

A study of the new fragment of *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra* in Old Uyghur

Tursunjan Imin*

(Institute of Dunhuang Studies, Lanzhou University)

Abdurehim Rustem**

(Institute of Dunhuang Manuscripts, Dunhuang Academy)

Abstract

This paper presents the critical edition of a previously unstudied Old Uyghur manuscript fragment (D1150) housed in the Dunhuang Academy. This fragment, written in cursive Uyghur script and consisting of 18 lines, corresponds to the verses on ‘praise of the perfection of patience’ from the third chapter of the Chinese *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra* 大薩遮尼乾子所說經 *dà sàzhē nígān zǐ suōshuō jīng* in the Taishō Tripiṭaka. Although both surviving Old Uyghur fragments of this sūtra lack colophons, making it impossible to determine whether the translation predates the Yuan dynasty, the cursive script and orthographic features of D1150 suggest it was copied during the Yuan period.

Key Words: Old Uyghur, *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra* 大薩遮尼乾子所說經, chapter of Yi Cheng 一乘品, Dunhuang Academy Collection

* Prof. Dr., Institute of Dunhuang Studies, Lanzhou University, trsunjan@sina.com; ORCID: 0000-0001-6586-9100.

** Assoc. Res. Libr., Institute of Dunhuang Manuscript Studies, Dunhuang Academy, abdurehimrustem@hotmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0002-6123-2003.

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Özet : Eski Uygurca'da Yazılmış *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra*'sının Yeni Bir Parçasının İncelenmesi

Bu makale, Dunhuang Akademisi'nde bulunan ve daha önce incelenmemiş Eski Uygurca bir el yazması parçasının (D1150) kritik baskısını sunuyor. Bu parça, Eski Uygur alfabesiyle yazılmış 18 satırlık bir metinden oluşuyor ve Taishō Tripiṭaka'da yer alan Çince *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra* 大薩遮尼乾子所說經'nin (*dà sàzhē nígān zǐ suōshuō jīng*) üçüncü bölümdeki 'sabrın mükemmelliğini övmek'le ilgili dizelere karşılık geliyor. Her ne kadar bu sutranın günümüze ulaşmış iki Eski Uygurca parçasının da kolofonları olmasa ve dolayısıyla çevirinin Yuan Hanedanlığı'ndan önce mi yapıldığı belirlenemese de, D1150'nin el yazı özellikleri ve ortografik karakteristikleri, onun Yuan döneminde kopyalanmış olabileceğini gösteriyor.

Anahtar sözcükler: Eski Uygurca, *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sutra* 大薩遮尼乾子所說經, Yi Cheng bölümü 一乘品, Dunhuang Akademisi Koleksiyonu

Introduction

The Chinese translation of the *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra* (大薩遮尼乾子所說經) was translated by Bodhiruci (菩提留支 *pú tí liú zhī*) during the Northern Wei Dynasty (AD 386–534) and belongs to the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. It consists of ten scrolls and is divided into twelve sections. It is also referred to as 大薩遮尼乾子受記經 *dà sàzhē nígān zǐ shòujì jīng*, 大薩遮尼乾子經 *dà sàzhē nígān zǐ jīng* and 菩薩境界奮迅法門經 *púsà jìngjiè fènxùn fāmén jīng* in Chinese. It is now included in Volume 9, Lotus Sūtra Section 法華部 of the Taishō Tripiṭaka (No. 0272). This scripture is a different translation of the same original text as 菩薩行方便境界神通變化經 *púsà xíng fāngbiàn jìngjiè shéntōng biànhuà jīng*, which was translated by Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 *qiú nà bá tuó luó* during the Liu Song Dynasty (劉宋, AD 420-479).¹ The content of this scripture recounts that *Mahāsāgaranirgrantha* (尼乾子外道論師大薩遮), a doctrinal master of the *Nirgrantha* heretics, in response to the inquiry posed

¹ 佛光大辭典增訂版, 2014: 1203.

by Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, expounded the sublime and wonderful Dharma of Mahāyāna; the Buddha highly praised and affirmed this, and bestowed a prediction (Skt. *vyākaraṇa*) upon him.

Nirgrantha², the founder of the Jain school, is noted in Buddhist scriptures as one of the leaders of the major non-Buddhist belief systems (六師外道, *liù shī wài dào*) in Śākyamuni's time. He was born in the fifth century BCE and was known as Jina (the Victor) and Mahāvīra (the Great Hero). His followers practised as naked mendicants, covering themselves with ashes and seeking to free themselves from all ties. Mahāvīra (also called Jñāti 若提 *ruò tí* after his family name) taught that his doctrines shared several points in common with Buddhism, including the denial of the authority of the Vedas and the disapproval of killing. He was nonetheless an opponent of Śākyamuni, since his doctrines were deterministic: with everything subject to fate, no religious practices could change one's lot. Since one branch of the school practised nudity, it is sometimes known as the Nudist Heresy (裸形外道 *luǒ xíng wài dào*; Skt. *Nigaṇṭha*) or the Shameless Heresy (無慚外道 *wú cán wài dào*; Skt. *ājīvaka*, *nirgrantha*). References to the Nirgranthas in indigenous East Asian works do not always refer specifically to this school. Instead, they are often used as a general term for non-Buddhist Indian religious schools. The Sanskrit term *Nirgrantha* originally refers to one who is free from all ties and without possessions, a saint who has withdrawn from the world and lives either as a hermit or as a religious mendicant, wandering naked.³

The Sūtra comprises twelve chapters: the first is the prologue; the second is the chapter on inquiry into Doubts (問疑品); the third is the chapter on the One Vehicle (一乘品); the fourth is the chapter on visiting King Rāja Subhūti (詣嚴熾王品); the fifth is the chapter on the King's Discourse (王論品); the sixth is the chapter on Requesting Food (請食品); the seventh is the chapter on Inquiring about Transgressions (問罪過品); the eighth is the chapter on the Tathāgata's Unblemished Merits and Virtues (如來無過功德品); the ninth is the chapter on Visiting the Tathāgata (詣如來品); the tenth

² *Nirgrantha*, in Pāli *Nigaṇṭha-nātaputta* (Vardhamāna), in Chinese 尼乾陀若提子 *ní gān tuó ruò tí zǐ*.

³ 佛光大辭典增訂版, 2014: 1889, 2409.

is the chapter on Preaching the Dharma (說法品); the eleventh is the chapter on Buddhist Prediction of enlightenment (授記品); and the twelfth is the chapter on the Merits of Faith (信功德品). The essential purpose of the entire Sūtra can be broadly divided into two aspects: the worldly Dharma and the transcendental Dharma. The worldly Dharma reveals the meaning of the royal way and the essential art of governing a state, and it lists various worldly transgressions as a warning. Concerning the transcendental Dharma, it explains the practices and methods cultivated by Bodhisattvas, the merits and virtues of the Tathāgata, and the principles of ‘the One Vehicle exclusive to the Buddha’, ‘the universality of Buddhahood’, and ‘the eternal stillness of the Dharma-body’. The core of this Sūtra lies in explaining the authentic doctrinal meaning of ‘unfolding the Three Vehicles and revealing the significance of the One Vehicle’; therefore, its primary purpose is not different from that of the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra). However, this Sūtra creatively combines worldly Dharma and transcendental Dharma, making the complex doctrine of ‘the convergence of the Three Vehicles into the One Vehicle’ easier for ordinary believers to understand and accept.⁴

The content of the *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viśaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra* integrates core Buddhist doctrines with discussions of social governance and engages in intellectual interactions with Jainism (the Nirgrantha heretics). It holds a unique position in the developmental history of Chinese Buddhism. It is translated by Bodhiruci, the fourth-generation disciple of Bodhisattva Vasubandhu (世親菩薩 *shì qīn pú sà*), an eminent Indian Buddhist master who travelled to China during the Northern Wei Dynasty. This sūtra was included in successive editions of the Chinese Buddhist Canon and is also preserved in the Dunhuang manuscripts. The first three chapters revolve around ‘the Dharma Gate of Vigour in the Expedient Realm of the One Vehicle Bodhisattva Path,’ emphasising that practitioners attain Unsurpassed Perfect Enlightenment (Anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi) through the practice of the Twelve Wonderful Dharmas, the Twelve Superior Dharmas, and the Six Perfections. The latter nine chapters centre on the dialogues between Sātya, a master of the Nirgrantha heretics, and King Rāja

⁴ Xu 2023: 202.

Subhūti, expounding mundane dharmas such as the Ten Wholesome Karmic Paths, the way of governing a kingdom, and the merits of generosity, and ultimately guiding all sentient beings to turn toward Buddhism.

This Old Uyghur fragment, D1150, was translated from Chinese into Old Uyghur. The text corresponds to the Chinese version of the *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra*, specifically the chapter on the One Vehicle, Section 3.1. It is centred on ‘the One Vehicle teaching’, with the chapter on the One Vehicle systematically explaining the essential fundamentals and practical paths of Bodhisattva practice. It mainly elaborates on the twelve fundamental conditions for arousing the Bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment, specifically the arousal of the *Anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi-citta* (無上正等正覺心), which itself requires the perfect accomplishment of twelve intrinsic qualities.

1. Text Edition: Transcription and Translation

Fragment D1150 from the Old Collection of the Dunhuang Academy is written in Old Uyghur cursive script and comprises 18 lines. The paper is yellow, measuring 23 cm in width and 23 cm in length. To date, only one folio of the Old Uyghur fragment, with the inventory number GT15–40, housed in the National Library of China, was published in 2023 by Aydar Mirkamal.⁵ This fragment from the National Library of China comes from the same manuscript as D1150, and its contents are directly consecutive. Both fragments, GT15–40 and D1150, contain the section of ‘verses in praise of the Perfection of Patience (Kṣānti-pāramitā)’. D1150 thus represents the second identified fragment of this sūtra, following the discovery of GT15–40 held by the National Library of China.

This fragment shows an alternating use of specific graphemes, particularly between t and d, s and z, in its transcription. Based on this orthographic feature, the manuscript is suggested to date to the Yuan dynasty. The Uyghur translator of this Buddhist Sūtra and the exact date of its translation remain subjects for future investigation.

⁵ Mirkamal, 2023: 111-114.

1.1. Transcription of D1150

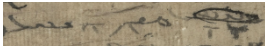
1. [t]uryuryalı *küsäsär* särinmāk yeg baştinqi < +qamay-ta>
2. [ol.] särinmāktä yorıdaçılariy kördäçi
3. [b]arča ögirür-lär sävinür-lär aŷ-ir-[la]yur-lar
4. ymä aŷu-luy kö[ng]ül-lärin tiŷip barča-ta ädgü
5. *körgäli* q-a q(a)daş []liŷ tuŷurur-lar: alqu
6. qamay ançulayu kälmiş-lär-ning täng tüz köngül-kä
7. tükäl-lig bolup tınl(i)ŷ-lar-qa umuy tayaq
8. bolmaq-lar-ı ärsär barča särinmāk-tä yorımaq
9. uyurınta anın ärür. anı üçün alqu burxan
10. oylan-lar-ı üzälik-siz yoluŷ tiläyü tınl(i)ŷ-
11. -lar-qa tayaq yöläk bolıalı küsäsär inçip
12. särinmākig b(ä)rk y(a)rp qılyu-luq ol. bodıstv-
13. -lar birök alqu burxan-lar-ning tuyunmaq-in?
14. -ta turyalı küsäsär, inçip alqu nom-lar-ning
15. *quruy*-ın tınl(i)ŷ-lar-ning⁶ bulıuluq-suz-in
16. qolulayı-luq ol. muntay osuyluy särinmāk
17. -in yorisar burxan-lar-ning ädgü-läringä adruq-
18. -läringä tükäl-lig bolıalı uyur. anı üçün

1.2. Corresponding Chinese Text from Taishō

The Chinese text below is taken from the 大薩遮尼乾子所說經 in the Taishō Tripiṭaka, which is published online as part of the Buddhist Canon by the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA). The highlighted underlined section corresponds to the Old Uyghur text.

Taishō, No. 0272, Vol. 9, p0322a16—28:

若欲為眾生，作諸歸依處，令生無畏心，忍辱最第一。能行忍辱者，見者皆歡喜，怨家捨毒心，皆生親友想。一切諸如來，成就平等心，眾生所歸依，皆由行忍故。是故諸佛子，欲求無上道，為物作依止，當堅固忍辱。菩薩若欲住，一切

⁶  in front of *tınl(i)ŷ-lar-ning* (sentient beings), *tylyp* was marked for deletion. This was a scribal error committed by the copyist, which was subsequently marked for deletion by drawing a circle around it.

佛菩提，當觀諸法空，眾生不可得，如是行忍行，能具佛功德，是故諸菩薩，常應修忍辱。菩薩若修忍，當遠離二邊⁷

1.3. Translation of the Uyghur text:

1 If one seeks to arouse the (mind of fearlessness), Kṣānti (Patience) is the foremost (Dharma). 2-3 Those who see those who practise Kṣānti will feel joy in their hearts. 4 They will abandon their poisoned hearts, 5 and generate familial affection and companionate affection. 6 All Tathāgatas have attained a mind of impartial equality, 7 being the refuge and support of all sentient beings, 8. This is entirely due to the Tathāgatas' cultivation of Kṣānti (Kṣānti-pāramitā). 9 Therefore, if all sons and daughters of the Buddhas, 10-11 seeks to pursue the supreme way (unsurpassed Buddha-path, anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi path) and become the reliance and support of all sentient beings, 12 they should cultivate Kṣānti firmly and steadfastly. 13 If a Bodhisattva wishes to attain the perfect enlightenment of all Buddhas, 14-15 they should realise through contemplation that all dharmas are empty (Śūnyatā), that sentient beings are hard to reach. 16. By practising the path of Kṣānti in this way, 17-18 one will perfect all the virtuous qualities of the Buddhas; therefore,

1.4. Comparison of Transcription, Translation, and the Chinese Text

lines	Transcription of Uyghur text	English Translation	Taishō Tripiṭaka No.0272
1	[t]uryuryalı kūsāsār sārinmāk yeg baštinqi <+qamay-ta>	If one seeks to arouse the (mind of fearlessness), Kṣānti (Patience) is the foremost (Dharma)	令生無畏心，
2	[ol.] sārinmāktā yorīdačīlarıy kördäči	2-5 Those who see those who practise Kṣānti will feel joy in their hearts. They will abandon their poisoned hearts and	能行忍辱者，
3	[b]arča ögür-lär sävinür-lär aḡ-ır-[la]yur-lar		見者皆歡喜
4	ymä aḡu-luy kö[ng]ül-lärin tiṭip barča-ta ädgü		怨家捨毒心，

⁷ Taishō vol.9, No.0272: https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T1723_005

5	<i>körgäli q-a q(a)daş []līy</i> <i>tuγurur-lar: alqu</i>	generate familial affection and companionate affection.	皆生親友想。
6	<i>qamay ančulayu kälmiš-lär-ning täng tüz köngül-kä</i>	6-9 All Tathāgatas have attained a mind of impartial equality, being the refuge and support of all sentient beings, is entirely due to the Tathāgatas' cultivation of Kṣānti (Kṣānti-pāramitā).	一切諸如來，成就平等心，眾生所歸依，皆由行忍故。 是故諸佛子，
7	<i>tükäl-lig bolup tīnl(i)γ-lar-qa umuy tayaq</i>		
8	<i>bolmaq-lar-i ärsär barča särinmāk-tä yorımaq</i>		
9	<i>uyurınṭa anın ärür. anı üčün alqu burxan</i>		
10	<i>oγlan-lar-i üzälik-siz yoluγ tıläyü tīnl(i)γ-</i>	10-12 Therefore, if all sons and daughters of the Buddhas seek to pursue the supreme way (unsurpassed Buddha-path, anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi path) and become the reliance and support of all sentient beings, they should cultivate Kṣānti firmly and steadfastly.	欲求無上道，為物作依止，當堅固忍辱。
11	<i>-lar-qa tayaq yöläk bolıalı kūsäsär inčip</i>		
12	<i>särinmākig b(ä)rk y(a)rp qılyu-luq ol. bodıstv-</i>		
13	<i>-lar birök alqu burxan-lar-ning tuyenmaq-in?</i>	13-15 If a Bodhisattva wishes to attain the perfect enlightenment of all Buddhas, they should realise through contemplation that all dharmas are empty (Śūnyatā), that sentient beings are hard to reach.	菩薩若欲住，一切佛菩提，當觀諸法空，眾生不可得，
14	<i>-ta turıalı kūsäsär, inčip alqu nom-lar-ning</i>		
15	<i>quruy-in tīnl(i)γ-lar-ning bulıuluq-suz-in</i>		
16	<i>qolulayu-luq ol. munṭay osuyluy särinmāk</i>	16-18 By practising the path of Kṣānti in	

17	-in yorīsar burxan-lar-nīng ädgü-läringä adruq-	this way, one will perfect all the virtuous qualities of the Buddhas; therefore,	如是行忍 行， 能具佛功 德，
18	-laringa tükäl-lig bolyalı uyur. añi üçün		

2. Notes

01 *[t]urγurγalı kūsāsār*: This section may be a supplement missing part of GT 15—40. *qorqinčsüz köngül [t]urγurγalı kūsāsār* corresponds to 若欲.....令生無畏之心 in Chinese text, meaning ‘arising in the mind, the mind of fearlessness’. *kūsāsār* is not clear in the fragment; it’s supplemented based on 若欲 in the Chinese text and *kūsāsār* in lines 11 and 14. *qorqinčsüz köngül* corresponds to 無畏⁸.

01 *sārinmāk*: ‘patience under insult, especially bearing insult and distress without resentment’ corresponds to 忍辱⁹ in Chinese and Sanskrit *Kṣānti pāramitā*; The six things that ferry one beyond the sea of mortality to nirvana, six *pāramitās* 六度. It refers to the practice of enduring humiliation and suffering without generating anger or resentment.¹⁰

01 *yeg baštinqi*: corresponds to 最第一 in Chinese text. It means the highest and the best.

01 *qamay-ta*: ‘primary, foremost’, it is written on the lower left side of the first line, *qamay-ta* may be a later-added content. It always appears as *qamay-ta baštinqi*, meaning ‘primary, foremost’.

01 *sārinmāktä yorīdačılar* : ‘one who practices *Kṣānti pāramitā*’, corresponds to Chinese 能行忍辱者. In *Āgama* texts, 別譯雜阿含經 *sārmāk sārinmāktä bīsrundačılar* 修忍辱 exercise forbearance (Skt. *kṣānti*).¹¹

⁸ Soothill & Hodous (2003: 381)

⁹ Soothill & Hodous (2003: 134-135, 237)

¹⁰ Soothill & Hodous (2003: 135,238).

¹¹ Kasai et al. (2017: 218, 225)

02-03 *kördäči [b]arča*: It refers to ‘all who see the one who is able to practice Kṣānti pāramitā’, which corresponds to Chinese 見者皆. The first letter in *[b]arča* is missing; it was supplemented based on *barča* in the 4th line.

03 *ayü-luy kö[ng]ül-lärin tiṭip*: It might be translated as ‘abandon their poisoned hearts’, which corresponds to Chinese 舍毒心.

04-05 *ädgü körgäli q-a q(a)daš []liṭuyurur*: ‘generate familial affection and companionate affection’ corresponds to 皆生親友想 ‘all generate the thought of familial affection and companionate affection’, - *gäli* is clear, *körgäli* is supplemented based on *ädgü*.

06 *qamay ančulayu kälmiš-lär*: corresponds to 一切諸如來, refers to ‘All Tathāgatas of the Three Times (past, present, future)’. *ančulayu kälmiš* refers to Tathāgata, the Uyghur translation of 如來.

06 *täng tüz köngül*: ‘an impartial mind’, it corresponds to Chinese 平等心 ‘An impartial mind, no respecter of persons, not loving one and hating another’¹². In the Uyghur *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya turyuryalī täng tüz köngül-üg* ‘who arise in a neutral stance’¹³.

07 *tīnl(i)γ-lar-qa umuṭ tayaq bolmaq*: It corresponds to Chinese 眾生所歸依, which refers to ‘reliance and support of all sentient beings’.

08-09 *barča sārinmāk-tä yorımaq uyurınṭa*: It corresponds to Chinese 皆由行忍故, which refers to ‘entirely on due to the Tathāgatas’ cultivation of Kṣānti’, *sārinmāk-tä yorımaq* refers to ‘practice of Kṣānti, practice of forbearance’.

09-10 *alqu burxan oylan-lar-ī*: corresponds to 諸佛子, 佛子 ‘Son of Buddha; a bodhisattva; a believer in Buddhism, for every believer is becoming Buddha; a term also applied to all beings, because all are of Buddha-nature’¹⁴ corresponds to *burxan oylan-lar-ī*.

¹² Soothill & Hodous (2003: 187)

¹³ Shōgaito (2014:164-165)

¹⁴ Soothill & Hodous (2003: 227)

10 *üzälik-siz yol*: corresponds to 無上道, it refers to ‘the supreme way, or truth, that of Buddha’. ¹⁵

12 *särimäkig b(ä)rk y(a)rp qilyu-luq*: corresponds to 當堅固忍辱, it refers to ‘cultivate Kṣānti firmly and steadfastly’.

13 *alqu burxan-lar-niṅ tuyunmaq-i*: corresponds to 一切佛菩提, It refers to the state of enlightenment attained by the Tathāgata. *tuyunmaq* corresponds to Chin. 覺悟 ‘to awake, become enlightened, comprehend spiritual reality’ and Sanskrit bodhi.

14-15 *alqu nom-lar-niṅ quruy-in tīn(i)γ-lar-niṅ bululuq-suz-in qolulayuluq*: corresponds to 當觀諸法空, 眾生不可得, It refers to ‘the truth that all dharmas lack an inherent and fixed self-nature’, and it is one of the core doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It might be translated as ‘one ought to realise that all things and phenomena lack an unchanging and fixed self-nature (Skt. Śūnyatā, Emptiness), and sentient beings are hard to attain’.

15 *quruy*: ‘empty, void, hollow, vacant, nonexistent’ corresponds to Chinese 空 or 空性 and Sanskrit śūnya and śūnyatā. It refers to ‘the nature of the Void, or immaterial, the bhūtatathatā, the universal substance’¹⁶. It appears as *bululuqsuz quruy bilgä bilig* in ETŞ¹⁷, which means ‘The hard-to-attain wisdom of Śūnyatā Pāramitā’.

17-18 *burxan-lar-niṅ ädgü-läringä adruq-larīṅa tükäl-lig bol-:* corresponds to 能具佛功德, refers to ‘to be fully endowed with all the virtuous qualities possessed by the Tathāgata’. It appears as *alqu bodis(a)t(a)vlar-niṅ ädgüläringä adruqlarīṅa tükäl-lig bolurlar* ‘attain all the meritorious virtues of Bodhisattvas’ (Taishō N0.293, Vol. 10, 811a06.成就一切菩薩功德) in the Uyghur translation of Avataṃsaka Sūtra in Forty Volumes. ¹⁸

¹⁵ Soothill & Hodous (2003: 377)

¹⁶ Soothill & Hodous (2003: 377)

¹⁷ Arat (1991: 156)

¹⁸ Yakup (2021: 208). Taishō N0.293, Vol.10, 811a06.成就一切菩薩功德

3. Concluding Remarks: Mañjuśrī Devotion of Old Uyghurs

With the expansion of the political power of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the situation in the northern regions of China tended to stabilize, which provided a favorable environment for the development of Buddhism at that time and also led to the gradual acceptance of the image of Mañjuśrī, who is closely associated with Buddhist doctrinal studies, by the rulers of the Northern Wei Dynasty. Therefore, during this period, multiple scriptures associated with Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva were translated from Sanskrit into Chinese. Among these were included such scriptures as the Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viśaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra 大薩遮尼乾子所說經, Mañjuśrīparipṛcchā 文殊師利問菩提經 *wén shū shī lì wèn pú tí jīng*, and the Mañjuśrī-nirdeśa-mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra 文殊師利所說摩訶般若波羅蜜經 *wén shū shī lì suǒ shuō mó hē bō rě bō luó mì jīng*, all translated by Bodhiruci, a renowned translator of Buddhist scriptures in the Northern Wei Dynasty.¹⁹ The widespread circulation of these scriptures led to the gradual rise in Mañjuśrī devotion in the Central Plains and further extended its influence into the Hexi Corridor. In the Tang Dynasty, Mount Wutai was officially recognised as the sacred abode (dharma seat, 道場 *dào chǎng*) of Mañjuśrī; thus, Mañjuśrī devotion further gave rise to the Wutai Mountain Belief. There are 12 surviving murals depicting Mount Wutai in the Mogao Grottoes. These are distributed as follows: Caves 112, 159, 222, 237, and 361 from the Mid-Tang Dynasty; Caves 9 and 144 from the Late Tang Dynasty; Cave 61 from the Five Dynasties Period; Caves 19 and 32 of the Yulin Grottoes (Five Dynasties Period 五代 *wǔ dài*); Cave 3 of the Yulin Grottoes (Xixia period 西夏 *xī xià*); and Cave 1 of the Subei Wugemiao Grottoes. This also reflects the prevalence of Mañjuśrī devotion in the Dunhuang and Hexi regions 河西地區 *hé xī dì qū*²⁰. The prevalent Mañjuśrī devotion in the Hexi region also influenced the Uyghurs, and Mañjuśrī, along with Mount Wutai, held important positions in Uyghur Buddhist beliefs. During the Yuan Dynasty, Imperial Preceptor Phags-pa personally made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, introducing Tibetan Buddhism there. The Emperors of the Yuan Dynasty also constructed Buddhist temples on Mount Wutai, which

¹⁹ Xu (2023: 202)

²⁰ Zhao 1993: 88; Dang 2004: 83-91; Li 2022: 343.

made Mount Wutai the only Buddhist sacred site in inland China characterised by the ‘coexistence of Han and Tibetan Buddhism, and harmony between the Gelugpa and other Buddhist sects’. This also enabled Mañjuśrī devotion on Mount Wutai to gradually serve as an emotional bond uniting Buddhist believers of the Han, Mongolian, Manchu, Tibetan and other ethnic groups.²¹ After the Uyghurs of Xizhou (西州回鶻 *xī zhōu huí hú*) submitted to the Yuan Dynasty, they were more profoundly influenced by Mañjuśrī devotion. Among the pilgrimage inscriptions left by Uyghur Buddhist devotees during their visits to Dunhuang, five are directly related to Mañjuśrī devotion. For example, *quṭluḡ mančuširi bodistv-qa yḡkündüm* ‘Pay homage to this sacred Mañjuśrī’ (northern wall of the main chamber of Cave No. 2 in Yulin Grottoes) (Matsui & Arakawa 21. Wu 167-171).²² In the Inscription of the Yuan Dynasty’s Renovation of Mañjuśrī Temple 有元重修文殊寺碑 *yǒu yuán chóng xiū wén shū sì bēi* mentions *arya-mančuširini činglatip*²³ ‘Invite the sacred image of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva’. An Old Uyghur inscription on the north wall of the main chamber of Cave 138 at the Mogao Grottoes records that a Uyghur pilgrim, Darma-širi, studied the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*.²⁴

Under such circumstances, the Uyghurs translated a considerable number of Buddhist scriptures associated with Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, such as *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* 文殊真實名經 *Wén shū zhēn shí míng jīng* and *Mañjuśrī-ācintya-buddha-kṣetra-sūtra* 文殊師利所說不思議佛境界經 *Wén shū shī lì suǒ shuō bù sī yì fó jìng jiè jīng*. When we combine the relevant inscriptions from the Dunhuang grottoes, these translations demonstrate that Mañjuśrī devotion was particularly prevalent among the Uyghur people during the Yuan Dynasty.

Two surviving fragments of the Old Uyghur version of the *Bodhisattva-gocaropāya-viṣaya-vikurvaṇa-nirdeśa Sūtra* lack colophons and inscriptions, so it cannot be verified whether they had been translated into Old Uyghur prior to the Yuan Dynasty; however, these two fragments are confirmed to have been copied during the Yuan Dynasty, and their transcription is undoubtedly closely

²¹ Xie 2024: 309.

²² Matsui & Arakawa 2017: 21. Wu 2023: 167-171.

²³ Geng & Zhang 1986: 259.

²⁴ Imin & Rustamjan 2025, 91.

associated with the prevalent Mañjuśrī belief among the Uyghur people at that time.

Abbreviations

Abhidharmakośabhāṣya = Shōgaito 2014

Āgama = Kasai et al. 2017

Avataṃsaka Sūtra = Yakup 2021

ETŚ = Arat 1991

T = Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新脩大藏經 1924–1934

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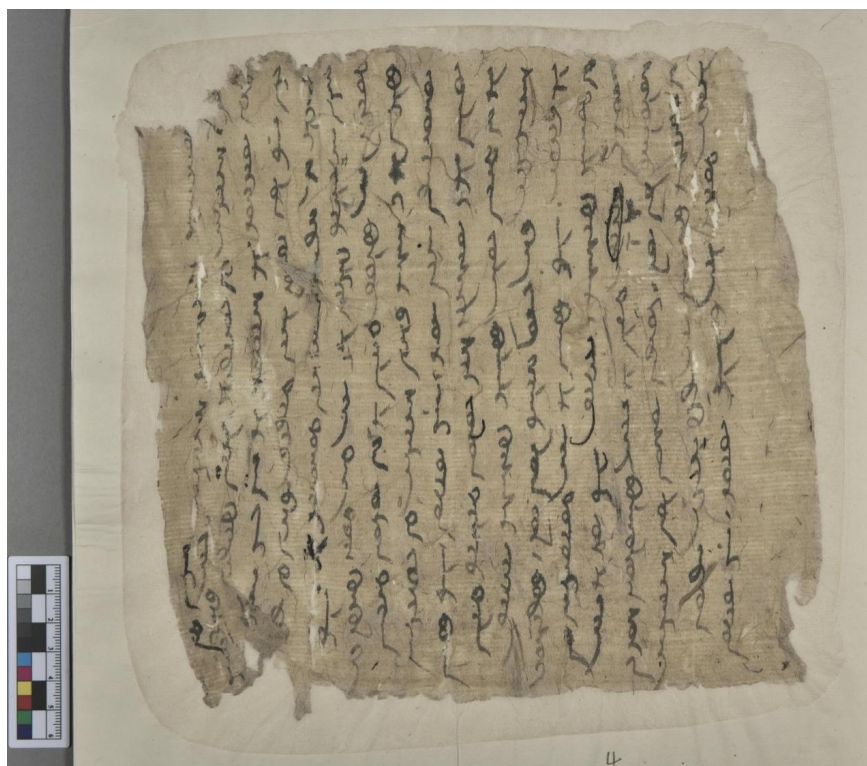


Figure 1: D1150-A-1, Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy

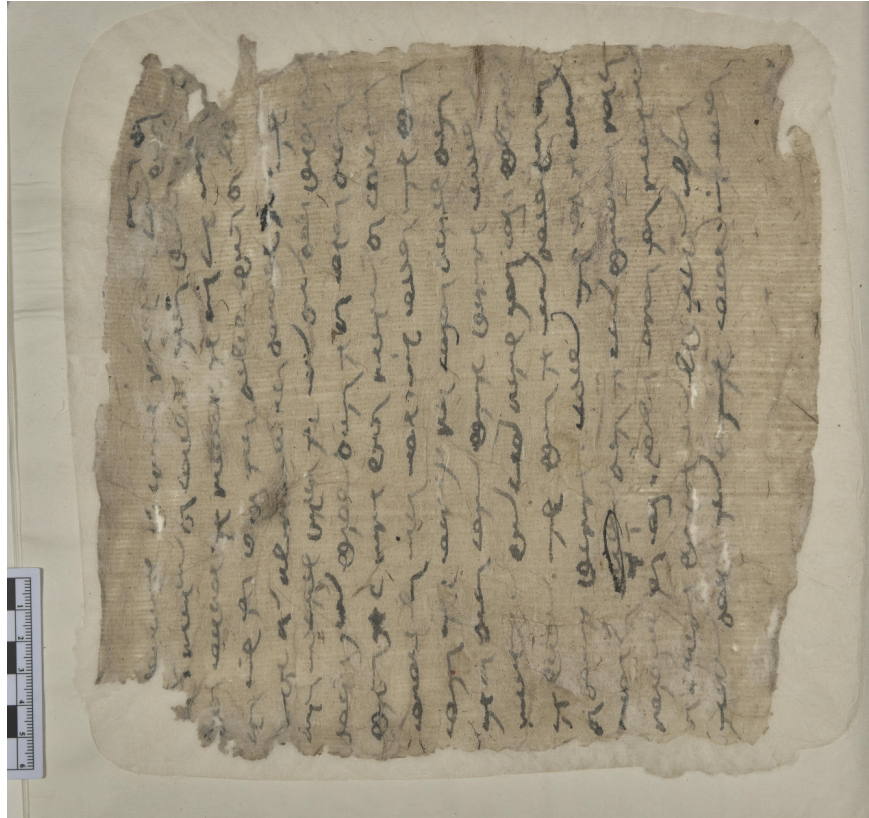


Figure 2: D1150-F-1, Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy