

SKT. *DĀYĀDA*- ‘EATING AWAY AT THE INHERITED/
ENTRUSTED.’ THE TRANSFORMATION OF INHERITED
INDO-EUROPEAN PHRASEOLOGY IN THE BUDDHIST LEGEND
OF AJĀTAŚATRU¹

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1.

Cultural change and the change of religions often cause inherited phrases to change and expand their inherited meanings. Paradigm examples are native Germanic words and phrases that underwent semantic changes in response to the introduction of Christianity (so-called *loan shifts*, cf. Hock 1991: 398). The new Christian meaning either superseded the older pre-Christian meaning, or it was added to the range of inherited meanings. Examples are German *Himmel*, whose inherited meaning is a) ‘sky,’ and which in the wake of Christianization acquired the polysemy as b) ‘heaven, paradise’ (EWAhd IV 1013, s.v. *himil* ‘Himmel, Himmelreich, Reich Gottes’), or in the same vein German *Hölle* with its inherited meaning a) ‘abode of the dead (below the earth),’ and b) Christian ‘hell’ (EWAhd IV 940, s.v. *hella* ‘Unterwelt, Totenreich,’ *fiur hella* ‘Fegefeuer’).

2.

A case of an Indo-European metaphor, which is preserved in Greek, Hittite, Middle Iranian, and Vedic as ‘eating away at the inherited/entrusted,’

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but expanded its meaning in the Buddhist interpretation to include ‘receiving the fruit of previous (good/bad) deeds,’ is the Skt. compound *dāyādo* (Skt. *Udānavarga* IX 8) in the Buddhist Legend of Ajātaśatru, together with its West Tocharian rendition as *śawāñc= ailñe* (= *śawāñca ailñe*, Toch. B *Udānālañkāra* B21a1). The Tocharian *Udānālañkāra* first cites *Udānavarga* IX 8, and then goes on to illustrate the meaning of this Udāna with the Buddhist legend of Ajātaśatru. The Sanskrit Uv IX 8 (in the *Karmavarga*) reads as follows (Bernhard 1965: 171):

- ^{8a} yat karoti naraḥ karma
^{8b} kalyāṇam atha pāpakam
^{8c} tasya tasyaiva dāyādo
^{8d} na hi karma praṇaśyati ||
^{8a} Whichever deed a man does,
^{8b} good or bad,
^{8c} he (becomes) the eater (= receiver) of its heritage,
^{8d} for the deed is not vanishing.

A long standing problem of Sanskrit lexicography is the meaning of the compound *dāyāda-* in Uv IX 8c, which is formally ambiguous, allowing for an interpretation either as a) *dāyā* ‘inheritance’ + *ā-dā* ‘take, receive,’ or as b) *dāyā* ‘inheritance’ + *ad-* ‘eat, consume’.² The derivational ambiguity of Skt. *dāyāda-* has remained a problem case of Sanskrit lexicography ever since. Now the West Tocharian *Udānālañkāra* B21 (*Karmavarga*) resolves the ambiguity of Skt. *dāyāda-* in favor of the latter interpretation as b) ‘eating, consuming inheritance.’ The West Tocharian *Udānālañkāra* B21a1, stanza 50, reads as follows:

- ^{50a} ///¹ (weña ślo)k ce¹ pudñākte :
^{50b} yolomeṃ āltsiś¹ krentauna(ne¹ rittässiś :)
^{50c} ///¹ (yolo wa)t
^{50d} **cwik śawāñc= ailñe¹ /// (50)**
^{50a} ... the Buddha spoke the following stanza,
^{50b} to prevent them from evil and commit them to virtues
^{50c} ... or evil.
^{50d} **Eating the inheritance thereof ...**

² Cf. the references cited in Dunkel 1987: 91f.

In the same vein, the following stanza 51 (*Udānālaṅkāra* B21a2–3), and pāda 51c in particular, reconfirms the understanding of the metaphor as ‘eating inheritance’:

51a (ce ślok a)kṣā-me¹ k_ace tne wnołmi yamantār

51b krent yo(laiṃ yāmor) ///

51c ///**ailñe śūwaṃ** cmelane:

51d ///**tār¹ mā=** lleko 51

51a This stanza he spoke to them: “Whatever the beings are doing here,

51b good [and] bad (deeds) ...

51c ...**the gift (leftover)** thereof they will have to eat in their [re]births

51d ... not another.”

3.

Given the formal ambiguity of Sanskrit *dāyāda-*, the following question imposes itself: How did the Tocharian translator come to opt for the interpretation of Skt. *dāyāda-* as ‘eating, consuming inheritance’? The most likely explanation is that already the Indian and Central Asian tradition must have transmitted this understanding of Skt. *dāyāda-*. In fact, there is solid evidence to substantiate an oral transmission of an inherited phrase ‘eat/consume gifts,’ so that Skt. *dāyāda-* can plausibly be understood as the Buddhist rendition of an inherited Indo-European metaphor, which is still present in many ancient Indo-European languages. To begin with, a documentation of parallels (with the exception of the Middle Iranian, Buddhist Sanskrit and Tocharian parallels) was compiled by Dunkel (1987), documenting the Indo-European metaphor ‘eat the property of others,’ ‘usurpate the booty taken of a defeated enemy,’ ‘behave antisocially’ for Hittite, Latin, Ancient Greek, and Vedic.

Proto-Indo-European

Basing himself on Prellwitz’s analysis (1899: 313f.), according to which Latin *hērēs* ‘heir’ and Greek *χηρῶστής* ‘distant heir’³ are cognate

³ Cf. Prellwitz 1899: 313 on Homer, *Il.* 5.158, and LSJ 1996 s.v. *χηρῶσταί*: “far-off kinsmen, who seize and divide among themselves the property of one who dies without heir.”

expressions that descend from PIE *ǵheh₁ro- + *h₁ed- ‘to eat inheritance,’ Dunkel (1987) adduced the following Hittite, Vedic, and Ancient Greek parallels to confirm the equation.

Hittite

mān appiziyān=ma Ṛ.^{MEŠ} DUMU.^{MEŠ} LUGAL maršeššir
nu É.MEŠ-ŠUNU karipuwān dair
 išḫašaš=ma=šan taštašeškiuwan dair

When the servants became deceitful later on,
 they began to eat their houses,
 they began to betray their masters again and again. (CTH 19 I 21f., Eisele 1970: 21)

Homeric Greek

... τοὶ δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἔδοντες
οἶκον ἐμόν· τάχα δὴ με διαρραίσουσι καὶ αὐτόν.

But they with feasting consume my property, before long they will bring me, too, to ruin. (Homer, *Odyssey* 1.250f., Murray and Dimock 1919)

σφὰς γὰρ παρθέμενοι κεφαλὰς **κατέδουσι** βιαιῶς
οἶκον Ὀδυσσεύος ...

For it is at the hazard of their own lives that they violently devour the house of Odysseus ... (Homer, *Odyssey* 2.237f., Murray and Dimock 1919)

... μή τοι κατὰ πάντα **φάγωσιν**
κτῆματα δασσάμενοι ...

[Fearing that] they divide and devour all your wealth ... (Homer, *Odyssey* 3.315f., Murray and Dimock 1919)

Vedic parallels to the Hittite Telipinu passage cited above and to the Homeric passages that were identified by Dunkel (1987) include:

prajābhyaḥ puṣṭīm vibhājanta āsate
 rayīm iva pṛṣṭhām prabhāvāntam āyaté
 āsinvan dāmṣṭraih **pitúr atti bhójanam**

They [= the priests] sit, apportioning prosperity to their children [= their fires], apportioning, like wealth, the back (of the fire?) as it arches forth to him [= the soma?] who comes. Insatiable, **he [= the fire] eats the food of his father [= the priest]** with his teeth. You, the one who did these things first, are worthy of hymns. (RV 2.13.4a–c, Jamison and Brereton 2014: 418f.)

Occasionally it is possible to identify Vedic-Greek etymological matches, cf. e.g.

ahám dāsúṣe ví **bhajāmi bhójanam**

I apportion food to the pious man. (RV 10.48.1d, Jamison and Brereton 2014: 441, cf. Dunkel 1987: 95.)

Dunkel (1987: 94) pointed out the Greek parallel in ἠδὲ κατὰ ζῶην φαγέειν μενοεικέα πολλήν ‘or to devour his great and pleasant property’ (Homer, *Odyssey* 16.429, Murray and Dimock 1919), where Greek φαγ- matches etymologically with Ved. *bhaj-* and Greek ζῶή ‘Nahrung, Vermögen’ equals Ved. *bhojanam*.

4.

Dunkel (1987) did not treat the Middle Iranian and Tocharian evidence, but the indications are that the orally transmitted formula of antisocial gift eaters ramifies into Middle Iranian and Tocharian too.

Middle Iranian

Middle Parthian *zyn ’yy xw ’ryg*, Sogdian *zynyh-xw ’ry*.

He that eats what is entrusted to him. (Henning 1946: 716).

Tocharian

The formula is traceable in both Tocharian A and B in the guise of the locution ‘eat entrusted gifts,’ which again denotes a dishonorable, antisocial behavior:

Toch. B: *senik śawa*

I ate the entrusted. (B 534a3)

Toch. A: (seni)k śont akritānikāñ^a eñkalsunt māskantrā

They are ... (without) conscience, ungrateful, [and] passionate. (A YQ 1.44 [III.3] a1, Ji, Winter, and Pinault 1998: 157).

The meaning of Tocharian A *senik śont* is determined by its Old Uighur translation *urunčaq-sz* (*Maitrisimit nom bitig*, see Geng and Klimkeit 1988: 178) as ‘without trustworthiness, untrustworthy.’ Tocharian A and

B *senik* is a loan from Middle Iranian **zēnik* (< **zainiya-kā-*), Sogd. *zynyh* ‘deposit,’ cf. Khotanese *ysīnīta* ‘entrusted.’

Schmidt (1996: 277) considered the Tocharian phrases quoted above a “Lehnübersetzung aus dem Iranischen,” and Pinault (2002: 273) compared Toch. A (*seni*)*k śont* to the Mesopotamian phrase ‘eat an oath = break an oath,’⁴ but the panoply of ancient Indo-European parallels pleads for an Indo-European metaphor. As illustrated above, the phrase is deeply entrenched in an Indo-European tradition and well attested across several ancient Indo-European languages, including *nota bene* Vedic (Dunkel 1987) and Middle Iranian (Henning 1946).

The Tocharian expression of ‘eating away at/embezzling entrusted (property)’ matches with Ancient Greek, and particularly Homer’s and Hesiod’s notion of dishonorable, gift eating kings:⁵

δημοβόρος βασιλεὺς

‘property devouring king’ (Homer, *Iliad* 1.231).⁶

ἦδη μὲν γὰρ κληῖρον ἐδασσάμεθ’, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ
ἀρπάζων ἐφόρεις μέγα κυδαίνων **βασιλῆας**
δωροφάγους, οἳ τήνδε δίκην ἐθέλουσι δίκασσαι.
νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὄσω πλέον ἡμισυ παντὸς

For already we had divided up our allotment, but you snatched much more besides and went carrying it off, greatly honoring **the kings, those gift-eaters**, who want to pass this judgement – fools, they do not know how much more the half is than the whole! (Hesiod, *Erga* 37–40, Most 2007).

and with Vedic and Sogdian:

Vedic *pitúr atti bhójanam*

He eats the wealth of the father. (RV 2.13.4c, cf. above §3.)

Sogdian *ptrq’ n-xw’r*

‘eating the paternal (heritage), heir’ (Henning 1946: 716).

⁴ “This expression is probably a borrowing in Tocharian ... the outcome of an old Mesopotamian juridical formula ‘to eat an oath’ meaning ‘to break an engagement’” (Pinault 2002: 273). Tibetan too uses this phrase (Tib. *mna’ za ba*), as Ulrike Roesler pointed out to me, so that the occurrence of the phrase ‘eat an oath’ in linguistically unrelated languages could in fact be due to areal diffusion. Yet this does not preclude that the phrase might have an Indo-European pedigree.

⁵ Not mentioned by Dunkel (1987), but see West 1978: 151.

⁶ Preserving the older, inherited meaning ‘communal property’ of δῆμος, cf. Homer, II. 5.710 πίονα δῆμον ‘rich land/property.’

5.

Turning now to the initially cited Sanskrit and West Tocharian parallel texts, the inherited Indo-European metaphor of ‘eating/consuming the heritage’ is adapted to a Buddhist reinterpretation, combining the old inherited metaphor with its new Buddhist understanding: the inherited meaning of a) ‘abusing property, usurpating alien property, being untrustworthy, behaving antisocially’ is expanded within the Buddhist framework to mean b) ‘suffering the bad consequences of bad deeds.’ The cyclicity of antisocial behavior with its negative consequences is illustrated within the legend of Ajātaśatru by the following nested ring composition, whose structure is ABB’A’: A) Devadatta behaves antisocially, B) Ajātaśatru behaves antisocially, B’) Ajātaśatru suffers the consequences, A’) Devadatta suffers the consequences. In greater detail:

Episode 1

Devadatta instigates Ajātaśatru to murder his father, king Bimbisāra. Ajātaśatru usurpates his father’s property.

- ^{52c} walo māgatṣe ¹ a(jātaśatru) – – (:
^{52d} yo)laim wāṣmontse ¹ devadatti ¹ ṣertwentsa (52) ///
^{52c} The King of Magadha, A(jātaśatru)
^{52d} through the instigation of his evil friend Devadatta

In the Indo-European metaphor, Ajātaśatru ‘eats the gift/inheritance of his father’, cf. the Vedic and Sogdian passages cited at the end of § 4 above.

Episode 2

Ajātaśatru starts waging war against Prasenajit/Prasannaka, thus committing a second attempt at usurpating alien property. This episode is linked with episode 1, since Prasenajit was the friend of Ajātaśatru’s father Bimbisāra. This causes the next war:

- ^{54a} (kly)auṣa ce_u wāntre ¹ prasanna(ke ¹ walo su :)
^{54b} /// (6 syllables) /// (a)jātaśatruṃś ce_u •
^{54c} tu yparwe śemo ¹ māgatäṣ(ṣ)e ¹ (walo su :)
^{54d} (12 syllables) /// 54

- 54a Prasannaka, the renowned king, heard of that affair
 54b ... to Ajātaśatru
 54c then came (the king) of Magadha ...
 54d ...

Ajātaśatru has to – metaphorically – eat the fruits of his bad deeds in that he is defeated by Prasenajit/Prasannaka. Finally, in order to interrupt the vicious cycle of bad deeds causing bad consequences, Buddha advises Prasenajit/Prasannaka not to punish Ajātaśatru.

- 65a tu yparwe w(e)ña¹ ślok pudnākte¹ l(āntāśco :)
 65b c(owai tār)k(a)n(aṃ)¹ ś(aumo) kos (c)wi¹ (ritteträ :)
 65c – – – lai –¹ (c)owai tārknāṃ¹ cowaicce :
 65d cowai tārkauca¹ cowai tārkau¹ māske(tār) 65
 65a Then Buddha spoke to the king the following stanza:
 65b “A human being becomes a robber, as often as there is an opportunity.
 65c ... then others in turn rob the robber.
 65d The robber himself becomes robbed.” 65

Pādas 65b–d contain the West Tocharian rendition of Uv IX 9:

vilumpate hi puruṣo
 yāvad asyopakalpate |
 tato 'nye taṃ vilumpanti
 sa viloptā vilupyate ||

Episode 3

Devadatta ends up in hell, which is the fruit of his bad deeds, such as the instigation of Ajātaśatru’s killing of his father in episode 1. Instigating others to commit murder, or murdering one’s father, is one of the five grave sins (*pañcānantaryāṇi*)⁷ that cause one to fall into hell.

- 72c anantārśānta¹ solme tarya¹ yāṃṣate :
 72d devadatte sū¹ apiś nraine¹ temtsate 72
 72c The three Ānantaryas altogether he committed,
 72d the renowned Devadatta, and was reborn in the Avīci-hell. 72

⁷ *pañcānantaryāṇi karmāvaraṇam | tadyathā māṭṛvadhāḥ piṭṛvadhō 'rhadvadhāḥ saṃghabhedaḥ tathāgataśarīre duṣṭacittarudhirotpādanam (Abhidharmakośabhāṣya 259.8–9, ed. Pradhan 1967).*

6.

To sum up, the phrase ‘eat/devour a gift’ in the West Tocharian *Udānā-laṅkāra* and its version of the Ajātaśatru-legend

^{50d} cwik śawāñc= ailñe
eating the inheritance

^{51c} /// ailñe śūwaṃ¹ cmelane :

They will (have to) devour the gift (= the results of their deeds) in their births.

has a double focus. In general, it denotes the Buddhist intertwining of bad deeds with unfavorable consequences. But in the narrative framework of the Ajātaśatru-legend, it also refers to the king Ajātaśatru who illegally appropriates/devours the property of his father Bimbisāra. This latter reference is reminiscent of the Indo-European metaphor of ‘untrustworthy kings as gift eaters’ that were famously depicted by Homer as δημοβόρος βασιλεύς (Homer, *Iliad* 1.231), and Hesiod as βασιλῆας δωροφάγους (Hesiod, *Erga* 38f.). The same Indo-European metaphor for abusing paternal property is traceable in the Middle Iranian and Indic tradition, ranging from Vedic to (Buddhist) Sanskrit *dāyāda*-. Finally West Tocharian *śawāñc= ailñe/ailñe śūwaṃ* turns out to be a later Central Asian offshoot of the same tradition.

Abbreviations

CTH	Catalogue of Hittite texts (see http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/CTH/).
EWAhD IV	<i>Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Althochdeutschen</i> . See Lloyd and Lühr 2009.
Il.	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> . See West 1998–2000.
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott, comps. 1996. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
RV	<i>Ṛgveda</i> . See Müller 1890–1892.
Uv	<i>Udānavarga</i> . See Bernhard 1965.

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