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—Victor Mair, Ph.D., Professor of Chinese Language and Literature, University of Pennsylvania

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—Colin Mackerras, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Griffith University

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BUDDHISM BETWEEN TIBET AND CHINA
Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism

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During the spring of 1996, as I was leaving my apartment in New York’s Morningside Heights to buy bagels one Sunday morning, I came across a group of Chinese university students, all wearing T-shirts emblazoned with the characteristic lotus, book, and sword emblem of the Tibetan Sakyapa order. I stopped to chat with them and learned that they were from many different places in China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, but were in the States to pursue graduate studies, mostly in the sciences and engineering. They gathered to meditate together on Sundays in the apartment of a fellow student who was connected with the Sakyapa center in Singapore. In fact, they had no idea that Buddhism was a subject taught at Columbia University, where I was then teaching, or that any member of the faculty would have heard of the Sakyapa, in their terms the “white sect” of Tibetan Buddhism. Their bemused expressions as they answered my questions betrayed evident puzzlement about my interest.

As a frequent visitor to Nepal, where Tibetan monastic development has been much assisted by donors from Singapore and Taipei, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur, it had become clear to me during the 1970s and 80s that there was very considerable ethnic Chinese involvement in Tibetan religious activity. I was therefore aware that prosperous Chinese had emerged among the major contemporary patrons of Tibetan Buddhist institutions and teachers, no doubt surpassing in this regard the contributions of either Hollywood heroes or Microsoft moguls. Nevertheless, my chance meeting with the overseas Chinese students that morning underscored for me the degree to which religious relationships between Tibet and China had remained invisible even to those of us who were engaged in the academic study of Tibetan or Chinese Buddhism. Was recent Chinese participation in Tibetan Buddhism, I found myself wondering, the fruit of cultural relations developed over centuries, or the product of uniquely contemporary circumstances?
Certainly, the painful political reality of the modern Tibet-China relation has skewed our perspectives and inhibited inquiry in this area. Though several pioneering scholars in Chinese and Tibetan studies did contribute to our knowledge of Chinese Buddhism in Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism in China—one thinks above all here of Berthold Laufer, Ferdinand Lessing, Paul Demiéville, Rolf Stein, and Herbert Franke—further research along these lines has languished until very recently, particularly in the United States. Scholars involved in East Asian Buddhist studies tended to see Tibet as a world apart, while those of us working on Tibetan Buddhist materials have often had our professional homes in departments of South Asian studies and have therefore encouraged our students to focus on something called “Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.” As a result, the sustained religious contact between Tibet and China throughout the past thirteen hundred years has remained obscure.

Nevertheless, in a few areas Tibeto-Chinese religious relations have aroused recent scholarly interest. The best example, no doubt, is the story of Tibet’s contact with China’s Chan Buddhist traditions during the Tang dynasty. Following the lead of Paul Demiéville’s path-breaking investigations of documents found at Dunhuang, there has been intensive research on this topic during the past few decades, above all by Buddhist scholars in Japan. Mention, too, must be made of recent art historical scholarship, which has shed new light on the cross-pollination of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist styles and techniques. The works that have aroused the greatest attention in this context were executed in Chinese imperial ateliers during the Ming and Qing dynasties, or by Tibetan painters during the same epoch, notably in far eastern Tibet, where the use of diaphanous washes inspired by Chinese brushwork served to convey the sense of aetherial luminosity cultivated in Tibetan tantric meditation. As the present book seeks to demonstrate, however, the interrelationship of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist traditions was more widely ramified, and has proven more enduring, than even these two very rich areas of study reflect by themselves.

In the introductory chapter I provide a brief historical overview of the religious connections between Tibet and China, surveying the contents of the volume as a whole. The eleven chapters that follow offer case-studies spanning more than a millennium, beginning with the study of a Sino-Tibetan cave temple in Gansu created under the Tibetan empire during the early ninth century and continuing down to H.H. the Dalai Lama’s 1997 visit to Taiwan. In between, pertinent examples of the intersections of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism during the Yuan (or Mongol), Ming, Qing (or Manchu), and Republican periods are considered in depth. These studies are all based...
on extensive original research and field work, presented here for the first time. Together they demonstrate that Buddhism not only served to mediate relations between Tibetan ecclesiastical powers and the Chinese imperial court, as has often been assumed to be the overarching concern that defined the relationship, but that it also provided what was in effect a cultural lingua franca, through which Chinese, Tibetans, and frequently others as well might, despite their many differences, interact on common, sanctified ground.

As mentioned above, Tibeto-Chinese religious relations have been in large measure neglected by scholars formed after the Second World War. This reflects in part practical limitations on research due to political restrictions, for, from the foundation of the People’s Republic in 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1978, it was generally impossible for scholars from abroad to pursue Tibetan studies in China. Those interested in Tibet necessarily turned their attention to the Himalayan regions and to Tibetan refugee communities in South Asia. It was only during the 1980s that renewed prospects for Tibetological research in China gradually began to emerge. Hence, recent advances in the study of Tibeto-Chinese relations have been largely due to researchers who have entered the field during the past quarter century. This generational transition is reflected in the composition of the present volume: whereas a few of the contributors are senior figures in Tibetan studies, most belong to the post–Cultural Revolution generation of Tibetanists. Some in fact completed—and several of them published—their dissertations while this book was in preparation. The gradual opening of China to Tibetological research has been in these cases a fundamental, enabling condition, essential to the development of their scholarship, so that their work reflects a new interrogation of Tibeto-Chinese cultural relations, as well as access to newly available materials and sources.

The present volume had its genesis in the meetings of the Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Group of the American Academy of Religion that I organized in 2000. The contributions of the participants on that occasion—Karl Debreczeny, Rob Linrothe, Paul Nietupski, Gray Tuttle, Zhihua Yao, Abraham Zablocki, and myself—became the point of departure from which the book grew. I wish to thank Professors Janet Gyatso and Georges Dreyfus, then the chairs of the Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Group of the AAR, and the entire Steering Committee of the Group, for their encouragements, and in particular Professor Robert Gimello, who thoughtfully offered the response to the original presentations. I am grateful, too, to Ester Bianchi, Fabienne Jagou, Carmen Meinert, and Elliot Sperling, who graciously consented to join this project after it was already in progress.
The painting that adorns the cover of this volume, generously made available for reproduction here by the Margot and Thomas J. Pritzker Foundation, depicts the Buddha Dīpaṃkara poised literally between Tibetan and Chinese worlds. Probably of Xi Xia provenance, it reflects the unique station of the Xi Xia kingdom of the eleventh-twelfth centuries as a cultural crossroads, where Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan Buddhists contributed to the protection and edification of the realm. In the cartouche to the Buddha’s upper right, we read Dīpaṃkara’s name in Tibetan, while the same is inscribed in Chinese in the cartouche to his left. As realised here, the Buddha mediates between opposing worlds, a role that he will assume throughout the pages that follow as well.

For their invaluable assistance at the University of Chicago with the preparation of this work for publication, I am grateful to Rachel Lindner and Susan Zakin for their careful editing of the text, and to You Hong for her help with the Chinese glossary. I acknowledge, too, the contribution that the China Committee of the University’s Center for East Asian Studies has made over the years to my ongoing research concerning Tibetan affairs in China. Tim McNeill and MacDuff Stewart at Wisdom Publications, together with the editors of the series Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, have my profound thanks for the characteristic enthusiasm with which they welcomed this project. And kudos are due to Laura Cunningham and Tony Lulek for the expertise and efficiency with which they shepherded the work through the final stages of its production.

Matthew T. Kapstein
Vaishakh, 2008
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Transcription Conventions

**TIBETAN NAMES** and terms are given in the main body of this book using simplified phonetic spellings.¹

In this system, most of the letters used may be pronounced according to their common English values. The exceptions to this rule are:

- ö and ū, which are pronounced as in German
- e and é, which are both pronounced like the French é, the accent being used here only at the end of words, to remind readers that a final e is not silent: e.g., dorjé
- z and zh, which resemble s and sh; thus, Zhalu sounds rather like Shalu

In some instances, however, we have retained established conventional spellings for proper names, instead of phonetic transcriptions: for instance, Gyantse instead of phonetic Gyeltsé (for literary Tibetan *rgyal-rtse*), and Derge for Degé (lit. *sde-dge*). The Tibetan spelling list given at the end of the book provides the exact literary orthography for all Tibetan names and terms used herein. The literary orthography has also been employed in the following cases: some names, terms and titles given only parenthetically; transcriptions of inscriptions; and all Tibetan expressions given in the endnotes to each chapter.

For Chinese, we use the standard Pinyin transcriptions throughout, though for a small number of proper names, such as Chiang K’ai-shek, we retain the forms that will be recognized by most anglophone readers. Similarly, for persons and places in Taiwan, we employ the standard spellings accepted in the Republic of China. A Chinese glossary supplies the characters corresponding to the transcriptions used in the text.

Introduction: Mediations and Margins
Matthew T. Kapstein

During the 1980s, Buddhist Studies entered a new and dynamic phase characterized in part by the abandonment of an earlier disposition to think of “Buddhism” as a singular term. Gone was the emphasis on core beliefs and doctrines, with respect to which local developments had often been regarded as late modifications, wholesale deviations, or else the simple resurgence of non-Buddhist, indigenous cultural strata. Against this, local Buddhisms were henceforth to hold pride of place and Buddhism as such was no more. In many respects, this shift of orientation proved to be a salutory one, as the standard in the field came to be defined increasingly by historically and culturally nuanced studies of persons, artifacts, schools of thought, and events in particular places and times. Where Buddhist Studies may have once seemed a narrowly circumscribed and relatively coherent field, it began to transform rapidly into a cluster of specialized disciplines devoted above all to regional Buddhisms: Indian, Chinese, Korean, Tibetan, Japanese, Sri Lankan, Thai, and so forth.

That the field did not just dissolve into various subunits, however, is perhaps due to two countervailing research trajectories that in quite different ways reached beyond national bounds. On the one hand, continuing work on Buddhist scriptural collections required, in many contexts, taking the canonical languages, rather than individual nations or ethnicities, as the meaningful units of analysis, thereby giving due allowance to the transnational character of the major classical Buddhist languages and the literature preserved in them. At the same time, a variety of collaborative, comparative studies on such topics as Buddhist hermeneutics, soteriology, mnemonics, hagiography, and mortuary beliefs, among others, continued to underscore the importance of key themes linking the varied local traditions, even if the treatment of those themes appeared at times to be notably diverse.¹

Despite the very rich veins for reflection that have been tapped through
these three predominant research areas—canonical Buddhist Studies, local or national Buddhist Studies, and comparative Buddhist Studies—there are significant issues that have nonetheless tended to be overlooked, given this configuration of the field. With the notable exception of so-called “Silk Road Studies,” the role of Buddhism in the cultural, economic, and political relations among different peoples and nations seems a particularly remarkable area of neglect. Though work in this area has by no means been altogether absent—in particular, recent contributions on Sino-Indian relations by Liu Xinru and Tansen Sen testify to the considerable prospects for such research—it is surprising that it has remained marginal to the orientations that in recent years have been most visible in Buddhist Studies overall. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that Buddhism has historically proven to be a powerful medium whereby political, economic, technological, and artistic ties have been negotiated and forged, besides its role in fostering religious life more narrowly conceived.

In seeking to encourage scholarship that examines Buddhism as a bridge among differing Asian milieux, the present volume offers a collection of original studies of Buddhism in the history of cultural and political relations between Tibet and China. Outside of the special value these contributions may have for students of these two lands in particular, it may be hoped that the work as a whole will be also seen as a stimulus to pursue the investigation of Buddhism in Asian “cross-border” relations more generally.

Part of the interest in examining this history through the Buddhist lens stems from the sheer tenacity of the Tibet-China relationship. From the period of their first serious encounters during the seventh through ninth centuries, when the two nations rivaled one another in their quest for imperial supremacy in large parts of Inner Asia, and down to the present day, when Tibet exists as an independent state no more but maintains nevertheless a unique cultural identity both in China and the world at large, Buddhism has regularly provided a vital connecting medium, whether during times of antagonism or of fraternity. Throughout this long history the role of religion in mediating Tibet-China relations has evolved together with the relationship itself, but, at the same time, we will find in the pages that follow that certain patterns and themes regularly reappear, despite marked overriding trends of change.

In its legendary representation, the Buddhist link between Tibet and China was first forged with an imperial wedding that served as a pretext for Buddhist proselytism. Contemporary historians may continue to debate whether the Tibetan monarch Songtsen Gampo (d. 649/650) did in fact
adopt the foreign religion and whether his Chinese bride, the Tang princess Wencheng (d. 680), really played any role in its transmission. But for the Buddhists of Tibet, it is an article of faith that the precious image of the Lord Śākyamuni in Lhasa, the most revered object of Tibetan pilgrimage, was brought to their land from China by a royal emanation of the female buddha Tārā, on the occasion of her wedding to their king, a mortal manifestation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara himself. For the Tibetan religious imagination, therefore, Sino-Tibetan relations had as their first and most valued offspring nothing less than Tibetan Buddhism itself.

Whatever may be eventually decided regarding the true historical record of Buddhism in Tibet during Songtsen Gampo’s reign, the story nevertheless contains a symbolic measure of truth; for soon Buddhism did come to enjoy a significant role in the mediation of Chinese and Tibetan affairs, providing a common framework of religious meaning for two powers that were otherwise frequently at war. It was a role that, variously adapted and readapted with the passage of time, remained vital until the early years of the twentieth century, influencing religion, politics, and art among Tibetans, Chinese, and their neighbors, leaving a legacy that is still visible, even now when the forms of religio-political culture characteristic of medieval and early modern Central and East Asia have long since passed from the scene.

After the mid-ninth-century collapse of the old Tibetan kingdom, however, Tibet never regained the political and military dominance it had enjoyed during its two centuries of imperial glory. In effect, the Tibetan presence in Inner Asia came to depend increasingly upon the symbolic power of the Tibetan Buddhist clergy, conceiving of itself (and frequently becoming similarly conceived by others) as the truest heir to the great traditions of Buddhism in India, upholding the intellectual prowess of the major monastic universities, especially Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, and supercharged with the mastery of occult ritual and yoga derived from the teachings of the renowned Indian tantric adepts, the mahāsiddhas. It was, and for many remains, a unique and heady blend of rational and charismatic authority, and as such proved compelling to the rulers of the Western Xia, Mongol Khans, Chinese and Manchu emperors, and Republican-era warlords alike.

One important aspect of the Tibet-China tie therefore concerns the formation of what is often termed the patron-priest, or donor-chaplain, relationship (Tib. mchod yon). As it is generally understood, this was a form of reciprocity in which the religiously symbolic consecration conferred on China’s rulers by Tibetan hierarchs was recompensed by the rulers through material and worldly empowerment—in the form of gifts, grants, titles, and seals.
of authority. However, the relationship was considerably more nuanced than this short explanation suggests and, when studied with care with respect to particular examples, it is frequently found to turn on the necessity of resolving or at least managing specific political or economic sources of conflict, whether actual or potential. The exchange relationship, moreover, served as a vehicle promoting commercial and cultural interactions extending often far beyond the official inventories of initiations bestowed or gifts received. In short, the patron-priest relationship provided a focal point around which a broad range of issues informing Tibet-China connections were arrayed.

Besides this, as suggested by reference to the Xia and the Mongols above, Tibetans and Chinese were by no means the only parties to the Tibet-China Buddhist relationship. A variety of peoples, and sometimes states, in Inner Asia and throughout the Sino-Tibetan Marches (i.e., the border regions extending from Yunnan in the south to the Qinghai-Gansu frontiers in the north) acted as mediators in the rapport of the Tibetans and Chinese. At one time or another, the actual agents or beneficiaries of Tibet-China exchange may have been Tangut, Naxi, Monguor or Yi, and many others as well. The multi-ethnic character of Tibet-China relations in particular permitted China, whose bureaucracy and court often struck outsiders as impenetrable and monolithic, to greet its Inner Asian others with an exceptionally pluralistic face.

The various forms of religious relations that unfolded between Tibet and China through the centuries found their most concrete embodiments in the many material artifacts—the products of extensive architectural, artistic and publication projects—in which the conjunction of the two realms was physically manifested through various forms of production. These range from mid-Tang-period murals in Dunhuang, to celebrated monuments such as the Yuan-dynasty “White Stūpa” in Beijing, to the Ming Yqong edition of the Tibetan Buddhist canon and the elaborate Tibetan tantric formulae adorning the tomb of the Manchu Qianlong Emperor, together with countless more. Through detailed consideration of three prominent religious edifices, the first part of this book, “Sites of Encounter,” examines key issues in China-Tibet relations during the periods in which they were constructed.

In “The Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove,” I suggest that the famous temple of Dega Yutsel, well-known from the documents discovered by M.A. Stein and P. Pelliot at Dunhuang, can in fact be identified with a still-surviving cave-temple in the complex at Anxi Yulin, not far from Dunhuang in Gansu province. Beyond this, however, the chapter urges a broadening of the investigation of the place of Buddhism in relations between Tibet
and Tang China. In recent scholarship one notes a tendency to emphasize the question of “Tibetan Chan” while neglecting other aspects of Chinese Buddhism that were transmitted to Tibet during this time, as well as the role of Buddhism in managing often hostile political relations. Here, it is the presence of Buddhism in Tibet-Tang diplomacy that forms the background for understanding the construction of the Treaty Temple.

The second chapter, “The Commissioner’s Commissions,” by Rob Linrothe, discusses the puzzling Yuan-period site of Feilaifeng in Hangzhou (in modern Zhejiang province), whose Tibetan tantric icons have frequently been understood as evidence of cultural confrontation on the part of the Mongol administration in their relation to the Chinese. Linrothe argues that the controversial Tangut official Yang Lianzhenjia, the principal patron of the site, was perhaps seeking to act with greater nuance than his detractors have generally recognized, and sought not confrontation, but accommodation between Chinese and Tibetan forms of Buddhism.

“Dabaojigong and the Regional Tradition of Ming Sino-Tibetan Painting in the Kingdom of Lijiang,” by Karl Debreczeny, introduces us to the powerful role of Tibetan religious culture among the Naxi of Yunnan. Debreczeny’s careful art historical analysis of the sixteenth-century temple of Dabaojigong demonstrates the equal importance of Tibetan patronage to the West and Chinese patronage to the East, as allegiances to both were clearly inscribed in the iconographic program of the temple, as well as in the characteristic style of its paintings, despite the evident Tibetan Buddhist affiliation that determined Dabaojigong’s overall religious orientations.

In all three of these studies, spatial intermediacy—the frontier settings of Anxi Yulin and Dabaojigong, and the frontier origins of Yang Lianzhenjia—plays a determining role in the formation of cultural ties. This theme serves, too, to introduce the principal concerns of the following section, “Missions from the Frontiers,” which turns to examine the manner in which Tibetan clergy from frontier regions acted to facilitate relations between Chinese and Tibetan civilizational spheres. While our subject matter here is in some respects continuous with that of the previous section—for patronage and the development of specific sites are key themes here as well—the agency of religious professionals in relation to worldly powers is now the chief concern.

In chapter 4, “Tibetan Buddhism, Perceived and Imagined, along the Ming-Era Sino-Tibetan Frontier,” Elliot Sperling examines three Tibetan monasteries in the Qinghai and Sichuan borderlands that received the support of the imperial court and whose hierarchs sometimes traveled to the capital. What emerges from his investigation is that these connections served the Ming as a
form of cultural diplomacy, helping to secure or stabilize the sometimes unruly regions in which direct Chinese authority could be exercised only at great expense and with much difficulty. This is perhaps most striking in the third of his case-studies, concerning the district of Songpan: the Tibetan clerics honored here as “imperial preceptors” were in fact representatives not of the major Buddhist orders, but of Tibet’s autochthonous Bön religion. Together with Karl Debreczeny’s contribution, this chapter also underscores the importance of Ming-period trade between China and far eastern Tibet. In both of these chapters, it is clear that the sponsorship of religion, whether by the Chinese court or local rulers, at once reflected the prosperity realized through this trade and was intended to secure conditions favoring its continuation and increase.

The patron-priest relationship may be said to have reached its quintessential form during the Ming dynasty. This was in large measure due to the fact that the Ming had few pretensions to rule Tibetan regions, and much less Tibet itself, which is to say that their concerns stressed ceremonial propriety, trade, and the security of China’s frontiers. Their precedent, moreover, was in most respects taken over by the Qing. Unlike their predecessors, however, the Qing eventually did seek to exercise authority in Tibet, but unlike the Yuan-dynasty Mongols they came to this reluctantly; although the Manchus overthrew the Ming in 1644, they asserted their rule in Tibetan regions sporadically throughout the eighteenth century. Moreover, as Paul Nietupski shows in “The ‘Reverend Chinese’ (Gyanakpa tshang) at Labrang Monastery,” in many places Qing control of Tibetan areas remained nominal at best. Under these circumstances, the continuing ceremonial relations with Tibetan and Mongol Buddhist hierarchs served as an important means to maintain an imperial presence in places remote from the real centers of Manchu power, while, for the hierarchs involved in such relations, the favor of the court advanced their religious mission, and helped to consolidate the position of the monasteries as the effective administrative centers in Qinghai, Gansu, and elsewhere.

The reciprocal relations that were forged between China’s rulers and Tibetan ecclesiastical figures, often themselves from border districts, did not come to an end with the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. During the Republican period, Chinese interest in Tibetan Buddhism in fact expanded, and the Tibetans who traveled to China to teach, perform rituals, and raise support continued often to be natives of Amdo (Qinghai/Gansu) or Kham (Sichuan/Xikang). One of the most outstanding examples of such missionaries was Bo Gangkar Rinpoché (1893–1957), the subject of Carmen Meinert’s study in chapter 6. Indeed, Gangkar Rinpoché’s career, which continued into the early days of the People’s Republic, mirrors the changing political
circumstances of his time in which he served different political agendas and was eventually made part of the communists’ “civilizing project” in cultural Tibet. In his story we may even detect the beginnings of the globalization of the Tibet-China Buddhist relation that will be discussed in greater detail in the final chapter. For Gangkar’s Chinese disciples included such figures as Zhang Chengji (C.C. Chang) and Charles Luk, whose English translations of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist classics opened new vistas to students of Asian religions in the West.

Although, from the Yuan-period on, Tibetan clerics often traveled to China on pilgrimage conferring Buddhist teachings on highly placed persons, up to and including the emperors themselves, and received honors and riches in return, one is struck that so few Chinese Buddhists appear to have ventured to visit Tibet. The contrast is all the more striking when we recall that large numbers of Indian and Nepalese Buddhist scholars and adepts did journey to Tibet, combining pilgrimage, teaching activity, and fundraising while there. The Chinese may have been put off in part by the Tibetans’ barbaric reputation, fostered in Confucian dynastic historiography. Or they may equally have been dissuaded by the hardship always associated with travel in the mountains and deserts to the west. Or they may have been convinced that theirs was an infinitely superior civilization, so that they had nothing of value to gain from their rude neighbors on the high plateau. Whatever their reasons, however, one of the striking shifts that occurs after the 1911 fall of the Manchu dynasty is the arrival of numbers of Chinese pilgrims and travelers in Tibetan Buddhist milieux. “The Modern Chinese Discovery of Tibetan Buddhism” considers important facets of this development, together with the parallel expansion of Tibetan Buddhist teaching and practice in the Chinese heartland itself.

One of the attractions of Tibetan Buddhism for the Chinese was certainly the charismatic allure of esoteric tantric ritual, promising both worldly and spiritual blessings. Strongly associated with the consecration bestowed by leading lamas upon the emperors, Tibetan tantrism in China was inevitably tied to images of imperial power. In a sense, this upsurge of interest and involvement in this form of religion can be seen to directly correspond to the political change whereby the promise of democracy made every citizen a potential king. Facets of the Republican-period advancement of Tibetan esotericism in China may be found in the tracts and practice manuals published in small editions during the 1930s and 1940s on behalf of practitioners, and later reissued in several collections. Chapter 7, “Translating Buddhism from Tibetan to Chinese” by Gray Tuttle, examines these
documents, identifying the Tibetan and Chinese figures involved and the settings in which they worked. It is noteworthy that we find evidence here, together with the contributions of well-known religious figures such as Norlha Khutughtu (1876–1936), of the activity of Chinese Buddhist laymen and the formation among them of lay Buddhist associations.

A quite different aspect of the early-twentieth-century Chinese turn to Tibetan Buddhism is described in Zhihua Yao’s chapter, “Tibetan Learning in the Contemporary Chinese Yogācāra School.” For the figures discussed here, chiefly the scholars Lü Cheng (1896–1989), Fazun (1902–1980), and Han Jingqing (1912–2003), Tibetan traditions were of interest primarily for preservation of the Indian Buddhist philosophical legacy. In other words, their concerns lay in the areas of Buddhist philology and doctrinal studies, and not (or at most only secondarily) in the approaches to ritual and esotericism that were often accentuated in Tibetan Buddhist practice. As Yao argues, the representatives of contemporary Chinese Yogācāra—much like the partisans of so-called “Critical Buddhism” in recent Japanese Buddhist intellectual circles—have used Indian and Tibetan sources as the basis for launching a critique of developments in East Asian Buddhism that, they believe, stray far from the teaching’s intent.\textsuperscript{15}

Throughout much of its history, Tibetan Buddhism has sought to promote a viable synthesis of philosophical insight and ritual virtuosity, even if the ideal of a perfectly harmonious balance of the two has often been only imperfectly realized. Accordingly, while some Chinese Buddhists found inspiration in Tibetan tantra, and others in scholasticism, still others strove to realize the embracing synthesis that many Tibetans themselves took to be the appropriate goal. Particularly noteworthy in this respect was Nenghai Lama (1886–1967), whose life and teachings are examined in chapter 9 by Ester Bianchi. Though he was a colleague of Fazun early on, Nenghai was clearly more influenced by the charismatic dimensions of Tibetan Buddhism than was the former. And Nenghai, moreover, proved to be an exceptionally charismatic figure in his own right, launching a monastic movement directly in the line of the Tibetan Gelukpa order that remains a dynamic force in mainland Chinese Buddhism today.

Taken together, therefore, the third section of this collection points to two rather different projects informing contemporary Chinese engagements in Tibetan Buddhism. As seen in Zhihua Yao’s study, there has been a scholarly, philological interest in Tibetan Buddhist scriptural sources as offering a repository in which the materials needed to make up lacunae in the Chinese Buddhist tradition may be found. The interest, in this case, is largely in
Tibetan translations of Indian doctrinal and philosophical works, not in contributions that Tibetans themselves may have made to the elaboration of Buddhist teaching and practice. Over and against this tendency, some Chinese seekers have responded primarily to the attractions of Tibetan approaches, involving mastery of tantric ritual and yoga, and culminating in spiritual attainment, rather than intellectual refinement, as the major Buddhist goal. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to insist on too radical a division. In the cases, for instance, of prominent modern Chinese masters such as Fazun and Nenghai, both interests are indeed represented in their lives and writings; what differs is the relative balance they found between scholastic and ritual engagements. What is perhaps most striking is that throughout the twentieth century Chinese Buddhists were moved, as Zhihua Yao puts it, “to search for a more authentic Buddhism, and so looked to Buddhism’s Indian origins and its Tibetan transmissions in order to find this.”

It may appear that, taking this and the preceding sections together, we seek to confirm the widespread impression that prior to the fall of the Qing the only real involvement of the Chinese in Tibetan Buddhism was limited to court circles, and that it was not until the Republican era that common Chinese Buddhist believers began to be engaged in Tibetan traditions as well. Without denying that there may be some element of truth to this, it is important to note, nevertheless, that we do find occasional indications of grassroots Chinese participation in Tibetan Buddhism during the Qing, and some suggestions along these lines even before. Evidence of this may be seen in Paul Nietupski’s comments on the “Chinese lamas” of Labrang Monastery in Gansu Province. And in the biography of the Qianlong Emperor’s renowned preceptor Changkya Rölpa Dorjé (1717–1786), we find it recorded that he attracted masses of the Chinese faithful during his visits to Sichuan and Wutai shan, besides his activities as a teacher of the Chinese Buddhist sangha. All things considered, it seems more prudent to admit that the question of Chinese popular involvement in Tibetan Buddhism during the dynastic period has not yet been adequately examined, and remains a topic of interest for future research.

If Tibetan Buddhism in modern China has evolved into an at once popular and learned movement among Chinese Buddhists, the political dimension of the relationship has by no means diminished with the passage of time. Since the seventeenth century, when the Great Fifth Dalai Lama was received in the court of the Manchu Shunzhi Emperor, no single figure has been more emblematic of this connection than the person of the Dalai Lama. The final section of this book, “China and the Dalai Lama in the Twentieth Century,”
therefore turns to this center of religio-political gravity in studies of China’s troubled rapport with Tibet’s chief hierarch at the beginning and end of the last century.

Although the Fifth was the sole Dalai Lama to visit the court before the Thirteenth did so in the early twentieth century, the preeminence of the emperor’s patronage of the Dalai Lamas was always upheld. Therefore, following his flight from Lhasa in advance of the arrival of the Younghusband expedition in 1904, and his failure to secure the aid he sought from the Jebtsundampa Khutughtu of Urga, Outer Mongolia, the Thirteenth turned to the traditional relationship with the Qing court in his quest for support and arrived in Beijing for imperial audiences in 1908. These events form the focus for Fabienne Jagou’s chapter on “The Thirteenth Dalai Lama’s Visit to Beijing in 1908.” While it has long been clear that the outcome of his meetings with the Emperor Guangxu and Dowager Cixi was not satisfactory, and that the major result of the meeting was the Dalai Lama’s determination not to solicit the Chinese court again, Jagou shows that the actual events were marked by considerable complexity reflecting, as she says, “the difficulty each faced in establishing relationships in an environment of political transition.” Part of this complexity stemmed from the Dalai Lama’s twin spiritual and temporal roles, and the felt need, on the part of the court, to nuance their response to his separate functions somewhat differently. The overriding impression, nevertheless, as noted by the Chinese monk Guankong in remarks cited by Tuttle, was that “the court had not been courteous to the Dalai Lama.” The Dalai Lama’s answer was his declaration of independence from China as soon as the dynasty fell.

The fall of the Qing, therefore, marked a complete rupture in the ceremonial religio-political bond linking the Dalai Lama to the Chinese ruler, a break whose legacy has had important and continuous implications for Tibet-China relations ever since. For, on the one hand, Chinese rulers, whether Republican or Communist, have been eager to affirm the continuity of a special connection of some kind, but without being committed to maintaining intact the dynastic-period pattern of the patron-priest relation. At the same time, from the position of the Thirteenth’s successor, Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, the struggle, following China’s assertion of its sway over Tibet in 1951, has been to find a new formula for the Tibet-China relationship, one that guarantees the integrity of Tibet. As in the past, part of the complexity of the issue stems from the Dalai Lama’s simultaneous political and spiritual roles.

These matters are brought into clear focus in connection with the present Dalai Lama’s visits to the Republic of China, that is, Taiwan, discussed.
in the closing chapter by Abraham Zablocki. Although both the Dalai Lama and Taiwan authorities have been keen to emphasize the non-political nature of his tours of the island, Beijing has of course regarded them as a poorly disguised pretext for collusion among “splittists.” And conflicted political reactions have been expressed in Taiwan itself, precisely owing to disagreements there between those who would opt for Taiwanese independence and those favoring, at least rhetorically, eventual reunification with the Mainland. Moreover, given extraordinary levels of interest in Tibetan Buddhism in recent years, the Dalai Lama was welcomed on Taiwan with all the acclaim and excitement that usually attends visiting pop stars. When we recall, too, that Taiwan is not the only part of the Chinese world in which Tibetan Buddhism is currently in vogue—evidence of this may be found throughout overseas Chinese communities and indeed in the PRC as well—it becomes clear that the ancient religious relationship of Tibet and China has entered the new century still full of vigor, together with the unceasing and profound contestation it has come to entail.

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While the cases studied in the present volume touch on many significant aspects of the role of Buddhism in Tibet-China relations throughout the span of their history, it cannot be said that all issues of importance are treated here. (The puzzling question of pre-modern Chinese popular involvement in Tibetan Buddhism, for instance, has been already noted above.) Accordingly, in the interest of indicating possible directions for future research, let us note some of the outstanding matters not treated at length in this book.

It will be apparent in these pages that Tibet-China ties exhibited a characteristic asymmetry: what Tibet imparted to China was religious goods, while what China bestowed in return was material. This seems to have been the case when Lama Pakpa was named State Preceptor by Khubilai Khan in the thirteenth century, when the Fifth Karmapa hierarch consecrated the Yongle Emperor in the fifteenth, and it remains so when the present Dalai Lama draws eager devotees to fill sports stadiums in Taiwan today. But, although this general impression reflects a measure of truth, it must be nuanced by taking into account the opposite trends, that is, the material goods Tibet provided to China, and the spiritual goods China bequeathed to Tibet.

The first of these points is indeed touched upon at various points throughout this book, particularly in the first five chapters. Connections with Tibet were essential to China both for reasons of security along the western frontiers
and lucrative trade-relations. Following the ninth-century collapse of the old Tibetan empire, and given the frequent absence of a single stable polity in Tibet, major monasteries, with their networks of hierarchs and branch temples, often served as the essential guarantors of the peace in endemically strife-filled regions. Simply put, as E. Sperling shows, it was sometimes more cost-effective to sponsor a lama than to send in an army. But the Tibetans also had wealth that was desirable in China. Besides some rare luxury items, such as musk and medicinal plants, there was an almost insatiable demand, particularly during the Ming, for Tibetan-bred horses. Although the abundant trade in tea and horses that arose was not in itself religious in nature, Tibetan monastic establishments often facilitated and sometimes directed this commerce, above and beyond the purely ceremonial rapport they forged, which nevertheless supported the cordiality and trust through which trade is often best able to thrive.

China, moreover, was rich in spiritual goods of its own, and these were not wholly unknown to Tibetans. Two aspects of the Chinese Buddhist legacy in Tibet that have been relatively well studied are Chan Buddhism and Chinese Buddhist aesthetics, particularly in the art of painting. But these were not the only elements of the Chinese Buddhist tradition to have made their way to Tibet.

Though overshadowed by the gigantic proportions of Tibetan translations of Indian Buddhist texts, a significant body of Buddhist works was nevertheless translated from Chinese, and some of these have had a considerable influence in Tibet. Included among them are major sūtras such as the Mahāyāna version of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra and the Tang-period esoteric master Yijing’s Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra. Another translation from the Chinese which left a deep imprint on Tibetan Buddhist thought was the Korean Wŏn-ch’ūk’s massive commentary on the Sandhinirmocanasūtra, a work that came to be much discussed in Tibetan scholastic philosophy from the early fourteenth century on. Moreover, the early organization of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, as reflected in the extant imperial-period catalogues, may have been indebted in some respects to the models provided by the Chinese Tripiṭakas.18

Part of the Chinese literary legacy to Tibetan Buddhism consisted, too, in apocryphal scriptures, in which peculiarly Sinic iterations of Buddhist thought were often articulated and promoted. Some, like the Vajrasamādhisūtra, advanced varieties of Chan teaching, while others, including the Chinese traditions of the arhat Mulian (Maudgalyāyana), sought to achieve a seamless integration of the virtue of filial piety with the renuncia-
It is possible, too, that one of the Chinese Buddhist apocryphal scriptures translated into Tibetan, the *Datong fangguang jing*, inspired a Tibetan abridgement that in later legend became renowned as the first Buddhist sūtra to appear in Tibet, a tale that may be read, perhaps, as a veiled acknowledgement of the early Tibetan debt to Chinese Buddhism. Though most translations of Chinese scriptures into Tibetan date to the Tang dynasty, some activity along these lines continued long after, and as late as the eighteenth century we find the Qianlong Emperor sponsoring Tibetan translations of Chinese sūtras.

Together with the project of translating Chinese Buddhist works, the Tibetans also, to varying degrees, imported Chinese traditions in branches of learning including historiography, divination, and medicine. Though these generally lie beyond the purview of Buddhism, strictly speaking, among the Tibetans they were nevertheless developed and maintained within a predominantly Buddhist milieu. Thus, for example, as the eponymous fount of *Yijing* lore and its related mantic traditions, Confucius is renowned in Tibet as a Chinese emanation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

The association of China with the bodhisattva of wisdom points to another important area in which the presence of China was felt in the spiritual life of Tibet: pilgrimage. Tansen Sen has recently summarized the findings of several generations of scholars regarding the processes whereby China was transformed into a Buddhist sacred land, on a par in many respects with India, and the importance of the identification of the Five Terrace Mountain, Wutai shan, as Mañjuśrī’s earthly abode, in these developments. Though Tibet, like China, came to be regarded as part of the sacred geography of the Buddhist world, it differed in that its geography was recognized almost exclusively by adherents to Tibetan forms of Buddhism. The major Tibetan holy site to achieve international recognition was Mt. Kailash, in far western Tibet, and this was as Śiva’s abode in the cosmography of South Asian Hindus. Chinese Buddhist pilgrims therefore generally felt no need to travel to Tibet in order to fulfill their spiritual aims.

Tibetan Buddhists, however, did honor the sacred places of China, and Wutai shan above all. As early as the eighth century, if we are to believe the extant versions of the *Testament of Ba* (*Sba bzhed*), Tibetan envoys to China journeyed to the holy mountain to meet with the bodhisattva; and a tenth-century Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang records the pilgrimage of an Indian guru who traveled through Tibet on his way to China, where he visited the mountain. The Tibetan veneration of Wutai shan, once aroused, never lapsed: in the eighteenth century, we find Changkya Rölpé
Dorjé writing a pilgrim’s guide to the mountain; in the early twentieth, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama visits and teaches there; and late in the twentieth century, on the heels of the Cultural Revolution, the famed “treasure-revealer” (gter ston) Khenpo Jikpün discloses a new sādhana of Mañjuśrī in the course of his pilgrimage. Wutai shan and its traditions, in short, became integral to and amplified by the culture of Buddhist pilgrimage in Tibet.27

Finally, we may add, that numbers of Chinese divinities were absorbed into Tibetan Buddhist traditions, sometimes as local protectors in the frontier regions of Qinghai and Sichuan. An example that has become well known in the anthropological literature is the divinity of the terrain of Trika (Khri kai’ yul lha), in Amdo (Qinghai), who is most frequently identified with the Chinese god of war, Guan Yu.28 And the Chinese god of longevity, Shouxing, is ubiquitous in the Tibetan Buddhist world under the designation of “Long Life Man” (Mi tshe ring).29

All this being said, however, it remains evident that Chinese traditions of Buddhist study and practice have had much less of an active presence among Tibetans, at least following the waning of the Tibetan Chan movement of the eighth–ninth centuries, than has Tibetan Buddhism in China. Certainly, we would be astounded today (or at almost any time over the past thousand years!) to find young Tibetans taking up an engagement in Pure Land Buddhism or Huayen with the enthusiasm that many of their Chinese counterparts show for Dzogchen meditation or Tibetan tantric rituals. Despite this, however, those aspects of Chinese religions that became known in Tibet certainly merit continuing and thorough historical study, if we are to fully comprehend the richness and extent of Tibet’s and China’s mutual engagements.

At the start of this introduction, I proposed that the relations among differing Buddhist societies have been a neglected area of inquiry. The exercise we have begun here needs now to be considered in connection to what is already known, and what we might yet learn, of Buddhism in the relations between any pair, or group, of Buddhist realms. For once we understand more clearly than we do at present the role of the religion not just in the commerce of religious ideas, but in all forms of material and cultural exchange, and political and military connections as well, only then will have begun to grasp the full measure of Buddhism in the history of Asia. In large part, this is a task for the future. The horizons for Buddhist Studies in relation to traditional and contemporary Asian patterns of exchange remain quite wide open.
Notes


2 Art historical research has been particularly noteworthy here. See, for instance, the magisterial work of Marylin M. Rhie, Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, 2 vols., Handbuch der Orientalistik, Vierte Abteilung, China 12 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1999–2002). Broad surveys will be found in Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, ed., The Silk Route and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes (Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1982); Agnès Takahashi et al., eds., Sérinde, Terre de Bouddha: dix siècles d’art sur la Route de la Soie (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995); and Susan Whitfield with Ursula Sims-Williams, eds., The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith (London: British Library, 2004).


6 The formation of Tibetan Buddhism during the first centuries of the second millennium CE is studied in depth, with special reference to the Sa-skya-pa order, in


9 Though the Ming court’s patronage of Tibetan Buddhism was much contested in China itself, as may be seen in the recent study by Weirong Shen 沈衞榮, “‘Accommodating Barbarians from Afar’: Political and Cultural Interactions between Ming China and Tibet,” *Ming Studies* 56 (2007): 37–93.

10 The major study remains Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); but see now, too, Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), which, though focusing on the region that is today Xinjiang, has much to offer to the study of early-Qing-period Tibet. For an introduction, see my *The Tibetans*, pp. 127–55.

11 These developments are studied in Gray Tuttle, *Faith and Nation: Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

12 The former has written a short, but fascinating, account of his sojourn in Kham, that has generally escaped the notice of scholars and appeared in Richard A. Gard, ed., *Buddhism* (New York: George Braziller, 1961), pp. 196–202. Though Luk (Lu K’uan Yü) wrote extensively on Chinese, rather than Tibetan, Buddhism, his indebtedness to Gangkar Rinpoche is clearly reflected in the dedication found in his translation of *The Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (Leng Yen Ching) (London/New York: Rider & Co., 1966). On the early-first-millennium relation with India and Nepal, see now, in particular, Ronald M. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*.

13 This may be seen in one of the rare memoirs of a Chinese monk, Xu Yun (1840–1959), who visited Tibet as a pilgrim prior to the Republican period. His experiences during the years 1888–1889 are summarized in Upāsaka Lu K’uan Yü (Charles Luk), trans., *Empty Cloud: The Autobiography of the Chinese Zen Master Hsu Yun* (Rochester, NY: Empty Cloud Press, 1974), p. 20: “During my march from Szechwan province to Tibet which took a year, I walked by day and rested at night. Often I did not meet a single man for days when I climbed the mountains or crossed the streams. The birds and beasts differed from those in China and the customs there were also different from ours. The Sangha order did not observe the monastic rules and most of the monks ate beef and mutton. They were divided into sects distinguishable by
their red and yellow robes. I thought of the days of the Jetavana assembly and could not refrain from tears (at the sight of this artificial division)."

15 Of course, the teaching of “buddha-nature” (buddhatva, i.e. tathāgatagarbha), castigated by the proponents of “Critical Buddhism” as dbātu-vāda (“essentialism”), is very well represented in the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, though it was perhaps more contested in traditional circles than were analogous teachings in East Asian Buddhist traditions.


17 A study that begins to undertake this may be found in Gray Tuttle, “An Unknown Tradition of Chinese Conversion to Tibetan Buddhism: Chinese Incarnate Lamas and Parishioners of Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries in Amdo,” in Avrum Ehrlich, ed., Negotiating Identity Amongst the Religious Minorities in Asia (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

18 The major surviving imperial catalogues of the canon are the Ldan-kar-ma and the ’Phang-thbang-ma, which have been edited and studied in: Marcelle Lalou, “Les Textes Bouddhiques au Temps du Roi Khrī-sron-lde-bcan,” Journal Asiatique 241/3 (1953): 313–353; Rta-rdo, ed., Dkar chag ’phang thbang ma. Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003); and Georgios Halkias, “Tibetan Buddhism Registered: A Catalogue from the Imperial Court of ’Phang thang,” The Eastern Buddhist 36, nos. 1–2 (2004): 46–105. Though there has been much speculation about Chinese influence on these inventories, the question has never been systematically examined.

19 For discussions of these materials, with further references to scholarship on Chinese apocrypha as known in Tibet, see my The Tibetan Assimilation, ch. 5; and “The Tibetan Yulanpenjing 佛說盂蘭盆經,” in Matthew T. Kapstein and Brandon Dotson, eds., Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 211–237.

20 Rolf A. Stein, “Tibetica Antiqua I: Les deux vocabulaires des traductions Indo-tibétaine et Sino-tibétaine dans les Manuscrits de Touen-houang,” BÉFEO 72 (1983): 149–236, esp. pp. 218–19. The Tibetan version is known as the Spang skong (= fangguang) phyag brgya pa and is said to have fallen from heaven to land on the palace of the ancient king Lha tho tho ri.


24 Sen, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–86.


26 Though refer to n. 14 above.


29 It may be noted in this connection that the Sde dge par khang (“Derge Printery”) illustration of Mi tshen ring includes a text based on the discourses of Si tu Pan chen Chos kyi ’byung gnas (1699–1774), and derived from his travels in Yunnan, explaining something of the cult of Shouxing in Chinese religion.
Part I
Sites of Encounter
The rise of the Tibetan empire during the first half of the seventh century corresponded closely to that of the Tang dynasty in China (618–907). With the expansion of their respective realms, it was not long before the two powers became rivals, particularly in Gansu and Xinjiang, in which both sought to control the routes and realms linking China to the West. The opposition of China and Tibet, however, served at the same time to strengthen cultural relations between them. Tibet, like many other Inner Asian powers, found resources in Chinese material and spiritual culture that contributed to its own civilization-building project, while China for its part made strategic use of cultural diplomacy as a means to domesticate the surrounding peoples, who so often threatened China’s northern and western frontiers. Buddhism, due in large measure to its place in the international culture of the time, came to play a distinctive role in the process of bilateral “confidence-building” such as this was pursued according to the diplomatic codes of the day.

Tibetan traditional accounts, of course, lay greatest stress in this context upon the religious activities of the Chinese princesses sent to Tibet. It was the princess Wencheng (in Tibet from 641, d. 680), the bride of the Tibetan monarch, or tsenpo, Songtsen Gampo (ca. 605–650), who most fascinated the later Tibetan imagination, and to whom was attributed the Tibetan adoption of Buddhism in large measure. Nevertheless, current scholarship has not supported the elaborate legends that were built around her and her marriage to Songtsen Gampo. Though, like other Tang princesses who were sent to wed foreign rulers, she may be considered as a cultural emissary whose mission was conceived as a type of soft diplomacy, the extant record does not indicate that religious affairs, or political developments relating to religion, were strongly
influenced by her. In 648, some years after her arrival in Tibet, the Tibetan military intervened in support of the Tang envoy to India, Wang Xuance, who had come under attack by an usurper to the throne of Magadha. As Wang’s mission in India involved visits to the major sites associated with the Buddha’s life, this perhaps suggests that Buddhism was not altogether overlooked in Sino-Tibetan relations during Wencheng’s lifetime. But she had no discernable role in connection with these events and the Tibetan action is reported without any reference to religion at all. During the last decades of Princess Wencheng’s life, when as queen dowager she apparently was still involved in official correspondence with the Tang court, Tibet entered into direct competition with China for the conquest and control of the strategically vital regions that are today Xinjiang and Gansu provinces. It was Tibet’s expansion in these territories, where Buddhism had been long established, that intensified its contact with the Indian religion, while simultaneously creating an ongoing pressure on Tang China to come to terms with a neighbor that aggressively threatened its prerogatives to the West.

If Wencheng remains an elusive figure, her “niece,” Princess Jincheng (in Tibet from 710, d. 739) left a more clearly defined imprint upon the early religious history of Tibet. Married to the tsenpo Tri Detsukten (704–755) when he was a six-year-old child, she is credibly recorded to have energetically promoted Buddhism among the Tibetan nobility, inviting monks from Khotan (which by this time was a Tibetan colonial territory) to found the first sangha in Central Tibet. This endured until her death during a plague epidemic, one of the results of which was a reaction against the presence of the foreign religion and the expulsion of the Khotanese monks. During the middle decades of the eighth century, Buddhist activity in Tibet was reduced to the point that it all but vanished.

Buddhism therefore, despite its presence in cultural affairs, played no appreciable role in Tibet-Tang relations during the period preceding the rebellion of An Lushan (755–757), nor did it enter into diplomacy proper, specifically the management of matters of war and peace between the two states. The imperatives that periodically drove Tibet and China to the bargaining table to discuss prisoner exchanges, the adjudication of frontiers, and the cessation of hostilities, did not, up to this point, involve the Buddhist religion so far as the extant record allows. Though a partial exception might be made for the expedition of 648 on behalf of Wang Xuance, even here it is not at all clear that the Tang emissary’s mission to tour the Indian Buddhist sites influenced the Tibetan decision to lend him armed support. Buddhism, in fact, entered into Tibeto-Chinese formal relations
only during the last quarter of the following century, at some point following the *tsenpo* Tri Songdetsen’s 762 conversion and subsequent adoption (ca. 779) of it as the Tibetan state religion. As this prima facie suggests, it was the transformation of the Tibetan religious constitution that drove subsequent changes in diplomatic practice. This, at least, is the conclusion that may be drawn from the two versions of the *Tang shu* ("Tang Annals"), in their reports of the treaties negotiated by China with Tibet in 762, 783 and 821/822 respectively. Concerning the first, the *Old Tang Annals* (*Jiu Tang shu*) offers this account:

In the first year of the reign of Suzong (756), in the first month, on the *jiachen* day, a Tibetan mission arrived at the court to ask for peace. The Emperor ordered the ministers of state, Guo Ziyi, Xiao Hua, Zhang Zunqing, and others to entertain them at a banquet, and to proceed to the Guangzhaisi [a Buddhist temple], to conclude a treaty, to be sworn by sacrificing three victims and smearing the lips with the blood. As it had never been customary to conduct affairs in a Buddhist temple, it was proposed that on the morrow, at the Honglusi [the Foreign Affairs Bureau], the rite of smearing blood on the lips be accomplished in accordance with the rites of the Tibetans. This was allowed.

It is notable here that, while the possibility of swearing to the treaty in a Buddhist temple is mentioned, it is explicitly refused. And that this incident occurred in the aftermath of the Tibetan *coup d’état* of 755, in which Tri Detsukten was deposed and assassinated, the succession passing to his thirteen-year-old son Tri Songdetsen, is significant as well. These events, which unfolded during the same tumultuous years as did the An Lushan rebellion in China, marked the culmination in Tibet of a ministerial rejection of the Buddhism that the former Tibetan ruler had favored. So it is perhaps not surprising, under the circumstances, that during the period still prior to Tri Songdetsen’s rehabilitation of Buddhism, the Tibetan nobles charged with negotiations would not have displayed a particular affinity with the foreign faith.

Although Tri Songdetsen may have been personally drawn to Buddhism as early as 762, it was not until his promotion of it as a state religion during the late 770s that China seems to have taken notice of its growing role in Tibet. The first reference to this in Chinese records dates to 781, when the decision was made to dispatch what was envisioned as a regular embassy of Buddhist missionaries to Tibet. This corresponds to the apparent upsurge
of interest in Chinese Buddhism shown by the Tibetan court following the conquest of Dunhuang. An oath-taking ceremony that accompanied the treaty of 783 unambiguously included a Buddhist rite, although the program overall remained primarily a sacrificial covenant. As the description that we find in the Old Tang Annals provides us with one of the best general accounts of Tang-Tibetan diplomatic usage, it merits citation at length:

In the first month of the fourth year (February–March 783), the imperial decree was issued that Zhang Yi and Shang Jiezan should make a sworn compact at Qingshui. . . . It had at first been agreed that the Chinese should sacrifice an ox, the Tibetans a horse, but Yi, ashamed of the alliance with the Tibetans, wished to depreciate the rites, and said to Jiezan: “The Chinese cannot cultivate the ground without oxen, the Tibetans cannot travel without horses, I propose therefore to substitute a sheep, pig and dog as the three victims.” Jiezan consented. But there were no pigs outside the barrier, and Jiezan determined to take a wild ram, while Yi took a dog and a sheep. These victims were sacrificed on the north of the altar, the blood mingled in two vessels and smeared on the lips. The sworn covenant [in the Chinese text] was: “The Tang possess all under heaven, wherever are the footprints of [Emperor] Yu, and as far as boats and chariots can go there is no one that does not obey them. Under successive sovereigns their fame has increased, and its years have been prolonged, and the great empire of its sovereigns extended, till all within the four seas listen to its commands. With the Tibetan tsenpo it has made matrimonial alliances to strengthen the bonds of neighborly friendship and unite the two countries, and the sovereigns have been allied as uncle and nephew for nearly two hundred years. Meanwhile, however, in consequence of minor disagreements, their good relations have been broken off by war, so that the borderland has been troubled and without a quiet year. The Emperor on his recent accession compassionated his black-haired people, and sent back the enslaved captives to their own country, and the Tibetan nation has exhibited good feeling and agreed to a mutual peace. Envoys have gone and returned, carrying in succession sovereign orders, putting a stop to secret plotting or the dispatch of chariots of war. They have, with the view of making the covenant of the two countries lasting, proposed to use the ancient sworn treaty, and the government, resolved to give
rest to the natives on the border, have alienated their ancient territory, preferring good deeds to profit, and have made a solemn treaty in accordance with the agreement. [The text at this point includes a geographical description of the frontiers.] With regard to the places not included in the covenant, wherever the Tibetans have garrisons the Tibetans shall keep, wherever the Chinese have garrisons the Chinese shall keep, each retaining its present possessions, and not seeking to encroach on the other. The places that heretofore have not been garrisoned shall not have troops stationed in them, nor shall walled cities be built, nor land cultivated. Now the generals and ministers of the two countries having been commissioned to meet, and having fasted and purified themselves in preparation for the ceremony, proclaim to the gods of heaven and earth, of the mountains and the rivers, and call the gods to witness that their oath shall not be broken. The text of the covenant shall be preserved in the ancestral temple, with a duplicate in the official archives, and the officers in charge according to the regulations of the two nations shall always keep it."

Jiezazan also produced a sworn covenant which he did not put into the pit where only the victims were buried. After the conclusion of the sworn ceremony, Jiezazan proposed to Yi to go into a tent of the Buddha at the southwest corner of the altar to burn incense and make oath. When this was finished, they again ascended the altar, when they drank wine and both gave and received ceremonial presents, each offering the products of his country, as a mark of liberal friendship. Finally they returned home.16

Significantly, it is the Tibetan Shang Jiezazan who in this narrative proposes that the oath be sworn in a “tent of the Buddha” located to the southwest of the altar (a placement that seems intentionally homologous with the geographical position of India relative to China). In all events, as Imaeda suggests, the refusal of the Tibetan to deposit his copy of the covenant in the sacrificial pit may imply a disinclination toward this rite, for which the oath sworn before the Buddha was intended to compensate.18 In sum, during the final decades of the eighth century, though China may have to some degree supported Buddhist missionary activity in Tibet, in the context of more formal diplomatic practice a distinction was emerging between adherence to a sacrificial covenant, which had been the ancient practice of both the Chinese and the Tibetans, and an oath sworn before the Buddha, the practice to
which the Tibetans increasingly adhered. Be this as it may, none of the treaties forged between Tibet and China succeeded in interrupting their hostilities for very long, and only with a treaty forged in the years 821–822 would a lasting peace be realized.

The relevant background can be reconstructed on the basis of the Chinese and Tibetan sources. Tibet, as we have seen above, had begun to seize control of parts of what is today China’s Xinjiang province during the mid- and late seventh century, and by stages came to hold sway over several of the important stations of the Silk Road, including the city-state of Khotan. By the late eighth century Dunhuang and neighboring territories in the Gansu Corridor, where the trade routes converged before entering China proper, had fallen to Tibet. The Tibetans were thus planted between China and those western powers with which China might become politically or commercially engaged, whether Arab, Iranian, Turk, or other. Through-out the first decades of the ninth century, events in the region thus came to be punctuated by shifting alliances and warfare among the Tibetans, Uighur Turks, and Chinese. During this period, the Uighur Empire repeatedly petitioned the Tang court for a princess to marry their Khan, and thereby to seal an accord between the two realms. In his study of Tang relations with the Uighurs, Colin Mackerras summarizes the course of events leading up to the marriage-alliance:

There was one faction at court which advised the emperor to grant the marriage in the interests of the state’s security.

This clique was led by Li Jiang (764–830), chief minister from 811 to 814. Shortly after he resigned, he sent memorial to the emperor setting forth in detail the reasons for his view. He pointed out the inadequate defenses of the borders and believed that it would be inviting trouble under these circumstances to irritate the Uighurs. He also raised the possibility that by refusing their request, the emperor would drive them into the arms of their traditional enemies, the Tibetans, which could well result in an alliance between the two states against China. On the other hand, to grant the Uighurs a bride would intensify the Tibetan hostility towards the Uighurs by arousing their jealousy.

[The Emperor] Xianzong was unmoved by these arguments. . . .

Early in 820 a third mission arrived to make a further petition for the marriage. This time Xianzong at last gave his consent. The situation had indeed changed since 817. . . . Li Jiang’s arguments
about the Tibetans made much better sense now, for in 818 they had broken a lull of over a decade and begun making raids against China’s borders. . . .

The emperor’s acceptance of the proposal was quickly interpreted by the Tibetans—no doubt correctly—as ratifying a strategic partnership whose aim was primarily to force them out of the Gansu corridor by exerting pressure from both the east and west simultaneously. The response was fast and furious, and the “pacified West” (Hexi) and adjacent areas were soon plunged into intensive warfare. As Mackerras continues:

Li Jiang’s suggestion that the marriage would inflame Uighur-Tibetan hostility proved justified. No sooner had the Princess of Taihe been ordered to marry the khaghan, than the Uighurs announced that they had sent forces to the far western districts of Beiting and Anxi to ward off the attempts the Tibetans were making, or might make, to prevent the Princess of Taihe from reaching Karabalghasun. Although in the first instance China also suffered renewed Tibetan raids on her borders owing to the marriage, a Sino-Tibetan peace agreement was reached soon after and the hostilities were discontinued. From a political point of view, the marital alliance with the Uighurs had definitely worked to China’s advantage.

Accordingly, beginning in 821, when the Tibetan tsenpo was Tri Tsukdetsen, who is better known to posterity as Relpachen (806–838), a series of treaties between China and Tibet, and between Tibet and the Uighurs, was negotiated, aiming primarily to stabilize and reaffirm the integrity of the frontiers, and to restore harmonious relations between the Tibetan and Tang courts. The treaty of 821/822 is well known through the celebrated bilingual “uncle-nephew pillar inscription” (dbon zang rdo ring) in Lhasa, the contents of which, like those of the treaty of 783, demonstrate the importance to the parties of the adjudication of borders. Despite uncertainties surrounding points of detail, these events would be generally remembered in later Tibetan historiography. The Fifth Dalai Lama, for instance, refers to them in his famous Chronicle, and they may be seen accordingly depicted in murals in the Potala Palace, which show how the frontier wars of the early ninth century were rendered by seventeenth-century painters, as well as the dedication of a version of the “uncle-nephew pillar inscription” at Gongbu Maru (fig. 1),
said to mark the frontier between the two empires. The latter panel makes a visual allusion to the famous metaphor comparing the Chinese emperor and the Tibetan *tsenpo* to the sun and moon, together holding dominion over all under heaven. The metaphor was employed in the west face of the treaty inscription of 821/822 itself, where it is written that the newly established peace between China and Tibet shall be such that “the report of its fame will embrace all that is touched by sun or moon.”

The treaty was ratified in separate ceremonies in the Chinese and Tibetan courts, in connection with the first of which the record makes no mention whatsoever of Buddhism, but alludes only to a sacrificial rite such as we have seen earlier. Concerning the oath taken in Tibet in 822, however, the *New Tang Annals* (*Xin Tang shu*) provides a remarkable account, derived certainly from the report of the Chinese ambassador Liu Yuanding:

The valley to the north of the Tsang river is the principal summer camp of the *tsenpo*. It is surrounded by [a fence of] staves attached together. At an average distance of ten paces [one from the other] 100 long lances are arranged. There are three gates, with a great standard planted before each, at 100 paces from one another,
with armored soldiers guarding the gates. Sorcerers with head-
dresses of bird[-feathers] and belts of tiger[-skin] beat drums. 
Whoever entered was searched before he was allowed to go in. In 
the middle [of the camp] there was a raised platform, surrounded 
by a rich balustrade. The tsenpo was seated in his tent. [There, there 
were] dragons with and without horns, tigers, and panthers, all 
made of gold. [The tsenpo] was clothed in white wool; a red mus-
lin [turban] was tied so as to cover his head. He wore a gold-in-
layed sword. Pelchenpo was standing to his right. The ministers 
of State were stationed at the foot of the platform. Since the arrival 
of the Tang ambassador, the jishezhong, minister Xidaruo, came 
to deliberate with him regarding [the ceremony of] the oath. 
There was a great feast to the right of the tent. The serving of the 
dishes and the circulation of the wine there were roughly of the 
same order as in China. The band played the air “The Prince of 
Qin defeated [the enemy] ranged in battle,” and other diverse airs 
all of the musicians being Chinese. The altar for the oath was 
ten paces wide and two feet high. The ambassador and more than 
ten great ministers of the Tibetans faced it. More than 100 chiefs 
were seated below the altar. On the altar, they had arranged a great 
banquet. Pelchenpo ascended upon it and announced the alliance 
[to the gods]. A man stationed beside him translated [his words] 
to communicate them to those below. When Pelchenpo had fin-
ished, [those assembled] smeared their lips with blood. Pelchenpo 
did not smear his lips with blood. The oath being completed, one 
sware once again before the Buddha, and they brought saffronated 
water that one drank. Congratulations were exchanged with the 
ambassador and one descended [from the altar].

The Tibetan ecclesiastical figure named here as Pelchenpo is certainly to be 
identified with one of the most powerful personages of early-ninth-century 
Tibet, Trenka Pelgi Yönten. He had risen to prominence already during the 
reign of Relpachen’s father, Tri Desongtsen (r. 804–815), dominating ecclesi-
astical affairs, and he came to assume a legendary status in later Tibetan tradi-
tion. As Relpachen was perhaps just sixteen years of age at the time that the 
treaty of 821/822 was enacted, we may assume that Trenka Pelgi Yönten still 
played a determining role in the affairs of his court. It was the influential posi-
tion of the Buddhist monk, no doubt, that impelled the intensive religious 
orientations for which Relpachen’s reign would be later remembered.
The insistence upon a key role for Buddhist ritual in the context of Tang-Tibetan diplomacy, a development that was due primarily to the emergence of Buddhism as the Tibetan state religion, was in evidence not only in court ceremonial. It had notable ramifications, too, for the conduct of affairs along the frontiers. The invocation of the Buddha’s august presence by the Tibetan colonial administration in order to guarantee the peace in these regions will illustrate something of the extent to which religious change came to penetrate political affairs.

*The Temple of the Treaty*

Among the early sources of information concerning the issues discussed in the present chapter, some of the most valuable are known thanks to the Taoist priest Wang’s revelation at the beginning of the twentieth century of the hidden text chamber in Dunhuang Mogao cave 17. His discovery brought to light roughly 4,000 Tibetan texts and documents dating to the last centuries of the first millennium, of which many stem from the period of the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang and the surrounding regions. These materials, whose value for historical scholarship was first recognized by M.A. Stein and Paul Pelliot, remain the bedrock for all study of dynastic and early post-dynastic Tibetan culture and history, and, a full century after their discovery, there remain plenty of surprises for us within them. Nevertheless, investigations of these texts have generally lagged behind the study of the larger corpus of Chinese-language manuscripts also revealed in cave 17. One area in which this is quite conspicuous involves the use of Dunhuang manuscript sources in connection with the interpretation of other types of material evidence from Dunhuang and elsewhere: whereas the Chinese documents have sometimes been found to refer to specific, identifiable sites, temples, icons, and so forth, relatively little progress has been made in locating convincing correlations between Tibetan Dunhuang texts and other archeological and art historical remains.

One of the most famous of these Tibetan documents is an incomplete manuscript, roughly the last half of which is preserved in two separate sections, catalogued respectively as PT 16 in the Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France and IOL Tib J 751 in London’s British Library. (As the text has come to be known conventionally as the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel,” this is the usage that we shall follow here.) The portions available to us provide a highly formalized series of prayers and memorials, celebrating the establishment of
a temple, known as the “Temple of the Treaty” (gtsigs kyi gtsug lag khang), at a place called Dega Yutsel, the “turquoise grove of Dega.” The text was first studied, and parts of it translated, by F.W. Thomas in his pioneering researches, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan.* Since his time, valuable comments on it have been presented in the writings of Ariane Macdonald and Rolf Stein; and additional contributions of geographical importance, to be considered in some detail below, are found in the remarks of Hugh Richardson and Géza Uray, among others.

As the narration of the text itself makes clear, the Temple of the Treaty was founded during the reign of the Tibetan *tsenpo* Tri Tsukdetsen, i.e. Relpachen, famed in later Tibetan historiography for his lavish patronage of Buddhism. Following the traditions codified by his father Tri Desongtsen, he was raised under the tutelage of Buddhist monks, no doubt including Pelgi Yönten. The foundation of the Temple of Treaty was intended to commemorate the council and subsequent treaty concluded between Tibet and the powers of China, the Uighurs, and possibly Nanzhao, during the first years of the 820s. The religious solemnity of the treaty was no doubt underscored by the construction of a temple in its honor, for the very name by which it is designated means literally the “temple of the treaty-edict.” The location for the temple’s construction, moreover, is described as the “plain of the peace council” (mjal dum thang). In the following sections, I shall attempt to offer some suggestions regarding where precisely this is, and to suggest further that the temple in question may in fact still exist.

The “Prayers of Dega Yutsel,” as it has been preserved, consists of a series of benedictions honoring the foundation of the temple, beginning on the numbered folio 22 of the manuscript. While we have no evidence as to what may have occupied the missing folios 1–21—further benedictions, selections from appropriate scriptures, or perhaps even a detailed narrative account of the temple’s creation and the events surrounding it—given the careful preparation of the work, it is most unlikely that materials not related in some way to Temple of the Treaty would have been included therein.

Of the seven surviving benedictions, the sources of five may be identified and these were all explicitly offered by prominent parties in the Tibetan colonial administration of what is today Gansu. A general outline of the portions of the manuscript that have been preserved runs as follows:

1. “Offered as a prayer . . .” (PT 16, 22a1–32b4: smon lam du gsol ba/). As the title in this case evidently began on the now missing folio 21, we have no way of knowing just who presented this prayer. It is by far the
most elaborate of the group, and, given the apparent arrangement of the collection according to descending hierarchical rank-order, must have emanated from among the highest echelons of Tibetan civil or religious authority. We shall return to this issue in discussing this remarkable text in greater detail.

(2) “Offered as a prayer, and presented as a donation, by the domain of the great military headquarters of Yarmotang, on behalf of the Three Jewels in connection with the edification of the most famous Temple of the Treaty concluded at the great council with China, the Uighur, etc.” (PT 16, 33a1 - IOL Tib J 751, 35a3: rgya drug las stogs pha mjal dum chen po mdzad pa’i gtsigs gyi gtsug lag khang grags pha chen po bzhengs pa’i dkon mchog gsum la dlyar mo thang khrong chen po khams nas smon lam du gsol ba dang/ yon du dbul ba’//). The identity of the place called Yarmotang, which is of central importance in the present context, will be the subject of further discussion.

(3) “Offered as a prayer by the Pacification Minister on the occasion of the consecration of the Temple of the Treaty of Dega” (IOL Tib J 751, 35a3–38b2: de ga gtsigs kyi gtsug lag khang zhal bsro ba’i tshe bde blon gyi smon lam du gsol ba’//). The “Pacification Minister” (bde blon) was among the highest ranked of the Tibetan colonial officers and seems to have been, in effect, the governor of Tibet’s conquests in Gansu and adjacent territories.

(4) “Offered as a prayer by the great military headquarters of Khartsen on behalf of the Temple of the Treaty of the Turquoise Grove of Dega” (IOL Tib J 751, 38b2–39b1: de ga g.yu tshal gtsigs gyi gtsug lag khang du mkhar tsan khrong chen po smon lam du gsol ba’//). The toponym “Khartsen” may have been applied at various points to several different locations, but in our present context, as will be seen momentarily, it can only refer to Liangzhou, to the northeast of Kokonor in Gansu.

(5) “Offered as a prayer by the great military headquarters of Guazhou on behalf of the Temple of the Treaty of the Turquoise Grove of Dega” (IOL Tib J 751, 39b1–40a2: de ga g.yu tshal gtsigs gyi gtsug lag khang du kwa cu khrong chen po nas smon lam du gsol ba’//). The Tibetan transcription of Guazhou (kwa cu) is unambiguous and corresponds to the well-known region of Anxi in northwestern Gansu, to the immediate east of Dunhuang.

(6) “Offered as a prayer by the chiliarch of Chuktsam and his servitors” (IOL Tib J 751, 40a2–41a1: phyug tsams stong pon dpon g.yog gi smon
lam du gsol ba’//). Though the location of Chuksam is uncertain, references in other Dunhuang texts, to which we shall have occasion to return, suggest that it was also in the vicinity of present day Anxi.53

(7) “Offered as a prayer by Drom Pékhongma (?)” (IOL Tib J 751, 41a2–41b4: ‘brom ?spe khong ?ma’i smon lam du gsol ba’//). The reading of several syllables of the donor’s name is in this case uncertain.54

In sum, the provenance of the manuscript in Dunhuang comports closely with the geographical frame of reference that is represented within it, that is, far western Gansu. As will emerge, however, though I am in favor of regarding matters from this angle, it is a conclusion that will prove in some respects problematic once the sum of the evidence is reviewed.

The “Prayers of Dega Yutsel” includes, in addition to the formal features of Buddhist dedicatory texts—salutations, praises, aspirations on behalf of living beings, etc.—a considerable amount of historical detail concerning the circumstances under which the temple came to be established by two very prominent ministers, Zhang Trisumjé and Zhang Lhazang. The historical narrative is repeated in longer or shorter form in several of the prayers55 which reproduce essentially the same account with the addition or subtraction of some elements of information. In the first and fullest of the surviving prayers, the foundation of the temple is related as follows:

25b3 . . . The divine tsenpo of Tibet, the lord of men appointed by the gods, Tri Tsukdetsen, like a body magically emanated by his ancestors, 25b4 is inscrutable56 and revered, like heaven and earth. Upright and equanimous, he commands all creatures. Open and expansive, his religious and political wisdom are refined in accordance with custom.57 His governance, sagacious and firmly crowned,58 26a1 is of great splendor so that [all] under the sun59—even the kingdoms of the south, north, east, and west—receive his order with respect, and are gathered under his sway,60 wherefore all of his undertakings are altogether realized as he intends.

26a2 The great ministers of [his] governance [as it has been just described] are the great minister Zhang Trisumjé and the great Zhang Lhazang, who, owing to the excellence of their intelligence are like precious wish-granting gems. Through their heroic labors61 the Chinese, Uighurs,

26a3 and others who were inflated with their own pride, having become objects of wrath, due to [their] enmity were defeated, their splendor
annulled and the source of their cunning effaced. Their weapons of enmity were laid down, and great fidelity then followed.\textsuperscript{62} As for the increase of the good, having enthroned the best, nobility and honor may be firmly upheld.\textsuperscript{63} Being without conflict, having treated [one another] as dear,\textsuperscript{64} the one kingdom of Tibet, for both its high and low subjects, both its great and small, enjoys the pervasive grace of happiness, for each at his own door. Having established Great Tibet, China and the Uighurs, etc., in an age of happiness in each of their respective countries, the Chinese and Uighurs, moreover, requested that there be a governmental peace council, and, as if among men of a single household, a treaty for a common peace with the powers of China and the Uighurs was made in the auspicious land, Dega Yutsel, the peace-council plain. Thereupon, as a sign of [its] truth, so that the limits of government would be perpetually unshaken and firm, and forever trusted by the many, it was inscribed upon a stone pillar. And afterward, this shrine of the Three Jewels was established in accord with the transmission of the sūtra—“When someone establishes a temple in the world, as an image of that great merit a gods’ mansion arises in the Akaniṣṭha heaven”—declared by the Buddha. The great benefactors who have established the Temple of the Treaty-Edict (\textit{gtsigs kyi gtsug lag khang}) are the great minister Zhang Trisumjé and the great Zhang Lhazang. Several benefactors, rejoicing in this, joined the effort with faith and devotion.

The expressed motivations of the two ministers, however, extended beyond their urge to celebrate the peace, honor their lord, and make merit. Contribution for the damage wrought by war is a further theme of importance in these prayers, contributing to the exceptional value of their testimony. This is most clearly evident in the prayer of the Pacification Minister, who writes:

\textit{… Formerly, when we did not convene with China and the Uighurs in governance, and there were hostilities between us, the Divine Son of firm crown, and the heroic and intelligent ministers, skilled in the ways of war,\textsuperscript{65} assaulted the enemy and with the steady}
power of many armies brought down the enemy’s fortresses, defeated them in battle, conquered the land, cut off their supplies, etc. Many of the enemy’s men and beasts were deprived of life, and what was not given [to us] was taken [by us]. We pray that all of these sins, by the splendor and brilliance of this great merit [derived from the foundation of the temple], be overcome and purified.

It is perhaps here, above all, that we remark the depth to which Buddhist sentiments and values had penetrated the discourse of these servants of the tsenpo, for the rhetoric of earlier Tibetan martial culture seems to have left little place for reflection upon the horrors of war.

Finally, we may note that although the kingdom of Nanzhao is mentioned on four separate occasions in the prayers, it is omitted from all references to the battles preceding the peace-council. One can imagine that, although Nanzhao may not have been a party to the hostilities that necessitated the negotiation of the treaty, it was invited nevertheless to dispatch an emissary. Perhaps it was the case that those responsible for the security of the Tibetan empire along its eastern borders, tired of wars that were proving costly and indecisive, wished to settle its frontiers once and for all. In all events, of the seven treaties that we know Tibet to have negotiated with Tang China, the treaty of 821/822 was the only one that ever held.

Where Is Dega Yutsel?

We are now faced with the question of whether or not it is possible to determine just where the “peace-council plain” may have been located and the Temple of the Treaty established. In order to address this adequately, it will be necessary in the present section to examine some fine points of historical geography and linguistics.

The location at which the Temple of the Treaty was founded is referred to in full as the “peace-council plain of Dega Yutsel” (de ga g.yu tshal mjal dum thang). In this expression, the “plain of the peace-council” is a descriptive phrase and not a proper geographical name. Dega, which is repeated several times in conjunction with Yutsel, has not so far been satisfactorily interpreted, though I shall propose an explanation below. The second element, Yutsel, by contrast is unambiguously a toponym meaning the “turquoise wood.” Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine a more characteristically Tibetan designation, or one more auspicious from the perspective of a Tibetan cultural framework. As I hope
to sufficiently demonstrate later in this chapter, this is no doubt precisely what the authors of PT 16 - IOL Tib J 751 intended. The exact identity of the location of the “turquoise wood,” however, has proven deeply problematic. As our texts refer frequently to identifiable places to the far northeast of Tibet, places located mostly in the Gansu corridor, such as Guazhou, Ganzhou, and Liangzhou, it seems reasonable to begin our search in this area. Besides this, we find one further geographical specification, which some have thought might be the key to the exact location of Dega Yutsel: it is said to be situated in Yarmotang.²²

Taking in turn, then, the puzzles surrounding the identities of the three key toponyms that concern us—Yarmotang, Yutsel, and Dega—we shall attempt to establish, at the least, a range of possible interpretations.

Yarmotang

This geographical term, which is encountered many times in Old Tibetan documents, has been discussed by a noted scholar of early Tibetan history, Géza Uray:

The location of the region dByar- (or g.Yar- or g.Yer-) mo thang (which frequently occurs not only in the ancient records but also in the geographic literature, and, especially, in the religious and heroic epic) was at all times thought to be found in the neighbourhood of Lake Ch’ing-hai; it was, however, only recently that Richardson recognized the importance of the Zhol inscription in Lhasa for a more exact location of dByar-mo-thang in the 8–9th centuries. Since, in the description of the conquest of Chinese territories between 758 and 763 this inscription mentions among others rGya’i/ kha[ms]-su [gto]gs-pa dByar-mo-thang, ‘the dByar-mo-thang belonging to the Chinese country’ (south side, ll. 32–33), there can exist no doubt, even given the incompleteness of the text, that dByar-mo-thang should be located east or northeast of Lake Ch’ing-hai.²³

By contrast, Helga Uebach has noted an important reference from the thirteenth-century writings of Chögyel Pakpa Rinpoche that supports a location in the Luchu region, that is, in what is today the southwest of modern Gannan prefecture in Gansu Province, not far from the area that includes the famous monastery of Labrang Trashikyi.²⁴ If we follow, as Uebach proposes, indications that Yarmotang was the “region where the Vihāra De-ga
gYual and a stone-pillar had been erected in commemoration of the treaty of 821/823, then we will seek to locate the temple somewhere in the southern Gansu-Qinghai frontier.

Although, for reasons that will become clear below, I do not believe that this hypothesis can be altogether ruled out, taking Uray’s and Uebach’s suggestions together, it is at once evident that we must not restrict too narrowly the limits of the area to which the designation Yarmotang may have applied at one time or another. The most we can say with assurance on the basis of their arguments is that it embraced areas beyond Kokonor (from the Central Tibetan perspective), was considered by the Tibetans to have formerly been Chinese territory, and extended into southern Gansu. It may be helpful at this point, then, to ask, just what did “Yarmotang” signify generally in traditional Tibetan geographical literature? Although an answer can only be gleaned from relatively late sources, it will be seen that this will nevertheless help us to clarify earlier references.

The great nineteenth-century history of Amdo, the *Doctrinal History of Domé (Mdo smad chos 'byung)* by Könchok Tenpa Rabgyé (b. 1801), lists Yar- or Yarmotang among the three gang (“highlands”) or kham (“realms”) into which eastern Tibet is divided, and holds the term to be synonymous with Domé

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**Fig. 2** The Tibetan Empire and its neighbors, ca. 820 CE.
This latter designation is however problematic, for some hold it to mean Amdo generally, while others prefer to limit it to the Yellow River basin in southern Amdo, and the regions to the west and southwest of the Kokonor. As the Tsongkha region of Amdo, to the east of the Kokonor, is identified in the Doctrinal History of Domé as a separate gang or kham, it is the latter usage that must be preferred in the present context. The Luchu valley, favored by Uebach as the location of Yarmotang, may thus perhaps be included in that region by extension, but cannot be taken to delimit its full extent.

The identification of Yarmotang with the upper Yellow River basin is confirmed by contemporary geographical nomenclature, for we find a location in the “source area of the Yellow River”—to the south of the Ngoring lake in Qinghai province situated at approximately 34.7°N, 98°E—called in Chinese “Yematang.” The suspicion that this is in fact a transcription of a Tibetan toponym is increased by the occurrence of a second, identically named location further to the north, roughly 100 km to the west of the Kokonor at 37.4°N, 98.3°E. The continuing use of these designations suggests that, as traditional Tibetan geography maintains, Yarmotang embraced the regions to the south of the Kokonor, and was extended to the west as well. That this usage is not of very recent vintage is demonstrated by the Yuan-period toponym “Yemotang,” found in close proximity to the second modern “Yematang” just noted. It is evident, therefore, that the toponym Yarmotang was applied, at one time or another, to the immense stretch of territory extending from southern Gansu to the northwest of Lake Qinghai.

Additionally, if we continue further to the northwest, adopting a trajectory that runs directly from the Kokonor to Dunhuang, we find that upon crossing the modern border from Qinghai into Gansu we traverse the mountain ranges Yema Nanshan and Yema Shan. Given that we have now seen that yema, “wild horse,” is the modern Chinese transcription of Tibetan yarmo/yermo, it is not impossible that these ranges owe their names, too, to the earlier Tibetan designation for the entire region. If the term Yarmotang had been at one time extended to include Chinese territories in Gansu brought under Tibetan rule, then there is no reason to assume, with Uray, that only locations to the northeast of the Kokonor would have been so designated; for, indeed, the regions of Dunhuang and Anxi, to the northwest of the Kokonor, are clearly contiguous with areas included under the traditional designation. I take it that the term was extended to embrace these “new territories” because they fell within the same Tibetan imperial administrative division, namely, the province of the chief colonial officer in the northeast, the governor known as the “pacification minister,” or delön.
Interestingly, the association of Yarmotang with the eminent Tibetan ministers mentioned in PT16 - IOL Tib J 751, Zhang Trisumje and Zhang Lhazang, would be recalled in later legends. One of these, illustrated in a mural in the Potala, depicts Zhang Lhazang’s meeting there with the armies of the god Kubera. Unfortunately, however, these legends do not appear to convey additional geographical information.\textsuperscript{83}

Finally, we should note that the relationship between Yarmotang, as a general geographical designation, and the “great military headquarters of Yarmotang,” from which prayer (2) emanated, is not altogether clear. The latter was no doubt somewhere within, or in close proximity to, the former, but it is probably not warranted to identify it with the former \textit{tout court}.

\textbf{Yulin}

Among the prayers offered in honor of the temple’s founding, there is one sent from the “great military headquarters” (\textit{kshrom chen po}) of Kwa cu. This is one of the places mentioned in the prayers that can be identified with exactitude, for Kwa cu is certainly a transcription of Guazhou, that is to say, the prefecture of the region immediately to the east of Dunhuang and now known as Anxi. If we assume that the place we are seeking might be in the general vicinity of Anxi it becomes plausible to suggest that \textit{yutse} (\textit{g.yu tshal}), the “turquoise wood,” might be none other than one of the most renowned temple complexes in that region, Yulin. Rolf Stein, to be sure, raised this possibility some two decades ago, but did not seem to believe that his hypothesis could be rigorously defended.\textsuperscript{84} I think, however, that it is probably correct, though there are some problems that must be addressed.

To begin, Tibetan \textit{tshal} is an exact translation of Chinese \textit{lin}, so that the second syllable poses no difficulty whatsoever. The first syllable of the Chinese, \textit{yu}, however, refers to the elm tree, so that we must explain the first syllable of the Tibetan, \textit{gyu}, “turquoise,” now pronounced \textit{yu}, not as a translation in this case, but as a transcription. In principle, of course, there is no objection to a Tibetan binomial phrase consisting of a transcription of Chinese in compound with a properly Tibetan syllable. An example in Old Tibetan is the term \textit{hen khang}, occurring in the Testament of Ba (\textit{Sba bzhed}) and referring to a Buddhist temple.\textsuperscript{85}

Nevertheless, \textit{gyu} is not precisely a transcription of the Chinese in this case either. Even after taking into account the reconstructed Tang-period pronunciation of the Chinese \textit{yu}, we are at a loss to explain the Tibetan pre-initial \textit{g}-, which was no doubt still pronounced when our texts were written.
The suspicion that Tibetan *gyu* cannot be an exact transcription of Chinese *yu* is strengthened by the observation that Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts (e.g. PT 997 and PT 2122) do exist that refer to temples at a place called *yu lim.* If this is correct, then it is virtually certain that the Tibetan word for “turquoise” is *not* being used here to transcribe the Chinese for “elm.”

The sole resolution that seems to me plausible, without sacrificing the possible identification of *yutsel* with Yulin, is to regard the Tibetan place-name as inspired by the Chinese, but adjusted so as to suit the religio-political concerns represented in PT 16 - IOL Tib J 751. Given the importance of the site in relation to the negotiation of the treaty, and the later construction of a commemorative temple there, it makes good sense to suppose that the Tibetan imperial administration would have wished to designate the place in Tibetan, and to do so auspiciously. The elm tree, though mentioned in later Tibetan *materia medica,* where it is called *yombokshing,* does not appear to have had very notable cultural connotations; and we know nothing so far of the significance of the elm tree in ninth-century Tibet. (A place called *yomboktang,* “elm plain,” is referred to in central Tibet, but in this case the name seems purely descriptive, with no remarkable connotations attached to it.) My supposition, therefore, is that, in seeking to coin a suitable Tibetan name for Yulin, *yu tshal* (which if read as purely Tibetan rather than Chinese + Tibetan would mean the “grove of the handle”) and *yo ’bog tshal* would have both been ruled out as unsuitable in the rather exalted context of the commemorative dedication. The Chinese syllable *yu,* however, was phonetically suggestive of one of the most auspicious terms in Tibetan, *gyu,* the talismanic stone *par excellence,* the turquoise. The authors of PT 16 - IOL Tib J 751 (or those who created the designations they employed), sought, in my view, to accentuate at once the importance of the formerly Chinese territory of Yulin as now a true part of Tibetan geography and its auspicious connotations within that geography; but they sought to do this in a manner that did not altogether erase its established identity.

Still, as Stein has pointed out, there were several locations in regions where the Tibetans were active during this period that were all called Yulin. Do we have any further grounds to hold that it is indeed *Anxi Yulin* that was intended? We shall return to this question later, but here we may note one further item that contributes to a response: the chiliarch of Chuktsam, to whom the sixth of the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel” is attributed, is also mentioned in the Dunhuang Tibetan inventory of Yulin (PT 997). Given the organization of the “Prayers” according to the ranks of the donors, it seems
most unlikely that an official of this grade would have been included here had the domain of his responsibilities not been closely tied to Dega Yutsel itself. The clearest way to account for his presence in our texts, therefore, is to assume that Yutsel is none other than Yulim. If this is so, however, we are still left with the thorniest geographical and lexical question of all.

Dega

Though varied interpretations of Yarmotang and Yutsel have been discussed in the literature, “Dega” has been generally ignored. Thomas understood there to be some possibility that this is merely a pronominal expression, but that, given the syntax of the phrases in which it occurs, it seems to make better sense if taken as part of a toponym. Noting the frequent occurrence of the suffix -ga/-ka in northeastern Tibetan place-names (e.g., Khri ga, Tsong k(h)a, Byang ka, etc.), he suggested that De ga might be another example adhering to the same pattern. If this were the case, however, then either we have an odd orthography for a Tibetan place name (which Thomas artfully sought to derive from bde ga), or if not, then without prejudice to the form of the suffix, we should see here instead the transcription of a non-Tibetan term. This latter hypothesis is, I think, certainly the more likely, as the manuscript in question was prepared with painstaking attention to Tibetan grammar, orthography, form, and penmanship, as befitting an official document emanating from the upper echelons of the Tibetan imperial administration.

And, although many languages were in use among various peoples throughout the Sino-Tibetan marches of Gansu, the most prominent candidate as the source for a borrowed term in this context is certainly Chinese. If Dega transcribes a Chinese toponym, however, it is one that has eluded those who have examined the relevant texts to date.

We have earlier met the Tang envoy Liu Yuanding, who was dispatched to Central Tibet in connection with the treaty of 822. An interesting story is related in the New Tang Annals in connection with his return journey to China:

When [Liu] Yuanding was on his way back, the supreme commander of the slaves, Shang Tazang, received him in the valley of Daxia, offered him a residence, and convened an assembly of the various generals of the administrative commission of the eastern region, numbering more than a hundred. [Shang Tazang] placed the text of the treaty upon a raised platform, and made its contents known to all. Then he advised all [the generals] to protect
their respective territories, without engaging in aggressions and mutual incursions.  

Demiéville long ago suggested that the Shang Tazang mentioned here might be identified with Zhang Trisumjé, one of the important figures we have seen referred to in connection with the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel.” However, it seems far more plausible to hold him to be the latter’s colleague Zhang Lhazang, whose name is in this case the better phonetic match. Curiously, this would correspond closely with the legend concerning his encounter with Kubera that, as we have seen earlier, remained in circulation in Tibet in later times. In the legend, the meeting of the minister with the god took place in Yarmotang, but here the location is said to be Daxia. If my hypothesis is correct, this is none other than Dega. The linguistic arguments for maintaining that the two are equivalent are best summarized in a note at this point. The phonological considerations that are presented there may be supplemented by noting that, as Daxia literally means “great summer” in Chinese, so the Tibetan Yarmotang signifies “summer plain,” Chinese xia and Tibetan yar being precise synonyms.

In the light of Uebach’s citation of Chögyel Pakpa’s mention of a Yarmotang in southern Gansu, the correspondence of Daxia with that region, and the suggestive convergence of the New Tang Annals with Tibetan legend, it may seem that we are entitled to cut to the chase and conclude that the Temple of the Treaty must have been located in or around the area that is now well-known for the great monastic complex of Labrang, itself significantly considered as marking a cultural frontier (as will be examined in chapter 5). Although this conclusion cannot, I think, be altogether excluded, there are nevertheless several difficulties that accompany it.

To begin, given the concentration of references in PT 16 - IOL Tib J 751 to places in and around far northwestern Gansu, and the provenance of the manuscript in Dunhuang, southern Gansu seems somewhat far afield in relation to the geographical frame of reference. The probable equivalence of Yutsel and Yulin, together with the occurrence in both the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel” and the Dunhuang “Inventory of the Yulin Temple” of references to a Chuktsam that can only have been in the vicinity of Anxi Yulin, further argue against a location roughly 1000 km to the southeast. And although the Daxia in southern Gansu mentioned in New Tang Annals was the location for a rehearsal of the treaty, it was not, as the “Prayers” affirm that the “peace-council plain” was, the site of its negotiation. The toponym Daxia, finally, has also been used to name many diverse locations to China’s west or northwest,
including Bactria, parts of northern India, possibly Tokharia, and later the Xi Xia realm, together with numerous more minor localities.\footnote{100}

It is this last consideration that, when taken together with the synonymity of *xia* and *yar,* “summer,” suggests a possible resolution to the difficulty of finding a satisfactory synthesis of the apparently conflicting information that we now have before us. For it is possible that the Tibetans took “Daxia” to be precisely a synonym of “Yarmotang,” and thus applicable to all those regions covered by this designation in Tibetan. This would permit all the data we have examined to cohere in a single explanation, though it may appear at this point to be still speculative. Is there, then, any additional evidence that would contribute to our assessment? It is time to return to the text of the “Prayers.”

**Dega Yutsel Discovered?**

The conclusions of the foregoing discussion are less decisive than we may prefer. Nevertheless, a number of points have been clarified and a range of possibilities comes into view:

1. The designation *yutsel,* “turquoise grove,” occurring in the name of the temple possibly is used in our texts for Chinese *yulin,* “elm grove.” Though this names several places during the Tang, it applies most plausibly in the present case to Anxi Yulin, the site of the famed cave-temple complex to the southeast of Dunhuang. Indeed, one of the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel” was offered by a local official, the Chuktsam chiliarch, who, on the basis of other Dunhuang documents, is known to have been particularly connected with a temple complex at Yulim (Yulin).

2. The Tibetan toponym Yarmotang, which properly refers to the upper basin of the Yellow River (Tib. Rma chu) to the south and west of the Kokonor, has been extended at one time or another to include neighboring territories, at least as far east as what is today southern Gansu, and in the northwest to the Gansu-Qinghai frontier. In the context of the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel,” taken alone, reference to the northwest seems more plausible, given the frequent mention there of districts that can all be identified as lying within that part of the Gansu corridor that is to the north of Qinghai.

3. The third term used to situate the temple, Dega, has hitherto proven the most resistant to satisfactory interpretation. Nevertheless, it is quite likely that it can be explained as a straightforward transcription of Chinese Daxia, which, among other places, names a well-known river valley in southern Gansu. This identification seems most plausible in the light of the
description, in the *New Tang Annals*, of a meeting there, following the ratification of the treaty of 821/822, of a Chinese envoy with Zhang Lhazang or Zhang Trisumjé, the figures prominently mentioned in the “Prayers” as the founders of the Treaty Temple.

A solution to the difficulty that these conflicting observations present is possible if we imagine that, because Chinese “Daxia” and Tibetan “Yarmotang” were nearly equivalent place-names, associating the locations to which they referred with the summer (Ch. *xia*, Tib. *dbyar*), the Tibetan authors of the “Prayers” were in fact using them as synonyms. To determine whether or not this is plausible, however, we shall have to take additional evidence into account. We may therefore turn now from the linguistic and geographical data to another important clue as to the identity of the temple given in the text of PT 16 - IOL Tib J 751, for its iconography is described there in some detail. This occurs in the first of the “Prayers.” To place the iconographical passage contained here in its proper context, let us begin by reviewing the structure of the text overall.

The prayer begins with an elaborate statement of the services performed at the commencement of Mahāyāna Buddhist rituals in general: salutations (*vandana*, 22a1–23b1), rejoicing in the good done by others (*anumodana*, 23b1–24a1), worship with offerings (*pūjā*, 24a1–24b1), confession of sins (*pāpādeśana*, 24b2–25b1), and going for refuge (*śaraṇagamana*, 25b1–25b2). The first and fourth of these require some comment.

The salutations are extremely ornate, and demonstrate at once that their author has a sophisticated command of both Buddhist doctrine and Tibetan rhetoric. In addition to the salutations to each of the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, we find here a fourth: a salutation to the wrathful embodiments, “who do not rest in the ways of those tamed by the vows of the Vinaya, who by their beauty tame heedless beings inflated with pride, who express the wrath and gladness of their compassionate nature but at the same time put down pride because they are emanated from the body of the Tathāgata, who are skilled in training all beings while neither purposing to enter into careless sin nor transgressing the bounds of sin, who radiate light rays so as to overwhelm the three realms, and who in an instant [throughout] the world-ocean cause all worlds to prosper by the emanations of their body, speech, and mind. . .” (23a2–b1). It is certain that the cult of the tantric wrathful deities was already associated with the martial ethos of the old Tibetan monarchy during the reign of Tri Songdetsen. The exaltation of the empire’s conquering prowess throughout the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel” seems to offer further confirmation of this association.
The treaty temple of the turquoise grove

The violence of worldly power, however, was not rendered unproblematic just by assimilating it to the image of divine wrath. It is in this regard that the confessional passage of the prayer we are considering is of great interest; for here, for the first time in the prayer, the formulae of the service explicitly include reference to the agents of the empire: the confession is performed to expiate the sins of all sentient beings beginning with “the lord of Tibet, his ministers and entourage” \((\text{bod rje blon 'khor dang bcas pa})\). The significance of this, as we have seen, is underscored elsewhere in the “Prayers,” above all in those offered by the Pacification Minister, wherein the merit of the edifying of the temple is called upon to purify especially the sins of battle during the period preceding the peace. Later Tibetan historical tradition would also recall that a temple was built in connection with the treaty enacted at this time.\(^{101}\)

Following the conclusion of the opening services, the long prayer we are considering enters into the extended narration concerning the circumstances of the temple’s foundation that is translated above. The act of constructing the temple is treated here as a precise analogue to the karmic construction of a divine mansion in heaven. Insomuch as this relates to the person of the tsenpo himself, a prayer is later offered that, as a result of this merit, he become a Cakravartin, and eventually a Buddha (28b3). Any doubts that one may have harbored regarding the “ideology of Cakravartin kingship” should be dispelled by this remarkably clear statement. The prayer for the king is followed by prayers specifically dedicated to the two ministers (28b3–30a1), and then, for the remainder of the text, prayers offered collectively on behalf of the tsenpo and his court, the two ministers, and sentient beings in general. The entire work is brought to a conclusion with the aspiration to realize the wisdom of Mañjuśrī, the vows of Samantabhadra, the compassion of Avalokiteśvara, the power of Vajrapāni, and the skillful means of Vimalakirti (32b1–32b4). This last recalls in some respect the close contact with Chinese Buddhism during this period, for Vimalakīrti did not enjoy the great popularity in later Tibetan Buddhism that he did in China.\(^{102}\) Let us recall, too, in this regard, that the celebrated portrait of a Tibetan tsenpo in Dunhuang Mogao cave 159 places the monarch in the entourage of the bodhisattva Vimalakirti.\(^{103}\)

With this framework in mind, we may turn now to examine the passage describing the construction of the temple itself:

\(27a2\) . . . Because it is said, “as for those who give aid, the fruit of merit will be like that of the master of the undertaking,”
for all those who have given precious aid, [their merit] will not go to waste, but an image of that great merit will arise in the heavens of the gods. The causes and conditions for [the arising of this image] are: the construction of the temple, the bodily image of Vairocana installed in its center. His body, achieved through inconceivable accumulations of merit and gnosis, teaches the enjoyment of the doctrine by means of the three secrets to bodhisattvas of the tenth level, and thus removes and purifies in an instant the obscuration of the knowable. By means of the emanational body he thoroughly matures sentient beings of the world-realms of the ten directions. Installed, too, is the bodily image of buddha Amitābha, whose field is best among those of all buddhas, where even the names of the three evil destinies and eight obstacles are unknown. Dwelling there, adorned with all the ornaments of divine enjoyment, so that there cannot even be the name of nirvana, in that field adorned with all perfect, world-transcending happiness, he acts on behalf of sentient beings. Because his compassion is especially great, just by calling his name all sins are purified and one is blessed to be born in that buddha-field. Installed, too, is the bodily image of Buddha Maitreya, who now, in the Tuṣita heaven, in a jeweled mansion adorned with all divine ornaments, matures all the offspring of the gods (devaputra), and so abides, never straying from that single mode of conduct, turning the wheel of the doctrine. Nevertheless, by means of light-rays of great compassion and instantaneous omniscient gnosis he abides delighting in the bliss of divine attributes throughout the ocean of world-systems. That Buddha Maitreya, in future time, will encourage the wishes and aspirations of all, and his name will accord with its meaning, so that by the power of great compassion all will be embraced by love. Also installed is the retinue of eight great bodhisattvas, the two wrathful [deities, i.e. Acala and Trailokyavijaya], etc. Also installed are the shrines that have been established of the lords and protectors of the four directions, of the eight classes of gods and nāgas, etc. Having done so, and having offered donations of mounts and walkways and groves and all pure requisites, by the merits of the authority thus determined, we pray that the countenance of the tsenpo Tri Tsukdetsen, enjoy limitless
longevity, great power, and the achievement of all his intentions, so that,
like a Cakravartin emperor, he exercise authority over the four continents and other kingdoms as well, and in the end achieve unsurpassed buddhahood!

Significantly, there is a temple conforming to this description located among the Yulin cave temples, and dating to the period of the Tibetan rule of the Dunhuang region, whose iconography closely matches that which is described in the prayer. I am speaking of Anxi Yulin 25, one of the most famous of the caves owing to the surpassing quality of its murals, its exceptional size, and the geometric precision of its excavation. (It was owing to these remarkable aesthetic qualities that it was chosen as one of the four caves reproduced according to its actual dimensions in the National Historical Museum in Beijing as part of the Dunhuang exposition there in 2000. The sole statue in the cave, it may be noted, dates to the Qing-period—or at least has a Qing-period head—and so our only concern here will be with the murals. It is possible of course that some of the figures mentioned in our text were once realized sculpturally, but if so they are now altogether lost.

*Fig. 3 Plan of Anxi Yulin, cave 25. (After Anxi Yulinku.)*

We may begin by noting the icons, among those listed above, that are represented in Yulin cave 25:
“lords and protectors of the four directions.” The kings of the directions (tianwang in Chinese) are represented both in the antechamber, and in the retinues of the Buddhas in the main hall. The refinement of the draftsmanship and painting is particularly clear in the images of Virūḍhaka and Virūpākṣa in the antechamber (figs. 4–5).

“the bodily image of Vairocana” (fig. 6), and “the retinue of the eight great bodhisattvas” occupy the east and central wall of the main chamber, and hence are preeminent in its composition overall. At the present time only the four bodhisattvas to the left remain (fig. 8), though photographs taken during the 1940s, and preserved in the Lo Archive in Princeton, show that the right hand portion of the wall, though already crumbling, was still extant at that time (fig. 9). Recent photographs demonstrate that the right half of the wall has been replastered in recent years.108
Fig. 6 (top left) At the center of the east wall: Buddha Vairocana. (Lo Archive, Princeton.)

Fig. 7 (top right) Tibetan imperial bronze (ca. ninth century) of the Buddha Vairocana. (Bodhicitta Collection, courtesy Namkha Dorje.)

Fig. 8 (bottom left) Four bodhisattvas to Buddha Vairocana’s right. (Lo Archive, Princeton.)

Fig. 9 (bottom right) Four bodhisattvas to Buddha Vairocana’s left. The panel no longer exists and was clearly already deteriorating at the time the photograph was taken (c. 1943). (Lo Archive, Princeton.)
Fig. 10 Detail of the *Amitābhavyūha*, south wall.
(Lo Archive, Princeton.)

Fig. 11 The dance of the bodhisattva, miraculously born in Amitābha’s realm.
(Lo Archive, Princeton.)
○ 27b2: “the bodily image of buddha Amitābha” is represented on the south wall (fig. 10), by a mural devoted to the Amitābhavyūha, that is, the Sukhāvati paradise. The wonders of rebirth there are represented in fine detail, in accordance with the descriptions given in the Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra, as seen here in a detail, depicting a heavenly neonate dancing for joy following his miraculous appearance on a lotus before the eyes of Buddha Amitābha (fig. 11).

○ 28a1: “the bodily image of Buddha Maitreya.” The north wall is dedicated to the future paradise of Maitreya, as revealed in the Maitreyavyākaraṇa, and illustrates the marvelous forms of happiness that, according to this prophecy, beings will enjoy when that Buddha appears (fig. 12). For instance, even in later life, when persons in our era can think only of aging and death, women will still have the vitality to marry.109 One of the remarkable features of this scene is that it is in fact a Tibetan wedding that is illustrated, as proven by the clothing depicted (fig. 13).110 The old man before the tomb (fig. 14), a motif encountered elsewhere in Dunhuang painting, is perhaps also a visual reference to the great longevity promised to inhabitants of Maitreya’s world. The Maitreya panel also includes the sole Tibetan inscription in cave 25, probably a late graffiti, of which I shall
have more to say in the appendix below. The delicate illustrations of everyday occupations are among the more critically renowned features of Anxi Yulin cave 25 (fig. 15).

Though other divinities mentioned in our text—for instance, the two wrathful [deities, i.e. Acala and Trailokyavijaya] and the eight classes of gods and nāgas—have not so far been identified in the surviving murals, there is, nevertheless, a strikingly high correspondence, which suggests to me, in conjunction with the geographical arguments reviewed above, that Anxi Yulin 25 is in fact none other than Dega Yutsel. What is initially most remarkable is the distinct presence of two very different iconographic programs, one following the conventions of “sūtra-painting,” as is well known from murals executed throughout the Tang-period at Dunhuang, the other, represented by the east wall, clearly adhering to the principles of the esoteric Buddhist maṇḍala. We would be wrong to assume that these two programs can in general be related to distinctively Chinese and Tibetan approaches respectively, but, nevertheless, in this case there may be some reason to consider matters in just this way.
The centrality of Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas, as well as the actual conventions of their representation, relate Anxi Yulin to a widespread group of early-ninth-century Tibetan icons that have been the object of ongoing study by Amy Heller. More broadly speaking, it also relates this temple to the wide-ranging association between Vairocana and the royal cult that we see represented during the ninth century at sites as far afield as Barabudur, Todai-ji (Kyoto), and Famensi (Xi’an). However, the Vairocana and eight bodhisattvas at Anxi Yulin are remarkable for the degree to which these images are consistent with other known Tibetan depictions during this period, including even such details as the draping of the robes and their patterns, the manner in which their hair is arrayed, their ornaments, etc. This may be seen in comparing the Anxi Yulin Vairocana with the stunning Tibetan imperial bronze from a private collection, shown beside it above (fig. 7). And, as I have argued elsewhere, the form of Vairocana in question is intended to represent the imperial presence of the Tibetan monarch whose mandala was none other than the Tibetan empire itself.

Nevertheless, because ninth-century Tibetan icons of Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas are now known from a number of locations throughout eastern Tibet, their occurrence alone by no means establishes a unique connection between Anxi Yulin and Dega Yutsel. It is, rather, the totality of the iconographic program, especially in light of earlier suggestions regarding the name of the place, that seems to warrant this conclusion. The extraordinarily
high quality of the murals in cave 25, certainly on a par with the best of mid-
Tang-period painting at Dunhuang, underscores the special care that was lav-
ished on this commission, something that we would expect in the case of an
important imperial project like the temple of Dega Yutsel.\textsuperscript{115}

We should note, too, that although the east wall, depicting Vairocana and
the bodhisattvas, seems stylistically almost altogether distinct from the north
and south walls, showing the paradises of Maitreya and Amitābha, there is
no reason to suppose that these were executed during different periods or by
different ateliers.\textsuperscript{116} A close stylistic comparison—focusing upon such details
as hair styles, garments, and brush strokes—suggests quite the opposite.\textsuperscript{117} It
is more plausible to hold that what we see here is the product of one and the
same group of artists struggling to execute a commission requiring the repre-
sentation of a somewhat unfamiliar type of composition, one based upon the
organization of the maṇḍala rather than upon that of the Buddha-field. In
both iconography and style, Anxi Yulin 25 thus expresses the coexistence of
the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist worlds. On the surface at least, it seems an
especially fitting memorial to a peace-accord between the two powers.

These appearances notwithstanding, however, the record as a whole sug-
gests that it was primarily the Tibetan administration, and not the Chinese,
that was eager to establish an enduring place for Buddhism in the bilateral
diplomacy linking the two powers. Individual Chinese officials, and certainly
important constituencies within the local populations of modern Gansu,
Sichuan and, in general, the Sino-Tibetan frontiers, no doubt often viewed
an explicit allegiance to Buddhism favorably as well. Nevertheless, the rela-
tively restricted role of Buddhism in the Chinese official record of relations
with Tibet demands further reflection.

In part, the diminished significance of the foreign religion may be due to
the general tendency, underscored by Tansen Sen, for the later Tang court
to have backed away from the robust commitment to Buddhism that it had
shown during the seventh century. In the course of this shift, moreover, the
Tibetans may have appeared as an obstacle to, and not a facilitator of, Tang
China’s relations with Buddhist India.\textsuperscript{118} What is clear is that so long as Bud-
dhism still flourished in India, and while the Tibetans were viewed as dan-
gerous and largely uncivilized rivals, Tibetan interest in Buddhism would
not have been felt as more than a minor theme in the Tang court’s reflections
on its foreign affairs. In the two centuries that followed, however, the pic-
ture began to change. Despite a brief and intense revival of Chinese interest
in Indian Buddhism under the Song,\textsuperscript{119} during the early second millennium
Buddhism in India was in sharp decline. At the same time, post-imperial
Tibet, no longer capable of threatening China directly, was beginning to emerge as India’s successor in terms of spiritual authority throughout much of the Inner Asian Buddhist world. So it was, therefore, that the subtle seed planted during the time of the Tibetan empire and the Tang, and nurtured too by the Tibetan frontier regime, eventually yielded the stout vine of religio-political order that bound Tibetan-Chinese relations for the greater part of the next thousand years.

Appendix: Some Objections Considered

As a coda to this chapter, I wish to review briefly some of the objections that my hypothesis may evoke, together with the sole alternative to it that seems to me viable, though I think less credible than what I have proposed. In all events, I remind my readers that what I offer here is strictly an hypothesis, and that without further evidence forthcoming it will be difficult to present a case that amounts to certain proof.

Although there is no doubt that the iconographic program described in the “Prayers” does conform with remarkable exactitude to that of Anxi Yulin cave 25, the significance of this observation is diminished if it proves to be the case that the program in question was relatively widespread. As we know that Vairocana with the eight major bodhisattvas became the objects of a long-sustained and very widely distributed cult, that may be traced to western India beginning in about the sixth century, and that inspired the production icons at various places in Tibet, as well as in China and Japan, are there clear reasons to associate the “Prayers” directly with the particular cave under discussion here?

In response, and without returning to the issue of the toponyms, we must stress once again that it is not only the presence of Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas that is of concern, for this is indeed too common to serve as a sole index. It is rather the presence of Vairocana in direct proximity to the fields of Amitābha and Maitreya that seems a decisive characteristic. The only other contemporary example of these three Buddhas depicted together in a Tibetan-period (mid-Tang) temple of which I am aware is the “Zhai-family Temple,” i.e., Dunhuang Mogao cave 220. In this case, however, the eight bodhisattvas are absent, the Vairocana image does not conform to the iconographic specifications of the known Tibetan models, and Amitābha and Maitreya are solitary, without their surrounding retinues and fields. While it is possible that the Zhai family, as important administrators in Dunhuang,
were inspired by the example of their Tibetan lords to include in their family shrine the same three Buddhas as those adorning the Temple of the Treaty, there can be no question that anything more than very rough imitation was involved in this case. It therefore in no way refutes my proposals with respect to Anxi Yulin cave 25.

A more delicate problem is posed by the sole Tibetan inscription in the cave, located on the north wall in the mural of Maitreya’s earthly paradise. It is not the only inscription in the edifice, but the others—Chinese donor inscriptions relating to later restorations and Uighur graffiti of the tenth century—are generally agreed to post-date the temple’s foundation by several decades and more. While the Tibetan inscription, from the perspective of Tibetan paleography, gives the impression that it too dates to the period following the Tibetan occupation of the Dunhuang region, when Tibetan was still in use as a lingua franca in the region, it is only thanks to a recent discovery on the part of Yoshiro Imaeda that it has become decisively clear that it cannot date to the period of the temple’s construction. For Imaeda has convincingly demonstrated that, under the Tibetan occupation, the cartouches for the inscriptions accompanying murals were characteristically provided in the form of a capital “T”: the upper bar in these cases is used for the horizontally written Tibetan script, surmounting a vertical bar for Chinese. In Anxi Yulin cave 25, the central mural of Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas is thus appropriately accompanied by T-shaped cartouches (figs. 8–9). In the Maitreya panel, however, only vertical cartouches for Chinese are present, one of which was rather awkwardly employed by the author of the Tibetan inscription. To all evidence, therefore, this individual was not familiar with the earlier convention; his words accordingly must be considered to be late graffiti. Despite this, two Tibetanists in China, Xie Jisheng and Huang Weizhong, have recently argued that the Tibetan inscription refers to the original donor. While, on the basis of the foregoing observations, I cannot concur, their arguments do require some further comment.

The inscription in question reads: // dze’u/ de'i cung gis/ phags pa’ khor cig/ bgyis pa’/’di shang she'i/ sku yon du/ bsngas pa’/ lags so/>. This means: “This circle of āryas, which Dze’u De’i cung enacted, is dedicated as a pious donation to Shang she.” The meaning of “enacted” (bgyis pa’), the honorific past stem of “to do,” in this context is not entirely clear. It most likely refers to the act of commissioning or sponsoring the paintings or their restoration. The names of the donor and recipient, in any case, are clearly Chinese.

In their reading, Xie and Huang are surely correct to hold that Dze’u is a
transcription of the name of the important Dunhuang family Cao, but they implausibly go on to hold that de’i cung is to be derived from the Tibetan phrase de’i gcung, “his little brother.” It is clear, however, that Dze’u De’i cung is to be read as a single Chinese name, of which Dze’u is the xing and De’i cung the ming. Taken thus as a whole, it partially resembles the name of one of the figures named in the Chinese donor inscriptions, Cao Yuanzhong, though I see no way to reconcile the de’i of the Tibetan with yuan in Chinese, even taking into consideration the reconstructed Tang-period pronunciations. (Cao Yuanzhong is well known as the “king of Dunhuang,” during whose reign [944–974] the oasis was virtually an independent city-state.) More plausible is the possibility that Dze’u De’i cung is a transcription of Cao Yangong (originally Yanjing), Yuanzhong’s successor whose brief reign spanned only two years (974–976). In any event, there can be no basis for arguing that the inscription pre-dates the inception of the rise of the Cao to power in the region during the early tenth century.

Regarding the name Shang she, Xie and Huang offer a number of suggestions without arriving at any definite conclusion. While acknowledging that any firm identification is doubtful, they dwell at length on the resemblance between this name and that of a famous personage of mid-eighth-century Tibet, Ba Sangshi. They overlook, however, Tucci’s important observation, following Demiéville, that this name, attributed to an individual said to have been a proponent of Chan Buddhism in Tibet, closely resembles the transcription shan(g)/shen(g) shi found frequently in Dunhuang Tibetan Chan documents and used to transcribe the Chinese title “dhyāna master” (Ch. chanshi). Though no definite conclusion about the interpretation of Shang she seems to be thereby warranted, the arguments of Xie and Huang, to the effect that the inscription refers to the early ninth century and alludes to the original donation, cannot be accepted on the basis of their suggestions regarding either of the names mentioned in it. It is a tenth-century addition, probably dating to the period of the Cao-family restoration of the cave, possibly (though this remains quite uncertain) referring to a grant in favor of one or more local chan-practitioners.

We have seen, too, in connection with the toponym Daxia, that we faced some interpretive difficulties, and that, on the basis of Chögyel Pakpa’s testimony, Uebach had located Yarmotang close to Daxia in southern Gansu. Would it not be preferable, then, to hold that Dega Yutset was in fact located in that region, and, while accepting the general drift of the interpretation advanced here, to consider that Anxi Yulin cave 25 was more likely created in imitation of it? This, of course, is the best alternative theory, and, though
I cannot exclude it altogether, it seems unlikely to be true. The geographical frame of reference of PT 16 - IOL Tib J 751 has been already discussed, including the important evidence provided by the Chusakm chiliarch, whose presence points directly to Anxi Yulin. The exceptional quality of the artistry of cave 25, and especially its strict adherence to early-ninth-century Tibetan iconographic codes in its depiction of the central Vairocana and eight bodhisattvas, points to Tibetan involvement of a very high order, such as would accord with a commission from the upper echelons of the colonial administration. The major objections to this thesis that have come to my attention so far have been answered above.

In sum, then, in the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel,” and at Anxi Yulin cave 25 which likely corresponds to the Temple of the Treaty described therein, together with the Chinese record of the ceremonies surrounding the ratification of the treaty of 822 in Lhasa, we find clear evidence for the beginnings of the process whereby Buddhism assumed a position of centrality in Sino-Tibetan relations overall. As would continue to be the case down through the centuries, diplomacy, ritual, and icon were interwoven in the tissue of events, places, and texts according to the ideal of a sublime, transcending plan.

Notes

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1 Christopher I. Beckwith, The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), provides the major study to date of Tibet’s rivalry with China in regions to China’s west. The essentials are summarized in brief by Denis Twitchett, ed., The Cambridge History of China, Volume 3, Sui and T’ang China, 589–
The treaty temple of the turquoise grove (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 35–36: “Tibet suddenly grew into a powerful united kingdom and embarked on a career of aggressive expansion. From their original centre in southern Tibet the Tibetans expanded westward toward the Pamirs, eastward toward Yunnan, and northward to impinge upon China’s fresh conquests in the Tarim, where they threatened China’s trade routes to the west. Then, during Kao-tsung’s reign, the Tibetans destroyed the T’u-yü-hun kingdom in modern Ch’ing-hai province, which had previously formed a buffer between them and the Chinese territories in Kansu. From this time onward the Tibetans constantly threatened the Chinese both in the Kansu corridor and in the region around Lan-chou, in which regions the T’ang was forced to maintain huge permanent armies. When, after 755, the An Lu-shan rebellion forced the government to withdraw these garrisons for the defence of the capital, the Tibetans occupied most of modern Kansu province where they remained from 763 until the 840s. The Chinese outposts in the Tarim and Zungharia were cut off from metropolitan China, and they too were later overrun by the Tibetans.”

For a sustained overview of China’s relations with Tibet, the Uighurs, and others during the mid-first millennium, see Pan Yihong, Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan: Sui-Tang China and its Neighbors (Bellingham, Washington: Western Washington University, 1997).


Per K. Sørensen, Tibetan Buddhist Historiography: The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), translates one of the fullest elaborations of the legend. Aspects of its development are studied in my The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation and Memory (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 8.


She appears to have played some sort of ongoing role in correspondence between the powers. In 679, shortly before her death, she is recorded as having solicited the Tang court, requesting that a princess be sent to wed the btsan-po ‘Dus-srong. Refer to Paul Demiéville, Le concile de Lhasa: une controverse sur le quiétisme entre bouddhistes de l’Inde et de la Chine au VIIIe siècle de l’ère chrétienne, Bibliothèque de l’Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, vol. VII (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale de France, 1952), p. 3.

Thus, referring to the situation in 670, Beckwith, The Tibetan Empire, p. 37, writes: “The Tibetans had now conquered a fairly large expanse of territory in eastern Central Asia. The region straddled the main East-West transcontinental trade routes, and was then a dynamic, integral part of the highly civilized Buddhist heartland of Eurasia. Thus, the loss of this profitable and most strategic part of their colonial empire was a shock to the T’ang Chinese...” See also Pan, Son of Heaven, pp. 243–247. It should be recalled that the Tibetans were also exerting pressure at the same time to the southwest of China, in Nanzhao, where Buddhism was also prominent.

Nevertheless, the traditions of the *Dba’/Shabzhed* do hold a Chinese Buddhist monk to have still been active in Lhasa: Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger, *Dba’ bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha’s Doctrine to Tibet* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), p. 39; Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation*, p. 39.


Stein, “Les serments,” pp. 134 and 136, argues that the date 756 given in the *Jiu Tang shu* is erroneous and must be corrected on the basis of other sources to 762. Pan and Imaeda have both followed him on this point.


On the Tibetan rebellion of 755, see Christopher I. Beckwith, “The revolt of 755 in Tibet,” in *Contributions on Tibetan Language, History and Culture*, ed. Ernst Stein-Kellner and Helmut Tauscher, Vol. 1 of the Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Symposium held at Velm-Vienna, Austria (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1983), pp. 1–16. There has been some disagreement over the interpretation of the 762 treaty between Tibet and China, R.A. Stein seeking to find here the evidence of a double rite—sacrificial and Buddhist—despite the explicit refusal of the Buddhist rite. While Pan Yihong, “The Sino-Tibetan Treaties,” follows Stein about this, Imaeda, “Rituel des traités,” has rejected this interpretation, and argues for adhering to a more straightforward reading of the text. The anti-Buddhist nature of the 755 Tibetan rebellion has not previously been taken into account, but I think that it does support Imaeda’s perspective. Nevertheless, a well-known early Tibetan history, the *Shab zhed*, does have Tibetan Buddhist ministers traveling to China during this period, in part to escape the reaction against their religion: *The Tibetan Assimilation*, pp. 71–72. In the account found in the *Dba’ bzhed*, however, the mission takes place at a later date, when Khri Srong lde’u btsan is already interested in Buddhism: Wangdu and Diemberger, *Dba’ bzhed*, pp. 47–52. The Tibetan envoys are not recorded, however, to have participated specifically in treaty negotiations while there. All in all, it seems to me that the reference to Buddhism in the *Tang Annals*’ account of the treaty of 762 prob-
ably reflects the vogue that the religion, particularly in its esoteric form, was enjoying in the Tang court during this period. See Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History, Volume 3*, pp. 576–580.

Demiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa*, pp. 183–184. Though Demiéville speaks here of a permanent Chinese Buddhist mission established by the Tang in Tibet in 781, it is not entirely clear for how long the project was actually continued.

For the most recent review of the problem of dating the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang, arguing that the hitherto accepted dates (781 or 787) are too late, see Bianca Horlemann, “A Re-evaluation of the Tibetan Conquest of Eighth-century Shazhou/Dunhuang,” in Henk Blezer, ed., *Tibet, Past and Present: Tibetan Studies I*, PLATS 2000 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 49–66. The correspondence of a Tibetan ruler, probably Khri Srong lde’u btsan, with the Dunhuang-based monk Tānkhuang well illustrates the interest of the Tibetan court in Chinese Buddhism at this time. See W. Pachow, *A Study of the Twenty-two Dialogues on Mahāyāna Buddhism* (Taipei: Taiwan: [s.n.], 1979).


His title and name in Tibetan may perhaps be reconstructed as “Zhang Skyes bzang. Though no person of precisely this appellation is known from Old Tibetan sources, the *Old Tibetan Annals* (PT 1288) does mention several individuals of ministerial rank (*blon*) named Skyes bzang under the years 729, 734, 737, 746 (Skyes bzang ldong tsab); 744, 761 (Skyes bzang); 746, 758, 759 (Skyes bzang stag snang); and 756, 757 (Skyes bzang rgyal kong). Perhaps one of the latter was granted the title of Zhang blon later in his career, although, because the personal name seems rather common, Shang Jiezan may have been another individual altogether. Alternatively, Jiezan may represent *Rgyal btsan/mtshan.


The history that concerns us here, and the previous research devoted to it, is surveyed in Pan, *Son of Heaven*, ch. 9–10.

Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, pp. 151–152, for instance, cites the Chinese minister Li Mi as advising the emperor during the autumn of 787: “I would like His Majesty to make peace with the Uyghurs in the north, come to terms with Nan-chao in the south, and unite with the Arabs and Hindustan in the West. In this way the Tibetans would themselves be in trouble, and horses would be easy [for us] to obtain.”


Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire*, pp. 46–47.

I speak here of a “series of treaties” with some hesitation, for, with the exception of the 821/822 treaty between China and Tibet, our evidence for Tibet’s treaties with the Uighurs and, in particular, Nanzhao is rather hazy. For a review of the problem, see J. Szerb, “A Note on the Tibetan-Uigur Treaty of 821/823 A.D.,” in *Contributions on Tibetan Language, History and Culture*, pp. 375–387.

Editions and studies of the “uncle-nephew pillar inscription” include: Bsod nams skyid, *Bod kyi rdo ring yi ge dang dril bu’i kha byang* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1984), pp. 21–58; Hugh E. Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*
Buddhism between Tibet and China


25 Rgyal ba Lnga pa chen mo (Dalai Lama V) Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, *Bod kyi deb ther dpjid kyi rgyal mo’i gli dbyangs* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988), p. 73: “At this time, China and Tibet being in disaccord, a great [Tibetan] army, fero-cious and awesome, waged war upon the land of China, vanquishing many Chinese fiefs [lit. ‘principalities’], and killing numerous lords and heroic warriors, so that they were brought to defeat. Then, the Chinese monk(s) and the Tibetan translators and paṇḍitas interceded and by their verbal admonitions they made the uncle [the Chinese emperor] and nephew [the Tibetan btsan-po] come to an accord. At Gung gu rme ru in China a pillar was erected, which was determined to be the China-Tibet boundary, whereupon [they agreed] not to let their armies transgress these frontiers so as to make war upon one another, etc. With the stern gods and nāgas bearing witness, they swore an oath to this, which was inscribed in writing upon three pillars: in Lhasa, the palace of the Chinese emperor, and Gung gu rme ru. At that time, because there was harmony between China and Tibet and their relations were good, it was said that ‘in the heavens there is the single pair of sun and moon, while on earth, the btsan-po, uncle and nephew.’” (’di’i dus su rgya bod gnyis ma mthun par/gyum drag rtag brjod dang Idan pa’i dmag gi dpung tsogs chen po rgya nag po’i yul du gyu lshams te/’tsi na’i rgyal kham du ma bcom zhing/ mi dpon dang/ dpa’ bo stag shar mang du bsad de cham la phab/de nas rgya’i bua shang dang bod kyi lo pan mams kyis bar du bzhugs te tsbig gi dbyang bsad kyis dpon [read: dbon] zhang mthun par mdzad/rgya’i gung gu rme rur rdo rring zhih bsugs te rgya bod kyi sa mtsams su bcad nas phan tshun gnyis kas sa mtsams las phyi rol tu bsgral ha’i dmag gi gyu lshams pa sogs mi byed pa’i dpang du lha klz gnyan po bzhag st bro bor ba’yi ye lha sa/rgya rje’i pho brang/ rme ru gsum gyi rdo rring la bris/ das der rgya bod gnyis mthun zhing ’brel bzang bar byung bas/gnam la nyi zla zung gic dang/ sa la btsan po dpon [read: dbon] zhang zhes gleng skad do/)."

26 *A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala* (Beijing: Jiu zhou tushu chubanshe, 2000), pp. 80–82.


28 Pelliot, *Histoire Ancienne*, pp. 73–74. Once again, Stein, “Les serments,” p. 128, goes to lengths to find a trace of a Buddhist rite in the ceremony performed in Chang’an, while Imaeda, “Rituel des traités,” p. 94, prefers to adhere to the explicit statements of the primary source, the *Jiu Tang shu*.

29 Liu Yuanding is also mentioned as a participant in the *Dbon zhong rdo ring*, south face, lines 39–40 (Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, pp. 142–143).

30 Pelliot translates, “au milieu d’elles [the lances], était planté un grand étendard,” but
I prefer to follow in this case the Tibetan translation of Don grub rgyal and Khrin Chin dbbyin [Chen Qingying], trans., Thang yig gsar rnying las byung b寨 bo’i bod chen po’i srid lugs (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1983), p. 105, according to which a standard was raised at each of the three gates.

Again, Pelliot’s translation, “une mousseline rose était nouée pour lui couvrir la tête,” seems to me less plausible that that of Don grub rgyal and Chen Qingying, who, quite in accord with the iconographic tradition, represent the Btsan po as wearing a red turban. The description of Khri Gtsug lde btsan’s costume given here corresponds with remarkable precision to the depiction that we find of a Tibetan Btsan po in the entourage of Vimalakīrti in the murals of Dunhuang Mogao cave 159, where he is shown with white robes and a red turban. Refer to Heather Karmay, “Tibetan Costume, Seventh to Eleventh Centuries,” in Ariane Macdonald and Yoshiro Imaeda, eds., Essais sur l’art du Tibet (Paris: Jean Maisonneuve, 1977), pp. 73–75.

In his text, Pelliot left this in the transcription po-tsh’ö-pou, but in his “Index des noms tibétains,” p. 146, gives po-tch’an-pou, which he elsewhere (Index général, p. 159) treats as synonymous, as equivalent to Dpal chen po in Tibetan. This suggestion was subsequently adopted by Demiéville, Le concile, pp. 228–230, and by Stein, “Les serments,” p. 129. The identification is confirmed by the occurrence in the Dhon zhang rdo ring, north face, line 9, of the ban de chen po dpal chen po yon tan, “the great monk [minister] Dpal chen po yon tan” (Richardson, A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions, pp. 128–129).

This title, which is recorded three times in Pelliot’s text (pp. 9, 106, 131) has not to my knowledge been satisfactorily explained. Don grub rgyal and Chen Qingying (p. 106) interpret the name of the minister who held it, Xidaruo, as a transcription of the Tibetan Stag bzher, a name that is indeed known from the Dhon zhang rdo ring, north face, line 35 (Richardson, A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions, pp. 132–133). As a minister belonging to the same Bran ka clan from which the monk-minister Dpal gyi yon tan hailed, he was no doubt in a position of considerable authority.

Pelliot translates “esclaves.”


Refer to Richardson, “Great Monk Ministers of the Tibetan Kingdom,” in High Peaks, Pure Earth, pp. 145–148.


PT, “Pelliot tibétain,” is used to denote Tibetan Dunhuang manuscript holdings of the Bibliothèque nationale de France that were collected by Paul Pelliot, while IOL Tib J is the British Library’s designation for the Tibetan documents brought from Dunhuang by Marc Aurel Stein and long kept at the India Office Library (London). The sections of the manuscript preserved separately in Paris and London were reunited in the facsimile reproduction given by Ariane Macdonald and Yoshiro Imaeda in the first volume of *Choix de documents tibétains*, and later edited by Imaeda and Tsuguhito Takeuchi in the third volume of the same series: Ariane Macdonald and Yoshiro Imaeda, *Choix de documents tibétains*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1978); Yoshiro Imaeda and Tsuguhito Takeuchi, *Choix de documents tibétains*, vol. 3 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1990). All subsequent references to the text of PT 16 - IOL Tib J 751 will be to the latter edition.


Thomas mistakenly identified the monarch concerned as Khri Lde gtsug btsan/brtan (r. 710–755) and therefore incorrectly dated the foundation of the temple to the early eighth century. The error was noticed and corrected by Demiéville (*Le concile*, pp. 362–364) and subsequently acknowledged by Thomas.


The entrustment of royal education to the Buddhist clergy is specifically ordained in the Skar chung inscription of Khri Sde srong btsan. See my *The Tibetans*, p. 76.
Refer to Szerb, “A Note on the Tibetan-Uigur Treaty.” Although Nanzhao is certainly mentioned in the text of PT 16 · IOL Tib J 751 (jang 38b3, 36b2, 38b1, 39b2), suggesting that it was a party to the treaty or treaties at issue, it is not quite clear to me that it is mentioned as anything more than one of the lands that was in some sense a beneficiary of the peace, whose representatives may have participated in some ceremonies.

The meaning of gtsigs in the present document has been discussed at length in Stein, “Les serments,” pp. 122–123. On his reading, my phrase “treaty-edict” is somewhat inexact, at least in relation to the primary and original meaning of the word, which referred to an orally sworn oath. The most pertinent passages for an interpretation of the term in our text are: PT16, line 34a1: myi’ gyur ba’i gtsigs kyi rdo rings btsugs, IOL Tib J 751, 39b3: gtsigs bka’ stsal to ’tsal du mnos pa, and 40b2–3: mjal dum gyi gtsigs bcas nas rdo rings la bris (cf. PT16, 26b2–3: tshigs bcas nas . . .). There is no question but that the gtsigs was considered to be a written edict here.

Szerb, “A Note on the Tibetan-Uigur Treaty,” p. 376, erroneously considers the first part of the manuscript preserved in PT 16 to have emanated from Dbyar mo thang, though in fact it is only prayer (2) that did. Perhaps prayer (1) was presented by representatives of the court. This, at least, is what may be suggested by a phrase from the Bde blon’s prayer (3), IOL Tib J 751, 38b2: smon lam gzhan yang/ bla nas mdzad pa dang mthun bar smond to/, “as for other prayers, I pray in conformity with what was done from above,” where “from above” (bla nas) likely refers to the court. If this is so, then it can only refer to the first surviving prayer (1), or perhaps to a lost text that occupied part of the missing portion of the manuscript.

khrom. Though often translated as “market,” “city,” or even “fortified city,” the khrom of the old Tibetan empire correspond more closely to the administrative center of a prefecture in Chinese practice, though, as Uray has shown, with a clearer accent on its role as a center for the military administration. It thus resembles a cantonment in Indian English usage. See Géza Uray, “Khrom: Administrative units of the Tibetan Empire in the 7th–9th centuries,” in Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980), pp. 310–318.

Here and in (6) and (7) below I have interpreted the genitive g(y)i/’i as agentive g(y)iis/’is.

Refer to Richardson, “The Province of the Bde-blon of the Tibetan Empire, Eighth to Ninth Centuries,” in High Peaks, Pure Earth, pp. 167–176.

As Stein notes, “Tibetica Antiqua I,” p. 216, the Japanese historian of early Tibet, Z. Yamaguchi, believed that Mkhar btsan (= Leng cu) should refer here to Lingzhou (Lingwu) in modern Ningxia province, which was the northwestern frontier of the Tibetan empire at the beginning of the ninth century (Tan Qixiang 譚其骧, ed., The Historical Atlas of China 中國歷史地圖集, volume V [Beijing: China Cartographic Publishing House, 1996], map 76–77). However, as Beckwith, The Tibetan Empire, p. 167, shows, Lingwu was likely lost to the Tibetans sometime before our texts were produced. (Refer to Pelliot, Histoire ancienne, p. 74, which does mention a negotiation over boundaries immediately following the Tibetan defeat by the commissioner of Lingwu.) Given therefore its proximity to the other regions in Gansu mentioned in the prayers, and the fact that it had been firmly under Tibetan command since 808.
66 Buddhism between Tibet and China

(Beckwith, p. 163), Liangzhou seems the more probable identification. This was also the conclusion of Uray, “Khrom,” p. 314.

53 Helga Uebach, “An 8th Century List of Thousand-Districts in Ne’i Paṇḍita’s History,” in B.N. Aziz and M. Kapstein, eds., Soundings in Tibetan Civilization (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985), pp. 147–151, records a phyugs mtshams in Central Tibet (dbu ru), but this seems surely not to be identified with the location mentioned here.

54 Thomas, Tibetan Texts II, p. 104, reads “the district hBrom khoṅ,” but this seems doubtful.

55 Refer to the translations of Thomas, Tibetan Texts II, pp. 99–104. Though now dated in terms of many particulars, these still provide an adequate view of the general contents of IOL Tib J 751.

56 dgag, lit. “hidden, concealed.”

57 chos gtsug ni/lugs kyis bzang/. With the exception of the grammatical particles ni and kyis, all of the terms used in this phrase are dense with meaning, and no translation can hope to achieve its semantic richness while preserving its concision. The term gtsug, in particular, which Ariane Macdonald regarded as the ancient name of the Tibetan royal religion, following further contributions by Stein, is now generally agreed to refer to the particular wisdom that characterizes just rulership. (See n. 42 above for their principal discussions of this issue.) The etymology of the word is brilliantly analyzed in Michael Hahn, “A propos the term gtsug lag,” Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Seventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, ed. Ernst Stein-kellner et al. (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 347–354.

58 thug skam dbu rmog btsan pa’i chab srid. Again, this is a stock characterization of the merits of the Tibetan Btsan po. Cf. the colophon cited in The Tibetan Assimilation, pp. 231–232, n. 64.

59 nyi ’og. Like tianxia, “under heaven,” in Chinese, this probably means here “the whole world.” I do not believe that it should be taken in this context as naming a particular country, i.e. Bactria (Skt. Aparāntaka), as it apparently does in the introduction to the Sgra sbor bam po gnyis pa, referring to the homeland of the “Indian” acārya-s at the court of Khri Lde srong btsan: refer to Mie Ishikawa, A Critical Edition of the Sgra sbor bam po gnyis pa, An Old and Basic Commentary on the Mahāvyutpatti, Studia Tibetica 18 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1990), p. 1, para. 2. A translation of this passage will be found in my The Tibetans, pp. 76–77.

60 chag og tu ’dus phas. . . The meaning is clear enough, though chag perhaps is err. for chab.

61 dpal ba’i la bor bas. I have not succeeded in ascertaining the precise significance of la bor bs, though it is reminiscent of expressions such as la zlo bs, “to ascertain,” or of mna’ bor bas, “to swear an oath.” Perhaps it means roughly “commitment, decision.” In the absence of a sure interpretation, I have allowed the fortuitous circumstance that the English homonym of the first two syllables yields an intelligible translation to suggest a tentative rendering.

62 gna’i chos chen po ni bstud. Here, gna’ should perhaps be read mna’. In any event, the parallelism in the phrases dgra chos “enmity” and gna’i chos is unmistakable, so that the translation of the latter as “fidelity” seems certain. If interpreted according to the classical Tibetan orthography it would mean roughly “traditions of yore,” which, though not impossible, seems not to make good sense here.
The treaty temple of the turquoise grove

raḥs ḥhrīḥ bzhag nas chu gang ḥhrēl ltas ni broling du btsugs. My translation of this passage is tentative.

ges paḥ byas nas. I.e., having made (ourselves) dear (to our former enemies), or having made (our former enemies) dear (to ourselves). Perhaps the lack of specification should be taken to suggest that the new-found cherishing is (or at least is conceived to be) expressly mutual.

dgra thabs mkhas paṭi skyims kyis. The precise meaning of skyims is unclear to me and my translation omits it.

mnangs bcad pa. “Plundered” is perhaps what is meant. Refer to the definitions of this and related terms in Rnam rgyal tshe ring, Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2001), p. 289.

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This clearly suggests that *gyer mo thang* designates Mdo smad including Tsong kha. In Zhang Yisun 張怡蓀 et al., eds., *Bad rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (Zang-han dacidian 藏漢大辭典; *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary*) (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1985), p. 2627, *gyer mo thang* is defined as a former designation for Mdo smad. The uncertainty as to whether the term embraces Tsong kha or not seems to be reflected in the work of R.A. Stein. In his *Les tribus anciennes de marches sino-tibétaines: Légendes, classifications et histoire*, Bibliothèque de l’Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, vol. XV (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1961), he identified *gyer mo thang* as Mdo smad and as the “plaine du Kokonor.” Accordingly, it is clearly indicated as the vast territory to the southwest of the Kokonor on the accompanying map. And elsewhere (*Recherches su l’épopée et le barde au Tibet* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959], p. 207, n. 11) he has written that it refers to “la grande plaine du nord renfermant le lac Kokonor,” which on p. 294 he identifies as the location of De ga gyu tshal (though without mentioning the temple by name). In the map of early Tibet given in his *La civilisation tibétaine*, 2nd ed. (Paris: le Sycomore-l’Asiatèque, 1981), pp. 58–59, however, it has been moved to the east of the Kokonor and runs north-south to include Tsong kha and A myes rma chen.

For geological remarks on this location, see Cheng Jie, Zhang Xuiaojia, Tian Mingzhong, Yu Wenyang, and Yu Jiangkuan, “Ice-wedge Casts Showing Climatic Change Sine the Late Pleistocene in the Source Area of the Yellow River, Northeast Tibet,” *Journal of Mountain Science* 2/3 (2005): 193–201. Although not immediately relevant to our present subject matter, it is not without interest that these China-based scientists refer to the region they are studying in Qinghai as “Northeast Tibet.”

Refer to the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Fen Sheng Dituji* (Hanyu Pinyinban) (Beijing: Ditu Chubanshe, 1983 [1977]), map 28 “Qinghai Sheng.” Both of the two “Yematang” mentioned here are indicated on this map.

I am grateful to Biancha Horelmann for sharing with me the drafts of her forthcoming article “Buddhist Sites in Eastern A mdo/Longyou from the 8th to the 13th Century,” through which I learned of the Yuan-period Yematang. It denotes the valley of the Buh He, which enters the Kokonor from the northwest. See Tan Qixiang 譚其骧, ed., *The Historical Atlas of China* 中國歷史地圖集, volume VII (Beijing: China Cartographic Publishing House, 1996), map 36–37.

These ranges are indicated on both the Qinghai and Gansu sheets (27–28) of the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Fen Sheng Dituji*.

Cf. Richardson, “The Province of the Bde-blon.”

Uebach, “Dbyar-mo-thaṅ and Goṅ-bu ma-ru,” surveys these legends and their literary sources in considerable detail. In connection with the tale of Zhang Lha bzang’s meeting with Kubera (Vaiśravaṇa, Rnam thos sras) in Dbyar mo thang, we find a seventeenth-century mural illustration of the scene in the Potala: *A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala*, p. 88. Ironically, the English caption in this case falls into unnecessary geographical confusion, owing perhaps to the proximity of the painting with an illustration of Bsam yas Monastery. Whereas the Tibetan caption correctly names Dbyar mo thang as the site of the encounter, the English version reads: “In the time of the Tibetan King Trisong Detsen, at a visit to Samye by God Namse and
entourage, a minister called Lhasang managed to see in front a massive force numbering 440,000 bird-faced, horse-legged, mouse-tailed, and donkey-eared freaks marching towards them.

Rolf A. Stein, 1983, “Tibetica Antiqua I: Les deux vocabulaires des traductions Indo-tibétaine et Sino-tibétaine dans les Manuscrits de Touen-houang.” *BEFEO* LXXII: 216. Stein’s perplexity stemmed from his identification of several locations named Yulin in Tang times, which, besides Anxi Yulin, include two occurrences in the Ordos and one near Turfan.

In this case this represents Chinese fan, “Brahman, Buddhist” + Tibetan khang, “house.” The term was no doubt modelled on a Chinese binome such as fangong, meaning a Buddhist monastery or temple. Refer to my *The Tibetan Assimilation*, p. 221, n. 3.


Zhang Yisun et al., *Bod rgya tshig mdzod*, p. 2599, defines yo ’bog as equivalent to Ch. yu, “elm.”


See n. 84 above.

Richardson, “The Inventory of Yu-lim,” pp. 281–282. The designation as given here, phyug mtshams btsan la snang dpon g.yog, differs somewhat from the form we find in the “Prayers of De ga g.yu tshal,” phyug tsams stong pon dpon g.yog.


Thomas, *Tibetan Texts III*, p. 5, suggests that we can account for the pre-initial b- of bde being dropped by the same principle that applies to the simplification of certain numerals, gnyis > nyi (e.g., in nyi shu), etc. He offers no clear account, linguistic or otherwise, of this otherwise undocumented transformation, which seems altogether arbitrary.

Richardson, *High Peaks, Pure Earth*, p. 78, approvingly cites Thomas’s description of the diction of these texts as “magniloquent,” suggesting that this may be “the product of a colonial frontier régime,” something of which he had, of course, considerable personal experience.


Demiéville, *Le concile*, pp. 266, 283. In this he was no doubt trying to reconcile the passage from the *Xin Tang shu* with the parallel passage in the *Jiu Tang shu* (Pelliot, *Histoire ancienne*, p. 75) that has Zhang Khri sum rje meeting Liu Yuanding in He Zhou, adjacent to Daxia. However we explain the discrepancy between the two accounts though, for the reasons given in the following note I believe that Shang Tazang is most likely a transcription of Zhang Lha bzang. Demiéville also proposed that Shang Tazang might be Zhang Stag bzang, though this seems unlikely in view of other known Tang-period Chinese transcriptions of stag, which are in two syllables so as to conserve both the pre-initial s- and the radical t-.

Because the Tibetan syllable lha is often transcribed luo in the *Tang shu*, e.g., in Luosuo (Lha sa), Demiéville and others may have drawn the conclusion that this is a
“standard” transcription. However, the Tibetan initial Ṭh-, which does not correspond precisely with any phoneme in modern or medieval Chinese, has not been interpreted uniformly in all contexts. Consider, for instance, the current situation, in which Lhasa is rendered Lasa, but Lha sgang (in Mi nyag lcags la, Sichuan) is Tagong. Assuming that the situation in earlier times was in some respects similar, Shang Tazang appears to be a relatively straightforward rendering of Zhang Lha bzang.

98 Following Bernard Kalgren, *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991 [1923]), Daxia in “ancient Chinese” (ca. sixth century) was ḍâi/tâi-γa’ (dai/tai-ka in Japanese), which very plausibly would have been transcribed as de ga in Tibetan. The refinements of E.G. Pulleyblank, *Middle Chinese: A Study in Historical Phonology* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984) do not seem to me to substantially alter this impression. For *da* he proposes Early Middle Chinese t’ajh/daăh (p. 157), and for *xia* ɦærh in Early Middle Chinese and xfa in Late Middle Chinese (p. 186).

99 Tibetan uses three spellings of this word—*dbyar*, *gyar*, and *gyer*—of which only the first in fact means “summer.” In modern pronunciation, however, all three are near homonyms throughout a broad range of dialects. One wonders if the last two, *gyar* and *gyer*, might not have arisen as transcriptions of Chinese *xia*, particularly in the light of Pulleyblank’s reconstructions given in the preceding note.


101 Oftentwo temples, one Chinese and one Tibetan, are referred to. The sources are surveyed in Uebach, “Dbyar-mo-thaṅ and Goṅ-bu ma-ru.”

102 Nevertheless, he was not altogether forgotten either. The extant Sanskrit text of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra* (Tokyo: Taisho University Press, 2004) was preserved thanks to a copy made on behalf of a certain Śīladhvaja (p. 511), who is no doubt to be identified as the well-known twelfth-century Tibetan visitor to India and translator Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan, a student of the mahāpaṇḍita Abhayākaragupta at Vikramaśīla.

103 Refer to n. 31 above.

104 My assumption that “two wrathful” (*khro bo gnyïs*) refers to Acala and Trailokyavijaya in this context is based on Khri Srong lde btsan’s own homage to these divinities following the eight bodhisattvas, in his *Bka’yang dag pa’i tshad ma* (Toh 4352, P 5839). For translation and discussion of the verses in question, see my *The Tibetan Assimilation*, pp. 61–62.

105 *mnga’ris bcad pa’i bsod nams kyis*.


107 For recent color photographic documentation, see Duan Wenjie 段文傑, ed., *Yulinku di’erwuku fu diyiwuku* (zhongtang) 榆林窟第二五窟附 第一五窟(中唐), in the series *Dunhuang shiku yishu* 敦煌石窟藝術 (Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1993); and Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, comp., *Anxi Yulinku* 安西榆林窟, in the series *Zhongguo shiku* 中国石窟 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1997), plates 12–43. The latter also includes historical commentary, pp. 162–167.

108 For example, *Anxi Yulinku*, plates 37 and 39.
Refer to H. Karmay, “Tibetan Costume, Seventh to Eleventh Centuries.”

Refer to the contributions of Fraser, Ning, and Wang in n. 39 above, and to Tan Chung, ed., *Dunhuang Art through the Eyes of Duan Wenjie* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1994).


The Tibetan Assimilation*, pp. 60–65.

This may be seen at once in comparison with some of the clearest iconographical comparisons of the period, e.g., in Dunhuang Mogao cave 220: Ning Qiang, *Art, Religion and Politics in Medieval China: The Dunhuang Cave of the Zhai Family* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), p. 73, figure 2.7.

This is not to say, however, that the cave was not subject to restorations, with some additions, during the centuries following its original construction.

I am indebted here to the observations of Karl Debrechteny, who has been able to study the painting in cave 25 at first hand.

Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003), p. 25: “Hostilities between China and Tibet, which resurfaced in the late 660s, the Sino-Tibetan war that followed in 670, and the Tibetan incursions into the Gangetic basin of India in the last quarter of the seventh century, reduced the traffic between India and China through the Tibetan route. By the late seventh or early eighth century, as Yijing suggests, the Tibetans seem to have completely blocked the road that passed through their territory linking India and China.” Although I rather doubt that “the traffic between India and China through the Tibetan route” was very substantial during the period concerned—Chinese travelers to India certainly preferred the routes that circumvented Tibet—Sen’s characterization of the situation seems generally correct. For, from the late seventh century on, though Tibet itself might be avoided, Tibetan-ruled territory could not be so easily bypassed.

Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, ch. 3.

In the mural mentioned in n. 115 above.

The Chinese inscriptions are recorded in Lo Chi-mei 羅寄梅, “The Mural Paintings


125 Imaeda, “T-shaped Inscription Frames,” p. 91, translates: “May the act of Dze’u De’icung joining the holy clergy be transferred to the merit of Shang she,” and adds: “It is a graffito which was added later, like all other graffiti inscriptions in Tibetan, Uighur and Chinese in other parts of the cave.”

126 Xie and Huang, “Yulinku di 25 ku bihuazangwen tiji shidu,” p. 72.


128 For an introduction to the history of Dunhuang during this period, see Rong Xinjiang, “Official Life at Dunhuang in the Tenth Century: The Case of Cao Yuanzhong,” in Whitfield, ed., The Silk Road, pp. 57–62.

129 Rong, op. cit., p. 58. Following Kalgren (p. 95), the first syllable of his given name, yan, is reconstructed as iän, but derived from an archaic form beginning in d-. Might this explain the syllable de’i in the Tibetan transcription? As gong (ancient kiwong according to Kalgren, p. 158) might readily have come to be represented in Tibetan as cung, it seems possible that Dze’u De’i cung is indeed Cao Yangong. I conceive at once, however, that as one not specialized in the relevant domains in historical linguistics, I offer this only as a layman’s guess.

130 Xie and Huang, “Yulinku di 25 ku bihuazangwen tiji shidu,” pp. 74–75.