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NATALIA YAKHONTOVA

Deformation of Boards: a Typical Feature of Later Xylograph Prints

Abstract

A routine procedure of measuring frame sizes on pages in several copies of the Beijing xylograph of the Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary "Ocean of Names" (Tib. *Ming gi rgya mtsho*, Mong. *Nere-yin dalai*) led to an attempt to find an explanation for up to 1.5 cm difference in frame length. A plausible explanation may be the deformation of printing boards: their drying out and the resulting shorter print. Due to the availability of several copies of identical text at the manuscript collection in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg) it was possible to take measurements of several other texts to prove the suggested explanation. The results obtained show that the frames in later editions are noticeably shorter.

Keywords: Beijing xylograph, printing boards deformation, later prints, Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary, "Ocean of Names" dictionary

The collection of the Mongolian manuscripts and xylographs kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences (IOM) in St. Petersburg is one of the richest in the world counting over 8000 items.[1] They were collected from different sources through almost three centuries due to the efforts of Russian scholars. On the one hand, the collection possesses quite a few unique items, and on the other hand, there are several copies of identical texts. The copies may be both handwritten and printed copies, the xylographed texts being the same. It was almost by chance that I paid my attention to the latter.

[1] Most of which one can find in a three-volume catalogue compiled by Alexei Sazykin. See А.Г. Сазыкин, *Каталог монгольских рукописей и ксилографов Института востоковедения Академии наук СССР*, т. I, Москва, 1988. А.Г. Сазыкин, *Каталог монгольских рукописей и ксилографов Института востоковедения Российской Академии наук*, т. II, Москва, 2001; т. III, Москва, 2003.

For some obscure reasons, certain Mongolian, Oirat and bilingual Tibetan-Mongolian items (full texts and separate folia) kept within the Tibetan part of the collection were moved to the Mongolian one only recently. It was necessary to sort them out. Among them there appeared a dozen of items (full texts, separate chapters and even folia) from a well-known Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary "Ocean of Names" (Tib. *Ming gi rgya mtsho*, Mong. *Nere-yin dalai*). In Sazykin's catalogue only three entries were mentioned.[2]

The dictionary "Oceans of Names" was written by 'Bro ba rab 'byams pa and published in 1718 in Beijing. It consists of four parts which have the following Tibetan marginal titles: *ming mtsho* – a long list of Tibetan grapheme combinations; *dag yig* (the longest) – a kind of grammar; *nyi 'od* – the dictionary proper; *rmi lam* (the shortest) – a prophetic dream which encouraged the author in his work.

There exist two separate editions of this dictionary, both printed in Beijing. What I consider to be an "edition" is a "separate edition" printed from different boards carved anew. The second one was undoubtedly printed from a different set of boards and most likely a bit later. The existence of two editions was stated by Walther Heissig in his *Pekinger lamaistischen Blockdrucke*.[3] He described the first one adding that "later editions existed",[4] with reference to what is called here a "second edition". Although the contents of both editions (including the colophones) is identical and the dates given in the colophones are the same, still there are some differences between them. They are shown in Table 1. Also the style of miniatures depicting the same images and page decorations are different in the two editions. From among all these features the Chinese marginal title has a key value because it is sufficient to identify which of the two editions the text in question belongs to.

Table 1. Main differences between two editions

		1st edition	**2nd edition**
1.	number of pages in each part	43 + 221 + 104 + 8 = 376	51 + 241 + 104 + 8 = 404
2.	number of part titles	1	4
3.	marginal part titles in Chinese	1	4
4.	part numbers in Chinese	yes	no

[2] Сазыкин, *Каталог*, т. I, pp. 264–265, No 1476–1478.

[3] Walther Heissig, *Die Pekinger lamaistischen Blockdrucke in mongolischer Sprache*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1954.

[4] Ibidem, pp. 43–44.

Therefore the sorting out newly arrived texts of the dictionary was not a too complicated task, though it involved reviewing the information in Sazykin's catalogue.[5] Everything went smooth until I came across a text (call number Q 4383/$_{4,6}$) which was beyond any doubt the 1st edition. However, it had titles for each part which is a typical feature of the 2nd edition and the first pages had pictures dyed not in red, which is typical for the 1st edition, but distinctly crimson. The comparison of its titles with that of the 2nd one evidently showed that they had been carved using the latter as a pattern but made not so skillfully repeating their mistakes and adding their own.[6] The crimson colour used in printing this text suggested its label – "crimson print".

The crimson print posed another problem. When taking measurements (just a routine procedure) of the third folio recto in each part – the whole folio and the size of the frame together with the text[7] – the frame length in the part *nyi 'od* measured 52.3 cm while in the 1st edition it was 53.2 cm,[8] which makes almost 1 cm difference.

Images 1 and 2 show measurements of page 3r from the part *nyi 'od* in the 1st edition and in the crimson print.

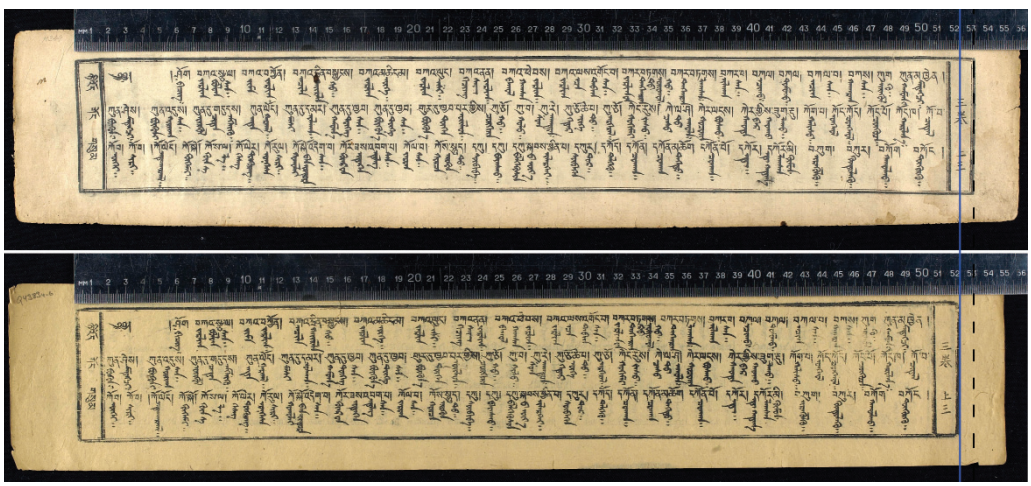

Image 1. Frame length on f. 3r: 1st edition (upper), crimson print (lower)

[5] All the updated information about the two editions of the "Ocean of Names" dictionary in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts and in other collections with the detailed description of the differences between the two editions see: N.S. Yakhontova, *The Ocean of Names: Its Editions at the IOM, RAS, and Other Collections* in: *Countries and Peoples of the East*, vol. XXXV, Moskva, Nauka – Vostochnaya Literatura, 2014, pp. 402–433.

[6] Ibidem, p. 414.

[7] The frame was measured along its outer edges along the upper and the right boarders.

[8] All measurements of the 1st edition were taken on the basis of the text: call number H 344 (Сазыкин, *Каталог*, т. I, p. 264, No 1476).

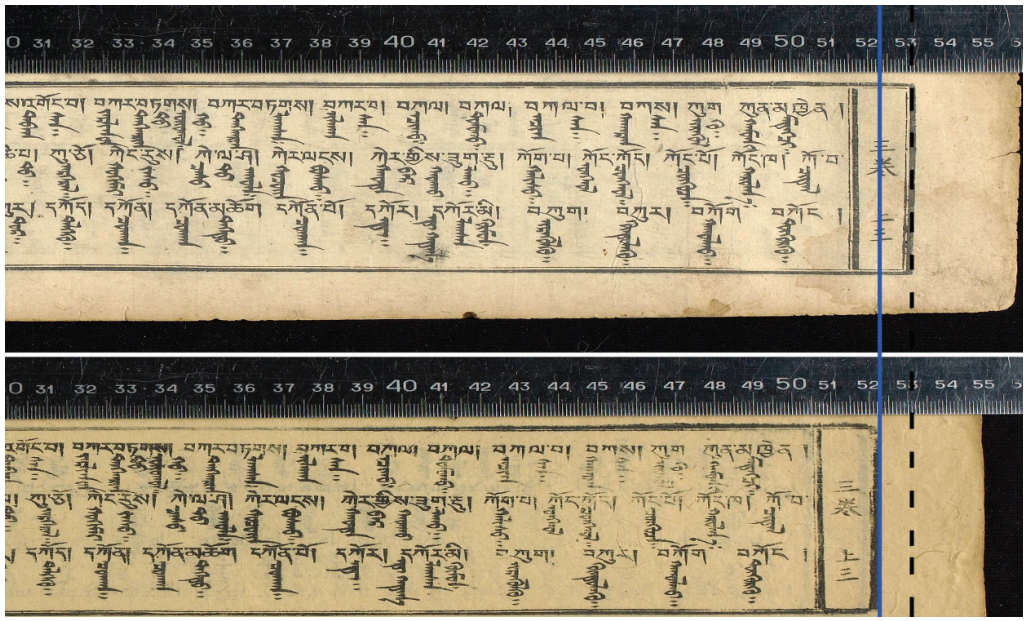

Image 2. Frame length on f. 3r, right end enlarged and stretched:
1st edition (upper), crimson print (lower)

There are at least three possible explanations of this phenomenon. The first, which I consider the most probable one is that the boards used for printing the crimson print were deformed (viz. dried out) since the time when the same boards had been used for printing the 1st edition. Strictly speaking it is impossible to prove that they were the same boards (only that with the titles were cut anew) since there are only prints at our disposal. Still a careful comparison – letter by letter, dot by dot – of the "problematic" pages shows that they are identical. Images 1 and 2 enable us to see it, although only attentive look at the real pages offers a real proof. Here I would like to mention judgements of several colleagues who doubted such a possibility and suggested that the boards had been neatly carved anew; however, after having examined the pages they all agreed that the boards used, were the same. One more proof will be given below where the data concerning the 2nd edition is provided.

Another possible explanation is that only the frame on the boards was moved. It is not only doubtful from the technical point of view but is *de facto* wrong. The sizes of the frame together with the text within diminish gradually from the center towards the edges, which can be seen in Images 3 and 4.

Image 3. Frame length on f. 3r, right half: 1st edition (upper), crimson print (lower)

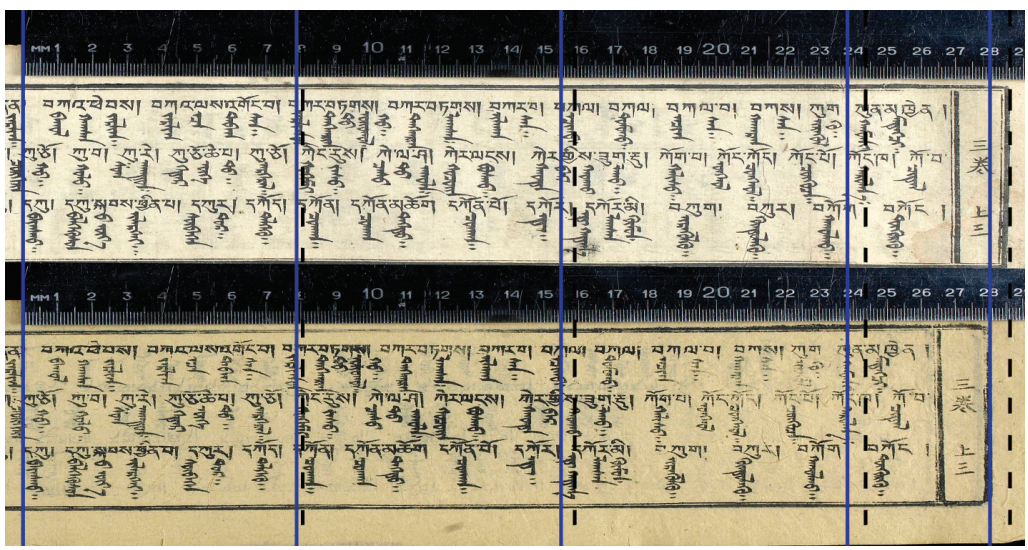

Image 4. Frame length on f. 3r, right half enlarged and stretched:
1st edition (upper), crimson print (lower)

Probably the crimson print was made in the late 19th – early 20th century. Unfortunately no precise date is known for the acquisition of the compared texts in our collection. The 1st edition text (call number H 344) was acquired not later than the middle of the 19th century, and not from Beijing but from another collection which makes possible even an earlier dating. Nothing is known about the crimson print. But the same print is

kept in Stockholm in Sven Hedin's collection (call number H-3516a,b,c).[9] According to the information provided by Håkan Wahlquist, keeper of the Sven Hedin Foundation, it was "collected in, perhaps ordered in the printing-office of the Lamasery Sung-chu-ssu in Beijing" and "the price paid for the two dictionaries was 6 Mexican Dollars"[10] during Sven Hedin's expedition in 1927–1935. So there is a good possibility that this text was printed much later than the early 18th century.

To prove that the phenomenon of shrunk wooden printing boards is a real one, I have measured the size of the frame on each page in all four parts of the dictionary, both of the 1st edition and of the crimson print, which makes approximately three thousand measurements (i.e. length plus width multiplied by 376 pages, multiplied by two sides and by two texts). These measurements provided the following results.

First of all the length and the width of the frame are different in different parts of the dictionary and on different pages. It is commonly known that the frames differ from page to page in xylographs and that is why the sizes of folia and frames should be supplied by page numbers in catalogues. The longest frame in the 1st edition is 53.5 cm and the shortest – 51.1 cm. The width is less indicative but still it ranges from 8.4 cm to 7.6 cm. Table 2 shows maximum and minimum sizes of the frames for each part of the dictionary and the average figures. In the dictionary the size of frame on side *verso* is on most pages smaller than on side *recto*.

Table 2. Maximum, minimum and average frame sizes for each part of the 1st edition of "Ocean of Names"

		length					**width**				
part	**side**	**ff.**	**max.**	**ff.**	**min.**	**average**	**ff.**	**max.**	**ff.**	**min.**	**average**
ming mtsho	recto	2r	52.8	37r	51.5	51.95	2r	8.2	26r	7.5	7.78
	verso	1v	52.2	35v	51.2	51.52	1v	8.2	23v	7.5	7.73
dag yig	recto	18r	53	123r	51.5	52.24	7r	8.2	116r	7.8	8.13
	verso	179v	52.8	78v	51.1	51.79	7v	8.2	112v	7.8	8.05
nyi 'od	recto	11r	53.5	2r	52	53	42r	8.3	87r	7.6	8.03
	verso	2v	53	100v	52.1	52.57	1v	8.4	87v	7.6	7.93
rmi lam	recto	5r	53	3r	52.7	52.86	8r	8.1	2r	7.6	7.83
	verso	1v	52.6	2v	52	52.37	1v	8.2	2v	7.6	7.83

[9] Pentti Aalto, *A Catalogue of the Hedin Collection of Mongolian Literature*, in: *Reports from Scientific Expedition to the North-West Provinces of China under the leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin*, Publication 38, Stockholm, 1953, pp. 85-86. The author is grateful to Håkan Wahlquist for his generously devoting time to answer the author's questions, which allowed identifying the text in question as a 'crimson print'.

[10] Håkan Wahlquist, text messages to the author from 20 May 2014, 23 May 2014.

The second and most interesting result was that the frame on page 3r was by far not the only one that showed a distinctive difference between frame sizes in the 1st edition and the crimson print. In the four parts of the dictionary the percentage of difference and its size varies. The number of pages on which the frame in the crimson print has become shorter, is much larger, than pages on which the frame extended. However, there are frames that hardly show any difference. The side *verso* shows less deformation. The boards seem to have dried out in unequal way. Some did dry out, others did not, still a few others extended their size (which means that their opposite side have been deformed), depending on the conditions of their storage. Since the length shows more distinctive results than the width, I have decided not to include the latter into the Table 3 which provides the results of the measurements. The number of pages in dictionary's parts differs, therefore not the number of pages but the percentage was calculated. The figures in centimeters are divided into ranges to show the most frequent differences. As a margin of error in measurement I take one millimeter and therefore the size labelled here "equal size" may not be strictly equal.

Table 3. Measurement results of the frame length in crimson print and the 1st edition of "Ocean of Names"

		crimson print frame is longer		**equal size**	**crimson print frame is shorter**			
parts \ **cm**		**> 0.5**	**0.5–0.2**	**0**	**0.2–0.5**	**0.6–1.0**	**> 1.0**	**> 1.5**
*ming mtsh*o	recto		9%	29%	31%	31%		
	verso		5%	40%	38%	17%		
dag yig	recto	6%	25%	36%	28%	3.5%	0.5%	
	verso	4.5%	31%	38%	25%	1.5%		
nyi 'od	recto			3%	10%	69%	18%	0.1%
	verso			2%	32%	66%	0.1%	
rmi lam	recto					29%	71%	
	verso					57%	46%	

It cannot be seen in the Table 3 but it was observed in the Excel file which I was working with that the changes in size are found in groups when several pages (about 6-8) following one after another show the same size whereas the next ones – a different size. Two parts of the dictionary, viz. *nyi 'od* (the dictionary proper) and a very short part *rmi lam* (only 8 folia) evidently show the greatest difference in size.

The *nyi 'od* part of the "Ocean of Names" is preserved as a separate text in some other collections besides IOM, which is quite understandable because this part was considered

the most essential part of the whole work, the dictionary proper. Most of such separate texts[11] seem to be later prints which have the same features as the crimson print from IOM, as far as it was possible to find out from their descriptions in the catalogues and information from colleagues, to whom the author is grateful. The only text that I had a chance to measure in full was the one in the manuscript collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.[12] The figures acquired from its measurement justify conclusion that this text is very close to our crimson print – the frame size on 80% pages is the same (plus/minus 1 mm), whereas other 20% have an average divergence of 0.3 cm.

In this place one should mention the type of paper used for the crimson print. When it is compared to the paper of the 1st edition it is distinctively thinner and yellowish in colour though both are of Chinese make. However, a suggestion that the reason of the difference could be the deformation of the paper should be rejected; firstly, due to the unequal frame sizes of different pages and because of the correspondence between the differences in two texts (the one from IOM collection and the other from the Hungarian Academy). The other evidence will be discussed below.

Existence of later prints was mentioned by György Kara in the *Mongolian and Manchu Manuscripts…* Giving basic information about several Beijing xylographs he wrote that they were 20th century copies or prints of old blocks.[13] Using his attribution as a guide I tried to find the same texts in our collection and see if they were 20th century prints or, possibly, the original 18th century prints or both, which would allow comparison. Only three texts turned out to be suitable for that purpose, but not in a single copy, that allowed making a comparison.

The first blockprint is the one of the Peking editions of the 29-chapter "Sutra of Golden Light" (Mong. 80 in the Hungarian collection). In IOM there are several copies of the same blockprint edition.[14] I have chosen for comparison and measuring two texts. The first one (call number H 309, ex. I) originally belonged to the collection of the Kazan Theological Academy, which may be the evidence of its early 19th century purchase. The second one (call number Q 1917) is of unknown origin. Measuring of the frame on the third folio recto provided the following results: Q 1917 – 36.9 : 9.2 cm and H 309 ex. I – 37.4 : 9.3 cm. The text Mong. 80 shows 37.0 : 9.3 cm.[15] Therefore, presumably two texts (Q 1917 and Mong. 80) might be the same later copies whereas the original copy is H 309 ex. I. When the length of the frame on other pages from the first chapter was measured (23 folia, both sides), 7% of the frames were equal, 93% showed that the frame

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[11] For the details of their attribution see N.S.Yakhontova, *The Ocean of Names,* pp. 410–417.

[12] Call number Mong. 7. See György Kara, *Mongolian and Manchu Manuscripts and Blockprints in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*./ Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica XLVII, György Hazai (ed.), Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 2000, p.20.

[13] The texts attributed in such a way are e.g. Mong. 10, Mong. 13, Mong. 80, Mong. 82, Mong. 83, Mong. 84, 84a, 84b. Kara, *Mongolian and Manchu Manuscripts…*, pp. 24, 29, 113, 121, 124, 126–130. The text Mong. 7 discussed above Kara does not consider as a later print. Ibidem, p. 20.

[14] Сазыкин, *Каталог*, т. II, p. 18, No 2437.

[15] Kara, *Mongolian and Manchu Manuscripts…*, p. 113.

in Q 1917 is shorter: the maximum being 1 cm, the minimum being 0.2 cm, and the average – 0.5 cm. Still the paper of this edition is noticeably thinner than of H 309 ex. I.

The second text is the 2nd edition of the "Ocean of Names" dictionary (Mong. 84, 84a, 84b in the Hungarian collection). The 2nd edition like the first one consists of four parts but I only took part *nyi 'od*[16] for measuring and comparing, although most of the texts are complete "Ocean of Names" sets. In IOM there are five copies of this part.[17] Acquisition of the two texts (H 311 and H 345) dates back to the early 19th century, whereas the source of the others is unknown. All pages in all five texts were measured. Besides I had a chance of measuring the Mong. 84a text from Budapest and one text from Ulaanbaatar collections.[18] First of all, all five texts in IOM as well as Mong. 84a show the same distorted printing on the same pages which is evidently a distinctive feature of their later printing. The reason for such bad quality should have been damage which must have occurred on the boards used for printing since the pages are the same in all these texts. Considering such damage which obviously could only have happened some time later than the first printing had taken place, all these texts should be treated as later prints. Images 5, 6, 7, 8 show fragments of the same pages with blurred printing from different texts.

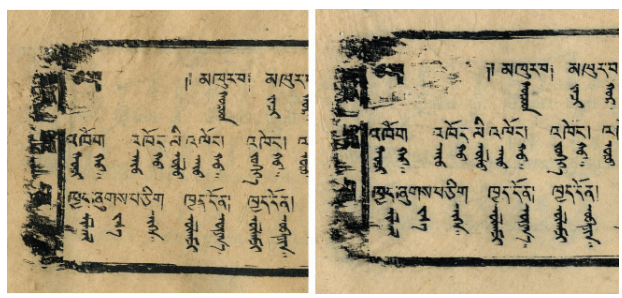

Image 5. Blurred printing on f. 9r from H 311 (left) and Q 4386/$_2$ (right)

[16] In the second edition each part of the dictionary bears its own title. The part *nyi 'od* is called: Tib. *dag yig chung ngu gdul bya'i snying mun sel byed nyi ma stong gi 'od zer zhes bya ba bzhugs so*; Mong. *öčüken üsüg nomoγadqalγ-a-yin ǰirüken-ü qarangγui-yi arilγan üiledügči mingγan naran-u gerel kemekü orošiba*. Under this title it can be found in the catalogues if this part is a separate text. In Kara's catalogue part *nyi 'od* has its own call number (Mong. 84a) though the whole set of four parts is kept there. Kara, *Mongolian and Manchu Manuscripts*…, p. 129.

[17] Call numbers H 311, H 345, Q 4386/$_1$, Q 4386/$_2$, Q 4386/$_3$. The first two are in: Сазыкин. *Каталог*, p. 264, No 1477 (H 311, he erroneously attributed it as the 1st edition). Three other texts were recently removed from the Tibetan collection to the Mongolian, and this is why they do not appear in Sazykin's catalogue.

[18] Call number 0010. See Б. Няммягмар. *Хэл зохиолын хүрээлэнгийн монгол бичмэл дармал номын бүртгэл*, Corpus Scriptorum Mongolorum Instituti Linguae et Literarum Academiae Scientarum Publicae Mongolici. T. XXVIII. Fasc. 1. Улаанбаатар, 2012, p. 111, No 449.

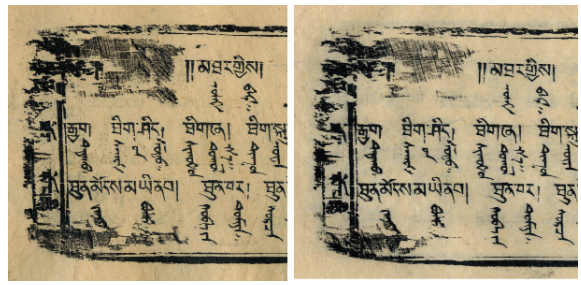

Image 6. Blurred printing on f. 34r from H 311 (left) and Q 4386/$_2$ (right)

Image 7. Printing from partly damaged board on f. 73r from H 311 (left) and Q 4386/$_2$ (right)

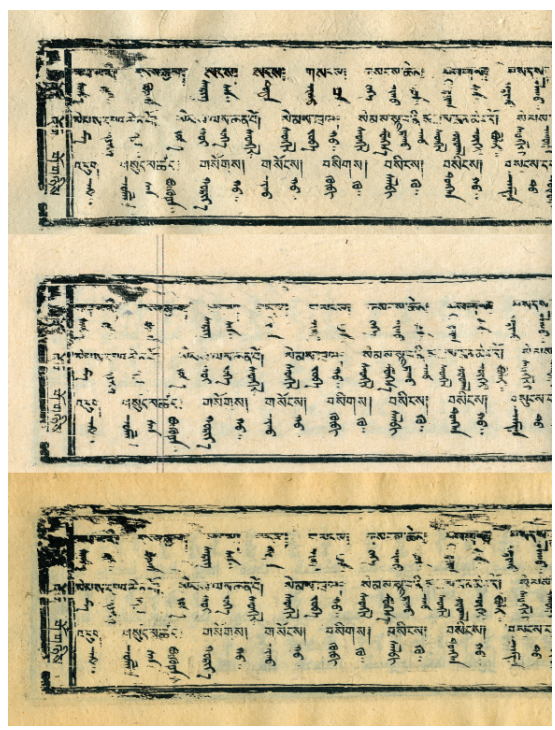

Image 8. Indistinct printing caused by worn out boards on f. 92v from H 311, H 345, Q 4386/$_1$ (from the top)

The only text whose all pages are printed impeccable (except f.73r *NB!*) is the one from Ulaanbaatar (call number 0010) but its photos are not available. This text could have been the original print dating back to the 18th century. It has one more feature not found in the other five texts – miniatures on the two first and the last page are coloured in red while in other texts red dye is not used and all pages are black. The same characteristics apply to the text Plg. 59 from the collection of the Library of the Oriental Faculty at St. Petersburg State University.[19]

The 2nd edition texts provide the most convincing proof of the possibility that the deformation of boards (their drying out) really occurred. Interestingly, it is also a deformation but of a different type.[20] One page (f. 73r, see Image 7) shows printing from a partly damaged board. The same defect on the same page exists in Ulaanbaatar text and in Plg. 59. It is evidently caused not by board aging but by original mechanical damage. The length of the frame on this page varies from 52.5 cm (in H 311) to 53.4 cm (in Plg. 59).

The measuring of the frame in the 2nd edition text was taken only on the pages with distinctive print. Thus many pages were left out including those with curved frames when the upper or the lower lines of the frame (or both) have a curve up or down. Such effect is a result of inaccurate printing but not of board deformation as it occurred in one text, whereas it was missing in the others.

Total number of pages fit for taking measurements was approximately one hundred. I should admit that the obtained results provided a fairly vague picture. It seems that the more texts are measured the more variants in size are possible. Frame lengths on some random pages are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Frame length on random pages from part *nyi 'od* of the 2nd edition of the "Ocean of Names" (in centimeters)

	UB 0010	**Mong.84a**	**H 345**	**Q4386/2**	**H 311**	**Q4386/1**	**Q4386/3**
f. 7r	53.0	53.0	53.0	53.0	53.0	52.4	52.4
f. 20r	53.4	53.1	53.0	53.0	53.1	52.6	52.6
f. 26v	52.8	52.9	52.8	52.6	52.6	52.3	52.3
f. 27v	52.7	52.9	52.9	52.6	53.0	52.4	52.4
f. 30r	53.0	53.0	52.8	52,7	53.1	52.3	52.5
f. 41r	53.5	53.1	53.3	53.1	53.3	52.9	53.0
f. 41v	52.7	53.1	53.0	52.9	52.8	52.4	52.5
f. 67r	53.6	53.3	53.3	53.2	53.2	53.0	53.0

[19] *Catalogue of the Mongolian Manuscripts and Xylographs in the St. Petersburg State University Library*. Compiled by Vladimir L. Uspensky with Assistance from Osami Inoue. Edited and Foreword by Tatsuo Nakami, Tokyo, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1999, p. 420, No 819.

[20] The idea that a page with a mechanical deformation will be the most convincing proof comes from Prof. Pavel Rykin (St. Petersburg).

Frames on the individual pages do not show much regularity, still when a simple statistical analysis was applied it was possible to come to some definite conclusions. All frame lengths were compared to those of the text from Ulaanbaatar (call number 0010) which probably is the oldest print. Table 5 shows the results of frame measurements for six texts.

Table 5. Frame sizes for six texts from part *nyi 'od* of the 2nd edition of the "Ocean of Names" in comparison to UB 0010 text

		1		**2**		**3**	
		Mong.84a	**H 345**	**Q4386/2**	**H 311**	**Q4386/1**	**Q4386/3**
equal size	percent	64%	52%	38%	26%	14%	9%
shorter	percent	24%	31%	51%	65%	83%	88%
	max	0.6 cm	0.7 cm	0.7 cm	0.9 cm	1 cm	1 cm
	min	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm
	average	0.3 cm	0.3 cm	0.3 cm	0.4 cm	0.5 cm	0.5 cm
longer	percent	12%	17%	11%	9%	3%	3%
	max	0.7 cm	0.6 cm	0.5 cm	0.4 cm	0.4 cm	0.4 cm
	min	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm	0.2 cm
	average	0.35 cm	0.3 cm	0.3 cm	0.3 cm	0.3 cm	0.3 cm

The columns are arranged in order to show that there are pairs of texts which indicate some common figures. The first group (Mong. 84a and H 345) is the closest to the presumably original text, the second one ($Q4386/_2$ and H 311) was probably printed later when the deformation of boards had started, and the third group comprises two texts which were printed on thinner paper and whose average frame size became the smallest.

Now let us produce the second evidence against the idea that it was the deformation of paper which caused the difference in frame sizes. The dependence of a frame size on the paper quality is contradicted by Images 9 and 10 comparing three texts of part *nyi 'od* from the 2nd edition of the "Ocean of Names"; two of them were printed on thick paper (H 345 and H 311) and one on thin paper ($Q\ 4386/_1$) of Chinese make. In Image 10 it can be clearly seen that the one printed on thick paper (H 311) is almost equal to another printed on thin ($Q\ 4386/_1$) (or even a bit smaller).

Image 9. Frame length on f. 74v (the 2nd edition of the "Ocean of Names"): H 345, Q 4386/$_1$ and H 311 (from the top)

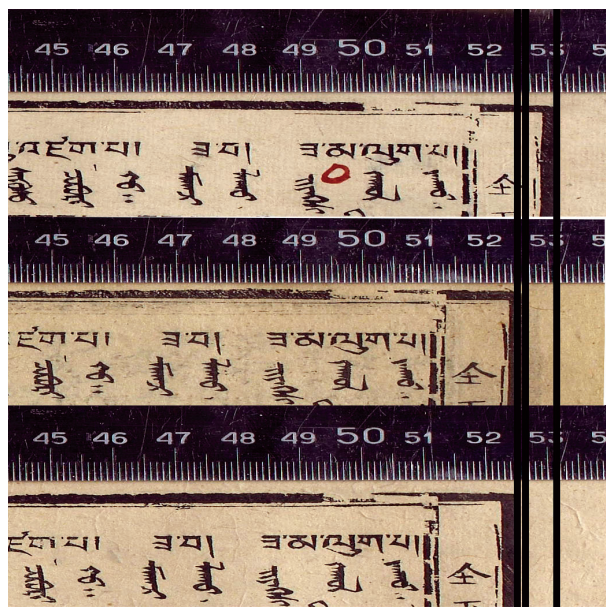

Image 10. Frame length (enlarged) on f. 74v (the 2nd edition of the "Ocean of Names"): H 345, Q 4386/$_1$ and H 311 (from the top)

The same evidence produces the third text – *Naiman mingγatu* (Mong. 137 in the Hungarian collection). This is the Mongolian translation of the well known *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. Forty pages (every 10th folio on both sides) in the two texts of the same Beijing blockprint from IOM collection (call numbers H 292 ex. 2 and Q 943)[21] were measured. Both texts were printed on Chinese paper and in both cases the quality (the thickness) is the same. However, the colour is greyish in the first and yellowish in the second one. The first comes from the Kazan Theological Academy (presumably the 19th century), the second from an unknown source and dating. The frame length on 78% pages in text Q 943 is shorter (ranging from 0.2 cm to 0.6 cm), on the rest it is the same. Images 11 and 12 show the frame length on folio 3r from both texts. The same frame in the text from Hungarian collection is 46.2[22] which is equal to that of H 292 ex. 2 from IOM collection. No other text in IOM (from among thirteen) has a longer frame on this page. Since G. Kara attributes Mong. 137 as a late print,[23] the text Q 943 should be attributed to an even later time.

Image 11. Frame length on f. 3r from the *Naiman mingγatu:*
H 292 ex. 2 (upper) and Q 943 (lower)

[21] Total number of complete texts is 13. Сазыкин, *Каталог*, т. II, p. 58, No 2638.

[22] Kara, *Mongolian and Manchu Manuscripts*…, p. 214.

[23] Ibidem.

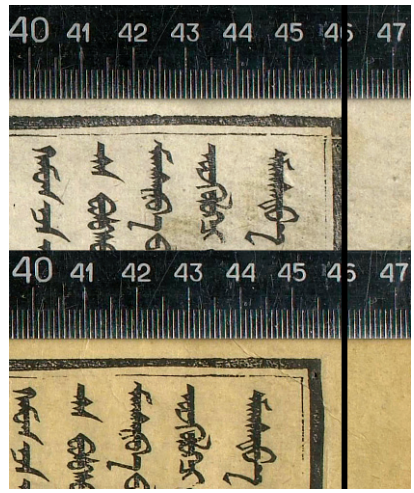

Image 12. Frame length (enlarged) on f. 3r from the *Naiman mingγatu:* H 292 ex. 2 (upper) and Q 943 (lower)

Another feature often mentioned when a print is presumably late, is the crimson colour of printing on the first page(s). As it was shown for the crimson print of the 1st edition of the "Ocean of Names" dictionary, it is plausible to regard the crimson colour as a distinctive trait of later prints.

The Plg. 59 text which is the 2nd edition of the "Ocean of Names" was unavailable for taking measurements for a long time and when at last the measurements were taken it was impossible to incorporate the results in Table 5 for the sake of comparison. As it was mentioned above, the text is very much like the Ulaanbaatar one mainly due to its red pictures and neat printing, so I expected to obtain results showing the frame sizes in these two texts as the most close ones. However, after having compared them only 16% of pages appeared equal, 28% pages are shorter in Plg. 59 than in Ulaanbaatar text and 56% are longer. Moreover, Plg. 59 shows the largest maximum difference in both cases (1.1 cm and 1.2 cm, respectively) if compared to texts in Table 5. Besides, the pages with equal frame size or showing difference in size are located in much bigger portions than in any other text. First 19 pages (f. 1v-10v) are either equal or show very small difference (not more than 0.3 cm in plus or minus), the next 52 pages (f.11r-36v) are either equal or longer (up to 1.20 cm on side recto), in another portion of 24 pages (f. 37r-48v) they are either equal or shorter (up to 1.10 cm), the next portion of 62 pages (f. 49r-80v) is a mixture of sizes located in random order typical for other texts, on the next 46 pages (f. 81r-103v) the frame sizes are again longer in Plg. 59 (the equal sizes have only 5 pages). The surprisingly high number of longer pages in Plg. 59 (56%) is the last puzzling fact. All in all, these contradictory results do not fit into the speculation stated in the title of this paper. Still I consider it to be not fair to conceal these results and hope to find a plausible explanation in future.

To sum up, the data presented in the paper evidently demonstrate that there exists a noticeable difference between frame sizes on the identical pages in different xylograph copies printed from the same boards. I suggest that the boards had dried out before later prints were made. So the frame size is a typical feature of a later print along with thinner yellowish paper obviously often used for later editions, but in my opinion, paper could not have caused differences in frame sizes.

The existence of such xylographs demonstrates that copies were made during a long period of time, which especially applies to the 2nd edition of the Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary "Ocean of Names", highly and constantly demanded by readers.

It is worth to remark that the whole study for the present article was possible only due to the fact that the same text was preserved in the collection of IOM in several copies. That proves the occasional importance of accumulating multiple pieces of identical texts in one place.