



Tibetan Manuscripts

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SAM FOGG

15D Clifford Street
London, w1s 4JZ

t: +44 (0) 2075342100 f: +44 (0) 2075342122
www.samfogg.com info@samfogg.com

ལུང་ངམ། འཇམ་ཏེ་བདག་ཉིད་སོ་སོ་ལྟ་བུ་མཚོན་པ་བསོད་ནམས་མཚོན་པ་
ལྟར་ལ་བཀའ་སྲོལ་བསྟུན། ལྷ་མཚན་བསྟུན། རྩམས་བསྟུན། མཚོན་པ་
གཞན་དག་ལ་ཡང་སྤྱོད་ཅིང་ཡང་དག་པར་འགྲེད་ན། འདི་ཉིད་དེ་བས
ཏེ། ཀོ་ལུ་ཞི་གའི་གསུང་གི་བུ་ལམ་འགྲེད་པའི་བུ་ལམ་དེ་ལྟར་
ངམ། ལྟུང་འཕྲིན་གསུང་། ལའོ་ལྟུང་ལྟུང་། ལའོ་ལྟུང་ལྟུང་།
དེ་ལྟར་། ལོ་ངམ་སྤྱོད་པ་ཉིད་ལྟར་། ཀོ་ལུ་ཞི་གའི་གསུང་ལ་ཕན་པ་
འགྲེད་པའི་བུ་ལམ་ལྟར་དག་ལྟར་ཞི་གའི་ལམ་ལྟར་དུ་ཕྱིན་པ་ལྟར་ལྟར་
བར་བྱེད། ཡང་དག་པར་འགྲེད་པར་བྱེད་ན། ཀོ་ལུ་ཞི་གའི་གསུང་གི་

The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses

TIB: Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa
SKT: Astasahasrika-Prajnaparamita Sutra

Tibet
13th or 14th century

314 sheets of heavy, multi-layered paper stained in blue over the whole area, varnished on the writing space, surrounded by a frame, within which are written 8 lines of approximately 80 characters in Tibetan dbu can script using gold ink on both sides, top cover from another manuscript, in black ink, two lines of very large script with the words "in the language of India" beneath the flap, first leaves of the manuscript contain 4, 5, 6 and 7 lines of script, damage to the outer corners of the upper and lower 10-20 leaves, very old marginal patches over tears from frequent turning of the pages, text complete at beginning and end

20 x 65 cm

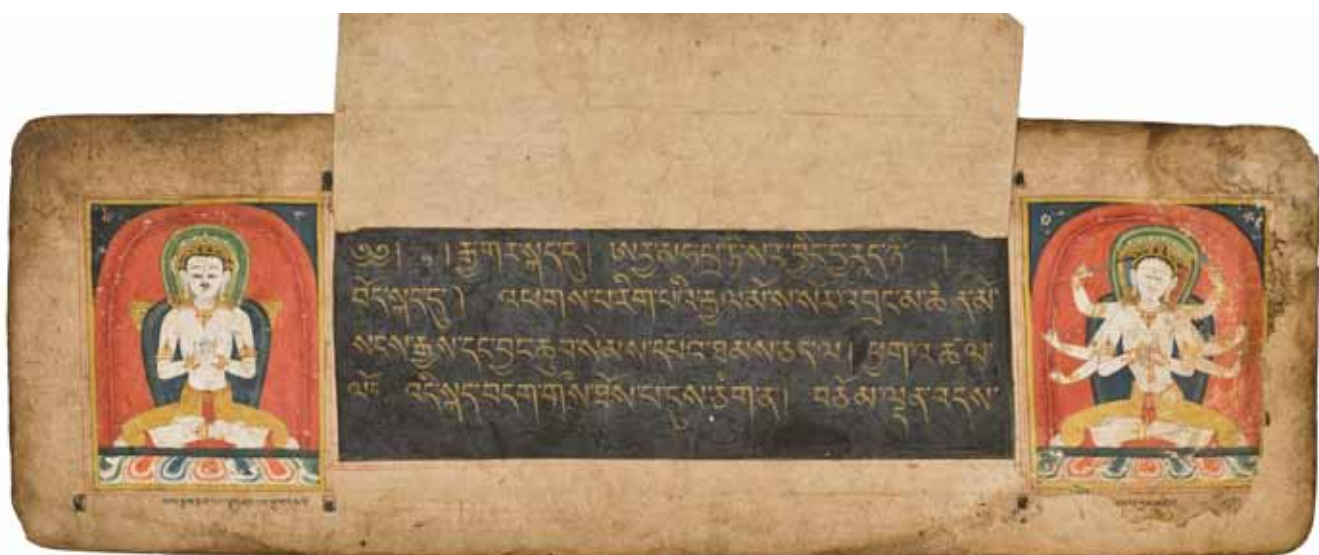
This manuscript is made with multi-layered paper stained in blue over the whole area, varnished on the writing space, surrounded by a frame. The writing is in Tibetan headed (dbu can) script using gold ink. Each leaf is written on both sides. The top cover is from another manuscript, in black ink; beneath a flap there are two lines of very large script with the words "in the language of India". Some pages have very old marginal patches over tears from frequent turning of the pages.

The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses is a fundamental scripture of Indian Mahayana Buddhism from around the first century AD. The first Tibetan translation was made in around 750 AD. The Tibetan translation achieves a high level of understanding and accuracy, and has been useful to modern scholars occupied in establishing and analysing the Sanskrit text. The whole range of Tibetan versions of the *Sutra*

on *The Perfection of Wisdom* has been edited, translated and commented on by Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary*, Berkeley, 1973.

This manuscript was almost certainly donated or sponsored by a lay person who hoped to win merit by financing the copying of the text. Although the manuscript is not illustrated, it displays some of the most superb *ucen* calligraphy produced in Tibet. The gold letters are pleasingly spaced and very exactly executed on the lustrous blue ground, which represent 'the clear empty space, the void from which all things arise'. The manuscript shows some archaic orthographic characteristics, such as the presence of the *da-drag* (the letter *da* as a secondary suffix for some syllables), which point to an early date, probably in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The text is a canonical Buddhist *sutra*, central to Mahayana teachings.





The Spell of the Jewel Peak, and The Spells of Five Goddesses

SKT: Pancaraksa

Nepal, Dolpo
15th century
24 miniatures

Tibetan manuscript on paper, 323 folios with Tibetan script in black and gold ink, title pages dyed black and burnished with rice powder with gold script, carved wooden covers

22 x 66 cm

This is a volume of Buddhist spells (*dharani* in Sanskrit). It is unusual in containing illustrated folios at several points throughout the volume. The volume contains several texts, beginning with *The Spell of the Jewel Peak* (Skt: *Ratnaketu Dharani*) and continuing with the spells of the five goddesses known as the *Pancaraksa*. An inscription in red ink at the bottom of the first title page states that the book was made thanks to “the pure and lofty aspirations” of Geshe Palrin, probably a monk of the Gelugpa school.

Illustrations

Each title page and final page of the six sections of the book, comprising the *Mahasannipataratnaketu Dharani* and the *Pancaraksa* cycle, is illustrated with a painting on the left and one on the right. The title pages of each section are written in gold on dark blue or black paper and the writing is protected by paper flaps. The illuminations represent buddhas and the five goddesses to whom the *Pancaraksa* hymns are dedicated, while the last pages are reserved for *bodhisattvas* and protective deities.

Text 1, ff 1-160

The Spell of the Jewel Peak

TIB: 'Phags pa 'dus pa rin po che tog gi gzungs

SKT: Arya-Mahasannipata-ratnaketu-dharani

Opening illustrations: On the left is Shakyamuni Buddha flanked by his two disciples Maudgalyayana and Shariputra car-

rying alms-bowls and staves. The Buddha is seated in meditation posture making the earth-touching gesture. A handsome pair of white geese sits on the back of his throne. Exuberant swirls form a decorative arch to the top of the image. On the right is Shakyamuni Buddha in teaching pose, flanked by the Buddhas of the past and future, Dipaskara in robes and the future Buddha Maitreya in bodhisattva silks. There are similar design to the left miniature, here with crocodiles instead of swans.

Closing Illustrations: On the left is the *bodhisattva* Maitreya-anatha in posture of royal ease holding a lotus in his right hand. On the right side is the *bodhisattva* Manjughosha seated in *vajra* posture (the legs crossed with the right leg above the left leg). In his four arms he holds a bow and arrow, and the sword and book of perfect wisdom.

Text 2, ff 161-204

The Great Goddess who Subdues Thousands

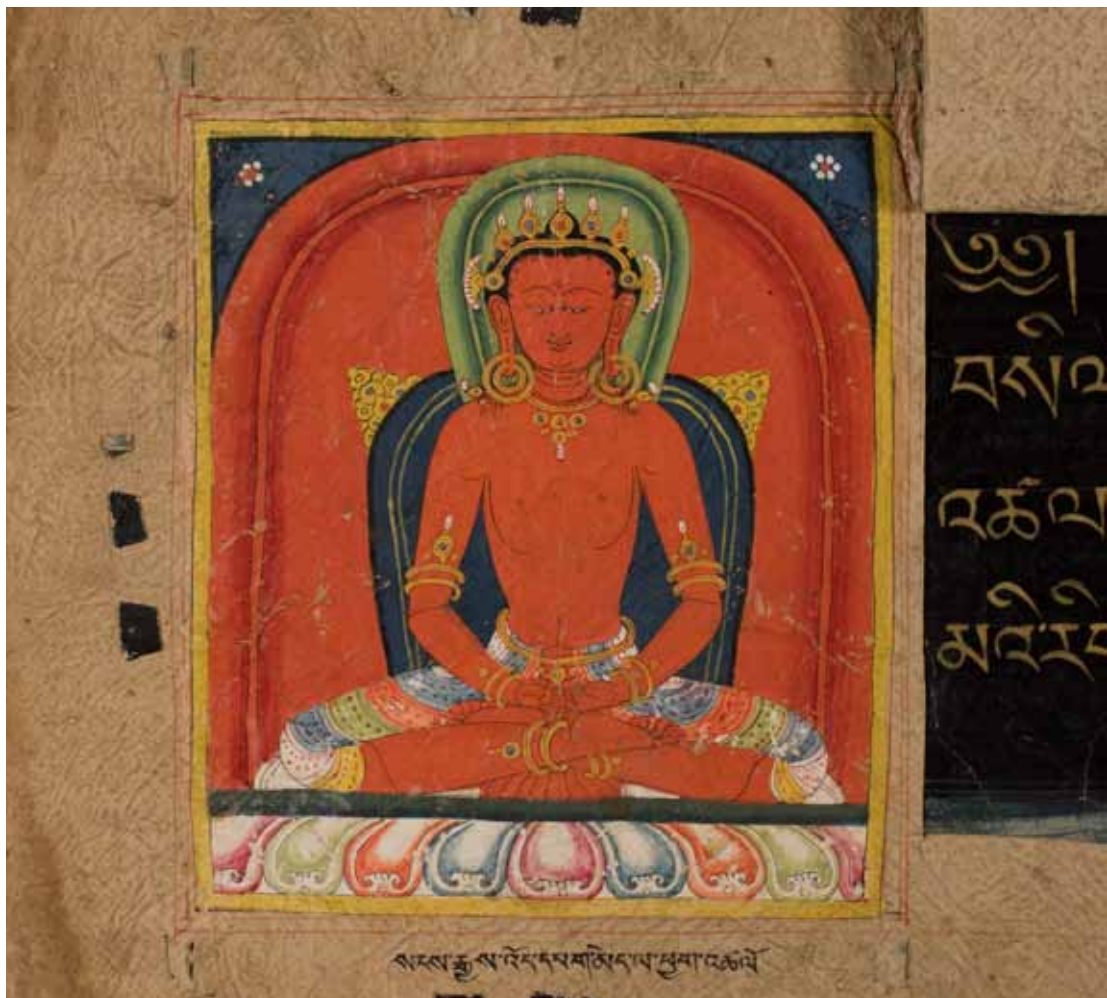
TIB: sTong chen po rab tu 'joms pa

SKT: Mahasahasrapramardana

Opening Illustrations: On the left is a dark blue Buddha Akshobhya. On the right side is the wrathful goddess Mahasahasrapramardani, with three faces and eight arms. Dark blue in colour with her right face red and left face white, she wears a crown of five skulls and has three eyes on each of her heads. In her tiger-skin skirt she tramples a pair of prostrate naked figures.

Closing Illustrations: On the left is the *bodhisattva* Mahakarunika, white in colour, with a single face and four arms. He holds a rosary and lotus. On the right is the goddess Tara, green in colour and seated in the position of royal ease with her right hand outstretched in the manner of granting a boon and her left at her heart with the stalk of a lotus between the fingers.





Text 3, ff 205-256

The Queen of the Spell of the Great Peacock[?]

TIB: Rig sngags kyi rgyal mo rma bya chen mo

SKT: Mahamayurividyarajni

Opening Illustrations: On the left is the yellow Buddha Ratnasambhava, his left hand in the gesture of bestowing prosperity with his outstretched right hand. On the right is the goddess Mahamayurividyarajni, also yellow in colour, with three heads and eight arms.

Closing Illustrations: On the left is the wrathful Vajrapani, dark blue in colour, in the fierce stance of a warrior brandishing the vajra, a metal weapon in the form of a sceptre and which has the symbolic properties of a diamond and a thunderbolt; this is his emblem. On the right side is the wrathful deity Hayagriva, red in colour, with a horse's head emerging from the top of his head.

Text 4, ff 257-292

The Great Goddess Who Repels Every Obstacle[?]

TIB: So sor 'brang ma chen mo bzung bar 'gyur ba'i gzungs

SKT: Mahapratisaradharani

Opening Illustrations: On the left is the Buddha Vairocana, white in colour, with the gesture of preaching. On the right is the goddess Mahapratisara, also white in colour, with four faces and eight arms.

Closing Illustrations: On the left is the two-armed form of the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteshvara, white in colour and holding a lotus. On the right is Vaishravana, king of the north, dressed in royal robes and boots and riding on a lion, he holds a royal parasol in his right hand and a mongoose in his left.

Text 5, ff 293-311

The Great Goddess of the Cemetery

TIB: gSil ba'i tshal chen mo'i mdo

SKT: Mahasitavana-sutra

Opening Illustrations: On the left is the Buddha Amitabha, red in colour, seated in meditation posture. On the right is the goddess Mahasitavani, red in colour, with twelve arms.

Closing Illustrations: On the left is the Buddha Acala, blue in colour, kneeling with upraised sword and noose held at his heart. On the right is the wrathful Niladanda, green in colour, brandishing a cudgel in his right hand and making a threatening gesture with his left.

Text 6, ff 312-323

The Sutra of She who Holds the Powerful Secret Mantras

TIB: gSang sngags chen po rjes su 'dzin pa'i mdo

SKT: Tibetan translation of the Mahamantranudhari-sutra

Opening Illustrations: On the left side is the Buddha Amoghasiddhi, green in colour, displaying the gesture of fearlessness. On the right side is the goddess Mahamantranudhari, green in colour, with three faces and six arms.

Closing Illustrations: On the left is a depiction of a famous sandalwood statue of the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteshvara, standing, red in colour, and holding a lotus. On the right is the wealth deity Jambhala, golden yellow in colour and holding a mongoose.



The Sutra of Golden Light

3 (7625)

TIB: Gser 'od dam pa mchog tu rnam par rgyal ba'i mdo

SKT: Suvarnaprabhasottama-sutra

CHI: Jin guang ming jing

Central Tibet or Dolpo

14th - 15th century

4 miniatures

Tibetan manuscript on cream paper, 192 leaves with Tibetan script in black ink, 4 miniatures, decorated wooden covers

58 x 19 cm

This is an unusual copy of *The Sutra of Golden Light*, translated into Tibetan from the Chinese in the ninth century AD by the famous translator Go Chödrup. In the usual place for the Sanskrit title on the first page, we find the Chinese title instead. The opening and closing pages of the book are beautifully illustrated, and the wooden covers have fine vine-shaped decoration at the edges.

The cloth tag attached to one of the leaves of the manuscript was used for reference purposes for indexing when the book was on the shelf in the monastic library; it usually contains the volume number and the title.

The *sutra* was given its name from an event occurring in the third chapter of *The Sutra of Golden Light*, when a *bodhisatva*, Ruchiraketu, has a dream in which a great drum radiates a sublime golden light. This light symbolises the *dharma*, or teachings of Buddha. The main message of this *sutra* conveyed that the Four Guardian Gods would protect a ruler who properly governed his country, and it was regarded with particular importance in Japan. Consequently, this text was frequently recited in public in the belief that it would ward off threats.



Illustrations

Title page: On the left is Shakyamuni, yellow in colour. On the right Avalokiteshvara, white in colour and holding a rosary and lotus.

Final page: On the left, the white Padmapani, and on the right, Green Tara. Both goddesses are sitting in the posture of royal ease and holding the stem of a lotus flower to their hearts. Their right hands are held outstretched in the gesture of conferring boons upon the devotee.

On both the title page and the final page, the captions beneath the images are reversed so that the caption on the left refers to the image on the right, and vice versa.



Large illustrations from the Perfection of Wisdom in a Hundred Thousand Lines

SKT: Satasahasrika-prajnaparamita

TIB: Ses rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ston phrag brgya ba

Central Tibet

14th or 15th century

2 large miniatures

Single leaf from a Tibetan manuscript on cream and dyed paper, Tibetan script in gold on dyed black and burnished script area

67 x 27 cm

This is the opening page from a volume of *The Perfection of Wisdom in a Hundred Thousand Lines*. The page contains two unusually large and detailed illustrations of the Buddha Shakyamuni.

Illustrations

On the left is Shakyamuni in the gesture of touching the earth, calling the earth goddess to witness his enlightenment. He is seated on a lion throne, in a palace surmounted by the bodhi tree under which he attained enlightenment. On the right, Shakyamuni is displayed in the gesture of teaching. He is seated on a throne supported by two earth spirits, in a palace surrounded by goddesses making offerings and surmounted by the mythical garuda bird.





The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses

5 (6718)

TIB: Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa
SKT: Astasahasrika-Prajnaparamita Sutra

Central Tibet
circa 1500
24 miniatures

Tibetan manuscript on black paper, 345 folios, generally 7 lines of white-silver script, within a ruled frame, 24 illustrations, ornately carved boards, containing strapwork patterns within a blank border, stained red

19 x 68 cm

This manuscript has particularly fine, ornately carved wooden covers in a thirteenth century style, with images of the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism, coloured with black and red lacquer work. The left sides are carved with the face of the mythical garuda bird. The manuscript itself is a profusely illustrated copy of the *Prajnaparamita Sutra in Eight Thousand Verses*. The features of the images of Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* exhibit an essentially Nepalese style, though mixed occasionally with Chinese elements, such as the volumetric treatment of robes. The synthesis of the earlier Nepalese and Pala styles with currents from China at the beginning of the fifteenth century paved the way for the emergence of later schools of Tibetan painting. This manuscript stands as an early example of this hybrid Indo-Nepalese and Chinese style.

Illustrations

Folio 1: On the left is the goddess Prajnaparamita, flanked by two female attendants. On the right is the Buddha Shakyamuni, in the earth-touching gesture and flanked by his monk disciples Sariputra and Maudgalyayana.

Folio 2, recto: On the left is Amitayus, the Buddha of long life. On the right is the Medicine Buddha, Bhaisajaguru.

Folio 2, verso: On the left is the Buddha Ratnasambhava. On the right is the Buddha Ashoka [Mya ngan med pa].

Folio 3, recto: On the left is [Rin chen 'od 'phro]. On the right is [Rgyal ba'i dbang po]

Folio 3, verso: On the left is [Ting 'dzin glang po dpal mnga']. On the right is [Pad mo dam pa].

Folio 4, recto: On the left is [Nyi ma snang ba'i dpal]. On the right is [Gdugs mchog dam pa'i dpal].

Folio 4, verso: On the left is [Pad mo'i dpal nyid]. On the right is [Dga' ba'i dpal chen].

Folio 5, recto: On the left is Vajrapani in wrathful form. On the right is Hayagriva.

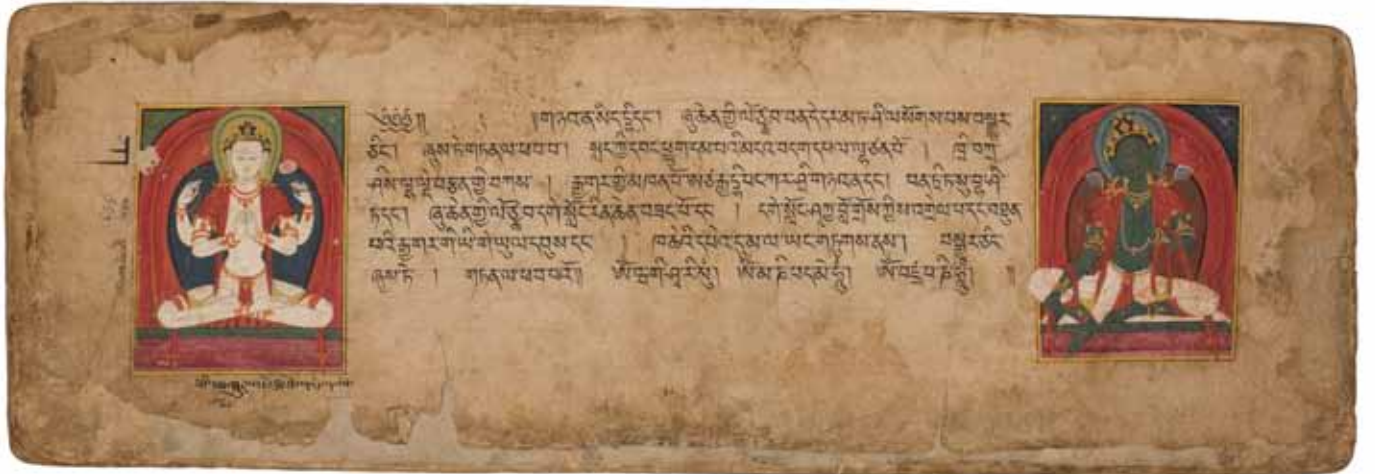
Folio 5, verso: On the left is Manjushri. On the right is the four-armed form of Avalokiteshvara.

Folio 6, recto: On the left is Maitreya, the future Buddha. On the right is Indra, the lord of the gods.

Folio 6, verso: On the left is the Buddha's disciple Shariputra. On the right is the Buddha's disciple Ananda.

Folio 7, recto: On the left is the *bodhisattva* Dharmatgata, below which is a smaller image of the female *bodhisattva* Tara. On the right, mirroring this, is a portrait of a senior official and his wife (no doubt the patrons responsible for the manuscript).





The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses

6 (6766)

TIB: Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa
SKT: Astasahasrika-Prajnaparamita Sutra

Tibet, perhaps Dolpo
15th century
4 miniatures

Tibetan manuscript on paper, 343 leaves of white paper ruled for writing with faint red borders, Tibetan script in black ink in 8 lines per page, carved wooden covers

22 x 65 cm

This manuscript is in very good condition, written in black and red ink on fine cream coloured paper. The first and final leaves are illustrated with beautiful images of Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*. The first leaf is reinforced with six further leaves for strength, and contains the manuscript's library tag on silk cloth, which would have identified the text in the manuscript's original setting: a monastic library. The manuscript closes with a long colophon explaining how the *sutra* was originally translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan in the eighth century, and later revised in the eleventh century.

Illustrations

First folio: On the left is the historical Buddha Shakyamuni seated on stylised lion throne, flanked by his monk disciples Sariputra and Maudgalyayana. On the right is the dharmakaya form of Amitabha, also seated on a lion throne, flanked by the *bodhisattvas* Padmapani and Vajrapani.

Last folio: On the left is the four-armed Avalokiteshvara, holding a rosary and a lotus, and described in the caption below as the tantric deity (*vidam*) Mahakarunika, 'the great compassionate one'. On the right is Green Tara, who represents the enlightened activity of Avalokiteshvara, and is said to have been born from one of his tears.



Handwritten text in a dark, rectangular frame, likely a manuscript page. The text is written in a cursive script, possibly Tibetan or Sanskrit. Two small, colorful illustrations of seated figures are visible, one on the left and one on the right, framed by red and yellow borders.

Handwritten text in a dark, rectangular frame, likely a manuscript page. The text is written in a cursive script, possibly Tibetan or Sanskrit. Two larger, colorful illustrations of seated figures are visible, one on the left and one on the right, framed by red and yellow borders. The text is arranged in several lines between the figures.

The Sutra of the Fortunate Aeon

7 (9420)

TIB: Skal pa bzang po'i mdo
SKT: Bhadrakalpika Sutra

Central Tibet

15th century

6 large illustrations and 502 miniatures

Tibetan manuscript on black paper, 257 leaves with script in alternating 8 lines of silver and gold, losses to edges and some distressed areas, with 6 large paintings and 502 small paintings, carved wooden covers

63 x 21 cm

This manuscript is unusual in several respects. The first three folios contain six very handsome large illustrations of the Buddhas of the past, present and future. These are in a Central Tibetan style influenced by the Newari art of Nepal, with denser and darker colours typical of Central Tibetan painting. The first letters of the title page are written in monumental style in gold ink, and below them the whole Tibetan alphabet is written: this is to purify oneself before reciting the *sutra*. Each leaf is decorated with two small miniatures of the Buddha. The leaves are also beautifully calligraphed in alternating lines of gold and silver ink, and the style of the knot used to tie the robe on Buddha, which is a Chinese style, does not appear before 1410 AD in illustrated *sutras* such as these. The wooden covers are carved with a geometrical pattern that may be as old as the thirteenth century.

This *sutra* is an important text iconographically as it provides a long description of a procession of Buddhas with all their attributes. The *Bhadrakalpika Sutra* provides an account of the Buddhas who have already appeared during this aeon: Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kasyapa, and Shakyamuni, and an account of the attributes of the thousand Buddhas yet to come: the circumstances of their birth, their special qualities, their disciples, their span of life and the duration of their teachings, and the relics they will leave.

For an English translation of this *sutra*, see *The Fortunate Aeon: How the One Thousand Buddhas Become Enlightened*, 4 vols., Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, CA 1986.

Illustrations

Folio 1: On the left is Shakyamuni Buddha performing the gesture of 'calling the earth to witness'. On the right is the Buddha of the past, blue in colour and flanked by two attendants.

Folio 2: On the left is Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, orange in colour and flanked by two attendants. On the right is a monk in the gesture of benediction towards Maitreya.

Folio 3: On the left is Manjushri, the *bodhisattva* of wisdom. On the right is Avalokiteshvara, the *bodhisattva* of compassion, in six-armed form.





A set of forty-two illustrated ritual cards (tsakali) depicting the hands of Avalokiteshvara

Central Tibet
15th century

A set of forty-two cards, opaque watercolour on brown paper, each margined with green and yellow borders, the reverse sides inscribed with Tibetan in u-med script, and numbered at the bottom

10 x 10 cm

This complete set consists of forty-two cards known as *tsakali*, which relate to the thousand-armed form of the deity Avalokiteshvara. Each card depicts a different *mudra*, or ritual hand gesture, most holding a symbolic object. The hands are all painted with orange henna on the underside, and have an eye set into the palm, the latter being a hallmark of an enlightened being. On the verso of all cards but one there is a description of the purpose of the *mudra*, and a *mantra*, and each is numbered from one to forty-one.

These cards would have been used to accompany tantric empowerment rituals, to be displayed by a lama in the course of the ceremony. The cards relate to ritual cycle of Avalokiteshvara, in the form with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes. The cards show the attributes of the deity's forty-two primary hands. The verso sides of the cards have the *mantra* of Avalokiteshvara, beginning with the well-known syllables: *Om mani padme hum*.

Illustrations

The set is comprised of the following illustrations of hands holding symbolic objects or performing *mudras*:

Wish-fulfilling jewel; Lasso; Begging bowl; Sword; Vajra; Pestle; Mudra of fearlessness; Ruby[?tse shel]; Crystal; Bow; Arrow; Flower; Fly-whisk; Water jug [?ril ba bting ka ra]; Solar disc [?spungs]; Axe; Crystal parasol [?shel gyi gdugs skor]; White lotus; Blue lotus; Mirror; Red lotus; Casket; Clouds of five colours ; Anointing vase; Flame-coloured devaputra flower; Trident; Conch; Key [?khri'i zur shing lta bu]; Rosary; Bell; Precious Seal; Hook; Monk's staff; Mudra of reverence; Buddha; Palace; Book; Wheel; Mudra of giving; The buddha Amitabha; Grapes on the vine.

The final card is without inscription or number, and shows a hand holding a jewel.





TIB: Skal pa bzang po'i mdo
SKT: Bhadrakalpika Sutra

Central Tibet

15th century

2 volumes, 4 large illustrations and
over 500 miniatures

Tibetan manuscript in two volumes, 606 leaves with Tibetan script in gold ink on mulberry paper, paper dyed black, text area burnished with rice powder, over 500 illustrations of various Buddhas and stupas, carved wooden covers

23 x 64 cm

This is a beautifully illustrated two-volume manuscript of *The Sutra of the Fortunate Aeon*, with intricate and detailed miniatures in the Newari style. As well as the large miniatures on the opening pages, every page of the manuscript is decorated with small miniatures showing the different Buddhas described in the *sutra*. An inscription below the monumental golden letters on the title page describes the beauty of the manuscript, comparing the paper to the blue of the sky, the paintings to the colours of the rainbow, and the writing to the gold and silver of the sun and moon. The verses also mention the sponsors who paid for the production of this exceptional manuscript.

Tibetan manuscripts were strongly influenced by Indian traditions. Many Tibetan manuscripts adopted the Indian *pothi* format, whereby a number of palm-leaf pages were held together by a string thread through the middle of the pages. Ninth-century Tibetan manuscripts in *pothi* format found in the Dunhuang caves attest to the longevity of this tradition. Though paper manuscripts do not need the string to bind the pages together, deference was still paid to the *pothi* format in what had become a purely decorative feature: circles drawn in the centre of the page through which the strings would have once run.

Illustrations

Volume I

Folio 1, recto: On the left is Prajnaparamita, the goddess of wisdom; on the right is Shakyamuni in the gesture of touching the earth.

Folio 1, verso: Drawn in red ink are images of fierce deities sworn to protect Buddhism.

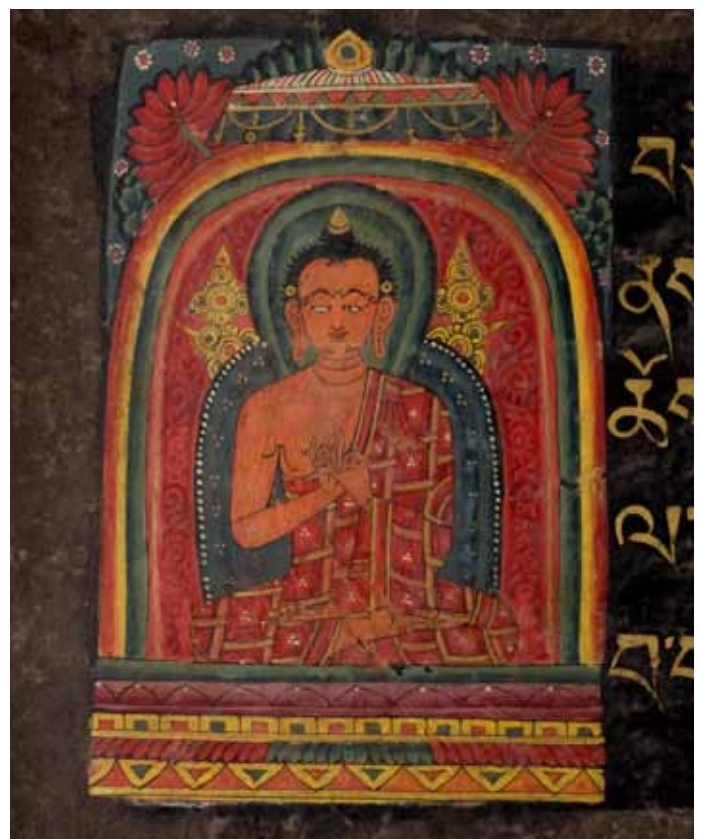
Folio 2, recto: On the left is the Buddha Amitayus.
On the right is the Buddha Amitabha.

Folio 2, verso: On the left is an unidentified Buddha.
On the right is the Medicine Buddha, Bhaisajaguru.

Volume II

Folio 1, recto: On the left is Shakyamuni in the gesture of touching the earth. On the right is an unidentified Buddha, blue in colour and holding a *vajra* and a bell.

Folio 2, recto: On the left is Shakyamuni in the gesture of touching the earth. On the right is an unidentified *bodhisattva*.





The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses

10 (3642)

TIB: Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa
SKT: Astasahasrika-Prajnaparamita Sutra

Tibet
16th century
2 miniatures

353 folios of white composite paper with 7 red-ruled lines in Tibetan except the opening leaves which have 3, 5, and 6 larger lines, with red chapter and section headings in the text. On the verso of the title page, which was originally blank, a later hand has added two verses of homage and written out the title again. This title page has both a yellow silk and a white paper guard attached.

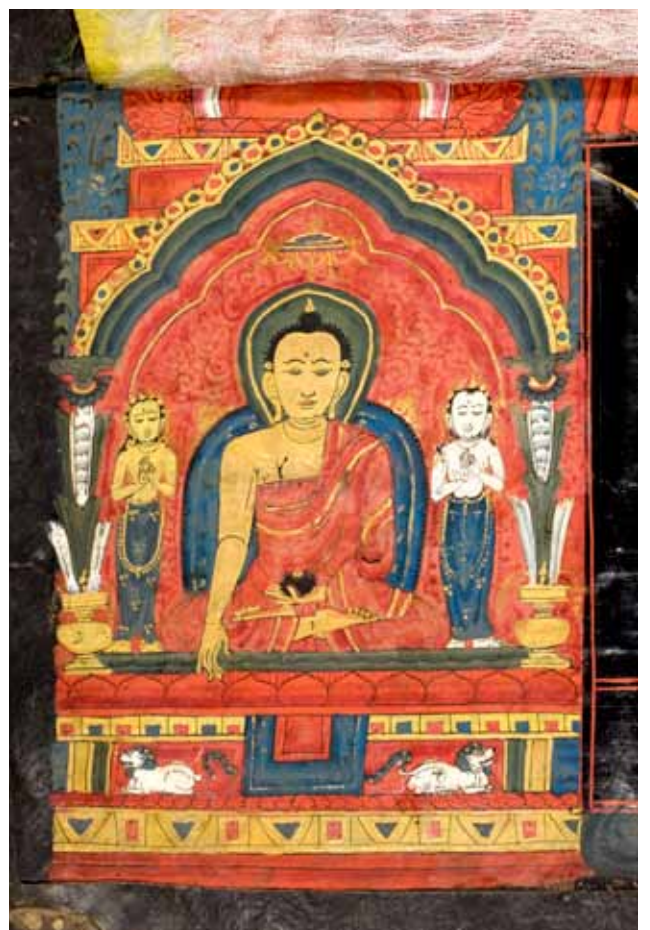
20 x 64 cm

This is a complete copy, in excellent condition, of *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses*. The pages are held between lacquered wooden book covers with a carved Sanskrit inscription in the sacred Lantsa script on the front cover, and a design of the Buddha and eight stupas on the top left side.

Illustrations

Folio 1: On the left is Shakyamuni Buddha seated cross legged on a simple lotus throne, his left hand upon his lap in the gesture of meditation and his right touching the ground in the gesture of calling the Earth Goddess to witness his defeat of Mara. On the right is Prajnaparamita, the goddess of wisdom. Golden in colour, this goddess has four arms with which she demonstrates immutability (with the vajra in her upper right), wisdom (with the book of knowledge in her upper left), fearlessness (the hand held in front of her chest repels evil forces) and meditative stability (with her lower left hand resting upon her lap).





The Sutra of the Fortunate Aeon

11 (8544)

TIB: Skal pa bzang po'i mdo
SKT: Bhadrakalpika Sutra

Central Tibet

15th - 16th century

2 volumes, with 7 large illustrations and
over 796 miniatures

Tibetan manuscript on paper, Tibetan script in gold and silver on dark blue/black paper, volume 1: 7 large illustrations, 400 small illustrations, 224 pages; volume 2: 4 large illustrations, 396 small illustrations, 242 pages, carved wooden covers

23 x 64 cm

This is an exceptional two-volume manuscript in Tibetan of *The Sutra of the Fortunate Aeon*. An inscription below the monumental golden letters on the title page describes the beauty of the manuscript, comparing the paper to the blue of the sky, the paintings to the colours of the rainbow, and the writing to the gold and silver of the sun and moon. The inscription concludes with the signature of the scribe, the "little scholar" Khabten Chöpel.

The large miniatures at the beginning of volume two depict the founding fathers of the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Thus the manuscript must have been commissioned by a patron of the Sakya school. The final leaf of volume two, illustrated with 26 tiny buddhas, contains the dedicatory verses, wishing the patrons a long life without illness.

These volumes are lavishly illustrated, with almost all of the pages having been painted with a pair of miniatures. Each page is marked with two red circles to symbolise the places where in an Indian *pothi* manuscript the pages would have been pierced. The sides of the pages are scored with the Tibetan letters *ka* and

kha on the end of each volume, denoting the first and second volumes of this *sutra*.

Illustrations

Volume I

Folio 1, recto: On the left is Shakyamuni in the gesture of touching the earth. On the right is Prajnaparamita, the goddess of wisdom. Both are coloured with gold paint.

Folio 2, recto: On the left is the Buddha Amitabha. On the right is the Buddha Amitayus.

Volume II

Folio 1, recto: On the left is the Indian tantric adept Virupa. On the right is Sachen Künga Nyingpo, who received Virupa's instructions in a dream.

Folio 2, recto: On the left is Sakya Pandita. On the right is Chögyal Pakpa, nephew of Sakya Pandita and ruler of Tibet alongside Khublai Khan in the thirteenth century.

Final folio, recto: a border of 26 different Buddhas surround the dedicatory verses for the two volumes.



Charm scroll with an apocryphal Buddhist text

12 (6108)

Tibet

17th century

Coloured illustrations on both sides

Paper scroll, Tibetan script in red and black ink, coloured illustrations on both sides

9 x 56.6 cm

One side of this remarkable manuscript is covered with text that claims to be *terma*, a hidden source of true Buddhist doctrine, hidden for centuries until human beings became able to comprehend its mysteries. It begins with invocations to the deities of the ten directions and pays them homage. Neither the names of the deities involved, however, nor the sacred realms from which they are invoked, are familiar from either Buddhist or Bonpo sources. The petitioner prays that he may enter each of these sacred realms in turn and afterwards return with the power to repulse the demons of that particular quarter.

This first section of text concludes: "May the darkness of the ten directions be cleared away and let auspiciousness prevail. For myself and my family circle, may there be good luck and the destruction of demons. *Om manidhari vajrapani svaha*. That concludes the sutra called 'The Noble Clearing Away of the Darkness of the Ten Directions'." The colophon claims it as a treasure text taken out from beneath the capital of a pillar in an unknown location. The next section of text follows without a break and claims to be translated from the Sanskrit. It consists of a long litany of unfavourable circumstances (astrological, demonic, natural, social, etc.) with a prayer that they may all be removed. After this come *mantra* and further spells for warding off evil and so on.

The other side of the scroll is covered with a long chain of talismanic charms, all in roundel form. Most of these consist of some kind of seed syllable encircled with the prayer "May we be protected from ..." or "May ... be driven away", each bearing the name of some specific type of demonic injury.



A collection of 16 folders of Sino-Tibetan prints associated with the cult of Vairocana Buddha, from the court of the Manchu emperor Kangxi

Dated to the 53rd year of the Emperor Kangxi (1714 AD)

China

1 woodblock printed illustration

318 leaves in 16 silk folders labelled A to M, Tibetan text with Chinese page numbers and occasional case titles, verse numbers, and date, some with manuscript replacement leaves

18 x 56.6 cm

This collection of prints comprises meditational and ritual texts of a devotee of the cult of the Buddha Vairocana, in addition to a variety of other liturgical texts.

Vol. A: (37 folios)

- Liturgical text, known as the 'mandala offering' describing the cosmos in simple terms as an offering to the tantric guru. The main features of the universe are listed in broken Sanskrit mantra form, glossed in Tibetan. Single folio.

- (xlyograph) Long life ritual, opening with a homage to the deity Manjughosa. Three folios.

- Single folio of a manuscript. Describing self-generation in the form of the wrathful Manjughosa with three faces and six arms. The right hand holds a *vajra* (thunderbolt), *cakra* (discus) and lotus; the left holds a bell, jewel and sword.

Vol. B: (30 folios)

- Portion of a ritual text devoted to Yamantaka wherein he is offered the seven precious jewels of sovereignty. Three folios.

- Khros, folios 2-9.

- Single folio, with prayers to lineage of lamas: bSod-nams rin-chen, Tshul-khri-m skyabs, etc.

- Ritual text on empowerment.

- Bdag, folios 22-32

- Single folio

- Vase empowerment ritual, ending on folio 5 with homage to Do-rje drag-po, the wrathful form of Padmasambhava.

Vol. C: (11 folios)

Ritual for the fierce golden liberation and the weapon for hurling against the enemy (*zor*) and the means of realizing the oath bound protectors of religion.

Vol. D: (4 folios)

- Text related to the establishment of deities in paintings, statues, etc.

- Sadhana related to the deity Guhyasamaja.

Vol. E: (17 folios)

-Ritual instructions on the offering of bali cakes to the great King Vaisravana.

Vol. F: (29 folios)

-Liturgical text on the 'Threefold Offering'.

Vol. G: (3 folios)

-Homage to Vajrabhairava.

Vol. H: (25 folios)

-Ritual text related to a wrathful deity.

Vol. I: (24 folios)

-Unidentified text, ending with homage to Sangs-rgyas dar-rgyas and his retinue of monks and laymen. Ends with a woodblock print of the kings ruling over the four directions: Dhrtarastra, Virudhaka, Virupaksa and Vaisravana.

Vol. J: (18 folios)

-A ritual in abbreviated form leading to the realisation of the six-armed Mahakala.

Vol. K: (23 folios)

-Lineage prayer for cult of Vairocana.

Vol. L: (39 folios)

-Mandala ritual text related to Vairocana.

Vol. M: (26 folios)

-A rNying-ma text concerning ritual offerings and praise to the 'enemy god' (dgra lha).

Vol. N: (11 folios)

-Unidentified ritual text by mKhas-grub 'Khyung-po.

Vol. O: (11 folios)

-Text concerning the vase ritual of Vairocana.

Vol. P: (20 folios)

-Ritual of self-empowerment related to Vairocana.



An Astrological Divination Manual

14 (9377)

Central Tibet

18th century

Numerous illustrations and astrological diagrams

Tibetan manuscript on paper, 46 bound leaves with Tibetan script in black and red ink, several illustrations and astrological diagrams, contemporary blue silk cloth covers

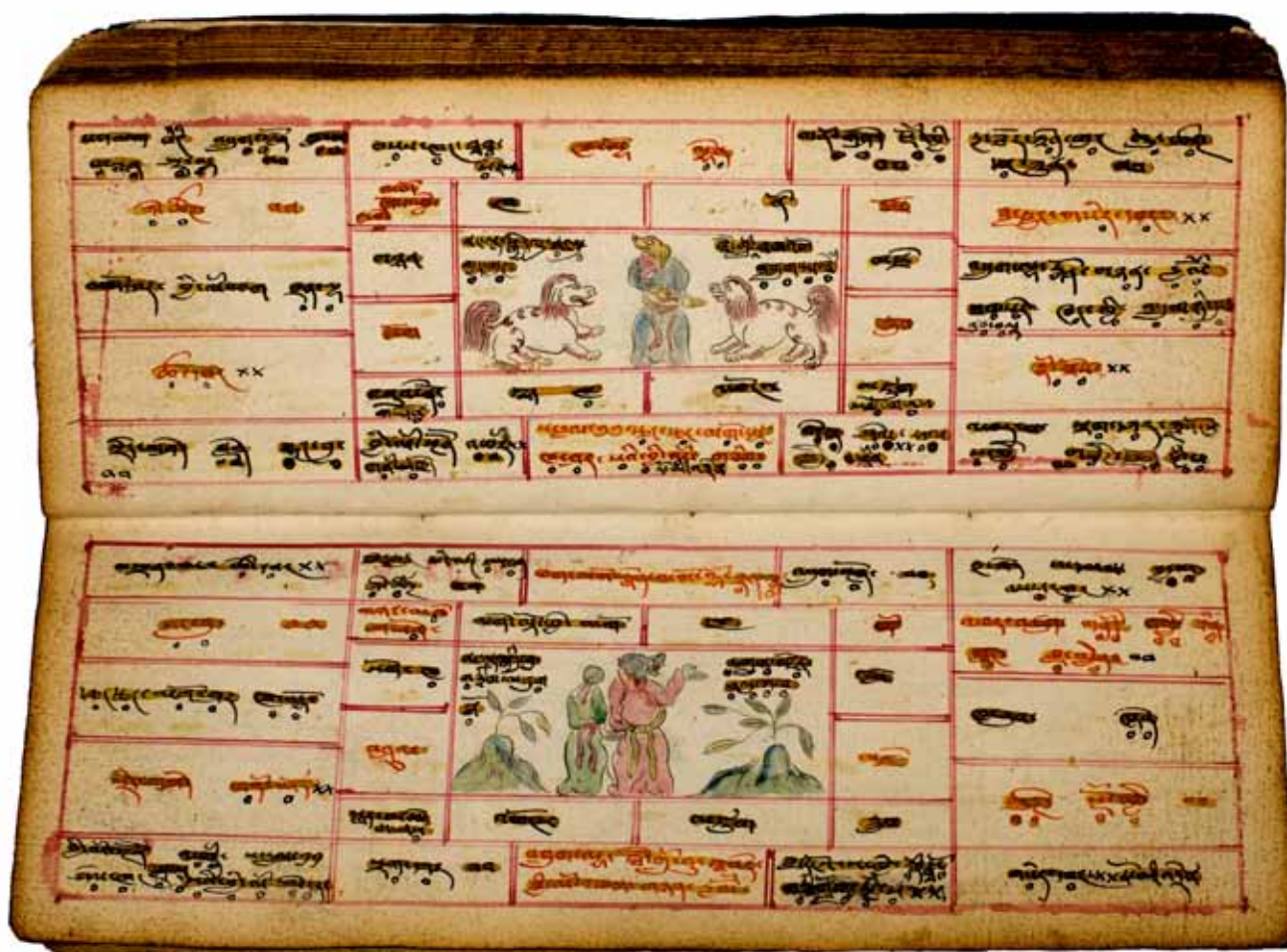
8,5 x 21,7 cm

This is a short, elegantly illustrated manual on astrological divination according to the Tibetan tradition; its pocket-sized nature suggests that it probably would have been carried by a professional astrologer. The style of painting and the layout of the manuscript are similar in appearance to the White Beryl manuscript, illustrated by G. Dorje, *Tibetan Divination Paintings: Illustrated manuscripts from the White Beryl*, London, 2001.

After six folios of introductory text, the manual consists almost entirely of illustrated diagrams relating to the sixty-year cycle named after various animals to the fluctuating influences of the elements as they impinge upon the life force (*srog*), physical health (*lus*), personal power (*dbang thang*), and good fortune (*klung rta*) of beings. Although this system is of Chinese origin, the chart attempts to give both Sanskrit and Chinese names

for each of the sixty years. Also calculated here are the various combinations of the nine *sme ba*, represented by the numbers one to nine, with the five elements, the twelve zodiacal animals, and the various trigrams (any of the eight possible combinations of three whole or broken lines used especially in Chinese divination) as adapted from the Chinese *Yijing*.

The next series of charts depicts the auspicious and inauspicious omens to be interpreted in connection with each of the twelve animals of the zodiac, in turn. The nine *sme ba* are depicted again at the end of this first text, now in nine small roundels showing the changing pattern of their cyclical relationship to one another as time goes by. Each *sme ba* is associated with a specific colour, symbolic of its particular function. The volume closes with three pages of text.



Selections from the Perfection of Wisdom in a Hundred Thousand Lines

15 (4313)

SKT: Satasahasrika-prainaparamita

TIB: Ses rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ston phrag brgya ba

Ladakh

18th century

Tibetan manuscript, 216 leaves of black and cream mulberry paper with Tibetan script in silver ink, title page missing, chapters present: 38, 40, 45, 47

45.5 x 12 cm

This manuscript consists of a miscellaneous collection of passages from *The Perfection of Wisdom in a Hundred Thousand Lines*. On average, these sections are from ten to twenty leaves each. Compilations of this type are not uncommon and reflect the central importance of *The Perfection of Wisdom* to Tibetan Buddhism.

The background to the text area is black, polished by rice powder for preservation purposes. On many folios, the polish

spills over onto the frame portion of the folios. There is reason to believe that this manuscript has not been opened for a long time, since many of its pages are firmly joined together. The writing is in silver ink, and the quality of the calligraphy has the 'rough and ready' appearance found in manuscripts from Ladakh. The state of conservation and the medley of pages suggest that this manuscript never belonged to a well-organised monastic library, but was kept in private hands for occasional consultation or purposes of worship on the family altar.



Notes on the Rol-pa'i Do-rje's Biography of the Seventh Dalai Lama by 'Madman' Phuntshog

Central Tibet

Late 18th century or early 19th century

Tibetan manuscript on paper, 384 leaves with text in 7 lines of highly cursive dbus-med script in black ink, with original red lacquer wooden covers

31.5 x 7.5 cm

This curious manuscript is purportedly by an author who calls himself the 'Madman (*smyon*) Phuntshog' in the colophon. He describes how he has based his biographical notes on the full biography of Kelsang Gyatso, the seventh Dalai Lama (1708-57 AD), entitled *Dpag bsam rin po che'i sne ma* ('Chaff of the Precious Wish-Granting Gem'). The original biography was written by the Lcang-skya Hutugtu, Rol-pa'i Do-rje (1717-86 AD), the famous Mongolian polymath who was friend and tutor to the Chinese Emperor Qianlong. Madman Phuntshog claims that he has removed unnecessary portions of the text, such as the initial salutations, Dalai Lama's poems and songs, and lists of names of unimportant Tibetans, Chinese, Mongolians and Khampas.

In the eighteenth century, Tibetans turned to a western Mongol tribe, the Dzungars, to oust Lhasang Khan. The Dzungar Mongols attacked Lhasa and killed Lhasang Khan in 1717

AD. The Dzungars, in turn, were ousted by a Chinese army, which in 1720 AD installed as the Seventh Dalai Lama Kelzang Gyatso. A scholar and poet, he preferred to let ministers attend to the affairs of Tibet. It was during his reign that an ordinance formulated by the Chinese government gave the Dalai Lama rule over Tibet, but attempted to strip him of any real political power. All decisions were supposed to be dictated by a resident Chinese official known as the *amban*. The authority and function of the *amban* is still disputed today.

This set of notes on the biography of the Seventh Dalai Lama is unrecorded and likely exists only in this single manuscript. The original work, the *Skal bzang rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* ('Biography of Kelsang Gyatso') by Rolpe Dorje, is among the works of the Library of Congress Tibetan collection (PL 480).



A Selection of Charms Collected by W.Y. Evans-Wentz

17 (1655)

Tibet or Sikkim
Early 20th century

Paper, 4 block-printed sheets, in Tibetan and Sanskrit

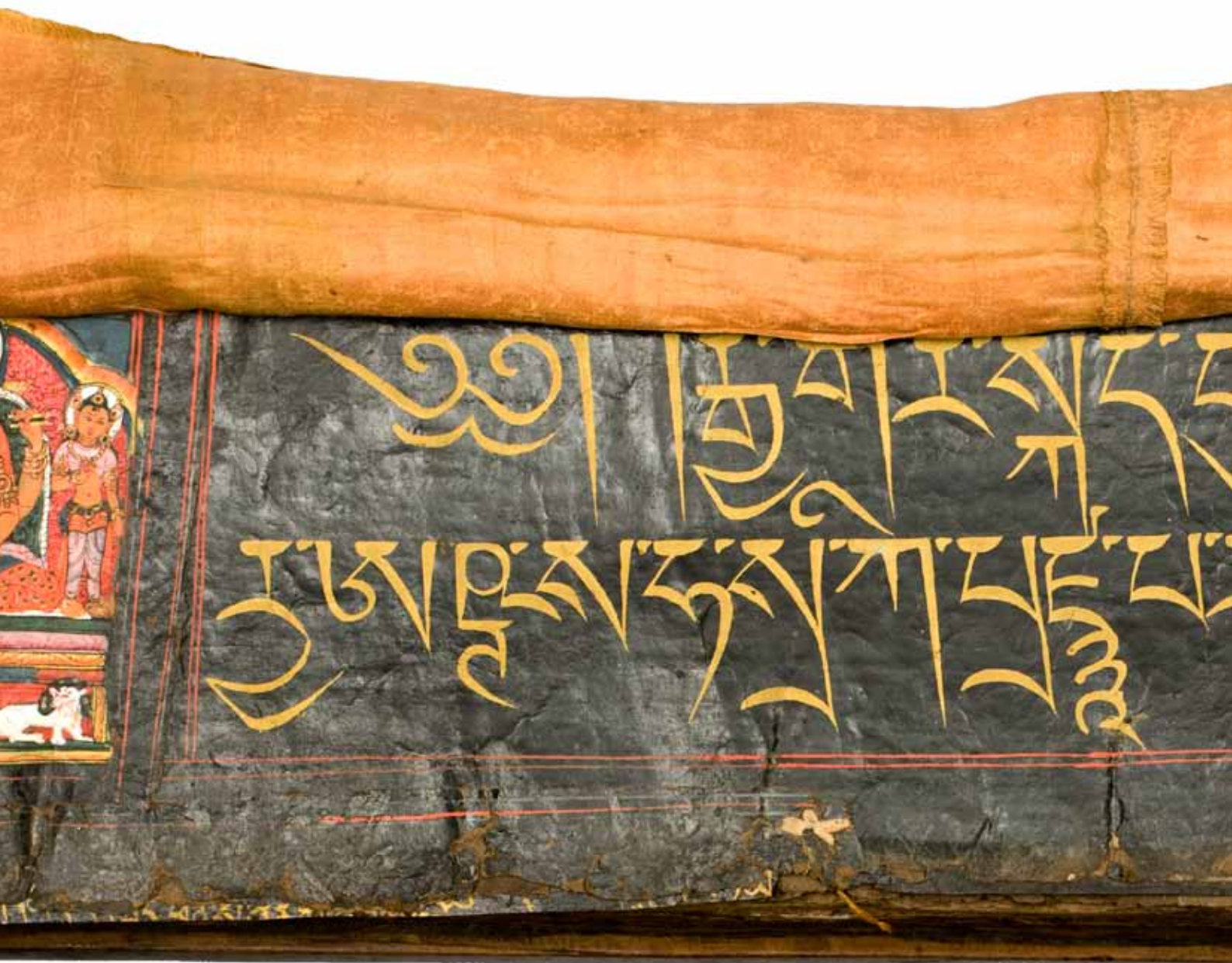
28. x 15 cm; 35 x 22.5 cm; 6 x 31 cm

These artefacts are charms, such as are hung on houses, bridges and temples to repel evil influences. They were collected at the beginning of the last century by the distinguished American Tibetanist W.Y. Evans-Wentz (1878-1965 AD), editor of the English translation of the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*. Sometime around 1918 he was commissioned by the United States Consul at Calcutta, C. Haywood, to assemble a representative collection of Tibetan manuscripts. These are a part of that collection. They are preserved in an envelope addressed to Evans-Wentz in Gangtok, Sikkim. A note on the envelope says:

“This contains samples of charms such as are hung up on houses, on bridges, round about temples, and other places to repel evil influences from spiritual beings.”

The large monogram in the centre of one of the charms is the device of the ‘ten interlocking syllables of power’ (*spungs yig rnam dbang ldan*), a design featuring the syllables of the mantra of *Kalacakra*, the deity known as the ‘Wheel of Time’. In the four corners are the names of the guardian animals of the elemental world: tiger (top left), lion (top right), eagle or mythical *garuda* (lower left) and dragon (lower right). The text consists of mantras to popular deities, *om vagishvari mum* (Manjusri), *om mani padme hum* (Avalokitesvara), *om vajrapani hum* (Vajrapani), and so on. One of the sheets invokes the tiger, lion, eagle and dragon to be present here at this place and promote the welfare of its inhabitants.





SAM FOGG

15D Clifford Street
London, w1s 4JZ