

# Kanjur

The term “Kanjur” (*bka' gyur*, appearing in secondary literature also as Kah-gyur – e.g. in Csoma de Kőrös, 1836; 1839a; 1839b; Kangyur, Kangyour, Kanjour, or Kandjour) literally means “Words [of the Buddha] in Translation” in a very general sense. This broader meaning is, of course, always implied. Nowadays, however, it is understood by Western academic and Buddhist communities, as well as by the Tibetan tradition, primarily as a technical term denoting a particular body of literature, which, structured and edited in a specific way, contains – at least in theory and ideally – all the texts considered to be the word of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*), translated into Tibetan primarily from Sanskrit but also from Chinese and occasionally from Central Asian languages. According to the Mahāyāna concept of the Buddha, however, the term and concept *buddhavacana* does not imply that these words were necessarily spoken by the historical (doctrinally speaking, *nirmāṇakāya*) Buddha Śākyamuni; they could be – and in the case of tantric literature often were – also revealed by the Buddha (or a buddha) in his *sambhogakāya* and *dharmakāya* aspects.

Together with the Tanjur (*bstan gyur*), which is roughly the collection of commentarial exegetical literature composed by Indian masters and translated into Tibetan, the Kanjur constitutes the literary corpus generally known today as “the Tibetan Buddhist Canon.” While this term may be problematic, for practical purposes, it will be retained here.

By its general nature, the Kanjur has always been an open collection of texts that are considered to represent the word of the Buddha and its commentarial literature; texts could and were added or omitted according to availability, the editors’ preferences, or “certain religious or political ideologies” (Schaeffer & van der Kuijp, 2009, 33; in general, Eimer, 1992, 12; Skilling, 1997b). Accordingly, nothing such as *the* Tibetan Kanjur exists, but rather a number of Kanjurs that are considered equally authoritative. Here, the collective “the Kanjur” is used when referring to the literary genre or the concept of a more or less complete collection of all sayings of the Buddha and the plural “Kanjurs” or the singular “a Kanjur” when referring to the individual versions/editions. Some 30 individual Kanjurs are known, and more

continue to be discovered. They share the basic stock of texts but vary with regard to the number of texts contained, the versions of the texts transmitted, and their arrangement. Various collections show mutual cross-dependences and interdependences of various kinds and to various degrees.

For Tibetan Buddhists, a Kanjur is a set of sacred texts, its value exceeding by far that of a mere literary corpus, regardless of how precious. It represents the Buddha in his aspect of speech, and as such it is – in particular for lay people – an object of veneration and a source of blessing rather than literature to be read; merely touching a volume of a Kanjur or turning its leaves is considered meritorious. Reciting its words or having them recited by monks adds to the blessing, but understanding their meaning is not required; mass ritual recitations of a Kanjur can take place with many monks simultaneously reciting different volumes aloud, the resulting incomprehensible din in no way reducing the resulting merit produced. In Tibetan historiographic literature, such veneration is reflected by the frequent use of the expression “Kanjur Rinpoche” (*bka' gyur rin po che*), using the same honorific title Rinpoche (“Very Precious One,” “Jewel”), by which incarnated lamas are generally addressed. This ritual significance is a possible reason for the existence of a considerable number of different Kanjurs, whereas only very few distinct Tanjurs are known.

The texts collected in the various Kanjurs are in principle of non-Tibetan origin; the majority of them were composed in India, a few possibly in Central Asia, and some tantric texts claim to be revealed by the cosmic Buddha or some tantric deity in the land of O rgyan (i.e. Uḍḍiyāna), present-day Swat in Pakistan. Some of the latter may be Tibetan compositions, quoting O rgyan as the place of origin for the sake of authorization, as this country was famous in Tibet for its tantric masters and magicians. The corpus of the Kanjur as such, however, is genuinely Tibetan; except for structural influences, as a whole it is unrelated to any of the Buddhist canons known in various Indian schools, for example, the well-known Pali Tipiṭaka of the Theravāda school or the Chinese *Dazangjing*. Although never defined as such, the Kanjur is basically a collection



Fig. 1: A Kanjur at Bse go ma lha khang, Zhwa lu Monastery, central Tibet (photo by Katia Buffetrille, 1989).

of Mahāyāna scriptures. Translations of only a few texts contained in the *nikāya/āgama* corpora are included, since such texts were never systematically translated into Tibetan. Apart from the nine titles of its *Mahāsūtra* section (Skilling, 1997a), the *Lhan kar ma* (see below), a 9th-century catalogue of Buddhist texts translated during the Tibetan Imperial Period, lists 37 “Hīnayāna” *sūtras* among its 739 titles, and only little of this material was translated in later centuries.

## Content and Structure of Kanjurs

The Kanjurs known today (see below) consist of some 750–1,100 individual texts (Eimer, 1992, 12) in 100–119 volumes, with an average of around 500 leaves per volume. (An exception, the Early Mustang Kanjur, of which only its catalogue [Eimer, 1999] is extant, comprised 141 volumes.) Of these texts, 707 can be considered to constitute the basic stock; 542 are extant in all Kanjurs, and another 265 are missing from not more than one of them (Lainé, forthcoming a). However, this reflects nothing but the present state of our fragmentary knowledge. Documentary evidence testifies to the one-time existence

of a great many Kanjurs (Almogi, 2012), and ongoing research continues to unearth more Kanjurs and manuscript collections that represent a preliminary stage to the fully edited Kanjurs. These latter collections occasionally preserve texts or versions of texts that were previously unknown, and they provide an increasing insight into a far richer range of the earliest traditions of Tibetan religious literature than is represented by the better-known Kanjurs. Thus, all sorts of statistics in this respect must constantly be revised.

The considerable discrepancy in the number of texts contained in the various Kanjurs is to some extent caused by a varying number of duplications. These might occur either simply by mistake or by the fact that several texts are included in the *sūtra* (*mdo*) as well as in the *tantra* (*rgyud*) section. Some short Prajñāpāramitā texts, for example, such as the well-known *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* (*Heart Sūtra*), are assigned to both categories (Silk, 1994, 27ff.). Occasionally even different versions of the same text may be included in the same collection. This might have happened by oversight, or because the editors could not decide which version to consider more authentic. Another reason for the varying number of texts – possibly even the main reason – is

the Kanjur's very nature as an open collection, editors being free to include or exclude certain texts when compiling or revising a Kanjur.

Individual Kanjur texts are arranged according to the basic literary/doctrinal genres, generally in "ascending" sequence, Vinaya (*'dul ba*), *sūtra* (*mdo sde*, in subclassifications, for which see below), and *tantra* (*rgyud sde*), but occasionally also in "descending" order, *tantra*, *sūtra*, and Vinaya, as in the editions of Peking and Cone. Already prior to their translation into Tibetan, Indian or Chinese scholars either considered certain *sūtras* to constitute a distinct genre or grouped them together and transmitted them as units. These groups were retained in Tibet and appear as additional sections of the Kanjur: Prajñāpāramitā (*sher phyin*), *Buddhāvataṃsaka* (*phal cher/chen*), and *Ratnakūṭa* (*dkon brtsegs*). Of these, the general division "Prajñāpāramitā" can be found only in the catalogues; in the actual Kanjurs, it is generally split into separate sections for each of its big *sūtras*, which comprise more than one volume, *Śatasāhasrikā* (*'bum* or *yum*), *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (*nyi khri*), *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā* (*khri brgyad*), *Daśasāhasrikā* (*khri pa*), and *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (*brgyad stong pa*) and a section "Various Prajñāpāramitā" (*sher/khri/sras sna tshogs*), normally consisting of only one volume, in which the shorter texts are collected. Within the sections, the volumes show a running numbering with the letters of the Tibetan alphabet (*ka, kha, ga*, etc.) used as numerical figures. An exception is the Peking edition, which has a continuous enumeration without regard for sections.

Variations of this general structure and additional subdivisions are found, of which the following may serve as examples: some Kanjurs (e.g. London, Stog, Shey, Ulaanbatar, Tokyo, Narthang, and Lhasa) count the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* as a separate section (*myang 'das*), usually in three volumes. The editions of the Stog Palace and London do not keep the traditional order of the subdivisions in their *sūtra* sections. In Stog, *Buddhāvataṃsaka* and *Ratnakūṭa* are placed after *Śatasāhasrikā*, and the sections (Various) *Sūtra* and *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* follow the remaining Prajñāpāramitā sections. In London the whole *tantra* section is placed between *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā* and *Buddhāvataṃsaka*.

A special position is occupied by the genre of *dhāraṇī* (*gzungs*), meaning "(mystic) formula," some 250 short texts, consisting mainly of mantra, to which magical power is ascribed. Although they are obviously tantric in nature, they are sometimes included in the *sūtra* section and sometimes in the

*tantra* section, and occasionally they constitute one or two distinct sections (*gzungs* or *gzungs 'dus* and *gzungs 'bum*) – for example, in the *Lhan dkar ma* catalogue, in the Kanjurs of Lithang, Derge (Sde dge), Urga, and in the Early Mustang Kanjur.

Some Kanjurs contain a few Nyingma *tantras*, tantric texts that are generally accepted as authentic only by the Nyingma (Rnying ma) school of Tibetan Buddhism and collected in great number in the Collection of Nyingma *tantras* (*Rnying margyud 'bum*). Most of these Kanjurs include them in their general *tantra* sections, but the Kanjurs of Ulaanbataar, Lithang, Derge, and Urga, and, most probably, the 17th-century Kanjurs from Başgo and Hemis in Ladakh, dedicate a separate section (*rnying rgyud*) to them.

The Kanjur is per definition the collection of Buddha's words. Thus, the only objective criterion for including or excluding a text is its authenticity. In general, the introductory formula, "Thus I have heard" (*'di skad bdag gis thos pa*; Skt. *evaṃ mayā śrutam*), is considered evidence that a text is the direct witness of a sermon or any particular teaching of the Buddha (Eimer, 2002, 7). Apparently, this did not suffice in all cases to decide whether a particular text contained the words of the Buddha or of a human master. This dilemma was known already in Indian Buddhism, where scholars disagreed on whether some Abhidharma texts should be considered *buddhavacana*. In line with different answers to this question, some Kanjurs (Ulaanbataar, Tokyo, Stog, London, and Shey) contain Abhidharma texts such as the *Lokaprajñapti* and *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, or for other reasons the *Kuṅālāvādāna* or *Li'i yul lung bstan pa* (a religious history of Khotan), while elsewhere (Derge, Peking, and Narthang) such texts are included in the Tanjur. It is to be noted that when these texts are included in the Kanjur, there exists no corresponding Tanjur in which they might have been placed.

## Genesis of the Kanjur

The literary corpus known as Kanjur is the result of a long-term process that went on for more than five centuries. It was essentially promoted by large-scale enterprises of collecting and translating Buddhist scriptures, which for the greater part always depended on royal support and sponsorship. Thus, the landmarks of this development can be connected with the respective rulers of the time.



Fig. 2: Some volumes of the Prajñāpāramitā and *sūtra* sections at Kanam Monastery, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India (photo by Helmut Tauscher, 2012).

## Collections of the Imperial Period

The translation of Indian sacred texts into Tibetan began already with the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet (which took place, in a more organized form, from the 7th cent. onward), although not in a systematic way. During the reigns of King Khri srong lde brtsan (756–796) and his successors, Mu ne btsan po (797–799), Khri lde srong brtsan *alias* Sad na legs (800–815), and Khri gtsug lde brtsan *alias* Ral pa chen (815–838), in the period known as the time of the “earlier diffusion” (*snga dar*) of Buddhism in Tibet, these activities were carried out systematically, on command and with support of the imperial court. In order to standardize the translations, the *Bye brag tu rtogs par byed pa chen po*/*Mahāvīyutpatti* was compiled, a Sanskrit-Tibetan terminological glossary, as well as the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, a commentary on selected terms from the *Mahāvīyutpatti*. A great number of texts were translated in a systematic cooperation between Tibetan translators and Indian or Chinese scholars, and these translations were then copied and recopied and collected at royal palaces and monastic centers.

These growing collections had to be structured and catalogued. The oldest known catalogues of this kind are the *Lhan kar ma*/*Ldan dkar ma* (Herrmann-Pfandt, 2008; Lalou, 1953) and the *Phangs thang ma* (Halkias, 2004; Kawagoe, 2005), both catalogues of collections kept at royal palaces in central Tibet. A third work, the *Mchims phu ma*, mentioned in later sources, is not known to be extant.

According to the introductory section of the *Lhan kar ma*, these catalogues contained “all translations of words [of the Buddha] and scholarly treatises” (*bka' dang bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog*), and thus they can be regarded as forerunners of the Tibetan canon (extensively discussed in Skilling, 1997b). They were structured according to various categories, some of which are also to be found in the Kanjur (other categories, such as texts translated from Chinese, works of King Khri srong lde brtsan, or *Mahāsūtra*, are not found in any Kanjur, although the works listed therein are generally included under the categories mentioned already above). The general distinction between Kanjur and Tanjur, however, was not yet made.

## Collections of the Time of the “Later Diffusion”

During the “later diffusion” (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism (from the early 11th cent. onward), a new wave of collecting and translating Buddhist scriptures started under the patronage of the lama-kings of Guge-Purang in western Tibet, Ye shes ’od (947–1024) and Byang chub ’od (984–1078; these dates are not undisputed; for the sake of convenience, I follow Vitali, 1996, 185, 296). Their capital, Tholing, became a center of learning and translating. Prominent proponents were Rin chen bzang po *alias* the “Great Translator” (Lo tsā ba chen po; 958–1055), Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba (c. 1011–1064), and Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (c. 1059–1109); even the royal prince Zhi ba ’od, brother of Byang chub ’od, is among the translators of canonical texts. During this period, the term “Kanjur” might have occurred for the first time. Ye shes ’od is reported to have prepared three sets of “the entire Kanjur of pure gold” and four sets of a white Kanjur. For central Tibet, among other reports, “silver and golden Kanjurs” are mentioned in the biography of Rwa rDo rje grags (11th cent.; Schaeffer & van der Kuijp, 2009, 12ff.). These events are presented in sources, however, that date from the 15th century and that might have simply adopted the usual terminology of their time. As none of these collections of translations has survived, it is by no means obvious to what the term refers in regard to contents, arrangement, or extent. It also has to be noted that in the biography of Rin chen bzang po, composed by his pupil Ye shes dpal, this term does not appear, and *sde snod gsum ka*, the Tibetan equivalent for Tripiṭaka, is used, without, however, clearly indicating what the term denotes (*Rin chen bzang po rnam thar*, 1996, 26).

## Proto-Kanjurs

An intermediate stage between the collections of imperial times and the fully developed Kanjurs – of course not necessarily in all cases or in a straight development – can be seen in the group of proto-Kanjurs. These are, in an ideal case, complete collections of the Buddha’s word but not yet systematically arranged into Kanjurs as described above. Similar or related texts are compiled into larger volumes, which, however, do not have any particular order among them. No complete collection of this kind is known so far; the only one with some degree

of completeness is the proto-Kanjur of Gondhla in Lahul, northern India, compiled in the late 13th or early 14th century. (On this collection and the genre in general, see the introduction to Tauscher, 2008.) Nevertheless, fragments of proto-Kanjurs are to be found in various places in the Himalayan region; apparently this form of canonical collection was rather widespread before and around the time of the compilation of the first Kanjur in its fully developed form.

## Collections of the Mongol Area

The time of Mongol and Yuan rule in Tibet (1240–1354) was particularly fruitful for the genesis and development of the Kanjur. Around 1272, activities of collecting canonical material started at Sakya (Sa skya), sponsored by the Mongol imperial family and culminating in 1285–1287, and already in 1275–1278, a Kanjur is reported to have been produced at the order of Lama ’Phags pa, the court chaplain of Khublai Khan. Between 1310 and 1328, the myriarchs of Tshal in central Tibet are reported to have financed a Kanjur in 250 volumes and one in 260 volumes (for a detailed account of these activities, see Schaeffer & van der Kuijp, 2009, 9ff.).

These collections have not survived, and their possible relation to the Old Narthang or the Tshal pa Kanjur (see below) is as unclear as is their exact nature. It can, however, be suspected that they followed a similar concept as the Kanjurs in the technical sense of the term.

## The Old Narthang Kanjur

In a further development of these preliminary steps, the first Kanjur, the Old Narthang Manuscript Kanjur, which is not extant and known only from literary sources, was compiled in the first decades of the 14th century at Zhalu (Zhwa lu) Monastery at Narthang (Snar thang) in central Tibet. It is commonly connected with the name of Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364), the 11th abbot of Zhalu, who compiled an extensive catalogue of religious and philosophical scriptures (Nishioka, 1980–1983). His role in the actual production of the Kanjur, however, is not directly attested (Eimer, 1992, 177; see also Schaeffer & van der Kuijp, 2009, 9). From that time onward, the terms “Kanjur” and “Tanjur” appear to be established for large collections of translated canonical texts.

## Transmission Lines and Groups of Kanjurs and Their Most Important Representatives

When A. Csoma de Kőrös studied a copy of the Narthang xylograph Kanjur (dating from c. 1730) in the early decades of the 19th century and initiated scholarly Kanjur research, he thought himself to be analyzing a copy of the one and only Kanjur; he even speaks of “the Tibetan work, entitled Kah-gyur” (Csoma de Kőrös, 1836; 1839a; 1839b). Following generations of researchers, becoming increasingly aware of the variety of Kanjurs, took the Old Narthang Kanjur as the prototype, to which all others can directly or indirectly be traced back. At present, however, it is widely accepted that different lines of canonical transmission are only conceptually indebted to the Old Narthang Kanjur but independent in their actual execution (Skilling, 1997b, 100); no *one* archetype of the Kanjur ever existed. None of these lines is pure; they show various degrees of interrelation and conflation. According to the various lines of transmission, four groups of Kanjurs are generally distinguished: the two main groups of Tshal pa and Them spangs ma, a “mixed” group, and the group of “local” or “independent” Kanjurs. Each group has its distinctive features in terms of structure, arrangement, and the texts or versions of texts contained. They are, moreover, not homogeneous units. In particular among the local Kanjurs, some sections might be more closely related to a particular tradition and others to another; that is, some collections may be traced back to diverse sources, as a result of which filiations are complex and not unilinear.

None of the archetypes from which the main traditions descend has survived; the oldest known Kanjurs, as physical entities, date from the 17th century. The individual Kanjurs mentioned below are designated in modern scholarship according either to their place of origin or to the place where they are presently located, both in monasteries or royal palaces and in Western or Japanese libraries.

The Tshal pa group descends from a manuscript Kanjur compiled at the Gung thang Monastery of Tshal in central Tibet at the order of the myriarch Kun dga’ rdo rje as part of the funeral ceremonies for his father in 1348; it was consecrated by Bu ston in 1351. For its compilation, material from the Old Narthang Kanjur was used to a large extent, so that it is sometimes considered a major revision of this Kanjur.

The majority of the Kanjur editions known today belong to this group. It is represented mainly by a number of block-print editions from Imperial China, starting with the first Kanjur to appear in printed form, that of Yongle (1410; Silk, 1996), and followed by its reprint of Wanli (1606; Mejer *et al.*, 2010) and a series of revised editions (Peking, 1684–1765, like the former designated by the Chinese imperial reign period under which they appeared; Eimer, 2007). The edition of 1717–1720 is edited in a modern reprint by D.T. Suzuki (1955–1961) and catalogued by D.T. Suzuki (1962); a recent high-quality digital scan edition of the Peking Kanjur held in the National Library of Mongolia has also appeared. The Kanjur of Berlin (1680; Beckh, 1914) and a Kanjur kept at the National Palace Museum at Taipei (18th cent.; now publ. in facsimile as *Longzangjing*, 2011) are the only manuscript Kanjurs of this group. The xylographs of Lithang/Jang sa tham (1609–1614; Imaeda, 1982; 1984), Cone (1721–1731), Derge (Sde dge, 1733; Ui, 1934; publ. by Barber, 1991), and Urga (1908–1910; Bethlenfalvy, 1980) belong to a subgroup.

The Them spangs ma group goes back to a manuscript Kanjur compiled at Gyantse (Rgyal rtse) in central Tibet shortly after 1430. None of the Them spangs ma Kanjurs has ever appeared in printed form, which might be one of the reasons for the more limited dissemination of this group.

Its main representatives are the manuscript Kanjurs of Ulaanbaatar (n.d.), considered to be a direct copy of Them spangs ma and published in 2010 as Tempangma Kanjur by the National Library of Mongolia and others (see Web sites below; catalogued by Samten *et al.*, 2012; also Bethlenfalvy, 1982), Stog, produced during the reign of the Ladakhi king Nyi ma rnam rgyal (1694–1729; Skorupski, 1985), and Tokyo (1858–1878; Saitō, 1977). A subgroup showing influences of a particular western Tibetan tradition (Tauscher & Lainé, 2008) is represented by the Kanjurs of London (Pagel & Gaffney, 1996), an 18th-century copy of a manuscript from Shel dkar in southern Tibet, and the Kanjur of Shey in Ladakh (17th cent.; Lainé, forthcoming b).

The mixed group, consisting of the closely related xylograph Kanjurs of Narthang and Lhasa (Eimer, 1998), are based on a copy from the Tshal pa line, but they include a great number of emendations based on some copy from the Them spangs ma group; thus it combines characteristic features of both traditions. The edition of Narthang was initiated by the sixth Dalai Lama (1683–1705), but the carving of the printing blocks was stopped with his death. The undertaking was restarted by Mi pham pho lha

Bsod nams stobs rgyal (1689–1747) and completed in 1732. Based on this Narthang edition, a new set of blocks was produced in Lhasa with some emendations according to the Derge Kanjur. This work was completed in 1934. This Lhasa Kanjur is the last traditionally produced Kanjur.

The local or independent group consists of manuscript Kanjurs that were produced not at large monastic centers but at rather remote places and compiled from locally available material. They usually show closer similarities with Them spangs ma than with Tshal pa. This does not indicate direct relation; rather it provides evidence for common or related sources from which their materials were drawn. In general, they are independent from either of the two main lines of transmission as well as from other local Kanjurs. Although similar to the mainstream Kanjurs in content and size, they differ from them with regard to the texts included and their arrangement. Just like the proto-Kanjurs, they contain texts absent from the mainstream traditions, texts in different recensions or translations, and even translations from a different version of the Sanskrit original. Occasionally they contain two or more versions of the same text, and their sources might predate the archetypes of the two main groups (Eimer, 2012, 21; Tauscher & Lainé, 2013).

Presently the Kanjurs of Phug brag (c. 1700; Samten, 1992), O rgyan gling (c. 1700; Samten, 1994) and Bathang (15th–16th cents.; Eimer, 2012), as well as the so-called Early Mustang Kanjur (1436–1447; Eimer, 1999), are generally regarded as local Kanjurs. Kanjurs discovered in recent years at Hemis and Basgo in Ladakh might also be counted among this group.

The Phug brag manuscript Kanjur is difficult to classify, as it appears to be the conflation of at least two Kanjurs or proto-Kanjurs stemming from different traditions. It shares many distinctive features with the roughly contemporary O rgyan gling Kanjur at Tawang in western Arunachal Pradesh, which, of course, is not necessarily evidence of a direct relationship, since this relationship might very well date back to earlier centuries. A number of conformities indicate a connection between Phug brag and Them spangs ma or its sources; others are seemingly unique.

The Early Mustang Kanjur was compiled at the order of King A ma dpal (c. 1380–1440), probably using material from Sa skya. It is not extant, only its catalogue (*dkar chag*) surviving. Two Kanjurs kept at Lo Manthang and at Tsarang (Mathes, 1997) are

considered to be copies, but they have not yet been studied in detail.

In 2007, two fragmentary Kanjurs were discovered at Hemis Monastery. Both were written during the reign of King Seng ge rnam rgyal, shortly after 1630, and are contemporary with the canonical manuscript material kept at Basgo, where in the late 20th century, a Kanjur was compiled out of at least five fragmentary sets.

Close similarities between the collections of Hemis and Basgo and the Early Mustang Kanjur provoke the hypothetical postulation of a Mustang group of Kanjurs in addition to the four groups generally accepted. This hypothesis is discussed in H. Tauscher and B. Lainé (2013).

## The Comparative Kanjur

A modern edition of the so-called Comparative Kanjur (*bka'gyur dpe bsdur ma*; Hackett, 2012) does not fit into any of the groups mentioned, as it is not a separate Kanjur. It was compiled in Beijing in 2006–2009 by comparing eight Kanjur editions (Yongle, Lithang, Kangxi, Cone, Derge, Narthang, Khure, and Lhasa Zhol). Thus it represents something between an attempted critical edition of the Kanjur and a tool for Kanjur research.

## Kanjur Research

Although the Kanjur has been an object of Tibetological research ever since the pioneering works of A. Csoma de Kőrös, it was only in recent decades that Kanjur research has justifiably emerged as an important subdiscipline within the field of Tibetan studies. It seeks to understand the evolving canon both as a record of the development of a substantial part of the Tibetan literary and religious heritage and as a source for the history of Tibetan Buddhism, since these usually massive products are the result of significant economic investment and thus by their very existence testify to the cultural capital of the regions and dynasties under which they were produced.

While previously these studies were handicapped by the fact that they require a vast amount of textual material and this material was either not easily accessible or not accessible at all, things have been changing rapidly in recent years. Increasingly access has been enabled, on the one hand, by the

production of finding aids, including catalogues and databases, historical studies, and other research and, on the other hand, by the reproduction, through microfilm or digital means, of editions. In addition to the sources already mentioned, special note should be made of some of the databases established by academic organizations, for instance, by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center and by the universities of Vienna, Virginia, Ōtani, and Columbia (for Web sites, see below). While these databases provide catalogues, search engines, and other research tools, needless to say individual scholars have long studied texts contained in the Kanjur collections, paying attention to the history of these collections, their interrelations, and other problems. They have also, since A. Csoma de Kőrös and the very earliest days of modern Buddhist studies, produced translations of Kanjur texts. Recently more systematic efforts are being attempted along these lines, one example of which is the 84000 project ([www.84000.co](http://www.84000.co)), which aims at a translation of the complete (Derge) Kanjur into English.

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