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An Old Uyghur Manuscript Fragment Dedicated to *Caitya* Veneration

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Abstract: *Caitya* is the name for the holy places tightly connected with the Buddha's great deeds, that are commonly praised and worshipped in the Buddhist tradition. These worshipping texts generally called *Caityastotra* were most probably widespread among the Uyghur Buddhists. A rather brief text *Caityastotra* is included in the preface of the late edition of the Old Uyghur *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama sūtra* also known as Altun Yaruk sudur. Several fragments of the other versions are found in the Turfan collection of Berlin. The newly identified fragment dedicated to the third *Caitya* veneration is preserved in the Serindia collection of the IOM, RAS. The aim of the present article is to provide transliteration, transcription and translation of the text.

Key words: Old Uyghur Buddhist literature, *Caitya* veneration, *Caityastotra*, Serindia collection of the IOM, RAS

At the turn of the 10th–11th cc. CE, Buddhism became one of the major driving forces of the Old Uyghur culture. It affected not only visual arts, architecture, literature, but also brought the new concept of space, incorporating the territories inhabited by the Old Uyghur in the Buddhist' cosmopolis. The “cosmopolis” was united through the recognition of the sacred sites in India associated with the life of the Buddha. Considered to be located in the central realm of Buddhism, these holy places were not just sites of pilgrimages by the devotees in search for the “true” teachings. They were also transferred to faraway landscapes by means of *stūpas* and *caityas* denoting the tradition's spiritual presence.

The term ‘*caitya*’ (‘that which is worthy to be gazed upon’, ‘worshipful’) in Sanskrit connotes a ‘tumulus, sanctuary or shrine’ and refers to any sacred place or object of veneration such as a burial mound, sacred tree, relics, etc. both in Buddhist and non-Buddhist contexts. The term *stupa* (‘heap’, ‘pile’) was applied to a reliquary or shrine containing the remains of a sainted person and/or artifacts (*śarīra* relics) associated with him. The distinction between *stūpa* and *caitya* is rather blurred and difficult to determine.¹ From antiquity, these terms were quite often used as synonyms in the Buddhist texts.² The construction and ritual veneration of Buddhist *stūpas/caityas* began with the death of Shakyamuni Buddha.³ The tradition eventually recognized “eight great caityas” (Skt. mahācaitya) for pilgrimage and veneration. They were erected to commemorate Buddha’s eight renowned deeds that took place in Lumbinī, Bodhgayā, Sārnāth (Vārāṇasī), Śrāvastī, Sāmkāśya, Rājagṛha, Vaiśālī, and Kuśinagara. The *caityas* in Lumbinī, Bodhgayā, Sārnāth (Vārāṇasī) and Kuśinagara were constructed to epitomize four primary events of the Buddha’s life, *inter alia* his miraculous birth, enlightenment, first sermon of the *dharma*, and passing to *parinirvāṇa*.⁴ The Buddha’s defeat of heretical teachers by displaying miraculous powers is associated with Śrāvastī, and his descent from the abode of the Trāyastriṃśa gods — with Sāmkāśya. There is no unanimity on the events that took place in other two places. According to various sources, in Vaiśālī the Buddha gave up the

¹ L. de la Vallee Poussin noted, a Dharmagupta (7th c.) *Vinaya* commentary suggested the existence of this technical distinction between shrines with relics (*stūpa*) and without them (*caitya*) (POUSSIN 1937: 284). On the other hand, many Buddhist texts do not follow this criterion. Thus, the Chinese pilgrim I-Tsing (義淨, 635–713) who traveled to India between 671 and 695, indicated: “...when the people make images and *caityas* which consist of gold, silver, copper, iron, earth, lacquer, bricks, and stone, or when they heap up the snowy sand, they put into the images or *caityas* two kinds of *śarīras*: 1. the relics of the Great Teacher; 2. the *gāthā* of the chain of causation” (TAKAKASU 1896: 150).

² The vagueness resulted that these terms were translated similarly to various languages of Central Asian.

³ According to tradition, the relics (*śarīras*) left after the Buddha’s cremation, were divided into eight portions, and each was placed in a *stūpa*. Two additional *stūpas* were erected, one over to the ashes of cremation pyre and one over the vessel (*droṇa*) used to divide the relics (SKORUPSKI 2012: 183). The fate of these *stūpas/caityas* is obscure. Some Buddhist text indicate that emperor Aśoka (304–232 BC) extracted the Buddha’s relics and divided them between 84000 *stūpas* erected in various parts of his empire (STRONG 1983: 109–110). The detailed analysis of narratives and rituals associated with *caityas* is present in (LEWIS 1994; LEWIS 2000: 21–39).

⁴ According to some Buddhist texts, it was the Buddha himself who instructed the disciples to build *stūpas* and go on pilgrimages to the four places of his principal life events.

remainder of his life or was offered the honey by the monkey, and in Rājagṛha he delivered the sermon on the reconciliation and unity of the Buddhist monastic community (Skt. *saṅgha*) and/or subjugated the mad elephant Nālāgiri.

In the Old Uyghur literature, the term *čaiti* appears rather rare, and only mentions of the eight *caityas* (sākiz čaiti) could be found.⁵ These ‘mentions’ admonish the believers to revere holy places in India that were connected with Buddha’s life. The most known nowadays Uyghur text concerning *caityas*, *Caityastotra*, is a separate work included into the preface of the 17th c. edition of Altun Yaruk sudur (Skt. Suvarṇaprabhāsottama sūtra, AY) preserved in the collection of the IOM, RAS.⁶ Manuscript and block printed fragments preserved in Turfan collection in Berlin⁷ of another version allow to assume that *Caityastotra* was also transmitted as a separate work among the Uyghurs.

Two fragments of Uyghur text on *caitya* veneration, edited by P. Zieme in 2007, were considered until recently to be one of a kind.⁸ Concerning the second and fourth *caitya* of the traditional set of eight, they commemorate

⁵ Skt. *caitya*, Chin. 提 *zhī ti*, Khotansak. *caityā*, *caitye*, *cīya-*, Tib. *mchod rten*, Mong. *čayiti*, *takil-un oron*. In the Old Uyghur texts the following examples could be found: *bo nom nomliš oron čaiti tegm-ä kut-lug yer oron tetir* “the place where the *Dharma* is preached is the blessed place called *caitya*” (AY, SI 4498, Chapter IV, 73v/1–3); *tükäl bilgä t(ä)ñri t(ä)ñri-si burhan-nuñ iduk kutlug sākiz čaiti kulmıš yer orun-ların tükäl körüp* “[the one that] completely saw all places of the perfectly wise Buddha, the god of gods, [that had been] made the sacred blessed eight *caityas*” (AY, SI 4498, Preface (süü), 2r/16–19); *[i]duk sākiz čaiti-lig iz orukug temäk sav kizläklig yörüg-lär ordusı m(a)hayan nomug tegüči söz birlä koš körši tetir*: “The saying about the traces of the eight holy *caityas* is comparable and parallel to the word about the Mahāyāna teaching, the palace of the secret meanings” (Xuanzang Biography: Mainz 819 (recto/2–5). ZIEME 2007: 165); *arayadan čaytı orun-ta arıg čahsap(a)t-lig käd toyın altun-lug tag-ča čoglangay* “In the monastery and *caitya* places monk with pure moral precepts (Skt. śikṣāpada) will shine like a golden mountain” (Insadi sūtra: Ch/U7570; TEZCAN 1974: 1024–1026). The term **āstup**, **stup** (Skt. stūpa, Khotansak. sthūva-, Sogd. ’st’wṣ-, Chin. 窣堵波 *sudubo*, Mong. *suburṣan*) mainly refers to an ‘architectural structure’ in the Old Uyghur texts, for example, *birök kim kayı kiši-lär sačuk yañluk köñülin ärsär ymä stup-ka vrhar-ka kirip* “If people, being confused and wrong-minded, enter the stupa and vihara...” (Kšanti kılguluk nom. ZIEME 1991: 54); *azu idiz tag-ta ärsär : azu idiz äv-tä ärsär : azu stup-nuñ içintä orguluk ol* “If it is on the holy mountain or in the holy house, it is located in the stupa” (Dhāraṇī sūtra: U374. MÜLLER 1910: 38) etc.

⁶ The manuscript is preserved under the call number SI 4498 (M/1). *Caityastotra* included in the Preface was edited by Dieter Maue and Klaus Röhbörn (MAUE & RÖHBÖRN 1979).

⁷ RASCHMANN 2000: no. 018; ZIEME 2007.

⁸ WILKENS 2020: 191.

the awakening and defeat of Māra at Uruvilvā⁹ and the Buddha's preaching to his mother the Trāyastriṃśa gods in Sāṃkāśya, respectively. Another peculiar Uyghur fragment *SI 5091* (Kr IV/400) preserved in the Serindia collection of the IOM, RAS, deals with the third *caitya* describing the first sermon of the Buddha in Sārṇāth (Vārāṇasī).

SI 5091 (Kr IV/400) is a folio of booklet 15.2×12 cm in size. It was acquired by the Russian consul in Urumchi Nikolai Krotkov in Turfan oasis (provenance is unknown) and brought to St. Petersburg in summer, 1911. Paper used in the manuscript is laid (6/cm), one-layered, thin and even paper nowadays of light brownish colour. The text is written on recto and verso sides, 8 lines each. The margin found on verso only contains the folio number '29'. The text starts with two lines in red, giving a kind of a title (marking the place to be venerated), and continues in black ink. The 'rails' that denote top and bottom edges of the text were made with red ink (13.1 cm). Line spacing 1.5 cm. The folio is complete despite several insignificant holes and traces of insects.

St. Petersburg fragment bears a striking similarity with the above mentioned two folios kept in the Turfan collection of Berlin under the call numbers *U3366* and *U3367*.¹⁰ However, the leaf number on the margin is written vertically on the left side of the text, on the other hand, in *U3366* and *U3367* the entry at the top perpendicularly to the text and mentions leaf number and short title 'čaiti'. Despite this fact, the fragment kept in the IOM could be considered if not part of the same manuscript with Berlin folios, but written in the framework of the same tradition.

⁹ The other fragment *SI 1610* (Kr II/31) on *caitya* veneration identified thanks to P. Zieme is parallel to fragment *U3366* preserved in Turfan collection in Berlin. The folio fragment 18.4×11.2 cm in size contains 5 lines on recto and verso sides. On verso side Uyghur pagination '25' is indicated. As the text was edited by P. Zieme (ZIEME 2007) only transliteration is given below:

<i>SI 1610 / recto</i>	<i>SI 1610 / verso</i>	beš otuz
01 el-tä urbilvay suzak-t[a]	01 [t(ä)ŋri oghılıg š(ı)mn]ug :	
02 nayrančan ögüz kıdıg-ınta :	02 [altı] kırk kolti š(ı)mnu-lug	
03 ašvant atlg mahabodi sögüt altın	03 süü-si čäriği birlä kilišmar	
04 [-ınta v(a)čr]azan örgün üzä oluru	04 tegmä nizvani-lıg š(ı)mnug	
05 [yarlıkap toŋuz yıl ikint]i ay (...)	05 tokuz tökün nizvani-l[ıg]	

¹⁰ Transliteration, translation, along with facsimiles, were published by P. Zieme (ZIEME 2007).

SI 5091 contains the text concerning the third *caitya*.¹¹ According to various preserved Chinese and Tibetan (canonic and post-canonic) works, after attaining enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha traveled to the Deer Park at R̥ṣivādāna near Vāraṇāsī, where the five monks whom he met before were practicing austerities. Shakyamuni presented to them the first sermon, in which he briefly laid out the entire exposition of the Buddha dharma, such as the Middle way, the Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, the origin and cessation of suffering, and how right living leads to knowledge, peace and nirvana.

No parallel for the text of the fragment in any other language has come up so far and there are some peculiar details mentioned which are unique to the Old Uyghur text. So, one may suppose that it was most probably compiled by the Uyghur monk.¹²

Transliteration, transcription

SI 5091 / recto

(01)	'wycwnc 'wyz 'lyksyz 'wn kwyclwk 'wmwq 'yn'q	üçünç üzäliksiz on küçlüg umug inag
(02)	pwrq'n p'qsy : kws [///]l 'yl t' p'r'n's	burhan bahşı : kaş [kavš]al eltä baranas
(03)	p'lyqd' 'yržyv'd'n 'ryq t' syqwn l'r nynk	balıkda irživadan arıgta sıgunlarını
(04)	prkynt' nykrwt swykw t'wypyt' : twnkwz yyl	b(ä)rkintä nigrot sögüt tüpintä : toğuz yıl
(05)	s'kyz ync 'y s'kyz y'nkyq' [']wtr'st ywltwz	säkizinc ay säkiz yarıka utraş(a)t yultuz
(06)	q' : prqmy mwqwrt q' kyc'lyk 'wydt' t'qdyn	-ka br(a)hmi muhurtka kečälig üdtä tagdın
(07)	yynk'k ywwz l'nyp 'wykyrw s'vynw qyq qwmyy	yınak yüüzlänip ögürü sävinü kıg komıy
(08)	'ty kwyt'rwlmys 't'sy k'syp tnkry pwrq'n	atı kötrülmiş atası kaşip t(ä)ñri burhan

¹¹ The fragment was first edited by Abdurishid Yakup in his dissertation "Studies on some late Uighur Buddhist texts preserved in Russia" (YAKUP 2000). The dissertation is rather difficult to find and was unavailable to me. I would like to thank Prof. Peter Zieme for his help in editing the fragment.

¹² This fact is impossible to prove until the colophon of the text would be identified.

SI 5091 / verso	twqwz 'wtwz	tokuz otuz
(01)	tynp'rw 'vrylm'dwk drm'c'kr tykm' nwmlwq tylk'n	tinbärü ävrilmädük d(a)rmačakr tegmä nomlug tilgän
(02)	yk s'p yyrtyncw 'rklyky 'z rw' tnkry nynk	–ig sab yertincü ärkligi äzrua t(ä)ḡriniḡ
(03)	'wytwk ynk' y'nkyrty 'vyrw t'kz yntwrw	ötüḡiḡä yaḡırtı ävirü tägzintürü
(04)	yrlyq'p : pys p'nc'ky twyyn l'r s'kyz twym'n	y(a)rılıkap : beš pañcake toyınlar säkiz tümän
(05)	tnkry l'r p'syn 'wz q'ly 'wd'cy v'ynyky l'r	t(ä)ḡrilär bašin ozgalı udaçı vai- nikelar
(06)	nynk nwmlwq kwyz yn "cyp q'wtrwlm' q'lyq	–nıḡ nomlug közin açıp kutrul- mıklıḡ
(07)	kwysws yn q'ntwrwp [///]q'rw 'wyd swr'dy	küsüšin kanturup : [tur]karu üd suradı
(08)	lyq tws q't'ky "lqynm'dyn swqwlm'dyn	–lıḡ tuškaatäḡi alkinmadın sugul- madın

Translation

Thirdly. The unsurpassed, the One of ten powers,¹³ hope and trust, Buddha teacher in the country of *Kāśīkośala*, in the city of *Vāraṇāsī*, at the deer park *Rṣivādāna*, under the *Nyagrodha* tree, on the eighth day of the eighth month of the Pig year, [under] the star of *Uttarāṣādhā*,¹⁴ at night, at the *Brahma muhūrta*,¹⁵ facing to the North, being happy and rejoicing, upon the request of

¹³ Skt. daśabala, Chin. shi li 十力, Tib. stobs bcu. The list of these powers differs in various sources.

¹⁴ Chin. dou xiu 斗宿, Tib. chu smad. The constellation corresponds to the eighth day of the eighth month.

¹⁵ 1 hour and 36 minutes before sunrise. Literally meaning “the Creator's hour”, it is traditionally the penultimate phase or muhūrta of the night and is considered an auspicious time for all practices of yoga and most appropriate for meditation, worship or any other religious practice. The term **muhurt** is found in another fragment of *caitya* veneration edited by Peter Zieme and Maitrisimit: ikinti ay säkiz yaḡıka puš yultuzka vičay atl(ı)ḡ muhurtka “second month, eighth (day), under the star Puṣya, at the hour called vicaya” (TEKIN 1980: 52; LAUT 1986: 125; ZIEME 2007: 167).

god *Brahma*, the ruler of *Sahāloka dhātu*,¹⁶ deigned to turn again the *dharma* wheel called *dharmacakra*, that had not been turned since [the time of] his father, the Buddha *Kaśyapa*, whose name is elevated, opened the *dharma*-eyes¹⁷ and fulfilled the liberation desires of the *vaineeyikas*¹⁸ enabled to be liberated headed by the five *pañcaka*¹⁹ monks and the eighty thousand *devas*. For everlasting long period without being drained or disappearing [...].

The preserved portion of text corresponds to the basic Buddhist tradition. Thus, in *Caityastotra* included into the Altun Yaruk preface, the third *caitya* is presented in the following manner: “I bow to the *caityas* of four kinds of *jñāna*, that destroy and demolish all *kleśas*, [located in the place, where Buddha] deigned to turn the *dharma* wheel *dharmacakra*, that had not been turned before, [while residing] in the country of *Kāśīkośala*, in the city of *Vāraṇāsī*” (kas kavšal el-tä baranas balık-ta ävrilmätük darmaçakir nom-lug tilgän-ig ävirü y(a)rlıkap : kadgu niz-vani-larıg üzdäci kädäci : tört törlüg iñana bilgä biliglig çaiti-larka yükünürm(ä)n ::).²⁰

The significant difference of circumstantiation is clear. While the locations connected with Buddha’s preaching in Benares (the country of *Kāśīkośala*, city of *Vāraṇāsī*, deer park *Ṛṣivādāna*, and *Nyagrodha* tree) are mentioned frequently in Buddhist texts in various languages, the time span (eighth day of the eighth month of the pig year, *Uttarāśādhā* constellation, hour (Skt. *muhūrta*) called *Brahma*) are absent in any Central Asian tradition. In the case of the important for the Buddhist tradition events described in St. Petersburg and Berlin fragments, the “notion of sacred space is combined with a detailed dating, which can be interpreted as a particular, auspicious moment”.²¹

¹⁶ Chin. suo po shi jie 娑婆世界, “the world of endurance”, that refers to *Jambudvīpa* or the Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold World. Same epithet of *Brahma* is found in Mongolian language: *sablokadadu-yin ejen esrün* or *sab yirtinčü-yin ejen esrün*.

¹⁷ Skt. *dharmacakrhuḥ*.

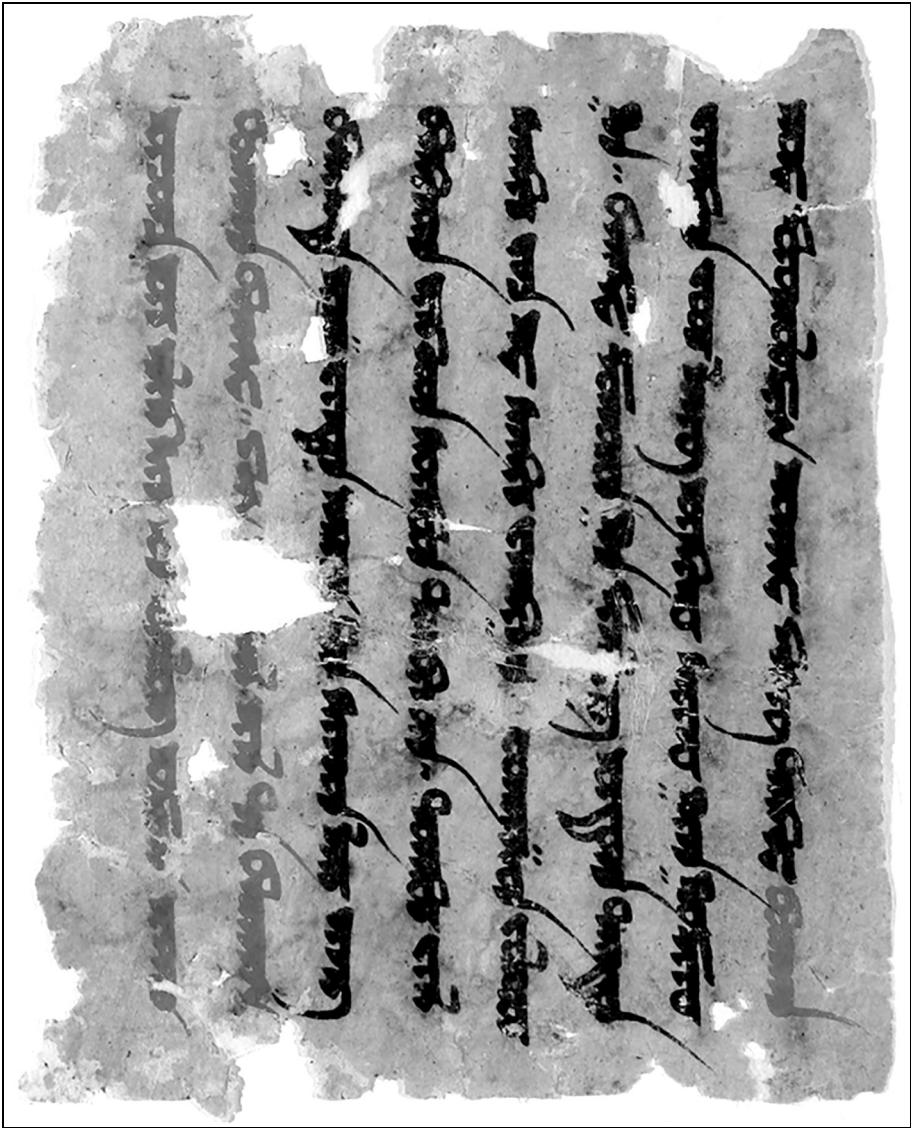
¹⁸ Skt. *vaineeyika*, a prospective convert of *śrāvakas*. About the term see EDGERTON 1959: 510; LANGBERG 2012. In the Uyghur literature the term appears infrequently. In Old Uyghur translation of *Abhidharmakośa* the terms *vaynikelar*, *vaynike tnl(i)glar* and *vaynikelig tnl(i)glar* are found (Shōgaito 1993: 392b). The latter is also used in *Daśakarmapathāvadānamālā* (GENG SHIMIN & LAUT & WILKENS 2005: 80), *Maitrisimit nom bitig* (KASAI 2008: 178).

¹⁹ Skt. *pañcaka*, ‘the retinue of five’. This is the term used to name the group of five men who were the first disciples of the Buddha. According to *Maitrisimit nom bitig*, their names are *Ajñāta Kaundinya*, *Aśvajita*, *Bhadrika*, *Vāśpa*, *Mahānāman* (TEKIN 1980: 40).

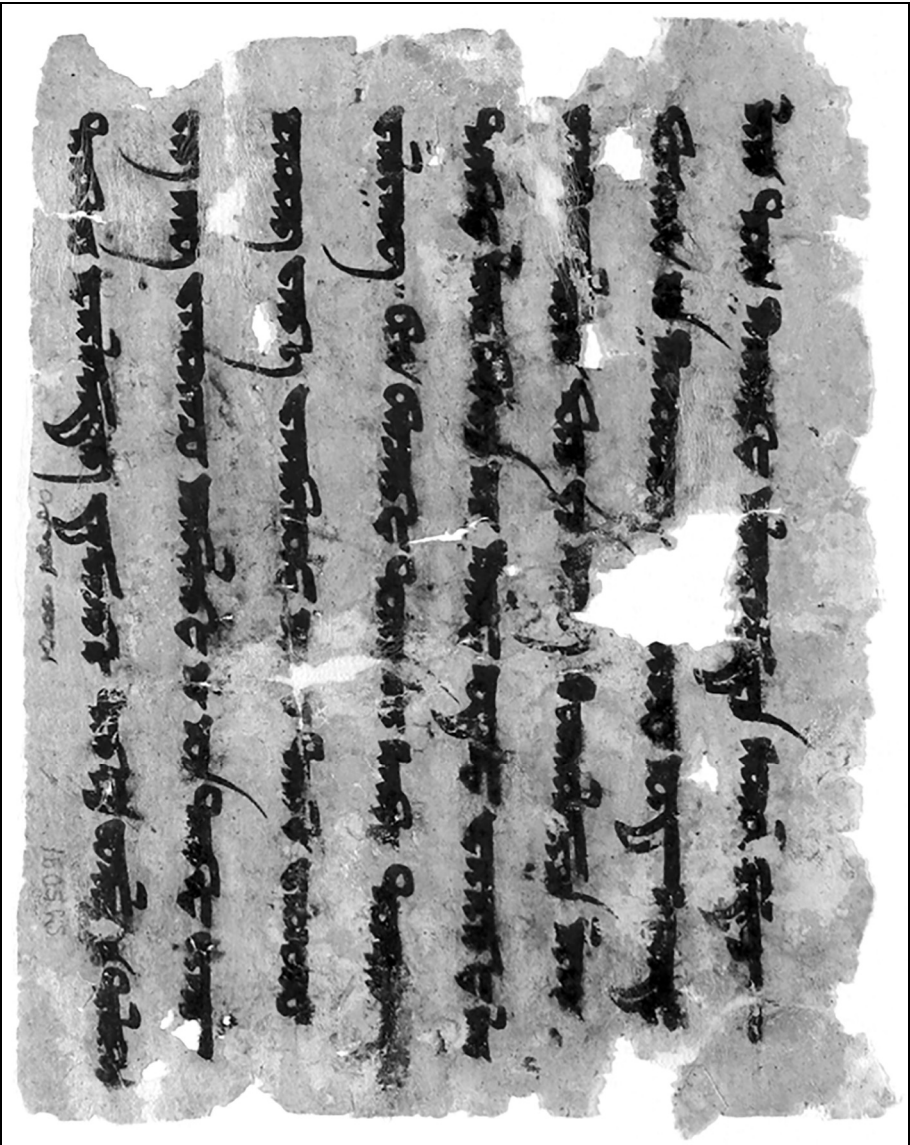
²⁰ SI 4498, Preface (süü), 17r/ 5–11.

²¹ WILKENS 2020: 192.

SI 5091



Recto



Verso

The preserved in St. Petersburg and Berlin fragments allow to assume that the order of the eight caityas differed from the commonly known order mentioned in other Buddhist texts. However, as only three fragments belonging to this version of *Caityastotra* have been identified, the corresponding list of eight *caityas* to be worshipped remain obscure.

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