

Introduction

0.1 Purpose of the Edition

The first and main purpose of the present work is to promote the understanding of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* (hereafter *MPM*)¹ by making a critical edition of the Tibetan translation available to scholars. The text is of highest importance in the history of Buddhism, but unfortunately the Sanskrit original has only been preserved in fragments.² While the Chinese translations³ of the *MPM* played an important role in the history of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, the content of the *MPM* is difficult to understand on the basis of the Chinese translations alone. The Sanskrit original of the *MPM* was translated into Tibetan at the beginning of the 9th century by Jinamitra, Jñānagarbha and Devacandra, and it is through their translation executed in typical Tibetan style (i.e. faithfully keeping to the wording of the original) that a deeper understanding of the text is possible.

Secondly, I am intending to make a small contribution to the study of Kanjurs which was begun by Helmut EIMER and continued by Paul HARRISON, Peter SKILLING and other scholars. To date, no older Tibetan manuscript of the *MPM* is known outside the earliest versions of the Kanjur,⁴ and the contribution this study proposes to make will be of little relevance for scholars interested in the relations between older manuscripts and the Kanjur editions. Nevertheless I do hope that the length of the text under study, along with my critical apparatus noting many important variants, provides a solid basis for an interesting text-critical analysis which is often difficult to achieve with a shorter text.

There might be more than one reason for a critical edition, but generally

¹The sūtra is commonly referred to as the “Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*” in works of modern scholarship, but this is not the exact Sanskrit title of the original: see HABATA 2007, pp. xliii-li.

²WATANABE 1909; THOMAS 1916; YUYAMA 1981; BONGARD-LEVIN 1986; MATSUDA 1988; HABATA 2007; 2009.

³*Da-ban-nie-pan-jing* translated by Dharmakṣema: Taishō vol. 12, no. 374, pp. 354-603 (hereafter ChinD) and *Da-ban-ni-huan-jing* translated by Fa-xian: Taishō vol. 12, no. 376, pp. 853-899 (hereafter ChinF).

⁴A fragment in Tabo is from the so-called “extensive Tibetan *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*” which is a translation from the Chinese rendering of Dharmakṣema: see EIMER 1998a; 1999a. The Gondhla Kanjur, too, contains only the translation from the Chinese: see TAUSCHER 2008, pp. 96-97.

speaking, editors strive to reach an archetype. For Kanjur texts an archetype should be as close to the first translation from the source as possible. Unfortunately, the transmission of the Kanjur poses certain difficulties,⁵ and only one fortunate case is known so far, in which the first translation of a canonical text (i.e. the *Advayasamatāvijaya*) could be identified.⁶ In most cases, editors try to reconstruct a later manuscript possibly used for important revisions, rather than the first translation.⁷

Knowledge of the historical background of the Kanjur transmission supports editorial works. We can benefit from the research of Yoshiro IMAEDA, EIMER, HARRISON, SKILLING, and other scholars.⁸ According to their findings, two main traditions are prevailing: one going back to the Tshal pa manuscript from the 14th century (1347-51), another to the Them spangs ma⁹ manuscript from the 15th century (1431).¹⁰ Both manuscripts are lost.

Critical editions in the strict meaning of the term, i.e. based on the principles of textual criticism,¹¹ were also advanced by EIMER and his work on the *Pravrajyāvastu*,¹² using 14 witnesses for a text extending to 131 folios in the Derge edition.¹³ Stemmatic analysis has shown so far that two hyparchetypes correspond to the two main traditions:¹⁴ Peking Kanjur and Lithang Kanjur make up one group corresponding to the Tshal pa tradition, while Stog Palace Kanjur, London Kanjur and Tokyo Kanjur represent another group from the so-called Them spangs ma tradition. However, as it was noticed by EIMER already at the earlier stage of his research,¹⁵ the exact results of the stemmatic analyses differ from each other. The relations between the older manuscripts and the Kanjur editions also vary depending on the text under

⁵See EIMER 1988b, p. 52: "The earliest manuscript ... did not contain a fully correct text, since in compiling the canons to a large extent sources were utilized which stand at the end of about five hundred years of transmission. And this transmission took place under very poor conditions, it suffered from the civil-war situation in Tibet after the assassination of Glan dar ma. Therefore it was the aim of the Tibetan scholars in revising the Kanjur again and again to improve upon the text. Thereby a great number of correct emendations was achieved, but the remnants of the archaic language were wiped out almost completely".

⁶FAN 2008.

⁷See, e.g., BRAARVIG 1993, p. xiv.

⁸For survey see EIMER 1988a; 1988b; 1992; HARRISON 1994; 1996; SKILLING 1997.

⁹For the name "Them spangs ma" see SKILLING 1997, p. 101, note 103; BETHLENFALVY 1982, p. 6 and p. 9, note 9.

¹⁰The dates of the both manuscripts according to SKILLING 1997.

¹¹See MAAS 1960.

¹²EIMER 1983b.

¹³For further critical editions see HARRISON 1992b: *Drumakinnararājapariṣcchāsūtra*; BRAARVIG 1993: *Akṣayamatīrdeśasūtra*; BRAARVIG 1994: *Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa*; OROFINO 1994: *Sekoddeśa*; SILK 1994: *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya*; SKILLING 1994: *Mahāsūtras*; DIETZ 1996: *Lokaprajñaptiśāstra*; ZIMMERMANN 2002: *Tathāgatarbhasūtra*.

¹⁴EIMER 1983b, 1. Teil, pp. 55-137: *Pravrajyāvastu*; EIMER 1988a: summary of *Pravrajyāvastu*; HARRISON 1992a: *Lokānuvartanāsūtra*; BRAARVIG 1993, pp. ix-xiii: *Akṣayamatīrdeśasūtra*; BRAARVIG 1994, p. 139: *Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa*; SILK 1994, pp. 17-27: *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya*; SCHOENING 1995, pp. 130-132: *Śālistamba-sūtra*; SKILLING 1997, p.107: *Mahāsūtras*; PAGEL 1999: *Bodhisattvapīṭaka*; ZIMMERMANN 2002, pp. 172-206: *Tathāgatarbhasūtra*; TROPPER 2010, pp. 37-47: *Caitīyapradakṣiṇagāthā*.

¹⁵EIMER 1983a, p. 8 (p.12).

study.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it now seems generally clear that the Tshal pa group represents a more revised stage than the Them spangs ma.¹⁷

0.2 Witnesses used in the Edition

Considering the purpose of the present edition, the witnesses are selected in the necessary limitation, depending on the results of EIMER, HARRISON, SKILLING and other scholars. The following nine (one of them only partly) witnesses are collated, which are listed below with short summaries of the research results found in other editions and works.

C : Cone Kanjur (1721-1731)¹⁸ *mdo mang, tha* (34) 1b1-169a5: no. 761 in the catalogue by MIBU 1959.¹⁹

The Cone text is only partly collated because I could not use the Lithang text at the earlier stage of my collating. After the Lithang text became accesible, the collation of the Cone text was discontinued. As EIMER demonstrated, Cone is a true copy of Lithang,²⁰ which was confirmed in further investigations by other scholars. The Cone text of the *MPM* is also, at least in the collated parts, no exception.

D : Derge (sDe dge) Kanjur (1729-1733)²¹ *mdo sde, tha* (54) 1b1-151a4: no. 120 in the catalogue by UI/ SUZUKI/ KANAKURA/ TADA 1934.²²

Previous reserch has shown that the Derge Kanjur was based on the Lithang Kanjur, but went under the correction with the Lho-rdzong Kanjur which belongs to the Them spangs ma tradition.²³ This historical evidence corresponds to the contaminated characteristic of the Derge texts.²⁴ Though

¹⁶Sometimes the Tshal pa recension of a text appears to reflect an older tradition attested to in Dunhuang material (e.g. HARRISON 1992b, pp. xxxi-xxxii), while in other cases (e.g. BRAARVIG 1993, p. vi, note 1) the Them spangs ma recension seems to be the older one.

¹⁷EIMER 1988b, p. 46: "The differences between the two groups are largely due to the re-edition of the early Narthang manuscript by Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje about the middle of the XIVth century."

¹⁸For the dates see MEISEZAHN 1976, pp. 442-443.

¹⁹For the photocopies of the Cone text, I thank the staff of the Tōyō Bunko. I also thank Naomi Sato for her generous assistance in collating the Cone text from C1b1 to C27a6.

²⁰EIMER 1988b, pp. 48-50 in his third example.

²¹For the dates see IMAEDA 1981, p. 229.

²²For the photocopies of the Derge text, I thank the staff of Tōhoku University. The Derge print kept at Tōhoku University is rather feeble, so I also used the microfiche edition of the Derge print held by Kōyasan University, which is also partly illegible, printed with too much ink. I thank Nikolai Solmsdorf for his generous assistance in proofreading the Derge variants at the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, to the staff of which I am also indebted for the support. The Derge print used for the proofreading is: *The sDe-dge mtshal-par bka'-gyur*. A facsimile edition of the 18th century redaction of Si-tu Chos-kyi-'byun-gnas prepared under the direction of H. H. the 16th rGyal-dbañ Karma-pa. Delhi 1976.

²³See EIMER 1983b, 1. Teil, pp. 93-97; SAMTEN 1987, pp. 18-19; HARRISON 1992a, p. 79.

²⁴As an exception BRAARVIG concluded that D is based on the manuscript which may have been the first Tshal pa manuscript: BRAARVIG 1993, pp. x-xi.

the Derge variants are not decisive for a critical edition, it is interesting to see which reading the Tibetan editors preferred for their revision. Furthermore, the Derge text informs us about the standardized grammatical and orthographical forms.²⁵

F : Phug brag manuscript Kanjur (ca. 1696-1706)²⁶ *mdo sde, tha* (63) 1-195: no. 96 in the catalogue by EIMER 1993.²⁷

The manuscript Kanjur from Phug brag monastery in the east of Western Tibet, kept in Dharamsala, is an important manuscript collection, which differs from other known Kanjurs.²⁸ According to its Tibetan catalogue (*dkar chag*), the Kanjur was revised by four monks from Eastern Tibet (*Mdo khams*).²⁹ Text-critical research has shown so far that the texts of the Phug brag Kanjur are independent from the other main traditions (Tshal pa and Them spangs ma), but its precise place in the history of Kanjur transmission is not clear. Different conclusions have been drawn, depending on individual texts.³⁰ Though the texts of the Phug brag Kanjur are often described as highly corrupted, its testimony is certainly of great value for a critical edition.³¹ In the *Mahāsūtras*, the readings of Phug brag agree with the older manuscripts from Batang and Tabo and the manuscript kept at the Newark Museum.³² In the *Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa*, *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, and *Sarvadharmagaṇavyūharājasūtra* passages have been found in which only the Phug brag texts have correct readings.³³

J : 'Jang Sa tham or Lithang Kanjur (1608-1621)³⁴ *mdo mang, tha* (49) 1b1-146b7: no. 65 in the catalogue by IMAEDA 1984.³⁵

²⁵Cf. EIMER 1988a, p. 39: "Besonders deutlich ist die Tendenz, den Text zu berichtigen, in dem Blockdruck des Kanjur aus Derge; in dieser Ausgabe finden sich neben sprachlichen Formen, die den grammatischen Normen der Zeit entsprechen, Varianten aus den beiden Hauptlinien der Tradition".

²⁶For the dates see SAMTEN 1992, p. 116.

²⁷For the microfiche copies, I thank Margaret Chen at the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religion. I also thank Naomi Sato for her generous assistance in collating the Phug brag text from F1b1 to F14b3, and Nikolai Solmsdorf for his generous assistance in proofreading.

²⁸See HAHN 1988; SAMTEN 1992; OROFINO 1994, pp. 35-37; HARTMANN 1996.

²⁹SAMTEN 1992, p. 118.

³⁰HARRISON 1992b, p. xxxvi; SCHOENING 1995, p. 129-132; BRAARVIG 1997, p. 6; SKILLING 1997, p. 107; ZIMMERMANN 2002, p. 205-206.

³¹See HARRISON 1992b, pp. xxxii-xxvi; BRAARVIG 1994, p. 139; SKILLING 1994, p. xxxi; DIETZ 1996, pp. 14-15; EIMER 1999b, pp. 101-102.

³²Skilling 1994, p. xxxi.

³³One example in the *Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa* ed. by BRAARVIG 1994, p. 139, pp. 151-152; one in the *Tathāgata-garbhasūtra* ed. by ZIMMERMANN 2002, p. 194, p. 197, p. 208 (his number 12C n. 15; 16); one in the *Sarvadharmagaṇavyūharājasūtra* ed. by VON CRIEGERN 2012.

³⁴For the dates see IMAEDA 1982, pp. 178-180; SAMTEN 1987, p. 17-18, gives the dates as 1609-1614.

³⁵I am indebted to the staff at the Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies where I could collate the Lithang text on the basis of a photocopy in good quality.

The Lithang Kanjur is an important early woodblock edition which was based on the 'Phying ba stag rtse manuscript. This manuscript, going back to the 14th-century Tshal pa manuscript, had undergone the corrections and additions by Tibetan scholars before the woodblock project began.³⁶ This historical report agrees with the text-critical results. The testimony of the Lithang text is important for the reconstruction of the earlier Tshal pa manuscript, but it is “a more heavily edited text” as EIMER mentions.³⁷

L : London manuscript Kanjur (completed in 1712)³⁸ *mdo, wa* (20) 43b4-239b1: no. 123 in the catalogue by PAGEL/ GAFFNEY 1996.³⁹

The manuscript Kanjur in the British Library in London was copied from the Shel dkar rdzong manuscript which can be dated to 1472 at the earliest⁴⁰ and goes back to the Them spangs ma manuscript itself.⁴¹ The text-critical studies agree that the London manuscript Kanjur belongs to a common hyparchetype together with the Tokyo manuscript Kanjur and the Stog Palace manuscript Kanjur. Whereas the Stog Palace Kanjur includes more revised texts (see under S below), the texts of the London Kanjur are considered to be more archaic even than the Tokyo Kanjur.⁴²

N : Narthang (sNar thang) Kanjur (1730-1732)⁴³ *mdo sde, nya* (54) 1-231b5: no. 107 in the catalogue by NAGASHIMA 1975; EIMER 1998b.⁴⁴

According to the Tibetan catalogue (*dkar chag*) of the woodblock edition of the Narthang Kanjur, the revisers of this Kanjur knew the “Tshal pa Kanjur” and the Kanjur known as “Rgyal rtse Them spangs ma”, but they did not mention to which Kanjur each text of their edition was based on.⁴⁵ For this reason it is difficult to decide which transmission lineage each text belongs to⁴⁶ and the text-critical results differ from each others.⁴⁷ Though it is often noticed that the contamination of the both lineages within individual texts

³⁶ IMAEDA 1982, p. 179.

³⁷ EIMER 1988b, p. 51.

³⁸ For the date see SAMTEN/ SKILLING 1996, p. 9.

³⁹ For the photocopies, I thank Ulrich Pagel. I also thank Marlene Erschbamer and Chanwit Tudkeao for their generous assistance in proofreading.

⁴⁰ EIMER 1981, p. 538.

⁴¹ PAGEL/ GAFFNEY 1996, p. ix.

⁴² EIMER 1983b, I. Teil, p. 116.

⁴³ For the dates see TUCCI 1949, pp. 479-480; PETECH 1950, pp. 144-145: PETECH refers also to the place of the carving project in “a printing house in the neighbourhood of Sel-dkar-rdson: the spot being probably selected with a view to the facilities for wood supply”.

⁴⁴ I used the print in the British Library, for the photocopies I thank Ulrich Pagel.

⁴⁵ EIMER 1983b, I. Teil, pp. 91-93. See also HARRISON 1992b, p. xxx-xxi, footnote 58.

⁴⁶ EIMER 1984; EIMER 1994.

⁴⁷ *Pravrajyāvastu* (EIMER 1983b), *Sekoddeśa* (OROFINO 1994), one Vinaya text and two Tantra texts of the *Mahāsūtras* (SKILLING 1994) belong to the Them spangs ma, whereas *Lokānuvartanāsūtra* (HARRISON 1992a), *Drumakinnararājaparipṛcchāsūtra* (HARRISON 1992b), *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* (Braarvig 1993), *Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa* (Braarvig 1994), and seven texts of the *Mahāsūtras* (SKILLING 1994) belong to the Tshal pa lineage. For further texts see Eimer 1992, pp. xv-xvi.

is not noted,⁴⁸ it could not be cleared unless the older edition of the Peking Kanjur (i.e. the Yongle edition) becomes accessible (see under P below).

P : Peking Edition *mdo sna tshogs, tu* (71) 1-156b8: *The Tibetan Tripitaka. Peking Edition* vol. 31, no. 788.⁴⁹

The widely used *Peking Edition* of Ōtani University is a reprint of the Kanjur printed under the Kangxi emperor in 1717-1720. This Ōtani edition partly includes the Kanjur printed under the Qianlong emperor in 1737,⁵⁰ but the catalogue of the Ōtani edition does not provide any information on the provenance of each text. The Peking Kanjur saw its first edition under the Yongle emperor in 1410, and this print is still kept in Sera monastery and at Wutaishan. As yet, it is unfortunately not accessible.⁵¹ The Kanjur prints of Peking, known in seven editions, were corrected and revised in their own transmission.⁵² Through EIMER's thorough investigations the complex situation of the Peking Kanjur has been cleared. For example, he demonstrated how the avadāna texts of the Peking edition from 1717-1720 are contaminated possibly with the Lithang/ Cone tradition.⁵³ For text-critical purposes the accessibility of the Yongle Kanjur is a great desideratum as this edition contains unrevised and uncontaminated texts. At present, without the Yongle Kanjur, it is necessary to find traces of corrections visible through smaller letters or *rasura* (erased trace). Together with the Lithang text, the testimony of the Peking text is important to reconstruct the Tshal pa manuscript.

S : Stog (sTog) Palace manuscript Kanjur⁵⁴ (ca. 1729)⁵⁵ *mdo sde, wa* (71) 44b2-251a3: no. 179 in the catalogue by SKORUPSKI 1985.⁵⁶

The manuscript Kanjur of Stog Palace in Ladakh was copied under King Nyi-ma-rnam-rgyal of Ladakh (r. 1691-1729) from a Bhutanese manuscript.⁵⁷ Text-critical research has shown so far that the Stog Palace texts belong to the Them spangs ma lineage. The possibility of a contamination, suggested in the earlier stage of Kanjur researchs,⁵⁸ could not be proved,⁵⁹ and it has

⁴⁸HARRISON 1992b, pp. xxix-xxx; SKILLING 1994, p. xxxix. But ZIMMERMANN 2002, pp. 205-206, believes N to be a contamination of the Them spangs ma.

⁴⁹I thank Katrin Querl and Chanwit Tudkeao for their generous assistance in proofreading.

⁵⁰IMAEDA 1977, p. 32, note 33.

⁵¹For the Yongle Kanjur see SILK 1996.

⁵²For the current state of the research see EIMER 2007.

⁵³EIMER 1988b, p. 50 in his fourth example.

⁵⁴For the description of the photo-mechanically reproduced edition *The Tog Palace Manuscript of the Tibetan Kanjur* see SKORUPSKI 1985, pp. xii-xiv.

⁵⁵For the date see SKORUPSKI 1985, p. xi: The date 1729 is the end of the reign of King Nyi ma rnam rgyal of Ladakh, under whom the manuscript was copied.

⁵⁶I thank Chanwit Tudkeao for his generous assistance in proofreading.

⁵⁷SKORUPSKI 1985, pp. xi-xii.

⁵⁸For example EIMER 1982, p. 129.

⁵⁹OROFINO 1994, p. 34, concludes that "S, even if it shares a common matrix with T, presents a high degree of contamination from the Eastern tradition", but in the list on p. 31, there is no reason for the contamination: 4 examples are common mistakes of LNU(U=Ulan Bator manuscript), one example is a common mistake of LNU and T, and

been ruled out.⁶⁰ Unique readings in the Stog Palace texts are understood as resulting from its own revisions.⁶¹ Besides the revisions, orthographical features differ from such standardizations as in the Derge revisions.⁶² The strongly revised character of the Stog Palace texts in the complicated case of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* was recently demonstrated by SHŌJI, who shows that London manuscript, Tokyo manuscript and one of three Phug brag manuscripts contain non-revised versions of the text.⁶³

T : Tokyo (Kawaguchi) manuscript Kanjur (1858-1878)⁶⁴ *mdo sde, wa* (76) 40b6-231a8: no. 179 in the catalogue by SAITŌ 1977.⁶⁵

The manuscript Kanjur kept in the Tōyō Bunko in Tokyo was brought to Japan by Ekai KAWAGUCHI, who acquired it in 1915 from the Dpal 'khor chos sde at Gyantse (Rgyal rtse). It was reported that the manuscript might be older than the Old Narthang, or that the Old Narthang might be based on it.⁶⁶ However, it has now been established that the manuscript was produced between 1858 and 1878.⁶⁷ It is assumed that the manuscript is a copy from the Them spangs ma manuscript kept at Gyantse.⁶⁸ Text-critical research agrees that the Tokyo manuscript Kanjur has a common ancestor with the London manuscript Kanjur. Although the date of the copying is relatively recent, texts of the Tokyo manuscript Kanjur have retained older characteristics such as older orthography⁶⁹ and non-revised versions.⁷⁰

one example is a common mistake of LNU and TS. Also in the list on p. 33, as Orofino mentions herself, most of the examples are trivial changes.

⁶⁰For example HARRISON 1992b, p. xxvii.

⁶¹See SKILLING 1994, pp. xlv-xlvi.

⁶²SKILLING 1994, p. xxxvii, mentions its orthography as more “modern”; ZIMMERMANN 2002, p. 208, states that “non standardized elements are frequent”.

⁶³SHŌJI 2009.

⁶⁴For the dates see SAITŌ 1977, p. 401.

⁶⁵For the photocopies, I thank the staff of the Tōyō Bunko. I also thank Nikolai Solmsdorf for his generous assistance in proofreading.

⁶⁶SAITŌ 1977, p. 405.

⁶⁷SAITŌ 1977, p. 401.

⁶⁸EIMER 1983a, p. 13 with footnote 45.

⁶⁹For example BRAARVIG 1993, p. xv.

⁷⁰SHŌJI 2009.