

# Tibetan Collections of Nepal

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Tibetan collections of Nepal represent the richest collections of manuscripts and xylographs in the Tibetan language.<sup>1</sup> Every year they are added with a new valuable material either given as gifts or bought from private collections. In these collections there is kept a great number of varied literary sources on history, culture, literature, language, art, philosophy and medicine covering approximately all aspects of spiritual life not only of the Tibetans but many other peoples of Central Asia. Yet Tibetan collections of Nepal are not the subject of special studies. According to the Nepalese-German project preservation of manuscripts, during 1973-74 there were made microfilms of 340 Tibetan

manuscripts and xylographs, copies of which are kept in the National Archives, Kathmandu, and in the State Library of the Prussian Cultural Archives, West Berlin (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz).

The central and coordination of scientific researches of the National Archives, Kathmandu, are held by the department of archaeology. The National Archives (Rashtriya Abhilekhalaya) was opened on the 3rd of October 1967 by the late King of Nepal - Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah who was greatly interested in the ancient history of Nepal. On his initiative there were begun active studies of old manuscripts concerning the ancient history of the country.

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- 1) The material for the article was collected by the author during her scientific mission (trip) to Nepal in January-April 1982 where she succeeded in getting acquainted with Tibetan collections in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Lumbini. Besides, there were used following articles: R. Kashewsky. Bericht über eine literarische und buddhologische Sammelarbeit in Nepal", 1968-69. "Zentralasiatische Studien" 1969, N 3, S. 310-319; F-K. Erhard. Tibetan texts in the National Archives, Kathmandu- "Research Journal", 1980, N 3.

I have a chance to thank for amiable reception and assistance in my work the head of the National Archives, Kathmandu, Balaram Dangol, the director of the National Museum of Nepal - Pashupati Kumar Dwivedi, the head of the buddhist monastery Ananda Kuti Bihar Bhikkhu Amritananda, the head of the buddhist monastery in Lumbini, the representative of the Sakya sect - Sakya Dagchen Rinpoche Agvan Kunga Tegchen Palbaru.

The National Archives includes sections: historical documents (Aitihāsika Abhilekha Sakha); administration and finance (Sadharanatatha-Arthika Prasasana Sakha), manuscripts (Hasta-Likhita Grantha Sakha). In its turn, the section of manuscripts is divided into subsections: astrology (Jyotisha), tantras, Dharma-sastras and Vedas (literature including dramas and dictionaries (Sabirya including Nataka and Kosha), philosophy (Darshana), Puranas.

The National Archives of Kathmandu has a valuable Tibetan collection. There is a written catalogue with names of texts in Tibetan and Nevāri but the catalogue does not cover the content of the collection. Of great worth is the Buddhist Canon consisting of two large codes - Gandjur and Dandjur (depending upon edition Gandjur includes from 100 upto 108 volumes and Dandjur - 225 volumes). Gandjur and Dandjur are unique monuments of the Tibetan written language and ancient culture and represent national honour of the Tibetans. There are collected works of many generations varied in genre, style and content of work, they summarise scientific achievements of the Tibetan people covering all aspects of the ancient and medieval creation which goes far beyond religious frames.

Scientific works in the fields of studying

Gandjur and Dandjur were connected with publications of catalogues of separate editions (the catalogue of Peking edition published by P. H. Cordeur, the catalogue of Derje edition compiled by Japanese scientists, re-edition of Gandjur and Dandjur of Peking edition in Japan; in New Delhi there was accomplished an edition of Mangolian Gandjur by the International Academy of Indian Culture), with edition of a series of texts, their translations into European languages and commentaries (some were published in the series "Bibliotheca Buddhica" and as well with analysis of separate works from Gandjur and Dandjur (works of E. E. Obermiller, F. I. Scherbatskoy, H. A. Schiffner, Y. I. Schmidt, Y. M. Parfianovich, B. V. Semichyov and others.

Studies of sources on philosophy, iconometry and social religious moral were started in the [Buryat] Institute of social sciences, there appeared three parts of the philosophical treatise "Abidharmakosha" of the Indian philosopher Vasubandhu (V. century A.D.), they are prepared by B. V. Semichyov and M. G. Bryanskyi.<sup>1</sup> treatises on iconometry became the subject of investigation by K. M. Gerasimova practical collections of moral maxims of "Niti-sastras" were elucidated in works of N. D. Bolsokhoyeva and T. M. Malonova.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1) Vasubandhu Abhidharmakosha. The translation close to the text from Tibetan into Russian, with the preface, preparation of the Tibetan text, comments and tables by B. V. Semichyov and M. G. Bryanskyi, Ulan-Ude, 1980.
  - 2) See, for example, K. M. Gerasimova. About the Canon of preparations upon texts from Gandjur and Dandjur. Studies on the history and philology of Central Asia. Ulan-Ude, 1976, /pp 104-117; N. D. Bolsokhoyeva. "Niti-sastras" in the history of the Tibetan literature - Buddhism and medieval culture of peoples of Central Asia. Novosibirsk, 1980, pp 83-102, the same author, "Subhasita" of the Tibetan author of the XIII century Sakyapandita (1182-1251) and its sources: - Abstracts from the conference of research students. History of literature, linguistics. Moscow, 1976, pp 12-13; T. M. Malanova. About early translations of ancient Indian "Niti-sastras" in Tibet - "Peoples of Asia and Africa", 1980, N3, pp 130-136.

In the collection of the National Archives there are kept two copies of Narthang edition of Gandjur and Derge edition and also Narthang edition of Dandjur. One copy of Narthang edition of Gandjur is not complete. The complete Gandjur of Narthang edition kept in the National Archives of Kathmandu consists of 100 volumes that are divided into 2nd divisions: 1) Vinaya (13 v), 2) Pradjnyaparamita (20 v), 3) Buddhaavatamsaka (6 v), 4) Ratnakuta (5 v), 5) Sutras (30 v), 6) Mahaparanirvana-sutra (2 v), 7) Tantra (21 v), 8) Garchak (contents) (2 v).

We formed the complete catalogue of texts which are included in Gandjur of Narthang edition that let us give a short characteristics of Gandjur divisions. In Narthang edition of Gandjur the first division is formed with treaties on Vinaya, maybe it reflects the very succession in which Lord Buddha sermonized his teaching. Vinaya consists of 13 volumes including 7 treatises which are divided into 4 groups.

1. "Vinayavasta" ('dul-ba-gzhi) consists of 109 parts which form 4 volumes. They have rules of behaviour of monks in a community.

2. Four treatises which are devoted to definition of behavioural rules of monks and nuns. "Pratimoksa-sutra" (so-ser thar-pa'i mdo) gives a short enumeration of 253 vows obligatory for every monk. Besides, "Vinayavi bhanga" (dul-ba rnam-par-'byed-par) lists 90 sinful doings. In "Bhiksuni-pratimoksa-sutra" (dge-slong-ma'i so sor thar-pa'i mdo) and "Bhiksuni-vinayavi bhanga" (dge-slong ma'i dul-'ba rnam-par-'byed-pa) there are defined rules of behaviour of nuns.

3. The treatise "Vinayaksudrakavasta" ('dul-ba phran-tshegs-kyi gzhi), which details rules of behaviour of monasticism.

4. The treatise "Vinaya-uttaragrantha" ('dul-ba gzhung bla-ma) consists of various prayer texts and blessing wishes. The division "Pradjnyaparamita" is divided into 4 groups.

1. "Pradjnyaparamita the Great". It includes one treatise "Satasahasri kapradjnyaparamita" (shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa stong phrag-brgya-pa) consisting of 12 volumes and containing 101 thousand slokas.

2. "Pradjnyaparamita the Average" has three variants large, average and reduced. These three variants are the essence of the average "Pradjnyaparamita".

a ] "Pancavimsatisahasrika-pradjnyaparamita" (shes rab kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa stong-phrag nyi-shu luga-ba) includes 3 volumes and contains 25 thousand slokas.

b ] "Agitadasahasrika-pradjnyaparamita" (shes rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa khri brgyad-stong-pa) covers 3 volumes and contains 18 thousand slokas.

c ] "Das asahasrika-pradjnyaparamita" (shes-rab gyi pha rol-tu phyin-pa khri-pa) consists of one volume and contain 10 thousand slokas.

3 "Pradjnyaparamita reduced" is presented as "Astahasrika-pradjnyaparamita" (shes-rab kyi pha rol-tu phyin-pa brgyad-stong-pa) in one volume containing and thousand slokas.

4. This group includes some varied reductions of diverse variants of "Pradjnyaparamita". There are treatises expounding "Pradjnyaparamita" in 500, 300, 108 and 50 slokas. The structure of distribution of treatises shows that classification of texts is carried out according to the grades of diminishing of a number of slokas. Every following treatise represents the reduction of the previous one.

The division "Buddhaayatamsaka" consists of 6 volumes, 39 300 slokas dividing into 115 parts. The sutra interprets the notion of Lord Buddha, gives names of various Buddhas, stories of their birth and death, of the lands they lived in, about the great deeds, their virtues and so on.

The division "Ratnakuta" (lit. "The collection of treasures") includes 6 volumes containing 49 chapters. A few treatises give a numeration of different qualities and perfections of Lord Buddha. In separate works there are stated answers of Lord Buddha on questions of various people, they are presented in the form of a dialogue between Lord Buddha and his followers. Besides, this division contains the description of the kingdom of Dhyana-Buddhas.

The division of the fifth sutra is the largest division of Gandjur consisting of 270 treatises (30 volumes). The Tibetan sources do not explain the inner structure of the division. The section of sutras begins with "Bhadrakalpika-sutra" (bskal-pa bzang-po pa mdo), which tells about thousands of Buddhas of the beautiful kalpa. Then go "Lalitavistara-sutra" (rgya-cher rol-pa'i mdo), "Sandhinirmocana-sutra" (dgongs-pa nyes-par-grei pa' imdo), "Lankavatara-sutra" (lan-kar gshegs-pa' i mdo), "Saddharma-pundarika-sutra" (dam-pa'i chos pad dkar-pa'i mdo), "Sukhavatika-vyuka-sutra" (bole-ba-can gyi bkod-pa'i mdo), "Karandavyuha-sutra" (za-ma tog bkod-pa'i mdo) and others.

The division "Mahaparinirvana-sutra" includes only one text (myang-das) "Sutra about the Great Niravana" in 2 volumes. The given sutra is one of the basic works of the Buddhist Canon. It runs about the past days of Lord Buddha, about his death and following

events connected with division of Lord Buddha's relics and remains.

The division "Tantra" consists of 423 treatises and takes up 21 volumes.

In the "Contents" of Gandjur which is kept in the National archives the new and old classifications of tantras are given. According to the new classification the tantras are divided into four groups: "Anuttara-yoga-tantra", "Yoga-tantra", "Carya-tantra" and "Kriya-tantra". In accordance with the old classification there are distinguished three groups of tantras: "Advaya-tantra", "Pradhyana-yogini-tantra" and "Upaya-yogini-tantra". In the "Contents" you can notice an intention to connect these types of classification. In particular, there is cited an utterance of the founder of the yellow-hats' sect Tsonkhava (1357-1419) that two first points of these classifications are identical, exactly, "Anuttara-yoga-tantra" is none other than "Advaya-tantra". The second and third points of the old classification are included in the form of subpoints of "Yoga-tantra" of the new classification.<sup>1</sup>

The study of "Tantras" shows that they are divided into following groups: 1) "Advaya-tantras" (gnyismed - pa'i rgyud) and "Yoga-tantra" (rnal-'byor rgyud).

We would like to pay a particular attention to 1-6, II volumes from the division "Tantras" which are attributed to the division "Old tantras". Volume 6 represents a manuscript written with silver on black paper which includes 444 lists. The manuscript is kept in a wonderful condition, according to handwriting and paper you can suggest that it refers to the end of XIX century.

1) The contents of Gandjur of Narthang editon. The National Archives, Kathmandu, with an inventory N, List 69<sup>2</sup>.

Gandjur of the National Archives of Kathmandu is an original edition of the first part of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. Copies of Gandjur of Narthang edition kept in the USSR differ from Gandjur discussed above, first- in a number of texts, second- in distribution of the material in divisions, third- in apportionment to a special division of texts which refer to the division "Old Tantras". "Old Tantras" serve as valuable and important sources for studies of Tibetan tantric literature of Mahayana, besides, they allow to begin researches in the aspect of comparative-contrastive analysis of "Old and new Tantras". Tibetan texts of "Old and New Tantras" from Gandjur are waiting for their scientists, they offer rich material for linguists in the aspect of comparison of norms of the old and new language. Besides, study of the texts allows to come to a conclusion about the reform of the Tibetan language which basic statements were worked out by a special board. The integrated study of Gandjur of Narthang edition from the National Archives will serve as good source material for research of Gandjur basic texts and for composing an analytical catalogue of Gandjur of various editions.

Gandjur of Derge edition from the National Archives of Kathmandu represents a re-edition of Gandjur of Derge edition of 1729-1733. It is a xylograph of red print on thick modern European paper, it includes 103 volumes (the first volume is the "Contents"). This edition was realised by representatives (members) of red-hats' sect - Kadampa in Sikkim. The most valuable in it is the "Contents", it is a model source for study of the political history of Tibet, the history of Buddhism in Tibet, and as well for study of the history of formation of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon.

According to the classification of the outstanding Tibetan scholar Buston (1290-1364) the second part of the Buddhist Canon forms Dandjur or sastras. Dandjur includes 225 volumes and consists of commentaries of Indian and Tibetan authors on works forming Gandjur and as well of independent works of Tibetan authors which gained such great authority in Tibet that became canonic. Among Dandjur treatises there are compositions on philosophy, logics, medicine, art, literature and so on.

We do not dwell on the characteristics of Dandjur of Narthang edition from the National Archives of Kathmandu as it corresponds completely to Dandjur of Narthang edition which is kept in the Manuscript Department of the Institute of Social Sciences of the Buryat Division of the Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Science (Note that in the collection of the Archives there is no first volume in Dandjur.)

Besides, in the National Archives there are presented sumbums (complete collections of works) of such well-known Tibetan authors as Lonchen Rabdjamba (1308-1363), Taranatha (born in 1575), Zhanchan Dubpai Dorje (?) and others.

In the Tibetan collection of the archives there are collected as well works of a few Tibetan authors on separate fields of science which may be grouped as following- history, medicine, theatre, works on tantrism and piographies of outstanding men of the Lamaist church.

The unique cope of manuscript Gandjur is kept in the Library of the Buddhist monastery in Lumbni. The manuscript was brought from monastery of Shalu, the area of main activity of the Tibetan scholar Buston. It includes 108 volumes written with black ink on Tibetan thick paper and is that very manuscript which served as the original for all Gandjur

xylographs. This unique copy of Gandjur is the most valuable and important source for composition of the complete critical text of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon and for composition of a comparative catalogue of Gandjur of various editions.

In the monastery of Lumbini there are two variants of "Sutras of Highest Wisdom" - of "Pradnyaparamita". These manuscripts written with gold are artistically decorated with ornamented frames and prints made with great grace mastership and wonderful combination of colour, with pictures of Tibetan religious men and gods of the Buddhist pantheon.

As the Lumbini monastery belongs to the sect of Tibetan Buddhism which is named Sakya its library has voluminous literature concerning the history of the sect and works of Sakya lamas

In the collection of the National Museum of Nepal there is kept a collection of Tibetan print books and manuscripts rich in their content. Unfortunately, the Tibetan collection of the museum is not practically sorted out, the fund is not inventoried and catalogued. Large and laborious work is needed for study of the Tibetan fund of the museum, for composition of a catalogue of the collection that will give an opportunity to carry the unique monuments of the Tibetan written language into scientific use. In the collection of the museum there are represented Tibetan versions of monuments of ancient Indian literature: "Abhisamayalan-kara", "Kavyadarsa" after Dandin and "Garlands of jatakas" after Aryasura. The last two works were rather popular in Tibet. The most valuable part of the collection is the Tibetan medical literature which is traditionally divided into the rGyud bzi, the basic treatise on the Tibetan medicine, and

numerous commentaries to it, - practical instructions on usage of various methods of healing.

In the Tibetan collections of Nepal (the National Archives, libraries of the Buddhist monasteries of Swayambu, Bodnatha, Lumbini Pokhara) there are kept various editions of works of ethic-didactic content which are of great value for research.<sup>1</sup> These works form specific genre of Buddhist literature which appeared as a result of synthesis of literary and folklore traditions with philosophical-ethic views of Buddhism and is characteristic of own themes and artistic peculiarities. Borrowing legends, traditions, fairy-tales from inexhaustible treasures of folk art and creating them in a poetic form Buddhist preachers accommodated these lively and fascinating stories for account and popularization of moral-ethic aspects of Buddhism. The critical analysis of these most valuable literary sources from the point of view at social science will be of importance for comparative study of different editions of texts of didactic content, promote the true decisions of the problem about the origin of the genre in the literature of Tibet and give an opportunity to define with critical assurance the level of influence of folklore elements on philosophical-ethic aspects of Buddhism. The integrated study of monuments of Tibetan culture will allow to carry into scientific use unique treatises in the Tibetan language which will serve model sources for linguists, historians, buddhologists, ethnographers, art critics, medical men.

Exposure and study of the most interesting monuments of Tibetan collections of Nepal is a necessary condition for elucidation of the character of original Tibetan culture and its role among the medieval cultures of Central Asia.

1) See the article by N. Bolsokhoyeva about study of Tibetan ethic-didactic literature in the Institute of Social Sciences of the Buryat Division of the Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Science in "Peoples of Asia and Africa", 1981, N 4, pp 156-169.