

The Path of Buddhism into China: The View from Turfan

It is easy to envision the spread of Buddhism from India to China as a stone dropped into a pond. When Buddhist religious institutions first took shape during the Buddha's lifetime (ca. 563-483 BC), the stone landed in the water. As the succeeding centuries passed, the ripples in the water formed larger and larger concentric circles. First the people of the Central Asian oasis kingdoms (many of which are located in modern Sinkiang in northwest China) embraced Buddhism sometime in the first and second centuries AD, and, then, as the ripples extended to China proper, China became a largely Buddhist empire by the tenth century AD.

Yet, as Erik Zürcher has suggested, this picture has gone largely untested. The unique combination of documents, epitaphs, and artifacts from two graveyards at Turfan makes it possible to examine the history of Buddhism there with far greater precision than is possible for any other Silk Road site or any site within greater China. The history of Turfan shows that Buddhists came to Central Asia sometimes from one direction, sometimes from another, and that the route of Buddhism was not a simple one, as the stone-in-the-pond analogy suggests. In almost every instance at Turfan in which the introduction of Buddhism can be linked with specific individuals, the original patrons of the early-Buddhist church turn out to have been either Chinese settlers from the region east of Turfan or local rulers consciously emulating the example of Chinese kings to the east. Only one early text mentions a foreign monk (perhaps from India or from Kizil), who was active in 382.

PROBLEMS WITH THE STONE-IN-THE-WATER SCENARIO

As intuitively appealing as the stone-in-the-water scenario is, it does not accord with either written evidence from historical sources or the archeologi-

I would like to thank the project participants who commented on earlier versions, especially Jonathan Skaff and Nobuyoshi Yamabe 山部能宣. Rong Xinjiang provided many helpful research leads, as did Zhang Guangda, who also aided in the reading of the most difficult texts. See a forthcoming shorter Chinese version of this paper, including the passages from original documents: Han Sen [Valerie Hansen] 韓森, "Chung-kuo jen shih ju-ho kuei-i Fo-chiao te Tu-lu-fan mu-tsang chieh-shih te hsin-yang kai-pien" 中國人是如何皈依佛教的吐魯番墓葬揭示的信仰改變, *Tun-huang Tu-lu-fan yen-chiu* 敦煌吐魯番研究 4 (1999).

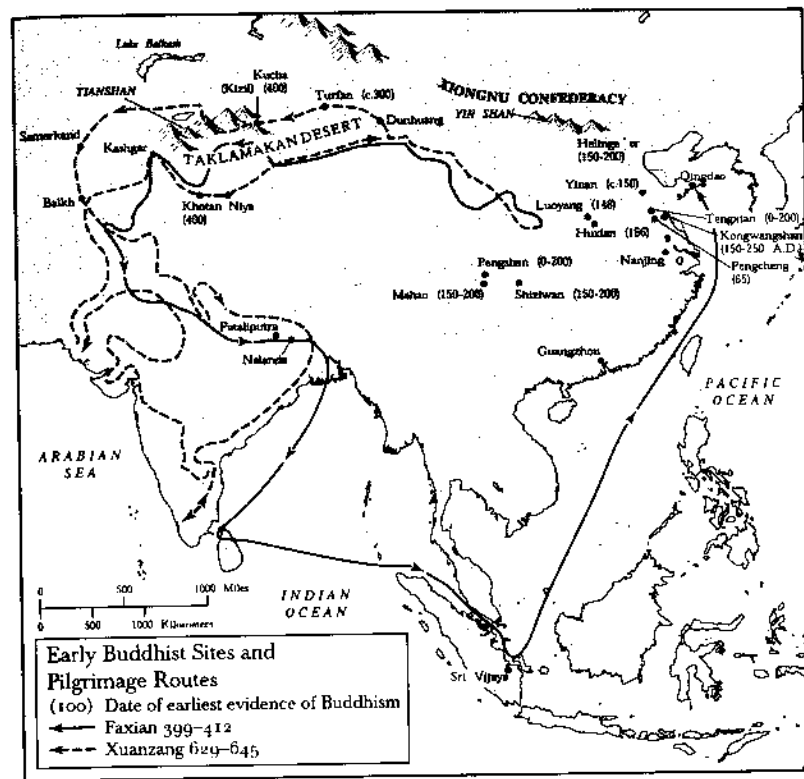
cal evidence from Central Asian and Chinese sites before the fourth century AD. As Erik Zürcher has so trenchantly pointed out, the surviving archeological and historical evidence suggests Buddhism did not spread from India via Central Asia to China:

In fact, the picture of such a gradual geographical expansion agrees to common sense to such an extent that it never has really been tested in the light of available data. Once we do so, we have to face the paradoxical situation that so far there actually is no reliable evidence for the existence of monastic Buddhism in present-day Sinkiang before ca. 250 AD – almost 200 years after emperor Ming's edict [resulting from the emperor Ming's dream of 65 AD, according to a legend], and a century after the establishment of the first monastery at Lo-yang.¹

The first translator-missionaries, Zürcher explains, had arrived in the Chinese capitals of Lo-yang (Hopei), and Ch'ang-an (now Sian, Shensi) as early as the first century AD, and the emperor himself worshipped the Buddha (alongside Huang-Lao 黄老) in 166, suggesting that a small community of teachers and devotees took shape in the two capitals before AD 200. Monasticism seemingly leaped across an underdeveloped Central Asia to the wealthy cities of China, only filtering back to Central Asia when economic conditions allowed it. In contrast, the earliest evidence of Buddhist practice in Central Asia comes from the third century AD, and truly convincing evidence dates only to the fourth century, the period to which the earliest caves at Kizil have been carbon-dated.² One might be forgiven for thinking the first Buddhist missionaries flew from the Kushan empire to Ch'ang-an, so little trace do they leave of their voyages, and I, for one, think it quite possible that they traveled by sea rather than overland.

¹ Erik Zürcher, "Han Buddhism and the Western Region," in W. L. Idema and E. Zürcher, eds., *Thought and Law in Qin and Han China: Studies Dedicated to Anthony Hulsewé on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), pp. 158–82, citation on pp. 168–69. As persuasive as Zürcher's overall argument is, one does not have to accept his hypothesis that the introduction of Chinese agricultural techniques by military colonists facilitated the establishment of Buddhist monasteries in the oases of Central Asia. The resulting increase in agricultural production, he argues, supported the new monasteries. His explanation rests on figures given in the *Han shu* and *Hou Han shu*, which record dramatic increases in agricultural production following Chinese settlement of the region. But because the borders of many of these Central Asian kingdoms were redrawn drastically between the compilation of the two histories, all numerical comparisons between the figures they give are skewed.

² Su Pai [Su Bai] 宿白, "K'o-tzu-erh pu-fen tung-k'u chieh-tuan hua-fen yü nien-tai teng wen-t'i te ch'u-pu t'an-suo tai hsi" 克孜尔不分洞窟阶段划分与年代等问题的初步探索代序, in *Chung-kuo shih-k'u K'o-tzu-erh shih-k'u i* 中國石窟克孜尔石窟一 (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1989). The chart on p. 19 gives 310 (±80) as the carbon-14 date of the earliest cave, number 38. Most researchers on this topic think that a date of 400 is plausible.



Widespread archeological excavations since the 1970s have made it possible for scholars to trace the first sites of Buddhist devotion with new accuracy (see the map, below). In 65 AD a local king in P'eng-ch'eng 彭城, Kiangsu, worshipped the Buddha alongside Huang-Lao. During the second century, artists in Mongolia painted a white elephant in a tomb, perhaps an allusion to the story of the Buddha's conception, which took place when his mother dreamt of a white elephant. Elsewhere artists made a lintel with a Buddhist carving in Szechwan, stone carvings with Buddhist scenes in Shantung, and, most impressively, the temple complex at Mount K'ung-wang 孔塢 (near the port of Lien-yun-kang 連雲港, Kiangsu).³

Mapping these sites makes it possible to trace isolated acts of piety throughout the empire, but such an approach does not reveal when or how – or even whether – larger communities adopted the new religious practices. The materials from Turfan make it possible to observe how the people of one communi-

³ Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art," *Artibus Asiae* 47 (1986), pp. 263–316.

ty adopted Buddhist practices between the fourth and eighth centuries. Because only Turfan has such a rich base of sources, it is frustratingly difficult to compare the history of Buddhism in Turfan with that of central China. This paper examines one rare surviving document and suggests that simultaneous worship in Shantung (and possibly elsewhere in China proper) of Buddhist and non-Buddhist deities was, in ways, very similar to that occurring in Turfan. Other than this one document, though, a researcher has little material from central China to work with.⁴ The evidence from Turfan suggests that Buddhism came to Central Asia from two directions: from the east, from China, and from the west, from India. Buddhist teachings did not come into China at a constant pace and nor did they come from only one direction.

THE EARLIEST EVIDENCE CONCERNING TURFAN BUDDHISM

The first evidence of Buddhism at Turfan consists of sūtras with dated colophons. According to Rong Xinjiang's research, the earliest text is a Chinese translation of the *Chu-Fo yao chi-ching* 諸佛要集經 made by the famous translator Dharmarakṣa (Chu Fa-hu 竺法護), which bears the date 296. We cannot know, of course, whether the text reached Turfan at such an early date, but the presence of other early sūtras (dated 360, 393, 429, 430, and 434) suggests that this was not an isolated example.⁵ Because Dharmarakṣa was active in Ch'ang-an, and some of his students were based in Tun-huang, the direction of influence was from Ch'ang-an to Turfan, or from east to west.

The earliest mention of a Buddhist missionary from India, or somewhere to the west of Turfan, appears in Seng-yu's *Collection of Records concerning the Tripiṭaka*, written early in the sixth century and quoting from the preface that Tao-an 道安 (312-385) wrote to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (*Mo-ho po-lo-jo po-lo-mi ching* 摩訶鉢羅若波羅蜜經). Tao-an records that, in 382, the Chū-shih ruler accompanied the Buddhist teacher Kumārabodhi to Ch'ang-an.⁶ Kumārabodhi, he tells us, brought the larger version of the text and could recite 20,000 verses in a non-Chinese (*hu* 胡) language. Kumārabodhi's name

resembles that of his contemporary, the famous translator from Kizil, Kumārajīva, who was born to an Indian father and a Kuchean mother; he may have had a similarly mixed cultural background. Because Tao-an uses the measure word *shih-lu* 失廬 (corresponding to the Sanskrit word for "verse," *śloka*), it is likely that the text Kumārabodhi recited was in Sanskrit or Prakrit.

By the end of the fourth century, the indigenous local rulers at Turfan, the Chū-shih 車師, a nomadic non-Chinese people, patronized Buddhism and supported the spread of Sanskrit learning.⁷ Although Seng-yu's record documents royal patronage for the Buddhist establishment, he does not provide any information about the extent of support for Buddhism among Turfan's residents. For that, we will need to examine the evidence underground.

A BRIEF COMPARISON WITH CHRISTIANITY

The catacombs of Rome occupy an important place in the history of Christian archeology because they offer a continuous series of tombs, and so the opportunity to glimpse religious change in one locality over time. Early analysts assumed all the paintings in the catacombs to be Christian, and all the dead to be Christian converts. Recent studies have shown that, in contrast, although some of the paintings depict clearly pre-Christian themes (funeral meals that had been misinterpreted as masses for the dead),⁸ some who were buried in the catacombs were not converts. Tombs with pagan motifs appear even after the first Christian tombs of the mid-second century AD, showing that pagan beliefs coexisted with Christian beliefs. Christianity, officially banned until 313, during the reign of Constantine, came in quietly – at first with just a picture of a fish drawn on an otherwise pagan tomb and only later with tombs whose paintings all show clearly identifiable scenes from the Bible.

Of course, Christianity differed from Buddhism in many ways, and while early Christian monks required converts to give up their own deities and to swear to a creed, Buddhists did not. Buddhist teachers often included local deities in their pantheons and named them as guardian deities in monasteries. In adopting Buddhism, then, a devotee did not renounce his earlier beliefs with the vehemence that was expected of a convert to Christianity.

Although converts to Christianity changed the design of their tombs to incorporate new Christian motifs, Buddhist devotees often did not. Those fa-

⁴ I am now beginning work on a book about the five Silk Road sites in China that have produced documentation (Ni-ya, Khotan, Kizil, Turfan, and Tun-huang), and I hope careful study of these materials will allow us to make more meaningful comparisons between Central Asia and China proper.

⁵ Jung Hsin-chiang [Rong Xinjiang] 榮新江, "T'u-lu-fan li-shih yü wen-hua" 吐魯番曆史與文化, in Hu Chi 胡戟, ed., *T'u-lu-fan* 吐魯番 (Sian: San-ch'ing ch'u-pan-she, 1987), p. 32.

⁶ Seng-yu 僧祐 (435-518), *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* 出三藏記集 (T'edn., no. 2145), vol. 55, p. 52B. Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972) p. 10 (Seng-yu's notes), p. 202 (Kumārabodhi).

⁷ Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, "A Concise History of the Turfan Oasis and Its Exploration," in this volume.

⁸ William H. C. Frend, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 248.

miliar with Chinese archeology will already realize how few Buddhist motifs appear in central Chinese tombs – even after the fourth century AD, when textual sources show that both rulers and ordinary people were drawn to the new faith. As Wu Hung has noted, although in Han tombs a few Buddha images appear in the company of deities that grant immortality, no iconic images of the Buddha have been found from the Six Dynasties period (220–589). A single Sui-dynasty (589–618) tomb contains figurines of two Buddhist monks.⁹ Pottery vessels have lotus motifs, and some tombs show flying divinities, but the use of these motifs does not necessarily indicate belief in Buddhism. In short, the archeological evidence from China suggests that using tombs to trace the course of Buddhism may produce very different results than using the catacombs of Rome to trace the history of Christianity.

A LOCAL APPROACH: THE ASTANA GRAVEYARD AT TURFAN

So far no equivalent of the catacombs has been found in either Chinese capital. The only rough analog – a graveyard whose burials span the centuries before and after contact with Buddhist missionaries – lies in the oasis of Turfan, an important city lying on the main northern trade route between China and India (see maps 1 and 2, above, in the Introduction to this volume). Although the oasis came under direct Chinese rule only in 640, its rulers enthusiastically embraced Chinese ways starting in about 500. The city of Kao-ch'ang, to use its ancient name, was built on the classic Chinese model of a planned square city on a north-south grid with evenly spaced gates. On its northern border, the residents built a large graveyard, covering some ten square kilometers, now called Astana and Karakhoja, after two nearby villages.¹⁰ These two sites produced the vast bulk of documents found at Turfan, but, because they were already severely disturbed by the end of the nineteenth century, and because they have been excavated by different teams at different times in the twentieth century, it is impossible to reconstruct the original contents – both documentary and artifactual – of any given tomb.¹¹

⁹ These were found in a tomb at An-yang (KK [1959.1], pl. 10, figures 10 and 11); Albert Dien, June 10, 1998, personal communication.

¹⁰ These are the Uighur names; see the table in the Introduction to this volume for Chinese renderings of Turfan places and peoples, and for a map of Kao-ch'ang.

¹¹ The documents excavated by the Chinese from Turfan are in a preliminary ten-volume set, and in a revised set of four volumes with photographic plates, all of which are now available. Unfortunately, both sets are called *T'u-lu-fan ch'u-t'u wen-shu* 吐魯番出土文書 [Excavated Documents from Turfan]. The 10-vol. set (hereafter, "*T'u-lu-fan* [texts]") is edited by Kuo-chia wen-wu-

In spite of the considerable obstacles to research, the materials spanning the fourth to eighth centuries from the Astana and Karakhoja graveyards make it possible to examine the history of Buddhism in surprising detail. Several hundred tombs have been excavated at the site. Although many had already been opened, the tombs all follow the contemporaneous Chinese pattern of a stairway leading down to a one- or two-chambered tomb. Excavated documents indicate that the Astana graveyard included people from a range of social levels. The poorest had enough money to have a grave and a simple tablet with only their names, while the more wealthy could afford to commission long epitaphs and include more lavish grave goods. The occupants of the graveyard seem to have been predominantly Chinese; all the documents found in Astana (with the exception of one Sogdian contract studied by Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊) were written in Chinese characters.¹² If any non-Chinese people were buried in the Astana graveyard, they had adopted Chinese funerary customs including the use of the Chinese language for grave documents.

This article examines the funerary documents and grave goods the people of Turfan placed in their graves in order to trace the history of Buddhism from the fourth to eighth centuries. Because many of the same document types have been found in central China as well, comparison with these finds will

chü ku wen-hsien yen-chiu-shih 國家文物局古文獻研究室 (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1981-1996), and the 4-vol. set (hereafter, "*T'u-lu-fan* [photos]") by T'ang Chang-ju (frequently romanized as "Ch'ang") 唐長蘊 et al.

The epitaphs have been published by Hou Ts'an [Hou Can] 侯燾, "Chieh-fang hou hsien ch'u T'u-lu-fan mu-chih lu" 解放後新出吐魯番墓誌錄, in Pei-ching ta hsieh Chung-kuo chung-ku-shih yen-chiu chung-hsin 北京大學中國中古史研究中心, ed., *Tun-huang T'u-lu-fan wen-hsien yan-chiu lun-ch'i* 敦煌吐魯番文獻研究論集 (Peking: Pei-ching ta-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1990), vol. 5. The most striking artifacts found at Turfan have been published in two books: Hsin-chiang tzu-chih-ch'ü po-wu-kuan 新疆自治區博物館, ed., *Hsin-chiang ch'u-t'u wen-wu* 新疆出土文物 [Excavated Artifacts from Sinkiang] (Shanghai: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1975); Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous District Museum, ed., *Shinko Uiguru jiziku hakubutsukan* 新疆ウイグル自治區博物館 [Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous District Museum] (Tokyo: Kodansha-Bunbutsu shuppansha, 1987).

Since 1976, the Turfan Museum has excavated ten tombs; the documents have been published recently, and the artifacts have already been published in two brief reports: "1986 nien Hsin-chiang T'u-lu-fan A-ssu-t'a-na ku-mu-ch'ün fa-chüeh chien-pao" 1986年新疆吐魯番阿斯塔那古墓群發掘簡報 KK (1992.2), pp. 143-56; "T'u-lu-fan Pei Liang Wu Hsüan Wang Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün fu-chen P'eng-shih mu" 吐魯番北涼武宣王沮渠蒙遜夫人彭氏墓 WW (1994.9), pp. 75-81; see a study containing the documents by Liu Hung-liang [Liu Hongliang] 柳洪亮, *Hsin-ch'u T'u-lu-fan wen-shu chi ch'i yen-chiu* 新出吐魯番文書及其研究 (Urumchi: Hsin-chiang jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1997). Ch'en Kuo-ts'an [Chen Guocan] 陳國燦 has reedited the Chinese documents brought back to England by Stein and that were originally published by Henri Maspero: *Ssu-t'an-yin suo-huo T'u-lu-fan wen-shu yen-chiu* 斯坦因所獲吐魯番文書研究 (Wu-han: Wu-han ta-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, n.d.).

¹² Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊 et al., "Kikusei Kōshōkoku jidai Sogudobun jo dorei baibai monjo" 麹氏高昌國家時代ソグド文女奴隷賣買文書, in *Nairiku Ajia gengo no kenkyū* 内陸アジア言語の研究 4 (1988), pp. 1-50.

help to illuminate the situation at Turfan, where the primary funerary document in the centuries before Buddhism was the tomb inventory, or *i-wu-shu* 衣物疏.¹³

PRE-BUDDHIST GRAVE DOCUMENTS: TOMB INVENTORIES

The earliest tomb inventories from the Turfan graveyards date to 384, and they continued to be used through the seventh century. The persistent use of grave inventories, even after they had fallen into disuse in central China, may reflect how long it took for the people of Turfan to be exposed to central Chinese customs. The Turfan inventories take up a single sheet of paper, or, rarely, a piece of silk. They list the goods the deceased took with them after death: items of clothing, money (both cash and cloth), and different ornaments. Some are also followed by a short statement giving the name and native place of the deceased, the date of death, or the names of witnesses (who often include the same four directional animals appearing on tomb contracts).

The most famous example of a tomb inventory from central China is, of course, that from lady Tai's tomb at Ma-wang-tui 馬王堆 in Ch'ang-sha, Hunan. Her tomb, dating to sometime after 168 BC, contained 410 bamboo slips detailing its contents by name and giving the quantity of each.¹⁴ The slips list the number of attendants and servants, her clothing, and the food. One slip gives the date of the transfer; an official in the Tai household gives the list to the assistant in charge of funeral goods and asks that he transmit it to the lord-administrator of funeral goods.

Although lady Tai wrote her inventory on bamboo slips, which survived thanks to unusual conditions, other residents of central China buried in their tombs a combination of tomb contracts 買地券, documents to ward off evil from the tomb 鎮墓文, and talismans 符.¹⁵ Surviving examples of these different types of document are on stone and brick. By the fourth century, the date of the earliest Turfan inventories, most of the residents in central China were using tomb contracts, and one finds few examples of other tomb docu-

ments. The tomb contracts, which usually give the names of the purchaser, witnesses, and guarantor, follow the format of a real-world land contract; some add a proviso warning the spirits of the dead not to bother the living.

Different as the grave inventories and tomb contracts are, both often close with the same phrase: "Promptly, promptly, in accordance with the laws and edicts" 急急如律令. As Anna Seidel explains,¹⁶ this exhortation appears on many Han-dynasty government documents. Its appearance in funerary documents presupposes the existence of a law code governing the behavior of the spirits that parallels the code governing bureaucrats. We cannot, however, know whether all the scribes who used this phrase understood its implications.

The Turfan tomb inventories vary in length, but all contain many items of clearly enumerated clothing giving both the color and the type of cloth. Tomb 305 from Astana contains two inventories, one for the deceased husband, the other for his wife, dating to sometime around 384.¹⁷ Both husband and wife bury a hair-tie, trousers, shirt, stomach-covers, and shoes. The wife's list also includes two gender-specific items: a skirt and a hairpin. Household items include bedding and pillows. They list several types of bag: to go in the sleeve and for holding fingernail and toenail clippings. (The deceased would need the clippings to form a whole person in the underworld). Both the husband's and the wife's inventories mention two types of currency circulating at the time: coins and cloth. The husband's inventory specifically says "two copper coins to be held in the hand," where the wife's simply lists two copper coins without explaining where they are to be placed. She also carries two ounces (*liang* 兩) of yellow silk. Her husband carries six bolts of hanging silk 帛絰, to be used as currency or perhaps for bedding.

Because many inventories survive, yet very few tombs remain undisturbed, our analysis must depend on lists that cannot be cross-checked against the contents of the tombs in which they were found. In the case of the couple from tomb 305, it seems likely that the items mentioned in the inventory were actually placed in their tomb, but that was probably not true of the next inventory, which is dated 418, from the tomb of the wife of a man identified simply by his village.¹⁸ Her list contains a crossbow 機郭. As Albert Dien explains,¹⁹ by the time of the Six Dynasties crossbows had received a symbolic value: they were thought to repel intruders from the tomb. Because a woman could hardly be

¹³ Albert E. Dien, "Instructions for the Grave: The Case of Yan Zhitui," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995), pp. 41-58.

¹⁴ *WW* (1974-7), p. 43, pl. 12.

¹⁵ Anna Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs," in Akitsuki Kan'ei 秋月觀映, ed., *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka* 道教と宗教文化 (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1987), pp. 21-57, esp. 24-27; Terry Kleeman, "Land Contracts and Related Documents," in *Chūgoku no shūkyō shisō to kagaku: Makio Ryōkai hakushi shōju kinen ronshū. Religion, Thought, and Science in China: A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Ryōkai Makio on His Seventieth Birthday* 中國の宗教思想と科學枝尾良海博士頌壽記念論集 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1984), pp. 1-34; Valerie Hansen, *Negotiating Daily Life in Traditional China: How Ordinary People Used Contracts, 600-1400* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1995), pp. 231-32.

¹⁶ Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion," p. 42.

¹⁷ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 1, pp. 8-10; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 1, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 1, pp. 14-15; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 1, p. 5.

¹⁹ Albert E. Dien, "Instructions for the Grave: The Case of Yan Zhitui," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995), pp. 41-58, esp. 49-51.

expected to use one in her own defense, it is most likely that this tomb, like many in central China, contained a model of a crossbow rather than the actual weapon itself. Her list goes on to specify obviously fictitious quantities of silk, rabbit hair, and gold. The characters giving the amount of silk to be held in the hand are missing, but her inventory lists 10,000 bundles of rabbit hair, 1,000 ounces of gold, and 100 bolts of pure silk.

Netherworld inflation continued unchecked in the fifth century. While some inventories list small quantities that could be placed in a tomb, a 425 tomb inventory calls for 1,000 ounces of gold,²⁰ and a 437 text for 1,000 pounds of gold, 1,000 bundles of rabbit hair, and 1,000 bolts of colored silk.²¹ The trend reaches its peak in 458, when the wife of a local ruler, lady P'eng 彭, lists 99,999 bolts of multi-colored silk 雜彩絹 and 99,999 pounds of cotton (reading 綿 as 棉).²² A familiar number from central Chinese tomb contracts, 99,999, is often the price of a tomb site. Since three was a *yang* (bright, powerful) number, nine was especially powerful, and 99,999 became the largest number to appear on tomb contracts.

LADY P'ENG'S TOMB

Lady P'eng was the wife of Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün 沮渠蒙遜, the ruler who had established the Northern Liang in 401. Based in Liang-chou 涼州, Kansu, the Northern Liang was a non-Chinese dynasty, most famous perhaps for holding the famous Buddhist translator Kumārajīva captive for thirteen years against his will. Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün died in 433. When the Northern Wei defeated the Northern Liang in 439, the Chü-ch'ü family moved west and eventually took control of Turfan in 442, where they stayed until their defeat in 460 by the Avars.

The Chü-ch'ü ruling family patronized Buddhism. Chü-ch'ü An-chou 沮渠安周 (r. 444-460) in particular financed the building of a monastery in the city of Kao-ch'ang and sponsored the copying of four Buddhist sūtras (three translated by Kumārajīva).²³ In doing so, they were following the same policies they had pursued while in Kansu. Interestingly, they were also pursuing the same pro-Buddhist policies of the earlier indigenous rulers of Turfan, the Chü-shih kings.

²⁰ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 1, p. 59; *T'u-lu-fan ch'u-t'u wen-shu* [photos] 1, p. 28.

²¹ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 1, pp. 176-77; *T'u-lu-fan ch'u-t'u wen-shu* [photos] 1, p. 85.

²² "T'u-lu-fan Pei Liang Wu Hsüan Wang Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün fu-chen P'eng-shih mu" 吐魯番北涼武宣王沮渠蒙遜夫人彭氏墓, *WW* (1994.9), pp. 75-81.

²³ Ikeda On 池田温, "Kōshō sanbi ryakkō" 高昌三碑略考, in *Mikami Tsugio Hakushi kiju kinen ronbunshū rekishihen* 三上次男博士喜壽記年論文集歴史編 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1975), pp. 102-20.

Although lady P'eng was the wife of a deceased ruler, her tomb is not lavish. Like almost all the tombs at Astana, hers consisted of a single underground chamber less than nine square meters in area and a little over one meter high reached by a descending passageway.²⁴ When the Turfan Museum opened the tomb in 1979, the excavators found that the tomb, like so many others at Astana, had been severely disturbed, with all goods of any monetary value removed.

Even so, the opportunity to compare the remaining physical contents of the tomb with the accompanying inventory is a rare one.²⁵ The lengthy tomb inventory, written on silk, has suffered damage and is missing a number of characters, especially in the first five lines. Of the many items of clothing listed on the inventory, only a cotton vest remnant (62 cm long) and a padded cape remnant (90 x 60 cm) remain, both once having been large enough to be worn by the deceased. Lady P'eng also took two bronze items used in grooming: a small knife in the shape of a fish, possibly used in the care of her feet, and an ear-wax remover. Other items also appear to have been real-world items placed in the tomb for the use of the deceased: a pillow of "crowing-cock" design (length of remnant 45 cm),²⁶ a wooden comb (7.5 x 5.5 cm), and a foot rest (30 x 13 x 9 cm). Although it is not certain which of the clothing names on the inventory refer to the vest and the cape (or if those sections are missing), the pillow, foot rest, and comb are all listed (lines 14, 15, 32).

The inventory also lists one figurine (line 20), which corresponds to an item 7.5 cm tall made out of small sheets of lead. Although lady P'eng's inventory does not specify the lead figurine's duties, Han-dynasty funeral vases found in central China suggest that they were intended to stand in for the deceased should they be sentenced to any punishments upon arrival in the netherworld. A text dated 147 AD even indicates that such lead figures could perform the underworld corvée assignments of the deceased.²⁷ Many of the Turfan tombs contain wooden slips with the term "substitute people 代人" on them. Although the original context and function of the item are not certain, it seems likely that the living believed that these figurines, and by extension the lead figurine from lady P'eng's tomb, could come to life in the underworld in order to serve, or stand in for, the deceased.

²⁴ See figure 2, *WW* (1994.9), p. 76, for a scale drawing of lady Peng's tomb.

²⁵ I thank Liu Hongliang, current vice-director of the Museum, for giving the members of the Silk Road Project a chance to view both the inventory and the grave goods on May 10, 1996.

²⁶ This is a rounded pillow whose two ends have been sewn to a point, with one end looking like a chicken's head, the other a chicken's tail (*WW* [1994.9], p. 77, pl. 8).

²⁷ Dien, "Instructions for the Grave," pp. 54-56.

The tomb's most surprising contents are miniature facsimiles made for the use of the dead. The tomb holds a miniature lead knife (7 cm), a miniature lead ruler (5.3 cm), a miniature clothes iron (11 cm), and miniature lead pair of scissors (11 cm). Although the inventory lists the scissors and the iron (lines 16, 19), it gives no hint that miniature facsimiles made of lead were buried instead of real-world implements.

The inventory also lists the obviously symbolic number of 99,999 bolts of multi-colored silk. How did the living arrange the grave goods to show such a large number? Lady P'eng's ingenious solution was to place a large number of miniature bolts of cloth in her tomb. Archeologists recovered 69 mini-bolts of silk of different colors, ranging in width from 2 to 5.5 cm, and sewn up with silk thread so they would retain their form. The largest mini-bolt, of red silk with white dots, stretched 13.5 cm long. These mini-bolts of silk assumed the same function that spirit-money played in funerals. So small as to have no intrinsic value in this world, they were placed in the tomb so that they could provide the deceased with money, in the form of textiles, in the next world. The real-world economy of Turfan used a mixed currency system of both coins and textiles (and rugs in this early period), and lady P'eng's kin prepared sufficient cloth to support her anticipated needs in the next world.

THE FEARS OF THE LIVING: KEEPING THE DEAD AWAY

Although lady P'eng's kin tried to provide her with what she would need in the next life, and although her in-laws numbered among the early important patrons of Buddhism at Turfan, they were also concerned about the threat that she, as a dead spirit, might pose to them should she be trapped somehow in this world. At the end of the inventory they added four lines giving the date of burial and her name. "Respectfully we append this list of clothing, quilts, and various other items. It is not permitted to detain or trouble her at the places she should stop or pass. Promptly, promptly, in accordance with the laws and edicts."

The concerns of those drafting these funeral documents at Turfan echo those expressed in the first-century texts on funeral vases from central China that emphatically underline the division between the living and the dead:

The dead belong to the realm of Yin,
The living belong to the realm of Yang.
[The living have] their village home,
The dead have their hamlets.²⁸

²⁸ Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion," p. 31.

Because the living kin sought to keep the dead away, they informed the gods of the underworld of the name of the deceased. If the underworld registrar had the correct name of the dead, it was believed, then he would not seize any of the deceased's living kin by mistake.

Still, several centuries later in Central Asia, the people of Turfan were of two minds about naming the dead, possibly because if they named the dead then the living might suffer the consequences. The earliest grave inventories, those of the married couple who were buried ca. 384, do not mention their names. One tomb contains funeral inventories for two women, one who died in 425, and one soon thereafter. Both give the name of the deceased yet warn, "People are not permitted to know their names." The text from 425 adds, echoing the concerns of those who drafted lady P'eng's inventory, "We hope that, as the deceased moves through passes, fords, rivers, and bridges, it is not permitted to detain or trouble her."²⁹ Going one step farther, one text from 436 gives a short list of goods and specifies "and this is one who has no name."³⁰

One inventory dated 551 can only be understood when compared to similar texts from central China. Like the early inventories, it gives the figurative quantity of 2,000 silver coins, and gives the witness's name as Chang Ting-tu 張定杜 (usually 張定度), and the scribe's as Li Chien-ku 李堅固. Chang and Li, who often appear on tomb contracts as scribes or witnesses, appear to be made-up names. Chang and Li, of course, are common last names, while their given names ("fixing the extent" and "clutching the unchanging") emphasize their reliability. This tomb also contained a paper talisman found inside a silk bag, to be worn against the body. Below a figure who holds a pitchfork in one hand and an enormous dagger in the other appears a short text, which has been translated by Anna Seidel as:

The Divine [Envoy of the] Yellow Celestial Thearch severely represses and executes the hundred species of wraiths and demons. Once decapitated, they must obey! The demons must not come near! May this order for protection be presented on high, according to my wish. Promptly, promptly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances!³¹

Several Han-dynasty funerary texts indicate that the Yellow Celestial Thearch (the Yellow Emperor) presided over the pre-Taoist underworld. He frequently sent instructions to the spirits of the dead via his divine envoy. Although recorded in Chinese, these grave inventories show the mixing of dif-

²⁹ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 1, pp. 59-62; *T'u-lu-fan ch'u-t'u wen-shu* [photos] 1, pp. 28-30.

³⁰ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 1, p. 98; *T'u-lu-fan ch'u-t'u wen-shu* [photos] 1, p. 47.

³¹ Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion," p. 39.

ferent beliefs, both Chinese and other, about the afterlife at Turfan.

Turfan lies both on the western edge of China and on the eastern edge of Iranian civilization. The people of Turfan believed that the dead traveled to an underworld via passes, fords, rivers, and bridges. If they did not reach their destination, the living would suffer the depredations of the wandering spirits of the deceased. The earliest Zoroastrian teachings also depicted the dead as traveling on a bridge: followers of truth could pass over it to proceed to paradise, while those who had violated religious teachings fell into a place of torment below. The ancient teacher Zarathustra predicted that everyone would be judged at the same time on a judgment day that would occur during his lifetime. After his death, Zoroastrians no longer anticipated a common judgment day. Instead, they came to believe that each person crossed the bridge after dying.³² While the notion of the bridge could have come from Persia (and not from India, where it did not exist), the structure of these tombs was characteristically Chinese stairway leading down to one or two chambers. No Astana tombs contain the ossuaries that are so characteristic of Zoroastrian burials.

EARLY SIGNS OF BUDDHISM

Buddhist teachings make their first appearance at the Turfan graves in the form of fragmentary undated sūtras, which the editors of the Turfan documents assign to the fourth and fifth century. A canonical text, *The Sūtra of the Seven Daughters* (*Ch'i-nü ching* 七女經) addresses the subject of death and its consequences.³³ The seven girls visit a graveyard where they see death in all its gruesomeness: beheaded bodies, corpses with hands, feet, noses, or ears cut off, dead bodies, and half-dead bodies. Some have catalpa wood coffins, whereas others are wrapped in mats and tied with rope, which was the more common practice at Astana. The girls watch the kin approach and note vermin feeding on the dead, blood pouring out of the corpses, and maggots coming from their chests. Each girl then states a metaphor about the dead designed to illustrate the Buddhist teaching that, because life has already left the body a dead corpse has no importance. For example, the third daughter contends that, because a corpse is like a cart whose driver has stepped down, it can go no further.

After encounters with several heavenly kings and bodhisattvas, the girls finally meet the Buddha, who explains:

³² Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 12–14, 27–28, 90–92; I am indebted to Stanley Insler and Oktor Skjaervo for pointing this out.

³³ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 1, pp. 218–21; *T'u-lu-fan ch'u-t'u wen-shu* [photos] 1, pp. 113–14; *Fo-shuo ch'i-nü ching* 佛說七女經 (Fedn., no. 556), vol. 14, pp. 907c–909b; quotation on p. 909b.

Bones and appendages will all disappear as ash. Even those who remain concerned with their own bodies will be like this. One should not value the beauty of the body. One should study what is not the norm. Those who carry out good deeds and avoid the profane will ascend to heaven after death, while those who do evil will enter the mud of the fields.

The Buddha then takes special pains to warn the women against jealousy, which is one of the main reasons women do not rise to the heavens.

Although this text cannot be dated with certainty, it reflects the concerns of the residents of Turfan. While advising its readers to reform their behavior, and while cautioning them that their funeral observances can do nothing to lessen the effects of death, the text does not actually condemn those funeral practices or advocate cremation, which few Chinese practiced.³⁴

BUDDHIST TOMB INVENTORIES

The first inventory to use explicitly Buddhist language dates to 543 and is from a grave holding two women and a man whose epitaph identifies him as Chang Hung 張洪.³⁵ He was buried in 562, while one of the women, woman Chiao, died in 543 and the other in 548. The lengthy, and unusually complete, grave inventory for woman Chiao dated 543 lists a great variety of clothing, jewelry, and bolts of cloth from China and Persia, and concludes with “ten thousand ten thousands nine thousand decafeet (*chang* 丈) of rope to climb to heaven.”³⁶

The heaven-climbing cloth or rope suggests a Buddhist-influenced change in ideas about the location of the netherworld. The people burying woman Chiao seem to have thought of heaven as above them, a possible indication of the absorption of Buddhist beliefs. In contrast, the traditional Chinese netherworld lay under the earth.

After stating the date (thirteenth day of the first lunar month, 543), the final section of woman Chiao's inventory reads as follows:

Monk Kuo-yüan 比丘果願 respectfully reports to the Great Deities of the Five Paths: Buddha's disciple Hsiao-tzu 孝資 adhered to the five precepts of the Buddha [not to kill, steal, commit adultery, lie, or drink alcohol] and devoted herself completely to performing the ten good deeds. She died on the sixth day of last month and has passed the Five Paths, scrupu-

³⁴ Anna Seidel, “Dabi,” in *Hōbōgirin: Dictionnaire encyclopédique de Bouddhisme d'après les sources Chinoises et Japonaises* (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1983), pp. 575–85; Patricia Ebrey, “Cremation in Sung China,” *American Historical Review* 95.2 (1990), pp. 406–28.

³⁵ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 2, pp. 60–61; *T'u-lu-fan* [photos] 1, p. 143; Hou, “T'u-lu-fan mu-chih,” p. 568.

³⁶ Ten Chinese feet at this time were approximately equal to three meters.

lously respecting their borders.

The items listed to the right were all things she used in her life.

Witnesses Chang Chien-ku, Li Ting-tu.

If you seek her, go to the eastern end of the sea. If you look for her, go to the eastern wall of the sea. It is not permitted to cause her to tarry or to stop.

Promptly, promptly, in accordance with the laws and edicts.

With this document, the phrasing of the tomb inventory has assumed a Buddhist cast. A monk makes the report to the god(s) of the underworld, the Great Deities of the Five Paths (*wu-tao ta-shen* 五道大神), that Hsiao-tzu has died.

As Oda Yoshihisa 小田義久 has explained, *wu-tao ta-shen* is understood sometimes to mean one god who presides over five paths, or sometimes as five different gods, each with his own path. The five paths can be understood in Buddhist terms as denoting the five possibilities for rebirth: in hell, as a hungry ghost, as an animal, as a person, or as a heavenly being. Traditionally, of course, some Buddhists would list six possible avenues for rebirth; the additional category – *asura* (“titan”) – has been dropped. This omission conformed with the teachings of the Sarvāstivādin school, whose members objected to the inclusion of asuras and who were active in Central Asia, and it coincided as well with the indigenous Chinese concept of the generals of the five directions: north, south, east, west, and up.³⁷ The Great Deities of the Five Paths were deities with Buddhist associations, who, in a Chinese context, took on an identity of their own that is often distinct from Buddhist concerns.³⁸

After vouching for the good behavior of the deceased, the concluding section duplicates much of the language of earlier non-Buddhist inventories. The witnesses are the same Chang Chien-ku and Li Ting-tu as on tomb contracts from central China, and their names are written with the standard characters.

Because the living have the same recurrent fear that the dead will not actually go to the realm of the dead, the text warns unnamed spirits not to delay or detain the dead Woman Chiao's spirit, whose destination is mysteriously given as the eastern end or the eastern wall of the sea (other texts usually say the western wall of the sea). Exactly which sea the residents of landlocked Turfan had in mind is not clear, but their general intent is: they want the de-

³⁷ Oda Yoshihisa, “Godō daishin kō” 五道大神考, *TS* 48 (1976), pp. 14–29; Glen Dudbridge, “The General of the Five Paths in Tang and pre-Tang China,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1996–97), pp. 85–94.

³⁸ Even in modern times, as evidenced in the Manchurian railway surveys and Grootaers' survey of Hsüan-hua, each street has a small shrine to the Deities of the Five Paths, to whom residents report all births, marriages, and deaths. See Dudbridge, “General of the Five Paths,” pp. 96–98, for specific references.

ceased to go far, far away where she will not be able to come back and bother the living. They refer to the code governing the behavior of the spirits just as the authors of earlier inventories do.

The arrangements for Chang Hung's wife, woman Chiao, were made at the beginning of a time of great change in funerary documents. Some thirty documents like this Buddhist model appear in the Turfan graves for slightly more than a century. Starting with hers in 543 and continuing until 655, one sees frequent examples of the same form: a monk (whose name is often given as Kuo-yüan 果願) informs the Great Deities of the Five Paths that Buddha's disciple so-and-so has died, should not be detained, and can be found at the eastern end or the western wall of the sea.

A STARTLING PARALLEL FROM SHANTUNG

Almost all of the evidence, discussed above, about popular beliefs in Turfan appears in excavated documents, often on paper, having no counterparts in central China. Because the unique climate of Turfan preserved materials that did not survive in China, the only materials from Turfan that have central Chinese equivalents are those on durable materials like stone, such as the steles recording the donations of the Chu-ch'ü kings to Buddhist monasteries. The varying nature of the sources makes it almost impossible to compare the well-documented experience of lay people in Turfan with the undocumented experience of lay people in central China.

A rare example of a tomb inventory on a wood tablet dated to 573 from Lin-ch'ü 臨洮 county, Shantung, serves as the sole reminder that funerary documents like the tomb inventories from Turfan may have been used in central China as well. Because the wording occasionally differs from that used in the Turfan materials, and because it contains a number of unusual variants, this inventory is not always completely understandable. Like the tomb inventories from Turfan, it was placed in the grave of Wang Chiang-fei 王江妃, the deceased wife of Kao Ch'iao 高僑, in 573. After giving the date, the text reads:³⁹

Kao Ch'iao, disciple of the Sakyamuni Buddha, dares to report to the earth deity of Sheng-wan 澗灣 hamlet and the land deity:⁴⁰ Kao Ch'iao was originally from Po-hai 勃海 commandery in Chi-chou 冀州 prefec-

³⁹ I am indebted to the discussion in Glen Dudbridge, “General of the Five Paths,” p. 93 (n. 25), for alerting me to its existence. (The text was first published by Tuan Fang 端方, *Tao-chai ts'ang-shih-chi* 陶齋臧石記 (in *Shih-k'ò shih-liao ts'ung-pien* 石刻史料叢編 [*chia-pien* 12]; facs. reproduction of 1909 edn.) 13, pp. 6a–8a; photograph in *WW* (1965, 10), p. 8, pl. 8.

⁴⁰ The character *tu* 土 (written with a dot on the lower right-hand corner as at Tun-huang) is preceded by three characters (two of them non-standard) whose meaning is not clear.

ture, but because of his official posting resides in Sheng-wan hamlet, I-tu 益都 subprefecture, Ch'i 齊 commandery, Ch'ing-chou 青州 prefecture. His wife Wang Chiang-fei at the age of 77 became ill for several years, and medicine brought about no lessening of her symptoms. On the sixth day of this month she suddenly died. She took leave of the Three Brightnesses [the sun, the moon, and the stars] above as she approached the realm of Hao-li 蒿里 below.

During her lifetime Chiang-fei assiduously performed the ten good deeds and steadfastly adhered to the five precepts. During the three months and six festivals each year she observed a vegetarian fast without fail.

Now she has been dispatched by two Masters of the Precepts, the Lord of the Hill (Shan-kung 山公) and the Lord of the Treasury (Tsang-kung 藏公)⁴¹ and others to take flowers from the Buddha. She has departed, and we know she will not return.

At the time the life of Chiang-fei ended, the Celestial Emperor held flowers and waited to welcome her spirit; the Great Power ... received her soul.

An imperial edict was given to the underworld Nü-ch'ing 女青⁴² emissary, who then told the Great Deities of the Five Paths and the Officer of the Slope: "You are not permitted to scold Chiang-fei or to obstruct the transport to any place of the clothes, money, other goods, and things Chiang-fei takes with her. If you do detain or interrogate her, *Sha-ho-lou-t'o* 沙訶樓陀 will smash your body and head like the branches of the arjakamañjarī tree.⁴³

She came in such a hurry that she does not know who wrote this edict and who read it. The one who wrote it is Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-shih-yin 觀世音). The one who read it is Vimalakīrti (Wei-mo ta-shih 維摩大士).

The document then ends with four illegible characters, quite possibly a talismanic charm, followed by an inventory of goods very similar to those from Turfan listing clothing, hair ornaments, a crowing-cock style (see above) pillow, and bolts of cloth.

The deities appearing in Wang Chiang-fei's inventory come from each of China's indigenous traditions: from Buddhism we see the Buddha, the Great Deities of the Five Paths, Kuan-shih-yin, and Vimalakīrti; from pre-Taoist and

Taoist beliefs, the Celestial Emperor and Nü-ch'ing; and from indigenous religions, the Lord of the Hill, who is here given the Buddhist title Master of the Precepts. Some of the deities are not well known: the Lord of the Treasury, the Great Power, the Officer of the Slope, and the mysterious Sha-ho-lou-t'uo. While the text shows a characteristically eclectic approach to China's religious traditions, the author takes pains to depict lady Chiang-fei as a devout Buddhist who upheld Buddhist teachings. The last line of the Shantung text is unique because it mentions Avalokiteśvara and Vimalakīrti, in contrast to the much more common Chang Chien-ku and Li Ting-tu. The author of the text clearly has a strong familiarity with Sanskrit words: who else would mention the arjakamañjarī tree?

All the Buddhist references notwithstanding, lady Chiang-fei still travels to an underworld. The text explicitly states that she is going under the earth. It adds details not mentioned by the Turfan texts: she will take flowers from the Buddha and be received by the Celestial Emperor, who also carries flowers. Like the residents of Turfan, she is thought to be able to take the goods placed in her tomb to the realm of the dead, and like them, she risks being detained by various spirits.

So the residents of Turfan were not the only people burying tomb inventories in their graves during the sixth century. Tuan-fang 端方, the Manchu epigrapher who published this text, marveled that the characters written on wood could still be made out after 1,300 years. We must share his delight. The inventories from Turfan were done on the even more perishable materials of silk and paper. Like so many other extraordinary materials they survive only because of the unique conditions at Turfan.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK BUDDHISM

The sudden appearance of Buddhist terms in Woman Chiao's 543 inventory earlier prompted such scholars as Oda to posit a change from tomb inventory to Buddhist document. One cannot, however, assume that all the residents of Kao-ch'ang city who used inventory forms also fully embraced all the tenets of Buddhism. Some of the inventory forms using Buddhist terms had blanks to be filled in. Once such forms began to circulate in Turfan, families trying to ensure a better rebirth for their deceased kin might have adopted them without necessarily understanding all the implications of Buddhist teachings. Rather than see, as Oda does, the appearance of these new inventories as evidence of conversion to Buddhism, one may also argue that they simply represent a slight modification of the traditional funerary practices of Turfan. The residents

⁴¹ This perhaps is another name for Ti-tsang 地藏 (Kṣitigarbha).

⁴² Nü-ch'ing appears in many tomb contracts as the emissary of the Five Directional Emperors (Hansen, *Negotiating Daily Life*, p. 173).

⁴³ This tree splits into seven pieces when it is cut down; Dudbridge, "General of the Five Paths," p. 93, n. 26.

of Turfan continued to believe in a realm for the dead, but their understanding of that realm expanded to include Buddhist concepts and deities.

Monk Kuo-yüan makes his first appearance in 543 and his last in 628, eighty-five years later. It was unusual that a practicing monk could live so long; more likely, those filling in the forms on behalf of the deceased copied Kuo-yüan's name from earlier examples even if no monk named Kuo-yüan presided over the funeral. They could have consulted a small cribsheet like those for contracts found at Tun-huang, or they could have memorized a model text.⁴⁴ The use of forms with blanks to be filled in later was not limited to Buddhism; model contracts and wills often were of the same type.

One inventory dated 576, also buried in a Chang family tomb, is obviously a form.⁴⁵ It refers to the reporting monk as "monk of Great Virtue name-to-be-filled-in 大德比丘△甲 and the deceased is "Buddha's disciple lay sister (*upāsikā*) name-to-be-filled-in 佛弟子清信女某甲."⁴⁶ One cannot be sure whether the scribe failed to realize that he should have filled in the names of the reporting monk and the deceased. Or perhaps leaving the two names blank was a deliberate omission, the legacy of the earlier reluctance to provide the spirits of the underworld with the name of the dead in writing. The scribe does not identify himself: he may have been the monk who presided over the funeral.

An inventory dated 605 documents even more clearly the struggle to master the appropriate forms.⁴⁷ It also names the monk reporting the death as "Monk of Great Virtue name-to-be-filled-in," but then places two dots next to the characters *mou-chia* to show they should be deleted and gives the name of the monk as Nan-kuang 南光. Whoever supplied the monk's name does not give the deceased's name. Indeed the scribe dropped a character or two before "five precepts," so there is no verb "to observe" (usually 持) or mention of the Buddha's name.⁴⁸ The dropped characters and an error (律 for 李 in the name

⁴⁴ In the spring of 1996 I met a geomancer in Wen-shui 文水, Shansi (empress Wu's native place), who wrote down from memory several texts of tomb contracts for me.

⁴⁵ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 2, pp. 217-18; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 1, p. 208. The scribe's grasp of Chinese characters is uncertain: he writes "天" for "衆," as the family name of the mythical scribe Chang Chien-ku.

⁴⁶ Two characters are missing; it thus reads 佛弟□信女某甲. Assuming that this follows the same format as others of the same type, it should read 佛弟子清信女某甲.

Nobuyoshi Yamabe (personal communication, July 2, 1997) informs me that "in the present Sōtō tradition in Japan, we say 'ū-tzu mou-chia' when chanting some texts of dedication/confession in unison. Theoretically 'mou-chia' should be replaced by one's real name when one chants the text by oneself, but I'm not sure how often people do that in practice. Since we are accustomed to the phrase 'ū-tzu mou-chia,' this expression doesn't sound too odd to us. Perhaps a similar thing was happening in China?"

⁴⁷ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 3, p. 9; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 1, p. 306.

⁴⁸ The usual phrase is *ch'ih-fo wu-chieh* 持佛五戒.

of the mythical witness Li Ting-tu) suggest that the scribe had not yet mastered Chinese characters.

These two examples provide clear evidence that the residents of Turfan were filling in blanks of a form whose contents they did not quite understand. The use of such forms hardly constitutes evidence of mass conversion.

THE CHANG FAMILY

Many of these Buddhist inventories were buried in the tombs of the men of the Chang family, of their wives, and of their concubines. The only Buddhist statue found in the Turfan graves, a statue of the Heavenly King P'i-shamen (Skt.: Vaiśravaṇa), was also found in a Chang-family grave.⁴⁹ The Changs were a prominent local family who supplied the ruling Ch'ü 麴 family with wives. Because of their high social position, they may have been more influenced by Chinese example than their contemporaries.

Sometime around the year 500, the Ch'ü family gained control of Kao-ch'ang, which they ruled until defeated by the T'ang in 640. The Ch'ü family engaged in a precarious form of diplomacy. Just as they cultivated the rulers of the Sui and T'ang dynasties, they also maintained strong ties to the Turkic peoples to the west. The Ch'ü rulers paid tribute to and personally visited both the Sui and T'ang emperors, but they remitted to the Turks all the revenues from the caravan tax they collected. (See the list of Ch'ü rulers; Introduction.)

The third Ch'ü ruler, Ch'ü Po-ya 伯雅, was particularly drawn to Chinese ways. He ordered his people to adopt Chinese clothing, and he received titles from the Chinese as a result. He also forged marriage alliances with the Western Turks, marrying a daughter to the eldest son of Ton-yabghu, the leader of the Western Turks. Ch'ü Po-ya's wife, the mother of the fourth Kao-ch'ang king, Ch'ü Wen-t'ai 文泰 (r. 619-640), was born into the Chang family (her father is buried in the Astana tomb numbered TAM114), and we know her to have been an observant Buddhist from a mention in the hagiography of Hsüan-tsang 玄奘 written by his disciple Hui-li 慧立 (and subsequently revised by another disciple Yen-ts'ung 彦宗).⁵⁰ Hui-li's description of the charged encounter with king Ch'ü Wen-t'ai bristles with life, and could certainly have

⁴⁹ Janet Baker, "Sui and Early Tang Period Images of the Heavenly King in Tombs and Temples," *Orientalism* 30.4 (April 1999), pp. 53-57.

⁵⁰ *Ta T'ang Ya Tz'u-en-ssu San-tsang fa-shih chuan* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (T'edn., no. 2053), vol. 50, pp. 220-80; the encounter with the Kao-ch'ang king appears on pp. 224-25, and the passage translated here on 225A. See Samuel Beal, trans., *The Life of Hsüan-tsang by the Shaman Hwui Li* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1973; originally published in 1911); and Li Rongxi, trans., *A Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Cien Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995).

been embellished, but it at least provides an alternative perspective on the extent of Buddhism in the Kao-ch'ang kingdom.

Hsüan-tsang's Stopover in Kao-ch'ang

According to Hui-li's account, the monk Hsüan-tsang originally had not wanted to stop in Kao-ch'ang but was obliged to do so when king Ch'ü Wen-t'ai sent an entourage to meet him in 629.⁵¹ The king, who stayed up to wait, greeted the monk enthusiastically, and on the first night of the visit kept the exhausted monk up until dawn. He gave the monk a room in the palace, arranged food for him, and assigned eunuchs to wait on him. He then began his campaign to persuade him to remain in Kao-ch'ang, explaining that in his travels to China he had never met a monk who impressed him so much. He continues:

But from the time I heard the name of the Master of the Law my body and soul have been filled with joy, my hands and my feet have danced.

I propose that you stay here, where I will provide for your wants to the end of your life. I will order the people of my realm to become your disciples. I hope you will instruct the clerics here, who, although not numerous, number several thousand.

Although the king hoped to persuade the monk to stay in his kingdom, he had no reason to exaggerate the number of Buddhists. Furthermore, he had no way of knowing whether Hsüan-tsang would prefer a kingdom with few Buddhists, where he could work to convert them, or many, whom he could help to advance to a higher understanding. Chinese sources give the population of the Kao-ch'ang kingdom in 640 as 8,000 households with 37,700 residents,⁵² so, if the king's estimate was correct, one in ten may be classified as Buddhist clergy. (Contrast ten percent with Jacques Gernet's estimate of a monastic population of .35 percent for all of China in 624.)⁵³ Kao-ch'ang was well-known for the size of its Buddhist community, and the Kao-ch'ang state, unlike central Chinese governments, taxed the Buddhist religious community, presumably because it was so large.

⁵¹ Kuwayama Shōshin 桑山正進, "How Xuanzang Learned about Nālandā," in Antonino Forte, ed., *Tang China and Beyond: Studies on East Asia from the Seventh to the Tenth Century* (Kyoto: Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 1988). Kuwayama understands this change in plans as the product of the Kao-ch'ang king's being better informed than the monk Hsüan-tsang about the political situation among the Turks to the west.

⁵² *Chiu Tang-shu* 舊唐書 (Chung-hua edn.) 198, p. 5295.

⁵³ Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, Franciscus Verellen, trans. (New York: Columbia U.P., 1995), p. 12.

Hui-li's account continues: when the king's offer of hospitality failed to persuade the monk to abandon his journey, he opted for coercion, and kept the monk as a prisoner. He threatened to send him back to China, where he could have been arrested for violating the ban on leaving the empire without imperial permission. At this point, the monk started a hunger strike, and the two men remained at loggerheads for three days until the king finally gave in and promised to provide the monk with the supplies for his journey. The king's mother, empress-dowager Chang, may have played an undocumented role in the compromise. Hsüan-tsang remained suspicious of the king and asked him to take an oath facing the sun. The king did so, paying obeisance to the Buddha, and then pledged brotherhood to the monk in the presence of the empress Chang. Only then, Hui-li explains, did the monk agree to resume eating. During the following month the king's men prepared the monk's supplies, the monk taught the *Scripture of the Benevolent Kings* (*Jen-wang ching* 仁王經), and the empress Chang took a vow of spiritual kinship with him.

The king's munificent provisions for Hsüan-tsang included four novices, twenty-five servants, and thirty horses. He also provided them with appropriate clothing for the journey: thirty monks' habits, face-covers, boots, and gloves. The funds were also generous: 100 ounces of gold, 30,000 silver coins, and 500 bolts of satin and taffeta. Even more important, because of his ties to the Western Turks, the Kao-ch'ang ruler provided the monk with twenty-four diplomatic letters, each with a bolt of silk, that requested safe passage through the Turks' territory on his way to India.

This may have been the high point of the king's reign. Because he supported different Turkish initiatives against the Chinese, including an attack on Hami, the Chinese sent a force that speedily attacked and conquered his kingdom in 640. Chinese sources maintain the king died of fright when he saw the Chinese forces, and his son Ch'ü Chih-sheng 麴智盛 surrendered to the Chinese when they bombarded his capital at Chiao-ho with stones. As part of their punishment, the ruling Ch'ü house, and the Chang family who had supplied so many consorts, were sentenced to internal exile within China. While resident in Lo-yang, the Chang family dedicated a cave at Lung-men. The daughter of the last Kao-ch'ang king outlived her father, joined a nunnery in the outskirts of Ch'ang-an, where she died, and so continued her family's tradition of Buddhist devotion.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Chu Lei [Zhu Lei] 朱雷, "Lung-men shih-k'u Kao-ch'ang Chang An 'i-chi yü T'ang T'ai-tung tui Ch'ü-ch'ao ta-tsu chih cheng-ts'e" 龍門石窟高昌張安題記與唐太宗對麴朝大族之政策, in Joseph Wong and Lau Kin-ming, eds., *Studies on the Sui and Tang Dynasties* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, 1993), pp. 49-53.

The funerary documents from Astana show few signs of the T'ang conquest of 640. Unlike contracts, which changed format before and after 640, funerary documents stayed the same. In the early years of Chinese rule, one sees the continuing use of grave inventories along with new types of documentation, some of which reflect Taoist teachings, some Buddhist.

RECORDS OF MERIT-PRODUCING DEEDS

Only in the 660s and 670s do the first explicitly Buddhist documents appear in the Astana graveyard: these are records of merit-producing deeds (*kung-te-shu* 功德疏). Five such texts, from ten to fifteen lines long, recount the main activities of the deceased during his or her lifetime, with the primary emphasis on Buddhist activities. The earliest is dated 667 and lists the different Buddhist texts whose recitation or copying the deceased sponsored. Moneylender Tso, who buried fifteen intact contracts in his tomb, listed the images he had commissioned and the sūtra whose readings he had sponsored before his death in 674, but he included a short list of goods he hoped to take to the underworld as well.⁵⁵ A second record of merit-producing deeds, this time from a woman, also dates to 667.⁵⁶ A woman who died in 674 listed all the sūtras whose readings she had sponsored and claimed to have donated 300 coins to a group of monks on her death.⁵⁷ One official who had been transferred from Yen-ch'i 焉耆 (Karashahr) to Tun-huang listed the three sūtras whose readings he sponsored on the sixth hour and the six feasts of every month (on the 8th, 14th, 15th, 23rd, 29th, and 30th days) but chose not to mention other texts.⁵⁸

These texts suggest that at least these four occupants of Astana graves envisioned an underworld in which they would be judged according to a Buddhist standard of good works. Accordingly, they listed the texts they had sponsored and the donations given to the Buddhist community over the course of their lifetimes. These records remain catalogues of religious activity that convey little emotion. One record of merit-producing deeds, written by a woman whose father-in-law had died recently, runs a full ninety-four lines long and provides an extraordinarily vivid record of lay Buddhist belief in Turfan in the years after the T'ang conquest.⁵⁹ Without giving personal names, the record

⁵⁵ Hansen, *Negotiating Daily Life*, pp. 33–39; *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 6, p. 402; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 3, p. 208.

⁵⁶ Chen, *Su-t'an-yin suo-huo Tu-lu-fan wen-shu yen-chiu*, p. 346–47.

⁵⁷ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 6, p. 500; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 3, p. 259; Hou, "Tu-lu-fan mu-chih," p. 603.

⁵⁸ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 7, p. 524; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 3, p. 567.

⁵⁹ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 7, pp. 66–74; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 3, pp. 334–40. Wang Su 王素 has reedit-

refers to her as the new wife 新婦, and her late father-in-law as *a-kung* 阿公 (an appellation reserved for older male kin including one's paternal grandfather, father-in-law, or husband's older brother). The text is dated 672, when a cave was dedicated to the deceased, but one cannot be sure how much time elapsed between the death of the father-in-law and the building of the cave.

The first seventy-four lines of this text detail the deceased's activities for forty-odd days between the father-in-law's falling ill and his death, when the text says he abandoned the teaching activities of this world (understanding 捨化 as 遷化).⁶⁰ The long list specifies A-kung's daily activities before his death, concluding with the donation of clothes to the sangha about two weeks after his death. The final section of the document, separated from the rest by two blank lines, describes the subterranean cave among the tombs dedicated by the daughter-in-law to the memory of A-kung.

As Wang Su has pointed out, A-kung's many activities include three different types of reading and recitation of sūtras.⁶¹ A-kung sponsored five sūtra recitations 誦經, but the text does not specify which sūtras the monks recited. In two cases, he sponsored readings 讀經 of *The Diamond Sūtra* and *The Nirvana Sūtra*, and seven "turnings 轉經" of different texts in which monks read several lines from the beginning, middle, and end sections of each text. He also financed two copyings of different texts including *The Nirvana Sūtra* and paid for ritual observances including circumambulation, incense burning, recitation of the Buddha's name, and the commissioning of paintings (with details of subject matter), flags, and statues. Finally, he and his daughter-in-law contributed goods to the Buddhist community, starting with the donation of a horse, grain, and clothing. The list of clothing she gave after his death, divided into twenty-four items from him and three from her, bears a curious resemblance to a grave inventory in that it includes shirts, trousers, skirts, quilts, shoes, and socks – but none of the figurative quantities so characteristic of the earlier genre.

The extensive ritual activities, coupled with the direct gifts, convey an impression of a wealthy man whose source of income is unclear. Unusually, the list mentions no activities before the day A-kung fell ill, although it may refer to them very broadly in the two missing characters in the first line. The first two lines read "All the merit-producing deeds of A-kung, when he was alive and on this earth, *should be recorded*. But only those merit-producing deeds

edit the text and discussed its implications for the study of Pure Land Buddhism in his "Tu-lu-fan ch'u-t'u 'Kung-te-shu' suo-chien Hsi-chou shu-min te ching-t'u hsin-yang" 吐魯番出土功德疏所見西州庶民的淨土信仰, *Tang yen-chiu* 唐研究 1 (1995), pp. 11–35.

⁶⁰ Nobuyoshi Yamabe suggested this reading; personal communication, July 2, 1997.

⁶¹ Wang, "Kung-te-shu," pp. 17–18.

dating from the time he fell ill last year are listed as follows to the right" (lines 1–2; reconstruction of a missing section is underlined here). The list divides all his activities by the day on which they occurred to create thirteen different sections, of which nine mention the reason: to repent for and erase past wrongdoings (the text gives *ch'an-hui ch'u-tsui* 懺悔出罪, or *ch'u-tsui ch'an-hui*, or just *ch'an-hui* or *ch'u-tsui*).⁶² The frequent use of this phrase distinguishes this record from the other four, which do not use the term. The father-in-law is the only one of the five people burying records of good deeds in their tombs to take the bodhisattva precepts (as he nears death). The others simply take the usual five precepts for lay people.

Most striking is the inclusion of a section in which the daughter-in-law writes to the unnamed gods of the underworld about her father-in-law A-kung's future:

Permit me to address you directly.

I firmly believe that all the merits my father-in-law accrued during his life-time should be recorded, but those merits he accrued after his fate slipped away are recorded one-by-one as listed above. I wish to submit this account so that the past can be debated and resolved in the hopes that my father-in-law can attain rebirth in the pure land 淨佛國土 – not to seek any compensation in this world.

All possessions, fields, houses, wives, children, slaves, and other things are empty flowers, and all are unreal. Every time sūtras were read, you must know that A-kung deeply considered the sense of the sūtra.

The only factor to take into account is that the paths of the living and the dead have always been different. I am afraid that my father-in-law did not reason in the right way [because he was alive and could not understand the ways of the dead]. Since he took the precepts before dying, his merits are manifold.

If he is in the intermediate state between rebirths 中蔭 (*antara-bhava*), I hope he will express his deepest wishes to look for a good place to be reborn. I hope he will not long for what is past and so fall into the lowest path of reincarnation.

I respectfully record this account in order to make the case for his strong points in the hope that when he leaves the three realms of the world of transmigration [namely the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of non-form] he can attain the uppermost realm.

If he is reborn among the living, I ask you to send a dream to inform me.

This section affords an extraordinary glimpse of lay understanding of the Buddhist afterlife. A-kung's daughter-in-law believes he will go to an intermediate realm, from which he will be assigned to rebirth in a different realm. She hopes he will be assigned to the pure land, but she believes a negative decision could send him to a lower realm. She admits that he performed many good deeds, and took the bodhisattva precepts in the hope that these acts will influence his future.

While much here shows a good knowledge of Buddhist teachings about the afterlife, remnants of earlier belief linger. The daughter-in-law's insistence that the paths of the living and the dead differ harks back to earlier inventories, as do her urgings that her father-in-law not return to the realm of the living. But she has a very different, and very new, sense of what happens to the dead after they die – a sense that one has to label "Buddhist." Her record of her father-in-law's merits reveals an active Buddhist community in Turfan replete with monks, monasteries, lay people, and activities aimed at the generation of merit.

But we must remember that A-kung's daughter-in-law did not typify the residents of Turfan. The four other records of good deeds show much less understanding of Buddhist teachings than she does, and the residents of Turfan buried other types of non-Buddhist burial documents in their tombs during the century of Chinese rule there.

ALTERNATIVES TO BUDDHISM

A couple who died nameless, and whose tomb contains documents dating from 661 to 665, chose to include several geomantic texts bearing the title *Wu-t'u-chieh* 五土解 ("undoing the influence of the Five Directional Generals"), which list the attributes of those deities.⁶³ The tomb also includes fragments of prayers addressed to the Deities of the Five Directions (Wu-fang shen 五方神) and to the Earl of the Earth (T'u-po 土伯), a familiar figure from tomb contracts. Although missing many characters, both prayers include lines identical to those appearing in a prayer from a different tomb, datable sometime between 666 and 706.

The beginning of the prayer is missing the name of the deity to whom it is addressed:

We hope that you will strictly watch over this soul so that it cannot transgress the living. The paths of the living and the dead are separate and it is not permitted for them to meet. Today we write the name of the deceased

⁶² The entry for the seventh day of the second month repeats the phrase.

⁶³ *Tu-lu-fan* [texts] 6, pp. 285–87; *Tu-lu-fan* [photos] 3, pp. 152–53.

to transmit to the Deity of the Upper Left. Quickly bind the deceased.

The master again bows to offer wine to others and dares to address the Upper Direction, according to the honored (?) deity 垂神.⁶⁴

On the back of this prayer are written two large characters for heaven and earth 天地, which has prompted the editors of the Turfan documents to label it an “offering prayer 醮辭,” but it seems to be a more general funerary document whose ties to organized Taoism cannot be established. Much in this prayer – especially the names of the deities – is familiar, but comparison with two similar texts addressed to the Deities of the Five Directions and the Earl of the Earth shows that it is clearly the product of the ancient concern that the spirits of the dead will mistake the living for the dead.⁶⁵ As in the case of the Han-dynasty vases, the funeral ceremony aims to underline the distinction between the two by reminding the gods of their obligation to supervise the travel of the dead and to prevent them from interfering with the living.

One document found in the small village Wu-erh-t'ang 烏爾塘, some twelve kilometers from the city of Kao-ch'ang, resembles the funerary contracts buried in central China much more closely than do any of the funerary documents so far discovered in the Astana and Karakhoja cemeteries. After giving the date, 757, it reads:

Lord Chang 張公 of Nan-yang 南陽 respectfully offers a libation of clear wine, for the carefully considered reason that this time of this day is auspicious for good work. Taking fifty thousand strings of cash and fifty bolts of silk, respectfully we buy one section of tomb land from the Generals of the Five Earths that stretches twenty paces to the east, west, south and north. The tomb reaches up to the heavens and down to the Yellow Springs. Once it is sold neither side is permitted to encroach. This contract is handed to the Generals of the Five Earths to retain.⁶⁶

This funerary document takes the form of a contract between the deceased and the Generals of the Five Earths. Like tomb contracts from central China, it gives a fictitious price – like the abstract entities in the tomb inventories – and fictive dimensions up to the heavens and down to the netherworld of the Yellow Springs. It is dated 757, making it one of the latest extant documents preserved at Turfan. We do not know whether or not this type of funerary document became widespread in Turfan in subsequent centuries. The only

other example of a tomb contract, that of general Chang Wu-chia 張無價, whose paper coffin contained over 200 documents, is the earliest extant tomb contract to follow the model laid down by the Sung-dynasty burial manual, *The New Book of Earth Patterns*. This model was used throughout China, and examples have been found spanning the tenth and eighteenth centuries.⁶⁷

In the absence of further evidence from the years after 769 it is impossible to decide whether records of merit or tomb contracts were used more frequently. We can merely note that tomb contracts far outnumbered Buddhist burial documents in tombs from central China.

THE PARADOX OF TURFAN

Writing in 1986, Ma Yong posed an important question: why, if above the ground Turfan was such a Buddhist community, is there so little evidence of Buddhist belief below the ground?

We know from historical records and other excavated documents that Buddhism in the Kao-ch'ang of the time [Sixteen Dynasties] was already relatively predominant, with monks, monasteries, and even translation activities. During the period of the Northern Liang, the support of the Ch'ü-ch'ü family was especially great. Among this group of excavated documents are occasional materials reflecting Buddhism, but they are not obvious, and there is no Buddhist influence in the superstitious documents of the buried tomb inventories. One can conceive of a situation in which Buddhism circulated only among the highest aristocrats and did not penetrate the populace...⁶⁸

Professor Ma goes on to note the presence of Buddhist terms in the tomb inventories of the period of Ch'ü-family rule in Kao-ch'ang and explains how different these documents are from those of the earlier period. Although it is an exaggeration to say that only the highest born at Turfan took to Buddhism while ordinary people did not, his suggestion that people from different social strata absorbed Buddhist teachings at different rates has much value. We have already seen that many of the earliest Buddhist documents are linked with one powerful Turfan family, the Changs.

Only after the Chinese conquest of 640 do we see documents like A-

⁶⁴ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 7, p. 352; *T'u-lu-fan* [photos] 3, p. 167.

⁶⁵ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 6, pp. 288, 293–94; *T'u-lu-fan* [photos] 3, pp. 154–55.

⁶⁶ *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 9, p. 255; *T'u-lu-fan* [photos] 4, p. 601.

⁶⁷ Hansen, *Negotiating Daily Life*, pp. 160–64, 166; *T'u-lu-fan* [texts] 10, pp. 6–7; *T'u-lu-fan* [photos] 4, p. 395.

⁶⁸ Ma Yung [Ma Yong] 馬雍, “T'u-lu-fan ch'u-t'u Kao-ch'ang chün shih-ch'i wen-shu kai-shu” 吐魯番出土高昌郡時期文書概述, in idem, *Hsi-yü shih ti wen-wu ts'ung-k'ao* 西域史地文物叢考 (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1990), p. 120.

kung's record of merit, but they coexist with both Taoist documents and tomb contracts. Although some scholars, such as Oda Yoshihisa, have described the Turfan tombs as shifting from indigenous practices to Buddhist, few analysts have pointed out that some of the deceased continued to use non-Buddhist burial rituals even in the last century the graveyard was in use, the eighth century. At the highest end of the social spectrum, we see one general who received a burial using a contract to purchase his tomb land from the gods of the netherworld, and, at the opposite end, we see a poor man who also does so. These examples remind us that the adoption of Buddhist burial practices was partial.

We should not be surprised to find the people of Turfan, with their mixed cultural background, adding Buddhist and Taoist elements to their preexisting funeral practices. This article has shown that, when the rulers of Turfan adopted Buddhist practices or patronized Buddhist institutions, they looked eastward to China. The period of greatest Buddhist activity – as shown in records of good deeds – came after the Chinese conquest of 640.

This picture of Chinese influence still allows for the possibility of an Indian presence at Turfan. We have seen that an early mention of Buddhism in Turfan concerned a monk alive in 382, during the reign of the Chü-shih kings, who knew Sanskrit or a language related to Sanskrit. German archeologists found libraries of Sanskrit materials in the above-ground ruins of monasteries (for they almost never excavated graves), but they consisted almost entirely of Buddhist sūtras (and a handful of medical prescriptions).⁶⁹ These texts cannot be dated with certainty, but judging from the types of script used we can estimate that the texts were written after about 400. Are these texts evidence of a resident Indian community who consulted these libraries? Or could they simply point to the existence of a devout Buddhist community consisting largely of Chinese who used Sanskrit as a church language and who read texts in Sanskrit? The current state of our knowledge does not permit an answer.

The findings from Turfan prompt a reformulation of the stone-in-the-water model. Intuitively appealing as it is to say that Buddhism spread from India across Central Asia to China, such a description does not explain either the timing or the nature of religious change in the Silk Road oasis of Turfan. Buddhism came to Turfan from at least two directions: from China and from India.

⁶⁹ Zhang Guangda (personal communication October 3, 1997) states that of the 648 Sanskrit texts in Germany whose provenance is still known since the removal of their identifying labels, 116 came from Turfan. For the materials held in Germany, see volumes 1, 5, and 7 of *Sanskrit-handschriften aus den Turfanfunden* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1965–). For the medical texts, see Heinrich Lüders, “Medizinische Sanskrit-Texte aus Turkestan,” in *Philologica Indica* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1940), pp. 579–91.