Chapter 13

Practice and Rituals in Uyghur Buddhist Texts: A Preliminary Appraisal

Jens Wilkens

1 Introduction

The topic of practice and ritual in Uyghur Buddhism is a vast field with various layers and complex interconnections that is not well understood in its entirety. Eyewitness accounts of ritual practice, such as the one Faxian

1 I would like to express my thanks to Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Munich) for his response to my paper during the BuddhistRoad Mid-project Conference in Bochum.

2 Some important aspects of practice and ritual have been addressed before. The practice of giving, merit making, and merit transfer is a central concept within Uyghur Buddhism that remains an important issue from the early phase of Uyghur Buddhism until the late period (14th c.). Merit transfer was a ritual means to strengthen the power of certain protective deities who would thus be equipped with further strength in order to protect the country of the Uyghurs. On merit transfer, especially in a group of unrelated Old Uyghur colophons, see Peter Zieme, “The West Uigur Kingdom: Views from Inside,” Horizons 5.1 (2014): 6, 10–11. Pilgrimage is another issue that has become an important object of study. For an overview of pilgrimage, see Tibor Porció, “Some Peculiarities of the Uygur Buddhist Pilgrim Inscriptions,” in Searching for the Dharma, Finding Salvation: Buddhist Pilgrimage in Time and Space, ed. Christoph Cueppers and Max Deeg (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2014), 157–178. Very important new materials from the Dunhuang region, i.e. the Yulin Caves (Chin. Yulin ku 榆林窟) and Mogao Caves (Chin. Mogao ku 莫高窟), etc., are collected in Matsui Dai 松井太, “Tonkō sekkutsu uigurugo mongorugo, daiki meibun shūsei 敦煌石窟ウイグル語. モンゴル語題記銘文集成 Uighur and Mongolian Wall Inscriptions of the Dunhuang Grottoes,” in Tonkō sekkutsu tagengo shiryō shūsei 敦煌石窟多言語資料集成. Multilingual Source Materials of the Dunhuang Grottoes, ed. Matsui Dai 松井太 and Arakawa Shintaro 荒川慎太郎 (Tokyo: Tōkyō gaikokugo daigaku Ajia Afurika gengo bunka kenkyūjo, 2017), 1–161. See also Simone-Christiane Raschmann’s recent paper, Simone-Christiane Raschmann, “Pilgrims in Old Uyghur Inscriptions: A Glimpse Behind their Records,” in Buddhism in Central Asia I: Patronage, Legitimation, Sacred Space, and Pilgrimage, ed. Carmen Meinert and Henrik H. Sørensen (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020), 204–229. Sometimes certain wall paintings have apparently inspired visitors of Buddhist caves to leave a record of their pilgrimage and to put down their thoughts. For instance, pilgrims added a whole group of inscriptions and scribbles to a brāhmaṇa painting from Bezeklik. See the analysis in Peter Zieme, “A Brāhmaṇa Painting from Bāzāklık in the Hermitage of St. Peters burg and Its Inscriptions,” in Unknown Treasures of the Altaic World in Libraries, Archives and Museums: 53rd Annual Meeting of the Permanent International Altaic Conference, Institute of Oriental

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(ca. 340–before 423, 法顯) provides for processions and festivals in Khotan/Yutian (于闐) or Jiecha (竭叉), are lacking. Instead of dealing with a single aspect of the topic of practice and ritual in Uyghur Buddhism, I will, therefore, delimit my endeavour to a very basic overview of related issues, mostly based on an evaluation of textual materials. For the early phase of Uyghur Buddhist literature (2nd half of the 9th–early 11th c.), practice and ritual are somewhat difficult to grasp. The Uyghurs were clearly interested in literature of ritual and apotropaic content from the earliest phase of their conversion to Buddhism. The scroll of the Sākiz Yügmäk Yaruk [Brilliance of the Eight Accumulations] from London that was found in Dunhuang (敦煌) (Or. 8212/104) is one of the most archaic examples of a Buddhist text in Old Uyghur. It is a very early translation from a Chinese original, the Foshuo tiandi bayang shenzhou jing [Mantras of the Eight Principles of Heaven and Earth as Spoken by the Buddha] (T. 2897).

It is possible that the focus of early Buddhist literature in Old Uyghur was different, on the one hand, in Dunhuang, where texts were translated mainly from Chinese and, on the other, in Turfan and in the Hami region, where the first phase of translation activity centered on works in Tocharian A. As for apotropaic literature, there is evidence that the narrative cycle of stories called Daśakarmapathāvadānamāla [Garland of Legends Pertaining to Manuscripts, RAS St. Petersburg, July 25–30, 2010, ed. Tatiana Pang, Simone-Christianne Raschmann, and Gerd Winkelhane (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2013), 181–195.


4 As to processions and rituals, some chapters of the Old Uyghur translation of the biography of Xuanzang (600/602–664, 玄奘) are rich in detail, but the text is secondary and cannot be used as a source for the study of Uyghur rituals. However, the terminology used therein is important.

5 See Johan Elverskog, Uyghur Buddhist Literature (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997).

6 See the analysis of orthographic features of this particular scroll in Jens Peter Laut, Der frühe türkische Buddhismus und seine literarischen Denkmäler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986), 78–88. A complete facsimile is provided in volume two of James Hamilton, Manuscrits ouïgours du ixème-xème siècle de Touen-Houang (Paris: Peeters, 1986), 331–350. For a comprehensive edition of various manuscripts and a translation of this important text, which is extant in different recensions, see BT XXXIII. It gives a list of manuscripts and prints in other languages. Ibid., 284–286.

7 This assumption would only be valid if it could be ascertained that the London scroll of the Sākiz Yügmäk Sudur was actually produced in the Dunhuang region.
the Ten Courses of Action]—the Old Uyghur version is a translation from Tocharian A—made use of some sources with an affinity to the rakṣā genre.\(^8\) The *Maitrisimit* [Meeting with Maitreya]—one of the earliest specimens of Uyghur Buddhist literature and also a translation from Tocharian A—is not only a kind of compendium of Buddhist knowledge and a biography of the future Buddha Maitreya, but also a text that possibly relates to visualisation techniques. The stock phrase at the beginning of each chapter that ‘one has to understand’ the scene treated therein and which replaces ‘stage directions’ depending on the (semi-)theatrical character of the Tocharian original could mean that the reader has to ‘imagine’ or ‘visualise’ the locality in his mind. Lists of the 32 marks of the Buddha (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*) or the very detailed scenes in the chapters dedicated to the description of the major and minor hells might also point to such an understanding. Other passages are likely only literary themes, such as the reference to the festival commemorating Bodhisattva Maitreya cutting off his hair knot (Skt. *cūḍāmaha*) in Chapter 13.\(^9\) This event is, in any case, envisioned for the future.

Some Turkologists proposed that the *Maitrisimit* was performed for public entertainment during a specific feast, in the wake of which Buddha Maitreya would manifest himself during the performance of the very same spectacle.\(^10\) This assumption turned out to be groundless.\(^11\) The misunderstanding followed from an erroneous interpretation of the key term *yanykün*, which literally means ‘new day’, but really shows a semantic spectrum ranging from ‘festival, feast’ and ‘ceremony, rite’ to ‘spectacle, wonder’.\(^12\) Georges-Jean Pinault recently presented a detailed study of its Tocharian A equivalent *opusāly* together with the Tocharian B cognate *eksalye*, in which he proves that the same semantic range applies for the two Tocharian terms, and that “the notion is not related to

\(^8\) BT XXXVII, vol. 1, 68.
\(^12\) Wilkens, “Der ‘Neutag’ und die Maitrisimit,” 375–401.
any special Buddhist festivity or ritual”. The Old Uyghur and Tocharian terms can thus apply to any kind of feast, ritual, ceremony, spectacle, or wonder. A specific Maitreya festival with alleged Iranian antecedents—as Geng and Klimkeit surmise—is out of the question.

It is difficult to tell which Buddhist festivals really had practical importance within Uyghur Buddhism. This topic needs further research. There is, for instance, very scarce evidence for the quinquennial festival (Skr. pañcavārṣika). Besides a fragmentary reference in the Maitrisimit, there is one mention of the term in an avadāna collection. In both texts, we find a connection with alms-giving. The festival is, in all likelihood, only a literary motif without any historical significance. Further examples are found in a Sanskrit-Old Uyghur bilingual manuscript in Brāhmī script and in an alliterative poem, where the term is used as a substantive and as an adjective respectively. The bilingual text and the first instance of the term in the poem combine the Sanskrit term pančav(a)rṣikī with the Chinese term tāiču̯n, which is also recorded in the spelling tāičo. This last term and its adjectival derivative occur every now and then in Old Uyghur, for instance, in the translation of the biography of Xuanzang, (Da Tang da Ci’ensi sanzang fashi zhuan) [The Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Ci’en

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17 BT XXXVII, vol. 2, 522 (line 05691).
18 As Deeg observes, in the legend of Aśoka (r. ca. 268–232 BCE) and especially in the Avadānasataka (T. 200.4), the term pañcavārṣika “[...] lost its connection to the historical facts and was only understood as an event of donations to the sangha by a donator—not even necessarily a king.” Deeg, “Origins and Developments,” 74. This observation is true for other specimens of avadāna literature, where the term is used without any reference to Aśoka or the legend pertaining to him.
20 Aydar Mirkamal 阿依达尔・米尔卡马力, Huihuwen shiti zhushu he xin faxian dunhuang hen yunwen yanjiu 回鹘文诗体注疏和新发现敦煌本韵文研究. Alliterative Verse Commentaries in Old Uyghur and Newly Unearthed Verses from Dunhuang (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2015), 185 (line 70), 209 (line 19).
Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty], T. 2053-50) and in a late avadāna text, in which it is used in connection with a banquet or feast to be offered to Buddha Maitreya and his entourage in future times. The precise etymology of the term has not been established yet. Judging from the context in which the term pañcavārṣika appears in the Old Uyghur sources, the festival itself seems to be a mere literary motif. Although the monthly gatherings in Liang Wudi’s (r. 502–549, 梁武帝) palace chapel are known to have represented the Buddha Maitreya and his entourage in future times.

In chapter four, the term is likewise used with reference to King Wudi’s (r. 502–549, 梁武帝) palace chapel are known to have represented the Buddha Maitreya and his entourage in future times.23 The precise etymology of the term has not been established yet. Judging from the context in which the term pañcavārṣika appears in the Old Uyghur sources, the festival itself seems to be a mere literary motif. Although the monthly gatherings in Liang Wudi’s palace chapel are known to have represented the Buddha Maitreya and his entourage in future times.24 There is no evidence that a similar institution existed in Uyghur Buddhism, even though the emperor was held in high esteem by Uyghur Buddhists.

Other texts relate to a ceremony that was actually performed, the pravāraṇā, the ceremony concluding the annual monastic retreat during the rainy season.26 The most peculiar textual specimen is the Insadisīṭrā, a late composite text in cursive script, the title of which is, so far, unexplained.27 The second part of the text refers directly to the pravāraṇā and contains Chinese characters that correspond to Chinese versions of the Pravāraṇāsīṭrā.28 It is conceivable that the Uyghurs used a Sanskrit text to perform the ritual itself, because the pravāraṇā is a monastic ceremony. A confirmation of this assumption could be found in two manuscripts in Uyghur script in which the corresponding Sanskrit parts are given in Brāhmī script.29 A letter containing

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27 The edition and translation are in BT III.


29 These manuscripts are dealt with in Zieme, “Das Pravāraṇā-Sūtra.” See also the enlarged edition in BT XXXVIII, 89–109.
instructions to carry out Buddhist ceremonies mentions also the recitation of the \textit{Pravāraṇāsūtra}.\textsuperscript{30} Recently, a bilingual text (Sanskrit and Old Uyghur) in Uyghur script related to the \textit{pravāraṇā} ritual was also discovered.\textsuperscript{31} The liturgical formulas are in Sanskrit, whereas the ritual instructions are in Old Uyghur.

The \textit{poṣadha} \textsuperscript{32} \textit{posatha} day was of particular importance for Buddhist practice. One can deduce from various dated sources that this day was considered as especially auspicious and was chosen deliberately by practitioners who commissioned the printing or writing of a text\textsuperscript{32} or by pilgrims who left an inscription on the walls of Buddhist caves.\textsuperscript{33} Perhaps the day was considered auspicious for making a pilgrimage or a visit to Buddhist shrines. An otherwise unknown scholar named Nomkul Śīla (fl. 14th c.) as the sponsor of the edition, which definitely served ritual purposes. The printing was effected on the 15th day of the seventh month, presumably of the year 1347. The colophon calls this day \textit{agır ulug poṣad baçaq kün} “the very great \textit{poṣadha} fast day”. It is possible that the date might also indicate that Uyghurs celebrated the ghost

\textsuperscript{30} Simone-Christiane Raschmann and Osman Fikri Sertkaya, \textit{Alttürkische Handschriften Teil 20: Alttürkische Texte aus der Berliner Turfansammlung im Nachlass Reşid Rahmeti Arat} (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016), 101–102 (cat. no. 063).


\textsuperscript{32} BT VII, 66 (lines 105–108) = BT XXVI, 209 (No. 11b line 1); BT XII, 124 (lines 46–48) = BT XXVI, 56 (line 1); BT X, 164 (lines 2–3) = BT XXVI, 240 (line 1); BT XXIII, 148 (lines G324–325) = BT XXVI, 132 (lines 4–5); BT XII, 161 (lines 1–3) = BT XXIII, 148 (line G337) = BT XXVI, 133 (line 1). Peter Zieme, “Donor and Colophon of an Uighur Blockprint,” \textit{Silk Road Art and Archaeology} 4 (1995/96): 412 (section C); reedited in BT XXVI, 245 (lines 7–8).

\textsuperscript{33} For the Yulin Caves, see Matsui, “Tonkō sekkutsu uigurugo mongorugo,” 88, 89, 102.

\textsuperscript{34} BT XXVI, 136 (lines 2–4). This statement made by Nomkul Śīla K(ı)ya refers apparently to a revision of the translation in which he was involved.

\textsuperscript{35} Edited in BT XII, 163–170 (text 46). Reedited in BT XXVI, 239–243 as text 129.
festival (Chin. yulan pen 孟蘭盆), because it always fell on the 15th day of the seventh month.

Another aspect of Uyghur Buddhism related to practice has to be mentioned here. Annemarie von Gabain provides a rather detailed description of a Buddhist festival held on the 15th day of the first month of the year. She mentions confessions, material offerings, spiritual gifts, symbolic gifts, liturgical ceremonies for the benefit of the departed, readings of edifying tales, pictures on display, and performative arts. However, an analysis of von Gabain’s method reveals that this particular festival is nothing but her fictional construct, in which she combines observations based on texts from different periods and totally unrelated contexts. Nevertheless, some scholars take her fictitious account for granted.

2 Practice and Rituals as Mirrored in Old Uyghur Texts

2.1 Blessings

Blessing texts are a genre connected with practice and ritual. One example of this type of literature is the Diśastvustik (Skt. *Diśāsauvāstika) [Blessing of the Cardinal Points] from the Krotkov Collection in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in which the legend of the merchants Trāpuṣa and Bhallika provides the narrative frame. The incomplete text—apparently from the late classical period of Old Uyghur (ca. 12th c.)—is a booklet in European style and—on account of its rather small

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40 On this literary genre, see Zieme, “The West Uigur Kingdom,” 11–12.

format—probably intended for personal use. The glosses in Brāhmī script are unusual for a manuscript. In essence, the text is a blessing of the cardinal points with copious names of yakṣas and minor female divinities and interspersed with dhāranīs. The text is also supposed to offer basic protection. The whole setting is Indian, and Central Asian place names are not mentioned.

In Old Uyghur literature, there are additional examples of blessing texts that are likely native Uyghur compositions rather than translations, for example, extant texts include two New Year’s blessings, two harvest blessings, and a blessing of a sacrifice, which mentions it is intended to heal several ailments and ward off demonic beings. The formulas used are, in part, spell-like.

The harvest blessings in particular reflect a local form of Buddhism. I will discuss briefly the two extant examples of harvest blessing texts. The first includes a lengthy description of agricultural activities, mentions a libation of wheat beer (OU sorma) to the god of wealth (Skt. dhanyadeva), Kubera. It also mentions the sacrifice of a he-goat and a pig in order to prepare a banquet. The goal of the rituals referred to in the text is to produce an outstanding crop yield. The last part of the harvest blessing is a detailed depiction of an evil spirit with certain animal characteristics, whom one intends to ban by means of the text. The second text is on the whole quite similar. A blessing for a vineyard, which has not been edited yet, is reported in a catalogue description.

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42 For the first text, see the first edition in Peter Zieme, “Zur Verwendung der Brāhmī-Schrift bei den Uiguren,” Altorientalische Forschungen 11.2 (1984): 331–346. It is reedited with additional fragments in BT XXXVIII, 192–203. For the second text, see Peter Zieme, “Māngi bulzun! Ein weiterer Neujahrssegen,” in Dr. Etem Esin'e Armağan, ed. Şükrü Elçin (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basimevi, 1976), 131–139. This fragment is combined with a prayer for forgiveness. In its final part, the prayer evokes images from nature to strengthen the efficacy of the liturgy.


45 Zieme, “Ein uigurischer Erntesegen,” 118.

46 Ibid., 118.


49 Raschmann and Sertkaya, Alttürkische Handschriften Teil 20, 232–233 (cat. no. 250).
2.2 **Confessions**

One of the most striking features of Uyghur Buddhism and, one may add, one of its enigmas, is the popularity of confession texts intended to be used by lay disciples. Despite several studies, the possibility of a historical connection with a Manichaean pattern is still unclear.\(^5^0\) While confessions often have a preparatory and cathartic function within the wider context of complex Buddhist rituals, especially of the esoteric type, the work known as the *Kšānti kulmak atl(i)g nom bitig* [The Book Called Making a Confession] is self-contained. Although many manuscripts are extant, the title of this text is preserved in only a few of them.\(^5^1\) The *Book Called Making a Confession* is either a group of similar texts with sets of matching lines or, in fact, only one work that was open to additions and alterations, depending on the specific requirements of the sponsors. We have examples of manuscript copies of the text, typically in the form of scrolls but also in the Indian *pustaka* format, characterised in this case by long vertically oriented folios with string holes.\(^5^2\) It is certainly not by sheer accident that the majority of the manuscripts were found at Yarkhoto. The rather short text, consisting of only one scroll, was intended for lay people who were in need of a text dealing with their various offences. The names of these people are recorded in the manuscripts. Ritual formulas and merit making are important in this text. It was particularly important that the work consisted of only one scroll, so that ordering a copy was not as expensive as copying works in many fascicles. While what Willi Bang and Annemarie von Gabain refer to as Part A and Part B in their edited text seem to belong to the Śrāvakāyāna tradition—since they name as addressees of the confession Maitreya and several *kotos* of *arhats*—the first scroll that Friedrich Wilhelm Karl Müller

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The Confession of the Lay Female Buddhist Üdrät edited, is directed to the 496 Bodhisattvas of the fortunate aeon (Skt. bhadraḥkalpa) beginning with Maitreya. The second scroll Müller edited also mentions the 496 bodhisattvas and Maitreya, but at the end, the lay woman Kutlug mentions that she commissioned not only the confession text in one scroll but also the Zun sheng jing [Sūtra of the Victorious One with the Uṣṇīṣa] (Skt. Uṣṇīṣavijaya) in one scroll and the Avalokiteśvara chapter of the Saddharmapuṇḍarikāsūtra [Lotus Sūtra] one scroll. The ritual context of copying the confession text is different in this particular case, on account of the idiosyncrasies and religious goals of the female lay person acting as a benefactor.

One of the most relevant chapters of the Suvarṇaprabhāsasūtra [Sūtra of Golden Light] in terms of practice and ritual is certainly the fifth chapter, dedicated to confession. In Old Uyghur, this section is also rendered as a separate text on its own in poetical form, and as such, is an independent reworking in strophic alliteration. It is preserved in handwritten and block-printed form. An independent prose version of this chapter was also recently identified in the fragment U 2585. Over the course of centuries, the text of the Suvarṇaprabhāsasūtra grew more and more. Nobel observes that the dhāraṇī portions in particular were added. Gradually, the literary character trans-
formed into a typical specimen of an Esoteric Buddhist text. The Old Uyghur version contains several independent texts in the preface, one of which is a ritual offering to the four Great Kings (Skt. mahārāja), which is most likely based on a Tibetan model, because the term torma (Tib. gtor ma) is one of the key words in the manual.

The most important ritual work in Old Uyghur, judging from the great number of manuscripts identified so far, is the Kšanti kilguluk nom bitig [The Book on How One Should Practice Confessions], a translation from the Chinese Cibei daochang chanfa [The Dharma of the Ritual of Repentance at the Bodhimaṇḍa of the Compassionate One] (T. 1909.45). This native Chinese work in forty chapters is an elaborate repentance ritual in which the invocation of the names of the buddhas of the fortunate aeon and of several bodhisattvas plays an essential part. One objective is to provide help for the beings living in unfortunate existences, especially for members of one’s own family. Röhrborn surmises that the text was used during funerary ceremonies and functioned as a kind of ‘funeral requiem’. It was definitely performed in congregation, which is underlined by the recurrent expression relating to the practitioners: ‘persons possessing the same kind of activity’ (OU bir išdāš). Stylistically the The Book on How One Should Practice Confessions is characterized by many repetitions and formulaic expressions,

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62 Except for the narrative of the hungry tigress, the chapters with marked ritual content are represented most often in the Chinese fragments from Dunhuang of Yijing’s (635–713, 義淨) version. Nobel, Savarnaprabhāsottama-Sūtra, xxiv.

63 Edition and translation are in BT XVIII, 112–119.

64 Edition and translation are in BT XXV.

65 BT II, 7. The German title “Totenmesse”, too, was deliberately chosen to strengthen this characterisation of the text. The designation is a bit misleading because it evokes Christian motifs. This edition comprises fragments of the eighth and ninth scrolls.

66 Charles Orzech recently highlighted the concept of liturgical ‘subjects’. He writes, “[…] [i]n this view, ‘subjects’ are socially produced in ritual and discourse. The subject then can be understood as an institutional construct, typical, rather than unique and fully autonomous—a subject produced socially for institutional ends. Thus, liturgy, performed in congregation, produces a liturgical subject that is primarily constructed in a social performance.” See Charles D. Orzech, “Tantric Subjects: Liturgy and Vision in Chinese Esoteric Ritual Manuals,” in Chinese and Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism, ed. Yael Bentor and Meir Shahar (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 21. He continues, “[…] we can see in such confessional liturgies a communal process through which the worshipper is created as a criminal subject in need of purification.” Ibid., 23.
which enhance its ritualistic features. Sponsors are given the opportunity to have their names inscribed in place holders based on Chinese mou jia (某甲) (a certain person, N.N.) at specific intervals provided by the text. The names included in the manuscripts shed some light on the persons who were active in the Uyghur Buddhist society of the Turfan region.

Peter Zieme achieved an important discovery because he identified a confession text he had originally published in the year 2001 in the reprint of his selected articles on Uyghur Buddhist studies.⁶⁷ The confession text in this unique manuscript, which also includes a remarkable version of the Araṇemīṭātaka, is a translation of the Chinese Cibei shui chanfa 慈悲水懺法 [The Dharma of Repentance Pertaining to the Water of Compassion] (T. 1910.45). A re-edition with matching Chinese text is highly desirable.

A late poem in strophical alliteration is dedicated to a glorification of the 35 Buddhas of Repentance to whom the practitioner bows.⁶⁸ Although there are similarities in this poem to other Buddhist works, the Old Uyghur work has some unique features regarding structure and wording.⁶⁹

Occasionally, the Uyghurs used their own script to write down texts in Sanskrit, although the Uyghur alphabet is ill-suited to such an endeavour. One example of a Sanskrit text written in the Uyghur script is a particular confession text to which parallel passages exist in Sanskrit texts from Central Asia in Brāhmī script. A single fragment contains parts in Uyghur script and in Sanskrit in Brāhmī script.⁷⁰ The text mentions that the person making the confession, Indrasena, has a monastic background, because it states that he is a saṃghasthavīra, a community leader or abbot.⁷¹ The Sanskrit verse text was likely produced in Central Asia.⁷²

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⁷¹ Hartmann, Wille, and Zieme “Indrasenas Beichte,” 206–208.

⁷² Ibid., 212.
2.3 Amitābha Worship

Pure Land Buddhism—characterised by its visualisation techniques—had a deep impact on Uyghur followers. After groups of Uyghurs—who fled from Mongolia after the demise of the East Uyghur Khaganate in 840 and settled in the Turfan area—converted to Buddhism on a large scale around the turn of the first millennium, some of them must have subsequently encountered Chinese Buddhist visualisation practices. The Toyok Cave Temple complex was definitively a hub of meditative practices centered on visualisation techniques of Amitābha and his paradise, so the Uyghurs who settled there must have had access to this tradition. Nobuyoshi Yamabe highlights the importance of this site by combining textual and pictorial evidence—especially Cave 20 and 42—to tracing the history of the Guan wuliangshou jing 觀無量壽經 [Sūtra on the Contemplation of Amitāyus] and related texts.

The early history of Uyghur Pure Land Buddhism has not been investigated in detail yet. The three foundational scriptures in Pure Land Buddhism, the Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra, Larger Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra and the Guan wuliangshou jing 觀無量壽經 [Sūtra (Concerning) the Contemplation of Amitāyus], have been identified by scholars as well as the Abitake (Chin. Amituo jing 阿彌陀經) [Sūtra of Amitābha], a text which has only partly matching passages in Chinese Buddhist literature. Either is its Chinese original lost or the Abitake is an original composition of a Uyghur author who compiled his text from various Chinese Pure Land sources and gave it its present form. Based on the materials discovered so far, Pure Land Buddhism did not spread among the Uyghurs of Turfan earlier than in the late 11th or early 12th century but remained an important Buddhist tradition until the late period (14th century). The Āryāparimitāyurjñānāmamahāyānasūtra [Sūtra of the Great Vehicle Entitled Knowledge of the Noble One with Infinite Life], which was particularly popular in the Mongolian period, is extant in

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75 There is also a well preserved Old Uyghur poetic adaptation edited in Kudara Kögi 百済康義 and Peter Zieme ペーター・ツィーメ, Uiguru-go no Kammuryōjukyo ウイグル語の観無量寿経 Guanwuliangshoujing in Uigur (Kyōto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1985).
about 200 fragments in both block-printed and handwritten form. The Amṛtatadundubhisvaradhāraṇī [Dhāraṇī of the Sound of the Drum That is Like Ambrosia], a text sometimes assigned to either Esoteric or mature Tantric Buddhism, can now be added to the corpus of works dedicated to the worship of Amitābha. Because only block-printed fragments are extant, the text was probably translated during the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368, 元). Perhaps both texts, the Āryāparimitāyurjñanānamahāyānasūtra and the Amṛtatadundubhisvaradhāraṇī, were translated into Old Uyghur based on versions in two different languages. A fragment of a poem from Dunhuang related to Pure Land beliefs refers to the famous Vaidehi story. Zhang and Zieme, the editors of this source, discovered that a text from the Turfan Collection in Berlin features a parallel text that has, however, different spellings of proper names.

2.4 Worship of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara

There are several Old Uyghur texts of ritual or practical background related to Avalokiteśvara, the most popular of which is the translation of the Guanyin jing [Avalokiteśvara Scripture], the 25th chapter of Kumārajiva’s (344–413, 鳩摩羅什) version of the Lotus Sūtra. This section centers on the 33 forms of the bodhisattva’s appearance and was transmitted as an independent text. A poem that praises Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara makes reference

77 For an edition and translation, see BT XXXVI, 41–121 (text A).
79 BT XXXVI, 125.
81 Edited in BT XIII, 64 (text 7).
82 On Avalokiteśvara in Esoteric and Tantric Buddhism, see George A. Keyworth, “Avalokiteśvara,” in Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 525–528. For the cult of this particular bodhisattva in Uyghur Buddhism, see also Yukiyo Kasai’s paper in this volume.
83 A nearly complete scroll of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra is edited and translated in Wilhelm Radloff, Kuan-ši-im Pusar: Eine türkische Übersetzung des XXV. Kapitels der chinesischen Ausgabe des Saddharmapuṇḍarīka (St. Petersburg: Imprimerie de l’Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1911). See also the edition and translation of a Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra scroll formerly housed in Berlin published the same year in Müller, Uigurica II, 14–20. This piece was rediscovered in the St. Petersburg Collection. Pchelin and Raschmann, “Turfan Manuscripts in the State Hermitage,” 21–23. Fragments from other manuscripts are found in various collections.
to this chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

The cult of the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed esoteric form of Avalokiteśvara spread across China in the 10th century. There is a corpus of texts translated from Chinese during the classical period of Uyghur Buddhism, which are ascribed to Śiṃko Śāli Tutu (fl. second half of 10th c./beginning of 11th c.), who was active around the turn of the first millennium. The most important text of this group, the *Qianshouqian Guanshiyin pusa guangda yuannan wu daibei xin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經 [The Vast, Perfect, and Unobstructed Dhāraṇī of the Great Compassionate Heart (Taught by) the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara with 1000 Eyes and 1000 Arms = *Nilakanṭha*(ka)sūtra] (T. 1060.20), is extant in several manuscripts, most of which are still unedited, although the relationship between this work and the *Qianyan qianbi guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神呪經 [The *Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī Spell of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara with 1000 Eyes and 1000 Arms*] (T. 1057.20) is not always certain.

Given that Śiṃko Śāli was probably the most illustrious translator

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86 While the edition is still to be expected, it remains unclear whether the Old Uyghur version is based on T. 1057, T. 1063, or both texts.

87 Zieme, “Local Literatures: Uighur,” 876b. For a re-edition of two preserved colophons, see *BT* XXVI, 125–129.


90 The edition and Japanese translation of the St. Petersburg fragments are in Shōgaito Masahiro 庄垣内正弘, *Roshia shōzu uigurugo bunken no kenkyū: Uiguru moji hyōki kan-bun to uigurugo butten tekisuto* ロシア所蔵ウイグル語文献の研究-ウイグル文字表記
of Uyghur Buddhist literature, we can perhaps infer that his reason for selecting the texts related to Avalokiteśvara can be found in his personal devotion to this particular bodhisattva.

Other manifestations of Avalokiteśvara were also popular, which is reflected in Old Uyghur literature and art. There is also a composite manuscript including the *Ruyi luon tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 如意輪陀羅尼神咒經 [Sūtra of the Dhārāṇī Spell of Cintāmanicakra]. Another text related to this bodhisattva that is preserved in many manuscripts and block-prints is the translation of the apocryphal *Foding xin da tuoluoni jing* 佛頂心大陀羅尼經 [Great Dhārāṇisūtra of the Heart of the Buddha’s Crest]. It was most likely translated in the pre-Mongol period but became more popular because the technique of printing, which spread under Mongol rule, facilitated the dissemination of the dhāraṇī. One pronounced practical function of this composition was its obstetrical benefit, because the second chapter is dedicated to making childbirth easier. But we also find a section with the ritual empowerment of water by means of talismanic writing. The Chinese original of the text was, until recently, mainly known from late prints from the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644, 明), dating from the 15th century. There are also copies of the Chinese text from Dunhuang that bear different titles and an engraved version from the site of Fangshan (房山), dated to the Khitan Empire (907–1125, in Chinese sources

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known as Liao (遼) or the Jurchen Jin Dynasty (1115–1234, 金). The Chinese version from Dunhuang originated around the year 850.

Only very few lines and the colophon of an Avalokiteśvarastava text are preserved. Two Avalokiteśvaraśādhana texts based on the tradition of mature Tantric Buddhism and translated from Tibetan are still not identified with any known Tibetan text. Two block prints of the first text date to the years 1333 and 1336 respectively.

It should be mentioned that a sizeable number of fragments of votive banners from the Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Berlin) found in the Turfan region relate to different aspects of this bodhisattva. One example (inv. no. I 6355) of the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara is well-known. Three banners show only the eyes of the bodhisattva. Two banners (I 7307 and I 7308) were found in Toyok, the one from Murtuk (I 7787) is painted in a crude way. One banner from Toyok (I 7307) is inscribed on both sides in a late form of Old Uyghur. It is tempting to see a connection with the Eye-Healing Avalokiteśvara known from Tibet and Mongolia, but this is

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94 Li Ling and Ma De, “Avalokiteśvara and the Dunhuang Dhārāṇī Spells,” in Chinese and Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism, ed. Yael Bentor and Meir Shahar (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 343–348. The authors discuss two further texts extolling Avalokiteśvara’s role as a helper with childbirth, namely the Juchannan tuoluoni [Dhārāṇī for Delivery from Childbirth Obstacles] and the Nan yuewen [Text on the Difficult Months (of Pregnancy)].

95 Li and Ma, “Avalokiteśvara and the Dunhuang Dhārāṇī Spells,” 345.


97 See BT VII, 63–67 (text B = block-prints) and 67–68 (text C = manuscript).


perhaps too speculative, because this cult developed later.\textsuperscript{103} One inscription identifies the main deity as Cintāmaṇicakra Avalokiteśvara, to whom a lay person, together with his wife, dedicated the banner.\textsuperscript{104}

Female manifestations of Avalokiteśvara have to be mentioned as well, the most famous of which is Tārā. The \textit{Tārā-ekavimsatistotra} was probably translated from a Tibetan original, but it is also possible that the translator consulted more than one version. Most of the extant copies are from different block-prints, while the \textit{stotra} part is also preserved in handwritten form.\textsuperscript{105} Another aspect of Avalokiteśvara is Cūṇḍi.\textsuperscript{106} An Old Uyghur translation of a \textit{dhāraṇī} dedicated to her has not been identified with any known version so far,\textsuperscript{107} although it has similarities to the \textit{Cūṇḍidevīdhāraṇīsūtra} (T. 1075.20).

What makes this text particularly interesting is that it is rich in ritualistic details (the construction of a \textit{maṇḍala}, the position of the image of the deity, the description of various ritual tools, the sequence of the \textit{vaśikāraṇa} and \textit{abhicāraka} rituals, the accomplishment of the painting of Cūṇḍidevi, etc.).

\begin{flushright}

\textsuperscript{104} Moriyasu and Zieme, “Uighur Inscriptions,” 463a (line 10).


\textsuperscript{107} Edition and translation are in BT XXIII, 65–79. On p. 77, Zieme points out that the \textit{Cūṇḍidevīdhāraṇī} is also attested in Arat, \textit{Eski türk şiri}, 9 (lines 78–81).
2.5 **Ritual Texts of Mature Tantric Buddhism**

There was a new religious dynamic in Uyghur Buddhism under Mongol rule. The growing interest the Mongol elite took in mature Tantric Buddhism also affected the Uyghurs. This coincided with the spread of the block-printing technique, which enabled the production and distribution of a large number of texts. The efficacy of these texts was probably thought to be enhanced by the glosses in Brāhmī script sometimes added to the Indic elements in the text. One of the most widespread block-printed texts with glosses in Brāhmī script is certainly the *Sitātapatrādhāraṇī*. Some scholars claim that next to various block-printed editions—most of them found at Murtuk—there should also be a handwritten manuscript but this assumption is groundless. The exact version from which the Old Uyghur translation was made has yet to be determined. It is generally assumed that it must have been a Sanskrit text.

In a colophon, the initiator Kamala Ačari, also known as Kamala Anantaširi (fl. 14th c.), mentions that he commissioned the printing of 108 copies of the

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text. The colophon expressly states that longevity of the Mongol imperial family is one of the intended goals of printing the text. There is one additional colophon of a block-printed text called the Sitātapratrāṣūtra, which states that a Sanskrit and an Old Uyghur version of this text were printed in an edition of 10,000 copies. The colophon also mentions the Mongol emperor. Since the Mongol emperors venerated Sitātapratrā as a powerful divinity in military conflicts, imperial patronage and distribution of this important text was probably encouraged with respect to the Uyghurs. Mythologically, Sitātapratrā is said to have originated from the Buddha’s Uṣṇīṣa. Another text held in high esteem among the Uyghurs during the Yuan Dynasty was the Uṣṇīṣavijayādhārani. It also exists only in block-printed editions, which are quite similar to those of the Sitātapratrādhārani. Here, glosses in Brāhmī script are likewise found. In all likelihood, it is significant that glosses in Brāhmī script are—in most cases, though not exclusively—found with texts that have a ritualistic character. Also the majority of the block-printed fragments were found during the third Turfan expedition in Murtuk. Where the Turfan expedition code of folios or fragments of the Uṣṇīṣavijayādhārani points to another site such as Dakianusḥahri (= Kočo) or, specifically, ruin μ in Kočo this often coincides with the information that can be gleaned from the fragments belonging to the Sitātapratrādhārani. Both texts were found at the same sites, obviously. Additionally, there is a handwritten fragment from Toyok (U 2378a) that contains an Old Uyghur explanation of the (inflected) Sanskrit terms in the Uṣṇīṣavijayādhārani on its verso.

111 The colophon is edited and translated into Modern Turkish in Arat, Eski türk şiirleri, 233–235. This first edition was later superseded by BT XIII, 170–172.
112 BT XIII, 172.
114 Uṣṇīṣavijayā and Tārā are also connected with this laksana.
116 There is one block-printed folded book that contains not only this dhārani but also the Aryanāparimitāvyānānāmahāyānasūtra. See BT XXXVI, 46.
117 Catalogue information, including newly identified parallels to the first edition, is provided in Yakup and Knüppel, Alttürkische Handschriften Teil II, 151–178. One fragment of a block-printed folded book formerly thought to be lost during World War II was rediscovered. See Pchelin and Raschmann, “Turfan Manuscripts in the State Hermitage,” 10–11.
One should also mention a translation made by Puṇyaśrī (fl. 14th c.) around the year 1330 from the Tibetan version of the Śrīcakrasaṃvaramaṇḍalābhīsamaya.119 This is clearly one of the most important ritual texts in Old Uyghur of tantric content. Another translation made from Tibetan during the Yuan Dynasty is a nearly complete booklet with square leaves, which contains Sakya Paṇḍita’s (1182–1251, Tib. Sa skya paNyA sRI kUN dga’ rgyal mtshan) Lam zab ma bla ma’i rnal ’byor [The Profound Path of Guru Yoga].120 Further texts of mature Tantric Buddhism are the following: a Vajrapāṇisādhanā,121 a fragmentary description of Ratnasambhava122 as well as part of a description of the five tathāgatas of which only sections on Ratnasambhava and Amoghasiddhi are preserved,123 two fragmentary maṇḍala descriptions one of which relating to Amoghasiddhi and his consort,124 a ritual instruction for a offering cake (Tib. gtor ma) ritual to Heruka,125 a visualisation of Cakrasaṃvara,126 two fragments of a yet unknown visualisation text including a dhāraṇī of a boar-headed Tejomahākāla,127 a fragment of a visualisation of several buddhas located on the body parts of the practitioner,128 a colophon to an unidentified text,129 a fragment of a praise of Vajrasattva130 as well as two fragments of block-prints of the Vajrasattva mantra,131 a Mañjuśrīsādhanā that was translated from Tibetan (’Phags pa Jam dpal gyi sgrub pa’i thabs) by Saṃghaśrī (fl. 14th c.) around the year 1300,132 a fragmentary double leaf of

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120 An Edition, translation, and comparison with the Tibetan original are in BT VIII, 17–79.

121 Edition and translation are in BT VII, 68–69 (text D).


125 Edition and translation in BT VII, 72 (text I).

126 Edition and translation in BT VII, 73–74 (text J). As shown in BT XXXVI, 159, this fragment might belong to text A in BT VII, because the fragment U 5689 runs parallel to parts of text A and parts of text J. But there are still some differences in the sequence of sentences. For an edition U 5689 and two further Cakrasaṃvara texts, see BT XXXVI, 159–171 (text F). The very late fragment Beida Fu Ti V (232, 4012, 483642) found on pp. 165–168 is an improved re-edition of Abdurishid Yakup, “A New Cakrasaṃvara Text in Uighur,” Kyoto University Linguistic Research 19 (2000): 43–58.


130 Edition and translation in BT VII, 78 (text M).

131 Edition and translation in BT XXXVI, 137–143 (text C).

Vajravidāraṇānāmasādhana, presumably translated from Tibetan,\textsuperscript{133} a ritual manual mentioning several gurus with Tibetan names,\textsuperscript{134} and a text relating to Tibetan Buddhism of unknown content.\textsuperscript{135} A composite ritual manual of four texts related to the Cakrasaṃvara cycle of Nāropa’s (1016–1100) teachings, which dates to around the year 1350 and begins with a text that is similar to the so-called Book of the Dead (Tib. Bar do thos grol),\textsuperscript{136} was discovered in Dunhuang.\textsuperscript{137} The three other mature Tantric Buddhist texts of this book are an instruction based on Nāropa’s teachings\textsuperscript{138} by Mahāguru Dharmadhvaja (1108–1176, Tib. Chos kyi rgyal mtsphan) from Amdo, a text on the six dhyanas of Caṇḍāli, and a sacrifice text for Cakrasaṃvara. This collection of four texts assembled in one book is a fascinating example of the late phase of Uyghur Buddhism and its complex relationship to Tibetan culture and yogic instruction in this region. We now know that in Gansu (甘肃), the religio-political situation was dominated by the inclinations of the ruling Mongol Bin (豳) clan, who promoted Tibetan Buddhism among the Uyghur population. Scholars are of the opinion that the modern Yugur nationality descended from this Uyghur group. The decision to align with Khubilai Khan (r. 1260–1294)—and

\textsuperscript{133} Edition and translation in BT XXXVI, 174–177 (text G).
\textsuperscript{134} Edition and translation in BT VII, 78–79 (text N).
\textsuperscript{135} Further unidentified tantric fragments, including a description of a Mañjuśrī visualisation are edited and translated in BT XXXVI, 179–195 (text H).
thus with Tibetan Buddhism—during the end of the 13th century is credited to the brothers Chūbaī (fl. second half of 13th–beginning of 14th c.) and Qabān (fl. second half of 13th c.).

One of the most popular texts of mature Tantric Buddhism was certainly the *Maṇjuśrīnāmasaṃyāti*. There is not only the block-printed Old Uyghur translation but also a block-printed version of the Sanskrit version in Uyghur characters with accompanying interlinear Brāhmī text (fig. 13.1). A

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single manuscript sheet featuring the *mantravīryāsa* [The Arrangement of the Mantra] in Sanskrit in Uyghur script is a recent discovery.\(^{141}\)

Zieme is preparing an edition of fragments related to the *Guhyasamājatantra*.\(^{142}\) The scroll of a text known in Old Uyghur studies as *bahšı ogdisi* [Praise of the Teacher] in the Turfan Collection in Berlin (U 5678) is believed to be related to Tibetan Buddhism.\(^{143}\) It mentions the Buddha Vairocana in one line (l.9). As mentioned above, the *Amṛtadundhubhisvaradhāraṇī*, which is related to the worship of Amitābha, is known from only three fragments.\(^{144}\) The *Māricūdhāraṇī*\(^{145}\) is a text that was most likely based on a Tibetan version and translated in the Mongolian period.\(^{146}\) Because she was associated with warfare,\(^{147}\) Māricū was perhaps attractive as a goddess to support the Mongol Empire and their vassals. In the *dhāraṇī* she is invoked to protect against enemies and dangerous wild beasts. Text A, which is edited in *Türkische Turfantexte V*, is still enigmatic. It contains several ritual instructions including visualisations, a *dhāraṇī*, and several *mudrās*.\(^ {148}\) The manuscript contains some archaic spellings, which point to a rather early translation probably made from a Chinese original, if a loan word such as *hwašin* from the Chinese *hua shen* (化身 = Skt. *nirmāṇakāya*) should prove to be conclusive. The text does not seem to belong to mature Tantric Buddhism in the narrow sense.

### 2.6 Amulets and Talismans

The use of amulets and talismans is widespread in Esoteric Buddhism.\(^ {149}\) The first amulet made known to the public is dedicated to Avalokiteśvara and


\(^{142}\) BT XXIII, 9.


\(^{144}\) See BT XXIII, 9, and the edition and translation in BT XXXVI, 124–136.

\(^{145}\) Edition and translation in BT XXIII, 89–114 (with corresponding Tibetan text).

\(^{146}\) BT XXIII, 89.

\(^{147}\) Sørensen, “Central Divinities,” 119.


was published by Wilhelm Radloff in 1911. In the same year, Müller—who referred to Radloff’s publication in his supplement to *Uigurica II*—added further examples, such as an amulet for easy childbirth and one for removing a headache. In 1937, Gabdul R. Rachmati published several other specimens—one for a person ill with fever, one to avert evil spirits, and one to avoid delivering a female child, among others. Zieme published them again in 2005. An apotropaic work with the still-enigmatic title *Garbaparimančanantisūtra* is preserved in printed and handwritten form. The text, which includes a *dhāraṇī* and is unusually replete with metaphors, even for Old Uyghur standards, says that the *apsaras* Śaśī, Urvaśī, and Tilottamā continuously recite the *sūtra*. The Buddha entrusts Ānanda with the task of helping a doe, heavy with young, in the throes of birth. Another apotropaic text which Radloff edited could be supplemented with further pieces by Zieme, who identified it as dedicated to the group of the Seven Guanyins, that is Avalokiteśvaras, and related to Amoghavajra’s (705–774, Chin. *Bukong* 不空) translation of the *Avalokiteśvaratrilokavijayavidyādharasūtra* (T. 1033.20).

### 2.7 Astrological and Astronomical Works

Uyghur astrology relies heavily on Chinese paradigms. A small number of fragments that definitely are from the pre-Mongolian period testify to the cult

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153 *BT* XXIII, 182–184. A large fragment of a scroll from the collection in Berlin (The Seven Guanyins), which was considered lost during World War II, was rediscovered in the St. Petersburg Collection. See Pchelin and Raschmann, “Turfan Manuscripts in the State Hermitage,” 8–9. Further amulets, some of which are connected with certain stars, are edited in *BT* XXIII, 184–185.
154 Edition and translation in *BT* XXIII, 151–177.
155 *BT* XXIII, 164 (lines H025–027).
156 Edition in *BT* XXIII, 179–182.
of Tejaḥprabha Buddha among the Uyghurs. They correspond to the *Foshuo daweide jinlun foding Chishengguang rulai xiaochu yiqie zainan tuoluoni jing* [The Dhāraṇī for Eliminating all Disasters of the Tathāgata Blazing Light on the Summit of the Greatly Awesome Virtues of the Buddha Golden Wheel Spoken by the Buddha] (T. 964.19). The names of donors mentioned in the fragments point to lay persons. In her book on Uyghur patronage in Dunhuang, Lilla Russell-Smith discusses in detail a pictorial representation of Tejaḥprabha from Bezeklik Cave 18 (= Grünewald's Cave 8). The most popular Old Uyghur astrological work of Yuan period was the *Yetikän Sudur*, a text with talismans and dhāraṇīs dedicated to the worship of the Big Dipper in order to procure long life, a concept generally related to the heavenly bodies in medieval Chinese Buddhism. It is preserved in handwritten and block-printed form (fig. 13.2). A small fragment in Tibetan script was also identified by Zieme, who was able to reconstruct nearly the whole text. Some of the seals or talismans are preserved. Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian versions are also extant. The Old Uyghur version is related to the Chinese *Foshuo beidou qixing yanming jing* [The Sūtra of the Seven Stars of the Big Dipper Procuring Longevity Spoken by the Buddha] (T. 1397.21). The relationship between the

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158 There is also one temple banner inscribed with the dhāraṇī of this text. See Moriyasu, Zieme, “Uighur Inscriptions,” 466a–468a. On Tejaḥprabha see Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of the Planets,” 239–241.

159 BT XXIII, 85.


162 On the connection between the worship of the Big Dipper and procuring longevity, see Kotyk, “Buddhist Astrology,” 202–204. See also Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of the Planets,” 237.


164 BT XXIII, 128–129.

165 See the edition and translation in BT XXIII, 115–149, which supersedes all previous work on the Old Uyghur version.

Old Uyghur and the Mongolian versions is not sufficiently clear. Although phrased differently, both extant Old Uyghur colophons mention that a posatha day was selected by the lay donors for copying (in case of a manuscript) or printing (in case of a block-print) the work. The donors of the manuscript colophon request protection for the realm while the colophon of the block-print

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167 See Johan Elverskog, "The Mongolian Big Dipper Sūtra," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29.1 (2008): 93: "The opening passage of the Mongolian text provides a history of its translation: it was translated from Chinese into Mongolian, which in turn was used as the basis for the Tibetan translation. The colophon also notes that an Old Uyghur translation was prepared and printed, but it never states explicitly whether it was used as an intermediary in the translation from Chinese into Mongolian."

168 For the colophons, see BT XXIII, 148–149.
asks for welfare for the Mongol royal family. The latter colophon tells us that the lay female donor Sıl Tegin commissioned the printing of 1000 copies of this text in order to recover from illness and never be reborn in a female body in the future.

The *Modingqie jing* 摩登伽經 [Mātaṅgīsūtra] (T. 1300.21)—known also under the Sanskrit title *Śārdulakarṇāvadāna*—is a work with astrological contents.\(^\text{169}\) We can now add at least four further fragments (Mainz 356a–c, U 293) to the published materials of this version.

In case of the *Grahamātykadhārāṇī*, the Old Uyghur fragments show corresponding parts to the *Zhuxingmu tuoluoni jing* 諸星母陀羅尼經 [Sūtra of the Mother Dhāraṇī Among the Stars] (T. 1302) as well as to the *Foshuo shengyaomu tuoluoni jing* 佛說聖曜母陀羅尼經 [The Holy Mother Dhāraṇī Spoken by the Buddha] (T. 1303.21).\(^\text{170}\)

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\(^{169}\) Edition and translation in *BT* XXIII, 47–60. The fragments U 1580 and U 1581 are actually part of the narrative cycle of stories called the *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā*. See Jens Wilkens, *Alttürkische Handschriften Teil 10: Buddhistische Erzähltexte* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010), 191 (no. #232), 275–276 (no. 370).

\(^{170}\) Edition and translation in *BT* XXIII, 61–64.
Literature of astrological content must have been substantial at some point among the Uyghurs. The introductory part of a treatise housed in the Beijing National Library on the portents of meteors, depending on their outward appearance, was recently identified.\textsuperscript{171} So far, the text as a whole has no matching Chinese parallel, although the editor identifies similar descriptions in Chinese astrological or divinatory texts. Matsui identified fragments of almanac divination texts related to the \textit{Yuxiaji} \text{[Records of the Jade Casket]} found at Dunhuang and dating to the Yuan Dynasty.\textsuperscript{172}

In the late phase of Uyghur Buddhism, other astrological and hemerological works (fig. 13.3) flooded the scene, as did amulets devised for protection against various influences (illness, evil spirits, groundless accusations, death of livestock etc.) and for application in different aspects of life (childbirth, combat, and so on).\textsuperscript{173} A new evaluation of these texts that takes the progress in Dunhuang studies into account is a desideratum.

2.8 \textit{Spells and Incantations}

The \textit{Āṭānātikasūtra} and \textit{Āṭānātikahrdaya} were first known from Sanskrit-Old Uyghur bilingual texts,\textsuperscript{174} but later, monolingual Old Uyghur versions of both texts were also discovered.\textsuperscript{175} Two leaves (U 3831, U 3832) of a \textit{Āṭānātikasūtra} manuscript in gold letters on indigo paper are remarkable because the text is presented in a particularly prestigious way (fig. 13.4). The translation of the \textit{Āṭānātikasūtra} was, in all likelihood, made from a Sanskrit text (version from Xinjiang).\textsuperscript{176}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{173} Most texts are edited in Rachmati, \textit{Türkische Turfan-Texte VII}. Some fragments are based on the system of the nine palaces (Chin. \textit{jiu gong} 九宫). A re-edition of the amulets, including new ones, some of which are connected to the stars, is found in \textit{BT XXIII}, 182–185.
\item \textsuperscript{175} Edition and translation in \textit{BT XXIII}, 31–45.
\item \textsuperscript{176} \textit{BT XXIII}, 37.
\end{itemize}
Practice and Rituals in Uyghur Buddhist Texts

Figure 13.4 Old Uyghur leaf of the Āṭānāṭikāsūtra
U 3831 RECTO, DEPOSITUM DER BERLIN-BRANDENBURGISCHEN
AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN IN DER STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU
BERLIN—PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ ORIENTABTEILUNG
Three different versions of a snake charm entitled *Maitrīsūtra* that is related to the *Upasenasūtra* were identified: first, a complete scroll containing a transliteration of the Sanskrit text in Uyghur script; second, one leaf of a small booklet with a Sanskrit-Old Uyghur bilingual text; and third, a *pustaka* manuscript in Old Uyghur. Only the first and the second text are independent works, while the third is embedded in a manuscript that is a composite text with a basic narrative structure and formulaic parts. As the title indicates and as is explicitly stated at the beginning of the third text, an important practical aspect of the snake charm is the perfecting of *maitrī*.

The practice of rainmaking with a special kind of stone is widespread in Inner Asia. There are a few fragments in Old Uyghur that mention this stone. One of these fragments (U 3004) mentions a *maṇḍala* on the verso. Interestingly, the word *mantal* (Skt. *maṇḍala*) is used together with the verb *ba*- ‘to bind’, which here means ‘to construct’ or ‘to make use of in the context of a magical ritual’.

An unidentified manuscript contains a quote from a ritual text along with two contracts and scribbles. In lines 13–15, the quote mentions that the practitioner should make a water *maṇḍala* in order to cause rain to fall.

There are further fragments of spell-related literature. The Uyghurs knew the *Pañcarakṣā* quite well, as one can infer from extant *mantras* in Uyghur script. There are also fragments pertaining to individual works of the *Pañcarakṣā* collection. And there is an archaic text that the editors interpreted as

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179 For this manuscript, see Wilkens, *Alttürkische Handschriften Teil 10*, 302–306.


182 Ibid., 148.

183 Raschmann and Sertkaya, *Alttürkische Handschriften Teil 20*, 170–171 (cat. no. 149, especially fn. 6).

containing rhymed sayings, but which I prefer to treat as an incantation. In line 10, the word savıš ‘jinx, incantation, spell’ appears in the phrase ağı savıš ‘revealing spell’. However, the overall impression is that the incantation is not Buddhist in content. In the last three lines, the speaker announces that he wants to collect taş of certain animals, which the editors take to mean ‘testicles’. But the literal meaning of the word is ‘stone’, and because all the animals mentioned are ruminants (sheep, bovines, goats, and stags), I take it to mean ‘bezoar’ (a concretion in the stomach or intestines of some animals).

2.9 Consecration Rituals

The stake inscriptions are a highly important group of local Buddhist sources, four of which are in Old Uyghur (nos. I, III, IV, and V) and one in Chinese (no. II). These stakes made of wood are clearly connected to consecration rituals of Buddhist buildings. In the inscribed texts of stake inscriptions I and III, members of the Uyghur nobility appear as a group of faithful Buddhists. It is possible that there is a connection between these wooden stakes—either

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188 See the article by Takao Moriyasu, “Uighur Buddhist Stake Inscriptions from Turfan,” in *De Dunhuang à Istanbul: Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, ed. Louis Bazin and Peter Zieme (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 148–223, in which stake inscriptions I and III are edited and translated. According to Moriyasu (ibid., 157), stake inscription V is from the Yuan Dynasty.

*Malov* (Leningrad: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften der USSR, 1928), 109–112. It was later identified and reedited with parallel Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Mongolian, in Pentti Aalto, “Prolegomena to an Edition of the Pañcarakṣa,” *Studia Orientalia* 19.2 (1954): 29–34. Aalto also points out that the text published in Radloff, *Uigurische Sprachdenkmäler*, 194–196 is likely a commentary to the Pañcarakṣa, although it was—in Aalto’s words—“very clumsily edited”. However, Aalto’s assumption that the text is a commentary cannot be confirmed. In the first text Radloff edited, the deity is conceived of as male. Zieme identified a fragment of the Mahāpratisarā from the Northern Section of the Mogao Caves (B 464;146) as the Mahāpratisarā (BT XXIII, 9). On the Mahāpratisarā, see Gergely Hidas, *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī, the Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells: Introduction, Critical Editions and Annotated Translations* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 2012). A reference to the Old Uyghur version is on p. 10.

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driving them into the earth or placing them into walls—and the use of khadirakīlakas (pegs made of khadira wood) in Buddhist rituals of India and elsewhere. It is possible that the mention of a harpist (Ou kuyhaucī) in an enumeration of persons from different walks of life in stake inscription I indicates that the consecration ritual itself was accompanied by music.\(^{189}\)

### 3 Concluding Remarks

The appropriation of ritualistic literature took a long time in Uyghur Buddhism and served various purposes, from individual needs to imperial demands. The history of this process still has to be reconstructed on the basis of the extant sources. Such an endeavour would also have to take local varieties of Buddhism into account. The secular documents provide interesting materials, such as naming the four mahārāja kings and the seven sisters as witnesses in contracts.\(^{190}\) What seems to be certain now is that Dunhuang was a source of new text-related ritual systems, such as the one exemplified in the Shiwang jīng 十王經 [Scripture on the Ten Kings], which was extremely popular at Dunhuang. The text reached the Turfan region, presumably in the late phase of classical Uyghur literature, by the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century. von Gabain was the first to discuss illustrated fragments of the Old Uyghur version of the Scripture on the Ten Kings retrieved from the Turfan region.\(^{191}\) Kōgi Kudara later added a fragment found at Dunhuang.\(^{192}\) Given the importance of the Chinese original of this scripture in its different recensions in the Dunhuang region,\(^{193}\) it seems highly probable that the Uyghurs received

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\(^{189}\) Jens Wilkens, “Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom and Beyond,” in *Transfer of Buddhism Across Central Asian Networks (7th to 13th Centuries)*, ed. Carmen Meinert (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 202.


the complex system of the purgatories and the related scripture as well as their iconography and rites from Dunhuang. Zieme studies the textual material in an article, later complemented by Simone-Christiane Raschmann's paper. The case of the transmission of this particular work may serve as an example of how open the Uyghurs were to religious innovations. Art historical research reveals that the esoteric pictorial programme of some of the caves at Bezeklik (Turfan)—especially the iconography of Avalokiteśvara—was also inspired by esoteric Dunhuang art. This applies especially to Cave 20, where a pedestal, mural paintings, silk banners, and even vestiges of a wooden statue are connected with this bodhisattva. The name Çituŋ (Chin. Zhi tong 智通) mentioned in a cartouche retrieved from the cave was identified as the same person who acted as a translator of the Chinese dhāraṇī mentioned above (T. 1057. 20).

A further line of enquiry is ascertaining the ritual implications of why various works serving ritual purposes were combined in one manuscript. To give one example, the last part of the confession text Kšanti kilmak nom bitig [The Book Called Making a Confession] mentioned above is extant in fragmentary form in one specific piece of a scroll from the Turfan Collection in Berlin (U 5033). The first part of the fragment refers apparently to the mis deeds of other people. It is followed by a colophon which remarks that two lay persons commissioned the copy of one scroll each of the Yamarājasūtra

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197 Koichi Kitsudo, “Historical Significance of Bezeklik Cave 20 in the Uyghur Buddhism,” in Torfan no bukkyō to bijutsu: Uiguru bukkyō o chūshin ni トルファンの仏教と美術:ウイグル仏教を中心に, Buddhism and Art in Turfan: From the Perspective of Uyghur Buddhism, ed. by Research Center for Buddhist Cultures in Asia, Ryukoku University (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 2013), 142–143. See also Fig. 3.

198 Kitsudo, “Historical Significance,” 147.

199 See also the colophon by Bodhidhvaja Śīla mentioned above.

(OU y(a)mlñwñ-ste, Chin. Yanluowang jing [閻羅王經], the Säkiz Yügmäk Yaruk [Brilliance of the Eight Accumulations], and the Book Called Making a Confession.201 The context of the collection of texts to which the colophon refers could very well be a mortuary ritual to safeguard the wellbeing of the donors’ deceased family members. Transference of merit for deceased family members was widespread among the Uyghurs. One example is a famous votive banner that was devised for the soul (OU özüt) of Kara Totok, the father of the dedicating person.202 Zsuzsanna Gulácsi recently interpreted this specimen as a funerary banner.203 Written information on textile materials in ritual functions is rather scarce, but one such document from a late period, viz. the Yuan Dynasty, is a request for embroidered depictions of Vajrapāṇi, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī.204

201 A re-edition and translation of the colophon is in BT XXVI, 246.