A Fragment of a pien-wen (?)
Related to the Cycle
“On Buddha’s Life”

by
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I. S. Gurevich, "A Fragment of a pien-wen (?) Related to the Cycle 'On Buddha's Life'"
Sino-Platonic Papers, 82 (October, 1998)

A FRAGMENT OF A PIEN-WEN (?) RELATED TO THE CYCLE "ON BUDDHA'S LIFE"*

The present paper takes together three Tunhuang pieces (=fragments) TH-285 (I, II and III) from the Tunhuang collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies (St. Petersburg), being parts of a text that may be considered as representing a popular narrative and if precisely — the one in the pien-wen genre.

In the late 1950's professor Cheng Chen-do when visited St. Petersburg (at that time — Leningrad) showed a great interest in the Tunhuang collection and in regard with one of the three pieces mentioned above, namely, TH-285 III, (two other pieces were found in the St. Petersburg collection later) the famous Chinese scholar came out with a suggestion that this piece referred to a fragmentary text of the pien-wen "The Crown Prince has left home" (太子遊園記).

Proceeding to analyse the piece TH-285, III by comparing its text with that of the Buddhist sutra I hazarded to advance my own opinion that the text in question is extremely close to the "Sutra on the Crown Prince Sudhana" (太子賢王善話) [1] and should be determined as a part of a pien-wen unknown before but undoubtedly related to the cycle "On Buddha's Life". (It is to be noted that there is no serious contradiction between prof. Cheng's suggestion and my guess.)

Later in the Tunhuang collection two other pieces (TH-285, I and II) were found, which proved to be parts of the same text as the TH-285, III. A careful examination of these pieces of our text has shown that I was quite correct in my way of identifying TH-285, III as a part of an unknown pien-wen. Thus I have got sound reasons to assert that the pieces TH-285 I, II and III are nothing else but a fragmentary text of a pien-wen based on the "Sutra on the Crown Prince Sudhana".

When comparing the manuscript (hereafter MS) under consideration with the sutra in congruence, attention should be paid to some specific points.

Firstly, A formal feature for distinguishing the Buddhist pien-wen [2] is a certain proportion between a rather short quotation from the sutra preceding a vast enough text of the pien-wen itself. However such correlation is not typical for the pieces in question and the "Sutra on the Crown Prince Sudhana".

Secondly, Certain passages in our fragments agree completely with those of the sutra; others have some variations but they do not touch seriously the general meaning; in some cases there are passages in our MS that are not covered in full by the sutra and vice versa — certain extracts of the sutra are not covered in full by the MS [3]. I suppose that special attention should be paid to the passages in our MS (they may be rather short or lengthy) that have no relative to them in the sutra. Almost in all cases these extracts describe especially affective and moving events (such as, for example, the threatening scenes of all sorts of horrors that could happen to a person who had to stay in the wild mountains — recounting all manner of horrors the Crown Prince tried by all means to persuade his wife not to follow him in the exile; another example is the episode when the officials appealed to the King with a complain against the Crown Prince who had given away the enemy the great white elephant and thus enormously weakened the kingdom, see TH-285, I).

There are no sound reasons to assume that we are dealing with another Chinese translation of the same sutra [4]; though there exists another translation but its text does not agree at all with that of our MS.

Today it is needless to prove the well known fact that the fundamental specific feature of pien-wen as a genre of popular narrative is precisely the alternating of prose and verse passages [5], or, in other words, the prosimetric form [6]. Therefore the presence of verses in the text of the piece TH-285, II, whereas the text of the Chinese translation of the "Sutra on the Crown Prince Sudhana" is entirely prosaic, may be taken as an argument in favour of the hypothesis that the MS in question is related to the genre of pien-wen. It is noteworthy that the verses occurred in TH-285, II represent the Chinese original poetical system with its rhymes (I mean the five- and seven-syllable verses encountered accordingly in lines 3, 4—5), so they cannot be suspected as insertions from any other sutras; it must be also taken into account that the translation of the Buddhist psalms (gathas) has no rhymes.

Though it seems to be apparent if bearing in mind all the facts mentioned above that the text under examination is nothing else but a part of an unknown before pien-wen on the "Sutra on the Crown Prince Sudhana", still I shall try to be as careful as possible in my final judgement.

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In all probability it may be considered that we are dealing with one of the earliest samples of the pien-wen running back to the rise of the genre. And right due to this condition the unstableness of the identifying features of the genre (if being compared with its "ripe" state) should be explained. From the very brief examination of our MS provided by comparison with the text of the "Sutra on the Crown Prince Sudhana" an observation can be made that in the making of pien-wen genre the following way is noteworthy: the Performer having no strict rules regularly step by step was turning aside from the canonical text of the sutra by enriching the narration by all means of his own colourful fantasy.

As it was stated above, in the beginning of my researches in the field of pien-wen, when the study of the problem was in its infancy, my "boldness" was of a rather high degree (!) and I had no doubt identifying the text under examination as an unknown pien-wen. But as time was going by, the knowledge and the experience I have got through years of my own research having been enriched due to my eight months' fellowship in USA, where I had learned the essential works by Prof. Victor Mair [7] dealing with the problem of pien-wen and related genres and analysed his concept, I was brought to a rather fixed conclusion. The latter argues with the former one: today I should hazard to guess that the fragments under examination are very close to the Buddhist genre of the Tunhuang popular literature called chiang-ching-wen (簡經文) "sutra-lecure". But I hope that arguments in favour of this hypothesis is a topic for discussions in future.

A large number of notes that the reader can see below deals with textual problems; they have been designed to make the translation more readable not only for a specialist but for an intelligent layman as well.

The following symbols are employed in the paper:
1. The numbers on the left margin indicate the line of the fragment.
2. The asterisk * marks the unusual writing and indicates that the character is included in the Table of specific Tunhuang graphic forms.

N o t e s

1. The life and events of the Crown Prince Sudhana that make the plot of the sutra in question is a prevalent topic not only in the Indian literary tradition, but also in the mural painting of India and Central Asia as well. For more details on this sutra see my translation of it in the book: "Buddism v perevodah. Al'manah, vyp. 1. St. Petersburg, "Andreev i synov'ya", 1992, pp. 9—32.


3. All notes are keyed to a certain word or passage in the translation.

4. [ ] words added to get the literary sounding in English.

5. ( ) words taken from the text of the "Sutra on the Crown Prince Sudhana".

6. The dots ... mark that the text is broken off.
How to get in

exiled from the
cherishing the white elephant like me in the same way

I had a

moment the Crown Prince thought to himself. 

Crown Prince said: 

Crown Prince will not grant

whom my father-King (loves most of all)

making no difference between us. 

[1] can not give him

my own* oath [12].

How to get in future* the aim — to transcend the bound of

the supreme* calmness? [If I] comply with [the request] and
grant [14] him // [then I acquire] the transcendence of the bound [16] of (the supreme calmness) [17]. // The Crown Prince said: “All right! That is wonderful! [I] wish* to grant him [to you]”. [He] immediately ordered his attendants to make ready (a golden saddle) [118] for the elephant. //...bring [him] out. In the left hand the Crown Prince was holding [a vessel with] water and was pouring it on the hands of the righteous men. In the right hand [he] had a cord for cording the elephant in order to hand (him) [19]. (The eight men having got) [10]// the elephant* said their prayer with well-being wishes* to the Crown Prince. When the prayer was finished all of them saddled up the white elephant and left [looking] quite happy. The Crown Prince


II

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// (said) [131]: “Be quick. If the King finds out [what has happened] he will instantly send persecutors to catch [you] and to take back [the elephant] [321].” Before the Crown Prince finished these words [they] had immediately disappeared [331]. When the officials of the country heard that the Crown Prince gave up the white elephant* to the hostile country* [341] all of them [281] worried* and felt joyless [361]. All the officials having got together* went to the king and he* felt fear. And the officials were going on years * to take back* the elephant.* This elephant's force is going beyond country*. This elephant was the only thing* our kingdom leaned on to withstand the hostile countries".

The Brahman... to us... to inherit [our country's] altars* [344]. The officials feel fear* that [he] will give up [as alms all] the people [351] of the whole kingdom* with all its citizens*, with their wives and children. We are at the end* of our resources* to go on living [354]. Having heard such words the King became deeply unhappy [361]. [He] has fallen down from [his] seat, [he] sank under sorrow, did not want to discuss with people [364]. [He] was poured over with water [354]. A lot of time had passed before [he came to himself*]. All (verbatim: in number twenty thousand*) his wives were embarrassed deeply [369]. The King taking into consideration [411] the common consent of all [his] officials said [421]: “Now the Crown Prince must be punished cruelly* // [453]. One of the officials [said] [444]; ["He] stepped into the elephant's stall by foot — his foot should be cut off. [He] was cording the elephant by hand — // his hand should be cut off. His eyes were looking at the elephant* — his eyes should be put out”. There was somebody else who said: “His head should be cut off*”. Others said: “His body [should be] chopped in hundred pieces [434]. // The officials held a consultation and each of them told thus. Having heard these [461] words [471] the King... did not say any more [484]. // Gradually he came to life and in a weak voice addressed to the crowd of officials... [491] I have the only son. From the very childhood [he] loved...

**C**ommentaries

1. Reconstructed after the text of the sutra (hereafter: S).
2. Reconstruct. after S.
3. Reconstruct. after S.
4. Instead of 人... in the MS there stands 人... in S.
5. In S 令 is omitted.
6. Reconstruct. after S.
7. “[I] shall be exiled...” In S 我 is not omitted: 予我令...
8. “The Brahman... to us...” 弥羅阿言: 夫若不此說/我等... — in S we do not find this phrase.
9. “... thought to himself* instead of 自為思 (in MS) 自為思 (in S).
10. “... purpose...” — 額 (in MS) instead of 額 (in S).
11. Reconstruct. after S.
12. Reconstruct. after S.
13. “... oath...” 誓 in MS. Instead of it in S stands 願, "intention". After this word in S we have 若不此以象施有, "if [I] shall not grant this elephant" — This phrase is not found in MS.
14. “How... in future...” 云未何得 — in MS. 何能當得 in S.
15. Instead of 人... (in MS) 聲 (in S).
16. “... the transcendence of the bound...等之度... in MS instead of 等度... “the intention of transcendence...” in S.
17. Reconstruct. after S.
18. Reconstruct. after S.
19. Reconstruct. after S.
20. Reconstruct. after S.
21. Reconstruct. after S.
22. “... instantly...” — in S 使 is not followed by 使; instead of 聲卿 in S we have 世譲卿 in MS.
23. Instead of 不譲來比 “before [the Crown Prince] finished these words” in MS we have 世譲士八人 “then the eight righteous men...” in S.
24. In S we read 至 “to the enemy” instead of 聲卿 "to the hostile country" in MS.
25. “When the officials... all of them” — in S the passage mentioned is followed by 皆見恐怖，從而面望 “all of them have become frightened and have fallen down from [their] seats”.
26. “... joyless” — in S these words are followed by... 達言/國家恐懼比象以鄰敵國手 “...thought [to themselves]. This elephant was the only thing [our] kingdom leaned on to withstand the hostile countries".
27. "All the officials..." saying: "The same meaning is expressed in a rather short way in S, [and only three words in MS] ... in S instead of "in S.

28. "... gave up" — in S instead of "in S.

29. "... were going on" in S instead of "in S.

30. A rather long passage (from the 13th to the 17th lines, beginning with "[He] wiped out the enemy") is not presented in S. Attention should be paid to the point that typical precisely for this piece of the fragment is a very emotional exposition of the enormous force of the white elephant and also the colourful description of the feelings of officials deprived of the white elephant: they are full of bitterness and sadness (see their appeal to the King). And one more point that should be taken into consideration: the parts of S are sometimes almost unreadable because of a rather awkward handwriting with many miswritings.

31. "... ruined" — my reconstruction of the damaged character as is based on the sense of the context.

32. "... treasured by years" — the character that follows "is reconstructed as if basing on the sense may be reconstructed as "to heap up"; the one that follows "is as I suppose, may be reconstructed as 

33. (like thus) — is reconstructed basing on the sense of the context.

34. "... altars" — up to these words it was the passage that is not presented in S. Right after the words mentioned there is a passage in S that we do not find in MS. It looks like that: "... [the crown Prince] gave him up to the enemy, we are afraid that the kingdom can be lost. What is to be done? The Crown Prince is so generous in giving up alms that the treasury is being wasted day by day".

35. "... all the people of the whole kingdom" — in S is not followed by "people"; in S stands instead of (2 characters) in MS.

36. "... We are... to go on living" — these words are not presented in S.

37. "... deeply unhappy" — these words in S are followed by a passage that is not presented in MS. Here it is: "I must be away from the enemy. I cannot take the white elephant with me..."

38. "... did not [want] to talk with people" — in MS it looks like "in S we find "did not recognize people". I guess the latter looks more logical.

39. "... with water..." — in MS it looks like "in S "... with cold water".

40. "... were embarrassed deeply" — in MS we find "all were unhappy", whereas in MS "... all were unhappy".

41. "... taking into consideration" — that is my translation of the word "... in S we find "... in place of ..."

42. "... common consent..." said in S there is no particle "... in MS..." so in MS seems to be unnecessary.

43. "... must be punished cruelly" — in S in place of this sentence there is another one somewhat different: "... What is to be done to the Crown Prince?"

44. In MS the word "said" is omitted.

45. "... His body..." pieces — this sentence is not presented in S.

46. "... these..." in MS it is expressed by "... in S by "... The former is more archaic.

47. "... words..." — the rest of the line is damaged.

48. The third character from below in the 22nd line I reconstruct as "one" that was in common use in the Tung-huang texts.

49. "... in a weak voice addressed to the crowd of officials"... In the 23rd line the characters from the 6th to the 9th are nearly illegible. My hypothetical reconstruction looks like this: "... The rest of the line is torn off.

TH-285,II (Fig. 2)

TRANSLATION

All the officials looked at me with pity and sympathy.*

"How can one bear watching before* his eyes* the worst kind [of] sufferings*... [And now I have no Crown Prince at all]... [I myself have obtained this pain* by begging the Heaven and Earth. I have this* [single] sweet child*... It is unbearable to let [him] die before my eyes*... [I wish my officials become fulfilled* with love* and pain. Let nobody* break* a word in my instructions. It would be [much] better if I passed away before* and only then [let them] kill my son*..."

There was between [a] a sage* official. [He] suspected that the words had been [said] by the officials were not in keeping with fairness at all... He is the Crown Prince of [our] Kingdom... // The King has only this single son. [And he] loves him very much... Such an evil thought as to punish* the crown Prince so hardly* did it really* occur? [He] immediately came nearer to (bowing) and addressed [to the] King: "I even do not dare to suggest that the King's Crown Prince (?) should be caught and put into prison. [It would be] better [if] to expel him out of the bounds of the Palace[...]. Let him stand in the wild mountains for twelve years. While staying there he will devote himself to reading sutras...[All his life he shall be undergoing sufferings* and feel pangs of conscience...]. In accordance with* [the words] pronounced by this* chief official the King immediately sent a courier to call to* the Crown Prince and asked [him] as follows: "Why did you take my... // elephant* and gave [him] away the enemy and did not tell me [about it]...?" The Crown Prince answered: "Formerly, I had an
agreement that the King all through dispensing alms not to leave out anyone's demands that is why I did not tell [the King about it]'. The King said "As to the former agreement I ment the treasures stay here. The Crown Prince answered: 'These all things are in King's possession. Why does [this] single [thing] make you regret? The King said to the Crown Prince ... (I send you into exile) for twelve years in the Chant'iehshan mountains. The Crown Prince addressed to the King in such words: "According * to the King's order ... / A. innermost aspiration. Then I shall leave your Kingdom." The King said: "Because of * your extraordinary generosity in dispensing alms you have wasted away the treasury of my Kingdom. // ... the enemy. Be quick in leaving the Kingdom. [I do not permit you to stay here] The Crown Prince answered: "[I] do not dare (to disobey the King's order) // command. [I] shall not have anything in common with the state wealth anymore. But I have my own property *. [I] should like * to have the possibility to dispense wholly as alms everything that I have", [45] // The great King was silent [and] did not agree. Twenty thousand * wives shedding tears came up to the King asking [him] to let the Crown Prince stay in the Kingdom. The King then complied ... // ordered his servants to carry out the belongings and to announce everywhere * about it. Everybody * who heard (about it) came up to the gateway of the Crown Prince's Palace // meal. [He] was dispensing [his] property *; having got in accordance with their wishes they were leaving. After seven days the property came to its end. The poor // The Crown Prince entered [his] personal Palace and addressed to his wife: "You like your being resident of the Palace. You devote yourself respectfully ... / ... I am sent by the King into exile for more than twelve years". Having heard these words the Crown Prince's wife // said ... this. the great King has only this single son; [he] loves [him] so much. What is the crime he has committed ... // ... the Crown Prince said: "By dispensing alms too wastefully I have ravaged the treasury of the Kingdom ... " [46].

Notes on TH-285,II

1. The first five lines are not presented in S at all.
2. The rest of the line is torn off.
3. "... the worst kind... — thus I have translated the word such in the fourth-fifth centuries; in the language of that period it was in current use while could be noted but a single example; as to the language of the Tang dynasty became quite usual; it also deserves to be marked the frequent occurrence of dissyllabic words combined of monosyllabic synonyms: one of them being an old word, the other — a new one.
4. "... sage... — in S instead of we find — "high".
5. The sentence taken as a whole is somewhat obscure: it seems there is a mixture of direct and indirect speech: the character 父 that stands before 不 looks erroneous; the word in its place should have the meaning close to "at all". In S instead of "words" 语气 we have "opinion" 语气; instead of "not in keeping with fairness at all" 语气 we find 语气... 语气 also.
6. "He" — thus I translate the word 他, though this meaning is not quite common for this.
7. The phrase is not presented in S.
8. "[and he] ... very much" — instead of 他 in Ms we find 他 in S.
9. The structure of this sentence looks rather strange: at least in the phrase 他 语气 it should be expected another word-order — I mean: 他 语气. In S this sentence looks as follows: 句句他他 语气 语气 语气 "Why do [you] want to punish [him] so cruel, that such kind thought arose?"
10. "... came nearer to" — after the words 遠去了 there lack two characters.
11. "Who will send..." — instead of 奉使使 it is expressed by 他 whereas in MS he have 它. It is quite natural: the translation of S dates from the fourth-fifth centuries; in the language of that period was in current use while 它 could be noted but a single example; as to the language of the Tang dynasty became quite usual; it also deserves to be marked the frequent occurrence of dissyllabic words combined of monosyllabic synonyms: one of them being an old word, the other — a new one.
12. "The rest of the line is torn off.
13. The sentence taken as a whole is somewhat obscure: it seems there is a mixture of direct and indirect speech: the character 父 that stands before 不 looks erroneous; the word in its place should have the meaning close to "at all". In S instead of "words" 语气 we have "opinion" 语气; instead of "not in keeping with fairness at all" 语气 we find 语气... 语气 also.
14. "He" — thus I translate the word 他, though this meaning is not quite common for this.
15. The phrase is not presented in S.
16. "[and he] ... very much" — instead of 他 in Ms we find 他 in S.
17. The sentence taken as a whole is somewhat obscure: it seems there is a mixture of direct and indirect speech: the character 父 that stands before 不 looks erroneous; the word in its place should have the meaning close to "at all". In S instead of "words" 语气 we have "opinion" 语气; instead of "not in keeping with fairness at all" 语气 we find 语气... 语气 also.
18. "Who will send..." — instead of 奉使使 it is expressed by 他 whereas in MS he have 它. It is quite natural: the translation of S dates from the fourth-fifth centuries; in the language of that period was in current use while 它 could be noted but a single example; as to the language of the Tang dynasty became quite usual; it also deserves to be marked the frequent occurrence of dissyllabic words combined of monosyllabic synonyms: one of them being an old word, the other — a new one.
19. "... came nearer to" — after the words 遠去了 there lack two characters.
20. "Who will send..." — instead of 奉使使 it is expressed by 他 whereas in MS he have 它. It is quite natural: the translation of S dates from the fourth-fifth centuries; in the language of that period was in current use while 它 could be noted but a single example; as to the language of the Tang dynasty became quite usual; it also deserves to be marked the frequent occurrence of dissyllabic words combined of monosyllabic synonyms: one of them being an old word, the other — a new one.
21. "... stay in the wild mountains for twelve years" — instead of 奉使使 it is expressed much more shorter 奉使使. 
22. "... stay in the wild mountains for twelve years" — instead of 奉使使 it is expressed much more shorter 奉使使.
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27. "... to call to ... as follows" — instead of 甲 in MS we find 甲 in S; "... asked as follows" — in S we do not see the words 甲. A question may arise if does not belong to the next sentence. In my opinion, in all probability though it is not quite obvious, is still should be considered as the final word of the sentence and not as an initial of the next one.

28. "... take..." — in fact, 甲 as a function word (an instrumental preposition) should not be translated as a single unit, but I do translate it in this way in order to reproduce the structure of the sentence as a whole and to point out the lack of characters in it.

29. "Why ... about it?" — In S this passage is presented much more detailed: "Why should I give away the enemy my white elephant?" The Crown Prince addressing the King said: "Really, gave him away". The King asked the Crown Prince: "Why did you take my white elephant and gave him away the enemy and did not tell me [about it]?"

30. ... agreement ..." — instead of 甲 in MS we find 甲 in S.

31. ... demands ..." — thus I translated 甲, (verbatim: "wishes").

32. ... tell ..." — S gives 甲 instead of 甲 in MS.

33. ... said" — instead of 甲 in MS we find 甲 in S.

34. ... answered ..." — reconstituted on the base of the text in S.

35. ... regret ..." — instead of a rather short 甲 in MS we find a more long expression 甲 not to include ..." in MS.

36. Further the text breaks off: some characters lack in the end of the line 13 and in the beginning of the line 14. In place of the lacking characters in MS we read in S 甲 "As soon as possible do leave the Kingdom. I send you into exile...".

37. ... mountains" — in the text of S there is no final 甲 in the end of the sentence.

38. Further the text breaks off: some characters lack in the end of the line 14 and in the beginning of the line 15. In place of the lacking characters in MS we find in S the following passage: 甲 do not dare to disobey the King's command. I would like to dispense alms during seven more days, as to still my innermost aspiration".

39. (The King) — reconstituted on the base of S.

40. "Because of your ..." — instead of 甲 in MS we find in S 甲. After the word "treasury" the text breaks off. In S in this place we find a rather long passage 甲 do not dare to disobey the King's command. I would like to dispense alms during seven more days, as to still my innermost aspiration."

41. ... quick" — in S we find 甲 instead of 甲 in MS.

42. ... to stay ..." — in S we do not find the word.

43. "(to disobey the King's)" — reconstituted on the base of S.

44. ... have anything in common ..." — thus I translate the word 甲.

45. In S the last two sentences are given in a reverse order.

46. In S we do not find this sentence.

47. ... shedding tears" — in S we do not find these words 甲.

48. "... asking ..." — in S we find 甲 instead of 甲 in MS.

49. ... stay ..." — in S this situation is described more detailed; 甲 ... let the Crown Prince stay in the Kingdom] dispensing alms for seven days, and then let [him] leave the Kingdom".

50. ... compiled ..." — hereafter the text breaks off; some characters lack in the end of the line 18.

51. ... carry out the belongings ..." — the words 甲 are not found in S.

52. Hereafter in S we find: 甲 if there are those who want to get things".

53. "Who heard" 甲 in S we do not find these words.

54. Hereafter the text breaks off: some characters lack in the end of the line 19 and at the top of the line 20.

55. ... meal ..." — instead of 甲 in MS we find in S. Moreover, there is a passage in S followed by the word 甲. That is not found in MS. In MS 甲 do not dare to disobey the King's command. I would still my innermost aspiration."

56. "... was dispensing" 甲 — in S we find 甲.

57. Hereafter the text breaks off: some characters lack in the end of the line 20 and at the top of the line 21. In place of the lacking characters in S we find as follows: 甲 The poor have got property; all the people felt happy".

58. "... entered [his] personal Palace" — in S this part of the phrase is not presented.

59. "You like ... respectfully to call to ..." in S this passage is not presented. Hereafter in the ens of the line 21 and at the top of the line 22 there lack some characters.

60. ... more ..." 甲 in S this word is not found.

61. In the end of the line 22 and at the top of the line 23 there are some lacking characters.

62. "... the great ... so much" — in S we do not find this phrase.

63. There are some lacking characters at the top of the line 24. In place of the lacking characters S reads as follows: 甲 the King is going to treat him in this way?".

64. "... said" 甲 — in S this passage is not presented. Hereafter the text breaks off.
I. S. Gurevich, "A Fragment of a pien-wen (?) Related to the Cycle 'On Buddha's Life'"

Sino-Platonic Papers, 82 (October, 1998)

TH-285,III (Fig. 3)

Translation

[the Crown Prince said]: “You got used to everlasting enjoins [11]. [You] shall be unable to bear it, shall not you? [If living in Palace you have got] delicious (food and drink) [10]. Whatever [you] wished everything came in sight [14] ... [You] shall have [to use] a straw litter as bedding, [you] shall have [to use] wild fruits as food [10] / [you] shall have [to use] salt water as drinking. [As a result your] lips will all be chapped [14]. It makes [7] the people's hair stand on end. If I am undergoing pain [7] [that is because] I myself committed a crime, so I myself have // to undergo sufferings*. But endure sufferings of one's own free will* — what for would you?" // Manti* said: "You have a faithful bondmaid [14], and I shall firstly undergo [all] sufferings. Now you are suffering*. How can I enjoy myself [feeling] lonely? Sorrow and joy // we shall live through together. In life and death we shall get together. [As to me] it is impossible to part with you***. [The Crown Prince said: "From* the [very] childhood [it was like this]: when you wished // your heart to be comfortable, you got cool, if you got hot* it is extremely hot*. The gusty wind and the abrupt rain do not stop day and night. The fog and dew, the hoar-frost and snow last all night long [10]. // The peal of thunder

[and] sparkling of hail [stones] [12] instil terror into people [13]. The falling stones [and] the sand floating in the air fulfil people's eyes and mouths [14]. Moreover there are prickles of shrubby plants [14] sticking out of the earth; // sharp stones [16], poisonous herbs, nasty insects [17]; so that [even] under the trees it is impossible to stay [for rest]. How can you [being attached with all your (?) heart disregard my words?" [13] // Manti* said [10]: "From the [very] childhood the Crown Prince and me [in regard to out nature [13] [we] formed a unit. [Our] love is incomparable with any other. Let the Crown Prince // eat wild fruits and wear clothes made of grass, while I am [12] to [sleep] in a soft bed and to eat delicious food [13]. Is not it [unjustifiable] [14]? // Not for the world can I part with the Crown Prince [13]. I do have to follow* the Crown Prince [14]. As the King's sign the standard is to be considered, // as a sign of fire the smoke is to be considered, and as a sign of a wife [her] husband is to be considered. I lean for support only on the Crown Prince. The Crown Prince // is [something] that I hold as a Heaven. Residing in the State Palace* [13] the Crown Prince used to dispense alms ... // If [13] I have to stay together with the Crown Prince ... [13] // if a mendicant asks me to give you [13] away, I ... // [but my] thoughts are with you [13] ... // Manti* ...

Notes on TH-285,III

1. "... enjoins“ 申爾 in S we find 慣．
2. Reconstruct. after S.
3. "Whatever ...” 子所 in S we find 述, instead of 告.
4. "... everything came in sight” ... 名至眼底 — in S this phrase is not presented.
5. "[You] shall ... as bedding ... as food” — my reconstruction of the passage is based upon the scrap of the broken off text of MS and the text of S.
6. "[As a result your] ... chased” 細 ... 鼈 — in S this phrase is not presented.
7. "It makes...” — in S the causative construction is marked by 使 instead of 見．
8. The seventh character in line 5 I reconstruct as 據; the word combination 禾穀 I translate as “faithful bondmaid”.
9. The Chinese original demonstrates an unusual structure of the complex sentence in the point of sequence of the principal and subordinate clauses: generally the subordinate clause precedes the principal one; in my translation I follow the unusual order of the parts of the complex sentence.
10. The passage that begins with the words "If I am undergoing pain ..." 彼人肋肋 in the line 3 and up to the words The point is that* in the mountains [12] 少錯 is not presented in S. 1.
11. "The gusty wind ... last all night long” 且且 — in S the same meaning is expressed much more shorter: 且且.
12. "...hail [stones]” — in S instead we have “lightning” 萬 that looks more logically. The phrase “The peal of thunder [and] sparkling of hail [stones]” is not presented in S.
13. "...instil terror into people” 彼人肋肋 — in S almost the same meaning looks as follows: 彼人肋肋 “... it makes the people's hair stand on end”.
14. "The falling stones ... mouths” 矢矢 — in S the passage is not presented.
15. "...shrubby plants” — in S we find 麻 that is more logically.
16. "... sharp stones ...” — in S 麻.
17. "... insects” — in S 麻.
18. The words in brackets are to be considered as a hypothetical reconstruction of two characters which are difficult for recognition.
19. "... How ... words?” ( 汝 ... 言也 — in S the passage is not presented.
20. "... said” — the next character is struck out and is difficult for recognizing.
21. "... nature” — thus I translate the character 彼: the initial (literal) meaning of the word is “bones”; just as “bones” may be considered a base of any construction, “nature” implies the essential qualities of anything.
22. The passage that begins with the words "... the Crown Prince ..." ... 太子 ... (line 11) up to the words "...I am to ..." ... 造发 ... (line 12) is not presented in S.

23. "... while I am ... food" 失 ... 食 ... — in S we find nearly the same text except for an insignificant variant reading 食用 (S) and 食用 (MS).

24. "Is not it [unjustifiable]?" 里有里[理] — in S the phrase is not presented; 里是 reconstructed on the base of the well-known idiomatic expression 想有 想 理 or 里有里理.

25. "Not for ... Crown Prince" 余不能以太子相離 — in S we find almost the same text but instead of 以太子相離 there stands 相違離也.

26. "[I] do have ... the Crown Prince" 皆當與太子相隨 — in S we have nearly the same text but instead of 隨者 there stands 隨方耳.

27. "... State Palace" 固 宮 — in S stands 固時.

28. "If" — my interpretation of the character as 萬 (the first in line 16) is presumably.

29. "If I have ... Crown Prince..." — in S the phrase is not presented.

30. "... you ..." — instead of 之在 MS there stands 之在 S.

31. "... [but my] ... with you ..." — the phrase is not presented in S.

Illustrations

Fig. 1. TH-285, I. Fragments of a pien-wen (?) related to the cycle "On Buddha's Life".
Fig. 2. TH-285, II.
Fig. 3. TH-285, III.
I. S. Gurevich, "A Fragment of a pien-wen (?) Related to the Cycle 'On Buddha's Life'"
Sino-Platonic Papers, 82 (October, 1998)
The Table of specific Junhuang graphic-forms occurred in the Fragments of this

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The Table of specific "Tunhuang" graphic forms occurred in the Fragments of 17S

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Editor's Note: The preceding paper was not edited by me, but appears exactly as it was prepared by the author, one of the leading authorities on Medieval Vernacular Sinitic in Russia. The main reasons why the paper appears in its unedited form are two: 1. severe difficulties in communication, and 2. the fact that a disk and a file attached to an e-mail message both came to me in an unusual compressed format that made it impossible to decompress the author's text with the computer expertise available to me. I tried my best to obtain an uncompressed file but that proved impossible.

Despite these problems, I have decided to publish the paper as is because it makes available an important, but hitherto unknown, manuscript of a semi-vernacular, medieval Buddhist text. Furthermore, the author has provided a complete scholarly apparatus for dealing with the text. The paper has, in addition, been neatly prepared in a clean format. Although the author's English is sometimes not entirely idiomatic, it is remarkably good for a non-native speaker and certainly clear enough to be understood. Finally, she is right to put a question mark after the word pien-wen ("transformation text") because the text under consideration, strictly speaking, does not belong to that genre but to popularized versions of sutras about the Buddha's spiritual awakening and enlightenment of the type known as T'ai-tzu ch'eng-tao ching (see Tun-huang pien-wen chi, vol. 1, p. 296, l. 11). Last, but not least, publication of Dr. Gurevich's paper in its original form affords scholars outside of Russia the opportunity to gain an appreciation of the state of Sinology in that country. Russian Sinology has a long and glorious heritage; it is sad that so few people in the West and in the East are aware of the valuable resources it offers.
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