

## ***ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS***

### **Buddhist Manuscript Cultures Princeton University. January 20-22, 2017**

**Heather Blair**  
***The Prayers of the Queen***

What counts as a Buddhist text, a Buddhist manuscript? Can laypeople write such things? And what are the lines between literature and devotion? As one entry into these questions, this paper examines liturgical prayers (*ganmon*) from the Heian period, with a focus on several such texts written around the turn from the eleventh into the twelfth century for the woman known to historians as Princess Atsuko (1060–1114). First as an empress and then as a nun, Atsuko built a reputation for herself as a devout Buddhist by sponsoring sutra-copying projects and large-scale rites. Liturgical prayers written on her behalf by male literati were central to this endeavor, for they announced her aims to human and divine audiences alike. Indeed, even though these prayers were written, recited, and preserved by people other than Atsuko herself, they are the best evidence we have for how she imagined and described her work as a good Buddhist. Importantly, the literary and material qualities of these texts also impinged upon their use (and continue to affect our perceptions of them). Whereas the best-known prayers written for Atsuko were anthologized in literary collections, a set of archaeological texts has also been attributed to her: a suite of sutras written in gold and silver ink on indigo paper, a set of three mandalas, a list of offerings, and a *ganmon*—all buried at Mt. Kōya in 1113 and later excavated. Whether they now appear to us as more ‘literary’ or more ‘material,’ Atsuko’s prayers—and *ganmon* more generally—operated at the nexus of writing and ritual, sense and thing. Consequently, as rhetorical frames that are also ritual objects, these texts provide a salutary perspective on the vibrant and diverse Buddhist manuscript culture of the Heian period.

**Agnieszka Helman-Ważny**  
***Scriptures Written in Gold across the Various Buddhist Manuscript Traditions***

Calligraphy in gold was well known and appreciated as a skill by itself in all religious traditions. In different cultures, it was practiced with varied tools and on diverse support mediums. The gold script on the black or blue ground is one of the typical conventions developed especially within the Buddhist manuscript cultures. Individual craftsmanship as well as patronage contributed to the choices of the materials to be used. In the context of Buddhist tradition, the objective usually was to accumulate greater merit, which was contingent on the higher quality and preciousness of the materials. This technique was often used for special editions offered to important people such as famous Buddhist teachers, rulers, and aristocracy. The best materials -- good quality paper and ink, natural pigments, true gold and silver, and even precious stones --- were used for their production. Although these manuscripts still could follow regional patterns and production habits formed from local plant resources and a specific availability or tendency of using particular materials by particular communities. This comparative study will explore the history of this aesthetic on selected Buddhist manuscripts exemplified from the various Buddhist cultures and geographical regions of Asia.

**Shih-shan Susan Huang**  
*Buddhist Frontispieces Printed During the Song, Xi Xia, and Yuan Periods*

This paper examines art, culture, and religion as related to Buddhist woodblock printing in manuscript and book culture during the Song, Xia Xia, and Yuan periods (tenth to fourteenth centuries). Woodblock printing, which gradually became more sophisticated over this period, provided a means for accurately and efficiently replicating texts. This new technology enabled Buddhist knowledge to be transferred on an unprecedented scale. The mechanical reproduction of sutras also allowed for the accumulation of merits at a vastly higher rate. Beyond familiar Dunhuang sources, archaeological finds from Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, and areas of Jiangnan show that the printing of Buddhist materials was multi-centered and cross-regional.

Unlike pre-Song hand-written manuscripts, these printed texts bear a frontispiece, an illustrated page at the beginning of the text containing iconic and narrative elements. To meet the great demand for their work, frontispiece makers developed an efficient method for designing their pages. They relied on standard templates and modular motifs that could be modified, repurposed and reassembled. They also appropriated existing pictorial motifs from earlier Chinese painting and other non-Buddhist art sources. Religious texts, by their very nature, limit readership to those who are literate and know the given language. In contrast, a printed frontispiece presents no such barrier. Indeed, it is clear that the frontispieces had an impact beyond their original Chinese Buddhist context. We see evidence of this in a late-fifteenth century Islamic painting from Timurid Herat and in an eighteenth century Korean genre painting.

The Inner Asian peoples served as important agents of Buddhist book culture transmission. Dedicatory prayers and inscriptions from selected printed materials in Khara Khoto, Lingwu, and Turfan shed light on non-Han donors. These included Xi Xia and Yuan emperors and empresses, as well as multi-ethnic monks, officials, and merchants. Of these, some either worked closely for the regimes or enjoyed elite status as members of the Semu class under Mongol rule. While little information is available concerning the individuals who designed the frontispieces, there is ample documentation regarding the woodblock carvers. They included itinerant Chinese who were active in Hangzhou and worked on various editions of the Buddhist Canon and Yuan reprints of Tangut-script sutras.

**Matthew T. Kapstein**  
*Codex Interruptus: A Dispersed Manuscript of Tibetan Tantric Magic and Its Broader Lessons*

Two decades ago an unusual Tibetan manuscript bundle was acquired by the Thomas Isenberg Collection. The volume, which contains numerous finely executed paintings focusing upon the elephant-headed Indian divinity Gaṇeśa, soon attracted the attention of scholars of art history, who dubbed it the “Ganesh Manuscript.” Questions of its provenance, dating, and cultural significance, however, have not yet been definitely resolved. In the present talk, I shall attempt to clarify what is known and to advance the state of our knowledge to some degree, with reference to additional, newly discovered manuscript sources. We must consider, too, the possible implications of the curious case of the “Ganesh Manuscript” for our study of Buddhist manuscript cultures more generally.

**Christine Mollier**

***For the living and the dead: talismans for the protection of Dunhuang and its inhabitants***

Composed of esoteric graphs and designs inscribed or engraved on diverse media, Chinese talismans 符 are ritual implements endowed with apotropaic powers. Created in profusion by Daoist and Buddhist clerics for minor rites and great liturgies, they also served as prophylactic, therapeutic or exorcistic devices employed by astrologers, medicine men, and other parareligious technicians. This presentation will focus on the typology and *modus operandi* of talismans produced for the welfare of Dunhuang's inhabitants in the medieval period. Particular attention will be given to talismans transmitted in divinatory treatises authored by local civil or military functionaries. We will see how these talismans reflect the soteriological and astrological conceptions of the epoch, and how some of them which were intended to pacify tombs are related to extant archeological artefacts.

**Nathalie Monnet**

***Towards a Reassessment of the Contents of Dunhuang Cave 17***

The great majority of the Dunhuang manuscripts have been catalogued and we now have a fairly accurate description of the actual contents of Cave 17. There is however a tendency to assimilate the retrieved contents of the cave with the intended contents. The manuscripts are too often unconsciously seen as having been purposely stored in the cave by monks in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Since their discovery over a hundred years ago, the manuscripts have been taken out of their original bundles and classified by language and document types. Scrolls and sheets have been detached and reassembled, cleaned and repaired, and finally restored and “de-restored.” This has enabled us to uncover texts written on the reverse side of Buddhist scrolls and on patches and backing paper. The consequence is that many scrolls have lost the appearance they had when the cave was sealed. The focus on the extremely valuable recovered non-Buddhist material has impressed on us the idea that the contents of the cave were rather diverse and eclectic. By reviewing the material state of some documents, I will attempt to reevaluate the original contents of the cave that may be less heterogeneous than they now appear. I wish to establish a clear distinction between what was deliberately stored in the cave and what was there by chance or necessity, by concentrating on the aspect of some Dunhuang manuscripts at the time of their discovery.

**Asuka Sango**  
***The Power of Copying and the Materiality of Learning:  
 The Tōdaiji monk Sōshō's (1202–1278) Manuscript Production***

The Tōdaiji monk Sōshō (1202–1278) produced a vast body of manuscripts (the total of 351 bound books and 129 handscrolls) covering multiple disciplines of Buddhism. Despite this accomplishment, Sōshō has received little scholarly attention since he “copied” (*shosha*) and “excerpted” (*shōshutsu*), but did not author most of these texts. His textual scholarship lacked what the modern notion of “authorship” presumes: i.e., originality, innovation, and ownership.

In this paper, Sōshō will be brought out of the narrow, etic view of authorship, and instead, be placed back in the original contexts of his manuscript production. I will focus on what he wrote for preparing to participate in debate rituals (*rongi-e*) and receiving a resultant promotion. Scholars have tended to depict debate-related textual production as a mere tool for upward social mobility, but I will reveal its intellectual significance. Sōshō copied various types of texts as different cognitive tools, appropriate for particular stages of learning. Also, Sōshō's texts were not only the means and products of his learning, but their circulation and transmission generated social relations such as a lineage.

In addition to the social contexts of his manuscript production, the language of Sōshō's texts will be analyzed. His act of copying was not pure mimicry; rather, he omitted some of the original, inserted his own thoughts, and signed his name in a colophon (*okugaki*). These traces of his textual presence point to the power of copying in shaping a Buddhist author, who aspired, not to innovate, but to emulate and embody the Buddhist tradition.

**Kirill Solonin**  
***Tangut Chan texts: an attempt of systematization***

Apart from the so-called “Chan Buddhist and doctrinal texts” pertaining to the realm of Sinitic Buddhism in Xixia, the Tangut Buddhist corpus includes several compositions in both Chinese and Tangut. I have earlier attempted to arrange some of these texts into a sort of system, so as to reveal the selection criteria and recover the doctrinal tenets (including doctrinal taxonomy) which determined the specific makeup of what is known as the Tangut Chan corpus. In this presentation, I intend to further investigate a set of texts which I provisionally identify as the collections of the Chan Buddhist “recorded sayings.” One is the Tangut translation of the no-longer extant “Recorded sayings of Nanyang Huizhong” (南陽惠忠禪師語錄), known only under its Tangut title “Twenty five questions and answers on the Buddhist teaching presented to the Tang State Preceptor Zhong while he was staying in the Guangzhai Temple.” This is one of the most popular Buddhist compositions in Tangut, totaling up to 20 copies in both manuscript and printed formats. My focus will be the comparison between the longer and the shorter versions of the text, from codicological, linguistic and possibly intellectual perspectives. The other one is the composition of probably native Tangut origin, “The Chinese Chan master \*Piheng's Collection on Various occasions.” Although the texts are different in subject matter, they can still be related to the general category of Huayan-Chan texts, probably imported to Xixia from both Liao and the Northern Song. The manner in which the texts emerge from the Khara-Khoto collection, allows us to attribute them to a uniform tradition, which was in all probability spread in Northern China and determined, among other things, the doctrinal system of the Sinitic Buddhism in Xixia.

**Brian Steininger**  
*Secular Literature in the Medieval Japanese Temple:  
 A Case Study of You xianku (Yūsenkutsu)*

*You xianku* (Visit to the Immortal's Den, late seventh century) is a long tale in parallel prose, describing a young official's encounter with two mysterious sisters, their banter, poetry exchanges, and a final erotic encounter. Apparently forgotten in China not long after its composition, it enjoyed continuous dissemination within in Japan all the way down to the late nineteenth century. Several manuscripts and woodblock printed editions of the text append a legend describing the mysterious origins of the tale's vernacular reading tradition (*kundoku*), which is peculiarly elaborate. This paper conducts a close reading of this legend, contextualizing its repetition and revision in relation to the reception of the tale in Shingon temples. I argue that the continued attention to this legend attests to its symbolic representation of a fundamental shift in patterns of textual circulation in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Japan, in which established lineages of hereditary learning were dissolved in favor of a dispersed network of religious centers as the custodians of literate scholarship. This institutional transformation of knowledge communities is a key element in the continuity between medieval and early modern Japanese intellectual history.

**SUGIMOTO Kazuki**  
*Copying Buddhist Manuscripts in Ancient Japan:  
 The Actual Practice Evident in the Shōsōin Documents and Shōgozō Sūtras*

The Shōsōin (Japanese imperial treasure house) holds a significant number of Buddhist manuscripts, the so-called *Shōgozō* (repository of sacred works) sutras copied in the eighth century AD. This group of sutras was produced for Tōdaiji temple in Japan's capital of the time, Nāra. At that time Buddhism was considered a crucial means of maintaining peace in the country, and activities such as copying sutras and completing the Great Buddha and other building projects were considered of national importance.

The Shōsōin also contains a great number of ancient documents known as the *Shōsōin monjo* (Shōsōin documents), the core of which consists of various types of administrative documents that had been recorded in scriptoria (*shakyōsho*) in a relatively accurate and efficient manner. In addition to the written materials, contemporary clothes and objects are also preserved in the treasure house. All these artifacts are invaluable because they offer concrete knowledge of not only the study of religious doctrine but also the activities of secular officials who supported religious practices.

杉本一樹  
 古代日本における仏教經典の書写—正倉院文書・  
 聖語藏經卷にみる具体相

正倉院には、西暦8世紀に書写された仏教經典（聖語藏經卷）が大量に伝存する。この經典群は、東大寺のために作成されたものである。東大寺は、当時の日本の首都である奈良の地に創建された。仏教の力は、国家の安泰を保つための重要な支えと考えられた。本尊である大仏、多くの建物の造立と並んで、經典の書写事業写経も重要な国家的事業と位置づけられていた。

正倉院には、その事業を進めた組織（写経所）が作成した（正倉院文書）も大量に残る。しごとを正確かつ効率的に進めるために必要とされた、各種の事務用書類が、その中核をなす。さらに、文字の資料だけでなく、当時使用された衣服や用具も正倉院には存在する。このため、宗教者の教理的研究だけではなく、その活動を支えた世俗的官吏の活動も具体的に知ることができる点で、これらの資料群は、貴重な存在である。

**Sam van Schaik**

***Bilingual Buddhist Manuscripts from Silk Road Sites***

The manuscripts found in Dunhuang and other sites along the Silk Routes of Eastern Central Asia are famous for their linguistic diversity, including Chinese, Tibetan, Turkic, Sanskrit, Tocharian, Khotanese, and Tangut, among other languages. A small number of manuscripts contain texts that combine two of these languages. These bilingual texts have been studied primarily for their linguistic value, to assist in the decipherment of lost languages like Khotanese and Tangut, or to help reconstruct earlier pronunciations of well-known languages like Chinese and Tibetan. In this paper, I take a different approach to these bilingual manuscripts, considering their original uses, asking who created them, and for what purpose they were used. Looking in particular at Sino-Tibetan bilingual manuscripts, I will consider, among others, a phrasebook, an aid for translating Buddhist scripture, and a monk's crib sheet. I suggest that thinking about the functions of bilingual manuscripts is a useful way to raise issues that concern manuscript culture in general.

**Zhanru**

***The Buddhist Canon of Ximing Monastery and Tang China***

The Buddhist canon at Chang'an's Ximing Monastery played a pivotal role in Tang China. Many of the scriptures comprising the canon were translated at Ximing Monastery. This paper reconstructs the outline of the Ximing canon by examining Daoxuan's *Catalogue of Buddhist Texts of the Great Tang* (*Da Tang neidian lu*), Daoshi's *Pearl Forest of the Dharma Grove* (*Fayuan zhulin*), and other sources. The large number of scriptures in the canon, most in the format of scrolls, presented difficulties for preservation. In this context, the paper examines the history of scripture platforms and scripture cabins. Finally, this paper considers the route by which copies of texts from Ximing Monastery made their way to Dunhuang and the activities of monks from Ximing Monastery in Dunhuang and elsewhere.