BuddhistRoad
Dynamics in Buddhist Networks in Eastern Central Asia 6th–14th Centuries

BuddhistRoad Paper 6.1 Special Issue

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

Edited by
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BUDDHISTROAD PAPER

Peer reviewed

ISSN: 2628-2356

DOI: 10.13154/rub.br.119.104

You can find this publication also on the BuddhistRoad project homepage:

https://buddhistroad.ceres.rub.de/en/publications/

Please quote this paper as follows:

Scherrer-Schaub, Cristina, "Conveying India to the Pamir and Further Away: On Divine Hierarchy and Political Paradigms in Buddhist Texts," *BuddhistRoad Paper* 6.1 Special Issue: *Ancient Central Asian Networks. Rethinking the Interplay of Religions, Art and Politics across the Tarim Basin (5th–10th c.)*, ed. Erika Forte (2019): 107–148.

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BuddhistRoad is a project of

Centrum für Religionswissenschaftliche Studien
Center for Religious Studies

RUHR UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

SPONSORS:

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 725519).

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CONVEYING INDIA TO THE PAMIR AND FURTHER AWAY: ON DIVINE HIERARCHY AND POLITICAL PARADIGMS IN BUDDHIST TEXTS

CRISTINA SCHERRER-SCHAUB

Abstract

While relatively early we see that some of the prominent Indian gods and *diis minores* are current interlocutors of the Buddha, at some point epic's characters are introduced in Buddhist narrative and become even 'divinized/deified' figures, some of them as mere name, other with a subtle reference to their original and specific physiognomy if not pedigree. On their part, the lords of land essentials in regulating social order were possibly the first agents with whom the Buddhists entered mundane transactions with the hosting society for the sake of installing the institution. And the success of the enterprise was depending upon the subtle 'coalescence' of their respective common law and/or juridical system. The hierarchy of the various divinities attested in epigraphy and in secular documents while in a way indicates the degree of reciprocal permeability of the Buddhist institution and the outer society, equally informs the historian about the possible itineraries taken by texts and their conveyors.

1. *The Problematics and its Complexity*

As noted very long ago by Alfred Foucher, terrestrial presiding gods and celestial divinities, as well as all other sort of beings, were present in Buddhist textual and plastic narrative since its beginning as an integral part of the generic representation of the world. These entities were possibly perceived as such until their respective role was, metaphorically or effectively, transposed into a new religious/ideological conspectus. And this was certainly not done once for ever since, following the variety of societies where Buddhism moved along its history, that multitude of divine beings tended to acquire a new and distinct agency and, above all, this process modified the hierarchy of gods and divine beings. While some of the prominent gods, such as Indra/Śakra, Brahmā, Viṣṇu/Nārāyaṇa or Śiva/Maheśvara, but also *nāga*s, *yakṣa*s, and other *diis minores* were current interlocutors of the Buddha, at some point the epic's characters were equally included in the Buddhist narrative and, with time, even became 'divinized/deified' figures—some of them as a mere name, others with a subtle reference to their original and specific features.

On their part, local presiding (and protecting) gods, the lords of the land, essentials in regulating the social order, were possibly the first agents with whom the Buddhist religious directly or indirectly entered the necessary practical transactions for the sake of installing the institution in a precise 'place of earth' where Buddhism was not yet installed. And the modalities of mutual agreement, and even competition, between the two institutions in matter of political and social control were naturally depending on the subtle 'coalescence' of their respective common law and/or juridical system.[1] The precise organisation and distribution of territory in ancient time is not easy to envision.[2] The treatises on politics, economics, and administration may guide our general understanding, and the rules governing the monastic institution, particularly when they are confronted with public (and dated) records, may reach a plausible assessment of historical facts.

In the perspective of the normative narrative and of its casuistry, Gregory Schopen cites the case of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya, which contemplates the worship of territorial lords/local deities dwelling in a particular place, here called *naivāsika*.[3] The same term is also applied to a monk who is a 'permanent resident' of a particular monastic site (cf.

[1] Exemplary in this respect and well-documented is the case of Japan, where the minor and major local gods, the *kami*, are present everywhere, cf. *Hōbōgirin.*, vol. IV, 327–329a, 327 s.v. *chinju*; See also Bernhard Faure, David M. Moerman, and Gaynor Sekimori, ed., *Shugendō. L'histoire et la culture d'une religion japonaise. Shugendō. The History and Culture of a Japanese Religion* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2009), 5–6 (and notes), which contains important contributions illustrating the problematics of the *kami*-buddha relationship.

[2] Texts like Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* inform us about the ritual establishment of a territorial space and its demarcation in the Hindu context; see Michael Witzel, "The Brahmins of Kashmir," in *A Study of Nīlamata. Aspects of Hinduism in Ancient Kashmir*, ed. Yasuke Ikari (Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities, 1994), 249–250 and notes.

[3] Gregory Schopen, "On Buddhist Monks and Dreadful Deities: Some Monastic Devices for Updating the Dharma," in *Gedenkschrift J.W. de Jong*, ed. Henk W. Bodewitz and Minoru Hara (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2004), 179–180.

the Latin *residentarius)*, as it appears in the "likewise Mūlasarvāstivādin commentary *Āgamakṣudrakavyākhyāna* of Śīlapālita" cited by Jonathan Silk in his detailed analysis of various categories of *bhikṣu*.[4] Later ritual manuals detail the ceremony of 'taking possession of the earth' that includes a mode or a particular form of contract in reciprocity between the officiant and the territorial lord/local deity—be it a *vṛkṣadeva* or whatever other owner of the place—a fact that the *jātaka*s narratively illustrate.

Buddhist textual, plastic, and figurative narrative shows that 'foreign' divinities do integrate quite easily a given society. Questions related to these phenomena are also known in Classical Antiquity. In commenting upon a passage of the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 55–116/120), Philippe Borgeaud stresses upon the importance of considering such questions in their historical complexity.[5] Tacitus is possibly among

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[4] Jonathan A. Silk, *Managing Monks. Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 151, n. 22. From a lexicographical point of view, the notion of *naivāsika/āvāsika*, that designates both the tutelary and the resident monk, presents a common feature shared by both referents: their right as 'temporary' resident of a place. Cf. the passage drawn from the *Avadānaśataka* (Silk, *Managing Monks*, 191) that narratively shows how a *bhikṣu* undirectly claims his right when visiting monks jeopardize his privileges. The *naivāsika bhikṣu* of the narrative manifests the same noxious attitude as some ferocious *numina,* one being 'pacified' with sanctions, the others with rituals.

[5] Philippe Borgeaud, *Aux origines de l'histoire des religions* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 2004), 72. "Il faut bien reconnaître que ce qui pousse les Anciens à la comparaison, et à ce qu'ils appellent eux-mêmes "traduction" (*interpretatio*) [= Tacitus *Germaniae* xliii, 4, 5], ce n'est pas d'abord un souci théorique. Mais bien l'expérience historique, incontestable et répétée, de la rencontre, du dépaysement, du choc culturel. La Grèce pas plus que Rome n'est isolée. Elle entretient des rapports de communication constants, commerciaux, conflictuels ou d'osmose culturelle, durant toute son histoire, avec ses voisins d'Anatolie, du Proche-orient, d'Iran, d'Egypte et d'Italie. Le relativisme culturel, quoiqu'en disent ses adeptes, trouve son origine et son expression dans des rapports de force. Il s'inscrit dans l'histoire, il prend forme dans un champ de mouvance et de transformation. Ses apologètes se comportent toutefois comme s'il en allait tout autrement, comme si les entités comparés étaient parfaitement, naturellement, distinctes les unes des autres. Ce qu'elles ne sont pas, bien entendu." In his article "Note Kuṣāṇa: a proposito di una recente interpretazione di Pharro," Gherardo Gnoli, while stressing the historical complexity of facts ("una complessa realtà storica", 694) and following the very complicated destiny of Pharro, shows the intricate series of factors that historian must take into account in studying the long journey of peculiar figures that may be subjected to a mediatory mode of transmission. See Gherardo Gnoli, "Note Kuṣāṇa: a proposito di una recente interpretazione di Pharro," in *Convegno internazionale sul tema: la Persia e l'Asia centrale da Alessandro al X secolo (Roma, 9–12 novembre 1994),* ed. Accademia Nazionale dei

the first intellectuals to use the expression *interpretatio* to refer to the 'translation' of the name of foreign gods into comparable figures of the Roman pantheon (*sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant, Germaniae* loc. cit).

Sylvain Lévi, in dealing with this subject in the specific context of Nepal, goes a step further:

> A rigid classification which simplistically divided divinities up under the headings, Buddhism, Śaivism, and Vaiṣṇavism, would be a pure nonsense; under different names, and at different levels, the same gods are for the most part common to different confession.[6]

It is commonplace to say that in the course of their history, the various cultural and social spheres move in interplay with a relative high degree of fluidity, favouring a process of osmosis as the result of historical interaction between the agents, a fact that is exemplarily illustrated in the practice of texts' translation and transmission.[7] But to see these phenomena as a mere fragmented whole would obscure, if not obliterate, the

Lincei and Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1996), 685–702.

[6] 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 d'Extrême-Orient* 5.3–4 (1905): 253–305. This passage is translated into English by Gellner in David Gellner, *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and Its Hierarchy of Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 76.

[7] Cf. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "Śa cu: Qu'y-a-t il au programme de la classe de philologie bouddhique?," in *Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Narita 1989*, ed. Ihara Shōren and Yamaguchi Zuihō (Tokyo: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), 216–217; Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "Scribes and Painters on the Road: Inquiry into Image and Text in Indian Buddhism and its Transmission to Central Asia and Tibet," in *The Art of Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent*, ed. Anupa Pande (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, National Museum Institute, 2009), 29: "Confronted quite early with the problematic of transmitting the teaching to a multilingual and multicultural milieu, particularly in Central Asia, Indian Buddhism has been thereby confronted with the complex problematic of translating, a fact that was not limited to the translation of text as such, but certainly influenced also the 'translation' of the narrative expressed in the production of visible works (painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.), as well as in dramatic performance"; see also Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "Copier, interpréter, transformer, représenter ou des modes de la diffusion des Écritures et de l'écrit dans le bouddhisme indien," in *Écrire et transmettre en Inde classique*, ed. Gérard Colas and Gerdi Gerschheimer (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2009), 159–161.

polysemic interplay that an entity whatsoever, be it a god, a word, or a narrative motif, may produce or activate under given spatio-temporal circumstances.

2. *Documented Microhistory: Mapping History with Fragmented Manuscripts*

That texts, like any other artefact, were conveyed from their native Indian milieu to the East via the Central Asian or the Southern maritime routes, is confirmed by several sources.[8]

The interest in investigating the dynamic and functionality of the various itineraries tracing the intellectual and cultural history of texts was revivified in the last decades of the past century, when new collections of Buddhist manuscripts came to considerably increase the preceding findings. The intensive study of the material that followed made accessible a Buddhist 'virtual mobile library', a collection of texts transported and diffused at various epochs by masters of the past who contributed to conveying Indian culture and religions beyond their native cradle. The detailed 'cartography' sketched by these findings invites the historian to further investigate the modalities of textual transmission and their impact on specific socio-political milieux. It also questions the whereabouts of the geographical proximity of collections of specific texts, as well as the presence and temporal coexistence of identical items located at far distance.

One of the changes in perspective that may arise in considering the text inventory of specific Buddhist sites situated along the so-called North and South Routes of the Tarim basin questions the idea of a North Route 'all Śrāvakayāna' and of a South Route 'all Mahāyāna', an idea that, to some extent, appears to be less 'heuristically probative' than

[8] The recent publication of Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann—*From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field. Stanford, June 15–19, 2009* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2014)—gives a clear and precious example of the phenomenon.

expected for the study of the micro-history of the Tarim oases.[9] Something that seems rather obvious, given that the two piedmonts bordering the Taklamakan desert maintained commercial relations, constantly favouring the exchange of letters and religious from both parts, often passing via Dunhuang (敦煌). This is magisterially illustrated by the survey of eleven routes (P. 2009) crossing the region of Turfan and connecting the two piedmonts of the Taklamakan desert, dated to the second part of the 8th century. This record attests the refined organisation of the system of communication and traffic in this region, lists the precise locations of 'transport cafés', and informs the reader about the practicability of the roads according to season.[10] In 789, Wukong (悟空), on his way from Khotan to Beš Balīq (Chin. Beiting 北庭, near Turfan) via Kučā and Qarašahr (Chin. Yanqi 焉耆), possibly took one of these paths.[11] We are told indeed that while Wukong was in Beiting, the monks there invited Śīladharma, the high dignitary of Khotan, to [come to Beiting in order to] translate the *Daśabhūmi*(*ka*), one of the three texts that Wukong re-

[9] The necessity of studying Buddhism from a broad perspective is, of course, not limited to this particular case. Buddhist religious were also literati and, as such, certainly did not confine their intellectual interest to a limited 'orthodoxical' library. We know, for instance, that fragments of the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta,* whose 'mahāyānistic' nature is undeniable, were found in Šorčuq, near Turfan. See Mauro Maggi, "The Manuscript T III S 16: Its Importance for the History of Khotanese Literature," in *Turfan Revisited: The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 457, pls. 35 and 36, 184a. In her recent article Duan Qing notes *à propos* a fragment of *Abhidharma* found in Khotan that "seems to imply that there was a possible existence of Śrāvakayāna Buddhism in this area". See Duan Qing, "Indic and Khotanese Manuscripts: Some New Finds and Findings from Xinjiang," in *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field. Stanford, June 15–19, 2009,* ed. Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2014), 269, 278, and 271. Actually, the fact that religious from various obediences were crossing in Khotan, as was the case everywhere, can now be readily admitted. The idea that the existence of texts of *Abhidharma* are necessarily linked to a particular school is another matter; see the present passage and n. 14.

[10] The ms., translated and annotated by Paul Pelliot, was posthumously published by Jean-Pierre Drège; see Paul Pelliot, *Les routes de la region de Turfan sous les T'ang suivi de l'histoire et la geographie anciennes de l'Asie centrale dans Innermost Asia* (Paris: Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises du College de France, 2002).

[11] Sylvain Lévi and Édouard Chavannes, "L'itinéraire d'Ou-K'ong (751–790)," *Journal Asiatique* 6 (1895): 365; Pelliot, *Les routes de la region de Turfan*, 154.

ceived in his hand together with other relics before leaving Udyāna/Uḍḍiyāna on his way back to China.[12] Incidentally, two of them are well-represented among the extant collections of Central Asian manuscripts. Fragmented mss. of the *Daśabhūmi*(*ka*)*sūtra* have indeed been found in Gilgit and in Turfan, while several fragments of the *Daśabalasūtra* (*Samyuktāgama*) were found in Turfan, in Dunhuang, and in undetermined sites of the northern route and Central Asia.[13] The reciprocal 'permeability' that we see at work among the Buddhist communities

[12] That Śīladharma was called to Beiting may be inferred from the record of Wukong's "Itinéraire": "Puis il partit encore de là et arriva dans l'arrondissement de Pei-t'ing; le député administrateur de ce district, le ya-che-ta-fou Yang Si-kou, avec les religieux du temple Long-hing, demandèrent au çramaṇa supérieur du royaume de Ya-tien (Khoten) Che-lo-ta-mo (Çīladharma), de traduire le Che-ti-king (Daçabhûmi sûtra)." (Lévi and Chanannes, "L'itinéraire d'Ou-K'ong," 365–366). In this period of political unrest (789–792), the religious link established between Beiting and Khotan might have equally served the political affairs. The three texts in question—the *Daśabhūmi(ka)sūtra*, the *Daśābalasūtra* and the **Pariṇamana/Pariṇāmacakra*—were the texts that Wukong received in his hand from the abbott of the convent while leaving Uḍḍiyāna for his homeland and that, interestingly enough, are said to have been physically kept in the form of a bound volume, "[Q]ui formaient ensemble un cahier; (il lui donna en même temps la relique d'une dent du grand saint Çakya-Muni; élévant ces objets au dessus de sa tête, il témoigna son affliction et en pleurant les lui remis pour qu'ils fussent des présents pour l'accréditer qu'il offrirait à son saint souverain[…]". See ibid., 359–360. These texts were translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Śīladharma. The Tibetan translation of the *yoṅs su bsṅo ba'i 'khor lo* is recorded in the Lhan dkar (Ldan dkar) Catalogue (no. 262) among the group of mahāyāna *sūtra*s translated from the Chinese. The canonical version (Tōh. 242) attributes the translation to the *bhikṣu* and *tripiṭakadharin* of Khotan Śīladharma (Tib. *Li'i [yul] dge sloṅ sde snod gsum daṅ ldan pa Śī la dha rma*) in collaboration with Ban de rNam par mi rtog (*mdo źa*, folio 306a7). Paul Pelliot, "Notes à propos d'un catalogue du Kanjur," *Journal Asiatique* 4.1 (1914): 135–137, finds confirmation for the fact that the text had been translated in Beiting in the colophon of a ms. that he brought back from Dunhuang (P 3918, T. 998), which reads: "Traduit par Çīladharma de Khotan dans le Long-hing-sseu de Pei-t'ing," see Pelliot, "Notes à propos d'un catalogue du Kanjur," 136. rNam par mi rtog is an interesting person. His personal name, dates, and collaboration with Hwa śaṅ Zab mo, with whom he translated the *Daśacakrakṣitigarbha* (Tōh. 239), suggest that he may have been close to the milieu of the Chinese teachers involved in the religious controversy that, at some point, the Tibetan *btsan po* Khri sroṅ lde btsan, in coordination with other religious, decided to arbitrate and which gave birth to the famous Samye (Tib. bSam yas) debate. He could also have been part of the team that gathered the literary sources of the '"Cycle of Khotan"', the texts conveying the Buddhist history of the region.

[13] See Harrison and Hartmann, *From Birch Bark to Digital Data*, 109, 196, 206, 231, 238 and 249.

studded along the two piedmonts partially reflects what we know from the course of religious study that was practised in Khotan at the end of the 7th century and recorded in the life of Devendraprajñā.[14]

In the light of the texts of the Gilgit collection that "grew over a long period of perhaps about a century" (from the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 8th century),[15] and that contain, among other items, some "ancillary treatises" on medicine and grammar,[16] it may be useful to recall that these regions, particularly Taxila and the Sindh, were the cradle of Indian culture, where impressive figures such as Pāṇini (5th c. BCE) or Caraka (first centuries CE)[17] spent their *floruit*. This is certainly not to

[14] See Antonino Forte, "Le moine khotanais Devendraprajña," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 66 (1979): 290. "Devendraprajñā était originaire de Khotan où il était éminent par sa doctrine dont Tche-cheng fait ainsi l'éloge: "Pour ce qui concerne ses études, il était à même de pénétrer dans le Grand et dans le Petit [Véhicule]; pour ce qui concerne ses élucidations, il se servait soit des [vérités] réelles soit des [vérités] communes. De la technique des *dhāraṇī* et des théories des *dhyāna* il avait une compréhension parfaite" Cf. by contrast *supra* n. 9. Incidentally, the fact that the *Book of Zambasta* (Z) chooses a particular set of texts in support of the teaching about the advantages and disadvantages of being a *śrāvaka* or a *mahāyānist*, besides painting a peculiar type of *śrāvaka* that metaphorically opposes him, a merchant, to the noble Mahāyāna, "as noble as the royal class" (Z 13.30–33), indicates that the discussion closely concerned the Khotanese. See on that Ronald E. Emmerick, *The Book of Zambasta. A Khotanese Poem on Buddhism* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 184–211. The narrative related to king Vijaya Dharma[I] (+746–756+) in the 'légende de fondation' inserts a passage that seems to suggest that when the Mahāsāṃghika and the *bhikṣu* Dharmānanda, brother of the king, came to Khotan, "eight *vihāra*s belonging to 'Dro tir and eight *vihāra*s of Kam śeṅ" were yield by/granted to the Mahāsāṃghika Nikāya (*maẖāsaṃghika'i sder gtogs ⇒ gtogs : saṃdhā-*); Ronald E. Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 40–41.

[15] Oskar von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts. An Ancient Buddhist Library in Modern Research," in *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field. Stanford, June 15–19, 2009,* ed. Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2014), 84 and notes.

[16] Von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscript," 82–83.

[17] Cf. Wille who lists, among other things, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, declension exercises, grammar related to *Kātantra*, *Kātantra* of Śarvavarma; the *Chandoviciti* (on metrics); a list of synonyms on *śloka* (lexicography); names for the signs of the zodiac used in Eastern Asia (astronomy and astrology); on politics, the *Laghucāṇakyarājanītiśāstra*; treatises on medicine (conspicuously present in Khotan) the *Bheḍasaṃhitā* and *Siddhasāra* of Ravigupta. See Klaus Wille, "Survey of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Turfan Collection (Berlin)," in: *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist*

say that the Gilgit treatises were necessarily written in the region rather than to see, once again, how the large area around Gilgit, surrounded by the Himalaya, Hindukush, and Pamir, appears as the ideal hub of the multidirectional spread of Indian culture.[18] In this scenario, the Āyurvedic tradition, whose propensity to preventive medicine, favouring health education versus treatment, known by the authors of Antiquity, Chinese records, and other sources outside India, became central to the history of Khotan.[19] This scholarly tradition, as it is known, is often accompanied

Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field. Stanford, June 15–19, 2009, ed. Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2014), 187–211, in particular 209. Always in relation with the 'fluidity' that we have alluded to previously, and the fact that Buddhist religious were also literati, we may note that the *vidyāsthāna* practiced by the bodhisattva are praised in Mātṛceṭa's *Varṇārhavarṇa*, a text largely diffused in Turfan—see Wille, "Survey of the Sanskrit Manuscripts," 208—and in other collections of Central Asia (such as Schøyen, Hoernle, Pelliot, etc.).

[18] On these regions at the turn of the era see Saifur R. Dar, "Pathways between Gandhāra and North India During the Second Century B.C.–Second Century A.D," in *On the Cusp of an Era. Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, ed. Doris M. Srinivasan (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 29–54; Jason Neelis, "Passages to India: Śaka and Kuṣāṇa Migrations in Historical Context," in *On the Cusp of an Era. Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, ed. Doris M. Srinivasan (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 55–93. Michael Witzel cites "[t]he play Pādatāḍitaka, written in the fifth century (c. 455–510 A.D.) by the Kashmiri author Śyāmilaka", see Michael Witzel, "The Brahmins of Kashmir," in *A Study of Nīlamata. Aspects of Hinduism in Ancient Kashmir*, ed. Yasuke Ikari (Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities, 1994), 250–252. This play, Witzel underlines, "contains much information on the social life […] and also on the contemporary Buddhists and Brahmins, who are called 'god on earth' (*bhūmideva*)". While we see here that these scholars are all learned in the three Veda, Song Yun (fl. 6th c., 宋雲) tells us about "Brahmans who respect Buddhist teaching and enjoy reading sūtras".

[19] See Ronald E. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1992), 42–45 and, for Emmerick's rich contribution to Khotanese *materia medica*, cf. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "R.E. Emmerick's Bibliography," in *Old Tibetan Studies Dedicated to the Memory of R.E. Emmerick*, ed. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 11–20. Noteworthy is the list of medical texts in the Śrīnagar collection of Gilgit mss., see Wille in von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts," 113, "Additional Note on the Srinagar Collection by Klaus Wille." In the preface of the Khotanese translation of the *Siddhasāra* the translator, after having paid homage to the Triratna, invokes Maheśvara and Brahmā in order to secure his purpose: "May I be able to translate this treatise in accordance with [its true] meaning"; see Ronald E. Emmerick, "Some Remarks on Translation Techniques of the Khotanese," in *Sprachen des Buddhismus in Zentralasien. Vortäge des Hamburger Symposium vom 2. Juli bis 5. Juli 198*, ed. Klaus Röhrborn and Wolfgang Veenker (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1983),

by 'traditional' medicine of an *atharvanic* character that appears in daily and life-rituals to regulate evil in society, and that may be linked with the territorial protectors/deities[20] subsumed by the textual tradition under various generic denominations, such as '*nāga*'. An interesting case that illustrates this complex scenario and shows the subtle interaction between medicine, *numina*, and Buddhist institution, is recorded in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. Here we are told that a physician, the son-in-law of Caṅkuna, the minister of Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa (ca. 725–761/762), after having propitiated a *nāga,* built a *vihāra* in Śrīnagar as an offering in fulfilment of his vow:

> The physician Īśānacandra, a son in law of the minister Caṅkuna, built a *vihāra* after obtaining wealth through the favour of Takṣaka.[21]

19–21. A fragmented ms. of the *Siddhasāra* of Ravigupta is kept in the Śrīnagar collection together with several fragments of medical texts, and of Agniveśa's *Carakasaṃhitā*, see "Additional Notes by Klaus Wille" in von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts," 113.

[20] Other 'divinised/deified' cosmic agents intervene in daily practices, such as the *nakṣatra*, in case of labour, illness, etc. Inherited from the Vedic tradition, the invocations to the terrestrial, aquatic, and celestial protectors continue in the Brahmanic and Buddhistic milieu. Medical treatises admit the invocation of Brahmanic deities on specific occasions in the Buddhist milieu, and vice versa; cf. the previous note.

[21] Marc Aurel Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī. A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1987–1989) 3 vols., cf. I.220 and IV.216; Skr. text ibid. vol. 3, 10, 52. On the *nāga* Takṣaka, see ibid., vol. 1, 10, I.220, footnote: "The Takṣaka Nāga is worshipped to this day in the large pool of limpid water situated close to the village of Zevan (or *Jayavana*, see VII.607) in the Vihi Pargana, 74°58' long. 34°3' lat. It is happily described by the poet Bilhaṇa, who was born in the neighbouring village of Khonamuṣa (Khun*moh), in his *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* xviii.70 (as translated by Prof. Bühler): 'At a distance of a *gavyūti* and a half of Pravarapura (Srinagar) lies a place with high-rising monuments called Jayavana (Zevan), where a pool filled with pure water, and sacred to Takṣaka, lord of snakes, cuts like a war-disk the head of Kali bent on the destruction of Dharma.'" The Nāga Takṣaka reappears in the *Li yul luṅ bstan pa* where, together with Deva Jinarṣabha and Devī Aśoka, the *nāgarāja* Takṣaka guards a sacred place destined to the meditation of the Āryas to come (Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan*, 38). Incidentally, *mahānāga* Takṣaka is listed in the *Mahāmāyūrī* together with Manasvin, Apalāla, etc., all of whom are very present in Kāśmīr and the neighbouring regions. Amazingly enough, Manasvin is here assigned to Suvastu/Swat (see Sylvain Lévi, "Le catalogue géographique des Yakṣa dans la Mahāmāyūrī," *Journal Asiatique* 11.5 (1915): 67–68 and § 19.4), while a fragmented ms. from the region of Bajaur has preserved a version of the **Maṇasviṇagarayasutra*/Skr. **Manasvināgarāj-sūtra*, see Harry Falk and Ingo Strauch, "The Bajaur and Split Collections of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts," in *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers*

Still another case of the textual 'stellate itineraries' that the findings of mss. illustrate is represented by a Gilgit fragment[22] of Indian narrative that preserves part of the 20th apologue ('Dharmabuddhi and Pāpabuddhi') of the first section (Mitrabheda) of the *Pañcatantra*, a collection of edifying tales that presents some affinity in scope with the famous "Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish" widely diffused in Central Asia, directly and indirectly transmitted in several languages, and whose "Central Asian text (*huben*) [had been obtained] in Khotan and translated in Qočo", that is Gaochang (高昌) near Turfan.[23] As a matter of fact, the

Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field. Stanford, June 15–19, 2009, ed. Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2014), 67, § 3.2.2.3; Ingo Strauch, "The Evolution of the Buddhist *rakṣā* Genre in the Light of New Evidence from Gandhāra: The **Manasvi-nāgarājasūtra* from the Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77.1 (2014): 63–84. It should, however, be noted that in some particular periods in Kāśmīr (and possibly also in its vicinage), the *nāga* worship has been considered as having been seriously endangered by the Bauddhas, and subsequently reintroduced by Hindu kings; see Witzel, "The Brahmins of Kashmir," 271–272 and *passim*. On the complexity of this issue, we will come again on another occasion.

[22] On this fragment, see von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts," 82 and notes. See also Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Dynasties et histoire de l'inde depuis Kanishka jusqu'aux invasions musulmanes* (Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 1935), 300–301: "Une recension du *Pañcatantra* fut traduite en pehlvi par Burzōe, sous Chosrau Anôsharwân (531–579); cette traduction, perdue maintenant, passa en syriaque (un manuscrit incomplet), 570, et, de là, 750, accrue de nouvelles histoires, en arabe; puis des versions syriaque, grecque, latine, hébraïque, etc.", cf. *infra* n. 24 and 26.

[23] In re-analysing the record of this *sūtra*, written by Śākya Sengyou—and previously translated and studied by Paul Pelliot and Sylvain Lévi—see Victor H. Mair, "The Khotanese Antecedents of the Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish (Xiangyu Jing)," in *Buddhism across Boundaries—Chinese Buddhism and the Western Regions (Collection of Essays 1993)*, ed. John R. McRae and Jan Nattier (Sanchung, Taipei: Foguangshang Foundation for Buddhist and Culture Education, 1999), 364, n. 1, Mair suggests that the "Great Monastery", where the teaching of the *sūtra* was first heard, "was probably the Gomatī-*mahāvihāra*", see Mair, "The Khotanese Antecedents," 366, n. 14; the text was subsequently 'compiled' in 445 in Qočo (ibid., 368 and 374–375). And, once again, among the possible Indic antecedents, Mair mentions Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*, fragments of which have been found in Gilgit (see von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts," 100) and in the Schøyen collection (see Jens Braarvig, "The Schøyen Collection," in *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field. Stanford, June 15–19, 2009*, ed. Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2014), 163).

Pañcatantra that alternates narrative prose, gnomic, and *nīti*-verses may be seen as a putative model of political behaviour of the type 'miroir du prince'[24], a 'basic' model to imitate that may potentially be addressed to the petty lords which, incidentally, were legion on both sides of the Pamir. Oskar von Hinüber notes *à propos* the Gilgit fragment that "[T]his seems to be the oldest trace of the *Pañcatantra* in an Indian manuscript".[25] And we may even go a step further and wonder if the Gilgit manuscript may be close to the northwestern recension that was translated into Pehlevi (ca. 570) and came down to us in the Syriac translation (dating to the same period) that, in its turn, was later translated into Arabic (ca. 750), the famous story of Kalīla and Dimna.[26]

3. *Divinities and Tutelaries: Exported, Imported and Transported*

Mundane divinities or *numina* are by definition 'local or presiding gods'. As seen, whether included in narrative intrigues or listed in various textual traditions, the major and minor gods have been present in Buddhism since the beginning of its documented history.

Quite famous are the lists of tutelary gods that appear in early Buddhist literature. Sylvain Lévi, inspired by the fragments discovered in

[24] Cf. the title of the Italian translation of the *Pañcatantra*, published in Ferrara in 1583: "Del governo de' regni, sotto morali esempi di animali ragionanti tra loro, tratti prima di lingua Indiana in Agarena, da Lelo Demno Saraceno, et poi dall'Agarena nella greca, da Simeone Setto philosopho Antiocheno, et hora tradotti di Greco in Italiano", see Édouard Lancereau and Louis Renou, *Pañcatantra. Traduit du sanskrit et annoté par Édouard Lancereau. Introduction de Louis Renou* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 43 and 31, n. 2. Interestingly, the 15th century(?) *Nīti(-paddhati)* of Vallabhadeva quotes the *Pañcatantra* as one of its three main sources, see Ludwik Sternbach, "De l'origine des vers cités dans le *Nīti-paddhāti* du *Subhāṣitāvalī* de Vallabhadev," in *Mélanges d'indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou* (Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 1968), 684–686.

[25] von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts," 82, n. 20.

[26] On the fascinating fortune of this text, see Lancereau and Renou, *Pañcatantra*, 20–21, 25–41 and notes. Ravigupta's *Siddhasāra*, fragments of which were found in the same region (see n. 13) enjoyed a similar destiny. Dated "with considerable confidence to approximately AD 650" it "may have been translated into Arabic as early as the eight century" and "[c]ertainly it was frequently quoted in translation by Rhazes, who was born in AD 865. His translation appears to go back to one made by a certain Ibn Dahn, who is dated approximately to AD 800." See Emmerick, "Some Remarks on Translation Techniques," 19.

Central Asia, attracted the attention of scholars to this literature, particularly to the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārajñī* (*Māy*) (3rd c. to 4th c.), as well as to other texts which include various itineraries from India to the northwestern regions and beyond, to China.[27]

The *Māy* is partially kept in the famous Bower manuscript, dated to the first part of the sixth 6th century and most likely written in Kāśmīr.[28] Published by Frederic Rudolf Hoernle in 1893 in Calcutta, the *Māy* is a widely diffused text of protection that records a long series of mundane deities and major gods, as for instance the *bodhi* trees of the seven Buddhas of the past, the four *mahārāja*s and their sons; the *yakṣa*s tutelaries of the cities, the 28 *mahāyakṣasenāpati*, the *dharmabhrātṛ* of Vaiśravaṇa, or the goddesses having protected the gestation and birth of the Bodhisattva, among them the twelve great mothers (Skt. *mahāmātṛ*), the twelve *mahāpiśācī* and still others as the *mahārākṣasī*.[29]

In his long article of 1915, "Le catalogue géographique des Yakṣa", Sylvain Lévi compared the Chinese version of the *Māy* with the extant mss. kept in the Bendall Collection in Cambridge and the British Museum collection, dated to the epoch of Nayapāla (ca. 1054/1025–1041)[30]

[27] Lévi, "Notes chinoises sur l'Inde V," 253–305; Lévi, "Le catalogue géographique des Yakṣa," 313–323.

[28] Lore Sander, "Origin and Date of the Bower Manuscript: A New Approach," in *Investigating Indian Art. Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography Held at the Museum of Indian Art, Berlin, May 1986,* ed. Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo (Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1987), 321.

[29] The text includes various other lists, cf. Lévi, "Le catalogue géographique des Yakṣa," 21–22 and Shuyō Takubo, *The Ārya-Māyūrī-Vidyā-rajñī* (Tokyo: Sankibo, 1972), 13ff. Concerning the "divinités stellaires" as Lévi termed them, a fragment of the *Diśāsauvastikagāthā* kept in the Schøyen Collection (MS 2379/72) has recently been published, see Vincent Tournier, "Protective Verses for Travellers: A Fragment of the Diśāsauvastikagāthās Related to the Scripture of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins," in *Buddhist Manuscripts,* ed. Jens Braarvig, vol. 4, (Oslo: Hermes Publications, 2016), 407–437.

[30] A new, detailed, and commented Catalogue is in progress at the University of Cambridge, by the grace of Camillo Formigatti and Daniele Cuneo under the supervision of Vincenzo Vergiani, and accessible on www.cam.ac.at/affiliations/sanskrit-manuscripts-project. On the new Pāla chronology, see Rajat Sanyal, "The Pāla-Sena and Others," in *History of Ancient India, Vol. 5: Political History and Administration (C. 750-1300),* ed. Dilip K. Chakrabarti and Lal Makkhan (New Delhi: Vivekananda International Foundation and Aryan Books International, 2014), 165–213.

and Vigrahapāla III (1041–1067). This comprehensive catalogue of local and city's gods, which possibly originated in stages, both geographically and historically, starts with the city of Pāṭaliputra and lists a series of cities and regions together with their appointed protectors, spanning from India proper to the north-western regions, as far as the present region of North Pakistan and beyond.[31]

Other lists of sacred sites mentioned and published by Lévi are kept in the *Āṭānāṭiya,*[32] the *Candragarbhasūtra*, and the *Sūryagarbha* of the *Mahāsaṃnipāta*, all texts that were largely diffused in the oases of the Taklamakan desert, where fragmented mss. have been found in Sanskrit or in vernacular languages. These texts are closely related to the *Li yul luṅ bstan*[33] [Prophecy of Khotan], that links the narrative of the institution of Buddhism in Khotan to the *Candragarbhasūtra*,[34] the *Āryārhatsaṃghavardhanavyākaraṇa*, and the *Vimalaprabhāparipṛcchā*.

[31] See Lévi, "Le catalogue géographique des Yakṣa," 30–122. It would, of course, be perilous to consider this text, relatively dated to the 3rd or 4th century, as witnessing the local deities of *that* period. Not only because of the imprecise date of its composition, but also because the lists of divinities, cities, etc., it may reflect an earlier stage.

[32] See Peter Skilling, *Mahāsūtras: Great Discourses of the Buddha. Vol. 1: Texts* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), § 9, 460–561 and Peter Skilling, *Mahāsūtras: Great Discourses of the Buddha. Vol. 2 Parts I & II* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1997), § 9, 553–579.

[33] See Emmerick "Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan," 74 and 91: "*'phags pa zla ba'i sñiṅ pos źus pa daṅ / lha mo dri ma med pa'i 'od kyis źus pa daṅ / 'phags pa dgra bcom pa dge 'dun 'phel gyi luṅ bstan pa rnams daṅ mthun par Li'i yul daṅ / der li rje'i rgyal po rnams kyis 'phags pa rnams spyan draṅs nas / saṅs rgyas kyi bstan pa daṅ / de'i gźi gtsug lag khaṅ daṅ / lha khaṅ daṅ / mchod rten rnams ji ltar bźeṅs pa daṅ / dge 'dun sde gñis ji ltar spel ba'i tshul rgyas pa bstan pa / li yul luṅ bstan pa źes bya ba rdzogs so //*." And this is repeated in the *Li yul chos kyi lo rgyus* [Annals of Buddhist Khotan]: "*dar ma mdo sde Su rya ga rba daṅ / Can dra ga rba daṅ /Bye ma la pa ri pri ca'i gźuṅ las mdo tsam źig / mkhan po Mo rgu bde śil gyis / gsar du bsgyuro //*."

[34] Fragments of which were found in Khotan; see Klaus Wille, "Survey of Identified Manuscripts in the Hoernle, Stein, and Skrine Collection of the British Library (London)," in *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field. Stanford, June 15–19, 2009*, ed. Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2014), 226 and 229. It is equally worth noting that the *Mahāsaṃnipāta,* which is mentioned in the "légende de fondation" of Buddhist Khotan (see Emmerick, *The Book of Zambasta*, 4–5), is among the texts that the king of Khotan kept in his palace (at Birgaṃdara?), according to the relation of

These texts were thus considered as the founding narrative of 'Buddhist' Khotan. The country is effectively counted among the twenty-one places bestowed or conferred by the Buddha himself to the protectors and guardians of the various lands[35] (*yul khams so so'i mgon po daṅ / lha klu la sogs pa sruṅ ma rnams la gtad pa*), from now on 'buddhisied', countries that spread from Madhyadeśa to China via the Indus valley (and further northwest), the Pamirs, and far beyond to Kašgar and Khotan.[36] This appears to show that at this point, a considerable shift in the

*Jñānagupta who visited the region in the 6th century; see Lévi, "Notes chinoises sur l'Inde V," 253–255. See the following note.

[35] The *Vimalaprabhāparipṛcchā* contains a series of narratives and rites and opens in quoting the *Candragarbhasūtra,* with Bhagavat staying at the Gṛdhrakūṭa and investing the gods with the charge of protecting all the regions (*yul thams cad sruṅ ma rnams lag tu so sor gtad pa*, folio 201a2) of the Jambudvīpa. The interesting point is that the transaction is performed as a contract or agreement in reciprocity: the tutelaries will protect the Buddhist country, grant prosperity, etc., and the inhabitants will worship them in return. The detailed commentary of this long and fascinating work far exceeds the present scope, but we will nonetheless emphasize here the fact that it promotes the circulation of some particular *sūtra*s, among them the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* [and the *Suvarṇa*] that should be deposited in the royal palace of Khotan, as well as in other strategic places in the kingdom, namely in *vihāra*s, thereby functioning as protector of the king and the kingdom. Cf. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "Histoire du bouddhisme indien tardif (IIe-XIIe siècle). Matériaux pour l'étude du bouddhisme indien et du Mahāyāna (VI)," *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sciences religieuses* 114.2005–2006 (2007): 55–57; Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "Histoire du bouddhisme indien tardif (IIe-XIIe siècle). Matériaux pour l'étude du bouddhisme indien et du Mahāyāna (VII et VIII)," *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sciences religieuses* 116.2007–2008 (2009): 91–92. This fact is well attested among the petty kings of Gilgit, whose name appears in protective texts and colophons (von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts," 84)—kings that the *Vimalaprabhā* includes in the family lineage and relations with neighbour petty kings, including Khotan. See Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "Dhāraṇī, Vidya-rajñī (Devī?): Buddha! Dire les rites et écrire l'histoire. Les excès d'une forme," (paper presented at the *XII Conference of the International Association for Buddhist Studies (IABS), University of Lausanne, Switzerland, August 23–28, 1999*); Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, *Questions bouddhiques/Buddhist Questions* VII (forthcoming).

[36] See Emmerick, Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan, 2–3 and 8–9: "*saṅs rgyas bcom ldan 'das Śā kya thub pa rgyal po'i khab bya rgod phuṅ po'i ri la bźugs te zla ba'i sñiṅ po gsuṅs pa'i tshe yul khams so so'i mgon po daṅ/lha klu la sogs pa sruṅ ma rnams la gtad pa'i dus na dus na li yul yaṅ luṅ bstan te/*", followed by the name of the various divinities appointed to Khotan. The *Candragarbhasūtra* lists the 250,000 sacred sites where buddhas miraculously appeared. The number of apparitions progressively increase with the increasing in distance from India, and Khotan holds the 'privilege of sanctity', second only to China: "La dernière des listes (D) est à ce point de vue particulièrement significa-

control over the socio-political sphere had occurred. One may wonder if the vesting of local gods to the charge of protecting a particular place was not proceeding parallel to the phenomenon of exportation of images narratively transposed in the motif of the 'flying' images, *stūpa* and relics, but the interweaving of narrative motifs occurring in the texts connected with Khotan is so dense that it demands a separate treatment.[37]

Texts like the *Mahāmāyūrī* and the *Āṭānāṭīya* recommend various rites under the modality of specific recitations and practices with the scope of 'regulating the evil' in the private and public sphere. Other narratives illustrate the case where Buddhist agents directly grant protection from evil in society and, above all, state protection, a function that was assigned to *atharvanic* priests, or traditional specialists. Obviously, when the Buddhist institution was directly involved in these practices, it acquired a peculiarly central role in the political sphere, even if in the context of a variety of mediated or unmediated transactions with the political authority and with the territorial, if not cadastral, owner of the region. When, at some point, the *numina* allotted to the various spheres of the Buddhist traditional cosmology were, under different personal names (at times non-Indic), vested in their/with the charge of protecting the Buddhist regions (or 'Buddhist to be'), and appointed to sacred sites or cities by the Buddha himself, a variously shaped new configuration of

tive; elle parle le langage simple et net des chiffres. Le pays de l'Inde propre, y compris la Terre d'occident, s'y voient attribuer au total 813 manifestations de Bouddhas; le reste, sans tenir compte des trois derniers noms ajoutés à la liste commune (56, 57, 58), en a pour sa part 971. Tandis que Bénarès, la plus favorisée des villes de l'Inde, en compte 60, la Terre d'occident sur la limite de l'Inde, en a 70, Kachgar en a 98, Koutcha 99, Khotan 180, et la Chine 255. Comme le caitya de Khotan occupait dans le Sūryagarbhasūtra, la place d'honneur entre tous les caitya du monde, c'est encore Khotan qui détient, dans la statistique du Candragarbhasūtra, le privilège de la sainteté. La Chine seule peut lui contester la supériorité numérique; mais ses 255 manifestations de Bouddhas s'espacent sur un territoire infiniment plus étendu", see Lévi, "Notes chinoises sur l'Inde V," 285).

[37] It may nonetheless be noted that the *Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇa* goes a step further and images of the Tathāgata are there mentioned as guarding the cities, the same phenomenon occurs in the *Li yul luṅ bstan pa*, see Scherrer-Schaub, *Questions bouddhiques/Buddhist Questions* IV and VII. On the "travelling objects" to and via Khotan, see now Erika Forte, "A Journey 'to the Land on the Other Side': Buddhist Pilgrimage and Travelling Objects from the Oasis of Khotan," in *Cultural Flows across the Western Himalaya*, ed. Patrick McAllister, Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, and Helmut Krasser (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Verlag, 2015), 151–187.

the social order and the cosmic space was introduced. This phenomenon possibly existed since the very beginning of Buddhism in India. The standardization of plastic and narrative representation of the various categories of divinities, observable from relatively early on, seems to confirm the idea. But this 'monochromy' might have coexisted with a 'polychromy' of local gods/protectors[38] that were not necessarily represented in painting, plastic, or narrative, but rather in various ritual and social contexts that are by definition ephemeral.[39]

4. *Linking the King to the Buddhist Institution*

The hierarchy of divinities and the role played by some of them as intermediary in the process of controlling and neutralising noxious forces is attested in various texts, namely the already alluded to *Āṭānāṭīya-sūtranāmamahāsūtra*.[40]

[38] A possible case of relative coexistence and role sharing seems to be attested in early Tibetan inscriptions; see Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "A Perusal of Early Tibetan Inscriptions in Light of the Buddhist World of the 7th to 9th Centuries A.D.," in *Epigraphic Evidence in the Pre-Modern Buddhist World. Proceedings of the Eponymous Conference Held in Vienna, 14.–15. Oct. 2011*, ed. Kurt Tropper (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2014), 117–165, 136–145 and notes.

[39] Exception do exist, however, e.g. the representation of Wi-nyu-myin, the Protectress of Tabo, and her retinue, "placed conspicuously above the entrance to the Assembly Hall opposite the original entrance of the temple", see Deborah Klimburg-Salter in *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom. Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*, ed. (Milan: Skira, 1997), 11 and fig. 39 and 55.

[40] See Skilling, *Mahāsūtras: Vol. 1*, 566–567 and 570–571. With regard to this protective text, Skilling notes that "[It] has been recognized as one of the most potent *paritta*s, up to the present day. Its influence seems to have been enormous. Its recitation sets up a *maṇḍala*, a protective circle formed by the four Kings, and subdues the various spirits under their sovereignty. The idea of protection of the four quarters or cardinal points (and sometimes zenith, nadir, and intermediate points) permeates *rakṣā* literature: through the invocation of the four Great Kings, as in the *Mahāmāyūrī*, or of sundry *yakṣa*s, as in the *Mahāmāyūrī* and in the non-canonical Theravādin *Chadisāpāla-sutta*. Like the *Mahāsamāja*, the *Āṭānāṭīya* belongs to the ambience of the early *caitya*s and cave temples in India", see ibid., 575–576, and more explicitly, "At the heart of these two surviving recensions [that is the (Mūla)-sarvāstivāda and Theravāda] lies a liturgy that wove together mythological, cosmological, and apotropaic elements, and was most probably recited at sacred sites such as the ancient *caitya*s", ibid., 577. Incidentally, the *Āṭānāṭīya* is attested (with different orthographies and titles) among mss. of the "Northern Route of the Silk Road". Cf. e.g. Wille, "Survey of the Sanskrit Manuscripts," 196. While fragments of the

At the occasion of the repairs of the *stūpa*[41] that had been recently destroyed by lightning the king of Oḍi re-enacts the foundation (i.e. the deposit of relics) performed by Vasusena, son of Uttarasena. Senavarma, the present king of Oḍi, shares the merits of his act with relative and officials and deliberately associates to the religious act his lineage, the administrative body of the state and allied (ll. 8d-10b), and possibly, in order to win their favor, includes in the act the worship of a group of major and minor deities (l. 10c),[42] foreshadowing the contract in reciprocity between the institution and the outer society that later on, as seen, will be so to speak overtly affirmed in the *Candragarbhasūtra*. And the king as said wishes to win the favor of the deities, since as will be seen in the following lines the document considers them as putative noxious forces.

In effect, the inscription of Senavarma shows that the king does not directly invite the various agencies to protect the state and his person but these are indirectly called upon to act as guardians and protectors of the *stūpa* enshrining the relics. This is indeed implicitly suggested in the imprecatory clause (ll.12e–13e), calling down the unfelicitous consequence of being precipitated [43] to the Avīci-hell (Skr. *sa*

Āṭānāṭīya have apparently not been found in Khotan, another *Mahāsūtra*, the *Mahāsamāja,* seems to be alluded to in the *Li yul luṅ bstan*.

[41] On the possible location of the monument, see Richard Salomon, "The Inscription of Senavarma, King of Oḍi," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 29 (1986): 289–290; cf. Oskar von Hinüber, *Beiträge zur Erklärung der Senavarma-Inschrift* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003), Nr. 1; Neelis, "Passages to India," 83; Gérard Fussman, "Review of Oskar von Hinüber 2003. *Beiträge zur Erklärung der Senavarma-Inschrift, Mainz, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur*. Abhandlugen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 2003, Nr.1. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 90–91 (2003–2004): 517–518.

[42] See von Hinüber, *Beiträge zur Erklärung der Senavarma-Inschrift*, 34, here quoted after the very convenient author's Sanskrit rendering: *Brahmā sahaṃpatiḥ śakro devānām indraś catvāro mahārājā aṣṭaviṃśatir yakṣasenāpatayo hārītī saparivārā pūjitāḥ*. To the references given by Gérard Fussman (ibid., 35) and equally inspired by Edgerton, one may add, among other texts, the *Mahāmāyūrī* and the *Suvarṇabhāsottama*.

[43] The expression *padyet saśarīraḥ* (gāndhārī on l. 13c: *padeati saśarire*), is here translated as "may [they] be precipitated", the verb "precipitate" meaning in its turn "throw down headlong," French "tomber la tête la première" which is the usual case with the Avīci hell, nicely represented for instance on a bas-relief of Borobudur. Cf. the expression *adhaśira* (*Mahāvastu* III 455.3) and the explicit gloss of *Dharmasamuccaya* XVI.7ab: *etān patanti narakān ūrdhvapādā avāṅmukhāḥ* //. (Li-kouang Lin, *Dharma-samuccaya:*

avīcimahānirayaṃ padyet saśarīraḥ) for all those beings, minor and major gods included (ll. 13b–13c), who would dare damaging the shrine.[44]

Despite the distance in time that separate the inscription of Senavarma and the narrative of the founding of 'Buddhist Khotan', the central role played by the region of Swāt in connecting India to the Pamir and beyond to the Tarim basin[45] and the location of particular texts along these itineraries invite to question the presence of the sequence of deities, undoubtedly formulaic and yet particular, that are here associated with the religious act of repairing the damaged *stūpa*. In the *Candragarbhasūtra*, whose Chinese translation dates to the 6th century,[46] Brahmā Sahaṃpati, Śakra Devendra, and the four *mahārāja*s intervene, as in thousands of other texts, as the interlocutors of Bhagavat. The list of *yakṣa* and other *numina*, guardians of cities and regions, assigns Hārītī to the protection of Udyāna/Uḍḍiyāna, and Vaiśravaṇa to Khotan.[47] While it is well known that Hārītī is connected with the region of northwestern India and particularly with Gandhāra, it is nonetheless interesting to notice the persistence of Hārītī in the region of Swāt from the time of the Oḍi's inscription to the *Candragarbhasūtra*. In the Senavarma's sequence Hārītī appears with an unprecised attendance (*saparivāra*), while in the *Su-*

Compendium de la Loi. Recueil de stances extraites du Saddharma-smṛty–upasthāna–sūtra: L'aide mémoire de la vraie Loi par Avalokitasiṃha. Troisième partie, chapitres XIII-XXXVI. Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1973).

[44] The Senavarma inscription seems to follow the model of the liturgy addressed to the *stūpa* in the Vinaya tradition, and mention of the first sequence of deities associated with the religious act may have functioned as an 'enlarged version' of the common recitation of *gāthā*. As will be seen in a later Khotanese document (IOL Khot S 21, Prods Oktor Skjærvø with contributiony by Ursula Sims-Williams, *Khotanese Manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in the British Library: A Complete Catalogue with Texts and Translations by Prods Oktor Skjaervo with Contributions by Ursula Sims-Williams* (London: The British Library, 2002), 522, ll. 14–16), this short sequence of worshipped deities is there included among all those who were called to protect the realm and the king, see p. 129 and n. 60.

[45] It is significant, we think, that other epigraphs of the region that precede the Senavarma inscription seem to display another pattern, see Scherrer-Schaub, *Questions bouddhiques/Buddhist Questions* VII-VIII.

[46] Translated by Narendrayaśas from Uḍḍiyāna (born in 517), see *Hōbōgirin, Fascicule annexe* 1931, 145b. The text could thus have been composed around this epoch or shortly before.

[47] Lévi, "Notes chinoises sur l'Inde V," 266 and 268.

varṇabhāsottama, where she harbours the epithet *bhūtamātar*, and like in the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārajñī*, she is accompanied by her five hundred sons.[48]

[48] See *Suvarṇabhāsa* I. 13 and 14.51: *Hārītī bhūta-mātā ca paṃca-putra-śatair api* / (Prods O. Skjærvø, *This Most Excellent Shine of Gold, King of Kings of Sutras. The Khotanese Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* (Cambridge: Harvard University, The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, 2014), vol. 1, 13 and 273); cf. *Māy*: *Pāñcikena ca yakṣa-senāpatinā, Hārityā ca pañca-putra-śata-parivārayā bhāṣitā cābhyanumoditā ca* (Takubo, *The Ārya-Māyūrī-Vidyā-rajñī*, 56–57). Both the *Māy* and the Senavarma inscription share a common hierarchy, where Hārītī is listed after a particular sequence which indicates that, by then, Hārītī was submitted. In two other occurrences of the same text, Hārītī appears among the twelve *mahāpiśācī* (Takubo, *The Ārya-Māyūrī-Vidyā-rajñī*, 29) and among the ten *mahārākṣasī* (ibid., 32), the goddesses having protected the gestation and birth of the bodhisattva (*supra* p. 118). See Scherrer-Schaub, *Questions bouddhiques/Buddhist Questions* VII–VIII. In her usual 'comprehensive' approach of art history, Hélène Diserens critically examines a small image belonging to the school of Vijabrōr, near Brār on the shore of the Jhelum—possibly dating to the 6th century (see Hélène Diserens, "La statue de Brār (Kaśmīr) retrouvée," *Arts Asiatiques* 48 (1993): 80a)—a region that may be considered as being part of that large area where the 'stellate itineraries' (*supra* p. 114) were crossing (Diserens, "La statue de Brār," 72–85). The value of this article lies in the fact that the author, after having dedicated an important passage to the iconography, enters the topic of Hārītī in its complexity. Worth mentioning is the evidence of the Ajaṇṭa's representation of the ferocious ogress and the tamed 'buddhised' Hārītī on the same relief, parallel to the case that we find in some texts: "La représentation post kouchane du couple [i.e. Pāñcika and Hārītī], sans doute la plus célèbre, est sculptée sur le grand relief central de la chapelle latérale de la caverne 2 à Ajanta [= Ghulam Yazdani, *Ajanta. The Colour and Monochrome Reproductions of the Ajanta Frescoes Based on Photography, Volume 2* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), II, 34–35, pl. xxxiv]: assise à la droite de Pāñcika selon la coutume indienne de placer les deux conjoints, Hārītī tient un enfant sur son genou gauche et une bourse dans sa main droite. Deux petits reliefs narratifs, placés de chaque côté des divinités, illustrent deux scènes de la légende bouddhique et certifient l'identification de la déesse originaire du Gandhāra: l'ogresse agressant le Buddha et Hārītī convertie agenouillée devant le Buddha". Gregory Schopen gives a detailed analysis of various vinaya's passages concerned with the role of Hārītī as protectress of childrens, see Gregory Schopen, "A New Hat for Hārītī. On 'Giving' Children for their Protection to Buddhist Nuns and Monks in Early India," in *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and other Worldly Matters. Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*, ed. Gregory Schopen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2014), 130–156. Cf. also Noël Péri, "Hārītī, la mère-de-démons," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 17.3 (1917): 2–43, slightly outdated, no doubt, and yet with useful references to vinaya material, namely on the presence of Hārītī depicted in convent's refectory where the tamed goddess received regular meals (ibid. 44–48).

5. *Narrative Motifs and Political Patterns Gleaned in Secular Documents from the Region of Khotan*

The earliest evidence of Khotan as a Buddhist centre of learning dates to 260. Skjærvø notes that the Tang annals mention "the cult of the celestial god", which, according to him, "no doubt refers to a remaining Old Iranian Mazdayasnian cult in Khotan."[49] Concerning the territorial lords of Khotan, however, we know nearly nothing apart from the wooden panel representing the legend of the Rat King, dating to the 6th century.[50] Instead, the Buddhist Protectors of Khotan are well known and well attested not only in the *Li yul luṅ bstan* and the *Li yul chos kyi lo rgyus*, but also in other documents, and are illustrated on murals commented in writing on cartouches, as in Mogao Cave 231 in Dunhuang dating to 839.[51]

The *Vimalaprabhāparipṛcchā,* part of the texts related to the founding of Buddhist Khotan, promotes the circulation of particular works, among them the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* and the *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*

[49] See Prods O. Skjærvø, "Khotan, an Early Center of Buddhism in Chinese Turkestan," in *Buddhism Across Boundaries—Chinese Buddhism and the Western Regions (Collection of Essays 1993)*, ed. John R. McRae and Jan Nattier (Sanchung, Taipei: Foguangshang Foundation for Buddhist and Culture Education, 1999), 277. For a chronicle of Chinese "faits d'armes" and politics in the region of Khotan in the previous centuries, see Edouard Chavannes, "Les pays d'occident d'après le *Heou Han chou*," *T'oung-pao* 8.2 (1907): 171–174.

[50] See Ursula Sims-Williams, "Khotan: A Kingdom of Remarkable Diversity," in *The Silk Road. Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, ed. Susan Whitfield and Ursula Sims-Williams (London: The British Library, 2004), 133–138, fig. 26, 137 and n. 1: "Stein notes that the story is similar to that told by Herodotus of the destruction of Sennacherib's Assyrian host on the borders of Egypt (*Ancient Khotan*, 120) and also a later Chinese legend of Buddhist protection against Arab besiegers". Duan Qing, among other items found in Khotan mentions an "amulet which has a format of approximately 2 m long by 7 cm wide" and that according to the author "represents a certain local cult", see Duan, "Indic and Khotanese Manuscripts," 269, 278, and 271. Here however it should be stressed that the term 'local cult' does not refer to a specific indigenous cult, but to the fact that the Buddhist text of protection, written in Khotan, in its apotropaic function is 'designed for a single woman named Säväkä', a Khotanese lady (ibid., 278) who commanded (and possibly paid) the talisman.

[51] See Michael Soymié, "Quelques représentations de statues miraculeuses dans les grottes de Touen-houang," in *Contributions aux études de Touen-houang. Volume III*, ed. Michel Soymié (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984), 86–102; cf. Sims-Williams, "Khotan," 136, no. 24, and 137.

that are recommended to be deposited in the royal palace of Khotan, as well as in other strategic places of the kingdom, namely in *vihāra*s, thereby functioning as protectors of the king and the kingdom.[52] These texts, that were also famous among the petty kings of Gilgit, whose name appears in protective texts and colophons,[53] link the family lineage of the lords of the region with other neighbour *roitelets*, including the royal family of Khotan.

That the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* was widely circulated, particularly in Khotan, is evidenced by the Khotanese summary mentioning the Ācārya of the Gūmattīrai (Gum tīr)[54] *vihāra* , the famous monastery having hosted renown Buddhist scholars of the past. Centred upon the figure of Avalokiteśvara, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* is famous for Avalokiteśvara's polymorphism and shows how, by virtue of his skilfulness in means (*upāya-kauśalya*), Avalokiteśvara may assume various forms. Among these, quite a number of divinities are conceived as his metamorphoses.[55] While the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* functions as a

[52] Cf. Scherrer-Schaub, "Dhāraṇī, Vidya-rajñī (Devī?)"; Scherrer-Schraub, *Questions bouddhiques/Buddhist Question* VII, cf. also *supra* n. 35.

[53] von Hinüber, "The Gilgit Manuscripts," 84.

[54] Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan*, 29.

[55] In the 7th and 9th centuries, the polymorphous Avalokiteśvara, among whose various forms Īśvara and Maheśvara are included, will find a counterpart in Amṛteśvara that, according to the *Netratantra*, may assume the form of the Buddha: "It may be urged against this interpretation that the *Netratantra* includes the Buddha among the forms that may be assumed by Amṛteśvara. For the Buddha is evidently not a brahmanical deity. That objection might hold for other areas of the Indian world but not for Kashmir. For in its account of the local religious calendar the Kashmirian *Nīlamatapurāṇa* requires the worship of the Buddha in celebration of the day of his birth and Nirvāṇa during the 3 days of the moon's passing from Puṣya to Maghā in the bright half of Vaiśākha. Moreover, the *Netratantra* refers to the Buddha at the end of its description of his iconic form "as bestowing the reward of liberation upon women". This suggests that the worship of [Amṛteśvara as] the Buddha was a duty that the Śaiva officiant was required to perform for the special benefit of the women of the palace. Patronage of Buddhism in Kashmir was not provided by the royal women alone, but in the political history of the kingdom completed by the poet-historian Kalhaṇa in 1148/9 they do figure conspicuously in this role in his account of events immediately before and during the Kārkoṭa dynasty (c. 626–855/6), the period towards whose end I hold the *Netratantra* to have been composed", see Alexis Sanderson, "Religion and State: Śaiva Officiants in the Territory of the King's Brahmanical Chaplain," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47 (2004): 254–255.

powerful talisman protecting the king and his kingdom, the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* acts in a more complex and structured context.[56]

The *Book of Zambasta* contains a narrative that may be considered as the founding motif of the elaborate theme that we find in the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* of the king that leaves the palace accompanied by the city's tutelaries and other gods, and goes to meet the *dharmabhāṇaka*.[57] An interesting document from the region of Mazar-thag [IOL Khot 50/4 (M.Tagh.b.ii 0065)], a "metrical text composed in the 16th regnal year of Viśa' Kīrtta (791?–806) who is described as the 'great gracious lord'", links the king with the Tibetans and is worth mentioning here *in extenso*:

> When the good time came — at the time when the great Gracious Lord of the blessed aeon (= the Buddha) took birth here, Viśa' Kīrrta, by the power of (his merits).

[56] Among other themes, the *Suvarṇa* conveys a model of kingship that is also attested in early Tibetan inscriptions, see Scherrer-Schaub, "A Perusal of Early Tibetan Inscriptions," 135–145 and notes. For an extensive treatment of the *Suvarṇa* model of royal theory, see Scherrer-Schaub, *Questions bouddhiques/Buddhist Questions* IV.

[57] A detailed treatment of this motif, which may be considered as a variant of the better-known motif of the 'father and son' kept in the **Pitāputrasamāgamasūtra* (see Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti. Commentaire à la soixantaine sur le raisonnement ou Du vrai enseignement de la causalité par les Maître indien Candrakīrti*. (Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1991), ns. 121, 373, 492, and 511), far exceeds the present scope. We may notice in passing that the narrative's main characters are king Śuddhodana and the Buddha, who returns to his father's palace and instructs him. In the end, the two main characters will reverse their respective roles: Śuddhodana will call his son 'father' while referring to himself as 'son' of the Buddha, see Emmerick, *The Book of Zambasta*, chapter 5, 96–117; cf. Dhammadinnā, "Mahāratnakūṭa' Scriptures in Khotan: A Quotation from the *Samantamukhaparivarta* in the Book of Zambasta," *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 12 (2014): 339, n. 8. The story ends on 117.1–2 (folio 212), with the transfer of merits gained by the translator: "Through these merits may the *śāsana* surely last long in the land of Khotan. May the king of Khotan for many years keep the land unharmed". Further evidence of the act of humility on part of the king is given in the record of Faxian (法顯). When visiting Khotan at the beginning of the 5th century, the Chinese pilgrim describes the procession of images that starts on the first day of the fourth month. When the procession and the cart with the image of the Buddha approach the city, the king, who is standing at the gate of the city with his queen and her *parivāra,* removes his crown, and dressed with new robes goes barefoot to meet the image. See Jean-Pierre Drège, tr., *Faxian. Mémoire sur les pays bouddhique* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 2013), 6–7.

> [There is] abundance here in everything because of the merits of the king, as well as because of the Tibetan Masters, who are guarding this land of Khotan.
>
> His sixteenth regnal year has passed. Great respect has arisen for him. Because of the guardians for the sake of promoting the Law,
>
> he with faith (and) in love has invited thither to Gara (the Hill of Mazar-tagh), two reverend ones. He at that time, at the beginning of the month of Rāhaja
>
> for the sake of protection of the land (…). (So) strive there in the temple for one year well (and) *uninterrupted, so that all suffering disappear![58]

This public record that may be relatively dated to 806/807(?), is interesting in many respects. The Tibetans took Khotan in 791/792 and occupied the region until 851. If the date of the reign of Viśa' Kīrrta is 791–806+, this means that the king's *floruit* was spent entirely under Tibetan domination. In this epoch, the governor of the citadel of Mazar-tagh, the *naṅ rje po*, was higher up in hierarchy than the king of Khotan.[59] The document may also be seen as a case of the king acting as the donor of the Buddhist institution, and the invitation extended to the religious to come

[58] Prods O. Skjærvø, "Iranians, Indians, Chinese and Tibetans: The Rulers and Ruled of Khotan in the First Millennium," in *The Silk Road. Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, ed. Susan Whitfield and Ursula Sims-Williams (London: The British Library, 2004), 34–42, 35–36. The last verse of the document is translated by Ursula Sims-Williams: "Utilities as many as they need, all of them he (?) has gathered for them here", see Sims-Williams, "Khotan," 201 and fig. 119.

[59] See Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, "Revendications et recours hiérarchique: Contribution à l'histoire de Śa cu sous administration tibétaine (Ptib 1089)," in *Études de Dunhuang et Turfan*, ed. Jean-Pierre Drège and Olivier Venture (Geneva: Droz, 2007), 289 and n. 106, 321–325. Skjærvø quotes another document [IOL Khot 54/2 (M. Tagh.c.0018)] dating of 795(?) and which attests the Khotanese title "*tsīṣī āmāca* [which] is the Chinese *cishi amozhi*, also found in the Chinese document Or. 6405 (M.9a) dated 768 discussed by Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang and which they render as 'Prefect'" (Prods O. Skjærvø, "Iranians, Indians, Chinese and Tibetans," 35). P. T. 1089 makes them equally hierarchically inferior to the Tibetan "Prefect" of Khotan, cf. Scherrer-Schaub, "Revendications et recours hiérarchique," 289 and n. 106, 321–325. Confirmation of P. T. 1089 is further given by the document Or. 15000/180 (M.Tagh.b.1.0092), published by Frederick W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan. Part II: Documents, Oriental Translation Fund, N.S.* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1951), 185–190 and republished by Tsuguhito Takeuchi, *Old Tibetan Manuscripts from East Turkestan in the Stein Collection of the British Library*. *Volume II. Descriptive Catalogue* (Tokyo, London: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, the Toyo Bunko British Library, 1998), no. 244.

to Mazar-tagh is but a variant of the model illustrated in the narrative of the *Book of Zambasta* and the *Suvarṇa,* alluded to previously. Incidentally, and given the subordinated position imposed to the king by the Tibetans, the exhortation that "all suffering will disappear" sounds somewhat ironic.

A later document [IOL Khot S 21],[60] a detailed *praśasti* of king Śrī Viśa Dharma^{II} dating to 982, bears evidence of another model of royal politics illustrated by the famous motif of the 'king-and-bodhisattva'. In 978, Viśa' Dharma succeeds his father Viśa Śūra (r. 967–978?), who:

> led a victorious army against the Muslim Ilek-khan of Kashgar and reported on the campaign in a letter to the ruler of Dunhuang, dated 17 February 970, in which he mentioned the capture of a dancing elephant. As it happens, both the original letter from the king (P. 5538a in the Pelliot collection, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris) and a record of the event in the Chinese annals have been preserved, in which we are told of a dancing elephant captured during a victorious struggle with Kashgar and presented to the Chinese court in 971.

Most interesting, "Viśa' Śūra mentions his 'Tajik' son at Kashgar". Prods Oktor Skjærvø advances the hypothesis that this fact might

> eventually have proved the undoing of Khotan and Buddhism in Xinjiang, for shortly after King Viśa Śūra was succeeded by Viśa' Dharma in 978, relations with the Dunhuang government seem to have been broken off, presumably because of Uighur pressure from Ganzhou, graphically reflected in a series of Khotanese letters probably dating to 990–993.

He concludes:

> We may perhaps conjecture that the king's Muslim relative at Kashgar not long after this replaced Viśa' Dharma as king of Khotan.[61]

If this is the case, then one could surmise that the *praśasti* of king Viśa Dharma is intended as an exalted exhortation addressed to the king to preserve the Buddhist religion in Khotan, and his political, familial,[62] and

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[60] The document IOL Khot S 21 is edited and translated by Prods O. Skjærvø, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, 522–524.

[61] Skjærvø, "Iranians, Indians, Chinese and Tibetans," 41.

[62] See Zhang Guangda 張廣大 and Rong Xinjiang 榮新疆, "Les noms du royaume de Khotan. Les noms d'ère et la lignée royale de la fin des Tang au début des Song," in *Contributions aux études de Touen-houang. Volume III*, ed. Michel Soymié (Paris: École

religious link with Dunhuang. We find in it a list of bodhisattvas, divinities (Śakra, Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa, Maheśvara, Skandha, Varuṇa, and others) and *numina*, said to have granted kingship to the king. Various significant epithets are here piled any old how, painting the present king of Khotan/Gostanadeśa, among others, as *rājeśvara* and *bala-cakravartin rāja*, epithets that link the epigraph to various Buddhist texts and that, all things considered, could be applied to the contextual political situation ("subduer of all kings"). Further on, the text recalls that the protectors gave him the name of

> Viśa' Dharma bodhisattva and king[63], adding that, like Lord Śakra, who is a lamp shining among the Trāyastriṃśa gods, Viśa' Dharma [shines] among the kings of the Jambudvīpa.[64]

Interesting clues are found in the eulogy's *narratio cum dipositio,* where we learn that the king wished to take a Chinese princess from the royal family of Dunhuang as future queen in order to ensure the continuation of "the golden kingly family".[65] Viśa' Dharma thus sends an envoy to Dunhuang in search of that 'pearl,' and this gives occasion to the panegyrist to praise the region:

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française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984), 41–42, plates 1–4; Zhang Guangda 張廣大 and Rong Xinjiang 榮新疆, "Sur un manuscrit chinois découvert à Cira près de Khotan," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 3 (1987): 77–92; James Hamilton, "Les règnes Khotanais entre 851 et 1001," in *Contributions aux études de Touen-houang*, ed. Michel Soymié (Geneva: Droz, 1979), 49–54; James Hamilton, "Sur la chronologie Khotanaise au IXe-Xe siècle," in *Contributions aux études de Touen-houang. Volume III*, ed. Michel Soymié (Paris: Publications de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984), 47–48; Prods O. Skjærvø, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, lxvi-lxviii.

[63] Cf. the document IOL Khot S 21 (Ch.i.0021a), l. 20: "Sous le roi-boddhisattva (sic) Viśa Darma (sic), 5e année du règne cū-hīṅa, année du Cheval, 7e mois=23 juillet-21 août 982", see Hamilton, "Les règnes khotanais entre 851 et 1001," 51.

[64] Skjærvø, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, 522, ll. 27–28.

[65] Cf. Chin. *Jin guo* 金國/*Jinyu guo* 金玉國. On the name of the Khotanese reigns, see Zhang and Rong, "Les noms du royaume de Khotan," updated in Zhang Guanda 张广大 and Rong Xinjiang 荣新江, "Shi shiji Yutianguo de Tianshou nianhao ji qi xiangguan de wenti 十世纪于阗国的天寿年号及其相关的问题. On the Year-name *Tianshou* of the Khotan Kingdom in the 10th Century and Some Related Problems," *Ouya xuekan* 欧亚学刊 *International Journal of Eurasian Studies* 1 (1999): 181–192.

> Like the land of gods (is) the city of Shazhou, like a lamp, pure (like) gold melted a hundred times, – or like a peak studded with jewels, brilliant, beautiful, like that that land shines together with (its) king.[66]

Further he praises the Buddha and Bodhisattva images, beautifully displayed in the twin monastery of Gūmattīra, the Dunhuang replica of the famous homonymous Khotanese *mahāvihāra*.

This extraordinary document finds impressive resonance in events having occurred in the neighbour kingdom of Puraṅ-Guge a few decades later. Indeed, the monastic site of Tabo (Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India) was founded in 996 by king Ye śes ‘od, whose reign might have partially overlapped with the reign of king Viśa’ Dharma. Epigraphical records and the evidence of a colophon give various titles to king Ye śes ‘od that, among other interesting aspects of the question, link the king of Puraṅ-Guge with his ancestors of Central Tibet. In both Tabo and Tholing, he is recorded as bodhisattva, though in a slightly different way. In Tabo, he is said to be

> born in the divine lineage of the Ancestors and bodhisattvas (*sṅon mes Byaṅ chub sems dpa*[’]) [he] the bodhisattva, the guide of all black-headed men (*byaṅ chub sems dpa’ gi myi rje lhas mdzad mgo’ nag yoṅs kyi mgon*… *Ye śes ‘od*), a lord of men made/magically created by [a portion of] all gods, [king] Ye śes ‘od,[67]

However, in Tholing he is simply “Great bodhisattva, dharma-protector, divine teacher Ye śes ‘od (*byaṅ chub sems dpa’ chen po cho[s] sk[yoṅ] lha bla ma Ye śes ‘od*)”.[68]

In previous research, we drew attention to the possible various links existing between these regions, Kāśmīr, Central Asia, and, more specifically, the region of Khotan.[69] It is equally Ye śes ‘od, the king of Puraṅ-

[66] Skjærvø, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, 524; ll. 17–19.

[67] Scherrer-Schaub, “A Perusal of Early Tibetan Inscriptions,” 141 and notes.

[68] Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, “Was Byaṅ chub sems dpa’ a Posthumous Title of King Ye śes ‘od? The Evidence of a Tabo Colophon,” in *Tabo Studies II. Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*, ed. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub and Ernst Steinkellner (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, 1999), 215; Scherrer-Schaub, “A Perusal of Early Tibetan Inscriptions,” 139–143 and 141, n. 61.

[69] See Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, “Towards a Methodology for the Study of Old Tibetan Manuscripts: Dunhuang and Tabo,” in *Tabo Studies II. Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*, ed. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub and Ernst Steinkellner (Rome: Istituto

Guge, who is recorded as "Princely Donor and Bodhisattva" in the colophon appended to a manuscript of the Tibetan translation of the *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, bearing the same titulature as the king of Khotan. In that colophon, Ye śes 'od appears as if "in assuming the religious life [of a bodhisattva he] abandoned the 'state affairs' but retained, in one way or another, the 'religious-cum-political-power'",[70] a status that he seemingly did not share with his homologous neighbour, the last Buddhist (and Muslim?) king of Khotan.

Further links between Khotan and the western regions are evidenced in the famous description of the route given in the travel report, dating to the reign of Abhimanyagupta (958–972) of the Utpāla Dynasty (855–1003) in Kāśmīr, better known as "Saka itinerary" (IOL Khot S 21 Ch. i0021a.b.), the title that Morgenstierne gave to his article published in 1942.[71] The fact that Viśa Śūra (r. 967–978?) was filled with wonder at seeing the dancing elephants, is nicely echoing the amazement of the Khotanese travellers who styled this precious document, which records a series of monasteries and temples and indicates the mountains and rivers of a large area extending from the Pamir to Gilgit and Kāśmīr and observing, among other, the use of entering the river on 'inflated skin"', a practice that was also known along the gTsaṅ po. When speaking of king Abhimanyagupta, the travellers are struck by the great number of elephants that they saw in Kāśmīr: were they part of the elephantry announcing the sound of the war-drums beating in the vicinity?

And there is more. Rinchen Zanpo (Tib. Rin chen bzaṅ po, ca. 958–1055), the emblematic figure of the renewal of Buddhism in Tibet, a son of mṄa' ris, left his country in 975 at the age of seventeen, and went first to Kāśmīr where he studied with the famous *paṇḍita* Śraddhākaravarman

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Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 1999), 310 and n. 27, 18–21 and notes, and particularly 26–28; Scherrer-Schaub, "Was Byaṅ chub sems dpa' a Posthumous Title of King Ye śes 'od?," 213 and n. 21 on sNyel or in Tabo and Mazar-thag. On this cluster of combined data at the turn of the first millennium, see the Introduction to Cristina Scherrer-Schaub and Paul Harrison, ed. *Tabo Studies III: A Catalogue of the Manuscript Collection of Tabo Monastery, Vol. 2* (forthcoming).

[70] Scherrer-Schaub, "Was Byaṅ chub sems dpa' a Posthumous Title of King Ye śes 'od?," 207–225.

[71] Georg Morgenstierne, "The Saka Itinerary," *Norsk Tidskrift for Sprogvidenskap* 12 (1942): 269–271; Skjærvø, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, 524–526.

moving then, as it seems, to northern India and returned home in 988.[72] In this epoch or on the occasion of his second visit to Kāśmīr, Rinchen Zanpo might have met the famous Kāśmīri *paṇḍita* and physician Janārdana, who was then collaborating with Dharmaśrīvarma and Śākya Blo gros (two of his own collaborators), and who translated the *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya-nāma-vaiḍūryaka-bhāṣya* of Vāgbhaṭa. The colophon says that the translation had been performed "by order of the Divine btsan po of Tibet, the *ācārya* Byaṅ chub sems dpa' the Divine Guru Jñānaprabha"[73] otherwise said king Ye śes 'od. And this colophon, once again, appears as one of the numerous flashes studding the 'stellate itineraries' that we have been dealing with here and that will lead us even further away.

[72] Petech, "Western Tibet," 234 and notes; cf. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub and Kurt Tropper, "Ruler, Translators and Teachers: On Some Murals and Captions in the Lo tsā ba lha khang of Ri ba (mNga' ris)," in *Tibet in Dialogue with its Neighbours: History, Culture and Art of Central and Western Tibet, 8th to 15th Century*, ed. Erika Forte et al. (Vienna and Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2015), 318–329, col. figs 262–264.

[73] Scherrer-Schaub, "Was Byaṅ chub sems dpa' a Posthumous Title of King Ye śes 'od?," 215–219 and notes; Scherrer-Schaub, "A Perusal of Early Tibetan Inscriptions," 158 and n. 99.

Abbreviations[74]

Hōbōgirin	Demièville, Paul, Junjiro Takakusu, and Sylvain Lévi, ed. *Hōbōgirin. Dictionnaire encyclopédique du bouddhisme d'aprés les sources chinoises et japonaises.* Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres, 1929→ (9 vols).
Ch.	Ch'ien fo tung (Qian fo dong) the "Thousand Buddhas Caves" (commonly referred to as Dunhuang) Stein site about 10 miles southeast of modern Dunhuang (cf. n. 75).
CMCTH-1	Catalogue des Manuscrits chinois de Touen-Houang. Fonds Pelliot Chinois de la Bibliothèque nationale. Vol. I: N° 2001-2500. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 1970.
CMCTH-4	Catalogue des Manuscrits chinois de Touen-Houang. Fonds Pelliot Chinois de la Bibliothèque nationale. Vol. IV: N° 3501-4000. Paris, École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991.
CMCTH-5	Catalogue des Manuscrits chinois de Touen-Houang. Fonds Pelliot Chinois de la Bibliothèque nationale. Vol. V: N° 4001-6040, Tome 2: 4735-6040. Paris, École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1995.
IOL Khot S	Shelf no. of manuscripts scrolls from Qian fo dong, see Ch., Cf. n. 75.
Māy	*Mahāmāyūrīvidyārajñī.* See Takubo, Shuyō. *The Ārya-Māyūrī-Vidyā-Rajñī.* Tokyo: Sankibo, 1972.
M. Tagh.	Mazār Tāgh "Hill of the sacred shrine", Stein site north of Khotan on the Khotan river.[75]

[74] The present author after having noted current confusion in the use of Abbreviations has deemed useful to precise the siglas, as they are adopted by the scholars in they respective fields, and as they could be equally advantageously adopted by the general public. Needless to say indeed, that each of them are important 'markers' for the historians.

[75] On the history and ambiguity of the use of sigla "M. T.", see Skjærvø and Sims-Williams, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, xxiii: "1. Mazār Tāgh "Hill of the sacred shrine", Stein site north of Khotan on the Khotan river. 2. Mazār-toghrak "Shrine of the wild poplars". Stein site west of the Domoko-yar south of Khadaliq." Ibid. n. 1: "The abbreviation M. T. (for Mazar Tagh) was adopted by Bailey for Stein's "M" and "Mr-Tagh"; on the confusion of Mazar Tagh and Mazar Toghrak, see below p. li."

Or	Oriental. "Or" refers to the main manuscripts accession sequence, first of the OMPB [Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books of the British Library, formerly part of the British Museum] and subsequently of the joint British Library Oriental Collection/India Office Library. See n. 75.
P.	Chinese Manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Paul Pelliot Chinese collection, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BN), Paris
P. T.	P. tib.[76] Tibetan Manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Paul Pelliot Tibetan collection, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BN), Paris.
T.	*Taishō daizōkyō.* In Takakusu Junjirō 高順次郎 et. al., ed. *Taishō shinshū dai zōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [Taishō *tripiṭaka*]. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1935.
Tōh	Tōhoku. *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Btsan-ḥgyur)*, edited by H. Ui, M. Suzuki, Y. Kanakura et al. Tokyo: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934, 2 vols.
Z	*Zambasta*. See Emmerick, Ronald Eric. *The Book of Zambasta. A Khotanese Poem on Buddhism*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

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P. 2009	CMCTH-1: n° 2009, p. 5. See Pelliot, Paul (éd. par Jean-Pierre Drege). *Les routes de la region de Turfan sous les T'ang suivi de l'histoire et la géographie anciennes de l'Asie centrale dans Innermost Asia*. Paris: Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises du College de France, 2002.
P. 3918	CMCTH-4: 3501-4000, n° 3918, p. 407-408.
P. 5538recto	*Khotanese text*, kept at the BN Paris = Ch.i.0021b.a2, see Skjærvø, Prods Oktor, with contributions by Ursula Sims-Williams. *Khotanese Manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in the British Library: A Complete Catalogue with Texts and Transla-*

[76] This is the adopted sigla in French publications, see e.g. Françoise Wang-Toutain, *Catalogue des manuscrits chinois de T'ouen-Houang. Fragments chinois du Fonds Pelliot tibétain de la Bibliothèque nationale de France* (Paris, École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2001). It has the advantage of avoiding the ambiguity created by the use, among some Tibetologists, of the sigla "P.T." to abbreviate the name of the famous Tibetan historian dPa'o gTsug lag phreṅ ba (1504-1566).

tions by Prods Oktor Skjaervo with Contributions by Ursula Sims-Williams. London: The British Library, 2002, lxviii (herewith Skjaervo and Sims-Williams, *Khotanese Manuscripts*). Edited and translated in Bailey, Harold W. "Śrī Viśa Śūra and the Ta-uang." *Asia Major* 11.1 (1964), 17–26.

IOL Khot S 21 = Ch. i 0021.a.a. Edited and translated in Skjaervo and Sims-Williams, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, 522–524.

IOL Khot S 21 = Ch. i. 0021a.b. Edited and translated in Skjaervo and Sims-Williams, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, 524–526.

IOL Khot 50 (4) = M. Tagh. b ii.0065. Edited and translated in Skjaervo and Sims-Williams, *Khotanese Manuscripts*, 285.

IOL Khot. 54 (2)= M. Tagh. c0018. Edited, translated and commented in Skjærvø, Prods Oktor. "Iranians, Indians, Chinese and Tibetans: The Rulers and Ruled of Khotan in the First Millennium." In *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, edited by Whitfield, Susan and Ursula Sims-Williams, 34–42. London: The British Library, 2004, 35.

Or 15000/180 = M. Tagh b.1 0092. Edited, translated and commented in Thomas, Frederick W. *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan*. *Part II: Documents*. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1951, 185–190. Cf. Takeuchi, Tsuguhito. *Old Tibetan Manuscripts from East Turkestan in the Stein Collection of the British Library*. *Volume II: Descriptive Catalogue.* Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco, The Toyo Bunko & The British Library, 1998, 79, no. 244.

P. T. 1089 = P. tib. 1089. Edited, translated and commented in Scherrer-Schaub, Cristina. "Revendications et recours hiérarchique: contribution à l'histoire de Śa cu sous administration tibétaine (Ptib 1089)." In *Études de Dunhuang et Turfan*, edited by Drège, Jean-Pierre and Olivier Venture, 257–326. Geneva: Droz, 2007.

Tabo n° 25 [Scherrer-Schaub, Cristina, and Paul Harrison, ed. *Tabo Studies III: A Catalogue of the Manuscript Collection of Tabo Monastery*, vol. I: n° 1.1.1.9]
Edited, translated and commented in Scherrer-Schaub, Cristina. "Was Byaṅ chub sems dpa' a Posthumous Title of King Ye śes 'od? The Evidence of a Tabo Colophon." In *Tabo Studies II. Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*, edited by Cristina Scherrer-Schaub and Ernst Steinkellner, 207–225. Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 1999.

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