

Made in China? Sourcing the Old Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabhasūtra*

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This paper presents evidence to suggest that the highly aberrant Old Khotanese version of the popular *Sūtra of the Master of Medicine Beryl-Shine* (*Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabhasūtra*) may have been translated from a Chinese text, the twelfth fascicle of the so-called *Consecration Sūtra*, T1331. As a possible explanation for the hybrid nature of the Khotanese text, which shares in features of the *Consecration Sūtra* and of the mainstream version, I suggest the possibility that the Sanskrit version may have originated in Khotan as a revision of the Khotanese text. Lastly I explore the greater consequences that these scenarios would have in our understanding of the pre-Islamic cultures of the Tarim Basin, underscoring the role of China as a significant cultural influence.

INTRODUCTION

A prophet has no honor in his own country, says the evangelist. Never too successful in their putative Indian homeland, the buddha *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha*, the “Master of Medicine Beryl-Shine” or *Bhaiṣajyaguru* for short, and the eponymous Mahāyāna text (henceforth *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*) that narrates his promises of aid and salvation to his devotees went on to gain great popularity in Central and East Asian Buddhism. Before the turn of the millennium this *sūtra* had versions in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese (no less than four), Khotanese, Sogdian, and Old Uighur;¹ the salvific image of the Master of Medicine has a place of honor in the art of Dunhuang and Kocho, in the temples of Mongol-era Shanxi, and in the silk paintings of the Tangut ghost town of Khara Khoto.

Within the picture of the successful eastward career of this text, the textual affiliation of the Khotanese version or versions has, however, remained elusive to scholars, and with it also the precise place that the Khotanese material occupies within the larger picture of the cult of this buddha in Asia. So Emmerick (1992: 22) says that “[t]he Khotanese fragments do not appear to represent a close rendering of any known version and may represent an independent Central Asian tradition,” and, in the same vein, Maggi (2009: 386) that “[a] number

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1. As far as secondary scholarship on the Sanskrit texts of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* is concerned, Schopen 1977: 208–10 is probably still the best general survey, to which should be added the actual editions of the recension A of Gilgit in Schopen 1978 and Schopen forthcoming and also an overview of the Sanskrit texts in Schopen 2009: 193–95. The Tibetan text was critically edited with a wealth of textual information in Arai 1977 and Schopen 1978; Schopen 2009 surveys the remarkable fluidity that characterizes the Sanskrit *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* tradition on which I will have further occasion to comment. For a survey of the Sogdian texts, see Kudara and Sundermann 1992; for the Old Uighur version, Elverskog 1997: 52; for the Chinese texts, an early but still useful survey is Pelliot 1903.

of Old Khotanese fragments of the *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra* have come down to us, which do not appear to correspond closely to any of the known versions.”²

I suggest in this article that the Khotanese fragments—at least those substantial enough to allow for comparison—are in fact closely related to one of the known Chinese versions and, moreover, that the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* was actually translated from that very Chinese version, now available as the twelfth fascicle (*juan* 卷) of a Buddhist text, the *Consecration Sūtra* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經, T1331). This has interesting implications for the history of the spread of Buddhism in Asia that I will also discuss.

1. A MISBEHAVING CHINESE VERSION OF THE *BHAIṢAJYAGURU-SŪTRA* AND ITS WELL-BEHAVED SIBLINGS

While reading the Tibetan version of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* I was trying to gain a general idea of the problems involved in the transmission of the text by comparing the versions in different languages, and in that process I was constantly surprised by the wild eccentricity of the Khotanese fragments. Equally eccentric—odd, in fact—was the version in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*.

As I mentioned already, there are four extant Chinese versions of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*: one fifth-century translation, namely the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*, and three subsequent seventh-century translations (T449, T450, T451, fasc. 2). As understanding the relationships between these four texts is essential to the following discussion, I will briefly survey them here.

The *Consecration Sūtra* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經, T1331) is a work in twelve fascicles to which Michel Strickmann dedicated a careful and justly famous study (Strickmann 1990). Strickmann suggests there that the entire twelve-fascicle *Consecration Sūtra* evolved in China out of the initial kernel that makes its last and final fascicle, the twelfth, and the one that corresponds to a version of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* (pp. 81–84). Strickmann presents the whole *Consecration Sūtra* as a Buddhist pamphlet aimed at the practices of both Daoism and traditional Chinese religion, and says that it “must be viewed as part of the great wave of Indian proto-Tantric practice that inundated Chiang-nan³ in the fifth century” (p. 93). Strickmann notes, however, that the attribution of the “translation” that the *Consecration Sūtra* purports to be to the western monk Bo Śrīmitra 帛尸梨蜜多 as found in the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist corpus is a blatant fabrication by the notorious sixth-century bibliographer Fei Changfang 費長房 (p. 90 n. 40). More trustworthy references to the origin of the *Consecration Sūtra* appear in the work of another ancient bibliographer, one to whose work modern scholarly consensus grants, by contrast, great reliability, 僧祐 Sengyou (445–518). Sengyou’s notes regarding the text are aptly summarized in Strickmann 1990: 90–93: the first eleven fascicles of the work, the same eleven that Strickmann postulates to have been created in China, Sengyou thought to be of Indic origin, i.e., “legitimate,” in Chinese terms. As for the twelfth fascicle, namely the version of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*, Sengyou remarks:

右一部，宋孝武帝大明元年魅陵鹿野寺比丘慧簡，依經抄撰。此經後有續命法所以偏行於世。(T2145.39a.22–23)

As for this aforementioned [last fascicle], in the Daming year 大明 of emperor Xiaowu 孝武 of the [Liu] Song [劉]宋 dynasty (456 AD), the monk Huijian 慧簡 of the Deer Wilderness Monastery

2. More cautiously, Skjærvø (1999 [2012]: 135) says that “all the Khotanese versions differ considerably from the Sanskrit and are not particularly close to the Chinese versions as translated by Birnbaum [1979].” With equal caution, Leumann (1920: 104) states that the Chinese and Tibetan translations might hold the key to the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* tradition.

3. In the more modern romanization system *hanyu pinyin* this would be Jiangnan (江南), i.e., the region around the modern city of Nanjing that constituted the core of the empire of the southern [劉]宋 [Liu] Song dynasty (420–479 AD).

(Luye si 鹿野寺) in Moling 魅陵⁴ composed it on the basis of an [Indian] sūtra (依經抄撰). In the last part it contains a rite for the prolongation of life, which made it extremely popular.

Huiju 慧矩, a member of the committee that prepared the succeeding Chinese translation of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*, wrote a preface for this new version in the early seventh century, and this preface also throws light on the origin of the *Consecration Sūtra* and its mysterious twelfth fascicle. I include a passage from this text here not only for its interest for the present discussion, but also because it provides us with a rare glimpse into the patient pursuits of a punctilious seventh-century Chinese philologist:

昔宋孝武之世，鹿野寺沙門慧簡已曾譯出，在世流行，但以梵宋不融、文辭雜糅，致令轉讀之輩多生疑惑。矩早學梵書恒披葉典，思遇此經驗其紕謬；開皇十七年初獲一本，猶恐脫誤未敢即翻，至大業十一年復得二本，更相讎比方為措定，遂與三藏法師達磨笈多，并大隋翻經沙門法行明則、長順海馭等，於東都洛水南上林園翻經館重譯此本。(T449.401a.5–29)

Formerly, during the reign of emperor Xiaowu of the [Liu] Song dynasty (430–464 AD), the monk Huijian of the Deer Wilderness Monastery translated this sūtra, which became extremely popular. However, Indian [original] and Chinese were not in agreement, and the words of the text were mixed and spurious (文辭雜糅) to the point of raising doubts among those in the assembly who recited it. I, who from early on had studied Indian writing(s) (梵書)⁵ and always leafed through the palm-leaf volumes (恒披葉典), thought about finding this sūtra and testing its errors. In the seventeenth year of the Kaihuang 開皇 era (596 AD) I initially obtained one exemplar, but as I feared that it might contain mistakes, I did not dare to have it translated, until in the eleventh year of the 大業 Daye era (614 AD) I managed to acquire a second exemplar. Then, by comparing them with each other (相讎比) I made a comparative ascertainment [of the text]. [I], together with the knower of the three baskets, [the Indian] master *Dharmagupta (?–619), and the Chinese translators Faxing 法行, Mingze 明則, Changshun 長順, Haiyu 海馭, and others, in the translation office of the Garden of the Upper Grove (上林園 *Shanglin yuan*), south of the Luo river in the Eastern Capital (=Luoyang), translated for the second time this sūtra.⁶

Huiju's fastidiousness was certainly not a rhetorical pose: the translation that his team produced is, in fact, the one that most closely adheres to the extant Sanskrit and Tibetan versions.

What does Huiju mean when he says that the text is “mixed and spurious”? To put it succinctly, the version of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* is studded with Chinese pearls: interspread into the familiar Bhaiṣajyaguru narrative known from most other versions, this text contains references to Chinese astronomy, medicine, music, onomastics, black magic, and specifically Chinese conceptions of life and the afterlife. By way of illustration, the following passage that describes the misdeeds of those sinners who should fear the judgment of the king of hell—a passage to which we will have occasion to return—is especially illustrative in its delightful commixture of Indian and Chinese anxieties:

若人為惡作諸非法、無孝順心、造作五逆、破滅三寶、無君臣法... (T1331.535, c.23–24)

If there is a person who for the sake of evil does what is unlawful, who does not possess a heart obedient to filial piety, who commits the five transgressions, who harms the three jewels, who does not [abide by] the law of prince and minister...

4. Moling, with the same name as in the past, is nowadays a suburban district of the city of Nanjing.

5. As Huiju himself makes clear, the translation team was headed by an Indian monk: Huiju himself might have had acquaintance with the principles of the Sanskrit language, but it is unlikely that he would have been able to carry out an independent translation. As H. R. van Gulik has shown in his rich study on the history of Sanskrit studies in China and Japan (1956: 24, 102), although the study of the Brāhmī alphasyllabary was extensively cultivated in Sinitic East Asia, the study of the Sanskrit language itself was rare in the extreme and demonstrably only for those Chinese monks who spent a protracted period of study in India.

6. The whole preface has been translated by Birnbaum (1979: 149–50), but I have included my own translation because I disagree with his on a number of points.

Sengyou's assessment that the author-translator of the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* "composed it on the basis of an Indian sūtra" would then seem accurate: the text follows roughly the structure of the text as it appears in its Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, which I will call here the mainstream version, but often deviates from it with additions, substitutions, deletions, and rearrangement of sections.

After the translation of circa 615 AD by Dharmagupta and Huiju followed the translations of Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), T450, carried out sometime during the fourth and sixth decades of the seventh century, and Yijing 義淨 (635–713), T451, probably completed around the turn of the century. Yijing's (635–713) translation should not be considered a version of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* as much as of a text that contains it, one **Saptatathāgata-pūrvapraṇīdhānaviśeṣavistara* that is also available in Tibetan translation (*De bzhin gshegs pa bdun gyi sngon gyi smon lam gyi khyad par rgyas pa*, Derge, *Rgyud*, Da, 248a.1–273b.7).⁷ In this text the buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru is preceded by six other buddhas who like himself have each issued a set of twelve vows for the rescue and salvation of their devotees: the second fascicle of T451 is solely devoted to Bhaiṣajyaguru and matches the text of the Tibetan and Sanskrit *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* in most places.

2. ANOTHER ROGUE VERSION OF THE *BHAIṢAJYAGURU-SŪTRA*: THE KHOTANESE FRAGMENTS

After this outline of the Chinese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* tradition, it is time to enter the wild landscape of Khotanese country. The most recent survey of the Khotanese fragments of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* is Maggi 2009: n. 191, which I can summarize as follows. The bulk of the fragments are in the British Library, and these are handily collected in Skjærvø 2002 with references to those previously edited by Bailey in *Khotanese Texts* (Bailey 1945–1963); one folio is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Pelliot khotanais 428, FM 25, 1) and was edited by Emmerick (1985); finally, a series of fragments preserved in the Institute for Oriental Manuscripts in Saint Petersburg was edited in Emmerick and Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995.⁸

In order to show the affinity between the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* and the Khotanese fragments I will present here only one parallel Chinese-Khotanese passage—the longest and most substantial one in the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* corpus—with English translations and interspread with Gregory Schopen's English translation of recension A of the Gilgit text for comparison with the mainstream version. Regarding the other portions of the extant Khotanese text, at the end of this paper I have included an appendix with a list of fifteen Chinese-Khotanese parallel passages that highlight the exclusive features shared by these two texts that are absent from all other known versions, Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Sogdian, or Old Uighur. As my translation of the Khotanese fragments is not meant to be a new contribution to Khotanese philology, I have restricted linguistic commentary to a minimum. For several vocabulary items I have relied on Bailey 1979, aware of the caveats that many scholars of Khotanese have raised regarding it, in particular Bailey's etymological enthusiasm, but also aware of his uncanny linguistic instinct: the fact that Bailey's conjectures often are echoed by the Chinese passage lends them, I believe, corroboration. I have marked these items (i.e., Bailey's etymological conjectures) with a double asterisk (**) in the translation. This passage has been pieced together from three overlapping separate

7. I have given only a superficial look at the Tibetan text, and although it does not always closely match Yijing's text, it matches it enough to postulate the essential identity of the two.

8. Missing here are, however, four fragments in the Crosby collection of the Library of Congress, on which see n. 37 below.

fragments:⁹ the passage deals with a pre-trial of sorts of a moribund in the court of Yama, king of the underworld, followed by a rite to prolong life and the heroic resolutions of a number of ghostly deities, who only in the Khotanese version and in the *Consecration Sūtra* relinquish their ghostly bodies as a result:

<p>若已定者，奏上閻羅。 (T1331.535c.27) When [the deeds of the sick person] have been determined with certainty, he presents a memorial to king Yama.</p>	<p>(IOL Khot 149/2r1) kvī nāgatu <u>nyāpātā</u> ś¹⁰ami rundi bañai <u>bāstu</u> y¹¹indā 60 When it is known with certainty, one/he can lead him in front of king Yama.</p>
<p>閻羅監察，隨罪輕重考¹²而治之。 (T1331.535c.27–28) Yama investigates, and according to the lightness or heaviness of the sins interrogates [him] with torture¹³ and sentences him.</p>	<p>śamī vā rre pulśti biśu anujātā crāmī (r2) ārrā o garkhā o vā rraysgā ttīti paśkūjindā pulsīndī 1 And king Yama asks everything; he investigates to what extent his guilt is heavy or is light. Then they beat¹⁴ him and interrogate him.</p>
<p>世間痿黃之病，困篤不死一絕一生。 (T1331.535c.28–29) [Here] in the world [it is as if he had contracted] the disease of “numbing jaundice,”¹⁵ a morbid stupor [in which] one does not die [completely], at times failing and at times living.</p>	<p>dātai ysamaśśamḍya hvandā <u>āchānā</u>¹⁶ ysiḍā (r3) pumāḍa kāḍe vīyanosta nvathāta pharrā ysera dukhauṭta 2 ce ne tte rrāyā mārāre [mu]-(r4)-lśu nātcaṅvūṇa hāmāre. mulśa burō <u>vātco bījo</u>¹⁷re [One] has seen in the world men ill, old, withered, troubled, pained, oppressed, pitiable, suffering, that do not die at that time** and at times become senseless, at times then become lifeless.**¹⁸</p>

9. Skjærvø identified the overlap between IOL Khot 149/2r1 and IOL Khot 173/8, and this is recorded in the personal notes that he kindly shared with me (pers. comm., 11-1-17), and of which I had the occasion to see an earlier version in the possession of Gregory Schopen. This piece of information was not, however, put in print in the relevant entries in Skjærvø 2002. I have identified as belonging also to this cluster the fragment Pelliot khotanais 428 FM 125, 1. The text of IOL Khot 149/2r1+IOL Khot 173/8 contained here is the one from Skjærvø 2002; that of Pelliot khotanais 428 FM 125, 1 is the one in Emmerick 1985 without modifications; I have included other readings—mine and not—in the footnotes. The portions integrated from IOL Khot 173/8 are underlined. Otherwise, I have preserved here the typographical conventions of Skjærvø 2002, which include italics to mark tentative readings.

10. IOL Khot 173/8a1: nyāp[ā]t[e] tt-

11. IOL Khot 173/8a2: x bāstu y-

12. 考 *kao* means ‘to examine’, but it can have the specialized legal meaning ‘to interrogate by means of torture’, which was, at least from the time of the Northern and Southern dynasties, often but not always written with the graphically determined variant 拷 *kao*. This variant is actually attested in the Taishō variant “Song 宋.”

13. See n. 12 above.

14. See n. 12 above.

15. What I call here “numbing jaundice” (痿黃 *weihuang*) is a typified condition in classical Chinese medicine, mentioned already in the Han-dynasty medical treatise 金匱要略 *Jingui Yaolue* (15.7; p. 162 in the 1990 critical edition of He et al.); it apparently involves numbness and yellow discoloration.

16. IOL Khot 173/8a3: -ndā āchānā

17. IOL Khot 173/8a4: bu]ro vātco bājo]re.

18. Bailey (1979: sub *bijore*) proposes ‘to become lifeless’ as the meaning of this apparent hapax. However, he draws support for his etymological conjecture only from Walter Liebenhal’s translation of a clause in Xuanzang’s version: 死相現前 (T450.407b.14) “The signs of death are presently manifest” (Liebenhal 1936: 19), which possibly corresponds to *marāṇābhīmukha* ‘[is] faced towards death’ in the Sanskrit versions. The form might be perhaps related, though, to the verb *bujy-* ‘resuscitate, revive’ (Bailey 1979 s. v.). If that was the case, then, the meaning of the Khotanese passage would be very similar to the Chinese.

<p>由其罪福未得料簡，錄其精神在彼王所。或七日，二、三七日乃至七七日名籍定者。 (T1331.535c.29–536a.2)</p> <p>Because his sins and good deeds have not yet been determined, his soul is appointed where that king is. In 7, or 2 or 3x7, up to 7x7 days, the register [under his] name is determined.</p>	<p>kho <i>dā</i>. . . x x <i>īndā</i> 3 [śśā]ra kara[ṇa] (v1) o vā dīra. ne nā tta ha(m)khāṣṭu yanīndā rraysgu vātā crā[m-] . . . x -d¹⁹ vijñānu nā x x hoś²⁰[ndi 4] (v2) bāyīndi śāmi baṇa rrundi o yi hauda haḍā dṛjsāre o vātcu sūvarebāstā haḍā o <i>puspa</i>-(v3)-redārsā haḍā 5 o haḍā nauvarecaholsā <i>vaṣṭa</i> ku²¹ haṃkhāṣṭu yanīndā kvī nātātā pravanya nā-(v4)-ma hāmāte</p> <p>As [. . .] are, the good deeds or the evil ones, they cannot count them quickly, to what extent [. . .] the consciousness [. . .] they carry. They lead him in front of king Yama, and they hold him for seven days, or then for twenty-one days, or for thirty-five days, or for forty-nine days. When they can [finish the] count, when [the count] is certain for him, the name comes into the register**.²²</p>
<p>放其精神還其身中。如從夢中見其善惡。 (T1331.536a.2–3)</p> <p>His soul is released and he returns into his body. As after a dream, he sees his good and evil.</p>	<p>vīñānvī vātco 6 varā śāna ttīti paśīndā hālsto vā ttarandaro²³ īste samvī <i>tta tta sai</i>[ttā²⁴</p> <p>Then at once they release his consciousness and he returns back to the body. To him it appears just as [. . .]</p>
<p>Schopen 2017: §17</p> <p>[. . .] There will be, Reverend Blessed One, in the last time, in the last period, individuals tormented by various diseases, their limbs atrophied through a long sickness, their throats and lips parched from hunger and thirst, facing death, surrounded by weeping friends, relatives and kin, blind, not seeing forms in any direction, being dragged away by Yama’s men. Of them the cadaver is here insensible, the consciousness (<i>vijñāna</i>) is brought before Yama, the King of Dharma. And then the god which was born with that person and follows behind him, having written fully down what would be the good and bad done by him, he presents it to Yama, the King of Dharma. Yama, the King of Dharma, interrogates him. He adds it up. In accordance with the good and bad done, he gives a corresponding order. Those who will go for refuge to that Blessed One Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha, the Tathāgata, if they would do worship with a particular form for the sake of the sick it is possible that his consciousness could return even then, and he would himself recall as if it had occurred in a dream. Or if it is on the seventh day, or if on the twenty-first day, or if in the thirty-fifth day, or if on the forty-ninth day that his consciousness would come back he would obtain recollection. He would be just himself an eye-witness to the maturation of good and bad acts. Even for the sake of his life he does not commit an evil act. Therefore, a devout son of good family, or daughter of good family, should do worship to that Tathāgata.</p>	

19. Perhaps (vā)[tcu]?

20. IOL Khot 173/8a5: śī

21. IOL Khot 173/8b1: Skjærvø 2002 reads [ba]lly[ä] vaṣṭa [t]tr-. I read: -ls[ä] vaṣṭa -u.

22. loc.sing. of *pravana* understood as in Bailey 1945–1967: iv (1961): 70.

23. I read here ttarandāro.

24. IOL Khot 173/8b2: -ī tta tta seittā *kho*. The next line in this fragment (=b3) reads: *aṣṭā pattimā* x.

<p>其人若明了者信驗罪福，是故我今勸諸四輩造續命神旛，然四十九燈，放諸生命。 (T1331.536a.3–5)</p> <p>If their people understand, and believe the evidence—sins and good deeds—then now I urge the fourfold assembly to make holy banners for the continuation of life, to light forty-nine lamps, to release animals.</p>	<p>(Pelliot khotanais 428; 1068; FM 25, 1 r1) hasp[i]jmā ttānu śāra hautana tceṛa 60²⁵ cāro padajsāña nauvaretcaholsā p²⁶abanā jīvātā ttitā tte palye ttānu caroṇu puñyau jsa jsīnai hūṣṭā 1 [. . .] I urge for them good, powerful acts: forty-nine lamps must be lit for the continuation of life. Then from the merit of that banner and those lamps, the lifespan increases, towards there to/by him [. . .]</p>
<p>以此旛燈放生功德，拔彼精神令得度苦，今世後世不遭厄難。 (T1331.536a.5–6)</p> <p>With the merit of those banners and lamps and release of animals, they bail out that soul and make it attain liberation; in this life and the next it does not run into danger and calamity.</p>	<p>hā yi dī[rā] k[ā]d[āgāne pa]²⁷-(r2)-śīndā varā ṣṭāna ttitā dukhyau jsa ttānai byevīndā p²⁸arriyu haṃtharkyau haysgamatyau jsa 2 [They re]lease [. . .] At once then, by that, from sufferings they obtain deliverance, from oppressions, from sorrows.</p>
<p>救脫菩薩語阿難言：“如來世尊說是經典，威神、功德、利益不少” (T1331.536a.6–8)</p> <p>The <i>bodhisattva</i> Salvation Liberation (=Skt. Trāṇamukta) said to Ānanda: “The Thus-come One, World-honored (=Skt. <i>tathāgata bhagavat</i>) pronounced this sūtra; its power, merit, and benefit are not small.”</p>	<p>trāṇamuktā vā bütāsativā ānandā ttitā tta hvate se. cu ttutu ttīsondu balondu sūtru (r3) hvate balysā uysguste 3 yāḍe uysnaurāṇu biśānu ce buro pyūvā`te ttu sūtru biśī dīra hāra jyāre puṣo parśti biśyau dukhyau jsa 4 And the bodhisattva Trāṇamukta then said to Ānanda: “When the Buddha spoke this glorious, powerful sūtra, [when] he explained [it], he did [so] for all beings. Whoever hears this sūtra, all his sins disappear. He completely escapes from all sufferings.”</p>
<p>Schopen 2017: §18</p> <p>Reverend Ānanda, those who wish to effect the release of one who is sick from the great illnesses, they, for the sake of the sick, must for seven nights and days take on the restraints of the period of fasting that has seven limbs. Worship and service must be done to the Community of Monks with food and drink, with all means of subsistence according to one’s abilities. Three times a night, three times a day homage must be done towards the Blessed One Bhaiṣajyaguruvaīdūryaprabha, the Tathāgata. This sūtra must be remembered forty-nine times. Forty-nine lamps must be lighted. Seven images must be made. For each image seven lamps must be set up. Each lamp must be made the size of the wheel of a cart. If on the forty-ninth day the light is not diminished it is to be known “All has succeeded.” And more than forty-nine five colored banners must be made.</p>	

25. I esteem possible that this numeral, partially obscured by a strip of adhesive material placed on it by early twentieth-century conservators, should be read 70 instead of 60. This would might make sense in light of the numeral 60 at the beginning of IOL Khot 149/2.

26. IOL Khot 173/8b4: tcaholsā x. I think that tcaholsā [p-] is highly likely.

27. The entire sequence ī[rā] k[ā]d[āgāne pa] is highly conjectural.

28. IOL Khot 173/8b5: byehīn[d]ä x. I think that byehīn[d]ä [p-] is visible.

<p>座中諸鬼神有十二神王。從座而起往到佛所。胡跪合掌白佛言： (T1331.536a.8–9)</p> <p>Sitting among the spirits,²⁹ there were twelve spirit kings. They stood from their seats and went where the Buddha was. Kneeling in barbarian fashion and joining their palms they said to the Buddha:</p>	<p>ttiña paršo āsta du[vā]su (r4) yakṣānu rrunde balonda tītā āysarnna vahāṣṭa dasta hā haṃju yādāndā 5 patā balysu jsonāta vāstāta tta pā haṣṭā yādāndā</p> <p>In that assembly sat twelve kings of the Yakṣas, powerful. Then they came down from (their) seat and cupped their hands. They kneeled before the Buddha and then thus they made this proclamation:</p>
<p>“我等十二鬼神在所作護，若城邑、聚落、空閑林中，若四輩弟子誦持此經，令所結願無求不得”。</p> <p>(T1331.536a.9–11)</p> <p>“We twelve spirits, in the course of this protection that we carry out, if in a city, village, or uninhabited forest, if there are disciples of the fourfold assembly who chant and hold this sūtra, we will make so that among their resolutions there is nothing that is not attained.”</p>	<p>buhu dvāsu hotana yakṣa ku halci kā-(r5)-miña kṣīra 6 kīntha biśa āvuto’ bāśa garuvo’ ulatāñe saṃkherma o rrayso biñā ku ānde.³⁰ buhu nā rakṣāmā biśinda 7 cu buro tvī bāṣṭe tcahaurpandīya ce sājitā (v1) drjsāte ttutu sūtru cu halci āt x ta niśtā cu va ne byevā 8</p> <p>“We twelve powerful Yakṣas, wherever, in whichever country, city, house, village, forest, mountains, charnel ground, <i>saṃghārama</i>, or empty forest (?)**³¹ where they may dwell (<i>ānde</i> > <i>√āh</i>), we will protect them completely. Those who are your disciples in the fourfold [assembly] who learn and hold this sūtra, whatever [. . .] there is not what [one] would not attain.”</p>
<p>阿難問言：“其名云何？為我說之” 救脫菩薩言： (T1331.536a.11–12)</p> <p>Ānanda said: “What are their names? Say them to me.” The <i>bodhisattva</i> Salvation Liberation said:</p>	<p>ānandā vātcu trāṇamuktu būtasatvu tta brraṣṭe cu buro ttā ttā yakṣa duvāsu kho nā nāma vā mama hvāña 9</p> <p>Then Ānanda asked the bodhisattva Trāṇamukta: “Who are these twelve yakṣas? You should tell me how they are called!”</p>
<p>“灌頂章句，其名如是。神名金毘羅、神名和耆羅、神名彌佉羅、神名安陀羅、神名摩尼羅、神名宋林羅、神名因持羅、神名波耶羅、神名摩休羅、神名真陀羅、神名照頭羅、神名毘伽羅”</p> <p>(T1331.536a.12–17)</p> <p>“[In] the words of the Consecration, their names are like this: [that] spirit’s name is *Kimbilā,³² [that] spirit’s name is *Ywātśilā, [that] spirit’s name is *Mjiek^hialā, [that] spirit’s name is *?Āndālā, [that] spirit’s name is *Mwānilā, [that] spirit’s name is *Suonljōmlā, [that] spirit’s name is *?Jiendjilā, [that] spirit’s name is *Pwājilā, [that] spirit’s name is *Mwāxjoulā, [that] spirit’s name is *Tśjendālā, [that] spirit’s name is *Tśjāudoulā, [that] spirit’s name is *Bikalā.”</p>	<p>paḍā (v2) kāmuīrā vaśārā mekhalā tēramā andālā pūhā vā anilā sanilā. kṣei’ma u indālā rro nāma. 70 haṣṭamā rro pāyālā nomā mahurā cāndālā rro nāma. sau yakṣā pāyālā (v4) cau dvāsaṃ yakṣā bikalā nāma</p> <p>“The first Kāmuīra, Vaśāra, Mekhala, the fourth Andāla, and the fifth Anila, Sanila is the sixth and also one is called Indāla, also the eighth is called Pāyāla, Mahurā, also one is called Cāndāla; one is Pāyāla, Cau[dhura], the twelfth is called Bikala.”</p>

29. See n. 33 below on *guishen* 鬼神 ‘spirits’.

30. Bailey (1945–1967: iii [1965]: 125, §53.5) reads here instead *avye*.

31. Bailey (1979: sub *avye* [p. 26]) seems to interpret *biñā* as a locative singular of a stem cognate to Skt. and Avestan *vana* ‘forest’.

32. Here and below the phonetic renderings of Chinese preceded by an asterisk represent reconstructions of the learned pronunciation of common Chinese around the middle of the first millennium as recorded in the seventh century AD rhyme dictionary *Qieyun* 切韻 and according to the interpretation of this source in Schuessler 2009.

<p>救脫菩薩語阿難言：“此諸鬼神別有七千以為眷屬，皆悉叉手低頭聽佛世尊說是藥師琉璃光如來本願功德”。</p> <p>(T1331.536a.18–20)</p> <p>The <i>bodhisattva</i> Salvation Liberation said to Ānanda: “These spirits have besides a retinue of 7,000; they all, cupping their hands and bowing their heads, listen to the Buddha, World-honored pronounce the [Sūtra] of the Merit of the Resolutions of the Thus-come Master of Medicine Beryl-shine.</p>	<p>trāṇamuktā vā bütāsadvā ānandā ttītā hvate se ttātā hautana yakṣa ci rro paḍā nāma hvataimā 2 hvatā tāmye paṣa hauda ysāre ttā. biṣī vaysña hamālā dasta hā haṃju yāḍāndā kamala hanatāndā biṣīnda 3 pyūṣtāndā cu gyastā balysā kha hvate tte balysi padamgyo bhaiṣajyagurā ppraṇāhāna paḍājsy x x x</p> <p>And the bodhisattva Trāṇamukta said then to Ānanda: “These are the powerful yakṣas, [they] whose names I previously said. Each of them [has] an assembly of seven thousand. They all now, together, cupped their hands, completely bowed their heads and listened to the god Buddha as he spoke out the description of that Buddha, the Former Vows of Bhaiṣajyaguru [. . .]</p>
<p>莫不一時捨鬼神形得受人身，長得度脫無眾惱患。若人疾急厄 [. . .]</p> <p>(T1331.536a.20–21)</p> <p>None of them failed to immediately relinquish his spirit form and obtain a human body! They will for long be liberated and without various afflictions. If a man is afflicted by impending danger [. . .]”</p>	<p>(v5) -teta 4 biṣā ttu scātu (B tta ttātu) bütāna aṃga karaṇa varā ṣtāna paśāndā ne mara pharu tsindā samtsera thatau byevindā parrīyu 5 ce ju ṣā hve’ itā ce āchāna vītanauṣtā d[u]khau[ttā]</p> <p>They all, at that time, at once relinquish[ed] their ghostly³³ bodies—their <i>karma</i>. They do not transmigrate here in <i>samsāra</i>; they quickly attain liberation. Whatever man there is, who is sick, suffering, troubled [. . .]”</p>
<p>Schopen 2017: §21</p> <p>Then there in the assembly the Twelve Great Spirit (<i>yakṣa</i>) Generals had assembled, Kimbhīra, the Spirit General, Vajra, the Spirit General, the Spirit Generals Mekhila, Anala, Anila, Sanila, Indāla, Pāyila, Māhura, Cindāla, Codhura, and Vikala. These twelve great Spirit Generals, each had a retinue of seven thousand spirits. They with one voice said to the Blessed One: “Heard by us, through the might of the Buddha, is the name of that Blessed One Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha, the Tathāgata. No longer for us is there the fear of a bad rebirth. United, in unison, for life we go to the Buddha as refuge, we go to the Dharma and Community of Monks as refuge. We will appear eagerly for the good, the benefit, the ease of all individuals. Especially where in a village or city or countryside or place in a forest this sūtra will be used, or he who will preserve the name of that Blessed One Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha, the Tathāgata, and will do worship and service to him, those we, Blessed One, will guard, we will protect, we will free them of all misfortune, and we will fulfill all their hopes.”</p> <p>Then further the Blessed One gave approval to those Spirit Generals: “It is well done, well done, that you, recalling what you owe to that Blessed One Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha, the Tathāgata, are committed to the benefit of all individuals.”</p>	

33. Emmerick (Emmerick and Skjærvø 1982–1997: i sub *bütāna*) saw in *bütāna aṃga* a rendering of the Skt. *bodhyaṅga* ‘the members (=aids) of enlightenment’ as opposed to Bailey’s (1979: sub *bütāna*) ‘devotion’. I would see *bütāna* much more simply as an adjective derived from *būta* ‘ghost’ (from Indic *bhūta* ‘ghost’) and the adjectival suffix *-iṅa* (Degener 1989: 129), yielding ‘ghostly’, and the whole phrase to mean ‘ghostly bodies’, which matches closely the Chinese *guishen xing* 鬼神形 ‘spirit form’. One of the reviewers of this article has insightfully remarked that *guishen* 鬼神 is, in early Chinese translations, a rendering of Skt. *yakṣa* and its presumed Middle Indic cognates: this might explain why we have *yakṣa* in the Khotanese and the Sanskrit, although that would not explain *bütāna*. Nevertheless, in the most literary register of Classical Chinese, *guishen* 鬼神 means ‘spirits of the dead’ (e.g., *Analects*, *Xianjin* 先進, 11), and, later on, ‘[evil] spirits, ghosts’. Furthermore, equating *guishen* 鬼神 too squarely with *yakṣa* in the *Consecration Sūtra* might not be advisable: the introductory *nidāna* scene tells us that for the recitation of the *sūtra* there were in attendance the “eight kinds of *guishen*: gods, dragons (=nāgas), [etc.]” (天龍八部鬼神, T1331.532b.13), and this is undoubtedly a rendering of the ubiquitous Skt. cliché *devanāgayakṣagandharvāsurasgaruḍakinnaramahoraga*, which makes it likely that in this text *guishen* 鬼神 designates supernatural entities in general.

My main purpose in presenting this long passage is to highlight the close affinity between the Chinese and Khotanese texts and their shared deviations from the narrative of the mainstream version: the resemblance between the Chinese-Khotanese parallel and the Sanskrit text is loose at best.

In the first place the very sequence of events is different: the Chinese-Khotanese parallel roughly covers sections §17–18 and §21 of the mainstream version in Schopen’s segmentation; sections §19–20 of the mainstream version, on the other hand, are roughly similar to other sections of the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*, namely 535b.18–26 and 535c.6–11, which in the Chinese text occur before the passage presented below.

In the second place, I need to draw the attention of the reader to a curious phenomenon: although the Khotanese text follows the Chinese closely, there are small passages in which the former seems closer to the mainstream narrative. So, for example, the “numbing jaundice” that overcomes the man who goes to see the king of the underworld in the Chinese text corresponds to a longer list of afflictions in both the Sanskrit and Khotanese texts. The reader should keep in mind the interesting pivotal position of the Khotanese text, which seems to draw material both from the mainstream version and from the *Consecration Sūtra*.

Having now, I hope, made explicit the close affinity between the Khotanese fragments and the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*, I will explain why I believe that the Chinese text is the actual source of the Khotanese.³⁴

As I said before, the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* brims with specifically Chinese cultural references: luckily, although the text is extremely fragmentary, some of the passages that contain those specifically Chinese elements are actually attested in the Khotanese version, although inconspicuously. The Sanskrit text in Schopen’s section §20 (modes of untimely death and the way to avert it) has, within the entry relative to the ninth “untimely death,” the following text:

navamam akālamaraṇaṃ ye kṣuttarṣopahatā āhārapānam alabhamānā kālaṃ kurvanti (Schopen 1978: 66)

The ninth untimely death is: those who, afflicted by hunger and thirst, not obtaining food and water will die. (Schopen 2017: §20)

Now, 1331 has something very different:

九者，有病不治又不修福，湯藥不順，針灸失度，不值良醫為病所困於是滅亡。(535c.9–11)

The ninth: [one] has a disease that cannot be treated, and [one] cannot restore [one’s] merit, medicine does not yield results, acupuncture and moxibustion lose their standard [effect], [one] cannot visit a good physician, is overcome by disease, and as a result is exhausted and dies.

The fragment IOL Khot 8/6 contains the passage of the nine untimely deaths and the extant items in the list do in fact match the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* (see appendix I below). This fragment has the following incomplete sentence:

thāna te dajsindā o yi suṃjsaṇu (IOL Khot 8/6a.3)

In [that] place they burn and [. . .] him with a needle.

34. Skjærvø (1999 [2012]: 135–36) noticed the agreement between IOL Khot 17/3 and the “Long Scroll” from Yunnan described in Birnbaum 1979: 63–64. This is unfortunately a red herring: the text of the “Long Scroll” reproduces verbatim the text of the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* and neither Birnbaum nor the editors of the “Long Scroll,” Chapin and Soper (1970), seem to have noticed this. What the “Long Scroll” has are by no means “abbreviated forms of the twelve vows” (Birnbaum 1979: 63) as much as the text of the *Consecration Sūtra* without modifications.

I interpret these words in IOL Khot 8/6a.3 as a rendering of the Chinese compound *zhen-jiu* 針灸 ‘acupuncture and moxibustion’ (lit. ‘needle and burning’). The pairing of acupuncture and moxibustion being such an indisputably and specifically Chinese medical practice, the affinity between the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* and the Khotanese text can only be made sense of if the former is the source of the latter.

Another parallel can be interpreted in a similar fashion, as it also bears traces of the specifically Chinese cultural elements that characterize the *Consecration Sūtra*. Schopen’s section §10 contains the description of the methods of evildoers who use black magic to harm others:

te vanadevatām āvāhayanti vrkṣadevatā giridevatā śmaśāneṣu pṛthakpṛthagbhūtānām āvāhayanti (Schopen 1978: 49)

They conjure the gods of forests, the gods of trees, the gods of mountains. They conjure one by one the demons in cemeteries. (Schopen 2017: §10)

Here the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* has

或就山神, 樹下鬼神, 日、月之神, 南斗北辰諸鬼神 (533b.23–24)

Some go to the gods of the mountains, to the spirits under trees, to the gods of sun and moon, to all the spirits of the [Chinese] Dipper and the Pole Star.³⁵

The Khotanese fragment IOL Khot 22/6 has in line a4:

u]rmaysde hauda rākhyā cu burō

The sun, the Seven Seers (=the Big Dipper), as many as . . .

Technically 南斗 *nandou* is the Chinese Dipper (literally the “Southern Measuring Cup,” ζ, τ, σ, φ, λ, μ Sagittarii in modern terminology), whereas the Big Dipper—the Sanskrit *saptarṣayas* “the Seven Seers”—is in China 北斗 *beidou* (the “Northern Measuring Cup”). These astronomical references do not match exactly, but I would like to draw the reader’s attention to two facts: firstly, that no astronomical reference occurs at all in the mainstream version, and secondly, that while Indian Buddhist discourse is typically not much concerned with specific stars and constellations beyond the realm of the lunar mansions (*nakṣatras*), all of the astronomical bodies mentioned above (the “Chinese Dipper” and the Big Dipper, the Pole Star) have played an important role in traditional Chinese religion since classical times.³⁶ Furthermore, as the “Chinese Dipper” is an arbitrary and culture-specific grouping of stars, it would be understandable that it may have caused trouble to the hypothetical Khotanese translators.

3. HOW MANY KHOTANESE VERSIONS DO THE FRAGMENTS REPRESENT?

A doubt that the perceptive reader must have been harboring through the course of my argument is whether when I have referred to the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* fragments I have been talking about one or several different recensions, namely whether we are dealing with one Khotanese text or many.

Skjærvø (1999 [2012]: 135) proposed two Old Khotanese and one Middle Khotanese versions and also grouped the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* corpus into six manuscripts in the personal notes that he generously shared with me.³⁷ I cite below this information critically,

35. On *guishen* 鬼神, which I have rendered here as ‘spirits’, see n. 33 above.

36. See 史記 *Shiji* in Chavannes’s translation 1895–1905: iii 339–41 (Pole Star), 341–43 (Big Dipper), 355 (“Chinese” Dipper).

37. Here follows a tentative ascertainment of the manuscripts, with a grouping of identifiable fragments by manuscript based on Prof. Skjærvø’s notes. I have added a paleographical characterization according to the guidelines

after having seen good photographs of the fragments³⁸ and agreed with Prof. Skjærvø's grouping on the basis of format, paper, and handwriting.

The texts of the various fragments share the important trait of being metrical: when the text is substantial enough to allow for metrical analysis, it seems to be consistently metrical, in Leumann's "A" meter (5+7+5+7 morae per hemistich). Moreover, my analysis of the contents of the fragments leads me to think that the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* underlies all the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* manuscripts. The reader will find in the appendix passages from each of the six Khotanese manuscripts that parallel portions of the *Consecration Sūtra*. I postulate a general coherence among the extant passages of the various manuscripts: some rogue passages that do not follow the Chinese text can, I believe, be accounted for.

The most divergent text is certainly the one of Manuscript F,³⁹ the single witness of the Middle Khotanese recension. This manuscript contains a rare boon in Khotanese codicology, namely a colophon that can be dated to the mid eighth century (Skjærvø 1991: 270). The language is Middle Khotanese: Or.6402b/1.1 has in v1 the verbal forms *tsue* 'went' (3.sing. act.pf. of *tsu*) and in v2 *ā* 'came' (suppletive 3.sing.mid.pf. of *hīs*), whereas the corresponding Old Khotanese forms would be respectively *tsute* and *ātū*; the locative plurals *prīyvā* "among the departed" (from *prīya*<Skt. *preta*) in Or6402b/1.2 v2 and *hvaṃdvā* 'among men' (from *hva'nd-*) in 6402b/1.3 b1 have the ending *-vā*, which Skjærvø (1999 [2012]: 116 n. 39) considers a distinctive feature of Middle Khotanese as opposed to Old Khotanese *-(u)vo(')*.

The expected and brief initial narrative setting of the *sūtra*, common to all extant texts except for the one contained in Manuscript F, is attested in the tiny and badly rubbed fragment IOL Khot 111/7 from Manuscript E. Manuscript F has instead in Or.6402b/1.1 and Or6402b/1.4 an extravagant description of Amrapāli's grove (*ambravālye bāysa-*)⁴⁰ with

given in Sander 2005, but have not included here four still unedited fragments from the Crosby collection now in the Library of Congress; I learned of the existence of these fragments through Prof. Skjærvø's notes, but too late along this project to include them in the discussion, which would require a separate treatment. The unmarked fragments belong to the British Library, those marked with an asterisk (*) to the Institute for Oriental Manuscripts in Saint Petersburg, and the single folio marked with a double asterisk (**) to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris:

- 1) Manuscript A (IOL Khot 8/6; IOL Khot 22/6; IOL Khot 149/2) is Early Turkestan Brāhmī on account of the pointed nib pen, also the shape of the *akṣara kha*; circa fifth-sixth centuries.
- 2) Manuscript B (IOL Khot 8/7; IOL Khot 29/11; IOL Khot 147/3; IOL Khot 173/8) is Early South Turkestan Brāhmī type 2.1, written with a pointed nib; circa seventh-eighth centuries.
- 3) Manuscript C (Pelliot khotanais 428 FM 25, 1**) is paleographically close to Manuscript B. It can be consulted online at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000217n/f5.image> and <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000217n/f6.image>.
- 4) Manuscript D (IOL Khot 147/4) is South Turkestan Brāhmī; noteworthy are the widely spaced *akṣaras*; circa eighth-ninth centuries.
- 5) Manuscript E (Iledong 014.3; Iledong 014.5; IOL Khot 17/3; IOL Khot 24/12; IOL Khot 112/6) is Early Turkestan Brāhmī on account of the pointed nib pen and the shape of the *akṣara kha*, as in Manuscript A; likewise circa fifth-sixth centuries. The absence of distinction between thick and thin line seems to be especially clear in this manuscript.
- 6) Manuscript F (Or.6402B/1.1; 6402B/1.2; 6402B/1.3; Or.6402B/1.4; Or.6402B/1.6.1; Or.6402B/1.6.4; Or.6402B/1.6.5; Or.6402B/1.6.6; Or.6402B/1.5.1; Or.6402B/1.5.2; SI P 65.1–3*; perhaps SI M 32*) is also South Turkestan Brāhmī, with widely spaced *akṣaras*. As mentioned before, the colophon allows it to be dated to the mid eighth century (Skjærvø 1991:270).

38. The ones in the European collections are now easily available in the Internet thanks to the International Dunhuang Project (idp.bl.uk) and Gallica (gallica.bnf.fr).

39. Please see n. 37 above on the division of the fragments in manuscripts.

40. Skjærvø reads in Or6402b/1.1 v2 *ā'e bravālye bāsa* "he came to the Marakaṭa grove" (Emmerick and Skjærvø 1982–1997: iii 119–20) and "he stayed (?) at the **Mrakaṭikā* grove" (Skjærvø 2002: 20). However, this

a series of unusual attributes that include many bodies of water filled with aquatic flowers (Or.6402b/1.1 v3–5), birds (Or.6402b/1.4 r1), and what seems to be a list of medicinal plants (Or.6402b/1.1 v2–3; see Skjærvø in Emmerick and Skjærvø 1982–1997: iii 120 and Skjærvø 2002: sub Or.6402b). The setting in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* is, however, the vicinity of a puzzling 音樂樹 *yinyue shu* “musical tree,” as also in the mainstream version. The text of Manuscript F may have been expanded with a new *nidāna* scene, but there is also the possibility that Manuscript F was a composite manuscript and that the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* was only one of the works contained in it. In this scenario the description of Āmrāpāli’s grove would belong to a different text.

Interestingly, fragment Or.6402b/1.2 from Manuscript F and IOL Khot 8/7 from Manuscript B overlap, and although the text is clearly the same, Manuscript B shows consistently older forms: where Manuscript F has the aforementioned Middle Khotanese locative plural *prīyvā* “among the departed” in Or6402b/1.2 v2, Manuscript B has the Old Khotanese form *[p]rīyvo*. This makes me postulate that Manuscript F contains a text that had been perhaps augmented at points and linguistically “updated,” but whose basis is still clearly the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*.

Among those augmentations in the text, not all can be explained as mere added flourishes. One fragment of Manuscript F, Or6402b/1.2 (=Schopen’s section §8), matches the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* as expected, but the one that follows, Or6402b/1.3 (=Schopen’s section §9), in a2 matches the Sanskrit traditions much better than the *Consecration Sūtra*. Compare the Khotanese *himāri aśśa ulaka* “they become horses and camels” with the Sanskrit *goṣvoṣṭragardabhādiṣu tiryagyonīṣūpapadyante* “they are reborn among animals: cows, horses, camels, donkeys etc.,” and the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* 後還為人作牛馬、奴婢 “they will later return to be cows or horses, male or female servants for others” (533b.14–15). Manuscript F is not alone in this behavior: fragment IOL Khot 112/6 of Manuscript E contains a fragment that in spite of the meager text that it preserves is clearly part of the list of the names of the *yakṣa* kings (‘generals’—*senāpati*—in the mainstream version) in Schopen’s section §21. Although thematically it tallies with the cluster of overlapping fragments IOL Khot 149/2+IOL Khot 173+Pelliot khotanais 428 FM 25, 1 that I presented above, the wording is not the same, and, more importantly, one of the

reading involves two difficult assumptions. In the first place, it involves a shift of either Old Khotanese *ātā* (suppletive 3.sing.mid.pf. of *hīs* ‘come’) or *āstā* (3.sing.mid.pf. of *ās* ‘stay’) into *ā’e*, which would be unusual. As for *bravālye*, the interpretation of this word as stemming from **mrakaṭika*, a presumed Gāndhāri form related to Skt. *markaṭa* ‘monkey’, is based solely on Birnbaum’s (1979: 115) reconstructed Sanskrit form of the Chinese *mihou lin* 獼猴林 “Monkey Grove” (T1161.660c.6) as “Markaṭa (Monkey) Grove” in his English translation of the *Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Bodhisattvas King of Medicine and Superior Medicine* (Guan Yaowang *Yaoshang er pusa jing* 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經, T1161). This text, which Skjærvø (Emmerick and Skjærvø 1982–1997: iii 121) calls “the first Chinese translation [of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*],” has many fascinating affinities with the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*, but this single bit of information is inaccurate and must be corrected. Besides, the attested Gāndhāri form of this word is *makaḍa* (KI565, R.b5). I would read in that same place *ā’ ambravālye bāśa* “he came to Āmrāpāli’s grove.” As for the *akṣara am*, I feel inclined to read the diacritic on top of the vowel-carrier sign (*a*) as a smudged *-e* later corrected with an *anusvāra* written over it: the lower portion of the *-e* diacritic looks fuzzy and different from the one in the *akṣara lye* at the end of the same word and seems to me the result of a blot or smudge, the only means to remedy an error in a paper manuscript. This reading would conform more closely to Khotanese grammar and lexicon: *ā* is the attested Late—and therefore presumably also Middle—Khotanese form of the 3.sing.mid.pf. of *hīs*; Khot. *ambra* > Skt. *āmra* ‘mango’ is attested (Bailey 1979: sub *ambrā*); *ambravālye* would be the regular gen.sing. of **Ambravāli*, i.e., the Pāli *Ambapāli* and Sanskrit *Āmrāpāli*, the wealthy courtesan who donated to the Buddhist order a famous grove in Vaiśālī where many Buddhist sūtras take place; the lenition of intervocalic *p* to *v* is a well-attested phenomenon in Middle Indic in general and Gāndhāri in particular (Baums 2011: §2.2.3).

names of the *yakṣas* is also different.⁴¹ However, since elsewhere Manuscript E, which from a paleographical point of view seems to be the oldest, follows the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*, I surmise that the Old Khotanese text represented by Manuscript E was subject to further modifications. In short, I would see a unitary—but fluid—Old Khotanese version together with a linguistically updated (and possibly augmented) Middle Khotanese version stemming from the former: we would be talking, in any case, about one base text.

We know that at least one Sanskrit text circulated in Khotan, since the single folio SHT 4393 of a Sanskrit *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* comes from Khadalik in the Khotan area: it represents the mainstream version.⁴² That the Old Khotanese text as we have it was redacted under the influence of some Sanskrit recension would be made likely by the fact that certain Sanskrit words in the Khotanese text do match the Sanskrit version: the *bodhisattva* 救脫 *Jiutuo* ‘Salvation-Liberation’ of the Chinese text is *Trāṇamukta* in both Sanskrit and Khotanese; the protective 鬼神 *guishen* ‘ghostly deities’ of the *Consecration Sūtra* are likewise *yakṣas* in both Sanskrit and Khotanese. Once again, I will ask the reader to bear in mind this interesting position of the Khotanese text, straddled between India and China. For the moment, an intriguing fact to remark here is that apparently even when at least one Sanskrit recension was available in Khotan, the Khotanese apparently never took steps to completely obliterate their old text based on the Chinese.

The situation in China was not different: in some places where Xuanzang and Yijing deviate from the mainstream version, they are simply quoting or paraphrasing from the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*, and this is, I believe, of great significance. Let one example suffice here. One passage quoted above enumerates the possible transgressions that the Master of Medicine shall prevent his devotees from incurring: 若人為惡作諸非法、無孝順心、造作五逆、破滅三寶、無君臣法 . . . “If there is a person who for the sake of evil does what is unlawful, who does not possess a heart with filial piety, who commits the five transgressions, who harms the three jewels, who does not [abide by] the law of ruler and subject . . .” (T1331.535c.23–24). This passage is unique to the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*, not matched by anything in the mainstream version as represented in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, and yet it has been inserted in the translations of Xuanzang and Yijing: the former retouches the same content to fit a more terse, literary idiom (T450.408a.19–20) whereas Yijing is happy to copy Xuanzang verbatim (T451.416b.5–6). Subsequent Chinese translations of an Indic text are often revisions of earlier translations rather than completely new renderings, but the most interesting fact here is that even if those two famous monk-scholars probably had access to a Sanskrit text, they decided to retain material from the old “apocryphal” Chinese version. Our assumption that for the Chinese Buddhists any text coming from the west had greater authoritativeness than those suspected of a Chinese origin must be perhaps revisited, as also our vision of the two famous pilgrims as “going to the source” to find the true picture of Buddhism in its Indian homeland. Many of the points in which Xuanzang and Yijing deviate from the mainstream version are in fact passages in which they have interpolated text from the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*, and unless both of these great scholars were unaware or dismissive of Huiju and Sengyou’s denunciation of this text as a composition of at least partial indigenous Chinese origin and genuinely considered it to be an old alternative translation of the *sūtra*, what they

41. Pelliot khotanais 428 FM 25, 1 v2 has both *anilā* and *sanilā*, but IOL Khot 112/6 b2 has *manilā*. Interestingly, the name Manila is widely attested in all the Chinese versions except 玄奘 Xuanzang’s (T450), and yet is not in the Sanskrit. The Tibetan *gnas bcas* ‘stay, abide’ (~Skt. *√mand* ‘stand still?’)+‘possessed with’ might also be a fanciful rendering of Manila (Emmerick 1985: 230).

42. Wille 1996: 396–97, which corresponds to §10 in Schopen’s edition.

did was, in fact, to emend the mainstream version with material extracted from a suspected apocryphon. It seems that this text addressed the concerns of Chinese Buddhists so adeptly that neither of these two illustrious translators was willing to forego the passages that they did not find in the conjectural Sanskrit versions they may have used.

4. A BUDDHIST TEXT TRAVELING AGAINST THE CURRENT?

The dependence of the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* in its entirety on the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* seems to me highly likely. As for the points in which the Khotanese text seems closer to the mainstream version than to the Chinese text, I have assumed that such points of resemblance are due to the influence of the Sanskrit text, operating according to the well-established axiom that Buddhist texts originate in India and then spread in other directions. Nevertheless, I just want to point out here that there is another way of explaining those points of contact between the Khotanese version and the Sanskrit—namely, postulating that the Sanskrit *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* was composed in Khotan, more as a revision than strictly a translation of the Khotanese text, the latter being ultimately based on the Chinese *Consecration Sūtra*.⁴³ Nothing precludes this possibility, and in fact some elements might lend support to it. While the *Consecration Sūtra* can reasonably well be dated to the mid fifth century, the earliest attestation of the Sanskrit text comes from the manuscripts from Gilgit and Bamiyan (sixth-seventh centuries); the single Sanskrit folio from Khotan, STH 4393, does not seem to be particularly early,⁴⁴ or at least certainly not earlier than the manuscripts from east of the Pamirs; the dates of Śāntideva, who quotes the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* a few times in his *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, are still very uncertain, but unlikely to precede the sixth century and most likely to gravitate around the early eighth century.⁴⁵

Besides the purely chronological criterion, a number of incongruous elements in the mainstream version might also lend strength to this hypothesis:

The bodhisattva Trāṇamukta who features so prominently in all extant versions of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* has a name that defies any straightforward Sanskrit interpretation: ‘freed (by, through, for the sake of, because of?) salvation’; the Tibetan *skyabs grol* seems equally opaque. The Chinese equivalent 救脫 *jiu-tuo* (‘rescue+emancipate’) used in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* and adopted in all subsequent Chinese translations is, on the other hand, a perfectly standard word in the lively vernacular idiom that one might call “Medieval Buddhist Chinese”: it is a typical juxtaposition of synonyms with one unitary—and not strongly technical—combined meaning, namely, ‘liberate’. According to Ogihara 1964: 837 it corresponds to *pratimokṣana* ‘emancipation’ in the Chinese translation of the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*. Trāṇamukta as a Sanskrit back-translation of 救脫 *jiutuo* is, I think, plausible.

In Schopen’s words (2017: n. 63), section §20 on the nine untimely deaths “[s]its oddly unintegrated with rest of the text” as “Bhaiṣajyaguru’s connection with these untimely deaths is not indicated.” The description of these nine modes of untimely death in the mainstream

43. Fang (2014) has argued, on the basis of other considerations, that the cult of the Master of Medicine *Bhaiṣajyaguru* (in itself a very odd Sanskrit name) originated in China, from where it spread to India and was then reimported through the Sanskrit recensions. He points out the interesting fact that the title 藥師 *yaoshi* ‘master of medicine’ means only ‘physician’ in early Chinese Buddhist sources, and that the title appears as the name of a buddha for the very first time in the *Consecration Sūtra*.

44. SHT XI 4393. It belongs to the late and specifically Khotanese Schrifttypus VII in Sander’s 1968 paleographical typology of Tarim Basin scripts. According to the typologies laid out in Sander 2005, it should be South Turkestan Brāhmī, eighth-ninth centuries.

45. See Todd (2013: §3.2), who reviews the dates proposed for Śāntideva so far.

version is a true non sequitur, as it comes as an answer to Ānanda's question as to how "a lifespan that is coming to a close can be increased again" (*katham* [. . .] *parikṣiṅāyuh punar eva vivardhate?*). The twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* offers a more logical sequence: Ānanda asks how can life be prolonged and Trāṇamukta quotes the Buddha recommending to "make banners and parasols to restore merit" (造幡蓋令其修福, 535b.28–29).⁴⁶ After this, Trāṇamukta mentions the story of a novice who prolonged his life by saving an ant.⁴⁷ Only then does Ānanda ask about the taxonomy of "misfortunes" (橫 *heng*), to which Trāṇamukta replies with the ninefold list. Then follows Trāṇamukta's impromptu description of the disease called "numbing jaundice" (*weihuang* 痿黃) during whose course Yama summons the soul of the unconscious moribund and carries out an anticipated trial. The ritual described afterwards has the effect that the soul "in this life and the next does not run into danger and calamity" (今世、後世不遭厄難, 536a.6).

While the quest for longevity is a constant through Chinese religious traditions, it seems a less emphasized pursuit in India: the cult of Amitāyus/Amitābha ('immeasurable lifespan'/'immeasurable light') is only marginally attested there, while in China it went on to become highly prominent. Ānanda's Sanskrit question as to how "a lifespan that is coming to a close can be increased again" (*katham* [. . .] *parikṣiṅāyuh punar eva vivardhate?*) is, again, extraordinary in an Indian context, but the question that he asks in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* 命可續也 "Can lifespan be prolonged?" resonates well with prominent concerns in traditional Chinese religious discourse.

The apparent mention of a *bodhisattva* system of training (*bodhisattvasaṃvaram* [. . .] *śikṣāpādānām*) in section §15, listed together with the rules of training of laysisters, lay-brothers, and monastics, seems to be more at home in China, where the practice of ritually taking the "*bodhisattva* vows" is old,⁴⁸ popular, and still alive today, than in India. Unlike all other versions—and the Khotanese is not extant for this passage—the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* does not give a specific number of "bodhisattva precepts."⁴⁹

According to Strickmann (1990: 99), one of the main targets of criticism in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* is the traditional blood sacrifice in honor of the ancestors. The mention in the Sanskrit recensions of people who "conjure one by one the demons⁵⁰ in cemeteries" and "deprive of life living animals" (tr. Schopen 2017: §10) (*śmaśāneṣu pṛthakpṛthagbhūtānām āvāhayanti tiryagyonigatānām prāṇinām jīvitād vyavaropayanti*, Schopen 1978: 49) is, again, extraordinary in an Indian setting.⁵¹ What the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* has in the passage that loosely corresponds to the former sounds

46. A similar clause is present, however, in 玄奘 Xuanzang's text (T450.408a.1–2), 義淨 Yijing's (T451.416a.16–18), and in the Tibetan *Saptatathāgata* text (Derge, Rgyud, Da, 268b.7).

47. See a parallel to this story in the narrative collection *Zabaozangjing* 雜寶藏經, allegedly translated in the fifth century by the team of *Kīmkārya (T203.468c.26–469a.5, with French translation in Chavannes 1910: iii 41).

48. The 梵網經 *Fanwang jing* or "Brahma-net Sūtra" contains the classical East Asian description of the "bodhisattva vows." The "Brahma-net Sūtra" was probably composed in the mid fifth century and probably—like the *Consecration Sūtra*—in the Jiangnan region of southern China (Groner 1990: 252–54).

49. T1331.534b.6.

50. I would remark here that *bhūta*, rendered by Schopen as 'demons', is etymologically one 'who has been', that the Sanskrit term when used nominally can mean '(existing) being' as much as 'ghost', and that *bhūta* as a loanword in modern Indo-Aryan languages took on exclusively the second meaning. *Bhūta* in the Skt. text seems to match closely the Chinese *shenming* 神明 'souls of the dead', on which see note 52 below.

51. The elements of this vignette—blood sacrifice and ghost-summoning—seem to me unlikely to reference the Vedic tradition of animal sacrifice; they might be taken, though, to display some affinities with the imaginary associated with medieval tantric traditions. However, the earliest caricatures of *vetāla*-controlling, blood-sacrificing *siddhas* seem to be much later (i.e., not earlier than the seventh century) than what an Indian text underlying the fifth-century *Consecration Sūtra* would have to be, on which see Davidson 2002: 175–76.

instead more decidedly like an accurate and yet polemical caricature of the traditional Chinese ancestral blood sacrifice: 殺猪、狗、牛、羊種種眾生，解奏神明，呼諸邪妖魍魎鬼神請乞福祚 (535c.13–15) “They slaughter pigs, dogs, cows, goats, and all sorts of animals, and play music for the souls of the dead,⁵² invoking evil goblins, phantoms, and ghostly deities to ask them for good fortune.”⁵³

Although none of the facts that I list above could be used to prove conclusively that the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* is ultimately the source of the Sanskrit *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*, I believe that their cumulative force gives to this hypothesis at least the status of a possibility. The case of a Sanskrit Buddhist text translated from another non-Indic language is not unheard of: Nattier (1992) persuasively argued that the Sanskrit *Heart Sūtra* might derive from the Chinese text. For some terms one could even posit a sequence of development in three stages: what in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* are simply “misfortunes” (*heng* 橫) are a series of not further specified “untimely (circumstances)” (*abāḍa*) in the Khotanese text (water, fire, disease); only the mainstream version has terms corresponding to “untimely death” (*akālamaraṇa, dus ma yin par 'chi ba*). From Khotan the Sanskrit text would have traveled to neighboring Gilgit and Bamiyan, the only places in the Indian sphere of influence where the text is certainly attested with some degree of abundance. There is only one other attestation of the Master of Medicine elsewhere in the Indian world: as we saw, Śāntideva quotes from the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* in his *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, and one of those quotations does not match anything found in the mainstream version or in the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*.⁵⁴

Stepping back onto more certain ground, Śāntideva’s otherwise unknown version of the text serves to illustrate what Schopen has termed “the absence of an Urtext.”⁵⁵ Although Schopen refers mostly to the Sanskrit recensions of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* in Gilgit, the versions in other languages are singularly well suited to show a similar phenomenon. As we have seen, there are several Chinese versions and also several Khotanese ones, with significant differences in content among them; even the Sanskrit text, where the main points and sequence of events are largely homogeneous, involves several separate recensions that sometimes in the detail do actually convey different messages.

5. LARGER IMPLICATIONS: THE ROLE OF CHINESE HEGEMONY IN THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM IN SERINDIA

At this point I would like to discuss some of the implications of the derivation of the Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* from the *Consecration Sūtra*. The first is that it directly contradicts some of the conclusions of the field of Khotanese studies. Emmerick (1992: 17) says that “[. . .] most of the Khotanese translations were made directly from Sanskrit originals”

52. That this is the meaning of the vague term *shenming* 神明 in the *Consecration Sūtra* is made explicit by the following passage: 不信人死神明更生 (T1331.534b.24) “Those people who do not believe, when they die [their] soul is born again.”

53. 1) Kleeman (1994) provides a survey of blood sacrifice (including the ancestral blood sacrifice) in traditional China. On p. 204 he provides a passage from a fifth-century Daoist text that criticizes blood sacrifice and portrays it in terms remarkably similar to those of the passage from the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra*.

2) This is another instance of a passage of the *Consecration Sūtra* inserted almost verbatim in Xuanzang and Yijing’s translation (T450.408a.7–9; T451.416a.23–24) in open opposition to the extant Sanskrit text. Once again, I believe we are dealing with a passage that both translators felt was too appropriate to their agenda to let it go, despite its absence from the Sanskrit recensions.

54. Schopen 2009: 195.

55. Schopen 2009.

and, using nearly the same words, Maggi (2009: 343) that “most Khotanese Buddhist texts were translated from Sanskrit”; Skjærvø (1999 [2012]: 108 n. 7) states forcefully: “although the possibility of any Chinese influence on early Khotanese Buddhism has not yet been investigated, the earliest texts, which are principally Mahāyāna sūtras [. . .] are close translations of Sanskrit originals.”

Whether this translation from the Chinese into Khotanese is an isolated case or not remains to be determined and provides an exciting direction of future research. The fact is that several Khotanese texts do not match closely the received Sanskrit versions. The corpus of Old Khotanese Buddhist texts—the “early texts” mentioned above—as described in Skjærvø 1999 [2012]: 118–19 contains the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* and six other texts (*Anantamukhanirhāradhāraṇī*, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, *Samghāṭa*, *Śūraṅgamasamādhi*, *Suvarṇabhāsottama*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*). Within such a small corpus, one single intruder—one text not translated from Sanskrit—weighs heavily and suggests less uniformity than what has been previously assumed.

Among the remaining six translated texts, except for the *Samghāṭa* all had Chinese translations by the fifth century, often even much earlier, and sometimes more than one: the *Anantamukhanirharadhāraṇī* totals no less than eight Chinese translations through its career. It seems also that at an early date the reading preferences of Khotanese Buddhists had more in common with China than with India: if we trust the famous account according to which the Chinese monk 朱士行 Zhu Shixing brought from Khotan in the mid third century a manuscript of a Sanskrit “Perfection of Wisdom” (*prajñāpāramitā*) text, we are dealing here with a genre that was popular in China during that very time period but that perhaps did not achieve a comparable popularity in India until much, much later (see Schopen 2000: 3–4).

Although the following statement might be taken as an endorsement of modern-day national agendas which I personally oppose, the historical evidence points in one direction: China has been through the historical era the earliest, longest, and most sustained external political presence in the Tarim Basin in spite of fluctuations in the intensity of such influence. The very first written records of the area might be some of the Chinese documents from Niya (early first century AD),⁵⁶ which long predate the corpus of Gāndhārī documents from the same site (mid third to early fourth century AD), and even within the latter corpus one should bear in mind that, as Brough (1965: 601) long ago showed, the title *jitumgha* that the kings of Shan-shan don from the late third century onwards is nothing but the modest Chinese title **zījun* 侍中 ‘palace attendant’, imposed on their tributaries by the Western Jin 西晉 emperors. As for Khotan, its written record begins with the mid first-century AD Gāndhārī-Chinese legends on the coins of kings Gurgamoya and Panadosana.

This is not to say, of course, that there have not been gaps, often significant ones: one of those gaps might in fact underlie the whole cultural makeup of the region throughout the first millennium of the Common Era.

On whether the Kuṣāṇas did effectively exercise at any point political dominion on the Tarim Basin there is still much disagreement.⁵⁷ If they did, though, it cannot have been for long—a few decades in the early second century—but the influence of the culture of Gandhāra, from which various Iranian dynasties governed in the first half of the millennium, is a distinctive feature of the cultural landscape of the Tarim Basin. Gāndhārī Prakrit had official status throughout the Tarim Basin for several centuries: in Khotan from at least the first century, as would follow from the “Sino-Kharoṣṭhī” (i.e., Chinese-Gāndhārī) coin legends,

56. The implicit dating to the Jin period in Chavannes 1913 is outdated: Hansen (2017: 36) surveys and summarizes the more recent research that dates some of the documents to at least the Xin dynasty (9–23 AD).

57. For a sample of the “Kuṣāṇa dominion” hypothesis, see Hitch 2009; for a sample of the opposite camp, see Hansen 2017: 52–53.

and at least up to the third, when in all likelihood document KI661 was written in Gāndhārī in Khotan; until as late as the fifth-sixth centuries for Kucha, where scribes still issued documents with bilingual legends in the indigenous Tocharian language and what undoubtedly was by then a purely ceremonial Gāndhārī (Ching 2013: 88).⁵⁸ It would be difficult to understand how an area in which Chinese presence had been so strong from early times would in such short time and so eagerly embrace and adopt a foreign culture unless it was a matter of choice of political allegiance. Tremblay (2007) in fact suggested that “Buddhism, and more generally the Indian culture, was in the Tarim Basin and in Sogdiana but one of the features of the adoption of a Bactrian⁵⁹ political influence” (p. 115).

By the end of the sixth century, a long process of urban decay in Gangetic India was complete. The demise of the cities was also accompanied by the demise of the powerful mercantile class that had cemented the international prestige of Indian culture in continental Asia. In the Northwest the streak of Iranian dynasties that ruled over Gandhāra and acted as promoters of its culture in Central Asia came to a stop with the fall of the Hephthalite empire around 560. China, on the other hand, was on the rise: the successful experiment at conquest and centralization carried out by the Turkic invaders, the Northern Wei 北魏 (386–584 AD), laid the foundation for the unification of China under the Sui 隋 (581–618) and the consolidation of this unification under the Tang 唐 (618–907).

Tremblay (2007: 116) postulates that from the sixth century onwards, Buddhism in the Tarim Basin was a sign of Chinese political influence, just as before then it had been one of “Bactrian” allegiances. The critical juncture around the middle of the first millennium was also the time period when the official use of Gāndhārī was discontinued and the peoples of the Tarim Basin started to write their own languages and to translate Buddhist texts into them, while carefully avoiding the adoption of Chinese literacy. Chinese Buddhist texts start, however, to enter the codicological landscape of the area surely but certainly around this time: from the Turfan area there is a manuscript of the 諸佛要集經 *Zhu fo yao ji jing* (T810) whose colophon dates it to the year 296 AD (Tsui 2010: 412); the first dated Chinese Buddhist fragment from Kucha—from Kumārajīva’s *Lotus Sūtra*—is from 411 AD (Kagawa 1915: ii 4–5). From then on Chinese Buddhist manuscripts become more and more numerous in the Tarim Basin, to the point of becoming, as re-used paper, the support for numerous texts in many other languages at Dunhuang. As Nattier (1990: 211–12) succinctly puts it, “we should begin to consider China not merely as the recipient of Buddhist traditions from the Western Regions, but also as the source of certain elements of Central Asian Buddhism.”

From the sixth century China might have been the main promoter of Buddhism in Asia, even though the exotic Indian aura of the religion seems to have still been felt to be an integral aspect of it. The fact that the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* seems to have been translated from Chinese in Khotan and clothed in an Indian garb suggests that at the very least the Khotanese, in a seminal era of their literary culture, did not draw their Buddhism exclusively from India, and, as I pointed out before, this last statement could potentially be extended to the culturally Indian Gilgit and Bamiyan. The Sogdian and Old Uighur Buddhist corpora, later than the Khotanese, are to a large extent derivative from Chinese sources, and maybe the Khotanese tradition is more akin to these than previously thought.

58. Ching (2013) argues convincingly for an earlier date than the one previously assumed (see, for example, Salomon 1998: 47). The Gāndhārī of these bilingual tablets is so heavily laden with Tocharian words that I would hesitate to even call it Gāndhārī in full right: by then (fifth-sixth centuries) Gāndhārī must have become an exclusively ceremonial legal relic, like the Latin in our university diplomas or, even more fittingly, the use of progressively skeletal French in English courts of law from the Norman conquest to the seventeenth century.

59. Tremblay most probably means by “Bactrian” the dynasties of Iranian origin that governed from Gandhāra, on which see the following discussion.

The exuberantly Indian aspect of the pre-Islamic cultures of the Tarim Basin in the second half of the first millennium—Stein’s “Serindia”—might reveal an attempt to keep their autonomy and cultural identity in the face of Chinese power, a way of acknowledging Chinese influence by rejection, more than of direct influence from the further away and progressively inaccessible Indian world by that point. Chinese cultural influence, one of whose most visible aspects was Chinese Buddhism, must have had to come to a compromise in this area by undergoing some assimilation, acquiring an Indian air: the American milkshake is nowadays still a *milkshake* in France, but in vibrantly North American and yet more-French-than-France-itself Québec, it is, with much effort and much pride, a *lait frappé*.

I have presented here what I believe is compelling evidence to argue that the Old Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* was translated from the Chinese *Consecration Sūtra* and not from an Indic source; I have also attempted to account for the odd pivotal position of the Khotanese text by suggesting the possibility that a seminal Sanskrit version (or versions) of the *sūtra* may have been composed in Khotan. The implications of these points—one a strong possibility, the other an informed conjecture—will be, I hope, a matter of debate: what they suggest to me is a stronger role for China as an early cultural model for Serindia, and perhaps for Buddhist Asia, than I had myself previously assumed.

APPENDIX: PARALLEL PASSAGES BETWEEN THE TWELFTH FASCICLE OF THE
CONSECRATION SŪTRA AND THE KHOTANESE *BHAIṢAJYAGURU-SŪTRA* FRAGMENTS

The numbers with section signs (§) reference the section headings in Schopen 1978 and Schopen 2017; the items listed under the headings are meant to act as illustrative keywords to the lexical correspondences between the twelfth fascicle of the *Consecration Sūtra* and the Khotanese tradition. I have selected these keywords to highlight the unique features shared by both to the exclusion of all other extant versions.

❖ IOL Khot 17/3=532c.11–21=§5.3–7

- *saṃtsarīgyau pyauryau* “from saṃsāric clouds” = 生死之雲 “cloud(s) of birth and death”
- *gūchiñi jāniñi rrimāñi* “I will emancipate, remove impurities” = 得清涼解除垢穢 “I will cleanse and release from defilements”
- *karīttetu* “energy” = 大精進 “great strength”
- *vasuto drjsā[re]* “they will keep [. . .] pure” = 淨持戒 “[they will] purely uphold the precepts”

❖ IOL Khot 149/2+IOL Khot 173+Pelliot khotanais 428 FM 25, 1 (overlapping text)

See the discussion above.

❖ Or.6402B/1.3 (G7) b3–5 from *sirave*=533b.18–19=§9

- *aysmūna suhā* “in [their] mind [there is] joy” = 當一心歡喜 “[they] will wholeheartedly rejoice”
- *gaurava* “respect” = 謙敬 “respect”
- *byehīndā x x bi[ś]yo [du]khy[au] haysgamatyau jsa* “they obtain [. . .] from sufferings and distresses” = 得解脫眾苦之患 “[they will] obtain deliverance from the afflictions of sufferings”
- *oṣku byehīdī sīra* “they always [will] obtain happiness” = 長得歡樂 “[they will] for long obtain happiness”

- ❖ IOL Khot 22/6=522b.20–26=§10
 - *būta* “ghosts” = 鬼神 “ghostly deities”
 - *[u]rmaysde hauda rākhyā* “the sun, the Big Dipper” = 日、月之神, 南斗北辰諸鬼神 “the deities of sun and moon, the ghostly deities of the Southern Dipper and the Pole Star”
- ❖ IOL Khot 147/3=533b.3–14=§17–18
 - *kū jsa sarbātā urmaysd[e]* “where the sun rises” = 東方 “in the east”⁶⁰
 - *cu ttā cāro palā pabanā jīvātā* “how do those lamps, banners [. . .] continuation of life?” = 命可續也 “Can lifespan be prolonged?”
 - *ciro padajsāna hauda parrama parramā śye śye hauda palo* “lamps should be burnt, seven *parramas*,⁶¹ of each *parrama* seven banners (*palaa->paṭaka*)” = 神幡五色四十九尺, 燈亦復爾, 七層之燈一層七燈 “five-colored sacred banners, and also likewise lamps, lamps in seven stories, each story with seven lamps”
- ❖ Or.6402B/1.6.6 (VI.6)=536a.23–27=§22
 - *dārañā* “*dhāraṇī*” = 呪 “incantation”⁶²
- ❖ IOL Khot 8/6=535c.6–11=§20⁶³
 - *dajsīndā o yi suṃjsaṇu* “they burn and [. . .] him with a needle” = 針灸 “needle and burning”(= idiomatically “acupuncture and moxibustion”)
 - *paroyse* “drowns” = 為水[. . .]漂 “is set adrift [. . .] by water”
 - *[ūśa]h[ā]rā būta kvī ttā vājāre nuhaṃjīndā* “the life-robbing ghosts (*ūśahāraa->ojohāraaka*), when they hold and restrain him [. . .]” = 邪神牽引 “evil spirits draw and drag [him]”
- ❖ IOL Khot 147/7=533a.19–26=§6–7
 - *marīṇa* [. . .] *vyāre* “[. . .] of Mara [. . .] are destroyed” = 魔家眷屬退散馳走 “the relatives and attendants of Mara are made to disband and flee away”
- ❖ Or.6402B/1.5.1 (V.1)+SI P 65.2 (two halves of same fragment)=534a.12–17=§14
 - *Mitrai* “Maitreya” = 彌勒 “Maitreya”
 - *ūca parauysdā* “he drowns in water” = 為水[. . .]所[. . .]漂者 “he is set adrift by water”

60. The reading *hauda parramā*. . . in Skjærvø 2002: 332 (IOL Khot 147/3, v4) must be corrected to *hauda parrama parramā*. I thank Dr. Chen Ruixuan for catching this important typo.

61. Bailey (1965: 35) and (1979: sub *parramāi*) takes *parrama* as a derivative of Skt. *pratimā* ‘image’, but this seems highly unlikely, since Khotanese, as Bailey himself remarks, already has a loan of Gāndhārī *paḍīma* ‘image’ in the form *pe’ma*. Bailey’s conjecture is based on the assumption that the underlying text is one of the Sanskrit versions, where *pratimā* occurs in §14. Besides a possible connection with the equally obscure *parrema* (‘ornament’?), see Bailey 1979 s.v.) I feel unable to formulate a conjecture regarding the meaning of this word. If it translates the Chinese 層 *ceng*, it should mean ‘story, stage, level’.

62. *Zhou* 呪 is one of the possible translations of Skt. *dhāraṇī*, although it has also and perhaps more often been deployed to render the related terms *mantra* and *vidyā*. I thank one of the reviewers for this important clarification.

63. A and B in Skjærvø 2002: 178 must be inverted. The sequence *ni ro skā sa te* in b3 remains unclear, but Bailey’s reading of it as a sandhi form of *nīra* ‘water’ and a hypothetical hapax *uskāsate* ‘rises’ (see Bailey 1979: sub *-skāsate*) is entirely based on an attempt to read the Khotanese text on the basis of the Sanskrit and is in my opinion highly unlikely.

- ❖ Khotanese missing fragments 5 (Hoernle 151.15) + SI P 65.3 (overlapping text) = 533c.26–534a.9=§13–14
 - *tvaṃdanuī ts[u]ñāu sata tcīra* (Hoernle 151.15) / *tvaṃdanī tsu'ño sa tcīra* (SI P 65.3) “they should circumambulate [the image] a hundred times” = 圍繞百匝 “they go around [the image] a hundred circumambulations”
 - *ttavastrīśvā* “the heaven of the thirty-three” = 三十三天 “the heaven of the thirty-three”
- ❖ SI P 65.1=533-c.13–21=§11–13
 - *balodānu bahoysānu* “[. . .] of powerful merchants” = 於豪姓長者居士富貴家生 “[they] are born in the wealthy and distinguished houses of prominent men of means (長者居士)”
 - *dasau diśi* “in the ten directions” = 十方 “in the ten directions”

ABBREVIATIONS

KI= See Boyer et al. 1929.

T= See Takakusu and Watanabe 1924.

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