



Assembly of the Exalted

The Tibetan Shrine Room from the Alice S. Kandell Collection

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Photographs by John Bigelow Taylor

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- Masterpieces of Tibetan Buddhist art are presented as the constituents of a shrine
- Sculptures, paintings, musical instruments, and ritual objects (13th-20th century) from the Kandell Collection

Assembly of the Exalted presents some 50 pieces from the remarkable collection of Alice S. Kandell. The works, dating from the late 13th century to the early 20th, include great masterpieces and emblematic examples of Tibetan Buddhist art. They are all presented here as the constituents of a Tibetan Buddhist shrine. Shrines, both modest and grand, are the primary sites of Tibetan Buddhist practice, whether it be reciting scriptures, performing rituals, saying prayers, or engaging in meditation. The introductory essays thus focus on the Tibetan Buddhist shrine, describing its evolution over the history of Buddhism, its special role in Tibet, and how the pieces in the Kandell Collection came to be assembled and displayed in shrines at institutions across America. Illustrated with vivid photography, forty short essays, each centered on a single work or set of objects, describe the pieces in terms of their importance for the practice of Buddhism, highlighting the many essential functions of Tibetan Buddhist art within the space of a shrine.

Rebecca Bloom is a PhD candidate in Buddhist Studies at the University of Michigan, specializing in Tibetan Buddhism and Himalayan art. She has curated exhibitions at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, and the Freer|Sackler, the Smithsonian's museums of Asian art. Most recently, she served as co-curator of *Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice Across Asia*, and wrote the *Sacred Spaces* app, which accompanied the exhibition's Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room from the Alice S. Kandell Collection. Her dissertation focuses on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's illustrated commentary on the Buddhist monastic code and the series of murals it inspired. John Bigelow Taylor and Dianne Dubler are New York based, still-life photographers, specializing in works of art, antiquities, jewellery, architecture and interiors. Working with the world's foremost collectors, museums and publishers, they have created the photography for over 250 art books, spanning a vast array of subjects. Currently, they are creating bespoke, limited edition books on estates and collections for private clients around the world.

Donald S. Lopez, Jr. is the Arthur E. Link Distinguished University Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies at the University of Michigan. He received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia in 1982. His publications fall into four areas: Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, the history of the European encounter with Buddhism, the life and works of the Tibetan writer Gendun Chopel (1903-1951), and anthologies and reference works on Buddhism. His recent books include *Buddhism: Norton Anthology of World Religions*, *The Lotus Sutra: A Biography*, *Dispelling the Darkness: A Jesuit's Quest for the Soul of Tibet* (with Thupten Jinpa), and *Gendun Chopel: Tibet's Modern Visionary*. The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (co-authored with Robert Buswell) won the American Library Association's Dartmouth Medal for best reference work of 2014. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2000.