PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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A BRIEF NOTE ON KHOTANESE FRAGMENT SI M/38
IN THE ST. PETERSBURG COLLECTION

This short essay concerns identification of a Khotanese fragment in the St. Petersburg Collection. My hope is that this identification can help us better understand the scale of Khotanese Buddhist literature as well as the connection between Khotanese Buddhist literature and Chinese Buddhist literature.

In the “Saka Documents Texts Volume III: The St. Petersburg Collections” [1], Ronald E. Emmerick and Margarita I. Vorobjeva-Desiatovskaia published a fragment in the St. Petersburg Malov Collection, numbered 379 in that book and, in the Malov collection, SI M/38. As they noted, there are two fragments belonging to a single folio, the left-hand piece, M 38.1 (15.5×6.5 cm), and the right-hand piece M 38.2 (12.5×6.5 cm). This fragment is written in Old Khotanese in formal script, indicating the fragment might have been written sometime in the 5th and 6th centuries. It was collected by Sergei Efimovich Malov (1880—1957) during the period 1913 to 1915.

In my understanding this fragment belongs to the Buddhist text Bodhisattvakarotpāy avisayavikrāntaṁ kṣaṇamirdeśa. I cite first the transliteration and translation of this fragment in the “Saka Documents Texts Volume III”, then offer an English translation of the corresponding section in a Chinese text. I am not able to read the Khotanese text, and my identification is based on the English translation that Emmerick and Voron’eva-Desiatovskaia have provided. The Khotanese fragment SI M/38 is transliterated as follows:

SI M/38

Transliteration

Recto

1. x̱ sa hamphûta sa balyśāna tĉâramâ
2. balyśâna tĉâramâ hâmâte . pratâre j̱ sa ssâr[...x]
me j̱ sa 10 hajvânu vaṣvatte j̱ sa hamphu-
3. ta sa balyśâna tĉâramâ hâmâte avgay[sa]le [...]
banhy vaṣvatte j̱ sa hamphûta sa balyśâ-
4. na tĉâramâ hâmâte tsûkânu i̱ hu vâtâ tsutai
 [...]manyu[ṣ]ṛya dvâśyau bujśyau u vaṣvatteyau
hamphu-

Verso

1. ta sa balyśâna tĉâramâ hâmâte . ku gyasta
b[alysa]... balyśâtu bhâre tâtâhe maṇyusârya pa-
2. daṁje j̱ sa tvi tta bvẫhu ḵ ho ne nîśâ mama x[...]
ta nārâmasca . tta tta ci ēhâ kâdiâna
3. pâskalâmatīge svemâte sâvatte j̱ sa x [...]balâysi
hanârânu usnasrânî balyśâha-
4. [vâ]ysânu nârâmasco ysvâ ṝhâta . hanârânu
usnasrânî ... nârâmasco ysvâ ṝhâta . hanârânu
̄sâvā-

Translation:

[r1] ...endowed with... it will be a Buddha-sphere (buddhaloka) it will be a Buddha-sphere. Endowed with... purity of... it will be a Buddha-sphere. Good by nature... /10/ Endowed with the purity of the wise, it will be a Bud-

[v1] it will be a Buddha-sphere. When the Lord Budhas... they realise enlightenment. In this way, Mañjuśrī, must this be understood by you. Just as there is not for me... escape. Now why is that? Due to the ap-
pearance of differentiation (and) due to duality... you approve of the escape (from the cycle of existence) of the Buddha, of other beings, and of Bodhisattvas. Of those beings... you approve of the escape (from the cycle of existence). Of other disciples (sravaka)... [2].

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