th to 10th centuries. Inclusion of the Eight Protectors of Khotan in caves sponsored by the Dunhuang Governors, in particular, indicates not only a close political relation between Dunhuang and Khotan, but also the profound influence of Khotanese Buddhist culture in the Dunhuang Caves art.

1. *Introduction*

Ancient Khotan, situated along the southern Silk Road of the Tarim basin, was once an important centre of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Buddhist scriptures from India were introduced to Khotan at quite an early time, and in later Buddhist literature the oasis was described as a holy place blessed by the Buddha. The stories about Buddha Śākyamuni going to Khotan to bless the kingdom attended by bodhisattvas, *devas*, *devīs* and other Buddhist deities became popular not only locally, but spread also to Chang'an (長安), the capital city of the Sui (581–618, 隋) and Tang (618–907, 唐) dynasties, through the production and translation of *sūtras*. A number of *sūtras* concerning Khotan were also translated into Tibetan in the early part of the 9th century when the Tibetan empire was thriving along the Silk Road. At the same time, the legendary stories about *buddhas*, bodhisattvas and other deities protecting Khotan were depicted in temples from Khotan to Dunhuang (敦煌). For example, depictions of the so-called Auspicious Images (Chin. *ruixiang* 瑞像) of Khotan are still visible in the Dunhuang Caves (Chin. Dunhuang shiku 敦煌石窟) of the Tibetan (786–848) and Guiyijun (848–1036?, 歸義軍, Return to Allegiance Army) periods and demonstrating the profound impact of Khotanese culture on Dunhuang's Buddhist world. Among many icono-

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graphic elements of Khotan in the Dunhuang caves, there is a group of deities called the Eight Protectors (Khot. *hastā parvālā*; Tib. *srungs ma chen po bryad*). From the known written sources, the Eight Protectors were worshipped as a distinct group in Khotan at the earliest in the year 585, when the *Candragarbhasūtra* (Chin. *Yuezangjing* 月藏經) was translated into Chinese. This group of deities was still important as protectors of the country as late as in the late 10th century. Although we have found no visual evidence of the Eight Protectors as a group in Khotan so far, they were depicted as a group in Dunhuang at the Mogao Caves of the Guiyijun period, especially in the 10th century when Khotan and Dunhuang had a close relationship. As is well known, in the year 934 the king of Khotan Viśa' Sambhava (r. 912–966, Chin. Li Shengtian 李聖天) took one daughter of Cao Yijin (r. 914–935, 曹議金), the Governor (Chin. *jiedu* 節度) of the Guiyijun, as his queen, and later another Governor of the Guiyijun, Cao Yanlu (r. 976–1002, 曹延祿), married a Khotanese princess, the daughter of the Khotanese king Viśa' Dharma (r. 978–982, Chin. Yuchi Sheng 尉遲勝). Many Khotanese princes and princesses lived in Dunhuang and it is possible that a large Khotanese community existed in Dunhuang sponsoring Buddhist activities there.¹

As a group of eight, the deities are found in Khotanese, Tibetan and Chinese texts from the 6th to the 10th centuries, as already noticed by the late professor H. W. Bailey when he translated Khotanese manuscripts into English in 1942.² But for a long time, scholars were unaware that the deities were also depicted in the Dunhuang Caves. In 1999, Sun Xiushen (孫修身) of the Dunhuang Research Academy published a book on the paintings in the Dunhuang Caves depicting the stories concerning the spread of Buddhism to the east. He reported that there are a group of eight deities on the two slopes (four deities on each side) of the entrance corridor in some of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves. He pointed out that

* We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Dunhuang Research Academy for providing us the pictures of the Eight Protectors of Khotan used in this paper.

¹ Rong Xinjiang 荣新江 and Zhu Lishuang 朱丽双, *Yutian yu Dunhuang* 于阗与敦煌 [Khotan and Dunhuang] (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2013), 153–181.

² Harold Walter Bailey, “Hvatanica IV,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 4 (1942): 912.

these figures should be the Eight Protectors of Khotan and identified one of them as the divine king Vaiśravaṇa.³ In 2005, Zhang Xiaogang (張小剛) from the same institute published an important article systematically introducing the Eight Protectors of Khotan as well as their iconographic characteristics in the Dunhuang Caves. In 2009, when translating Tibetan texts and documents concerning Khotan into Chinese, we realised that there was confusion in Zhang Xiaogang's identification of the deities that needed to be clarified. We went to Dunhuang for investigation in 2010.⁴ What follows is the first introduction of our findings in English. Based on our identification, in 2012, a young Chinese scholar, Chen Suyu (陳粟裕), analysed in detail the iconographic characteristics of the Eight Protectors of Khotan and believed it was a mixture of both Khotanese and Chinese elements.⁵ In 2015, Zhang Xiaogang's book on the Buddhist miracle paintings at the Dunhuang caves was published, which includes a section on the Eight Protectors of Khotan with fine pictures. He accepted our identification of the deities.⁶

³ Sun Xiushen 孫修身, ed., *Dunhuang shiku quanji 12: Fojiao dongchuan gushihua* 敦煌石窟全集 12: 佛教東傳故事畫 [Complete Collection of Dunhuang Caves 12: Paintings Concerning the Spread of Buddhism to the East] (Hong Kong: The Commercial Press, 1999), 74 and 78–81, figs. 62–64.

⁴ Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 and Zhu Lishuang 朱丽双, “Tuwen huzheng — Yutian ba dashouhushen xin tan 图文互证 — 于阗八大守护神新探 [Mutual Evidence of Image and Text. New Investigation on the Eight Guardians of Khotan],” in *Dunhuang wenxian, kaogu, yishu zonghe yanjiu. Jinian Xiang Da xiansheng danchen 110 zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 敦煌文献, 考古, 艺术综合研究 · 纪念向达先生诞辰 110 周年国际学术研讨会论文集 [Comprehensive Studies on Texts, Archeology and Art of Dunhuang: Essays Presented at the International Conference in Memory of Prof. Xiang Da on the 110th Anniversary of his Birthday], ed. Fan Jinshi 樊锦诗 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011).

⁵ Chen Suyu 陳粟裕, “Dunhuang shiku zhong de Yutian shouhushen tuxiang de yanjiu 敦煌石窟中的于阗守护神图像的研究. Study on the Images of Protector Deities of Khotan in the Caves of Dunhuang,” *Gugong bowuyan yankan* 故宫博物院院刊 *Palace Museum Journal* 4.162 (2012): 54–74; Chen Suyu 陳粟裕, *Cong Yutian dao Dunhuang. Yi Tang Song shiqi tuxiang de dongchuan wei zhongxin* 从于阗到敦煌 — 以唐宋时期图像的东传为中心. *From Khotan to Dunhuang: Based on the Images Spread to the East During Tang and Song Dynasties* (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2014), 127–154.

⁶ Zhang Xiaogang 張小剛, *Dunhuang fojiao gantonghua yanjiu* 敦煌佛教感通画研究 [Research on the Buddhist Miracle Paintings in Dunhuang] (Shenzhen: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2015), 170–195.

2. The Eight Protectors of Khotan in the Texts

As mentioned above, the Eight Protectors of Khotan were found in Khotanese, Tibetan and Chinese texts. The earliest text is the Chinese translation of the *Candragarbhasūtra* by Narendrayaśas (517–589) in 585.⁷ This text is followed by a Khotanese manuscript, P. 2893, and three Tibetan texts: *Ri glang ru lung bstan pa* [Prophecy of Gośrṅga], *Li yul lung bstan pa* [Prophecy of the Khotan Country] and *Li yul chos kyi lo rgyus* [Religious History of the Khotan Country, P. T. 960], which were all composed in the 9th century. The titles and the order of the Eight Protectors in each text are often different, seeming to indicate that their significance as protectors could have been changed in different times. The most remarkable change is the rise of Vaiśravaṇa. He was arranged in the first position in all four later texts of the 9th century, while in the Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra*, he was positioned last. It is likely that the cult of Vaiśravaṇa in Khotan went through a significant development from the 6th to the 9th century. We will deal with this topic in another paper.

2.1. The Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra*

The French scholar Sylvain Lévi once pointed out that the *Candragarbhasūtra* gave many detailed accounts of Khotan, indicating that it might have been composed in the area of Khotan or in its neighbouring regions.⁸ The close tie between the *Candragarbhasūtra* and Khotan is further attested by the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscript IOL Tib J 601 which contains two texts: one chapter of the *Candragarbhasūtra* and one text concerning Khotan, the *Li yul gyi dgra bcom bas lung bstan pa* [Prophecy of the Arhat of the Khotan Country]. Other Tibetan texts concerning Khotan such as *dGra bcom pa dge 'dun 'phel gyis lung btsan pa* [Prophecy of the Arhat Saṃghavardhana] and the *Religious History of*

⁷ Yuezang jing 月藏經 [Candragarbhasūtra], T. 397.13.

⁸ Sylvain Lévi, “Notes chinoises sur l’Inde V. Quelques documents sur le bouddhisme indien dans l’Asie centrale (première partie),” *Bulletin de l’École française Extrême-Orient* 5.3–4 (1905): 253–305.

the *Khotan Country* are also related to the *Candragarbhasūtra*.⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that the *Candragarbhasūtra* contains a passage of a group of deities protecting Khotan:

At that time, the Bhagavan put Khotan under the charge of the *devaputra* Aparājita with his retinue of one thousand, and Saṃjñāya, general of the *yakṣas*, with his retinue of ten thousand, and the great *yakṣa* who has the feet of black sheep with his retinue of eight thousand, and *yakṣa* Suvarṇamāla with his retinue of five hundred, and the *nagā*-king Gṛhāvatapta with his retinue of one thousand, and *devī* Aṃgūśa' with her retinue of ten thousand, and *devī* Sthānavatī with her retinue of five thousand, and king Vaiśravaṇa, and commanded: "Buddha bless you, and you together protect the Kingdom of Khotan." Then the Buddha and the masses all applauded: "Bravo! Bravo!"¹⁰

2.2. *Ri glang ru lung bstan pa* or the Prophecy of Gośṛṅga

The text is included in the Kangyur (Tib. *bka' 'gyur*) part of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. It relates the story of the Buddha coming to the Oxhorn Mountain (Mt. Gośṛṅga) of Khotan to prophesy the coming existence of the kingdom. The origin of the text must be in Khotanese.¹¹ Since it is registered in the Buddhist catalogues (Tib. *dkar chag*), the Denkarma (Tib. *dKar chag lDan dkar ma*) and the Phangthangma (Tib. *dKar chag 'Phang thang ka ma*), it must have been composed before the first half of the 9th century.¹² The passage related to the Eight Protectors of Khotan reads:

⁹ Zhu Lishuang 朱麗雙, "Jiu shiji Yutian de famie gushi 九世紀于闐的法滅故事. The Buddhist Demise Story of Khotan in the 9th Century," (forthcoming 2019).

¹⁰ 爾時世尊以于填 (闐) 國土付囑難勝天子千眷屬、散脂夜叉大將十千眷屬、殺羊腳大夜叉八千眷屬、金華鬘夜叉五百眷屬、熱舍龍王千眷屬、阿那緊首天女十千眷屬、他難闍梨天女五千眷屬、毗沙門王, 神力所加, 共汝護持于填 (闐) 國土, 乃至佛及大眾咸皆贊言: 善哉! 善哉! (T. 397.13, 368a).

¹¹ Kurtis R. Schaeffer and Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pa rgya pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Bcom ldan ral gri* (Cambridge: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, 2009), 161.

¹² Zhu Lishuang 朱麗雙, "Yutianguo Shouji de chengli niandai yanjiu《于闐國授記》的成立年代研究. A Study on the Composition Date of the *Li yul lung bstan pa*," *Xiyu wenshi* 西域文史 *Literature and History of the Western Regions* 9 (2014): 112.

Then at that time the Bagavan commanded the *deva*-king Vaiśravaṇa, the *bodhisattva mahasattva* Saṃjñin, the *deva* Aparājita, the *nāga*-king Grhāvataпта, the *deva* Gaganasvara, the *deva* Svarṇamāla, the *devī* Aṃgūśa’, and the *devī* Sthānavatī: ‘Noble youths, to you I wholly entrust the *stūpa* of Gomasalagandha and the Oxhorn Mountain, together with the land, and my doctrine and my sons; completely guard them, protect them and cherish them and make them objects of worship.’¹³

2.3. The Khotanese Manuscript P. 2893

The late Khotanese manuscript P. 2893 is dated to the 10th century.¹⁴ However, since the names of the Eight Protectors of Khotan in it are identical with their counterparts in the Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra* and the Tibetan *Prophecy of Gośrṅga*, the subject must have had a relatively earlier origin than the manuscript itself. The sequence of the Eight Protectors is the same as that of the *Prophecy of the Khotan Country* (see *infra*), but the total number of their retinue is somehow different in the two texts, indicating the possibility of an earlier source for the manuscript than that of the *Prophecy of the Khotan Country*. Unfortunately, the present authors cannot read Khotanese, therefore the following passage reproduces Professor Bailey’s translation:

The eight protectors mighty and great, in visible form took the neighbouring lands into their charge. There the kings who had gone forth wholly devoted to the teaching, excellent, faithful, vigorous, and the rest, Vaiśramaṇa, Sanjaya, Aparājita, Gaganasvara, Svarṇamāla, Grahavadatta,

¹³ *de nas de'i tshe bcom ldan 'das kyis* ①*lha'i rgyal po rnam thos kyi bu dang /* ②*byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po 'du shes can zhes bya ba dang /* ③*lha mi 'pham pa zhes bya ba dang /* ④*klu'i rgyal po khyim 'tshig ces bya ba dang /* ⑤*lha nam mkha'i dbyangs zhes bya ba dang /* ⑥*lha gser gyi phreng ba can zhes bya ba dang /* ⑦*lha mo lcags kyu can zhes bya ba dang /* ⑧*lho mo gnas can zhes bya ba rnams la 'di skad ces bka' stsal to // rigs kyi bu khyed rnams la mchod rten go ma sa la gan da dang / ri glang ru yul dang bcas pa dang / nga'i bstan pa dang / sras rnams yongs su gtad kyis yongs su bsrung ba dang / bskyab pa dang / bskyang ba dang / mchod gnas su 'gyur bar gyis zhig //* (Derge 224b2–5; Narthang 342b2–6; Stog 418b2–6). Translation based on Frederick W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan. Part I: Literary Texts* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1935), 19–20, with revisions.

¹⁴ Zhang Guangda 張廣達 and Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, *Yutian shi congkao* (zengding ben) 于闐史叢考(增訂本). *Collected Inquiries on the History of Khotan (New Edition)* (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2008), 135–136.

thereafter Aṃgūśa', Sthānāva, with their retinue, beginning with those the most great exalted three myriad powerful five thousand, possessed of the five sorts of knowledge, five hundred too and seven great protectors, eighteen thousand kings of Nāgas, who had received the teaching from Maleda — they hold the Khotan land.¹⁵

Here the total number of the retinue of the Eight Protectors is 35,500. If we compare the retinue in the Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra* altogether it is also 35,500. The retinue in the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga* is also the same number. This is not a coincidence but evidence that the three texts share the same source.

2.4. *Li yul lung bstan pa* or the *Prophecy of the Khotan Country*

Among several Tibetan texts concerning Khotan, the *Prophecy of the Khotan Country* is considered the most important because of its sober account of the historical aspects of the kingdom. It is contained in the *bsTan 'gyur* part of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, and has been translated into English by Thomas and later by Ronald E. Emmerick.¹⁶ According to the most recent research, the text was originally composed in Khotanese in 830, after the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga*.¹⁷ The *Prophecy of the Khotan Country* says that right before his *nirvāṇa*, the Buddha Śākyamuni preached the *Candragarbhasūtra* at Mt. Ḡḍhrakūṭa of Rājagṛha, where he appointed *devas*, *nagās* and other divine protectors to protect the various lands. Śākyamuni also commanded Vaiśravaṇa, Saṃjñāya, king Ajātaśatru's daughter Vimalaprabhā, Kumāra Vajra, Susthiramati, Hārītī and their retinue to guard Khotan.¹⁸ After that the Buddha himself came to Khotan to prophesy the coming existence of the kingdom. Then the text says:

¹⁵ Bailey, "Hvatanica IV," 892–893.

¹⁶ Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts I*, 89–136; Ronald E. Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 1–77.

¹⁷ Zhu, "Yutianguo Shouji" 109–119.

¹⁸ Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts I*, 94; Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts*, 8–9; Zhu Lishuang 朱麗雙, "Youguan Yutian de zangwen wenxian: fanyi yu yanjiu 有關於闐的藏文文獻: 翻譯與研究. *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan: Translations and Annotations*" (Post-doc degree report, Peking University, 2011), 26–27.



Then the eight bodhisattvas, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara and the rest, and Vaiśravaṇa and Saṃjñāya, general of the *yakṣas*, and the noble lady Vimalaprabhā, and the Kumāra Vajra brother and sister, and the *devas*, *nāgas*, etc. were appointed by the Tathāgata to be guardians at all times. Then to the Bhagavan the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, and Maitreya, and Avalokiteśvara, and Ākāśagarbha, and Kṣitigarbha, and Samantabhadra, and Mahāsthāma and Bhaiśajyarāja bodhisattva, and Vaiśravaṇa with his retinue of three thousand *yakṣas*, and Saṃjñāya, general of the *yakṣas*, with his retinue of ten myriads, and the *deva* Aparājita with his retinue of a thousand, and Ākāśacakṣus with his retinue of eight thousand, and the *devaputra* Suvarṇamāla with his retinue of five hundred, and the *nāga*-king Gṛhāvatapta with his retinue of a thousand, and the *devī* Añkuśavatī with her retinue of ten thousand, and the *devī* Sthānavatī with her retinue of five thousand, and the noble lady Vimalaprabhā, and Kumāra Vajrasena, and the *devaputra* Susthiramati, and the *devī* Hārītī with her retinue, and the rest, in the presence of the Bhagavan made a promise agreeing to guard the Khotan country. Down to this day, ever since, attended by these eight Ārya bodhisattvas and Vaiśravaṇa and the other protectors and *devas* and *nāgas* and *devīs*, the Buddha came to Gautośan and stayed there surrounded by his numerous retinues; those bodhisattvas and protectors and *devas* and *nāgas*, in the places where each was and, on the site where they made their promise, even now guard the country and bless it, and manifestations and signs occur.¹⁹

¹⁹ *de nas bcom ldan 'das la byang chub sems dpa' 'jam dpa' dang / byams pa dang / spyān ras gzigs kyi dbang phyug dang / nam mkha'i snying po dang / sa'i snying po dang / kun du bzang po dang / mthu chen dang / sman gyi rgyal po byang chub sems dpa' dang / rnam thos kyi sras 'khor gnod sbyin sum stong dang / gnod sbyin gyi sde dpon yang dag shes 'khor khri phrag bcu dang / lha gzhan gyis mi thub pa 'khor stong dang / nam mkha'i spyān 'khor brgyad stong dang / lha'i bu gser phreng 'khor lnga brgyad dang / klu'i rgyal po gnas dros po 'khor stong dang / lha mo lcags kyu can 'khor stong phrag bcu dang / lha mo gnas ldan ma 'khor lnga stong dang / rigs kyi bu mo dri ma med pa' 'od dang / gzhon nu rdo rje sde dang / lha'i bu blo rab brtan dang / lha mo 'phrog ma 'khor dang bcas pa la sogs pas bcom ldan 'das kyi spyān sngar dam tshig bcas nas li yul bsrung bar zhal kyis bzhes te / deng sang gi bar du yang 'phags pa byang chub sems dpa' 'di brgyad dang / rnam thos kyi sras la sogs pa'i mgon po dang / lha dang / klu dang / lha mo rnam thos ma sangs rgyas gau to shan du gshegs te 'khor mang pos bskor nas bzhugs pa'i tshes byang chub sems dpa' 'di rnam dang / mgon po dang lha klu rnam ga la bzhugs bzhugs pa'i gnas dang / dam tshig blangs pa'i sar da dung yang yul srung zhing byin gyis rlob / mgon rtags dang mshan ma dag kyang 'byung / (Cone 174a4–b2; Derge 174b1–6; Ganden 544b5–545a5; Narthang 427b1–7; Peking 451a5–b3). Translation based on Em-*

The Eight Protectors in this text do not appear as a separate group, but with *bodhisattvas* and other divine beings. However, the sequence of the Eight Protectors still has some sort of pattern, representing the concept of the Eight Protectors familiar to people during that time. Here the total number of the retinue is 128,500, indicating a relatively later origin compared with that of the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga* and the Khotanese manuscript P. 2893.

2.5. P. T. 960 *Li yul chos kyī lo rgyus, or Religious History of the Khotan Country*

Among all texts relating to the Eight Protectors of Khotan, the Tibetan manuscript P. T. 960 is considered to be the latest. It was probably composed in the second part of the 9th century, after the end of the Tibetan dominion of Dunhuang in the middle of the 9th century.²⁰ Lines 32–34 of the manuscript are about the Eight Divine Protectors:

As regards the non-decaying of the good religion in the Khotan country and the Eight Great Resident Protectors of the country, there are the great protector Vaiśramaṇa, the general Sanjaya, Aparājita, Gaganasvara, Suvāṇamāla, Aṃgūśa', Sthānavatī, the *nāga*-king Gṛhāvātapta and the rest. Their vowed retinues, the guardians in total, are three myriads, and the *deva* are one thousand five hundred and seven.²¹

It is worth noting that, with the one exception of *devī* Aṃgūśa', the names of the Eight Protectors here are mostly transcribed from Sanskrit or Khotanese, while they are all translated into Tibetan in the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga* and the *Prophecy of the Khotan Country*. With regard to the sequence of the Eight Protectors, there is only one difference from the Khotanese manuscript P. 2893 and the Tibetan text *Prophecy of the Kho-*

merick, *Tibetan Texts*, 12–15, with minor revisions. See also Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts I*, 96–97; Zhu, “Youguan Yutian de zangwen wenxian,” 29–30.

²⁰ Zhu Lishuang, “Jiu shiji Yutian de famie gushi.”

²¹ *Li yul du dam pa'i chos myi 'jig pa dang / yul gyi srungs ma chen po / brygad bzhugs pa la // mgon po chen po be sha ra ma ni / sde dpon sa nye / a pa ra dzI ta / gha gha na swa ra // su gar na ma la / lcags kyu / sta na ba ti / klu 'i rgyal po 'gra ha bad ta la stsogs pa / de dag gi 'khor dam tshig can // spyir srung ba ni sum khri / lha stong lnga bgya rtsa bdun srung ngo //*. The translation is based on Thomas *Tibetan Literary Texts I*, 310, with revisions.

tan Country, that is, the Nagā King Gṛhāvatapta, who was the sixth guardian in the two previous texts, but now dropped to the eighth position.

The Eight Protectors of Khotan and their sequence as recorded in the above texts may be illustrated by the following table (tab. 1)

<i>Candrakarabhasūtra</i>	<i>Prophecy of Gośrṅga</i>	P. 2893	<i>Prophecy of the Khotan Country</i>	P. T. 960	Sanskrit
難勝天子(1) <i>Devaputra Aparājita</i>	lha Mi pham pa (3)	Aparājai [ja]tta (3)	lha gZhan gyis mi thubpa (3)	A pa ra dzI ta (3)	Aparājita
散脂夜叉大將 (2) General of the <i>yakṣas Saṃjñāya</i>	byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po 'Du shes can (2)	Sam. nī (2)	gnod sbyin gyi sde dpon Yang dag Shes (2)	sde dpon Sa nye (2)	Samjñin /Saṃjñāya
*殺羊腳大夜叉 (3) Great <i>yakṣa</i> who has black sheep's feet	lha Nam mkha'i dbyangs (5)	Gaganasv Arā (4)	*Nam mkha'i spyān (4) Skt. Ākāśacakṣus	Gha gha na swa ra (4)	Gaganasvara
金花鬘夜叉 (4) <i>Yakṣa Suvarṇamāla</i>	lha gSer gyi phreng ba can (6)	Svarṇam Āra (5)	lha'i bu gSer phreng (5)	Su gar na ma La (5)	Suvarṇamāla
熱舍龍王 (5) <i>Nāga King Gṛhāvātāpta</i>	klu'i rgyal po Khyim 'tshig (4)	Grrahava Datti (6)	klu'i rgyal po gNas dros po (6)	klu 'i rgyal po 'Gra ha bad ta (8)	*Gṛhāvātāpta
阿那緊首天女 (6) <i>Devī</i> <i>Amgūśa'</i>	lha mo lCags kyu can (7)	Amkuśa (7)	lha mo lCags kyu can (7)	lCags kyu (6)	Amgūśa'
他難闍梨天女 (7) <i>Devī Sthānavatī</i>	lho mo gNas can (8)	Sthānāvā (8)	lha mo gNas ldan ma (8)	Sta na ba ti (7)	Sthānavatī
毗沙門王 (8) <i>King Vaiśramaṇa</i>	lha'i rgyal po rNam thos kyi bu (1)	Vrīśamaṃ (1)	rNam thos kyi sras (1)	mgon po chen po Be sha ra ma ni (1)	Vaiśramaṇa/Vaiśravaṇa

Table 1. The Eight Protectors of Khotan and their sequence as recorded in the texts.

From this table, we can see that, first, the *deva* Namkhé Chen (Tib. Nam mkha'i spyan), or Ākāśacakṣus, in the *Prophecy of the Khotan Country* must be a scribal error for Namkhé Yang (Tib. Nam mkha'i dbyangs) as in the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga*, its corresponding Sanskrit name is Gaganasvara, which is correctly interpreted by the Khotanese manuscript P. 2893 and the Tibetan manuscript P. T. 960. And in the Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra*, the deity in this place is written as *guyang jiao dayecha* (殺羊腳大夜叉). *Dayecha* means 'great *yakṣa*,' and *guyang* means 'black sheep,' so *guyang jiao* seems to indicate that this great *yakṣa* has a kind of special feet, but we really do not know what the feet are like nor can we find this deity in other Buddhist *sūtras* or other texts. However, the size of his retinue, which is 8,000, is the same as that of *deva* Gaganasvara in the *Prophecy of the Khotan Country* (wrongly written as Nam mkha'i spyan); therefore, they seem to have a close tie.

Second, the titles of these deities are diverse in the different texts. For example, Saṃjñāya is the General of the *yakṣas* (Chin. *yecha dajiang* 夜叉大將, Tib. *gnod sbyin gyi sde dpon*) in the Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra* and in the Tibetan *Prophecy of the Khotan Country*, while he is called *bodhisattva mahāsattva* (Tib. *byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po*) in the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga*, and General (Tib. *sde dpon*) in the manuscript P. T. 960. The various titles seem to indicate that their hierarchical order can be changed in different times.

Third, it seems that the positioning of the eight deities varies in each text, and this sequence has meaning. For example, Vaiśravaṇa is the eighth deity in the Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra* sequence, but he shifts to the first position in the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga* and maintains this position in the other texts. His title tells something too. He is King (Chin. *wang* 王) in the *Candragarbhasūtra* and Heavenly King (Tib. *lha'i rgyal po*) in the *Prophecy of Gośṛṅga*, but he is the Great Protector (Tib. *mgon po chen po*) in P. T. 960. As we know, the cult of Vaiśravaṇa was highly popular in medieval China and Khotan.

3. *The Eight Protectors of Khotan in the Dunhuang Chinese Manuscripts*

Among the many Dunhuang Chinese manuscripts there are a few related to the Eight Protectors of Khotan which have been discussed by Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang in their 1986 article on the Auspicious Images of Dunhuang.²²

By comparing the arrangement of every entry both in the manuscripts and in the inscriptions found in the Mogao Caves, Zhang Xiaogang pointed out that the manuscripts are likely copies of the inscriptions in the caves.²³ One such typical manuscript is S. 2113v. The manuscript contains four notes: (1) on the Buddhist Auspicious Images; (2) on a new shrine built by a monk called Ma Desheng (馬德勝) in 896; (3) of the inscription of the Nine Assemblies of the *Avatamsakasūtra*; and (4) on the Buddhist Auspicious Images again.²⁴ Since the manuscript mentions an event that happened in 896, the whole scroll should have been completed in the years after 896. Lines 48–52 of the first part are about the Eight Protectors of Khotan:

²² Zhang Guangda 张广达 and Rong Xinjiang 荣新江, “Dunhuang Ruixiangji, ruixiangtu ji qi fanying de Yutian 敦煌瑞象记瑞象图及其反应的于阗 [The Records on the Auspicious Images, the Depictions of the Auspicious Images from Dunhuang and their Reflection of Khotan],” in *Dunhuang Tulufan wenxian yanjiu wenji* 敦煌吐鲁番文献研究文集 [Essays on Texts Concerning Dunhuang and Turfan], comp. Beijing Daxue zhonggushi yanjiushi 北京大学中古史研究室 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1986), 168–176, 209–211.

²³ Zhang Xiaogang 張小剛, “Dunhuang gantong gushihua bangti chaolugao yanjiu 敦煌感通故事畫榜題抄錄稿研究. A Study on the Manuscripts of the Inscriptions of the Images of Miracle Stories in Dunhuang,” in *Qingzhu Rao Zongyi xiansheng 95 huadan dunhuangxue guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 慶賀饒宗頤先生 95 華誕敦煌學國際學術研討會論文集. *Essays on the International Conference on the Occasion of the 95th Birthday of Professor Jao Tsung-I*, ed. Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 404–423; Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 356–377.

²⁴ See Lionel Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tunhuang in the British Museum* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1957), no. 5553; Zhang et al., “Dunhuang Ruixiangji,” 169; Sha Zhi 沙知, ed., *Ying cang Dunhuang wenxian (hanwen fojing yiwai bufen)* 英藏敦煌文獻(漢文佛經以外部份) [Dunhuang Manuscripts in British Collections (Chinese Texts other than Buddhist Scriptures)] vol. 4 (Chengdu: Sichuan People’s Publishing House, 1991), 6–10.

Deva Gaganasvara protects the Kingdom of Khotan. *Deva* Suvarṇamāla protects the Kingdom of Khotan. *Deva* Suvarṇamāla (Saṃjñāya) protects the Kingdom of Khotan. *Devī* Amgūśa' protects the Kingdom of Khotan. North. *Deva*, Heavenly King, Vaiśravaṇa protects the Kingdom of Khotan. *Deva* Aparājita protects the Kingdom of Khotan. *Deva* Mahākāla protects the Kingdom of Khotan. *Devī* Sthānavatī protects the Kingdom of Khotan.²⁵

The Chinese translations of all the deities' names in this manuscript are quite different from those of the Chinese *Candragarbhasūtra* with the exception of Vaiśravaṇa, and we believe the names in S. 2113v are transcribed from Khotanese (see below). Considering that the Khotanese manuscript P. 2893 and the Tibetan manuscript P. T. 960 all transcribe the names of the Eight Protectors, it may be safe to deduce that S. 2113v provides us with their corresponding Chinese pronunciation. They must have been the standard names of the Eight Protectors of Khotan in Dunhuang in the 9th and 10th centuries.

Here in S. 2113v, according to one inscription in Mogao Cave 108, *Suonamoli shen* (莎那摩利神) '*deva* Suvarṇamāla' is a scribal error for *Suoyemoli shen* (莎耶摩利神) '*deva* Saṃjñāyamāla,' which, in turn, is a scribal error of *Suoye shen* (莎耶神) '*deva* Saṃjñāya.' We will come back to this issue later. Moreover, the small word *bei* (北), "north," after the names of the first four deities seems to indicate the position of the deities in the caves. Apparently, the first four are placed in the south, and the other four on the north wall of the cave.

Comparing the deities' names in S. 2113v with those in P. 2893 and P. T. 960, we believe that the former are more likely from Khotanese, but not from Sanskrit or Tibetan. For example, *suona* (莎那) is apparently derived from the Khotanese *svarṇa*, and not from the Sanskrit *suvarṇa* which would be transcribed as *sufala* (蘇伐刺) in medieval Chinese.²⁶

²⁵ 迦迦那莎利神守護于闐國。莎那末利神守護于闐國。莎那(耶)摩利神守護于闐國。阿闍闍天女守護[于]闐國。北。毗沙[門]天王神守護于闐國。阿婆羅質多神守護于闐國。摩訶迦羅神守護于闐國。悉他那天女[守]護于闐國。See Zhang et al., "Dunhuang Ruixiangji," 169, 175.

²⁶ Ernest John Eitel, *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism, Being a Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary* (Tokyo: Sanshusha, 1904), 166; William Eduard Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1975), 479.

This is further evidence demonstrating that the Eight Protectors at the Mogao Caves were transmitted from Khotan.

S. 2113	P. 2893	P. T. 960	Sanskrit
迦迦那莎利神	Gaganasvarā	Gha gha na swa ra	Gaganasvara
莎那末利神	Svarṇamāla	Su gar na ma la	Suvarṇamāla
莎那 (耶) 摩 利神	Samñī	Sa nye	Suvarṇamāla (Samjñāya)
阿隅闍天女	Aṃkuśa	lCags kyu	Aṃgūśa'
毗沙門天王神	Vrīśamaṃ	Be sha ra ma ni	Vaiśravaṇa
阿婆羅質多神	Aparājai[ja]tta	A pa ra dzI ta	Aparājita
摩訶迦羅神	Grrahavadatti	klu 'i rgyal po 'Gra ha bad ta	Mahākāla
悉他那天女	Sthānāva	Sta na ba ti	Sthānavatī

Table 2. The Eight Protectors of Khotan in S. 2113v and their counterparts in P. 2893 and P. T. 960.

From the table we find that the names of the Eight Divine Protectors in the three manuscripts correspond surprisingly well. However, there is one exception: that is *deva* Mahākāla. While the *nāga* king Gṛhāvatapta is found in P. 2893 and P. T. 960, he is replaced by *deva* Mahākāla in both the manuscript S. 2113v and in the paintings of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves (see below). What is the origin of this substitution? Unfortunately, so far, we have found no reference. As is well known, Mahākāla is a highly important deity in Tibetan Buddhist culture, per-

haps even one of the most important protectors of Tibet in history.²⁷ However, as we will show below, iconographically our Mahākāla in question is totally different from his counterparts in Tibet.

4. *The Eight Protectors of Khotan in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang*

The Eight Protectors of Khotan are painted in fourteen of the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang, in Caves 9, 25, 39, 45, 98, 100, 108, 126, 146, 340, 342, 397, 401, 454 and in Yulin Cave 33 (Chin. Yulin ku 榆林窟). Since we only investigated the Mogao Caves with the Eight Protectors of Khotan, we will skip the discussion of Yulin Cave 33 in this article. Luckily for us, some of the Chinese inscriptions that identify the individual deities are still readable in the Mogao Caves, such as in Cave 108. Cave 108 was constructed around 939 by Zhang Huaiqing (fl. 10th c., 張懷慶), a high military official of the Guiyijun regime.²⁸ The images of the Eight Protectors of Khotan in this cave as well as their inscriptions are relatively well preserved compared with others, so we will start our identification of the deities from here.

It should first be noted that, as we will discuss below, the Eight Protectors in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves are usually depicted in the first to fourth rectangles of the northern and southern slopes of the entrance corridor (counting from the west—hereafter same direction). Each deity is depicted within a rectangular frame, one next to the other, forming a long decorative band of four rectangles. Second, the arrangement of the deities in the various caves is always the same, which means that the

²⁷ See Réne de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (Hague: Mouton & co., 1956), 38–67.

²⁸ Jin Weinuo 金维诺, “Dunhuang kukan mingshu kao 敦煌窟龕名数考 [Notes on Names and Numbers of Dunhuang Caves],” *Wenwu 文物 Cultural Relics* 5 (1959): 51; He Shizhe 贺世哲, “Cong gongyangren tiji kan Mogaoku bufen dongku de yingjian niandai 从供养人题记看莫高窟部分洞窟的营建年代. The Construction Date of Some Mogao Caves in View of Donors’ Inscriptions,” in *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji 敦煌莫高窟供养人题记 [Donors’ Inscriptions of Dunhuang Mogao Caves]*, ed. Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 223–224; Ma De 马德, *Dunhuang Mogaoku shi yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟史研究 [A Study on the History of Dunhuang Mogao Caves]* (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), 129–130.

same image always appears in the same place in the different caves. Third, their iconographic features in the different caves are often very similar, in some cases nearly identical, suggesting that they were based on the same sketch model (Chin. *huagao* 畫稿). Cave 108 is unique in one feature, that is, the Eight Protectors are depicted in the second to fifth rectangles from the west because the first two figures depicted at the beginning of the sequence in the two slopes of its passageway are the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Ākāśagarbha. The inscriptions from the third to the fifth deity of the northern slope read:

(3) *Mohejialuo shenhua Yutianguo* 摩訶迦羅神護于闐國 *Deva Mahākāla* protects the Kingdom of Khotan.

(4) *Apoluozhiduo [...] huo Yu [...] guo* 阿婆羅質多 [...] 護于[...]國 *Deva Aparājita* protects the Kingdom of Khotan.

(5) *Pishamen tianwang shouhu Yutianguo* 毗沙門天王守護于闐國 *Deva*, heavenly king, Vaiśravaṇa protects the Kingdom of Khotan.

The inscription related to the third deity of the southern slope reads:

(3) *Suoyemoli shen huo Yutianguo* 莎耶摩利神護于闐國 *Deva Saṃjñāyamāla* protects the Kingdom of Khotan.²⁹

With regard to the four deities on the northern slope of the passageway of Cave 108, the second deity starting from the west, a beautifully dressed lady with a horse head, is also at the beginning of the sequence in other caves in Dunhuang displaying the group of divine protectors of Khotan. The inscription beside the image of this deity in Cave 98 reads: *Xita [...]* (*na*) *tiannü* 悉他[...] (那) 天女 [...] ‘*devī Sthānavatī [...]*’; that in Cave 126 reads: *Xitana tiannü hu Yutian[guo]* 悉他那天女護于闐[國] ‘*devī Sthānavatī* protects the Kingdom of Khotan’; and in Cave 146 it reads: [...] (*Xi*)*tana tian* [...] (*nü*) *hu Yutianguo* [...] (悉) 他那天□ (女) 護于闐國 ‘*devī Sthānavatī* protects the Kingdom of Kho-

²⁹ See also Paul Pelliot et al., *Grottes de Touen-Houang. Carnet de notes de Paul Pelliot: inscriptions et peintures murales II* (Paris: Collège de France, Instituts d’Asie, Centre de recherche sur l’Asie centrale et la Haute Asie, 1983), 21; Zhang Xiaogang 張小剛, “Dunhuang ruixiangtu zhong de Yutian huguo shenwang 敦煌瑞像图中的于闐护国神王 . Protection Gods of Khotan in Dunhuang Auspicious Image Paintings.” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 *Dunhuang Research* 89.1 (2005): 51; Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 190.

tan.³⁰ Thus, undoubtedly, the four protectors of Khotan on the northern slope of the passageway of Cave 108 as well as of other Dunhuang Mogao Caves, from east to west, are: *deva* Vaiśravaṇa, *deva* Aparājita, *deva* Mahākāla, and *devī* Sthānavatī.³¹ They are exactly the latter four protectors in S. 2113v, in the same order (tab. 2).

As for the four protectors depicted on the southern slope of the passageway of Cave 108, the inscription beside the third icon reads *Suoyemoli shen hu Yutianguo* 莎耶摩利神護于闐國 ‘*deva* Saṃjñāyamāla protects the Kingdom of Khotan.’ Referring to S. 2113v previously discussed, we may easily deduce that the other three deities beside him are *deva* Gaganasvara, *deva* Suvarṇamāla and *devī* Aṃgūśa’. Zhang Xiaogang paid attention to the Eight Protectors of Khotan in the Dunhuang caves in his 2005 article. However, he confused the relation between S. 2113v and the icons in the caves, and suggested that the four deities on the southern slope of the passageway are: an unknown *nāga* king, *deva* Gaganasvara, *deva* Saṃjñāyamāla and *devī* Aṃgūśa’.³² This is not the case. According to our investigation, we believe these four deities are, instead, from east to west: *deva* Gaganasvara, *deva* Suvarṇamāla, *deva* Saṃjñāyamāla and *devī* Aṃgūśa’. Furthermore, according to the literary texts and documents discussed in the first section of this paper, we believe that the name Saṃjñāyamāla has been mistaken from Saṃjñāya. Moreover, as mentioned above, the second sentence *Suonamoli shen shouhu Yutianguo* ‘*deva* Suvarṇamāla protects the Kingdom of Khotan’ in S. 2113v is a scribal error for *Suoyemoli shen shouhu Yutianguo* ‘*deva* Saṃjñāyamāla protects the Kingdom of Khotan.’ The evidence is provided here by the inscription of Cave 108. Why did all these mistakes occur? Likely, this was due to scribal errors made by the artists who painted the two deities; in fact, the Chinese characters *suona* (莎那) and *suoye* (莎耶) used to transcribe their names are very similar.

The inscription of this deity also partly remains in Cave 98: *Suoye* [...] 莎耶 [...] ‘Saṃjñāya [...],’ and in Cave 126: [...] *shen hu Yutianguo* []

³⁰ See Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 173.

³¹ Cf. Zhang, “Dunhuang ruixiangtu,” 51–52.

³² *Ibid.*, 52.

神護于闐國 ‘*deva* [...] protects the Kingdom of Khotan,’³³ thus further confirming our identification.

To sum up, the four protectors of Khotan on the southern slope of the passageway of Cave 108 as well as in other Dunhuang Mogao Caves are, from east to west: *deva* Gaganasvara, *deva* Suvarṇamāla, *deva* Saṃjñāya and *devī* Amṅūśa’. Like the four deities on the northern slope of the passageway in the caves, they are identical with the former four protectors listed in S. 2113v, and even their order is the same.


Returning to the record about the Eight Protectors of Khotan in S. 2113v, we agree with Zhang Xiaogang that this document is copied from the image inscriptions in the caves. Thus, the former four protectors identified in the manuscript are the four deities painted on the southern slope of the passageway from east to west, and the latter four protectors of S. 2113v are the four deities on the northern slope of the passageway from east to west. The smaller word ‘north’ after *devī* Amṅūśa’ in the manuscript indicates that the following four protectors are on the northern slope. This is exactly the same case as in the caves.

We investigated all fourteen Dunhuang Mogao caves that bear paintings of the Eight Protectors of Khotan. Table 3 shows their arrangement in the caves. They are systematically painted on the two slopes of the passageway ceiling in each of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves. Four protectors are depicted on the southern slope, and the other four on the northern slope. Their position is fixed, usually at the western end of the passageway. The protectors are displayed from the first to the fourth rectangles, with only two exceptions, in Caves 108 and 454, where they are placed in the second to fifth rectangle starting from the west.

Southern slope					
E	(1) <i>Deva</i> Gaganasvara	(2) <i>Deva</i> Suvarṇamāla	(3) <i>Deva</i> Saṃjñāya	(4) <i>Devī</i> Amṅūśa’	W
Passageway					
E	(5) <i>Deva</i> Vaiśravaṇa	(6) <i>Deva</i> Aparājita	(7) <i>Deva</i> Mahākāla	(8) <i>Devī</i> Sthānavatī	W
Northern slope					

³³ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 189–190.

Table 3. Arrangement of the Eight Protectors of Khotan in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves



Southern slope					
E	(1) <i>Deva</i> Gaganasvara	(2) <i>Deva</i> Suvarṇamāla	(3) <i>Deva</i> Saṃjñāya	(4) <i>Devī</i> Aṃgūśa'	W
Passageway					
E	(5) <i>Deva</i> Vaiśravaṇa	(6) <i>Deva</i> Aparājita	(7) <i>Deva</i> Mahākāla	(8) <i>Devī</i> Sthānavatī	W
Northern slope					




Figure 1. Arrangement of the Mural with figures of the Eight Protectors of Khotan on the two slopes of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925.

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Besides the Eight Protectors, there are other images painted on the two slopes of the passageway of each of the fourteen caves, some of which are related to Khotan, such as depictions of Auspicious Images, stories about the establishment of the Kingdom of Khotan and Buddhist historical and legendary stories. A few examples include the ‘Auspicious Image of the Buddha offering a pearl to the thief’ (Chin. *shibaozhu ruixiang* 施寶珠瑞像); the ‘Image of the double-bodied Buddha’ (Chin. *Shuangshen xiang* 雙身像); ‘Śāriputra and Vaiśravaṇa breaching the lake’ (Chin. *Shelifo he Bishamen juehai* 舍利弗和毗沙門決海); and ‘The arhat blocking the sun with a single hand’ (Chin. *Zhishou zhe tian* 只手遮天).

In what follows, we would like to give some details of the Eight Protectors. First, the four southern divine protectors:

(1) *Deva Gaganasvara* (fig. 2): he wears armour covering his body to the knees and a scarf. He has bare feet. His right hand holds a knotty club; his left hand is in front of his chest. He is the fourth from the west in Caves 9, 39, 45, 98, 126, 146, 340, 397; the fifth in Caves 108 and 454; and damaged in Caves 25, 100, 401. As for Cave 342, we are unsure of the identification because the painting has subsequently been covered by the construction of a door.³⁴

³⁴ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 186–187.



Figure 2. Mural with figure of *Deva Gaganasvara*: Left: The fourth deity from west, south slope of the passageway of Cave 98. Dunhuang (923–925). Right: The fifth deity from west, north slope of the passageway of Cave 108. Dunhuang (ca. 939).

(2) *Deva Suvarṇamāla* (fig. 3): he is almost naked except for a short *dhoti*, and a scarf wrapped around his body. He has six arms. Two arms are raised up, with the right holding a *vajra*, and the left holding a mirror; his middle two hands are in front of his chest, the right holding a sword and the left holding a white conch shell; and of his other pair of hands, the right hangs down and the left holds a stick/sceptre topped with a flaming jewel. He is the third figure from the west in Caves 9, 98, 126, 340, 397, 401; the fourth in Caves 108 and 454; and the second in Caves 39, 45, 146. The painting is damaged in Caves 25 and 100.³⁵

³⁵ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 187–188.



Figure 3. Mural with figure of *Deva Suvarṇamāla*. Left: third deity from west, southern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925. Right: fourth deity from west, southern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 108, Dunhuang, ca. 939.

(3) *Deva Saṃjñāya* (fig. 4): he wears a short suit of armour like that of *deva Gaganasvara*, with a long scarf around his body. His two hands cross in front of his stomach, with the right on the top and the left holding a staff/sceptre. His two feet step on a naked demon. The demon was omitted in Caves 45, 146, 340, 401. *Deva Saṃjñāya* is the second figure from the west in Caves 9, 98, 126, 340, 397, 401; and the third in Caves 39, 45, 108, 146, 454. The painting is damaged in Cave 25 and unclear in Cave 100.³⁶

³⁶ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 189–190.



Figure 4. Mural with figure of *Deva Saṃjñāya*. Left: second deity from west, southern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925. Right: third deity from west, southern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 108, Dunhuang, ca. 939.

(4) *Devī Aṃgūśa'* (fig. 5): she is a beautifully dressed lady. Her right hand holds a flaming jewel, and her left hand holds a lotus. There are four flaming jewels around her feet. She is the first from the west in Caves 9, 98, 39, 45, 126, 146, 340, 397, 401; and the second in Caves 108 and 454. The painting is damaged in Cave 25 and unclear in Cave 100. The figure in Cave 45 was repainted in a later period, in the manner of a bodhisattva, but judging from the remaining old lines and colour, she must be *devī Aṃgūśa'*.³⁷

³⁷ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 175–178.



Figure 5. Mural with figure of *Devī Aṃgūṣā*. Left: first deity from west, southern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925. Right: second deity from west, southern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 108, Dunhuang, ca. 939.

The following four divine protectors are found on the northern slope of the passageway:

(1) *Deva Vaiśravaṇa* (fig. 6): he is depicted in his attire of a heavenly king, wearing knee-length armour, boots and a long scarf around his body. His right hand holds a trident, and his left hand holds a *stūpa*. His feet step on a small demon. He is the fourth from the west in Caves 9, 39, 45, 98, 126, 340, 397; the fifth in Caves 98 and 454; and the first in Cave 25. The painting is completely damaged in Cave 100, and the lower half of the guardian’s body is damaged in Cave 401. His attributes are slightly different in Cave 146, with his right hand holding a stick and the left hand touching his face.³⁸

³⁸ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 184–186.



Figure 6. Mural with figure of *Deva Vaiśravaṇa*. Left: fourth deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925. Right: fifth deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 108, Dunhuang, ca. 939.

(2) *Deva Aparājita* (fig. 7): he wears a short *dhoti* and a scarf around his body. His legs are bare. His right hand is in front of his chest, as if in the *vitarkamudrā*, and his left hand holds an incense burner. He is the third from the west in Caves 9, 39, 45, 98, 126, 146, 340, 397, 401; the fourth in Caves 108 and 454; and the second in Cave 25. The painting is damaged in Cave 100. He was repainted in Caves 25 and 45 in a later period, but can still be identified. His attributes are slightly different in Cave 454, with his right hand holding a *vajra*. His attributes in Caves 126 and 146 also differ, with the left hand pinching a small item in front of his chest.

The lower half of his body is covered by mud in Cave 340, but the figure is still recognizable.³⁹



Figure 7. Mural with figure of *Deva Aparājita*. Left: third deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925. Right: fourth deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 108, Dunhuang, ca. 939.

(3) *Deva Mahākāla* (fig. 8): he has a very strong and massive body. He wears knee-length armour and boots, and a long scarf around his body. His two hands are in front of his chest, holding a plate of flaming jewels. He is the second from the west in Caves 9, 39, 45, 98, 126, 146, 340, 397, 401; the third in Caves 25, 108 and 454. The painting is damaged in Cave 100, and the lower half of the painting is damaged in Cave 397.⁴⁰

³⁹ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 182–183.

⁴⁰ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 178–182.



Figure 8. Mural with figure of *Deva Mahākāla*. Left: Second deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925. Right: third deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 108, Dunhuang, ca. 939.

(4) *Devī Sthānavatī* (fig. 9): this deity is beautifully dressed and has a horse head. Her right hand seizes a small staff in front of her chest or holds a long hook as in Cave 9; her left hand holds a flaming jewel. She is the first from the west in Caves 9, 39, 45, 98, 126, 146, 340, 397, 401; the second in Caves 108 and 454. The painting is damaged in Cave 100. The deity is the fourth figure in Cave 25 and was repainted in a later period, transforming her face into that of a lady instead of a horse and her right hand holding a *vajra*. Judging from the lines and colours used in the early period, the deity was definitely originally *devī Sthānavatī*.⁴¹

⁴¹ Cf. Zhang, *Dunhuang gangtonghua*, 170–174.



Figure 9. Mural with figure of *Devī Sthānavatī*. Left: first deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 98, Dunhuang, 923–925. Right: second deity from west, northern slope of the passageway of Mogao Cave 108, Dunhuang, ca. 939.

The arrangement of the Eight Protectors of Khotan in the Dunhuang Mogao caves can be summarised in the following two tables (tables 4.1 and 4.2).

Cave no. (D/P/Z)	4	3	2	1
9/167/155	Gaganasvara	Suvarṇamāla	Samjñāya	Aṃgûśa'
25/138/120	damaged	damaged	damaged	damaged
39/125/109	Gaganasvara	Samjñāya	Suvarṇamāla	Aṃgûśa'
45/120g/106	Gaganasvara	Samjñāya	Suvarṇamāla	Aṃgûśa'
98/74/42	Gaganasvara	Suvarṇamāla	Samjñāya	Aṃgûśa'
100/66/40	damaged	damaged	Samjñāya(?)	Aṃgûśa'(?)
108/52/39	(5) Gaganasvara	(4) Suvarṇamāla	(3) Samjñāya	(2) Aṃgûśa'
126/22/23	Gaganasvara	Suvarṇamāla	Samjñāya	Aṃgûśa'
146/8/12	Gaganasvara	Samjñāya	Suvarṇamāla	Aṃgûśa'
340/154/140	Gaganasvara	Suvarṇamāla	Samjñāya	Aṃgûśa'
342/157a/142	unknown	unknown	Samjñāya (?)	Aṃgûśa'(?)
397/146a/194	Gaganasvara	Suvarṇamāla	Samjñāya	Aṃgûśa'
401/142g/197	damaged	Suvarṇamāla	Samjñāya	Aṃgûśa'
454/119/228	(5) Gaganasvara	(4) Suvarṇamāla	(3) Samjñāya	(2) Aṃgûśa'

Table 4.1. Arrangement of the Eight Protectors of Khotan on the southern slope of the passageways in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves (numbered from west to east) (Cave no. according to D = Dunhuang Academy, P = Paul Pelliot, Z = Zhang Daqian)

Cave no. (D/P/Z)	4	3	2	1
9 /167/155	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
25/138/120	Sthānavatī	Mahākāla	Aparājita	Vaiśravaṇa
39/125/109	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
45/120g/106	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
98/74/42	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
100/66/40	damaged	damaged	damaged	damaged
108/52/39	(5) Vaiśravaṇa	(4) Aparājita	(3) Mahākāla	(2) Sthānavatī
126/22/23	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
146/8/12	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
340/154/140	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
342/157a/142	Unknown	Unknown	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
397/146a/194	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
401/142g/197	Vaiśravaṇa	Aparājita	Mahākāla	Sthānavatī
454/119/228	(5) Vaiśravaṇa	(4) Aparājita	(3) Mahākāla	(2) Sthānavatī

Table 4.2. Arrangement of the Eight Guardians of Khotan in the northern slope of the passageways in Dunhuang Mogao Caves (numbered from west to east) (Cave no. according to D = Dunhuang Academy, P = Paul Pelliot, Z = Zhang Daqian)

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5. Dating of the Mogao Caves with Representations of the Eight Protectors of Khotan

The dating of the caves with the Eight Protectors of Khotan is clear in some cases and not in others. It is certain that they were all depicted during the late Tang (second half of the 9th century), Five Dynasties (907–958, 五代) and early Song (second half of the 10th century, 宋) periods, especially when there were close ties between the ruling family of the Guiyijun regime and the Kingdom of Khotan in the 10th century. As far as we know, the earliest cave with the Eight Protectors of Khotan is Cave 9 which was constructed around 892.⁴² The donors' portraits of the Dunhuang governor Suo Xun (r. 892–894, 索勳) and other high officials of the Guiyijun regime such as Zhang Chengfeng (?–910, 張承奉) are depicted on the two walls of the entrance corridor. Next is Cave 98, which was finished in 923–925. The cave was sponsored by the Dunhuang governor Cao Yijin.⁴³ Cave 100 was built by Cao Yijin's Uyghur wife and their son Cao Yuande (r. 935–939, 曹元德), the Dunhuang governor, in 939.⁴⁴ Around the same time, the construction of Cave 108 was carried out by Zhang Huaiqing.⁴⁵ Cave 454 was initially built by the Dunhuang governor Cao Yuanshen (r. 939–944, 曹元深) in 940–944, but its entrance corridor was reconstructed by the Dunhuang governor Cao Yangong (r. 974–976, 曹延恭) and his younger brother Cao Yanlu in 976.⁴⁶ Cave 342 is of the early Tang period and was reconstructed around 980 by Cao Yanlu, at that time the Dunhuang governor.⁴⁷

⁴² He, "Gongyangren tiji," 214.

⁴³ He, "Ibid.," 217–219; Ma, *Dunhuang Mogaoku shi yanjiu*, 115–119.

⁴⁴ He, "Gongyangren tiji," 222–223, Ma, *Dunhuang Mogaoku shi yanjiu*, 127–129.

⁴⁵ Jin, "Dunhuang kukan mingshu kao," 51; He, "Gongyangren tiji," 223–224; Ma, *Dunhuang Mogaoku shi yanjiu*, 129–130.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 130–134.

⁴⁷ He, "Gongyangren tiji," 230; Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu 敦煌石窟内容总录 [A Complete Catalogue of Dunhuang Caves]* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), 140.

There is no clear dating for the other caves. Cave 340 was initially built during the early Tang, but its entrance tunnel was repainted in the Guiyijun period of the Zhang (張) family (851–914).⁴⁸ Caves 39 and 45 were originally of the high Tang period (first half of the 8th century), but their entrance tunnels were reconstructed in the Guiyijun period of the Cao (曹) family (914–1006).⁴⁹ Cave 126 was begun in the high Tang period and completed after the year 781; it was rebuilt by Cao Yu-anzhong (r. 944–974, 曹元忠) in the Guiyijun period. The paintings on the two slopes of its passageway must have been produced when the cave was rebuilt.⁵⁰ Cave 146 was constructed in the Guiyijun period of the Cao family.⁵¹ Caves 397 and 401 were originally constructed in the Sui dynasty, but their passageways were painted during the Guiyijun period of the Cao family.⁵² Cave 25 was constructed in the late Guiyijun period of the Cao family.⁵³

We find that the position of the Eight Protectors is rather fixed in the larger scale caves constructed from the late 9th century to the first part of the 10th century, such as Caves 9, 98 and 108. The protectors' attributes in these different caves are also quite consistent. However, over time, the images became increasingly stylized, and sometimes very sketchy or even rough. For example, there is a small demon under the feet of *deva* Saṃjñāya in Caves 9, 98 and 108, but the demon is omitted in Caves 45, 146, 340 and 401, which may be due to the fact that the passageways of these caves were painted in a later period.

From the above tables we can also see that, first, in Caves 39, 45 and 146, the position of the *deva* Suvarṇamāla and *deva* Saṃjñāya changed. As mentioned above, this may be due to the similarity of their names in Chinese characters. Second, the order of the four protectors on the northern slope of the passageway of Cave 25 is reversed. Third, roughly before the second part of the 10th century, the Eight Protectors of Khotan

⁴⁸ Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*, 139.

⁴⁹ Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*, 19 and 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 161, 163.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 14.

were usually depicted in the first to fourth rectangles from the west of the two slopes of the entrance tunnel with only one exception, that is, in Cave 108, because the first two western deities of the two slopes of the passageway in this cave are two bodhisattvas, and the Eight Protectors of Khotan are accordingly moved to the second to fifth rectangles. However, in Cave 454, the Eight Protectors of Khotan are placed in the second to fifth rectangles again. We also notice that the deities painted in a later period (from the second part of the 10th century on) are often poorly drawn or coloured. These images demonstrate that, in the late 10th century, although the people of Dunhuang still worshipped the Eight Protectors of Khotan, they did not care about the exact features and position of the deities in the caves.

The importance of the Eight Protectors of Khotan in Dunhuang during the entire Guiyijun period is beyond doubt. They appeared in the Dunhuang caves from the late 9th to the 10th century, especially in the caves sponsored by the Dunhuang governors (Caves 9, 98, 100, 342, 454). Further, they were depicted directly above the heads of the donor portraits of the Dunhuang governors. This indicates not only a close political relation between Dunhuang and Khotan, but also the profound influence of Khotanese Buddhist art on the Dunhuang caves.

Abbreviations

Cone	Tangyur, Cone edition.
Derge	Kangyur, Derge edition.
Ganden	Ganden/Golden Manuscript Tangyur.
IOL Tib J	Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London (formerly in the India Office Library (IOL))
Peking	Tangyur, Peking edition
P.	Pelliot Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque National in Paris
P. T.	Pelliot Collection of Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque National in Paris
S.	Stein Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London
Narthang	Kangyur, Narthang edition
Stog	Tibetan Kangyur Manuscript of the Stog Palace Collection

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'Phags pa ri glang ru lung bstan pa [Prophecy of Gośrṅga]. In Narthang, *mdo sde, a*, vol. 76, 336b6–354b4;

'Phags pa ri glang ru lung bstan pa [Prophecy of Gośrṅga]. In Stog, *skabs gsum pa, rgyu mtshan nyid theg pa 'i skor, mdo sde, na*, vol. 63, 413a3–429a7.

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