



## GABAIN, ANNEMARIE VON

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**GABAIN, ANNEMARIE VON**, (b. 7 April 1901, d. 15 January 1993; [FIGURE 1](#)), German scholar who worked in the field of Central Asian (primarily Turkic) studies, first as a linguist but later as an art historian. After completing a dissertation in Sinology, von Gabain studied Turcology with Johann Wilhelm Bang Kaup (q.v.), the founder of the Berlin school of Turkic studies, and she began to work on the Old Turkic materials kept at the Academy of Sciences in Berlin. Although she left Berlin after the Second World War, she remained in close contact with the Academy there. She published the first grammar of Old Turkic in 1941. While still working with Bang Kaup, she also had contacts with Iranologists such as Heinrich Junker and Wolfgang Lentz and gave advice as well on Chinese and Buddhist questions to the editors of Middle Iranian texts (see, e.g., F. Müller, “Soghdische Texte II,” *SPAW*, 1934, pp. 504, 550 n. 1). Her association with Iranologists continued even while she was working on the objects of art and history from the Central Asian expeditions. During her visits to Berlin she always discussed problems of mutual interest with many scholars, including Iranologists such as Werner Sundermann.

Von Gabain was particularly interested in the question of the extent to which the religious ideas of the Central Asian peoples had been influenced by Zoroastrianism or other Iranian beliefs, and this perspective is reflected in several of her publications. A short chapter of her book *Einführung in die Zentralasienkunde*, entitled “Elemente aus iranischem Bereich und von Volksreligionen,” was devoted to the question of Iranian-Turkic contacts. There she wrote, “*Die genauen Zusammenhänge zwischen iranischem Glauben*



*einanderseits und dem der Zentral- und Ostasiaten andererseits sind noch zu klären*” (von Gabain, 1979, p. 53). She also authored a general survey of “Irano-Turkish Relations in the late Sasanian Period” (*Camb. Hist. Iran* III/1, pp. 613-24). A third article (von Gabain, 1977) examined general aspects of the Irano-Turkic relationship and suggested a whole set of Turkic beliefs and customs going back to Iranian models; however, some of these ideas are no longer accepted, such as the theory (following Edward Conze) that the concept of the *bodhisattva* is of Iranian origin (von Gabain, 1977, p. 58).

In connection with the general topic of Iranian-Turkic contacts, von Gabain devoted two studies (1972, 1973) to Kṣitigarbha, the *bodhisattva* who guides beings through the hells. The apocryphal *sūtra* on the ten kings who control the different stages of the hells had become popular and widespread at least since the 9th century (see Teiser). However, it can be demonstrated that the textual dependence of the Old Turkic text on the Chinese counterpart is obvious and stronger than von Gabain had thought (cf. Zieme, 1996). Von Gabain (1976) also provided the first extensive information about Old Turkic texts written in Sogdian script. These texts follow more strictly the scribal system used by the Sogdians themselves (the question of the orthography has been reviewed recently by Fedakâr, 1991, 1994)

Von Gabain was personally acquainted with the researchers of the “first generation of Turfan scholars” as she called Friedrich W. K. Müller, Albert von Le Coq and others (von Gabain, 1991), and that area of study remained of great interest to her. She wrote a short survey on the geography of the Tarim Basin and the sites where manuscripts had been discovered (von Gabain, 1970). In this connection she also described active Saka-Turkic relations, although linguistically, despite the Saka-Turkic word-lists, it is difficult to establish or to prove them. In a study of interest to Iranologists, she discussed the historical relationship of the two rather distant regions of Bāmīān and Kuča and demonstrated their resemblance in terms of artistic similarities (von Gabain, 1979-80; cf. BĀMĪĀN). The subject of Maitreya and Mithra was another topic of great importance to her. Through the symbiosis of Indic peoples and the Iranian-speaking population in the Kuṣāṇa realm there developed the imperial manner of depicting the seated *bodhisattva*, especially of Maitreya. She further argued that the Maitreya belief developed among the Kuṣāṇa through the influence of the Iranian adoration of Mithra (von Gabain, 1987).



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