

CANONS, KANJURS, AND COLLECTIONS

Multidisciplinary Approaches in the Study of Tibetan Canonical Literature

A Symposium in Honour of Helmut Tauscher

PROGRAMME

24./25. October 2022

INSTITUT FÜR SÜDASIEN-, TIBET- UND BUDDHISMUSKUNDE

Seminarraum 1, AAKH, Hof 2.7, Spitalgasse 2–4, Wien 1090

Monday, October 24, 2022

08.30 REGISTRATION

09.00 OPENING

Welcome by Birgit Kellner (Austrian Academy of Sciences) & Klaus-Dieter Mathes (University of Vienna)

Introduction by Markus Viehbeck (University of Vienna)

09.30 SESSION 1 (Chair – Verena Widorn)

Bruno Lainé (University of Vienna)

Memories of Helmut's Personal Slave: From Paper Kanjur to E-Kanjur

Alexander Zorin (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

On the Structure of the Ablakit Bka' gyur

10.30 Coffee

11.00 SESSION 2 (Chair – Kurt Tropper)

Orna Almogi (Hamburg University)

A Canon in the Making: Three Versions of the Old sNar thang bsTan 'gyur

James Gentry (Stanford University)

*Drawing the Boundaries of Canonicity: The *Guhyagarbha Tantra in the Formation of Kanjur Tantra Collections*

Channa Li (IKGA, Austrian Academy of Sciences)

A Re-investigation of the Translation History of the Mahāratnakūṭasūtra (Dkon brtsegs) in Tibet

12.30 Lunch

14.00 SESSION 3 (Chair – Bruno Lainé)

Jonathan Silk (Leiden University)

The Open Philology Editing Environment: Introducing a New Tool for Editing Tibetan Texts

Kaldan Tenzin (Esukhia, Dharamsala)

Lopenling: A Collaborative Critical Edition and Translation Platform in the Making

Gregory Forgues (Tsadra Foundation / Leiden University)

From the Network to the Text: Selecting Key Witnesses across Tibetan Collections of Canonical Texts

15.30 Coffee

16.00 SESSION 4 (Chair – Verena Widorn)

Sam van Schaik (British Library, London)

Digitising Tibetan Manuscript Canons in Bhutan – Past and Future Projects funded by the Endangered Archives Programme

Élie Roux (BDRC, Boston)

Canonical Texts Studies on BUDA – Present and Perspectives

17.00 Coffee

18.00 KEYNOTE LECTURE (Chair – Cristina Scherrer-Schaub)

Paul Harrison (Stanford University)

Earning More Merit or Wasting More Time? The Tibetan Text of the Lokānuvartanā-sūtra Revisited 30 Years Later

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

09.00 SESSION 5 (Chair – Bruno Lainé)

Markus Viehbeck (University of Vienna)

Re-visiting the „Dolpo-Kanjur“ – Disentangling Canonical Collections in the Himalayan Borderlands

Kurt Tropper (IKGA, Austrian Academy of Sciences)

A Second Manuscript Witness for the Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud from Lang (Dolpo)

Tensho Miyazaki (Tsurumi University)

Relationships among the Namgyal and Lang Manuscript Collections in Nepal – the Mustang Kangyur Group:

*Regarding the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*

10.30 *Coffee*

11.00 SESSION 6 (Chair – Verena Widorn)

Agnieszka Helman-Ważny (Hamburg University / University of Warsaw)

Paper Supplies for Canonical Production in Dolpo

Amy Heller (University of Bern)

Observations on Prajnaparamita Manuscript Leaves and Their Illuminations

Christian Luczanits (SOAS, London)

Illuminated Tokzung Manuscripts from Mustang

12.30 *Lunch*

14.00 SESSION 7 (Chair – Markus Viehbeck)

Katia Buffetrille (E.P.H.E., Paris)

Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur Stone Walls

Charles Ramble (EPHE – PSL, CRCAO, Paris)

Preliminary Remarks on Editorial Strategies in the Compilation of Le'u Bonpo Texts from Eastern Tibet

Daniel Berounský (Charles University, Prague)

Voicing the Origin Myths and Written Texts: An Example from Leu Tradition of North-East Tibet

15.30 *Coffee*

16.00 SESSION 8 (Chair – Kurt Tropper)

Roberto Vitali (Independent researcher)

Besides the Literary Icon: Historical Hints on the Life of bcom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri

Final discussion led by Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (EPHE, Paris / University of Lausanne)

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CANONS, KANJURS, AND COLLECTIONS

Multidisciplinary Approaches in the Study of Tibetan Canonical Literature

A Symposium in Honour of Helmut Tauscher

During the last twenty years, the field of Kanjur studies changed significantly in terms of the availability of primary sources, the proliferation and combination of different methodological approaches, and the advancement of investigative techniques in each of them. This symposium aims to take stock of these developments, present and discuss new findings and problems in studying Tibetan canonical corpora, and foster exchange between the researchers involved.

While for Csoma de Kőrös, one of the founding fathers of Tibetan studies in the nineteenth century, it was possible to study “the Tibetan Kanjur” – based on the Narthang edition –, an ever-increasing number of different available Kanjurs made it necessary and possible to analyse their contents in comparison. Towards the end of the twentieth century, crucial ideas about the central relationships and basic features in the evolution of Tibetan Kanjurs were developed through the historical and philological research of Helmut Eimer, Paul Harrison, Peter Skilling, and many others.

The beginning of the twenty-first century, in turn, saw a drastic boost in the availability of Tibetan textual sources. New Kanjurs, and other canonical corpora were noted in different locations of the wider Tibetan cultural area, documented, and made accessible, also due to the establishment of large scale digital repositories by institutions like the *Buddhist Digital Resource Center*, *Resources for Kanjur & Tanjur Studies*, the *Endangered Archives Programme*, and others. These efforts involve issues of documentation and preservation, on the Tibetan or Himalayan ground as well as regarding their digital incarnation. The newly available source material also widened the scope of interest. While earlier research was limited mostly to Kanjurs, recent investigations started to consider other canonical collections of various sorts – Tanjurs, *rnying ma rgyud 'bum*, *gzungs 'dus*, *mdo mang(s)*, and what is often referred to as proto-Kanjurs. Their contents and mutual relationships need to be explored, and newly discovered Kanjurs and other collections need to be fit into earlier stemmatic schemes. Also in this regard, developments in the field of digital humanities are crucial and hence must be addressed as tools to cope with the unprecedented quantity of information now available.

Further, while in the past, canonical collections were studied primarily as repositories for the texts they contained, an increasing emphasis on material aspects in the humanities (“material turn”) is also visible in the field of Tibetan studies and contributes new insights into manuscript culture. Material features of manuscripts, their paper, ink, and writing conventions, but also the social contexts of manuscript production are given more attention. The material dimension is also important for art historians who investigate illuminations, book covers, and other artistic aspects of canonical collections. Social aspects, on the other hand, are addressed by anthropologists who study how humans interact with canonical texts and how the latter are used in various types of ritual.

In order to address these developments and foster a dialogue between different disciplinary approaches in the study of Kanjurs and other canonical collections, this symposium gathers contributions within and across the following principle avenues of investigation:

- Philological Studies (including issues of translation, edition, or revision; research addressing newly noted primary sources)
- Historical Research (regarding individual collections as well as relations between different collections)
- Digital Humanities (documentation, preservation, dissemination of primary sources; digital tools for investigating textual corpora)
- Manuscript Studies (including issues of documentation and material preservation)
- Art History (addressing illuminations, book covers, etc. and relations between art and text)
- Anthropology (social dimension of canonical collections, their usage in ritual, human-manuscript relations)

As Helmut Tauscher has dedicated at least one of the many lives he is living to the documentation, preservation, and research of Kanjurs and canonical collections of various sorts, and thereby contributed immensely to the recent developments in Kanjur studies, as outlined above, it seems appropriate to dedicate this symposium to him, in honour and gratefulness to his efforts.

ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1

Bruno Lainé (University of Vienna)

Memories of Helmut's Personal Slave: From Paper Kanjur to E-Kanjur

In this presentation, Helmut's personal slave will trace the evolution of the Tibetan canonical studies over the past 25 years and pay tribute to Helmut's contribution in this field.

At the end of the 1990s, canonical studies were still made based on facsimiles, photocopies, microfiches, or manual copies of canonical texts. The ones with the large funds and good connections could hope to collate over ten Kanjurs, but Tibetologists mostly had access to 5 or 6 editions. 25 years later, with few clicks, they get access to over 50 canonical collections and have the possibility to let the computer make the searching work for them.

Helmut Tauscher played an important role in this development, although not always directly. All started with the Tabo manuscripts and more particularly with the cataloguing of the Gondhla collection. It soon became clear that Tibetologists needed a tool to facilitate their studies and required more textual material to deepen their comprehension of the transmission of the canonical literature. The Tibetan Manuscript Project Vienna was launched and the basis for rKTs initiated. Helmut tirelessly surveyed the western Himalayas and brought back from his expeditions ever more textual material; at the same time, his slave developed the rKTs navigation system for the Tibetan canon.

Alexander Zorin (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

On the Structure of the Ablakit Bka' 'gyur

About 230 folios that belonged to a set of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur from the library of Ablakit, the 17th century Oirat monastery, have been found at various collections, mostly in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St Petersburg, but also in about ten other Russian and Western European collections. Due to a completely random way of their acquisition, we have folios that used to be parts of many volumes from various sections of the canonical set. A tentative analysis of a greater part of these folios was made in 2015 and it resulted in a preliminary conclusion that Ablakit had possessed a unique version of the Bka' 'gyur whose structure differed from all the other known versions. Having now a little bigger number of Ablakit folios, on the one hand, and more data about other manuscript versions of the Bka' 'gyur, on the other hand, I will try to define more precisely the place of the Ablakit Bka' 'gyur in the history of the Tibetan Buddhist canon.

SESSION 2

Orna Almogi (Hamburg University)

A Canon in the Making: Three Versions of the Old sNar thang bsTan 'gyur

We now know, on the basis of the two extant versions of dBus pa blo gsal's catalogue, that there have been at least three versions of the Old sNar thang *bsTan 'gyur*, versions that represent the outcome of possibly the initial, intermediate, and final compilatory and editorial efforts of dBus pa blo gsal and his colleagues. In the present paper, I shall attempt to evaluate the differences between these three stages in the formation of the Old sNar thang *bsTan 'gyur*, as represented in the two versions of the catalogue, and discuss the possible reasons for these differences in consideration of various aspects of the Tibetan textual culture of that time.

James Gentry (Stanford University)

*Drawing the Boundaries of Canonicity: The *Guhyagarbha Tantra in the Formation of Kanjur Tantra Collections*

This presentation examines the role that excluding scriptures from canonical translation catalogues under charges of apocryphal authorship played in the formation of Kanjur Tantra Collections (*rgyud 'bum*). It argues that controversies in Tibet surrounding the authenticity of the *gSang ba'i snying po*, better known by its putative Sanskrit title the **Guhyagarbha tantra*, provides a particularly rich case study for understanding this dynamic. The authenticity of the **Guhyagarbha* was a topic of heated debate from the 11th to the 14th century, the formative period of the Tantra Collections of the Kanjur collections. Although a Sanskrit manuscript of the tantra was allegedly discovered in the 13th century by bCom ldan rig pa'i ral gri (1227–1305), the genuineness of this manuscript was also disputed, continuing to cast doubt on the tantra's Indian pedigree. bCom ldan rig ral reportedly commissioned a new translation based on this manuscript and included it in his catalogue of canonical translations. Yet the tantra's authenticity continued to be questioned, resulting in its exclusion from Kanjur collections until later Kanjurs began including "old tantras" (*rnying rgyud*) and forming separate old tantras sections. An important exception to this pattern is the Phukdrak Kanjur, which does not include an old tantras section, but nonetheless includes the **Guhyagarbha tantra*—the new translation alongside the old. This paper inquires into the possible rationale for this unusual editorial decision in light of the controversy surrounding the tantra in bCom ldan rig ral's time, its echoes in the 14th century, and the significant variations between the new and old translations.

Channa Li (IKGA, Austrian Academy of Sciences)

A Re-investigation of the Translation History of the Mahāratnakūṭasūtra (Dkon brtsegs) in Tibet

Scholars have noticed that the Tibetan translation *Dkon mchog brtsegs pa chen po* (abbr. *Dkon brtsegs*) in the Kanjurs is modeled on Bodhiruci's Chinese collection of the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra*, which is treated as a piece of supporting evidence that the *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra*, as a mini-canon consisting of 49 *sūtra* chapters, was possibly first fashioned by Bodhiruci in China (Silk 2019: 230–231). However, the translation history of *Mahāratnakūṭasūtra* in Tibet itself underwent many stages of development, prior to the establishment of the structure accepted in the Kanjurs. A more careful investigation of the *Dkon brtsegs* in the imperial catalog, *Phang thang ma* (the *Lhan dkar ma* seems to have undergone heavy editorial works in the later centuries) reveals that *Dkon brtsegs* had a quite different (or premature) textual configuration in the imperial period. The earliest testimony of the 49-chapter structure could be the 13th-century *Bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od*, which later influenced Bu ston's *Chos 'byung* and many later canonical editorial projects. Even then the discrepancy in sequences of chapters of the *Dkon brtsegs* is also frequently observed among different canonical versions. This paper aims to shed light to the history of how the *Dkon brtsegs* developed into its full-fledged structure (namely, that with all the 49 *sūtra* chapters), by investigating imperial and early post-imperial catalogs, witnesses from Dunhuang, different Kanjurs, as well as some later Tibetan Buddhist discussions (two 16h-century Tibetan compositions both entitled *Mdo sde spyi'i rnam bzhag*).

SESSION 3

Jonathan Silk (Leiden University)

The Open Philology Editing Environment: Introducing a New Tool for Editing Tibetan Texts

The ERC-funded Open Philology project based in Leiden had as one of its goals the preparation of software tools for the editing of Buddhist texts multilingually, chiefly in Chinese and Tibetan. We have now achieved a much scaled-down version of our original grand vision with the creation of an environment for the editing of Tibetan texts. This presentation introduces our tool at its present stage of development.

Kaldan Tenzin (Esukhia, Dharamsala)

Lopenling: A Collaborative Critical Edition and Translation Platform in the Making

In October 2012 in Bodhgaya, BDRC and Esukhia jointly pitched a translation platform for 84000 to the directors of Khyentse Foundation. Jeff Wallman provisionally named the project ITP (Integrated Translation Platform for Canonical Buddhist Languages). The platform intended to give instant access to any resource connected to every phrase in the canon, while providing translators with a set of tools to collaborate with pairs and consult relevant scholars. Although the proposal was not accepted by the foundation, KF funded the creation of the eKangyur while Esukhia and BDRC went ahead and developed OpenPecha as a back-end and the Lopenling-app as a front-end.

This presentation will describe the various steps we took in order to make our 2021 pitch a reality. OpenPecha and Lopenling are both a work in progress, but we hope that a decade's worth of trial and error can benefit others in the field. In practice, Lopenling combines the features of a critical edition editor with that of CAT tools and is therefore of great relevance to Kanjur studies.

Gregory Forgues (Tsadra Foundation / Leiden University)

From the Network to the Text: Selecting Key Witnesses across Tibetan Collections of Canonical Texts

The ERC Open Philology project at the University of Leiden aims at documenting the textual environment of the forty-nine works included in the Mahāratnakūṭa collection of sūtras. One of the many challenges encountered in this process concerns the number of documents that are witnesses to the original Tibetan translation. In recent years, new witnesses belonging to Tibetan Buddhist canonical collections or Kanjurs (*bka' 'gyur*) have been found in monasteries located in India and Nepal. The academic community has welcome these additions to the previously available canonical repositories since these witnesses are extremely useful (1) to better understand the entangled transmission lines of canonical literature in Tibet and (2) to produce critical editions of Tibetan canonical works. Foundational to attaining this double objective is the process of collating all the available Tibetan witnesses of the work one intends to document and edit. Needless to say, the philological work involved in this process can be quite daunting as many documents must be dealt with, sometimes as many as thirty.

In this presentation, I would like to suggest a new method to streamline the editing process by focusing on key witnesses. This approach has been made possible by the recent development in the Digital Humanities. It allows researchers to evaluate text variation on the basis of a robust methodological framework designed around the philological principles formulated by Maurice Bévenot in his celebrated study of St Cyprian's treatise *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*. The aim of this presentation is to show how time-tested philological methods can be enhanced and supported by computational tools.

SESSION 4

Sam van Schaik (British Library, London)

Digitising Tibetan Manuscript Canons in Bhutan – Past and Future Projects funded by the Endangered Archives Programme

The Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) funds digitisation projects to record cultural heritage and make it available to as wide an audience as possible. Since its beginning in 2004, EAP has funded projects working on Buddhist manuscripts, including a series of projects in the monasteries of Bhutan. These projects, initiated and managed by Dr Karma Phuntso, have digitised and made available rare manuscript Kanjurs, Tanjurs and Nyingma Gyubums from different regions of Bhutan. The first project in 2005 (EAP039) digitised manuscripts including a 100-volume Kanjur from Gantey Gonpa in central Bhutan. The second project in 2006 (EAP105) carried out digitised work in Orgyen Choling and Drametse monastery, in central and eastern Bhutan. The third project started in 2009 (EAP310) and worked in the Tshamdrak, Neyphug and Thadrak monasteries in central Bhutan. The fourth project started in 2012 (EAP570) and worked in the monasteries of Dongkala, Chizing, Dodedra and Phajoding. Now, in 2022, a new project (EAP1494) - by far the most ambitious yet - will digitise manuscripts from twenty monasteries in more remote regions of Bhutan. In this talk, I will look at how these projects have tackled access to the monasteries, digitising manuscripts onsite, and what materials are now available for the study of Tibetan canonical collections thanks to their work in Bhutan. I will also discuss briefly how EAP has collaborated with the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC) to make this material available through their platform as well.

Élie Roux (BDRC, Boston)

Canonical Texts Studies on BUDA – Present and Perspectives

BDRC's new platform, BUDA, has been designed from the start as a platform to connect texts in the different languages and traditions. Canonical texts in their different translations are the perfect example of a complex web of interconnections, and have thus been the focus of many new developments.

On the Tibetan side, BUDA now has a significantly improved catalog of the Kangyur collections thanks to our partnership with the rKTs database and other projects such as ATIL. Partnerships with Asian and European institutions have also greatly enriched our collection of Kangyurs.

But one major innovative feature of BUDA is the availability of Chinese and Sanskrit parallels through IIF and cataloging partnerships, as well as large-scale OCR. With these new developments, BUDA has become a very large multi-lingual digital corpus. A crucial part of our mission is thus to help scholars explore it and develop new digital research projects. We will demonstrate the new features that BUDA brings to Canonical texts studies, and the new canonical collections that it makes available. We will end our presentation with our perspectives on the use of OCR to make rare texts and editions surface in the BDRC data ocean.

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Paul Harrison (Stanford University)

Earning More Merit or Wasting More Time? The Tibetan Text of the Lokānuvartanā-sūtra Revisited 30 Years Later

At the 5th IATS Seminar held at Narita in 1989 I presented a paper intended as a contribution to the newly developing field of Kanjur Studies, subsequently published in the proceedings volume as "Meritorious Activity or Waste of Time? Some Remarks on the Editing of Texts in the Tibetan Kanjur" (Narita, 1992). The framework developed in that paper rested on a preliminary edition of the Tibetan version of the *Lokānuvartanā-sūtra* based on ten Kanjurs. Since then my work on that text has for the most part lain fallow, but the field of Kanjur Studies has not. Due in large part to the prodigious labours of our colleagues in Vienna, the number of Kanjurs accessible has increased markedly, while our improved understanding of their relationships has rendered many of the conclusions drawn in the 1992 paper suspect or altogether invalid. On the occasion of the Vienna conference I propose to return to the *Lokānuvartanā* at last, collating approximately 30 Kanjurs and using the results to reflect on the costs and benefits of such scholarly work and the state of the field as a whole.

SESSION 5

Markus Viehbeck (University of Vienna)

Re-visiting the „Dolpo-Kanjur“ – Disentangling Canonical Collections in the Himalayan Borderlands

Already in the 1990s, a massive collection of ca. 640 older Tibetan manuscripts, located at the monastery of Nesar (*gnas gsar*) in Bicher/Vijer, Upper Dolpo, has been noted by various scholars (Mathes 2003, Heller 2007). In a preliminary inventory of the collection, Amy Heller (2009) identified its main constituents – also by labelling central parts of it as „Kanjurs“ – that originate from three different monasteries in Upper Dolpo. The idea of a „Dolpo Kanjur“ was further corroborated when images of an assumed Kanjur of this collection were prepared for the archive of *Resources of Kanjur & Tanjur Studies* (rKTs) by the head lama of Nesar Monastery in 2014. Within a new research project of the same initiative at the University of Vienna, the textual collections were re-visited and a considerable part of these was digitised completely within two expeditions to Upper Dolpo in 2018 and 2019.

In my talk, I will provide a report of the documentation conducted at Nesar Monastery as well as a preliminary investigation of the features and contents of the manuscript collections. Specifically, I will discuss some of the difficulties and prospects of addressing the conglomerate nature of the collections, rather than seeing them as homogenous units as the label „Kanjur“ suggests. The identification and comparative analysis of individual building blocks will further be used to map possible relationships between different collections.

Kurt Tropper (IKGA, Austrian Academy of Sciences)

A Second Manuscript Witness for the Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud from Lang (Dolpo)

In a study that was published in 2005, I compared extensive excerpts of the *Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud* (i.e., the Tibetan translation of Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*) as they are extant in a cycle of inscriptions in the monastery of Zha lu with the corresponding passages in six other witnesses for the text, namely: the respective versions of the *Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud* in the five Tanjur collections of Cone, Derge, Ganden, Narthang and Peking, and a xylograph whose printing blocks were completed under the aegis of the wife of the Phag mo gru ruler 'Gro ba'i mgon po in 1542–1543. As could be shown, the inscriptions in Zha lu and the xylograph of 1542–1543 both preserve correct original readings in places that have become corrupt in all five Tanjur collections.

In a short monograph that is presently being prepared for the press, I could use nine more witnesses that have become available to me since 2005, including an early manuscript from the “Lang collection” in Dolpo. Comparing these nine witnesses with the seven used for the previous study, it turned out that in the examined text passages (equivalent to about 15 folio-pages in the Peking Tanjur) there are only four places where some of the newly adduced witnesses have or may have preserved the original reading of the *Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud* while all the previously used seven witnesses have become corrupt.

After I had already completed the collation and appraisal of the nine “new” witnesses, a second manuscript witness from Lang became available to me. In my presentation I will discuss the text-critical value and the stemmatic position of this witness.

Tensho Miyazaki (Tsurumi University)

*Relationships among the Namgyal and Lang Manuscript Collections in Nepal – the Mustang Kangyur Group:
Regarding the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*

Previous studies of Tibetan Kangyurs, such as those of Prof. Tauscher and Dr. Lainé, have revealed that the Mustang lineage of the manuscript Kangyurs has been transmitted, besides the two major Kangyur groups, or the *Them spang ma* and *Tshal pa* lineages. Specifically, the Basgo and Hemis manuscript Kangyurs, preserved in the Ladakh region, are known to belong to the Mustang group.

Moreover, the recent studies by Dr. Viehbeck clarify that the Mustang group shows clear similarities in structure with the two newly accessible manuscript collections preserved in northern Nepal, the “Sūtra collection” at Namgyal temple in Upper Mustang and the “Extended Sūtra collection” of the Lang collection in “Dolpo Kangyur,” at Nesar Temple, Dolpo district. Dr. Viehbeck also assumes that there could be a close connection between the Namgyal and Lang collections.

As Dr. Viehbeck's study suggests, more detailed textual investigations on individual texts are still necessary to clarify how the Namgyal and Lang manuscript collections and the Mustang group are connected. Therefore, this paper will deal with variant readings found in the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana, on which I have been working, and explore the relationship

among the above materials in further detail. Moreover, I am to discuss how the Mustang group and the other Kangyur groups and materials are related.

SESSION 6

Agnieszka Helman-Ważny (Hamburg University/University of Warsaw)

Paper Supplies for Canonical Production in Dolpo

The 103 volumes that constitute the core of the canonical collections of Nesar Monastery (N1-N103 in Amy Heller's initial inventory from 2009) were digitised *in situ* by Markus Viehbeck and Jigme Lodroe in 2019. At the same time, I focused on codicological and material features of these volumes (research conducted within the project *History of paper of ethnic groups in Southwest China and mainland Southeast Asia* hosted by the University of Hamburg Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts). Preliminary examination indicated various types of paper present in the volumes of the Nesar collection, most probably produced at different times and locations. The carbon dating of selected five samples shows, that the paper on which manuscripts were written, was produced at different times in between tenth and thirteenth centuries. In my presentation, I will especially discuss the paper support of studied manuscripts, as well as techniques and technologies of its manufacturing, in the context of regional production, the availability of raw materials, craftsmanship, and both local and long-distance trade and the vicinity of the Silk Roads.

Amy Heller (University of Bern)

Observations on Prajnaparamita Manuscript Leaves and Their Illuminations

In 2015, in the context of his research on the contents of the stupa at Matho, Helmut Tauscher sent me a fragment of an illuminated manuscript leaf conserved therein. I tentatively suggested chronology and identified the subject of the fragment as Prajnaparamita in a four-arm aspect. (Tauscher 2015: Fn 6). In a spirit of homage to Helmut, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the Matho fragment here, notably in comparison with a very special dedication leaf conserved at the Shalu monastery, also with an illumination of Prajnaparamita in four-arm aspect.

Christian Luczanits (SOAS, London)

Illuminated Tokzung Manuscripts from Mustang

Among the books documented so far in Mustang, a group of *dhāraṇī* manuscripts stands out for their illuminations. Usually, the volumes holding these texts are designated as *tokzung* (*tog gzungs*), deriving their name from the *Mahāsannipātaratnaketurdhāraṇī*. However, the volumes appear to predominately be a collection of the texts dedicated to the five protective goddesses, the Pañcarakṣā or Kyongmanga (*skyong ma Inga*). A common pattern among them is, that each of the goddesses is associated with one of the five esoteric Buddhas depicted on the title page of the text, and that two illuminations end the text. Occasionally additional illuminations are found within the text, but these are commonly very small. A first survey suggests that these handwritten, often incomplete, manuscript span several centuries and that their quality diminishes. Eventually, they also get replaced by printed versions which are organised differently.

In my presentation I will present these manuscripts in greater detail and assess their typology and chronology. I will also compare the depicted deities iconographically, as there is considerable variation between the depictions of what is supposed to be the same deity. I will also take a closer look on the additional illuminations found within the texts and their

relationship to them. Finally, I will evaluate the importance of this manuscript type for the art and manuscript history of the region.

SESSION 7

Katia Buffetrille (E.P.H.E., Paris)

Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur Stone Walls

While some studies have dealt with *mani* walls, none, to my knowledge, has looked at the phenomenon of stone walls engraved with the *Bka' 'gyur* and sometimes even with the *Bka' bstan*. During my fieldwork in Amdo, I had the opportunity to see and photograph two of these walls. I found some information in Tibetan regarding other walls of *Bka' bstan* on the internet as well as some mentions (very few in fact) in Western language literature. Most of these walls appeared in Amdo but the phenomenon is still going on and not limited to this region. In 2004, a *mchod rten* made of stones engraved with the *Bka' 'gyur* was built in Lhasa, at Lcags po ri, facing the Potala.

In this communication, I will present a survey of the stone walls engraved with the Buddhist canon that I have been able to locate, together with their possible dating. In a second part, I will look into the origin of these walls and the reason for building them.

Charles Ramble (EPHE – PSL, CRCAO, Paris)

Preliminary Remarks on Editorial Strategies in the Compilation of Le'u Bonpo Texts from Eastern Tibet

In 2005, Tibetan media in China announced the discovery, in private houses, of several caches of manuscripts that were purported to date from the Tibetan imperial period. This media attention followed the publication, in that same year, of an article (Ngag dbang rgya mtsho 2005) which contained sensational information about a local tradition of lay priests called *le'u* in the Minshan mountain range, at the north-eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau on the border between Gansu and Sichuan provinces. A local official named Drukthar, who had developed an interest in this obscure local tradition, obtained a substantial allocation from the Gansu provincial authorities to produce a lavish 31-volume collection of facsimiles. Since the publication of this collection, a great deal more source material has become available. Preliminary examination of the volumes revealed that they contained a very large number of texts of varying length, dealing with a variety of topics but concerned mainly with the propitiation of different categories of divinities employing a wide range of offerings. The first set of facsimiles was followed by the publication of further collections. In 2013, a 60-volume set of *le'u* texts, in 2014 a further 100 volumes, and in 2016 a shorter 10-volume collection were published. Another 100-volume collection is in press. With volumes ranging in size from 150 to around 300 pages of facsimiles, the collections amount to a total of some 35,000 folios. While not strictly speaking a canon, the fact that the many hundreds of texts that make up these compilations belong to a definable tradition distinct from Yungdrung Bon gives the collections a certain coherence. This presentation, which should be seen as complementary to Daniel Berounský's paper on particular rituals in the corpus, will offer an overview of the contents of the different collections, with particular attention to the different strategies that have been employed in their compilation.

Daniel Berounský (Charles University, Prague)

Voicing the Origin Myths and Written Texts: An Example from Le'u Tradition of North-East Tibet

While most of the available information on the relationship to the written text comes from Tibetan societies influenced by Buddhism supported by written texts, very little is known

about Tibetan ritual traditions continuing to be carried by performance of origin myths (*smrang/rabs/dpe*). Examples of texts containing origin myths from Dunhuang demonstrate that these non-Buddhist myths were the subject of writing perhaps as early as the Imperial period. The paper will bring an example of a lay ritual tradition from the north-eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau called *leu (le'u)*. This tradition existed here until the Cultural Revolution in China. The scraps of information about the origins of some texts attest to the primary role of oral tradition by its bearers. Today, however, there are paradoxically only hundreds of difficult-to-read texts available, which were probably influenced by the monastic tradition of the bön and often represent censored versions in their present form. Finally, an example of an illegible phonetically inscribed text will be given, which can be deciphered only with the help of another manuscript that is at least partially legible. Phonetically inscribed manuscripts (which often contain only fragments of myths) testify to importance of voicing the ritual narrations, while the text probably serves as a mnemonic device. This is in a way the counterpart of the precise editorial tradition existing in some monastic circles. However, it is the specific combination of the two poles and their interrelationships that characterizes the Tibetan milieu and its relationship to written texts more generally.

SESSION 8

Roberto Vitali (Independent researcher)

Besides the Literary Icon: Historical Hints on the Life of bcom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri

What makes research on Rig pa'i ral gri intriguing for a historian is that he is celebrated for his embryonic creation of the Tibetan Canon but little is known about his life. His biography stresses the many fields of knowledge of which he was a specialist but does not say much about his personal experiences. An attempt at deciphering aspects of his existence is where a historian can intervene.

His existential itinerary from Yar lung and a Kha che pan chen environment at Gra phyi to the vibrant non-Sa skya pa cultural habitat at the border of Myang smad is recorded with utmost restraint. Even his long association with sNar thang is treated in an episodic manner. In particular, a major phase of his life is derived from the outline of the course of studies he undertook. It seems that bcom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri hid his persona to communicate the aspect of the intellectual that he was. In my presentation, I try to give a human dimension to this mythical master.