

Uyghur Tibetan Buddhist Documents Unearthed in the North of Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang

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ABSTRACT

The Uyghur is one of the important ethnic groups in the history of Dunhuang. After moving from grassland in Outer Mongolia (north Gobi Desert) to the Hexi Corridor in the middle of the 9th century, it kept active for generations and became one of the main ethnic groups there. Having diverse religious beliefs, the Uyghurs who lived in Shazhou (the present Dunhuang) and Gansu area commonly believed in Buddhism in the early 11th century. Uyghur Buddhism was greatly influenced by both Han Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism. A large number of Tibetan Buddhism literature was discovered among the Uyghur Buddhism literature unearthed in Dunhuang and Turpan. Tibetan Buddhism literature, especially the Uyghur Tibetan Buddhism literature unearthed in the north Mogao grottoes at the end of the 20th century provides the important basis to discuss the nature of Dunhuang Uyghur Buddhism under the context of Tibetan Buddhism prevailing during Yuan dynasty.

Keywords: *Mogao Grottoes, Uyghur Tibetan Buddhist documents, Literary research.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A large number of Uyghur Buddhist documents were first discovered in the Turpan and Dunhuang in the early 20th century, and were successively unearthed in the northern archaeological excavation of the Mogao Grottoes in the late 20th century. The existing research results show that the Uyghur Buddhist documents are rich in content, including classical Tibetan, theoretical Tibetan, Tantric documents, Zen documents, Buddhist literary works, narrative poems, etc. Yang Fuxue, Niu Ruji, Yang Jianxin, Wang Hongmei and other scholars systematically sorted out the Uyghur Tibetan Buddhist documents found in Dunhuang Turpan and discussed their research status, but none involved the relevant documents unearthed in the northern area of the Mogao Grottoes. In 2001 professor Abudurishid Yakup systematically compiled the part of Uyghur Buddhism literature ("Dunhuang Mogao grottoes north grottoes (a)") unearthed in north grottoes and studied part of the literature and determined its name. The relevant results were submitted on *the India-central Asian language culture exchange academic seminar* in Gotingen, Germany, on May 10, 2001 [1]. Later,

professor Abudurishid Yakup also compiled all the Uyghur documents unearthed in the North Grottoes, including Buddhist scriptures, postscript, secular documents and unnamed fragments. [2] According to three volumes of "The north grottoes of Dunhuang Mogao grottoes", written by Peng Jinzhang, Ji'an-jun wang, and research by professor Abudurishid Yakup as well as other previous studies on Uyghur Tibetan Buddhism literature unearthed in Turpan, it is discovered that among the Uyghur Buddhism documents unearthed in northern area of the Mogao Grottoes there are some Tibetan Buddhism documents belonging to Yuan Dynasty, which provide an important basis to discuss the nature of Dunhuang Old Uyghur Buddhism during Yuan Dynasty.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE UYGHUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

As a nomadic people emerging on the Mongolian plateau, the Old Uyghur gradually became strong around the end of the 6th century to the beginning of the 7th century, "one hundred thousand, half an army." [4] In the third year of Tianbao (744), Old Uyghur Khanate in the Mobei

was established.[5] In 788, during the Tang Dynasty, Old Uyghur" asked Tang Dynasty to call it Huihe." [6] After that, Huihe officially changed its name to Uyghur. After the collapse of the Old Uyghur Khanate in the middle of the 9th century, a large number of Uyghur people migrated to Hexi area including Guazhou and Shazhou, and became one of the main ethnic groups in the region.

Old Uyghur had diverse religious beliefs, including Shamanism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Nestorianism, Zoroastrian, Taoism and Islam. Shamanism was its original religious belief. As early as the first half of the seventh century, the Old Uyghur began to contact Buddhism. In the middle of the 8th century, Mou Yu Khan introduced Manichaeism to the Old Uyghur Khanate in Gobi desert from Luoyang, and then Manichaeism became the State religion of the Old Uyghur. In the middle of the 9th century, after moving to the west, the Old Uyghur was influenced by the local Buddhist culture, with most of the people believing in Buddhism while their royal family still believed in Manichaeism. Meanwhile, Zoroastrian and Nestorianism also spread among Old Uyghur.[7] The coexistence of multi-religious beliefs was reflected in historical trivia (Zayn-al-akhbar) by Indian traveler Galdiz in the mid-11th century as follows " Khan traditionally believed in Manichaeism (Dina vari), however, in the capital of Ugas (Shaher) and territory (welyayat), there is Christianity (tarsa), Oanawi (Oanawi, fire worship) and Buddhism (Samani / Samani)... every day three or four hundred voters gather at the gate of the palace of the local rulers." [8]

According to Chinese historical records, Buddhism spread widely in the mid-10th century among the Old Uyghur people living in the Turpan Basin. The Uyghur people who lived in Shazhou and Ganzhou in western Gansu province generally believed in Buddhism in the early 11th century. In the late 17th century, the Buddhist Sutra of Jin and Guangming (the 26th year of The reign of Emperor Kangxi [1687] of the Qing Dynasty) was found in Jiuquan, Gansu Province.[9] The latest research results show that at least in the 52nd year of Kangxi (1713), there were still Uyghur Buddhist churches in the area from Jiuquan to Dunhuang in the west of Hexi.[10] The Yugur, who took shape through the integration of the Uyghur and Mongol descendants, still has Tibetan Buddhism as its main belief.[11]

3. UYGHUR TIBETAN BUDDHIST DOCUMENTS

Mori once pointed out that from the early to the middle of the 14th century, the East and West Silk Road were safe and smooth. Dunhuang was an important node in the "Uyghur Contact Network" of Turpan, Dadu and Hangzhou during the Yuan Dynasty. Dunhuang Uyghur Buddhism was closely connected with the Uyghur people in the east of the Tianshan Mountains. [12] Therefore, the study of the Old Uyghur Tibetan Buddhism in Dunhuang should be combined with the relevant documents unearthed in Turpan.

Based on the research findings of the scholars above, some of the Old Uyghur Tibetan Buddhism documents currently discovered in Turpan area were translated from the Chinese "*thousand eyes thousand arm avalokitesvara bodhisattva*", and some others were translated from the Tibetan teaching literature, *the scriptures of the Buddha said the great umbrella of the victory auspicious ring law mandala*", *the king kong hand Bodhisattva praise*", *the China classics of guanyin achievement law*" sheng army king asked "twenty-one praise classics", "the king" the manjusri division into" In terms of law, Manjusri, The Holy Sutra, The og' the Earth, The Book of Ming, and the fragments of Unnames.[13] There is also the Ten Square Peace Sutra, written in Brahmi.[14]

P.4521 literature, which was discovered in Dunhuang and currently collected in the National Library of France, was the remains of Yuan era. It was the letters the Buddhism believers beyond eastern Tianshan Mountain and Shazhou sent to Buddhism believers in Dunhuang Mogao grottoes. Its content is about urging the Buddhist exchange and some commercial issues. According to its content it can be known that the letter, together with Manjurisi translated by Anzang, a Buddhist in Beshbalik, was sent to Dunhuang Uyghur monks.[15] The classics name Namasangi also appeared in the Uyghur tourist inscription in 138th cave of Mogao Grottoes [16] *The Sutra of Manjusri* is one of the most popular Buddhist scriptures in Tibetan Buddhism. The German archaeological team obtained 43 Uyghur printed volumes in Turpan, which are now stored in Berlin. From one of the inscriptions, it can be known that the scriptures were translated by the Yuan Dynasty monk Karunathasi (Karunadaz) in 1302 or 1304. [17] Although the Uyghur translation of the Sutra has not yet been found in Dunhuang, it can be seen from the letters and inscriptions above that the

Sutra was widely circulated among the Uyghur Buddhists in Dunhuang in the Yuan Dynasty.

The Buddha said white umbrella always hold toroni classics: It belongs to the Uyghur article fragments unearthed in the north B59 grottoes, number is B 59:72, the Buddha, the two sides of 10 lines, between the Sanskrit and Old Uyghur contrast, was used to express the exact pronunciation of the Uyghur word. Currently here has been no detailed study on B 59:72 fragments in academic field. It is professor Abdurishid Yakup who just named it. The fragments of the Uyghur text were mostly found in Turpan as many as 117 pieces, which are relics of the Mongolian era, and Li Geiti (1973) proved that the document was translated from the Tibetan language. [18] As for the relationship between the Dunhuang copies and the Turpan copies of the scriptures, it remains to be further studied by experts in the field.

Mahayana Sutra: A total of 7 fragments of the Uyghur text were unearthed in the North District Grottoes, namely B137:2, B 138, B 138:10, B160:6, B160:12, B464:142, B157:12:12B, 172:3. The first four contents were determined and studied by Professor Zhang Tieshan. They were written in the 13th and 14th century, with reference to Tibetan translation or translator proficient in Tibetan translation.[19] The latter three were published by Professor Abdurishid Yakup based on Tibetan or Sanskrit.[20] According to Professor Zhang Tieshan's research results, the Dunhuang version of the scriptures is the same as a broken printed edition of the scriptures published in Berlin in 1928.

Twenty-one kind of Praise of Buddha: Two fragments of the Uyghur were unearthed in the North District Grottoes, both unearthed in Cave 464, respectively B464:134-1, B4644:134-2, of which B464:134-1 front and back painted Bodhisattva and 8 lines of handwritten Uyghur. [21] Currently there have been no special researches on the two fragments unearthed in the North District. Professor Abdurishid Yakup confirmed that the content was *the Twenty-one Praise Sutra of the Holy Salvation Buddha Mother*. [22] The Sutra is an important classic of Tibetan Buddhism. The German archaeological team once obtained a Uyghur translation of the Sutra in Turpan, which is now stored in the Turpan Literature Center in Berlin, numbered TIII 281 (U 3883). The National Library of China contains a copy of the scriptures, which is a combination of Tibetan, Sanskrit and Uyghur languages, and has been supposed to be translated by the Old Uyghur monk in the Yuan Dynasty. [23]

The Book, also known as *The Book of Death*, was completed on the basis of the famous Tibetan *yogi master*. In 1907, Stein found an Uyghur book with 63 pages and 1430 lines in Dunhuang. The original volume is now stored in the British Library in London, with the number Or.8212-109. According to the contents of 46a-46b, the Uyghur version of *Sri-cakrasamvara* was translated by Aya, the ruler of Hami. Or-109 was translated in 1350 by Lukchun ruler who was ordered to translate it by the king of Xining..8212[24] Mr. Yang Fuxue speculated that it may originate from the cave 464.[25] A total of 2 pieces of auspicious rhythm in Uyghur were unearthed in the North District Grottoes, namely B160:7 and B 160:9, which are written in soft cursive script, 10 lines for B160:7 and 11 lines for B160:9. At present, there has been no special research on these two fragments, and only Professor Abdu Remci Yakufu named him.[26]

"Jixiang Lun Mandala": also known as "rotary King Mandala", is a Tibetan Buddhist dotoptric document, Tibetan Written as Cakrasamvaramadala, the Tibetan translation of the Uyghur scholar Benyari (Punyasri) in the Yuan Dynasty. At the beginning of the 20th century, a German expedition obtained a Uyghur translation of the Uyghur scriptures in Turpan, which is now stored in Berlin, Germany, with the number U557 (originally T1Tantra)[27]. A fragment of the Uyghur script unearthed from the North District Grottoes is B464:38, with 10 lines in the Uyghur script, and the front is the Grand Prajna Polomita Sutra in Chinese [28]. At present, there is no special research on the fragment, but only named by Professor AbduResiti Yacufu.[29]

In addition, there are some unidentified Uyghur Buddhist documents unearthed in the North District Grottoes, some of which are mixed with Tibetan languages among them, such as B 97:7 and B 121:38, indicating that the audience of the scriptures should master at least both the Uyghur and Tibetan languages at the same time. It is worth mentioning that two Tantric documents (Mah a siddhas), with the number B77:241/2, which is the Uyghur translation of the story of the great achievements of Tibetan Buddhism. They belong to the late Uyghur Buddhism and were copied no earlier than the 13th and 14th centuries. [30] In addition to the above Uyghur Tibetan Buddhist documents, Dunhuang also left a large number of relics of the Yuan Dynasty, including grottoes, murals, These materials together reflect that the Uyghur Buddhism of Dunhuang has been deeply influenced by the prosperity of Tibetan Buddhism

in the Yuan Dynasty. This should be related to the Mongol rulers' strong praise of Tibetan Buddhism. In 1247, Wang Kuoduan, the Mongol sect, and Ban Zhida, the leader of the Sakya sect in Tibet, met in Liangzhou. [31] After that, Tibetan Buddhism gradually prevailed in Hexi, and the Mongol rulers also gradually converted. Under the influence of this trend, the Uyghurs, such as Anzang, Karunasa, Danbusun, Bilana Shili, and Sheranlan, also took the Tibetan monks led by the emperor as teachers.[32] Most of them are proficient in Sanskrit, Han, Tibetan, Uyghur and other languages, and have translated a large number of Buddhist classics. They have not only translated Tibetan Buddhism into Uyghur, but also some Uyghur Buddhist scriptures into Tibetan. For example, the Uyghur translation of the Book is directly from Tibetan.

4. CONCLUSION

The Tibetan translation of the statue of Buddha is translated from Uyghur into Tibetan.[33] The Mongolian rulers also provided great support for the spread of Tibetan Buddhism. The Mongolian instruction B163:42 unearthed in the North District Grottoes is to ensure the safety of Tibetan Buddhist monks and pilgrims between Xinjiang and Dunhuang.[34] The prosperity and development of Tibetan Buddhism in Dunhuang in the Yuan Dynasty so that from 1362 to 1365, when the Karma Black Hat system, it made a detour of 1200 kilometers to patrol the two Wenshu caves in Shazhou.[35] It can be said that the Uyghur monks greatly promoted the integration of the religious cultures of various ethnic groups in the Yuan Dynasty, and were the link between the Mongol rulers and Tibetan Buddhism in the Yuan Dynasty.

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