BUDDHIST SCRIBAL PRACTICES IN A TRANSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

ORNAMENTAL AND STRUCTURAL SYMBOLS AND HIGHLIGHTER MARKS IN INDO-TIBETAN AND CENTRAL-ASIAN MANUSCRIPT CULTURES

Co-organized by the École française d'Extrême-Orient and the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures - Universität Hamburg, with the support of the GIS Asie

25 NOVEMBER 2019

ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE D'EXTRÊME-ORIENT
22 Avenue du Président Wilson
75116 Paris
INTRODUCTION

This international workshop is a collaborative effort organized by the École française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO-Paris) and the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC-Hamburg), which involves scholars in Buddhist studies, codicology, and art history to analyze the connections between scribal practices attested in various Central and East-Asian Buddhist manuscript cultures, with a focus on mutual influences between them regarding the use of specific ornamental and/or structural marks. This project will cover various areas, in particular the Indo-Tibetan, Chinese and central Asian region. The use of visual devices and highlighter marks specific to Buddhist manuscript cultures is attested in corpora produced in various cultural areas (India, Tibet, Nepal, Central Asia, China, etc.). These elements served various functions in relation to different codicological needs. Some symbols were meant to enrich the aesthetics of the page, used to fill the blank spaces that might occur on various parts of the page, for instance, after the last line of a section, or before the beginning of a text. Such devices are thus reminiscent of *incipit* marks or *culs-de-lampe* found in western books. They also provided the manuscript with symbolic protection.

Signs and highlighter marks found in many Dunhuang documents are a specific feature of manuscripts produced under Tibetan Rule (781–848), and during the following century, and are among the earliest attested examples of this scribal practice. They constitute important evidence of Indo-Tibetan influence on Chinese scribal practices of that period. A number of these specific marks are also found, with certain variants, in North Indian and Nepalese manuscript collections from different periods. The use of ornamental and structural marks was maintained after the transition from manuscript to print. Various examples are found in the earliest printed documents, in Xi Xia script, discovered in Khara-khoto.

Conference papers will focus on the origin, use, and iconographic characteristics of these visual devices, their dating and specific function in the layout of a text, with a focus on phenomena attesting a cultural transfer.
PROGRAMME - 25 NOVEMBER 2019

10:00 Welcome and Introduction

10:30 Keynote Lecture: Scribal practices in the Northern Thai monasteries: calligraphy, lay-out, decorations and illustrations of the palm leaf manuscripts (Buddhist chronicles)
François LAGIRARDE
École française d’Extrême-Orient

11:00 Coffee break

11:15 Visual text-organization in North Indian and Nepalese Buddhist manuscripts
Bidur BHATTARAI
Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures - Universität Hamburg

11:45 The decorated papers used in the early Central Asian manuscripts and ritual objects
Agnieszka HELMAN-WAZNY
Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures - Universität Hamburg

12:15 Discussion

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Survey of some ornamental signs in several of the Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang in the Stein Collection
Mélodie DOUMY
British Library

15:00 Ornamental signs and structural marks in Dunhuang Buddhist manuscripts of the “Pelliot chinois” collection
Costantino MORETTI
École française d’Extrême-Orient

15:30 Coffee break

15:45 Ornamental signs in manuscripts from Khara-khoto
Imre GALAMBOS
Cambridge University

16:15 Punctuation and ornamentation in some Tibetan manuscripts from the 10th to 20th centuries
Sam VAN SCHAIK
British Library

16:45 Discussion

17:15 Closing Remarks

18:30 Dinner
CONVENORS: Costantino MORETTI
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