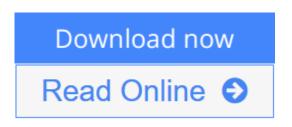# Deities of Tibetan Buddhism: The Zurich Paintings of the Icons Worthwhile to See

From Wisdom Publications

Deities of Tibetan Buddhism: The Zurich Paintings of the Icons Worthwhile to See From Wisdom Publications

An extraordinary encyclopedia of Buddhist icons. Illustrating the *Rin 'byung brgya rtsa*, the *Nar thang brgya rtsa*, and the *Vajravali*, the book is based on a collection of over five hundred images of Tibetan deities. The images, presented in the book at full scale, were originally created by a master artist in the early nineteenth century to serve as initiation cards (*tsakli*). The original *tsakli* were woodblock prints, hand colored at the request of a Ch'ing Dynasty nobleman who had received the initiations. Such cards are used in ceremonies to introduce the practitioner to the deity and his or her practice. The paintings are housed in the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich.

Deities of Tibetan Buddhism is also an indispensable reference tool for Tibetologists, students of Mahayana Buddhism, and museum curators. Its extensive supplementary materials include English translations of the basic invocation texts; the associated visualization with descriptions of the deities' postures, attributes, and colors; and the dharanis and mantras used in their invocation.

Co-editor Martin Willson spent more than a decade translating and documenting this work. He has provided detailed explanations of technical terms, enlightening explanatory notes, and glossaries documenting the discrepancies in the depictions. The extensive pictorial index, featuring drawings and text by Robert Beer, explains the symbolic meaning behind the deities' implements and adornments. The cross-referenced indices for Tibetan, Sanskrit, Mongolian, and English names and terms provide quick access to vast amounts of information.

Co-editor Martin Brauen and the technical staff of the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich have documented the relationship between this and other sets of initiation cards that exist elsewhere, as well as detailing the construction materials and methods involved in producing this set.

Deities of Tibetan Buddhism is a reference book without peer, essential for any serious student of Tibetan and East Asian art and religion.

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Editorial Review

Review
"The lineage of these deities has survived for hundreds of years, but now, as the great masters disappear, this lineage is in danger of being lost. How will the next generation of practitioners gain a proper knowledge of these deities? This book marks the first time all this information has been collected in one place, with the deities shown in full color and with so many details provided about them. *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism* is an enormously important achievement, an essential document for preserving this precious lineage. Wonderful! Wonderful!" (Ven. Amchok Rinpoche, Director, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala)

Language Notes
Text: English (translation)
Original Language: Tibetan

About the Author
Martin Willson received his PhD in radioastronomy at Cambridge University before spending twelve years as a Buddhist monk in Australia, Switzerland, and France. Now married, he lives in Swansea, South Wales, United Kingdom.

Martin Brauen (born 1948) is an anthropologist from Bern, Switzerland. From 2008 to 2012, he was the chief curator of the Rubin Museum for Himalayan Arts in New York. And since 1975, he has been the head of the Himalaya, Tibet, and the Far East department of the Ethographic Museum of the University of Zurich.

Robert Beer was born in Wales in 1947 and now lives in Oxford, England. He first became interested in Tibetan art in the late 1960s and has since spent more than forty years depicting and studying the iconography and symbolism of Vajrayana Buddhism. In recent years he has been actively involved with some of the finest contemporary Newar artists of the Kathmandu Valley and has assembled a unique collection of their work. Apart from his continuing work with Indo-Tibetan iconography, he is also deeply involved in researching all aspects of the afterlife, especially the enhanced consciousness and transformations related to the near-death experience. His illustrations have been widely published and pirated, and he is the author and illustrator of *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs* and *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols*.

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