

The City of *Nirvāṇa*: Conceptions of *Nirvāṇa* with Special Reference to the Central Asian Tradition

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THE *Udānālankāra*, a Tocharian commentary on the *Udānavarga*, contains the story of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. In strophe 72 in the first part of the commentary on the *Mārgavarga*, the Buddha speaks as follows:

^{72a} ytāri akṣāwa-me | **nervāṃṣṣai riś** kartsai | oktatsai klyo(mñai :)

^{72b} /// (9 syllables) /// yāṃṣālle | spelke po āñmtsa :¹

“I taught you the path toward the good city of *nirvāṇa*, [namely] the sacred eightfold [path].

. . . you should make an effort towards it with all your being.”

The expression *nervāṃṣṣai riś* corresponds to the Sanskrit *nirvāṇa-nagara-* or *nirvāṇa-pura-*, which no other versions of the *mahāparinirvāṇa*

THE PRESENT ARTICLE is an English version of the paper I presented at the workshop “Überlieferung der buddhistischen Texte in Zentralasien: Tocharischer Buddhismus und seine Rolle” (Transmission of Buddhist Texts in Central Asia: Tocharian Buddhism and Its Role) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München on April 3, 2014, as part of the project “Die Legende des Buddha in tocharischen Texten: Eine interdisziplinäre Untersuchung zur zentralasiatischen Überlieferung” (The Legends of the Buddha in Tocharian Texts: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of the Central Asian Transmission) supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. I am grateful to Olav Hackstein and Christoph Bross for discussing the Tocharian texts with me. Thanks also go to Jens-Uwe Hartmann for supporting the project and for the helpful advice. I would like to express my thanks to both peer reviewers who commented on my paper with valuable feedback.

¹ B28a2–3. Emphasis added. German translation in Sieg and Siegling 1949b, p. 46: “Den Weg habe ich euch vorgetragen zur guten Nirvāṇa-Stadt, den achtfachen, edlen . . . (von euch) aber muß Anstrengung gemacht werden mit dem ganzen Selbst.”

The Eastern Buddhist 46/2: 61–83

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texts use.² In the following sections, I would like to discuss the concept of the “city of *nirvāṇa*” within the Buddhist context and outline the background that is connected with it.

INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPTS OF *NIRVĀṆA* AND *PARINIRVĀṆA*

The Sanskrit terms *nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa* derive from the root *vā-* (**h₁u eh₂-*) whose present form in Vedic is *vāyati* “expire.”³ There is another root *vā-* (**h₂ueh₁-*) whose present form in Vedic is *vāti* “blow.”⁴ From the time of the Brāhmaṇas onward, both roots were susceptible to being confused with one another due to their homonymy.

This confusion does not seem to bother the Tocharian translators. The word *nirvāṇa* was translated into Tocharian with the root *käs-*, “quench, extinguish, come to extinction.” The abstract derived from this root, Toch B *kselñe* / Toch A *ksalune*, is used for the translation of the Sanskrit term *nirvāṇa*.⁵ The Tocharian root *käs-* derives from the Proto-Indo-European root **(s)g^hesh₂-* “expire,” whose Vedic root *das-* / *jas-* means “pine away.”⁶

On the other hand, the Sanskrit term *nirvāṇa* was often left untranslated, because the concept of *nirvāṇa* is difficult to translate directly into other languages. The central doctrinal concept of *nirvāṇa* has been transcribed or transliterated into a number of languages, for example in Chinese as *niepan* 涅槃 or *nihuan* 泥洹, in Tocharian as *nervām*, as *nirvana* in English, as *Nirwana* in German, and so on. This use of loanwords instead of translations of *nirvāṇa* causes problems when the concept *nirvāṇa* is used in verbal forms of *nir-vā-*. For example, the phonetic transcription *niepan* in Chinese is often accompanied with the verb *ru* 入 “enter” like *ru niepan* 入涅槃 “enter into *nirvāṇa*” or *ru banniepan* 入般涅槃 “enter into *parinirvāṇa*.” The same conundrum confronts us in the English translation “enter into nirvana” and in the German translation “*ins Nirwana eingehen*.” This problem was already noticed by Rhys Davids in 1910:

² MPS-ChinDĀ has at the end a verse part, in which the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*” (*niepan cheng* 涅槃城) appears. These verses probably have no Indian origin; see below for a discussion on the Chinese term *niepan cheng*.

³ See LIV², p. 254: *vāyati* “schwindet dahin, wird leer, ermangelt.”

⁴ See Ibid., p. 287: *vāti* “weht.”

⁵ See Malzahn 2010, pp. 594–96.

⁶ See LIV², pp. 541–43: **(s)g^hesh₂-* “erlöschen;” ved. *das-* / *jas-* “verschmachten.” See also EWA s.v. “verschmachten, dahinschwenden, erschöpft werden” and PW s.v. “Mangel leiden, verschmachten,” which is used only in Vedic.

The last word, Parinibbuto, was misunderstood by Childers. It is used in the Nikāyas of living persons in the sense of set free (from evil), at peace. . . . But, just as in the somewhat analogous Christian expression *entered into rest*, the word (still in its ordinary meaning as above) is once or twice used, figuratively, of Arahants who have died. They are at peace, set free. There is no word in the Buddhist phrase corresponding to the Christian “entered.” The Buddhists never say *entered into Nirvana* of a deceased person.⁷

Similarly, in Tocharian, the phonetic transcription *nervām* for *nirvāṇa* is used in the expression “go into extinction.” According to Carling, the locative of *nervām* with the verb *i-* “go,” or with the verb *yāp-* “enter,” is well attested both in Tocharian A and B texts:⁸

nervām in the locative with the verb *i-* “go”:

khaḍgaviṣṇākalpa ñom mskatār Prattika ptāñkāt yāṣ nervānaṃ (in Toch A)⁹

“He is called Khaḍgaviṣṇākalpa and goes into *nirvāṇa* as a Pratyekabuddha.”

spāntai(tsñe)mpa śwaraikne spē[ntai m<a>]sta nervāne (in Toch B)¹⁰

“Together with trustfulness, in the fourfold way, trustfully, you went into *nirvāṇa*.”

nervām in the locative with the verb *yāp-* “enter”:

lān<s>la[m]ṣṣāte poyśiññe yopsa nervāne (in Toch B)¹¹

“He carried out [the labor] of the omniscient and entered into *nirvāṇa*.”

The expression, supplementing the noun *nirvāṇa* with a verb meaning “enter into,” would make it possible to interpret *nirvāṇa* in the locative, “into which one enters.”

⁷ Rhys Davids 1910, p. 132, n. 2.

⁸ Carling 2000, pp. 248–49.

⁹ A18b2.

¹⁰ B241a4f.

¹¹ B288a2.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE *NIRVĀṆA* INTERPRETATION*Nirvāṇa-dhātu*

As noticed by Rhys Davids,¹² the sentence construction discussed above, which uses the locative of the word *nirvāṇa*, does not occur in early Pāli texts.¹³ A possible development can be discerned in the interpretation of the compound *nirvāṇa-dhātu/nibbāna-dhātu*. The final member of the compound *dhātu-* means “constituent part, element,” from which the literal meaning of the compound *nirvāṇa-dhātu* results in “element of *nirvāṇa*.” The *Itivuttaka* describes two “elements of *nirvāṇa*,” namely *saupādisesa-nibbānadhātu-* and *anupādisesa-nibbānadhātu-*:

katamā bhikkhave saupādisesā nibbānadhātu? idha bhikkhave bhikkhu araham hoti. . . . tassa tiṭṭhanteva pañcindriyāni yesam aviḅhātattā manāpāmanāpaṃ paccanubhoti, sukhadukkham paṭisaṃvediyati. tassa yo rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo

*katamā ca bhikkhave anupādisesā nibbānadhātu? idha bhikkhave bhikkhu araham hoti. . . . tassa idheva bhikkhave sabbavedayitāni anabhinanditāti sītibhavissanti.*¹⁴

“And which, monks, is that *nibbāna* element with substrate remnant? In this case, monks, a monk is an arahant. . . . For this one the five faculties still persist, as a result of whose non-disappearance he receives that which is charming and otherwise, experiences pleasure and pain. On this one’s part, it is the destruction of lust, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion.”

“And which, monks, is that *nibbāna* element without substrate remnant? In this case, monks, a monk is an arahant. . . . On this one’s part, monks, all that is sensed right here, being not rejoiced in, will become cold.”¹⁵

The difference between the two elements depends on whether the sense faculties of an *arhant* remain or not. Therefore, the former element

¹² Rhys Davids 1910, p. 132, see footnote 7 above.

¹³ Note that when *nirvāṇa* occurs in the accusative with the verb *adhi-gam*, *nirvāṇa* is understood as the aim of the subject; see PTC s.v. *nibbānaṃ: anupubbena nibbānaṃ adhiḅacchanti paṇḅitā ti* AN I 162.29 = AN III 214.19.

¹⁴ It 38.5–21.

¹⁵ English translation in Masefield 2013, pp. 228–29.

saupādisesa- is often interpreted as the *nirvāṇa* of a living person, and the latter element *anupādisesa-* as the *nirvāṇa* of a dead person.¹⁶ This interpretation is, however, secondary, and is not supported by an older passage in the *Suttanipāta* 354: *yadatthiyaṃ brahmacariyaṃ acāri, Kappāyano, kacci 'ssa taṃ amoghaṃ, nibbāyi so ādu saupādiseso, yathā vimutto ahu taṃ suṇāma*. (Was Kappāyana [Nigrodhakappa], who lived a profitable, virtuous life, in anyway in error? Did he expire or did he have something remaining? We [want to] hear how he was released.)¹⁷ In Sn 354, Vaṅgīsa asks if his teacher Nigrodhakappa¹⁸ expired (*nibbāyi*) or had something remaining (*saupādiseso*). This question corresponds to the question in the introductory paragraph of the Vaṅgīsasutta: *parinibbuto nu kho me upajjhāyo udāhu no parinibbuto*. (Did my teacher completely expire or did he not completely expire?)¹⁹ It is evident that his teacher Nigrodhakappa died: *Aggālave kālam akāsi bhikkhu*. (The monk [Nigrodhakappa] died in Aggālava.)²⁰ The commentary on Sn 354 interprets the former expression of the question as *anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā*, the latter as *saupādisesāya*. The correspondence of the usage of the terms is illustrated in the following table:

Sn 59.20–21	Sn 354	Pj II 350.23–24
<i>parinibbuto</i>	<i>nibbāyi</i>	<i>anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā yathā asekhā</i>
“completely expired”	“expired”	“with the <i>nirvāṇa</i> element without remainder like one who does not need further training”
<i>no parinibbuto</i>	<i>saupādiseso</i>	<i>saupādisesāya yathā sekhā</i>
“not completely expired”	“having remainder”	“with [the <i>nirvāṇa</i> element] having remainder like one who needs further training”

¹⁶ See Fujita 1988, pp. 7–10.

¹⁷ The same passage is found in Th 1274. For this verse see Fujita 1988, p. 10; Nakamura 1984, p. 75 (endnote on pp. 321–22); Norman 2001, p. 44 (endnote on p. 235); Norman 1969, pp. 119, 299.

¹⁸ The name is Kappāyana in Sn 354.

¹⁹ Sn 59.20–21.

²⁰ Sn 343c.

This comparison raises further questions regarding the meanings of the terms used here. For the interpretation of the “city of *nirvāṇa*,” it is important that the term *nirvāṇa-dhātu* is used in the sense of “element” and not in the sense of “place” as advocated in the interpretations that I will discuss in the following sections.

The Buddha’s Parinirvāṇa in the Mahāparinibbānasuttanta

The feminine word *dhātu-* in Pāli raises the issue of determining which of the five possible cases of obliques it should be understood as. For instance, when describing the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha, the *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* uses the compound *nibbāna-dhātu-* in the oblique feminine (obl. fem.) form:

*puna ca paraṃ Ānanda yadā tathāgato anupādisesāya nibbāna-dhātuyā parinibbāyati, tadā ’yaṃ paṭhavī kampati saṃkampati sampakampati sampavedhati.*²¹

Franke translates this sentence as follows (here shown in English equivalent):

“When, further, a Tathāgata departs in the Nibbāna of release without residue, then the earth trembles and quivers and shakes.”²²

Franke explains that “*nibbānadhātu*” may be taken literally as meaning “factor of *Nibbāna*,” but that this would imply less that it is a place than Oldenberg assumes. Thus, whether “*nibbānadhātu*” is taken as instrumental or locative, to be transcribed as “with *nibbāna*” or “in *nibbāna*,” is rather irrelevant. That the northern Buddhist Divyāvadāna presumes the locative is not relevant for the interpretation of our present text.²³

The interpretation by Rhys Davids vacillates between the instrumental and locative cases. In 1881, he interpreted the oblique feminine form *nibbāna-dhātuyā* in the sentence MPS-P 3.20 as instrumental:

“Again, Ānanda, when a Tathāgata passes entirely away **with** that utter passing away in which nothing whatever is left behind, then this earth quakes and trembles and is shaken violently.”²⁴

²¹ MPS-P 3.20 (DN II 108.33–109.2).

²² Franke 1913, p. 209: “Wenn ferner ein Tathāgata im Nibbāna restloser Erlösung abscheidet, dann wankt, zittert und bebt diese Erde.”

²³ Ibid., n. 1. See also Windisch 1895, p. 74; Oldenberg 1906, p. 310, n. 1.

²⁴ Rhys Davids 1881, p. 48. Emphasis added.

However, in 1910, Rhys Davids revises the sentence to the locative case: “. . . **in** that utter passing away.”²⁵

Oldenberg interpreted *nirvāṇa* decisively as place: “From the flames of becoming, decease, and suffering, the believer, he who has knowledge, saves himself in the world of “extinction” (*Nirvāna*), in the cool quiet of everlasting peace.”²⁶ He explained his interpretation as follows: “*Nirvāna* is meant in fact as a place—that is, thought of, of course, as being in the image of a place in which the Released One dwells. In the expression *anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbāyi* the first two words are locative, not instrumental as Childers assumes.”²⁷

The problem appears to be not only a grammatical interpretation but also a philosophical or religious interpretation from the view of our modern understanding. The locative interpretation of *nibbāna-dhātu* benefits the notion of place, which is inclined to be understood as an abstract place.

Nirvāṇa as Place

Oldenberg’s interpretation is based on the explanation of the features of *nirvāṇa* in the *Milindapañha*.²⁸ The *Milindapañha*, which is transmitted in Pāli, does not belong to the *Tipitaka* but to para-canonical texts of the Theravādins. The text deals with questions posed by Milinda, who is known as the Indo-Greek king Menandros (second century BCE), and responses by an otherwise unknown monk Nāgasena. The transmitted *Milindapañha* is a collection of texts in the style of dialogues about problems concerning Buddhist doctrine, and is divided into five parts. The section about the features

²⁵ Rhys Davids 1910, p. 117. Emphasis added. Windisch translated the phrase in the locative, depending on the *Divyāvadāna*, and criticized the translation of Rhys Davids 1881; see Windisch 1895, p. 74.

²⁶ Oldenberg 1996, p. 263. The German of Oldenberg 1906, p. 310, reads: “Aus den Flammen des Werdens, Vergehens, Leidens rettet sich der Erkennende an den Ort des ‘Erlöschens’ (*Nirvāna*), in die Stille ewigen Friedens.”

²⁷ Translated from the German of Oldenberg 1906, p. 310, n. 1: “Das *Nirvāna* wird in der That als ein Ort—d. h. natürlich unter dem Bilde eines Orts—gedacht, an dem der Erlöste weilt. In der stehenden Wendung *anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbāyi* sind die beiden ersten Worte Lokative, nicht wie Childers (s.v. *parinibbāyati*) anzunehmen scheint, Instrumentale.” For a philosophical interpretation of the term *nirvāṇa-dhātu*, see Schmithausen 1969, pp. 82–83. See also Childers 1875, s.v. *parinibbāyati*: “The death of Buddha is sometimes spoken of in the following words, *anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbāyi*, or *parinibbuto*, he attained the extinction of being through that element of *Nirvāṇa* in which no trace of the skandhas remains.”

²⁸ Mil 268; 319–320.

of *nirvāṇa* does not belong to the first original part of the *Milindapañha*, but to the second part, “Meṇḍakapañha,” which is not of early origin.²⁹

In the pertinent section of the *Milindapañha*, the features of *nirvāṇa* are compared with those of *ākāsa* (Skt. *ākāśa*):

*bhante Nāgasena, ākāsassa dasa guṇā nibbānaṃ anupaviṭṭhā ti yaṃ vadesi, katame ākāsassa dasa guṇā nibbānaṃ anupaviṭṭhā ti.—yathā mahārāja ākāso na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na uppajjati, duppasaho acorāharaṇo anissito vihaḡagamaṇo nirāvarenaṇo ananto, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja nibbānaṃ na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na uppajjati, duppasahaṃ acorāharaṇaṃ anissitaṃ ariyagamaṇaṃ nirāvarenaṃ anantaṃ. ime kho mahārāja ākāsassa dasa guṇā nibbānaṃ anupaviṭṭhā ti.*³⁰

“ ‘Revered Nāgasena, when you say that eleven special qualities of *ākāsa* are present in *nibbāna*, what are the eleven special qualities of *ākāsa* that are present in *nibbāna*?’—‘As, sire, *ākāsa* is not born, does not age, does not die, does not de cease (here), does not arise (elsewhere), is hard to master, cannot be carried off by thieves, depends on nothing, is **the sphere of birds**, without obstruction, unending, even so, sire, is *nibbāna* not born, does not age, does not die, does not de cease, does not arise, is hard to master, cannot be carried off by thieves, depends on nothing, is **the sphere of ariyans**, without obstruction, unending. These, sire, are the eleven special qualities of *ākāsa* that are present in *nibbāna*.’”³¹

Here, the word *ākāsa* is explained with the compound *vihaḡagamaṇo* “(sphere in which) birds go.” By contrast, the corresponding quality of *nirvāṇa* is explained with the compound *ariyagamaṇaṃ* “(sphere in which) *āryas* go.”

In another comparison with *mahāsamudda*, “great ocean,” the corresponding quality of *nirvāṇa* is interpreted clearly as a place (*āvāsa*):

*puna ca paraṃ mahārāja mahāsamuddo mahantānaṃ bhūtānaṃ āvāso, evaṃ eva kho mahārāja nibbānaṃ mahantānaṃ arahantānaṃ vimalakhīṇāsava-balappatta- vasībhūta-mahābhūtānaṃ āvāso.*³²

²⁹ See von Hinüber 1996, § 172–179: the first part (Mil 2.23–89.16) is the original *Milindapañha*, which dates between 100 BCE and 200 CE. The other four parts date to the period of the commentaries.

³⁰ Mil 320.26–321.4. Emphasis added.

³¹ Horner 1964, pp. 157–58. Emphasis added. Horner (p. 157, n. 4) reads “eleven” for *dasa* (ten), according to the *Milinda-tīkā* commentary to the *Milindapañha*.

³² Mil 319.23–28. Emphasis added.

“‘And again, sire, the great ocean is **the abode of great beings**; even so, sire, is nibbāna **the abode of arahants**, great beings who are stainless, their cankers destroyed, who have attained the powers and become masters (over their minds).’”³³

In this layer of the *Milindapañha*, it is evident that *nirvāṇa* was expressed as a place where *ariyans* or *arahants* live. As Oldenberg’s interpretation shows, it depends on the understanding of interpreters if it means an abstract place or a concrete place.

Locative Interpretation in the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra of the Sarvāstivādins

As already mentioned, the Pāli *nibbāna-dhātu* in the oblique feminine leads to difficulties in interpreting its case. After going through a process of Sanskritization, *nirvāṇadhātu* was interpreted in the Sarvāstivādin tradition as locative:

*punar aparaṃ na cirasyedānīm tathāgatasyānu(padhiśeṣe nirvā)ṇadhātu parinirvāṇaṃ bhaviṣy(ati | atyartham tasmin) samaye mahāprthivīcālaś ca bhavaty ulkāpātā diśodāhā antarīkṣe deva-
dundubhaya ’bhina(dan)t(i)*³⁴

復次阿難陀。如來不久却後三月。入無餘依妙涅槃界。於此時中大地振動。四維上下朗然明照。於虛空中諸天叫聲猶如擊鼓。³⁵

Tibetan *Vinaya*: *phung po ma lus pa’i mya ngan las ’da’ ba’i dbyings su yongs su mya ngan las ’da’ bar ’gyur ba*³⁶

In the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* of the Sarvāstivādins, the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* is expressed as *na cirasyedānīm tathāgatasyānu(padhiśeṣe nirvā)ṇadhātu parinirvāṇaṃ bhaviṣy(ati)* (MPS-S 17.21: “Not long from now, there will be the *parinirvāṇa* of the Tathāgata in the *anupadhiśeṣa-nirvāṇadhātu*”). Waldschmidt translates the parallel passage from the Chinese translation of

³³ Horner 1964, p. 156. Emphasis added.

³⁴ MPS-S 17.21. The same expression in locative is found in the *Divyāvadāna*: *na cirasyedānīm tathāgatasya trayāṇaṃ vāṣikāṇaṃ māsānām atyayān nirupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātu parinirvāṇaṃ bhaviṣyati* (Divy 202.23–25).

³⁵ MPS-ChinMSV 388b17–19. Translation by Waldschmidt (1950–51, vol. 2, p. 219): “Und sodann, o Ānanda, (wenn) der Tathāgata in kurzem, nach Verlauf von drei Monaten, in das Gebiet des restlosen wunderbaren Nirvāṇa eingeht, schüttelt sich zu dieser Zeit die große Erde, die vier Himmelsrichtungen lodern oben und unten hell auf, und im Luftraum rufen die Götter, als ob sie die Trommel schlugen.”

³⁶ Tibetan text after Waldschmidt 1950–51, vol. 2, p. 219. Emphasis added.

the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins as: “The Tathāgata is about to enter the region (*das Gebiet*) of wonderful *nirvāna* without residue.”³⁷ His translation *das Gebiet* corresponds to the Sanskrit *dhātu*, to the Chinese *jie* 界, and to the Tibetan *dbyings* “celestial region.”

In another passage in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, which Waldschmidt published as “Sanskrit-Sondertext II”³⁸ separately from his edition of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, the interpretation is still clearer:

*atha brahmanah sabhāpateḥ śakrasya c(a deve)ndrasya
svanikāyasthitayor etad abhavat | ayaṃ buddho bh(a)g(av)ā(m)
kuśinagarīsamīpe sthitaḥ kauśināgarān mallān mahataraddhiprā
tihāryeṇāvārajayi(tvā na) cirasyedānīm bhagavān anupadhiśeṣe
nirvāṇadhātau parini(r)vāsyati*³⁹

In this last sentence, Waldschmidt interprets the locative expression *nirvāṇadhātau* as referring to “the domain of *nirvāṇa* without remainder” (*die Stätte des restlosen Nirvāna*) in which the Buddha “enters.”

FIGURATIVE CONCEPTION OF *NIRVĀṆA*: *NIRVĀṆA-NAGARA*

Yogalehrbuch

The expression *nirvāṇa-nagara* “city of *nirvāṇa*” put forth a figurative interpretation of *nirvāṇa*. The compound appears in the so-called *Yogalehrbuch*, which Schlingloff edited from the Turfan-Funde.⁴⁰ The book explains

³⁷ Translated from the German of Waldschmidt 1950, vol. 2, p. 219: “(Wenn) der Tathāgata in kurzem . . . in das Gebiet des restlosen wunderbaren Nirvāṇa eingeht.” See n. 35 above for the entire passage.

³⁸ Waldschmidt 1944–48, vol. 1, pp. 171–86.

³⁹ MPS-S 31.76. Translation by Waldschmidt 1944–48, vol. 2, p. 86: “Damals kam Brahman Sabhāpati und dem Götterkönig Śakra, die sich bei den Göttern ihrer Klasse befanden, folgender Gedanke: ‘Buddha, der Erhabene, hält sich hier in der Nähe von Kuśinagarī auf. Nachdem er die Mallas durch ein großes Schaustück seiner übernatürlichen Fähigkeit für sich gewonnen hat, wird der Erhabene nun in kurzem in die Stätte des restlosen Nirvāna eingehen.’”

⁴⁰ See Schlingloff 2006. The manuscript fragments of the text were found in the Kucha region except one fragment from Shorchuk; see Hartmann: “Einleitung zum Nachdruck,” in Schlingloff 2006, p. xiv. The title of the text is unknown and the text was translated neither into Chinese nor into Tibetan. Schlingloff analyzed the scribal mistakes in the fragments and surmised that the Indian Gupta script underlies a possible earlier manuscript; see Schlingloff 2006, pp. 12–13. The origin of the text remains unclear.

the meditation practice for a *yogin*. It is worth noting that the compounds *nirvāṇa-nagara* and *nirvāṇa-pura* are found only in the *Yogalehrbuch* among the Sanskrit texts in the Turfan-Funde.⁴¹

In the tenth chapter, “Indifference” (*upekṣā*), six kinds of indifference are explained.⁴² The sixth kind, “indifference as infinitude” (*apramāṇopekṣā*), deals with the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*. Schlingloff translates *nirvāṇa-nagara* and *nirvāṇa-pura* as “city of extinction” (die Stadt des Verlöschens). In paragraph a), the city of *nirvāṇa* is described as follows:

a) (7 akṣaras lost) .ai ..ṃ [bha]gavatparinirvāṇam
 abhimukhī bhavati vajraśailam i[va va]na[ka]ṃpane dharmānusāri
 (24 akṣaras lost) (*nirvāṇapu*)rasthaṃ ca bha(gavantaṃ dhārm)y[ā]
 (ṃ) gaṇḍikāṃ ākoṭayaṃtaṃ paśyati sa śabdaḥ ananta lokadhātun
 (ā)pūr(a)[y](a)t(i) s. (21 akṣaras lost) m iti ghoṣa[y](a)[t](i
 śrā)[va]kāṇāṃ nirvāṇapurapraveśakālaṃ sūcayati | tato yāvas
 tasya bhagavataḥ parivāraḥ tābhyah t. (14 akṣaras lost) (di)śo
 ’namtaparyantaḥ puṣparatnamayaḥ prādur bhavati yatrādhirūdhā
 drśyaṃte | tato nirvāṇapuram praviśatā vaidūryābhaḥ dauvārikah
 puruṣo [v]. (7 akṣaras lost) [ka]thayatiha na[ga]re yah praviṣṭo
 na bhūyo nirgacchatīti | te ca praviṣṭāḥ ākāsamayair ivābhrakūṭair
 avaṣṭabdhāḥ pradīpā iva sāmyaṃte śī (8 akṣaras lost)⁴³

⁴¹ See SWTF, s.v. *nirvāṇa-nagara*, s.v. *nirvāṇa-pura*, and s.v. *parinirvāṇa-nagara*.

⁴² The six *upekṣā* are (1) *viṣayopekṣā* “Gleichmut gegenüber den Sinnesobjekten;” (2) *vedayitopekṣā* “Gleichmut gegenüber der Empfindung;” (3) *bālacaritaratyupekṣā* “Gleichmut gegenüber der Lust am kindischen Lebenswandel;” (4) *bhavāṃgopekṣā* “Gleichmut gegenüber den Gliedern des Werdens;” (5) *ātmaparikalopekṣā* “Gleichmut gegenüber der Einbildung einer Seele;” and, (6) *apramāṇopekṣā* “Gleichmut als Unermeßlichkeit;” see Schlingloff 2006, p. 156.

⁴³ YL 161R2–R6. Translation by Schlingloff (2006, p. 169): “. . . kommt [dem Yogin] das völlige Verlöschens des Erhabenen zu Gesicht: Wie ein Diamantfels beim Erbeben des Waldes, der Lehre folgend . . . sieht er den (in der Stadt des Verlöschens) stehenden (Erhabenen) den Gong (der Lehre) anschlagen. Der Ton erfüllt unendliche Weltregionen und läßt für alle Wesen ertönen . . . und kündigt für die Jünger die Zeit des Eintretens in die Stadt des Verlöschens an. Dann tritt, soweit das Gefolge des Erhabenen [reicht], von . . . (nach den zehn Richtungen) in unendlichem Umkreis aus Blumen und Edelsteinen in Erscheinung, worauf sitzend [die Jünger] erscheinen. Dann [wird] von dem in die Stadt des Verlöschens Eintretenden ein gläsern leuchtender, das Tor bewachender Mann . . . spricht [dieser]: ‘Wer hier in [diese] Stadt eingetreten ist, geht nie mehr heraus.’ Indem [die Jünger] eintreten, werden sie gleichsam von ätherischen Wolkenhaufen zum Erstarren gebracht und kommen wie Lampen zum Erlöschen.’”

The essential part for understanding the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*” can be summarized as follows: The *yogin* sees the venerable one, who strikes the gong. The sound signals the time for entering into the city of *nirvāṇa* (*nirvāṇapurapraveśakālam*) for the disciples. The door-keeper (*dauvārikah*, literally, “gate-keeper”) who is [like] shining crystal says: “Anyone who entered in this city will never come out anymore.”

In paragraph f), the Buddha enters into the city of *nirvāṇa* (*ni(rvā)ṇanagare praviśya*), and goes to extinction like a lamp (*pradīpaivopaśamaṃ gaccha(ti)*):

f) *tato bhagavāṃ gā(thāṃ bhāṣate |*
anityā) bata saṃskārā utpādavayayadharmaṇaḥ
[u](tpadya hi nirudhyaṃte teṣāṃ) [v]yupaśamaḥ sukhaṃ |
ity uktvā ni(rvā)ṇanagare praviśyākāśanibhair abhrakūṭer
ivopagūdhā[y](ā)ṃ lāṣī pradīpaivopaśamaṃ gaccha(ti) |
bhagavata)[ś ca] śrāvākāḥ paścāt pari(n)ir(v)ā(ṇa) ram
pravi[ṣ](t)ā . . . [opaśama]ṃ [ga](ccha)ṃ(ti) |⁴⁴

In paragraph g), the *yogin* is following the Buddha and his disciples, but he is stopped by the door-keeper of the city of *nirvāṇa*.⁴⁵ In the *Yogalehrbuch*, the place of *nirvāṇa*, the city of *nirvāṇa*, is clearly visualized in the meditation practice of *yogins*.

Kumārajīva: Dazhidulun and Miaofa lianhua jing

The gate (*men* 門) to the city of *nirvāṇa* (*niepan cheng*) is also known in the *Dazhidulun* 大智度論,⁴⁶ translated by Kumārajīva (Ch. Jiumoluoshe 鳩摩羅什; fl. 4 century):

⁴⁴ YL 162R2–R3. Translation by Schlingloff (2006, p. 171): “Dann (spricht) der Erhabene die Strophe:

‘(Unbeständig) fürwahr sind die Gestaltungskräfte,
dem Gesetz des Entstehens und Vergehens unterworfen:
(sie entstehen und werden zum Verschwinden gebracht;
[nur] ihr) Erlöschen ist Glück.’

Wenn er so gesprochen hat, tritt er in die Stadt des Verlöschens ein und kommt, an der gleichsam von äthergleichen Wolkenhaufen umhüllten (Stätte nichts mehr) begehend, wie eine Lampe zum Erlöschen. Auch die Jünger (des Erhabenen) treten anschließend, (in der Zeit) [ihres] völligen Verlöschens, in (die Stadt des Verlöschens) ein und (kommen ebenso) zum Erlöschen.”

⁴⁵ Schlingloff 2006, p. 172.

⁴⁶ T no. 1509, 25: 57a4.

三十七品是趣涅槃道。行是道已得到涅槃城。涅槃城有三門。所謂空無相無作。已說道次應說到處門。四禪等是助開門法⁴⁷

There are three gates to the city of *nirvāṇa*, namely: *śūnyatā*, *ānimitta*, and *apraṇihita*. This passage appears in the explanation about the three meditations (*samādhi*), namely *śūnyatā-samādhi*, *ānimitta-samādhi*, and *apraṇihita-samādhi*, which belong to the basic doctrine of the *prajñāpāramitā* texts.

Kumārajīva, a monk of Tocharian origin and translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese, established an epoch-making translation method. In his translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經,⁴⁸ the phrase “city of *nirvāṇa*” (*niepan zhi cheng*) is also used:

又復賜與涅槃之城言得滅度⁴⁹

In the Sanskrit *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the compound *nirvāṇa-nagara* appears as follows:

*nirvāṇanagaram caisām mahādharmānagaram dadāti
nirvṛtyā cainān pralobhayati sma na punar imam evaṃrūpaṃ
dharmaparyāyaṃ bhāṣate sma*⁵⁰

The subject of the sentence is the *tathāgata* (SP 290.1), who “did not teach (*bhāṣate*) anymore this *dharmaparyāyaṃ*,” that is, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* for the four assemblies (*eṣām = catasṛṇām pariśadām*, SP 290.3) to whom the *tathāgata* “gave (*dadāti*) the city of *nirvāṇa*, that is, the city of the great *dharma*.” This agrees with Kumārajīva’s translation “and [the *tathāgata*] gave [them] the city of *nirvāṇa*.” However, the earlier translation by Dharmarakṣa (230?–316), the *Zheng fahua jing* 正法華經,⁵¹ lacks the expression for *nirvāṇa-nagara* in the corresponding sentence:

詔平等城其見身魔⁵²

⁴⁷ T no. 1509, 25: 206a11–14. Translation by Lamotte (1970, vol. 3, p. 1210): “Les trente-sept auxiliaires sont le chemin (*mārga*) qui conduit au Nirvāṇa. Quand on a suivi ce chemin, on arrive à la ville du Nirvāṇa (*nirvāṇanagara*). La ville du Nirvāṇa a trois portes (*dvāra*): la vacuité (*śūnyatā*), le sans-caractère (*ānimitta*) et la non-prise en considération (*apraṇihita*). Aussi, après avoir parlé du chemin . . . faut-il parler ici des portes auxquelles il aboutit. . . . Les quatre extases (*dhyāna*), etc., sont des *dharma* aidant à ouvrir ces portes.”

⁴⁸ T no. 262, 9.

⁴⁹ T no. 262, 9: 39a5–6.

⁵⁰ SP 290.3–4.

⁵¹ T no. 263, 9.

⁵² T no. 263, 9: 109c7.

Though Dharmarakṣa's version uses *cheng* 城 (city) for *nagara*, this word is employed in quite a different context: “[The Tathāgata] invited [the assemblies] impartially to the city [or: invited to the city of impartiality], and [they] saw the *māra* (evil) of the body.” In this context, there is no possibility of interpreting “the city” as “the city of *nirvāṇa*.”

Dharmarakṣa translated the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka* in the year 286 CE. The two Chinese versions of the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka*, by Dharmarakṣa and Kumārajīva respectively, indicate a possible development of the conception “city of *nirvāṇa*.” Dharmarakṣa's version makes mention of the three gates to *nirvāṇa* (*nihuan*):

空無相無願向泥洹門⁵³

This accords with the Sanskrit text:

*yathā catasra ośadhayas tathā śūnyatānimittāpraṇihitanirvāṇa-
dvāraṃ ca draṣṭavyam*⁵⁴

As in the *Dazhidulun*, the three gates (Skt. *dvāra*) are *śūnyatā* (Ch. *kong* 空), *ānimitta* (Ch. *wuxiang* 無相), and *apraṇihita* (Ch. *wuyuan* 無願), which lead to *nirvāṇa*. The correspondence in the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka* is *śūnyatānimittāpraṇihitanirvāṇadvāraṃ*. In Kumārajīva's version, the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*” (*niepan zhi cheng*) is used in twenty-six places and is only rarely matched with the corresponding passage in the Sanskrit text.⁵⁵

The expressions *nirvāṇa-nagara* and *nirvāṇa-pura* do not seem to be widely used in Indian texts. The example in the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka*, as seen above, indicates that the compounds could not have existed in the old version.⁵⁶ Further examples of *nirvāṇa-pura* are found in the *Laṅkāvatāra*,⁵⁷ which does not antedate Kumārajīva's time.

⁵³ T no. 263, 9: 85c9.

⁵⁴ SP 136.13–137.1.

⁵⁵ The Khotanese version of the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka* also uses the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*.” For this information, I am grateful to Yumi Katayama who presented her paper “A Study of the Khotanese Summary of the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīkasūtra*” at the Seventeenth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies on August 19, 2014.

⁵⁶ Lamotte (1970, vol. 3, pp. 1210, 1231) quotes an example in the *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka*, which has the phrase “*nirvāṇanagara*.”

⁵⁷ Laṅk 155.1; 361.2.

VERSION OF THE *PARINIRVĀṆA* STORY IN THE *UDĀNĀLANĀKĀRA*

The Tocharian fragments B27–29 of the *Udānālanākāra*, the commentary on the “Mārgavarga”, the twelfth *varga* of the *Udānavarga* (verse XII 9–13), contain the story of the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*.⁵⁸ As quoted at the beginning of this paper, the text uses the expression “city of nirvāṇa” (*nervāṃṣṣai riś*), which we find in no other versions of the *mahāparinirvāṇa* texts.

The “Mārgavarga” deals mainly with the Buddhist doctrine of the sacred eightfold path (*ārya-aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*). The word *mārga* is used in the *Udānavarga* with *nirvāṇagamana-* (Uv VI 15) or *nirvāṇagāmin-* (Uv XXVII 34) to mean “the path, which leads to *nirvāṇa*.”⁵⁹ However, the “Mārgavarga” of the *Udānavarga* does not mention the word *nirvāṇa*. In another verse commentary transmitted in the Chinese translation, the *Chuyao jing* 出曜經 (T no. 212, vol. 4), the verses of the “Mārgavarga” (T no. 212, 4: 681b–687b) are often explained with the word *nirvāṇa* (Ch. *nihuan*), the goal to be reached through the path (*mārga*). The commentary in the *Chuyao jing*, however, is not connected with the story that precedes the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*. Another commentary, *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* in Pāli, also contains a parallel chapter, “Maggavagga,” in which twelve stories are relayed. None of these stories are connected with the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*.

Strophe 15 in the second part of the “Mārgavarga” of the *Udānālanākāra* testifies that the text in the Tocharian fragments B27–29 deals with the story that precedes the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*:

⁵⁸ Sieg and Siegling identified Tocharian fragment B27 of the *Udānālanākāra* as the story before the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. Fragment B27 includes strophes 61–70 of the first part of the commentary on the twelfth *varga*, the “Mārgavarga,” of the *Udānavarga* (verse XII 9–11). Fragment B28 directly follows the fragment B27, which comprises the further strophes 71 and 72 with the end formula for the first part of the commentary. After this end formula, the second part of the commentary begins with renewed strophe numbers. Fragment B28 also comprises strophes 1–9 of the second part of the commentary. Fragment B29 directly follows fragment B28, which includes the strophes 9–21 of the second part of the commentary on the “Mārgavarga” of the *Udānavarga* (verse XII 12–13). The story before the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha appears to be continued through the part change in fragment B28. See Sieg and Siegling 1949, p. 44.

⁵⁹ *nirvāṇagamanaṃ mārgaṃ kṣipram eva viśodhayet* (Uv VI 15); *āryaṃ cāṣṭāṅgikaṃ mārgaṃ kṣemaṃ nirvāṇagāminam* (Uv XXVII 34). The Pāli *nibbāna-gāmin* is also used in the same way as the attribute for the path, and not for a person; see PTC s.v. *nibbāna-gāmin* (leading to *nibbāna*).

15a (2 syllables) /// (po spe)l(k)e pyāmtso | warkṣāltsa | ñiś yesām
pānto :

15b mā walke űke | ñiś ksemar | tu postām | onmiṃ tākam-me :

15c som(w) ai(ñyai) /// (12 syllables)

15d (7 syllables) /// | (l)k(ā)tār űk(e) | mā ṣ ñiś tu lkālle⁶⁰

“Do every effort with energy. I am your refuge.

Before long, however, I will expire, and after that, you will have regret.

The only (way) to go . . .

(The way) however will be seen, but I won’t be visible.”

In *pāda* b), the passage *mā walke űke ñiś ksemar* “before long, however, I will expire” looks like a rendering of *nirvāsyāmi tv ahaṃ samyag adya*.⁶¹ It is not clear in the fragmentary text what is meant with the further sentence in *pāda* b), *tu postām onmiṃ tākam-me* “after that, you will have regret.” The word *onmiṃ* (regret) corresponds probably to the episode shortly before the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*: He asks the monks if they have any questions. If they did not clear their doubts at their last audience with the Buddha, they would regret it later. This episode is transmitted in the *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta* of the Theravādins⁶² and the Chinese translation of the *Dīrghāgama*, which is attributed to the Dharmaguptakas.⁶³ The versions of the Sarvāstivādins (MPS-S) and of the Mūlasarvāstivādins (MPS-ChinMSV) lack this episode.

It is worth noting that the Tocharian text of strophe 20 does not agree with the Sarvāstivādin or Mūlasarvāstivādin tradition:

⁶⁰ B29a8–b1. Translation by Sieg and Siegling 1949, p. 48: “Machet (alle Anstrengung) mit Energie, ich [bin] euer Beistand. Doch nicht lange, [dann] werde ich erlöschen, [und] danach wird euch Reue sein. Der allein gangbare (Weg).”

⁶¹ The sentence in the first person singular is attested in MPM SF 7.13. The same meaning in the third person singular is expressed as *na ciraṃ tathāgatassa parinibbānaṃ bhavissati, ito tiṇṇaṃ māsaṇaṃ accayena tathāgato parinibbāyissatīti* (MPS-P 3.51; DN II 120.14–16), which also recurs in the Sanskrit *na cirasyedānīm tathāgatasyānu(padhiṣeṣe nirvā)ṇadhātu parinirvāṇaṃ bhaviṣy(ati)* (MPS-S 17.21). For this Sanskrit sentence see the discussion on the term *nirvāṇa-dhātu* above.

⁶² *pucchatha bhikkhave. mā pacchā vippiṣārino ahuvattha*: “*sammukhī-bhūto no sathā ahoṣi, na mayaṃ sakkhinha bhagavantaṃ sammukhā paṭipucchitun.*” [“Ask me your questions, monks, do not become later remorseful, (thinking): ‘Certainly, the teacher is not present. We will not be able to ask the Lord in his presence.’”] (MPS-P 6.5; DN II 154.27–155.3). Emphasis added.

⁶³ MPS-ChinDĀ 26b3–9.

20a *nervām kālpoṣ | cai ṣaṅ-aṅmā y· ///* (7 syllables)

20b (15 syllables)

20c (5 syllables) */// poysi | vyākarit | ente śaul cwy āram :*

20d *naivasamjñānmem srau(kam) | ///* (8 syllables)⁶⁴

“After they have attained *nirvāṇa*, themselves . . .

The omniscient [Buddha] (made) the prophecy: When his life will end, when he will die, (he will proceed) from the Naivasamjñānāsamjñā stage.”

The words preserved in pāda c), *poysi vyākarit* “the omniscient one (made) the prophecy” make it clear that the Buddha made the prophecy. The prophecy (*vyākaraṇa* in Sanskrit) shortly before the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* is known from the version in the Chinese *Dīrghāgama*, in which one-thousand-two-hundred disciples obtained the prophecy.⁶⁵ This episode corresponds to one in the *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta*, albeit one in which the term “prophecy” is not used.⁶⁶ Here again, we find no correspondence for this episode in the versions of the Sarvāstivādins (MPS-S) and the Mūlasarvāstivādins (MPS-ChinMSV).⁶⁷

By contrast, the *Udānālankāra* version of the *parinirvāṇa* story shows a particular feature in common with the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* of the Sarvāstivādins in Central Asia, which narrates the wicked behavior of monks in the future. This topic was dealt with by Waldschmidt separately from his edition as “Sanskrit-Sondertext III,”⁶⁸ because no other versions of the *mahāparinirvāṇa* texts contain this topic. In strophes 62–66 in the first part of the commentary, the *Udānālankāra* also explains the bad behavior of monks in the future, such as enjoying idle twaddle, quarreling with each other, looking for delicious meat, and so on.

This complex feature of the correspondences to other versions does not necessarily mean that Dharmasoma (n.d.), the author of the *Udānālankāra*, mixed different versions for his commentary. He probably quoted the narrative

⁶⁴ B29b6–7. Translation by Sieg and Siegling (1949, p. 49): “Die das Nirvāṇa erlangt haben, sich selbst . . . (machte) der Alleswissende die Prophezeiung: Wenn dessen Leben aufhört, (wird er), wenn er stirbt, aus dem Naivasamjñānāsamjñā-Stadium”

⁶⁵ MPS-ChinDĀ 26b13.

⁶⁶ MPS-P 6.6 (DN II 155.28–30).

⁶⁷ Ines Konczak examines prophecies in Tocharian art comprehensively in her dissertation. It is noteworthy that the prophecy for the monk Priyadarśana is portrayed together with the Tocharian inscription; see Konczak 2014, pp. 125–26.

⁶⁸ MPS-S 36b (Sanskrit-Sondertext III: Hs. Blatt 101.5–104.5 in Waldschmidt 1950–51, vol. 1, pp. 39–40). See also Waldschmidt 1944–48, vol. 1, pp. 216–17.

of the story transmitted to him, the recension of which differs from the text known to us as the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* of the Sarvāstivādins edited by Waldschmidt. It is well known that the Vinaya texts of the Sarvāstivādins were transmitted orally and translated into Chinese.⁶⁹ It could also be true that the *sūtra* texts were transmitted orally and written in a relatively later period.⁷⁰ We do not know what the oral tradition consisted of before it was fixed in writing. The complex features of the version in the *Udānālāṅkāra*, which we analyze on the basis of the written texts transmitted to us, possibly reflect the oral tradition, which was not strictly fixed, but instead remains flexible with regards to the variations that modern scholars now would classify as pertaining to the various schools. Also, the expression used in the *Udānālāṅkāra* might have been influenced by tradition, including that of oral transmission.

POPULARITY OF THE EXPRESSION “THE CITY OF *NIRVĀṆA*”

Another example of the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*” is found in the Tocharian *Udānastotra*:

*nervāṇāṣṣai rintse ṅiis | śtwer empreṃ ṣarnesa | ruwim yenme*⁷¹

“May I myself open with the two hands of the four truths the door of the city of *Nirvāṇa*.”⁷²

The expression is used in a poetically refined way. The expression “city of *nirvāṇa*” may have gained popularity among Tocharian Buddhists. It also seems to be accepted as a Chinese term to a large extent. In the Chinese canon, the terms *niepan cheng* and *niepan zhi cheng* are used in a great number of examples.⁷³

⁶⁹ Puṇyatāra (Ch. Furuoduoluo 弗若多羅; n.d.) and Dharmaruci (Ch. Tanmoliuzhi 曇摩流支; n.d.) translated them into Chinese with Kumārajīva in the beginning of the fifth century.

⁷⁰ According to research by Hartmann, the *Ṣaṣṭisūtrakāṅgī*, the part of the *Dīrghāgama* that includes the biographical texts of the Buddha such as the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*, was presumably compiled relatively late; see Hartmann 1994, p. 324. According to paleographical studies by Sander, the oldest extant manuscripts of the *Daśottarasūtra*, the *Saṅgīṣūtra*, the *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*, and the *Mahāvādānasūtra* date from approximately the fifth century; see Sander 1991, p. 133.

⁷¹ See manuscript PK AS 5C a6; photographic reproduction and complete transcription by Georges-Jean Pinault for the CEToM (Comprehensive Edition of Tocharian Manuscripts), accessible at: <http://www.univie.ac.at/tocharian/?PK%20AS%205C> (Accessed on January 29, 2017).

⁷² See Pinault’s translation, *ibid*.

⁷³ According to a simple search in the database of the Chinese canon, about 440 examples are found.

This expression is, however, alien to the *mahāparinirvāṇa* texts transmitted to us. The version in the Chinese of the *Dīrghāgama*, the *Chang ahan* 長阿含 translated by Buddhayaśas (Ch. Fotuoyeshe 佛陀耶舍; n.d.) and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (n.d.) in the beginning of the fifth century, has at the end of the *Youxing jing* 遊行經 a verse section in which the expression “enter into the city of *nirvāṇa*” is used.⁷⁴ This verse section seems to be an interpolation whose origin is unclear. The corresponding Sanskrit manuscript has no such verse section at the end of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* story.⁷⁵

In order to understand the popularity of this expression in Chinese translations, the following example in the *Mile xiasheng chengfo jing* 彌勒下生成佛經⁷⁶ is helpful. The text was translated by Yijing 義淨 (635–713):

化滿百千億 令度煩惱海 有緣皆拯濟 方入涅槃城⁷⁷

This verse corresponds to the 96th verse of the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*:

śatalakṣasahasrāṇi prāṇinām sa vināyakaḥ |
*vinayitvā ca saddharme tato nirvāṇam eṣyati ||*⁷⁸

In *pāda* d), the phrase “he will go to *nirvāṇa*” (*nirvāṇam eṣyati*) corresponds to *ru niepan cheng*, “[he] will enter into the city of *nirvāṇa*,” in Yijing’s version. Considering the meter, it is not possible that *nirvāṇa-nagara-* or *nirvāṇa-pura* stands as a variant in *pāda* d).⁷⁹ It is probable that Yijing used the expression *ru niepan cheng* to adapt it to the style of the Chinese verse with five characters and also to fit it in with the popularity of the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*.”

CONCLUSION

Examining the transmission of the conception of *nirvāṇa* related to the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*,” we can see that some aspects are complex. These are as follows. The interpretation of the term *nirvāṇa* causes difficulties of translation both into our modern languages and ancient languages such

⁷⁴ The verse part is found in T no. 1, 1: 30a18–b4, in which the expression *ru niepan cheng* 入涅槃城 appears in 30a19; 21; 29; and *ru nihuan cheng* 入泥洹城 in 30a25.

⁷⁵ For this information on the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Dīrghāgama*, I am grateful to Dr. Klaus Wille.

⁷⁶ T no. 455, 14.

⁷⁷ T no. 455, 14: 428a29–b1.

⁷⁸ *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*, verse 96, edited by Ishigami (1989) on the basis of the manuscript from Kathmandu.

⁷⁹ Every available manuscript agrees with the reading *nirvāṇam eṣyati*; see Lévi 1932, *pāda* 98d; Majumder 1959, *pāda* 102d; Li and Nagashima 2013, *pāda* 103b.

as Chinese and Tocharian. The conception reveals a tendency for *nirvāṇa* to be interpreted as a place, especially through the usage in grammatically ambiguous compounds with *nirvāṇa-dhātu*. The exegesis of this compound required a difficult decision even among the ancient scholars who Sanskritized the transmission, and among modern scholars who interpret it from modern philosophical and religious points of view. The terminological development is recognizable in the translations of Kumārajīva, from “the way to *nirvāṇa*,” to “the gate to *nirvāṇa*,” and “go into the city of *nirvāṇa*,” in which the three meditations, *śūnyatā*, *ānimitta*, and *apraṇihita* are underlying the primary dogmatic point. Besides this dogmatic element, there was the meditation practice as described in the *Yogalehrbuch*. Considering the transmission of the *parinirvāṇa* texts, the possible oral tradition in Central Asia could be reflected in the version in the *Udānālankāra*. The popularity of the expression can be seen in both Chinese and Tocharian texts, including instances of poetical usage.

Whereas the Chinese translations provide us with relatively clear dating, the Tocharian texts, including the Sanskrit texts transmitted by the Tocharians, lack chronological information. We know that at the beginning of the fifth century, Kumārajīva often used the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*” for his free translations, and the popularity of the expression continued at the time of Yijing, namely at the beginning of the eighth century. As it is generally admitted that the Buddhist Tocharian texts were translated from Indian languages, if they were not originally written in Tocharian, it is not probable that the use of the expression “city of *nirvāṇa*” in Tocharian was influenced by the Chinese translations. They could have the common tradition of using the expression in circumstances in which Tocharian, Chinese, and other cultures in Central Asia had influenced each other.

ABBREVIATIONS

A	Tocharian A texts in the Berlin collection. In Sieg and Siegling 1921.
AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i> . 5 vols. Ed. R. Morris, A. K. Warder, and E. Hardy. London: Pali Text Society, 1883–1961.
B	Tocharian B texts in the Berlin collection. In Sieg and Siegling 1949a, 1953.
Divy	<i>Divyāvadāna</i> . In Cowell and Neil 1886.
DN	<i>Dīgha-Nikāya</i> . Ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter. London: Pali Text Society, 1890–1911.

- EWA *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. 3 vols. Ed. Manfred Mayrhofer. Heidelberg: Winter Verlag. 1992–99.
- It *Itivuttaka*. Ed. E. Windisch. London: Pali Text Society, 1889.
- Ja *Jāta*. 7 vols. Ed. V. Fausbøll. London: Pali Text Society, 1877–1897.
- Lañk *The Lañkāvatāra Sūtra*. Ed. Bunyiu Nanjio. Kyoto: Otani University Press, 1923.
- LIV² *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben: Die Wurzeln und ihre Primärstammbildungen*. Ed. Helmut Rix and Martin Kümmel. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag. 2001.
- Mil *Milindapañha*. Ed. V. Trenckner. London: Pali Text Society, 1880.
- MPM SF Sanskrit fragments of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*. In Habata 2007.
- MPS-ChinB *Fó bānnihuán jīng* 佛般泥洹經, translated by Bái Fǎzǔ 白法祖 (T no. 5, vol. 1).
- MPS-ChinDĀ *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* correspondence: the *Yóuxíng jīng* 遊行經 section of the Chinese *Cháng āhán jīng* 長阿含經 (T no. 1, vol. 1).
- MPS-ChinMSV *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* correspondence in the Chinese translation of the *vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins: *Gēnběn shuō yíqiè yǒubù pínàiyé zāshì* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 (T no. 1451, 24: 382b29–402c4).
- MPS-P *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta*. In DN II.
- MPS-S *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* of the Sarvāstivādins. In Waldschmidt 1950–51.
- Pj *Paramatthajotikā II*. 3 vols. Ed. H. Smith. London: Pali Text Society, 1916–1918.
- PTC *Pāli Tipiṭakam Concordance: Being a Concordance in Pāli to the Three Baskets of Buddhist Scriptures in the Indian Order of Letters*. Ed. F. L. Woodward, E. M. Hare, et al. London: Pāli Text Society, 1952–84.
- PW *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*. Ed. Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolph Roth. St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1855–75.
- Sn *Suttanipāta*. Ed. D. Andersen and H. Smith. London: Pali Text Society, 1913.
- SP *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Ed. Hendrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio. St. Petersburg: Imprimerie de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1908–12.
- SWTF *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden und der kanonischen Literatur der Sarvāstivāda-Schule*. Ed. Ernst Waldschmidt. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972–2014.
- T *Taishō shinshu daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. 85 vols. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–32.
- Th *Theragāthā*. Ed. H. Oldenberg and R. Pischel. London: Pali Text Society, 1883.
- Toch A Tocharian A language
- Toch B Tocharian B language
- Uv *Udānavarga*. In Bernhard 1965–68.
- YL *Yogalehrbuch*. In Schlingloff 2006.

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