Tibetan Manuscripts from the Silk Road

Although the majority of the manuscripts found in the library cave in Dunhuang were Chinese, reflecting the fact that the Chinese empire controlled this area for much of the first millennium, there were also considerable numbers in other languages, primarily Tibetan and Uighur. This issue of the newsletter is devoted to the Tibetan manuscripts and Tibetan Silk Road art and culture.

On page 2, Dr. van Schaik of the International Dunhuang Project reports on the Tibetan manuscripts remaining in collections in Gansu Province, China, following his research visit to Dunhuang last year. He also gives a short report on the Ellsworth Huntington collection at Yale University on page 4. There are further reports on the Songtsen Library and listings of web sites and books relating to Tibetan art and culture.

Tibetan manuscripts in potoi form from the Dunhuang library cave photographed by Stein in 1907. Photograph from Siirtania, 1921, vol. 4, Plate CLXXIII.
Dunhuang Tibetan Manuscripts in Gansu Province, China
Sam van Schaik

The story of the Tibetan Manuscripts
A large number of manuscripts, many in Tibetan, remained in Dunhuang after Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot had made their selections from the original cache. The Tibetan manuscripts were still there after the Chinese authorities had removed most of the Chinese manuscripts to Beijing in 1910. Subsequently a relatively small number of Tibetan manuscripts were acquired by the Otani and Oldenburg expeditions but, in 1919, a government official sent to Dunhuang recorded 94 scroll bundles and 11 pohti volumes in the cave. The great majority of these were Tibetan. They were then removed from the cave, but their fate afterwards is little known outside China.

The director of the Dunhuang Academy’s museum, Luo Huqing, continues the story: ‘In 1928, all the Tibetan manuscripts remaining in Dunhuang went to a cultural institute in Dunhuang city. After 1949, some were brought to the Dunhuang Academy, some were sent to provincial museums, but most of the manuscripts were placed in the City Museum of Dunhuang.’

The present whereabouts of the manuscripts
In a 1978 article by Huang Wenhuan was published on the whereabouts of the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts in Gansu province (Henuu (Dec. 1978), pp. 59-63). He reported that small collections of Tibetan manuscripts were held in the county museums of Jiuquan, Zhangye and Wuwei, that the Dunhuang Academy held 42 pohti folios and 43 scrolls, and that Lanzhou Library held 1,117 folios and 30 scrolls. Most significantly, he reported that Dunhuang City Museum held 8,780 Tibetan folios and 224 scrolls.

In July 2000 I had the opportunity to visit Dunhuang on a British Academy funded research trip. At the Dunhuang Academy I was shown their collection of 47 scrolls (as well as one single panel and one fragment), all of which, except one, contained the Tibetan text of the Aparimitāyūmānasūtra (the exception was the Heart Sutra). There were 87 large pohti leaves, all containing the Tibetan text of the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra in 100,000 verses. Additionally, the Academy holds at least 700 more Tibetan pohti leaves, and numerous fragments, but all are apparently not older than the Yuan period and some are certainly more recent than that. I also visited the Dunhuang City Museum. The scrolls which I examined all contained, once again, the text of the Aparimitāyūmānasūtra, while the pohti leaves were all of the large variety, again with the text of the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra in 100,000 verses. According to the museum’s curators, the other folios, which they confirmed were over 8,000 in number, were all of the same format.

The significance of the Chinese collections
The group of Tibetan manuscripts in the Dunhuang City Museum makes it the third largest collection in the world, after those of Paris and London. Furthermore, the manuscripts in the Dunhuang Academy and Lanzhou Library comprise significant smaller collections. However, while the size of the Gansu collections rivals those of the Paris and London, the manuscripts are much less varied in subject matter. It seems that both Stein and Pelliot, through a combination of circumstances, took away with them the most varied of the Tibetan manuscripts, leaving behind mainly those regular sets of manuscripts stored together in scroll bundles and large pohti volumes.

Outside Gansu, other institutions in China also have small collections of Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts. The National Library of China in Beijing holds around 200 manuscripts which may have arrived in Beijing in 1910 along with the Chinese scrolls. Peking University Library, Shanghai Library, Shanghai Museum, and Tianjin Arts Museum each have a few manuscripts. Peking University Library acquired most of its Tibetan manuscripts in the 1950s from collectors, and this is likely to be the case with the other institutions too.

I would like to thank The British Academy, who provided me with a grant to travel to China, as well as Fan Jinhui and Luo Huqing at the Dunhuang Academy and Sun Liping at the National Library of China who helped me during my visit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CATALOGUES OF CENTRAL ASIAN TIBETAN MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

‘La formation du Bouddhism tibétain à travers les documents de Dunhuang’
Summary of the January 2001 EPHE Vème section lecture series
Matthew Kapstein

The four lectures in the series concerned primarily two broad themes: relations between Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism under the Tibetan empire during the early 9th century; and aspects of the development of Tibetan Buddhist tantrism during the early post-imperial period (late 9th and 10th centuries).

The study of Sino-Tibetan religious relations has so far generally emphasized the transmission to Tibet of Chan Buddhism, and the controversy surrounding it. It has been primarily in the work of the late R.A. Stein that other aspects of the relationship have been to some extent examined, for instance, the spread of Chinese Buddhist apocryphal literature in Tibet. In the first lecture, ‘Mulan au pays des neiges: les traditions chinoises de l’Arhat Maudgalyāyana dans la littérature Tibétaine’, we have sought to add to this line of research.

The elaboration of the legend of the Arhat Maudgalyāyana during the course of Buddhism’s progression from India through Central Asia to China has been a topic that has long fascinated scholars of Chinese literature and of Buddhism in East Asia. Two of the most famous products of the legend’s development are the Yulampen jing (Taisho 685) and the Da maqianlun mingjian jiunn biawen, often referred to in English as the Transformation Text on Mulian Saving His Mother from Hell. It can now be established that these works were to some extent known in Tibet, where they exerted a degree of influence on later Tibetan Buddhist literary accounts of the life of the Buddha and his disciples.

The Tibetan version of the Yulampen jing is so far known from just three of the manuscript versions of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, where it is entitled ‘Phags pa yongs su skyobs pa’i snod ces bya ba’i nido (Stog Palace Kanjur no. 266, Ulan Bator 314 and Tokyo 266); it is not found in the printed editions.

According to the colophon it was translated from the Chinese by ‘Gos Chos-grub, the renowned ninth century translator based in Dunhuang, who is also well-known in Chinese as Facheng. The translation is literal and precise, and corresponds very closely with the published Chinese version of the Yulampen jing, as found in the Taisho Tripitaka (no. 685).

It is of considerable interest, too, that in the Stein collection of Tibetan documents from Dunhuang in London, we find a short verse composed by ‘Gos Chos-grub himself that is devoted to the story of Maudgalyāyana (de la Vallée-Poussin 1962, no. 686, IOL Tib J 86). This work is based not on the Yulampen jing, but on the Transformation Text. Besides this, the Transformation Text had a considerable legacy in later Tibetan literature and a fuller version of it was also translated into Tibetan. Among the numerous late retellings of the tale, we have considered here the version given the popular life of the Buddha (Sangs-rgyas mdzad-rnam) authored by Sna-nam bstan-po Skal-bzang-chos-kyi-rgya-mtsho (15th century), and the Dmyag-glging episode of the epic of Gling Ge-sar, which seems certainly to be derived ultimately from the story of Mulian’s mission to rescue his mother from hell.

The second lecture, ‘L’identification du temple de De ga g.yu tshal étude iconographique’, concerned the problem of the precise location of the ‘temple of the treaty’ (gtsegs-kyi gtsug-lag-khang) celebrated in the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts Pelliot Tibétain 16 and IOL Tib J 751, first studied by F.W. Thomas. The temple had been founded to commemorate the treaty of peace concluded between Tibet, China, the Uighurs and the kingdom of Nanzhao in 821. Though the exact significance of de ga in the name of place where the temple was situated remains uncertain (it is perhaps an ancient local geonym), philological arguments were advanced to show that g.yu tshal might have stood for the Chinese place name Yulin, though it is neither an exact translation or transcription of the latter. The suggestion that g.yu tshal = Yulin is however strengthened by the study of iconographic information contained in PT 16: this is found to closely match the actual iconography of Anxi Yulin cave 25, a temple already famed among art historians for the exceptional refinement of its murals. Its construction dates certainly to the period of Tibetan administration in the region during the early 9th century. In its overall iconographic program, as well as in the style of its execution, this temple clearly seems to mediate between Tibetan and Chinese religious worlds, and thus would have been a fitting monument to an accord between these two powers.

The last two lectures both sought to illustrate the early formation of the tantric traditions of Ruying ma pa order, with reference to a particular cycle belonging to the Ruying ma bka’ ma collections, namely, the Na rak dong sprags (‘Stirring up the hells’). In the first, ‘En amont de la tradition Ruying ma pa: 1. le lotus aux cent pétales: un maṇḍala tantrique’, we have studied IOL Tib J 318, a Tibetan manuscript from the Stein collection describing a lotus-maṇḍala of 108 divinities. The maṇḍala in question certainly is derived from the Yogatantras and probably from the Sarvadurgatiparisodhahatantra in particular. Nevertheless, we have attempted to suggest that it may also be related to the maṇḍala called padma byga-ladan, the ‘hundred-petalled lotus’, that is the special maṇḍala of the Na rak dong sprags cycle, and that is attested in Ruying ma pa historical sources as an icon in the temples of the Zur lineage. A functional relationship with the Sarvdurgatiparisodhahatantra is further suggested by a common emphasis on the purification of evil karma and miserable rebirth.

It is in any case quite certain that elements belonging to the Na rak dong sprags cycle are already in evidence in the Dunhuang Tibetan documents. The final lecture, ‘En amont de la tradition Ruying ma pa: 2. un rite de contrition tantrique’, concerned a clear example, IOL Tib J 584, a brief tantric confessional litany. We have been able to demonstrate that most of the content of the text can be matched, word for word, with passages contained in a Ruying ma tantra that has remained unstudied to date, the Dri med bshad rgyud, the tantra, in fact, from which the Na rak dong sprags cycle is derived.

Matthew Kapstein is Associate Professor of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, The University of Chicago.
Ellsworth Huntington and the Central Asian Manuscripts at Yale

Ellsworth Huntington (1876-1947) was perhaps the best known American geographer of his time. In the last forty years of his life he was a lecturer and research associate at Yale University, during which time he pursued his great interest, the effect of climate changes on human culture and civilisation.

Before he arrived at Yale, Huntington also had a short career as one of the first Central Asian explorers. He accompanied an expedition led by Raphael Pumpeley in 1903-1904, which spent most of its time in Russian Turkestan, (as it was then), north-west of the Taklimakan Desert. In 1905-06 he accompanied an expedition led by Robert Barrett into Chinese Turkestan, travelling over the Himalayas to Khotan and Niya. Setting out in a different direction from Barrett, Huntington travelled east from Niya to the Lop Nor desert, then north to Turfan, and travelled home via Siberia and Russia.

Huntington drew on his Central Asian experiences to illustrate his theory of the significant effect of climatic change on civilisations in his book The Pulse of Asia (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1907). He concluded that: 'with every throb of the climatic pulse which we have felt in Central Asia, the centre of civilisation has moved this way and that. Each throb has sent pain and decay to the lands whose day was done, life and vigour to those whose day was yet to be.'

Although Huntington was not an archaeologist, he brought back a few souvenirs from his Central Asian journeys — manuscripts and artifacts — which were acquired by Yale University Library after his death. This small collection includes some fragments of sculpture, probably from one of the sites on the southern Silk Road, and manuscripts on paper and wood. These include a portion of the Saddharma-pundarikasutta in Sanskrit, a page from The Book of Zambasta in Khotanese, and wooden slips with Kharosti, Khotanese and Tibetan inscriptions.

Huntington was not a textual scholar, but he was able to enlist the help of F.W. Thomas, a retired India Office librarian and scholar living in Oxfordshire, who catalogued the Kharosti and Tibetan wooden slips. Most of Thomas's transcriptions were published and, more recently, scholars including R.E. Emmerick and Akira Yuyama have published studies of the other manuscripts in the Huntington collection.

Bibliography

Studies of Manuscripts in the Huntington Collection


Expedition Reports


Sam van Schaik, IDR The British Library. Thanks are owing to Dr Jonathan Silk for helping me at Yale.

Other Resources for Tibetan Research

The Songtsen Library

The Songtsen Library is an International research library whose goal is to make accessible in one place — digitally or otherwise — the extant and diverse primary and secondary sources dedicated to Himalayan culture and history. The special emphasis of the Songtsen Library is the complete Dunhuang collected Tibetan manuscripts as well as the study and preservation of the history of Tibetan and Himalayan culture.

The library will also have significant holdings on all traditions of Buddhism furthering the study of Buddhist scripture and scholarship.

The library will use state-of-the-art computer technology bringing online an integrated catalogue and index, unifying search and query of local and international databases for all extant sources of information.

For more information contact:
Michael Thompson
Songtsen Library
PO: Kilhan, Sahastradhara Road
Dehra Dun (U.A.) 248001 India

Tibetan Studies Library

This is a new series by Brill Academic Publishers and is intended to provide a forum for outstanding works concerning the Tibetan cultural region, aimed at 2-3 titles per annum. The first volume is expected in November 2001.

For details see:
http://www.brill.nl

Circle of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies

London, UK

The aim of this newly formed circle is to encourage the scholarly exploration of Tibetan culture by providing a forum for research, exhibitions and affiliated events in the UK.

For further details contact:
Dr Ulrich Pagel
Department of the Study of Religions
SOAS, Russell Square
LONDON WC1H OXG, UK
tel: +44 20 7898 4782
fax: +44 20 7898 4779
email: elhs@soas.ac.uk
**Selected Publications on Tibet**

**Websites**

- Matthew Ciolek’s guide to other sites on Tibet and Tibetan studies.

**Buddhist Texts**

Tibetan Buddhism Resource Centre

- [www.tbrc.org](http://www.tbrc.org)
- An extensive searchable catalogue of Tibetan texts and authors, with some texts available online.
- The Asian Classics Input Project (ACIP) [www.asianclassics.org](http://www.asianclassics.org)
- Texts available for download, including Tibetan texts from the Kanjura, Tenjur and other sources, as well as catalogues of certain library collections.
- A catalogue of the canonical collections of the Nyingma school.

**Art**

- The Rubin collection [www.tibetart.com](http://www.tibetart.com)
- Online images of hundreds of paintings from the Rubin collection of Tibetan art.

**Software and Fonts**

- [www.cfymn.dircorn.org](http://www.cfymn.dircorn.org)
- Chris Fyffe’s links to on-line resources for Tibetan software and fonts.

**Art Books**

**Classic Studies**

**A History of Tibetan Painting**, David Jackson

Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.

**Tibetan Painted Scrolls**, Giuseppe Tucci,


**Tibetan Thangka Painting**, David Jackson & Janice Jackson, Serinda Publications,


**Recent Publications**

- Photographs of the murals of the Laktang temple in Lhasa.


A study of the depiction of wrathful deities in Tibet.

**From the Sacred Realm**, Val_ra Reynolds et al., Prestel, Munich and New York, 1999


An introduction to Tibetan art.


Paintings from the New York collection of Shelley and Donald Rubin.

List compiled by Sam van Schaik

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**Tibetan Exhibitions**

**The Gods of the Himalayas**

**Essen Collection of Tibetan Art**

Museum der Kulturen

Basel, Switzerland

Opening 6 May, 2001

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**Jowo Rimpochle**

Sculpture, fire-gilded hollow copper casting.

Height: 23.5 cm, Tibet, 16th century

Ild 13889 (Essen I-1)

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Thanks to a generous donation in 1998, the Museum der Kulturen Basel now possesses one of the world’s most important collections of Tibetan art. It was compiled by the religion scientist Gerhard-Wolfgang Essin in Hamburg. During his thirty years of research, Essen not only collected two hundred thangkas and religious statues, but also ritual utensils, books, masks, musical instruments, temple textiles and furniture. Thus, this unique collection today provides us with an impressive picture of the religious culture of Tibetan Buddhism.

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**TIBET - Buddhas - Gods - Saints**

5 May to 31 October, 2001

Museum der Kulturen

Basel, Switzerland

Augustinergasse 2, CH-4051 Basel

[http://www.mkb.ch](http://www.mkb.ch)

Opening hours:

- Tues. - Sun. 10 am - 5 pm
- Wed. 10 am - 9 pm
- Special opening: Mon., May 7, 10 am - 5 pm

Closed on Mondays, closed on August 1st

For further information please contact:
Mareena-Anna, Press office

Tel: +41 61-266 56 34
Email: anna-margaretha.stalder@bs.ch

/more overleaf
Tibetan Thangkas
2001 Touring Exhibition in Japan
Tokyo, Fukuoka, Kyoto and two other cities

The Hanh Cultural Foundation is located in Seoul, Korea and houses the largest Tibetan Thangka collection - over 1200 paintings - in East Asia. They also run the Hwajeong Museum. A selection of Tibetan Thangkas from the collection is currently on exhibition tour in Japan.

For details see:
http://home.interlink.or.jp/~aom

Publications on the collection include:
Art of Tibet, Korea, 1999
An exhibition catalogue with details of thangkas, sculpture, books etc. Korean-English Edition. USD50

Other Exhibitions

L’Asie des Steppes d’Alexandre
le Grand à Gengis Khan
Musée des Arts asiatiques-Guimet, Paris, France
3 February - 2 April, 2001

Madrid
25 April - 1 July, 2001

This exhibition, to coincide with the reopening of the Musée Guimet, comprises 180 works dating from the time of Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) to Genghis Khan (1176-1227). A catalogue in French is available.

For details see: http://www.museeguimet.fr

Borne of the East Wind
Oriental Art from Private Collections in Finland
Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland
1 March - 29 April, 2001

This exhibition comprises 205 works of art, including paintings and statues, with the primary focus on Central Asia. A catalogue with preface and captions in English is available.
http://www.amosanderson.fi

Thanks to Alpo Rata for details of this exhibition.

Conferences

2001 International Turfanological Conference
Turfan, China
15-20 August, 2001

For details contact:
Ouyang Hui
Turfan Bureau of Cultural Relics
26 Gaochang Road
Turfan, Xinjiang, China
Tel: +86 995 8522619
Email: OuyangHui@Email.com.cn

‘A Man Should Not Act Different From His Wife: The Role of Women in the Altaic World’
Permanent International Altaistic Conference

PIAC 44th Meeting
Walberberg, Germany
26-31 August, 2001

For details contact:
Secretary General, PIAC
Goodbody Hall 157
Indiana University
1011 E. Third St.
Bloomington
Indiana 47405-7005, USA
Fax: +1 812 855 7500
Email: sinord@indiana.edu

Turfan Revisited: The First Century of Research Into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road
Berlin, Germany
8-15 September, 2002

This conference will coincide with a major international exhibition at the Museum of Indian Art in Berlin-Dahlem, details of which will be given in a future issue.

For details contact:
Professor Dr Werner Sundermann
Akademienvorhaben Turfanforschung Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften
Unter den Linden 6
D-10117 Berlin, Germany
Tel: +49 30 20370 472
Fax: +49 30 20370 467
Email: sundermann@bbaw.de

International Dunhuang Studies in the 21st Century
Conference in honour of Pan Zhonggui’s 95th birthday
Chung Cheng University, Jiayi, Taiwan
2-4 November, 2001

For details contact:
Organizing Committee
International Dunhuang Studies in the 21st Century
Chinese Literature Department
National Chong Cheng University
160 Sanhsing Tsun, Minhsing
Chiayi Hsien, TAIWAN
Tel: +886 5 2720411
Fax: +886 5 2720493
Email: chlacc@ccunix.ccu.edu.tw
Fieldwork Opportunities

ARCHAEOLOGY IN WESTERN UZBEKISTAN (ANCESTOR CHORASMAI)

The University of Sydney Central Asian Programme (USCAP) invites volunteers to join them on their current excavations in western Uzbekistan (ancient Chorasmia). The trip is organised as a tour, with two weeks spent with the field team excavating a massive fortified city dating to around the 4th century to 2nd century AD and a fire temple complex of roughly the same date. The visitors will then continue to a tour of the Silk Road cities of Khiva, Bukhara and Samarqand.

There are two group departures, each of about 12 people. 3 and 17 Sept. ex-Sydney (from A$595). You may also join the tour in Tashkent (land-only price available on request). A shorter tour takes place in May/June. This replaces the excavation with a five day study tour of the early frontier fortresses of Chorasmia.

Details can be obtained from our website at:
http://members.spree.com/education/uscap/uscap.htm

You may also email the Project Director, Dr Alison Betts at:
alison.betts@archaeology.usyd.edu.au

SUMMER ARCHAEOLOGY IN SOUTHERN RUSSIA AT THE CHASTSIYE KURGANS

The Center for the Study of Eurasian Nomads is now taking applications for the above. Information on the archaeological site, the leaders of the expedition, dates of the session, and other pertinent information is available on the CSEN website at:
http://www.csen.org
or directly on the Chastsiye Kurgans Information page at:
Please address any questions to:
Dr. Jeannine Davis-Kimball
Executive Director
Center for the Study of Eurasian Nomads
577 San Clemente St.
Ventura, CA 93001 USA
Tel. & fax: +1 805 653-2607

General Publications of Interest


For details contact:
Postboks 2709 Solli, N-0204 Oslo
tel & fax: +47 22 43 69 95
email: hermesac@online.no

In Japan contact:
Malsho Co. Ltd. Book Section
c/o Mitsuobori, 2-24 Fujimi-cho,
Yokosuka 238-0021, Japan
email: malsho@beige.ocn.ne.jp

For details of the Schøyen collection see:
www.nb.no/baser/schoyen/

Legacy of the Desert King: Textiles and Treasures from Niya on the Silk Road,
Feng Zhao and Zhiyong Yu (ed.)
ISAT/ costume, Hong Kong, 2000, 112 pp., colour ill., Chinese/English bilingual, USD20

Catalogue of the exhibition held at
Hangzhou, China from 20 October.
The ancient site of Niya is located in the southwestern area of the Taklamakan Desert.
It was first excavated by Stein in 1901 and, from 1988, a Sino-Japanese team have been
 carrying out fieldwork there.

For details contact:
Feng Zhao
China National Silk Museum
73-1 Yuhuangshan Rd
Hangzhou310002, China
Fax: 86-571-7068136
Tel: 86-571-7068138
Email: zhaofeng38@hotmail.com or zhaofeng@hz.cic.com.cn

The Renovation of the Musée Guimet: Towards a New Understanding of Asian Art in Paris,
Jean-Francois Jarrige, Directeur.

This is one of the world's premier collections of Asian art and the article is an
 informative history of the museum and its collections with some stunning photographs
 of the renovated interior and of its exhibits.

The museum had its official reopening in

Anyone wishing to purchase reprints of this article should contact the publisher:
Arts of Asia Publications Ltd.
1309 Kowloon Centre, 29-39 Ashley Rd
Kowloon, Hong Kong
Tel: +852 2376 2228
Fax: +852 2376 3713
Email: info@artsofasiainet.com.

L'Arie des Steppe d'Alemandre le Grand à
Gengis Khan,
Reunion des Musées Nationaux and

Catalogue of an exhibition held in Madrid, Paris and Barcelona, 2000-2001
(see opposite).

History of Civilizations of Central Asia. Vol. IV:
The Age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the end of
the fifteenth century. Part 2: The Achievements,
C. E. Bosworth and M. S. Asimov (edd.)
50,30 euros).
http://www.unesco.org

The first volumes of this series have recently been
reprinted in India, but they are also still
available from UNESCO in Paris.

Southern Silk Road: In the Footsteps of Sir Aurel Stein and Sten Hedin
Christoph Baumer
166pp., ISBN: 9784304388 (hb),
9784304396 (pb), USD45 (hb), USD35(pb).

To order contact:
Asia email: woop@inet.co.th
US fax: +1514-934-6043
Europe fax: +7 22 56 57 66

For details:
http://www.cuvinlaida.com/odyssey/
silkroute.htm

Journals

Bulletin of the Asia Institute, 11 (1999), pub.
Nov. 2000
For details contact:
3287 Bradway Blvd., Bloomfield Hills
MI 48301, USA
Tel: +1 248 647 7917
Fax: +1 248 647 9223
Email: bai34@aol.com
http://www.bulletinasiainstitute.org

Institute of History and Philology, Academia
Sinica, Taipei
Devoted to papers from the 'Third Silk
Road Conference' held in July 1998 at Yale
University, USA.
Project News

Joint Project with the National Library of China

A memorandum of Understanding for a five year project between the British Library and the National Library of China concerning the International Dunhuang Project was signed on 7 March by Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library, in the presence of H.E. Ma Zhenguang, Chinese Ambassador to the UK. Zhou Heping, Deputy Director of the National Library of China, was signatory for the Chinese side.

The reception was also attended by representatives of the two main project sponsors, Professor Naylor, Chairman of the Sino-British Fellowship Trust (SBFT), and Jannette Cheong, Head of International Collaboration and Development, The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (pictured right).

Full details of this exciting collaboration will be given in the next issue of IDP News.

The Mellon International Dunhuang Archive

In December 2000 the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation agreed to make an award of $1.1 million to the British Library for the Mellon International Dunhuang Archive (MIDA), a scholarly resource that the BL is taking a leading role in developing. The Archive will include two and three-dimensional images of the Dunhuang Buddhist caves linked with digital images of a selection of the artefacts and manuscripts found at Dunhuang. The Archive will complement the International Dunhuang Project web database which will continue to work towards digitising all of the first millennium manuscripts and documents found at Dunhuang and other Silk Road sites and now in collections worldwide and making them freely available to all on the Internet.

Over the next four years, as part of the Mellon funded project, IDP will digitise over 4,000 manuscripts comprising 35,000 images using the latest digital cameras. As part of this project, advertisements were placed for six new IDP staff, including a Administrative Manager, 3 photographers and 2 imaging assistants. Full details of the new IDP personnel and progress on this project will be given in the next issue.

People

Susan Whitfield attended the ECAI conference held at the City University of Hong Kong in January, 2001. She also gave several talks in Hong Kong on the project.

Dr Ksenia Kepping from the Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg, arrived in London for a three month visit to catalogue the Tangut (Xixia) manuscripts from Kharkhoto, funded by the UK National Heritage Memorial Fund. An article by Dr Kepping will appear in the next issue.

Two new imaging consultants started work with the IDP team during January, working on Tibetan and Chinese fragments respectively.

Conservation

Anna-Grethe Rischel visited the library in December to give a report on her research into the paper fibres of the fragments from Loulan both in the Hedin and Stein collections. She has been working closely with Japanese colleagues on these fragments and the results will be published later this year.

Conservation was carried out at the British Library on the particular Loulan fragments under investigation, and they were rejoined (see below). It is curious that these fragments, which clearly belong together, were found by Stein at different sites in the Loulan area, some several miles apart.

FUNDING APPEAL

Thanks to the generous support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, HEFCE and SBFT, IDP is set to expand and accelerate its digitisation programme over the coming years. However, funds are still urgently required for certain parts of the project, notably:

- the digitisation of the Tibetan and other language collections
- development of the map interface
- conservation of the material prior to digitisation

An appeal is enclosed with this newsletter indicating ways in which you can help. Any monies go directly to IDP work and are most gratefully received.

If you would like to discuss IDP's funding requirements further please contact the Project Director (details below).

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http://idp.bl.uk (online database)

Please send contributions or comments to the above address. The newsletter is free; send a mailing address if you would like to subscribe.