



# IDP NEWS

IDP — TO PROMOTE THE STUDY AND PRESERVATION OF THE  
DUNHUANG LEGACY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

No. 4 January 1996 ISSN 1354-5914

## Dunhuang at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris

Monique Cohen

Paul Pelliot was only twenty-seven when he was chosen to lead a three-man expedition to Chinese Central Asia. He arrived at Dunhuang in March 1908 and, as a sinologist, was able to make a careful selection of the many manuscripts in Cave 17 — he claimed to have surveyed up to one thousand a day. When the manuscripts arrived in Paris, they were classified into several series, generally according to the language of their texts. *Fonds Pelliot tibétain* is the largest collection with 4,174 items (950 not yet catalogued). *Fonds Pelliot chinois* is the second largest collection comprising about 3,900 documents. There are about 3,000 scrolls (among them a few illuminated manuscripts), booklets, concertinas, two hundred leaves of Buddhist pictures (paintings, woodblock prints or stencils), and seven hundred fragments. Very much smaller are the *Pelliot sogdien*, *Pelliot ouïgour* and *Pelliot sanscrit T.H.* collections comprising fewer than one hundred documents altogether, in the form of scrolls, fragments, manuscripts or woodblock prints.

Beside this material, in the cave which he gave the number 181 (Cave 465), Pelliot also discovered several hundred fragments in Xixia (Tangut: mostly woodblock prints), Tibetan, Chinese, Sanskrit, and Uighur (both blockprints and manuscripts). These fragments are generally in poor condition.

Although there are some Sanskrit pieces from Cave 17, most of the 4,000 pieces of the Pelliot Sanskrit collection were found in the oasis of Kucha, mainly at Duldur-aqur, near Kumtura, while the wooden slips were excavated at Subashi, near Kucha. The documents of the *Fonds Pelliot koutchéen* are written on wood or paper, and comprise about 2,000 pieces, most smaller than a pôthi leaf. They come from different sites in the oasis of Kucha, such as Duldur-aqur and Saldirang.



Paul Pelliot in 1916

Photograph courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

While registering the manuscripts, Pelliot specified how to preserve some of them and his notes prove interesting. Describing a fifth to sixth century silk manuscript, for example, he wrote: "très fragile et très précieux. Voir si on doit le recoller sur soie mince de ton approprié. Mon avis serait de garder tel quel un des rouleaux, afin qu'on puisse toujours avoir une idée de l'aspect original, quitte à ne communiquer qu'avec des précautions spéciales ce type de mss..." This clearly shows that these then recently acquired collections involved new preservation

problems, and that Pelliot's main objective was not to alter the original appearance of the documents. This is the reason why glass has been used on a large scale to frame paintings or fragments of paper sheets.

Until the late 1940s, painted leaves, woodblock prints and most of the leaves in the Pelliot Sanskrit and Kuchean collections were framed between two sheets of glass. When the collection had to be moved out of Paris during the Second World War, many of the glass sheets were broken, and from the early 1950s to 1962 these were replaced by cellulose acetate sheets known by the trade name of Rhodoïd.

In 1990, it was decided to remove all the documents from the Rhodoïd (about 175 paintings and woodblock prints, and about 2,000 Sanskrit and Kuchean fragments, and pôthi leaves). The programme of removal began with the paintings and prints. They were unframed, their pH was tested, and they were put in an acid free paper wrapper. A form, specially designed in conjunction with the Preservation Service, detailing their condition and proposed treatment was completed for each document. Some restoration, such as paper repair or the removal of old repairs, was undertaken. The paintings and blockprints were mounted, in the same way as European prints and drawings, in acid-free cardboard and put in acid-free cardboard boxes according to their size.

Scrolls were first rolled round new pine batons where the original roller was missing (as was generally the case). A paper wrapper was tied with a cotton ribbon and special cardboard boxes with internal partitions were designed to house two, three, four or six scrolls. Booklets and individual leaves were wrapped in the same paper with the same cotton ribbons and kept in cardboard boxes. Since 1981, the



pine rollers have been removed from the scrolls, and the wrappers replaced by cotton lustre (pH of 4.90). The boxes have been retained, since their pH was found to be 6.70. The booklets have also been wrapped in cotton lustre; this re-wrapping was completed in 1993.

From 1951 to 1963, all the Chinese manuscripts were systematically checked and then given conservation treatment. Some repairs were very slight (holes or splits), but others were extensive. Where paper was severely damaged, it was repaired with Japanese paper, and then pasted with silk gauze, sometimes on both sides. The paste was thick and very often caused cracking. The manuscripts in Tibetan, which were conserved at a later date, were often written on coarse brown paper. Their condition was generally bad, and silk gauze was used on a large scale for their restoration but now only Japanese paper is used now.

After many years intense use (the microfilm of the entire collection, completed in 1981 has not entirely supplanted the use of the originals), the manuscripts are now in poor condition. The priority over the past few years has been to define the proper way to preserve the Sanskrit, Kuchean, Uighur and other fragments still under Rhodoïd and to undertake a new survey of the condition of the entire collection, record the data together with the existing data, so that a full conservation programme can be planned, funded and established.

*A full version of this article is published in the Conference Papers, details of which are given opposite. A paper by Astrid-Christiane Brandt describing the effect of Rhodoïd is also part of this collection.*

## Bibliography

### Catalogues

- Catalogues des manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang (Fonds Pelliot chinois)*  
 Vol. 1: 2001-2500, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris 1970  
 Vol. 2: 2501-3000 (forthcoming)  
 Vol. 3: 3001-3500, Fondation Singer-Polignac, Paris 1983.  
 Vol. 4: 3501-4000, Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris 1991.  
 Vol. 5: 4001- 6040 (2 vols.), 1995.

### Facsimiles

- Faguo guojia tushuguan zang dunhuang xiyu wenxian*, Shanghai guiji chubanshe, Shanghai  
 Vol. 2: Fonds Pelliot chinois 2032-2039 &  
 Vol. 3: Fonds Pelliot chinois 2040-2058, 1994.

### Other Works

- Jacques Gernet, *Les aspects économiques du bouddhisme dans la société chinoise du V<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Ecole française d'Extrême Orient, Siagon 1956. Translated as: *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, Franciscus Verellen (trans.), Columbia University Press, New York 1995.

# An Oasis in Europe Dunhuang Studies in France

Professor Jean-Pierre Drège

When Pelliot returned to France in 1909 after his Central Chinese Asian expedition, he drew up an inventory of his finds. Completed in 1920 it was translated into Chinese and published in 1923. He also carried out research on a number of texts including bilingual manuscripts — Chinese with Sogdian, Tibetan and Uighur — and published a number of important studies. However, it was after the Second World War that Dunhuang Studies in France experienced a period of considerable development, unmatched elsewhere in Europe.

Paul Demiéville was the initiator of this and many of his lectures at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes and the Collège de France were dedicated to the analysis and translation of Buddhist manuscripts, thus introducing a new generation of scholars to Dunhuang material. In 1952 he initiated the compilation of a descriptive catalogue of the Chinese manuscripts which project is now nearing completion. Comprising five volumes covering about 3000 manuscripts and fragments, as well as wood engravings and paintings on paper, the first volume was completed by Jacques Gernet and Wu Chi-yu and published in 1970. It was continued by Marie-Rose Séguy with the assistance of Dzo Ching-Chüan and Hélène Vetch (volume 2, forthcoming). From 1973, a small team under Michel Soymié carried on this work and volumes three and four were published in 1983 and 1991 respectively. Volume five has just been published and the final volume will probably follow shortly.

Since the 1950s the research and editing of the Chinese manuscripts has been under the supervision of Paul Demiéville and his students who have carried out important scholarly work. Demiéville himself, for example, raised important questions about the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang in his monumental work *Le Concile de Lhasa. Airs de Touen-Houang*, a compilation of song lyrics with studies by Jao Tsung-yi and translations by Demiéville, and *L'Oeuvre de Wang le Zélateur*, translations of popular poems, both played an important part in emphasizing the role of Buddhism in the development of literature. He also discussed many Buddhist religious texts, a field of studies dominated by Japanese scholars.

Jacques Gernet, author of a seminal work on the economic aspects of Buddhism, was one of Demiéville's students who followed in his footsteps. Others are

Michel Soymié who has concentrated on popular literature and the links between the practices of Buddhism and Daoism; Wu Chi-yu, who has also carried out research in Daoism, as well as translating many poems and having an interest in diverse philological problems; Chen Tsulong, who wrote about the monk Wuzhen and also compiled *Eloges de Personnages Eminents de Dunhuang*; and James R. Hamilton who, in *Les Ouïghours au Xe Siècle* showed the importance of the Cao family in Dunhuang, and since has had an interest in the Uighur manuscripts.

Michel Soymié in turn has developed a strong team of Dunhuangologists which, over the past two decades, has contributed about fifty monographs and articles to this important area of study. The team includes Kuo Li-ying (Buddhist rites); Françoise Wang-Toutain (Buddhist devotion); Paul Magnin (the introduction of Buddhism into China and Buddhism catechisms); Anna Seidel and Christine Mollier (Daoism); Danielle Eliasberg and Hou Ching-lang (popular religion); Carole Morgan and Marc Kalinowski (prophecy); Eric Trombert (economics); Richard Schneider (the history of writing); and the author himself (writing and the history of the book). Most of their works have been translated and published in China.

The research will continue under the framework of a renewed and larger team (*Centre de Recherche sur les Manuscrits, Inscriptions et Documents Iconographiques de Chine*). In the future, emphasis will be placed on the systematic study of series of manuscripts, a task made easier by the almost complete reproduction of the collections on microfilm and in facsimile form.

Within this framework, Marc Kalinowski and others have just started a general study of prophetic manuscripts in collaboration with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Serge Franzini on medical manuscripts, and the author on paintings on paper and illustrated manuscripts. A multi-disciplinary study on daily life in tenth century Dunhuang is also planned by Eric Trombert. With these initiatives Dunhuang studies in France continues to thrive, providing an oasis among the relative paucity of studies in Europe.

*This is a condensed version of a paper first published in IAS Newsletter 6 (Autumn 1995), p.44, reproduced with the kind permission of the author and the editor, Paul van der Velde.*



# Conservation and Science

## British Library Studies in Conservation Science

The British Library is publishing the papers from the First Conference of the International Dunhuang Project as the first in an important and innovative new series of scholarly works on Conservation Science. The general editors of the series are Mirjam Foot, Director of Collections and Preservation at the British Library, and Professor Kenneth R. Seddon, Professor of Inorganic Chemistry at the Queen's University of Belfast and currently an EPSRC and Royal Academy of Engineering Clean Technology Fellow.

The papers from the First Dunhuang Project Conference (see *IDP News* 1), *Dunhuang and Turfan: Contents and Conservation of Ancient Documents from Central Asia*, will be out in February. Edited by Susan Whitfield and Frances Wood, the contents are:

Frances Wood, 'Two thousand years at Dunhuang'  
Peter Lawson and Mark Barnard, 'The preservation of pre-tenth century graphic material'  
Mark Barnard, 'The British Library Stein Collection: its conservation history and future preservation'  
Kumiko Matsuoka, 'An investigative study of the frontispiece of the *Diamond Sutra*'  
Andrew Thompson, 'Japanese conservation techniques as applied to pre-tenth century material'  
Du Weisheng, 'The restoration of Dunhuang Manuscripts in the National Library of China'  
Monique Cohen, 'The conservation of Cave 17 material in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris'  
Astrid-Christiane Brandt, 'The development of new solutions for protective enclosures for the documents from the Pelliot collection'  
Yuri A. Petrosyan, 'Conservation problems of oriental manuscripts in the Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg'

Nadia Brovenko, 'The conservation history of the Dunhuang Collection in St. Petersburg'  
Lev N. Menshikov, 'The history of conservation in the Dunhuang library itself'  
Simone-Christiane Raschmann, 'A survey of research on the materials from Turfan held at Berlin'  
Surinder Pal Singh, 'Conservation of Central Asian collections in the National Museum, New Delhi'  
Peter J. Gibbs and Kenneth R. Seddon, 'The Dunhuang *Diamond Sutra*: a challenging problem for scientific conservation techniques'  
Anne-Marie Bremner, Peter J. Gibbs and Kenneth R. Seddon, 'The chemical constituents of the *huangbo* dye'  
Derek Priest and M. C. Southgate, 'The effect of sodium nitrate on cotton-based paper'  
Susan Whitfield, 'Epilogue: The International Dunhuang Project'

112pp., 234x156mm, paperback, ISBN 07123 0484 3, £28 (inc. p&p in UK only; the cost of postage on overseas orders is charged extra). Orders to:-

Turpin Distribution Services Ltd., Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Herts SG6 1HN, UK  
fax: +44-1462 480947

## Congratulations

— to **Professor Kenneth Seddon** who is now an EPSRC and Royal Academy of Engineering Clean Technology Fellow,

— and to **Dr Peter Gibbs** who successfully completed his doctorate on the *Diamond Sutra* in 1995. The Project would like to thank Peter for his excellent work on the *Diamond Sutra* and wish him the best of luck in his future career.

# Project News

## Agreement Signed

We are extremely pleased to announce that the manufacturers of the Project database software, 4th Dimension, are supporting the International Dunhuang Project. An agreement between ACI (UK) Ltd. and the British Library was signed in November and provides the Project with software on free loan, free training and consultancy.

The Project has found 4th Dimension to be an excellent product which supplies all its needs, not least in its multi-lingual and multi-script capacities and ability to store images with the database records. Demonstrations of the database will be given in Paris, London, Honolulu, Taipei and Beijing in the course of 1996.

We trust that this will be a long and fruitful relationship and thank ACI (UK) Ltd. for their support.

## Dunhuang on Internet

In October the IDP page was launched on Internet. The page contains details about the Project, gives examples of a few key manuscripts and also carries the latest newsletter and the questionnaires. Its address is:

<http://portico.bl.uk/oioc/dunhuang.html>

Comments and suggestions are welcome.

## Second Meeting in Paris

The second Meeting of the International Dunhuang Project, 'Preservation of Material from Central Asia and Dunhuang', will be held at Les Fontaines, Chantilly (near Paris) from 7-9 February 1996. A report will be published in the next newsletter.

## THE YEAR OF THE RAT



The detail shown left is from one of the many manuscript almanacs in the Stein collection (Or.8210/S.612) and is for the year 978. The drawing shows the Year-star god (Taisui) surrounded by the twelve Great Spirits (Yuanshen) and the four guardian kings (Lokapala). The Great Spirits each have one of the 12 year animals in their head-dress, so from the figure at the middle of the bottom row going clockwise the animals are: rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, cock, dog and pig. These were the twelve animals who, according to legend, visited the Buddha on his deathbed, although the animals were only linked in this manner with years in the Tang dynasty.

1996 is the start of a new 12 year cycle and therefore from Chinese New Year's day on 19 February it will be the year of the rat. The rat, according to one story, owes his place as the first of the twelve owing to craftiness. The ox, leading the way, agreed to give him a ride and when they came close to their destination the rat jumped off and scampered ahead, thereby arriving first at the Buddha's bedside. The person born in a rat year is characterised as good at making money and therefore a rat year is supposed to be a prosperous one.



# Project News

## Questionnaires

The response to the initial mailing of several hundred questionnaires for individual scholars and institutions has been excellent and a second mailing will accompany this newsletter. The data from the questionnaires will be input on to the database to facilitate links between scholars and persons interested on all aspects of the Silk Road. A *Directory of Silk Road Scholars* will be published at the end of 1996 and all those who completed questionnaires will receive a copy.

If you have not yet received a questionnaire or need more copies please contact IDP at the address below or fill in the questionnaire on the Internet (address above).

## Sérinde, Terre de Bouddha

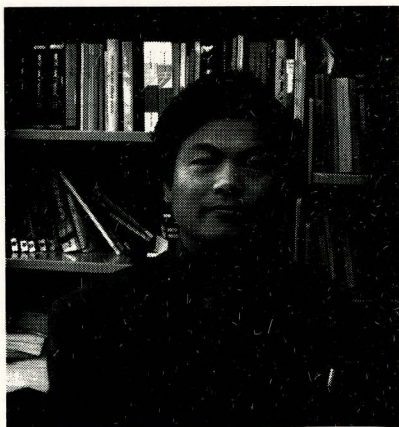
Dix siècles d'art sur la Route de la Soie

This exhibition of art from the Silk Road continues until 19 February 1996 at the Grand Palais in Paris, open every day except Tuesday, from 10am to 8pm, and Wednesday until 10pm. There is an accompanying catalogue in full colour with text.

**La Sérinde terre d'échanges: art, religion, commerce du premier au dixième siècle** — a colloquium to accompany the exhibition will be held in Paris from 13 to 15 February 1996. Further details: Ecole du Louvre, Colloque La Sérinde, 34 quai du Louvre, 75038 Paris, fax: +33-1 40 20 59 55.

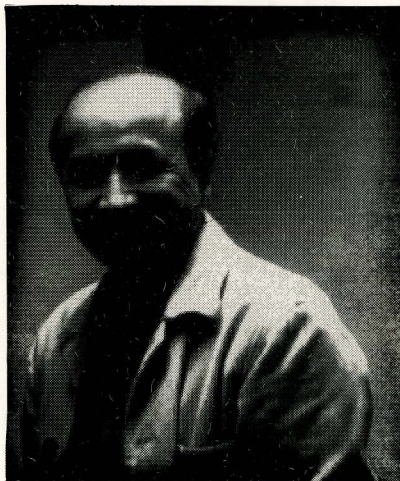
## People

**Catherine Till** started work on the Project in January, funded by a British Academy small research grant. She is helping to update Giles's catalogue and to translate Rong Xinjiang's catalogue for entry on to the Project database.



**Wang Jiqing** (pictured above) from Lanzhou University returned to China in October after six months in Britain. He is nearing completion of his book on Stein's Fourth Central Asian Expedition and the manuscripts from this expeditions. It is planned that both will be published in Britain in the near future and full details will be given in *IDP News*.

**Dr Yasin Ashuri** (pictured top of next column) from the Institute of Ethnology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences also left for



China in December. He will return next year to continue his work on the Uighur manuscripts from the Stein collection.

During his stay he also visited Paris and Berlin. At the latter, he was especially interested in investigations into Old Turkic blockprints and was shown some related material preserved in the Berlin collection.

**Professor Tsuneki Nishiwaki** from the Faculty of Integrated Human Studies at Kyoto University was working on the Berlin Turfan collection for the third time in November 1995. His special interests are the non-Buddhist Chinese manuscripts and blockprints preserved in the Berlin Turfan collection of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and in the Museum of India Art in Berlin-Dahlem. He is preparing a catalogue on this material in cooperation with the project Katalogisierung der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland at the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.

**Susan Whitfield** successfully completed her doctoral viva examination in late August and was awarded her doctorate by the University of London in October. In 1996 she will be giving presentations about IDP at several international conferences.

## The Suvarnaprabhâsasûtra

**Professor Peter Zieme** from the project Turfurforschung of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften is currently preparing an edition of the preface and first book of the Old Turkic version of *Abu Yaruq* (Suvarnaprabhâsasûtra). It will be published as Volume 18 of the series *Berliner Turfantexte*. An almost complete manuscript of this widely disseminated sutra is preserved in the manuscript collection at the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. However, most parts of the first book are missing and for these and for the preface, the Berlin fragments offer some very interesting additional variants. The missing parts of the first book will be reconstructed with the help of the Berlin fragments and in accordance with the Chinese text from which the Old Turkic version was translated. A complete catalogue of all fragments of the Old Turkic translation of the sutra is in preparation and will be published in the series *Verzeichnis Orientalischer Handschriften in Deutschland* by Simone-Christiane Raschmann.

# Other News

Founded in September 1995, the **Circle of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology (CIAAA)** has already attracted considerable interest drawing large audiences to its lecture series held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. **Professor A. D. H. Bivar**, as Honorary President, gave the inaugural lecture in October on 'Cultural Elements in the Tillya Tepe Finds', at which he showed a number of slides of objects from this site which revealed the wide variety of cultural influences at play in this region.

The November lecture was given by **Deniz Cole**, recently returned from Xinjiang, and she presented fascinating slides of her research visit to Khotan and other sites on the Silk Road. The CIAAA President, **Professor Roderick Whitfield**, also showed slides from his recent visit to the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang at which he had the opportunity to take many excellent and well-lit photographs as part of a project by Getty Publishers to produce a book on the site.

Forthcoming lectures are given below. CIAAA also produces a newsletter and if you wish to be added to the mailing list contact CIAAA at Dept. of Art and Archaeology, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, LONDON WC1H 0XG, UK

email: russellsmith@cix.compulink.co.uk  
fax: +44 171 436 3844 (please state CIAAA)

**21 February: Dr Elizabeth Errington** (British Museum), 'The Columns and Capitals of Gandhara with Special Reference to Jamalgarhi'

**14 March: Dr Susan Whitfield** (British Library), 'The Stein Collection at the British Library and the Dunhuang Project'

**3 April: Dr Georgina Herrmann** (Institute of Archaeology, UCL), 'Merv, A Central Asian City'

**24 April: Helen Wang** (British Museum), 'Stein's "Recording Angel" Miss Lorimer'

**15 May: Professor Nicolas Sims-Williams** (SOAS) and **Mr Joe Cribb** (British Museum): 'A New Bactrian Inscription of Kanishka the Great'

All talks are at 6pm in room B202 of the Brunei Gallery (opposite the main SOAS building).

*IDP News is edited and designed by:*

**Dr. Susan Whitfield**  
The International Dunhuang Project  
The British Library  
Oriental and India Office Collections  
197 Blackfriars Road  
LONDON SE1 8NG  
UK

tel +44-171 412 7647/7650  
fax: +44-171 412 7641/7858  
email: susan.whitfield@bl.uk  
http://portico.bl.uk/oioc/dunhuang.html

*Please send contributions or comments to the above address. The newsletter is free: send a mailing address if you would like to receive a copy.*