The recent discovery of Chinese Manichaean silk paintings shook up Manichaean studies during the past decade. This small but well-preserved corpus consists of six complete and three fragmentary silk hanging scrolls, eight of which are housed in various Japanese collections and one in the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. While the visual language of these paintings reflects the norms of late medieval Chinese religious art (best known from Buddhist and Taoist images), their unique iconography and doctrinal content positively confirms their Manichaean identification. This lecture explores the pre-Chinese antecedents of these paintings, fragments of which survive from the Uygur Era of Manichaean history (755/762 – ca. 1024 CE), preserved today in the Asian Art Museum of Berlin.

**Chinese Corpus**

Wu Wenliang (1957), Statue, Shrine
51 years later 7 paintings in 11 parts
Preservation: Good condition but, in parts => Matching
Subject: - previously misidentified as Buddhist
- what they represent cannot be understood solely in light of Chinese sources

**Pre-Chinese History of Manichaeism**

Maps with Phases of Manichaean history,
Map with Manichaean Texts (Egypt, East Central Asia)
Map with Manichaean Art: best preserved, richest, earliest
Mani’s Crystal Seal housed today in the Bibliothèque nationale de France
Inscription (Baptist community, Jesus his personal savior)
Elite education (his teachings in books)

**Doctrine**

Canon & Cultural Roots: Mesopotamian Christian, Iranian Zoroastrian
(Dualism, Cosmogony, Cosmology)
Liberation of Light (Art)
List of Forces of Light/Good
Primary Prophets (Text & Art) - book illustrations survive only from the Uygur era

**Uygur Era**

Map, German Expeditions (5000 text & 26 art)
Uygur corpus (110 items)
Pan Asiatic trade routes, Uygur’s control of trade (Steppe Empire)
Uyghurs in East Central Asia: Gansu & Tien Shan Uyghur Kingdoms
Uyghur Support of Manichaeism in Tang China => Map: Manichaean temples

**Compendium**

preservation and date of manuscript (Dunhuang, Mogao Cave # 17)
731CE = date of text in colophon
6 articles: founder, doctrine, institution
Mani’s birth story allows to identify 2 scenes from a Chinese painting

**Didactic Art**

Salvation of the laity (judgement after death) Uygur roots
White cloak

**Jesus Image**

Hymn Scroll
Identification, Hands: 2 teachings

**Growing Chinese Corpus**

Clues for future identifications
Chinese Manichaean Corpus
11th/12th-15th centuries
1 statue & 7 hanging scrolls in 11 fragments
(after Gulacsi, Mani’s Pictures, Fig. 5/12)

Suggested readings:
Gulácsi, Zsuzsanna, Mani’s Pictures: The Didactic Images of the Manichaeans from Sasanian Mesopotamia to Uygur Central Asia and Tang-Ming China, Leiden, 2015.
Lieu, Samuel N. C., Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China, Tübingen, 1992.
Russell-Smith, L., Uygur patronage in Dunhuang: regional art centers on the northern Silk Road in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Brill, 2005.
Tardieu, Michel, Manichaeism, Urbana, 2008.