

Abstract for the conference 2013

Reading the Tocharian fragments about *Dhūtaguṇa*

Ruixuan Chen

Institut für Indologie und Tibetologie

Ludwig-Maximilians Universität (LMU), Munich

A group of Tocharian fragments in the Berlin Collection (B 558-561) seems originally to belong to a relatively large manuscript of Buddhist content in the light of two remnant folio numbers 74 & 93 written in thin strokes on the left edge of B 558 & 559 verso. A preliminary glimpse at these fragmentary pieces would suffice to gain the impression that they all have something to do with the *Dhūtaguṇa* or *Dhutaṅga*, the so-called "purifying practices" of the Buddhists, which are systematically enumerated and explained in the Pāli *Visuddhimagga* as well as in the Tibetan *Vimuktimarga-dhūtaguṇa-nirdeśa* (Bapat 1964) and Chinese *Fo-shuo-shi-er-tou-tuo-jing* (Taishō 783). Among the (Mūla)sarvāstivādins, whose teachings used to be prevailing in the Tocharian speaking area, no detailed information is hitherto available with the exception of a list attested in the Vinaya of this school. In this perspective, the Tocharian material, albeit fragmentary and limited, provides us with a tantalizing insight into how the *Dhūtaguṇa* practices were recognized from the standpoint of the Tocharian Buddhism. However, as the Tocharian texts are - since the very beginning of their decipherment - mostly read and interpreted by the Indo-european linguists rather than by the Buddhologists, hence it has been rarely taken into account how could these fragmentary passages make sense, although verb forms and pronouns attested therein have been thoroughly investigated. It is thus usually the case while reading the Tocharian texts that one may well know what they linguistically mean, but one can hardly know what they exactly signify in context.

The current paper aims at trying to read the fragments in question and a couple of fragments of relevant content (for instance, PK NS 55, A 376) altogether in a broader religio-historical background. To begin with, the work is based on an overall search of their parallels within the Buddhist scriptures. All the findings will be presented in form of synopsis so as to render the comparison between the parallels and the Tocharian texts more convenient. Meanwhile, a new translation of the Tocharian texts will be given while every divergent point from the existing translations will be highlighted alongside the corresponding arguments. Last but not least, the concluding part of this paper will not only summarize the factual informations that we may have attained in the reading, but also set out a discussion about the possibility of the existence of a *Dhūtaguṇa* cult within the Tocharian people from a historical perspective.