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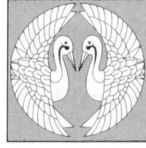
Front cover:

“The Holy Family with Attendants”, *Muraqqa’* (E 14) in the collection
of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Lucknow school, mid-18th century,
fragment of folio 91a, 10.0×13.3 cm. Watercolour, gouache.

Back cover:

“The Madonna Praying before the Crucifix” (top left), “The Madonna of St. Luke” (top right)
and “Ibrāhīm ibn Adham and Angels” (bottom), *Muraqqa’* (E 14) in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of
the Institute of Oriental Studies, attributed to Manohar Dās, Mughāl school, ca. 1590—1595, folio 53a.
Sizes: 6.0×7.2 cm, 2.8×5.8 cm, 14.8×19.5 cm. Watercolour, ink and gold on paper.

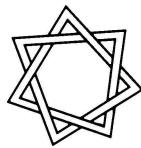
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ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS AND NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

A. Bazarov, S. Syrtypova, Ol. Rinchinov, Kh. Garmaeva

THE *THOR BU* GROUP OF TIBETAN BOOKS AT THE INSTITUTE OF MONGOLIAN, BUDDHIST AND TIBETAN STUDIES: CREATING A DATABASE*

Electronic information systems create new technical opportunities both for inventory-making and the preservation and scholarly investigation of various objects of culture, written sources in particular. However, the creation of an electronic database for Tibetan manuscripts and block-prints faces many difficulties. The modern computer equipment necessary to create a high quality electronic catalogue is often lacking. Also, any researcher who wishes to create a manuscript database, must first of all possess an excellent knowledge of the Tibetan language for the correct comprehension of Tibetan texts, which are frequently illegible either because of decayed, poor quality paper or poor print quality. Moreover, the large number of Tibetan manuscripts and block-prints (about 15,000) in the repository of the Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Ulan-Ude) renders the task very time-consuming [1].

The electronic cataloguing of the so-called *thor bu* group of books (see below) in the Department of Written Texts of the Institute began in 1998 as a continuation of the general cataloguing of Tibetan sources stored here since the 1920s—30s. The non-electronic catalogue relied on 3—4 parameters of description. A card should contain: (i) composition title; (ii) book size; (iii) type of edition (manuscript or block-print); (iv) name of author (when possible).

The new electronic catalogue presumes 24 text characteristics [2]. An electronic card-description that provides all of this information would be the fullest possible description of a book. We note that the established tradition of storing Tibetan texts in the Department of Written Texts classifies texts according to formal polygraphic data. Texts are classified as (a) serial, (b) pertaining to a set class, or (c) individual editions. This classification matches the literary divisions within Tibetan Buddhism. First, there are:

1. works of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon, which includes (i) the *Kanjur* (Tib. *bKa' 'gyur*), and (ii) the *Tanjur* (Tib. *bsTan 'gyur*);

2. *sumbums* (Tib. *gSung 'bum*) — complete sets of works by Tibetan or Mongolian authors;

3. *thor bu* books (Tib. *thor bu*) — individual editions.

The contents of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon (*Kanjur* and *Tanjur*) and the canonical collections of works by noted Buddhist authors are quite well known thanks to existing catalogues of the Buddhist Canon and traditional bibliographic reference-books (Tib. *dkar chag*) on *sumbums* [3].

Special historical circumstances and political events in Russia in the twentieth century made the Tibetan collection at the Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies one of the largest in the world. Now that catalogues of the Buddhist Canon [4] and bibliographic reference-books on *sumbums* have been published, more attention can be directed toward the *thor bu* group of books, which constitute a large portion of the Institute's Tibetan collection and can be regarded as a characteristic feature of this Tibetan collection. Individual (*thor bu*) books may include some works of interest to all specialists on Tibetan literature.

The *thor bu* group of the collection includes individual *sūtras* or *tantras* of the *Kanjur* as well as authored books printed separately or extracted from the *Tanjur* and *sumbums*. Moreover, among them one finds works not included, for various reasons, in the officially printed *sumbums*, works by anonymous authors (usually compilations), texts on religious ritual, texts by authors who did not compose *sumbums* of their own, and, finally, apocryphal writings (*terma*, Tib. *gTer ma* “store-place”, “treasure-house”, “hidden and secret books”). The latter are traditionally ascribed to some outstanding author of the past, most often Guru Padmasambhava (Tib. Pad ma 'byung gnas).

In the present issue, we give two samples of electronic description of the *thor bu* books from the Institute's collection (see *figs. 1* and *2*).

Apart from the books described above, certain other texts and comments on secret *tantra* practices can be

* The present paper was made with the financial support of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Fund.

Number	881	Executor	Bazarov ▼	Call number	No.TT-07581
Full title	*,, THUB DBANG GNAS BRTAN BCU DRUG DANG BCAS PA LA MCHOD CUNG GSOL BA GDAB BA'I CHO GA THUB BSTAN RGYAS BYED YID BZHIN NOR BU'I SBYOR DNGOS GSU				
Skt. title	N				
Add.language	N	Seal	68	Shortened title	N
Author					
Edn.date	CHU KHYI	Type	XYL ▼	Paper type	RUS ▼
Paper colour	W,W	Paper quality	G ▼	Readability	G ▼
Volume No.	N	Pagination	1A-39A	Lines number	7
Outer size	44.5 X 10.0	Inner size	38.0 X 8.0		
Edn. place	DG'A LDAN CHOS [MDZOD?] GLING				
Illustr.	N				
Colophon	RJE ETSUN BLA MA DE NYID KYI DGONGS BA DANG MTHUN PAR BYAS TE, SHA KYA'I RJES SU SKYES PA'I ETSUN BA NGAG DBANG BLO BEANG BSTAN BA'I RGYAL BTSHAN DEAL BEAD PO'I SUG BRIS SU BGYIS BA 'DIS KYANG RGYAL BA'I BSTAN PA RIN BO CHE SGO THAMS CAD NAS BYOGS THAMS CAD DU DAR ZHING RGYAS LA YIN RID GNAS PA'I RGYUR GYUR CIG, DGE'O LEGS SO				
Notes	N				
<< Previous		+ Add new +		Next >>	

Fig. 1

Number	224	Executor	Syrtypova ▼	Call number	No.TT-07025
Full title	*,, BKA'DANG BSTAN BCOS LAS GSUNGS PA'I 'KHOR LO BSKOR BA'I PHAN YON BZHUGS SO,,				
Skt. title	ARYA LOKI SHA RA YA				
Add.language	M	Seal	N	Shortened title	N
Author	PADMA SAMBHAVA				
Edn.date	?	Type	MAN ▼	Paper type	CHIN ▼
Paper colour	W,Y	Paper quality	G ▼	Readability	G ▼
Volume No.	N	Pagination	1A-4A,+1A-5B	Lines number	8
Outer size	42.5 X 9.8	Inner size	37.0 X 8.0		
Edn. place	?				
Illustr.	N				
Colophon	BADM-A SAMBHAV-A-YIN NOMLAGSAN BARASI UGEI ACI TOSA YEHEDE // BAL METU ENE KURDUN-U ACI TUSA INU // BAGADUR TAIYJI-YIN DURATQAL JARLIG-IYAR AQAT AYUSI MANDJUSIRI-TAI GUSI // ARAI DAKINI-YIN NOMLAGSAN // AMITAN-U TOSA-YI SETKIJU // AYALGU TEGUN-E TUBED-UN KELEN-ECE // MONGGOL-UN KELEN-DUR ORUSIGULBAI // // OM MA NI PAD ME HUM HUM //				
Notes	TIBETAN, + MONGOL TRANSLATION; FROM STUKOV'S COLLECTION				
<< Previous		+ Add new +		Next >>	

Fig. 2

included in the *thor bu* group, represented by extremely rare manuscripts or editions not available for general readers.

The bulk of *thor bu* books in the Institute's Tibetan collection (about 7,000) are small-size editions (22.0×7.0 cm). These books were printed in large quantities by Buryat monastery printing-houses for everyday needs. The small-format books were convenient to use, and the Buryat call them *ubur nom* which denotes a book kept close to the bosom under an article of clothing called a *degel*. There are also books of average size (37.0×8.0 cm) and even of large format (60.0×11.0 cm). As a rule, they are extracts from the Buddhist Canon or *sumbums*. The Russian government maintained strict control over and censored all editions which appeared in Buryat monasteries. To cite only one example, according to "Resolution No. 280 of the General Meeting of the Transbaikalian Regional Administration of July 21/22, 1884", adopted in response to a petition submitted by delegates of the Buryats of the Hori Buryat district to the Governor of the Transbaikalian region, five Hori Buryat *datsans* were permitted "to print prayer-books by means of wooden boards and under all necessary censorship" [5].

While the texts of the Canon (*Kanjur* and *Tanjur*) and the collections of works by famous Buddhist authors (*sumbums*) were bought in large Tibetan monasteries and printing-houses, popular texts for everyday use (ritual, educational, etc.) were printed in Buryatia. In 1884, the list of publications contained 158 titles (7,786 folios). In 1911, a report by the office of Khambo-lama (the religious leader of Transbaikalia's Buddhists) contained 1,696 titles printed at 32 printing-houses [6]. As for large-format *thor bu* texts, which are usually extracts from *sumbums*, they were printed in the most famous monasteries of Tibet — Sera (Tib. Se ra), Drepung (Tib. 'Bras spung), Labran (Tib. Bla brang), and others.

Many texts on ritual were printed in Buryat monasteries (*datsans*) (i) for temple services (prayer-books, *rahsals* for worshipping higher deities and *khangals* for evil deities); (ii) for worshipping at home (*san-choga*, *serzhem*, *zhabtuy*, etc.); (iii) for individual religious practices (*mani*, *mezgem*, *zhabdo*, *dubtals*, *magtals*). The monastery printing-houses (the largest were in the Tsugol and Gusinozersk *datsans*) printed philosophical literature for educational purposes — on *mādhyanika* (Tib. *dbu ma*), *abhidharma* (Tib. *mngon pa*), *prajñāpāramitā* (Tib. *phar phyin*), etc. Literature on medicine — *lhanthabs* (additional reference-books), *jors* (books of prescriptions), and so on — was usually printed at the monastery of Aga, where the faculty of medicine (Tib. *smam grwa tshang*) was located.

It should be noted that since the Tibetan language formed the basis of the educational system in Buryat Buddhist monasteries, primers and textbooks on Tibetan grammar were also printed in abundance [7].

Sadhana literature forms one of the largest groups of *thor bu* books. It serves as guide to meditation practices related to various tantric deities, *vidams* of those who follow the Gelukpa [8]: Vajrabhairava, Guhyasamaja, Cakrasambara, etc.

There are many reprints of the most popular *sūtras* among the *thor bu* books: *Vajracchedikā*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, *Pañcarāṅkā*, etc. The Tibetan collection of the Institute contains a large number of various editions of these *sūtras*. For example, *Vajracchedikā* (Tib. *rdo rje bcod pa*) was printed in several monasteries: in the Zagustaevs *datsan* (a book of 55 folios), Yangzhinsk *datsan* (75 folios), Uchetuevs *datsan* (76 folios), Jidinsk *datsan* (two books of 65 and of 69 folios respectively), Burgultaevsk *datsan* (a book of 71 folios), Olykhonovsk *datsan* (64 folios), Bultumurovsk *datsan* (72 folios), etc. Apart from these editions, there are numerous manuscript copies of this *sūtra*, which entered the collection either from the libraries of large monasteries or from the small private libraries of Buryat monks and ordinary believers. The texts of some of these manuscripts are written on black polished paper in calligraphic handwriting, seven sorts of ink being used. They are also decorated with miniatures depicting deities and have bindings trimmed with silk.

When cataloguing Tibetan texts, modern scholars use various Tibetan terms to indicate scattered texts similar to those we term *thor bu*. For example, to catalogue such kind of books in the Tibetan collection of the Peking library, Chinese scholars use the term *kha thor sna tshogs* [9], while at Otani University (Japan) the term *sna tshogs phyogs bsodus* is used [10]. In our view, the term *thor bu* is preferable since it corresponds to the living Tibetan tradition [11] and reflects the current project to create an electronic catalogue of the Institute's collection.

The following results had been achieved by the end of 1999:

1. description standards were adopted for cataloguing Tibetan texts;
2. about 3,000 Tibetan texts of the *thor bu* group were processed and entered into the database;
3. a database of more than 200 Tibetan book seals was converted into electronic format;
4. an information system was developed which functions under DBMS MS Access and provides the user with a set of forms for data input into the database;
5. a set of SQL queries was created for performing basic functions of data searching and retrieval. It will serve as the basis for an information system available both through the Department's local network and the Internet.

The importance of the current project derives from the scholarly value of the materials in the Institute's Tibetan collection. *Thor bu* texts are a rich source of reliable information about the development of Buddhism in Buryatia. Hence these texts are of interest to any modern specialist in the field. The database will make information for advanced study of Buryat Buddhism much more accessible, aiding, among other things, the establishment of closer contacts with scholarly centres in Central and East Asia.

Notes

1. On the collection of Tibetan books in the repository of the Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies see R. E. Pubaev, "Study of the Tibetan collection in Buryatia", in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, Narita 1989 (Narita, 1992), ii, pp. 687–90.

2. This method was developed within the framework of the Asian Classics Input Project (ACIP) to produce a universal approach to describing Tibetan books. For details, see V. L. Uspensky, "Two years of cataloguing of the Tibetan collection in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies: some problems and perspectives", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, II/1 (1996), pp. 51–3.

3. See, for example, *Bod kyi bstan bcos khag gi mtshan hyang dri med shel dkar phreng ba* (Rosary of Pure White Crystal, Being a Catalogue of Tibetan Collected Works) (Xining, 1980).
 4. For example, *A Catalogue of the Tohoku University. Collection of Tibetan works on Buddhism* (Sendai, 1953).
 5. State archive of the Chita area, stock 1, note 1, folder 2028.
 6. "Catalogue of printing blocks of Buddhist monasteries in Transbaikalia", in *Four Mongolian Historical Records of Prof. Dr. Rinchen* (New Delhi, 1959), pp. 71—121. — SPS, vol. 11.
 7. For example, *yi ge thob nyer mkho* (the edition of the monastery of Tsugol, 3 folios); also *bod yig gsal byed gsum bcu dbyangs yig bzhi dang bcas pa* (the edition of the monastery of Tsugol, 2 folios).
 8. The main branch of local Buddhism.
 9. See *China Tibetology*, 1 (1988), pp. 67—9.
 10. See *Index to the Catalogue of Tibetan Works Kept in Otani University Library* (Kyoto, 1985), p. 214.
 11. Since the term *thor bu* is used to indicate individual works in the collected works of Ganzhurva. *Catalogue of Tibetan Works Kept in Otani University Library* (Kyoto, 1973), p. 345.
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