

## *Kalparāja-sūtra* and Pagoda Worship

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SEVERAL years ago, I received photos of a quite neatly written Khotanese manuscript, which turned out to be a complete Khotanese version of the well-known *Raśmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā nāma Dhāraṇī* as the Tibetan version is known.<sup>1</sup> I was told that the manuscript was found in the form of a small scroll in a cloth bag together with some debris and chips that looked like bone ash. The bag with ashes had been thrown away, and the scroll of unknown script was retained. Now the manuscript is in a private collection. Judging from the photos and as confirmed by the owner, the manuscript consists of 12 sheets of paper — each about 41cm long and 13.2cm wide — which are affixed together to form an elongated sheet of paper about 5m long. After the text had been written, it was rolled into a scroll.

At the end of the manuscript, the name in Sanskrit is given — a long one spelt otherwise than the Tibetan version: *nirmalāvibhāsa-kauṭīpariśudha-sarvattathāgatta-samāstāsa-prattiṣṭhitta-mudrā* [in translation: the spotless seal (which is) brighter than billions of lights, established by all Tathāgatas (for the purpose of) reviving]. Surprisingly, there is an informative colophon attached, which calls itself *Kalparāja*, a name in shorter form that seems to be the designation of a genre of Buddhist scriptures: if a Buddhist text contains several *dhāraṇīs* and explanations of duly performed rituals, it may be designated as *Kalparāja-sūtra*, ‘the sutra that is the king of spells’. This, however, is beyond the scope of our present discussion. The colophon, itself, tells us that the manuscript had been commissioned to be written down for a dead monk of Gūmatīrai Monastery, Jīyānā by name, and that he is wished all the best for finally attaining the highest Buddhist enlightenment on the earth by realizing the true essence of Mahāyāna dharma.

It is definitely rare for a complete Khotanese Buddhist manuscript to have been found in the area of Khotan. What’s more, for the first time ever since Khotanese scriptures were discovered, the manuscript affords tangible evidence of a tradition going back to a specific monastery of ancient Khotan. This fact throws new light on several aspects

of Khotanese studies. For instance, it is widely believed that the Khotanese language has undergone at least two stages of development and is therefore divided into Old Khotanese and Late Khotanese.<sup>2</sup> The *Kalparāja-sūtra* from the Gūmatīrai Monastery tradition gives good reason to reconsider this popular assumption. While considering the factors that may have caused variations in spelling, grammar and writing of Khotanese language, it would be too easy to say that all the changes are the results of time. Dialects and traditions of different schools and sects must also have made a contribution to the variations between so called Old and Late Khotanese. I have good reason to propose that the Gūmatīrai Monastery, as the most important monastery in ancient Khotan, could indeed have exercised influence on the shaping of written Khotanese.

Recently, the manuscript has been published in my new book, which consists of a transliteration of the script, a Chinese translation of the text, commentary to words and a complete glossary along with photos of the manuscript. A discussion on the words and grammar of this *Kalparāja-sūtra* is also included as a chapter in the book. Here, however, I will limit myself to three points: first, a recapitulation of Gūmatīrai Monastery as related by Faxian; second, the content of the *Kalparāja-sūtra*; and third, the new custom of Buddhist pagoda worship set out by the *Kalparāja-sūtra*, as observed in China, Korea and Japan in the eighth century.

### **Gūmatīrai Monastery**

Faxian, the famous ancient Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, on his way to India, arrived in Khotan in 401 CE. His travel account provides a detailed description of Gūmatīrai Monastery as well as the Buddhist ambience in Khotan at the beginning of the fifth century. According to him, all the inhabitants of Khotan, without exception, were Buddhists.

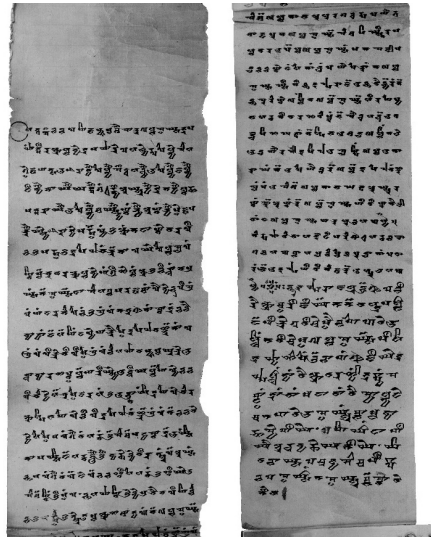


Fig. 1 First and last parts of the Khotanese *Kalparāja-sūtra* manuscript

The number of monks was huge, and they were primarily practitioners of Mahāyāna. A striking phenomenon that he noticed was the popularity of pagodas: “The people live scattered about; and before the door of every house they build small pagodas, the smallest of which would be 20ft in height.”<sup>3</sup>

There were four large monasteries as well as numerous smaller ones. Amongst the four large ones, Gūmatīrai Monastery, housing 3000 monks, was the largest. When Faxian arrived, the king of Khotan lodged him and his companions comfortably in this monastery, where he spent three months as a guest monk. Details about the monastery life are preserved in his account:

At the sound of a gong, 3000 monks assemble to eat. When they enter the refectory, their demeanour is grave and ceremonious; they sit down in an orderly manner; they all maintain silence; they make no clatter with their bowls, etc.; and for the attendants to serve more food, they do not call out to them, but only make signs with their hands.<sup>4</sup>

Faxian goes on to explain why he spent so long in Khotan. He was waiting for the processions of Buddha-images celebration, which took place every year on the first day of the fourth lunar month. His account describes the ceremony as follows:

Beginning on the first day of the fourth moon [month], the main thoroughfares inside the city are swept and watered, and the side-streets are decorated.... The *bhikṣus* of Gūmatīrai Monastery, the followers of Mahāyāna, were deeply venerated by the king. Thus, they took the foremost position in the procession.<sup>5</sup>

Faxian’s account provides first-hand evidence of Gūmatīrai Monastery as the most important Buddhist monastery in Khotan, which existed and flourished as early as the beginning of the fifth century. Research on the Khotanese language shows that the monastery must first have been established and it then developed into a centre with a secular population. Therefore, if Gūmatīrai is mentioned in Khotanese documents, it is the monastery, itself, that is meant. The adjective *gumatīraja*, “belonging to the Gūmatīrai Monastery”,<sup>6</sup> which refers to a secular resident who might also have paid taxes to the monastery, too, is a derivative of the name of the monastery.

Obviously, the monastery maintained a good relationship with the royal family, and this tradition seems to have lasted centuries, until

the kingdom of Khotan, itself, perished at the end of the 11th century. We know that during the 10th century, the royal family of Khotan was closely related to the regnal family in Dunhuang through reciprocal marriages. At the beginning of the 10th century, the Grand Guardian Cao was the highest ruler in Dunhuang. He married his daughter to the Khotanese king, Viśa Saṃbhava, who was apparently the great donor who funded the reconstruction of the massive cave no. 98, since his image is depicted in a wall painting in the cave as if he were the Chinese emperor! All Khotanese royal family members were pious followers of Buddhism. When they moved to Dunhuang, they probably brought their own *bhikṣusamgha* with them. Otherwise it would be difficult to find an explanation for why a huge number of Khotanese documents and Buddhist manuscripts had been preserved in the library cave along with Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist manuscript scrolls and documents. Several Khotanese documents from Dunhuang mentioned *ācāryas* from Gūmatīrai. There was certainly a regular correspondence between Dunhuang's *bhikṣusamgha* and Gūmatīrai Monastery in Khotan. Perhaps the *bhikṣusamgha* in Dunhuang was an affiliate of the Gūmatīrai Monastery.<sup>7</sup>

From all information that comes down to us, Gūmatīrai Monastery played a leading role in the Buddhist society of Khotan. As mentioned earlier, the complete Khotanese manuscript of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* that we are discussing here was originally a sort of protective amulet to be laid beside the ashes of a dead monk of Gūmatīrai Monastery. The copying of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* to be laid beside the ashes in a pagoda built for the purpose seems to have been a funeral custom for monks. We have good reason to assert that this kind of custom was maintained by Gūmatīrai Monastery, and such was its influence once that the same custom can be observed in countries thousands of miles away from Khotan.

### **Content of *Kalparāja-sūtra***

The *Kalparāja-sūtra* under discussion here starts with a story:

Once upon a time, deva Buddha dwelt in Kapilāvastu, in a grove (*ārāma*) called Kapala, with the great community of monks and with the eight great bodhisattvas. He sat in the middle, surrounded by assemblies of devas, nāgas, yakṣas and so on and preached the discourse. A Brāhmaṇa, Kapilacaṃḍa by name, was a follower of the Upaniṣad school. He was told by fortunetellers that he would

die after seven days. Brāhmaṇa Kapilacandā was very worried. He came to the Buddha seeking refuge. The Buddha could clearly foresee Brāhmaṇa Kapilacandā's destiny in eternal existences. He said, "On the seventh day Brāhmaṇa Kapilacandā will die. He will then be reborn in *avīci*, the most frightful hell. Then, in due course, he will receive birth in the six great hells. After he will have finally disappeared from the hells, he will be reborn amongst pigs and then in the house of a caṇḍāla as a lowly woman, miserably suffering from dirt and filth while foraging for dirty food in slush. When, after almost eternal time, he will finally reappear as a man, a malodorous smell will emit from his mouth and face. His whole body will stink. His throat will be as thin as a needle so that he will always suffer from hunger and thirst. Emaciated, withered and weak as he would be, he will always be ridden over roughshod."

When Brāhmaṇa Kapilacandā heard about his fate in his next and next existences, he was deeply terrified. He begged the Buddha to rescue him from all the miserable sufferings. He said, "The Buddha is the refuge for all beings. Please rescue me from all the inescapable sufferings in hells."

Therefore, the Buddha said, "Please go, Brāhmaṇa Kapilacandā, to the central market of the city where a shabby pagoda lies upon relics of the Buddha Kamaladhvajī. Renovate the pagoda, build a multi-cakra-shaped pillar (*damarāśa* = Skt. *dharmarāja*) or a banner on the pagoda. Let a scribe make 77 copies of this efficacious *dhāraṇī* I give to you and put it in the middle of the multi-cakra-shaped pillar. Venerate duly the scribe. In this way your long life will return to you. Through the power of this efficacious *dhāraṇī*, you will be reborn in Sukhāvātīlokaḍhātu and enjoy happiness for a hundred thousand *kalpas*. Then you will be reborn among Tuṣṭi devas. You will always encounter Buddhas wherever you are reborn."

In the great assemblies there was a bodhisattva, Sarva-nīvaraṇaṣṭkambha by name. He asked deva Buddha to preach the *Kalparāja-sūtra* for the benefit of all beings. Therefore, Śākyamuni proclaimed several *dhāraṇīs*, which in sequence are named *mulamaṇḍri* "the fundamental spell", *daśa hīvī maṇḍri* "the spell for banner" and *caityā jehāme hīvī maṇḍri* "spell for renovation of a pagoda". Then, the Buddha preached the great merits the *dhāraṇīs* may generate for beings. Bodhisattva Sarva-nīvaraṇaṣṭkambha also spoke one *dhāraṇī*. There are two other *dhāraṇīs* that should be recited during the worship of a *dhāraṇī*-containing pagoda.<sup>8</sup>

If we stay with the first three *dhāraṇīs*, it seems that the *Kalparāja-*

*sūtra* has the purpose of strengthening the rituals for worship of pagodas, but a careful scrutiny of the text reveals that the *Kalparāja-sūtra*, itself, is regarded as most crucial in the equation. The Buddha preached to Vajrapāṇi, “Oh, Vajrapāṇi! Like Buddhas, this king of spells will carry out the work of Buddhas.”<sup>9</sup> It appears as if the writings of the *dhāraṇīs* would outweigh a pagoda in value.

Let us look at what is basically known about pagoda worship. In the early stages of Buddhism, pagodas were reliquaries containing relics of the Buddha and later of his disciples. Pagodas of various styles are widely spread in the Buddhist world. Akira Hirakawa, the late Japanese scholar of the University of Tokyo, proposed the theory that it was the laity who initially worshipped pagodas.<sup>10</sup> Later on, as Mahāyāna doctrine developed, pagoda worship was also adopted by the monks. Concerning the pagoda worship of so called Mahāyāna Buddhism, an observation has been made by David McMahan, professor of religion at Franklin and Marshall College of America. He noticed that “this body of literature (*Prajñāpāramitā*), along with a number of Mahāyāna wisdom texts, downplays the value of pagoda / relic worship in comparison to devotion to the text itself, that is, the written manuscript of a Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra.”<sup>11</sup> In one passage of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, it is claimed that the Perfection of Wisdom supersedes relics in importance in so far as it is itself the “true body of the Buddha”, which is the body of the Dharma (*dharmakāya*), since the Perfection of Wisdom is the cause of the wisdom of the tathāgatas, rather than its depository.

These divergent views show that changes in worship of Buddhist objects have been sharply observed by scholars. Obviously, the passage from the *Kalparāja-sūtra* cited earlier coincides with the trend of written manuscripts superseding relics, even if they are *dhāraṇīs*. However, taking the changes in customs of Buddhist worship as a background, especially in the Mahāyāna trend, the real purpose of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* becomes highlighted. What it advocates is a combination. The introductory story of Brāhmaṇa Kapilacaṃḍa relates that the Brāhmaṇa was encouraged by the Buddha to renovate an old pagoda of a former Buddha. At the same time, he was also told by the Buddha that a scribe should be invited and venerated, and 77 copies of the spells written down, which were to be put into a freshly built multi-cakra-shaped pillar to be erected on the pagoda. These words of the Buddha are very informative with regard to pagoda construction and worship. However, importantly, these words also underscore on the other hand the Mahāyāna tradition of worshipping written texts, which in this case, are

*dhāraṇīs* released by the Buddha. The text is composed in earnest faith of it having efficacy in preventing early death, granting long life, and protecting human beings from falling into hells and being reborn into miserable existences. For achieving all the merits, due practices need be faithfully carried out. Numerous *dhāraṇīs* are to be copied since they are crucial and act as Buddhas. The effect will be achieved when they are rightly stored in pagodas and the multi-cakra-shaped pillar.

In the Khotanese version the *dhāraṇīs* are called mantras.<sup>12</sup> Mantras are originally not Buddhist, but go back to the Vedic tradition of India. Vedic hymns are mantras, believed from remote times to have the ability to confer magical power. When the Buddha's words were transformed into mantras, they were accorded a magical quality. The *Kalparāja-sūtra* in fact introduced a new model of Buddhist worship culture. The text suggests that a pagoda containing *dhāraṇīs* of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* is most meritorious and efficacious, especially for increasing lifespan in this existence and happiness in future existences. Several passages emphasize the following:

If a son or daughter of good family walks clockwise around a pagoda, in which copies of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* are included, or honours and worships it with parasols, incense, flowers, lamps, music or rainwater, [he or she] will attain the unexcelled enlightenment ... and destroy all obstacles. Even birds and beasts, who come into the shelter of the pagoda, will be saved from evil existences and become, through enlightenment, those who are not liable to turning back.

In several passages, when a son or daughter of a good family, a *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī*, as well a lay follower or female is encouraged to build pagodas, or to renovate or fabricate small pagodas, it is ordered that they should firstly recite the *dhāraṇī* of renovation of a pagoda 1008 times. Afterwards, no matter how small the pagoda is, for instance as small as a fingernail, as long as finger to elbow, or as large as having the span of a yojana, through the power of the *dhāraṇī* and the power of faith, heavenly fragrances, such as of various sandalwoods and of tulips, will waft from the pagoda made of earth. Whoever offers worship to this pagoda, even if his life is short, will increase his lifespan. Even if someone is just about to lose his life, he will regain it and live long.

The model promulgated by the *Kalparāja-sūtra* is strengthening the power of pagoda worship through the *dhāraṇīs* that are pronounced in this *sūtra*. The combined model of pagoda worship with written texts can only be feasible when writing material is abundant. The Khotanese

*Kalparāja-sūtra* is written on paper. It is not yet clear since when paper was widely used in ancient Khotan. However, the Khotanese word for paper, *khalavī*, is unambiguously confirmed in this *Kalparāja-sūtra* for the first time.

The new model of worship as described in the *Kalparāja-sūtra* in fact strips a pagoda of its original function as a reliquary containing remains of the Buddha. The pagoda becomes a pure symbol of Buddhism. It spreads the idea that a pagoda, no matter how small it is, whenever *dhāraṇīs* or the *Kalparāja-sūtra* are enshrined in it, can function as a Buddha does and will bring about immense merit, and is especially beneficent for increasing lifespan. With this, I come to my last point in this article.

### ***Kalparāja-sūtra* and a New Worship Trend in China, Korea and Japan**

It is not clear when exactly the manuscript of this Khotanese *Kalparāja-sūtra* was produced. However, undoubtedly, the present Khotanese *Kalparāja-sūtra* is a translation. The original text must have been composed in Sanskrit. The period when the Khotanese translation was completed can be roughly narrowed down to a short span. According to recent research based on new material composed in Gandhārī / Kharoṣṭhī and Sanskrit / Brāhmī, it is evident that the Brāhmī script was not adopted as the official script for writing Khotanese until the later sixth century. In approximately the second half of the sixth century, the indigenous language of Khotan replaced Gandhārī and Sanskrit as the official language of Khotan. So, no translated Khotanese version of the Buddhist canon can be dated earlier than the later sixth century. From the other end, we have a Chinese translation of the *Kalparāja-sūtra*, which is certainly based on the original Sanskrit text that had been brought from Khotan to Luo Yang around 689 CE by the Khotanese monk, Devendraprajña. The original Sanskrit manuscript brought to Luo Yang must have been the only copy in Khotan, because several fragments of copies of the Khotanese *Kalparāja-sūtra* have been found, but not a single trace of a Sanskrit version. Thus, the Khotanese version could have come about only within the narrow band of between the later sixth and the later seventh centuries.

When the monk Devendraprajña passed away in Luo Yang, the Empress Wu Zetian invited Śikṣānanda from Khotan primarily to translate the large *Avatamsaka* into Chinese. It is recorded in the Chinese *Catalogue* completed by Zhi Sheng in 730 CE that the *Kalparāja-sūtra*



was translated twice into Chinese. The first version was completed by Śikṣānanda likely in 700 CE, because until that time, he was intensely occupied with *Avatamsaka* and the only thereafter could be turn to the other translation tasks assigned to him by Empress Wu. However, as soon as he finished his version, it was lost and a translation team was organized for the second time. Since Śikṣānanda was once again busy with other texts, a monk named Mitraśānta, who came from the country of Tukhāra (north-east Afghanistan), took over the team for translating the *Kalparāja-sūtra*. His version must have been finished between 700 and 702 CE. The record relates that monk Mitraśānta personally presented the new Chinese version to Empress Wu, and at the same time, asked the empress for permission to leave for home. Thereupon, the empress rewarded him lavishly and granted him the freedom to come and leave at will. Mitraśānta's Chinese version of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* remains the only version preserved in the Chinese Buddhist canons. The remarkable Empress Wu died in 705 CE at the age of 82.

The *Kalparāja-sūtra* certainly made significant contribution to the history of pagoda worship and the beginning of printing. A new trend of worship in the Buddhist world started from the beginning of the eighth century and could still be observed at the end of the Tang period. A new way of building pagodas became popular from inland China to Korea and Japan. All of a sudden, stone pagodas of small size proliferated, for instance, the several stone pagodas of Yunju Monastery.<sup>13</sup>

Built in 721 CE, the biggest of the eight pagodas of Yunju Temple from the Tang period is made of white marble and measures 3m in height, including the foundation. The bottom part is a hollow square shrine, about 130cm high. Above the pillar built of stone in seven layers. According to the record, the stone pagoda was commissioned by two *bhikṣuṇīs* for their departed parents.

The other stone pagodas are similar in construction and can be dated no earlier than 720 CE. As another example, the pagoda shown in Fig. 2 was commissioned by a high official of the Tang dynasty in 722 CE for his departed wife. Although there is no



Fig. 2 So-called Jinxian Princess's Pagoda

inscription on these stone pagodas indicating that a copy of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* is hidden inside them, their structure is itself an indication. They are so formed that the upper part of the stone pillar weighs more than the lower hollow part, and they are certainly not pagodas containing any ashes. The upper part is a sort of cakra-shaped pillar, although the layers of stone are not round.

In August 29, 1966, an earthquake occurred in Gyeongju of South Korea, damaging slightly a stone pagoda in the Bulguksa Temple compound. For restoration, the workers needed to take apart the layers of the stone pagoda. On the second level, they found a small copper box with a silver bottle containing relics. Beside the bottle, to their great surprise, a printed copy of the Chinese *Kalparāja-sūtra* wrapped in silk cloth was also discovered. The text is printed on 12 sheets of paper, each sheet measuring 6.5cm × 52.5–54.7cm; if connected, the sheets measure 6.43m in length.<sup>14</sup> At that time, the discovery of the printed scroll caused a great sensation, because the *Sukgatap*, as the pagoda is called, was built in 751 CE and no restoration of it has ever been recorded. On the basis of this discovery, the Koreans claimed that technique of printing had been invented in Korea, since the earliest evidence of a printed text had been found there. However, for our purposes, the discovery of a copy of the Chinese *Kalparāja-sūtra* on 12 sheets of paper lying beside the relic bottle is more noteworthy because it evidences a similarity to the copy of the newly published Khotanese manuscript, which was written on 12 sheets of paper and laid beside the ashes of a dead monk of Gūmatīrai Monastery in Khotan.

Located at the foot of Mt Nangsan in Gyeongju, another stone pagoda built in 706 CE also contains a copy of the Chinese *Kalparāja-sūtra*. However, till today, nobody has actually been fortunate enough to see the scroll. Its presence within this pagoda is only detailed in the inscription of a relic box discovered by Japanese archaeologist, Sueji Umehara.

It is certain that the Chinese translation of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* came to Japan as early as the eighth century. The story of one million *dhāraṇī* or *hyakumantō darani* of Japanese Empress Shōtoku is well known.<sup>15</sup> On the website of the library of Princeton University, the background of



Fig. 3 Pagoda dating back to 722 CE

the one million *dhāraṇī* is recapitulated by Graphic Arts Librarian Julie Mellby. I cite it here:

The 46th imperial ruler of Japan was Empress Kōken (Kōken Tennō 孝謙天皇) who ruled from 749–758. The eccentric queen suffered from depression and on the advice of her cousin, Fujiwara Nakamaro, finally abdicated the throne. Friends introduced her to a young, handsome Buddhist monk named Dōkyō and under his care, she made a miraculous recovery.

Kōken became devoted to this monk, brought him into the royal family as a Master of Healing, and (depending on which history you read) had an intimate relationship with him. Her cousin objected to the monk and led a rebellion. Nakamaro was killed and Kōken restored herself to the throne, this time under her father's name, as Empress Shōtoku (Shōtoku Tennō 称徳天皇) in 764.<sup>16</sup>

As a sort of penitence, Empress Shōtoku had one million *dhāraṇīs* of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* printed and one million tiny wood pagodas built in which to store the printed spells. Completed around 770 CE, these slips of paper — now held in collections around the world — represent some of the earliest printed texts. They are known as the *hyakumantō darani* or one million pagoda spells.

On the one hand, the two pagodas of Korea discussed here, with relics and a copy of the Chinese version of the *Kalparāja-sūtra*, more or less support the observation that the *Kalparāja-sūtra* played only an additional part in pagoda worship because there are still relics of Buddhist monks included. The story of the Japanese Empress Shōtoku shows, on the other hand, that the *dhāraṇī* itself could become the centre of the worship cult, whereas a pagoda had to change its form.

Judging by the photo of the one-millionth slip of paper of the *dhāraṇī* preserved in the collection of Scheide Library in Princeton, included in a 1987 article by Mimi H. Yiengpruksawan, Professor of Japanese Art History at Yale University,<sup>17</sup> and the photo of another one, which forms part of the Graphic Arts Collection of Princeton University, the Chinese text that had been printed one million times is the second *dhāraṇī* of the *Kalparāja-sūtra*, the Khotanese version of which is called “*ṣi' daśa hīvī madrrī*” or “*daśā' vīra bisai maṃdrra*”.<sup>18</sup> In both phrases the word *daśā'* (*daśa*) — a dialect form of Sanskrit *dhvaja*, “banner”, is found. Thus, the first can be translated as “the spell of the banner”, and the second as “the spell dwelling in the banner”.

At this stage, it is important to point to a difference between the

Khotanese version and the only extant Chinese version, that of Mitraśānta. In place of *daśa* or *daśā'* of the Khotanese version, the Chinese version has *xianglun cheng* 相輪樑, “a multi-cakra-shaped pillar”, which in the Tibetan version is rendered *srog shing*, “the life pillar”. What a *dhvaja*, or in Khotanese form a *daśā'* (*daśa*), refers to is clear for people familiar with Buddhist decorative objects. A *dhvaja* is not a multi-cakra-shaped pillar. However, the second *dhāraṇī* of the banner of the Khotanese version is also meant for the pillar as it is expressed at several places in the Khotanese text, for instance in the following paragraph instructing how many copies of the second *dhāraṇī* were to be made, and where they were to be placed.

*ṣi' dārqaṅṅā nauvaranau juna pīrōṅṅa o brrāmja bi(dā) o khalavī bidā damareśa' viśtōṅṅa o daśā' bidā biśq tcahaura hālā u puhā pacadā uspurra dārqaṅṅa myām damarāśā' viśtōṅṅa myā daśā' ustam cittyā bidā sakhvai*<sup>19</sup>

Ninety-nine copies of this *dhāraṇī* should be made, on birch or on paper and should be put in the cakra-shaped pillar or on the banner. In the four directions at the pagoda the whole *dhāraṇī* should be placed, and as the fifth step, in the middle of the pillar [and] in the middle of the banner [which] is finally sealed on the *caitya*.

Also this paragraph in the Chinese version varies from the Khotanese:

善男子，應當如法書寫此呪九十九本，於相輪樑四周安置。又寫此呪及功能法，於樑中心密覆安處。<sup>20</sup>

Noble man, 99 copies of the *dhāraṇī* should be written in a righteous way and placed around the multi-cakra-shaped pillar. Again, the *dhāraṇī* and the special ritual rule should be written, laid into the middle of the pillar and be surely and well sealed.

The difference between the two versions is merely that in the Chinese version, the second *dhāraṇī* is specifically meant for a multi-cakra-shaped pillar, while in the Khotanese version, it can be placed either in a multi-cakra-shaped pillar, which is *damarāśā'* in Khotanese, or in a *dhvaja*, a banner. Whether it is a pillar or a banner<sup>21</sup> depends on which one is finally to be set on a pagoda.<sup>22</sup>

*Damarāśā'* should be a variant of the Sanskrit *dharmarājikā*. If this word was the original one for Chinese 相輪樑 “multi-cakra-shaped pillar”, this part of a pagoda must be regarded as being as significant as the pagoda itself, for *dharmarājikā* is an attribute that comes from

*dharmarāja*, hence meaning that “which belongs to the king of the doctrine”, who is the Buddha.<sup>23</sup> Based on the Khotanese version, a *dhvaja*, or in Khotanese *daśā*,<sup>24</sup> can be the finial ornament for a pagoda,<sup>24</sup> as much as a multi-cakra-shaped pillar can. It seems that the Khotanese version concerning the second *dhāraṇī* of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* is a sort of free translation, since the Chinese version mentions only a multi-cakra-shaped pillar.

It is interesting to see how widespread a Buddhist text became and how it influenced social custom in the areas of its spread. At the same time, typically, everywhere it took on local variations. The best example is the one million pagodas of Empress Shōtoku. As described by Yiengpruksawan, the tiny pagoda measuring 22cm from base to finial summit, is formed in two parts (Fig. 4). The main part is a three-storeyed body and the finial is seven-ringed. The slip of paper on which the *dhāraṇī* is printed measures about 30cm in length by 5cm in width and was once rolled up and inserted into a cylindrical cavity, open at the top, that had been drilled into the pagoda body; the cavity was then sealed using the pagoda’s finial ornament as a stopper.<sup>25</sup> If one is keen to detect an outside influence on the form of the pagodas of Empress Shōtoku, a far-fetched similarity might be found with *Sukgatap* pagoda of Bulguksa Temple in Korea, in so far as both pagodas have a three-storeyed body. Nevertheless, no derivative imitation can be attested. This kind of small wooden pagoda is preferred for inserting the second *dhāraṇī*, because “the notion of multiple miniature pagodas as a vehicle of sin-vanquishing holiness is most clearly articulated in the *Sōrin* text”, which is the second *dhāraṇī*, and because “it is also the one darani that is primarily focused on the pagoda-worshipping sovereign.”<sup>26</sup> The whole design and manufacture of the one million pagodas must have been based on the theory articulated in the *Kalparāja-sūtra*, but what emerged was unique. The pagodas are round in shape in order to conform to the concept of a multi-cakra-shaped pillar.

On the other hand, the form of the paper slips that the one million pagodas contain is noteworthy. They are all elongated paper slips and treated as tiny scrolls. Their form coincides with the scroll of the Khotanese *Kalparāja-sūtra*. This detail is significant, for it exhibits the



Fig. 4 Miniature pagoda

existence of a cult set out by the *Kalparāja-sūtra* in the eighth century, which thrived in a wide area stretching out from Khotan to Japan.

Finally, a few words should be spared in regard to printing. The technique of printing certainly starts with the *Kalparāja-sūtra*. One passage shows that the idea of printing came down directly from the habit of using seals:

*vasvena aysmuna u paṭṣānaina aysmuna ṣi' kalparāja-dārañīnai  
phīsuna pīrōñā u cittyāṇa viśtōñq*

With pure mind and with equanimous mind the seal made of the dhāraṇī is to be copied and to be placed in a pagoda.

A seal in the ancient world symbolized the power of a most efficacious authority, especially in the Central Asia region. Contracts, deeds and documents unearthed from archaeological sites in Niya and Khotan afford abundant evidence of this. Every business and every document of legal validity carried prints of seals of a higher official. To fabricate a master block of wood or bronze and to engrave *dhāraṇīs* on the block would involve the same process as making a seal. However, to turn the *dhāraṇīs* into imprints of seals meant — for the people of the ancient world — to transfer authoritative power to *dhāraṇīs* and to confer legal authority on the copies of the *dhāraṇīs*.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bka' 'gyur, Sde dge version, Tantra section, vol. Na, no. 510; Bka' 'gyur, Peking version, Tantra section, vol. Pha, no. 218.
- <sup>2</sup> For the stages of the Khotanese language, Skjærvø (2002, lxx) has given a brief summary. For the difference between the old and late stages of the language, see Emmerick 1980 and 1981.
- <sup>3</sup> Giles 1923, 4.
- <sup>4</sup> This is a revised translation based on Giles 1923, 4. The Chinese version is as follows. 《高僧法顯傳》：其國豐樂，人民殷盛，盡皆奉法，以法樂相娛。眾僧乃數萬人，多大乘學，皆有眾食。彼國人民星居。家家門前皆起小塔，最小者可高二丈許，作四方僧房供給客僧，及餘所須。國王安頓供給法顯等於僧伽藍。僧伽藍名瞿摩帝，是大乘寺。三千僧共撻搥食，入食堂時，威儀齊肅，次第而坐，一切寂然，器鉢無聲。淨人益食，不得相喚，但以手指麾。(T51, no. 2085: 857b3-11)
- <sup>5</sup> 《高僧法顯傳》：法顯等欲觀行像，停三月日。其國中有四大僧伽藍，不數小者。從四月一日，城裏便掃灑道路莊嚴巷陌。其城門上張大幃幕，事事嚴飾。王及夫人嫫女皆住其中。瞿摩帝僧是大乘學，王所敬重，最先行像。(T51, no. 2085: 857b12-17)
- <sup>6</sup> In 1996, I published a paper on a Khotanese document together with Wang Binghua, a famous archaeologist of Xinjiang. It was a sale contract concerning a woman together with her son. The seller was a resident of the estate that belonged

to the monastery. Therefore, the monks of Gūmatīrai were witnesses to the sale. This document deserves to be re-evaluated and our paper revised based on new knowledge from Khotanese studies.

- <sup>7</sup> For instance, in one document from the hidden cave of Dunhuang (Or. 8212/162), between lines 139 and 140, we find *gūmatīrai āśa'rī vīrapūña* “Vīrapūña, the monk of Gūmatīrai Monastery”. All Khotanese documents are from the ninth and 10th centuries. See Skjærvø 2002, 53 and Kumamoto 1982, 289, ns (51 and 52).
- <sup>8</sup> There is a good well-informed introduction about the *Kalparāja-sūtra* by Yiengpruksawan, Professor of Japanese Art History at Yale University. For details, see Yiengpruksawan 1987, 231.
- <sup>9</sup> The Khotanese text is *ba'ysyau jsa hamaṅga vajrrapāṃṇa ṣi' kalparājā ba'ysā-vīra idā*. See Duan 2019, 53.
- <sup>10</sup> Hirakawa 1963, 113.
- <sup>11</sup> McMahan 1998, 257.
- <sup>12</sup> Duan 2019, 16 and 18.
- <sup>13</sup> Yunju Monastery is situated in the south-west of Beijing, 70km far away from the centre. The monastery was initially built in the sixth century and is now mostly famous for the nearby hill with hidden caves holding more than 4000 stone plates engraved with Buddhist sutras.
- <sup>14</sup> For details, see Pan 1997, 1011.
- <sup>15</sup> Yiengpruksawan (1987) has given details about the background of the coming into being of the one-million-dhāraṇī.
- <sup>16</sup> Julie L. Mellby, ‘One Million Buddhist Incarnations’, accessed February 19, 2020, [https://blogs.princeton.edu/graphicarts/2009/01/one\\_million\\_buddhist\\_incantati.html](https://blogs.princeton.edu/graphicarts/2009/01/one_million_buddhist_incantati.html).
- <sup>17</sup> Yiengpruksawan 1987, 226.
- <sup>18</sup> Duan 2019, 16 and 30.
- <sup>19</sup> The whole paragraph is quite clear, but not the last Khotanese word that might be corrupt and not encountered before. The meaning of ‘*sakhvai*’ is not yet clear. It might be a corrupt past participle of the verb *saṃkhal*, meaning “to be tainted” according to Emmerick (1968, 130). However, its new meaning is attested in the new Khotanese version of the *Kalparāja-sūtra* as “to be covered or sealed”. The instance is in §7.17 (Duan 2019, 62).
- <sup>20</sup> T19, no. 1024: 719a17–19.
- <sup>21</sup> I think that here *dhvaja* “banner” actually means the pole of a banner.
- <sup>22</sup> In the context of the *Kalparāja-sutra*, a *caitya* is a pagoda.
- <sup>23</sup> See Edgerton 1977, 280–81.
- <sup>24</sup> “Finial ornament” is the term used by Yiengpruksawan 1987, 226.
- <sup>25</sup> Cited (partly rewritten) from Yiengpruksawan 1987, 226.
- <sup>26</sup> Yiengpruksawan 1987, 232.

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### Figure References

Figs 1–3: Photograph by the author.

Fig 4: [https://blogs.princeton.edu/graphicarts/2009/01/one\\_million\\_buddhist\\_incantati.html](https://blogs.princeton.edu/graphicarts/2009/01/one_million_buddhist_incantati.html).

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