The Transformations of Vaiśravaṇa

----The Cult of Vaiśravaṇa in Khotan and Medieval China

毗沙门天的演变

——于阗和中国中世纪时期的毗沙门天信仰

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Macau.

Author: WANG Yuantian (王元天)

Student I. D.: MB041055

Supervisor: Dr. Tianshu ZHU

Department of History

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

University of Macau

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis represents my own work, except where the acknowledgement is made, and it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.
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Abstract

Vaiśravaṇa is an important Buddhist deity from India to China. In China, the Vaiśravaṇa worship was once a very important belief from the Tang dynasty to the Yuan dynasty. This period of his popularity contributed a lot to his transformations towards his basic form in China. The key characteristics of his every aspect were roughly settled after this period. These characteristics derived from different aspects of his prototype in early Buddhism. To make clear the transformation tracks from his prototype to his Chinese basic form can provide great help to the understanding of his situation in China. This thesis focuses on the transformation of Vaiśravaṇa from Khotan to medieval China till the emergence of his Chinese basic form. In order to achieve this goal, it will be a comprehensive study referred to several regions as well as interdisciplinary sources.

Key Words: Vaiśravaṇa, Khotan, Medieval China, Transformations.