

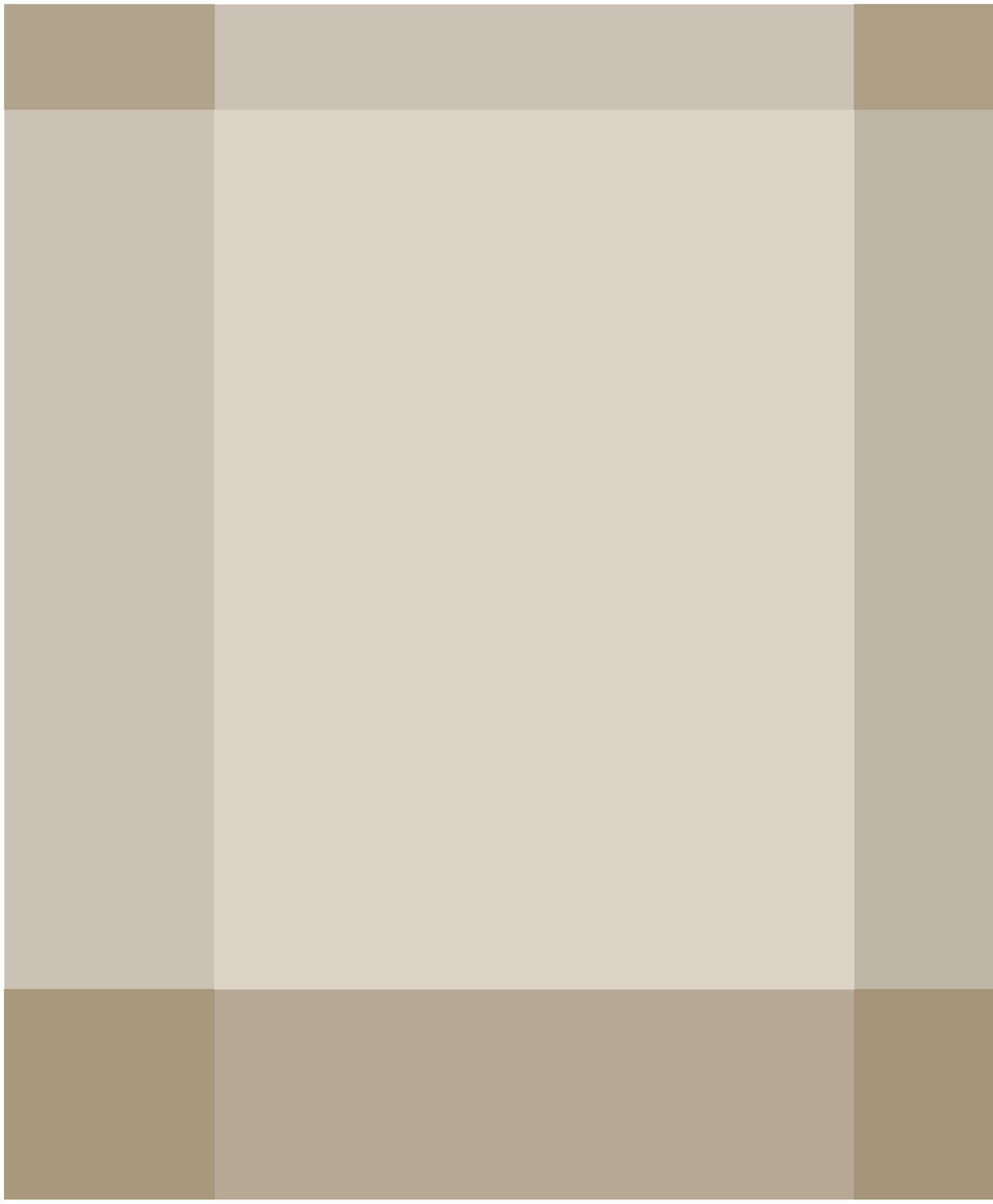
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The Mongolian Collections Retracing Hans Leder

edited by
Maria-Katharina Lang
and Stefan Bauer

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Maria-Katharina Lang (project director) / Institute for Social Anthropology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in cooperation with Weltmuseum Wien

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Preface Maria-Katharina Lang



This project publication is a result of the involvement with the Mongolian collections of the research traveller Hans Leder. In 1996 I selected one artefact at the Weltmuseum Wien – the former Museum of Ethnology Vienna – a pendant that had been part of the elaborate headdress worn by women in northern Mongolia, to narrate the histories related to this item, most importantly the life stories of Mongolian women in the 20th century. During the research it turned out that the piece and the collection in Vienna was one part of the collector's far larger collection of more than 4,000 objects, mostly Mongolian Buddhist ritual artefacts, held in several ethnographic museums in Europe. The research funding programme *forMuse* ("Research at Museums", Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research) exactly fitted frame to realise the idea of reconnecting these collections in several ways.

On closer regard, the scope, authenticity and integrity make the Mongolian collections of Hans Leder unique, and this imposes a certain responsibility: to conserve them, as one task for the museums, and when doing research to try to relate them more closely to the histories they are connected to. One way to do this is to tell "what" they are through their iconography. Another way is to let them "re-travel" and document the contexts they were made for and of which they had been part, to learn what these things might have meant to people and re-trace the artefact's (life-) histories in their place of origin, in Mongolia. The focus of this compilation is on the artefacts themselves. They are presented in selected object groups as part of larger collections – through which their histories in connection and interaction with people become visible.

This volume brings together multiple points of view on artefacts: those of the Tibetologist, the Mongolist, the religious-studies scholar, the artist and the social and cultural anthropologist. The first chapter, by myself, offers an approach to the collection's histories and relations by shedding light on the collector's biography and the movement of artefacts. Lhagvademchig S. Jadamba draws upon past and recent developments of Buddhism in Mongolia from an insider perspective. Olaf Czaja chose to overview the large group of painted and printed images in the collections: thangkas, paintings and *tsakli* as well as amulets and manuscripts. Béla Kelényi elaborates on the specific object groups of votive tablets (*tshatsha*), representations of the Five Personal Protective Deities and prayer flags. In our contributions, Krisztina Teleki and I reunited and analysed the scattered groups of wooden figures of the characters of the Mongolian Tsam dance. Ágnes Birtalan examined representations of the "White Old Man" and the equestrian warrior deities in their textual and iconographic traditions as well as their specific Mongolian characters.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who contributed to and supported the project, especially: Lhagvademchig Jadamba, Chuluunbat Purvee, Bumochir Dulam and Munkh-Erdene Lkhamsuren (Institute of Social Anthropology at the National University of Mongolia / Ulaanbaatar), Natsagnyam Ch. (Karkhorum Museum / Kharkhorin), Otgonsuren D. (Chojin Lama Temple Museum / Ulaanbaatar), Mendsaikhan O. (Bogd Khan Palace Museum / Ulaanbaatar), Abbot Baasansuren and ex-Abbot Enkhbat, Lama Osorkhuu (Erdene Zuu Monastery / Kharkhorin), Khishigjargal and family (near Khara Balgas), Dawaa (Khogno Khan Monastery), Abbot Baasanjargal, Junsh (Tsetserleg Monastery), Dolmaa, Dondog, Mendbayar (Bayan Olgii).

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Note on Transliterations

In this publication different forms of transliteration are used according to the specific focus of the individual authors (philologists, social anthropologists, Tibetologists etc.). Popular spellings are used for established names and notions: for example “Chinggis Khan” instead of “Činggis Khan”. There is no widely shared well-established system for transliterating Mongolian. Nevertheless, the editors have tried to harmonise the text where reasonable. In general we have oriented ourselves on more common terminology within Mongolian studies to provide the reader with a more comprehensive readability.

Illustrations

Where the object photographs were of poor quality we have used them only in the preview images accompanying the articles and not in the “Figures” section.



Hans Leder at the age of 61
(1904; Jisl 1963: 53)

I The Collector and the Collections

Maria-Katharina Lang

The Collector

Hans Leder (1843–1921) was born in Jauernig / Javornik near Troppau, the capital of Austrian Silesia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, today Opava in the Czech Republic. He is described by his contemporaries as having a distinct passion for nature sciences and already collecting at an early age. Modest family circumstances and the lack of support from his father (his mother died when he was eight) did not allow him to complete his studies at the Mountain Academy in Schemnitz. In 1867 he left Europe for northern Africa to study French and Arabic and started collecting *entomologica*, which he sent to his friend and colleague the entomologist Edmund Reitter to Paskau in Austro-Hungary for further specification and classification (Hetschko 1922: 95). In 1872 he returned home and cooperated with Reitter in entomological studies, until leaving again in 1875 for a two-year research expedition to the Caucasus. This journey turned out to be unexpectedly successful: Leder discovered a variety of hitherto unknown insect species, which were later classified by European specialists. They all bear the name of the collector, “Lederi”. (Fig. I/1)

Leder returned to the Caucasus nearly every year to continue entomological activities. In 1882, after his marriage, he and his young wife moved to the German settlement of Helenendorf near Elisabethpol.¹ The family stayed there until their return to Austria in 1888. Helenendorf was Leder’s starting point for several exploration trips to nearer and more distant regions. Some explorations were joint ventures together with Gustav Radde, director of the Caucasus Museum in Tbilisi (Tiflis) or with the Russian General A. W. Komarow, head of the *Bergvölkerverwaltung im Kaukasus*. Gustav Radde (1831–1903) was an important contact person in Tbilisi for European travellers and researchers at that time; several relations and networks were established through him. During a visit to Radde’s summer residence in Borjomi (Borshom) in the mid 1870s Leder met the sons of Prince Michael Nikolaievich of Russia, then Viceroy of the Caucasus. The three of them were eagerly collecting insects and presenting their finds to Leder. One of them, Nikolai Mikhailovich (1859–1919), became an eminent scholar and historian. As passionate lepidopterist, he published a ten-volume work entitled *Mémoires sur les Lépidoptères* (Romanoff 1884). In his preface to volume one he thanks Leder for his collecting endeavours; several specimens collected by Leder are published in this work. Some years later – in 1891 – Prince Nikolai Mikhailovich of Russia, by then president of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, sent Leder to southern Siberia primarily to continue his entomological work. This is how he came nearer to Mongolia.

I have spent the entire summer of 1891 almost exclusively in the forest and soon pitched my tent in a glade at the bottom of a valley, then in the dense forests of the middle mountainsides or on the alps above the tree line and on the shores of the iced lakes of the upper tundra. Sometimes I found it rather lonesome, sad and dull. But this was not the fault of the at times indeed unfriendly and harsh, but even then and maybe just therefore, magnificent and overwhelming countryside. These were simply just moods, not surprising for anyone trying to understand just for an instant my isolated situation at



Fig. I/1
Philonthus Lederi
Museum of Natural History Vienna
(photo by H. Schillhammer)

Fig. I/2
Forest near Irkutsk
(Leder, Globus 1893: 320)

that time. And in these cases each time it was just the selection and observation of the life surrounding me that distracted me again from dark thoughts and elevated and delighted me. [...] Anyone who observes his surroundings carefully and closely will always still find something that completely escapes the unpractised eye of someone used to more crude and obvious appearances. (Leder 1894c: 152f.; translation by the author.)²



Ich habe den ganzen Sommer des Jahres 1891 fast ausschließlich im Walde gelebt und mein Zelt bald auf der Lichtung der Thalsohle, bald in den dichten Beständen der mittleren Berghänge oder auf den Alpen über der Waldzone und an den Ufern der beeisten Seen der Hochtundren aufgeschlagen. Ich habe es gar manches Mal recht einsam, traurig und öde gefunden. Aber daran war nicht die zwar bisweilen unfreundliche und raue, aber auch selbst dann und vielleicht gerade darum immer noch großartige und überwältigende Natur schuld. Das waren eben nur Stimmungen, die jedem, der in meine damalige isolierte Lage sich nur einen Augenblick hineinzudenken vermag, nicht überraschend sein werden. Und in solchen Fällen war es jedes Mal gerade die Aussuchung und Beobachtung des Lebens um mich, welches mich wieder von dem düsteren Gedankengange ablenkte und mich erhob und erfreute. [...] Wer jedoch aufmerksam und scharfen Blickes seine Umgebung beobachtet, wird immer noch etwas finden, was dem an mehr grobe und augenfällige Erscheinungen gewöhnten oder ungeübten Auge eines Anderen ganz entgeht. (Leder 1894c: 152f.) (Fig. I/2)

After some months in the Sajan mountains, he was not too satisfied with his new findings and decided to move southwards to get to know “the mystical land of the Mongols” more closely (Leder 1893: 319). In April 1892 he left Irkutsk and reached Urga (Ikh Khüree; present-day Ulaanbaatar) on 5 May 1892. There he recruited a small caravan to travel westwards to the Erdene Zuu Monastery, built in 1586 under the rule of Abadai Khan at Karakorum (Kharkhorin), the former centre of the Mongolian empire founded by Chinggis Khan’s successor Ögödei (1186/1189–1241). (Fig. I/3–4)

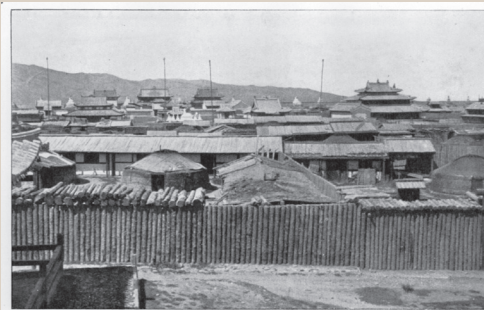


Fig. I/3
Erdene Zuu
(Leder 1909: plate IX)

Leder returned to Mongolia several times: his stays can be retraced for the years 1899/1900, 1902, and 1904/05. On his first Mongolian journey he was still mainly collecting insects and *zoologica* – today these are part of the collections in the natural history museums in Vienna and Budapest. Afterwards, his collecting focus drifted gradually from *entomologica* to *ethnographica*. By 1905 he had become a renowned collector of Mongolian ethnographic items, mainly Buddhist ritual artefacts. After his last journey to Mongolia – Leder was over sixty – he desperately tried to make a living by selling his collections. He died in 1921 in Katharein / Troppau.



Fig. I/4
Stūpas at Erdene Zuu
(Leder 1909: plate V)

Travels in Mongolia

1892 Leder describes his first journey, taking about four months, in several articles and tells of his passage by sledge via Lake Baikal, further to Kyakhta and from there to Ikh Khüree, known as Urga by Europeans at the time. He spent some days in Urga before and after his journey to the countryside. Even then he noted many details of the Mongolian lifestyle and countryside he experienced. Leder described the site of Ikh Khüree with its main monasteries, the market and the residence of the Jebtsundamba Khutugtu (Bogdo Gegeen; Fig. I/5), the spiritual head of the Mongolian Buddhists, which was then in the process of construction, as the former residence had been destroyed by a fire the preceding winter. Leder mentions several temples, one of them the Maidar temple (Maidariin süm), which according to him was constructed according to Tibetan design and represented the Tibeto-Mongolian style of architecture. He comments on the colossal statue of burkhan Maidar (Maitreya), produced by Chinese artists, and notes the main architectural forms of Ikh Khüree.

Immediately on entering through the gate one stands in front of a colossal statue of the Burkhan Maidari, the halo of which reaches to just below the roof of the cupola and which takes up nearly all the space inside. The deity is shown sitting, not as usual with crossed legs, but in the way we usually sit, made entirely of copper, gilded, nostrils, eyes painted accordingly. The figure is probably 30 m high. The idol is a product of Chinese imagery and artistically rather worthless. (Leder 1894a: 53)

Unmittelbar nach dem Eintritte durch die Pforte steht man vor einer riesigen Statue des Burchans Maidari, welche mit dem Strahlenkranz des Kopfes bis unmittelbar unter das Dach der Kuppel reicht und deren Masse fast den ganzen Innenraum einnimmt. Der Gott ist sitzend dargestellt, nicht mit untergeschlagenen Beinen, wie gewöhnlich, sondern in der Weise, wie wir zu sitzen pflegen, ganz aus Kupfer, vergoldet, die Lippen, Nasenlöcher, Augen entsprechend gemalt. Die Höhe der Figur beträgt wohl an die 30 m. Das Idol ist ein Produkt chinesischer Bildnerei und künstlerisch ziemlich wertlos. (Leder 1894a: 53)

Like most of the temples and monasteries in Urga, the Maidar temple with its statue and artefacts was destroyed during the purges in 1938 (cf. Teleki 2011).

For his research trip to the countryside Leder organised a caravan consisting of five camels, seven horses, two Mongolian monks as guides and two Russian companions from Siberia as translators. He hired the animals and the crew for a period of five months (Leder 1895: 27). In his preparations to travel to the countryside he was supported by Shishmarev, the Russian consul in Ikh Khüree and a crucial player in the upcoming political events towards the declaration of independence in 1911. Even during his first journey Leder was repeatedly suspected of being a Russian spy – which in his opinion never had a negative connotation – on the contrary, Leder noticed the Mongolians' desire to exchange the reign of the Emperor of China for the reign of the “*zagan chan*” or “white tsar” (Leder 1895: 113–114). This underlines the strong pro-Russian tendencies as early as 1892, which were increasingly reinforced by the Tibetan side.

The caravan headed west, to Erdene Zuu Monastery. The journey, partly on routes not previously taken by foreign scholars, took about a month. Leder describes the Erdene Zuu Monastery complex with its more than sixty buildings as a lively and active place. He notes the ruins very close to the monastery gates and rightly assumes that they concern the ancient remains of the former Mongolian capital Karakorum. From



Fig I/5

The Eighth Bogdo Gegeen
(Coll. Leder; Néprajzi Múzeum
Budapest, inv. no. 59734)

Erdene Zuu Monastery they departed for the ruins of Khara Balgas – about 25 km north of Erdene Zuu – which at the time some Western scholars held to be the remains of Karakorum – seeing the location and the ruins Leder had his doubts. The caravan moved further west to Sain Gegeen Monastery (today in Tsetserleg). On their way they passed hot mineral springs, used by the locals as thermal baths. Not far from the hot springs Leder recognised ruins smaller but similar to those of Khara Balgas. These were called “Bulgas” by the locals and had not previously been marked on any maps. Leder interpreted them as being the remains of the former encampment of the Uighur Kagan “Tschin-tschu-Pi-kia”. The caravan stayed for some days near Sain Gegeen Monastery before moving further south, passing the ruins of the ancient Uliastai (Uliyasutai), until they reached the Ongiin river at the border of the Gobi region. From there they moved northwards again, back to Erdene Zuu Monastery. On 21 August Leder witnessed a Tsam dance performance in Erdene Zuu (cf. Lang in this publication p. 59) Leder returned to Siberia by the end of September. Though not always correct or precise, a map of the route taken in 1892 is an important source for the identification of places visited by Leder and helps to retrace them. (Fig. 1/6)

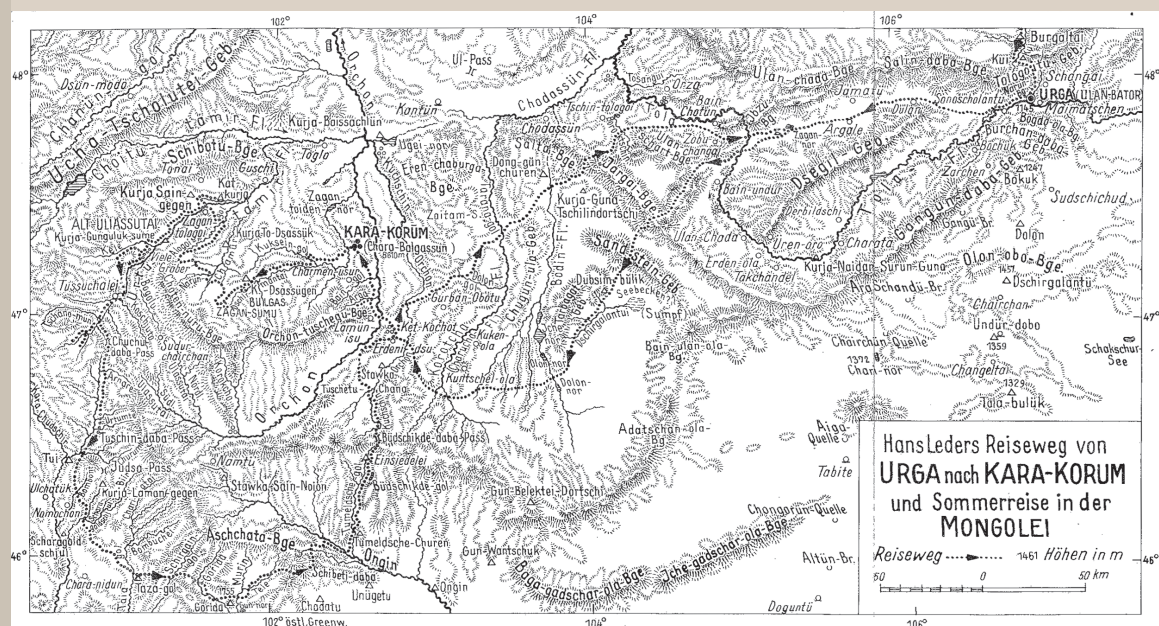


Fig. 1/6

Map of Leder's Journey in 1892
(Jisl 1963)

As a result of lectures and publications on his first stay in Mongolia, Leder was encouraged by colleagues to travel to Mongolia again, this time with a special emphasis on ethnographic topics. It may have been that it was additionally the upcoming interest and the quest for ethnographic items for the emerging ethnographic museums in the European museum landscape that led him to return to Mongolia with this additional focus alongside the entomological interests.

1899/1900 During his second journey to Mongolia Leder acquired the first larger collections of ethnographica for the imperial Naturhistorische Hofmuseum in Vienna. In November 1899 he sent a list of objects to the museum. Some of these items, with 210 inventory numbers, were purchased by the museum in 1899. Besides collecting ethnographic items and studying Mongolian Buddhism, one of Leder's declared

aims was to travel to Tibet disguised as a pilgrim – this plan failed. Another intention was to clarify the location of the historic Mongolian capital, Karakorum. Not only by visual inspection but also by documents he recovered, he was able to verify that the ruins of Khara Balgas were definitely not the location of Karakorum. Leder again visited Erdene Zuu Monastery and spent the winter in Urga. As well as him, other Europeans were staying in Urga at that time: the later well-known Finnish linguist Dr. Ramstedt (1873–1950) and his family and the Norwegian missionary Westegard. In March 1900 Leder travelled with a caravan to Irkutsk together with Ramstedt's wife and young child. There he met his servant, a Cossack called Maxim, and together they travelled to the Altai region. They returned from the mountains in August (cf. Leder 1908/1909).

1902 On 8 July Leder left Troppau by train. He arrived in Kyakhta after a nineteen-day journey, changing trains four times. This time Leder was already focused on collecting ethnographica, especially additional artefacts as an extension to a collection he had sold to Graf von Linden, director of the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, in April 1902. To collect exclusively for Linden he had asked him for credit in advance. Several letters in the archive of the Linden-Museum document Leder's endeavours. The collection purchased was packed into three trunks and taken by Leder by train to Verkhne-Udinsk (Ulaan Ude) from where they were forwarded to Europe. Leder returned to Urga, where he learned that his consignment had got as far as Irkutsk before being held up. Leder returned home by end of November 1902, while his collections reached their final destination, Stuttgart, only in April 1903 after tedious interventions.

1904/1905 In 1904–05, spending the winter months in Urga, Leder witnessed important historical events unfolding in Mongolia. He had arrived there in October and was lodging in the complex of the Russian consulate. On 27 November he witnessed the arrival of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso (1876–1933) in Urga. The Dalai Lama had left Lhasa on 30 July shortly before the invasion by British troops. Disguised as a Mongolian trader, he journeyed north to Mongolia (cf. Goldstein 1989, Andreyev 2003, Brauen 2005, Shakabpa 2010). Urga / Ikh Khüree was chosen as a place of exile due to existing religious and cultural ties as well as for political reasons: the Tibetan leadership wanted to avoid further influence from China, and communications with the Russian tsar were easier from there.

Leder noticed the growing excitement after the rumour of the impending arrival of the head of the Tibetan Buddhists and his envoys spread. According to Leder the news “was like a bombshell” and excited every believer “in Mongolia and Transbaikalia with a pure flush of joy” (Leder 1909: 4–5). Leder witnessed the arrival of the caravan accompanying the Dalai Lama and his and their reception by the clerics, Mongolian princes, Mongolian and Chinese (Manchu) dignitaries and ordinary people from all over Mongolia. Notably, only the Eighth Bogdo Gegeen, Jebtsundamba (1870–1924), was absent at this extraordinary event – a fact commented on in different ways and by Leder as follows (according to him, Jebtsundamba Khutugtu had already travelled towards of the convoy some days earlier to welcome the Dalai Lama personally):

But it was an official secret that the [Bogdo] Gegeen was not content with the presence of the Schenresig. There were sufficient minor indications that clearly expressed his jealousy. He had even expressed his plan to move to another monastery, from which he wisely refrained. (Leder 1909: 5–6).

Trotzdem war es ein öffentliches Geheimnis, dass der Göggen mit der Anwesenheit des Schenresig durchaus nicht zufrieden war. Es gab der kleinen Züge genug, die seine Eifersucht deutlich zum

Ausdruck brachten. Soll er doch sogar einmal die Absicht ausgesprochen haben, nach einem anderen Kloster zu verziehen, was er aber wohlweislich unterließ. (Leder 1909: 5–6)

Tibetan sources such as the biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the recollections of his minister of finance, Shakabpa (Shakabpa 2010), document the animosities that led to a personal break between him and Jebtsundamba Khutugtu. Additionally, the requests for support from Russian side were not successful; all this led to an early departure. According to Leder, the Dalai Lama stayed in Urga until autumn 1905 before moving to Erdene Zuu Monastery for the winter.³

Concerning the Eighth Bogdo Gegeen, Leder writes that he met him for the first time when he was in his twenties, while he was going for a horse ride escorted by his favourite wife. As Leder noted, his relations with women were completely accepted by the people. In Leder's opinion, documented retrospectively in his book (Leder 1909), the Bogdo Gegeen had no political influence; he had once been capable but was increasingly inclined to alcohol, specifically champagne and cognac. Of course one has to consider that Leder's recollections were written from a specific point of view – sometimes expressing eurocentric ideas.

Another of Leder's meetings with a political player in the events on the eve of Mongolia's independence was with Agvan Dorjiev (1854–1938), Buryat lama, a close associate and mentor of the Dalai Lama, who probably convinced the Dalai Lama to flee to Mongolia in 1904 and played an instrumental role in building relations with the Russian Tsar. Leder described his first meeting with Dorjiev in the Mongolian steppe, which led to further meetings and discussions. Leder saw Dorjiev as highly influential. He notes: "he actually combines the highest power in his hands, which he naturally can only exercise through the medium of the Dalai Lama." (Leder 1909: 72). Leder emphasised Dorjiev's sympathy for Russia; regarding their conversations Leder comments:

The idea, of declaring Tibet as a neutral state on the model of Belgium or Switzerland and permitting entry to all people equally has to remain a dream. Not only this, but other plans were also discussed in my presence in all seriousness. (Leder 1909: 73)

Ein politischer Traum aber muß für immer die Idee bleiben, Tibet nach dem Muster von Belgien oder der Schweiz als neutralen Staat zu erklären und allen Völkern gleicherweise den Zutritt zu gestatten. Es wurde nicht nur dieser, sondern auch noch manche andere Pläne in meiner Gegenwart allen Ernstes erörtert. (Leder 1909: 73)

Supported by his meanwhile growing recognition within the entourage of the Dalai Lama, Leder finally managed to take part at an official audience with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and met him face to face, receiving a personal gift. In spring of 1905 Leder travelled once more to Erdene Zuu Monastery and to the Khangai mountain range. In July he returned to Troppau – he had reached the age of 62. By then his "Mongolian Collections" were extensive and it was to take great efforts to sell these in the way he had imagined. Finally his financial situation forced him to sell the collections well below his asking price and – even more importantly – this led him to divide his collections, often reluctantly. As a result today they are held in ethnographic museums in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Hamburg, Berlin and Stuttgart.

Leder's reminiscences were naturally biased and written from the viewpoint of a European "in the field". Nonetheless, his recollections enrich the understanding of the prevailing atmosphere and the political cli-

mate in and around Mongolia at that time – and they are the historic matrix for the material collections assembled. Furthermore, his collections of Mongolian ethnographic artefacts are tangible evidence that enables us to establish a direct link to the past. History, beliefs and individual lives are encoded within these items.

Collecting

Places of Collecting For the collector Hans Leder it was important to state that most of the objects in his collections came directly from people's daily usage, whether from their house altars in the Mongolian yurts (*ger*) or from public sacred ritual places such as stupas and sacrificial stone cairns (*owoo*, *oboo*). Leder described his collections as follows:

As a very special feature of most of the collection items it should be mentioned that, originating either directly from the temples and altars or from the property of priests and believers, they may be regarded as being of high cultural value, as they are still in exactly the same condition and have all the specific characteristics as are demanded by the liturgy and religious prescription. (Leder Manuscript, 1902, Archive Linden-Museum Stuttgart)

Als ein ganz besonderer Vorzug der weitaus meisten der in dieser Sammlung enthaltenen Gegenstände verdient aber auch der Umstand erwähnt zu werden, dass sie, als entweder direkt aus den Tempeln und von den Altären oder aus dem Besitze von Priestern und Gläubigen stammend, als kulturell durchaus vollwertig angesehen werden müssen, da sie noch in genau demselben Zustand sich befinden und mit all den Eigentümlichkeiten versehen sind, wie es die Liturgie und die religiöse Vorschrift eben verlangt. (Leder Manuscript, 1902, Archive Linden-Museum Stuttgart)

Apparently, their being taken from direct use provided these items with unique value in the eyes of the collector. Perhaps something like “lived Mongolian culture” or their “aura” could be sensed and conveyed by them or even something of their intrinsic efficacy might still be felt.

Dislocated Objects Leder himself made detailed inventories of most his collection. His original inventories are archived at the Weltmuseum Wien, the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart and the Grassi Museum in Leipzig. Some interesting notes concerning the use of the objects or their acquisition can be found in these inventories, such as the following connected with the small votive clay images, the *tshatsha*, which pilgrims left in sacred places in the countryside and in temples and stupas. Some of the *tshatsha* and other items in the collection were apparently taken from these sacred places by Leder. In the object list he sent from Urga to Vienna in November 1899 he comments:

On the public altars and obos, the pious pilgrims, who come together here from practically the whole of Asia, frequently leave various things such as clay plaques and figures, images, prayer flags, stones and other incredible things as offerings. The small items that form a part of the collection described above come from these places. This way of collecting can only take place in a limited way and with extreme care, because it is very dangerous. If I were once to be caught in my pious zeal for Buddhist treasures, it would be the worst for me. But on the other hand there is certainly no other way for me to obtain these items, so I will continue to collect carefully. May the burkhans [gods] forgive this sin;

I only do it to allow their wondrousness to shine under other heavens. (Leder Manuscript, 1899; Archive Weltmuseum Wien)

Auf den öffentlichen Churds, den öffentlichen Altären, Suburganen und Obos legen die frommen Pilger, die aus fast ganz Asien hier zusammenströmen, häufig verschiedene Dinge, Tontäfelchen und Figuren, Dartschiks, Bilder, Gebete, Fetzen aller Art, Steine u. unglaubliche Dinge als Opfer nieder. Von diesen Orten stammen die kleinen Sachen, die unter den oben aufgeführten Nummern in der Sammlung enthalten sind. Diese Art des Sammelns kann aber nur in gewissen Grenzen u. mit alleräußerster Vorsicht geschehen, denn sie ist sehr gefährlich. Wenn ich einmal in meinem frommen Eifer für buddhistische Kostbarkeiten ertappt würde, könnte es mir sehr schlecht ergehen. Andererseits aber gibt es sicher keine andere Möglichkeit mir diese Gegenstände zu verschaffen, ich werde vorsichtig weiter sammeln, mögen mir die Burchanen meinen Frevel verzeihen, ich tue es ja nur, um ihre Herrlichkeit auch unter einem anderen Himmel leuchten zu lassen. (Leder Manuscript, 1899; Archive Weltmuseum Wien)

Leder mentions public altar places and shrines as places of origin for other items as prayer flags, manuscripts (Weltmuseum Wien inv. no. 65017–65027) and amulets. Other sacred natural places were the “Lappenbäume” [rag trees] – Leder collected prayer flags, for example, from these consecrated trees. Here he adds the remark:

Anyone who is going on a journey and wants to seek protection of Burkhans [deities] for himself and his animals goes to the lama of his district and in return for payment has such pieces of cloth printed with various emblems and prayers, which will guarantee safe protection if on dangerous or difficult passages he attaches them to trees or obos [stone cairns] while praying and making incense offerings. (Leder Manuscript, Archives Weltmuseum Wien and Linden-Museum Stuttgart)

Wer auf die Reise geht und sich selbst wie seine Tiere unter den Schutz der Burchane stellen will, geht zum Lama seines Bezirkes u. lässt sich gegen Entgelt ein solches Zeugstück geben, das mit verschiedenen Emblemen u. Gebeten bedruckt ist, die ihm sicheren Schutz gewährleisten, wenn er sie an gefährlichen oder schwierigen Wegstellen an Bäumen oder Obos, die sich auf den Pässen aller Berge finden, anbringt, dabei betet u. ein Rauchopfer bringt. (Leder Manuscript, Archives Weltmuseum Wien and Linden-Museum Stuttgart)

In the museum inventories we mostly find “Urga” given as place of origin for the artefacts in the Leder collections. In the correspondence archived in the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, Leder notes that the artefacts offered to the museum in 1902 were mostly collected from the largest monasteries of Mongolia in “Da-Khüree” (Urga) and have their origin in many different monasteries. Some items, such as amulets originating from Lhasa and consecrated by the Dalai Lama, had been brought by with pilgrim monks. Sometimes places such as Baruun Khüree, Amarbayasgalant Monastery, Erdene Zuu Monastery, a temple of the Monastery Baruun Khüree in the Gobi and Kumbum Monastery are given as provenance. Some items such as a hand-drum (*damaru*) originate from the estate of a deceased monk.

Indeed it must have been very difficult to acquire certain items, and considering the size of Leder’s collections as a whole (more than 4,500 items in the museums researched), it seems rather astonishing that he was able to amass such an immense collection. Apparently, small things such as *tsakli* and *tshatsha*, which make

up the largest groups within the collections, were on the one hand less difficult and expensive to transport and on the other hand easier to acquire. Maybe they were even sold at workshops in Urga and other places.

As usual in Buddhist art, the artists or monk-artists in most cases remain anonymous, so Leder does not give their names. Only sometimes does he comment that items such as sculptures and thangkas were made by Mongolian monk-artists; he seldom mentions Chinese artists (in one case he seems to have purchased a painting depicting Wutai shan mountain from a Chinese artist (Leder Manuscript, 1902, Archive Linden-Museum Stuttgart). For the scattered groups of carved wooden figures of characters of the Mongolian Tsam ceremony (cf. contributions by Lang p. 58 and Teleki p. 76 in this publication) Leder provides the information that he ordered them to be made by a monk near Urga, at least some of them by the same artist-monk who had carried out a similar assignment for the collections of the Kunstkamera in St Petersburg.

Modes of collecting It seems that the low budget Leder was provided with, together with the difficulties of transportation, led him to acquire objects that were small and inexpensive, at least in those days. We have also seen that in some cases Leder was involved in methods of acquisition that we would consider “dubious” today. Leder was not a mere collector selling and earning a living from this occupation, his interest went far beyond that. He studied the relevant literature available in his time, wrote several articles and a small book (Leder 1909). A further work on Mongolian belief systems probably planned for publication remained a manuscript in fragments and could not be realised (cf. Lang 2010: 38). Leder is described by his contemporaries as having a gift for creating a synoptic view in his research work, expressed in the mode of collecting and the consistency of his collections – the quest for curiosities was not his concern.

I have always been in close contact with the ordinary people and with the priests or lamas, low and high ranking. So it was just natural that I was primarily interested, yes indeed had to be interested in their religious life, as I could only gain an understanding for the thousands of things associated with ritual that I was collecting by insistent questioning and getting explanations. In this I was supported by one of the outstanding characteristics of Buddhists – the complete lack of any kind of intolerance and fanaticism towards people of other religions. (Leder 1909: V)

Ich befand mich stets in innigem Kontakt mit dem gewöhnlichen Volke sowohl, wie mit den Priestern oder Lamen, mit niederen und hohen. Es war da ganz natürlich, daß ich mich vor allem für ihr religiöses Leben interessierte, ja geradezu interessieren mußte, da ich nur durch beständiges Ausfragen und Erklärenlassen ein Verständnis für die tausenderlei mit dem Kulte zusammenhängenden Gegenstände, die ich sammelte, gewinnen konnte. Hierbei unterstützte mich einer der hervorragendsten Züge aller Buddhisten, der vollständigen Mangel jeder Art von Intoleranz und Fanatismus Andersgläubigen gegenüber. (Leder 1909: V)

During his travels in Mongolia Leder cooperated with or was supported by locals. Mostly, Mongolian monks accompanied him. At the time of his first journey he could speak Russian but later he acquired some knowledge of Mongolian. Monks assisted him when writing down the local names of the collected items – these are quoted in his inventories, which include the following categories for each item: number of pieces, condition, local name, size and additional comments. Leder collected systematically, maybe partly according to the demands of ethnographic museums of that time. He sent handwritten copies of his inventories to the museums, identifying most of the items collected with small paper labels – some are still visible today. His

collections open a comprehensive view of the Mongolian Buddhist pantheon shown in the artworks. Concerning some paintings in his inventories Leder remarks:

Images of various size and design painted on canvas by monks in Urga. The combined ones as well as the images of only one deity are in no sense arbitrary compositions by the artists, but mainly established, recurring portrayals that are consecrated by the cult everywhere within the scope of Lamaism, which have their specific names and meanings. Thus the images serve us as a kind of classification index to recognise figures and other images easily. Each of the images has a number on the back, the corresponding names of which follow here. (Leder Manuscript, 1902, Archive Linden-Museum Stuttgart)

Auf Leinwand von Lamen in Urga gemalte Bilder von verschiedener Größe u. Ausführung. Die zusammengesetzten sowohl, wie die nur eine Gottheit enthaltenden Bilder sind in keinem Falle willkürliche Compositionen der Künstler, sondern in der Hauptsache feststehende, durch den Kult geheiligte, überall im Geltungsbereiche des Lamaismus wiederkehrende Darstellungen, die ihre besonderen Benennungen u. Bedeutungen haben. Die Bilder dienen deshalb für uns als eine Art Bestimmungstabelle, nach welcher sowohl Figuren als andere Bilder leicht erkannt werden können. Jedes dieser Bilder trägt auf der Rückseite eine Nummer deren entsprechende Namen hier folgen. (Leder Manuscript, 1902, Archive Linden-Museum Stuttgart)

Collections of Buddhist, namely Lamaist, art (a notion common in Leder's time) were rare at that time, Tibet was seen a mysterious destination. In the correspondence in the archive of the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart Leder's collections are compared with the collection of Count Ukhtomskij and the collection at the Museum of Russian Imperial Geographic Society in Irkutsk and regarded as equally important – furthermore they were the first of this kind in the European west. Edmund W. Braun, director of the Kaiser Franz Joseph Museum in Troppau, a supporter of Leder, even considered them to be culturally and quantitatively more significant (Letter Braun, 31.3.1902, Archive Linden-Museum Stuttgart).

Ways of the Collections

The branching and yet interwoven histories of Leder's collections, accumulated during his journeys in Mongolia between 1882 and 1905, lead to several ethnographic museums in Europe, where these stories have been reconstructed through the still existing correspondence with Leder. Here it becomes apparent that the collector and his collection were subject to a transnational network of relations dominated by research interests, collecting strategies, museum policies and their diverse power relations. The correspondence between the collector and museum employees or directors sheds light on Leder's desperate financial situation, which on the one hand led him to sell his collections well below his asking price and on the other hand – even more importantly – forced him to divide his collections, often against his own wishes. As a result the collections are scattered over several ethnographic museums in Europe (Weltmuseum Wien, Linden-Museum Stuttgart, Völkerkundemuseum der J. & E. von Portheim Stiftung Heidelberg, Grassimuseum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, Völkerkundemuseum Hamburg, Néprajzi Múzeum Budapest and Náprstek Museum Prague). Research at the museums concerned has made the histories of the Leder collections, the individual biography of the collector, collecting policies and ethnographic museum histories more transparent (cf. Lang 2010b)

Weltmuseum Wien Leder's collections in the Vienna museum include 811 identified pieces – eight of them are assigned to western Asia and originate from Leder's travels in the Caucasus and Transcaucasus. The first ethnographic collection acquired from Leder by the museum, then the imperial Naturhistorische Hofmuseum, are 34 votive clay plaques (*tshatsha*), a snuff bottle from Urga, a tea brick, two silver ingots and two ritual silk scarves (*khadag*) – these items (inv. no. 63428–63466) were inventoried in 1898 and were therefore most probably collected by Leder in 1892. The second acquisition, of 210 inventory numbers, is recorded in 1899 (inv. no. 64833–65043). The last acquisition, in 1905/1906, was the most extensive, including 576 items (inv. no. 74648–75223). Complicated and tedious negotiations preceded this acquisition as can be gathered from the correspondence in the museum archive (cf. Lang 2010b: 85 ff.). Leder's handwritten inventories for the acquisitions in 1899 and 1905/1906 reveal that items not chosen by the Vienna museum at that time were later sold or offered to other museums and probably to the Umlauff trading company.

Náprstek Museum Prague The Kaiser Franz Joseph Museum in Troppau (today the Silesian Museum in Opava) once housed 123 artefacts of Leder's Mongolian collections. Most of these were destroyed by fire at the end of WW II; 24 *tshatsha* and stūpas survived and were transferred to the Náprstek Museum in Prague. Today these are held in a museum depository outside of Prague.

Linden-Museum Stuttgart On intervention of Director Braun (Kaiser Franz Joseph Museum / Troppau) in April 1902 Leder sold a collection of more than 1,500 artefacts to the Württembergische Verein für Handelsgeographie, managed by Karl Graf von Linden, director of the museum. The Museum for Ethnography in Budapest had also shown an interest in buying the collection, but Braun intervened in favour of Graf Linden. In May 1902 the collection arrived in Stuttgart, and Linden was enthusiastic about the quality of the pieces. When Leder left for Mongolia again in July 1902 they had agreed that he would collect exclusively for Linden to complement the first collection. For this reason Leder received a requested credit from Linden in advance. The correspondence between Graf Linden and Leder (05.1902 – 09.1904) reflects the complications Leder became involved in after this positive start. First, after the second collection had arrived in Stuttgart by April 1903, Linden was again extremely satisfied. But when it came to the account from Leder, misunderstanding and insufficient agreement became obvious and led to controversies: in Linden's view the advance credit was already the payment for the collection. Leder however asked for and needed a larger amount for his expenses. Linden was not willing to buy the second collection; on the contrary Leder was in debt to him as he had to pay back the credit. Finally Leder, by then already in deep financial trouble, managed to sell the collection to Budapest.

Néprajzi Múzeum Budapest In 1904 Leder agreed to sell the collection originally acquired for Stuttgart to the Néprajzi Múzeum in Budapest (at that time part of the National Museum and located in Budapest IX, Csillag utca 3). The collection numbered 906 pieces and the museum paid in instalments. Although an inconvenient procedure for Leder, his personal situation meant he had to agree to this arrangement. In the course of the project, 664 locatable artefacts were documented and identified.⁴ In 2011 the archive of the museum did not have any of the collector's original inventories or related data on the Leder collections. In 1963 Lumír Jisl recorded following objects from Leder's collections at the museum: 207 *tshatsha*, two grand reliefs, 32 clay stūpas and one bronze one, 22 wooden figures of Tsam dancers, more than 50 small bronze sculptures, several printing plates, four prayer wheels, several papier-mâché figures, 89 chess figures, three



Fig I/7

White Mahākāla, Mongolia, begin 20th century, mineral pigments on cotton, 173 x 77 cm, Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, inv. no. 11281

vajra, one “Titim” crown, two skull-cups, 219 miniature paintings (*tsakli*) and many thangkas, woodprints and paintings (cf. Jisl 1963).

Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig In 1907 the museum acquired 1,235 artefacts from Leder’s collections, among them: 300 thangkas, four house altars with *tshatsha*, fourteen house altars with miniatures, 47 small clay figures, 42 bronze figures, twelve wooden Tsam figures, five prayer wheels, twelve manuscripts and nine books. For 1912 there is a second entry of a few items purchased from Leder. As in Vienna and Stuttgart, handwritten inventories and the correspondence with the collector (1905–1912) are held in the museum archive. Leder tried to sell at least part of his by then three-part collections, temporarily held at the museum in Vienna. Due to its budget, the Naturhistorische Hofmuseum in Vienna had only been able to acquire a sixth of his collections. Before he could sell his collection, Leder brought the asking price down several times. Finally he expressed his despair:

It is indeed a bitter apple that I have to bite, but what can I do? My creditors surround me like a pack of hungry wolves. (Letter Leder, 10.06.1907, Archive Grassi Museum Leipzig)

Es ist wohl ein etwas saurer Apfel, in den ich beißen muss, indeß was kann ich machen? Meine Gläubiger umlagern mich, wie eine Meute hungriger Wölfe. (Letter Leder, 10.06.1907, Archive Grassi Museum Leipzig)

His last letter in the archive is dated the end of 1912; Leder is 70 years old and appeals for the purchase of some of his last and best pieces – one of them a thangka (Fig. I/7, inv. no. 11281).

Völkerkundemuseum der J. & E. von Portheim Stiftung Heidelberg The founders of the museum, Leontine and Victor Goldschmidt, who were married cousins, started collecting ethnographic items during their world travels in 1894/95. Victor Mordechai Goldschmidt was an internationally recognised crystallographer and mineralogist with professional and family ties to Vienna. In 1919 the Goldschmidts founded the J. & E. von Portheim Stiftung – established in honour and memory of his mother and her father Josephine and Eduard von Portheim. The foundation consisted of several independent scientific institutes in Heidelberg, among them the Ethnographic Institute and Museum. This is in the Palais Weimar – open to public as a museum since 1929. The “aryanisation” of the foundation in 1933 and the death of the founders also led to the loss of several documents and artefacts.

As no original inventories of the Leder Collections are preserved at the museum, it is sometimes difficult to reconstruct the provenance, but it can be assumed that most of the objects assigned to “Tibet” are from the Leder Collections. Most of them are inventoried as “Sammlung [Collection] Umlauff”. The Umlauff trading company was *the* trading house for ethnographica at the turn of the 19th century and influenced collection activities in many museums in Germany and beyond (cf. Lange 2006). The first historic evidence for Leder’s collections is an inventory sent by the Umlauff company to Victor Goldschmidt in 1911, including some bronze sculptures and other items from “Urga”. These items that Goldschmidt bought are not traceable today. It is probable that most of the artefacts from Leder’s collections were sold to Goldschmidt via the Umlauff company. There is one undated typed inventory at the museum – the objects from Mongolia have the typical names given by Leder for items in his collections, some still have original paper labels, probably from Leder as well, as designations in his handwriting. The museum holds about 800 artefacts collected by



Fig I/8

Sitātapatrā, Mongolia, 19th century, mineral pigments on cotton, 90 x 48 cm, Weltmuseum Wien, inv. no. 74968