

Untying the Bonds of Hatred: Manuscripts of a *Dhāraṇī* from Dunhuang

Imre GALAMBOS

Imre Galambos is a specialist of Chinese manuscripts and palaeography. He received his PhD from UC Berkeley (2002) with a dissertation on the Chinese script as evidenced in Warring States manuscripts. After graduation, he worked for the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) at the British Library, where he gradually changed the focus of his research to medieval manuscripts from Dunhuang and other Silk Road sites. Since 2012, he has been teaching at the University of Cambridge. His books include: *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing* (2006), *Manuscripts and Travellers* (2012; co-authored with Sam van Schaik), *Translating Chinese Tradition and Teaching Tangut Culture* (2015), and *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture* (2020).

Email: iig21@cam.ac.uk

International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture Vol. 30. No.2 (December 2020): 169–191

© 2020 Academy of Buddhist Studies, Dongguk University, Korea

<https://doi.org/10.16893/IJBTC.2020.12.31.2.169>

The day of submission: 2020.10.15.

Completion of review: 2020.11.29.

Final decision for acceptance: 2020.12.21.

Abstract

The Dunhuang manuscripts include over twenty copies of a text called Foshuo jie baisheng yuanjia tuoluoni jing 佛說解百生怨家陀羅尼經 (Dhāraṇī Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on Dissolving [Ties with] Grudge-Holders of a Hundred Lifetimes). The text is also known from other sites along the historical Silk Road, attesting to its popularity across a vast geographical area. This paper focuses on extant manuscripts of this scripture from the Dunhuang library cave and groups them according to physical typology. The basic premise is that the manuscripts' physical characteristics are of significance because they show how the dhāraṇī was reproduced as material text. Some of them were produced collectively, in ways that included the active participation of donors from the same extended family, possibly in connection with the commemoration of the dead. Other types of manuscripts suggest having been copied as part of larger projects. Finally, some of the manuscripts may have functioned as devotional objects in themselves.

Key words: *dhāraṇī*, Dunhuang, Chinese manuscripts, bonds of hatred, commemoration of the dead

Introduction

The Dunhuang library cave has yielded tens of thousands of Buddhist manuscripts produced in the Hexi 河西 region (i.e., Gansu) prior to the sealing of the cave in the early eleventh century. The material is primarily written in Chinese and Tibetan, although there is also material in several other languages (e.g., Old Uighur, Khotanese, Sogdian, Sanskrit). The bulk of the collection comes from the ninth and tenth centuries, when the region was no longer part of the Tang empire and was under strong Tibetan and, subsequently, Uighur influence. A series of shorter scriptures related to esoteric Buddhist practices date to this period. Among these is a text called *Foshuo jie baisheng yuanjia tuoluoni jing* 佛說解百生怨家陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on Dissolving [Ties with] Grudge-Holders of a Hundred Lifetimes*; hereafter *Dhāraṇī Scripture*). This is a short text that survived in the Dunhuang library cave in more than two dozen copies but was also found at sites such as Khara-khoto (i.e., Heishuicheng 黑水城, Inner Mongolia), Haimudong 亥母洞 (Gansu) and Shende monastery 神德寺 (Shaanxi), attesting to its popularity across a vast geographical area. This paper focuses on extant manuscripts of the scripture from the Dunhuang library cave and groups them according to their physical typology. The basic premise is that the manuscripts' physical characteristics are of significance because they show how the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* was reproduced as material text. Some of them were produced collectively, in ways that included the active participation of donors from the same extended family, possibly in connection with the commemoration of the dead. Other types of manuscripts suggest having been produced as part of larger projects, potentially involving a multitude of copies. Finally, some of the manuscripts may have functioned as devotional objects in themselves.

The text

So far, the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* has not generated a great deal of research, and scholars have only mentioned it in connection with other texts. Makita Tairyō listed it among the apocryphal scriptures (Jp. *gikyō*, Ch. *yijing* 疑經) composed in China, many of which were found among the Dunhuang manuscripts (Makita 1976, 38). A brief entry in the encyclopedia *Dunhuangxue dacidian* 敦煌學大辭典

introduced its content and noted that it did not occur in historical catalogues and canons (Ji et al. 1998, 704). Françoise Wang-Toutain discussed it in the context of the cult of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, pointing out that it had been inspired by the eleventh section of the *Guanding jing* 灌頂經 (*Consecration Sūtra*) and that it was similar in function to the *Foshuo Dizang pusa jing* 佛說地藏菩薩經 (*Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha*), with which it was often copied in combination (Wang 1998, 195). Henrik Sørensen briefly stated that in terms of its practical application, it was meant to resolve domestic problems (Sørensen 2011, 56–57).

The text itself is relatively short, less than 200 characters including the head and end titles. In the scroll format, this comes to merely 13 lines, an amount of text which would have been relatively easy to memorize. Although extant copies exhibit little variation, the transcription below is based on a specific manuscript, namely, Pelliot chinois 2169, which is a beautifully executed scroll featuring a regularized layout and binding. The text reads as follows:

唵啊啊暗噀

如是聞。一時佛在毗耶離城，音樂樹下，與八千比丘眾俱。

時有一菩薩名曰：普光菩薩摩訶薩，眾所知識，說往昔因緣。未來世中，末法眾生，多造罪苦。結怨讎已，世世皆須相遇。若有善男子善女人，聞是陀羅尼，七日七夜，潔淨齋戒，日日清朝，念此普光菩薩摩訶薩名號，及念此陀羅尼一百八遍，七日滿足，盡得消滅，怨家不相遇會。

佛說是語時，四眾人民，悉皆歡喜，受教奉行。

唵阿惡伊惡薩婆訶

(Translation)

Om, ʔa-ʔa-ʔim-ʔak

Thus have I heard. Once, the Buddha stayed underneath the music-tree in the city of Vaiśālī, along with a group of eight thousand monks.

At this time, a bodhisattva called Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva Universal Illumination, well known to everyone, explicated the causes and conditions stemming from past lives. [The Buddha said:] “In the future, sentient beings of the Latter Dharma period will often produce suffering born of sin. Once they have formed bonds of resentment and hatred [with other people], they will have to encounter those [people] in a succession of lives. If there are good sons and good daughters who, upon hearing this *dhāraṇī*, undertake the

purification observance for seven days and seven nights, chant the name of this Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva Universal Illumination and recite this *dhāraṇī* 108 times, then at the end of the seventh day they will be able to fully extinguish [all resentment] and will not encounter their grudge-holders any longer.”

When the Buddha spoke these words, members of the four groups of monastic community all rejoiced. They received the teaching and put it into practice.

Om, *ṇa-ṇak-ṇi-ṇak*, svāhā.

The pronunciation of the undeciphered part of the spells at the beginning and end of the text (marked in *italics*) is given according to Pulleyblank's (1991) Early Middle Chinese reconstruction. Similar to the core text of the scripture, the opening and closing spells are remarkably consistent in the available manuscripts. Even the presence of the *kou* 口 (mouth) radical in all five characters of the opening formula and its absence from all but one character in the closing formula are consistent. In general, the language of the text seems awkward and there are several parts where it would be possible to improve the grammar simply by substituting one character for another. The stability of the scripture across the manuscript witnesses, however, shows that it was popular precisely in its imperfect form.

According to the text, the Buddha's speech on the *dhāraṇī* is delivered in response to the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva Universal Illumination's (Puguang puta-mohesa 普光菩薩摩訶薩) explication of the causes and conditions (*yinyuan* 因緣) of past lives. There is a glitch in the narrative at the point where the Buddha begins his speech, as the text does not expressly state that he is the one talking, making it seem as if these were the words of the bodhisattva. But towards the end, it becomes clear that it was in fact the Buddha who spoke these words. The *dhāraṇī* specifies that to ensure its efficacy, one needs to undertake ritual purification for a period of seven full days. The whole procedure, therefore, takes several days and only at the end of it will the grudges generated by past lives be extinguished.

The visual arrangement of the scripture in the scroll is also regularized, emphasizing the text's internal structure. The beginning and end are marked by the head and end titles, as is normally the case in pre-modern manuscripts. Moving inwards from the two ends, the next layer is represented by two spells on both sides (i.e., beginning and the end). The prose part of the scripture

itself contains yet another layer, first describing the setting in which the Buddha delivered his speech and then what its effect was. Enveloped by these symmetrical outer layers is the core part of the scripture, in which the Boddhisatva-Mahāsattva Universal Illumination explains the causes and conditions stemming from past lives, prompting the Buddha to talk about the way of breaking the bonds of resentment accumulated over previous lifetimes. We could demonstrate this layered structure visually in the following way:

- Title (head)
 - spell
 - scene before speech
 - Bodhisattva's explication
 - Buddha's speech
 - scene after speech
 - spell
- Title (end)

In fact, the manuscript accentuates the text's structure by using a variety of visual devices, such as line breaks, indentation, or empty lines. When reading, or reciting, the reader effectively first moves inwards towards the core of the text and then outwards, as if ascending and descending a set of stairs to reach the main point.

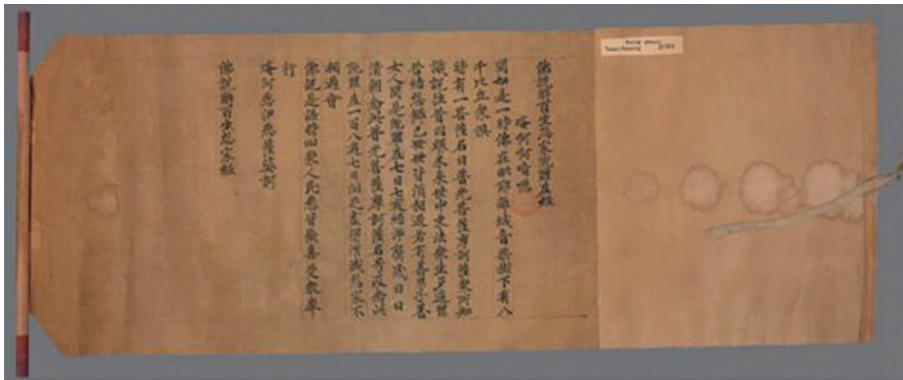
Manuscripts from Dunhuang

There are about two dozen copies of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* among the Dunhuang manuscripts, which is a testimony to its one-time popularity in the region.¹ From the point of view of their basic physical typology, the relevant manuscripts are either scrolls or codices. The scrolls can be further divided into single-text and multiple-text manuscripts. As we will see below, there are important differences between these groups that have implications for the context in which the manuscripts were used. Below, we examine each of these two groups separately.

Single-text Scrolls

At least twenty manuscripts with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* are scrolls or fragments of scrolls. In Dunhuang, as in most of East Asia before the eleventh century, the scroll was the most common book form for writing Buddhist texts. In fact, in the multilingual environment of the Silk Road, we see this form adopted for manuscripts in other languages, most notably Tibetan.² It is, therefore, no surprise that most of the copies of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* are in the scroll form. Based on their content and appearance, the scrolls with the scripture are of two distinct types. The first type is single-text manuscripts with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* on its own, usually in the form of a properly bound scroll featuring a wooden roller and a silk ribbon. The other type is multiple-text manuscripts with a series of shorter scriptures copied in succession.

A representative example of the single-text type is Pelliot chinois 2169 (25.7 × 68.1 cm), used as the basis of the transcription and translation above. The entire length of the manuscript is 68.1 cm, but this includes a 22.5 cm sheet cover added to the main sheet holding the scripture (Figure 1). The main sheet with the text is 45.6 cm long and includes 2 blank lines at the beginning and another 9 lines at the end. The scripture itself takes up about a third of the length of the scroll. Normally, a manuscript with a text of this length would form a sheet, rather than a scroll, and so it is clear that the scroll form was of significance. Accordingly, the corners at the end of the scroll were beveled



[Figure 1] Manuscript Pelliot chinois 2169, an example of a single-text scroll. (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

and a wooden roller was attached, as was common for proper scrolls with longer texts. Another sheet of paper, half the size of the main one, was added at the beginning to serve as a protective cover for the rolled-up manuscript. An approximately 1 cm wide strip of paper was folded back to form a sheath with a thin bamboo slat to protect the edge of the scroll and provide physical support for it. Secured to the slat is a yellow silk ribbon, to be tied around the rolled-up scroll.

On the verso, the title of the scripture is written over the sheath with the bamboo slat. This is an abbreviated title, matching the end title on the recto, and is displayed on the top (i.e., outside) of the rolled-up scroll, making it possible to see the content without unrolling it. Above the title we find two drawn hooks commonly used in scrolls from Dunhuang to mark such titles on the outside.³ The Stein collection contains a detached piece of the cover sheet (Or.8210/S.6195), with the bamboo slat and the ribbon still present, but not the main sheet with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* itself.

These details are consistent with how Buddhist scrolls were copied and bound in medieval China. What is unusual is that this type of careful artisanship was applied to creating a scroll with such a short text. It is clear from Pelliot chinois 2169, and most of the other single-text scrolls, that the individuals producing the scroll were aiming to create an exquisite object. The only aspect that does not feel fully professional is the calligraphy—it is adequate but somehow seems to be of lesser quality than what the amount of effort invested into the binding would justify. A possible explanation for this is that the text was written by the owner or user of the manuscript, rather than a professional copyist. Personal involvement in transcribing the text was likely an essential part of its efficacy.

Another curious detail is that despite the great care invested in producing an aesthetically pleasing object, none of the single-manuscript scrolls bear a colophon. If these were devotional manuscripts, it is likely that at least in some cases we would see colophons recording the date and the purpose of copying, as well as the name of the person who copied the text.

Although Pelliot chinois 2169 is an especially well-preserved copy, other short scrolls with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* are very similar in appearance, even if some of them are no longer intact. They share the same physical structure, consisting of two sheets of paper, one with the text and the other acting as the cover. They have a wooden roller at the end and a narrow bamboo slat with

a silk ribbon at the beginning. The outside title with the double hook mark appears at the leftmost end of the verso, so that it is visible when the scroll is rolled up. Some of these scrolls are of the same dimensions as Pelliot chinois 2169 (e.g., Or.8210/S.2900, Or.8210/S.4223, Or.8210/S.4271, Or.8210/S.5235), although there are also some that are a bit longer or shorter. It is likely that at least the manuscripts that are identical in size were transcribed and bound by the same individuals as part of the same project. Those that are slightly different in size, but otherwise still very similar, may have been produced by others but possibly still within the same context.

Manuscripts Or.8210/S.5235 and BD14171 feature an alternate parsing of the text, as they break the line in the middle of the compound word *yuhui* 遇會 (encounter, meet) at the end of the Buddha's speech. Thus, they move the character 會 to the beginning of the next line, which thus begins with the words "Just as the Buddha said these words" 會佛說是語時. By contrast, in other scrolls the new line starts with the word "Buddha" 佛 and the character 會 is at the end of the previous line.⁴ Although this is a minor detail that is of no consequence for the meaning of the text, the difference tells us that these two manuscripts have a more immediate connection with each other. Indeed, Or.8210/S.5235 and BD14171 are almost identical in appearance. As far as it is possible to determine from their published facsimile images, they were probably written in the same hand.⁵ Moreover, each line begins with the same character, which is not the case with other manuscripts. It is likely then, that these two scrolls were produced on the same occasion by the same individuals. This suggests that such scrolls may have been produced in series, possibly in larger numbers.

Multiple-text Scrolls

The majority of the manuscripts with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* are single-text scrolls. There are only four extant multiple-text scrolls: BD00693, BD08590, Or.8210/S.5677 and Dx-3000. Of these, BD00693 and Or.8210/S.5677 are long and contain several texts, whereas the other two are incomplete, containing, in addition to the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*, only one other text.

BD00693 is a relatively long scroll (27.9 × 184.2 cm), starting with the *Foshuo xuming jing* 佛說續命經 (*Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Prolonging Life*), followed by

the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* and six other texts. Typologically, this manuscript forms part of a group of multiple-text scrolls associated with the seven times seven ritual commemorating the dead.⁶ In most cases, there is considerable overlap between the choice of texts, most of which were, in one way or another, related to eradicating negative karmic influences. Some of the scrolls, including Pelliot chinois 2374 and Pelliot chinois 2055, have colophons directly referencing the rituals. Clearly, the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*, with its concern for severing ties of resentment from previous lifetimes, fits this context well. The scripture's assertion that the purification observance must last a full seven days to be efficacious is yet another link to the seven times seven ritual.

Although the handwriting is confident and skilled, BD00693 is not particularly well produced as a manuscript. Its edges are uneven and the texts themselves contain a series of crude corrections and mistakes. In the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*, for example, the verb *zhishi* 知識 (know) is miswritten as *zhushi* 諸識 and the character *e* 惡 in the closing spell as 西. Such mistakes, and especially the smudged corrections, suggest a different degree of competence on the part of lay believers mourning their family members.

An example of one of the incomplete multiple-text scrolls with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* is Dx-3000. This manuscript has a messy layout and markedly inept handwriting. It contains the *Foshuo dizang pusa jing* and the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*, neither of which is complete. This scroll is about half the height of proper scrolls and has only 8–9 characters per line.⁷ The two texts are written in the same unskilled hand, as is the colophon written on the side with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*. The colophon is grammatically awkward, in that it places the object before the verb, suggesting that it may have been written in a different language (but still using Chinese characters) or by someone who was not entirely competent in Chinese. Bearing in mind its subject-object-verb (SOV) word order, we can translate it as follows:

戊子年三月廿一日張法律諸雜經一本為會

On the twenty-first day of the third month of the *wuzi* year (988), *falü*
Zhang assembled one set of miscellaneous scriptures.

Since the colophon mentions the bringing together of miscellaneous scriptures, it is obvious that it used to contain more texts but was subsequently damaged. The title *falü* 法律 could function as a given name but could also refer to a

monastic administrative title. Considering that it occurs in the Dunhuang manuscripts in combination with the surname Zhang (i.e., Zhang *falü* 張法律) no less than 70 times, it is much more likely that it was a title, perhaps an informal one.⁸

The S-O-V word order is unusual for texts written with Chinese characters, although there are some examples in colophons from Dunhuang. For instance, a colophon written by the donor Wang Shangqing 王上卿 next to a votive painting of Vaiśravaṇa in Pelliot chinois 4518 (27), also uses the S-O-V word order. Since the painting includes a Khotanese inscription mentioning the same name, the unorthodox word order may reflect Khotanese influence.⁹ Even though both Wang and Zhang are Chinese surnames, they are evidently not reliable indicators of linguistic background or language proficiency, especially in the multilingual environment of tenth-century Dunhuang. In connection with the word order in our colophon, it is curious to see that Zhang had accidentally reversed the two characters in the phrase “one set” 一本 but then corrected the mistake with a reversal mark, suggesting that he did care about word order.

Another instance of a Zhang *falü* writing a colophon in the *wuzi* year appears in manuscript Pelliot chinois 3826. This scroll does not contain the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* but is the same type of narrow strip-like scroll (15 × 364 cm) as 卅x-3000, only complete. The recto contains part of the *He pusa jie wen* 和菩薩戒文 and the *Lichan wen* 禮懺文 written in the same hand.¹⁰ On the verso, which is mostly blank but contains some miscellaneous jottings, are three colophons, quite at a distance from each other. The first is only a date from the beginning of a colophon (or a contract), but the other two seem to be closely related. The three colophons read as follows:

庚寅年十月十八日

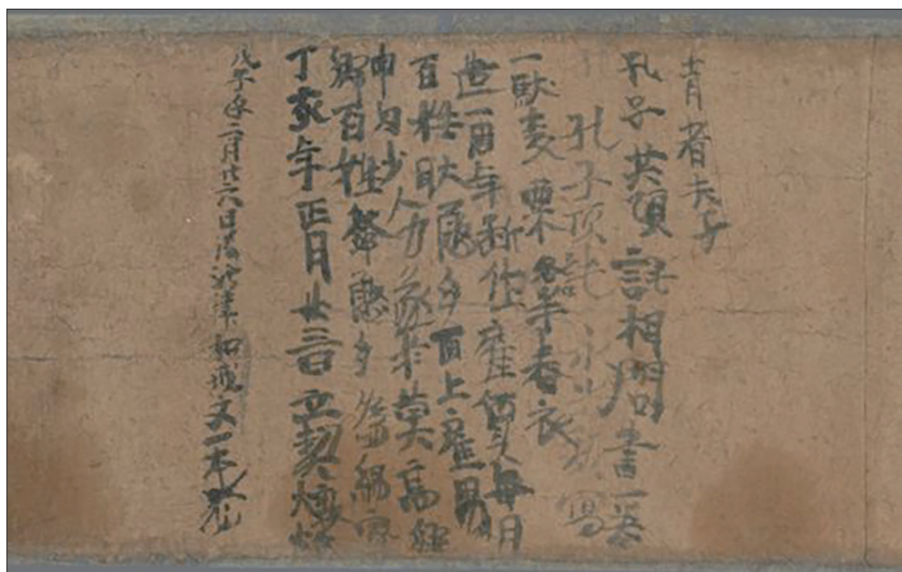
The eighteenth day of the tenth month of the *gengyin* year (990) [...]

戊子年閏五月六日□法律自手寫和戒文壹本□

On the sixth day of the intercalary fifth month of the *wuzi* year (988), *falü* [...] copied, in his own hand, a copy of the *Hejie wen* [...]

戊子年二月廿六日張法律和戒文一本□

On the twenty-sixth day of the second month of the *wuzi* year (988), *falü* Zhang [wrote?] a copy of the *Hejie wen*.



[Figure 2] Verso of Pelliot chinois 3826 with *falü* Zhang's colophon, a contract and a fragment of the *Kongzi Xiang Tuo xiangwen shu*. (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

The only *wuzi* year with an intercalary fifth month within our timeframe was 988, and this disambiguates the cyclical date in the second colophon.¹¹ This also means that the *wuzi* year of the third colophon similarly signifies 988, whereas the *gengyin* year in the first one, 990. In the second colophon, the surname is illegible, although it is discernibly not Zhang.¹² Clearly, the two colophons are related, yet the dates and the surnames are different. The second colophon is written by a *falü* Zhang (*Zhang falü* 張法律) and seems to be missing the verb, which may be the illegible character at the very end. Therefore, this is likely yet another colophon with a S-O-V word order.¹³

The first and second colophons are completely on their own with no other texts in their vicinity, but the third one appears immediately to the left of a contract for hire of labor and the first few characters of the primer *Kongzi Xiang Tuo xiangwen shu* 孔子項託相問書 (Figure 2).¹⁴ Both of these texts are written from left to right, in the same inept hand as the colophon. In fact, this hand seems to be the same one as in Δ x-3000 with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*. Consequently, *falü* Zhang in Pelliot chinois 3826 and the one in Δ x-3000 were probably the same person. Accordingly, the *wuzi* year in Δ x-3000 also

designates 988 and the colophon was written less than a month after the colophon in Pelliot chinois 3826.

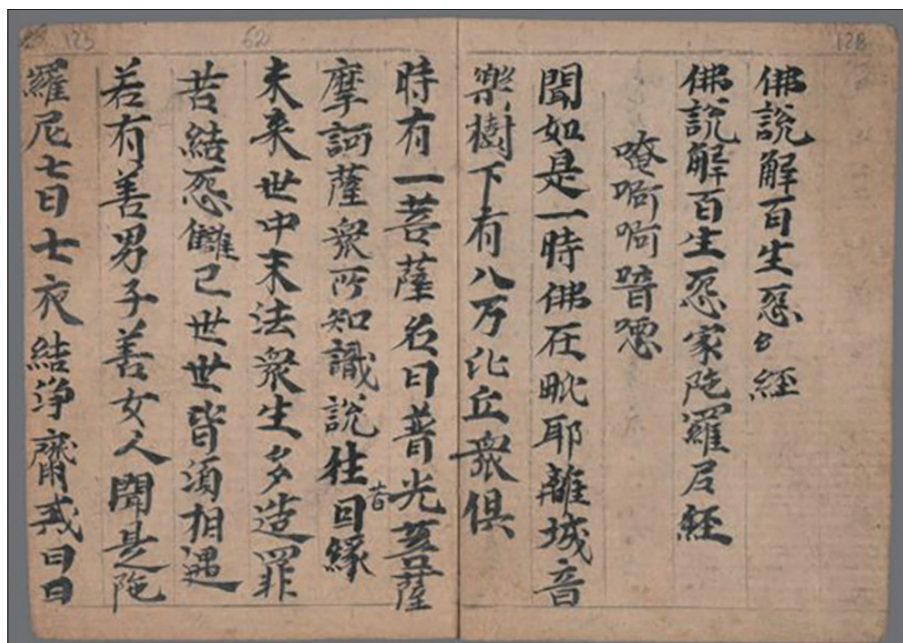
Codices

Three copies of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* are in the codex form: Pelliot chinois 3824, Pelliot chinois 3932 and Or.8210/S.5531. All three manuscripts are sewn codices, which consist of stacked bifolia sewn together with a thread into notebook-type quires, which are also sewn to each other. The three codices are all small multiple-text manuscripts with a series of shorter texts, of which the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* is only one.¹⁵ Based on dated copies from Dunhuang, we know that the codex as a book form was primarily in use during the tenth century, which also provides a rough timeframe for these three manuscripts.

Pelliot chinois 3824 (14.7 × 10.4 cm) consists of 6 quires, amounting to a total of 86 folia. Each page has 6 lines of text, strictly following the ruling lines drawn in lighter color. The manuscript contains a series of texts, followed by 17 blank pages, possibly to add additional texts at a later occasion. The inside cover has a colophon by the monk Yongchang 永長 and dates to the year *xinwei* 辛未 (911/971). The colophon also mentions a “Song version” 宋本 of a scripture, which means that it was written after the beginning of the Song dynasty (960) but before the closing of the Dunhuang library cave (ca. 1006), that is, in 971 (Zhang 2018, 113).

The codex contains a total of nine texts. It begins with the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (*Sūtra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma*), followed by the *Jingang bore boluomi jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (*Sūtra of the Diamond Perfection of Wisdom*) in 32 sections, and then the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*. The first line with the title of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* is miswritten and left unfinished. The correct title appears as a new line (Figure 3). The text is identical to that translated above, except that the number of monks is accidentally written as “eighty thousand” 八万 instead of “eight thousand” 八千. Moreover, a careless omission of the character *xi* 昔 (former) was corrected by inserting the character on the side in small script.

The handwriting is confident but not particularly practiced or careful, demonstrating that the aesthetic appearance of the text was not a major



[Figure 3] The beginning of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* in manuscript Pelliot chinois 3824. (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

concern. The nine texts in the manuscript are written in several hands, sometimes switching half-way through a text.¹⁶ It is clear, therefore, that the manuscript was written by several individuals. We might expect that one of the scribes was Yongchang himself, yet his personal hand—which has a characteristically rough appearance—does not seem to match any of the hands evidenced on the manuscript. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that he did not copy any of the texts, as he could have used a less personal type of handwriting when transcribing the scriptures.

Pelliot chinois 3932 is yet another small codex (12 × 7.4 cm) with five scriptures and two mantras.¹⁷ The manuscript has a maroon damask cover and opens with a picture of Bodhisattva Guanyin holding a willow branch and a donor couple kneeling in front of him. This implies a devotional setting for the production and use of the manuscript. Once again, the first text is the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Miaofa lianhua jing*, followed by the *Heart Sūtra*, *Foshuo xuming jing*, *Foshuo Dizang pusa jing* and then the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*.

At the end, there are two short mantras, the *Cishi zhenyan* 慈氏真言 (*Mantra of Maitreya*) and the *Jing kouye zhenyan* 淨口業真言 (*Mantra for the Purification of Karma Caused by Speaking*). The texts are written in three different hands, the most competent of which wrote over eighty percent of the entire manuscript. The second, slightly less practiced, hand wrote the *Foshuo Dizang pusa jing* and the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*.¹⁸ Finally, the third, decidedly unskilled, hand wrote the two brief mantras. The involvement of three different hands, especially the most incompetent one on the final pages of the codex, suggests that some of the texts were copied by the donors and that such multiple-text codices were by design a collective undertaking.

The third Dunhuang codex with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* is Or.8210/S.5531 (12.5 × 7.3 cm), which is of the same size as the previous one. Physically, it consists of four quires, each with 8 bifolia, amounting to a total of 32 bifolia (i.e., 64 folia or 128 pages). The inside back cover has the date “the twentieth day of the twelfth month of the *gengchen* year” 庚辰年十二月廿日 (921/981). A full quire (i.e., 32 pages) is missing from the beginning of the codex, probably because the thread tore, and the first quire became detached. Fortunately, a single bifolia of this detached quire is preserved in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg, under pressmark Дх-962. It contains the blank cover of the original codex and the portion of the text from the *Lotus Sūtra* connecting seamlessly to the beginning of Or.8210/S.5531.

Or.8210/S.5531 is also a multiple-text manuscript with a series of short scriptures.¹⁹ It includes ten texts, beginning with the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Miaofa lianhua jing*, directly followed by the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*. Then come the *Foshuo Dizang pusa jing* and another seven texts. Altogether, the texts are written in five distinct hands, exhibiting varying degrees of writing skill. As before, the presence of several hands points to a collective ritual setting, during which several individuals, possibly members of the same extended family, engaged in copying texts into the same booklet. Rather than each of them filling their own manuscript with one or more of these texts, it was evidently important to them to take part in the production of the same manuscript. That several multiple-text codices have leftover blank pages implies that the copying did not happen on a single occasion but that texts continued to be added over the period of several months or years.

Beyond Dunhuang

Apart from the Dunhuang cave library, copies of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* have also been discovered at other sites and locations. Copies from the same period (i.e., the tenth century), for example, have been preserved among the more than 300 manuscripts and printed books found in 2004 inside the tower of the Shende monastery during a renovation project. The catalogue records 23 items with titles similar to the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*, revealing that it was among the most popular texts in the collection (Huang and Wang 2012). In fact, of the two items with dated colophons, a manuscript from the second year of the Yongxi 雍熙 reign of the Northern Song Dynasty (985) is a copy of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* (Y0032).²⁰ Significantly, some of the manuscripts from the Shende monastery are in the same single-text scroll form as those from Dunhuang.

Three copies of the text are known in Tangut translation. One of these was excavated at Khara-khoto and is currently part of the Kozlov collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg. The other two come from the Haimudong site near Wuwei 武威 and are held in the Wuwei City Museum. These latter two are disjointed parts of the same concertina book, in which the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* was followed by three other *dhāraṇī* texts, all aiming to dissipate negative karmic influences (Duan 2010; Duan 2011, 130–134; Hu 2012). Scholars have compared the Tangut text with the *Foshuo jie baisheng yuanjie tuoluoni jing* 佛說解百生冤結陀羅尼經 of the Jiaxing Canon 嘉興藏, which essentially consists of the same core text with a longer (i.e., 52 characters) incantation at the end.²¹ The title of the Tangut translation matches that of the Jiaxing Canon version, which feature the phrase *yuan jie* 冤結 (hatred tied) instead of *yuanjia* 怨家 (grudge-holder, enemy) seen in the title of the Dunhuang version.²² Among the smaller differences between the versions in the Jiaxing Canon and the Dunhuang manuscripts is that, describing the four groups of monastic community rejoicing at the Buddha's words, the former also includes the "eight groups of supernatural beings" 天龍八部, a detail that is also present in the Tangut version. Nevertheless, the Tangut version does not have the long incantation at the end, and in this respect is closer to the Dunhuang version, which ends with an eight-character spell.²³

The scripture was also popular in the Yunnan region, on the territory of the old Dali 大理 kingdom. For example, the epitaph of Li Ying 李應 from 1476 has the title *Foshuo jie baisheng yuanjie tuoluoni jing* written horizontally across

the top of the stone, with the scripture itself taking up much of the available space.²⁴ This title is the same as in Dunhuang and Shendesi (i.e., with the phrase *yuanjia* 怨家) but different from that of the Jiaxing Canon version (i.e., with the phrase *yuan jie* 冤結). Although the surface of the stone is partly effaced and its lower part is completely damaged, the legible portion of the text shows only minor differences with copies known from elsewhere.²⁵ As one of the scriptures carved on tomb inscriptions in this region (along with the *Heart sūtra* and the *Dizang pusa jing*), it evidently played a role in the commemoration of the dead, having a similar function to some of the manuscripts from Dunhuang.²⁶

A copy of the text is included in a Ming-dynasty printed edition sponsored by Imperial Noble Consort Zheng 鄭貴妃 (1564–1630) sometime during the latter part of the Wanli 萬曆 period (1572–1620). This is a concertina volume entitled *Foshuo Guanshiyin pusa jiuku jing* 佛說觀世音菩薩救苦經 (*Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Savior from Hardship*), although it includes two more scriptures, one of which is the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* (Zhou 1987, 9–10). The title of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* matches that in the Jiaxing Canon, as it uses the phrase *yuan jie* 冤結 instead of *yuanjia* 怨家. The date of the print is also close to the time of the Jiaxing Canon, attesting to the popularity of the scripture during the late Ming period.

At least from the Ming period onward, printed copies of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*, as well as several other scriptures, were commonly used as paper horses burnt at the altar to aid the deceased (Wang 2004, 89). The leaves used for funeral offering usually included an image of a deity, with the text added on the side in small script. Despite the presumably large print runs, these leaves were meant to be burnt and thus relatively few actual copies survive. Once again, Yunnan is one of the regions where the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* is documented to have been commonly used for this purpose (Qu and Wang 2011, 89–90). In general, it is evident that the text was in use over the course of several centuries across a wide geographic area.

Conclusions

This paper examined extant copies of the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* from Dunhuang. In terms of their physical form, the approximately two dozen manuscripts are either scrolls or codices. The scrolls themselves are also of two distinct types:

single-text and multiple-text scrolls. The single-text scrolls were generally created with care and attention to detail, clearly aiming to produce a beautiful object. Multiple-text scrolls are visually less appealing and feature a series of texts connected with mourning rituals, often including the *Foshuo Dizang pusa jing*. The presence of different hands evidences the participation of several individuals, who may have been members of the same extended family. The three codices with the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* are also multiple-text manuscripts in which the texts are in several hands. Once again, based on the nature of the texts included in the booklets, these manuscripts may have been related to the commemoration of the dead. The Ming-dynasty examples of the text from Yunnan similarly point to its use in a funerary context.

Four of the manuscripts bore cyclical dates. Of these, we could determine that the *wuzi* year in 卅x-3000 referred to 988; the *xinwei* year in Pelliot chinois 3824, to 971; and the end of the *gengchen* year in Or.8210/S.5531, to the year 921 or 981. In addition, a manuscript of the text from the Shende monastery in Shaanxi had a colophon that dated to 985. In light of these dates, it seems that the *Dhāraṇī Scripture* was most popular in the late tenth century (including Or.8210/S.5531, in which the *gengchen* year should probably be identified as 981). Yet it is important to keep in mind that most extant copies do not carry a date and are in an entirely different form (i.e., single-text scrolls), which may also reflect temporal trends.

Notes

- * This article is the outcome of the research project with Lanzhou University (國家社會科學基金重大項目“絲綢之路中外藝術交流圖志”16ZDA173). I am grateful to Costantino Moretti for his help with some of the sources used in this paper.
- 1 The manuscripts are: Or.8210/S.2900, Or.8210/S.4223, Or.8210/S.4271, Or.8210/S.4431, Or.8210/S.5235, Or.8210/S.5531, Or.8210/S.5677, Or.8210/S.6195, Pelliot chinois 2169, Pelliot chinois 3824, Pelliot chinois 3932, 卌x-926, 卌x-2675, 卌x-3000, BD00693, BD08590, BD14171, BD13668, BD14840, Beida-137, CXZ25, Shangtu-53, Dunbo-39, and Shoubo-32.577.
 - 2 Helman-Wazny (2014, 59–60) notes that the scroll form was rare in Tibet but was used in Dunhuang for writing Tibetan texts because of Chinese influences.
 - 3 This mark is also common in pre-modern scrolls from Japan, where it is known by the name of *ijiten* 以字点, because it resembles the handwritten form of the character 以. On the possible origin of this mark, see Huang and Wang (2020).
 - 4 Except in Dunbo 39 (single-text) and 卌x-3000 (multiple-text), which have no line break here at all.
 - 5 For the facsimile of Or.8210/S.5235, see the *Dunhuang Baozang* 敦煌寶藏 (Huang 1986, v. 41, 93) and for BD14171, the *Zhongguo guojia tushuguan cang Dunhuang yishu* 中國國家圖書館藏敦煌遺書 (Ren et al. 2009, 184–185).
 - 6 For an analysis of such multiple-text scrolls, including BD00693, see Galambos (2020, 79–83).
 - 7 Unfortunately, I do not have access to precise measurements, but the scroll is very similar to manuscript Or.8210/S.5677 (260×15 cm), one of the three other multiple-text scroll containing the *Dhāraṇī Scripture*. It is reasonable to assume that it must also be around 15 cm in height.
 - 8 For a list of occurrences of this combination, see Dohi (2015, 455–457).
 - 9 For a brief discussion of Wang Shangqing's inscription and its possible influences, see Galambos (2020, 185–186). Of course, the S-O-V word order is also characteristic of other languages used in the region during this period, including Tibetan, Old Uighur, and Sogdian.
 - 10 On the content of this scroll, see Guarde-Paz (2014, 173–174).
 - 11 Ikeda (1990, 471) dates this manuscript to 928 but Zhang (2007, 69) corrects this by showing that the intercalary fifth month could only refer to 988.
 - 12 Ikeda (1990, 471) reads the surname as “Zhang” probably because of the colophon at the end of the verso. Guarde-Paz (2014, 173) reads it as *xiao* 小, translating the name as “Venerable Xiao.” The character in question is similar to *xiao* 小 but if this was indeed the case, then it would probably represent the word “little.”
 - 13 By contrast, the second colophon uses the verb “copied” before the object.
 - 14 Naturally, the contract seen here is only a copy of the actual document used as a writing

- exercise. The fragment of the primer similarly connects this cluster of texts with learning.
- 15 On multiple-text codices, see Galambos (2020, 37–79).
 - 16 On which portion of the manuscript was composed by which hand, see the catalogue entry in Soymié et al. (1991, 310–313).
 - 17 For a detailed analysis of the content and physical structure of this codex, see Galambos (2020, 56–61).
 - 18 This hand accidentally omitted the syllable *luo* 羅 from the word *tuoluoni* 陀羅尼 (*dhāraṇī*) in the head title and the syllable *he* 訶 from the word *mohesa* 摩訶薩 (*mahāsattva*). Although these two omissions seem to have escaped his attention, the copyist did correct the accidentally reversed characters 語 and 時 by adding a reversal mark.
 - 19 On this codex, see Galambos (2020, 45–56).
 - 20 The other date in the collection is the ninth year of the Kaibao 開寶 reign (976), located on a printed copy of the *Beidou qixing hu mofa* 北斗七星護摩法.
 - 21 The carving of the Jiaying Canon began in 1589 but most of it was not finished until 1713, with parts being added even after that date. See Zhang (2020).
 - 22 The title of the Shende monastery copies in this respect matches the Dunhuang version.
 - 23 Although the Tangut version does not have these eight syllables either.
 - 24 For a rubbing of the inscription, see Zhang (1993, v. 2, 77); for a transcription of the text, see Zhang (1993, v. 10, 61).
 - 25 For example, the inscription omits the word “city” 城 from the name of the city of Vaiśālī (Piyeli 毘耶離 vs. Piyelicheng 毗耶離城). Some of the differences, however, are only in the transcription, as the inscription itself is in accord with the Dunhuang version (e.g., “suffering born of sin” 罪苦 is accidentally transcribed as “bad karma” 罪業, and the word “morning” 清朝 as “clear, sunny” 清朗).
 - 26 See, for example, the *Dizang pusa jing* on a tomb inscription from the same region (Zhang 1993, v. 10, 60–61).

References

- Dohi Yoshikazu 土肥義和 2015 *Hasseiki makki – jūisseiki shoki Tonkō shizoku jinmei shūsei: Shizoku jinmeihen, Jinmeihen* 八世紀末期~十一世紀初期燉煌氏族人名集成：氏族人名篇，人名篇 [Collection of Dunhuang clan and personal names from the end of the eighth century to the beginning of the eleventh century: Clan names volume, Personal names volume]. Tokyo: Kyūko shoin.
- Duan Yuquan 段玉泉 2010 “Gancang Xixiawen *Foshuo jie baisheng yuanjie tuoluoni jing* kaoshi” 甘肅西夏文《佛說解百生冤結陀羅尼經》考釋 [A philological study and explication of the Tangut version of the *Foshuo jie baisheng yuanjie tuoluoni jing* kept in Gansu]. *Xixia yanjiu* 西夏研究 4: 40–42.
- 2011 “Wuwei Haimudong yizhi chutu de liang jian Xixia wenxian kaoshi” 武威亥母洞遺址出土的兩件西夏文獻考釋 [A philological study and explication of two Tangut documents unearthed from the Haimudong site in Wuwei]. *Xixia xue* 西夏學 8: 127–134.
- Galambos, Imre 2020 *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture: End of the First Millennium*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Guarde-Paz, César 2014 “Identification of Dunhuang and Turfan Manuscripts from the Pelliot, Stein and BBAW Collections.” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* 67(2): 163–185.
- Helman-Wazny, Agnieszka 2014 *The Archaeology of Tibetan Books*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Hu Jinshan 胡進杉 2012 “Wuwei shi bowuguan cang Xixiawen *Foshuo baishou yuan jie tuoluoni jing* ji qi canye kaoshu” 武威市博物館藏西夏文《佛說百壽怨結解陀羅尼經》及其殘頁考述 [The Tangut version of the *Foshuo baishou yuanjiexie tuoluoni jing* preserved in the Wuwei City Museum and textual research on its fragmented pages]. *Ningxia shehui kexue* 寧夏社會科學 1: 69–80.
- Huang Wei 黃威 and Tiantian Wang 王甜甜 2020 “Shuminghao qiyuan kao” 書名號起源考 [Research on the origins of book title marks]. *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 古籍整理研究學刊 3: 85–88.

- Huang Yongwu *Dunhuang baozang* 敦煌寶藏 [The Treasure of Dunhuang]. Taipei:
黃永武 Xinwenfeng.
1986
- Huang Zheng “Shanxi Shendesi ta chutu wenxian bianhao jianmu” 陝西神德寺塔
黃征 出土文獻編號簡目 [Brief numbered catalog of manuscripts unearthed
and Xuemei Wang from the pagoda at Shende Monastery in Shaanxi]. *Dunhuang*
王雪梅 *yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1: 46–51.
2012
- Ikeda On *Chūgoku kodai shabon shikigo shūroku* 中國古代寫本識語集錄 [Compilation
池田溫 of colophons in ancient Chinese manuscripts]. Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku
1990 bunka kenkyūjo.
- Ji Xianlin *Dunhuangxue dacidian* 敦煌學大辭典 [Encyclopedia of Dunhuang
季羨林 studies]. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe.
et al.
1998
- Makita Tairyō *Gikyō kenkyū* 疑經研究 [Research on apocryphal sūtras]. Kyoto:
牧田諦亮 Rinsen shoten.
1976
- Pulleyblank, Edwin G. *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation of Early Middle Chinese, Late*
1991. *Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Qu Yanling *Yunnan zhibima de yishu renleixue jiedu* 雲南紙馬的藝術人類學解讀 [An
曲艷玲 art historical and anthropological interpretation of paper dolls for
and Wei Wang ritual use in Yunnan]. Kunming: Yunnan daxue chubanshe.
王偉
2011
- Ren Jiyu *Zhongguo guojia tushuguan cang Dunhuang yishu* 中國國家圖書館藏
任繼愈 敦煌遺書, v. 121 [Dunhuang manuscripts in the National Library of
et al. China]. Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe.
2009
- Sørensen, Henrik H. “Textual Material Relating to Esoteric Buddhism in China Outside
2011. the *Taishō*, Vols. 18–21.” In *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East*
Asia, ed. Charles D. Orzech, 37–67. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

- Soymié, Michel et al. 1991. *Catalogue des manuscrits chinois de Touen-Houang: Fonds Pelliot chinois de la Bibliothèque nationale, IV: Nos 3501–4000* [Catalog of Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts: The Pelliot chinois collection of the National Library, IV: Nos. 3501–4000]. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.
- Wang, Françoise 1998. *Le bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha en Chine du Ve au XIIIe siècle* [The Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha in China from the fifth to thirteenth centuries]. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.
- Wang Shucun 王樹村 2004. *Zhongguo minjian meishu shi* 中國民間美術史 [History of popular art in China]. Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu chubanshe.
- Zhang, Dewei 2020. “Beyond Seeking for Sacredness: Shedding New Light on the Carving of the Jiaxing Canon on Mount Wutai.” In *The Transnational Cult of Mount Wutai: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Susan Andrews, Jinhua Chen and Guang Kuan, 98–123. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Zhang Shufang 張樹芳 1993. *Dali congshu: Jinshi pian* 大理叢書. 金石篇 [Dali collection: Epigraphy volume]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe.
- Zhang Xiaogang 張小剛 2018. “Dunhuang Molizhitian jingxiang” 敦煌摩利支天經像 [Scripture and images of god Marici at Dunhuang]. *Foxue yanjiu* 佛學研究 1: 110–128.
- Zhang Xiuqing 張秀清 2007. “Dunhuang wenxian duandai yanjiu li” 敦煌文獻斷代研究例 [Examples of research on the dating of Dunhuang manuscripts]. *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 古籍整理研究學刊 5: 64–70.
- Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良 1987. “Mingdai huangdi guifei, gongzhu yinshi de jiben fojing” 明代皇帝貴妃、公主印施的幾本佛經 [Several Buddhist scriptures printed by imperial concubines and princesses of the Ming dynasty]. *Wenwu* 文物 8: 8–11.