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# ONE FURTHER FRAGMENT OF THE OLD TURKISH COMMENTARY ON THE VİMALAKĪRTİNİRDEŚA-SŪTRA*

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## Öz

Bu makale Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra'daki U 3006 [T II S 606] sayılı eski Türkçe yorumlarının parçasının ilk yayınıdır. Berlin Turfan koleksiyonunda, bu metne ait bazı parçalar bulunmaktadır ve yazar, onu 2011 yılında Berliner Turfantexte XXIX'de yayınlamıştır. Bu parça, o parçalarla aynı el yazısına aittir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eski Türkçe, Budizm, Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra'nın yorumu

## Abstract

The present article is the first publication of the fragment U 3006 [T II S 606] of the Old Turkish commentary on the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra. There are some fragments belonging to this text in the Berlin Turfan Collection and the author published it 2011 in Berliner Turfantext XXIX. The fragment in question belongs to the same handwriting of those fragments.

**Keywords:** Old Turkish, Buddhism, commentary on the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra

## Introduction

The book *Der alttürkische Kommentar zum* Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra published in 2011 was the first result of my work in the "Turfanforschung" where Prof. SEMİH TEZCAN, the scholar celebrated here, is active as the "Projektleiter". In that book I published the Old Turkish commentary on the famous Mahāyāna sutra, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra*, in which the layman in the city of Vaiśālī plays an important role. At that time, altogether 48 fragments belonging to one and the same handwriting in the Berlin Turfan Collection could be identified to it. After finishing my work Prof. PETER ZİEME kindly informed me that he could identify one further fragment of this text. I would like to publish

* I would like first to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Peter Zieme who gave me useful advice about the contents of this article and correct my English, too. While I am grateful to him for his bountiful assistance, I alone am responsible for my mistakes.

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this small fragment here to continue my first work in "Turfanforschung" which was supported by Prof. TEZCAN.

## 1. The Old Turkish commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra*

As above-mentioned only one manuscript of the Old Turkish commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra* is found in the Berlin Turfan Collection up to now. It has an upright Poṭhi format and on each side around 10 lines are written in square script. Amongst the fragments there are a few ones which contain several lines in red ink, but it does not seem to be used for the consequent mark such as for the quotation from a sutra. Thus the purpose of the use of this colour remains unclear.

Because colophons of the preserved manuscript are lacking, neither the date of its original composition nor that of copying it is clear.[1] The Old Turkish version of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra* was, however, probably composed around the 11th c.[2], so that one can suppose that the commentary was presumably composed not so far away from this period, too.

In regard to the content, the Old Turkish commentary has the closest relationship with the Chinese commentary *jingmingjing jijie guanzhongshu* 淨名經集解關中疏 (T. 2777) which was composed by Daoye 道液, the representative of the Buddhist *tiantai* 天台 school.[3] The author, Daoye 道液, put comments of various former masters in order and added his own comments. Against them the Old Turkish version, however, contains almost only the comments of one master named Sengzhao 僧肇. Furthermore, it has additional comments some of which are surely added by the Uyghur translator himself and influenced by the Yogācāra school and the Northern Chen 禪-Buddhism.[4] Thus the

[1] The text in question has its own preface, but it does not contain any dates, see KASAI 2009; BT XX, pp. 64-67.

[2] The text was published by P. ZIEME and the dating also owes to him, see BT XX, esp. p. 19.

[3] The detailed information about the Chinese commentaries on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra* including *jingmingjing jijie guanzhongshu* 淨名經集解關中疏 is summarized in the introduction of my book, see BT XXIX, pp. 9-15.

[4] This topic was already discussed in detail by me, see BT XXIX, pp. 15-21.

possibility that the Old Turkish commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra* was composed by a certain Uyghur Buddhist who used thereby the Chinese *jingmingjing jijie guanzhongshu* 淨名經集解關中疏 as a reference cannot be eliminated.

## 2. Fragment U 3006 [T II S 606]

The further fragment of the Old Turkish commentary on the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra* which I present here has the signature U 3006 [T II S 606]. It shares the same characteristics of the script and the format with the other fragments of the text in question. Furthermore, the name Vimalakīrti itself appears in this fragment so that its identification to this text is assured.[5] This fragment is not well preserved, it has the size of 6,9 cm high and 15,8 cm wide. Both sides have each 10 lines so that the right and left side of the fragment is almost completely preserved. Amongst those lines 3 lines on each side are written in red ink. It indicates the possibility that this fragment joints to the other ones containing red lines. Up to present, only two such fragments are found: U 1991 [T III TV 86-20] and Mainz 827 [T III. 84-21][6]. The former one contains 4 lines on the recto side and 3 lines on the verso in red, while the latter one has 2 red lines on each side. The number of the red lines in those two fragments does not correspond to that of the fragment in question, so that none of them can be connected directly each other.

**Text**[7]

(side A)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | [ | ]/ *tw//*[ | ] |
| | [ | ]/ *ᴛw//*[ | ] |
| 2 | [ | ]q'nt twyy*n* [ | ] |
| | [ | ar]hant toy*ın* [ | ] |
| 3 | [ | ]*'myš* myšyn /[ | ] |

[5] See below in line 9 on side A in the text.

[6] The fragment U 1991 belongs to Chapter III, while the fragment Mainz 827 is from Chapter II. About the transliteration, transcription, German translation and commentary on those fragments see BT XXIX, p. 28, pp. 56-57, pp. 106-111, pp. 117-119.

[7] The transliteration and transcription follow the system of *UW*. The lines written in red ink are underlined.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | [ | k]*ämiš*-mišin /[ | ] |
| 4 | [ | ]*yz w*nty l'r q'm/[ | ] |
| | [ | k]*özü*nti-lär kam[ag(?) | ] |
| 5 | [ | ]*l'*ty pyš ywz [ | ] |
| | [ | u]*la*tı beš yüz [ | ] |
| 6 | [ | ]/ nw*m*d'qy /[ | ] |
| | [ | ]/ no*m*dakı /[ | ] |
| 7 | [ | ]*wl*(?) *''nym'l*(?)[ | ] |
| | [ | ] *ol*(?) *''NYM'L*(?)[ | ] |
| 8 | [ | ]// *'ynč'* [ | ] |
| | [ | ]// *ınča* [ | ] |
| 9 | [ | ]/ *vym'l'ky*[ | ] |
| | [ | ]/ *vimalaki*[rti | ] |
| 10 | [ | ]// 'wy*č*wn [ | ] |
| | [ | ]// ü*č*ün [ | ] |
| (side B) | | | |
| 1 | [ | ]/[ | ] |
| | [ | ]/[ | ] |
| 2 | [ | ]*y* ym' yw[ | ] |
| | [ | ]*Y* y(e)mä YW[ | ] |
| 3 | [ | ]/*q'n twyš* [ | ] |
| | [ | ]/*Q'N tüš* [ | ] |
| 4 | [ | ]/*k kwyr*[ | ] |
| | [ | ]/*K KWYR*[ | ] |
| 5 | [ | | ] |
| | [ | | ] |
| 6 | [ | ]tq'rqwlwq '[ | ] |
| | [ | ku]tgarguluk '[ | ] |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | [ | ]*l*g*w*rtyr ((:)) syz ''n/[ | ] |
| | [ | be]*lgü*rtir ((:)) siz ''N/[ | ] |
| 8 | [ | ]mk' p'rdym /[ | ] |
| | [ | ]MK' bardım /[ | ] |
| 9 | [ | ]/y 'rky mn [ | ] |
| | [ | ]/Y ärki m(ä)n [ | ] |
| 10 | [ | ]/ 'rd'myn [ | ] |
| | [ | ]/ ärdämin [ | ] |

## Translation

(side A)

(1) … (1-2) … [ar]hat and monk … (2-3) … that … have [th]rown away … (3-4) They … [ap]peared. Al[l](?) … (4-5) … five hundred … [be]ginning with … (5-6) … in the law … (6-7) … the(?) … (7-8) … thus … (8-9) … Vimalakī[rti] … (9-10) … because …

(side B)

(1) … (1-2) … and … (2-3) … fruit … (3-4) … (4-5) … (5-6) … to rescue … (6-7) … (one) makes manifest. (7-8) "You … (8-9) I went to … Do I …?" (9-10) … the virtue of …

## 3. Analysis of the Content

As its comparative study with the Chinese commentaries clearly shows, the Old Turkish text contains a considerable number of sentences which probably owe to the Uyghur author of this work himself. Thus it is not always easy to allocate the fragments as regards the content exactly. Furthermore the bad condition of the fragment in question does not allow even to fix which is the front- or backside. Some words preserved in the fragment, however, give the important hints for its understanding.

First, it is noteworthy that the number *beš yüz* "five hundreds" is mentioned in line 5 on side A. In the Chinese *jingmingjing jijie guanzhongshu* 淨名經集解關中疏 which has the closest relationship with the Old Turkish commentary this number appears with several different terms: 1. Five hundred *śreṣṭḥin*s (Chin. *wubai changzhe*

五百長者)[8], the rulers of the city of Vaiśālī, 2. Five hundred places where the Buddhas stayed (Chin. *wubai fosuo* 五百佛所)[9], 3. Five hundred Brahma-gods (Chin. *wubai fantian* 五百梵天)[10], 4. Five hundred disciples of Buddha Śākyamuni (Chin. *wubai dizi* 五百弟子)[11], 5. Five hundred gods (Chin. *wubai tianren* 五百天人)[12], 6. Five hundred *śrāvaka*s (Chin. *wubai shengwen* 五百聲聞)[13]. Amongst them the first and the fourth ones are often mentioned. The first one almost appears in the sentences mentioning the sons of those five hundred *śreṣṭḫin*s who visited the Buddha together headed by Ratnākara (Chin. *baoji* 寶積). On the other hand, the latter one which indicates the famous disciples of Buddha Śākyamuni collectively are mainly attested in the discussion scene between the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and Vimalakīrti, in the second half part of the text. Because the Old Turkish text is broken after the number, it remains unclear which of those terms corresponds to this Old Turkish phrase. But the Old Turkish word standing before the number, *ulatı* "and, as well as", indicate that the text originally mentioned this number with some examples.

A further point which we have to pay attention to is that in the sentences of ll. 7-9 on side B. The personal pronouns like *siz* "you" or *m(ä)n* "I" are used. This leads to the assumption that those lines belong to a dialogue part. In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra* besides Buddha Śākyamuni the layman Vimalakīrti discusses different important Buddhist topics with various disciples of Buddha and argues them down effectually. It is one of the important parts of this Mahāyāna sutra, because the text tried to show the preponderant position of the layman Vimalakīrti over the disciples of Buddha in this manner. Only from the remaining words in those lines it is indeed hardly to say whether the dialogue was here led by Buddha or Vimalakīrti.

In the Chinese *jingmingjing jijie guanzhongshu* 淨名經集解關中疏 both the number "five hundred" and a certain kind of dialogue are mentioned next to each other only in three sections. In the first section Buddha

[8] See e.g. T. 2777, 445b13-14, 447c16, and so on.

[9] See T. 2777, 460c07, 460c10.

[10] See T. 2777, 462a21.

[11] See e.g. T. 2777, 465c04-05.

[12] See T. 2777, 469b02.

[13] See T. 2777, 473b26.

Śākyamuni spoke to the sons of five hundred *śreṣṭhin*s led by Ratnākara (Chin. *baoji* 寶積)[14], while the second one comprises the end of Vimalakīrti's dialogue with Buddha's disciple Aniruddha and the beginning of that with Upāli, it also mentions the five hundred Brahma-gods (Chin. *wubai fantian* 五百梵天)[15]. Compared to those two sections in which the number is mentioned in the original sutra text itself, in the third section, the dialogue with bodhisattva Maitreya, the number "five hundred" appears in the comment of Sengzhao 僧肇. In this section this number stands for Buddha's disciples (Chin. *wubai dizi* 五百弟子).[16]

The remaining lines of the Old Turkish fragment in question do not allow to determine which of those three sections corresponds to them exactly. But if the Uyghur author tried to give here the faithful translation of the Chinese text, we have to pay attention to one further important word, the name Vimalakīrti in l. 9 on side A. While the first section stands before the first scene in which Vimalakīrti appears, in the latter two he surely plays an important role as the dialogue partner. Thus it is rather probable that one of the latter two was the corresponding section of this Old Turkish fragment.

## 4. Literature

### Abbreviations


BT XX — PETER ZIEME: *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*. Edition alttürkischer Übersetzungen nach Handschrift-fragmenten von Berlin und Kyoto. Mit einem Appendix von JORINDE EBERT: Ein Vimalakīrti-Bildfragment aus Turfan, Berliner Turfantexte XX, Turnhout, 2000.

BT XXIX — YUKİYO KASAİ: *Der alttürkische Kommentar zum* Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra, Berliner Turfantexte XXIX, Turnhout, 2011.

UW — KLAUS RÖHRBORN: *Uigurisches Wörterbuch*. Sprachmaterial der vorislamischen türkischen Texte aus Zentralasien, Lieferung 1-6, Wiesbaden, 1977-1998.


14 See T. 2777, 448a18ff.

15 See T. 2777, 462a21ff.

16 See T. 2777, 465c2ff.

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2009 Der Einfluß der Vijñānavāda-Schule im alttürkischen Kommentar zum *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-Sūtra*, in: 張定京 & 阿不都熱西提・亜庫甫（編） Zhang, Dingjing & Abdurishid Yakup (Hrsgg.): 突厥語文学研究–耿世民教授80華誕記念論文集 *Tujue yuwenxue yanjiu – Geng Shimin jiaoshou 80 huadan jinian lunwenji*, Beijing, pp. 298-316.