

PRAGUE COLLECTION OF TIBETAN PRINTS FROM DERGE

—JOSEF KOLMAS

The collection of Tibetan texts—printed books, xylographs, and manuscripts—as kept in the Tibetan Section of the Library of the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague, is relatively small, both with regard to the vast extent of Tibetan literary production itself and in comparison with much richer and more representative collectanea of Tibetan texts in other centres of Tibetan studies in the world.

Apart from a small collection of Tibetan manuscripts and block-prints¹, and a number of Tibetan books printed and bound in European way, such as new Tibetan publications and/or reprints of older indigenous work edited in recent years in China or in India², our biggest and most invaluable collection of Tibetan texts is represented by the complete set of the Holy Kanjur and Tanjur of the Derge (Sde-dge) edition, consisting of 316 volumes (including two Index-volumes). This collection was acquired by the present writer in 1958 in the East Tibetan town of Derge with the Peking National Library acting as intermediary.³

Another collection of our Tibetica, perhaps unique in Europe, is represented by 5,615 title leaves of Tibetan works turned out by the two monastic printing-houses in Derge, viz. the Dgon-chen monastery and the Dpal-spungs monastery. Again, it was acquired by the present author during his stay in China in 1958-1959. As it stands now, the collection represents an extremely useful bibliographical guide for the study of Tibetan literature which, unfortunately, in general remains as unknown and inaccessible for us as Tibet itself.⁴

It was my teacher of Tibetan, Professor Yu Tao-ch'uan of the Central Academy of Nationalities, Peking, who had suggested to me to buy—in addition to the Kanjur and Tanjur—also a whole set of Tibetan texts printed at the Dgon-chen and Dpal-spungs monasteries of Derge.

Dgon-chen or “Great Monastery” belonging to the Sa-skya-pa order, is known for its large printing establishment (*Sde-dge par-khang Chos-mdzod chen-mo*), opened in the first half of the 18th century during the illustrious reign of the King Bstan-pa-tshe-ring of Derge (1678-1738). In this place the Kanjur and Tanjur collections, as well as numerous

gsung'-bums and *bstan-bcos*, canonical texts and *dharanis*, histories and *rnam-thars*, along with many other works on Buddhism in general have traditionally been printed. ⁵

Dpal-spungs or "Heap of Glory", a Bk'-rgyud-pa monastery near Derge (founded by Si-tu Bstan-pa'i-nyin-byed in 1727), is celebrated for its excellent edition of the voluminous collection of Lamaist text called the *Rin-chen gter-mdzod* or "Repository of Jewels", compiled in the 19th century, as well as for printing the Rnying-ma-pa texts'. ⁶

Naturally, Yu Tao-ch'uan's suggestion was a most attractive one, but the cost of acquiring the complete texts of these works was too considerable to be undertaken at that time. I have therefore resolved to buy the title leaves (or, cover-prints) only. At that time it was only the Peking National Library which ordered the full set of these texts in order to have them deposited with other Tibetan holdings in the Library. To facilitate, in the future, the borrowing of a pertinent work in the Peking National Library, an identical numbering was employed between the texts kept in Peking and the title leaves preserved in Prague.

As to the copies kept in Peking, unfortunately I am not in a position to tell with certainty what happened to them during the subsequent trouble. Nor is it known to me how far they have been further processed. The only surviving link between the two collections in Peking and in Prague is in fact their common numerical designation (group numbers and item numbers), which it thus became imperative for the editor to preserve in his edition. If one day the Library in Peking becomes accessible again, it will be possible to examine the works listed in this catalogue quite easily.

With only the title leaves to consult, it was practically impossible for me to present more information on the character of the respective works and other useful data concerning the author/editor, place and year of edition, etc., usually to be gathered from the colophon at the end of a Tibetan book. I have therefore collected only the basic general data on the respective group of texts, its author/compiler (if known), number of volumes and the total number of individual items. Also indicated is the original numerical marking (Prague-Peking numbers) for the benefit of a potential user of my catalogue. Moreover, to facilitate the reference, all the texts have been provided with consecutive numbering (Serial numbers from 1 through to 5,615; cf. a similar system used by Lokesh Chandra in his *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, New Delhi 1963).

Followings is a summary list of the Prague collection of Tibetan prints from Derge.

The DGON-CHEN COLLECTION consists of 2,299 items divided into the following twenty groups:

- (1) ལྷ་ཚེན་ལྷུ་ལྷོ་མཁས་ལེན་ཚེན་གྱི་གསུང་འབུམ་ Complete works of the well-known Sa-skyapa scholar Zhu-chen Tshul-khrims-rin-chen (1697-1769). 10 vols., 174 items.
- (2) ལྷུང་རྩེ་ཀླན་བཏུས་ Collection of works and commentaries dealing with the so-called "new tantras" (*rgyud gsar-ma*); A Sa-skyapa work by different authors. Initiated by 'Jam-dbyangs Mkhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po Kun-dga'-bstan-pa'i-rgyal-mtshan (1820-1892), but the major part of the work was performed by his student, Ngor-pa dpon-slob 'Jam-dbyangs Blo-gter-dbang-po (ca. 1856-ca. 1914). 32 vols., 242 items.
- (3) ལྷུང་ལའབས་ཀླན་བཏུས་ Collection of *sadhanas* and related texts of the Vajrayana tradition of Tibet, compiled by 'Jam-dbyangs Mkhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po Kun-dga'-bstan-pa'i-rgyal-mtshan (1820-1892). 14 vols., 353 items.
- (4) རྗེ་རེན་པོ་ཚེ་རི་བཀའ་འབུམ་ Complete works of Rje Rin-po-che Tsongkha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa (1357-1419), founder of the Dgelugs-pa order. 19 vols., 180 items.
- (5) ལྷུང་ཐོག་ *Avadanas* of the first translations of Tantras (*snga-'gyur rgyud-'dum*) and other work by different authors, including some of the writings of Kun-mkhyen 'Jigs-med-gling-pa Rang-byung-rdo-jre Mkhyen-ertse i-od-zer (1927-1798). 7 divisions, 68 items.
- (6) རོགས་མེད་བཀའ་འབུམ་ Complete works of Rgyal-sras Thogs-med-bzang-po-dpal (1295-1369) and other works (e.g. བཀའ་ཐང་ཡིག་, མི་ལ་རས་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་ etc.), 5 divisions., 51 items.
- (7) དྭགས་པོ་འཛིན་གསུང་འབུམ་ Complete works of Mnyam-med Dwags-po Zla-'od-gzhon-nu (1079-1153), also styled Dwags-po lha-rje or Sgam-po-pa. 2 vols., 36 items.
- (8) ལྷུང་བྱང་ཡོངས་རྫོགས་ Small-size prints (Miscellanea). 17 divisions, 71 items.

- (9) རྒྱུ་འབྲིང་གྲས་ Medium-size prints (Miscellanea). 20 divisions, 62 items.
- (10) དཔལ་ལྷན་རྒྱུང་རྫོགས་བརྗོད་སྐབས་ Avadana of Dpal-ldan-chos-skyong and other works. 1 division, 4 items.
- (11) དེ་ཚན་རྒྱ་རྫོགས་ Miscellaneous books. 55 divisions, 135 items.
- (12) མི་ཕམ་གྱི་གསུང་འབྲས་ Complete works of 'Jam-mgon Mi-pham-jam-dbyangs-rnam-rgyal-rgya-mtsho *alias* Mi-pham'jam-dpal-dgyes-pa'i-rdo-rje (1846-1912), the famous Rnying-ma-pa writer of Derge. 18 vols., 166 items.
- (13) ལྷན་གྱི་སྐོར་ Works on medicine. 2 divisions, 55 items.
- (14) མཚན་བརྒྱན་གསུང་ཐོར་བྱ་ Minor texts by different authors, including the རྫོགས་པ་རྗེ་པོ་ངལ་གསོ་ by the Rnying-ma-pa author Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen Rab'byams-pa Dri-med-'od-zer (1308-1363). 5 divisions, 35 items.
- (15) གཡག་ཤིག་ Commentaries on the Prajnaparamita texts by the Sa-skyapa author Mkhan-chen G. yag-ston Sangs-rgyas-dpal (14th cent.). 9 vols., 14 items.
- (16) ལམ་འབྲས་སྐྱོབ་བཤད་ Basic philosophical works on the *Lam'bras* doctrine edited by and printed through the efforts of Ngor-pa dpon-slob Jam-dbyangs Blo-gter-dbang-po *alias* Tshul-khrims-rgya-mtsho (ca. 1856-ca. 1914). 23 vols., 106 items.
- (17) སྐང་རྩ་ Collection of minor texts dealing with different aspects of Lamaist mysticism, doctrine, etc. 6 divisions 295 items.
- (18) མ་རྒྱུ་ལྷན་འབྲས་ Complete works of the Five Masters of the Sa-skyapa order, viz. Sa-chen Kun-dga' -snying-po (1092-1158), 2 vols.; Slob-dpon Rin-po-che Bsod-nams-rtse-mo (1142-1182), 3 vols.; Rje-btsun Rin-po-che Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216), 4-vols.; Chos-rje Sa- kya pandita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251).; 3 vols.; and Phags-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan (1235-1280), 3 vols. Altogether 15 vols.; 136 items.
- (19) ཨ་མེས་བཀའ་འབྲས་སྐབས་ The writing of 'Jam-mgon A-mes-zhabs Kun'dga-bsod-nams, the well-known historiographer of the Sa-skyapa sect (16th-17th cent.), and other works. 2 divisions, 23 items.

- (20) མེ་ལམ་བཀའ་འབུམ་མེགས་ The writings of Kun-mkhyen Go-bo Rab-
byams-pa Bsod-nams-seng-ge (1429-1489), an eminent scholar of
the Sa'skys-pa sect, together with some works of his teacher,
Ngo'chen Kun-dga-bzang-po (1382-1456). 18 vols., 93 items.
The DPAL—SPUNGS COLLECTION, larger in extent, consists of
3,316 titles divided into fifteen groups:
- (1-3) གཉིར་མཛོད་ Collection of Rnying-ma-pa texts, called the
རིན་ཆེན་གཉིར་མཛོད་ or Repository of Jewels (or, Treasury of
Revelations), prepared at the order of 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Rin-
po-che Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho (1813-1899). 61 vols., 1,864 items.
- (4-5) གདམས་མཛོད་ Collection of *upadesa*-texts, called the Treas-
ury of Religious Instructions) གདམས་ངག་མཛོད་) granted by
great masters of India and Tibet; a Bka'rgyud-pa work collected
by 'Jam-gon Kong-sprul Rin-po-che Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho (1813-
1899). 10 vols., 346 items.
- (6) རྒྱགས་མཛོད་ Collection of *mantras*. 3 vols., 79 items.
- (7) དགོངས་འདུམ་ or ལྷ་མ་དགོངས་པ་འདུམ་པ་ a Rnying-ma-pa work
of higher mystic contemplation. 1 division, 26 items.
- (8-9) མཁའ་ཁྱབ་ཀྱི་གསུང་འབུམ་ Collected works of Rgyal-dbang Karma-
pa Mkha'khyab-rdo-rje (1868/1871-1924), the fifteenth head-lama
of the Bka'rgyud-pa sect. 10 vols., 135 items.
- (10) དཔེ་ཚན་རྩ་ཚོགས་ Miscellaneous books. 460 items divided
into forty-six sections.
- (11) བཀའ་འབུམ་མེགས་ Miscellanea (works on grammar, etymology,
poetics, astrology; biographies, eulogies, etc.). 6 divisions, 42 items.
- (12) བཞེབ་རྒྱུང་ Small-size books (Varia). 3 divisions, 208 items.
- (13-15) ཀོང་སྐུ་བཀའ་འབུམ་ Complete works of 'Jam-mgon Kong-
sprul Rin-po-che Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho *aliases* Blo-gros-mtha'yas and
Ngag-dbang-yon-tan-rgya-mtsho-blo-gros-mtha'yas'pa i-sde (1813-
1899), the famous Bak'rgyud-pa master of the Dpal-spungs monas-
tery of Derge. 7 vols. (incomplete), 156 items.

NOTES

1. Described in my *Tibetan Manuscripts and Blockprints in the Library of the Oriental Institute Prague*, Prague 1969.—Since the publications of this catalogue, the number of Tibetan xylographs in our collection has increased considerably through recent acquisitions made by the author during his stay in India (February-April, 1969) which he visited under the Cultural Exchange Programme.
2. Some of these have already been announced in my short bibliographical notices, "On Some More Recent Tibetanistic Publications Edited in the Chinese People's Republic", *Archiv orientální* 29 (Prague 1961), pp. 476-479, and "Tibetan Literature in China", *ibid.* 30 (1962), pp. 638-644.—The "China Collection" of Tibetan books and newspapers in private possession of the author, consists of 269 items divided into four groups, viz. Language (script, phonetics, grammar, text—books, dictionaries—52 items in all), Literature (belleslettres, instructional literature, etc.—24 items), Translations (mostly from the Chinese originals—188 items), and Newspapers (5 different titles). I hope one day to be able to give a more detailed description of this rare collection of Tibetan books.
3. A short preliminary notice of the Kanjur and Tanjur in Prague appeared in *Archiv orientální* 30 (1962), pp. 314-317.
4. The Academia Publishers of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague, in co-operation with Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, are preparing a facsimile edition in two volumes (ca 1200 pages) of the whole collection, entitled *Prague Collection of Tibetan Prints from Derge, Being a Facsimile Reproduction of 5,615 Book-titles Printed at the Dgon-chen-and Dpal-spungs Monasteries of Derge in Eastern Tibet* (edited with introduction by Josef Kolmas). To be completed by the end of this year (1971).

5. For a list of 143 prints of the Dgon-chen Press, compiled after a *par-tho* in possession of Rai Bahadur T.D. Densapa of Sikkim, see Lokesh Chandra, "Les imprimeries tibetaïnes de Drepung, Derge et Pcpung", *Journal asiatique* 1961 (pp. 503-517), pp. 507-516.
6. For a partial list of 18 prints of the Dpal-spungs Press, see Lokesh Chandra, *op. cit.*, pp. 516-517.