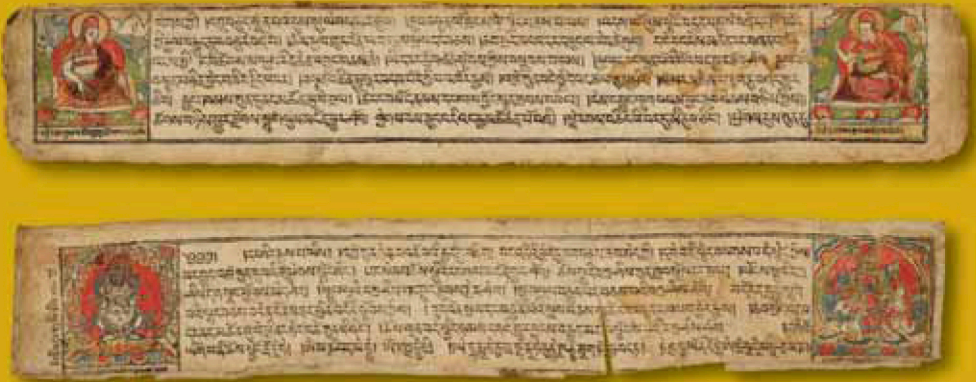


Tibetan Printing: Comparison, Continuities, and Change



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Cover illustration: The 1521 print of the Mani bka' 'bum produced at Gung thang. Photograph from the Cambridge University Library.

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Introduction

Hildegard Diemberger, Franz-Karl Ehrhard and Peter Kornicki

Almost three decades have passed since the publication of Elizabeth Eisenstein's seminal work *The printing press as an agent of change: communications and cultural transformations in early modern Europe*. Her suggestion that printing technology promoted dissemination, standardization, and preservation of texts impacting the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution has elicited intense debate up to the present day. Different perspectives, new research and cross-cultural insights have since complicated the picture, but some of the questions she raised proved to be extremely fertile in opening new terrains of investigation.

Printing started to be a means of dissemination of texts in Tibet and in Europe at roughly the same time. In the 15th century blockprinting or xylography, which had long been practised in China¹ was adopted in Tibet, becoming an important technology for the multiplication of texts and images, alongside manuscript production,² and remaining so until the 20th century. Blockprinting in Tibetan script which had appeared before the end of the first millennium AD on the Silk Road alongside other Asian scripts (see van Schaik, Formigatti and Barrett in this volume), was used for the multiplication of Buddhist texts among the Tanguts in the 12th century and at the Yuan court in China in the 13th and the 14th centuries (see Schaeffer 2009).

Blockprinting played a part in Europe too, albeit one that is not always fully recognised (see Chartier 2007: 400; Chow 2007: 169–192), but it was the printing press that became dominant and triggered what was defined by Eisenstein as the 'printing revolution' (Eisenstein 1979). This seminal study by Eisenstein provoked intense debates that have provided a more nuanced view of this momentous process: various scholars have pressed for interpretations that are not overly deterministic and have opened up a space for cross-cultural comparison that has brought together book cultures across the world (see for example Alcorn Baron, Lindquist, Shevlin 2007). Tibetan materials have, unfortunately, so far been absent from this discussion. While the editors of this volume do not believe that the analytic framework used in the study of the

1 See for example Barrett 2008.

2 Tibetan manuscript production started during the imperial period (6th–9th century) and played an important role in the framework of a wide range of Buddhist manuscript cultures (Berkwitz, Schober, Brown. 2009).

European 'printing revolution' can be easily exported, especially since it has been critically revised in a variety of ways in its European context, we think that it is worth exploring cross-culturally a range of interesting questions that have emerged from the relevant debates. It is with this agenda in mind that the conference "Printing as an agent of change in Tibet and beyond" was held at Pembroke College, Cambridge, on 28–30 November 2013. On that occasion, specialists in early Tibetan printing, the study of the book in Asia and Europe, as well as experts in paper, wood and pigment research gathered to explore the technology and materiality of Tibetan book culture in a wider perspective. This volume brings together their contributions, which are organised in three sections with different focuses.

Part 1 looks at the introduction of printing in Asian contexts, comparing and contrasting different experiences, with an eye to recent research on the European 'printing revolution' and the debates surrounding it. Some of the contributions address the relevant questions directly; others provide important reference materials and new discoveries that give insight into the use of printing as socio-technological process in its historical context and in a cross-cultural perspective.

Peter Burke draws upon his vast knowledge of the subject to address the global history of the book, summarising the effects of print as the amplification of texts, the accumulation of knowledge, the fixation of languages and texts, the relativisation of knowledge and the constitution of communities through print as discussed by Benedict Anderson. He also draws attention to the importance of the roads not taken, such as the lack of interest in typography in China after its invention in the eleventh century and the extreme reluctance to take to print in the Islamic world. He also considers whether a technology could be said to be an 'agent' of change and concludes that it could if the consequences were unintended by the human agents involved. Johan Elverskog highlights the insignificance of vernacular printing in Mongolia and strongly emphasizes the lack of any sense in Asia that printing was 'revolutionary' or something to be celebrated like the supposed hundredth anniversary of Gutenberg in Europe in 1540. Leonard Van der Kuijp analyses the way in which books were the medium for the transfer of knowledge across cultures from the Chinese translations of missionaries' works based on Tycho Brahe's and Johannes Kepler's astronomical studies to the assimilation of this knowledge in the Tibetan context. Other comparative contributions come from Camillo Formigatti, who draws attention to the very late development of Sanskrit printing in India, and from Imre Galambos, who focuses on printing by the Tanguts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the coexistence of manuscript and print production in that contexts. The papers by Peter Kornicki and Sherab Sangpo draw attention to the

role of women, especially elite women, in the promotion of printing: from the Japanese empress Shōtoku to the Mongolian empresses who promoted some of the earliest examples of Tibetan printing produced at the Yuan court in the 13th century. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub explores the question of the relationship between print and manuscript production by reflecting on the work of Paul Pelliot while Sam Van Schaik provides a fascinating insight into Tibetan printed fragments from the Turfan Oasis, a melting pot of different languages and civilizations.

Part 2 explores the inception of block printing in Tibet and the Himalayas, looking at its origins and impacts and presenting new discoveries. Exploring this innovation as a socio-technological process, it addresses a number of important questions. How did printing relate to manuscript production in the Tibetan context? Was the introduction of printing a small-scale operation with limited impact or was it something that had transformative effects? In what ways did it relate to the spread of literate forms of popular religiosity, the standardization of monastic curricula, the emergence of certain literary genres and the establishment of certain works as classics? Did the printing of key works such as the *Mani bka' 'bum* have an impact on a shared sense of history and identity among Tibetans?

Porong Dawa, Tsering Dawa Sharshon, and Franz-Karl Ehrhard present new discoveries casting light on the beginnings of printing in Tibet itself, showing that from the opening years of the 15th century a variety of works began to be printed in Tibet including Buddhist texts, the collected writings of religious teachers, biographies and medical works. Dorji Gyaltzen of the National Library of Bhutan explores the early history of the book in Bhutan, where, for the most part, the need for books was supplied by imports from Tibet. However, at least from the sixteenth century, and probably even earlier, books were being printed in Bhutan that met local needs, such as biographies of religious figures and literary writings by Bhutanese.

Hildegard Diemberger explores networks of Tibetan women involved in printing operations, highlighting women's roles within patronage structures that supported book production and sometimes promoted innovation in book technology. Among these women was Kun tu bzang mo, the driving force behind the printing of the life and songs of gTsang smyon Heruka (1452–1507). Stefan Larsson gives a detailed analysis of four texts that were printed by her as these give insight into the conditions of their production as well as the networks of craftsmen and patrons she relied upon. Marta Sernesi focuses on the life and work of *mkhas pa* Dri med, one of the better-known artists involved in printing projects in Mang yul Gung thang; this is a rare instance in which an artist's individual trajectory, as reflected in a painstaking work of collation of

relevant sources, offers a glimpse into the esthetics, expertise and patronage involved in printing projects.

On the basis of a study of colophons from the same region, Michela Clemente raises fundamental questions relating to the socio-technological process behind the relatively rapid emergence of printing projects and printing houses in 15th/16th century Tibet: was this an unacknowledged ‘printing revolution’? The question is still open; certainly Mang yul Gung thang provided the hub for important printing projects that saw the dissemination of certain texts across Tibet. Benjamin Nourse, in a fascinating exploration of the distribution of certain key texts over space and time, shows enlightening connections between the early days of printing and later printing projects. Helmut Eimer provides us with precious insights, both in terms of data and methods, in the analysis of Tibetan xylographs focusing especially on 18th century canonical materials.

Part 3 explores the materiality and technology of Tibetan prints by looking at paper and wood as well as pigments and dyes. The contributions present research on historical materials, connecting them – when possible – to living traditions of craftsmanship.

The papers by Agnieszka Helman-Ważny and Alessandro Boesi focus on the production of paper and the plants used to produce different types of paper, documenting some of the earliest known examples of Tibetan paper that date back to the 9th and the 10th centuries and exploring the differences in the paper used in printed books and manuscripts. Pasang Wangdu’s analysis of an 11th-century Tibetan manuscript, which in its colophon refers to the scriptorium, the patronage and the materials involved in book production, shows that this kind of practice must be seen as a direct precursor of printing workshops. The contribution by Tomasz Ważny focuses on the wood involved in the production of printing blocks and book covers, drawing attention to different methods of analysis, including dendrochronology, and suggesting further research on the use of Himalayan birch. Paola Ricciardi and Anuradha Pallipurath show what can be learnt from non-invasive pigment analysis applied to the study of painted illustrations in manuscripts and prints and emphasize that this information can complement the study of book production by connecting materials to artists, artisans and trade. At the conference, these contributions were complemented by a demonstration by Burkhard Quessel (British Library) and Terry Chilvers (University of Cambridge) of the database of the project ‘Transforming technologies and Buddhist book culture’ (http://www.innersiaresearch.org/T_Msite/tmindex.html), which provides a unique resource bringing together different approaches to the study of books, from the analysis of content to that of the relevant materials.

Finally, Tim Barrett with a real tour de force that ranges across history and cultures sets Tibetan printing in the framework of a wider reflection on pattern reproduction and raises some intriguing questions on a Tibetan printed fragment included in the Dunhuang collection.

By exploring different aspects of Tibetan printing and its relationship to manuscript production and use, the authors of these papers hope to open up new avenues of research and reflection that set Tibetan book production in the wider context of the studies of the book. Although printing in Tibet does not seem to have had the kind of socially transformative effects highlighted in Eisenstein's study, it did have some of the important effects pointed out by Peter Burke, such as the accumulation of knowledge and the fixation of languages and texts. This was true in the Tibetan context, despite some important caveats in that printed texts could be seen as faulty and in need of amendment (see for example van der Kujiip 2010: 441ff) and the drive towards standardisation was already important for scriptoria producing manuscripts (see Schaeffer 2009).

While there are references to printing projects that took place in the Chab mdo region as early as 1207 (van der Kujiip 2010: 441ff), it seems that it was only in the fifteenth century that printing became commonly employed in Central and Western Tibet: in one of the earliest scholarly surveys of the subject, David Jackson reports that he had come across Tibetan printed texts dating to the fifteenth century in most libraries he visited (Jackson 1990). Indeed, recent research has recovered many early such exemplars, and in Tibet an increasing number are coming to light: one of the newly-discovered works presented by Porong Dawa in this volume is the earliest extant printed item from Tibet and is dated 1407. Some are editions that achieved only local relevance, while others became important classics. There is a range of texts, the most famous of which are noted in Ben Nourse's contribution, that seem to have been propelled to further dissemination and influence after having been printed in editions that ended up being seen as authoritative. These texts range from Milarepa's biography and songs by gTsang smyon Heruka, to the *Mani bKa' 'bum* and the *bKa' gdam glegs bam* among others. Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2013) has already drawn attention to the pivotal role of the *Mani bka' 'bum*, printed in Mang yul Gung thang, which travelled to Bhutan where it was re-carved and eventually became part of the authoritative texts used by the Fifth Dalai Lama (see also Kapstein 2000: 260, n. 9 and Sernesi forthcoming). Central in the development of the cult of Avalokiteśvara and of a shared narrative reflecting Tibet's imperial legacy, this text played an important part in what George Dreyfus (1994: 205–218) defines as Tibetan 'proto-nationalism'; its printing is

therefore likely to have significantly enhanced its dissemination and political impact. Another interesting case is that of the *bKa' gdam glegs bam*, which has a remarkable editorial history linked as well to the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang, since its earliest printed edition was produced there by the Bo dong pa scholar Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484–1549) in 1535 (Ehrhard 2000: 42–4 and see also Ehrhard 2013: 427ff). The illustrious master Atiśa (982–1054), who is associated with the origin of the collection, entered Tibet via Mang yul Gung thang, accompanied by the local scholar Nag tsho Lo tsa ba. While the related biographical tradition was available in the region, and narratives of the master's deeds are linked to the local landscape even now, a copy of the *bKa' gdams glegs bam* to serve as the basis for the print edition had to be retrieved from central Tibet. This redaction of the text would later be used as an authoritative edition by the dGa' ldan Pho brang government, which had blocks re-carved in the Zhol par khang in lHa sa (see Sernesi 2015: 411).

As shown by a number of contributions to this volume, the adoption of printing is likely to have had a far-reaching social, cultural and political impact. Porong Dawa, Tsering Dawa and Diemberger illustrate this point when discussing the 1407 imprint of Haribadra's commentary produced at Shel dkar, which was connected to the establishment of the school of philosophy in the Shel dkar monastery and eventually became part of the monastic curriculum more generally (see Dreyfus 2003: 174–182). They also show that the celebration of the distribution of texts so often mentioned in the colophon of imprints was in all likelihood not a mere rhetorical device but pointed to enhanced distribution (even though the extent remains difficult to assess). However, it is also clear that prints and manuscripts continued to coexist in the Tibetan context complementing each other until the twentieth and twenty-first centuries when a new range of technologies appeared on the scene. As observed by a local Lama in Solu (Nepal), in many cases it was the photocopy machine that proved to be the real competitor to block printing as it allowed for individualised 'printing on demand' similar to that provided by blocks preserved in a monastic printing house but more practical and cheaper for people with access to urban settings. The ritual significance of blockprinting, however, was never fully displaced and from this point of view it remains a living tradition complemented now not only by photocopying but also by movable type printing and digital text reproduction. It is therefore not possible to speak of a 'revolution' as a linear process in which one technology replaces another. From this point of view, however, what happened in Tibet has unexpected similarities to what happened in European book history.

Recent research has shown that the so-called 'printing revolution' in the European context was a longer and more complex process than hitherto

assumed and that it was less shaped by linear causalities and progressive developments from one technology to the next than originally thought. Commenting on how in Europe the innovations in printing were gradual and that the manuscript tradition lasted long after the introduction of printing, McKitterick observed that “printing combined with older practices and habits of thought in the manuscript tradition . . . it is more realistic to speak not of one superseding the other, but the two working together” (McKitterick 2003: 21). According to him: “Print sits beside manuscript, just as computerized IT sits beside print and manuscript. The significance of these relationships – not so much of different generations as of related cousins, since in practice each lives alongside the next – is apparently easily missed.” (McKitterick 2003: 20)

Despite some re-thinking about the timing and the impact of printing technologies, it is undeniable that important elements of innovation were enabled by its introduction in the European context and these had far reaching consequences. In Tibet, as in many other Asian contexts, the socio-technological process that shaped the way printing technologies were introduced, developed and used alongside other technologies was extremely complex and marked more by continuities than discontinuities with pre-existing forms of text reproduction – both manuscript production and stone inscriptions. Innovation was nevertheless part of the picture, even when not fully acknowledged at the time. For example, the commemoration of the passing of the ruler Chos kyi rin chen (d. 1402) from La stod lHo offered an excellent opportunity to the Bo dong pa masters to provide scriptures for the newly established school of philosophy since the production of ‘symbols of [Buddha’s] speech’ (*gsung rten*) was a recognised way of gaining merit for the deceased. Borrowing Elisabeth Eisenstein’s wording, with the production of the 1407 imprint they “broke new paths in the very act of seeking to achieve old goals” (Eisenstein 1979: 693; see also Eisenstein 1983).

The work on the ‘printing revolution’ in the European context and the debates that followed Elisabeth Eisenstein’s seminal work may serve as a heuristic device in thinking through the Tibetan materials with a wider range of questions in mind. Detailed research on printed texts, printing sites, materials and technologies, trading routes as well as reading practices and ritual usage of texts will help cast new light on the history of printing as part of Tibetan book culture. Hopefully this will give insight into the way in which texts were printed, disseminated and used in the Tibetan context in a process that was shaped by both continuity and innovation. This should also contribute to setting Tibetan materials in conversation with the study of other book cultures around the world. More generally, Tibet reminds us that the fate of printing technology was tied so closely to the cultural context in which it was implanted

and that this is also true for the introduction of digital technologies in the 21st century.

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PART 1

*The Introduction of Printing in the Asian Context:
Wider Perspectives on Print and Manuscript
Cultures*



Three Print Revolutions

Peter Burke

In what follows I shall try, very briefly, to compare three print revolutions: in the early modern West, the region that I know best; in Ming China; and finally in Tokugawa Japan, while thinking about a major absence, the early modern Islamic world, despite a famous but abortive experiment in Istanbul in the early eighteenth century. I leave it to a more ambitious scholar to extend the comparative approach and to try to place printing in the context of what the Canadian historian Harold Innis (2008) called the ‘bias of communications’, especially of writing: on clay tablets, papyrus, parchment and so on, in other words the political and social consequences of using particular media.

To speak of three revolutions already raises at least two major problems: one about comparison and the other about the idea of revolution. Unlike some of my colleagues in plain or general history, I firmly believe in the value of comparison, including the search for differences as well as for similarities or functional equivalents. Under the umbrella of comparative history I also include what the French call *histoire croisée*, in other words the search for connections, intercontinental as well as international. Some supporters of *histoire croisée* present themselves as replacing an older comparative history, but in my view the search for similarities and differences on the one hand, and the search for connections on the other, are perfectly compatible and equally necessary (Werner and Zimmermann 2004). This point may be illustrated from the history of printing. Although many western scholars long assumed that printing with moveable type was more efficient than block printing, it has recently been argued that each system had its particular advantages and disadvantages, with block printing being better adapted to a non-alphabetic writing system like the Chinese (Brokaw forthcoming). As for *histoire croisée*, the possibility that printing with moveable type reached Europe from China or Korea (despite the difficulty of crossing the barrier of the print-less Islamic world) has long been discussed, given what has been called the ‘almost hallucinatory similarity’ between the two methods (Carter 1931; Martin 1994, 225). At the very least, news about this may have reached the ears of Gutenberg, just as news about a Dutchman having constructed a telescope reached the ears of Galileo a century and a half later. In Galileo’s case, once he knew that a telescope existed, he was able to construct one of his own. Might Gutenberg have done the same?

What counts as a 'revolution' has long been a subject of debate among historians, but focussing on the topic of this conference, print as an agent of change, we might say that any innovation that has important consequences counts as revolutionary (Porter and Teich 1986). In the case of western history, Gutenberg's invention, whatever inspired it, has long been viewed in this way. Among the first centenaries to be celebrated were the centenary of printing in 1540 (since it was believed that Gutenberg had printed his first book in 1440), the bicentenary of printing in 1640 and its tercentenary in 1740. The *philosophe* Condorcet saw print as literally epoch-making – the eighth epoch of his 'Sketch for the History of the Progress of the Human Mind' (1795).

As for the consequences of printing in the West, they are the focus of two major studies, the one by Betty Eisenstein (1979) from which this conference takes its title, and an earlier study in French by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, first published in 1958 and translated into English under the title *The Coming of the Book* (1979). Both studies discuss the Renaissance and the Reformation at some length, but Eisenstein adds the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century. Another difference between the two studies is that Eisenstein is aware of the work of the media theorist Marshall McLuhan (a former student of Harold Innis) and tries to domesticate his ideas, notably the idea that 'the medium is the message', translating it into a language that ordinary empiricist historians would understand. There is, of course, a danger of exaggerating the consequences of printing. Eisenstein virtually claims that printing caused the Renaissance, although the movement that we call the revival of classical antiquity was already under way more than a century before Gutenberg opened his shop. Again, in discussing the consequences of print in particular communities at particular moments, one needs to ask how many people were literate. In seventeenth-century Europe, there was enormous variation between Sweden, where almost every man, woman and child could read (though most were unable to write), and Russia, where virtually no one could read except the clergy (Johansson 1973; Marker 1982).

All the same, despite controversies on matters of detail, there is now a sort of consensus among western historians of printing about certain important consequences. It may be useful to distinguish five of these consequences.¹

1 What follows draws on, criticizes and attempts to refine and develop the remarks on print culture in Eisenstein (1979, 71–129).

1. In the first place, there is the most obvious consequence. Books became cheaper and more numerous, while both public and private libraries became bigger. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the number of books, especially new publications, was coming to be perceived as frightening or at least as confusing, an early example of what has come to be known as 'information overload' (Blair 2010). The ideas expressed in print were amplified, spreading to more people in more places than before (Eisenstein 1979, 71–80). Unorthodox ideas became more difficult to stamp out, as in the famous case of the Reformation. Martin Luther was far from the first theologian to challenge the Catholic Church. In the early fifteenth century, the Czech reformer Jan Hus had done the same. However, Hus was burned as a heretic in 1415 and his ideas, which had not had time to spread very much beyond Central Europe, were suppressed. The pope would have liked to suppress Luther's ideas in the same way, but by 1521 Luther had published three pamphlets in German, one of which sold 4000 copies in a single day, and these texts were soon translated into Latin. As a result, Luther's ideas became virtually impossible to suppress.
2. A second important consequence of printing stressed by western historians is the preservation of information, allowing it to accumulate, a point already made in the early days of the new invention, among others by the Venetian physician Nicola Gupalatino, writing in the early 1470s, and again by Eisenstein, writing of the "cumulative impact exerted by the new communications system" (Eisenstein 1979, 29, 113–26). Printing in multiple copies was a kind of insurance against the loss of knowledge, a loss (especially in the case of the destruction of the library of Alexandria and the fall of the Roman Empire) of which Renaissance scholars were very much aware (in other words, in the sixteenth century, fear of loss, of too few books, coexisted with fear of overload, of too many books). Again, it has often been argued that the 'scientific revolution' associated with Galileo, Kepler, Newton and others happened in the seventeenth century, and not before, because it had become possible by that time to build theories on data accumulated earlier. The Scientific Revolution was dependent on an earlier 'scientific renaissance' that involved the rediscovery and the publication of classical texts about the world of nature (Boas 1962; Eisenstein 1979, vol. 2, *passim*).
3. A third consequence of printing was the fixing of what had been variable (Eisenstein 1979, 80–88). This assertion has become the subject of debate, since it turns out that different copies of the same edition of an early

printed text are far from identical, thanks for instance to the correction of errors in the workshop while printing was in progress. Indeed, it has been argued that “no two final copies out of a given edition would necessarily be the same”. This ‘instability’ has sometimes have been exaggerated but it needs to be remembered, although, relatively speaking, a printed text was more stable and more uniform than different manuscript copies of a text, even if they had been written by the same scribe (Johns 1998, 91, also 10, 31, 172; McKitterick 2003 8–9, 23, 68, 97, 217–30). As a result, it was possible to give more exact references, to page numbers for instance, allowing readers to find the source of a given statement more easily. In that respect the rise of what we now consider to be proper research methods depended on the rise of print.

In any case, the tendency to fixing, to freezing the fluid, affected much more than different copies of a given edition. In the case of language, for instance, thinking now not only of the sixty-odd languages current in sixteenth-century Europe, but also of the numerous dialects of what we call the ‘same’ language, including dialects that were mutually unintelligible. It was for this reason that Luther chose not to write in his native Saxon variety of German but in a hybrid language that deliberately mixed the language of different regions in order to be understood all over the German-speaking lands. Printers supported this tendency towards standardization because a standard form of language would allow them to sell more copies of a given book. In some cases where the manuscript of a sixteenth-century book has survived as well as the first edition, it is possible to view linguistic standardization at work (examples in Burke 2004, 106–7, and more generally, 89–110).

Another kind of standardization was the effect of the use of printed forms: for sixteenth-century Spanish contracts, for instance, or for Venetian census-takers in the same period (using three separate forms for nobles, citizens and artisans and asking about the numbers of children, servants and gondolas). By the seventeenth century there were even printed forms, in Latin, for the cardinals to use when they elected popes (*‘Ego . . . cardinalis . . . eligo in summum pontificem Reverendum Dominum meum Dominum cardinalem . . .’*) (Burke 1987, 179–80). The same method was used for gathering knowledge. Bruno Latour’s claim that the astronomer Tycho Brahe used “pre-printed forms”, asking his colleagues elsewhere to enter their observations on the forms and return them to him, appears to be mistaken, but from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, printed questionnaires were in use, helping to standardize answers and thus to make them comparable (Latour 1987, 226–7, criticized in Johns 1998, 13, 17; Fox 2010).

4. Other possible consequences of print have often been discussed, with less agreement. One point concerns the relation between the rise of scepticism and the increase in the awareness of alternative versions of a given story. A century after Gutenberg, a French gentleman sitting in the library of his chateau, Michel de Montaigne, noted major disagreements between different authors, and this led him to ask whether it was possible to know anything at all. In the seventeenth century, the rise of newspapers, offering the reader a variety of papers presenting contradictory versions of the same story, encouraged this kind of scepticism (Eisenstein 1979, 74; Dooley 1999, 3 and *passim*; Burke 2000, 197–212.).
5. There remains the question of identity, the construction of communities by print. In early modern Europe, the scholarly community or ‘republic of learning’ was constructed not only by letter-writing, but also by the circulation of learned books, often published in an international language, Latin. In the nineteenth century, national communities were constructed at least in part by printing in different vernaculars, a point emphasized in a famous, controversial book by Benedict Anderson, who noted the importance for this process of consciousness raising of ‘print capitalism’ in general and of printed newspapers and maps in particular (Anderson 2006; Bots and Waquet 1997).

It might be prudent for a historian of early modern Europe to stop at this point and allow specialists on other parts of the world to decide whether any of the claims made above are relevant to printed texts outside Europe in their many languages and scripts. To provoke discussion, however, it may be useful to offer a few remarks about two more print revolutions, one in China and the other in Japan.

The example of China has been invoked in order to criticize Eisenstein for “technological determinism” and for a lack of concern with “the way in which print is embedded in society”, since only in Europe was print a “powerful agent of change” (Raven 1999, 233, 224n). As Tim Barrett (2008) recently argued, printing is even older in China than was previously thought. All the same, the true print revolution seems to have occurred at much the same time as in Europe, in the long sixteenth century. “From 1400 to 1600 annual imprint production, expressed in terms of decade-by-decade averages of new imprint titles, increased as much as twenty-fold” (McDermott forthcoming). Commercial printing expanded in some regions in particular, especially the Jiangnan or lower Yangtze delta. Introducing China into the discussion widens it in important ways. On the production side, it is illuminating to compare and contrast block printing with printing with moveable type. Western historians used to think that moveable type was simply superior; then they realized that

the problem of printing a language written in ideograms needs a different solution from a language written in an alphabet; and now they see that the two systems have different costs and benefits (Brokaw forthcoming). On the side of the readers, the time taken to learn 20,000 or 30,000 characters meant that serious literacy was restricted to a small elite, the examination candidates for whom so many books were written (though western schoolboys were also an important captive audience for textbooks). However, “semi-literacy”, in other words the knowledge of some 2000 or 3000 characters, was more widespread and must not be forgotten (Rawski 1979). The sheer size of the Chinese market for print seems extraordinary for a western historian who takes for granted a variety of languages impeding the flow of information. On the other hand, the diversity of political regimes in Europe also impeded the effective censorship of literature that was considered subversive for religious or political reasons. The importance of frontier zones such as the Netherlands and Switzerland in the smuggling to France of unorthodox political and religious books (known euphemistically as ‘philosophical books’) has been discussed by scholars such as Elizabeth Eisenstein (1992) and Robert Darnton (1995).

Turning now to Japan, the print revolution, or perhaps one should say print’s commercial revolution, came a generation or two after China, in the early seventeenth century, and indeed came from China, offering an important example of ‘connected history’. The speedy success of the new medium was linked to the rapid urbanization of the country at this time, especially the growth of three cities, Kyōto, Ōsaka and the new capital of Edō. It was also linked to the coexistence of printing in Chinese characters with printing in a syllabic script that ordinary people, male and female, could learn quickly. Turning to consequences, Mary Elizabeth Berry, making a creative use of Benedict Anderson’s book, has recently and persuasively argued for the link between what she calls the print-driven ‘information revolution’ at this time and the rise of national consciousness in Japan (Berry 2006).

To conclude, two further general points may be worth making. The first concerns the term ‘agent’. Can print be an agent of change? Yes and no. In some ways it is surely less misleading to think about people as agents rather than about things. It was not the printing press, but the printers, some of whom (the ‘ideologists’, one might call them, such as Melchior Lotter and Hans Lufft, who supported Luther as well as printing his work) wanted to change the ideas of readers, while others (let us call them ‘the mercenaries’) concentrated on making a profit and might print books for Catholics and Protestants alike (Cole 1984). On the other hand, some of the consequences of print were unintended, and in that sense the medium may be regarded as an agent. It remains necessary to ask, what are the circumstances that allow print to become an effective

agent of change, especially in some places and at some periods? A second and final point is that, as a European historian of Europe, I have found that reading about the diverse careers of print in China and Japan has helped me to understand what was happening at home by revealing roads that were not taken. Comparison makes us more aware of possible alternatives and provokes the search for explanations. I hope that the same goes for specialists in Tibetan and the other languages discussed at this conference.

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The Gutenberg Fallacy and the History of Printing among the Mongols

Johan Elverskog

In a 1969 *Playboy* interview Marshall McLuhan proclaimed that the printing press was “directly responsible for the rise of such disparate phenomena as nationalism, the Reformation, the assembly line and its offspring, the Industrial Revolution, the whole concept of causality, Cartesian and Newtonian concepts of the universe, perspective in art, narrative chronology in literature, and a psychological mode of introspection or inner direction that greatly intensified the tendencies toward individualism and specialization” (Kingwell 2013). Or in short, the man behind “the medium is the message” was an avid promoter of the notion that basically the entire modern world – from neo-liberal democracy to monster truck rallies – grew out of Gutenberg’s invention of movable type.

By any stretch of the imagination this is an unbelievably bold – if not completely ludicrous – claim; however, as we all know, it is one that drives much of the thinking and writing about the history of printing. Indeed, it is this very same conceptual framework that undergirds not only the current flurry of conferences and scholarship on the global history of printing,¹ but also this very project and volume as well. Moreover, it is this same master narrative – and admittedly its re-orientation – that also drives the current nationalist-fueled scholarship that aims to find the origin of printing in China, Korea, or Japan (Kornicki 2012). Yet, regardless of where printing actually originated the main thrust of all this “work” – as most famously manifested in the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (Bachner 2014, 1–6) – is simply to confirm that printing was not solely a European invention. Thus by extension – as with the discourse about the “four great inventions” (Amelung 2003) – the argument is that the roots of modernity actually stretch back to Asia. And,

1 The list of such work and projects is obviously long, thus here let me just cite one of the latest: “International Conference on the Technology and Development of Metal Movable-Type Printing and Print Culture in East Asia” (University of California, Berkeley, September 28, 2013). In regards to Inner Asian book and printing culture see the review of all such recent and on-going projects in Almogi 2014.

of course, within this larger intellectual project the one invention most freighted with tension – on account of McLuhan and Eisenstein – is the history of printing, since it has indisputably been held up as the key innovation that ushered in the modern world.

Yet, as Marks has so eloquently put it, such winner-and-loser narratives largely miss the point of world history, and thus they need not detain us here (2002, 1–16). Nevertheless, even if one does so there still remains the related issue about the supposedly fundamentally transformative nature of printing. Indeed, we may want to stop for a moment and ponder – as many other scholars have done² – about the very notion that printing is in fact a transformative invention. Or, at the very least, we may want to explore whether the speculations of McLuhan and Eisenstein about printing are applicable in all times and places. In fact, what I want to argue herein is precisely that printing actually had very little impact among the Mongols.

1 Thinking Printing

In making the argument that printing may not have been as radically transformative in all times and places I am not arguing that the scholarship on the global history of printing should be dismissed out of hand. Quite the opposite in fact, since it is precisely such work that is challenging one of the last rickety planks upholding the edifice of Eurocentrism and thereby providing us with a better understanding the global interconnections that went into shaping the world of today. And, as such, it is vital to recognize that modernity did not simply flow out of a fifteenth century German workshop. Indeed, the scholarship on global printing therefore plays a vital role in problematizing the conventional Eurocentric narrative of modernity. Yet, at the same time as doing so, we also need to be cognizant of the potential inadvertent reification of this model simply by studying the history of printing; since by itself it virtually encapsulates modernity as seen in McLuhan's argument cited above. Indeed, consciously or not, simply by making printing the topic of our research we are all by default operating in the shadow of Gutenberg and the larger narrative of European modernity.

Yet, in saying that, it also needs to be noted that this has not always been the case. Or as Joseph Dane has boldly put it: “the entire notion of Print Culture is constructed in bad faith” (2009). Indeed, the elevation of printing in the

2 On the re-evaluation of printing's impact see Febvre and Martin 1990, Chartier 1994, Johns 1998, McKitterick 2003, and Baron et al. 2007.

teleological narrative of the modern West is premised on its very own logic that values the socially transformative potentials of technology, which is something that is largely unique to the Western world. Moreover, even in the West it is actually a rather new development as well. Thus as scholars who specialize in the Gutenberg Bible have recently pointed out: based on the different font structures and a whole range of other issues, the fact of the matter is that today we do not really know how the Gutenberg Bible was actually printed. In fact, the conventional image of the uniform dies in little boxes, assembled into pages, and then printed on a press, seems to be wholly inaccurate in relation to how Gutenberg actually did his work. Rather, as Dane and others have pointed out, all of the iconic images of “early printing presses” that are found in books and now all over the web, are actually from the sixteenth century. Or in other words, these images reflect how printing was done then, not how Gutenberg did it. Moreover, it was only then, in the sixteenth century, that the value of printing was beginning to be recognized, whereby it then became a foundational part of the teleological narrative of modernity. Before that, however, it is important to recognize that no one in Europe apparently thought that printing was anything as monumentally important as people like McLuhan have claimed it to be. Rather, it was just a technique. One, moreover, that no one bothered to even document since it was of such little relevance (Dane 2003, 10–21). Indeed, it is precisely for this reason that today we do not know how the Gutenberg Bible was printed.

To my mind this is an important point since it problematizes the whole narrative arc of not only printing, but also modernity, which is very often built on the notion whereby technology has the potential to be a positive force for social transformation. And since this idea is so deeply engrained in our own narratives of modernity – and, of course, they have now been taken to even newer heights by the utopian fantasies of the technologists in Silicon Valley (Morozov 2013) – it is important to recall that such a narrative is not a universal reality. Rather, as Furth has pointed out, the classic “Needham question” of who came first, and why, is fundamentally misguided since it is based upon the teleological narrative of the modern West. Thus as she has pointed out, this narrative elevation of printing and technology writ large is a purely European phenomenon. In East Asia, on the other hand, and indeed everywhere else that printing arose before it did in the West – including Inner Asia and the Middle East – where there was no conception of the “socially transformative potentials of technology,” there simply is no history of printing. No one cared about it.

In China, for example, where one would assume that much would be made of printing there is virtually nothing on it in the historical record (Barrett

2014). Most notably, the most comprehensive work on technologies of the late imperial period, Song Yingxing's 宋應星 seventeenth-century *Tiangong kaiwu* ("Works of Heaven" 天工開物), has a section on paper-making but nothing on printing. An omission that Schäfer in her work on Song's thought and work has argued is because he did not think printing involved transformation, which was the key element of his whole intellectual process (Schäfer 2011, 243).³ Yet even if that was indeed the case the fact that printing is so wholly absent in the Chinese historical record still needs to be explained. Joseph McDermott, for example, while researching his book *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, could not find any descriptions of "woodblock printing technology in pre-modern sources, and found them only in nineteenth century writings by Western missionaries who were looking into ways to propagate translations of the Christian Bible. So through most of Chinese history, it would seem that Chinese didn't celebrate printing as a major technical achievement of their civilization" (Furth 2009, 2).

It is this fact that therefore goes a long way in explaining why the origin of printing is so bitterly debated. Was it in China under the Buddhist empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (Barrett 2008), or was it in Korea as archaeological records would seem to confirm? Whatever the case may be, the point I want to make here is that the reason that we do not have a definitive answer to this question is that at the time no one in China, Korea, or Japan actually cared enough about printing to make anything of its "discovery." Much less did they see they see the socially transformative potentials of this particular technology. And, as noted above, it was actually the same in Europe until the sixteenth century when printing became part of the technological narrative of modernity that Europeans had come to tell about themselves.

3 At the same time Schäfer does believe that printing had a "Montaigne effect;" namely, on account of the explosion of printing in Ming-Qing China Song Yingxing was actually able to investigate all kinds of sources and thereby compare things, which led him to vocally call for an examination of all statements. It also led him to critique people, like the new philologists (Elman 1984), who just repeated the classics when evidence clearly showed that it was false. Such as when Zhu Xi 朱熹 in his *Comprehensive Mirror for the Aid in Government* (*Zizhi Tongjian Gangmu* 資治通鑑綱目) talked about there appearing two suns and two moons, which led Song to critique uncritical bookish learning: "His notion of knowledge was based on universal principles and orderly proceedings, an approach that allowed no obscurities such as two sons or two moons. He called for a critical assessment of the multitude of books and materials made available to the scholar by commercial printing. Instead of blindly following the assumptions of written accounts, Song demanded reliable verification by observation of all facts at hand" (Schäfer 2011, 237).

Thus, even though the aim of this entire project is to look precisely at how printing changed and transformed the Inner Asian world, I think it is important to be cautious about so readily buying into this particular master narrative. Most notably, I think it is vital to recognize that for most peoples around the world printing was not anything of importance, much less a revolutionary technology. Rather, more often than not, printing was recognized simply as a rather a low level craft that was considered of very little cultural, social, or technological importance. Printing was therefore not considered to be a harbinger of radical change; moreover, quite simply, it did not in fact usher in a new age as so often imagined in the West. It is thus within such a framework that I believe that we need to think about the history of printing among the Mongols.

2 Printing among the Mongols

As with most things that the Mongols did their involvement with printing was precociously early and on a massive scale. Indeed, only a few short decades after developing a written script we already have an outpouring of printed works ranging from Buddhist ones such as the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (Weiers 1967) and Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Treasury of Aphoristic Jewels* (*Sa skya legs bshad, Subhāṣitaratnanidhi*; Ligeti 1964) and to Chinese works like the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing* 孝經; Cleaves 1982, 70), as well as imperially-sanctioned printed calendars (Franke 1962; Kara 1979). Yet these works from the early fourteenth century were only the beginning. Thus in the post-Yuan period (1368–1644) we have evidence of both multi-volume and multi-lingual printed works from the Ming period (Cleaves 2001), and then, beginning with the second conversion and then reaching its crescendo during the Qing period (1644–1911) there was a veritable tsunami of printed works. Of course, by now most of this printed material has been amply documented, catalogued, and commented upon by a range of scholars, but especially by the monumental labors of Walther Heissig.⁴ And no doubt one reason for this sustained scholarly attention on Mongolian printing is precisely the importance placed upon printing in the West. Thus, on account of the Gutenberg shadow, the fact that the Mongols also had a long and illustrious history of printing was clearly important. Indeed, it is precisely because of this discourse that we now know a great deal about Mongolian

4 Some of Heissig's most important works on Mongol print and manuscript culture include 1954, 1962, 1976.

print culture, such as which elites paid for these works, where and how they were prepared, as well as who used them.⁵

Thus, in thinking about this history, as well as all the scholarship on the history of Mongolian printing, one thing that is important to note is that nowhere in any of this material – or the broader historical corpus – is there ever any claim by the Mongols that printing by itself is either a revolutionary innovation, or in anyway socially transformative, or even anything to be noted. Printing is simply a method of mass production. Moreover, nowhere in any of the Mongol printed material – be it from the Yuan, Ming, or Qing period – is printing, by itself, held up – or categorized – as something of note. Rather, printing was something that was simply done more often than not for Buddhist merit, or to project state power, or much later, to make money by printing what sold to the small community of literate Mongols.

Indeed, in this regard, it may be valuable to cite one of our earliest extant colophons to get a better sense of how the Mongols actually spoke about printing:

Knowing well of the benefits for whoever worships mindfully with an intent to rely on the fully enlightened Buddha Teacher's preaching of the *Big Dipper Sūtra*, Urug Böke, a Great Parasol Holder, continually recited [this text] with humility and a reverent and pure mind. [He prepared this text] because he prays for the intercession of his blessing, hoping for the long life of the Meritorious Lord, an incarnation of the Buddha who performs Liberation, Tug Temür, and wishes that he will be the greatest Emperor of all, he being a pure minded Bodhisattva Lord. Having learnt Wisdom and Skill and Means he will take the throne of Sechen [Khubilai] Khan.

[Previously], whoever wished one's own mind to be free of attachments and doubts, had to produce faith in this Dharma in Uygur, since this Dharma Sūtra was not translated. Saying, "In order to have many Mongol subjects worship it with faith," I [Urug Böke], had it translated into pure Mongolian. In order to accomplish my idea, "To satisfy the wishes of a thousand people, and thus satisfy their desires," one thousand complete copies were printed and all were disseminated.

By the power of the fruit of this good merit may the Lord Emperor, the Queen, the Imperial lineage, all eternally rejoice, spread merit, and finally obtain the sanctity of the Buddha. May the agitating enemies of the Empire be pacified, and there be no evil spirits and obstacles. May all of

5 The best overview of Mongolian book culture – both manuscript and printed – is Kara 2005.

the various weathers and rains come at the proper time, may there be no destruction or insufficiency of the livestock, and may whatever I think and speak be accomplished. By means of this scripture may my wishes in this world, and the wishes of this world of my parents, relatives and children, living and deceased older and younger brothers and all living beings be satisfied in this world, and may they all reach the peaceful world of Sukhāvātī.

In the first year of [Toghon Temür] Tianli's reign, a Dragon year [1328], on the first day of the tenth month, wooden blocks [of this sūtra] were carved. This book was brought from India by an Indian paṇḍita and the wise Xuan Zang, and it was translated in China. When it completely spread in the Land of Supreme Customs [i.e. the Yuan dynasty], the nobles and officials of the Great Emperor gave rise to Bodhicitta and became complete in their faith, wisdom and samādhi-dhyāna.

When he brought these things to mind, Parasol Keeper and Chief Censor Urug Böke had the Lord of the Religion of the Uygurs, Prajñāsī translate it into Mongolian, and had two thousand copies printed. Alīn Tāmūr translated it into Uygur, and a thousand woodblock prints were collected and distributed as Dharma alms among the Mongols and Uygurs. The Grand Empress Dowager, who had previously held the principles of the Mongolian religion, truly entered the Buddha's Dharma and experienced the tranquility of the guṇas of meditation by the blessing of this scripture. Afterwards in the Ding Ox year [1337], the translator Matiphala and Śrī Ānandavajra, at Gung Thang monastery, corrected and translated it into Tibetan language and script (Elverskog 2008, 114–118)

Thus as is evident from this passage, the art of printing by itself was not something to cherish, much less a technology that could change Mongolian society. Rather, for the Mongols – or at least Urug Böke – printing was instead a technique that could be harnessed to promote religious doctrines and practices.

Yet, above and beyond this apparent lack of critical reflection upon the potential impact of printing among the Mongols themselves – which is a phenomenon clearly not unique to the Mongols – what is even more interesting to note about the history of printing among the Mongols is that even though the printing of Mongolian material came to be on a monumental scale, it apparently had very little impact in Mongolian culture more broadly. Indeed, in complete contradiction to the whole narrative of printing as ushering in modernity – or printing as fundamentally changing human consciousness and society – there is seemingly no evidence for this in the case of Mongolian printing. As a result, what needs to be recognized is that even though there was all

this printing going on in the Mongolian world, the Mongols – and Mongolian culture – remained not only largely the same as in its pre-printing age, but also that the Mongols continued to be by and large a manuscript culture.

These two facts clearly need to be explained. Not not only since we have been charged with reflecting on the potential impact of printing in the Inner Asian world, but also because by pointing this out I seem to be yet again reifying the Hegelian narrative about the static and backward Mongols who remained outside the greater flow of humanity to the ultimate end game of Western modernity (Elverskog 2004, 137–139). Indeed, as noted above, I readily understand that much of the recent work on printing around the world is to show precisely that printing was not the exclusive domain of Europeans and thus to use the parlance, one can thereby “provincialize Europe,” or else “destabilize” the narrative of modernity, or quite simply show – as Victor Lieberman has so eloquently done (2009) – that printing was one of the many world-wide elements that shaped the early modern world. And while in theory I support and agree with all of these scholarly endeavours, the case of the Mongols seems to point in a different direction.

In fact, when I first started thinking about this issue I was even tempted to make a grand case based on Heidegger’s critique of technology that was picked up by the Frankfurt School in order to castigate precisely the horrors of western modernity (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002). Which, in short, can be summed up by arguing that if printing created modernity it therefore led not only to the discovery of the Higgs-Boson, but also to Zyklon-B and the death chambers at Auschwitz. Thus by avoiding the “enframing” – to use Heidegger’s term – of technology as the be-and-end all of existence – as we have and continue to do in the West – it can potentially be argued that by not adopting printing and the salvific narrative of technology, the Mongols thereby avoided the horrors of modernity. And, of course, I can well imagine that some Mongol nationalists, or reactionary Mongolists, could take such an idea and run with it;⁶

6 Unfortunately, the rise of the far right in Mongolia has not received the scholarly attention it deserves; however, the lyrics of the song “Don’t Overstep the Limit You Chinks” by the popular Mongolian rap band Dörwön Züg gives a sense of its sensibilities.

We are Chinese, you are paupers sitting on gold
 We have the money to buy everything you’ve got
 Your women, land, dignity, down to everything you own.
 You just wait and see!

Crushing rice in their hand, they took hold of our state for themselves
 If the state entrusted by us was entrusted to the Chinks
 (We would) shoot and slaughter them all (until) none (is left)
 Mongolian girls who become 5 penny whores below them

however, I confess I'm wary of such grand speculations. Nevertheless, I do think it is valid to think about the epistemological and ontological implications of technology's impact on a society, such as was clearly the case with printing. Yet, I am not a philosopher, and thus the larger questions about the existential consequences for the Mongols of avoiding print culture I will leave aside for now.

Though in doing so it is no doubt relevant to note that the situation among the Mongols and Tibetans was quite different in this regard. Indeed, as evidenced in previous work (Schaeffer 2009) – as well as all the articles in this volume – it is clear that printing had a profound impact on Tibetan culture. And these transformations can both be traced out, and used to reveal new insights into Tibetan history. Yet, as I have been arguing, I do not think the same can be said in terms of Mongolian print culture, this disjuncture clearly needs to be explained. To do so, I would like to suggest some possible reasons for why this may have been the case.

Snub-nosed Mongolian stray dogs as their food menu
 The poison goes straight down to our empty stomach
 Right away, (they) suck out the Mongol blood
 We will make trouble for you, we'll make you pay dear

You'll give up, saying "Come here, come here," you'll click the tongue ha ha
 You Chink who stabs from behind you'll be dead by tomorrow
 While we think it's easy to click click the word "Chinese," they really overstep the limits
 On the land of our country Chinese slippers' prints do not lack, they are in excess

Us Mongols who became men following men's principles
 Are we going to let ourselves be humiliated by these shitty Chinks?
 Call the Chinese, call call call; and shoot them all all all
 Call the Chinese, call call call; and shoot them all all all . . .

They rape young girls and abandon them, dirty shits
 You weak candy wraps with your fetid breath and your small body
 Time has come for you to go back bastards
 Slide out and die motherfuckers

(<http://www.gregorydelaplace.com/images/docs/zugdavaren.pdf>). For more on this movement and its connection with Chinese mining companies, corruption, and a whole host of other factors see the following articles: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1910893,00.html>; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/02/mongolia-far-right>; <http://www.economist.com/node/21543113>; <http://www.theglobalmail.org/feature/the-filthy-rich-and-the-racists-in-mongolias-mining-boom/16/>.

3 Printing and Its Discontents

Some may want to argue that Mongol cultural resistance to print culture lies in the largely Qing imperial initiative behind most of the Mongolian printed corpus. Whereby the Mongol rejection of print culture was thereby somehow “anti-colonial.” I would completely discount such a reading (Elverskog 2005), since to a large extent it is evident that the Mongols were loyal supporters of the Qing and would therefore presumably have engaged the expanding print culture that the Manchu court made available to the Mongols (Elverskog 2006a). The Mongols therefore not only had access to the ever-expanding corpus of Mongolian printed material, but also the even larger corpora of printed Chinese and Tibetan material. And as we know, the Mongols were avid consumers of both of these other print cultures.⁷ Thus the fact that the Mongols were “using” – buying, reading, gifting, worshipping – materials in both Chinese and Tibetan clearly impinged upon the use, circulation, and possible impact that Mongolian printed material may have had on Mongolian culture more broadly. Indeed, the prestige carried by both Tibetan and Chinese on account of the Dharma and literati culture clearly played a role in not only diminishing the power of Mongolian print culture, but also to a certain extent even hindered the very development of an autochthonous Mongolian literary culture.⁸

The elevation of Tibetan as the liturgical *lingua franca* across Inner Asia thus profoundly impacted the development and growth of not only Mongolian literary culture, but also Mongolian Buddhism. So much so in fact that leading Mongol clerics such as Mergen Gegen (1717–1766) tried to address this problem by creating entirely new Buddhist liturgies in Mongolian (Humphreys and Ujeed 2013, 65–114); however, these efforts ultimately failed on account of the enormous prestige placed upon both Tibetan and Chinese. Thus in many ways it is no surprise that Mongolian printed material came to be eclipsed as Tibetan language sources came to dominate. Indeed, when thinking about the history of print culture among the Mongols, the absence of vernacularization and all the benefits that supposedly flowed out of it were therefore short-circuited. And this dynamic clearly played a role in diminishing the power, or lure, of the enormous amount of Mongolian works printed in Beijing, Doloon Nuur, and elsewhere. They simply could not compete with the prestige of Tibetan (and/or Chinese). Moreover, and even more tragically, most of these works could

7 On the influence of Chinese print culture on Mongolian culture see, for example, Bowden (1979, 1983, 2002), Clunas (1980), and Nasanurtin (1999).

8 On the lingering consequences of this Qing-period dynamic see Elverskog 2006.

not even be read; and thus, if anything, they simply signified what they were: vehicles of merit production and monuments of state power. As such, even if voluminous, the Mongolian printed material was simply not enough by itself to generate what one can call a print culture and its consequences as explored in the work of Benedict Anderson.

In short, Mongolian print culture never developed a life of its own. Squeezed between the omnipresent and prestige-filled corpora of Chinese and Tibetan material the corpus of Mongolian printed material never had a chance. Of course, as with any “smaller” language grappling with larger ones – such as with English and Putonghua 普通话 today (Crystal 1997; Tsu 2011) – there are invariably numerous issues of power and history at play, and the case of Mongolian print culture in the face of Chinese and Tibetan was no different. Indeed, while the prestige of these two languages on account of their link with Buddhism and literati culture clearly played a role, there were other factors involved that need to be explored in order to fully explain the failure of a Mongolian print culture to develop.

For example, in the case of Chinese print culture and its relationship to Mongolian culture and its valuation of knowledge, it is relevant to note that the Mongols were excluded from the imperial examination system. Which had huge consequences, since as Elman has noted, the educational function of the civil examination system was the “social, political, and cultural reproduction of the late imperial status system” (Elman 2000, xxviii). Thus being denied access to the standard means of producing status in late imperial China clearly had an impact on the Mongols and thus it is no surprise that in the nineteenth century Injannashi was to rail against this exclusionary policy (Elverskog 2008a, 98–100). However, before that time this situation did not apparently receive much attention, and as such, this lack of concern clearly needs to be explained. Not only in terms of how this influenced the Mongols’ engagement with the Qing’s various print cultures, but also in terms of how it shaped broader understandings of knowledge acquisition among the Mongols and its relation to book culture. In short, did Qing imperial policies – in tandem with Tibetanization – play a role in short-circuiting the common developmental arc of print culture among the Mongols? Perhaps, but the actual dynamics of this process are now unfortunately speculative.

Yet, what is not speculative is that Mongolian print culture never really took off beyond what may be termed the fetishized object of the Buddhist book cult. And while this fact can no doubt be partially explained by the realities of Tibetanization and Qing policies, there were no doubt other factors also at play. One of these was no doubt cost; namely, while one can look at Heissig’s work on the printed Mongolian material produced in Beijing (1954), or look at

all the printed material housed in Mongolian collections around the world,⁹ and thereby somehow be amazed, or struck, by the remarkable amount of woodblocks produced, one also does not get a sense of how much these things cost. Or how difficult they were to produce. For example, the colophon of the 1656 *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* tells us that it took three months to carve the blocks for that one text (Kara 2000, 179). Of course, in the Manchu capital, where the initial expenditure for producing something as monumental as the *Kanjur* or *Tanjur* was initially borne by the court, we should rightly ask what happened afterwards? In other words, once they had the blocks carved and stored in Beijing, how much would it cost to get a full copy of the *Kanjur* in Mongolia? Based on a monastic inventory that I came across in Inner Mongolia it was 5000 *liang* of silver, which by any stretch of the imagination was a huge sum of money at the end of the eighteenth century; especially for something that was not going to be read. Thus the financial burden of not only producing printed works, but also the subsequent realities of a small market demand were clearly aspects that hindered the development of Mongolian print culture.

Yet, above and beyond the issue of cost and the deeper structural problems of Tibetanization and other Qing policies, there is also another factor that may have played a role in hindering the development of Mongolian print culture. And that is aesthetics; in particular, the unattractive nature of many Mongolian printed books. Thus, unlike Tibetan printed books, which can be beautiful and easy to read, Mongolian blockprints are very often neither. A fact that may be attributable to the difficulty of carving blocks with the vertical Sogdo-Uyghur script within the narrow confines of the traditional Buddhist *pustaka* format. However, above and beyond such technical difficulties there is also the more intangible issue of beauty, and in this regard a valuable parallel can be drawn between the Mongols and the history of printing in the Islamic world, where printing was also famously not adopted even though they had the technology (Elverskog 2010). In trying to explain this Muslim rejection of print technology Blair has recently argued that aesthetics actually played a large role; namely, printed Arabic could never compete with the artistry of calligraphy (2006, 486–7). Which is an argument that no doubt also resonates in the Sinoscript

9 The major collections of Mongolian material include those in Berkeley (Bese 1977), Budapest (Kara 2000), Chicago (Krueger 1966), P.R.C. (Editorial Board of the Catalogue of Ancient Mongolian Books and Documents of China 2000), Copenhagen (Heissig 1971), Germany (Heissig 1961), Oslo (Heissig 1958), Paris (Ligeti 1930), Scheut (Heissig 1957/8), St. Petersburg (Uspensky 1999), Stockholm (Aalto 1953), Tokyo (Poppe et al. 1964), Ulan Ude (Tsyrempilov 2004), and Washington D.C. (Farquhar 1955).

world; however, in the case of Arabic and Mongolian, both of which derive their scripts from Aramaic, the situation is particularly acute since block-printed Arabic and Mongolian is very often nothing but a crude simulation of the calligraphic original. Thus in both cases it is very likely that this aesthetic concern – as well as the others articulated above – played a role in hindering the development of their own print cultures.

4 Conclusion

As the above has hopefully made clear there were no doubt many reasons for why a Mongolian print culture did not fully develop. But in addition to recognizing that such factors as language prestige, religious valuations, political policies, and aesthetics may have played a role in this phenomenon, it is also vital to recognize that the Mongols also quite simply never imagined printing as socially transformative. Thus the fact that they never actually developed a vernacular print culture and all the consequences that such a thing supposedly entails may have been a foregone conclusion. Or else it could quite simply have been the wrong question, and therein lies the Gutenberg fallacy.

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Mongolian Female Rulers as Patrons of Tibetan Printing at the Yuan Court: Some Preliminary Observations on Recently Discovered Materials

Kawa Sherab Sangpo

1 Introduction

For several years with my colleagues of the dPal brtsegs Research Institute I have been exploring libraries and repositories of books and manuscripts across Tibet, trying to restore collections and find neglected treasures of cultural heritage. Among the texts that I have discovered are several prints that were produced at the Yuan court during the 13th and 14th centuries and then apparently taken to Central Tibet. Many are unfortunately just fragments and loose folios; a few however are complete enough to give us precious information on their production. I have recently published articles (Kawa Sherab Sangpo 2013; 2009) discussing some of the most significant finds. In this brief note I shall highlight some of these texts as their print was sponsored by three Mongolian female rulers of the Yuan dynasty: Chabi, Kōkōchin and Bulughan (see also Rossabi 1979: 153–180; 1988). From this point of view these texts are important witnesses to the role played by Mongolian elite women in the promotion of Tibetan printing.

2 Empress Chabi (1227–1281)

In the gNas bcu lha khang of 'Bras spungs monastery there is a printed copy of the *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter* (Treasury of the Science of Valid Cognition) by Sa skya Paṇḍita. According to the colophon, this print edition had been instigated by Khublai Khan's main consort, Empress Chabi (for a discussion of this print edition see also van der Kujip 1993: 280–283; 2014: 1–5; and Kawa Sherab Sangpo 2009; 2013). The colophon states:

This [print] was begun by dPon mo chen po Cha bu who bears the auspicious marks of family lineage and physical beauty, has devotion to the Dharma, is loving and economically well-endowed and an excellent

manager. It was completed to perfection by her royal prince's glorious consort Queen Go go cin who was a patron of religion, akin to a Mother to all sentient beings, immaculately blessed in respect of family lineage, physical beauty and educational accomplishments. Contemporaneously, too, may the King and the prince, the Queen and the entire family lineage enjoy good health and longevity; be blessed with abundance of religious merit, material and financial prosperity. Whosoever remembers, exhorts others, writes, prints or endeavours to provide the wherewithal for such [producing holy texts], may they all spontaneously attain both temporary and ultimate aspirations. May auspiciousness spread in all directions and at all times. In the year of the Wood Male Monkey, on the 8th [day] of the waxing moon period of the 12th month, [this print was] fully completed [i.e. December 16, 1284].

“dPon mo chen po Cha bu” is clearly Empress Chabi, the main wife of Kublai Khan and the mother of prince Se chen alias g.Yus tsung (Yu zong, 裕宗) (1243/5–1286) also known as Zhenjin and Jingim (mentioned in Marco Polo's travel account). In the year 1260 AD, when the Yuan dynasty was just established, she was enthroned as the Senior Queen, and passed away in 1281 AD during the 18th throne year of Kre yon. In the year 1294 AD, during the 31st throne year of Kre yon, Emperor The mur (Temür Öljeytü) alias Khreng tsung ascended the throne, and she was awarded posthumously the royal award and title of “clever and beautiful queen” (Zhaorui Shunsheng Huanghou, 昭睿順圣皇后).¹

3 Kōkōchin (alias Bo lan ye qie chi fei zi 伯蓝也怯赤妃子?)

It is not completely clear who is the queen referred to in the colophon of the 1284 print of the *Tshad ma rigs gter* as the “blue lady” (Go go cin, i.e. Kōkōchin). Go go cin, is claimed to be the queen of Prince g.Yus tsung (Yu zong, 裕宗), the son of Queen Cha bu (Chabi). Also known as Zhenjin he was the heir apparent of Khublai Khan. Documentary research and analysis reveals that Prince g.Yus tsung had two queens – one named Bo lan ye chas khre (Bo lan ye qie chi fei zi, 伯蓝也怯赤妃子) and the other named An kren mi'i hre (An zhen mi shi fei zi, 安真迷失妃子). However there is no evidence associating the name Go go cin with either of these two queens. Nevertheless, indicating that she was invested with the title of ‘Senior Queen’ and living a glorious life, this term must most probability refer to Queen Bo lan ye chas khre, because she was enthroned as

1 《元史·列传·后妃》卷一百一十四，中华书局1976年版，第2871页

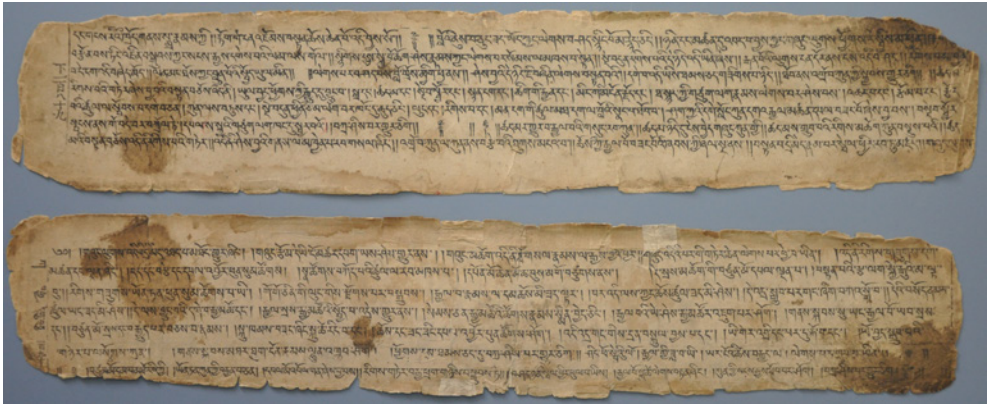


FIGURE 3.1 Colophon of the Tsad ma rigs gter print preserved at Tibet University Library.
 PHOTOGRAPH KAWA SHERAB SANGPO

the ‘Senior Queen’ in the year 1294 AD during the 31st throne-year of Kre yon, and passed away in the year 1300 AD during the 4th throne-year of Twa Te, and this is consistent with the time frame of the events.

4 Empress Bulughan (‘Bol gan)

The afore mentioned copy of Sa skya Pañḍita’s *Tshad ma rigs gter* preserved at ‘Bras spungs has a second colophon stating that Empress Bulughan had commissioned the reprint of 200 copies and distributed them to monastic colleges:

The noble Queen known as dPal mo gan endowed with all the heavenly qualities, commissioned two hundred sets of the Rigs gter and offered them [to the monasteries] for teaching and learning, by virtue of which may the Ruler properly enjoy longevity; and may everyone attain Buddhahood. May this be auspicious! it is recorded.

The colophon appears to be a later addition, because the orthography of the single line text, grammar and spelling differ from the text of the original – being smaller and closer, lacking the flow of the archaic style of writing. This second colophon is a testimony to the re-printing for the sake of distribution.

The patron of this operation, Empress ‘Bol gan alias Bhol gan (Bulughan), was the wife of the Yuan Emperor Temur (Temür Öljejtü) alias Khreng tsung. In the year 1295, AD she was enthroned as the Senior Queen. Devoted to Tibetan Buddhism, she had a special predilection for Tantric traditions. This is

reflected in the decoration and the statues of the monastery named dBan nying si (Wan ning si, 万宁寺), which she established in the capital city. It seems that Emperor Temur was unable to exercise political rule due to a chronic disease and therefore this queen exercised most of the political authority. In the year 1308 AD, when Emperor Temur passed away and Emperor Wu tsung (Wuzong Külüg Khaan) ascended the throne, her title as the Senior Queen was withdrawn and she was sentenced to be executed after having been banished to a place called Tung an kro'u (Dong'an zhou, 东安州).²

The re-print of the *Tshad ma rigs gter* was part of a wider operation of printing and distribution of texts. In the year 1299 Empress Bulughan also instigated and sponsored the print edition of six sets of scriptures, Mahāyāna-sūtrāṅkāra [by Maitreya] when Tishri Lama Grags pa 'od zer (1294–1303) was in charge of propagating the dharma. She had four hundred copies printed and distributed as free offerings to dharma practitioners.

The six scriptures commissioned by Empress Bulughan were written at the Blue Stupa of the Great Palace in Ta'i Tu (Dadu [Beijing]) in the year 1299 AD and printed at the White Stūpa. These are listed as follows:

1. Title: *Theg pa chen po'i mdo sde rgyan* (*Mahāyāna-sūtrāṅkāra*)
2. Title: *dBu ma rtsa ba'i 'grel ba tshig gsal* (*Prasannapadā* by Candrakīrti)
3. Title: *Chos mngon pa kun las btus pa* (*Abhidharma-samuccaya* by Asaṅga)
4. Title: *mNgon pa mdzod* (*Abhidharmakośa*) (to date this text has not been retrieved).
5. Title: *Tshad ma rnam par nges pa* (*Pramāṇaviniścaya*)
6. Title: *Tshad ma rigs gter* (the 'Treasury of the Science of Valid Cognition' by Sa skya Paṇḍita mentioned before)

The colophon of the third text states:

This immaculate teaching to gain a discriminative faculty fully to comprehend all phenomena, and showing the means to attain that [skill] through clear exposition of meanings, this *Abhidharmasamuccaya* or compendium of knowledge comprises the noble teaching by the Bodhisattva Asaṅga. For the sake of the noble Queen of the Great Dharmarājā of the world, who is endowed with all the signs of heavenly attributes of nobility, adorned with the seven attributes of an ārya (noble one) such as devotion to the dharma, in order that she, the Glorious

2 See 《元史·列传·后妃》卷一百一十四，中华书局，1974年版，第2873页

'Bol gan, through her pure devotion attain the state of Sugata, and in order that she may help propagate and spread the Buddha dharma, and to uphold the noble dharma through all her cyclic rebirths, this treasure of dharma has been produced to last long in print form. 'Jam dbyangs, the epitome of the virtuous application of all aspects of the Buddha's doctrine, Kun dga' dbang 'phyug, Bhikṣu Rin chen 'phel, the noble translator Karanada and Bad ma se na du lag yang nga [?], Saṃghada and Zam chung etc., all helped to compile this text and the skilled calligrapher Chos skyabs copied the [model] text, which was [then] nicely engraved [on woodblocks] by skilled artisans.

By the great merit arising from this undertaking, may all sentient beings attain Buddhahood. For the period until that is attained, may none be separated from this noble dharma. May the ruler Tha'i hwu, and his consort (dPon mo) with their princes and subjects enjoy longevity. May the empire expand and the realm enjoy peace; and may the rule be according to the dharma at all times. The essence of the meaning of Abhidharma according to the Mahāyāna tradition has been expounded in depth by the teacher Asaṅga in this text, the edition and its printing were curated by Yon tan rin chen, an upholder of the Tripiṭaka.

dPon mo Bhol gan, the noble Queen of the [present] ruler, a descendant in the sixth-generation lineage of the mighty Cakravartin Chinggis Khan, ruling the world according to the dharma, is endowed with noble lineage, physical beauty, mighty good fortune and great power. With undivided devotion and faith rooted in an understanding of the virtues of the Triple Gem [Buddha, Dharma and Sangha] during the time when the imperial preceptor Tishri Bla ma Grags pa 'od zer was the head of the dharma, she commissioned the printing of 400 copies each of *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra* [by Maitreya]; *Madhyamakakārikā* [by Nāgārjuna]; *Abhidharma-samuccaya* [by Asaṅga]; *Abhidharmakośa* [by Vasubandhu], *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, a setting of valid cognition [by Candrakīrti], and Treasury of the Science of Valid Cognition [by Sakya Paṇḍita]. May the merit accruing from offering copies of these texts to the upholders of the Tripiṭaka, enable the Great King Po hwang tha'i hwu, dPon mo chen mo, the royal off-spring and lineages, enjoy longevity. May peace prevail in the kingdom, and with the flourishing of the Buddha dharma in ten directions, may everyone attain the unsurpassable state of enlightenment. All this was written at the Blue Stūpa of the Great Palace in Ta'i tu (Beijing) on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month of the Earth Female Sow year and [the printing] was completed at the White Stūpa. May it be auspicious!

There is an additional text that was part of this printing operation but was not listed: the text called *sDom pa gsum gyi rab dbye ba* [a detailed analysis of the three vows] by *Sa skya Paṇḍita*. According to the colophon this was commissioned by Queen *Bhol gan* alias *'Bol gan* [Bulughan] and, like the other texts, it was completed on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month of the Earth Female Sow year (1299 AD) at the blue *Stūpa* of *Ta'i tu* Great Palace, and printed at the White *Stūpa*. This text is preserved in *sNye mo bye mkhar* monastery in Central Tibet (and not like the others in *'Bras spungs* monastery in *lHa sa*). The colophon is as follows:

In the Land of Snows, prophesied by the Victorious One (Buddha), with encyclopaedic knowledge of all Buddha's doctrines, the Second Victorious One, the Glorious *Sa skya pa* [*Kun dga' rgyal mtshan*] gave this excellent teaching. This noble text that is an exposition of the mind of the enlightened ones [was printed] for the sake of the noble Queen of the Great Dharma Raja of the world, who is endowed with the seven attributes, such as [high ranking] lineage and is adorned with the seven attributes of an *ārya* such as devotion to the Dharma. Thanks to her devotion, the Great Queen *Bhol gan* has commissioned the writing and engraving for printing of the stainless commentaries of the *Tathāgatas*. At this very time, this immaculate teaching of *Chos rje* [*Sa skya Paṇḍita*] was also being completed successfully. May the accruing merits enable [her] to attain enlightenment. Contemporaneously, in this life, may the Lord Emperor and all his lineage, enjoy longevity and good health, and may all conflicts and harmful elements subside, so that peace and well-being spread in all directions. On the 15th day of the 7th lunar month of the Earth Female Sow year, this was written at the Blue *Stūpa* of the *Ta'i tu* (Beijing) Palace, and printed at the White *Stūpa*. May it be auspicious.

A possible reason for the omission of this text from the list is that it was not originally planned as part of the same printing operation. However, it can be inferred from the colophon that this was an addition to the other scriptures.

These extant prints bear witness to the largest volume of printing scriptures in Tibetan language during the Yuan dynastic period. They also establish Empress Bulughan as the most generous patron of printing in the Tibetan language. The texts were distributed on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month of the Earth Female Sow year, which corresponds to the Christian era of 1299 AD. Obviously this was the ceremonial start of a wider distribution. All these texts printed thanks to the endeavor of this Mongolian Empress who was profoundly dedicated to Tibetan Buddhism made it to Central Tibet and

eventually reached 'Bras spungs and sNye mo bye mkhar monasteries (and probably other Tibetan monasteries, too).

5 Conclusion

Newly retrieved texts from Central Tibet that were printed at the Yuan court bear witness to the importance given by Mongolian rulers to the multiplication and distribution of Buddhist texts. The colophons celebrating Chabi, Kōkōchin and Bulughan provide us with precious evidence on the role women played in this process. Bulughan in particular seems to have been much more significant in this respect than any of the known patrons and her contribution is not only remarkable in terms of printing but also actual distribution. It is hoped that more witnesses of a book history that connects different people, Chinese, Mongols and Tibetan in the name of a shared book history will surface and cast light on this momentous process.

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Empress Shōtoku as a Sponsor of Printing

Peter Kornicki

There is no documentary evidence of printing in Japan until 1009, when the statesman Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1028) recorded in his diary that 1,000 copies of the *Lotus sūtra* had been printed.¹ No copies of this survive, but even if he was mistaken his entry shows that the concept of printing texts was already familiar by his lifetime. The oldest extant printed text with a date is the *Jōyūshikiron* printed in Nara in 1088. In spite of the lack of documentary evidence, however, printing in Japan has a much longer history, as is well known, and in fact dates back to the middle of the eighth century. That is when the so-called *Hyakumantō darani* were printed and in this short piece I shall explore the connection between Empress Shōtoku (718–770; reigned 749–758 under the name Kōken and 764–770 under the name Shōtoku) and the earliest known instance of printing in Japan.

Shōtoku was the last of a succession of women to sit on the Japanese throne and it was nearly a thousand years before another woman did so; since the Meiji Restoration of 1868 the Japanese throne has been barred to women (Kornicki 1999, 133–152). Her parents both appear to have been devout Buddhists. Her father, Shōmu (701–756; reigned 724–749), is best known as the monarch responsible for the construction of the huge gilt statue of Vairocana Buddha at the Tōdaiji temple in Nara, which was completed in 752, but much of his reign was governed by his Buddhist faith, which was enlisted in the protection of the nascent Japanese state (Piggot 1997, chapter 7). Her mother, Kōmyō, ran her own agency which carried out temple construction, sūtra-copying and image-making, and in 740 had the scriptorium make a copy of the complete Buddhist canon (*Issaikyō*) (Ariga Yōen 1984, 16–17). Shōtoku seems to have inherited both her parents' devotion to Buddhism and the sense that Buddhism was inseparable from the interests of the state. Apart from the *Hyakumantō darani*, her most well-known act of sponsorship of Buddhism is the construction of the Saidaiji temple in 765 as a counterpart to her father's Tōdaiji.

As the name suggests, the *Hyakumantō darani* consist of both miniature wooden pagodas and *dhāraṇī* or Buddhist spells. In the Hōryūji temple in Nara more than 45,000 of the miniature pagodas survive along with nearly 4,000

1 *Dainihon kokiroku* edition of *Midō Kanpakuki* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1952–54), vol. 2, p. 34.

dhāraṇī, but many more are to be found elsewhere in Japan and overseas. The only documentary evidence relating to the *Hyakumantō darani* is to be found in the chronicle *Shoku nihongi* (797), in an entry corresponding to the year 770.

After the uprising of the eighth year [of Tenpyō-hōji, i.e. 764] had been put down, the sovereign [Shōtoku] took a vow and ordered the construction of one million small three-storied pagodas, each 4 *sun* 5 *bu* [about 13.5 cms] in height and 3 *sun* 5 *bu* [about 10.5 cms] in diameter and containing underneath the upper part one of the Konpon, Jishin, Sōrin and Rokudo *dhāraṇī*. Once this had all been done, the pagodas were distributed to various temples. The officials and artisans who had been engaged in this work, one hundred and fifty-seven in all, were rewarded with increases in rank, according to station.²

This clearly associates Shōtoku with the *Hyakumantō darani* but does not trouble to mention that the *dhāraṇī* were printed. Considerably more information is provided in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*, a record of the Tōdaiji temple which carries a preface dated 1106 but appears to rely on much older records.

In the first year of Jingo-keiun [767], Eastern and Western Small-Pagoda Pavilions were constructed [in the Tōdaiji]. The monk Jitchū built them. On Tenpyō-hōji 8[764].9.11 the monarch Kōken had one million small pagodas made and distributed to Ten Great Temples. Each one contained a printed *Muku jōkō darani*. (Oral tradition has it that this was in atonement for the deaths caused during the rebellion of Emi [no Oshikatsu]). (Tsutsui Eishun 1971, 25–26, 104)

This for the first time mentions that the *dhāraṇī* had been printed and furthermore identifies the sūtra from which they had been taken: in Japanese, the *Muku jōkō darani kyō* (Ch. *Wugou jing guangda tuoluoni jing* 無垢淨光大陀羅尼經).³ In the year 722 it was recorded that that text had been translated into Chinese by a Tokharian monk by the name of Mitraśānta, together with the monk

2 *Shoku nihongi*, in *Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei* vols. 12–16 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989–1998), vol. 13, p. 280.

3 *T* 19, pp. 717–21, #1024. It appears that the Sanskrit original is not extant, but several Tibetan translations survive, and from these the original Sanskrit title has been reconstructed as *Raśmīvalaviśuddhaprabhā-dhāraṇī-sūtra* (see Lancaster and Sung-bae Park 1979, 126–127; and, for a different reconstruction of the Sanskrit title, Miyasaka Yūshō 1977, 18–20).

Fazang, in the closing years of the reign of empress Wu.⁴ *Wugou jing guangda tuoluoni jing* is a short text in which the Buddha recites six *dhāraṇī*. The efficacy of the first, the 'basic' spell, is described as follows:

People who wish to perform the ceremony for it should, on the 8th, 13th, 14th or 15th day of the month, walk round and round the pagoda containing the relics a full seventy-seven times, with it on their right, reciting this charm [*dhāraṇī*] also seventy-seven times: they should build an altar and keep its surface clean. They should have the charm copied out seventy-seven times, and out of respect for the ceremony should give the copyist perfume, flowers, food and drink, clean clothes and a bath, and reward him either by anointing and covering him with perfumes or by giving him much money, or by paying him according to his ability. Then they should take these copies of the charms, place them inside the pagoda, and make offerings at the pagoda. Alternatively they should make seventy-seven small clay pagodas, place one copy inside each, and make offerings. If they duly perform this, people who are about to die will prolong their lives to old age, all their previous sins and evil deeds being completely destroyed.

The sūtra goes on to recommend that 'anyone wishing to complete the six ways to salvation . . . should copy out ninety-nine copies of the first four above mentioned [*dhāraṇī*], make ninety-nine small pagodas, and insert a copy in each'.⁵

These two pieces of evidence together provide a great deal of information, but they would be subject to incredulity were it not for the survival of many miniature pagodas and their printed contents. What confirms the link between the two is the fact that although the printed *dhāraṇī* themselves are undated, many of the pagodas carry handwritten dates on their bases which correspond to the 760s. Yet this still leaves us with a number of problems: there is the origin of printing technology, there is the choice of this particular sūtra, there is the supposed scale of the whole exercise (one million rather than seventy-seven), and there is the motivation for carrying it out in the first place.⁶ With regard to the first question, it is striking that the sūtra from which the *dhāraṇī* were extracted, the *Wugou jing guangda tuoluoni jing*, is the same as the sūtra which was discovered in a full printed version in a stone pagoda in the Pulguksa

4 See T 55, #2152, p. 369c; T 55, #2157, p. 867a; and T 55, #2154, p. 566b.

5 T 19, #1024, pp. 717–21; the translations are adapted from a complete translation of the sūtra made by Eric Ceadel, probably in the 1960s, and now in the author's possession.

6 On most of these questions I have written at length elsewhere, see Kornicki 2012, 43–70.

temple in Kyōngju in 1966 and which, it is now widely accepted, was printed in the early eighth century, although there is an unresolved dispute over whether it was printed in China or in Korea.⁷ Whatever the answer to that question, it is clear that printing was practiced on the mainland before it was undertaken in Japan, so printing was without doubt yet another of the technologies transferred to Japan during the Nara period.

The link with empress Wu that is suggested by the fact that this very sūtra was one translated in her reign is intriguing. In 2008 Tim Barrett produced a mass of circumstantial evidence to suggest that printing was actively encouraged in the reign of empress Wu, but so far no concrete evidence has come to light. Even in fourteenth-century Japan the parallels between empress Wu and Shōtoku were already a matter of note: as the historian Kitabatake Chikafusa put it, ‘Some sixty years separated the rule of Empress Wu in China and the reign of Empress Shōtoku in Japan, yet how similar were the events in the two countries at these different times’ (Varley 1980, 146). Close though the connections may be, they do not prove that Shōtoku got the idea of printing from Wu, and we surely need to see the whole *Hyakumantō darani* project as coming out of the realities of politics and religion in mid eighth-century Japan, and in particular as a product of Shōtoku’s own engagement with the *Wugou jing guangda tuoluoni jing*.

A cursory reading of the *Wugou jing guangda tuoluoni jing* not only reveals the origin of the idea of mass reproduction of the *dhāraṇī* (albeit on a much smaller scale) but also casts doubt on the supposition, expressed in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*, that the *Hyakumantō darani* project was conceived as an act of atonement. The sūtra itself reveals the religious reasons for reproducing it, in terms of prolonging life, as we have already seen. In the 760s Shōtoku was in fact nearing the end of her life, as indeed had been Wu when the sūtra was translated into Chinese. But this explains neither the scale of the project nor the use of printing technology to reproduce the *dhāraṇī* and we must look elsewhere for Shōtoku’s motives.

Crucial to any interpretation of Shōtoku’s motives is the fact that the *Hyakumantō darani* were a state undertaking and that the provision of the timber, the use of lathes to fashion the miniature pagodas, the provision of the paper and ink and the use of newly-imported printing technology were all underwritten by the state. In this respect the *Hyakumantō darani* resemble her father’s construction of the great statue of the Buddha in the Tōdaiji and of a massive building to house it, also undertaken by the state. Both of these were

7 On this find, on further developments, and on the current state of play, see Kornicki 2012, 47–49.

public and political acts and need to be understood as such. As the initiator of the *Hyakumantō darani* Shōtoku is thus akin to Balthild, the Merovingian queen who is said to have ‘grasped the uses of piety, both as a means to secure personal status and as a political instrument’ (Nelson 1986, 31). It is not easy to appreciate the difficulties faced by women on the throne in early East Asia who had to deal with an exclusively male bureaucracy, but the example of Balthild suggests that Shōtoku’s motives may indeed have been concerned with securing her personal status as a woman ruler and using Buddhism as a political instrument. In these respects she may well have consciously or unconsciously found Wu’s patronage of Buddhism, and possibly of printing as well, an example worth following. If she did, she would not have been alone, for the same can be said of at least two other East Asian female rulers, Trimalo (d. 712) of Tibet and the queen of the state named in Chinese records as Dongnūguo, who visited the court of Wu in 692 in person.⁸

Shōtoku’s use of printing was thus tied up with considerations relating to Buddhist ritual and political advantage in eighth-century Japan. It had nothing to do with printing for the practical purpose of providing texts for people to read: after all, the *dhāraṇī* were rolled up and placed inside the miniature pagodas and in any case, being written in Sanskrit using Chinese characters phonographically, as texts they were accessible only to a tiny handful of people in eighth-century Japan. All the signs are that after Shōtoku’s death the *Hyakumantō darani* were seen as a political embarrassment: the treatment of the episode in the official history *Shoku nihongi*, which was revised in 794, is laconic and fails to mention the use of printing technology, and there is no mention of printing again until 1009, as noted at the beginning of this essay; the *Hyakumantō darani* themselves disappeared from the historical record completely until the eighteenth century.⁹ What is more, it was not until the seventeenth century that the next woman, Meishō (1624–1696; reigned 1629–43), ascended the throne in Japan.

Much remains mysterious about Shōtoku’s sponsorship of printing for the *Hyakumantō darani* and most of the questions are likely to remain unanswered unless archaeologists happen upon some *mokkan* (wooden writing tablets) which cast more light on our knowledge of these events. At the present state of our knowledge, all that can be said is that the scale of the whole exercise points inexorably to a political use of Buddhist ritual and of a new technology. It demonstrated her control of the resources of the state but in the long run

8 See Diemberger 2007, 341, n. 22; Uebach 2005, 37; *Jiu Tang shu*, *juan* 197, p. 5278. For a fuller exploration of Shōtoku’s motives see Kornicki 2012.

9 On the revisions to the *Shoku nihongi*, see Kornicki 2012, 56–7.

failed to achieve what was expected and suffered the ignominy of extinction from the public record.

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From *Chongzhen lishu* 崇禎曆書 to *Tengri-yin udq-a* and *Rgya rtsis chen mo*

Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp

Beginning with the visits to the Tibetan area by the Portuguese Jesuit priests A. de Andrade (1580–1634) and M. Marques (d. 1640s) in the 1620s, regions dominated by Tibetan religion and culture were visited by a number of Catholic priests belonging to several different orders, men of the cloth who were ostensibly in search of souls that, in their view, needed to be saved. One undoubted high point among these contacts is the well-documented stay in Central Tibet of the Italian Jesuit priest I. Desideri (1684–1733) during the years 1715–1721. In his recent splendid book, T. Pomplun (2010) included a compelling narrative of this priest's encounters with the doctrines of the *dGe lugs pa* school of Tibetan Buddhism.¹ It will no doubt be fruitful to read this rewarding volume together with the larger-scale study of Wu Kunming 伍昆明 (1992), which is primarily based on a very judicious use of a good number of archival documents in a variety of European languages.² Sweet's highly readable translation of Desideri's mission makes equally compelling reading, as does the recent, slim reprint of a number of Desideri's letters and personal papers edited and translated by H. Hosten, S.J.³ Amazingly, when one considers his relatively short stay in the Tibetan area, Desideri apparently wrote several treatises in Tibetan, a good number of which are now available in an Italian translation by G. Toscana, S.J. However, his major work *contra* Buddhism, the so-called *Questions on Rebirth and Emptiness* of perhaps 1731 (Pomplun 2011, 402ff.),⁴ has yet to be edited and studied.

1 See also the fine bibliographical and analytical survey of Desideri's Tibetan writings in Pomplun (2011); and for another recent contribution to this theme, see Sweet (2006).

2 My thanks go to Prof. Zhang Changhong of Sichuan University for reminding me of the existence of this important work, which is not registered in Pomplun's bibliography.

3 See, respectively, Sweet (2010) and Hosten (2011). The latter was originally published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1938), 567–767.

4 I have not seen the manuscript, but Pomplun cites its title: *mGo skar bla ma i po li do zhes bya ba yis phul ba'i bod kyi mkhas pa rnam la skye pa snga ma dang stong pa nyid kyi lta ba'i sgo nes zhu ba*. This should be corrected to *mGo dkar bla ma i po li do zhes bya ba yis* [or better:

A band of Jesuit priest-astronomers such as Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), Johann Schreck (1576–1630) and Giacomo Rho (1583–1638), who were followed by Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–88), together with their Chinese acolytes and converts, introduced Western astronomy and mathematics into China during the late Ming and early Qing. The story of their treatises and translations is well known and its broad contours have been well surveyed in a good number of publications.⁵ These translations introduced their newly found audience to the astronomy of Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) and Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), in particular. Empire and the cosmopolitanism of the Qing court had an interesting, unintended consequence, namely, that a small band of Mongols and Tibetans who were active at the imperial court were also able to gain access, through the Chinese translations, to these collections of writings on Western astronomy. The source for these was the compendium titled *Chongzhen lishu* 崇禎曆書, *Calendrical Treatise of the Chongzhen Reign*, of roughly 1635, the publication of which was supervised by Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562–1633) and Li Tianjing 李天經 (1579–1659).⁶ Its pendant of 1645, the *Xiyang xinfa lishu* 西洋新法曆書, *Calendrical Treatise Based on the New Western Methods*, was issued by Schall von Bell. Both compendia consist of Chinese translations and reformulations of a series of texts on astronomy, a number of individual items of which have so far remained unidentified, that were written in part by the Jesuit scholar-priests. In 1669, Verbiest followed the reissue of the *Xiyang xinfa lishu* with a tract titled *Xinfa suanshu* 新法算書, *Mathematics Based on New [Western] Methods*, that was compiled and later published in 1700 by order of the Kangxi emperor. Earlier, in 1656, Schall von Bell had compiled the *Jiyanao lishu* 簡要曆書, *Simplified Calendrical Treatise*, as a kind of guidebook to the much more voluminous *Xiyang xinfa lishu*, for the Shunzhi 順治 emperor (r. 1644–1661). His son Kangxi, too, took a keen personal interest in calendrical astronomy – at one point he wrote, not altogether unexpectedly, that “calendrical methods are linked to essential affairs of State” – and had made serious studies of the subject as well as of mathematics with Verbiest and other Jesuits (Jami 2012, 61, 73ff., 139ff.). The Tibetans became aware of what appears to have been the *Xinfa suanshu*

zhes bya bas] phul ba'i bod kyi mkhas pa rnams la skye ba snga ma dang stong pa nyid kyi lta ba'i sgo nas zhu ba.

- 5 Aside from a massive amount of Chinese scholarship on this topic, Needham and Wang (1970, 437–61) still gives an admirable overview, as does Sivin (1973) [= Sivin (1995)], and also Martzloff (1993–1994). For a detailed study of the Kangxi 康熙 period, 1662–1722, see now Jami (2012) and its excellent bibliography.
- 6 For this work and its successors, see Chu (2007) and Pen Nai (2009).

through their Mongol co-religionists as well as by their direct contact with the Kangxi court. But they were not privy to the innovations and refinements that were later introduced by such men as Jean-François Foucquet, S.J. (1665–1741) in 1712 and, in any event, these were virtually of no consequence for the preparation of calendars (Jami 2012, 284–311). The compendium was to have a lasting effect on traditions of Tibetan calendar making in the Amdo area.

In their survey of the introduction of Western calendrical astronomy in the Tibetan cultural area, Huang Mingxin 黃明信 and Chen Jiujin 陳久金 indicated that portions of the *Xinfa suanshu* were translated into Mongol in 1711 by order of Kangxi, that is, 11 years after the printing of the Chinese text.⁷ And they signalled the existence of a xylograph of this Mongol translation in the Beijing National Library. My copy of the xylograph, courtesy of the kind offices of Mr Yumpa and his colleagues, does not have a title page, but the 13-page *Preface* has the following heading: *Qitad-un ĵiruqai-yin sudur eĉe mongyol-ĉilen orĉiyuluysan ĵiruqai-yin [orusil]*, that is, *The Mongol Translation from the Chinese Book on the Mathematical Astronomy*. After a preamble, we have, as per protocol, two passages that are elevated from, that is, that are placed above, the upper margin of the main body of the text: namely, a reference to Kangxi, here styled *Manĵusiri degedü Amuġulang qaġan*, that is, the ‘Supreme Mañjuśrī Kangxi Emperor’ and an official decree as well as a listing of the names of various individuals, scholars, artists [for drawing the planetary constellations and star maps], and officials, who took part in the translation project (*orĉiyuluġĉi kelemürĉi-ün ner-e*). Thus, a consortium of scholars who were able to translate Mongol (*mongyol biĉig*), Tibetan (*töbed...*), and Chinese (*kitad...*) written documents were involved in this project that may (but only may, since evidence for this appears to be lacking) have been nominally headed by Rje btsun dam pa Qutuġtu 1 Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan (1635–1723) of Urga [= Ulaan Baatar]. As indicated by his biographer and friend Jaya Paṇḍita Blo bzang ’phrin las dpal bzang po (1642–1708), Rje btsun dam pa and Kangxi enjoyed very close relations. They had been in indirect contact since 1688 when rje btsun dam pa had requested the court for protection against the Jungar Mongols, but their first recorded face-to-face meeting took place some three years later, in May of 1691, in mTsho bdun [Mon. Doluġan naġur = Dolonor], in Čaqar.⁸ And they seem to have taken to one another immediately. Being a witness to the growth of their relationship, Jaya Paṇḍita writes that not only

7 Some of the details that follow are taken in part from Huang and Chen (1987, 316–17, 599–605).

8 For this and what follows, see Jaya Paṇḍita Blo bzang ’phrin las dpal bzang po (1981a, 70a–74a) and Jaya Paṇḍita Blo bzang ’phrin las dpal bzang po (1981b, 479–517). Their first meeting was occasioned by the conclusion of a tribute treaty between the Qalqa Mongols and the Qing

did the emperor pay him personal visits in his private quarters (*gzings/gzims gur*) – this would contravene well-established imperial protocol and must have occasioned some frowns on the foreheads of his Chinese advisors – but also that he himself had heard the emperor say twice or thrice that he held no lama in higher esteem than his [or: their] teacher! One wonders, of course, what he would have written had he been asked about Kangxi's relationship with lCang skya II Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan (1642–1714), whom the emperor had awarded with the very substantial title of National Preceptor (Ch. *guoshi*) title in 1705 while visiting Dolonor! (See the narrative in Sagaster (1967, 281–2.) Even if it is still far from clear exactly what kind of privileges this title may have carried with it, aside from the obvious increase in the prestige of its holder, rJe btsun dam pa was never given this title and the privileges it may have entailed.

It now turns out that this blockprint was published in printed book-form in Inner Mongolia under the title of *Tengri-yin udq-a, Essence of Heaven* (Čeden 1990).⁹ With his usual resourcefulness, my student Mr Jo Sokhyo 조석효 [曹锡孝], ever the 'library cormorant', to borrow a memorable phrase from Samuel T. Coleridge, was able to secure copies of this work – I thank him for kindly providing me with one of these – that, given its topic and date of publication, really should no longer have been available for purchase. This collectanea was also translated into Tibetan, and Mr Jo is studying this compendium for his doctoral dissertation where he will deal with its various linguistic incarnations with a special focus on the section that deals with the calculation of solar eclipses (*rishi* 日食, *naran bariqu, nyi 'dzin*).

Simply titled *rGya rtsis chen mo, Great Chinese Astronomy*, the Tibetan translation of the Mongol version appears to date from *circa* 1714–15.¹⁰ The bilingual pagination with the Tibetan numbering on the left-hand and the Chinese on the right-hand side of the page no doubt has its origin in the fact that Chinese and not Tibetan artisans were responsible for carving the printing blocks. Indeed, being ignorant of Tibetan, carving Chinese-style pagination on the blocks was the only way in which they could keep track of what they were

court. Jean-François Gerbillon, s.J. (1654–1707) provided an eyewitness account of this event, for which see the reference in Charleux 2006, 80, n. 68.

9 Its Chinese title is *Tianwen yuanli* 天文原理. This work was not used or cited in the otherwise very substantial study of Baumann (2008).

10 Here I should like to thank Mr Yumpa for having so generously shared with me his copy of this translation, which has yet to be published. Karmay (2003, 1999) has the following entry at E.039: *rgya nag gsar rtsis kyi stong thun 'gyur byang ma gff*. Though the Tibetan phrase can be rendered as “translation's colophon of a miscellany anent the new Chinese astronomy,” the fact that a young Chinese astronomer/astrologer (*rtsis pa rgya phrug*) had a stake in it makes it pretty much unlikely that this refers to our text.

carving. We have already come across this custom of dual pagination in the Tibetan xylographs from printing blocks that were carved in Dadu 大都, the winter capital of the Yuan dynasty.¹¹ Again, Yum pa was able to locate a xylograph of the *Great Chinese Astronomy* from these blocks among the vast library holdings of the Potala in Lhasa.¹² The result of the labours of a team of bilingual Mongol scholars (including, so it would appear, the rJe btsun dam pa himself) survives in a xylograph from printing blocks that were carved in Beijing in 1715, the 54th year of Kangxi's reign. Still uncomfortable with the geocentric model of the Galilean solar system, these seventeenth-century Jesuit astronomers had adopted the geoheliocentric or Tyconic model of the solar system as advocated by Brahe and were of course also quite familiar with Kepler.¹³ That being the case, it is still surprising to see mention of the names of both astronomers in these compendia¹⁴ that also contain numerous glosses in smaller lettering. Independently titled *Jam dbyangs bde ldan rgyal pos mdzad pa'i rgya rtsis bod skad du bsgyur ba'i spar byang, Print Colophon of the Chinese Calendrical Astronomy, Written by the Mañjuśrī Emperor Kangxi, which was Translated into Tibetan*, the concluding colophon of the Tibetan translation in three folios is as lengthy as it is instructive. My student Mr Jo will present an analysis of it, as he will deal with the particulars of the Mongol translation.

A key point: as is to be expected, traditional Tibetan culture makes no distinction between astrology and astronomy. In Europe, a distinction between the two was apparently first made as late as the Renaissance and, even so, a number of *bona fide* European astronomers like, for example, Kepler continued not merely to take an interest in but actually also to write on astrological subjects. In the Indian subcontinent as well in Tibet, astronomy with its rigorous mathematics and astrology fell under the rubric of *rtsis rig pa* (**jyotiḥvidyā*), that is, what can be called 'astral science', and it was in turn included in the so-called 'eighteen domains of knowledge' (*rig gnas chung ba bco bryad*),

11 For some of these xylographs, see van der Kuijp (2013, 127–8, nos. 33–4), and the literature cited there.

12 See Yum pa (1998, 556–67).

13 It is worthy of note that there were other Jesuits who introduced the competing heliocentric astronomy, for which see Shi (2007).

14 See the *Rgya rtsis chen mo*, vol. pa, fol. 1b (*og*) / Juan 21, fol. 1b (*xia*): "Kepler [with a gloss:] 'was a friend of Ti go [= Tycho, vdK]'" (*ke pe el* [with a gloss: *ti go'i grogs po yin /*] – half forgotten, Mr Yumpa pointed this passage out to me long ago when he was a Harvard-Yenching coordinate scholar in the year 2009. See now also the parallel Mongol text of the *Qitad-un jiruqai-yin sudur* in Čeden (1990, 690): *ke pi lel* [with a gloss: *ti go nökiür yin bolai*:]. There is of course hardly any question that the Mongol and the Tibetan transcriptions go back to Chinese Keba'er 刻白爾 for Kepler and Tigu 弟谷 for Tycho.

an enumeration for which the very early *Vinayavibhaṅga* may very well be the *locus classicus* (see sDe dge (1991, vol. 51, no. 4357 [# 4352], 406/iff. [Co, 200bff.]), as quoted in Khams sprul IV bsTan 'dzin chos kyi nyi ma (1976, 11). The Tibetan term for astrologer/astronomer is *rtsis pa*, which literally means “one who calculates/computes” and, to my knowledge first attested for the fifteenth century, the court-astrologer at the Phag mo gru court was called *bla rtsis pa*, a title that came to be employed for several centuries.¹⁵

The libraries of Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil monastery in that portion of Amdo / mDo smad that is located in Gansu Province also reportedly contain a witness of this work, but it is as yet unclear whether this is a xylograph or a manuscript copy.¹⁶ In any event, I suspect that it is currently located in the monastery's E vaṃ chos 'khor gling, that is, its Dus 'khor [Kālacakra] Seminary (*grwa tshang*). According to his biographer and disciple Gung thang III dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron ma (1762–1823), dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (1728–1791), *alias* 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje II, had founded this seminary in 1763 at the instigation of Paṅ chen Lama III [or VI] dPal ldan ye shes (1738–1780) (see Gung thang III dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron ma (1971, 158) [= 1990, 143–144]; see also Brag dgon Zhabs drung dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1982, 523)). The third volume of the collected writings of Blo bzang sbyin pa (1918–after 2003), *alias* Tshangs sras bzhad pa'i blo gros and Smad sog Badzra, is devoted to the study of the calendar that is based on the astronomy that we find in this compendium (Blo bzang sbyin pa 2003).¹⁷ He is [or was] institutionally affiliated with this seminary. And the same holds for another recent work on the calendar that was written in 1985 by Shes rab chos 'phel, *alias* Mi pham dbyangs can dgyes pa'i blo gros, who was also connected with Bla brang's Dus 'khor Seminary (Shes rab chos 'phel 1989). And Huang Mingxin, whose Tibetan name is bSod nams rgya mtsho, writes that he had studied Chinese astral science

15 Schuh (2012, 1497) renders *bla rtsis pa* as ‘Divinationsmeister’. This is found in the last volume of his four-volume compendium of the secondary literature on the subject in Japanese, German, French and English. I thank him for kindly providing me with a copy of this useful and remarkable collection. But his ‘Divinationsmeister’ is too one-sided and thus a trifle misleading, since a *bla rtsis pa* was also engaged in computational astronomy and calendar making. Indeed, his definition of *rtsis pa* on p. 1541 is much more inclusive.

16 Ascribed to 'Jam dbyangs bDe ldan rgyal po, that is the Kangxi (*bde ldan = kangxi = bde skyid*) Emperor himself, the titles of the individual chapters of the text are given in Grags pa (1985, 42–44). The work in which this entry is found is a title catalogue of the holdings of the libraries of Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil monastery *sans* the personal library of the 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje re-embodiments.

17 The author of several studies of the Sanskrit grammar of the *Sarasvatīvyākaraṇa* and prosody, Blo bzang sbyin pa spent some 22 years in jail, regaining his freedom in 1979.

(*rgya rtsis*) with the astronomer (*rtsis rams pa*) bSam grub rgya mtsho of the Kyai rdor gsangs sngags dar rgyas gling Seminary of Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil and that he benefitted also from the historian of science Khren ci'u cin, that is, Chen Jiujin (Huang and Chen 1987, 619).¹⁸ Lastly, 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje IV Skal bzang thub bstan dbang phyug (1856–1916) wrote a short piece on the chronology of Buddhism (*bstan rtsis*) according to the *Rgya rtsis chen po* [= *mo*]. It will be worth our while to examine this little work a little more closely.¹⁹

After a brief preamble on earlier emperors of China, 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje IV states that the historical Buddha was born in the 26th regnal year of Tse'u dbang (< Ch. Zhao Wang 照王), the fourth emperor of the Zhou Dynasty, who reigned from *circa* 995 to 977 or from *circa* 977/975 to 957. To be sure, we find this already in the anonymous account of the famous sandalwood statue that was translated from Chinese into Uyghur by a certain Aṃ chang and then, evidently in a water-female-pig year (1263), from this Uyghur version into Tibetan by a certain Danasi.²⁰ Somewhat artificially titled *Tsan dan gyi sku rgya nag na bzhugs pa'i byon tshul, Origin of the Sandalwood Statue which Resides in China*, and oddly included under the rubric of *Rgyud 'grel* in two of the later xylograph editions of the Tanjur-canon – it is only found in the Tanjur editions of Beijing (1724–1738) and sNar thang (1741–1742) as well as in the so-called Golden Tanjur manuscript (c. 1733–c. 1741) – we do not encounter its listing in the available fourteenth- and fifteenth-century catalogues of the Tanjur, not even those from the pen of Karma pa III Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339)²¹ whose monastery, mTshur phu, was part of Tshal pa myriarchy

18 bSam [']grub rgya mtsho must be identified as the author of the two-volume work on astral science, for which see bSam grub rgya mtsho (1992).

19 What follows is based on 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje IV Skal bzang thub bstan dbang phyug (nd).

20 For further details surrounding the account of the sandalwood statue, see Pelliot (1914, 188–90); on the Kangxi stele inscription of 1721, MacDonald (1963, 77ff.), and more recently Sørensen (1986, 241–51) and Sørensen (1994, 78, 500–506). See also below.

21 The text is registered in the 1688 catalogue of the Beijing Tanjur that was allegedly compiled by a venerable monk (*ban rkan* [= *rgan*]) of Za hor, gDong drug bsn'yems pa'i lang tsho and scribed by the 'master of dance' (*'chams dpon*) Ngag dbang dkon mchog; see gDong drug bsn'yems pa'i lang tsho (1983, 209). The identification 'old, venerable monk (*ban rkan* [= *rgan*]) of Za hor' is frequently used by Dalai Lama v Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–82), but nowhere does he mention the name gDong drug bsn'yems pa'i lang tsho in his autobiography. On the other hand, he does register there a 'Chams dpon Ngag dbang dkon cog [= mchog], for which see Dalai Lama v Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1991, 433, 438). A 'New (*gsar ba*) gDong drug bsn'yems pa'i lang tsho' figures in the colophon of sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's (1653–1705) 1699 interlinear exegesis

(*khri skor*) that Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje (1309–64) governed from 1323 to circa 1350. Titled *Deb ther dmar po*, *Red Book*, the latter's influential chronicle, of which one recension contains a passage that is dated as late as 23 March 1363, includes a/the narrative of this statue that was apparently referred to in a work that he calls a *Rgya nag po'i yig tshang*, a *Chinese Document*. We are informed that this *Document* was translated into Tibetan by one Shes rab ye shes, who, we are told, had been a disciple of Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) and who was an erstwhile abbot (*mkhan po*) of Byang ngos [= Liangzhou 涼州, present-day Wuwei 武威], Gansu Province (see Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje 1981, 11–12). Here, Byang ngos might indicate any one of the so-called four monasteries of Liangzhou (*lang gru sde bzhi*). These are: Lha khang sde (Ch. Jinta si 金塔寺) to the south; Padmo'i sde to the west; Rgya mtsho'i sde to the north; and Sprul pa'i sde (Ch. Baita si 白塔寺) to the east.²² All are located within a relatively short distance of Wuwei and all were founded by Sa skya Paṇḍita. In his account of the influential Zi na family and their “home” monastery of Zi na bsam grub gling that is found in the area that would later be dominated by sKu 'bum monastery, Brag dgon Zhabs drung notes a certain Zi na mkhan po Shes rab ye shes dpal bzang po, who was apparently related to a certain Zi na Tse 'jo. We do not know whence he obtained this important narrative, but it definitely bears paraphrasing. While he does not quite explain how this came to pass, he writes that Zi na Tse 'jo was virtually raised as the fourth son of Tolui-noyan (1192–1232), Činggis Qan's (?1162–1227) youngest son, and his wife Zo ro ta [Sorqaqtani] (d. 1252).²³ According to his narrative, the third son was none other than Qubilai, and it was he who had requested his uncle Köden Qan for Sa skya Paṇḍita to be his chaplain. Köden only partly acquiesced to this request and gave him the latter's young nephew 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280). Even if the narrative appears to be somewhat flawed

of Dalai Lama v's commentary on the *Kāvyādarśa*; see sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1996, 651), and he is none other than the sDe srid himself. But I am afraid that I cannot [yet] identify the person who was the original gDong drug bsnyems [or snyems] pa'i lang tsho. Given the fact that he hid Dalai Lama v's passing for more than a decade, it is possible that this catalogue was in fact ghost-written by him.

- 22 For these, see Dor zhi (1988, 1–58); Brag dgon Zhabs drung dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1982, 139–47; 1989, 133–43). For a study of this region and the monastery where the Mongol prince of the blood Köden Qan and Sa skya Paṇḍita met, see now Fan and Shui (1997) and (2009). I do not have access to the original Chinese text. For the specifics of the four monasteries, see Fan and Shui (2009, 279–308).
- 23 For what follows, see Brag dgon Zhabs drung dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1982, 166–7; 1989, 162). To be sure, Tolui-noyan and Sorqaqtani had ten sons, of which Qubilai was in fact the fourth; see Boyle (1971, 159–62).

chronologically as well as factually, it then continues with Qubilai ordering 'Phags pa to receive his full ordination as a monk in Central Tibet, which we know from other sources to have taken place in 1255. 'Phags pa did not travel alone. He was accompanied by an escort that included a certain Zi na mKhan po Shes rab ye shes dpal bzang po, who, as his name in religion already suggests, was ordained in the lineage that Śākyaśrībhadrā (1127–1225) had founded in 1204 (Heimbel 2013). Once in Central Tibet, Zi na mKhan po ensured that many large and smaller religious institutions benefitted from 'Phags pa's return and gifted them with many goods. When they returned to one of the two Yuan dynasty capital cities (*rgyal khab*), Qubilai and 'Phags pa became his patrons (*yon mchod*),²⁴ being impressed by the way in which he had been able to handle the affairs of the 'two domains' (*lugs gnyis*), the religious and the secular. They asked him what he might wish for, to which he replied. As a result, they offered him competence over a number of areas and religious institutions and gave him a document to this effect that included the right to levy *corvée* labour (*'u lag bka' shog bcas*); The areas comprised: Shar Tsong kha, Su rgan, Khri kha, sPen thog, gDung khang, 'Ga Gam cu (? < Ch. Ganzhou 甘州), Bhi ti sde (< Ch. Baita si 白塔寺) in Byang ngos, Ched gsum sde, Khang [g]sar sde, La song sde, and Rin chen gling. And

mchod yon so so nas mu tig gi 'ja' sa re re dang / zon ju dben gyi rtsa ba'i dben ši'i las ka gnang /

... the patronized (*mchod*) [= 'Phags pa] and patron (*yon*) [= Qubilai] each gave him an edict adorned with pearls and the position of the basic Director (*dben ši* < Ch. *yuanshi* 院使) of the Office of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (*zon ju [ng] dben* < Ch. *xuanzhengyuan* 宣政院).²⁵

Aside from the mKhan po Shes rab ye shes, Tshal pa also mentions a Mi nyag Tsen tse Shes rab ye shes in connection with the historical sketch of Xixia 西夏 that he included in his chronicle (see Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje 1981, 28). The toponym 'Mi nyag' indicates that this Shes rab ye shes was in one way or another associated with Xixia, but the import of 'Tsen tse' is a bit of a problem

24 For this meaning of *mchod yon*, that is, here, *mchod gnas* [= 'Phags pa] and *yon bdag* [= Qubilai], see Seyfort Ruegg (1991, 442ff.); see also Seyfort Ruegg (1995, 41).

25 For Tibetan *zon ju dben*, Brag dgon Zhabs drung dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1989, 162) has *xuanjiyuan* 宣濟院, a department that I have not found attested elsewhere. The Imperial Preceptor and 10 directors headed the Office of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs; see Farquhar (1990, 153–7).

and I am unable to come up with a convincing solution of its probable Chinese antecedent²⁶ as I am of the ethnic identity of this man, if he be indeed different from the Shes rab ye shes of the Zi na clan.

The internal evidence of this narrative in the *Chinese Document* as well as in the *Origin of the Sandalwood Statue which Resides in China* suggests that the water-female-pig year roughly corresponds to the year 1263. Further, the *Origin of the Sandalwood Statue which Resides in China* indicates that its contents were based on an elusive historical work titled *Cung*. According to their narratives, the historical Buddha was born on the eighth day of the fourth month of a wood-tiger year and when he passed away [into nirvana] in the water-female-pig year (c. 750 BC), 2013 years had elapsed up to the year of 1263. But the text's *Anno Nirvanae* of c. 750 BC was not without its problems and was taken to task by a number of Tibetan scholars in their quest to ascertain the exact date of the Buddha's passing. One of these was 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481). He first quotes this chronology in his *rTsis la 'khrul pa sel ba, Eliminating Errors in Calendrical Calculations*, of 1442/3 and then curtly dismisses its veracity with the remark that it was merely a hypothesis (*dam bca' tsam*) without any supporting argument or evidence (see 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal 1466, 15b–16a, 20b). We notice, of course, that the title of the text that he cites is the *Chinese Document* and not the *Origin of the Sandalwood Statue which Resides in China!* 'Gos Lo tsā ba's first and major critic was Grwa phug pa Lhun grub rgya mtsho (c. 1400–c. 1460), and the latter mentions this reference to the chronology proposed by the narrative of the sandalwood statue in his detailed, seminal work on *Kālacakratantra* calendrical astronomy of 1447 (see Grwa phug pa Lhun grub rgya mtsho (1681, 3a–b) and Grwa phug pa Lhun grub rgya mtsho (2002, 3), which became the tested standard of the so-called Phug Tradition (*phug lugs*) of Tibetan calendrical astronomy. Notwithstanding the fact that an interlineary note in his work even mentions a 'chronology of the sandalwood lord' (*tsandan jo bo'i lo rgyus*), neither he nor 'Gos Lo tsā ba seems to have been directly familiar with the *Origin of the Sandalwood Statue which Resides in China*, a work that, as we now know, was to become part of the canon. To be sure, the absence of the *Origin of the Sandalwood Statue which Resides in China* from the early Tanjur catalogues and its obvious felt presence in the first half of the fourteenth century does not necessarily mean that it, or its basic narrative, was not more widely known prior to this time. Indeed, we meet with an early, if not what is so far the earliest, Tibetan mention of a work that deals with the history of this statue in the biography of Ze'u 'Dul 'dzin Grags pa brtson 'grus (1253–1316), *alias* Ze'u dpag shi (< Mon. *baysi*), that is,

26 Fortunately, I am in good company with my ignorance; see Stein (1966, 285, n. 1).

Master Ze'u – Ze'u 'Dul 'dzin was one of the resident chaplains who were active at the courts of Qubilai and Öljeitü (Chengzong, r. 1294–1307). Upon his return to Central Tibet, he ultimately served as Snar thang monastery's 10th abbot from 1305 until his death. Written in an optically not unpleasant variety of the *dbu med* script, a manuscript of this relatively short biography is happily in my possession. Not only is it anonymous, it is also undated. However, judging from the contents, I believe it can be reasonably argued that the author must have been one of his disciples. It contains much that should be of importance to students of Snar thang monastery. It is also worthy of note that the author mentions a certain Rin chen grags, whose name he prefixes with imperial preceptor (*ti shri* < Ch. *dishi* 帝師) (see Unknown ?, 17b).²⁷ We know that the affixation of the 'imperial preceptor' title does not necessarily mean that the court had officially granted him this title. For example, Karma pa III is often associated with this epithet, but we know with certainty that he never actually held this office, as Tshal pa implies in his sketch of the Karma pa's life in the *Deb ther dmar po* when he writes, in an entry for the year 1337, how the Karma pa argued in the presence of officials that included the then Imperial Preceptor for a reinstatement of the privileges that high-level government officials had earlier taken away from a large portion of the Chinese and the Tibetan Buddhist clergy of Amdo, owing to their misbehaviour.²⁸

In fact, during the Karma pa's sojourn in Yuan China from 1332 to 1334 and then again from 1337 to his passing, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1310–1358) was the only Sa skya pa lama of the 'Khon family who was the actual imperial preceptor and who therefore held the official seal of this office. Kun dga' rgyal mtshan reigned as imperial preceptor from 1333 to 1358 and Kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung nas rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1308–1329) was his predecessor and a member of the same 'Khon family. Thus, it would appear that this Rin chen grags, whose family origins were definitely not connected to that branch of the 'Khon family that ruled over Sa skya, was an interim, acting imperial preceptor without officially holding this office and its seal. Rin chen grags is so far known from three different Tibetan sources, where he is noted in passages that discuss events of c. 1314 (for details, see van der Kuijp 2004, 39, 43–6). On the other hand, three Chinese sources suggest that he or his namesake temporarily filled the role of imperial preceptor from 1329 to 1333 (van der Kuijp 2004, 43–6). This would

27 See Unknown (? , 17b).

28 Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje (1981, 104–5); see also Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje (1988, 91–2). An expanded narrative of this incident is found in dPa' bo II gTsug lag phreng ba (1986, 941–2).

mean that the reference to him as *di shri* in the Tibetan sources is anticipatory, as would be its occurrence in Ze'u 'Dul 'dzin's biography.

In a passage that appears in Ze'u 'Dul 'dzin's biography prior to the notice of his invitation by Qubilai, we come across a rather substantial passage on the fortunes of the sandalwood statue that ends in an interesting twist (Unknown ?, 9a–10b). We are told that, intending to be kind to his mother, the historical Buddha travelled to the land of the gods when he was 38 years old to teach her dharma, and that he stayed there for three summer months. King Udayana [*sic*] thought about him and requested Maudgalyāyana, one of his main disciples, to construct a statue of the Buddha. Maudgalyāyana took 32 artisans and a chunk of red sandalwood to the land of the gods and, after the statue had been made, went back to the land of mankind. The Buddha himself returned to the land of mankind at the end of the three summer months that, as we are now told, occurred in the iron-hare year [c. 799 BC].²⁹ He then paid the statue his respects and, placing his hands on it, foretold that it would arrive in China 1000 years after his nirvana; it would benefit the gods and humankind; then (Unknown ?, 10a–b):

*tsan dan gyi sku 'di bzhengs nas chu phag lo yan chad la lo chig stong dgu
brgya lnga bcu rtsa gsum lon pa yin / 'di'i lugs kyi [read: kyis] bcom ldan
'das mya ngan 'das nas chu phag lo yan chad la lo chig stong dgu brgya
dang bcu gcig lon pa yin / shing +stagzla ba bzhi pa'i tshes brgyad la sangs
rgyas sku bltam[s] / bcu dgu lon nas khyim dor te gangs kyi ri la dka' ba
mdzad / sum bcu la sangs rgyas / mos pa skye ba'i [read: bskyed pa'i] byung
tshul ngo mtshar can 'di lchang ra ba shag seng gis rgya nag cong rdor bris
pa / kun +mkhyenmchims kyi phyag yig 'dug pa la bris pa'o //*

Up to the water-pig year [1263], one thousand nine hundred and fifty-three years have elapsed since this sandal wood statue was created. According to the position of this [account], up to the water-pig year, one thousand nine hundred and eleven years elapsed since Lord's nirvana. The Buddha was born on the eighth day of the fourth month of the wood[-tiger] year [c. 837 BC]. Having reached the age of nineteen, he left home and practised austerities among the snowy mountains; he became a Buddha at the age of thirty. This marvellous story that arouses respect, which was written in China's Cong rdo (< Ch. Zhongdu 中都)³⁰ by lCang

29 This detail is absent from the Tibetan canonical account; see above n. 20.

30 Among other instances, Tibetan *cong to* also occurs in several colophons of the writings of 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280), Qubilai's first Imperial Preceptor;

ra ba Shag (< Shākya) seng [ge], was the handbook of the All[-knowing] mChims (?Nam mkha' grags, 1210–1285); it is written.

I cannot identify this Lcang ra ba Shākya seng ge. mChims Nam mkha' grags – he is usually referred to as the 'All-knowing mChims' – is of course most probably the famous and prolific scholar who was Snar thang monastery's seventh abbot.

In his undated narrative of the origin and the vicissitudes of the statue, and the merit that can be accrued when circumambulating it (he calls it a sacred statue proper, 'bur sku, as opposed to a drawn or painted sacred figure, bris sku) Lcang skya III Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786) points out that he follows the Chinese accounts.³¹ The Tibetan accounts of the sandalwood statue in the 'Dul ba lung and the Drin lan bsab pa'i mdo,³² etc., that are contained in the Kanjur-canon, he writes, are but piecemeal and fragmentary, and do not give the entire picture; and he hastens to point out at the outset of his study of the fortunes of the sandalwood statue that there are many differences of opinion about the Buddha's year of birth among Chinese, Indian and Tibetan scholars and that there is much uncertainty about its chronology.

Pelliot may have been the first in the Western world to make the observation that the Hanlin 翰林 scholar Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫 (1249–1318) authored a stele-inscription with the title *Zhantan foxiang ji* 旃檀佛像記, *Notes on the Sandalwood Statue of the Buddha* (sometimes referred to as the *Chijian zhan-tian ruixiang dianji* 敕建旃檀瑞像殿記, *Uyghur Record of the Sandalwood Statue*), which is contained in the various editions of his collected essays.³³ It is cited *in toto* in the 1333 *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載, *Comprehensive History of the Buddhist Patriarchs*, of Nianchang 念常 (1282–1341) and it was also used by Kangxi for the stele inscription of 1721.³⁴ Cheng's work is not expressly dated,

see Ishihama and Fukuda (1986, 54, 56). One of the capital cities of the Jurchen-Jin 金 Dynasty (1115–1234), Zhongdu is located in the southwestern part of present-day Beijing.

31 For what follows, see Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje (1995, 657).

32 For the first, see the story of King Udrāyaṇa in the *Vinayavibhaṅga*, which was studied in Nobel (1955). For the second, the full title of which is *Thabs mkhas pa chen po sangs rgyas drin lan bsab pa'i mdo*, see Sde dge (1991, vol. 16, no. 353 [# 353], 461/3–493/2 [Aḥ, 106a–197b]). This sutra was translated from the Chinese. It is listed in the *Lhan dkar ma* catalogue of 812 or 824, but not in the possibly somewhat later *Phang thang ma* one; see Lalou (1953, 325, no. 253).

33 For the text in the most recent edition of his oeuvre, see Cheng (2009, 98–9).

34 See, respectively, Nian Chang (1344, 730b26–731b2) and Franke and Laufer (1914, Plate 26). The latter is a truncated, trilingual piece in Chinese, Manchu and Mongol, that goes up

but 1289 is the last year that he mentions, so that it may very well be based on the earlier work that is dated 1263 and cited by Ze'u 'Dul 'dzin.

No doubt in accordance with a reverse calculation (*ldog rtsis*) using the [incomplete] (*grub rtsis* [*< grub mtha'i rtsis*], *siddhāntajyotiśa*) of the *Kālacakratāntra* corpus, the colophon of the *rGya rtsis chen mo* observes that exponents of the Phug pa tradition had ascertained that the Buddha passed away on the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month of the iron-dragon year. Indeed, it is in Grwa phug pa's work that we first encounter this year of the Buddha's nirvana, which works out to be c. 881 BC.³⁵ Having stated that 'Jam dbyangs [Mañjuśrī] was born 44 years thereafter, in the water-male-rat year [c. 837 BC], 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje IV writes:

'jam dbyangs 'khrung [read: *'khrungs*] *nas lo nyis stong bzhi brgya go bzhi song ba na bde skyid rgyal pos sngar gyi rtsis gzhung bcos bsgyur byas nas rgya rtsis chen mo shog grags brgya brgya lthag spel nyid kyis bka' bzhin rgya sog bod kyi yi ger bkod du bcug /*

When two thousand four hundred and ninety-four years had expired since *Mañjuśrī's birth, in accordance with the order by emperor bDe skyid [Kangxi]: "Disseminate the more than hundreds of pages of the *rGya rtsis chen mo* after having edited and translated an earlier treatise of mathematical astronomy!" it was committed to Chinese, Mongol and Tibetan writing.

That is all.

No doubt imitating illuminated Sanskrit manuscripts,³⁶ Tibetan xylographs with a variety of adornments and illustrations are probably as old as the printing of Tibetan textual material itself, from tablets with *dhāraṇī*-incantations to entire works, the earliest specimen of which appears to date from around the year 1200. The quality of the original drawings and their subsequent carving varies greatly; some are rather primitive and coarse, others are quite gorgeous and obviously executed with great care and attention to detail. Non-*dhāraṇī* texts in tablets and boxes appear in xylographs at least as early as the first half of the eighteenth century. The recent publication of the Mongol text of the

to the 63rd year of Kangxi's reign, although the text of the inscription itself was prepared during his 60th year, that is, 2711 years after the passing of the historical Buddha!

35 See Grwa phug pa Lhun grub rgya mtsho (nd, np, 58b–61b) and Grwa phug pa Lhun grub rgya mtsho (2002, 85–90).

36 Kim (2013) is a recent contribution to their study.

Tengri-yin udq-a was given a print-run of 500 copies; the Tibetan text of the *Rgya rtsis chen mo* awaits a modern publication and I have nowhere come across a record of how many xylograph copies were made from the printing blocks. Lastly, let us take a look at the ways in which these Mongol and Tibetan xylographs reproduced some important diagrams. The first appears to be the celestial globe, which Verbiest created in 1673. A plate of this globe is reproduced in Needham [with Wang] and we have similar diagrams, actually several of these, in the *Tengri-yin udq-a* and the *Rgya rtsis chen mo*.³⁷ The latter two also have a fine star map and numerous diagrams of individual constellation.³⁸

A final note: the nineteenth century witnessed xylographs of at least two works that beg our attention for their special and perhaps unique features. The first of these is the xylograph of the *tour de force* of a work by Klong chen Chos dbyings stobs ldan rdo rje (?1785–1848).³⁹ Mainly active in the Re skong region of Amdo and especially associated with Ko'u sde dgon Rdzogs chen rnam rgyal gling,⁴⁰ this author wrote a fascinating versified work titled *mDo rgyud rin po che'i mdzod* at the age of 51 [50] in the earth-male-dog year [?1838], to which he added a summary, a word-for-word commentary at the age of 53 [= 52], an extensive commentary subtitled *Tshangs chen bskal pa mdzes pa'i rgyan*, and one entire volume of illustrations.⁴¹ This encyclopaedic work is indeed a significant forerunner of Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas' (1813–1899) much better known and written in a somewhat different register, the *Shes bya ba mdzod* and autocommentary of 1864. The last volume of Klong chen Chos dbyings stobs ldan rdo rje's commentary contains a large number of carefully executed illustrations (*dpe'u ris*) with explanatory glosses as well as the reproduction of the xylograph of the first part titled *mDo rgyud rin po che'i mdzod kyi gnas dang po thun mong mdo yi dpe'u ris zla ba'i phreng ba mchan dang 'grel dang bcas pa* (Klong chen Chos dbyings stobs ldan rdo rje 2000, vol. 5).

Another interesting, albeit somewhat coarse, specimen of nineteenth-century xylography must certainly be the undated illustrated *material medica*

37 See, respectively, Needham [with Wang] (1970, 388, fig. 176), Fig. 94, between pp. 250 and 251; Čeden (1990, 722ff.) and the *Rgya rtsis chen mo*, vol. pha, fol. 2a (*gong*) / Juan 22, fol. 2a (*shang*), vol. ba, fols. 2aff. / Juan 23, fols. 2aff.

38 Čeden (1990, 896) and the *Rgya rtsis chen mo*, vol. Sa, fol. 1a–2a / Juan 32, 1a–2a; see also Needham [with Wang] (1970, 250–51, fig. 94).

39 For a capsule study of his life, see Nyoshul Khen po (2005, 4007–8).

40 For this monastery, see Lce nag tshang Hūm chen and Ye shes 'od zer sgröl ma (2004, 70–106) and Reb gong pa 'Jigs med bsam grub (2013, 581–5).

41 I have seen xylographs from the original woodblocks, which were handsomely printed in modern book form in Klong chen Chos dbyings stobs ldan rdo rje (2000). This work is apparently being translated into English.

of 'Jam dpal rdo rje in which we find, *inter alia*, lovingly, but somewhat amateurishly, carved illustrations of various medical substances plus most of their nomenclature in Tibetan (cephalic, *dbu can*), Chinese, Mongol and Manchu scripts ([Dge bsnyen] 'Jam dpal rdo rje (1971a; 2008a)). 'Jam dpal rdo rje also composed illustrations to De'u dmar dGe bshes bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs' (1673–?) *Dri med shel phreng material medica* of 1727, in which he also often included a quadrilingual gloss of the names of various drugs, medical instruments, etc. ([Dge bsnyen] 'Jam dpal rdo rje (1971b; 2008b)). According to its colophon, the carving of the printing blocks of this work was completed on the eighth day of the sixth month of the iron-female-pig year (1851), that is, “the third [regnal] year (*gnam lo*) of the ‘Great Mañjuśrī Emperor Shwan thung (< Ch. Xianfeng 咸豐, r. 1850–1861).” This means that we have here a slight chronological problem that, however, I cannot solve at this time!

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A Forgotten Chapter in South Asian Book History? A Bird's Eye View of Sanskrit Print Culture

Camillo A. Formigatti

idaṃ mañjuśrīḥ tathāgatasya nāmāṣṭottaraśatakaṃ ye keciḥ likhīṣyanti
likhāpayīṣyanti pustakagatam api kṛtvā gr̥he dhārayīṣyanti vācayīṣyanti |
te parikṣiṇāyūṣaḥ punar eva varṣaśatāyūṣo bhaviṣyanti | itaś cyutvā
aparimitāyūṣas tathāgatasya buddhakṣetre upapadyante | aparimitāyūṣas
ca bhaviṣyanti aparimitāguṇasañcayāyāṃ lokadhātāu |

Mañjuśrī, those who will copy this collection of one-hundred and eight names of the Tathāgata, will commission it to be copied, and after having committed it to a book, will keep it at home, will recite it, once their life is exhausted, they will become again endowed with a life-span of a hundred years. Once they have left this world, they enter the Pure Land of the Buddha of the Infinite Life, and will have an infinite life in the Realm with the Infinite Multitude of Qualities.

Aparimitayurjñānanāmamahāyānasūtra (WALLESER 1916, 22)

•••

pustakasthā tu yā vidyā parahaste ca yad dhanam |
kāryakāle samutpanne na sā vidyā na tad dhanam ||

Knowledge stored in a book and money in the hand of others:
When the time to act has come, there are neither knowledge nor money!

Cānakyaniti 678 (STERNBACH 1967, 413)

••

When I was asked to talk about Sanskrit print culture in the workshop *Printing as an Agent of Change in Tibet and Beyond*, I enthusiastically accepted. Unfortunately, I didn't have the slightest idea of what I was getting myself

into.¹ I was just glad that somebody had finally accepted the challenge issued by Elizabeth Eisenstein in the first edition of her book *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*:

As noted in my preface, the term 'print culture' is used to refer only to post-Gutenberg developments in the West. How printing affected pre-Gutenberg Asia must be left to others to investigate. (Eisenstein 1979, 9, fn. 18)

However, soon I realized that I might have made a big mistake by accepting such a challenge: virtually all studies on South Asian print culture focus on printing of vernacular texts. To my knowledge, there is no comprehensive study of the printing of Sanskrit texts, a fact reflected for instance in the recent volume *The History of the Book in South Asia* (Orsini 2013), a very interesting and useful collection of essays dealing with many aspects of South Asian book history, enriched by a thoughtful introduction. It is divided into four parts: 1. "Writing, Orality and the Manuscript Book," 2. "Technology and Practices" (i.e. print culture), 3. "The Cultures of the Book in Colonial India" and finally 4. "Post-Colonial Histories." Yet, even in this rich *vademecum*, the printing of Sanskrit works is not dealt with in any essay: all contributions included in Part II focus on the print of vernacular texts (Hindi, Urdu, Tamil etc.).

1 Introduction, or Arbitrary Definitions of Sanskrit Printed Works

Even though I share Carlo Cipolla's opinion that "the surest way to fail as an author is to start by sounding pedantic, and the surest way to sound pedantic is to start with an unexhilarating search for definitions" (Cipolla 1969, 11), I am afraid I will have to start my article with a definition. I beg the readers' forgiveness. Many contributions in this volume deal with geographically defined

1 I would like to express my gratitude to all colleagues and friends who helped me in many ways while I was writing this article. First and foremost, I thank the editors of the volume for their patience, and above all Dr Hildegard Diemberger (Cambridge), who contributed also with suggestions about the role of print in Tibet and Nepal. Many thanks go also to Dr Michela Clemente (Cambridge), who read parts of the draft and discussed with me some of the ideas presented. A first draft of the article was presented at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures of the University of Hamburg, where I profited very much from the lively discussion that followed – above all, I would like to thank Dr Martin Delhey (Hamburg), whose remarks helped me honing the definition of Sanskrit print. I owe thanks also to Prof. Dr Stefano Zacchetti (Oxford), who pointed to my attention the article by J.-P. Drège about the Dunhuang prints. Dr Lore Sander kindly helped me by providing bibliographical information about studies of the Turfan Sanskrit blockprints.

printing traditions (like Mongolian, Chinese, and Tibetan printing traditions, or the intersection between all these traditions). However, providing a clear-cut definition of Sanskrit print culture is not an easy task. The material to be examined is defined according to a linguistic criterion, a fact bearing important consequences on the research approach. First of all, in order to delimit the field, we have to answer the apparently simple question: what are Sanskrit printed works? With the spread of Buddhism from the Indian subcontinent, Sanskrit culture as well moved northwards, crossing the Himalayan range to reach Central and East Asia. Scholars usually consider the numerous fragments of Sanskrit manuscripts found in the city-states and Buddhist monasteries in Central Asia along the Silk Road as belonging to South Asian manuscript culture. D. Wujastyk's remarks about the difficulty of finding a restrictive definition of Indian manuscripts can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, also to Sanskrit prints:

What, then, really defines an "Indian manuscript?" For most specialists, this expression conjures up the idea of a handwritten document inscribed on paper or palm leaf, in Devanāgarī or one of the other alphabets of South or Central Asia, and typically in the Sanskrit, Tamil or Persian language. But one has to bear in mind that the boundaries of definition are fluid, and that a manuscript from China, written on birch bark in the Kharoṣṭhī script of Gandhāra and the Middle-Iranian language called Khotanese, may also be considered, in many respects, an Indian manuscript, for example if it contains a translation of a Sanskrit treatise on Buddhism or Āyurveda, or if it was produced in a Buddhist monastery that still had living links with India. (Wujastyk 2014, 159)

In other words, should we consider Sanskrit works printed in Central Asia as part of the history of Sanskrit printing? For the moment, let us answer this question in the positive and include in our survey all Sanskrit works printed in the Asian continent. Immediately, another question arises: what if the first attestation of the printing of Sanskrit works occurred outside the Asian continent? Should an evaluation of Sanskrit works printed and distributed, for instance, only in Europe, be included in this article? Moreover, since we are now applying a purely linguistic criterion, we might ask ourselves if we should take into consideration all printed works that contain some form of Sanskrit text.² Some practical examples might help clarify this last point.

2 Even if the distinction between text and work applied in this article is rather intuitive, I hope it will prove helpful for the reader. It is based on C. Segre's definition of text: "The text is the

The *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* (Av-klp) is a work composed in the style of *kāvya* by the Kashmiri poet Kṣemendra in the 11th century. Between 1260 and 1280 it was translated into Tibetan by the lo tsā ba Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan and the Paṇḍit Lakṣmīkara on behalf of Qubilai Khan's advisor's 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan. Thanks to this translation it enjoyed great popularity in Tibet, becoming a milestone of literary style as well as a source of inspiration for visual artists. In fact, this popularity is the reason why this work survived, for it is transmitted in its entirety only in a Tibetan bilingual edition containing the original Sanskrit together with the Tibetan translation, revised and printed in 1664–65 under the aegis of the Fifth Dalai Lama (on this edition are based also the canonical bilingual editions printed in the Derge and Cone Tanjur).³ Should we include in our survey these prints as well? Moreover, if we were to push the argument further, we might even ask ourselves if it is worth including Chinese and Japanese Buddhist prints containing Sanskrit *dhāraṇīs* embedded in the main text, or even Japanese facsimile editions of Sanskrit texts.

At this stage, let us apply a purely linguistic criterion, and define Sanskrit prints as follows: either as (1) any print containing any kind of Sanskrit text, regardless of the completeness or length of the text, or (2) any print containing a complete Sanskrit work, regardless of other features (such as the presence of a translation in another language). It is immediately clear that the first definition is too broad, allowing us to include in the present analysis for instance the Japanese *Hyakumantō darani* prints, commissioned by the Empress Shotoku between 764–770 – after all, even if this version of the *dhāraṇī* is written in Chinese characters, 'the texts consist almost entirely of sounds transcribed phonetically from the original Sanskrit' (Gardner 1993, 196). These kind of texts are beyond the scope of this article. The second definition is more restrictive, and would allow us to include in our survey the bilingual editions of Kṣemendra's *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*. However, this printed work arguably belongs to Tibetan print culture, and it is of little help (if at all) in the reconstruction of the history of Sanskrit print culture.

linguistic texture of a discourse. In the meaning most prominent until the present century [Segre writes in the 20th century], it is a written discourse (whose oral utterance cannot be defined as text anymore). When we speak of the *text of a work*, we point to the linguistic texture of which the work is formed; on the other hand, if we are referring to the content, work and text are almost identical" (emphasis mine; the original Italian is as follows: "Il testo è dunque il tessuto linguistico di un discorso. Nell'accezione prevalsa fino a questo secolo, si tratta di discorso scritto (la cui realizzazione vocale non è più denominabile come testo). Quando si parla del testo di un'opera, si indica il tessuto linguistico del discorso che la costituisce; se viceversa si allude al contenuto, opera e testo sono pressoché identici." Segre [2014, p. 298]).

3 On the 1664–65 edition, cf. Mejer 1992, 52–64; on the Tibetan transmission of the Av-klp, cf. also Straube 2006, 70–72 and 90–92; and Straube 2009, 18–22.

The Sanskrit text is written in a Tibetan *dbu can* script adapted to represent the Sanskrit language. This printed edition was conceived and produced within the Tibetan cultural sphere, where it also circulated, and thus had little impact on South Asian cultural history. This remark is proved by the fact that the first part of the Sanskrit original of the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* was lost in South Asia, and all Nepalese manuscripts that have come down to us contain only *avadānas* from the second half of the work.⁴ Remarkably, the first part of the work was considered to be lost in Nepal, even if the complete work was still extant in the neighboring country of Tibet.

This last consideration introduces a geographical and cultural criterion that apparently allows us to narrow the scope of our survey. We might define Sanskrit prints as (3) any print containing a complete Sanskrit work, regardless of other features (such as the presence of a translation in another language), and printed in South Asia. At first sight, this last definition might appear fitting. On the other hand, if we were to apply it blindly, we would be forced to exclude any Sanskrit work printed outside South Asia, thus obliterating aspects and phenomena important for the scope of the present volume, i.e. an assessment of print culture in Asia. Moreover, it would exclude also short, fragmentary or incomplete texts, such as *dhāraṇīs* extracted from longer works. It is perhaps advisable to revise it, as we want to consider as many aspects as possible before pinning down a definition. Surely another aspect that should be added to the discussion is the printing technique. In an article on the history of lithography in India, G. Shaw describes its introduction in the South Asian continent, mentioning reports that circulated in India in the late 1820s about a “form of lithography” that had originated in Asia:

A Dr J. G. Gerard of Sabathu, at a military post near Simla, mentioned meeting the famous Hungarian orientalist, Csomo [sic] de Körös, at the monastery of Kanam in Kunawar, whose ‘learned companion, the Lama, has informed him that lithographic printing has flourished for ages in the ancient cities of Teshoo Loompoo and Lahassa’, and the report of the proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for July 1829 recorded the presentation by the same Dr Gerard of ‘a specimen of the stone used for lithographic printing in Thibet, and of the printing’, a footnote adding that ‘it seemed to be a fine-grained chlorito-argillaceous schist’. This is clearly a reference to the practice (originating in China but spreading early to other Buddhist cultures) of taking inked rubbings on paper from

4 On the textual transmission of the Sanskrit text of the Av-klp, see Straube 2006, 60–87; and Straube 2009, 3–17.

stone inscriptions, the forerunner of taking impressions from wood, a process which the Sinologist Thomas F. Carter himself referred to in the 1920's as 'lithography' or 'lithograph rubbing'. (Shaw 1998, 91)

Despite Carter's definition of the inked rubbings on paper from stone inscriptions as 'lithography,' lithographic printing as it is commonly understood is based on a different technique, developed in Europe at the very end of the 18th century. Still, this passage is a good starting point for yet another question to be asked: which typology of printing technique is to be included in our definition? Reproduction techniques akin to printing were known in South Asia already from a very early age, such as impressing on clay tablets short texts like *dhāraṇīs* by means of sealings (the first specimens of this type of impressions are possibly dated to the first century BCE). Such texts were mechanically reproduced in a high number of identical items (one of the defining characteristics of printed texts), but were not meant to be read, their reproduction had, rather, a cultural and ritual purpose.⁵ Even though they can be considered to be the very first attestation of printing in South Asia, surprisingly little attention has been paid to them, perhaps because their primary function was magical and protective, and they were considered to be devoid of the transformative power attributed to texts printed in order to be read.⁶

It is possible to further narrow down the definition by combining the four criteria considered above (linguistic, geographical/cultural, grammatological⁷ and technological), and propose the following stricter definition: a Sanskrit print is (4) any object (complete or fragmentary) containing a Sanskrit text, printed in Asia in a South Asian script,⁸ with the purpose of being distributed

5 For a brief survey on this topic, see Kornicki 2012, 51ff.; on the *dhāraṇīs* impressed on clay tablets, see Lawson 1982.

6 "After all, these clay tablets with impressions of a seal or stamp are evidence of the use of mechanical means for the mass production of texts which were not manufactured for the purpose of reading; once they had been produced and ritually used their fate was of little concern" (Kornicki 2012, 52).

7 I.e. relating to the writing system. As pointed out by P. T. Daniels, the study of writing systems per se, as an object of a defined academic field of study, is relatively recent: "[W]riting systems per se, the marks that record the languages of the documents produced by the civilizations, have absorbed the attention of only a very few linguists. No name for this field of study has even become widely accepted; "grammatology," proposed in the mid twentieth century, is better than most" (Daniels and Bright 1996, 1).

8 Again, this characteristic might be too broad, for it is possible to include under the label "South Asian" also the Tibetan script (in almost all its varieties), since it is derived from a

either for reading or for ritual activities, regardless of other features (such as the presence of a translation or paratexts in other languages).

All four definitions of Sanskrit print proposed above are valid, but on account of the nature of the present volume, I will take the fourth definition as a starting point. The three main printing techniques that in the past were employed for printing Sanskrit texts in Asia are xylography, lithography and letterpress printing. In the following three sections, I will try and provide some general remarks, based on a few examples of texts printed with these three techniques. The last section will be devoted to preliminary conclusions about the history of South Asian print culture.

2 Sanskrit Xylographs

This survey does not aim at being exhaustive; it is rather a starting point and a means for a first appraisal of the general features of Sanskrit xylographs. Two main sites in Central Asia will be taken into consideration: Dunhuang and Turfan. The Sanskrit prints found in the first site have a more uniform character, and have already been the object of preliminary studies. On the other hand, the Turfan findings display more variety both in terms of content and codicological features, yet to my knowledge no specific study has been devoted to them. For this reason, I will focus more on the xylographs from Turfan.

2.1 *Dunhuang*

Among the numerous Sanskrit fragments of manuscripts found in the Dunhuang caves, a small number of bilingual Sanskrit woodblock prints have come to light. They all contain various *dhāraṇīs* (such as the *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣa-sitātapatradharaṇī*, or the *Mahāpratisāradhāraṇī*), often together with other Chinese texts or at least with Chinese paratexts (such as the donor's colophon) printed on the margins. They are all printed on paper, and the script used to write the Sanskrit text is a kind of *siddhamātrkā*. The Sanskrit text is usually written around a central figure representing a deity or a Bodhisattva, and each print displays a very complicated decorative layout, for instance in the form of a *maṇḍala* starting from the centre, with the text written as a round spiral around the central figure. Occasionally the text is continued on the four margins, forming an external frame around the internal spiral.⁹

North Indian script. However, taking into considerations the other three criteria, it should still be possible to reasonably narrow down the domain of Sanskrit print.

9 Four of these prints are described in WU 1984, 68–72, and in Drège 1999.

Scholars devoted particular attention to a print of the *Mahāpratisāradhāraṇī* discovered in Szechwan in 1994, in a tomb in Chengdu “dated from the latter part of the Tang period” (Twitchett 1983, 18). The *dhāraṇī* is written in Sanskrit, but on the right margin a colophon in Chinese provides information about the printer, a certain “Pien in the Lung-chih ward of Ch’eng-tu city. From the names used for administrative units it must date from some time after 757” (*ibidem*). Such an early date would mean that this print is either older or at least contemporary with the oldest known prints, such as the the *Hyakumantō darani* (764–770 CE), or the printed *dhāraṇī* discovered inside the Sokkat’ap stone pagoda of the Pulguksa temple in Kyongju in South Korea and traditionally dated before 751 CE.¹⁰ However, based on a comparison of dated similar material recovered in Dunhuang, Jean-Pierre Drège has proposed the 10th century as a more probable date for this print (and similar ones) (Drège 1999, 34–35).

These *dhāraṇīs* were printed in multiple exemplars, like the *Mahāpratisāradhāraṇī*, of which three exemplars are known, one in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Pelliot sanscrit 2), one in the Musée Guimet (EO. 3639), and one in the British Museum (Stein painting 249, figure 6.1). Moreover, it is not clear if such *dhāraṇīs* were all printed in Dunhuang, probably some of them circulated: for instance, a xylograph of a Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* kept in the Musée Guimet, MG. 17688, is strikingly different in style from other 10th Sanskrit xylographs from Dunhuang, and may have been printed elsewhere (Drège 1999, 28–29). From the viewpoint of the codicological features as well as of the content, the ritual and protective purpose of such prints is clear. In a bilingual xylograph from the Pelliot collection in the musée Guimet (MG. 17689), the Chinese text states that the person who prints, copies and carries the *dhāraṇī* will be freed from all bad and gross negligence acts, will be helped by all Tathāgatas, will be protected by all Bodhisattvas and Nāga kings, will avoid all calamities and brutalities, will escape the evil destinies, and will not be hurt by water, fire, thunder, lightning, poison or evil (Drège 1999, 29–30).

2.2 Turfan

Numerous fragments of Sanskrit blockprints have been recovered during the German expeditions in the Turfan oasis. They have been described and edited in several volumes of the *Sanskriithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden* (SHT), published in the series *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* (VOHD). Unfortunately, a list of the xylographs recovered is provided only in the first volume, and the indexes to all other SHT volumes do

10 The date of this *dhāraṇī* is still disputed, for a discussion of the various hypotheses see Kornicki 2012, 47–50.

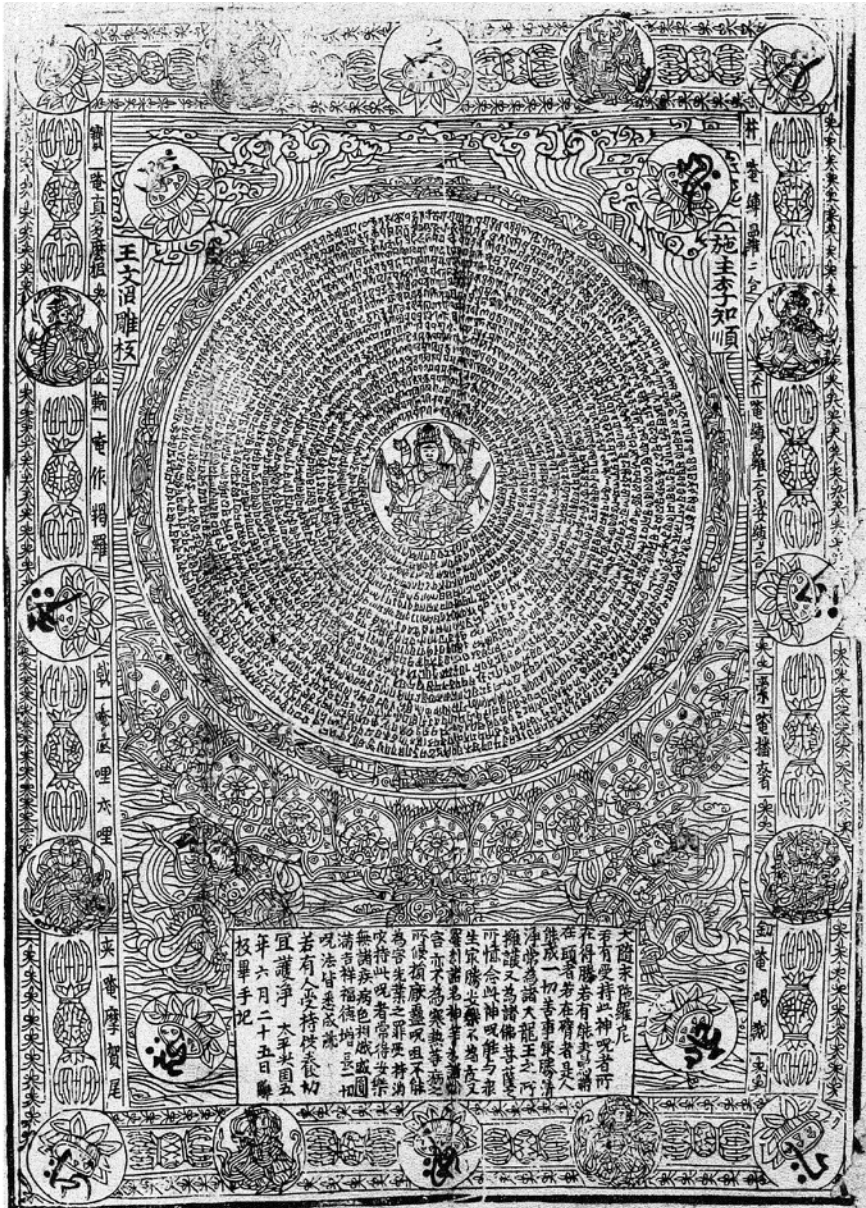


FIGURE 6.1 British Library, Stein painting 249. Ritual print with eight-armed figure surrounded by a dhāraṇī in Sanskrit, with the text of the Da sui qiu tuoluoni in Chinese. Northern Song dynasty, dated 5th year of Taipingxingguo (AD 980). Xylograph, ink on paper with Sanskrit letters overprinted on the lotus medallions. Printed area: H. 41.7 cm, W. 30.3 cm.

not help at all in the search for xylographs (they are organized according to topics and genre). In order to find them, I tried to use also the database of the *International Dunhuang Project* website, but its search functions are not very user friendly. Moreover, the 2011 electronic edition of the VOHD volumes is still labelled as work in progress – it is probably for this reason that in the entries of the IDP online version of the catalogues, all xylographs are wrongly described as “manuscript, ink on paper.” The following survey has thus been prepared by looking for xylographs in all entries in the eleven SHT volumes published until now. A list of the xylographs described in the SHT volumes is provided in Appendix A.

The very first observation is how scarcely represented Sanskrit xylographs are in the vast amount of book findings in the Central Asian city states. If we take into account the fragments of Sanskrit manuscripts so far catalogued in the VOHD, and adjust this number by taking into consideration the possibility that some fragments described separately might actually belong to one single item, the proportion is staggering. In the eleven volumes I perused, a total of 5799 fragments are described, of which only nineteen are blockprints (much less than one per cent). One could be tempted to immediately draw the conclusion that although blockprinting technology was already known in Central Asia during the flourishing period of the city-states, it was scarcely used for Sanskrit texts. However, given the character of the material and the serendipity of the findings, I believe that any conclusion about the diffusion and impact of this printing technique for Sanskrit texts in Central Asia is highly hypothetical. Nonetheless, I also believe that it is worth trying to provide at least a preliminary assessment of the material. Needless to say, it has to be taken *cum grano salis*.

The xylographs are grouped according to three criteria: (1) location at which they were found, (2) script and (3) format and content. The reason why the last two aspects are subsumed under one criterion is that the relationship between format and content might yield useful information about the usage and function of the books.¹¹

2.2.1 Distribution According to Location at which the Xylographs were Found

Qočo: 11 items (SHT 575, SHT 612, SHT 613, SHT 614a and SHT 614b, SHT 627, SHT 645, SHT 646, SHT 1173, SHT 1191, SHT 1385).

Sāngim: 2 items (SHT 1105, SHT 4352).

¹¹ When fragment SHT 612 is mentioned in any of the following lists, it always includes SHT 1174 and SHT 5029; fragment SHT 1430 always includes SHT 4008, SHT 4015, SHT 4264, SHT 4524b, SHT 4591 and SHT 647.

Murtuq: 4 items (SHT 580, SHT 1110, SHT 1190, SHT 4442).

Unknown: 2 items (SHT 1430, SHT 4465v).

After more than forty years of research, the observation made by L. Sander in 1968 that most of the xylographs were found in Qočo is still valid (Sander 1968, 17 fn 57). Out of a total of nineteen fragments, eleven have been found in the temple city of Qočo. Strikingly, all other fragments have been found in two localities not far Qočo, Sängim and Murtuq. Unfortunately, the list of finding locations compiled during the German Turfan expeditions was lost during World War II, together with Theodor Bartus' diary, and assessing the provenance of the fragments with certainty is not always possible (Sander 1968, 7–8). Four sources for this task are listed by the German scholar: published reports of the expeditions, letters and documents in the archives about Turfan, seals on the fragments, and the extant lists of the findings (Sander 1968, 8). It is even more difficult to establish the exact place where each fragment was found within each complex of ruins. It is mainly thanks to the reports of the expeditions by Grünwedel and Le Coq that in some cases we have general gleanings on the precise locations of the findings. Fragments of manuscripts and xylographs were found in three types of locations: ruins of libraries, ruins of votive statues, and monks' cells. Still, more often than not it is impossible to assess with certainty whether a given fragment was recovered in a *stūpa*, in a votive statue or in a library. The following exemplary remark refers to the first expedition in Qočo, where the majority of the blockprints were recovered:

Über die Ergebnisse der ersten Expedition hat Grünwedel ausführlich berichtet. Er schildert auch eingehend die Handschriftenfunde, die er in den verschiedenen Ruinen gemacht hat, doch erwähnt er nicht, ob sie aus Bibliotheken oder Kultfiguren stammen könnten. Wahrscheinlich war diese Frage auch schwer zu beantworten, weil die Stadt gewaltsam zerstört worden ist und – wie alle anderen Fundstätten auch – laufend Plünderungen zum Opfer fiel. [...] Die anderen von der ersten Expedition aus Qočo mitgebrachten Bruchstücke von Sanskrithandschriften oder Blockdrucken sind wahrscheinlich käuflich erworben. Grünwedel konnte jedoch einen Teil der Fundorte von den Verkäufern ermitteln und sich durch Überprüfung der Angaben von ihrer Richtigkeit überzeugen. (Sander 1968, 16–17)

With regard to the other two cities, Sängim and Murtuq, we are left with the same degree of uncertainty. For instance, we can only speculate whether the two fragments found in Sängim, SHT 1105 (parts of a *Deśanā*) and SHT 4352

(*Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatradhāraṇī*), come from a library or from another building. The last one for instance might have been found in the *stūpas* described by Le Coq.¹² It is therefore an almost impossible task to put forward any tenable hypothesis as to the function of these xylographs based on their place of recovery.

2.2.2 Distribution According to Script

1. Nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b: SHT 575, SHT 580, SHT 612, SHT 613, SHT 614a, SHT 614b, SHT 627, SHT 1105, SHT 1110, SHT 1173, SHT 1190, SHT 1385*, SHT 1430, SHT 4442.
2. Südturkistanische Brāhmī (Alphabet v): SHT 4352.
3. Pāla: SHT 645, SHT 646.

Three different scripts were used for printing Sanskrit texts in the Turfan area. The first one is the “nordturkistanische Brāhmī,” and as its name betrays, it was widely employed for the production of manuscripts in the regions on the northern route of the Silk road. According to L. Sander, on the basis of the ductus it is possible to further differentiate it into two types: “Typ a” was more widespread in the Kučā-Region, while “Typ b” was more so in the Turfan oasis (Sander 1968, 5). Since the xylographs were recovered in the Turfan region, it is no wonder that the script used in the great majority of the xylographs corresponds to the one used in manuscripts from the same area. The only exceptions are three fragments, SHT 645, SHT 646, and SHT 4352. The latter is written in the südturkistanische Brāhmī (Alphabet v) used in the Khotan region (Sander 1968, 183), and contains part of the *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatradhāraṇī*, a text very popular and widespread in Central Asia. Given the character of this text, considered to be used in protective amulets, it may well be that this book had been produced elsewhere, and only later carried by a traveller to the place where it was found, Sängim.

12 “Trotz des abschreckenden Eindrucks dieser Landschaft ist die Schlucht auf ihrem linken oder westlichen Ufer mit einer Reihe von Tempeln besetzt, während die Höhen des rechten Ufers mit zahlreichen indischen Grabmonumenten (stūpa) besetzt sind, deren einige auch unmittelbar am rechten Ufer des Stromes sich erheben. Diese Stūpas enthielten Reste von Leichenbrand, künstliche Blumen, Votivgaben (Heiligenbilder auf Papier) und zahlreiche Manuskriptreste. Es muß auffallen, daß in einem dieser Denkmäler, in der Biegung des Stromes, ein nur wenig beschädigtes manichäisches Buchblatt, unter Bruchstücken zahlreicher buddhistischer indischer Handschriften, gefunden wurde. [...] Hier und da wurden auch Funde manichäischer und indischer Handschriften gemacht” (Le Coq 1926, 69–71).

On the other hand, SHT 645 (figures 6.4 and 6.5) and SHT 646 (figures 6.7 and 6.8) contain respectively parts of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* and an unidentified *dhāraṇī*, and are written in a completely different type of script. L. Sander compares it to the so-called Tibetan sha-chen (“corpulent characters”), which is very similar to the Pāla script employed in Bengal during the Pāla dynasty, both in manuscripts as well as in inscriptions (Sander 1968). However, in the secondary literature the terminology for this type of script varies greatly, very often leading to a confusion with other very similar ornamental scripts probably derived from it. Cecil Bendall (and others after him) defined it as *Kuṭila* (Bendall 1883, xxiv), but numerous other definitions have been applied, such as *Nāgarī*, *Siddhamātrkā*, *Proto-bengali*, *Nevārī*, and *Raṅjanā* (Weissenborn 2012, 19).¹³ I prefer to adopt the term “Pāla” used by Sander, since it clearly indicates the geographical and cultural origin of this script. In her exhaustive palaeographical analysis of these two fragments, the German scholar already noticed that, on account of Buddhist missionary activity, the Pāla script rapidly spread to neighbouring countries such as Nepal and Tibet, spawning a series of similar, yet distinct scripts, including the sha-chen, (Sander 1968, 173–76). The use of the Pāla script or one of its derivatives was very often a sign of the particular prestige and/or ritual value attributed to a manuscript, and apparently was linked to specific texts: single *dhāraṇīs* and collections thereof like the *Pañcarakṣā*, *Prajñāparamitā*-texts (very often the *Aṣṭasahāsrikā*), the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*.¹⁴ The sacred and ornamental value of these scripts is testified to also by the fact that they were – and still are nowadays – used for writing Sanskrit titles on title pages of Tibetan manuscripts and prints, as well as for prayer-wheels and for inscriptions on sacred buildings.¹⁵ The script could give us also a clue as to the place of production of the xylographs: in the light of the fact that the Tibetan sha-chen is a modification of the Pāla script, L. Sander suggests that SHT 645 and SHT

13 The confusion goes even further, for instance the *Raṅjanā* and the Tibetan *Lan-tsha* are sometimes considered to be one and the same script – see for instance Tibetan and Mongolian abecedaria of Indian scripts, like the *dByangs gsal bzhuḡs* (Skt. *Ālikālibijahāram*), composed by mGon po skyabs in the first half of the 18th century, but based on an older work written in 1586 AD (Chandra 1982, 3–5 and 9–14; on mGon po skyabs, see Wang-Toutain 2005).

14 Even a cursory analysis of catalogues of Buddhist manuscripts would confirm this remark.

15 See for instance the account provided by S. C. Das in 1888: “In the grand sanctuary of Sam-yea, Lan-tsha characters were written and painted and engraved on prayer cylinders, walls, tapestries, doors and chapels. On chaityas and votive piles there were numerous inscriptions written in the Lan-tsha character, which exist up to the present time round the central sanctuary of Sam-yea” (Das 1888, 44).

646 were either produced in Tibet or carved in Qočo on the basis of Bengalese manuscripts (Sander 1968, 175–76). However, woodblock printing technology was already in use in China by the mid-seventh century, while the earliest extant xylograph from central Tibet is copy of Haribhadra's commentary on the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, produced in 1407 to commemorate the death of the ruler of Southern La stod Situ Chos kyi rin chen (died 1402).

2.2.3 Distribution According to Format and Content

1. Pothī: SHT 612 (*Samyuktāgama*), SHT 613 (*Samyuktāgama*), SHT 645 (*Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*), SHT 1110 (unidentified Mahāyana text), SHT 1385* (*Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā?*), SHT 1430 (*Vinayavastu*, *Samghabhedavastu*), SHT 4442 (unidentified text).
2. Accordion book: SHT 575 (*Deśanā*), SHT 580 (*Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*), SHT 627 (*Stotras*), SHT 1173 (end of a colophon and *ye dharmā* formula), SHT 1190 (*Sitātapatrahṛdayamantra*), SHT 4352 (*Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatradhāraṇī*).
3. Scroll: SHT 1105 (Chinese characters on the recto, and on the verso a metrical *Deśanā*).
4. Unknown format (codex?): SHT 614a (*Smṛtyupasthāna*), SHT 614b (*Smṛtyupasthāna*), SHT 646 (*Dhāraṇī*), SHT 1191 (*Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣavijayanāmadhāraṇī*), SHT 4465 v).

The range of book formats and the content of the fragments enable us to draw more plausible hypotheses about the function of these xylographs. From the viewpoint of the content, an interesting feature is that the findings include only few specific typologies of texts: (1) different sections of Sanskrit Buddhist canons (two fragments from the *Samyuktāgama*, two belonging to the *Vinayavastu*); (2) the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature (represented here in his version in 100,000 stanzas); (3) ritual and performative texts (two fragments of a *Deśanā*, two fragments of the *Smṛtyupasthāna*, one fragment of the *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*, and one fragment containing several *stotras*); (4) magical and protective spells (at least four fragments of various *dhāraṇīs*). It is not by chance that specific formats correspond to specific typologies of texts. The *pothī* format of South Asian origin is used to print canonical texts and the *Prajñāpāramitā*, probably in an attempt to give a more prestigious status to the printed books by appealing to the South Asian traditional format. In the case of the two long fragments of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the South Asian cultural influence is seen not only in the format, but also in the use of the Pāla script, as explained above.

On the other hand, the accordion books contain almost exclusively ritual and magical texts (including SHT 627, a fragment containing various *stotras*; on the daily recitation of this type of texts, cf. Schlingloff 1955, 8ff.). Unlike in the case of the *pothī*, this format is easier to handle during the recitation, for it enables the reader to hold the book and flip the pages even with one hand, without the aid of any surface to put the book on.

The other represented formats are the scroll and probably the codex. The scroll format is typically Chinese, and in fact SHT 1105 is a fragment containing Chinese characters on the recto (in this particular case, a Chinese book was repurposed). The presence of the codex format is uncertain due to the state of conservation of the fragments. However, SHT 614a is better preserved, and its dimensions are 15cm × 15cm, pointing to a different format than the *pothī*. SHT 646 is in an even better state (figures 6.7 and 6.8), and its dimension (10.7cm × 6.5cm) points more decidedly towards the codex.

2.2.4 First Appraisal of Sanskrit Xylographs from Turfan

As we have seen, it is almost impossible to pinpoint the exact position of the fragments and to place them in a definite stratigraphy in the sites where they were recovered. For this reason, the identification of the type of script is very important as a means to date the fragments. Again, according to the palaeographical study of L. Sander, the lower limit is the 7th century CE, and the upper limit might be the 14th century CE (Sander 1968, 46–47). This rather large range of seven centuries can be narrowed down further by considering other features. As with most of the fragments, SHT 612 was found in Qočo and contains running titles in Uighur on the margins. This evidence might allow us to set lower and upper limits for the production of this xylograph that most probably coincide with the period of Uighur occupation of this city (850–1250). An upper limit of around the 13th–14th century is confirmed also by SHT 645. The Pāla script of this xylograph is dated by Sander to the 14th century on account of palaeographical features and general considerations about the transmission of this script from Bengal to Tibet and Central Asia (Sander 1968, 176–77). However, manuscripts in this script were produced in Nepal already in the 12th century,¹⁶ and it is not an impossible scenario that manuscripts written in this script had reached the cities on the Silk Road already by the 13th century.¹⁷ This

16 For instance, Add.1693 in the Cambridge University Library, a manuscript of the *Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñāparamitā*, completed on Sunday, July 18th, 1165 CE in the Dharmacakra-vihāra in Kathmandu.

17 A confirmation of this hypothesis might be found in the running marginal titles in Chinese characters, to be dated after the 10th century (Imre Galambos, personal communication).

hypothesis coincides with the evidence at our disposal about the introduction of blockprinting in the Uighur kingdom of Qočo in the 13th–14th century.¹⁸ According to Annemarie von Gabain, four types of format were used for the production of manuscripts and xylographs in the Turfan area: codex, *pothī*, scroll, and accordion book. The accordion book format was a late introduction of the Uighurs, an aspect that might confirm the dating of the Sanskrit blockprints in this format to the last period of the Uighur occupation of the Turfan area (Gabain 1964, 173–76; 1967, 18–19).

Even though the range of items taken into consideration is very limited, a combination of the three criteria employed to group the xylographs, together with an analysis of their codicological features allows us to draw at least hypotheses about the production, use and diffusion of Sanskrit prints in the Turfan area. As noted above, the script employed in the great majority of them is the “nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b” found in manuscripts from Turfan, a strong argument towards the hypothesis of the presence of local printeries. Following this line of reasoning, we can narrow the spectrum of possibilities and try to tentatively locate the printeries. Only two fragments were recovered in Sängim, SHT 1105 and SHT 4352. The first one is part of a scroll with five lines of Chinese on the recto, and a metrical *Deśanā* on the verso. The scroll format and the Chinese characters are features pointing to the Chinese origin of this fragment, which has probably been re-used to print the Sanskrit text on the verso. SHT 4352 is written in “südturkistanische Brāhmī (Alphabet v),” a script mostly used in the Khotan region, and given the character of the text it contains (a protective spell), it might have been an amulet carried by a person coming from the southern route of the Silk Road. Among the four fragments found in Murtuq (SHT 580, SHT 1110, SHT 1190, SHT 4442), SHT 580 is part of an accordion book containing the *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*. SHT 1110 consists of small fragments from the middle of a folio of an unidentified Mahāyana text; the format has been tentatively identified as *pothī*, but it might have been an accordion book as well. SHT 1190 is one folio of an accordion book containing the end of the *Sitātapatraḥṛdayamantra* with the title used as final rubric (and, as to be expected, parts of the *ye dharmā* formula). Finally, SHT 4442 consists of various fragments of a *pothī* containing a yet unidentified text. The accordion books were probably used for ritual purposes, but unfortunately we cannot make any hypothesis about the function of the *pothī*, since the text is unidentified. Nonetheless, we could assume that according to the type of texts and formats of the xylographs found in Murtuq, these prints might have been brought there for use, rather than produced in situ. On the other hand, eleven

18 See Gabain 1967, *passim*, and Elverskog 1997, 11.

fragments – more than half of the total findings – were recovered in the temple-city of Qočo. Among these fragments all type of formats¹⁹ and texts²⁰ are represented. Moreover, the only two fragments not written in a Brahmī were found in this city (SHT 645 and SHT 646). The variety of this material calls for a deeper analysis, in order to add some more solid bricks to the reconstruction of this picture.

First of all, almost all xylographs are printed on paper with black ink. The only notable exception is SHT 646, printed on paper with red ink. The layout of the *pothī* xylographs contains South Asian, Tibetan and Chinese elements. Particularly interesting are the bigger fragments, such as the ones transmitted in SHT 612 and SHT 645. Fragments of sixteen folios (157–173) of SHT 612 are extant, and one almost complete folio (173). This complete folio (figures 6.2 and 6.3) measures 10.8 × 28, and has five lines per folio on both sides. Like in many Central Asian manuscripts of Sanskrit texts, the ratio between the characters and the interlinear space is roughly 1:2, rendering the text very reader friendly. It has a single-lined writing frame surrounding the whole writing area, and a string hole space, 15.5cm from the left side, interrupting lines 2–4, decorated with a lotus. The running title in Chinese characters is written on the left margin of the recto, while on the left side of the verso the running title is given in Sanskrit and Uighur. The running marginal titles are separated from the text by means of a line thinner than the frame lines. Although the overall aspect of the folios resembles that of a manuscript – even the string-hole space is echoed by means of the decorative lotus – the writing frame and the marginal titles seem to be peculiar features of printed *pothīs*, and are lacking in the accordion



FIGURE 6.2 SHT 612, folio 173 recto (for a complete description, see Appendix A).

- 19 *Pothī*: SHT 612, SHT 613, SHT 645, SHT 1385; accordion book: SHT 575, SHT 627, SHT 1173; codex: SHT 614a, SHT 646.
- 20 Canonical: SHT 612, SHT 613; ritual/performative: SHT 575, SHT 614a, SHT 614b, SHT 627, SHT 645, SHT 1385; magical and protective spells: SHT 646, SHT 1191.

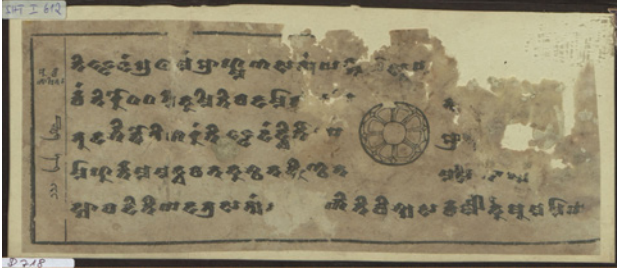


FIGURE 6.3 SHT 612, folio 173 verso (for a complete description, see Appendix A).

books.²¹ Very similar considerations can be made for SHT 645 (figures 6.4 and 6.5), seventeen folios of a xylograph of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.²² The four complete folios measure 16×37 , are printed on both sides and have 6 lines per folio. On the left margin of each recto and verso, an abbreviated running title (including chapter titles) in Pāla script is provided, while on the right margin of each recto and verso, part of the chapter number and foliation is provided in Chinese script.

Accordion books tend to have a simpler layout. The most complete example is SHT 575 (figure 6.6), which consists of a continuous sheet of paper divided into three folios by leaving a blank space corresponding to approximately four written lines, with single marginal frame lines. The absence of running marginal titles and foliation could be explained by the format and its usage. These books were *Gebrauchsobjekte*: the reader had one verso and recto before the eyes, and to read the following verso and recto he/she just needed a slight movement of the hand to turn two pages at time, the risk of turning to the

21 Compare this description with the description of Uighur *pothīs* in Gabain (1964, 174), and above all in Gabain (1967, 24): “Einige wenige Blätter haben eine Form, die den handschriftlichen Blättern im ‘Hochformat’ ähnlich ist [...] Sie haben eine Breite von etwa 59 cm, eine Höhe von 24,5 cm; der Schriftspiegel ist etwa 18,5 cm hoch und von einem Doppelrand eingerahmt, das Papier ist dünn; es gibt kein Schnurloch mehr, aber an dessen einstiger Stelle ist noch immer ein Kreis gezeichnet; er ist ohne Zirkel gezogen, denn es gibt kein Einstechloch. Er unterbricht die 8.–10. Zeile oder die 6.–8. Zeile. Die Paginierung befindet sich links, zwischen der Randlinie und der 1. Textzeile: zuoberst ist sie in uigurischen Buchstaben und darunter auf Chinesisch gegeben.”

22 One fragment assigned to SHT 645 is without foliation, but with the running title [*pañ*] *cā vi sā* in Brāhmī script, suggesting that the fragment belonged rather to a xylograph of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

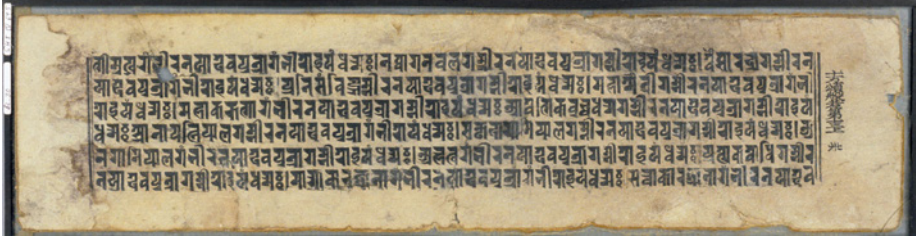


FIGURE 6.4 SHT 645, folio 30 recto (for a complete description, see Appendix A).

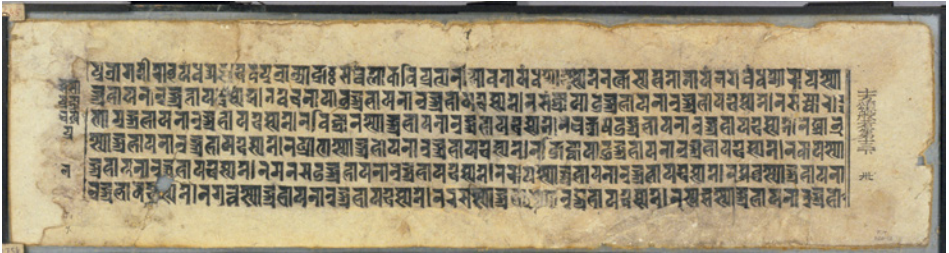


FIGURE 6.5 SHT 645, folio 30 verso (for a complete description, see Appendix A).

wrong page was minimal. SHT 1190 consists of a single folio, and has double marginal frame lines (with a thicker external line).

SHT 646 (figures 6.7 and 6.8) is the only item whose state of conservation allows one to conclude with a degree of certainty that it belonged to a codex. Since it is printed on both sides, it is unlikely that it belonged to a butterfly book (although this possibility cannot be ruled out). It consists of two fragmentary folios, and is a unique item also in other respects: it is the only xylograph printed in red ink, and like SHT 645 is written in an ornamental script derived from the Pāla script. The left and right margins of both folios are damaged, but most probably the writing 6area was completely delimited by a double frame, with a thicker external line.

Among the whole body of written material recovered in Central Asia, printed books were found only in sites on the northern route of the Silk Road (the Turfan oasis, Khara-khoto and Dunhuang), and only in six languages (Chinese, Uighur, Mongolian, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Tangut) (Gabain 1967). Even if the xylographs recovered in Qoço represent only a very small part of the findings if compared to the manuscripts, they show what appears to be a very diversified production, covering a wide range of languages and typologies of texts and book formats. The Sanskrit printed material examined presents features very

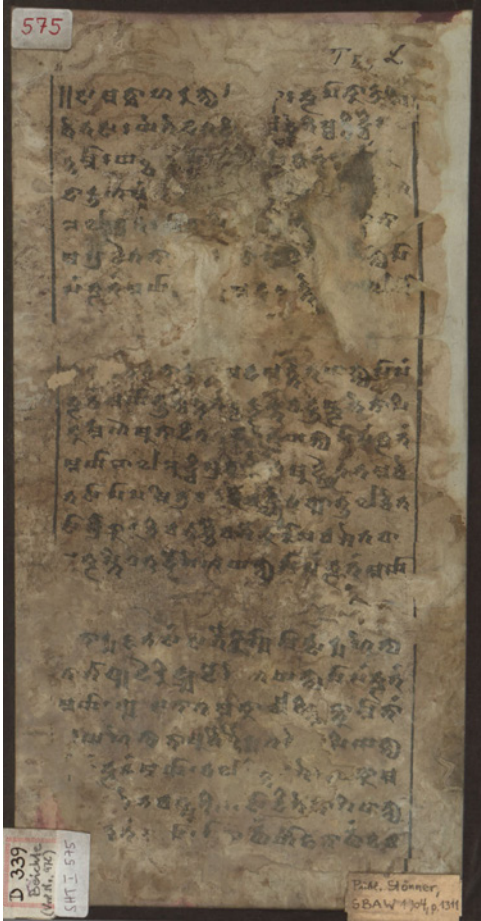


FIGURE 6.6
SHT 575, recto (for a complete description, see Appendix A).



FIGURE 6.7 SHT 646, recto (for a complete description, see Appendix A).



FIGURE 6.8 SHT 646, verso (for a complete description, see Appendix A).

similar to the blockprints in other languages (above all the Uighur prints).²³ In the light of these considerations, we might be tempted to reconstruct a picture in which Qočo was the seat of a printery that supplied also the neighboring cities and temples with Sanskrit texts. The local origin of the Turfan prints has already been questioned by P. Zieme (2009b), and indeed a whole different picture emerges if we widen our perspective and take into consideration xylographs in other languages. Since the blockprints in Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit do not contain colophons mentioning the place of production, it is easy to assume that they were produced in the same place where they were found. On the other hand, a closer look at the colophons of Uighur prints in which the printing place is mentioned reveals that they were not printed in Qočo. After a perusal of Y. Kasai's *Die uigurischen buddhistischen Kolophone*, I was able to trace thirty-three colophons in Uighur extant blockprints,²⁴ but only seven colophons contain a reference about the printing place. Five xylographs were printed in Dadu, the capital of the Yuan emperors (near present-day Beijing):²⁵

- (1) an Uighur version of the Chinese sūtra *Fo shuo guan wu liang shou fo jing* (no. 12), translated by Cinasiri (Skt. Jinaśrī) in the 14th century;
- (2) the *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatradhāraṇī* (no. 45), printed in 1298 in ten thousand exemplars (according to Kasai, the whole printing project probably lasted one year);

23 Cf. Gabain 1967; although slightly dated, this is a fundamental and very insightful contribution about Turfan printing culture.

24 The following list of Uighur blockprints is based on the examination of the 156 entries in Kasai 2008 (the first number is the one assigned by the author in her book, followed by the page number): 4 (p. 52), 8a-b (p. 60), 10 (p. 63), 11 (p. 64), 12 (p. 65), 15 (p. 71), 40 (p. 112), 41 (p. 115), 42 (p. 118), 43 (p. 121), 44 (p. 122), 45 (p. 123), 48 (p. 129), 50 (p. 132), 68 (p. 155), 109 (p. 207), 110 (p. 208), 111 (p. 209), 128 (p. 235), 129 (p. 239), 130 (p. 243), 141 (p. 260), 142 (p. 260), 143 (p. 261), 144 (p. 261), 145 (p. 262), 146 (p. 264), 147 (p. 264), 148 (p. 265), 149 (p. 265), 150 (p. 266), 154 (p. 272), 155 (p. 273). Unfortunately, the indexes to the volume are of no help in this case too, and the only way to determine which blockprints contain a colophon is to read all entries. Like in the case of the eleven SHT volumes, one or more blockprints could eventually have escaped my attention. For this reason, I would like to appeal to the readers of this article and express one apparently minor request: if you are compiling a printed catalog, please consider the possibility of preparing also an electronic version, or at least think about the needs of the prospective readership, and provide accordingly a comprehensive index (or indexes).

25 For a discussion of these prints, see also Zieme 2009b.

- (3) the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (no. 48) in the Uighur translation by Karuṇadāsa, completed in 1302 in the “White Stūpa Tempel (Chin. Bai ta si), in Dadu, and most probably printed in the same year and place;
- (4) *Avalokiteśvarasādhana* (no. 110), in the Uighur translation by Punyasiri (Skt. Puṇyaśrī), printed in 1333 on behalf of the monks of the Pu qing si monastery;
- (5) a multi-text accordion book (no. 130), containing six different texts (Chinese *sūtras*, either in the original or in the Uighur version) printed on behalf of a certain Buyancog Bahsi, using the blockprints kept in the Hong fa si temple in the city of Zhongdu. The identification of this city with Dadu is controversial, and depending on it this xylograph was printed either in 1188 or (most probably) in 1308. The different hypotheses are discussed by Kasai, 243–44, who leans toward the identification with Dadu.

Another blockprint that probably was printed in Dadu contains the Uighur translation of the *Avalokiteśvarasādhana* by Punyasiri (Skt. Puṇyaśrī) (no. 111), printed in 1336 on behalf of a lay Buddhist, Böri Buka. A fragment from an accordion book of an unidentified text was printed in 1361 in Ganzhou (no. 154), and another fragment of an unidentified text was printed on behalf of the emperor in Zhongdu (no. 142). Unfortunately, for the latter no further details are available, and in the light of the consideration made about the multi-text accordion book (no. 130), also in this case we are unsure about the identification of this city. Nonetheless, there is tenuous evidence that xylographs could have been printed in Qočo. An accordion book of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* (no. 40) was printed and distributed in the 14th century in one hundred exemplars on behalf of the Idiqt Köncök for the benefit of his parents. Fragments of two other accordion books of unidentified texts (no. 144 and 149) printed on behalf of the Idiqt Köncök have also come to light (according to the colophon, no. 149 was printed in five-hundred exemplars). Moreover, an accordion book of the *Aparimitāyurjñānanāmamahāyānasūtra* (no. 42) was printed and distributed in one hundred and ten exemplars, on behalf of Buyan Kaya Sal, the sister of the Idiqt Köncök's wife. The location of this family is controversial, they might have been the Idiqt of Qočo or of Yongchang (Kasai 2008, 112–13; Zieme 1992, 52–54). Finally, a fragment of an unidentified text (no. 155) printed before 1300, and probably commissioned by the empress Buluṅ, was found in Dunhuang.

Tempting as it might be, the hypothesis of a printing house active in Qočo seems improbable. The important role played by the Uighurs at the Mongolian court in the 13th and 14th century certainly accounts for the production of the Uighur prints. The role of the Mongols in the printing of Tibetan texts is also well known, as well as their involvement in the printing of Chinese texts. An

excellent example of the skilfulness of the printers active in the Mongolian capital in the 14th century is provided by the quadrilingual prints of the *Namaskāraikaviṣṭatistotra* to Tārā, containing the Sanskrit text in Pāla script, along with the Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese translations (Zieme 1982, 1989). A similar type of print has been found also in the Turfan area, TibHT 107. These two fragments of a xylograph contain the *Namaskāraikaviṣṭatistotra* in three languages: the Sanskrit text in Pāla script, the Tibetan translation in dBu can, and only three characters in Uighur script and language.²⁶ The texts are printed under the image of two different forms of this deity. Is it too far fetched to assume that also TibHT 107 was a quadrilingual xylograph? Moreover, if we assume that also the Sanskrit xylograph were printed in Dadu, the use of the Pāla script in SHT 645 and SHT 646 is easily explained with the Tibetan cultural influence at the Mongolian court (as explained above, the Pāla script in its derivative forms was employed in Tibet for ornamental purposes). Likewise, we can account for the multilingual marginal titles and foliation in SHT 612 and SHT 645, which most probably had the function of instructions for Chinese and Uighur printers (or librarians?).²⁷ Another interesting witness of the broadness of this printing activity is SHT 646, in the middle of which (lines 3 and 6) Tangut characters are to be found.

On the other hand, this explanation raises daunting questions: why were the Sanskrit xylographs found in Qočo? Who commissioned them? What was their purpose? The great variety of languages in these xylographs almost automatically leads to questions about multilingualism in Turfan. It is an accepted view that there must have been quite a few Uighur-Chinese bilingual individuals (Gabain 1967, 28–29), but the question remains of the status of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts. Sanskrit can be considered the “church language” of Central Asian Buddhism, and given the ritual value of the hymns, we might speculate that the Sanskrit and/or the Tibetan versions of TibHT 107 were recited even by persons who didn’t understand the languages (after all, they were provided with a translation on the same page).

Even if this hypothesis explains the occurrence of other ritual or magical Sanskrit texts (like the *dhāraṇīs*), the purpose of canonical texts such as the *Samyuktāgama* remains unclear. Were they meant to be read? If yes, by whom? How well-known was Sanskrit during the Uighur domination in Turfan? A

26 For the identification of the language, see Zieme 1989. The fragments preserve parts of the first and third *pāda* of stanza 5 in TibHT 107b (first line, 5a: *namas tuttārahūṃkā[ra]*; second line, 5c: *[sa]ptalokakramā[k.]*), while TibHT 107a preserves parts of the second and fourth *pāda* of stanza 6 (first line, 6ab: *[ma] | marudviśveśvarārcite |*; second line, 6d: *yakṣapuraskṛte*).

27 On the function of the Chinese foliation in Uighur prints, see Gabain 1967, 27–28.

comparison of the Sanskrit printed texts recovered with the extant Uighur Buddhist literature might provide an answer. Given the fragmentary character of the findings, obviously what we are looking for is not an exact correspondence, but rather a correspondence in terms of the typology of the texts (for instance, parts of the *Vinaya*, regardless of which exact parts). Almost all identified Sanskrit texts represented in the xylographs have Uighur counterparts:

1. *Āgamas: Samyuktāgama* (Appendix A nos. 3 and 4; cf. Elverskog 1997, 20–22, no. 3); *Cittānupaśyanā-Smṛtyupasthāna* and *Dharmānupaśyanā-Smṛtyupasthāna* (Appendix A nos. 5–6; Elverskog 1997, 18–20, no. 2 *Madhyamāgama*);
2. *Vinaya* texts (Appendix A no. 16, *Samghabhedavastu*; cf. Elverskog 1997, 31–31–22, nos. 11–12, *Vinayavibhaṅga* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and of the Sarvāstivādins);
3. *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* (Appendix A no. 1, *Deśanā* corresponding to *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* III.17–27; cf. Elverskog 1997, 65–71, no. 37; 135–38, no. 79);²⁸
4. *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra* (Appendix A no. 1; cf. Elverskog 1997, 26–27, no. 7, *Disastvustik*);
5. *Stotras* (Appendix A no. 7; cf. Elverskog 1997, 126–29, no. 75 B);
6. *Dhāraṇīs: Sītātapatrahṛdayamantra* and *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatradhāraṇī* (Appendix A no. 13 and 17; cf. Elverskog 1997, 108–110, no. 62; *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣavijayanāmadhāraṇī* (Appendix B no. 14; cf. T III M 209).

The only Sanskrit text without any Uighur correspondence is the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (SHT 645, to which one may add SHT 646, an unidentified *Dhāraṇī*). Is this a fortuitous case, or did the *Prajñāpāramitā* enjoy a different status than other Sanskrit texts? As we have seen, SHT 645 is a peculiar print (*pothī* in Pāla characters), probably it had a cultic value and was meant to be worshipped rather than read. A similar remark can be made also for the *dhāraṇīs* and the *stotras*: the former had magical protective value per se, while the latter were perhaps recited in the original Sanskrit. If we turn to the rest of texts, the *Āgamas*, the *Vinaya* texts and the *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra*, we have to come up with a different explanation. According to Elverskog, the Uighur versions

28 On the centrality of this *Deśanā* for the development of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, cf. Nobel 1937, and Elverskog 1997, 65: “The text probably was built up around the confession of sins found in chapter 3 of the Sanskrit version, and over time it was continually expanded with the addition of *jātaka* stories, an exposition of *śūnyatā* (emptiness), political ideas of kingship, and certain Tantric concepts.” Cf. also the metrical *Deśanā* in SHT 1105, Appendix A no. 10.

of the latter two were translated from a Sanskrit original (1997, 10). Is this the explanation for the presence of Sanskrit xylographs of such texts, even after the Indian missionary activity in Central Asia had ceased? A confirmation of this hypothesis might be found in the bilingual Sanskrit-Uighur manuscripts recovered in the Turfan area. In fact, these fragments include parts of the *Vinayavibhaṅga* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, as well as of the *Samyuktāgama* and the *Madhyamāgama* (Gabain 1954, Hartmann and Maue 1996, and Maue 1996). Maybe the Sanskrit prints of these texts were based on the manuscripts used for the Uighur translations, and were still used as reference works in a monastic environment (or to learn Sanskrit?).

3 Sanskrit Lithographs

We now turn to the world of lithography, the first printing technology that made a real impact in South Asia and had more immediate and far-reaching effects than typography. Invented by Alois Senefelder in Munich in 1798, lithography is based on a relatively simple process:

The key to the process is the basic principle that grease and water do not mix. If marks are made on a flat, porous stone surface with a waxy crayon or other greasy substance it will stick to the stone and be partially absorbed. The whole surface can then be moistened and the water is attracted to the stone but repelled by the grease. If the stone is then inked up with greasy printing ink, the ink will adhere to the greasy marks but be repelled by the water. The ink can then be transferred to a sheet of paper through the application of pressure. Unlike relief printing where the printing surface is raised, or intaglio where the ink is contained in incised grooves in a metal plate, in lithography the printing surface is flat. (Banham 2007, 284)

The introduction of lithography in South Asia has already been described in detail by G. Shaw, therefore I mention here only the relevant details. Lithography was introduced in South Asia in the 1820s, and the two main centers of production were Mumbai and Calcutta (Shaw 1993, 91; Shaw 1998, 91). Soon it became clear that the technique had to be adapted to the Indian climate, and many technical shortcomings had to be dealt with. Particularly important was the preparation of the stones and the inks (for the latter, special recipes were developed, see Shaw 1993, 91).

Lithographic printing was widely employed for the production of books in Hindi and Urdu, and accordingly the scholarly literature on this topic

is vast.²⁹ On the contrary, virtually no specific study has been devoted to Sanskrit lithographs. Nevertheless, even a cursory examination of selected catalogues confirms the great popularity enjoyed by this technique in South Asia for printing Sanskrit books as well: 807 lithographs are listed alone in the Nepal German Manuscripts Cataloguing Project (NGMCP) database. Unlike in the case of xylographs, where the (unfortunately) limited amount of material at our disposal allowed a comprehensive study, it is not possible to provide a complete analysis of such a vast amount of material. A bibliographical study of Sanskrit lithographs is still a desideratum, and as long as no reliable census is available, we are left in the blind as to what kind of Sanskrit works have been published by means of this printing technique. Therefore, a reliable study on the impact and circulation of Sanskrit lithographs has to be postponed. Nevertheless, a close examination of selected material might reveal other aspects of lithographic print culture, which might have had an impact on the attitude of readers towards the printed book. I focus here on one example of a Sanskrit lithograph, the *Śūdrakamalākara* by Kamalākaraḥṭṭa, a Sanskrit manual about the conduct of life and social behavior for *śūdras* composed in the 17th century (cf. Kāṇe 1930, 432–37). This lithograph was published in Mumbai in 1861 and is currently kept in the Cambridge University Library (figures 6.9–6.13). Although printed in the *pothī* format, it is now bound as a volume in the codex format. The manuscript of the *Śūdrakamalākara* examined here (figures 6.14–6.17) is kept in the Anandashram Samstha in Pune. According to the colophon, it was written in 1817 in the *Kṛṣṇātīrāṃsālī* (?)

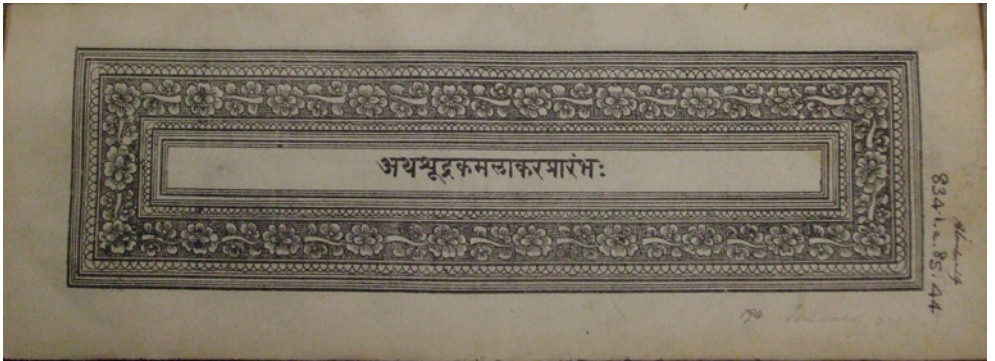


FIGURE 6.9 *Lithograph of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 1 recto, title page. Black and white illustration imitating wooden covers of manuscripts (for a complete description, see Appendix B).*

29 See for instance the works listed in Stark 2007.

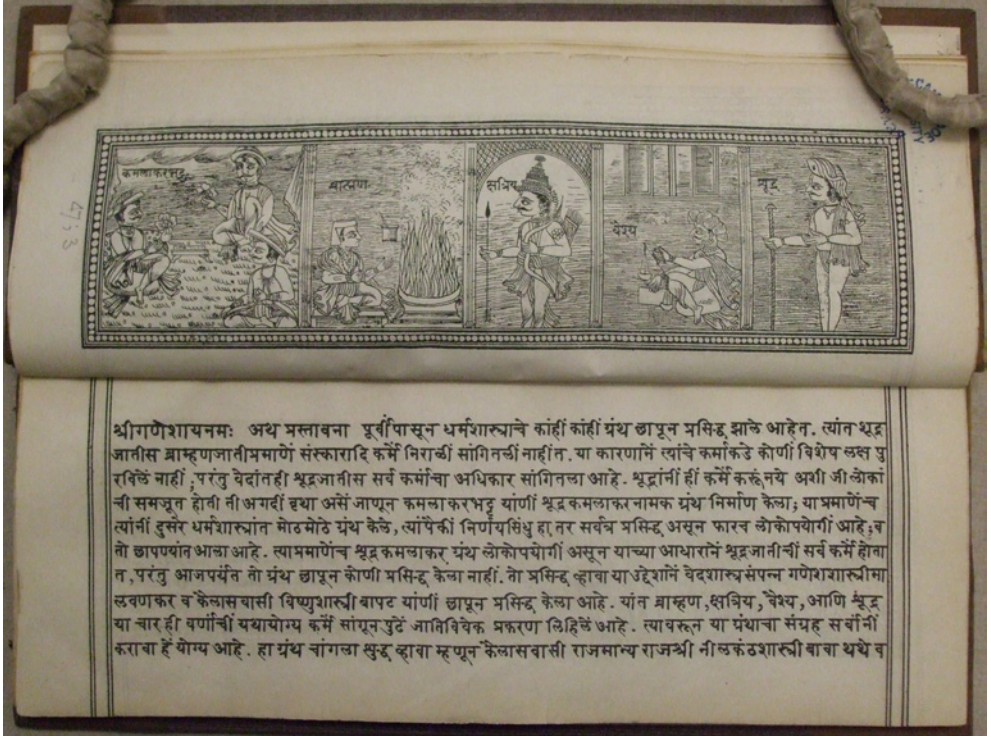
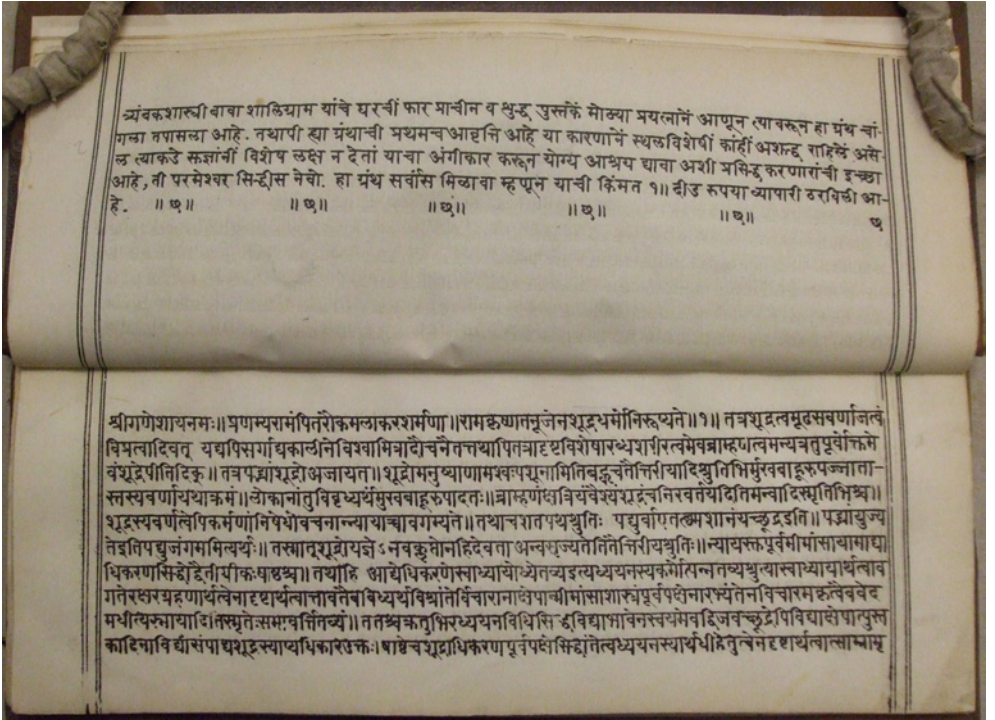


FIGURE 6.10 *Lithograph of the Śūdrakamālākara, folio 1 verso. Black and white illustration divided into four panels (from left to right: the author of the treatise; figures representing the four varṇas in this order: brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra), and folio 2 recto (for a complete description, see Appendix B).*

village by a certain Bāka for his own use as well as for others. Most probably the scribe was not a professional, and the overall impression conveyed by the script and the carelessly planned layout confirms this conclusion. A detailed description of both manuscript and lithograph is provided in Appendix B. A comparison of the layout features of the lithograph with that of the manuscript shows that basically there are no differences between the two: they are both *pothīs*, the writing space is delimited only by double marginal frame lines, and for the segmentation of the text the same set of symbols and strategies are used. Moreover, paratextual elements such as the running marginal title and the foliation are in identical positions in both the manuscript and the lithograph. Finally, pieces of information that in Western printed books are usually found in the title page, such as place and year of printing, are provided in a colophon after the main text. In the lithograph and the manuscript of the *Śūdrakamālākara*, the structural elements of the two colophons are identical, as shown in the following table:

TABLE 6.1 *Structural analysis of the colophons in the Śūdrakamalākara manuscript and lithograph.*

Element	Manuscript	Lithograph
Name of era	śake	śake
Year	1739	1783 trināgasaptemdumite
Name of year	īśvaranāmasaṃvatsare	durmatināmasaṃvatsare
Month / fortnight / day	caitravadyapratipadāṃ, saumyavāsare	mārgaśīrṣamāsi, kṛṣṇapakṣe, ravivāsare
Place of production	kṛṣṇātīraṃsāligrāmamadhye	mum̐bākhyapaṭṭaṇe
Formula of completion	idaṃ pustakaṃ [...] nirmitaṃ samāptaṃ	idaṃ pustakaṃ samāptam
Name of scribe	bhaṭṭopanārakagoviṃdabhaṭṭātma- jabākena likhitaṃ	yatnataś ca gaṇeśena am̐kito 'yaṃ śīlākṣaraṅḥ
Scribal note	svārthaṃ parārthaṃ ca [...] evaṃ vādati pustakaṃ śrīrāma	—

FIGURE 6.11 *Lithograph of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 2 verso and 3 recto (for a complete description, see Appendix B).*

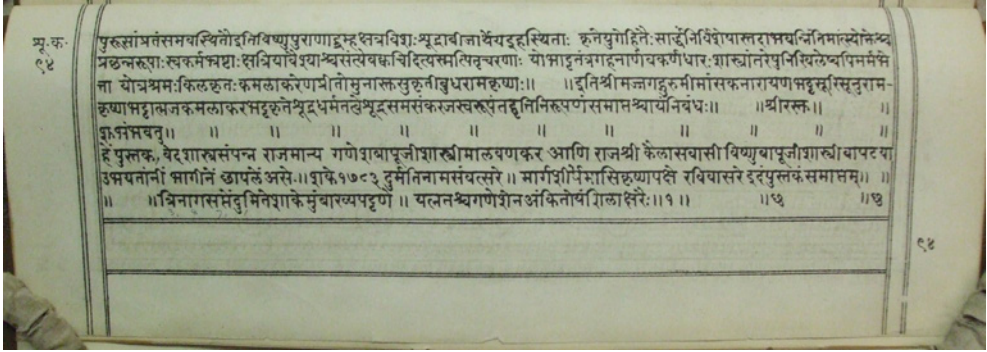


FIGURE 6.12 Lithograph of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 94 verso, colophon (for a complete description, see Appendix B).



FIGURE 6.13 Lithograph of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 95 verso. Black and white illustration imitating wooden covers with carved floral decorations (for a complete description, see Appendix B).

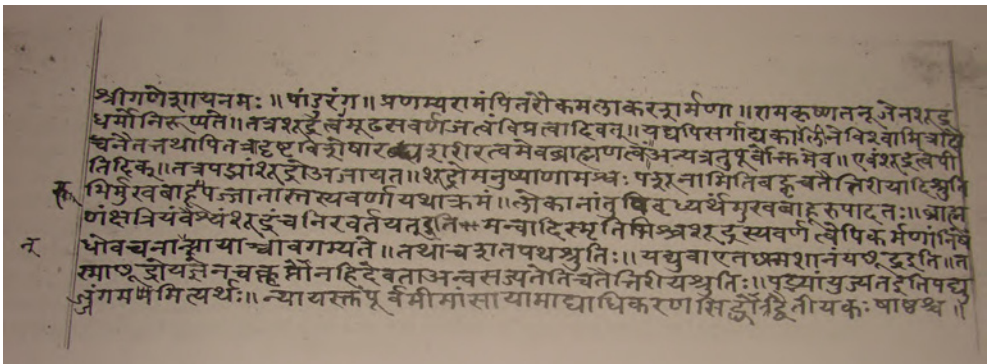


FIGURE 6.14 Manuscript of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 1 recto (for a complete description, see Appendix B).

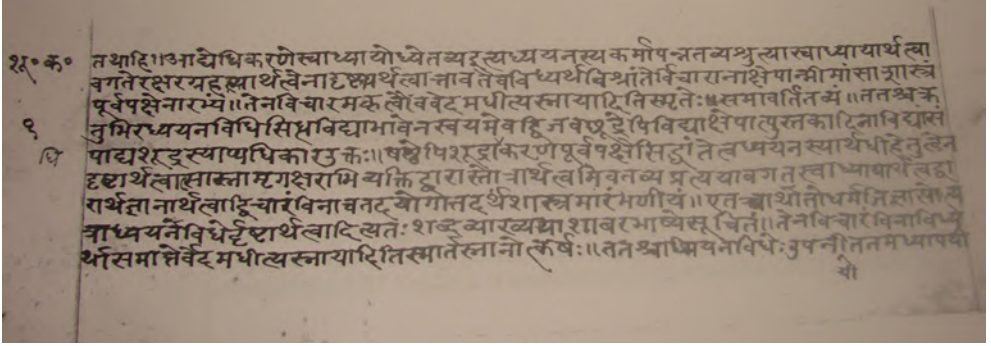


FIGURE 6.15 Manuscript of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 1 verso (for a complete description, see Appendix B).

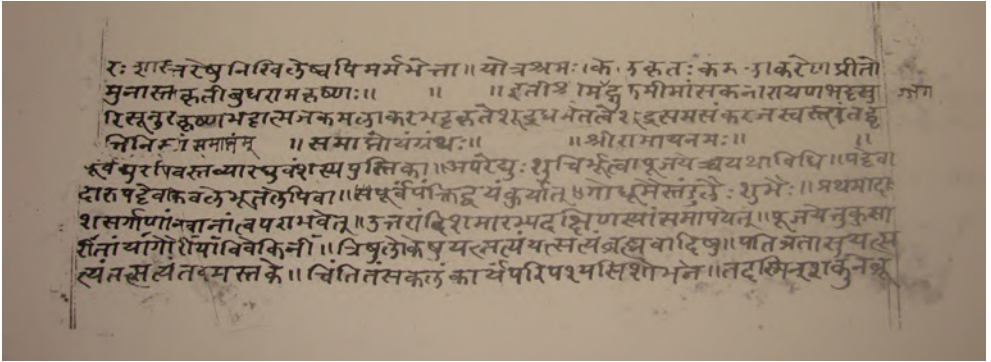


FIGURE 6.16 Manuscript of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 124 recto, colophon (for a complete description, see Appendix B).

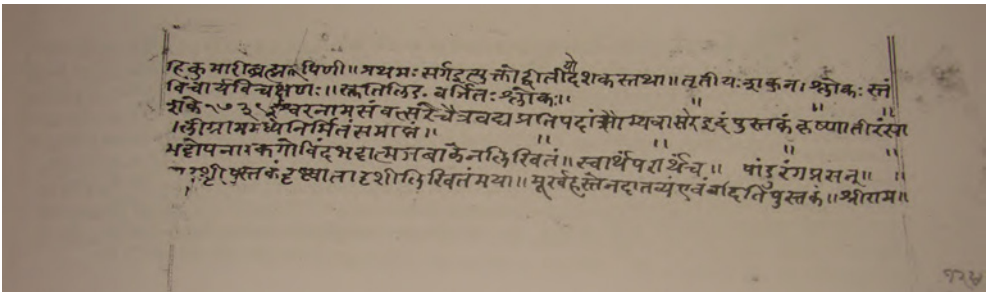


FIGURE 6.17 Manuscript of the Śūdrakamalākara, folio 124 verso, colophon (for a complete description, see Appendix B).

The only differences lie in the terminology employed to indicate the name of the scribe, and the absence of the scribal note in the lithograph. If it is clear that the manuscript was written (Skt. *likhitam*) by a certain Bāka, son of Govinda, the terminology for the preparation of the lithograph is ambiguous. We know that a certain Gaṇeśa printed the text (Skt. *anikito*, scil. *granthaḥ*) with effort (*yatnataḥ*) by means of lithographic process (Skt. *śilākṣaraiḥ*, lit. “stone characters”). For the preparation of a lithograph, a manuscript had to be written, which was subsequently pressed on the stone. Was Gaṇeśa the scribe and the printer as well? Or does the word *anikita* only mean that he prepared the manuscript? Moreover, if we take into consideration that at least three different hands can be distinguished (as described below in the Appendix B), the plot thickens: was Gaṇeśa only the last scribe, and did he not credit the others? Or is the change of hand to be ascribed to different writing tools used by him in the preparation of the master copy?

The scribal note in the manuscript includes three elements: the indication of the purpose of the manuscript (“for my own sake as well as for the sake of others”), followed by very common statements usually added at the end of manuscripts in metrical form (“I have written this book as I have seen it. ‘Do not give [me] in the hand of fools!’ says the book”); an invocation to Rāma closes the whole manuscript. It should be stressed that although quite common, scribal stanzas are not always present in manuscripts (and very often they are written in poor Sanskrit, like in this case: the first two *pādas* should read either *yādrśaṃ pustakaṃ dr̥ṣṭvā tādr̥śaṃ likhitaṃ mayā* or *yādr̥śiṃ pustikāṃ dr̥ṣṭvā tādr̥śī likhitā mayā*).

The codicological features as well as the paratextual elements of the lithographed book reveal the clear intention of imitating manuscripts. This sort of imitation is pushed to such an extent that the recto of the first folio and the verso of the last folio are imitations of wooden covers of manuscripts (see the section about layout in the description provided in Appendix B).

4 Sanskrit Incunabula

In order to get an idea about the Sanskrit works printed in South Asia in the pre-colonial period, the first step is to turn to Graham Shaw’s (1987) *The South Asia and Burma Retrospective Bibliography* (SABREB). Stage 1, 1556–1800. This is what I did, but what I found was rather disappointing. According to Shaw, prior to 1800 only a single Sanskrit work had been printed in South Asia: the *Ṛtusaṃhāra*, or as it runs in the title of the printed volume, “The seasons: a descriptive poem, by Cālidās, in the original Sanscrit.” This book was printed in

Calcutta at the Honorable Company's Press in 1792, and the "entire text is not printed in Devanāgarī but in Bengali characters" (Shaw 1981, 149). The editor was Sir William Jones, and it is important bibliographically as the first Sanskrit work ever printed with movable type in India. Calcutta confirms its role as a printing hub in South Asia also as far as printing with movable type is concerned, and the first Sanskrit works in Devanāgarī characters were printed in this city. Between 1801 and 1832, the Serampore Press of the Danish mission produced an output of "more than two hundred and twelve thousand volumes in forty different languages" (Grierson 1903, 241). The pivotal role of the Serampore Press has to be acknowledged also in that it developed and cast types for a wide range of South Asian scripts (*ibidem*). As is to be expected, the list of Sanskrit books printed at this press includes translations of the Old and New Testament. However, more interesting is the range of works printed in order to fulfil the needs of books in Sanskrit and other languages for the education of civil servants in the College of Fort William: William Carey's *A Grammar of the Sungskrit Language* (1804, 1806 and 1808), the *Rāmāyāna* (1806), the *Mugdhabodha* by Vopadeva³⁰ (in Bengali characters, 1807), the *Nāmalīṅgānuśāsana* by Amara (with an English interpretation and annotation by E. T. Colebrooke, 1808 and 1825), the *Sāṅkhyapravacanabhāṣya* by Vijñānabhikṣu (in Devanāgarī characters, 2nd edition 1821) (Grierson 1903, 254). Moreover, Henry Thomas Colebrooke commissioned Carey to print a reader for the students of Fort William, containing "the *Hitopadeśa* fables, Appaya Dikṣita's abridgment of Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita* story and Bhartṛhari's three *śatakas* (centuries) of poetical aphorisms" (Rocher and Rocher 2012, 73).

The Serampore press was not able to print enough books to fulfill the needs of Fort William College, and in 1807 a printing press entirely run by Indian personnel was established in the College, thanks to Colebrooke's support. In 1809 the press became independent under the ownership of Paṇḍit Bāburām.³¹ After the takeover by Bāburām, the press had a short life span, and "owed its survival until then to Fort William's need to adapt Sanskrit classics for classroom use" (Kopf 1969, 118). The very first books published by this press were Sanskrit works that were interesting to Colebrooke, mostly *kośas*. Among these books, particularly interesting is a volume including the *Amarakośa*, the

30 In this early period of Sanskrit studies, this grammatical treatise was deemed to be superior to Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* for didactical purposes (Rocher and Rocher 2012, 68–70).

31 Before 1800, the first printing press "used by Indians for Indians (without any direct European stimulus or involvement) was when two Parsee compositors working at the Courier Press in Bombay produced an edition of their Zoroastrian holy book, the Khordeh Avesta, in 1798" (Shaw 2007, 131).

Trikāṇḍaśeṣa, the *Harāvalī*, and the *Nānārthakośa* by Medinī, together with an index by Paṇḍit Vidyākara Miśra (Rocher and Rocher 2012, 74). The description provided by R. and L. Rocher's enables us to have a very precise idea of its nature:³²

Setting a pattern of Sanskrit Press publications, it was printed in the traditional format of Indian manuscripts, oblong and without title pages, but with extensive colophons. Introductory verses announced that the book appeared 'at Mr. Colebrooke's behest' (*Kolabrūka-sāhab-ājñayā*). (Rocher and Rocher 2012, 74)

Like in the case of lithographs, for the sake of clarity and due to the editorial constraints, I have chosen to deal only with two early printed editions of one single work, Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*. The first edition of this work (figures 6.18–6.20) was printed in 1814 at Fort William, when the press was under the direction of Babūrām. A closer look at some features of this Sanskrit incunabulum confirms that the style of the books printed by Bābūrām is a simple adaptation of a manuscript with few minor differences. Even though the imprint/title page is a feature that in the form seen here is absent in manuscripts, it retains elements of manuscript colophons. The number of verses (*śloka*) of the main text is indicated, as if it were a manuscript and the scribe would have to be paid (*atra kāvyē mūlaślokaśamkhyā || ekapañcāśadadhikasahasraṃ 1052*). The presence of introductory verses about the occasion of preparation of the edition resembles the scribal verses found in manuscripts.³³ Finally, the publication date is given in four different calendars. Other features of manuscripts crept into this printed book, such as the use of foliation instead of pagination, and the nature and appearance of paratexts (running marginal abbreviated title, number of the *sarga*). Moreover, the overall layout of the complex main text-commentary is basically the same as in a manuscript in the *tripāṭha* format. The persistence of elements of manuscripts in incunabula is not peculiar to South Asian print culture, yet the choice of the Indian editors and printers

32 Although this description is rather fitting, the copy of this book I consulted (Cambridge University Library 834: 4.c.80.1) is not in the "oblong," i.e. *pothī* format of Indian manuscripts, but in the Western book format. Otherwise, the 1814 edition of Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya* examined by me has the same type of layout.

33 "Gildemeister (Bibliotheca Sanskrita, 1847, # 331, p. 63) was puzzled by a king Mallāta mentioned in the *maṅgala* verses of Bābūrāma's edition of the *Kirātārjunīya* (Calcutta 1814), *śrīmāllāṭānṛpājñayā*. In fact, the book was published at the instance of the *lāṭa-nṛpa*, i.e., the governor-general" (Rocher 2009, 512).

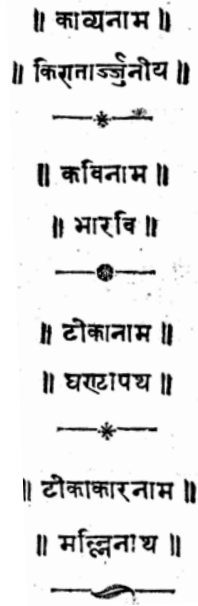


FIGURE 6.18
Kirātārjunīya, 1814 edition, title page (for a complete description, see Appendix C).

in the beginning of the 19th century was surely more deliberate than the one of their European counterparts in the 15th and 16th century. Even though they could rely on different models and draw inspiration from Western books set up with a different layout, they decided not to depart from the indigenous manuscript tradition.

On the other hand, the 1847 edition of the same work (figures 6.22–6.23) already shows features borrowed from Western printed books: the layout of the complex main text + commentary is completely different, the paratexts (running marginal abbreviated title and number of the *sarga*) have moved to the header, and instead of a foliation, a pagination is employed. However, the main difference between the two editions is in the degree of readability and the means employed to achieve it. In the 1814 edition (figures 6.18–6.21), the first stanza is printed in the middle of folio 1v, slightly indented on the left and right, and separated from the preceding and following nine lines of commentary only by means of a double interlinear space. Moreover, it is preceded by the rubric (Skt. *namaskāra*) *śrīgaṇeśāya namaḥ*, like in manuscripts, and is printed on two lines, even though the meter has four lines (Skt. *pāda*). More importantly, both the text of the *mūla* as well as that of the commentary are completely printed in *scriptio continua*. In other words, little thought has been paid to enhance the readability of this printed book against its manuscript counterparts.

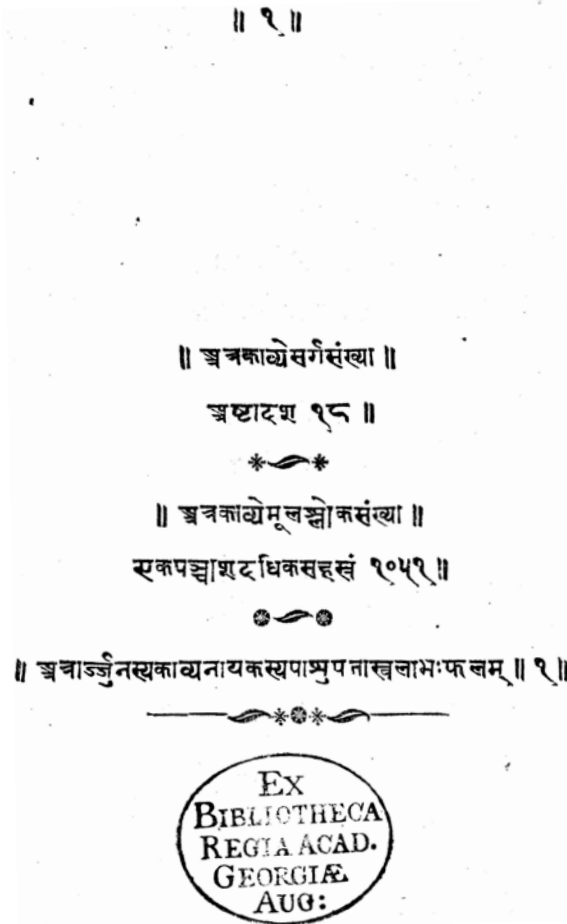


FIGURE 6.19 Kirātārjunīya, 1814 edition, page 1 (imprint; for a complete description, see Appendix C).

A very different approach has been adopted for the 1847 edition, in which the text is far more reader friendly. First of all, the layout solution for the main text and the commentary is a clear improvement. Albeit not always immediately under the stanza, the commentary to each stanza begins on the same page where the stanza is printed, and continues up to the next stanza in the main text, helping the reader considerably to navigate between the two. Other important improvements are that the stanzas are printed on four lines, representing their structure in four *pādas*, and that the text is not printed in *scriptio continua*, the words are divided (even if not always, in the

॥ शकेवडग्रिसप्रेन्दुसम्मिनेदन्सरेश्रुभे ॥

॥ शाके १७३६ ॥

॥ चन्द्राद्रिवसुभूमानेविक्रमादिद्यवत्सरे ॥

॥ संवत् १८७१ ॥

॥ भूयुग्मदृष्टिधरणीसंमितेयवनादके ॥

॥ सन १२२१ साल ॥

॥ आयाळस्यसिनेपक्षेनृतीयासोमवासरे ॥

॥ वेदभूमिवसुचन्द्रमासनईसवीप्रमान ॥

॥ माहजूनकेवाइसाकप्योयम्यपरधान ॥

॥ सन् १८१४ ईसवी । मा: २२ जून ॥

FIGURE 6.20

Kirātārjunīya, 1814 edition, page 2 (imprint; for a complete description, see Appendix C).

great majority of cases). For instance, in the 1814 edition the first stanza is printed as:

śriyaḥkurūṇāmadhipasyapālanīmprajāsuṽṛttiṁyamayūṅktaveditum |
savarṇiṅgīviditaḥsamāyayauyudhiṣṭhiraṁdvaitavanevanecaraḥ || 1 ||

In the 1847 edition, however, it is printed as follows:

śriyaḥ kurūṇāmadhipasya pālanīm
prajāsu ṽṛttim yamayūṅkta veditum ||
sa varṇiṅgī viditaḥ samāyayau
yudhiṣṭhiraṁ dvaitavane vanecaraḥ || 1 ||

The tendency towards printing more easily readable and better accessible texts did not cease, and later editions gradually introduced other means to facilitate

॥कि०स०॥ नीयांख्यंमहाकायंचिकीर्षुश्चिकीर्षितायाविघ्नपरिसमाप्तिस्म्यदायाविच्छेदलक्षण
 ॥सर्ग १॥ फलसाधनत्वादाशीर्नमस्त्रियावस्तुनिर्देशोवापितन्मुखमित्याद्याशीर्वादाद्यन्यतम
 ॥ १ ॥ स्यप्रबन्धमुखलक्षणत्वाच्चवनेचरस्ययुधिष्ठिरप्राप्तिरूपं वस्तुनिर्देशनकथामुपक्षि
 पति । श्रियइति । आदितःश्रीशब्दप्रयोगाद्दर्शगणादिश्रुद्धिरत्रोपयुज्यते । त
 दृक्त्वेवतावाचकाःशब्दाद्येचभद्रादिवाचकाः । ते सर्वे नैवनिर्द्याःस्युलिपितोगण
 तोपिचेति । कुरूणांनिवासाःकुरवोजनपदाःतस्यनिवासइत्यण्प्रत्ययःजनपदे
 लुक् । तेषामधिपस्यदुर्थाधनस्यसम्बन्धिनींशेषेघृष्टी । श्रियोराज्यलक्ष्याः । कर्तृ
 कर्मणोःकृतीतिकर्मणिघृष्टी । पाल्यतेचनयेतिपालनीताम्यतिष्ठापिकामित्यर्थःप्रजा
 रागमूलत्वात्सम्पदइतिभावः । करणाधिकरणयोश्चेतिस्त्रेणात्रकरणेव्युत्पत्तिर्वा

श्रीगणेशायनमः ॥ श्रियःकुरूणामधिपस्यपालनीम्यजास्तुवृत्तियमयुक्त्वे
 दितुम् । सर्वाणिलिङ्गीविदितःसमाययौयुधिष्ठिरद्वैतवनेवनेचरः ॥ १ ॥

शान्तिव्यादिनाडीप । प्रजास्तुजनेषुविषये । प्रजास्यात्सन्ततौजनइत्यमरः । वृत्तिं
 व्यवहारंवेदितुंज्ञानुयं वनेचरं अयुक्त्वनियुक्तवान् । वरुणःप्रशस्तिरस्यास्तीतिणिप्र
 त्ययः । तदुक्तम् । स्मरणंकीर्तनंकेलिःप्रेक्षणंगुह्यभाषणम् । संकल्पोऽध्यवसाय
 च्छक्तियानिवृत्तिरेवच ॥ १ ॥ एतन्मैथुनमष्टांगम्ववदन्तिमनीषिणः । विपरी
 तम्ब्रह्मचर्यमेतदेवाष्टलक्षणम् ॥ २ ॥ एतदष्टविधमैथुनाभावःप्रशस्तिः । व
 र्णीब्रह्मचारीतस्यलिङ्गिच्छिन्नमस्यास्तीतिवर्णिलिङ्गीब्रह्मचारिवेषवान् इत्यर्थःस
 नियुक्तःवनेचरतीतिवनेचरःकिशतःभिद्वःकिशतश्वरपुलिन्दास्त्रेच्छजातयइत्यम
 रः । चरेष्टइतिटप्रत्ययःतपुरुषेकतिवज्जलमित्यलुक् । विदितंवेदनमस्यास्ती
 तिविदितःपरवृत्तान्नान्नानवान् इत्यर्थः । अर्श आदिभ्योजिव्यचप्रत्ययःअथवाकर्त्तरि

FIGURE 6.21 Kirātārjunīya, 1814 edition, folio 1 verso (for a complete description, see Appendix C).

reading, such as types in different bodies to distinguish the main text from the commentaries (the former were usually printed with bigger bodies), or by printing in a bold face the first word of the main text when quoted as a lemma in the commentary (Skt. *pratīka*).

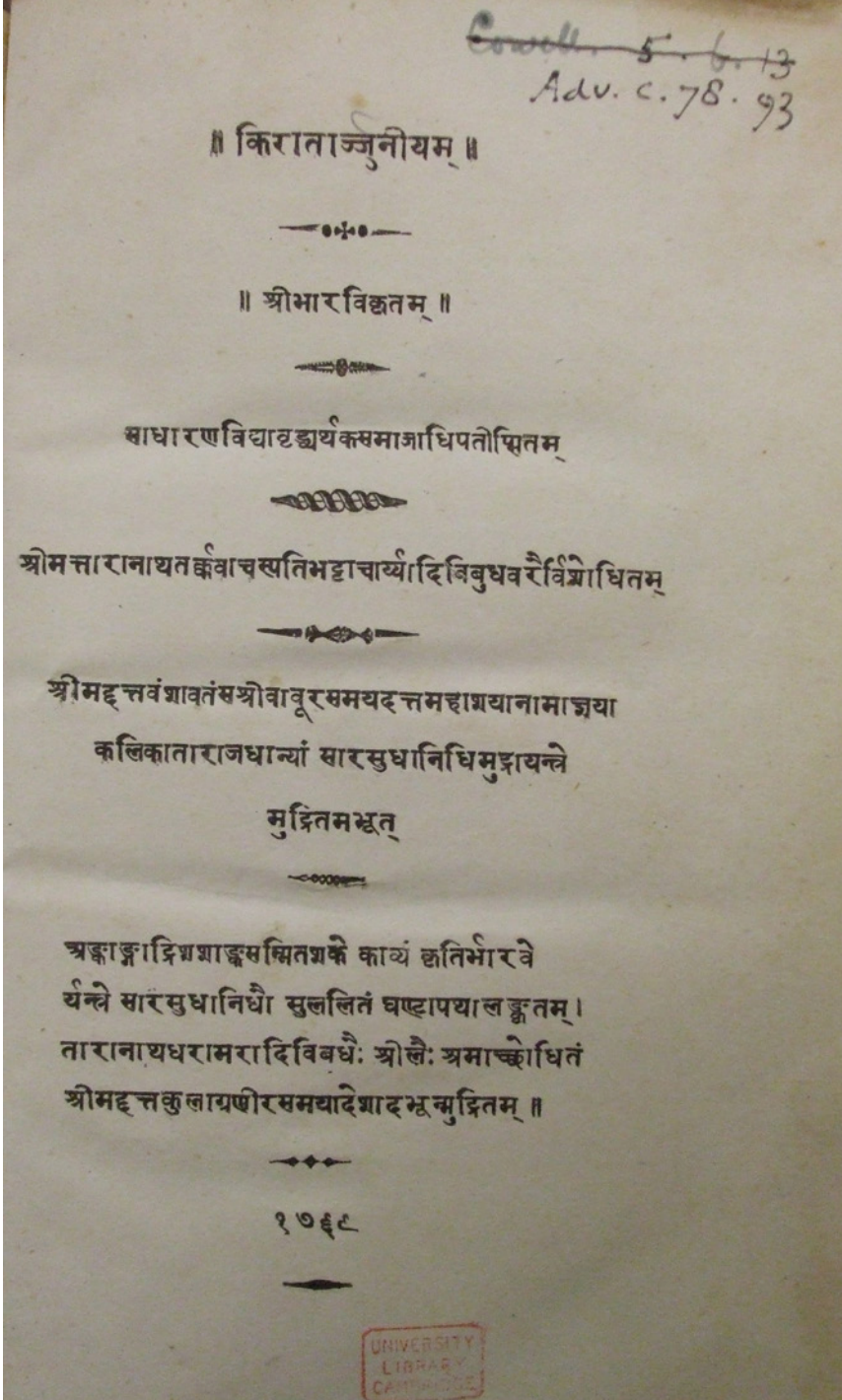


FIGURE 6.22 Kirātārjunīya, 1847 edition, imprint (for a complete description, see Appendix C).

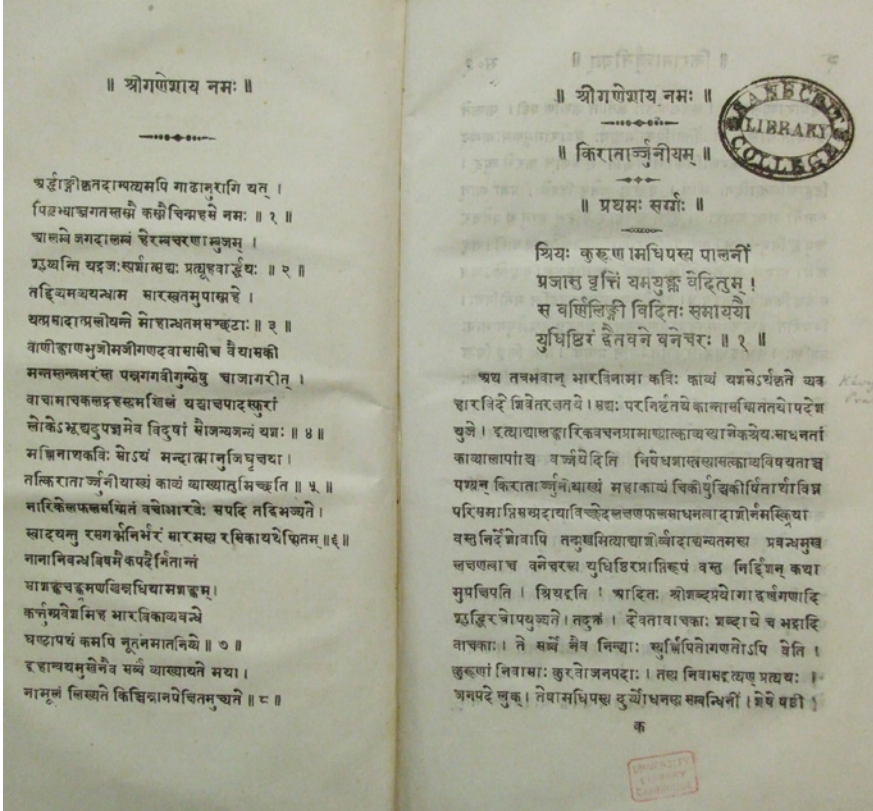


FIGURE 6.23 Kirātārjunīya, 1847 edition, page 1 (for a complete description, see Appendix C).

5 Final Remarks

With regard to the literature that argues for the revolutionary character of print culture as compared to manuscript or oral culture, one may divide the scholars into two categories: the “Macluhanians” and the “Eisensteinians.” The first type focuses more on the psychological impact of the introduction of a new technology on the human mind – in our case, printing – for instance by asking questions about how “the interiorization of media such as letters alter the ratio among our senses and change mental processes” (McLuhan 1962, 24). The second type of scholar is more interested in the economical, cultural, social and even political consequences caused by the introduction of a new technology such as printing, and strives to trace these consequences within their historical and geographic research foci. In what follows, I will try to provide remarks relevant to both these sets of scholarly concerns.

5.1 *Elizabeth Eisenstein's Agent of Change in South Asia*

In the realm of South Asian book history, it is quite a daunting task to write about any of the influences of the introduction of printing on South Asian history and culture. In fact, the *mantra* recited by almost all scholars is that the introduction of printing in South Asia on a massive scale happened late, and mostly due to political, economical and Western cultural influence – in other words, it is yet another child of colonialism. Virtually all recent studies on the introduction of printing in South Asia simply highlight that it wasn't introduced on a massive scale before the 1800s, and leave the question about the reasons of this phenomenon more or less unanswered. If they try to provide an answer, they almost invariably refer to S. Pollock's article *Literary Culture and Manuscript Culture in Precolonial India* (Pollock 2007), in which he provides a more or less "monogenetic" answer to a rather complex and multi-faceted problem. For instance G. Shaw summarizes the points made by Pollock in his (otherwise) insightful contribution on South Asian book history in *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Eliot and Rose 2007), although he mitigates Pollock's statement about an "industrial" production of manuscripts by adding the remark that "whether such manuscript production was in fact truly on an 'industrial' scale requires much further research and validation" (Shaw 2007, 130). The "armature" of Pollock's article is fundamental to understanding why, according to him, there is basically a single reason for the absence of the development of a print culture in South Asia before 1800. As Pollock puts it:

In the last several decades scholarship on the invention, diffusion and eventual triumph of print culture has had a considerable impact on the writing of literary, social and even political history. [...] An alternative case could certainly be argued, that the event which was truly historic for literary cultures in India and defined them in the peculiar contours they often still bear, was the invention, diffusion and eventual conquest of manuscript culture, in its specific symbiotic relationship with the antecedent oral culture. The epistemic revolution of literacy, the production of manuscript books (over thirty million manuscripts are still extant), their dissemination in often massively reproduced and relatively stable form and, perhaps most important, their oral performance before large audiences over long periods of time, have had an effect on shaping imagination, sociality and power that is arguably deeper and more extensive than any attributable to print, middle-class book consumption (stunningly low in India), or the culture of private reading reinforced by print (though hardly generated by it). [...] These themes – the interplay

of the oral and the written; the materiality of manuscript culture; *what might be called script-mercantilism* – along with the peculiar mix, discernible throughout, of a dynamism that was measured and considered, and a stasis that may have been less a sign of deficiency than a sort of cultural strategy, form the armature of the following survey. (Pollock 2007, 77–78, emphasis mine)

The main reason adduced for the late introduction of print culture in South Asia is what Pollock defines as “script-mercantilism,” as opposed to “print-capitalism.” According to the American scholar, “script-mercantilism” is a typical feature of South Asian manuscript culture, consisting of its enormous productivity and efficiency, which led to the creation of a huge amount of manuscripts. Pollock states that the “more than thirty million manuscripts estimated still to be extant [...] represent the merest fraction of what must once have been produced,” a figure that compared to the “some thirty thousand manuscripts” still extant “for all of Greek literature, classical, Hellenistic, and Byzantine” means that the Indian manuscripts exceed the Greek ones by a factor of 1000 (2007, 87). First of all, it must be stressed that the figure of thirty million manuscripts does not include only Sanskrit manuscripts, but also manuscripts in vernacular languages, and it is an estimate given by the late Prof. David Pingree based “on a lifetime of academic engagement with Indian manuscripts,” and counting “both those [manuscripts] in public and government libraries, and those in private collections,” while “the National Mission for Manuscripts in New Delhi works with a conservative figure of seven million manuscripts” (Wujastyk 2014, 159–60). On the other hand, the figure of thirty thousand manuscripts provided by him includes only manuscripts of Greek literature. In fact, if we were to include all manuscripts in Greek, Latin and vernacular languages produced in Europe from the 6th to the 15th century, we would come up with the figure of almost eleven million manuscripts (Buringh and van Zanden 2009, 416, table 1). If we take into consideration these revised estimates of manuscripts production in Europe and South Asia, we notice that the balance is different, and the number of European manuscripts (ca. eleven million) outweighs the number of South Asian manuscripts extant according to the National Mission for Manuscripts (seven million). Apparently, one could argue for the existence of a “script mercantilism” in Europe too, a fact that did not stop the diffusion of a strong print culture. Moreover, in the four cases adduced as instances of “the pre-print publishing industry of south Asia,” Pollock addresses only very briefly and superficially some of the characteristic features usually considered to be – rightly or not – a consequence of the “revolution” caused by the printing

technology. According to E. Eisenstein these characteristics are dissemination, standardization, reorganization, data collection, preservation, and amplification and reinforcement (Eisenstein 1979). For instance, as an example of increased “dissemination” Pollock reports “the story of the production and dissemination of the Sanskrit-Prakrit-Apabhramsha grammar of the Jaina cleric and scholar Hemacandra, the *Siddha-Hemacandra-Sabdanusasanam* (c. 1140) [...] told in a fourteenth-century collection,” relying only on this internal account to demonstrate “the conditions of mass production and the remarkable expanse of the Sanskrit cosmopolitan order within which it circulated,” without providing any hard evidence about the number of manuscripts of this work still extant, nor about their codicological features. As to the “standardization” of texts, he refers to what he thinks is “the most remarkable example of religiously motivated, and tightly controlled, text-reproduction in pre-modern India,” the diffusion of the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāj, a poetic biography of the religious reformer Caitanya in Bengali language, about which he states that “there is none of Eisenstein’s ‘textual drift’ here; print was not the sole bulwark against variation.” In order to demonstrate this statement, a few lines later he merely reports the following passage, taken from a work (at that time, still in progress) by Tony Stewart, which actually contradicts Pollock’s own statement: “Because of the tight control of Srinivasa in the reproduction of the Caitanya-caritamṛta [...] there is decidedly little variation in the manuscripts – a critical edition of the *Caitanya-caritamṛta* would in fact make no sense, because copies are virtually identical, with variation consisting of nothing more than the occasional spelling error, *the insertion of paratextual material in the form of chapter/verse citations, or the appending of commentary*” (Pollock 2007, 88–89, emphasis mine). In other words, the manuscripts of the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* differed from one another exactly like many other South Asian manuscripts, which differ from each other precisely in terms of layout, presence or absence and typology of paratexts, the correctness and reliability of the language. Moreover, the presence or absence of a commentary is a crucial element: bibliographers, librarians, and readers would consider a printed edition of Vergil’s *Aeneid* with Servius’ commentary to be a completely different item than an edition containing Fulgentius’ commentary, let alone one with the sole *Aeneid*. The fact that there is little textual variation in the manuscript tradition of the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta* doesn’t mean that each and every manuscript of this work is identical.

It is undoubtedly true that print culture in South Asia had two formidable adversaries, oral and manuscript culture. Nevertheless, reasons other than “script mercantilism” might have played a relevant role in the lack of diffusion

of print in South Asia. A preliminary list might include (1) technical difficulty, (2) religious and cultural taboo, (3) economic inconvenience vis-à-vis manuscript production (including, but not limited to, script-mercantilism), and (4) political control and cultural censorship. In the following section, I will try to discuss some of these points.

As to technical difficulties, there is no reason to suppose that the characters of the various scripts used to represent Sanskrit were obstacles to the spread of printing in South Asia. After all, the printing techniques examined in the present article (xylography, lithography and movable type) were successfully employed, and there is no indication that there was any particular technical difficulty in printing Sanskrit texts in any script. Other technical factors involving the materiality of the book, probably combined with political control and economic inconvenience, might have contributed to the late dissemination of print culture in South Asia. If we look at the emergence and consolidation of print in other Asian regions, we notice that three (if not more) concurrent elements were present: paper technology, Buddhism, and a centralized and strong state structure. As epitomized by the passage of the *Aparimitayurjñānanāmamahāyānasūtra* quoted as an epigraph, the spreading of the Dharma by means of the production and dissemination of books is a central aspect of Buddhism.³⁴ It is not by chance that the 10th century Sanskrit xylographs from Dunhuang contain *dhāraṇīs*, nor that the Tibetan printed material found in Turfan includes small slips of paper stamped with mantras (as we have seen, the practice of stamping *dhāraṇīs* on clay tablets for mass distribution was already known in South Asia in the first half of the first millennium CE). If we look at South Asia, we find a situation different from the one in Central Asia, where paper, woodblock printing and Buddhism were present and widespread simultaneously. In the Indian subcontinent, the writing materials employed in the production of manuscripts were mainly birch-bark, palm-leaf, and paper. Of these three, only paper is suitable for printing, and mass production of paper could be considered a prerequisite for the emergence of print culture. Even if the introduction of paper in South Asia dates to the 12th or 13th century (or even earlier), a significant production of indigenous paper did not start before the 13th–14th century, albeit with different regional patterns: according to K. Janert, a wider use of paper started in northern India from the 13th century, in western India from the 14th century and in eastern India from the 15th century

34 Obviously, the most quoted passage about the Buddhist cult of the book is from the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, but I think that the centrality of the printing of *dhāraṇīs* in Central Asia called for a quote from a maybe less known, yet very widespread text.

(Janert 1955, 60). Strikingly, this period coincides with the decline and demise of Buddhism on the Indian subcontinent. In South India, other reasons might have played a role, such as the massive production of palm leaves for manuscripts, which might have rendered pointless the development of centres of paper production, above all if the demand for books was already met by the production of palm-leaf manuscripts. In addition, access to paper and other tools required for printing was often controlled by colonial powers.³⁵ In regions such as Nepal, where there was no colonial presence and paper was produced locally in great quantities and xylography was a known technique used to print Tibetan texts, other reasons may have contributed to the slow emergence of printing – for instance, the desire to maintain the secrecy of Tantric teachings, handed down from master to disciple by means of initiation in a closed lineage. The mistrust of the written word in the form of manuscripts has deep roots in South Asian culture, as witnessed by the very popular, anonymous Sanskrit stanza quoted as an epigraph to this article: “Knowledge stored in a book is [like] money in the hand of others – when the time has come to act, there is neither knowledge nor money.” What is print, if not a technique that allows one to store knowledge in even more books, putting this wealth in the hands of even more persons? Unfortunately, we do not yet have enough reliable quantitative data about literacy rates, book markets and manuscript production in South Asia before 1800 to underpin these hypotheses. Nonetheless, an indirect confirmation of the picture presented here is provided by the case of Sri Lanka and Burma, two Buddhist countries where the production of manuscripts on palm-leaf continued well into the 19th century, and the printing technique was first introduced by the colonial powers. Moreover, at the time of annexation by the British, apparently in Burma the literacy rate was higher than in England, even in the absence of a print culture.³⁶

5.2 *The Gutenberg Galaxy in the South Asian Sky*

South Asian Sanskrit lithographs as well as Central Asian Sanskrit xylographs share many common features with manuscripts. This fact is usually not taken into consideration, but has fundamental consequences on the alleged impact

35 As pointed out by G. Shaw: “As well as books, Britain was also the source of materials and manpower for printing in South Asia. Types, presses, printers’ tools, ink, and particularly paper (as local varieties were found unsuitable for printing) all had to be imported” (Shaw 2007, 132).

36 On the introduction of print in Sri Lanka, see Wolf forthcoming; on Burma, see Ruiz-Falqués forthcoming.

this new medium has on the mind and attitudes of readers. First of all, the choice of retaining the *pothī* format (or other manuscript formats, such as the accordion book) and the layout features of manuscripts is striking, all the more because it was not forced. It bears witness to a continuity, not to a change or rupture in book culture, and surely is not an agent of transformation. This phenomenon has been discussed by G. Shaw (2007, 127):

The one printing technology that did strike a cultural chord, particularly with Muslim communities, was lithography, introduced to South Asia in the 1820s. This was precisely because it enabled the printed book to imitate the characteristics of the manuscript which still held cultural authority. Ironically, it was print that appeared strange and produced problems of legibility in South Asia. This was why as late as the 1830s Christian missionaries in Orissa paid scribes to copy biblical texts onto palm leaves, a practice begun by the Danish missionaries at Tranquebar in south India in the early eighteenth century – print yielding to the more familiar manuscript letter-forms. But lithography overcame this problem by realizing a paradox: the mass-produced manuscript.

As I have tried to outline above, readers probably experienced no real difference while reading a manuscript, a lithograph or an incunabulum such as the 1814 edition of the *Kirātārjunīya*. In addition, manuscripts of a work with its commentary might have been even more readable than their printed equivalents, above all if their layout was carefully planned, for instance with lemmata (Skt. *pratīka*) in the commentary highlighted in red. Obviously, this remark is by no means limited to South Asian manuscripts, nor is it a sort of “layout revolution” limited to printed books, as is sometimes argued. In fact, in European book history this revolution happened almost seven hundred years before Gutenberg:

Around 600 Irish monks developed a system of writing that separated individual words, which greatly facilitated reading. Finally, around 800, modern punctuation, uniform script, and division into paragraphs were introduced, all also greatly helping the reader to understand the text quickly. In sum, a new information technology was created, which, as Ulrich Blum and Leonard Dudley argued, helped launch the European economy in the period that followed.

Blum and Dudley [...] argued that these innovations – and in their view in particular the standardization of Latin in 800 – launched not only the book but a new, uniform, and more efficient form of writing, helping

to promote European economy in the centuries after ca. 950. (Buringh and van Zanden 2009, 424–25 and 425, fn. 33)

In this case, a change of readers' habits (and possibly of their mental processes) did not occur on account of a change of medium, but on account of a *change within the same medium*. The divide is not between manuscript and print culture, but between manuscripts in *scriptio continua* and "marked up" manuscripts: the latter are closer to printed texts than to their manuscript predecessors.

5.3 *Sanskrit Print Culture Reappraised*

Print technology was introduced in South Asia only in the 19th century, having a belated cultural impact. As pointed out by many scholars, in South Asia the interface between the oral and the written word is very important. It is probably for this reason that the interface between the written and the printed word has been neglected, and little attention has been devoted to the aspect of the fixation of languages and texts that printing technology might have introduced. In the case of Sanskrit prints, this aspect has to be examined by closely taking into consideration the type of printing technique employed. As it is usually stressed, each manuscript of a given text is a unique artefact and differs from all other manuscripts of the same text. On the other hand the text of a printed book should be "identical" in all its exemplars (they even share the same errors and flaws). In fact, the reproducibility of a text in virtually countless identical books is almost always adduced as one of the distinctive marks of "print culture" as opposed to "manuscript culture." Strictly speaking, xylographs and lithographs too are printed books. Nevertheless, from a philological point of view, one might be tempted to consider each book printed from a specific wood-block to be an apograph of the manuscript template used. Still, all printed exemplars should be identical. However, this is not always the case, and there are other possibilities which one has to take into account when dealing with xylographs, due to the printing technique, which plays a decisive role in the possibility of changing the text. As H. Eimer has pointed out, instead of a new manuscript, occasionally a template from an old printed book was used to produce a new wood-block. This technique results in the production of "books in which the distribution of the text is exactly identical both within the lines and on the pages, so that one is tempted to consider them as prints from one single woodblock set; yet minimal differences show that these prints were made from different woodblock sets" (translated from Eimer 1980, 196). There are cases in which the differences between the two sets of printed exemplars are minimal, but there are also cases in which the changes are more substantial

and involve major parts of the text. (All this affects also one of the main features of the printed book, its reproducibility without relevant changes, or in E. Eisenstein's words, the *standardization* effect of printed texts, as well as their alleged stability.) If we move to another book culture in which xylography was used, we can notice similar patterns. In a recent article, M. Schneider presents the preliminary results of his research on the *Selection of Direct Instructions on the Lotus Sūtra*, a work belonging to a specific genre of Japanese Buddhist commentarial literature, and focuses on the changes occurred during its transmission from manuscripts to xylograph editions. In his study, he examines and compares layout and paratexts (including colophons) of manuscripts and xylographs, outlining the differences in the presentation of the text due to the two different media. Strikingly, he comes to the conclusion that "quite contrary to the by and large faithful copying of the scribes, the publisher [of the xylographs] deleted at places substantial quantities of text while altering others" (Schneider 2011, 81).

In light of these considerations, I would like to pose the following question which might change our approach in relation to studies of the history of the book in Asia: xylographs and lithographs certainly aren't manuscripts, but should we still equate them to books printed with movable types and printing presses? Maybe it would be better to think of them as something similar to a manuscript and a printed book at the same time, and yet different from both.

The Sanskrit xylographs found in Central Asia are also very important as witnesses to the central role Buddhism played in the diffusion of print culture. They were printed under the aegis of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, most probably in the capital city, and not in the small city-states on the Silk Road. It is precisely at this court that other big printing projects were also initiated (such as the printing of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist canons, as well as of Uighur translations of numerous Buddhist works). In the light of this consideration, the demise and fall of Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent before the successful introduction and diffusion of paper technology seems a very plausible explanation for the late diffusion of print culture in South Asia. As I have stressed above, also other causes might have been decisive, like the colonial powers' control of the technical means for printing, or the distaste of Indian Muslims for the printed books as aesthetically inferior to manuscripts. Complex cultural processes such as the late establishment of a print culture in South Asia can be understood only by taking into consideration their numerous facets. The history of Sanskrit print culture is an integral part of South Asian book history, and hopefully I have demonstrated that it can be of great help in this task.

Appendices

The printing process of xylographs and lithographs involves the preparation of a manuscript master copy. These types of printed books thus have a liminal nature, and can be considered to be a sort of bridge between manuscript and printed books.³⁷ Accordingly, the description of xylographs in the SHT volumes follows the rules of manuscript description. Only a few selected pieces of information about each xylograph are provided in Appendix A, in the form of a translation from the description in the corresponding SHT volume. Similarly, the description of the lithograph in Appendix B follows the pattern employed in manuscript description. The incunabula are described following a slight modified version of the rules of bibliographical description laid out by Gaskell [1995, 321–60].

Appendix A: Sanskrit Xylographs from Central Asia

In order to help readers who wish to check the original complete descriptions, the list is organized according to the SHT volumes. Unless otherwise stated, the fragments are edited in the same SHT volume in which they have been described. The originals of SHT 613, 614a, 614b, and SHT 5029 have been lost during the transfer after the war and have not been recovered. All xylographs are printed on paper, the size is given in height × width in centimetres. As to the definitions of the scripts, the policy is to retain the original German names, instead of adding one more layer of confusion by translating them into English.³⁸

Volumes 1–4

1. SHT 575

Content: *Deśanā*, corresponding to *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* III.17–27.

Physical description: 3 folios, accordion-book, 8 × 13, 7 lines per folio, one-sided; nord-turkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Qočo, Ruin L (Plan Grünwedel); 1. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: VOHD vol. X,1 (p. 254); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

2. SHT 580

Content: Two texts: (a) *Catuṣpariṣatsūtra* (chapter 27f.13–17) and (b) unidentified fragment (mirror image).

37 See for instance Formigatti 2011, 45–48.

38 On the difficulties created in paleographical studies on South Asian scripts by the proliferation of different terms, see Sander 2007.

Physical description: 2 central parts of folios, accordion-book, (a) 11 × 28.1, 5 lines per folio, one-sided; (b) 11 × 16.5, 2 lines per folio, one-sided with a final, page-wide line marking the end of the text; the letters are mirrored and rubbed off on the page; nord-turkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Murtuq, excavation behind ruin 8 in valley 2 of the foothills of Turfan; 3. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: Waldschmidt; digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

3. SHT 612, SHT 1174, SHT 5029³⁹

SHT 612

Content: *Samyuktāgama*, six Sūtras from the *Parivrājakaśaṃyukta*:

Kokanada (ff. 157r–159v2),

Anāthapiṇḍada (ff. 159v3–162v1),

Dūrghanakha (ff. 162v2–167v1),

Śarabha (ff. 167v2–170v3),

Parivrājaka Sthavira (?) (ff. 170v4–172v2), and

Brāhmaṇasatyāni (ff. 172v3–173r5).

Physical description: 17 left corner fragments, 1 right corner fragment, and 3 fragments; *pothī*, 10.8 × 28 (f. 173); 5 lines per folio, two-sided, single writing frame, string-hole space decorated with a lotus (15.5cm from the left side, interrupting lines 2–4).

History: Finding location: Qočo; 1. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: a) SHT 612: VOHD vol. X,1 (p. 270); b) SHT 1174: VOHD vol. X,5 (p. 168f.); c) SHT 5029: VOHD vol. X,10 (p. 70); d); digitized on IDP (ff. 157, 159, 162; the online IDP catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

SHT 1174 (vol. 5)

Content: Fragment of a Sūtra with a text from the *Samyuktāgama* (*Parivrājakaśaṃyukta*)

Physical description: two parts of one folio, almost fitting together (first fragment 11 × 20.8, second fragment 9.4 × 10.5), total dimension of the fragmentary folio ca. 16 × 32; 5 lines per folio, two-sided, single writing frame; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

SHT 5029 (vol. 5)

Content: Fragment of a Sūtra with a text from the *Samyuktāgama* (sūtra 966 in the Chinese version).

39 Since they probably belong to one single xylograph, for the sake of a better understanding a complete description of the SHT 1174 and SHT 5029 is provided immediately after SHT 612.

Physical description: a small fragment from the middle of a folio, 4.5 × 5.5; 3 lines, two-sided; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

4. SHT 613

Content: *Samyuktāgama* (corresponding to Sūtra 831–832 in the Chinese version).

Physical description: 1 incomplete folio (fragments from the middle), *pothī*, 10.6 × 26; 5 lines per folio, two-sided; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Qočo (bought); 1. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: VOHD vol. x,1 (p. 270–72); VOHD vol. x,7 (p. 258 suppl.); VOHD vol. x,8 (p. 178 suppl.); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

5. SHT 614a

Content: *Cittānupaśyanā-Smṛtyupasthāna*.

Physical description: one almost complete folio (folio 13.), unknown format (*codex* ?), 15 × 15; 5 lines per folio, two-sided; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Qočo, site K (Plan Grünwedel); 1. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: VOHD vol. x,1 (p. 272ff); VOHD vol. x,7 (p. 258); Pischel 1904b: 1143 (Publ.) Pischel 1904b: table XI f. (facsimile); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

6. SHT 614b

Content: *Dharmānupaśyanā-Smṛtyupasthāna* and beginning of the four *Samyakprahāṇa*.

Physical description: fragments, unknown format, 10 × 15; 3 lines per folio, two-sided; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Qočo, site K (Plan Grünwedel); 1. Turfan expedition.

Publication: VOHD vol. x,1 (p. 272f.); VOHD vol. x,7 (p. 258); Pischel 1904b: 1143 (Publ.) Pischel 1904b: Tafel XI f. (Faksimile); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

7. SHT 627

Content: unidentified *Stotra* to the Buddhas.

Physical description: fragments of the left part of a folio; accordion-book(?), 7.4 × 6.4; 7 lines per folio, one-sided; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b (original lost after the moving of the collections due to the war).

History: Finding location: Qočo, site O; 1. Turfan expedition.

Publication: Schlingloff (*Buddhistische Stotras aus ostturkistanischen Sanskrittexten*, 1955); (the online IDP catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

8. SHT 645

Content: *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. The following table of contents refers to the extant folios and fragments as described below; the first part is a transcription of the running titles on the left margins, followed by a solution of the abbreviation (commas indicate a new line in the original):

Folios 25–30: śasā (*śatasāhasrikā*), prajñā (*prajñāpāramitā*), ca kha (*caturtha khaṇḍa*), pra (*prathama*);

Folio 81: śa°, pra°, pra kha° (*prathama khaṇḍa*), ca (*caturtha*);

Folios 87–88: śa°, pra°, dvi kha° (*dvitīya khaṇḍa*), ca (*caturtha*);

Folio 200: [pra]jñā°, ca kha° (*caturtha khaṇḍa*), dvi (*dvitīya*); colophon on the verso: || śatasāhasryāḥ prajñāpāramitāyāś caturtha parivarttaḥ ||;

Folio 215: śa°, pra°, ṭṛ kha° (*ṭṛtīya khaṇḍa*), ca (*caturtha*);

Folio 230: information only in Chinese;

Folio 245: śa°, pra°, pra kha° (*prathama khaṇḍa*), ca (*caturtha*);

Folio 260: information only in Chinese;

Folios 312v and 313r: information only in Chinese;

One fragment without foliation, but with the running title [*pañ*] *cā vi sā* in Brāhmī script, suggesting that the fragment belonged rather to a xylograph of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

Physical description: four complete folios and one almost complete folio, 5 fragments of a left corner, 4 fragments of a right corner, 3 fragments of a left margin, 1 fragment of a right margin, 1 big fragment of an upper margin, 21 small fragments; extant folios no. 25–30, 81, 87–88, 200, 215, 230, 245, 260, 312, .35; pothī, 16 × 37; 6 lines per folio, two-sided; on the left margin of each recto and verso, abbreviated running title (including chapter titles) in Pāla script; on the right margin of each recto and verso, part of the chapter number and foliation in Chinese script; Pāla script.

History: Finding location: Qočo, site T I D; 1. Turfan expedition.

Publication: VOHD vol. X,1 (p. 289–90); VOHD vol. X,4 (p. 281f.); partially digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

9. SHT 646

Content: *Dhāraṇī*

Physical description: parts of 2 different folios (probably one left and one right), unknown format (*codex?*), 10.7 × 6.5; 9 lines per folio, two-sided, double frame lines; Pāla script in red ink.

History: Finding location: Qočo; 2. Turfan expedition.

Publication: VOHD vol. X,1 (p. 290–91); VOHD vol. X,4 (p. 340 suppl.); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

Volume 5

10. SHT 1105

Content: recto: Chinese characters; verso: *Deśanā* (in the *anuṣṭubh* metre).

Physical description: part of a Chinese scroll, 8.8 × 12.7; recto: 5 lines of Chinese handwritten (?) characters; verso: 6 lines printed in nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b. Together with SHT 1924, this fragment belongs to one manuscript. However, in the description of the verso of SHT 1924 it is stated that the Sanskrit text in Brāhmī is written with a calamus, and not printed.

History: Finding location: Sängim; 2. Turfan expedition.

Publication: VOHD vol. x,5 (p. 100–1); VOHD vol. x,8 (p. 195–6 suppl.); VOHD vol. x,5 (table 43, facsimile); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

11. SHT 1110

Content: fragments of an unidentified Mahāyāna text.

Physical description: fragments from the middle of the folio, *pothī* (?), 13.7 × 7; 6 lines per folio, two-sided; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Murtuq, site T II; 2. Turfan expedition.

Publication: VOHD vol. x,5 (p. 105, table 45, facsimile); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

12. SHT 1173

Content: (a) end of a colophon (*tas samāptah*); (b) verso: parts of the *Stanza of Aśvajit* (*ye dharma* formula).

Physical description: two fragments, one from the left side and one from the middle of the folio; accordion book (?), 5 × 6, 1 line (first fragment), 7 × 7.8, 2 lines (second fragment); nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Qočo, site v'; 2. Turfan expedition).

Publication: VOHD vol. x,5 (p. 168, table 70, facsimile); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

13. SHT 1190

Content: *Sitātapatrahṛdayamantra*; on the verso, end of the *Sitātapatrahṛdayamantra* (with the title as final rubric), and parts of the *Stanza of Aśvajit* (*ye dharma* formula).

Physical description: one folio of an accordion book, 9.5 × 21.5; 5 lines per folio, double marginal frame lines; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Murtuq, site T III M 156; 3. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: VOHD vol. x,5 (p. 184–85, table 79, facsimile); digitized on IDP (the online version of the catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

14. SHT 1191

Content: *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣavijayanāmadhāraṇī*

Physical description: two fragments (upper left corner and a big part of the right side) of one folio, unusual format, 19.7 × 27.8; the *akṣaras* are separated by wider blank spaces, giving the impression that each character stands alone; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location; probably Qočo, site T 1; 1. Turfan expedition.

Publication: VOHD vol. X,5 (p. 185–86, table 79, facsimile); facsimile on IDP (the online IDP catalogue entry wrongly describes it as “manuscript, ink on paper”).

15. SHT 1385*

Content: probably a *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

Physical description: one complete damaged folio, *pothī*, 18.5 × 57.3, 6 lines per folio, two-sided, string hole blank space 7cm wide, ca 19cm from the left margin and interrupting lines 3–5 and 3–4; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Qočo, site T III D III; 3. Turfan expedition.

Publication: VOHD vol. X,5 (p. 247–48); *the facsimile on IDP shows a fragment of a manuscript of the *Bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣavibhaṅga* of the Sarvāstivādins; moreover, in VOHD vol. X,5 (p. 243f.), this fragment is described as SHT 1358 + 1385, but unfortunately at the end of the volume no facsimile is provided.

Volume 6

16. SHT 1430, SHT 4008, 4015, 4264, 4524b, 4591⁴⁰

Content: *Vinayavastu: Saṃghabhedavastu* (SBV II: 198.14–199.11). Physical description: a series of fragments belonging to the same folio:

SHT 1430: fragment from the middle of the folio, 7.5 × 12.8;

SHT 4008: fragment from the middle of the folio, 4.7 × 4.5;

SHT 4015: fragment from the middle of the folio, 4.6 × 4;

SHT 4264: fragment from the middle of the folio, 8.7 × 5.4;

SHT 4524, 4526b, 4591: numerous small fragments;

faded ruling; nordturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location unknown.

Bibliography: VOHD vol. X,6 (p. 132); VOHD vol. X,7 (p. 297f. suppl.); VOHD vol. X,10 (p. 243f., SHT 4008+4015+4264, Fragm. 1);

40 SHT 1430 was originally identified as a xylograph. Subsequently, it was identified as a manuscript. I believe the first identification is correct (thus, all other fragments should be classified as xylographs).

Volume 10

17. SHT 435²

Content: *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatrā Nāma Aparājitā Mahāpratyaṅgirā Mahāvidyārājñī*

Physical description: 3 folios of an accordion book, total dimension 29.3 × 21.8 (first folio 9.6 × 21.8, second folio 10 × 21.8, third folio 9.7 × 21.8); südurturkistanische Brāhmī (Alphabet v);

History: Finding location: Sängim; 2. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: VOHD vol. x,10 (p. 390–91); Bhattacharya-Haesner et al. 2003: Nr. 94 (facsimile).

Volume 11

18. SHT 4442

Content: fragments of an unidentified text.

Physical description: *pothī*, various fragments:

folio 165; three fragments, one of the left side of a folio (16 × 8.9), one from the middle (16 × 9.8), and one from the right side;

fragment from the middle of a folio (15.5 × 8.4);

fragment from the middle of a folio (6.5 × 7.2);

fragment of the upper left corner of a folio (8 × 7.9);

fragment of the upper margin of a folio (5.3 × 15.6);

fragment from the middle of a folio (14 × 14), including a decorated string-hole space; nordurturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: Murtuq, site: (T III M 198); 3. Turfan expedition.

Bibliography: VOHD vol. x,11.

19. SHT 4465 v)

Content: a small fragment from the upper part of a xylograph, with the frame line on the verso and manuscript pen trials on the recto (four times *ma* and one time *ya*).

Physical description: small fragment, 4.2 × 7, nordurturkistanische Brāhmī, Typ b.

History: Finding location: unknown.

Bibliography: VOHDX vol. x,11 (pp. 70–71).

Appendix B. Manuscript and Lithograph of the Śūdrakamalākara Manuscript

The description of this item has been made on scans of a xerocopy of the original (!), and therefore lacks numerous codicological features. The scans are freely available at <https://archive.org/details/Shudrakamalakara>.

Pune, Anandashram Samstha; 124 folios; paper, *pothī* (height: 10 cm, width: 30 cm); Devanāgarī in black ink; foliation: top left margin (under marginal running title).

- Layout: 9–10 lines per page, double marginal frame lines.
- Marginalia: running marginal title (*śū° ka°*), top left margin, verso.
- First Rubric: [1v1] śrīgaṇeśāya namaḥ || pāṇduramga ||
- Incipit: [1v1] praṇamya rāmaṃ pitarau kamalākaraśarmaṇā || rāmakṣṇatanūjena śūdra[1v2]dharmo nirūpyate || 1 ||
- Explicit: [123v9] yo bhāṭṭanaṃ agahanārṇavakarṇadhā[124r1]raḥ śāstrāmtareṣu nikhileṣv api marmabhettā || yo aśramaḥ kila kṛtaḥ kamalākareṇa pṛito [124r2] munāstu sukṛtī budharāmākṣṇaḥ || || ||
- Final rubric: [124r2] iti śrīma'jjaga'dgurumīmāṃsakanārāyaṇabhaṭṭasu(!) [124r3]risūnurāmākṣṇabhaṭṭātmaajakamalākaraḥbhaṭṭakṛte śūdradharmatatve śūdrasamasamkarajasvarūpaṃ tadvr[124r4]ttinirūpaṇaṃ samāptam,|| || samāpto yam graṃthaḥ || || śrīrāmāya namaḥ || ||
- Colophon: [124r5] pūrva[mura.i]vastavyāraghuvamśasya pustikā || aparedyuh śucir bhūtṛvā pūjayed ca yathāvidhi || paṭṭe vā[124r6]dārūpaṭṭe(!) vakivale bhūtale pi vā || [[sa]] pūrvaṃ paṃktidvayaṃ kūryāt 4 godhūmaus taṃḍulaiḥ śubhaiḥ || prathamā dā[124r7]śasargāṇāṃ [na]vānāṃ tv aparā bhavet,|| uttarāṃ diśam ārabhya dakṣiṇasyāṃ samāpayet,|| pūjayet tu kusā[124r8]rītām(!) yāṃ gauriṃ yāṃ vivekināṃ || triṣu lokeṣu yat satyaṃ yat satyaṃ brahmavādiṣu || patin(!) natāsu(!) yat sa[124r9]tyaṃ tat satyaṃ ta[-i-]mastake|| ciṃtitaṃ sakalaṃ kāryaṃ paripaśyasi śobhane || tad asmin,śakune brū[124v1]hi kumārī brahmarūpiṇī || prathamaḥ sarga ity ukto dvitī'yo'śakas tathā || tṛtīyaḥ śakunaḥ ślokaḥ tam [124v2] vicāryavicaḥṣaṇaḥ || statilidāḥ(?) varjitaḥ ślokaḥ || || || [124v3] śake 1739 īśvaranāmasamvatsare caitravadyapratipadāṃ saumyavāsare idam pustakaṃ kṣṇātīraṃsālīgrāmamadhya nirmītaṃ samāptaṃ || || || [124v4] bhaṭṭopānāyakaḥgovindabhaṭṭātmajabā kena likhitaṃ || svārthaṃ parārthaṃ ca || pāṇduramgaprasan,|| || [124v5] yādṛśī (!) pustakaṃ dṛṣṭvā tāḍṛśī (!) likhitaṃ mayā || mūrkhahaste na dātavyaṃ(!) evam vādanti pustakaṃ || śrīrāma ||

Lithograph

- Physical Location: Cambridge University Library, classmark: 834: 1.a.85.44;
- 94 folios; paper, *pothī* (height: 11.5 cm, width: 32 cm); foliation: top left margin (under marginal running title), and bottom right margin, verso.
- Devanāgarī in black ink. Tentatively three different hands can be distinguished: the scribe of folios 2r–38v wrote tall and slender *akṣaras* with 5 mm height, connecting all characters of a string by means of a continuous upper line, interrupted only by *daṇḍas*; the *akṣaras* written by the scribe of folios 37r–66v have an height of 4mm,

|| mārḡaśīrṣamāsi kṛṣṇapakṣe ravivāsare idaṃ pustakaṃ samāptam, || || [94r8]
trinaḡasaptemḡdumite śake muṃbākhyapaṭṭaṇe || yatnataś ca gaṇeśena aṃkito yaṃ
śilākṣaraiḥ || 1 || || cha || cha

**Appendix C. Incunabula of Bhāravi's Kirātārjunīya with Mallinātha's
Commentary (Gaṇṭāpatha)**

Published in 1814

Editors: Vidyākaramiśra and Bābū Rāma. Typesetter (printer?): Madanapāla.

Published in Khidirapore (Calcutta) at the Sanskrit Press in 1814 (*saṃskṛtayantre khidi-
rapure śrīmadanapālenāṅkitam*).

[All elements are centered] [Title Page]

|| kāvyanāma || \ || kirātārjunīya || \ \ [puṣpikā] \ \ || kavināma || \ || bhāravi || \ \ \ \ [puṣpikā] \ \ ||

ṭīkānāma || \ \ || gaṇṭāpatha || \ \ \ [puṣpikā] \ \ || ṭīkākāranāma || \ \ || mallinātha || \ \ \ \ [puṣpikā]

[flyleaf 1r, Imprint]

|| 1 || \ \ \ \ atra kāvye sargasamkhyā || \ aṣṭādaśa 18 || \ \ [puṣpikā] \ \ || atra kāvye
mūlaślokasamkhyā || \ ekapañcāśadadhikasahasraṃ 1052 || \ \ [puṣpikā] \ \ || atrārjju-
nasya kāvyanāyakasya pāsupatāśvalābhah phalam, || 1 || \ \ [puṣpikā]

[flyleaf 1v, Imprint]

|| śāke vaḡagnisaptendusammite vatsare śubhe || \ \ || śāke 1736 || \ \ [separating line] \ \ ||
candrādrivasubhūmāne vikramādityavatsare || \ \ || saṃvat 1871 || \ \ [separating line] \ \ ||
bhūyugmadṛṣṭidharaṇīsamite yavanābdake || \ \ || san 1221 sāla

|| \ \ [separating line] \ \ || vedabhūmivasucandramāsana.ī savīpramāna || \ \ ||
māhajūnakevā.īśacchapyogranthaparadhāna || \ \ || san, 1814 īsavī | tāḥ 22 jūna || \ \ [puṣpikā]

[flyleaf 1r, Imprint] || 2 ||

[three ślokas] nagare kalikattākhye śrīmallāṭaṇṛpājñāyā | śrī \ vidyākaramiśreṇa⁴¹
bāburāmeṇa dhimatā || 1 || \ sambhūya śodhayitvātha kāvyam ṭīkāśamanvitam, |
mu \ drākṣareṇa yatnena nyāsitaṃ sudhiyām mude || 2 || \ vinā pariśramaṃ dhīrāḥ
pāṭhayantu paṭhantu ca | tada \ rtham aṅkitaṅ caitat saṭīkaṅ kāvyam uttamam, || 3 ||
\ \ [puṣpikā] \ \ || saṃskṛtayantre khidirapure śrīmadanapālenāṅkitam, || \ \ [puṣpikā]

Published in 1847

Editors: Tārānātha Tarkavācaspati (1812–1885) et al. (*tārānāthatarckavācaspatibhaṭṭā-
cāryyādivibudhavarair viśodhitam*)

41 The type for *dya* is horrible.

Published in Calcutta at the Sārasudhānidhi press (*kalikātārājadhānyām sārasudhānidhimudrāyante*, 1769 [śake = 1847 CE]

[Title Page]

[All elements are centered; all *puṣpikās* are different]

|| kirātārjuniyam,|| \ [*puṣpikā*] \ || śrībhāravikṛtam,|| \ [*puṣpikā*] \ sādharmaṇa vidyā-
vṛddhyarthakasamājādhipatīpsitam, \ [*puṣpikā*] \ śrīmattārānāthatarikkavācas-
patibhaṭṭācāryyādivibudhavarair viśodhitam,⁴² \ [*puṣpikā*] \ śrīmaddattavaṃśā-
vatamśaśrīvāvūrasamayadattamahāśayānām ājñayā \ kalikātārājadhānyām
sārasudhānidhimudrāyante \ mudritam abhūt, \ [*puṣpikā*] \ [*stanza in*
the Śārdūlavikrīḍita meter] aṅgāṅādriśaśāṅkasammitaśake⁴³ kāvyam kṛtir
bhāraver \ yante sārasudhānidhau sulalitam ghaṇṭāpathālaṅkṛtam,|| \
tārānāthadharāmāradivibudhaiḥ śrīlaih śramāc chodhitam \ śrīmaddattakulāgraṇī
rasamayādeśād abhūn mudritam,|| \ [*puṣpikā*] \ 1769

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42 The rendering of *o* in Devanāgarī is a good example of the combination of types: the sign for *ā* and for *e* are clearly combined to get a *o*, since there are blank spaces between the different elements.

43 *aṅga* (6), *aṅga* (6), *adri* (7), *śaśāṅka* (1), i.e. 1766 = 1844 CE!

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Manuscript and Print in the Tangut State: The Case of the *Sunzi*

Imre Galambos

The corpus of Tangut texts discovered among the ruins of Khara-khoto on the territory of the former Tangut state includes a handwritten and a printed version of a translation of the *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法 (The Art of War of Master Sun; hereafter referred to as *Sunzi*) followed by a text known as the *Sunzi zhuan* 孫子傳 (Biography of Master Sun). The two versions are almost identical in wording, confirming that they are two copies of the same translation. Comparing the discrepancies between them, modern scholars concluded that the manuscript must have been a draft to what later became the printed edition and therefore represents an earlier stage in the evolution of the book. In this paper I re-consider the issue of temporal priority of the two versions and advance an argument that it is more likely that the manuscript was copied from the printed edition, even though not necessarily from this particular one. In addition, I intend to draw attention to the complex relationship between manuscript and print culture that existed long after the spread of printing. The materials excavated from Khara-khoto are a unique body of material in this respect, as they provide first-hand evidence to the extensive use of manuscripts in an age when different technologies were already common.

1 Tangut Contribution to the Development of Printing

The Tanguts are often evoked in connection with the development of printing technology in China. A particularly important aspect in this regard is the use of moveable type for printing, as the Tanguts were among the first users of this technology. Until the beginning of the 20th century, however, little was known about their textual culture. The limited number of available sources comprised the stone inscriptions at Juyongguan 居庸關 near the Great Wall about 30 miles northeast of Peking, and several volumes of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* discovered at the Summer Palace amidst the turmoil that followed the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. But even the available sources were

initially not recognized as having been written in Tangut and for some time scholars debated the language and the type of script of these texts.¹

The discovery of the dead city of Khara-khoto in Inner Mongolia, where a large body of Tangut and Chinese material was found in 1908 changed all this, providing ample evidence for the identity of the strange script. The Russian team, led by the renowned explorer Pjotr K. Kozlov (1863–1935), discovered most of the material inside a stūpa outside the city walls of Khara-khoto and promptly shipped these back to St. Petersburg. Today these are in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In 1914, as part of his third expedition to Western China, Sir Aurel Stein (1862–1943) also carried out excavations at the site, collecting a large number of fragments that had been left behind by the Russian expedition. These items were deposited in the British Museum and today they are for the most part in the British Library.² In later years smaller groups of Tangut material have also been found at other sites of the old Tangut state, and texts continue to come to light to this day.

These discoveries provided first-hand sources for the study of Tangut history and culture. Many of the newly found texts were printed but there were also a significant amount of handwritten ones. It is clear that prints and manuscripts circulated concurrently and scribal culture did not disappear with the spread of printing.³ In comparison, the Dunhuang corpus, which mostly comprised texts of the 9th–10th centuries, contains merely a handful of printed material against tens of thousands of manuscripts. This was no doubt due to the fact that the texts from Khara-khoto on average post-dated the Dunhuang manuscripts by about three centuries and by that time printing had become extremely common throughout East Asia. In addition, the composition of the Khara-khoto corpus also attests to the widespread use of printing in this region and, at the same time, to the contribution of the Tanguts to the development of printing.

1 Although in the late 19th and early 20th centuries Western scholars debated over the identity of the Tangut inscription at Juyongguan, the Qing-dynasty scholar Zhang Shu 張澍 (1781–1847) had already identified it as Tangut almost a century earlier.

2 The British Library was founded in 1973, it inherited the majority of the textual collections from the British Museum, including the Stein collection. A small number of Tangut items have also been sent to India, as Stein's expeditions were partly financed by the Government of India. These are today at the National Museum of India in New Delhi.

3 For a discussion of this phenomenon in the Western context, see Chartier 2007.

A particularly important aspect in this respect is the use of movable type, which is amply demonstrated by the Khara-khoto material, as well as subsequent discoveries at other sites.⁴ For example, among the texts found in the Baisigou square pagoda 拜寺溝方塔 in Helan county 賀蘭縣 (Ningxia) in 1991 there was a Tangut translation of a Tibetan Tantric text printed with movable type in 6 volumes.⁵ Some believe this to be the earliest extant text produced with wooden movable type and date it to about 1103.⁶ Another well-known example of a text created with wooden movable type is an edition of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, volumes of which are now held at various institutions around the world.⁷ Some studies point out that the earliest specimens of texts printed with clay movable type, a technology we have known about from sporadic references in transmitted Chinese sources, also come from the Tangut state.⁸ All these examples point to the significant role the Tanguts played in the development and spread of printing in East Asia.

2 Tangut Translations of Chinese Military Texts

Of special interest for the study of the relationship between manuscript and print cultures are the cases when we have parallel copies of the same text in printed and handwritten form. Quite a few such Buddhist texts survive but there are also examples among the secular material.⁹ One of these is the Tangut translation of the *Sunzi bingfa*, a treatise on military strategy which

4 Shi and Yasen 1999, 38–54. Zhang Xiumin (2006, 542) identifies four characteristics of texts printed with movable type: (i) the corners of the printed frames around the page do not connect seamlessly; (ii) the ink is uneven across the page; (iii) occasionally individual characters may appear upside down; (iv) there are traces of lines separating columns of characters.

5 Shen Weirong (2007, 93) reconstructs the original Tibetan title of this work as *dPal kun tu kha sbyor zhes bya ba'i rgyud*. For the Tangut books found in the Baisigou square pagoda, as well as the detailed description of other items, see Ningxia wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2005.

6 E.g. Niu 1994. We should point out that the text itself is undated and the date of 1103 is suggested by other texts found in the same location.

7 On this text and in particular the copy kept at the Gest Library at Princeton University, see Heijdra and Cao 1992. The authors hypothesize that this copy, which was probably acquired in Peking around 1929, dates to the mid-Yuan period.

8 E.g. Sun 1994 and 2007.

9 One such example is fragments of the preface to the text called *Rules of Confession of the Sanctuary of Compassion* (Ch: *Cibei daochang chanfa* 慈悲到場懺法), part of which survives as a block print and a pothi manuscript leaf; see Kepping and Terent'ev-Katanskij 1987.

enjoyed enormous popularity both in China and the rest of East Asia.¹⁰ Early copies of the Chinese text survive in Japan and Korea but it was also one of the texts commonly translated into other languages. Thus in addition to the Tangut rendition, there are also several extant Manchu translations.¹¹ As to the Tanguts, it is clear that besides translating a wide variety of Chinese texts (e.g. Buddhist sūtras and commentaries, Confucian canonical works, Daoist texts, medical literature, primers), they were also very interested in treatises on military strategy. Among the surviving body of Tangut material there are copies of several Chinese military texts: the *Sunzi*, the *Sunzi zhuan*, the *Liutao* 六韜 (Six Quivers), the *Huangshi gong sanlüe* 黃石公三略 (Three Strategies of Master Yellowstone), and the *Jiangyuan* 將苑 (General's Garden).¹²

Of these works, the *Liutao* and *Huangshi gong sanlüe* are woodblock prints but the *Jiangyuan* is a manuscript. The *Sunzi* and *Sunzi zhuan*, however, survive in both printed and handwritten copies, though they only partially overlap and neither of them is complete. Nevertheless, the overlapping portions provide a rare opportunity for comparison. Although there are many more cases of such matching pairs among the Buddhist texts in Tangut, translations of secular texts are understood by modern scholars to be less rigid in adhering to the source text than canonical sūtras and are therefore considered more 'natural' in their wording.¹³ Presumably the reason for this was that in the case of secular texts the comprehensibility and clarity of the translation was more important than adherence to the original wording of a sacred text. Accordingly, works of military strategy may be more 'user-friendly' from the point of view of a Tangut reader than religious literature.

In addition to the main text, the Tangut *Sunzi* comes with three commentaries, in an unattested combination that does not match any known Chinese edition. In the Chinese tradition only editions with ten or eleven commentaries are known, depending on whether the commentary of Du You 杜佑 (735–812) is included or not. Since the three commentaries of the Tangut version are also part of the Chinese editions, it is possible that we are dealing with an abridged version originally derived from one of the more extensive known editions. While it is theoretically possible that this was created by a Tangut translator or editor, it is more likely that an edition like this existed in Chinese

10 The Tangut *Sunzi* was the subject of several studies, including two monographs (Kepping 1979 and Lin 1994) and a several academic articles (Kepping 1977, Nie 1991 and Sun 2010).

11 For an English study of a Manchu translation of the *Sunzi*, see Mair 2008.

12 For a short introduction to the military works in Tangut translation, see Galambos 2012, 85–86. For a more detailed study of the *Jiangyuan*, see Galambos 2011.

13 Kepping 1985, 15–17; Kepping and Gong 2003, 14–16.

(but was subsequently lost) and the Tangut version is merely a translation of that. After all, several hitherto unknown Chinese texts were discovered among the ruins of Khara-khoto, not to speak of the Tangut translations of Chinese and Tibetan texts.¹⁴

Another significant difference with Chinese editions is that both the printed and handwritten versions of the Tangut *Sunzi* come with the *Sunzi zhuan* appended to their end. The text of the biography comes from the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian), China's first dynastic history completed around 100 BC by the historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–90 BC). The Tangut text at the end of the *Sunzi* is unmistakably a translation of Master Sun's biography in the *Shiji*, yet it is not part of known Chinese editions of the *Sunzi*. Once again, it is possible that the two texts were linked for the first time in Tangut but it is perhaps more likely that the translator was working with an existing Chinese model and translated what was in front of him, rather than compiling an entirely new edition. Nie Hongyin points out that since the *Sunzi zhuan* is the sole example of a Tangut translation made from an official history, it was probably not extracted independently from the *Shiji* by a Tangut translator but was instead translated as part of a Chinese edition of the *Sunzi* in which it already featured.¹⁵ Moreover, the fact that both printed and handwritten copies of such an unconventional version survived in Tangut translation suggests that this was not an *ad hoc* arrangement but a relatively popular combination.

A comparison of the two printed and handwritten texts reveals that they are ultimately two versions of the same translation, deriving from a single source. The printed version, however, is not a single book but consists of part of a book bound in a butterfly format and several fragments, which may not belong to the same physical book. Even though it would be desirable to distinguish them, this is only possible through a careful examination of the originals *in situ*, a task yet to be accomplished. One of the difficulties is that while the bigger part of the extant *Sunzi* is at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg, there are also some fragments at the British Library in London, making the comparison problematic.¹⁶ Having said that, even if the surviving

14 E.g. the Tangut translation identified by Shen Weirong as (2007, 93) *dPal kun tu kha sbyor zhes bya ba'i rgyud* (see above).

15 Nie 1991, 267.

16 Two pages of the *Sunzi* in London (Or.12380/3841–3842) were first identified by Eric Grinstead (1961). In his unpublished manuscript catalogue of the British collection, the Japanese scholar Nishida Tatsuo identifies another fragment (Or.12380/872), although the text on it is rather unclear and it remains to be seen whether it really belongs to the *Sunzi*. In the facsimile edition published in Shanghai (*Xibei di'er minzu xueyuan* 2005, v. 1, 296)

fragments belong to different books, there seem to be no overlaps among them and therefore for the time being the extant bits can be treated as belonging to one text.¹⁷

The manuscript version is a scroll with 90 lines of text, 17–20 characters per line.¹⁸ Except for the last eight lines, the text is written in the cursive script, which would be difficult to read without having a printed version of the same text available.¹⁹ From the *Sunzi* itself, only the last 17 lines survive and the bigger part of the scroll is taken up by the *Sunzi zhuan* (i.e. the biography), which is complete. In line 17, at the text of the *Sunzi*, we have the title of the preceding work, claiming it to be the *Sunzi* with three commentaries.²⁰ Yet even though we only have the very end of the text, it is clear that the commentaries have not been copied and the scroll only has the main text of the *Sunzi*. In other words, the title that appears in the manuscript does not fully correspond to the text.

Ksenia B. Kepping points out that the title that appears in the manuscript at the end of the *Sunzi* is slightly different from the title that appears in the printed version of the same text.²¹ In the manuscript we read *Swən¹ tsə¹ nga¹ ĩwə² in¹ so¹ mbje* (Three commentaries to Master Sun's Art of War), whereas in the printed text the possessive marker *in¹* is absent. This, naturally, does not change the meaning of the title and works just as well grammatically. We should also note that in both versions we have what the Chinese tradition calls an end title (*weiti* 尾題), that is, a title that appears at the end of a chapter or volume. This is often an abbreviated or more commonly used version of the

it is labelled a Buddhist sūtra (*fojing* 佛經), which is certainly wrong. But the same facsimile volume identifies further fragments (Or.12380/660–664) as belonging to the *Sunzi*.

17 Kychanov (2005, 5) also mentions a common phenomenon in Tangut printed text, namely, that the text printed from the same woodblocks appears to have been printed on paper of different size – the leaves could differ in size as much as 5 cm. As an explanation he proposes that these leaves of different size are either fragments of large and small print runs or were printed at different times.

18 A detailed physical description of the manuscript is available in Kepping 1977.

19 Even though the Tangut script itself does not present particular difficulties for reading, the cursive writing is still very hard to read. In their work on Chinese classics in Tangut translation, Kolokolov and Kychanov (1966, 128–133) provide a table of common elements in Tangut cursive script, which among other things shows how the same element can be written in a number of different ways. Eric Grinstead, in his monograph on the Tangut script adds regular-script characters by the side of cursive ones on the facsimile reproduction of the Tangut *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety) manuscript from St. Petersburg (Grinstead 1972, 300–376).

20 Kepping 1977, 161.

21 *Ibid.*, 161–162.

title, in contrast with the head title (*shouti* 首題) that gives the text's full official designation. In surviving medieval manuscripts the two titles at times can be quite different, even though the context makes it clear that they refer to the same text.²² In our two versions of the *Sunzi*, the titles are all end titles and as such they are less rigid than the head titles would be, which may be the reason why they slightly differ. The printed *Sunzi* has two such end titles, one at the end of the second *juan* (Kepping 1979, 526) and one at the end of the third *juan* (*ibid.*, 566).²³ Interestingly, the former is followed by a note giving a total count of characters in the main text and the commentary.

3 Draft or Personal Copy?

The printed edition is the same two-fold combination comprising the *Sunzi* followed by the *Sunzi zhuan*. In this case the *Sunzi* includes the three commentaries not only in its title but also in the text. The three commentaries are those by Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), Li Quan 李荃 (8th c.) and Du Mu 杜牧 (803–852), all of which are also part of the ten and eleven commentary editions known from the Chinese tradition. Accordingly, in the printed edition, unlike in the manuscript, the text conforms to the title. In contrast with the scroll, a much larger portion of the *Sunzi* survives in this edition, although the end of the biography is missing. The overlapping portion includes the last few lines of the *Sunzi* and most of the biography. Apart from the disparity of including or omitting the three commentaries, the text of the *Sunzi* matches in the printed and manuscript versions.²⁴ The biography shows a number of minor

22 For example, manuscript Or.8210/S.5438 from Dunhuang is a notebook from the 10th century with Chapter 25 of the *Lotus sūtra*. At the beginning of the manuscript, we find the title *Miaofa lianhua jing Guanshiyin pusa pumen pin di ershiwu* 妙法蓮華經觀世音菩薩普門品第廿五 (*Lotus sūtra*, Chapter 25, The universal gateway of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara), whereas at the end, *Foshuo Guanyin jing yi juan* 佛說觀音經一卷 (The sūtra of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, as preached by the Buddha, in one *juan*). Thus the head and end titles do not match at all, even though we know that this chapter of the *Lotus sūtra* also commonly circulated separately as a stand-alone sūtra.

23 Kepping (1970, 9) is mistaken to claim that the title appears only once in the printed *Sunzi*.

24 The only difference is two cases where adjacent characters have been accidentally reversed in the manuscript but in both cases this was corrected by a reversal mark commonly seen in both Chinese and Tangut manuscripts (Kepping 1977, 162). Taking into consideration the corrections, these instances do not constitute differences with the printed edition of the text.

discrepancies, part of the reason for which is no doubt that the overlapping portion is significantly longer (as opposed to the 17 lines of the *Sunzi*). Kepping lists 39 differences between the two versions, pointing out that the nature of the discrepancies confirms that we are dealing with two versions of the same text.²⁵ She argues that the printed text in most cases clarifies and corrects the manuscript, which leads her to conclude that the printed text is an improved version of the manuscript. Finally she voices the possibility that the manuscript may have been the draft for the printed edition.²⁶

A problem with this scenario, which Kepping raises herself, is that the manuscript 'draft' does not have the commentaries which are indicated in its title and are in fact present in the printed edition. She thinks that a possible reason for this may have been that the copyist was only interested in the main text of the *Sunzi* and thus omitted the commentaries, while retaining the original title of the work he was using.²⁷ This explanation, however, somewhat contradicts the point about the manuscript being a draft for the printed text. The logical thing would be that a draft of a printed edition would include the commentaries the way they were going to appear in the final edition. Instead, this must be a manuscript version that was obviously copied from a commented edition (handwritten or printed) that included the three commentaries referred to in the title. Nevertheless, the copyist omitted the commentaries, revealing, as Kepping correctly observed, that he was only interested in the main text and not the commentaries. But I see this as an indication that rather than working on a new edition of the text (especially a commented one), he copied down the text for his own purposes, perhaps as a private study tool.

We can cite several additional details to support this assumption. One is that the manuscript is written in the cursive hand, which is easier to conceive as being used in a copy intended for personal use, rather than for preparing a printed edition. After all, the process of printing would have still necessitated additional stages, such as writing out a clean copy of the text and then carving this onto woodblocks, and for both of these a standard calligraphy would have been more suitable. When producing a copy for one's own use, however, a hasty hand would have posed no obstacles whatsoever, as the copyist would have had little difficulty reading his own handwriting, while the aesthetic qualities of the text would have been largely irrelevant.

25 Ibid., 163–165.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

Similarly, the lack of any kind of formatting in the manuscript that could be considered as anticipating the layout of the printed text is an argument against it representing an intermediary stage on the way to a printed edition. In contrast with this, making a personal copy from an existing book would not have necessitated keeping the layout of the source text, since the point of the exercise would have been to duplicate the content of the text.

Moreover, the *Sunzi* manuscript is in the form of a scroll. Although the scroll had been the main book form in China and the rest of East Asia up to the latter part of the Tang dynasty, from the second half of the 9th and early 10th centuries other forms became increasingly common. The Dunhuang manuscripts provide ample evidence for this shift in book form, as around this period we see the appearance of non-orthodox forms such as the butterfly, whirlwind, concertina, pothi and notebook forms, some of which point to a Central Asian influence. Yet the scroll never disappeared but continued to be used alongside other forms. The Khara-khoto texts are significantly later than the Dunhuang manuscripts and likewise come from the periphery of the Chinese domain, where the influence of Central Asian book cultures would have been presumably more pronounced. Consequently, among the surviving body of Tangut texts the scroll is relatively uncommon and most books which are complete enough to show their original form are in butterfly, concertina or notebook formats. The fact that our *Sunzi* manuscript written in a cursive hand is a scroll may be a sign of it being intended for personal use, in which case binding it properly would have hardly been necessary. It was simply jotted down on a piece of paper and then rolled up.

A point worth noting here is that concertina books were among the most common ones in Khara-khoto. But a concertina is essentially a scroll that is not rolled up but folded into an accordion-like shape. Therefore there is a fine distinction between scroll and concertina and without the outside covers commonly attached to properly bound concertina books, it would be hard to tell them apart.²⁸ Fortunately, many of the books were found folded as concertina books and thus we are able to determine precisely their book form. But it is also possible that some of the crumpled fragments assumed by modern conservators to have been scrolls in reality had originally been concertina books. For this reason we cannot rule out the possibility that our manuscript scroll was at one point also in the form of a concertina, which would of course be even less compatible with the idea of having been created as a temporary draft towards a more stable edition.

28 Terent'ev-Katanskij 1981, 27.

As to the differences between the printed text and the manuscript, the discrepancies can also work in the other direction. In this way, what appeared to be a correction of the handwritten draft may be a copying mistake; a ‘clarification’ of a one-character word with a compound word can simply be a case of accidental omission. The differences listed by Kepping by themselves cannot verify the priority of one version over the other. Contrary to her conclusion, they could just as well support the idea that this was a temporary copy where such minor discrepancies were of little consequence, especially if they did not change the meaning of the text. It is only logical that a military treatise could have been copied for pragmatic purposes which had nothing to do with philological enquiries and other scholarly pursuits. This manuscript may have been one of these personal copies prepared for practical use.

The theory that the manuscript is a draft version of the printed edition also raises some questions with regard to the nature of the entire corpus of texts found in Khara-khoto. First of all, why would an earlier version of a printed text, a copy that functioned as a draft copy for a printed edition, be deposited in a funerary stūpa? We know that the Kozlov expedition found a skeleton in a sitting position inside the so-called library stūpa and it seems reasonable to assume that the stūpa was dedicated to this person.²⁹ This parallels the situation of the Dunhuang cave library which initially also held the statue of the monk Hongbian 洪辯 (d. 868), head of the local *saṃgha*, and a small niche at the back of the statue enclosed a silk bag with human ashes, presumably those of Hongbian.³⁰

The nature of the Dunhuang collection and the reason for its interment have long perplexed scholars.³¹ Sir Aurel Stein, who was the first Westerner to examine the cave, advanced the theory of ‘sacred waste,’ drawing attention to the existence of a tradition that prohibits the destruction of any writing, no

29 The expedition took the skull of this person back to St. Petersburg, and it was later examined by the anthropologist F. Volkov who concluded that it may have belonged to an older lady who was over fifty years old (Kozlov 1923, 555–556). Based on this supposition, Lev N. Menshikov, who had compiled a descriptive catalogue of Chinese texts from Khara-khoto, advanced the hypothesis that the person buried in the stupa was Empress Luo, widow of the Tangut Emperor Renzong (r. 1139–1193). Kychanov, however, expressed his opinion that this was merely a “romantic hypothesis” which could be refuted if the skull was examined once again. Since then, however, the skull was lost – possibly during the siege of Leningrad.

30 At a later point, in order to create more space for manuscripts, this statue was removed from the library cave (i.e. Cave 17) and moved into the larger anterior cave (i.e. Cave 16) where it stood until recently.

31 See, for example, Rong 1999 and Imaeda 2008.

matter how small or fragmentary, that has the word of the Buddha. Naturally, this was only one of the possible explanations and not everyone concurred with it. For example the eminent French sinologist Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), who visited the cave a few months after Stein, was a proponent of the theory that the manuscripts were hidden in the cave in order to protect them from an invading force, which he believed to be the Tanguts.³² Later on, building on Stein's initial hypothesis, the Japanese scholar Fujieda Akira suggested that the Dunhuang manuscripts were deposited in the library cave because with the spread of printing in the 10th century the printed books of the Buddhist Canon displaced the handwritten ones, which were thus stored in the cave as sacred waste.³³ Regardless of which theory is correct, in the case of Khara-khoto neither of these explanations is likely because it is improbable that a stūpa would be used either to deposit unwanted scriptures or to hide texts in order to protect them from a hostile invasion. It is evident that Buddhist texts interred in a stūpa must have had a function related to the consecration of the site. Yet even though the bulk of the material found there comprised Buddhist texts, there were also secular ones, including the *Sunzi*. These must have been connected to the person buried there, either as a personal library or part of a larger collection that person oversaw. In either case, it is hard to explain why a draft copy of the *Sunzi* would have been preserved as part of this collection. In contrast, it would have been reasonable to deposit in the tomb a personal copy of a text that belonged to the tomb occupant.

4 Co-existence of Scribal and Printed Cultures

While none of the above points provide conclusive proof to establish temporal priority between the two versions of *Sunzi*, when taken together they imply that the manuscript was not a draft for the printed edition but was, rather, itself made from this three-commentary edition – or another similar one (printed or handwritten). Indeed, one cannot avoid noticing that the conjecture that the handwritten version preceded the printed one reflects the commonly held notion that manuscripts generally precede printed texts, an assumption largely based on a modern understanding of the course of the history of the book. According to this understanding, printing technology represented a more advanced stage of evolution and with time it replaced the tedious task

32 For an overview of the various theories proposed to explain the nature of the Dunhuang cave library, see van Schaik and Galambos 2012, 19–28.

33 Fujieda 1973, 128.

of copying texts by hand. Consequently, as a general principle, manuscripts predate printed books, and if they are from the same period, the manuscript must have served as a temporary means to arrive at the technologically more advanced product: the printed book. A classic example of this view is Prof. Fujieda's above-mentioned explanation for the sealing of the Dunhuang cave library, a convincing argument against which is, for instance, the coexistence of large quantities of manuscripts and prints in the Khara-khoto corpus.

Yet there is undeniably some truth to this model, as before the spread of printing manuscript culture was the main setting in which texts were produced and circulated. The appearance and spread of printing modified this by adding an alternative mode of textual production. Handwritten and printed books, however, were conceived not as opposites in a binary split between old and new technologies but rather as complementing modes of production. By virtue of their very nature, woodblocks faithfully reproduced handwritten originals, consequently print and manuscript did not significantly differ visually.³⁴ For that reason it is perhaps better to understand early woodblock printing as an extension of scribal culture, rather than a brand new technology that brought radical changes to the lives of literate communities. If it represented an advancement, it would not have been as obvious to contemporary people as we tend to imagine today.³⁵

In fact, even though woodblock printing was already in use in the late 7th century AD, it subsequently fell into disuse and remained largely ignored until the end of the Tang period.³⁶ Hence there is certainly a diachronic dimension to the spread of printing, which is also amply demonstrated by the differences

34 Kornicki 2006, 25.

35 We should also point out that although we commonly associate printing with mass production, surviving examples of printed texts do not always support this view, at least not for the medieval period. We usually find only one or two specimens of printed fragments, which would suggest a very low print run. It is of course possible that the reason we do not find more copies of the same print is because most of them perished over time but this would be inconsistent with the fact that numerous copies of the same text are more commonly found in manuscript form. For example, the most popular Buddhist sūtras occur in hundreds of copies each among the Dunhuang manuscripts, many of them produced as part of the same sūtra-copying project.

36 Timothy Barrett (2008) argues that the reason why printing technology did not achieve widespread application during the Tang was that it was too closely associated with the "usurper" Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705) who had used it for the dissemination of Buddhist texts as part of her quest for legitimacy. Therefore it was only after the end of the dynasty that printing was once again considered a viable option for state-sponsored projects. For additional points and references concerning this topic, see also Barrett 2012.

in the composition of the Dunhuang and Khara-khoto corpora, as already alluded to above. In fact, the rarity of printed texts in the Dunhuang corpus has been one of the criteria which helped to identify a number of Khara-khoto texts which had been erroneously catalogued in St. Petersburg as being from Dunhuang.³⁷ Most items in the small group of printed material discovered in the Dunhuang cave library comprise one-page prayer leaves and calendars, and there are very few longer texts. A famous example of the latter is the 868 copy of the *Diamond sūtra* – the earliest complete dated book in the world – held at the British Library which was, however, brought to Dunhuang from Sichuan. As a result, as soon as it became clear that the St. Petersburg collection had Khara-khoto texts accidentally intermixed among the Dunhuang material, any print with a longer text (i.e. sūtras, commentaries) became an immediate suspect and, indeed, most of them turned out to be from Khara-khoto. Although there is undeniably a certain amount of circularity in excluding printed texts from the Dunhuang corpus by arguing that they are atypical of the corpus, in practice this theory provided a feasible method for isolating items that did not belong there.³⁸

Yet printed texts never completely replaced manuscripts which continued to be used until modern times throughout East Asia, especially in the Buddhist context. Sūtra copying for the sake of accruing karmic merit, either by copying them personally or by paying someone else to do so, has been an essential part of Buddhist ritual culture since the early medieval period. But even secular texts continued to be hand-copied in large quantities for various reasons. Discussing the survival of scribal culture in Edo period (1603–1867) Japan, Peter Kornicki argues that manuscripts were used alongside printed editions and that copying printed books by hand was a widespread practice attributable to a range of factors.³⁹ People filled notebooks with extracts from books they read, copied religious texts as an act of devotion, created artistic calligraphies of secular texts, or simply copied printed books because those were more expensive, not easily available or even banned.⁴⁰ It is only natural that all of these reasons also played a role in the production of manuscripts in Khara-khoto and other regions of northwestern China.

37 Rong 2007.

38 Naturally, this has not been the only criterion for identifying such texts. Other criteria included late dates on dated texts, administrative texts of a particular format, codicological characteristics and the ability to join the fragments with fragments in the Khara-khoto collection. See Rong 2007, 542–543.

39 Kornicki 2006.

40 Ibid., 30–38.

The Khara-khoto material, the texts of which date from the 11th–13th centuries, includes both printed and manuscript books, but without dated colophons or other information that can be linked with particular moments in time it is usually not possible to determine their priority. The Dunhuang manuscripts contain very few printed texts which indicates the rarity of prints at the time; yet there are also manuscripts with colophons and notes that assert that they had been copied from printed texts. For example, in several notebooks of the *Diamond sūtra* (e.g. Pelliot chinois 2876, Or.8210/S.6762, Or.8210/S.5534, Or.8210/S.5451) a note following the text states that the copy was made “from the true printed text of the Guo family of Xichuan” 西川過家真印本. The wording slightly differs in the different copies but they all claim to have been copied from the same printed edition of the *Diamond sūtra*. One of the manuscripts is dated to 905 and presumably the other ones were also written around the same period. This demonstrates how even among the Dunhuang manuscripts we find examples of manuscripts copied from printed editions, showing that the temporal priority of manuscripts vs. prints cannot always be taken for granted.

A telling example of the symbiotic relationship between manuscript and print is found on one of the pages of the printed edition of the Tangut *Sunzi zhuan*, where the top of the page is missing with the first two characters of each row. Accordingly, the lines only have 11 characters instead of the 13 on adjacent pages. As a means of restoring the text, someone wrote the missing Tangut characters by hand, thereby rectifying the problem. Although it is not entirely visible on the available reproductions, it seems that the paper itself is intact which would mean that the missing part of the text is a printing error. Perhaps the woodblock broke off and all prints made from it had this part missing.⁴¹ While the restoration of missing printed text in this manner is a phenomenon well attested in later print culture in both China and the West, the missing text was almost always added by subsequent owners or users of the text much later, often in the modern period. In our case, however, the handwritten characters were added before the stūpa in Khara-khoto was closed, possibly immediately after the book was produced. Consequently, this page is one of the earliest examples of such mixing of printed and handwritten text.

There are also some cases of printed images attached to the beginning of concertina manuscripts of Buddhist sūtras. Manuscript Inv. No. 2208 from the

41 Another possibility is that the damage occurred to the printed page and the handwritten additions are on an extra sheet of paper used by a medieval conservator. Naturally, this could be easily verified by examining the original page in St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg collection, for example, is volume (*juan*) 1 of the Tangut translation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*, which is by far the most common text in the Tangut corpus from Khara-khoto. This manuscript begins with a woodblock printed image of the Buddha preaching to his disciples. The exact same illustration also appears in volume 160 of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (Inv. No. 1763), which suggests that all volumes of this copy of the *sūtra* may have begun with the same image. In turn, this also confirms that the image was not arbitrary but had a significance for the particular *sūtra*. To cite another example, the concertina manuscript Inv. No. 150 of the *Dirghāgama sūtra* also has a printed illustration at the beginning, showing the Buddha preaching to the multitudes.⁴² Furthermore, woodblock printed books are sometimes recycled in the cover of concertina manuscripts, as it is the case in manuscript Inv. No. 1786 (St. Petersburg), a handwritten copy of volume 195 of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*. The cover is assembled from recycled paper in a way that the pages are turned inwards. Yet the text shows through and it is visible that the pages used to belong to a printed dictionary of some sort.

5 Conclusions

This paper examined the relationship between two surviving versions of the Tangut translation of a text comprising the *Sunzi* and the *Sunzi zhuan*. The pairing of these two otherwise distinct texts may have been part of a now lost Chinese edition which was available in the Tangut state. The two Tangut versions clearly represent the same translation as the discrepancies between them are minor and for the most part inconsequential. Yet one of them is a manuscript and the other a print. Having compared these against each other, modern scholars came to the conclusion that the print post-dated the manuscript, as it corrected and supplemented the manuscript in a number of instances. Accordingly, the handwritten copy was assumed to have functioned as a draft copy in the process of producing the printed edition. As a result of my own analysis of the two versions, however, I argue that the handwritten copy was probably made from a printed edition and thus should be considered later.

To be sure, in itself the question which version was earlier is of minor import and may seem like a trivial pursuit. Yet this particular case helps to reconsider some of our assumptions concerning the relationship between manuscript

42 Colour photographs of these manuscripts appear at the beginning of the facsimile editions of Khara-khoto materials in Russian collections, published by the Chinese publisher Shanghai guji chubanshe (vols. 15 and 17).

and print in the medieval period. It questions the common, typically unstated, assumption that manuscripts predate printed texts, a belief ultimately stemming from a linear view of the evolution of book culture. By examining the two versions of the Tangut *Sunzi* and drawing on evidence from other texts found in Dunhuang and Khara-khoto, I attempted to uncover the faults in this scenario and demonstrate that manuscripts continued to be used even after printing technology became widespread. Woodblock printing was not considered a radically new technology that would render older forms of book production obsolete. In fact, scribal and printed cultures co-existed for centuries, as is amply evidenced by the corpus of Chinese, Tangut and Tibetan texts found in Khara-khoto. Even the much earlier Dunhuang materials include manuscripts made from printed editions, confirming that without other supportive evidence manuscripts should not automatically be judged to be earlier than printed texts.

Finally, the case presented here is an example of the significance of the materiality of excavated texts. Former research has given little attention to this aspect of the Tangut *Sunzi* (or Tangut material in general), concentrating on textual and linguistic issues, even though the physical form of these manuscripts and prints affords important clues to their production, use and relationship. Including these parameters in our enquiry enables us to uncover a host of additional information which in turn has implications for the interpreting the social and cultural circumstances of the texts in their original milieu. My intention was to call attention to the possibilities inherent in such an approach for furthering our understanding of Tangut texts, be they handwritten or printed.

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Printing versus Manuscript: History or Rhetoric?

A Short Note Inspired by Pelliot DIC

Cristina Scherrer-Schaub

1 Historiography and Materiality

Techniques and mechanical arts, such as writing or printing, share similar features: they move in space and time, and they are diffused (and hence exchanged) in sequential stages.¹ Their applicability is determined by contingent factors. The historical interpretation of these factors is in turn dependent on relevant archival records, as well as prevailing modes of interpreting the social and intellectual history of mankind.

Kurtis Schaeffer's *The Culture of the Book in Tibet* finely analyses the economic and social issues generated by the process of writing and printing in Tibet, and gives a comprehensive view of the problematic, including the reciprocal interplay generated by the encounter of Tibetan and Indian traditions, the editing of the Tibetan canons, and the role played by the various political, religious, and cultural actors. Relevant to our concerns here is the accuracy in locating Tibetan sources on the various techniques of writing and printing.²

Ideas gleaned beyond Tibet and in different contexts may equally be of interest in reflecting on the general problematic. Shortly before passing away in 1925, Thomas Francis Carter (1882–1925) published *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*. Carter himself averred that it needed to be improved and complemented. Paul Pelliot, who had contributed to the revision of Carter's manuscript, was asked by the editors to revise the first edition of Carter's book which was sold successfully immediately. Thus it was that

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- 1 This is the model that we have adopted in our essay on the introduction of writing to Tibet, presented at the 10th Seminar of the IATS (Oxford, 2003) and published with the title "Tibet: an Archaeology of the Written" (Scherrer-Schaub 2012, 217).
 - 2 Various topics have been treated in detail by several authors, among others Rémi Chaix, Michela Clemente, Christoph Cüppers, Hildegard Diemberger, Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Helmut Eimer, David Jackson, Andrew Quintman, Marta Sernesi and Leonard van der Kuijp, and some of these contributions appeared long ago. Particularly precious are the essays that make use of the work done by contemporary Tibetan scholars (cf. Chaix 2010, 85–113).

Pelliot, in the years 1928–1929, devoted his research and lectures at the Collège de France to the history of printing in China, exploring a large number of texts on the subject. Pelliot, ‘devoured by the demon of research,’ was not worried by the tyranny of writing all that passes through one’s brain (or repeating what is already known . . .). The material that he left was published posthumously by Paul Demiéville in 1953 with the title *Les débuts de l’imprimerie en Chine* (DIC),³ complemented with Demiéville’s “Notes additionnelles sur les éditions imprimées du canon bouddhique.”

Jacques Gernet who recently revisited the subject, in emphasizing Pelliot’s acumen notes that he was

l’égal des plus grands érudits chinois des XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles et de ceux qu’il a connus en Chine au début du XX^e. Sa science sans égale explique son horreur des à-peu-près et le fait qu’une partie de ses oeuvres consiste en notes parfois étendues où il s’attache à corriger les approximations et les erreurs de ses devanciers ou de ses contemporains. Attentif au moindres indices qui permettent de fixer l’origine, les auteurs, la date des ouvrages, poussant ses recherches aussi loin qu’il le pouvait, il apporte, grâce à sa connaissance exceptionnelle de la bibliographie chinoise, une abondance de précisions qu’on ne trouve nullepart ailleurs. (...) Ce soin extrême explique que, sauf découverte plus récente, ses conclusions n’ont rien perdu de leur valeur.⁴

In DIC, Pelliot carefully analyses Carter’s position, addressing the problematic aspects of his work, placing the issues on solid evidential ground, and commenting extensively on various episodes, *e.g.* the note of Yijing on the diffusion of paper, that we find in his report on Buddhist practices in India and ‘Insulinde’ (Sumatra, Java, Bali, etc.). Yijing sent this note to China in 692, while still in Palembang (Sumatra). The text contains the famous passage on the small clay *caitya*, the ancestors of the Tibetan *tsha tshas*: “[Dans l’Inde] on fait des *caitya* d’argile et on moule par pression des images d’argile; ou encore on [les] imprime sur de la gaze de soie ou sur du papier, et on leur fait des offrandes là où on se trouve (DIC: 15).”⁵ Of interest to us is the fact that the record of the Chinese pilgrim tallies quite nicely with the Chinese sources,

3 Oeuvres posthumes de Paul Pelliot IV, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1953.

4 Gernet 2013, 553–567.

5 Cf. Kunsang Namgyal Lama 2013.

stating that paper was introduced from China to India between 650 and 670.⁶ Even more important to us is the fact that among the Gilgit manuscripts there is what seems to be a very rudimentary example of paper.⁷ This tends to confirm that the period of introduction of paper indicated by Chinese scholars seems to be practically confirmed.⁸

2 Seals and Engraved Stones

Carter and Laufer made a number of suggestions concerning the factors that influenced the development of printing technology. Pelliot questions the terminology, and notes the ambiguity that may be seen in various languages using the same term for two or more different procedures of reproducing images or scripts.⁹ Carter was convinced that he would find the ancestor of printing in the seal (DIC: 15–16) while Pelliot, more cautiously, reckons the seal among one of the elements that suggested the idea of printing, and distinguishes seals from engraved/carved stones

[D]ès les Han tout au moins, ils [*i. e.* the seals] étaient gravés en caractères inversés, qui apparaissaient en sens direct quand on les appliquait. Les stèles sur pierre au contraire, telles que celles des classiques gravés au II^e siècle de notre ère, donnaient bien des ouvrages entiers, mais étaient gravées en sens direct; elles ne pouvaient servir qu'à la copie, et plus tard à l'estampage.

6 Ji 1954, 25–52; Huang 1980, 113–133; see Drège 1986, 19–39.

7 On the name of paper in India, and the paper MSS of Gilgit and Bāmiyān, cf. Scherrer-Schaub 1999, 3–36, n. 5, n. 9.

8 See Kishore 1963/64, 1–3. Cf. also *infra* pp. 9–10 and n. 24.

9 A good example is furnished by the translation of the Tibetan term *zhu chen*, the term used to refer to the person in charge of emending and correcting (*zhu dag byed pa*) the final version of the translated text. According to the Tibetan, this term should be translated as 'Great reviser/revisor' (*zhu dag mkhan, zhu chen*), cf. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo, s. v. zhu dag*. It is however often translated as 'Editor' possibly in close connection with the contemporary practice of editing texts, but much less with the complex organisation of revising the copies of the sDe dge Canon for instance, cf. the study of Rémi Chaix cited *supra* n. 2. On the process of editing in the 8–9th c., cf. Scherrer-Schaub 2010, 314–318, 314/317, on the distinction between the 'internal' and 'external' editing process.

3 Xylographic Print and Stamping (French: Estampage)

The oldest specimen of a dated xylographic print seems to be an exemplar of the *Vajracchedikā*, dated to 868, kept at the British Museum, London, and probably imported in Dunhuang from Sichuan (DIC: 47–48), as Drège notes “[Le] pays où l’imprimerie xylographique semble avoir eu dès le IX^e siècle son plus grand essor.”¹⁰ Pelliot, after Carter, reads the colophon of the *Vajracchedikā* and notes that, contrary to what had been assumed by the American scholar, Wang Kiai, the person mentioned in the colophon as dedicating the text to his parents, is most likely not the printer: “[Wang Kiai] n’est pas plus un «imprimeur» que celui qui fait exécuter une statue ou un bas-relief n’est un «sculpteur»: c’est un donateur qui fournit l’argent et voilà tout.”

Incidentally it is worth noting that the region of Sichuan and the valley of the Yangzhi saw an important economic development in the 8–9th c. and the cosmopolitan capital of Sichuan was famous as a prosperous city, where merchants were meeting on intersecting trading paths, and where the first cheques were circulating since 806–820. Intriguingly, this was shortly before the first attacks of Nanzhao on the region of Chengdu.¹¹ Sichuan, famous for paper-making and printing, is also the region where the first xylographic blocks of the Chinese Canon were carved, and subsequently sent to the capital Kaifeng (Hunan). In his additional note to DIC, Paul Demiéville (DIC: 121) explains that

Le Hien-cheng sseu était un monastère de Pien-leang, l’actuel K’ai-fong, chef-lieu du Ho-nan, alors capitale des Song. C’est là qu’en 1071 furent déposées les planches de la première édition imprimée du *Canon bouddhique*, celles qui avaient été gravées au Sseu-tch’ouan de 971 à 983, avec leur suite gravée depuis 983, et c’est là qu’un tirage de cette suite fut fait deux ans plus tard, en 1073, pour le pèlerin japonais Jōjin.

Further on, Pelliot in his critical approach to the history of stamping the inscriptions carved on stone (*estampages*), gives a clear idea of the process. In introducing the description of the technique of stamping, Pelliot cites Stanislas Julien (DIC: 93) who

[N]’avait jamais rien compris à ce qu’est l’estampage chinois. Julien a cru que la face des tirages qu’il avait sous les yeux était celle qui avait été appliquée contre la pierre encrée elle-même au préalable, et qu’il

¹⁰ Cf. Drège 1986, 36 and n. 25.

¹¹ See Gernet 1972, 229–231.

s'agissait d'une véritable impression, ce qui aurait nécessité des caractères inversés sur la pierre originale. Mais il est à peine besoin de rappeler que l'estampage chinois consiste à appliquer sur la pierre un papier très mince qu'on mouille et qu'on fait pénétrer dans tous les traits gravés en creux; on encre ensuite ce papier à plat extérieurement, et les caractères viennent en blanc sur noir sur la face *externe* du papier et, dans le même sens où ils étaient gravés sur la pierre; il n'y a donc pas lieu d'inverser la gravure des caractères comme dans l'imprimerie proprement dite.

The ancientness of this technique could be proved by the fortunate find of Paul Pelliot, while still in Dunhuang, on the 6th of March, 1908 (*Carnets* 280): “[Trouvé] un superbe rouleau donnant un estampage pris au plus tard au début du x^e siècle (je n'en ai jamais vu citer en Chine d'avant les Song du nord) d'une *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya sūtra* écrit par le célèbre Lieou Kong-tsiuan et gravé sur pierre.” Later on Pelliot (DIC: 95) revises his previous note and correctly identifies the text as the *Vajracchedikā*, further explicating the context. The text, calligraphed in 824 by Lieou Kong-k'iuian, is a complete stamp taken under the Tang and, as Pelliot shows, it represents a new progress in the technique. Indeed one may see that it is already a text expressly carved on a certain number of elongated slabs, and numbered, in order to be stamped.¹² Incidentally, this description vividly recalls the *sūtra*-stones that, along the centuries, have paved several sacred sites, in China, Burma, and Tibet (Fig. 8.1).¹³

4 The Wooden Cubes and the Mobile Fonts

A further change in the technique may be observed thanks to the collection of the small wooden cubes or hexahedron blocks, discovered by Paul Pelliot in the Yuan caves of Dunhuang,¹⁴ in 1908. Four of them were possibly offered by Pelliot himself to the *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York (n^o 24.114.1–4),

12 “Le *Kin kang pan jo po lo mi king* calligraphié par Lieou Kong-k'iuian (778–865) en 824 et dont j'ai rapporté à Paris un estampage complet pris sous les T'ang marque un nouveau progrès: c'est déjà un texte gravé expréssément en vue de l'estampage sur un certain nombre de dalles plus longues que hautes et numérotées . . .”

13 On the *sūtra*-stones in Sichuan, cf. Suey-Ling 2014, 167–192; in Tibet, cf. Tropper 2009, 87–96. On the general problematic, see Scherrer-Schaub 2013a, 139–170, 153 and notes, 160 and Figs. 4 and 10.

14 Cf. *Carnets*: 295: “Samedi 23 mai 1908. Dans la grotte 181, trouvé nombre de cubes servant à l'impression de livres mongols [sic!], et pas mal de fragments imprimés dont un certain nombre de feuillets si-hia”. Cf. Scherrer-Schaub 2013b, 371–408, 374.

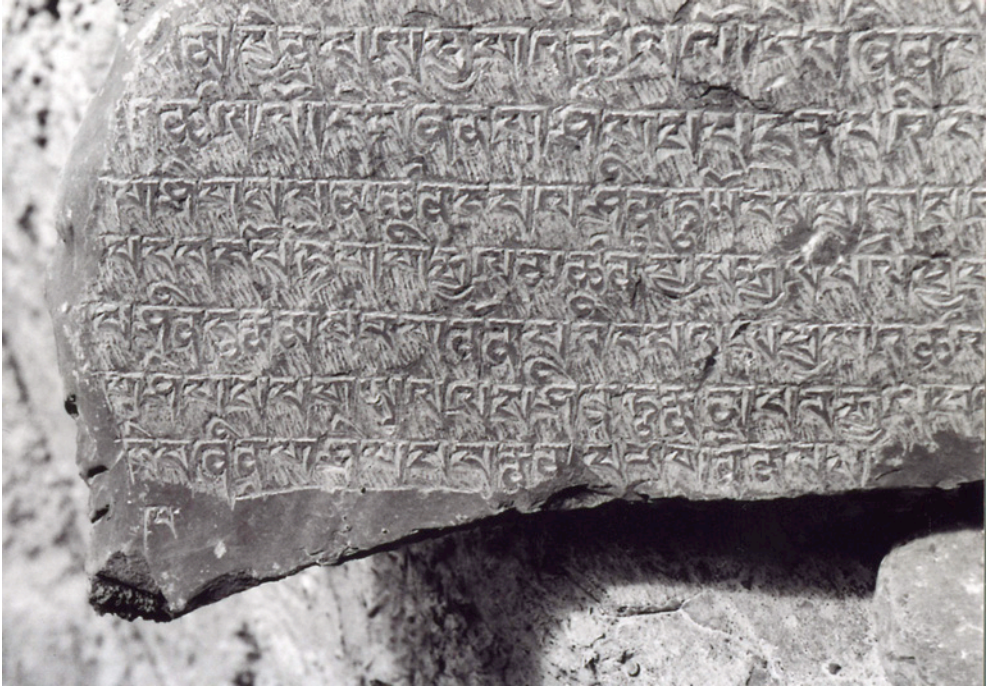


FIGURE 8.1 *Tabo, stone Kanjur, fol. kha.*
PHOTOGRAPH CRISTINA SCHERRER-SCHAUB 2002.

and the remaining 965, are kept in the *Musée Guimet*, Paris (n° MG 25507, n° 926 des collections archéologiques de la mission Pelliot).¹⁵ The description given by Francis Macouin (1986: 149) shows that these wooden cubes bore on one face the types, carved in relief of *ca.* 2 mm. Remarkably enough

Tous les blocs présentent deux dimensions, la troisième étant variable. La première de ces deux dimensions constantes est la hauteur qui est de 22 mm, avec une variation inférieure à 1 mm en plus ou moins. Cette dimension constitue la hauteur en papier des caractères et il est à remarquer qu'elle est **du même ordre que la hauteur typographique standard actuelle, 23,56 mm en France** [*underlined by the present author*: it shows, if necessary, that technique, when optimal, may last for centuries]. La deuxième dimension, qu'on peut appeler le corps du caractère, est de 13 mm. La troisième mesure, qu'on peut qualifier de châsse, varie d'un caractère à l'autre en fonction du « mot » gravé, de 2 mm au minimum

15 Macouin 1986, 147–157.

à 34 mm au maximum. On peut constater par ces indications qu'il s'agit d'un ensemble cohérent et il est logique de penser que tous ces caractères appartenaient à une même police d'imprimerie. Il est évident cependant qu'un millier de signes est insuffisant pour imprimer un ouvrage et, par conséquent, nous n'avons là qu'une partie seulement de la police.¹⁶

Jacques Gernet (2013, 555) notes however that if the word 'printing', used by Carter and Pelliot is «*commode*», nonetheless when

[E]ntendu au sens que nous lui donnons depuis Gutenberg, il ne peut s'appliquer à la Chine **qui ignorait la vis sans fin, le pressoir à vis, et n'a jamais usé régulièrement des caractères mobiles** [*underlined by the present author*]. Si la Chine y eut recours à plusieurs reprises – ils sont attestés pour la première fois de façon certaine entre 1041 et 1048 – ils n'eurent pas chez elle de succès durable **en raison du trop grand nombre de signes nécessaires à la reproduction du chinois** [*underlined by the present author*]. Leur plus grande réussite fut celle des grandes éditions coréennes, commencées en 1403, un demi-siècle avant les débuts de notre imprimerie, où furent fondus 100 000 caractères chinois. C'est la xylographie et l'usage du froton qui se sont imposés couramment en Chine et presque aussitôt dans les pays voisins Japon, Corée et Vietnam, où le chinois écrit s'imposait anciennement dans tous les domaines de la culture savante. **Plutôt que d'imprimerie à notre sens, il serait donc plus exact de parler des procédés artisanaux qui ont permis à la Chine d'être pendant plus de cinq siècles le seul pays du monde qui pratiquait couramment la reproduction de l'écrit et le plus riche en livres et bibliothèques** [*underlined by the present author*]. And a similar conspectus may be observed in the case of Tibet.¹⁷

16 The intuition of Francis Macouin is corroborated by a note of Hamilton 1992, 97–121, 100, n. 5: "Par ailleurs, j'apprends depuis peu avec étonnement que S. F. Ol'denberg, au cours de son expédition à Touen-houang en 1914–15, aurait trouvé encore 100 000 petits blocs mobiles portant des formes gravées en écriture ouïghoure. Voir l'ouvrage de S. L. Tixvinskij et B. A. Litvinskij, *Vostočnyj Turkestan v drevnosti i rannem srednevekov'e. Očerki istorii*, Moscou 1988, p. 42, ainsi que le compte rendu de Peter Zieme, *Neue sowjetische Veröffentlichungen über die alten Kulturen Xinjiangs*, «*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*» (Leipzig), N° 499."

17 Cf. Eimer 2007, 35–60, 39: "At the time when the first Kanjur edition was printed in China, the technique of movable type – made of clay, porcelain, wood or bronze – had already been developed. But it was obviously not used for disseminating Tibetan texts. We can only infer that movable type was seen as a very apt invention for the common Chinese books in the *juan* style, but not for Tibetan books in *dpe cha* – *pothi* format with their

When Pelliot brought back to Paris the wooden cubes (Fig. 8.2), found in cave 181 at Dunhuang, there were also, from the same deposit, “cinq petits carnets de manuscrits bouddhiques en ouïgour tardif des environs du XIV^e siècle”. As James Hamilton notes one of these *cahier* contained a letter addressed by a Buddhist religious practitioner to his correlative Alp Qaya residing in Dunhuang. This letter, studied previously by Takao Moriyasu,¹⁸ arrested the attention of Hamilton (1992, 98–99) when in 1987 he was examining some manuscripts together with Kudara Kogi. Hamilton reconsidered the interpretation of the term *yonar*

[T]iré sans doute du verbe turc *yon-*, tailler, sculpter, couper, qui désignait une importante activité se déroulant au XIV^e siècle en milieu boud-

oblong form, which in the case of the Kanjur printed in China measures about 73 to 27 cm. The peculiarities of the Tibetan script do not favour the use of movable type, as the super- and subscript letters and vowels put above and below the consonants require ample space between the lines. This problem does not occur with the quadrangular shape of the Chinese signs, which can be set in close lines.” Apparently however the question of the format (*dpe cha*, that is to print on fly leaves *versus* to print on *juan*, *i. e.* scrolls that are themselves composed by fly leaves) does not enter in question in the case of mobile types. Cf. the interesting contribution of Jean-Pierre Drège on the Sino-Tangut printed books where, among others, the author clearly explains the elements that may help to ponderate the analysis of texts printed with wood-blocks or mobile types. Drège lists the criteria that permit to distinguish the two sort of printing: “Les différences des caractères et leur épaisseur irrégulière, leur alignement parfois défaillant, un espacement parfois inégal, ainsi que les différences d’encrage que l’on peut observer notamment en examinant le revers des feuilles imprimées. La différence d’encrage résulte d’une hauteur inégale des caractères mobiles qui entraîne une absence relative d’encre aux endroits les plus bas. le décalage des caractères mobiles dont certains peuvent être plus ou moins obliques provient évidemment d’un calage insuffisant de la composition typographique ou de la perte d’une des petites cales utilisées pour bloquer les types. (...) Il est en effet difficile d’établir des critères clairs de différenciation des imprimés en caractères mobiles de bois et de terre cuite dont on ne connaît aucun spécimen pour les périodes anciennes. Il n’y a certes pas lieu de contester que la plupart des exemplaires considérés comme des imprimés typographiques le soient réellement. Encore peut-on appeler à la prudence quant à certains critères utilisés. En effet l’observation du revers de certains imprimés xylographiques montre, par exemple, que l’encrage n’est pas toujours bien réparti sur la planche, ou du moins que l’impression peut être inégale. Cela tient à plusieurs raisons, telles que l’usure de la planche ou encore la manière plus ou moins régulière de passer le froton,” see Bussotti & Drège (2015). On the history of movable types, their fabrication and use in China, see Comentale 1986, 41–55, and p. 54 where Jacques Gernet’s response precisely defines the distinction between printing in China and in the Western world, cf. *supra* p. 159–160 and n. 17.

18 Moriyasu 1982, 1–8.

dhiste à Cha-tscheou et qui se trouverait apparemment en relation, d'une part, avec le travail manuel difficile et fatigant échoué au religieux Al Qaya et, d'autre part avec la fabrication d'objets poursuivie par le ou les maîtres bouddhistes, en même temps qu'avec leur étude des oeuvres sacrées bouddhiques. Cette activité dite *yonar*, préoccupation toute particulière de l'auteur de la lettre, qui semble correspondre à un travail de sculpture, de taille, ou de gravure en relief (...) m'a évidemment fait penser au millier de petits blocs de bois portant en relief des caractères ouïghours taillés ou sculptés, qui furent trouvés par Paul Palliot en 1908 dans la grotte 181 du groupe septentrionale de Touen-houang, aménagée à l'époque mongole, d'où proviendrait justement notre cahier ouïgour. . . .

5 Xylography and Its Technique

Xiong Wenbin in a public lecture in Paris, and while presenting the work of his colleague Sherab Sangpo, mentioned the interesting case of the Buddhist Tibetan texts printed by members of the imperial family of the Yuan dynasty.¹⁹ A series of Tibetan Buddhist texts were indeed impressed on xylographs and illustrated, on behalf of the imperial ladies, between 1284 and 1351. Some of these copies, originally printed at the capital Dadu/Khanbalik, are today kept in the monastery of Drepung. They show, once again, the preeminent role of royal ladies in religious matters, mediating, as it were, the transactions between religious and political parties.²⁰ They also show the close relationship linking the imperial ladies with the imperial preceptors.²¹ Finally, the colophon of the last group of texts indicates other interesting data on the artisans, as it says that the text in question had been 'put down in letters' (*yig ger bkod*) by a Tibetan copyist (*bod kyi yi ge pa*) and carved by Chinese artisans (*rgya nag bzo bo'i tshogs kyis du brkos*).²²

19 Cf. Sangpo 2009; Sangpo 2013.

20 See Scherrer-Schaub 2014, 117–165.

21 Following Xiong Wenbin the texts that were ordered to be printed cover a large field, *na*, logic (an indigenous manual), scholastic (Abhidharma), philosophy (Mādhyamika and Yogācāra), monastic discipline, medicine, *mahāyānasūtra*, and *tantra*. This interesting selection of texts, destined to be carved and impressed, appears as an exemplary small collection of the essential for the monastic educative program.

22 Cf. Scherrer-Schaub 2014, 145–146, 146, n. 72 citing the analogous case of the bell at Khra 'brug (Richardson 1985, 82–83), dedicated by the Jo mo rgyal mo btsan yum to her son *lha btsan po* Khri lde srong brtsan (c. 800–815), and casted by the *mkhan po* (*mkhyen po*), and *bhikṣu* of China (*rgya'i dge slong*), Rin chen. While the imperial noble ladies played an important role during the Yuan period, they received little attention from the part

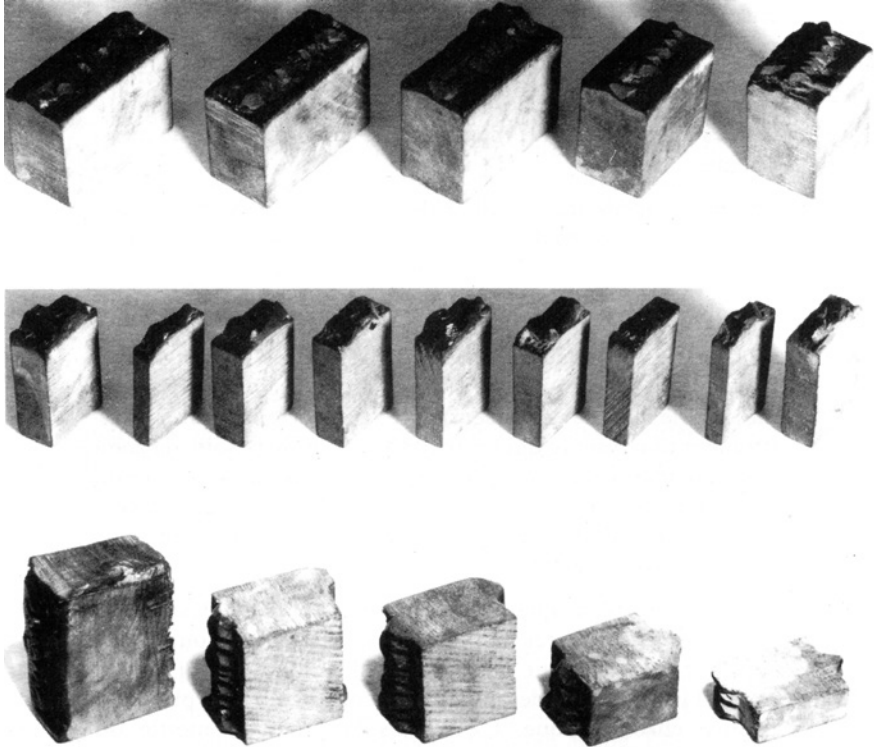


FIGURE 8.2 *Wooden-cubes, mobile ouighours types. Musée Guimet, Paris (from Francis Macouin) « A propos des caractères d'imprimerie ouïghours », in: J.-P. Drège, M. Ishigami-Iagobnitzer et M. Cohen (éds.), Le livre et l'imprimerie en Extrême-Orient et en Asie du Sud. Bordeaux, Société des bibliophiles de Guyenne, 1986: 153 « Blocs mobiles d'impression en ouïgour ».*

The first printed text of the collection²³ seems to be Sa skya Paṅḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's (1182–1251) *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter*, measuring 64 × 11 cm, with 6 lines per page, in 190 folios. It shows two illustrations on the first page and is kept in the monastery of Drepung. It had been written, engraved and printed at the Capital Dadu/Khanbalik in 1284 (a mere three years after the passing away of its author!), on behalf of *feu* dPon mo chen mo cha bu (?–1281) and Go go cin

of Tibetologists, quite. On imperial ladies during the Tibetan Empire, see Uebach 1997, 53–74.

23 Schaeffer 2009, 9: “The earliest Tibetan-language wood-block print currently known is a small prayer printed in Khara Khoto in 1153,” and n. 48.

(?–1300), wives of Qubilai Qan. Subsequently, on behalf of dPal mo 'bol gan the text was reprinted in 200 copies (see Sherab Sangpo in this volume).

6 *Printing ad usum modernorum?*

The changes of support in the art of communication have increasingly impacted our life in the past decades, and the process is still on-going. That earlier forms persist despite the fact that they are *instrumentally obsolete* is something that we may easily observe. For example fonts, such as 'courier', 'bodoni', or 'garamond' that we are here using *ad modum antiquum*, have not been carefully drawn with due consideration to the most common softwares. And yet, these fonts that were often used in typography and in typewriting continue to be used in text written with a computer. The reason may well be inertia, given that technique and technology, and contrary to economics (as it seems . . .), does not need 'destruction for construction.'

We may follow this idea in the exemplary case of the use of string-holes, inherited from the Indian palm-leaf MSS's practice, and observable in Central Asia, Dunhuang (Fig. 8.3) and Tibet, at an early date. In some cases, the string-holes may be reduced to one, usually placed in the middle of the left side of the folio, for instance in the MSS from Khotan. A beautiful example of the use of the string-hole *ad modum antiquum* may be seen in a Sanskrit folio on paper, most likely from the Northern route of the Taklaman desert though of uncertain origin (Turfan? Dunhuang?), and dated approximately between the 9th c. and the 12th c. or more likely to the 13–14th c., that is to the Yuan period (Fig. 8.4). It is kept at the Musée Guimet in Paris and shows the motif of an ornamented lotus where, traditionally, the string-hole was placed. The folio belongs to a *Madhyamāgama*, it is printed on xylograph and bears on the verso side the title in Chinese (*Zhang a han*), and the folio number '89'. It contains a passage from the episode of the conversion of Upāli.²⁴

24 A.A.V.V. 1995, 69–70, n. 34, 69b: "[M]algré un changement de matière, passage de la palme au papier, et de technique, l'imprimé remplaçant le manuscrit, on constate la perpétuation de la forme des livres indiens qui transmettaient les textes sacrés. Ce feuillet témoigne aussi de la persistance de la culture d'origine indienne et de la connaissance par certains du sanscrit puisque tout un ensemble de sūtra a été imprimé, ce qui laisse supposer la production d'un nombre d'exemplaires non négligeable. En outre, l'impression d'un autre recueil de sūtra, dits *Samyukta-āgama*, est connue par des fragments découverts à Iduksari près de Turfan et aujourd'hui conservés à Berlin." See Nakatani 1986, 306: "Dans l'état actuel, ce fragment, qui rappelle les feuillets de palmier de format oblong, mesure 10,5 cm de longueur et environ 28 de largeur. [...] Le papier est jaunâtre, assez

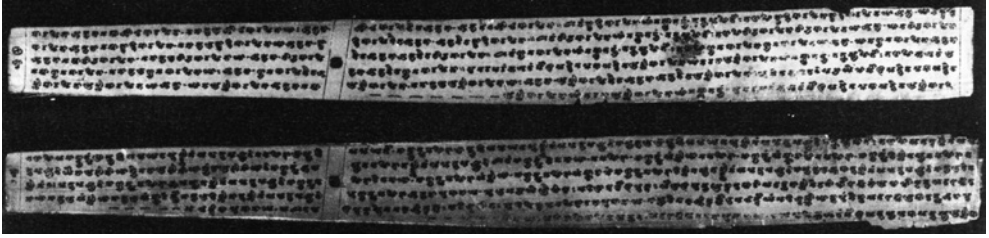


FIGURE 8.3 *Incomplete MS of the Śatasāhasrikā in Sanskrit, from Dunhuang (8th c.) on palm leaves, 5 lines, one string-hole to the left side (IO.LR Ch 0079a), from W. Zwalf Buddhism Art and Faith. London, British Museum and British Library, 1985; n° 64.*

As far as the Tibetan MSS are concerned, the practice of displaying string-holes may have been introduced, since the beginning and with rare exceptions, *ad modum antiquum*. During the period from *ca.* mid-13th century to the beginning of the 15th c. (Type II of MSS), these string-holes tend to disappear. Later on, that is beginning from the first part of the 15th c. (Type III of MSS), one may observe the increasing practice of elaborate imitations of the string-holes, used as ornamentation (if not apotropaically!) and, at times, very sophisticated.²⁵

An interesting case is represented by a folio of a xylographic print of *'Grel ba don gsal ba* from Shel dkar to which Hildegard Diemberger kindly drew our attention (Fig. 8.5).²⁶ Dated to 1407, the folio displays the paleographic features typical of Type II²⁷ and present two string holes. As discussed elsewhere in this volume, the xylographic technique intrinsically coexisted with handwriting, since the text is first copied on a thin leaf of paper, and subsequently glued on its reverse side upon the wooden-block.²⁸ The presence of the string-holes is

foncé. L'épaisseur ou l'état superficiel du papier ne peut plus être connu, du fait que le fragment a été inséré entre deux couches de tissu fibreux, pour en permettre la conservation." Cf. Hartmann and Wille 2014, 213–222, 219.

25 See Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002, 184–215, 207–208.

26 See Diemberger 2012.

27 Cf. Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002, 207.

28 See the description of Eimer 2007, 38–39, and 39, n. 23: "The Chinese printers found a peculiar solution to the problem of how to bring the mirror-like letters onto the prepared wooden block: the scribe wrote the text in calligraphy with birch bark soot or lampblack ink on a sheet of [thin] paper, using only one side. The written text – the master copy, as it were – was glued face down on the prepared wooden planks and kept moistened for some time. Thus the ink pigment seeped into the pores of the wood and the block received the mirror image of the text written on paper. Before the carver set to work, the remnant of the soaked master copy were wiped off from the block while the ink remained in the

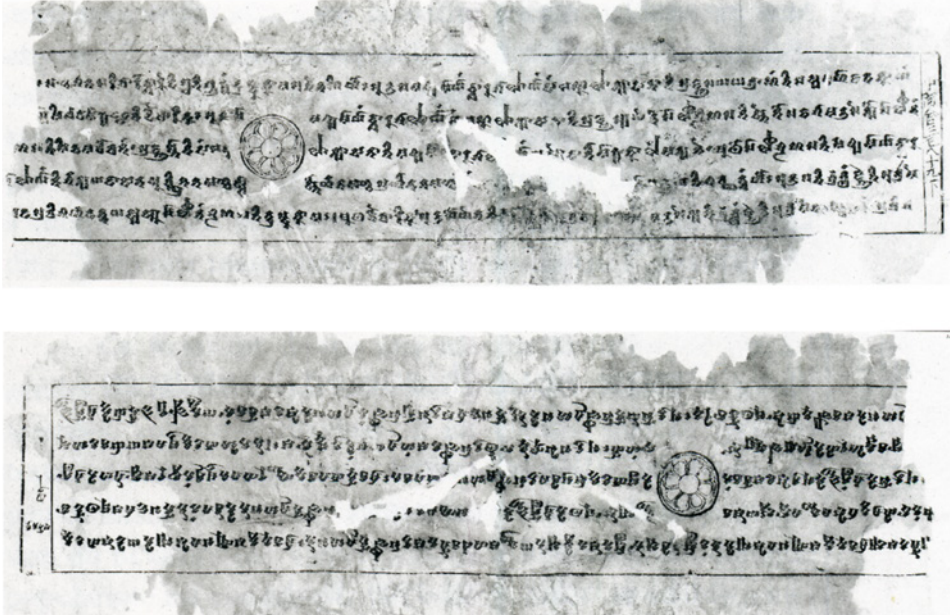


FIGURE 8.4 *Fragment of the Madhyamāgama, in Sanskrit, printed on xylographs (c. 13–14th c. from Turfan? Dunhuang?) and showing the motif of an ornamented lotus there where, traditionally, the string-hole is placed, from Sérinde, Terre de Bouddha. Dix siècles d’art sur la Route de la Soie. Paris, Éditions de la Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1995: 69–70, n° 34.*

thus quite normal, all the more since, as seen already with manuscripts, the holes were no more *instrumentals*. They are thus seen here as an aesthetic element enhancing the beauty of the text, in agreement with the ancient rules given in Indian texts, at an early date.²⁹ Kurtis Schaeffer translates the verses in praise of ‘books as both material and symbolic objects’ that ‘Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280) wrote in Sakya and where he repeatedly comments on the aesthetic of the work. Closer to our topic is the quotation from sTag tshang Lo tsa ba Shes rab rin chen (1405–1477) where the Lo tsa ba gives details on the page layout, mentioning the string-holes: “In Indian books there is

pores. Thus the mirror-image letters were still visible when the carver cut off the surplus wood.” Cf. Schaeffer 2009, 11 and n. 60.

29 It should be stressed however that aesthetic criteria may coexist with functionality. See e. g. the case of the MS of the *Vessantarajātaka* in Pāli and ‘Cambodian’ script on palm-leaves, kept at the British Library (OMPb Or. 1245A), and displaying elaborate and beautiful ornamental string-holes showing traces of their actual use, see Zwalf 1985, n. 52.

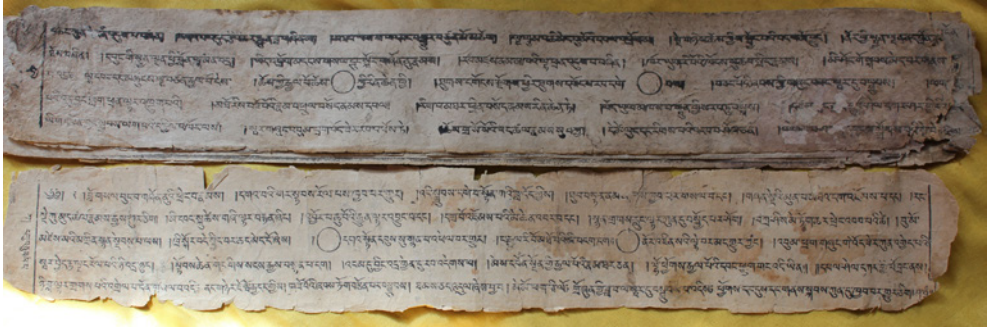


FIGURE 8.5 *Fragment of the 'Grel ba don gsal ba, in Tibetan, printed on xylograph, dated 1407, from Shel dkar, showing two string-holes and the traditional ms layout. See Hildegard Diemberger 2012; Diemberger (in press).*

either one hole or two. [...] In the first case [place the hole] at the line between the second and third fifths of five parts. In the second case, divide [the page] in thirds and place the hole there. A round or square hole [should be] neither too big nor too small, but attractive.”³⁰

7 By Way of a Conclusion

While printing with mobile types renders the practice of amanuenses obsolete within a relatively short period of time, the xylographic print, whose technique, as seen, requires the work of copyists and calligraphers, contributes to perpetuate the rules and principles of handwriting but, at the same time, it also perpetuates paleographic variations and orthographic mannerisms, if not mistakes. This also might have been one of the reasons that induced Si tu Pañ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774) to assemble a school of amanuenses, especially trained in view of the printing of the sDe dge's Tibetan Canon, following the rules and principles faithfully transmitted from the times of the redactors of the *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, to 'Phags pa or Bu ston Rin chen grub. The innovation that resulted from this gigantic enterprise was the founda-

30 *Rten gsum bzhengs tshul dpal 'byor rgya mtsho, Stag tshang lo tsa' a ba shes rab rin chen gyi gsung skor*, Kathmandu. Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, n. d.: 1, 449–540, 509.7–511.2, see Kurtis Schäffer 2009, 9 and n. 47; on the tradition of aesthetic in editorial practice, see pp. 29–31.

tion of the printing house of sDe dge in 1729, and the rivalry that arose between the king of sDe dge and Pho lha nas (1689–1747) who was presiding over the xylographic print of the *bKa' gyur* of sNar thang (1730–1732). In this quintessentially virile competition (from which non-virile ones are not excluded), Pho lha nas invented a stratagem to prevent the return of Si tu Paṅ chen to sDe dge, but the Great scholar, impassible as a scholar should be, renouncing the sight of the precious Sanskrit manuscripts he was offered, spoiled Pho lha nas's ruse, and the sDe dge Canon appeared in 1729.³¹

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31 See Chaix 2010, 93, n. 29: "Cette rivalité entre Pho lha nas et le souverain de sDe dge se poursuit lors de la réalisation de l'édition du *bsTan gyur*. Si tu paṅ chen mentionne dans son autobiographie (p. 164), pour 1735, une tentative de Pho lha nas et de mDo mkhar zhabs drung pour le faire rester au Tibet central en lui offrant notamment des textes sanskrits rares."

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The Uses of Early Tibetan Printing: Evidence from the Turfan Oasis

Sam van Schaik

Little is known about the origin and early development of printing in the Tibetan script, but archaeological evidence points to the region to the north of Tibet, around the Tarim basin and the Gobi desert. This area, nowadays often called *Chinese Central Asia* or *Eastern Central Asia* was the site of the early trade routes popularly known as the Silk Road, a multicultural and multilingual region in which Tibetan culture participated from the 7th century onwards. Here I will look at one of the major Silk Road archaeological sites, the Turfan oasis, and what we can learn about the early development of Tibetan printing from the artefacts found there. I will argue that the variety of printed and stamped material discovered in Turfan show alert us to the fact that from the beginning Tibetan printing served a variety of social and ritual functions, wider than the production and circulation of books.

Woodblock printing was already being practised in China by the mid-seventh century, when Xuanzang organized the printing of a million copies of the figure and *dhāraṇī* of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Material evidence from the same period was found at Turfan in 1974: a print of a Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* which has been dated to between 650 and 670. Also discovered in Turfan by the Otani expedition was a scroll containing part of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikā sūtra* dating from the end of the seventh century.¹ The earliest dated and complete printed book is of course the *Vajracchedikā sūtra* (Or.8210/P.2) dated to 868, taken by Aurel Stein from the library cave at Dunhuang, which has an ornately carved image the Buddha teaching reproduced on the first panel.

When we turn to printed material in Tibetan, the earliest dates are much later than these. A single sheet found in the Dunhuang collections is a print or stamp in the Tibetan script, used to transcribe a *dhāraṇī* text from Sanskrit,

1 A good summary of the earliest dated printed books discovered in East Asia can be found in Pan 1997, unfortunately in the context of a polemical debate about whether printing originated in China or Korea. See also Drege 1984 and Konicki 2012.

via Chinese.² Apart from this single case, probably dating from the tenth century, the earliest known printed books and fragments are those found at the site of Kharakhoto, which flourished under the Tangut kingdom. We know from Tibetan historical sources that Tibetans were influential at the Tangut court from the middle of the twelfth century until the conquest of the Tanguts by Genghis Khan's Mongol army in 1223. The only printed booklet from Kharakhoto that has been studied in any detail is XT 67 from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St Petersburg. It contains colophon information dating it to the late twelfth century.³

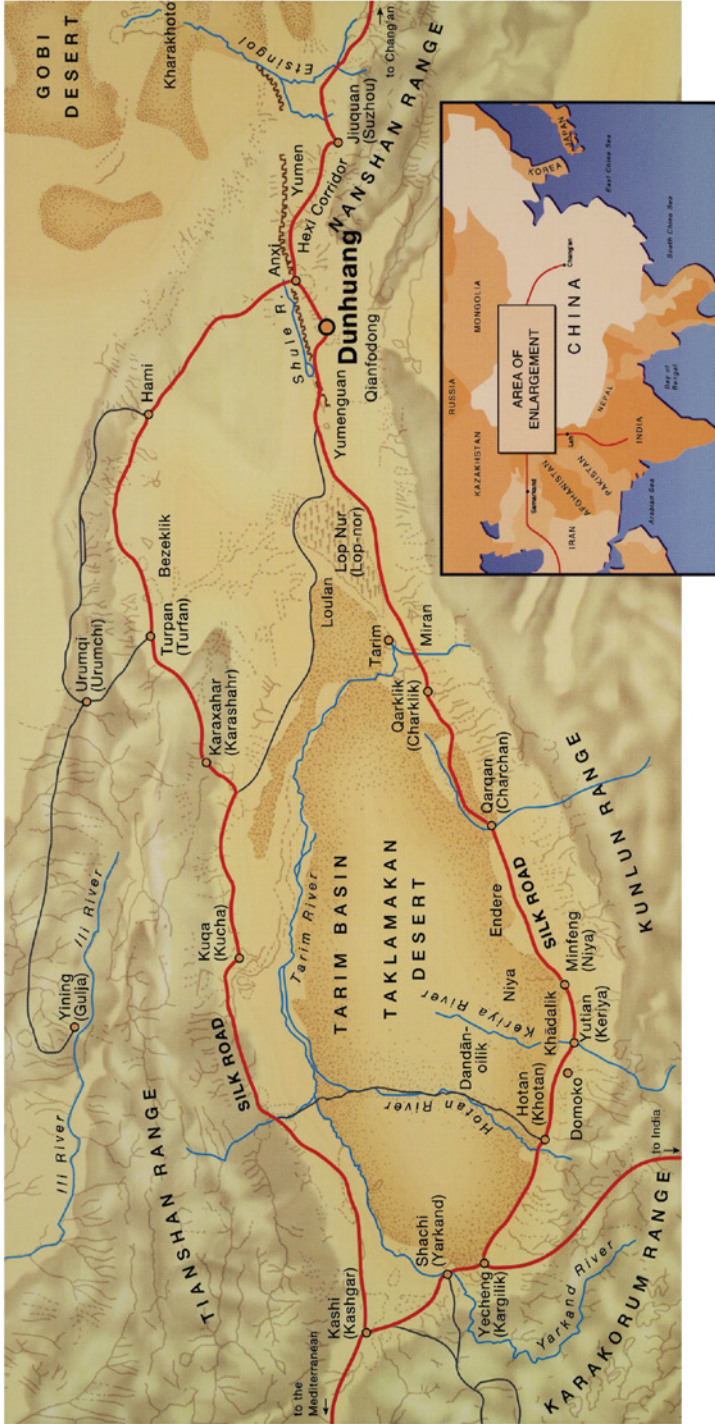
Thus, based on the present state of our knowledge, it seems that printing in the Tibetan script began in Eastern Central Asia among the Tanguts, before being adopted by the Mongol empire. The activities of printing in Tibetan among the Mongols moved to the capital of the Yuan dynasty, Dadu, near Beijing, often sponsored by queens at the Mongol court. Printed books from the Mongol period were known in Tibet as *Hor par ma*, 'Mongolian prints' and share certain features, including Chinese page numbers, which were probably added for the convenience of the Chinese printers. Several of these Mongolian prints have been identified in the collections of Tibetan monastic libraries (Sangpo 2013). According to Tibetan literary sources, printing continued in Eastern Central Asia: a commentary on the *Hevajra tantra* was printed in Gansu province in 1273, and there are references to the printing of books in eastern Tibet as early as the beginning of the 13th century, though there is currently no extant physical evidence of this activity.⁴

In this paper I will be looking at evidence of printing in Eastern Central Asia from the Mongol period (and perhaps a little earlier) found in the Turfan oasis. As we will see, this material is different from the *Hor par ma* found in Chinese and Tibetan collections, in that we have no complete books, only isolated pages, scraps, and small printed or stamped slips of paper. Yet this may not be a disadvantage. While manuscript and printed material recovered from archaeological sites like those of the Turfan oasis are generally in far worse condition than those kept in libraries, and only rarely complete, they result

2 This manuscript, Pelliot tibétain 4216, was brought to my attention by Matthew Kapstein (November 2015). There seems to have been some attempt to partly Sanskritize the Tibetan letters in this print: the *-i* vowel often extends all the way behind the letter form, in imitation of the long *-ī* vowel in Sanskrit as written in the Siddhamatṛka style.

3 See Stoddard 2010 and Shen 2010. It would be wrong to assume that all of the archaeological finds at Kharakhoto predate this conquest; indeed, some of the manuscripts contain texts that seem to have been translated in the Mongol period, and a *terminus ad quem* of the late fourteenth century is now accepted (Samosyuk 1999: 45)

4 van der Kuijp 2010, 453–455.



MAP 9.1 Map showing the location of the Turfan basin.

from, and represent, a greater variety of social practices than a library collection does.⁵ My aim in this paper then, is to introduce the Tibetan printed material from the Turfan oasis, and to take advantage of the miscellaneous nature of this material to say something about the social role of printed matter in the early stages of Tibetan print culture.

1 The Turfan Oasis

This brings us to the Turfan oasis. The oasis is a depression to the northeast of the Taklamakan desert, its deepest point being 154 meters below sea level. The main archaeological sites of Turfan are the cave temple sites of Bezeklik and Shorchuk, the cities of Kocho and Yarkhoto, and the grave site of Astana. Before the eighth century, the oasis was ruled by a succession of local dynasties, and intermittently fell under the sway of Chinese kingdoms, particularly during the Han and early Tang dynasties. In the middle of the eighth century Turfan was conquered by the Tibetan army, and was ruled by the Tibetan empire until it came under the control of Uighur Turks in the middle of the ninth century.

The Uighur kingdom in Turfan was formed from the refugees of the collapsed Uighur empire, who styled themselves Idikut, and are known to historians as the West Uighur Kingdom. The centre of their kingdom was the city of Kocho, which they called Idikut-schari, and their influence extended beyond Turfan to other sites of northern Taklamakan, including Kucha. The West Uighurs became vassals of the Khara-Khitan Khanate in the 12th century, and submitted to Genghis Khan in 1209. They became part of Kubilai Khan's empire, but were ruled by the Chagatai Khanate from 1275–1318. Kocho is thought to have been finally abandoned in the late 14th century.⁶

The exploration and excavation of the sites of the Turfan oasis was mainly carried out by German scholars from the Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin, who had been alerted to the presence of ancient ruins in the area by travellers including the German botanist Johann Albert Regel. In the years between 1902 and 1914, four expeditions, led by Albert Grünwedel or Albert von le Coq excavated sites to the north of the Taklamakan desert; the importance of the Turfan sites led to these expeditions being known as the 'Turfan expeditions' and the collections of manuscripts, printed books and artefacts resulting from them as the 'Turfan collections'. The manuscript and print collections are now the

5 This point has been made regarding European printing by Peter Stallybrass (2007, 322): "The deluxe volumes, surviving in substantial numbers, dominate accounts of the history of printing, while the majority of broadsides, almanacs, pamphlets, and schoolbooks have disappeared completely."

6 On the Uighur kingdoms of Silk Route, see Moriyasu 2000 and Russell-Smith 2005.

responsibility of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. The Turfan collections contain an astonishing linguistic range, including Buddhist Sanskrit and Prakrit; languages from the Silk Route cultures such as Tocharian A and B, Khotanese, Tumshuqese, Tangut and Mongolian; languages from further west including Middle Persian, Sogdian, Bactrian, Syriac, Greek and Hebrew; Chinese and Tibetan.

The Tibetan manuscripts and prints from Turfan were catalogued by Manfred Taube, and published in 1980 in his *Die Tibetica der Berliner Turfansammlung* which contains details of 114 items, some comprised of several fragments. This catalogue and colour images of the collections are now available on the website of the International Dunhuang Project (idp.bl.uk). The manuscripts and prints were mainly found in the sites of Qocho, Yarkhoto and Bezeklik, though the marking was not done consistently, and in many cases it is difficult to know exactly where an item was found. Most of the manuscripts, and all of the printed material is Buddhist; among the manuscripts there are also a few letters. Little work has been done on the Tibetan material from Turfan since Taube's catalogue; therefore before looking at the printed material, I will briefly review the whole Tibetan collection.

The 114 entries in Taube's catalogue comprise 111 for handwritten items and only 13 for printed or stamped items, and though a single entry sometimes covers more than one physical object, this gives an idea of the proportion of manuscripts to printed matter in the collection. All of the material is very fragmentary, with only portions of single pages surviving of what were once substantial books. Letters are written on single folded sheets, as we see in Dunhuang and later in Tibet, while Buddhist texts are written on pothi-style pages, and in a few cases in concertina or codex format books.

Because the area was populated for such a long period, it is difficult to assign dates to the Turfan material as a whole. The Uighur manuscripts from Turfan are generally dated from the 9th to 14th centuries, with a distinction between those from the period of the West Uighur Kingdom (9th to 12th centuries) and those from the period of Mongol rule (13th to 14th centuries). It is thought that the Uighur printed material probably dates from the Mongol period.⁷ Some of the Tibetan material may date from earlier than this, as the Tibetans were in Qocho before the Uighurs, but the end-date of the late 14th century is probably the same, as there is no evidence of activity in Qocho and most other sites after that point. We may be able to use palaeography to gain a better idea of the dates of the Tibetan manuscripts, and by extension of the use of Tibetan in the region in general. Below I offer a brief typology of the Turfan Tibetan manuscripts, with suggested dates.

⁷ Personal communication, September 2013, from Simone-Christiane Raschmann.

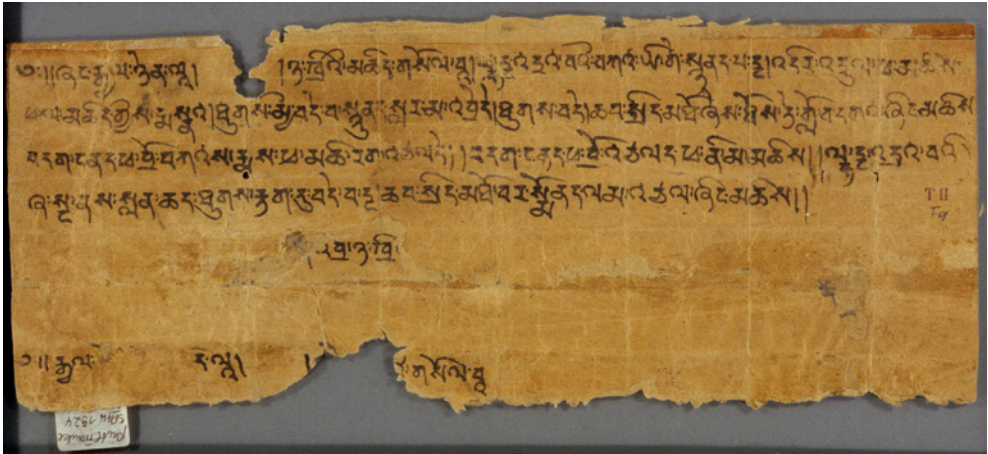


FIGURE 9.1 A Tibetan letter (TibHT 2).

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2 Tibetan Manuscripts from Turfan

2.1 *Letters from the 9th Century*

It is only among the non-Buddhist manuscripts that we find writing styles comparable with manuscripts written elsewhere in Eastern Central Asia during the Tibetan imperial period. Where the manuscripts are complete enough to tell, these are letters. Several seem to be copies rather than originals, as they have been written on the blank verso of a portion of a scroll containing a Chinese sūtra. In palaeographical terms, some fall into the general categories that I have elsewhere called the ‘square’ and ‘official’ styles of Tibetan writing during the imperial period.⁸ Others are similar to the rough military handwriting seen in the documents found in the imperial Tibetan forts of Miran and Mazar Tagh.⁹ Some of the letters also make use of archaic orthography including the subfixed *a rten* and the *da drag*, and use the double or mid-line *tsheg*.

8 See van Schaik 2013. TibHT 2 is in the square style. TibHT 1, 4, 7 and 9 may be classified with documents from Dunhuang in the official style. One letter (TibHT 3) has palaeographic features associated with the post-imperial period, including longer descenders.

9 The Miran and Mazar Tagh documents are classified under the sequence Or.15000/ and can be viewed on the IDP website. See also Takeuchi 1997–8. TibHT 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 are comparable to the Miran and Mazar Tagh documents.



FIGURE 9.2 *Fragment of a scroll (TibHT 31).*

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Some of these letters addressed to people with titles that suggest the Tibetan empire, such as Zhang rgyal nyen la' (TibHT 2) and Nang rje po stag gzigs (TibHT 4). However, some of these letters (TibHT 2, 3 and 4) also contain a formalized greeting that includes an enquiry about whether the addressed person is ill (*snyun*), which Tsuguhito Takeuchi has suggested is characteristic of letters written after the Tibetan imperial period. As Takeuchi has pointed out, the Tibetan language and script continued to be used as a lingua franca in Central Asia after the collapse of the Tibetan empire.¹⁰ Due to this and the lack of clear references in the letters to imperial institutions, we cannot confidently assign these documents to the Tibetan imperial era, despite their palaeographical features being suggestive of that period. Therefore they should be dated between the middle and the end of the 9th century.

¹⁰ Takeuchi 1990 and 2004.

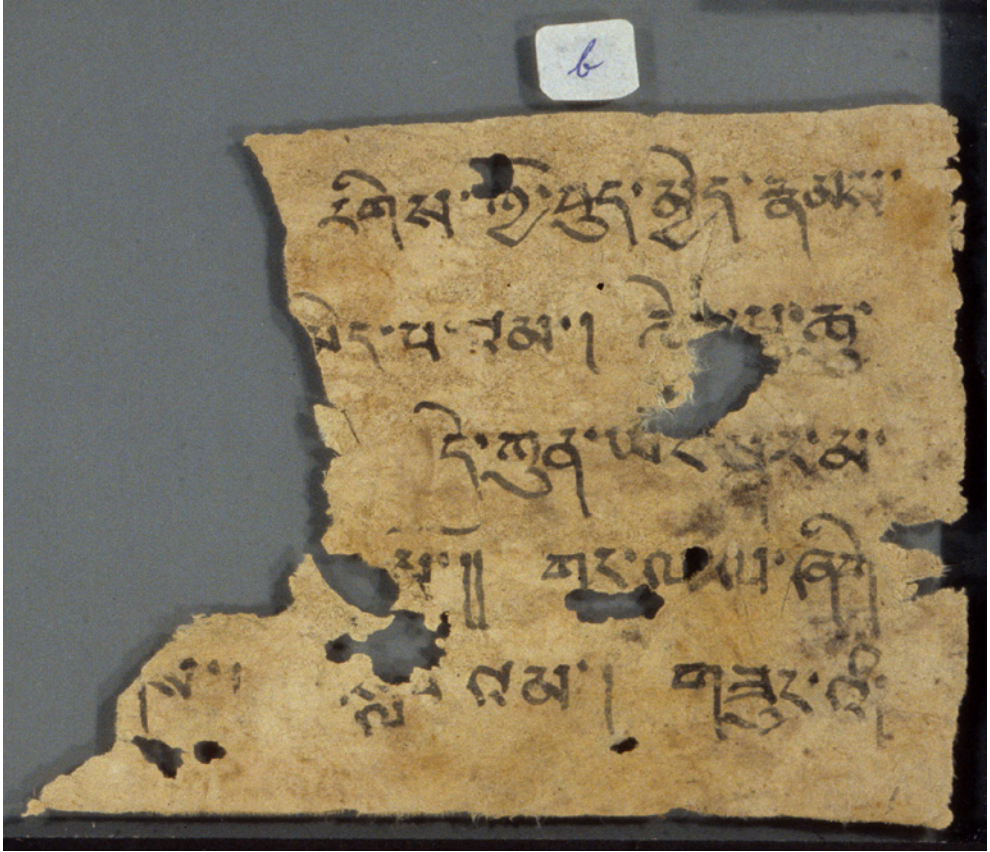


FIGURE 9.3 *A Buddhist manuscript (TibHT 63).*

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2.2 *Manuscripts from the 9th and 10th Centuries*

The Turfan collections include four fragments of divination texts (TibHT 31–34), with patterns of circles indicating that these are readings for dice divination. The results are spoken by various indigenous Tibetan deities. The writing is in a rough version of the square style, generally seen in documents from, or associated with the Tibetan imperial period. A similar text is found in the Dunhuang scroll IOL Tib J 740, where it is paired with a legal text; Brandon Dotson (2007) has suggested that the divination text (and others like it) were used to settle legal disputes, which would explain why this text would be circulated to far flung regions of the Tibetan empire. Several of the Buddhist manuscripts found in Turfan are also visually similar to the Tibetan

Dunhuang manuscripts. Some of the more complete pages (TibHT 88, 89) are from a copy of the *Mahābālā sūtra* (D.757). The somewhat rounded headed (*dbu can*) letters with ‘blobby’ heads are characteristic of a group of 10th century Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang (e.g. 10L Tib J 492).

2.3 *Manuscripts from the 11th to 14th Centuries*

It is difficult to assign a more specific date than this to the remainder of the manuscripts. Several manuscript fragments containing Buddhist texts are written in a headed style that appears to be a further evolution of the 10th century Buddhist manuscripts. These are written making full use of a flat-nibbed pen to create shaded and angular letter forms (e.g. TibHT 63, 75–79) that are not found in the Dunhuang manuscripts. They do continue to use old orthography, including the tick on the *’a chung* and the subfixed *ya* on *ma*. They are probably from the 11th or 12th centuries. Later styles are also seen in the Buddhist manuscripts written in headless (*dbu med*) styles. For example, TibHT 36 and 104 (both on tantric empowerment, possibly being two pages from a single original manuscript) are written in a style seen in manuscripts from the 12th and 13th centuries, and have scribal contractions and Arabic numerals, not seen in earlier manuscripts. Although TibHT 71 contains a Buddhist text (a tantric text beginning with a homage to *Vīravajra*), it has the striking long descenders seen in official documents from the period of Mongol rule over Tibet, and probably dates to the late 13th or 14th century.

3 Tibetan Printed and Stamped Material from Turfan

The Tibetan manuscript material from Turfan, despite what is a relatively small group, compared with the manuscript finds from Dunhuang and Kharakhoto, covers a range of dates from the 9th century through to the 14th. This is roughly contemporaneous with the period of Uighur influence that followed Tibetan imperial rule over the area, though some of the Tibetan letters perhaps date from the imperial period. In theory, the Tibetan printed material could come from the same long period as the manuscripts, but in fact it is unlikely to date from much before the 12th century. A clue to the earliest appearance of Tibetan printed material is found in the ruined city of Kharakhoto, part of the Tangut kingdom in the 11th to 13th centuries. One of the printed books from Kharakhoto in codex form (XT 67), has a colophon suggesting that the book was produced in the Tangut kingdom in the latter part of the 12th century.¹¹ Given the close links between the Tangut kingdom and the West Uighur kingdom of

¹¹ See Shi 2005 and Stoddard 2010, 365–366.

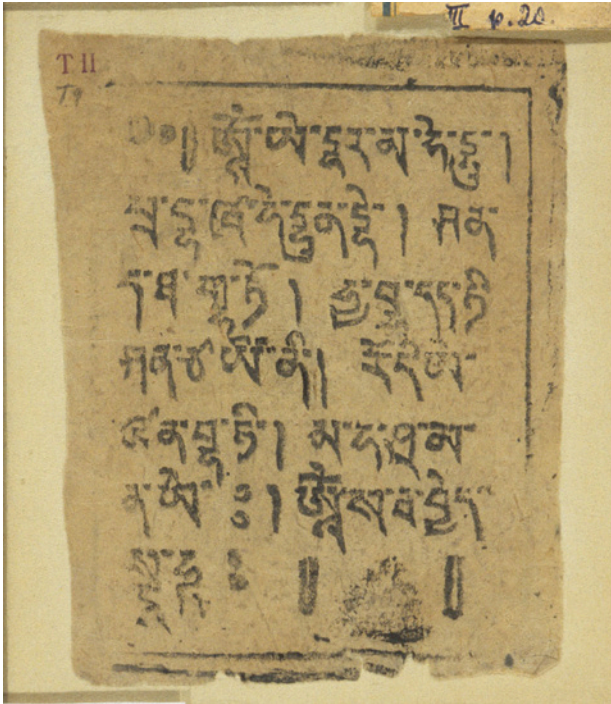


FIGURE 9.4 *A prayer sheet (TibHT 49).*

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Turfan, it would not be unlikely that some of the Turfan printed and stamped material also goes back as far as the 12th century.

3.1 *Paper Sheets with the ye dharma Formula*

The Berlin collections contain eleven sheets of roughly 8 × 10 cm, stamped with the Sanskrit *ye dharma* formulae in Tibetan transliteration, which were found in Kocho and the Toyuk caves, TibHT 49, 50, 51(a)–(i). The Tibetan letters in these sheets are similar to those in the Kharakhoto manuscript XT 67. The shape of the *wa* is unusual, neither that of the 9th/10th century manuscripts, nor the established later form. At the bottom left of the stamp there is a pictorial element that is not clear in any of the extant copies; it might be a depiction of the three jewels, or a lotus flower. Other explorers in Turfan gathered more of these sheets stamped with the *ye dharma* formula. Aurel Stein found two, and further 54 sheets were collected by the Otani expeditions in Turfan and



FIGURE 9.5 *Mantra slips (TibHT 55).*

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are now held in the Ryūkoku University. Through Carbon-14 dating, one of the Otani sheets has been dated between 880 and 1140.¹²

The size of the *ye dharma* sheets, and the unevenness of the inking make it likely that these were created by stamping rather than printing, i.e. the wooden block was pressed down on the sheet, rather than the sheet being laid across

12 Takeuchi 1990, 210. The two Stein items are Or.15000/546 & Or.8212/1387, and have the site mark H.B., denoting the site Kichik-Hasser, which is in Turfan.

the block. Stamped prayers in Sanskrit are found among the Dunhuang manuscripts; the sheet IOL San 1446 contains five stamped prayers or *dhāraṇīs* and three images of deities. It is possible that Tibetan stamped paper like the Turfan *ye dharma* sheets developed from an existing tradition of stamping Sanskrit mantras, and that these predate the development of printing in the Tibetan language.

3.2 *Paper Slips Stamped with Mantras*

The Turfan collections contain another form of stamped paper, even smaller than the *ye dharma* prayer sheets: ten paper slips around 3 cm high and 7–10 cm long, collected under the two pressmarks TibHT 55 and 56. The mantras include *ōṃ ā hūm*, *ōṃ hūm svāhā* and *ōṃ sarvavid svāhā* (the latter being the mantra of Sarvavid Vairocana, the central deity of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*). The slips are housed alongside pieces of multicoloured string, though the relationship between slips and string is unclear. It is likely that the slips were originally intended to be inserted inside statues; bundles of them may have been tied together with string for this purpose. Handwritten mantra slips were also found in Turfan (TibHT 58); these probably served the same purpose as the stamped slips, which would be an example of the simultaneous use of two technologies to serve the same function. The *ye dharma* sheets discussed above may have had a similar consecrational function, or have been used as votive offerings.

3.3 *Paper Sheet with Image of Tārā and the Phyag 'tshal nyer gcig in Three Languages*

The two fragments, TibHT 107(a) and (b) come from a single original sheet, with the image of a deity in the top portion, and a text below in three languages: Sanskrit, Tibetan and Uighur/Mongolian. The text on these fragments can be identified as the *Phyag 'tshal nyer gcig*, 'Praise to the 21 Tārās' and the image of the deity is almost certainly one of the 21 forms of Tārā. Given that each verse of this prayer applies to one of the 21 forms, this sheet may have been one of a set. The Sanskrit is written in the ornate form known in Tibet as *lan tsha*, which probably derives from an 11th–12th century Nepalese formal style.¹³ The Tibetan letters are better formed than in the stamps discussed above. Below the Tibetan is a fragment of Uighur script, too little to determine whether the text is in Uighur or Mongolian.

This prayer sheet is a direct descendent of similar printed sheets in Chinese, dating from the 9th century onwards; see for example Or.8210/P.14. Other early printed (or perhaps stamped) sheets were found in Kharakhoto, with circular

13 On this script and its relation to the Tibetan script, see van Schaik 2011.

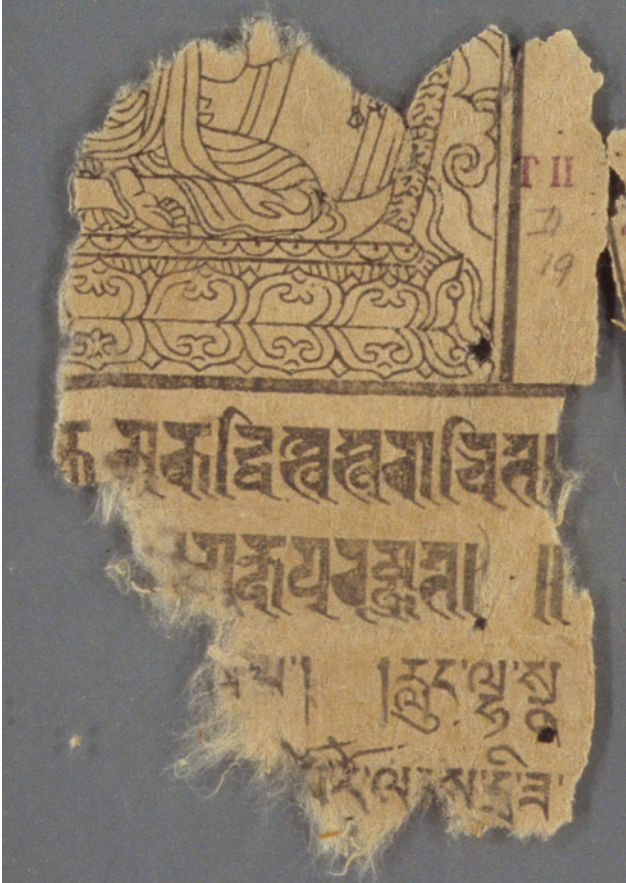


FIGURE 9.6 Sheet with image and prayer (TibHT 107).

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diagrams containing Tibetan prayers and *dhāraṇī*.¹⁴ In the other direction, these early printed sheets can be linked to the *rlung rta* (prayer flags) and other forms of printed combinations of images and prayers common in Tibetan religious practice through to the present day.

14 These are XT 16b and XT 23; both are reproduced and discussed in Piotrovsky 1993.



FIGURE 9.7 *Paper sheet (TibHT 53).*

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3.4 *Paper Sheet with Six-syllable Mantra and Illustrations*

TibHT 53 is a fragment of what must have been a much larger paper sheet; what remains is only a portion of the right side, with three panels (24×9.5 cm). The paper is, unlike most of the Tibetan Turfan material, dyed yellow, suggesting that it came from China proper. The largest panel contains the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara, *om maṇi padme huṃ*, in large, fine Tibetan letters, and smaller Chinese characters. To the left of this panel is a small, complete, figure of Avalokiteśvara and below that the head of a donor figure. The distinctive hat of this donor can be used to date the image. It is a close match to a figure found in Bezeklik cave 17, now kept at the Museum for Asiatic Art, Berlin (MIK III 4453). This figure is a female patron from the Mongol period (13th to 14th centuries); thus the prayer sheet probably also dates from this period. It may well have been made in the Yuan capital at Dadu, near present-day Beijing. The original sheet probably featured a larger central image of Avalokiteśvara, which may have been flanked by further donor figures. Given its large size, it could have been displayed in a temple or house.

3.5 *Two Tibetan Pothi Pages*

The Turfan collections contain two fragmentary blockprints. The first, TibHT 69, is the right side of a pothi style page containing the text of one of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* (either the version in 8,000 or 25,000 verses). The left margin contains Chinese page numbers (日上三). This feature suggests that

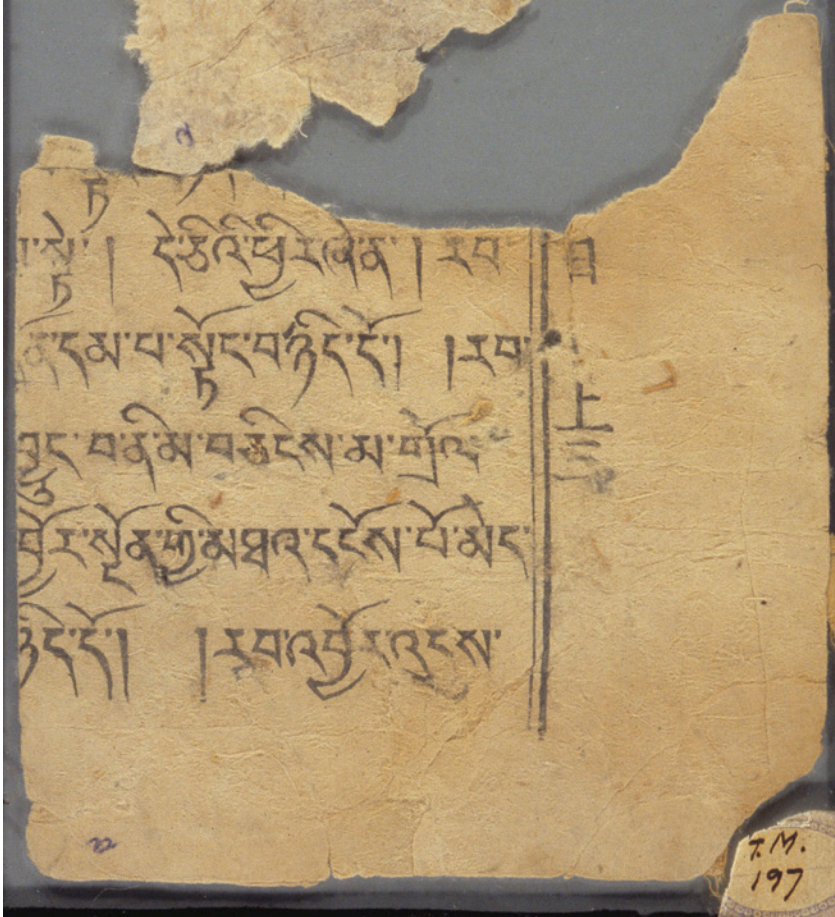


FIGURE 9.8 *Fragment of a printed page (TibHT 69).*

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this is a fragment of a book produced in the capital of the Yuan dynasty, often sponsored by queens at the Mongol court. In Tibetan literature these are known as *Hor pa ma*, 'Mongolian prints'.¹⁵ The Tibetan letters are finely formed, with long tapering descenders, and the margin has two lines, a fine inner and heavy outer line. Many similar printed pages were found by Aurel

15 On the *Hor pa ma*, see van der Kuijp 1993 and 2010, and Sangpo 2010.

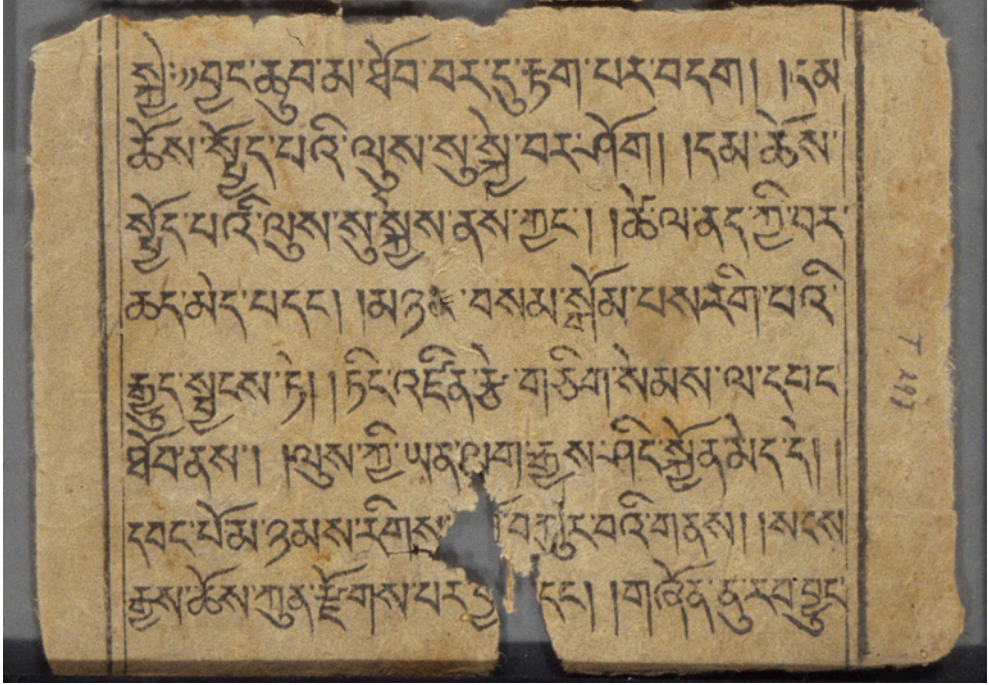


FIGURE 9.9 *Pages from a concertina (TibHT 102).*

© DEPOSITUM DER BERLIN-BRANDENBURGISCHEN AKADEMIE DER
WISSENSCHAFTEN IN DER STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN - PREUSSISCHER
KULTURBESITZ, ORIENTABTEILUNG.

Stein at the site of Estin Gol in the Gobi Desert.¹⁶ The Turfan fragment TibHT 69 has no printed Tibetan on verso, and this blank side has been used to write something in cursive Uighur script, a style which is only found from the 13th century onwards.¹⁷ The page was probably originally made from two sheets of paper, which have been separated.

The other fragment of a blockprinted page from Turfan, TibHT 119, has only the left margin, containing the Tibetan page numbers *ka so bzhi*. Thus it is not possible to know whether the original book contained Chinese page numbers in the right margin as well. I have not been able to identify the text. The Tibetan letters of less finely drawn than in TibHT 69, with much shorter descenders, but whether this is due to chronology or differing regional origin between the

16 These are now in the IOL Tib M sequence at the British Library; a catalogue by Tsuguhiro Takeuchi and Maho Iuchi is in progress.

17 See the palaeographic scheme in Moriyasu 2004.

two manuscripts is difficult to say at this stage. There is a chronological clue in the orthography of both manuscripts, which contain no archaic elements, including the *ya* subscribed to *ma*, which suggests a date towards the end of the Turfan chronology, 13th or 14th century.

3.6 *Two Pages of the Ārya-nāgārjuna-praṇidhāna*

These two pages under the single pressmark TibHT 102 are blank on the verso, and may have originally been pasted back to back. At 8 × 11 cm, they are not of the oblong pothi shape, nor do they seem to have been bound at one side. Thus the form of the original book was probably a concertina. The writing style is somewhere between the two pothi pages discussed above, with long descenders for some letters. The margins have the fine inner and heavy outer line seen in TibHT 69. The writing lacks old orthography, including the *ya* subscribed to *ma*. Therefore this fragment probably also dates to the Mongol period, 13th–14th centuries. Whether a small textual object like this was made by printing or stamping is difficult to say; both methods would have been feasible. The most obvious issue in the choice between stamping and printing is size. As the size of the wooden block increases, the physical action of stamping becomes more difficult, and less likely to produce an even coverage of ink.

4 Conclusions

As we have seen, the Tibetan manuscripts from the Turfan collection show the presence of Tibetan writing in the region as far back as the 9th century, in the form of letters received from elsewhere. Later, we have mainly Buddhist manuscripts, suggesting that this was the main function of the Tibetan language and script from the 10th century onwards. The latest manuscripts are written in styles associated with the Yuan period, so the chronology of the Tibetan manuscripts probably extends through to the middle of the 14th century. This provides a chronological framework for the printed fragments from Turfan.

The majority of this material is not printed in the strict sense of that term, but made with stamps: slips stamped with mantras and small sheets stamped with the *ye dharma* formula. According to carbon dating carried out on similar sheets in the Otani collection, the *ye dharma* sheets may date as far back as the 9th–10th centuries; however given the lack of such material in the Dunhuang collections, and the earliest date of the printed material from Kharakhoto, I would suggest a more conservative dating to the 11th–12th centuries. The relationship between stamping and printing in the early development of the Tibetan print tradition also needs further research. At this stage it seems clear

in the Tibetan context that stamping and printing were complementary technologies, rather than stages in the development of a single technology. Both techniques were in use in Central Asia before being used for Tibetan, so presumably each was adopted for a specific purpose.

I suggested at the beginning of this paper that the advantage of the fragmentary and accidental nature of what was recovered from Turfan is that it forces us to look beyond texts and colophons to the forms of the artefacts and their original functions. This moves us away from considering manuscripts (and other artefacts) as simply sources of information *about the past*, towards an attempt to understand their agency *in the past*. The importance of this move has been eloquently argued in a short book by the archaeologist John Moreland, *Archaeology and Text*. Moreland argues that while archaeologists might investigate the social functions and agency of objects in the past, they generally exclude texts from their work; while historians, who work with texts, tend to treat them as neutral sources. Moreland writes:

We should focus more than we have done on the fact that documents are not neutral epistles, that they are not disinterested bearers of information about the past. Like other products of human creativity, they were, in fact, active in the production, negotiation and transformation of social relations.¹⁸

He goes on to suggest how texts ought to be approached:

If we are to fully understand the historical past, we must seek out the details of the way in which people, in historically specific contexts, used, manipulated and confronted both texts and objects. We have to reconstruct the details of their entanglement with words and things, and write the kind of ‘thick descriptions’ which allow the variety and ingenuity of human creativity, and the difference of the past, to shine through.¹⁹

One area in which this kind of approach has been tried, with some success, is in the study of the social transformations effected by print technology in Europe, in the work of historians such as Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin, Elizabeth Eisenstein and Peter Burke.²⁰ In these works, printing has been linked to the spread of ideas through greater access to recently composed texts, a development that includes the decline of popular religious beliefs (‘superstition’) and

18 Moreland 2001, 31.

19 Moreland 2001, 97.

20 Key works here are Febvre and Martin 2010, Eisenstein 1982, Burke 1994 (chapter 9).

an increasing political consciousness in popular culture. Printing has also been associated with the accumulation of information leading to a faster development of ideas in science in particular, and, in less positive terms, the standardization of various elements of culture, such as local linguistic differences.

It is debatable whether such changes accompany the development of printing in Asia, which raises the question of how great a part print technology really played in these changes tracked by European historians. However, that is far too large a question to address here. What I want to point out here is that the changes associated with printing in these studies are predicated on the consideration of printed thing as a carrier of texts, rather than as an object with social agency, the kind of object that Moreland writes about. Printed objects used for ritual purposes – such as the indulgences printed by Gutenberg – are not generally part of these classic discussions of the impact of print technology, despite their important social role.

Recently some scholars have attempted to redress this balance; for example in a volume dedicated to Elizabeth Eisenstein's work, Peter Stallybrass has reassessed the cultural importance of printed 'ephemera' such as indulgences and broadsides. And in a rare cross-cultural review of printing in Europe and Asia, Kai-wing Chow has argued that the study of printing in the West should better take into account the co-existence of woodblock printing and moveable type, and the non-linguistic functions of printing allowed by the woodblock print technology. Chow writes: "In brief, it is time to reinvent the narrative of Gutenberg, rescuing the obscured role of woodblock in European printing in the post-Gutenberg period. Resuscitating the importance of woodblock printing in Europe will encourage investigation into the similarities in the history of printing in Europe and Asia."²¹

To return to the Turfan manuscripts, it should be clear from the brief survey I have made here that many of them are closer to Gutenberg's printed indulgences than his Bibles. Investigations of the *Hor par ma* and other early examples of Tibetan printed books are central to our developing understanding of printing in Tibet, but miscellaneous collections like these from Turfan are also important if we are to understand the broader context of social (and ritual) uses of this technology. Nor are the materials from Turfan peripheral to printing in Tibetan, which emerged in the multicultural, multilingual realm of Eastern Central Asia, informed by Chinese technological developments and given impetus by the interest and support of wealthy Tangut and Mongol patrons. The ways that the technology developed here in the 12th to 14th centuries is surely connected with its later progress in Central Tibet.

21 Stallybrass 2007, Chow 2007, 192.

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PART 2

*The Introduction of Printing Into Tibet: Drivers,
Impact and New Discoveries*



New Discoveries in Early Tibetan Printing History

Porong Dawa

1 Introduction

In May 2013, Paltsek Research Institute (dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib 'jug khang) published a collection of early prints from Central Tibet titled *Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdus bzhugs so* (A brief introduction to the history of Tibetan printing technology).

The publication includes a CD with copies of 50 printed texts that were produced in Tibet between 1407 and 1689. For each text, the book provides the colophon of the text, images of the initial pages, as well as a short comment on the text.

The book is published in Tibetan and has a very limited distribution. As the main editor of this publication, I provide here an outline and will then highlight some of the discoveries and avenues for future research based on this publication and related materials. For the sake of simplicity, this book is referred throughout this article and in this edited volume as *Porong Dawa Collection*. This paper is structured as follows:

- a) a brief outline of the process that led to the compilation of the book and the way it contributes to the understanding of the history of printing in Tibet;
- b) an account of some of the most interesting texts;
- c) a discussion of the likely location of the printing of the first edition of the Mi la ras pa's biography and songs. This was done on the basis of the colophons of early print editions, historical sources such as the newly retrieved biography of Kun tu bzang mo, gTsang smyon He ru ka's consort, and my research on place names and historical sites in the actual landscape.

I was born in the nomadic area called 'Brog sa sgang ra, at sKyu mdog, in the sPo rong area which is located between what historically used to be southern La stod and the Kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang. Before 1959 this area was under the rule of the sPo rong ruler, the sPo rong Je dbon, and included one of the main seats of the Bo dong pa tradition: the monastery of sPo rong dPal

mo chos sdings established by Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal himself around 1410/1.¹ For several years, I have generally focused on understanding and documenting his tradition and have been trying to find the volumes that are still missing from the extant copies of his collected works. This led me to collaborate with and then become part of the Paltsek Research Institute in Lhasa. During my research I realised that Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal played an important part in the development of printing in Tibet. In collaboration with colleagues of the University of Cambridge, such as dKon mchog dpal mo (i.e. Hildegard Diemberger), I dedicated to pay special attention to documenting and studying early Tibetan printing.

In this paper, I give an outline of the book that I recently produced and which assembles the early Tibetan prints that I was able to find. I also highlight some of those texts that I believe can contribute significantly to our understanding of the history of printing in Tibet. Finally, having travelled the La stod and Gung thang regions with the Tibetan documents in hand, I was able to locate a site that is most likely the place where the biography and the songs of Mi la ras pa by gTsang smyon He ru ka were first printed. In order to do so, I used, among other sources, the manuscript of the biography of Kun tu bzang mo, which we have recently discovered. Compiled in 1551, by one of her main disciples, mKhyan rab dBang phyug, the throne holder of bKra shis chos rdzong in Dags po, the text was written shortly after her death, on the basis of autobiographical notes and short biographies by other disciples.² It gives insight into the events that unfolded at that time and more generally into Tibetan life in the 15th/16th century which was the setting within which printing became an increasingly popular technology for book reproduction.

2 Outline of the *General History of Woodblock Printing Technology of Tibet*

The materials contained in *Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim m dor bsdus bzhuqs so* are the product of a process of research and collection that took us to monasteries such as sNye mo Bye mkhar and Brag dkar rta so and to many libraries across Tibet. I am particularly grateful to all those who helped

1 This date is given in the local manuscript of the text *dus khor ba mang thos rdo rjes byas pa'i bstan rtsis* which states that dPal mo chos sdings was founded in the iron tiger year, which is the year 1410/1 when Bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyal was at the age of 35.

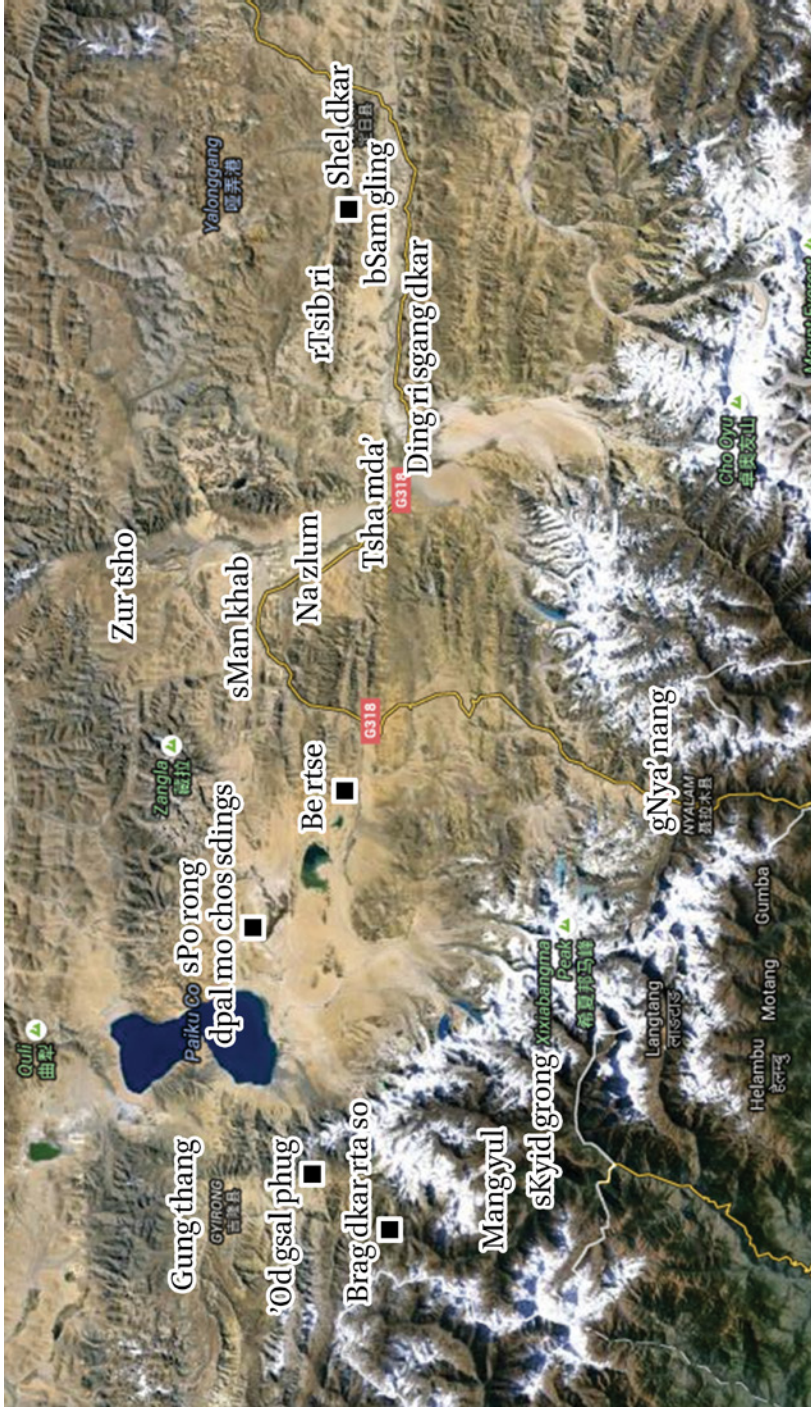
2 These are mentioned at the end of the biography (biography of Kun tu bzang mo folios 67–71).

in the research, giving access to the original texts, and to all those who contributed to the process of editing and publication in Lhasa. The book consists of an introduction; fifty subsections dedicated to the fifty texts with the reproduction of the initial and final pages, the colophon, and a synthesis of the main information concerning the person who supervised the printing operation, the place and time of printing, the sponsor, the scribes, the editing process, the management, the carvers and the dedication. A set of endnotes and a list of references complete the book.

From the colophons of these prints we gain insight into the aspirations of those who drove and contributed to these printing projects. We can read about their wish that all schools of Tibetan Buddhism prosper and that epidemics, famines and wars be prevented or stopped thanks to the merit accumulated through such deeds. These materials can also provide valuable information for scholars involved in Tibetan studies. For example, the text n. 19 has a colophon that tells about the big families shaping politics and culture in the La stod/Gung thang area such as the headman of Zur tsho (sde pa) and his minister rNam rgyal tshe rten and the official Tsha mda' nang so and his minister sTag la nang pa. The relationship between these families, which can be gleaned from these sources, is otherwise difficult to understand. It seems the area of gNya' nang was ruled from the north – like sKyid grong ruled from rDzong dkar and mKhar rta-Pha drug ruled from Shel dkar – since sTag la Nang pa, located in central gNya' nam (see map), was acting as chief councillor for the official residing in Tsha mda', to the west of Ding ri, where the local centre of power was located (see map); it also seems that Zur tsho was a very influential place, both politically and culturally.

The *Porong Dawa Collection* is to be understood as a contribution to an emerging field in Tibetan studies that focuses on printing technologies. In the article “Tibetan printings” written by Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las³ and included in the second volume of his collected works, it states that in the year 1408, the Emperor Yongle of China sent the minister Tha kyen bzhi to Tibet and invited the Byams chen chos rje to Nanjing and the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur was printed there using wood-blocks. Later, they presented sets of these prints to Sa skya pa, Karma pa and rJe Tsong kha pa. Tibetan lamas were delighted with the gift and this expanded their vision. Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las comments that already during the time of King Srong btsan sgam po the skill of carving stone and wood was known. However there was no systematic carving practice and anyone who carved something did so according to their own inspiration and viewpoint, but in terms of the skill itself, it was easy for them to

3 Dung dkar Phrin las 2004, 138–139.



MAP 10.1 Map of the region of southern La stod and Mangyul Gungthang showing the location of sites discussed.

MAP BY TERRY CHILVERS ON THE BASIS OF GOOGLE MAPS

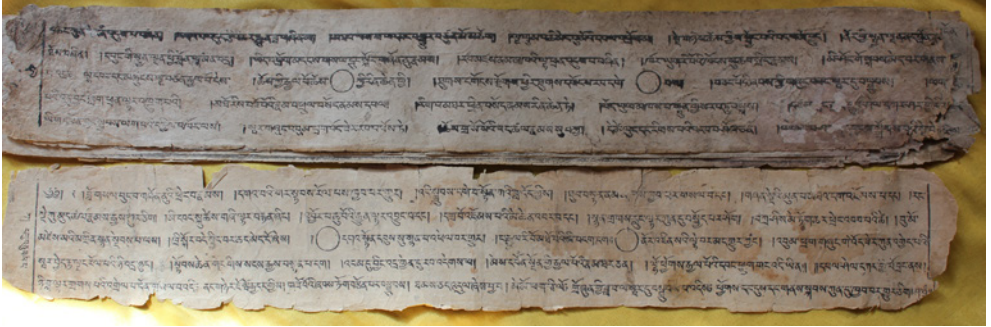


FIGURE 10.1 1407 print of the 'Grel chung don gsal, produced at Shel dkar.
PHOTOGRAPH PORONG DAWA

carve. Carving for printing required a more specialised skill and letters carved on wood must be identical with the original [manuscript] text, so advanced skills and expertise were needed. Reproducing letters through copper printing (*zangs spar*) and bronze printing (*khro spar*) using casting technology was therefore easier than wood-block printing. However because of the scarcity of copper and bronze in Tibet, it was difficult to find the raw materials that were necessary. Also, wood was plentiful in Tibet and the technology of carving on wood and stone was well developed.

According to this article, the abundance of wood in Tibet as well as Yongle's gift⁴ of canonical sets to Tsong kha pa and other Tibetan lamas gave the main impetus to printing technology based on wood-block carving. However, materials show that wood-block printing was already taking place in Tibet before that time. For example the *'Grel pa don gsal* written by the Indian master Seng ge bzang po (Haribhadra) was printed in 1407 at Shel dkar, the capital of La stod lho, with the support of the ruler Si tu lHa btsan skyabs and the supervision of the abbot of Shel dkar monastery Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal. This text is now preserved at sNye mo Bye dkar monastery. Thanks to the cooperation with the local monastic community, it was possible to retrieve and digitise it. This is now included in this book as text n. 1. At that time in Tibet there was still the custom that Buddhist texts had two rings. This was reminiscent of the holes that were used for book binding strings in ancient palm leaf manuscripts. The manuscript *bsTan 'gyur* produced by Drung chen sMon lam rdo rje (1317–1323) still has these rings. The block-printed version of the *'Grel pa don gsal* also has such rings. The discovery of this print therefore not only challenges the com-

4 On Yongle bKa' 'gyur see Jonathan Silk 1996, 153–200; 2009, 35–60.

mon belief that wood-block printing started in Central Tibet after the production of the Yongle bka' 'gyur in Beijing, but it also makes available to scholars an item with remarkable codicological features.

The *Porong Dawa Collection* also provides information on the printing houses: for example Shel dkar is the place where the earliest extant print was produced. Soon after that the *rGyud sde spyi rnam* by Bo dong pan chen and other texts were also printed there one after the other. Called Shel dkar mi 'gyur rdo rje rdzong, this fortress was established by Si tu Chos kyi Rin chen in the 14th century and was a place where political power and religious power were joined together. Here, in the period 1730–1731, a set of blocks for the *bKa' 'gyur* and in the period 1741–1742 a set of blocks for the *bsTan 'gyur* were produced by Mi dbang Pho lha ba when he was the ruler of Tibet. These wood-blocks were later transferred and preserved and used for printing at sNar thang (see map), which was considered the biggest printing house of Central Tibet (dBus gTsang). As far as the other prints are concerned, I provide information about the printing houses and the sites as well as the time and the circumstances of their production as far as I was able to identify them on the basis of the colophons and other sources.

In the *Porong Dawa Collection*, I also discuss the aim of the printing activity. In this respect, the gift of the Dharma is considered to be the best of all possible presents. Patrons have been sponsoring therefore this kind of donation. On the other hand, books are also needed for teaching and recitation. In this way, books – from big collections such as the *bKa' 'gyur* and the *bsTan 'gyur* to small texts for personal ritual usage – were printed and great effort was put into book production. There are all kinds of other reasons behind the production of printed texts and I have commented on them in each subsection of the volume.

3 **Highlights of the Collection Included in the *General History of Woodblock Printing Technology of Tibet***

Among the fifty texts described in the *Porong Dawa Collection*, I wish to mention a few that I consider particularly important. I have already commented on text number 1.

Text number 2 is the text of the teachings by Seng ge rgyal mtshan⁵ and was printed under the supervision of Seng ge bzang po, a lama who might be identical with the Seng ge bzang po connected to the Gung thang king Khri rgyal

5 The title is: *Chos rje dbon seng pa'i gsung/ don tshan bzhi bcu zhe gnyis kyi bshad pa / sgom chen gyi mngon rtogs mrjod pa ri khrod long gtam chen mo*. This lama is also known as dBon Seng pa and lHa bdun pa.



FIGURE 10.2 *lHa mdun print of the teachings of Seng ge rgyal mtshan.*
PHOTOGRAPH PORONG DAWA

bSod nam s lde (1371–1404). Around the end of the 14th or the very beginning of the 15th century, this spiritual master established a meditation monastery (*sgrub sde*) with the support from this king at Shag,⁶ a site on the ridge of a hill just south of the more famous Brag dkar rta so and the starting point of one of the main routes from Mang yul to bTsum and Nub ris. There is the name lHa mdun hand-written in small characters in the margin of the folios of this print. This means this print was either produced or preserved at lHa mdun monastery in Nub ris, which is consistent with the fact that the printed works are those of Seng ge rGyal mtshan, founder of lHa mdun monastery.⁷ lHa mdun as the printing place would be consistent with the location of a number of the patrons (mostly from the surrounding areas of rNying, sMyams, rTsang etc.). The hypothetical dating of the print to the reign of Khri rgyal bsod nam s lde would also be supported by his close connection to this monastery at the end of his life before being assassinated. His son and heir, Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan, was born to the niece of lHa mdun chos rje, the head of this monastery and successor of lHa mdun Seng ge rgyal mtshan; he was kept there during his childhood to protect him from court intrigues until he ascended the throne in 1419 (see Diemberger 2007, 35–36). It would be plausible that the rGyal tshab chos rje mentioned at the top of the sponsors' list refers to this obviously powerful religious master.

The tentative scenario, which would date this print edition to the early 15th century, is however not the only possible one. There is a lHa 'dun pa Seng ge bzang po who participated in the 1523 celebrations for the Phags pa wati temple (see Ehrhard 2004, 370, n. 95) who might be another possible identification

6 According to the *Gung thang rgyal rabs* a meditation place was established in Shag; see Everding 2000, 122–123. The term *shag* may mean both a monastic housing and a particular location at the border between Mang yul and Gung thang. The second is the most plausible option in this case.

7 Everding 2000, 125; 514–515.

for the spiritual master in charge of the carving mentioned in the colophon. In this case, the print would have been produced a century later.⁸ Since the colophon is incomplete it is uncertain whether this is the original print or a re-edition that includes the first colophon. It is in any case interesting that the Gung thang king Khri rgyal bSod nams lde was also a strong supporter of Grags pa rgyal mtshan, uncle of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, and Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan a sponsor of the prints of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's works, which may point to an early printing connection between Gung thang and La stod (see Tsering Dawa in this volume).

Text number 3 is the print of a text by Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal made at Shel dkar with the title *rGyud sde spyi rnam*, which is the detailed version of this text also known as the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa chung ba*. No exact date is given in the colophon, but it is mentioned that it was produced with the sponsorship of lHo bdag lHa btsan skyabs⁹ when Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal was the abbot of Shel dkar. Considering the biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, this is likely to have happened before the 1410/1 establishment of sPo rong dpal mo chos sdings, which eventually became his main seat, and probably in the wake of the 1407 print.

Text number 8 is another edition of the Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's *rGyud sde spyi rnam* produced in the 1468 in the palace of Hing du Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, the ruler (*khri dpon*) of Yar 'brog. This is one of several texts that point to a close connection between the Gung thang/La stod networks and Yar 'brog.

Text number 10 is the print of another key text of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, the *Chos spyod* of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa'i snying po*, i.e. the practice of the essence of his collected works. It was produced in Zur tsho, also known as rTse chen rdzong in the second half of the fifteenth century. Among the people involved in the production of the print, the colophon particularly praises the editor 'Dul 'dzin Ngag dbang,¹⁰ a spiritual master mentioned in the biography of Chos kyi sgron ma (1422–1455)¹¹ as coeval or more likely older than her. The main patron of this print edition was sLob dpon ma Nam mkha' dpal bzang mo, who was a member of the ruling family of Zur tsho and who

8 The style of the images and the format of the book seems to support the later dating (Michela Clemente personal communication).

9 Si Tu lHa btsan skyabs, the son of Si tu Chos kyi rin chen was the ruler of southern La stod after the death of his father in 1402. See also Diemberger in this volume.

10 On 'Dul 'dzin Ngag dbang see Pahlke 2012, 249.

11 He is briefly mentioned in folio 59; see also Diemberger in this volume.



FIGURE 10.3 *'Od gsal phug, early printing house in the border area between Mang yul and Gung thang. In this site, close to the birthplace of Mi la ras pa, the 1538 edition of his biography and songs was produced.*

PHOTOGRAPH BRUCE HUETT

belonged to a lineage descending from dPang lo tsa ba.¹² She was a female spiritual master with a particular devotion for the Bo dong pa tradition and may have been part of the network of religious women that developed around Chos kyi sgron ma and her disciples. bSam pa blo gros seng ge is mentioned among the carvers involved in this Zurt tsho based printing project and Nam mkharin chen among the scribes. The print edition was made to commemorate the passing of Drung chen bSod nams rgyal mtshan, a member of the local ruling family with close connections to that of northern La stod (Byang bdag). (For a discussion of the patronage of this print edition see also Diemberger in this volume.)

Number 16 is a biography of mChog ldan mgon po. This is a re-print of an earlier print edition produced in 1527 at rDzong dkar with the patronage of a wide range of members of the Gung thang royal family, including Khri rgyal Zil

12 dPang Lo tsa ba was a great translator and the first of an important nephew-lineage of spiritual masters from Zur tsho, which will culminate with Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal.

gnon mgon po lde (?), the then still very young Gung thang king Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa (1514–1560), his mother dKon mchog bzang mo (died 1554), Shes rabs rgyal mo the widow of his uncle Khri rgyal bsam grub lDe (1459–1506), and others. Compared with the Gung thang prints, the style is unusual and the images belong to the sMan thang tradition of Tibetan painting which was dominant in the dBus' area (for a discussion of the 1527 print edition see Ehrhard 2000, 32–37).

Text number 19 is the 1538 edition of the biography of Mi la ras pa by gTsang smyon Heruka produced at 'Od gsal phug by a number of disciples of gTsang smyon and sponsored by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473–1557) and the Gung thang King Khri Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa (1514–1560). This edition contains the colophon of the first edition produced at Na zlum Shel phug. For a detailed discussion of the location and the patronage of the first printing site see below (See also Sernesi 2011, 191–197).

Text number 24 is the biography of bSod nams blo gros, a disciple of gTsang smyon Heruka who lived in Be rtse. The print was produced by one of his disciples, Blo gros mchog ldan, a member of the Glo bo royal family, with the sponsorship of the Dharma king of gTing khebs (skyes) and Nam mkha bsod nams, a member of the family of the minister of Tsha mda' nang so, dGe sbyong na me, a descendant of the ancient gDon clan, and others. It was printed around 1545 at Gar phug hermitage near the famous hidden valley of sKyid mo lung (see Schaeffer 2011, 465–466).

Text number 25 is the biography of dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (1474–1552), printed at rDza ri bSam gtan gling, a locality mentioned as close to Jo mo Shel lcag. This print was produced thanks to wide-ranging support described in detail in the colophon: the Gung thang queen dKon mchog bzang mo who offered barely and some of the woodblocks; Chos rje Zla bag rags pa who offered the rest of the wood blocks; the Zur tsho sde pa, who offered barely and an ancient excellent turquoise; the family of the dPal lding nang so; a range of local officials and village headmen; the abbot of Shel dkar monastery; relatives of the master and a long list of male and female followers. This text provides valuable information on a disciple of gTsang smyon Heruka for whom so far no biography was known. The last page of the colophon was damaged and the last but one page is missing, therefore some details of the production of this print edition were lost. The last date mentioned in the text refers to the time in which the master was sixty-seven years old [i.e. 1540], the biography may therefore have been compiled and printed before his death. An interesting feature of this print is that some names of scribes and carvers are mentioned at the page bottom, for example in folio 71v it is stated: "From folio 15 to folio 70, the scribe was Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan and the carvers were four people from



FIGURE 10.4 *Na zlum. This seems to be the place where the first edition of Mi la ras pa's biography and songs was produced.*

PHOTOGRAPH PORONG DAWA

gTsang (gTsang pa nam bzhi)"; again at folio 73v it is stated: "carved by Zur tsho ba". This was a common feature in early printing and was linked to the payment of the craftsmen for their work (see Ehrhard 2000a: 69, 75). Finally there are many words, often names, that were either deliberately highlighted or erased (the images are unclear in this respect). Some peculiar drawings such as that of a long-nosed man holding a whip (folio 58r) and that of two men on horses (folio 151) were added in the margins presumably at a later date. The text shows the traces of handling over many generations.

Some of the texts included in the book are previously unknown print editions, others are further examples of early prints that have already been pointed out and discussed before and can be useful for comparison. Most of the texts are from Gung thang and La stod lho but a few are from other areas in Central Tibet that may be particularly important or relevant in a discussion of early Tibetan printing. The region of Gung thang and La stod seems to have played an important part in early printing and I did some dedicated research on the location of specific places that can cast light on the geographical and historical setting of book production.

4 Location of Na Zlum Shel phug as the Place Where the First Print Edition of Mi la ras pa's Biography and Songs was Produced

West of what is now called Old Dingri is a village called Nas lung or Na zlum, rendered in Chinese as Nailonxiang. A significant variability in the rendition of this place name appears not only in historical sources but also in contemporary uses as witnessed by the inconsistencies on signboards along the road. In the village or the monastery, the explanation for the name is usually given in the following terms: *na* is a type of grassland and *zlum* means encircled space and indicates in this case an encircled patch of very green grass that has the miraculous gift of producing flowers even in winter. The other form *nas lung* means much more simply 'Land of barely' and is a very common place name. Na zlum seems to be rendered also as Na 'dum which has no immediate meaning. The name Na zlum is unusual and is connected to the legend of origin of the place connected to the Mahasiddha Virupa, reflected in a variety of forms in the local monastery of dGe sdings which was established during the Sa skya period. Although the monastic community currently follows the rNying ma pa tradition, it is known to have historically had tight connections to the Sa skya pa and the Bo dong pa. Na zlum is also connected to the birth and childhood of U rgyan pa who travelled widely and supervised the production of a Kalacakra print at the Yuan court in 1292/3 (see Sherab Sangpo 2013, 201–224). Looking from Na zlum dGe sdings across the valley towards the north-east one can see the ragged peaks of the sPud tra spun bdun, the "Seven sPud tra Brothers", where U rgyan pa used to have his main seat (sPud tra monastery) and where he passed away in 1309 (Biography of U rgyan pa folio 105r). In between is the Bong chu river that gathers the waters coming down from the Zur tsho and sMan khab areas.

gTsang smyon Heruka is said to have dwelled in this region. In Na zlum, not far from the old village, are ruins of what must have been a large building locally considered to have been a residence of the great Mahasiddha. Inbetween is a white relatively low ridge dotted with caves that were apparently used for human dwellings. This ridge bears the traces of a destroyed nunnery on its top and currently goes under the name of Ri rgya dkar mo.

According to the biography of Kun tu bzang mo, Na zlum was the place where she met her master, as he was involved in the production of the print of the biography of Mi la ras pa. In folio 16r, it is stated that her assistant first made contact with Heruka who had returned from his trip to Tsa ri as he was "staying at Na zlum Shel phug and was involved in the printing of the biography and songs of the venerable Mi la ras pa" (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folio 16r).¹³

13 *He ru kha rje btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur par du gzhegs pa la na zlum shel phug na bzhugs pa'i drung du.*

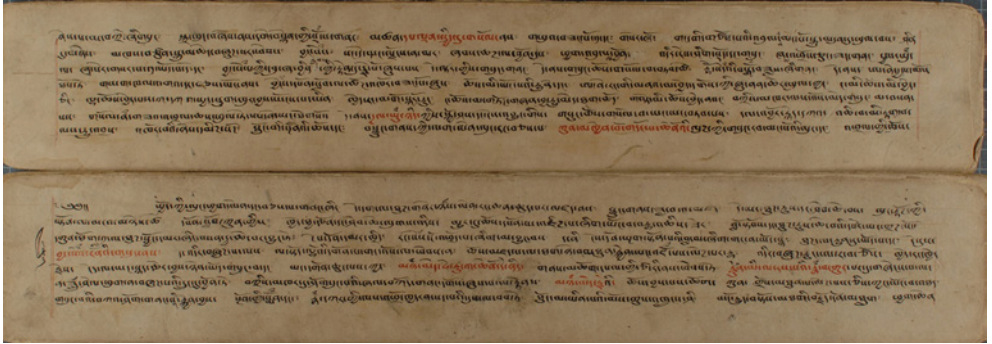


FIGURE 10.5 *Folio 16 of the biography of Kun tu bzang mo referring to gTsang smyon Heruka's printing of the biography and songs of Mi la ras pa at Na zlum.*
PHOTOGRAPH PORONG DAWA

The spelling of the place name is given in this case as Na zlum which is very particular and consistent with the local explanation of the name. The name Na zlum returns repeatedly in the biography, always with this spelling. The name Shel phug, i.e. crystal cave, is however not preserved in the local oral tradition, but it may well have referred to the strikingly white cave complex in the ridge of Ri rgya dkar mo. The overall location is consistent with the biographical narrative as Kun tu bzang mo was coming from dPal mo chos sding, located at about one day by horse to the northwest of Na zlum. Furthermore, narratives of other events that are taking place in the vicinity of Na zlum mention the sMan chu river, i.e. the river flowing through sMan khab which is located directly to the north of Na zlum (see also Diemberger in this volume). The location Na 'dum Shel phug appears in the biography of gTsang smyon by rGod tshang ras chen (folio 134v) as the printing place of the first print edition of the life of Mi la ras pa, but the form Na 'dum has in itself no recognisable meaning. It seems therefore that Na 'dum and Na zlum are variants indicating the same place. The version of the name given in Kun tu bzang mo's biography seems to be the most plausible and is close to other variants such as Nas zlum that appear in other historical sources.

The colophon of the first edition contained in the 'Od gsal phug edition (see text nr 19 and see also Sernesi 2011, 184–185; 217–28) gives a list of patrons that can provide some further circumstantial evidence for the location of the printing place in the sense that a significant number of the people mentioned are either from places in the vicinity of Na zlum or are connected to the area. The first name is that of the Gung thang ruler(s) mentioned in generic terms as Gung thang khab pa; we know that this was principally Khri rNam rgyal lde, but other members of the royal family may have been involved. Following this is the Zur tsho headman (*sde pa*) and his chief councillor (*blon chen*) rNam

rgyal tshe rten; they were both from the Zur tsho area to the northwest of Na zlum. Following this is the Tsha mda' official (*nang so*) from the village next to the hot spring area, located directly to the south of Na zlum and to the west of Ding ri. He was a local headman (*sde dpon*) claiming to have the Gung thang royal lineage in his ancestry. His chief councillor (*blon chen*) sTag la nang pa, mentioned immediately afterwards, was the uncle of Kun tu bzang mo and belonged to the lineage of dPon chen Shakya bzang po; he was based in the locality currently known as sNang yul or sNgor ra 'bugs stag in the gNya' nang area and had a sister married into the Zur tsho ruling family. After some names of unspecified provenance, there is mention of the three brothers from upper Ar (Ar stod spun gsum), including 'Phags pa skyabs. Assuming that the name Ar is identical with A ra, they also are from the Zur tsho ruling family, as the A ra ba people are mentioned in the biography of Kun tu bzang mo. In there, it states that her paternal aunt married into the Zur tsho ruling family (see Diemberger, in this volume). A special mention is also made of the people of sMan khab stod, just north of Na zlum, who are collectively praised for their effort and great support. Among the religious supporters, there is mention of dBu mdzad rGyal le who might belong to the same family as the master involved in the 1443 print of the *Chos spyod* of the *De nyid 'dus pa snying po* at Zur tsho. There are a few names of people from other areas in the region, in particular Shakya bshes gnyen, the main person from gNyi shangs,¹⁴ Ting lung Grags pa bzang po, mDo chen bla ma from the Gung thang monastery (see Ehrhard 2008, 63) and gNya' nam Ngag dbang grags pa. There are also several disciples of gTsang smyon, both male and female, that are not mentioned with an area of origin. Overall, the people connected to the Na zlum area and its surroundings are in the majority. All these sponsors are mentioned as having offered gold, silver and all what was needed for the printing and the colophon concludes by the wish that all those who enabled the printing, those we know of and those we don't, may become like Mi la ras pa, avoiding the eight worldly concerns and quickly reaching enlightenment.

Finally, there is also mention of the scribes that were of all sorts and the craftsmen for the printing who consisted of Kha khyu Chos bzang and his disciples (folio 112 r).¹⁵ Most interesting is the fact that the craftsmen for printing seem to have been part of an existing "school", i.e. teacher and disciples, cen-

14 Currently gNyi shangs is usually identified with the Manang region in Nepal, further to the west, but this identification would not seem to be necessarily accurate in this case. Sometimes this toponym indicates the area around the Trisuli River. See also Franz-Karl Ehrhard's discussion of the toponym sNye shang, 2013, 291.

15 *mam thar yig mkhan nges med sna tshog te / par mkhan kha kyu chos bzang dpon slob yin.*

tered in Kha khyu, which is a village located immediately to the north-east of the Zur tsho capital. Most of the lay sponsors are from the region surrounding Na zlum, especially Zur tsho, sMan khab and Tsha mda' which would be consistent with this locality being the printing site of the first print edition of Mi la ras pa's biography and songs.

From the biography of Kun tu bzang mo (folio 19v), we learn that the printing blocks carved at Na zlum were eventually taken to Nya' lam Grod phug, the famous cave of Mi la ras pa and where 'Phel rgyas gling monastery was later built (and which is currently a regular tourist spot, see map). Following the ancient route, this is at some two days walking distance from Na zlum via Ding ri Glang 'khor and the Thong la pass (see Chang 1994: 271) or via another parallel route slightly further north. After gTsang smyon's death in 1507, a new print edition was produced by Kun tu bzang mo who remembered the fact that her master was unhappy with the small size of the letters of the first printing blocks (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folio 29r). This time she had the blocks carved in Ze phug, the holy place of Mi la ras pa in La phyi, by craftsmen from sMan khab and Zur tsho whom she invited there for the operation. These blocks were also taken to Grod phug in gNya' lam after their carving (on this story see also Diemberger in this volume). Over the years Kun tu bzang mo produced various print editions of gTsang smyong Heruka's works and the works of other masters for which she often used craftsmen from the Zur tsho and sMan khab areas (see Larsson in this volume; Ehrhard 2000, 188; and also Sernesì 2011, 154–158).

Although many questions remain open until we find actual samples of these earliest print editions of Mi la ras pa's biography and songs, we can glean from what is currently available to us that the areas of Zur tsho and sMan khab were particularly important for scholarship and craftsmanship connected to printing. Perhaps it was the local availability of craftsmen and sponsors that made Na zlum attractive for gTsang smyon's initial printing operation. This region was also located in a strategic position linking southern La stod and Gung thang, which probably promoted borrowings and collaboration. For example Text nr 14, a biography of rGyal ba Yan dgon pa printed in Tsibri in 1520, has main scribes from sMan khab and carvers from Gung thang.

5 Conclusion

In the last few years it has been possible to find several manuscripts and prints that were unknown or believed lost. Going around Tibet, I am aware that there are still a lot of undiscovered materials and I am glad that for this publication,

I was able to collect texts that could give an insight into the early days of printing in Tibet. From the colophons of these prints we gain insight into the aspirations of those who drove and contributed to printing projects as well as information on the material circumstances under which they were operating. It is particularly important to compare printing colophons with biographies because we can then gain a better picture of the overall setting of the printing projects. It is also useful to look for place names in the actual landscape, where oral tradition has preserved some of them, and where ruins can elicit many stories and memories often encapsulated in place narratives (*gnas bshad*). The identification of Mi la ras pa's biography printing place is just an example of this process. Place names preserved in oral narratives of course cannot provide historical proofs but can often offer useful circumstantial evidence. They also remind us of the fact that some of these ancient stories are very much alive in peoples' memory and shape their understanding of the place they live in. Having presented these preliminary materials, I hope that further research will cast new light on Tibetan book culture and its technologies.

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Collected Writings as Xylographs: Two Sets from the Bo dong pa School

Franz-Karl Ehrhard

1 Introduction

During the expeditions of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) to different parts of the Nepalese Himalaya quite a number of Tibetan block prints could be located and microfilmed, and the ensuing research of documenting and describing individual works and collections provided a platform for investigating the historiography of print in Tibet. It was in particular the tradition of producing Buddhist xylographs in the region of Mang yul Gung thang in south-western Tibet where a shift from a manuscript culture to a block-print culture could be observed and where questions could be raised concerning the introduction of this technology, and such issues addressed as craftsmanship, patronage structures and the choice of texts for reproduction as print editions.¹

The strong presence of the Bo dong pa school of Tibetan Buddhism in the region of Mang yul Gung thang can be regarded as a positive force for the introduction and dissemination of the art of printing in the period, especially in the 15th and 16th centuries. The expertise of the Buddhist craftsmen in this region and period was highly influential in the development of further centres of printing in neighbouring areas. The starting point for the documentation of this local school is what was executed by a learned Bo dong pa monk and by a bKa' brgyud pa yogin, all of which could be identified and described on the

1 For the term “print culture” as a unifying concept characterized by certain traits such as standardization, dissemination and fixity of texts in early modern Europe, see Eisenstein (1979) and (1983). For the problems this understanding encounters in the historiography of print in early England’s book culture and the proposal to use the term more in the sense of a result of manifold representations and practices, thus allowing us to reconstruct different print cultures subject to particular historical circumstances, consult Johns (1998, 6–28). See Schaeffer (2009, x1) for methodological challenges to the study of the culture of the book in Tibet.

basis of their biographies and the “printing colophons” (*par byang*) available at the time.²

In the following I want to take a closer look again at this particular period in south-western Tibet and the efforts undertaken to execute xylograph editions of the “Collected Writings” (*gsung ’bum / bka’ ’bum*) of two of the masters of the Bo dong pa school, who enjoyed the support of the court at the royal capital, rDzong dkar. We should thus be able to observe how the shift from a manuscript culture to a block-print culture actually took place and consider what it meant to have texts that had been copied by scribes printed out – in other words, to have manuscripts replaced by xylographs.

2 Collected Writings as Prints

The early history of xylographic printing of Tibetan texts, the corpus of printed texts and the question of patronage have been laid out in some detail on other occasions, with note being taken of the importance in this regard of the relationship that existed between Tibetan Buddhist religious hierarchs and the Mongolian court in the 13th century. These religious teachers belonged to the Sa skya pa and bKa’ brgyud pa schools. During the time of the Mongolian occupation xylographs of relevant texts were being carved in China proper; such xylographs are known among Tibetan authors as “Mongolian prints” (*hor par ma*). It has also been observed that the very first Tibetan treatises ever committed to printing blocks in the Tibetan cultural area were the collected writings of two masters of the sMar pa bKa’ brgyud school from sMar khams in eastern Tibet; this is known from the chronicle of the abbots of Tsom mdo gnas gzar, a monastery of this school founded in the year 1200. Although the actual xylographs of the writings of Chos rje sMar pa Shes rab ye shes (1135–1203) and ’Gro mgon Rin chen dpal (1170–1249), are not available, we know from this evidence that the technology of block printing was in place in Khams around 1200 and

2 For the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang, the spiritual ties of its individual rulers with Bo dong Chos rje Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1375–1451) and the production of Buddhist classics in the 15th and 16th centuries, see Ehrhard (2000a, 12–16). Consult Smith (2001, 170–208) for an overview of works of Bo dong Paṅ chen dealing with Buddhist literary and practical arts. For the religious careers of the Bo dong pa monk Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484–1549) and the ‘Ba’ ra ba bKa’ brgyud pa yogin Nam mkha’ rdo rje (1466–1553) and their printing activities, see Ehrhard (2000a, 23–66); see also Ehrhard (2012, 150–167) for the life of gNas Rab ’byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs (1503–1581) and his contribution to Buddhist block printing in the region. Refer to Diemberger (2009, 114–115) and Diemberger (2012, 29–34) for the present-day revival of the Bo dong tradition.

that it was the collected works of these two Buddhist masters for which the technology was first employed.³

The earliest large printing project in Central Tibet to which reference survives is an edition of many works of rJe Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419), who took a personal interest in printing in the final years of his life. The work was executed on orders of the Phag mo gru pa ruler Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1374–1452), and according to biographical sources relating to him the responsibility for seeing the project through to completion was deputed to a minister of Gong dkar. The disciples and patrons of rJe Tsong kha pa saw their work as “fulfilling the intentions” (*dgongs rdzogs*) of the master. During the early 15th century and the following decades other nobles sponsored the carving of individual works of the founder of the dGe lugs pa school; these included the powerful sNe’u/sNel pa family. These xylographs became known as “old dGa’ ldan prints” (*dga’ ldan par rnying*), inasmuch as the blocks were originally carved in the monastery of dGa’ ldan or else were eventually moved there.⁴

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- 3 See van der Kuijp (2010, 449–455) for a brief overview of the early history of xylographic printing in Tibet and the religious chronicle of the sMar pa bKa’ bryud pas. The work has also been used as a source for documenting the presence of Sa skya pa and bKa’ bryud pa religious hierarchs in sMar khams; consult van der Kuijp (2007, 107 & 122–123). For the biographies of ‘Gro mgon Rin chen dpal and his successor Chos rje sTon pa Tshul khriims gzhon nu dpal (1197–1277), who were responsible for executing the blocks, see *sMar pa bka’ bryud kyi nam thar phyogs bsrigs*, Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006, 82–122; the references to the printing can be found *ibid.*, p. 97.13–14 (*chos rje’i gsung rnams phyogs gcig tu shing spar brkos*), and p. 121.15–16 (*chos rje ston tshul ’dis ’gro mgon rin chen gyi gsung ’bum rnams spar shing brkos te*). The question of a possible Chinese influence on the Tibetan custom of producing collected writings at a time when eminent Tibetan masters had close relations with the Chinese court, and of exactly when the printing technology was introduced to Tibet, is raised by Kragh (2013, 381). Compare Sernesi (2013/2014 [2015]: 475ff) for the construction of literary *oeuvres* of Tibetan masters, including the collected sayings of sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079–1153), the founder of the Dvags po bKa’ bryud school.
- 4 For written references to the earliest printings of the works of rJe Tsong kha pa and the patrons involved in these projects, see Jackson (1990, 107–108); see also Jackson (1989, 12) for the powerful sNe’u/sNel pa family (especially Drung chen Nam mkha’ bzang po, a great patron of the master). Consult Sørensen and Hazod (2007, 49–52) for the role of the sNe’u/sNel family (and in particular the 2nd sNe’u rdzong dpon Nam mkha’ bzang po, fl. ca. 1400–1430) as pioneer patrons of the dGe lugs pa school in sKyid shod. An illustrated print of a manual on Nāropa’s Six Yogas, based on teachings delivered by rJe Tsong kha pa in 1419 and produced under Phag mo gru pa patronage in the first half of the 15th century has been described in Sernesi (2010, 143–149). A reproduction of an early print of a tantric commentary by rJe Tsong kha pa (dating from 1428) brought out by the nobles of sTag rtse in ‘Ol kha for the

During this period, too, writings of further eminent Tibetan teachers were carved on wooden blocks, including ones of Chos rje Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451), the founder of the Bo dong pa school. It is known that early prints of his writings were produced in the myriarchy of La stod lHo in south-western Tibet through the efforts of the ruler Ta'i Si tu lHa btsan skyabs and that the master himself was personally involved in the production of prints of Buddhist canonical texts during his residence at the Shel dkar chos sde at the beginning of the 15th century.⁵

Concerning the collected writings of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, it is said that they were reproduced in Mang yul Gung thang during the reign of Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan (1404–1464), who regarded Bo dong Chos rje as his main spiritual preceptor. These prints included the three different versions of the *De nyid 'dus pa*, the final masterpiece and legacy of Bo dong Chos rje. None of these prints seems to have survived, but at least other xylographs of individual writings of the founder of the Bo dong pa school are available, including the smallest and fourth text of the *De nyid 'dus pa* cycle; according to the printing colophon this latter work was printed at the border between dBu and gTsang, the patrons responsible for the project being two rulers of the myriarchy of Yar 'brog, namely Khri dpon Nam mkha' bzang po and his nephew Khri dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan.⁶

long life of the Phag mo gru pa ruler Grags pa rgyal mtshan is now available; see *dPal 'khor lo sdom pa bde mchog bsdu pa'i rgyud kyi rgya cher bshad sbas pa'i don gsal ba*, 167 fols., in “Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdu,” Xinhua: Bod ljongs bod rig dpe mnying dpe skrun khang, 2013, 15–17.

- 5 For the xylographs of the Tibetan translation of Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra-āloka*, 90 fols., from the year 1407, and for the work *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa las rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhaq pa*, 259 fols., a general exposition of the Tantra classes by Phyogs las rnam rgyal printed at the Shel dkar chos sde, see “Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdu” (as in note 4), pp. 4–6 & 10–11. A short “catalogue” (*dkar chag*) to the former work by Bo dong Paṅ chen can be found in “Bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyal gyi gsung 'bum gсар rnyed skor,” Beijing: Khrung go'i bod rig dpe skrun khang, 2009, vol. 4, pp. 301–303. Compare Diemberger & Clemente (2013, 133) on the importance of these works as documentary sources for the historiography of printing in La stod lHo. In the last decade of the 14th century Bo dong chos rje had also contact with the Phag mo gru pa ruler Grags pa rgyal mtshan; see Czaja (2013, 215–216).
- 6 Concerning the reference to 15th-century prints of the collected writings of Phyogs las rnam rgyal in the region of Mang yul Gung thang, see Ehrhard (2000a, 12–13); and Everding (2000, 128–129) for the relevant section in the chronicle of the rulers of Mang yul Gung thang, written by Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698–1755). Consult Chok Tenzin Monlam (2005, 97–98) regarding the xylographs of the *De nyid 'dus pa* cycle and relevant references to the

Single works containing teachings of the mentioned cycle of the Bo dong pa school were also printed in southeastern Tibet, one of them dating from 1482. In the latter's printing colophon it is noted that it had been completed in order to fulfil the final intentions of the "sovereign who upholds the doctrine" (*bstan 'dzin gong ma*); among the sponsors, the ruling family of the myriarchy of Bya is mentioned in the first place. While the epithet is a reference to the Seventh Phag mo gru sDe srid Kun dga' legs pa (d. 1482), the latter ruler of the myriarchy of Bya can be identified as Bya pa khri dpon bKra shis dar rgyas (d. 1499). The xylograph was executed at gSang sngags bDe chen gling, located at the sacred site of gNas chen Tsa ri tra, under the supervision of one Byams chen gyi btsun pa 'Phags pa.⁷

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- biography of Phyogs las rnam rgyal as a source for further prints; details of these prints can be found in Diemberger, Wangdu, Kornfeld & Jahoda (1997, 41–97). The lone surviving copy of the smallest *De nyid 'dus pa* text (170 fols.) is housed in the British Library under pressmark Tib 1.156. Another print of an individual work by Phyogs las rnam rgyal, one supported by Khri dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, can be dated to the year 1446; see *rJe thams cad mkhyen pa phyogs las rnam par rgyal bas mdzad pa'i kun rig gi cho ga'i de nyid rnam par nges pa*, 42 fols., in "Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdu" (as in note 4), pp. 18–19. Compare *'jigs bral gyi slob dpon phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i zhal snga nas mdzad pa'i rgyud sde'i rnam par bzhag pa*, 178 fols., *ibid.*, pp. 23–24; this is a further xylograph, executed in Yar 'brog in the year 1468. A work related to the *De nyid 'dus pa* cycle and composed in the 15th century was produced in Zur mtsho, a principality to the east of Mang yul Gung thang; see *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa'i snying po chos spyod rab tu gsal ba*, 176 fols., *ibid.*, pp. 28–29.
- 7 The print bears the title *Zhal gdams de nyid 'dus pa las / rdo rje lus kyi sbas bshad / rin chen snying po*, 20 fols., and can be found in "Bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyal gyi gsung 'bum gсар rnyed skor" (as in note 5), vol. 2, pp. 625–664. Concerning the conflicting dates of the death of the Seventh Phag mo gru sDe srid, see Ehrhard (2002, 26, 22); see also Ehrhard (2002, 30) for the residence of the ruler Bya khri dpon bKra shis dar rgyas in [g]Nyal and the editing and carving of the "Blue Annals" (*deb ther sngon po*) in the same year, i.e. 1482. Another individual work of Phyogs las rnam rgyal was printed during this period in the southern region of gTam shul in the region of lHo brag. See *rGyud sde bzhi'i lha tshogs la bstod pa 'dod pa'i 'jo ba*, 91 fols., in "Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdu" (as in note 4), pp. 25–27. This xylograph was executed in 1477 after the demise of the Second 'Brug chen rGyal ba'i dbang po (1428–1476) by a member of the family of mNga' bdag Nyang, namely the treasure discoverer Nyi ma'i 'od zer (1124–1192). For the significance – as exemplified above – of offering a print of a specific work as a memorial to a deceased person or for the long life of prominent living figures, see Schaeffer (2011, 461–462).

3 Collected Writings as Manuscripts

Another member of the royal house of Mang yul Gung thang who honoured Phyogs las rnam rgyal as his spiritual preceptor was Khri rNam rgyal lde (1422–1502). According to the historiographical sources, he acted as patron for a number of printing projects and also supported the production of manuscript copies of Buddhist texts. This we can see in the case of further collected writings from the Bo dong pa school. I may refer to the works of dPal ldan Sangs rgyas (1391–1455), a disciple of Phyogs las rnam rgyal. The following quotation is from the biography of the bTsun pa Chos legs (1437–1521), another Bo dong pa master, who undertook the task of reproduction. It illuminates the difficulties of obtaining the necessary materials for such a project, and also the role of the ruler in finalizing it:

Then, in the summer of the horse-year [=1474] the thought arose in my mind: “What if I prepare a [set of the] Collected Works of the great mKhas grub [dPal ldan Sangs rgyas]?” When in following [days] I made further enquiries with persons who were like close friends [to him], one dGe sbyor Chos nyid by name, who had before been the servant of the great mKhas grub [dPal ldan Sangs rgyas], [acting as his] assistant for the offering rituals and so on, spoke [the words]: “In conformity with [the size of] that [undertaking], I present ten loads of barley as working support for the production of the Collected Works.” And as it happened, I decided to execute the plan and complete it by all means. Although I had at that time no material goods at all, after dGe sbyong dPal legs, a friend from earlier times when I had taken the monastic vows, offered a woollen cloth and seventy small pieces of coral, because of that offering I looked around how best to purchase paper. When there was still prosperity in the region within my purview, some ten close friends went out [to look for paper] during a begging tour to [the valley of] bTsum, but still they could not get any proper paper at that time.

Then, from the winter of the sheep-year [=1475], after such paper was acquired from sKyid grong, two scribes wrote out from the beginning the two great commentaries on the difficult points of the *'Dul (b)rgyan* and the *Phar phyin*. Then the sovereign Khri rNam rgyal lde himself spoke [the words]: “I shall act as donor for the production of the *'Dul (b)rgyan*”, and he gave nine loads of barley. As in the summer [of the next year] one more scribe was added, [the work] was completed and the nine volumes of the Collected Writings of the great mKhas grub [dPal ldan Sangs rgyas] and the biographies of the All-knowing Bo dong [Paṅ chen], [i.e.] the *Yar*

'brog ma and the *Ngag dbang ma*, [these] two, [together with] the biography of the great mKhas grub [dPal ldan Sangs rgyas] by the great scholar dPal ldan dar (1424–1510), [these] three, were made into one volume. [All in all] I executed ten volumes, which [thus] made their appearance, and they rest [up till now] in [the monastery of] mNgon dga'.⁸

The mentioned monastery – located to the south-west of rDzong dkar, the capital of the rulers of Mang yul Gung thang – has already been identified as an important stronghold of the Bo dong pa school in the royal domain, and as a residence of teachers including dPal ldan Sangs rgyas (its first abbot) and dPal ldan dar. It was also the institution where bTsun pa Chos legs had received his monastic training. The same master was not only able to compile and edit the collected writings of dPal ldan Sangs rgyas, but also completed in the same year a manuscript edition of the “Collected Tantras” (*rgyud 'bum*), once again with the material support of the king Khri rNam rgyal lde. In the year 1477 he was urged to come in person to rDzong dkar, and this stay resulted in the production of a complete manuscript *bKa' gyur* written out by thirty scribes – a project supervised by dPal ldan dar (the second abbot of mNgon dga') in a special temple erected in the royal palace during this time.⁹

On the basis of these details it is possible to see how collected works were produced in Mang yul Gung thang both as block prints and as manuscripts in the 15th century and the extent to which such projects were supported by

8 For this passage from the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs, see Ehrhard (2000b, x–x1); compare *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa chos legs mtshan can gyi rnam thar yon tan 'brug sgra* [= **Appendix I, ka**], fols. 58/6–59a/2. A biographical sketch of dPal ldan Sangs rgyas is contained in another work of the same author; see *Thugs rje chen po'i dmar khrid che tsham lnga pa* [= **Appendix I, kha**], fols. 14b/2–18a/3. Concerning an encounter between dPal ldan Sangs rgyas and Bo dong Chos rje Phyogs las rnam rgyal in Glo bo, present-day Mustang in the Nepalese Himalayas, see Diemberger, Wangdu, Kornfeld & Jahoda (1997, 77).

9 See Ehrhard (2000b, x1–x11) for these further productions of manuscripts of Buddhist canonical collections in Mang yul Gung thang during the reign of Khri rNam rgyal lde. The temple called [gSang sngags] lHa khang dmar po and the existence of a handwritten *bKa' gyur* is also noted in the chronicle of the royal house; see Everding (2000, 138–139) and Ehrhard (2000a, 14). The same source refers in the same context to the printing projects of Khri rNam rgyal lde, including the *Mani bka' 'bum* and the *Mi la'i bka' 'bum*. This seems to be a telescoping of later events and probably signifies simply the general support printing projects enjoyed from the rulers; see Ehrhard (2013, 45, note 5). Compare Diemberger & Clemente (2013, 132–133) for a similar observation and details of a reproduction of the collected works of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal by Chos kyi sgron ma (1422–1455/56), a sister of Khri rNam rgyal lde and personal disciple of the master; this edition existed as a whole obviously only in the form of manuscripts.

the patronage structure of kings. In order to see how further manuscript collections were produced and how the transformation of individual texts into the xylographic medium occurred, I shall look more closely into the religious career of bTsun pa Chos legs to see which texts were chosen to be reproduced as prints.

4 Mahāmudrā Works in Mang yul Gung thang

It has already been documented that bTsun pa Chos legs was an eclectic Buddhist master, one who had developed a particular interest in the Mahāmudrā doctrine. This interest had been stirred by a Sa skya pa teacher called mKhas btsun dPal 'byor bzang po (15th cent.), who hailed from an influential family at the court of the rulers of Glo bo. It was from him that bTsun pa Chos legs had received the cycle known as the *Ri chos skor gsum* of rGyal ba Yang dgon pa (1213–1258), and soon afterwards he had made the teachings available in the form of a manuscript edition of the collected writings of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa master; these activities can be dated to the year 1497. It is interesting that only three decades later this *mgur 'bum* collection was further distributed in the form of a xylographic print; it was Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, the previously mentioned Bo dong pa monk who counted among the close disciples of bTsun pa Chos legs, who conceived and carried out this undertaking.¹⁰

In the years 1501 to 1504 the master from mNgon dga', now settled at the hermitage of Chab rom near the village of Rud in the southern part of the kingdom, composed his own text on the Mahāmudrā doctrine, consisting of five chapters. Ten years later, in 1514, the manuscript was then printed as a xylograph in mTsho rkyen, another hermitage located in the vicinity of Chab rom. This print was executed during the joint reign of King Khri Kun dga' mam rgyal lde (d. 1524) and his nephew Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan. It may be noted that

10 The transmission of the Mahāmudrā doctrine from mKhas btsun dPal 'byor bzang po and the production of a manuscript set of the *mgur 'bum* collection of rGyal ba Yang dgon pa is described in the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs; see Ehrhard (2000b, XIII) and the text (as in note 8), fols. 77b/4–78b/4 & 90b/2. The print of the same collection in two volumes by Chos dbang rgyal mtshan after the death of his teacher was the first of his major printing projects; see *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyan med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi mam par thar pa / rin po che nor bu'i phreng ba* [= Appendix II, ka], fol. 53a/4–b/3, and Ehrhard (2000a, 29–30). For the printing colophon of this collection, consult Ehrhard (2000a, 88–93).

among the six carvers summoned to mTsho rkyen, one finds the “master scribe of the ruler” (*sde pa'i yig dpon*), dPal ldan rgyal po; this points up that the main craftsmen came from the court of the rulers of Mang yul Gung thang.

The master composed a further two works on the Mahāmudrā doctrine, but in contrast to the first composition they not long afterwards appeared in a print medium. The two works were executed as xylographs in the year 1516, and once again the royal scribe is highlighted among the carvers. A fourth and final work concerning the Mahāmudrā doctrine was printed in 1521 after the death of bTsun pa Chos legs; in its printing colophon, the castle of rDzong dkar is given as the place where the carving of the blocks was performed.¹¹

From the biography of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, who had been in the company of his teacher during the period under discussion, it is possible to learn how the royal support for these printing projects came about. The year 1521 saw both teacher and disciple in rDzong dkar, following an invitation-cum-request by Khri Kun dga' mnam rgyal lde to bTsun pa Chos legs to come and offer instruction on the Mahāmudrā doctrine. The final teachings of the Bo dong pa master were thus delivered at the royal residence. Among the recipients one finds once again the ruler, his nephew Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan and the abbot of mNgon dga'. After the death of bTsun pa Chos legs, his disciple Chos dbang rgyal mtshan was responsible for the necessary funeral rituals, but he also took it upon himself to execute xylographic prints, among them the four mentioned Mahāmudrā works.¹²

Like the collected writings of rGyal ba Yang dgon pa – of which a great number of manuscript versions circulated at that time, according to the testimony of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan – the Mahāmudrā works of the Bo dong pa master were executed as xylographs only when the time was ripe, namely only after royal support had been secured from the court at rDzong dkar; such support ensured the expertise of Buddhist craftsmen like the royal scribe. We may now turn to the mentioned sources in order to see what they have to say about how exactly the collected writings came into being as a complete set.

11 The details concerning the writing out and printing of the four Mahāmudrā works of bTsun pa Chos legs can be found in Ehrhard (2000b, xiv–xvi); for the individual sections in the biography, see the text (as in note 8), fols. 109b/6–110a/1 and 110a/4–5. The printing colophons of these xylographs are reproduced in Ehrhard (2000a, 83–87).

12 For the ten-year period from 1511 to 1521, which Chos dbang rgyal mtshan spent in the company of his teacher and in the printing of the mentioned works (and further xylographs of the writings of bTsun pa Chos legs), see Ehrhard (2000a, 24–28); compare the biography (as in note 10), fols. 30b/6–51b/2. During the pair's first stay in rDzong dkar the king and his court received also the transmission of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, while among the xylographs produced in 1521 one finds the so-called “Royal Print” of this collection; see Ehrhard (2013, 144–156).

5 Writing Out the Works of bTsun pa Chos legs

After Chos dbang rgyal mtshan had obtained ordination as a Buddhist monk from Rab 'byams pa dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (15th/16th cent.), the abbot of mNgon dga', he spent the time up to the end of 1517 in strict seclusion at his favourite hermitage of Kun gsal sgang po che in the region of gTsang to the south-west of rDzong dkar. Soon afterwards he was summoned by bTsun pa Chos legs, and he took advantage of the occasion to copy out the collected writings of the master into six volumes of manuscripts, while receiving during this same time "reading authorization" (*lung*) for these volumes from bTsun pa Chos legs:

Afterwards [Chos dbang rgyal mtshan] made a petition: "For the benefit of the Buddhist doctrine and the disciples following it, we two, [master and disciple], should execute these former compositions [of yours] as volumes (*glegs bam*) of [a set of your] collected writings", whereupon [bTsun pa Chos legs] replied: "This is the very way you go about things! But since there may be benefit to others [through such work], perform [it]!" Having obtained permission, [Chos dbang rgyal mtshan] completed six books (*po ti*) [of the master's writings], which were for the greater part manuscripts of the Precious One himself. [These volumes] now rest in [the monastery of] rTa dga'.

On these occasions, too, reading authorization was given for the large and small instructional texts of the Mahāmudrā [doctrine], the large and small [texts] on the difficult points relating to obtaining spiritual progress in that [doctrine]; [the work] *Nyams yig mani lu gu brgyud*, [i.e. the text on] how to keep one's spiritual experience on track; [and of the work] *Grol lam gsal bar byed pa snying gtam rin po che'i phreng ba* [with its sections on] the general framework, the presentation of the base (where the Mahāmudrā of the existing ground is established), the presentation of view, meditation and conduct (where the Mahāmudrā of the path of meditation is established), and that of the fruit (where the Mahāmudrā of the result to be realized is shown). [At the same time,] too, the comprehensive reading authorization for the six books of the precious collected writings [of bTsun pa Chos legs] was given.¹³

13 See the biography of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (as in note 9), fol. 49a/1–b/1 (*de nas bdag gnyis kyis / bstan pa dang rjes jug gi gdul bya rnams kyi don du / sngar gyi gsung rtsom 'di rnams kyang / bka' 'bum glebs bam du bsgrub par bka' gnang zhus pas / khyed rang gi byed lugs kyang yin / gzhan la phan par yang srid pas bsgrubs shig gsung / dgongs pas khrol / rin po che rang gi phyag ris gtso che ba'i po ti drug bsgrubs pa de / da ltar rta dga' na bzhugs*

In the case of the collected writings of bTsun pa Chos legs, we can see how the author's own handwritten material was initially copied and transformed into a manuscript edition by a disciple trained in the art of different scripts and already experienced in printing the master's compositions through his association with the same Buddhist craftsmen who had executed the first two texts of the Mahāmudrā doctrine as xylographic prints. We may now take things a step further by observing how the writings of the Bo dong pa teacher in their entirety were made available in the form of printed texts.

6 Printing the Works of bTsun pa Chos legs

Among the disciples who were responsible for printing the master's writings at the time of the funeral ceremonies at the royal residence at rDzong dkar in 1521 was one 'Jigs med bzang po. He was the disciple who had requested bTsun pa Chos legs to relate the course of his life and had written down his narrative (an important literary source for the history of south-western Tibet and its nomadic regions), which took events up to the year 1520. At the beginning of the autobiography we find a discussion between bTsun pa Chos legs and 'Jigs med bzang po about the need to make a mask from a cast of the master's face and an edition of his collected writings. Some of the statements echo ones which the master had earlier addressed to Chos dbang rgyal mtshan with regard to much the same issues. What comes out here more clearly is the fact that prints of the master's writings that had already been produced were the starting point for considering a print edition of all his compositions, including the biography:

Further, ['Jigs med bzang po] made a petition: "If one also compiles a [set of] collected writings when the teacher is [still] in good health, the gen-

so / de dag gi skabs su yang / phyag rgya chen po'i khrid yig che chung / de'i bogs 'don dka' ba'i gnas che chung / snyams skyong tshul nyams yig ma ñi lu gu brgyud / spyi'i khog phubs / gnas pa gzhi'i phyag rgya chen po gtan la 'bebs pa gzhi'i skabs rnam par gzhang pa / bsgom pa lam gyi phyag rgya chen po gtan la 'bebs pa lta sgom spyod pa'i skabs rnam par gzhang pa / grub pa 'bras bu'i phyag rgya chen po ston pa 'bras bu'i skabs te / grol lam gsal bar byed pa [49b] smying gtam rin po che'i phreng ba'i khrid lung rnam gnang zhing / bka' 'bum rin po che po ti drug pa'i lung yang yongs su rdzogs par gnang ngo). See Ehrhard (2000a, 26) for the context of these events in the life of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; concerning the monastery of rTa dga' (also spelt rTa sga or lTas dga'), another of the Bo dong pa school's foundations, consult Cüppers & Ehrhard (2008, 18, note 2); concerning its early history in particular, see Vitali (2012, 74–78).

eral order [of the volumes] will be perfect. Also, concerning each [single volume], a properly written [copy] will come out [of it]!” Similarly, a further request was put [to bTsun pa Chos legs]: “By having the cycle of the Mahāmudrā [doctrine] executed [already] as a print in one volume, [in] cut [paper format], it is completely done. Should the other [writings] be collected into three books (*po ti*) similar [in format] to cut [paper], in other words, these three [volumes], shall we three, [i.e.] we two friends together with the bhikṣu dBang phyug dpal ldan, execute each volume [as a print]?”¹⁴

Then [the master] replied: “There is no need to produce a mask from my [face]. Even if you were to produce one, later one will say something like: ‘Although the mask resembles the teacher in one way, in part it does not. It would be better to destroy [the mask] and erect a statue of such a person!’ Therefore it’s not worth the trouble to produce a mask for me. If you collect my compositions into books (*po ti*), you would be following the way you [normally] do things. The most important thing about my biography is this: as people are of various kinds, it is possible that benefit will later arise for those who follow [the Buddhist doctrine]!” With that he gave permission, and the collected writings were compiled into four volumes; [together with the Mahāmudrā volume and the biography] they represent the six volumes in cut [paper format] which exist up to now.¹⁵

14 The term *sa dras* can be understood here as referring to the paper size or format. Compare the following passage from the work *She bam chen mo'i dper brjod* in “Zhal lce phyogs btus”, Xinhua: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1987, p. 143.10–13: “In keeping with [the fact that] the size of the cut paper was commissioned and manufactured in mTsho sna, it is called ‘dGa’ ldan paper’, of which two [sets] each came forth.” (... *mtsho snar mngag bzos kyi shog bu dras tshad dang mthun pa gnyis re thon pa'i dga' ldan shog zer ba...*). The context is the production of deluxe editions of the *bKa' gyur*; see Cüppers (2010, 116–117).

15 See the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs (as in note 8), fols. 4b/1–5a/2 (*gzhan yang sku kham bzang ba ka bka' 'bum zhig kyang bsgrigs na / spyi'i go rims legs shing / rang rang gi thad du yang yi ge dag pa cig 'ong par mchis pas / bka' gnang bzhu zhing / de la yang phyag chen gyi bskor sa dras po ti gcig par du bsgrubs pa 'dis tshangs pa gda' / gzhan rnams 'di dang dras mnyam pa'i po ti sum (= gsum) du 'du lags sam / gsum po de bdag grogs mched gnyis / dge slong dbang phyug dpal ldan pa dang gsum gyis re re sgrub / de ltar bka' gnang ba zhu zhus pas / nga'i 'dra 'bag bzhengs pa la dgos pa med / bzhengs kyang phyis 'di 'dra ba bla ma su 'dra gcig gi 'dra 'bag yin kyang cha mi 'dug / 'di bshig nas che ge mo'i sku bzhengs pa drag zer ba las mi 'od pas 'dra 'bag bsgrubs pa la don med / nga'i brtsams chos rnams glegs bam du bsgrigs na nyid cag rang gi yang byed lugs su 'gro zhing / [5a] nga'i rnam thar gyi gtso bo 'di pa ka yin / sems can mos pa sna tshogs pa yin pas / phyis rjes su 'jug pa phan pa 'byung ba yang srid gsung bka' gnang nas / bka' 'bum bsgrigs pas po ti bzhi ma 'dus par /*

The question of casting a mask of bTsun pa Chos legs arose in the year 1518 when Buddhist craftsmen, including the “old master artist of the king of Gung thang” (*gung thang rgyal po'i bla [= lha] bzo pa dpon rgan po*) erected a “Mahābodhi stūpa” (*byang chub chen po'i mchod rten*) and a statue of Buddha Śākyamuni at the hermitage of Chab rom phug. Both 'Jigs med bzang po and Chos dbang rgyal mtshan supervised this project, and afterwards they proposed the idea of casting a mask of bTsun pa Chos legs from the gold which was left over. At the same time, the request was made to put together the collected writings – obviously by Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, who went on to produce a manuscript version in six volumes.

From the narrative penned by 'Jigs med bzang po, we can see that the volume of the three texts of the Mahāmudrā doctrine, already brought out as a xylograph edition, played a role in the compilation of the remaining texts, raising at it did the question whether the latter should take the form of manuscripts or be executed as xylographs by the two mentioned disciples along with dBang phyug dpal ldan, another Bo dong pa monk. It is interesting that bTsun pa Chos legs left this decision up to his disciples. We know at least that by 1525 the biography had finally been printed as the first volume in Chab rom phug; there too, and in the same year, the second volume, devoted to the Mahākaruṇika teachings transmitted by the master, was also executed as a xylograph.¹⁶

The four mentioned volumes of the collected writings of bTsun pa Chos legs seem to encompass the remaining works, that is, everything excluding the biography (marg. Ka) and the works on the Mahāmudrā doctrine. As the volume containing the Mahākaruṇika teachings (marg. Kha) is extant, there are three volumes and their individual titles which still remain to be identified. Two of

da lta sa dras po ti drug bzhugs pa 'di yin). See Ehrhard (2000b, xvi xvii) for a first assessment of the compilation of the collected writings of bTsun pa Chos legs. The mentioned friend of 'Jigs med bzang po is none other than Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, who was also involved in the execution of the print of the biography. For the printing colophon, see Ehrhard (2000a, 95–100). For the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs as a most important historical source for the history of south-western Tibet, see Everding (2000, 223–228).

16 For the events in Chab rom phug which led to the questions addressed to the eighty-one-year-old teacher about relating the story of his life and the compilation of his writings, see the biography (as in note 8), fols. 3b/6–4b/1. The second volume bears the title *Thugs rje chen po'i dmar khrid don tshan lnga pa* [= **Appendix I, kha**]; for the printing colophon, see *ibid.*, fols. 125b/6–126a/6. For the full details, the reader is referred to the colophon of the biography, where it is stated that material support for this project came from the same source as the former one (*par byang nam thar nyid las rtogs par byos*). For the lineage of the Mahākaruṇika teachings and the short biographies of the lineage holders, consult *ibid.*, fols. 3b/5–23a/3, and Ehrhard (2000c, 201–204).

these must have contained the writings of the master on the Madhyamaka and rDzogs chen doctrines; up to now the original xylographs of these works have not yet surfaced, but at least manuscript versions are available. The third volume seems to have consisted of miscellaneous writings, of which two individual texts (marg. Ca) have come down to us. As the “catalogue” (*dkar chag*) of the complete set of collected writings has not yet surfaced, for the time being only a provisional list can be provided (see **Appendix 1**).

7 Printing the Works of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan

It has been shown that in the case of the collected writings of bTsun pa Chos legs the effort to compile and edit this master’s compositions started already in the final phase of his life, even if they bore final fruit only after his death. In any case, his disciples proved faithful to the task of “fulfilling the intentions” of the master, as the standard formula goes. We have seen that both manuscript and block-print versions were produced, and that the latter (with support from the royal court of Mang yul Gung thang) debuted with xylographs of works on the Mahāmudrā doctrine. In the following I shall look into how the collected writings of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, the Bo dong pa monk known for his artistic and editorial skills, were made available as printed texts.

It is known that a set of the monk’s complete writings were collected soon after his death in 1549 and that in the year 1551 a first volume, covering three individual works, was printed at the hermitage of Kun gsal sgang po che. The catalogue of the complete three-volume collection is available. It was produced in the following year by the same disciple of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan who had been responsible for carving the collected writings on printing blocks. This xylograph edition begins, like that of bTsun pa Chos legs’s works, with a biography of the master.¹⁷

17 For the compilation of the collected writings of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan and the printing of the complete set, see Ehrhard (2000a, 50, note 46) The first volume contains the biography, the spiritual songs and minor religious writings, while of the works of the remaining two volumes only two texts are available; see *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi bka' 'bum dkar chag mun sel sgron me*, fols. 2a/4–3b//4 [= **Appendix II**]. Attention should be drawn to the list of contents of the third volume, for it mentions a catalogue of the collected writings of bTsun pa Chos legs and another one of the collected writings of Bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa brTson 'grus grags pa (1122–1193), the transmission of which was also in the hands of the master of the Bo dong pa school.

In order to show how this set of collected writings had been conceived when the author was still alive, the section of catalogue which follows immediately after the actual table of contents and initial verses may be cited:

Thus the immaculate speech of the Noble One, the incomparable glorious teacher (i.e. Chos dbang rgyal mtshan), this powerful king of a precious [set of] collected writings – concerning [these] blessings they were compiled in the actual presence [of the master]. When [the work] *Grub mtha' gshags ral* [= *Chos thams cad kyi spyi babs gshags ral chen mo*] had been written out in his actual presence, the request was put to the Precious One: “Up to now [even] some of the treasure-teachings of the Precious One from Oḍḍiyāna have been transcribed from golden scrolls by treasure-discoverers – like sons enjoying the riches of the father. [This, your work], too – in the same way as the handwriting of the treasure-discoverer is inseparable from the golden scroll – has been transcribed by yourself!” Accordingly, he strove to complete [correctly the works bearing the titles] “The Minor Nirvāṇa of the Qualified Lord” (i.e. bTsun pa Chos legs) and “The Small and Extensive Royal Genealogies” [and all] the individual names [of the rulers] mentioned [therein]. And not only that; it is said that his previous compositions, including the metrics of poetical writings and so forth were [all] executed by himself and thus transformed into a [set of his own] collected writings.

Also, the sequence, [i.e.] the succession in the ordering of the writings – these were compiled [like] a continuous stream of water, with sometimes greater [works followed by] lesser, and sometimes lesser [by] greater, in an uncertain arrangement. Persons of great learning will have no occasion [to use] faulty words [against such an arrangement]!¹⁸

18 See the catalogue of the collected writings of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (as in note 17), fols. 4b/3–5a/2 (*de ltar mnyam med dpal ldan bla ma'i dam pa'i gsung ngag dri ma med pa / bka' 'bum rin po che dbang gi rgyal po'di nyid / byin rnams ni zhal bzhugs ring la bsgrigs pa yin cing / grub mtha' gshags ral ni zhal bzhugs dus bris pa yin la rin po cher sung (= gsung) zhu / da bar u rgyan rin po che'i gter chos gcig ni / gter ston rnams kyis shog ser las phab pa las / pha nor la bu spyad pa ltar / 'di yang gter ston gyis phyag ris / shog ser dang dbyer med pa las nyid kyis phab pa / de dang mtshungs bzhin / mtshan ldan rje'i mya ngan 'das chung dang / rgyal rabs che chung rnams kyang / mtshan so sos smos pa rnams klad du bzhugs pa ma gtogs / snyan sngags gyi sdeb sbyor sogs gong [5a] rtsom thams cad nyid kyis mdzad pas / bka' 'bum du 'gyur gsung ngo / go rim yang yi ger bkod pa rim bzhin chu babs su bsgrigs pa yin pas / mchog dman dang / dman mchog gi bsgrigs rim nges pa med pa la / mkhas pa chen po rnams kyis tshig skyon gyi skabs ma mchis so). According to the table of contents, the doxographical work with the short title *gShags ral chen mo* is contained in*

These details make it clear that the three volumes of the collected writings were compiled and written out during the lifetime of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan and that he had an active hand in the editorial process of producing the manuscripts of his own compositions. The blocks for the three-volume set were only carved after the master's death. According to the printing colophon of the biography, the donors came from the Himalayan valley of bTsum, already referred to as a regional source of paper, and a region where on earlier occasions the Bo dong pa monk had been actively involved in producing xylograph editions of Buddhist texts.

The act of transcribing the teachings of Padmasambhava can be considered as a standard for the correctness and authenticity of other handwritten material brought to light by treasure-discoverers. The allusion to it recalls Chos dbang rgyal mtshan's own involvement with treasurer-discoverers of the rNying ma pa school and the revelation of an ancient scroll he had discovered himself; the result of this find was written out and later incorporated into his collected writings. Another angle to be considered here is the impact the more widespread use of printing (and the growing awareness of conflicting readings it occasioned) had on editorial practices at the time. It is noteworthy that in the case of a representative of the flourishing block-print culture it is the model of the true treasure-discoverer transcribing the original golden scrolls that is summoned up.¹⁹

We do not have access to the majority of the doctrinal works of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, and it would be particularly helpful to have all the writings of his that are known as the "cycle of catalogues and printing colophons" (*dkar chag dang / spar byang gi skor*) in order to further document the individual printing projects conducted under his supervision. In order to get an overview

the second volume of the collected writings. Mention is made as well to a chronicle of the rulers of Mang yul Gung thang in the third volume; see the work (as in note 16), fols. 2b/2 & 3b/3–4 [= **Appendix II**]. A work by Chos dbang rgyal mtshan documenting the phase immediately before the death of bTsun pa Chos legs (known as the "Minor Nirvāṇa") is noted in the biography of the former; see Ehrhard (2000a, 27, note 10).

- 19 For the contacts Chos dbang rgyal mtshan had with such treasure-discoverers as Rig 'dzin mChog ldan mgon po (1497–1531) and Rig 'dzin bsTan gnyis gling pa (1480–1535), both of whose collected writings he had executed as block-print editions, see Ehrhard (2000a, 32–37 & 40–42). During a stay in the region of lHo brag, the Bo dong pa monk had extracted a treasure text which found its way into the second volume of his collected writings; see the text *Dug brtag pa dang bcos pa'i gdams ngag khyad par can* in the catalogue (as in note 17), fol. 3a/6–b/1 [= **Appendix II**]. For the impact printing had on Tibetan textual criticism and scholarship and the implications for and influence on Tibetan intellectual and cultural practices in general, consult van der Kuijp (2013, 125–126).

of both the available works and complete writings according to the catalogue, the corresponding list and a facsimile of the catalogue is reproduced below (see **Appendix II**).

8 Conclusions

The shift of a manuscript culture to a block-print culture in the region of Mang yul Gung thang can best be described as a change in media under which the old ways of codifying and transmitting Buddhist scriptures and teachings in the form of handwritten copies, far from becoming superfluous, continued to play a central role in textual production. As could be seen in the case of the two sets of collected writings from the Bo dong pa school, the individual works were first written out in manuscript form by expert scribes – sometimes even by the authors themselves – and were only later carved on wooden blocks. The expertise of the craftsmen and artists was grounded in their knowledge of the different scripts and the technical means of producing Buddhist artefacts. It was important, too, to receive financial assistance from royal patrons or local communities, who supported the activities of individual masters.

As could be seen in the early efforts of bTsun pa Chos legs to produce a set of collected writings and in the first stage of the codification of his own compositions, the manuscript medium was the dominant one, and even shortly before the time of his death the matter was still unsettled whether his compositions should be collected and made available as xylographs. It was obviously only after increased contacts with the royal court of Mang yul Gung thang that the means and resources could be marshalled to produce a complete print edition of his writings. In the case of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, the expert Buddhist craftsman with close contacts to the royal court, we step over the threshold into a well-established block-print culture, one with its centre at the hermitage of Kun gsal sgang po che. Here again, one can observe the delivery of its products to Central Tibet and visits of religious and political authorities to Mang yul Gung thang in order to have collected writings brought out as xylograph editions. This situation would explain in part why the collected writings of the Bo dong pa monk became available as block prints so soon after his death.²⁰

20 The hermitage of Kun gsal sgang po che as a vibrant centre of printing activities in Mang yul Gung thang, along with a visit paid to it by an official known as sDe pa skyid gshongs pa nang so, was first sketched in Ehrhard (2000a, 39, note 29); compare Ehrhard (in press) concerning its print edition of the collected writings of 'Ba ra ba sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1475–1530) from the year 1534 executed on the visitor's behalf. During this

One of the differences between handwritten and printed texts lies in the latter's mode of dissemination and the number of copies that could be made available to a wider audience. We still do not know much about the number of prints produced of such collected writings as the two examples of the Bo dong pa school and how they were circulated. It seems that everything was largely confined to a fairly local scale, as can be inferred from the number of original xylographs which have surfaced up to now. As documented by the initial xylographs of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, the technology of printing was introduced in south-western Tibet in the early 15th century, and actual printing ventures were supported by the various ruling houses. The craft exerted a greater impact in the 16th century with the establishment of individual workshops and a network of Buddhist artists and craftsmen, as documented in the historiography of the print medium in Mang yul Gung thang. The compilation of individual works of great teachers into coherent collections has always played an important role in the intellectual and religious life of Tibetan Buddhists, and this is just as true, if not more so, of texts chosen to be reproduced as xylographs.

Appendix I: Collected Works of bTsun pa Chos legs

Block prints that contain a marginal volume letter:

Vol. Ka *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa chos legs mtshan can gyi rnam thar yon tan 'brug sgra*, 150 fols.

NGMPP reel nos. L 66/7–L 67/1. Also available in “Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdus” (as in note 4), pp. 40–42.

Vol. Kha *Thugs rje chen po'i dmar khrid don tshan lnga pa*, 125 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 263/1

——— *gSang spyod rnal lam ma*, 14 fols. NGMPP reel no. L 340/14

Vol. Ga (not available)

Vol. Nga (not available)

Vol. Ca *rDo rje slob dpon gyis bya ba'i rim pa*, 38 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 340/5

——— *Kun rig la brten pa'i zhi ba'i sbyin bsreg*, 19 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 878/3

Vol. Cha (not available)

period one can also witness in the southern regions of the kingdom an increased production of xylograph editions of hagiographical works and reprints of Buddhist classics; see Sernesi (2011, 184–205).

Block prints lacking a marginal volume letter:

Grol lam gsal bar byed pa snying gtam rin po che'i phreng ba, 239 fols.

NGMPP reel nos. L 390/7–L 391/1 & AT 150/7–150/11

*Phyag rgya chen po'i khrid / skal bzang gso pa'i bdud rtsi snying po bcud bsdu*s, 81 fols.

(individual margin: e)

NGMPP reel no. AT 161/21–162/1

Phyag rgya chen po'i dka' ba'i gnas gsal byed sgron me, 25 fols. (individual margin. vaṃ)

NGMPP reel no. AT 161/21–162/1

Nyams yig maṇi lu gu rgyud, 37 fols. (individual margin: ka)

NGMPP reel no. AT 161/21–162/1

Nges don dgongs pa kun 'dus, 9 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 189/2

Manuscripts lacking a marginal volume letter:

rDzogs pa chen po kun bzang dgongs pa rab gsal, 213 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 492/1

Shes rab gtso bor gyur pa'i zab mo dbu ma rnam par bzhag pa, 137 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 390/5–6

Thabs gtso bor gyur pa mi shig pa'i (= shigs pa'i) rnam par bzhag pa, 60 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 390/5–6

Appendix 11: Collected Works of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan

Block prints containing a marginal volume letter:

Vol. Ka *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa / rin po che nor bu'i phreng ba*, 129 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 66/5 & L 389/13–L 390/1

——— *mTshan ldan bla ma dam chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi mgur 'bum*, 212 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 17/4, 212 fols. (incomplete) &

241 fols., NGMPP reel no. L 65/5 (manuscript)

——— *mNyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi gsung ngag thor bu*, 58 fols.

NGMPP reel nos. L 17/6 and L 66/6

Vol. Kha *Phyag rgya chen po lhan gcig skyes sbyor gyi khrid rgyab*, 12 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 17/2

——— *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa'i gsung 'bum las / phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag bdud rtsi'i gter mdzod*, 10 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L 17/5

——— *mNyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi sku bstod*, 3 fols.

NGMPP reel no. L. 17/3

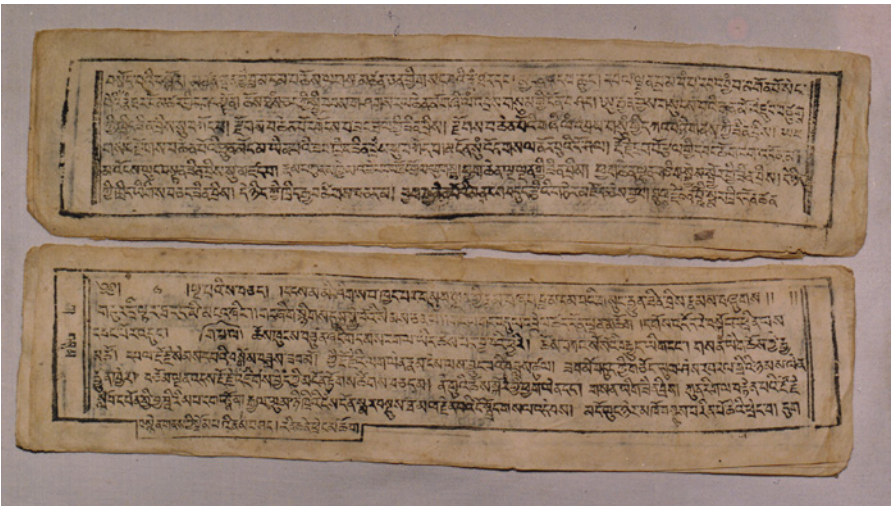
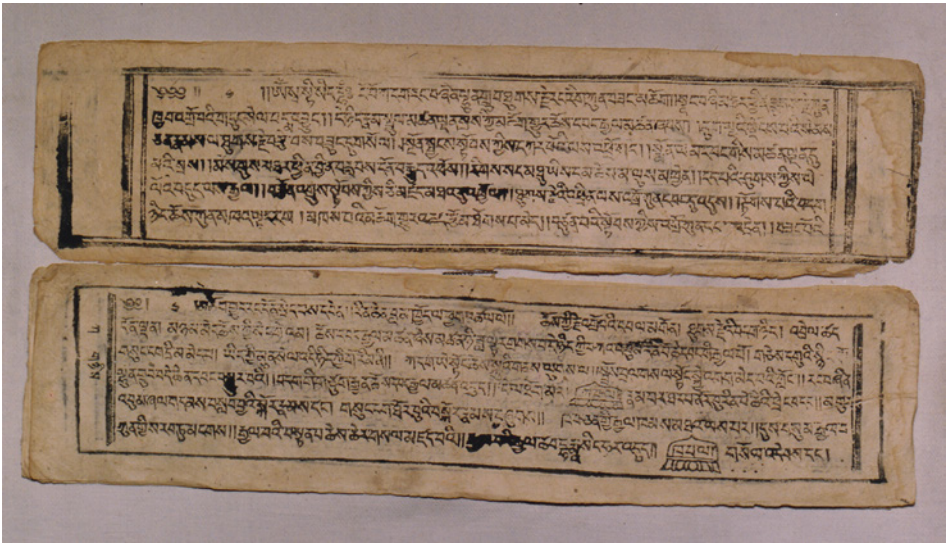
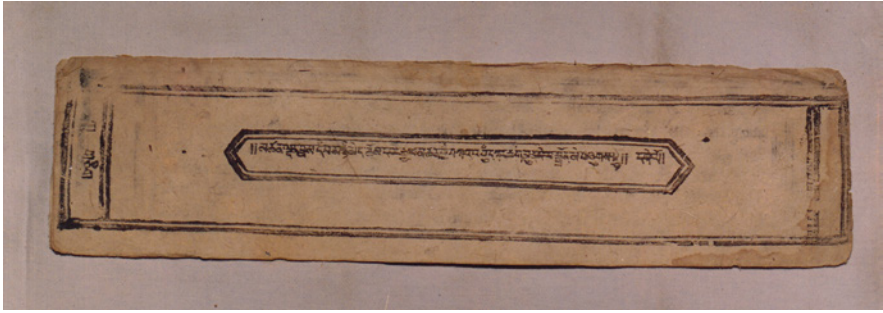
Vol. Ga (not available)

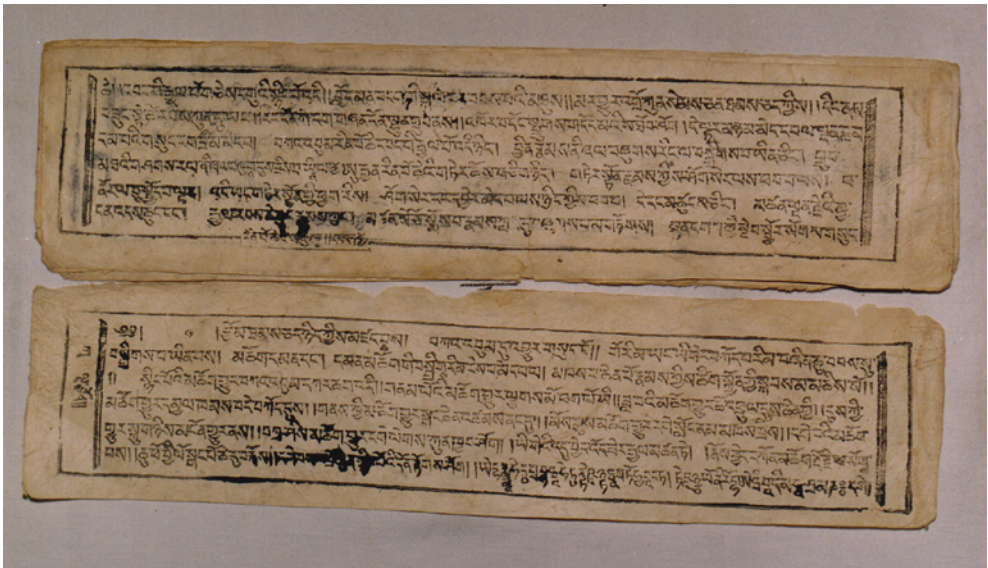
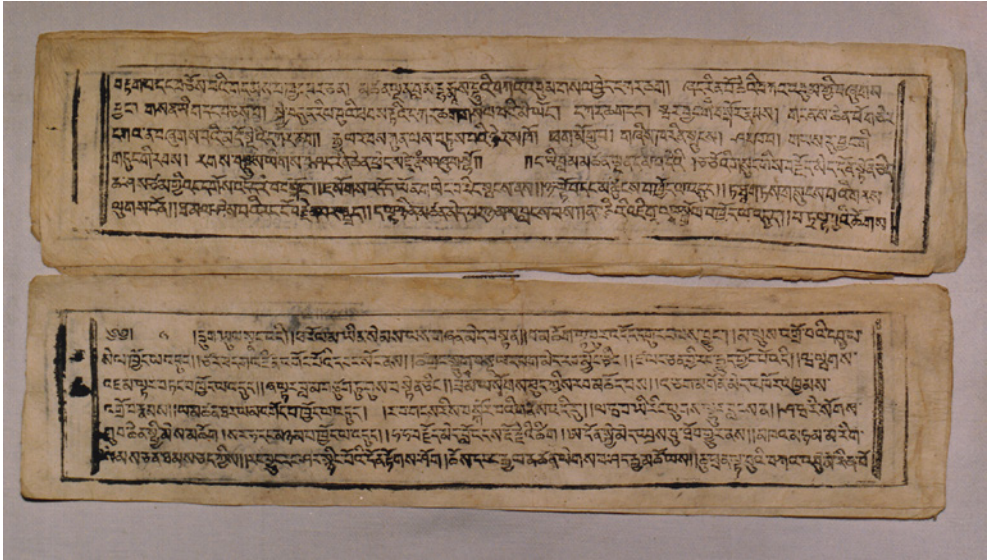
Contents of the Collected Writings according to *dKar chag mun sel sgron me*, fols. 2a/4–3b/4:

de las thog mar ka pa la / nmam par thar pa nor bu rin po che'i phreng ba dang / mgur 'bum zhal gdams bslab bya'i skor rnams dang gsung ngag thor bu'i skor rnams bzhugs / . . . /

kha pa la / gsol 'debs dang / [2b] bstod pa'i skor / mtshan ldan gyi bla ma dam pa chos lags (= legs) mtshan can gyi gsang ba'i nmam thar dang / mya ngan 'das chung / dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rab 'byams pa mngon pa'i seng ge'i nmam thar ngo mtshar gyi dga' ston / chos thams cad gyi spyi babs gshag ral chen mo gzhi lam 'bras bu gsum gyi don bshad / u rgyan gyis gsungs pa'i rgan mo 'dzub btsugs kyi khrid zin bris su bkod pa / rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal gyi zin bris / rdzogs pa chen po gzhi lam 'bras gsum gyi dka' ba nye gnas kyi zin bris / yang gsang rdzogs pa chen po'i thun mong ma yin pa'i zab bris su bkod pa / mngon sum 'od gsal nor bu'i do shal / rdo rje drag po rtsal gyi dbang chog ngag 'don ma / ma 'ongs lung bstan zin bris su mdzad pa / nmam pa kun mkhyen 'grel pa mthong grol 'brug sgra / phyag chen lnga ldan gyi zin bris / phyag chen lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi zin bris / de nyid kyi khrid yig sa bcad zin bris / de nyid kyi khrid rgyab tshigs bcad ma / phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag bdud rts'i'i gter mdzod ces bya ba / thugs rje chen po'i smar khrid don tshan [3a] lnga pa'i sa bcad / dangs ma mi shigs pa khyad par gsum ldan gyi rnam bzhag / bla ma dam pa'i gsung rgyan zin bris rnams bzhugs // . . .

ga pa la / chos khungs btsun zhing gdams ngag la yid che par bya ba'i phyir / chos bka' so so'i brgyud yig dang / gsan yig chos kyi rgya mtsho / dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i bsgom bzlas zab mo / kyai (= kye) rdo rje'i lag len rnam nges las byung ba'i bzlas tshul / zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul shes rab ral gr'i'i nyam len rgyun khyer / bcom ldan das rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi mngon rtogs tshigs bcad ma / ni gu'i chos skor gyi phyag len dang / gsan yig zin bris / kun rig la brten pa'i rdo rje slob dpon gyi bya ba'i rim pa dga' ston / bsnyen gnas kyi sdom pa'i rnam bshad / rin chen phreng mchog / rgyal yum nyi khri'i nges don smar bsdu / tha mal rjen pa'i ngo sprod gsal 'debs / mdo lung nyer mgo (= mkho) bsdu pa rin po che'i phreng ba / dug [3b] brtag pa dang bcas pa'i gdams pa khyad par can / mtshan ldan bla ma dharma sadhu'i bka' 'bum gsal byed dkar chag / zhang rin po che'i bka' 'bum gyi bzhugs byang / gsan yig dang bcas pa / skyes bdun ril bu'i phabs rta'i dkar chag gsal ba'i me long / dkar chag dang / spar byang gi skor rnams / gdan sa chen po gcer dga' na bzhugs pa'i mdo sde'i dkar chag / rgyal rabs kun las btus pa'i nyer mkho / phag mo gru pa / gzhis kha rin spungs / shar kha ba / g.yas ru byang gi gdung rabs / rabs bsdu legs bshad rin chen phreng mdzes rnams bzhugs so //





FIGURES 11.1–11.5 *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi bka' 'bum dkar chag mun sel sgron me*, 5 fols., NGMPP reel-no. L 389/3–390/1.

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Continuity and New Developments in 15th Century Tibetan Book Production: Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal (1376–1451) and His Disciples as Producers of Manuscript and Print Editions

Tsering Dawa Sharshon

1 Introduction

In 1402 at the Shel dkar palace Si tu Chos kyi Rin chen, the great dharma king of southern La stod, passed away. It was the end of the extraordinary life of a king that was later described by the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* (folio 12r) as having the features of a Paṇḍita (*rgyal po Paṇḍita cha lugs su gzhuḡs pa*). His son Si tu lHa btsan skyabs and his spiritual master Grags pa rgyal mtshan together with all the lamas of southern La stod performed the funeral in an excellent way. In order to accumulate merit for the deceased they carried out many ritual activities and one of these was the printing of the Buddhist treatise *'Grel chung don gsal*.¹ The following year Grags pa rgyal mtshan passed the abbot's throne of Shel dkar to his nephew Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal. This latter with the support of Si tu lHa btsan skyabs completed the work in 1407. According to a recently published collection of Bo dong pa texts, which contains a handwritten version of the text of the colophon, this was written originally by Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal himself. (*Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal gyi gsung 'bum gsar rnyed skor*, vol. 4, 301–303) This just confirms his direct involvement in the printing process, which was predictably the case as he was by then the head of Shel dkar monastery.

This early Tibetan print drew my attention to the role that Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal and his disciples played in Tibetan fifteenth century printing and encouraged me to explore Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal's views concerning the production of books as an important part of the arts and crafts (*karmasthānavidyā*, *bzo rig pa*) dedicated to the creation of supports of body, speech and mind (*sku gsung thugs rten*). In this article, I begin with an

1 *'Grel chung don gsal*, is a famous commentary by the Indian master Haribhadra (Seng ge bzang po) on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*.

examination of what he writes on book production in his collected works. I also consider what can be gleaned from printing colophons. The aim is to understand his views on the subject. I then look at how his disciples carried on his legacy by having many of his works printed as well as numerous other texts. By analysing the motivations and processes that informed printing in this area, I show that printing as technological innovation is to be seen in continuity with established forms of book production, so much so that only some of the biographical accounts of masters involved in printing refer to it as something distinctive. Printing did not supersede manuscript production; it, rather, complemented it. The particular emphasis that Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal and his disciples gave, to teaching the doctrine to a large number of people and to spreading Buddhist texts as widely as possible, might be seen as one of the factors that let the Bo dong pa embrace printing technology when this was still in its early days in Tibet.

2 Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's Views on the Making of Books as Supports of the Speech [of the Buddha] (*gsung rten*)

In Buddhism, especially but not exclusively in the Mahāyāna tradition, books are considered the supports of the speech of the Buddha and are worshipped as such. This is reflected, for example, in a dialogue between the Gung thang king Khri bKra shis lDe (1313–1365) and his masters (*Gung thang rgyal rabs*, folio 11r):

Thanks to the power of the merits (*bsod nams mthu*) of the king, he obtained a great wealth of gold. Then he thought: 'Things in this world are truly without meaning and the wealth of this life is an outcome of the compassion of the Jewel [of Buddhism] and the actions of giving in previous lives. Therefore, I do not want to waste the gold, I want only to serve the Jewel', [and] he asked the master: 'By what actions can I accumulate the most merits?' [To this the master replied,] 'The excellent field of merits is the precious Buddha's teaching, which is the source of all happiness and benefit. The meaning of the scriptures is the root of Buddha's teachings and should be explained by standardised treatises. In Tibet, texts with many words, in a complete form are quite rare. If Tibetan treatises could be produced, they would bring great benefit.' Having happily accepted the suggestion, he had all the treatises explaining all teachings of the dharma produced on lapis lazuli paper written in golden ink.

In the collected works of Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal, generally known as *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*, there are several texts dedicated to the arts and crafts. Among these, there are two texts written by Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal himself, included in Vol. 2 of *Encyclopaedia Tibetica*. According to the original organisation of his collection, these texts belong to the *mKhas pa la 'jug pa'i sgo* (*The entrance door for expert beings*).² The discussion of the supports of speech is given in the text: *rtan gsum bzhengs tshul bstan bcos lugs bshad pa* (*Discourse on the tradition of setting up supports of the three planes*).³ This text consists of five parts and the main portion of the text focuses on where the supports of the three planes should be housed. In practice, this is dedicated to the construction of monasteries and temples. The fourth and fifth parts of this text are dedicated to the actual supports of the three planes which included the “supports of speech”, i.e. the scriptures. Discussing the “supports of speech” he makes three main points:

- 1) Since the words of the Buddha are beyond our imagination, the books (*glegs bam*), which are the supports of Buddha's speech, should be understood as being beyond our imagination (*bsam gyis mi khyab pa*) in terms of importance, features and number. This is important because Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal seems to see himself as directly enacting the legacy of the Buddha which he considers to be wider than anything common human beings had done before.
- 2) In order to make supports of the three planes, including the supports of speech, in the proper way, five factors need to be considered to obtain the best result: patron (*yon bdag*), leader of the scholarly work (*yon tan mkhan po*), craftsmen (*bzo bo*), materials (*rgyu*), conditions (*rkyen*). The discussion of the materials and the processes reflect the fact that he had direct experience of what he was writing about and was himself a skilled

2 The *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* was originally organised in four sections: the entrance door for [common] human beings; the entrance door for expert beings; the entrance door to the Sutra; the entrance door to the Tantra (See Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal I, pp. 355–357).

3 Comparing this text with another text on this subject in the same collection written in *dpe tshugs*, it can be inferred that the latter was the original version on which the *dbu can* version is based. This is consistent with Gene Smith's comments on the fact that *Encyclopaedia Tibetica* was the result of an assemblage of two different sets so that it presented both duplications and gaps due to texts being lost in the transportation out of Tibet (Hildegard Diemberger, personal communication). The *dpe tshugs* set seems to be more accurate than the *dbu can* version.

artist and craftsman as reported in his biography by Amoghasiddhi 'Jigs med 'bangs (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal I, pp. 168–171), which mentions among other skills his painting and carving abilities.

- 3) The criteria according to which what is to be reproduced are important and are linked to the actual process of writing. From this we can see that he understood all practical aspects of bookmaking as intrinsically linked to Buddhist morality and to a discerning vision about the reproduction and distribution of scriptures, i.e. some are to be accessible to everybody, some only to a few and some not at all.

Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal paid a lot of attention to the moral qualities and the expertise of the people involved in the production of books. He observes (*Encyclopaedia Tibetica*, vol. 2, pp. 333–334):

The definition of a bad sponsor is as follows: he does not pay attention to sins and has little faith; he has a mind of competition and yearning for this life; he is impatient, has little tolerance and is full of regrets; he wants to achieve things without effort and does not complete undertaken tasks; he is doubtful of the benefits [of Buddhist teachings] and blames the gods and the craftsmen (*lha dang lha bzo*). The definition of an excellent sponsor is as follows: he is faithful, hard-working and compassionate; he is willing to offer selflessly and do the preparatory work for the achievement of merits; he is stable, patient and without hypocrisy; he has great respect for the gods and the craftsmen. The fake leader of the scholarly work (*yon tan mkhan po*) is as follows: he is has no intellectual abilities, cannot concentrate, is not friendly and likes beer; if he drinks a bit he becomes like a madman; he finds it difficult to endure work and is very arrogant; he is greedy, sharp-mouthed and has great desires; he does not use things like provisions thoughtfully and, unsatisfied, can even steal. In this way his own sins and those of others grow and expand while the sponsors' faith is certainly crushed. Having transformed good karma into bad karma, this person will be reborn in the lower realm of existence. Please don't make contact with such a person and keep away from him. The definition of the excellent craftsmen is as follows: the treaty *dPal ldan rgyud chen sa ma su di* says: "they should be calm, faithful, young, sharp-minded and not distracted by many thoughts; they refrain from anger and behaving badly behind one's back; they are very skilled and enjoy what they are doing; they are tolerant and compassionate." The *dPal ldan sdom pa 'byung rgyud* says: "they are very calm and competent in the skills of arts and crafts, they consider rituals and are very

conscientious". This is a concise definition or, in other words, they have little desire and are able to endure [hard work] (*bzol ba zob cing rkyen la bgyi*). They speak in a well-mannered way, are patient and easily agree with each other. They express their gratitude [to human beings] and respect the gods. They don't like beer and they are easy-going.

In the production of books Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal highlights some practical aspects of materials and processes. Concerning writing supports he lists four classes of paper (*shog*): golden paper written with lapis lazuli is the best, blue-black paper written in gold and silver is the best in the medium options, blue-black paper written in a gold-silver mix or silver only is a lesser medium option, beige paper (*shog skya*) or tree bark (*shig shun*) written in black ink (*snag tsha*) are the lowest quality options. He then states (*Encyclopaedia Tibetica*, vol. 2, pp. 339–340):

If you want to produce supports for the dharma, paper (*shog bu*) and other materials provide the basis [for writing]. They must be smooth, flexible and have the right consistency. They must have a light colour and the appropriate thickness. They can be written on with the best precious stones or gold and silver or black ink. The ink must be appropriate according to the basis. The ink must have a good colour in clear contrast with that of the basis. There must be the right spaces and the lines must be straight and well shaped. The scribes should be excellent at writing" and this should be according to the description given previously in the text in which both moral qualities and expertise of craftsmen are discussed.

Concerning that which ought to be written and the manner of writing, he states (*Encyclopaedia Tibetica*, vol. 2, pp. 340–341):

What deserves to be written should be meaningful and it should provide great benefit to those who read it or even just see it. Furthermore, it must support the teaching of the dharma and benefit self and others. The immaculate teachings of the Buddha, the sutra and the Tantra, as well as the excellent undisputed treatises should be produced. Whatever you wish to write, should follow a perfect root text which you need to get. If there are any doubts concerning words or mistakes you should compare the root text with others and edit well. The size of the lines should fit the paper base (*shog khyim*), the size of each word (*yig khyim*) should fit the line (*thig khyim*). The letters should be well shaped, aligned and consistent as if the whole book was written in a single day with a single

pen. It is said that [comparing letters] one above should be exactly the same as one below. The letters should be equal if compared. Paper technology (*shog bzo*), paper colouring and the colour of inks and so on, all must be excellent as if they are produced in competition. Treatises that raise enthusiastic faith should be written in such a way. The fake sutra and Tantra or those treatises that contain wrong information or distorted meaning, written by foolish men of Tibet who act as if they are learned persons should not be written. This should be done avoiding the sins of bad and incorrect writing and wording with the purpose of raising yearnings and competitions. As soon as the text is written down and a good editing performed, *rtsi gres* (counted and put in order?), endowed with book covers and so on, then the consecration and the *rgya tshar bya* (one-hundred times) [ritual] must be performed well. The common [books] (*thun mongs pa rnams*) benefit the common sentient beings. The uncommon [books] (*thun mongs mayin pa*) should be hidden from those who do not have the karma [to access them] and benefit those who have.

Most of what is said in this text applies also to book production through printing. Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal does not single out this technique in his treatises. Details of the printing processes in which he was involved are given only in printing colophons. Most of what he says about merit making through book production, the features of patronage, the moral qualities and the skills of craftsmen as well as some of the information about materials could apply to both prints and manuscripts. Despite the fact that he did not highlight the technique, he was clearly an enthusiast of it.

There are several elements that underpinned Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal attitude towards printing. I can identify four but there are probably more.

- 1) He came from a very scholarly background and had great interest in books through his activities of teaching, translating and writing. He considered the compilation of his vast collection his great achievement and his main tools for teaching students how to strive for enlightenment.
- 2) Building on the legacy of dPang Blo gros brtan pa, Byang chub rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan⁴ who had first advocated and eventually built a school of philosophy in Shel dkar monastery, Bo dong Phyogs las rnam

4 These great translators, all born in Zur tsho, were part of the of the uncle-nephew lineage to which Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal belonged. See *Shel dkar chos 'byung* folio 35r–46v and also *Bo dong chos 'byung* folio 14v–16v.

rgyal was dedicated to teaching a large number of disciples. For this purpose sets of identical texts were particularly useful.

- 3) He was following in the footsteps of masters who were very dedicated to book production. He was aware of and building on the work of Bu ston Rin chen grub who gave precise instructions especially concerning editing (See Schaeffer 2009).
- 4) He had a special attention for the social and technical aspects of book production within his wider interest in secular arts and science.

3 Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal and His Disciples as Pioneers of Printing

Most detailed information on how Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal was involved in printing projects can be gleaned from the printing colophons of two prints from the early 15th century (text 1 and 3 in Porong Dawa's collection, see his article in this volume). The biography by Mi bskyod rdo rje, one of his young disciples during the final part of his life, mentions (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal II, folio 69r–69v) the reproduction of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's works and other famous texts in manuscript and print form as follows:

After the completion of the great treatises, i.e. the *de kho na nyid 'dus pa*, the original manuscript by the Lord siddha himself was produced (*bzhengs*) as follows: one whole set was produced by the Bo dong community; one whole set at Yar 'brog by Hyeng du Kun dga' rgyal mtshan and his brother; one whole set at Rin spungs by Drung chen Nor bzang and his brother; one whole set by Ta'i Si tu lHa btsan skyabs; one whole set by Chos rgyal rnam rgyal grags bzang; one whole set by sTag lung bka' drug pa [Ngag dbang grags pa]; one whole set by the queen Byang chub chos kyi sgron me at mNga' ris Gung thang and also a whole set was sponsored by sKyid grong mNgon dga' ba. Altogether these were nine [manuscript] sets. So up to now there are nine whole sets. Furthermore half of a medium sized set [of Bo dong pa] works was sponsored by Si tu Rab brtan pa of rGyal mkhar rtse, another half of a medium-sized set by rNam rgyal gling pa and another by bSod rgyal, ruler of Shang pa. The *Tripitaka* holder dPal ldan sangs rgyas (1391–1455) sponsored an entire medium sized-set. Then under the sponsorship of Shel dkar chos sde the *rGyud sde spyi rnam* [by Bo dong pan chen] was printed (*spar du brkos*). Furthermore the *sBas don gsal ba* was sponsored by mNga' ris chos sde.

[The print edition of the] *De nyid 'dus pa snying po* was sponsored by the Zur tsho ba. The *De nyid 'dus pa snying po* was produced (*bzhengs*) [in printing] at Yar 'brog mNgon dga' again. The *Kye rdo rje mngon [tog] dkyil* [*'khor*] was produced (*bzhengs*) [in printing] with the sponsorship of faithful patrons. Also the *mNgon rtogs kyi rnam nges*, the *gSang 'dus mdor byas kyi mngon dkyil*, the *'jigs byed mngon dkyil*, the *bDe mchog dril bu lugs kyi mngon dkyil*, the [*Tshad ma*] *rnam nges*, the *Kun rig*, the *sMan bla* and so on were printed (*spar du brkos*). Furthermore many currently famous scriptures were reproduced in print and manuscript form. Up to now, regarding the volumes at dBus gtsang mNga' ris, their quantity is beyond what can be counted even discarding those that have been spreading through printing.

Among the book production projects mentioned here some were supervised by Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal himself, most of them, however, were sponsored and supervised by his numerous lay and monastic disciples. Most important among them were local rulers who were very devoted to him as spiritual master and who felt that producing books was a Buddhist deed of merit that enhanced not only their path towards enlightenment but also the fulfilment of their role as successful Dharmaraja. In doing so, they were following in the footsteps of their ancestors. For example the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* (folio 18r) states that Si tu Chos kyi Rin chen: "Looking at the example (*spyang yar lta*) of the great deeds of the Bodhisattva ancestral kings of religion as well as Sa [skya pa] . . . wanted to build many religious symbols such as temples." However, at this point in history printing became particularly fashionable.

4 Printing as an Enhancement in Buddhist Book Production

Many print colophons highlight that one of the aims of this particular form of book production is to produce an endless stream of merit and knowledge. This is highlighted in the 1407 *Shel dkar* print as follows: "From the hill of *Shel dkar* in the east, which had become an ornament of the world, from the hands of the leading scribe Byang skyabs hundreds of thousands of treaties in printed form spread like the rays of the sun to the lotus garden of each monastery [i.e. school of philosophy]. At that time, everywhere there were many youths with their bright minds endowed with the wings of scriptural and philosophical knowledge and singing the melody of good sayings, enjoying the step of the dance like a swarm of bees". A similar idea can be found for example in the *Gung thang rgyal rabs* according to which the Gung thang king Khri rNam rgyal lde (1426/7?–1502) whose root lama was Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal produced

at rDzong dkar “the print editions of the medical treatises Yan lag brgyad pa, the *Ma ni bka' bum*, *Urgyan thangyig* and the *Mi la bka' bum* in order to spread innumerable books”. His father Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan (1404–1464), who was also a disciple of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal “had the great scriptures (*bstan bcos chen po*) of this master, the *de nyid 'dus pa* reproduced in its extensive, medium and short form and also innumerable prints (*gsung par mtha' yas pa*) of the works *Dus 'khor ye shes mchod rten*, the *rGyud sde bzhi mngon rtogs gyi dkyil 'khor rnam nge*.”⁵

Clearly these comments reflect the idea that a great number of books equal a great number of merits, which is a well-known tenet of Mahāyāna Buddhism especially reflected in the Prajñāpāramitā literature. Whether this vision corresponded to an actual high number of texts being printed and distributed is difficult to assess on the basis of the current available materials. What is certain is that some of these texts travelled and generated new print editions that spread across the Tibetan Buddhist world promoting the establishment of certain texts as classics or standard texts (see Nourse, this volume).

In addition to merit making, there seems to have been a sense of competition among patrons who were using Buddhist deeds to enhance their power and prestige (*mnga' thang*). For example the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* (see folio 33r–33v) directly correlates Buddhist deeds with the ruler's *mnga' thang*. Here it is also stated that the Thirteen Deeds (*legs mdzad bcu gsum*) of Situ Chos kyi Rin chen were comparable to the Eighteen Deeds (*phun tshogs bco brgyad*) of Si tu Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags, ruler of rGyal rtse and disciple of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal. The construction of the monasteries of Gung thang chos sde in Mang yul Gung thang, Shel dkar chos sde in Southern La stod, Ngam ring chos sde in Northern La stod and dPal 'khor chos sde in rGyal mkhar rtse, sponsored by the respective local rulers within a period of less than twenty years can be understood in this light. It is therefore not surprising that this logic applied also to book production and in particular to print editions that had become the fashion of the day.

The Yar 'brog rulers were no exception. Disciples of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, they sponsored a great number of prints as well as manuscripts over the 15th century and later. As a native of Yar 'brog, I shall discuss in detail the print of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* and refer to other early print editions produced in this area.

5 The *Gung thang rgyal rabs* included in the *Deb ther khag lnga* edited the term '*gsung par*' to '*gsungs pa*'. The original given by Everding (13v), however, clearly reports '*gsung par*', which he translated with the German “Drucke”, i.e. English “prints” (Everding 2000: 129). See also Ehrhard 2000: 12.

5 The Royal Prints of Yar 'brog: When Spiritual Aims Merge with Secular Governance

Bo dong Phyogs las rnam was repeatedly invited to Yar 'brog and had a close connection with the Yar 'brog ruling family. In 1440 he went there responding to an invitation by the Yar 'brog ruler and especially his brother Amoghasiddhi 'Jigs med 'bangs, who was one of his disciples and later became one of his biographers (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal 1, p. 384–386). On that occasion the Khri dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan took the oath that he would produce a full set of the Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's collected works (*dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*). During Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's stay, which lasted five months, while he was giving teachings to vast crowds of people the reproduction of his collection was completed (and we can infer that it was in manuscript form). Some three years later (for the dating see below), not much after Bo dong Phyogs rnam rgyal wrote the essence of his collected works (*dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po*), its print edition was produced at Yar 'brog, too.

A volume of this early Tibetan print seems to be the one currently preserved at the British Library where it arrived after having been taken from Tibet to the UK by the Younghusband military expedition of 1903/4 (see Diemberger 2012: 131–171). During my research stay at Cambridge in 2013, I took the opportunity to visit the British Library and see the original of this work. It was with deep emotion that I had my first encounter with this precious text. It had been printed over five hundred years ago in the royal palace, behind which I was born, and it had been read by innumerable generations of monks and devout Buddhists from my homeland. A century after this text made a long journey away from its place of origin to come to the UK, carried by mule and ship, I was able to see and touch it. It was like finding an ancient, long-lost relative.

As a scholar I read it carefully and I was delighted to discover that it had a very interesting and distinctive colophon. This version of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* is particular in that it contains not only the actual text but also an authors' colophon (*mdzad byang*) referring to the entire *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* collection.

The colophon does not give us the actual printing date. However the biography of Byams pa gling pa bSod nams rnam rgyal (see TBRC W26621, folio 31r), one of Bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyal disciples, mentions the fact that he himself had compiled the colophon of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* printed by the rulers of Yar 'brog in 1443. According to both his biography (folio 28r–28v) and that of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal written by Amoghasiddhi 'jig med 'bangs (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal 1, pp. 374–376)

he was in Yar 'brog in 1440 when Bo dong Phyogs rnam rgyal was there. The colophon of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* preserved at the British Library mentions Hing du Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (birth before 1425 and death after 1478), brother of Amoghasiddhi 'jig med 'bangs, as *khri dpon* of Yar 'brog. It also mentions a praise to Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal without referring to his passing, as was done in the 1478 Yar 'brog edition of his works (see *dkar chag yid nor*, folio 22r). It is therefore likely that the British Library text is a print from the blocks carved in 1443.



FIGURE 12.1 *Nojin Gangsang and the sNa dkar rtse county.*
TSERING DAWA SHARSHON 2007.

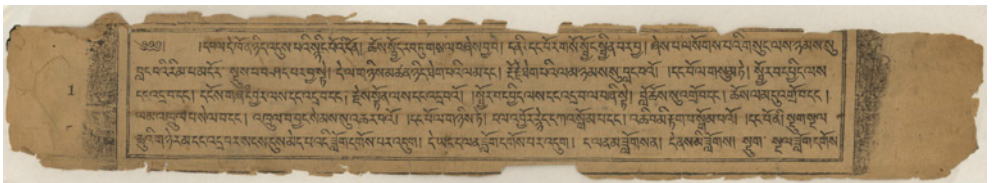


FIGURE 12.2 *Yamdruk prints Folio iv.*
COURTESY BRITISH LIBRARY.

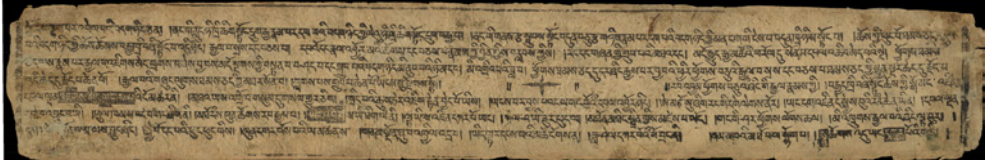


FIGURE 12.3 *Yamdruk prints Folio 169v.*
COURTESY BRITISH LIBRARY.

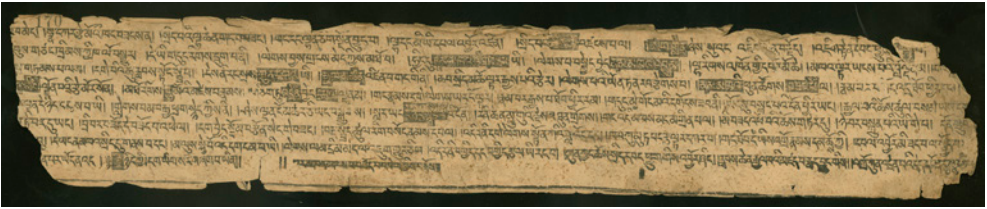


FIGURE 12.4 *Yamdruk prints Folio 170r.*
COURTESY BRITISH LIBRARY.

Two full sets of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* were produced in manuscript form at Yar 'brog in the 15th Century, one in 1440 and one in 1478. The 1440 edition is reported in both biographies of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal I, p. 518; Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal II, folio 69r) and in the colophon of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* preserved at the British Library (folio 170r). A newly discovered catalogue of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's works reported that the 1478 edition was produced at Yar 'brog under the sponsorship of Kun dga' gyal mtshan and the second bSam sdings rDo rje Phag mo Kun dga' bzang mo (see *dkar chag yid nor*, folio 22r and Diemberger in this volume). Furthermore, three of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's works are extant in print from this period: the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* mentioned above (1443?); the *Kun rig cho ga de nyid rnam nges* printed in 1446 (see text number 6 in Porong Dawa's collection); the *rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa* printed in 1468.

The biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal by Amoghasiddhi 'Jig med 'bangs (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal I, pp. 519–520) states: “The *rGyud sde rin po che spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa* was supported by Shel dkar chos sde and the *Khrid yig sbas don kun gsal* was supported by mNga' ris chos sde, the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa'i snying po* was supported by the Zur tsho ba. The *dPal de nyid 'dus pa'i snying po* was produced here again. All these texts were printed (*spar du grub*).”

This passage gives us important clues: except for the *Khrid yig sbas don kun gsal* this passage refers to extant printed texts, which correspond to texts number 3 and number 10 in Porong Dawa's collection. It can therefore be assumed that *Khrid yig sbas don kun gsal* was actually produced in print form in Gung thang before the date of the compilation of the biography 1453 (i.e. during Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan's reign, see also Diemberger in this volume). The *De nyid 'dus pa snying po* produced at Zur tsho must have been printed between 1441 and 1443, i.e. between the date of its compilation (see Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal I, pp. 391–392) and that of the new print edition in Yar 'brog.⁶ The 'here' referring to the site where the new print edition was made (*slar 'dir bzhengs pa*) clearly indicates sNa dkar rtse where the biographer, Amoghasiddhi 'Jig med 'bang, was residing. He was the brother of the Yar 'brog ruler Khri dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan also mentioned in the colophon of the print preserved at the British Library.

While the manuscripts were produced at Yar 'brog mNgon dga' monastery, the three printed texts were produced at the Yar 'brog royal palace. This is clearly stated in the colophons. These three volumes have letters on the margins: the first has the letter *ka*, the second *ga*, the third *Om hung ho* (each letter for one of the three texts forming the book). They all have the same style of writing and carving, which can be seen from the lay-out, the simple and non-decorated title page, the punctuation such as the *dbu khyud* sign and the shape of the letters. Some distinctive features of the first text will be discussed below. The colophon of the first text mentions as the main carver mKhas pa bZod pa 'phel, the colophon of the second text mentions mGon po dpal without any title or description, and the colophon of the third text mentions the excellent

6 This is presumably the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* printed at Zur tsho with the sponsorship of sLob dpon ma Nam mkha' dpal bzang mo, see Porong Dawa text number 10. This is consistent with the fact that its colophon mentions the spiritual master 'Dul 'dzing Ngag dbang as having participated in a leading position in the project. He was a teacher of Sha ra rab byams pa Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1427–1470), disciple of gTsang smyon Heruka, and a contemporary of Chos kyi sgron ma. The colophon also mentions a Drung chen bSod nams rgyal mtshan as deceased official to whom the printing project was dedicated. This bSod nams rgyal mtshan is different from the homonymous teacher of bTsun pa chos legs. The biography of bTsun chos legs (folio 84v–85r) in this respect reports that his bLa ma bSod nams rgyal mtshan, one of his eight main disciples of Kun skyong gling pa, "was not . . . the official (*sku ngo*) of the Zur tsho people known as sPang ston bSod nams rgyal mthan, who was killed by the Byang pa [i.e. the ruler of La stod Byang]" (*Zur tsho ba'i sku ngo sPang ston bSod nams rgyal mtshan du grags pa byang pas bkrong pa de ni ma yin te . . . sprul sku kun skyong gling pa'i thugs sras bryad kyi nang tshan du gyur pa'i bsod nams ming can de yin par shes par bya'o*).

carver mGon po dpal together with his students. It is plausible that the 1443 text was the first to be produced as volume *ka* and that between 1446 and 1468 a local carving school emerged under the leadership of mGon po dpal. These volumes are probably what is extant of a much wider collection of prints consisting of either the most popular of the Bo dong pa texts or even the entire *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*. According to the late Thub bstan rnam rgyal, former head monk of bSam sdings monastery, the sNa dkar rtse palace of Yar 'brog used to house a full set of printing blocks of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*. These were destroyed in the period between 1959 and the end of the Cultural Revolution.⁷

The characters of the Yar 'brog print of the *De kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* present features that remind of the 1428 print of Tsong kha pa's work (see text number 5 in Porong Dawa's collection)⁸ produced at 'Ol kha sTag rtse with the sponsorship of the local ruler. The carver of this text Sangs rgyas bsam [one syllable missing] and the Yar 'brog carver mKhas pa bZod pa 'phel might be seen as reflecting a tradition of style (*phyag rgyun*) common in southern Tibet. The shape of the letters, the punctuation and the layout are similar. Also, both texts use the reverse *gigu*, which is relatively rare in printed texts, and do so whenever a regular *gigu* would clash with features of the line above or with the vowel of the next or the previous letter on the same line. More generally, a lot of attention is placed on harmonising the letters. The thickness of the strokes (*smyug kham*), however, differs between the two prints: the 'Ol kha sTag rtse print shows thinner, neater and more homogenous strokes, which could be attributed to (or at least enabled by) the use of a harder wood. The Yar 'brog print has strokes that are either thicker or start thick and become thin at the end. It is likely that a softer and more readily available wood such as birch (*shing stag pa*) was used in this higher and remoter area, as reflected in the carving style.

The Yar 'brog print of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* shows an interesting irregularity: folios 56–57, folios 80–92 and folios 96–103 are stylistically different from the rest of the text and seem closer to La stod prints. First of all, there is no continuity in the text, despite continuity in the numbering of the folios. Furthermore, the calligraphy is marginally different; the marks on

7 This is according to a personal communication by Hildegard Diemberger, who met Thub bstan rnam rgyal several times between 1996 and 2000.

8 Porong Dawa considers this print as probably related to *dGa' ldan spar rnying*, see Porong Dawa's commentary to the text (2013: 140). 'Ol kha stag rtse is located in lHo kha, on the northern bank of the gTsang po river. This locality is opposite the palace of the Ne'u gdong rulers, who acted as sponsors for the *dGa' ldan spar rnying*.

the margins are absent; the *dbu kyud* is shaped differently and includes two dots (which is common in early Bo dong pa manuscripts and in many other manuscripts); there are no reverse *gigu* (except for perhaps one); there are many abridgements (*skung yig*), very infrequent in the rest of the text; and several of these folios have a seal imprint. Intrigued by the differences, I compared these folios with other texts. I then realised that they must have been printed from the Zur tsho blocks of the same text as they are absolutely identical (see Porong Dawa's collection number 10). They were probably added to the volume when some original folios went missing in order to guarantee auspiciousness (*rten 'brel*). However, the sense of completeness was presumably obtained through the continuity of the numbers rather than that of the text. This action was not repeated when other folios went missing, since thirteen of them are missing altogether.

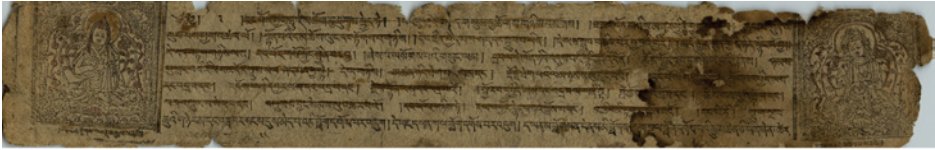


FIGURE 12.5 *Zur tsho prints 1v*.
COURTESY PORONG DAWA.

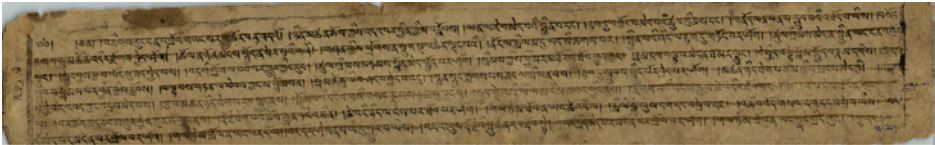


FIGURE 12.6 *Zur tsho prints 175r*.
COURTESY PORONG DAWA.

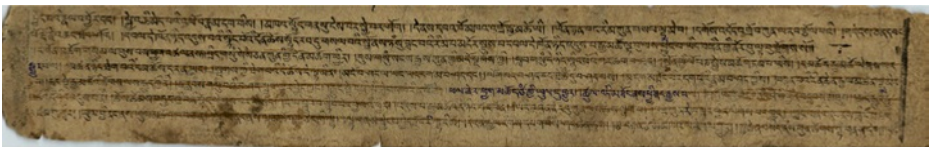


FIGURE 12.7 *Zur tsho prints 175v*.
COURTESY PORONG DAWA.

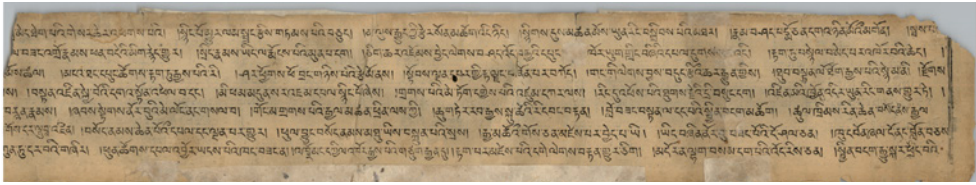


FIGURE 12.8 'Ol kha prints Folio 166v.
COURTESY PORONG DAWA

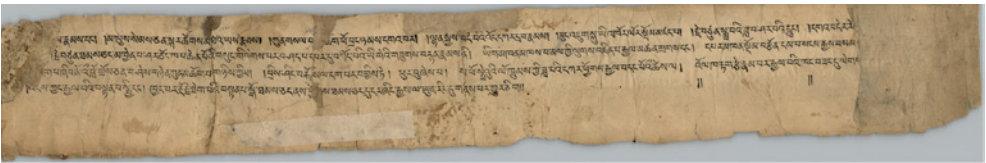


FIGURE 12.9 'Ol kha prints Folio 167r.
COURTESY PORONG DAWA

TABLE 12.1 Comparative table 1

	Yar 'brog version	'Ol kha version	Zur tsho version
༧			
༨			
༩			
༠			
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༣			
༤			
༥			

TABLE 12.1 *Comparative table 1 (cont.)*










	Yar 'brog version	'Ol kha version	Zur tsho version
མ			
ད			
ཙ			

TABLE 12.2 *Comparative table 2*

	Yar 'brog version	'Ol kha version	Zur tsho version
གི་ལྷ།			
ཞབས་ལྷ།			
འགྲོང་པོ།			
ན་ཚོ།			
གི་ལྷ་ལོག་པ།			without
དབང་ལྷ།			

I shall now discuss the printing colophon of this work, which can be found at folios 169v–170r. The last folio, which contains the key information, is badly damaged and therefore there are some gaps in my rendition and discussion of this text. There are twelve incomplete verses missing one or two words, four verses that were completely lost and one verse with two unclear words.

The text of the colophon presents some remarkable features, the names of people, places and texts are highlighted by having the relevant syllables carved

in reverse, i.e. as negative, in the blocks (see illustration 1–2). There is also a very particular punctuation mark separating the main text from the colophon, a very ornamented *sprul bshad*, which shows that scribe and carver paid a lot of attention to the aesthetics and clarity of the text. This way of ornamenting punctuation marks is common in beautifully produced manuscripts but is rare in prints.

The translation is as follows:

May the miracles of 'Jig med grags pa (Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal), who holds the teachings of the 84000 *dharmaskanda* taught by innumerable Buddhas in the Buddhafields of the ten directions, enlighten the three [classes of?] beings without limits. [This is a prayer for Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal]

Emaho! The [real] jewel of the mankind is whoever holds in a pure way to one's own wealth of virtue and goodness. This is like the ocean expanded to be the prosperity of the *nāgas*. [This is praise to human beings with high moral virtue, implicitly a reference to the ruling family]

The happy land where glorious virtue arises is Yar 'brog the navel of the earth, a place of heavenly accomplishment. The white divine mountain with snow on its top [gNod sbyin gang bzang] is beautified by the clouds in the sky. [This is a praise of the Yar 'brog area]

To the east of it, on one side, there is a miraculous place like the land of Akshobhya where, thanks to meritorious prayers, people like swarms of geese rejoice. Like blue sky molten [on the ground] is the lake. On its shore, pure like the mind, is the palace, white like the moon, which rises up to the top of the sky. The land that remains purest despite all kinds of things gathering there [words missing] [This is praise of the fortress of sNa dkar rtse]

At the excellent palace of sNa dkar rtse, was the one known in the world with the name of Ag glen.⁹ He was born originally together with Gang ba bzang (i.e. gNod sbyin gang bzang), one of the great deities of the world, who holds the prosperity of gods and humans and is excellent [words missing] of the world. The Lord of the World Sa skya pa [words missing] controls the law of [d]Bus gtsang. [This is praise of Ag glen]

His descendant in the sixth generation of the lineage, elevated by countless good deeds, is Hing du Nam mkha' legs pa. He raised in an

9 This was Ag len rDo rje dpal, Sa skya dpon chen ca. 1290–1298 and famous general, who became the ruler of the Yar 'brog myriarchy at the beginning of the 14th century (See Petech 1990: 71).

excellent way [his son?] Nam mkha' 'bum. The great female ruler, from the divine 'Khon lineage,¹⁰ the wise woman [with a mind] as broad as the sky [words missing] fulfilled [words missing] and is endowed with thousands of waves of the stream of merits. In order to obtain excellent ability for the son Kun dga' rgyal mtshan to be at the top of the expanse of the ocean of politics as Nam mkha Phun tshogs bzang po¹¹ did; in order to obtain virtue and goodness like the waxing moon for all those people [words missing] [including] 'Dren dpal, the Magnificent woman who Assembles all the beautiful qualities of high ranked women; and in order to fulfil all the wishes of the ancestors the teachings of the Buddha that are beyond what mind can conceive [words missing] hundreds of volumes of the magnificent *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* were produced. All wise people marvelled greatly at this. Then the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* followed, precious shoot causing an endless transfer of dharma treasures to the throat of many learned people [reading it].

The scribe(s) (*yi ge pa*) writing were Don grub (words missing). For the printing bZod pa 'phel carried out the scribal work. Seng ge bzang who has excellent Vinaya vows controlled the spelling. The grammarian was bSod nams dpal.

May the thus achieved virtue and goodness that are white like the light of the autumn moon, the snow, the *ku mud* flower and the root of the lotus flower let all sentient beings enjoy the endless prosperity of the pure *dharma*.

May the sky exist forever and may all human beings without exception enter the excellent path without stain of the ultimate [enlightenment].

Here, thanks to the deeds and the appreciation of the deeds, may all enjoy the political and religious power and may the excellent deeds of the great Buddha be the guide bringing together all beings.

(One sentence missing)

Although this text was [already] printed in (word missing) [in this case] the spelling was left as the original by the Lord [Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal]. It was carved by the skilled carver bZod pa 'phel.

10 The 'Khon lineage (descending from gYa' phrug 'khon bar skyes) is famously linked to the Sa skya monastery and the Sa skya rule. The Yar 'brog had a close connection to Sa skya.

11 According to *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (folio 47v) Nam mkha' bzang po was the uncle of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan. He was not identical with Amoghasiddhi 'Jig med 'bang as previously believed (See Ehrhard 2002a: 74). From the correspondence of Khrims khang lo tsa ba bSod nams rgya mtsho it is also clear that Amoghasiddhi 'Jig med 'bang and Kun rgyal mtshan were brothers (Erhard 2002b: xiii).

This colophon is quite distinctive and reflects strongly one of the main aims of the printing operation: beyond general merit making, the enhancement of the power and prestige of the ruler and the fulfilment of their legacy. At that time Kun dga' rgyal mtshan had a wife, 'Dren phel, and a son, rGyal bu lHun grub bkra shis (see Ehrhard 2002b: xiv). However, he must have recently ascended to the throne of *khri dpon* following or joining his uncle Nam mkha' bzang po. The text is quite explicit in declaring this as one of the main aims of the printing project: "In order to obtain for Kun dga' rgyal mtshan the son [of Nam mkha' 'bum and dPon mo che from the 'Khon lineage] the excellent ability to be at the top of the expanse of the ocean of politics as [his uncle] Nam mkha' Phun tshogs bzang po did". Although it is not uncommon for the prestige of the ruler and the well-being of the country to be listed among the aims of printing projects, and of Buddhist deeds more generally, this colophon is particularly straight forward in this respect. The Yar 'brog ruling family dominated both patronage and production and aimed at consolidating the power of the young ruler in his position as excellent *Dharmaraja*. It is also interesting that the prestigious ancestor Ag len, embodying the Sa skya legacy of control over this area, is celebrated in connection with the ancient mountain god gNod sbying gang bzang symbolising the honour of the land and its prosperity – reminding of mountain cults in imperial times and before.¹²

This print recalls the 1407 one sponsored by Si tu lHa btsan skyabs after the death of his father. As in that case the colophon celebrates king and country. However, spiritual and scholarly aims as well as merit making for the deceased are given more space there. In both cases, rulers who were also disciples of the spiritual master combined spiritual aspirations with worldly aims such as guaranteeing good governance and prosperity based on a shared vision of Buddhist morality. However, this is not the only form of patronage that fuelled the printing production of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal and his disciples. Printing colophons often reveal wide networks of people of various social standing involved in different ways in such Buddhist deeds.

12 gNod sbyin gang bzang is a snow-capped mountain located between the Yar 'brog and Myang area (the name Myang is directly related to a legend telling of Padmasambhava inviting his disciples to taste (myang) the nectar he had dropped from heaven on the top of this mountain. This mountain god is considered to be the king of all gNod snyin spirits (*gnod sbyin rta brtags bryed*) and also a palace of Cakrasaṃvara. This was already a holy mountain during the imperial period when this area was part of sNubs: it was identical with or at least related to sNubs lha mThon drug connected to rituals enhancing the power and prestige of the rulers (See *dba' bzhed folio 30r*).

6 Printing Colophons and Social Histories: When Books are Produced by Wider Networks

Some print editions are produced with the patronage of one main sponsor, often a local ruler or monastery, supporting a range of scholars and craftsmen. Others involve wider networks of people operating in different capacity (sometimes both as patrons and as craftsmen) and their colophons are particularly interesting because they reflect the social fabric of the time in striking ways. They also elicit the question of whether printing actually widened people's involvement in literate culture.

Colophons reflect the way in which people participated in the operation in different ways: sometimes there is a strong emphasis on a single sponsor, sometimes on a range of village communities, sometimes on individuals of different standing contributing through donations and work. Sometimes these forms of representation are mixed within a single colophon.

Above, I discussed examples of royal print editions; here I wish to mention a colophon that highlights a range of village communities rather than a big ruler. This is the colophon of text number 2 in Porong Dawa's collection (for a detailed discussion see his paper in this volume). Here, after the mention of two monks (mKhas btsun Chos nyid rnam rgyal and sDom btson Tshe dbang rgya mtsho) who requested the printing project, the spiritual master (Seng ge bzang po) who took care of the carving with his disciples, and a main sponsor who was apparently a religious authority (rGyal tshab chos rje), there is a list of people referred to collectively: monastics (*dge 'dun*), people (*mi mangs*) and women? (*mo dben?*) of Che sgres; lamas, headmen (*dpon bcur*) and people (*mi mangs*) of sNyings; lamas, headmen (*dpon bcur*) and people (*mi mangs*) of sMyams; officials (*rgya dpon*), lamas and patrons from sNa shod belonging to dGe gling; dGe bshes Nam [mkha] bzang [po], lamas, headmen (*bcur dpon*) and patrons from rTshang. All of these people are mentioned as having made great donations (*'bul 'degs rgya cher*). In this case the repeated use of the term *mi mangs* seems to highlight the communities involved rather than the individuals. The printing project taking place, probably, in Nub ris lHa mdun monastery seems to have relied on bringing together the efforts of the surrounding communities to print the works of the monastery founder.

Another colophon (discussed in Ehrhard 2000: 95–100) rather than communities seems to highlight a great number of individuals mentioned with their names and titles. The 1525 print edition of the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs (1437–1521), a scholar belonging to the teaching lineage of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, was apparently supported by a wide network of followers of different social standings. At the top of the list is the disciple (*'jigs med bzang po*) who instigated and led the project dedicating to it all what he had, followed

by the names of close disciples of the master (*nye gnas*) who assisted him in a variety of ways. Then there is a long list of patrons who provided sponsorship by donations. The first name is that of the queen dKon mchog bzang mo, who was very devoted to the deceased master and was the wife of the king of Gung thang Khri Kun dga' rnam rgyal lde (by then deceased) and his nephews.¹³ She is followed by a range of religious masters, starting from rTa sga chos rje Ngag dbang grags pa who had been one of bTsun pa Chos legs leading disciples. The patrons are subdivided as follows: male monastic disciples listed according to the amount of barley they offered; female monastic disciples listed according to the amount of barley they offered; monastic and lay patrons listed in a mixed way mentioning title, profession, place of origin, social position and sometimes kinship terms with which they were known in village communities; people speaking different languages (*skad mi gcig*); relatives of the deceased master. At the end the person who donated all the woodblocks that were needed for the printing is mentioned again. This colophon is also remarkable because it mentions details of units of measure, type of donations, titles and positions, all of which gives insight into the social fabric of the time.

On the whole, the colophon is beautifully written and reads like a text in its own right with the three traditional sections: *sbyor* (opening), *ngos* (main body) and *rjes* (dedication and prayers of auspiciousness). It shows that the very act of mentioning the patrons and the people involved in various capacities had ritual significance, sealing the book production as a Buddhist deed (For a further discussion of this colophon and the relevant work see Ehrhard in this volume).

This colophon seems to reflect a wide-ranging network of disciples and followers as well as more occasional patrons that became involved in the printing project. In addition to monastics and officials, there were several people who were doctors, craftsmen and village elders. They seem to indicate that such a project involved a wider range of people from different social backgrounds. Although many of them were involved only in terms of participation to a merit making activity, they were apparently aware of book production as a worthy enterprise. Literate people may have had access to some of the texts; illiterate people may have had access to contents only through books being read in their houses and temples. In all cases books were considered important ritual objects, bestowing blessings and good fortune.

The attitude of worship and respect towards books, however, was not considered satisfactory enough by some of the masters who promoted printing

13 The royal marriage arrangements and the politics of this period, reflected in other print colophons such as that of the Ma ñi bka' 'bum edition of 1521 was described in detail in Ehrhard 2013: 143–161.

activities, for example the colophon of the Zur tsho print edition of the *dpal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* supported by sLob dpon ma Nam mkha bzang mo states (folio 175 v):

Although three or four waves of tantric teachings and practices have appeared from the ocean of the classes of Tantra, the precious volumes of the four classes of Tantra have become largely something to prostrate and make ritual offerings to. Considering this issue, thanks to the prayers to the Inner and outer Buddhas and the power of their blessings, the collected essence of the ocean of Sutra and Tantra (i.e. the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*) explained in an excellent way the 84000 *dharmaskanda*.

This statement reflects not only Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's vision that underpinned the compilation of his collection but also his wish to make scriptures accessible and rigorously studied. This vision was taken forward by his disciples and can be seen as tightly linked to printing as a tool that facilitates the distribution of standardised texts and teachings. Printing as technological innovation was adopted without it being celebrated as such; it was much more seen in continuity with the overall vision of the spread of the dharma. However, colophons such as that of the 1407 print edition of the *'Grel chung don gsal* certainly celebrated the endless stream of teachings that had become possible thanks to it.

7 Conclusion

As an increasing number of materials are becoming available, we are gaining new insights into the spiritual, social and economic aspects of fifteenth century book production. Printing clearly developed from manuscript production but, rather than superseding it, complemented it. Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal engaged with book production in original ways by enacting the legacy of the Buddha creatively, harnessing the moral authority of ancient Buddhism and its attitude to books. He supported his attitude by highlighting that “the words of the Buddha are beyond our imagination so the books (*glegs bam*) which are the supports of Buddha's speech should be understood as being beyond our imagination (*bsam gyis mi khyab pa*) in terms of importance, features and number”. In this way he considered his aim of re-enacting the ancient Indian Buddhist civilization as wider than anything common human beings had done before (especially those around him). Innovation could thus happen in the name of tradition. With printing, the number, repetition and propagation of texts, became as important as lavishly decorated manuscript editions in merit

making enterprises. This may have promoted a new relationship to access and content. However, the extent to which the vision of innumerable prints propagating Buddhist teachings and narratives in an endless stream of merit corresponded to reality remains uncertain. The fact that some of the texts became popular classics and part of teaching curricula however seems to indicate that printing had an impact on their reproduction and distribution. Looking at a colophon-less print of Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal's *rGyud sde spyi nram par bzhag pa* retrieved in Glang thang, I can imagine that it is a descendant of some of the early Bo dong pa printing projects but no information allows us to map it. The same is often true for the heaps of prints in monastic and private collections as well as retreats and caves scattered around Tibet, and these are just a fraction of what existed before the Cultural Revolution. Assessing systematically the origin and distribution of prints remains therefore a challenge, but biographies and colophons offer precious glimpses into Tibetan book culture and its transformations.

Appendix

[1]

Gung thang rgyal rabs las (Folio 11r):

de ltar mnga' bdag rang nyid kyi bsod nams mthu la brten gser gyi 'byor pa rgya chen po rnyed pa la thugs kyi dgongs par 'jig rten 'di snang gi bya ba la snying po med par ya ma brla kho nar nges shing tshe 'di'i 'byor pa yang skye ba snga ma'i sbyin 'bras dkon mchog gi thugs rje kho nar grub pas des na gser 'di chud zos su ma song pa dkon mchog gi srid zhu ched kho nar btang bar dgongs nas dge ba'i bshes gnyen rnams la bsod nams kyi tshogs gang gi che dris pas na re tshogs kyi zhing mchog ni phan bde'i 'byung gnas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa rin po che kho na yin cing/ de yi rtsa ba gsung rab kyi dgongs pa yang bstan bcos tshad ldan rnams kyi gsal bar 'grel ba yin cing yig tshogs kyang che la mtha' dag tshangs ba yang dkon pas bstan bcos bod du 'gyur ro 'tshal bzhengs nas dkon bzhin phan yon che zhes gsol bas de thugs la 'jug shing dgyes pa yi bka' yang dag pa'i dgongs 'grel bstan bcos kyi glegs bam rnams be+eDUr+ya yi kha dog lta bu'i gan shog la btso ma gser gyi yang zhun gyis legs par bzhengs//

[2]

Bo dong pan chen gyi gsung 'bum pod gnyis pa las (pp. 333–334):

yon bdag spangs bya'i mtshan nyid ni/ sdig la mi 'dzems dad 'dun chung/ tshe 'di 'i lo 'dod 'gran 'dod blo/ ngang thung theg chung 'gyod sem can/ mi 'brul bsgrub 'dod 'phror 'jog dang/ pha yon dag la the tshom zhing/ lha dang lha bzo smod pa'o/ yon

bdag mchog gi mtshan nyid ni/ dad 'dun rtson 'grus snying rjer ldan/ dge la sngon 'gro stong phod can/ bstan cing ngang ring g.yo sgyu med/ lha dang lha bzo la gus pa'o/ yon tan mkhan po ltar snang ni/ yon tan mi mkhas 'dug mi tshugs/ 'grogs pa mi bde chang la rtsi/ cung zad zi na smyon pa 'dra/ bkur dka' zhe 'khyengs shin tu che/ za 'dod mchu rno 'dod po che/ yon rgyags la sogs thang med 'bebs/ des kyang ma tshim rgyu rnams rku/ rnyed pas rang gzhan sdig pa 'phel/ yon bdag dang ba dbang med bzlog/ dge las sdig par 'gyur mkhan po/ de'i 'gro sa ngan po gsum/ de 'dra mi bsten rgyangs rings spangs/ lha bzo mchog gi tshan nyid ni/ dpal ldan rgyud chen sam su Tir/ dul zhing dad ldan lang tsho bab/ dbang po rnams gsal rnam tog med/ khro med lkog 'chas med pa dang/ shin tu mkhas pa spro ba dang/ bzod ldan snying rje cher ldan pas/ zhes pa dang/ dpal ldan sdom pa 'byung ba las/ dul zhing bzo rnams kun shes pas/ cho ga mthong zhing mnyam bzhag pas/ zhes ni mdor bsdus bzhan yang ni/ 'dod pa chung la bkur ba sla/ bzo la bzob cing rkyen la bgyi/ snyan cing ngang ring bstun pa mkhas/ byas pa shes shing lha la gus/ chang sogs mi rtsi 'grogs bde ba'o//

[3]

Bo dong pan chen gyi gsung 'bum pod gnyis pa las (pp. 339–340):

chos kyi brten bzhengs par 'dod na/ shog bu la sogs pa gzhi bzang zhing 'jam la gnyen pa/ 'khregs zhing kha dog gsal la dngas pa/ srab mthug ran pa dang/ rin po che'i mchog rnams sam/ gser dngul la sogs pa'am/ phal pa snag tshas kyang rung ste/ gzhi dang rjes su mthun pa dag mdog legs la khyed che ba/ dam tshad ran zhing/ drang ba bde ba/ yig mkhan yi ge'i 'du byed la shin tu mkhas/

[4]

Bo dong pan chen gyi gsung 'bum pod gnyis pa las (pp. 340–341):

bri bar 'os shing bris na don che ba bris pa'am/ mthong ba'am/ klags pa tsam la/ phan yon dpag du med pa can/ bstan pa dang/ rang bzhan la nges par phan pa/ rgyal ba'i gsung rab mdo rgyud dri ma med pa dang/ bstan bcos khyad 'phags rtsod pa dang bral ba rnams las/ rang nyid gang dang gang 'bri bar 'dod pa de'i/ dpe phye shin du dag pa btsal zhing/ gal te dag ma dag the tshom za na dpe 'dab pa sogs te zhus dag legs par byas la/ shog khyim dang 'tsham pa'i thig dang/ thig khyim la 'tsham pa'i yig khyim la sogs pa bkod pa dang/ yi ga'i gzugs legs la kyus nyi ma ci la bris pa 'dra dang/ snyug gu gcig gis bris 'dra dang/ gong ma 'og du 'pho 'dra dang/ ces pa ltar snyom pa dang/ shog bzo dang/ shog mdog dang/ snag mdog la sogs pa khyad 'phags phan tshun 'dran pa lta bu/ mthong ba tsam gyis dang ba'i dad pa skye ba bri bar bya'i/ bod kyi blun po mkhas par bcos pas byas pa'i mdo rgyud sdzun ma dang/ bstan bcos don phyin ci log ston pa gang dag/ 'phel zhing dar na/ bstan pa rin po che'i bya ba nub par 'gyur ba rnams bri bar mi bya'o/ yig ge nyid kyang mi legs pa/ ma dag pa dang/ lo 'dod dang 'gran 'dod la sogs pa'i ched du/ sdig pa dang ma 'dres par bri bar bya'o// bri ba tshar ba dang/ zhus

dag legs par byas te/ rtsi gras dang/ gleg shing la sogs pas brgyan cing/ rab gnas dang/
brgya tshar legs par grub pa dang/ thun mongs ba rnams kyis/ thun mong du 'gro don
mdzag cing/ thun mong ma yin pa/ skal ba dang ldan pa rnams la sbas te/ skal ba dang
ldan pa'i don mdzad du bzhug go//

[5]

Bo dong phyogs las mam rgyal gyi rnam thar ngo mtshar rgya mtsho las (Folios 69r–69v):
de nas bstan bcos chen po grub te/ rje grub thob nyid kyi rtsa ba'i phyag dpe nyid/ bo
dong tshogs pas yongs rdzogs bzhengs pa idang/ ya 'brog du h+yeng du kun dga' rgyal
mtshan pa sku mched kyi yongs rdzogs idang/ rin dpung du drung chen nor bzang pa
sku mched kyi yongs rdzogs idang/ ta'i si tu lha rtsan skyabs mas yongs rdzogs idang/
chos rgyal rnam rgyal grags pas yongs rdzogs idang/ stag lung bka' drug pa chen pos
yongs rdzogs idang/ mnga' ris gung thang du mnga' bdag rgyal mo byang chub chos
kyi sgron mes yongs rdzogs idang/ skyid grong mngon dga' bas sbyin bdag mdzad nas
yongs rdzogs cig dang dgu'o// ding gi bar la rgyas pa tshar dgu dang/ rgyal mkhar rtse
pa si tu rab brtan pas sbyin bdag mdzad nas 'bring po phyed tsam dang/ mam rgyal
gling pas 'bring po phyed/ shangs pa dpon bsod rgyal gyi 'bring po phyed/ sde snod
'dzin pa dpal ldan sangs rgyas pas 'bring po yongs rdzogs dang/ shel dkar chos sdes
sbyin bdag mdzad nas rgyud sde'i spyi'i rnam bzhag spar du brkos/ mnga' ris chos sdes
sbyin bdag mdzad nas sbas don kun gsal ba dang/ zur tsho bas sbyin bdag mdzad nas
dpal de kho na nyid 'dus pa'i snying po dang/ yang ya 'brog mngon dgar bzhengs pa'i
de nyid snying po dang/ gzhan yang yon bdag dad pa can gyis bzhengs pa'i kye rdo rje'i
mngon dkyil/ mngon rtogs kyi rnam nges/ gsang 'dus mdor byas kyi mngon dkyil/ 'jigs
byed mngon dkyil/ bde mchog dril bu lugs kyi mngon dkyil/ mam nges/ kun rig/ sman
bla sogs spar du brkos pa dang/ gzhan yang deng sang grags che ba'i gsung rab mang
po spar dang/ bris pa la sogs ding sang phan la'ang dbus gtsang mnga' ris na bzhugs pa
rnams la spar gyis 'phel ba ma yin pa'i glegs bzhugs tshod ni dpag par dka' ba yin no//

[6]

De nyid 'dus pa'i snying po yar 'brog spar ma'i spar byang ni (Folio 169v–170r):
rab 'byam phyogs bcu'-i zhing gi rgyal rnams kyi//brgyad khri bzhi stong chos kyi sgo
mang 'dzin//dpal ldan 'jigs med grags pa'i ngo mtshar ni//mtha' yas 'gro ba gsum du
gsal gyur cig//srid pa'i chu gter 'jig rten byed po yis//yangs par byas pa'ang lag 'gro '-i
dpal 'byor nyid//e maho su zhid rang gi dge legs nor//yang dag 'dzin de skyes bu'i r-in
chen yin//dpal ldan dge ba 'byung ba yi//yul khams bde ba gang zhid ni//mtho r-is
phun tshogs rab rgyas pa//yar 'brog sa yi thig le ni//lha yi sa 'dzin dkar po yang//ke la
sha yi zur phud la//mthon mthing sprin gyis mdzes pa yod//gang gi shar phyogs logs
cha la//mi 'khrugs rgyal ba'i zhing lta bur//dkar po'i smon lam las byung zhing//skye
bo ngang pa'i phung phung gis//kun dgar 'os pa'i ya mtshan sa/ gnam sngon zhu ba

'khyil 'dra ba//yid ltar dngas pa'i mtsho ngogs na//zla shel dkar po'i pho brang ni//nam mkha'i mtho ba la snyog pa//sna tshogs 'du yang dkar po'i gzhi//[****]ba med//sna dkar rtse mo'-i khang bzangs na//srid pa'i lha chen gang ba bzang//gang dang lhan cig sngon byung ba//lha dang mi yi dpal 'byor 'dzin//srid pa'i [**]'dzangs pa la//ag glen zhes su'ang 'jig rten brjod//'jig rten dbang phyug[*]skya pa//[***** *]bus gtsang khirms kyi kha lo bsgyur//de yi gdung rigs drug pa ni//legs byas grangs med kyis mtho ba//h+ying du nam mkha' legs pa yi//legs par bskyed byed nam mkha' 'bum//lha rigs 'khon gyi dpon mo che//mkha' ltar yangs pa'i blo ldan ma//gang[***** **]sa gtams pa las//dge ba'i chu rlabs stong spro ba//des ni rang sras kun dga' yi//rgyal mtshan 'dzin pa gang gi ni//chab srid mtsho ltar rgyas pa'i rtser//legs pa'i yon tan rab rtsegs pa//nam mkha'i phun tshogs bzang po la//rnam par bkod 'dra thob phyir dang//[***** *]kra shis ljon pa'i rtse mor son//mtho rigs bu mo'i mdzes pa rnam//gcig tu 'dren byed dpal ldan ma//gang rnam dge legs yar ngo ltar//rnam par rgyas pa thob phyir ram//gdung mes gong ma'i dgongs zab ni//yongasu bskang pa'i don phyir yang//rgyal ba'i chos tshul bsam yas dag[***** *]ldan de nyid 'dus pa yi//glegs bam brgya phrag snyed kyis ni//shes ldan ngo mtshar ci yang bsgrubs//slar yang de nyid snying po'i don//rin chen myu gu'i rjes 'thun grogs//gang 'di mkhas mang mgrin pa la//mi bzad 'pho ba'i chos gter du//nye bar bskrun pa'i yi ge pa/ don grub [***** **]te par du yang//bri bar bzod de bzod pa 'phel//dag byed sdom brtson seng ge bzang//brda sprod tshul rig bsod nams dpal//dir ni dge legs ston ka'i zla 'od dang//kha ba ku muta pad rtse ltar dkar ba//gang thob de yis 'gro nams dam chos kyi//dpal 'byor mi zad pa la spyod par [* *****]bu//de yang nam mkha' srid du gnas pa dang//ma lus skye bo 'di dag dam pa yi//legs lam dri ma med la 'jug gyur cig/ 'dir ni bgyid dang bgyid rtal yi rang ba//kun kyang chos srid dbang phyug gi 'byor zhing//rlabs chen rgyal ba'i mdzad pa rmad byung gis//'gro kun 'dren pa'i ded dpon du gyur cig/[***** **]na par yod na'ang//!rje nyid kyi dag yig sor gzhang pa yin///par mkhan mkhas pa bzod pa 'phel gyis brkos//

[7]

De nyid 'dus pa'i snying po zur tsho'i spar ma'i spar byang las (folio 175v):

rgyud sde rgya mtsho'i tshogs las rgyud kyi ni//rba rlabs gsum bzhi bshad sgrub ltar byed kyang//rgyud sde bzhi yi glebs bam rin po che//phal cher phyag mchod tсам gyi yul du gyur//tshul 'di mthong nas phyi nang rgyas pa la//gsol ba btab cing de yi byin brlabs mthus//mdo rgyud rgya mtsho'i de nyid 'dus pa ni//chos tshoms brgyad khri bzhi stong legs par bshad//

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Tibetan Women as Patrons of Printing and Innovation*

Hildegard Diemberger

1 Introduction

Buddhist women played an important and often not fully recognised part in the production of books and, more specifically, in the introduction of printing as a technological innovation: from the Pāla queen who sponsored the production of exquisite palm-leaf manuscripts of the Prajñāpāramitā in Eight Thousand Verses and the Pañcarakṣā at the turn of the first millennium CE (see Fromigatti 2013, 12–13), to the Chinese Empresses Wu Zetian (r. 690–705), considered to be the woman “who discovered printing” (Barrett 2008), to the Japanese Empress Shōtoku who sponsored printing in 8th century Japan (see Kornicki in this volume), to the Mongolian Empresses of the Yuan court patronising the printing of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures in the 13th and 14th centuries (Sherab Sangpo in this volume), to the innumerable Tibetan women who contributed in various capacities to the production of literary masterpieces of the Tibetan tradition. This article concentrates on the contribution of Tibetan women to the printing of books in the 15th and 16th centuries and draws some parallels with their European contemporaries.

Chos kyi sgron ma (1422–1455) and Kun tu bzang mo (1464–1549) are some of the most prominent examples of Tibetan women who promoted cultural innovation in the Tibetan society of their time. Among many religious and artistic accomplishments they supported printing projects when this technology was still relatively new on the Tibetan plateau, promoting access to the

* This paper is based on research undertaken with the sponsorship of the British Arts and Humanities Research Council. In exploring the lives of these Tibetan women, I have been assisted by a number of friends and colleagues, including Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Burkhard Quessel, Michela Clemente, Marta Sernesi, Sharshong Tsering Dawa, Porong Dawa and many more. I am also particularly indebted to Sylvia Huot for her advice on English medieval women. While I very much benefitted from their advice and information, all mistakes in the paper are, of course, mine. Finally, my partner Bruce Huett has provided invaluable assistance throughout the writing process.

written word to a larger number of people, including women. Both challenged the social conventions of their times by giving up or refusing marriage, became disciples and partners of great spiritual masters and eventually became leading spiritual figures in their own right. Their lives were described in their biographies written by direct disciples and give a unique insight into their world and the way in which they enacted Buddhist ideals, often with a particular attention to the predicaments of other women.

These famous women were not the only women to enact and support Buddhist deeds and they did not operate in isolation. Looking at the colophons of early prints and biographies of spiritual masters, many more women can be discovered as participating in the process of book production, especially as donors. In this paper I am going to follow a string of interconnected women, including the two aforementioned prominent examples, who were part of the cultural and social fabric within which early printing developed in Southern La stod and Gung thang. By looking at what can be gleaned from a range of known and newly discovered sources, I explore the aspirations, the constraints and the circumstances that led them to promote printing as well as a wide range of other cultural achievements. I also show that these women experienced lives often caught in a difficult tension between worldly commitments and spiritual yearnings and that through biographical narratives they could act as exemplars and authorising referents for later generations. Finally, I suggest that beyond the specificities of the Tibetan context, it might be a fruitful exercise to explore parallels with female patronage of book production cross-culturally, looking in particular at Medieval and Renaissance Europe.

2 Tibetan Women as Part of Religious and Political Networks

The earliest extant print from central Tibet produced at Shel dkar in 1407 does not explicitly mention a woman as patron or initiator. It was sponsored by the ruler of Southern La stod, lHa btsan skyabs, as part of the funerary practices for his father Si tu Chos kyi rin chen (?–1402). In the colophon however, some remarkable lines of praise are dedicated to his wife, bTsan lcam rgyal mo, the queen of southern La stod:¹

1 bTsan lcam rgyal mo, born in 1393, was the sister of the ruler of northern La stod, rNam rgyal grags bzang and the wife of Si tu lHa btsan skyabs (see Everding 2006, 105–106). She appears repeatedly in the biography of Chos kyi sgron ma as her mother in law (see Diemberger 2007). At the time of the print production she was only fourteen years old. The verses were therefore presumably celebrating her expected role more than her actual deeds.

The highest queen ruling over the land beyond boundaries (*mtha' yas pa*), like the moon [providing] a continuous stream of the nectar of happiness. The royal lady, with the beauty of a goddess, became the female ruler who protects both [the lay and the religious] communities according to the *dharma*. (*'grel chung*, folio 89v)²

These verses do not make it clear whether she played an active role in the production of this print. She may well have participated in the patronage operation, as members of the elite often did,³ but in this case she is celebrated more as the queen than as a patron. She was still very young and the marriage must have taken place not long before the completion of the print.

Print editions that were sponsored by rulers often had colophons that celebrated the entire land and the ruling family with its ancestry. They were among the religious deeds that enabled rulers to manifest their power and prestige as Buddhist rulers, often competing against each other and emulating powerful exemplars such as the Yuan emperors (see Tsering Dawa in this volume and Diemberger in press). These verses in the print colophon are remarkable in that they encapsulate the role of a woman member of a ruling family: she was born in the ruling family of northern La stod and had married into the ruling family of Southern La stod.⁴ While men ruled over the territory, it was women who often acted as ambassadors and mediators beyond the boundaries of a polity through marriage alliances. When involved in patrilocal marriages, which was the most common option,⁵ they could talk to both their family of origin and the family they had married into relying on their kinship networks. They were therefore an essential element in marriage alliances that held together a set of competing polities often torn by feuds and conflict.

2 Folio 89v: *Gsal ba'i bdud rts'i'i char rgyun zla gzhin ma // mtha yas sa la dbang bsgyur btsun mo mchog // lha lcam 'chi med bu mo'i dpal 'phrog ma // sde gnyis chos kyis skyong ba bdag mo byung//*

3 Female Buddhist patronage was well-established in Tibet since the imperial period. The custom of promoting printing, which was popular among female representative of the Mongolian elite, may have also had an impact in Tibetan society. Among the Mongolian female patrons of Tibetan printings was Bulughan, the wife of Togon Temur who had bestowed seals and titles to Si tu Chos kyi rin chen. She was one of the most significant supporters of the production of Tibetan prints at the Yuan court and their distribution that reached Tibet (see Sherab Sangpo in this volume).

4 She was part of an established pattern of marriage alliances between northern and southern La stod, as mother-in-law of Chos kyi sgron ma she is discussed in Diemberger 2007.

5 Patrilocal marriages were the expected norm and were the most celebrated. This does not, however, exclude the existence of a wide range of different marriage arrangements.

They also often acted as mediators internally when rifts, usually linked to succession disputes, were tearing apart ruling families within one polity.

The political structure that constituted the background against which they were operating in the 15th and the 16th century was made up of a multitude of polities, with different levels of subordination, shifting balances of power and changing allegiances. While southern La stod, like Gung thang and northern La stod, had been under the rule of Sa skya and later the Phag mo gru pa, it had a great deal of autonomy. Its ruling family, which had earlier produced some of the great Sa skya governors (Sa skya dpon chen),⁶ had also direct dealings with the Yuan emperors and later the Ming.⁷ At the same time local rulers such as the Tsha mda' sde pa were subjects of La stod lho but were ruling with a large degree of autonomy over a vast land in what currently corresponds to gNya' lam county. They also entertained direct relationship with the neighbouring Gung thang kings. A similar arrangement applied to the rulers of Zur tsho and other areas. In brief, what is mentioned in the 1407 colophon (*'grel cung*, folio 89r) as the 'polities as numerous as the stars paying respect' (*rgyal phran skar ma tsam gyis phyag byed pa*) to the centre of power of Southern La stod can be seen as reflecting the model of 'galactic' polity described by Geoffrey Samuel who adopted and adapted Tambiah's notion to the Tibetan setting (Samuel 1993, 62).

In this context marriage alliances were crucial. Elite women in particular were expected to fulfil their role both by their family of origin and the family they would marry into. However, some women were unhappy or unsatisfied with fulfilling this role and aspired to a complete dedication to a spiritual life. It was at the time of marriage that their views and expectations would surface, often leading to dramas and conflicts. Sometimes, after having rebelled, women re-negotiated their positions as religious women. Sometimes, women combined worldly and other-worldly commitments. As we shall see below, high ranking Tibetan women of this period lived lives that shared similarities

6 See Petech 1990; Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger 1996; Everding 2006.

7 According to the *Shel dkar chos 'byung*, (folio 7r) Si tu Chos kyi rin chen received his title from the Yuan Emperor Togon Temur (Huizong) whose wife was an enthusiastic supporter of Tibetan printing. The Ming Emperors (Ta' ming rgyal po) were considered to be remote patrons of Buddhist monasteries on the holy mountain range of rTsib ri (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* folio 31v, 32r). In 1413 lHa btsan skyabs received from the Ming Emperor Yongle, one of the greatest promoters of Tibetan printing, an edict which is currently preserved at the CTCRC Museum in Beijing. These political connections suggest the existence of cultural networks that at different times may have promoted the spread of printing technologies through the distribution of prints and the relevant practices.



FIGURE 13.1 *Zur tsho with Mt Tsang lha in the background.*
PHOTOGRAPH: BRUCE HUETT.

with those of their European contemporaries, given their struggles against unwanted marriages, their patronage of monastic colleges, nunneries and printing projects, spiritual aspirations and love for books.

In Tibet, female monasticism was not only a way for women to fulfil spiritual aspirations but also an acceptable route to refuse marriage and shape one's own life. In some circumstances, such spiritual power assisted the recognition of the status of women holding political positions. lHa rin chen tsho, a 13th century throne holder in Gung thang history, is such an example. She took over the regency at a time of political turmoil and ruled successfully, creating the basis for her nephew 'Bum lde dgon nag po to establish the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang in the form that would shape the history of the region in the following centuries. Highly respected as a nun, during her rule she produced forty volumes of Buddhist scriptures of the mDo mang cycle in a dedicated workshop (see *Gung thang rgyal rabs* folio 3r, v; Everding 2000, 54–59).

Lay patronage, however, remained a highly appreciated and socially accepted route for women to fulfil their aspirations without renouncing their worldly commitments and without confronting the challenges of embracing monastic life against their kin's expectations.

Colophons of print editions and biographies give some insight into political and religious networks within which women played a significant part, sometimes as innovators but more often simply following established ritual protocols. I suggest that women's contribution in promoting printing was tightly connected to the role they were expected to play within the Tibetan social and political fabric of the time. Highly individualised, women's experiences reflected the outcome of both complying with and transgressing social expectations. Their life itineraries were often tortuous, and only in the few cases in which biographies are dedicated to them can they be accessed in any detail. More often, we have to rely on a patchwork of minimal information from sources that are not dedicated to them. In this they are similar to the medieval European patronesses, whose lives and deeds can be gleaned from letters, devotional books and scanty private writings or documents concerning the institutions they established.

3 **bDag mo Nam mkha' bzang mo (15th century) – Nun and Female Ruler**

A recently discovered print reveals that around 1442⁸ the ruling lady of Zur tsho devoted herself with great passion to the printing of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po*, a work that encapsulated the essence of his extensive compendium the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*. According to the colophon, she was a highly respected nun addressed with the title 'female master' (*slob dpon ma*) and sponsored the printing project to make merit for the deceased ruler of Zur tsho Drung chen bSod nams rgyal mtshan and a number of other officials (see also Sharshon Tsering Dawa in this volume). She was related to him and, like him, belonged to the lineage of the Great Translator dPang lo tsā ba, which controlled the Zur tsho area (at that time and later) as part of southern La stod. Critical of popular ritual handling of scriptures as mere objects of devotion, she wanted to promote a more rigorous engagement with content and meaning, especially concerning the tantra. She thought of doing so by printing an essential work, the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po*, which had just been composed by Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451) in 1441. Celebrated in the colophon for her spiritual qualities and her vision, she seems to have been involved in the project not only as a patron but also as an initiator and the driving force behind its completion.

8 For the dating see Sharshon Tsering Dawa's contribution in this volume.

The colophon reads as follows (particularly important passages are highlighted in bold):

Bowing to the Three jewels!

For the excellent aim of benefitting all living beings of the three realms of existence,

such is the table of contents of the [*dPal*] *de* [*kho na*] *nyid* [*'dus pa*] *snying po*,

containing the three-fold disciplines of the sūtra and tantra taught by all Buddhas of the three times.

Since the precious paṇḍita and translators of the past, have translated the ocean of dharma in an excellent way,

the pure doctrine of the philosophical vehicle [i.e. the sūtra] has expanded widely;

in contrast to this the pure doctrine of the tantric vehicle did not expand in such a way.

Also the sūtras were explained inaccurately,

meanings were subverted

and doubts were created.

Considering the [past] mistakes an accurate explanation sheds [now] light on the banner of the doctrine's jewel.

As far as the the ocean of the tantra is concerned,

three or four waves of tantric teachings and practices have appeared

However the precious volumes of the four classes of tantra have become largely something to prostrate and make ritual offerings to.

Considering this issue,

thanks to the prayers to the Inner and Outer Buddhas and the power of their blessing,

the "Collected essence of the ocean of sūtra and tantra (*dPal de kho na de nyid 'dus pa*)"

explained in an excellent way the 84,000 *dharmaskandha*.

In order to enact the essence of the practice,

the [*dPal*] *de* [*kho na*] *nyid* [*'dus pa*] *snying po* was extracted from the ocean of the [*dPal de kho na nyid*] *'dus pa* (i.e. the essence of the collection was condensed in a single treatise).

Superior to all wish-fulfilling jewels,

it is excellent in fulfilling the hopes of all living beings.

Among the four continents of the universe, the excellent one is 'Dzambu gling [inhabited by humans].

Among all countries, the excellent one is the Land of Snow.

Among all deities the excellent one is gTsang gi lha [the mountain god of Zur tsho].

The location of the god is sKyengs byed rdzong ri lha ri mo.

Here emerged the royal lineage like a wish-fulfilling tree with roots that are very stable and the top that reaches the sky.

In this merit gathering place

like a crystalline branch of youth

came about the female spiritual master (*slob dpon ma*) wearing the saffron [robe] like fruits,

Nam mkha' dpal bzang mo.

Having an ocean of wealth without limits,

a retinue and servants numerous as the stars in the sky,

and the beauty of the sun and moon of the accumulation of the two merits,

she has become an object of admiration for all people.

As a means to enlighten the darkness of Saṃsāra's hardship

and to expand the harvests of benefits and happiness

she conducted meditation again and again.

At this point in time, having realised that there is the [*dPal*] *de* [*kho na*] *nyid* [*'dus pa*] *snying po*

with which not even countless moons and suns can compete,

she thought that she would promote it by using all her resources.

Generally in order to help all living beings reach enlightenment

as well as in order to fulfil the aspirations of deceased officials,

and in particular Drung chen bSod nams rgyal mtshan,

supporting them in reaching the stage of Buddhahood, this print edition was produced.

The wood blocks were offered by the master sNyan grags bzang po.

The countless rays of light of the printed treatises spread from the hands of

the wonderful scribe Nam mkha' rin chen, which are like the maṇḍalas of sun and moon,

as well as [the hands of] the learned carver dGe bshes rGya le

and bSam pa blo gros seng ge among others.

[Spelling mistakes] which were like dust covering sun and moon,

clouds [covering the sky] and Rahula [who obscured the sky by creating eclipses eating the moon],

were eliminated by the scholarly 'Dul 'dzin Ngag dbang,

who created such an [accurate] clarifying system for the Great Vehicle.
The virtues of the excellent printing greater than a wish-fulfilling jewel,
may dispel all mistakes like countless suns and moons,
and let comprehensive ability be obtained.

In order to let all obstacles be eliminated
and the two accumulation of positive conditions be enhanced,
may the sun of the dharma spread in the ten directions
and the moon of benefits and well-being shine in the ten directions.
May all the relatives who have passed away achieve Buddhahood,
and those who are still alive enjoy a long life.

May all the wishes of the great female sponsor be realised without
effort.

May virtue be! May auspiciousness be!⁹

This printing project is recorded in both available biographies of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal¹⁰ as part of a set of prints produced in the first half of the fifteenth century (see Sharshon Tsering Dawa in this volume) but only attributed in general terms to the Zur tsho ba, i.e. the rulers of Zur tsho.

According to the biography of the Bo dong pa master bTsun pa chos legs (1437–1521), the official of Zur tsho known as Spang ston bSod nams rgyal mtshan (mentioned above as Drung chen bSod nams rgyal mtshan) had been killed by the ruler of northern La stod and this colophon seems to indicate that he was not the only one to die on this occasion as other deceased officials are hinted at. It is possible that he had been among the victims of one

9 For a transliteration of this passage see Appendix.

10 The relevant passage states: “Then under the sponsorship of Shel dkar chos sde the *rGyud sde spyi nam* [by Bo dong pan chen] was printed (*spar du brkos*). Furthermore the *sBas don gsal ba* was sponsored by mNga’ ris chos sde. [The print edition of the] *De nyid ’dus pa snying po* was sponsored by the Zur tsho ba. The *De nyid ’dus pa snying po* was produced [in printing] at Yar ’brog mNgon dga’ again.” Quoted from the biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal by Mi bskyod rdo rje, one of his disciples during the final part of his life (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal 11, folio 69v). The biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal 1, folio 519–520) states: “The *rGyud sde rin po che spyi’i nam par gzhag pa* was supported by Shel dkar chos sde and the *Khrid yig sbas don kun gsal* was supported by mNga’ ris chos sde, the *dPal de kho na nyid ’dus pa’i snying po* was supported by the Zur tsho ba. The *dPal de nyid ’dus pa’i snying po* was produced here [i.e. Yar ’brog] again. All these texts were printed.” See also Sharshon Tsering Dawa in this volume.

of the numerous clashes between northern and southern La stod or of a local border dispute between the neighbouring polities. Whatever the cause of these deaths, producing books was a well-established way of making merit for the deceased and as such it is mentioned in the print colophon. The style of the colophon is similar to that of other print editions sponsored by rulers such as the 1407 print of Shel dkar and the 1443 print of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* produced at Yar 'brog, which include a celebration of the sacred land and its ruling family (see Sharshon Tsering Dawa in this volume). The emphatic reference to the female ruler of Zur tsho who seems to have been directly involved in the production may have also been a politically soothing way to cope with a time of grievance and instability by relying on the dharma. According to the colophon she was born into the ruling lineage (rather than marrying into it), was an achieved spiritual master and clearly celibate, and it can be inferred that she may have taken on a regency function (otherwise the ruler would have been mentioned). From this point of view, she can be seen as sharing some of the features of lHa Rin chen tsho, the queen of Gung thang mentioned above. In both cases, the production of books (manuscripts in the case of lHa rin chen mtsho, prints in the case of bDag mo Nam mkha' bzang mo) underpinned a vision of Buddhist governance that, if needed, could be enacted by a woman.

The printing project as a Buddhist deed was also going to boost the carving skills of Zur tsho lay and monastic craftsmen, who became famous all over the region, and were later involved in famous printing projects such as the carving of the first print edition of the biography and songs of Mi la ras pa (see Porong Dawa in this volume). The involvement of 'Dul 'dzin Ngag dbang, a famous bKa'

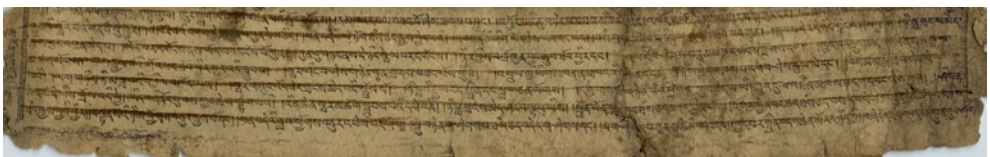
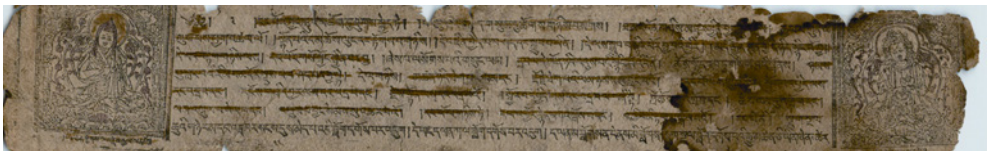


FIGURE 13.2 *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po text printed in Zur tsho by Nam mkha' dpal bzang mo.*

PHOTOGRAPH: PORONG DAWA

brgyud pa bla ma,¹¹ as editor shows that at this point in time the boundaries across sects and traditions were rather fluid. It also demonstrates the great care that was put into the project by involving a highly respected and competent spiritual master for the delicate work of editing and proof-reading.

Little is known about the lady of Zur tsho who pursued with such enthusiasm the printing of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's work, except for the fact that she was a dedicated follower of this master. Much more is known of another committed female disciple who similarly obtained the title of female master (*slob dpon ma*): the Gung thang princess Chos kyi sgron ma.

4 Chos kyi sgron ma (1422–1455) – Princess, Nun and Reincarnation

Chos kyi sgron ma was born as the first child of the Gung thang king Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan (1404–1464) in 1422. After a marriage into the ruling family of southern La stod, she managed to give up worldly life and became a nun. Counting on her royal kinship and on her ability as a fundraiser Chos kyi sgron ma was a great patron of the arts and crafts. Editing the teachings of her spiritual master Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, she supported the production of print editions when this technology was still in its infancy in Central Tibet. Chos kyi sgron ma was particularly dedicated to the education of religious women. In her biography it is stated that she had followers everywhere, gathered an increasing number of nuns and established a good system for teaching the doctrine so that “the nuns developed good reading skills”¹² (Biography of Chos kyi sgron ma folio 73r). Together with the famous yogin Thang stong rgyal po she supported the construction of iron-chain bridges over the gTsang po River and of architectural masterpieces such as the Stūpa of gCung Ri bo che. Recognised as an emanation of the tantric deity rDo rje phag mo, she was also one of the rare examples of a fully ordained woman in the Tibetan Buddhist context. At the end of her life she went to Tsa ri with a group of her closest disciples where she died at the age of 33 and was reincarnated shortly afterwards in Kun dga' bzang mo (see below).

11 Disciple of La phyi ba Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1372–1437), 'Dul 'dzin ngag gi dbang po was his successor in the Ras chung snyan rgyud tradition. See Pahlke 2012, 249. He also appears as a revered spiritual master in the Biography of Chos kyi sgron ma folio 59a. Although he is only fleetingly mentioned, this reference also supports the understanding that he was an important religious authority in the region in the 1440s.

12 *dpal mo mdzad kyi zhabs kyis yongs su bzung bas thegs pa'i 'og tu yang / dge 'dun ma mang du 'dus chos tshugs bzang zhing klog pa 'phel bar gyur.*



FIGURE 13.3 *The Gung thang princess Chos kyi sgron ma (1422–1455). Illumination in manuscript of the biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal.*
PHOTOGRAPH: HILDEGARD DIEMBERGER.



FIGURE 13.4a *The biography of Chos kyi sgron ma.*
PHOTOGRAPH: PASANG WANGDU.



FIGURE 13.4b *The capital of Gung thang.*

PHOTOGRAPH: HILDEGARD DIEMBERGER.

Her biography (Biography of Chos kyi sgron ma folio 62r–63r) gives a rare glimpse into the writing up, editing and printing of her master’s teaching. Apparently the process happened as part of a session of summer religious practice involving a crowd of people:

Then she suggested to her brother gCen [i.e. Khri rNam rgyal lde] that ’Jigs bral [Phyogs las rnam rgyal] and his monastic community should be invited for the summer session of religious practice (*dbyar gnas*). Her brother gCen provided one third of the necessary support, dGe ’dun Sher pa provided one third and the Lady of Prosperity provided one third. [Phyogs las rnam rgyal] was invited to reside at Pan gnas dbu rtse temple where Sa skya Paṇḍita held and won a debate against the heretic (*mu stegs byed*)¹³ [...] The sahaja yoga (*lhan cig skyes sbyor*) according to the Mahāmudrā tradition, and the teachings of [the collection] “Clarification of the hidden meanings” (*sbas don gsal ba*) were learnt and rehearsed. The content of the teachings for the attending followers was checked, the teaching texts were written up, every textbook was edited for printing (*yig cha so so’i spar gyi zhu dag*), images of the lord’s tutelary deity were printed (*rje’i thugs dam lha sku spar*) and every ritual item was looked after. [She] looked after all the activities that were performed to

13 This was the famous debate between Sa skya Paṇḍita and Harinanada. Concerning this latter see Hugot 2012, 51–102.

please the lama, providing all what was necessary for the celebration by the people assembled around the Omniscient [Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal]; arranging all kinds of food and drinks such as *chang*, *a rag* and honey; as well as organising the serving for the King Son of the Gods [Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan], the royal uncles and nephews. She never looked tired and did everything without interruption and with great joy. At that time [Chos kyi sgron ma] was told by attendants (apparently nuns) working in the kitchens: “We do not only have to carry out our tasks, we also have to serve other people to such a great extent that this is worse than worldly work!”¹⁴

The *sBas don gsal ba* teaching that was written down and edited for printing on this occasion, is presumably the same text reported as actually printed with the support of mNga’ ris chos sde in the 1453 Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (Biography of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal folio 519). It is highly likely that the printing of the *sBas don gsal ba* reflects the outcome of the religious gathering described in Chos kyi sgron ma’s biography as happening in a summer of the second half of the 1440s – a period of intense Bo dong pa printing activity.

The setting described here is remarkable in that it involved not only a large crowd but also different key players on the political scene of the time: her brother Khri rnam rgyal lde (who was in a conflictual relationship with her father) and the people of Sher (who were often rebellious vassals of her father). They were joint patrons of the enterprise with her. Her father, the king, was invited together with a wide range of royal relatives. It is also clearly stated that she took the initiative of suggesting the enterprise to her brother. Beyond the undeniable achievement of the spiritual aims, such an event was apparently part of Chos kyi sgron ma’s religious diplomacy with which she was trying to soothe the conflict ridden political leadership of her country of origin. Despite her efforts, things broke down shortly afterwards and she had to intervene directly to appease her brother who had escaped to Sher. Only after a lot of insistence she managed to negotiate a compromise. Shortly afterwards her brother was enthroned as ruler alongside her father. He would later become one of the great royal patrons of printing, supporting amongst other print editions that of the biography and songs of Mi la ras pa (see Porong Dawa in this volume).

14 For a translation of the biography see Diemberger 2007. However, in that version I omitted the important detail that this editing operation was for printing (*spar zhu dag*) and I simply translated it as ‘editing’.

The crowd involved in the event was apparently not exclusively monastic and seems to show a wider participation in the religious teaching with people presumably accessing, at least to some extent, the content of texts. According to her biography, Chos kyi sgron ma had learnt reading and writing from her mother, which seems to indicate that members of the elite, including women, were at least partially literate. The participation in the gathering may have been wider than the top dignitaries and the ritual efficacy of printed images and texts ensured that the blessing reached out to everybody, even those who were illiterate. Chos kyi sgron ma had the vision that religious education would bring peace (see below) and the multiplication of texts was one of the means through which she sought to realise it. In order to achieve this she produced both prints and manuscripts and was deeply aware of the ritual power of scriptures.

According to her biography, after the passing of Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal, Chos kyi sgron ma decided to have his collected works reproduced, mixing into the ink the blood from the nose of the master. This may be a literary trope or the description of an actual ritual act; the blood was probably available as Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal seems to have repeatedly suffered from nose-bleeds. In any case this passage reflects the feeling of a text as a relic. While Chos kyi sgron ma had earlier engaged in printing for teaching purposes, in this case the manuscript form seems to have been the preferred option (perhaps given the sheer size of the collection). Apparently the ritual significance of the book production did not come at the cost of her scholarly commitment since she organised a thorough editing workshop. Eventually she produced two sets, one for Gung thang and one for dPal mo chos sdings, Bo dong Phyogs las nram rgyal's main monastery. This was part of a wider set of activities with which she honoured her deceased master. When it came to his bodily relics, avoiding conflicts was her paramount preoccupation and therefore she distributed the bone-splinters to members of the monastic community and his ashes mixed with clay in *tsha tsha* to the lay followers.

Chos kyi sgron ma's vision of Buddhist teachings as an agent of peace is spelled out in connection to the construction of water channels around the monastery of dPal mo chos sdings: she thought that by producing enough food to support a large centre of religious learning, peace would be brought to the neighbouring polities of Gung thang, southern and northern La stod. According to her this would

benefit greatly not only those who live on the dPal thang plain but also become the best place of refuge for people from places in the sTod area, coming from India, Nepal and so on, who travel in Tibet and face great

hardship and unbearable anxiety. In particular a great seat for the monastic community could be established... scholars from Southern and Northern La stod and mNga' ris¹⁵ should gather here to study and practise the precious *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*, promoting it and The Lord of the Doctrine's commitment for the advancement of the precious Buddha's doctrine will spread. Also, thanks to these good deeds this great land can remain peaceful for some time. (folio 110 v, r).

Her utopian vision, which she explicitly states as being a re-enactment of ancient Buddhist India, did not pan out. Her failure however actually supports the feeling that the biographical narrative, written close to the events, reflects real life circumstances beyond the recognisable literary tropes. This biographical narrative provides therefore a precious glimpse into the setting in which Chos kyi sgron ma promoted printing (alongside a wide range of other activities) with which she sought to realise her aspirations. Less is known of the women who followed directly in her footsteps.

5 Kun dga' bzang mo (1458–1549) – A Female Reincarnation

Chos kyi sgron ma had left for Tsa ri with a group of male and female disciples with grand plans in her mind. However, she died shortly after reaching the sacred site. As discussed elsewhere (Diemberger 2007) this left the community that had emerged around her in a difficult predicament. Without empowerment and formal transfer of authority, her disciples were unable to mobilise her network and carry on her legacy adequately. Her return in a new body appeared under those circumstances particularly compelling – although by no means to be seen as directly and instrumentally caused by these circumstances except in a wider karmic sense. Kun dga' bzang mo was identified and brought up as the re-embodiment of the deceased princess and like her an embodiment of the rDo rje Phag mo within a long succession of reincarnations (see Diemberger 2007; Tashi Tsering 1993, 20–53).

Kun dga' bzang mo was principally a religious figure, part of what would eventually become a reincarnation lineage defined through the re-embodiment of spiritual principles. Despite the prominence that she eventually acquired as part of the most famous female reincarnation line, unfortunately, information

15 In this case mNga' ris smad alias Mang yul Gung thang is meant.

about her is scanty. What we have are brief biographical sketches (in the *Bo dong chos 'byung* and in the biography of Thang stong rgyal po by 'Gyur med bde chen), her occasional appearance in other master's biographies (e.g. g'Tsang smyon He ru ka) and her mention in the manuscript edition of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* kept at the Potala Palace.

Kun dga' bzang mo travelled all over Tibet with dPal 'Chi med grub pa (ca.1420–1478), who had been one of the closest male members of Chos kyi sgron ma's entourage. In particular she found hospitality and support with the rulers of Yar 'brog, who had been devout disciples of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal and had been involved in a range of Bo dong pa printing projects (see Sharshon Tsering Dawa in this volume).

When dPal 'Chi med grub pa died, aged 59, Kun dga' bzang mo did for him what Chos kyi sgron ma had done for her master. In 1478 she established a workshop and in three months she had the entire collection of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*, the Collected Works of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, edited and reproduced in manuscript form. The table of contents has survived up to the present day and is preserved in the Potala palace and refers to the time and place of the production and the central role she played in it.¹⁶

Kun dga' bzang mo was still young then and she would go on to support a great deal of Buddhist deeds, including the restoration of bSam sdings monastery and the building of monastic colleges (see Diemberger 2007). She is celebrated in the colophon of an important manuscript production but for the moment her direct participation in printing projects is uncertain. There is no doubt that at Yar 'brog she was part of a network of people deeply committed to scholarship and book production and who had embraced printing technologies with great enthusiasm (see Sharshon Tsering Dawa in this volume). She also met the famous biographer of Mi la ras pa, g'Tsang smyon He ru ka (see Biography of g'Tsang smyon He ru ka by rGod tshan ras can folios 32–33, 120–122).

Comparing Chos kyi sgron ma and Kun dga' bzang mo, it is clear that the latter was in a rather different position: her religious identity shaped her life from a very early age and by being recognised as the reincarnation of the princess she took over her network of relationships. She never had to struggle to be allowed to abandon worldly life and seems to have adapted well to a role that

16 This version of the Collected works of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal has as table of contents the text *dKar chag yid nor bzhugs / yan lag bstan bcos sdebs sbyor rtsa 'grel sogs*, Manuscript of 22 folios, kept at The Potala Palace.

was defined for her by a pre-existing network of disciples and patrons. Like Chos kyi sgron ma she was both a donor and a donee in relation to Buddhist deeds but the resources she was able to mobilise depended on the framework that she had become part of with her identification. Her family of origin is only known through the names of her parents and we don't know their social status.

Comparing Kun dga' bzung mo and the female ruler of Zur tsho, the Nam mkha' dpal bzung mo mentioned above, it is clear that the latter had a much stronger political profile and that her religious identity supported a role that she had acquired as a member of the ruling family. Embodying very different religious experiences, both contributed to the consolidation and spread of the Bo dong pa tradition and were part of a wider network that connected the region of La stod and Gung thang with Yar 'brog.

6 bDe legs chos 'dren – A Faithful Assistant and a Key Player

The biography of Chos kyi sgron ma repeatedly refers to a woman who must have been very close to her and probably played a crucial role in the establishment of her tradition: bDe legs chos 'dren. She joined her as junior religious companion and assistant nun in the 1440s and she was separated from her only when she was entrusted with specific tasks. Although she is not always highlighted, she was probably involved in substantial ways in the realisation of all the deeds of the princess, including her book production.

bDe legs chos 'dren followed the princess in her journey to Tsa ri and after her death played a significant part in the identification of Kun dga' bzung mo and probably her upbringing (see Diemberger 2007). From an analysis of Chos kyi sgron ma's biographical narrative, it can be inferred that she is likely to have played a part in the compilation of the biography, albeit not as the author.

Her social status is not clear and references to her in Chos kyi sgron ma's biography and the Biography of Thang stong rgyal po can be seen as one of the rare instances in which women of more common background and their experiences can be gleaned from narratives not dedicated to them. More often these women are part of the invisible crowd that shapes events but cannot be brought back from historical obscurity. Only in a few exceptional cases such as that of bSod nams 'dren ma (see Bessenger 2013) and later U rgyan chos skyid (see Schaeffer 2004) due to a wide range of favourable circumstances do women of a lower social standing become protagonists of dedicated narratives and rise to spiritual mastership.

7 Byang chub bzang mo (Fifteenth/Sixteenth Century) – A Leading Nun in the Region

When Chos kyi sgron ma left for Tsa ri, some of her nuns remained in their homeland. One of these was Byang chub bzang mo. In Chos kyi sgron ma's biography, she first appears as a high ranking nun (*dpon btsun ma*) of her nunnery in the vicinity of dPal mo chos sdings, and as part of the small group of nuns with whom she established the hermitage in the vicinity of rDzong dkar (Biography of Chos kyi sgron ma folio 76v–77r). She is again mentioned among the nuns who helped with the logistics in the manuscript reproduction of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal's Collected Works and the relevant celebrations at rDzong dkar: "Concerning the necessary assistance, tasks such as sending messages, grinding roasted grain [to make *rtsam pa*] and making *chang* were managed by the chief nun (*dpon btsun ma*) Byang chub bzang mo"¹⁷ (Biography of Chos kyi sgron ma 96r).

Byang chub bzang mo became a respected nun within the Bo dong pa network after the departure of Chos kyi sgron ma. She requested the Bo dong pa master bTsun pa Chos legs to write his biography (see Everding 2000, 223), which was printed after the master's demise, and assisted him in a variety of ways. She looked after him in Ko ron sBa tshe spil (Biography of bTsun pa Chos legs folio 86r) and certainly contributed in unrecorded ways to the success of the deeds of one of the great spiritual masters of her time whose works were printed and distributed across the region. .

She is probably identical with the Byang chub bzang mo mentioned as the venerable nun (*btsun ma*) consulted in 1485 by the young Kun tu bzang mo (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo 9v) when she was on her quest for a spiritual master (see below).

While so far Byang chub bzang mo remains elusive, Kun tu bzang mo is much better known thanks to the recent discovery of her biography which adds to what was already known about her from the biography of her master and consort gTsang smyon He ru ka written by rGod tshang ras chen (1482–1559).

17 *zhabs tog tha na bang chen rngod thag chang tshod pa las ka so so rnam la dpon btsun ma byang chub bzang mos thog ma byas.*

8 Kun tu bzang mo (1464–1549) – The Consort of gTsang smyon He ru ka

sPo rong dPal mo chos sdings, the monastery where Chos kyi sgron ma had taken her vows and resided with Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, saw a few decades later (in the late 1480s) the arrival of another woman of high rank who was born in south-western Tibet, Kun tu bzang mo (1464–1549). Like Chos kyi sgron ma she had fought against her family and in particular their marriage strategies to pursue her own aspirations. She would eventually become the consort of gTsang smyon He ru ka, the great Buddhist master who compiled and had the printing blocks for the *Life and Songs of the famous Buddhist Yogin Mi la ras pa* carved.

Her story has now become better known thanks to the recent discovery of her biography written in 1551 by one of her main disciples, mKhyen rab dBang phyug, on the basis of autobiographical notes and short biographies written by other disciples (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folio 70v).



FIGURE 13.5 *sKyid grong valley. View from the pass leading to La ldebs.*
PHOTOGRAPH: BRUCE HUETT

She was born to the west of rTsib ri, in a place called dPyad lung Brag 'bur said to be at the distance of one *rgyang drag* from the famous pilgrimage site (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folio 4v). From the biography of Grags pa rgyal mtshan (folio 51) we know that sPyad lung is a locality between Shel dkar and rDzong dkar not far from Na zlum, a place where gTsang smyon He ru ka often resided (see for example Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folio 8r) and where the first print edition of the biography and songs of Mi la ras pa was later produced (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folios 16r–19v, see also Porong Dawa in this volume).

She was the youngest of four children and was given the birth name of mGon mo skyid. She was the daughter of the brother of a local official ruling over gNya' nang called sTag la nang pa, who belonged to the lineage of Shākya bzang po, the famous ruler (*dpon chen*) of Sa skya. Her mother seems to have remained resident in dPyad lung Brag 'bur and Kun tu bzang mo often moved back and forth between the lower areas of gNya' nang and her mother's residence in the higher areas west of the rTsib ri. At that time gNya' nang seems to have been administered from Tsha mda', an important centre west of Ding ri sGang dkar, just like sKyid grong was administered from rDzong dkar and mKhar rta Pha drug from Shel dkar. This is clearly stated in the colophon of a print produced by one of Kun tu bzang po's disciples: "Within the prosperous polity of Tsha mda', in the great hidden resort of gNya' nang"¹⁸ (Text 39 in Porong Dawa's collection, folio 68v). There was therefore a tight connection between the lower and the higher areas of the polity that corresponded roughly to current Nyalam County and this was achieved through a range of routes, the most important being the one via Glang 'khor and the Thong la pass (see map).

Kun tu bzang mo was a sickly child and showed early signs of wanting to pursue a spiritual life. In 1485 she met Byang chub bzang mo, one of the nuns belonging to Chos kyī sgron ma's retinue, and asked her about the best way of finding a true spiritual master (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo, folio 9v). At the same time she was promised as a bride to the tantric lama of bKra shis mkhar in a marriage that was seen as very convenient to her family because of the standing of the bKra shis mkhar family and its links to the rulers of Tsha mda' (*Tsha mda' sde pa*). She opposed the marriage; then eventually agreed but before the full conclusion of the marriage process her husband died. This led to a range of negotiations involving her paternal aunt who had married A ra dPal

18 *chab srid dar rgyas sde chen tsha mda' khul sbas ba'i sti gnas snya (gna') nang lung chen.*

bzang, a member of the Zur tsho ruling family, suggesting that she could come to Zur tsho as a secondary wife.

Refusing all the arrangements her family was trying to make, she kept pursuing her quest for a spiritual life. Her predicament led her to a dramatic escape one night from bKra shis mkhar, which must have been located just north of Na zlum in the vicinity of 'Gu tsho.¹⁹ This is vividly described in the biography (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo, folio 13r–14r):

Eventually, she arrived at sPo rong dPal mo chos sding where things did not work out too well for her. When she asked to take refuge and cut her hair, the spiritual master Byang sems Rin chen dpal refused as they already had problems with high ranking women wanting to take vows. After a lot of insistence she was able to take refuge and was given the name dPal ldan skyid. At dPal mo chos sdings she practiced meditation and received the teachings of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal. However she was repeatedly told that she should return to bKra shis mkhar. The spiritual master Byang sems rin chen himself suggested she should go to suitable monasteries in southern La stod, which would benefit her religious practice and her living conditions. He then emphasized: “If you stay here there is the risk that the people led by A ra ba [i.e. the Zu tsho ruler] may disturb and oppress not only you but also me” (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo, folio 16r).²⁰

Feeling the pressure, she decided to leave dPal mo chos sdings and pursue her spiritual quest elsewhere. She sent her assistant dGon chung pa to see “the incomparable great He ru ka who, having returned from Tsa ri, was staying at Na zlum Shel phug in order to produce the print edition of the biography and songs of Mi la ras pa” (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo, folio 16r).²¹ gTsong smyon invited her saying that he was prepared to teach her the dharma.

The biography reports a range of spiritual and social events taking place at Na zlum, including a New Year celebration in which she was a cause of embarrassment because she refused to join a formal gathering and was

19 The approximate localisation of bKra shis mkhar is enabled by the mention of the sMan chu river, which flows through the sMan khab area, in the nocturnal escape episode. The sMan chu joins the river that comes from Zur tsho to form the Bong chu in the 'Gu tsho area, just north of Na zlum. Also, at folio 12r the biography reports that when she met with Bla ma bSod nams bzang po she said: “We are from the 'Gu tsho side (*nga nams 'gu tsho phyogs nas yin*)”. Having married into the bKra shi mkhar family, she repeatedly refers to herself as the *dpon mo* of bKra shis mkhar, which would indicate an overlap, or at least a convergence, between the two proclaimed places of belonging.

20 *'dir bzhugs rang a r a ba tsos khyed rang khyer rjes nged la yang rnyed tser byas nyen yod.*

21 *mnya' med he ru ka chen de nyid gnas mchog dpal tsa ri nas phebs te rje btsun mi la ras pa'i mam mgur par du gzhegs pa la na zlum shel phug na bzhugs.*



FIGURE 13.6 *dPal mo chos sdings monastery.*
PHOTOGRAPH: HILDEGARD DIEMBERGER

reading the life and songs of *Mi la ras pa*, poorly dressed in a separate room. At that time seated in a top position of the seating row were the spiritual son of *gTsang smyon Heruka*, *lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal* (1473–1557), and his mother, described here as an emanation of the *rDo rje phag mo* (*Yum rdor je phag mo*).²² As high ranking guests belonging to the *Gung thang* royal family, they invited her to join but to no avail. They must have been either visiting or possibly taking refuge, having escaped the *Gung thang* court intrigues that led to the assassination of *lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal's* father.²³

At *Na zlum*, *Kun tu bzang mo* received many teachings from *He ru ka* and his disciples. Eventually, after they completed the printing project, they transferred the blocks to *gNya' nang Gro phug*, a sacred site of *Mi la ras pa* in central *gNya' nang*. She kept travelling in the region, going to *Gung thang*, *Glo bo* and other areas, often returning to *gNya' nang* and going into retreat in *La phyi*. After a while, when she was on her own, she received news of *gTsang smyon He ru ka's* passing which distressed her greatly. Shortly afterwards *dNgos 'grub*

22 On *lHa btsun's* mother as an emanation of the *rDo rje phag mo*, see Clemente 2009, 3.3; Diemberger & Clemente 2013, 125.

23 On this episode, see Clemente 2014, 457–63; Diemberger & Clemente 2013, 122–125.



FIGURE 13.7
Kun tu bzang mo as depicted in her biography.
 PHOTOGRAPH: PORONG DAWA.

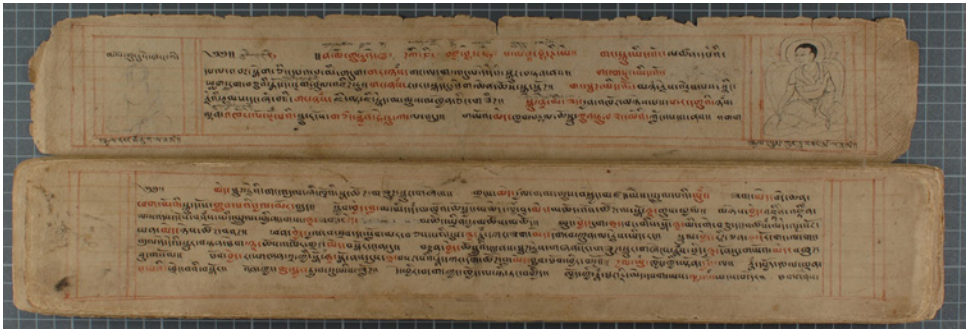


FIGURE 13.8 *Biography of Kun tu bzang mo. Her image is drawn showing her as an old woman; the image of her master gTsang smyon He ru ka is just sketched. Perhaps the artist struggled with the fact that he died long before her and no memory of his appearance or iconographic representation was available to him.*
 PHOTOGRAPH: PORONG DAWA.

dpal 'bar (1456–1529)²⁴ wrote gTsang smyon He ru ka's biography, for which the blocks were carved in rTsis ri bSam gling in 1508 and subsequently taken to Grod phug (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folio 28r–29r, see also Larsson in this volume and Sernesi 2011). The same happened for gTsang smyon He ru ka's works.

A short while after the completion of the funerary rituals for her master, Kun tu bzang mo decided to reprint *Mi la ras pa's* songs because the first print had some deficiencies:

At that time the victorious mother (*rgyal yum*) [Kun tu bzang mo] thought: 'When the master was alive, he told me that the woodblocks of

24 dNgos grub dpal 'bar was one of the closest disciples of gTsang smyon Heruka and the author of the first of his biographies.

the songs of *Mi la ras pa* have letters that are generally too small in shape (*yi ge chungs*); thus what was in his mind in relation to the carving wasn't fully achieved.' Generally, in order to benefit the dharma and the living beings and not to turn away from the master's thought, she decided to revive the printing activity (*par gyi zhig bsos*). She sent disciples with letters and with the relevant ceremonial gifts to *Gu ge*, *sPu rangs* and other places to collect donations." (Biography of *Kun tu bzang mo*, folio 29r)

After a preparatory stay at *Shes phug chu shing sgang* of *bKar shis sgang* in *Chu dbar*, "they went to *Brod phug* (*Grod phug*) of *gNya' nang*. They gathered from disciples and the sponsors up to *Tsa ri* all the donations necessary for the support of the speech (*gsung rten*). They then stayed at *Se phug* [in *La phyi*] and gathered all what was necessary for the printing such as the wood blocks. All the donations that were sought for from all directions arrived plentiful and in a short time. The scribes and carvers from *sMan khab* and *Zur gtso* were called many times. The disciple *Lo pañ* [*ras pa 'Jam dpal chos lha*] did the editing and one hundred and eight blocks were newly produced. (Biography of *Kun tu bzang mo*, folio 29r)

The narrative then highlights the fact that when the marking phase was completed (*spyän 'byed grub*) on the remaining blocks, *Kun tu bzang mo* let the craftsmen enjoy a ceremony and payed their salaries. Once the carving operation was completed, they consecrated all the wood blocks with a lavish performance of the relevant consecration ritual (*rab gnas*) and a fire ritual (*kha skong sbyin sreg*) according to the sand maṇḍala of *Cakrasaṃvara*. At that point rainbows appeared in the blue sky and a pleasant scent spread everywhere. As a further miraculous sign it is mentioned that when the illuminations were completed with the finishing touches, everybody saw that, in the images, the wisdom-beings had arrived in person (*ye shes pa phebs*) and obtained great faith. The wood blocks were then 'invited' to *Drod phug* (*Grod phug*) and spread the prints to sponsors and disciples everywhere. (Biography of *Kun tu bzang mo*, folio 29v).²⁵

25 *de'i tshé rgyal yum nyid kyi dgongs pa la: rje bzhuḡs dus/ rje mid la'i mḡur 'bum gyi par shing phal cher yi ge chungs shing: kos thugs gzhed bshin ma byung gsung pas/ spyir bstan 'gro la phan pa dang: bye brag tu: je dgongs pa phyin ci ma log pa yin pas/ par gyi zhig bsos mdzad par thugs thag spyad: bu slob rnams/ gu ge: pu rangs sogs: so sor bka' shog rten dan/... de nas gnya' nang brod phug tu phebs te: tsa ri man gyi bu slob dang sbyin bdag rnams la'an gsung rten dan bcas 'bul sdud gnang: dpon slob kyis ze phug tu bzhuḡs: par sogs 'phral dgos kyi chas rkyen mams bsgrubs/: phyags kyi 'bul sdud rnams kyang/ stobs che ba myur du sleb*

For the re-carving of the blocks of the songs (possibly including the biography?)²⁶ of Mi la ras pa, Kun tu bzang mo chose a new strategy: this time rather than taking the wood to the place where sponsors and craftsmen were based as her master had done, she invited them to Mi la ras pa's holy site of Se phug in the densely wooded La phyi area where birch (the most commonly used wood for printing blocks) is plentiful. On this occasion the operation seems to have taken much less time (just a few months), possibly taking into account summer rains and winter snows, and was relying on a wider sponsorship network as well as an experienced team of craftsmen that had been involved in Kun tu bzang mo's projects before. She managed to convince them to go to a holy but very remote area and kept their spirits happy by organising a large scale celebration and payment of salaries before the end of the project.

It is also likely that the criticism of the letter size of the original blocks may have prompted some stylistic innovation, but only the retrieval of these original prints will make an evaluation possible. The scribes and the carvers were from sMan khab and Zur tsho as in the Na zlum edition (see Porong Dawa in this volume). Many were presumably the same that had been involved in Kun tu bzang mo's 1508 projects of rTsib ri bSam gtan gling (Sernesi 2011, 186–187). As in the case of the Na zlum and rTsib ri print editions, she had the blocks taken from Se phug to Gro phug printing house in central gNya' nang.

The Grod phug printing house, which is located in a Mi la ras pa site relatively close to Kun tu bzang mo's paternal family home, was apparently an important place for gTsang smyon He ru ka and his disciples. Later Kun tu bzang mo restored it (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo, folio 43r) and had some of her spiritual daughters based there or in its vicinity (see below).

After a long period spent in the La stod region, during which she visited many places including the Hidden Valley of mKhan pa lung,²⁷ she decided to go to Tsa ri in south-eastern Tibet (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo, folio 47).

te: sman khab dang: zur tsho nas yig mkhan dang kos mkhan mang du bos: thugs sras lo pan pas zhu dag mdzad: par shing brgya dan brgyad gsar du bzheng.

26 In the reference to the Na zlum print edition, songs and biography (*rnam mgur*) are mentioned collectively. In Ze phug only the songs (*mgur*) are mentioned but it is possible that both were meant.

27 mKhan pa lung is a famous hidden valley (*sbas yul*) considered to have been revealed by Rig 'dzin rGod kyi ldem phru can, a rNying ma pa master with a close connection to the Gung thang royal house. The mention of Kun tu bzang mo as opening the hidden valley seems to attest to the fact that by then mKhan pa lung, located to the south of Pha drug, was at least known. Kun tu bzang mo's interest in the hidden valley may have been not exclusively spiritual as these were areas rich in wood and paper and medicinal plants.

Kun tu bzang mo followed the same route as Chos kyi sgron ma. In contrast to her, however, she enjoyed a long life there. She established herself as a spiritual leader in the Dvags po and Kong po regions and was recognised as an emanation of the rDo rje phag mo (Biography of Kun tu bzang mo folio 58r) before dying at the venerable age of 84 in 1549.

Kun tu bzang mo's biography mentions long lists of male and female disciples, and of monasteries she established or supported. As the spiritual heir of gTsang smyon He ru ka, she had a network that spanned the whole of Tibet and included some of the greatest spiritual masters of her time. Most famous among them is perhaps rGod tshang ras chen (1482–1559), whom she empowered as throne holder in Ras chung phug. Certainly she contributed in a significant way to establishing some of the texts that were produced by gTsang smyon He ru ka and his disciples as classics of Tibetan literature (see Ehrhard 2010, 129–162 and also Larsson in this volume).

Although she was considered an emanation of the rDo rje phag mo, as was the mother of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal, Kun tu bzang mo does not seem to have been recognised in a female re-embodiment and no reincarnation line originated from her. Her legacy was passed on through teacher-disciple relationships and kinship.

Certainly, Chos kyi sgron ma and Kun tu bzang mo belonged to the same networks of patronage, religious practice and kin: Chos kyi sgron ma's sister 'Dzam gling rgyal mo and her niece, mKha 'gro rgyal mo, had songs dedicated to them by gTsang smyon He ru ka as they visited him in 'Od gsal phug in Ron phu to receive religious teachings. Kun tu bzang mo ensured that these songs were put into print as part of a collection of songs by her master (see *gTsang smyon's mgur 'bum*, 11v, 12r).

It is thanks to these larger networks that the deeds of great spiritual masters became part of a narrative tradition that has survived and thrived up to the present day. Women were an important part in these relationships in which kinship, patronage and religious affiliation intersected and ensured that deeds were achieved, traditions maintained and sometimes innovation enabled.

9 dBang mo Yang 'dzom (16th Century) – A Niece and Local Heir of Kun tu bzang mo's Legacy

A recently discovered text (see text 39 in Porong Dawa's collection), a handwritten copy from a print of the biography of Nāropā by dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (1474–1552) – which was reprinted in gNya' nang in the vicinity of Grod phug – gives insight into what happened to Kun tu bzang mo's printing

activities in her homeland after her departure for the east. The printing project was managed by a spiritual daughter (*thugs sras*) of Kun tu bzang mo called dBang mo g.Yang 'dzom and her sisters. They were her nieces (*dbong mo*) and were presumably taking care of the printing house after their aunt's departure. Connected to the ruling family of gNya' nang (as was Kun tu bzang mo) they were in a good position to mobilise resources to take forward the legacy of Kun tu bzang mo there. Like many spiritual masters before her, dBang mo dpal 'dzom took the opportunity of fulfilling the remaining wishes of an important and [presumably] deceased person and his family to initiate the print edition of a work that had been composed upon the request of her famous aunt. As in the case of many other women, very little is known of Kun tu bzang mo's nieces but we can be certain that their aunt had been a source of great inspiration for them. Having transformed from rebel to moral exemplar, Kun tu bzang mo had become an authorising referent that commanded respect and protected whoever was carrying on her legacy.

The Tsha mda' ruling family seems to have been an important element within the patronage network that promoted the composition and printing of important works by gTsang smyon He ru ka and his school: they were among the sponsors of the first print edition of Mi la ras pa's biography and songs and the daughter-in-law of the Tsha mda' rulers had a song dedicated to her by gTsang smyon He ru ka soothing her grief at the passing of her husband, which was printed by Kun tu bzang mo within the collection of gTsang smyon songs (see *gTsang smyon's mgur 'bum*, f. 11v–12r).

10 Gung thang Queens and Other Women

Many of these patronage networks spanned entire regions. The links between southern La stod and Gung thang were particularly close and often stretched beyond the actual polities through marriage alliances, religious connections and trade relations. Trans-Himalayan trading routes certainly played an important part in the development of printing, as wood, paper, ink and colorants were often sourced through trade. The *Gung thang rgyal rabs* mentions Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan, Chos kyi sgron ma's father, as the first to produce print editions among his merit making deeds and this might be linked to the expansion of his network in cis-Himalayan regions.

According to Chos kyi sgron ma's biography, Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan married as a secondary wife "one of the Bong rdzogs sisters" (Biography of Chos kyi sgron ma folio 7v). Chos kyi sgron ma's mother was deeply disappointed

with this: she had had only two daughters from the king but she had married him only four years before; they were both young and could have still tried to have a male heir. Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan however either for personal passion or, more likely, political necessity decided to marry a woman from the ruling clan (Bong rdzogs)²⁸ of the kingdom immediately to the south of Gung thang, currently corresponding to an area in the Rasuwa valley in Nepal. She became the mother of Khri rNam rgyal lde, a great sponsor of printing. Her origin was, however, completely omitted by the *Gung thang rgyal rabs*, either for lack of evidence or deliberately (she would have been considered a *mon pa/rong pa*), and Chos kyi sgron ma's mother and Khri rNam rgyal lde's mother were conflated.

The upper Rasuwa area was, and to some extent still is, famous for its paper, dyes and wood. The local rulers controlled the trans-Himalyan trade route and especially the sKyid grong passage. It is therefore plausible that the kinship network of the Gung thang kings played a part in securing the sourcing of the materials that were essential for the production of print editions. Later, in some cases, blocks were actually carved in regions corresponding to Hidden Valleys (*sbas yul*) such as sKyid mo lung (see Porong Dawa in this volume), Helambu (Yol mo) and Langtang (Lang 'phrang) (Ehrhard 2013; forthcoming).

After Chos kyi sgron ma, we find a whole host of women, especially members of the royal family, mentioned in the relevant colophons involved in printing operations. In most cases, these are simply female names within long lists of sponsors. Only by cross-referencing them in different colophons, biographies and the history of Gung thang (*Gung thang rgyal rabs*) do glimpses of these women's stories sometimes emerge.

In some cases, one wonders whether the production of print editions was a catalyst for the establishment of patronage networks that bridged political rifts and consolidated existing ties in the name of a shared Buddhist vision of merit making. For example there are Gung thang prints that list in their colophons members of rival factions within the royal family. After Khri rnam rgyal lde (1426?–1502)²⁹ the Gung thang dynasty had split into two competing branches (emerging from his two wives), with bitter rivalry and even murder separating them (see Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 119–142). At that time,

28 Bong rdzogs (which is both a place and a clan name) is tightly connected to the Bong rdzogs Ghale, the name of a ruling clan in the Upper Rasuwa. See Campbell 1996, 222–245.

29 Khri rnam rgyal lde's dates are usually given as 1422–1502 according to the *Gung thang rgyal rabs*. The biography of Chos kyi sgron ma however suggests that 1422 was her date of birth and that her brother was born some four years later (see Diemberger 2007).

queens belonging to opposing factions seem to have joined forces in sponsoring print editions: Gu ge ma dKon mchog bzang/rgyal mo, wife of Khri Kun dga' rnam rgyal lde (?–1524) and Shes rab rgyal mo, wife of bSam sgrub lde supported a print edition of the Yang dgon pa spiritual songs and other works (see Diemberger & Clemente 2013, 131, n. 78). This and other examples suggest that colophons should be understood not only as a mere reflection of actual processes but also as powerful narratives enacting religious and political arrangements through their compilation and reading, processes in which women often played a distinctive part.³⁰

Gung thang prints not only mention a significant number of women but also present colophons that involve a large number of people of different standing, suggesting that printing operations involved a wider participation beyond the political and religious elite (see Clemente in press b). From this point of view women may have had an important part in widening access to the written word. The extent of this process however remains to be evaluated and has so far proved difficult to glean from extant sources.

11 Women as Spiritual Leaders and Patrons: Compliance, Transgression and Innovation

Either enacting patronage from a position of compliance with social norms or, more rarely, transgressing them, women certainly played a part in the cultural life of 15th/16th century Tibet. Some of the sacred women mentioned above were recognised as emanations of the deity rDo rje phag mo. Three cases that are known within this network – Chos kyi sgron ma, the mother of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal and Kun tu bzang mo – indicate that this occurred more often than the rare instances in which women became established as reincarnation lines. It seems, rather, that by being identified as rDo rje phag mo these women had their unconventional achievements and relationships accepted as the result of their embodiment of the sacred power that comes from transgressing and transcending conventions. (On features that epitomize the deity they embody, Vajrayoginī/rDo rje phag mo, see English 2002.) Further, marriage seems to have played an important part: Chos kyi sgron ma abandoned her marriage to become a disciple and perhaps consort of spiritual masters (and her divorce triggered a war); lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal's mother was

30 At least one woman is also mentioned among artists who worked on printing projects. On this figure, see Clemente in press a.

a close disciple of gTsang smyon He ru ka, probably after having been the lover of a member of the Gung thang royal house (Shes rab dpal bzang);³¹ Kun tu bzang mo refused a range of marriage arrangements and eventually became the consort and spiritual heir of gTsang smyon He ru ka. All three of them reportedly shaped their destiny and their personal relationships in ways that did not comply with the expectations of their kin groups and their community more generally. To what extent this kind of behaviour remained a prerogative of elite women, who had the means and the manoeuvring space to fight their battles, remains to be explored as more women emerge from a close scrutiny of the historical records. The fact that the bSam sdings rdo rje phag mo – the institutionalised reincarnation of Chos kyi sgron ma – eventually became the protectress of women who refuse marriage (see Dhondup K and Tashi Tsering 1979, 11–17) seems to indicate that these issues were more widespread than the few prominent cases we know of. Certainly, the possibility of relating to this kind of female sacredness afforded opportunities to a number of women – and to male members of the Buddhist congregation who supported them – to shape their religious lives in ways that enacted traditions creatively, and also created an environment conducive to innovation. However, in a context in which anything new tended to be seen as equivalent to corruption of the doctrine and departure from transmitted authority, this would usually be conceptually framed in terms of continuities with the past; such a framework of interpretation applied to printing, too.

Printing in Tibet is certainly to be seen in continuity with other forms of book production. Rather than superseding manuscript production it complemented it, retaining many elements of continuity. However, certain features of blockprinting, and the relevant processes, were innovative in that they seem to have enabled a wider spread of the written word and promoted an enhancement of editorial practices. In what ways might this introduction of printing have impacted on women?

Women, at least those belonging to the elite, were not excluded from literacy but the number of literate women is likely to have been quite limited. It is difficult to find information on whether female literacy was enhanced through printing. Chos kyi sgron ma, who had learnt how to read from her mother, expressed commitment towards teaching reading skills to nuns, which

31 The informal character of her relationship is the most plausible explanation for the fact that lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal was included in the genealogies only belatedly (he is ignored by the *Gung thang rgyal rabs*), see also Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 119–142.

suggests that at least for religious women a larger availability of books was likely to have had an impact. This involved not only direct reading but also the practice of reading books to people. When Kun tu bzang mo was travelling around reading the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, she either used her own copy or more likely the volumes that were available in the relevant households: ornate manuscript editions or copies that had been printed by Chos kyi sgon ma's brother Khri rnam rgyal lde a few years before (*Gung thang rgyal rabs 15r*; Everding 2000, 139; Ehrhard 2000, 14). A more widely distributed royal edition was produced shortly afterwards by King Kun dga' rnam rgyal lde (see Ehrhard 2013, 143–171). Availability of common texts in printed form enhanced therefore the performance of ritual reading as part of religious services. As far as Kun tu bzang mo's own reading skills are concerned, she presumably acquired them when she was brought up by her aunt who was a nun and who is likely to have taught her how to perform religious services for people – an important merit making and fund raising activity.

Some of the women who followed masters became influential spiritual figures even if their deeds can so far be gleaned only from the narratives of others, where they are only marginal figures – as was the case of Chos kyi sgron ma and Kun tu bzang mo until their biographies came to light.



FIGURE 13.9 *Nuns at Be rtse performing a tshogs ritual (the sheep is a tshe thar offering). This nunnery was established on one of the sacred sites where dNgos grub dpal 'bar, disciple of gTsang smyon He ru ka, used to reside.*

PHOTOGRAPH: HILDEGARD DIEMBERGER.



FIGURE 13.10

Ani Rig 'dzin lha mo. She has a slob dpon degree and is the head of a nunnery in Bhutan. Female spiritual masters of the past are highly inspirational for Buddhist nuns of the current era.

PHOTOGRAPH: HILDEGARD
DIEMBERGER.

12 From Tibet to Europe: A Cross-cultural Look

High-ranking Tibetan women of this period lived lives that shared some similarities with those of their European contemporaries, given their struggles against unwanted marriages, patronage of monastic colleges and nunneries, spiritual aspirations and love for books. They also operated through their female networks, often through the medium of book exchanges, to influence the political dynamics of the age. They remind us of the patronesses of Cambridge colleges or the ladies who sponsored the production of manuscripts and prints. Many of these women acted as aristocratic patrons, often having freed themselves from marriage obligations through widowhood, refusal of marriage or celibacy vows and some of them devoted themselves to monastic lives. These women often shared their experiences, creating networks similar to the Tibetan elite networks described above often linking to important religious figures of the time: bishops and arch bishops, and inspired each other. For example Clare of Assisi (1194–1253) who, after refusing marriage, had established the order of the Clarisse in 12th century Italy, was a source of inspiration and a moral exemplar for Marie de Saint Pol (1303–1377), the patroness of Denny Abbey and foundress of Pembroke College, who requested in her will to be buried in a nun's habit (Ward 2002; see also Field 2010, 384–387). At the same time Marie de Saint Pol was a friend of Elisabeth de Burgh (1295–1360), patron of Clare College and collector of art works with whom she shared experiences and aspirations. Frances Underhill (1996) describes how Elisabeth de Burgh exemplifies the possibilities of female cultural leadership and patronage in medieval

England, which was one of the few domains in which a public role for women was sanctioned. It enabled self-empowerment in a world unconcerned with female self-actualisation. Many of the books she owned would have been illuminated religious works and there is a record of her giving an illuminated book to her daughter. She ensured that poor boys in her village should be instructed in singing, grammar and logic. Both Marie de St Pol and Elizabeth de Burgh lived through periods of Civil War in England in which their relatives were involved and when female networks were important in maintaining some stability. It is interesting that in the preamble to her statutes for Clare College she specifically mentions that the scholars should “live in harmony”.

Dedication to books shaped the lives of many of these women and some of them became involved in printing. For example Margaret of York (1416–1503) was the patron of the translation and printing of the first book in English, the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* by Willam Caxton (see Rutter 1987, 440–470). Caxton's prologue, as transcribed by James Ames in 1749, extols the virtues of Margaret of York and her importance to the project, including her making corrections to his English, and could be compared to some exultant descriptions of patrons in Tibetan colophons.³²

Across Europe we find women among the patrons of printing affording easier access for the broader population in the local language, such as Isabella d'Este (1475–1539) who was a significant patron of several arts and supported the printing of a range of books, insisting on good quality and reasonable prices (McCash 1996, 33). She also played an important diplomatic role acting as regent for Mantua during the absence of her husband and when her son was a minor. Sometimes called ‘Machiavelli in skirts’ she was renowned for her diplomatic skills and, like some of her Tibetan counterparts, she negotiated to avoid war with a neighbouring polity, France (see Marek 1976).

There is also evidence that women in medieval Europe became significant acquirers of books. For instance Isabella d'Este had a vast library and an increasing number of studies are casting light on women's holdings and use of books. In European book history, it seems that women played a part not only as patrons but also as readers, being fond especially of vernacular literature, which they actively promoted. Women are also acknowledged to have made a major contribution to translation in the medieval and renaissance period (Lawrence-Mathers 2010). They were also critical in the education of their daughters, who would not normally have had formal schooling like male children.

32 See “Typographical antiquities: being an historical account of printing in England” printed by W. Faden and quoted in McCash 1996, 33.

In a parallel way, Tibetan women are likely to have had an important part in the popularisation of texts through many practices, ranging from patronage of book production, to reading and having books read, to teaching children and other women how to read and write, to the few cases in which they became accomplished spiritual masters recognised as such by both men and women of their communities. It is argued that involvement with books and book production enabled these women to find an identity in a society in which they had little property and few legal rights.

13 Conclusion

It can be suggested that, as sentient beings, Tibetan women have been striving towards enlightenment like their male counterparts, reflecting the vision that Alan Sponberg (1992, 8) calls 'soteriological inclusiveness'. However, as it is well attested, the social and cultural fabric of the relevant time, often by means of Buddhist gender discriminating narratives, have often placed them in positions that implied subordination to a wide range of expectations and social constraints. Looking at the lives of a number of women who were involved in Buddhist deeds such as the printing of scriptures we can identify some common features in their experiences: Most of the known female patrons and female spiritual leaders tended to belong to the elites, since such a social position offered both the means and the manoeuvring space for realising spiritual aspirations. Women of lower background were likely to rise to spiritual prominence only under exceptional circumstances. However, women of lower backgrounds are likely to have participated in many Buddhist deeds in different unrecorded capacities, as for example the repeated references to the generic involvement of nuns suggests. Even the more prominent women tend to disappear from records over time as some of the above mentioned examples show (e.g. the female ruler of Zur tsho and Chos kyi sgron ma).³³

Elite women involved in the patronage of printing, in addition to the overall Buddhist soteriological aims, seem to have had distinctive ways of engaging in such an activity, which related to the position they occupied in marriage alliances. In a world of political fragmentation and local conflicts, in which they had to act as ambassadors through their kinship ties, they seem to have been in a particular position to act as promoters of peace and mediation – often

33 Zur tsho bdang mo mentioned elsewhere as the Zur tsho ba; Chos kyi sgron ma mentioned in a single line in the Gung thang rgyal rabs and ignored in relation to the production of prints.

joining forces with spiritual masters who were powerful mediators and negotiators (when they were not engaged in sectarian fights and patronage competition).³⁴

Biographical narratives have played an important part in the enactment and transmission of a morality of exemplars in the Buddhist context. Thus the lives of Buddhist women played an important part as 'authorising referents' for later generations (see Gyatso and Havevik 2005; Diemberger 2007). In addition to the few female biographies, colophons and records of patronage sometimes contain powerful narratives in this direction, even if they are more difficult to interpret because of the lack of contextual information – this would have been known at the relevant time and possibly passed on through local oral tradition.

Book production seems to have offered women an important route to fulfil their spiritual aspirations, produce merit for their deceased family members, and at times reinforce their religious profile in ways that could consolidate a political position (given that it was much more difficult for a woman to be seen as a strong and legitimate ruler than for a man),

In contrast to the few women who engaged critically with the social and cultural setting within which they were operating, many more found less disruptive ways of fulfilling their aspirations both as nuns and benefactresses. Patronage often provided a rewarding and less problematic way of taking part in Buddhist deeds (see also Willis 1985), contributing substantially to their realisation: providing the opportunity to compose new spiritual works, the food for scribes and carvers, the arrangements for the materials necessary for constructing religious objects or the resources to establish a workshop. We often only know of these women's contribution from a brief mention of their names as sponsors at the end of documents. It is difficult to glean what motivated them and how they pursued their aspirations from fragments and traces in sources that were not dedicated to them. Even if we do not know their story, it can be assumed that their ways of enacting Buddhist patronage was directly connected to the position they occupied within wider kinship, religious and political networks. In this they remind us of many medieval and renaissance patronesses in Europe, who supported book culture and a wide range of spiritual institutions that became hubs of education and learning. In both cases their legacies lives on in the traditions and achievements to which they contributed as women in a men's world.

34 The role of lamas in the mediation of disputes has been analysed in detail by Fernanda Pirie (2012) on the basis of ethnographic evidence from Amdo. Some of her reflections can be seen as relevant to historical contexts.

Appendix

Transliteration of the colophon of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa snying po* printed at Zur tsho. Text n. 10 Porong Dawa's collection:

Folio 175v

dkon mchog gsum la gu bas phyag 'tshal nas/ srid gsum sems can kun gyi don mchog phyir// dus gsum sangs rgyas kun gyi mdo sngags kyi// slab gsum de nyid snying po'i dkar cag bshad//sngon gyi lo pan skyes mchog dam pa yi/dam chos rgya mtsho legs par sgyur ba la/ mtshan nyid theg pa'i dam chos dar na yang// sngags kyi theg pa de chos de lta min//mdo ba bshad la yang yang dag pa ma bshad dan//log par bshad dang the mtshom du bshad pas// ma dag mthong phyir dag pa'i rnam bshad kyis//bstan pa'i rin po che rgyal mtshan lham mer [...]s// rgyud sde rgya mtsho'i tsho gas las rgyud kyi ni//rba rlabs gsum bzhi bshad sgrub ltar byed kyang//rgyud sde bzhi glegs bam rin po che//phal cher phyag mchog tsam gyi yul du gyur//tshul 'di mthong nas phyi nang rgyas pa la//gsol ba gtab cing de yi byin brlabs mthus//mdo rgyud rgya mtsho'i de nyid dus pa ni//chos tshoms brgyad khri bzhi stong legs par [...]shad//de yi sgrub pa snying por by aba phyir//rus pa rgya mtsho'i de snyid snying po ni//yid bzhin nor bu kun las ches lhag pa//gro kun re ba skang phyir legs par phyung//

gling bzhi nang nas gling mchog 'dzam bu gling//yul gyi nang nas yul mchog kha ba can//lha'i nang nas lha mchog gtsang gi lha//lha gnas bskyeng byed lha ri mo//der ni rgyal rigs dpag bsam shing chen rgyas//rtsa brtan rtse mo mkha' la reg pa byung//rgya chen bsod nams phun tshogs sti gnas der// lang

Folio 176r

tsha shel gyi lcug phran lta bu la//ngur smrig lo 'bras 'dzin pa'i slob dpon ma//nam mkha' dpal bzang mo zhes grags pa byung// 'byor pa'i chu gter pha mtha' mi mang zhing/'khor ba yog ra mkha'i skar ma lta bar dar//tshigs gnyis nyi zla shar [...] 'ogs gyi smon pa'i gnas su gyur//'khor ba'i 'gal rkyen mun pa kun sel cin// phan bde'i lo tog thams cadrgyas byed pa'i // thabs ni ci zhig yong yang dang yang//bsam [...] mdzad pa'i rtul shugs thob par gyur// skabs der de nyid snying po zhes bya ba//nyi zla grangs med kyis kyang 'gran med pa// yod par dgongs nas yod pa'i dngos po kun// kun du btang nas de nyid spel bar dgongs//spyr gyi 'gro kun byang chub thob phyir dang/zhal ngo gshegs pa mams kyi dgongs rdzogs dang/ khyad par drung chen bsod nams rgyal mtshan sogs//rgyal ba'i go 'phang thob phyir spar 'di sgrubs//

spar shing bshes gnyen grags pa bzang pos phul//'phrul gyi yig mkhan nam mkha' rin chen dang//rkos byed mkhas pa dge ba bshes rgyal le dang//bsam pa blo gros seng ge la sogs pa'i//lag gnyis nyi ma zla ba'i dkyil 'khor las/ spar gzhung 'od zer grangs med 'di spros so//nyi zla'i rdul ngad sprin dang sgra gcan sogs//dag gsal gnyen po'i phyogs su mdzad pa'i/'dul 'dzin mkhas pa ngag dbang zhes bya ba//shing rta chen po de yis srol 'di phye//

yid shin nor bu bas kyang ches ltag pa'i//rin chen spar mchog sgrubs pa'i dge ba na//nyi zla grangs med shar ba lta bu yis// skyon yon spang thams cad mthar pyin shog//gal rkyen bar chad thams cad bsal ba dang//mthun rkyen tshogs gnyis thams cad? rgyas bya'i phyir//bstan pa'i nyi ma phyogs bcur rgyas pa dang//phan bde'i zla ba phyogs bcur 'phel bar shog//sku gnyen gshegs pa thams cad bder gshegs dang//ma gshegs pa kun sku rtse mi 'da' dang// khyad par sbyin bdag chen mo rang nyid kyi// bzhe don thams cad 'bad med lhun grub shog

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'*Grel chung* = '*grel chung don gsal by Haribadra*. Text number 1 in *Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdus bzhugs so* (brief introduction to the history of Tibetan printing technology) by dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rmying zhib 'jug khang published by Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rmying dpe skrun khang, 2013. This text is also available in manuscript form as *Ta si tu lha btsan skyabs kyi 'grel chung don gsal par du bsgrubs pa'i dkar chag tshigs bcad la*. Text included in a four volumes collection of Bo dong pa works with the title *Bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyalgyi gsung 'bum gсар snyed skor*, published in 2009 by the dPal brtseg Research Institute. Vol. 4, 301–303.

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Prints about the Printer: Four Early Prints in Honour of the Mad Yogin of gTsang*

Stefan Larsson

1 Introduction

This article investigates four texts that the disciples of the mad yogin gTsang smyon Heruka (1452–1507) compiled and printed in 1508, the year after their teacher passed away. On the basis of these four prints, the article will explore how gTsang smyon's disciples, almost directly after the death of their beloved master, began composing and printing texts in his honour. Additionally, the people involved in the production of the prints and the place where the printing likely occurred will be outlined. It is worth mentioning that the texts were made by a quite disparate group of people. Two of them, rGod tshang ras pa (1482–1559) and Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal chos lha (n.d.), were tantric yogins; one of them, dNgos grub dpal 'bar (1456–1527), was a learned monk affiliated with the Sa skya tradition; and one of them, Kun tu bzang mo (1464–1549), was the female companion of gTsang smyon.

The four prints could be seen as the second step in the development of 'the school of gTsang smyon', an influential school of printing that centered around gTsang smyon and his disciples.¹ The first step was taken by gTsang smyon himself when he organized the printings of his versions of the life story and song collection of Mi la ras pa in 1488 and of Mar pa in 1505, prints that became very popular and widely disseminated. When gTsang smyon passed away,

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1 Franz-Karl Ehrhard has suggested that on the basis of the stylistic criteria of Tibetan printed texts, one may identify individual 'schools' or 'workshops,' and that these could then be named after the leading figures or religious communities with which the artists and craftsmen affiliated themselves (Ehrhard 2012, 149). Several scholars have investigated the prints that 'the school of gTsang smyon' produced, for example, Clemente 2007, 2009; DiValerio 2015a, 2015b; Diemberger and Clemente 2013; Ehrhard 2000, 2010, 2012; Larsson 2012; Larsson and Quintman 2015; Quintman 2014; Roberts 2007; Schaeffer 2007, 2009, 2011; Sernesi 2010, 2011, forthcoming; Smith 1969, 2001.



FIGURE 14.1 *Block-print illustration of gTsang smyon Heruka (dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 1a).*

his disciples continued his manifold activities, among them printing texts. By compiling and printing the four texts, they laid the foundation for later gTsang smyon biographies, and they also contributed in making their teacher remembered by future generations. If it were not for promoting their teacher's life and songs through printing, it is possible that the identity of "the yogin adorned with bone ornaments who roam charnel grounds", as gTsang smyon names himself in the colophon of his famous biography of *Mi la ras pa*, would be unknown today.² By taking this 'second step', his disciples also proved that they were capable of organizing substantial printing projects without their master's

² gTsang smyon Heruka 1991 [1488]: *dur khrod nyul ba'i rnal 'byor pa rus pa'i rgyan can*.

guidance. They thus continued in gTsang smyon's footsteps, acting as leading figures in the wider printing culture that blossomed in sixteenth-century Tibet.

2 The Four Prints

Heart of the Sun, the most extensive biography of gTsang smyon, describes how the mad yogin's disciples and benefactors carried out numerous devotional acts in honour of their guru after his passing. Besides engaging in elaborate rituals and offerings, they honoured his body by making hundreds of statues and paintings depicting him. It is also said that his disciples honoured his mind by devoting their life to practising the teachings they had received, some spent the rest of their lives in isolated retreat places, struggling to realize the innermost meaning of his teachings. Moreover, it is stated in *Heart of the Sun* that his female companion, Kun tu bzang mo, printed a collection of gTsang smyon's spiritual songs in honour of his speech. These songs, according to the biography, had been written down by his disciples and compiled by rGod tshang ras pa. It is also said that she printed his biography, which had been composed by dNgos grub dpal 'bar.³ The author's colophon of dNgos grub dpal 'bar's biography reveals that this work was completed in 1508, the year after gTsang smyon's death, in a monastery called bSam gtan gling in rGyal gyi śrī ri, La stod lho (dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 30b). Franz-Karl Ehrhard and Marta Sernesi have shown that the song collection was printed together with the biography, and that two catalogues of songs were printed alongside with these works (Ehrhard 2010, 157–58; Sernesi 2011, 186).⁴ Since the present article is based on these four texts it might be useful to introduce them before continuing:

3 These activities are described in rGod tshang ras pa's biography of gTsang smyon, *Heart of the Sun* (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 281–82 [1512, 141a–141b]) and in the biography of Kun tu bzang mo (mKhan rab dbang phyug 1551, 28b). I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Hildegard Diemberger (University of Cambridge) and her colleagues, not least Porong Dawa (dPal brtsegs Institute), who discovered Kun tu bzang mo's biography and have made several unique Tibetan texts available. I would like to direct those who are interested in Kun tu bzang mo and gTsang smyon to Diemberger and Porong Dawa's contribution in this volume. For an English description of gTsang smyon's death as portrayed in *Heart of the Sun*, see Schaeffer 2007, 218–21.

4 The colophons of all four texts have been studied in detail by Ehrhard (Ehrhard 2010, 154–58). Sernesi has investigated these and other prints belonging to the school of gTsang smyon (Sernesi 2011). The two catalogues of songs have also been described by Dieter Schuh (Schuh 1981, 126–27).

- *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*, gTsang smyon's song collection; main author: rGod tshang ras pa; full title: *The Collected Songs of the Master Heruka from gTsang: The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel Showing the Path of the All-Knowing One* (rJe btsun gtsang pa he ru ka'i mgur 'bum rin po che dbang gi rgyal po thams cad mkhyen pa'i lam ston).⁵
- *Lion of Faith*, gTsang smyon's biography; author: dNgos grub dpal 'bar; full title: *The Common Life Story of the Venerable One of gTsang – The Great Heruka: The Lion of Faith Playing on the Snowy Mountain of Good Qualities* (rJe btsun gtsang pa he ru ka'i thun mong gi rnam thar yon tan gyi gangs ri la dad pa'i seng ge rnam par rtse ba).⁶
- *The Illuminating Sunlight Catalogue*, a catalogue of gTsang smyon's song collection; author: rGod tshang ras pa (dKar chags nyi 'od snang ba).⁷
- *Opening the Eyes of Faith*, a catalogue of Buddhist songs; author: gTsang smyon; full title: *A Catalogue of Songs Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance and Opening the Eyes of Faith* (mGur gyi dkar chags ma rig mun sel dad pa'i mig 'byed).⁸

The four prints are related to one another in several ways. *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*, the song collection, for example, contains biographical information which is lacking in the biography, and the songs complement the biography in significant ways. Through the songs, we get in direct contact with the speech of the mad yogin as it were; and as listeners or readers of the songs, we can receive his instructions and advice.

Lion of Faith, the biography, on the other hand, provides its reader with central information concerning the life of the mad yogin who sang the songs. The biography follows gTsang smyon from birth to death and contains biographical data. Most importantly, since it is a 'liberation story' – *rnam thar* – it shows its readers that gTsang smyon is a completely liberated one, a Buddha, whose lineage and disciples are worthy of faith, respect, and support.

5 This text has been documented by the Nepal German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) and by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC). The text is also available in some private collections. The text is 28 folios long.

6 This text has been documented by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, by Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center, and by dPal brtsegs Institute. The text is also available in some private collections. The text is 31 folios long.

7 This text is, to my knowledge, only available in the "Sammlung Waddell", Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung. It is included as a kind of appendix to *Opening the Eyes of Faith*, folio 9b–10b. The text is one and a half folios long.

8 This text is, to my knowledge, only available in the "Sammlung Waddell", Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung. The text is 9 folios long.



FIGURE 14.2 *Block-print illustration of rGod tshang ras pa (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 287 [1512, 144a]).*

The two catalogues of songs are quite different from one another. *The Illuminating Sunlight Catalogue*, the catalogue of gTsang smyon's songs, contains short information about the different songs which are included in the song collection. We are informed about the circumstances around the songs; the person or persons towards whom the songs were originally directed are introduced; the subject of the songs are pointed out (i.e. instructional song, question-and-answer song etc.); the place where the songs were originally sung is mentioned, etc. *The Illuminating Sunlight Catalogue* was obviously meant to be used together with the song collection, so it was appropriate to print the works together.

Opening the Eyes of Faith, the somewhat more extensive catalogue of songs that gTsang smyon composed in 1503, is quite different from *The Illuminating Sunlight Catalogue*. It contains general information about the Buddhist song-genre and explains why songs are sung, how they are supposed to be sung, what effect they have on various types of listeners, and so on. Above all, it is

a history and rationale for Buddhist songs. Starting with songs from Indian masters and following the tradition up to gTsang smyon's own teacher, Sha ra rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas seng ge (1427–1470), *Opening the Eyes of Faith* enumerates the songs which gTsang smyon considered to be most important. This catalogue also contains instructions on how to perform songs in the proper way. The intended audience for this text was likely gTsang smyon's disciples and this might explain why the text never became widely disseminated.⁹

3 The Place of Printing

It is rather difficult to determine where these texts were printed. It is also somewhat complicated to know exactly who were involved in their production. However, the colophons of the four texts and two biographies where the printings are mentioned give us certain clues. It is therefore to these colophons and biographies that we will now turn.

In the printing colophon of *Lion of Faith*, it is stated that the text was printed in a place called gNas chen dgon gсар (dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 30b). Ehrhard suggests that gNas chen dgon gсар refers to bSam gtan gling, the monastery in rGyal gyi śrī ri, La stod lho, where the biography was composed (Ehrhard 2010, 155).¹⁰ rGyal gyi śrī ri / Śrī ri is a variant name for rTsib ri, a holy mountain located northeast of Ding ri and west of Shel dkar in La stod lho.¹¹ This area corresponds to the modern-day Ding ri prefecture, in the south-western part of the gTsang province.¹² Since bSam gtan gling is referred to as “gnas chen bSam gtan gling” in the author's colophon of *Lion of Faith* (dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 30b), it seems reasonable that gNas chen refers to bSam gtan gling in this con-

9 Andrew Quintman and I have recently published a study and translation of the catalogue in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* (Larsson and Quintman 2015).

10 Since *gnas* is a common name for a holy place, and *dgon gсар* means 'new monastery', it should be kept in mind that there are many different places in Tibet referred to as 'gNas', 'gNas chen', 'dGon gсар' etc., and there are several different monasteries and hermitages named bSam gtan gling as well.

11 Buffetrille mentions that a variant term used for Śrī ri ('glorious mountain') / rTsib ri ('mountain [in the shape] of Ribs') is Shi ri 'mountain of the dead' (Buffetrille 2013, 40). She also states that some scholars consider Shi ri/rTsib ri to be a distortion of the Sanskrit word *śrī*, 'glorious' (Buffetrille 2013, 40, n. 13). The biographies of gTsang smyon refer to the place as Shri ri, which I assume is a variant spelling of Śrī ri.

12 For a map of rTsib ri and the Ding ri area, see Buffetrille 2013, 60; for a map of rTsib ri, see Thub bstan shes rab 2004, 32–33; for maps of La stod lho, see Everding and Dzongphugpa 2006, inset; Wangdu and Diemberger 1996, 158.



FIGURE 14.3 *Block-print illustration of 'Jam dpal chos lha ('Jam dpal chos lha 2013 [16th century], 75b).*

text. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that two of the people involved in the production of these early prints were abbots of bSam gtan gling for a while, Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal chos lha who edited the texts and dNgos grub dpal 'bar who wrote the biography.¹³

Unfortunately, the place where the printing occurred is not clearly specified in *Heart of the Sun* or in Kun tu bzang mo's biography. There are some references to Ding ri in the latter, however, and since rTsig ri, the holy mountain

13 This is pointed out by Ehrhard (Ehrhard 2010, 155), who refers to *The Buddhist History of Shel dkar* where this is stated (Wangdu and Diemberger 1996, 53; Everding & Dzongphugpa 2006, 191). Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal chos lha is referred to as Lo paṅ Ras chen in *The Buddhist History of Shel dkar*, and it is not mentioned when he and dNgos grub dpal 'bar served as abbots of bSam gtan gling.

where bSam gtan gling is located, is situated in the Ding ri area, these references verify that the printing blocks could have been made in bSam gtan gling. Kun tu bzang mo's biography describes the event as follows:

All the monks [and] disciples [then] assembled in the cave of Ding ri again. The great disciples from sTod and sMad, and so forth, constructed a statue which resembled the lord, meaningful to behold, made from gold and copper. Accompanied with [a statue] made by the benefactor of the teachings, the great king of mNga' ri, it was installed at Chu bar. Moreover, as a support for the veneration of the speech of the Heruka, the Victorious Mother, the [female] master and the disciples made two [texts], a biography and a song collection. The heart-sons, the great disciples, exhorted the lord dNgos grub dpal 'bar, saying that [he] had to compose [a biography], and the heart-son rGod tshang pa compiled the song collection. Having made the prints, they were taken to Brod phug.¹⁴ After having distributed [the texts] all over sTod, sMad, and so forth, the funerary services were excellently completed.¹⁵

Although no place of printing is given in the colophons of the song collection and the two catalogues of songs, there are several factors indicating that these three texts were printed together with the biography. As mentioned, it is stated both in *Heart of the Sun* and in Kun tu bzang mo's biography that the biography and the song collection were printed together. This is also revealed in the texts themselves: the biography is marked with letter *ga* in the margin and the song collection with the letter *nga*, indicating that they belong to the same collection. The similar page layout also indicates that all four texts were issued together, and so does the fact that the same people were involved in producing the four prints, a fact we will have reason to return to. But first let us have a closer look at bSam gtan gling, the place where the texts likely were made.

14 Brod phug is a variant spelling of Grod phug, which is an abbreviation of Grod pa phug (Belly Cave), a famous Mi la ras pa cave in gNya' nang.

15 mKhan rab dbang phyug 1551, 28b: *slar yang gra bu slob thams cad ding ri'i phug par du 'dzom/stod smad kyi bu chen sogs/sku'i rten rje nyid sku'dra mthong ba don ldan gser zangs las grub pa gzhengs (bzhengs)/ bstan pa'i sbyin bdag mnga' ri gong ma chen mo'i gzhengs pa de dang bcas/ chu bar du gdan drangs/ yang rgyal yum dpon slob rnams kyis/ gsung gi rten du rje he ru ka de nyid kyi nmam thar/ rje dngos grub dpal 'bar la thugs sras bu chen rnams kyis mdzad dgos zhes bskul nas mdzad pa dang/ mgur 'bum thugs sras rgod tshang pas sgrigs pa gnyis/ par du gzhengs nas brod (grod) phug tu gdan drangs/ stod smad kun du par 'gyed mdzad pa sogs dgongs rdzogs legs par grub rjes/.*

The Buddhist History of Shel dkar (Shel dkar chos 'byung) provides a brief overview of the history of bSam gtan gling, and in this historical chronicle it is said that the monastery was the main monastery of rTib ri (Wangdu and Diemberger 1996, 52–54, 59). Given the school of gTsang smyon's close links to Mi la ras pa, it is noteworthy that a Mi la ras pa cave called 'Plain of the Hidden Cave' (lKog phug thang) is located below bSam gtan gling.¹⁶ This could be one of the reasons why the school's founder, gTsang smyon, who was considered to be a reincarnation of the 'cotton-clad' yogin and often meditated in caves where Mi la ras pa had meditated, visited the area.

In *Heart of the Sun*, a version of gTsang smyon's biography which rGod tshang ras pa composed four years after the four prints were made, it is mentioned that gTsang smyon once went to Śrī ri bSam gtan gling and met its abbot, bSod nams mchog drug (=grub).¹⁷ It is stated that this abbot had heard of gTsang smyon for a long time, and that he had several auspicious dreams the night before gTsang smyon's arrival. When gTsang smyon came, the abbot invited him to his residence and after having conducted a huge ritual feast, the abbot said:

Nowadays there is nobody who surpasses Your Eminence [gTsang smyon] as a holder of the bKa' bryud teachings in these areas. Therefore, since it is necessary to spread the teachings of the Buddha, I request you to take responsibility of my monastery. This is the main practice centre in La stod lho, and since I've become old you must take over the responsibility, by all means.¹⁸

gTsang smyon replied to the abbot in the following way:

In general, since I am a vagabond, I won't take the lead of a fixed monastery [...]. In particular, my spiritual father, Sha ra rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas seng ge, told me to stay in the three holy snow mountains

16 Mi la ras pa sang one of his famous songs in this cave (Thub bstan shes rab 2004, 57–59; gTsang smyon 1991, 320–22; Chang 1989 [1962], 157–58). Buffetrille notes that the memory of the Mi la ras pa site has faded nowadays (Buffetrille 2013, 50).

17 bSod nams mchog drug could be the same person as ('Dzam gling pa chos rje) bSod nams chos sgrub, who was abbot of bSam gtan gling for a while according to *The Buddhist History of Shel dkar* (Wangdu and Diemberger 1996, 53).

18 rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 134 [1512, 66b]: *deng sang 'di phyogs nas rang re bka' rgyud kyi bstan pa 'dzin pa la skyes bu khyed las lhag pa mi 'dug pas/ nga'i gdan sa 'di yang khyed kyis rtsis gzhes (bzhes) mdzad nas sangs rgyas kyis bstan pa spel dgos/ 'di la stod lho'i sgrub sde kun gyi gtso bo yin cing kho bo yang rgas 'dus pas ci nas kyang mdzad dgos [...]*.

[i.e. La phi, Tsa ri, and Ti se]. Since I have received this command, I have no plans to stay here. But I rejoice in the greatness of your pure perception and in your good supreme attitude. In the future, it is possible that my disciples will be of benefit for this monastery of yours.¹⁹

gTsang smyon's disciples did indeed benefit the monastery, as mentioned, two of gTsang smyon's main disciples became abbots of bSam gtan gling; and the earliest prints that the school of gTsang smyon made after gTsang smyon's passing were probably produced there. In *The Buddhist History of Shel dkar*, it is stated that although the monastery appeared outwardly to belong to the Sa skya tradition during this period, its main practice was bKa' brgyud (Wangdu and Diemberger 1996, 53). This too indicates that the tradition of gTsang smyon, which was bKa' brgyud, was practised at the monastery during this period.²⁰

It is noteworthy that it is stated in Kun tu bzang mo's biography that the woodblocks were taken to Grod phug after completion (see quote above). This indicates that, although the texts appear to have been compiled, written down, and carved in bSam gtan gling, the actual printing may have occurred in Grod phug. According to *Heart of the Sun*, the printing blocks of gTsang smyon's Mi la ras pa works were moved from 'Na dum Shel phug where they were made to a printing house in gNya' nang grod phug (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 152 [1512, 75a]). It seems appropriate that the woodblocks made in honour of the mad yogin where moved to this place and stored there together with the printing blocks of gTsang smyon's famous Mi la ras pa works.

4 The People Involved in the Production of the Prints

According to the colophons of *Lion of Faith*, *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*, and *Opening the Eyes of Faith*, it was gTsang smyon's female companion Kun tu

19 rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 134 [1512, 66b]: *kho bo spyir bya bral ba yin pas gzhi bzung gi dgon pa bdag tu mi 'dzin cing/ [..]/ khyad par pha sha ra rab 'byams pa sangs rgyas seng ge'i gsung gi gnas gsum kyi gangs ri la sdod gsungs pa'i bka' yod pas/ kho bo 'dir gdod pa mi 'char/ 'on kyang khyed rang dag snang che zhing lhag bsam bzang pa rjes su yid rangs/ ma 'ongs pa na kho bo'i slob rgyud kyi khyed kyi gdan sa 'di la phan thogs pa 'dra srid gsung/*

20 It is noteworthy that bSam gtan gling eventually changed its religious affiliation and became a 'Brug pa bka' brgyud monastery, but this happened later (Wangdu and Diemberger 1996, 53; Buffetrille 2013, 42, 50). Buffetrille mentions that the monastery was affiliated with the bSam gding convent as well (Buffetrille 2013, 50). This further complicates the religious affiliation of the monastery, since this convent belonged to the Bo dong pa tradition.

bzang mo who financed these printings. It is stated in the colophon of *Lion of Faith* that:

All necessities for accomplishing the printing
 Was assembled through the enlightened attitude and great blessings
 [Of] the magnificent woman, the delightful good master,
 The Victorious Mother who is endowed with the marks of a wisdom
 dākinī.
 [She who] mastered all the profound and meaningful oral instructions,
 [And] traversed the inner paths and stages through progression of the
 four joys.²¹

Kun tu bzang mo also sponsored the printing of *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* and she was also involved in arranging its beginning.

Without forgetfulness, having removed duplications and omissions,
 The venerable one, the great Mother, Kun bzang
 Arranged this precious garland which fulfils all needs,
 Up to the instructions to the heart-son Chos mchog.²²

rGod tshang ras pa also had a prominent role in the production of the texts, he was the main compiler of *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* and he also authored *The Illuminating Sunlight Catalogue*. It is said in the colophon of *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* that he compiled the main part of the collection, from the songs with instructions to king bSam grub lde and onwards (rGod tshang ras pa [1508]a, 27b).²³

21 dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 30b: *par du sgrubs pa'i mthun rkyen ma lus pa//ye shes mkha' 'gro'i mtshan ldan rgyal ba'i yum//zab don man ngag kun la rang byan chud//dga' bzh'i'i 'gros kyis nang gi sa lam bgrod//bzang po'i yongs 'dzin dges pa'i dpal yon mo//gang de'i brlabs chen sems bskyed rkyen gyis sbyar*].

22 rGod tshang ras pa [1508]a, 27b: *dgos 'byung rin chen phreng ba 'di nyid kyi//thugs sras chos mchog la gdams yan chad par//rje btsun drung du yum chen kun bzang gis//lhag chad bsal nas mi rjed (mi brjed) bzungs su bkod*].

23 In Kun tu bzang mo's biography rGod tshang ras pa is said to be the compiler of gTsang smyon's song collection (mKhan rab dbang phyug 1551, 28b: *mgur 'bum thugs sras rgod tshang pas sgrigs pa*), and I have chosen to list him as its author when referring to the work. However, it should be kept in mind that several disciples were involved in the making of all four texts.



FIGURE 14.4 *Block-print illustration of Kun tu bzang mo (rGod tshang ras pa [1508]a, 28a).*

The Illuminating Sunlight Catalogue has a short colophon which simply states that,

For the sake of clarifying Vajrayāna, this catalogue outlining the vajra songs, *Illuminating Sunlight*, was composed by rGod tshang ras pa, the minor spark among the assembled sparks following the sun [gTsang smyon]. May all beings attain the state of Vajradhāra! Eṃam!²⁴

24 rGod tshang ras pa [1508]b, 10b: *rdo rje theg pa'i gsal byed du/ rdo rje'i mgur chings dkar chags ni/nyi 'od snang ba zhes bya 'di/nyi ma'i rjes 'brang dkar tshogs kyi/ dkar phran rgod tshang ras pas sbyar/ 'gro kun rdo rje 'chang thob shog// e bam//.*

This short colophon does not give any information about the sponsor, editor, scribe, or carvers involved in the production of the print, but the other three texts mention that gTsang smyon's heart-son and personal secretary, Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal chos lha, was the editor (*zhus dag*), that sTod pa Nam mkha' 'phel le from sMan khab was the scribe, and that the carvers came from Zur tsho, areas in La stod lho, northwest of rTsib ri. *Lion of Faith* and *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* name the following carvers: Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, rDo rje dpal, (Nor bu) g.Yang 'phel, and dGe 'dun rgyal mtshan (dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 31a; rGod tshang ras pa [1508]a, 28a; cf. Ehrhard 2010, 154–58).

Marta Sernesi has discovered that the same editor (Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal chos lha), scribe (sTod pa Nam mkha' 'phel le), and two of the carvers (Sangs rgyal and rDor dpal) also participated in the production of gTsang smyon's biography of Mar pa, a work which was printed just a few years earlier, in 1505, while gTsang smyon was still alive.²⁵ It is interesting to note, as Sernesi points out, that the life story of Mar pa is marked with the letter *ka* in the margin, which could indicate a continuity between this and the later prints, which are marked with letters *ga* (*Lion of Faith*) and *nga* (*The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*). Sernesi also mentions the striking similarities between the original print of Mar pa's biography and the four prints "in terms of page layout (*mise en page*) and *ductus*, confirming that they issued from the same workshop" (Sernesi 2011, 187).

It is mentioned in *Heart of the Sun* that gTsang smyon brought in craftsmen from sMan khab and Zur tsho also when he printed the biography of Mi la ras pa, more than fifteen years prior to printing the biography of Mar pa (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 138–39 [1512, 68b–69a]).²⁶ Moreover, in the same text it is said that gTsang smyon invited two scribes from sMan khab when he was preparing to have his large Aural Transmission collection written down with gold letters, by the end of his life (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 245 [1512, 123a]). The above mentioned 'Jam dpal chos lha also served as the editor, when Kun tu bzang mo made a new edition of gTsang smyon's collection of Mi la ras pa's songs; an enterprise that took place not long after having completed the four prints. In this printing project, the scribe and carvers also came from sMan khab and Zur tsho in La stod lho (mKhan rab dbang phyug 1551, 29a).

dNgos grub dpal 'bar, who wrote *Lion of Faith*, was another central figure in the production of the prints. This erudite Sa skya monk was born in a place situated about two miles west of rTsib ri, and his mother and father were local rulers of the area (Byams pa tshul khriims 2007, 76). Due to his vast learning, dNgos grub dpal 'bar was known as Paṅ chen gZhung brgya pa dNgos grub dpal

25 The printing is mentioned in *Heart of the Sun* (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 235 [1512, 118a]: *rje btsun mar pa'i rnam thar mgur 'bum spar du bzhengs*).

26 Cf. Ehrhard 2000, 18, n. 16; Sernesi 2011, 185.

'bar, and he was later praised for having mastered "all the scriptures of India and Tibet without exception."²⁷ It is somewhat unexpected that this learned and influential Sa skya monk became one of gTsang smyon's main disciples. According to the biographies of gTsang smyon, dNgos grub dpal 'bar met the mad yogin at the important Sa skya monastery 'Bras yul sKyed mo tshal in gTsang, about a year before gTsang smyon began compiling Mi la ras pa's biography and song collection.²⁸ It is said that gTsang smyon, who was believed to be an emanation of Mi la ras pa, recognized that dNgos grub dpal 'bar was an embodiment of Mi la ras pa's foremost disciple, the scholarly monk sGam po pa (1079–1153) when they met (Byams pa lha btsun grags pa 2005 [1528], 9–12).²⁹ When dNgos grub dpal 'bar later received instructions from gTsang smyon in Zal mo brag in dBus, he was asked by the mad yogin's close disciples to compose his life story. He completed the root-verses of the biography in 1507, and later, the close disciples requested him to write explanations to these verses of praise. In 1508, he completed the biography, based upon what he "heard from the master himself, some originating from reliable sources, and other things from reasonable argument."³⁰ Since dNgos grub dpal 'bar was the abbot of bSam gtan gling for a while, it is possible that this well-connected and prominent monk-scholar contributed in the printing enterprise that took place there more actively than the colophons reveal.³¹

The relationship between gTsang smyon and his female companion Kun tu bzang mo was even more important than that between gTsang smyon and dNgos grub dpal 'bar. Kun tu bzang mo had a particularly central position, not only in gTsang smyon's tradition, but also in the printing projects that were carried out in his honour. Since Kun tu bzang mo both exhorted and financed

27 Byams pa tshul khriims 2007, 76: *rgya bod kun gyi gsung rab ma lus pa*.

28 Their meeting is described in all the three extant biographies of gTsang smyon (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 133 [1512, 66a]; lHa btsun rin chen rnam rgyal 1971 [1543], 93 [47a]; dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 15b–16a).

29 In a biography of dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (1474–1552), a disciple of gTsang smyon, it states that dBang phyug rgyal mtshan is Gam po pa's incarnate (Rang grol dbang phyug, 6a–7b).

30 dNgos grub dpal 'bar 1508, 2b: *rje btsun nyid la dngos su thos pa dang/ 'ya' zhiq ni yid ches pa las rgyud de thos pa dang/ gzhan dag ni rgyu mtshan dang bcas pa'i gtan tshigs las nges pa rnyed pa rnams/ phyogs gcig tu bri bar bya'o/*.

31 Unfortunately, very little is said in the biography of dNgos grub dpal 'bar about his involvement in this printing project. It simply states that he wrote a biography of gTsang smyon, but the details around the enterprise are not mentioned (Byams pa lha btsun grags pa 2005 [1528], 75). dNgos grub dpal 'bar's biographer, Byams pa lha btsun grags pa, also appears to have been an abbot in bSam gtan gling for a while (Wangdu and Diemberger 1996, 53).



FIGURE 14.5 *Block-print illustration of dNgos grub dpal 'bar (Byams pa lha btsun grags pa 2011 [1528], 383).*

the prints around which this article centres, it is important to say more about her before the conclusions.

In the supplication to gTsang smyon and his many disciples, which is included in *Heart of the Sun*, Kun tu bzang mo is the first person praised after gTsang smyon, indicating thus her importance for the tradition:

I pay homage to Kun tu bzang mo,
 The Mother, who is the main emanation of the Kechara celestial realm,
 The yoginī who gives birth to the Victorious Ones,
 The holder of the secret treasury of the speech of the Venerable One
 [gTsang smyon].³²

32 rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 259 [1512, 130a]: *mkha' spyod gtso mo sprul pa'i yum//rgyal ba skyed mdzad rnal 'byor ma//rje btsun gsung gi gsang mdzod 'dzin//kun tu bzang mo la phyag 'tshal//.*

In this supplication prayer, Kun tu bzang mo is praised as the upholder of the speech activities of gTsang smyon. As mentioned above, the biography and song collection which she printed is said to have been done in honour of gTsang smyon's speech. Kun tu bzang mo thus appears to have had a special responsibility for the propagation of gTsang smyon's teachings, including his life story and songs. While other disciples made life-long retreats, renovated the Svayambhū Stūpa, or printed texts of other masters related to the tradition, Kun tu bzang mo assured that gTsang smyon's own life story and songs were printed.

rGod tshang ras pa had a particularly close relationship with Kun tu bzang mo and he considered her to be one of his main teachers.³³ As mentioned, rGod tshang ras pa was also the author of two of the four early prints, which Kun tu bzang mo printed. Kun tu bzang mo and some other close disciples of gTsang smyon later urged him to make another version of the biography (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 284 [1512, 142b]). This was to become the most extensive version of gTsang smyon's life story, the *Heart of the Sun*. In this version, the songs he had printed some years earlier were included. rGod tshang ras pa also incorporated much material which is lacking in dNgos grub dpal 'bar's version, for example, he provides the following biographical information about Kun tu bzang mo (rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 140–42 [1512, 69b–70b]):³⁴

Kun tu bzang mo was the daughter of the oldest brother of the leader of gNya' nang sTag la and it is said that she had faith, diligence, wisdom and compassion already as a small child. She had no interest in worldly affairs, but only wanted to devote her time to the practice of Buddhism. Since she was endowed with the outer, inner, and secret signs of a wisdom ḍākinī, everyone felt attracted to her.

When she became older, she did not want to marry, but only wanted to practice Buddhism. However, her parents did not allow their beloved daughter to become a hermit and forced her to marry a rNying ma lama from bKra shis mkhar. Just a few months after their marriage, her husband died. Kun tu bzang mo saw this as an opportunity to devote her life to the practice of Buddhism, but she was still not allowed to leave her worldly obligations; her relatives and in-laws wanted her to stay where her former husband had lived. One night, Kun tu bzang mo sneaked away, accompanied by an attendant. They travelled during the nights and stayed hidden during the days, so that nobody could find them. Eventually, they reached dPal mo chos sding where Kun tu bzang mo received novice vows from the abbot. In dPal mo chos sding, she was taught

33 This is mentioned in rGod tshang ras pa's autobiography (Ehrhard 2010, 145).

34 Cf. Stearns, I. M. 1985, 90, n. 30.

the teachings of Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451) and Ma cig lab sgron (1055–1149). It is said that, although she attained great compassion and renunciation, no experience or realization arose when receiving these teachings.

Around that time, she heard that gTsang smyon was making the woodblocks of Mi la ras pa's biography and song collection in 'Na dum Shel phug in La stod lho. When she heard about gTsang smyon, "an almost intolerably strong faith arose", and she immediately decided to go to 'Na dum Shel phug to meet him.³⁵ The night before Kun tu bzang mo's arrival, one of the around hundred female practitioners who were among gTsang smyon's retinue, dreamt that a woman with bone ornaments and dressed in silk clothes came to visit gTsang smyon. The woman in the dream had guided many people and she brought along many precious offerings. When gTsang smyon's female disciple told her teacher about the dream, gTsang smyon said that "the woman [in the dream] has the marks of a *ḍākinī* and the power to spread the essential doctrine. She will come [here] and none of you will be her equal."³⁶

The same day, at noon, Kun tu bzang mo and her attendant arrived. They brought along precious gifts and offered all their ornaments and belongings to gTsang smyon. gTsang smyon became pleased and accepted them with kindness. He bestowed an empowerment to them and gave them the Four Letter Mahāmudrā instructions. Due to this, Kun tu bzang mo attained the extraordinary experience and realization that the teachings she had received earlier had been unable to give rise to.

While this was happening, Kun tu bzang mo's relatives from sTag la and her in-laws in bKra shis mkhar had begun quarrelling. When Kun tu bzang mo, out of compassion, settled the dispute, her relatives, who were just about winning the case, became angry. As a result of this, Kun tu bzang mo's relatives refused to provide her with provisions. gTsang smyon decided to use these circumstances to test Kun tu bzang mo's faith and fortitude and to purify her from her inner obscurations. He therefore did not provide her with any support. This did not discourage the remarkable woman. Without any solid food, she listened, reflected, and meditated with great diligence. She became famous for her strong determination and received all the central instructions from gTsang smyon, such as the six doctrines of Nāropa, the Secret Conduct, the Aural Transmissions, the Hevajra Tantra, and so forth. Having received all the tantras, commentaries, and oral instructions, she studied and practised in

35 rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 141 [1512, 70a]: *dad pa'i gdungs shugs mi bzod pa lta bu byung bas.*

36 rGod tshang ras pa 1969, 141 [1512, 70a]: *bud med mkha' 'gro ma'i mtshan dang ldan pa snying po'i bstan pa dpel (spel) nus pa khyed tshos 'gran du med pa cig yong ba yin gsungs/.*

a perfect way. Step by step, she attained all the levels and stages of the path, and became a very learned and powerful yoginī.

Kun tu bzang mo eventually became a master in her own right, and the other disciples of gTsang smyon held her in great esteem. After she had printed the biography and song collection of gTsang smyon, in the summer and in autumn, she bestowed teachings to about hundred people in Ku ra byang gling, indicating that she was already a great master who spread the teachings of gTsang smyon, not only through prints, but through teachings and empowerments as well.

She gave instructions on Mahāmudrā, on the Six Dharmas, on Cutting, and so forth. To those with the most excellent acumen, she bestowed the empowerments and instructions of the Aural Transmission of the Dākinīs as practical guidance. It is said that she taught in the most excellent way.³⁷

Among the disciples who were instrumental in the making of the four prints around which this article centers, Kun tu bzang mo stands out as the most important one. Acting as gTsang smyon's representative and spiritual heir, she was in charge of the printing project. Her importance for the school of gTsang smyon, and for gTsang smyon's legacy overall, appears to have been larger than previous studies reveal.

5 Conclusions

Kun tu bzang mo met gTsang smyon for the first time when the mad yogin printed Mi la ras pa's life story and song collection. She thus witnessed his efforts in 'benefitting the beings and the teachings' through printing biographies and songs. When meeting gTsang smyon, she must also have met editors, carvers and scribes. She was most likely inspired by the remarkable success of gTsang smyon's Mi la ras pa prints when she decided to print texts in gTsang smyon's memory; and what could be more suitable than honouring the great printer through printing his own biography and songs?

37 mKhan rab dbang phyug 1551, 28b–29a: *dbyar ston gnyis sgrags nas/ ku ra byang gling tu/ drung kun dga' chos grags pa sogs rgya (brgya) phrag tsam la/ phyag chen/ chos drug/ gcod yul/ sogs kyi khrid pa gnang/ dbang po yang rab rnam la mkha' 'gro snyan [brgyud] gyi dbang dang gdams pa rnam nyams khrid du gnang bas/ khrid mo shin tu legs byung gsung ngo/.*

When Kun tu bzang mo printed texts in honour of her master in 1508, she contributed to the consolidation of a school of printing that was to continue for a long time. Kun tu bzang mo inherited a contact network of wealthy patrons, skilled craftsmen, authors, and editors who were devoted to the mad yogin and had worked for him previously. As the consort of gTsang smyon, Kun tu bzang mo appears to have had a unique position within his school. She obviously was a suitable person to continue the printing activities that gTsang smyon so skilfully had started. However, she was not alone in this undertaking, there were a core group of close disciples specialized in book production and printing that helped her execute the printing project. gTsang smyon's secretary Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal chos lha edited the texts that the learned monk dNgos grub dpal 'bar and the yogin rGod tshang ras pa had compiled. Then they employed skilful craftsmen who wrote down the letters and carved the blocks. It is noteworthy that the scribes came from sMan khab and the carvers came from Zur tsho, two areas in La stod lho that appear to have been centres for this type of craftsmanship in the region at the time.

These people set the standards for the many other printing projects that the school of gTsang smyon carried out in the coming years. The school both reprinted the works of their guru and compiled and printed a large number of works that had not been printed before. The most important centres for these later printing activities were not bSam gtan gling and rTsib ri, however, but Brag dkar rta so in sKyid rong and Ras chung phug, south of rTsed thang. The prolific printer lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473–1557) was the leading figure in Brag dkar rta so, while rGod tshang ras pa, who had also participated in the rTsib ri printing project, took the lead in Ras chung phug. Using the biography and song collection which Kun tu bzang mo printed in rTsib ri as sources, these two masters also compiled and printed their own versions of gTsang smyon's life story.³⁸

The prints that gTsang smyon's disciples made in rTsib ri and other places never became as influential and widely known as gTsang smyon's own prints of Mi la ras pa and Mar pa. Although it is mentioned in Kun tu bzang mo's biography that the biography and song collection she printed were widely disseminated, few copies of these texts are extant today. It is likely that new prints were made from the same blocks also after 1508, but the demand for these prints were apparently not large enough to make the production of new printing blocks necessary. In stark contrast to the printings of Mi la ras pa and Mar

38 David DiValerio recently wrote an article about how the three different biographies and the song collection are related to each other (DiValerio 2015a).

pa that were reprinted again and again in numerous editions, gTsang smyon's life story and songs were gradually more or less forgotten.

It is somewhat puzzling that this influential and charismatic yogin, who lived such a colourful life, sang such extraordinary songs and created some of Tibet's most beautiful and beloved literature, did not receive more attention in his own right. The prints containing his life stories and songs, and the surviving statues of him, show that he was famous when he passed away and that his fame continued for about a century, but the memory of him faded away. The reason for this was perhaps lack of institutional and financial support in the new political situation that arose when the dGa' ldan pho brang government of the Fifth Dalai Lama came to power in 1642. When this happened, many of the religious and political leaders who had supported the bKa' brgyud tradition lost their power and influence. The printing efforts of Kun tu bzang mo and gTsang smyon's other disciples were not entirely wasted, however; some copies of the many prints that Kun tu bzang mo and the other disciples of gTsang smyon made did survive the vicissitudes of time. Thanks to these surviving prints, the songs and life stories of gTsang smyon and many other bKa' brgyud masters were preserved. These prints indicate that Elisabeth Eisenstein is right when stating that preservation was possibly the most important of all the new features introduced by the duplicative powers of print (Eisenstein 1979, 113).

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Works and Networks of *mkhas pa* Dri med. On the Illustrations of 16th Century Tibetan Printed Books

Marta Sernesi

The illustrations of Tibetan printed books are a strikingly understudied issue, considered the wealth of data available to scrutiny. Indeed, while other material aspects of Tibetan books, such as wooden covers or manuscript illuminations, have received some attention, only few contributions address specifically the images in blockprinted texts. Moreover, Tibetan book illuminations have been usually studied in terms of their stylistic or iconographic features, while historians, specialists of textual studies, and even researchers particularly concerned with the history of the Tibetan book have so far mostly neglected the topic, to the extent that detailed and learned catalogues of Tibetan texts don't even mention the illustrations. However, the illustrations constitute an integral part of the book, considered both as a material object and as an intellectual product.¹

In order to approach this issue, I have chosen to present a case study on a Tibetan master artist active during the first half of the 16th century in the Western Tibetan kingdom of Mangyul Gungthang. *mkhas pa* Dri med is known especially for impressive illustrations of blockprinted books, in that distinctive style that readily allows to recognize volumes produced at the time in the area.² He was among the foremost artists of his time, as may be deduced from the prestigious commissions received from the royal family, and his career in book illustration may be now well documented during the 1520s, 30s, and 40s. Unfortunately, however, no other extant work, such as scroll painting, mural or sculpture, may be attributed to him and is available for study. Therefore, aspects of his craftsmanship – such as the use of colour – and the full scope of his artistic output, may not be evaluated. Also the crucial issue of the relation-

1 For previous studies treating the illustrations of Tibetan blockprinted texts, see Karmay 1975; Imaeda 1977; Jackson 1996: 122–31, 301–14, 375–7; De Rossi Filibeck 2002. For a catalogue that treats with particular attention the illustrations, see Everding 2015.

2 For earlier mentions of his work, see Jackson 1996: 122; Ehrhard 2000: 71, 74, 76. On the epithet *mkhas pa* (literally 'skilled' or 'learned') meaning artist, see Jackson 1996: 138, n. 302.

ship between book illustration and cognate arts – painting *in primis*, but also scribing, engraving, goldsmithy or inlay – may not be explored.

A recent Tibetan cultural history of Mang yul Gung thang mentions the first half of the 16th century as an extraordinary time for the flourishing of the arts in the kingdom, and in particular as the golden age of blockprinting, and states:³

In each region the pictorial arts spread in different ways. Because of this, also the art of illustrating the wooden book covers developed in different ways. *mKhas pa* Dri med from Gung thang, and the other figurative artists [working] in the craft of carving the printing blocks [that developed] in the sKyid grong district, displayed a wonderful art of book illustration, [with] a variety of appearances and postures of images of the Buddhas [inserted] on the left and right side of the books[folios]. Following the emergence of this tradition, gradually everywhere in Tibet it was widely famed how [the skill of] carving book illustrations had spread in the district of sKyid grong, and how [in that region] there were many different printing skills. Many works bearing woodcut illustrations in black and white of such high value are still preserved in the district of sKyid grong to the present day, as it is elucidated in many related reference materials.⁴

Therefore, the production of *m khas pa* Dri med seems as a privileged point of departure to explore the flourishing of printing skills in Mang yul Gung thang, the different aspects of the trade, the composition of the printing workshops, and the specific issue of book illustrations.

3 *Mang yul gung thang gi rig gnas lo rgyus*, by Gung thang bstan 'dzin nor bu, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2012, pp. 199–203, 518–21. The author quotes in particular the colophon of Klong chen rab 'byams pa's *Theg mchog mdzod*, realized in 1533 and illustrated by *m khas pa* Dri med, on which see below.

4 *Mang yul Gung thang gi rig gnas lo rgyus*, pp. 520–1 (cf. also pp. 201–2); *yul lung so sor ri mo'i dar khyab mi 'dra ba'i dbang gis gsung rab glegs shing gi ri mo'i sgyu rtsal yang mi 'dra ba thon yod pa red/ gung thang gi mkhas pa dri med la sogs pa'i ri mo'i sgyu rtsal mkhas pa tshos skyid grong khul gyi par shing yig brkos kyi lag rtsal nang pod kyi g.yas g.yon du sangs rgyas kyi sku brnyan bzhugs stangs dang rnam 'gyur mi 'dra ba sna tshogs bar 'jug[=bcug] gi ri mo'i sgyu rtsal phun sum tshogs pa bkod srol byung ba de nas rim bzhin bod kyi sa phyogs gang sar skyid grong khul du dar ba'i bar 'jug[=bcug] gi ri mo'i brkos dkrol dang/ par 'debs kyi lag rtsal mi 'dra ba mang po zhig yod pa khyab par grags/ de lta bu'i rin thang che ba'i dkar nag gnyis 'brel gyi par shing ri mo'i brtsams bya mang po zhig dus da lta'i bar du'ang skyid grong khul du nyar tshags byas yod ces 'brel yod kyi dpyad gzhi'i yig cha mang po'i nang gsal.*

1 The Workshop

The production of a blockprinted text was a collective enterprise, involving multiple people with different competences, and an ensuing distribution of tasks. 16th century prints often bear printing colophons (*par byang*) that elucidate the division of labour, mentioning by name the individuals involved.⁵ The scribe (*par yig rig byed; par yig mkhas pa*) would prepare the written model (*par yig*) leaving adequate space on the folio for the addition of the illustrations. The images were in fact drawn separately by the artists, called *le lha'i rig byed*: the illustrations are termed 'chapter deities' (*le lha*), as they are found at the beginning and end of the volumes, thus marking internal breaks in case of multi-volume texts or multi-textual collections. After being revised and approved (*zhus dag*), the text would then be cut out onto the wooden blocks by the carvers (*rkos byed; rkos mkhan*): they may be numerous, depending on the length of the text, and they divide the work among themselves lengthwise rather than content-wise. Only the most skilful carvers could cut out the images following the artists' drawings, and therefore they are usually separately mentioned in the colophons (*le lha'i rkos byed*). They may also be called artists (*mkhas pa*) themselves, and may be praised for their dexterity (*bzo rig mthar phyin*). However, artists usually don't carve their own drawings, *mkhas pa* Dri med for example never figures in the colophons as a carver, and therefore we may posit that there was a clear-cut distinction between the artist-painter, who drew the image, and the artist-engraver (*brkos byed mkhas pa*), who cut them out.⁶ 16th century prints from South-Western Tibet (Mang yul Gung thang and La stod lHo) often carry the signatures of the scribes on the blocks, which are called *ming thang* or *ming yig thang*: they are usually found on the lower margins of the folios, and more rarely on the top or on the lateral margins. Sometimes they indicate the number of blocks carved by the named artisan, or they state that "until this point" (*'di yan*) they have been carved by

5 For a detailed description of the Tibetan technique of xylographic book printing, see Jest 1961. For a discussion of the division of labor in Tibetan book production as may be evinced from 15th and 16th century colophons, see Cabezón 2001. On the study of colophons, see also Bacot 1954, Ehrhard 2000: 69–175, and Clemente 2007.

6 In the production of woodcuts in Europe the two trades were distinct as well; see Hind 1935: 30: "In general it appears to me probable that in the earliest period as well as in the later xv century and during the xvi century, the cutters were a separate class from the designers, and that the designers, as later, were the painters. In the xvi century the designer, or *Reisser* (...), is often indicated on the print by the sign of a pen, the woodcutter by a knife"; For the distinction between the designer or painter (*Reisser* or *Maler*), and the cutter or carpenter (*Schnitzer* or *Schreiner*), see also *ibid.*: 82, 90–1.

a certain individual: for this reason, F.-K. Ehrhard has proposed that these signatures could have been employed in order to calculate each worker's share of work and consequent remuneration.⁷

As may be gained from their titles, found in the colophons, the artisans were either administrative or military officials (*bcu dpon*, *brgya dpon*, *mgon po*, *drung yig*), or educated monastics (*dge slong*, *dge shes*, *dge sbyong*). Therefore, apart from the artists, they do not seem to be professional figures all-year round, but individuals with other occupations employed for specific printing projects. However, many of the names recur in the colophons, indicating that their skill was appreciated and sought-after, and in practice ensured them frequent work. The same artisans are found contributing to projects realized in different areas of the kingdom (Gung thang, sKyid grong, Lan 'de[/dhe]), and by distinct religious institutions (e.g. Bo dong, Sa skya, bKa' brgyud), which suggests mobility, although within regional scope. We are in fact witnessing a distinct phase in the development of the specialized craftsmanship required for xylographic bookprinting, and at this time the trade was probably valued in good esteem: gradually printing skills will be equated to other artisanal labours, the workers' names will disappear from the books, and large and productive printing houses, with substantial manpower at their disposal, will be established.

The most important figure of the workshop was the project leader (*do dam pa*), who was responsible for planning and executing the printing enterprise. He needed leadership abilities to choose, summon, and organise the artists and workers, and entrepreneurial skills to raise all the needed funding and collect the materials, such as wood, paper, and ink. The project leader could act on his own initiative, raising the needed resources from his powerful acquaintances, through alms rounds, or drawing from the wealth of his religious institution. Most often, he would also direct other kinds of projects, such as the realization of statues, paintings, and murals, building constructions or renovations. If he was particularly renowned for his skills, he could act at the exhortation of the royal family, who would entrust him with the duty of realizing projects conceived for specific occasions. This is the case of the Bo dong master Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484–1549), who supervised many of the projects illustrated by Dri med, and who was repeatedly summoned by the royal family of

7 The practice has been compared to a parallel one employed in Southern Sung printing (on which see e.g. Drège 1991: 101); see Ehrhard 2000: 69–70. The printing colophons of the works may refer to the carvers' signatures in order to identify the workers involved, by phrases such as *rang rang sug rjes so sor gsal*, *rang rang lag rjes so so'i thang na gsal*, *rang rang sug rjes ming yig thang na gsal*, *rang rang sug rjes rang rang thang na gsal*, *sug rjes ming mams rang rang thang na gsal*.

Mang yul Gung thang.⁸ Often the project leader and his closest collaborators are mentioned in the colophons among the artisans, acting as scribes or carvers. This shows how the capacity of taking a major role in the realization of projects such as prints, and closely supervise their execution, implied a first-hand knowledge of the crafts (*bzo rig*) and the technology involved. In fact, there is evidence that Chos dbang rgyal mtshan trained groups of carvers at his hermitage, teaching them the artisanal skills alongside the Buddhist doctrine. His *Collected Songs* (*mGur 'bum*) record religious instructions written at Kun gsal gang po che and addressed to a group of six 'realized practitioners' (*rtogs ldan*) who were at the time studying the trade of carving for printing purposes (*spar brkos*).⁹

The illustrations have an intimate relationship with the text that they accompany. Some volumes simply bear initial portraits of the masters with whom the text is mainly concerned: thus, for example, in the production of *mkhas pa* Dri med, the life story of sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan bears the portraits of 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1310–91) and sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1475–1530), who was considered the reincarnation of the founding master of the 'Ba' ra ba lineage (Appendix text no. 5), while on the life and songs of rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje (1189–1258) we find the portraits of this master and of his teacher gTsang pa rgya ras ye shes rdo rje (1161–1211) (Appendix text no. 10). In richly illustrated volumes, however, the images may compose a complex system of signification in themselves, representing the complete transmission lineage of the religious cycle, the main Buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and tantric deities invoked, and the specific protective deities of the instructions or of the lineage: this may be observed in the *Mañi bka' 'bum* (Appendix text no. 1), the *bKa' gdams glegs 'bam* (Appendix text no. 7), and the *Theg mchog mdzod* (Appendix text no. 4). In these cases, the value of the images is not merely ornamental, instead the illustrations interact with the written text and integrate it in an autonomous way, conveying supplementary meaning.¹⁰ Hence, the question of the planning of the iconographic

8 For the life of this master and his printing activities, see Ehrhard 2000: 23–50.

9 See *Chos rje dbang rgyal ba'i slob ma rtogs ldan drug la brkos slob dus gdams pa*, in *mGur 'bum zhal gdams bslab bya'i skor*, NGMPP L 65/5, fols. 155a–156b; Ehrhard 2000: 79, n. 20. Incidentally, the six were disciples of *mkhas grub rtogs ldan gyi rgyal po* dBang phyug rgyal mtshan, himself a disciple of gTsang smyon Heruka (1452–1507). dBang phyug rgyal mtshan was active in neighbouring La stod lHo, where he composed, at the request of his master's consort Kun tu bzang mo, the biographies of Tilopa and Nāropa.

10 The question of the relationship between images and text is too wide and complex to be addressed here; see e.g. Drège 1999 for a pertinent discussion revolving around Chinese texts from Dunhuang. See Sernesi 2015 for the study of the illustrations of the *bKa' gdams*

system, and the related issue of the role of the artist in the process, arises. It may be suggested that the subject of the illustrations and their overall order were planned by the project leader – perhaps in concert with the main donor, such as the noble person in case of royal commissions, who could have specific requests. Indeed, the project leader was responsible for the whole planning of the work, from the location or production of an appropriate manuscript model, to the choice of artisans, to fund raising and the administration of the financial resources, to the consecration of the blocks and the distribution of the prints. Hence, he was in fact wholly responsible for the conception and the realization of the book, and this would logically include the plan of the illustrations (*inventio*), determined on the basis of his knowledge of the text and of the religious tradition. However, the figurative language (*ars*), including the proportions, postures, and attires of the figures, and the details of the composition, such as the filling of the background, was the domain of the artist. He would hence translate into images the indications of the project leader, according to his painting tradition, his models, his skills and sensibility.¹¹

2 From Manuscript to Print

Since the spread of the printing technology, the blockprinted and handwritten book coexisted in Tibet: printed and manuscript copies were produced side-by-side, copied one from the other and vice-versa. However, differently from what has been observed for European book culture, instances of books produced by a combination of techniques are surprisingly lacking, even for prestigious, extensively decorated editions. It is well documented how, during the early decades of printing in Europe, the mediums of movable type printing, woodblock printing, and handwriting or illumination may be found employed together in the same volume: in fact, some early printing workshops hired illuminators in order to embellish their printed volumes in a systematic way, thus fostering the trade. Also, the employ of woodcuts for inserting

glegs bam, their relationship with the textual contents, and their value as historical evidence. For the role of illustrations in assessing the dating of a blockprint, see also Sernesi 2010: 145–9.

11 This presupposes that all parties shared the knowledge of an established iconographic tradition. For the distinction between *inventio* and *sola ars*, see e.g. Settis 2005: 6–7, who, discussing the case of medieval icons, remarks that this distinction reflects a common practice at the time, and that it presupposes the actual existence of a long-lasting iconographic tradition.

decorated initials or illustrations within books printed with movable type soon became common, while sets of illustrations produced as xylographs or copper incisions would be printed and sold, to be inserted within or glued on either printed or handwritten books. And alongside blockbooks, i.e. books entirely produced from wooden blocks, are collections of woodcuts bearing handwritten or typeset captions or explicative texts.¹² In Tibet, on the other hand, these combinations seem to have been extremely rare, and there is no evidence, to my knowledge, pointing to a production of images independent from the text to be illustrated, meant to be employed to decorate different volumes, as in the 15th–16th century European book market.

A singular case may be brought to attention as a somewhat isolated example for the moment, and that is the *Collected Works of sGam po pa* (*Dwags po bka' 'bum*) printed at Dwags la sgam po in 1520. Indeed, one full copy of the collection has been thoroughly decorated by hand: while at the beginning of the first volume (KA) we find the expected blockprinted illustrations, these are lacking in the following volumes, and the blank spaces on the initial folios allocated for the purpose have been filled, for the most part, with illuminations painted by hand. On the other hand, one copy of the *Collected Works of sGam po pa* printed from the blocks prepared in Mang yul Gung thang in 1572 shows the same illustrations, repeated, to decorate the initial folio of the different volumes: this shows that at least in this case the images were produced in a series in order to be employed multiple times.¹³ However, both these strategies of dec-

12 For the interaction and non-exclusive employ of manuscript, xylography, and typography in the production of 15th century volumes, see McKitterick 2003, especially chapter 3 treating the illustrations. Cf. also Bühler 1960: 66–93, who notes “that it was quite immaterial to the fifteenth-century owner how his books were produced or decorated, whether manually or mechanically. The artist could copy the woodcutter – and the scribes and the woodcutters could imitate the printers, or vice versa – and it was all the same to the contemporary purchaser. The fifteenth-century book, then, cannot logically or properly be segregated into those neat categories so dear to the heart of Library Schools: the autonomous departments of manuscripts and printed books.” (p. 68). For the significant increase of miniaturists in Venice in the late 15th century, and their collaboration with printers in order to decorate printed books on big scale, leaving the space for the buyer to eventually personalize the volume, see Armstrong 1991. For woodcut initials, see Donati 1978 and references quoted therein.

13 For the illuminated copy of the *Dwags po bka' 'bum*, see dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, *Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdus*, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2013, DVD 2, no. 46. A copy of the collection printed from the same blocks has been filmed by the NGMPP: it has the same initial woodcuts at the beginning of vol. KA, and then empty spaces in the initial folios of each subsequent volume; NGMPP Reel no. L 594/1–595/1–596/1. Interestingly enough, the local monastic

orating the blockprinted books – painted illuminations or repeated woodcut illustrations – are to my knowledge rarely employed, and most commonly we find the illustrations prepared for their specific purpose and carved at the appropriate place of the block. A fairly common practice in Tibet was to colour the woodcuts by hand, in order to enhance their aesthetic quality. Indeed, among the copies produced from a given set of blocks, the first samples (*par phud*) were destined to the main donors and sent as prestigious gifts to high officials and prelates, and therefore were further enriched when compared to later prints from the same blocks. The copies destined to the highest recipients were meticulously executed from brand new blocks, could be embellished with colour, and then splendidly wrapped; also the wooden boards serving as book covers would be decorated by paint, carvings, or inlay, perhaps by the same artists engaged in the printing project.¹⁴ These embellishments, however, could also be done at a later stage on behalf of a subsequent owner of the text, or requested by an individual upon commanding a print from the existing blocks – which could be in use for centuries – while of course wooden covers could be re-employed and switched easily, so that we cannot mechanically date all the aspects of the decorated book at the time of the carving of the blocks, nor attribute them to the same individuals.

Overall, in terms of format, there is an obvious continuity between manuscript and print. Indeed, there is even a case of a blockprinted text bearing such a conservative formal feature as the mark for the string-holes.¹⁵ Also, there is evidence of skilled scribes who worked at the written models used for carving printing blocks, who were also active in preparing luxury manuscript editions.¹⁶ However, when compared to prestigious manuscript editions,

history states that this collection was printed “with many initial illustrations” (*dbu la mang po dang bcas par du bsgrubs*). For the context of production of this edition, and of the new edition produced in Mang yul Gung thang in 1572 by Byams pa phun tshogs (1503–86), see Sernesi forthcoming. The copy of this later edition filmed by the NGMPP as reels E 1991/10–1992/27 added lateral images at fol. 1b of several texts (repeating them always the same), which are absent from another copy of the print, filmed as NGMPP reel L 118/3–119/1.

- 14 For Tibetan book covers, see Grönbald 1991, 2002; Klimburg-Salter 1990; Selig-Brown 2012.
- 15 For this text, printed in 1407 in La stod lHo, see Diemberger 2012, and Porong Dawa in this volume. The real discontinuity in terms of format may be observed between the scroll and the codex (or the scroll and the *pothi*); on the largely forgotten or unacknowledged ‘revolution’ of the codex, see Chartier 2007: 407–8.
- 16 The master scribe (*dpon yig*) from the area of sNyings called Thugs rje skyabs pa acted as scribe (*yig mkhan*) for the printed edition of the biography of Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan (text no. 5 in the Appendix), and for the print of the biography of bsTan gnyis gling pa

printed editions show some minor formal discontinuities with their model. The most important difference may be observed in the title page. Indeed, luxury manuscript editions usually begin with a calligraphed page: only a few syllables of the title or *incipit* are inscribed in bigger size, often in metal ink (prepared from gold or silver) on dark paper; this is followed by a second page of calligraphy, also illustrated. Therefore, calligraphy and precious substances are employed, alongside illuminations, to lend value to the manuscript copy.¹⁷ The printed book, on the other hand, needs to discard both these means, and recurs solely to pictures and drawings as enriching devices. Thus, the quality and number of illustrations may indicate the level of the book commission: royal productions were richly decorated by the best artists of the kingdom, while middle-scale, local productions may bear illustrations but in minor quantity and often of inferior execution. Also, new formal solutions are conceived: in this context we may understand the appearance of the decorated title-page so distinctive of South-Western Tibetan prestigious blockprints, bearing the full title of the text within a lavish composition of lotus throne, vines and stylized foliage.¹⁸ Then, with the verso of the first folio, the text begins: this is illustrated, and usually the script is neater and less dense, with one less line of script than in the rest of the volume, but there is no more use of calligraphic embellishments. The quality and the number of the illustrations become the true criteria of luxury.

3 The Tradition of sMan thang pa

It is widely known everywhere that, at the time of the rule of the Phag mo gru pa, the painting tradition of sMan thang [pa] greatly spread and developed in the district of mNga' ris Gung thang, and that [in that region] there were also many famous artists skilled in [that] painting

(text no. 6 in the Appendix). Chos dbang rgyal mtshan imparted instructions to the same individual at the time when he was preparing a golden manuscript; see *dPon yig thugs rje gser yig 'bri dus gdams pa*, in *mGur 'bum zhal gdams bslab bya'i skor*, NGMPP L 65/5, fols. 167b–168b; Ehrhard 2000: 74, n. 12.

17 For the production of luxury manuscript editions with the employ of precious metals and stones, and the realization of the initial pages in relief type script (*yi ge lto gar*, *gser bris lto gar*), see e.g. Cüppers 2010.

18 In this regards, it may be interesting to note how the title page of books – bearing the title, author name, printing house and year of printing – was rare in the European manuscript culture, and developed gradually after the beginning of the printing press, to be found opening *incunabula* from the 1480s; see e.g. Hirsch 1978; Labarre 1982.

tradition. The artist Dri med from Gung thang was one [such] skilled painter who adhered to the tradition of sMan thang; the works illustrated by him in that way, and the great knowledge of pictorial arts, filled everywhere the land of mNga' ris Gung thang, making everywhere weaver the banner of fame.¹⁹

mKhas pa Dri med is known as a follower of the painting tradition inaugurated by sMan bla don grub, known from his birthplace as 'the master from sMan thang' (sMan thang pa/ sMan thang chen po). He flourished in the mid-15th century (1450s–70s or 80s), and is recognized as one of the earliest artists to create a unique style of Tibetan painting, called the sMan thang tradition (sMan ris/ sMan thang lugs).²⁰ No mural or scroll attributed to the master or his direct pupils has been so far available for study, and also for this reason the production of Dri med has received attention as the earliest datable evidence of the tradition.²¹

sMan thang pa was a native of lHo brag, and was trained in the Central Tibetan region of gTsang: his main teachers were dPal 'byor rin chen and bSod nams dpal 'byor, both from gNas rnying, and active in rGyal mkhar rtse during the 1430s, where they signed murals at both the gTsug lag khang and the sKu 'bum *stūpa* sponsored by the ruler Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags (r. 1412–1442), also known as a donor of early printing projects.²² The magnificent paintings

19 *Mang yul gung thang gi rig gnas lo rgyus* (as in n. 3), p. 199: *phag gru'i dbang bsgyur byed pa'i dus rim de'i nang/ mnga' ris gung thang khul du sman thang lugs kyi ri mo'i sgyu rtsal mang po dar khyab chen po byung bar ma zad/ sgyu rtsal ri mor mkhas pa'i mi sna grags can yang mang po byung yod ces sa khyab rdo khyab tu grags/ gung thang gi mkhas pa dri med ni sman thang lugs la dad zhen gnang mkhan gyi ri mo ba mkhas can zhig yin par ma zad/ khong gis de'i thad kyi ri mo'i brtsams bya dang/ de min ri mo'i sgyu rtsal gyi rig gnas mang po zhig mnga' ris gung thang gi sa cha gang sar khyab cing snyan grags kyi ba dan gang sar g.yo bar byas.*

20 For the dating of sMan bla don grub see Jackson 1997: 254–7.

21 Note, however, that "A few murals attributed to menla Döndrub are reported to have survived in Tibet. According to the account of a recent artist at Tashilhunpo, the original murals painted by Menthangpa in the great assembly hall are still extant. These include those of Vajradhara surrounded by the eighty great adepts, of the Buddha Śākyamuni surrounded by the sixteen arhats, and of the Twelve Great Deeds of the Buddha. It has not been possible to obtain photographs of these works...": Jackson 1997: 257, quoting Lobsang Phuntshok, *Bzo rig pa'i bstan bcos la sangs rgyas byang sems dang yi dam zhi khro'i lha tshogs kyi cha tshad gsal ba'i ri mo don ldan kun gsal me long*, Beijing, 1993, p. 5.

22 See Tucci 1941; Ricca and Lo Bue 1993: 20, 250, 290, 303; Jackson 1996: 109–11; von Schroeder 2006. For the ruler of rGyal mkhar rtse, see Lo Bue 1992; for the printing projects sponsored by Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags, see Ehrhard 2000: 11–2.

of these constructions were considered by Tucci as the earliest example of a true Tibetan style, as they part from the earlier and contemporary works directly indebted to the Pāla or Newar traditions.²³ Ricca describes the cycle of the eighty-four *mahāsiddhas* painted by dPal 'byor rin chen in the Lam 'bras lha khang in the upper storey of the gTsug lag khang, as follows:

These paintings are distinguished for their bright colours and for the particularly lively postures of the figures, as well as for the free association and arrangement in space of individual elements (*siddhas*, *prajñās* and trees) with luxuriant flowers, shreds of clouds and ritual objects. The countenances of the *siddhas* are rendered with great taste and refinement. And the virtuosity of the artist is evident in the shading technique sometimes used to create realism in the musculature. The full artistic maturity attained by the Tibetan master is evident, too, in the harmonious way in which the Newar backgrounds stewn with small corollas are beautifully integrated with the large flowers and leaves, and with the clouds of Chinese origin. The same masterly skill is revealed in the treatment of the bodies of the yogins and in the well-draped garments of the monks, as well as in the portrayals of elegant styled animals.²⁴

The murals are praised for the lively postures and the refined execution of the figures, and for the free arrangement of the elements in the composition. Against the dark Newar background are disposed coloured decorative elements, such as large flowers and clouds, the latter showing a noticeable Chinese influence. These innovations were fostered and brought to perfection by sMan thang pa. According to tradition, he designed slender bodies, with long necks and limbs, and especially a longer lower body, portraying the figures in natural, relaxed postures; in particular, in his manual on iconography “[h]e states that figures of bodhisattvas should be long and slender, and those of wrathful deities short and stout in order to distinguish one type from the other.”²⁵ His style is characterized by prevailing tones of malachite and azurite, and a lavish use of gold to add brightness to the painting, in contrast with the prevailing red-orange hues of Newar-influenced (Bal-bris) works, prevailing in the murals

23 Tucci 1949: 280.

24 Ricca 1997: 208–9; he remarks that dPal 'byor rin chen painted also the portrait of 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1364–1422, abbot of gNas rnying) in chapel 4S2 of the sKu 'bum, and also decorated its chapel 2Sb, and in 1418 had prepared the drawings for an appliqué scroll at rGyal mkhar rtse.

25 Quoted in Thaye 1997: 273.

painted by dPal 'byor rin chen. sMan bla don grub is best known for complex compositions against extensively decorated backgrounds: natural landscapes rich in water, clouds, and plants, which incorporate Chinese motifs.²⁶

It is said that sMan bla don grub was directly exposed to Chinese art, and indeed, at the time, Tibet-Ming relationships engendered the travel of people, and the ensuing exchange of goods and artefacts. In this way, Chinese painted scrolls, textiles, and bronzes reached Central Tibet as gifts to high hierarchs, and were destined to enrich the monasteries' treasure troves. Under the same circumstances, the Yongle Tibetan bKa' 'gyur, printed in 1410 upon the order of emperor Chengzu, was sent from the Chinese court to the Sa skya master Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis (1349–1425), and to Tsong kha pa's disciple Byams chen chos rje Shākya ye shes (1352/4–1435): this is considered one of the triggers for the 15th century widespread adoption of the woodblock printing technique in Central Tibet.²⁷

On the other hand, sMan thang pa's reception of Chinese visual culture was also mediated by the synthesis attempted at rGyal mkhar rtse by his own masters, and was harmonised with other elements in order to create a new Tibetan stylistic blend. sMan thang pa became increasingly famous in gTsang, where he trained his sons and pupils, who were called upon to contribute to the main commissions in Central Tibet in the latter half of the century: in particular, sMan thang pa was active at bKra shis lhun po upon request of dGe 'dun grub (1391–1474), and he himself or his sons and pupils were working at gSer mdog can for Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507), and later also at Yangs pa can for the 4th Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524).²⁸

sMan thang pa's main iconographic treatise, the *Wish-fulfilling Gem explaining the measures of the bodies of the Sugatas* (*bDe bar gshegs pa'i sku gzugs kyi*

26 A description of the sMan thang style is provided by Jackson 1996: 119, and Thaye 1997: 272–5.

27 For the relationship and exchanges between Central Tibet and the early Ming, see Sperling 1980, 1982, Wylie 1980, 1980b. For the Yongle bKa' 'gyur, see Imaeda 1977, Silk 1996. For Tibeto-Chinese visual culture at the time, see for instance Karmay 1975, Watt and Leidy 2005, Weidner 2009.

28 At bKra shis lhun po, he worked upon request of dGe 'dun grub (1391–1474) in 1458, 1464, 1468–9: he painted murals on the first two occasions, supervised the realization of a large cloth-appliqué *thang ka* of the Buddha in 1468, and prepared a smaller cloth image of Tārā in the following year. These commissions are known from the biography of the first Dalai Lama; see Jackson 1997: 256; Jackson 1996: 114–21. For the activities at gSer mdog can, i.e. the execution of a large silken scroll depicting the Buddha Śākyamuni surrounded by the sixteen Arhats in 1491, and murals for the temple, the assembly hall, and the protector's chapel, in 1491 and 1495, see Caumanns 2013: 75–8.

tshad kyi rab tu byed pa'i yid bzhin gyi nor bu), was written at the request of his pupils coming from dBus and gTsang, at the monastery of 'Bras yul rdzong dkar in the Rong valley in gTsang.²⁹ 'Bras yul Skyed mo[s] tshal had been founded by the famed Sa skya master Byams chen Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas 'phel (1411–1485), and had soon become a major institution, with five dependent “son monasteries” established by his students. The Sa skya communities in La stod lHo and Mang yul Gung thang had strong ties with the school's institutions in gTsang, where a copious number of monastics from these Western regions were trained. In fact, the 3rd abbot of 'Bras yul Skyed mo[s] tshal, Nor bu phun tshogs (1450–1521), stemmed from the Khang pa family, which was settled in the village of gNas in Mang yul, and after his ordination was trained by Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas 'phel himself. It is safe to speculate that during his tenancy, at the beginning of the 16th century, monastics from his home region came in even greater numbers to be trained at the monastery in the Rong valley.³⁰

4 *mKhas pa Dri med*

Among the youths travelling to gTsang at the time must have been also Dri med, who, however, instead of following the scholastic curriculum, sought for training in the figurative arts. If he was exposed to sMan bla don grub's work in 'Bras yul Skyed mo[s] tshal or in the other great monastic institutions where the master had painted is not known, but in any case Dri med was probably trained by a member of the painting tradition who was active in the region at the beginning of the 16th century. Indeed, the earliest testimony that we have of Dri med dates 1521, and he is already designated as one “following the tradition of the artist from sMan thang.” At that time he must have already achieved some fame in his home region, as he was called to work at a major printing project commissioned by the royal house and prepared at the capital rDzong dkar, that is to say the first printed edition of the *Mañi bka' 'bum* (fig. 15.1; Appendix text no. 1).³¹ It was realized in two bulky volumes enriched

29 Jackson 1996: 113, 135 n. 272; Cüppers, van der Kuijp, and Pagel 2012: 5.

30 For Byams chen Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas 'phel, and the foundation and succession at Skyed tshal, see van der Kuijp 1983: 120–2. For Nor bu phun tshogs and the Khang pa family, see Ehrhard 2012: 150–2. For the location of the monastery, and neighbouring religious institutions in the Rong chu valley, see Ferrari 1958: 70.

31 For the Royal edition of the collection and its earliest reprints, see Ehrhard 2013; Sernesi forthcoming.

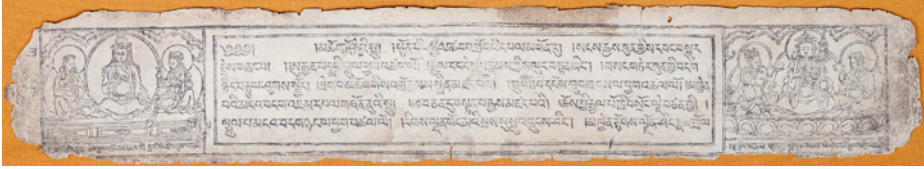


FIGURE 15.1 *Royal Print of the Maṇi bka' 'bum, printed in 1521, vol. Ka, fol. 2a. Cambridge University Library.*



FIGURE 15.2
*Portrait of Nor bu phun tshogs (1450–1521)
from the Royal Print of the Maṇi bka' 'bum,
vol. Kha, fol. 370b left. Kathmandu National
Archives.*



FIGURE 15.3
*Portrait of bTsun pa Chos legs (1437–1521),
from the Royal Print of the Maṇi bka' 'bum,
vol. Kha, fol. 320b, right. Kathmandu National
Archives.*

by a total of twenty-four images, drawn by Dri med and another artist from Gung thang called rDo rje mgon po: among the closing illustrations, there is also the portrait of the master Nor bu phun tshogs (fig. 15.2), who had just passed away after having served, in the latter years of his life, as the abbot of the Sa skya monastery in the capital of Gung thang, namely sGo mangs. In that same year had also passed away the teacher of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, the Bo dong master bTsun pa Chos legs (1437–1521), who was a teacher of the king Khri Kun dga' rnam rgyal lde (d. 1524), and had been instrumental in the transmission of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* at court: his portrait is found on the right side of

fol. 320b of the second volume of the print (fig. 15.3). Indeed, the illustrations of the collection, found at the beginning and at the end of the individual texts and running through both volumes, represent the king Srong btsan sgam po, at the origin of the teachings, and the master Padmasambhava (fol. 2a, fig. 15.1), then the treasure discoverers who compiled the scriptures, and finally the succession lineage of masters who transmitted the teachings in the kingdom.³²

The master Dri med worked at least at ten more printing projects during the following twenty-five years (see complete list in the Appendix). During the 1520s and 1530s he contributed to all the major printing projects headed by the Bo dong monk Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, mostly realized at the latter's hermitage Kun gsal gang po che, either on his own initiative, or solicited by the royal family. It is probable that Dri med during this time was summoned to realize other artefacts commissioned by the noble house for the palace and monasteries of the capital, but unfortunately we have no supporting evidence so far. In particular, Kun bzang Nyi zla grags pa (1514–1560), later also known as bDud 'dul mgon po lde, ascended the throne in 1529: this ruler is known as a generous donor of multiple “supports of the Buddha's body, speech and mind”, and is mentioned with praise in many of the printed books of the time.³³

The artist Dri med is famous principally for the illustrations of Klong chen Rab 'byams pa's *Theg mchog mdzod*, printed at Kun gsal gang po che in 1533, after that a manuscript of the text was brought from Central Tibet by bSod noms bkra shis, a pupil of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan.³⁴ These images were thus realised midway between 1521, the date of his earliest works, and the date of his last signed volume, i.e. 1545. The printed volume is enriched by eight illustrations, on either side of the two opening (fol. 1b, 2a) and the two closing folios (fol. 509b–510a), all drawn solely by Dri med; bSod noms bkra shis carved himself the initial ones (Appendix text no. 4). These are among the painter's finest creations and represent perhaps the peak of his career: the lively postures of the yogins may be compared with the portraits of the *siddhas* painted in rGyal mkhar rtse a century earlier by dPal 'byor rin chen, while the background

32 The full list of illustrations is given in the Appendix, text no. 1. For the transmission of the *Mañi bka' 'bum* in Mang yul Gung thang, see Ehrhard 2000d and Ehrhard 2013.

33 The *Mang yul gung thang gi rig gnas lo rgyus* (as in n. 3), pp. 199–200, states that the king commissioned, for the royal palace, paintings of the previous lives of the Buddha based on the *dPag bsam 'khri shing* (*Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*), and paintings of the succession history of the kings of Tibet (*bod kyi tsan po rim byon gyi lo rgyus*).

34 For this printing project, see Ehrhard 2000: 38, 73–4. For the facsimile edition, see Ehrhard 2000b. For its description and its illustrations, see also Jackson 1996: 122–5; Everding 2015, sv. Hs.or. 1648. For the colophon, see Everding *ibid.*; Ehrhard 2000: 104–14. bSod noms bkra shis was active alongside Chos dbang rgyal mtshan in many printing projects, and acted as a carver himself; see Ehrhard 2000: *passim*, and below.

is filled by stylised rock boulders, trees and bushes (figs. 15.4 and 15.5). The scribe of the first part is called gTsang pa 'Od zer, while the rest was written by *dge slong sGrol ma* and his brother. The first scribe is originally from gTsang, an area of Mang yul Gung thang not to be confused with the central Tibetan region. This individual is qualified in the colophon as “the youngest pupil of the master scribe from mNga' ris called rDo rje dpal” (*mnga' ris yig dpon rdo rje dpal zhes pa'i slob ma'i tha chung*s), indicating that he was still in training at the time in question. The numerous carvers are mentioned in the colophon by name, with a number written above each one that indicates the number of blocks individually carved: evidently this served as a means of calculating their share of payment.

The contacts between Mang yul Gung thang and Central Tibet involved not only the training of monks and artisans, but also the search for manuscripts to serve as models for Western Tibetan printing projects, and the dispatch of the first copies of prestigious editions to high hierarchs in Central Tibet. These interactions had publicized the high quality of the Western Tibetan prints, which had attracted estimators from outside the kingdom. Indeed, in the Spring of 1534 Dri med was called to work at a commission that had come from Central Tibet: the print of the life and songs of the 'Ba' ra ba master sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1475–1430). It was requested to King Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa by an official of Chu shul lhun po rtse, and realized at the King's



FIGURE 15.4 *Illustration of the Theg mchog mdzod printed in 1533, fol. 1b right. Kathmandu National Archives.*



FIGURE 15.5 *Illustration of the Theg mchog mdzod printed in 1533., fol. 2a left. Kathmandu National Archives.*

order, again in *Kun gsal gang po che* by a group of artisans headed by Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (Appendix text no. 5). The scribe was Thugs rje skyabs pa from sNyings. Dri med was involved in this project, for which he drew exquisitely detailed illustrations. After its completion, the official party travelling to Central Tibet also carried first copies (*par phud*) of the *Theg mchog mdzod* to be dispatched to the distant donors.³⁵

Another ambitious enterprise realized at the Bo dong hermitage was the first printed edition of the *bKa gdams glegs 'bam*, accomplished in 1539 (Appendix text no. 7). Its two volumes are enriched by a series of portraits of the masters who compiled and transmitted the collection, partly mirroring and partly supplementing the information provided by the text itself (fig. 15.6).³⁶ The total of forty illustrations were drawn by three artists – Dri

35 For this printing project, commissioned from afar, see Ehrhard 2000: 39; Ehrhard forthcoming: images of the text are published in the latter. Note that only a copy of the *mam thar* is extant, which is numbered Kha, suggesting that the *mgur 'bum* constituted the first volume (Ka).

36 The illustrations are listed in the Appendix, text no. 7. For a detailed study of these illustrations and their ordering, see Sernesi 2015. On this edition, see also Eimer 1984.

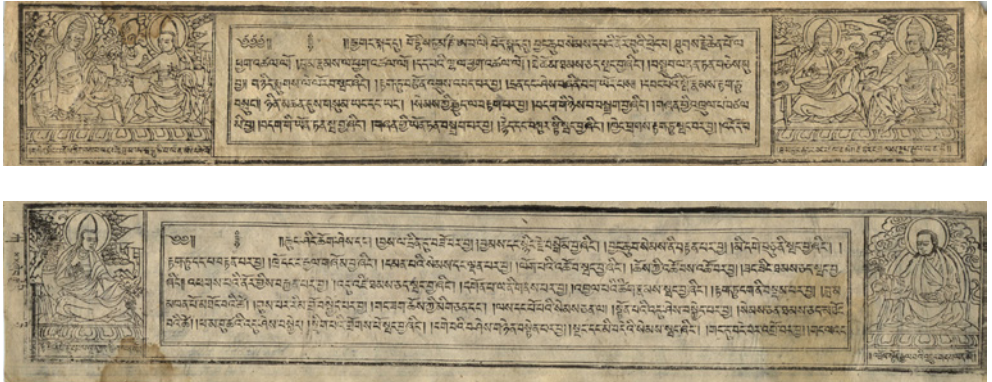


FIGURE 15.6 *The bKa' gdams glegs bam printed in 1539, vol Ka, fols. 247b and 248a. Paltsek Institute.*

med, Chos dpal, and sMon lam – and were carved by bSod namg bkra shis. The latter individual, who had already realized previous projects with Chos dbang rgyal mtshan such as the *Theg mchog mdzod*, is called in this instance “the great artist” (*mkhas pa chen po*), apparently for his great skill in cutting out the elaborate illustrations. However, he is never mentioned as the person responsible for drawing the illustrations, showing how the two trades of painting and carving remained distinct. Among the scribes, figure the same that had worked at the *Theg mchog mdzod*, i.e. dGe slong Sgrol ma seng ge, and the above-mentioned Thugs rje skyabs pa, here called artist (*mkhas pa*) too, all from sNyings: it has been observed how “With the help of this text we can see clearly that the regions of sNyings and gTsang were the local centres from where the scribes and carvers were first and foremost recruited” (Ehrhard 2000: 74).

During the 1540s, Dri med worked at a number of middle scale productions in the southern part of the kingdom, in sKyid grong. Two projects were realized respectively in 1540 and 1545 in the Lan ’de[/dhe] valley: the reprint of *The Collected Songs of Mi la ras pa* by gTsang smyon Heruka (Appendix text no. 8) and the reprint of the Life and Songs of sPrul sku Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan (Appendix text no. 9). Interestingly enough, in the colophon of the *Mi la’i mgur ’bum* the scribe gTsang pa ’Od zer is still qualified as “the youngest pupil of the master scribe of mNga’ ris called rDo rje dpal”. On the other hand, in the colophon of the *Collected Songs* of Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan, produced five years later, he is now simply denoted as the scribe (*yig mkhan*), indicating that his long training, already ongoing in 1533, was finally fulfilled by the time. In another, undated text, the same individual is called “the expert well-trained

scribe for printing purposes" (*spar yig rig byed legs sbyangs mthar son pa*), showing how he eventually acquired recognition in the trade.³⁷

In the year 1546, *mkhas pa* Dri med may still be found in the southern region of sKyid grong together with one *mkhas pa* dPal chen, at the head of the decoration project of the circumambulation path of the 'Phags pa lha khang. The renovation was supervised by the monk of royal birth lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473–1557).³⁸ The latter is also well known for his prolific printing activities, and Dri med indeed signs the illustrations of at least one work stemming from lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal's efforts, that is the life and songs of rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje (Appendix text no. 10).

As may be seen, Dri med worked for royal commissions, for Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, and for the monk of royal birth lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal, thus contributing to the finest blockprinted books produced in Mang yul Gung thang at the time. However, his work was not restricted only to book illustration, but he was in fact a full-fledged painter, as may be seen by his involvement with the renovation of the 'Phags pa lha khang. Hence, we may hopefully expect to find further mention, or even testimony, of his work, as one of the leading artists of the kingdom in the 16th century.

The images produced by the master Dri med at the peak of his career are readily recognizable. We may observe extreme richness in detail, especially in the depiction of the garments and implements of the figures; harmonious, elongated bodies; characteristic oval-shaped faces, with regular proportions, heart-shaped hairline, and the marks of the folds of the neck. But especially characteristic are the landscape elements which are depicted in the background of the main figures: peaked mountains with rivers streaming down (fig. 15.2 and 15.3), hard-cut rocks (figs 15.4, 15.5, 15.6), trees with big, carefully designed, leaves (fig. 15.4), or thick bushes with characteristically shaped trilobated leaves (fig. 15.5, 15.6). Clouds are depicted in two different shapes, both as stratus (horizontal, thin and filamentous, fig. 15.3), and cumulus (rounded and fluffy, with cauliflower-shaped outline, fig. 15.6). The sMan thang tradition became the predominant style of blockprinted books' illustrations in Mang yul

37 This is a reprint of the life story of Mar pa by g'Tsang smyon Heruka, realized in Mang yul Gung thang by a disciple of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal called gSung rab rgya mtsho; Sernesi 2011: 201–2.

38 This project is mentioned in *lHa btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar gyi smad cha* (as in n. 40 below, fols. 4a–5a), which also includes the *dkar chags* and *smon lam* of the enterprise (fols. 5a–9a); *mkhas pa* Dri med is also mentioned among the donors (ibid. fol. 6b). See also Ehrhard 2004: 84. For the master and his biography, see Clemente 2014.

Gung thang during the first half of the 16th century. Besides *mkhas pa* Dri med, a number of other artists are explicitly associated with this painting tradition, i.e. rDo rje mgon po (who worked at the 1521 *Maṇi bka' 'bum* royal print with *mkhas pa* Dri med), dKon mchog rgyal po,³⁹ and Don bzang.⁴⁰ And also when the affiliation of the artist is not openly stated, or the work is anonymous, the Mang yul Gung thang regional style is easily recognizable by the details influenced by the sMan thang pa/Dri med tradition, in both the proportions and postures of the bodies, and the background elements that fill in the space of the illustration: among the most refined examples are the initial illustrations of the guidebook to the 'Phags pa Vati temple printed in 1532. The illustration on fol. 2a (left) portrays the holy statue of Avalokiteśvara within the 'Phags pa lha khang temple – with its structure and roof clearly visible in the background – flanked by the Tibetan kings of the imperial period Srong btsan sgam po and Khri srong lde btsan (fig. 15.7).⁴¹ Worthy of notice are also the illustrations of *The Six secret songs of Mi la ras pa* printed by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal at Brag dkar rta so in 1550 (fig. 15.8).⁴²

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- 39 Mentioned in the colophon of the *sPrul sku rigs 'dzin mchog ldan mgon po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum dang ldan spro ba bskyed byed* (NGMPP L 9/3 = L 189/4). The life and songs of the treasure discoverer Rig 'dzin mChog ldan mgon po (1497–1531) were printed in sKyid grong under the supervision of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (= dGe slong chos [kyi] seng [ge]) in 1527. See Ehrhard 2000: 32–33, 72–73; Colophon: *le lha rang byon gsung 'byon ji bzhin pa/ sman thang srol 'dzin dkon mchog rgyal pos bkod*.
- 40 He worked at the illustrations of at least two texts: (1) *rNal 'byor dbang phyug lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar gyi smad cha*; NGMPP L 456/7, NGMPP E 2517/5, ISIAO Tucci collection no. 657(6); colophon (fol. 32a): *sgos su par 'di'i le lha'i ri mo pa/ /mkhas pa don bzang sman thang rgyud 'dzin mkhas*. (2) *Grub thob gtsang pa smyon pa'i rnam thar dad pa'i spu long g.yo ba*; ISIAO Tucci collection no. 706; colophon: *sgos su par 'di'i le lha'i ri mo pa/ /mkhas pa don bzang sman thang rgyud 'dzin mkhas*. For a description of the texts and an excerpt of the colophons, see Clemente 2007: 133–7.
- 41 *'Phags mchog spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug va ti bzang po'i rnam thar nam mkha'i nor bu ma rig mun sel*, NGMPP Reel L 686/6. For the traditions surrounding the statue and its temple, including a full transliteration of this text, see Ehrhard 2004, especially pp. 483–521. For this print, and further images of the text, see Ehrhard forthcoming.
- 42 *Mi la ras pa'i rdo rje mgur drug*, ISIAO Tucci collection no. 1089(2). Another illustration from this volume, portraying Mi la ras pa, is found in Sernesi 2011, fig. 6, and may be compared with a drawing by Dri med in the 1540 print of the *Mi la'i mgur 'bum* (ibid., fig. 5).

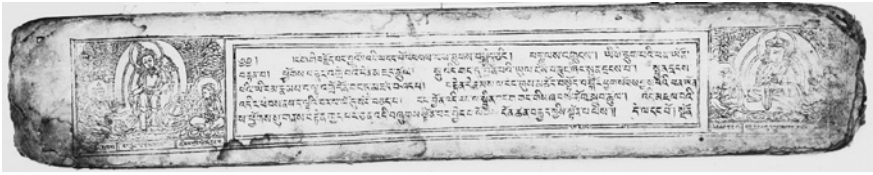


FIGURE 15.7 *The Story of Va ti bzang po printed in 1532, fol. 2a. Kathmandu National Archives.*



FIGURE 15.8
The Six Secret Songs printed in 1550, fol. 1b right. IsIAO
Tucci Collection.

5 Regional Styles?

As may be seen, it is possible to recognize a distinct style of woodcut book illustrations produced in Mang yul Gung thang by a determined group of artisans in the first half of the 16th century. Likewise, it may be possible to individuate specific workshops elsewhere in Central Tibet: although for these other regions the documentary evidence is still scarce, it is already possible to study 16th century book illustrations, and to trace the names of artisans working at multiple texts in a given area. Hence, to appreciate the distinctiveness of the Mang yul Gung thang regional style, we may compare it to a contemporary figurative tradition flourishing in the Central Tibetan region of dBus. Indeed, a volume printed in the fortress of Gong dkar in 1542 offers an example of book illustration likely belonging to the mKhyen ris tradition. However, differently from the case of *mkhas pa* Dri med, the images are not signed in the colophon of the text, nor is the adherence to a specific painting tradition explicitly claimed.

The master dGe bsnyen rNam par rgyal ba, known as mKhyen brtse, was a native of Gong dkar in dBus, and flourished around the 1460s, thus being a contemporary of sMan bla don grub. He was particularly linked, although not exclusively, to the Sa skya school, and his main patron (*yon bdag*), who was also

his religious teacher, was the master Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432–96). The latter entrusted to the artist the realization of most of the frescoes and the statues of the monastery of Gong dkar rDo rje gdan, founded in 1464–5.⁴³ His painting style was renowned for the execution of tantric deities, and it is said to be characterised by thicker colours and less expressive figures than the sMan ris. The tradition was long lasting, as masters painting in this fashion are recorded well into the 17th century.⁴⁴

The volume produced in the palace of Gong dkar in 1542 is a copy of the *Jātakamālā* by Āryaśūra supplemented by sixty-seven stories compiled by the 3rd Karma pa Rang 'byung rdo rje (1284–1339), which was realized upon the request of the Phag mo gru prince 'Gro ba'i mgon po (1508–1548).⁴⁵ The craftsmen were headed by one rDo rje tshe dbang originary of gNyls in the nearby area of gNyal, who is also mentioned in colophons of works printed at Dwags la sgam po under the tenure of Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal (1513–87).⁴⁶ The volume bears four illustrations on its opening pages (fig. 15.9), portraying the Buddha Śākyamuni (fol. 1b, top left), Nāgārjuna (fol. 1b, top right), Āryaśūra

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- 43 See Jackson 1997: 254, 257. According to Be-lo, mKhyen rtse also contributed to the murals at Yangs pa chen in 1506, although this could be late for the master himself; see *ibid.*, 257. For the construction of the monastery of rDo rje gdan, and the work executed there by mKhyen rtse, see Fermer 2009: 132–5. For an overview of the site, and images of some of the relevant frescoes, see sKal bzang chos 'phel (ed.), *Gong dkar chos sde'i gnas yig*, Sam bho ṭa dben bryud dpe tshogs, Gong dkar chos sde dgon, *s.d.*
- 44 See Jackson 1996: 139–61, Wangdu 2012. mKhyen ris artists are known to have worked upon the summon of the 5th Dalai Lama and later by sDe srid Sang rgyas rgya mtsho; Jackson 1997: 257.
- 45 NGMPP Reel L 528/2: *Ston pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i skyes rabs phreng/ /bcu phrag gsum dang bzhi ni dpa' bo'i ste/ /phyi nas rang byung rdo rjes bdun lcag pa'i/ drung bcus brgya rtsa rdzogs par mdzad pa bzhugs*. Digital images of a copy are also included in *Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim msdor bsdus*, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe mnying dpe skrun khang, 2014, DVD 2, vol. no. 38. For the editorial history of this text, see Sernesi forthcoming. 'Gro ba'i mgon po (1508–1548) was the elder son of the Phag mo gru gong ma sde srid Ngag dbang bkra shis grags pa (1488–1563/4) and took residence in Gong dkar in 1524; Czaja 2013: 256, and n. 44. It may be noted that wall paintings in the 'Dus khang of Gong dkar rdo rje gdan monastery attributed to Mkhyen rtse depict a series of one-hundred previous lives of the Buddha, which are, however, said to be inspired by the *dPag bsam gyi 'khri shing (Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā)*; see *Gong dkar chos sde'i gnas yig* (as in n. 43), p. 25, 81.
- 46 These are the *mNyam med dwags po'i chos bzhir grags pa'i gzhung gi 'grel pa snying po gsal ba'i rgyan* by La yag pa Byang chub dngos grub, and the *gSang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i spyi don mdor bsdus pa legs bshad nor bu'i 'od zer* by bKra shis rnam rgyal himself; Sernesi 2013: 199, 201.



FIGURE 15.9 Illustrations of the *Jātakamālā* printed in *Gong dkar* in 1542. Paltsek Institute.

(fol. 2a, bottom left), and the 3rd Karma pa (fol. 2a, bottom right). The first two images are portrayed frontally, seated on a high lotus throne, surrounded by an elaborate halo; the background is filled with greenery of two different kinds, showing elongated fern-like leaves on the right illustration. The two masters are portrayed in three-quarters against a natural landscape. Āryaśūra wears an Indian monastic robe (*saṃghāṭi*) that leaves the right shoulder bare, and holds a palm-leaf text in the left hand. He is seated on a mat upon a rock, besides a tree, amidst bushes and a large flower. A vase may be seen on his left side, under the tree. In the background a mountain is suggested behind thick clouds. Rang 'byung rdo rje is portrayed in his Tibetan monastic attire and wearing the

black hat characteristic of his lineage. He sits among plants and flowers, and in the background clouds and mountains are also visible. His large throne, with a rounded wooden frame and a baldaquin, is akin to those portrayed in a series of thangkas of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud lineage painted in mKhyen ris style.⁴⁷

We may compare this volume's illustrations with paintings of the mKhyen ris tradition,⁴⁸ and with another roughly contemporary print from dBus, that is *The Life of Ras chung pa*, printed at Ras chung phug in the Yar lung valley by rGod tshang ras chen (1482–1559) in 1531: its printing colophon mentions the prince 'Gro ba'i mgon po among the main donors.⁴⁹ In so doing, we may detect distinctive details, which may be contrasted in turn with the Western Tibetan examples. First, the depiction of the halo: it is surrounded by flames, represented in a stylized and elaborate fashion (cf. the image of the Buddha Śākyamuni); also, radiant beams of light are portrayed as a string of small beads or petals surrounding the halo (like in the case of the 3rd Karma pa), or in its interior (like in the figure of the Buddha Śākyamuni). Second, the already mentioned characteristic throne of the 3rd Karma pa, with its large frame and decorated rear. Moreover, the lotus thrones of the deities show pointy, curly, ornate petals (cf. the image of the Buddha Śākyamuni), in contrast with the lotus petals of the Mangyul Gung thang depictions, which are usually rounded. And finally, the natural elements inserted in the background are also differently treated: while in the Western Tibetan examples bushes and trees are stylized, with respectively trilobated, and big oval leaves, in the images from Gong dkar the plants are more realistically depicted, with a great variety of types and shapes: in the portrait of Āryaśūra in the Gong dkar print for example, the leaves of the knotty tree are very small, and there are four different kinds of bushes and a flower.⁵⁰ Also, the mountain tops and the thick rounded

47 Cf. Heller 2012, especially figs. 1, 2, and paintings IV (Mar pa), VI (sGam po pa), VII (Phag mo gru pa), XI (Chos rgyal Ngag dbang), XIII (bsTan 'dzin nor bu), XIV (unidentified).

48 As telling parallels, cf. especially the following pictures: (1) Buddha, mural from Gong dkar, 15th century, in Jackson 1996: 151 (pl. 19); (2) thangka of Amitāyus, in Jackson 1996: 162–3 (pl. 78–9).

49 This volume is kept at the British Library, no. 19999d89. I thank Burkhard Quessel for providing me access to this text. This printing project was realized in a hare year, which must be 1531, as I discuss elsewhere. A more extensive analysis of 16th century prints from Gong dkar or dBus lies beyond the scope of this paper, and will be postponed to another occasion. I thank M. Fermer for showing me images from multiple such prints that he collected. For earlier prints realized at Gong dkar, see Jackson 1983: 8–16, and 1989: 10–7.

50 Note that Wangdu (2012) was able to count “as many as 65 different species and forms of leaves” depicted in the narrative series of the previous lives of the Buddha in the 'Dus khang of Gong dkar.

clouds (behind *Āryaśūra*), as well as the thin filamentous clouds (behind the *Karma pa*), are sketchy and far from the conventional depictions adopted in the images from *Mang yul Gung thang* as shown above.

6 The Circulation of Motifs

Therefore, we may see how printed texts constitute datable and localizable examples of artwork, which bear witness to the wider history of Tibetan art and material culture. Distinct regional styles may be recognized in book illustrations of the 16th century, and no doubt this investigation may be refined with the growing data that is becoming available. This endeavour may lead to the recognition of clues useful in determining the date and place of provenance of printed texts, and hence deserves attention from bibliographers and textual scholars alike. However, a note of caution is in order: stylistic features are not sufficient for this purpose, and should always be complemented with internal data, i.e. the information gathered from the book, such as details related in the colophon, names and place of origin of the artisans mentioned in the colophon or in the *ming thangs*, codicological features of the volume, references in the invocations and dedications to specific circumstances of production or transmission of the text, and so on. In turn, this must be corroborated by external data, such as information about the text's circulation and reception, or about its editorial history, passages in biographical sources relating the execution of a given printing project, identification of regional redactions of works, etc.⁵¹

51 On the comprehensive approach to the codex, see Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002; for an attempt at such an enterprise, see Sernesi 2010; for relevant elements in the description of Tibetan printed books, see Clemente 2011. For a summary of this methodology in the context of the study of Medieval European manuscripts, see Segre Montel 2003: 492–3: “La miniatura si data in genere più facilmente della pittura monumentale, perché dal codice nel suo complesso si possono ricavare molte informazioni, complementari a quelle fornite dalla decorazione, che è solo un aspetto, tra i tanti, di quel manufatto complesso che è il libro scritto a mano. Trascurando anche solo uno di questi, si rischia di perdere dei dati essenziali: il calendario di un codice liturgico, per esempio, può indicarci, con la scelta dei santi elencati, la diocesi per la quale il manoscritto è stato eseguito, in alcuni casi la data di composizione, oppure il luogo dove in un determinato momento è stato utilizzato. Anche un testo o una sua redazione particolare possono orientarci verso una specifica regione o data, e il *colophon* (la sottoscrizione del copista), così come i versi o una miniatura di dedica possono rivelarci il nome del committente, del destinatario e magari del miniatore, mentre il solo esame della decorazione, per quanto approfondito e insostituibile per l'aspetto specifico dello stile, non riuscirebbe a fornirci altrettanti dati”.

Indeed, style may be misleading because artists would travel in order to be trained, and took pride in mastering multiple styles and combining them for the creation of their works. And during this period they were itinerant, at least in a regional setting, and if particularly famed could be called upon, or receive commissions, from afar. Even more importantly, books, as portable objects endowed with value and prestige, circulated widely, offered as gifts to honoured masters and generous donors, or sought-after for their doctrinal contents. Moreover, as I have discussed elsewhere, during the period in question cherished texts were often the object of multiple printed editions, to make them available at a different monastic centre or a far-away Tibetan region, to amend the existing edition when deemed unsatisfactory, or to substitute blocks worn out, damaged, or lost in fire and floods. In these cases, it was common practice to employ a pre-existing printed edition as the sample to prepare the new set of blocks, more or less directly.⁵² The illustrations would be copied too, and indeed very often we may readily recognize the prototype of a given edition also by looking at its iconographic program and at the composition of the individual illustrations, mirrored in the later print. In this way, the circulation of books favoured the circulation of stylistic trends and motives. Hence, it may be clear that the sole appraisal of the illustrations may not be sufficient and determinant in establishing the place and date of origin of a printed volume.

As a telling example it may suffice to finally look at a volume of the *Jātakamālā* reprinted in Mang yul Gung thang in 1574 (fig. 15.10).⁵³ The Gong dkar ba edition may be clearly identified as the model on which the new edition is based, and indeed the subject and ordering of the illustrations follows closely the previous print: the initial folios bear, once again, images of the Buddha Śākyamuni (fol. 1b, left), Nāgārjuna (fol. 1b, right), Āryaśūra (fol. 2a, left), and the 3rd Karma pa (fol. 2a, right). Moreover, the debt may be recognized in the composition of the single illustrations, in the attire and posture of the figures, and even in the treatment of specific details, showing the characteristic mKhyen ris features: note in particular the decoration of the halo of

52 In the case called by Eimer 'technical identity', the previously printed text was glued to the blocks and used in place of the printing sheets (*par yig*) as the guideline for carving the new blocks. In the majority of cases the text was copied anew by a scribe, but following closely the printed sample; Sernesi forthcoming. See Sernesi 2015 for the *bKa' gdams glegs bam* example.

53 NGMPP L 568/9–569/1: *Ston pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i skyes rabs phreng/ /bcu phrag gsum dang bzhi ni dpa' bo'i ste/ /phyi nas rang byung rdo rjes bdun lcag pa'i/ drung bcus brgya rtsa rdzogs par mdzad pa bzhugs*. On this printed edition, produced by Byams pa phun tshogs (1503–81), see Ehrhard 2012: 166; Sernesi forthcoming.



FIGURE 15.10 Jātakamālā, printed *Mang yul Gung thang* in 1574. Kathmandu National Archives.

the Buddha figure, the greenery behind it, the tree in the background of the portrait of Āryaśūra, and the throne of the Karma pa, with its rounded wooden frame and baldaquin. On the other hand, to the left of Āryaśūra is depicted a waterfall in the expected manner (cf. fig. 15.2 and 15.3), replacing the clouds and mountains of the original picture. In this case, a purely stylistic analysis would be confusing and could lead to mistaken conclusions, if not supported by research into the editorial history of the volume in question.

Therefore, I am arguing for an approach to the *codex* in its integrity, which brings together the study of its formal features and of its textual contents. This entails the investigation of the circumstances in which it was produced, including not only the identification of the writers, the recipients, and the sponsors, but also the understanding of the technical knowledge involved in its manufacture, the composition of the workshops, and the organisation of labour. The figure of *mkhas pa* Dri med offers an enlightening point of view on these practices, and I hope thereby to have shown how book illustrations and illustrators deserve much more attention than they have received so far.

Appendix: The Works

1. 1521. *Maṇi bka' 'bum*. NGMPP Reel E 2933/5–2935/1. Cambridge University Library, Tibetan 149. Royal Print, realized in rDzong dkar under the supervision of 'Jigs med bzang po, Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, and Chos skyong rdo rje.

The scribes are *brgya dpon* Chos skyong rdo rje and *mkhas pa* 'Phags skyabs. The blocks were carved by seven carvers headed by *dge slong* Seng ge and *drung yig* dPal ldan rgyal po. The artists are rDo rje mgon po and Dri med. The illustrations

were carved by *brkos byed pa mkhas pa* Chos skyabs dpal bzang, *bzo rig mthar phyin* bSod rnams rnam rgyal, and *mkhas pa* Skyabs pa. Ehrhard 2013, especially pp. 154–5; Colophon Appendix 1.6, p. 167 (fol. 369b–370a): *le lha rang byung gsung 'byon 'dra ba 'di/ /sman thang mkhas pa'i rgyud 'dzin gung thang pa/ /mkhas pa rdor mgon dri med la sogs kyis/ /skal bzang 'dren byed bdud rtsi'i gru char phab*: “The chapter-deities, like self-arisen, self-talking [images], descend as a drizzle of ambrosia conveying good fortune, by [the skill of] the artists rDo rje mgon po, Dri med, etc. from Gung thang, who follow the tradition of the artist from sMan thang.”

Illustrations:

Vol. KA: 1b (l) Ston pa sangs rgyas, rGyal ba 'Od dpag med, Byams mgon; (r) Sras nor bu 'dzin pa, 'Jig rten dbang phyug, Yi ge drug ma.

2a (l) Bal mo Khri btsun, Chos rgyal Srong btsan rgam po, rGya mo Kong jo; (r) lHa lcam Man dha ra, U rgyan Padma 'byung gnas, Ye shes mtsho rgyal.

217a (l) Slob dpon Grub thob dngos grub; (r) mNga' bdag Nyang ral chen po.

218b (l) Bla ma Mi skyod rdo rje; (r) rJe btsun Shākya bzang po.

323b (l) Bla ma lHa rje dag pa 'bum; (r) lCam mo Ye shes mchog ma.

324a (l) Grub thob Chu sgom zhig po; (r) mTha' bzhi bya bral chen po.

Vol. KHA: 1b (l) 'Jam dbyangs bsod nams seng ge; (r) Bla ma bKra shis rgyal mtshan.

2a (l) dBus pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan; (r) 'Phags mchog Nor bu bzang po.

319b (l) Chos rje Bzang po rgyal mtshan; (r) mKhas grub dPal ldan sangs rgyas.

320b (l) mKhas btsun bSam grub dpal; (r) mKhas grub Chos kyi legs pa.

370b (l) rJe rab 'byams pa Nor bu phun tshogs (r) rJe Kun dga' rgyal mtshan.

371a (l) rDo rje nag po chen pos bgegs rnams 'joms; (r) rNam thos bu yis 'dod dgu char ltar 'bebs.

2. 1521. *Nyams yig mani lu gu rgyud*. NGMPP Reel L 61/21–62/1, facsimile Ehrhard 2000c. Printed at rDzong dkar by *bla ma* 'Jigs med bzang po.

Chos dbang rgyal mtshan acts as carver, with bShes gnyen Kun ne and bSod rnams rnam rgyal. The scribe is Chos skyong rdo rje. Ehrhard 2000: 71; Colophon no. 3, p. 87 (fol. 36b–37a): *le lha rang byung mtshan dpe'i dpal 'bar 'di/ mkhas pa dri med dad pa'i mtsho las 'khrungs*: “the glowing splendour of the chapter-deities, bearing the marks of self-arisen [images], is born from the ocean of faith of the master Dri med.”

Illustrations:

1b (l) [bTsun pa] Chos legs; (r) Bram ze chen po.

37a (l) mGon po Klu sgrub; (r) Yang dgon chos rje.

3. 1524. *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i mgur 'bum* and *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i bka' 'bum yid bzhin nor bu*. NGMPP Reel L 66/2–66/3, IsIAO Tucci Collection no. 286/1–286/2. Collected Songs and Collected Saying of Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1213–58), printed at Kun gsal gang po che.

The scribe is 'Phags skyabs; the carvers include Chos dbang rgyal mtshan and bSod nams bkra shis. Ehrhard 2000: Col. no. 4, p. 91: *le lha rang byung gsung byon 'dra ba 'di/gung thang mkhas pa dri med dad pas bzhengs*: “The chapter-deities, like self-arisen, self-talking [images], were crafted with faith by *mkhas pa Dri med* from Gung thang”.

Illustrations:

- mGur 'bum*: 1b (l) rGyal ba Yang dgon chos rje; (r) mTshan ldan Rin po che Chos legs.
65a (l) rGyal ba Yang dgon pa; (r) mNga' bdag Chos legs.
bKa' 'bum: 1b (l) mKhas btsun chos skyi rgyal po sPyan snga ba; (r) Ko brag pa.
128a (l) sKu gsum bde chen rgyal ba rGod tshang pa; (r) Pañ chen Sa skya pa.

4. 1533. *Theg mchog mdzod*. Berlin State Library Hs. Or. 1648. NGMPP Reel AT 53/17–54/1. Facsimile Ehrhard 2000b. Printed at Kun gsal sGang po che.

The scribe of the first part is gTsang pa 'Od zer, of the latter part dGe slong and sGrol ma. The carvers were fourteen. The images at the beginning of the volume were carved by bSod nams bkra shis. Ehrhard 2000: 38, 73–4, Colophon n. 8, especially pp. 111–2; Everding 2015, s.v. Hs. Or. 1648. Images in Jackson 1996: 123–5. Colophon (fol. 508b): *le lha'i ri mo sprul sku sman thang pa'i/brgyud 'dzin mkhas pa'i 'byung gnas gung thang pa/ mkhas pa dri med sor mo'i sgyu rtsal lo*: “the drawings for the images [were made by] the skilled fingers of *mkhas pa Dri med*, the artist originary of Gung thang who follows the tradition of *sprul sku sMan thang pa*”.

Illustrations:

- 1b (l) Longs sku rNam snang, Chos sku Kun bzang yab yum, sPrul sku rDo rje 'chang; (r) Slob dpon 'Jam dpal bshes gnyen, Rig 'dzin dGa' rab rdo rje, Śrī Siṃha.
2a (l) Rig 'dzin dznya na sutra, Rig 'dzin Bi ma la mi tra; (r) U rgyan Pad ma 'byung gnas, Chos rgyal Khri srong lde btsan.
509b (l) gNas brtan lDang ma lhun rgyal, Nyang Ting nge 'dzin bzang po; (r) lCe btsun Seng ge dbang phyug, rGyal ba Zhang ston.
510a (l) Klong chen Rab 'byams pa, Chos 'di'i rTsa ba'i bla ma; (r) bKa' bsrungs E ka tsa ti, rGyal chen rNam thos sras.

5. 1534–5. The Life and songs of sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, printed at the request of sKyid gshongs pa Chos kyi grags pa. Only volume Kha (i.e. the *mam thar*) is extant: *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa sprul pa'i skyes mchog nam mkha' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i mam par thar pa skal ldan dga' ba bskyed pa'i pad dkar yid kyi 'dod 'jo*, Collection University of Hamburg.

The scribe is Thugs rje skyabs pa from sNyings. Ehrhard 2000: 39; Ehrhard forthcoming. Colophon (fol. 57b): *le lha'i rig byed mkhas pa dri med do*: “the artist who drew the illustrations is *Dri med*”.

Illustrations (vol. Kha):

- 1b (l) sKyes mchog 'Ba' ra ba; (r) sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan.
58a (l) Ye shes mgon po phyag bzhi pa; (r) bKra shis tshe rings ma.

6. 1537. *sPrul sku bstan gnyis gling pa pad ma tshe dbang rgyal po'i rnam thar yid bzhin nor bu*, and *sPrul sku bstan gnyis gling pa pad ma tshe dbang rgyal po'i mgur 'bum dgos 'dod kun 'byung*. NGMPP Reel L 143/5, L 143/6–144/1. The Life and Collected Songs of bsTan gnyis gling pa. Realized at the palace Khyung rdzong dkar po with royal sponsorship, and under the supervision of Chos dbag rgyal mtshan.

The scribes were bSod nams 'od zer from gTsang, and Thugs rje skyabs pa from sNying. Ten carvers worked at the project, and the images were carved by bSod nams bkra shis. Ehrhrad 2000: 40–1, 74; Colophon 9, pp. 115–7. Colophon (fol. 186b): *le lha'i rnam 'gyur sprul sku sman thang pa'i/brgyud 'dzin mkhas pa dri ma mes pas bkod/ (. . .) le lha'i rkos byed bsod nams bkra shis so*: “the appearance of the illustrations was determined by *mkhas pa Dri ma med pa*, who follows the tradition of *sprul sku sman thang pa*”.

Illustrations:

rNam thar: 1b(1) Chos sku Kun bzang yab yum; (r) Longs s[ku] [. . .]

mGur 'bum: 1b (1) Bram ze chen po Sa ra ha; (r) lHa btsun [. . .] rab brtan.

2a (1) [. . .] mChog ldan mgon po: (r) Rigs 'dzin Pad ma tshe dbang rgyal po.

187a (1) mGon po Tshe dpag med (r) rNam sras mdung dmar can.

7. 1539. *bKa' gdams glegs 'bam*. This edition has been reproduced in the Śāta Pitaka Series vols. 309–310 (New Delhi 1982). Several incomplete copies exist: cf. NGMPP Reel L 587/1 (vol. Ka, fols. 124–365), NGMPP Reel L 784/2 (vol. Ka, fols. 247–365), NGMPP Reel L 784/3 (vol. Kha, fols. 1–278; continues in Reel L 785/1, not seen); TBRC W4CZ1021 (vol. Kha, fols. 1–343), British Library 19999 d107 (vol. Ka): I thank B. Quessel for assistance in getting access to the latter. Cf. also dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, *Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsodus*, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2013, DVD 1, no. 20.

The illustrations were drawn by *mkhas pa Dri med*, *mkhas pa Chos dpal*, and *mkhas pa sMon lam*; those of the first volume were carved by *mkhas pa chen po* bSod nams bkra shis. Twenty three carvers worked at the text, including bSod nams bkra shis. Several scribes contributed, including dGe slong sgrol ma seng ge, *dpon yig* Rin chen, and *dpon yig* Thugs rje skyabs pa: the latter, in particular, wrote the first volume. Ehrhard 2000: 19 n. 17, 42–43, 74–75; Colophon 10, pp. 118–29. See also Eimer 1984; Jackson 1996: 121; Sernesi 2015. Colophon (fol. 341b): *le lha'i dpe ris mang yul gung thang pa/mkhas pa dri med mkhas pa chos dpal dang/mkhas pa smon lam sogs kyis gzabs nas bris*: “the template drawings for the illustrations were drawn with zeal by [the artists] from Mang yul Gung thang *mkhas pa Dri med*, *mkhas pa Chos dpal*, *mkhas pa sMon lam*, and so forth.

Illustrations:

vol. KA. 1b (1) Ti lo pa, rDo rje 'chang, Nā ro pa; (r) Byams pa, Shākya'i rgyal po, 'Jam dbyangs.

2a (1) Thogs med, dPal mgon Klu sgrub, dPal mchog Doṃ bhi pa; (r) Mi g.yo pa, Thugs rje chen po, sGrol ma.

- 19a (l) Jo bo rje dPal ldan A dhi sha [=Atiśa]; (r) 'Brom ston pa rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas.
 20b (l) rNgog legs pa'i shes rab; (r) mNga' ris pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan.
 119a (l) Phu chung pa gZhon nu rgyal mtshan; (r) Zhang ka ma pa Rin chen rgyal mtshan.
 124b (l) Stab ka pa Dar ma rgyal mtshan; (r) Stab ka pa Byang chub bzang po.
 125a (l) Stab ka pa rNam mkha' rin chen; 'Brom ston sprul pa gZhon nu blo gros.
 246a (l) Mkhan chen Nyi ma rgyal mtshan; (r) Rin chen gling pa Rin chen byang chub.
 247b (l) gSer gling pa Chos kyi grags pa, Bla ma A wa dhu ti pa; (r) Bla ma Byang chub bzang po, Dze ta ri dGra las rnam rgyal.
 248a (l) Jo bo chen po rje dpal ldan A ti sha; (r) 'Brom ston rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas.
 365a (l) Yi dam Thugs rje chen po; (r) rJe btsun sGrol ma dkar mo.
 vol. KHA. 1b (l) Nag tsho tshul rgyal, Jo bo rje, Khu ston brTson 'grus g.yung drung; (r) sPyan snga ba, 'Brom ston, Pu to ba rin chen.
 2a (l) dGa' lung pa rigs gi bDag po'i dpal, dGa' lung pa Byang chub dpal; (r) Bla ma dam pa bSod nams 'od zer, Go sngon chu ser ba Sangs rgyas bzang po.
 2b (l) Bla ma dPal ldan pa; (r) mKhas mchog bSod nams bzang po.
 214a (l) sTag tshang chos 'khor ba bSod nams 'od zer; (r) sBa tshab sga gdong pa [=Pa tshab dga' gdong pa] Ye shes tshul khriims.
 215b (l) mKhan chen Ratnākaraśānti; (r) Rin po che Kun dga' blo gros.
 216a (l) mKhan chen Legs pa rin chen; (r) Rtsa ba bla ma Kun dga' legs pa bkra shis.
 342a (l) Chos rje Sa skya Paṇḍita; (r) Chos rje Blo bzang grags pa.
 342b (l) Dhar ma sa dhu [bTsun pa Chos legs], U rgyan Padma 'byung gnas, rje Ra tna dhā dza [dKon mchon rgyal mtshan]; (r) rJe Śrī man Udaya [Dpal ldan dar], rJe bstun A bha ya ki rti [Bo dong Jigs med grags pa], rJe Ki rti dznā na [Grags pa ye shes].
 343a (l) sGrol ma dkar mo, mGon po Tsho dpag med, lHa mo Nor rgyun ma; (r) bKa' bsrung Kṣetrapāla, mGon po Phyag bzhi pa, 'Jigs byed chen po.

8. 1540. The *Collected Songs of Mi la ras pa* by gTsang smyon Heruka. Wellcome Tibetan 6, Wellcome Tibetan 64; Chicago Field Museum, B. Laufer Collection FM 206 (Catalogue. no. 4125.336333). Printed in Lan 'de[/dhe] glang phug under the direction of rNal 'byor dbang phyug Chos kyi rgya mtsho.

The scribe is gTsang pa 'od zer. The images were carved by *dpon btsun* Pad ma. Eimer 1996; Sernesi 2011: 191–7, Colophon 1b, pp. 220–5. Colophon (fol. 443b): *le lha'i rig byed gsung 'byon 'dra ba 'di/ /mkhas pa'i mchog gyur dri med mgon pos he*: “The [artist] who drew the chapter-deities, like self-talking [images], is the supreme artist Dri med mgon po.”

Illustrations:

- 1b (l) Mi la ras pa,; (r) Dwags po lha rje(?).
 2a (l) Ras chung pa, (r) [...].

263b (l) Ston pa bo dhi rā dza (r) rje btsun Sha ra rab 'byams pa.

264a (l) Grub thob gTsang smyon pa; (r) bKra shis tshe rings ma.

9. 1545. The Life and the Songs of sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1475–1530). Printed in the Lan 'de[/dhe] valley. *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa sprul sku nam mkha' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa dgos 'dod kun 'byung nor bu'i 'phreng ba* (NGMPP Reel L 18/14), and *Śākya dge slong nam mkha' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i mgur 'bum*: the *mgur 'bum* has been reproduced in *Rare dKar bgyud pa Texts from Himachal Pradesh. A collection of biographical works and philosophical treatises. Reproduced from prints from ancient western Tibetan blocks by Urgyan Dorje*, New Delhi, 1976, pp. 181–271.

These works were realized by the scribe gTsang pa bSod noms 'od zer, and by five carvers from the region of gTsang, including three which had worked at the 1540 *Mi la'i mgur 'bum* woodblocks: *m khas pa* mGon po rgyal mtshan, *dpon btsun* Pad ma and *bcu dpon* rDo rje rgyal mtshan. The latter carved the images drawn by *m khas pa* Dri med. On the printing of these two works, marked volumes Ka and Kha respectively, see Ehrhard 2000: 64, 76, and Col. no. 12 (pp. 142–7), which applies to both.

Illustrations:

Vol. Ka: 1b (l) rGyal ba rdo rje 'chang rgyal po; (r) Bram ze chen po Sa ra ha.

2a (l) Bla ma Zhang g.yu brag pa; (r) rGyal ba Yang dgon chos rje.

48a(l) sKyes mchog 'bar [= 'ba'] ra ba; (l) [...]

Vol. Kha: 1b (l) Mi la ras pa; (r) Dwags po bSod noms [rin chen].

2a (l) mKhas btsun Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan; (r) Thugs sras Nam mkha' rdo rje.

46a (l) dPal Ye shes mgon po; (r) Chos bdag bKra shis tshe rings ma.

10. 1563(?). *rje rgod tshang pa'i rnam thar rgyal thang pa bde chen rdo rjes mdzad pa la mgur chen 'gas rgyan pa*. NGMPP Reel L 211/3, 969/5–970/1, E 2518/8. The life and songs of rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje. Printed by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473–1557) at Brag dkar rta so in a water pig year (*chu mo phag gi lo*), which, however, is difficult to accept considering the life span of the master.

Colophon.: *le lha tshugs legs mkhas pa dri med pa*: “The well-shaped images [were drawn by] *m khas pa* Dri med pa”.

Illustrations:

1b (l) rJe rGod tshang pa; (r) Grub thob gtsang pa.

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Early Book Production and Printing in Bhutan*

Dorji Gyaltsen

1 Introduction

This paper presents an account of early book production and printing in Bhutan. Though nobody has done research yet, many written histories and biographies of eminent teachers suggest that mass book production has been done in Bhutan since 14th century. Many treasure discoverers such as Gu ru Chos dbang, rDo rje Gling pa and Padma gling pa were popular and thus their treasure teachings have been produced in various places in Bhutan.

From the 16th century, many *bKa' gyur* and other canonical corpuses have been produced across the country. This is confirmed by the digital library of the Shejun Agency¹ that contains books from 37 monasteries and private libraries in Bhutan. The collection contains tens of thousands of miscellaneous titles and some 28 canonical corpuses including eight *bKa' gyurs*, seven '*Bums*, six *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, three *dGongs 'dus*, and two *bKa' brgyad* collections of manuscripts. According to the evidence we have, most of them were produced between the 16th and 18th centuries although in some cases it is not known when they were created.

By the 17th century, the tradition of carving woodblocks was practised widely in the country and every major temple had started to carve woodblocks to meet its own needs. One good example for this is the collection of *dhāraṇī*. There were four woodblocks for *dhāraṇī* collections in Bhutan. Most of the temples carved woodblocks of the *Diamond Sutra* as Bhutanese used it to

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1 This is an Agency for Bhutan's Cultural Documentation and Research, founded by Dr Karma Phuntsho. I am very privileged to have had the opportunity to work for such an organization under a great scholar like him.

learn how to read. Some of the temples had also carved blocks for alphabets. Woodblocks for prayer flags and images are also common in Bhutan. Almost every village temple has them.

The traditions of printing and book production in Bhutan are generally associated with Buddhism and not so much with the archaic animistic beliefs and practices Bhutanese call Bon. Therefore, firstly, this paper presents a brief history of Buddhism in Bhutan, and then the history of book production, followed by a history of printing based on the books that were printed from the earliest woodblocks in Bhutan. These books are from the collection of digital books created by Shejun Agency from the temple archives in Bhutan, with the support of the Endangered Archive Programme of the British Library and UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council through Cambridge University.

2 Buddhism in Bhutan

According to Bhutanese historians, Buddhism was introduced in Bhutan by the Tibetan emperor Srong btsan sGam po in the 7th century. The emperor built Byams pa lHa khang in Bumthang and sKyer chu lHa khang in Paro as border and frontier taming temples while he was building Ra sa 'Phrul snang or the Jo khang temple in Lhasa. With the building of these temples, the belief in the Triple Gem, which is the principle tenet of Buddhism, was introduced in the country.²

According to Bhutanese tradition, in the 8th century, Padmasambhava visited Bumthang before he visited Tibet upon invitation of King Sindhu of Bumthang lCags mkhar. Padmasambhava gave 'refuge vows' and empowerments to the king and his subjects, making them followers of Buddhism.³ Later, Padmasambhava visited Bhutan from Tibet several times. He is said to have visited the entire country without leaving untouched any piece of land, not even the size of the imprint of a horse's hoof. He hid treasures in the earth, boulders, lakes and cliffs. Thus Padmasambhava blessed and converted the country into a hidden land.⁴ Padmasambhava also founded many meditation centres in

2 dGe 'dun Rin chen 2004, 144; Padma Tshe dbang 1994, 23; Phun tshogs dBang 'dus 2007, 59; dGe 'dun Rin chen 2008, 90; and Slob dpon gNag mdog 1986, 59. For detailed discussion, see Karma Phuntsho 2013, 77–84.

3 Dri med Gling pa n.d.; dGe 'dun Rin chen 2004, p. 140–143; and dGe 'dun Rin chen 2008, 91. For a discussion on Dri med Gling pa's identity, see Karma Phuntsho 2013, 91–101.

4 dGe 'dun Rin chen 2004, 148–151; dGe 'dun Rin chen 2008, 92; and Slob dpon gNag mdog 1986, 59.

Bhutan including sTag tshangs in Paro and Sengge rDzong in Lhuntse, where Rlangs chen dPal gyi Seng ge and Ye shes mTsho rgyal meditated respectively.⁵

Later, in the 11th Century, many treasure discoverers such as Bon po Brag tshal and Raksha Chos 'bar visited Paro and Bumthang. They revealed treasure teachings and spread the teachings.⁶ In the following centuries, other great teachers, such as Lo ras pa, Lha nang pa and Klong chen Rab 'byams (1308–1364) from both the rNying ma or old school and gSar ma or new schools also travelled to Bhutan.⁷ Some of them established monastic institutions and gave instruction so that the Buddhist doctrine spread in the country.

3 Book Culture in Bhutan

According to an oral account, the golden manuscript of the 8000 verses of *Prajñapāramitā* currently preserved at Chal temple in sTangs as a sacred relic belonged to the prince Khyi kha Ra thod, who settled in mKhan pa lJongs after his father king Khri song lDe btsan banished him from Tibet. The story goes that the prince Khyi kha Ra thod resettled in Chos 'khor valley in Bumthang towards the end of his life and the relic was placed in his personal temple. Later, the temple was gutted by fire, when the book of 8000 verses of *Prajñapāramitā* is believed to have flown away and landed on a rock in a field in Gong mkhar village in Bumthang. Then it was found by the group of people from sTangs when they were travelling to Chos 'khor and they took it to Chal temple where it is currently preserved.⁸ If this oral account has any historical basis, the culture of the book had already spread in Bhutan by the 8th century.

The treasure texts also hint that book culture existed in the country from the 8th century. According to the treasure text of Ratna Gling pa and Padma gling pa, the cycle of Vajrakīla and *Klong gsal gsang ba snying bcud* teachings were

5 Padma gling pa 1975, vol. Zha, p. 697; Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas 1976, vol. 1, 331–335; dGe 'dun Rin chen 2008, 92; Padma Tshe dbang 1994, 46; and Kun bzang Nges don Klong yangs 1976, 50. Gu ru bKra shis also recounts the story of Rlangs chen dPal gyi sengge meditated at sTag tshang in Paro (Gu ru bKra shis 1998, 170).

6 Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas 1976, vol. 1, 369–416; Kun bzang Nges don Klong yangs 1976, 134–184; and dGe 'dun Rin chen 2004, 156–162. For a list of treasure discoverers who were active in Bhutan in the 11th to 20th century, see Karma Phuntsho 2013, 152–153.

7 dGe 'dun Rin chen 2004, 163–164; Chos grags bZang po 1994, 193; mChog grub dPal 'bar 1984, f. 22r; and bSod nams Chos grub 1994, 122–123.

8 The oral history has recounted by Padma Tshe dbang in his work *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i sgron me* (1994, 40–41). For detailed information on mKhan pa lJongs and Khyi kha Ra thod, see Padma gling pa (1975, vol. Tsa, 499–511) and Karma Phuntsho (2013, 103–107).

written by Ye shes mTsho rgyal at Sengge rDzong in Lhuntse before it was hidden as treasure by Padmasambhava.⁹ *The Prophecy called Clear Mirror*, a treasure teaching of Dri med Gling pa, narrates a story of how the translator lDan mang rTse mang wrote all the teachings of *rDzogs chen gsal ba'i me long* including the prophecy under the command of Padmasambhava in the lCags mkhar palace at Bumthang.¹⁰ Some Bhutanese historians even believe that the translator lDan mang rTse mang invented the Bhutanese script, during that time, which is currently used as the official script of Bhutan.¹¹ These treasure texts and hagiographies, however, appeared only from the 12th century, nearly four centuries after the events they report. Although later reports and ancient oral accounts indicate that the production and use of books had spread by the 8th century, we do not have strong textual evidence from that time showing that book culture was thriving then.

By the 12th century, book culture was widespread in Bhutan. As I mentioned earlier, many treasure discoverers (*gter ston*) such as Bon po Brag tshal, Raksha Chos 'bar, Nyang ral Nyi ma 'Od zer (1124–1192) and Ku sa sMan pa visited Bhutan and discovered treasure teachings from Paro and Bumthang.¹² In 1194 AD, gZi brjid dPal (1164–1224), a master from 'Bri gung bKa' rgyud order who was popularly known as Lha nang pa after he founded a monastery at Lha nang in Tibet, visited Bhutan and settled at Cal kha in Paro.¹³ While he was at Cal kha, he gave teachings on *Chakrasaṃvara* to more than 1700 students.¹⁴ He also composed many commentaries at Cal kha including *bSlab gsum lam gyi them skas rin po che'i bang mdzod* which is his only surviving work.¹⁵ The biog-

9 Ratna Gling pa (1984–1985, vol. 1, p. 89): *Kho mo bdag 'dra ye shes mtsho rgyal gyis: mon kha ne ring seng ge rdzong gsum du: snying po'i yang zhun dpe tshar gsum du bkod: gnam skas can dang dang lung khra mo'i brag: padma'i rdzong gsang gsum du gter du sbas: de rnams nang nas gser gyi yang zhun ltar: kho mo'i thugs bcud 'di nyid man re skan*. Padma gling pa (1975, vol. Ca, p. 9.) Most of the *vajrakīla* teachings, including *bKa' ma* texts, agree that Ye shes mTsho rgyal meditated on *Vajrakīla* at Seng ge rDzong.

10 Dri med Gling pa n.d., f. 2v.

11 Slob dpon gNag mdog 1986, 29.

12 Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas 1976, vol. 1, 369–416; Kun bzang Nges don Klong yangs 1976, 134–184; and dGe 'dun Rin chen 2004, 156–62. Except Nyang ral Nyi ma 'Od zer, the exact date of when they appeared is not known but dGe 'dun Rin chen dates them to the 1st and 2nd cycle of Rab 'byung.

13 Jana Vajra 2004, 119–121; Padma Tshe dbang 1994, 73; and Karma Phuntsho 2013, 139. Karma Phuntsho and Padma Tshe dbang noted Lha nang pa visited Bhutan in 1193–4 respectively.

14 Padma Tshe dbang 1994, 73: *Cal khar bzhugs dus mkhan po gzad pa sogs ri la byon lhag tshogs pa stong bdun brgya nyer lnga'i tshul shing bzhes/ra li/bde mchog/'dus brgyad/'jigs byed/phyag chen lnga ldan/na ro chos drug sogs bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa dar bar mdzad/*

15 Jana vajra 2004, 133: *sPyal dkar bka' bstan bcos thams cad kyi snying po bslab gsum lam gyi them skas rin po che'i bang mdzod le'u nyi shu pa/rigs can gsum la thun mong du dgongs*

raphy mentions a patron of his from Cang who offered him *bka' rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum* which refers to the 100,000 verses, 20,000 verses and 8000 verses of *Prajnapāramitā* teachings.¹⁶ The biography also mentions that he introduced the tradition of reading and writing *Dharma* books at Cal kha.¹⁷

At the same time, a lady called 'Od gsal 'bum and her son bSod nams Grags pa, who were disciples of Zhang g.Yu brag pa (1123–1193), visited Bhutan and founded sPang ka gShong temple in Dbang 'dus pho brang as prophesied by their teacher. Sometime later, Zhang g.Yu brag pa also visited sPang ka gShong through eastern Bhutan upon the invitation of 'Od gsal 'bum and bSod nams Grags pa. On the way, he is said to have composed a eulogy to sPang ka gShong from a place called bSam gtan sgang. He stayed at sPang ka gShong for six months, giving empowerments and teachings to the disciples, before he left for Gung thang mchod pa in Tibet.¹⁸

Later, in the 13th century, Lo ras pa (1187–1250), a master of upper 'Brug pa bKa' rgyud tradition, also visited Bumthang and founded Thar pa gling temple.¹⁹ When he was at Bumthang he had more than 2800 monk students.²⁰ At

nas jo sras lho brag pas zhus nas mdzad/ sngags mtshan nyid thams cad kyi don gsal bar bya ba'i phyir/ ston 'jam gyis zhus nas ye shes sgron ma mdzad/ bye 'u stod nag mas 'bu mang po zos pa zgigs nas bsam mi khyab bcu pa mdzad/ gzhan yang rigs gsum mgon po'i bstod pa la sogs pa mang du mdzad nas gda'.

- 16 Jana vajra 2004, 133: *gZhan yang spyal ka na bzhugs pa'i dus su/ rkyang po bas rgya ba'i slob dpon du bltas nas/ gcung po byang chub dpal bkyigs pa'i dus su/ nga 'dir bsad pa la khyed mi dges na/ gzhan du phyin pas chog rgya rkyang po grang chung gsum la nye ring med/ btsun pa de 'khyig na yang 'khyigs gsungs nas gshegs par byung bas/ rkyang po bas gcung po spyang sngar phul/ ja ting chen po byas/ bka' rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum dang / rta bzang po gcig la sogs pa la rgyal chen po mdzad/ de'i dus na rkyang po bas zhabs spyi bor blangs te/ rgya ba dang khyad med par mdzad skad.* It is not clear what *rgyal chen po* meant. But I think it probably could be *'bul ba rgya chen po*. However, it is clear that a person from Cang had done something with *bka' rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum*.
- 17 Jana Vajra 2004, 121: *Sa phyogs de na mi shi'i dge rtsa dud 'gro bsad nas byed pa de rgyun bcad nas/ bla ma'i zhabs tog dge 'dun gyi snyen bkur/ chos kyi 'bri klog bla ma la sems bskyed dang dbang bskur zhu ba'i srol gtod do/ .*
- 18 According to Sangs rgyas rDo rje, the story is written in the biography of Dakini 'Od gsal 'bum which is currently preserved at sPangs ka gShong dGon pa as a sacred relic. See Sangs rgyas rDo rje 1999, 196–197.
- 19 sNa tshogs Rang grol 1993, 375–76; and Karma Phuntsho 2013, 145–146. The exact date of his visit to Bhutan is not known.
- 20 sNa tshogs Rang grol 1993, 368: *De nas lho mon la byon/ mon bum thang du phyags phebs pa'i dus su grwa pa nyis stong brgyad brgya tsam 'tshogs/ mtha' 'khob chos ma dar ba'i sems can dud 'gro dang 'dra ba namas la las rgyu 'bras/ skyabs 'gro sems bskyed/ bsnyen gnas ma Ni sdig spong dge bsgrub kyi dam bca' sogs dkar po'i las 'grel gzhaq cing sems can mang po smin grol mdzad/.*

the same time, Pha jo 'Brug sgom Zhig po arrived in western Bhutan and gave teachings of *Ma ni bka' 'bum* and *Mahāmudrā*²¹ at rDo gdan na in Thimphu probably based on the books given to him by his teacher Dharma Sengge (1178–1237) when he left Tibet for Bhutan.²² He was also a treasure discoverer and had discovered treasure teachings of the deity Hayagriva.²³ So, he must have taught this treasure text too.

In 1289 AD, a master called bDe mchog (1179–1265), who was a son of lHa nang pa, visited Bumthang and founded Sum 'phrang temple.²⁴ He was a yogi following the Vajrakīlaya practice and the text on Vajrakīlaya, which local people believe was written by him, is still preserved in Sum 'phrang temple as sacred relic.²⁵ So, all these accounts prove that the book culture was widespread in Bhutan from the 12th century.

According to a treasure text of Ratna Gling pa, a previous incarnation of Ratna Gling pa was born in Bumthang and became an expert in *tantra*. He is said to have become disciple of treasure discoverer rGya zhang Khrom pa. His next incarnation was also born in Chos 'khor village of Bumthang and was said to have taught *dharma* such as recitation of *Ma ni* and other prayers in his homeland.²⁶ The chronicled history of rNying ma School by Gu ru bKra shis suggests rGya zhang Khrom pa might have appeared one generation earlier

21 Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin n.d., f. 57r.

22 Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin n.d., ff. 17r–21; Karma Phuntsho 2013, 142–145; dGe 'dun Rin chen 2004, 207–217; and Padma Tshe dbang 1994, 80–87. Karma Phuntsho and dGe 'dun Rin chen noted that Pha jo's date as 1184–1251 and arrived in Bhutan in 1222. While Padma Tshe dbang noted Pha jo's date as 1179–1246 and arrived in Bhutan in 1218.

23 Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin n.d., f. 16v.

24 gSang sngags 1983, 107; and Karma Phuntsho 2013, 140–141. sMyos ston bDe mchog alias 'Khrul zhig Chos rje settled in Bhutan in the year of 1228.

25 The text is a commentary on the root *tantra* of *vajrakīlaya* called *rDo rje phur pa gsang ba'i rgyud*. It seems that the text was composed by sMyos ston bDe mchog himself because the title of the text reads as *'dPal gsang rgyud kyi 'grel pa sMyos ston bdag gi khyad chos lags*, which means the text is a special feature of sMyos ston bDe mchog. The text is not found anywhere else even in the collection of *vajrakīlaya* teachings published by Bod kyi shes rig zhib 'jug khang in Khrengtu'u, China.

26 Ratna Gling pa n.d., f. 5v: *De nas bum thang byams pa gling du pha rgyal po dar dang: ma sri thar lcams kyi bur skyes te: tshul khrims rdo rje zhes bya ba lo bcu gsum nas sngags la mkhas par 'gyur ro: snubs sangs rgyas ye shes skye ba rgya zhang khrom gyis man ngag mang du byin nas: nus pa dang ldan pa la jo bo lha dbang bya ba mngon gyis las dbang gis zas kyis sbyor bas nyer gcig la tshe'i dus byas nas: slar yang bum thang chos 'khor du pha sangs rgyas bstan grags: ma ma gcig bzang rgyal ma'i bur skyes te: lo brgyad la rta mgrin lha dgu'i zhal mthong: mngon shes mang du shar nas: thams cad kyi byin rlabs mngon shes can du grags: sems can gyi srog skyob pa dang: ma Ni thun bskul sogs 'gro don cher bskul kyang:*

than *Mi la ras pa* (1052–1135).²⁷ It shows that the book culture was existent in Bhutan, perhaps earlier than the 11th century.

4 Printing Culture in Bhutan

As we discussed earlier, treasure teachings of many *gter ston* have flourished in Bhutan throughout the second millennium. Most of the treasure teachings contain illustrations and diagrams for protection often used as amulets, and *za yig* or mantra for eating.²⁸ So we can assume that there was widespread custom of using amulets and *za yig* during those times in the society. The autobiography of Padma gling pa also indicates that the tradition of erecting prayer flags was existent during the time of Padma gling pa. It writes that when Padma gling pa was in his youth, he would show interest in religious activities such as building temples, writing scripts, and erecting prayer flags etc.²⁹ Through such customs, we can infer that there was probably a printing system to mass produce those images in order to meet the public demand. Even today we find piles of blocks of illustrations and diagrams to be used as amulets or mandala, and images of mantras for prayer flags in many temples.

Although we do not have record of a full printing technology being in use in Bhutan before the 15th century, a seal carved on a piece of wood and kept as a sacred relic is found in mKho chung temple³⁰ in Lhuntse. On the seal, the word Padma gling pa is engraved and so the people of mKho chung believe that the seal belonged to Padma gling pa. If the seal belonged to Padma gling pa, then we can confirm that the art of wood carving existed since the 15th century. However, printing technology was certainly in use in many parts of the country by the end of the 15th century. To substantiate this, I shall present four texts printed from wood blocks in Bhutan.

rgya nag tu skyes dus kyis rten 'brel nyes pas: yang nyer gcig la tshe'i dus byas rtags khyad par can yang byung bar 'gyur ro:

27 Gu ru bKra shis n.d., 369.

28 Padma gling pa 1974, vol. Kha, p. 473; and Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas 1976, vol. 67, pp. 183–654.

29 Padma gling pa n.d.1, f. 27.

30 It was founded by Padma gling pa's son Kun dga' dBang po around 1530. Photograph of the seal was given in the Sangs rgyas rDo rje's work. See Sangay Dorji 2012, p. 39.

5 Biography and Works of 'Ba' ra ba

The first woodblocks I shall present are the woodblocks for the autobiography and spiritual songs of 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dPal bzang (1310–1391). I do not have the text printed from the blocks, but the biography of Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan confirms that a set of woodblocks for the biography and the spiritual songs of 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dPal bzang were carved at Paro 'Brang rgyas kha in Bhutan.³¹

The biography says:

Then, when autumn arrived, [Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan] travelled to 'Brang rgyas kha. While, the woodblocks for the biography and spiritual songs of the precious Supreme Being ['Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dPal bzang] were being carved, due to the cruelty of evil spirits, a big earthquake hit the region. Although the lama's residence was in poor shape, the lord was sitting in meditation in the posture of yogic gaze and because of his compassion there were no casualties among either humans or cattle. At that time, all the patrons marvelled and said: "All good mansions of others have collapsed and killed many people and cattle, but in the lama's residence, which is in poor shape, there are no casualties of either humans or cattle. This must be due to the blessings of the bKa' brgyud hierarchs, the compassion of the lord himself and the power of *dākinī* and *dharma* protectors." Then, after completion of the woodblocks, [Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan] returned to 'Ba' ra with the woodblocks. When they arrived, resident priests of the establishment pleased him with great offerings and honour. He entered in to a strict retreat in 'Bar chung byang.³²

31 'Brang rgyas dGon pa was founded by rGyal mtshan dPal bzang perhaps in the year 1354. Though none of following sources mention the date of rGyal mtshan dPal bzang's visit of Bhutan and its foundation, the autobiography of rGyal mtshan dPal bzang merely mentions (211) that his first visit to Bhutan occurred in the same year as the assassination of rGyal ba bZang po, the 20th ruler of Sa skya. According to rTa tshag Tshe dbang rGyal mtshan (1994, 379) and Blo bzang rGya mtsho (1997, 322–333), rGyal ba bZang po was assassinated around 1352. rGyal mtshan dPal bzang spent about a month in Paro during his first visit and then returned to Tibet. But he again visited Paro in the next year. During that time he laid the foundation of 'Brang rgyas dGon pa at the behest of his patrons Khro rgyal rDo rje. For more details see Padma Tshe dbang (1994), pp. 91–95 and Karma Phuntsho (2013), pp. 182–185.

32 *Chos kyi Grags pa* (n.d), ff. 18v–19r: *De nas nam zla ston du gyur pa dang / 'brang rgyas khar phebs/ skyes mchog rin po che'i nam thar mgur 'bum dang bcas pa'i par bzhengs pa'i dus su/ nag phyogs kyi mi ma yin nam kyi gdug rsub las lung pa der sa g.yos chen po byung*

Another version of Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan's biography discussed by Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2000: 55–65) also recounts the event.³³ Both the biographies clearly mention that Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan initiated carving the woodblocks for the biography and spiritual songs of rGyal mtshan dPal bzang at Paro 'Brang rgyas kha. But no detailed information is given about when it was carved and how many people were involved.

Nevertheless, the account confirms that the woodblocks were carved towards the end of 15th century. According to the biographies, Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan (1475–1530) entered into retreat for nine months when he was around 15 years old. While he was in retreat, he heard the news that his parents had arranged a bride for him. Because of that he ran away from the retreat to Jag and then to Zab phu. He spent a month at Zab phu receiving teachings from Kun dga' Nyi ma (1412–1509). By then, followers from 'Ba' ra reached there and requested him to return to 'Ba' ra. Therefore he had to return, but he refused to go to 'Ba' ra and stayed at Chab phu until the marriage arrangement was cancelled. He went to 'Ba' ra after the father of the girl agreed to cancel the marriage with compensation. Then, he built a small hut at 'Bar chung rDo rje brag and entered into strict retreat. While he was in retreat, his father passed away in Bhutan. Thus, he visited Bhutan first time for his father's funeral. After

bas/ bla brang zoms par yod 'dug na'ang / rje 'di nyid thugs dam ting nge 'dzin gyi ngang nas spyan lta stangs su bzhugs 'dug cing / de lta bu'i thugs rjes mi phyugs gang la'ang gnod pa med par gyur/ de'i tshe sbyin bdag rnams na re/ mi gzhan ma rnams kyi mkhar bzang po tsho 'gyel/ mi phyugs thams cad 'chi lugs la/ bla brang zoms po 'dir mi nor gang la'ang skyon med pa 'di/ bka' brgyud gong ma dang / rje rang gi thugs rje/ mkha' 'gro chos skyong gi nus mthu yin zer kun ngo mtshar du byed do/ de nas par rnams legs par grub nas/ par gdan drangs 'ba' rar phebs pa'i tshe/ gzhi bzhugs sgom chen rnams kyis rnyed pa dang bkur sti rgya chen pos mnyes par mdzad cing / 'bar chung byang du sku mtshams shin tu dam pa la bzhugs/.

- 33 Kunga Peljor 1970, 450–452: *De nas skyes mchog rin po che'i rnam thar mgur 'bum sogs par du bsgrubs/ lan cig 'brang rgyas kyi bla brang de zoms po yod rtsor bzhugs pa'i dus/ sa g.yos shin du che ba cig byung / klungs tshor/ mi phyugs mang po la god che ba byung na'ang / rje nyid/ rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin la/ g.yo ba med pa'i byin brlabs kyis/ gzims khang de nyid shin tu groms pa yod kyang / nyim pa gang yang ma byung bas/ sbyin bdag rnams kyang bsnyen bkur rgya chen po khur te byung nas/ mda' mtshor pe'u bzang po tsho yang zhig nas nyes pa chen po byung 'dug pa la/ 'dir gzims khang thoms sho la nyes gyong gang yang med pa 'di/ la la dkon mchog gi bka' drin yin zer/ la la tshe ring mas bskyabs pa yin zer/ la la rin po che'i byin brlabs yin zer/ rje nyid kyi dgongs pa la kha rtsang gin 'di dang / da lan gyi sa g.yos 'di par bzhengs 'di'i rmgur yin par 'dug/ god kha mi yong ba de dkon mchog gi bka' drin yin snyam pa byung gsung / de nas par bzhengs rnams grub/ lho pa rnams la chos dang / spyi dpon so so la zang zing gi gnang sbyin gyis tshim par mdzad/ lo bcu gnyis kyi bar du 'khrug pa mi 'ong ba'i dam bca' bskyar lcag dang gan rgya bzhes/.*

completing the funeral, he returned to Tibet, making a promise to visit Bhutan again in three years. He also made people swear an oath not to cause conflict for three years. Later he received a messenger who was sent by patrons from Paro to invite him. The messenger reported to him that people of Paro were about to break out in conflict. Thus he visited Bhutan a second time and at this time, he initiated the carving of the blocks.³⁴

From the above accounts, his father seems to have passed away in the year 1493 when he was around 17 years old and the woodblocks seem to have been carved in the year 1496 when he was at the age of 21. If this calculation is correct, then the woodblocks would be the earliest of the four sets of woodblocks discussed in this paper. Unfortunately, we do not have a single page of the text printed from the woodblocks, even at 'Brang rgyas kha where the blocks were created.

As discussed earlier, the woodblocks were taken to 'Ba' ra in Tibet immediately after the carving was completed.³⁵ When Nam mkha' rDo rje was initiating the carving of the blocks for the collected works of 'Ba' ra ba at rDzong dkar in Tibet, in the year 1540 (the colophon is given in Ehrhard 2000, 130–140), the block prints printed from the blocks of 'Brang rgyas kha were used as an exemplar for the autobiography and spiritual songs. The colophon of the autobiography and spiritual songs contained in the collected works of 'Ba' ra ba printed from the blocks of rDzong dkar says the following:

Up to this point is the biography and spiritual songs
Of the accomplished master 'Ba ra ba rGyal mtshan dPal bzang,
According to the inexhaustible prints made
By the reincarnate master Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan.
Except for [differences in] small portions of spellings and grammar
In its upper part, the exemplar is produced as it is
By the monk holding three vows, Nam mkha' rDo rje
In the year of Mouse in mNga' ris rDzong dkar.³⁶

34 See Chos rgyal Lhun grub (1970, 615–618) for the information about carving the blocks.

35 Chos kyi Grags pa n.d., f. 19r: *De nas par rnams legs par grub nas/ par gdan drangs 'ba' rar phebs pa'i tshe/ gzhi bzhugs sgom chen rnams kyis rnyed pa dang bkur sti rgya chen pos mnyes par mdzad cing / 'bar chung byang du sku mtshams shin tu dam pa la bzhugs/.*

36 Namkha Dorji n.d., f. 193r: *'Di yan grub pa'i skyes mchog 'ba' ra ba/ /rgyal mtshan dpal bzang dag gi nram mgur ni/ /sprul pa'i sku mchog nam mkha' rgyal mtshan gyis/ /mi zad par du spel bar mdzad bzhin la/ /stod phyogs phyi mo dang gtugs brda phrad kyi/ /cha shas phra mo ma gtogs ji lta bar/ /sum ldan dge slong nam mkha' rdo rje yis/ /byi lo mnga' ris rdzong dkar par du sgrubs/.*

According to the colophon, the woodblocks of 'Brang rgyas kha were only for the autobiography and spiritual songs. In the woodblocks of rDzong dkar, three more titles were added such as the secret biography, a guidebook for practicing dharma and questions and answers. However, it is not known whether any of the block prints and blocks of 'Brang rgyas kha still exist.

6 Biography and Collected Writings of Padma gling pa

The second set of woodblocks for our study is that of the woodblocks of the autobiography and collected writings of Padma gling pa. These were preserved at Kun bzang Brag until the Division of Conservation under the Department of Culture brought it to Thimphu for repair and fumigation. As the woodblocks have been badly damaged by insects, it is unlikely that any copy can be printed from them now.

Nonetheless, the block prints of the autobiography and collected writings of Padma gling pa printed from the woodblocks mentioned above were popular in Bhutan and almost all temples that have a library have a copy. Some temples such as Dung dkar sNag tshang have more than 10 copies printed from these woodblocks. Karma Phuntsho has written about the woodblocks as follows:

Although the autobiography itself does not have any colophon or record to help us date exactly when the woodblocks were carved, we know from records in other volumes of the same collection that the blocks were carved for the entire set of Padma gling pa's writings (*Pad gling bka' 'bum*) under the supervision of Zla ba rGyal mtshan. Locals in the area believe that the woodblocks or at least some of them were personally carved by Padma gling pa himself. So, they treasure them as cultural relics. Although it is very unlikely that the blocks for the biography were carved in Padma gling pa's lifetime, there is very little doubt that they were produced in the generation after him.³⁷

As Karma Phuntsho mentions, although the autobiography does not have a colophon, there is no doubt that it was carved together with the woodblocks for the collected writings of Padma gling pa. To prove this, I have examined the block prints printed from the two blocks. As a result, I found that there are several different layouts and calligraphical styles used in both the *Pad gling bka' 'bum* and the autobiography. For example, some blockprints have the

37 Karma Phuntsho 2013, vi–vii.

layout, which has thin and double lines on the margins and others have the layout with a bold line on the margins and a thin line on top and at the bottom of the text as a border. Both types of layout are used in the block prints of the *Pad gling bka' 'bum* and the autobiography. Calligraphical styles in the block prints with these different layouts are also exactly same. It is thus highly plausible that the *Pad gling bka' 'bum* and the autobiography were carved by the same scribes and carvers.

The woodblocks of the collected writings of Padma gling pa were carved at Kun bzang brag in Bhutan under the supervision of Thugs sras Zla ba rGyal mtshan (1499–1586) who was a prominent son of Padma gling pa. The colophon has the following:

The marvellous supreme Bodhisattva Zla ba,
Who is the embodiment of all Buddhas of three times,
Supreme guide to liberation who appeared for the sake of sentient beings,
Foremost representative of two treasure discoverers,
The supreme precious son of Padma gling pa,

The emanation of Avalokiteshvara, a pride of the world,
The true embodiment of glorious Hayagriva, the lord of power,
And supreme refuge of all gods and men in the world
Created the excellent woodblocks in the supreme hermitage Kun bzang
brag

As an inexhaustible treasury for spreading dharma,
In order to return the kindness and fulfil the wish of supreme father
Padma gling pa,
And in order to benefit the Buddha's teachings and sentient beings.³⁸

38 Padma gling pa n.d.2, sect. pha, f. 13: *Kyai/ dus gsum sangs rgyas kun gyi ngo bo nyid/ /gro ba'i don byon thar pa'i lam ston mchog /gter ston rin chen rnam gnyis rgyal tshab rje/ /pad gling dngos kyi sras mchog rin po che/ /thugs rje chen po'i rnam sprul 'gro ba'i dpal/ /dpal chen rta mgrin sku dngos dbang gi rgyal/ /'jig rten lha mi kun gyi skyabs gnas mchog /ngo 'tshar mchog gi rgyal sras zla ba yis/ /yab kyi rgyal po pha mchog pad gling gi /sku drin bsabs cing thugs dgongs rdzogs phyir dang / /sangs rgyas bstan dang 'gro la phan phyir du/ /chos sbyin mi zad gter chen par mchog 'di/ /sgrub pa'i gnas mchog kun bzang brag tu bsgrubs/ /de yi mthu dang bden pa'i byin brlabs kyis/ /bdud rigs stongs shing dgra gegs kun zhi nas/ /rgyal ba'i bstan pa yun du gnas gyur cig /.*

The dedication prayer for carvers and scribes etc. is also written right before the above colophon:

Through the merit of producing the blocks for the collected writings
 By incomparable Zla ba, the great son of the Victorious One
 May he fulfil all the wishes in the present life
 And live long and his enlightened activities flourish.

May the male and female disciples and patrons from all the directions,
 Who have engaged with their body, speech and mind
 And given food and wealth for carving the blocks,
 Fully obtain enlightenment just like Padma gling pa

The scribes, carvers, carpenters and the task-bearers,
 The supervisors and those who went through difficulties of body and
 speech,
 And those who spent the resources of wealth, articles for food,
 May they fully obtain the good qualities of the Buddha.³⁹

Despite several stanzas of colophon and dedication prayers, the colophon does not mention the names of the carvers, scribes or the year of carving, making it impossible for us to exactly date it. Yet, it is possible that the production of the woodblocks happened immediately after Padma gling pa passed away as it was undertaken as a project of *dgongs rdzogs* which could imply a funerary rite. If that were the case, the production may be dated to the 1520s although we can confirm this only through further research.

However, it is clear that there are two different versions of the woodblocks of *Pad gling bka' 'bum* which were produced in separate print editions. The version of the blocks for *Pad gling bka' 'bum*, which I consider to be later, has image illustrations on the side panel of Samantabhadra, Amitābha, Śākyamuni, Padmasambhava, Padma gling pa and Zla ba rGyal mtshan in the first three folios. A section of dedication prayer is also added in the end which is not

39 Padma gling pa n.d., sec, pha. ff. 12v–13r: *rGyal sras chen po mtshungs med zla ba yis/ /gsung 'bum par du bsgrubs pa'i yon tan gyis/ /tshé 'dir dgos pa'i don kun 'grub pa dang / /sku tshé brtan zhing 'phrin las rgyas par shog /phyogs med bu slob yon mchod pho mo yis/ /par 'di'i phyir du lus ngag yid gsum dang / /zas nor longs spyod bzang ngan 'brel tshad mams/ /pad gling khyed dang dbyer med sangs rgyas shog /yig mkhan brkos mkhan shing zo las byed rigs/ /lus ngag dka' ba spyad dang do dam mkhan/ /nor dang dngos po za ma'i rgyu song mams/ /sangs rgyas yon tan rab tu rdzogs par shog/ /.*

contained in the other version. Except for these additions, the main body of the two block prints is exactly the same, including the calligraphical styles and layouts. In the dedication, there are some lines that appear to be have been composed by Zla ba rGyal mtshan.⁴⁰ These indicate that the additions may have been made later as part of efforts at improving an earlier version. Thus, the version without these additions, which I consider the earlier version, was perhaps created soon after Padma gling pa's death and the later version with improvements produced at least some years after that but in the life of Zla ba rGyal mtshan.

7 Autobiography and Collected Works of Blo gros Rab yangs

The 3rd set of woodblocks for our study is that of the woodblocks of the autobiography and writings of Blo gros Rab yangs. We have two block prints of the autobiography and writings of Blo gros Rab yangs: one from dGra med rtse and another from sPyi zhing dGon pa, but both of them are printed from the same blocks. These are the only text of Blo gros Rab yangs' works we have found while we were digitizing more than 34 archives of monasteries and private libraries across the country. Blo gros Rab yangs aka sKal ldan Rab yangs⁴¹ (1474–1570?) was the founder of main Sa skya monastery in Bhutan, sPyi zhing bSam gtan Chos gling,⁴² located in the southeast of Thimphu. According to the

40 See Padma gling pa n.d.2 and Padma gling pa n.d.3.

41 He was a disciple of numerous well-known Sa skya scholars such as Go rams pa (1429–1489), dBang phyug Grub pa (1443-?) and Sangs rgyas Rin chen (1450–1524). He served as the 4th abbot of rTa nag Thub bstan rNam rgyal in 1521 to 1531 as successor of 3rd abbot Chos grags rGya mtsho. rTa nag Thub bstan rNam rgyal was founded by Go rams pa in 1474. See Blo gros Rab yangs n.d.1; Blo gros Rab yangs n.d.2; Blo gros Rab yangs n.d.3; 'Jam dbyangs Blo gter dBang po 2007, vol. 34, 127; Mus po 2002, 76; and Mi pham Ngag gi dBang phyug n.d., 13.

42 dGe 'dun Rin chen noted that sPyi zhing bSam gtan chos gling was founded in the 8th Rab 'byung cycle by a disciple of Ngor chen Kun dga' bZang po (1382–1456) named Phrin las Rab yangs. See dGe 'dun Rin chen (2004, 200–201). However, 'Phrin las Rab yangs is not found in any other sources. Instead of Phrin las Rab yangs, Blo gros Rab yangs is mentioned in the *bKa' 'gyur* catalogue and the prayers to the lineage holders of Lam 'bras teachings of sPyi zhing temple. See Lhag bsam bTan pa n.d., f. 5: *Gangs chen shAkya'i bstan 'dzin kun gyi mchog /lha babs 'khon rigs 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi gdung / /sa skya'i rje btsun gong ma lnga yi bstan/ /bla nas blar spel dpal ldan e wang pa/ /rgyal bas lung bstan dge slong rdo rje 'chang / /gro kun dga' ba'i 'phrin las bzang po'i rgyun/ /lho phyogs nags ma'i gling 'dir rgyas mdzad pa/ /pad+ma'i zlos gar DA ki'i dbang phyug gang / /shes bya'i blo gros mkha' ltar yangs pa de/ /bsam bzhin sprul pa'i sku ru yang byon pa/ /gsar rnying bstan pa*

colophon of his writings, the woodblocks of the block prints were carved at sPyi zhing temple. The colophon says:

Emā ho! Homage to guru, *yi dam* and *ḍākinī*.

What follows is the account of carving the woodblock for
The extensive and brief biographies of outer, inner and secret life,
Spiritual songs and praises of the eminent reincarnate Blo gros Rab yangs,
Who is rebirth of great translator rGyal ba mChog dbyangs,
The speech emanation of great deity Avalokiteśvara.

In the centre of deep hidden southern slopes,
Is this valley called Wang region,
Where varieties of trees and cereals grow
And where many earthly pleasures abound because ten virtues are
present.
All patrons who live in the valley,
Have great faith and interest in *dharma*.

It is victorious from enemies because wealth and people abounds.
In the supreme place called sPyi zhing kha,
Which is surrounded by such patrons,
A place prophesied by the enlightened ancestors
And blessed by noble scholars and meditators,
The supreme incarnate figure Nam mkha' rGyal mtshan
And other great disciples have provided limitless resources.

'dzin pa'i dbang po yis/ /spyi sgos bstan dang mi zad 'gro ba 'dir/ /phan bde nyin mor byed la thugs bskyed nas/ /gtsug lag rten gsum sngar gyi nyams gso dang / /gsar bzhengs du mas tshogs gnyis gong du spel/ /Tshul khriims rNam rgyal (n.d), f. 3: Gang na blo gros rab yangs sprul pa'i sku/ /lung rtogs yon tan kun ldan chos kyi rje/ /mnyam med ngag dbang bstan 'dzin dbang po yis/ /sa lam rim pa mangs po mngon bgrod kyang / /da dung tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho bsgrub la brtson/ /bdag gzhan dge tshogs rgya mtshor spel ba'i phyir/ /rgyal gsung bod du 'gyur ro cog ma lus/ /'dir yang dkar 'jam shog bu'i ngos yangs por/ /thon m'i yi ge'i gzugs su rdzogs par bzhengs/ / and bSod nams rGyal mtshan (ed) n.d., f. 6: sKu gsum mngon gyur o rgyan rin po che/ /nyams rtogs mthar phyin rgyal ba mchog dbyangs zhabs/ /mkha' gro'i rjes bzung skal ldan rab yangs la/ /gsol ba =, Blo gros Rab yangs is mentioned even in the other sources such as biographies of Lam 'bras lineage teachers. See 'Jam dbyangs Blo gter dBang po (ed) 2007, vol. 034, 035, and 037.

The youngest disciple bsTan pa Rab gsal⁴³
 And supreme heart son Thar pa'i rGyal mtshan,⁴⁴
 Along with all the *vajra* brothers and sisters who live here,
 Offered their efforts of body, speech and mind for this work.

All faithful and wealthy patrons
 Spent their valuable things for this work without any hesitation
 To fulfil the wishes of supreme incarnate figure
 And to gain the essence of illusive wealth.⁴⁵

The colophon also provides the names of people involved in the project. Following are excerpts from the colophon which contain the names of scribes, carvers and editors.

The scribe is the learned Nam mkha' bSam grub
 From the supreme place called dPal ri,
 The editors are the spiritual master
 'Od zer rGyal mtshan from g'Tsang rong Byams chen,
 And the great accomplished one Blo gros rGya mtsho,
 From rTa nag of the upper g'Tsang.
 The one who did the carving
 Is the learned dPal ldan mChog grub from mNga' ris,

43 He seems to be main supervisor for carving the blocks, because among many disciples mentioned in the above colophon, only his name is mentioned in the dedication prayer. See Blo gros Rab yangs n.d.4, f. 64v: *Chos med ban chung bsTan pa Rab gsal la/ /blo gtad bcol sa gzhan ni su la'ang med/ /bdag dang bdag la ltos pa'i sems can rnams/ /yang dag sangs rgyas sa la sbyar du gsol/ /*.

44 He is mentioned in the colophon of the secret biography as *skul ba po*. See Blo gros Rab yangs n.d.3, f. 54r.

45 Blo gros Rab yangs n.d.4, f. 162b: *E ma hoH bla ma yi dam mkha' 'gro gsum la gus pas phyag 'tshal lo/ /lha mchog thugs rje chen po'i gsung sprul mchog/lo chen rgyal ba mchog dbyangs skye ba'i mtha'/ /sprul pa'i skyes mchog blo gros rab yangs kyi/ /phyi nang gsang gsum rnam thar rgyas bsdu dang / /mgur 'bum dang ni bstod pa la sogs pa/ /mi zad par du bzhangs tshul 'di ltar ro/ /lho phyogs lho rong sbas yul zab mo'i dbus/ /wang gi yul zhes grags pa'i lung pa 'di/ /ljon shing dang ni 'bru sna sna tshogs skye/ /dge bcu tshang bas 'dod yon mang du 'dzom/ /yul der gnas pa'i yon bdag thams cad ni/ /dad pa che zhing chos kyi phyogs la mos/ /mi nor 'dzom pas phas rgol dgra las rgyal/ /de lta'i yon bdag kun gyi bskor ba'i gnas/ /rgyal ba gong ma rnams kyi lung bstan zhing / /mkhas grub dam pa rnams kyi byin brlabs pa'i/ /spyi zhing kha zhes grags pa'i gnas mchog tu/ /sprul pa'i skyes mchog namakha' rgyal mtshan sogs/ /bu chen rnams kyi mthun rkyen tshad med bsgrubs/ /*.

Who is equal to celestial craftsman Viśvakarmā.
 Among others who did the carving
 Are wise and intelligent Rang grol dPal 'bar
 From Dar rgyas Chos gling in dBus
 And bSam gtan bZang po from Gur yang of upper gTsang,
 Their legacy is clear in the individual's works.⁴⁶

Looking at the colophon, all the people who were involved in this work were Tibetan and especially, most of them were from gTsang. rTa nag is north of the dPal khud Lake and was closely connected to Gung thang, dPal ri is a variant of Sri ri alias rTsib ri. This may suggest that the art of wood carving in Bhutan is linked to the printing tradition in the gTsang region, perhaps even to some of the schools of craftsmanship that were active at the time of gTsang smyon, who was promoting printing in Tibet.

Although no date is given in the colophon, as we observed above, it is likely that Blo gros Rab yangs was alive when the blocks were carved because nowhere in the colophon is there a mention of his death. The prayers for dedication in the colophon repeatedly dedicate their merit for fulfilling wishes of Blo gros Rab yangs, but that is not a sufficient reason to infer that he was dead by then. On the other hand, there are indications that he was alive when the blocks were carved. The block prints of biography and collected writings of Blo gros Rab yangs have a section of supplications to Blo gros Rab yangs composed by dPal ldan mChog grub, who was a main carver of the blocks. The blocks for the supplications were also carved by dPal ldan mChog grub himself as *spar phud* or offering blocks, probably in preparation of carving the blocks for the biography and writings of Blo gros Rab yangs. The colophon of the supplication says the blocks were offered as *spar phud* but does not mention to whom they were offered. According to the supplications, dPal ldan mChog grub was a disciple of Blo gros Rab yangs, so it is likely that he offered it to Blo gros Rab yangs. The supplication is composed in the biographical style and it gives an

46 Blo gros Rab yangs n.d.4, f. 164r: sPar yig pa ni gnas mchog dpal ri ba/ /namakha' bsam 'grub zhes bya'i mkhas pas bris/ /zhu dag mkhan ni gtsang rong byams chen pa/ /dge ba'i bshes gnyen 'od zer rgyal mtshan dang/ /gtsang bstod rta nag phyogs su 'khrungs pa yi/ /sgrub chen blo gros rgya mtsho gnyis kyi bgyis/ /rkos kyi 'du byed sprul pa'i bzo bo ni/ /bl shwa karma dang mtshungs mnga' ris pa/ /dpal ldan mchog grub zhes bya'i mkhas pa dang/ /gzhan yang dbus phyogs dar rgyas chos gling pa/ /rnam spyod bshes ldan rang grol dpal 'bar dang/ /gtsang bstod mgur yangs gnas su 'khrungs pa yi/ /bsam gtan bzang po rnams kiyis legs par rkos/ /rang rang phyag rjes chos mtshan so sor gsal/ /.

account of Blo gros Rab yang's life in brief but it does not mention his death, which suggests that Blo gros Rab yang was alive when the blocks were carved.

According to the secret biography of Blo gros Rab yang, which seems to have been composed seven years after he resigned from his office in the year 1531, he had met a *yogi* called Thos pa Rang grol who prophesied that he would go to Lho rong or southern region, where he would have wide-ranging benefits for the sentient beings. His spiritual teacher rJe btsun ma⁴⁷ and his disciple Zhabs drung⁴⁸ are also said to have predicted that he would live until he was 97 years old.⁴⁹ Based on these accounts, he seems to have visited Bhutan in early 1540s and lived until 1570 if he visited Bhutan immediately after he received the prophecy and lived in accordance with the prophecy. The blocks for the autobiography and collected writings of Blo gros Rab yang seems to have been carved almost immediately after he arrived in Bhutan.⁵⁰ If that is the case, the year of carving the blocks may fall around 1540, although thorough research is needed to confirm this.

Whatever the case, the biography and writings of Blo gros Rab yang which were printed from these blocks are rare in Bhutan and nobody knows what happened to the woodblocks. They are now most likely lost.

8 Biography of Pha jo 'Brug sgom Zhig po

The 4th and final xylographic print for our study is the woodblock of the biography of Pha jo 'Brug sgom Zhig po who brought the Middle 'Brug pa bKa' rgyud tradition to western Bhutan. As a result of our study, we have found that there were two blocks for the biography of Pha jo. Among them, the wood-

47 She was a main teacher of Blo gros Rab yang and her name was Chos skyong rGyal mo. She was also known Shangs phu'i mTsho rgyal or Zhang dKon mchog sGrol ma. See Blo gros Rab yang n.d.3, f. 9r.

48 He was a main disciple of Blo gros Rab yang. His name was rDo rJe TShe brtan Chos kyi dBang phyug. He was also known as Zhabs drung sku skyes or sDe pa sgar pa'i sku skyes. See Blo gros Rab yang n.d.2, f. 13v.

49 Blo gros Rab yang n.d.3, ff. 52r–53r.

50 Among the works of Blo gros Rab yang, the secret biography and collection of spiritual songs are latest. The secret biography records events only a few years after he resigned from his office. The documents such as biographies for the masters of Lam 'bras teachings also contain records of him when he was at rTa nag. After he resigned from rTa nag, no information is recorded in Tibetan sources, probably because he visited Bhutan immediately after he received the prophesy. The woodblocks were carved immediately after he arrived in Bhutan.

blocks which we consider to be the older woodblocks were carved at rTa mgo under the command of Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin (1522–1590),⁵¹ son of 'Brug pa Kun legs (1455–1529) and grandfather of bsTan 'dzin Rab rgyas (1638–1696), the 4th sDe srid of Bhutan.

According to the colophon, woodblocks for many other texts were also carved along with Pha jo's biography.

Holding the monks, disciples and future beneficiaries with love more than 110 woodblocks of sutra *Byang chub ltung bshags* and of the prayer *Mos gus dkar po gcig thub* and 75 other blocks were carved, meditation centres were established and such other extensive virtuous activities were carried out.⁵²

Although the colophon says it was carved when Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin was 50 years old,⁵³ the exact year is not known. According to the biography of Tshe dbang bsTan 'dzin⁵⁴ and bsTan 'dzin Rab rgyas,⁵⁵ Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin founded rTa mgo at the age of 50. After that, he had a daughter before Tshe dbang bsTan 'dzin was born in 1574. Inferring from this, the year of the production of

51 The year of his birth and death are not mentioned anywhere but the year of the birth and death of *Tshe dbang bsTan 'dzin* is confirmed by biography of Tshe dbang bsTan 'dzin ('Jam dbyangs dPal ldan rGya mtsho 1974) and biography of bsTan 'dzin Rab rgyas (Ngag dbang lHun grub 2005). He has born in 1574 and passed away at the age of 70, in the year 1643. Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin passed away when Tshe dbang bsTan 'dzin was 17 years old. The colophon of Pha jo's biography and the biography of Tshe dbang bsTan 'dzin confirm that Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin founded rTa mgo at the age of 50, or before the monkey year, corresponding to 1572. Based on these, we can confirm that Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin was born in 1522 and died in 1590.

52 Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin n.d.1, f. 74v: *Grwa bu slob dang ma 'ongs pa'i gdul bya rnams la rtse bas gzigs/ spar shing bcu phras bdun dang lnga / gzhan yang byang chub ltung bshags kyi mdo/ mos gus dkar po chig thub kyi gsol btab sogs dril bas spar shing brgya bcu lhag tsam spar shing la 'phrul chen yi ger 'khor bar mdzad pa dang / sgrub sde gsar 'dzugs sogs mnam dkar gyi mdzad pa sogs rgya che lags/.*

53 Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin n.d.1, f. 74r: *Sras gar ston nyid kyis nyi ma lho phyogs kyi gdul bya rnams dang khyad par zhal ngo bu rgyud la dgongs thed thim bu sa mtshams stod pa lung pa'i sa'i cha bkra shis rgyas pa phral sna zhes bya ba'i yul du yab mda' 'dzin chen po'i sras su 'khrungs nas zhi bcu zhe dgu'i bar sbas pa'i tshul bzung bcu phrag lnga'i lo gnas chen rdo gdan la sku mtshams se ba mdzad thugs dam la bzhugs pa'i tshe/ mkha' gros gter 'don pa'i dus bab par lung bstan pa ltar gnas thugs rje brag la gsang thabs su byon gter 'don par brtsams pas ri shig ma mnyed pa'i tshe/ yus kyi rnams pa pha jo la gsol ba 'di btab bo/ /*

54 'Jam dbyangs dPal ldan rGya mtsho 1974, ff. 7v–22v.

55 Ngag dbang lHun grub 2005, 5–9.

the woodblocks could be 1570. They were carved under the supervision of Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin's cousin bsTan 'dzin Grags pa, but the scribes and craftsmen were Tibetan.

The main responsibility for carving the woodblocks was taken by cousin bsTan 'dzin Grags pa, under the command of lord *drung*. Craftsmen were pleased by offerings of *mamsa* meat and varieties of alcohol. Besides, Rin chen Bu 'gron, a faithful one from Tsha gling, sponsored the craftsmen for two months and offered food, meat and alcohol with dedication. May the patrons who provided resources be guided by Avalokiteśvara on their path. The blocks were carved by sPrul sku Thabs gzhi bKra shis from Bya yul. The writing was done by the great scholar sMra bai Seng ge from Shar kha.⁵⁶

The blocks were lost to fire. According to the biography of Pha jo, they were carved at dBang 'dus rtse, using as exemplar a print from the woodblocks lost to fire. The dBang 'dus rtse block prints are referred in the rTa mgo block prints as Tibetan blocks.⁵⁷ This might be because the craftsmen and scribes were Tibetan. The woodblocks of the latter version are still in Pha jo sdings temple.

9 Conclusion

We have seen a brief account of how early book production and printing happened in Bhutan. From the 17th century, Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rNam rgyal,

56 Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin n.d.1, f. 75r: *sPar shing 'di nyid phul du bzhengs pa'i 'thun rkyen gtso cher chos rje'i drung gi bka' gnang ba bzhin dbon po bstan 'dzin grags pas phiyag len btab/ maM sa'i bye brag krum sha/ ma da na bdud rtsi chang gi bye brag sogs yon gyis gzo rig mkhan nmams mnyes par byas/ gzhan yang nya ma dad pa can tsha ling nas rin chen bu 'gron gyis spar mkhan zla ba gnyis steg za ma sha chang sogs lhag bsam dag pas legs par sgrubs/ 'thun rkyen sgrub pa'i sbyin bdag nmams mgon po spyen ras gzigs kyis lam sna 'dren par shog/ spar mkhan mkhas pa bya yul ba sprul sku thabs gzhi bkra shis kyis bskos/ yi ge'i 'du byed shar kha rab 'byams smra ba'i seng ge'i sug las su byung ba'o/.*

57 Ngag dbang bsTan 'dzin n.d.2, f. 43v: *Yi ge'i 'du byed shar kha rab 'byams smra ba'i seng ge'i sug las su byung ba'o// //zhes pa 'di yan sngon bod spar brkos pa glegs baM thung ngu zhig 'dug pas me la 'jig song bas slar gsar du bsgrubs pa 'di ltar/ pha jo 'brug sgom zhig po'i nmam thar 'di/ 'yig ger bris shing 'dzin 'chang kun chub sogs/ /bkur bsti tshul bzhin bgyis pa'i nmam dkar gyis/ /rje btsun bla ma'i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa dang / /bstan pa tshul bzhin 'dzin pa'i skeyes bu nmams/ /zhabs kyi pad+mo srid mthar brtan pa'i mthus/ /mar gyur 'gro nmams mam mkhyen thob gyur cig/ /.*

the founder of modern Bhutan, and his successors produced substantial numbers of manuscripts as well as woodblocks. For example, by the command of Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rNam rgyal, numerous blocks such as the ones on medical tantras and writings of Padma dKar po were carved at different places.⁵⁸ Likewise, the 3rd and 4th sDe srid of Bhutan, Mi 'gyur brTan pa and bsTan 'dzin Rab rgyas, also initiated projects of carving various blocks. The vast number of woodblocks carved in the 18th century were woodblocks of the collected works of Padma dKar po and five books on Maitreya.⁵⁹ The 20th sDe srid, 'Brug rNam rgyal, also carved substantial numbers of blocks.⁶⁰ Except the five books on Maitreya, all of these woodblocks are said to have been lost when the library of the monastic body of Bhutan called bSod nams dGa' tshal was razed to the ground by fire.

Until the end of 20th century, the tradition of book production and wood carving was practiced continuously across the country. The National Library and Archives of Bhutan has established a section for wood carving to keep alive the tradition. Due to the introduction of modern technology, the tradition of book production and printing from the woodblocks using traditional methods has come to an abrupt end almost everywhere. Today, most temples have already lost their blocks due to lack of usage or poor care. Whatever is left is also likely to disappear soon. Shejun has therefore recently sponsored the production of a shelf for wooden blocks at Pha jo sdings, which is the only library containing a huge amount of woodblocks from the 18th century. I hope it will significantly contribute to the conservation of the blocks.

58 Blocks for the four medical *tantras* and important works of Padma dKar po have carved under the patronage of Zhabs drung. See Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rNam rgyal (ed) n.d.1, sec. Ga, f. 210r. Ngag dbang rNam rgyal (ed) n.d.2, ff. 53v–54r. Ngag dbang rNam rgyal (ed) n.d.3, f. 189r.

59 The blocks for entire works of Padma dKar po were carved twice under the patronage of 18th sDe srid 'Jigs med Seng ge and 22nd sDe srid bSod nams rGyal mtshan. See Padma Tshe dbang 1994, 378, 390. The block prints printed from later blocks still exist in Bhutan, while the block prints printed from former blocks are not known whether they still exist or not. According to 'Jam dbyangs rGyal mtshan, the 18th rJe mKhan po of Bhutan, the project for the carving woodblocks was initiated jointly by the 21st sDe srid 'Brug rNam rgyal and the 22nd sDe srid, bSod nams rGyal mtshan, during the reign of 'Brug rNam rgyal. See 'Jam dbyangs rGyal mtshan (ed) n.d., vol. ka, f. 9r.

60 The list of the woodblocks that were carved under his patronage is given in Padma Tshe dbang's work. See Padma Tshe dbang 1994, 388–389.

References

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- Blo gros Rab yangs. n.d.1. *sPrul pa'i skyes mchog blo gros rab yangs kyi phyi nang gsang gsum gyi nram thar bsdus pa*, Block prints printed from the woodblocks of sPyi zhing and preserved in dGra med rtse temple. The digital copy is available under the title of Drametse_thorbu_095_blo_gros_rab_yangs_rnam_thar from the archives of Shejun.
- . n.d.2. *sPrul pa'i skyes mchog blo gros rab yangs kyi phyi nang gi nram thar rgyas pa*, Block prints printed from the woodblocks of Chizhig and preserved in Drametse temple. The digital copy is available under the title of Drametse_thorbu_095_blo_gros_rab_yangs_rnam_thar from the archives of Shejun.
- . n.d.3. *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa'i gsang ba'i nram thar*, Block prints printed from the woodblocks of Chizhig and preserved in Drametse temple. The digital copy is available under the title of Drametse_thorbu_095_blo_gros_rab_yangs_rnam_thar from the archives of Shejun.
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- , (ed) (n.d.2), *bDud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad pa gsang ba man ngag gi rgyud las dum bu bzhi pa phyi ma'i rgyud*, Bock prints printed from the blocks of Wangdiphodrang. The digital copy is available from the Shejun archives under the title of Gangteng_blockprints_006_bdud_rtsi_nying_po_b.
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The Unacknowledged Revolution? A Reading of Tibetan Printing History on the Basis of Gung thang Colophons Studied in Two Dedicated Projects

Michela Clemente

1 Introduction

Between the 15th and the 16th centuries, the kingdom of Gung thang in southwestern Tibet, experienced a true blossoming of printing projects. Printing workshops of various size and importance were established in many sites, including the Gung thang royal palace, monasteries and villages. Looking at colophons of extant prints, it is possible to identify some of these places and reflect on the process that made them into key locations for the introduction of printing technology in Tibetan book culture.

This paper has the twofold aim of exploring the printing history of the Mang yul Gung thang kingdom in southwestern Tibet and making some preliminary remarks on the extent of early printing operations as well as on the effects of the introduction of the xylographic technique into this country. It is divided into two parts with an appendix that provides a systematic treatment of the materials on which this paper is based. The first section provides general information on printing houses and their production, based on an examination of several colophons of xylographs from the Gung thang area collected by the University of Cambridge in collaboration with the British Library within the AHRC project entitled “Transforming Technologies and Buddhist Book Culture: The Introduction of Printing and Digital Text Reproduction in Tibetan Societies.”¹ The second part discusses issues related to the extent of

1 The project is funded by the British Art and Humanities Research Council (2010–2015) and led by Professor Uradyn Bulag. I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Hildegard Diemberger and Professor Franz-Karl Ehrhard for giving me the opportunity of collaborating in this project. The texts are being studied in correlation with another project entitled “Tibetan Book Evolution and Technology” (TiBET) granted by the Marie Skłodowska Curie Intra-European Fellowship. A database with a detailed description of these texts, transliteration and mark-up of colophons, transliteration and mark-up of entire biographies, entries of personal and place names built within both projects enables scholars to cross check information extracted by studying early prints from those areas. This is the result of a teamwork of several people

printing projects and the impact that xylography had on Tibetan society by presenting some reflections elicited by the study of blockprints and the mapping of the workshops where they were produced. How did printing technology affect Tibetan cultural tradition? Can we talk about a printing revolution in Tibet? These are the questions that inspired this section, which rather than an exhaustive treatment is meant to be a starting point for further investigations with a cross-cultural perspective in mind.

Kurtis Schaeffer states that despite the long term engagement in Tibetan studies with texts: “[...] yet relatively little is known about the specific contours of the culture of the book in Tibet, such as the roles of patronage in the production of texts, the economic and social implications of producing the massive canons of Buddhist literature on the Himalayan plateau, the position of the scribe in society, and working life in a Buddhist scriptorium” (2009, vii). Concerning Tibetan xylographs in particular, despite some important works on specific projects,² there is no clear understanding of the introduction of printing in Tibet as a social and cultural process. Why don't we have a clear picture of Tibetan printing history and the consequences of the introduction of the xylographic technique in this country? This question can be addressed with an eye to Elizabeth L. Eisenstein's considerations on European printing history:

Although the history of the book is normally allocated to courses in library studies; the topic of printing itself is assigned to historians of technology while type design, layout and lettering are treated as part of a subspecialty taught in school of design. Given a topic that is segmented, subdivided and parcelled out in this fashion, it is little wonder that one rarely gets a sense of its significance as a whole (Eisenstein 1979, 24).

based in the UK, in Tibet, Nepal and Italy, but it has also been achievable thanks to the starting idea of Gene Smith and the research undertaken by Franz-Karl Ehrhard. The database is accessible from the websites of both the above-mentioned projects: *Transforming Technologies and Buddhist Book Culture*: <http://www.ttbbc.socanth.cam.ac.uk/>; *TiBET*: www.tbvoltech.socanth.cam.ac.uk. It is also linked to the TBRC database and will supplement it with entries of people and places that are not currently available there. This is the result of a collaboration with the TBRC team. I would like to thank Burkhard Quessel of the British Library and Jeff Wallman of TBRC in particular for having made this possible.

2 See for example, Clemente 2015; Ehrhard 2000a; Schaeffer 2011; Sernesi 2013; Sernesi (forthcoming).

In my opinion, this is also true for the Tibetan printing history. In order to progress with our research, it is necessary to look at the same topic from different perspectives and collaborate with specialists in fields other than Tibetan Studies. In addition to the issue of disciplinary boundaries, the main reason for the lack of consistent information on Tibetan printing history is that most works have not survived to the present day in their original edition. Fortunately, relevant works are now surfacing thanks to the efforts of Tibetan organisations such as the dPal brtsegs Research Institute. The Cambridge collaboration with this latter as well as with the IsIAO Library in Italy,³ the National Archives of Kathmandu, the Nepal Research Centre⁴ and several libraries in the UK, is currently contributing to the study of the Tibetan printing history in the Mang yul Gung thang kingdom and the neighbouring areas.

The projects I have been part of chose to start with Mang yul Gung thang and the neighbouring areas, since these were an important hub of Tibetan early printing. These are among the places where the first printing houses of Tibet were set up, perhaps because this kingdom had developed into an important gateway between the north and the south of the Himalayas over the centuries. The main route between Tibet and Nepal, which passed through the sKyid grong valley and led to Kathmandu, traversed the kingdom. This area was politically important during the 13th and the 14th centuries, as a centre for Tibetan regional governance within the Sakya-Yuan imperial polity.⁵

3 It seems relevant to underline that IsIAO is now under liquidation and its Library is not accessible anymore. Fortunately, we were able to photograph all Gung thang xylographs before the closedown of the Institute thanks to a collaboration between IsIAO and the University of Cambridge within the project “Transforming Technologies and Buddhist Book Culture: The Introduction of Printing and Digital Text Reproduction in Tibetan Societies”. I would like to thank the former President of IsIAO, the late Professor Gherardo Gnoli, and Dr. Francesco D’Arelli, former Director of the Library, for their collaboration with us. It is my hope that the Library will soon be reopened and that this significant cultural heritage will be accessible to all scholars in African and Asian studies again.

4 Unfortunately, this is another important Institution that was closed due to financial issues. Fortunately, all microfilms are still preserved at the National Archives of Kathmandu thanks to collaboration with the Centre for Manuscript Studies, University of Hamburg (Nepal German Manuscript Preservation and Conservation Projects [NGMPP-NGMCP]).

5 For the history of this kingdom, see Ehrhard 2000a; Everding 2000; Everding 2004; Petech 1990; Petech 1997.

2 Where are we? A Preliminary Reading of the 16th Century Printing History in Gung thang

The projects mentioned above collected about two hundred early prints from Gung thang and La stod areas which are now being studied and described. These data are available via the relevant websites and represent a platform for use and expansion by all scholars for future research.

One of the earliest xylographs produced in Tibet is a 1407 print from Shel dkar, the capital of Southern La stod (lHa stod lHo),⁶ which was located immediately to the East of the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang. This print was discovered by the dPal brtsegs Research Institute in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and the British Library.⁷ This xylograph can be seen as reflecting a network of scholarship that linked La stod lHo and Gung thang which was instrumental for the establishment of printing houses in the region.

Mapping printing houses located in southwestern Tibet, so far I have identified sixty xylographs which were produced in ten different printing houses. A list of printing houses with information on identified xylographs produced in each of them is available in the appendix of this paper.⁸ I provide hereafter general data on the print production in these ten printing houses, starting from the most productive, that is to say, Brag dkar rta so. So far I have identified twenty-three xylographs printed there, which range from 1525 to 1563. Most are biographies or biographies with songs and are associated with the *bka' brgyud* school. Brag dkar rta so printing house (lit. 'white rock horse tooth'), located between the Mang yul and Gung thang areas, was founded by lHa btsun Rin chen nam rgyal (1473–1557),⁹ who is associated with the *bka' brgyud* tradition and who established his seat there in 1525. He is renowned for having continued his master's endeavours after this latter's death. His master was g'Tsang smyon Heruka (1452–1507),¹⁰ an outstanding *bka' brgyud pa bla ma* who also spent some time at the Gung thang court, being the teacher of King rNam rgyal

6 For the history of this kingdom, see Diemberger 2007, 37–38; Everding 1997.

7 On this text, see Diemberger 2012, 22, 23–26, 28–31; Diemberger (in press); Porong Dawa (this volume).

8 Printing houses that have not been examined so far do not appear in this list. This includes Zur tsho, lHa mdun/dun, rDza ri bSam gling, 'Od gsal phug, Na zlum, Lab phyi se phug, etc.

9 On this master, see Clemente 2009; Clemente 2014b; Clemente 2015; Clemente (in press a); Diemberger and Clemente 2013.

10 On this figure and his work, see Larsson 2009; Larsson 2011; Larsson 2012; Quintman 2006, chapt. 5–6; Sernesi 2007, introduction, 100–18; Sernesi 2010, 406–08, 419–20, 422; Sernesi 2011a; Sernesi 2011b, 191–98, 201–02; Sernesi (forthcoming); Smith 2001, 59–74; I. M. Stearns 1985.

lde (1426-/7–1502).¹¹ His project consisted of the compilation, editing, writing and printing of many *bka' brgyud pa* works. After gTsang smyon's death, this project was continued by some of his disciples, most notably lHa btsun and rGod tshang ras chen (1482–1559).¹² These masters produced a huge amount of xylographs, not only in the numerous printing houses established in Gung thang, but also in the neighbouring areas and then spread to other regions. The project was also sponsored by the rulers of Mang yul Gung thang, southern and northern La stod among others.¹³ lHa btsun died in 1557 but his disciples printed some xylographs after his death, especially texts that he had started to work on. Later generations of scholars continued the printing endeavor and Brag dkar rta so became a highly renowned printing house.

The second printing house to mention in order of productivity is rDzong dkar/Khyung rdzong dkar po, located in the royal palace of the Gung thang capital. So far I have found thirteen xylographs printed there, which range from 1514 to 1540. Since the promoters of the majority of projects carried out in rDzong dkar were bTsun pa Chos legs (1437–1521)¹⁴ and Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484–1549),¹⁵ who belonged to the *bo dong pa* school,¹⁶ most identified works are *bo dong pa* and associated with the Mahāmudrā tradition, but the literary genre of biographies/hagiographies is also represented.

Twelve xylographs produced at Kun gsal sGang po che, in Gung thang, have been identified so far. These range from 1523 to 1551. This place was the residence of Bo dong Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, who, as mentioned above, is also

11 For Khri rNam rgyal lde's birth date, see Diemberger 2007, 53, 121–22, 326.

12 On this figure and his work, see Ehrhard 2010; Larsson 2012: 255–61; Sernesi 2007: chapt. 2; Sernesi 2011a: 191–92, 197–98; Sernesi (forthcoming). On this project, see Clemente 2007; Clemente 2009, 1.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7; Clemente 2014b, 443–47; Clemente 2015; Clemente (in press a); Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 134–37; Larsson 2012, 229–76; Schaeffer 2009, 58–63; Schaeffer 2011; Sernesi 2011a; Sernesi (forthcoming); Smith 2001, 73–79.

13 On the sponsors of this project, see Clemente 2014b; Clemente (in press a); Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 127–31.

14 On this master, see Ehrhard 2000a, 15; Ehrhard 2000b, IX–XIII; Ehrhard 2000d, 201, 204–09. See also my entry in the database of the above-mentioned projects.

15 On this master, see Ehrhard 2000a: 23–50.

16 The origins of the *bo dong* school go back to Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, who invited Vibhūticandra from Nepal and received from him a new transmission of esoteric teachings centring around the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* (*yan lag drug gi mal 'byor*), the six-limbed yogic practices. This school reached its climax with *bo dong* Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451). The monastery of Bo dong E, one of the most important cloisters of this school, was founded in 1049 (see Smith 2001: 179–80). On *bo dong* Phyogs las rnam rgyal and this school, see Chok Tenzin Monlam 2005; Diemberger 2009; Diemberger, Wangdu, Kornfeld and Jahoda 1997; Ehrhard 2000b; Hazod 1998; Jackson 1996: 95–96; Smith 2001: 179–208.

associated with Khyung rdzong dkar po, both places being very close. It seems that most works produced at Kun gsal sGang po che are related to the *bka' gdams pa* school, but *bka' brgyud*, *rnying ma* and *bo dong pa* texts were also printed there so that we can call it an eclectic production. Most works belong to the genre of biographies.

The number of analysed xylographs from the printing house of gNas is still limited, but it is possible to make some preliminary remarks. So far only five prints produced there have been identified. gNas is located in the vicinity of sKyid grong, in Mang yul and is the birthplace of Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs (1503–1581),¹⁷ a disciple of both lHa btsun and rGod tshang ras chen. He followed his teachers' example and undertook many printing projects in the Gung thang kingdom starting from 1555.¹⁸ Four of the identified xylographs are indeed associated with him (see texts no. 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the appendix). Three of these prints are dated. They range from 1559 to 1561. The fourth one was printed between 1555 and 1581; however, since it was edited by rGod tshang ras chen, I tend to think that it was produced between 1555 and 1560, possibly soon after this latter master's death. The fifth identified xylograph is instead a later print, which was produced after 1627. This allows us to make a comparison between the xylographs printed in the 16th century and those produced in the 17th century and therefore make some preliminary observations about features of xylographs over space and time. Prints from gNas produced in the 16th century exhibit different features in comparison to xylographs produced at the same time in other printing houses in the Gung thang area. For example, the size of gNas prints is bigger than others and the number of lines differs too, presenting eight lines instead of seven.¹⁹ By analysing the xylograph printed in the 17th century, I discovered that this holds the same above-mentioned features. This might imply that each printing house employed its own layout for the production of printing blocks. I am not aware of any manual with instructions on the layout but some might have been used in schools of calligraphy and printing which were established in Tibet since the 15th century.²⁰ They might also have transmitted this kind of instruction orally during classes. Unfortunately, we do not have significant information on the course of study in these schools; a subject that I would like to investigate in future research.²¹

17 On this master, see in particular Ehrhard 2012.

18 See Ehrhard 2012, 160.

19 For preliminary remarks on this subject, see Clemente (in press c).

20 See Ehrhard 2000a, 13.

21 However, thanks to a measurement tool built for the above-mentioned projects, we can now automatically measure the distance between two points. This will allow us to

There is a limited number of xylographs from Chab rom phug, Glang phug, Shel dkar, mDzo/'Dzo lhas, A ti sha'i chos 'khor and Khams gsum g.yul las rnam rgyal pho brang that have been analysed so far. I will limit myself here to provide some preliminary information. Chab rom phug is a hermitage which is located near the village of Rud, south of Kun gsal sGang po che and West of rDzong dkar (its exact location is still unknown). This holy site was established by bTsun pa Chos legs as one of his retreat places, therefore the texts printed there seem to be associated with the *bo dong pa* tradition. Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, who was a close disciple of bTsun pa Chos legs, also moved there in 1511.²² It seems that the production of prints at Chab rom phug is connected with these masters and that it stopped after their death; however, this subject is still under investigation.

We do not know the exact location of Glang phug, which was presumably situated in the La 'de/'debs Valley. Two prints identified so far as having been produced there are associated with the '*ba' ra ba bka' brgyud pa* but at the moment we do not have enough information to assess the link between this place and the above-mentioned religious school.

The relevance of Shel dkar in the printing history is already well known and it seems that further xylographs from that area are surfacing now, but this is something currently under investigation.²³ Both prints identified so far were produced at the beginning of the 15th century so that we may guess that this was one of the first printing houses established in Tibet and a seminal place for the spread of printing, especially for projects associated with the *bo dong pa* tradition.

Khams gsum rnam rgyal is a castle established by King Kun dga' rnam rgyal lde in the area of sKyid grong and is again associated with the *bo dong pa* scholar Chos dbang rgyal mtshan.²⁴

As for mDzo lhas and A ti sha'i chos 'khor, I do not have significant information at the moment, but hope to identify further xylographs from this printing house which will provide us with more data.

To sum up: most xylographs analysed thus far were printed between 1515 and 1563. Most texts belong to the literary genre of hagiographies, but we also find many spiritual songs and some instruction manuals. The most represented

better understand if Tibetan used standardised criteria for the *mise en page* of prints. This subject is under investigation and will be the topic of a future publication. I would like to thank Terry Chilvers for this amazing tool.

22 See Ehrhard 2000a, 24.

23 On this subject, see Diemberger (this volume); Porong Dawa (this volume).

24 See Ehrhard 2000a, 31–33; Ehrhard 2004a, 139.

religious school is the *bka' brgyud*, but we also find several *bo dong pa* texts. We indeed know that in the Mang yul Gung thang area there was close contacts between a local *bo dong pa* school and members of the so-called “gTsang smyon Heruka’s school”.²⁵ As highlighted by Franz-Karl Ehrhard, the xylographs printed in the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang in the 15th and 16th centuries played a significant role in spreading the tradition of these Buddhist works.²⁶ The same occurred in southern La stod, which was also a center for calligraphers and scribes at least since the 15th century.²⁷

In the printing history of Mang yul Gung thang a particular role was played by the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, which is a collection of various mythico-historical, ritual and doctrinal texts attributed to the first Tibetan king Srong btsan sgam po. Providing a link to the imperial period seen as a golden age of Tibetan Buddhism before the fragmentation began in the 9th century, this collection is considered a treasure text (*gter ma*). It is an assemblage of specific portions considered to have been consecutively discovered by three treasure revealers (*gter ston*) from the middle of the 12th to the middle of the 13th century. Centred on the cult of Avalokiteśvara, the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* provides a number of legendary biographies of Srong btsan sgam po and Avalokiteśvara, the former considered to be an emanation of the latter. The *Maṇi bka' 'bum* played a central role in promoting the cult of Avalokiteśvara, who is considered the protector of Tibet, whereas Srong btsan sgam po as well as the Dalai lama are regarded as emanations of this *bodhisattva*. This text became particularly significant in the political context of the 14th century when Tibet was under the control of Phag mo gru pa, who encouraged Tibetans to get back to their roots and remained since then a very popular text not only in monasteries but also among the laity. This text was particularly relevant in the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang, where the rulers were considered to be descendants and sometimes reincarnations of the Tibetan emperors. It is not surprising that Khri rNam rgyal lde, considered to be an emanation of Khri Srong lde btsan, is said to have ordered the printing of this work to spread it in innumerable volumes.²⁸ While this edition has not surfaced yet, the text seems to have been widespread by the very beginning of the 16th century. The *Biography of Kun tu bzang mo*,

25 See Ehrhard 2012, 149.

26 See for example the history of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*, the *Padma thang yig*, the *rGyud bzhi* (Ehrhard 2000a, 14–15).

27 See Ehrhard 2000a, 13.

28 See *Gung thang rgyal rabs*: [...] *yang sman rgyud yan lag brgyad pa ma ṇi bka' 'bum o rgyan gyi thang yig mi la'i bka' 'bum rnams legs bam grangs med spel ba'i phyir par in* Everding 2000, 138–39.

gTsang smyon Heruka's consort, mentions that she used to read the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* when performing religious services for various people (see Diemberger, this volume). According to Georges Dreyfus, the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* contributed to give Tibetan people a form of national identity, which he termed 'proto-nationalism', centered on the imperial legacy. Printing is likely to have been instrumental in promoting this sense of belonging by consolidating the feeling of a shared territory and history among Tibetans.²⁹ While no prints of the Khri rnam rgyal lde edition are extant, the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* produced under his son Kun dga' rnam rgyal lde (?–1524)³⁰ certainly had a great impact. The xylograph of this text printed in 1521 in the royal palace spread its narrative widely. Used as *editio princeps* it was the basis for its re-print elsewhere in Gung thang as well as in other areas of Tibet and Bhutan. In the 17th century the 5th Dalai Lama also used the same edition to produce further copies of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*,³¹ which was central in his vision of the state.

Against the background of George Dreyfus' observations, the printing history of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* may recall the links between printing technology and nationalism explored and discussed in the European context.

3 Preliminary Remarks on the Extent of Early Printing Operations and the Impact of Printing on Tibetan Society

Tibetan people are still printing texts with the xylographic technique, even though it has been increasingly superseded by movable type and digital technology. There is often a direct transfer from xylography to digital technologies, which shows how successful this technique was in the country. At the time of its introduction it indeed offered great advantages for several reasons. Tibetans were able to make as many copies of a text as they wished, thereby assuring a wider distribution of the works all over the country and at the same time reduced the risk of their loss. Moreover, Tibetan people tended to consider print editions the most reliable and authoritative versions of a work. Before printing a text, they edited and proofread it many times. Finally the abbot of the monastery had to approve it. Nevertheless, this practice did not prevent mistakes; on the contrary, xylographs sometimes contributed to spreading texts with plenty of scribal errors, as Leonard Van der Kuijp pointed out.³²

29 See Dreyfus 1994, 205.

30 For his dating, see Ehrhard 2004a, 82.

31 See Diemberger 2012, 32; Ehrhard 2000a, 15; Ehrhard 2013; Kapstein 2000, 260, n. 9.

32 See Van der Kuijp 2010.

Block printings also allowed for flexibility in relation to demand: it was possible to print a rather small number of copies and, once a stock ran out, it was easy to pull out the stored blocks and reprint the text without having to waste labour and time on re-composition.³³

Although it is undeniable that this technique was widely used in Tibet since its introduction, the effects that this new technology had on Tibetan culture are still unrecognised. This subject is currently under investigation, but it is possible to make here some preliminary considerations. We know that in the 15th century printing houses mushroomed in different places of Tibet within a few decades and that in the 16th century they were everywhere. The historical period in which the printing technique spread in the country is particularly significant for the understanding of its success. After the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty (1280–1368), numerous Tibetan local noble families had emerged and were fighting to gain more power and territories. Like the kings of Mang yul Gung thang, the leaders of these families took advantage of the new technology to assert their political power by sponsoring religious schools, the foundation of printing houses as well as the production of Buddhist xylographs. They promoted several printing projects supervised by outstanding masters of the time, preserving and spreading Buddha's teachings and also accumulating merits thanks to their virtuous deeds. This allowed them to be considered as *Dharmarājas*, "Kings of the Dharma".³⁴ The fact that these enterprises did not aim at turning any profits might be one of the reasons why the impact of xylography on the Tibetan society has never been recognised as something revolutionary like the introduction of movable printing in Europe. However, the effects that the xylographic technique generated on Tibetan culture seem to have been numerous and significant:

- 1) An increase in the spread of works and the consequent decrease of their loss;
- 2) A rapid spread of ideas;
- 3) The emergence of certain works as classics;
- 4) An improvement in the continuity of transmission of texts;
- 5) A facilitation in accessing textual resources;
- 6) A contribution to the creation of shared standards and editing criteria;
- 7) A contribution to the rise of certain religious schools through the sponsorship of its masters, lineages and works;

33 See Brokaw and Kornicki 2013, xix; Diemberger 2012, 33.

34 On this subject, see Diemberger 2007, 32.

- 8) An increase in the assertion of political power thanks to the support of Buddhism;
- 9) The decline of the production of manuscripts, which even froze at times;
- 10) An increased standardization of the monastic curricula;
- 11) A correlation in the spread of printing and an increased use of Daphne as paper for the production of xylographs (Stellera and Daphne being the best combination for paper production);
- 12) The spread of literate forms of popular religiosity.³⁵

Scholars who research this field could not understand thus far whether Tibetan printing in the 15th and 16th century was a small scale operation or something that had a broader involvement. The small number of extant prints would seem to support the view of a limited impact of printing. However, the effects listed above, references to worn out blocks, circulation of prints, reading practices, transformations elicited by the production of print editions seem to indicate a wider phenomenon. We should also consider that most of the original works have not survived until now, or they have not surfaced yet; however, many works are currently being discovered, therefore in some years the situation could be very different. Also, the search for old prints has so far been difficult because of the type of texts – classical and famous – which did not attract the same attention as rare texts. The lack of accuracy in cataloguing these works, especially in libraries in the Himalayan area may mean that many other original early xylographs might have survived undetected. We should also take into account that Tibetans have always hidden their texts during difficult times, therefore many of those might be still concealed somewhere. We should bear in mind as well that Tibetan xylographs – but also manuscripts – had not only to stand the test of time to survive, but also crises such as the so-called “Cultural Revolution”, when they were targeted for destruction or abandoned to neglect. This might be one of the reasons why we have not found a larger number of printed works. Something that seems to support the theory that xylography played a bigger role in the Tibetan history is the fact that a printing project required extensive support and had to rely on a wide network of patronage. Over the last years, research in this field has shown that several printing projects were carried out in 15th and 16th century in Mang

35 There might be a further point worthy of investigation: I wonder whether Tibetans started to record more lives, accounts, etc. with the introduction of printing. For considerations on the impact of the xylographic technique in Tibet and differences and similarities with the introduction of printing in Europe, see Clemente (in press b).

yul Gung thang and in the neighbouring areas, and similar enterprises were undertaken in Central Tibet at the same time. Thinking about the number of printing houses located all over the country, we cannot really support the theory that each of them used to print only few copies of a work. Moreover, in many sources of the time we read that woodblocks wore out in few years. How could it happen if they were used so little? Given the scarcity of wood in many areas of Tibet, it seems unlikely that blocks were replaced unless strictly necessary.

4 Conclusion

I presented in this paper a preliminary reading of the printing history of the Mang yul Gung thang kingdom in southwestern Tibet in the 16th century according to some colophons of xylographs from that area which have been analysed so far. I also made some preliminary considerations on the extent of early printing operations in the country and on the effects of the introduction of the xylographic technique into Tibet. I do not have any real conclusion because these are open questions that need further research and discussion among scholars in different fields. Given this, I conclude this essay by quoting Elizabeth L. Eisenstein:

While trying to cover this unfamiliar ground I discovered (as all neophytes do) that what seemed relatively simple on first glance became increasingly complex on examination and that new areas of ignorance opened up much faster than old ones could be closed (Eisenstein 1979, X).

Appendix

List of printing houses with the number of identified texts produced in each of them:

- 1) Brag dkar rta so (between Mang yul and Gung thang): 23.
- 2) rDzong dkar/Khyung rdzong dkar po (in the capital of Gung thang): 13.
- 3) Kun gsal sgang po che (Gung thang): 12.
- 4) gNas (in the vicinity of sKyid grong, Mang yul): 5.
- 5) Chab rom phug (near the village of Rud, further south of Kun gsal sGang po che): 2.
- 6) Glang phug (La 'de Valley): 2.
- 7) Shel dkar (in the capital of Southern La stod): 2.

- 8) mDzo/'Dzo lhas (on the banks of the dPal khud mtsho, not far from Chos sdings, Gung thang): 1.
- 9) A ti sha'i chos 'khor (La 'de Valley): 1.
- 10) Khams gsum g.yul las rnam rgyal pho brang/Khams gsum rnam rgyal (Mang yul): 1.³⁶

List of identified xylographs (under the name of the printing house in which they were produced) with information on dating, literary genre and religious school:

- 1) Brag dkar rta so
 1. *Grub thob gling ras kyi rnam mgur mthong ba don ldan* (not before 1525 not after 1557, biography with songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).³⁷
 2. *Yang dkon chos rje'i mdzad pa'i bar do 'phrang bsgrol* (not before 1525 not after 1557, *bar do* instructions, *bka' brgyud pa*).³⁸
 3. *Khams gsum 'dran bral grub thob ko rag pa'i mgur 'buṃ* (not before 1525 not after 1557, spiritual songs).³⁹
 4. *Thun mong ma yin pa rdo rje mgur drug sogs / mgur ma 'ga 'yar* (not before 1525 not after 1557, spiritual songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴⁰
 5. *mKhas grub kun gyi gtsug rgyan / paṅ chen nā ro pa'i rnam thar / ngo mtshar rmad 'byung* (not before 1525 not after 1557, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴¹

36 We were able to locate and map some of these printing houses and we also have pictures of several places taken by Hildegard Diemberger, Bruce Huett and Agnieszka Helman-Ważny during their journeys in Tibet. Pictures of these places will soon appear on the interactive map built for the above-mentioned projects.

37 Cf. NGMPP E2518/6, L194/11 (some folios are difficult to read), L12/1 (it is difficult to read), L581/5 (it is incomplete, missing folios from 57 to 61). On this work see also Clemente 2015, 190; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 135; Schaeffer 2011, 472; Smith 2001, 76.

38 Cf. NGMPP E2518/9, L456/5 (it has some dark folios), L970/6 (it has many dark folios). On this work, see also Clemente 2015, 192; Schaeffer 2011, 473.

39 Cf. NGMPP E2518/11, L970/2 (some folios are difficult to read) and L456/8 (it is difficult to read); dPal brtsegs, text no. 28. For a translation of this work, see Stearns 2000. On this work, see also Clemente 2015, 191; Schaeffer 2011, 473. The affiliation of Ko brag pa to one of the religious schools is difficult to make. Stearns (2000, 3) indeed wrote: "even the authors of some of the most definitive histories of religion remained uncertain about where to place him because of the widespread and eclectic nature of his practices and activities."

40 Cf. NGMPP L477/14 (some folios are difficult to read), E1256/1 (it is difficult to read). On this work, see also Clemente 2015, 192; Schaeffer 2011, 471.

41 Cf. NGMPP L969/4[1] (it is possible to find this work after two texts with the same reel no), L36/1 (it is unreadable). There is another copy of this work, but it is a handwritten *dbu can*

6. *Phyag rgya chen po yi ge bzhi pa'i sa bcad sbas don gsal ba'i nyi ma* (not before 1525 not after 1557, mahāmudrā's manual, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴²
7. *rJe ras chung pa'i rnam thar mdor bsdus* (1538, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*);⁴³
8. *sTon pa sangs rgyas kyi skyes rabs bryad bcu pa slob dpon dpa' bos mdzad pa bzhugs* (1541 or 1553, *Jātakamālā*).⁴⁴
9. *Grub thob gtsang pa smyon pa'i rnam thar dad pa'i spu long g.yo ba* (1543, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴⁵
10. *Bram ze chen pos mdzad pa'i dho ha bskor gsum / mdzod drug / ka kha dho ha / sa spyad rnams* (1543, spiritual songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴⁶
11. *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi rnam 'phrul rje btsun ti lo pa'i rnam mgur* (1550, biography with songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴⁷
12. *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rdo rje mgur drug sogs gsung rgyun thor bu 'ga'* (1550, spiritual songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴⁸
13. *'Gro ba'i mgon po gtsang pa rgya ras kyi mgur 'bum rgyas pa* (1551, spiritual songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁴⁹
14. *bDe gshegs phag mo gru pa'i rnam thar* (1552, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵⁰

manuscript (see NGMPP AT29/5). See also PBP 2007, 346. For a translation of this work, see Guenther 1963. See also Clemente 2015, 190; Sernesi 2004, 257; Smith 2001, 76.

- 42 Cf. NGMPP L569/10. See also Schaeffer 2011, 476.
- 43 Cf. NGMPP E908/3, f. 39a4–6. See also Clemente 2015, 195.
- 44 Cf. FGT 707. The colophon states that the xylograph was printed by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal in an Ox Year, which would fit with 1529, 1541 and 1553. Since one of the carvers of this print seems to have been active in Gung thang at least from 1540 to 1555, this xylograph was more likely printed in 1541 or 1553. On this work, see Clemente 2011, 60–61; Clemente 2015, 190; Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 341.
- 45 Cf. FGT 706; NGMPP E2518/10, L12/2. Information about the drafting of this work is provided in lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal's *rnam mgur*. Cf. FGT 657/5, 16a6–16b5. On this work, see also Clemente 2007, 124, 135–37; Clemente 2015, 188; De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 341; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 134; Larsson 2009; Larsson 2012; Sernesi (forthcoming).
- 46 Cf. FGT 1102; NGMPP L237/13, L 456/6; U rgyan rdo rje 1976, 107–79. On this work, see also Clemente 2007, 125, 139–40; De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 397; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 137; Schaeffer 2011, 468.
- 47 Cf. NGMPP E2517/6, L1107/4. See also dPal brtsegs: text no. 32; U rgyan rDo rje 1976, 37–83.
- 48 Cf. FGT 1089/2; NGMPP L251/2; UL Tibetan 155.2. For the story of the order and preparation of this work, cf. FGT 657/6, 22b4. On this work, see also Clemente 2007, 124–25, 138; Cutillo and Kunga Rinpoche 1978; Cutillo and Kunga Rinpoche 1986; De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 394; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 137; Roberts 2007: 37–38; Sernesi 2004; Sernesi 2011, 198.
- 49 Cf. NGMPP L581/4, E2518/7, L970/4, L194/10. On this work, see also Schaeffer 2011, 472.
- 50 Cf. NGMPP L194/13, L970/3, E2518/5, E693/4 (it is difficult to read); U rgyan rDo rje 1976, 1–35. See also Schaeffer 2011, 472.

15. *sGra bsgyur mar pa lo tstsha'i mgur 'bum* (1552, spiritual songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵¹
16. *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i nam thar rgyas par phye pa mgur 'bum* (1555, biography with songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵²
17. *dPe chos rin po che spungs pa'i 'bum 'grel* (1555, commentary, *bka' gdams pa*).⁵³
18. *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa mkhas grub lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam mgur blo 'das chos sku'i rang gdangs* (not before 1555 not after 1600, biography with songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵⁴
19. *Phyag rgya chen po rnal 'byor bzhi'i rim pa snying po don gyi gter mdzod* (1556, *Mahāmudrā* instructions, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵⁵
20. *rNal 'byor dbang phyug lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i nam thar gyi smad cha* (not before 1557 not after 1600, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵⁶
21. *rGyud kyi dgongs pa gtsor ston pa / phyag rgya chen po yi ge bzhi pa'i 'grel bshad gnyug ma'i gter mdzod* (1561, *Mahāmudrā* commentary, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵⁷
22. *Tshe gcig la 'ja' lus brnyes pa rje ras chung pa'i rnam thar rags bsduṣ mgur rnam rgyas pa* (1563, biography with songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵⁸

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- 51 Cf. NGMPP L969/4 (it is possible to find this work after the biography of Nāropa with the same reel. no.), L194/7 (some folios are difficult to read), E2518/2 (it is incomplete). On this work, see also Schaeffer 2011, 470; Sernesi 2011a, 201; Smith 2001, 77.
 - 52 Cf. BL 19999a3; NGMPP L250/8–L251/1. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 135; Eimer 2010; Eimer and Tsering 1990, 71–72; Roesler 2000, 227–29; Schaeffer 2009, 62; Schaeffer 2011, 470; Sernesi 2011a, 184, 188–89, 200, 225–26.
 - 53 Cf. NGMPP L10/22, L813/2, E2617/9. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); Roesler 2000; Roesler 2011; Schaeffer 2011, 476.
 - 54 Cf. FGT 657/5; NGMPP L477/13; dPal brtsegs, text no. 31. On this work, see Clemente 2007, 124, 130–32; Clemente 2009; Clemente 2014b; De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 331; Diemberger and Clemente 2013.
 - 55 Cf. FGT 1356; NGMPP E1784/3, L567/5. On this work, see also Clemente 2007, 125, 141; De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 447; Schaeffer 2011, 476.
 - 56 Cf. FGT 657/6; NGMPP L456/7. On this work, see Clemente 2007, 124, 133–35; Clemente 2009; Clemente 2014b; Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 331; Diemberger and Clemente 2013.
 - 57 Cf. NGMPP L194/9, L 512/8, L1219/3, L503/2, L956/8. On this work, see also Ehrhard 2004b, 593, n. 6; Schaeffer 2011, 476.
 - 58 Cf. FGT 657/3; NGMPP E2518/3. On this work, see also Clemente 2007, 125, 142–43; De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 330; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 135.

23. *rje rgod tshang pa'i nram thar rgyal thang pa bde chen rdo rjes mdzad pa la mgur chen 'gas rgyan pa* (1563, biography with songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁵⁹
- 2) rDzong dkar/Khyung rdzong dkar po:
1. *blTa ba'i skabs nram par bzhag pa* (1514–21, Mahāmudrā, *bo dong pa*).⁶⁰
 2. *sGom pa'i skabs nram par bzhag pa* (1514–21, Mahāmudrā, *bo dong pa*).⁶¹
 3. *sPyod pa'i skabs nram par bzhag pa* (1514–21, Mahāmudrā, *bo dong pa*).⁶²
 4. *'Bras bu'i skabs nram par bzhag pa* (1514–21, Mahāmudrā, *bo dong pa*).⁶³
 5. *Nyams yig ma ṅi'i lu gu rgyud* (1521, *bo dong pa*).⁶⁴
 6. *Chos skyong ba'i rgyal po bsrong btsan rgam po'i bka' 'bum las stod kyi cha thog mar bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs lo rgyus sogs* (1521, Mani bka' 'bum).⁶⁵
 7. *sPrul sku rig 'dzin mchog ldan mgon po'i nram thar mgur 'bum dang ldan spro ba bskyed byed* (1527, biography with songs, *rmying ma pa*).⁶⁶
 8. *rje btsun 'ba' ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i nram thar mgur 'bum dang bcas pa* (1540, biography with songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁶⁷
 9. *'Ba' ra pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po gi nram thar kha skong* (1540, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁶⁸

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- 59 Cf. NGMPP L211/3, E2518/8, L969/5–970/1. On this work, see also Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 135; Schaeffer 2011, 472; Smith 2001, 75–76, 289, n. 183.
- 60 Cf. NGMPP AT61/21[2], L189/3; NAK 754 no. 2, 927 no. 3. This text is reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b, 21–96. On this work, see also Ehrhard 2000a, 70.
- 61 Cf. NGMPP AT61/21[3], L189/3; NAK 754 no. 3, 927 no. 4. This text is reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b, 97–143. On this work, see also Ehrhard 2000a, 70.
- 62 Cf. NGMPP AT61/21[4], L189/3; NAK 754 no. 4, 927 no. 5. This text is reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b, 145–210. On this work, see also Ehrhard 2000a, 70.
- 63 Cf. NGMPP AT61/21[5], L189/3, L501/2; NAK 754 no. 5, 927 no. 6. This text is reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b, 211–240. On this work, see also Ehrhard 2000a, 70.
- 64 Cf. NGMPP AT61/21[1], L189/3, L390/4, NAK 754 no. 1. This text is reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b, 349–85. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a, 87.
- 65 Cf. Tibetan 149; NGMPP E2933/5–2934/1, E2934/3–2935/1, AT167/5–168/1. For its cataloguing, see <http://catalogue.socanth.cam.ac.uk/exist/servlet/db/mssbp.xq>. On this work, see also Clemente 2014a; Ehrhard 2000d; Ehrhard 2013; Ricciardi and Pallipurath 2014; Ricciardi and Pallipurath (this volume).
- 66 Cf. NGMPP L189/4. A further copy is available at the National Archives of Kathmandu (NGMPP L9/3). On this work, see also Ehrhard 2000a, 32–33, 101–03.
- 67 Cf. FGT 671/1; NGMPP L535/5 (different edition), L195/9 (different edition), L1107/8–L1108/1, L1118/5–1119/1, L518/4; L785/2–786/1; L618/2–619/1; dPal brtsegs, text no. 20. On this work, see also Clemente (in press b); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 335; Ehrhard 2000a, 45 n. 38, 61–63.
- 68 Cf. FGT 671/2. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 335; Ehrhard 2000a, 45 n. 38, 61–63.

10. *sKyes mchog gi rnam mgur chen mo'i dkyus na mi gsal ba'i gsang ba'i rnamṅa thar rags sdu shig* (1540, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁶⁹
 11. *Ka kha'i gsol 'debs sogs mgur phran tshogs rnams* (1540, spiritual songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁷⁰
 12. *sKyes mchog 'ba' ra bas mdzad pa'i sgrub pa nyams su blang ba'i lag len dgos 'dod 'byung ba'i gter mdzod* (1540, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁷¹
 13. *sKyes mchog 'ba' ra pas mdzad pa'i mdo sngags kyi smon lam* (1540, prayer, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁷²
- 3) Kun gsal sGang po che
1. *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i mgur 'bum yid bzhin nor bu* (1523–24, spiritual songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁷³
 2. *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i bka' 'bum yid bzhin nor bu* (1524, collected works, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁷⁴
 3. *Rig 'dzin sprul sku mchog ldan mgon po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum gyi smad cha rnams* (1531, biography with songs, *rnying ma pa*);⁷⁵
 4. *Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod* (1533, *rnying ma pa*).⁷⁶
 5. *Jo bo rje lha gcig dpal ldan a ti sha'i rnam thar bla ma'i yon tan chos kyi 'byung gnas sogs. bka' gdams rin po che'i glegs bam* (1538, biography, *bka' gdams pa*).⁷⁷
 6. *Jo bo rin po che rje dpal ldan a ti sha rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags* (1538, biography, *bka' gdams pa*).⁷⁸

69 Cf. FGT 671/3. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 335; Ehrhard 2000a, 45 n. 38, 61–63.

70 Cf. FGT 671/4. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 335; Ehrhard 2000a, 45 n. 38, 61–63.

71 Cf. FGT 671/5; NGMPP L195/10 (It seems that a further copy is available at the National Archives, but I was not able to check it. Cf. L1208/4). On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 335.

72 Cf. FGT 671/7; NGMPP L195/12. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 335–36.

73 Cf. FGT 286/1; NGMPP L755/4–L756/1, L211/2. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 2; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 131; Ehrhard 2000a, 29–30.

74 Cf. FGT 286/2; NGMPP L755/4–L756/1. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 2.

75 Cf. NGMPP L189/5–L190/1. On this work, see also Ehrhard 2000a, 37.

76 Cf. NAK 743 no. 2; NGMPP AT 53/17–AT 54/1, L1121/3–L1122/1. Facsimile edition in Ehrhard 2000c, 1–510. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a: 104–14; Ehrhard 2000c, IX.

77 Cf. FGT 361/1. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 132; Vetturini 2013, 145–48.

78 Cf. FGT 361/1[1]. This section is not quoted in the catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Collection.

7. *dGe bshes ston pas mdzad pa'i glegs bam gyi bka' rgya* (1538, *bka' gdams pa*);⁷⁹
 8. *Zhus lan nor bu'i phreng ba lha chos bdun ldan gyi bla ma brgyud pa rnam kyi rnam thar*. (1538, biography, *bka' gdams pa*).⁸⁰
 9. *Jo bo yab sras kyi gsung bgros pha chos rin po che'i gter mdzod / byang chub sems dpa'i. nor bu'i phreng ba rtsa 'grel sogs* (1538, commentary, *bka' gdams pa*);⁸¹
 10. *'Brom ston pa rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs bka' gdams bu chos le'u nyi shu pa* (1539, biography, *bka' gdams pa*).⁸²
 11. *bKa' rgya / khu chos gnyis / lung bstan / rdor glu / kha skong rnam* (1539, *bka' gdams. pa*).⁸³
 12. *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa / rin po che nor bu'i phreng ba* (1551, biography, *bo dong pa*).⁸⁴
- 4) gNas
1. *rJe btsun 'ba' ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum dang bcas pa* (not before 1555 not after 1581, biography and songs, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁸⁵
 2. *rJe btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar rnam mkhyen thar lam gsäl bar ston pa'i me long ye shes kyi snang ba* (1559, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁸⁶

79 Cf. FGT 361/2; TBRC: W00KG09688. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 132.

80 Cf. FGT 361/3; TBRC: W00KG09688. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 132.

81 Cf. FGT 361/4; TBRC: W1KG4473. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 132.

82 Cf. FGT 363/1. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 132; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 129–30 n. 67.

83 Cf. FGT 363/2. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 132; Diemberger and Clemente 2013, 129–30 n. 67; Ehrhard 2000a: 118–29.

84 Cf. NGMPP L66/5. The colophon is provided in Ehrhard 2000a, 165–70. On this work, see also Clemente (in press b).

85 Cf. L535/5.

86 Cf. FGT 657/4; UL Tibetan 155.1. According to the biography of Byams pa phun tshogs, he spent 5 months with rGod tshang ras chen at Ras chung phug, where he received a great number of reading authorisations, including the one of the biography of Ras chung pa, which was based on a xylographic edition of the text (see Ehrhard 2012, 158). Then, in 1559 he decided to print the biography of Ras chung pa written by rGod tshang ras chen, also thanks to a dream of his teacher and author of this work. He began to work in the fourth Hor month of the Sheep Year, when he was 57, and finished on the fifteenth day of the fifth Hor month of the same year. This work was first printed in 1531 at Ras chung

3. *mKhas grub sha ra rab 'jam pa sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar mthong ba don ldan ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba shar 'dod yid 'phrog blo gsal mgul brgyan* (1559, biography, *bka' brgyud pa*).⁸⁷
 4. *Jam dbyangs zhal gyi pad dkar 'dzum bya nas / lung rigs kyi gter mdzod ze 'bru bzheng la / blo gsal rkang drug ldan rnam pa phur lding rol / legs bshad sbrang rtsi'i dga' ston 'gyeng pa* (1561, Vinaya).⁸⁸
 5. *'Dul ba'i spyi don thub bstan rgyas pa'i nyin byed* (not before 1627 not after 1700, Vinaya).⁸⁹
- 5) Chab rom phug
1. *Phyag rgya chen po'i khrid yig bzhugs // skal bzang gso ba'i bdud rtsi snying po bcud bsdu* (1515, Mahāmudrā instructions, *bo dong pa*).⁹⁰
 2. *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa chos legs mtshan can gyi rnam thar yon tan 'brug sgra* (1525, biography, *bo dong pa*).⁹¹
- 6) Glang phug (La 'de Valley)
1. *Shā kya'i dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa chen po / na<m> mkha' rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar gsal ba'i me long* (1554, biography, *'ba' ra bka' brgyud pa*).⁹²
 2. *Shā kya'i dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa | na<m> mkha' rdo rje'i mgur 'bum / yid bzhin nor bu'i bang mdzod* (1554, spiritual songs, *'ba' ra bka' brgyud pa*).⁹³
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- phug (see Roberts 2007, 40–47). For its description and the translation of its colophon, see Clemente 2007, 125–26, 143–50. My attribution of this xylograph to Brag dkar rta so turned out to be wrong. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 330–31.
- 87 Cf. NGMPP L109/11; dPal brtsegs, text no. 36; U rgyan rdo rje 1976, 451–501. On this work, see also Bacot 1954, 292; Ehrhard 2012, 173; Schaeffer 2011, 473.
- 88 Cf. FGT 587. On this work, see Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 314; Ehrhard 2012, 163.
- 89 Cf. FGT 586. On this work, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 314.
- 90 Cf. FGT 286/3; NGMPP AT 61/21[.6], L501/2, L390/3; NAK 754 no. 6. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 2; Ehrhard 2000b, 241–321.
- 91 Cf. NGMPP L18/3, L66/7–L67/1; dPal brtsegs, text no. 15. The transliteration of the colophon is provided in Ehrhard 2000a, 95–100.
- 92 Cf. FGT 709/2. For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 342. For a summary of the life story of Nam mkha' rdo rje based on this work, see Ehrhard 2000a, 55–66. See also Sernesi 2013, 205.
- 93 Cf. FGT 709/3. For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 342. See also Ehrhard 2000a, 55–66, 171–75; Sernesi 2013, 205.

- 7) Shel dkar
1. 'Grel chung don gsal (1407, commentary).⁹⁴
 2. rGyud sde spyi rnam (between 1407 and 1410?,⁹⁵ bo dong pa).⁹⁶
- 8) mDzo lhas
1. sKyes mchog gi zhus lan thugs kyi snying po zab mo'i gter mdzod (1540, questions and answers, bka' brgyud pa).⁹⁷
- 9) A ti sha'i chos 'khor
1. rGyal ba yang dgon pa'i thugs kyi bcud ngo sprod bdun gyi mgur ma (1546, spiritual songs, bka' brgyud pa).⁹⁸
- 10) Khams gsum g.yul las rnam rgyal pho brang
1. Rang byon jo bo 'phags pa wa ti bzang po'i rnam thar nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor (1525, biography).⁹⁹

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94 Cf. dPal brtsegs, text no. 1. On this work, see Diemberger 2012; Diemberger (in press).

95 For the dating, see Porong Dawa, this volume.

96 Cf. dPal brtsegs, text no. 3, f. 559. On this work, see Porong Dawa (this volume).

97 Cf. FGT 671/6; NGMPP L538/5, L195/11. On this work, see also Clemente (in press c); De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 335; Ehrhard 2000a, 130–41.

98 Cf. FGT 1466; U rgyan rdo rje 1976: 381–449. On this work, see also De Rossi Filibeck 2003, 458–59; Ehrhard 2000a, 65, 162–64.

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- NGMPP L66/5 = Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484–1549). *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa / rin po che nor bu'i phreng ba*. Microfilm kept at the National Archives, Kathmandu (ff. 1a–129b).

- NGMPP L109/11 = Zla ba rgyal mtshan. *mKhas grub sha ra rab 'jam pa sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar mthong ba don ldan ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba shar 'dod yid 'phrog blo gsal mgul brgyan*. Microfilm kept at the National Archives, Kathmandu (ff. 1a–26a).
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Revolutions of the Dharma Wheel: Uses of Tibetan Printing in the Eighteenth Century

Benjamin J. Nourse

1 Introduction

As there are not, to my knowledge, any established periodizations of the history of Tibetan printing, I would like to begin by briefly sketching out some of the critical eras in the development of printing technology for use in Tibetan-language publishing. The study of Tibetan printing history has, for good reasons, focused on developments in central and western Tibet (dBus gTsang and mNga' ris) during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this key period, printing became an established craft on the Tibetan plateau. But this was not the only important era of Tibetan printing. The history of Tibetan printing can, in very general terms, be divided into four main periods: (1) Tibetan-language publishing under the sponsorship of non-Tibetan central Asians such as the Tanguts and the Mongols (12th–14th centuries); (2) the rise of central and western Tibetan printing (15th–16th centuries); (3) the continued spread of printing, including into eastern Tibet and Mongolia, and the publication of canons (18th–19th centuries); and (4) the adoption of non-woodblock printing technologies (20th century). We could add to these key periods of intensive growth in Tibetan printing several other significant milestones, such as the simultaneous publication and suppression of literature by the dGa' ldan pho brang government beginning in the latter half of seventeenth century or the first xylograph editions of the bKa' 'gyur – produced by the Ming dynasty (15th c.) and the kingdom of 'Jang Sa tham (16th c.), both non-Tibetan polities.

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This general outline of Tibetan printing history is offered as an initial attempt at periodization and of course may require revision as more evidence comes to light. Regardless, the development of such frameworks can help us think through the larger trajectory of Tibetan printing and place individual printing projects or eras into a broader context. In this paper, I will be concerned mainly with developments in the third period suggested above – the spread of printing especially during the eighteenth century – while at the same time noting some continuities and differences between the earlier fifteenth and sixteenth-century publishing environment and that of the eighteenth-century. In order to do so, I will first look at several examples of well-known works or collections that were the subject of early Tibetan printing projects and trace these works' subsequent printing histories.

The political landscape of the eighteenth century was one in which several polities grew rapidly, consolidated their power, and built their institutional bases. These polities included the Qing dynasty, the dGa' ldan pho brang government in central Tibet, Bhutan under the Zhabs drung and their regents, and the kingdoms of Co ne and sDe dge in eastern Tibet. In addition, the eighteenth century saw the development of a host of mega-monasteries, especially within the dGe lugs pa school. These large monasteries housed thousands of monks and became substantial landowners with significant political clout of their own. Most of these new centres of power, polities and monasteries, became major publishers of woodblock editions of Tibetan texts. In the latter part of the paper, I will explore the development of several of these new printing centres with an eye toward how the texts produced at these centres may have been regarded and used. The amount of texts from eighteenth-century publishers that survive or are recorded in Tibetan sources provide us with an opportunity to speculate about some of the more specific uses of printing and printed books during that century.

2 Early and Later Publications of Important Collections

We don't know the full extent of printing in fifteenth-century Tibet, but from currently available evidence it seems that in terms of larger projects there was a focus on the collected works (or a selection of works) by the luminaries of particular schools and traditions. An example of this is the printing of works composed by Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419), which began not long after his death (Jackson 1983, 6; Jackson 1989, 5). These were published in dBus, near the centres of the emerging dGe lugs pa school around Lhasa and dGa' ldan monastery. They were produced with the support of Grags pa rgyal

mtshan (1374–1432), the ruler of the Phag mo gru pa government who was an important patron of Tsong kha pa and the early dGe lugs pa school. The publication of Tsong kha pa's works during this early period of woodblock printing in Tibet was probably one factor among many in the success of the dGe lugs pa school. However, it is not until the eighteenth century that we see his collected works published in several editions. They were printed in Beijing as a supplement to the bsTan 'gyur published with Qing imperial support in 1724.¹ At Co ne, a dGe lugs pa monastery in A mdo, we find the publication of Tsong kha pa's collected works under the direction of Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (b. 1708), a member of the Co ne royal family and the abbot of the Co ne dgon chen (dKlon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1986, 423.20–424.5, 426.4–6). Other editions of Tsong kha pa's collected works from dGe lugs pa institutions include those from the Zhol par khang, bKra shis lhun po, sKu 'bum, Bla brang, and 'Bras spungs, all of which date from the eighteenth century or later.²

Around the same time that Tsong kha pa's works were first being printed, works of the early Sa skya pa masters were being published in gTsang (Jackson 1983, 6). Toward the middle of the same century an edition (possibly incomplete) of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* was published in dBus under the sponsorship of Gong dkar rdo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432–96) (Jackson 1989, 11). We do not currently know of other editions of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* that were printed before the collection was published at sDe dge in 1736.³ It is not

1 A facsimile reprint of this edition is in *The Tibetan Tripitaka* (1961, vols. 152–161).

2 The Zhol par khang edition has been reprinted as *The Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of the Incomparable Lord Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa* (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Gurudeva, 1978–79), TBRC: <http://tbrc.org/#!rid=W635>. This publication dates the Zhol edition to 1897. The bKra shis lhun po edition has been reprinted as *The Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of Rje Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1975–), TBRC: <http://tbrc.org/#!rid=W22109>, and more recently as *Rje yab sras gsum gyi gsung bum*, vols. 1–18 (Dharamsala: Sherig Parkhang, 1998), TBRC: <http://tbrc.org/#!rid=W29193>. Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las (2004, 140–41) dates the bKra shis lhun po edition to the time of Paṅ chen Blo bzang ye shes (1663–1737). Digital reproductions of the sKu 'bum and Bla brang editions are available on TBRC: <http://tbrc.org/#!rid=W22272> and <http://tbrc.org/#!rid=W22273> respectively. TBRC dates the sKu 'bum edition to the nineteenth century. The digital reproduction of the Bla brang edition is based on a recent impression made from woodblocks at Bla brang which are probably not the originals. Tsong kha pa's collected works were also published in sDe dge, but not until the early twentieth century under the patronage of A ja rdo rje seng ge; see TBRC digital reproduction of the sDe dge edition: <http://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W22274>.

3 Jackson (1983, 16) notes that a list of printing blocks in central Tibet compiled in the mid-twentieth century contains a listing of an edition of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* listed under “dPal di rdzong.” Jackson speculates that this could be the old Gong dkar ba edition, but it could also be some other yet unidentified edition of this collection.

surprising that the sDe dge court sponsored this project. Printing in sDe dge focused on works of the Sa skya pa school and in particular the Ngor pa subsect of the Sa skya pa school with which sDe dge had an especially close relationship. In fact, the primary early instigator of printing at sDe dge was Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth Great Abbot (*mkhan chen*) of Ngor E waṃ chos ldan monastery.

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was invited to sDe dge by its ruler in 1699. He died in 1705, but spent the last years of his life in and around sDe dge. During that time he encouraged the royal court of sDe dge to print scriptures (Mu po 2002, 136–141).⁴ We find him mentioned in the nineteenth-century historical work the *Royal Genealogy of sDe dge* (*sDe dge'i rgyal rabs*) by Tshe dbang rdo rje rig 'dzin (b. 1786) as the key figure in the publication of one of the first, perhaps the very first, printed work produced in sDe dge – a bilingual xylographic edition of the *Eight-Thousand Verse Perfection of Wisdom* (*'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa*) with illustrations of the twelve acts of the Buddha (Tshe dbang rdo rje rig 'dzin 1994, 19b.1–3). The patron of this and other early publications was Sangs rgyas bstan pa, the third abbot of the sDe dge dgon chen and the king of sDe dge for several decades in the latter half of the seventeenth century (Kolmas 1968, 34; Ronis 2009, 65).

A series of abbatial throne holders from Ngor e waṃ chos ldan monastery followed the example of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and made extended journeys to sDe dge periodically throughout the eighteenth century (Mu po 2002, 157–58 and 169; Jackson 1996, 311–314). The steady stream of lamas from Ngor were no doubt aware of the favorable conditions in sDe dge under the patronage of the royal court, including support for printing projects. Many of the printing activities at sDe dge were said to be undertaken at the request of these hierarchs of Ngor and often reflect their sectarian interests. For example, two early publications at sDe dge carried out in 1705 were the famous *Excellent Sayings of Sa skya* [*Paṇḍita*] (*Sa skya legs bshad*) and the *Religious History of Ngor* (*Ngor chos 'byung*).⁵ The sDe dge printing house continued to publish the collected works

4 Note however that Mu po (2002, 139) identifies the sDe dge ruler who made the invitation as “sde dge sa skyong bla ma tshe dbang rdo rje.” This biography seems to be mistaking the nineteenth-century sDe dge ruler and writer of the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs*, Tshe dbang rdo rje rig 'dzin, for a late seventeenth-century ruler.

5 These two works are still held by the sDe dge Printing House. The printer's colophon to the *Sa skya legs bshad* (Kun dga' rgyal mtshan 1705, 26b.3–4), which I transcribed from the sDe dge blocks, reads: *lugs gnyis kyi blang dor gsal bar ston pa legs par bshad pa rin po che'i gter zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos 'di nyid srid mthar dar zhing rgyas ba'i ched du sa skyong shing bya lor sde dge lhun grun steng du sde dge bla ma sangs rgyas bstan pas chos sbyin mi zad pa'i rgyun spel ba 'dis bstan pa dang sems can la phan pa'i rgyur gyur cig//*. On this publication, see also Zhaxia (2008, 112). The printer's colophon to the *Ngor chos 'byung* may be found in the Indian

and biographies of other Sa skya and Ngor masters throughout the course of the eighteenth century.

Beyond the examples of Tsong kha pa's collected works or the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* and other publications from sDe dge, a cursory overview of the publications issuing from eighteenth-century printing centres would seem to indicate that the printing of many Tibetan texts was undertaken along sectarian lines. Printing at the Qing court, in Lhasa, and in A mdo, often favored the dGe lugs pa school with collections such as the collected works of Tsong kha pa and his immediate disciples. In Bhutan, works related to the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa school were sponsored, such as the collected works of Padma dkar po. Further investigation into the publication history of smaller collections or individual texts may be able to demonstrate whether Tibetan publishing was indeed as sectarian as the few examples I have discussed here would indicate.

3 Classics

While printing often focused on texts of sectarian or local importance, some pieces of Tibetan literature were able to transcend regional and sectarian affiliations. Prime examples of this type of literature include the *Life and Songs of Milarepa* (*Mi la'i rNam thar* and *mGur 'bum*), the *Collected Pronouncements of the Maṇi* (*Ma ṇi bka' 'bum*), and the *Four Tantras* (*rGyud bzhi*) – titles that Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2000a, 14) has described even in the context of fifteenth-century printing as “Buddhist classics.” But while these works were first printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, evidence for their appeal beyond certain lineages and localities is generally not evident in their publication history until the eighteenth century.

For example, among the eighteen woodblock editions of gTsang smyon He ru ka's *Life and Songs of Milarepa* (Map 19.1) that I have so far been able to identify, we find that the first edition was printed shortly after the composition of these works the late fifteenth century.⁶ This was followed by a quick succession of four other editions through the mid-sixteenth century. Then the rate of production slows considerable for the next century and a half (only one new edition made). In the eighteenth century, however, at least five new editions were carved, and there were likely more. And, whereas the earlier prints

reprint of the sDe dge edition (dKon mchog lhun grub and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs 1973, 457.2–458.2).

6 Sources relating to editions of the *Mi la'i rNam thar* and *mGur 'bum* are given in note 27.

had all been made in relatively close geographic proximity to one another and largely by bKa' brgyud pa figures in the lineage of the author, gTsang smyon Heruka, the eighteenth-century editions cover a large geographic extent (Bhutan, Beijing, sDe dge in Khams, and Co ne and g.Yer gshong in A mdo) and were published by figures and institutions representing a range of Tibetan sectarian allegiances.

We find a similar trend for the printings of the *Collected Pronouncements of the Maṇi* (Map 19.2).⁷ Of the editions that I have found mentioned in Tibetan or secondary sources, there were two early xylograph editions – one produced in the late fifteenth century and one in the early sixteenth century. They both were made in rDzong dkar in Mang yul Gung thang. After these, we do not see any more new editions until the eighteenth century when at least four editions were published within a few decades of each other. Editions of the *Collected Pronouncements of the Maṇi* were produced in Bhutan, Co ne, sDe dge, and Beijing, all sites of emerging political powers at the time.

In the publications of the *Four Tantras*, we find a different pattern from the above two examples (Map 19.3).⁸ While we again see an early edition from Mang yul Gung thang, this fundamental collection of the Tibetan medical tradition went through at least five editions in the seventeenth century, two of which were products of the newly formed dGa' ldan pho brang government in Lhasa. This seems to go against the general trend of finding the bulk of editions before and after the seventeenth century. In fact, apart from the publishing activities of the Jo nang pa monastery of rTag brtan phun tshogs gling in the first half of the seventeenth century, there is a general lack of evidence of concerted efforts at woodblock printing in that century by institutions other than the dGa' ldan pho brang government, which became the dominant central Tibetan publisher in the late seventeenth century. This gap in evidence may be related to the activities of the same government to limit or control the use of printing and the dissemination of texts by others, the foremost example of which is the conversion of rTag brtan phun tshogs gling to the dGe lugs pa school, after which the printing of many texts from that monastery's sizable printing house was restricted (on this and other printing bans see Smith 2004). The relatively large amount of seventeenth-century editions of the *Four Tantras*, however, did not curtail further publications of these texts in the

7 Sources relating to editions of the *Ma ṇi bka' 'bum* are given in note 28.

8 Sources relating to editions of the *rGyud bzhi* are given in note 29.

eighteenth century, including editions from sDe dge, Beijing, and sKu 'bum, and likely the dBang 'dus pho brang edition produced in Bhutan as well.

4 An Age of Canons: The Prestige and Merit of Printing

While the classics we have looked at so far all had a precedent of publication in central or western Tibet in the fifteenth century, there was no Tibetan precedent for eighteenth-century publications of perhaps the greatest of Buddhist classics, the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur. While the bKa' 'gyur had been previously printed in China and in the Naxi kingdom of 'Jang Sa tham, the eighteenth century witnessed the production of editions of both the bKa' 'gyur and the bsTan 'gyur in Beijing as well as the Tibetan areas of Co ne, sDe dge, and sNar thang. In no other century were more xylograph editions of canons produced than in the eighteenth century.⁹ This is in sharp contrast to the fifteenth and sixteenth-century printing boom in central Tibet which in comparison saw relatively little printing of canonical literature.¹⁰

The first Tibetan kingdom to print the bKa' 'gyur was Co ne, in A mdo (in today's Gansu province of China). The fortunes of the Co ne kings rose with the Qing dynasty, which they often aided militarily in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Around the year 1711, the king of Co ne, dMag zor mgon po (b. 1686), and his brother, Ngag dbang 'phrin las rgya mtsho (1688–1738), who was abbot of the Co ne dgon chen, went to Beijing for an audience with the Kangxi emperor. During this trip, Ngag dbang 'phrin las rgya mtsho, the abbot, paid two thousand silver *strang* in order to bring a print of the Beijing bKa' 'gyur back to Co ne for installation in its new Jo bo lha khang (dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1986, 385.12–14 and 402.1–3). Acquiring the newly completed edition of the bKa' 'gyur from the palace of the emperor was likely a factor in the decision

9 Xylograph editions of the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur that were *not* made in the eighteenth century include the Yongle bKa' 'gyur (15th c.), the Wanli bKa' 'gyur (17th c.), the 'Jang sa tham bKa' 'gyur (17th c.), the first issue of the Beijing bKa' 'gyur (17th c.), the Rwa rgya bKa' 'gyur (19th c.), the Urga bKa' 'gyur and (unfinished) bsTan 'gyur (20th c.), the the Wa ra bKa' 'gyur and (unfinished) bsTan 'gyur (20th c.), and the Lhasa bKa' 'gyur (20th c.).

10 There is some evidence of the printing of canonical materials during the early period of printing in Tibet. Leonard van der Kuijp (1993, 289–290; 2004, 10–11) mentions several fifteenth and sixteenth-century publications of canonical texts, such as works by Dignaga and Dharmakīrti. Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2000a, 12) mentions the 1439–1441 printing of a gzung 'bum compiled by Bu ston Rin chen drup. However, in general printing seems to have been more frequently utilized for non-canonical works in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

of the Co ne court to print their own edition of the bKa' 'gyur, a project that began in 1721 and was completed a decade later.

Indeed, later in the eighteenth century when the Co ne queen Rin chen dpal 'dzom printed the bsTan 'gyur at Co ne, competition with other polities is cited as one of her initial motivations, before turning to more pure intentions. We read in the catalogue written for the bsTan 'gyur publication that after some initial feelings of doubt as to the possibility of completing such a grand project, the queen then considered her status and the renown that would result from sponsoring the bsTan 'gyur project:

[The great ruler] thought dejectedly, “How can we accomplish such a difficult endeavor?” Then she thought arrogantly, “I alone can accomplish a task such as this which could not be undertaken by most common people.” She thought competitively, “Since in other great countries they have accomplished this excellent course of perfect virtue, I, who am equal to them, also will accomplish it.” With fame in mind she thought, “In accomplishing such service to the teachings, all the border people also will praise [me].” (dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1986, 439.18–440.4)¹¹

This candid passage suggests that competition was a factor in the eighteenth-century printings of the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur and that prestige was granted to those who could undertake such projects. The act of reproducing and thereby maintaining and protecting the Buddhist teachings was seen as the domain of Buddhist monarchs, and Tibetan rulers who published canons were compared to the great religious protectors of old, as when Si tu pañ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (2008, 404.11) describes the sDe dge king as the second coming (*slar yang 'ongs*) of Aśoka.

Political leaders, however, were not exclusively motivated by prestige or competition. Canons were also printed because they were powerful sacred objects. Productions of xylograph editions of the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur were often carried out for the purposes of merit accumulation, ritual practice, and worship. The catalogues to eighteenth-century xylograph editions of the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur describe at length the great merit generated by these

11 In Tibetan: *bya dka' ba'i gnas 'di lta bu bdag cag gis ji ltar sgrub nus snyam pa'i zhum pa dang /_skye bo phal mo che sus kyang rtsom par mi nus pa'i gnas 'di lta bu sgrub pa ni bdag nyid 'ba' zhig go snyam pa'i khengs pa dang /_yul gru chen po gzhan dag tu mnam dkar gyi lam bzang po 'di lta bu bsgrubs 'dug pas de dang mtshungs par bdag gis kyang bsgrub par bya'o snyam pa'i 'gran sems dang /_bstan pa'i zhabs tog 'di lta bu sgrub pa la sa mtha'i skye bo rnam gyis kyang bsngags pa 'rjod [read: brjod] par 'gyur ro snyam pa'i grags pa . . .*

projects, the good results that are likely to result from them, and the protection from evil events and forces gained through the production of bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur.¹² To cite just one example, in his catalogue to the sDe dge bKa' 'gyur, Si tu paṅ chen ends an analysis of several quotations from Buddhist scriptures that describe the merit of copying Buddhist texts by extending the discussion to the merit resulting specifically from printing:

In summary, if each time one writes out a sūtra there are these kinds of benefits, then in tens of thousands of aeons one could not even partially describe the heap of merit resulting from printing an edition consisting of many volumes of sūtra and tantra for the purpose of distributing inexhaustible gifts of Dharma. (Chos kyi 'byung gnas 2008, 514.20–515.2)¹³

The results of accruing such great stores of merit were said to include peace and prosperity for the kingdom in which the production took place, as well as the continuation of the royal family as rulers and the maintenance of their wealth for generations (see, for example, Chos kyi 'byung gnas 2008, 509.17–511.6; and dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1986, 455.1–456.12).

Merit could also be earned through ritual recitations of the canonical collections. Eighteenth-century bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur catalogues contain several references to rulers ordering such recitations to be performed by monasteries in their domain (for example, Tshul khirms rin chen 1985, 435.12–15; dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1986, 385.10, 397.10–11, 408.16, and 410.19). We might speculate that one use of the printed editions of the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur might have been for distribution to regional monasteries, allowing a ruler to greatly amplify ritual readings of these collections.

12 Claims about the accumulation of merit and other results of canonical publications are mostly found in the sections of bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur catalogues having to do with the benefits (*phan yon*) to be gained through printing the bKa' 'gyur or bsTan 'gyur (see Chos kyi 'byung gnas 2008, 511–520; Tshul khirms rin chen 1985, 864–875; and dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1986, 456–467).

13 In Tibetan: *mdor na mdo sde re re 'dri ba la'ang de lta bu'i phan yon yod na/_ mdo rgyud kyi glegs bam mang po'i phyi mo mi zad pa'i chos sbyin spel ba'i phyir par du bsgrubs pa'i bsod nams kyi phung po la ni phyogs tsam zhig kyang bskal pa bye pa phrag mang por brjod pas mtha' gtugs par nus pa ma yin no/.*

5 Ritual Liturgies in sDe dge and Beijing

Merit could also be accrued through the performance or sponsorship of smaller, regularly performed rituals. Whether or not printing added to the amount of ritual recitations of the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur, printing was used to produce material for the regular ritual activities of monasteries in the eighteenth century, particularly in the publications of collections of liturgical materials.

At sDe dge, the Ngor abbots who had been responsible for encouraging the court to take up printing also worked to establish new codes of conduct and reinvigorate the monastic ritual calendar. Zhu chen Tshul khrim rin chen in his catalogue to the sDe dge bsTan 'gyur tells us that Ngor abbots like Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and bKra shis lhun grub wrote new monastic customaries (*bca' yig*) and instituted new annual ceremonies and daily ritual schedules for monasteries throughout the sDe dge kingdom (Tshul khrim rin chen 1985, 433.3–16). At the same time, the sDe dge court financed a large number of these rituals at monasteries within their domain (Tshul khrim rin chen 1985, 445.15–446.1). Zhu chen later in his catalogue mentions the printing of liturgical (*chos spyod*) materials needed for rituals and recitation. This comes in a roughly chronological listing of several early sDe dge publications. In between Zhu chen's recording of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* and the bsTan 'gyur publications, he writes:

Furthermore, around eleven volumes were published and given as gifts of Dharma which included the necessary materials for those liturgies chiefly recited in the Ngor tradition, such as means of accomplishment, maṇḍala rituals, offering [rites], and ritual cake [rites], and also the *Four Medical Tantras*, the *Supplement to the Oral Instruction Tantra*, and so forth. (Tshul khrim rin chen 1985, 448.18–21)¹⁴

The liturgical texts mentioned here could have been used in the regular ritual activity of Lhun grub steng and other monasteries in the sDe dge kingdom, particularly if in fact the religious centres of the region were increasingly adopting the same schedule of ritual activities.

14 In Tibetan: *gzhan yang ngor lugs gtso bor bton pa'i chos spyod kyi rigs dang /_sgrub thabs dang /_dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dang /_mchod pa dang /_gtor ma la sogs pa nye bar mkho ba'i rigs su gtogs pa dang /_gso ba rig pa'i rgyud bzhi dang /_man ngag rgyud kyi lhan thabs sogs/_bsdoms pa glegs bam bcu gcig tsam par du bsgrubs te chos kyi sbyin pa btang ngo /.*

Several collections of liturgical materials (*chos spyod rab gsal*) were also published in eighteenth-century Beijing.¹⁵ Most of these are one-volume collections composed of multiple short prayers and ritual liturgies that would be used in the daily assemblies of a monastery. For example, a collection published in 1731 by the imperial monastery dGa' ldan chos 'khor gling contains thirty short individual texts ranging from prayers of refuge and the cultivation of bodhicitta (*skyabs 'gro sems bskyed*) to confessional rites (*ltung bshags*) and ritual cake offerings (*gtor 'bul*).¹⁶ Monastic leaders were likely making a practical use of printing in the production of these woodblock editions of frequently used ritual texts.

6 sDe dge, the Literary Arts, and the Training of Scribes

Another practical application of printed texts in the eighteenth century may have been their use as study materials. Some early sDe dge publications reflect an interest in the literary arts, and these texts may have been in part printed as aids to the staffs at work on the sDe dge printing house's many publishing projects.

The earliest datable sDe dge publication that I have found is a grammar treatise published by Sangs rgyas bstan pa at Lhun grub steng in the wood monkey (*shing spre*) year, 1704. This work is a short (25 folios) commentary by Chos skyong bzang po (1441–1527) on Thon mi Sam+b+ho Ta's two root texts on Tibetan grammar and spelling.¹⁷ Sangs rgyas bstan pa's successor to the sDe

15 The University of Wisconsin-Madison Library's Special Collections Department holds prints of several of these collections and Taube (1966, 1145–1149) has catalogued a number of them that are held in German libraries.

16 This is in the Lessing Collection of University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries' Special Collections Department, nos. 362–88 (see Zwilling 1984, entries 31, 339, 325, 38, 292, 155, 249, 198, 237, 253, 369, 23, 110, 107, 141, 429, 101, 345, 172, 215, 481, 471, 475, 529, 146, 450, 137, and 2). The colophon at the end of the catalogue to this liturgical collection (Lessing no. 388, 3a.1–4) reads: *ta'i ching yung ceng rgyal po lo dgu zla ba brgyad pa la yar tshes la/_/cha han bla ma lha kha ba [= khang] dga' ldan chos 'khor gling du legs par bsggrubs/_/_/yi ge pa ni dge slong dge legs 'byung nas pris [= bris] pa'o/_/_/dge bas 'gro nmams sangs rgyas thob par shog/.*

17 The blocks for this text, titled 'Gos lo tsā ba d+harmā pā las mdzad pa'i bod kyi brda'i bye brag legs par bshad pa sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i rtsa 'grel, are still held by the sDe dge Printing House. Zhaxia (2008, 112), also discusses this text as one of the earliest publications at sDe dge, though only giving a Chinese gloss of the title: *Zangwen wenfa* [*Tibetan Grammar*].

dge throne, bSod nams phun tshogs, is also credited in colophons with the printing of several short texts. Two of these are also works on grammar and spelling: the *Lamp of Speech* (*Ngag gi sgron ma*) by dPal khang Lo tsā ba Ngag dbang chos kyi rgya mtsho (15th/16th c.) and the *Clove Pavilion Dictionary* (*Dag yig li shi'i gur khang*) by sMon grub Lo tsā ba Rin chen bkra shis (b. 15th c.).¹⁸ In these early sDe dge publications we see efforts made to print works on grammar and language arts. One possible reason for this interest could be the use of these and similar texts as practical reference works for a kingdom looking to train literate scribes, likely for the purpose of both writing out scriptures as well as administering the growing domain of the sDe dge kingdom. The printer's colophon to Chos skyong bzang po's text in fact provides a practical purpose for printing the text. It states that the publication was made "having found this root text and commentary to be indispensable to the fulfillment of reading and writing" (Chos skyong bzang po 1704, 25a.1–2).¹⁹

18 The blocks for these works are still held by the sDe dge printing house. The printer's colophon for the *Ngag gi sgron ma* (Ngag dbang chos kyi rgya mtsho, n.d., 21a.4–7) reads: *om s+ba s+ti/_brjod bya rang bzhin gyis grub rtsa yi gre'i/_dbyi bas su gnas pas brjod_dpal khang pa chos mdzad lo tsā bar grags/_byed ngag grub pa/_gangs can mrda' yi lam du 'dren byed pa'i/_gtsug lag bye ba'i rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru/_mkhas pa'i ngag sgron gdeng can bsti ba'i gnas/_glegs bshad chu klung 'bum gyi yongs gang ba/_blo ldan ngang mo rtse ba'i do ra che/_dzad med rba rlab 'phyur ba'i par 'di ko ta/_lugs zung mkhyen pa'i lus stobs rmad byung sdes/_dge bcu'i rgyal bstan 'degs la mi dal zhing _/_bgrangs yas bsod nams mtsho ba drug ldan pa'i/_phun tshogs phan bde'i dra bas mdzas des bskrun/_de lta'i legs byas me shel khang bzang can/_'khor gsum yang dag gzi 'od 'bum 'phro bas/_mtha' med 'khor ba'i mun pa drung 'byin nas/_rnam mkhyen rdzogs byang lam du bsgrad phyir bsngo//sar+wa dza yan+tu//_/_lha skyab kyis gso pa'o//. Circles underneath the text highlight the syllables *sde dge*, *bsod rnam*s, and *phun tshogs*, that is, the name of the sDe dge ruler. The printer's colophon for the *Dag yig li shi'i gur khang* (Rin chen bkra shis, n.d., 16a.4–6) reads: *om dza ya dza yan+tu/_gsung rab yan lag bcu gnyis chu gter che/_gsar rnying brda tshig gting zab spog dka' ba/_rnam dpyod khyor chur gsol byed li gur 'di/_thos bsam bdud rtsir bsgyur phyir mkha' la bskrun/_brda tshig skom gyis gdungs ba'i phyin pa/_tshig don yan lag brgyad ldan da 'thungs shig/_grangs med gcig car bskrun pa'i chos sbyin 'di/_sde dge lhun grub steng gi chos grwa ru/_byang phyogs nor 'dzin chos bzhin skyong ba po/_rdo rje 'dzin pa bsod nams phun tshogs kyis/_par du bsgrubs pa'i legs byas gang thob pa/_sangs rgyas bstan pa rgyas pa'i mchod par 'bul/_dpe 'di phyi mo gnyis dang bstun nas bris shing dpang po po ta la'i par yig yid brten dang mi 'gal bar rgyas pa'i yan lag 'ga' zhig zhabs rtog gi tshul du bkod cing slan chad kyang zhus dag sogs 'dug na mdzad par zhu zhu/_yi ge pa ni bkra lus bgyis so/_sar+ba mang+galam/_b+ha wan+tu/.**

19 In Tibetan: *rtsa 'grel 'di nyid 'dri klog mtha' dag la med du mi rung ba lta bu'i nges pa rnyed nas...* The full printer's colophon (Chos skyong bzang po 1704, 25a.1–3) to this edition reads: *ces pa bsil ldan ljong gi bstan pa'i srol 'byed chen po thon mi sam+b+ho ta'i mdzad ba'i sum rtags rtsa 'grel 'di nyid 'dri klog mtha' dag la med du mi rung ba lta bu'i nges pa rnyed*

The training of scribes reached its apex in sDe dge during the large bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur projects, when grammatical texts were used to train dozens of people to work in the scribal workshops which prepared the texts that were to be carved onto blocks. Zhu chen mentions explicitly that knowledge of Thon mi Sam+b+ho Ta's works were necessary for the scholars working on the bsTan 'gyur project. In the same section describing the qualifications of his project workers, he also cites from dPal khang Lo tsā ba's *Lamp of Speech* (Tshul khrims rin chen 1985, 551.10–22). The editors of both the sDe dge bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur remark that the publications of the sDe dge court increased knowledge of writing in the region (Chos kyi 'byung gnas 2008, 416.11–20; Tshul khrims rin chen 1985, 554.2–556.4; and Schaeffer 2009, 104).

7 Bla brang, Textbooks, and the Institutionalizing of Printing

Let us now turn from kingdoms to monasteries and look briefly at the development of printing at Bla brang bKra shis 'khyil in A mdo in order to suggest some of the possible ways that a rapidly growing monastery might have used printing. Woodblock printing began at Bla brang in the mid-eighteenth century under the direction of the Second 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po (1728–1791). In the biography of dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po we find several passages relating to the establishment of printing at Bla brang. The earliest reference is recorded when dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po was just twenty-two years old, around the year 1749. At that time, he brought a block carver by the name of Blo bzang dar rgyas from g.Yer gshong to carve sādhana texts related to the previous 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's tutelary deity (dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me 2000, 37b.2–3). This episode seems to have been a limited affair which did not establish regular publishing activities at Bla brang, since later in the biography dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me states that before the iron snake (*lcags sbrul*) year of 1761 there was not a tradition of printing at Bla brang (69a.2–69b.3).

Then, in 1761, two years after dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po's return from studying in central Tibet, he established woodblock printing as an integral part of Bla brang's activities. In that year,

nas sde dge lhun grub steng du sde dge gdan sa pa sangs rgyas bstan pas rab byung bcu gnyis pa'i nyi sgrol byed pa shing sprel lo'i sa ga can gyi zla ba'i dkar tshes la chos sbyin mi zad pa'i rgyun spel ba'i dge bas lung rtogs dam pa'i chos kyi tshig don 'khrul med dar zhing rgyas pa'i rtsa lag tu gyur cig/.

Because all of the textual traditions had become rare, [dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po] instructed Dar han chos rje [to act as] patron and Rab 'byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin [to act as] manager. Several monks were made to study block carving and afterward printing blocks for both the *Mind* and *Signs* (*Blo rTags gnyis*) were the first to be carved. Since then, the carving has been continuous and now has become a source of Dharma [in itself]. (dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me 2000, 69b.1–3)²⁰

The *Mind* and *Signs* mentioned here by dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me refers to the textbooks on the topics of mental states (*blo rig/rigs*) and reasoning (*rtags rigs*) written by the founder of Bla brang monastery 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje Ngag dbang brtson 'grus (1648–1722).²¹ Here again, we see a desire to put into print the works of a significant lineage master, in this case the founder of the monastery and the immediate predecessor of dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po in the line of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa incarnations. Indeed, these initial publications were followed by other works of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje until his entire collected works had been carved by 1791 at the latest (Schaeffer 1999, 160). However, the selection of the *Mind* and *Signs* as the first works to be published after the formal establishment of printing at Bla brang could also be significant in other ways. These two works are the textbooks used at the beginning of monastic education in many dGe lugs pa monasteries.²² Prioritizing their publication might indicate an emphasis toward using printing

20 In Tibetan: *sngar dgon 'dir par rkos rgyun chags kyi srol ma byung bas dpe rgyun thams cad dkon par yod pa'i stabs mnga' ris dar han chos rjer sbyin bdag dang /_rab 'byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin la gnyer gyi bka' phebs te/_grwa pa kha shas la par brko tshul slob tu bcug nas/_blo rtags gnyis kyi par thog mar brkos shing /_de nas bzung rgyun mi 'chad du brkos pa da lta chos kyi 'byung gnas lta bur gyur te...*

21 These two works are the *rTags rigs kyi nam bzhag nyung gsal legs bshad gser gyi phreng mdzes* and *Blo rig gi nam bzhag nyung gsal legs bshad gser gyi phreng mdzes* which are found in the Bla brang edition of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje's collected works (see 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje, n.d., 14: 174–301 (*rTags rigs*) and 14: 303–374 (*Blo rig*)).

22 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje's textbooks were used at sGo mang college of 'Bras spungs and at Bla brang monastery, as well as at their affiliates. There were two other main sets of textbooks used in dGe lugs pa monastic colleges. The gradual standardization of curricula and the wider use of printing in the eighteenth century likely helped cement these texts in the curriculum as well as making them easier to disseminate among the increasing population of monks at large monastic centres. On the three main sets of textbooks, or manuals, and their standardization, see Dreyfus (2003, 124–25 and 143). Dreyfus also notes (148) that the textbooks of Bla brang monastery eventually came to be used even in some non-dGe lugs pa monasteries in A mdo, in particular rNying ma pa and Jo nang pa institutions.

to supply study materials to monks of the monastery. This use of printing is attested at other major publishing centres in the eighteenth century. Pho lha gnas, the ruler of central Tibet from 1729 to his death in 1747, had published textbooks used at the three major dGe lugs pa monasteries in dBus. According to his biography by Tshe ring dbang rgyal, Pho lha gnas printed textbooks because “novice monks spent too much effort copying books and it was difficult for monks of little means to acquire copies” (translated and quoted in Schaeffer 2009, 116).

The printing of curricular materials which were distributed to monks at Bla brang is further suggested in an episode found within the history of Buddhism in A mdo known as the *Ocean Annals* (*Deb ther rgya mtsho*) by dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1801–1866). This episode occurred in the wood pig (*sa phag*) year, 1779, when Bla brang had just finished construction of its new assembly hall (*'du khang*). gTsang sprul sku bsTan pa rgya mtsho (1737–1780) was invited to Bla brang for the consecration of the new building. “At that time,” the *Ocean Annals* tells us, “he acquired many print copies of bKra shis 'khyil's *Collected Topics* (*bsDus grwa*) and distributed them to the community of monks” (dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1975–77, 1: 593.5–6).²³ The *Collected Topics* mentioned here most likely refers to *Opening the Golden Door to the Path of Reasoning: A Presentation of the Great Collected [Topics]* (*bsDus chen gyi rnam bzhag rigs lam gser gyi sgo 'byed*) written by the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa as a guide to the study of logic.²⁴

Not only was Bla brang printing key texts for monastic studies, but printing itself became a skill which monks studied at Bla brang. By 1790, Bla brang's traditions of calligraphy and block carving were being disseminated to many of the forty or so branch monasteries under Bla brang at the time, helping to spread this technical knowledge to other locations in A mdo and Mongolia (dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me 2000, 240a.1–6; dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1975–77, 2: 38.5). The regularization of printing within monastic training and more widespread knowledge of the craft may have had the unintended result of devaluing the skills associated with printing. In early central and western Tibetan prints, such as those from Mang yul Gung thang, one often sees carver's signatures. Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2000a, 69) has suggested that these signatures are a sign of the high esteem paid to the carvers. However,

23 In Tibetan: *sa phag la 'du khang gzims khang bcas gsar bskrun grub pa'i rab gnas kyang rje de nyid la zhus/ de dus khong gis bkra shis 'khyil gyi bsDus grwa tshar mang po dpar nas bsnams pa grwa mang la bkram/*.

24 This text is found in the Bla brang edition of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje's collected works (see 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje, n.d., 14: 377–488).

by the eighteenth century these types of signatures became rare in Tibetan xylographs. Instead, we read in the *Ocean Annals* that by the time of the twenty-fifth abbot of Bla brang monastery, dKon mchog seng ge (1768–1833), the ones who were made to study printing and calligraphy at Bla brang were monks of inferior intellect (dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1975–77, 2: 127.3).²⁵

While the work of printing may not have carried great esteem at Bla brang, dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po nevertheless certainly valued the technology of printing and had a genuine interest in making books available for reading and studying. We see this in his establishment of a library at Bla brang around the year 1775 when he was forty-eight years old. His biography tells us that:

Before this, although there was not a library (*dpe mdzod*) tradition, he established a tradition for the purpose of benefiting those students of limited means, and quickly over one thousand books arrived and became a great benefit for continuous teaching. (dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me 2000, 130a.6–130b.1)²⁶

Again we get the sense that there was a concern at Bla brang for making books available to students for study, and particularly those monks who could not obtain books otherwise.

At Bla brang, as at many printing houses large and small, the initial printing project was related to a recent master in the monastery's tradition, the collected works of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje. However, the selection of certain works to prioritize as printed publications along with the overall interest of dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po and others to make books more widely available suggests that the leaders of this rapidly growing monastery which housed several colleges looked to printing as a means of supplying study materials to students.

8 Conclusion

The increase in Tibetan woodblock publishing in the eighteenth century was truly a watershed in Tibetan printing. It might deservedly be called a Tibetan printing revolution; though our use of 'revolution' here is perhaps less in the

²⁵ The pertinent statement reading: *blo dman mams la dpar dang yi ge slob bcug/*.

²⁶ In Tibetan: *de sngon dpe mdzod kyi srol med kyang /_don gnyer can cha rkyen srab pa mams la phan pa'i phyir de'i srol btsugs pas ma 'gyangs par po ti stong phrag brgal ba byung ste bstan rgyun la shin tu phan por song /*.

sense of revolutionary upheaval or change and more in the sense of a revolving wheel – a Dharma wheel. To turn the wheel of the Dharma (*chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba*) is to teach or spread the Buddhist religion, and this purpose is mentioned in many Tibetan printing colophons. In that case, we could speak of eighteenth-century publishing, and other key eras in Tibetan printing, as ‘printed revolutions of the Dharma wheel.’

In this paper I have given some preliminary evidence for the growth of Tibetan publishing during two particular periods, the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries and the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. As shown by the publication histories of a selection of important Tibetan works, the bulk of xylograph editions fall into these two eras. Many of the larger projects that were undertaken in the earlier period were again taken up in the eighteenth century. Some of these publications were mainly continued in the latter century by printing houses affiliated with the school in which a particular work or collection was important. However, some works were able to transcend such sectarian identification and in the eighteenth century were widely published across geographic and sectarian boundaries.

Publishing was an expensive undertaking, and therefore was largely the prerogative of wealthy patrons, particularly political elites. In many cases, we see woodblock publishing following sources of patronage. In the fifteenth century, we see the importance of members of the ruling Phag mo gru pa government as patrons of early substantial printing projects in central Tibet. In western Tibet, the role of the court of Mang yul Gung thang was crucial to the efforts of early Bo dong pa and bKa' 'gyud pa publishers, including gTsang smyon Heru ka.

In the eighteenth century, printing patrons became increasingly common further east. We saw this in the Sa skya Ngor sect and the movement of prominent members of that school east to the sDe dge kingdom in Khams at a time when political and economic support in central Tibet was shifting decisively to the dGe lugs pa school. In sDe dge the abbots of Ngor found a rising political power willing to support major publishing projects. Later in the eighteenth century, sDe dge would increasingly support rNying ma pa publishing projects as well. rNying ma pa figures were also looking for greener pastures, having come under direct assault in central Tibet with the Dzungar invasion of 1717–1720 (Ronis 2009, 93).

Even members of the dGe lugs pa school were looking beyond central Tibet for patronage. This was probably due in part to the continuing political turmoil in central Tibet throughout the eighteenth century, of which the Dzungar invasion was just one of several unfortunate episodes, and in part to the rise of willing patrons in A mdo and China, including the Qing court, the Co ne kingdom,

as well as Bla brang and sKum 'bum monasteries. In the eighteenth century Co ne became a major woodblock publisher, supported by the royal court of Co ne. In addition to the well-known bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur carved there, Co ne also produced woodblock editions of the complete collected works of Tsong kha pa and selected works by his primary disciples (dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po 1986, 423.21–424.5). The first major publishing project at Bla brang was the collected works of its founder, the First 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa. Even before that project was finished, dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po initiated an effort to produce the works of mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang (dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me 2000, 86a.4–5).

Printing seems to have functioned, along side the building and maintenance of religious institutions and monuments, as a powerful way for a ruler to perform the role of protector and benefactor of religion and the populace, that is, the ideal role of a Buddhist ruler. The fifteenth century and eighteenth century in particular were times when political leaders put significant resources toward woodblock publishing. Why these two periods in particular? The answer to that question is certainly complicated and involves many factors. I would, however, like to put forth a few possible reasons. The mid-fourteenth century saw the collapse of the Mongol supported Sa skya regime in Tibet. That regime had been headed, at least nominally, by the religious leaders of the Sa skya pa school. As the Phag mo gru pa gained power, the need to position themselves as strong Buddhist rulers may have been particularly acute given that the preceding regime had been headed by Buddhist lamas, whose religious credentials were more obvious. The Phag mo gru rulers probably felt the need to establish their legitimacy through patronage which included support for woodblock publishing. In the eighteenth century, there were likewise several emerging powers that were seeking to establish their credentials through patronage. Most of these supported both sectarian printing projects as well as the publication of classics.

Classics may have been particularly useful in regard to establishing one's authority and legitimacy, which could account for these works' popularity. This is especially true in the case of the *Collected Pronouncements of the Mañi*, a treasure text (*gter ma*) whose composition is attributed to the Tibetan emperor Srong btsan sgam po. It is the primary text that establishes Avalokiteśvara as the special protector of Tibet while at the same time designating Srong btsan sgam po as a manifestation of this bodhisattva. It is thus a powerful statement on the sacred nature of Tibetan kingship. It is not surprising, then, that we find political figures again and again sponsoring its publication.

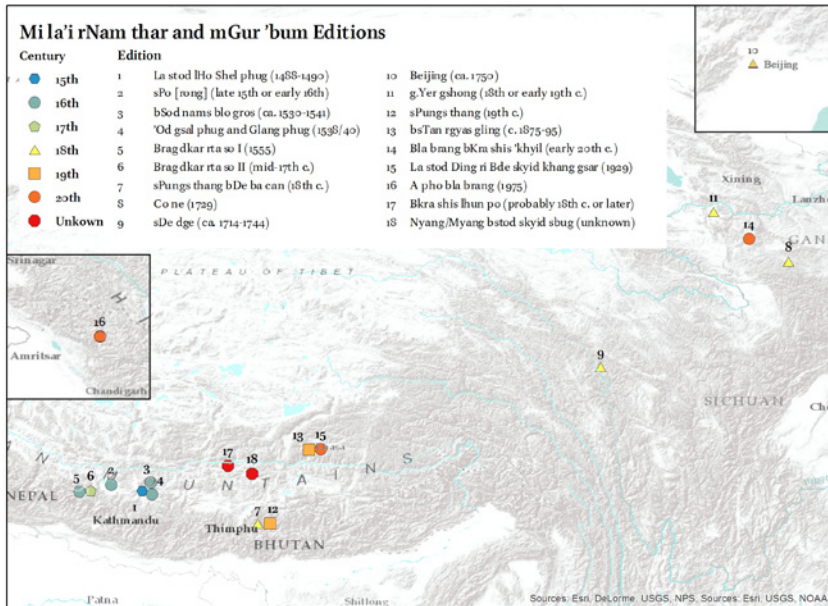
The governments of Bhutan and the dGa' ldan pho brang both promoted an image of their leaders as emanations of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara

and made use of both ritual performance and the composition and printing of texts to reinforce this image (Ardussi 2004, 11). However, neither of these polities was particularly interested in printing the bKa' 'gyur or bsTan 'gyur. On the other hand, several lay rulers of the eighteenth century were extremely active in bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur publishing. It is worth considering whether the difference between reincarnate and lay ruler had something to do with the discrepancy in bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur printing activities. I think it is entirely possible that the reincarnate status of the Zhabs drung in Bhutan and the Dalai Lama in Lhasa provided them with an obvious religious legitimacy (like the Sa skya pa lamas during the Mongol era) that did not demand the publication of a bKa' 'gyur or bsTan 'gyur to reinforce. With the emergence of these new reincarnate political leaders, as well as the rising clout of reincarnate leaders of powerful monastic institutions like the 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pas of Bla brang, lay rulers probably more than ever felt the need to assert their religious credentials and reinforce their claims to be emanations of bodhisattvas. They were also competing with each other for the loyalty of subjects in a time of territorial expansion on all sides. In such a climate, the circumstances were right for the extensive patronage of religious endeavors including the publication of texts.

While prestige, authority, and legitimacy were all likely important motivations for patrons of printing, many eighteenth-century publications also had more tangible purposes. The motivation behind at least some eighteenth-century publishing projects probably stemmed from a desire to train scribes and able administrators in expanding kingdoms and large monasteries. For the monasteries, there was likely also a need to provide texts used in the increasingly standardized monastic curricula of large religious institutions which housed several colleges and thousands of monks. Standard monastic curricula, as well as standard ritual calendars and liturgies, may have created a desire for standard texts to use for study and ritual performance. In these and other ways, the expanding polities and monasteries of the eighteenth century likely would have been interested in processes to enable effective administration and standards that could be used, and reproduced, across large bureaucracies and institutional structures. The demands of growing bureaucracy and increasing standardization would have been well met by the establishment of printing houses.

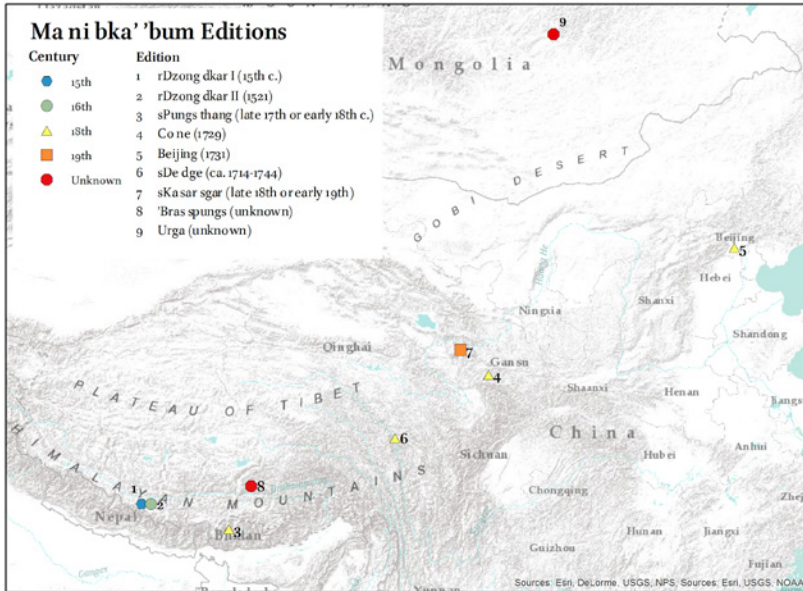
There were a number of interests and agendas that came together in the development of the large eighteenth-century printing houses. There were religious figures who sought to memorialize or promote their teachers and lineage. There were monastic leaders who saw in xylography a way to publish materials needed in a large monastic college setting, there were political leaders who saw the sponsorship of religious publishing as a way to reinforce their image as

a Buddhist ruler while also using printed texts to train skilled administrators and promote religious and ritual activities that would bring them and their domains good fortune and protection. All of these interests came together in the printing house and the various books that issued from these publishing centers can be seen as fulfilling one or more of these desires. The different types of literature and uses of printed texts, while in some respects serving quite different purposes, were nevertheless all aspects of institutional authority in eighteenth-century Tibet. Although used in different ways, woodblock publications positioned eighteenth-century figures, religious and political, as legitimate leaders who provided opportunities for learning, merit making, and turning the wheel of the (printed) Dharma.



MAP 18.1 *Xylograph editions of the Mi la ras pa'i rNam thar Mi la'i rnam thar and mGur 'bum.*²⁷

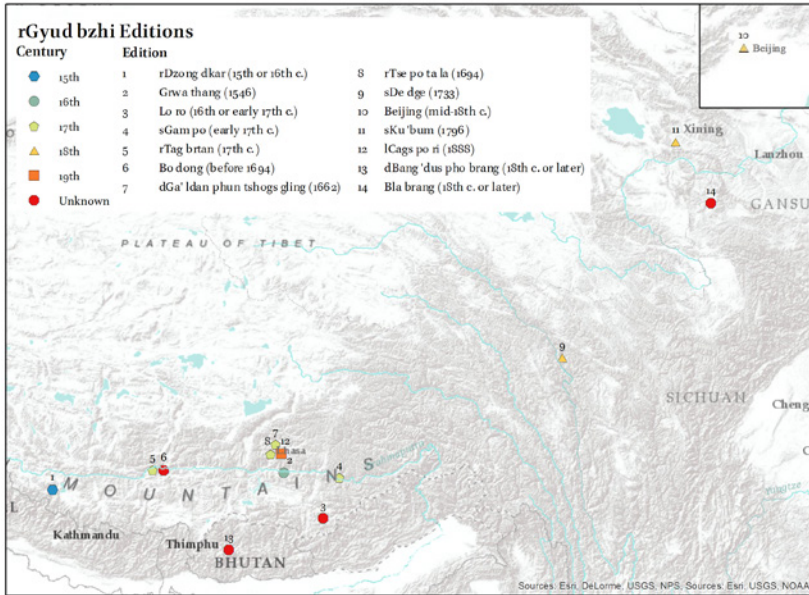
27 See Sernesi (2011, 180, 188, 191–92, 202–206) on the dates and circumstances of production for the La stod lHo Shel phug, bSod nams blo gros, 'Od gsal phug/Glang phug, and Brag dkar rta so I and II. Several scholars have associated the sPo edition with a region of Khams by that name, but Sernesi (190–191) provides convincing evidence that this edition actually should be associated with sPo [rong] in western Tibet and is likely a reprint of a relatively early edition from that region. See Smith (2001, 70–73) on the dating of the sPungs thang bDe ba can, sDe dge, Beijing, sPungs thang, bsTan rgyas gling, and La stod Ding ri bDe skyid khang gсар editions. The dating of the Co ne print is clear from the colophon of the *mGur 'bum*, where it is stated that this edition was prepared in conjunction



MAP 18.2 *Xylograph editions of the Ma ni bka' 'bum.*²⁸

with the founding of the tantra college at the Co ne dgon chen. The colophon is reproduced by Eimer and Tsering (1990, 74–76). According to dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1975–77, 3: 264.4), the tantra college at Co ne was founded in a earth bird (*sa bya*) year of the twelfth *rab byung*, or 1729. The g.Yer gshong edition is mentioned by dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1975–77, 1: 774.6) and by Brag dkar rta so sPrul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug (1775–1837) in his history of the abbatial lineage of Brag dkar rta so titled *Brag dkar rta so gdan rabs* (for a translation of the relevant passage, see Sernesi (2011, 182–183)). As that work was written in 1816 and g.Yer gshong bSam gtan chos 'phel gling was founded in 1696 (dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1975–77, 1: 770.1), this edition most likely falls in the eighteenth century. The Bla brang bKra shis 'khyil edition of the *rNam thar*, a print of which is held at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, contains a colophon written by the fourth 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, sKal bzang thub bstan dbang phyug (1856–1916), thus placing this edition in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. According to Eimer and Tsering (1990, 83–84) the A pho bla brang edition was prepared in Europe, while the colophon to the edition states that the blocks are kept at Ci ta ri'i dgon in Manali, [India] (84). The dates of the Bkra shis lhun po and Nyang/Myang bstod skyid sbug editions are not known. As Eimer and Tsering note (1990, 66–68), these two editions are related, one likely being based on the other, though which was first is unknown. Bkra shis lhun po's printing house expanded significantly in the early eighteenth century under Pañ chen Blo bzang ye shes (1663–1737) (Blo bzang 'phrin las 2004, 140). It would not be surprising to find that this edition dates from that era.

28 See Ehrhard (2000a, 14–15) on the two editions produced at rDzong dkar. No copies of the earlier edition are known to exist. Ehrhard's article on the dMar khrid Tshems bu lugs and the *Ma ni bka' 'bum* gives more details of the production of the 1521 edition



MAP 18.3 *Xylograph editions of the rGyud bzhi.*²⁹

(Ehrhard 2000b, 199–215). Prints of the 1521 edition are held in the National Archives of Nepal and the University of Wisconsin Library's Department of Special Collections. A reprint of the sPungs thang edition has been published in India (*Ma ni bka' 'bum* 1975). The sPungs thang edition can be tentatively dated to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century based on Sernes's (2011, 202) identification of mNga' ris sgrub chen Ngag dbang chos 'phel, "who requested the carving of the Punakha edition of the Mañi bKa' bum," as likely being the same as sGrub chen Ngag dbang chos 'phel who was a "main donor" of the print of *Mi la ras pa'i rNam thar* and *mGur 'bum* produced in the late seventeenth century and stored at Brag dkar rta so. While I know of no existing copies of the Co ne edition of the *Ma ni bka' 'bum*, the colophon to the Co ne edition of the *Mi la ras pa'i mGur 'bum* states that a xylograph edition of the *Ma ni bka' 'bum* was produced simultaneously with that publication in 1729 (Eimer and Tsering 1990, 76). The date for the Beijing edition is given in the colophon (reproduced in Taube 1966, 1086, entry 2926), as the eighth year of the Yongzheng emperor, 1730/31. A print of this edition is held by the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. The general time frame of the sDe dge edition is reported by Zhu chen Tshul khirims rin chen in his catalogue of the sDe dge edition of the bsTan 'gyur (composed in 1744), where he places the production of the edition during the reigns of the sDe dge kings bsTan pa tshe ring (r. 1714–1738) and Phun tshogs bstan pa (r. 1738–1751) (Tshul khirims rin chen 1985, 450.12–13). Thus, this edition would have been made at some time between bsTan pa tshe ring's taking the throne of sDe dge in 1714 and the composition of the bsTan 'gyur catalogue in 1744. TBRC holds scans of this edition: W1KG10871 (<http://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W1KG10871>). The sKa sar sgar edition is reported by dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1975–77, 1: 778.6). This edition would have been made

between the founding of sKa sar sgar in the late eighteenth century and the completion of the *Deb ther rgya mstho* in 1865. The dates of the 'Bras spungs and Urga editions are not known. The 'Bras spungs edition is listed in a catalogue of central Tibetan printing houses. It is found under blocks held by the Go bo khams tshan of Blo gsal gling college (*Gangs can gyi ljongs* 1970, 189). The Urga edition is listed and its colophon reproduced by Taube (1966, 1081–1085, entry 2925A). The print of the edition catalogued by Taube is held in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.

- 29 There are some discrepancies in the dating of the rDzong dkar edition. The introduction to the comparative edition published recently in Beijing identifies the sponsor as mNga' ris rgyal po Khri lde bSod nams dbang phyug (bsTan 'dzin don grub 2008, 3), whose dates are 1577–1621. This accords with the brief mention in the colophon of a “Khri lde bSod nams.” However, Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2000a, 14–15) has argued for a much earlier rDzong dkar edition, based on textual sources which mention Chos rje Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (d. 1466) as an editor. Ehrhard therefore concludes that the sponsor was likely Khri rNam rgyal lde (1422–1502). There is of course the possibility that two editions, an earlier and later, were produced in Mang yul Gung thang. See Ehrhard (2000a, 15) for the dating of the Grwa thang edition. The date of the Lo ro edition is not explicitly mentioned in the colophon (reproduced in bsTan 'dzin don grub 2008, 691–699), but based on some of the figures mentioned we can roughly date it to the sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The editor of this edition, Tshe dbang bsam grub, is identified as a disciple of a certain Zla ba'i bzang po. A medical figure of this name is mentioned by Martin (1997, 83, entry 154). Martin places him tentatively in the sixteenth century. The colophon to the Lo ro edition further indicates that the edition was made during or shortly after the life of 'Jam dbyangs bstan 'dzin grags pa, later mentioned as the first sByor ra sprul sku. He seems to have died in the early seventeenth century, based on a relative chronology that can be drawn from the ages at death given for the first five sByor ra sprul sku (the last of whom was born in 1770) which can be found under TBRC: P7007 (<http://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=P7007>). See bsTan 'dzin don grub (2008, 2–4) on the sGam po, rTag brtan, dGa' ldan phun tshogs gling, rTse po ta la, sDe dge, Beijing, sKu 'bum, lCags po ri, and Bla brang. The Bo dong edition must have been prepared before 1694 since it was consulted by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in the editing of his edition produced that year (Schaeffer 2009, 78). The date of the sKu 'bum edition, the earth male horse (*sa pho rta*, or 1796) year is found in the colophon (bsTan 'dzin don grub 2008, 705). The date for the lCags po ri edition is given in the preface to the Indian reprint (*rGyud bzhi* 1978). The dates of the dBang 'dus pho brang Chos 'khor rab brtan and Bla brang editions are not known. The dBang 'dus pho brang Chos 'khor rab brtan edition probably, like most prints from Bhutan, dates from the eighteenth century or later. The same is true for the Bla brang edition – Bla brang's printing house only being established in the mid-eighteenth century. The colophons for the Grwa thang, sGam po, rTag brtan, Lo ro (“Lor”), rDzong dkar, dGa' ldan phun tshogs gling, rTse po ta la (“rTse zhol”), lCags po ri, Beijing (“Pe cin”), and sKu 'bum editions are transcribed by bsTan 'dzin don grub (2008, 689–705). The editors of the *dPal ldan rgyud bzhi* also mention a possible Mongolian (Sog yul) edition (bsTan 'dzin don grub 2008, 3–4). They further mention (3) that the rDzong dkar edition was based on an edition from Gong dkar byar yul but no further information concerning such an edition is given.

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Observations Made in the Study of Tibetan Xylographs

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1 Introduction: Woodblock Printing and Textual Criticism

Over several centuries, printing with wooden blocks used to be the most common method of producing a fair number of identical copies of a specific text in East and Central Asia. In Tibet, monasteries functioned as spiritual and intellectual centres, and ran print shops which enabled them to make religious texts¹ and other literature available to monks and laymen alike on a larger scale than was possible before.

The spreading of the blockprint technique in Tibet from the beginning of the 15th century onwards, however, did not supplant the transmission of texts by manuscript. The latter always remained in high regard – for Tibetans a manuscript copy was of equal value to the original.

As in all written cultures, in Tibet, too, works from the past have not been handed down to us unchanged. In the course of transcription new errors could get into the text, especially when the text was transferred from one form of writing into another.² For this reason, classical philology and theology developed the technique of textual criticism for editing text transmitted in manuscript in order to restore the lost original to the greatest possible degree.³

The methods of textual criticism have come to be applied in Tibetology, as well. Tibetan texts, however, require consideration of a particularity. In addition to the mistakes which commonly appear in manuscripts,⁴ xylographs may

* We would like to thank Susanne Kammüller who kindly rendered this paper into English.

1 For the most part, these were texts used in spiritual teaching or in rituals with larger numbers of participants.

2 The shift from cursive writing (*dbu med*) to writing in block letters (*dbu can*) and vice versa occurs commonly in copying manuscripts, only the Bon pos produced blockprints in cursive writing.

3 We rely on Maas 1958 and West 1973 for the basics of textual criticism.

4 As for instance, graphical or phonologically caused errors, inaccurately dissolved abbreviated writings (*bskung yig* and *bsdu yig*), omissions, and dittographies.

also contain mistakes caused by the new technique of printing: since wood-carvers had to cut the printing plate from a mirror image of the text, mistakes in the master copy possibly went unnoticed; characters or parts of characters chipped off while the plates were used;⁵ fissures in the wood might render parts of the text illegible etc.

A thorough recording and description of each single witness is a precondition when working with several text witnesses in textual criticism, because even outward appearances can provide valuable hints. Compared to xylographs, manuscripts tend to contain more scribal errors.⁶ For printing, texts usually were thoroughly revised and corrected. On the other hand, reproduction in large numbers by printing makes it much easier for a mistake which has slipped unnoticed into the tradition to spread widely.

The starting point for applying textual criticism is always an observed difference in the wording of the accessible text witnesses, or variant readings. The following general rule applies:

It can be proved that two witnesses (B and C) belong together as against a third (A) by showing an error common to B and C of such a nature that it is highly improbable that B and C committed it independently of each other.⁷

From this, one can deduce relationships between text witnesses; the ultimate aim is to establish a stemma which recapitulates the transmission of the text in question and thus comes close to the lost original.

2 The Technique of Printing with Woodblocks

As the basis for the production of a printing block, that is as master copy, serves a calligraphed manuscript of the text in question.⁸ It was written, in general, on light paper with the common ink made from lampblack pigments. At this stage, the text could be proofread before the next production steps. If correc-

⁵ A *na ro*, for example, can turn into a *'greng bu*, or a *tsha* into a *cha*.

⁶ This is true even for the illuminated Kanjur manuscripts from the imperial workshop in Beijing kept in Berlin and Taipei.

⁷ Maas 1958, 43.

⁸ For the following cf., e.g., Jest 1961, 83–85; Grönbold 1982, 368–377; Sobisch 2005, 112–113; Schaeffer 2009, 11.

tions in the master copy were done with particular care, they did not affect the later layout.

The completed manuscript master copy was glued face-down with starch paste to a wooden plank prepared for the purpose and kept moistened for a span of time.⁹ The moisture enabled the very fine lampblack particles¹⁰ to permeate from the script into the pores of the wooden surface. After the removal of the master copy, which was destroyed in the process, the mirror image of the writing was visible on the wood. The plank was lubricated with oil to prevent it from splintering and to make the script emerge more distinctly. The carver cut away¹¹ all parts not covered by characters or lines and, thus, produced a wooden plate with elevated script, that is a block for relief printing.

When the printing plates were finished a first print was prepared for proof reading, corrections of the blocks were possible in cutting off the flawed part of the text from the plate and – if needed – replacing it by a piece of wood of equal size with the correct characters in mirror writing.¹² Subsequent corrections of this kind are often identifiable in the printed text from slightly slanted writing or a differing size of characters.¹³ Deleted parts show as gaps in the text; when longer passages were deleted, parts of the head line remained in the form of several dots.¹⁴

The ink used for printing was usually the black one made from lampblack pigment. Books which were regarded as particularly valuable sometimes were printed in red ink, like some editions of the Kanjur. The first volume of the Tanjur, the *bstod tshogs*, too, was printed in red, the pigment was vermilion, i.e. cinnabar, a rare, costly mineral. Printing in red was only possible with a new printing plate, because once lampblack ink was applied, the plate could only be used for prints in black colour.

For printing, the colour was applied to the plate with a brush or pad. Then the paper was placed on top, as far as possible without creases, and carefully

9 We owe this information to the kindness of Geshey Pema Tsering.

10 The soot particles of lampblack are much finer than those produced by grinding other materials used for making colours, for example charcoal or cinnabar.

11 Concerning the tools used for carving the plates, cf. Jest 1961, 83–85.

12 Alexander von Staël-Holstein wrote about this procedure as early as 1934; the article was printed, but remained unpublished until Jonathan A. Silk edited it from the only surviving copy in 1999, see Staël-Holstein 1934 and Silk 1999.

13 Examples are discussed in Eimer 1980, 198–207, and Eimer 1988a, 50–52 [repr. in Eimer 1992, 146–148]. If an insertion covered more than one line, the respective plate had to be made completely anew to prevent the inserted piece of wood from bursting the entire block, cf. Eimer 1986, 6.

14 Cf. for instance, Eimer 1980, 198–199.

pressed to the block with a hand roll or a clean pad. Simple, light paper was sufficient for block printing – an advantage when transporting the completed books. The paper for manuscripts – which in Tibet were written with a bamboo pen and not, as in China, with a brush – was heavier, because it had to be ink-proof. To make it so, starch was added to the fibre pulp; the paper thus produced could later be glazed, too, which required the use of additional glue.

3 Slight Differences between Woodprints Covering the Same Text

The Sven Hedin Stiftelse / Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm houses a most interesting collection of Tibetan xylographs and manuscripts mainly brought together in the thirties of the 20th century.¹⁵ Especially remarkable are about 500 small-size ritual texts, handwritten as well as printed.¹⁶ They used to be the property of some wandering lamas (Badarči) and bear evidence of the Tibetan rituals particularly popular and common in Inner Mongolia in their time.¹⁷ Among these booklets, measuring about 30 cm in breadth or less, there are a number of Tibetan prints which were apparently prepared in China or the Sino-Tibetan borderlands.¹⁸ In addition, the Stockholm collection holds a variety of texts in bigger formats as they were used in monasteries; many of these are prints with Chinese sigla.

Let us now take a look at a prayer with the title *'Phags pa bDe ba can smon lam*; in fig. 19.1 we see three examples of the right-hand section of leaf 4 *recto* (Chinese 198) from fascicle 'a (23) of a *chos spyod* collection in small format¹⁹ dated by the colophon of the *dkar chag* to the year 1730.²⁰ The text is available in several copies which, at first sight, appear to be doublets, that is to say printed from the same set of blocks. However, this is not true: three copies of

15 The complete fund of Tibetan texts is listed by Eimer 1972–78; the individual items are marked as 'H.' in combination with a following number and (with exceptions) another capital letter. Reference to texts in this list is given by the respective marks.

16 They were kept under the rubric 'Lamaistiska Små-skrifter'.

17 For the most part, the popular texts are preserved in manuscript, e.g., the *The'u rang mdo ma*, a ritual text for the expulsion of evil spirits incorporated into Tibetan Buddhism, cf. Eimer und Tsering 1973.

18 Heissig 1954 calls xylographs with Chinese marginal entries 'Pekingese xylographs' ('Pekinger Blockdrucke'). But, as a matter of fact, blockprints prepared by other print shops in the Sino-Tibetan region have Chinese marginals as well, e.g., the 'Jang Sa tham / Lithang Kanjur.

19 Listed by Eimer 1990a, 174–182.

20 The date is given in the *dkar chag*, fol. 3a1: *ta'i ching yung cen rgyal po lo dgu zla ba bryad*.

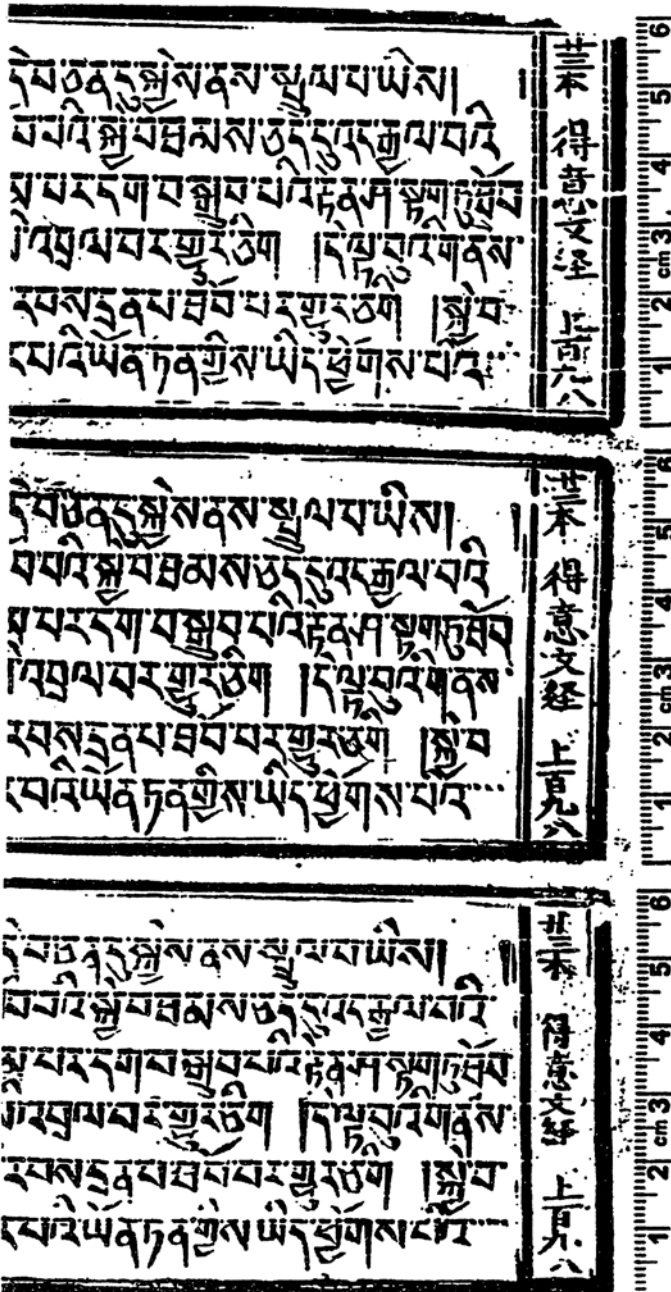


FIGURE 19.1 'Phags pa bDe ba can smon lam. Top: H.6035.O / first copy, middle: H.6035.O / second copy, below: H.6035.P (cf. Eimer 1970, 431, repr. in Eimer 1992, 193).

the prayer text differ from each other in relation to the layout of the Chinese characters in the marginals at the right-hand side: above the fascicle number is given, thereunder the short title of the text is written, *de yi wen jing*, and below follows the number of the folio. In their form the letters of the Tibetan text, too, slightly differ. This means that we are dealing with copies taken from three different sets of blocks which closely resemble each other. One possible explanation of this lies in the fact that the blockprint technique made it relatively simple to reprint text anastatically.

A new set of printing plates was usually prepared when the number of prints to be taken from the first set was insufficient,²¹ or when another monastery, for example, wanted to print the same book. In this case a new set could be produced after the model of the older one by taking a black print of the book in question – ideally each single page on a separate sheet – as the master copy. This was possible because the ink used for printing was made with lampblack pigment, too. This way, it was unnecessary to have a new master copy written and corrected. The new printing plates could be produced after the same method as the older ones; apart from minor differences they followed their model.

An example may illustrate how the process of producing a new printing plate could bring about mistakes, especially when the plates were taken from a printed master copy with blurred parts (presented in fig. 19.2). In one copy of the *Thabs mkhas thugs rjes [ma]*, i.e. in fascicle *nga* (4) of the *chos spyod* collection mentioned above, at the beginning of the last line of fol. 3 *recto* (Chinese 41), the first syllable of the phrase *srid pa gsum*, ‘the three worlds’, is substituted by a clearly legible syllable *lrid*, which does not make any sense at all.

It can be assumed that the corner of the leaf in question was not properly pressed to the printing block when the print was taken. A prior owner of the book marked the mistake and tried to correct it in the lower margin, but instead of *srid* the correction reads *sir* or *sid*.²² The minor differences in size showing in the margin around the script could be caused by slight warps in the paper when it was printed.

There is another mistake in the marginal entry of the same leaf: *gsun* instead of the leaf number *gsum*, ‘three’. It is not possible to determine at which stage in the process of producing the print it has occurred. But, we have to take into

21 The number of prints that could be taken from one set of blocks probably depended on the quality of the wood used and the manner of storing the blocks.

22 It could well be that originally *srid* was written in the margin and that the subscript *-r-* was broken off from the margin.

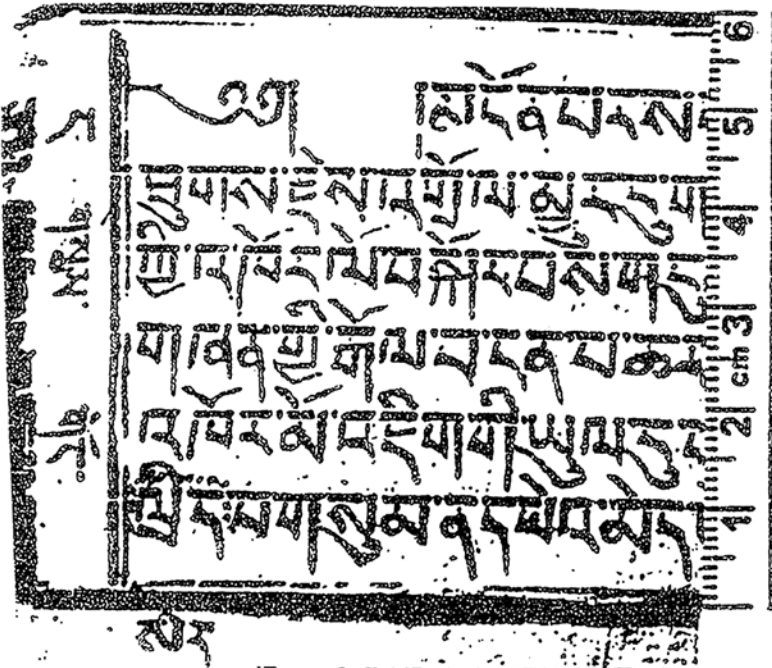
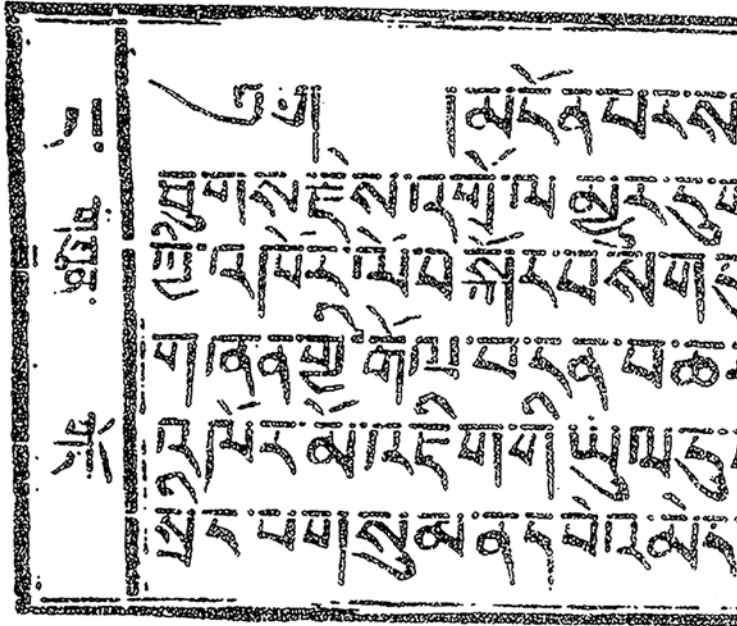


FIGURE 19.2 Thabs mkhas thugs rjes [ma]. Top: H.6035.C / 3rd copy, bottom: H.6035.C / 6th copy (cf. Eimer 1970, 430, repr. in Eimer 1992, 193).

account that the final vertical line of the numeral, i.e. of the letter *m*, was parallel to the veining of the wood.

In preparing wooden blocks relying on earlier prints intentional alterations can be made. They pertain, in general, to the marginal entries and / or additional dividing rules. In any case in prints from copied plates of this type, the individual text lines contain the same letters in identical distribution as the corresponding lines in the master copy.

In four copies of the *Pañcarakṣā* collection known to us we find some significant changes as to the Chinese distinguishing characters. These *Gzungs chen sde lnga*,²³ the 'Five great *dhāraṇīs*', served as a deterrent from all kinds of evil and were widely spread, especially in Nepal. The left-hand section of leaf 43 *recto* from fascicle *ka* (1) with the marginal entry (shown in fig. 19.3) serves as an example of the differences between these four issues.

The Stockholm collection preserves two prints (H.1191 and H.3503) presented in the upper line. They differ only in script ductus, meaning that they are identical in print space, they have in the left-hand side marginals between the Tibetan and the Chinese foliation the Chinese character *ren*, 'humanity, perfect virtue, benevolence, charity'. Besides these two books, there is a third *Pañcarakṣā* print kept in Stockholm (H.6009), fig. 19.3 bottom right. Therein the Chinese character between the Tibetan and the Chinese folio numbers is substituted by *jin* 'gold'. In addition we find the character *ban*, 'group', at the top of the marginal entry. A comparable item is held by the Berlin State Library (Hs. or. 1150). In comparison to H.1191 and H.3503 above, the Berlin print does not contain a Chinese character between the Tibetan and the Chinese folio numbers. Instead of the character *ban*, 'group', in H.6009 we find the character *wan*, 'ten thousand', inserted before the beginning of the Tibetan marginal entry. We understand the characters *ban* and *wan* as phonetical representations of *pan*, the first syllable of the Sanskrit title *Pañcarakṣā*.

Among the books of the Stockholm collection are two copies of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra* / 'Phags pa gSer 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po rgyal po, the 'Sūtra of Golden Light', a text that is highly estimated in Tibetan belief and ritual. In the older copy (H.1192, to be recognized from its paper and traces of usage) at the left-hand side, the marginals of leaf 4 *recto* show the Chinese character *jin*, 'gold' as distinguishing mark at the top left-hand corner. In the younger copy given at the right-hand side of fig. 19.4, we find the character *li* 'mile' in mirror writing, it was inserted only after the removal of the master copy and most probably written directly on the block before carving started.

23 For this collection see Skilling 1992, 138–144. Another Tibetan title is *gZungs grwa lnga*.

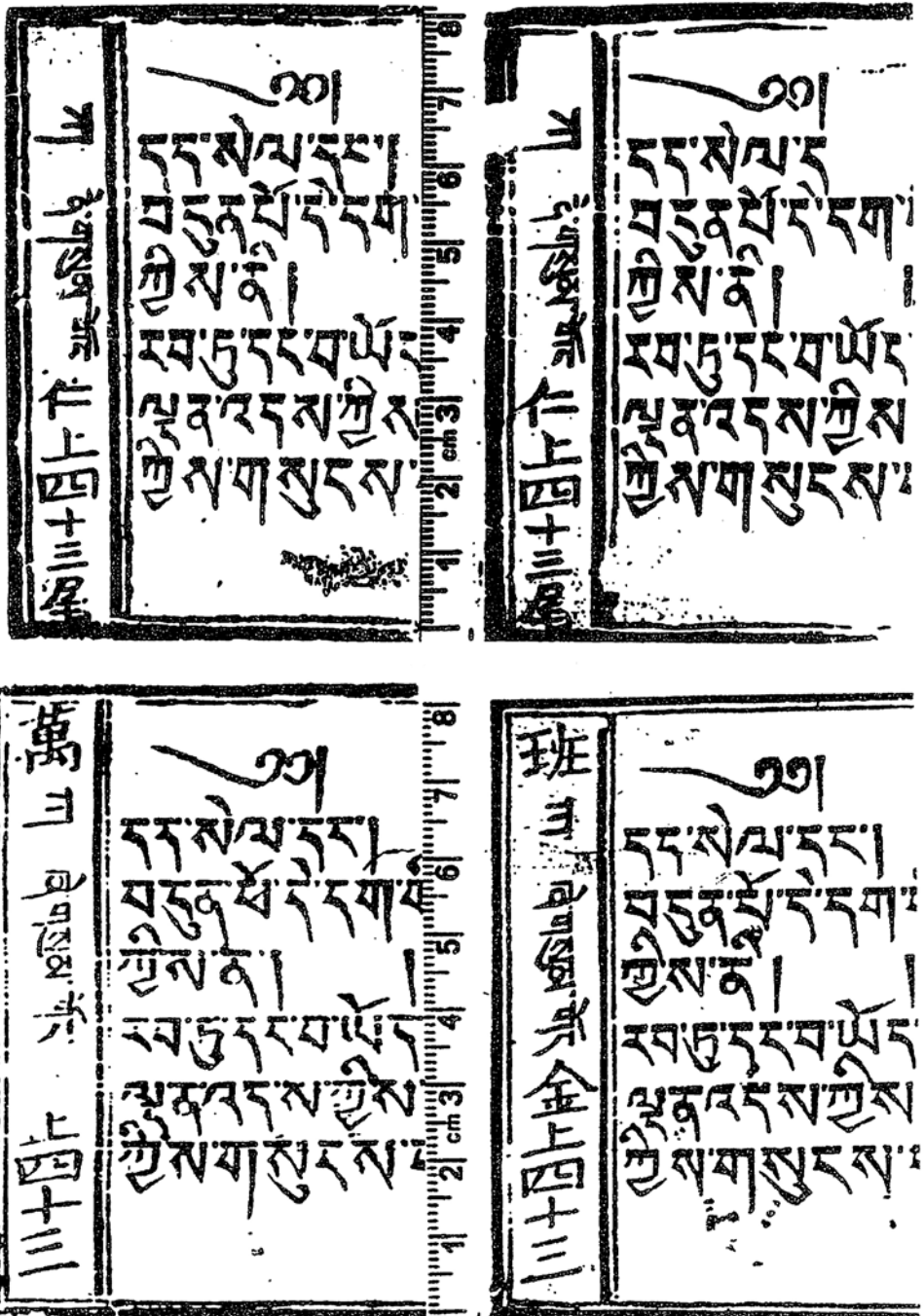


FIGURE 19.3 gZung chen sde lnga / Pañcarakṣā (fascicle ka). Top left: H.191, top right: H. 3503, bottom left: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Hs. or. 1150, bottom right: H.6009 (cf. Eimer 1970, 434, repr. in Eimer 1992, 196, and Eimer 1992, 202).

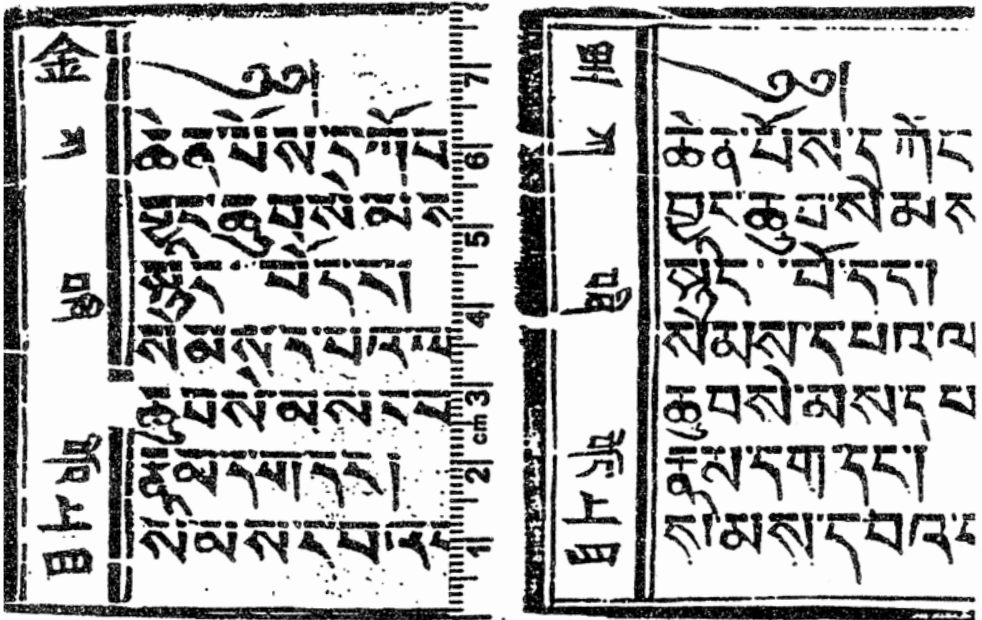


FIGURE 19.4 'Phags pa gSer 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po rgyal po / Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra, left: H.192, right: H.3502 (cf. Eimer 1970, 436, repr. in Eimer 1992, 198).

Chinese characters like these were meant to help the Chinese printers who did not always have a good command of the Tibetan language to distinguish the individual issues when they sorted copies or arranged printing plates in the storage.

So far, mainly Sino-Tibetan xylographs have been discussed. However, the observations made also apply to prints from Central Tibet. An example is the print in Stockholm (H.6008), *Chos kyi rgyal po Nor bu bzang po'i rNam thar phyogs bsgrigs byas pa thos chung yid kyi dga' ston*. The counter-part, which differs slightly in terms of characteristics of the script, but apart from that is almost identical, is owned by Loden Sherab Dagyab Rinpoche, Berlin, formerly Bonn.

There are two xylographs of Mi la ras pa's *mGur 'bum* which match in terms of page numbers and format and in which the individual text lines contain the same letters in identical distribution as the corresponding lines in the other copy.²⁴ The form of the script hardly differs between the two, but the colophons

24 Cf. Eimer and Tsering 1990, 66–68 (sigla D and D^{bis}).

are different, indicating bKra shis lhun po and Myang bstod sKyid sbug, respectively, as place of printing. It is currently not possible to determine if one of these prints served as an exemplar for the master copy of the other one, or if the printing plates were transferred from one monastery to another,²⁵ in which case only the printing plate with the colophon would have been newly carved.

4 Early Editions of the Tibetan Kanjur Issued in Beijing

The books cited above as examples were printed in bigger numbers because they were in broad demand. We can assume that they were stocked in print shops and not printed only by order. The opposite is true for the Tibetan Kanjur printed in Beijing, the first edition of which was prepared in red colour during the reign of the Yongle Emperor in 1410.²⁶ It appears that it was printed only a few times²⁷ by special order of the emperor, who donated it to chosen monasteries, high-ranking clerics or nobles as a special token of his favour. At about the same time when the first two copies of the Yongle Kanjur came to Tibet, that is at the beginning of the 15th century,²⁸ the first traceable xylographs of extensive texts were produced in Tibet herself.²⁹

The Kanjur printed from the plates of the first edition, but this time in black ink, in the reign of the Wanli Emperor in 1606 probably had only a small number of copies, too. So far, the number of specimens available for our observations on the early Kanjur prints from Beijing has been very small. The rediscovery of the great collection of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs brought from Beijing to Berlin by Eugen Pander now kept in the Jagiellonian Library, Krakow,³⁰ makes further investigations possible.

Among the 38 Kanjur volumes preserved in Krakow, there is one with a quite different layout, it is printed in red ink, so it cannot belong to the Wanli Kanjur.³¹ Of the remaining 37 volumes printed in black ink nine differ from the

25 The printing plates for the Narthang Kanjur, e.g., had been prepared in Shel dkar rdzong, those for the Lithang Kanjur in 'Jang Sa tham.

26 For a survey of the Beijing editions see Silk 1996, and Eimer 2007.

27 Cf. Silk 1996, 189–190.

28 In the year 1414 the head of the Lha khang branch of the Sa skya pa and in 1416 the founder of Sera Monastery were presented with copies, cf. Silk 1996, 156–157.

29 Cf. Diemberger 2012, 23; Jackson 1989, 2–7, and Jackson 1990.

30 Cf. Helman-Ważny 2009; Helman-Ważny 2010, and Mejor 2010.

31 The frames around the text show that it is to be dated to a time in or after 1684–92, see below.

28 others by their paper.³² On the leaves of these nine volumes, after printing lines in red ink were drawn around the entire text space as a margin.³³ These volumes are to be seen as a fragment of a second copy of the Wanli Kanjur; they were printed from those plates that were inked black in 1606, but the printing was surely done at a different time. It is possible that these nine preserved volumes belonged to a separately produced print of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* section which enjoyed great popularity.³⁴

The early prints from Beijing follow the tradition of handwritten books by limiting the text space only by a printed vertical line to the left and to the right, thus separating the Tibetan marginals which usually occur only on the left-hand side of *recto* pages from the text (see fig. 19.5, top).³⁵ Chinese marginals, which appear on the right-hand side of *recto* and *verso* pages, are set apart in the same manner.

Surprisingly, in Beijing work on a new set of printing blocks for a Kanjur based on the old ones began already in 1684, not even 80 years after the print in black.³⁶ For this anastatic new cut, double rulings were drawn around the text in the master copy. On the printing plates these lines – a technical novelty – form an uninterrupted ridge which not only makes sure that the front and back are set in the printing process at the same height,³⁷ but also protects the characters in the first and last lines against excessive wear or damage (see fig. 19.5, bottom).

In addition, in preparing the blocks for the 1684/92 edition of the Beijing Kanjur the entire text of the master copy was retraced with ink. In doing so, the Tibetan ductus was largely lost. Particularly noticeable are the long drawn-out letter downstrokes; they are a characteristic of the typical Sino-Tibetan script to be found also in other prints that were prepared in Beijing from the 17th century onwards.

32 Mejer 2010, 91, regards these volumes as a “not identified edition(s), different from Wanli”. Helman-Ważny 2010, 24–25, comments: “This unidentified edition, however, is related to the Wanli Kanjur set and I cannot reject the possibility that these volumes may belong to the Wanli edition.”

33 Pictured in Helman-Ważny 2010, 76–77 (fig. 57–59).

34 According to Mejer 2010, 91–92, volumes *ka* (1), *kha* (2), *ga* (3), *ca* (5), *cha* (6), *da* (11), *na* (12), *pa* (13) and *pha* (14) are extant.

35 The early prints from Tibet show this layout as well, cf. Diemberger 2012, 23 (specimen of a print from 1407). A further example is the well-known *Deb ther sngon po* printed in 1481 (reprinted in Lokesh Chandra 1976).

36 Cf. Imaeda 1977, 27 and 32, Eimer 1980, 196–198, and Eimer 2007, 46.

37 Cf. Grönbold 1982, 377.

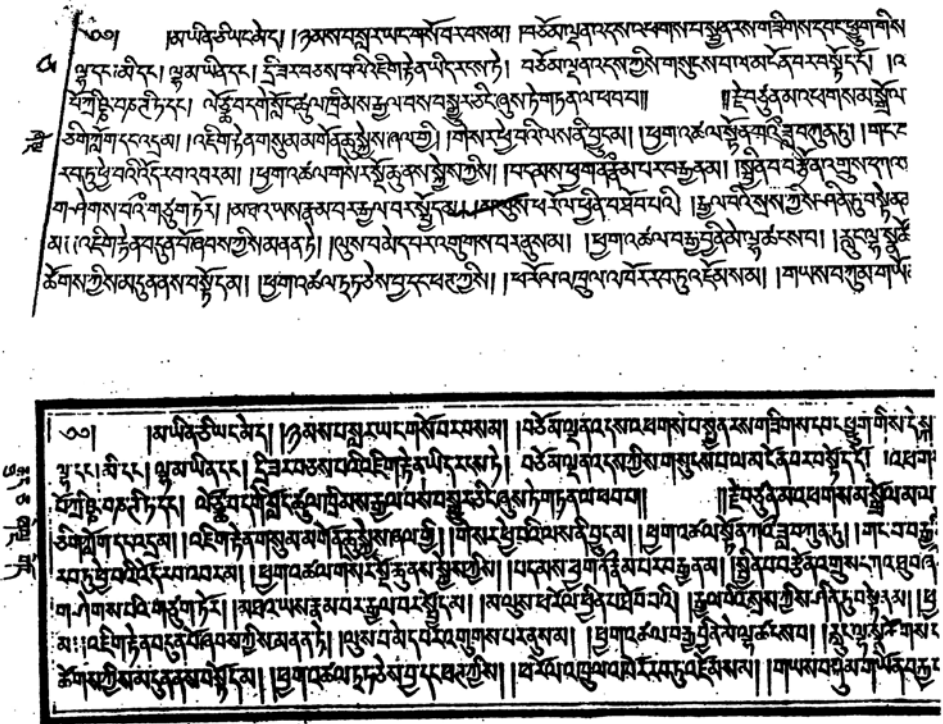


FIGURE 19.5 *Beijing Kanjur*, left-hand section of leaf 45 recto. Top: 1606 Wanli edition, volume [rgyud] ca (5), our thanks go to Prof. Dr. Marek Mejor for providing us with the copy (when the picture was taken, the page was in an uneven position), bottom: 1717/20 Kangxi edition, volume rgyud, ca (5) [TT Vol. 3, 136].

At this stage first corrections in the text could be made as well. Further alterations appear in the Tibetan marginals on the *recto*: One inserted the short title of the Kanjur section in question and replaced the section-wise volume count by a consecutive numbering of all volumes.³⁸ Tibetan marginals were inserted on the *verso* of leaves, marks for the *recto* (*gong*) and *verso* (*og*) were added in counting the folios. The Chinese marginals remained unaltered.

In the years to follow, the set of printing plates prepared 1684–92 was the basis for a number of further Kanjur prints. In these, the text on the printing plates was altered in some places as witnessed by manifold irregularities in the

38 On the volume numbering cf. Imaeda 1977, 32, and Silk 1996, 181–185 (list).

type face.³⁹ It could be demonstrated that the 'Jang Sa tham / Lithang Kanjur and the Mongolian Kanjur printed at the same time were both drawn upon for the redaction of 1717/20, resulting in corrections at several places in the text.⁴⁰

The starting point of our considerations was the aim of textual criticism to restore as closely as possible the original wording of texts transmitted in manuscripts and xylographs. In a collection as extensive as the Kanjur, the transmission can differ from text to text. The recently rediscovered volumes of the Wanli edition moreover provide access to the first Kanjur ever printed. With them, further investigation may verify the assumption drawn from text critical research on individual texts that the manuscript underlying the Yongle print of 1410 had already been altered by transmission.

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39 For examples cf. Staël-Holstein 1934, and Eimer 1970.

40 Cf. Eimer 1980, 205 (fig. 7), 206 and 209, and Eimer 1988a, 50–51.

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PART 3

Exploring the Materiality of Prints and Manuscripts



Wooden Book-covers, Printing Blocks, their Identification and Dating – How to Read the Wood

Tomasz Ważny

Wood is a unique material which is able to retain in its structure messages from the past. Woody plants, including trees, produce in each growing season a new layer of wood, which can be distinguished from the wood produced previously. Pallardy (2008, 2) has described trees as “complex biochemical factories that grow from seeds and literally build themselves”. Growth takes place periodically, mostly on an annual basis. The life of a tree is controlled by its environment, and environmental factors responsible for it: whether the year or season was favorable for growth or not, are registered and saved in anatomical structure. Therefore wood is called a “biological archive” (Eckstein 1986) or “biological time capsule” (Baillie 1995).

Wood can survive as an engineering material or in the form of wooden products for hundreds and thousands of years. Anatolian grave chambers (Kuniholm et al. 2011) or Early Neolithic wells in Europe (Tegel et al. 2012) are the best examples. They all contain numerous historical data written in the wood’s structure. The cultural heritage of Asia has enormous potential as yet undiscovered. Wood as a material used for printing will help us to date and to understand printing technology, technological advances and history of particular objects and texts. Concomitantly, important climatological information may be extracted from the wood structure which can enhance our knowledge of socio-cultural processes in relation to the environment.

The high mountains of Central Asia, part of the landmass which we will call High Asia, is a region known as the target of the Indian and East Asian monsoons which supply a large part of the continent with rainfall. In these high mountains, a variety of cultures and religions are to be found. People living in these harsh conditions were dependent on trees for fuel, material to build houses, shrines, and temples, as well as food for their livestock. The importance of wood was emphasized by its shortage. This contributed to the development of a wood-dependent culture spreading from craft centers, such as the Kathmandu Valley, along and across the Tibetan Plateau.

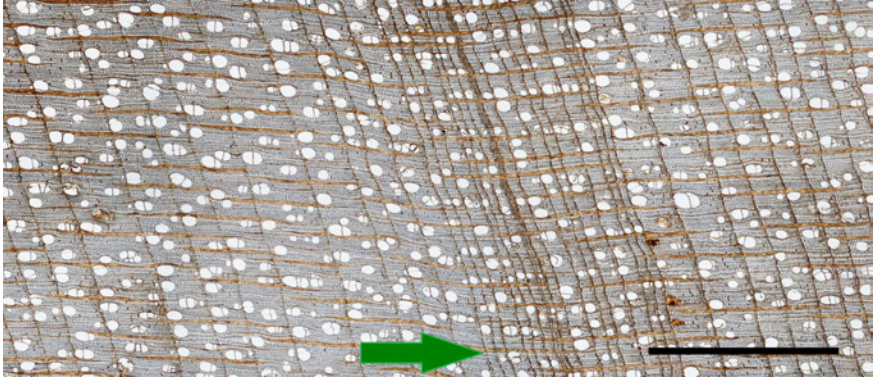


FIGURE 20.1 *Cross-section of Himalayan birch (*Betula utilis*). Diagonal lines are tree-ring boundaries. Arrow shows growth direction. Scale bar is 2 mm long. (Fot. Eryuan Liang).*

These high altitude areas are home to groups of people living at the limits of existence. Dating their technological advances and considering socio-economic aspects provide a unique source of information about environmental changes. Wood was one of the main building materials, and all villages, abandoned settlements, barns, temple sites, forgotten ways and forts, ruined bridges (within their contexts) are just as important sources of information as the time series. Structural timber, artifacts and wood from archaeological sites offer also the possibility of contributing to the knowledge of the local vegetation history.

Even a cursory look at a fragment of a cross-section of a Himalayan birch tree, a species common in the upper parts of the Himalayas, manifests similarities to bar code labels (see Fig. 20.1). The line pattern of this particular tree shows that it was slowly but regularly growing for many years until it underwent an unfavorable period of 16 years. The tip of the arrow shows the beginning of this period. The stress that the tree survived was so deep that the tree was not able to produce the new layer of wooden tissue over its whole circumference in the middle of this period. The occurrence of such so-called “missing rings” indicates dry and warm pre-monsoon seasons (Liang et al. 2014). It means that we are reading a history of a long pre-monsoon drought in the Himalayas with annual resolution.

This example shows that wood has enormous informative potential which has yet to be fully tapped into in relation to Tibet. By identifying this kind of material, we learn about the woods used for production, their origin and the regions supplying the workshops, and their suitability for advanced

examination, for example dendrochronology. Wood properties and the natural durability of wood will provide suggestions concerning optimal protection and conservation methods. Species suitable for dendrochronology provide a unique chance for precise dating and environmental information in addition. Thus – what are the woodblocks and covers made of?

To answer this question let take a closer look at the materials that were available to artisans and were most suitable for Buddhist scriptures. Which wood species could be expected in High Asia? Mountains collecting monsoon precipitation are regions especially rich in forest resources. The upper timberline is located at an altitude of up to 4500 m a.s.l. High mountain forests are far better preserved on account of their relative inaccessibility, than, for example, the Hill Regions of Nepal which are heavily deforested. Forest composition may be briefly presented in the following way:

- In the Himalayan region, including inner Himalayan valleys, the following species are dominant: east Himalayan fir (*Abies spectabilis*), blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*), West Himalayan spruce (*Picea smithiana*), oak species yielding hard wood and fodder (mainly *Quercus semecarpifolia* and *Quercus glauca*) and precious Himalayan cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) the occurrence of which is limited to western parts of the Himalayas.
- In the vicinity of Lhasa, fast growing poplar (*Populus*) is present, but the quality of the poplar wood is rather poor. Junipers (*Juniperus*) and pines (*Pinus*) are also present there but in lesser quantities.
- In northeastern parts of the Tibetan Plateau Quillan juniper (*Juniperus przewalskii*) is well represented.
- Less arid, eastern Tibet and western Sichuan are partly covered by forests with different species of fir (*Abies*), larch (*Larix*), spruce (*Picea*), juniper (*Juniperus*), cypress (*Cupressus*), and Himalayan hemlock (*Tsuga dumosa*) trees. Clear-cut coniferous forest was replaced in a short time by broadleaf species or slopes were degraded by erosion processes.
- Forests in Bhutan contain spruce (*Picea*), Himalayan hemlock (*Tsuga dumosa*), Himalayan larch (*Larix griffithiana*), Chir pine (*Pinus roxburgii*) and blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*).
- In addition, a wide variety of tropical and sub-tropical timbers could be imported from India, southern Nepal, Burma and southern provinces of China.

The present forest composition corresponds only partly to the forest from the past due to periods of deforestation and following regeneration. Changing climate conditions also shaped the vegetation – we can still find remnants of

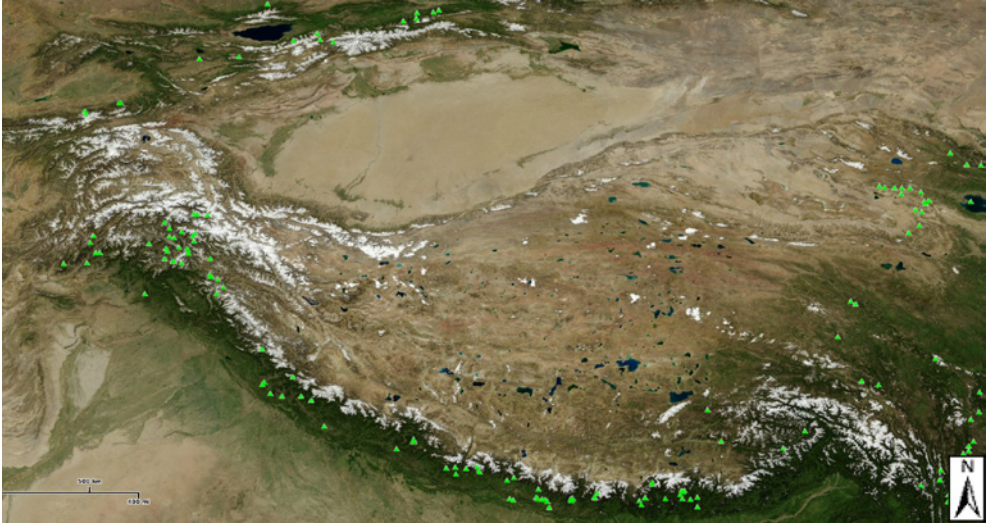
coniferous forest from the coldest phase of the Little Ice Age (17th c.) invaded by broadleaf trees after climate became warmer.

The determination of wood species is possible by means of microscopic techniques. Samples in the form of small splinters of wood are usually sufficient to prepare thin sections representing the transverse, tangential and radial directions. In situations when sampling is not possible, microslices, 0.01–0.02 mm thick, can be done directly on the object which would not leave any visible traces. The microslices are observed under a biological microscope in transmitted light (Map 20.1) and compared with reference materials. Identification at the level of genera and sometimes species is possible in this way by experienced wood scientists. This information combined with maps illustrating the range of natural distribution of identified genus/species will indicate the potential region of origin.

Tree-ring structure visible at the cross-section and sometimes at the radial section of wooden objects may be the subject of dendrochronological examination. Dendrochronology is one of the most important analytical methods used for the study of cultural heritage objects. Well-known as the most precise dating method, dendrochronology also provides information about the origin of the timbers. By comparing an undated tree-ring series (i.e., sequence of growth-rings from a wooden sample) with absolutely dated master chronologies from the same species and same geographical area, an exact calendar year can be assigned to each ring in the examined sample. Thus, the history of construction, renovations, and major structural changes can be dated with annual, and sometimes sub-annual, precision. The dating accuracy depends on the preservation of the youngest rings – those from the outer part of the tree. Annual precision can be achieved only when the youngest (outermost) rings are present – the last rings created by the tree before it was cut down.

Successful dendrochronological dating depends on the availability of master chronologies for the area of interest. The International Tree-Ring Data Bank housed in the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina, USA, is the only source of data for tree-ring research available to scientists. In 2014 the ITRDB contained nearly 160 tree-ring chronologies representing the Tibetan Plateau and regions surrounding Tibet. 42 of them represent Nepal, 40 – Pakistan, 35 – China, 22 – India and 20 – Bhutan. The geographical distribution of tree-ring chronologies is shown on the map (Map 20.1).

Triangles marking locations of chronologies form a kind of a garland around the part of the Tibetan Plateau. The interior remains empty. Natural forest resources in that area are very limited but information from the past is preserved in the historical timbers of building structures, furniture, sculptures,



MAP 20.1 *Satellite map with position of tree-ring chronologies (green triangles) in High Asia.*

SOURCE: WORLD DATA CENTER FOR PALEOCLIMATOLOGY, NATIONAL CLIMATIC DATA CENTER (NCDC), ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, USA.

book covers, etc. Subterranean tombs of Dulan with huge quantities of juniper wood used in the form of unworked trunks to cover tomb chambers and the construction of block-house type structures (Sheppard et al. 2004) are the best examples.

Tree-ring chronologies represent almost exclusively conifers: 5 fir species, 5 spruce species, 4 junipers, 3 pines and single species of cedar (Himalayan cedar), Himalayan hemlock, *Cupressus chengiana* (no English common name) and Siberian larch. All these chronologies were developed for reasons of climate study, climate reconstruction, forest productivity, hydrology, glaciology, etc., and they are based on data derived from living trees. There are a few historic tree-ring chronologies developed from old buildings (Brauning 2013, Schmidt et al. 1999, Schmidt et al. 2001) and archaeological timbers (Sheppard et al. 2004), but the data is unpublished. Blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*) – the most sought after wood for buildings in the mountains – is represented in ITRDB only by 6 chronologies from Nepal, Pakistan and Bhutan. On the other hand 24 chronologies were developed for the East Himalayan fir (*Abies spectabilis*), less appreciated as timber.

The longest combined chronology (living trees and archaeological material) goes back to 515 BCE and was constructed from junipers (Sheppard et al. 2004).

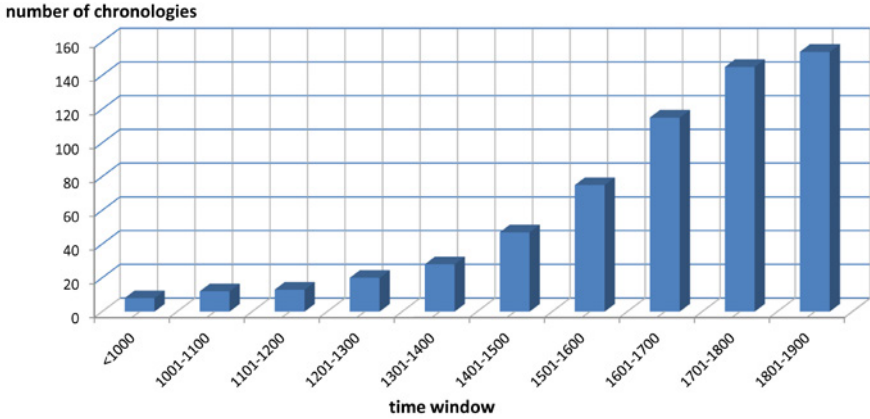


FIGURE 20.2 *Number of tree-ring chronologies developed for High Asia in selected time-windows.*

The period before 1500 CE is represented in the ITRDB resources by 47 chronologies, and before 1000 CE – by 7 tree-ring chronologies (fig. 20.2). Most of them represent junipers – trees which can be extraordinarily resistant and old. In some areas, especially semi-arid areas, only junipers were available.

A fortification in Lupra in Southern Mustang, Nepal (Fig. 20.3) is an example of the successful dendrochronological dating of an historical structure from an area without trees.

The Panda Khola Valley, a narrow eastern branch of the Kali-Gandaki Valley in Mustang, leads to the remote village of Lupra, which became noteworthy for the first time over 800 years ago – its first monastery was founded around 1160 by Bon missionaries (Ramble 1984). A modest village today, it has nearly 100 inhabitants. The ruins of an old castle or fort dominate the northern slope above the village, witness to the prosperity of old Mustang and the Salt Route leading from Tibet across the Himalayas to India. This structure in Lupra is classified as an observation tower/fortress. It belongs to the well-developed chain of castles and castle-like buildings constructed to control access to valleys, to protect local duchies and to collect taxes from trade caravans (Seber 1994). This structure in Lupra, with its three-storey tower, had a few other castles and observation towers in direct sight, some of them far away but close enough to transmit light or smoke signals.

Today, the structure's tower in Lupra is ruined. The original wooden construction inside the building doesn't exist, but visible in the walls are the beam-holes, still containing the ends of beams from the time of construction (Fig. 20.3). These provided excellent material for the tree-ring study. Most of



FIGURE 20.3 rDzong in Lupra.

the beams were made of pine, and the only pine in this geographical region is *Pinus wallichiana*. A well replicated reference chronology for blue pine from the Lower Mustang was already developed at the time of sampling (Schmidt et al. 1999) and examination of samples collected from the fortification yielded 11 dating results (fig. 20.4). Seven samples were dated with annual precision. This means that we know precisely the calendar year when the tree was cut. These precious trees were cut intentionally; thus these dates indicate unequivocally the time of construction. The concentration of results within a short time-interval of 4 years excludes the possibility of the utilization of reused timbers, although it should be noted that the reuse of timber was a common practice in these wood-poor regions of Asia – timber may therefore not always be used to date a structure, as the timber may predate the structure (Baatarbileg et al. 2008). The collection of a larger number of samples is required to avoid this problem, as well as the problem of the accidental dating of younger replacements. This would increase also the possibilities of interpretation of samples without their youngest rings preserved.

The trees used for the construction of the structure at Lupra were cut in the years 1589–1592. Taking into consideration the transportation and processing time, we can determine that the structure was built in 1590–1593. In that time the area south of Kagbeni, near Lupra, was controlled by the kingdom of Jumla. The timber came from 80–120-year old pine trees.

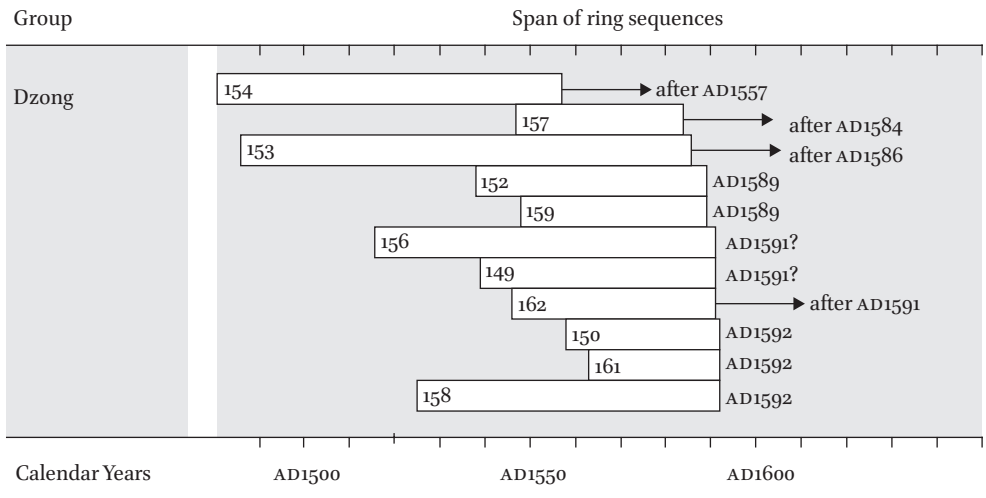


FIGURE 20.4 *Dating the growth sequences of remnants of pine beams found in walls of the structure (a castle/fort with a tower) in Lupra, southern Mustang. Bars are showing position of tree-ring series representing sample with given number in time.*

Apart from buildings, wood is also importantly present in printing and the technology of the book in High Asia, mainly in the form of xylographic blocks and book covers. In contrast to the “Western World”, xylography has played an important role over centuries there, because movable types were never developed in Tibet (Helman-Ważny 2014).

Xylographic blocks were introduced in Buddhist Asia several centuries before they were in Europe. The earliest known examples are from 8th c. Korea and Japan (Helman-Ważny 2014, 117). In case of Tibet, the 12th century is regarded as the period when block-printing technology was introduced (Schaeffer 2009, 9). Wood selected for printing blocks must have properties appropriate for this application: hardness, low abrasiveness and structure, allowing it to obtain and retain high precision shapes. At the same time it should have a uniform structure and a reduced tendency to crack. The most sought after timbers for printing blocks were pear, jojoba, and, closer to tropical regions, shorea, sal, and sandalwood (Helman-Ważny 2014, 127). Areas poor in wood were, however, much more dependent on local resources due to economic reasons.

The numbers – 42000 “printing blocks engraved on both sides” prepared to print Kanjur, part of Tibetan religious canon (Helman-Ważny 2014, 129), or 81258 wood blocks used for the second version of the Korean Tripitaka



FIGURE 20.5 *Used wooden block print from the Library of Tibetan Archives in Dharamsala after printing hundreds of copies.*

(Park 2014, 12) – give an impression of the wood quantities required by printing houses. In the Himalayas, since mainly coniferous species are available, this wood was often used. At higher altitudes in the mountains, printing blocks were frequently made of Himalayan birch (*Betula utilis*) (Diemberger 2014, pers. comm.). Birch in Europe is regarded as a low quality wood, used for the production of plywood, pulp and paper industry, or invisible furniture pieces. The slow growing Himalayan birch, however, has very hard wood and, in the absence of higher quality wood, could be used as a main material for printing blocks. Similar criteria for wood selection were applied in Korea. Since pear and jojoba, widely used in Chinese xylography, were difficult to obtain in the Korean Peninsula, the local birch (*Betula Schmidtii*) became the main type of wood used for the carving of printing blocks (Park 2014, 13).

Himalayan birch is a widespread broadleaf timberline species which grows between 3000 and 4200 m. Birch is well known because of its white bark which was used as writing material before the introduction of paper. Birch trees covering large areas in the Himalayan region are of a medium size. The dominant trees from Sagarmatha National Park selected for the tree-ring studies were of 50–80 cm diameter (Liang et al. 2014). The number of copies printed from a single xylographic block is difficult to calculate and rough estimates range from hundreds to thousands (fig. 20.5). For that reason the availability of material seems to be very important. This also explains the utilization of just this type of wood.

Birch has been a subject of dendroclimatological studies and revealed to be suitable for dendrochronology (Bhattacharyya et al. 2006, Davadi et al. 2013, Liang et al. 2014). The maximum age of the trees can be more than 400 years; thus a tree-ring chronology based only on living trees may reach to the end of 16th c. For successful dating, however, around 50 or more rings on the cross-section of wooden block should be accessible. The mean ring-width of 211 trees from Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal was 0.81 ± 0.53 mm (Liang et al. 2014). This means that a 14 cm wide and radially cut board made of slow growing birch may have 150 or more rings.

Book covers of Tibetan books are different from those of Western books. Tibetan books, even today, generally have the traditional, loose-leaf form. The stack of unbound pages is simply placed between a pair of wooden boards which play a similar role to Western book-covers though the leaves are not bound to the boards (Fig. 20.1). The boards may be plain, painted and/or carved and richly decorated, sometimes gilded or lacquered. The size of the book-covers depends on the size of the paper sheets and can even reach “a size of a door”. The largest known book is 130x170 cm and is owned by Sa skya monastery (Grönbold 1991, 10). The upper board has metal rings and must be lifted by four monks.

The selection of wood depended in general on what was available in the region. Areas poor in wood were supplied by the south and southeastern regions of Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, or eastern India. The availability of heavy tropical timbers (the best material for stable book covers) and the thickness of wood used was limited by the cost of transportation over the Himalayan passes (Selig Brown 2012, 16). There was thus a difference between the desirable and the available materials. The results of wood identification reveal what was actually used. For instance, an examination of 13 covers of Buddhist manuscripts from the collection of the Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw, Poland revealed that four covers were made of blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*) growing in the mountains above 2000 m a.s.l.; one book cover was cut of chir pine (*Pinus roxburgii*) the distribution of which is limited to elevation 400–2300 m a.s.l., and this species occurs e.g. in Kathmandu Valley; two other book covers were made of *Trema politoria*, a species characteristic of the foothill forests of Nepal, northern India, Kashmir, and Pakistan; further, one book was covered with boards made of *Semiliquidambar cathayensis* – a species endemic to China. Five covers were not identified. Pine wood was distinctly dominating.

The Tibetan “Book of the Dead” from the British Library (OR15190) was selected to test the possibility of applying wood science in the study of the printing heritage of Asia. The upper cover of the book was made of a wooden plank, 50 × 21 cm, and 1.5–1.8 cm thick. The plank was made of coniferous wood and cut radially (fig. 20.6). This method of trunk conversion (radial cut) secures



FIGURE 20.6 *'The Book of Death'; British Library OR15190, upper cover with visible wood texture and tree rings.*

the shape stability of the plank and maximal number of available tree-rings, because the cut line ran perpendicular to tree-ring boundaries.

The first step of investigation was microscopic wood identification. Microslices representing the axial, radial, and tangential samples were prepared. Identification was based on observation under a biological microscope in transmitted light. Magnification at 50×, 100× and 200× was applied. The microscopic picture (Fig. 20.7) was compared with reference materials and the wood atlas. The details of the wood's anatomical structure revealed that the examined plank was made of spruce (*Picea sp.*). This genus is represented in the Himalayas, Karakorum, Tian Shan, and in south-eastern Tibet only, which reduced the area of possible origin significantly.

The tree was at least 150 years old. A measurement of ring widths yielded a tree-ring sequence that was 142 years long. The tree-ring series displayed in fig. 20.8, and illustrating the rhythm of the growth of the tree, shows two periods of growth reduction which occurred in relative years 32–45 and 104–124. They probably reflect changes in climatic conditions.

A comparison with available tree-ring chronologies was not successful and I have not obtained any secure dating results yet. However, it is expected that an increasingly dense network of tree-ring chronologies developed for spruce in particular will lead to the absolute dating of the book cover.

The examples presented above demonstrate the role of wood – definitely an underestimated subject of historical study – as a witness of the past. This

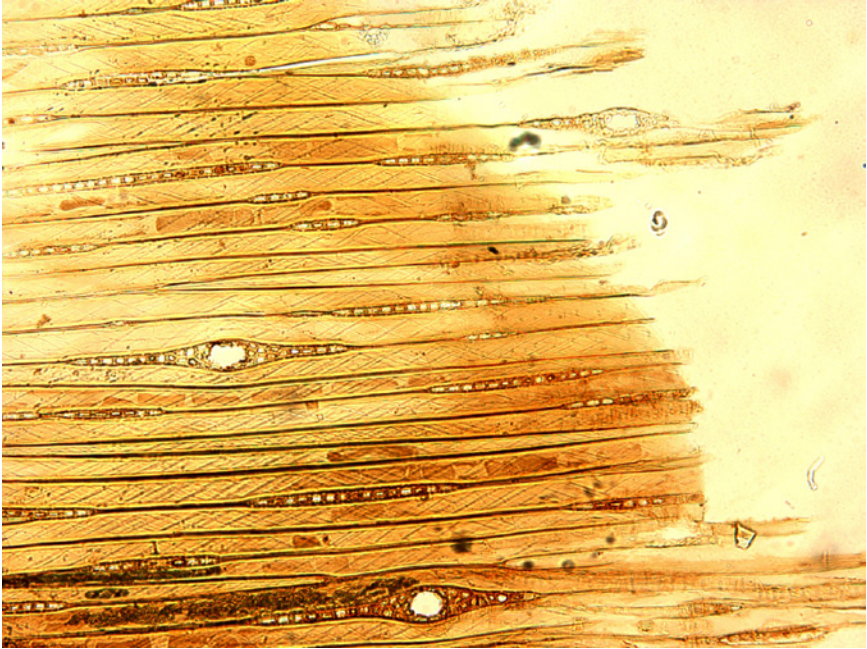


FIGURE 20.7 *'The Book of Death', British Library OR15190, upper cover, tangential section in magnification 100 \times .*

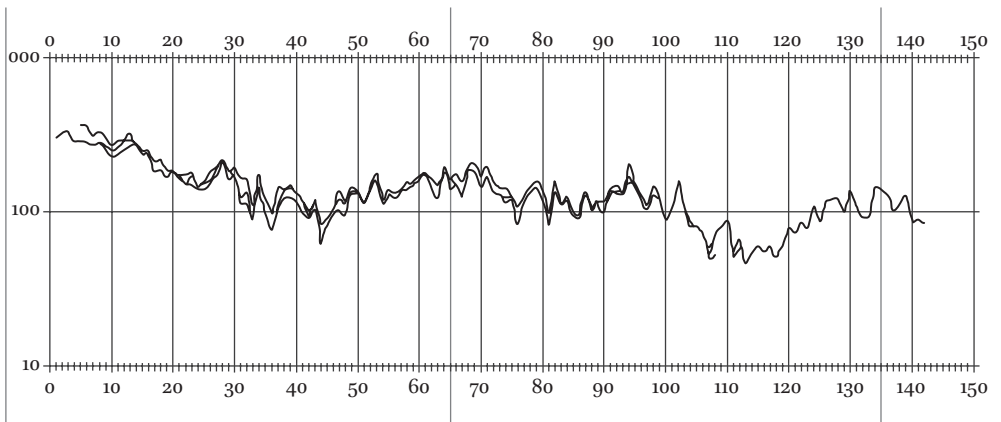


FIGURE 20.8 *Tree-ring series representing "The Book of Death", OR15190, British Library. X-axis represents relative years, Y-axis – tree-ring widths in hundreds of mm in logarithmic scale. Value "100" means 1 mm.*

is one of the first attempts to apply wood science to the study of the “printed heritage” of Tibet and beyond. To achieve significant progress in this field in the foreseeable future, certain conditions should be fulfilled. The following are the most urgent:

1. Development of annual, precisely dated series of ring width from the long-lived trees combined with tree-ring series obtained from historic buildings and archaeological timbers will provide precise dates for historical objects.
2. Systematic identification of wood species used for book covers and printing blocks is required.
3. Sources of old timbers and tree-rings are rapidly disappearing without being investigated. This process is irreversible!

The proposed ‘pairing’ of Asian studies and wood science cuts across many borders, between disciplines and sub-disciplines. Like our predecessors exploring High Asia, I feel the thrill of stepping into new territory.

Acknowledgements

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The Five Colours of Art: Non-invasive Analysis of Pigments in Tibetan Prints and Manuscripts

Paola Ricciardi and Anuradha Pallipurath

This paper reports on the preliminary results of the technical examination of two Tibetan objects in the collection of the Cambridge University Library: an illuminated manuscript, dating to the seventeenth or eighteenth century (Add. 1666), and a sixteenth-century print of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* (Tibetan 149).¹ The opportunity to undertake such investigation came about in early 2012, when the Fitzwilliam Museum launched an ambitious research project called *MINIARE*² (www.miniare.org), which deals with the study of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts with a holistic, cross-disciplinary approach. While *MINIARE*'s focus is on Western European manuscripts, the potential to expand its remit to the study of Asian material in the collections of the University Library was very tempting. In collaboration with Dr Hildegard Diemberger and the team working on the research project *Transforming Technologies and Buddhist Book Culture*,³ these two objects were selected to serve as initial case studies.

Knowledge of the painting materials and techniques used to decorate manuscripts and prints can provide a wealth of information on the skills and possibly the identity of the painter(s), the importance and the overall history of the object under study. It can also explain observed degradation phenomena, inform decisions regarding storage and conservation treatment, and

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- 1 The technical analysis was carried out in December 2012 at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, UK, with the help of Dr Jonathan M. Skelton, then a graduate student in the Department of Chemistry, University of Cambridge.
 - 2 The *MINIARE* project is headed by the Department of Manuscripts and Printed Books at the Fitzwilliam Museum in collaboration with several Departments at the University of Cambridge and other partners. *MINIARE* is a cross-disciplinary endeavour, taking into account not only analytical investigations, but also the contextualization of the results within the historical, art-historical, social and political context in which the manuscripts were commissioned, executed and used.
 - 3 <http://www.socanth.cam.ac.uk/directory/research-themes/environment-time-resources/transforming-technologies-buddhist-book-culture>

allow for comparisons with contemporary artistic practice in other media and in other geographical areas. Despite major technical developments in recent years which allow reliable, *non-invasive* identification of many artists' materials (Bull et al. 2011; Delaney et al. 2010; Leona 2009; Miliani et al. 2007, 2010; Ricciardi et al. 2012; Romani et al. 2010; Rosi et al. 2010; Vagnini et al. 2009), the technical analysis of works of art on parchment and paper remains an under-developed field in comparison to the extensive analyses routinely carried out on other types of artwork, especially easel paintings (Neate et al. 2011). One main reason for this is the widespread need to employ only non-invasive analytical methods to analyse works on paper, due to the general requirement to avoid sampling, i.e. removing small portions for analysis, which is instead commonly practiced in the case of paintings on panel and canvas.

General information on pigments and painting techniques used by artists working in Tibet and in the neighbouring regions is relatively scarce, and the vast majority of it relates to thangka painting. A few scientific studies of pigments on thangkas have been published (Duffy and Elgar 2003; Elgar 2006; Ernst 2010; Laurenzi Tabasso, Polichetti and Seccaroni 2011; Mass et al. 2009), in most of which the technical analysis had been carried out on small samples removed from the paintings. The general information on Tibetan pigments and painting techniques presented in the next section is therefore mostly based on literary sources dealing with thangka painting. Very limited analytical results on other types of painted objects from Tibet have been published (Mazzeo et al. 2004; Price et al. 2009). Recently, a research project focused on the scientific investigation of Tibetan manuscripts has been started at the University of Hamburg, and its first results have just been published (Almogi et al. 2015). These technical studies seem so far to confirm the identity of the pigments used by Tibetan artists as reported by the historic and contemporary sources discussed in the following section.⁴

4 The characteristics of the paper on which the manuscripts were written is also of interest in order to understand Tibetan craftsmanship; paper fibre analysis of several groups of Tibetan manuscripts has been carried out and its results combined with codicological, palaeographical and textual information by Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik (2013). Additional technical research is ongoing on the related topics of identifying paper-making plants (Boesi 2014) and paper typologies (Helman-Ważny 2014) used for the production of manuscripts.

1 Tibetan Painting Materials

Tibetan colour theory, as reported to us by fifteenth-century scholar Bo dong Pan chen, considers the existence of five colours: white, red, blue, yellow and black. All other colours are thought to derive from these five (Jackson and Jackson 2006: 91). One would expect then to find mentions of pigments of these five colours in historic and contemporary sources. These, however, also discuss the use of pigments of a sixth colour i.e. green (Huntington 1970: 131; Jackson and Jackson 2006: 78), suggesting that mixing blue and yellow pigments to obtain green, common in other parts of the world, was not and still is not preferred by Tibetan artists.⁵

Historic pigments⁶ can be classified according to their nature as being either inorganic, of both mineral (i.e. natural) and synthetic (i.e. man-made) origin, or organic, of both vegetal and animal origin – in which case they are more accurately defined as dyes.⁷ Tibetan sources list the following pigments, here divided by colour:

- white: calcium compounds such as chalk and limestone (calcium carbonate, CaCO_3);
- red: cinnabar and its synthetic analogue vermilion (mercury sulphide, HgS), minium and its synthetic analogue red lead (lead tetroxide, Pb_3O_4), red earths and ochres, lac (the resinous secretion of a number of species of scale insects) and sandalwood (a dye extracted from a family of trees);
- blue: azurite, which is a copper-carbonate mineral ($\text{Cu}_2(\text{CO}_3)_2\text{OH})_2$), as well as indigo, derived from the leaves of a number of *Indigofera* and other plant species. Lapis lazuli, a semi-precious blue stone mined in the mountains of Afghanistan and widely used to produce a beautiful pigment called ultramarine blue, appears to have only been used as a medicinal substance in Tibet;

5 An extensive discussion of Tibetan painting materials is beyond the scope of this paper and therefore only a brief summary is presented here. The reader is referred to the comprehensive essay by David and Janice Jackson (Jackson and Jackson 2006), on which this section is largely based, for more information.

6 Historic pigments can be defined as those available to artists before the Industrial Revolution.

7 The term 'pigment' properly refers only to a colourant that is insoluble in water, whilst a 'dye' is a soluble colourant. In this sense, indigo is the only organic colourant which is a pigment rather than a dye. However, since colourants are commonly referred to as pigments, we will continue to use these two terms as synonyms, and use 'dye' to indicate any organic colourant.

- yellow: arsenic sulphides i.e. orpiment (As_2S_3) and realgar ($\alpha\text{-As}_4\text{S}_4$), yellow earths and ochres, as well as dyes made from the petals of several plants, and from barberry and rhubarb roots;
- black: carbon-containing materials such as charcoal (wood chars) and lamp black, prepared by collecting the soot produced by burning oils and resins;
- green: the only green pigment mentioned is malachite, which is a copper-carbonate mineral ($\text{Cu}_2\text{CO}_3(\text{OH})_2$). References to yellowish-green plant-based dyes can also be found, but mostly only in the context of textile dyeing (Jackson and Jackson 1976: 288).

Many of these pigments could be sourced from specific regions in Tibet; this was the case for azurite and malachite, cinnabar, orpiment and realgar. The most common pigments, such as red and yellow earths and ochres, yellow dyes and carbon-based blacks, could be sourced from a number of sites in the region. Other pigments, such as vermilion, minium, lac dye and indigo, were instead imported into Tibet from neighbouring countries such as Nepal and China, or from India.

Additional 'modern' (i.e. post-1820) pigments listed include synthetic ultramarine, emerald green and Scheele's green. Powdered metals including gold, silver, brass and copper were also used as inks and painting materials.

2 Analytical Methods

A large number of analytical methods are currently used for the technical investigation of cultural heritage objects including works of art on paper such as manuscripts and prints. The most sophisticated of these, which are also the most accurate, require taking small samples from the objects. Because of the damage, however small, that this causes to the art object, these methods are more and more often being substituted by non-invasive analytical methods, which do not require sampling and can be used *in situ*, often without the need to even touch the object.

Such is the case of reflectance spectroscopy in the ultraviolet-visible-near infrared range (UV-vis-NIR), which has been successfully used in recent years to identify a large number of pigments, inks and paint binders on easel paintings (Bacci et al. 2003; Delaney et al. 2010) as well as on works of art on parchment and paper (Aceto et al. 2014; Delaney et al. 2014; Ricciardi et al. 2012, 2013; Ricciardi, Pallipurath and Rose 2013; Strlič et al. 2010; Vetter and Schreiner 2014; Wouters 2008). It has the advantage of being a rapid technique (only a few seconds are required to collect each spectrum) allowing for comprehensive

analysis of extensively decorated objects such as manuscripts, in which hundreds of illustrations might be present. Reflectance spectroscopy is often referred to as FORS when the spectrometer is equipped with fibre optics, such as the one used in the present work.⁸

Reflectance spectroscopy measures light that has been reflected or scattered from a surface, as a function of wavelength. In a simplified way, one can say that as light impinges onto an object, some is reflected from the surface, some is absorbed and some is scattered in a different direction and continues to interact with the material until it is either absorbed or reflected back away from the surface so that it may be detected and measured. Light is absorbed by several processes; their nature and their wavelength dependence allow deriving information about the chemical composition of an object based on its reflected light, i.e. on the shape and characteristics of the measured reflectance spectrum. The human eye functions as a crude reflectance spectrometer in the visible range (i.e. 400–700 nm): we can look at a surface and see colour. The eyes and brain process the wavelength-dependent scattering of visible-light photons and reveal a physical property of the object we are observing, i.e. colour. A spectrometer, however, can measure finer details, which allows making a distinction between different materials of the same colour. It can also work in an extended wavelength range (UV-vis-NIR) and therefore provide more information about the object's composition and molecular structure than can be seen with the eye (Aceto et al. 2014; Clark 1995).

Whilst it cannot, if used alone, identify all the possible pigments used by artists, reflectance spectroscopy is an extremely useful tool for preliminary technical investigations of painted areas on works of art, to be then supplemented by other analytical methods such as X-ray fluorescence and Raman spectroscopy.

Ultraviolet-induced luminescence imaging (also called UV imaging) was also employed to verify the identity of certain pigments on both objects. Some pigments show a characteristic appearance when viewed under ultraviolet radiation. While exact identification of pigments based on this method alone is hardly possible, UV imaging can provide useful information to supplement analytical data from other techniques. In a very simple set-up, a commercial digital camera (Canon EOS 20D) was used to take photographs of the pages whilst illuminating them with an ultraviolet light source (254 nm).

⁸ FORS analysis was carried out using a FieldSpec4 spectroradiometer (manufactured by ASDi/Panalytical, lent to us by Analytik Ltd.) with external light source, with the ability to collect reflectance spectra between 350 and 2500 nm.



FIGURE 21.1 Cambridge University Library Ms Add. 1666, folios 14 (top) and 2r (bottom).

3 Add. 1666

This manuscript was acquired by the Cambridge University Library (CUL) in 1876 and it is one of the most beautiful and well-preserved Tibetan texts of the CUL. The first three leaves are richly written in golden ink on black paper. The illustrations painted on the first page are protected by multiple layers of brightly coloured textiles. The rest of the book is written in silver ink with a golden line in the middle. The manuscript is 362 folios long (220 × 580 [leaves], 150 × 470 [written], 9 lines). It has the title *rGyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed pa'i rim pa la bsal pa'i tshul /sgrub pa'i thabs nam par bzhed pa ngos grub kyi rgya mtsho* by mKhas grub dge legs dpal bzang and is part of a collection of Tsong kha pa's writings.

The four illustrations on folios 14 and 2r (Figure 21.1) and the coloured textiles covering the first page were analysed by fibre optic reflectance spectroscopy and UV imaging. The same pigments were identified on both pages;

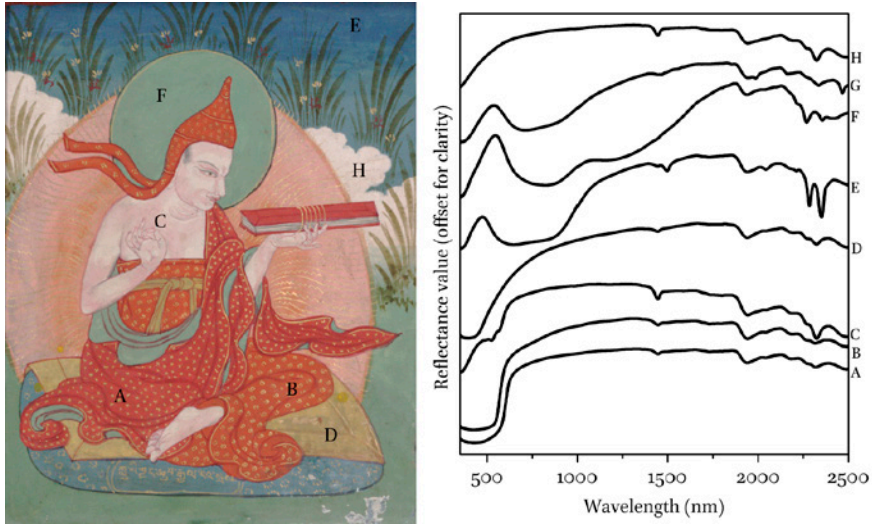


FIGURE 21.2 *MS Add. 1666, detail from fol. iv with sites analysed and corresponding reflectance spectra.*

therefore the following discussion will focus on the illustration on the left side of folio iv as an example of the overall results. Figure 21.2 shows sample reflectance spectra from the illustration on folio iv and the areas where they were collected, each labelled with a letter to which reference is made in the discussion below.

Red areas (A) were painted using cinnabar/vermillion, characterised by a transition edge at 602 nm. Reflectance spectroscopy cannot distinguish between the natural and the synthetic form of mercury sulphide. Orange areas (B) were painted with minium/red lead, recognisable by its transition edge at 570 nm. The natural and the synthetic form of lead tetroxide are also indistinguishable by FORS. Pink areas (C), including fleshtones, contain an organic dye of insect origin, showing absorption maxima at 524 and 566 nm. The spectroscopic analysis alone cannot distinguish between different kinds of red dyes derived from Coccid scale insects such as kermes, cochineal and Indian lac (Aceto et al. 2014: 1492), but the presence of lac dye can be hypothesized in this case based on what is known about traditional Tibetan painting methods (Jackson and Jackson 2006: 112–114).

Orpiment was most likely used to paint yellow areas (D). This hypothesis is based on the presence of a broad and asymmetric transition edge at about 482 nm in the reflectance spectrum and on the absence of fluorescence emission under UV imaging, which suggests that the pigment is indeed inorganic.

Blue areas (E) were painted using azurite, which displays a spectrum characterised by intense absorption bands at 1493, 2283 and 2350 nm. Green areas (F) were instead obtained with malachite, which shows very distinct absorption bands at 2218, 2270 and 2356 nm. In some green areas on three of the illustrations on both folios (G), however, the spectral signature is different and most resembles that of verdigris.⁹ In one of these areas the green pigment does appear darker, and its application less homogeneous. Overall there is, however, no apparent correlation between the visible appearance of each green area and its spectral signature. The nature of this second green pigment and the reason why it is only present in certain areas deserve further investigation; it is possible that it may be a trace of a past conservation treatment carried out on the manuscript.

White areas (H) were painted with lead white (lead carbonate), recognisable by intense absorption bands at 1445 and 2324 nm. The identification of lead white is unexpected, as this material is never mentioned by literary sources listing pigments used by Tibetan artists. It has, however, been identified during technical examinations of a late 19th or early 20th century Tibetan altar (Price et al. 2009), of a 19th century Mongolian-style thangka (Huntington 1970: 131) and of earlier paintings on silk, paper and wall from other Eastern Asian countries, notably China, Korea and Japan (Gettens, Kühn and Chase 1993: 78; Winter 1981). The spectral signature for lead white was identified also in most sites analysed on manuscript Add. 1666, regardless of the colour of the individual areas, as well as in one area where the paint layer has flaked off the page. The data suggest that lead white may be present as a 'ground' layer, as was customary in European easel painting. Lead white is also mentioned as one of the materials being imported into Nepal and Tibet by the British East India Company in 1831 (Mass et al. 2009: 116). It is of course possible that the same Company may have imported it into Tibet much earlier than the mid-19th century. The combination of the analytical data with the latter information supports the hypothesis that both the lead white pigment and its use as a painting material for both ground and surface paint layers might have been 'imported' from Europe rather than from Eastern Asia.

Lead white, which is an inorganic pigment, was also identified in the white highlights painted over fleshtone areas, in which an organic pink base layer is present. This is, again, an unexpected result because it is traditionally believed that Tibetan artists used mainly inorganic pigments for the main paint layers,

9 These 'verdigris' areas show absorption bands at 1465, 1493, 1556, 1988, 2160, 2335 and 2467 nm, some of which are very intense.

and reserved organic dyes for the final highlighting and outlining stages (Jackson and Jackson 2006: 91).

The blue paper surrounding the illustrations was dyed with indigo and the black background over which the text is written was obtained with a carbon-containing pigment. FORS cannot exactly identify the metallic ink, but it does confirm that it is indeed metallic rather than a yellow pigment used to imitate gold.

Reflectance spectroscopy also allowed a rapid and non-invasive confirmation of the presence of silk in the brightly coloured textiles that cover the illustrations on the first page. Silk can be identified and distinguished from other fibres such as wool, cotton and linen by the presence of characteristic absorption features in the near infrared range (Richardson et al. 2008: 305–306).

4 Tibetan 149

Acquired by the Cambridge University Library in 1904, this is one of the early xylographs of Tibet, printed in Southwestern Tibet (Mang yul Gung thang) in 1521 and containing the *Mañi bka' 'bum*, one of the most important works of Tibetan literature. The first five pages are hand-written, probably to replace missing pages. The book includes beautifully coloured illustrations, which were painted after the xylographic print had been completed by two different artists, Khepa¹⁰ Drogon and Khepa Drime, as mentioned in the colophon.

The presence of more than one painter at work is reflected in the analytical results: the four pages subjected to analysis (Figure 21.3) can be separated into two pairs (fols. 319r and 320r vs. fols. 370v and 371r) on the basis of the pigments identified. One illustration from each pair will be used here to summarise the analytical results and describe each artist's palette. Sample reflectance spectra from these two illustrations and the corresponding sites of analysis are shown in Figure 21.4 and labelled with pairs of letters for easier reference to the following discussion of the results.

Both artists used cinnabar/vermillion, possibly mixed with a small amount of a red earth/ochre, to paint red areas (a-A). Most orange areas have severely degraded and now have a brown and inhomogeneous appearance; this causes the reflectance spectra to be hard to interpret, though the presence of minium/red lead is possible. Both the nature of this orange material and its degradation process deserve further investigation. Fleshtones are a light pink colour on

10 “Khepa” (mkhas pa) is a title used for artists.



FIGURE 21.3 Cambridge University Library MS Tibetan 149, from top to bottom: fol. 319r, fol. 320r, fol. 370v and fol. 371r.

folios 319–320 (b), and contain a small amount of red earth/ochre¹¹; on folios 370–371 they were probably left blank (B), as both their colour and their reflectance spectra are very similar to those of the paper. The difference in the composition of fleshtones is clearly reflected in the UV images (Figure 21.5), which display a strong difference in the fleshtones' emission on folio 319r (purple) and 370v (no emission; fleshtone areas appear just like the bare paper).

The reflectance spectra of yellow areas (c-C) show broad transition edges at about 475–480 nm, compatible with the presence of either orpiment or an organic dye. Imaging under UV illumination (Figure 21.5) confirms that on folios 319–320 the yellow colourant is probably inorganic, therefore quite possibly orpiment, due to the absence of luminescence emission. On the other hand, the strong emission visible from the yellow areas on folios 370–371 suggests that the yellow colourant used here is probably an organic dye.

11 Spectra acquired in these areas also show absorption bands at 1413, 2200 and 2350 nm, whose origin is still under investigation.

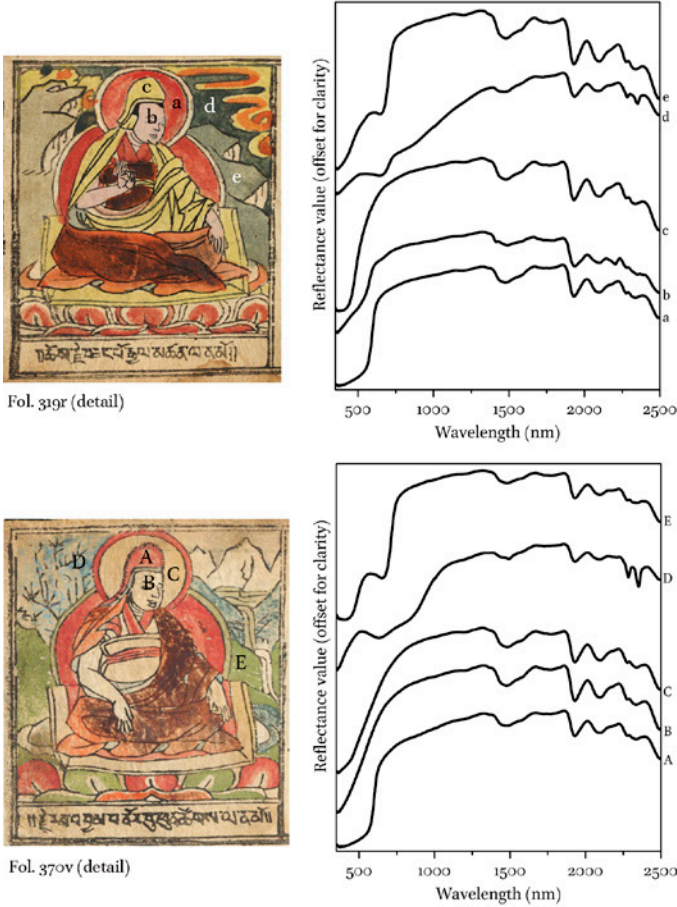


FIGURE 21.4 *MS Tibetan 149, details from folios 319r (top) and 370v (bottom) with sites analysed and corresponding reflectance spectra.*



FIGURE 21.5 *MS Tibetan 149, details from folios 319r (left) and 370v (right) imaged under UV illumination.*

Truly blue areas are only present on folios 370–371 (D), where they were obtained with azurite, as shown by intense absorption bands at 1493, 2284 and 2350 nm in the reflectance spectrum. The greenish-blue hues on folios 319–320 (d) were instead obtained by either mixing or, more likely, layering azurite and indigo; the presence of indigo can be inferred from the deep absorption at about 650 nm followed by a rather sharp rise in reflectance.

Green areas (e-E) were most likely painted with mixtures of indigo, again identified by the deep absorption between 650–660 nm, with yellow pigments, probably different on the two sets of pages. Further technical analysis by means of either X-ray fluorescence or Raman spectroscopy would be needed to confirm the presence of these yellow pigments and ascertain their nature.

Visual observation suggests that white areas may have been left largely unpainted; however, reflectance spectroscopy is unable to identify white calcium-based pigments such as chalk and limestone and so their presence cannot be excluded.

5 Conclusions

The results obtained during the preliminary technical investigation of selected pages from manuscript Add. 1666 and the Tibetan 149 xylograph highlight the potential of non-invasive scientific analysis as a tool to further our knowledge of the materials and painting techniques of Tibetan artists.

Based on these results, we need to expand on the list of pigments used by Tibetan artists, at least when discussing paintings on paper, i.e. manuscripts or hand-painted prints. Lead carbonate appears to have been the white pigment of choice for the artist decorating Add. 1666, although the presence of other (calcium-based) white pigments cannot be excluded based on the spectroscopic data alone. The use of lead white, as well as its presence in a ground layer, suggest that this artist may have had strong ties with the Western world, something which certainly deserves further investigation. Green pigments not included in the traditional lists of Tibetan artists' materials were also identified, i.e. verdigris (which may have been a later addition on Add. 1666) and green mixtures obtained with indigo and yellow pigments. We also unexpectedly identified the combined use of azurite and indigo either in a mixture or, more probably, in a sequence of layers. Finally the analytical results challenge the notion that Tibetan artists used mineral pigments exclusively for painting base layers, and organic ones for highlighting and outlining.

Future analytical work will focus on completing the characterisation of the palette used by each artist on these two objects, by means of complementary analytical methods such as X-ray fluorescence, Fourier-Transform Infrared spectroscopy, and Raman spectroscopy. Infrared imaging of the manuscript might also reveal the presence of underdrawing and preliminary sketches.

Further analysis of a greater number of pages from Tibetan 149 may well allow assigning authorship of the decoration on each of them to one or the other artist. Additionally, if a substantial corpus of Tibetan manuscripts and prints were to be analysed in the future, we may well be able to start generalising the results obtained so far and begin to explore the relationship between artists working in Tibet and in neighbouring countries based on their use of certain painting materials and artistic techniques.

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Paper Plants in the Tibetan World: A Preliminary Study

Alessandro Boesi

Tibetan texts, notably religious ones (*dpe cha*), were inspired by Indian Buddhist manuscripts, which were produced from palm leaves,¹ and represented one of the oldest tools of writing in India, and several other Asian Countries as Thailand, Burma, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Called *grantha* or later *pustaka*, they were manufactured in the so-called *pothi* format – loose long rectangular leaves held together by a string that runs through holes in the middle and then bound around with two covers, usually made of wood. Tibetan manuscripts and printed texts mostly conserve the Indian *pothi* format.

In the seventh century, when Tibet became a powerful empire in Asia and the basis of Tibetan civilization were laid, recording of information became a crucial undertaking, primarily for administrative and ritual purposes. A new script based on a Sanskrit alphabet was devised; stone inscriptions were carved and wood was often used as writing surface but had significant limitations. As paper, and techniques for making it, were imported from neighbouring countries much more extensive writing became possible. It was most likely during this period that Tibetans selected the local plants that could be used to produce paper, and started this activity in their own country.

The aim of this article is to examine paper plants in the Tibetan cultural area, particularly focusing on their identification. This will be done by examining accounts from pre-modern Tibet, my field data, research data, and the information available on Tibetan medical treatises. This study is preliminary.

Research specifically addressing the issue of Tibetan paper plants is rare and only recently scholars have attempted to deal with this subject (Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik 2013). At present we still do not know precisely which plant species have been used in the past and are used today in each region and printing house, which are the areas of collection of these plants, and which

1 According to Agrawal (1984: 25–27), the leaves of only a few varieties of palm-trees have been used for writing in South and Southeast Asia. The most widely exploited species included *Borassus flabellifer* Linn (the Palmyra palm), *Corypha umbraculifera* Linn (talipot, fan palm), and *Corypha taliera* Roxb.

regions and places have represented the main centres of paper production. Also, we do not know how local people perceive, categorize these plants, evaluate their qualities as raw materials for paper-making, and it is not clear to what extent these plants were and are significant for the life of Tibetans, notably in the context of the exploitation and marketing of natural resources. At present we know for certain that the main raw materials used for paper production in Tibet have been obtained from *Daphne*, *Edgeworthia*, *Stellera*, and *Wikstroemia* species of the Thymelaeaceae family.

1 Paper Plants According to Accounts from Pre-modern Tibet

Several travellers, explorers, and missionaries who lived and criss-crossed Tibetan cultural regions in the past centuries reported the use of certain plants for paper manufacture.

Waddell (1905: 226), who participated in the Younghusband military expedition to Lhasa in 1904, wrote that at the rGyal rtse sKu 'bum, "The books are usually written on a paper made from the bark of the Himalayan laurel or the root-fibre of a native lint like plant." The former plant likely corresponds to *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia* species or to *Edgeworthia gardneri*.

Eric Teichman (1922: 107), the British consular officer who extensively travelled in eastern Tibet in 1918, when passing through Nang chen in northeast Tibet, reported: "I came across some Tibetans digging up the root of a kind of bush from which Tibetan paper is made. This paper is used all over Tibet. The Chinese locally call it p'ichih ('skin paper' – there are also other kinds of p'ichih made in China). It is very tough and strong, but, in Eastern Tibet at any rate, so roughly made as to be difficult to write upon with a steel pen; the Tibetan wooden pen, however, slides over the obstructions of unassimilated fragments of wood and straw more successfully." So according to Teichman this root, certainly obtained from *Stellera chamaejasme*, was used as source material to produce paper, and this paper was used all over Tibet. The quality of the paper produced in this area, which Teichman deemed to be low, possibly depended upon local procedures and skills. Actually, according to Trier (1972: 56) "paper made from the bast of *Wikstroemia chamaejasme* [synonym for *Stellera chamaejasme*] was regarded as of high quality in Tibet and used for special purposes as paper money".

Beetham,² who participated in the British expedition to Everest in 1924, took some very interesting pictures of people from the Rong shar Valley, located to

2 See The Bentley Beetham Collection: <http://www.bentleybeetham.org/index.php>.

the west of Everest region, while working on paper production, and notably peeling off the bark of local plants, making paper pulp, and putting paper to dry on moulds. Beetham wrote that this paper was made from elder (*Sambucus* sp.) bark. To my knowledge species belonging to this genus, two of which are present in Tibet (*S. adnata* and *S. javanica*) (Wu et al. 2011, 19: 611–613), have never been used for making paper. So it must be again species belonging to the Thymelaeaceae family (see below). Beetham also commented that the paper would end up in Lhasa, where it was used for official purposes.

The British officer Samuel Turner (1800: 99–100) described the process of papermaking in Bhutan in the mid-18th century: “In our perambulations down the valley, I often rested at the place where the chief manufacture of paper is established, which was made, I found, by a very easy and inexpensive process, of the bark of a tree, here called Deah, which grows in great abundance upon the mountains near Tassuisudon, but is not produced on those immediately bordering on Bengal.” The term ‘Deah’ likely relates to the Dzonkha language designation “De shing” that, according to a FAO report on plant use in Bhutan (Chamling 1996: 44), indicates both *Edgeworthia gardneri* and *Daphne bholua* (Table 3).

A few works indicate that in sDe dge (sDe dge County in dKar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, PRC), locality hosting one of the most important printing houses of Tibet, the plant mainly used for paper-making has been *Stellera chamaejasme*. Duncan (1964: 64), a missionary who lived in 'Ba thang from 1921 to 1932, reported that, “After the root pulp has been washed and spread thinly on cloth stretched between frames it is dried in the sun assuming the form of paper sheets. This is an important business at sDe dge.” Also at the present time according to Dongfa (2010: 78–79) at sDe dge, “The paper was made from the root tassels of the local medical herbal plant. [*Stellera chamaejasme*] Therefore, the paper had the characteristics of being anti-vermin and worms and of good fibre quality for long term preservation.”

2 Recent Research

During my research fieldwork many informants from different Tibetan regions as Li thang County (dKar mdzes Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, PRC), lower Mustang District and Dhorpatan (Baglung District) in Nepal, Lhasa area (TAR, PRC), Reb kong (Tongren County, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, PRC) and Bla brang (Gannan Tibetan Autonomous prefecture, Xiahe County, Gansu Province, PRC) in A mdo, have reported that in the past paper was made by using plant bark

(obtained either from stem or root), which was beaten to obtain paper pulp, mixed with water, and spread over a mould to dry.

The first time that I was shown a plant that Tibetans have used to produce paper was in 1999. At that time I was conducting my PhD research fieldwork in Li thang, a Tibetan town located in eastern Tibetan regions. Ngag dbang bkra shis, a local traditional doctor, indicated me a plant abundantly growing over the southern slopes of *spom ra*, the mountain dominating Lithang, which he collected and used to prepare medicines, particularly to relieve pain, to treat swellings, infectious, and skin diseases. Ngag dbang bkra shis commented that the root of this plant, named *re lcag pa* (*Stellera chamaejasme*)³ according to Tibetan medical treatises, and *mgo re lcag re* in the local dialect, was used for making paper before the arrival of the Chinese in the 1950s. Not far from the place where we stood near Li thang monastery Ngag dbang bkra shis also showed me a ruined building that once was Li thang printing house.

According to my field data, *Stellera chamaejasme* is a well-known paper-plant in many Tibetan cultural regions: in A mdo, Khams, and dBus gtsang, and in Nepalese high valleys as Dolpo and lower Mustang. Tibetans generally designate this plant *shog gu me tog* ('paper flowering plant'), *shog ldum* ('paper plant'), and *shog shing* ('paper wood'), and use these same designations to indicate the other plants locally exploited for paper-making. Yet in each region a local vernacular name for *Stellera* is used, as *mgo re lcag re* at Lithang, *mgo na ra* in Nepalese Dolpo, *mgo bo rol gdangs* in lower Mustang District (Nepal), and *ra ma rwa co* in Xining area (Qinghai Province, PRC). According to a recent ethnobotanical study (Ji et al. 2000) conducted in northwest Yunnan, *Stellera chamaejasme* was used as indigenous medicine, virulent herb, pesticide, and raw material for making paper in the area.

It is interesting to note that Tibetans widely acknowledge that *Stellera* (and also the other paper plants as *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia*) is a poisonous plant, which reared animals do not eat, and notably that its fragrance is poisonous and can provoke headaches to people. Actually it seems that some of its popular denominations include the term *mgo*, "head", which might be related to this plant quality.

3 *Stellera chamaejasme* L. is a perennial species that has a stout, thick, branched or not woody rhizome, many clustered erect and unbranched stems (20–50 cm). The globose terminal inflorescence bears many fragrant flowers. The calyx is white, yellow or reddish purple. Flowering season spans from April to June. The fruit is a conic drupe. It grows in sunny and dry slopes, sandy places, between 2600–4200 in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, TAR, and Yunnan. It is also diffused in Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, in several Chinese provinces, and Russia (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 250.). According to Polunin and Stainton (1989: 356) it grows in Uttar Pradesh (now Uttarakhand), India.



FIGURE 22.1 *Stellera chamaejasme*, *Lihang, Sichuan, China*.
PHOTOGRAPH: ALESSANDRO BOESI, 2000.

Concerning paper production in Li thang, Duncan (1964: 73–74) reported that in the 1920s, “Litang monastery has a set of blocks for the Kagyur but printing has ceased due to the expense of paper since bark must be brought from a distance of two or more day’s journey.” It is interesting to note that this information may contrast with my observations, particularly if the term ‘bark’ refers here to the root bark of *Stellera chamaejasme*. At Li thang and surrounding area at the time of my fieldwork this plant abundantly grew on south facing slopes and thus could be easily collected as a source material for paper-making. It may put forward that, when Duncan visited Li thang, the plant used to produce paper was not *Stellera chamaejasme*, but another species of the Thymelaeaceae family, possibly *Daphne* or *Wikstroemia*, or both of them, some species of which likely grow in Lithang County and other parts of western Sichuan.⁴ For reasons that I explain below, at that time *Stellera chamaejasme* could not grow as abundantly as today or could even be rare at Li thang. Also, local people might have deemed *Stellera chamaejasme* less valuable than the other available local plants suitable for making paper and that it was more convenient to collect the raw material from the bark of the stems of other Thymelaeaceae species growing in areas two or more day’s journey distant than obtaining it from *Stellera chamaejasme* roots, the extraction of which from the soil represents a more difficult procedure. Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik (2013: 2) reported that this material requires a longer time for processing, and an extra step in the paper-making process.

‘Gyur med tshe brtan, another traditional doctor working in Li thang and coming from gLing ka skyid, a *rong* valley located in Li thang County, came to my help by reporting that in his homeland a plant named *shog shing* did grow, which was different from *re lcag pa*, and that in the past was used to make paper. This plant might belong to *Daphne* or *Wikstroemia* species. *Edgeworthia gardneri*, another important paper plant in Tibet and Himalayan regions, does not thrive in this area (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 247).

A few recent studies support the hypothesis that at that time paper plants were possibly collected two or more day’s journey from Li thang. Research has shown that *Stellera chamaejasme* is a pest plant, having the ability of successfully competing with other species and particularly quickly colonizing

4 According to the Flora of China (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 215–245), *Wikstroemia leptophylla*, *W. scytophylla*, *W. capitatoracemosa*, *Daphne papyracea*, *D. aurantiaca*, *D. tangutica*, and others are diffused in the Tibetan areas of western Sichuan. Yet at the present stage of research except for a few, we do not know which of these species have been used or not for making paper, for example *D. tangutica* and *W. capitatoracemosa*, and we do not know whether they grow or not in Lithang County.

degraded pasturelands. *Stellera* is able to synthesize and secrete in the soil secondary metabolites that prevent some other plant species to grow. Notably Hui (2011) showed that *Stellera* can exert allelopathic inhibition on several Fabaceae and grasses through water leaching, residue decomposition, and root exudates.⁵ Recent investigations have also shown that mainly from the 1960s onwards pasture overexploitation owing to increases in cattle and sheep numbers has been a diffuse phenomenon over the Tibetan plateau. According to Sun et al. (2009) this phenomenon is particularly relevant in alpine meadows on the eastern Tibetan regions, which have been overgrazed during the last several decades and are suffering serious invasion of *Stellera chamaejasme*. Also Klein et al. (2007) suggested that climate warming in the area may have increased production of this non-palatable forb. Thus it is almost sure that in the past *Stellera chamaejasme* was not as diffused as it is at present in Tibet. This has been shown (Sun et al. 2009) in Zung chu County (Songpan County, rNga ba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, PRC), a region that has been heavily grazed in the past few decades. According to local informants in the 1960s *Stellera chamaejasme* was not diffused there whereas today it abundantly grows in the area, notably on flat valleys and south-facing slopes.⁶

These data possibly imply that in the past *Stellera chamaejasme* was not as abundantly spread as it is today also in Li thang and surrounding area, and that local people used to collect it or other Thymelaeaceae species in other parts of their territory as Duncan reported.

5 According to Hui (2011), the role that *Stellera chamaejasme* has in grassland degradation is significant owing to its competitive encroachment on several plant species. Wang Hui showed that *Stellera* released allelochemicals provoked allelopathic inhibitions on the four Fabaceae *Medicago sativa*, *Onobrychis viciifolia*, *Coronilla varia*, and *Melilotus suaveolens*, and at a lesser extent on the six Poaceae *Agropyron cristatum*, *Agropyron mongolicum*, *Elymus dahuricus*, *Psathyrostachys perinnes*, *Bromus inermis*, and *Lolium perenne*. This study demonstrated that the allelopathic inhibition of *Stellera* roots was particularly significant, and that it enhanced with the increase of roots biomass. The inhibitory effect of *Stellera* stems and leaves was relatively weak, but when the amount of stems and leaves increased, it also significantly inhibited the growth of the four kinds of legumes, and augmented its allelopathic effects on forages. See also Zhou et al., 1998.

6 According to Sun et al. 2009 one of the outcomes of *Stellera chamaejasme* spread in this area is displacement of the dominant palatable *Kobresia* and *Poa* species, while its toxicity prevents it from being eaten by yaks (Liu et al. 2004). For these reasons, *Stellera* spread threatens productivity, conservation, and ecological sustainability in wide range of meadows and grasslands on the Tibetan Plateau of China (Xing et al. 2002; Liu et al. 2004).

The recent *Stellera chamaejasme* spread over the Tibetan plateau also entails that, when considering the amount of source material for paper-making that was available in the past, we cannot rely on the present abundance and distribution figures of this species. This might in part explain why the Tibetan manuscript brought from central Tibet during the imperial period and sealed in Dunhuang caves have been produced from *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* fibres (Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik 2013). It is worth noting that the choice of using or not using *Stellera chamaejasme* might have been also influenced by the habit of this species, which may vary according to altitude and climate. For example, near Shigatse (TAR) I observed specimens that were tinier and more slender than the ones growing in many eastern Tibetan regions, so possibly offering less raw material for paper-production.

Daphne species⁷ grow in several Tibetan cultural regions, notably in southern and eastern Tibetan plateau, and also on the southern side of the Himalayan Range. These areas are dominated by deep, forested valleys often run by big rivers, and host lush vegetation. Among the different *Daphne* species diffused in these regions, some have been reported to represent raw material for paper making as *Daphne sureil*,⁸ *D. bholua*,⁹ *D. aurantiaca*,¹⁰ and

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- 7 The *Daphne* genus includes shrubs or subshrubs, evergreen or deciduous, with mostly alternate, sometimes opposite leaves. The inflorescence, usually terminal, has pink or yellow, rarely mauve flowers with campanulate, cylindric, or slightly funnel-shaped calyx. The fruit is a succulent berry or dry and leathery, sometimes enclosed by persistent calyx, sometimes naked, usually red or yellow. In China 52 *Daphne* species are present, of which 41 are endemic (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 230–245).
- 8 *Daphne sureil* is an evergreen shrub to 2.5 m., the bark is greyish brown, the branches ascending and tomentose. Leaves are alternate, lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, 5–13 × 1.6–5 cm. Inflorescences are usually terminal, flower calyx is white with green base; Flowering season spans from October to November. Drupe is orange-red, ovoid, ca. 15 × 10 mm. It grows in dense montane forests; 1800–2100(–2800) m. in TAR, [Bangladesh, Bhutan, NE India, E Nepal] (Wu et al. 2004, 13: 241).
- 9 *Daphne bholua* is a evergreen or deciduous shrub, creeping or erect, 1–4 m tall. Branches are brownish, becoming dark brown suffused with purple. Leaves are alternate, clustered at stem apex, narrowly elliptic or oblong-lanceolate (3.5–17 ×). Flowers are fragrant with purplish red or red calyx. Flowering season spans from January to March. Drupe is black, ovoid, 7–8 × ca. 5 mm. It grows in forests, 1700–3500 m., in Sichuan, TAR, northwest Yunnan [Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal] (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 244).
- 10 *Daphne aurantiaca* is an evergreen shrub up to 1.2 m tall with the main branches reddish to dark brown, often prostrate. Leaves are obovate, ovate, or elliptic, glabrous, max 2.3 × 1.2 cm. It has terminal inflorescences, 2–5-flowered. The flowers are fragrant with deep yellow to orange calyx. Drupe is brownish yellow, ellipsoid, 3–5 × 2–3 mm. The flowering season spans from May to June. It grows in forests, shrubby slopes, often on ledges and faces of limestone cliffs (2600–3500 m.) in southwest Sichuan and northwest Yunnan (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 235).

*D. retusa*¹¹ (Chamling 1996: 44), some others might have been used for this purpose and only further research may allow us to assess this.

*Edgeworthia gardneri*¹² thrives between 1000 and 2500–3500 metres in eastern TAR and northwestern Yunnan in the same environmental condition of *Daphne*, and it also grows on the southern slopes of Himalaya in India, Bhutan, and Nepal where it has been used for paper making as well. Out of the 4 *Edgeworthia* species present in China, only one, *Edgeworthia gardneri*, grows on the Tibetan plateau, so it must be this plant to have been used in Tibet to make paper.

*Wikstroemia*¹³ *canescens*¹⁴ is a very interesting plant that mainly grows in southern TAR. Jim Canary (Paper Road Tibet Project)¹⁵ reported that he found

11 *Daphne retusa* is an evergreen shrub, 0.4–1.5 m tall, densely branched. Leaves are alternate, usually clustered at apices of branches; leaf blade is oblong, oblong-lanceolate, or obovate-elliptic (1.4–7 × 0.6–1.4 cm). The inflorescence is terminal, usually several flowered. Flowers are fragrant with calyx purplish red with paler purple-pink or white lobes. Drupe is red, subglobose or ovoid, 6–8 mm. The flowering season spans from April to May. It grows in shrubby or herbaceous slopes; 3000–3900 m., in Gansu, Hubei, Qinghai, Shanxi, Sichuan, TAR, Yunnan [Bhutan, north India (Assam, Punjab), Kashmir, Nepal] (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 238).

12 *Edgeworthia gardneri* Meisner is a small tree to 3–4 metres tall with a brownish red stem. It has elliptic-lanceolate pubescent leaves, inflorescence 30–50-flowered, with flowers borne in round clusters. Calyx exterior is densely white sericeous and the 4 lobes yellow. Flowering season spans from late winter to early spring. Drupe is ovoid, densely sericeous. It grows in forests, moist places, 1000–2500(–3500) metres, in east TAR, northwest Yunnan [Bhutan, India, N Myanmar, Nepal] (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 247).

13 The genus *Wikstroemia* includes shrubs or subshrubs, occasionally small trees or rarely a herbaceous perennial (*W. linoides*), evergreen or deciduous. These species have usually terminal and subterminal inflorescence, flowers are yellow or green, less often purplish, red or white, cylindrical or tubular, sometimes slightly funnel-shaped. The fruit is a succulent berry or rather dry. This genus includes about 70 species, of which 49 (43 endemic) are present in China. It is worth noting that the separation of *Wikstroemia* from the genus *Daphne* is problematic. “Features such as leaf arrangement, inflorescence type, and flower colour are all clearly paralleled within the two genera and are of no diagnostic value, although they are mentioned in most keys to these genera.” and even concerning the nature of the hypogynal disk, “there are species where the interpretation of the structure of the disk is difficult” (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 215).

14 *Wikstroemia canescens* is a shrubs 1.6–2 m tall, often much branched toward apex. Branches are purple-black, turning greyish brown, pubescent. Alternate leaves are green-whitish, lanceolate, 2.5–5.5 × 0.8–2.5 cm, Inflorescences are many, terminal, and axillary, elongating into racemes after anthesis, 4–10-flowered; Calyx is yellow, ca. 15 mm. Drupe is dry. Flowering season is in autumn. *Wikstroemia canescens* grows on shrubby slopes, among rocks, 1000 to 2800(–3500) metres in TAR [Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan] (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 225).

15 See Paper Road Tibet Project: tslingo.tripod.com/paper_road.htm

in a village near sKyems stong in Dwags po, to the southeast of Lhasa, an old man who showed him an area where he collected samples of a six to eight foot shrub locally named *skyems shing*, identified as *Wikstroemia canescens*, a species that grows on three mountains near sKyems stong, and was used for producing *skyems shog*, ‘Kyemdong paper’. A recent Tibetan publication points out that this was traditionally considered the paper of the highest quality and it was used among other things for the production of Tibetan money (Tsendru 2010). Bertsch (1996: 8) quoted another source (Rhodes 1992: 93) that mentions the bark of a tree called ‘Shogshing’ (*shog shing*), and the place of collection at ‘Kemdong’ (skyems stong). The information was given in Calcutta by the Tibetan official Ngawang Tsultrim Kesang in 1927. Huber (1999: 262) in his book *The Cult of the Pure Crystal Mountain* reported that, “raw materials for papermaking were regularly carried by corvée from Chayül Dzong to Chösam, from where the Tsariwa had to deliver them to Kyemdong Dzong.” This corroborates the accounts that sKyems stong was an important centre for paper collection and production. Also Stein (1986: 9) wrote that in Dwags po *Daphne laureola* was collected to manufacture Tibetan paper (*dwags shog*, ‘Dwags po paper’). Yet this species does not grow in Asia and so this plant likely belongs to another *Daphne* or *Wikstroemia* species, or to *Edgeworthia gardneri*.

According to Khartasia,¹⁶ *Wikstroemia canescens* also grows in Yunnan province and it is used for making paper also in primarily Tibetan inhabited areas as Deqen (bDe chen) and Gyalthang (rGyal thang, Zhongdian) in Deqen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Khartasia (Table 1) reported that besides *Wikstroemia canescens* other 13 *Wikstroemia* species grow in Yunnan. Among these, 6 thrive in its northwestern areas (*W. delavayi*, *W. leptophylla*, *W. canescens*, *W. lichiangensis*, *W. scytophylla*, and *W. lamatsoensis*),¹⁷ and three of them (*W. delavayi*, *W. canescens*, and *W. lichiangensis*) have been used by Naxi to make Dongba paper.¹⁸ Since these species certainly grow in Tibetan cultural areas, it is possible that also local Tibetans have used them for paper-making. According to

16 The database Khartasia combines historical and technological information on components of the papermaking plants, papermaking manufacturing, paper names and characteristics of papermaking fibres. This information comes from literature surveys carried out in collaboration with partner institutions in China, Korea and Japan. See: www.khartasia-crcc.mnhn.fr/en/content_en/wikstroemia-canescens-wall-ex-meisn

17 The Flora of China (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 215–229) confirms this.

18 According to Khartasia, the paper produced by Naxi “is also called ‘Baidi’ from the name of the village (Baishuitai or ‘white water terraces’ Shangri-La) which is native Dongba culture. The tradition traces the production of paper by the Naxi in the Yuan Dynasty (1280–1368) but the first Dongba texts date from 1668 (www.khartasia-crcc.mnhn.fr/en/content_en/wikstroemia-canescens-wall-ex-meisn).

the Flora of China (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 224–225) other two *Wikstroemia* species grow in TAR: *W. lungtzeensis* and *W. capitatoracemosa*, which might also have been used for paper production. Further research is needed to verify this.

TABLE 22.1 *Wikstroemia* species used for paper-making in Yunnan according to Khartasia

Botanical species	Place of growth
<i>Wikstroemia canescens</i> Wallich ex Meisner	Shrubby slopes, among rocks; 1000–2800 (-3500) m. TAR [Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan].
<i>Wikstroemia lichiangensis</i> W. W. Smith	Forests; 2600–3500 m. SW Sichuan, NW Yunnan.
<i>Wikstroemia delavayi</i> Lecomte	Valley forests, shrubby or limestone areas; 2000–2700 m. Sichuan, Yunnan

I have already mentioned above that *Stellera chamaejasme* is a poisonous plant. Also, Tibetans designate *Daphne* paper as *dug shog*, ‘poison paper’. Several species of the Thymelaeaceae family share this significant feature: being poisonous, they are not attacked by insects, worms, and small animals, an additional quality that makes them an excellent source material for paper-making. The toxicity of Thymelaeaceae species has been well established for humans as well as for several higher animal species. Toxic manifestations may be divided into those observed when the plant materials are taken internally and those seen when such materials are contacted externally. Concerning the Thymelaeaceae species that Tibetans have used to make paper recent studies have shown that *Wikstroemia canescens* has antibiotic properties. People from Parbati Valley of Kullu District in Himachal Pradesh (India) use this plant as pesticidal (Sharma and Samant 2014: 96), and in the rural areas of Nepal this plant is traditionally used as an abortifacient (Gyawali et al. 2010: 205). Different root extracts of *Stellera chamaejasme* showed antimicrobial activity against several microorganisms, and particularly against three bacteria, and twelve phytopathogenic fungi (Lin et al. 2009; Bai et al. 2012). Other studies have reported pesticidal and acaricidal activity (Wang et al. 2002; Shi et al. 2004). *Daphne bholua* is used to treat intestinal worms in Sikkim Himalaya (Panda and Misra 2010: 186), it showed antibacterial, antifungal, antiprotozoal, and antiviral activity (Goel et al. 2002). From *Edgeworthia gardneri* substances having antimicrobial and antibiotic activity have been isolated (Gao et al. 2008; Chakrabarti et al. 1986).

Codicological studies, examination of paper fibres from ancient manuscripts and books, information available on Tibetan written sources, accounts from travellers, explorers, and missionaries, data from botanical studies, and recent research in the field, indicate that a few species belonging to the Thymelaeaceae family have represented the most important source material for paper-making in Tibet. So far, among the Thymelaeaceae, the following species have been identified as raw materials used in Tibetan cultural regions: *Edgeworthia gardneri*, *Daphne sureil*, *D. bholua*, *D. aurantiaca*, *D. retusa*, *Wikstroemia canescens*, and *Stellera chamaejasme*. These plants grow in the areas inhabited by Tibetan people, and can be easily collected. Yet in Tibetan regions do grow other *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia* species, which may also have been used for this purpose.

Thymelaeaceae is a dicotyledonous family including 52 genera and more than 750 species, among them small trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Some of these species share a particular feature: their phloem or bast, the plant nutrient conductive tissue, includes very strong fibres. These fibres are long, narrow, and supportive cells, which provide tension strength without limiting flexibility, and render the bark of these plants a valuable material for the manufacture of high-quality paper. In fact their stems (and roots) are supple and difficult to break and may be used as a substitute for string. The poisonousness of several of these species, as stated above, is an additional feature that makes them particularly suitable for making paper.

The other plant species that have also been used for paper production in Tibet include paper mulberry, *Broussonetia papyrifera* (Moraceae),¹⁹ which thrives in south-eastern Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), Yunnan and Sichuan Provinces, and since ancient times has been cultivated in China for paper manufacture. According to Khartasia²⁰ *Broussonetia papyrifera* has been used for paper-making in southeast TAR and this agrees with the findings of Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik (2013, see below). Meisezahl et al. (1961: 15–18)

19 *Broussonetia papyrifera* is a tree 10–20 m. tall with flowers always produced on leafy stems. Leaves are ovate to elliptic-ovate, spirally arranged, simple or 3–5-lobed on young trees. The male and female flowers are borne on separate plants, the female flowers being greenish and held in round heads, the male plants bearing catkins. The edible fruits are orange-red, round or pear-shaped. It grows in many Chinese provinces, among them in Gansu, Sichuan, southeast TAR, and Yunnan (Wu et al. 2003, 5: 26–27; http://kchartasia-crcc.mnhn.fr/en/content_en/broussonetia-papyrifera-l-her-ex-vent). *B. papyrifera* prefers sub-humid warm, sub-tropical monsoon climates in moist forests, and, at a lesser extent, temperate climates, and it grows up to 2100 metres.

20 http://kchartasia-crcc.mnhn.fr/en/content_en/broussonetia-papyrifera-l-her-ex-vent

examined a four-layered Tibetan paper and found that the outer layers were made from *Broussonetia* fibres and bamboo.²¹

According to informants birch bark, mainly from *Betula utilis* (*stag pa shing, gro ga*), which grows in southern and eastern TAR, and also *Betula alnoides* (*stag pa shing*), has been used in Tibet and high Himalayan valleys.²² The bark of birch, according to Ketzer (1993: 21), has been used in Tibet until the 17th century only for special occasion like short texts. It was the inner bark of the tree that was used for writing. After peeling off the tree, it was dried. Oil was then applied to it and it was polished. Finally the birch bark was cut to a suitable size. Besides *B. utilis* and *B. alnoides* 12 other birch species are diffused over the Tibetan plateau. Additional study is needed to assess whether some among them have also been used for paper making.

The origin of Tibetan paper is still unclear. The main reference study for this subject is the one conducted by Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik (2013). As they reported, this issue has taken political overtones: the Chinese claim that paper was introduced from China whereas some Tibetan scholars argue that it originated in the ancient kingdom of Zhang zhung. Another topic of discussion, which is related to the subject of this article, is whether the original Tibetan paper was made from *Daphne/Edgeworthia* species or/and from *Stellera chamaejasme*. In the 8th century the Chinese already had a long experience in paper making and have probably used “a variety of raw fibres that included the rags of hemp, flax (ropes) and ramie (known as “Chinese grass”), bark of mulberry, bamboo and rattan, rice and wheat straw, and many other types of grass depending on the region of production.” (ibidem: 2). Some of these plants as *Broussonetia papyrifera* (see above) also grow in Tibetan cultural regions.

Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik (2013) specifically investigated the earliest extant Tibetan paper from the manuscripts discovered in the caves of Dunhuang in Gansu Province (China). They examined paper fibres and combined their results with codicological, palaeographical, and textual information. The examination included 63 samples taken from 50 manuscripts of the Stein Collection. Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik found that the majority of manuscripts were rag paper primarily composed of *Boehmeria* sp. (ramie) and *Cannabis* sp. (hemp), sometimes with the addition of other fibres such as *Corchorus* sp. (jute) or *Broussonetia* sp. (paper mulberry). This type

21 *Phyllostachys, Pleioblastus, Bambusa, Dendrocalamus, Sinocalamus* and *Chimonobambusa* species, according to Maoyi (1999).

22 In Tibetan cultural areas 14 species of the genus *Betula* grow, among these some were used for paper-making, certainly *B. utilis* that thrives in south and east Tibetan Autonomous Region.

of paper and the technology to produce it showed that these manuscripts were made in Dunhuang or in other parts of China. Yet 6 samples were produced by using plant fibres from Thymelaeaceae, specifically *Daphne* sp. or *Edgeworthia* sp. Among these last works, one was evidently produced in central Tibet during the imperial period, and another likely came from the same area. None of the Tibetan manuscripts known to be made in Dunhuang was made from Thymelaeaceae fibres. Also a letter found in Miran possibly coming from central Tibet was made from *Daphne* or *Edgeworthia*, mixed with paper mulberry, and other 12th–13th century Tibetan manuscripts brought from Tibet to Kharakhoto by Tibetan monks were produced from *Daphne* or *Edgeworthia*. Interestingly Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik found that methods of production and textual evidence suggest that other manuscripts were brought to Dunhuang from Tibet. Yet, these texts, again dating from the first half of the ninth century, were not made from Thymelaeaceae fibres, but from *Broussonetia*, sometimes possibly mixed with hemp or *Morus* sp., mulberry.

This study essentially showed that the manuscripts likely coming from central Tibet were made from *Daphne* and/or *Edgeworthia* plant fibres, and that, at the present state of research, it seems that Thymelaeaceae family plants were not used in Central Asia or China. Tibetans had likely developed the techniques for making paper during the imperial period from as early as the first half of the ninth century. The raw material for this technology were mainly plants belonging to the Thymelaeaceae family, particularly *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia*, which occur widely in the Himalayas, and in southern and south-eastern Tibetan regions. It is surprising that evidence of the use of *Stellera chamaejasme* roots was not found in any Dunhuang manuscript (at this stage of research). People from central Tibet might have preferred to use *Edgeworthia* and *Daphne* rather than *Stellera chamaejasme*, the roots of which are difficult to obtain, and possibly because, as recent studies (see above) have shown, this plant was not so abundantly diffused in the past as it is today, and only in the last decades has been rapidly spreading in many areas where it was rare before. So, as Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik stated: “root paper was probably only made where other plant sources were unavailable” such as in the Tibetan plateau regions where *Edgeworthia* and *Daphne* do not grow, notably in the higher and drier part of it, actually covering the majority of its extension, and cannot be imported. The date when this practice began remains to be determined (the earliest known examples of *Stellera* paper go back to the 10th/11th century, see Helman-Ważny and Pasang Wangdu in this volume). Thus it seems that *Daphne* spp., *Edgeworthia* sp. (*E. gardneri* since it is the only species of this genus that grows in Tibet), and *Broussonetia* sp. (*B. papyrifera*, for the same

reason as above) were used for papermaking in early Tibet. The authors conclude claiming that given the patterns of plant distribution in Tibet, it is likely that the primary type of paper used in central and perhaps western Tibet was made from Thymelaeaceae species.

Edgeworthia and *Daphne* thrive up to 3500 and more in typically Tibetan cultural areas where they have been easily available to local Tibetan people. *Edgeworthia* grows in eastern TAR and in northwestern Yunnan, and not also in Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai Provinces as *Daphne* (Wu et al. 2007 13, 247–248). *Broussonetia papyrifera* grows at lower altitude (up to 2100 m.) in some areas of southeast TAR, in Sichuan and Yunnan. According to Ju et al. (2013: 7) *Broussonetia papyrifera* thrives in Deqen (bDe chen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan), a Tibetan cultural area, which below 2500 metres includes subtropical and warm temperate climate.

Interestingly the data of Trier (1972: 245–246), although obtained in Nepal where environmental conditions and plant availability are different (and by examining a number of samples that is not representative), agree with those of Helman-Ważny and Van Schaik. Trier analyzed 22 paper samples from books written in Tibetan and identified 16 samples as being made entirely from *Daphne bholua*, two samples were exclusively made from *Edgeworthia gardneri*, three were a mixture from *Daphne bholua* and *Edgeworthia gardneri*, and only one was made from *Stellera chamaejasme*.

Further research is needed to assess whether also *Wikstroemia* species, and particularly *W. canescens*, were used in ancient Tibet, as it is likely. It is interesting to note that properly distinguishing *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia* species is difficult through the examination of both their morphological features (see footnote 13) and bast fibre anatomic structures (Meisezahl et al. 1960: 300). Thus some of the specimens so far studied and identified as *Daphne* might belong to *Wikstroemia*.

3 Paper Plants in Tibetan Medical Treatises

The majority of paper plants have been used in Tibetan medicine, and are often named with specific other designations; several medical texts mention their employ for paper production but only in passing. Thus I have examined some Tibetan *materia medica* treatises composed in pre-modern Tibet to tease out this information. This study is not exhaustive and more work, also on other texts, is necessary to give a comprehensive view on the concept of these plants as material to make paper according to Tibetan medical texts.

Some modern Tibetan *materia medica* and recent research publications include the botanical identification of Tibetan medicinal plants. Yet it must be highlighted that these identifications may be valid only for specific regions. One of the main features of Tibetan *materia medica*, particularly concerning medicinal plant identification, is that it exhibits strong variability. In the vast area inhabited by Tibetan people, which exhibits geographical, climatic, ecological, and floristic differences, medical practitioners have to select their medicinal agents in contrasting environmental settings. Variability in *materia medica* identification may also be related to practitioners' education and to the peculiar ways local medical traditions practise medicine. Thus in different areas homonyms of Tibetan medicinal plant designations often correspond to different botanical species (Boesi 2004: 297–304; Salick et al. 2006). This explains why the identification of paper plants may vary according to different sources.

So far I have found that, according to medical texts, the following medicinal plants have been used as raw material for paper production: *ar nag*, *ar skya*, *re lcag pa*, *sngon bu*, and *dug srad*. The first four designations most likely indicate the principal paper plants that have been used in Tibet. According to modern Tibetan *materia medica* *re lcag pa* corresponds to *Stellera chamaejasme*, *ar nag* to *Daphne aurantiaca* and *Wikstroemia canescens*, *ar skya* to *Daphne aurantiaca*, and *sngon bu* to a few Campanulaceae species. The fifth denomination, *dug srad*, indicates a substitute: *Oxytropis ochrocephala* or/and *Astragalus strictus*.

3.1 *Ar nag, ar skya*

According to one of the most important Tibetan *materia medica*, which was composed in 1727 by De'u dmar dge bshes bstan 'dzin phun tshogs (1994: 236), *ar nag* is considered as a type of *a ga ru*, "it has flowers and leaves similar to the ones of *re lcag pa*" (*Stellera chamaejasme*), and thus it likely belongs to the Thymelaeaceae family, "it has yellow flowers and it is a type of *shog shing* ["paper wood"] since its skin is suitable for making paper".²³ The Mongol doctor rJam dpal rdo rje (1971: folio 111) in his illuminated work on Tibetan medicinal substances possibly compiled in the first half of the 19th century, reported the same information given by De'u mar dge bshes bstan 'dzin phun tshogs. The modern Tibetan *materia medica* composed by dGa' ba'i rdo rje (1998: 164–165) describes the *ar nag* as a type of *shog shing* and identifies it as both *Daphne*

23 *me tog re lcag pa'i dbyibs ji lta ba la/ me tog kha dog ser ba shing lpags shog bu 'chos nyen pas shog shing rigs yin la/*



FIGURE 22.2 *Folio (23R) from a Tibetan materia medica manuscript (author and title unknown). In the first section from the left, the author illustrated re lcag pa (Stellera chamaejasme) and noted its medical properties. The caption says: “re lcag nim pa completely heals cold diseases.” (Boesi 2015).*

aurantiaca and *Wikstroemia canescens*. The former identification is also given by Zhongguo kexueyuan xibei gaoyuan shengwu yanjiusuo (1991: 452–453)²⁴ for a type of a *ga ru*. Both *D. aurantiaca* and *W. canescens* have yellow flowers as the ones of *Edgeworthia gardneri*, another paper plant.

According to the *Vaidurya sngon po* (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1982: 253), the commentary to the *rGyud bzhi* (g.Yu thog yon tan mgon po 1992) written by the regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in 1687–88, the type of a *ga ru* that can be used as a source material for paper-making is not the black type, but the ‘light colour’, *ar skya*, type. sKar ma chos dpel (1993: 94), author of a modern Tibetan *materia medica*, agrees with Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and identifies this plant as *Daphne aurantiaca*.

Interestingly Gabrish (1990: 49) reported that one of his informants mentioned the plant *ar bo gra bo* as one of the raw materials used for the production of banknote paper. The term *ar bo gra bo*, ‘multicoloured *ar bo*’, may be related to *ar nag/ar skya*, being a synonym or indicating another type of this plant.

3.2 *Re lcag pa*

According to De’u dmar dge bshes bstan ’dzin phun tshogs (1994: 290) “with the root (of *re lcag pa*) paper is made”.²⁵ rJam dpal rdo rje (1971: folio 150) wrote that: “with the single segment white root (of *re lcag pa*) the paper of dBus was

24 This text aims at identifying and describing from a modern scientific point of view medicinal substances used in Tibetan medicine.

25 (*re lcag*) *rtsa bas shog bu byed pa yin/*

made”.²⁶ So in the first half of the 19th century this plant was used in central Tibet for this purpose. In the *materia medica* compiled by the physician Cha har dGe bshes blo bzangs tshul khirms (1740–1810) (2007: 79–80) in the section devoted to *re lcag pa*, the author informed us on the part of the root used to make paper: “it is said that the white bast is suitable to make paper, and it is also called *sho gu bzo rung*”.²⁷

3.3 *sNgon bu*

Tibetan medical treatises describe a plant named *sngon bu* that most likely corresponds to a Thymelaeaceae species. According to De’u dmar dge bshes bstan ’dzin phun tshogs 18th century *materia medica* (1994: 287) *sngon bu* is also designated as *shog shing pa*. So we may presume that it was used as a raw material for paper-making. This plant is also described in the treatise *Gso dpyad rin po che’i ’khrungs dpe bstan pa* (g.Yu thog yon tan mgon po 2006: 109). This is, according to Tibetan tradition, a very old text of Indian origin that was translated under the supervision of the scholar Shantigarbha in the 8th century. When describing the plant named *sngon bu*, its author wrote: “with the assembled bark [of *sngon bu*] one can get paper”.²⁸ Thus *sngon bu* has likely been used for paper-making for long time, and to my knowledge this work might represent the most ancient written source to mention that a plant collected in Tibet has been used for paper-making. Yet according to modern Tibetan *materia medica* its botanical identification corresponds to *Cyananthus sherriffii* (dGa’ ba’i rdo rje, 1998: 195), a slender herbaceous species growing in southern TAR in alpine meadows and thickets (3200–5000 m.) (Wu et al. 2011, 19: 510), to *C. argenteus*²⁹ and to *C. incanus* (Karma chos dpel, 1993: 208), the former thrives in northwest Yunnan (2800–4300 m.) (Wu et al. 2011, 19: 509), the latter in south Qinghai, west Sichuan, east TAR, and northwest Yunnan (bDe chen, rGyal thang) (2700–5300 m.) (Wu et al. 2011, 19: 509). These species, which belong to the Campanulaceae family, have certainly not been used as raw material for paper-making. Yet since Tibetan medical treatises see *sngon bu* as the designation that indicates one of the plants that were used in southern Tibetan valleys to produce paper, it may put forward that this plant likely corresponds to other species, possibly to the Thymelaeaceae *Daphne*,

26 *rtsa ba dkar po rkang gcig bas dbus shog byed pa’o/*

27 *bar shun dkar po la sho gu bzo rung ces kyang zer ba zhiq la byed do/* I would like to thank Professor Elena de Rossi Filibeck for revising the translation of this passage.

28 *shun pa bsdus pas shog bu ’byung/*

29 Synonym of *Cyananthus longiflorus* Franchet.

Wikstroemia, or *Edgeworthia*. Zur mkhar ba blo gros rgyal po (1989: 528) comes to our help in his treatise *rGyud bzh'i 'grel pa mes po'i zhal lung*, compiled in the 16th century. In the section devoted to describing *sngon bu* he commented: "Concerning *sngon bu*, the real one is the *shog shing pa* that grows in Dwags po and Kong po." So in these regions does thrive a type of *sngon bu*, which is different from the *sngon bu* recognized in other Tibetan areas. This is also corroborated by the doctor Cha har dGe bshes blo bzang tshul khrim (1740–1810) (2007: 79), who wrote that "concerning the real *sngon bu*, it is the *shog shing* that grows in Dwags po",³⁰ and it is noteworthy that he adds that "if one does not find it, it is claimed that *re lcag pa* is a suitable substitute".³¹ This indicates that *re lcag* and *sngon bu* share similar features, may be strongly related, and that the latter possibly belongs to the Thymelaeaceae family.

Interestingly the authors of another medical treatise (Yid lhung 'Jam dbyangs et al. 1986) composed in the 18th century, the students of the famous Si tu pan chen chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700–1774), gave important information on the identification of *sngon bu* (folio 84). They claim that two types of *sngon bu* are recognized according to the medical tradition:³² the *byang lugs* tradition recognizes a type that has a silver blue flower whereas the *zur lugs* tradition identifies *sngon bu* with a plant called *shog shing a ga ru*, with which bast paper is made.³³ Zur mKhar ba blo gros rgyal po was a disciple of Zur mKhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje, the founder of *Zur lugs* tradition. That is why according to him, the real *sngon bu* is the one from Dwags po with which paper is made. It is worth noting that the differences between the two medical traditions mentioned above likely reflected the different ecological and epidemiological conditions of the regions where they have been practised. The *Byang* tradition was mainly rooted in the northern plateau while the *Zur* tradition originated in Tibetan southern valleys as Dwags po (see Meyer 1995: 116).

30 *sngon bu dngos ni dwags po'i yul du skye ba'i shog shing yin la/*

31 *ma myed na re lcag gis tshab rung bar 'dod do/*

32 Several medical traditions propounded by learned masters have developed during the history of Tibetan medicine, with their own medical lineages, followers and treatises. Among these, the *Byang* (see Hofer 2007) and *Zur* traditions, named after their founding lineages, the famous practitioners Byang bdag mnam rgyal grags bzang (1395–1475) and Zur mKhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje (1439–1475) respectively, were established in Tibet in the 15th century. They differed only in minor issues, such as the location of a few channels and vital points of the body, identification of medicinal substances and concept of medical formulae (see Meyer 1995).

33 *sngon bu ni byang lugs pas me tog sngon po dngul 'od can byed kyang/ sur lugs [?] shun pas shog bu byed pa'i shog shing a ga ru ser ba de'i bar shun mdzed/*

Thus it is plausible to claim that the ‘real’ *sngon bu* from Dwags po described in Tibetan medical treatises corresponds to *Daphne*, *Wikstroemia*, or *Edgeworthia* species, which grow in this region and have been the only plants used there by Tibetans for making paper (besides *Broussonetia*).

3.4 *Dug srad*

According to Hildegard Diemberger, who worked on Tibetan paper and text printing in southern Tibet, one of her informants, a local traditional doctor, affirmed that in case of lack of *shog gu me tog*, the root of a plant called *srad ma* was used as substitute. The informant also reported that this paper plant is poisonous and that its fragrance provokes headache. According to Diemberger this plant’s botanical identification corresponds to *Oxytropis* sp.

De’u dmar dge bshes bstan ’dzin phun tshogs (1994: 395) mentioned a type of *srad ma*, named *dug srad* (‘poisonous *srad*’), which, according to the text *Khrungs bkod*, has tender aggregate leaves and whitish flowers. It grows in lower areas, has a fragrance and toxic properties, since it can kill snakes and render cattle confused when they eat it, the fumigation of which is used to paralyse evil spirits, and its roots are used to make paper. According to sKar ma chos ’phel (1993) *materia medica*, *dug srad* corresponds to *Astragalus strictus*,³⁴ and according to dGa’ ba’i rdo rje (1998: 311) to *Oxytropis ochrocephala*.³⁵ Both species are poisonous and are reported to be a serious hazard to Tibetan livestock causing poisoning and even death (Hao Lu et al. 2014; Wu Chenchen et al. 2014; Zhao Meng-Li et al. 2011). Both species are present over Tibetan cultural regions, the former thrives at higher altitude (3000–5600) than the latter (1800–4500).

34 *Astragalus strictus* (Fabaceae) is a herbaceous species 8–30 cm tall, hairy, with pinnate leaves (4–7 cm) and 8–12 pairs of elliptic leaflets. Inflorescences are arranged in racemes up to 20-flowered. Flowers are pale pinkish to purple; Legumes have a 0.5–1 mm beak. It grows in alpine steppic grasslands, stony slopes, 3000–5600 m. in Qinghai, Sichuan, Xinjiang, TAR, Yunnan [Bhutan, India, Kashmir, Nepal] (Wu et al. 2010, 10: 387).

35 *Oxytropis ochrocephala* (Fabaceae) is a tuft-forming herbaceous species 10–56 cm tall. Stems are erect or sprawling. Leaves are pinnate 3–19 cm, 11–39-foliolate. Racemes are compact, 8–14-flowered or more; Calyx is cylindrical and corolla yellow. Legume has inflated body, its beak incurved at apex. It grows in grasslands, weedy slopes and alpine meadows, 1800–4500 m., in Gansu, Hebei, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Qinghai, Sichuan, Xinjiang, and TAR (Wu et al. 2010, 10: 474).

4 Paper Plants According to Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye

'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899), well known 19th century Buddhist master from Khams, devoted to paper-making a section of his encyclopaedic work on Buddhism and Buddhist culture, the Treasury of All-pervading Knowledge (*'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas* 1982). In book six part one (Ibidem vol. 2: 204–359) 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas described the different plants that are used for paper manufacture and claimed that different qualities of paper are produced in Tibet according to the materials with which they are made: superior, average, and inferior materials. He also stated that each Tibetan region may have a different quality of paper, produced by using specific materials and manufacturing techniques.

A plant designated *shog ldum dung lo ma* is indicated as representing the best paper plant. Tibetan medical treatises, for example the 18th century *Shel gong shel phreng* (De'u dmar dge bshes bstan 'dzin phun tshogs 1994: 290), mention the term *shog ldum* as a synonym for *re lcag pa*, yet the terms *shog ldum dung lo ma* and *dung lo ma* (“conch shell leaves”), to my knowledge, do not appear. At the popular level, *shog ldum* is used as a general term to designate paper plants. So *shog ldum dung lo ma* might indicate a paper plant having leaves that are similar to a conch shell. 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas went on describing the place of growth of this plant, which includes a type of soil, notably dark soil (*sa nag*),³⁶ the presence of *shug pa* (*Juniperus* sp., *Cupressus* sp., *Playticiadus* sp.) (Boesi 2004: 180), and a ground free from boulders and rocks. The author also described a yellow flowered variety of *shog ldum dung lo ma* growing in red sandy soil interspersed with slabs of stones, which is difficult to cook since it is hard. He added that when the bark is thick and harbours insects, it is deemed to be of inferior quality.

The botanical identification of *shog ldum dung lo ma* must correspond to one species (or more than one) of the Thymelaeaceae family. As stated above, Tibetans use the term *shog ldum* (as well as *shog shing*) to generally designating paper plants, and the ones that are deemed to be of good quality always correspond to Thymelaeaceae species.

The description of *shog ldum dung lo ma* by 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas may help us in its identification, particularly when he mentioned the existence of a yellow-flowered variety. This most likely implies that the flower colour of the latter is different from the one of the “standard” *shog ldum*

36 According to informants from Li thang County (Sichuan, China), *sa nag* indicates a dark soil, which is soft, of good quality, and over which abundant vegetation grows.

dung lo ma, which must not be yellow. If so, the botanical identification of *shog ldum dung lo ma* cannot correspond to paper plants as *Wikstroemia canescens*, which is seen as one of the best raw materials to produce high quality paper in South-eastern Tibet, and *Edgeworthia gardneri*, since these two plant species have yellow or yellowish-green flowers. This might corroborate the idea that this information likely refers to paper plants collected and used in sDe dge principality and adjacent regions in today northern Sichuan, where both *Wikstroemia canescens* and *Edgeworthia gardneri* do not grow. It also seems that 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas spent most of his life in this area (yet only an in-depth examination of his biography can confirm this point). Also, sDe dge, dPal yul, and dKar mdze in northern Khams were important centres for the production of paper (Weber 2007: 111), 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas was an expert of Tibetan pharmacopoeia ('Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas 2013: 1), and possibly knew well, collected and saw paper plants since they are also used as medicines. Had the author obtained this information on paper in northern Khams, it might be speculated that other *Daphne* species having white, red, and purplish flowers, growing in Sichuan, and that Tibetans see as important raw materials for manufacturing paper, might correspond to *shog ldum dung lo ma*. *Daphne bholua* and *Daphne retusa* represent two possible candidates: the former grows in TAR, Sichuan and Yunnan Tibetan areas, and on the southern side of the Himalayan range, the latter is present in Qinghai, Sichuan, TAR, and Yunnan. Another option might be *Daphne sureil*, which grows in TAR and on the southern side of the Himalayan range, but not in Sichuan. Only further research may confirm these assumptions. Concerning the denomination of this plant, it is interesting to note that since these *Daphne* species may have glossy glabrous leaves, Tibetans could have seen them as recalling conch shells, the surface of which is smooth and shiny.

When 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas wrote that the average quality source material is obtained from *a ga ru*, he most likely meant the variety of it called *shog shing ar nag* (see above), which, according to him, is particularly suitable for thick paper used in writing books. Finally the worst material comes from *re'u lcag* (*re lcag pa*) (*Stellera chamaejasme*, see above). According to 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, the hard paper obtained from it may be used for writing letters, but it is not good for books, and the plants that grow in soft and sandy soil, and in soft dark soil areas are excellent. This idea can be explained by considering that, when the soil is softer and allows the plants to grow abundantly as the "dark soil" does, *Stellera* roots get bigger and offer more raw materials for paper making.

Paper plants classifications from the Tibetan perspective may vary and do not imply that in different areas the botanical identifications correspond. People have had to adapt to local environmental conditions and available materials, as 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas reported. So considering for example Central Tibet and northern Kham areas, the best and average plant materials to manufacture paper may have been obtained from different species. Concerning *re lcag pa*, since it grows in most of Tibetan regions where paper has been traditionally produced, its botanical classification is certain, but its quality may have been perceived differently according to local traditions.

5 Discussion

According to information from travellers' accounts, recent research, Tibetan medical treatises, and my fieldwork, it is possible to devise a preliminary list of some of the plant species that Tibetans have used for making paper (Table 22.2). This list is certainly not exhaustive since botanical studies have shown that several other *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia* species grow over the Tibetan plateau: some of them might also have been used for producing paper. In addition, paper-plant identification may not be simple given that some species as *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia* are difficult to be distinguished one from the other upon both morphological traits and fibre structure (Wu et al. 2007, 13: 215; Meisezahl et al. 1960: 300).

As it has been shown above, the majority of Tibetan paper-plants belong to the Thymelaeaceae family, and notably to *Daphne*, *Stellera*, *Edgeworthia*, and *Wikstroemia* species. The other plants have most likely had minor impact on paper production in Tibet. They include *Broussonetia papyrifera* (Moraceae), *Betula utilis* and *B. alnoides* (Betulaceae), and either *Oxytropis ochrocephala* and/or *Astragalus strictus* (Fabaceae). These two species have been only used as substitutes and among the Tibetan books that have been so far examined, none has been found to have been made from their bast fibres.

TABLE 22.2 *Preliminary List of Raw Material Sources for Traditional Paper in Chinese Tibetan regions*

Botanical name	Local name	Forest type and altitude
<i>Edgeworthia gardneri</i> Meisner	<i>shog shing, shog gu me tog</i>	Forests, moist places; 1000–2500(-3500) m. E TAR, NW Yunnan [Bhutan, India, N Myanmar, Nepal].
<i>Daphne aurantiaca</i> Diels	<i>shog shing, shog gu me tog, ar nag, ar skya</i>	Forests, shrubby slopes, often on ledges and faces of limestone cliffs; 2600–3500 m. SW Sichuan, NW Yunnan
<i>Daphne sureil</i> W. W. Smith & Cave	<i>shog shing, shog gu me tog</i>	Dense montane forests; 1800–2100(-2800) m. TAR, Bangladesh, Bhutan, NE India, Nepal.
<i>Daphne bholua</i> Buchanan-Hamilton ex D. Don	<i>shog shing, shog gu me tog</i>	Forests; 1700–3500 m. Sichuan, TAR, NW Yunnan [Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal]
<i>Daphne retusa</i> Hemsle	<i>shog shing</i>	Shrubby or herbaceous slopes; 3000–3900 m. Gansu, Hubei, Qinghai, Shanxi, Sichuan, TAR, Yunnan
<i>Daphne</i> spp.	<i>shog shing, shog gu me tog</i>	TAR, Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai
<i>Stellera chamaejasme</i> L.	<i>re lcag pa, shog ldum pa, shog shing pa, mgo re lcag re, ra ma rwa co, mgo na ra, mgo bo rol gdangs</i>	Sunny and dry slopes, sandy places; 2600–4200 m. Gansu, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Jilin, Liaoning, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shanxi, Sichuan, Xinjiang, TAR, Yunnan [Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, Russia].

Botanical name	Local name	Forest type and altitude
<i>Wikstroemia canescens</i> Wallich ex Meisner	<i>shog shing, shog gu me tog,</i> <i>skyems shing, ar nag</i>	Shrubby slopes, among rocks; 1000–2800(-3500) m. TAR, NW Yunnan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan.
<i>Wikstroemia</i> spp. <i>Astragalus strictus</i>	<i>shog shing, shog gu me tog,</i> <i>srad, dug srad</i>	TAR, NW Yunnan. SE TAR. Alpine steppic grasslands, stony slopes; 3000–5600 m. Qinghai, Sichuan, Xinjiang, TAR, Yunnan [Bhutan, India, Kashmir, Nepal].
<i>Oxytropis ochrocephala</i>	<i>srad, dug srad</i>	Grasslands, weedy slopes and alpine meadows; 1800–4500 m. Gansu, Hebei, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Qinghai, Sichuan, Xinjiang, TAR.
<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i> (L.) Vent		Sub-humid warm, sub-tropical monsoon climates in moist forests, temperate climates up to 2100 metres. Gansu, Sichuan, SE TAR, Yunnan, and many Chinese provinces.
<i>Betula utilis</i> D. Don	<i>stag pa shing, gro ga</i>	Temperate broad-leaved forests; 2500–3800 m. Gansu, Hebei, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi, W Sichuan, E and S TAR, NW Yunnan [Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal]
<i>Betula alnoides</i> Buchanan-Hamilton ex D. Don	<i>stag pa shing</i>	Fujian, Guangxi, Hainan, Hubei, Sichuan, S Yunnan, 700–2100 m. [Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam]

Examining the distribution over the Tibetan plateau of the Thymelaeaceae species, one notices that the majority thrive in southern and eastern regions in the so-called *rong* areas, which Tibetans see as deep valleys cut by strong rivers, hosting lush forests, where temperature is milder, and land is suitable for agriculture. These areas roughly correspond to southeast and east TAR, northwest Yunnan, western Sichuan, and some areas of Qinghai and Gansu Provinces. A few of these species are also distributed in other parts of China and/or on the southern side of the Himalaya. *Daphne aurantiaca*, only growing in southwest Sichuan and in northwest Yunnan Chinese Provinces, is nearly endemic to Tibetan cultural regions. It should be noted that only *Stellera chamaejasme* is able to thrive at high altitude over 4000 metres, and that in some areas of the Tibetan Plateau, as sDe dge in Sichuan (Duncan 1964: 64; Dongfa 2010: 78–79) and Nang chen in southwest Qinghai (Teichman 1922: 107), it has been used as main source material for paper-making. Besides *Stellera chamaejasme*, among the Thymelaeaceae that have been possibly used to make paper, *Daphne retusa* (3000–3900 m.), *D. tangutica* (1000–3800 m.), *D. rosmarinifolia* (2500–3800 m.), and *D. giraldi* (1600–3100 m.) grow in Qinghai up to 3900 metres (Wu et al., 2007, 13: 230–345). Yet, as *D. rosmarinifolia*, they mainly grow in southeast Qinghai, far from Nang chen.

So *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia* species, and *Edgeworthia gardneri*, have been mainly collected in southern and eastern Tibet whereas *Stellera chamaejasme* roots were found on the higher plateau areas. According to available information, in central and west Tibet different raw materials for paper production have been imported. At rGyal rtse (Waddell 1905: 226) both *Stellera chamaejasme* and *Daphne/Wikstroemia/Edgeworthia* were used. At Lhasa according to rJam dpal rdo rje (see above) *re lcag pa* was used, and travel accounts as the one by Beetham³⁸ indicate that *Daphne* and/or *Wikstroemia* and/or *Edgeworthia* were sent to the capital from southern Tibet. All these materials were used alone or mixed in paper manufacture.

On the basis of the examination of Tibetan books and other information it is reasonable to think that *Daphne* and *Wikstroemia* species, and *Edgeworthia gardneri* have represented the most important raw materials for paper production in Tibet. Some areas in south-east Tibet, as sKyems stong in Dwags po (Paper Road Tibet Project;³⁹ Huber 1999: 262), have represented important centres for paper-plants collection and paper production. These plants, as *Wikstroemia canescens*, have been sought after because of their high quality (Tsundru 2010) and local people used them to produce paper and to pay taxes

38 See The Bentley Beetham Collection <http://www.bentleybeetham.org/index.php>.

39 See Paper Road Tibet Project: tslingo.tripod.com/paper_road.htm.

to the central Tibetan government (Huber, *ibidem*). Tibetans would likely prefer to use *Daphne/Wikstroemia/Edgeworthia* than *Stellera chamaejasme*: its roots are difficult to be extracted from the soil, require a longer time for processing, and an extra step in the papermaking process. In addition this plant was likely not as diffused in the past over Tibetan regions as it is today. Yet *Stellera chamaejasme* was important in plateau areas, particularly when distant from the areas of collection of the other Thymelaeaceae.

The tradition of paper making in Tibet has been preserved up to the present time. *Stellera chamaejasme* is used in a few printing houses and paper making centres in places such as sDe dge, Lhasa, and sNye mo (TAR), whereas in southern TAR and in the Himalayan Valleys, *Daphne/Wikstroemia/Edgeworthia* species represent the main source material as it happens in Bhutan (see Table 22.3). As transportation has dramatically improved in the last few years, the mixing of different species has become easier and often one place may produce different types of paper with different ingredients.

TABLE 22.3 *Raw Material Sources for Traditional Paper in Bhutan (Chamling 1996: 44).*

Botanical name	Local name	Forest type and altitude
<i>Edgeworthia gardneri</i> Meisner	De shing (Dz), Shogo shing balingmeen (Sh), Kagate, Argayle (N)	Wet, sub-tropical forest; 1,670–2,400 m.
<i>Daphne involucrata</i> Wall.	Seti barwal, Chhota, Argaule, Bimbiri (N)	Mixed broad-leaved forest; 1,200–2,000 m.
<i>Daphen bholua</i> Buchanan-Hamilton ex D. Don	De shing (Dz), Shogo shing (Sh), Shugu shing (Sh), Kagate, Argayle (N)	Evergreen oak, blue pine, spruce, hemlock and fir forests; 1,980–3,400 m.
<i>Daphne sureil</i> W. W. Smith & Cave	Kagate, Argayle, Bhale and Kagate (N)	Warm, broad-leaved and evergreen oak forests; 1,220–2,130 m.
<i>Daphne retusa</i> Hemsle		Rocky hillsides and wet ravines; 3,700–4,200 m.
<i>D. ludlowii</i> D. G. Long & Rae		Mixed rhododendron, hemlock, and spruce forests; 3,350–3,580 m. Endemic to Bhutan.

Source: *Flora of Bhutan* (1991).

(Dz) = Dzongkha (Sh) = Sharchop-kha (N) = Nepali

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The Choice of Materials in Early Tibetan Printed Books

Agnieszka Helman-Ważny

1 Introduction

As Thomas Francis Carter (1882–1925) said in his book *The Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward*, “Back of the invention of printing lies the use of paper” (1955, 3). Indeed this close relationship between paper and printing is true for printing developments in practically every geographical region where paper was used as a printing support. Both inventions, mutually dependent on each other, stimulated the development of book making technologies, which in turn had an impact on Tibetan cultural life and ultimately changed Tibetan society.

During the dynastic period Tibet experienced Buddhist influences from different directions; however, according to Tibetan historiography, it was eventually decided that all Buddhist literature would be inherited from what was available in India (Snellgrove and Richardson 1978, 70–71). At that time printing was in its infancy in China. In India, texts were written on palm leaves; printing technology was not yet considered. This is possibly one of the reasons why at that time (about 792) Tibetans had no immediate need for a new technology, and also why most Tibetan early prints originate from areas outside Tibet. Chinese sources usually locate the beginning of woodblock printing in Northwestern China and are keen to claim this invention, as are many others concerned with book cultures in Asia (Pan 2000, 265–266). The oldest surviving examples of printing in the Tibetan script are from Northwestern China. Archaeological finds from the ruins of the Tangut city of Khara Khoto, mostly dated from the 12th and 13th centuries, suggest that the idea of printing in the Tibetan language was inspired by the book culture of the Tangut kingdom (1038–1227).

The region where the greatest quantity of early block prints (xylographs) was found is the Turfan oasis in what is now Chinese Turkestan. Printed books are a small but significant part of the Turfan collection (see van Schaik in this volume). This location was first excavated by the expeditions of Grünwedel and von Le Coq in the years 1902 to 1907 (Carter 1955, 141). The early wood

prints discovered there are not only rubbings from stone inscriptions, but also stencils and pounces, printed textiles, seals of different sizes, and many examples of stamped figures of the Buddha (Carter 1955, 39). Of the printed books, the most popular is the concertina form printed in Uighur with black ink. These early block prints comprise the concertina form, the *dpe cha* or booklet format, and single sheets. The booklets contain ritual texts such as *dhāraṇīs*, while the single printed sheets contain diagrams printed for ritual purposes. These block prints were probably produced mainly in Chinese workshops, despite the fact that they were found in many places in the Turfan oasis, and they contain Chinese, Tangut, Mongolian, Tibetan, Old Turkish, and Sanskrit texts, most of which can be dated to the 13th and 14th centuries, with only singular examples dated to the 9th.¹ It should also be mentioned that many of these sūtra translations – regardless of language – exhibit Chinese pagination (Carter 1955). Interestingly, Chinese pagination (in Chinese characters) can be found in many of the early woodblocks in Tibetan produced outside Tibet proper.

Leonard van der Kuijp points to 13th-century evidence for the preparation of a xylograph with the Tibetan text of the *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter* and the auto-commentary of Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) preserved in the Tibetan Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing (van der Kuijp 1993, 279–298). The printing of Tibetan Buddhist texts increased during the period of Mongol rule over Tibet and China (1271–1368), often sponsored by queens at the Mongol court, and printed in Beijing (see Sherab Sangpo in this volume). This explains why there is more evidence concerning the various Mongol-sponsored printing projects propagating the *Kālacakra* literature first in China and then in Mongolia dated to the last decade of 13th century or the first decade of the 14th century. These prints are generally known under the name 'Mongol xylographs' (*hor par ma*; Ehrhard 2000, 11). The only early datable Tibetan work currently known was printed in China under Mongol patronage no later than the 1270s (Schaeffer 2009, 9). Schaeffer mentions the very significant role of 'Phags pa bLo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280) in the dissemination of printing technology in Tibet. In his printing projects, Tibetan and Chinese craftsmen worked together sponsored by Mongol leaders Yesu Boga and Hayimdu (Schaeffer 2009, 10). There is also an example of a volume of *The Kālachakra Tantra (Tantraraja Shrikalachakratantra or Laghukalacakratantra; dus 'khor rgyud)* printed from woodblocks and carved for the funeral ceremonies of the Kublai Khan (1215–1294) sponsored by Khublai Khan's wife and son that supports the above-mentioned dates. This book is in *pothi* format, with six

1 Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Turfan Studies. Berlin 2007.

lines of text printed between two side margins executed with a single line and Chinese pagination on the right side and Tibetan on the left of the recto of the folio. It displays a high-quality printing production with regular and proportional letters aligned to the top line of text. The lower parts of the head of the letters were cut with a rounded chisel. This feature of the letters' execution is shared with the first editions of Tibetan *Kanjur* produced in Beijing (especially Yongle and Wanli; Helman-Ważny 2014, 123, 153).

The best known works of Tibetan printing culture are the editions of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. This collection of Buddhist scriptures underwent a final compilation in the 14th century by bCom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri (1227–1305) and Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364). The Tibetans did not have a formally arranged Mahāyāna canon and so devised their own scheme, which divided texts into two broad categories: *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*. In general, the combined number of volumes of the two parts is over 300, and each side of a single page is printed from an individually carved woodblock (Harrison 1996, 81).

It is still believed by many scholars that before 1410, when the first woodblock edition of the Tibetan *Kanjur* was produced in Beijing, all Buddhist canonical collections were produced and reproduced as handwritten manuscripts. The *Translation of the Word (Kanjur)* and *The Translation of Treatises (Tanjur)* undertaken in 1410 by the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402–1424), is known as the first large-scale printed edition and almost nothing prior is known with certainty. In Beijing, new impressions continued to be taken from the Yongle blocks and in this way, the Wanli edition printed in black ink in 1606 was produced under the sponsorship of the Wanli emperor (1563–1620). When the blocks wore out, new blocks were prepared and carved using prints taken from the old blocks as a master. These are represented by the Qing dynasty re-edition and its reprints. Since the 17th century, *Kanjur* sets have been created, edited, and produced in Tibet and Mongolia.

The earliest surviving printed book from Central Tibet (Tibet proper) is dated to 1407, a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* by Haribhadra, printed to commemorate the death of Situ Chos kyi rin chen (1402) under the auspices of the scholar Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451). The colophon celebrates Situ Chos kyi rin chen in relation to the Yuan emperors, suggesting that this early printing activity in Central Tibet was conceived on the model of Kublai Khan's sponsorship of the printing of Tibetan Buddhist texts (Diemberger forthcoming).

In the 1420s and 30s the collected works of Tsong kha pa (1357–1419) were printed with the sponsorship of the ruling house of Phag mo gru pa. The production of printed books increased through the 15th century, with

the establishment of many small printing houses (*par khang*) in Central Tibet (Ehrhard 2000).

By the time printing appeared in Tibet, the technology of papermaking had already been known there. The art of papermaking eventually reached Tibet from China, most probably around 650 CE. Tibetan and Chinese historiography links it traditionally to the arrival of the Chinese wife of Emperor Srong btsan sgam po. While there is a suggestion that paper was already available in the pre-existing Shangshung kingdom and that the invitation letters to the Chinese imperial princess were already written on paper (Tsundru 2010), this claim has so far been supported only by relatively late sources. The earliest preserved manuscripts on Tibetan paper made of *Daphne* fibres discovered in Mogao grottoes near Dunhuang are dated to the 9th century (and were presumably produced in Central Tibet; Helman-Ważny and van Schaik 2013). Characteristics of the paper in these manuscripts clearly suggest that Tibetans established their own papermaking tradition and created a unique type of paper by using an individual 'floating' mould, which is placed on a water surface such as lake, pond, river, or puddle. Paper pulp is prepared by beating the materials upon a stone with a wooden mallet; this pulp is then mixed with water and poured on the mould in measured quantities. The papermaker moves the frame in the water until the pulp entirely and equally covers the surface of the mould; he then tilts the frame until the water drains off. The papermaking mould with its newly made sheet of paper is then left undisturbed until the sheet is dry.²

The specificity of Tibetan papermaking lies in the properties of the native plants used, the living conditions of peoples dwelling on the world's highest

2 The other main type of paper mould is usually known as a 'dipping' mould, and is thought to have developed subsequent to the floating mould. The dipping mould allows faster paper production because it is possible to remove a wet sheet of paper directly from the sieve just after its shaping. This means that papermakers do not need to wait until the paper has dried before re-using the mould to begin the next sheet. The main difference between the two types of mould is in their construction. The floating mould is built of a wooden frame with a woven textile attached to it. In the dipping mould, on the other hand, a movable sieve made from bamboo, reed or another kind of grass is attached to the wooden frame. Independently of the techniques of the sheet formation, any papermaking sieve makes an impression that is specific to the construction of the mould and sieve. This print is unaffected by most aging processes, and can be read centuries later. The print of a textile sieve made of cotton, hemp, or flax differs clearly from that of a movable sieve from a dipping mould made of bamboo, reed or other grasses. However, it is possible that a floating mould could have been used together with bamboo sieve placed inside.

plateau, and aspects of Tibetan culture that, together, created a distinctive craft. The high altitude of the Tibetan Plateau and the extremes of its climate make the vegetation distinctive from all other areas of Asia. Original Tibetan paper was made mainly from the phloem of shrubs belonging to the *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* species (*shog shing* in Tibetan) at least by the 9th century (as suggested by the earliest preserved Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang mentioned above), and the roots of the *Stellera chamaejasme* species (*re lcag pa* in Tibetan) at least by the 10th century in Central Tibet. The usage of plants with poisonous properties which were possibly chosen for this specific quality in the paper makes it resistant to damage caused by insects, and, ultimately, it is longer lasting than other types of paper.

The visual appearance of paper is affected by the type of raw material used, the technological process of paper production and its tools, and finally from the preparation of leaves of paper during book production. The choice to use certain plant fibres, which comprise the basic component of any paper sheet, has strongly shaped the aesthetics of a given culture's paper. Also, the printer or scribe chooses materials to match their skills and creative impetus. But beyond the raw materials, there are other aspects of the papermaking process which influence the nature of the resultant paper, such as the degree of fibre blending, the type of papermaking mould used, and the preparation of the paper surface before writing or printing. Also, different types of paper are required for manuscripts and printed books, as different qualities of paper are favourable by different way of text execution and its tools and methods.

The text is usually printed from wooden blocks by hand on paper that is relatively soft in comparison to paper used for manuscripts. These tend to have highly processed and sized surfaces to allow ink to be spread by pointed tool. Thus the main feature which should be adjusted differently for manuscripts and prints is paper absorbency.³ Furthermore, the quality of any printing has always depended on the type of paper support, the quality of the inks and wooden blocks used, and the skill of the craftsmen. A very fine quality print usually comes from the perfect match of ink thickness (viscosity) and type of paper.⁴ This conscious selection of materials provides a refined appearance that is the result of sharp, fine lines with little blurring. This refinement is also reflected in the appearance of the verso side of the leaf; when ink does not

3 Absorbency is the ability of a material to take in other substances with which it is in contact, either in liquid or gaseous form; the process of absorption is associated with changes in its physical or chemical properties (Banik and Brückle 2011, 492).

4 The viscosity of a fluid is a measure of its resistance to gradual deformation by shear stress or tensile stress. For liquids, it corresponds to the informal notion of "thickness".

bleed through, the paper was accurately sized. Thus we can say that the final result of printing is dependent upon the interaction of many components. Sometimes the discovery of a new tool or method revolutionized earlier printing practices. For instance, printing in larger formats required increasing the thickness of the paper by gluing sheets together in layers. This step was necessary because thinner paper would not provide the stability necessary for a large format. In this way we can see how the overall function of the book influenced the selection of paper used in its creation.

All this explains the variety of paper types, which is confirmed by this study, found in Tibetan printed books.

2 Results and Discussion

2.1 *Paper in Early Prints Excavated along the Silk Road*

The earliest known datable printed work in Tibetan language (but not from Tibet proper) is a small prayer produced in Khara Khoto, a Tangut city in western Inner Mongolia, in 1153 and preserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg.⁵ This is a double-sided, printed, 23-folio booklet (17.3 × 12.7 × 0.6 cm) composed of 12 bi-folios folded in half. Every bi-folio includes six lines of text printed on each page in a full frame 15.8 × 9.6 cm separated by the folding mark in the middle. It is printed with black ink on laid patchy paper glued in two layers characterized by 21 to 22 laid lines in 3 cm.⁶ I identified the paper as rag paper composed of hemp. (Fig. 23.1) The texture of the paper is soft and absorbent, with brush traces originating from gluing the layers together.

Interestingly, other examples of early printed works are made on different types of paper. A famous example in Chinese language is the '*Diamond Sutra*'. Printed in 868, the *Diamond Sutra* is the world's earliest dated complete

5 Accession number: Kh-Tib.67. For discussion of printing technology see Shi Jinbo 2005; Stoddard 2010.

6 Laid lines are horizontal line patterns visible when looking at the paper against light, which reflect the type of papermaking sieve used during papermaking process. A textile sieve differs clearly from that made of bamboo (laid regular), reed, or other grasses (laid irregular), and when sealed in the paper structure, this allows us to distinguish handmade woven paper and handmade laid paper characterized by the particular number of laid lines in 3 cm. These can be categorized as: laid, regular where unequivocal clear evidence; laid, irregular where the pattern is not regular; and, finally, laid, patchy where the pattern can only be seen in patches of the paper but could not have been made by anything else.

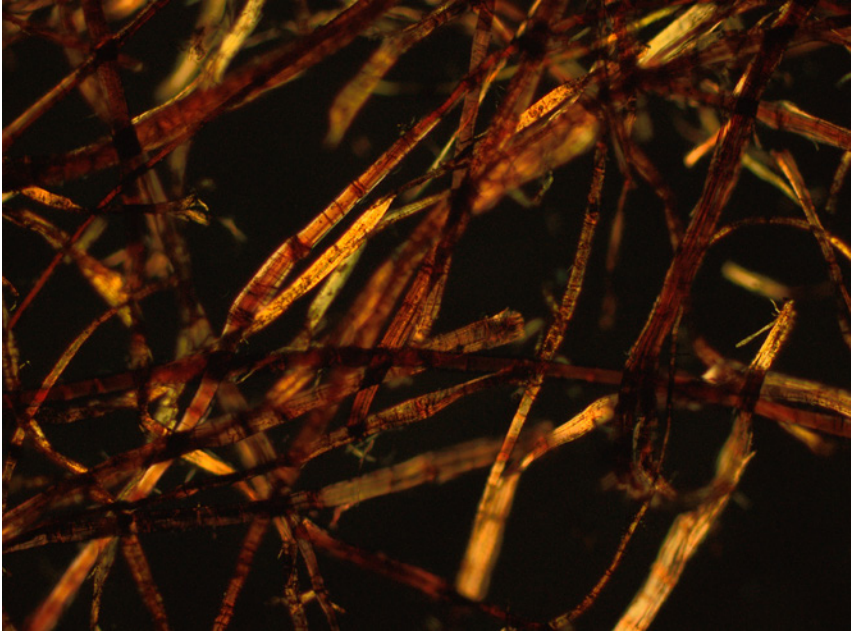


FIGURE 23.1 *Hemp (Cannabis sativa) fibres stained reddish with Herzberg in 100× magnification. The rag paper composing a small prayer printed in Khara Khoto, the earliest printed work in Tibetan language currently known, datable by colophon to 1153. The print belongs to the collection of the Institute for Oriental Manuscripts in St Petersburg, Kh-Tib. 67.*

printed book.⁷ It is a scroll, a continuous length of wood-block printed text made of seven panels of good quality paper pasted together to extend over 5 m. The *Diamond Sutra*'s paper is composed of *Broussonetia* sp. (Paper mulberry) fibres⁸ (Fig. 23.2). Fibre distribution in the paper clearly suggests that it is mostly of a woven type made using the 'floating' mould with textile sieve

7 My research on Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang was funded by the Deutsche Forschungs-Gemeinschaft (DFG) within the project (2010–2013) "History and typology of paper in Central Asia during the first millennium AD: Analysis of Chinese paper manuscripts," Abteilung für Sprache und Kultur Chinas, Universität Hamburg/AAI, Germany (Grant number Fr702/9-1). The author would like to acknowledge the help and support of the director of the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) Susan Whitfield, British Library.

8 The accidental addition of woven fabric was detected by Shoji Sakamoto only on Panel 2 of the *Diamond Sutra* scroll. Rag fibres however were not present as components of paper in rest of panels of the scroll. See the photograph taken with 16-bit digital microscope of panel 2 ×100 magnification by Shoji Sakamoto in the International Dunhuang Project database: <http://idp.bl.uk/database/large.a4d?recnum=18824&imageRecnum=340461>.

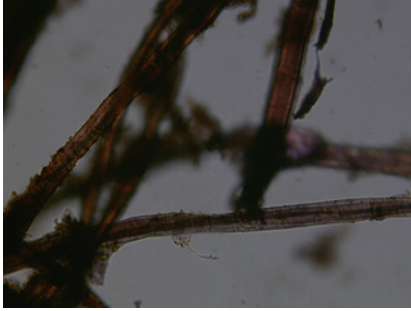


FIGURE 23.2
Paper mulberry (Broussonetia sp.) fibres composing the Diamond Sutra's paper stained reddish-brown with Herzberg in 600x magnification. Fibres visible on the picture are characterized by a transparent membrane indicating a primary wall enveloping the fibre. The book is from British Library Collection.



FIGURE 23.3
The paper of the Diamond Sutra's panel 6 viewed against the light. The faint laid lines suggesting the usage of a bamboo sieve attached to the 'floating' mould with a textile sieve visible in this picture. The book is from the British Library Collection.

(Fig. 23.3). However, we can also observe very faint laid lines in the paper of panel 6, which suggest that the paper for this panel was made using a bamboo sieve attached to the 'floating' mould. The best quality print in the whole Sutra is represented by the frontispiece on panel 1. The direction of fibres distributed within panel 1 shows a clock-wise, patchy circle shape visible in the middle, and this is typical for woven paper when the papermaker pours the pulp on the floating sieve and stirs it (clock-wise) to distribute around the sieve. Here in the paper we have a witness of this stirring, both in the circular pattern and from

its uneven thickness (0.14–0.22 mm measured at 10 different points within the paper sheet). Additionally, an evenly increased thickness along one edge suggests that this sheet was left to dry on the mould standing vertically, the wet pulp sinking slightly with gravity.

A block print from Turfan in Uighur language (U 4753) executed in six vertical text lines per page on a single-layered woven type of paper (size 10.5 × 14 cm) is composed of a blend of bamboo, paper mulberry and straw fibres.⁹ Despite its different components, the paper is soft and absorbent. The variety and type of components present in this sample suggest a rather later origin, since the mixing of bamboo, paper mulberry, and straw fibres was not seen before the 12th century. This combination is typical for later editions of Tibetan Canonical works produced in Beijing.

2.2 *Early Printed Tibetan Kanjurs*

Tibetan papers in the early printed *Kanjur* volumes do not represent a large variety. I could distinguish two main types of paper used in the examined sets of Yongle and Wanli Tibetan *Kanjur*. The main differences between the two types are found in fibre composition and traces of the type of papermaking sieve sealed in the paper structure.¹⁰ Early Yongle and Wanli *Kanjur* sets produced in China used paper made of pure paper mulberry fibres, while later volumes such as the Wanli Supplement were printed on paper with mixed fibre components.¹¹ Regarding regional origin, all *Kanjur* sets produced in the Beijing area were executed on paper made of typically Chinese components such as pure paper mulberry or mixed with bamboo or straw fibres. These papers were characterized by about 24–30 laid lines in 3 centimetres, and were produced using a mould with bamboo or grass sieve.

2.3 *The Earliest Extant Prints from Central Tibet*

The earliest surviving printed book from Shel dkar, Central Tibet, is dated to 1407, a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* by Haribhadra, printed to

9 Collection of the Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and the Berlin State Library, Orientabteilung, U 4753.

10 In Tibet, primarily Thymelaeaceae family plants were used for producing paper. This makes Tibetan paper very distinctive from Chinese, which is composed of a variety of plants such as paper mulberry, bamboo, and straw among many others. For further information on Tibetan and Chinese papermaking, see Hunter 1932 and 1978; Meisezahl 1958, 17–28; Trier 1972, Tsien 1973, 510–519; Tsien 1985; McClure 1986; Koretsky 1986; Pan 1998; Helman-Ważny 2005 and 2006, 27–37 and 3–9.

11 For a detailed study of paper in 60 volumes of the Tibetan Wanli *Kanjur* see: Mejor et al. 2010, 32–51.

commemorate the death of Situ Chos kyi rin chen (1402) under the auspices of the scholar Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451).¹² This text was discovered by the Paltseg Research Institute in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and the British Library (Diemberger 2012; Diemberger and Clemente 2014). Thus, this book is the earliest print in Tibetan language with confirmed origin from Tibet proper. The paper on which this book is printed is composed of two types of fibres: narrow with broad portions stained olive-grey identified as *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp.; and ribbon-like with a very wide and irregular lumen identified as *Stellera chameejasme*. The good condition of these preserved fibres suggests paper of a good quality. The majority of the fibres is *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp., showing clearly that *Stellera* was an addition. Besides these, I also observed an orange fibre in the pulp – very long, brightly stained (with Herzberg) dark yellow/orange fragments of parenchyma cells that lacked crystals on the fibre surface (Fig. 23.4).

I studied two other printed books from the same region dated later, to 1422 and 1539. The paper in the earlier print shares the same fibre composition as the above 1407 print: *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres with addition of *Stellera* sp. fibres. Singular, (stained) yellow sclereids (short with thick walls) are also present in the pulp (Fig. 23.5). However, the condition of fibres in this pulp suggests slightly worse quality of fibres than in the 1407 print.

The 1539 print is different from the two earlier samples. The fibre content shows very good quality, uniform, and long fibres, more flabby (slender) and more ribbon-like in shape, narrow with an irregular lumen and broad portions typical of plants in the *Thymeleaceae* family, possibly *Edgeworthia* sp. (Fig. 23.6). A substantial amount of glue is visible on the fibre surface, which may suggest some paper processing.

Further studied were 18 samples taken from three different sources, as follows: 10 printed volumes classified as early Gung thang prints from the Tucci Collection at the Istituto per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO);¹³ three samples from *Mani bka’ ’bum* volumes from Gung thang preserved in the Kathmandu National Archives in Nepal; and five samples from the British Library Collection in London. The results are significantly unified. All the papers I studied are composed of either pure *Edgeworthia/Daphne* sp. fibres or *Edgeworthia/Daphne* sp. fibres mixed with various amounts of *Stellera chameejasme* (Fig. 23.7 and 23.8). The samples mostly differ in the amounts of *Stellera* or

12 See Porong Dawa in this volume and Diemberger forthcoming.

13 Studied printed books were selected by Dr. Michela Clemente from IsIAO Collection, as follows: v. 286/3 f. 7, v. 706 f. 1, v. 363/2 f. 343a, v. 697/6 f. 1, v. 706 f. 1, v. 707 f. 1, v. 987 f. 118, v. 1466 f. 2, v. 657/5 f. 1, v. 671 f. 4, v. 771 f. 2.

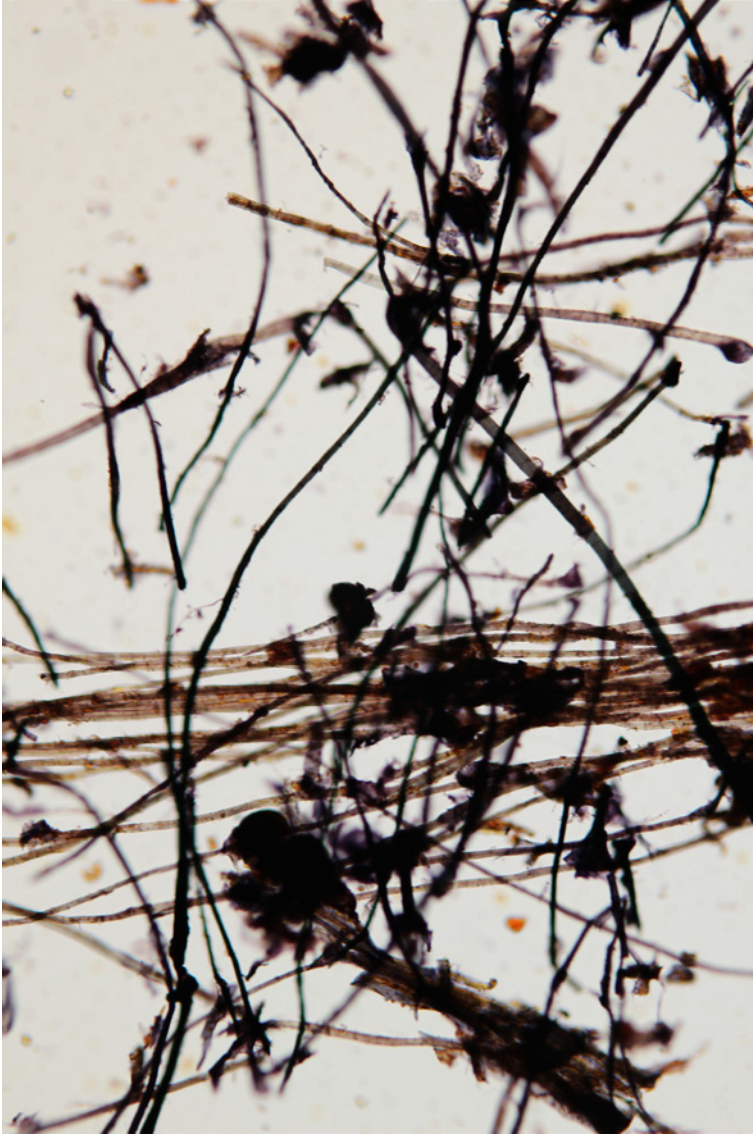


FIGURE 2.3.4 Long and good quality *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. fibres mixed with a small amount of *Stellera chamaejasme* fibres stained olive-grey with Herzberg in 100 \times magnification observed in polarized light. The paper belongs to the earliest surviving printed book from Shel dkar, Central Tibet, dated to 1407.

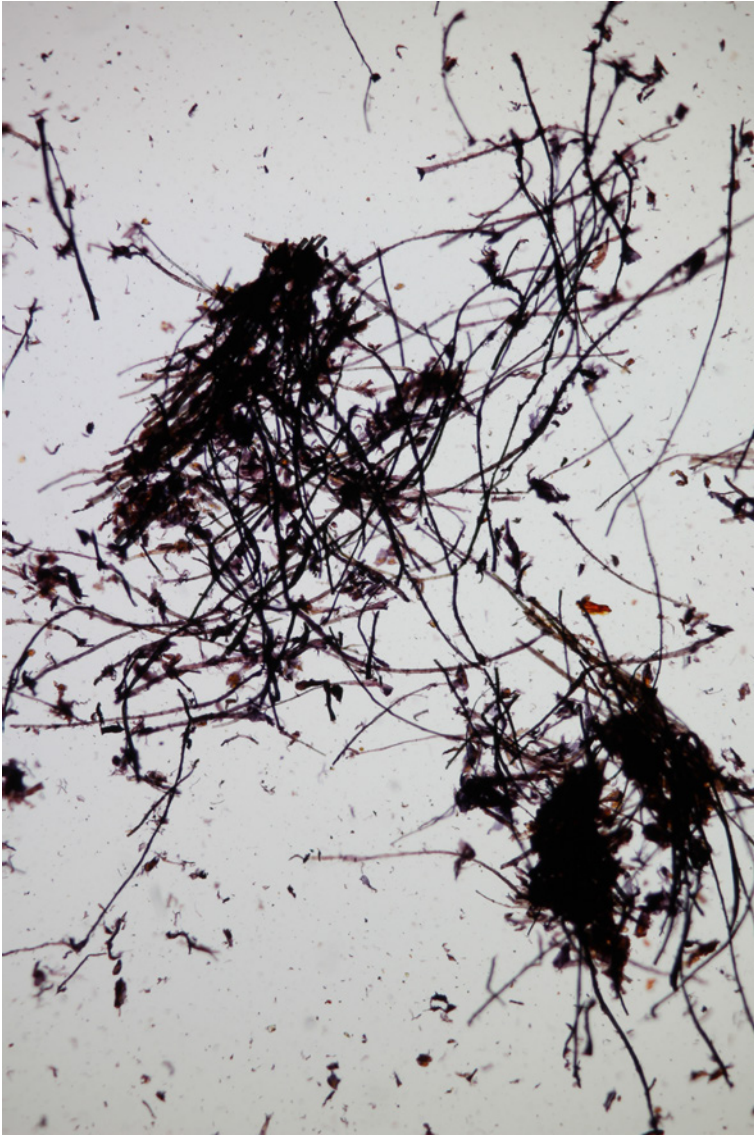


FIGURE 23-5 Daphne/Edgeworthia sp. fibres with added Stellera sp. fibres stained olive-grey with Herzberg in 50x magnification. This paper composes the Tibetan book printed in 1422.



FIGURE 23.6 The uniform, slender, and long fibres from the Thymeleaceae family plants (possibly *Edgeworthia* sp.) stained olive-grey with Herzberg in 50 \times magnification. This paper composes the Tibetan book printed in 1539.

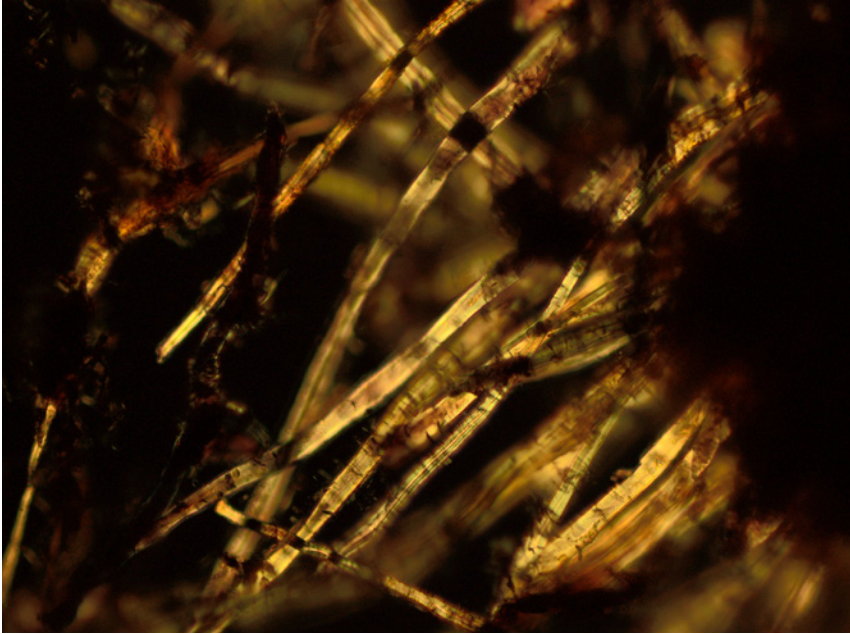


FIGURE 23.7 *Daphne/Edgeworthia sp.* fibres mixed with a small amount of *Stellera chameajasma* fibres stained olive-grey with Herzberg in 200× magnification observed in polarized light. Notice the varying fibre width and irregularities in fibre wall thickness, the many flattened places and dislocations. The lumen often narrows or wholly disappears. The paper sample belongs to the Tibetan book printed in early 16th c. in Gung thang region. The book belongs to the Tucci Collection at the Istituto per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO), v. 286/3.f.7.

other cells present in the pulp, such as parenchyma cells and fragments of parenchyma tissue, sclereids, the condition of fibres and stage of fibre lignification. These minor variations result in slight differences in the general quality of the papers, but in fact we can classify this entire group of papers as one unified type preferred by craftsmen for early prints in Central Tibet. Very few samples were composed of purely *Daphne/Edgeworthia sp.* fibres – only those taken from the Gung thang *Maṅi bka’ ’bum* volumes dated to early 16th c. from Kathmandu National Archives. Interestingly, there was no instance of a book printed on pure *Stellera* paper detected among the samples studied (Fig. 23.9). We can observe a similar pattern from the fibre analysis of printed book samples from the British Library Collection.¹⁴

14 OR 16756msf3, Tib I 156 f 169, Tib 19999 A3, Tib 19999 d107 f124, Tib 19999 d41, Tib Mss 1 18 PT1 f4.

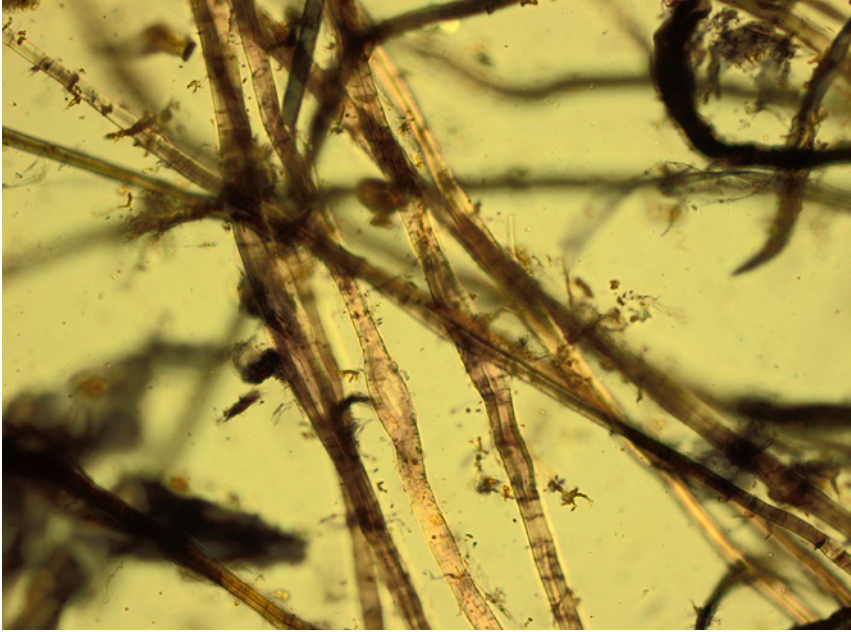


FIGURE 23.8 *Daphne/Edgeworthia sp. fibre mixed with Stellera chameejasme fibres olive-grey/greenish with slightly pink coloured lumen with Herzberg in 200× magnification observed in polarized light. Notice the comparatively great fibre thickness in broad portions, the varying wall thickness, the many flattened places and dislocations. The paper sample belongs to the Tibetan book printed in early 16th c. in Gung thang region. The book belongs to the Tucci Collection at the Istituto per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO), v. 706 f.1.*

2.4 *The Tibetan Manuscripts from Central Tibet*

As a reference for comparison with the paper used in printed books, I examined paper in the Phu ri Collection of manuscripts discovered by Sherab Sangpo in the homonymous location¹⁵ and now preserved in Tibet University Library. Of the 10 samples from these manuscripts dated as early as the 9th century one was written on pure *Daphne/Edgeworthia sp.* paper; four on *Daphne/Edgeworthia sp.* mixed with *Stellera sp.*; three on paper made of *Stellera sp.* with only a slight addition of *Daphne/Edgeworthia sp.* or unidentified fibres;

15 Phu ri is currently located in the northern part of gNya’ lam County in the western part of southern Lato (La stod lHo). This area was particularly important just before and during the Sa skya-Yuan period (Phu ri was the centre of one of the administrative units called *khri skor*. The finding place is within the area of sMan khab, which together with the neighbouring Zur tsho were famous for their scribes and carvers.



FIGURE 23:9 The long fibres of the Thymeleaceae family plants (possibly *Edgeworthia* sp.) stained olive-grey with Herzberg in 100×magnification. The book belongs to the British Library Collection, Tib. CC 80.

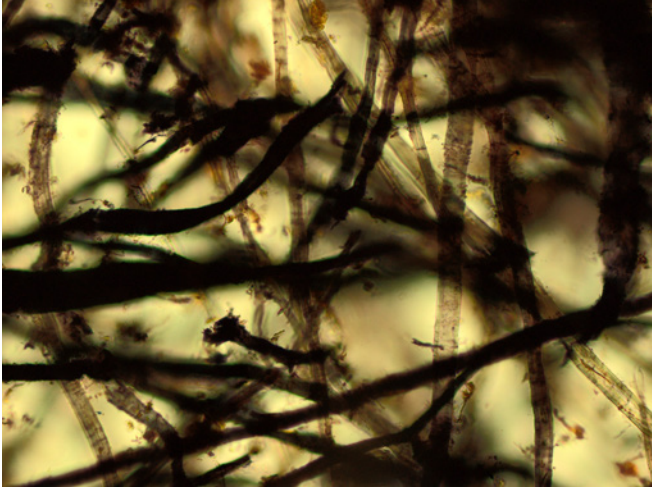


FIGURE 23.10 *Stellera chamaejasme* (re lcag pa) fibers with wide-irregular lumen and narrow cell-walls at 200 \times magnification observed in polarized light found in the Tibetan manuscript from the Tibet University Library, Phu ri Collection (TP0010).

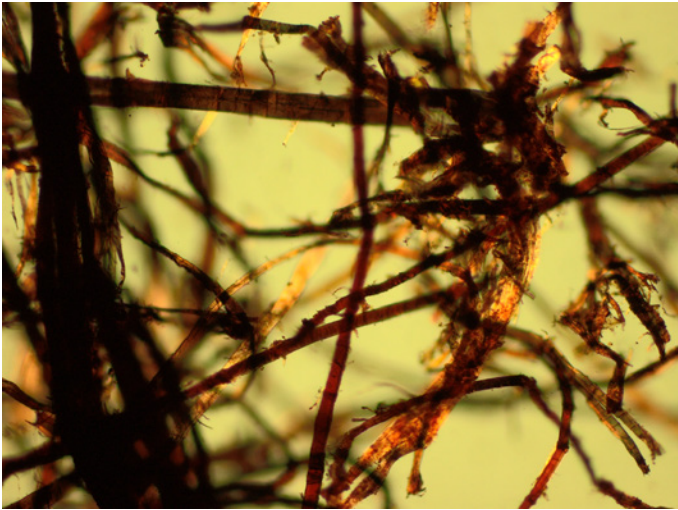


FIGURE 23.11 *Hemp* (*Cannabis sativa*) fibres stained reddish with Herzberg in 100 \times magnification found in the rag paper of the Tibetan manuscript from the Tibet University Library, Phu ri Collection (TP0151).

one on *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. paper with addition of unidentified fibres; and one on paper made of *Cannabis* sp. (Hemp) (Fig. 23.10 and 23.11). I detected more early manuscripts from the same region on *Stellera* sp. paper.

The manuscript *Mi la rnam mgur* from the British Library (OR16756) was confirmed as written on pure *Stellera* paper. Also four of seven early manuscripts from the Pasang Wangdu collection from southern Central Tibet were made on paper dominated by *Stellera* fibres, and three others contained a significant addition of *Stellera* fibres. Only one manuscript from this group was made on rag paper based on ramie and hemp. Also from this group we have the earliest confirmed manuscript which contains the fibers of *Stellera* sp. plant mixed with *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. This is dated to the 10th/11th century. This manuscript, discovered by Pasang Wangdu, originates from the area of bSam yas monastery in Central Tibet.

Furthermore the other early manuscript dated to the 11th c. written on mixed *Daphne* and *Stellera* paper is an illuminated manuscript (M81.90.6) from mTho lding in the collection of the Instituto per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO). Another paper of the same mixed composition is confirmed in a sample provided by Amy Heller from one of the Prajñāpāramitā manuscript volumes from the Bicher monastery in Dol po, Western Nepal.

3 Concluding Remarks

Most early xylograph prints were found in Central Asia along the Silk Road at the beginning of the 20th century, and those are our primary sources for reconstructing the early history of printing.¹⁶ Later, two other regions became known as centres for the production of early Tibetan books, and these were Beijing and Central Tibet. Any attempt to reconstruct the history of printing and usage of paper is predicated on the materials available for investigation. At this point, information is scanty and fragmentary but what we know offers a starting point and a framework for future research. Our early history of Tibetan prints and paper is based on a relatively small collection of Tibetan books scattered over Asia. For this paper, I was able to examine for the first time a group of

16 These early manuscripts from the Silk Road, including examples of early prints, are located in more than twenty institutions around the world. Among others, the most significant collections of printed books can be found in the collections of the British Library in London, the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (IOM) in St. Petersburg.

both prints and manuscripts from a known and identified region. Additionally I supported my research on paper in old books with background knowledge of papermaking traditions still existing in these same areas.¹⁷

Books from Tibet proper especially certify the ability and skills of Tibetan craftsmen and the development of printing technology there. Other works printed along the Silk Road or in Beijing under the Mongol court were produced on local materials far beyond Tibet's borders and reveal significant differences. Chinese pagination in the early Tibetan prints from Khara Khoto and Beijing and other features suggest the involvement of local Chinese craftsmen in the production. Taking into consideration how distant these places are from each other (Beijing is ca. 2200km from Turfan) and considering environmental and cultural differences, it is not surprising that different types of paper were identified in the Tibetan printed books I studied, varying regarding to region. Furthermore, the types of raw materials used and technology applied significantly exceeds the typology assumed from the standard literature, which is that all papers in Tibetan books are made with *Daphne* sp. fibres on a woven type of mould.

The preliminary results of my investigation suggest that the choice of paper for printing was predicated on what was locally available and what could be imported through trade. Looking at such good quality paper used for the earliest prints I can say that printers probably selected the best available materials for their new technology. This explains the variety of paper components found in early prints in Tibetan, Chinese, and Uighur languages. Seemingly, the selection of paper at that time was not yet formalized; with time they adjusted the properties of available papers to whatever worked best with their printing methods.

The paper mulberry plant (*Broussonetia* sp.) was used for the finest papers in China since the beginning of papermaking and is usually associated with very fine paper supposedly produced at the Imperial Court in the first millennium and during the Ming Dynasty. There, paper of exceptional quality was used for art and calligraphy; however these papers were made with a fine bamboo sieve characterized by 24 or more laid lines in 3cm. All *Kanjur* sets produced in the Beijing area were executed on typically Chinese paper made of paper mulberry, or, later, a mixture of components such as paper mulberry, bamboo, and straw.

17 Information was gathered from interviews with craftsmen involved in papermaking and book production together with Hildegard Diemberger during fieldwork in Central and Western Tibet in June 2013.

In contrast, all *Kanjur* sets produced in the Lhasa area and Central Tibet were printed on the Tibetan type of paper made of *Daphne* or *Edgeworthia* spp. of Thymelaeaceae family plants. I could observe the same split in paper features when examining fingerprinting patterns of papermaking sieves used (whenever it was possible). The majority of Tibetan papers was made with a woven sieve type (with no laid lines), and all Chinese papers were characterized by about 24–30 laid lines in 3 centimetres. In the examined *Kanjur* sets, papers were produced by means of moveable bamboo or grass sieve.

Altogether, I examined 50 samples from a clearly distinguished region of Central Tibet (La stod, Gung thang), and a few more from other areas. This helped to create my preliminary hypothesis. The paper chosen for printing in Central Tibet is relatively consistently based on *Daphne*/*Edgeworthia* fibres, whereas paper used in manuscripts has a greater range of variations. So far, I can tell that most early manuscripts were written on *Stellera* paper, or on paper where *Stellera* was a dominant component.

Stellera is closely related to *Daphne*; however, paper made with *Daphne* uses the bark from branches whereas paper made with *Stellera chamaejasme* uses the root bast. Although the quality of root paper is not as high as that made with bark, the presence of poison in the root paper makes it resistant to damage caused by insects and, ultimately, it is longer lasting than other types of paper. These root bast fibres create a very specific soft type of paper, which is considered to be of lower quality than bark paper because the fibres are not as strong. The roots are especially difficult to harvest, which places a serious limitation on the quantity of paper that can be produced. Root bast papers additionally require a longer time for processing, and an extra step in the papermaking process.

In principle, it should not be difficult to determine the relative importance of each of these different fibres in the early history of Tibetan papermaking. *Stellera chamaejasme* fibres are distinctive in the fibre examination of historic papers, and can be clearly differentiated from *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* despite the fact that all plants belong to the *Thymelaeaceae* family.

The altitude range of *Daphne* sp. reaches 3600m above sea level, and *Stellera* sp. is widely distributed along the Himalayan range at altitudes of 2700 to 4500 metres. And *Daphne* plants need much more moisture than *Stellera*. All this adds up to the fact that these two species very rarely grow in the same habitat. Because of this we can get a hint about the books' geographical origins based on which type of paper used.

For example, the fact that in my sample *Stellera* is confirmed mostly in early manuscripts on smaller formats suggests that *Stellera* was used for small local production. Taking into account the range and altitude of *Stellera* distribution

it may be safe to assume that it was used on the plateau at higher altitudes. There was no real reason that paper made from *Stellera*, which is lower in quality and needs longer time to process, would be used in the valleys where *Daphne* is widely available. Thus, in my sample, as described above, *Stellera* is confirmed as the dominant component mostly in early manuscript from Phu ri Collection and Pasang Wangdu collection – both from Central Tibet – and also in early manuscripts from Western Tibet. These were produced on the plateau as hinted by the text.

Additionally from the technological point of view, since paper for manuscripts has to be processed before writing, it is possible to use a variety of fibres for its production regardless of their individual properties and strengths. The only limit influencing the selection was the size of the manuscript. Small formats of manuscripts were easily produced on pure *Stellera* paper, whose fibres are soft and flabby with a wide lumen and narrow irregular fibre walls. But *Stellera* alone is not stable enough for large formats (*Stellera* paper can easily bend or break). Even increasing the thickness of the *Stellera* paper by gluing it in layers was not enough to achieve the stability necessary for a large format, which is obvious in *Daphne/Edgeworthia* based papers.

The majority of early printed books from Tibet proper were on paper composed of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* sp. with addition of *Stellera* sp. made with woven type of sieve. Given what we have just discussed about the differences between the two plants' fibres and origins, this strongly suggests that this particular mix of raw materials was chosen intentionally for its particular properties. *Daphne* sp. has strong lignified fibres which give stability to paper, but alone is not a perfect material for printing. The addition of a small amount of *Stellera* sp. provides a softness and absorbent quality which probably explains why it is present in the books I examined. Further research will add to our story.

Summarizing, my preliminary results suggest that while early manuscripts produced locally were written on *Stellera* paper, the printing technology required usage of *Daphne/Edgeworthia* paper. Also *Stellera* was used extensively in early times, and probably later export of *Daphne* to the plateau increased, however, being probably conditioned by other economical and historical factors. This will be a subject of further study when I am able to collect more samples which cover the region more precisely.

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Paper, Patronage and Production of Books: Remarks on an 11th Century Manuscript from Central Tibet

Pasang Wangdu

1 Introduction

Book production was already important in Tibet during the bTsan po period. Large scriptoria with scribes and editors supported by the political elite were part of the book culture of the time and materials from Dunhuang provide ample evidence of this. Early post-dynastic materials from Central Tibet show that this practice remained very important after the fall of the Tibetan dynasty. These practices of book production were the direct predecessors of printing workshops. In this paper I will discuss an 11th century manuscript from Ke ru that yields information on this kind of workshop and includes references not only to patronage but also to editorial practices and materials. The Ke ru collection and other manuscripts from lHo kha provide data on Tibetan paper that date back to the 10th/11th century and show the use of plants from the thymelaeaceae family in paper making. Paper analysis of a number of the 11th century manuscripts preserved at Ke ru shows that many were produced with a paper made from *Stellera* roots (*re lcag pa*) and the bark of *Daphe*/*Edgeworthia*/*Wikistroemia* (*shog shing/skyems shing*) mixed together. There are also a few pure *Stellera* paper samples, the oldest of which comes from a manuscript dating to the 10th century (according to both textual evidence and C14 dating).

2 An 11th Century Colophon

Among the fragments preserved at Ke ru lHa khang there is a text of the *'Phags pa 'gro ba thams cad yong su skyob par byed pa'i yongs su sngo ba*. The final verses of this text say that it was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by mKhan po bidy'a ka ra pra bha (Vidyākaraprabha?) from India together with

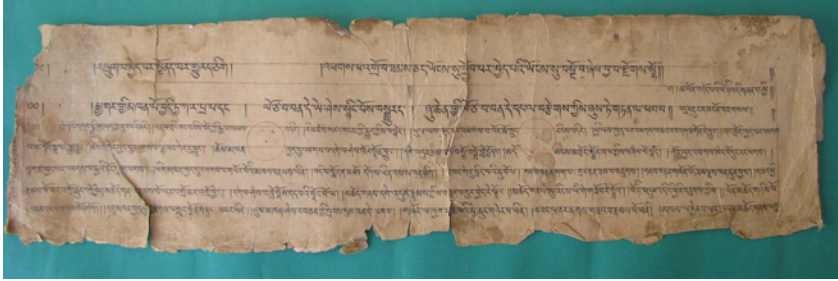


FIGURE 24.1 *11th century manuscript from Ke ru Monastery.*
PHOTOGRAPH PASANG WANGDU.

the Tibetan translator Lo tsa ba Ban de Ye shes snying po and was edited (*zhus gtan la phab*) by Ban de dPal brtsegs, translator and chief editor. The colophon of this specific manuscript edition reads as follows:

This text showing the virtue (*tsha yon*) is special; if you compare it to others this will be clear.

Kye! The apex of three universes (*stong*) is the southern continent, the land of Śākyamuni where the royal domain of Tibet [is located], with its high peaks and pure land, encircled by glacier mountains. In this land of 'On mo lung ring, which is the most excellent place, appeared the most excellent man, the ruler mGon ne; the most excellent uncle-ministers Zhang ston sgra ben; the most excellent place of worship, the temple of Ke ru; the most excellent abbot dGe shes 'Or ston. It is said that those members of the Buddhist community with their *sgro sgro blo blo* [sound-ing recitation] chant many sūtras that awaken spiritual aspirations by seeing. The best of all papers is *kheng po dung rang*; the best of all inks is *tong nag* from rGya (China); the best scribe is mKhas brdam of g.Yor po. If you blame this [text], it is not appropriate, don't do it! The Arhat Gag pa built a straight and firm bridge (*grang rten*) on the river of the universe which is the temple of Ke ru. The Arhat gZhon 'od acted as the bridge-support (*zam sngas*, lit. pillow). The lay people (*gza' myi*) [constantly] crossed this bridge and the members of the Buddhist community to which offerings were made (lit. 'field of offering') came and went [over the same bridge]. These monks to whom offerings were made were keen to serve and respect dGe bshes 'Bro sgom who is the tree of the faith. The priest sKu ring was keen to transcribe the letters carefully. Thanks to the blessing of this volume (*po ti pha dum*) may the patron and priest, [these]

two, encounter the face of Manjuśrī. The excellent images were drawn by sLung ston gzungs (?) 'bar. The editor was the wise Srangs sum ban de. The short young man with great endurance was the manager [of the operation]. The lay people were kind and persistent. The priests from Yar lungs were learned and sharp.

*tsha yon 'dod pa'i po ti 'di gzhan dang mi 'dra sdur na mngon par gsal||
kye stong gsum sbyi phud shag kya thub pa'i zhing//dzam gling mnga'
ris bod gyi rgyal khams 'dir//ri mtho sa gtsang gangs kyi rgyud kyis bskor//
yul las khyad par phags pa 'on mo klung rings 'dir//myi las khyad par 'phags
pa mnga' bdag mgon ne 'byung//*

*Zhang blon khyad par 'phags pa zhang ston sgra ban byung//chos dkor
khyad du'phags pa ke ru lha khang byung// chos mkhan khyad du 'phags
pa dge shes 'or ston byung// dge 'dun rnams po bsgro bsgro blo blo nas//
mdo mangs mthong smon zha lgyis bzhis so skad// sho'u khyad 'phags
kheng po dung rang lags//snag tsha khyad par 'phags pa rgya'i stong snag
lags// yig mkhan khyad du 'phags pa g.Yor po'i mkhas brdams yin//di la
smod na mtho' dogs yin pas ma nyan cig// lha khang ke ru srid pa'i chu bo
la// gnas brtan gag pa grang rtan zam pa btsugs// gnas brtan gzhon 'od
zam sngas phan btsun byas// gza' myi rnam spo phar 'gro tshur 'gro byed//
mchod gnas rnams po yar 'gro mar 'gro byed// dge shes 'bro sgom dad pa'i
sdom po la// mchod gnas dge 'dun rnams kyis bsnyan bkur byed re sbro'//
mchod gnas khu rings y age gzob re sbro'// po ti pha dum 'di'i byin brlabs
khyis//yon mchod gnyis po 'jam dpal zhal mthong shog// dbu mkhan khyad
du 'phags pa slung stong zung 'par yin//*

*Zhu mkhan shes rab can gyi srangs sum pan de lags// gzhon la khyag pa
che ba myi//*

*Chun gnyer pa yin// bzang lan nar chags gza' ba rnams po yin//mkhas
la rkyen pa yar lungs mchod gnas lag//*

3 Observations on the Colophon and What it Tells about Book Production

This colophon locates the production of the book within the wider Buddhist cosmology and locates the area of production as the land of 'On mo lung ring which is the area where the Ke ru temple is located.

The place name 'On mo lung ring is usually referred to with the short form 'On. 'On is an ancient place name still in use which refers to an area belonging

to the sKyes pa township of sNe gdong rDzong (county), lHo kha prefecture. Until the 9th century and before the Tibetan kingdom, the 'On area belonged to the sNa nam clan. A powerful and famous clan of that time, sNa nam is mentioned by another colophon of a Ke ru manuscript from the 11th century. Later, some famous monasteries appeared in this area, such as 'On chos sdings and bKra shis do kha.

In terms of the materials used in the production of books, there are references to both paper and ink. *Kheng po dung rang* remains so far an unclear expression referring to the best quality of paper. A possible explanation is that this was a place name located in the 'Brug yul, current Bhutan. In this context it seems that a place where the Dung rang people lived is indicated. Dung rang is likely to correspond to the tribal group later known as Dung reng, which used to inhabit the Himalayan regions where Bhutan is located. In the 15th century Dung reng people coming from the South invaded the rGyal rtse area (see *rGya bod yig tshang* 1985: 377, see also an article dedicated to the Dung reng by Petech 1990: 103–111). Keng po can mean 'slaves'. It is therefore likely that with Keng po dung rang a paper from the south, otherwise indicated as lHo shog, was indicated. Manuscripts of 11th–12th centuries also often mention rKong shog, meaning paper from the rKong po area. Near the upper rKong po area, there is a place called sKyems stong (corresponding to current sKyems stong township in sNang county, Nying khri prefecture), which became famous for the production of paper, at least after the 17th century. The paper from this area was made from a particular paper plant named after it: sKyems shing, corresponding to Wikistroemia Canescens, belonging to the Thymealaeaceae (瑞香科 *ruixiang ke*) family like Daphne, Edgeworthia and Stelleria (see Boesi in this volume). sKyems shog was considered to be the source of best quality paper in Tibet. It was used to print paper money by the dGa' ldan pho brang government.

The bSam yas and 'On region was ruled in the 11th century by descendants of Yum brtan who was one of sons of Dar ma 'u dum brtsan (see *Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga*, 76; see also Tsering Gyalbo, G. Hazod & P. K. Sørensen 2000: 189 and P. K. Sørensen & G. Hazod 2005: 314). mNga' bdag mGon ne was regarded as a descendant of Yum brtan. He is celebrated in the colophon, which highlights book production as an important merit making activity at all levels and reflects the fact that this was an expression of royal power and devotion. The extent to which the ruler mGon ne contributed directly to the production of this manuscript is unclear. The scribal workshop was clearly relying on a wider network of people who contributed in different ways and received blessings from participating in this operation.

Printing workshops, needing a much wider range of resources, represented an enhancement but not necessarily a complete innovation in book production. Networks of patronage were often wide ranging and included people at all levels. As in manuscript production, materials were sourced both locally and through trade. By mapping materials, trade routes and patronage network it will be possible to cast light on hidden aspects of the social history of Tibetan book production and its technological innovations.

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Pattern Reproduction Possibilities and the Alpha and Omega of Tibetan Printing

T. H. Barrett

When is a printing revolution not a revolution? When it takes place in East Asia. Or so we might guess from current writing on the rise of printing in China, where even those disposed to use the word ‘renaissance’ freely with regard to changes there prefer not to conjoin the ideas of printing and revolution, quite explicitly (Goody 2010, 23–4).¹ Yet in a recent monograph on an eleventh-century Chinese poet, Yugen Wang points to verifiable changes in thinking about literary practice that can only be associated with the introduction of printing. The amplification of the number of texts, the accumulation of knowledge, the standardization of texts, even the ‘Montaigne effect’ of making visible the relativity of knowledge, at least at that basic textual level, are all there in his discussion (Wang 2011, 174–82). Some would further see the rise of the profession of medicine as an elite career based on published, standardized medical classics as attributable to the same technological innovation (Hansen 2011, 220–21, makes this point more concisely and cogently than the work she reviews). Only the constitution of communities through print as posited by Benedict Anderson seems absent, perhaps because the world of letters in those times was in its boundaries as clearly delineated as it had been in earlier centuries, even if its circumference had expanded. Despite this, printing as a vigorous commercial phenomenon is, in the view of some experts at least, a product of the sixteenth century in China. On this understanding the little revolution of the tenth and eleventh centuries seems by the fourteenth to have lost its vigour, and to have languished until some new impetus propelled an already familiar technology to new heights of significance (McDermott 2006, 48–49).

So, then, was the rise of Tibetan printing a big revolution or a small one? The answer is by no means simple. This is because to some extent an assessment of the Chinese example, and for that matter the Japanese example too, depends after all upon where one draws the base line. In Europe, printing appears as it

1 The notion of renaissance as applicable to China is much better established: Peter Burke, following Toynbee, was using it as early as 1964: see Burke 1964, 141.

were out of nowhere, as a genuinely new technology, though as we shall see the exact degree of its novelty can perhaps be overstated. But this was certainly not the case in East Asia, quite indubitably not in China or Japan, nor yet, as I would argue, in Tibet either. This may seem a bold assertion from an outsider to Tibetan studies, but it relates as much to a broad view of the nature of printing as a variant form of a class of fairly widespread technologies as to any specific knowledge of the Tibetan case.

To be frank, the following remarks have been put together on the basis of an almost total absence of knowledge concerning Tibet, and even less about printing there, beyond what has been gleaned in passing from a primary interest in China. Thus an interest in Dunhuang as a source of printed materials has at least alerted me to what appears to be the earliest printed material in Tibetan, namely P. tib, 4216, a printed spell that some have assumed was produced there during the Tibetan occupation – that is, rather earlier than any other printed material from Dunhuang of demonstrably local origin (Cohen and Monnet 1992, 59. See Rong 2004, 62, for Dunhuang printing in Chinese in the tenth century). The assumption may in fact be incorrect, in that Tibetan was still clearly used in Dunhuang after the reassertion of Chinese control into the tenth century, especially in connection with Buddhist materials of this type (van Schaik and Galambos 2012, 29–34). If in any case this is the beginning of the story of Tibetan printing, when does it end, at least in the sense of linking with the wider, global printing community? The literal invasion of Tibet by the West must date to Sir Francis Younghusband's (1863–1942) expedition of 1904, when we read: "Painted clay images of the Buddha were smashed open, but to the disappointment of the marauders there was nothing inside them but block-printed mantras" (French 1994, 229 – despite the term mantra, the same material as appears at Dunhuang is indicated).² Such vandalism was of course nothing new to Western imperialism – similar treasure-seeking expedients during the bloody reprisals for the Boxer Uprising had already contributed some unusual materials to Chinese printing history (Carter 1955, 111–12). In fact the assumption must be that the highly durable technology encountered by Younghusband's troops here came originally from China, and certainly the *Blue Annals* suggest that, at a somewhat later date, printed single sheets combining

2 For the meaning of the practice of placing texts inside images, see Barrett 2005, 61. If one discounts the Younghusband episode, then perhaps Tibet was drawn into the wider world of printing rather later, when the French Orientalist André Migot arrived in sDe dge in 1947 with some specific reprinting request, to the astonished monks there, as described in his book *Tibetan Marches* (1956, Chapter xxv).

image and text were imported from there into Tibet (Roerich 1949, 911).³ The point that should be noted, however, is that once established, the production and circulation of single sheets of woodblock bearing words or images of power persisted for something like a millennium.

So, whatever the importance or even the revolutionary nature of the arrival of the entire printed book, in Tibet as in other parts of Asia, if not elsewhere, this took place against the background of forms of printing already well established and destined to endure much longer. Even these products, for their part, need to be seen against a wider background of even simpler or simply different modes of pattern reproduction. The following remarks – which are far from exhaustive – are designed to sketch this wider background to printing, using examples that are in part common knowledge, in part drawn from an interest in Chinese pattern reproduction that I have developed over a number of years. And in using the words ‘simpler or simply different’ I mean to acknowledge thereby that the production of a complex object such as a printed book, though obviously a more demanding task than the production of a single sheet, does not necessarily rest at the *apex* of a hierarchy of possibilities. Pattern reproduction is too diverse to construct such a pyramid.

After all, the transfer of an image to a new surface is something that takes place in nature without human intervention. Allegedly the inventor of lithography, Alois Senefelder, was inspired by the print of a plant left on a stone – or so we are informed according to the poem ‘A Sprig of Moss’ by William McGonagall (1825–1902), the finest (because to my knowledge the only) and also by far, far the worst literary tribute to this technology (McGonagall 1934, 214–16).⁴ We should in passing no doubt note that the twentieth-century Scottish publishers of McGonagall’s writings in book form boast that their firm typeset the single sheet handbills the great man originally used to circulate his compositions, for the history of the unbound, single folio print was by no means extinct in Britain in Younghusband’s youth, even if we do not reflect much on this today. By using the word ‘pattern’, however, I wish to focus on repeated transfers, though here too nature has played its part. The Chinese writing system, after all, is said in traditional accounts to owe its origins to human contemplation of the tracks of birds and beasts – something perhaps not without significance for the history of printing either.⁵

3 For the story depicted, see Barrett 2012, pp. 47–8.

4 The poet’s work first appeared in broadsheet from David Winter & Son, Dundee.

5 For a video summary of an unpublished paper on this topic, see www.sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1259713.

Certainly man seems to have learned from the animals in this matter very early on, to judge from the hand prints, usually it seems made by women, that feature across the world in cave art. The two techniques used to create these already exemplify the two main principles involved in pattern reproduction, namely blocking and striking. In the former technique, the hand was placed against the cave wall, and red ochre powder blown or otherwise applied around it, creating a stencil effect where the hand is outlined by the pigment. The use by cave women of red powder in particular in such contexts is echoed by the use of red powder in Chinese medieval pounces – a form of stencil discussed below – in a technique that apparently continues into the present day (Fraser 2004, 270, n. 72). Alternatively, the hand could be covered in pigment and struck against the rock to impress a coloured shape. Blocking usually involves a soft material being applied to a harder one, whereas striking involves a harder material applied to a softer one; in this case, however, the hard hand transfers the soft pigment to another hard surface, like ink to a page. More typical perhaps of striking or impressing would be the cord pottery of Japan 12,000 years ago, where patterns were imposed on damp clay during ceramic manufacture. As a form of pattern reproduction, impressing clay, especially by stamping, has had an immensely long history (Ledderose 2000, 160, cites Chinese research dating stamping back to the Neolithic). Reproducing some Han examples of stamped tomb bricks, the contemporary ceramicist Grayson Perry writes “The Chinese clay workers used exactly the same techniques I use, over 2200 years later” (Perry 2011, 88; the Han technique is explained in Čapek 1962, 49).

In the case of cord marking, however, a flat surface is not required. Pattern reproduction need not be two-dimensional but may be extended into three, especially when soft meeting hard involves the introduction of soft material into a mould for subsequent fixing. A mould – so important in the context of metallurgy – can be seen as a three dimensional stencil, blocking the natural flow of a soft or molten substance so that it takes the form of the harder substance surrounding it. In Bronze Age China, three thousand years ago, the use of moulds achieved great sophistication, even being employed to cast inscriptions on bronze vessels, though close examination shows that for each casting of a character (inscriptions often appear in duplicate on a vessel) fresh moulds were used *de novo* – the idea of multiplication does not initially seem to be present at all, though it did arrive a few centuries later (Ledderose 2000, 40–41; on pp. 41–8 he goes on, however, to explain the later ‘cloning’ and multiple manufacture of whole vessels). There does exist one example where the inscription is moulded character by character, so that had the moulds been used repeatedly, this would already have constituted a form of movable type (Ledderose 2000, 156).

But to revert to Japan, note also that the cord marks, as far as we know, do not convey meaning or represent anything other than pattern in the abstract, unlike the handprints – though this cannot be entirely certain, since we know that meanings can be applied by their users to non-representational patterns in beads and the like. In general, though, pattern can vary from the purely decorative to the multiple replications of meaningful images, the standardizing effect of which could have been felt long before modernity – that is, even in the ancient world. Moulds for the manufacture of small terracotta figures of gods still survive from twenty-four centuries ago. Perhaps by reason of the scale and breadth of distribution achieved, they were not capable of imposing uniformity on conceptions of iconography, but they could have been influential even so (see image no. 3 in Nicholls 1978, 7–8). For unlike a cave wall, such figurines were portable, and unlike cord pottery that was at first presumably created for immediate use, the creators of these small figurines must have made them in order to be marketed.

But it was surely the invention of coinage around 600 CE that had the deepest early impact of this type. In the Mediterranean world the coinage was struck, using dies, a technology already present – though using dies to strike clay, not metal – in the mysterious but certainly earlier Phaistos disk. There is eloquent testimony to the way in which die struck coins carried standardizing messages far and wide in the New Testament: “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s”, says Jesus in the Gospels, on the basis of the ‘image and superscription’ on a penny (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25). Chinese coinage dates back to the same period in the form of the moulded metal ‘spade coins’ and ‘knife coins’ that preceded later round forms, and though images were not used in East Asia, writing was usually included from very early on. This then would be a special case of the meaningful image, namely the linguistically meaningful image. And coins were certainly designed for portability, even if the space for a linguistic message was usually limited.

For a bigger image or longer message, a flat thin lightweight surface was clearly required, even if the multiple creation of lightweight metal objects bearing meaningful representations for widespread diffusion did find a place in the manufacture by stamping or casting of medieval pilgrim badges, a mass industry that has been seen as in a way antecedent to European printing (Parshall and Schoch 2005, 60–62). Grayson Perry likens their status as souvenir to that of the modern t-shirt: “My dad went to Canterbury and all I got was this lousy lead alloy badge!” (Perry 2011, 126).

Literally incorporating writing into clothing itself in a largely pre-literate age seems to have appealed less than the badge option. But abstract patterns were stamped onto textiles from much earlier on. Plates used by Chinese

(or perhaps they were closer ethnically to Vietnamese) craftsmen to impose patterns on silk have been retrieved by archaeologists from the tomb of a second-century BCE king of the state of Nanyue, on the southern border of the Han empire, and this practice seems to have spread westward from China, resulting in more recent times in the widespread use of printed cottons (Lin 2012, 260–61). As is well known, the block printing of text and image on textiles designed not for wearing but for decorative or religious use would seem to stand also in the immediate background to the woodblock printing of Europe (Parshall and Schoch 2005, 21–3, 62–8). As well as stamps, textiles could be patterned by means of resists, including means of blocking not only by stencils but also by using wax resists in conjunction with dyes. I have suggested elsewhere that there was in the eighth century a certain degree of crossover between these techniques and the emerging technology of woodblock printing proper (Barrett 2001, 240–47).

Such developments, however, had to await the arrival of paper, though it is arguable that this invention retained close links conceptually with textiles. Paper clothing at any rate may be found as a substitute for textiles even in Song times among those with religious scruples against luxury (see Tsien Tsuin-hsui 1985, 112; Boretti 2004, 360). But when it was adopted as a writing material, it was very clearly the freedom of movement it allowed by comparison with bamboo strips that appealed, rather than its provision of a flat surface for stamping. The cursive calligraphic styles of the post-Han period can hardly be imagined without the availability of paper, but producing patterns on it by stamping or even – with one limited exception – imposing preformed words on it was not the most obvious response to the new product, compared to the enthusiastic Chinese response to its invitation to the untrammelled movement of the writing brush.

The limited exception involves its suitability as a surface on which to stamp what we translate as a 'seal'. Seals in the Western sense, as part of the security apparatus provided by enclosure of documents such as letters or other objects, were used in China (Richter 2013, 28–9). But the traditional Chinese 'chop' was more like a signature, authenticating a body of text or a painted image with which it shared a surface. One example of a seal on silk comes from a grave of the fourth century BCE (Ledderose 2000, 160). And if we look at the wording of seals, they share a feature with the other short pieces of text that had been from antiquity multiplied through striking or moulding. They are all, in short, captions, verbal labels performing a self-identifying function – indeed Chinese examples often include the phrase 'the seal of' such and such an official, just as Caesar's coins stated his identity as issuing authority. This is by no means to deny the great symbolic importance of Chinese seals, upon which much has

been written, but simply to point out that by convention the amount of wording on them, as on a coin, was normally rather restricted.⁶

Paper did, however, make other technologies of facsimile reproduction possible that would have been much more expensive if not impossible had textiles been used. Take for example the reconstitution of a text in facsimile by means of tracing – a process of great value not simply in transmitting calligraphy but also later in Chinese history in creating an exact copy to transfer from an existing printed text to a new block. A surviving Tang example of ink traced calligraphy on transparent beeswax paper shows what could be achieved in the former case, and even if this material was scarcely a good medium for multiple reproductions it does show the copying resources at the Chinese printer's potential disposal (Richter 2013, 115, figure 3.1, from Liaoning Provincial Museum).

Tracing apart, moreover, another way in which paper could aid the exact creation of copies was through the creation of pounces. These are pieces of paper pierced through with small holes following a pre-existing ink outline of a figure or of some other pattern. The examples that survive from among the Dunhuang finds are iconographic: they are pinpricked sheets through which powder could be rubbed to create new outlines that a painter could follow in 'joining up the dots' to make a new icon in outline and proportion identical to the one that had served as the basis for the pounce, in essence a form of skeletal stencil. Such a technique could of course be applied on a variety of surfaces, typically in the creation of murals built up of multiple images of identical Buddha figures, but there are signs that pounces were also used in repeated textile designs (Fraser 2004, 102–108, gives an excellent summary and illustrations; note also her plate 14).

The question of multiplying images and texts in a Buddhist context is one to which we should return, but first mention should be made of one final means of reproduction made widely available through the spread of paper, even if not impossible with textiles, and that is the rubbing. This seems to be a distinctively Chinese technique, though in India impressions of relics were made in the seventh century using paste smeared on silk, as a part of a divination practice (Beal 2011, 59). Such corporeal impressions, however, also hark back to the hand-prints of cave women already mentioned, and may further connect with Western impressions of corporeal relics such as the famous Shroud of Turin, not to mention the corporeal impressions made by teeth in clay, used

6 For a good discussion of seals and authority extending from China to Inner Asia (though not Tibet), see Aubin 2010. That seals were usually at first rather brief even in religious contexts is suggested by the information in Drexler 1994, 10, but see also below on some more prolix seal messages.

as authenticating seals in India but known to Chinese also (Barrett 2012, 16). Rubbings by contrast may conceivably have been valued for their contact with the original inscriptions, seen as prestigious objects, but technologically are in some respects much closer to printing in reverse, in that a hard surface bearing a pattern – usually a linguistically meaningful pattern in the form of an incised inscription – is not used to strike the paper, but rather the paper, as a semi-elastic substance, is introduced to the hard pattern and pressed into its shape, so that when the remainder of the surface is inked, the portions pressed into the inscription are left white.⁷

To create a rubbing from an inscription takes a little time, but not unduly long, though the production is of course far less instantaneous than the creation of an impression by stamping (see Barrett 2011, 205). The creation of the stamp itself in the form of a Chinese seal, even if made out of a hard stone rather than wood, might by contrast take a certain amount of effort, but apparently even a beginner might not find the creation of a short message unduly difficult, and even surprisingly quick.⁸ But to talk of such matters implies a shift from an artisan's concern with accuracy of reproduction alone to a quest not simply for multiple replications but also for rapid and high volume production too. This would seem to imply the existence of a market, but the market for most of the patterned objects we have considered so far cannot have involved simple economics, in that none of them can be considered essentials – a pilgrim badge serves no immediate practical function, any more than does a terracotta statuette. Cultural factors determine the market for mass art even more than for luxury art, when people have less money. How important is it to be known as a pilgrim, or as the possessor in terracotta of what a rich man might have in marble and twenty times the size?

And this is just to assume a merely social role for the multiply created copy. It might also have a personal one, as a memento or even an object of devotion. Or its very creation might serve some religious function – not a factor that we think about much in the European context, but essential to understanding the use of pattern transfer in the Buddhist world, and especially the Mahāyāna Buddhist world. It has long been recognised that the acquisition of merit,

7 The most useful monograph on rubbings, Starr 2008, carries a good account of the apparent origins of rubbings by the sixth century and the existence of early examples from 654 onwards (pp. 3–24), besides exhaustive accounts of rubbing techniques, including (pp. 144–7) the form of rubbing used in Europe to copy monumental brasses in churches. The bilingual work by Liu Wing-fong (1986) is also handy.

8 Robert Van Gulik (1958, 437) records his experience of learning to create seals; one he eventually completed in “about an hour” (sic!).

through the multiplication of texts like the *Diamond Sutra*, provided an important religious impetus towards the adoption of printing (Carter 1955, 56–7). But recent scholarship has gone further to uncover the reasons for this, in that the form of Buddhism that came to be called Mahāyāna, ‘The Greater Vehicle’, as this polemical self-designation itself hints, was precisely very far in its early days from commanding numerically significant support amongst adherents of Buddhism, and so from its marginal position had to rely on writing to spread its message in opposition to the mainstream of Buddhist literature, which clearly had oral origins and was sustained by collective memorization by the established Buddhist clergy (for a good summary of recent rethinking on this issue, see Williams 2009, 1–44). To the advocates of new ideas, a book was just as important as a relic of the Buddha – in fact, it was a relic of the Buddha. For had he not said that whoever saw his words, saw him? (Cf. Barrett 2008, 45.)

Perhaps precisely because the message of the Mahāyāna goes back to outsiders on the fringes of the main Buddhist community, one gets a certain sense in the literature of the movement of being addressed through a megaphone. Volumes are ramped up rhetorically at every point, in the sense that there is more of everything – more Buddhas, more world systems, and more exhortations to propagate the message. Multiplication becomes the norm, hence for example the establishment of the ‘Thousand Buddha’ pattern known to art historians in China – and the need for mechanical aids like pounces to help create so many identical images. And in particular these images – which, like texts, count as relics also – amplified the material presence of the Buddha. The quickest way to multiply images and set them in appropriate reliquaries – stūpas, that is – was to mould the tiny shrines out of clay and include a tiny image or saying of the Buddha or both. This was most certainly a merit producing religious act in itself, so this makes the very moulds themselves, the matrices from which the tiny instantiations of sanctity emerged, into sacred objects, as Grayson Perry again notices (Perry 2011, 140, where Tibetan moulds are illustrated; cf. Barrett 2012, 55–6, for some much earlier evidence.). I do not believe that this ever happened in Europe with moulds for sacred images or indeed woodblocks for religious prints, which only served as means to an end, quite unlike the woodblocks that Tibetans were prepared to treasure, despite what seemed to European printers – used to recycling movable type – their inconvenient bulk.

This now brings us back to paper, and its Buddhist role in the dissemination of meaningful pattern in the form of images and texts. It has recently been established that a stamp on paper bearing both a Buddha image and text (in Sanskrit) dates to about the end of the fifth century (Barrett 2008, 67). Within about a century or so this technique had become common enough for Daoists

to list it as a legitimate form of image creation also (Barrett 1997).⁹ But though we do hear of a few large seals with outsize messages from quite early on, they must have been distinctly inconvenient to use, whereas the multiple Buddha stampings that survive from Dunhuang are all quite small.¹⁰ Rubbing was certainly used in the seventh century to convey a facsimile likeness of a Buddha relic from India to China, and thence via recreations there to Japan in more than one copy. Interestingly for the history of printing, and indeed for the history of the conception of 'relic' in China, this was the imprint of the Buddha's feet.¹¹ For Buddhists, perhaps, few patterns could be more meaningful, though in China the Buddha's handprints were to be discerned on the landscape as well (see Robson 2012, 92). By contrast, the same cult of the footprint is said to have spread from Sri Lanka to Thailand in the fourteenth century simply by freehand copying (Raben and Dhiravat na Pombejra 1997, 82). In this case the faithful reproduction of a pre-existing impression, and perhaps the transfer of sanctity by contact with a sacred object, made the use of a rubbing an obvious choice, but for reproducing in bulk larger images or portions of text the technique would have been at a disadvantage not so much because it was slow (scribal copying, though capable of stenographic speed, was usually conducted at quite a measured pace which any technology would find quite easy to outperform) but because it was a method of pattern transfer quite prodigal in its expenditure of ink.

Under what circumstances did someone hit upon the hybrid technique of bringing the paper to the stamp, as to a surface to be rubbed? My own hypothesis, based on the rapid spread of this technology through East Asia in contexts closely associated with royalty, is that it was used to create many copies of Buddhist texts that might serve as relics for widespread distribution, in emulation of the legendary feat of Ashoka in distributing the Buddha's relics (this hypothesis is outlined in Barrett 2008). Yet in Tang China this practice of relic distribution was firmly associated with dynastic rivals – with the preceding Sui dynasty, and especially with the usurper, Emperor/Empress Wu, who may in

9 I now date the source to the Sui period on the basis of the indication in the text of institutions unique to the Sui mentioned by Verellen (1994, 122): my thanks to Antonello Palumbo for pointing this out.

10 Best known of these longer yet still only four-inch (square?) stamps, carrying 120 characters, was that for use on clay against aquatic monsters in the early fourth century CE, though it is possible that seals bearing a Buddhist message 210 characters long were made in the seventh century: cf. Carter 1955, 13; Barrett 2011, 204–5.

11 For the relationship of this specific relic to a wider Chinese context, see Barrett 1990, 102; for the Buddhist cult, see Strong 2004, 85–97. For some notes on the retrieval of a facsimile from India and its transmission to Japan, see Ono Katsutoshi 1967, 113–14.

my estimation have used printed relics. As a result the dynasty itself avoided employing printing, though where multiple copies were needed in a short space of time – as in the production of calendars – they did nothing to stop the spread of the new technology as such.¹²

It was, then, these short printed spells, *dhāraṇī*, that Younghusband's invaders found serving as small, empowering elements of Buddha presence within statues. Little do they seem to have appreciated that to those whom they despoiled, these apparently valueless scraps of paper were veritable relics of the Buddha himself. Yet this may not be quite the status of the print in the Pelliot Tibetan collection. Eugene Wang, drawing in part on the research of Paul Copp, the leading authority on *dhāraṇī* in Tang China, points out that not all such texts associated with relic deposits can actually be understood as relics. In the Chinese environment, by the tenth century at least, Daoist ideas of talismanic writing had apparently bestowed upon these written relics a value of their own, especially perhaps in the minds of laypersons unconnected with the rhetoric of managing the Buddha's residual presence. They became, in short, protective charms (Wang 2011, especially p. 159). One good indication of this is the degree to which they were carried about the person inside arm-bands or otherwise left in burials, after serving as phylacteries. Katherine R. Tsiang has described a number of these, plus a couple of related manuscript examples, that have been retrieved by archaeologists in recent years (Tsiang 2010, 224–38). But although her broader treatment of early Buddhist printed materials is extensive, she does not touch upon Pelliot's Tibetan printed text. No doubt this print requires further examination within the context that she provides, but this would go substantially beyond the aim of these remarks.

For, to repeat, rather than introduce new evidence, the aim here has been to sketch in lightly the full range of what we already know. And what we know is that the printed book did not spring into being fully formed like Athena from the head of Zeus, though in Buddhist China the step from single sheet to multi-page book was no doubt eased by the fact that all Buddha's word, even the most prolix texts, constituted Buddha relics. It is true that the paths taken in Europe and East Asia differed substantially in the exact technologies that came to be preferred, even if some degree of East-West influence through the Islamic world could have provided some early stimulus (Elverskog 2010, 104–15, which also provides good illustrated examples in Tibetan, Mongol and Arabic of the materials discussed). This is very effectively illustrated by the way in which the

12 The evidence for this is outlined in Barrett 2012. I hope in due course to publish an expanded version of this study making clear how its findings are consistent with the hypothesis put forward in my earlier work.

rather detailed but not absolutely explicit account of the block printing of paper money in the Mongol empire given by Marco Polo is depicted by European artists of the early sixteenth century: they can only imagine that dies were used to stamp the seal of the Great Khan onto the money (see Vogel 2013, 125). For we know that the system initiated but probably not perfected by Gutenberg was something very much more complex than anything considered here. But there is a substantial background, a 'prehistory' to it strictly within Europe, based on this time honoured method for the transfer of linguistically meaningful pattern. How important this may have been is as yet a little difficult to discern, and of course this may impinge to some extent on the degree to which we may one day continue to see the rise of the post-Gutenberg technology as truly revolutionary, though the major changes that it ushered in can hardly be ignored. The prehistory to this, however, may have started in Lydia long ago as a form of stamping soft metal with hard metal, but it was clearly also used to transfer writing from other hard to soft surfaces long before Gutenberg's time. The use of the alphabet on stamps or metal punches, as demonstrated for example by the altarpiece of Pellegrinus II at Cividale, Friuli, round about 1200 CE, must for example surely have to be taken into account – even if the claim that this exhibits the earliest example of a product of movable type may in itself not be sustainable (Lipinsky 1986). Punches indeed have a history in the Eastern Mediterranean dating back about three and a half thousand years, if one takes into account the Phaistos Disc (Godart 1995, 113–14). Block printing, for that matter, has an Eastern Mediterranean history of about two and a half thousand years, if one includes the block printed amulet now housed in the Schøyen Collection, MS 5236.¹³ Both these cases, however, involved the use of gold, either for what can apparently only have been golden punches or for the gold leaf surface impressed to make the amulet. Obviously, then, economically viable mass printing on any scale had to await the bringing together in East Asia of wood and paper.

But again, to go into a full account of that would take us too far. In sum, however, we can simply say that both in East and West the concept of pattern transfer was very widely known and understood – and very multifariously put into practice. When H. G. Wells said that printing was "the most obvious of inventions", already present in the use of seals, this may rather slight the technological advances required, but actually he underestimates the prehistory even to that development (Wells 1965, 50, 207). By highlighting a range of simpler technologies, however, I merely wish to draw attention to two points. One I have

13 www.schoyencollection.com/pre1450.html#5236, accessed 28 April, 2014. The same website shows examples of Sumerian block printing on clay more than four thousand years old.

made before, namely that a history of technology on its own does not explain everything – whatever the materials used, in China at any rate religious ideology seems to be very important too. The other is a yet more resounding truism, but one still perhaps worth enunciating: that in any revolution, many things will still remain the same. The crucial issue from which we started, namely where we draw our base line, and hence what we consider revolutionary, is therefore not necessarily a self-evident matter.

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