

The Old Turkish explanation on Buddha's reunion with his father Śuddhodana

Yukiyo Kasai

Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Germany

Since the Uyghurs accepted Buddhism they produced a large amount of Old Turkish Buddhist texts whose contents cover a widespread area of the different Buddhist schools. Many of those texts are written on paper in traditional Buddhist Poṭhi-format and are mostly written in Uyghur script. But there are some texts displaying other scripts. Amongst these Old Turkish Buddhist manuscripts there is a text group called “texts with Brāhmī elements” which I am now working on. In this group the script is mainly Uyghur, but for some special terms and sentences – mostly from Sanskrit – the Brāhmī script is employed. The contents of these texts belonging to this group are various, and it extends from Buddhist dogmatic texts to Buddhist praises for actual persons.

Among this text group one newly identified text draws our attention in conjunction with the relationship between Tocharian and Uyghur Buddhism. So far as we can know from the preserved fragments, this text contains the scene of Buddha Śākyamuni's reunion with his father Śuddhodana. Because of its contents the text can be characterized as Buddha legends, and many of them are preserved in texts of Sarvāstivādin- and Mūlasarvāstivādin-school which were introduced into Tocharian Buddhism, too. In the lecture, the Old Turkish text and its possible original are first presented and the role of Tocharian Buddhism in the translation of this text is discussed.