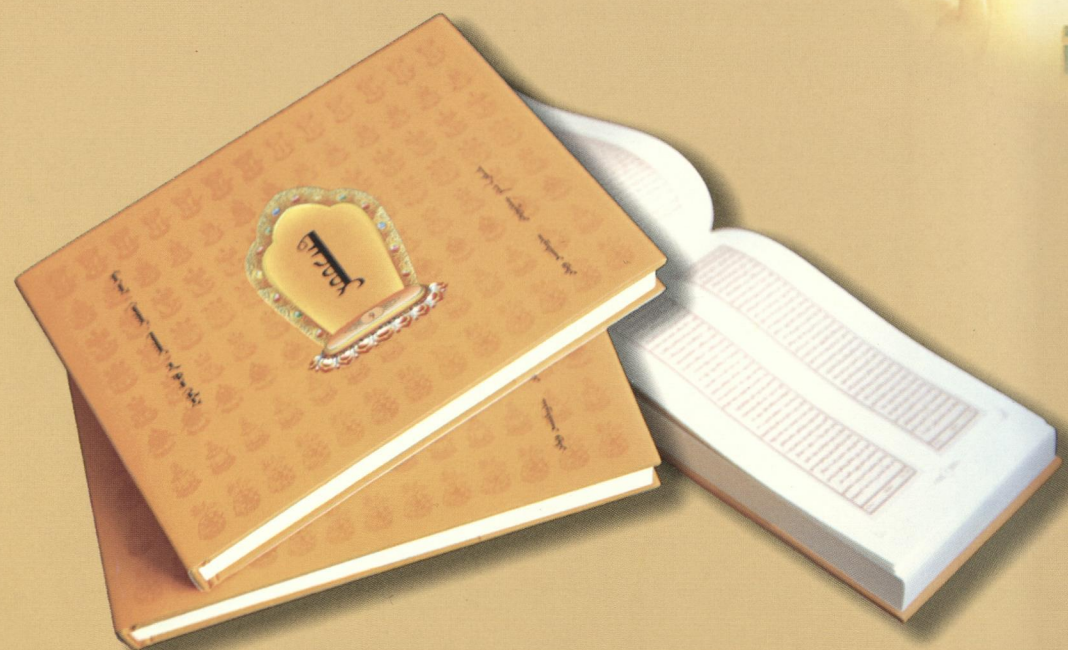


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Notice of Subscription to *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian

Buddhism, which originated and later disappeared in ancient India, found China as its second hometown. After circulation in China, Buddhism formed its Chinese characteristics, with the combination of herding and farming civilizations, and developed into a variety of sects.

In history, nomadic ethnic groups on the Mongolian Plateau, such as Xiongnu, Yueshi, Jie, Shi, Qiang, Xianbei, Rouran, Tujue, Huihe, Qidan, Nü zhen, Dangxiang and Mongol, all had faith in Buddhism. Minority nationalities like Tubo on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and Dai on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau also believed in Buddhism. And the Chinese nation in the Central Plains first accepted Buddhism through minorities in the Western Regions and on the Mongolian Plateau.

Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism later became the three foundation stones of the traditional culture in China's Central Plains. At present, Buddhism still has a great influence on China as well as many other parts of the world. The Buddhist classics preserved in China, in the Han, Tibetan, Mongolian, Manchu, Dai, Western Xia and other languages and in various editions, are valuable possessions in China's treasure house of multi-national cultures.

The publication of the collated photocopy of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian, undoubtedly the rescue of the cultural heritage of the Mongolian nationality, and a tremendous achievement in the construction of the Inner Mongolia National Culture Zone, has great significance and a far-reaching influence.

China is a country that preserves the most ancient Buddhist classics. Sanskrit, meanwhile, is a mixed language which has borrowed some noun terms from the Huns and other nationalities. In accordance with the needs of the centralized system, Buddhist classics in Sanskrit were engraved on copper plates, allegedly hidden in stone houses. Since then, Buddhist classical works have been preserved formally in Sanskrit records.

Buddhist Scriptures, the title given by Chinese Han nationality, first

called "All Scriptures" or "The Tripitaka", refers to the confluence of the scriptures, disciplinary rules and treatises of Buddhism.

During the 261 years between 945, when Old Tang Book was completed giving an account of Mengwu Shiwei tribe for the first time, and 1206, when Genghis Khan founded the Mongolian Empire by unifying various Mongolian tribes, Mongolia underwent successive reigns of the Tang, Liao and Jin dynasties established by Xianbei, Qidan, Nü zhen and other ethnic groups.

Archeological data prove that some Mengwu Shiwei people began to accept inland Buddhism during the rule of Qidan in the Liao Dynasty. After they migrated west to the Mongolian grassland from the Greater Xing'an Mountains east of the Ergun River, the Mengwu Shiwei people came into contact with the tribe speaking the Tujue language. There were chances that the Buddhist classics in the Sogdian and Huihe languages were the earliest ones spreading in Mongolian tribes. Almost 500 years passed from the 13th century when Buddhist classics were translated into Mongolian to the 17th century when *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian took shape.

In 1209, the State of Huihe came under the State of Mongolia, and its khan Barshu Artedejin was conferred the fifth son of Genghis Khan. Huihe monks were put in key positions, taking on joint responsibility with Tibetan and Mongolian monks for the translation of Buddhist classics into Mongolian. Shuosiji Wujier, Bilannashili, Xilabusengge, monks of the Sakya sect, became the three famous translators of Buddhist scriptures in Mongolian in the Yuan Dynasty. They devoted all their lives to the translation of large numbers of Buddhist classics in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Huihe and Chinese into Mongolian.

From then on, the practice has lasted of writing notes and adding annotations after translating Buddhist scriptures into Mongolian. Notes refer to the writing at the end of the scriptures, recording the translators and copyists, giving reasons for the translation and copying, etc. However, the notes often concern various areas including politics,

economy, culture, official positions, names of places and persons, and social life. The translators, in the meantime, expressed their thoughts and understanding and put forward their own philosophy. Moreover, the Buddha's discourses and commentaries in the Mongolian version all have at the beginning the expressions, for instance, "In Sanskrit, it means", "In Tibetan, it means", "In Mongolian, it means", etc., indicating the authenticity and credibility of the translated classics. The names of the translators are given before the text of the Chinese version. The Mongolian version of the Buddhist scriptures, with unique local and national features formed in the notes, annotations and styles, has become valuable data for the research on various fields of Mongolian studies.

After the downfall of the Yuan Dynasty in 1368, its ruling clique retreated from the inland to the Mongolian prairie. In the early 15th century, Mongolia was split into two major parts, Mongolia and Oyrat. In 1437, Master Tuohuan and Master Yexian, the father and the son, of Oyrat once unified the different tribes of Mongolia and Oyrat. After he became a khan, Yexian suggested that the Ming court appoint the lama under him as Master of the Country. In view of this, Buddhism, after the extinction of the Yuan Dynasty, did not vanish in the Mongolian region.

In 1578, Altan Khan, head of the Tumd tribe of the Mongolian right wing, held a meeting at the Chaboqiayale Temple in Qinghai with 100000 people present, who were of the Mongolian, Tibetan, Han, Uygur and other nationalities, greeting Sonam Gyatso, chief of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, and conferring on him the title of "Waqier Dala Dalai Lama sacredly discerning all things", which is still in use today.

At that time, a series of important decisions were made including the translation of Buddhist scriptures. In the spirit of the meeting, the Dazhao Temple, Xilitu Monastery and other monasteries were built in succession in Hohhot. Erdeni Monastery, the first of its kind in Khalkha Mongolia, was set up near the ruins of Halahelin, the capital of Mongolia north of the Great Desert.

State Preceptor Xiletu from Tibet, State Preceptor Ayoushi of the

Khalaqin tribe of the Mongolian right wing, Duoluonata of the Khalkha tribe of the Mongolian left wing, Zaya Bandita Namuhai Zhamusu of Oyrat Mongolia and others translated one after another a large number of Buddhist classics into Mongolian, some of which were once published in block-printed edition. For the sake of the accurate translation of Buddhist classics in Sanskrit and Tibetan, Ayoushi used the Tibetan alphabet to create the Mongolian Ali Gali alphabet, which later served as serial numbers of *Buddhist Scriptures* in the Mongolian language.

Between 1602 and 1607, the two State preceptors mentioned above, supported by 30000 feudal lords of the right wing of Tumd and other tribes, organized the Mongolian and Tibetan scholars of Buddhism to complete the translation of the 108 volumes of *Kangyur* into Mongolia and bound them into a book. In 1628, Lingdan Khan of Qahar Mongolia defeated the 30000 lords of the right wing and asked Gonggawujier and Samudan Sengge, famous scholars of Buddhism and translators, to take charge and they succeeded in 1629 in translating 113 volumes of *Kangyur* into Mongolian and made manuscript copies with gold and silver powder. Obviously, the latter were completed by supplementing the former ones.

This marked the formation of *Kangyur*, the main part of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian, and Mongolian Buddhism. In almost a century from 1629 to 1720 when the block-printed edition was published, the two kinds of manuscript copies of *Kangyur* in Mongolian spread widely in the Mongolian region. In the ten banners of Nenkerqin in Jirem League in the Qing Dynasty, handwritten copies of *Kangyur* in Mongolian in gold and silver words were found in most of the great monasteries. However, they were all transferred editions. It is not clear, at least at present, from books in which language the two kinds of manuscript copies of *Kangyur* in Mongolian were translated, and whether they were based on the Mongolian translation of the classics in the 13th century. This remains to be solved only after the publication of the book and its thorough research as well.

Professor Suganuma Akira, former president of Toyo University and

appraisal member of Japan Buddhist Studies Association, holds that the “*Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian is not only a translation of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Tibetan, but also the essence of Mongolian culture and a world-famous cultural legacy. The Mongolian nationality, through the translation of Buddhist classics, absorbed various Western cultures and brought about, both materially and mentally, profound changes of Mongolian culture. The Mongolian translation of Buddhist scriptures, especially using directly the classics in the Indian Sanskrit language, records many things that are not found in the Tibetan edition.

During the general survey of place names in China in 1981, an inscribed board of the temple for the Mongolian Baiyao tribe was discovered in Sumuqin Village of Yulin Commune in the eastern suburbs of Hohhot, dated “the fifth of the fourth month of the eighth year of the reign of Emperor Wanli (1580)” and with five languages, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Han, Pakpa Mongolian and Huihe Mongolian, written on it. This indicates that the Mongolian people were familiar with the five languages mentioned above until the late 16th century. Therefore, Mr. Suganuma Akira’s opinion deserves consideration.

In 1716, Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, hearing that most of the Chasak Mongolian nobility had copies of *Kangyur* in Mongolian in their houses, asked Laxi, the Mongolian bodyguard, to convene ministers, guards, officials, clerks and others of the Eight Banners of Mongolia to make donations to cutting blocks for printing. Shanbalashi, beizi of Kalaqingushan in outer Mongolia, and Xili, beile of Sunite, held that “the copies of *Kangyur* in Mongolian existing today have been transferred through many hands, full of omissions and errors”, proposing “collating in detail *Kangyur* in the Mongolian language with the grandma-empress’ *Kangyur* in the Tubo language to make good omissions and deficiencies”.

The grandma-empress abovementioned referred to Empress Xiaozhuangwen of the Kerqin tribe of Mongolia, the mother of Emperor Shunzhi and grandmother of Emperor Kangxi. She was a superwoman, and a great thinker and educator in Mongolian history.

Kangyur in the Tubo language refers to the 106-volume *Kangyur* in Tibetan, published in block-printed edition, with Yongle edition as the master copy, in Beijing between 1683 and 1700. This block-printed edition in the Tibetan language was published in conformity with the wishes of Empress Xiaozhuangwen, the grandmother of Emperor Kangxi, colloquially called, therefore, the grandma-empress’ *Kangyur*.

Emperor Kangxi’s proposal of making donations to the block printing of *Kangyur* in Mongolian was met with a universal response from the Mongolians of the Eight Banners stationed in Beijing, the forty-nine banners of inner Chasak Mongolia, the nomadic Eight Banners of Qahar, and lamas in Beijing and other places. Under the direction of Mongolian monks and laymen and feudal lords such as Xiretuchur Jiluosangchuledumu, the Seal-holding Chasak Ta Lama in Dolonnur, Ta Lama Kangyur Baluosangchuledumu, Xili, Shanbalashi, and Demuchuge in Apkachi, the work of collation and revision was conducted at Huizong Monastery in Dolonnur. In 1720, Ta Lama Nurbugelong in Miaoying Monastery in Beijing, which had been a center for the block cutting of Mongolian classics since the Yuan Dynasty, was given 45000 plates, with words engraved on both sides, 108 volumes in all. The budget for engraving was 43688 taels of silver, and printing one set cost 2287 taels. This Mongolian edition of *Kangyur* has 5 fewer volumes than the handwritten edition in Lingdan Khan’s time, and 2 more volumes than the Tibetan edition, the format remaining the same as that of the Tibetan edition. No conclusions should be reached regarding its contents until a comparison between and a study of the Tibetan and Mongolian languages have been made.

Kangyur and *Tengyur* in the Mongolian language in the Qing Dynasty were revised, translated and published by Mongolians, to answer the call of the Qing government, through charitable activities on a large scale. *Tengyur* refers to the “Translation of Commentaries”, a collection of the translations of the interpretations and expositions of Sakyamuni’s discourses by the Buddha’s disciples. The translation of the classics of

Hidden Teachings into Mongolian, however, was completed in secrecy within the ruling clique of the Qing Dynasty. The so-called the classics of *Hidden Teachings* refer to the classics of the esoteric sect brought to the State of Tubo from India by Great Master Padmasambhava in the 8th century, when some of the classics of the esoteric sect were hidden in caves or buried under the ground, due to various causes involving politics, regions, etc., and "taken out for propaganda at favorable opportunities". Therefore, the later generations called them the classics of *Hidden Teachings*.

In Tibetan Buddhism, the Nyingma tradition, in particular, attached great importance to the classics of *Hidden Teachings*, while the Mongolian and Oyrat feudal lords in the Ming and Qing dynasties offered support to the Gelug school, worshipping Tsongkhapa and his two leading disciples Dalai and Panchen. In 1642, Gushi Khan of the Hoxut tribe of Oyrat Mongolia eventually put Losang Gyatso, the 5th Dalai, in the highest ruling position in Tibetan Buddhism. Losang Gyatso and Desi Sangjie Gyatso, attempting to eliminate the influence of the Nyingma tradition on the doctrine and support the State of Junggar politically, presented to the Qing government their demands that *The Classics of Padmasambhava* be banned throughout the country. Contrary to this, some people represented by Guoyi Prince Yunli, the 17th son of Emperor Kangxi, gathered and rearranged the classics of *Hidden Teachings* in the Sanskrit and Tibetan languages, and translated them into Mongolian for future use.

The only extant handwritten edition of the classics of *Hidden Teachings* in Mongolian, as rare historical data, with most parts of the book in the Sanskrit and Tibetan editions lost to the world and with no Chinese edition, is of significant reference value in the study of the relations between politics, religions and nationalities in the Mongolian and Tibetan regions in the Qing Dynasty.

Buddhist culture has rich connotation and Buddhist classics are voluminous. *Buddhist Scriptures* is not only a Buddhist book, but, all-inclusive and encyclopedic, a maxi-series of ancient books as well,

covering philosophy, history, languages, literature, art, astronomy, calendar operator, medicine, architecture and other areas.

Today, the publication of the collated photocopy of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian will undoubtedly open up broad new fields for the Chinese nomadic civilization and the research in Mongolian studies.

Through enduring efforts of the Mongolian and Tibetan men of insight, so far six volumes of *Kangyur* and two volumes of *Tengyur* in Mongolian have been preserved in China.

These Buddhist classics in Mongolian, in the block-printed edition or as handwritten copies, have all begun weathering, ink marks in many volumes or chapters having come off, and some of the chapters out of use. It is imperative that these precious classics be photocopied urgently. Otherwise, we would feel ashamed before our ancestors, and even more ashamed before our descendants, which will lead to immeasurable losses. In times of prosperity canons are revised. That is why Chinese culture has been inherited and passed on for thousands of years. In the past thirty years of the reform and opening, the collated edition and photo-offset edition of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Tibetan, Chinese and Manchu have been published in China, with the improvement of the cultural quality of the nation and the rapid development of economy. After almost ten years of preparation, *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian, as a significant project in 2007 dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the founding of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, has also been published in the collated photocopy edition. This is a great happy even in the cultural life of mankind, especially of all nationalities in China, a cause of boundless beneficence, and valuable cultural heritage left to later generations.

On January 18th, 2007, the Publishing Committee and the Editorial Board of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian were founded. And the latter, on the basis of efficient investigation and according to the needs of academic research, made a decision: the three complete sets of *Kangyur*, *Tengyur* and the classics of *Hidden Teachings* should be included in the collated photocopy of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian.

The copies collected in the Library of Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences were to be taken as the master copies of *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*, and the ones in Inner Mongolia Library and the National Library of Mongolia as reference versions. The missing *Collected Works of Tsongkhapa* and *Collected Works of Changkya Hutuktu Ngawang Choten* would be supplemented separately with the block-printed editions published in Beijing in the Qing Dynasty, collected in Inner Mongolia Library. For the most part, the only existing handwritten copy in the Library of Inner Mongolia Normal University was to be used for the classics of *Hidden Teachings*.

Since a complete set of the collated photocopy of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian is of large dimensions, approximately 100 million words, its editing and proofreading costing a longer time, it is planned that the publication will be completed by stages and in batches in order of *Tengyur*, *Kangyur* and the classics of *Hidden Teachings*. Before the main body of both *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*, there is a volume of the original table of contents in four languages, Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan and Manchu. *Kangyur*, *Tengyur* and the classics of *Hidden Teachings* each have a collated volume attached to the end of the main body. Each of the present volume, based on the original, contains about 250 to 850 pages, with a table of contents of the volume in Mongolian at the beginning. At the end of each set of *Buddhist Scriptures* there are two volumes of “*Buddhist Scriptures · General Table of Contents*” in Mongolian and a volume of chronicle of events of photocopy publication and some of the research results. The complete set of *Buddhist Scriptures* consists of 400 volumes or so, a project huge enough to be called the most voluminous series of the documents of the Mongolian nationality.

On the occasion of the publication of the collated photocopy of *Buddhist Scriptures* in Mongolian, we offer our deeply felt thanks to the leaders at all levels and the related organizations that have provided support for the work.