

# The Maitreya-samiti and Khotanese

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§ 0

## [Title Slide]

Ladies and gentlemen. Of this colloque's topics on cultural interactions in Eurasia, I would like to speak today about a wide-spread Buddhist legend of the future savior of the world, the legend of the Buddha Maitreya, which evolved through translations and adaptations in a number of Pre-Islamic Central Asian languages.<sup>1</sup> Specifically I would like to speak about the Middle Iranian Khotanese version, since other versions, like Tocharian and Old Turkic (also called Uigur or Old Uigur), have been extensively discussed upon in recent years, because of the discoveries and publications of new manuscript fragments, by eminent scholars including Professor Pinault here present. Compared to this I must say that the Khotanese version has rather been neglected. In spite of the new edition and translation by the late Professor Emmerick, which appeared 34 years ago, one still sees, when this Khotanese text is mentioned in relation to other versions, that the pioneer work by Ernst Leumann half a century before Emmerick's book is still relied upon. **[Slide of the tree]** What is important in the case of the Maitreya legend is, to my mind, unlike the translations of the Buddhist canonical texts, the scriptures, this text develops in the course of diffusion from language to language. It is therefore not possible to leave out the Khotanese Maitreya text in order to obtain an overall picture of the development.

§ 1

One of the most extensive pieces of religious literature in Pre-Islamic Central Asia is Old Turkic *Maitrisimit*, which is now found in two versions, one from Sängim and Murtuq in the Turfan oasis and the other from Hami. One of the colophons of the first version was deciphered in 1916 by F. W. K. Müller and Emil Sieg, who indicated that the Old Turkic (also called Uigur) version was translated from the *Twγγy* language

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<sup>1</sup> For the general background see e.g. Baruch 1946, and Jaini 1988.

(which gave rise to the designation of “Tocharian”<sup>2</sup>) and that it ultimately goes back to the Indic (Sanskrit) original. **[Slide Müller-Sieg]** The first part of this statement seems to be confirmed through the publication of the fragments of the “Tocharian” version<sup>3</sup>, while the second part has often been considered suspect. In fact the known Sanskrit versions<sup>4</sup> of the Maitreya legend, **[Sanskrit versions]** the *Maitreya-vyākaraṇa* in the Gilgit<sup>5</sup> and Calcutta<sup>6</sup> manuscripts as well as the *Maitreyāvadāna*, which is the third chapter of the *Divyāvadāna*, the second of the three episode<sup>7</sup>, originally taken from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, *Bhaiṣajya-vastu*, not only are far shorter but also lack some important parts altogether as compared to the 28 chapters (or “acts”) of the Uigur *Maitrisimit* (and presumably the Tocharian *Maitreyasamiti-nāṭaka*). Moreover, the word *samiti* occurs in these texts only in the sense of “assembly (of the audience at the sermon of the Buddha Maitreya)”, synonymous to *pariṣad*, **[samiti]** while according to Müller and Sieg the author(s) (of the colophons) in the Tocharian-Old Turkic versions understood the Sanskrit title *Maitreya-samiti* as “Encounter (*Zusammentreffen*) with Maitreya”.

## § 2

The Khotanese version is somewhat in between in length. **[Khotanese version]** It occupies the central part of the 22nd Chapter (of 24 extant Chapters) of the *Book of Zambasta* (so named by H. W. Bailey). The first eight folios of this chapter are lost, so we do not know how the chapter began. The end of the chapter is apparently the end of the frame story where the Buddha teaches Ānanda the serious consequences of unlawful acts even under Maitreya, so the beginning of the chapter would have been the first half of the frame story. **[Zambasta, Chap. 22]** The preserved part begins with an episode where the Buddha entrusts his Śāsana to Mahākāśyapa just before his Nirvāṇa. Here the text seems to allude to the “Account of the duration of the Law enounced by the Great

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<sup>2</sup> F. W. K. Müller und E. Sieg, “Maitrisimit und ‘Tocharisch’”.

<sup>3</sup> For the relation of the Tocharian and Uigur *Maitreyasamiti* see e.g. K. T. Schmidt 1996, and G.-J. Pinault 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Later texts such as *Maitreyavyākaraṇāvadāna* (= *Avadāna-Kalpalatā*, Chap. 16) as well as the Pāli *Anāgata-Vaṃsa* (Minayeff, 1886 as well as Leumann 1919, 177-226) and its Siṃhalese (Meddegama 1993) version are not considered here.

<sup>5</sup> P. C. Majumdar, “Ārya-Maitreya-vyākaraṇa”, in N. Dutt ed.

<sup>6</sup> Lévi 1932.

<sup>7</sup> The first two episodes are translated by Abegg 1928, 153-155. The same parts from the Tibetan Vinaya are translated by Schiefner 1876 (1874).

Arhat Nandimitra”「大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記」<sup>8</sup> with a list of 16 Arhats. It is certainly not a part of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* as supposed by Leumann. **[Zambasta, Chap. 22 cont’d]** In spite of the title of Leumann’s book there is absolutely nothing to warrant the use of the word *Maitreya-samiti* in the text of the Khotanese Maitreya story proper (22.112 - 22.311). As will be seen below the Khotanese version has all the ingredients of the Sanskrit *Maitreyāvādāna*, but greatly expanded. At the same time some proper names correspond to the *Maitreya-Vyākaraṇa* and the Chinese versions rather than to the *Maitreyāvādāna*. But I will come back to this later. Although the Khotanese version alone belongs to the Mahāyānist tradition (with the mention of the “Mahāyāna-sūtras” in Z 22.226), there is very few explicit traces of the Mahāyāna within the text.<sup>9</sup> In fact the text incorporates a quotation from the Udānavarga, 4.37-38 (= Z 22.276, 278), and a passage similar to the *Mahāvastu*,<sup>10</sup> as well as the traditional *catvāri dharmodānāni* “Four summary statements”.<sup>11</sup> It utilizes many sources.

### § 3

**[Chinese versions]** Four Chinese versions of the *Sūtra of the Descent (from Heaven) of Maitreya* are known. They are all translated in German by WATANABE Kaikyuku 渡辺海旭 in Leumann’s book. Leumann also provides a synoptic table for these versions together with the Khotanese and the *Maitreyāvādāna*, which was the only available Sanskrit text at that time. Soon after Leumann’s book came out, P. Demiéville published a detailed review that focused on the Chinese part of Leumann’s

<sup>8</sup> T 49, 12ff. Translated by Lévi and Chavannes 1916, 6-24. Closer parallel to this Chinese text, the Indian original of which is assured to have existed by these authors, is curiously found on the back cover in wood of the folios of the *Book of Zambasta* (published as SI P 6.1 by Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desyatovskaya, 34-35) [I owe this remark to Mr. Sh. Hori]. The connection of this account to the Maitreya story has already been suggested by Lévi, “Maitreya le Consolateur” 367. Lamotte, *Histoire* 765ff. and 775 ff. (690ff. and 699ff. in the English edition) also pursues the same line of association.

<sup>9</sup> See the remarks of von Gabain 1957, 18f.

<sup>10</sup> Z 22.130-134 and *Mahāvastu* iii, 240-1, noted by Leumann.

<sup>11</sup> Z 22.101 *anice harbiśśā ţkoṅgye anātme harbiśśā ţkauṅgye | dukhṅgye harbiśśā ţkoṅgye tsāṣṭā nārvāni nāṣaundi ||*

“Impermanent are all the *saṃskāras*. Without self are all the *saṃskāras*.

Woe-afflicted are all the *saṃskāras*. Calm, quiet is Nirvāṇa”.

Cf. Bodhisattvabhūmi (Wogihara ed., 277; Dutt ed., 155) *catvārīmāni dharmodānāni ... anityāḥ sarva-saṃskārāḥ ... duḥkhāḥ sarva-saṃskārāḥ ... anātmānāḥ sarva-dharmā ... śāntaṃ nirvāṇam ...*

book, insisting, among other points, on the importance of another group of the Maitreya sūtras dealing with Maitreya's Ascent to the Tuṣita Heaven in the past. However, we could pass this part for the time being since the Sanskrit and Khotanese versions exclusively deal with the future Maitreya. Although these Chinese versions are translations, they can provide information at relatively early dates as to various stages of development of the Sanskrit text.

#### § 4

On the Tocharian *Maitreyasamiti-nāṭaka* and Old Turkic *Maitrisimit nom bitig* I have very little to say.<sup>12</sup> We shall hear plenty about them from our next speaker. I will present here only the basic data for these two versions. **[Tocharian Maitreya-samiti-nāṭaka]** The Tocharian version is very fragmentary. What is remarkable is it is made in the style of a drama (as the Sanskrit title *nāṭaka* “drama” shows).<sup>13</sup> **[Tocharian A manuscript]** A new group of fragments are found in China in 1974 and published recently.<sup>14</sup> **[New fragments]** Unfortunately (that's for Iranologists) the published pieces all belong to the story of Earlier Life of Maitreya, which is absent from the Sanskrit and Khotanese versions.

**[Old Turkic Maitrisimit nom bitig]** The Old Turkic version<sup>15</sup> is the most extensive. The manuscript fragments from Sāngim and Murtuq may be considered to represent the single largest text among the findings of the German Turfan Expeditions.<sup>16</sup> Still von Gabain (1957, 12) estimates that nine tenths of the original work were lost. The Hami manuscripts discovered in 1959 and still in the process of publication<sup>17</sup> are said to preserve more text, but still incomplete. **[Maitrisimit chapters]** Both are divided into 28 “chapters” (chapters 1-25 between an introductory chapter and two chapters of the conclusion). Each chapter has, when preserved, a title and the indication

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<sup>12</sup> On the correspondences between these two versions see K. T. Schmidt 1996 and Pinault 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Sieg und Siegling 1921.

<sup>14</sup> Ji, Winter and Pinault 1998.

<sup>15</sup> See the bibliography in Elverskog 1997.

<sup>16</sup> For the summary of the text by chapters see Gabain 1957, 31-57. The entire text is transliterated, translated and provided with a glossary by Tekin 1980.

<sup>17</sup> For the description of the manuscript fragments by chapters see Laut 1986, 18-45. For the summary of the contents see Klimkeit 1996. Publications so far of the transcribed text and translation with commentary are found in Geng, Klimkeit (and Laut) 1987-1998.

of the scene where the narrative takes place).

§ 5

In contrast to the book-length Old Turkic version the Sanskrit and Khotanese texts of the Maitreya legend is much shorter. In Sanskrit the narrative is made in the future tense consistently, while in Khotanese, which lacks the future, the verbs are in the present tense. Here I summarize the story after the Khotanese version.

**[Future Jambudvīpa]** The world is much more spacious and level, with the climate and vegetation extremely pleasant. Men are good-natured, with no afflictions or punishments for wrong-doing. The life of men is 80,000 years, and girls are married at 500 years of age. Men are 40 *pukas*<sup>18</sup> tall. Illnesses are few, even the death is not painful.

**[King Śaṅkha]** The capital is Ketumatī, which is now Vārāṇasī, with walls made of seven jewels, trees covered with a network of bells. Śaṅkha is king, a *cakravartin*. The Nāga kings erect a golden pillar (*stunā*) a thousand *pukas* tall for him. He has four treasuries in four countries.

**[Maitreya]** Subrahma, a brahmin, is father of Maitreya, Brahmāvati is his mother. He has 32 *lakṣaṇas* (signs). He goes out to the tree called Nāgapuṣpa (for meditation). ... [*lacuna*] ... The god Brahma announces that Maitreya is the next Buddha after Śākyamuni to rescue the beings from woes.

**[Pillar]** In celebration of the news of the coming of the new Buddha Śaṅkha gives the bejeweled pillar to the brahmins, who promptly breaks it up. Seeing this Maitreya, disgusted, perceives the impermanency and has the desire to renounce the world.

**[Followers]** King Śaṅkha with other kings, 84,000 brahmins, 84,000 noble women, 84,000 princes and myriad-thousand of others, follow the steps of Maitreya.

**[Sermon]** In a garden called Saṃpuṣpita (fully-flowered) Maitreya preaches the Teaching of the Buddha Śākyamuni to the gathering. (Once, not three times like the Sanskrit *Maitreya-Vyākaraṇa* and all the Chinese versions).

**[Return]** As Maitreya enters Ketumatī together with all the followers, all the gods and celestial beings praise him.

**[Mahākāśyapa]** Maitreya with the Bhikṣusaṅgha goes out to Mount Kukkuṭa-pāda (rooster's feet) where Mahākāśyapa is miraculously keeps meditating. After

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<sup>18</sup> Probably a loan word from Tocharian (*A poke, B pokai* “arm”). Corresponding

honoring Maitreya Mahākāśyapa flies up in the sky. He emits fire from his body and realizes *parinirvāṇa*.

**[Glimpse of Hells]** From the big toe of his foot Maitreya emits a ray, which extends over to the Hells. Those who merit being rescued see the Buddha Maitreya from the Hell and are reborn. Those who are not worthy do not see Maitreya and remain there.

§ 6

Apart from the lengthy sermons of Maitreya and other divine personages in the Khotanese version, which are either totally absent (*Maitreyāvadāna*) or much shorter (*Maitreya-Vyākaraṇa*) in Sanskrit, the basic framework of the two Sanskrit texts are not much different from the Khotanese. Still it would be convenient to tabulate some of important differences.

**[Sanskrit versions]**

<b>Maitreyāvadāna</b>	<b>Maitreya-Vyākaraṇa</b>
No description of Jambudvīpa	Lengthy description of Jambudvīpa
Father of Maitreya is Brahmāyu	Father of Maitreya is Subrāhmaṇa
Three kings of three other countries give the <i>yūpa</i> (pillar) to Śaṅkha, who gives it to Brahmāyu, who gives it to Maitreya, who gives it to brahmins. They tear it down.	Śaṅkha has the <i>yūpa</i> (pillar) erected, which he gives to brahmins. 1,000 brahmins tear it apart.
No sermons	3 Sermons at Supuṣpita garden
No return to Ketumatī	Return to Ketumatī
Visiting Mahākāśyapa in Mount Gurupādaka	No Kāśyapa episode

The discrepancy in Maitreya’s father’s name may be accidental, since the Chinese translation by Yijing 義淨 of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya* (T. 24. 25a) has 善淨, which corresponds to \*Subrahma, not Brahmāyu. It is clear from this comparison that the *Maitreyāvadāna* selects only three components from the Maitreya legend; the

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Sanskrit has *hasta*- “hand, forearm”.

birth of the future Buddha, the *yūpa* episode which was a crucial moment in his career to enlightenment,<sup>19</sup> and the Kāśyapa episode. The Maitreya-Vyākaraṇa leaves out this last part. Again the discrepancy between the names of the mountain (all the other versions, Khotanese, Tocharian and Old Turkic, go with Kukkuṭapādaka, except the Chinese version of Kumārajīva has 狼跡山 “footsteps of wolves”: T 14, 433b) can be resolved with Xuanzang’s testimony that two names, *Kukkuṭapādaka* and *Gurupādaka*, were both in use (*Travels*, Vol. 9, passage just before Rājagṛha).

## § 7

**[The Destruction of the Pillar]** In the whole Maitreya legend the episode of the destruction of the pillar is a decisive turning point, a Damascus-like experience for Maitreya. Most of the painters who decorated the walls and ceilings of the cave temples in Dunhuang and its vicinities with the scenes from the Maitreya-sūtras did not fail to include the “pillar destroyed”. However, the Chinese word used in the translation of Sanskrit *yūpa* is generally *chuang* 幢, whose primary meaning is “banner, streamer” made of cloth and hung from a tall flag-pole, and which generally translates Skt. *dhvaja*, *ketu* (“flag, banner”). **[chuang]** In the paintings it seems that a conflation has occurred with another meaning of *chuang*, namely “a multi-storied stone pagoda as a Buddhist monument”, which is also very far from the Sanskrit *yūpa* “sacrificial post”.<sup>20</sup> See the scenes from **[Mogao cave 148]** from High Tang, **[Mogao cave 186]** from Middle Tang, **[Mogao cave 9]** from Late Tang, and **[Mogao cave 61]** from Five Dynasties. The famous Maitreya scenes from Cave 25 of the Anxi Yulinku 安西榆林窟 (Middle Tang) are based on Kumārajīva’s Chinese version, which abandons *chuang* and uses *qibao tai* 七寶臺 “seven-jeweled platform” for translating *sapta-ratna-mayaṃ yūpaṃ* “a post adorned with seven jewels”. **[Yulin 25]**

It seems merely accidental that the pillar episode has not emerged in Tocharian and Old Turkish versions. In fact it is only with the discovery of the Hami manuscripts that we know the title of Chapter 12, which is still unpublished, mentions it.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The three episodes of the *Maitreyāvadāna*, each of which is provided at the end with the identifications of the personages with the characters at the Buddha’s time, must have been originally independent stories. What links the first and the second episodes is *yūpa* “pillar”. In the first episode King Mahāpraṇāda had the golden, bejeweled pillar sunk into the Gaṅgā.

<sup>20</sup> A similar character with the tree radical 幢 means only “post, pole”. But the Chinese texts are consistent in using 幢.

<sup>21</sup> Laut, 1986, 28.

[**Maitreya chapters (cont'd)**] In the Turfan manuscripts of the Uigur *Maitrisimit* Chapter 12 is completely lost. In Tocharian there is a large sheet which covers the end of Chapter 11 and the beginning of Chapter 12.<sup>22</sup> Professor Pinault suggests<sup>23</sup> that another fragment with the mention of a “diamond pillar of King Mahā-Praṇāda” must belong to this chapter. One would wish that a full translation be given so that non-specialists can see the context. King Mahā-Praṇāda and his pillar (*sıruq* in Uigur) are the topic of the first episode of the Sanskrit *Maitreyāvadāna*, and in Chapter 4 of the Old Turkic version it is alluded to three times in the Hami manuscripts<sup>24</sup> and once in the Turfan manuscripts.<sup>25</sup> Likewise the third episode of the *Maitreyāvadāna*, with King Vāsava (who will be Śaṅkha in the future) and King Dhanasamṃmata (who will be Maitreya in the future), is alluded to in Chapter 16 of both groups of the Uigur *Maitrisimit* manuscripts.<sup>26</sup>

## § 8

The story of Maitreya during the lifetime of the Buddha Śākyamuni is prominent in Tocharian and Old Turkic versions, while it is totally absent from the Sanskrit and Khotanese ones. It has often been remarked that the teacher of young Maitreya, *Bādhari* in Tocharian and Old Turkic versions, is the same character as *Bāvarī* in the Pāli *Sutta-nipāta* as well as Chapter 57 of the *Sūtra of the Wise and Fool*.<sup>27</sup> This very early Pāli text does not tell much beyond the fact that the circle of disciples around the Buddha included persons called *Bāvarī* and *Metteya*, while the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Fool*, whose ultimate sources are said to go back to Khotan, poses a complicated problems of textual recension. Although Chapter 57 in question is found in two major classes of the Chinese canons, the Tibetan *mDzangs-blun*<sup>28</sup> does not have it. One does not know where and when it was incorporated into the collection of tales.

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<sup>22</sup> Partly translated in Müller-Sieg, 1916, 405.

<sup>23</sup> Pinault 1999, 200.

<sup>24</sup> Geng and Klimkeit 1988, 223, 225, 265.

<sup>25</sup> Tekin 1980, 86.

<sup>26</sup> Tekin 1980, 136; Geng and Klimkeit 1985, 98.

<sup>27</sup> Sieg und Siegling, 1921, 254, and Lévi, 1925, Ji et al. 1998. Cf. also *Bhaddālī* in the first episode of the *Maitreyāvadāna*.

<sup>28</sup> I. J. Schmidt 1843.



In this connection a very convenient book was published early this year in Hongkong. It is a classified collection of the paintings concerning the Maitreya-sūtra (i. e. the Sūtra of the Descent of Maitreya in Chinese) in the cave temples of Dunhuang, **[Album of the Paintings ]**. I have shown from this Album some pictures of the “pillar” episodes. At the end of the book the editor gives very useful, chronologically arranged tables which show the topics or scenes of the paintings in each cave. **[Tables 1] [Tables 2]** It is clear from these tables that “the earlier life of Maitreya” was not part of the story as it was understood in Dunhuang. On the other hand, the editor remarks that another Maitreya-sūtra, one that dealing with the Ascent of Maitreya to the Tuṣita heaven, was most popular in Sui, and during Tang it was gradually replaced by the Descent sūtra (*ibid.* 31f.). As far as our knowledge goes, it is only the Tocharians who combined all the Maitreya materials in a grand scale, and handed it over to the Uigurs.

## § 9

Although the Sanskrit *Maitreya-Vyākaraṇa* ends without the episode of visiting Kāśyapa in the mountain, the shorter *Maitreyāvadāna* shows that it was associated with the Maitreya cycle at an early date. In the Dunhuang paintings, on the other hand, it is the concluding part of the Maitreya story. Moreover, the tables of the Album shows that in High Tang and Middle Tang most of the paintings have this scene, but the number of caves having it sharply decreases in Late Tang and Five Dynasties, and in Song there is none. This tendency may be reflected in the difference between the two Sanskrit versions. These tables also show that the “Glimpse of the Hells” which follows the mountain scene **[Glimpse of Hells (Z 22.304-307)]** was not a part of the story in Dunhuang, nor is there any trace of it in the Sanskrit versions. It could have been added in the west, and it is a link that connects the Khotanese version with the Tocharian - Uigur versions, where four verses in the Khotanese are expanded to six full chapters.

## § 10

### **[Conclusion]**

Now I would like to summarize and conclude this communication very briefly. The comparison of the components of the Maitreya legend in various appearances reveals that the Khotanese version occupies a place that bridges the Sanskrit texts and the hugely expanded Tocharian-Uigur versions. At the same time the Dunhuang paintings can show which elements were fashionable in different periods during the second half of the first millennium.

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