

A Sanskrit Fragment of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* in Uyghur Script

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Özet: Uygur Alfabesiyle Yazılmış Sanskritçe *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* Fragmanı *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (“Mañjuśrī’nin adlarını zikretme”) adlı Tantra Budizmi eseri, Yuan döneminde (MS 1279–1368) Uyğurlar arasında çok popülerdi. Bu çalışma, St. Petersburg Koleksiyonu’ndaki kursiv yazılı bir yazmayı, Uygur harfli *mantravinyāsa*’nın (“mantra’nın tertibi”) – eserin ana ritüel kısmı – Sanskritçe metni olarak tespit eder. Yeni tanımlanan bu parça, Moğol İmparatorluğu döneminde Uygur Budizminin geç evresinde Sanskritçenin önemine bir kez daha tanıklık eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, Eski Uygurca, Sanskritçe, Tantrik Budizm, Orta Asya.

Abstract

The tantric Buddhist work *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (“Chanting of the Names of Mañjuśrī”) was very popular among the Uyghurs during the Yuan period (1279–1368 CE). The article identifies a manuscript in cursive writing from the St. Petersburg Collection as the Sanskrit text of the *mantravinyāsa* (“The arrangement of the mantra”) – the core ritual part of the work – in Uyghur script. This newly identified piece testifies once more to the importance of Sanskrit in the late phase of Uyghur Buddhism during Mongol rule.

Key Words: *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, Old Uyghur, Sanskrit, tantric Buddhism, Central Asia.

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I.

In the year 1996 L. Yu. Tugusheva published a selection of Old Uyghur manuscripts from the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Under text no. 1 (former shelf mark: SI KR I 6; new shelf mark: SI 4131¹) in this edition, we find as text B a piece in Uyghur script² of the cursive type in ten lines, which has hitherto eluded identification,³ but can now be identified as being a rendering of the Sanskrit *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (“Chanting of the Names of Mañjuśrī”).⁴ This work, which is also known under the titles *Nāmasaṃgīti* and *Paramārthanāmasaṃgīti*,⁵ is one of the most widespread texts of mature tantric Buddhism or “perhaps the most popular canonical ritual text” of the Vajrayāna in general⁶ with a rich commentarial tradition.⁷ 167 verses, mantras, and a prose section make up the basic structure of the text.⁸ The *Mañju-*

¹ I would like to thank P. Zieme for pointing out the new shelf mark of the fragment to me.

² Tugusheva 1996:8; facsimile on p. 10, Fig. 1 (above).

³ Tugusheva (1996:8) notes that the texts published by her “belong to the marginal area of literature and business”.

⁴ General information is provided in Tribe 2015. The Uyghur version is not mentioned in this article.

⁵ Tribe 2015:354. The title *Nāmasaṃgīti* was used by the Uyghurs as well. Apparently this title was the most common one. It is attested in a letter (spelled *namasaṃgīṭ*) in which the famous Anzang (Chinese 安藏 *an zang*) († 1293 CE) is mentioned as the translator. See Moriyasu 2019:190 (line 18). We find the spelling *nama-saṃgīṭ* in the block-print Mainz 305 + U 4134 line 5 (ed. Kara 1981:230). In a block-printed colophon the title is spelled as *nama-saṃgīṭ* (Zieme 1985:179, no. 50:14). The same spelling with a diacritical dot next to the second letter <n> is found in a colophon to a collection of works (Zieme 1985:165, no. 46:7). In a pilgrim inscription from 莫高 Mogao cave no. 138 the spelling *nama-saṃgīṭ* is attested. See Matsui 2017:29 (no. 31:5).

⁶ Davidson 1981:1.

⁷ This commentarial tradition starts in the middle of the 8th century. See Tribe 2015:353.

⁸ Tribe 2015:353.

śrīnāmasaṁgīti is especially important in Tibetan and Nepalese Buddhism.⁹ Fragments of the Old Uyghur translation were published together with a German translation as text B by Kara and Zieme in 1977 in their joint edition of tantric works.¹⁰ A few years later G. Kara edited some more pieces which were identified by P. Zieme after the edition from 1977 had appeared.¹¹ Further newly identified fragments of the Old Uyghur version and of the Sanskrit text in Uyghur script with an interlinear Brāhmī version are mentioned by P. Zieme in his edition of the “magical” texts.¹² All these pieces are block-printed. P. Zieme could also identify the fragment Ch/U 8021 (MIK 028476) as a transcription of the Chinese version of this text in Uyghur script.¹³ Further pieces of this type from the collection in St. Petersburg were identified and edited by M. Shōgaito.¹⁴ A block-printed colophon in strophic alliteration was published by P. Zieme in 1985.¹⁵ This colophon is particularly significant because it mentions the scholar Karunadaz (Skt. Karuṇādāsa) († 1311 CE)¹⁶ as the translator of one version of the Old Uyghur *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṁgīti*. The date given for the translation which was made in 大都 Dadu (Great Capital = Beijing) is most likely 1302 CE.¹⁷

After Avalokiteśvara Mañjuśrī, the embodiment of Buddhist wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*),¹⁸ certainly is the most popular bodhisattva in mainstream Mahāyāna as evidenced, e.g., in the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Avataṁsakasūtra* tradition and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, esoteric¹⁹ as

⁹ Tribe 2015:358.

¹⁰ Kara, Zieme 1977:83–116 (“Nachtrag” on pp. 117–121).

¹¹ Kara 1981.

¹² Zieme 2005:9.

¹³ Zieme 1996.

¹⁴ Shōgaito 2003:5–26 (I owe the reference to P. Zieme).

¹⁵ Zieme 1985:178–179 (no. 50).

¹⁶ For the date of his death see Franke 1996:84.

¹⁷ Franke 1996:83.

¹⁸ But cf. Quinter 2019:591a: “This conventional designation, however, obscures a more multifaceted persona”.

¹⁹ The bodhisattva was seen as a state-protecting deity in esoteric Buddhism (Quinter 2019:595b).

well as tantric Buddhism among the Uyghurs. The veneration of this bodhisattva in East²⁰ and Central Asia²¹ is closely connected with pilgrimage to Mount 五臺 Wutai in China²² – a religious concept which spread also to the Uyghurs.²³

II.

The first line of the new reading presented here gives the transliteration, the second the transcription and the third one the original Sanskrit text. This Sanskrit fragment is one further example of the tendency in the late phase of Uyghur literature to record Sanskrit texts in the Uyghur alphabet.²⁴ So far the specimens are all ritualistic in character. The importance of the Sanskrit text of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti* in Uyghur Buddhist circles was previously known because of the above-mentioned block-printed Sanskrit text in Uyghur characters with accompanying interlinear text in Brāhmī. A joint Sanskrit-Uyghur edition of the text is mentioned in a colophon to a large collection of Buddhist works. Whether this information refers to the languages or to the alphabets is not sure.²⁵

In the manuscript from the St. Petersburg collection, confusion of dentals is rather common, as are prothetic (<'yny'n'> for Skt. *jñāna*) and epenthetic vowels (<m'nčwšyry> for Skt. *mañjuśrī*).

²⁰ For the beginnings of the cult of Mañjuśrī in China see Quinter 2019:591b.

²¹ I. Hamar (2019) has recently emphasised the importance of Khotan for the spread of the cult of this particular bodhisattva.

²² On the connection between the *Avatamsakasūtra* tradition and Mount Wutai see Quinter 2019:594a.

²³ Kasai 2020. See especially pp. 17–30 for the cult of Mañjuśrī in Uyghur Buddhism. Kasai also discusses the important role of this bodhisattva in pilgrim inscriptions. Studies on the visual materials from the Turfan region are summarized on pp. 17–18, footnote 35. For a study of the wall painting “Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai” from Bezeklik cave no. 34 (= Grünwedel’s numbering 21; = Oldenburg’s numbering 27) see Zhang 2016.

²⁴ See also Hartmann, Wille, Zieme 1996 for a confessional text and the snake charm (text A) in Zieme 1984:428–433.

²⁵ Zieme 1985:165, no. 46:7.

The letter <n> may render Skt. *m*, while Skt. *h* is represented by the letter <k>. The visarga, however, is ignored throughout. The representation of the seed syllables is thus rather inaccurate. The text is a rendering of the *mantravinyāsa* (“The arrangement of the mantra”²⁶), thus the most important core ritual part of the litany. It is therefore likely that the text can be considered complete, which is corroborated by the facsimile. The lower right corner of the manuscript has been torn off, however. It is conceivable that the text, which apparently had not been written by a professional scribe, was used as a kind of amulet.

III.

Transliteration and transcription of the text with accompanying Sanskrit verses:²⁷

- (01) 'wwm s'rv' trm' [] /v'p'v'
oom sarva-ḍ(a)rma [bava] svabava-
oṃ sarvadharmābhāvasvabhāva-
- (02) vyšwd' v'čyr ' ' ' //k' pyr'kyrdy
višuda vačira a a aha pirakīrti-
viśuddhavajra a ā aṃ aḥ prakīrti-
- (03) p'ryšwd'²⁸ srv' trm' y'twd'
parišuda sarva-ḍ(a)rma yaḍuta
pariśuddhāḥ sarvadharmā yad uta
- (04) srv' t't'k'd' 'yn'y'n' k'y' m'nčwšyry
s(a)rva-tatagaṭa-iñana-kaya-mančuširi-
sarvatathāgatajñānakāyamañjuśrī-

²⁶ According to Davidson 1981:44, where this part of the text is also translated.

²⁷ The Sanskrit text follows Davidson 1981:68.

²⁸ The dots next to the letter <š> are barely visible.

“Om, O pure *vajra* whose proper nature is the nonexistence of all *dharmas*, a *ā aṃ aḥ*—that is to say, employing the purity of Mañjuśrī, the gnostic body of all Tathāgatas, a *aḥ*, bear up, bear up the heart of all Tathāgatas—Om Hūṃ Hrīḥ. O blessed one, O Lord of Speech who is embodied gnosis, with great speech, O embryo of the gnosis of the *dharmadhātu*, being very pure and stainless like the spatial field of all *dharmas*—*āḥ*.”

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