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Peter Zieme

Fragments of the Old Uighur Maitrisimit nom bitig in St. Petersburg, Helsinki and Berlin

Abstract: The author examines some small Old Uighur fragments belonging to three collections of Turfan texts that provide parallels to passages of the extant full versions of the Maitrisimit nom bitig, an important Buddhist text on the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya known only from Tocharian and its Old Uighur translation.

Key words: Turfan, Maitreya, Maitrisimit, Old Uighur literature, Old Uighur texts

The Maitrisimit nom bitig is one of the oldest and best known Old Uighur texts.\(^1\) It was translated from Tocharian and occupies a prominent place in Old Uighur literature, as it is not only well translated but appears at the very beginning of Old Uighur literature. Manuscripts that were written during the 10th and 11th centuries were found at different sites of the Turfan oasis. Today they are preserved in several collections of Central Asian texts. The majority of manuscripts from Sängim and Murtuk are housed in the Berlin Collection, others in the Xinjiang Museum of Urumqi.\(^2\) One fragment belongs to the Otani Collection in the Library of the Ryūkoku University in Kyoto.\(^3\) A slightly different manuscript was found in 1959 near Hami (Qomul), in the village of Tömürti. While this manuscript is preserved in the Xinjiang Museum, some 436 small fragments, probably from the same manuscript that came to light only in 2006 near the village of Närnasi, are owned by the Cultural Centre of Qomul.\(^4\)

Thus, there are two groups of manuscripts, one from the Turfan oasis with the manuscripts from Sängim and Murtuk, the other consists of the fragments

\(^1\) A new comparative edition of all Maitrisimit nom bitig fragments is the aim of the project “Gesamtedition der alttürkischen Überlieferungen zur Maitreya-Literatur” at the “Seminar für Turkologie und Zentralasienkunde” of the University of Göttingen, cf. its website.

\(^2\) ISRAPIL 2013.

\(^3\) ZIEME 2000.

\(^4\) ISRAPIL, LAUT, SEMET 2012/2013, 220–221.
from Tömürti and Närnasi. While the latter ones may belong to one and the same manuscript, it is still debated how many manuscripts were written in Süngim and Murtuk or collected there.

In a recent paper, the authors reported for the first time that fragments of a manuscript from Süngim are also kept in St. Petersburg without giving any details.\footnote{\textit{I}SRAPIL, \textsc{La}UT, \textsc{S}EMET 2012/2013, 220, fn. 2. Probably the authors thought of the items SI 4a Kr 48 and 49, SI O 40a, b, c for which the catalogue of UMEMURA, SHOGAITO, YOSHIIDA, \textsc{Y}AKUP 2002, 143, 159 gives the identification as “Maitrisimit”, but this is not the case.} Besides the pieces labelled as “Maitrisimit”, there are some small fragments in the Central Asian Collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences\footnote{I am grateful to the responsible persons of the collections in St. Petersburg, Helsinki and Berlin for the opportunity to work with the Old Uighur texts housed there.} that can probably be regarded as parts of that text.

\section*{St. Petersburg Fragments}

Fragment SI 5129 (SI Kr IV 448) belongs to the so-called Krotkov Collection,\footnote{N.N. Krotkov (1869–1921), consul in Urumqi, collected 4,070 text fragments.} but there is no record about the exact site of its origin. It is a small part of a large \textit{pustaka} leaf which might have been as large as those known from the Berlin Collection, probably about 50 cm wide. Whether it can be joined with another fragment of other collections, must be examined in future.

The fragment belongs to one of the “hell chapters” comprising large part of the Old Uighur \textit{Maitrisimit nom bitig}. Among Old Uighur fragments\footnote{\textsc{G}ENG, \textsc{K}limkeit, \textsc{La}UT 1988b.} published so far, there is no direct evidence of both sections, but there is at least a probable candidate for the verso side.

\subsection*{Text of SI 5129 in transcription}

(recto) \hspace{1cm} [toyın]
(01) [-larnaŋ] köñülläri kürsiz arıg
(02) turug üçün kóni ol k[uñ]ragka
(03) kirür-lär : ötrü ol toyın-lar inčä
(04) tep ötüntilär : kim-lär sizlär nää
(05) ayıg kılınč kılıpan bo muntag
(06) [tamularta ]dip ol
Pl. 1.
Turfan Collection of St. Petersburg. SI 5129 (SI Kr IV 448) recto
“As [the monks’] hearts are [spotless and] clean, they enter this true con-
vent(?)]. Then these monks requested: Who are you? What bad deeds have
you done [to be born] in these [hells]. Hea[ring it(?)], they […]”

(verso)
(01) [kama]gun anta [öläüp]
(02) ulug [tam]u-larda tugdumuz ta[mu]
(03) -ta kurtulup amtı bo kičig tam
(04) -ularda tugmıš ärür-biz : körüŋ
(05) -lär bäglärim(iz)z tämirlig örtlüg
(06) čomakların [

“The text of the verso side can be compared to the following passage on
leaf 7 of the 22nd chapter9 of the Maitrisimit nom bitig.10 (Pl. 73 = Mainz
975 recto 3–13) ol tiltagın biz tıtsilang boš idmĩş üčũn anta öläüp kamagin
tamuda tugdumuz : tamudın ozup bo kičig tamular-da tugmıš ärür biz : :
körüü̈lär bāglärim(iz) munta tugup örtänûr yalar-biz : bahşi boltačılarr
açarlar öyru-h yoryur-biz yaŋ udu tıtsi boltačı-lar örtlüg yalinlig at’özın ört-
lüg čomaklar tuta bızni tokçu inčã tep teyüṛlär,11 “Because of this, as we
disregarded12 pupils, we died there and altogether were born in hell. Re-
leased from (that) hell, we were born in these small hells. Look, our lords!
We were born here, and we are all in flames and burn. As those who were
masters, ācārya, we go ahead, and those who are pupils following the rule13
hold with their flaming and burning bodies flaming maces and beat us saying
thus.”

As one finds only the highlighted words of Mainz 975 in the
St. Petersburg fragment, it remains doubtful whether this is really a variant
of the Maitrisimit text, but the probability is very high as the following table
shows.

9 iki otuzunč üluš yeti ptr.
10 TÆKIN 1980, Pl. 73.
11 GENG, KLIMKEIT, LAUT 1988b, 92.
12 It is a special phrase boš id- “bos göndermek”, cf. Şen 2010, 62.
13 The phrase yaŋ udu translated by Ş. TÆKIN “[uns als ihrem] Vorbild folgend” (TÆKIN
1980, I, 185) was slightly changed by GENG, KLIMKEIT, LAUT 1988b, 92: “und das Gefolge”:
But I think that Tekin’s translation fits better, as it is improbable that udu can be understood
as a noun.
<table>
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<th>Mainz 975</th>
<th>SI 5129</th>
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<tr>
<td>anta ölüp</td>
<td>[kama]gin anta [ölüp]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamagın tamuda tugdumuz</td>
<td>ulug t[am]u-larda tugdumuz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamudın ozup</td>
<td>ta[mu]-ta kurtulup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bo kiçig tamular-da tugmıš ärür biz</td>
<td>amtı bo kiçig tam-ularda tugmıš ärür-biz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>körüŋlär bäglärim(i)z</td>
<td>körüŋ-lär bäglärim(i)z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>munta tugup örtänür yalar-biz : ba-ḥși boltačılär açaırılär öŋrä varyur-biz yan udu titsi boltačlı-lar örtlüg yalınlıg ät’özın</td>
<td>(omitted?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ört-lüg çomaklar tuta bizni tokiyu</td>
<td>tämirlig örtlüg çomaklarin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word *kılıpan* contains the converb suffix -\(\text{XpAn}\), which is rare, especially in Buddhist texts. Another example is *kör-üpän*\(^14\) in a Sāgīṃ manus-\(\text{script}\). Further, it occurs in the augmented form *uk-üpāmn*.\(^15\)

The order of recto and verso sides is not clear. But considering that, before leaf 7, a large gap of about 90 lines\(^16\) must be reckoned with, it is very probable that the recto side contains the question of the monks. The editors of the Göttingen project will hopefully find a proof of my assumption.

Another fragment of the Krotkov Collection, SI 4433 (SI Kr I 348) is too small to allow its exact placing in the *Maitrisimit nom bitig*. The handwriting of this fragment is similar to the manuscripts of the *Maitrisimit nom bitig*, but this fact is not conclusive *per se*, especially because the verso side contains no text. Even if it is a piece of a scroll, one cannot exclude the possibility of its belonging to this text.\(^17\) While, in the *Suttanipāta*, Ajita is, like Metteya, the Buddha’s disciple,\(^18\) later Ajita became an epithet of Maitreya.\(^19\)

\(^{14}\) Cf. T\(\text{E}K\)IN 1980, I, 231, pl. 106, 5.  
\(^{15}\) Cf. T\(\text{E}K\)IN 1980, I, 71, pl. 23, 13.  
\(^{16}\) GENG, KLI\(\text{M}E\)IT, LA\(\text{T}\) 1988b, 91.  
\(^{17}\) See the other case of a Berlin manuscript (U 4963).  
\(^{18}\) The fragments of an Old Uighur translation of the *Pārāyān* /dotsubnosp asūtra contain the passage from the *Suttanipāta* in which Ajita and Metteya [Skt. Maitreya] put their questions to the Buddha (see ZI\(\text{ME}\) 1997).  
\(^{19}\) NATTIER 1988, 38, fn. 12.
This is also the case in the *Maitrisimit*. Thus both texts are candidates. Since all places where Ajita occurs in the currently known *Maitrisimit* text fragments have no match to any of the few other words, the question of identifying this small fragment remains unsettled.

**Text of SI 4433 (SI Kr I 348) in transcription**

(01) [ ] ačiti [ ] [ ] Ajita [ ]
(02) [ ] : beš tūrl[ūg ] [ ] five kin[ds ]
(03) [ ] : mn // 'w'[ ] [ ]
Fragments of the Mannerheim Collection in Helsinki

The following two fragments of the Mannerheim Collection in Helsinki resemble the Sängim manuscript of the Maitrisimit. But, due to its meagre text, there is little chance to locate them in the Maitrisimit nom bitig. From the few legible words one can guess that “all monks” will keep “true belief” and venerate the “Noble Maitreya”.

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20 The Mannerheim Collection is deposited in The National Library of Finland, and its owner is The Finno-Ugrian Society. I express my thanks to Oguchi Masashi for sharing with me his photographs.
Pl. 6
Mannerheim Collection of Helsinki. M14F recto

Pl. 7
Mannerheim Collection of Helsinki. M14F verso

**M14E in transcription**

(recto)

(01) alku dentar [ süz]
(02) -ük köňül o[r]it ]
(03) töztün maitri [ ]
(04) [ ]
A Fragment of the Turfan Collection in Berlin

In the following, I turn to a passage of the first leaf of the 10th chapter of the Tömürti manuscript: *anta ken šamnu t(a)ŋri öütügingä t(a)ŋri t(a)ŋrisi šakimun burxan čap(a)li atl(i)g yemišliktä öłümlüg şamnąg utup isig özın ᵅlap ikilä üç ay kömi adhis/tüta tuta y(a)rückaduktä tőzün maitri bodis(a)(a)t t(a)ŋri t(a)ŋrisi burxanta öğräräk yalųŋuk ät'özîn ūdalap tüžit t(a)ŋri yerintä tugdī.* ¹²² “When the god of gods Śākyamuni Buddha on request of God Māra in the garden called Cāpāla had conquered the Death-Māra and was giving up his life and graciously retained it again for three months through adhiṣṭhita, the Noble Maitreya Bodhisattva gave up his human body earlier than the god of gods Buddha and was reborn in the Tuṣita heaven’s land.” ²³

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²¹ In Uighur cursive script.
²² Tömürti ms. X, 1b1–9.
Parts of this phrase occur in fragment U4963 of the Turfan Collection of the Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. According to the old signature (T), it originates from Toyuq, so far not known as a place where Maitrisimit fragments were found. It is a fragment of a book-scroll. If the identification of this fragment as part of the Maitrisimit nom bitig can be ascertained, it would be the first specimen of a Maitrisimit manuscript that definitely is not from a pustaka.

Text of U4963 in transcription

(01) […] [o]l k[…]k[ ]²⁶ [urunčaq tuta tāginti : anta ken]
(02) [šmn]u t(ā)ŋri ötūginjā [šakimun burhan čapali atlg yemišlik-tā]
(03) […]-ka öläm-lūg [šmnug utup]
(04) [iš]lîg özů努znî id[ip iki]lā uč ay köni adištît]
(05) [üz]ä tuta y(a)rlikadîŋ[iz…]

²⁴ The verso side bears the old entry T II T., while the label on the glass has T II T 503.
²⁵ The verso side remained empty, as is normal with scrolls, later it was used to write down some phrase of a document that contains in its second line the well-known term kuanpo “official linen”.
²⁶ Unclear.
The following table may show how the two texts are related to one another. The identical words are highlighted in bold letters.

<table>
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<th>Tömürti ms. X 1b</th>
<th>U 4863</th>
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<tr>
<td>anta ken šamnu (t(ä)ŋri ötügiŋä t(ä)ŋri t(ä)ŋrisi šakimun burxan</td>
<td>[... šmn]u t(ä)ŋri ötügiŋä [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čap(a)li atl(ı)g yemišliktä ölümlüg šamnug utup</td>
<td>-ka ölüm-lüg [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isig özün idp ikilä üč ay köni adištit üzä tuta y(a)rlkadukta</td>
<td>[lis]ig özünüzni idl[ıp ... üz]ä tuta y(a)rlkad[ı]z ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tözün maitri bodisvt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With some hesitation I suggest that U4963 is part of another manuscript of the Maitrimiṭ nom bitig. The corresponding passages are striking, but still some deviations are unsurpassable. In line 3 of U4963, there is an unexpected suffix -ka. Another problem is the shift from the narrative style (3rd person) in the Tömürti text to the addressing style (you) in U4963.

**Further Notes on Maitreya**

In their editions of the 10th and 11th chapters of the Tömürti manuscript, the authors pointed out how essential the descent of Maitreya from the Tuṣṭa and his birth on earth are; these events present the culminating phases of the whole story. In the following, I discuss some passages of chapter XI.

a) In the passage which describes Maitreya’s stay in his mother’s womb we read: ög karnunta olurup kalı monečk ärdni kaš altag agıda urmš osuglug kah[n] k[an] kir yamka arći yuku[mæz]²⁸ “Maitreya sits in the mother’s womb as a pearl jewel wrapped into brocade called kāši, totally not flawed by thick blood, dirt and dust”.

The authors comment on the fourth word of 4b27, which they read ärši: according to the context, this word should denote a kind of fabric.²⁹ Now, instead of ärši one can read agı. As noted by Mahmūd al-Kāšyārī, this agı has the special meaning “brocade”.³⁰ What could fit Maitreya better?

²⁸ Tömürti ms. XI.4a25–29.
²⁹ GENG, KLIMKEIT, LAUT 1988a, 343, fn. 40.
³⁰ CLAUSON 1972, 78a.
b) At another place, the text has the following passage: \( k(\ddot{a})nt\ddot{u} \ddot{a}l\ddot{t}'\ddot{o}z\ddot{n} hua \ yavi\ddot{s}gu \ t\ddot{o}lt\ddot{a}klig ag(a)r \ yidin \ tik\ddot{m}\ddot{i}\ddot{s} \ \ddot{a}v \ bark\ddot{c}a \ sak\ddot{m}p. \)

Two words have to be read, in my view, differently from the authors’ reading: 'kr = ag(a)r instead of ãdãgii and tik\ddot{m}\ddot{i}\ddot{s} instead of tug\ddot{m}\ddot{i}\ddot{s}. Considering these different spellings, one can translate the phrase as follows: “(She) envisages her own body as a house endowed with flower garlands and filled with agaru\textsuperscript{32} fragrance.”

c) A further sentence will be discussed here:

In their note,\textsuperscript{34} the authors point to the legend that Brahm\ddot{a} offers a drop of honey\textsuperscript{35} to the Bodhisattva from a crystal bowl (\textit{vaid\ddot{u}rya-bh\ddot{a}jana}).\textsuperscript{36} In this connection, one should consider Dieter Maue’s explanation of \textit{morvant}. He writes that this word can be understood as “chain”, not “pearl”, as sometimes assumed.\textsuperscript{37}

d) In 2009, Jens Peter Laut edited the joint fragments U3798 + Mainz 1098.\textsuperscript{38} He writes that their text is similar to the first leaf of chapter X of the Tömürti version. I read the text of U3798 + Mainz 1098 somewhat differently:

(recto)

(01) ///y yüz [
(02) ugrınta m[
(03) [yer]\ddot{i}nc\ddot{u}d\ddot{a} [\ddot{a}rk\ddot{g}n]\ddot{a} be\ddot{s}\ddot{a} kirk
(04) [ya]\ddot{i}\ddot{s}ınta burhan kutun \ddot{b}ul\ddot{t}ı :
(05) be\ddot{s} allig \ddot{y}l \ddot{b}urhanlar
(06) \ddot{i}\ddot{s}i\ddot{n} i\ddot{s}l\ddot{a}d\ddot{i} \ kirk kirk\ddot{g}n
(07) \ddot{y}l \ddot{y}a\ddot{s}agu-[luk]\ddot{g}n ya\ddot{g}n

\textsuperscript{31} Tömürti ms. XI.6b22.
\textsuperscript{32} ROHRBORN 1977–1998, 62 (see \textit{Orientalistische Literaturzeitung} 73 (1978), col. 329 (’kr in U3148)).
\textsuperscript{33} Tömürti ms. XI.4b2–5.
\textsuperscript{34} GENG, KLIMKEIT, LAUT 1988a, 343, fn. 44.
\textsuperscript{35} This term is apparently the origin of Old Uighur \textit{t(\ddot{a})yrid\ddot{d}am tatag}.
\textsuperscript{36} WINDISCH 1908, 152.
\textsuperscript{37} MAUE 2009, 297–298.
\textsuperscript{38} LAUT 2009, 334.
\textsuperscript{39} The emendation to [\ddot{a}rk\ddot{g}n] follows similar patterns.
\textsuperscript{40} LAUT 2009, 334, reads \textit{tör}t with question mark. But I believe the letters can be clearly read as \textit{be\ddot{s}}, and one also expects the age of 35 for the moment of enlightenment.
\textsuperscript{41} The editor has not read the word before kirk.
\textsuperscript{42} The editor reads \textit{ya\ddot{s}ar}, but the parallel text clearly has \textit{ya\ddot{s}agu-[luk]}. 
The editor gave no translation, here is a trial version:

(recto)
“[…] hundred […] at the time [of…] […] when he was] in the world, he reached the Buddhahood when he was 35 years old. For 45 years, he accomplished the Buddhas’ deed. After 40 (plus) 40 years, he left (the world), [gave up] his life and went […]”.

(verso)
“In his life, the Honorable, the god of gods, the Buddha weakened the evil death-Māra. For three months he graciously lived his life. Then the brown earth in its suffering trembles and shakes all corners and ends. From caves […] fire arises, […] turns, dark […]”.

There are two fragments in the Turfan Collection of Berlin with Sanskrit text on one side and Old Uighur on the other: U7248 and U7249.

The Old Uighur side of U7248 has the same text as the joint fragment edited by J.P. Laut. A comparative table may help to clarify this.
The other fragment is U7249 (T II M 866) with some traces of words only.\(^49\)

\(^49\) Between the Sanskrit lines of the other side of U7249, there is an entry in Uighur script and language.
The most interesting matter is that we find here the traditional dates of the Buddha’s life, in short: enlightenment at the age of 35, teaching for 45 years, parinirvāna at the age of 80. Instead of sākiz on “eighty”, this text has kırk kırk, of course also equal to eighty. I cannot trace such very unusual doubling of kırk to denote eighty in any of the Turkic languages. It cannot be ruled out that, in fact, the fragments of section (d) do not belong to the Maitrisimit nom bitig, but are rather parts of another Life of the Buddha.

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\(^{50}\) ZIEME 2014, 403, fn. 13.

\(^{51}\) But, of course, I am not sure of my result. Hopefully, other scholars will correct me.
References


