

Introduction: On the Tokharians and the Yuezhi

From the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, a great number of manuscripts in Indo-European languages were discovered in northwest China (mainly in Xinjiang and Dunhuang, Gansu). It has been revealed that the languages in which these manuscripts were written include Gāndhārī, Pahlavī, Sogdian, Parthian, Khotanese, Tumshuqese, etc. Also found were texts in another ancient Indo-European language, different from the Indo-Iranian languages listed above and written in the Brāhmī script. Two dialects of this language, A and B, have been identified.¹ Based on the colophons of *Maitrisimit*, a famous Buddhist play written in Uighur, F. W. K. Muller, E. Sieg, and W. Siegling named this ancient language “Tokharian” in their works. One of these Uighur colophons, no. 48, reads:

Nakridiš ulušta toymış Aryačintrī bodisvt kši ačari Äntkāk tilint in`... Toχri tilincä yaratmīs Il-baliqda toymış Prtanyarakšit kši ačari Toχri tilintin Türktilincä ävirmış Maitri... [si]mit nom bitig.²

W. B. Henning has translated this paragraph into English as follows:

The sacred book *Maitreya-Samiti* which the Bodhisattva *guru ācārya* Āryacandra, who was born in the country of Nagaradeśa,³ had com-

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¹ Ji Xianlin, “Tuhuoluoyu de faxian yu kaoshi ji qi zai Zhong-Yin wenhua jiaoliu zhong de zuoyong [The Discovery and Studies of Tokharian and Its Function in the Cultural Communication between China and India]”, in his *Zhong-Yin wenhua guanxi shi lunwen ji* [A Collection of Articles on the Cultural Relations between China and India]. Beijing: 1982.

² F. W. K. Müller und E. Sieg, “Maitrisimit und Tocharisch,” *SBAW* (1916), p. 414; and F.W.K. Müller, “Toχri und Kuišan (Kūšan)”, *SBAW* (1918), pp. 566ff.

³ W. B. Henning suggests that the correct transcription of N’krydyš, which was transcribed by F. W. K. Müller and others as Nagaradeśa, should be “knydyš”, equivalent to Agnideśa, the Sanskritized name for Agnean. Cf. Müller, “The Name of the Tokharian

posed⁴ in the Twry language from the Indian language, and which the *guru ācārya* Prajñarakita, who was born in Il-baliq⁵ translated from the Twry language into the Turkish language.

During the decades that followed, many scholars hotly debated the nomenclature of this language and a series of related historical, geographical and ethnological issues, and especially its relationship to the Yuezhi and Kushan peoples.⁶ Most of them hold that the Tokharian dialects A and B are actually Agnean and Kuchean.⁷ However, many questions about this theory still need to be resolved, and “Tokharian” as a useful term should not be dismissed.

The extant Tokharian documents date from the period between the sixth and the eighth centuries. However, Tokharian itself is an ancient Indo-European language belonging to the Centum branch, more closely related to Celtic, German, Italian, and Greek than to other languages.⁸ This means that an Indo-European people rather than those speaking Eastern Iranian (the Satem branch) entered modern Chinese territory at a very early time. The British scholar T. Burrow, who studied the Kharoṣṭhī documents unearthed in Niya,

Language”, *AM* 1 (1949), p. 160. The same word reads “Najie” 那竭 in the *Faxian zhuan* 法顯傳 [Biography of Faxian], and “Najieluohē 那竭羅易” in the second chapter of the *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西遊記 [The Great Tang Accounts of Travels in the Western Regions].

⁴ “Yaratmīs” means “to edit and translate”; see Ji Xianlin, “Tuhuoluowen he Huihewen ben Mile huijian ji xingzhi qianyi [A Brief Discussion of the Nature of the Tokharian and Uighur Versions of Maitreyasamiti]” *Beijing daxue xuebao* 2 (1991), p. 65. Rerikh, a Tibetologist of the former USSR, also thinks that this word corresponds to Tibetan “gtan-la ’bebs-pa”, meaning “to collate and edit [classics]”, *NAA* 6 (1963), p. 123.

⁵ F. W. K. Müller and others identify Il-baliq with Ili-baliq or Ila-baliq (near present-day Yining) of the Yuan and Ming periods. Cf. F. W. K. Müller und E. Sieg, *op cit.*, p. 416. Yet as Paul Pelliot has pointed out, this identification is debatable. Cf. P. Pelliot, “Tokharien et kouchéen”, *Journal Asiatique* 224 (1934). See also the Chinese translation of this article by Feng Chengjun in: *Tuhuoluo yu kao* [Apropos the Tokharian Language], Beijing: 1957, p. 94. J. Hamilton, on the other hand, regards “Il-baliq” as having the meaning of “capital”, probably referring to the capital of the Uighur empire, Qoco. See also his discussion of A. von Gabain’s *Maitrismit* I, in: *T’oung Pao* 46 (1958), p. 443; and Geng Shimin, “Gudai Weiwuer yu fojiao yuanshi juban *Mile huijian ji* (Hami xieben) yanjiu [A Study of the Buddhist Play Maitreyasamiti in Ancient Uighur (the Hami Manuscript)]”, *Wenshi* [History of Literature] 12 (1981), p. 215.

⁶ Wang Jingru, “Lun Tuhuoluo ji Tuhuoluo yu [On the Tokharians and Tokharian]”, *Zhongde xuezhī* 5, nos. 1–2 (1943). See also Buddha Prakash, “Thākura,” *CAJ* 3 (1957); Yu N. Rerikh, “Tokharaskaya problema [Problems Concerning the Tokharian Language]”, *NAA* 6 (1963); Huang Shengzhang, “Shi lun suowei ‘Tuhuoluo yu’ jiqi youguan de lishi dili he minzu wenti [A Preliminary Discussion on What is Called “Tokharian Language and Its Related Historical, Geographical and Ethnic Issues]”, in: *Xiyu shi luncong* [Anthology on the History of the Western Regions], Vol. 2, Urumqi, 1985.

⁷ Cf. Geng Shimin and Zhang Guangda, “Suolimi kao [A Study on Sulmi/Solmi]”, *Lishi yanjiu* [Historical Studies] 2 (1980), p. 156. Nevertheless, some scholars still hold that the name “Tokharian” is probably correct. See W. Thomas, “Zu skt. tokharika und seiner Entsprechung im Tokharischen”, *Kuhns Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 95:1 (1981).

⁸ D. Q. Adams, “The Position of Tokharian among the Other Indo-European Languages”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984).

Loulan and Shanshan, pointed out long ago that many grammatical phenomena and the vocabulary of Niya vernacular were close to Tokharian.⁹ Therefore, the residents of the Shanshan state were speaking a Tokharian language which was somewhat different from the later Agnean and Kushan. That is to say, there existed a third Tokharian dialect, and the Tokharian entry into the Tarim Basin can be traced back to the second and third centuries.

Furthermore, there have been some very important archaeological discoveries in Xinjiang in recent years which may provide new clues to the origin of the Tokharians. For example, in 1979 the Institute of Archaeology at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Science excavated forty-two ancient tombs in the lower Kongque River valley, seventy kilometers west of the presently dry Lake Lop-nor. These tombs, which constitute an important site of the Gumugou Culture, date from the Bronze Age, approximately 3000 years ago. The anthropometric studies of the human skulls collected from these tombs have shown that the Gumugou people possessed primitive Caucasoid features and that their physical characteristics had certain similarities to the Nordic or northern European type.¹⁰ Moreover, a large number of mummies has recently been found in Xinjiang. These mummies, of which the oldest date from 4000 BC, also show Caucasoid features. May we surmise from these facts that, as early as three or four thousand years ago, the Caucasian residents of the Tarim Basin were already in certain ways related to the Tokharian people who came later?

The Yuezhi 月支 people recorded in the Chinese histories might be related to the Tokharians. Since the 1970s several scholars have proposed that the Yuezhi were a branch of the Tokharians. Detailed arguments can be found in articles by B. Henning, A. K. Narain, Lin Meicun 林梅村, and myself.¹¹

⁹ T. Burrow, “Tokharian Elements in Kharoṣṭhī Documents”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1935).

¹⁰ Han Kangxin, “Xinjiang Kongquehe Gumugou mudi rengu yanjiu [A Study of the Human Bones from the Gumugou Cemetery in the Kongque River Valley, Xinjiang]”, *Kaogu xuebao* 3 (1986); “Xinjiang Kongquehe Gumugou muzang rengu de renleixue tezhen [The Anthropological Characteristics of the Human Bones of the Gumugou Cemetery in the Kongque Valley, Xinjiang]”, in: *Zhongguo kaoguxue yanjiu: Xia Nai xiansheng kaogu wushi nian jinian lunwen ji* [Research on Chinese Archaeology—Articles Collected on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Mr. Xia Nai’s Archaeological Studies], Beijing, 1986. The tombs are actually located in the sandy hills of the second plateau above the northern bank of the river.

¹¹ Cf. W. B. Henning, “The First Indo-Europeans in History,” in *Society and History: Essays in Honour of Karl August Wittfogel*, ed. by G. L. Ulman. The Hague, 1978; A. K. Narain, “On the ‘First’ Indo-Europeans”, in: *The Tokharian-Yuezhi and Their Chinese Homeland: Papers on Inner Asia* 2. Bloomington: 1987; Idem, “Indo-Europeans in Inner Asia”, in: *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. by D. Sinor. Cambridge: 1990; Lin Meicun, “Kaituo sichou zhi lu de xianqu—Tuhuoluo ren [The Pioneers on the Silk Road—the Tokharians]”, *Wemvu* 1 (1989); and Xu Wenkan, “Cong yijian Poluomi zi boshu tan woguo gudai de Yin-Ouyu he Yin-Ouren [Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans in Ancient China: From the Investigation of a Manuscript in Brāhmī Script]”, in: *Ji Xiatalin jiaoshou bashi huadan jinian lunwen ji* [Articles Collected on the Occasion of Professor Ji

It is commonly accepted that the “Yuzhi” 禺知 people mentioned in the *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 [Biography of Mu, the Son of the Heaven], the “Yuzhi” 禺氏 people in the “Wanghui” 王會 chapter on *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書, as well as in the “Guoxu” 國畜, “Kuidu” 揆度, “Qingzhong jia” 輕重甲, and “Qingzhong yi” 輕重乙 chapters of *Guanzi* 管子 [Book of Guanzi], the “Yuezhi” people in the “Yiyi chaoxian” chapter of *Yi Zhou shu*, and the “Niuzhi” 牛氏 people in the “Dishu” 地數 chapter of *Guanzi*, are all the same as the Yuezhi people. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, the Yuezhi were one of the three major ethnic groups (the other two were the Eastern Hu and Xiongnu) to the north of China, living between Dunhuang and the Qilian Mountains, “residing wherever there were water and grass”. So they must have been active in the vast area from the Tarim Basin to the Ordos Grassland. The power of the Yuezhi was weakened after they were defeated by the Modu Shanyu of the Xiongnu. After their king was killed by another Xiongnu leader, Laoshang, the Yuezhi were divided into two groups, one called Greater Yuezhi and another called Lesser Yuezhi. The former moved westwards, conquered Bactria, and established a kingdom in south Central Asia, leaving a remarkable chapter in world history.

It is after the westward migration of the Tokharian-Yuezhi people that the term “Tokharian” began to appear in the documents of various languages. According to Strabo’s *Geography* (xi. 8.2), the four nomadic peoples who took Bactria from the Greeks were the Asii, Gasiani, Tochari, and Sacarauli. Trogus, on the other hand, records that “the Scythian tribes, the Saraucae and Asiani, conquered Bactria and Sogdiana”, and that “the Asiani [became] the kings of the Tochari, and the Saraucae were destroyed”. We believe that one or a few of the four peoples who were mentioned in the Greek sources as having conquered Bactria must have been the Yuezhi. The Yuezhi was a tribal federation dominated by the Tokharians. Yet in the course of their westward migration, they also absorbed various Eastern-Iranian speaking Śaka tribes.¹² According to “Xiyu zhuan” 西域傳 [Account of the Western Regions] in both the *Han shu* 漢書 [History of the Han Dynasty] and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 [History of the Later Han Dynasty], the Greater Yuezhi were later broken into “five divisions under five *xihou* 翕侯 leaders”, of which the Kushan division was the most powerful. In the early first century, the Kushan *xihou* Kujula Kadphises unified the five divisions, broke away from the control of the Hellenized Bactrian dynasty, and established the Kushan Empire.

All the different Tokharian groups mentioned above were influential in the transmission of Buddhism across Central Asia to China. In the following section I will explore this point, relying principally on Chinese sources.

Xianlin’s Eightieth Birthday], ed. Li Zheng *et al.* Nanchang, 1991.

¹² A. N. Zelinsky and Y. G. Rychkov point out that the physical attributes of the early Kushans are similar to that of the Yuezhi, belonging to “north-Europoids” which were distributed from Europe to Sayano-Altai during ancient times; see *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, Calcutta, 1970, p. 179.

1. The Tokharians, the Yuezhi and the Transmission of Buddhism to China

Buddhism spread to northwest India and its neighbouring countries very early. According to the Aśokan inscriptions, Indian envoys reached Parthia, Bactria, Egypt, and Greece. We know for sure that as early as the mid-third century BC, Buddhism flourished in Qandahar in southern Afghanistan. In the early second century BC, the Bactrians, who were ruled by the Greeks, invaded northwestern India, but later Bactria itself became divided. Menander (or Menandros, rendered as Milinda in Pāli), the king of the Hellenistic city state whose centre was Sāgala (modern Siālkoṭ in Pakistan), is well known for his discourse with Nāgasena, a prestigious monk from Jibin (present-day Peshawar, Pakistan), and was allegedly converted to Buddhism. This discourse was recorded and compiled into the *Milindapañhā* in Pāli and translated into Chinese as the *Naxian biqiu jing* 那先比丘經 [*Sūtra* of Bhikṣu Nāgasena].¹³ After the Tokharians, namely the Yuezhi, conquered Bactria in the middle of the second century during their westward migration, they inherited Buddhism, which had already taken root there.

At the latest the Greater Yuezhi had converted to Buddhism by the first century BC. The country expanded rapidly after Kujula Kadphises established the Kushan Dynasty, and within one hundred years the Yuezhi had invaded Parthia, taken Gaofu (today's Kabul in Afghanistan), and destroyed Puda (today's Gwadar in Pakistan) and Kashmir. From the first century AD, the famous Gandharan art began to appear. In the early second century, the king of the Kushans, Vima Kadphises, known in the Chinese sources as Yan'gao-zhen 閻膏珍, further expanded the country by occupying the Indus River region in Pakistan. Then the Kadphises royal house was replaced by the -ska family. The founder of this new royal house was the historically renowned Kaniška.¹⁴

The exact date of Kaniška's accession to the Kushan throne has not been confirmed, and the entire chronology of the Kushan empire has also been the subject of heated controversy.¹⁵ According to our present understanding,

¹³ T. 1670.32.

¹⁴ I. V. V. Ivanov has studied the suffix of the name of this Kushan king, and regarded it as being derived from Kuchean. Cf. Ivanov, "Yazykovyue dannye o proiskhozhdenii Kushanskoi dinastii i Tokharskaya problema", *NAA* (1967), p. 3. H. W. Bailey and W. B. Henning regard the name "Kaniška" as consisting of the combination of the root *kan* and the suffix *-iška* (*-iška*), which makes it term of praise meaning "the most youthful and energetic". This name could also have been a Bactrian term: **kaništaka* > **kaništka* > *kaniška*. Refer to J. Brough, "Nugae Indo-Sericae", in: W. B. *Henning Memorial Volume*, ed. M. Boyce and I. Gershevitch, London, 1970, pp. 85–6.

¹⁵ These issues were the primary topic of two international conferences held in London in 1913 and 1960, and they were also discussed during the conference on Kushan civilization, which was held in Dushanbe in 1968. However, no consensus on the matter has so far been reached. Cf. Buddha Bashmi Mani, *The Kushan Civilization: Studies in Urban Develop-*

Kaniška's accession probably occurred sometime between AD 78 and 144, with the year AD 128 being the most likely specific date. Since Kaniška employed a policy of supporting and sponsoring various religions, Buddhism was able to develop rapidly. The famous Fourth Council of Buddhism (actually a conference of the Sarvāstivāda school) was summoned during Kaniška's reign. He built Buddhist temples and *stūpas* throughout the kingdom. The Jaurya (Queli 雀離) Stūpa, which he built at his capital Puruṣapura (today's Peshawar), was reportedly seen by the Northern Wei emissary Song Yun 宋雲 and a pilgrim Huisheng 惠生 who passed by here on their way to India in search of Buddhist scriptures in the early sixth century.¹⁶ Research has shown that Queli and Zhaohuli 昭估釐,¹⁷ the name of another Buddhist temple in Kucha reported by Xuanzang 玄奘 in the first chapter of his *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 [Accounts of the Western Regions], must be the same Tokharian word.¹⁸

The most important Kushan Buddhist site excavated in former Soviet Central Asia is Kara-tepe in ancient Termez. The archaeological find include stone statues, sculptures, Kushan coins, and inscriptions in the Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī scripts. There are also inscriptions in local Bactrian, written in a cursive style of Greek script.¹⁹

Zhang Qian's 張騫 journey to the Western Regions during the Western Han period marked the official opening of the Silk Road, which connected inland China with Central Asia. It has long been a hotly debated issue when Buddhism was transmitted from India to China. Nevertheless, one thing is known for sure: the Tokharian-Yuezhi people played a key role in this transmission. In a passage from Yu Huan's 魚豢 *Weilue* 魏略 [A Brief History of the Wei] quoted by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 in his commentary to the "Dong Yi zhuan 藥夷傳" [Account of the Eastern Aliens] chapter in the *Weizhi* 魏志 [History of the Wei] on the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 [History of the Three Kingdoms], there is a clear record:

ments and Material Culture, Delhi, 1987, pp. 2–13.

¹⁶ *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 [Accounts of Buddhist Temples in Luoyang], chapter 5, T. 2092.51. See also W. J. F. Jenner, *Memoires of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the Lost Capital (493–534)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 269–71.

¹⁷ Also referred to as "Queli da qingjing 雀離大清淨", in the *Shishi xiyu ji* [Account of Buddhist Western Regions], as cited in *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 [Commentary on the Book of Water], and as "Queli da si 雀離大寺" in the "Biography of Kumārajīva" as found in the second chapter of 高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks], T. 2059.50.

¹⁸ In the context of Ban's expedition to Karashar, "Ban Yong zhuan 班勇傳 [Biography of Ban Yong]" in: *Hou Hanshu*, the text refers to a place called "Jueli guan 爵離關" (the Jueli Pass), which is another transcription of this word. This question has been discussed in P. Pelliot, "Tokharien et Koutchéen"; P. Boodberg, "Two Notes on the History of the Chinese Frontier", H//4S 1 (1936), pp. 290–1; E. Pulleyblank, "An Interpretation of the Vowel System of Old Chinese and Written Burmese", *AM* 10 (1963), pp. 206–7.

¹⁹ B. Ya. Stavisky, "Kara Tepe in Old Termez: A Buddhist Religious Center of the Kushan Period on the Bank of the Oxus", in *From Hecataeus to Al-Huwārizmī: Bactrian, Pahlavi, Sogdian, Persian, Sanskrit, Syriac, Arabic, Chinese, Greek and Latin Sources for the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, ed. J. Harmatta. Budapest, 1984.

In the first year of the Yuanshou Reign of the Han Emperor Aidi 哀帝, Jing Lu 景盧, a student at the Grand Academy, received the dictation of the *Futu jing* 浮屠經 from Yicun, an envoy sent to China by the king of the Greater Yuezhi. It was he who had re-established [Buddhism in China]. All the terms such as *pusai* 蒲塞, *sangmen*, 桑門, *bowen*, 佰聞, *shuwen* 疏問, *boshuxian* 白疏聞, *biqu* 比丘, and *chenmen* 晨門 appearing in this *sūtra*, are titles of [the Buddha's] disciples.

This event is also reported in the following works; Liu Xiaobiao's 劉孝標 commentary to the "Wenxue 文學 [Literature]" chapter of *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 [New Words and Sayings of the World], "Shi Lao zhi 釋老志 [Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism]", in the *Weishu* 魏書 [History of the Northern Wei], "Jingji zhi 經籍志 [Bibliographical Treatise]", *Suishu* 隋書 [History of the Sui], the fifth chapter of Falin's 法林 *Bianzheng lun* 辯主論 [Treatise on Defending the Right], Zhang Shoujie's 張守節 commentary to the "Dawan liezhuan 大宛列傳 [Account of Ferghana]", the *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the Historian], the 193rd chapter of the *Tongdian* [The Comprehensive Codex], the *Buddha's Sūtra* [*futu jing* 浮屠經] of the Jin and Song dynasties cited in the 196th chapter of *Tongzhi* 通志 [Comprehensive Accounts], and *Jin zhongjing* [The Middle Sūtra of the Jin] quoted in the second chapter of the *Guangchuan huaba* 廣川畫跋 [Guangchuan's Postscripts to Paintings]. However, Jing Lu's name is written as Qin Jingxian 秦景憲 in the *Weishu*, and in *Bianzheng lun* we find another version of the story about Qin Jing going to the Yuezhi country, whose king ordered his son to teach [Qin] the *Futu jing*, which is similar to the account in the *Jin zhongjing*.

After the Greater Yuezhi migrated westwards to Bactria, they quickly assimilated themselves to the local culture. Therefore, it is highly possible that Buddhism was prevalent there in the late first century BC, and that a Greater Yuezhi envoy to China at that time orally transmitted a Buddhist scripture to a Chinese student.²⁰ Tang Yongtong has correctly pointed out that the Greater Yuezhi's invasion of Bactria was an important event in the history of Buddhist transmission to China, that the Greater Yuezhi converted to Buddhism during the Western Han period, and that Buddhism probably came to China from Bactria. Therefore the beginning of Buddhist translation should be traced back to the late Western Han.²¹ The scripture(s) referred to as *Futu jing* said to have been translated in this period might have been a scripture describing Buddha's life, similar to the later *sūtras* like the *Benqi jing* 本起經 [Sūtra on the

²⁰ Note that oral transmission of scriptures was a tradition of Indian Buddhism. Early Chinese Buddhist *sūtras* were also transmitted in this way.

²¹ Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei Han Jin Nanbei chao fojiaoshi* [A History of Chinese Buddhism during the Han, Wei, Western and Eastern Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties], Beijing, 1983, p. 36.

Buddha's Origin],²² and the *Benxing jing* 本行經 [Sūtra on the Buddha's Deeds].²³ Later on, quite a few Buddhist monks from the Greater Yuezhi began to arrive in China for missionary and translation work.

There is a well known legend in which it is told that, in the seventh year of the Yongping 永平七年 reign, i.e. AD 64, the Emperor Mingdi 明帝 dreamed of the Buddha and then sent envoys to the Western Regions in search of the Buddhist teachings. This highly fictional story has many different versions. Its earliest version is found in the preface to *Sishier zhang jing* [Sūtra in Forty-two Sections]:

One night in the past, the Emperor Han Mingdi dreamed of a deity, who had a golden hued body and rays like the light of the sun emanating from his neck, flying in front of the palace. This made the emperor ecstatic and pleased. The next day the Emperor asked his ministers: "Who was that person?" The learned Fu Yi answered: "I have heard that in India there is a person who has obtained the Way, called the Buddha. He can easily rise and fly. He is most likely the deity you dreamed of." Upon hearing this, the emperor understood and immediately sent twelve people, including the envoy Zhang Qian, the Court Gentleman Qin Jing, and an erudite student Wang Zun to the Greater Yuezhi. They copied the *Sūtra in Forty-two Sections* and placed it in fourteen stone cases. [The emperor] established *stūpas* and temples [for the *sūtra*]. Thus the Dharma was widely spread, and Buddhist temples were set up everywhere.

Later various elements were added to the story, such as that when Zhang Qian and Qin Jing arrived in the Western Regions they met a monk called Zhu Moteng 竺摩騰 i.e. Kāśyapa Mātāṅga, from whom they copied the scripture in question, then returned to Luoyang, where it was kept in the fourteenth stone chamber of Lantai 蘭臺 or Orchid Tower.²⁴ All of these stories concerning the earliest transmission of Buddhism to China involved the Greater Yuezhi. Despite their obvious fictional elements, they clearly indicate that it was the Yuezhi who were most closely linked with the early Buddhist translations in China.

Here we cannot discuss problems such as the authenticity, translation and nature of the *Sūtra in Forty-two Sections* in detail. However, its close relation with *Dharmapada* [Faju jing 法句經] has to be pointed out.²⁵ The Gandhārī

²² T. 184.3.

²³ T. 193.3.

²⁴ *Chu sanzang jì jì* 出三藏記集記 (Collection of Records on the Translation of the Chinese Tripitaka), ch. 2. T. 2145.55.

²⁵ Cf. Lü Cheng, *Zhongguo foxue yuanliu lüejiang* [Lectures on the Origin and Development of Chinese Buddhism], Beijing, 1979, pp. 20–2. In this study the author has pointed out that the *Sūtra in Forty-two Sections* and the *Dharmapada* translated by Zhi Qian are quite similar in form. Furthermore, he has pointed out that approximately

version of this scripture written in Kharoṣṭhī script discovered in Khotan was thoroughly examined by J. Brough in the early 1960s.²⁶ Kharoṣṭhī was one of the official scripts used by the Kushan Empire, and the grammar and vocabulary in this Kharoṣṭhī Buddhist scripture resemble those of the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the Kushan Empire. Hence a careful comparison between the Gaṇḍhārī *Dharmapada* and the Chinese *Sūtra in Forty-two Sections* would be most helpful.

Professor Ji Xianlin has already argued that the languages of ancient Central Asia and Xinjiang, such as the various Iranian and Tokharian languages, influenced the Chinese translation of Buddhist scriptures.²⁷ As early as 1947, he demonstrated that the Chinese word *fo* is not a direct translation from the Sanskrit *buddha*, but probably of Tokharian origin, such as *pät-* in Agnean and *pud-* [or *pūd-*] in Kuchean. Yet, according to Bernhard Karlgren's reconstruction, the ancient pronunciation of the Chinese character *fo* 佛 b' iwət / b' iuət begins with a voiced consonant, while in Tokharian it always begins with an unvoiced consonant. In 1970, the German scholar F. Bernhard supported Ji's hypothesis, maintaining that *fo* was a transcription of **but* in a Tokharian dialect that predates the A and B dialects (cf. *pudñäkte* in the B and *ptāñkät* in the A dialect).²⁸ E. G. Pulleyblank also regards the original form of *fo* to be *but*.²⁹ In 1979, a small bronze statue of a sitting Buddha, inscribed with one line of Kharoṣṭhī letters on the bottom, was found at a site in the ancient Chinese capital of Chang'an. According to Lin Meicun, it is dated to no later than the end of the fourth century, and it was evidently produced by the Yuezhi immigrants from Kushan who had been moving to China in increasingly great numbers since the mid-second century.³⁰ The inscription on the bottom of this statue contains a word meaning Buddha, written as *buca*. The transformation from *t* into *c* is a known feature of Tokharian, also seen in the oldest stratum of Tokharian used in Kharoṣṭhī documents from Loulan.

two-thirds of the former work is identical with passages from the latter, hence it would not be incorrect to refer to the former as a sort of copy of the latter.

²⁶ J. Brough, *The Gaṇḍhārī Dharmapada*, Oxford, 1962.

²⁷ Cf. Ji Xianlin, "Futu yu Fo [On Futu and Fo]", reprinted in *Zhong Yin wenhim guanxi shi luwen ji*; and his "Zai tan Futu yu Fo [Another Discussion on Futu and Fo]", *Lishi yanjiu* 2 (1990).

²⁸ F. Bernhard, "Gaṇḍhārī and the Buddhist Mission in Central Asia, Añjali", in: *Papers on Indology and Buddhism Presented to Oliver Hector de Alwis Wijesekera on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. J. Tilakairi. Peradeniya, 1970, p. 59.

²⁹ E. G. Pulleyblank, "Stages in the Transcription of Indian Words from the Han to Tang", in: *Sprache des Buddhismus in Zentralasien*, ed. K. Röhrborn and W. Veenker. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983, p. 78. The most recent publication on Chinese *fo* and its Iranian correspondence can be found in W. Sunderman, "Manichaean Traditions on the Date of the Historical Buddha", in: *The Dating of the Historical Buddha*, ed. H. Bechert, Göttingen: 1991, pp. 426–9.

³⁰ Cf. Lin Meicun, "A Kharoṣṭhī Inscription from Chang'an", reprinted in: *Ji Xianlin jiaoshou bashi huadan jinian lunwen ji*.

Therefore, *buca* is a Tokharian term used by the Yuezhi people. This evidence further confirms Ji's hypothesis.

2. The Yuezhi Buddhist Translators in China

It is possible to know a great deal about the situation of Buddhism in the Greater Yuezhi kingdom through the Buddhist scriptures which were brought from that country to the East and there translated into Chinese.

Most of the people who came from the Western Regions to China and adopted the Chinese surname Zhi 支 during the second to fifth century were more or less related to the Yuezhi. One of them, Lokakṣema (Zhi Loujiachan 支婁迦讖, sometimes abbreviated to Zhi Chan 支讖), was the most famous Buddhist translator during the Later Han period. He was originally a Kushan *śrāmāna* and arrived at Luoyang in the late years of the Emperor Han Huandi's reign. In AD 178 and 179, he translated more than ten Buddhist sūtras from Central Asian languages into Chinese, including the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, the *Śūramgamasamādhi sūtra*, the *Pratyutpannabuddha-sammukhāvasthitasamādhi sūtra*, the *Ajātaśatrukankṛtyavinodana*, and the *Ratnakuta*. Among the sūtras translated by Lokakṣema the most noteworthy is that belonging to the *prajñāpāramitā* class of scriptures which laid the foundation for the early development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in China. The fact that his translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*, also called the *Xiaopin boruo* 小品般若 [Small Prajñāpāramitā], had already been re-translated twice by the time of Kumārajīva clearly shows its great influence. The Mādhyamika school of Mahāyāna might have evolved from the Mahāsāṃghika tradition, which originated in southern India and had been transmitted to the north by the time of Kaniṣka. Chinese Buddhists regard Āsvaghoṣa as the first advocator of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and he was said to have been highly respected by King Kaniṣka. During the Eastern Han period, Mahāyāna scriptures had already become popular in the Kushan Empire. By the end of the Eastern Han, Mahāyāna sūtras, including the Prajñāpāramitā and the *Vaipulya* classes of scriptures, had made their way to China. Therefore, it is not surprising at all for us to see that the early Mahāyāna Buddhist system in China was established by the Yuezhi Lokakṣema, rather than by someone of another nationality.

It is known that a Yuezhi monk, Zhi Yao 支曜, engaged in Buddhist translation at Luoyang in AD 185. The *Chengju guangming jing* 成具光明經 [Sūtra on the Completion of Brightness], is the only extant translation that can be definitely identified as being made by Zhi Yao, also belongs to the Mahāyāna tradition.

One of Zhi Chan's known students was Zhi Liang 支亮 (also styled Jiming 紀明 is uncertain whether he was an *upāsaka* or *śrāmāna*, and some scholars even suggest that Zhi Liang and Zhi Yao were actually one and the

same person.³¹ In Chinese both *liang* and *yao* mean “light” or “brightness”; they were probably used to translate the same Sanskrit word *prabhāsaka*.

Another Yuezhi monk Zhi Qian 支謙 (also named Yue 越 and styled Gongming 恭明) translated as many as thirty-six Buddhist *sūtras* in forty-eight chapters between AD 222 and AD 253. His grandfather, Fadu 法度, the leader of the several of hundreds Greater Yuezhi people who migrated to China during the reign of the Emperor Han Lingdi, was appointed Court Gentleman by the Han court. Zhi Qian studied with Zhi Liang and thus became the second generation disciple of Lokakṣema. He is said to have studied Buddhist texts from the age of ten and various Central Asian languages from the age of thirteen. He is said to have mastered six languages and was well read in the Chinese classics. Sun Quan 孫權, the ruler of the Wu Kingdom, was deeply impressed by Zhi Qian’s explanation of Buddhist scriptures and gave him the title of Boshi 博士, i.e. Erudite Scholar, with the responsibility of working with Wei Zhao 韋昭 and other scholars to counsel and instruct the crown prince.³² The scriptures that he translated covered a wide spectrum, including both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna texts. His most important translations include the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* [*Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經] in two chapters, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* [*Da mingdu wuji jing* 太明度無極經]³³ in four chapters, a biography of the Buddha, the *Taizi ruiying jing* 太子瑞應經 [The Scripture on the Auspicious Department of the Prince],³⁴ etc. He also collated Wei Zhinan’s 維祇難 translation of the *Dharmapada*. Zhi Qian inherited Lokakṣema’s philosophical system and tried to make his translations smooth and readable. For example, when he was translating the *Anantamukhasādhaka-dhāraṇī*,³⁵ he succeeded both in maintaining the original eight-syllable format and correctly translating the meaning, instead of just transcribing the sounds. He proved himself to be a literary master well versed in rhymes and cadence, as shown in his composition of the *Zan pusa lianju fanbai* 贊菩薩連句梵唄 [Hymn of Linked Verse in Praise of the Bodhisattva]. The scriptural commentary he made for his own translation of the *Śalistambhaka sūtra* is the earliest example of this kind of Buddhist literature in China.

Yet another Buddhist translator with the surname “Zhi” was Zhi Jiangjieliang 支疆接梁 (Kālasivi?), who also might have come from the country of the Yuezhi. While residing in Jiaozhou 交州 (present-day Hanoi in Vietnam)

³¹ For a discussion of this, see Lin Meicun, “Guishuang Dayuezhi ren liuyu Zhongguo kao [A Study of the Yuezhi Immigrants in China]”, in: *Dunhuang Tulufan xue yanjiu lunwen ji* [Collection of Papers in the Field of Dunhuang and Turfan Studies], ed. Jiang Liangfu and Guo Zaiyi. Shanghai, 1990, p. 722.

³² Cf. ch. 13 of the *Chu sanzang ji ji*.

³³ T. 225.8.

³⁴ T. 185.3.

³⁵ T. 1011.19.

in either AD 255 or AD 256, he translated the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* [*Zheng fahua jing* 正法華經]³⁶ in six chapters.

However the most eminent translator during the Western Jin period was Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護), whose ancestors had lived in Dunhuang 敦煌 for generations. Although he was of the Yuezhi nationality, when Dharmarakṣa became a monk at the age of eight under an Indian monk Zhu Gaozuo 竺高座, he adopted his teacher's surname. When he was young, Dharmarakṣa travelled with his teacher to many countries in the Western Regions and learned several Central Asian languages and scripts. Following this he returned to China with a large number of Buddhist texts. In AD 266 he travelled from Dunhuang to Chang'an and Luoyang, and later crossed the Yangzi River. During his travels he is said never to have stopped teaching and translating. He translated some one hundred and fifty Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna *sūtras*,³⁷ virtually covering all important texts circulating in the Western Regions. Thus, he greatly expanded the possibilities for the further development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in China. Among the eighty-six translations attributed to Dharmarakṣa that have survived up to the present are the *Pañcaviṃśatikasāhasrikāpraññāpāramitā sūtra*³⁸ in ten chapters, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*³⁹ in ten chapters, the *Daśabhūmika sūtra*⁴⁰ in five chapters, the *Lalitavistara* in eight chapters, etc. Dharmarakṣa was often assisted by men like *upāsaka* Nie Chengyuan 聶承遠 and his son Nie Daozhen 聶道真, who not only took the responsibility of writing down Dharmarakṣa's oral recitation and checking the translation, but also translated some texts by themselves. Besides, they recorded information about the original texts and the place of translation, which constituted the earliest Chinese Buddhist catalogue commonly called the *Nie Daozhen lu* 聶道真錄 [Nie Daozhen's Catalogue].⁴¹

Although their ethnic attributes are not specified in scriptural catalogues, Zhi Fadu 支法度 and Zhi Daogen 支道根, two other Buddhist translators active during the fourth century, were most likely directly or indirectly related to the Yuezhi.

According to *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 [Biographies of Nuns],⁴² the monk Sengjian 僧建 obtained the *Mahāsaṃghikakarmavācāna* and the *Prātimokṣa* for nuns in the Yuezhi country between AD 335–42, and translated them at

³⁶ T. 263.9.

³⁷ See ch. 2 of the *Chu sangzang ji ji*. Cf. the entry in the *Kaiyuan shijiao* 開元釋教錄 [Catalogue of Buddhism during the Kaiyuan Period], T. 2154.55. Here it is stated that he translated one hundred and seventy-five texts.

³⁸ T. 222.8.

³⁹ T. 263.9.

⁴⁰ T. 285.10.

⁴¹ This scripture is no longer extant, but is referred to in the second chapter of the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T. 2154.55, 49c–97a, pp. 500b, 501a.

⁴² T. 2063.50. See also, *Lives of the Nuns: Biographies of Chinese Buddhist Nuns from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries*, tr. Kathryn Ann Tsai, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994, p. 19.

Luoyang. This fact indicates that the *Bhikṣūṇī Prātimokṣa* was in circulation in the Yuezhi. There was also a monk by the name of Zhi Shilun 支施論 (fl. late 4th cent.), who translated some *Vaipulya* scriptures, including the *Suṣthitamati[devapūtra sūtra]pariprachā*,⁴³ the *Shang jinguangshou jing* 上金光首經 [Scripture of the Supreme, Golden Light Uṣṇīṣa?]⁴⁴ and the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi sūtra*.

After the Former Qin Kingdom (359–94) unified North China and re-established direct communication with the Western Regions, a Tokharian monk called Dharmanandhī (Tanmonanti 暴摩難提) arrived in China and translated the *Madhyamāgama* and the *Ekottarāgama* sometime during the Jianyuan reign period, i.e. AD 364–89. These are the earliest translations of major *Āgamas*. The two eminent Chinese monks, Daoan 道安 (d. 385) and Fahe 法和 (fl. 4th cent.), examined these *Āgamas*, while the former wrote a preface for the Chinese version of the *Ekottarāgama*.

In AD 433, the monk Daotai 道泰 obtained the Sanskrit version of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* in more than one hundred thousand *gāthās* from the area west of the Pamirs. Four years later, this *sūtra* was translated into Chinese at Liangzhou 梁州 by Buddhavarman, who was also said to be of Tokharian descent.⁴⁵ It is well known that the *Mahāvibhāṣā* was quite popular among the Yuezhi.

In summary, Yuezhi monks translated a great number of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, most of which seem to have been Mahāyāna *sūtras*, including the *Avatamsaka*, *Vaipulya*, *Prajñāpāramitā*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and *Nirvāṇa*. These translations greatly accelerated the development of Chinese Buddhist doctrine and philosophy. As for the original languages in which these scriptures were written, no thorough examination has been made so far. It seems that most of them were written in some form of Sanskrit or Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, though some probably contained elements of various Central Asian languages including Tokharian. The question as to whether many of the early Chinese Buddhist *sūtras* were translated from Central Asian languages is still an important subject that needs further study.

3. Kumārajīva and Kuchean Buddhism

Kucha was a state established by the Tokharians on the northern edge of the Tarim Basin, and it is not clear when Buddhism first spread to this area. An account in the *Ayuwang taizi huaimu yinyuan jing* 阿育王太子壞目因緣經 [Scripture on the Causes and Conditions of Prince Aśoka]⁴⁶ which says that

⁴³ T. 342.11.

⁴⁴ This scripture is no longer extant.

⁴⁵ His biography can be found in the *Da Tang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan* 大唐西遊法高僧傳 [Biographies of the Great Tang Monks Who Travelled to the Western Regions in Search of Dharma], ch. 1. T. 2066.50.

⁴⁶ T. 2045.50.

Kucha was among the lands Aśoka gave to his son Fayi 法益 is obviously a fable and should not be taken at face value. However, according to Chinese sources, as early as the third century some Buddhist monks from Kucha arrived in the Chinese heartland to translate and teach. It is for example recorded that a Kuchean prince referred to as Bo Yan 白延 took part in the translation of the *Śūraṅgamasamādhi sūtra* together with Zhi Shilun. It is also said that Bo Yan was good at both Chinese and foreign languages, well read in a variety of classics, and that he mastered both Buddhism and Confucianism. Other Kuchean Buddhists active in China during the Western Jin period were the layman Shan Yuanxin 單元信 and Śrīmitra (Bo Shilimiduoluo 帛尸梨密多羅), a member of the Kuchean royal house. Another famous monk, Fotudeng 佛圖澄, who arrived at Luoyang in AD 310 and whose original surname was Bo 帛, was also a Kuchean. After the Later Zhao regime was established, he became a confidant of the Zhao rulers such as Shi Le 石勒 and Shi Hu 石虎. He advised them to be lenient, and made every effort to spread Buddhism among the common people. Although he is not credited with having translated any Buddhist *sūtras*, he worked in northern China for many years and had a great impact on the subsequent development of Chinese Buddhism.

During the fourth century Buddhism became increasingly popular in Kucha, and the number of Buddhist monks in that country reached more than ten thousand. In the capital alone no less than one thousand temples and *stūpas* were established, and Buddhist statues were worshipped in the royal palace as well as in the temples. Some temples were magnificent and extensive, including the famous Queli Temple located at Subasi to the north of the seat of today's Kucha County, whose remains have been found by archaeologists.⁴⁷ At that time the most famous monk within the Hīnayāna Buddhist clergy around Kucha was Buddhakṣema (Fotushemi 佛圖舌彌). He was in charge of many temples, including three large ones for the nuns, some of whom were princesses of the royal houses of Eastern Central Asian kingdoms, and who had come to Kucha to learn Buddhism. The Kuchean *Vinaya* was said to be very strict and even attracted monks from the Eastern Jin, who travelled the thousands of miles to request *Vinaya* texts from Buddhakṣema. Thus we can conclude that Kucha had become one of the most important Buddhist centres at that time. The earlier Buddhist caves at Qizil were also constructed during this period. In these caves many Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts have been found dating from the second to fourth centuries. The majority of these belong to the Hīnayāna.

The most famous Kuchean monk was undoubtedly Kumārajīva (344–c. 413), whose dates are variously given. According to Sengzhao's 僧肇 *Jiumoluoshi*

⁴⁷ See Chao Huashan, "Xinjiang Kezier shiku kaocha yanjiu jianshi yu Xinjiang wenwu zai guowai de liuchuan [A Brief History of the Investigation and Studies of the Qizil Caves and the Distribution of Xinjiang Cultural Relics in Foreign Countries]", reprinted in: *Dunhuang Tulufan yanjiu lunwen ji*, p. 618.

fashi lei 鳩摩羅什法師誄 [Memoir of the Dharma Master Kumārajīva],⁴⁸ Kumārajīva's father, Kumārayāna, was an Indian. He resigned from the post of prime minister, became a monk, and then travelled across the Pamirs to Kucha where he was warmly welcomed by the reigning king. He was appointed to the position as court teacher, and eventually married the king's sister, Jivā. When Kumārajīva was seven years old, he left home along with his mother and went to study the scriptures of the *Abhidharma* with Buddhakṣema. At the age of nine, Kumārajīva travelled with his mother across the Indus River to Kashmir, and further to Yuezhi (Gandhārā?), Kashgar and other places before they arrived in Yarkand. The Buddhist *sūtras* Kumārajīva studied prior to his twelfth year were Hīnayāna texts, especially those of the Sarvāstivāda School, which was popular in Kashmir. However, after he met the prince Sūryasoma of Yarkand in Kashgar, he turned his interest to the Mahāyāna. In addition to Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism, Kumārajīva also studied the four *Vedas* and the *pañcavidyā*. After he returned to Kucha via Aksu, he became a *bhikṣu* connected to the royal palace until he reached the age of twenty.

In the course of time Kumārajīva's reputation reached China, where Daoan suggested in a letter to Fu Jian 苻堅 the ruler of the Former Qin, that Kumārajīva be invited to China. In AD 385 Fu Jian sent some troops under general Lü Guang 呂光 to Kucha and forcefully brought Kumārajīva with them back to Liangzhou. As it happened Fu Jian was assassinated soon after, and Lü Guang established his own regime in the Liangzhou area, the Northern Liang 北涼, where Kumārajīva stayed for more than ten years. In AD 401 Liangzhou fell to Yao Xing 姚興, the founder of the state of Later Qin 後秦, who invited Kumārajīva to Chang'an and gave him the title of "national preceptor" 國師. After that time, Kumārajīva began to translate *sūtras* with the assistance of hundreds of monks.

Among the hundreds of rolls of Buddhist texts translated by Kumārajīva in Chang'an were the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra*, the *Amitābha sūtra*, the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, etc. Most of them were Mahāyāna scriptures and re-translations. Kumārajīva also introduced the Mādhyamika school of Indian Buddhism systematically to China and translated representative works of this school including the *Mādhyamika śāstra*, the *Śata śāstra*, the *Dvādaśānikāya śāstra*, the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*, and *Satyasiddhi śāstra*. Kumārajīva started a new epoch in the history of Buddhist translation in China because he was successful in both correctly rendering the original meaning and expressing it in elegant Chinese. That is the reason why Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518), in the first chapter of *Chu sanzang ji ji* makes a distinction between Kumārajīva's "new" translations and the "old" ones made by all his predecessors.

⁴⁸ T. 1856.45.

As a master of Buddhist translation, Kumārajīva authored only a few works himself, including the *Shixiang lun* 實相論 [Treatise on the Marks of Reality]. This work, which is said to have systematically expressed his philosophy, has unfortunately long been lost. His correspondence with Huiyuan 慧遠 (344–416) was collected by later scholars and preserved in a book titled 大乘大義章 [Essays on the Essence of Mahāyāna]⁴⁹ in three chapters. Most recently, an ancient manuscript of Kumārajīva's *Dasheng Pusa rudaosanzhong guan* 大乘菩薩入道三種觀 [Three Contemplations of the Enlightened Mahāyāna Bodhisattva], has been found in Nagoya, Japan.⁵⁰ Its authenticity, however, needs further examination.

Concluding Remarks

Until the fifth and sixth centuries, Buddhism was still flourishing in Kucha. It was during this period that most of the Kuchean votive caves were built. Many Buddhist scriptures in Tokharian B (Kuchean) as well as temple registers and accounts of begging for alms dating from this period have been discovered. As seen in the wall-paintings in the caves as well as in the excavated scriptures, Hīnayāna Buddhism was still dominant in that area. During the AD 720s, Xuanzang passed through Kucha en route from China to India. In his *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西游記 [Record of the Western Regions] he reported that there were more than one hundred Buddhist temples and no less than five thousand Hīnayāna monks and nuns. He also visited the two Zhaohuli Temples in the east and west, namely the great Queli Temple mentioned above. From the mid-seventh to the late eighth century, many Chinese people migrated to Kucha. Because of the cultural exchanges between the Chinese and Kucheans, some Buddhist caves mixed the art styles of both. From the second half of the ninth century, the Uighurs gradually replaced the Tibetans as the controllers of Kucha. The Uighurs also converted to Buddhism and tried hard to resist the eastward spread of Islam. The Turks had long since entered Kucha. Gradually they became dominant in the local population during later periods and eventually assimilated the native Kuchean population, while the Kuchean language was eventually replaced by Uighur. By the thirteenth century, the Kuchean people had converted to Islam. The Buddhist culture of the region as well as the Tokharian-speaking Kucheans themselves gradually disappeared from Central Asia.

However, the extinct Tokharians and their relation with Buddhism have been discovered by modern archaeology. All the Tokharian documents have been written in a form of slanted Brāhmī, which is referred to as Northern Turkestan Brāhmī by L. Sander. The Buddhist literature written in ancient

⁴⁹ This work is no longer extant, but is referred to in several later works and scriptural catalogues.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ochiai Toshinori, *The Manuscripts of Nanatsu-Dera: A Recently Discovered Treasure-House in Downtown Nagoya*, Kyoto: The Italian School of Oriental Studies, 1991, pp. 41–5.

Kuchean and Agnean consists mainly of such works as the *Udānavarga* and its commentary the *Udānālaṃkāra*,⁵¹ the *Prātimokṣa*,⁵² the *Karmavācanā*, *Karmavibhaṅga*, the *Pratītyasamutpāda*, the *Abhidharmakośa*, the *Catuṣparisat sūtra*, the story of Nanda and his wife Sundarī, Mātṛceta's *Buddhastotra*, etc. Also found were the *Puṇyavanta-jātaka*, a variety of *avadāna* stories taken from the *Araṇemi Jātaka* and so forth. Most of these stories are also found in the *Avadānaśataka*, the *Divyāvdaṇa*, the *Jātakamālā* and in the *Avadānakalpātā*. In the early twentieth century, the German expedition led by Grünwedel and Von le Coq found some fragments of the *Maitreyasamiti* at Šoršūq near Karashahr (Yanqi). In the winter of 1974, a further forty-four sheets, altogether eighty-eight pages of the same work, were found in an ash pit near the north temple at the Siksim site, also in the vicinity of Karashahr.⁵³ Other Buddhist texts related to the Maitreya cult included the *Maitreyāavadānavyākaraṇa*, whose contents are in large part the same as those of *Maitreyasamiti*, but also have some significant differences. In addition to the above findings, there are also manuscripts and cave inscriptions related to Buddhism. Besides Buddhist literature, there are medical, legal, economic and Manichaean documents.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See *Tocharische Sprachreste: Sprache B*, herausgegeben von Emil Sieg und Wilhelm Siegling, Kommentar nebst Register versehen von Werner Thomas, Göttingen, 1983–.

⁵² Cf. Klaus T. Schmidt, *Der Schlußteil des Prātimokṣa sūtra der Sarvastivādins: Text in Sanskrit and Tocharisch A verglichen mit den Parallelversionen anderer Schulen, Auf Grund von Turfan-Handschriften, herausgegeben und bearbeitet, Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden XIII*, Abh. d. Ak. d. Wiss. in Göttingen, Phil-hist. Kl., Dritte Folge Nr. 171, Göttingen, 1989.

⁵³ Cf. Li Yuchun and Han Xiang, “Xinjiang Yanqi faxian tuhuoluo wen A [Yanqi yu] ben Mile huijian ji juben canjuan [The Manuscripts of Maitrisimit in Tokharian A (Agnean) Discovered in Karashahr, Xinjiang]”, *Wenwu* 3 (1983); and Ji Xianlin, “Tuhuoluo yu A zhong de sanshier xiang [The Thirty-two *lakṣanas* in Tokharian A]”, *Minzu yuwen* 2 (1982).

⁵⁴ For general information about the field of Tokharian studies, which due to the lack of space cannot be discussed in detail here, the reader may refer to such catalogues as E. Schwentner, *Tocharische Bibliographie 1890–1958*, Berlin: 1959; St. Zimmer, *Tocharische Bibliographie 1959–1975* (Heidelberg: 1976). Refer also to W. Thomas, *Die Erforschung des Tocharischen (1960–1984)*, Stuttgart: 1985; Ji Xianlin, *Durthuang Tulufan Tuhuoluoyu yanjiu daolun* [A Discussion of the Research on Tokharian Language in Dunhuang and Turfan]. Taipei: 1993; and Václav Blažek, “Tocharian Linguistics during the Last 25 Years”, *Archív Orientální* 56 (1988).