


Compte-rendu

Anne Burchardi. *Catalogue of Tibetan Mandalas and Other Images. Texts, Initiation Cards and Prayer Flags in the Royal Library and the National Museum, Copenhagen.* The Royal Library, Copenhagen Denmark. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, 2016. xv + 304 pp. ISBN 978-87-7694-172-7 (NIAS website price: 200\$).

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 The present volume is a welcome addition to the series *Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Xylographs, etc. in Danish Collections (COMDC)* published by the Royal Library. It is intended as a supplement to the two catalogues produced by Hartmut Buescher and Tarab Tulku published close to 20 years ago.¹ Anne Burchardi, the author, studied with Tarab Tulku and subsequently is a long-standing collaborator of the Royal Library of Denmark. The COMDC series was founded to provide a complete set of catalogues of the Oriental collections providing brief description of the contents, physical appearance and provenance of each item, augmented by additional information relevant to the manuscripts and block prints so that the catalogues serve as reference works. This protocol has proven successful for the two previous Tibetan volumes as well as Buescher's catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts and the Nepal collection.² Burchardi's organization of the present volume is exemplary. The detailed introduction first provides the background of the Tibetan collection in terms of previous print publications as well as the online Royal Library catalogue, the Mongolian collection and the holdings of the National Museum.³ The provenance of the collection is discussed by brief biographical data of all the collectors and explorers who acquired texts and artefacts in Tibet and China, as well as the Danish ethnographer Haslund-Christensen who travelled with Sven Hedin to Inner Mongolia and then led expeditions himself to Central Asia.

¹ *Catalogue of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs* by Hartmut Buescher and Tarab Tulku. Copenhagen: Curzon - Det Kongelige Bibliotek, 2000. Vols. 1-2.

² *Catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts (early acquisitions and the Nepal collection)* by Hartmut Buescher, COMDC, vol. 7. NIAS, 2011.

³ The online selection of manuscripts is very well presented in an easily navigable website allowing excellent magnification of the text and the imagery. See for example the <http://www.kb.dk/manus/ortsam/2009/okt/orientalia/object80763/da/#kbOSD-0=page:1>.

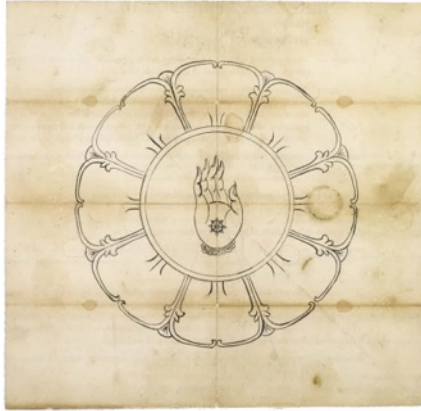
His untimely death in 1948 led to the involvement of Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, as leader of an expedition then as collector of Tibetan texts and artefacts during his years of residence in Kalimpong until 1957.⁴ Unique materials were acquired by Dr Jesper Trier during the research for his thesis (1972) " Ancient paper of Nepal. Results of ethno-technological field work on its manufacture, uses and history - with technical analyses of bast, paper and manuscripts".⁵ Rolf Gilberg, then curator of the Ethnographical department of the National Museum contributed texts and artefacts acquired during his visit to Tibet ca. 1980. Subsequent acquisitions were both donations and purchases. The reader will find a helpful list of accessions of The Royal Library and those of The National Museum at the end of the volume.

The catalogue comprises 381 selected objects in 174 catalogue entries. The volume is written in English, with abundant transliteration of Tibetan and the use of Tibetan typeface as well for many mantra which are not translated. The first section describes 21 texts and two book covers, covering canonical texts, rituals, prayers and spiritual practices, history science and arts, as well as one Christian text written in Tibetan language. The remainder of the catalogue consists of iconographical materials, focusing particularly here on maṅḍalas, divination diagrams, *tsakli* empowerment or initiation cards, prayer flags, meditation manuals. The collection also includes pages described as elemental divination (item 148), on paper, which has drawings very similar to the figures and trigrams carved and colored on on *zan par* wooden tablets (cf. Fleming, Zara " The ritual significance of Zan par" Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS, 2003. Volume 13: *Art in Tibet*, pp 173-182). Noteworthy also are the rolls of paper from prayer wheels which are illustrated with Buddhist deities and letter diagrams as well as inscribed with prayers and mantra syllables (item 150, 9 x 605 cm). The majority of the iconographic material is hand-colored blockprints, which may tentatively be attributed to 18th-20th century, as well as *tsakli* painted on cardboard. There are many Mongolian ritual diagrams of the 19th -20th century. Curiously, for item 168, a set of *tsakli* of the Five Wisdom Buddhas (19 x 13. 5 cm), rather than ritual invocations on the reverse of the *tsakli*, these are recto-verso paintings, a very unusual, if not unique, phenomenon in Tibetan and Mongolian ritual

⁴ Brox, Trine and Miriam Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2017 "When Tibet came to Prince Peter: Tibetan-Danish Relations through a Stationary Expedition in the 1950ies", *The Tibet Journal* Vol. XLII (1, spring-summer), pp. 13-35.

⁵ Corneille Jest first drew my attention to this important early publication, recently complemented by Helman-Wazny, Agnieszka. *The Archaeology of Tibetan Paper*, Brill's Tibetan Studies Series, Leiden, 2014.

paraphernalia. The provenance of this set is uncertain, it was acquired in 1982. There is a particularly elegant drawing of a hand performing the abhaya mudrā with a dharmacakra on the palm (item 139, 34 x 35.5 cm), which Burchardi has convincingly analysed as a Mongolian drawing due to the use of Russian paper with an identifiable imprint. (see Fig. 1.)



Particularly noteworthy is Burchardi's analysis and discussion of the canonical text no. 6, which she translated as "Illustrated Retribution", a bi-lingual Tibetan and Mongolian blockprint on Russian paper, replete with numerous hand-colored illustrations giving vivid depictions of the hells, (see pp. 15-56 for analysis of the text and the illustrated folia), The *Āryasaddharmasmṛtyupasthāna* ('Phags pa dam pa'i chos dran pa nye bar gzhags pa) found in the *bKa' 'gyur* (TBRC WP96682). As Kollmar-Paulenz remarked in her study on the hell descriptions in the Ernst collection of Mongolian manuscripts, there is a definite Mongolian obsession with hell.⁶ Burchardi's emphasis on this text is highly appreciated for the very numerous and idiosyncratic drawings of the fires of hell and the fantastic creatures which populate them.

The book is produced on a glossy paper with fine color reproductions. The layout is practical and well conceived; the large-scale design allows for full-page color or black and white illustrations of many individual items. There are very few very minor printing errors, in the bibliography (Schaeffer, Curtis (sic) Kurtis), and p. 201

⁶ Kollmar-Paulenz, Karenina. "Teaching the Dharma in Pictures: Illustrated Mongolian Books of the Ernst Collection in Switzerland" in Heller, A. (ed). *The Arts of Tibetan Painting, Recent Research on Manuscripts, Murals and Thangkas of Tibet, the Himalayas and Mongolia (11th -19th century)*.
<http://www.asianart.com/articles/paulenz/index.html>

Gyurme Dorje 2001 (sic> 2008) for the discussion of the Divination chart in relation to his study: *Tibetan Elemental Divination Paintings: Illuminated Manuscript from the White Beryl of Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho with the Moonbeams treatise of Lo-chen Dharmasri*, London 2008. In view of the excellent online resources produced for the selection of the Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs, it may be hoped that in the future, the Danish Royal Library will also make a selection of the maṇḍalas and other illustrations from the present catalogue. The magnification feature of online consultation would be welcome for many of the images and illustrations published in the present catalogue.

This handsome volume is destined to become a major reference book to be acquired by university libraries and scholars. This book stems from long Danish participation and involvement in Tibetan studies, and the collections were acquired in the context of the excellent reputation of Danish scholars, such as Erik Haarh. Thus in the present review, it is important to note that university studies of Tibetan in Denmark have been dismantled in recent years and one may hope that this publication will spur Danish Royal and national institutitons to renew their sponsorship and encouragement of Tibetan studies, which has long been a mainstay in the academic heritage of Denmark.

