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ON THE COVER:

Pl. 5. Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
The Serindian collection of the IOM, RAS. Birchbark manuscript SI 6558 after restoration
(recto).

Kristina Korosteleva,
Alla Sizova

Tibetan Birchbark Manuscripts in the Serindian Collection of the IOM, RAS: Restoration and Identification

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Abstract: The article presents the Tibetan birchbark manuscripts kept in the Serindian collection of the IOM, RAS. The five birchbark manuscripts exhibit common codicological and paleographic characteristics, and the texts within them demonstrate a functional congruence, primarily associated with the rituals of consecration and empowerment. The objective of the conservation efforts was to flatten the birchbark fragments to both identify and preserve the inscribed texts. The fragments were sufficiently moistened in the birch sap as a plasticizer instead of regular water, given that it is a natural substance inherent to birch bark. The birch sap for conservation was hand-harvested from an ecologically pristine area. The soaking process in warm birch sap softened the fragments, and they were also cleansed of surface impurities. Damaged areas of the birchbark fragments were reinforced using Japanese conservation paper. For subsequent use and preservation, the fragments were stored in envelopes made of high-quality Melinex polyester film. Owing to the restoration work, five Tibetan birchbark manuscripts were described and transliterated.

Key words: Tibetan manuscripts, restoration, conservation, birchbark manuscripts, consecration, stupa

The article aims to present the Tibetan birchbark manuscripts that belong to the Serindian collection of the IOM, RAS. This implies the need to describe the experience of restoring Tibetan birchbark manuscripts, as well as their characteristics and contents. Texts that could be found in the canon were compared to the critical edition of Tibetan Kangyur. Due to the large number of discrepancies, only the most important ones were given in the footnotes.¹ Also for comparative purposes we used the compilation of *dhāraṇīs* made by the fourth abbot of the Kagyu Buddhist monastery Taklung (*stag lung*) Onpo Pal (*dbon po dpal*) (1251–1296); this is noted in each individual case.

© Kristina Korosteleva, Conservator, Laboratory Serindica, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences (chrisjolie92@gmail.com)

© Alla Sizova, PhD student, Institute for Indology and Tibetan Studies, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (Sizova.Alla@campus.lmu.de)

¹ The sigla denoting Kanjur editions are given in the abbreviations. If a siglum isn't specified, it indicates that the manuscript's text varies from all editions found in *Dpe bsdur ma*.

In Tibetan book culture, birchbark is deemed a pure material, apt for ritualistic applications, including crafting texts for placement inside stupas and for creating protective amulets. Given its fragility compared to paper, there are a limited number of Tibetan birchbark manuscripts catalogued in the known collections. A few items are housed in the Berlin Turfan Collection², the Mongolian Academy of Sciences³ and the National Library of Russia.⁴ Alla Sizova, one of the co-authors of this paper, previously published an article discussing a birchbark manuscript acquired by N.P. Likhachev. This manuscript features a selection of *dhāraṇīs*, mantras, and a fragment of the *Prātimokṣa sūtra*.⁵ During her research for the said article, the N.P. Likhachev manuscript (SI 6618) was included into the Serindian collection of the IOM, RAS due to its purported origin from East Turkestan. During her engagement with the Tibetan section of the Serindian collection between 2019 and 2021, Alla Sizova had the opportunity to study four other previously unidentified Tibetan birchbark manuscripts, which are outlined in this paper.

List of the Tibetan birchbark manuscripts in the Serindian collection of the IOM, RAS

No.	Call number	Contents and provenance
1	SI 6558	Fragment of “The Verses that Summarize the Perfection of Wisdom”. Collection of N.F. Petrovsky ⁶ (?)
2	SI 6618	<i>Dhāraṇīs</i> , mantras, passage from the <i>prātimokṣa sūtra</i> . Collection of N.P. Likhachev. Brought from East Turkestan by N.M. Berezovsky and a certain “unknown traveller”. ⁷

² TAUBE 1980: 93–101.

³ CHIDO 2000: IX.

⁴ Two small birchbark fragments of the Dzogchen (Nyingmapa) text, call number Dorn 901 (DORN 1852: 657–658; VASILYEVA 2020: 64). We are grateful to Anna Turanskaya for this information.

⁵ SIZOVA 2020.

⁶ POPOVA 2008a: 25.

Unlike the Tibetan manuscripts on paper from the collection of N.F. Petrovsky, which have old call numbers of the Asiatic Museum (P/...) and originate in Khotan, SI 6558 has no such old call number. This might be due to the item's poor condition when it first arrived at the Asiatic Museum. The provenance is recorded in the modern inventory book, but this manuscript must be attributed to Petrovsky's collection with reservations.

⁷ SIZOVA 2020.

3	SI 6680	<i>Sarvavid mantra</i> . Comes from the group of materials marked as “Туюк Мазар Р.Д. 11.1909”, that means that they were obtained in Tuyuq Mazar during the first Russian Turkestan Expedition (1909–1910) headed by S.F. Oldenburg. ⁸
4	SI 6681	<i>Dhāraṇī</i> collection. Provenance unknown.
5	SI 6682	<i>Dhāraṇī</i> for consecration of a stupa. Provenance unknown.

SI 6680 (Pl. 1) is a folio (size: 16.1×18.6 cm) inscribed on both sides, with 20 lines on the recto and 20 on the verso. The spacing between the lines is 0.7–0.9 cm. Manuscript contains the repeating singular formula known as the Sarvavid mantra: *o-’aṃ sa rba byid swā hā* (corresponding to skt. *oṃ sarvavid svā hā*) “OM the Omniscient SVĀHĀ”. Paper slips with this mantra, associated with Sarvavid Vairocana, the central deity of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, can be found in the Berlin Turfan collection (call number TibHT 55) with a similar orthography: *o-’aṃ sa+rba byed swā hā*.⁹ The formula is related to the rituals of empowerment and consecration.

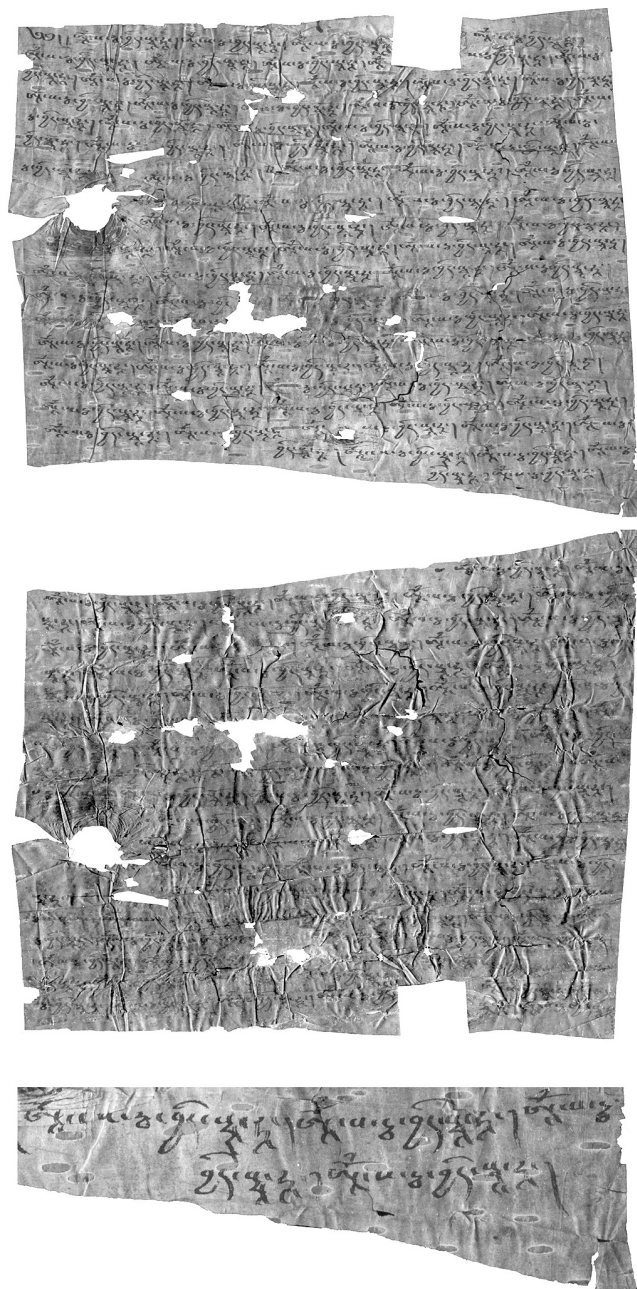
SI 6682 (Pl. 2) consists of the two folios (size of one of them is 11.3×21.4 cm, the second one is of similar size, requires restoration), which are pieces of birchbark of a rather uneven shape. The spacing between the lines is 0.8–1.5 cm. Manner of writing, comparing to the other birchbark manuscripts in the Serindian collection, is unskillful. Both folios, as in the previous case, are inscribed with the repeating *dhāraṇī*:

*na ma na ba ti nam | ta thā ga ta ga ga na | dhi ba lu ka | ko ti ṇa yu ta ṣa
ta sa ha sa na ma | o-’aṃ po po ri | rtsa ri | ṇi rtsa ri | mo ri ko ri rtsa la
ba ri swā hā |*

⁸ POPOVA 2008b.

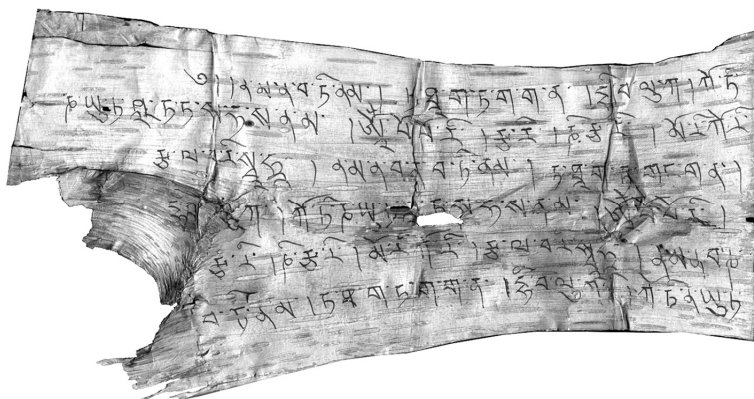
The item SI 6680 doesn’t have an old call number, just as in the earlier mentioned case.

⁹ SCHAIK 2016: 181–182.



Pl. 1. Birchbark manuscript SI 6680
(recto, verso; fragment — recto, right lower corner)

This formula can be found in the compilation of Onpo Pal.¹⁰ According to it, in order to attain high spiritual levels, one must copy this *dhāraṇī* and tie the text around a “life-tree” (axis) of a stupa, performing prostrations and offerings. In one of the Tibetan manuals, researched by Béla Kelényi, this formula is called “the *dhāraṇī* accompanying the offering of immaculate light”. Gergely Hidas translated it from Sanskrit as: “Veneration to the ninety-nine times ten-million-million-hundred-thousand Tathāgatas equaling the sand particles of the Gaṅgā river. OM PŪRIṆI PŪRE. CALINI CALE. MORI KORI CALA VĪRA SVĀHĀ”.¹¹



Pl. 2. Birchbark manuscript SI 6682 (one of the two folios, recto).

Manuscripts **SI 6558** and **SI 6681** (Pl. 3, 4) required restoration procedures. The restoration process, as well as subsequent research, are described in detail below.

SI 6558 and SI 6681: restoration process

In 2019,¹² the birchbark fragments with call numbers **SI 6558** and **SI 6681** were retrieved for conservation in a state of significant disrepair (Pl. 3, 4). They were folded, misshapen, and had sustained multiple tears and losses.

¹⁰ rigs kyi bu'am rigs bu mo gong la la zhig gis gzungs 'di dag dgu bcu rtsa dgu bris te| mchod rten gyi srong shing gi ngos bzhir bzhug ste| phyag dang pū dza chen po byas na| de nges par phyir mi ldog par 'gyur zhing myur du bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub tu mngon par rdzogs par 'tshang rgya'o| (DBON PO DPAL 2007: 215–216).

¹¹ KELÉNYI 2008: 148.

¹² The restoration procedures were successfully completed in January, 2020.

All of these birchbark pieces had lost their natural flexibility, making them extremely delicate and susceptible to any external factors. This was particularly true for fragments **SI 6558**, which were originally very thin and thus more easily damaged (Pl. 3). Some of these fragments had also split into several parts. The primary reason was the lack of appropriate temperature and humidity levels and the mechanical stress experienced by these fragments before they became part of the Institute's collection. When overly dry, birchbark items can become desiccated, leading to crumbling and disintegration. Objects of this kind require specific storage conditions: temperatures of +15 to +18°C and relative humidity levels of 50–60%.



Pl. 3. Birchbark manuscript SI 6558 before restoration.

The conservation efforts of the 1950s–60s, focused on restoring the Novgorod birchbark manuscripts, provided a blueprint for the conservators at the IOM, RAS. In order to flatten the birchbark, the conservators of the Novgorod texts would soften them using boiling water, then unfold and place them between sheets of glass, pressing them down with weights. For an extended period, selecting the most appropriate adhesive to strengthen the manuscripts proved challenging.¹³

¹³ A moderately quick-drying, reversible adhesive was required. In the early 1980s polybutyl methacrylate, otherwise PBMA, was tested for bonding of birchbark. When diluted, quickly or slowly evaporating solvents can be used: toluene, xylene, and acetone. For working



Pl. 4. Birchbark manuscript SI 6681 before restoration.

Fragment **SI 6681** had a more robust structure and greater pliability compared to **SI 6558**. However, it wasn't flexible enough to be unfolded without the risk of cracking and damage to the birchbark. Visual examination indicated distinct color variations in the birchbark of each fragment. Fragment **SI 6681** displayed a light gray hue on the front and an almost red shade on the back. In contrast, fragment **SI 6558** showcased a light ochre tone on the front and a dark brown hue on the reverse.¹⁴

The objective of the conservation efforts was to flatten the birchbark fragments to both identify and preserve the inscribed texts. To achieve this, the fragments needed to be sufficiently moistened. Before doing so, we conducted water resistance tests on the black ink used in the texts. All texts proved to be waterproof. During the conservation meeting, the decision was made to use birch sap as a plasticizer instead of regular water, given that it's a natural substance inherent to birch bark.

Birch sap is a liquid that seeps from birch trees due to root pressure when cuts are made in the trunks and branches. This sap flow commences in

with birchbark, PBMA diluted with acetone turned out to be more acceptable. Acetone evaporates fairly quickly, however, it leaves time to correct or install more precisely glued scraps. PBMA is a reversible adhesive: it can be completely dissolved and removed if necessary after it has hardened. It is valuable because it is not absorbed into birchbark and does not destroy its structure. Despite only superficial contact with birch bark, it is also dense enough to keep fragments of a manuscript whole (POVETKIN 1996).

¹⁴ The structural and visual attributes of birchbark largely hinge on the location of the birch trees and their age. The specific type of birchbark selected is influenced by the intended product. The outer surface of birch bark is typically white with a grayish undertone, though occasionally it can be pinkish-brown. The inner layers, which face the bast, range in shades from yellow to brown.

the spring with the onset of the first thaws and lasts until the buds open. The birch sap for conservation was hand-harvested from an ecologically pristine area, distant from urban zones and major roads. When stored in a cool, dark place within a sterilized container, freshly harvested sap can remain fresh for an extended period without souring or becoming cloudy, and without the need for any preservatives.

Manuscript **SI 6681**, while being less deteriorated and more robust, needed thorough moistening. To achieve this, the fragment was fully submerged in a container filled with birch sap for several hours. After soaking, we checked its plasticity. Its significant increase enabled us to unfold the manuscript, but it still wasn't flexible enough for complete straightening. During the careful unfolding process, it became evident that this single fragment (Pl. 4) consisted of three identically colored and sized folios of birchbark (Pl. 7–12).

Evidently, the deformed fragments couldn't be fully straightened at this point due to their limited flexibility. The soaking process in birch sap was thus continued. All the fragments, including **SI 6558**, were again immersed in warm birch sap to continue their softening. The warm sap was replenished every thirty minutes. During this immersion, the fragments were also cleansed of surface impurities.

Once sufficiently softened, the fragments were removed from the sap bath and placed between sheets of dense polyethylene terephthalate. They were then sandwiched between cloths and wooden boards and subjected to a mechanical press for a few hours. The use of the dense film provided a solid surface while retaining the moisture within the folios. After pressing, the fragments of **SI 6558** were fully straightened and then transferred to a dry cloth before being placed back under the press. However, manuscript **SI 6681** still had prominent creases across its surface. Its softening in warm birch sap was extended for several more hours, with the same pressing procedure using polyethylene terephthalate. An hour later after that the film was removed. Any lingering creases were meticulously smoothed using a fluoroplastic spatula. These slightly moistened birch bark fragments were then pressed for an extended period between cloths to eliminate any remaining deformations and creases.

After undergoing the aforementioned procedures, the birchbark fragments transformed from being overly dry and brittle to flexible and resilient. Damaged areas of the birchbark fragments were reinforced using Japanese conservation paper, Hidaka Washi Tengu Tape (Tan) weighing 7.3g/m²,

adhered with 3% wheat starch glue. For subsequent use and preservation, the fragments were stored in envelopes made of high-quality Melinex polyester film, a material commonly employed in the archival storage of photographic and paper-based items.

SI 6558: description and transliteration

Description

The manuscript (as shown in Pl. 5 and 6) comprises three fragments which originally formed a single folio of a rough square shape, measuring 22.1×23.6 cm. The recto side has 27 lines, while the verso side has 32 lines. The spacing between the lines is 0.7–0.8 cm. The piece of birchbark originally had an irregular shape, as well as tears and holes, and the scribe had to adapt to this.

The birchbark is very thin and fragile, as in the case of the manuscript SI 6618, which was supposedly produced not for reading but for symbolic purposes.¹⁵ Text is written with black ink in elegant *dbu med* script. One can note the letter *ya* attached to *ma* (*ma ya btags*) (although inconsistent).

Text has a number of scribal errors (for the relevant ones the corresponding correct variants from the critical edition are given in the footnotes), such as: *ston nyid* ‘emptiness’, *sems* ‘sentient being’ (instead of *sems can*) etc. One verse is omitted (recto, line 11). The scribal negligence also led to disruptions in the poetic rhythm, resulting from missing or exceeding number of syllables.

Contents

The manuscript contains the fragment from the canonical *prajñāpāramitā* text “The Verses that Summarize the Perfection of Wisdom” (skt. *āryaprajñāpāramitāsañcayagāthā*, tib. *’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa*). The work summarizes in versicular the contents of the “The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines” (skt. *aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*). It was divided into 32 chapters by Haribhadra in the 8th c.¹⁶ The Tibetan translation was made by Vidyākaraśiṃha and Kawa Paltseg in the early 9th c.

¹⁵ SIZOVA 2020: 471.

¹⁶ CONZE 1975: ix.

The fragment SI 6558 covers chapters 20–26 (Chapter XX “The Simile of the Merchant and His journey” — Chapter XXVI “The Simile of the People Created by Magic”).¹⁷ In the critical edition of the Kangyur,¹⁸ the entire work spans pages 3–44. Meanwhile, the fragment found in manuscript SI 6558 corresponds to pages 27¹⁸–34¹⁷. This suggests that, had there been a complete copy of the work with folios containing roughly equivalent portions of text, the existing folio would likely be numbered five, and there would be around 7 folios in total.



Pl. 5. Birchbark manuscript SI 6558 after restoration (recto)

¹⁷ Translation into English: CONZE 1975: 47–57.

¹⁸ DPE BSDUR MA 34 2008.

Transliteration

Recto

- [1] <dper na rin chen 'dod pa rin chen gling song ste|| rin chen rnyed nas phyir yang khyim du 'ongs gyur pa|| der ni ded dpon 'ba' zhig bde bar 'tsho byed cing|| gnyen bshes tshogs yid mi bder 'jo>g pa myin pa ltar|| de bzhin byang chub sems dpa' ston¹⁹ nyid rin chen gyi||
- [2] <glings du song ste bsam gtan dbang po stobs thob pa|| mya ngan 'das la reg pa 'ba' zhig mngon dga' zhing|| sem>s can sdug bsngal yid du 'jog par 'gyur ma yin|| dper na don gnyer tshong
- [3] <pa rgyus shes bya ba'i phyir|| bar gyi grong khyer grong rdal grong gang yin par 'gro|| der yang mi gnas rin che>n glings du 'ang myi gnas la||rig pa'i khyim du myi gnas lam la mkhas par 'gyur||
- [4] <de bzhin byang chub sems dpa' gsal te nyan thos dang|| rang rgyal rnams kyi shes pa rnam grol kun la m>khas|| de la myi gnas sangs rgyas ye shes gnas ma yin|| 'dus ma byas la
- [5] myi gnas lam kyi tshul shes yin|| gang tshe 'gro la byams pas rjes su 'brel byas nas|| ting 'dzin stong pa mtshan myed smon pa myed spyod pa±so²⁰|| de ni mya ngan 'das pa thob par 'gyur
- [6] zhe 'am|| 'dus byas yin par gdags nus de ni gnas myed do|| dper na sprul pa'i myi lus myi snang ma yin zhing|| de ni mying gis kyang ni gdag<s> par nus pa ltar|| de bzhin
- [7] <byang chub se>ms dpa' rnam thar sgor spyod pa|| de ni mying gis kyang ni gdags par nus pa yin|| ga<|> te spyod pa dang ni dbang po yongs dris la|| byang chub sems pa²¹
- [8] <stong> pa mtshan ma myed pa'i chos|| yongs su myi rtog²² phyir myi ldog pa_sa_i²³ chos|| myi 'chad de ni lung ma bstan pa²⁴ yin rig bya²⁵|| dgra bcom sa dang
- [9] <rkyen gyi sangs rgyas ye shes dang|| kham s gsum dag la rmi lam na yang mi 'dod cing|| sangs rgyas> rnam²⁶ mthong 'gro la chos kyang ston byed pa|| de ni mi ldog

¹⁹ stong.

²⁰ -; scribal error.

²¹ dpa'.

²² ston.

²³ pa'i sa yi but Y: pa sa yis; L, P, N, C: pa sa yi.

²⁴ bstan par but Y: stan par; N, Zh: bstan pa yin.

²⁵ rig par bya but N, Zh: - par.

²⁶ rnams.

- [10] <lung bstan> yin par rig par bya|| rmi lam na ni sems can <ngan song gsum gnas> mthong|| <skad cig de> la ngan song rgyun gcad smon lam 'debs|| bden pa'i byin kyis rlabs kyis
- [11] m<e>²⁷ phung po zhi|| de ni myi ldog lung bstan yin par rig par bya||²⁸ ji ste de ni bden pa'i byin rlabs sna tshogs dag|| 'byor pa bdag lung bstan snyam rlom sems 'byung ba'am||
- [12] gal te byang chub sems dpa' gzhan kyis lung bstan rlom|| rlom sems gnas pa de ni blo chung shes par bya|| mying²⁹ gzhi las bdud ni nye bar 'ong gyur na-s|| 'di skad smras
- [13] te 'di ni khyod dang pha ma dang|| khyod kyis bdun mes rgyud kyis bar kyis mying yin zhing|| gang tshe khyod ni sangs rgyas 'gyur ba'i mying 'di yin|| sbyangs sdom rnal 'byor ldan pa
- [14] ci 'dra 'byung 'gyur la|| khyod sngon yon tan tshul yang 'di 'dra 'o zhes brjod de³⁰|| de skad gang thos rlom sems byang chub sems dpa' ni|| bdud kyis<s yongs su bslang zhing>
- [15] blo chung rig par bya|| rab tu dben pa'i grong dang grong khyer ri sul dang|| dgon pa dben pa'i <nag>s khrod rab tu sten <byed> cing|| bdag stod³¹ gzhan la smod <pa'i byang chub sems>
- [16] dpa' ni|| bdud kyis yongs su bslang zhing blo chung rig par bya|| rtag tu grong dang yul 'khor grong rdal gnas byed cing|| sems³² smyin byed byang chub brtson pa ma gtogs par||
- [17] de na³³ dgra' bcom rang rgyal 'dod pa gzhan myi skyed|| 'di ni bde bar gshegs pa'i sras kyis³⁴ dben par gsungs|| gang zhig dpag tshad lnga brgya yod pa'i ri'i sul|| sbrul kyis gang
- [18] bar lo mang bye bar gnas byed kyang|| dben pa 'di myi shes pa'i byang chub sems dpa' de|| lhag pa'i nga rgyal rnyed nas 'dre bar gnas pa yin|| byang chub sems

²⁷ me yi.

²⁸ + mi yi 'jig rten 'byung po'i gdon dang nad mang ba|| phan dang snying brtser ldan pa'i bden pa'i byin gyis zhi|| 'on kyang rlom sems med cing nga rgyal skyed med pa|| de ni mi ldog lung bstan yin par rig par bya||.

²⁹ + gi.

³⁰ do.

³¹ only D.

³² + can.

³³ ni.

³⁴ kyis sras kyis but N, Zh: pa'i sras kyis.

- [19] < *dpa* > 'gro ba'i don brtson bsam gtan dang|| stobs dang dbang po'i stobs thob rnam thar ting 'dzin thob de la||³⁵ 'di ni dgon dben spyod pa myin snyam brnyas byed pa|| de ni bdud
- [20] < *kyi spyod yul gnas zhes rgyal bas gsungs* >|| gang zhig grong ngam 'on te dgon par gnas kyang ru<ng>|| theg pa gnyis kyi sems bral byang chub mchog nges na||
- [21] < 'di ni 'gro don zhugs pa rnams kyi dben pa > ste|| byang chub sems dpa' drod nyom³⁶ de ni bdag nyid nyams|| de ltar bas na byang chub dam pa tshol ba yi|| bsam pa drag ldan mkhas
- [22] < *pas nga rgyal nges bcom ste* || *nad pa'i* > tshogs kyi gso phyir sman pa bsten pa ltar|| g.yang³⁷ ba myed par dge ba'i bshes gnyen bsten par bya|| sangs rgyas byang chub mchog zhugs byang chub
- [23] < *sems* > dpa' dag|| pha rol phyin dang bcas ste dge ba'i bshes su bstan³⁸|| 'di ni rjes su ston byed sgrub³⁹ pa'i sa|| rgyu rnams⁴⁰ gnyis kyis sangs rgyas byang chub myur du rtogs⁴¹|| rgyal ba 'das dang ma
- [24] byon phyogs bcu⁴² gang bzhugs pa|| kun lam pha rol phyin pa 'di yin gzhan ma yin|| pha rol phyin 'di byang chub mchog la zhugs rnams kyi|| gsal dang sgron dang snang dang ston mchog
- [25] < *yin zhes bshad* || *ji ltar shes rab pha rol phyin pa mtshan nyid stong* || *chos 'di thams cad mtshan* > nyid de dang 'drar shes shing|| chos rnams stong zhing mtshan ma myed par rab shes
- [26] < *na* || *de ltar spyod pa bde gshegs shes rab spyod pa yin* || *sems can yongs su ltogs pa zas la 'dod bye* > d cing|| 'khor bar chags pa'i yid dang ldan rnams rtag tu 'khor||
- [27] < *bdag dang bdag gi chos gnyis yang dag min stong ste* || *byis pa bdag nyid kyis ni mkha' la mdud pa bor* || *dper* > na dogs pa'i 'du shes kyis ni dug langs pa|| dug de khong du song

³⁵ stobs dang dbang po rnam thar ting 'dzin thob de la||

³⁶ snyom but Y, L, P, N: nyom; C, Zh: snyoms.

³⁷ g.yel.

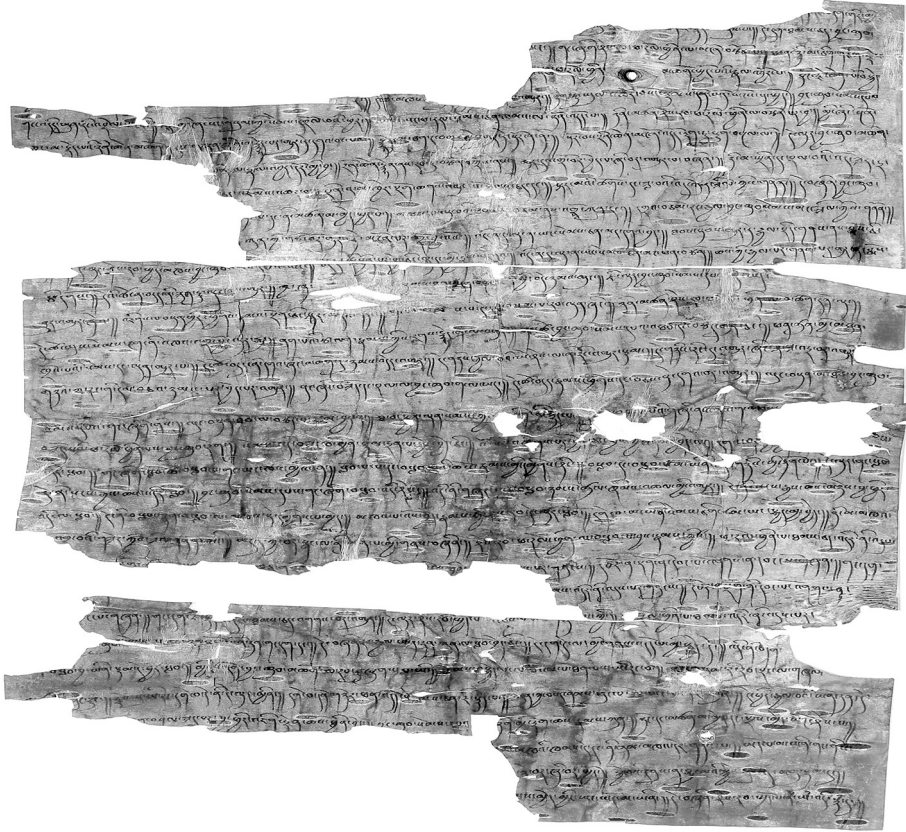
³⁸ bsten.

³⁹ de dag rjes su ston byed 'di ni.

⁴⁰ rnam but C: rnams.

⁴¹ Scribal error, attempt to write: myi rtogs.

⁴² bcur but Zh, N: bcu.



Pl. 6. Birchbark manuscript SI 6558 after restoration (verso)

Verso

- [1] <ba med kyang brgyal bar 'gyur|| de bzhin byis pa bdag dang bdag gir khas len pa|| bdag der 'du shes yang dag mi rtag skye zhing 'chi|| ji ltar 'dzin pa de ltar kun nas nyon mongs bstan|| bdag> dang bdag gir myi
- [2] <dmigs rnam par byang bar gsungs|| 'di la gang yang nyon mongs rnam dag 'gyur med par|| byang chub sems dpas shes rab pha rol phyin pa rtogs|| 'dzam bu 'i gling na sems can ji snyed ma> lus pa|| de dag thams cad byang chub

- [3] <*mchog tu sems bskyed nas*|| *lo stong bye ba mang por sbyin pa byin byas la*|| *kun kyang 'gro ba'i don du byang chub rgyur bsngo*> yang|| gang zhig shes rab pha rol phyin la⁴³ mngon brtson pa|| tha na nyi ma cig gcig⁴⁴ rjes
- [4] <*su 'thun byed na*|| *de la sbyin pa'i phung pos bsod nams char mi phod*|| *de phyir g.yel med rtag tu shes rab 'jug par bya*|| *shes*> rab pha rol phyin mchog spyod pa'i rnal 'byor pa|| snying rje chen po bskyed
- [5] <*kyang sems can 'du shes me*>d|| de tshe mkhas <*pa 'gro ba kun gyi sbyin gnas*> 'gyur|| rtag tu yul 'khor bsod snyoms don yod yongs su spyod|| byang chub sems dpa'
- [6] gang 'dir yun ring 'brel pa yi|| lha myi ngan song gsum kyi sems⁴⁵ dgrol ba'i phyir|| lam yangs pha rol sems can kham la ston 'dod pa|| nyin mtshan shes rab pha rol phyin la brtson par bya|| myi zhing⁴⁶ sngon
- [7] chad ma rnyed pa'i rin chen mchog|| dus gzhan zhig na rnyed par gyur te dga' ba las|| rnyed ma thag tu bag myed gyur te stor na ni|| stor bas rin chen mngon 'dod rtag tu sdug bsngal lo|| de ltar byang chub mchog
- [8] <*zhugs rin chen lta bu yi*|| *shes rab pha rol*> phyin la rnal 'byor dor myi bya|| rin chen nyen⁴⁷ nas⁴⁸ rab tu brtson bkris⁴⁹ nas|| myur du 'gro bar byed pa zhi bar 'gyur ba bzhin|| nyi ma sprin dang bral ba'i 'od zer dra
- [9] <*ba can*|| *mun nag thibs po mun pa thams*> cad 'joms 'char ba|| srin bu me khyer srog chags 'byung po thams cad dang|| skar ma'i tshogs dang zla ba'i 'od kun zil kyis gnon|| de bzhin byang chub
- [10] <*sems dpa' shes rab pha rol phyin*|| *mchog spyod stong*> pa dang ni mtshan ma myed spyod pa|| mkhas pa lta ba'i thibs po bcom nas 'gro kun dang|| dgra' bcom rang rgyal byang chub sems mang zil kyis gnon||

⁴³ mchog but L, N, Zh: la.

⁴⁴ gcig cig.

⁴⁵ + can.

⁴⁶ zhig.

⁴⁷ rnyed.

⁴⁸ + blangs te.

⁴⁹ dkris but N, Zh: bkris.

- [11] <dper na rgyal po'i bu zhig nor gtong don 'dod pa||> kun kyī gtso bor gyur te mngon par 'gro bya 'os|| 'di ni dē lta⁵⁰ na yang sems can mang dga' byed|| thabs stob⁵¹ gyur te rgyal srid gnas nas smos ci
- [12] <dgos>|| de ltar shes rab spyod mkhas byang chub <sems> dpa' yang|| bdud rtsi sbyin par byed cing lha dang myi rnams dga' || 'di ni da lta na yang sems can mang phan brtson|| chos kyī rgyal por gnas par gyur na⁵² smos
- [13] ci dgos|| dē i⁵³ tshe na bdud ni zug ngu ldan par 'gyur|| mya ngan nyams⁵⁴ thag sdug bsngal <y|>d myi bde nyams chung⁵⁵|| ji ltar byang chub sems dpa' 'di yid
- [14] nur 'gyur zhes|| 'jigs pa bstan phyir phyogs rnams sreg cing skar mda' gtong|| gang tshe mkhas pa de dag bsam pa rab⁵⁶ ldan zhing|| nyin mtshan shes rab pha rol phyin pa mchog don lta||
- [15] de tshe lus sems ngag ni 'kha⁵⁷ 'gro bya ltar rgyu|| nag po'i rtsa lag rnams kyis rlags⁵⁸ rnyed ga la 'gyur|| gang tshe byang chub sems dpa' 'thab dang brtsod⁵⁹ gyur cing|| phan tshun myi mthun
- [16] khros pa'i sems dang ldan gyur pa|| de tshe bdud ni dga' zhing mchog tu nyams bder 'gyur|| de gnyis rgyal ba'i ye shes la⁶⁰ ni ring 'gyur snyam|| de gnyis ring du 'gyur zhing sha za 'dra bar 'gyur
- [17] gnya ka⁶¹ rang gi dam bca⁶² nyams par byed par 'gyur|| sdang zhing bzod dang bral la byang chub ga la yod|| de tshe bdud rnams phyogs dang bcas ste⁶³ dga' bar 'gyur|| lung bstan ma thob byang chub
- [18] sems dpa' gang zhig gis|| lung bstan thob la⁶⁴ brtsod pa rtsom byed na|| tha ba skyon ldan sems kyī <skad c>ig ci snyed pa|| d<e snyed bskal> pa'i gzhi nas nas(!) go cha bgo <bgos so|| sangs rgyas>

⁵⁰ only D, U.

⁵¹ thob but Y, P: thobs.

⁵² nas but Zh: na.

⁵³ de yi tshe.

⁵⁴ nyam but Y, L, P, N: nyams.

⁵⁵ nyam chung but Y, P: nyams chung.

⁵⁶ drag but N, Zh: rab.

⁵⁷ mkha'.

⁵⁸ glags.

⁵⁹ rtsod.

⁶⁰ las.

⁶¹ gnyi ga.

⁶² bcas.

⁶³ te.

⁶⁴ + sems khros.

- [19] bzod pa'i pha rol phyin pas byang chub reg|| sems 'di bzang ba myin snyam dran pa skyed byed cing|| so sor 'chags par byed cing phyis kyang sdom byed la|| dga' bar <myi byed de ni sangs rgyas chos>
- [20] 'dir slob|| gang zhig slob tshe bslab pa gang yang khas myi len|| slob pa po dang bslab pa'i chos rnams myi dmyigs shing|| bslab dang bslab pa ma yin <'di> gnyis myi rtog pa|| de ltar gang slob
- [21] de ni sangs rgyas chos 'dir slob|| byang chub sems dpa' gang zhig ⁶⁵ bslab 'di shes|| 'di⁶⁶ ni gzhar yang bslab nyams tshul khrims 'chal myi 'gyur|| de ni sangs rgyas chos mnyes bya phyir
- [22] 'di la slob|| de ni bslab lhag bslab la mkhas ste dmyigs pa myed|| mkhas pa 'os⁶⁷ byed rnams kyi shes rab de ltar slob|| dge ba ma yin sems cig⁶⁸ tsam yang skyed myI byed|| nyi ma mkha'
- [23] <la> 'gro ba'i gzer kyis zil gnön pa'i|| mdun kyi bar snang la ni mun pa myi gnas bzhin|| shes rab pha rol phyin la bslab pa byas rnams kyi|| pha rol phyin pa thams cad 'dir ni 'dus
- [24] <par 'gyur|| 'jig tsho<gs lta bar lta ba drug> bcu⁶⁹ gnyi<s 'dus ltar|| de bzhin pha r>ol phyin <pa 'di dag 'du>s par gsungs|| dper na srog gi dbang po 'gags na
- [25] <dba>ng po gzhan|| gang dag ji snyed <yo>d pa thams cad 'gags par 'gyur|| de ltar shes rab spyod pa <mkhas pa mchog rnam>s kyi|| <pha> rol phyin pa thams⁷⁰ 'dir ni 'dus par
- [26] <gsungs|| byang> chub sems mkhas nyan thos yon tan gang dag dang|| de bzhin rang rgyal yon tan kun la slob byed cing|| de dag de la myi gnas 'dod pa myi skyed de|| 'di ni bdag
- [27] <gis> bslab bya yin snyam de phyir slob|| myi ldog byang chub mchog la rab tu zhugs pa yi|| sems bskyed pa la bsam pa thag pas yi rang ba|| stong gsum ri rab srang la gzhal
- [28] <bas tshad g>zung rung|| rjes su yi rang dge ba de ni de lta myin|| dge ba don gnyer phan 'dod sems can ji snyed pa|| kun kyi bsod nams phung po la yang yi rang gyur|| de phyir rgyal ba'i yon tan de⁷¹

⁶⁵ + de lta'i.

⁶⁶ de.

⁶⁷ 'od.

⁶⁸ gcig but N: cig.

⁶⁹ cu but Y, L, P: bcu.

⁷⁰ + cad.

⁷¹ de phyir de dag rgyal ba'i yon tan.

- [29] <thob gyur nas|| sdu>g bsngal zad par bya phyir 'jig rten chos sbyin byed|| byang chub sems dpa' <gang> zhig myi rtog chos rnams kun|| stong dang mtshan ma myed dang spros myed yong⁷² shes pa||
- [30] <de ni shes rab gnyis kyis byang chub tshol mi byed|| rnal 'byor pa de shes rab pha rol phyin mchog brtson|| na>m mkha'i kham de dang ni nam mkha' der gñas⁷³ pa|| yod pa ma yin gang gis
- [31] <kyang ni de ma thob|| de bzhin shes rab spyod mkhas byang chub sems dpa' yang|| nam mkha' lta bu yin te> nye bar zhi bar spyod|| skye bo'i dbus na sgyu ma'i skyes bu 'di mgu⁷⁴ snyam du||
- [32] <skye bo 'di mgu bya snyam mi sems de yang byed|| rdzu 'phrul sna tshogs rab tu ston par byed mthong yang|| de la lus med se>ms myed mying yang yod ma yin|| de bzhin shes rab spyod pa nam yam 'di snyam du||

SI 6681: description and transliteration

Description

The manuscript comprises three folios with dimensions of 10.2×28.6, 10.2×26.6, and 10.3×26.7 cm. Compared to manuscripts SI 6558 and SI 6618, the birchbark used in this case is sturdier and more robust. Given the content of this manuscript, which provides specific instructions on how to utilize a particular *dhāraṇī*, it can be inferred that it was created not (only) for ritualistic purposes, but for practical use.

The first two folios are labeled with the Tibetan letters *nga* and *ca*, which correspond to the numbers 4 and 5, respectively. The third folio lacks a foliation mark, but its text continues from f. 5. Hence, we have folios 4–6 from the text, yet we lack both its beginning and end.

The orthography is characterized by the letter *ya* attached to *ma* (*ma ya btags*). In rendering Sanskrit sounds there is a tendency to use *e* instead of *i*: *bye ma la* for *vimala*, *be ra* for *vīra*.

⁷² yongs.

⁷³ 'gal.

⁷⁴ —.

Contents

- F. 4 recto¹⁻⁸ **Mantra “Unfathomable mansion of increasing jewels”**
 (no beginning) (skt. *maṇivipulavimāna*, tib. *nor bu rgyas pa'i gzhal med khang*)

Textological comparison is made with the edition of Onpo Pal.⁷⁵ Following the *dhāraṇī* text is an explanation of its use. This consists of a typical list of actions for such texts, such as reading, comprehending, affixing to someone's body, writing on various objects and materials (though birchbark is not specified), and so forth.⁷⁶

The subsections of the text (such as “heart” mantra, skt. *hrdaya*, tib. *snying po*; secondary “heart” mantra, skt. *upahrdaya*, tib. *nye ba'i snying po*) are not titled. They are marked by *yig mgo* ཡིག མགོ, or three dots flanked by two *shad* ཤ.

- F. 4 recto⁸– **Dhāraṇī “Stainless uṣṇīṣa”**
 5 recto⁵ (skt. *vimaloṣṇīṣa*, tib. *gtsug tor dri ma med*)

“Stainless *uṣṇīṣa*” is a widespread formula used in the rites for blessing a *caitya* (stupa). This *dhāraṇī* with accompanying text (as present in **SI 6681**) can be found in the canon as a part of the *dhāraṇī-sūtra* entitled “A *caitya* perfectly constructed with complete knowledge” (skt. *sarvaprajñāntapāramitāsiddhicaitya*; tib. *shes pas thams cad mthar phyin par grub pa'i mchod rten*).⁷⁷ The explanation mentions bark (*shing shun*) as a suitable material for copying the *dhāraṇī*.

Last part of the fragment contains three formulas starting with *om trai-yadhve* (in the manuscript: *strāi yadh dhe*) that spread nature of a *caitya* on “all the lands”, “all the waters” and “all of space” respectively. This explanatory parts are absent in **SI 6681**. The fragment concludes with these three formulas, while the canonical text continues with explanations of various formulas related to the consecration of stupas.

⁷⁵ DBON PO DPAL 2007: 243–244.

⁷⁶ The explanation is not included into the canonical edition of this mantra (DPE BSDUR MA 104 2008: 609–611).

⁷⁷ The relevant fragment can be found in (DPE BSDUR MA 90 2008: 859⁷–860¹⁸), where the whole work occupies pages 857–872. The canonical work was translated into English (SCHOTT 2023).

F. 5 recto⁵⁻⁹ **Mantra “Hundred syllables of the *tathāgatas*”**
 (skt. *tathāgataśatākṣara*, tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i yi ge brgya pa*)

This mantra is featured as an independent text in the Narthang and Lhasa editions of the Buddhist canon.⁷⁸ The **SI 6681** version includes an introductory header that elucidates the mantra’s purpose, which provides “access to all *maṇḍalas*, both mundane and supramundane”.

F. 5 verso¹⁻⁶ **The Eight names [of *Avalokiteśvara*]**
 (tib. *mtshan brgyad po*)

Textological comparison is made with the edition of Onpo Pal.⁷⁹ After listing the eight names in Sanskrit, the **SI 6681** version gives the translation to Tibetan.

No.	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Tibetan</i>	
1	akṣadhara	pad ma bsname pa	holding the lotus ⁸⁰
2	padmodbhava	pad ma las 'khrungs pa	born from the lotus
3	padmahasta	phyag na pad ma	[holding] the lotus in hand
4	padmaśrī	pad ma'i dpal	glory of the lotus
5	padmanāyaka	pad ma'i gtso bo	leader of the lotus
6	padmalocana	pad ma'i spyan	eye of the lotus
7	lokeśvara	'jig rten dbang phyug	lord of the world
8	padmeśvara	pad ma'i dbang phyug	lord of the lotus

F. 5 verso⁶–
 6 verso⁸
 (no end) ***Dhāraṇī*, fulfilling the six perfections of Amoghapāśa**
 (skt. *āryāmoghapāśapāramitāṣaṭparipūraka nāmadhāraṇī*,
 tib. *'phags pa don yod zhags pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa drug yongs su rdzogs par byed pa'i gzungs*)

⁷⁸ DPE BSDUR MA 91 2008: 509–510.

⁷⁹ DBON PO DPAL 2007: 252–253.

⁸⁰ In Sanskrit, however, it is *akṣa* ‘axis’, not *padma* ‘lotus’.

The translation of the Sanskrit text in manuscript **SI 6681** notably differs from the canonical version by Mañjuśrīvarma, Loden Sherab, and Chokyi Sherab.⁸¹

The salutations to the buddhas and bodhisattvas in **SI 6681** are given in Sanskrit, whereas in the canonical version they are translated to Tibetan. The vocabulary of these two versions differs significantly (SI 6681 / canonical version: *bsnyen gnas* / *smyung bar gnas* “one day precepts”, “fasting vow”; *nyin cig bzhin du* / *nyi ma re re zhing* “daily”; *dud 'gro'i skye gnas* / *byol song gi skye gnas* “animal womb” etc.), as well as the syntactic order.

The text is structured around the six perfections: generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, one-pointed concentration, and wisdom. Each of these perfections has its respective formula and explanations. However, in **SI 6681**, the scribe mistakenly omitted the section on patience and began copying the section on diligence immediately after the one on discipline. Upon realizing this error, he then added the section on patience. The text then appears to transition to the salutations of the *dhyāna* section. This is where the existing text concludes. Given that the last available folio 6 lacks a foliation mark, it's plausible that this folio was discarded due to the error in sequencing the perfections. However, this remains speculative and cannot be confirmed with certainty.

Transliteration

F. 4: recto

- [1] @ | dzwa la dzwa la dha rma dhā tu gar bhē | ma ṇi ma ṇi ma hā ma ṇi
ta thā ga ta hri da⁸² ma ṇi swā hā ||@⁸³|| na maḥ sa rba ta
- [2] thā ga tā nām | ōṃ bi pu la gar bhē | ma ṇi pra bhē ta thā ga ta ni ḍa ri
ṣhā⁸⁴ nē ma ṇi ma ṇi su pra bhē | bi ma lē⁸⁵ sā⁸⁶ ga ra gam

⁸¹ DPE BSDUR MA 93: 151–157.

⁸² + ya | ma hā.

⁸³ + shin tu rab tu gsang ba'i.

⁸⁴ di+rsha.

⁸⁵ la.

⁸⁶ sam.

- [3] bhī rē hūm hūm | dzwa la dzwa la | bud dha bi lō ki tē | gu hya a dhi
ṣṭhi te gar bhē swā hā | | ⁸⁷ōm ma ni ba+dzre hūm | :|@⁸⁸||ōm ma nin
dha
- [4] ri hūm phaṭ | | ⁸⁹gzungs 'di'i mthus thos pa rtsal 'am | blags pa 'am |
kun chub par byas sam | lus la thogs
- [5] sam | bris sam | 'chang ngam | <rgyal> mtshan gyi rtse mo la 'dogs⁹⁰
sam | ⁹¹glegs bam du <byed> dam | <ras> la bris sam |
- [6] dar la bris sa<m> | <rtsig> pa la <bris pa 'a>m | ra ba la bris pa 'am |
chung ngu na skra 'am lag pas reg gam | grib mas
- [7] phog⁹² gam | sems can gzhan <gyi>s reg na yang de gdon myi za bar
phyir myi ldog par gyur nas bla na myed pa yang dag par
- [8] rdzogs pa'i byang chub mngon bar rdzogs par 'tshang rgya⁹³ bar 'gyur
ro || ||gzungs 'di ni⁹⁴ rigs kyi bu 'am rigs kyi bu mo
- [9] gang la la zhiḡ gis 'dzin tam 'chang ngam bris sam klog gam | mying
nyan bar byed na de mtshams myed pa lnga dang myi dge



Pl. 7. SI 6681 (f. 4, recto)

⁸⁷ + snying po.

⁸⁸ + nye ba'i snying po.

⁸⁹ + ma ma rang gi ming spel ka+sya swā hā].

⁹⁰ btags.

⁹¹ + mchod rten du gzbug gam].

⁹² reg.

⁹³ sangs rgyas.

⁹⁴ mchod rten byin gyis brlab pa'i cho ga rig pa chen mo bi ma la u+ṣṇī+ṣa'i gzungs 'di ni.



Pl. 8. SI 6681 (f. 4, verso)

F. 4: verso

- [1] ba bcu dang sdig pa'i las ci bg̃yis⁹⁵ pa thams cad ma lus par byang
bar 'gyur ro || bye⁹⁶ ma la u ṣṇi ṣa'i rig pa chen mo mchod rten
- [2] byin kyis brlab pa'i cho ga n̄⁹⁷ 'di 'o | om strāi yadh dhe⁹⁸ sa rba ta thā
ga ta | hri da ya gar bhe dzwa la dha rmā dhā tu gar bhe | sam ha ra na
a
- [3] yu sam sho dha ya | pā paṃ sa rba <ta> thā ga ta sa man to u ṣṇi ṣa bye
man to⁹⁹ | bi shud dhe swā hā | rig pa chen mo 'di gsungs
- [4] ma thag tu 'ji <g rten gyi> kha <ms thams> cad mchod rten gyi rang
bzhin du gyur to || rig pa chen mo 'di gro ba 'am ras sam | shing
- [5] shun la bris te | mchod rten¹⁰⁰ <...rgyal m> tshan gyi rtse mo la btag na
lha dang myi la+stsogs pa thams <cad k> yis phyag bya ba dang |
- [6] bkur bsti bya ba'i 'os su 'gyur ba dang | rig pa chen mo 'di lus
sam 'gul du thogs na | d <e> lha dang myi ma yin ba¹⁰¹ la+stsogs
- [7] pa rnams kyis sangs rgyas nyid du lta¹⁰² bar 'gyur ro || gzhan yang
mchod rten la dmyigs shing mang du bzlas na | bde legs dang

⁹⁵ byas.⁹⁶ bi.⁹⁷ -.⁹⁸ trai ya dhwe but Y: strai yad dhe; L, C: strai ya ddhwa.⁹⁹ ma le but Y, P: man to.¹⁰⁰ -.¹⁰¹ dang lha ma yin pa.¹⁰² blta but N, Zh: lta.

- [8] bkra shis dang | byin rlabs chen por¹⁰³ 'gyur ro|| ||om strāi yadh dhe sa
rba ta thā ga ta hri da ya | ga rbhe dzwa la dha rma dhā tu gar bhe|
- [9] saṃ ha ra na ā yu saṃ sho dha ya pā paṃ | sa rba ta thā ga ta sa man to
u ṣṇi ṣa bye ma la | bi shud dhe ma hā be¹⁰⁴ ra tse ra ga ba¹⁰⁵ ra si dha
rma dhā

F. 5: recto

- [1] @| tu gar bhe bi bi sa ra a a laṃ swā hā ||¹⁰⁶ om strāi yadh dhe | sa rba
ta tha ga ta hri da ya | gar bhe dzwa la dha rma dhā tu gar bhe |
- [2] saṃ ha ra na ā yu saṃ sho dha ya | pā paṃ sa rba ta thā ga ta sa man to
| bye ma la u ṣṇi ṣa bi shud dhe | ma hā be ra tse ra ga bi ra si |
- [3] dha rma dhā tu bi bi sa ra | a a¹⁰⁷ ma ma ki swā hā¹⁰⁸ |ōm strāi yadh
dhe | sa rba ta thā ga ta hri da ya | gar bhe dzwa la dha rma dhā tu gar
bhe |
- [4] saṃ ha ra na ā yu saṃ sho dha ya | pā paṃ sa rba ta thā ga ta sa man to
bye ma la u ṣṇi ṣa bi shud dhe ma hā be ra tse ra ga bi ra si | dha rma
- [5] dhā tu bi bi sa ra a a e kham ya swā hā¹⁰⁹ |@| yang na de bzhin
gshegs pa'i snying po bzlas brjod stong phrag brgyad bya
- [6] ste | de yis 'jig rten dang | 'jig rten las 'das pa'i dkyil 'khor thams cad
du zhugs par 'gyur te de yang gang dag ce na¹¹⁰
- [7] na maḥ strāi yadh dhi kā nām | ta thā ga tā nām sa rba trā a¹¹¹ pra ti ha
ta bab ti dha rma tā ba li nām | am¹¹² | a sa ma sa ma | sa man

¹⁰³ bdag nyid ri brag gam| tshal lam| dgon pa'am| sa phyogs gang du 'gro ba'i tshe rig pa
chen mo 'di brjod na ri dang sa phyogs thams cad mchod rten dang 'dra bar.

¹⁰⁴ bi.

¹⁰⁵ dze ra ga+mbhī but Y, P: tse ra gam bi.

¹⁰⁶ + zhes brjod na| sa gzhi thams cad kyang mchod rten gyi rang bzhin du 'gyur ro| |bdag
nyid chu'am| chu bo'am| mtsho'am| rgya mtsho la sogs pa gang la rgal ba na yang rig pa chen
mo'i sngags 'dis btab na chu de thams cad kyang mchod rten gyi rang bzhin du 'gyur ro|.

¹⁰⁷ -.

¹⁰⁸ + zhes brjod na| chu thams cad kyang mchod rten gyi rang bzhin du 'gyur ro| |gzhan
yang bdag nyid kyis nam mkha' gang nas gang khyab par rig pa chen mo'i sngags 'di btab na|
nam mkha' thams cad kyang mchod rten gyi rang bzhin du 'gyur ro|.

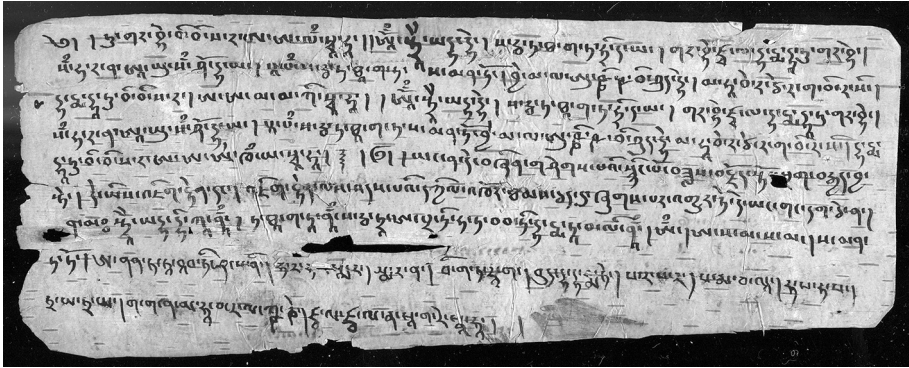
¹⁰⁹ + zhes brjod na| nam mkha'i kham thams cad mchod rten gyi rang bzhin du 'gyur te|.

¹¹⁰ -.

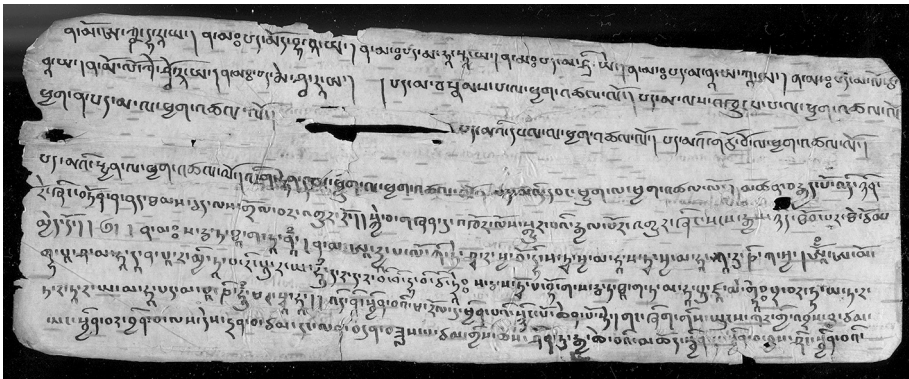
¹¹¹ -.

¹¹² -.

- [8] ta to | a nan ta tā¹¹³ bāb ti sha sa ni | ha ra ha <ra> sma ra | sma ra na |
bi ga ta rā ga | bud dha dha rma te | sa ra sa ra | sa ma ba lā | ha sa ha
sa|
- [9] tra ya tra ya | ga ga na¹¹⁴ ma hā ba ra la kṣa ñe | dzwa la dzwa la na sā
ga re swā hā ||



Pl. 9. SI 6681 (f. 5, recto)



Pl. 10. SI 6681 (f. 5, verso)

¹¹³ sa ma+nto na+nta.

¹¹⁴ bha ga wān.

F. 5: verso

- [1] ¹¹⁵ na mo a kṣa dha rā ya | na maḥ pad mod bha bā ya | na maḥ pad ma
hā stā ya | na maḥ pad ma shri ye¹¹⁶ | na maḥ pad ma nā ya kā ya | na
maḥ pad ma lo tsa
- [2] nā ya | na mo lo ke shwo rā ya | na maḥ pad me shwa rā ya | pad ma
bsnams pa la phyag 'tshal lo | pad ma las 'khrungs pa la phyag 'tshal lo
- [3] phyag na pad ma la phyag 'tshal lo | pad ma'i dpal la phyag 'tshal lo |
pad ma'i gtso bo la phyag 'tshal lo |
- [4] pad ma'i spyang la phyag 'tshal lo | 'jig rten dbang phyug la
phyag 'tshal lo | pad ma'i dbang phyug la phyag 'tshal lo¹¹⁷ mtshan
brgyad po 'di nyin
- [5] re zhing¹¹⁸ bton na nad thams cad las grol bar 'gyur ro|| skye ba gzhan
du 'khor los sgyur pa'i rgyal por 'gyur zhing sangs rgyas nyid thob par
the tshom
- [6] myed do|| @|| na mah sa rba ta thā ga tā nām | nā ma ā rya pa lo ki te
shwa ra sya bo dhi sa twa sya ma hā sa twa sya ma hā kā ru ni ka sya
¹¹⁹ ōṃ a mo
- [7] gha pā sha ma hā dā na pā ra myi tā pa ri pū ra ya hūṃ da ra da ra bi bi
dhi bi tsi trēḥ sa rba sa two pa bho ga sa rba ta thā ga ta ma hā ¹²⁰ pū jā
me ghēh¹²¹ pra bar tta ya ta ra
- [8] ta ra tā ra ya ma hā pad ma pā¹²² ṇi huṃ phaṭ swā hā|| 'di ni ¹²³ sbyin
ba'i pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po chen po ste| gang zhig gis yungs
kar gyi¹²⁴ 'bras bu¹²⁵ tsam

¹¹⁵ + thugs rje chen po'i mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa.

¹¹⁶ nā ya.

¹¹⁷ -.

¹¹⁸ bzhin.

¹¹⁹ sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' thams cad la phyag 'tshal lo | dus gsum du
gshegs shing bzhugs pa'i de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad la phyag 'tshal lo | byang chub sems
dpa' sems dpa' chen po snyin rje chen po dang ldan pa 'phags pa spyang ras gzigs dbang
phyug la phyag 'tshal lo | (DPE BSDUR MA 93: 151³⁻⁷).

¹²⁰ + dā na.

¹²¹ gha.

¹²² ma.

¹²³ + don yod pa'i zhags pa'i.

¹²⁴ -.

¹²⁵ 'bru.

- [9] yang¹²⁶ sbyin bar byin ba las des dran ba tsam dang lan bdun bzlas pa
tsam gyis¹²⁷ ches shin tu rgya che ba'i mchod sbyin dang sbyin ba
byas shing¹²⁸ sbyin ba'i

F. 6: recto

- [1] @| pha rol du phyin pa yongs su rdzogs par byas par 'gyur ro| @| |na
maḥ sa rba ta thā ga tā nām| ne ma ā ryā ba lo ki te shwa ra ya bo dhi
[2] sa twā ya ma hā sa twā ya ma hā kā ru ni kā ya | ōṃ a mo gha shī la
saṃ bha ra saṃ bha ra | bha ra bha ra | ma hā shud dha sa twa pad ma
bi bhū ṣi ta bhū ja dha ra¹²⁹ sa man tā
[3] ba lo ki ta hūm phaṭ swā hā| |gzungs <'d>i 'phags pa'i lam¹³⁰ yan lag
brgyad pa'i bsnyen gnas kyi bsnyen gnas la gnas su lan nyi shu
[4] rtsa cig myi smra bar¹³¹ dran bar bya zhing de nas don yod pa'i zhags
pa'i snying po stong¹³² bzlas pa tsam gyis kyang ches yungs su dag
pa'i tshul khrims¹³³ dang ldan
[5] bar 'gyur ro| tshul khrims kyi pha rol du phyin pa yongs su rdzogs
par 'gyur ro| |tshul khrims kyi dri zhim po'i dri chen po lus
las¹³⁴ 'byung ba dang|
[6] phyogs bcu'i 'jigs rten du mam par¹³⁵ grags par 'gyur ro| gang yang
nyin cig bzhin du¹³⁶ gzungs 'di dran par byed pa de ni¹³⁷ tshul khrims
rtag tu¹³⁸ yongs su
[7] dag par 'gyur ro| |gang yang dge slong¹³⁹ tshul khrims ma nyams pa
de'is 'di snyen gnas la gnas pas¹⁴⁰ bzlas pa bya ste stong bzlas pa tsam
gyis kyang tshul khrims

¹²⁶ gyi.

¹²⁷ bzlas brjod byas na.

¹²⁸ mchod sbyin chen po mam par 'phrul pa chen po shin tu rgyas pa chen po'i.

¹²⁹ + dha ra.

¹³⁰ gso sbyong gi.

¹³¹ brgyad bzung nas smyung bar gnas par byas te mi smra bar lan nyi shu rtsa gcig tu.

¹³² -.

¹³³ mdo la tshul khrims dag pa chen po.

¹³⁴ dri zhim po mang po lus la.

¹³⁵ -.

¹³⁶ zhig nyi ma re re zhing.

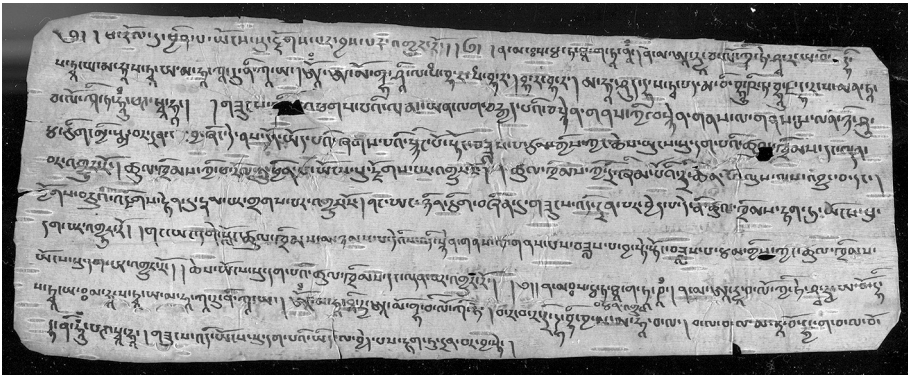
¹³⁷ rtag tu.

¹³⁸ -.

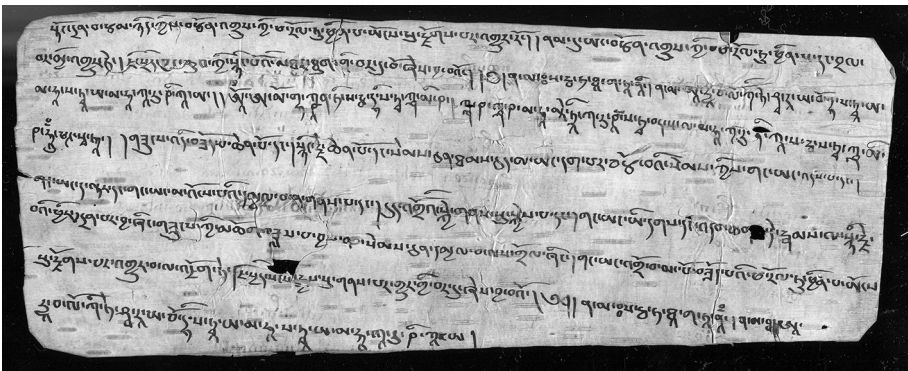
¹³⁹ dge slong gang la la zhig.

¹⁴⁰ nyams par gyur pas smyung bar gnas par byas te.

- [8] yongs su dag par 'gyur ro| ches yongs su dag pa'i tshul khrims dang
ldan bar¹⁴¹ 'gyur ro| @||na mah sa rba ta thā ga tā nām {brtson 'grus}|
na ma ā ryā ba lo ki te shwa rwa ya bo dhi
- [9] sa twā yah ma hā sa twā ya ma hā kā ru ni kā ya| ōm ma hā bī rya ā mo
gha bi lo ki te | ba ra ba ra dri dha bhi bya ma ma¹⁴² hā ba la| ba la ba
la ma hā bo dhyang ga ba la bo
- [10] dha ni hūm phat swā hā| gzungs 'di yongs su dag pa'i yid la byed pas
rtag tu dran bar bya ste |



Pl. 11. SI 6681 (f. 6, recto)



Pl. 12. SI 6681 (f. 6, verso)

¹⁴¹ mdo la tshul khrims yongs su dag par.

¹⁴² bī+rya ma.

F. 6: verso

- [1] stong_dran_ba¹⁴³ rtsam nyid kyis brtson 'grus kyi pha rol tu phyin pa
yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur rol | nam du yang brtson 'grus kyi pha rol tu
phyin pa dang bral
- [2] bar myi 'gyur te | ji srid_byang_chub_kyi_snying_po'i mthar thug gi bar
du_bo_zhes_bya_ba'o¹⁴⁴ | @|na maḥ sa rba ta thā ga tā nām| na ma ā ryā
ba lo ki te shwa rā ya bo dha sa twā ya
- [3] ma hā sa twā ya ma hā kā ru ṇi kā ya| ṃ a mo gha kṣān ti sa rba¹⁴⁵
dhi sa twa ksha mi ṇa¹⁴⁶| ksha ṇa ksha ṇa ma hā mē trī ka ru ṇā¹⁴⁷ sa
twa bad sa la ma hā ka ru ṇi kā sa rba sa twa ksha mi
- [4] ṇa¹⁴⁸ hūṃ phaṭ swā hā| gzungs 'di bzod pa chen po dang | snying_rje
chen_po¹⁴⁹ dang sems can thams cad la yang dag par brtse ba'i sems
kyis gang yang 'das pa dang|
- [5] gang yang da ltar dang gang yang ma 'ongs pa'i dmyal ba na gnas pa
dang | dud_gro'i_skye_gnas¹⁵⁰ su skyes pa dang | gang yang yi_dags¹⁵¹
dang 'dab_chag<g>¹⁵² de rnam la snyam rje
- [6] ba'i phyir dran par bya zhing gzungs kyi mchog bzlas pa byas na sems
can dmyal ba las grol zhing | gang yang 'gro ba mang po bzod pa'i pha
rol tu phyin pa yongs
- [7] su rdzogs par 'gyur ba la 'jog te | ji srid sangs rgyas su gnas par gyur
gyi bar du zhes bya ba'o|@|| na maḥ sa rba ta thā ga tā nām | na maḥ ā
- [8] ryā ba lo ki te shba rā ya bo dhi sa twā ya ma hā sa twā ya ma hā
kā ru ṇi kā ya|

¹⁴³ dus rtag tu dran pa'am| yongs su dag cing spro ba'i yid kyis dran pa.

¹⁴⁴ byang chub kyi snying po la 'dug gi bar du brtson 'grus nyams par mi 'gyur.

¹⁴⁵ + bo.

¹⁴⁶ ṇi but L, N, C, Zh: ṇa.

¹⁴⁷ + sa+rbba.

¹⁴⁸ ṇi but N, Zh: ṇa.

¹⁴⁹ snying brtse ba.

¹⁵⁰ byol song gi skye gnas.

¹⁵¹ ri dags.

¹⁵² bya.

Conclusion

Tibetan birchbark manuscripts present a fascinating yet under-researched phenomenon.

Given the initial condition of the two manuscripts (SI 6558 and SI 6681), the conservators at the IOM, RAS felt compelled to conduct specialized research on restoration techniques for such items. Consequently, they devised methods to flatten and reinforce the birchbark texts using birch sap.

There are five Tibetan birchbark manuscripts at the Serindian collection of the IOM. While they originate from different sources or have unknown provenance, their contents reveal a shared functional purpose. This functional purpose is related to the rituals associated with the consecration of stupas. In academic literature, this topic is consistently addressed, albeit without a specific focus on the birchbark material. Jampa Kalsang provided an overview of a work by the first Changkya Khutukhtu on the topic.¹⁵³ Béla Kelényi examined a specific collection of paper scrolls retrieved from a stupa.¹⁵⁴ There's a case study on the Dunhuang manuscript PT 350,¹⁵⁵ and Yael Bendor has made the most significant contributions to the study of consecration rituals.¹⁵⁶ All these publications help to establish the repertoire of the consecration texts, and allow us to speculate on the function of the birchbark manuscripts after identifying their contents.

In case of Likhachev's manuscript (SI 6618), it was established that the fragment of the *Prātimokṣasūtra* it contained, was widely used for inscriptions in the shape of Buddhist stupas on the back of thangkas, i.e. was related to consecration rituals. Likhachev's manuscript contains *pratītyasamutpāda* and *uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī*, that belong to the group of "five great *dhāraṇīs*" recommended for depositing within stupas and images along with *vimaloṣṇīṣa*, *guhyadhātu* and *bodhigarbhāṃkāralakṣa*.¹⁵⁷

The four birchbark manuscripts discussed in this article might have served a similar purpose. The text of SI 6680 is solely composed of the Sarvavid mantra, which is also used for empowerment and consecration rituals. SI 6682 exclusively contains a repeating formula of the "immaculate light" *dhāraṇī*, copies of which are meant to be wrapped around the "life-tree" of a

¹⁵³ KALSANG 1969.

¹⁵⁴ KELÉNYI 2008.

¹⁵⁵ SCHERRER-SCHAUB 1994.

¹⁵⁶ BENDOR 1994, 1995, 1996, 2003.

¹⁵⁷ BENDOR 2003: 24, 32.

stupa. SI 6681 is a compilation of various *dhāraṇīs* and mantras, including the *vimaloṣṇīṣa* (one of the “five great dhāraṇīs”) and a non-canonical translation of the *āryāmoghapāśapāramitāṣaṭparipūraka-nāmadhāraṇī*. Owing to the relative durability of its material and the inclusion of explanatory texts, this manuscript could have been used for reading. This is less likely for the manuscript SI 6558, which is written on extremely delicate birchbark and includes the *prajñāpāramitāsañcayagāthā*. While *prajñāpāramitā* texts can be venerated as sacred objects, there have been no known instances of such lengthy Tibetan texts being inscribed on birchbark until now.

It’s notable that the letter *ya* attached to *ma* (*ma ya btags*) can be found in manuscripts SI 6618, 6681 and 6558 (SI 6680 and SI 6682 have no suitable linguistic material). All these manuscripts, except for the less proficiently made SI 6682, exhibit an elegant *dbu med* script. However, as we stated already in the case of the Likhachev’s manuscript, there aren’t enough clues to date these manuscripts with any relative certainty.

Special designations

<abc>:	Reconstructed text (using other editions)
{abc}:	Text added by the scribe
[1]:	line number
1 ² :	folio/page ^{line}

Abbreviations

C:	Cone edition
D:	Sde dge edition
L:	Lithang edition
N:	Narthing edition
P:	Peking (Kangxi Kanjur) edition
U:	Urga edition
Y:	Yongle Kanjur edition
Zh:	Zhol (Lhasa) edition

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