

Philological Study of Several Old Uighur Tantric Manuscripts Recently Unearthed from Tuyuq, Xinjiang

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ABSTRACT

Among the recent archaeological finds in Tuyuq are several Old Uighur texts related to Tantric practices in the cave monasteries in the Mongol time. A fragment from Cave 24 preserves an unidentified text related to the Mahākāla rites, which has not been attested before. A fragment from Cave 54 provides us a new kind of manuscript of the *Baxši Ögdisi*, which is different from the previously identified manuscripts from Dunhuang and Turfan. Another fragment from Cave 57 preserves a list of dates that can be identified as the days on which the lamp-lighting ceremony influenced by Chinese tantric Buddhism should have been held. Three wooden tablets with Uighur texts probably belong to guest monks or donors. These materials provide precious new information on the ritual and daily life of the Uighur Buddhist community in Tuyuq.

KEYWORDS

Old Uighur texts, Uighur Buddhism, Tantric, Tuyuq

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0. INTRODUCTION¹

The excavation of the Tuyuq Buddhist site in Turfan, Xinjiang, carried out since 2010 by a joint team from the Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) and the Academia Turfanica, has brought to light numerous new archaeological finds, among which are many Old Uighur manuscripts. As is well known, the Tuyuq valley was one of the most important Buddhist sites for the local people in the Turfan oasis in pre-Islamic times. According to literary and archaeological evidence, the Buddhist community in Tuyuq came into being at the latest in the fifth century and flourished till the end of the Buddhist Uighur period. Newly unearthed manuscripts cover a wide range of contents, shedding light on the daily life of the Buddhist community in Tuyuq during different periods. This paper addresses the decipherment of three manuscripts related to Old Uighur tantric Buddhist practice, along with three wooden tablets used by Buddhist monks or donors; transcriptions are given in Latin script, accompanied by English translations. These manuscripts were unearthed from Cave 24, 51, 54, and 57, respectively (see: Fig. 1),² belonging to the monastery complex on the high platform in the middle of the western section, during four excavations carried out by the joint team between 2013 and 2016.³



Fig. 1: Coding of Caves on the high platform in the middle

¹ We are indebted to Prof. Li Yuqun (Beijing), the chief director of the joint archaeological team of the Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and the Academia Turfanica, for kindly inviting us to study these precious new materials and authorizing us to publish the data. We would like to thank Prof. Peter Zieme (Berlin), Prof. Rong Xinjiang (Beijing), Prof. Matsui Dai (Osaka), and Dr. Kasai Yukiyo (Bochum) for their kind reading of the drafts and their generous suggestions. We would also like to thank Prof. Christopher Beckwith (Bloomington), Dr. Chen Ruixuan (Heidelberg/Beijing) and Dr. Mark Dickens (Edmonton) for reading and commenting on the paper.

² For the temporary coding of the caves, see: Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Academia Turfanica 2020: Fig. 4; A unified coding of all the caves excavated in Tuyuq valley is planned to be included in the forthcoming archaeological report, see: Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Academia Turfanica 2020: 430, fn. 3.

³ For information on the excavations and the archaeological finds, see: Office for the Research on China's Frontier Archeology, Institute of Archaeology, CASS and Academia Turfanica 2020: 429–459. Cf. Fu and Xia 2021: 182.



I. TANTRIC RITUAL TEXT UNEARTHED FROM CAVE 24③: 25 (FIG. 2)

This fragment is part of a manuscript written in cursive Uighur script in black ink on coarse paper, which has been cut out from a larger piece of paper. The upper and lower margins are original, but the left and right sides have been torn away. The size of the fragment is 19.7 × 12.2 cm and 10 lines of text are preserved. It was unearthed in Cave 24, and coded as Cave 24③: 25. The content of the text records part of a tantric ritual, probably related to the veneration of Cakrasaṃvara or Mahākāla.

1. Transcription⁴

- 1) orun-taqī čin k[ert]ü bilgä biliglig m(a)xa
- 2) kala-ñi nom küzädči aña birlä öñünüp kälürüp
- 3) yüz uñru kök qalıy-ta turmıš-in saqinip
- 4) oom basir-a samay-a ža xung pañg xo tep
- 5) sözlöp. üç qata ängräk suqıyu ol. bas[a]
- 6) čaņg silkip. ögd[i šl]ok sözlöp basa altı
- 7) tapıy tuñyu ol. [anta] basa nama guru piñg
- 8) tep. m(a)xa kala bašlap burxan-lar ### p'///-lar-q[a]
- 9) yükü(n)gü ol. anta basa s[]
- 10) [] oom širi []

2. Translation

1–5) One should invite and bring the ₂true ₂wise Mahākāla of the [...] seat with the mother who is the guardian of the dharma, think of his appearance from the heaven towards one's face, say *om vajra samaya jaḥ hūṃ vaṃ hoḥ*, and snap one's fingers three times.

5–10) Then, after shaking the bell, one should say praise *ślokas*, and then present the six offerings. Then, one should say *nama guru piñg*, and worship the Buddhas...beginning with the Mahākāla. Then, ... *om širi*...

3. Commentary

1) m(a)xa kala: Old Uighur transcription of Sanskrit *mahākāla*.

4) basir-a: written *p'syr* ' and derived from Sanskrit *vajra*, usually transcribed *vačir*, *včir* or *vačira* in Uighur script, with an initial *v*. However, the variant form *p'syr* ' has also been attested.⁵

4) ža xung pang xo: derived from Sanskrit *jaḥ hūṃ vaṃ hoḥ*.

⁴ Missing or unreadable letters are represented by /. Missing text with an unknown number of letters is represented by square brackets with no content. Partly visible letters are in bold. Completely reconstructed text is in square brackets. Dental confusions are transcribed with a dot under letters in question. Unwritten or omitted phonemes are indicated in parentheses.

⁵ Zieme und Kara 1978: 104, l. 419.



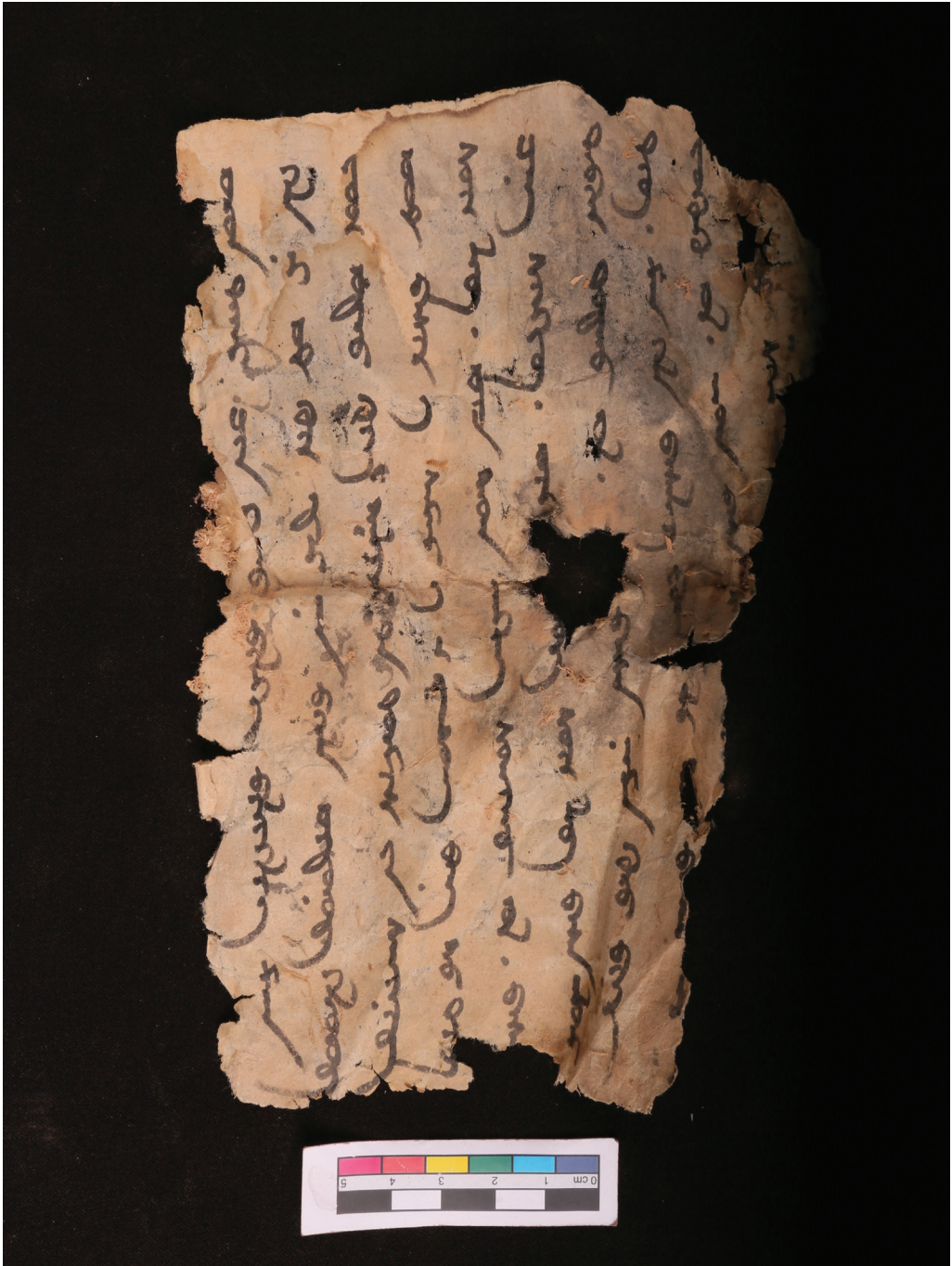


Fig. 2.



5) ängräk suqï- : ‘to snap one’s finger.’⁶ The metathesis of *r* and *ng* cluster in *ärngäk* signifies the late date of the manuscript.⁷

6) čang silkip: ‘after shaking the bell. Written *c’nk syrky~synkyp* and can be transcribed *čang singip*. Čang means ‘bell’⁸ and *singip* is the converbal form of *sing-* ‘to sink’, in which case *čang singip* can be interpreted as ‘after the bell sinks’. However, tantric ritual practices often involve ringing the bell, which is expressed by *čang silk-* ‘to shake the bell’ in Old Uighur.⁹ Therefore, we have decided to read the second word *syrkyp*, and transcribe it *silkip*, interpreting the *r* as an *l* without a hook due to a scribal mistake.

6) altı tapıy: ‘six sacrificial offerings’. This reminds us of the reference to ‘the six kinds of offerings (*altı törlüg tapıylar*)’ in text D of the Old Uighur tantric ‘Totenbuch’ unearthed from Dunhuang (Or 8212/109). These are the *dhāraṇī* offering (*darnilıy tapıy*), the external offering (*taš tapıy*), the internal offering (*ič¹⁰ tapıy*), the happiness offering (*ögirdürmäklig tapıy*), the offering of accomplishment with heart (*köngül üzä büdürgülik tapıy*) and the offering of saying praise (*ögdi sözlämäklig tapıy*).¹¹ According to Peter Zieme and Georg Kara’s study, text D is a ritual text related to the sacrifice to the Cakrasaṃvara.¹²

II. CAVE 54⑤: 1 (FIG. 3)

This fragment is part of a manuscript written in cursive Uighur script in black ink on coarse paper, which has been cut out from a larger piece of paper. The upper and lower margins are original but the left and right sides have been torn away. The size of the fragment is 18.6 × 17 cm and 11 lines of text are preserved. It was unearthed at the foot of the front wall in the inner room of Cave 54 and given the code number Cave 54⑤: 1. Cave 54 was one of the dormitories for monks located to the right of the main stupa temple Cave 33, thought to have been the center of the monastery complex on the high platform in the middle of the western section. Like the other dormitory caves located along the two sides of Cave 33, Cave 54 is divided into inner and outer rooms. Noteworthy is a niche discovered on the right wall at the end of the inner room as well as a decorative wooden item, indicating that the monks who lived in this cave had a private area for meditation.

This text can be identified with the tantric Buddhist text *Baxši Ögdisi* ‘Praise of the master’. Two different manuscripts in Old Uighur have been identified thus far: U 5678 (T II S 135) from Sängim, Turfan, edited by Mehmet Ölmez,¹³ and B 464: 73 from the Northern Grottoes of Dunhuang Mogao Caves, edited by Abdurishid Yakup.¹⁴ Yakup has already provided a comparison

⁶ OTWF: 468.

⁷ GOT: 113.

⁸ ETD: 424.

⁹ BT VIII: 55, ll. 368–369.

¹⁰ Written *iš*, see: Zieme und Kara 1978: 186, 343.

¹¹ Zieme und Kara 1978: 186, ll. 1336–1341.

¹² Zieme und Kara 1978: 41–42.

¹³ Ölmez 1998.

¹⁴ Yakup 2006: 11–14.





Fig. 3.

between these 2 manuscripts.¹⁵ As the following reading shows, the text from the Tuyuq manuscript generally corresponds to ll. 71–81 of U 5678,¹⁶ in particular, ll. 4–11 also correspond to ll. 1–8 of B 464: 73.¹⁷

¹⁵ Yakup 2006: 13–14.

¹⁶ Ölmez 1998: 270.

¹⁷ Yakup 2006: 12.



The Tuyuq manuscript has the same line order as the other two. Since there are no Chinese characters involved in the text, it seems to be closer to U 5678 than to B 464:73.

Several differences among the parallel texts are very noteworthy.

A. ll. 6–8 all end with *enč äsän* as the object, with only one accusative suffix *+ig* added to the last object. This resembles U 5678 (ll. 76–78), but differs from B464: 73 (ll. 3–5), which has three accusative suffixes *+ig* added to the end of each line.

B. In l. 9, a dative suffix *+qa* has been added to the noun *utli*; this does not occur in the parallel text in U 5678 (l. 79), but it is seen in B 464: 73 (l. 6).

C. In l. 11, we read *turuyma*, which is identical to what we see in U 5678 (l. 81), but different from B 464: 73 (l. 8), which, according to Yakup, has *turulma*.¹⁸

Textual differences

	Find site	A	B	C
U 5678	Sängim	ll. 76–78 enč äsän, enč äsän, enč äsänig	l. 79 <i>utli tükäl-lig</i>	l. 81 turuyma
B 464:73	Dunhuang	ll. 3–5 <i>enč äsänig, enč äsänig, enč äsänig</i>	l. 6 uṭli-qa tükäl-lig	l. 8 <i>turulma</i>
Cave 54⑤: 1	Tuyuq	ll.6-8 enč äsän, enč äsän, enč äsä[ni]g	l.9 uṭli-qa tükäl-lig	l.11 turuyma

The Tuyuq manuscript should therefore be considered as part of a third manuscript of the *Baxši Ögdisi*, which is different from the previously published U 5678 and B 464: 73.

1. Transcription

- 1) yaruq yalt'iriq [u]duzup čilayu [körk]itžün
- 2) baxši birlä burxan-lar-niing uduzmaq-inga tušušup
- 3) nom e-š(i)dip viyakrit bulup tuyunmaq-iy tanuqlalim
- 4) kalp alqiyi[nča] baxši birlä burxan-qa uṭli öžünüp
- 5) nom-uṭ ulap [no]m uyuš-indaqi-larqa asiṭ qilalim
- 6) künṭüz enč [äsä]n tünlä **enč äsän**

¹⁸ Yakup 2006: 13.



- 7) küntüz tünlä alı üddä enç äsän
- 8) ančulayu oq alqu üddä enç äsä[ni]g
- 9) utlı-qa tükäl-lig baxşı berzün bizingä
- 10) bizning kertgünç-lüg yiltizimizning küçindä¹⁹
- 11) nom uyuş-nung tiltaş-din turuyım-a-nıng küçindä

2. Translation

- 1) Let him (the Buddha) show himself, as the light beams lead (themselves)!
- 2–3) Let us witness the enlightenment after we meet the Buddha's instructions with the master, listen to the (Buddhist) law, and find the prediction (*vyākṛta*).
- 4–5) Let us present rewards to the Buddha with the master, proliferate the (Buddhist) law and bring advantage to those within the realm of the (Buddhist) law (*dharmadhātu*), until the *kalpa* is exhausted.
- 6–11) Let the master complete in rewards give us peace and calm day and night, peace and calm day and night in the six periods, and peace and calm in all periods. With the power of our root with faith, with the power arising from the reason of the realm of the (Buddhist) law,

3. Commentary

- 1) [u]duzup: 'leading', written ///dwswp. We reconstruct it *uduzup* on the basis of the parallel text U 5678 (l.71).

1) čilayu: 'as', written čyl'yw. In the parallel text U 5678 (l. 71), the word appears to be č'lkyp, as a result of which it was transcribed čälkip by Ölmez.²⁰ As he has pointed out, the verb čälk- or čälki- is not attested in historical or modern Turkic languages. He therefore assumes that it forms a hendiadys with the preceding *uduzup*, and thus the word could, in parallel with *uduz-*, also mean 'to direct, to showing the way'.²¹

However, the spelling in the Tuyuq manuscript is obviously čyl'yw, so we can correct the parallel word of U 5678 (l. 71) into *čilayu*, with a careless hooking of the letter *alef* in the middle and a longer tail of *waw* at the end.

The form *čilayu* can be regarded as the converbal form of the verb *čila-* 'to moisten',²² but this interpretation does not fit the context. In his recent study on the suffix *+čilAyU*, Zieme has pointed out that this form, expressing similarity, also occurs separately from the preceding word.²³ He has also mentioned the present case as an example in which *čilayu* was used in combination with a non-nominal form.²⁴ We follow his interpretation and translated it as "as".

- 1) [körk]itüzün: 'Let him show himself', written ////ydzwn, reconstructed according to U5678 (l. 71).²⁵

¹⁹ Written more like *kwyyynd'*.

²⁰ Ölmez 1998: 270.

²¹ Ölmez 1998: 281.

²² *ETD*: 418.

²³ Zieme 2021: 281.

²⁴ Zieme 2021: 284–285.

²⁵ Ölmez 1998: 270.



- 3) e-š(i)dip: ‘listening’. Written *ʿy-šdyṗ*. The form *ʿyšd-* for the stem *ešid-* is well attested.²⁶
- 3) viyakrit: ‘prediction of attaining Buddhahood’, borrowed from Tocharian A/B *vyākarit*, corresponding to Chinese *shou ji* 授記.
- 3) tuyunmaq-iy tanuqlalim: ‘Let us witness the enlightenment’.
- 4) alqiyi[nča]: written *”lqyqy////*, reconstructed according to U5678 (l.74)²⁷.
- 5) [no]m uyuš-ındaqī-larqa : written *//m ’wqws yndqy l’rq’*, reconstructed according to U5678 (l. 75). The phrase *nom uyušī* means ‘the realm of the (Buddhist) law’, corresponding to Sanskrit *dharmadhātu* and Chinese *fa jie* 法界.²⁸ The whole section thus means ‘towards all that are within the realm of the law’.
- 8) enč äsä[ni]g: despite the damage to the text here, the reconstruction of the accusative suffix is safe according to the tail of *k* and the parallel text in both U 5678 and B 464: 73.

11) *nom uyuš-nung tiltay-din turuym-a*: ‘arising from the reason of the realm of the (Buddhist) law’. The text is identical to the parallel text of U 5678 (l. 81), but is different from that of B 464:73 (l. 8), which has a *turulma* instead, on which see above. Yakup has doubted the reading of *turuyma* in U 5678, interpreting it as *turulma* minus the hook of *l* by mistake.²⁹ The Tuyuq manuscript here can prove the reading of *turuyma* in U 5678.

As Yakup has already pointed out, this phrase, with either *turuyma* or *turulma*, should be a translation of the Buddhist term in Chinese *fajie yuan qi* 法界缘起 ‘the dharmadhātu is produced by the mutual influence of all things’.³⁰ However, it is actually a literal translation of the Chinese term. Thus, we have decided to give here a literal translation of this phrase.

III. CAVE 57 DJ③: 4 (FIG. 4)

This manuscript was written in black ink on coarse paper, cut out from a larger piece of paper and measuring 15 × 22 cm in size. It is preserved in nearly its complete form, with 12 lines in cursive Uighur script on the left 4/5 of the sheet and a rectangular seal or drawing in red ink on the right 1/5 of the sheet. It was unearthed from the cellar in the outer room of Cave 57 and was given the code number Cave 57 DJ③: 4. Cave 57 was one of the dormitories for monks located to the right of the main Cave 33. It has the same layout as the aforementioned Cave 54.

1. Transcription

- 1) *aram ay yeti y(a)ngi*
- 2) *ikinči ay tört y(a)ngi*

²⁶ UW. I.2: 37.

²⁷ Ölmez 1998: 270.

²⁸ BTT XXV: 392.

²⁹ Yakup 2006: 13.

³⁰ Yakup 2006: 13.





Fig. 4.

- 3) üçünc ay iki y(a)ngi
- 4) törtünc ay yeti oțuz
- 5) beşinç ay be[š] oțuz
- 6) altinç ay ü[č] oțuz
- 7) yetinç ay yegirmikä³¹
- 8) säkizinç a[y] yeti³² yegirmikä
- 9) toqzunç ay yegirmikä
- 10) onunç ay bir yegirmikä
- 11) bir y(e)g(i)rminç ay beş yegirmikä
- 12) č(a)xšapud ay säkiz y(a)ngi

2. Translation

- 1) the 1st month the 7th day
- 2) the 2nd month the 4th day
- 3) the 3rd month the 2nd day
- 4) the 4th month the 27th day
- 5) the 5th month the 25th day
- 6) the 6th month the 23rd day

³¹ Written like *y'gyrmyk'*, with an aleph in the second place.

³² Written like *ywty*, with a waw in the second place.



- 7) on the 20th day of the 7th month
- 8) on the 17th day of the 8th month
- 9) on the 20th day of the 9th month
- 10) on the 11th day of the 10th month
- 11) on the 15th day of the 11th month
- 12) the 12th month the 8th day

3. Identification of the text

Although this manuscript merely has a list of 12 days selected from each month of a certain year, without any context, we can assume it is related to the Old Uighur Buddhist text *yetikän sudur*, since an identical list of dates is included in the last section of that text.

The Old Uighur *yetikän sudur* was for the most part a translation of the Chinese tantric apocrypha *Fo shuo beidouqixing yanming jing* 佛說北斗七星延命經 ('the Great Bear Sūtra', T. 1307). The list of dates is already attested on a block print fragment, U 4740 (T III M 243), which was published by Gabdul Rašid Rachmati³³ and later re-edited by Zieme.³⁴ According to Zieme's edition, the text on U 4740 made up the last section of the Old Uighur *yetikän sudur*, which consists of a hymn to the Seven Stars of Ursa Major and the list of dates.³⁵ However, this section has no parallel text in the extant Chinese versions.³⁶ According to the context in U 4740, we know that it is a list of dates on which the lamp-lighting ceremony should be held to worship the seven stars (*yetikän*, Ursa Major). We cite here the related text in U 4740 (ll. 12–26 = G305–319), based on Zieme's transcription and translation, with the textual difference **in block script**:

yetikän-kä yula tamduryu künläriḡ ayu berälim:

[a]ram ay yeti yangi-qa:

ik[int]i ay tört yangi-qa:

üçünç ay iki yangi-qa:

törtünç ay yeti otuzqa:

bešinç ay beš otuzqa:

altinç ay üç otuzqa:

yetinç ay y(e)g(i)rmi-kä:

säkizinç ay yeti [yegirmikä:]

toqzunç ay y(e)mä [yegirmikä]³⁷

onunç ay bir y(e)g(i)rmi-kä:

bir y(e)g(i)rminç ay beš y(e)g(i)rmi-kä:

č(a)xšap(a)d ay säkiz yangi-qa:

yula tamduryu kün-lär tükädi:

³³ *TTT* VII: 51.

³⁴ *BTT* XXIII: 146–147.

³⁵ *BTT* XXIII: 146–147.

³⁶ Since the *Great Bear Sūtra* was excluded from most of the Chinese Buddhist Canons, we have only the *Taishō* version as a complete text to rely on. However, there is no parallel list of dates, see: T. 1307. A scroll fragment of a block print dated to 986 was also published in 1994, which preserves the second half of this *sūtra* text, but it also has no parallel list; see: Zhao 1994: 45–46, Pl. 1.

³⁷ Zieme has proposed to fill the lacuna with *tört(?) y(i)g(i)rmi-kä*. Now that we have the parallel list, we can safely reconstruct it as *yegirmikä*. Rachmati had already proposed a correct reconstruction, but he ignored the preceding *y(e)mä* in the text, see: *TTT* VII: 51.



Let us inform you of the days for lighting the lamps for the Seven Stars [of the Great Bear (Ursa Major)]!

- on the 7th day of the 1st month
- on the 4th day of the 2nd month
- on the 2nd day of the 3rd month
- on the 27th day of the 4th month
- on the 25th day of the 5th month
- on the 23rd day of the 6th month
- on the 20th day of the 7th month
- on the 17th day of the 8th month
- on the 20th day of the 9th month
- on the 11th day of the 10th month
- on the 15th day of the 11th month
- on the 8th day of the 12th month

The days for lighting the lamps are complete.

According to the text before and after the above list, we know that the list includes the dates on which the lamp-lighting ceremony should be held to worship the Seven Stars of the Ursa Major. As for the Tuyuq manuscript Cave 57 DJ(3): 4, although it bears an identical list of dates, we do not view it as part of the *sūtra*, since the manuscript is written carelessly on a coarse piece of paper and only preserves the list in almost complete form. Instead, it is likely that the Tuyuq text was used by the monks in this monastery as a reminder or record of the dates for holding the lamp-lighting ceremony. The list was either extracted from the *yetikān sudur*, or it shares a common origin with the list in the *sūtra*.

In addition to the careless ductus, the textual differences also indicate that the present list cannot be a copy of the *sūtra*. As the block print version of the *sūtra* shows, the dates in the list are all written in a unified and standard form, with the dative suffix added to the end of each item. However, the dates in lines 1–6 and 12 in the Tuyuq manuscript are written without the case ending, as opposed to the other 5 dates, indicating the informal nature of the text.

As the extant colophons suggest, the *yetikān sudur* was translated, at the latest, at the beginning of the 14th century.³⁸ Numerous fragments of this *sūtra* from different block prints and manuscripts have been found in Turfan,³⁹ demonstrating its prevalence among Buddhist Uighurs during the Mongol era. Therefore, we can probably also date the Tuyuq manuscript to the Mongol era, more particularly to the 14th century, when the worship of the Seven Stars of Ursa Major was highly popular. As discussed above, the manuscript may have been used by the monks in the monastery on the high platform in Tuyuq as a reminder for or record of holding the lamp-lighting ceremony for the monastery or for the donors from outside.

The graphic (or drawing) on the red seal is unlikely to be connected to any known scripts, whether Chinese, Old Uighur, 'Phags-pa or Brāhmī. It can be divided into two halves with a column in the middle. A row of triangular forms extends vertically on the left half of the graphic, while a row of rectangular forms (which form a square wave) extends along the right half. It is likely to be a talisman related to the lamp-lighting ceremony for the Seven Stars of the Ursa Major.

³⁸ *BTT* XXIII: 115; *BTT* XXVI: 131–134;

³⁹ *BTT* XXIII: 118–129.



The Chinese version preserves seven talismans for the Seven Stars respectively;⁴⁰ these were borrowed into the Old Uighur translation with some changes in details.⁴¹ In addition to the *yetikän sudur*, other Old Uighur texts and fragments also preserve a few talismans.⁴² However, none of them seem to resemble the one on the present manuscript.

IV. WOODEN TABLETS WITH OLD UIGHUR TEXTS (FIG. 5–9)

Cave 57 DJ③: 6 (Fig. 5, 6)

This is a rectangular wooden tablet, with two lines of Old Uighur written in black ink on each side. It was also unearthed from the cellar in the outer room of Cave 57; it measures 6.2 × 1.9 cm.

As can be seen in Fig. 5 and 6, this item was probably designed to be hung on a wall or attached to offerings. The text suggests that the Turmüš Toyrül Tarxan who is named in it was a Buddhist donor, probably a layman. The title *tarxan* indicates someone of high rank, perhaps a noble, assuming the material belongs to the early period of the West Uighur kingdom.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.

⁴⁰ T. 1307, 21.425b06.

⁴¹ *TTT* VII: 23–24; *BTT* XXIII: Taf. XLVIII–LI.

⁴² See: *TTT* VII: Taf. 5; *BTT* XXIII: Taf. LXXXVII–XCV. For a thorough survey of talismans in Old Uighur texts, see: Kasai 2021.

1. Transcription

Recto

1) turmīš toyrīl

2) tarxan yūkünürm(ä)n

Verso

1) šakimuni burxan

2) -qa yūkünürm(ä)n

2. Translation:

Recto

1-2) I, Turmīš Toyrīl Tarxan venerate.

Verso

1-2) I venerate the Buddha Śākyamuni.

Cave 57 DJ③: 7 (Fig. 7)

Another piece of wooden tablet with 1 line in Old Uighur on its one side was unearthed from the cellar in the outer room of Cave 57.

1. Transcription

1) m(ä)n uṭmīš š(a)bi-q(i)ya

2. Translation

1) I, Uṭmīš, the humble monk.

3. Commentary

1) uṭmīš: a personal name well attested in Old Uighur texts.⁴³ The donor family of the famous manuscript of the *Xuanzang's Biography* includes an Uṭmīš Oγul.⁴⁴

1) š(a)bi-q(i)ya: 'the humble monk'. *šabi* is a loan word borrowed from Chinese *sha mi* 沙彌 'low-class monk'.⁴⁵ A diminutive suffix +*q(i)ya* has been added to it to express modesty.⁴⁶ The same self-designation has already been attested in the inscription on a wall painting fragment from Tuyuq, left by 'two humble monks [*iki šabi-q(i)ya-lar*]',⁴⁷ as well as Old Uighur pilgrim inscriptions in Dunhuang.⁴⁸ It was likely a common self-effacing appellation among the Buddhist Uighur monks.

⁴³ *SUK* 2: Sa 11, Mi 20, Mi 28.

⁴⁴ Cf. *BTT* XXVI: 150–151.

⁴⁵ *BTT* XIII: 231.

⁴⁶ *OTWF*, p. 50.

⁴⁷ *BTT* XIII: 192.

⁴⁸ Matsui and Arakawa 2017: 21, 28.





Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.

Cave 51⑤: 1 (Fig. 8, 9)

A third rectangular wooden tablet was unearthed from Cave 51, a hall cave. It is similar in form to that of Cave 57 DJ③: 6, minus the rope. 1 line of Old Uighur was written on each side in black ink. Its dimensions are 6.3×2.1 cm. We assume that it was also intended to be hung on a wall or attached to offerings.

1. Transcription

Recto

1) m(ä)n tikuy šila.

Verso

1) ming beš [yü]z(?)



2. Translation:

I, Tikuy Šila. 1500(?).

3. Commentary:

2) tikuy: this personal name should be a transcription of Chinese *Ding hui* 定惠, which is already attested in a bilingual Old Uighur / Chinese bilingual contract.⁴⁹ The same combination of name and title Tikuy Šila is attested in a colophon on the left wall of Room B in Cave 26, belonging to the same monastery complex on the high platform. The colophon III-4 records Tikuy Šila's visit to the cave in the 7th month of a certain pig year.⁵⁰ Considering the proximity of the colophon to the find spot of the wooden tablet, both items likely refer to the same monk.⁵¹ As the colophons in Cave 26 suggest, this monastery must have been a major site for the Uighur monks to stay and practice during the summer retreat.⁵² Since Tikuy Šila's visit took place in the 7th month, it probably served the same purpose.

ABBREVIATIONS

BTT VIII = KARA und ZIEME 1977.

BTT XIII = ZIEME 1985.

BTT XXIII = ZIEME 2005.

BTT XXV = WILKENS 2007.

BTT XXVI = KASAI 2008.

EDT = CLAUSON 1972.

GOT = ERDAL 2004.

OTWF = ERDAL 1991.

SUK = YAMADA 1993.

T. = TAKAKUSU and WATANABE 1924–1934.

TTT VII = RACHMATI 1937.

UW, I. 2 = ÖZERTURAL 2020.

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⁴⁹ *SUK* 2: Mi 27.

⁵⁰ Fu and Xia 2021: 199; Matsui 2021: 38.

⁵¹ Matsui 2021: 39.

⁵² Fu and Xia 2021: 200.



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