



Cataloguing the “Newark Kanjur”

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Since A.D. 1920 the Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey, has kept 23 volumes of Buddhist scriptures from Bathang in Khams. The books, written in silver on black blue dyed paper, date back into the 15th to 16th century. They are stray volumes belonging to the main sections of a *bKa’-’gyur*, viz. *’dul-ba*, *’bum*, *brgyad-stong*, *phal-chen*, *mdo*, *’das-mdo*, and *rgyud*. Therefore, the designation “Newark Kanjur” (hereafter: NK) has come into use in spite of its limited number of volumes.

In research, the NK has so far only been utilized for editing some relatively short texts. From the study of the Mahāsūtras (Skilling 1994) it has become obvious that the NK is a local compilation that cannot be regarded as related to the main-stream transmission of Tibetan Buddhist texts translated from the Sanskrit. A detailed investigation of the Tathāgatarbhasūtra (Zimmermann 1998) shows that the NK comprises at least this text in a translation divergent from that contained in the common canonical tradition. These features already classify the NK as a Kanjur comparable to the Phug-brag and the O-rgyan-gling manuscripts. Thus the testimony of the NK is extremely valuable for editing canonical texts.

A preliminary list of the texts in the NK became accessible in 2000 (Skilling). For twelve out of the 15 volumes of the Sūtra section it relies mainly on tables of contents, which are written on slightly smaller leaves added to the individual volumes. Where such tables of contents are missing, the preliminary list does not record all titles contained in the respective volume. On the occasion of the 6th Seminar of the IATS, the present writer was requested to participate in a precise description of the NK. At that time four colleagues were willing to participate in the project. A preliminary basic catalogue of two volumes was already published in the proceedings of the 9th Seminar of the IATS (Dietz 2002).

The paper outlines the basic plan for the catalogue and presents some further observations gained during the cataloguing project.