



## Illustrated Manuscript of The Liberation Through Hearing in the Intermediate State (Bardo Thodrol)

### Date

19th century

### Medium

Pigments and ink on paper

### Description

Illuminated books became very popular in nineteenth-century Mongolia, and unlike many Buddhist texts that were reproduced using block prints, most of these books were hand written as is true of this text. This manuscript of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, a guide to navigating the intermediate state of consciousness between death and rebirth, or the bardo, features a vertical Uyghur-based Mongolian script that was instituted by order of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan (reigned 1206–1227) in the early thirteenth century. Painted illustrations translate the written word into easily recognized and memorable forms and shapes, both peaceful and fearsome, that are meant to be visualized during the bardo practice in preparation for one's own death or as part of the ritual at someone else's death performed by a ritual specialist. In one folio various female forms are depicted in active postures, each with a different animal head and body color. The colors relate to basic elements such as fire, air, and earth, and the animal heads are derived from Central Asian species of wild game along with some iconic Indian animals such as the elephant and boar.

### Dimensions

7 3/8 × 24 1/4 × 1 1/8 in. 6 5/8 × 24 1/8 in. (Page Size)