

TWO OLD UIGUR FRAGMENTS FROM DUNHUANG CONNECTED WITH THE PURE LAND BELIEF

ZHANG TIESHAN, ZIEME ZIEME

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27 Zhongguancun South Avenue Haidian District, Beijing, 100081, P. R. China
e-mail: zhangtieshan@sina.com

16816 Neuruppin, Schinkelstr. 12, Germany
e-mail: ziemepe@gmail.com

In this paper the authors edit two Old Uigur fragments that have recently become accessible from Dunhuang. The first is part of a poem on the famous story of King Bimbasāra and his wife Vaidehī that was popular in Pure Land Buddhism. The second is a kind of a commentary that uses Chinese phrases in original Chinese script.

Key words: Old Uigur, Buddhist literature, Pure Land, commentary, Chinese phrases.

1. A Poem on Amitābha

The famous emotional story of Vaidehī, the wife of King Bimbasāra, was again and again a topic of inspiration for artists and literati.¹ It might suffice to remind here of the prologue in the 觀無量壽經 *Guanwuliangshoujing* (T.XII.365). The text of this apocryphal sūtra was translated from Chinese into Old Uigur not only in prose (Kudara 1979; Zieme 1982), but also newly arranged in alliteration verses and masterfully printed during the Yuan period (Zieme–Kudara 1985). The book also starts with the Vaidehī story (Zieme–Kudara 1985, p. 80, l. 16) like this new manuscript, but the leaf is clearly the work of a different author. Whether one can find any connections between the two versions is a question which cannot be resolved now.

The leaf of a stitched booklet we are going to edit here belongs to the manuscript collection of the Dunhuang Academy, it bears the signature D.0019 (52.35.20) (see Figures 1 and 2). The size of the fragment is 7.5 × 11.5 cm. Since the page number

¹ The origin and composition of this story used in the prologue to the *Guanwuliangshoujing* were treated by many scholars, see Silk (1997); for artistic presentation compare i. a. Yamabe (1999, 2012).

on the margin of the verso side is preserved, one can reconstruct the beginning of the booklet, but how many pages followed remains unclear.

Leaf 1 (missing)

If one counts 7 lines on each side of a leaf, one can estimate that the first three lines on page 1 were preserved for the title, followed by probably three stanzas of each 4 lines.

Leaf 2 with the leaf number *iki* “two”. The first line on the first page of leaf 2 is the fourth line of stanza III.

The end of a stanza is marked by a four hooks sign. The script is very clear and resembles other examples used in the Yuan period. To give a precise date is impossible.

Transcription of the text

Recto

Stanza III^d

01 asıg tusu kılur ugur-ta ::

Stanza IV²

02 ačatašatru³ han-nıñ atası⁴

03 ayaguluk bimbasare⁵ elig-kä ..

04 anası vaidehi⁶ hatun-ka ..

05 alku kamag terin-kä kuvrag-ka ::

Stanza V⁷

06 abita t(ä)ñri t(ä)ñrısı burhan-nıñ ..

07 artokrak mänji-lig uluš-in ..

Verso

08 adırtl(ı)g körkitü⁸ közüdürü

09 antag tep inčä y(a)rılıkadıñız ::

² Zieme–Kudara (1985, p. 80, ll. 13–16): [anta] basa bir tušta / ačagarh al(ı)g balıkta / [ačata]šaturu eligñıñ / anası vaidehi [v'ytyq y] hatunka.

³ 'č' d' s' t' rw.

⁴ 'd' sy.

⁵ The name is also known as Bimbisāra, but the Old Uigur form is derived from Bimbasāra. For Bimbasare cf. Zieme (2013).

⁶ v'ytyq y.

⁷ Zieme–Kudara (1985, p. 80, ll. 17–20): [a]bita t(ä)ñri burhanıg / artokrak mänjilig ulušug / adırtlıg körkitü y(a)rılıkap / ača adıra nomlamış.

⁸ kwyrkydw.

Stanza VI

10 kenki beš čöpdik üd-täki ..
 11 kim kayu kiši yalaŋok oĝlanı ..
 12 kkir-siz arıg uluŝ-ta tuggalı ..
 13 kertgünč taplag-ları bolsar-lar ::

Stanza VII

14 kolu-suz y(a)ruk-lug burhan-nıŋ ..

Translation

III d

[...]

At a time [when (you, the Buddha) on the pure mountain Gṛdhrakūṭa] were making
 vantage and benefit [to the *vaineŷika* beings having reasons (of good deeds)],

IV a–d

to King Bimbāsāra –
 the father of Lord Ajātaśatru –,
 to his mother Lady Vaidehī,
 to the whole community,

V a–d

you deigned to show and make appear
 distinctly
 the realm of utmost bliss (i.e. Sukhāvātī)
 of Amitābha, the god of gods.

VI a–d

Whoever of the sons of human beings
 in the later period of the five impurities⁹
 has in belief the wish
 to be born in the stainless pure realm,

VII a

[the word] of the Buddha ‘Infinite Light’¹⁰
 (...)

⁹ Usually the texts use *čöpik*.

¹⁰ “Infinite Light” is the translation of Amitābha.

Notes

The text of this poem is partly known also from the manuscript U 5369 (T I 578) (BT.XIII.7). Here is a comparison of both versions:

	BT.XIII.7
	arıg gadirakud ol tagta avantlıg vaineke tınl(1)glarka asıg tusu kılur ugurta
01 asıg tusu kılur ugur-ta ::	
02 ačatašatru han-nıñ atası	ačadašaturu hannıñ atası
03 ayaguluk bimbasare elig-kä ..	ayaguluk bimbasare eligkä
04 anası vaidehi hatun-ka ..	anası vudeh hatunka
05 alku kamag terin-kä kuvrag-ka ::	a[lk]u kamag terinkä kuvragka.

artokrak mänjilig uluŝ “Realm of utmost bliss” is one of the compounds of translating Sanskrit *sukhāvātī* (UWN II, 2, pp. 51–52). Accordingly, it seems better to reconstruct in the Avalokitśvara praise the verse BT.XIII.20.24 in the same way:

06 abita t(ä)ñri t(ä)ñrisi burhan-nıñ ..	amita-aba burhanıg
07 artokrak mänj-i-lig uluŝ-ın ..	[a] töpötä eltinür
08 adırtl(ı)g körkitü ¹¹ közündürü	[artokr]ak mänjilig uluŝug
09 antag tep inčä y(a)rılıkadıñız ::	[adırt]lıg munta ok körkitür.

vaidehi // vudeh

The name of the protagonist is the queen Vaidehī (cf. Zieme 2013, pp. 28–29; Wilkens 2017, pp. 215–216 [12v27]). The Dunhuang manuscript has the correct form *vaidehi hatun*, while one sees *vudeh hatun*¹² in the manuscript of BT.XIII.7. The latter spelling is so far unexplained. The fragment U 2084 of the Berlin Collection, which is part of the prose translation of the *Guanjing*, has in recto 5 [... *vaidejh hatun*]¹³ translating 佛告阿難及韋提希 “The Buddha said to Ānanda and Vaidehī” (T.XII.365c15).

2. A Commentarial Text

The leaf with the shelf number D.0590 (54.1.272) (see Figure 3) has a size of 14 × 23 cm, it is part of a manuscript. The text is written on one side of the leaf. Since it definitely belongs to a pustaka shape manuscript with a typical pustaka hole extending from l. 4 to l. 7, one has to assume that two sheets of paper were pasted together.

¹¹ kwyrkydw.

¹² vwdyq̄ q' dwn.

¹³ ...q̄ q' twn.

In the course of time one layer became detached and was lost. The Chinese quotations on ll. 14 and 16 are written in red ink.

The Chinese quotations are taken from the *kimkoki*¹⁴ < 金剛經 Jin'gangjing which is the standard short title of the *Vajracchedikāsūtra* derived from its Chinese rendering as used in the commentary. The exact parallel is not found in the normal Chinese translations of the sūtra, only in the Fu Dashi verse commentary based on this sūtra (T.LXXXV.2732). This shows again the popularity of the Fu Dashi text among Uigur Buddhists.

The text of the leaf refers to the Pure Land, but this does not mean that the whole commentary can be related to the Pure Land Buddhism. Similar manuscripts have to be taken into account, too. One other fragment from the same manuscript 北大附 T3 was edited by A. Yakup in which a quotation is given from the *Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra* (Yakup 2015). As shown before, it is unlikely that the manuscript is a commentary to that sūtra (Zieme 2015). A further fragment from the same manuscript is 附 T2 which has the title and page number on its verso: *šuntsi bir* “顺次 shunci, one [first leaf]”. Other leaves of similar manuscripts are known from the Collection in Berlin (Zieme 2015).¹⁵

Transcription of the text

- 01 inčip yänä bo nomlug tilgän
 02 ävirgäli ötünmäk alku-nuṅ
 03 asıg-lıg-ıṅa tiltag bolmak
 04 -tın yeg adrok ärsär
 05 ymä inčip
 06 yänä munta
 07 ačınu yadınu
 08 kšanti kılmak burhan
 09 -lar uluṣ-ın ukmak-nıṅ
 10 tiltag-ı ärür .. nätägin tep
 11 tesär .. k(a)ltı bo sav-nıṅ
 12 tiltag-ınta kimkoki sudur
 13 -ta šlok-ta sözlämiši
 14 bar 除心意地¹⁶ arıtsar
 15 sipirsär köñül-nüṅ tarıglag
 16 yer-[in ...] 名爲淨土因
 17 [atı] bolur .. burhan-lar uluṣ
 18 -ın etm[äk ...]

¹⁴ kymqwky.

¹⁵ P. Zieme's statement that the Beijing and Berlin leaves belong to the same manuscript is wrong. Although they are parts of the same text, the fragments stem from two different manuscripts. In an earlier paper P. Zieme edited the *Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra* quotation of the Beijing manuscript, some of his readings differ from those of A. Yakup (see Zieme 2014, p. 403, fn. 13).

¹⁶ The first Chinese character 掃 is missing!

Translation

As again the humbly turning of the dharma wheel is better and superior than being the reason for the welfare of all (people), just acknowledging and confessing (sins) is the reason for understanding the Buddha land. Thus as reason of this saying there is one śloka in the *Vajracchedikāsūtra* which says: “if one purifies and cleans the citta field, it is like creating the Pure Land.”

Notes

The Chinese quotation occurs in T.LXXXV.2732.3c28: 掃除心意地 名爲淨土因. It is part of the Fu Dashi (Maitreya) śloka based on § 10b of T.VIII.235.749c18–19 須菩提於意云何菩薩莊嚴佛土不不也世尊 “The Lord said, “Any bodhisattva, Subhūti, who says ‘I will make the dispositions of a field perfect!’ would be telling a lie.””¹⁷

It is translated into Old Uigur literally for the first verse, but more freely for the second one:

<掃>	除	心意	地
arıtsar	sipirsär	köñülnüñ	tarıglag yer[in]
名	爲	淨土	因
[atı]	bolur	burhanlar ulušin	etm[äk].

The text U 3352 (BT.XXVIII.text B) has some interesting variants. For comparison we quote from Yakup’s (2010) edition:

sipirsär arıtsar k[öñülnüñ tarıglag yerin]
atı bolur burhanlar [ulušin etmāk :]¹⁸

This clearly shows that the translation of the Dunhuang manuscript was made independently, unless it was the intention of the composer to present a better or a corrected version. But comparing both versions, one can hardly say which version can be regarded as more truthful to the original text.

Here, one observes that the order of the members of the biverb *art-* *sipir-* can change to *sipir-* *art-*. It is an interesting topic for the research of biverbs and binoms whether and how much the members can change freely or not.

From a Buddhological point of view it is worth noting that Chinese *jingtu* “Pure Land” was understood as a more general term “Buddha Land”. This is reasonable as these terms can be used for expressing the same idea.

In both versions Chinese 因 *yin* “cause, reason” is translated by *etmāk*, the verbal noun from *et-* “to create, to decorate” etc.

¹⁷ All quoted from the TLB database (in Bibliotheca Polyglotta).

¹⁸ For the emendations A. Yakup follows the parallel text U 3214 recto 1–2 (BT.XXVIII.C224-225).

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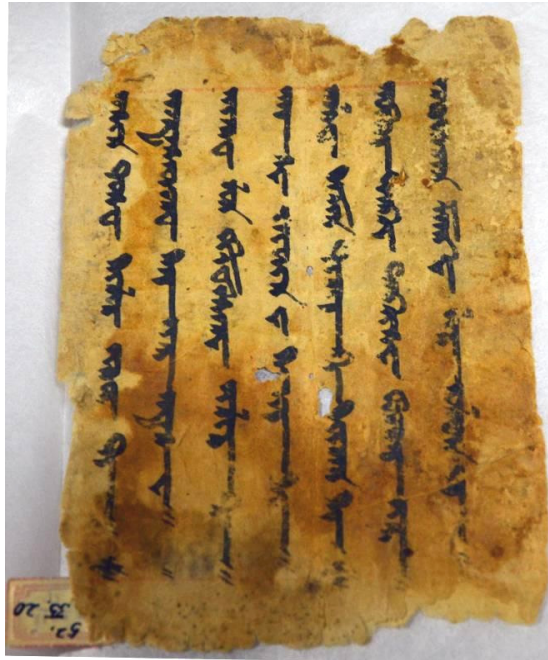


Figure 1. D.0019 (52.35.20). Recto

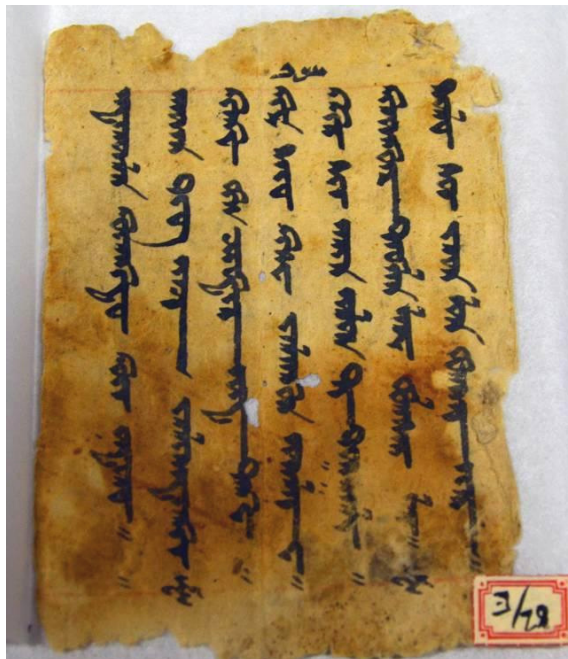


Figure 2. D.0019 (52.35.20). Verso

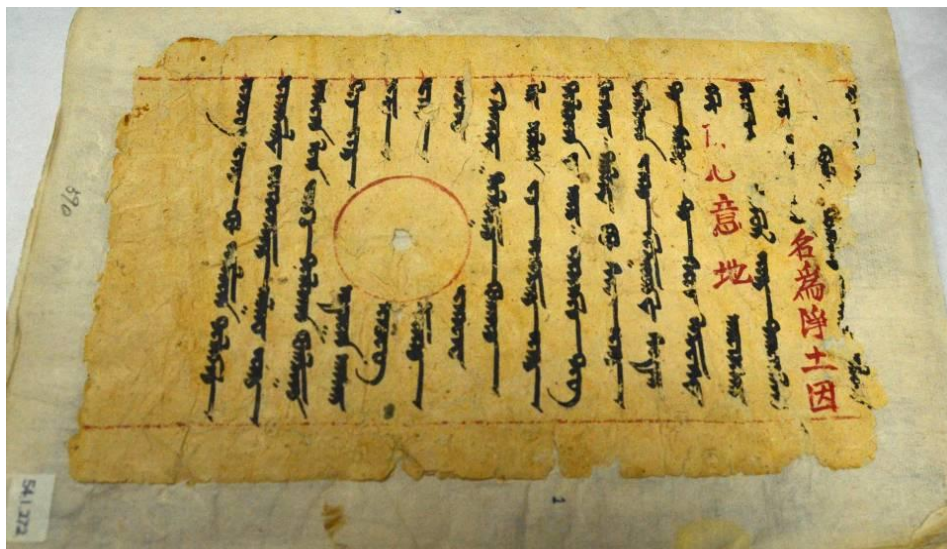


Figure 3. D.0590 (54.1.272)

