

# A 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscript from Dunhuang concerning the Gantong monastery at Liangzhou\*

Imre Galambos

Manuscript IOL Tib J 754(c) at the British Library commemorates the rebuilding of the Gantong monastery near Liangzhou. A colophon at the end of the document identifies the person who recorded the text as the Buddhist monk Daozhao, and the date as 968. Originally part of three separate manuscripts that had been pasted together into a single scroll, the document was carried by the Chinese pilgrim on part of his journey from Wutaishan to India. Thus the manuscript is not only important in terms of the history of the Gantong monastery (also known at different times in history as Ruixiang or Shengrong monastery) but also as a witness of the great pilgrimage movement of the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century evidenced in historical sources.

## 1. History of the manuscript

The manuscript was acquired at Dunhuang by Aurel STEIN and was subsequently deposited in the collection of the India Office Library (IOL). In 1983 the IOL became part of the British Library and this is where the manuscript is located today.

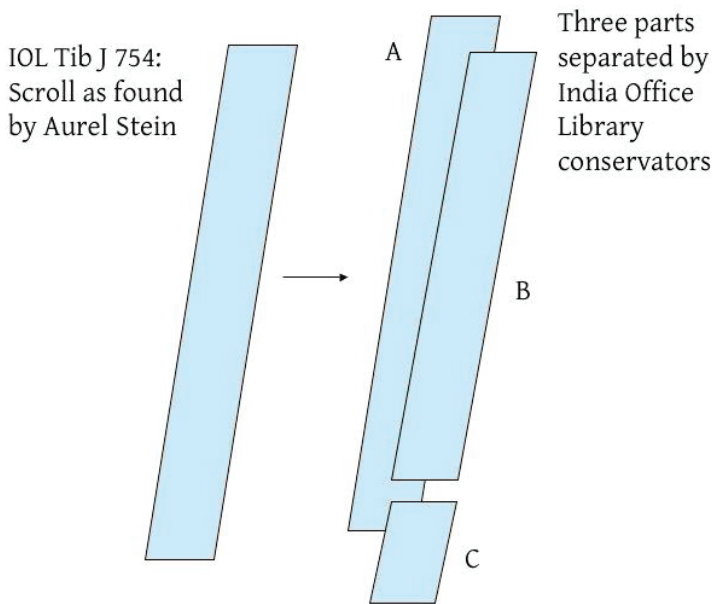
Originally, the IOL material consisted mainly of Sanskrit and Tibetan manuscripts, the Tibetan ones having “Tib” included in the shelfmark. Among these, the ones coming from Cave 17 at the Mogao Grottoes near Dunhuang were also marked with the capital letter “J.” Thus IOL Tib J 754(c), the shelfmark of our manuscript means that it was part of the IOL collection, classified as a Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang. The number 754 was assigned to it by Louis de

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\*I would like to thank members of the Chinese mediaeval manuscripts class of Professor TAKATA Tokio 高田時雄 for their contributions to this paper. I am especially grateful to Professor YU Xin 余欣 of Fudan University for giving me much help with the transcription of the text, as well as KITSUDO Koichi 橘堂晃一 and NOMURA Toshio 野村俊郎 of Ryukoku University. Sam VAN SCHAIK of the British Library has been giving valuable advice on all aspects of this research.

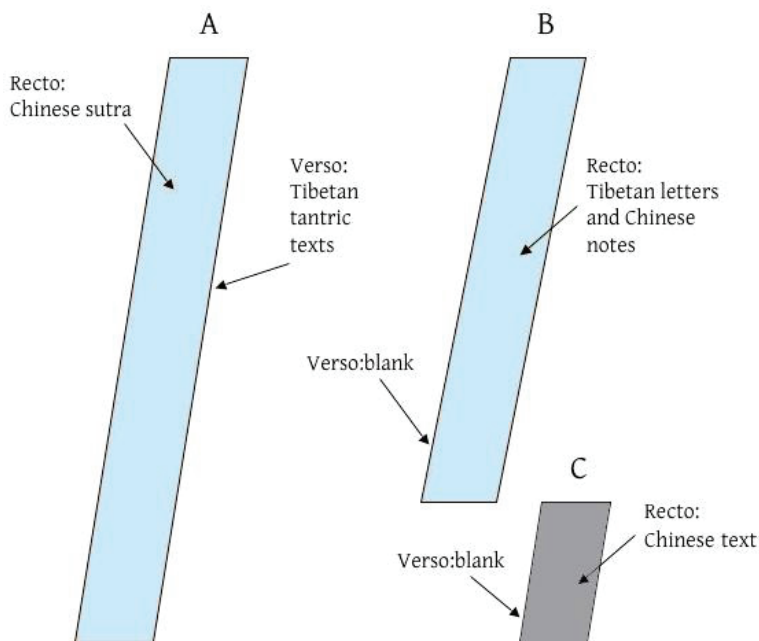
La VALLÉE-POUSSIN, a Belgian scholar who catalogued the collection during the First World War.

The manuscript was originally acquired as a long sheet of paper rolled up in a scroll, with a portion of a Buddhist sutra in Chinese on one side and a mixture of Tibetan and Chinese writings on the other. During conservation it became clear that the item actually consisted of three parts that had been joined together before sealing the Dunhuang cave by pasting two smaller manuscripts onto the back of a Chinese sutra. (See Fig. 1.)



*Fig.1. The separation of the manuscript during conservation*

The India Office Library conservators separated the three manuscripts in an effort to mount them onto paper, a customary preservation method at the time. The separation yielded the following items. (See Fig.2.)



*Fig.2. The constituent texts in the group. The text commemorating the reconstruction of the Gantong monastery is on a small sheet of paper shaded darker and marked with the letter “C.”*

- Manuscript A: IOL Tib J 754(a). The longest item, with a portion of the *Baoenjing* 報恩經 on one side and Tibetan tantric texts on the other.
- Manuscript B: IOL Tib J 754(b). Slightly shorter item, a series of Tibetan letters with Chinese notes in between. The verso is blank.
- Manuscript C: IOL Tib J 754(c). A short item consisting of a single panel of paper, with a short text about the Gantong monastery in Liangzhou. The verso is blank.

Here I am mainly concerned with Manuscript C, which currently has the shelf-mark IOL Tib J 754(c). Naturally, even when focusing on one particular text, it is important to remember the connection between the three manuscripts, as they had been pasted together to form a single object by their original owner. It is an intriguing question whether any of the manuscripts was simply used to back another, or whether there was a deliberate effort, perhaps even design, to join these texts into a composition.

## 2. Other manuscripts within the same group

### *Manuscript A, recto*

In Manuscript A, the side that was exposed before the India Office conservators separated the documents has Chapter 3 of the *Baoenjing* 報恩經 (T.0156) written in Chinese on a total of five complete and two shorter panels of paper, with the incomplete ones located at the beginning and the end of the scroll. The sutra is executed in even calligraphy with a hard pen, using the 17 characters per line format. Although the beginning of the manuscript is worn, it represents the very beginning of Chapter 3, with only a single line missing. The end is complete and accordingly bears the title saying, “*Baoenjing*, Chapter 3” 報恩經卷第三. The text of the sutra follows its standard transmitted version, only occasionally omitting or substituting individual characters. Judging from the completeness of this chapter, we can safely assume that this side of the manuscript must have been written before the Tibetan texts on the other.

### *Manuscript A, verso*

The other side of Manuscript A, which was hidden before the separation, has four mahāyoga sādhanas written in Tibetan. Detailed discussions of these texts can be found in DALTON and VAN SCHAIK (2006, pp.323-325). Thus far, several manuscripts of Tibetan mahāyoga texts have been dated to the late 10<sup>th</sup> century (TAKEUCHI forthcoming), and it is likely that most the manuscripts with such content were written within that time frame. The Tibetan texts on this particular manuscript were most likely written after the *Baoenjing* on the other side was already completed. The reason for them being covered is not clear. It is not unrealistic to assume that all the texts in this group had some sort of mutual significance and they had been written and pasted together in this particular combination for a purpose.

### *Manuscript B, recto*

This is the side that was on the outside before the separation of the manuscripts. Physically, the paper consists of four panels, of which only three and half are covered with writing. The rest of the space is empty, presumably because more text was expected to be written there in the future. This manuscript is described in detail in my forthcoming study with Sam VAN SCHAIK, I only relate here our main findings.

This side contains four letters written in Tibetan, with some Chinese writing in between, executed with a hard pen. Although the Tibetan text is relatively clear, the Chinese is hard to make sense of. In addition, some of the lines have been smudged away making them illegible. Part of the Chinese text can be identified as a Sanskrit dharani written with Chinese characters. As for the

rest of the Chinese text, ENOKI (1962, p.259) calls these “almost completely incomprehensible” and having no direct concern with the Tibetan letters, with Tson-ka as the only proper name that occurs in both languages. However, the Chinese notes mention the name of Jiuṃ Tān-tś’iuk 用檀畜,<sup>1</sup> who is without doubt the “great master Yon tan mchog” referred to in the Tibetan text. A careful study of the Chinese bits and pieces reveals that for the most part these are transcriptions of Tibetan names and titles, some of which also occur in the Tibetan letters.

As for their contents, the Tibetan text consists of letters of introduction recommending the travelling Chinese monk to the abbots of monasteries along his way. The pilgrim was going from Wutaishan to India to see the relics of the Buddha, passing through Hezhou 河州 (Ga cu), Dentig Shan, Tsongka 宗喀, Liangzhou 涼州 (Leng cu), Ganzhou 甘州 (Kam cu), and Shazhou 沙州 (Sha cu). The fact that these letters were discovered in Dunhuang shows that the pilgrim arrived there but either left his letters behind or ended his journey without going further.<sup>2</sup> An interesting phenomenon with regard to the interrelation of these manuscripts is that the Chinese text in Manuscript B was most likely written by the same person as the statement about the Gantong monastery in Manuscript C. A comparison of a selection of Chinese characters appearing in both texts is shown in Fig.3.

The characters are written with a hard pen characteristic of the manuscripts dating after the Tibetan occupation. Although the strokes are not completely identical, they are close enough to conclude that even if not written by the same hand, they had to have been produced within the same general time and location. The significance of this lies in that the date 968 found in the colophon of Manuscript C would also be valid for the pilgrim’s trip.

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<sup>1</sup>Phonetic reconstruction based on TAKATA (1998).

<sup>2</sup>It is possible that going to India in search of scriptures according to the contemporary understanding did not necessarily mean travelling all the way to India but was a general way of describing a pilgrimage in a western direction. Thus a pilgrim who ended his trip in Dunhuang could have been regarded as having completed his mission.



*Fig.3. Comparison of the handwriting in Manuscript C and the beginning of Manuscript B.*

### 3. Former research

The manuscript is included in ENOKI Kazuo's appendix to VALLÉE-POUSSIN's (1962, p.265) catalogue, where it is referred to as "a statement in commemoration of the completion of the temple Kan-t'ung-ssû where the portrait of the first Emperor of Pei-chou (A.D. 556) was hung." It is clear that ENOKI did not realize that the term "holy countenance" 聖容 was referring to a statue of the Buddha, rather than a portrait of a historical emperor. Due to the same oversight, he also translated the title row in front of the text as "The portrait of the Emperor has come down from the Heaven to the Yü-shan Kan-t'ung-ssû Temple in Liang-chou."

A transcription has been published by MA De (1994, p.111) who named the text "A record of the restoration of the Gantong monastery from the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Qiande era of the Song" 宋乾德六年修涼州感通寺記, adding a note that the actual site of the monastery in modern-day Yongchang county carries traces of

a restoration that was effected around the time of Five Dynasties or the early Song and that this text was a record of that restoration.

IKEDA (1990, p.501) records the colophon, calling it the “colophon of the monk Daozhao in a miracle tale of the Gantong monastery at Liangzhou” 涼州感通寺靈驗記僧道昭題記. HIDA (1994, p.175) mentions MA’s transcription in a note at the end of an article and points out its significance for the study of the history of the Guiyijun period and the Cao family in Dunhuang.<sup>3</sup> The chronology of Dunhuang during the Guiyijun period compiled by RONG Xinjiang and YU Xin (forthcoming) includes the manuscript under the year 968 using the title assigned to it by IKEDA.

Other than MA De’s transcription and the other short references above, neither this manuscript nor the other two from the same group (A and B) have been studied previously. I am currently working with my colleague Sam VAN SCHAIK on a study of the Tibetan letters in Manuscript B, which we hope to publish later this year under the title “The pilgrim’s passport: A 10th century manuscript containing Tibetan letters of introduction for a Chinese traveller to India.”

#### 4. Colophon and date

The manuscript has a dated colophon that concludes the text with the words, “Recorded by the monk Daozhao on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Qiande era” 乾德六年六月廿二日僧道昭記之耳.

ENOKI (1962, p.265) understood the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Qiande as referring to 577 but a number of reasons corroborate that this is a Northern Song reign period and the date is 968. First, the manuscript was written with a hard pen which was typically used to write Chinese only from the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century. Another reason is that the monastery was initially assigned the name of Ruixiangsi 瑞像寺 (Monastery of the Auspicious Image) and was renamed to Gantongsi 感通寺 (Monastery of the Spiritual Response) only in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Daye (609) when Emperor Yang 煬帝 travelled through here and decreed the name change.

Another problematic issue is the date within the text, which both ENOKI and MA De read as the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the Baoding era 保定九年. However, as ENOKI pointed out, the Baoding reign period (561-5) only lasted for 5 years, thus this was an impossible combination. In my opinion, the problem in this case is caused by incorrectly reading the graph 九 as 九 (“ninth”), instead of 元 (“first”). The character 九 appears twice in the same text, written as 九 and 九, making it

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<sup>3</sup>This note only appears only in the Chinese translation of HIDA’s article, the earlier Japanese version (HIDA 1994) does not include it.

clear that neither of these forms is identical to 九. In reality, however, the graph 九 should be read as the character 元, resulting in the date of 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Baoding era 保定元年, which corresponds to 561. (See Fig.4.)

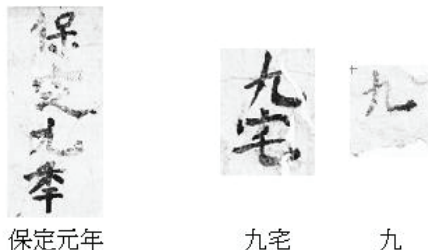


Fig.4. Comparison of the characters 元 and 九 within the same manuscript

This not only solves the problem of not having a 9<sup>th</sup> year in this reign period but also corresponds to the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (T.2122) which claims that the monastery, initially called Ruixiangsi, was established in this place in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Baoding, that is, in 561.<sup>4</sup>

## 5. The text

The text consists of 16 lines, with 15-18 characters per each complete line. The first line is the title and the last the colophon. The title, main text and the colophon all appear to have been written by the same hand. The text quite visibly was written with a hard pen, with characters closely resembling the Chinese portions of Manuscript B. Although the text is complete, some of the characters are either smudged or hard to read. There are a number of variant character forms, some of them with inconsistent orthography even within the same document. For example, the character 年 occurs three times as 年, 年 and 年, the first two of which are the traditional lishu 隸書 forms consisting of the combination of 禾+千. Another such example is the character 無 occurring twice as 無 and 无. The transcription below is an attempt to read and segment the text. Characters that are illegible due to the physical condition of the manuscript are marked with the blank  sign. The same sign inside brackets [] means that the context and grammar imply the absence of one or more characters from the text, most likely having been omitted accidentally during the process of copying.

<sup>4</sup>I provide a complete translation of this passage further down in this paper.



In cases where the use of a more accepted character variant is obvious, the latter is provided in round parentheses, e.g. 采 (彩). The translation underneath the transcription is a preliminary effort to make sense of this difficult text.<sup>5</sup>

- 01 涼州御山感通寺聖容天上下來  
 02 大祖文皇帝，膺千年之聖脈，百代之英運，  
 03 屬龍非 [□] 時當鳳舉，廓三籟於道銷，庇四民於  
 04 德喪。維釋氏之頽綱，綴儒之絕約，澤流遐外，九  
 05 被無窮。皇帝時乘馭寓幄曆，君臨德□ (須?) □ (淵?)  
 06 泉，道光日月。不住无為而孝慈兆庶，不住有  
 07 為而多 (芻) 狗万機，洞九宅之非絙，樹三寶之弘祉。  
 08 於保定元年，涼州表上，方知尊容，神異靡測，  
 09 又空鐘震響，寔韻八音，燈輪自轉，珪符三點。親  
 10 嶮 (驗) 者，發奇悟於真源，傳聽者，蕩煩羈於逆派。  
 11 澡 (藻) 慕之流，京野翹注，公惟大慈，府降宜就表  
 12 受。罄捨珍財，敬營塔寺，依峰樹刹，竦 (聳) 丹采 (彩) 於重  
 13 霄，因林構宇，曉朱青於 [□□]，諒盡人工之妙。房  
 14 廊周迥 (匠)，勢放 (傲) 祇藪，禪室連局，刑模鷲嶺。  
 15 左瞻崆峒，想斬 (軒) 轅之所遊。  
 16 乾德六年六月廿二日僧道昭記之耳

The holy countenance that came down from heavens at the Gantong monastery on Mount Yugu, Liangzhou.

Emperor Taizu Wen has been bestowed a thousand years of holy succession, a hundred generations worth of precious fortune. [.....]<sup>6</sup> He expanded the three notes [of man, Earth and Heaven]<sup>7</sup> in times when the Way was destroyed, protected the four kinds of people<sup>8</sup> in times when the Virtue was annihilated. [Following] the demise of Buddhism, coupled with the breach of Confucianism, his benevolence flowed beyond limits, to the nine reaches of the world.

At the time the Emperor rode a horse carriage and lodged in a tent, he approached virtue [.....], his principles shining like the sun and the moon. He did not abide by non-action but made the masses pious

<sup>5</sup>In the translation, the sign [.....] marks those parts which I was not able to translate.

<sup>6</sup>The meaning of this sentence is unclear and it also appears from the parallel structure of the text that at least one character is missing. One of the likely possible concepts referred to here are the flying dragon and rising phoenix, which are known allusions to the ruler. If this is truly the case then the character 非 (“not”) should be read as the homophonous character 飛 (“to fly”).

<sup>7</sup>The “three notes” 三籟 is a reference to Chapter 2 of the *Zhuangzi*, which talks about the music made by the symbolic windpipes of man, Earth and Heaven.

<sup>8</sup>The term “four kinds of people” 四民 refers to the traditional categories of scholars, farmers, artisans and merchants, that is, ordinary people in general.

and loving; he did not abide by action but handled the myriad affairs of government as if they were straw dogs (i.e. with impassion).<sup>9</sup> He deepened what has not been filled within the nine abodes,<sup>10</sup> and established the wide fortune of the Three Jewels [of Buddhism]. In the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Baoding (561), [the prefecture] of Liangzhou submitted a proposal, and this is when the people learned about the venerable image and its immeasurable marvellousness. Also, bells echoed in the sky, their sound producing great harmony; and the lantern wheels spun around on their own accord, [.....]. Those who experienced this first hand were subject to a wonderful realization at the original source [of the miracle]; whereas those who heard about it through others had their many restrictions washed away at the [.....].<sup>11</sup> People who were curious or admiring, from both the capital and the country were awaiting in eager anticipation. In his great kindness, the magistrate issued the procedures(?) and the proposal was accepted. Using up his precious wealth, he respectfully renovated the stupa and the monastery. On the mountain top, he erected a temple with red colors rising towards the skies; in the forest he constructed buildings with vermilion and turquoise reaching the [.....].<sup>12</sup> All this seems to have [been done in a way that] exhausted the brilliance of human craftsmanship. The cloister around the central hall was made circular, in a layout emulating the Garden of Jetavana; the meditation rooms were linked together in a chain, in a shape modelling the Vulture Peak. Looking up to the left was Mount Kongtong, reminding one of Xuan Yuan (i.e. the Yellow Emperor) travelling through here.

Recorded by the monk Daozhao on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of

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<sup>9</sup>According to the commentators of the *Laozi*, whence the concept is borrowed, “straw dogs” were puppets made of straw for the purpose of being burned at funerals as a form of sacrifice. Treating things as if they were straw dogs came to symbolize an attitude of sagely indifference or detachment, when actions are performed with a clear head without an emotional involvement.

<sup>10</sup>I suspect that it is an allusion to the words “filling the deep quarters” 緝洞房些 in the *Chuci* 楚辭, but the sentence still does not easily yield to interpretation.

<sup>11</sup>Although I am not sure in what sense the word 逆派 is used here, in terms of their logical structure, the two phrases of 發奇悟於真源 and 蕩煩羈於逆派 are very similar to a line in a fu poem by Jiang You 江迺 (ca. 301-365): 蕩煩垢於體外, 流妙氣於中心 (“wash away the various pollutions on the outside of the body, make the wonderful ether flow on the inside”). In this case the two characters in question would have to designate a location opposite in meaning from “the original source.”

<sup>12</sup>The parallel structure of the sentences makes it clear that two characters have been omitted here by Daozhao. The character 曉 is used in this context as a verb meaning “to spread, to widen, to reach far,” therefore with stupa rising upwards corresponds to the buildings spreading sideways.

the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Qiande era (968).

Because I had a chance to examine the manuscript in person, I was able to improve the readings in MA De's original transcription in a number of cases (e.g. 寰→喪; 丘拘→芻狗; 聖福→弘祉; 九年→元年; 奉之→表上; 打→燈; 囂→羈; 房□周迎→房廊周迺; 道和→道昭). In addition to providing a more faithful rendering of the characters in the manuscript, these improvements also made some of the otherwise meaningless clusters fit the context. For example, the string 丘拘万機 turned out to be 芻狗万機 ("handling the myriad affairs of government as if they were straw dogs"), a Daoist reference to governing the state.<sup>13</sup>

The content and wording of the manuscript in part resembles the inscription on the verso (i.e. yin 陰 side) of a stele found by a peasant in 1911 near Turfan, commemorating the establishment of a monastery at Gaochang by Qu Bin (高昌綰曹朗中麴斌造寺銘). The colophon at the end of the text dates the erection of the stele to the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the Yanchang era (575). A full transcription of this long inscription was published, among others, by IKEDA On (1985, pp.112-113); I am only quoting here the part that is relevant to our manuscript. I slightly modify IKEDA's transcription by inserting in parentheses character variants/equivalents that are more appropriate for the context, mostly based on Manuscript C.

乃於所領城西顯望之處，磬(磬)捨珍財，建茲靈刹。因其(峰)定□，□  
□構宇。銀槃切漢，□□□□□□踊，金鐘振響，似香山之美樂。房廊  
周迺，勢方(倣)祇恒(菌)，禪室連扃，祕如兜孌。

Therefore, at a place to the west of the territory under his jurisdiction, he used up his precious wealth to built this marvellous temple. On the mountain top,<sup>14</sup> he established a [temple, in the forest], and he constructed buildings. With the moon high above, ascending [...].<sup>15</sup> The sound of golden bells echoed around, just like the beauty and delight of Xiangshan. The cloister around the central hall was made

<sup>13</sup>An additional problem in MA's reading was that he, the same way as ENOKI, misread the date in line 8 of the text as the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the Baoding era, producing an impossible combination. To be sure, such impossible dates are not unheard of in Dunhuang and Turfan manuscripts, a phenomenon usually explained in terms of the long distances from Central China. However, in this case it is more likely that the character in question should be read as "first," rather than "ninth."

<sup>14</sup>IKEDA's transcription has the character 其 in the phrase 因其定□, but HUANG Wenbi's (1954) earlier rendering has 形. Based on our Manuscript C, we can be relatively certain that neither 其 nor 形 is appropriate here. Instead, the context calls for a noun describing the natural surrounding of the place where the temple was erected, along the lines of the phrases 依峰樹刹 ("on the mountain top, he erected a temple") and 因林構宇 ("in the forest he constructed buildings"). Based on these parallels, I translate the phrase as if the character 峰 ("mountain top") was used in this place. I also complete the missing characters based on Manuscript C.

<sup>15</sup>The Chinese text has six characters missing here.

circular, in a layout emulating the Garden of Jetavana; the meditation rooms were linked together in a chain, with a density resembling the Tushita heaven.

It is clear that the two texts resemble each other both in terms of their genre and language. Even this relatively short quote from the Gaochang inscription has numerous overlapping phrases, e.g. “using up his precious wealth” 罄捨珍財; “construct buildings” 構宇; “sound of bells echoing” 鐘振響; “the cloister around the central hall was made circular” 房廊周匝; “in a layout emulating the Garden of Jetavana” 勢方祇園; “the meditation rooms were linked together in a chain” 禪室連肩.

Beside the Gaochang stele, a parallel sentence can be found in Chapter 8 of the *Guang Hongmingji* 廣弘明集 (T.2103):

芻狗萬機，不可謂之為有，孝慈兆庶，不可謂之為無。

Handling the myriad affairs of government as if they were straw dogs cannot be referred to as an existing [action]; making the multitude of people pious and loving cannot be referred to as a non-existing [action].

This sentence closely matches lines 6-7 in our manuscript where we have the words “He did not abide by non-action but made the masses pious and loving; he did not abide by action but handled the myriad affairs of government as if they were straw dogs.” Although the English translation of the sentence is slightly different, the Chinese original is almost identical, except that the characters in the phrases 有為 (*you-wei* “action”) and 無為 (*wu-wei* “non-action”) are flipped in Manuscript C, in contrast with the *Guang Hongmingji* where they appear as 為有 (*wei-you* “existing”) and 為無 (*wei-wu* “non-existing”).

## 6. Historical relevance

The Gantong monastery in Liangzhou, formerly known as Ruixiang monastery, is closely tied to the tradition of Liu Sahe 劉薩訶 and his prophecy about the auspicious image of the Buddha appearing at Mount Yu. This tradition is also related to the establishment of some of the Dunhuang caves, and a number of these include murals retelling the main events in the narrative. The history of the monastery established at the site near Liangzhou is recorded in several sources, the most complete version appearing in the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (T.2122). This account follows the main steps of the Liu Sahe tradition, as well as the evolution of the monastery:

元魏涼州山開出像者，至太武大延元年，有離石沙門劉薩何師，備在僧傳，歷游江表禮鄞縣塔。至金陵開育王舍利，能事將訖，西至涼州。西一百七十里番禾郡界東，北望御谷山遙禮。人莫測其然也，何曰，此山崖當有像出。靈相具者則世樂時平，如其有缺則世亂人苦。經八十七載至正光元年，因大風雨雷震山巖挺出石像。高一丈八尺，形相端嚴唯無有首。登即選石命工，安訖還落，魏道凌遲其言驗矣。至周元年，涼州城東七里澗，忽石出光照燭幽顯。觀者異之，乃像首也。奉安像身宛然符合。神儀彫缺四十餘年，身首異處二百許里，相好昔虧一時還備。時有燈光流照鍾聲飛響，皆莫委其來也。周保定元年立為瑞像寺，建德將廢首又自落，武帝令齊王往驗，乃安首像項，以兵守之，及明還落如故。遂有廢法國滅之徵接焉，備于周釋道安碑，周雖毀教不及此像。開皇通法依前置寺。大業五年煬帝西征躬往禮觀，改為感通道場。今像存焉，依圖擬者非一，及成長短終不得定云。

During the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534) a mountain opened up and brought forth a statue. During the reign of Emperor Taiwu, in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Taiyan era (435), a monk by the name of Liu Sahe, a native of Lishi, whose biography is recorded in the *Lives of Eminent monks*, travelled along the Yangzi river, paying homage at the stupa at Maoxian [in Zhejiang province]. Arriving in Jinling (present-day Nanjing), he opened the reliquary of King Ashoka, and afterwards travelled to Liangzhou. A hundred seventy *li* west of there, at the northeast border of Fanhe commandery, he looked northward up to Mount Yugu in the distance and bowed to it. The people did not understand the reason for his action thus he said, “This mountain side will issue forth an image. Should the divine depiction be complete, there will be happiness and peace in the world; but if it should be deficient, the world will sink into chaos and the people will suffer.

After eighty seven years, in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Zhengguang era (519), the mountainside thrust out a stone statue following a great thunderstorm. It was eighteen feet high and of marvellous appearance, but with no head. When the people climbed up there, they picked a stone [as raw material] and ordered craftsmen [to carve a head], but it always fell off as soon as they put it on. At that time, the [Northern] Wei dynasty was about to end and so the monk's words were to become true.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the [Northern] Zhou (557), in the Seven *Li* Gorge to the east of the city wall of Liangzhou [where Liu Sahe died], suddenly a rock began to shine brightly in the darkness. All who saw it

were amazed. This turned out to be the head of the statue. People reverently installed it on the body of the statue and it fit perfectly. Even though the statue was incomplete for over forty years, with the head and body apart for about two hundred *li*, the two came together and once again became complete. At that moment lights shone from everywhere and the sound of bells echoed around, and no one understood where all this was coming from.

During the [Northern] Zhou, in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Baoding era (561), the Ruixiang (Auspicious Image) monastery was established here. In the Jiande era (572-78) the head got severed again and fell on the ground of its own accord. Emperor Wu ordered Prince Qi to travel there and investigate the matter. He set the head back on and put soldiers to guard the statue but by the next morning [the head] had fallen off again, just as before. After this came a period when Buddhist teachings were abolished and the country was in destruction. All this is recorded on the stele of the Zhou dynasty monk Daoan. Despite the religious persecutions of the Zhou, this statue was not destroyed. During the Kaihuang era (581-89), Buddhist teachings were promoted and a monastery was built where the old one used to stand. In the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Daye era (609) when Emperor Yang led a campaign to the west, he came here personally on a pilgrimage, and changed its name to Gantong sanctuary. The statue is still there today; many have tried to copy it but none have been able to get the proportions right.<sup>16</sup>

The accounts ends here, since the *Fayuan zhulin* was completed in 668. Accordingly, the last name change evidenced here happened in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Daye (609) when the monastery was enlarged and received the new name of Gantong. The monastery's name was changed into Shengrongsi 聖容寺 (Monastery of Holy Countenance) sometime during the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century. The evidence for this is found on three bits of inscription on the wall of a pagoda located behind the actual site of the monastery, which say "Shengrongsi" 聖容寺, "the 2nd year of Qianyuan" 乾元二年 (759), and "1,500 Tibetan monks" 番僧一千五百人, respectively.<sup>17</sup>

SUN and DANG (1983, p.105) also saw the name change confirmed by a mid-Tang painting on the ceiling of the western niche in Cave 231 at Dunhuang. The inscription on the painting reads, "The auspicious image of the holy countenance

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<sup>16</sup>My translation relies on, and partially follows two earlier translations by Roderick WHITFIELD (1989, pp.68-69) and WU Hung (1996, pp.35-36).

<sup>17</sup>ZHU (2005, p.64).

in the north of Panhe county at Mount Yangrong, Panhe province” 都督府御容山番和縣北聖容瑞像. However, the phrase *shengrong* (“holy countenance”) in this place is clearly not the name of the monastery but a general term for the face of the Buddha. The title of Manuscript C uses this term in exactly the same way (“the holy countenance that came down from heavens at the Gantong monastery on Mount Yugu, Liangzhou”), at the same time referring to the monastery by the name of Gantongsi.

If the monastery was already called Shengrongsi in 759 then the only reason why Daozhao referred to it in 968 as Gantongsi was that he was copying a text that had been written earlier, before the name change took place. Considering the similarity of the manuscript with the text of the Gaochang stele, it is very likely that he copied the text from a local stele. Accordingly, by the time of his visit, the inscription on the stele was at least two centuries old. This also means that the text could not have been a commemoration of a reconstruction project carried out around the Five Dynasties or early Song, as MA De (1994, p.111) suggested, since the stele was erected much earlier.

Daozhao visited the monastery on his way from Wutaishan to India in search of Buddhist relics. The date of the colophon suggests that his visit might have been part of the a documented group of pilgrims travelling under imperial sponsorship. The *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (*juan* 337) records several such enterprises:<sup>18</sup>

乾德三年，滄州僧道圓自西域還，得佛舍利一水晶器，貝葉梵經四十夾來獻。道圓天福中詣西域，在塗十二年，住五印度凡六年，五印度即天竺也；還經于闐，與其使偕至。太祖召問所歷風俗山川道里，一一能記。四年，僧行勤等一百五十七人詣闕上言，願至西域求佛書，許之。以其所歷甘、沙、伊、肅等州，焉耆、龜茲、于闐、割祿等國，又歷布路沙，加濕彌羅等國，並詔諭令人引導之。開寶後，天竺僧持梵夾來獻者不絕。In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Qiande era (965), the monk Daoyuan, who was a native of Cangzhou, returned from the West, where he had obtained a crystal urn with Buddha’s relics and forty cases of Sanskrit sutras on palm leaves. Daoyuan went to the West during the Tianfu era (936-942) of the [Latter] Jin, spent twelve years on the road and lived in the five regions of India for a total of six years. The five regions of India refer to the land of Tianzhu. On his return, he travelled through Khotan and arrived together with an envoy from there. Emperor Taizu queried [Daoyuan] on the customs and habits of the places he traversed, their mountains and rivers, roads and settlements. He was able to recall every detail.

<sup>18</sup>The same text appears almost verbatim in the *Songshi* 宋史 (Zhonghua shuju edition, pp.14103-4).

In the 4<sup>th</sup> year (966), Xingqin and other monks totalling 157 came to the imperial audience with a request, wishing to travel to the West to acquire Buddhist writings. The permission was granted. They travelled, among other places, through the prefectures of Ganzhou, Shazhou, Yizhou and Suzhou; the kingdoms of Karashahr, Kucha, Khotan and Qarluq; then through the kingdoms of Purushapura and Kashmir. The people [of these countries] were also requested to provide guidance for them. After the Kaibao era (968-976), there was an incessant flow of Indian monks bringing with them Sanskrit [manuscript] bundles and presenting those at the court.

Of the monks mentioned in the above description, Daoyuan's name appears in at least two Dunhuang manuscripts.<sup>19</sup> In Or.8210/S.6264 his signature appears at the end of a document given to Cao Qingjing 曹清淨 in Khotan, following a ceremony. The document dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the Tianxing era (961) and he is identified in it as the master of precepts.<sup>20</sup> In addition, Daoyuan's name also appears in the colophon of P.2893: 僧性空於道圓顧人寫記 ("Copied on behalf of the monks Xingkong and Daoyuan by a hired hand"). The main text on the manuscript, to which the colophon is appended, is a portion of the same *Baoenjing* sutra (Chapter 4) that appears on our Manuscript A recto (Chapter 3). Although the layout and calligraphic style of these two manuscripts are extremely similar, they were written by different people. Even so, the visual resemblance between the two manuscripts suggest a connection that is more than coincidental. This idea is further reinforced by the fact that the verso of both documents contains writings in non-Chinese script: Manuscript A verso has Tibetan tantric texts, whereas P.2893 verso contains medical texts in Khotanese.<sup>21</sup>

Daoyuan came back from his trip to the West in 965, which was three years earlier than the date of Manuscript C. Since the Tibetan letters in Manuscript B make it clear that Daozhao was travelling in the direction of India, rather than coming back from there, he could not have participated in Daoyuan's mission. He could have, however, been part of the 157 monks who travelled under the leadership of Xingqin and were granted permission for a journey in 966.

In addition, the *Wenxian tongkao* (*juan* 335) also records that in 966, the same year that Xingqin received permission for his pilgrimage, another group was also

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<sup>19</sup>I am grateful to Professor TAKATA for pointing out these two manuscripts to me.

<sup>20</sup>The manuscript is described in DOHI (1980, pp.262-263).

<sup>21</sup>Having gone through the copies of the *Baoenjing* in the Dunhuang corpus, I found yet another copy that is similar in style and layout to these two. This is a manuscript at the British Library under the shelfmark Or.8210/S.5115, containing part of Chapter 7 of the sutra. However, the verso is blank and there is no colophon.



travelling through Liangzhou and Ganzhou.<sup>22</sup>

乾德四年，知西涼州折逋葛皮上言，有回鶻二百餘人、漢僧六十餘人，自朔方路來，為部落劫掠。僧云欲往天竺取經，並送達甘州訖。

In the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Qiande era (966), Zhepu Gepi, the administrator of Western Liangzhou reported to his superior that over 200 Uighurs and 60 some Chinese monks came from the Shuofang road. They were robbed by tribesmen. The monks said that they wanted to go to India in search of scriptures. Accordingly, they were escorted until Ganzhou.

This group of 60 some Chinese monks is very close in time and place to Daozhao who travelled through Liangzhou two years later in 968.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, this was a period when large numbers of Buddhist pilgrims were being sent to India, and many of these went along a similar route as Daozhao.<sup>24</sup> Even though the Tibetan letters in Manuscript B contain no references to anyone else travelling with him, it is possible that he either already separated from his companions or was joining a group later on, perhaps in Dunhuang.<sup>25</sup>

## 7. Conclusions

The prime importance of Manuscript C lies in its connection with traditional accounts of Buddhist pilgrimages to India. According to transmitted sources, the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century was a period of lively religious interaction between China and India, and most of the traffic passed through the Hexi corridor. Although we do not know which group mentioned in historical sources was Daozhao travelling with, or whether he was travelling with a group at all, he was part of the larger pilgrimage movement of this period, and as such his voyage was no doubt very similar to those taken by others. A clear evidence for this is that he carried with himself a copy of the *Baoenjing* (Manuscript A), and

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<sup>22</sup>Once again, the same account with minor differences appears in the *Songshi* (Zhonghua shuju edition, p.14153).

<sup>23</sup>Another large group going to India slightly earlier is recorded in Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126-1193) travel diary called *Wuchuanlu* 吳船錄 (cited in the *Yūhōki shō* 遊方記抄 (T.2089, p.0981c14): "in the 2nd year of the Qiande era (964), 300 monks were sent by imperial order to India in search of relics and palm leaf manuscripts" 乾德二年，詔沙門三百人，入天竺求舍利及貝多葉書。

<sup>24</sup>For a fairly exhausting list of Buddhist pilgrimages in transmitted sources see JAN (1966, I-II), conveniently arranged in a chronological order. This very useful list, however, does not include manuscript material.

<sup>25</sup>It is also conceivable that the introduction letters would mention only the name of the leader and that a number of monks would be travelling with the same set of documents.

that a similar copy of the same sutra was found in Dunhuang with a colophon by Daoyuan, whose voyage to India and Khotan was recorded in the *Wenxian tongkao*. Therefore the three manuscripts Daozhao pasted together and carried with him are a first-hand witness of how Chinese monks travelled in search of the dharma and Buddhist scriptures (*qiufa qujing* 求法取經).

The three manuscripts of IOL Tib J 754(a-c) were found pasted together into a single composition, the way Daozhao carried them during his travels. Considering that in this way part of the writings was hidden from the outside, the arrangement was probably not random. A careful study of the interrelation between the individual items that were joined together could shed light on their function as devotional objects.

The manuscript is also significant with regard to the history of the monastery, including the cult of Liu Sahe and the tradition of the auspicious image. It shows that following a period of decline, a reconstruction project was carried out and a stele was erected in commemoration of this. Daozhao passed through here in 968 and made a handwritten copy of the inscription. The text refers to the monastery by the name of Gantongsi, evidencing that the inscription itself was written sometime while this name was in use, namely, during the period between 609 and the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century. The reconstruction of the monastery must have also happened within this time interval.

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九州山感通寺聖容天上未  
 大祖文皇帝膺十季聖脈百代之英運  
 屬龍非時皇鳳舉上廓三類於道銷底  
 德乘維精氏之類經綴傳之絕然澤流  
 被無窮 皇帝時乘馭高樞唐君德  
 泉遠光日月不住死為而考慈此庶不  
 為而高荷乃機洞九宅之非恒樹之寶之  
 於保之九季涼州上方知 司容神異靡  
 又空鐘震響實是類八音燈輪 符三點類  
 驗孝發守悟於真源傳器者傷 符三點類  
 漆慕之流宣野翹注公惟大慈府降同慈表  
 受啓捨財財敬營塔寺依山今樹剎陳丹朱於重  
 霄因林構宇晚宋青於讀善人工之妙房  
 層周通勢放祇箇禪室連局刑模鷲嶺  
 石瞻峒想斬棘之所遊  
 乾德六年六月廿三日僧道和記之

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