



## Report of the Guest Lecture of the BuddhistRoad project

13 October 2020 Channa Li (IKGA)

### **TOWARD BUILDING A TYPOLOGY OF CHOS GRUB'S CALLIGRAPHY: PALEOGRAPHICAL STUDIES OF THE TIBETAN DUNHUANG MANUSCRIPTS WRITTEN IN THE MONASTIC STYLE.**

invited lecture at the BuddhistRoad project, CERES, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

The ERC project *BuddhistRoad* team invited Dr. Channa Li, a Post-doc Research Associate at IKGA, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, to give a virtual lecture on the paleographical approach to a collection of Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts plausibly ascribed to Chödrup (d. 864, Tib. Chos grub, Chin. Facheng 法成), the great bilingual Buddhist translator, who was active in the first half of the ninth century in Dunhuang.

In her talk, she started with an overview of Chödrup's intellectual heritage, including a reconstructed biography of Chödrup based on colophons of Dunhuang manuscripts, a list of his Tibetan and Chinese translations, and a list of commentaries composed by him. With such background knowledge, she then proceeded to sifting manuscripts possibly written by Chödrup personally out of Chödrup's intellectual heritage. Based on the previous studies of Ueyama Daishūn and Sam van Schaik, she selected eight Tibetan manuscripts, IOL Tib J 217, IOL Tib J 686, IOL Tib J 687, IOL Tib J 625, P. T. 783v, IOL Tib J 588, IOL Tib J 619, P. T. 770, which are closely connected in terms of both the handwriting (i.e., sophisticatedly cursive) and the textual content (i.e., summaries or commentaries rather than direct scripture translations, by Sino-Tibetan Buddhist compositions associated with Chödrup's team). Moreover, she further strengthens her identification by using manuscripts produced from the massive *sūtra*-copying project in Tibetan imperial period. These copies of scriptures provide us with plenty of editorial records, in which Chödrup frequently acted as the final proofreader, who signed his name on the obsolete folios. All these editorial records contain precisely the same handwriting style as that in IOL Tib J 686, which strengthens the possibility to attribute this handwriting to Chödrup personally. Setting the above eight manuscripts as the samples, she further established a typology of this hand, adopting the



convention of paleography in Western manuscripts studies. A number of idiosyncratic scribal features are identified and analysed in this process.

This talk is also concerned about the application of paleography as a means to grasp new knowledge. Building a paleographical typological model for studies of individual scribes is not an end in itself. One application of this typology, as she demonstrated, is to improve the readings of manuscripts with similar cursive writings. It can also be used to tentatively recognize more of Chödrup's unsigned works, which could broaden our current knowledge of Chödrup as well as the intellectual history in Dunhuang.

