This issue of *IDP News* is dedicated to the *Diamond Sutra*, including an article on its history and transmission (pp. 2–3), a preliminary study of the paper of the printed copy (British Library Or.8210/P2, detail of frontispiece above) found at Dunhuang (pp. 6–7), as well as extracts from new books on the *Diamond Sutra* (pp. 4–5), one of which showcases the conservation work recently completed at the British Library.

We also report on the IDP partners’ business meeting held in October 2011 at the Dunhuang Academy (pp. 10–11), and the exhibition curated by the Dunhuang Academy on historical photographs of Dunhuang (p. 9).
The Diamond Sutra: History and Transmission

Sam van Schaik

When the seventh-century Buddhist master Huineng was a boy, he worked in a marketplace selling wood. One day he heard a customer reciting the Diamond Sutra, and experienced a sudden clarity of mind. He asked the man where he had learned the sutra. The man replied that he had been to see the fifth patriarch of the Chan school, Hongan, who had told an audience of monks and laypeople that by merely memorizing the Diamond Sutra they would see their true natures and become Buddhas. So Huineng went to find Hongan, joined his monastery, and ultimately became the sixth patriarch of the Chan school.¹

This story shows the high regard in which the Diamond Sutra was held by Chinese Buddhists. For centuries this text has been thought to encapsulate all that is important in the Buddha’s teachings. In its pithy and paradoxical text is thought to provide the insight into the nature of reality that turns an ordinary being into a Buddha. To understand why the Diamond Sutra was revered in this way, we need to understand its place in the Buddhist tradition. For Buddhists, a sutra is a record of the teachings of the Buddha himself, and every sutra begins with the phrase, ‘thus have I heard’ (in Sanskrit: evam supta-sutra). The sutras were first written in the local languages of India, and later in the sacred and literary language of Sanskrit.²

The Diamond Sutra was part of a Buddhist movement known as the Mahayana, or ‘greater vehicle’. By the first century AD followers of the Mahayana were writing down new sutras. The content of these texts was quite varied, but some key themes came to characterise the Mahayana. One was the altruistic motivation of the bodhisattva, a follower of the path who aims as the Perfection of Wisdom (prajñāpāramitā), that all things exist only on independent existence.

The latter theme was expounded in a group of texts known as the Perfection of Wisdom (prajñāpāramitā) sutras. In Mahayana Buddhism, the perfection of wisdom is one of the six perfections: generosity, morality, patience, energy, meditation and wisdom. The Sanskrit term prajñāpāramitā actually signifies transcendence, rather than perfection. This indicates that the ideal is not to perfect these six, but to transcend the concepts of self and of independent existence. An independent self performance a truly existent action. This again brings us back to the idea of emptiness.

According to Edward Conze, who specialized in the study of this literature, the earliest Perfection of Wisdom sutras is the version in eight thousand verses. It appeared some time before the first century BC and the first century AD. Over the next two centuries this text was expanded into versions in eighteen thousand, twenty-five thousand, and a hundred thousand verses. These large and unwieldy sutras mainly increased the level of repetition in the original version. Then, by the fourth century AD, a trend in the other direction emerged with the appearance more concise Perfections of Wisdom sutras. These included the Diamond Sutra, which contained a mere three hundred verses. However, some Japanese scholars have argued that the Diamond Sutra was actually the earliest of the Perfections of Wisdom sutras, the kernel from which the later longer texts developed.

The Sanskrit title of the Diamond Sutra is Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, which can be translated as The Diamond Cutter Perfection of Wisdom Sutra. The significance of the sūtra (translated here as ‘diamond’) is that it is the hardest and strongest of all substances, which can cut through any other. As such, it is like the doctrine of emptiness, which cuts through all substantialist concepts. The earliest Sanskrit fragments of the Diamond Sutra dating to the late fifth century in the century, were discovered by Aurel Stein in the Taklamakan desert site of Dandan Uilig, near Khotan. More extensive manuscripts, dating from a century or two later, have been found in Gulgut and Bannian. Thus we know that the sutra was popular and circulated widely in Gandhāra and Khotan. Both places were key stages on the route between India and China travelled by monks and merchants.

The Diamond Sutra reached China by the fourth century. The earliest translation of the Diamond Sutra into Chinese was by the Central Asian translator Kumārajīva, and dates from the year 402, pre-dating even the earliest Sanskrit fragments. Kumārajīva’s translation became the most widely read, recited and copied version of the sutra throughout China, in spite of the fact that later translations were made by several other translators, including the famous pilgrim monk Xuanzang. As Paul Harrison has shown, Kumārajīva’s translation often simplifies and augments the original Sanskrit text, which makes for a better Chinese rendering, but one less faithful to the original than some of the later translations.³

The work of translating the Diamond Sutra into Tibetan was carried out by order of the Tibetan emperor in the late eighth or early ninth century. Such translations were usually done by a team consisting of an Indian master and a Tibetan translator, and the canonical Diamond Sutra translation is credited to the prolific translation team of Śīlāhrādbhodi (from India) and Yeşé Dē (from Tibet). Because a technical language was developed in Tibetan specifically to cope with translating Buddhist texts, the Tibetan translation of the Diamond Sutra offers a literal rendition of the Sanskrit text than any of the Chinese translations. Another Tibetan translation, found only in the Dunhuang collections, was made from the Chinese. The Diamond Sutra also exists in other languages, including Sogdian, Khotanese and Mongolian, and a unique manuscript from Dunhuang rendering the Chinese version in Brahmi script.

Essentially, the Diamond Sutra is a dialogue between the Buddha and a monk named Ananda. Out of this conversation main topics emerge. The first is the doctrine of emptiness. This is characteristic of all Perfection of Wisdom literature, but the Diamond Sutra takes a particular approach to it,eschewing argument and analysis and not even using the term ‘emptiness’. Instead the Buddha repeatedly makes contradictory statements, celebrating the virtuous path of a bodhisattva and the qualities of a Buddha at the same time as denying that they exist. This approach, described as ‘the logic of not’, is a challenge to dualistic concepts of self and other, existence and non-existence, and the like.⁴ The use of deliberate paradox as a teaching method had a strong influence on the development of the Chan and Zen traditions.

The other recurring topic in the Diamond Sutra is the vast merit that anyone can attain by teaching and reciting the sutra. For exposition the body of the Buddha says that to teach and recite the sutra is an act of generosity, jeweys piled up as high as the highest mountain would bring less merit than memorizing and teaching a single verse of the Diamond Sutra. The concept of merit is independent of karma, in that merit is what the Buddha refers to results from positive actions, and leads to a better life and higher rebirth. In statements such as this one in the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha reworks the idea of merit so that true merit resides in that which leads directly to enlightenment. And the words of the Diamond Sutra itself are the best path to enlightenment.

This aspect of the Diamond Sutra has led Gregory Schopen to identify it as one of the most important texts in the development of a ‘cult of the book’ in Mahayana Buddhism.⁵ This term describes a growing reverence for the written word, which led to the copying of sutras solely for the purpose of generating merit. This should be kept in mind when we look at the copies of the Diamond Sutra found in the library cave in Dunhuang. The Dunhuang collections contain hundreds of copies of the Diamond Sutra, mostly in Chinese, with around fifty manuscripts in Tibetan and a few fragments in Khotanese.

Some of the Chinese manuscripts of the Diamond Sutra contain colophons giving the reasons why the sutra was copied. For example, in a scroll copied in the year 700, the government office responsible for sutras. These colophons are intended to behalf to the empress, to his parents and his family, and then explains that he made a vow to have two copies of the sutra made every month if he was promoted to the fifth grade. But, he explains, received a grade below, and so he is writing another copy. It is only now that Huineng has been able to commission a copy of the sutra. Another copy was commissioned in the year 616 by a nun, who writes that

She hopes anyone who hears the sutra read aloud will benefit, and pray that she will soon be able to leave the desert frontier regions and return to the imperial capital.⁶

Sources like the man’s colophon show that the recitation of the Diamond Sutra was also considered to be highly meritorious by medieval Chinese Buddhists. In the Tibetan manuscripts, the sutra is often found in scriptural compendium alongside popular prayers and magical formulae (dikṣā) clearly intended for recitation. By the ninth century Chinese manuscripts of the Diamond Sutra were also augmented with mantras and prayers, making their ritual function quite apparent. This can be seen in the famous Diamond Sutra printed in the year 868. Here the text begins with a mantra to purify the mouth for recitation, followed by an invocation of eighty deities. This is followed by the main text of the sutra, after which the manuscript concludes with another mantra.⁷

As we saw in the story at the beginning of this article, hearing the Diamond Sutra recited is said to have been the decisive moment that led the Chan patriarch Huineng to practise Buddhism. In the Diamond Sutra itself, the Buddha states that anywhere the sutra is recited becomes a sacred place. And the practice of recitation remains the most significant use of the Diamond Sutra in modern Buddhist cultures. The sutra is still recited in Asia in languages such as Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese and Korean, and increasingly across the world in new translations into European languages.

NOTES
1. The story is told at the beginning of the Platform Sutra.
5. These two manuscripts are Or.8210/S.87 and Or.8210/S.2605.
6. The arrangement of ritual texts on Diamond Sutra manuscripts, including Or.8210/P2 is discussed in Yong You, The Diamond Sutra in Chinese Culture (Los Angeles: Buddhism Light Publications, 2010).

¹ From Gāgāt to the Nārāya Valley Photograph courtesy of Rui Jidōki
In 1987, a decision was made to set up a long-term project with two broad aims. The first was to understand the nature and the reason for the fading of the horizontal stain between the Head of the Chinese Section and the servator at the British Library from 1980, and was Mark Barnard worked as a conservator at the British Library from 1980, and was involved in the conservation of the sutra because they, together with repair paper patch remains firmly lodged on the back of the scroll to give a discreet, blending appearance to the original size without any distortion of the text or image. After more than 1000 hours of exacting work, finally completed in 2010, the sutra can now be seen the way it was intended, the frontispiece, in particular, now presents a complete and flowing image instead of our eyes following a series of disjointed lines, which had created a worryingly fragile appearance. It was extraordinary to find that after 1100 years and much human intervention, the impetus of the block print, the three-dimensional dimension of the actual printing process itself, was still present in places after the scroll linings were removed. It is only now that the Diamond Sutra can be fully viewed and handled without the masking of linings. This will open up future areas of research, especially in the area of early printing and papermaking for printing, as this shows a high degree of maturity in these important technologies.

In 1990, links were established with Kenneth Seddon, Professor of Inorganic Chemistry at Sussex University, latterly at Queen's, Belfast, to explore the chemical constituents of herbage, the yellow dye used on Dunhuang scrolls and possibly to develop a solvent that would allow the removal of the adhesive without dissolving the dye. In parallel, another task such as identifying a tool that was undertaken in-house to find a way to remove the linings and the adhesives using various methods, from ultrasonic to moisture to superheated steam. With this help he was finally able to re-search enabled the team carefully to remove the adhesive residues and linings was vital to the conservation of the sutra because they, together with repair paper patch remains firmly lodged on the back of the scroll to give a discreet, blending appearance to the original size without any distortion of the text or image. After more than 1000 hours of exacting work, finally completed in 2010, the sutra can now be seen the way it was intended, the frontispiece, in particular, now presents a complete and flowing image instead of our eyes following a series of disjointed lines, which had created a worryingly fragile appearance. It was extraordinary to find that after 1100 years and much human intervention, the impetus of the block print, the three-dimensional dimension of the actual printing process itself, was still present in places after the scroll linings were removed. It is only now that the Diamond Sutra can be fully viewed and handled without the masking of linings. This will open up future areas of research, especially in the area of early printing and papermaking for printing, as this shows a high degree of maturity in these important technologies.

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A Preliminary Study of the Paper of the Diamond Sutra (Or.8210/P.2)

Agnieszka Helman-Ważyń

The Diamond Sutra (Or.8210/P.2) is the world’s earliest complete surviving example of a printed book, and is dated to 868. It is a scroll, a continuous length over 5 m in wood-block printed text made of seven panels of good-quality paper pasted together. The fine quality of print comes from the perfect choice of ink thickness and type of paper. This conscious selection of materials created fine lines with sharp edges, showing a highly refined printing technique. Also the fact that ink is not present on the verso confirms that the paper was originally accurately sized. The best-quality printing can be seen in the foottip space.

This study reports preliminary findings drawn from the paper analysis of the Diamond Sutra recently conserved by conservators at the British Library. Thanks to this faithful restoration the Diamond Sutra can be studied again without the masking of many layers of secondary linings. Thus, it was possible to read technological features, and the type of raw material used.

The visual appearance of paper is affected by the type of raw material used, the technological process of paper production and the tools used, and finally from the preparation of leaves during book production. In the case of the Diamond Sutra, information about substances introduced into the paper of exceptional dating has been confused due to previous repairs and conservation.

The Diamond Sutra is printed on wove paper using a ‘floating’ mould with a textile sieve. This mould type is called ‘floating’ because it is placed on a water surface such as a lake, pond, river or puddle. The other main type of paper mould is usually known as a ‘dipping’ mould, and is thought to have developed subsequently to the ‘floating’ mould. The ‘dipping’ mould allowed faster paper production because it was possible to remove a wet sheet of paper directly from the sieve just after its shaping. This meant that paper makers did not need to wait until the paper had dried before re-using the mould to begin the next sheet. The main difference between the two types of mould was in their construction. The ‘floating’ mould had a wooden frame with a woven textile attached to it. In the ‘dipping’ mould, on the other hand, a movable sieve made from bamboo, reed or another kind of grass was attached to the wooden frame. Independently of the techniques of sheet formation, any papermaking sieve makes an impression that is specific to the construction of the mould and sieve. This print is unaffected by most aging processes, and can be read century after century later. The print of a textile sieve made of cotton, hemp, or flax differs clearly from that of a movable sieve from a ‘dipping’ mould made of bamboo, reed or other grasses. However, the floating mould could have been used together with a bamboo sieve placed inside. Fibre distribution in the paper of the mould standing in a vertical position. This is why the pulp sank down to the bottom of the mould frame while still wet.

Information concerning a type of mould alone cannot be used for the identification of paper origin, nor for dating. According to Dard Hunter,1 in the southwestern regions of China and the Himalayas the floating mould was most commonly used for making paper along the Silk Road, and it is possible that one papermaking workshop used both types of mould at the same time.

In this case we still need data on other features of the paper, such as fibre composition, to indicate the type of paper and locate its source. Fibres constitute the basic component of any paper sheet, and so determining the fibre composition is essential in characterising the paper. The Diamond Sutra’s paper is composed of Broussonetia sp (Paper Mulberry) fibres.

This plant has been used for the finest papers in China since the beginning of papermaking and is usually associated with very fine paper supposedly produced at the imperial court in the first millennium, or early Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) paper structures of exceptional quality used for art and calligraphy; however, these were made with a fine bamboo sieve characterised by eight or more laid lines of 1 cm. However, according to the recent typology established together with Sam van Schaik from a group of Tibetan and Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang it has been possible to distinguish a group of high-quality paper made with a ‘floating’ mould with textile sieve, which was unusual for Tibet. With this reference in mind there is a strong possibility that the paper used for the Diamond Sutra could have been produced in southern China, close to the Eastern Tibetan borders. Further research will be needed to confirm this, however.

Agnieszka Helman-Ważyń is a paper scientist at the University of Hamburg.

NOTES

Diamond Sutra clearly suggests that mostly a ‘floating’ mould with a textile sieve was used in this case (see fig. 1). However, very faint laid lines are visible in the paper of panel six suggesting the use of a bamboo sieve attached to the ‘floating’ mould (see fig. 2). The clockwise direction of fibre distribution in the foottip space, with a patchy circular shape visible in the middle, is typical of wove paper when the papermaker pours pulp on to the sieve floating on the surface of the water, sets it within the sieve, and then raises the mould. The stirring can be seen from the uneven paper thickness ranging between 0.14–0.22 mm measured at ten different points within the paper sheet (see fig. 1). Additionally, evenly increased thickness along the upper edge suggests that the paper was dried on the

Figure 1. Fibre distribution in the paper of the Diamond Sutra on a light table. The print of the ‘floating’ mould with a textile sieve are visible in this picture.

Figure 2. The paper of panel 6 of the Diamond Sutra viewed against light. Faint laid lines suggesting the usage of bamboo sieve attached to a ‘floating’ mould are visible in this picture.

Thierry Delcourt

1959–2011

IDP was deeply saddened to learn of the death, following serious illness, of Thierry Delcourt, Director of the Manuscripts Department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF).

Delcourt trained in the European manuscript tradition but had a vision that extended beyond this world. He obtained his diploma as a palaeographer and archivist at the École nationale des chartes for his work on a critical edition of manuscripts of the prose Tristan cycle, and continued research on this and related topics, publishing widely and curating several exhibitions. His work first with the audiovisual department of the BnF and then as a consultant in systems technology from 1989–1992, equipped him with a technical knowledge that he put to active use in his next post. He became Director of the Municipal Library of Troyes, making it a leading media centre during his tenure. And his love of the Tristan cycle and his vision and understanding of the power of technology combined perfectly within his joint project with John Hopkins University and Sherdian Library on the Digital Roman de La Rose.

This rare combination of scholarship and technical vision was immediately evident when we first met in 2006 just as he started at the BnF. We explained the work of IDP — the BnF had been founder members and hosted conservation conferences, but had not yet made their manuscript collections available online through IDP. Thierry immediately understood IDP’s vision and agreed that the BnF must become full partners, hosting an IDP France website. His support and energy ensured that this vision was realized, with the cooperation of the Musée Guimet. IDP France went live in April 2009, giving access to all 8549 Dunhuang manuscripts in the BnF with full catalogues, along with almost 2000 published manuscripts and artefacts from the Guimet.

IDP was looking forward to continuing work with Thierry over the coming years: we are sure his legacy will continue but we will miss him greatly.

Susan Whitfield

John R. Macrae

1947–2011

When I first started work on Dunhuang manuscripts, John Macrae’s work on Chan Buddhism was on my initial reading list and remains on my reference shelves to this day.

He was one of the few western scholars at that time working on the Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang: more attention had been focused on the less-representative social and economic documents. I was therefore delighted when I had the opportunity to meet him at an early conference of the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative in the 1990s and to realise that, in addition to his scholarship, he was very interested in digitalisation and new technologies for making manuscripts accessible and for enhancing their research.

He was (just) over 80 at Yale when he had taught at Cornell and Indiana universities. Following retirement he moved to Japan, as a visiting scholar at the University of Tokyo and a part-time lecturer at Komazawa University. He planned to retire at 82 but decided to continue working on the Roman de La Rose and the Tristan cycle and his vision and understanding of the power of technology combined perfectly within his joint project with John Hopkins University and Sheridan Library on the Digital Roman de La Rose.

It is in Japan that we last met, discussing the possibilities for extending the functionality of a small piece of software IDP had developed — which John had beta tested for us. He was always generous in this way with his time and his comments were invaluable to our work. We will miss him.

Susan Whitfield
Documenting Dunhuang

Historical Photographs from the late Qing and Republican Periods

This exhibition provided visitors to the Mogao Caves and local people with the opportunity to see images of the town of Dunhuang and caves from over a century ago. The exhibition was organised by the Dunhuang Academy with the help of IDP and contained facsimiles of digital copies of photographs from collections at the British Library, the State Hermitage Museum, the Musée national des Arts asiatiques-Guimet, theNeedham Research Institute, the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Academia Sinica, Institute of History and Philology. The exhibition opened for two months on 7th October 2011. The photographers in this exhibition document the condition of the caves, stupas and buildings around the Mogao Caves before the Dunhuang Art Research Institute (predecessor of the Dunhuang Academy) was established in 1944, and before extensive consolidation and conservation of the site took place. The photographs show the Mogao Caves as barren and desolate with damaged wooden walkway structures, collapsed cliff faces, exposed wall paintings, and lower caves buried by sand drifts. Other photographs offer a glimpse into the lives of people who lived in the town of Dunhuang around the early twentieth century and into the 1940s. They are a valuable historical record as there are very few extant photographs of the old town of Dunhuang.

Many of the photographs in this exhibition, for example those taken by Stein and Nouette, are freely accessible online on the IDP website. On the advanced search page, select 'Photographs' under type of artefact, and select the relevant holding institution to bring up the photographs and their catalogue entries.

IDP plans to digitise photographs from other collections not currently on the IDP website. On the advanced search page, select 'Photographs' under type of artefact, and select the relevant holding institution to bring up the photographs and their catalogue entries.

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IDP Worldwide: First Partners’ Meeting in Dunhuang

With its institutions running eight centres, each hosting a server and website in the local language, IDP is now a complex international collaboration. Running its database on a system implemented over fifteen years ago and served on a website now almost a decade old, IDP’s technical infrastructure is long overdue for a major revamp and update. There are also questions about what should be in scope. IDP now includes not only Dunhuang manuscripts but all archaeological artefacts and archives from the Eastern Silk Road. Should IDP also be digital material, for example, from northern India and Iran relating to the Silk Road?

Previously, partners have met on an ad hoc basis, usually bilaterally or during the IDP conservation conferences. Because of the complexity and importance of the issues to be discussed, it was decided to hold a special meeting devoted to these questions. The Dunhuang Academy very generously agreed to host this, covering all local expenses, and we are immensely grateful for their hospitality. Representatives came from seven IDP Centres, IDP Russia being the only one not represented owing to last minute visa issues.

Sessions One and Two: Scope and Content

The first day consisted of short presentations by representatives from the IDP centres worldwide on their work and their thoughts on the scope of IDP. The second day started with a discussion on the scope and content of IDP. The issue of the name was raised by Yong-chul Choe. There was a consensus that the name was now so well known that it would be counter-productive to change it. It was pointed out that more than not the shortened form “IDP” was used anyway. Desmond Durham-Meistererst from Berlin — collections which do not contain material from Dunhuang — reiterated the point made by various speakers, including Turfan Academy, namely that the rich connections between Dunhuang and other important Silk Road sites, such as Turfan, meant it is not inappropriate to include this material within the project. Zhang Yuanlin of the Dunhuang Academy said he thought that it was so well established it would not be a problem to expand in scope.

It was agreed that an intellectual focus was needed to define the parameters of material to be included but that the eastern Silk Road or perhaps the Dunhuang Academy could set up the intellectual leadership of IDP in this respect. Susan Whitfield suggested the theme of the Dunhuang Academy could be “Documenting Dunhuang” to which many had contributed images.

A discussion about various bibliographies and the collection of terms for paper types in different languages, IDP is adding terms and definitions to its online glossary, in consultation with scientists, paper historians and others. It will promote the use of this vocabulary in all publications.

The importance of cataloguing came across in the respective presentations by Ma De and Barbara Meisterernst, the former talking about his work on the Tibetan manuscripts in Gamma (for details of his website see p.8) and the latter about her work on inputting catalogues and records in IDP in Berlin. She had a discussion around making the catalogues more accessible, especially those not in Chinese or English. This was a point also discussed later by Natalia Monnet who raised the possibility of translation to increase access.

Susan Whitfield said she hoped that this would be an area in which IDP could elicit the help of the user community as the institutions did not have sufficient resources or expertise.

The attendees had the opportunity to view the exhibition “Documenting Dunhuang” to which many had contributed images.

Research

The next session consisted of papers on scientific and humanities research. Sakamoto Shouji and Agnieszka Helman-Walzyizi each discussed the different methodologies they are employing to collect data about the paper of the Chinese Dunhuang scrolls. It is planned that a discussion will be set up on the differences and methodologies, such as Raman spectroscopy for pigment analysis, will form the foundation of a growing data set that can be used to test hypotheses by the researchers and others. Their data is being added to the IDP database and will be made available to all.

This raised the issue of IDP’s role in setting standards, one of its essential and must not be abandoned and that the current database for discussion. She agreed that the principle of multilingualism was essential and must not be abandoned and that the current database software, chosen in 1993, had been an excellent choice at the time. She raised the issue of access to catalogues in different languages and gave the example whereby catalogues at the BN had to be submitted in two languages to allow access but agreed this would be difficult for IDP to achieve in terms of cost and time. There was a discussion about the time required for this. Vic Swift stressed the need for partners to give regular time, if not a lot of time, in areas such as checking multilingual concordances. These enable users to carry out searches in local languages. Susan Whitfield said she thought that translation of catalogue and metadata would be something that could best be tackled by closed sourcing and that a new system should allow this.

Discussion and Roundup

In her presentation, Yoonhee Hong raised several important issues including the need for more convenient direct interaction possibly through internal IDP web pages. Vic Swift confirmed that she had previously tried to use various online communication tools but that many were blocked to British Library users owing to firewalls or were not available to partners in all countries. She encouraged Yoonhee to try to find a suitable system and also encouraged direct interaction between partners. She confirmed that contact details for all the partners were on the IDP database under the mailing list (participants) tab.

Yoonhee also made several suggestions regarding enabling more scholarly exchange through, for example, IDP posting scholarly papers and arranging special lectures.

Localisation

Following Vic Swift’s presentation on the issues to be discussed concerning localisation, Natalia Monnet followed with some points for discussion. She agreed that the principle of multilingualism was essential and must not be abandoned and that the current database software, chosen in 1993, had been an excellent choice at the time. She raised the issue of access to catalogues in different languages and gave the example whereby catalogues at the BN had to be submitted in two languages to allow access but agreed this would be difficult for IDP to achieve in terms of cost and time. There was a discussion about the time required for this. Vic Swift stressed the need for partners to give regular time, if not a lot of time, in areas such as checking multilingual concordances. These enable users to carry out searches in local languages. Susan Whitfield said she thought that translation of catalogue and metadata would be something that could best be tackled by closed sourcing and that a new system should allow this.

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People

We were delighted to welcome interns from China and India to IDP UK during the autumn of 2011. These internships are funded by the World Collections Programme. Hu Wanglin from the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology in Urumqi started with IDP UK in late September 2011 and will stay for six months. He is working on data entry and checking, catalogue mark-up in XML, as well as carrying out research and translation work. Dr Mandira Sharma from the National Museum Institute, New Delhi arrived at IDP UK in late October and will stay for three months. Dr Sharma will be researching archaeological sites in Central Asia.

Both interns will spend time at the British Museum working on the Stein and Hoernle collections. The programme is also intended to provide an opportunity to build links between young scholars in India and China and their home institutions.

Resources

A new scholarly resource for manuscript studies has been launched by IDP. It provides an introduction to the variety of writing styles and palaeographic features found in the Tibetan and Chinese manuscripts from Central Asia. Each page introduces the features and dating of particular styles or aspects of writing, and contains a transcription exercise allowing anyone to test their ability to read a particular style. After gaining a familiarity with these typologies, readers will be able to identify the style of a particular manuscript. This in turn allows a better understanding of context in which the manuscript was created, and, in many cases, to assign an approximate date.

The resource is the result of the palaeographic project funded by the Leverhulme Trust, and was developed by Imre Galambos, Sam van Schaik and Vic Swift.

Education

As a new addition to the popular Sacred Texts workshop, run by the British Library learning team for school years 7-13, groups are now offered the option of a ‘Sacred Texts on the Silk Road’ add-on. This hour-long session, run by Abby Baker of IDP, introduces students to some of the manuscripts, paintings and artefacts that were uncovered in Dunhuang and other Silk Road sites in northwest China in the early twentieth century. Interested schools should contact the BL learning team for more details, and to book:

http://www.bl.uk/learning/tarea/index.html

Collaboration

IDP signed an MoU with the Royal Library, Copenhagen in 2011 leading to the inclusion on IDP of the images, metadata and catalogue of the fourteen Dunhuang scrolls in the Royal Library collections. The scrolls were purchased in 1915 at Dunhuang by Bollerup Sørensen, the chief telegraphist in Shanghai at the Great Northern Telegraph Company, and donated by him to the Royal Library on 29th November 1915. You can access images and data relating to these manuscripts on IDP by selecting ‘Det Kongelige Bibliotek’ under Holding Institute on the Advanced Search page:

http://idp.bl.uk/database/database_search.a4d.

END OF YEAR APPEAL

IDP has made significant achievements in 2011, including new partners and considerable more material catalogued, digitised and available online. We continue to be largely externally funded and individual donations, whether one-off gifts, through our annual supporters’ scheme, or through Sponsor a Sutra (see links on idp.bl.uk to both of these), are invaluable to us and always appreciated. Over the past year they have helped, for example, to fund the photography by IDP of archaeological artefacts from the Silk Road held in the British Museum. We have had no other funds for this work. This material is already going online on IDP and the British Museum website. We hope to complete this work but need your help. Any donation, however small, is welcome. You can make a donation through our online form (https://forms.bl.uk/international-dunhuang-project/) or by sending a cheque to IDP at the address below (payable to ‘The British Library’). All donations will go directly to the work of IDP and your contribution will be acknowledged online.

Thank you and all best wishes for 2012 and the year of the dragon.