



Title	An Uigur Monasterial Letter from Toyoq
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Citation	内陸アジア言語の研究. 1995, 10, p. 1-7
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://hdl.handle.net/11094/16014
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An Uigur Monasterial Letter from Toyoq

Peter Zieme

*Dedicated to all who suffered from
the earthquake in the Kansai region*

Between the monasteries of Manichaeans, Buddhists etc. inside the Turfan oasis and beyond there were several activities as we learn from the remainders of letters and other civil documents. A good example of this kind from Bäzäklik has been studied and edited by Dolkun Kämbiri, Hiroshi Umemura and Takao Moriyasu.¹ It is a document about donations of Buddhist images around the sanctuary of the site.

Here I want to introduce another document of a similar content found at Toyoq.² It is written on the backside of a sheet of paper cut from a Chinese block print.³ The paper is dark yellow and seems to belong to the later period, perhaps the time of the Yuan dynasty. Otherwise I see at the moment no further indications for dating the fragment. The script is Cursive, but rather clear. The text concerns the sending of statues for which different words are used. Beside OT *körk* “figure” (ll. 4, 5) the text has *so* (< Chin.像) “figure, statue” (l. 5). In the Bäzäklik document mention is made of *yiti* so of

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1. First edition by H. Umemura in his article: Uyghur Manuscripts Preserved in the People's Republic of China, in: Documents et archives provenant de l'Asie Centrale. Actes du Colloque franco-japonais, Kyoto, 4-8 octobre 1988, ed. by A. Haneda, Kyoto 1990, pp.177-182. Second edition by D. Kämbiri, H. Umemura, T. Moriyasu, ウイグル文仏教尊像受領命令文書研究—USp. No.64 などにみえる“čuv”的解釈を兼ねて—, in: Journal of Asian and African Studies 40 (1990), pp.13-34.
 2. It is preserved in the Turfan Collection of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften as T II T 1353 (Ch/U 7426). See PI. I.
 3. The Chinese text of the recto side has not been identified.

different Buddhist Tantric images like those of Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra. The name of the first deity is still unclear.⁴ Here the use of Chinese 樣 “pattern” (l. 5), perhaps in the sense of a mould, is of special interest. Among the art objects found in the sites of Xinjiang there are some examples of such moulds for statues etc.⁵

The text of the fragment T II T 1353 (Ch/U 7426) can be read and interpreted as follows.

Transliteration and transcription

1 {tw} twyyñ (q) mn s'mzwn tyn 'wlwq twyrlwk snkr'm (tyn) s'ryr lyq
toyin-qa mn samzun-tin uluy türliq s(a)ngram-tin šarir-liq

2 'wrwn (tyñ) 'wykws t'lym pwy'n 'wrtwq 'yydw 'ydwrmn
orun-tin üküš tälüm buyan ortuq ayidu idurm(ä)n

3 y'n' swyzwm {mn} mnk' p'syr ' pyd'r ' ny
yana sözüm m(a)nga basir-a-bidar-a-ni

4 nynk kwyrky . y'n' pwrwnk pwrwnk β'cyr'p'n nynk
-nïng körki . yana burung burung vačirapan-nïng

5 ynky mwnwnk 'wq kwyrky m'rcy nynk swsy . y'n'
y(a)ngi munung oq körki . mar(i)či-nïng sosī . yana

6a y'n' c'nk β'cyr
yana čang vačir

6 ''lty t'pyq twydsy l'r . n't'k 'rs'r mnk' {tyl}
alti tapiý tuidsi-lar . nätag ärsär m(a)nga

7 tyl'p 'ydlyq⁶ , s'nk' mnk' pwy'n k'rkysyz⁷ mw pwy'n
tiläp idyil , sanga m(a)nga buyan kärgisiz mu buyan

4. Several possibilities have been discussed in the mentioned articles by H. Umemura et alii.

5. Cf. e.g. M. Yaldiz, Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte Chinesisch-Zentralasiens (Xinjiang), Leiden/New York/København/Köln 1987, p.143 sqq.

6. This word may be a scribal error for *idyil*.

7. Cf. note to 1.7.

8 "ljqw 'wycwn mnk' tyl'p 'ydq'wl 'ws'l pwlm'swn ,,
alju üčün m(a)nga tiläp idyul osal bolmasun ,,

9 9 'n' s'þync q'y' mn s'mz wn s'ryr lyq tyn 'wykws
yana sávinč qay-a mn samzun šarir-liq-tin üküš

10 t'lym pwy'n 'wrtwq 'yydw 'ydwr mn s'n mnk' mwncwq
tälim buyan ortuq ayidu idur-m(ä)n sän m(a)nga munčuq

11 'ydm'q' "ctynk 'ydm'tynk n' 'wycwn 'ydm'tynk
idmaq ačting idmatiŋ nä üčün idmatiŋ

12 kwnkwl mw y'qdy . y'n' swyz wm
köngüll mu yaqdü . yana sözüm

Translation

1 To Toyin: From me, Samzun, from the illustrious Samghārāma, from the Śarīra 2 place. Many times asking for bliss and partner(ship), I send (this message).

3-7 Again my word: Send me on request one statue of Vajravidāraṇa, then one model of the Bhrum bhrum Vajrapāṇi as well as one statue of it, one figure of Mārīcī, then a bell and a vajra, (these) six rite utensils as it may be.

7-8 Is merit not necessary to you and to me? To achieve merit one should send me what I wished. Do not be sluggish!

9-12 Again (to?) Sävinč Qaya: I, Samzun, send (this message) from the Śarīra (place), many times asking for bliss and partner(ship). You promised me to send jewels. You did not send. Why did you not send? Is the heart impressed?

12 Again my word:

Remarks

1 The name of the sender is Samzun, probably a Chinese name. The word might reflect the Chinese pronunciation of 三尊 *sān zūn* (P: *sam; tsun*) a term which denotes the Triratna (Buddha, Dharma, Samgha), cf. SH 64a. A more common term is 三寶 *sān bǎo*

(P: *sam; pow*) “the three jewels”, and there are many names having it as an element, cf. P. Zieme, Samboqdu et alii, in: Journal of Turkology 2 (1995). A clear example unconsidered in this article, can be found in a fragment of the Museum für Indische Kunst: MIK III 6281b: *pylykdw* = *bilikdu* < Chin. 彌勒奴 *mí lè nú* = Skt. Maitreyadāsa “Slave of Maitreya”.

1-2 *śarir-liq orun* “the *śarira* place”. As the term *śarir-liq* is used independently in line 9 the suffix should be read *+liq*, and not *+liγ*. Cf. OTWF 2.77.

2 *buyan ortuq* (or: *ortoq*?). It seems to be a real compound, even if the first element is an Abstract and the latter rather a Nomen actoris (cf. TMEN No. 446; ED 205). The word *ortuq* is used for a “partner in a business” etc. It appears also in the phrase *buyan ordu[q] bolzun* in ll. verso 4-5 as well as *[b]uyan orduq-layu* in l. recto 2 of the letter edited by T. Moriyasu: Pelliot 203 etc., cf. 森安孝夫、ウイグル語文献、講座敦煌、第6卷、東京、1985, p. 65, pp. 76 sqq. I think that the suffix is *+layu* “as”. M. Erdal translates the phrase differently (OTWF, p. 409): ““(I) the ‘slave’ Taypudu send *punya* to their honours, all my brethren-in-religion, as if they were my partners.”” In my opinion the term *buyan ortuqlayu* is very much alike the expression *äśängüläyü* in other letters.

3 *p'syr-a pyd'r'n'-ny* may represent *vačiravidaranani* = skt. *Vajravidāraṇa*, one of the Tantric deities, no. 173 of the 300 icons from Tibet, cf. B.C. Olschak, *Geshé Thupten Wangyal, Mystik und Kunst Altibets*, Bern/Stuttgart 1972, pp. 154-155: “der alles besiegende Beschützer der Reinheit, der gegen Schmutz aller Arten angerufen wird. In seinem lieblichen Aspekt, zweiarmig, hält er in seinen Händen die Glocke und das Donnerkeilkreuz, VISHVAVAJRA.”

4 *pwrwnk pwrwnk* = *burung burung* is the Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* syllable *bhrum bhrum* (or: *bhrum bhrum*),⁸ here used probably to denote a special kind of *Vajrapāṇi*, cf. A. Getty,

8. Cf. e.g. *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīśavijaya-nāma-dhāraṇī*, SHT V, Wiesbaden 1985, Nr.1191, Z.1(om) *bhrum* (...). Cf. also R.O.Meisezahl, *Geist und Ikonographie des Vajrayāna-Buddhismus*, Sankt Augustin 1980, p.160 (in the recitation of the yogin: 118a).

The Gods of Northern Buddhism, Rutland, Vermont/ Tokyo 1962, pp. 50 sqq. Statues of Vajrapāṇi are widespread in Tantric Buddhism, but, as A. Getty remarks, “Vajrapāṇi is rarely seen in statues alone, but often in a triad with Amitāyus (or Mañjuśrī) and Padmapāṇi.”

5 The word *yang* is apparently a term for the model or pattern of a statue, it is a loan from Chinese 樣 *yàng* (P: *jaŋ*) “A kind; a manner; a style; a sort. A pattern or sample” (Mathews 7256). As seen by the following item, Samzun ordered in the case of Vajrapāṇi the model as well as a statue (OT *körk*).

5 *marči-niŋ sosi* “a figure (statue) of Mārīcī”, OT *so* < Chin. 像 *xiàng* (P: *sjan*).⁹ All relevant data on *so* are given in the article of D. Kāmbiri, H. Umemura, T. Moriyasu (pp. 15 sqq.) as well as in the study of H. Umemura (p. 243). The authors refer also to L.Ju. Tugusheva’s article Dva ujgurskich dokumenta iz rukopisnogo sobranija Lenigraskogo Otdelenija Instituta Vostokovedenija Akademii nauk SSSR, in: Sovetskaja Tjurkologija 4/1975, p. 94, l. 14: *tsw sw pwrq'n-q' pyr yyβ'k twn = ts(a)o so burxan-qa bir yiväk ton* “one silk dress for a sitted Buddha (statue)”. While they derive *tsw sw* from Chin. 塑像 I want to propose Chin. 坐像 *zuò xiàng* (P: *tso`*; *sjan*), cf. Nakamura 441d: 坐像 is a “坐しているすがたの仏像...”. The word *m'rcy* is equivalent to Skt. Mārīcī, a famous Tantric deity, cf. Getty, pp. 132 sqq. In OT there are several mss. of works concerned with her, e.g. T I (U 4828) XXIIIb 1-3: *tözün ög mariči atly drni tükädi* “Finished is the dhāraṇī called ‘Āryamātṛ Mārīcī’”; T II Y 15 (Mz 724) ll. 29-31: *amīti yiti kolti burxan-lar-nüng ögi bolu (...) yrlıqamış ayay-qa tägimlig čunti botosvit-nüng soo bázadgü nom-in ayu birälim* “Now we want to recite the teaching how to model the figure of the Bodhisattva worthy of respect Cunqđī [= Mārīcī, cf. HN 360] who has deigned to be the mother of seven koṭis of Buddhas [= Skt. Saptakoṭibuddhabhagavatī, cf. R. Tajima, Les deux grands mandalas et la doctrine de l’esotérisme Shingon, Tokyo/

9. Cf. M.Ölmez, Uygurca Xuanzang-Biyografisindeki Çince Alıntılar (Chinesische Lehnwörter in uigurischer Xuanzang-Biographie), in: Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları 4 (1995), p.131.

Paris 1959, p. 81, 83].”

6 twydsy = *tuidsi* may be explained as an equivalent of Chin. 圖兒 *tú ér* (or: *ní*), if one assumes that 子 *zǐ* is used instead of *ér*. The meaning of *tú ér* is “A map; a picture; a diagram; a portrait” (Mathews 6531). If one counts the statues and the ritual objects, one gets the sum of six objects.

6-7 *nätäg ärsär*, vgl. Pelliot Ouïgour 16, first edited by T. Moriyasu, An Uigur Buddhist’s Letter of the Yüan Dynasty from Tun-huang (Supplement to Uigurica from Tun-huang), in: Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko 40, 1982, pp. 1-18, later again by J. Hamilton, Étude nouvelle de la lettre *Pelliot Ouigour 16 bis* d’un bouddhiste d’époque mongole, in: Turfan and Tun-huang. The texts, ed. by A. Cadonna, Firenze 1992, pp. 97-121; ll. 10-11: *nädäg ärsär anı manga p///(p) idyıl* (J. Hamilton emends the text as *b[iti]l(p)*, but one could propose also *t[ilä]l(p)*, cf. here ll. 6-7). The locution *nätäg ärsär* is often used in colloquial speech in Modern Turkish: *ne ise*.

7 *k’rkysyz* = *kärgisiz* is perhaps a scribal error for *kärgäksiz*, otherwise I cannot explain this unusual form.

9 Sävinč Qaya (“joy”, “rock”) was a common personal name in the Yuan period. There are a lot of persons bearing this name, among the persons known from OT texts as well as among those recorded in Chinese sources. In the document Pelliot no. 203 etc. edited by T. Moriyasu, there is also a person called Sävinč Qaya, cf. Moriyasu, 1985, pp.83-85.

10 *munčuq* “jewel” or sth. like that. From the context its exact meaning does not become clear. Cf. also P. Zieme, Alttürkische Halsketten und andere Schmucke, in: Festschrift G. Doerfer, Wiesbaden 1995.

11 In the phrase *idmaq ačting* the verb *ač-* can be best explained as “to promise”. Are there further examples?

12 The verb *y’q-* is probably *yaq-* “to approach” etc., but also ““to touch (something *Dat.*)’ and fr. this, metaph., ‘to touch (someone’s heart), impress, please’, and the like” (ED 896b).

Abbreviations

- ED G. Clauson, An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish, Oxford 1972.
- HN J. Hackmann, J. Nobel, Erklärendes Wörterbuch zum chinesischen Buddhismus. Chinesisch-Sanskrit-Deutsch, Leiden 1951-1954 (A-NI).
- Mathews R.H. Mathews, Chinese-English Dictionary, Cambridge/Mass. 1972.
- OTWF M. Erdal, Old Turkic Word Formation, Wiesbaden 1991.
- P E.G. Pulleyblank, Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin, Vancouver 1991.
- SH W.E. Soothill, L. Hodous, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, London 1937.
- TMEN G. Doerfer, Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neopersischen, Wiesbaden 1963-1975.