PART I

Patterns of Historical Growth

CHAPTER 1

Buddhism in Central Asian History

Mariko Namba Walter

Central Asia covers a vast and historically significant area in Eurasia, where ancient civilizations flourished, although there is no common agreement about its precise boundaries. Here Central Asia is provisionally defined to include the southern, western, and eastern parts of Central Asia, which roughly corresponds to present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, northwest India, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in northwest China. Although from early on the region was surrounded by superpowers—such as the ancient empires of Greece, India, and China—for considerable stretches of history Central Asians managed to retain relatively stable kingdoms. At times these independent kingdoms lasted for several centuries, despite the constant intrusions and interferences from the dominant neighboring empires. According to Greek, Chinese, and local sources, the residents of the ancients city-states in Central Asia were mainly speakers of East Iranian, Turkic, and Tokharian (an archaic Indo-European language). Many of the local population had Caucasoid physical features, but since their exact race or ethnicity is unknown, they are often identified by the languages they spoke.

Buddhism initially spread into the region around the first century of the Common Era, at the latest, and it flourished there for more than half a millennium, until the Islamization of Central Asia, which started during the seventh century. Kuṣāns were major contributors to the early spread of Buddhism in Central Asia. In the early first century CE, the Kuṣāns migrated from the northwestern regions of China and conquered Greco-Bactrian Kingdom in present-day Afghanistan. They further conquered northwest India and the southern part of the Tarim Basin, including Kroraina and possibly Khotan. Around the first century CE, Gandhāra (modern Peshawar region), which at the time was under the Kuṣān empire, became a vibrant Buddhist region, and Gandhāran Buddhism had direct impacts on the development of Central Asian Buddhism. Buddhism settled in the oasis-states of western Central Asia—Indo-Parthia and Sogdiana—fairly early, before the introduction of Buddhism into China during the first century CE. Buddhism was already divided into various schools by the time it reached

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Central Asia. Mahāyāna Buddhism was present in the Central Asian kingdoms from the early period of its growth and transmission.

In accord with the longstanding character of Buddhism as a missionary religion, Buddhist missionaries from Gandhāra, mid-India, and Central Asia were active in the transmission of Buddhism into China. Notable examples of Central Asian monks that arrived in China around the middle to late second century CE include An Shigao (147–167 CE in China), originally from the Indo-Parthian kingdom, Lokakṣema (147–188 CE), from the Kuṣān empire, and Kang Mengxiang (190–220 CE), whose ancestors were from Sogdiana. Chinese accounts about these and other Buddhist missionaries from the region, together with other historical sources, provide us with valuable evidence about the presence of Buddhism in Central Asia around the beginning of the Common Era. The legendary tales of Khotan and Kucha also point in the same direction. Among the Chinese sources that indicate the presence of Buddhism in Central Asia during the first century, *the History of the Later Han (Hou Hanshu)* tells the story of Emperor Ming's (r. 58–76 CE) dream about a flying "golden man" (identified as the Buddha), and the account of an envoy from the kingdom of the Dayuezhi (the Kuṣāṇas), who supposedly brought Buddhism to the Chinese court in 2 BCE (Zürcher 1972: 19–22; see also Chapter 2 by Poceski in this volume).

This chapter examines the history and character of Buddhism in each of the six main regions of Central Asia: Kuṣānia, Kroraina (Shan-shan), Sogdiana, Khotan, Kucha, and the areas populated by the Uighur (a Turkic people). During the early centuries of Buddhism's presence in the region, the Kuṣān empire and the oasis kingdoms around the Tarim Basin made a variety of notable contributions to the transmission of Buddhism into China. Later on, however, Central Asians became recipients of Chinese forms of Buddhism, especially during the Tang dynasty (618–907).

Buddhism in the Kuṣān Empire

In the middle part of the first century CE, Kujula Kadphises (r. 30–80 CE), the founder of the Kuṣān empire (located in present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan), conquered the Greco-Bactrian kingdom. Kujula and his successors continued to expand their territories. Eventually they established a vast empire, which included the areas both north and south of the Hindu Kush Mountains, bordering with Iran in the west, China in the east, India in the south, and Sogdiana in the north. The Kuṣāns were one of the offshoots of nomadic people called the Yuezhi by the Chinese.

The Yuezhi originally inhabited the northwestern regions of China and the steppes of Mongolia, but then the Xiongnu, a Mongol-Turkic tribal federation from north China, started to attack their neighboring populations. The Xiongnu effectively pushed the Yuezhi westward in the second century BCE. Subsequently the Yuezhi reached Bactria at the western end of their journey, and around 128 BCE they conquered the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom located in the area that corresponds to present-day northern Afghanistan. The Yuezhi divided the empire into five territories, ruled by different *yabgus* (regional generals), one of which was the territory of the Kuṣāns. This became the name of the whole empire in the late first century BCE.

The fourth ruler of the Kuṣān empire, Kaniṣka (r. 127 CE?)—whose name appears in various Buddhist texts—is the best known of the Kuṣān kings. As Kaniṣka extended his territory deeper into India, he moved the main capital to Puruṣapura (modern Peshawar). That brought Kaniṣka in close touch with the Buddhist communities of Gandhāra, located in the northwestern part of India. The depiction of the Buddha image on some of his coins is taken to reflect Kaniṣka's closeness to the Buddhist communities that flourished at that time. These coins indicate that Kaniṣka, if not a Buddhist himself, favored or supported Buddhism.

The same connection between Kaniṣka and Buddhism is implied by some Buddhist texts. Some Buddhist texts stress the important role Kaniṣka played in the early growth of Buddhism. That includes the building of a huge stūpa in a suburb of Puruṣapura, as well as Kaniṣka's active role in convening the fourth Buddhist council in Kashmir. Some Kaniṣka legends are also supported by archaeological evidence. For example, a reliquary found near Peshawar, which is inscribed as "Kaniṣka sanghārāma (monastic temple),"may indicate the location of the legendary stūpa of Kaniṣka. As Kaniṣka was a notable patron of Buddhism, it is likely that during his reign a number of Buddhist missionaries went from his empire to Central Asia and China.

Many Kharoṣṭhī Buddhist inscriptions have been found in north India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions. The Kharoṣṭhī script was derived from the Semitic script, and was used for the composition of early Buddhist literature. Later it was adopted by the Kuṣāns as their administrative language. A number of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, usually inscribed on stone or other materials such as copper plates, record the donations of various objects to Buddhist institutions. Sten Konow published numerous Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions that are dated around the first or second century CE, namely around the time of Kaniṣka, which represents the peak of the Kuṣān empire (see Konow 1929).

One of the interesting things we learn from the inscriptions is that Buddhist women in the Kushān empire were active donors. It is probable that these women owned some properties and had independent financial means, which made it possible for them to donate Buddhist statues or lion capitals. For example, the Jamālgarḥi pedestal inscription from the Peshāwar Museum provides a short description of two Buddhist women donating jointly a statue to a monastery: "Gift of the mother (Ambā), together with the wife of Vāsishṭha, in honor of all beings and for the benefit of health for the Master" (Konow 1929: 114).

Much longer inscriptions found in Mathurā describe how the queen of a local king, representing all womenfolk in the royal household, donated a lion capital. Her brothers also donated land to the local Sarvāstivādin sangha. These women's active participation in the growth of early Buddhism differs from the typical images of women we get from within the Brahmanic tradition, or from some early Buddhist texts, which often emphasize the negative nature of women. Even when donations are initiated by husbands or fathers, they tend to mention their wives and daughters as donors, so that they can share the merit accrued by the pious act. For instance, we have a record of a local Greek general in Taxīla who, together with his wife, donated a stūpa in honor of his mother and father.

These kinds of explicit mentions of female religious participation may be partially due to the international character of the Kuṣān empire. As there was an intermingling

of Greco-Roman, Iranian, and Indian cultures, Hindu culture was not as dominant as in India proper. Epigraphic studies have shown that some donors had Greek names such as Theodoros, a donor of relic-vase found in Swat. Others had Iranian names such as Vagramarega, who founded a vihāra that bore his name, as well as a stūpa that he built in honor of his parents, his brother Hashthunä Marega, and all sentient beings.

These inscriptions, along with the accounts of Chinese traveling monks, indicate that different Buddhist schools or traditions existed in the area ruled by the Kuṣān empire. The Sarvāstivādins seem to have enjoyed royal patronage, as indicated by some Kaniṣka stories, but the Mahāsāṃghika tradition, with its subdivisions, also had a stronghold in the region. They were particularly influential in areas that correspond to the western and northern parts of Afghanistan. They managed to find an especially solid base in Bāmiyān, as evidenced by the two giant standing Buddhas, dated around the fifth century, which were unfortunately destroyed by the Taliban in April 2001.

In the course of examining the history of transmission and translation of Mahāyāna sūtras, some scholars have proposed that northwest India, namely the Gandhāra region extending to Mathura, was the birthplace of the Mahāyāna movement. Translator-monks from the Kuṣān empire, whose place of origin in Chinese sources is usually indicated by the "surname" Zhi, translated many Mahāyāna sūtras into Chinese. Zhi Loujiachen or Lokakṣema, who arrived in China in the second century CE, translated only Mahāyāna sūtras. In contrast, other Kuṣān monks such as Zhi Yao (fl. 185 CE) also translated so-called Hīnayāna or Śrāvakayāna texts. Another well-known monk with Yuezhi ancestry was Zhi Qian (223–253). He was born in China, where his family settled after his grandfather immigrated to China. Zhi Qian was very productive in his translation activities: he is said to have translated 36 sūtras in 48 volumes, which include both Mahāyāna and Śrāvakayāna texts.

There were also multilingual Kuṣān monks that resided in Dunhuang, an important area along the Silk Road where Central Asians and Chinese lived together. Among them, Zhu Fafu or Dharmarakṣa (233–310) was the most well-known Yuezhi monk. Praised as Dunhuang Bodhisattva by the Chinese, he translated many significant Mahāyāna and Śrāvakayāna sūtras. The translation and missionary work of these monks contributed greatly to the early development of Chinese Buddhism. Since at the time only Mahāyāna practitioners would have studied both kinds of texts, we can surmise that the majority of translator-monks from the Kuṣān empire active in China had Mahāyāna orientation, even though there are no clear signs of early Mahāyāna presence in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions.

The influential Japanese scholar Hirakawa Akira, however, has noted that many donative inscriptions do not give the names of the recipient monastic congregations or sanghas. He assumes that these stūpas were donated to anonymous groups of Buddhists, who did not belong to the traditional monastic sanghas (Hirakawa 1990: 324–25). According to him, they lived close to the stūpas and managed them as their own, supporting themselves by means of the donations given to the stūpas. These individuals were neither ordained monks nor ordinary lay people. They formed groups of active Buddhist practitioners that promoted stūpa worship. These groups could collectively be called "bodhisattva sangha," although there is no evidence of such designation from the time of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions.

According to Hirakawa's controversial hypothesis, which has been critiqued by a number of Western scholars, the Mahāyāna movement seems to have born from such lay-based Buddhism, which centered on stūpa worship and lacked organized institutions. As for the earliest mention of the word Mahāyāna itself, it appears in one of the Brahmī fragments, written on birch bark and found in room 12 of Vihāra J of the Dharmarajika stūpa in Taxīla, which has been dated to the fifth century, during the Gupta period. Accordingly, these putative predecessors, who lived in small vihāra quarters attached to the main stūpa, were not yet called Mahāyānists.

Besides the communities of stūpa worshipers postulated by Hirakawa, various early Mahāyāna groups developed at different locations. They emphasized distinct practices and teachings, which were eventually compiled into various strands of Mahāyāna. Accordingly, "Mahāyāna" seems to have been a loosely inclusive designation, which was subsequently adopted by different groups outside the traditional monastic establishments, represented by the mainstream schools of Buddhism. Eventually some kind of cult of the book, which involved the veneration of sūtras—rather than stūpa worship—became a prominent feature of most groups that were subsumed within the Mahāyāna movement. Even though Mahāyāna has always been a broadly inclusive term, from its beginnings down to the present, early Mahāyāna groups shared certain core beliefs and practices, such as focus on the attainment of Buddhahood, compassion toward others, bodhisattva vows, and cults of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Mahāyāna flourished along the "spine" of the Kuṣān empire, namely the major cities connected with the main trade route, such as Mathurā, Taxīla, and Gandhāra (Puruṣapura or Peshawar) in northwest India, as well as Nagrahāra, extending north to Kāpiśi in Afghanistan, even though both Faxian (c. 337–418) and Xuanzang (c. 600–644) reported that these regions were stronghold of the Sarvāstivādins and other Śrāvakayāna schools, which in Western scholarly literature are often referred to as mainstream schools. Presumably early Mahāyāna groups existed at the margins of the Buddhist mainstream, living in forests or vihāras, where both traditional and Mahāyāna monks were allowed to live together. It also seems that at times they were persecuted by the Śrāvakayāna monks. Gregory Schopen and others have suggested that the Mahāyāna movement never enjoyed a dominant position in India, which may help explain why Mahāyāna missionaries, some of whom suffered persecutions in their homelands, were so active in Central Asia and China (Schopen 2000: 14).

In his study of the *Ta zhi tu lun* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*), an important early text that serves as a compendium of Mahāyāna teachings, Étienne Lamotte also points to northwest India under the Kuṣān empire, where he believes the treatise was compiled (Lamotte 1940–1970). As the treatise often refers to the Yuezhi (the Kuṣāns), its author was provably living during the peak of the Kuṣān empire, namely around the second century. According to Lamotte, for many historical and cultural reasons, northwest India would qualify as the region where Mahāyāna Buddhism originated.

Northwest India was geographically the gateway that connected the Indian subcontinent with the outside world. That is why foreign invaders, starting with the Achaemenids in the fifth century BCE, one after another came to India through this gateway as they sought to conquer the region. The foreign invaders include the Greeks, who occupied sizable regions in the western areas of Central Asia, including Bactria, Sogdiana,

and Seistan (eastern Iran and southwestern Afghanistan). Having inherited and incorporated elements of Greco-Roman culture into their own indigenous East Iranian cultures, later invaders such as the Sakas, Parthians, and the Kuṣāns—who ruled Kāpiśi, Gandhāra, and Panjab—left a rich legacy of interaction among different civilizations. This in turn provided a fertile ground for new Buddhist movements to develop and flourish.

Ancient Buddhist Manuscripts from the Greater Gandhāra Area

Since the 1990s there have been significant new discoveries of many ancient Buddhist manuscripts from northern Pakistan, eastern Afghanistan, and Xinjiang, a large geographical area that Richard Salomon calls "Greater Gandhāra." These manuscripts were ritually interred as a form of relic dedication, as well as due to a desire to ensure the Dharma's transmission into the future (Salomon 2009: 31). They are mainly two kinds of manuscripts: those written in the Kharoṣṭhī script, in the Gāndhārī or northwestern Prakrit language, and Buddhist Sanskrit texts written in the Brāhmī script. There are also a couple of documents related to Buddhism that are written in the Bactrian language and in the Greco-Bactrian script. The materials used for these texts are birch-bark scrolls, palm leaves, parchments, and copper plates. They are dated from the first to around the eighth century, although the peak period of composition coincides with the crucial time of the Kuṣān empire, namely from the first to the fourth century (Allon 2007: 135). The content of the Buddhist manuscripts are diverse and they cover a number of genres. So far a number of mainstream or so-called Śrāvakayāna texts, along with a handful of Mahāyāna texts, have been identified and published.

Important collections of early Buddhist manuscripts include the British Library collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts and the Senior Collection. The collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts, acquired by the British Library in 1994, contains manuscript fragments from a number of Buddhist texts written on birch bark. These manuscripts probably originated from the Haḍḍa region in eastern Afghanistan. The original clay pot containing the manuscripts bore an inscription, describing the pot and the texts placed in it as belonging to the Dharmaguptaka school of mainstream Buddhism. The Senior Collection—named after R. Senior, a British collector—consists of two dozen birch-bark manuscripts composed in Gāndhārī, all written by the same scribe. It contains texts from the *Saṃyuktāgama* of the Dharmagputaka school.

On the basis of their study of the Kharoṣṭhī texts from the British Library collection, scholars have postulated the existence of an extensive library of early Buddhist texts composed in the Gāndhārī language, possibly dating from the first century BCE to the third century CE. Gāndhārī was the first language used in the course of the transmission of Buddhism from northwest India into Central Asia. The Dharmaguptaka school apparently used Gāndhārī as the primary linguistic medium for their missionary activities. Consequently, the source language of many early Mahāyāna sūtras translated into Chinese was probably Gāndhārī, before the Sanskrit Buddhist literature became more common throughout Greater India.

There is also the Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts from Pakistan, which consists of eighteen different birch-bark scrolls written by nineteen different scribes.

They were found in 1999 by locals at a Buddhist monastic site known as Mahal, in the Bajaur region, a remote border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Like the other collections, its contents represent a variety of genres of Buddhist literature. This collection includes a notable fragment of over 600 lines from a Mahāyāna sūtra related to the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, and a text associated with the *Prajñāpāramītā* corpus. The script belongs to the late phase of Kharoṣṭhī, from around the second century CE.

Among the other important collections are the Schøyen manuscripts from the Bāmiyān caves. Several thousand fragments of Brāhmī, Kharoṣṭhī, and Bactrian Buddhist texts were discovered by local people in one of the collapsed Zargaran caves, near the Bāmiyān cave complex, in 1994. Norwegian collector Martin Schøyen bought most of them. They are comprised of Sanskrit or Sanskritized texts in various forms of Brāhmī script, plus about one hundred small fragments written in the Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script. The collection's manuscripts include Mahāyāna and Śrāvakayāna texts, which can be dated from the second to the seventh century. Although these manuscripts were presumably not written in Bāmiyān but were brought there from outside, they show the variety of Buddhist literature that was available in Bāmiyān at that time. The large number of Buddhist manuscripts from these collections provides scholars with significant opportunities for further study of the early spread of Buddhism across Asia—including its transmission and growth in Central Asia—covering an important period from the first to the eighth centuries.

Kingdom of Kroraina and Buddhism around the Third Century

Kroraina (Loulan in Chinese, also known as Kroran by the locals) is the name of the ancient kingdom in the area near the lake Lop Nor, on the southern rim of the Tarim Basin (in present-day northwest China). The kingdom consisted of several smaller oasis kingdoms, namely Cherchen, Endere, Caḍ'ota (Niya), and Ronglu. Kroraina was called Shanshan by the Chinese from around the first century BCE, when the Chinese conquered the area and set up a puppet king. The Shanshan kingdom had a total population of about 23,000, according to a Chinese survey from 60 BCE. The kingdom's people subsisted on a combination of agricultural and pastoral economy. They also profited from their connection with international trade, as the kingdom's oases were situated on caravan trade routes that connected the Roman Empire, China, and India.

In the early twentieth century, Sven Hedin (1865–1952) and Aurel Stein (1862–1943) independently discovered many handwritten manuscripts in Kharoṣṭhī and Chinese, written down on wooden tablets and paper, in the desert ruins of the ancient town of Loulan in Niya. These documents tell us about the nature of Buddhism that flourished in Kroraina, as well as about the society of Kroraina during the third century (see Boyer *et al*. 1920 and 1927; Rapson and Noble 1929). According to the Kharoṣṭhī documents, Kroraina faced threats of being colonized by the Kuṣāns during the first and the second centuries, but the Chinese Western Jin dynasty (265–315) put an end to the prospect of Kuṣān colonization.

The main population of Kroraina was referred to by the Chinese as the Lesser Yuezhi. They were a branch of the Yuezhi people that was pushed westward and settled to the

north of the Pamirs, near Endere and the surrounding regions. Like Kuṣānia, Kroraina was inhabited by East Iranian speakers, who had diverse religious cultures. According to the Kharoṣṭhī documents and Chinese records, their indigenous beliefs and practices included cow sacrifice, witchcraft, and purification through sacred bathing. They also adopted elements of Iranian religion, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

The heyday of Kroraina as a Buddhist kingdom seems to have been around the first and second centuries. The kingdom declined by the fifth century, due to Chinese and nomadic invasions, desertification caused by a course change of the Tarim River, and loss of economic status for part of its trade cities due to changes in trade routes. The kings of Kroraina had Buddhist titles such as "Standing in the True Dharma," and they maintained control over a Buddhist sangha of the Mahāyāna persuasion. In the capital a Buddhist monastery was built right next to the palace. Each of the smaller city kingdoms also had a Buddhist community, which was centrally administered from the sangha headquarters located in the capital of Kroraina. The king appointed the heads of the central and local monastic communities, who managed both secular and religious affairs. The Buddhist communities in Kroraina, therefore, were integrated within the stratified sociopolitical system of the ancient kingdom.

According to the Kharoṣṭhī documents, many Buddhist "monks" in the kingdom were married, and they often held bureaucratic positions in the local government. They were called *śramaṇa*, a Sanskrit term that can be translated as monk, and had Indian personal names, even though the rest of the populations had Iranian or other non-Indic names (Brough 1965: 606). Some of the monks or part-time monks owned slaves, and they enjoyed considerable wealth and high status in society. It seems that many individuals of wealthy background became or were appointed as high-ranking *śramaṇas*, which served as a marker of social and religious prestige. The *śramaṇas* of the Kroraina kingdom probably did not live in traditional temples or secluded monasteries. Instead, they had their own family residences, where their lifestyles resembled the daily pursuits of laymen. The secular activities and lifestyles of these "monks," such as marriage, raising children, property ownership, and involvement with other business, make it impossible for us to think that they lived in proper monasteries (Atwood 1991: 174).

Some Kharoṣṭhī documents indicate that Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished in the Kroraina Kingdom around the third century CE. In a document numbered 390, the *cozbo* Ṣamasena, who seems to have been the most influential man of a local oasis, is referred to as the one "who has set forth in Mahāyāna." Similarly, document no. 288 refers to the *cozbo* Saṃcaka as "Bodhisattva in person," which also implies a Mahāyāna connotation. The presence of Mahāyāna can also be established on the basis of archaeological evidence, unearthed at local stūpas in the region. An Indian-type stūpa with a square base was built adjacent to wooden temple buildings in Mīran, located 50 km south of Kroraina. This temple site was initially discovered from scattered wooden pieces near the stūpa site, inside a fortified compound, where the royal palace of the king of Kroraina was located (Stein 1921: 389–98). The sites of similar stūpas of varying sizes, built close to the main temples, were also found in the oases of Endere and Niya. Some have argued that the close proximity of the stūpas and the vihāras indicates that they were associated with the Mahāyāna movement, since many of the stūpas donated to Śrāvakayāna sangas were structurally separated from their vihāras.

Buddhist artifacts found in Mīran indicate a strong influence of Gandhāran art. The Mīran complex contains fourteen Buddhist temple sites, where there are twelve statues of "angels" with wings in Hellenistic style. They were found with the Roman inscription of "Titus," probably the name of the artist. Furthermore, statues of Herakles and Athena holding a vajra, and of other Greek gods, were found together with statues of the Buddha. The stūpa of Kroraina was decorated with various motifs in Kuṣān style, displaying the kind of mixture of Hellenistic, Iranian, and Indian artistic elements that is typical of Gandhāran art (Rowland 1970: 33–44).

During the fifth century Faxian reported that the king of Kroraina still practiced Buddhism, but according to him by that time Mahāyāna Buddhism had died out and all monks in the kingdom practiced only Hīnayāna Buddhism. Non-Mahāyāna or mainstream sanghas might have also existed earlier, including during the peak of Mahāyāna's influence in Kroraina. The Mīran, Endere, and Niya sites provide the earliest textual and archaeological evidence for the presence of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Kroraina, which probably had a direct relationship with the Mahāyāna movement that existed in the Kuṣān empire. The ancient Kroraina kingdom thus provides us with an intriguing example of the presence of early Mahāyāna in the oasis kingdoms of that part of Central Asia during the third century.

Sogdians and Buddhism

Sogdiana (or Sogdia) proper is located in the Transoxiana region, between the Syr-Darya and Amu-Darya rivers, mostly in present-day Uzbekistan. There were also a number of Sogdian colonies in northern Eurasia. Some Sogdian colonies, like those in Mongolia and Semirechie, were under the protection of the nomadic Turkic empire. Other colonies, especially those along the northern trade route of the Silk Road, such as Lop Nor, Dunhuang, Hami, Liangzhou, and Changan, were under strong Chinese cultural influence. The Sogdians were successful merchants, playing an especially important role in the mediating of trade along the Silk Road, especially between China and countries located to its west.

Like other Central Asian city-states, the history of Sogdiana is marked by a series of continuous subjugations by neighboring empires, from the time of the Achaemenid Persians to the Arab invasions in the eighth century. After Alexander the Great conquered Samarqand in 329 BCE, Sogdiana was dominated by the Seleucid empire (323–60 BCE), and then by the Greco-Bactrian kingdom (250–125 BCE), which left a notable Greek legacy. From 260 to 360 CE Sogdiana was a part of the Sasanian empire. On its northeastern frontier it bordered the Kuṣān empire. The Chinese Tang dynasty extended its hegemony to western Central Asia by setting up one of its Western Protectorates in Sogdiana in 679. The Chinese were eventually pushed out from the region by the Muslims. The final blow to the Sogdian kingdom came when the Arab armies destroyed Samarqand in 712. This marked the end of the Sogdians as a distinctive people, along with a near extinction of their language except in the remote valleys of the Yagnob in Tajikhistan.

In addition to being important carriers of material goods, Sogdians also transmitted several religions, including Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Nestorian Christianity, and

Buddhism, which were introduced into Central Asia and China. Buddhism was probably introduced to Sogdiana before or during the period when the region was under the domination of the Kuṣān empire, around the first century CE. Influenced by neighboring countries closer to India, such as Bactria and Kuṣānia, by the second century Sogdiana probably already had a well-developed form of Buddhism. It can be assumed that Buddhist monks with the Kang surname, mentioned in early Chinese sources, were from Sogdiana.

Chinese historical sources provide information for about twenty monks from Sogdiana (Kangju). Among the early Sogdian monks that settled in China were Kang Ju (187–199), Kang Mengxiang (190–220), Kang Sengkai (or Saṃghavarman, who arrived at Luoyang in 252), and Ji (632–682, also known as Cien dashi). These monks were actively propagating Buddhism in Luoyan, Changan, and other major Chinese cities. There were also other monks with Sogdian ancestry, coming from expatriate families that had settled in China. Examples of monks belonging to this group include Kang Senghui (222–280), Kang Sengyuan (267–330), Kang Falang (310–420), and Shi Huiming (427–497). The ethnic Sogdians living in China were fluent in Chinese, and their outlook on Buddhism was heavily influenced by Chinese classical learning. In addition, at least a couple of Sogdian monks, including Baoyi (or Ratnamati, 420–502), came from India.

The Sogdian monks brought and translated into Chinese a variety of canonical texts, including Mahāyāna scriptures belonging to the *Prajñāpāramītā* corpus, the Vinaya of the Dharmaguptaka school, and āgama texts. It is unclear if these texts were brought into China from Sogdiana, as they could also have been obtained from various regions in Central Asia or India. After the well-known Chinese scholar and pilgrim Xuanzang visited Sogdiana in the seventh century, he reported that there were two Buddhist temples in Samarqand. However, the local inhabitants, presumably of Zoroastrian faith, supposedly burned the monks that came to the temples. By that time Zoroastrianism was the dominant religion in the area, and Sogdian Buddhism seems to have almost died out. By the beginning of the eighth century, Hyecho (704–787, or Huichao in Chinese) reported that the people of Sogdiana practiced Zoroastrianism and did not know anything about Buddhism. Still, the Korean pilgrim found one Buddhist temple in Samarqand, where one monk resided. Buddhism in Sogdiana disappeared completely by the eighth century, although Sogdian Buddhist literature continued to circulate in some of the Sogdian colonies in China.

A considerable number of Buddhist Sogdian texts, along with Manichean and Nestorian Christian manuscripts, were discovered in East Turkestan. Only a few of them are complete texts, and many are fragmentary (see Dresden 1983). The major sites where Sogdian Buddhist texts have been discovered are Turfan and Dunhuang, both located on the northern trade route around the Tarim Basin. Smaller quantities of Sogdian Buddhist texts were also found in other areas, but so far no Sogdian Buddhist texts have been found in Sogdiana proper. Most of the extant evidence, including the orthography of the Sogdian script, suggests that the peak of Sogdian Buddhist literature was from the seventh to the eighth century (Utz 1978: 8). That coincides with the height of Sogdian trade activities and the spread of Sogdian colonies into China.

The majority of extant Sogdian texts belong to the Mahāyāna tradition. They include canonical works such as *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*, *Suvarnaprabhāsottama sūtra,*

Mahāparinirvāna sūtra, and *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*. There are also some texts belonging to the popular jātaka and avadāna genres; for instance, Sogdian versions of the *Vessantara jātaka* (which tells the rebirth story of the Buddha as Prince Sudāśan) and *Daśakarmapatha-avadānamāla* were found in Dunhuang and Turfan. There are also Tantric and dhāraṇī texts, such as the *Nīlakaṇṭha-avalokiteśvara dhāraṇī*, probably written in the eleventh century. A large text titled the *Sūtra of the Causes and Effects of Good and Evil (Actions)* is considered to be a creation of local Sogdians from Dunhuang. Evidently most Sogdian Buddhist texts are translations from Chinese. Some translations are so faithful that in places the Sogdian texts clearly reflect the kinds of word usage and style that are peculiar to Chinese texts.

Some of the Sogdian colonies in the Dunhuang region lasted until the tenth century. In some cases, an entire village of Sogdians cultivated the land belonging to a Buddhist temple. We have information about a Buddhist community constituted by Sogdians that originally came from Bukhara, and which circulated instructions about leaving vegetarian foods in front of the Liantai temple as part of the funeral rites for a deceased member of the community. There are also records about a wealthy Sogdian who served as an official in charge of the Sogdian Buddhist community and who donated wheat, silverware, millet, and other provisions to the Pure Land Temple in Dunhuang; he also commissioned the painting of a Guanyin image in one of the Magao caves. These and other pertinent sources indicate that Sogdians were active in various aspects of Buddhist life in Dunhuang, especially during the ninth and tenth centuries.

Like the Tokharian people of the Kucha region, the distinct social and cultural character of the Sogdians disappeared from the history of Central Asia over a thousand years ago. Yet, unlike the Tokharians, Sogdians traveled and settled in various colonies in China, India, and Southeast Asia, where they primarily worked as traders. In the Dunhuang and Turfan areas, Sogdian Buddhist literature flourished during the eighth century. Sogdians who continued to live there were active in various aspects of local Buddhist life, until they were eventually assimilated into the local population and lost their distinctive identity (for more on Sogdian Buddhism, see Walter 2006).

Khotan and Buddhism

The capital of Khotan was established in an oasis located on the southern rim of the Tarim basin, about 1,000 km to the east of Shanshan. By the first century CE, both Khotan and Shanshan had become major powers along the trade route that connected China and the "West." As the Khotanese spoke a middle-Iranian language, presumably there was an immigration of the Iranian people in the early history of Khotan, probably sometime after the third century BCE. The physical features of the modern population of Khotan are similar to the Iranian-speaking tribes of the Wakhān region in the Pamirs, whose language, Wakhī, is also the closest to Khotanese in terms of features, phonetics, and vocabulary (Bailey 1982: 7). While the indigenous population in modern Khotan does not have obvious Mongolian features, except further to the east, there seem to be some admixture of Tibetan and Turkish blood, reflecting the complex movements of people during the early history of the Central Asia.

From the first century onward, Khotan had always been caught in the struggles between the major sedentary power in the east, namely China, and the nomadic (or semi-nomadic) powers primarily situated in the steppes of Central Asia, namely the Xiongnu, the Kuṣāns, the Eastern Turks, and the Tibetans. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the colonial pressures exerted by the major powers, the Chinese and the nomads did not necessarily maintain direct rule over the subjugated regions. Khotan largely managed to maintain its indigenous royal line and its Iranian Buddhist culture fairly intact for many centuries, until the Islamic conquest at the beginning of the eleventh century CE.

According to *Prophecy of the Li Country*, a legendary Tibetan text about the history of Khotan, three brothers of the King Vijaya Jaya of Khotan invited Buddhist monks and established both the Mahāsāṃghika and Sarvāstivāda schools in Khotan. The early existence of mainstream Buddhist schools in Khotan can also be known from an account written by the Chinese monk Zhu Shixing, who traveled to Khotan around 260 CE to obtain a *Prajñāpāramītā* text. He supposedly obtained the text there and wished to take it back to China. However, he was obstructed by so-called Śrāvakayāna monks, who complained that the Mahāyāna sūtra would confuse people in China, because it does not represent the real words of Buddha. Zhu Shixing managed to take the sūtra to China, but the alleged episode indicates that non-Mahāyāna monks were prominent in third-century Khotan, even if some Mahāyāna texts were also available there. Gītamitra also brought into China the Sanskrit text of the *Prajñāpāramītā sūtra on the Praise of Light*, along with some *āgama* texts, from Khotan, which in 296 he translated into Chinese.

According to Faxian, who visited Khotan around 400, Mahāyāna was the prevalent form of Buddhism at the time. Faxian reported that the Khotanese king was a sincere Buddhist who held regular ceremonial banquets for the monks. Faxian also reported on the existence of fourteen large vihāras and many smaller ones in Khotan. Many Buddhist texts that were translated into Chinese, such as the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, the sixty-fascicle version of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan jing*), and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, were brought to China from Khotan around the fifth century. Around 470 the Ruanruan (Turco-Mongol nomads) invaded Khotan, but they did not destroy the local Buddhist temples.

It seems probable that in the sixth century the Ephthalites (most likely East Iranian nomads) destroyed the Buddhist infrastructure of Khotan. At the time, in wake of the nomadic invasions, the royal family of Khotan had to temporarily go into exile at the Northern Wei court. Despite these setbacks, Buddhism continued to develop even after the destruction brought by the nomads. At the beginning of the seventh century, Xuanzang observed that Buddhism was still flourishing in the kingdom. According to his account, "there are about a hundred saṅghārāmas with some 5,000 monks, who study Mahāyāna" in Khotan (Beal 1880: 309).

From the end of the seventh century, Tantric Buddhism started to gain momentum in Khotan. Devaprajña, a Khotanese monk, went to Luoyang in 689, where he gained a reputation for his mastery of mantras and his meditation expertise (T 50.719b). Then in 695 Śikṣānanda brought many Mahāyāna texts into China, including a manuscript of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* that served as the basis for the eighty-fascicle

Chinese version of this important text, which was produced at the request of Empress Wu Zetian. At the time the *Avatamṃsaka sūtra* was one of the most popular sūtras in Khotan, as can be seen from many paintings at Buddhist sites near Khotan, such as Dandan-uilik. In 726 Hyecho stopped at Khotan, on his way back from India to China. He reported that Khotan was a flourishing center of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The *Dharmapada* in the Kharoṣṭhī script, dated to around the second century CE, is the only extant early Buddhist text found around Khotan. Nevertheless, there are a considerable number of Buddhist texts in Khotanese, a middle-Iranian language, written in the Brahmī script. Most of these texts are dated to around the eighth to tenth centuries. Surviving Khotanese texts include various Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the Saṅghāta-*sūtra, Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra*, and *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*, assorted jātakas and avadānas (e.g. *Aśokāvadāna*), and texts of local composition, exemplified by the *Book of Zambasta* (see Emmerick and Skjaervø 1989: 499–505). Khotanese Buddhists only started to write and translate Buddhist texts in Khotanese during the eighth century, although this relatively late trend of indigenization of the canon seems consistent with Buddhist texts written in other Central Asian languages.

During the tenth century, before the onset of the Islamic conquest, Khotanese kings and their subjects were still Buddhists, although Buddhism coexisted with other beliefs, especially Zoroastrianism and folk religion. In 971 the last Khotanese royal envoy to a Chinese court to be accompanied by Buddhist monks arrived in Chang'an. The last Buddhist king of Khotan fought for twenty-four years against an Islamic force led by Yusuf Qadr Khān, with aid from Tibetan and Buddhist Uighur forces. By 1,000 CE, most of the surrounding oasis states had been conquered by Turkic Islamic forces, and Khotan was almost the last Buddhist state to be conquered. The *Prophecy of Li Country* describes how an Islamic ruler confiscated Buddhist temples and their properties (Thomas 1935: 303–323). Some local monks escaped to Tibet, where they stayed for a while under the protection of a Chinese princess. However, they had to move to Gandhāra when the princess died. According to the *Annals*, after some disputes, they finally met their demise in Kauśāmbī, north India. Aside from this legendary account, it seems probable that at the time of the Islamic conquest Buddhist monks escaped in large numbers from Khotan to neighboring countries.

Buddhism in Kucha

Kucha is located on the northern rim of the Tarim Basin, in northwestern China. From the first to the tenth centuries it was one of the major Buddhist kingdoms of Central Asia (see Walter 1998). The people of Kucha and the neighboring Agni were speakers of Tokharian A and B, an archaic western branch of Indo-European languages, which is closer to Latin than to Indo-Iranian languages. Some philologists refer to Tokharian B as "Kuchean," and to Tokharian A as "Agnian," in order to avoid confusion with Tokharistan in ancient Bactria, although some scholars believe that the Tokharian language and Tokharistan might be related. There are several historical and linguistic hypotheses regarding how and when these early Indo-Europeans ended up in the northwestern

part of China, which happened sometime before the first century CE. Some scholars have postulated that they originated from an area in southern Russia, went to Babylon, then moved to Persia, and finally settled in the Kansu region of Chinese Turkestan. If that is the case, perhaps they could be called the first Indo-Europeans, as they appeared in Persia before the Hittites had arrived in Asia Minor. Ultimately, the unresolved question about the origin of the Kucheans in Chinese Turkestan has to be considered in relation to complex movements of people, which occurred over an extremely broad area in Eurasia over a very long period.

Kucha, with a population of 80,000 in the first century and with rich agricultural and mining resources, was one of the major trading posts on the Silk Road. Due to its wealth and strategic location, from the beginning of known history Kucha got embroiled in many wars that involved the Chinese, Xiongnu, Ruanruan, Turks, and Tibetans. Ancient Chinese annals mention the kingdom of Kucha as one of the major protectorates of China along the western border region. For centuries Kucha found itself caught up in ongoing struggles between the nomads and China, but the kingdom managed to preserve its indigenous political and cultural structures, within a broader system of colonial administration based on "indirect rule" over Kucha. For a period of over seven hundred years the kingdom of Kucha continued to flourish, regardless of who the overlord was, under a single dynasty called Bai or Bo.

Unlike Khotan, where Mahāyāna Buddhism was dominant, in Kucha the traditions of so-called Śrāvakayāna Buddhism flourished for over a thousand years, until the end of the tenth century CE. During the early phase of Kuchean Buddhism, members of the royal family and the aristocracy joined the Buddhist order. This can be ascertained from the fact that many monks had the royal surname of Bai or Bo. By the third century, missionary Kuchean monks started to arrive in China, where they transmited various Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna sūtras. In the fourth century, the Kuchean monk Kumārajīva (344–413), under the patronage of the king Baichun, preached Mahāyāna texts and temporarily established a Mahāyāna presence in Kucha. However, his teachings were better appreciated in China. After his arrival in the Chinese capital, with the help of a group of scribes and other assistants, Kumārajīva translated over 300 Mahāyāna texts, including the *Lotus Sūtra*, several *Prajñāpāramītā* sūtras, and the *Vimalakīrtti-nirdeśa-sūtra*.

According to Xuanzang's diary, in the seventh century there were just over a hundred monasteries in Kucha, with over five thousand monks, most of them belonging to the Sarvāstivāda school (Beal 1880: 19–24). Xuanzang also briefly mentions a ceremony called *pañca-varṣikā-pariṣad*, held every five years, when the king gave offerings to the Buddhas, monks, and poor people. Xuanzang's report also provides vital information about the relationship between kingship and Buddhism in Kucha. In comparison with Khotan and Shanshan, the established Sarvāstivādins sangha in Kucha enjoyed relative independence from the king. Kuchean kings had to consult with the heads of the sangha regarding various administrative affairs. Each king was also regarded as a *dharmarāja* (king who protects the dharma), which implied ritual responsibilities toward the Buddhist sangha. Śrāvakayāna remained the dominant form of Buddhism in Kucha during the eighth century, according to Hyecho, although elements of Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism also continued to exist.

Many Buddhist texts in Tokharian were found in the Kucha and Agni (Qarašahr) regions. Tokharian A texts, all of them Buddhist and totaling around 470 fragments, were found in Šorčuq near Qarašahr, east of Kucha. Presently they are kept as part of the Berlin Collection in Germany. Over 780 fragments in Tokharian B, now in Europe and Japan, were mainly found in the Thousand Buddhas Caves of Kizil and in Šorčuq. Unlike Khotanese or Old Turkic texts, there are no Tokharian Buddhist texts translated from Chinese or vice versa. The texts composed in Tokharian A and B include many *jātaka*, *avādana*, *āgama*, *abhidharma*, *vinaya*, *stotra* (hymn), and other types of Śrāvakayāna texts. Mahāyāna texts are preserved only in Tokharian B.

Most of the Tokharian texts were translated from Sanskrit or Prakrit. Apparently Kuchean monks studied Sanskrit and read Sanskrit texts. Consequently, canonical texts were translated from Indian languages into the vernacular language of Tokharian B, presumably in order to teach the laity of Kucha. This perhaps helps explain why very few Abhidharma texts in Tokharian A or B have been found. The study of Abhidharma was prominent among the Sarvāstivādins, but the relevant texts were studied by monks in Sanskrit, not in Tokharian. That is confirmed by several Sanskrit manuscripts found in Kucha, Qarašahr, Dunhuang, and the Turfan region.

The Kizil caves, situated 65 km west of Kucha, are the largest Buddhist cave complex in the Kucha region. There are over 236 cave temples in Kizil, with various paintings decorating their inside walls and ceilings. They were carved into cliffs, stretching from east to west for a length of 2 km. The main subjects depicted in the murals, which are dated from the third to the eighth century CE, resonate with Tokharian Buddhist literature. They feature scenes and motifs associated with various *jātaka* and *avadāna* stories, as well as with legends about the Buddha. Earlier murals reflect Gandhāran influences, while later ones are a blend of Indian and indigenous styles. Later caves seem to have more designs that feature small thousand Buddha motifs, or sitting Buddhas with nimbus. A common characteristic of the caves is a conspicuous lack of Chinese influences.

Some paintings in the older caves were commissioned by a Tokharian king called "Mendre," under the advice of Anandavarman, a high-ranked monk (Grünwedel 1920). The king ordered an Indian artist, Naravāhanadatta, and a Syrian artist, Priyaratna—who were helped by their disciples—to paint the caves. One mural depicts the Buddha's miracle of walking on the water of the Ganges river, as described in the Vinaya text of the Mūlasarvāstivādavins. Bodily sacrifice was also a theme featured in the murals of the Kizil Caves, inspired by art from Gandhāra, where popular stūpas named "sacrifice with flesh," "giving eyes," or "giving head" existed (Legge 1886: 32). The scenes depicting the Buddha's entry into final Nirvana, usually located on the wall behind the Buddha niche, also originated in Gandhāra. While the original artistic inspirations were from Gandhāra and India, in terms of their artistic style the Kizil murals reflect a local Central Asian interpretation of central Buddhist themes.

Turkic Buddhism

The vast steppes of Mongolia, namely the areas around the Tianshan and Altai mountains, were homelands of various Turco-Mongolian nomads such as the Xiongnu, as

well as of Indo-European nomads such as the Yuezhi and Wusun. By the third century BCE, the Indo-European nomads were pushed out from Mongolia in the westward direction by the dominant Xiongnu, who ruled the region for the next 250 years. In the second century CE, however, they were replaced by the Xianbei, a Manchu-Mongolian tribe who conquered and united the whole area of Mongolia. In the fifth century a Turco-Mongolian tribe named the Ruanruan dominated and ruled the region, until they were defeated by the Tujuezhi. This brought about the birth of the first Turkic nomadic empire, established in 552 by the Azhina clan and located in Mongolia.

The Western Turkic empire (Xi Tujue) was established in 563. In the sixth and seventh centuries it expanded its territory into the Tarim Basin, Ferghana, northern Afghanistan, and parts of Indus Valley. In 744, the Uighurs, one of the Nine Oghuz Turkic tribes, destroyed their former allies and established the Uighur empire in Mongolia, in the area around the upper Orkhon river. In 840, after suffering a defeat at the hands of the Kirghiz, the Uighurs dispersed as they fled into different directions. Those who fled to Kansu replaced Tibetan rule and established their dominance over the region, functioning as overlords from 890 to 1026. Other Uighurs that fled to Turfan, called Arslan (lion) Uighurs by the Muslims, settled there and ruled the region until the twelfth century.

Both the Tujuezhi and the Uighurs inherited sociopolitical structures prevalent among the Central Asian nomads, which were based on tribal federations. Within the nomadic states, various semi-independent tribal groups were administered by the dominant tribes. Dominant tribal rulers were able to levy taxes and require obligatory participation in warfare, which often involved the plunder of wealthy neighbors like China. Over time the Uighurs became more sedentary, due to their close contacts with the Sogdians and Chinese. The Uighurs were deeply involved with Chinese political affairs, and they maintained close contacts with the Chinese empire, often through marital alliances. The Uighurs adopted a modified Sogdian script, and they also embraced the religions of their neighbors. In the steppes of Mongolia they built a permanent fortified city, called Karabalghasun, with the assistance of Sogdian imperial advisors. Their indigenous religion was a kind of shamanism that incorporated belief in the sky god Tengri as the sole creator. Gradually they were exposed to a variety of cultural and religious traditions, coming from both east and west, including Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, and Buddhism.

Buddhism was first introduced to the Turkic ruling class in Mongolia during the late sixth century, when a nomadic ruler named Tabar qaghan was converted by a captured Chinese monk. The qaghan then built a Buddhist temple and sought a copy of the *Māhāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* from China. Apparently he thought that Buddhism had magical powers that could strengthen his empire. Upon his request, a Chinese official translated the sūtra into Turkic, and then he sent what is supposedly the oldest Turkic sūtra (now lost) to the qaghan. During the fifth through seventh centuries many Buddhist monks also passed through the Tujue empire, often on their way from India to China (and vice versa). The traveling monks were courteously welcomed at the courts of the Turkic qaghans. By the seventh century Buddhism was widely accepted by various Turkic rulers; one of the qaghans even came to be known as "*pusa*" (boddhisattva). Buddhism, however, did not penetrate among the ordinary people until the eighth century, when Turkic Buddhist literature flourished in the Turfan region.

Most extant Uighur texts have been found in the Dunhuang and Turfan regions. These manuscripts include Buddhist, Manichean, and Nestorian Christian texts. Early Uighur Buddhist texts were written in the Sogdian script. They were mostly translated from other languages, such as Chinese, Tokharian, and Tibetan; there are also a few translations from Sanskrit. For example, *Maitrisimit*, various *avadāna* texts, *Pañcatantra*, and some tantric texts were translated into Uighur from Tokharian A or B. Uighur texts based on Chinese originals tend to be major Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Prajñāpāramītā-sūtra*. The Uighurs also composed their own Buddhist texts, in the form of *avadāna* and *jātaka* stories.

Early Uighur texts such as *Maitrisimit*—that centers on a Maitreya legend— include more Sogdian loan words. In contrast, later texts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries use actual Chinese characters, which are read in Uighur. That indicates that many among the Buddhist Uighurs were bilingual. While surviving Uighur Buddhist literature includes both Mahāyāna and Śrāvakayāna texts, the Uighurs probably felt more affinity with Chinese versions of Mahāyāna teachings and practices. The Uighur embrace of both Mahāyāna and Śrāvakayāna texts is aptly illustrated by a copy of the Uighur version of *Abhidharma kośa* commentaries produced by the Sarvāstivāda school, which are written on the back of the Chinese version of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Tantric scriptures, in the form of Tibetan texts, were also introduced to the Uighurs during the period of Mongol domination, namely the thirteenth century.

According to textual and archaeological evidence, Buddhism and Manichaeism coexisted for several centuries in the Turfan region. Manicheans adopted specialized Buddhist words such as Buddha (used in reference to Mani), *cintamani* (wish-fulfilling jewel), *nirvāṇa*, and so on. Despite the tendency of Manichaeism to be adaptable and eclectic, Buddhism won in the end. Consequently, the Manichean cave temples in Bezeklik were converted into Buddhist sanctuaries, while Buddhist iconography was painted over Manichean murals.

Who taught Buddhism to the nomadic Uighurs? The Sogdians are said to have been responsible for the early transmission of Buddhist literature, as evidence by the presence of many Sogdian loan words in Uighur Buddhist texts. However, many loan words were in fact derived from the Sogdian vocabulary of Manichaeism. Examples of such linguistic borrowings include *tamu* (hell), *nizvani* (desire), and *nom* (dharma) (Moriyasu, 1989: 464). Thus in terms of the development of native Buddhist vocabulary, Sogdian Manichaeism had major impacts on Uighur Buddhism. At the same time, the Tokharian influence on Uighur Buddhism also cannot be ignored, since most of the Uighur-Sanskrit words used in Buddhist texts were mediated by Tokharian A and B. Later on, the Uighurs learned the Sanskrit vocabulary of Buddhism, thereby bypassing other intermediary languages (both Central Asian and Chinese), although it is not clear how and why the Uighurs decided to use Sanskrit directly.

Uighur Buddhism continued to exist until around the fifteenth century. To some degree it coexisted with Islam from the eleventh century until the total Islamization of the area. Some small Uighur tribal groups in eastern Central Asia even remained Buddhist until the seventeenth century, as evidenced by a copy of a Uighur Buddhist sūtra dated 1687 that was discovered in Kansu. The text is a Uighur version of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama sūtra* that was translated from Chinese (see Finch 1993). Uighur Buddhism was multidimensional, reflecting the Uighurs' complex cultural interactions

with the Tokharinas, the Sogdians, the Khotanese, and the Chinese. As the Uighurs absorbed a range of elements from different Buddhist cultures, this contributed to the sedentarization and Sinification of the nomadic people with Turkic origins.

Decline of Buddhism in Central Asia

The first contacts of the Arabs with the Central Asians can be traced back to the mid-seventh century, when the Arabs conquered the Sasanians. In the beginning of the eighth century, Hyecho reported a revival of Buddhism under Turkic kings in both Tokhāristan and Gandhāra. Nevertheless, soon after Hyecho's visit, the situation changed. In 713, Qutayba ibn Muslim, an army commander of the Umayyad empire, occupied Sogdiana and Tokhāristan, thereby firmly established Islamic power in the region. In Gandhāra, Buddhism was revived briefly under Western Turkic rulers, until they were replaced by the Hindu Shāhī (870–1021), and by the Turkic Ghaznavids (977–1186). The Islamic ruler Maḥmūd of the Ghaznavids (r. 997–1030) invaded north and west India, where he implemented fierce destruction of other religions. Gandhāran Buddhism was presumably wiped out completely during his reign, in the early tenth century.

The first wave of the expansion of Islam into East Turkestan occurred in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. In the cases of Khotan and Kucha, Muslim conquest took the form of Jihad, but later the religion started to spread by peaceful means, through the influx of traders and Sufi missionaries. The first Islamic Turkic empire, the Qarakhanids (955–1140), contributed to a wholesale Turkinization of Central Asia, as they extended the territory under Turkic rule from Kashgar in the west to Khotan in the east. Their culture was the product of a synthesis between Islamic and Buddhist Uighur culture, and for some time both religions continued to coexist to some extent. Buddhism continued to flourish in some later Central Asian kingdoms, such as Xixia (1038–1227) and Qara-Khitai (or Western Liao, 1132–1211). In Turfan, Buddhism survived longer among the Uighurs, who sent a Buddhist monk and his disciples as envoys to Chang'an in 1408. However, by the thirteenth century Buddhism had died out in most of Central Asia, although Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism became established in Mongolia, where it remained dominant over the succeeding centuries, down to the modern period.

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