

On and around the Gilgit Manuscripts in the National Archives of India

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THE so-called “Gilgit manuscripts” are a corpus of Buddhist texts discovered in 1931 from the ruins of what was previously assumed to be a stūpa in the village of Naupur (Navapura; located amidst the Karakoram Mountains at an altitude of about 1500 m, in what is now Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) near the Gilgit River. Excavation was done twice in this place and what was excavated is called “Gilgit manuscripts” in a narrow sense. In recent years, manuscripts written in the same script have been discovered from north-west India including the area around Gilgit; these can also be called “Gilgit manuscripts” in a broader sense.¹ This article deals with the collection of the National Archives of India, which accounts for the majority of Gilgit manuscripts found at Naupur in 1931.

1.1. Discovery of the manuscripts (The first accidental excavation)

The ‘stūpa’ site of Naupur village is located about 5 km north of the centre of Gilgit. The first report of manuscript discovery was made by Aurel Stein who was visiting the area at that time (June 1931).² According to his short report, at the end of May 1931 local boys found ancient documents from a place in the hills of the village, probably once a stūpa. Stein examined boxes containing the manuscripts in the office of the wazir of Gilgit, and he noticed that they were Buddhist scriptures written in Brāhmi script similar to that of the manuscripts found in Chinese Turkestan. Stein acquired some leaves of the manuscripts from the villagers and sent them to the British Museum.³

A more detailed report on this accidental discovery was left by the Joseph Hackin of the French Citroën Mission, who arrived there on July 22 of the same year.⁴ It mentioned that there were four mounds (A to D) in the north and south of the discovery site (Fig. 1) and the manuscripts were found only in mound C (Fig. 2). The base part of the stūpa is 18 m in circumference and 12 to 15 m in height, the inner chamber has a thickness of 1.8 m on the inner wall and a diameter of 5 m. In the chamber, there seems to be one main pillar and four pillars which

supported the ceiling (Fig. 3), as well as clay statues and five wooden boxes.⁵

1.2. The second excavation

The excavation of 1931 was actually accidental;⁶ there is no accurate record concerning what was discovered, how it was discovered, and what happened to it afterwards. Official excavation was carried out in 1938 by archeologist Madhusudan Kaul Shastri for just one week (August 20 to 26).⁷ The excavation took the following course (as to the findings, only the documents are mentioned here):

20th, Aug.: “the excavation of the Mound C was taken.”

21st: the Mound C was excavated; “torn leaves of birch bark manuscript or manuscripts and one complete Manuscript No.1 [i.e.,



Fig. 1 Mounds on a hill of the opposite bank, located in the north of Gilgit



Fig. 2 Mound C where the manuscripts were excavated



Fig. 3 Main pillar and four pillars

Samghātasūtra, noted by N.K.] ... below the central poles at the depth of seven feet.”

22nd: excavation of the Mound C and A; from the Mound C, “torn leaves and miniature stupas ... and Manuscript No. 2 [= *Samghātasūtra*, noted by N.K.], complete, of birch bark found below the junction of the cross with the outer central pole in the south at the depth of seven feet and nine inches ... and Manuscript No. 3 [= *Samghātasūtra*, noted by N.K.] ... found near the same place but at a lower depth.”

23rd: from the Mound C, “the Manuscript No. 4 [**Āryadharmā* (but this is not correct), noted by N.K.] on palm leaf and two damaged fragments of manuscripts.”

24th and 25th: “the Mounds C and D were completely excavated, the former giving nothing further.”

26th: “excavation was carried on here and there near Mounds but nothing worth mention was found there.”⁸

All the manuscripts have been found only in mound C; the four complete manuscripts are enshrined in two wooden covers, and those of manuscript nos. 1, 2 and 4 are illustrated. On the inside covers are painted a seated Buddha or bodhisattva with kneeling donors/devotees.⁹

1.3. Division and transfer of the manuscripts

The manuscripts discovered in 1931 were placed under the control of the state government on the orders of Raja Hari Singh of Kashmir in 1933 and were transferred to Srinagar. However, a substantial part of them seems to have gone missing during this period. With the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war in 1947, the remaining manuscripts were transferred to the National Archives of India, New Delhi, for the protection of cultural properties (1948), and there they remain to date.

They are divided into three collections in India and each collection is called after the name of the location where it was found.

2.1. New Delhi collection

The majority of the 1931 findings are now preserved at the National Archives of India, New Delhi (Acc. no.: Gilgit Manuscripts), numbered from 1 to 62 (Figs 4 and 5).

The list of manuscripts was first published in Lokesh Chandra 1959.¹⁰ During 1957–60 P.V. Bapat inspected this collection and later reproduced the list of manuscripts “prepared by the local pandits”¹¹ but this list in which the manuscripts were classified into 62 and given

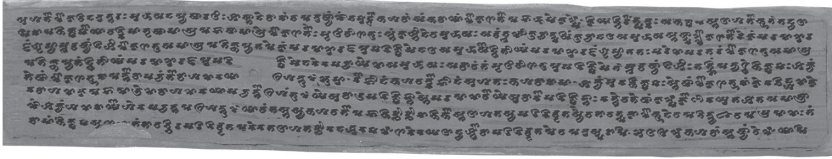


Fig. 4 Gilgit *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscript (Collection of the National Archives of India)

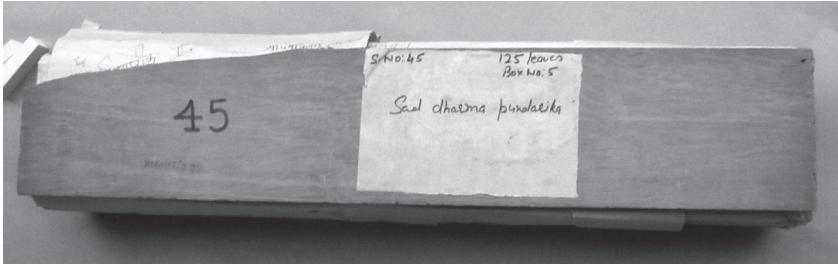


Fig. 5 No. 45: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscript containing Fig. 4 between wooden covers

details such as folio numbers, titles known so far and so on — is slightly different from the list published by Lokesh Chandra.¹²

The facsimile edition (in black/white) was published by Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra in 1959–74 (later a reprinted and enlarged edition appeared in three parts. This enlarged version contains three *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts [nos. 26, 27, 50] which were not published in the first facsimile edition).¹³ The entire text is not yet published.¹⁴

2.2. Classification of manuscripts

It is uncertain who classified and divided the manuscripts into 62. These serial numbers (1–62) were given when the manuscripts were preserved in Srinagar (as stated earlier, “a list, prepared by the local pandits”¹⁵). At present, the manuscripts are bundled together within two wooden or thick paper covers; on the cover is the following description, probably inscribed before the Gilgit manuscripts were shifted to New Delhi (1947): serial number (S no.), number of folios, box number (Box no.) and title (Figs 6 and 7).¹⁶ The classification seems to have been done according to the order of the boxes where the manuscripts were kept. Therefore, manuscripts under one and the same serial number comprise portions from several texts; in some cases attribution of the title is wrong (Fig. 8). In other words, the classification is not according to content. Whereas the majority of manuscripts are on birch bark; some are on paper and there is one palm-leaf manuscript.¹⁷

As to their state of preservation in the National Archives, the folio is peeled off in the front and back layers and each peeled layer is backed by another thin paper. After that, both sides are stuck together on the back and front of another thin transparent paper. Some kind of chemical treatment has been done for preservation, and the whole is something like a thin plate. Unfortunately, it is sad to say that they do not seem to be in a very good state of preservation and on the surface of some folios, white spots that appear to be mould can be seen.¹⁸

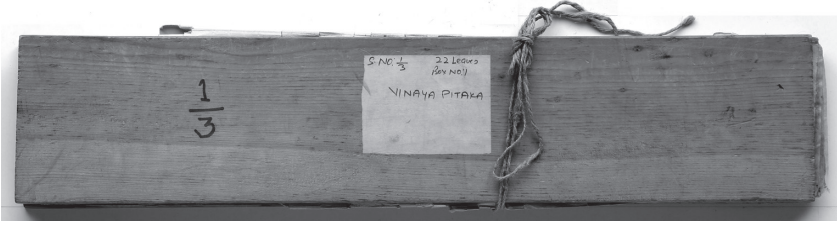


Fig. 6 No. 1: *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* manuscript bundled with the wooden covers

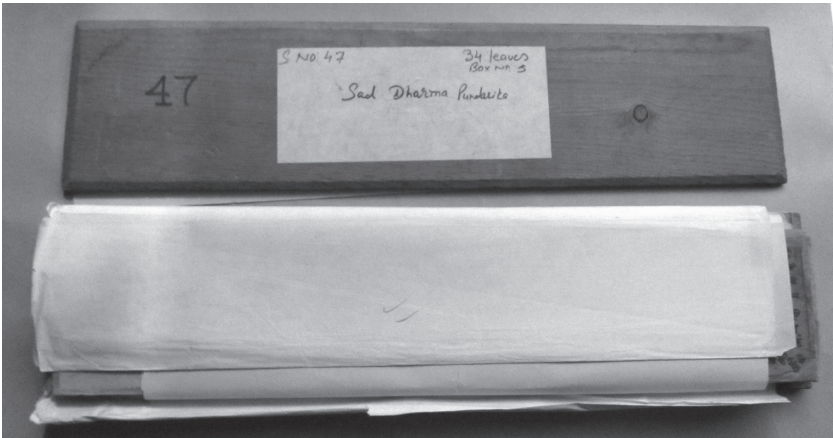


Fig. 7 No. 47: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscript with upper wooden cover removed

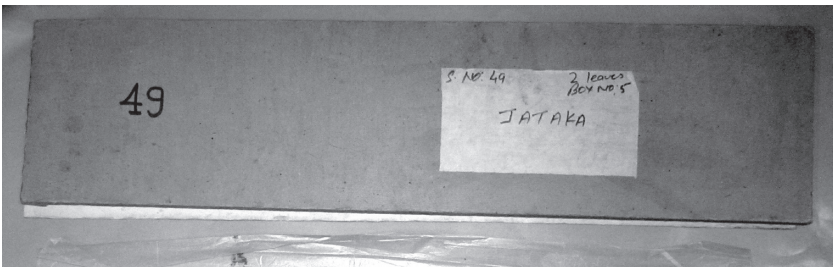


Fig. 8 No. 49: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscript between thick paper covers (wrongly titled as “Jataka”)

2.3. Scripts used

One of the criteria for estimating the date of the manuscripts is the script they are written in. In the entire Gilgit manuscripts collection, only the Gilgit/Bāmiyan script is used. This script has two types, namely type I (or round Gupta) and type II (or Proto-Śāradā). The former (6th–7th centuries) is always used in manuscripts of Mahāyāna works and the latter (7th century–) is used in non-Mahāyāna works such as *Vinaya* texts, non-Mahāyāna sūtras, *avadāna* texts and *gāthās*. There are some exceptions where Gilgit/Bāmiyan type II or Proto-Śāradā script is used for transcribing Mahāyāna texts, for example, *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra* (serial no. 32, 1 folio), *Samghāṭasūtra* (no. 39, 15 folios), *Pratīyasamutpādayakārikā* of Nāgārjuna (no. 61, 3 folios) and *Pāramitāsamāsa* (no. 57, 1 folio).¹⁹

The answer to why manuscripts of different genres which are written in different script types had been preserved in one place is closely related to the question of where these manuscripts were discovered.

3.1. Srinagar collection

This collection is housed in Sri Pratap Singh Museum (J&K State Government Libraries and Research Department, Jammu & Kashmir; Acc. nos.: 2689/A, 2689/B, and 2689/C). These manuscripts were discovered at the time of the second excavation (1938).

So far, only the manuscripts of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* (30 folios)²⁰ and the *Samghāṭasūtra*²¹ have been studied. Klaus Wille recently published a detailed list of this collection.²²

3.2. Ujjain collection

Another lot of manuscripts is preserved at the Scindia Oriental Museum, Scindia Oriental Research Institute, Vikram University (accession no. Bauddhāgama no. 4737). This collection consists of 34 folios found in 1931: 9 folios of the *Ekottarikāgama*, 19 of the *Dharmaskandha*, and 6 of *Lokaprajñapti* (all incomplete).²³ These were purchased in 1936 from somewhere in Kashmir.

3.3. Manuscripts preserved outside India

There are two collections outside India as well. The manuscripts that form part of both were all found in 1931.

The British Library: Or. 11878A-G. Eleven folios of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya (Pravrajyavastu)*, folio nos. 43–53 (= A) and seven folios of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*.²⁴ These folios were acquired by Stein and sent to the British Museum.

Tucci collection (Pakistan): Some of the manuscripts were in the possession of Agah Mohammad Ali Shah, Captain, Northern Command, Pakistan Signals, Rawalpindi. Giuseppe Tucci successfully brought back a majority of them to Italy (1956) and later returned them to the government of Pakistan (now deposited at the National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi).²⁵ They consist of 20 folios of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīkasūtra*, 189 folios of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* (*Sayanāsanavastu*, *Adhikaraṇavastu*, *Samghabhedavastu*), and 49 folios of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

4. What was the site?

Whether the excavation site was a stūpa or not is still being debated. In the reports immediately after the discovery by Stein and Hackin, it was considered “the ruins of stūpa”, but in recent years, different views have emerged. According to Gérard Fussman, the site where the manuscripts were found was neither a stūpa nor a monastery but a stone building (or tower) supported by pillars, probably a chapel or lodging for monks and the manuscripts were placed in this library-like place as their belongings.²⁶ That this ruin was not a stūpa is supported by the fact that there are indeed no traces of monastic buildings nearby.²⁷ The monks were undertaking activities such as performing ceremonies for local laypeople and residents there.

Later, in 2009, Gregory Schopen asserted that the place was likely “a kind of combination of genizah and scriptorium” and the manuscripts found there were “paid for or purchased” and “they may not have been picked up yet by, or delivered to, their purchasers” or “these manuscripts may have come back to or been returned to the scriptorium for some reason — their owners might have died intestate.”²⁸ Anyway, it is probable that the finding spot was not the mere remains of a stūpa.

In the Gilgit manuscripts, several texts have been found in multiple copies while the scripts used in them differ. For example, as is pointed out by Schopen, there are four manuscripts of the *Baiṣajyagurusūtra*; among them, manuscript no. 32 is written in Gilgit/Bāmiyan type II and the others (nos. 10b, 31+51a, 34) are in type I.²⁹ We have four copies of the *Samghāṭasūtra*: manuscript no. 39 is written in type II and the others (nos. 16, 36, 37, 38a) in type I.

Not only the Mahāyāna sūtras but also one of the avadāna texts is written in different scripts. There are three incomplete manuscripts of the *Sumāgadhā-avadāna*, a genre of Buddhist literature which narrates the causal relationship between past actions and present results of the followers (in this case Sumāgadhā) of the Buddha: one manuscript,

namely Ms A (nos. 7b, 10c) is written in type I and the other two, namely Ms B (nos. 51c, 52c) and Ms C (nos. 51c, 52c, 59a, 60c with five fragments from the Srinagar collection) are written in type II.³⁰

If the Gilgit manuscripts belonged to monks, and if the place where they were found was something like a library or a copy room of manuscripts (or if they were newly created and stored), it is no surprise that we find multiple texts written in different scripts. In some cases, one copy may have been the source when copying.

Oskar von Hinüber who studied all the colophons remaining in the Gilgit manuscripts (in particular, those of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*), the drawings engraved on the rocks in the surrounding area, and the inscription on the pedestal of the bronze Buddha statues states that “the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* was venerated by Buddhists from the Gilgit area as first of all the Burushaski names indicate, and by devotees with an Iranian background, most likely from Central Asia”³¹ and that “two *dharmabhāṅakas*, Buddhist monks who propagated the Law organized one of the extant *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* manuscripts to be copied for the benefit and merit of a large group of laypeople with a widely varied ethnic background”.³² In doing so, the manuscript has been copied and dedicated for at least centuries.

In other words, if the place where the manuscripts were discovered was not a mere stūpa but a place like a residence for monks or a “scriptorium”, then there had been monks who consciously possessed the manuscripts of both the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* and several Mahāyāna texts and they copied the scripture, held ceremonies, and donated the manuscripts to laypeople of various ethnic backgrounds. That was the state of affairs in Gilgit (Parola Śāhi Dynasty) at least in the sixth to eighth centuries. The Gilgit manuscripts are witness to ethnic as well as religious history of a century or more.

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The National Archives of India (New Delhi) and the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University (Tokyo; IRIAB) agreed to publish a new facsimile edition of the Gilgit manuscripts — except those of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* — now housed at the former institute. This joint project is conducted under the general editorship of Dr Oskar von Hinüber (Prof. Emeritus, Freiburg University), Prof. Seishi Karashima (IRIAB, Soka University) and the present author. The manuscripts are reclassified (though retaining their original serial number) according to their genre, such as *Vinaya* texts, Mahāyāna sūtras and *avadānas*. Our joint publication contains photographs which have been newly taken in colour, a concordance

to editions and to parallels in Chinese and/or Tibetan, and up-to-date surveys of research on individual texts. Until today, the following volumes have been published:

Gilgit Manuscripts in the National Archives of India. Facsimile Edition [= GMNAI].

Published by the National Archives of India and the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University.

I. Vinaya Texts. Ed. by Shayne Clarke, 2014.

II. Mahāyāna Texts:³³

II.1. *Prajñāpāramitā* Texts (1). Ed. by Seishi Karashima et al., 2016.

II.2. *Prajñāpāramitā* Texts (2). Ed. by Seishi Karashima and Tatsushi Tamai, 2019.

II.3. *Samādhirājasūtra*. Ed. by Noriyuki Kudo, Takanori Fukita and Hironori Tanaka, 2018.

II.4. Further *Mahāyānasūtras*: *Ratneketuparivarta*, *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa* and *Avikalpapraveśasūtra*. Ed. by Adelheid Mette, Noriyuki Kudo et al., 2017.

II.5. *Samghātasūtra* and *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra* (in preparation).

III. *Avadānas* and Miscellaneous Texts. Ed. by Noriyuki Kudo, 2017.

IV. Smaller Texts, *Dhāraṇīs*, and Unidentified Folios (in preparation).

Notes

¹ As to the details, see Kazunobu Matsuda ‘Chūō Ajia no Bukkyō Shahon’, in *Shin Ajia Bukkyō shi* 5. *Chūō Ajia Bunmei/Bunka no Kōsatō* (Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppansha, 2010), 119–58.

² At first, it was published in the newspapers (articles in *Statesman* (Calcutta), July 24, 1931 and *Times*, September 1931). Later, Aurel Stein published it in an article in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (‘Archaeological Discoveries in the Hindukush’) no. 4 (Oct. 1931), 863–65.

³ See Stein’s letter [dated November 9, 1931] quoted in Sylvain Lévi, ‘Note sur des manuscrits sanscrits provenant de bamiyan (afghanistan) et de gilgit (cachemire)’, *Journal Asiatique* (Janvier–Mars 1932), 1–45, esp. p. 22: “Meanwhile I have sent some well preserved leaves of two mss. which had been secured from the hands of villagers to Dr Barnett at the British Museum as a temporary deposit.” See also Karl Jettmar, ‘The Gilgit Manuscripts: Discovery by Instalments’, *Journal of Central Asia*, IV.2 (1981), 1–18, esp. p. 6.

⁴ See the letter sent to Sylvain Lévi dated August 8, 1931 (Lévi 1932: 13–18). Based on this letter, Lévi published a long article concerning the manuscripts found in Afghanistan and Gilgit. As to the site, Stein reported it was “about two miles west of Gilgit Cantonment” (‘Archaeological Discoveries in the Hindukush’, 863) but according to Hackin it was “trois milles au nord de Gilgit” (Lévi 1932: 14).

⁵ According to Hackin (= Lévi 1932: 15), “(l)e centre est occupé par les fragments de cinq poteaux de bois, le cinquième étant entouré par les quatre autres.” See also Shōkō Watanabe, ‘Maborosi no Shahon/Hokekyō Girugitto Shahon —

- Hokeyō Ganten Saiko no Shahon', *Daihōrin* (July 1974), 94–101. Kaul Shastri, who excavated this site in 1938, requested to send him some of “the birch-birk manuscripts, a few plaques and images” and he subsequently investigated them. See Madhusudan Koul, ‘Report on the Manuscripts Found at Navapura (Gilgit)’, in *The Seventh All-India Oriental Conference, Baroda December 1933* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1935), 6–10.
- ⁶ According to the information which was gathered by Jettmar in August 1980 on the occasion of his field research around Gilgit, there “was the villages pasture for cows”; “one of these cowherd had started digging the earth of one of elevations”; “he reached down to wooden beams”. After the cowherd reported this fact to the village, the villagers “agreed upon not to investigate further on”. However, someone secretly dug that place early in the morning and “later on returned with a wooden chest”. When “the chest was opened — but it contained just ‘books’”; “Afterwards the police prohibited further digging at the site.” (Jettmar 1981: 6).
- ⁷ Actually, excavation was continued from August 20 to 29; however, nothing was excavated from the 27th to the 29th, see Madhusudan S. Kaul Shastri (Madhusudan Koul), ‘Report on the Gilgit Excavation in 1938’, *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* 30 (1939), 1–12 and 15 plates. Some of the Kaul Shastri photographs are reproduced in Gérard Fussman, ‘Dans quel type de bâtiment furent trouvés les manuscrits de Gilgit?’, *Journal Asiatique* 292, 1-2 (2004), 101–50 (figures 2–4 are reprocessed images).
- ⁸ Kaul Shastri, ‘Report on the Gilgit Excavation in 1938’, 2–5.
- ⁹ As to the illustrated manuscript covers, see Kaul Shastri, ‘Report on the Gilgit Excavation in 1938’, Plates 1433, 1436, 1438; see also Deborah Klimburg-Salter, ‘The Gilgit Manuscripts Covers and the “Cult of the Book”’, in M. Taddei and Callieri, eds, *South Asian Archaeology 1987*. Serie Orientale Roma vol. LXVI, 2 (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990), 815–30, Figs 2–3, 4; Pratapaditya Pal, *A Painted Book Cover from Ancient Kashmir*, Figs 8 and 9, accessed April 11, 2019, <http://www.asianart.com/articles/kashmir/index.html>
- ¹⁰ Lokesh Chandra, ‘A Note on the Gilgit Manuscripts’, *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, IX.2 (1959), 135–40. The latest one is Oskar von Hinüber, ‘The Gilgit Manuscripts: An Ancient Buddhist Library in Modern Research’ in P. Harrison and J.U. Hartmann, eds, *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research. Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field, Stanford, June 15–19 2009* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), 79–135.
- ¹¹ P.V. Bapat, ‘Gilgit Manuscripts and Numerical Symbols’, *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, XI (1961–62), 127–31, esp. p. 127.
- ¹² In Bapat, ‘Gilgit Manuscripts and Numerical Symbols’, based on the ‘original list’, the number of the leaves is 1668. However, Lokesh Chandra (‘A Note on the Gilgit Manuscripts’, 135) gives the number as 1811; this number is “revised after restoratory treatment of the mss”. It is confirmed by another article which is published by one Japanese research team sent from Bukkyō University, Kyoto. This team was able to obtain the “original list” preserved in the National Archives, Kashmir, under the title ‘List of the Gilgit manuscripts in the private library of His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir’. The list is reproduced and the number of total leaves is the same as in Bapat, see Daien Kodama, ‘Kashumīru bukkyō kenkyū no Kadai to Tembō (1)’ (The Buddhism of Kashmir — Study

Plans and Future Perspective), *The Ryūkoku daigaku Ronshū* (*The Journal of Ryukoku University*), 420 (1982), 54–72, esp. pp. 61–64.

In the previous facsimile edition, every leaf is given a “facsimile number” up to 3514. The principle of this numbering seems to be to give a number to each side but in some cases only one single number is given to both sides. Moreover, a facsimile number is also given to the folios now preserved in the British Library (thus, not belonging to the Delhi collection); some folios have not been published either in the first facsimile edition or in the second edition. Several fragments which have different numbers consist of one folio. Therefore, it is difficult to fix the real number of leaves in the Delhi collection. Based on recent studies on the individual texts of the Gilgit manuscripts, “about 1800 leaves” is close to the actual number of leaves in the Delhi collection.

¹³ First facsimile edition: *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts (Facsimile Edition)*. Śāta-Piṭaka Series, vol. 10, 1–10. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture 1959–74 (FE nos. 1–3368); Second facsimile edition: *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts, Revised and Enlarged Compact Facsimile Edition*. Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica Series 150, 151, 152, Delhi 1995 (FE nos. 1–3368 + nos. 3369–514 [no. 26, 27: FE 3369–494, no. 50: FE 3495–3514]).

¹⁴ Some of the texts were published in Devānāgarī script by Nalinaksha Dutt during 1939–59, *Gilgit Manuscripts*. vol. I, Srinagar, 1939; vol. II.1, Srinagar, 1941; vol. II.2, Calcutta, 1953; vol. II.3, Calcutta, 1954; vol. III.1, Srinagar, 1947; vol. III.2, Srinagar, 1942; vol. III.3, Srinagar, 1943; vol. III.4, Calcutta 1950; vol. IV, Calcutta, 1959 (reprinted in 6 parts, Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica Series no. 14, Delhi, 1984). These volumes cover only one-third of the manuscripts, namely texts of nos. 1, 10, 29–35, 40 and 46.

¹⁵ Bapat, 127.

¹⁶ Box number varies from 1 to 5 and seems to indicate that the manuscript was placed in a box of that particular number.

As is stated in note 5, the manuscripts were found in the wooden box containing five small boxes inside; when they were transferred from Srinagar to New Delhi, they were “preserved in five big boxes” (Lokesh Chandra, ‘A Note on the Gilgit Manuscripts’, 135). The “box number” seems to indicate their original preservation at the site (but it might be mere coincidence that the manuscripts were in five boxes when they were found in mound C). According to the manuscript covers (but they are not original; probably supplied when they were deposited at Srinagar), Box no. 1 contains the manuscripts of serial no. 1 (all *Vinayavastus*); Box no. 2 = those of serial nos. 2–23; Box no. 3 = those of serial nos. 24–28 (all the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts); Box no. 4 = those of serial nos. 29–43; Box no. 5 = those of serial nos. 44–62 (all *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* manuscripts).

¹⁷ On paper, no. 36. *Samghāṭasūtra* (folio nos. 38, 39, 43, 45, 47, 49, 53, 57, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73); no. 38b. *Dhāraṇīs* (folio no. 10); no. 48. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* (48 folios; seven leaves in the British Library Or. 11878B–G); on palm-leaf, no. 4S: *Sarvadharmaguṇavyūharājasūtra* (in the Srinagar collection).

¹⁸ See, for example, folio nos. 100–08 of the *Ratnaketurparivarta* (GMNAI II.4, 2017, plates 66–74).

In this regard, it is incumbent upon me as the one who arranged the photographing and saw the originals to answer Stefan Baums’s concern (‘Review on Clarke 2014 [GMNAI I]’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient*

103 [2017], 495–501) about the damage(s) incurred on the folios. He says that we “know, for instance, that in the National Archives, the folios were stabilized by gluing a thin layer of transparent gauze over their surface” (498). As far as I checked directly, however, there is no “thin layer of transparent gauze” on their “surface”; although chemical treatment seems to have been done, the surface of the folios is not covered by any gauze. As a result of conservation treatment, each folio as become hard and like a thin plate/board.

A more serious problem is what Baums fears following von Hinüber (cited by Baums [498]; Oskar von Hinüber, *Die Erforschung der Gilgit-Handschriften*. NAWG, Jahrg 1979, no. 12, 329–60). The “deterioration” of the folios is a fact: for example, as is “noticed” by von Hinüber (“Da der verwendete Klebstoff jedoch aktiv bleibt, besteht nun die Gefahr, dass die Hss. im Laufe eines längeren Zeitraumes zu einem nur noch mit Mühe zerlegbaren Block zusammenkleben” [332–33]), some of folios of several manuscripts are stuck together and difficult to separate. Furthermore, in certain cases, especially on the right and/or left edge(s) of the broken folio, some akṣara(s) is missing, which probably happened in the course of peeling the layers.

As to an availability of digital images of the manuscripts, since our agreement for this publication series is only restricted to publishing the “facsimile edition” (print version) under the editorship of our institute and respective editor(s) and to distribute the copies free of charge, the National Archives of India is solely responsible for releasing the digital images of the collection.

- ¹⁹ See Noriyuki Kudo, ‘A Newly Identified Manuscript of the *Pāramitāsamāsa* in the Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts’, *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University*, XVI (2013), 255–66.
- ²⁰ Oskar von Hinüber, *A New Fragmentary Manuscript of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* (Tokyo: The Reiyukai, 1982).
- ²¹ Yasumichi Sanada, ‘*Samghātasūtra-dharmaparyāya ni tsuite*’ (The meaning of *Samghātasūtra-dharma-paryāya*), *Jimbungaku Ronshū* (*Journal of Humanistic Studies*) 14 (1980), 57–73; ‘*Samghāta-sūtra-dharma-paryāya* Śrinagar Manuscript (1)’, *Journal of Humanistic Studies* 16 (1981), 32–57; ‘*Samghāta-sūtra-dharma-paryāya* Śrinagar Manuscript (2)’, *Journal of Humanistic Studies* 17 (1982), 1–11.
- ²² See von Hinüber ‘The Gilgit Manuscripts’, esp. pp. 111–12 and Klaus Wille, ‘Additional Note on the Srinagar Collection’ (appended to v. Hinüber, ‘The Gilgit Manuscripts’), 112–13. The Srinagar collection was photographed twice by Chandrabhal B. Tripāṭhī in 1982 and 1987. However, after the first shooting some manuscripts went missing. (For some of the missing fragments, see Kazunobu Matsuda, ‘Udānabaruga no Girugitto shahon’ (A Gilgit fragment of the Udānavarga), *Bukkyōgakubu Ronshū* (*Journal of School of Buddhist Studies, Bukkyo University*) 95 (2011), 17–32, esp. pp. 29–30.
- ²³ S. Sengupta, ‘Fragments from Buddhist Texts’, in R. Pandeya, ed, *Buddhist Studies in India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), 137–208. The former two manuscripts belong to the same manuscripts, to No. 4 and 5 respectively, of the Delhi collection.
- ²⁴ On the latter, see W. Baruch, *Beiträge zum Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938) [photographs & transliteration: I, II, III]; Shōkō Watanabe, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra Manuscripts found in Gilgit*, part I and part II (Tokyo: The Reiyukai, 1972 and 1975) (photographs: part II. I–VII; transliteration: 297–

- 307). Latest study with colour photographs is Noriyuki Kudo, ‘Gilgit *Saddharma-puṇḍarīkasūtra* Manuscript in the British Library, Or.11878B–G’, *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University*, XVIII (2015), 197–213 (14 figures).
- ²⁵ As to these folios, see P.V. Bapat, ‘Another Valuable Collection of Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts Containing among Others, The Śrāmaṇya-phala Sūtra in Sanskrit’, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, vol. XXX (1950), 241–45, esp. p. 241 and Lokesh Chandra, ‘A Note on the Gilgit Manuscripts’, 135. Francesco Sferra published the list of the entire Tucci collection including the Gilgit manuscripts, ‘Sanskrit Manuscripts and Photographs of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Giuseppe Tucci’s Collection’, in *Sanskrit Texts from Giuseppe Tucci’s Collection*, part I (Rome: Istituto Italiano per L’Africa e L’Oriente, 2008), 15–78, esp. p. 29. Through personal communication with the curator (at that time) of the National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi, the Tucci collection was housed there until 2014. However, since then, no information is available from the Museum.
- ²⁶ Fussman, ‘Dans quel type de bâtiment furent trouvés les manuscrits de Gilgit?’, 134.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.
- ²⁸ Gregory Schopen, ‘On the Absence of Urtexts and Otiose Ācāryas: Buildings, Books, and Lay Buddhist Ritual at Gilgit’, in G. Colas and G. Gerschheimer, eds, *Écrire et transmettre en Inde classique* (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2009), 189–219, esp. pp. 199–200.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 206ff.
- ³⁰ Ms C alone among the Gilgit manuscripts is preserved both in New Delhi and in Srinagar, see Noriyuki Kudo, ‘Girugitto-hon Sumāgadā avadāna ni tsuite’ (Gilgit Version of the *Sumāgadā-avadāna*), *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū (Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies)*, 63-1 (2014), 357–51(L). Some texts such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* have more than a single copy but all the copies are written in Gilgit/Bāmiyan type I script.
- ³¹ von Hinüber, ‘The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* at Gilgit: Manuscripts, Worshippers, and Artists’, *The Journal of Oriental Studies*, 22 (2012), 59.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 63. Focusing on this point, he discusses the formation of the early Mahāyāna sūtras, see Masahiro Shimoda, ‘Shoki Daijō bukkyō no aratana rikai ni mukete — Daijō bukkyō kigen saikō’, *Daijō Bukkyō 4: Chie, Sekai, Kotoba* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2013), 3–100, esp. pp. 38–42.
- ³³ All the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* manuscripts have been jointly published by the National Archives of India, the Soka Gakkai, and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in the form of replicas, Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 12. *Gilgit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archives of India*. Facsimile Edition, 2012.

Figure References

- Figs 1–3: Baruch, Willy. 1938. *Beiträge zum Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Fig. 4: Mizufune, Noriyoshi, ed. 2012. *Gilgit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archives of India, Facsimile Edition*, Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 12. Tokyo: National Archives of India, Soka Gakkai and The Institute of Oriental Philosophy.
- Figs 5–8: Photograph by the author.

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