

The Buddhist Philology from Studies of Tocharian Manuscripts

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We can see many old manuscripts from ruins of Tocharian Buddhist temples, which once flourished along the northern route of Taklamakan Desert in Central Asia.

Linguistic studies of Tocharian language are progressed mainly in Europe, but studies of Tocharian Buddhism still remain insufficiently researched. The reason could be caused not only by the fragmental condition of manuscripts, but also by lack of diachronic/synchronic analyses of manuscripts. After my studies of *Paläographische Untersuchungen zum B-Tocharischen*, Innsbruck 2011, *The Tocharian Maitreyasamitiṇāṭaka*, Tokyo, 2019 and Weber/Macartney Collection in England (not published in Japan), I have organized my research into two periods for Tocharian Buddhism—the early and late periods, whose dividing line is the 6th century. The late declining period after the 6th century could have been caused by the destruction of temples by Mihirakula of the Alchon Huns.

We can find the declining situation mentioned in 屈支國 Quzhi from the dialogue between 大德僧・木叉羯多 Mokṣagupta and 玄奘 Xuanzang in 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (T2053.50.227a1–3): Monks or transcribers in the late period could not understand the contents of the Buddhist texts, so that they could not decipher or copy *sūtras*, *vinayas* or *śāstras* correctly, and also Tocharologists or current-day readers could not understand word-meanings or contents. Please allow me to cite some examples:

1) Peyrot 2014, pp. 151–2, SHT1317: (< > shows Tocharian annotation under the Skt. words between the lines; SHT represents “Sanskrit Handschriften aus Turfan” kept in Berlin).

SHT 1317b5 ///tas tṛṣākhaṃ <lyāk> lalāto (neut.) <āṇṭ> bhṛkuṭiṃ <prśari> (kṛt) [o] kathayati khusta[ko] <māl> /// 根本說一切有部毘奈耶 卷十 T1442.23.679b17–18: 長者面現曠相額起三峰而告之曰。汝拔髮露形何所知見。

The Tocharian scribe’s mistake of Skt.: tṛṣākhaṃ for tṛṣākhām, nom.sg. lalāto

‘forehead’ for loc. *lalāte*; The Tocharian annotator’s mistake: *ṭṛśākhaṃ* ‘three furrows’ as <*lyāk*> ‘visible’ or impf. of √lāk ‘to see’; Peyrot’s mistake: <*lyāk*> as *lyā* ‘limbs’ (ad hoc!) with the emphatic particle *-k*.

The mistake in the Sanskrit by the Tocharian scribe could have come from a Sanskritization of Chinese version, i.e., the scribe could not understand 三峰, and 現 as *lyāk*, 額起 as *lalāto kṛto*. Another expression for ‘frowning’ in Chinese, e.g. 莊子 18.6 ‘deepening the middle of the eyebrows’ and ‘shortening a nose.’

2) Catt 2019, “THT541 b7 pp. 5–6” in: “On Tocharian B *antiṣpūr*, A *āntiṣpur* ‘harem’” (Kyoto Indo-European Roundtable in Honor of Kazuhiko Yoshida, Kyoto University, 2019):

The content of THT541 is compared with the *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra* (CPS) 16 or the *Sanjhabhedavastu* (SBV) I 140 ff. in Sanskrit, but it is not exactly match with them. Some words or phrases of CPS/SBV are written at random, and at first recto/verso was not decided, when Sieg/Siegling edited the text, e.g. THT541a1 *āsvādā* ‘tasting’ (Toch. note *sak* ‘happiness’): CPS16.12. *kāmānām āsvādā*ḍīnavaṃ is a supplement from SBV (5x), but *pūrvakālākaraṇīyā* before *āsvādā* is found in another place, and the following *yadainam* and Sieg’s correction (*śrad*)*dhāpūrva* cannot be found.

Catt sees *aniṣpūr*, 541b7 as B-Toch. *antiṣpur*, although nt > n is not attested and almost impossible. The passage: (*mā*)*riśa* • *ṣamān(e?)* • *aniṣpūr*, 108000 *idaṃ te anupadrūtaṃ* •. A tentative translation for this passage “friend (Skt.) • monk (Toch.) • *aniṣpūr*, 108000 • this is not oppressed for you (Skt. √dru- ‘to run?’)” shows no correspondence and non-sense.

I assume that *aniṣpūr*, would be Skt. *aniṣṭhā* ‘unlimited’ because of *ani-* and 108000 (Tamai 2011, p. 178), although it comes in the case of compound *aniṣṭhā-pada* (Edgerton 1985, p. 25). It is possible that our case could be a binomen to make the meaning clearer, but Catt insists Toch. *antiṣpūr*. If Catt’s opinion is right, it should be Skt. *antaḥpura* because of the word order with punctuation •.

100–8–1000 could be 108,000 (T397.13.17b15) or 800,000 (T264.9.110c15), putting the figures set simply, or inserting ‘8’ wrongly between ‘100’ and ‘1000’ for *śatasāhasraṃ* ‘100–1000’ in CPS16.4. 100–8–1000 has no connection with ‘harem,’ and there is no word of ‘harem’ in CPS, but in SBV with *niṣpuruṣa* ‘without men, (music) performed by women only’ (Catt, op. cit., pp. 8–9; Edgerton 1985, p. 309). A similar

story can be seen about Yaśas in the Bhaiṣajya-vastu (Yao 2012, pp. 473–474), in which there is no “harem,” but 死屍觀想 “observing a dead woman’s body.” We can also see a result of the declining Buddhist influence because of no innovation on the part of Buddhists, as is noted above (dialogue between Mokṣagupta and Xuanzang).

3) Malyshev 2019:

This fragment is composed in a way where Tocharian annotation for Sanskrit words with punctuation marks comes after the Sanskrit and Tocharian words. Malyshev identifies it with the Cīvaravastu on the base of Dutt’s transcription and Schopen’s reading, but its condition is too far damaged for us to be able to establish the exact meaning or translation, we can only recognize the bilingual form (a1, a2 and a3 are line numbers of the fragment).

a1 An interpretation of *pārśo* (p. 76): Khot. *pārṣa* ‘reverend’ or Tumshuqese *bārza* ‘Buddha’ by Peyrot is not acceptable because of no attested example, i.e., no ground and ad hoc.

a2 Schopen has corrected Dutt’s reading *dhi eka* to *hiruka*, *hiruk-poṣadha* → *hirukapoṣadha*, although <ru> and Dutt’s reading <e> are quite different, and Malyshev supplemented lacuna as *[h]i(rukapo)[ṣ](a)dena* (Skt. instr.) *u[p](agacchanti)*. Judging from a3 (Toch.) *pkänt poṣāt ṣurmaṣ* ‘because of (abl. of ‘cause’) separated *poṣadha*’ (= *hirukapoṣadhatvāt?*), it is possible, but the instr. creates a problem for the context, and also its syntax is not clear, i.e., Gilgit shows *hirukapoṣadhatvāt* in Clarke 2014, p. 160 and *hirukpoṣadhau* in Shōno 2010, p. 88, and also the subject of *u[p](agacchanti)* ‘they reach (with acc. or rarely dat.)’ cannot be recognized.

The problem is that the adv. /hiruk/ ‘apart,’ which was found in Veda (Skt. *huruk*), could be composed in compound. We can see it in the manuscripts from Gilgit, which is presumably Karmadhāraya (Tsuji 1974, p. 230), but it should be *hiruk-*, not *hiruka-*. Possibly it is influenced of Tocharian, i.e., accented epenthesis between /k/ and /p/ (Bernhard 1958, p. 21ff.). If it is an acceptable assumption, 2) above *aniṣṭhā 100-8-1000* is possible to be seen as Dvandva or binomen(?). In any case there was no compound in the Tocharian language in my opinion, therefore it was difficult for Toch. scribes to write the Skt. compound correctly.

Conclusion

When looking at manuscripts, such a problem can be also found in other languages. In studies based on communications between scribes and readers, which is the original purpose of philology, it is also important not only for Indology and Buddhology, but also for other fields of sciences as well. We, as readers, must be able to see the abilities of scribes and recognize what scribes wanted to tell, and we should possess synthetic competences of not only philology including phonology, grammar, syntax etc. but also of diachronic/synchronic comparative studies including politic, economic, history, art etc. Such a study cannot be accomplished by just one scholar, but must be done through the cooperation of specialists in each field.

In the case where we only have fragments of documents remaining, we won't be able to share much fundamental data, nor can we make adequate comparative studies. But we can examine vocabularies with possible comparative studies, and we keep them as cornerstones for future and upcoming new studies.

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