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ORIGINAL TIBETAN MATERIALS IN UKRAINE¹

The Kyiv Museum of Bohdan and Barbara Khanenko (Western and Eastern Art) possesses one of the most interesting collections in Ukraine. Its occidental collection is relatively well known not only in Ukraine, but all over the world. The Museum's pictures were exhibited in London (1995), Lahti (Finland, 1998) and Athens, Salonika (Greece, 1998). Over the last few years the world community had the opportunity to rediscover for itself a "new" collection with Zurbaran, Peruginos, etc.

A huge Oriental collection from China, Japan, Iran, as well as ancient Greece and Rome lies dormant for the last ten years due to Museum's renovation works and has never been exhibited abroad. Besides, there is an original collection of thangkas, sculptures, ethnographic objects, applied arts and books, representing the culture of Tibet and territories influenced by Tibet, such as Mongolia, Buryatia, Kalmykia and Tuva.

This part of the collection is known by two or three publications of separate images of Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. In the 1950s–1970s Mr. Alexander Kryzhytsky, the Head of Oriental section, made great efforts to enhance its fame and recognition. Thanks to him, George Roerich saw this collection in 1959. Ms. Evelyn Ganevskaya and Mr. Alexander Dubrovin (Moscow) and other experts saw this collection, later helping in the attributing of pictures. Unfortunately, the Museum's scientific workers didn't get an opportunity to meet with Tibetans, who studied in Kyiv in those years, among them Agvan-Rabgyal, who then became of the 14th the Dalai-lama representative in Moscow.

So, for a long time these materials were stored in Museum vaults and have never been fully examined as Ukraine lacked qualified specialists to study these original materials and the possibilities to exhibit them all.

The situation changed when Ukraine became independent. Nearly 26 Buddhist communities, among them the Tibetan Gelugpa (Dge-lugs-pa) and Kagyupa (Bka-brgyud-pa) schools were registered all around country. Besides, the Tibetan language had been taught for two years in the charitable society "The Far East". New materials were discovered and old ones became more accessible those about the missionary activities of Ukrainian Orthodox priests in Peking and the Russian Buddhist territories during the last 250 years. New interest in Tibet, its history, art and Buddhist thought emerged. That's why a whole section devoted to Tibetan art and on territories influenced by its culture, was exhibited in the Museum of Russian Art, in the Oriental exhibition of the Kyiv Museum of Western and Eastern and Art. In summer 1996, during the preparation of this exhibition, a dire need to investigate this collection systematically and publish its catalogue arose.

The short preliminary description of this collection was the result of common work by the author with Ms Galina Belenko, the Head of the Eastern section of the Kyiv Museum of Western and Eastern Art with the support of its Director, Ms Vira

Vinogradova.

The formative sources of this collection are: the personal collection of Mr Bohdan Khanenko, the founder of the East-West Arts Museum, transfers from the other museums' collections, gifts and purchases of separate items and personal collections. The temporal limits of this collections are from the 16th and 17th centuries to the 1930s. The collection as such started its existence in the beginning of the 20th century. New purchases continue to be made, last receipt dates to May 1998.

According to the inventory books preserved in the Museum, the collection was founded by Mr Khanenko. In 1904 he bought some metallic effigies of deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. These are hollow rather than packed sculptures without any written inscriptions. The oldest of them is the effigy of Kye-rdo-rje yab-yum (570 ДБ). George Roerich attributed them to 16–17th centuries Tibet. The other two sculptures are the effigies of rDo-rje-'chang (566 ДБ) and Tsongkhapa Lobzang-dakpa (1357–1419) (562 ДБ). They are from Inner Mongolia as George Roerich considered and they date to the 18–19th centuries.

During the 1930s–1970s this collection was being completed thanks to transfers from various museums of Ukraine and the USSR. Painting (thangka), sculpture applied art objects and ritual objects were received from the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra in the 1930s; from the Kyiv Historical Museum in the 1950s–1960s; from the Museum of Eastern Peoples (Moscow) in the 1950s–1970s and exhibitions in the 1950s–1970s.

The so-called Museum Town on the Lavra territory in Kyiv consists of collections of former Orthodox Church-Archeological museums, transformed in Soviet times. That is why we can assume that all Buddhist receipts from these museums are connected with the stay of Ukrainian priests in the Russian Orthodox mission in Peking, or connected with their activity in Kalmykia, Buryatia, Tuva from the end of the 17th century till the beginning of the First World War in 1914.

It is quite possible that Tibetan icons, sculptures and objects of applied art are connected with names of Innokenty Kulchitsky, Gervasy Lentsovsky, Sofrony Grybovsky and other priests, graduates from the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy or Kyiv Ecclesiastic Academy, who took part in Peking Orthodox mission throughout the 18th and in the very beginning of the 19th centuries. There was a good Orthodox tradition of bringing various artifacts from countries they visited. For example. Porphyry Uspensky and Anthony Kapustin brought to Kyiv a unique collection of Greek manuscripts from the Near East.

The sculpture section is represented by effigies of Amitayus (tshe-dpag-med) and Amitabha ('od-dpag-med), the 16th–19th centuries, brought from Tibet, Inner Mongolia and perhaps from China. The predominance of exactly these images is the confirmation of their appearance in Kyiv from Peking, due to the above mentioned priests and taking into account the particular status of Amitayus' cult at the Qianlong Emperor's court.

Ritual subjects are two vajra, dated by George Roerich to the 18th–19th centuries and they are classified as Tibetan.

Thangkhas from Lavra, dated to the 18th–19th centuries are of Tibetan origin (Amdo, Kham, the Eastern Tibet) and Mongolian too and could have come from Peking. All of them have inscriptions on both sides. These inscriptions represent the names of characters on the icons and so are the prayers turned to these characters. There is the whole hierarchy of the pantheon in the collection. Buddhas – Buddha Shakyamuni from “Twelve Miracles of Buddha”, Tibet, the 19th century (486 ЖБ); 35 Buddhas of the cycle of the confession of sins, Mongolia, the 19th century (479 ЖБ); Buddha, Peking, the 18th century (477 ЖБ); Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (spyan-ras-gzigs), Mongolia, the 18th–19th centuries (476 ЖБ); Maitreya (byams-pa), Tibet, the 19th century (312 ЖБ); Tara (Sgrol-ma), Tibet, beginning of the 19th century (495 ЖБ); other characters. Dharmapala – Mahakala (mgon-po phyag-drug), Kham, the 17th–18th centuries (471 ЖБ); Tsiu-marpo, Tibet, Amdo, the 18th century (480 ЖБ) idam Samvara (bde-mchog) yab-yum, Tibet, the 18th century (494 ЖБ); Lokapala – Vaishravana (rnam-thos-sras), the Eastern Tibet, the 18th century (493 ЖБ). The above mentioned Mahakala and given Vaishravana were perhaps made at the same workshop. Multi-figure compositions are presented with the image of Sukhavati, Tibet, Amdo, the 18th century (488 ЖБ). There is the definite interest in the portrait of Qianlong – the emperor together with rJe-lCang-skya Rol-pa’i rDo-rje and two other teachers whose names are unknown, Tibet, Amdo, the 18th century (478 ЖБ).

Some images, brought from the Museum Town, are connected with the names of priests Kliment Fomenko, Melenty Selinhinsky, Modest Volynsky. Kliment Fomenko was in Kalmykia in the second half of the 19th century. There are icons in the collection received exactly from Kliment Fomenko. The Buryatian art school is represented by the icons received from Modest Volynsky, who was the Bishop of Irkutsk and from Melenty, who was the Buryat’s Bishop in the Selinhinsky Eparchy.

The origin of receipts from the Kyiv Historical Museum is unknown yet. The images, received from the Museum of Eastern Peoples (Moscow), according to the main curator of this museum Mr. Voitovych, are the parts of the collection of the famous Russian Mongolist Mr A. Pozdneyev, besides Kyiv, the items of this collection could be seen in the museum collections of other towns of Ukraine, such as Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy and Luhansk.

The third source of acquisition – gifts and purchases of separate subjects from Kyiv owners, and also buying of great private collections of Velychko, Vysotsky, Shcherbak. The collections of the last two collectors present rather history and culture of Buddhist Buryatia, as their collective activity took place just on its territory. Mainly, all icons, sculptures, written sources of these collections were discovered on, so-called sacred places and places of burials. As for collection of Velychko, it is unique by its compound.

Velychko’s collection was purchased in 1969 in Moscow. The attempt to establish in what way it was completed was in vain, except for a few items. This collection is of great interest because of the names of orientalists, travellers and scientists connected with it – Dalai-lama XIII, Peter Kozlov, Nikolai Roerich, Ilya Mechnikov, doctor

Badmayev.

In Kozlov's diaries some gifts are mentioned, especially ones he received from Dalai-lama XIII during the meetings with His Holiness in Urga in 1905 and in Gumbum in 1909. But the exact compound of gifts is unknown. In Velychko's collection two images – sculpture and thangkha – are connected with the names of Dalai-lama and Kozlov, and it is confirmed only by signs in Russian on these pictures preserving the old orthography. To the sculpture of one of the 16 archats (2114 ДВ) a metal table is attached with the note: "Dalai-lama's blessing to Kozlov, Urga, May 1905" ("Благословенье Далай-ламы П. К. Козлову, Урга, май 1905 г."). On paper label inside of the effigy is written: "Copper burkhan, the 18th century, handmade. Collection of Kozlov". ("Бурханъ медный 18 века ручной работы. Собрание Козлова"). Kozlov had reminiscences about copper burkhan, that was presented to him by Dalai-lama, it is possible that exactly the same sculpture is mentioned. A more beautiful gift is thangkha with a picture of Vajrabhairava (rDo-rje-'jigs-byed) (465 ЖВ), a small note in Russian says that the picture comes from Lama Jury monastery and is the work of master Sankhar. Kozlov mentioned that he received a beautiful burkhan as a gift from His Holiness in 1905. If the diary presents a true statement about this picture, to my knowledge it must be the first mentioning of painter's name on a picture. As far as neither in collection of the Hermitage, nor in collection of the Museum of Eastern Peoples, neither in published catalogues of Buryat Buddhist paintings, nor in any Kalmyk publications whatsoever, pictures with painter's name on thangkhas have been found yet, it is possible to meet such a phenomenon only in Tibet. But if the icon painting tradition is taken as a whole, such cases are seldom enough in Orthodoxy as well. The icon painting tradition is predominantly anonymous.

In the account of purchased items, in Velychko's collection there are two pairs of musical instruments (2124 ДВ). A hanging metal tablet is fastened to one of them with a note in Russian in the old orthography: "To deeply respected Roerich from Kozlov. S.-Petersburg, 1913". ("Глубокоуважаемому Н. К. Рерихъ от П. К. Козлова. С.-Петербург. 1913 годъ"). From the beginning Kozlov then Nikolai Roerich during their trips across the Central Asia paid attention to the special role of wind instruments in the sacred sermon and also in everyday life of Tibetans and Mongolians. Each of them wrote down some interesting information about wind instruments. Summarizing this information we may say that the instrument is called a teacher who brings new faith; the sound of the instrument which produces the neigh of magic hoarse helps in transferring the souls of righteous persons to Sukhavati; the instrument informs about the sermon; instrument by its sound drives away evil spirits which bring diseases and misfortunes. The last superstition coincides also with Orthodox tradition, as it is considered that the sound of the bell produces the same effect.

Connection in gift note with Kozlov's and Roerich's names, time and place, pointed there, with knowledge of specific functions of wind instruments, known by Kozlov and Roerich, testifies to unoccasional character of gift. On 21 February 1913 first divine service took place in the Buddhist Temple in St. Petersburg, unfinished at

that time. That is why in the fact of presenting of these musical instruments to Roerich, who took the most active part in decorating the Temple and was the member of Building Committee, Kozlov symbolically rendered the wish of successful completion of the building out of the successful completion of general matter – making Buddhist centre in European part of Russia and even Europe. The opening and consecration of the Buddhist Temple in Petersburg took place on 10 August 1915.

One more thankha (462 ЖВ) in Velychko's collection is connected with the name of the famous Ilya Mechnikov, a Noble Laureate. In 1911 Ilya Mechnikov and two of his students, Etienne Byurne and Lev Tarasevich, visited Kalmykia with the aim to investigate the outbursts of tuberculosis there. Thangkha is the picture of Tsongkhapa and two of his pupils. On the backside there is a note in Russian in modern orthography: "Gift to Mechnikov from the population for the anti-epidemic work together with Professor Tarasevich. From the Tarasevich Juliya Lvovna collection". ("Подарок И. И. Мечникову от населения за работу противэпидемического характера совместно с проф. Л. А. Тарасевичем. Из коллекции Тарасевич Юлии Львовны"). The arrival of famous scientist was known in the steppes of Kalmykia and the local authorities prepared themselves for it. Taking into account circumstances of Mechnikov's travel across Kalmykia, we may consider that this icon actually represents the painting school of Kalmykia. The gift is apparently of the symbolic character – the wish to underline the importance of then tradition of knowledge transmission from teacher to pupils. Perhaps the connection of names and images is a hoax by the collector. But the realities of the lives of the above mentioned men of science and art give no occasion for doubt.

Besides icons, connected with the names of distinguished men of science, Velychko's collection astonishes by its exceptional composition, by the splendiness of the presented items – specimens of painting, sculpture and applied art that testify not only to Tibetan artistic tradition, but also of Mongolia, Buryatia and Kalmykia. We may mention the picture of idam Kalachakra, Tibet, the 19th century (458 ЖВ), dharmapala Bektse, Tibet, the 18th century (461 ЖВ), on the backside of which, besides mantras, one can see a palm-print. This collection deserves special attention.

As the result of communication with the representatives of other Ukrainian museums, it was possible to establish that among their collections there are some smaller ones that present artistic and intellectual traditions of Tibet, Mongolia, Buryatia, Kalmykia, Tuva and China. As a matter of fact, the work on describing these collections and making a unified data bank has just started. A data bank and publication of catalogues has essentially broaden our ideas about geography of the Buddhist world of Central Asia. We should also mention, above all, the decisive role of Mongolia, Buryatia and Kalmykia, the territories of which became re-translators of the unique world of Tibetan civilization and brought it closer to far away Ukraine.

¹ Текст доповіді був проголошений на Міжнародному тибетологічному семінарі у Блумінгтоні, Індіана (США) липень–серпень 1998 р.