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### BuddhistRoad Paper 2.7

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# TIBETAN RITUAL TEXTS AND THE *UṢNĪSAVIJAYĀDHĀRAṆĪ* ON THE FIRST PANEL OF IOL TIB J 466

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## BUDDHISTROAD PAPER

Peer reviewed

ISSN: 2628-2356

DOI: 10.46586/rub.br.266.243

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Please quote this paper as follows:

**Doney, Lewis, “Tibetan Ritual Texts and the *Uṣnīṣavijayādhāraṇī* on the First Panel of IOL Tib J 466,” *BuddhistRoad Paper 2.7* (2023).**

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### SPONSORS:



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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).

TIBETAN RITUAL TEXTS AND THE *UṢNĪṢAVIJAYĀDHĀRAṆĪ*  
ON THE FIRST PANEL OF IOL TIB J 466

LEWIS DONEY

*Abstract*

This article explores prayer texts written on the first panel of a manuscript whose content links Dunhuang (敦煌) and Central Tibet, IOL Tib J 466. The wider Dunhuang corpus of which this manuscript is part offers scholars a time-capsule from the social and cultural world of first-millennium CE Dunhuang, a melting pot with connections to China, the eastern part of the Silk Road and Tibet. The corpus can also be used, with caution, to compare religious practice there with what we know of Buddhism at the court of the Tibetan emperors in the eighth and ninth centuries especially. One aspect of this is ritual, into which category fall prayer and the related genre of *dhāraṇī* (Tib. *gzungs*, Chin. *tuoluoni* 陀羅尼), and IOL Tib J 466 contains both of these. This article focuses on the first panel of this manuscript, containing invitations to the buddhas of the ten directions, praises to the eight great bodhisattvas and an exemplar of the *Uṣnīṣavijayādhāraṇī* (Tib. *gTsug tor rnam par rgyal ba'i gzungs*, Chin. *Zunsheng zhou* 尊勝咒). Analysing these materials within the context of prayer and *dhāraṇī* literature evidenced in some of the other Tibetan-language documents from Dunhuang and later canonical Tibetan exemplars and references broadens the description of ritual traditions in the Tibetan imperial (ca. 600–850) and early post-imperial period and within Tibeto-Chinese Buddhist communities in Dunhuang during and after Tibetan imperial control over the region (up to 848).<sup>1</sup>

*1. Introduction*

The Tibetan Empire (Tib. *Bod chen po*, ca. 7th c. to 842) saw the unification of a number of different ethnic groups and kingdoms on the Tibetan Plateau, the introduction of Buddhism as a state religion and a little under a century of rule, up to around 848, over the largely Buddhist

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to offer my thanks to Sam van Schaik for first making me aware of IOL Tib J 466 and helping me gain access to it in the British Library, Carmen Meinert and Alexander Zorin for their useful feedback on an early draft of this paper, and Vivien Staps for all her editing work.



but mostly ethnically Chinese region around Dunhuang (敦煌) to the north-east.<sup>2</sup>

Data on ritual activities and texts in Old Tibetan come from Central Tibet, from the Dunhuang Mogao Cave 17 a.k.a. the Library Cave or scripture repository cave (Chin. Cangjing dong 藏經洞) or from archaeological sites along the Silk Roads. They range from complex tantric commentaries to simple requests for requisite items. I have chosen to refer to this Tibetan ritual literature as ‘Old Tibetan’, despite the linguistic debate over what Old Tibetan is (especially in relation to translated literature and especially that transliterated from Indic languages rather than translated) alluded to above. I rejected using the term ‘imperial Tibetan’ to refer to *dhāraṇī* literature in Tibetan (rather than, say, Chinese) from the (Tibetan) imperial period (ca. 600–850), such as the *Aparimitāyurdhāraṇīsūtra* (Chin. *Foshuo wuliang shou zongyao jing* 佛說無量壽宗要經, or *Aparimitāyurnāmamahāyānasūtra* (Tib. *Tshe dpag tu med pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po 'I mdo*)) discussed below. The term ‘imperial Tibetan’ could be confused with the term ‘Tibetan imperial’, which refers to a time span and could be misinterpreted as meaning only prayers emanating from the court of the Tibetan Empire. Instead, one of the points I wish to make here is that unidirectional influence of the Tibetan Empire on prayer and *dhāraṇī* literature in Tibetan found in Mogao Cave 17 cannot always be assumed and that multiple fascinating influences are often at play.

At one extreme of complexity in Old Tibetan texts on ritual lie the commentaries on esoteric Buddhist rituals that contain praise, offerings and *dhāraṇīs*.<sup>3</sup> At the other extreme are some of our oldest sources of

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<sup>2</sup> On the cosmopolitan and multicultural Tibetan Empire and its Buddhism, see especially Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 27–83; Guntram Hazod, “Tribal Mobility and Religious Fixation: Remarks on Territorial Transformation, Social Integration and Identity in Imperial and Early Post-Imperial Tibet,” in *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World*, 300–1100, ed. Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, and Richard K. Payne (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 43–57; Lewis Doney, “Tibet,” in *A Companion to the Global Early Middle Ages*, ed. Erik Hermans (Leeds: Arc Humanities, 2020), 191–223. I recently looked at the continuities and discrepancies in doctrines and beliefs between Central Tibet and the Dunhuang region at this time, in Lewis Doney, “On the Margins: Between Beliefs and Doctrines within Tibetan-Ruled Dunhuang Scribal Culture,” *BuddhistRoad Paper* 1.6 (2023).

<sup>3</sup> Examples from Mogao Cave 17 are covered most thoroughly in Jacob P. Dalton and Sam van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Stein Collection at the British Library* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). See also Jacob P. Dalton,

evidence of non-Buddhist rituals in Tibet, found on small wooden slips. As Sam van Schaik points out, the dispatch texts written on the latter and a non-Buddhist ritual manual from Mogao Cave 17, P. T. 1042, contain references to rituals concerning deities called heavenly and lord spirits of the region (Tib. *yul lha yul bdag*, literally ‘land-god land-owner’), as well as to spirits known as alpine spirits (Tib. *smān*, a name perhaps related to healing but for spirits who are probably the owners of wild animals).<sup>4</sup> There is thus some slight evidence in such Old Tibetan material of non-Buddhist rituals and spells that may have already existed in certain places around the Tibetan Empire, and perhaps were practised at court, at the time when Buddhism became one of (but not the only) state religion supported by the Tibetan emperors.

The ascendancy of the Tibetan Empire under Tri Songdésen (742–ca. 800, Tib. Khri Srong lde brtsan), with the necronym Jangchup chenpo (Tib. Byang chub chen po, Great Awakening,) who ruled over the empire at perhaps its peak of extent and cosmopolitanism, allowed the emperor to confer high status, patronage and support on the Buddhist institution of ordained monks (the *saṃgha*).<sup>5</sup> Whatever non-Buddhist rituals and spells were popular in parts of the Tibetan Empire, undoubtedly complex and connected ‘pools of tradition’, they were slowly engulfed and to some extent destroyed by a tidal wave of Buddhist ritual literature entering Central Tibet through translation.<sup>6</sup>

An older Old Tibetan language was replaced in these contexts by a modified form used to translate especially Buddhist literature from Indic

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“How *Dhāraṇīs* WERE Proto-Tantric: Liturgies, Ritual Manuals, and the Origins of the Tantras,” in *Tantric Traditions in Transmission and Translation*, ed. David B. Gray and Ryan R. Overby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 199–229 for a recent discussion of the relation between *dhāraṇī* and *tantra* in the context of commentaries.

<sup>4</sup> Sam van Schaik, “The Naming of the Tibetan Religion: Bon and Chos in the Tibetan Imperial Period,” *Journal of the International Association for Bon Research* 1 (2013): 246. Similar references are made in Tibetan dispatch texts written in ink on wooden slips found at an outpost on the northern edge of the Empire, along the southern Silk Road at what was Miran fort (ibid., 246–247).

<sup>5</sup> See Hugh E. Richardson, “The First Tibetan chos-’byung,” in *High Peaks Pure Earth*, ed. Michael Aris (London: Serindia, 1998 [1980]), 89–99.

<sup>6</sup> On the notion of a ‘pool of tradition’ drawn on by oral-literary registers of expression (including in Old Tibetan), see Lauri Honko, “Text as Process and Practice: The Textualization of Oral Epics,” in *Textualization of Oral Epics*, ed. Lauri Honko (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter 2000), 3–54; Brandon Dotson, “The Unhappy Bride and Her Lament,” *Journal of the International Association for Bon Research* 1 (2013): 199–225.



languages. On top of this, a few of the *dhāraṇī* texts that I shall cover below are strictly speaking transliterated from Indic languages (sometimes via Chinese intermediaries) rather than translated, which adds another level of remove from the original intention of creating the script, namely for properly expressing Old Tibetan phonology and grammar. There is also evidence that this new register was adapted to make indigenous Buddhist texts related to the Tibetan Empire, such as the *mChod pa bsdus pa'i le'u* [Chapter of Collected Offerings] that is contained in the short manuscript IOL Tib J 374.<sup>7</sup> This invokes, among others, the buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, gods of the form realm (Skt. *rūpadhātu*, Tib. *gzugs khams*) and of the desire realm (Skt. *kāmadhātu*, Tib. *'dod khams*), the four heavenly kings (Tib. *rgyal po bzhi* or, in this case, *rgyal chen rIgs bzhi*) and the ten local protectors (Tib. *phyogs skyong bcu*) to come and clear away the obstacles of the Tibet realm (Tib. *bod khams*), for which they are worshipped with offerings (Tib. *mchod pa*). A general mark of this register is to emphasise the ten directions (Tib. *phyogs bcu*), inhabited by buddhas, that slowly come to replace the non-Buddhist four-borders (Tib. *mtha' bzhi*) schema that had acted as a metaphor of imperial expansion.<sup>8</sup>

Another work at least expanded to include Tibet-specific content drawing on an Old Tibetan religious register are certain parts of a prayer known to most scholars as the *Tridaṇḍaka* (Tib. *rGyud chags gsum*), found in the manuscript IOL Tib J 466.<sup>9</sup> The beginning of this prayer, IOL

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion, translation, and transliteration of the *Chapter of Collected Offerings* portion of the manuscript, see Sam van Schaik, “A Prayer for Tibet,” last modified May 22, 2009, accessed February 28, 2021. <https://earlytibet.com/2009/05/22/a-prayer-for-tibet/>, updating the account given in Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 108–109. IOL Tib J 374/1 ends by saying “the Chapter of Collected Offerings is finished” (IOL Tib J 374, 5v.5: // \$ // *mchod pa bsdus pa'i le'u rdzogs+ho /*) and with a colophon attributing the “Chapter of [Collected] Offerings” to the monk Peltsek (Tib. dPal brtsegs) (IOL Tib J 374, 5v.5: *dge slong dpal brtsegs gyi mchod pa'i le'u glags s+ho // : / /*). which may or may not mean the famous eighth-ninth century translator, Kawa Peltsek (fl. 8th/9th c., Tib. sKa ba dPal brtsegs) as suggested by Dalton and van Schaik in *ibid.*, 108.

<sup>8</sup> See Lewis Doney, “Early Bodhisattva-Kingship in Tibet: The Case of Tri Songdétse,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 24 (2015): 37–39; Doney, “Imperial Gods,” 72–75.

<sup>9</sup> On this work, see Sam van Schaik and Lewis Doney, “The Prayer, the Priest and the Tsenpo: An Early Buddhist Narrative from Dunhuang,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 30.1/2 (2007): 195–196; Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 209–212, entry on IOL Tib J 466; Doney, “Imperial

Tib J 466/3, ll. 1–17, comprises three parts: (1) the three jewels (Tib. *dkon mchog gsum*, Skt. *triratna*), i.e., the Buddha, *dharma* and *saṃgha*, are prayed to in the first part, (2) all three as a whole in the second part, and (3) in the last part is recited the *Pūjāmeghadhāraṇī* that suffuses the buddha fields of the ten directions—addressed to the first of the three jewels (though perhaps synecdochically all three).<sup>10</sup> One of the later stanzas of praise to Buddhists of the past (as it is extant in IOL Tib J 466/3, column 11, ll. 1–4) praises Tri Songdétse as a spiritual advisor (Tib. *dge ba'i bshes gnyen*, Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*)—a term that during the imperial period generally refers to imperial preceptors instead—and as a fully enlightened teacher.<sup>11</sup> Another, following straight after (IOL Tib J 466/3, column 11, ll. 4–8), praises the heavenly spirits (Tib. *lha rnams*) of the Tibetan region (Tib. *bod yul*), or perhaps the heavenly spirits of the region (Tib. *yul gyi lha rnams*) of Tibet (Tib. *bod*) that include the lord spirits of the region (Tib. *yul bdag*), alpine spirits (Tib. *sman*) of the non-Buddhist rituals evidenced in P. T. 1042 and on wooden slips (see above).<sup>12</sup> Triangulating between terminology used in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts from Cave 17 and elsewhere across the Tibetan Empire, we gain glimpses of Old Tibetan ritual in all its variety, from the simple to the highly complex, and in dialogue with each other in ways that are otherwise lost to the ages.

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Gods.” Yi Ding, “Divine Transactions: The Transformations of Buddhist Communal Liturgies at Dunhuang” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2020), 96, n. 1, suggests translating the title *rGyud chags gsum* as “Three Sequences” and further notes: “Despite the fact that most scholars reconstruct the underlying Sanskrit of the title as \**Tridaṇḍa/Tridaṇḍaka*, it seems more like[ly] that *rGyud/rGyun chags gsum* is for \**Tritantra* (“Three Essential Parts”). BGTD [(the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* dictionary)] describes the term *rgyun chags gsum pa* as a liturgy performed on a *poṣadha* rite [(i.e., absolution rite)] featuring three different ritual actions. The first action is paying homage to deities and spirits, the second is *sūtra*-chanting, and the third is merit-transfer.” Dan Martin recently suggested to me that *rgyun chags* relates to the Sanskrit metre and in turn to the fact that part of this work is one of the few that is permitted to be recited to a melody (personal communication, 31 October 2018, and see Doney, “Imperial Gods,” 83–84 for this latter fact).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 84–85.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 88–89.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 89–90. The translations offered there are tentative, but a translation that I would like to amend is found on p. 90, for the Tibetan phrase *byang chub kyi sems kyls zin pa 'I so so 'i skye bo rnams la mchod pa //* (column 11, line 8). Dan Martin kindly pointed out that *so so('i) skye bo* means simply ordinary person(s) (Skt. *prthagjana*) “who have been seized by [become imbued with] the thought of Enlightenment” and who are here being praised (personal communication, 31 October 2018).





Leaving aside new adaptations for the next section of this article, the influx of pre-existing Buddhist ritual traditions meant that many diachronically laid-down *strata*, comprising ritual texts created within various sects and monastic lineages of Buddhism in South Asia as well as Eastern Central Asia and East Asia over the centuries, became a synchronic collection in the Tibetan imperial libraries.<sup>13</sup> What little evidence we have of imperial Buddhism (as distinct from Dunhuang Buddhism) suggests some liturgies among this mass of texts proved more popular than others at court and in Tibetan temples, and recent trends in surrounding Buddhist regions may have had an impact on this; yet the situation remains unclear due to the opaqueness of the texts.<sup>14</sup>

One Tibetan imperial library catalogue, known as the *Lhenkarma* (Tib. *dKar chag lHan kar ma*),<sup>15</sup> contains a prologue (of uncertain date) that describes:

... the translation of the *dharma* that took place in the imperial-period Tibetan realm [(Tib. *bod khams*)], including *sūtras* of the large and small vehicles, long and short spells (*dhāraṇī*), the ‘one hundred and eight names’ [(Skt. *nāmāṣṭaśataka*)], hymns of praise [(Skt. *stotra*)], aspirational prayers [(Skt. *prañidhāna*)], benedictions [(Skt. *maṅgalagāthā*)], the *Vinayaṭīka* [and so forth].<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A similar process in Tibetan art is described in Rob Linrothe, *Ruthless Compassion: Wrathful Deities in Early Indo-Tibetan Esoteric Buddhist Art* (London: Serindia Publications, 1999), 23.

<sup>14</sup> See Jonathan Silk, “Chinese Sūtras in Tibetan Translation: A Preliminary Survey,” *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University* 22 (2019): 227–246; Channa Li, “A Survey of Tibetan Sūtras Translated from Chinese, as Recorded in Early Tibetan Catalogues,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 60 (2021): 174–219.

<sup>15</sup> The *Lhenkarma* can be considered an Old Tibetan source in my sense of the term, despite the fact that it only exists in later manuscripts. As I suggested elsewhere, it is clear that the *Lhenkarma* represents a library catalogue, the inventory of a literary storehouse or the official register of the imperial holdings, rather than the ‘table of contents’ of some proto-canon whose order (say, where each item is found among the ‘library shelves’) is necessarily reflected in the ordering principle of the *Lhenkarma* text; see Lewis Doney, “Text, Act and Subject: A Proposed Approach to the Future Study of Old Tibetan Prayer,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 60 (2021): 55.

<sup>16</sup> My translation. According to the critical edition in Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die lHan kar ma: Ein früher Katalog der ins tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 1, the *Lhenkarma* reads: *theg pa che chung gi mdo sde dang / gzungs* (variant: *gzugs*) *che phra*



This list accords with the categorisational order of the catalogue itself, as well as that of the slightly later *Phangthangma* (Tib. *dKar chag 'Phang thang ka ma*). As Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt discusses in the foreword to her presentation of this ‘work’ (made up of exemplars showing several changes during the imperial period and afterwards), the *Lhenkarma* itself:

represents a cross-section of what was available for translation in the period from about the beginning of the eighth to the first third of the 9th century of Buddhist literature in Tibet [...] [and] a cross-section of the most important Buddhist literature of its time.<sup>17</sup>

The classes of textual categories and the order in which they are given in the prologue reflect the classification system of the *Lhenkarma* catalogue itself.<sup>18</sup> There too, the *dhāraṇī* category is followed by that of ‘one hundred and eight names’ (Skt. *nāmāṣṭaśataka*). Within this subsequent ‘one hundred and eight names’ section,<sup>19</sup> we find a couple of the texts that within the imperial period are accompanied by *dhāraṇī mantras* (or *dhāraṇīs* and *mantras*) according to their titles and some that are, at a later date, included within exemplars of the work/genre called *gZungs 'dus* [Dhāraṇī Collection].<sup>20</sup> Given their close connections then, it does not seem to be a coincidence that *dhāraṇīs* precede the ‘one hundred

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*dang / mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad dang / bstod pa dang / smon lam dang / bkra shis dang / 'dul ba'i sde snod dang / ... la sogs pa bod khams su chos 'gyur ro.*

<sup>17</sup> The original German, in Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die Lhan kar ma*, i, reads: “Zum zweiten stellt die Lhan kar ma einen Querschnitt dessen dar, was in dem Zeitraum etwa vom Beginn des 8. bis zum 1. Drittel des 9. Jh. an buddhistischer Literatur in Tibet zur Übersetzung zur Verfügung stand, – in einem Land, das auf breiter Basis Interesse an allen Aspekten buddhistischer Kultur zeigte. Sie bietet damit auch einen Querschnitt durch die wichtigste buddhistische Literatur ihrer Zeit.”

<sup>18</sup> See Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die Lhan kar ma*, 181–276 and the discussion in Doney, “Text, Act and Subject,” 55f.

<sup>19</sup> Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die Lhan kar ma*, 250–257, entries 437–455.

<sup>20</sup> The *Sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das 'khor byang chub sems dpa' brgyad dang bcas pa'i mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa gzung sngags dang bcas pa* is so-named in the *Lhenkarma* and slightly later *Phangthangma* catalogue, see Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die Lhan kar ma*, 250, entry 437; the *'Phags pa lha mo sgrol ma'i mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa* is named the *'Phags pa sgrol ma'i mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa gzung sngags dang bcas pa* in the *Phangthangma*, see *ibid.*, 253–254, entry 439. See references to the *Kangyur dhāraṇī* collections section in various places over *ibid.*, 250–257, entries 437–455.

*BuddhistRoad Paper 2.7. Doney, “Tibetan Ritual Texts and the Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī”*



and eight names’, followed by hymns of praise (seemingly closest to the ‘one hundred and eight names’ among the three following categories).<sup>21</sup>

The *Lhenkarma* is one of three catalogues of Buddhist texts translated into Tibetan by the ninth century (along with the *Phangthangma* and *Chimpuma* (Tib. *dKar chag bSam yas mChims phu ma*)). In addition, we possess similar but expanded catalogues from later centuries (including those of the various collections of the *bKa’gyur* [Kangyur], *bsTan’gyur* [Tengyur], and *rNying ma rgyud ’bum* [Ancient Tantra Collection]) and countless lists in religious and historiographical works down to the present day.<sup>22</sup> Matching the titles and content of the imperial catalogues with these later lists, it is clear that many of the imperial-period prayers survived.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, they were joined by others—whether due to indigenous innovation or developments in surrounding Buddhist regions—that expanded not only the corpus but also the number of terms used for these communications. Such later approaches to categorisation could constitute a fertile field for further digging into the changing uses of these forms of ritual text.

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<sup>21</sup> In fact, this liminal status, and many Tibetan canon creators’ subsequent decisions to include most *dhāraṇīs* within their *tantra* sections led to the classification of *dhāraṇīs* under *tantra* in relation to the imperial period in Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt, “The *Lhan kar ma* as a Source for the History of Tantric Buddhism,” in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, ed. Helmut Eimer and David Germano (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 129–149; Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die Lhan kar ma*, viii and xxxv. In contrast, Ulrich Pagel, “The Dhāraṇīs of Mahāvīyutpatti #748: Origin and Formation,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 24.2 (2007): 151–191, places *dhāraṇīs* within the context of Mahāyāna texts (focused on the *bodhisattvayāna* rather than the *vajrayāna*) as they were incorporated into other Tibetan imperial sources on bibliography and translation terminology. Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, xxi discuss this problem and the authors’ pragmatic solution to include most *dhāraṇī* texts within their catalogue of “tantric manuscripts from Dunhuang.”

<sup>22</sup> Herrmann-Pfandt, “The *Lhan kar ma* as a Source”; Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die Lhan kar ma*, i and xiv–xxvii. For a general introduction to Tibetan catalogues (Tib. *dkar chags*), see also Dan Martin, “Tables of Contents (*dKar chag*),” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (New York: Snow Lion, 1996), 500–513.

<sup>23</sup> See the excellent such comparative work evidenced in Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die Lhan kar ma*.

## 2. IOL Tib J 466

The Tibetan Empire ruled over Dunhuang from either the 750s or 760s, or 787, until 848.<sup>24</sup> During this period, the region belonged to the military district of Guazhou Province (瓜洲, Tib. Kwa chu khrom) with its base in the Guazhou oasis, 15 km to the east of Dunhuang.<sup>25</sup> This area was pivotal for trade and connectivity, since here the northern and southern Silk Roads came together before entering the Hexi Corridor (Chin. Hexi zoulang 河西走廊) that led to Liangzhou (涼州) and Chang'an (長安, modern Xi'an 西安). Gertraud Taenzer explains how the Tibetan administration split the inhabitants into civil and military units, the former paying taxes and remaining relatively untouched by Tibetan culture and the latter group in addition performing *corvée* labour (including recruitment as soldiers) and more often taking on Tibetan names.<sup>26</sup> The area was primarily Buddhist, and military units included some monks who became military citizens (though perhaps not soldiers). Regional councils (Tib. 'dun sa/tsa) administered both the general Dégam area (Tib. bDe khams) and the more specific Guazhou Province that included Dunhuang, and gradually new rules were introduced for the Tibetan government of both monastic and lay organisations, altering the already existing structures but with a relatively light touch.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The later date for the beginning of Tibetan occupation was the established one among academics, but the earlier dates were more recently suggested by Bianca Horlemann, "A Re-evaluation of the Tibetan Conquest of Eighth-century Shazhou/Dunhuang," in *Tibet, Past and Present: Tibetan Studies I, Proceedings of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 2000*, ed. Henk Blezer (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 49–66. Tibetan rule of Dunhuang ended gradually between 848 and 851, according to Henrik H. Sørensen, "Guiyijun and Buddhism at Dunhuang: A Year by Year Chronicle," *BuddhistRoad Paper* 4.2 (2019).

<sup>25</sup> Gertraud Taenzer, "Changing Relations between Administration, Clergy and Lay People in Eastern Central Asia: A Case Study According to the Dunhuang Manuscripts Referring to the Transition from Tibetan to Local Rule in Dunhuang, 8th–11th Centuries," in *Transfer of Buddhism Across Central Asian Networks (7th to 13th Centuries)*, ed. Carmen Meinert (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 19.

<sup>26</sup> See Taenzer, "Changing Relations," 20–22; for more on the geographical divisions, see Kazushi Iwao, "Organisation of the Chinese Inhabitants in Tibetan-Ruled Dunhuang," in *Old Tibetan Studies Dedicated to the Memory of R.E. Emmerick: Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS, 2003*, ed. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 65–75.

<sup>27</sup> Brandon Dotson, *The Old Tibetan Annals: An Annotated Translation of Tibet's First History, With an Annotated Cartographical Documentation by Guntram Hazod* (Vienna:



At Dunhuang too, recent trends in surrounding regions no doubt had an impact on Buddhist rituals. Here, or in the surrounding areas, Tibetan-speakers or writers continued to process the rich traditions they had inherited in numerous ways, as the literature found in Mogao Cave 17 attests. Such is the case with IOL Tib J 466/3, which I briefly described above. The manuscript IOL Tib J 466 is also connected with other rituals, especially *dhāraṇī*, dating from the end of the Tibetan imperial period.<sup>28</sup>

IOL Tib J 466/3 is scribed on the same paper, and in the same handwriting style, as the many copies of the *Aparimitāyurdhāraṇīsūtra* that were written in the 840s, during or soon after the last years of the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang. Further, IOL Tib J 466 is marked with the site reference Ch.79.XIII.4, probably assigned by Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943) or those who received the Dunhuang manuscripts in London.

Another manuscript given the same wider site reference is found in another volume: IOL Tib J 310.4 (volume 88:002, site ref. Ch.79.XIII.1).

<sup>29</sup> The shelfmark IOL Tib J 310 was created to encompass all of the Dunhuang Tibetan copies of the *Aparimitāyurdhāraṇīsūtra*. This document is indeed such a copy, written over three panels and with a colophon that identifies its scribe and editors. The scribe possesses a Chinese name, transcribed into Tibetan as Lu Dzéshing (Tib. Lu Dze shing),<sup>30</sup> and the editorial team consists of at least two monks, Shérab (Tib. Shes rab) and Pelchok (Tib. dPal mchog).<sup>31</sup> The fact that both documents are written on panels and share a site reference raises the possibility that they were placed in the cave together (perhaps with the Chinese documents also sharing the same wider site reference) and may be historically connected in some way.

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Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 69; Taenzer, “Changing Relations,” 27–35.

<sup>28</sup> The following is based on van Schaik and Doney, “The Prayer, the Priest and the Tsenpo,” 195–196 and Doney, “Imperial Gods,” 75–76. See also Brandon Dotson and Lewis Doney, *A Study of the Tibetan Dunhuang Aparimitāyur-nāma mahāyāna-sūtras Kept in the British Library* (with the participation of Dongzhi Duojie, forthcoming).

<sup>29</sup> All the other documents contained under site reference Ch.79.XIII are Chinese. It should be noted that, at present, IOL Tib J 310.4 does not correspond to the images under that IOL reference on the IDP website.

<sup>30</sup> IOL Tib J 310, panel 3, line 38: *lu dze shing bris //*.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, line 39, in red ink, reads: *\$/ : / shes rab zhus / jI i na yang zhus / dpa+l mchog sum zhus /*.

*BuddhistRoad Paper 2.7. Doney, “Tibetan Ritual Texts and the Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī”*

As for content, I already mentioned that the liturgy of IOL Tib J 466/3, ll. 1–17, begins with praising the three jewels and then reciting the *Pūjāmeghadhāraṇī*. It should be noted for what follows that the *Pūjāmeghadhāraṇī* is often found together in the Dunhuang Tibetan corpus with a very popular prayer, the *Āryabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna*, and that both ritual texts emphasise the ten directions that Buddhist geography connected with the buddhas.<sup>32</sup>

Before IOL Tib J 466/3, someone has added another panel of paper, which is now fragmentary (see fig. 1). What remains shows that it contained some hitherto unidentified ritual texts (together given the designation IOL Tib J 466/1) and the *dhāraṇī* spell known as the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* (Tib. *gTsug tor rnam par rgyal ba'i gzungs*, IOL Tib J 466/2)—in effect broadening the ritual collection (and perhaps its practice) by the addition of a piece of paper at some unidentified point in time before the closing of Cave 17.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See van Schaik and Doney, “The Prayer, the Priest and the Tsenpo,” 184–185; Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 20–21. See Dalton, “How *Dhāraṇīs* WERE Proto-Tantric,” 206–208 on this aspect of the *rgyud chags gsum*.

<sup>33</sup> See Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 209–10; Doney, “Imperial Gods,” 82–83 on the first panel of IOL Tib J 466.

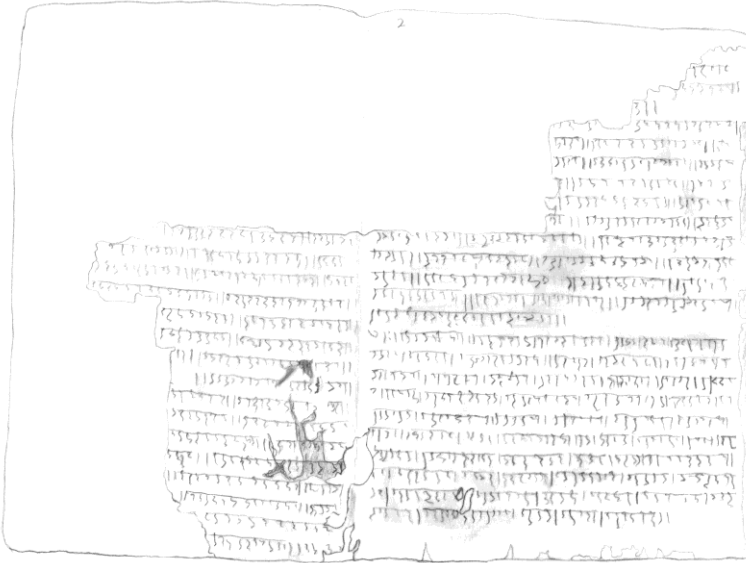


Figure 1. Sketch of the, as yet undigitised, first panel of IOL Tib J 466, by the author.

IOL Tib J 466/1 actually consists of at least four texts. The panel of paper is a fragment and is missing the top left-hand side. It is torn from the middle of column one on the bottom left to the top of the right, cutting at least nine lines of text in column two in half or more. The panel contains other tears at the bottom and was backed with a (now) darker piece of paper prior to being written on (see fig. 2).<sup>34</sup> The height of the remaining right-hand edge of the panel suggests that one complete line could be missing from the top of column two. Thus, it now consists of 24 lines but once may have comprised 25 lines, which is consistent with at least some of the other panels of IOL Tib J 466.<sup>35</sup> Comparing the first and second column indicates that column one could be missing its original first nine

<sup>34</sup> See Doney, “Imperial Gods,” 82, n. 32. These make a full transliteration of what remains of IOL Tib J 466/1b difficult and at times impossible.

<sup>35</sup> Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts from Tun-Huang in the India Office Library (entries 333 to 765)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), no. 466, states that each folio (read column) consists of “ll. 24 and 25.” The opening part of IOL Tib J 466/3 is written on panels consisting of 19 lines per column, but towards the end of the manuscript this increases to between 21 and 25 lines per column.

or ten lines completely, as well as a substantial portion of the left-hand side of each of the remaining 16 lines.

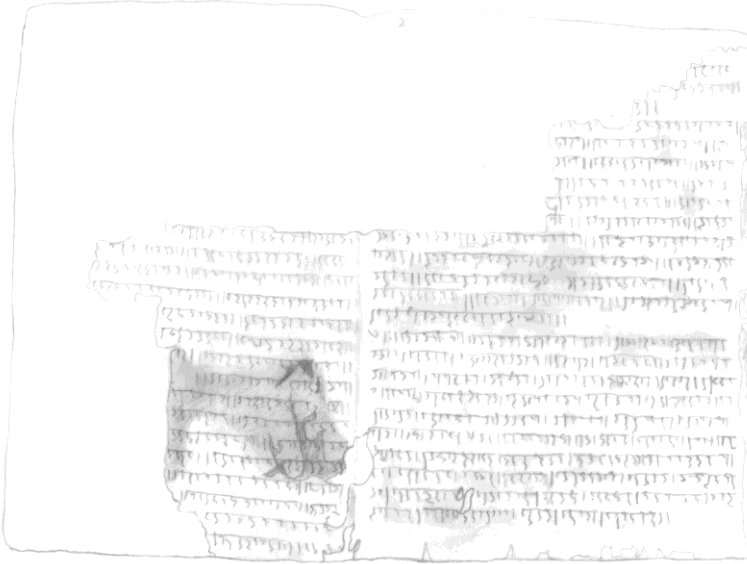


Figure 2. Indication of the minimum size of the patch on the reverse of the first panel of IOL Tib J 466, by the author.

Of the first four texts, IOL Tib J 466/1a covers lines 1–7 of what remains of column one and probably ended on line 8. IOL Tib J 466/1b fills the rest of line 8 and all of lines 9–16 down to the bottom of column one, then lines 1–3 of column two, in other words lines 8–19 of the extant panel text as a whole. In this latter method of counting, I am following the line numbers given in Jacob P. Dalton and Sam van Schaik’s catalogue entry for IOL Tib J 466/1 from 1 to 19, where Dalton (who is responsible for the entry) correctly suggests that one text may come to an end on this line.<sup>36</sup> IOL Tib J 466/1c covers lines 20–24 and IOL Tib J 466/1d spans lines 25–30, where Dalton notes that IOL Tib J 466/1 ends.

<sup>36</sup> See Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 209.





## 2.1. IOL Tib J 466/1a

IOL Tib J 466/1a is thus now a fragment. It reads:

[...] are requested to protect, are requested to come [to], the world.

The factors of enlightenment [...] absolutely abandoned the seven [...] [and] obtained the seven riches of the Noble Ones,<sup>37</sup> the *tathā[gatha(s)]* [...] are requested to come to protect [the world].

Entering into equality with the eight utter emancipations,<sup>38</sup> [...] of turning back [(or ‘that are wrong’, Tib. *log pa ’I*), [...] since [they] have completely perfected the eight teachings [of] the Noble One(s),<sup>39</sup> [they] are requested to come to protect the world.

[...] By abandoning the nine [...] [those who] also act for the benefit of all the nine beings [(i.e., every single one)] [...] are requested to come [to protect the world?].

The pure power of practising the ten virtues [...] the buddha(s) [who] completely perfected the ten strengths [...] .<sup>40</sup>

The reader of this article has already, no doubt, identified this as a fragment of a Buddhist prayer inviting a higher power or powers to come to the world and protect it, and thus in line with the Mahāyāna context of the rest of the IOL Tib J 466 manuscript. The reader perhaps also spotted the numbers seven, eight, nine and ten occurring in order as a structuring basis for the praises’ poetics, yet the details are unclear from what remains

<sup>37</sup> A *ha* is attached to the bottom of the *nya* of *brnyes*, which Alexander Zorin informs me (personal communication, 16 January 2023) is found as an apparently legitimate orthography in some Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts.

<sup>38</sup> IOL Tib J 466, l. 3 appears to read *nam thar* but the *tha-* in the second syllable seems to have been written over something else and so is not completely certain. See footnote 49 below on *mam pa*.

<sup>39</sup> This line ends ... *pas na/*, where the *na* as pleonastic. It is interesting that this is also acceptable in Old Tibetan documents, including in this text (see also *spangs pas na* on l. 5 below).

<sup>40</sup> IOL Tib J 466, ll. 1–7, reads:

- (1) [... -dʔ]/ /j[i]g r[e]n skyabsu gs[o]l gshegs su gs[o]l/ /byang chub yan
- (2) [...] *bdun p[o] shin tu spangs/ /'phags pa 'I nor bdun brny+hes pa ste/ /de bzhin*
- (3) [...] *r[t]e]n skyabs su gshegs su gsol/ /rnam thar brgyad la snyoms par 'jug/ /log pa 'I*
- (4) [... 'phags pa 'I chos brgyad rdzogs pas na/ /'jig rten skyabsu gshegsu gsol/ /
- (5) [...] *dgu spangs pas na/ /skye dgu kun kyl don yang mdzad / /*
- (6) [...] *su gshegs su gsol/ /dge ba bcu spyad rnam dag mthu/*
- (7) [...] *na/-n/ /sang rgyas stobs bcu yong[s]u rdzogs/ /*

of the text. Fortunately, however, a corresponding and more complete text of IOL Tib J 466/1a exists in manuscript P. T. 2.<sup>41</sup>

P. T. 2 comprises at least five texts and begins with what Marcelle Lalou described (in the first volume of her catalogue of the P. T. collection) as an “invitation (*spyān draṅ ba = āvāhana*) to the buddhas of the ten directions.”<sup>42</sup> This prayer (transliterated in Appendix I along with corresponding extant text from IOL Tib J 466, ll. 1–7) fills lines 1–17 of the first panel of P. T. 2, written neatly along guidelines and between two drawn margins, in a single column to be unrolled vertically (in contrast to IOL Tib J 466). Lines 10–16 contain text that corresponds to IOL Tib J 466/1a, lines 1–7, where basically every line in the former contains some text (ranging from 1/3 to 2/3 of the line) corresponding to text in the latter. There are nine or ten lines missing at the top of IOL Tib J 466’s column one and nine lines of prayer in P. T. 2 preceding where it begins to correspond to extant text in IOL Tib J 466/1a. Thus, it is likely that the entire prayer that begins P. T. 2 was also written at the top of the first column of IOL Tib J 466, before part of that column was lost, and that the prayer began the panel (in other words, nothing preceded it on this panel).

It seems clear, then, that the first prayer in P. T. 2 was scribed (with some divergences) as the prayer IOL Tib J 466/1a. Yet, what is its content?

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<sup>41</sup> I was aided in identifying and transliterating the correspondences between IOL Tib J 466/1a and P. T. 2 by Kha sgang Bkra shis tshe ring, Stobs ldan and Sha bo Rab brtan ed., *Hpha ran sir nyar ba’i tun hong yig rmying shog dril bshus yig phyogs bsgrigs deb dang po* [First Volume of a Collection of Transcriptions of the Manuscripts of Old Texts from Dunhuang Held in France] (Beijing: Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2014), 8–9. This first volume was not followed by a second, and the whole enterprise appears to have begun again as a 2016–2017 series of at least twelve volumes—with a similar name but published in Lhasa and with only two of the previous three editors now as main editors (Tib. *gtso sgrig pa*, Stobs ldan and Kha sgang Bkra shis tshe ring) and supplemented by two main junior editors (Tib. *gtso sgrig gzhon pa*, Rdo sbis tshe ring rdo rje and Rin chen sgrol ma); see Stobs ldan et al. ed., *H+pha ran sir nyar ba’i tun hong shog dril yig rmying gi bshus yig phyogs bsgrigs* [Collection of Transcriptions of Old Texts from the Manuscripts of Dunhuang Held in France], 12 vols (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmang dpe skrun khang, 2016–2017).

<sup>42</sup> Marcelle Lalou, *Inventaire des manuscrits tibétains de touen-houang conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale I* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1939), 1, entry 2, begins: Recueil de quatre textes complets plus un mantra.

1) Invitation (*spyān-draṅ-ba = āvāhana*) aux Buddha des dix directions. Débute: *phyogs bcu’i saṅs-rgyas ’phags-pa-nams spyān-draṅ-ba’* ... Finit: *’phags-pa-nams spyān-draṅ-ba rjogs-so*.



In P. T. 2, it consists of a title, “The Invitation of the Buddhas, the Noble Ones, of the Ten Directions,” and then 48 ‘feet’ (Tib. *rkang pa*) of seven-syllable verse. There were most probably originally 50 feet, divided into ten five-foot stanzas. The verse uses the sequence of numbers ‘one, two, three, ...’, fittingly up to ten, to structure its series of requests to the buddhas of the ten directions to come to protect the world.<sup>43</sup>

The full prayer, with the text roughly corresponding to the extant text of IOL Tib J 466/1a underlined, reads:

The Invitation of the Buddhas, the Noble Ones, of the Ten Directions:

By [using] the excellent, utmost supreme Mahāyāna (?)<sup>44</sup> in order to abandon (even?) a single reference point [and] attaining the *dharmadhātu* possessing one taste, all the singular buddhas [who] defend, are requested to come to protect the world.

The Noble Ones [who], by the power of the two truths, combine both skilfull means and wisdom and, in order to abandon the two types of defilement, are endowed with the two abundant excellences, are requested to come to protect the world.

Completely abandoning the three poisons [and] protecting and defending all the three realms of existence, the *tathāgathas*, completely endowed with the three bodies, are requested to come to protect the world.<sup>45</sup>

Since [the Noble Ones], by cultivating the four establishments that get one close to mindfulness (?),<sup>46</sup> are liberated from the four mistakes, the Noble Ones, having perfected the four truths [and] defending those completely endowed with four types of fearlessness, are requested to come to protect the world.

[Those who] by the power of being endowed with the five senses are utterly liberated from the five aggregates, the five aggregates [being] the five that are equal in being unequal,<sup>47</sup> the lords of the five relatives [(Tib. *span*?)]

<sup>43</sup> On the early history of the buddhas of the ten directions, see Juyan Zhang “‘Buddhas in the Ten Directions’: Its Origins in the Early Buddhist Texts and Metamorphosis,” *Review of Buddhist Studies* 27 (2020): 9–37.

<sup>44</sup> P. T. 2, l. 1, reads *theg pa gcan* but I propose amending this to the more comprehensible *theg pa chen* (‘Mahāyāna’).

<sup>45</sup> A seven-syllable foot of verse is probably missing from this stanza in P. T. 2, which currently contains only four feet compared to the five feet of all of the other stanzas (except the one that begins “Resting in balance ...”, on which see below).

<sup>46</sup> There are four kinds of mindfulness or four reminders (Tib. *lus, tshor ba, sems, chos*), perhaps this is what is meant here.

<sup>47</sup> The Tibetan reads: *mnyam med mnyam ba’i lnga phung lnga*. Assuming that *phung* is shortened from *phung po* to retain the metre, and so means ‘aggregates’ rather than ‘heap’, we are still left with a confusing antithesis and repetition here—though an alternative reading is ‘the five aggregates [are] five [collections] that are similar[ly] illusory

[that are?] the perfected five wisdoms are requested to come to protect the world.

[Those who by] the blessings of the six remembrances are utterly liberated from the six sense bases, have perfected the six *pāramitās*, and clearly know the six actions that benefit sentient beings,<sup>48</sup> are requested to come to protect the world.

[Those who] by cultivating the seven factors of enlightenment absolutely abandoned the seven illnesses [and] obtained the seven riches of the Noble Ones, the seven earlier *tathāgathas* are requested to come to protect the world.

Resting in balance with the eight kinds [(of the existence and non-existence of mind?)],<sup>49</sup> abandoning the eight paths of turning back (/wrong paths), [those who have] completely perfected the eight paths [of] the Noble Ones [and] absolutely transcended the eight worldly phenomena [(missing: ‘\*are requested to come to protect the world’)].<sup>50</sup>

[Those] resting in balance with the extremes, the nine [(perhaps ‘multitude’?)], abandoning the nine harmful things, by acting completely for the benefit of the nine beings, absolutely transcended all the nine actions are requested to come to protect the world.

By the pure power of practising the ten virtues absolutely abandoning the ten non-virtues, in order to cultivate the ten stages of enlightenment, the

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or bad despite being] dissimilar [from each other]’. Alexander Zorin (personal communication, 16 January 2023) suggested that *nyams med nyams pa* may make more sense than *mnyam med mnyam ba*, thus perhaps ‘the five aggregates that are five undiminished [factors] that diminish [us]’ (if one of the *lnga* are not written in error for something else).

<sup>48</sup> The line *sems can don mdzad/drug mngon mkhyen* contains a *shad* in the middle that should not be there.

<sup>49</sup> Instead of ‘kinds’ (Tib. *mam pa*), IOL Tib J 466, l. 3 appears to read *mam thar*, utter emancipation (Skt. *vimokṣa*)—of which there are also eight according to Old Tibetan and canonical sources, and which may make more sense in this text; see James B. Apple, “An Old Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscript of the *Avaivartikacakrasūtra* in the Stein Collection Collated with Tibetan Kanjurs,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 59 (2021): 49, section [6.6]. On the method of utterly deconstructing “the eight kinds of existence and non-existence of mind” as described in P. T. 699, see Carmen Meinert, “The Conjunction of Chinese Chan and Tibetan rDzogs chen Thought: Reflections on the Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts IOL Tib J 689-1 and PT 699,” in *Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet*, ed. Matthew T. Kapstein and Brandon Dotson (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007), 267. The line *mam pa brgyad la snyoms/par bzugs* contains a *shad* towards the end that should not be there.

<sup>50</sup> IOL Tib J 466, l. 4 actually includes this final request, either by preserving the earlier reading or through hypercorrection: [‘]phags pa’I chos brgyad rdzogs pas na/ /’jig rten skyabsu gshegsu gsol/. See further discussion of this phrase in the main text of this article, below.



buddhas [who] completely perfected the ten stages<sup>51</sup> are requested to come to protect the world.<sup>52</sup>

Where it is extant, IOL Tib J 466/1a largely agrees with P. T. 2 in its readings. One exception to this is that IOL Tib J 466, line 1, suggests a variant to the repeated “x are requested to come to protect the world,” namely “x are requested to protect, to come [to], the world” (Tib. *’j[i]g rt[e]n skyabsu gs[o]l gshegs su gs[o]l/*). However, this version breaks the seven-syllable metre, and the usual formula is repeated in whole or in part several times in IOL Tib J 466/1a. Thus, this apparent variant is probably a mistake instead of an alternative formulation. Another exception is slight, a divergence between eight utter emancipations (Tib. *rnam thar*) and eight kinds (Tib. *rnam pa*).<sup>53</sup>

A more important divergence, from a philological perspective, occurs in the same stanza and sheds light on a problem highlighted in the above translation, that P. T. 2 is missing the phrase “are requested to come to

<sup>51</sup> IOL Tib J 466, l. 7 reads ‘the ten strengths’ (Tib. *stobs bcu*, Skt. *daśabala*) instead of ‘ten stages’ (Tib. *sa bcu*, Skt. *daśabhūmi*). The latter may represent dittography from the previous line.

<sup>52</sup> P. T. 2, ll. 1–17, with the text roughly corresponding to the extant text of IOL Tib J 466/1a underlined, reads: *phyogs bcu’i sangs rgyas ’phags pa rnam spyang drang ba’// //theq pa gcan (=chen?) mchog bla na med/ dmyig pa gcig po spangs pa’i phyir//chos dbying ro gcig mnga’ brnyes pas// //sangs rgyas nyag gcig kun kyi mgon//’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol//’phags pa bden ba gnyis kyi mthus/’thabs dang shes rab gnyis ’brel te/sgrib pa rnam gnyis spangs pa’i phyir/’phun gsum tshogs pa gnyis dang ldan/’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/gdug pa gsum po yongs su spangs/’khams gsum kun gyi skyabs dang mgon/’sku gsum yongs ldan de bzhin gshegs//’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/’dran ba’i nyer bzhag bzhi bsgoms pas/’phyin ci log pa bzhi las grol/’phags pa bden ba bzhi rdzogs pas/’myi ’jigs bzhi ldan yongs kyi mgon/’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gso+ldbang bo lnga dang ldan pa’i mthus/’phung po lnga las rnam par grol/’mnyam med mnyam ba’i lnga phung lnga/ye shes lnga rdzogs span lnga’i bdag/’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/’rjes su dran ba drug gi byin/’du mched grug (=drug) las rnam par grol/pha rol phyin pa drug rdzogs ste/’sems can don mdzad/drug mngon mkhyen/’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/’byang chub yan lag bdun bsgoms pas/’nad rnam bdun po shin du spangs/’phags pa’i nor bdun brnyes pa ste/’de bzhin gshegs pa snga ma bdun/’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/’rnam pa brgyad la snyoms/par bzhugs/’log pa lam brgyad spangs pa ste/’phags pa lam brgyad yongs su rdzogs//’jig rten chos brgyad shin du ’das/’dgu po mthar pa’i snyoms par bzhugs/’gnod pa’i dngos po dgu spangs ste/’skye dgu yongs su don mdzad pas/’mdzad dgu kun las shin ’das/’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/’dge bcu spyod pa’i rnam dag mthus/myi dge bcu po shin du spangs/’byang chub sa bcu bsgom pa’ (=pa’i) phyir/’sang rgyas sa bcu yongs su rdzogs/’jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/.*

<sup>53</sup> This is discussed in footnote 49, above. Another minor difference, in the final stanza, is noted in footnote 51.

protect the world”. IOL Tib J 466, l. 4 actually includes this final request, either by preserving the earlier reading or through hypercorrection. Instead of “[those who have] completely perfected the eight paths [of] the noble ones [and] absolutely transcended the eight worldly phenomena (*dharmā*)” (Tib. *'phags pa lam brgyad yongs su rdzogs/ 'jig rten chos brgyad shin du 'das/*), it reads “since they have completely perfected the eight teachings (*dharmā*) [of] the Noble Ones, [they] are requested to come to protect the world” (Tib. [*'phags pa 'I chos brgyad rdzogs pas na/ 'jig rten skyabsu gshegsu gsol/*). The two versions use the same phrases in different orders, and their different readings turn on interpreting the multivalent term *chos* (Skt. *dharmā*, also translated as (religious) law) as a ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ term respectively.

## 2.2. IOL Tib J 466/1b

A new text begins in the same hand on line eight of IOL Tib J 466’s first panel, most likely drawn from a different source but still in seven-syllable verse. Its source is unknown to me, but certain repeated phrases are consistent with other ritual texts from Dunhuang (and the later Tibetan canons). It is difficult to decipher in places but appears to relate to an offering ritual. It could either be translated in the first person, like a prayer, or in the second person, like instructions for carrying out a ritual, so I have chosen a neutral rendering. As will be discussed below, the recipients of offerings could be implied to each be plural, but I have left them as singular unless a clear plural marker is given in the text. The fragment reads:

[...] Pure, mighty body (?),<sup>54</sup> merit [...] of peace [...] as for (?) praise to the unparalleled ones [with] the best of voices<sup>55</sup> [...] [offer] best perfumes to the victor together with their entourage [...] melody of pleasant praise [to?] the victory banner [...]. Offer [...] [and] request that [the offering] be received with compassionate consideration. [...] Offer [the offering] to the leader together with their entourage [and request that the offering be received with?] compassion[ate consideration?]. [...] Those who live in the

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<sup>54</sup> The Tibetan word *mnga'* can mean ‘might(y)’ but may also mean ‘to possess’, rendering this phrase “possessing a pure body.” The Tibetan word *sku* is an honorific, meaning that this refers to the body of a deity, most likely a buddha, or less likely a high-status human such as one of the Tibetan emperors.

<sup>55</sup> It is unclear whether ‘the best of voices’ belongs to the unparalleled ones or to the praise.



precious immeasurable celestial mansion(s), the protector [together with their entourage?] [...] the circle (/entourage)<sup>56</sup> and the flower of the unbiased [...] request that [the offering] be received [with compassionate] consideration. Wish-fulfilling [tree? ... request that the offering be received with?] compassionate [consideration?]. [...] Those without protection [...].<sup>57</sup>

Given that IOL Tib J 466/1a can be inferred to end about seven syllables into IOL Tib J 466, line eight, we can be missing only five to seven syllables from the beginning of IOL Tib J 466/1b—enough room for a first poetic foot or a title.<sup>58</sup>

After scribing IOL Tib J 466/1b, the scribe leaves some blank space at the end of line 19, suggesting that this really is the end of the text (as Dalton suggested, above). The repetition of compassionately (Tib. *thugs rjer*) on line 17 indicates that the same ritual text continues from the bottom of column one to the top of column two. Structurally, each description of a type of offering is followed by an identification of the recipient (who has an entourage) and then the verb offer (Tib. *dbul*). This construction is then followed by the request that the offering be received with compassionate consideration.

I have not been able to locate a corresponding text among any material in Tibetan. Yet, the reconstructed phrase “request that [the offering] be received with compassionate consideration” (Tib. *thugs rjer dgongs ste bzhes su gsol*) is partially mirrored in a phrase from the tantric ritual of

<sup>56</sup> Structurally, the translation ‘entourage’ does not fit ‘*khor*’ here, since the latter is not followed by *dang bcas la dbul*.

<sup>57</sup> IOL Tib J 466, ll. 8–19 read: (8) [...] //*rnam dag sku mnga’ bsod nams [zhi’i/zhiyi’]*// (9) [...] *-n/na*] *smra ba’I mchog/’dpe myed rnam[s] la mcho[d] [?] ni’]* (10) [...] *dri mchog rnams/’rgyal ba’I [’kh?’or dang? bcas? la* (11) [...] *-il snyan mchod pa’I dbyangs/’rgyal mtshan [?] pa [na]* (12) [...] *dbul/’thugs rjer dgong[st]e b[zh]esu gsol’* (13) [...] //’*dren pa’I ’khor tang (=dang) bcas la dbul/’thugs [r]j[e]* (14) [...] //’*rin cen (=chen) gzhai yas khang pa rnams/’skyob pa’I* (15) [...] *’khor tang (=dang) r’lso ma chad pa’I men tog [chu-?] (16) [...] dgongste bzhesu gsol/’dpag bsaM[s?]* (17) [...] //’*thugs rjer* (18) [...] [s]ky[ab]s myed rnams// (19) [...] *-n(n-)/*.

<sup>58</sup> What we know of *mis en page* of the first panel of IOL Tib J 466 suggests that the scribe wrote 20 or 21 syllables per line of column one. The text of P. T. 2 corresponding to the missing text that probably once ended IOL Tib J 466/1a reads: //’*jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol’*. Lastly, the extant text on IOL Tib J 466, line eight (the first extant text of IOL Tib J 466/1b) reads: //’*rnam dag sku mnga’ bsod nams [zhis/zhi yi?’]*//. These two pieces of text add up to 14 or 15 syllables out of a possible 20 or 21 syllable-long line, so we can infer that only another five, six or perhaps seven syllables would fit in the space unaccounted for on line eight.



offering the five ambrosias (Tib. *bdud rtsi lnga*, Skt. *pañcāmṛta*). Thus, we find the repeated “with great compassionate thoughts” (Tib. *thugs rje cher dg+’ongs / rg+’ongs / drg+’ongs* [= *dgongs*]) in IOL Tib J 332, whereas the lone “request that [the supreme pledge (Skt. *samaya*, Tib. *dam tshIg*) of yoga, the supreme of ambrosias] be received [by the gods] with delighted thoughts” (Tib. *gyes par dgongs te bzhes su gsol*) is found in P. T. 321.<sup>59</sup> The adverb ‘compassionately’ (Tib. *thugs rjer*) appears to be an Old Tibetan form of the more common classical Tibetan instrumental ‘with compassion’ (Tib. *thugs rjes*) that is sometimes found following a version of the offering formula that precedes it in IOL Tib J 466/1b: “offer to *x* together with their entourage” (Tib. *’khor dang bcas la dbul* and variants).<sup>60</sup> The use of the phrase in IOL Tib J 466/1b does not necessitate any tantric connotations to be read into it, and the rest of the text does not suggest a Vajrayāna context either. The terms used for the deity whose entourage this is, victor (Tib. *rgyal ba*, Skt. *jina*), leader (Tib. *’dren pa*, Skt. *nāyaka*) and protector (Tib. *skyob pa*, Skt. *trā/tāyin/trāṇa*),<sup>61</sup> are epithets of the Buddha, or buddhas plural—because “those who are unparalleled/ without equal” (Tib. *dpe myed nam[s]*, Skt. *apratima/nirupama*) may also be objects of worship in this text. Perhaps, then, IOL Tib J 466/1b reflects a ritual of offering to the same buddhas of the ten directions that are the object of the previous invitation prayer.

<sup>59</sup> The relevant part of ‘offering the five ambrosias’ section of IOL Tib J 332, 19v.3–20r.6, is transliterated in Ding, “Divine Transactions,” 332–333. P. T. 321, 5v.5–6r.3, is transliterated in Jacob P. Dalton, “Bridging Yoga and Mahāyoga: Samaya in Early Tantric Buddhism,” in *Buddhism in Central Asia II: Practice and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, ed. Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2022), 280. According to Ding, “Divine Transactions,” 207, n. 2, “[t]he five kinds of tantric ambrosia (Skt. *pañcāmṛtāni*; Tib. *bdud rtsi lnga*) are urine (Skt. *mūtra*; Tib. *dri chu*), excrement (Skt. *purīṣa*; Tib. *dri chen*), blood (Skt. *rakta*; Tib. *khrag*), human flesh (Skt. *māṃsa*; Tib. *sha chen*), semen (Skt. *śukra*; Tib. *rdo rje ’i zil pa*).” Their offering forms part of the ‘feast gathering’ (Skt. *gaṇacakra*; Tib. *tshogs kyi ’khor lo*), whose importance to Buddhism around Dunhuang as evidenced in the Tibetan Mogao documents is ably discussed in part of the dissertation itself, which Yi Ding kindly shared with me.

<sup>60</sup> See the examples that can be found by searching BDRC: [https://library.bdrc.io/search?q="dang bcas la dbul bar bgyi thugs rjes"~1&l=bo-x-ewts&t=Etext](https://library.bdrc.io/search?q=), last accessed 15.10.2022.

<sup>61</sup> My source for the Sanskrit is Jeffrey Hopkins and Paul Hackett ed., *The Uma Institute for Tibetan Studies Tibetan-Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Dyke, VA: UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies, 2015).



## 2.3. IOL Tib J 466/1c

Line 20 begins another text, IOL Tib J 466/1c, which is again fragmentary. Yet, it corresponds closely to part of P. T. 26,<sup>62</sup> a concertina of *pothī*-shape (Tib. *dpe cha*) pages (rather than panels) whose beginning and end are missing.<sup>63</sup> This text (transliterated in Appendix II along with corresponding extant text from IOL Tib J 466, ll. 20–24) covers pages *recto* 6.4–7.2, lines 31–38 of P.T. 26 as a whole. It is written quite quickly or roughly—for instance, the intersyllabic *tshegs* are not always clearly present—in a quite cursive but still legible *uchen* (Tib. *dbu can*) script and then, as Lalou noted, crossed out (like the preceding text in the manuscript). Again, we can probably assume that the entire text of P. T. 26 was included on column two of IOL Tib J 466 (with perhaps fewer divergences than IOL Tib J 466/1a showed against P. T. 2, above).

The text is a work of praise,<sup>64</sup> consisting of eight couplets describing first the personality of the eight *mahāsattvas* (Tib. *byang chub sems dpa' chen po brgyad*) or eight close (spiritual) sons (of the Buddha) (Tib. *nye ba'i sras brgyad*) and then second their emblems (Tib. *phyag mtshan*), those objects that they hold in their (honorific) hands (Tib. *phyag*) which act as signs (Tib. *mtshan*) of their attributes and help to identify them in art and visualisation. Although the term ‘emblem’ is not used in the text, ‘hand’ and ‘sign’ occur frequently in the text in parallel constructions, and these couplets sometimes link the first and second parts of the couplets explicitly. Finally, each couplet ends in a striking adjective made up of a

<sup>62</sup> I was aided in identifying and transliterating the correspondences between IOL Tib J 466/1c and P. T. 26 by Kha sgang Bkra shis tshe ring, Stobs ldan and Sha bo Rab brtan ed., *Hpha ran sir nyar ba'i tun hong yig rmying shog dril bshus yig phyogs bsgrigs deb dang po* [First Volume of a Collection of Transcriptions of the Manuscripts of Old Texts from Dunhuang Held in France] (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2014), 222.

<sup>63</sup> Lalou, *Inventaire des manuscrits tibétains*, 9, entry 26, begins:

Recueil dont le début et la fin manquent. Contient, d'un côté:

- 1) Un texte qui est le Lha klu chen-po spyang-drang-pa débutant par les deux derniers vers du Rgyud sum-pa: [l]ha dbaṅ gchugi rgyan//bag-yod dad-pa'i spyi-bos blaṅ-bar mjad // chaṅs-pa brgya-byin ... et avec le colophon: rgyud sum rjogs-so.
- 2) Un texte dont le début: *sku gsum bstod-pa* [*Trikāyastotra*, cf. *Tanjur*, Bstod, I, 15] a été biffé.
- 3) Un court rituel débutant: *j'ig-rten skon-gyis myi gos brtags // phyag-na phaṅ ma dkar ...* qui a été également biffé.

<sup>64</sup> Lalou, *Inventaire des manuscrits tibétains*, 9, identifies it as “Un court rituel”, a short ritual; Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, describe IOL Tib J 466/1 in its entirety as ‘prayer.’

duplicated simple syllable (lacking complex onsets or stacks of multiple characters) that makes it sound like an exclamation, for example ‘quivering!’ (Tib. *yam yam*). I have identified the bodhisattvas in square brackets in the translation, based on correspondences between this text and scriptural descriptions found in the Tibetan tradition (discussed below). The full set of praises, with the text roughly corresponding to the extant text of IOL Tib J 466/1c underlined, reads:

[Avalokiteśvara, whose] judgement is untainted by worldly faults, in his hand holds a white lotus, upright!

[Maitreya, as] a sign of combining love and insight, is arrayed [with] *nāga*-tree flowers, scattered/strewn!

[Ākāśagarbha, as] an example of how antidotes end suffering,<sup>65</sup> grasps a straight [sword of] good fortune, the blade quivering!

[Samantabhadra, with] judgement that is thoroughly, supremely good, [holds] in his hand a precious light, clear/dazzling!

[Vajrapāṇi, as] a sign of taming those who have viewed things wrongly,<sup>66</sup> [holds] in his hand a noble well-formed *vajra*, so good!

[Mañjuśrī, knowing] the method of abandoning obstinate hatred, [holds] in his hand a soft *utpala* flower, trembling!

[Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin,] as the example for teaching the ignorant [and] impure, [holds] in his hand the elegant scriptures, so abundant!

[Kṣitigarbha, with] judgement that becomes the embryo of the world, [holds] a harvest of ambrosia [in] a seed/kernel, cracking/breaking open!<sup>67</sup>

Linguistically, the content of IOL Tib J 466/1c gives little indication of the original language of the composition that now exists in Tibetan (and the same is true of the texts above). One indication of a Tibetan origin may be in the repetition of simple syllables in creating the adjectives that end

<sup>65</sup> IOL Tib J 466, l. 21 reads *dper* for the *dpe* given in P. T. 26, which is consistent with what is given in the next stanza in P. T. 26, l. 36, thus “as an example of how antidotes end suffering.”

<sup>66</sup> The line *log par blta ba’/’dul ba’I mtshan* contains a *shad* in the middle that should not be there.

<sup>67</sup> P. T. 26, ll. 31–38, with the text roughly corresponding to the extant text of IOL Tib J 466/1c underlined, reads: \$/’jig rten skyon gyis myi gos brtags/’phyag na phad (=pad) ma dkar sang sang?/’byams shing shes rab ’brel pa’I mtshan/’klu shing men thog bkra yer yer/’gnyen pos mya ngan gchod (=gcod?) kyi dpe/’bkra shis bshan brnams (=bsnams) mo yam yam/’kun nas mchog du bzang ba’i rtags/’phyag na rin chen ’od lam lam/’log par blta ba’/’dul ba’I mtshan/’rdo rje dbyibs legs ’phags zang zang/’zhe sdang tha ba spangs kyi tshul/’phyag na ud dpal (=pal) ’jam phril phril/’mi shes ma byang slob pa ’i dper/’phyag na gsung rabs mdzes khrigs khrigs/’jig rten snying por ’gyur gyi rtags/’bdud rtsi lo thog? ’bru sil sil//.



each couplet, but this may simply show the skill of the translator. Another may be allusions to the parts of the bodhisattvas' names as they exist in Tibetan that are included in their praises, for example love (Tib. *byams*) in the praise to Maitreya (Tib. *byams pa*), thorough ... good (Tib. *kun ... bzang*) in the praise to Samantabhadra (Tib. *Kun tu bzang po*) and embryo (Tib. *snying po*, also translated as 'essence') in the praise to Kṣitigarbha (Tib. *sa'i snying po*)—yet this could also be true of a Chinese or Indic original, in theory. Finally, it is tempting to see the repetition of hand (Tib. *phyag*) and sign (Tib. *mtshan*) as a Tibetan play on words implying the term emblem (Tib. *phyag mtshan*), which is not possible with the Sanskrit original (Skt. *mudrā*, also rendered as 'gesture'), but it may be possible with the Chinese (Chin. *shouyin* 手印). Whatever the case, this textual exemplar was scribed in Tibetan before the closing of Cave 17, and it is found together with the above invitation and ritual texts (and the texts discussed below) on a single panel that was then attached to further panels all within the ritual genre. What does the content tell us in this context?

Thematically, the praise places more emphasis on wisdom than on other virtues. It especially stresses judgement or wisdom in a rational sense (Tib. [*b*]rtaḡs) and teaching those beings with wrong views, ignorance or mental impurities, but within a standard Mahāyāna framework of love overcoming negative emotions and in emulation of the bodhisattvas and their path. Yet, in its details, the poetry is condensed to a string of allusions and adjectives at times and so is difficult to accurately translate.

The names of the bodhisattvas praised in this text are not given explicitly, but I have inferred them from the above-mentioned allusions in the couplets themselves and some external sources. The ritual manual attributed to Amoghavajra (705–774, Chin. Bukong 不空), titled *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni niansong yiguifa* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼念誦儀軌法 [Ritual Commentary on the Recitation of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa] (T. 972.19), includes the following part described by Michelle C. Wang:

Next, the ground is cleared, the surface is made level and pure, and a rope is used to mark off nine evenly spaced positions. In the center, the position of Vairocana Buddha is established, after which the positions of the eight bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (here rendered as Guanzizai pusa 觀自在菩薩), Maitreya (Cishi pusa 慈氏菩薩), Ākāśagarbha (Xukongzang pusa 虛空藏菩薩), Samantabhadra (Puxian pusa 普賢菩薩), Vajrapāṇi (Jin'gangshou pusa 金剛手菩薩), Mañjuśrī (Wenshushili pusa 文殊師利菩薩),

Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhīn (Chugai zhang pusa 除蓋障菩薩), and Kṣitigarbha (Dizang pusa 地藏菩薩) are established in a clockwise sequence. These images are drawn using white sandalwood, which is “taken as welcoming the sages to their positions.”<sup>68</sup>

The order in which the bodhisattvas are laid out in the *maṇḍala* match my best assessment of the order in which they are praised in IOL Tib J 466/1c and P. T. 26. Yet, no physical description of the bodhisattvas is given in the Chinese ritual text. Wang also points to Amoghavajra’s mid-/late-eighth-century translation of the famous *Badhracarī* prayer (popular in Dunhuang and early Tibetan Buddhism), to which she appends the *Puxian pusa xingyuan zan* 普賢菩薩行願讚 [Eulogy on the Vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra], which includes unique praise of the eight *mahāsattvas* in the same order.<sup>69</sup>

Within the Tibetan sphere, the shared text of P. T. 7a and P. T. 104, a ritual in praise of Vairocana (Tib. rNam par snang mdzad) and the eight *mahāsattvas* that Amy Heller linked to Tibetan imperial depictions of the same deities (see below), offers a series of prostrations to the same list of bodhisattvas, again in the same order, after describing Vairocana Buddha:

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<sup>68</sup> Michelle C. Wang, *Maṇḍalas in the Making: The Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang* (Leiden: Brill), 47, based on the *Ritual Commentary on the Recitation of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Uṣṇīṣa* (T. 972.19, 364c9–13). Wang acknowledges the previous translation of this portion of the text by Paul F. Copp, “Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone: The Makings of Spells in Medieval Chinese Buddhism” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005), 287–288, which goes into more detail on the layout of the *maṇḍala*: “As for the nine stations [figured by the knots in the ropes], at the center secure the position of Vairocana (zhongyang an Piluzhena wei 中央安毘盧遮那佛位). To the right [of this] secure the position of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanzizai pusa 觀自在菩薩). Behind Guanzizai secure the position of the bodhisattva Maitreya (Cishi pusa 慈氏菩薩). Behind Vairocana’s position, secure the position of the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Xukongzang pusa 虛空藏菩薩). To the left of this bodhisattva, secure the position of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra (Puxian pusa 普賢菩薩). To the left of Vairocana’s position, secure the position of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi (Jin’gangshou pusa 金剛手菩薩). Below Vajrapāṇi’s position, secure the position of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Wenshushili pusa 文殊師利菩薩). In front of the buddha Vairocana, secure the position of the bodhisattva Sweeping Away Obstacles [i.e., Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhīn] (Chugaizang pusa 除蓋障菩薩). To the right of bodhisattva Sweeping Away Obstacles’ position, secure the position of the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha (Dizang pusa 地藏菩薩).”

<sup>69</sup> T. 297.10, 881b17–c8; Wang, *Maṇḍalas in the Making*, 257–258. See also Bart Dessein, “The Glow of the Vow of the Teacher Samantabhadra ‘Puxian Pusa Xingyuan Zan’ (T.297) Samantabhadrācāryapraṇidhānarāja,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 56.2/4 (2003): 332, where “Acalanātha” is a mistake for Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhīn (as pointed out in Wang, *Maṇḍalas in the Making*, 258, n. 59).



(1) Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs.); (2) Maitreya (Tib. Myi 'pham dga' ldan chos kyī rje); (3) Ākāśagarbha (Tib. Nam mkha'i snying po); (4) Samantabhadra (Tib. Kun tu bzang po); (5) Vajrapāṇi (Tib. Phyag na rdo rje); (6) Mañjuśrī (Tib. 'Jam dpal dbyangs); (7) Sarvanivāraṇaṣkambhin (Tib. sGrib pa thams cad rnam sel pa); (8) Kṣitigarbha (Tib. Sa'i snying po).<sup>70</sup> However, unlike in IOL Tib J 466/1c and P. T. 26 they are primarily distinguished only by character (and partially by colour) rather than mentioning their emblems.<sup>71</sup> The images of the imperial-period eight *mahāsattvas* surrounding Vairocana at the Bida Temple (Tib. 'Bis mda') also do not fit, since Avalokiteśvara there holds a vase rather than his usual white lotus.<sup>72</sup>

#### 2.4. IOL Tib J 466/1d

IOL Tib J 466/1d covers lines 25–30 and comprises a praise to a highly realised being or beings. Its corresponding text, if any, has yet to be identified among extant Tibetan literature. The poetic feet are generally 7 syllables long, though four of them are 9 syllables long and one is 11 syllables long (and so constitutes a final aspirational prayer rather than part of the praise itself). It is impossible to tell whether the missing text at the beginning was a title or the first foot ending in 'conquer/ destroy/ subdue/ overcome' (Tib. j[*o*]ms), but the syllable length of the rest is: 7, 7, 9, 9, 7, 7, 7, 7, 9, 7, 9, 11. The two 9-syllable lines in the middle appear to be together, but the two 9-syllable lines at the end are separated by a 7-syllable line. The final line is 11 syllables long and appears connected to the last 9-syllable line, so it is difficult to identify a clear pattern without any correspondences outside the manuscript and I have been quite free with this aspect of the translation. Furthermore, we should not at present discount the possibility that couplets, lines, or pairs of

<sup>70</sup> Amy Heller, "P.T. 7A, P.T. 108, P.T. 240 and Beijing Bstan 'gyur 3489: Ancient Tibetan Rituals Dedicated to Vairocana," in *The Pandita and the Siddha: Tibetan Studies in Honor of E. Gene Smith*, ed. Gene Smith (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2007), 88–89.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 88 states that "the eight Bodhisattvas are named and described by color" but this does not seem to have been carried out consistently across the list.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 88; see also Amy Heller, "Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions from Eastern Tibet, VIIIth to Xth Century, Part IV," in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, ed. Helmut Krasser et al., (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), vol. 1, 390–391.



syllables in lines are either missing or interpolated in the extant text. The text reads:

[You?] [...] dispell/overcome. [You] tread the very levels of the ten *pāramitās* [and] dry up [(Tib. *skems*)]<sup>73</sup> the ocean that is connected to the three poisons. Possessing equanimity [and] the unwavering true nature of the *dharmā*, [you] act [(hon.)] with compassion to uncover [false perceptions of] self [and] suffering.

You know the method of guiding all those beings who think basely and flexibly (?) preach [(hon.)] the advice/instructions of the teacher (the Buddha), the supreme Mahāyāna that is equal for all.

It is difficult for any beings to understand, [but you] know the wisdom [of] the learned and perceive [(Tib. *rig*)] [it] with trust. It is not an object that [can be] expressed by conceptions.<sup>74</sup>

Oh, may I at all times generate trust and devotion in the Mahāyāna that is as supreme as this, in order to progress [towards] enlightenment!<sup>75</sup>

The Mahāyāna context of the praise does not suggest anything tantric, but the addressee(s) remain unclear. Elements of the description included in the praise resonate with those in IOL Tib J 466/1a (and P. T. 2) addressed to the buddhas of the ten directions (especially its first stanza). However, there does not seem to be a break between the end IOL Tib J 466/1c and IOL Tib J 466/1d, so perhaps the bodhisattvas are still the intended recipients of this praise. It is unclear why, if this praise was considered connected to the one directly above, the praise was omitted in P. T. 26 but, since it was, I call this IOL Tib J 466/1d rather than referring to both this and the preceding one as IOL Tib J 466/1c. Yet, given the apparent inclusion of the latter deities in the ritual attributed to Amoghavajra above, it may be also fitting that this part links the praise of the eight great bodhisattvas that precedes it to what follows it, namely the *Uṣṇīṣaviṣajayādhāraṇī*.

<sup>73</sup> The top of the line, where any superscribed vowel *sigla* were, is now missing so I have guessed *sk[e]ms* (pres.), ‘dry up’.

<sup>74</sup> My thanks to Alexander Zorin for his suggested translation of this last sentence.

<sup>75</sup> IOL Tib J 466, ll. 25–30, reads: (25) [...] *j[o]ms/ /pha rol phyin bcu 'I sa yang gnon/ /dug gsum* (26) *sby[a]r ba 'i rgy[a] mtsh[o] sk[e?]ms/ /mnyam ny[i]d my[i] g.y[o] ch[o]s nyid can/ thugs rjes bdag nyid sdug bsngal bstsal* (27) *bar mdzod/ /skye bo ma rabs rtog pa 'I rnam/ /'dren pa 'I thabs la khyod mkhaste/ /bla myed theg cen (=chen) kun* (28) *la snyoms/ /ston pa 'I man ngag ldem por gsungs/ /'gro ba kun kyis shes par dka' /'blo ldan ye shes* (29) *mkhas shing dad pas rlg/ /dmylgs pas rtags pa 'I yul ma yin/ /kye ma 'di 'dra' I bla myed theg cen (=chen) la/ / (30) *byang chub bgrod phyir kun kyang dad mos skyes par shog/.**





2.5. IOL Tib J 466/2

IOL Tib J 466/2 is the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī*, transcribed as part of the *dhāraṇī* itself as *u sh+nI sha bI dza ya*.<sup>76</sup> It reads:

\$/:/na mo rad na tra ya ya/na mo b+ha ga ba te/na mo strai ⟨'i⟩ lo kya pra  
ti bi shi sh+ta' a ya/bud d+ha ya/b+h+ 'a ga ba te/ /tad+ya th+ 'a/o+ 'aM/ /bI  
sho d+ha ya/bi sho d+ha ya/sa ma sa man ta/a b+ha ba sa spa rI Na ga tI  
ga ga na/ /sya b+ha ba bi shu(-d) d+he/a b+hi shin tsa na tu ma+ 'an/su ga  
ta ba ra ba tsa na/a mri ta//a b+hI she kai+r/ma ha+ 'a man tra pa dai/a+ 'a  
ha ra a+ 'a ha ra/a+ 'a yus san d+ha ra Ni/sho d+ha ya sho d+ha ya/ga ga  
na bI shu(-d) d+he/u sh+nI sha bI dza ya/pa rI shud d+he/sa ha sra ra sh+mI  
san tso di te/sa rba ta th+ 'a ga ta hri da ya/a d+hi sh+ta na/a d+hI sh+tI  
te/mu tre/ba dzre ba dzre k+ 'a ya/ /sang ha ta na shud d+he/sa rba a ba ra  
Na bI shu d+he/pratI ni+r bar t+ 'a ya/a yur bI shud d+he/sa ma y+ 'a a d+ 'I  
sh+ti te/ /ma tI ma ti ma ma ti/ma ha ma ti/ /ta tha ta b+hu ta ko Ti/pa rI  
shud d+he/ /bI sphu tæ TI bud d+hi shud d+he/he he/ dza ya dza ya/bI dza ya  
bI dza ya/sma ra sma ra/sa rba bud d+ha' a d+hI/sh+t+ 'a na' a stI te/shud  
d+he/ ba dzre ba dzre ma h+ 'a ba dzre/ba dzre ga+r b+he/ba dzram b+ha  
ba du ma ma: sa rba sha r+ 'I ram// [?] sa rba sa dva n+ 'ana tsa k+ 'a ya/pa  
rI shud d+h+ 'I / /b+ha ba du me sa da/sa rba ga ti pa ri shud d+he/sa rba ta  
th+ 'a ga ta/ ~~mæ~~ sa m+ 'a shvasa a d+hI sh+tI te/sa rba ta th+ a ga t+ 'an tsa  
m+ 'a na (?)/sa m+ 'a shvasa yan tu /bud d+h+ya bud d+hya/bo d+ha ya bo  
d+ha ya/bI bo d+ha ya bI bo d+ha ya/sa man ta pa rI shud d+he/ /sa rba ta  
th+ 'a (?) ga ta hrI da ya/a d+hI sh+t- 'a na/a dhl mash+tI te/ma h+ 'a mu tre  
sb+ 'asv+ 'a h+ a//.

Many other examples of this *dhāraṇī* exist in different contexts and forms in the Dunhuang corpus, with which this exemplar at the end of the first panel of IOL Tib J 466 could be fruitfully compared on the level of both text and material support.<sup>77</sup> The same is true of the

<sup>76</sup> This Tibetan transcription suggests the Sanskrit *Uṣṇīṣavijaya*, rather than *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* with the long *ā* at the end of *vijayā*. This also accords with the (masculine/neutral) *ba* at the end of the Tibetan title, *gTsug tor nman par rgyal ba*. However, because *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* reflects the identification of the deity *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* as female, and since the most recent scholarship on this text in Tibetan uses *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*, I have opted for that rendering in this paper.

<sup>77</sup> For some early discussion of philological and art historical aspects of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* from around Dunhuang in comparison with Central Tibet, see Doney, “Text, Act and Subject,” 60–63 and 68–69 based on Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York: University of Columbia Press, 2014). On the canonical Tibetan versions of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* and its associated rituals, see the Translations, Notes, Introductions and Bibliographies in Catherine Dalton, tr. *The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual Manual (I)*

*Pūjāmeghadhāraṇī* that forms part of the beginning of the text on the next panel. An attention to such surface detail may help to reframe the Tibetan *dhāraṇī* manuscripts as not merely the bearer of a text, as containing Old Tibetan *dhāraṇī* texts and partaking in imperial-period ritual practice, to be mined for its doctrinal, ritual or even historico-cultural value alone. Further, contextualising Tibetan imperial and post-imperial manuscript productions within the wider aesthetic context of Buddhist Asia, its artistic and material culture concerns, would also aid the wider study of choices made and not made in the incorporation of physical instantiations of *dhāraṇī* forms within Tibetan-speakers/writers' practices. I hope to carry out such comparison in the future, but it would explode the length of this contribution unnecessarily. As such, we come to the end of what we can say about the additions of ritual materials before what is known as the *Tridaṇḍaka* prayer.

### 3. Conclusion

Luis Gómez, within a general discussion of prayer, includes *dhāraṇīs* as an example of how “the language forms of prayer themselves push the verbal act beyond its function as conveyor of meaning or instrument.”<sup>78</sup> He also mentions the similarity of *dhāraṇīs* to “the Indian tradition of invoking the sacred names of bodhisattvas and deities” (i.e., the ‘one hundred and eight names’).<sup>79</sup> I have argued elsewhere that one could make a ‘strong’ argument for including *dhāraṇīs* under the category of prayer,

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(*Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇīkalpasahitā*, *Toh 594*) (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2022). Accessed December 23, 2022. <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh594.html>; Patrick Lambelet and Caley Smith, tr. *The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī* (*Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī*, *Toh 597*) (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2022). Accessed December 23, 2022. <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html> (the translators, Catherine Dalton and Patrick Lambelet and Caley Smith, have also translated other canonical works related to the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* and cross-references appear in the above two translations). To reference all literature on the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* would not be helpful without going into an in-depth and far more wide-ranging analysis of the textual differences, transmission histories and ritual uses of it, which I hope to carry out in the future.

<sup>78</sup> Luis Gómez, “Prayer: Buddhist Perspectives,” in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, ed. Will Johnston (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), vol. 2, 1040.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1039. Note that, in the Introduction to this paper, we saw that these two categories were placed next to each other in the *Lhenkarma* catalogue.



following the definitions provided by Gomez.<sup>80</sup> Yet, a ‘weak’ version of this argument is that including *dhāraṇīs* helps to once again problematise the hard distinction between prayer and spell, which is shown to be less significant than it was considered in older scholarship on Buddhism and Tibet. The close relations between praise, rituals and *dhāraṇīs* categories of the *Lhenkarma* catalogue and in IOL Tib J 466 also seems to move in the direction of these arguments.

Focusing on the paper supports of manuscripts can also help push us in other directions, for example in identifying the milieu (and perhaps the date) of each exemplar’s creation and help problematise our identification of Mogao Cave 17 documents solely with practices in Central Tibet and so closer to the ritual practice of Dunhuang. I mentioned at the beginning of this article that the *Lhenkarma* is one of three catalogues of Buddhist texts translated into Tibetan by the ninth century under the aegis of the Tibetan Empire. Yet, much literature is contained in Dunhuang’s Cave 17 that seems not to have been included in these library catalogues—though they may have been in the libraries or present at the Tibetan court, nonetheless. Another possibility is that these were productions created, or at least popular, in or around Dunhuang itself rather than in Central Tibet. To judge from the materials surveyed above, these include prayers whose titles do not appear in the catalogues and multiple versions of *dhāraṇīs* who only seem to have one version stored in this Tibetan imperial library.<sup>81</sup>

The paper used to scribe IOL Tib J 466/3 apparently had been recently discarded or left over from the imperially sponsored copying of the *Aparimitāyurdhāraṇīsūtra* around Dunhuang of the early ninth century, and which were given the same wider site reference number as some of these *sūtras* (see above). Such evidence (as well as its script style) closely connects this exemplar of the so-called *Tridaṇḍaka* (and its scribe) perhaps less with the Tibetan Empire’s Buddhist practices than with the

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<sup>80</sup> Doney, “Text, Act and Subject,” 75.

<sup>81</sup> See also the materials surveyed in Doney, “Text, Act and Subject”; Doney, “On the Margins.” Further complications of the idea that what ended up in Dunhuang’s Cave 17 was even indicative of the practices of Dunhuang itself are found in Carmen Meinert, “People, Places, Texts, and Topics: Another Look at the Larger Context of the Spread of Chan Buddhism in Eastern Central Asia during the Tibetan Imperial and Post-Imperial Period (7th–10th C.),” in *Buddhism in Central Asia III—Doctrines, Exchanges with Non-Buddhist Traditions*, ed. Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Yukiyo Kasai, and Henrik H. Sørensen (Leiden, Boston: Brill, forthcoming).

Sino-Tibetan scribal community it funded during or shortly after its period of rule over the region.<sup>82</sup> Comparing the details of these Tibeto-Chinese modes of production may in future enrich our knowledge of the context in which such physical remnants of prayer activity were made, held, safeguarded and *perhaps* used in practice around Dunhuang during and after the period of Tibetan rule there.

In a previous article, I argued that the first panel, on which is written IOL Tib J 466/1 (ritual texts) and 466/2 (the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* spell), do not form a unified whole with the later parts of the manuscript IOL Tib J 466.<sup>83</sup> The evidence marshalled with respect to IOL Tib J 466/1a suggests that there was not more to IOL Tib J 466 preceding the extant manuscript's first panel. It is still unclear whether this panel was intended as the first of many panels making up IOL Tib J 466 or was a stand-alone panel that was added to the panels that now follow it at a later date.<sup>84</sup>

In terms of content, note that the *Pūjāmeghadhāraṇī* is often found together with the *Āryabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna*, which shares an emphasis on the ten directions that was so influential in Tibetan imperial texts especially in the eighth century, and that due to the addition of an extra panel the *Pūjāmeghadhāraṇī* is now found in IOL Tib J 466 together with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī*. Further, two of the other texts that contain more complete versions of two of the rituals from the first panel of IOL Tib J 466 (P. T. 2 for IOL Tib J 466/1a inviting the buddhas of the ten directions and P. T. 26 for IOL Tib J 466/1c praising the eight great bodhisattvas) also contain the popular *rGyud gsum pa* [Three Descendants] that is so tied to *dhāraṇī* literature at Dunhuang Tibetan corpus—just as IOL Tib J 466 does later in the manuscript (in the form of IOL Tib J 466/4) before another set of prayers (IOL Tib J 466/5) and an unidentified *dhāraṇī* text connected to Avalokiteśvara (IOL Tib J 466/6).<sup>85</sup> Future exploration of

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<sup>82</sup> My thanks to Carmen Meinert for this suggestion. Note too, that the rituals that make up IOL Tib J 466/1 and IOL Tib J 466/3 and a number of others discussed in this article are not catalogued in the *Lhenkarma*. The *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī*, *Pūjāmeghadhāraṇī* and *Āryabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna* are found there, but more work needs to be carried out to ascertain whether they conform to the specific versions present at the court and in the libraries of the Tibetan Empire.

<sup>83</sup> Doney, “Imperial Gods,” 82–83.

<sup>84</sup> Once again, see Doney, “Imperial Gods,” 82–83 for further discussion.

<sup>85</sup> On the *Three Descendants* and its relation to *dhāraṇī* compilations, see Jacob P. Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2011), 62f. The *Three Descendants* are listed as



these connections may help to uncover the Old Tibetan register of ritual texts in the Cave 17 corpus, and distinguish those that are more indicative of Central Tibetan Buddhism and those that reflect the practices of Dunhuang and the surrounding areas, on the edge of the empire.

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part of the content of P. T. 2 and P. T. 26 in Lalou, *Inventaire des manuscrits tibétains*, 1, text 2, section 4 and *ibid.*, 9, text 26, section 1, respectively. On IOL Tib J 466/4–6, see Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 211–212.

*BuddhistRoad Paper 2.7*. Doney, “Tibetan Ritual Texts and the *Uṣṇīṣaviṣayādhāraṇī*”

4. Appendices

4.1. Appendix I

P. T. 2, ll. 1–9	
(1) @ \$// \$// \$// \$// phyogs bcu 'i sangs rgyas 'phags pa rnamspyang drang ba// // theg pa gcan mchog bla na myed/	
(2) dmyig pa gcig po spangs pa 'i phyir// chos dbying ro gcig mnga' brnyes pas// // sangs rgyas nyag gcig kun kyi mgon//	
(3) 'jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol// // 'phags pa bden ba gnyis kyi mthus/ // thabs dang shes rab gnyis 'brel te/	
(4) sgrub pa rnam gnyis spangs pa 'i phyir// phun gsuM tshogs pa gnyis dang ldan/ // 'jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol//	
(5) gdug pa gsuM po yongs su spangs/ // kham gsuM kun gyi skyabs dang mgon/ // sku gsuM yongs ldan de bzhi gshegs//	
(6) 'jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/ // dran ba 'i nyer bzhi bzhag bzhi bsgoms pas/ // phyin ci log pa bzhi las grol/ /	
(7) 'phags pa bden ba bzhi rdzogs pas/ // myi 'jigs bzhi ldan yongs kyi mgon/ // 'jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gso+//	
(8) dbang bo lnga dang ldan pa 'i mthus/ // phung po lnga las rnam par grol/ // mnyam myed mnyam ba 'i lnga phung lnga/ ye shes lnga rdzogs span	
(9) lnga 'i bdag/ // 'jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/ // rjes su dran ba drug gi byin/ // 'du mched grug las rnam par grol/	
(10) pha rol phyin pa drug rdzogs ste/ // sems can don mdzad/ drug mngon mkhyen/	

P. T. 2, ll. 10–17	IOL Tib J 466, ll. 1–7
'jig rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/ /	(1) [... -d?]/ // 'ji[g rt[e]n skyabsu gs[o]l gshegs su gs[o]l/ // byang chub yan
(11) byang cub yan lag bdun bsgoms pas/ // nad rnam	
bdun po shin du spangs/ // 'phags pa 'i nor bdun brnyes pa ste/ /	(2) [...] bdun p[o] shin tu spangs/ // 'phags pa 'I nor bdun brny+hes pa ste/ // de bzhi
(12) de bzhi gshegs pa snga ma bdun/ // 'jig	



<p><i>rten skyabs su gshegs su gsol/ /rnam pa brgyad la snyoms/par bzhugs/ / (13) log pa lam brgyad spangs pa ste/</i></p>	<p>(3) [... r]t[e]n skyabs su gshegs su gsol/ /rnam thar brgyad la snyoms par 'jug/ /log pa 'I</p>
<p><i>'phags pa lam brgyad yongs su rdzogs/ /'jig rten chos brgyad shin du 'das/ / (14) dgu po mthar pa'i snyoms par bzhugs/ /gnod pa 'I dngos po</i></p>	<p>(4) [... ']phags pa 'I chos brgyad rdzogs pas na/ /'jig rten skyabsu gshegsu gsol/ /</p>
<p><i>dgu spangs ste/ /skye dgu yongs su don mdzad pas/ / (15) mdzad dgu kun las shin 'das/ /'jig rten skyabs</i></p>	<p>(5) [...] dgu spangs pas na/ /skye dgu kun kyI don yang mdzad //</p>
<p><i>su gshegs su gsol/ /dge bcu spyod pa 'I rnam dag mthus/ (16) myi dge bcu po shin du spangs/ /byang cub sa bcu bsgom pa ' phyir/</i></p>	<p>(6) [...] su gshegs su gsol/ /dge ba bcu spyad rnam dag mthu/</p>
<p><i>sangs rgyas sa bcu yongs su rdzogs/ /'jig rten (17) skyabs su gshegs su gsol // \$ // \$</i></p>	<p>(7) [... na/-n] /sangs rgyas stobs bcu yong[s]u rdzogs/ /</p>

#### 4.2. Appendix II

<p>P. T. 26, ll. 31–38</p>	<p>IOL Tib J 466, ll. 20–24</p>
<p>(31) \$/ /'jig rten skyon gyis myi gos brtags/ /phyag na phad ma</p>	
<p><i>dkar sang sang/ (32) byams shing shes rab 'brel pa 'I mtshan/ /klu shing men thog bkra yer yer/ /gnyen (33) pos mya ngan gchod</i></p>	<p>(20) [... dkar] ... byams tang shes rab 'brel pa 'I mtshan/</p>
<p><i>kyi dpe/ /bkra shis bshan brnams rno yam yam/ /kun nas (34) mchog du bzang ba 'i rtags/ /phyag na rin chen 'od</i></p>	<p>(21) [...] kyi dper/ /bkra shis bshan bsnams rno yam yam/ /kun</p>





<i>lam lam/ /log par blta ba'/ (35) 'dul ba'I mtshan/ /rdo rje dbyibs legs 'phags zang zang/ /zhe sdang tha ba spangs (36) kyi tshul/</i>	(22) [... ] <i>lam lam/ /log par lta ba 'dul ba'I mtshan/ /rdo rje dbyibs</i>
<i>/phyag na ud dpal 'jam phril phril/ /myi shes ma byang slob pa 'i dper// (37) phyag na gsung rabs mdzes khrigs khrigs/</i>	(23) [... ] <i>/ /phyag na u dpal 'jam phril phril/ /myi shes ma byang</i>
<i>//'jig rten snying por 'gyur gyi (38) rtags/ /bdud rtsi lo thog 'bru sil sil//</i>	(24) [... ] <i>'jig rten snying por 'gyur kyI rtags/ /bdud rtsi lo thog</i>



### Abbreviations

BDRC	Buddhist Digital Resource Center, <a href="https://library.bdrc.io/?uilang=en">https://library.bdrc.io/?uilang=en</a> .
IOL Tib J	Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the British Library in London (formerly in the India Office Library (IOL)).
P. T.	Pelliot Collection of Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

### Symbols

(1)	line number.
(xyz)	information supplied by the author to the translation/transliteration.
\$	opening ornamentation (Tib. <i>dbu</i> ).
+	transcription of non-standard ligatures.
-I, N-, etc.	reversed Tibetan glyphs, e.g., <i>gI</i> (𑀧) / <i>Na</i> (𑀢).
<del>strike through</del>	cancelled text in the manuscript.
<xyz>	interlinear addition.
*	reconstructed titles or terminologies.
...	continuation of text/quote that is of no relevance to the present paper.
[...]	omission.
[xyz]	inferred text in obscured or missing part of manuscript.
<u>underlined</u>	tentative reading; text roughly shared by two or more exemplars of the same text.

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