

The Concluding Verses of a “Lyrical Poem in Khotanese”

HIROSHI KUMAMOTO

Among the Khotanese literary texts of Indian inspiration perhaps the most famous is the Rāma story. It was first published with a translation and commentary by Harold W. BAILEY in 1940.¹ Recently R. E. EMMERICK, who has a new edition in preparation, devoted an article and a number of remarks to this important text.² Next in fame would be the *avadāna* of Prince Sudhana and *kinnaṅ* Manoharā, which survives in three manuscripts and several fragments. It was also translated by BAILEY in 1966,³ and a new edition is announced by the hand of Mauro MAGGI. MAGGI also produced an excellent edition of the “Love story of a householder’s son and a minister’s daughter”, which unfortunately breaks off in a single manuscript just when the narrative was put in motion.⁴ Also known from incomplete Khotanese versions are the story of Prince Kuṇāla, son of Aśoka, and his stepmother Tṣ yarakṣ itā,⁵ and the story of Nanda the merchant.⁶ In both of them only the beginnings of the stories are preserved.

Unlike these, the text known as a “Lyrical poem”⁷ does not offer a continuous narrative. It is known from six manuscripts, which the late professor Mark DRESDEN called A, B, C, D, E and F in his edition in the *Waldschmidt Festschrift*.⁸ In the longest of them (E) the text reaches the beginning of verse 30, with four *pādas* for each verse, where the manuscript breaks off. The topics in these verses are the coming of spring, various flowers and birds, songs of the bards (*māgadha*), and homage to the amorous sport of young lovers. Towards the end, however, the author seems suddenly to shift to a sober tone, recalling a number of legendary figures who suffered from or perished on account of amorous passion, thus offering admonition against such transgressions from

¹ *KT III* 65-76; BAILEY (1940a, b).

² EMMERICK (1997) and *Studies* I, II, III.

³ *KBT* 11-39; BAILEY (1966a), DEGENER (1986) and MAGGI (1997a).

⁴ *KT III* 105-106; MAGGI (1997b).

⁵ *KBT* 40-44; BAILEY (1966b) and SKJÆRVØ (1987), (1998).

⁶ *KBT* 45-47; EMMERICK (1970); cf. HANDURUKANDE (1984).

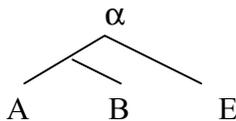
⁷ *KT III* 34-41, 42-44, 45-48; BAILEY (1964).

⁸ DRESDEN (1977).

Buddhist viewpoints.

Unfortunately, DRESDEN did not live to complete “a full translation, with annotations and glossary” (*op. cit.* p. 84), leaving behind only an undated draft translation full of lacunae and queries. It is essentially the interpretation he imparted, nearly twenty years ago now in one of his last classes in Khotanese, to a few students including the present writer, whom the honoree of these pages had persuaded to take up Iranian studies and then sent to Philadelphia. Although the text as a whole remains as impenetrable as it was then, attracting relatively few remarks from the specialists in the series of *Studies in the Vocabulary of Khotanese* (I, 1982; II, 1987 and III, 1997), it may be time to start a fresh attempt at interpretation. In what follows I shall try to present the last part of the extant text of the poem with a hope to invite improving opinions and remarks from others.

As DRESDEN points out (*op. cit.* p. 83) “the poem is structured in four-line strophes”. Since this obviously follows the Indian model, it is more convenient to refer to each strophe by the number (1-29) written, in most cases, at the end of the strophe in the main manuscript (P 2956 = DRESDEN’s E), and to the *pādas* within the strophe by a, b, c and d, rather than giving each *pāda* the consecutive number (1 – 117) as was done by DRESDEN. The synoptic text and the concordance table of the six manuscripts given by DRESDEN show that we have practically two versions of the poem, namely Ch. 00266 (A) and P 2025 (B), apart from a few lapses, going together against P 2956 (E). This latter, beside giving the longest text of all, is likely to have had originally a complete text whose first two strophes, preserved in A and B, and part of strophe 3 as well as strophe 30 (only the first two words of 30a left) onwards are lost due to the damage to the manuscript. On the other hand, the scribe of B stopped copying at the end of strophe 24 and went on to copy the Sudhana avadāna, while that of A did not quite finish copying the end of strophe 24 before starting also the Sudhana story. Since it is not possible, for the time being, to decide whether either of A and B is a copy of the other (the matter depending also on the evaluation of the Sudhana part), I shall call α the source represented by the three manuscripts, shown schematically as below:



Another group of manuscripts which exhibit a different arrangement of strophes are P 2985 (DRESDEN’s C; called Paris Y by BAILEY) and P 2022 (DRESDEN’s F). P 2985 (C) has 12 strophes, of which strophes 1, 2, 3, and 5 correspond to strophes 1, 2, 3 and 5 of α respectively, but the agreement stops there. For the remaining strophes see the table

below (- shows no corresponding strophe).

P 2895	α	P 2895	α
1	1	7	15
2	2	8	-
3	3	9	-
4	16	10	-
5	5	11	-
6	19	12	22

Unlike P 2985, where the beginning of the text is marked with the double vertical strokes before strophe 1 and strophe 12 comes at the end of a roll, it is not possible to know how many verses P 2022 (F) originally had. In the present state it has 20 strophes at the end of a roll, of which only five have correspondences in α , thus:

P 2022	α
*3	25
*8	28
*11	23
*12	24
*15	9

A third group of manuscripts would be those in which some verses from these collections are quoted among more or less non-literary documents. P 2896 (DRESDEN’s D) could be included here. It is of a miscellaneous character, like a copybook of a student, beginning with the opening of the Sudhana story (lines 2-5), then followed by several incomplete drafts of letters (lines 16-48), strophes 1, 2 and 3a-c of our poem (lines 49-55), and again some more letters (lines 56-68), finally ending in a Sanskrit verse in Khotanese orthography (lines 69-71).⁹ The nine strophes of the “love poem” at the end of the famous Staël-Holstein roll (lines 52-73)¹⁰ were probably copied from a similar source, although none of them happen to match strophes in our lyrical poem. Thus we have, on the one hand, some manuscripts which preserve more or less well-formed collections of verses, and, on the other, those where some verses from these collections are incidentally quoted.

⁹ M. LEUMANN (1959) 154.

¹⁰ BAILEY (1951b).

Text (manuscript E, lines 49-76)¹¹ and Translation

- 22a puñū da arāhaṃda cū saṃtsā rā nāraṃḍa
 b na-ṃ ysī ra brrī as tā na vā jūhai bvā <re>^a
 c a mūś tu kī ra yuḍim^b haṃḍara ysamṭhv<ā>^c
 d ca ma ṣ ṭ ā ṃjū hauji rri vyattive^d panū ḍai 20 2
^aMS *bvā*; B *bvauri*, C *bvārai*. ^bB *yūḍai*, C *ī ḍai*. ^cMS *ysamṭhva*; B *ysamṭhvi*,
 C *ysamṭhvā*. ^dB *vyātteva*, C *vyattaive*.
 “The virtuous *arhants* who have gone out of *samsāra*,
 in their heart there is no beloved, nor do they know love-making.
 In other births I have done a merciless deed,
 (I), whom my lover leads astray everyday.”
- 23a prrihajinyau hv<a>ṇḍyau^e ḥmi byaṃḍi na tsū {i} va
 b ṣ kaujī nai sauhā bida pā’jsā na ṣ iṣ ḍi^f
 c saṃtsā rā drrā ma {ni} khu rai bida mī reca^g
 d ā ramā rga bhā vyārā saṃtsā ra nāraumyara 20 3
^eMS *hvāṇḍyau*; B *hvaṇḍyāṃ*, F *hvaṇḍau*. ^fB *ṣ aitti*, F *ṣ aiṭ ha*. ^gB *mī raica* with
rai written over *ca*, F *mī racai*.
 “You, ordinary (*pr̥thagjana*) men, do not become confounded!
 A strong one does not attach (himself) to the goodness (*sukha*) of
samskāra.
Samsāra is such a thing as a mirage (*marīci*) on the plain.
 Meditate on the noble paths (*ārya-mārga*), go out of *samsāra*!”
- 24a kā ma tte ya pī rū yau bā ḍā prrihajinau satva
 b cū maṛa kī ḍeś au^h jsa ṣ iṣ ṭ iⁱ kā maguṇā ṃ bidā
 c avamā va be’ysi paryi na rā vī j<ai>ṣ ṭ ā da^j
 d drrā myi sauha kaiṇa dū rā naryi vavada^k 20 4
^hB *kles au*, F *satsaira*. ⁱB *ṣ aiṣ ṭ a*, F *basta*. ^jMS *vī jāṣ ṭ āda*; B *vī jaiṣ ṭ āda*,
 F *vī jī ṣ ṭ āda*. ^kB *vavadi*, F *vavaṃda*.
 “Which ordinary beings of former times were they,
 who were attached to objects of desire (*kāmaguṇa*) here through *kles as*?

¹¹ <> for editor’s addition or emendation to the MS; { } for editor’s deletion from the MS; [] for broken parts in the MS; x for an illegible akṣ ara.

They did not yet see countless Buddhas delivered,
attaining remote *narakas* because of such pleasures (*sukha*).”

- 25a mā dā ttā rre vī na haṃkhī ysi jsī na varaṣ ṭ e
b pu ṛā ṃ pṛribhā v<āna>¹ nā va ś akrrā ṃ ā ysam
c ś ū rī pi’ṛau jsa ū ysirā biś ā tcabrrī yi^m
d kā <ma>guṇvā aviphaṃdi ṣ ṭ ā jsī na paś ā ve 20 5
¹MS pṛribhā va, F pṛrabā vaṇā. ^mF nī hī yi.

“King Mā ndhā tar enjoyed life without number,
he took the seat of Śakra by the power of (his) merits (*puṇya*)
(and) by the strength of (his) valor. Then he scattered all the gold,
he gave up life unsatisfied with objects of desire.”

- 26a jausti ṛahaṣ uā jastyau pharā ysā rā salī
b vi[ṣ ṭ ?]ā maⁿ [ji?]nī d-ū^o sā na varai hauve pī hī ya
c kā maguṇā ṃ keṇā dalī pa ś aysdi padī dā ṃ<dā>^p
d kaucā kṣ ra rraispū ra mauḍā draipye kaiṇa 20 6
ⁿOnly some traces of an akṣ ara left. ^oOne akṣ ara totally lost. ^pMS padī dā ṃ.

“Nahuṣ a fought with gods for many thousand years.
They (=gods?) *destroy (his) *abode and the enemy stopped his
powers there.
Because of objects of desire they made Dilī pa into a snake.
Prince Kī caka died because of Draupadī .”

- 27a brrī ye kaiṇa pauṇḍā hauda piṣ kala ttā ra gvāṣ ṭ ä
b sī jsa udaiś ä diś agrī kṣ ṣ pū nyau jsa ysira bai’stä
c gauttama ś akrra jasta ysurre jsa ahā lya kaiṇa
d jabvī vī jinavaṇa ji^q mithū nadarmā kaiṇa 20 7
^qSomewhat unusual shape of the akṣ ara *ja*.

“Because of love Pā ṇ ḍu had (his) head split in seven pieces.
On account of Sī tā Daś agrī va had (his) heart pierced with six arrows.
Gautama had, through (his) anger at Śakra *deva* on account of Ahalyā,
destroyed the land of Jambudvī pa, because of *mithuna-dharma*.”

- 28a vyā si rreṣ a’ya pā tcā kā ś isā dra^r ū diś ā yā
b tcū rvā yi kī thā ṣ ṭ ä r<a>hā^s kā ḍā x gū hä khiṇḍā
c b[rr]ī [v]ī je^t brrī thi^u jsa paj<s>ā ḍā^v mā sta^w ṣ ṭ au

- d rauste a[bi]ñ^x pajsī ś i' ā drrakā^y rā ma-ś ai 20 8
^F *kaiś ta sādārū*. ^SMS *rehā*; ^F *raḥa*. ^F *brrī yī jai*. ^F *brrī ttā*. ^VMS *pajā dā*;
^F *pajsā dā*. ^WF *abausta*. ^XF *abai'ñā*. ^YF *raudākā*.

“The *r ś i* Vyā sa then on account of Kā ś i-sundarī ,
 on all fours drew a cart to the city like an ox.
 Overwhelmed by the whirlwind of love, intoxicated,
 that Udraka-Rā maputra lost five magical powers (*abhijñā*).”

- 29a ū ysirā vā si kaṁthi pasva st<r>ī yā^z udiś ā yā
 b gaupakā pyidau dāhaus <t>i^{aa} vā sile kaiṇa
 c sī na ū upaysauna tta dvā brrā vara hatca
 d ū ma udi[ś ā y]ā ś [ū]je jsā ṁdā tcaḍā simaudra ś ṭ ā 20 9
^ZMS *sī yā*. ^{aa}MS *dā haus i*’.

“The city of Asuravā sa burned down on account of women.
 Gopaka clouded (?) (his) virility because of Vā siṭ ṭ hī (?),
 Sena and Upasena, those two brothers together,
 because of Umā killed each other near the ocean.”

Notes

22c *amūś tu* Adj. in *-ua* (ASg.) from O(ld) Kh(otanese) *mulysdi-* “compassion” with negative *a-*. So correctly in *Dict.* 6a s.v.; cf. *Studies* I 105, III 125 on *Dict.* 339a *muś tā jsa* erroneously interpreted as “dislike, malice”.

22d *jū hauji* Pres. pt. fem. (*-ā ṁgyā-*; *Suffixe* 78) of *jū h-* “to love” (*SGS* 36) followed by the particle *ra* (so in B, C). In BAILEY’s (*Dict.* 112b) *jū hā ṁjara* < **jū hāna-č i-kara* “maker of love” the supposed suffix *-č i-* cannot be explained.

The reading of C *ca bās dai* in *KT III* (also *Dict.* 112b, 393b) followed by DRESDEN is wrong. The MS has *ca ma ś ṭ a* like E and B *ca ma ś ṭ ā ṁ*.

The hapax *vyattive* (B *vyätteva*, C *vyattaive*)¹² is explained by BAILEY in two ways. In *Dict.* 112b it represents “BS *vyattiv-* < **vivartāpay-*”, which is phonologically impossible and semantically incompatible with the meaning “practises” given by BAILEY to the passage. In *Dict.* 393b it is translated as “has practised” and explained as

¹² Z 2.51 *vyattu* “clearly” (< *vyaktam*) already explained by E. LEUMANN is different. Kal(ās a) *biyat-* “to pass” under *vivartatē* “turns from” in *CDIAL* 11917a is explained differently by

“a loan-word Pali *vyatta-* (BS *vyakta-*) with *-ev-* ... , *vyattev-* ‘to experience (by practice)’”. However, the meaning of the Pali word is rather “learned, skilled” unfit for the present context. The variant spellings in the MSS. strongly suggesting *vyatt-* + *-ev-* point to the secondary derivation within Khot. from the Pkt. ppp. *vyatta-* + causative forming *-ev-*, not from *vi-añj-* as BAILEY saw, but from *vi-ṽ t-* “to turn aside” (cf. PISCHEL, *Grammatik* §102 °*viatta-*). The form thus would be the pres. 3sg. as in the pf. tr. 3sg. fem. in L(ate) Kh(otanese) *-yā* (masc. *-ye*) would be expected.

23a *prrihajinyau hv<a>ṇḍyau* “ordinary men” is the VPl. and *tsūva* as well as **d** *bhāvya ra, nāraumyara* is 2pl. imperative.

23b The MS E clearly has *ṣ ḍi*, the 3sg. pres. of *ṣ ḥ ḍi a-* “to take hold of” (*SGS* 130). B has *ṣ aitti*, probably a miscopying from the presumed source **ṣ aiṣ ḍi*, and F has *ṣ aḥ ha* which is evidently a corruption. *KT III* (all editions), *Dict.* 176b, and DRESDEN all have the negative *na* which precedes as part of the word (preverb). They misread as *nṣ iḍi* (for E) and *nṣ aima* (for F). The whole entry of *nṣ aima* “attachment” (*Dict.* 176b) must therefore be deleted.

23c In translation “such a thing” is after B *drrau hera*, F *ttrau haira*, E having only *drāma* “such”. On the phrase *rai baida mī reca* “a mirage on the plain” see Z 5.63 *kho rro v̄ rā maī ca jaḍā ūtca saittā* “water appears to a fool as a mirage on a plain: (= *Mañj.* 196 *sa khu rai vī mī rī ce jaḍa utca saitta*).

24a *kāma tte ya* “Which ... were they?” refers to the legendary figures beginning with King Māndhātar in **25a**.

24b MS F has *basta* “bound” instead of *ṣ ḥ i* (E), *ṣ aḥ a* (B) “attached”; see *Dict.* 410a *ṣ äṣ* - “adhere”.

24d *vavanna-* in Z 24.53 *brahma-lovi vavannā* “he attained the world of Brahma” is already explained by E. LEUMANN as <*upapanna-*. Here the pres. pt. active *vavaṇda-* in all three MSS. points to the existence of the present stem **vav-* at least in L.Kh. as a secondary (back-) formation within Khotanese from the borrowed ppp.; see DRESDEN (1972) 110.

25a The story of King Māndhātara, who, having conquered all the worlds and ascending the heaven, shared the seat of Śakra with the god himself, then wished the rest of the seat, whereupon he was reduced to a mere mortal and died, is told in the Pāli Jātaka No. 258, the *Divyāvadāna*, chap. 17, and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya* (see further references in PANGLUNG, 35f.).

25c Cf. MBh. 13.80.5 where Māndhātara gave away hundreds of thousands of cows. Less satisfactory is *Dict.* 135b *tcabalj-* “to break up, scatter, separate” where *ysirā* (so MS, not *yserā*; *bisā* is a misprint for *bṣā*) here is taken as “heart” (*Dict.* 352a *ysāra-*) and not as “gold” (*Dict.* 352b *yṣāra-*), with a translation of the passage as “he oppressed the whole heart”, preferring (even under *tcabalj-*) the variant F *nī hī yi* (*nihalj-* “to restrain”).

26a The reading of *KT III* followed by DRESDEN is *jaustiñā haiś ä jastyau*. Here *haiś ä* (for the expected **haiś ä*) would be the 3sg. pres. of *haiś-* “to carry off” and *jastyau* IAbPI “gods” (hardly VPI). But *jaustiñā* is unexplainable except as the LSg. of **jausta-*, the ppp. to *juv-/justa-* (< Ir. **yud(h)-*) “to fight” (thus “fought”, not “a/the fight”). In any case no subject noun would be at hand. However, the akṣara read *asś ä* is actually *ṣ uä* with two vowel signs above and below. From this we can recover, in the form of *ñahaiṣ uä*, the name Nahuṣa, who usurped Indra’s throne and ruled heaven for a long time (MBh. 5.11), in a peculiar, but not so exceptional, Khotanese spelling. Curiously, the one who was made into a snake by the curse of the *ṣ i* Agastya is this Nahuṣa (MBh. 5.17), not Diṣpa as in **26c** below.

26b *viṣṭ ?jāma* is conjectural. On the assumption that akṣaras *vi x-ā ma* represent one word, the most likely candidate would be either *vṣ tāma* “establishing” (as in *Suvarṇabhāṣa* 12.13 *vṣ temate*) or, more frequent, *vaṣ tāma* “stay, concentration (of mind, etc.)” written in this case with *vi-*. The remaining traces of the second akṣara are not incompatible with *ṣ ta*. The next word, *x nī dū*, on the other hand, would be the 3pl. pres. verb in *ṣ nī dā + u* “and”. BAILEY in *KT III* 39 (followed by DRESDEN) reads <ya?> *nī dū* “they do, make, and” but apparently with no particular reason. <ji> *nī dū* “they destroy, and” or <jsa> *nī dū* “they kill, and” can be as good a guess. In any case the line remains unclear.

26c This may not be the same King Diṣpa of the *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.41 and the *Raghuvamśa* 1.12ff. MBh. 5.101.15 mentions a snake named Diṣpa. The final long *-ā* of *keṇā* may simply be a mistake by attraction of the preceding *ṇāṃ*, but the final *-āṃ* of *paṭ dāṃ* of the MS is unexplainable unless it is the 3sg. pf. tr. fem. (*paṭ dā*) or the 3pl. pf.

padī dāṃdā with the last akṣ ara missing.

26d MBh. 4.21.

27a On this expression see EDGERTON, *BHSD* s.v. *sphālayati*; *saptadhā mūrdhnaṃ sphāleyā* (Mahāvastu) “the head would burst in seven pieces”, etc.; cf. *Dict.* 126a *tāra-* “forehead, etc.”. In MBh. Pāṇḍu died of Kimpama’s curse (1.116).

27c Cf., *inter alia*, *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.47.15-32.

28a In Z 5.3 *vyāysā rṣ ayā* “the ṛṣ i Vyāsa” is *kāś a-sundhare hī sā* “the servant of Kāś i-sundarī”. The story of the “Beauty of Kāś i”, who chose, as a form of *svayaṃvara*, the religious life under the Buddha over a number of royal suitors, is told in the *Avadāna-ś ataka*, no. 76 (there *Kāś ika-sundarī*).

28b See *Dict.* 138a s.v. *tahora* “four”; 360a *rraha-* “chariot”; 59a *kār-* “to draw”.

28c See *Dict.* 201a where the text of F is translated. *pajsāḍa-* (E *pajāḍa-*) is, as BAILEY points out, related to (*a*)*ttajsāḍa-* (*JSt* 23d, 57c; p. 475a) “(un-)surpassed” with a different preverb (cf. *SGS* 231).

28d For this line see *Studies* II 24 (the entry of *ādraka-* “prince” in *Dict.* 18a is to be deleted). On Udraka-Rāmaputra (Uddaka-Rāmaputta in Pāli) see MALALASEKERA I, 382f. On the five kinds of supernatural knowledge see *BHSD* s.v. *abhijñā*.

29a In MBh. 8.24.121 *evaṃ tat tripuraṃ dagdhaṃ dānavās ca apy aś aḥ* “Thus the triple city (of demons) was burned, and (all) the demons too without exception”. *pasva* (*SGS* 78 *pasūjs-* “burn” intr.) agrees with the NSg. fem. of *kaṃthā-* “city”. On *st<r>ī yā* see *Dict.* 433b.

29b *pyidau* is possibly a miswriting for **pyaudi*; cf. *Dict.* 236b *pātām-* “to obscure”; *Suvarṇabhāsa* 3.58 *pyaudā* “confounded (by anger, passion, folly)” (SKJÆRVØ).

29c The two Asura brothers, who killed each other “near the river” because of Tilottamā, not of Umā, are Sunda and Upasunda in MBh. 1.204. The reading of *KT III* followed by

DRESDEN is *ū ma u devāś ūje jsāṃdā* “Umā and the *deva* killed each other”.¹³ On the photograph the akṣ ara after *u* is *di* rather than *de* at the end of line 75, and only the vowel sign *-ā* is visible at the beginning of the next line. The word is evidently *udṣ āyā* “on account of” (Pkt. < *uddiś ya*) either partly broken or incompletely written.

The above interpretation of these verses, which is in many points highly conjectural, would show that, besides some allusions to the well-known episodes such as Indra cursed by Gautama or Kī caka killed by Bhī ma, quite a few appear to be purely fantastic having no grounds either in the Sanskrit epic and Purāṇic sources or in the Buddhist legends. Nevertheless, the use of these names alone, however mixed-up, attests to the degree to which the non-Buddhist Indian tradition had penetrated the literati of the kingdom of Khotan in the ninth to the tenth centuries.

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BHSD See EDGERTON (1953).

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¹³ A still earlier, and less satisfactory, reading is found in BAILEY (1940b) 597.

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