



The Iconography of Buddha on a Wooden Panel from Khotan

Sampa Biswas

This paper will discuss the iconography of a carved wooden panel from Khotan in Chinese Central Asia (present day Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China), on display in the Central Asian Antiquities Gallery at the National Museum in New Delhi, dating to the sixth century AD (Fig. 1).¹ The panel shows a seated Buddha with hands raised in front of the chest. To his side is a standing figure of the bodhisattva Maitreya wearing a crown, jewellery and holding a water pot. The Buddha appears to be depicted in *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā*.

This article investigates whether *dharmacakrapravartana* (literally meaning setting the Wheel of Law into motion) can be universally applied to all those *mudrā* (hand gestures) assumed to express visually the act of teaching. In other words, should *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā* serve as a general term to denote all teaching poses in Buddhist iconography?

The representation of the episode of the setting of the Wheel of Law into motion appears in early Indian art in diverse representations. The representation of a distinctly executed wheel, occasionally at the top of a pillar (for example at Sanchi, second century BC), is most common. Sometimes the wheel is flanked by a pair of deer as a visual allusion to the place where the episode occurred, Mrigdāva (literally meaning, the place where deer were subdued) near Benāras.

In a sculpture from Sarnath, the *mudrā* displayed by the image of the Buddha seated on the pedestal has been referred to as the *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā*. In this *mudrā*, the right hand is held before the chest with tips of the thumb and index finger joined to touch one of the fingers of the left hand, and the palm is facing outwards towards the onlooker. The tips of the thumb and index finger of the left hand are touching each other and the palm of the hand is held against the heart, with the left palm facing inward (Fig. 2).²

Monastic seals bearing the insignia of the motif of a wheel flanked by a pair of deer are known,³ and they are considered as *dharmacakra mudrā*, or the emblem of the Wheel of Law, or of the commencement (*pravartana*) of the circulation of the Law (*dharmacakra*). This motif became associated with Buddha's first teaching at Sarnath, as is evident from the fact that the celebrated Sarnath sculpture of the Buddha in the teaching pose includes the depiction of this motif in the frontal face of its pedestals, along with the representation of the figures of the five eminent Brahmins (*pañcavaggiyā*) who were known to be the first recipients of the teachings. Many other sculptural representations of this type (with interpretative variations) also occur from different places and periods (Fig. 3).⁴



Figure 1. Carved wooden panel from Khotan, Courtesy of the National Museum, New Delhi.

This iconographical terminology originated from the presumption that the Buddha had indeed made a gesture with his hands at the moment he delivered the sermon at Sarnath. *Mudrā* of similarly positioned hands shown in images of the Buddha or Buddhist deities have also been referred to as *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā*.

Dharmacakrapravartana is a prerogative of the buddhas; only they exercise this privilege as an expression of divine endowment (*mahāprātihārya*), and only they have the right to the act of *dharmacakrapravartana*, or the initiation of law, when and where there exists none. But any Buddhist deity – buddhas, bodhisattvas, and others – can bear the concern for the *dharmacakra*, meaning the circulation and dissemination of the Law.

The episode of the *dharmacakrapravartana* with Gautama Buddha is expounded in the *Mahāvastu*, *Avadāna* and *Lalitavistara* texts. These accounts are very clear about his sitting posture, stating he is in *pariyānkāsana*, the formal mode of sitting with both feet crossed and firmly locked, and the soles upturned. But the narrative does not throw light on the hand gestures that the Buddha exhibited while delivering the sermons. The Buddha used many hand poses during his first teaching and preaching, with none being recognized as the *mudrā de jure* relevant to the episode of the *dharmacakrapravartana*, thus no hand pose can be identified with certainty as the *dharmacakrapravartana*, unless there is a contextual clue, such as the presence of the Wheel flanked by a pair of deer symbolically implying the particular place of occurrence of the episode of the *dharmacakrapravartana*.

However, on occasions, *mudrā* of this type have been given a simplified nomenclature like *dharmacakra mudrā*, by dropping the term *pravartana*, although its implied relevance to the delivery of the sermon by the Buddha still continued. Images of the Buddha, at Sarnath, Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad, showing the Buddha sitting on a raised seat with both feet dangling downwards (*bhadrāsana*) have been described as *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā*. In view of the teaching aspect seen from the position of the hands, these images should at best be considered as in the *dharmacakra mudrā*, which does not bear any relevance to the episode of the first delivery of the sermon at Sarnath. Indeed, the *Mahāvastu*, *Avadāna* and *Lalitavistara* texts clearly describe his sitting posture as *pariyānkāsana*. The distinction in essence between the *dharmacakra mudrā* and the *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā* in the context of the hand gesture in the image of the Buddha cannot be ignored.

Dharmacakramudrā refers to dissemination of the Law, but *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā* specifically refers to the delivery of the sermons at Sarnath when the process of dissemination of the Law began. *Dharmacakra* is a liberalised term, and can be applied to a wider range of imagery than the more restrictive terminology of *dharmacakrapravartana mudrā*. According to biographical accounts, the delivery of the sermons at Sarnath included: a verbal presentation of the ambrosial sound of the divine drum in order to eliminate the dumb silence of inaction; enlightening the world devoid of sight; and, setting the Wheel of Law to motion. The question that arose was whether the Wheel of Law (*dharmacakra*) was just a metaphorical expression or whether it represented the pictorial reality. The activity of the turning of the Wheel of Law has been more symbolically represented by the depiction of a wheel, sometimes flanked by a pair of deer, but as is clear from textual accounts, the actual physical act of the turning of a wheel was used as a part of the delivery of sermons. The Buddha delivered the sermons through speech, and hand gestures, while also performing the ceremonial turning of the wheel to imply

that the message was destined to roll on continuously. In the sculptural art of Gandhāra, the Buddha is shown actually turning the wheel. It is evident from the detailed description of the features of the wheel at Sarnath, that the physical act of turning the wheel constituted an important item in the programme of the *dharmacakra*. It was of extraordinary size, expanse (*visfirṇa*), and was quite engaging (*darśanīya*) and variegated (*citra*). The wheel had twelve spokes, but in motion, became almost invisible. The Buddha is said to have treated the wheel to three rounds of movement by giving it a downward thrust. These graphic descriptions of the wheel, and setting it into motion, cannot be regarded only as literary fiction.

Until the eighth century AD, artists in India continued to view the *dharmacakra mudrā* as an expression of teaching or preaching (*dharmadeśanā*). They envisaged it as a combination of the *jñāna mudrā* (Wisdom Pose) and *vyākhyāna* (exposition), symbolising the delivery of the sermons at Sarnath. During this period, innovative experimentation within the conceptual and visual scope of the *mudrā* started. The most important breakthrough was the emancipation of the *dharmacakra mudrā* from its established symbiosis with Sarnath. Once its meaning was no longer exclusively linked to this event, it assumed the general character of a teaching pose. The *mudrā* no longer remained restricted to images of the Buddha but was shared by a number of Buddhist deities.

Original iconographic meanings did not change immediately however; conceptual transformation was an ongoing, gradual process as new dimensions were added over time. Buddha's role as the founder of the Law or as the dispenser of the Law eventually receded to the background. He was regarded as the intellectual colossus who was adept in the exposition and interpretation of the Law. Exposition (*vyākhyāna*) of the Law being the Buddha's foremost concern, his hands in *dharmacakra mudrā* became known as *vyākhyāna mudrā* in the changed milieu. This alternative appellation of the same hand gesture in Buddhist iconography constituted a significant change.

As mentioned above, the *vyākhyāna mudrā* was originally only an element of the complete *dharmacakra mudrā*, and was used only by the right hand; the left hand was engaged with the expression of the *jñāna mudrā*. Once *vyākhyāna mudrā* became used as a term for *dharmacakra mudrā* however, it was used with reference to both hands. Textual evidence supports this claim, with *Mañjuvajra* described in the *Sādhanamālā* as having two lotus-like hands absorbed in the act of the exposition or interpretation of the Law.

The broader context provides further evidence that this two-handed form of the *vyākhyāna mudrā* is the same as the *dharmacakra mudrā*. In one of the *Dhyānas* of the *Vādīrāt Mañjuśrī*, described in the *Sādhanamālā*, Mañjuśrī is simultaneously described as having 'hands emblematic of the exposition of the essence of Law as equal to *vyākhyāna mudrā* and two lotus-like hands disposed in the great *dharmacakra mudrā*'.²⁵ The question is whether *vyākhyāna mudrā* was only a new name for *dharmacakra mudrā*, or whether any change was effected in the structure of the hand gesture as well, leading to the *mudrā* being displayed in a different way. Now that the exposition of the Law gained importance, the dispositional mode of the *mudrā* also assumed a changed character. Making a lotus bloom was a handy metaphor for the concept of exposition of the Law.

The *sādhana* of an important deity, *Vajradharma* in the *Sādhanamālā*, (a deity seen as the same as the Buddha) describes the hand gesture in the following way: '...and he holds with pride the stem of a lotus with sixteen petals in his left hand and with



Figure 2. Buddha Preaching his First Sermon, Indian Museum, Calcutta².

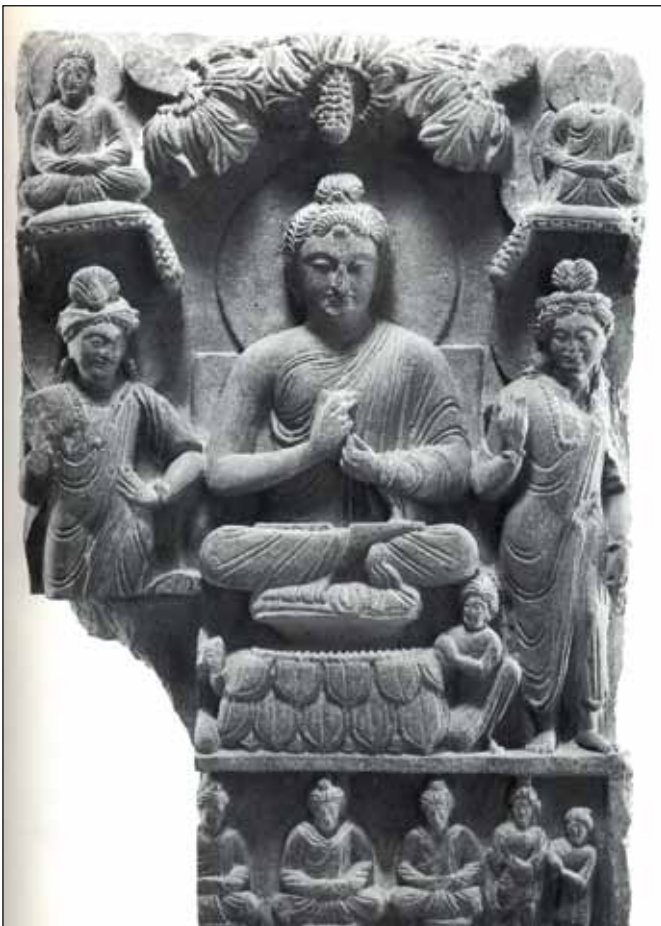


Figure 3. Buddha preaching between two Bodhisattvas, British Museum⁴.

the right causes it to blossom against his chest.⁶ The description seems to be of a lotus which figures as an attribute. But the lotus is only seen as a metaphor, and the unfolding of its petals has to be carried out in notional terms.

The *Sādhnamālā* describes the two hands of the deity *Mahārājatilā Mañjuśrī* in the following manner: ‘the left hand holds a lotus, while the right is active.’⁷ The right hand is active, and by implication the left hand is static or in a position of no

movement. Or the left hand could be in a single position, while the right hand should be actively involved with multiple movements. The movement that the right hand should have exhibited has been described in the subsequent part of the iconographic account as a hand-pose called the *vikacotapala mudrā*, or the hand pose emblematic of the activity of making a lotus (*utpala*) bloom (*vikaca*). The entire act of the notional holding of the lotus stalk by the left hand, and the hypothetical unfolding of the petals of the lotus by the right hand is implied in the disposition of the *vikacotapala* or *utpalavikaca mudrā*.

The use of hand gestures in the *dharmacakra mudrā* was to make verbal discourse visually explicit. The unfolding of the petals of a lotus bud (*vikacotapala*) was considered an appropriate visual analogue for the exposition of the subtleties of the Law. In the Buddhist context, the Law of the order is likened to a lotus of piety (*saddharmapuṇḍarīka*). The exposition of the Law can best be described as making a lotus bloom by way of the unfolding of the petals of its bud.

The *dharmacakra mudrā*, the *vyākhyāna mudrā* and the *vikacotapala mudrā* are one and the same, but each one emphasizes a particular facet of the hand pose. The *vyākhyāna mudrā* gives priority to the interpretative aspect of the Law; *dharmacakra mudrā* highlights the delivery and circulation; and *vikacotapala mudrā* emphasises the illustrative potential of the Law.

This paper concludes therefore that the hand pose of the figure in question is in *vikacotapala mudrā*, that is, not the *mudrā* symbolizing the ordinary turn of the Wheel of Law, but a more advanced concept. It means that the true religion is like a lotus (*saddharmapuṇḍarīka*), and the unfolding of the lotus buds or causing the lotus to bloom, which the Buddha’s right hand is performing, mean that he is interpreting the subtleties of the Law. This is an early concept in Mahāyāna Buddhism which began and developed in northwestern India around the first to third centuries AD. The Buddha has been shown here wearing jewels, and he is portrayed as *Rājādhirāja* of all religions – the King of the Spiritual World.

Dr Sampa Biswas is a researcher and lecturer at the National Museum Institute, New Delhi, India.

NOTES

- 1 The panel was originally numbered Har.028 by Aurel Stein. See Stein, A. *Innermost Asia. Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su and Eastern Iran*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 1053.
- 2 Fig. 2 is from *Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian art* (LA.: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984), 109.
- 3 Shastri, H. *Nalanda and its Epigraphic Material* (Delhi: Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India No. 66, 1942), 38.
- 4 Fig. 3 is from Zwalf, W. *A Catalogue of the Gandhāra sculpture in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London, British Museum Press, 1986), pl. 112.
- 5 *Sādhnamālā* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1968).
- 6 Bhattacharyya, B. *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, mainly based on the Sādhnamālā and Cognate tāntric texts of rituals* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1958), 143.
- 7 *Ibid.* 116-7.

Stars on Earth — De Filippi's 1913-4 Karakorum Expedition

Massimo Mazzoni

When one speaks of the 1913-4 Filippo De Filippi expedition to the Karakoram, the following adjectives usually spring to mind: large-scale and scientific. The expedition lasted for a year and half and took almost as long to plan. It was certainly a large-scale undertaking, 'for the number and quality of the participants and the length of the expedition,'¹ indeed for little more than a dozen scientists and technicians, there were two hundred porters and almost as many horses, camels, *zho*² and yaks. Another six tonnes of food were sent on ahead, and then distributed with 135 horses in seven different stations along the planned route. Despite this, problems relating to provisions and transport were such that De Filippi feared several times that the success of the mission would be compromised.

The large-scale nature of the expedition was also linked to its scientific quality; in his final report, De Filippi noted that this was the first scientific expedition outside Europe of such magnitude.³

De Filippi had the idea of undertaking an expedition in Central Asia between the Karakorum pass and the Siachen Glacier while on a mountaineering expedition across the Baltoro Glacier in 1909. This enterprise had been organised by the explorer Luigi Amedeo of Savoy, Duke of the Abruzzi, with the intention of scaling the K2 peak: in fact they had to stop just above 7000 metres. De Filippi had participated as expedition doctor and as the official chronicler of the Duke's explorations, a duty that he undertook also for expeditions in which he did not participate, as was the case with the ascent up the Ruwenzori Mountains in 1906.

De Filippi enjoyed ample official Italian support for his 1913-4 Karakoram expedition, including the Italian government, astronomical and meteorological institutes, universities, research institutes and specialised personnel from the Italian Army. The expedition required funding of 250,000 lire (equivalent to roughly a million Euros in 2008), most of which came from the Italian government and the Savoy Royal Family, with a contribution from the government of India and the Maharaja of Kashmir. The official Indian-British support meant the expedition was always welcomed by the local authorities, which was vital in securing an ample workforce from local porters and pack animals that were necessary for its viability.

The scientific core of the expedition was composed of seven Italians, two Britons, and two Indians. After Filippo De Filippi, the second in command was Alberto Alessio, who had worked at the Prussian Geodetic Institute, and taught theoretical geodetics at the university of Padua. The other members of the expedition were Professor Giorgio Abetti, an astronomer, Giotto Dainelli and Olinto Marinelli, both geographers. The Marquis Nello Venturi Ginori and Camillo Alessandri took meteorological measurements. Lieutenant Cesare Antilli was responsible for documentary photography, being replaced later by Giorgio Abetti. The mountaineer Giuseppe Petigax also played an important role in the expedition. In 1914, Major Henry Wood, from the Trigonometrical Survey of India, and John Alfred Spranger, an engineer, joined the expedition, with the help of two Indian technicians, Jamna Prasad and Shib Lal.

The Role of the Stars

Nowadays knowledge of the coordinates of any point on the earth's surface can be easily and quickly obtained via GPS (Global Positioning System) technology. As is well known, GPS works by the immediate capture of signals emitted from a group of satellites positioned on appropriate orbital planes. In 1913, constellations of stars were used as reference points to achieve the same aim in vast territories that were largely unknown. Before the departure of the De Filippi expedition, Professor Abetti studied the coordinates of the places they were to pass through in order to prepare a list of stars that were sufficiently bright and belonging to visible constellations at already explored latitudes, and the position of which was already known with accuracy. These stars would then be used later on as a reference. The notebook with his original notes has recently been found.⁴ Astronomical observations that are not made by following the celestial bodies as is usually the case are called 'transitory measurements', requiring compensation for the rotation of the earth. They are made by positioning the measuring instrument so that it remains immobile precisely on a vertical plane that passes through the polar axis. Then the motion of the rotation of the earth results in a certain star passing above the observer at a determined time, dependent on the longitude. Longitude can be calculated from time measurements, although for a long time this constituted a formidable and irresolvable problem for navigation until the production of reliable marine chronometers by the Englishman John Harrison (1693-1776). The link between time and longitude in De Filippi's expedition was the stars. The positions of the stars were taken from the most reliable sources of the time, the *Berliner Astronomisches Jahrbuch* and the *Nautical Almanac*. The astronomical measurements were taken with a telescope positioned inside an open-air tent, and were not only nocturnal readings, but included the sun and the stars.

The stars in question belonged, and naturally still belong to the following constellations, Bootes, Pegasus, Ursa Minor, Capricorn, Corona Borealis, Andromeda, Aquila, Ophiuchus, and Libra. If they are traced on a star chart, it is easy to see how they were chosen to allow for a generous coverage across the heavens, not so much as a precaution against a partially-covered sky, but mostly to compensate for systematic errors of positioning and tracking.

The scientific equipment included a dozen chronometers, some of high precision to the order of 0.1 second, whereas the others could only capture half a second. However the measurements recorded in the final tables are cautiously approximated to one second. Before the expedition departure, staff at the Institute of Genoa checked the functioning of these in view of environmental variables. Despite this, the harshness of the journey and the adverse and extreme climatic conditions at altitudes up to 6000 metres unavoidably led to errors, even though the clocks were kept in the most appropriate containers, and were transported on the back of a particular porter. It was then decided to adopt the practice of stopping and immobilising all the clocks during the journey, apart from the one used as a standard. Then once a new base camp had been established, the correctness of



Peak at Burji-La (from left to right: Ginori, Abetti, Alessio and Petigax).



Winter camp at Skardu.



Porter carrying the clocks.

All these photographs are reproduced courtesy of the Historical Archive of the Astrophysics Observatory of Arcetri (Florence).

the standard clock was checked against a time signal, if available, received from the radio station. They managed to bury the standard clock for short periods to ensure its protection against any disturbance. The second-level clocks were synchronised with this clock, and checks were repeated every day, often several times a day, and taken to locations for triangulation and observation from the sky: this was the well known and widespread procedure of ‘transporting time’.

The astronomical instruments used were a zenith telescope and an astrolabe with an artificial mercury horizon, which allowed for a measurement of around $\pm 6-8''$ on the celestial sphere.

A series of measurements required ‘40–60 minutes of observation’, with the temperature dropping on occasion to -20° C at the highest points. Clearly the measurements of astronomical positions were corrected for refraction, according to the height of the star, the pressure, and the temperature. Alberto Alessio estimates a final uncertainty of about 300 metres on the horizontal plane, an appreciable difference because if the precision of the time really was less than 1 second, at the glacier latitude of $+35^{\circ}$, the uncertainty must have been about 30% higher. Finally, in places where the geodetic longitude was known independently, the comparison between the measured astronomical longitude meant the local deviations in longitude from the vertical could be evaluated, if it was assumed that transporting the clocks did not compromise their precision. The complete set of measurements made it possible also to determine the ellipsoidal longitude.

A gravimetric and meteorological station was set up at each new camp, as well as a laboratory for the development of photographic plates, and a radiotelegraphic station at the lowest part of the itinerary. This was the first time that radio signals were crossing those mountain chains. It was another success of the expedition to have shown that it was possible to carry out the survey of new regions even when reference could not be made to pre-existing triangulation points, and across such extensive and impenetrable areas. In the final report, De Filippi predicted a definite decrease in the use of traditional forms of communication for exploration, and Alberto Alessio particularly advised abandoning the method of transporting clocks for a more simple system that was less cumbersome and safer, based on radio signals and the use of a sextant with an artificial horizon.

Professor Massimo Mazzoni works at the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Florence, Italy.

This is an English translation of an extract from a longer article about De Filippi's 1913-4 expedition that appears in La ‘Dimora delle nevi’ e le carte ritrovate, Filippo De Filippi e le spedizioni scientifiche italiane in Asia Centrale (1909 e 1913-4), Atti del Convegno, Florence, 13-14 March 2008, pp.75-89, edited by Laura Cassi.

Translation by Alastair Morrison.

NOTES

1 Dainelli, G. *Esploratori e alpinisti nel Caracorum* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1959), 171.

2 A cross between Indian cattle and yaks.

3 De Filippi, F. *Introduzione alle relazioni scientifiche* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1925), XIII.

4 The notebook is kept along with other important documentation relating to the expedition at the Historical Archive of the Astrophysics Observatory of Arcetri (Florence), of which Abetti became the director about ten years later.

St. Petersburg Dunhuang Studies Conference

Irina Popova



The international conference 'Dunhuang Studies: prospects and problems for the coming second century of research' was held on September 3-5, 2009, in St Petersburg, Russia, at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences. The conference was organized in cooperation with the International Liaison Committee for Dunhuang Studies, and sponsored by Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, the Russian Foundation for Humanities, and the Dunhuang Academy (China). The aim of the conference was to discuss issues relating to Dunhuang studies in the present day, giving priority to the textual and philological research of primary sources.

The main goal of Dunhuang studies in the early twenty-first century is to pursue research of the material already available and to make the whole extant corpus of Dunhuang sources accessible with complete modern catalogues. A small part of the Dunhuang and Central Asian collections preserved in Europe and China is still not restored or inventoried in a satisfactory way. Some material, especially tiny fragments, has still not been published. The descriptive catalogues published in the twentieth century in China, Japan, France, Russia and Great Britain are important works, but not entirely complete, and require revising; manuscript catalogue data should be provided with more extensive information. The scholarly output achieved from the study of primary material, such as the Buddhist and secular manuscripts and artefacts, has led to tremendous findings, but at the same time, the extensive and complex nature of the Dunhuang collections has occasionally led to a narrow specialization of the disciplines recently developed within the field. This is the inevitable result of in-depth analysis of a specific part of the collections, although scholars who are concerned with the continuation of the traditions of Chinese and Dunhuang studies in their countries should be aware of these possible limitations.

Academic exchange in Dunhuang studies has become more active over recent decades, but there remain a variety of problems and questions to be decided regarding the relationship between research schools and international scholarly traditions. In recent years some scholars have sought to preserve the integrity of national schools of academic research in pre-modern Chinese studies, especially in European countries. Therefore, it is hoped

that the possibilities of academic exchange and mobility of international scholars will contribute to solving this problem in a more effective way.

Among the participants were researchers from China, Japan, Europe and the USA. The keynote speaker, Professor Vladimir Myasnikov, gave an overview of the study of Central Asia by Russian scholars and presented an outline of the history of Dunhuang, Turfan and Tangut studies in Russia. Seventy-four presentations were made during the conference sessions, during which papers concentrated on the study of manuscripts from Dunhuang. Professor Wang San-ching presented his study of three categories of Dunhuang literary manuscripts *leishu* 類書, *shuyi* 書儀 and *zhaiyuanwen* 齋願文. Professor Chu Feng-yu discussed Dunhuang *bianwen* narratives concerned with biographical stories of the Han Dynasty. Dr Isabella Gurevich analyzed the manuscripts of vernacular literature as source material for studies of the historical grammar of the Tang period. Professor Takata Tokio discussed the main sources that made it possible to reconstruct the Chinese northwestern dialect of the Tang and Song dynasties.

Many papers were connected with the study of Dunhuang materials held in Russian collections. Professor Irina Popova presented the results of the study of documents representing legislative practice in Dunhuang. Professor Sun Jimin analyzed the Chinese documents on military administration from the St. Petersburg Tangut collection, and Dr Tsuji Masahiro gave a report on judicial texts and introduced some newly identified documents. The paper by Professor Deng Wenkuan was devoted to the study of a calendar (Dx.2880), dated AD 834, arguing that the precise chronology of the printing technique should be thirty-four years earlier than was previously thought.

Some presentations dealt with textual and philosophical comparative studies of Buddhist manuscripts (papers by Professor Frédéric Girard, Professor Kuo Liying, and Dr Margarita Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya). Professor Cheng A-tsai focused on different traditions of Buddhist sutra expositions. Professor Stephen Teiser discussed the literary form of ritual texts, and Dr Chen Huaiyu analyzed different Buddhist traditions of invocation ritual from the Western Regions, Tibet, and Central China encountered in Dunhuang. Professors Hyun Heangja and Zhang

Yongquan presented recent results on identifying the fragments of Buddhist collections from Dunhuang.

A number of presentations included the study of documents representing administrative practice and daily life in ancient and medieval Dunhuang (papers by Dr Wu Liyu, Dr Nagata Tomoyuki, Professor Gao Qi-an). A series of valuable ethnographic data was presented by Professor Chai Jianhong and Dr Li Jinmei. Professor Hao Chunwen gave a paper on the study of some ritual manuscripts from the British Dunhuang collection.

Papers by Dr Zhang Huiming, Dr Kira Samosyuk, Dr Nicolai Pchelin, Dr Meng Sihui, Dr Lin Jen-Yu, Dr Liu Hui-Ping, and Dr Pai Shih-ming focused on the history and iconography of Dunhuang, Tangut and Turfan art.

Some papers presented extended beyond Dunhuang studies and were devoted to Tangut, Turfan, Uighur and Central Asian studies. Dr Sakajiri Akihiro, Dr Wang Ding, Dr Xu Quansheng, and Dr Akagi Takatoshi presented the results of their studies based on Dunhuang collections which give important, new information about the cultural and international exchange in the region. The session on Uighur studies discussed the results of the study of documents in the Uighur language from Dunhuang and Turfan. Professor Peter Zieme, Dr Simone-Christiane Rashmann, Dr Liliya Tugusheva, Dr Abdurishid Yakup, and Dr Kasai Yukiyo summarized the results of recent studies of Uighur texts. Professor Sergej Klyashtornyj discussed the Old Turkic Book on Divination from Dunhuang as a phenomenon of Serindian Culture.

Three of the conference sessions focused on Tangut studies. After the discovery of the ruined city of Kharakhoto by P K Kozlov in 1909, Chinese scholars have continued to undertake extensive explorations in the region, discovering a large number of manuscripts in Tangut and Chinese. Professor Du Jianlu

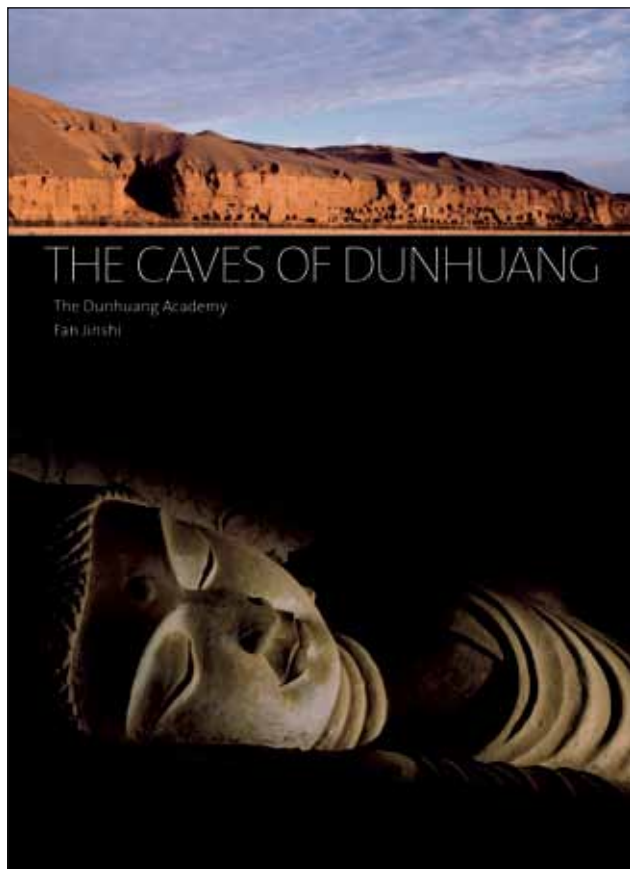
presented the results of this work, and announced that the total number of Chinese fragments collected from Kharakhoto in China numbers 4000. Professor Kirill Solonin analyzed some Chan Buddhist manuscripts from the St. Petersburg Tangut collection, and Professor Nie Hongyin conducted research on a Tangut translation of the hundredth volume of the Chinese medical work *Taiping Shenghui Fang* 太平聖惠方. Professor Sun Bojun discussed commentaries on Tangut poetry entitled *A Collection of Virtuousness and Resourcefulness*, and Dr Tai Chung Pui presented the results of his work on the reconstruction of the Tangut fragments of the *Aparimitāyurjñānanāmamahāyanasūtra*.

In a session devoted to the study of Tibetan texts from Dunhuang, Dr Iwao Kazushi, Dr Yan Tingliang, Dr Alexander Zorin, and Dr Yang Fuxue provided new information on the history and dissemination of Buddhist texts in the Tibetan language in Dunhuang. Professor Evgeniy Kychanov analyzed the chapters of the Tangut Code dealing with the administration of the border regions of the Xixia state.

One session was devoted to the study of the history of exploration in Dunhuang and other sites of Xinjiang. Professor Wang Jiqing, Dr Cordula Gumbrecht, and Dr Imre Galambos showed in their papers that despite the fact that in the early 1900s no results of the Western expeditions were published, scientists strove to work in close contact. Professors Zhu Yuqi and Ochiai Toshinori presented papers on studies of the Chinese scholars Xu Song and Li Shengduo in the region at the turn of the twentieth century.

As agreed by the participants, the conference proceedings will be published.

Professor Irina Popova is Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Russia.



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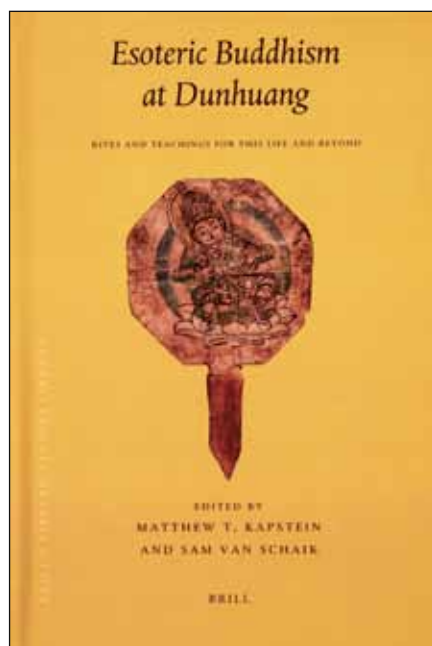
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New Publications

Trade and Contemporary Society along the Silk Road: an Ethno-history of Ladakh

Jacqueline Fewkes
Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2009
202 pp. \$170
ISBN: 9780415775557 0415775558
9780203273692 0203273699
<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415775557/>



Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang: Rites and Teachings for this Life and Beyond

Matthew T Kapstein and
Sam van Schaik (eds)
Leiden: Brill, 2010
300 pp. €103/\$147
ISBN: 9789004182035 9004182039
<http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=40826>

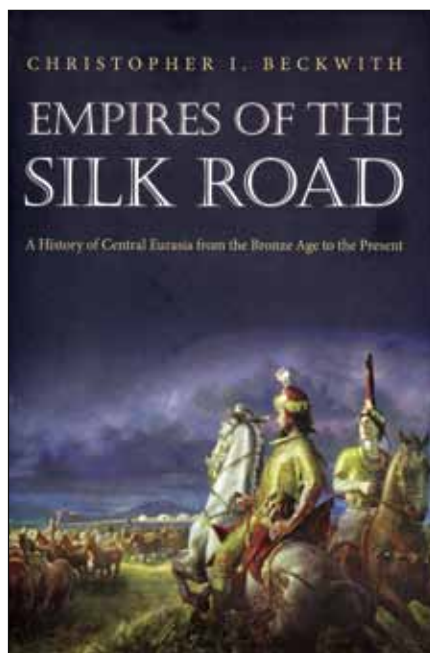
This new study of esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang includes papers on consecrations of the wrathful divinity Vajrakīlaya, approaches to the vows of tantric adepts, philosophical interpretations of Mahāyoga, the background for later Tibetan tantric mortuary rites, and early printing in relation to esoteric dhāraṇīs, and their role as amulets accompanying the deceased.

突厥語文學研究: 耿世民教授八十華誕紀念文集

Studies in Turkic Philology: Festschrift in Honour of the 80th Birthday of Professor Geng Shimin
張定京, 阿不都熱西提·亞庫甫
Zhang Dingjing and Abdurishid Yakup
Beijing: China Minzu University Press, 2009
491 pp.
ISBN: 9787811087772 7811087774
Articles in Chinese, English, German, Kazakh, Turkish and Uygur.

Cultural Histories of Central Asia

Rashmi Doraiswamy
New Delhi: Academy of Third World Studies and Aakars, 2009
270 pp. Rs. 595
ISBN: 9788189833763 8189833766
http://aakarbooks.com/bookdetail.php?book_id=323

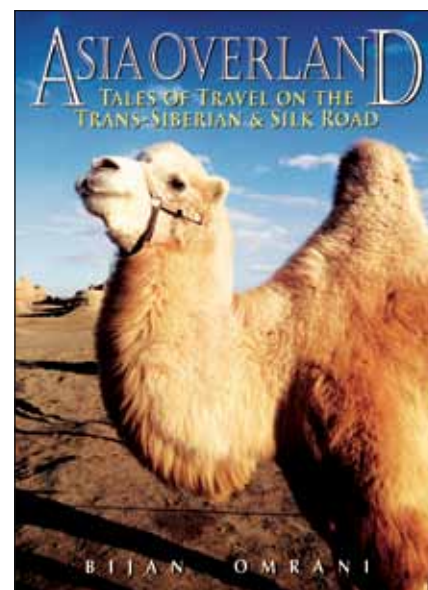


Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present

Christopher I Beckwith
Princeton University Press, 2009
ISBN: 9780691135892 0691135894
496 pp. \$35/£24.95
<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8882.html>

Fragmenta Buddhica Uigurica. Ausgewählte Schriften von Peter Zieme

Simone-Christiane Raschmann and Jens Wilkens (eds)
Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag 2009
(Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der Turkvölker. Band 7.)
646 pp. €148
ISBN: 9783879973491 3879973490
<http://indologica.de/drupal/?q=node/686>



Asia Overland: Tales of Travel on the Trans-Siberian & Silk Road

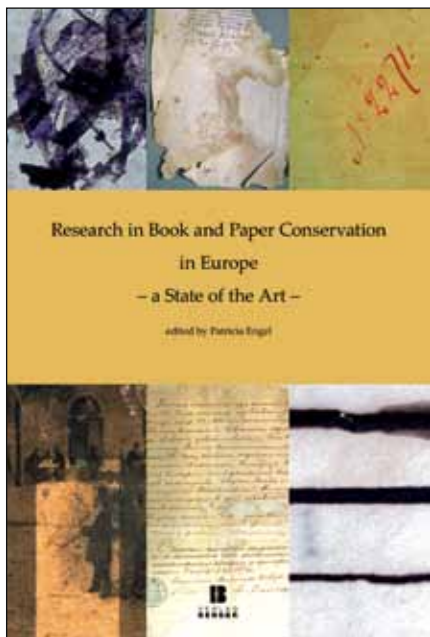
Bijan Omrani
Hong Kong: Odyssey; New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010
ISBN: 9789622178113 9622178111

Art, Architecture and Religion Along the Silk Roads

K. Parry
Turnhout: Brepols, 2009
308 pp. €70
ISBN: 9782503524283 2503524281
http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=IS-9782503524283-1

Out of Steppe: the Lost Peoples of Central Asia

Daniel Metcalfe
London: Hutchinson, 2009
241 pp.
ISBN: 9780091925529 0091925525



Research in Book and Paper Conservation in Europe: A State of the Art
Patricia Engel (ed.)
Horn: Berger, 2009
328 pp. €25

ISBN: 9783850284905 3850284905
<http://www.verlag-berger.at/en/detail/isbn-978-3-85028-490-5-1.html>
This collection of papers provides an overview of current research in book and paper conservation-restoration in Europe. The book examines basic research, applied research and experimental development, and aims to serve as a starting point and tool for policy makers.

シルクロード文字を辿って：ロシア探検隊収集の文物

On the Trail of Texts Along the Silk Road: Russian Expedition Discoveries of Manuscripts in Central Asia

Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan. 2009
205 pp.

Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Kyoto National Museum in 2009.

Literarische Stoffe und ihre Gestaltung in mitteliranischer Zeit. Colloquium anlässlich des 70. Geburtstages von Werner Sundermann

Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Christiane Reck and Dieter Weber (eds)
Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag 2009.
(Beiträge zur Iranistik. 31.)
381 pp.

ISBN: 3895006718 9783895006715

Ancient Glass Research Along the Silk Road

Fuxi Gan, Robert H Brill and Shouyun Tian

New Jersey: World Scientific, 2009
496 pp. \$95/£74.

ISBN: 9789812833563 9812833560
<http://www.worldscibooks.com/history/6964.html>

Alttürkische Handschriften. Teil 14: Dokumente. Teil 2

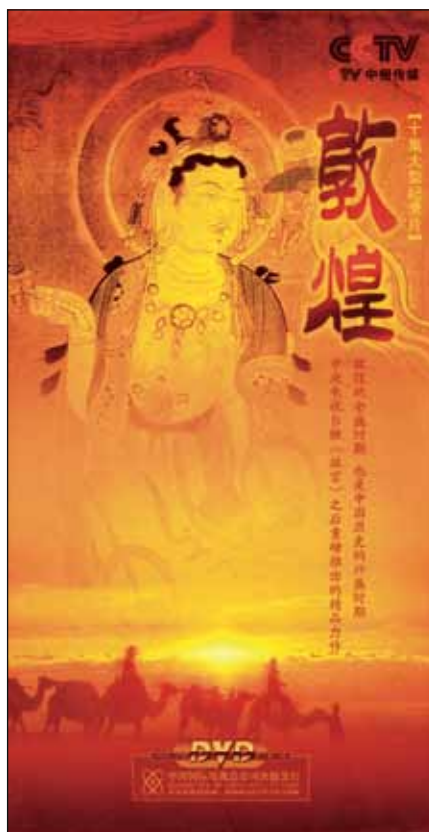
Simone-Christiane Raschmann
Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2009.
(Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland. XIII,22.)
386 pp.

ISBN: 9783515094283 3515094288

When Asia was the World

Stewart Gordon
Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2008
228 pp.

ISBN: 9780306815560 0306815567



Dunhuang CCTV Documentary

This new ten-part documentary has been shown on Chinese national television over 2009-10. Directed by Zhou Bing, the documentary presents various aspects of history and culture related to Dunhuang and the Silk Road, including a short feature on IDP at the British Library and National Library of China.

Exhibitions

The Printed Image in China from the 8th to the 21st Centuries

British Museum, London
May 6 - September 5, 2010



This exhibition presents a history of 1,300 years of Chinese print making from the Museum's collections, and external loans. The recently conserved Diamond Sutra (Or.8210/P.2), dated AD 868, from the British Library Stein collection is also on display.

Dunhuang and Sui-Tang Urban Civilisation

World Expo 2010, Shanghai
May 1 - October 31, 2010

The China Stand at the World Expo includes original manuscripts from the Library Cave, five original sculptures from the Mogao Caves, as well as two replica caves: cave 220 from the early Tang period at Mogao, and cave 25 from the Yulin Caves from the High Tang period.

Conferences

16th Himalayan Languages Symposium

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London
September 2 - 5, 2010

The focus of the symposium will be geographical rather than linguistic and is being held in the UK for the first time.

For more information on the symposium and registration details, please go to: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/events/event52562.html>

Symposium on Multilingualism and Society in Ancient Central Asia

Turfan Academy, Turfan
October 23 - 25, 2010

Topics include philology, and the relationship between languages, ethnicity, society and religion.

IDP Worldwide News



Retired staff at the Dunhuang Academy who have been speaking about their experiences as part of an oral history project.
Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy.

IDP China

Beijing

Wu Xinyi has continued as photographer, and has been instrumental in maintaining quality consistency and training new digitisation staff. Liu Ting joined IDP Beijing in the autumn of 2008 as an image manipulator, and was joined by a second image manipulator, Xi Xiao, in April 2009. Having three full-time staff working at full capacity has led to an increase in the output of images over the year, with 20,185 images being uploaded to the database and website in 2009.

IDP Beijing marked up Li Yizhuo's catalogue entitled *Non-Canonical Buddhist Manuscripts from the Dunhuang Caves* (敦煌石室經卷中未入藏經論著述目錄), and imported it to the database for web display in December 2009. The catalogue has 159 items, including a record of more than 500 non-canonical Buddhist manuscripts at the Metropolitan Library (former NLC).

IDP Beijing manager Liu Bo published an article entitled *The International Dunhuang Project (IDP) and international collaboration on the digitization of Dunhuang and Central Asian documents* to introduce IDP to scholars and librarians in China.



It was published in the first and second issue of *Digital Library Forum* (數字圖書館論壇) in 2010, a professional magazine in the field of digitization and digital libraries. Colleagues at IDP Beijing published academic papers on Dunhuang and Turfan manuscripts in the journal *Wenxian* 文獻.

During a special exhibition on rare books and manuscripts at the NLC from June to July 2009, a series of lectures and salons was organized, two of which were related to IDP Beijing. Lin Shitian, Shi Rui and Liu Bo hosted a salon on the background and history of the Dunhuang and Turfan manuscripts on exhibition, and was attended by an audience of more than sixty. Zhao Daying presented IDP at another salon.

Dunhuang

Since its inception in 2007, the IDP digitisation studio at the Dunhuang Academy (DHA) has digitised 65 manuscripts, and has uploaded more than 500 images to the IDP database. The exhibition centre at DHA has also made more than 30 facsimiles of manuscripts from the Library Cave, allowing original manuscripts on display to be returned to storage.

IDP Dunhuang staff have also been involved in recording oral histories of long-serving, now-retired members of staff at the Academy from its earliest days. Four retired staff members took part in the event (see above), all of them over seventy years old: Mr Fan Hua, who worked as an administrator at DHA; Mr Gong Jin,

who served for many years as a security guard; Mrs Dou, who worked as a cook; and Mr Li Yunhe, who was also a security guard. IDP Dunhuang staff made film and audio recordings of the retired members of staff talking about experiences from their working lives over four decades at the Mogao Caves.

IDP Japan

The Digital Archives Research Center (DARC) at Ryukoku University began work on a conservation project in April 2009. IDP Japan also collaborates with several conservation companies in Kyoto, such as Sakata Bokujudo, Syokakudo and Kawamo Art Research Institute, resulting in a number of collaborative research projects taking place simultaneously.

Dr. Sakamoto Shouji, Professor Emeritus Enami Kazuyuki, Mr. Sakata Masayuki and Mr. Ikeda Kazuhiko (both of Sakata Bokujudo) investigated the Li Bo Documents that were discovered by Tachibana Zuicho of the Otani expedition. Ms. Matsueda Reiko and Ms. Morikawa Yoko (both of Syokakudo), Dr. Kato Masato (National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo), Dr. Sakamoto and Professor Enami carried out research on the discolouring of paper that had been dyed by *huangbo*. Professor Okada is working on the wall paintings at Nishi Honganji with the Kawamo Art Research Institute. He is also investigating the medieval Asian map, Kangnido 混一疆理歷代國都之圖.

IDP Japan organized an international symposium on the Buddhist manuscripts in Lüshun Museum, China at Ryukoku

IDP Beijing team: Liu Ting, Liu Bo, Xi Xiao, and Wu Xinyi.

University on March 29, 2010. Director Guo Fuchun from the Lüshun Museum was invited, and visited DARC. Talks were also held on producing a progress report of joint research of the non-Chinese manuscripts in the Lüshun museum, as well as on the possibility of opening to the public in the near future.

IDP Japan also organised a conference coinciding with a visit from IDP staff at Ryukoku University in July 2010 at which findings from the above research projects were presented.

(left to right): Prof Abdurishid Yakup, Dr Simone-Christiane Raschmann, Dr Barbara Meisterernst, Prof Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Dr Christiane Reck, Dr Yukiyo Kasai (all BBAW), and Prof Mazumi Mitani (Ryukoku University) in Berlin.



IDP Germany

At the end of 2009 two further meetings of the *Collegium Turfanicum* took place at the Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW).

Anna-Grethe Rischel, former paper conservator at the National Museum of Denmark (now retired) began research on the Berlin Turfan manuscripts at the beginning of 2009.

During several visits to the ‘Turfanforschung’ (BBAW) and the conservation studio of the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage, Professor Rischel was able to carry out a closer study of the paper material and collect data through an analysis of the paper. She has so far been able to analyse about 200 samples. During the 44th *Collegium Turfanicum* on the 4th November 2009 she presented the first results of her work.

Professor Rischel presented her new results concerning the Berlin material at the second workshop on the ‘The Christian Library from Turfan’, held in April 2010 at the BBAW in Berlin.

Professors Mazumi Mitani and Koichi Kitsudo from Ryukoku University in Kyoto both gave interesting papers at the 45th *Collegium Turfanicum* on 20th November 2009. Mazumi Mitani gave a report on collaborative research on Chinese and non-Chinese Buddhist manuscripts in Ryukoku University and Lüshun Museum. During his visit, further cooperation on the Berlin Turfan collection between Ryukoku University and the Berlin ‘Turfanforschung’ (BBAW) as well as the ‘Union Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts in German Collections’

(Academy of Sciences Göttingen) was agreed. The Ryukoku research group agreed to compile a new volume of the catalogue of Chinese Buddhist fragments in the Berlin collection, due for completion by 2015. Koichi Kitsudo presented his outstanding results for the first time on the identification of the Chinese sources of the Uigur *Lehrtext* which seems to be a commentary belonging to the Yogācāra-school. About sixty-six Old Turkish fragments of this text are preserved in the Berlin Turfan collection.

Over the course of the IDP-CREA project Susann Rabuske transferred digital images and data from the Digital Turfan Archive I to the IDP database. The 496 Christian Sogdian fragments in Nestorian script (the ‘n-Fragmente’) are now fully accessible on the IDP database (about 1000 digital images). Within the framework of the project ‘The Christian Library from Turfan’ led by Erica Hunter (SOAS), Nicholas Sims-Williams compiled a catalogue of these texts. The catalogue will be published in the *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*. Currently around 2000 images (up to shelf number M 750) of the Berlin Turfan texts in Manichaen script have been incorporated into the IDP database. Many images had to be rescanned from the analogue slides and manipulated to meet the requirements for inclusion in the IDP database.

Digitisation of the Sanskrit Fragments

A programme to digitise the Sanskrit and Syriac fragments began in December

2008. Apart from a few manuscripts that were purchased, most of these manuscripts were excavated on the Northern Silk Road at the following sites: Tumshuq, Kucha, Shorchuk, and the Turfan oasis.

The Sanskrit collection consists of around 15,000 fragments which were assigned 7179 SHT pressmark numbers. Of these numbers, SHT 1–4362 have already been identified and described in the catalogues of the project *Katalogisierung der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, Göttingen, in volumes 1–10 (1965–2008). Most of these fragments have now been digitised and are accessible via the IDP websites.

Anne Peters has contributed as yet unpublished preliminary identifications and descriptions of the Sanskrit fragments (with scholarly input from Klaus Wille), in particular from SHT 4362 onwards, which she has been adding to the digital catalogue. Annett Brüsemeister, responsible for processing the digital images and their preparation for inclusion into the IDP database, has prepared and imported most of the digital images up to SHT 809. At present she is on maternity leave.

After having prepared the basic data on the Sanskrit fragments, Barbara Meisterernst left IDP Germany at the end of January 2010 to start on a research project at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She will continue to be connected to IDP in gratitude and friendship and hopes to be able to join her research interests with IDP some time in the future.

IDP UK

People

Ammandeep Mahal spent three weeks in March at IDP UK working as an intern, entering data and putting together an educational resource on geography on the Silk Road.

Sheng Yanhai from the Dunhuang Academy left IDP UK in April after a five-month internship funded by the World Collections Programme. Sheng helped with photography and image manipulation, and became familiar with IDP's digitisation workflow for different types of material. He is now continuing digitisation of Dunhuang manuscripts at the Dunhuang Academy for inclusion in the IDP database. During his internship, Sheng also met with British Library conservators and learned about housing fragments in Melinex.

IDP welcomed **Yichon Kim from the Institute of Korean Culture (IKC)**, Korea University, Seoul for a six-month internship at IDP UK, as part of IDP's collaboration with IKC. Yichon is helping with photography and image manipulation.



Yichon Kim from the IKC.

Collaboration

IDP staff visited Stockholm in January 2010 to discuss collaboration on the Sven Hedin collections. They met colleagues at the Museum of Ethnography, the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, the Royal Library, the National Archives and the department of Central Asian studies at Stockholm University. Funding is being



IDP meeting with colleagues at the Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm.

sought to set up a digitisation centre in Stockholm with a Swedish website.

Susan Whitfield visited India in March 2010 and met with the Ministry of Culture and the National Museum to discuss collaboration.

Imre Galambos visited the Central Library, Taiwan to begin talks about digitising Dunhuang manuscripts kept there.

IDP Korea will be launched at the end of 2010 with a ceremony in Seoul and a Korean version of the website.

Cataloguing and Research

A project is underway with the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) to create electronic versions of the Pelliot tibétain catalogues. IDP is inputting and marking up the catalogues in XML (TEI), for subsequent conversion to EAD by the BnF; the first marked-up volume has recently been completed and sent to the BnF.

Imre Galambos and Sam van Schaik are completing an educational web resource for the palaeographical study of Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang. They travelled to western China in May 2010 to retrace the steps of a tenth-century pilgrim, funded by a Stein–Arnold Fund grant. Details will be published in the next newsletter but a preliminary account can also be seen on the IDP blog (see below).

Blog, Flickr, Facebook and YouTube

Readers of *IDP News* can keep up to date with IDP activities in real time by

visiting our social networking pages, all accessible via the IDP website homepage (<http://idp.bl.uk>). You can read about new collaborations, visits and anything interesting related to Central Asia on the IDP blog, view photographs on the Flickr pages, keep up with new educational content on the Facebook page, and view IDP videos on YouTube.

Educational Resources

IDP UK has produced a new educational resource on Chinese astronomy, with funding from the **Royal Astronomical Society**. The resource introduces the Dunhuang Star Atlas, and provides an introduction to astronomy in China and its importance in Chinese history and



culture. Some Chinese constellations and associated myths are presented, while the links between astronomy and astrology are also explored. The resource contains classroom activities, downloadable resources, including an illustrated wall chart of the Chinese sky.

The astronomy resource is accessible on IDP's education pages:

<http://idp.bl.uk/pages/education.a4d>

IDP News appears twice a year. It is also available online.

Editor: Alastair Morrison; Picture Editor: Rachel Roberts

For further details about IDP or to be added to the free mailing list contact:

Kate Hampson, The International Dunhuang Project, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, LONDON NW1 2DB, UK

tel: +44 20 7412 7319 fax: +44 20 7412 7641 email: kate.hampson@bl.uk

<http://idp.bl.uk>