

# The Culture of the Iranian Kingdom of Ancient Khotan in Chinese Turkestan

The Expansion of Early Indian Influence into Northern Asia

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The expansion of ancient Indian influence outside the subcontinent has often been a subject of absorbing interest. As Greek and Roman civilization spread westwards to illuminate Western Europe with the art of writing and ideas from the ancient Eastern Mediterranean, so the ancient land of India engendered ideas of religion and the good life which were taken southwards to the Indonesian islands and to the Cambodian and Champā mainland kingdoms, and westwards to the north to the ancient Bactria (modern Afghanistan) and thence through Central Asia to China, Korea and Japan. Directly north of India Tibet received the Indian Buddhism which entered into conflict and eventually into co-existence with the older Tibetan religion of Bon.

The history of the region to which Indian religion and methods of administration spread from Bactria had remained surprisingly obscure. There were Greek allusions (and naturally there were the splendidly artistic Greek coins) and Chinese Annals. Indigenous documents were lacking.

Then suddenly from the end of last century onwards a flood of newly discovered documents reached the hands of scholars from Chinese "Turkestan before the Turks," from the sand-buried cities of the Taklamakan desert, which is the Tarim Basin, which in turn is the land of the ancient Śītā river; and from the manuscript-filled room of a Chinese temple at Tun-huang near the Jade Gate. Only a small part of these manuscripts has yet been published by a small band of scholars who have often had other urgent occupations.

There are in the Pamir mountains and in the mountains of the Caucasus remnants of a people whom the ancient Persians in the time of Dareios I (regnant 521-486), the emperor, *χΰῥῃαθῖα χΰῥῃαθῖανᾶμ* (*šahinšah*) of Persia (a wider land than modern Iran), called Sakas. The ancient Persians knew them in four divisions: in the west the *Sakā paradrava* 'beyond the Black Sea', and the *Sakā tigraxaudā* 'tall-capped' or 'pointed-capped'; in the east the *Sakā haumavargā* ('the celebrators of the hauma cult'), in Greek *Ἀμώργοι*, *Mungān*, modern *Munjān*, in the Pamirs, and

the Sakā para Sugudam 'the Sakas beyond Sogdiana' (with its capital Maracanda, Samarkand). Their main floraison and dominance were from about 800 B.C. to 400 A.D., some 1200 years followed by a period of small kingdoms for 600 years more.

At the end of last century and early this century manuscripts written by two Saka peoples within the period from about 300 to 1000 A.D. were found in their Kingdoms in Tumshuq and Khotan, in what later became Turkestan, land of the Turks. A scanty history of the 1200 years of the Khotan Kingdom is in the Chinese Annals.

The language of these Saka peoples belongs in origin to the large Indo-Iranian or Irano-Indian branch of Ancient India and Ancient Persia, hence it is one of the branches of the Indo-European language which in antiquity stretched from Ireland in the west to Central Asia (Turkestan) and south-east into India, and which in its modern forms of English and Spanish now encircles the world. The Iranian branch of Indo-Iranian has preserved a large part of the old vocabulary which was discarded in the Indian branch, and hence has importance for the wider Indo-European field.

From the same region of Central Asia (modern Turkestan) we have Iranian texts of the Sogdian people based originally in Samarkand and also intrusive missionary texts of the Manichaeans in Persian and Parthian (*pahlavānīg*) of the third century A.D. from the west. From inscriptions from ancient Bactria joined with some fragmentary paper documents from Central Asia we have now some knowledge of the language of that region of Bactria in the Kušān period (about 100 B.C. to 400 A.D.). Later from the 11th Century Muslim manuscripts we are beginning to know the language of Iranian Chorasmia (the modern Khiva, east of the Caspian Sea, where Turkish is now spoken).

There is a notable survival of a name of the Buddhist pre-Muslim period in ancient Afghanistan. In Bactra, the city called Bāḡḍī in the sacred book of the Zoroastrians, and later Baḡl and now Balḡ, there was a Buddhist foundation called the Nava-vihāra, that is, the 'New Dwelling', a Buddhist monastic centre, which therefore contained the images all such centres favoured. When the Arabs reached Balḡ the head of this Nau-bihār, whom the Arabs called Barmak [or Parmak], became a Muslim and founded the Barmak or Barmecide family. They served the Abbasid Khalifas as ministers of Court. This family is known to all readers of the Arabian *Alf lailah wa lailah*, the 'Thousand Nights and a Night', in the person of Ja'far the Barmecide, intimate of Hārūn al-Rašīd (who lived 763-809 A.D.).

The name Barmak [or Parmak] was originally the title of the President of the Nava-vihāra, and it is the Buddhist Sanskrit title of the head of a vihāra (college), the *pramukha*, Saka *pramuha*-, of which the popular form was *parmog* and *barmag* in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

An incidental but important result of the discovery of pre-Muslim Persian and Parthian texts has been the long-desired illumination of the large but obscure writings of the Zoroastrians in Sasanian times, and in times shortly after the Islamic invasion.

The name of the Sakas is known to all Classical scholars, since Herodotus in his History in § 64 of Bk. 7 reported that the Persians used the name Sakai for all the peoples the Greeks called Skuthai; and the name Saga is on the Roman map, the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. The name Sakastāna- 'land of the Sakas' is found in the east of the Iranian area in an ancient Indian inscription and in the Sanskrit texts of the *Brāhmaṇas*. In the west the word has survived in modern Iran for the south-eastern province of Seistan, which is earlier Segistane and Sakastan. The greatest hero of the Persian epic the *Shāhnāmāh* is Rustam the Saka of Zābul.

The coming of Indian culture to the Central Asian region is associated with the spread of Buddhism. One centre of this cult was in the small, but stable, kingdom of Khotan, and of that I wish particularly to speak here, since I have spent many years in elucidating the manuscript remains from Khotan.

From our various documentary sources we know of ten small Kingdoms in this region of the ancient Śītā river of the Taklamakan desert. From west to east these are Khyeṣa (now Kāshghar), Sakā (now Yarkand), Hvatana (now Khotan), Tumshuq (whose ancient name is unknown), Bharuka (Aqsu), Hecyuka (Üč), Kuci (Kucha), Argi (Qarašahr), Turpana (Turfan) and Kroraina (Lou-lan).

The Kuṣān empire of Bactria and North India which was dominant nearly four centuries from the first century of our era, was also of Saka origin. The most famous of the emperors was Kaniška, claimed as their patron by the Buddhists.

The kingdoms of Kuci and Argi had an Indo-European language distinct from all other branches, but sharing some archaic vocabulary with the peoples to the north of the Black Sea, who are known to us in their new habitat south of the Black Sea in Anatolia (modern Turkey) under the name Hittite.

Of the manuscripts of the language of Kuci a large part remains unpublished some sixty years after their discovery.

I am concerned here chiefly with the kingdom of Khotan as a focus of Indian Buddhist culture in Central Asia. But I should first picture the background.

The earliest local use of the name is Khotana in a Kharoṣṭhī text. In the indigenous literature the name was Hvatana, Hvamna. In Buddhist Sanskrit gaustana was written. Sogdian used xwōnyk. The Chinese oldest name may have intended ghodan, but was later pronounced ü-t'ien whence

Khotan writers took yūttina, and the Tibetans ḥuten, ḥuthen, ḥuden, yvuthen. Another Central Asian Sanskrit form was Korttana, which occurs as Qordan in Turkish. The name will be known to all readers of Marco Polo's book *'Description of the World'* as Cotan.

The Saka people of Khotan before becoming Buddhists had their own religious traditions. These show like submerged rocks in the Buddhist texts. Pre-Buddhist ideas are readapted. The world mountain of the Iranians was called the Taëra Harā bərəz in the Zoroastrian books, that is, 'the peak, the lofty Harā'. This occurs in a Khotan text for the Buddhist world mountain Sumeru (Meru) in the dialect form ttaira harāysa. It is the familiar New Persian Alburz now localized north of Teheran. The earth as bestower of all good things was called in the Iranian Zoroastrian tradition spənta ārmaitiš, where ārmati- is like the ancient Indian Vedic arámati-, an epithet signifying the earth. This is used by Buddhists in Khotan to refer to the great divinity Śrī, giver of all good fortune, in the form śśandrāmata. The divine world of the Buddhist devas is named by the ancient Iranian word yazata-, Khotan gyasta-, jasta-, Tumshuq jezda, New Persian izad, yazd, Old Indian yajata-. The ancient term for the ritualist with his metrical skill in sacred verses was taken from the base Iranian braz-. It is unknown to Zoroastrian books, presumably by deliberate rejection, but is now familiar to us in Old Persian brazmaniya, and in Khotan and Tumshuq Saka. Here we have Tumshuq bārza-, and Khotan balza-. The word was used together with the divine epithet gyasta- as a title of the Buddha himself (as gyasta balya); and derivatives translated the word bodhi- 'Buddhist transcendental knowledge', which was presupposed by Buddha status. In the Indian tradition this basic word gave the brāhman and its cognates. The ancient term farnah, so familiar in Persian names in the Greek and Latin books, which is explained in various foreign sources as meaning 'fortune', is used to refer, as Sogdian farn, in the form phārra-, to the lofty status of the Buddha and his devotees.

An ancient Iranian traditional society is indicated by the titles rrund-'king', rrīnā-'queen', rrispūra- 'prince', rriysdutar- 'princess', and especially by the term bisivrai 'son of the House' (used to render Buddhist Sanskrit kula-putra 'son of the Family'). This term (in the old Iranian vīsō-puθra-) 'son of the House' designates the system of the 'Great House' called in Greek *οικαρχία* which the Greeks saw as peculiar to Persia. It was the House ruled by the 'director' and his consort 'directrix' with their sons, surrounded by people dependent on the House. The concept is still dominant in the Iranian epic of Ossetia in the Caucasus who still know the actual title Ustur ḡādzārā 'the Great House', where ḡādzārā means 'the Community dwelling'. It was into this Iranian world that Indian ideas were intruded. Buddhism came to Central Asia.

As a result of the adoption of Buddhism we find that the kings of Khotan used Buddhist Sanskrit Vijaya and Vijita as their family name. It is likely to be a transformation of a Saka name Viśa, and, since vijaya means 'victory', the change was a kind of propaganda. To this name Vijaya the Kings then added Indian auspicious words as personal names. In the documents we have then the names of the kings Kīrti, Dharma, Vāhana, Vikrama, Śūra, Saṃbhava, Siṃha. Bala occurs in a Tibetan text. Their patronage of translation from Sanskrit is eulogized, and they are depicted as ardent Buddhists building monastic colleges for the āryas, 'the noble ones', an honorific term for the older bhikṣu 'beggar, mendicant', while their consorts built dwellings for the Buddhist bhikṣuṇīs called āryikā, a Buddhist type of nun.

In this Central Asian region we find Buddhist texts in the various local languages beside those in the Saka of Khotan. We have many texts from Kuci, largely as already noted, still unpublished; in Turkish of the Uigur Turks; in Tibetan, as well as basic manuscripts of Indian Buddhist Sanskrit and the later North-Western Prakrit. For writing these languages, after a period when Kharoṣṭhī script, written from right to left as the semitic Aramaic from which the script came through Persia, was favoured, the Brāhmī script written from left to right, dominated. One Kharoṣṭhī document dated in Khotana by the name of the King maharaya rayatiraya hinajha dheva Vijīda Siṃha of about the year 300 A.D., but thereafter the Brāhmī is employed. For Sogdian the script of Syria was accepted, and it passed thence to the Uigur Turks.

The Buddhism, with which Indian learning reached Khotan, has already passed through many stages in its long development. It is not here that the earliest Buddhism, nor the later Buddhist philosophy can be found in their first flush of enthusiasm. The divisions in the Buddhist fold have become established, polemics within the Community are accentuated, and rigid attitudes are evident.

For Khotan itself we know from the Tibetan Annals of Li that they had sixteen colleges, called vihāra 'dwellings', of the Mahāsāṅghika school which used Prakrit in their Vinaya book, the book of monastic discipline. It survives in a Chinese translation. The Dharmaguptaka school also used a Prakrit, that of the north-west of India, for which I once proposed the name Gāndhārī, a name I see has been taken up by other scholars. The *Dharmapada* (anthology of religious verse) of the Dharmaguptaka school was found in a North-Western Prakrit text in Kharoṣṭhī script in Khotan. But in most Khotan texts it is the Mahāyāna, the Great Vehicle (of Salvation) which is proclaimed both in its earlier form of the Prajñā-pāramitā Perfect Wisdom texts and of the Vijñānavāda which claimed that mentality alone was the real, the citta-mātra doctrine. The later Vajrayāna, the Vehicle of the Vajra in its two meanings of diamond and thunderbolt, a

mystic tantric type of Buddhism, is found in three Khotan texts. The Vajrayāna is cited in a traveller's handbook from Khotan as the speaker's favourite Buddhist literature.

Āryaśūra, a true Mahāyāna man, has a severe opinion of the other Śrāvakayāna 'the Vehicle of the Listeners', which he calls hīna-yāna. The word hīna- means 'low' or 'contemptible' and he states that it is truly hīna-(hīnam eva tat). Other writers more tolerant accept it but at a lower level.

But it was the non-Mahāyāna teaching which flourished in the kingdom of Kuci in the form of Sarvāstivāda, a school which used Sanskrit. Not only did the earlier wisdom poem of the *Dharmapada* in its Sanskrit form called *Udāna-varga* receive full attention in Kuci, but the encyclopaedic *Abhidharma-kośa* 'the Treasury of Philosophy' of the Sarvāstivāda writer Vasubandhu was translated in Kuci. This *Kośa* has not yet been traced in Khotan books. The *Kośa* is still used as a basic text of Buddhist doctrines. The original Sanskrit text with its author's own commentary found in Tibet has only recently been published. The *Kośa*'s fame reached even the west: it is listed in the Zoroastrian book of the 9th century, the *Dēnkart*, beside tarka-'logic' and vyākaraṇa 'grammar'.

The early development of the traditional eighteen Buddhist schools is known to the Khotan writers, but no list of the names has so far been found in the extant Khotan texts.

The amount of Indian learning which was known in Khotan is truly remarkable, while most of the texts cited are religious and philosophical, yet medical texts also were translated, and lyrical poems were written.

Here are two passages excerpted from Khotan texts which show how the writers were permeated by Buddhist faith. The first is an eloquent letter of thanks to certain doctors of Buddhist philosophy in the city of Phema, long familiar in the *Book of Marco Polo* as Pem. This letter begins with courteous and flattering phrases: My teachers, my spiritual friends, learned in the religion, resident in Phema City, skilled in all philosophy, possessed of the light of wisdom, lions of the Śākya family [that is, of Gautama Buddha, Śākyamuni], illuminated sages resembling the sun on the mountain peaks, the scholar in two scriptures, the elder, the doctor Yaśaḥprajña, and the scholars in three scriptures, the elder and doctor Puṇyamitra, the elder Mitraprajña, the elder and doctor Nāgasthira and Bhadreśvaramitra, at your feet I humbly bow with my forehead and make my report.

Here all the five scholars have distinguished Buddhist Sanskrit names Yaśaḥprajña, Puṇyamitra, Mitraprajña, Nāgasthira and Bhadreśvaramitra. This language was indeed the language of prestige among the Saka Buddhist ārya 'noble' monks.

My second excerpt is from a eulogy of the Khotan King Śrī Vijita Saṃgrāma. A solemn convocation is to be held with a sermon on the Buddhist doctrine and it is associated with the prosperity of the King. So we read in part: With a view to exalting the noble celestial long life in the three accepted ways of the king of kings, the sacred lord Śrī Vijita Saṃgrāma who rules prosperously over the Land of Jade, seated upon the gold-coloured royal throne, protected by the four world-regents, under a yellow-knobbed jewel-handled white umbrella, like the god Śakra, king of deva-gods, with splendour shining in fortune, like a fifth world-regent, guardian of the Golden Land and the Land of Jade; with a view to the success and prosperity of all religious harvests of the people good, bad and intermediate, here in the Land of Jade, so that all troubles, distresses, illnesses and the like, even if slight in the lofty state of the god of gods, which persist in his celestial body, may be removed, expelled and ended; so that the splendid city of the thirty-three deva gods on the mountain ttaira harāyśa, King of mountains Sumeru in the midst of the Great Ocean, may be unharmed by the fire at the End of the Age, so that he may know celestial pleasures, well-being and fortune, surrounded by the celestial assembly, being a Śakra, king of deva-gods, upon his yellow seat of stone, so that further here over the Land of Jade, the imperial and royal fortune of the sacred lord, the gracious god Śrī Viśa Saṃgrāma may shine, so that in all the ten regions the divine Buddhas may give their blessings on such wise that he may maintain the Land of Jade with the Buddhist Law, so that the divine queen, the sons and daughters of the king, may have fortune, ease, health and prosperity, to-day in the evening there will be the Prelection on the noble profound true religion of the Buddha.

The sacred books of the Buddhists were the ancient Vinaya or code of monk discipline, with the prātimokṣa restriction, prescriptions of the bhikṣus, monks, to which later a Bodhisatva-prātimokṣa was joined, and the volumes of sūtras, doctrinal texts, often in the form of dialogues. The separate schools developed their own more philosophical books under the title *Abhidharma* (discussion on the doctrine).

In the Mahāyāna the doctrine of the śūnya, literally the void, but indicating a type of relativism of the elements called dharma (translated by hira- 'thing') was greatly developed. Then there is the Vijñāna-vāda, the doctrine of "mind only" the citta-mātra, to which further refinement was the store mind, the ālaya-vijñāna. This is introduced into the Khotan text of the *Prajñā-pāramitā*, the *Book of the Perfection of Wisdom* (early Mahāyāna). A striking doctrine of the 'jewelled embryo' or 'jewelled substance', the ratna-gotra, taught the hidden existence in every man of the Buddha germ which could be revealed by teaching and developed by concentrated meditation (bhāvanā). It was a favourite teaching in Khotan.

The Vajrayāna, developed in India, passed to the south to Java (where

Sanskrit texts are known), and is in Tibet, China and Japan. It tended to a mystic religion. It is least represented among the Buddhist cults in Khotan.

The bodhisatva doctrine stands out as the shining ideal of the Mahāyāna. This ideal is the vow to devote life to the teaching of the whole world and hence win all to salvation by deliverance from the transmigratory world (the saṃsāra), before oneself consenting to enter upon the status of a Buddha passed beyond all conflict. The career of a bodhisatva, the being according to Saka interpretation who seeks to reach the bodhi-transcendental knowledge of a Buddha, was planned in detail in ten stages, called bhūmi, on which an eleventh bhūmi called the stage of the Tathāgata, an epithet of a Buddha, was finally superimposed. This eleventh stage is known in Khotan. The ideal of the bodhisatva was powerfully set out in devotional poetry. The *Bhadracaryā-deśanā*, the doctrine of the good career of the bodhisatva, was one of the most admired poems of Buddhism. It is known in the original Prakrit-influenced Sanskrit, in Khotan Saka paraphrase, and in Tibetan and Chinese versions.

The bodhisatva became known in the west. In the Zoroastrian book called *Bundahišn* the author knew of the term Bōdāsaf as did the Arabs. It was this title which passed through Caucasian Georgian language to Greek and Latin as Iosaphat, in the popular medieval tale of Barlaam and Josafat.

Within the Buddhism of Khotan we find the many personal saviours whose names have gained fame down to the present day. One of these names Maitreya is known also in early Pali texts in Ceylon as Metteyya, a saviour expected, to whom confession texts are devoted with prayers to be accepted in his three gatherings, called saṃnipāta and samiti. The tale of Maitreya, which is preserved in the book *Maitreya-vyākaraṇa* in a not quite complete Sanskrit text, with complete Tibetan rendering, is found also in a picturesque Khotan poem. In Uigur Turkish a dramatic text of the story has been found. It is known also from Argi. The name passed through various Central Asian forms into Chinese as Mi-lō whence we have still the Japanese Miroku. Other supernatural beings, recipients of cult, are the Sixteen Sthaviras or elders, Mañjuśrī, Amitāyus, Avalokiteśvara (familiarized as Balo in Tibet, and widely known as Chinese Kuan-yin and Japanese Kuannon), Vairocana, Samantabhadra, and Vajrasatva in the Vajradhara cult.

It is striking that the sacred formula Sanskrit Oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ which is now closely associated with Avalokiteśvara (Balo), hence in Tibet with the Dalai Lamas, has not been pointed out in the early Tibetan religious texts found in Tun-huang near the Jade Gate to the West.

If conflicts arose between the earlier Iranian beliefs of the Sakas and the new missionary faith of Buddhism the history was played out before our texts were written. The Buddhists could at least utilize technical terms



of the older Iranian cult for which the name *gyaysna-*, *gyaysāmata* is known in the Khotan texts. In Tibet however it was different. The Bon religion, which the Bon texts claimed to be of western origin, fought its way to a coexistence with the Buddhists. Three Bon monks whom I knew in London made it clear that they could reside in Buddhist monasteries. One, my friend Tendzin Namdag, originally from Khams in eastern Tibet, claimed to have been the equivalent of a professor of logic, that is, Indian Buddhist logic, in his monastery near Lhasa. The founder of Bon was called Šenrab 'the great sacrificer'. It has been recently claimed by Bronislav Kuznetsov in Leningrad that Bon is a development out of Iranian Mithraism. In an early Russian text of Iranian origin he has found the statement that the founder's name was Mitra.

That Mithra had a great place in at least some cults of the Sakas, we know from the Sanskrit account of the worshippers of Mihira, identified with the Sun in the Sky, whose priests were called *maga*, ancient *magu-*, and who were accepted into the Brāhmaṇa caste as *Magabrāhmaṇas*. They came into India from a region called Śākadvīpa, the land of the Sakas'.

The Saka monks of Khotan knew also the Buddhist commentarial literature. They cite the name of the *Vibhāṣā* which means 'Commentary'. It was declared to have been promulgated at a Council held in the time of the Kuṣān emperor Kaniška. It occupies 1000 pages in the Chinese translation, of which no translation into a European language has yet been made. The Sanskrit text is lost and only quotations have been found in later books.

To refer to the language of these Buddhist Sanskrit texts Vasubandhu in his encyclopaedic *Kośa* used *ārya-bhāṣā*, that is, the speech of the *āryas*', where *ārya-* meaning originally 'noble' is applied as a kind of ethnic name, as in *ārya-deśa* for India. This name *ārya-bhāṣā* had disappeared from Sanskrit books, except only in the colophon at the end of a Sanskrit-Chinese lexicon.

Of the many translators, the name of Kumārajīva in the fourth century (344–413 (or possibly 380–409)) stands out. Son of a Kuci princess and a man of Kaśmīr he lived in Kuci and later worked at his translations in China. He is said to have composed Sanskrit verses, but they are lost.

In a Khotan text the most distinguished poet of the Buddhist, Aśvaghoṣa, author of the epic poetical *Buddha-carita*, the life of the Buddha, is named as a contemporary of the emperor Kaniška. The poems of another Buddhist poet Mātṛceṭa have been found in Kuci together with a Kuci translation. The philosopher Nāgārjuna is named in a Khotan text. A later commentary of Sthiramati is preserved in a Turkish translation from Chinese, made in the City of Lükčün.

Popular Buddhist literature was well known to the people of Khotan. It was in Khotan that Chinese scholars attending the Pañcavārṣika (Quin-

quennial) ceremonies wrote down the tales of the Damamūka book, that is, the *Dharma-mukha* 'the book of entering into the Buddhist Law', a set of moral tales illustrating the *Subhāṣita*, the good sayings of salvatory verses. The legends of Aśoka the emperor of India are in Khotan texts. Kaniṣka and the story of his stūpa, the monument imitative of the funeral mound of the Buddha, which has been found and excavated at Puruṣapura (Peshāwar), is also related in Khotan Saka. The jātaḥ birth-tales of the Buddha's earlier exploits in earlier lives are, to the number of fifty, told in the Khotan poem, the *Jātakastava*, which survives complete. Rāma and Sītā of the Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa* are celebrated in a long poem. Its Buddhist appropriateness is assured by the identification of Rāma with the Buddha in the final summing up. But the Khotan references to the other Indian epic the *Mahābhārata* are ambivalent. It is once declared to be a book of lies, misleading many, and at the same time the heroes the Pāṇḍavas are called naḍaunā 'men of might', just as the Turks called them tonga 'hero'. A long tale, partly prose and partly verse, of Rāma and Sītā but greatly differing from the Khotan poem, is known in Tibetan. The first integral edition will shortly be published by Professor Jan de Jong at Canberra.

The story of prince Sudhana and the fairy Kimnari Manoharā ('mind-ravisher') is known to both north and south of the Buddhist world. A poem in Khotan Saka is preserved in three manuscripts. The story tells how a hunter captures Manoharā from among the 500 daughters of the Kimnara King Druma while they are bathing in a mountain pool. Prince Sudhana, out hunting, comes upon the hunter and his captive. The delighted prince weds her. Later when the prince is away on a military expedition his enemies plot to destroy Manoharā. She escapes back to her father's country, leaving a message for Sudhana to guide him if he desires to follow her. He toils twelve years over the mountains. After at first a harsh reception, Druma the King accepts him. At the end of the story Sudhana and Manoharā return to India.

This is how the poet narrates the tale. Here are two short episodes.

When the prince saw the maiden before his eyes, every pore expanded, his limbs trembled. Much wealth he gave to the hunter. On his brilliant chariot adorned with jewels he placed her and took her to his pleasure garden. He sent a heart-felt message to his father, saying, I have found myself a wife. Do not show anger, my king. Though born among the fairies, she is under my control. This message came at a festive time. On hearing it the king commanded at once all his courtiers and warriors to a feast.

The second excerpt is the appearance of Prince Sudhana and Manoharā at the feast.

When Sudhana came out he had the beauty of the autumn moon, as the sun rising upon the eastern mountains or as lightning in clouds within a network of jewels. Fiery beams mounted around him.

Manoharā was handsomely adorned. She was like the goddess Sujā, the wife of the deva-god Śakra. All the people did her generous honour as she sat, beautiful, among them. For three months they drank at the great feast.

One unexpected, but welcome, text reports a journey from the north in the Vi land (probably Khotan) across the mountains to the capital city of Kaśmīr which is named Adhiṣṭhāna, as it is in the Arabic text of Al-Bairūnī. The narrator notes matters of interest along the route. He is one of the first writers to mention Cīdāgītta, that is, Gilgit, and Śīlathasa, that is, Chiltas, Chilas. He observes the first monkeys and the various trees on the way. He especially seems interested in the monastic buildings and the markets. He is evidently surprised at the extension of the capital city for one day's journey along the river Vitastā, as Al-Bairūnī also noted. The report is dated by the reference to the reigning king Abhimanyu-gupta who ruled for 14 years (958–972 A.D.). Al-Bairūnī is hardly a half century later.

Drama called by the Prakrit name nālai (older nāṭaka-), is mentioned, as it is also in Tibetan in writing of Khotan. In one passage the epic hero Rāma is cited as being acted in a play. Indian dramas in Sanskrit and the later languages we call Prakrit have been found in Central Asia. Turkish, Argi and Kuci texts have preserved dramatic compositions. So far no drama is represented in the Khotan texts. The chāyā-nālai shadow-play is also once mentioned in a Khotan text.

But the majority of the texts discovered in whole or in fragments in Khotan Saka are Buddhist doctrinal texts. Many of these are famous. I have already mentioned the *Maitreya-vyākaraṇa* the book of the birth, life and career of the saviour Maitreya. There are the many other texts. The *Sad-dharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, that is, the *Book of the Lotus of the Good Law*, basic still in the sect of Ničiren in Japan, is represented by a summary in Khotan. A text, the *Avalokiteśvara-dhāraṇī*, promises security and favour to followers of Avalokiteśvara. A poem is in honour of Amitāyus, the earlier form of the name of Amida-buddha, familiar to all who know Japan. The *Book of Golden Light*, *Suvarṇabhāsa-sūtra*, is found in large portions in Khotan. It is known in the original Buddhist Sanskrit and in Chinese, Tibetan, Turkish and Mongol renderings. The dialogue of the Buddha and Subhūti, the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*, the *Book of Diamond-cutting* or *Thunderbolt-cutting* (that is, of doubts in the Law) has come down in a complete Khotan translation. A conflated text of the series of the *Perfection of Wisdom*, the *Prajñā-pāramitā*, fills 30 folios of one manuscript. The devotional poem, the *Bhadra-caryā-deśanā*, also called the *Bhadracarī*, has been

worked over into a Khotan poem, freely adapted. The devout Buddhist was likely to set out in verse his feeling of sinfulness and desire for escape, desire to become a bodhisatva, the seeker after bodhi, the Buddhist full transcendental knowledge. Of these texts called *deśanā* and *deśita* there are specimens in both Khotan Saka and Turkish. Among other texts there is a complete translation of the *Sumukha-sūtra*, which states how the various supernatural entities of the Mahāyāna gladly respond with favours to the pronunciation of Sanskrit formulas, called *dhāraṇīs*. A text of the class devoted to *samādhi*, ecstatic contemplation, has partially survived in the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi-sūtra*, the *Book of the Ecstasy of the Bold Strider*, of which the original Buddhist Sanskrit is lost, but Chinese and Tibetan renderings are known.

The Khotan Sakas also copied Buddhist Sanskrit texts. From Khotan we have the only manuscript of the *Kauśika-sūtra*, one of the *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts of the Perfection of Wisdom. In Khotan two manuscripts of the *Book of the Lady of the White Umbrella*, *Sitātapatrā-dhāraṇī* were found. It was previously known in Chinese and partially in a Turkish rendering.

It was a practice in Central Asia for a patron's name to be inserted into a sacred text with a prayer for *rakṣā* 'protection', in a formula 'protection for me' with the name. In one of the two Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Sitātapatrā-dhāraṇī*, I suddenly found under my pen the name of the King Vijita Saṃbhava of Khotan, the king whom the Chinese called Li Šeng-t'ien in the mid 10th century. It was as if a Western European had suddenly met the name of the Saxon King Alfred in a contemporary manuscript.

It is a striking fact that the type of literature called *Dharmapada* and *Udānavarga*, sets of doctrinal verses collected early into anthologies, is not represented in Khotan Saka texts. It may well be that the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna devotees felt that they had moved far beyond such simple pious texts to travel in their large *yāna* vehicles. In Kuci where the Sanskrit Sarvāstivāda school was dominant this older type of literature flourished. When the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang in the first half of the 7th Century visited Kuci he felt somewhat out of sympathy, as a Mahāyāna believer, with the Buddhists in Kuci. The Sanskrit *Udānavarga* book has now been recovered from 700 fragments of 200 manuscripts, still other fragments have been found.

Though medical books were given a religious colouring, they yet held scientific theories of the origin of diseases and the way to heal them. One medical text (known in two corrupt Sanskrit manuscripts) of which about half has been discovered in Khotan translation and a small part also in Turkish, the *Siddhasāra*, the 'Essence of Ascertained Science', of the medical writer Ravigupta, has received in Khotan an introduction setting out the patronage of the Tsai-syām, the Minister, and expatiating upon the value

of the medical knowledge in this book, because, he wrote, many had been given unsuitable medicaments and had died. One text in Buddhist Sanskrit and Khotan translation pictures the Buddha giving medical knowledge to Jīvaka, who, in the Buddhist tradition, is the personal physician of the Buddha. In Turkish we find a partial translation of the medical '*Treatise of one hundred treatments*', the *Yoga-śataka*, but it has not been traced in Khotan.

The Chinese texts report that at one time in the early centuries of our era Buddhist teachers went from China to Khotan as a centre of study. There they found Sanskrit manuscripts which they took back to translate in China.

One Khotan painter Īrasaṃga became famous at the Chinese Imperial Court and some trace of his work, the painting of a Devarāja a 'King of deva-gods', is still extant.

To end this brief survey of the Indianized culture of Khotan before the Turkish invasion of 1006 A.D. I should mention music. In a Kharoṣṭhī text from Kroraina, music occurs in a list of subjects of study under the Indian name gaṃdhava. There is frequent reference to music in Khotan texts. They had the bīnā- 'harp', whence they made their word for music bīnāña (the name is like the Indian word vīṇā), and had other certainly indigenous musical instruments, the gaysaka- 'flute', the šū 'horn' and Kūsa- 'drum'. But it is the story of the music of Kuci which is most wonderful. The Chinese took possession of Kuci and among other spoils they took the Kuci orchestra to China. They recorded the names of the Kuci musical compositions. It has even seemed possible to Dr Lawrence Picken in Cambridge, specialist in Asian music, Chinese and Turkish, to restore this music from Kuci in modern terms and to record it on magnetic tape with which he can reveal an ancient music to his friends.

After the coming of the Turks to Kāshghar, before 1000 A.D., and in 1006 A.D. to Khotan the Indianized culture withered away. The Khotan Saka Iranian language gave way to Turkish, though the physical type in Khotan to the present day is not Turkish, but Iranian. Only in the Pamirs and in the Caucasus do we now find varieties of spoken Saka. The Ossetic of Ossetia in the Caucasus (called Iron) has many features resembling the language of the texts of Khotan of a thousand years earlier. Here there is much work to be done.