

Article

Sacred Space, Material Culture, and Ritual Practice for Installing Parasols in Dunhuang

Xin Yu

School of Literature, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou 310058, China; asieyu@zju.edu.cn

Abstract: This paper aims to shed new light on the religious function and symbolic meaning of parasols (*san* 傘) in Buddhist ritual practices, tracing the origins of the concept and examining its representations in texts and art. The author focuses on manuscripts, particularly the “Liturgies for Installing Parasols” (*Ansan wen* 安傘文) from Dunhuang, and argues that parasols were used as special ritual instruments to guard the local community. Their sacred power stemmed from the apotheosis of the parasol’s practical function of shielding and protecting people, which was further enhanced by beliefs surrounding the “Mother of Buddhas with Great White Canopy” (Da bai sangai fomu 大白傘蓋佛母) in the late Tang and Five Dynasties. Erecting parasols or carrying them in processions around the city was considered equivalent to demarcating boundaries, establishing defenses, and creating sanctuaries. Whether worn as a protective object, placed at the city’s four gates as a symbol of safeguarding passage, or installed in processions, the Great White Canopy Dhāraṇī and the practice of installing parasols distinguished the inside from the outside, self from others, and purity from impurity. This practice not only had the power to expel plagues and disasters, but also solemnified spaces, bringing blessings, purification, health, and peace. The parasol’s practical functions were continuously extended and mythologized, becoming a central object in rituals aimed at sanctifying space. The rise of the *Great White Canopy Dhāraṇī* belief in Dunhuang further reinforced its role in local customs. This method of spatial sanctification reflects the internal logic of esoteric Buddhist practices while sharing conceptual and technical similarities with traditional Chinese apotropaic arts (*fangshu* 方術) and Daoist exorcistic rituals. Through the grand and regular performance of these ceremonies, political legitimacy and communal well-being were successfully established.

Keywords: parasol; Dunhuang; ritual texts; religious practices; cryptic arts; sacred space; medieval China



Citation: Yu, Xin. 2024. Sacred Space, Material Culture, and Ritual Practice for Installing Parasols in Dunhuang. *Religions* 15: 1408. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15111408>

Academic Editors: Huaiyu Chen and Minhao Zhai

Received: 29 June 2024

Revised: 26 October 2024

Accepted: 16 November 2024

Published: 20 November 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The parasol (*san* 傘/繖) originally served as a practical item for providing shade and protection from rain, and after being elaborately decorated, it evolved into a ceremonial canopy. The ceremonial canopy gradually became a device for displaying authority and honoring respected figures. The *chuang* 幢 can be seen as a multi-layered canopy, with components and construction methods that are quite similar. When a parasol is placed underneath a *chuang*, it is referred to as a parasol canopy (*chuangsan* 幢傘).

The custom of placing a canopy over the heads of respected figures exists in many civilizations around the world, including ancient Rome, ancient India, and ancient China. After the rise of Buddhism, the parasol canopy was incorporated into many Buddhist images, used not only to show reverence for images of the Buddha and bodhisattvas but also in solemn ritual occasions. The parasol canopy became a symbol of the Dharma and was imbued with meanings of shielding against demonic obstacles and protecting sentient beings.

Parasols were widely used in Dunhuang Buddhist rituals from the Late Tang Dynasty to the Five Dynasties (755–979). For example, people set up parasols in order to eliminate disasters on the 23rd day of the first month in a year; or carried them in a procession around

the city on the 8th day of the second month, on Buddha's birthday; or in a praying ritual for their king's health during the *Ullambana* festival. Nonetheless, scholars have not paid enough attention to the practical use and religious function of parasols.

For a very long time, there was only a very brief analysis on "Liturgies for Installing Parasols" (*Ansan wen* 安傘文) by Tan Chanxue 譚蟬雪 in her research on Dunhuang folklores (Tan 2000). Tan's paper, unfortunately, has not gained enough attention from other scholars until very recently, when some scholars began to rethink the topic. Yang Zhishui 楊之水 delicately examines the structural components of parasols, including its pillars, brocade skirt, mesh mantle, and apricot leaves, and verified these specific names (Yang 2000; 2007, pp. 135–42; 2012, pp. 46–81). Zhao Feng 趙豐 and Wang Le 王樂, in a review of studies in Chinese art history, focus on the stylistic features of parasols, and discussed their materials, shape, and size (Zhao and Wang 2009a; 2009b, pp. 128–34). In my previous paper on the "Seven Jewels" (*qibao* 七寶) in Buddhism, I also touched on the ornament of banners (*fan* 幡) and parasols (Yu 2010a; 2011c, pp. 248–66). Françoise Wang-Toutain, who specialized in Tibetan Buddhism, contends that the origin of the purification function in the ornamental program can be traced back to traditions from Dunhuang, and suggests that we should not overlook the possible interactions that existed between Dunhuang and Tibet (Wang-Toutain 2009, pp. 81–113). Wang's paper deals with both Tibetan and Chinese documents, which is quite intriguing and enlightening, but Wang does not examine the religious function and symbolic meaning of parasols in a social-historical context. Therefore, this paper is intended to explore the representation and ceremonial role of parasols, attempting to reveal their functions and symbolic meaning, and then trace their origins as well as their representation in a variety of texts.

2. The Influence of Popular Beliefs on Geopolitics: Well-Being, Power, and the Ritual of Turning Sutras Along with Erecting Parasols

Regarding the construction of political legitimacy embedded in rituals, I propose a new analytical framework called "the social history of livelihood religions". This framework serves as a valuable tool for uncovering hidden political and cultural factors within religious ceremonies, particularly in interpreting how popular religions and geopolitics intersect. "Livelihood religions" refer to faiths that originate from or develop to support the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. They particularly concern the intellectual and behavioral aspects of people's basic needs and life courses, such as the four basic needs—food, clothing, shelter, and means of travel—and the four major life challenges: birth, aging, sickness, and death. The central notion of "livelihood religions" encompasses three elements: a system of gods, ceremonial practices, and a structure of symbols. The major distinction between this new analytical framework and traditional studies of popular religions lies in its focus on how a belief influences the way believers live and think, rather than merely examining what believers believe. Studies of livelihood religions often examine how religion, as a form of ideological and social practice, links state politics, regional communities, interest groups, elites, and the general populace. In summary, the primary concern for studies on livelihood religions is the practice of religion itself (Yu 2006, pp. 2–3, 131–57).

Manuscript P. 2704, commonly addressed as "A Detailed Record of the Ceremony of Making Offerings for and Turning Merits to Cao Yijin, which was held on the 23rd day of the first month in the fifth year of the Changxing period",¹ is one of a handful of surviving records that address Buddhist ceremonies relating to the "white parasol". A scrutiny of this record reveals its great value in the study of medieval Chinese history, politics, and culture among others. This record, resembling *yuanwen* 願文 (prayer) in many respects, reads:

Four bolts of cloth and four bolts of fine cotton cloth (donated to all monks). One bolt of fine cotton cloth (donated to the rituals).

On the first day of the first month, White parasols were set in eight directions; in the last ten days of the first month, banners and flowers were donated at nine places. We wish

the Eight Sections of Heavenly Devils landing at the sacred land of Dunhuang, and the Four Heavenly Kings banishing all evils out of our kingdom.

The King's illness would disappear, like a breeze in the fall, and he would recover in the coming spring. All elders and youths in his family would be in joyful mood, and always hear good news. All his relatives enjoy a peaceful life. All families enjoy happiness, and peasants gain a good harvest. Ambassadors from Dunhuang to Chang'an, would come and go without any held up or restrictions. Ambassadors from Khotan to Dunhuang, would arrive soon without any troubles. All diseases, plagues, disasters and inauspicious would be removed completely. This ritual, here, intends to invite Buddhas and Gods come to accept our offerings and wish good fortunes to return.

On the 23rd day in the first month of the fifth year of the Changxing, Disciple Cao Yijin, the Military Governor of Hexi Region and the Minister and the King, wrote this sincerely (*DHSHJ*, vol. 3, p. 86).

布肆疋, 繼肆疋, (施入大眾). 繼壹疋, (充法事).

伏睹建寅上朔, 白傘廣布於八方; 太簇末旬, 翻(幡)花遍施於九處. 願使龍天八部, 降瑞色於龍沙. 梵釋四王, 逐邪魔於他境.

大王微疾, 如風卷於秋林; 寶體獲安, 願團圓於春月. 合宅長幼, 恒聞吉慶之歡; 遠近枝羅, 同受延祥之喜. 然後千門快樂, 三農秀實於東皋; 萬戶謳歌, 五稼豐登於南畝. 朝貢專使, 來往不滯於關山; 于闐使人, 回騎無虞而早達. 勳(癘)疾消散, 障(瘴)毒殄除; 斗斗藏音, 災殃蕩盡. 今因大會, 令就道場, 渴仰慈門, 希垂回向.

長興伍年正月廿三日弟子河西歸義等軍節度使檢校令公大王曹議金謹疏.

This document (hereafter Cao's *shiru shu*) records a great event in the local history of Dunhuang: in the first month of the fifth year of the Changxing period 長興 (934), Cao Yijin 曹議金—the Military Governor of Guiyijun 歸義軍², the *de facto* ruler of Dunhuang during that time—fell ill. Worried by this news, local elites and commoners, following the local Buddhist tradition, held a ceremony as a means of praying for the lord's restoration from sickness. The range of intended receivers of the merits of Buddha in this ceremony is broad: in addition to praying for Cao Yijin's health, this document also extends the blessing to all the local families (including Cao's) and passing-by envoys, for their well-being, as well as for good harvests in the years to come. This particular record has attracted a lot of academic attention for its mentioning of a "white parasol", which seems to have played a central role in the praying ceremony. Nevertheless, the brief, vague account of this ceremony in parallel structure—"white parasols are distributed broadly across eight directions" and "fluttering banners are found all over nine areas"—reveals little about the topic under discussion and the "Erecting Parasol Ceremony" remain a mystery.

Another document, which I title as "Tianfu ernian zhengyue nianyiri Shi Dushangshu Yushidaifu Zhang bang gao 天復二年 (902) 正月廿一日使都尚書御史大夫張榜稿" (Draft of A Notice Issued by Minister and Censor-in-chief Zhang in the Second Year of the Tianfu Period), provides more information about the ceremony under discussion than the one in P. 2704 does. This document is included in a series of written pieces on manuscript P. 2598v. It reads as follows:

Every year, on the 23rd day of the first month, it is the time to [make prayers to] avert calamity and prevent enemies. On the four sides of the city, white parasols were installed, and sites of Buddhist ceremonies were established. In the district of Dunhuang, people were always protected by Buddha-dharma. However, I was told that on the day of installing parasols, some ignorant children shot banner flowers with catapults, preventing Buddhist masters and monks from performing the ceremony. What's worse, these masters and monks, along with some people in the mass, even got shot, and got hurt in eyes. Now it is made clear that this behavior must be banned. Inspectors-in-chief and Township Supervisors will be after these children and report their names. Once such a child is caught, he must pay the fine of two white sheep, as the supply for the ambassador.

Notice issued on the 21st day of the first month, announcement by Commissioner, Minister and Censor-in-chief, Zhang.³

常年正月廿三日，爲城隍禳災卻賊，於城四面，安置白傘法事道場者。右敦煌一郡，本以佛法擁護人民。訪聞安傘之日，多有無知小兒，把彈弓打蓮花，不放師僧法事，兼打師僧及眾人眼目傷損。今固(故)曉示，切令禁斷。仍仰都虞候及鄉司衙子捉獲，抄名申上。若有此色人，便罰白羊兩[口]充供使客者。恐眾不知，故令曉喻。

正月廿一日榜。使都尚書御史大夫張榜。

This document is undated, and the given name of the issuer is also unknown. Based on previous studies on this document and intertextual analyses (Hao 1998, p. 404), I think this notice was probably issued in 902 by Zhang Chengfeng 張承奉. This document is of great value for the studies of the history of Dunhuang under the rule of Guiyijun. It has attracted much academic attention and has been studied from various angles. However, I propose to read this official notice against the unfavorable geopolitical background of Dunhuang during that period and reexamine Zhang Chengfeng's original intention of publicizing this announcement.

An examination of another two Buddhist sutra colophons ($A_{x.566}$ and BD14799), along with a series of prayer texts centering on the ceremonies of *zhisan* 置傘 (installing parasols) and *ansan* 安傘 (setting parasols), helps deepen our understanding of the two documents discussed previously. Being separately preserved in different collections and cataloged and entitled by different scholars, $A_{x.566}$ and BD14799 were accordingly identified as unrelated sutra copies. A close examination of the handwriting and textual content reveals otherwise. Manuscript $A_{x.566}$ is part of a copy of miscellaneous Buddhist sutras on one sheet of paper, with the title *Dafoding rulai fanguang sidaluo duoda shenli dushe yiqie zhouwang tuoluoni jing da weide zuisheng jinlun sanwei pin* 大佛頂如來放光悉怛羅多大神力都攝一切咒王陀羅尼經大威德最勝金輪三昧品. At the beginning of the scroll, it reads: “[Dhāraṇī of] Sitātapatra, Great Corona of All Tathāgatas, Radiating Light·Supernormal Powers...”. This sutra copy includes a colophon at the end:

On the 23rd day of the first month in the second year of the Tianfu period (*renxu* year), the Military Governor of the Returning to Allegiance Army, Lord Zhang, cherishing sincere and earnest intention to attain enlightenment, respectfully copied this sutra, and preserve it in a parasol as a way of making offerings, to pray to avert calamities for the whole city (EC, vol. 6, p. 370).⁴

天復二年壬戌歲正月廿三日，歸義軍節度使張公發心敬寫，爲城隍禳災，貯入傘中供養。

BD14799, also a sutra copy, is close to the one above in style and pattern. The title and the colophon of BD14799 remarkably resemble those of $A_{x.566}$, with slight variances. The two copies of this sutra were obviously transcribed by the same hand (Zhang Chengfeng himself) on the same day and for the same purpose. The two manuscripts are essential sources for understanding the nature of the Buddhist ceremony involving parasols. This issue will be elaborated in the following section. A dozen extant prayer texts under the titles of and on the topics of “Installing Parasols” and “Setting Parasols” in the Dunhuang manuscript collections also provide valuable leads to the topic under discussion.

All the textual sources from Dunhuang form a vivid but unclear and incomplete historical background of the Buddhist ceremony under discussion. Thus, sources providing supplementary proof can be helpful only if we cautiously stick to their content and context and avoid making farfetched deductions (or avoid overgeneralization). For example, in the “Jishi zhi” 祭祀志 (“Treatise of Sacrificial Ceremonies”) of *Yuanshi* 元史 (*History of Yuan*), it says:

In the 7th year of the Zhiyuan period (1270), taking the Imperial Advisor ‘Phags-pa’s advice, [Kublai Khan ordered to] set up a white parasol canopy on the imperial seat in the Daming Hall. The parasol’s dome was covered in white satin, on which Sanskrit characters were written with golden paint, as it was said, the *cha* to repress evil demons and protect the state and the Buddha-realm. From then on, every year, on the 15th day of the 2nd month, the Installing White Parasol Buddhist ceremony would be held at the Daming Hall. Various types of processions of entertainers greeted and led the parasol, parading around

within and outside the imperial city. It is said that [this ceremony] was meant to clean away ominous influences and lead the auspicious in (Song 1976, p. 1926).

世祖至元七年, 以帝師八思巴之言, 於大明殿御座上置白傘蓋一, 頂用素段, 泥金書梵字於其上, 謂鎮伏邪魔護安國刹. 自後每歲二月十五日, 於大[明]殿啟建白傘蓋佛事, 用諸色儀仗社直, 迎引傘蓋, 周遊皇城內外, 云與眾生袪除不祥, 導迎福祉.

This record of the origin of Kublai Khan initiating the White Parasol Buddhist activity is a well-known textual source in the history of esoteric Buddhism. The *cha*, titled “repress evil demons and protect the state and the Buddha-realm”, indicates it was a splendid parasol. The *Foding baisangai tuoluoni jing* 佛頂白傘蓋陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī of the White Parasol above the Buddha’s Head*), translated from Tibetan by Shaluoba 沙囉吧 in the Yuan dynasty, is another text recording in detail how this *dhāraṇī* was installed and the merits it would produce. The text reads:

When meeting with all kinds of misfortunes, such as disease, disease of livestock, plague, injuries, quarrels, oppression, and disturbance of war, one will be bestowed with this none can surpass [Dhāraṇī of the] White Parasol above the Buddha’s Head, tie it to the top of the banner, broadly extend offerings, and hold a grand Buddhist ceremony. Receive this *dhāraṇī*, install it on the four gates of a city, in residential sites, towns, or villages, and worship it respectfully. Then all disasters and misfortunes will accordingly be cleaned away (T. 976, 19. 403b29-c6).

若遭人病, 孳畜病, 疫癘, 惱害, 斗諍, 逼迫, 他兵侵擾, 一切厄難, 賚此佛頂大白傘蓋無有能敵. 般囉當雞囉母陀羅尼, 繫幢頂上, 廣伸供養, 作大佛事. 奉迎斯咒, 安城四門, 或諸聚落, 都邑, 村野, 禮拜恭敬, 一心供養. 所有兵陣, 隨即消滅, 疫癘諸病, 惱害斗諍, 他兵侵擾, 一切災厄, 悉皆消滅.

Previous discussions allow us to reconstruct, though in a quite sketchy form, the Buddhist ceremony in which the white parasol played a central role:

1. Installing parasols and marching around the city is the practice of worshipping Baisangai fomu 白傘蓋佛母 (Mother of Buddhas with a White Parasol), an embryonic form of the White Parasol Buddhist ceremony in the Yuan dynasty. Extant sources show that it was after the occupation of Tibet that this ceremony began to be held in Dunhuang and that it was the advice of the Tibetan monk ‘Phags-pa (1235–80), the “Imperial Advisor” appointed by Kublai Khan (r. 1260–94) that initiated the tradition of worshipping “Buddha with a White Parasol” in the Yuan dynasty. The correlation between these two ceremonies suggests that they possibly share the same origin as Tibetan Buddhism.

2. The ceremony under discussion was held on every 23rd day of the first month in Dunhuang, a time described as “a wonderful month of spring sunshine, the sign of coldness still obvious” (春陽令月, 寒色猶威), and “a wonderful one among the three spring months, the first of the four seasons” (三春令月, 四序初辰). It is, however, not a coincidence that both the praying activity held for Cao Yijin (P. 2704) and Zhang Chengfeng’s copying sutras (A_x.566 and BD14799) happened on the 23rd day of the first month. According to Zhang’s own statement, he copied the *Dhāraṇī Sutra of the Great Corona of All Tathāgatas* “at a particular time every year” (常年), suggesting that this sutra-copying activity was a tradition rather than a one-off practice. Under the rule of Mongols, however, the date of this ceremony was postponed to the fifteenth day of the second month by Kublai Khan in accordance with ‘Phags-pa’s advice, although the reasons for such a change of date are still unknown to us.

3. The “White Parasols” may be easily mistaken for the common parasols, because they both appeared, in most cases, in Buddhist ceremonies, but that is where the similarities end. Although common parasol canopies and banner flowers were also often presented in the same ceremony as the white parasols were used, the latter played a significant role as the ritual instrument and was the center of the worshipping ceremony. The former, on the other hand, were just used to decorate the marching parade. The white parasols were believed to possess unsurpassed supernormal powers. For example, in the extremely laudatory statement in the Liturgy for Installing Parasols from Dunhuang, it says: “None surpasses (the ceremony of installing) this parasol in terms of protecting a state

and saving it from danger; [the parasol] is the hope to keep away calamities and diseases, and to protect five crops from natural disasters like frost and hail. [It] helps all the myriad species ascend to the city of benevolence and longevity” (若論護國匡邦，無過建其幢傘。即冀除災殃於不毛之地，并[屏]疫癘於無何有之鄉；五谷無霜雹之災，萬品登人[仁]壽之城)。This worship of white parasols has undeniable associations with the teachings of esoteric Buddhism. Meanwhile, the worship is a result of the pervasive popular belief in “Mother of Buddhas with White Parasols”.

A possible misunderstanding of the correlations between the *Dhāraṇī of White Parasols* (aka. *Dhāraṇī Sutra of the Great Corona of All Tathāgatas*) and the ritual instrument “white parasols” must be cleared up: the former is NOT the origin of the latter. In the *Da tuoluoni mofa zhong yizi xin zhou jing* 大陀羅尼末法中一字心呪經 (*Great Dhāraṇī Incantation of One Syllable for the Age of Terminal Dharma*), which, according to its colophon, is translated by an Indian Tripiṭaka master named Maṇi-cinta (寶思惟; d. 721) upon the issuing of the order in the early Tang, it says: “The method of using parasols: A new white parasol is a must-have. It must be decorated with various precious objects like gold and silver and have a banner hanging beneath it. When one holds the parasol, recite the mantra as previously given one character after another, flame will be spouted right away, and he will rise up into the sky, as stated previously”. (欲成就傘蓋法者，作新白傘蓋，種種金銀寶物莊嚴，內中懸一口幡，手把其傘，一依前法誦咒，當即火出，其持法人即騰虛空，皆如上說) (T. 956, 19. 317b9-b12). Unfortunately, there are no extant records of “a banner hanging beneath a white parasol” in extant Dunhuang manuscripts. In accounts in the Receiving Sarira ceremony at the Famen Temple held by the Emperor Yi of the Tang (唐懿宗; r. 859–873), it mentions decorating parasols with precious items like gold and silver.⁵ It is obvious that although “the method of using parasols” was not yet theorized and systemized, it had already been used in practice before the establishment of the ritual of the Dhāraṇī of White Parasols.

4. White parasols, in different sizes, as described in Dunhuang documents, were installed in the center of the walled city of Shazhou (possibly in front of the gate of local government office), and at the city gates of the four directions (“setting up the Buddha peak on the four gates” 設佛頂於四門, and “erecting white banners in five spots” 建白幢於五所). In some cases, the white banners seem to have also been installed in the directions of the southeast, northeast, southwest, and northwest of the city, as mentioned in the “Text of Installing Parasols” preserved on manuscripts A_x.01028 and A_x.02751, “building the Buddha peak on the four gates, and erecting the banners of victory in eight directions” (遂[建]佛頂於四門，立勝幢於八表者) (EC, vol. 7, p. 272).

P. 2613, The Counting Record of Permanent Belongings Transaction in a Certain Temple of Shazhou in the Fourth Day of the First Month of the Fourteenth Year of the Xiantong Period of Tang Dynasty, reveals more details of the white parasols used as ritual instruments. According to this checklist, some parasols could be in a tremendously huge size: “One white embroidered parasol: white-cloth inner layer, one *zhang* and three *chi* in length, and one *zhang* in width” (line 46) (DHSJJ, vol. 3, p. 11). It is certainly impossible to hold such a huge item in hands—it must be transported by chariots. One cannot help but ask the question: how to fix such a huge, heavy instrument during its transportation and how to install it after its arrival? P. 2613 provides a reasonable answer—it mentions “two large banner stands” (line 28) —this shows that large white parasols were probably fastened to this type of stand, which had been made for the special purpose of installing parasols. This checklist also makes a few references to small parasols (*sanzi* 傘子; nouns with suffix “zi 子” are often small-size objects). For example, “one parasol made of white silk tabby” (白絹傘子壹; line 88), “one small parasol made of white silk tabby” (小白絹傘子壹) (line 43), “two small parasols made of white twill damaskin ball-shaped pattern, with parasol tongues made of miscellaneous-colored silk tabby” (白綾團傘子貳，雜絹者舌; line 72). Despite the fact that no specific size is recorded, these parasols are obviously those small ones fixed on the city gates. The aforementioned “Checklist of Transacted Objects Owen by the Longxing Monastery” records two used small parasols made of white silk

tabby, with tongues made of colored silk tabby, measuring one jian and a half in circumference (故小白綾傘貳, 色絹者舌, 周圍壹箭半). *Jian* 箭 (arrow; *mda'* in Tibetan) was a Tibetan measure word of length; one *jian* roughly equals to 75 cm (Iwao 2010). It seems that each of the parasols recorded in the Longxing Monastery checklist measured about 113 cm in circumference; they are indeed small parasols, though whether they were fixed on the city gates is hard to tell.

At the Mongol court, the activity of installing parasols took a different form from that of Dunhuang. “Gate” is traditionally viewed as a tool of spatial and social-class division, a significant cultural symbol with rich connotations in traditional China (Liu 1997). In the Mongol version of the parasol-installing ceremony, ideas from esoteric Buddhism and Chinese traditions of creating social divisions and differentiating “inner” and “outer” were mingled together creating a new symbolic boundary via religious practices.

5. Below is a sketchy reconstruction of the procedure of the ceremony at the Mongol court:

- From the 11th day to the 20th day of the first month: completing production and preparation of white parasols and other ritual instruments;
- On the 21st day: an official notice of the activity was issued by the Military Governor of Guiyijun to order children, who would disturb the ceremony, to be watched, and assign the Inspector-in-Chief and the Township Supervisor with the duty of patrol;
- On the 23rd day: the Military Governor himself wrote esoteric Buddhist sutras and mantras before “preserving it in a parasol as a way of making offerings to make offerings” (貯入傘中供養), and meanwhile, had silk bolts distributed to people and sent to the place to hold the ceremony. Before the ceremony began, copies of dhāraṇī sutras and incantations were fixed to the top of white parasols (both large and small ones) and banners. During the ceremony, the large white parasol canopies were moved by chariots, and the small ones were held by participants. Buddhist monks and nuns of the two divisions went up to the city walls, holding parasols while chanting incantations and sutras to protect them, parading around the city. Gentlemen, ladies, princes, and lords greeted the parade by holding incense burners. Bells were sounded; drums were beaten. “Sanskrit hymns and Buddhist sounds shook the earth, pipe and string music echo in the clouds” (梵音與佛聲震地, 簫管弦歌共浮雲爭響). Large and small parasols were separately installed in the center of city and on the four city gates. Ritual sites were established, and worshiping and offering-making ceremonies were performed. Participants recited “Texts of Installing Parasols” altogether before the ceremony official ended.

By examining *xiangrui* 祥瑞 (auspicious signs) adopted in critical periods in the history of the Guiyijun, I find that the highest frequency of the appearance of *xiangrui* usually happened when the rulers just seized the power. The major concern of these rulers is not the authenticity of any auspicious sign itself, but rather how to make up a *xiangrui* and manipulate it to gain political legitimacy. A *xiangrui* is the end product of the following factors: existing theories of prognostication and apocrypha, cooperation of bureaucrats, literati, and commoners, and last but not least, the influence of Buddhist ideas and the participation of Buddhist communities. In the process of practical operation, literati played a crucial role. All the governors of the Guiyijun, including the founder Zhang Yichao 張議潮, who is believed to be rather literary and cultured, were military dictators. The major stages of circulating a *xiangrui*—such as the implanting the ideas of *xiangrui*, developing strategies for its creation, planning the procedure, conducting flamboyant ceremonies, and producing and transmitting literary works on *xiangrui*—were all accomplished by literati (Yu 2010b).

Thus, we must pay attention to the political and cultural background revealed in the previously examined documents (Cao’s *shiru shu*, the sutra colophons, and the prayer texts), and take into consideration the power base and the political environment in Dunhuang when it was an independent, regional political entity under the rule of the Guiyijun. This methodology helps expand the scope of current research on the political pattern and

power operation of a regional autonomy, and deepens our understanding of the internal political structure, power base, and how to legitimize such a “state” ruled by a warlord.

1. The ceremony was carefully planned and organized by the supreme rulers of Dunhuang (*ji'er* 節兒, *dudu* 都督 during the occupation of Tibetans, and the Military Governor of Hexi Region during the rule of Guiyijun), and profoundly involved local elites, leaders of Buddhist communities, and commoners; it was the result of the cooperation of all social classes in Dunhuang. This activity received constant support from the government, which is a crucial reason for the thriving of this Buddhist activity.

2. Leaders of local Buddhist communities were a highlight of the ceremony; they were often placed higher than officials and even the district governor in the list of the participant in the ceremony. For example, in the “Text of Erecting Banners and Parasols” (Shu chang san wen 豎幢傘文) on P. 2854, it says: “Who donated to the sacrifice? The Provincial Secretary for Buddhist Affairs, Senior Provincial Official, Commander-in-chief, Provincial Governor are offering sacrifices to the great cause for the Emperor Dazhong on the throne” (其誰施之? 則我釋門僧政[正]和尚爰及郡首,都督,刺使[史]等奉爲當今大中皇帝建茲弘業也). Monks were placed at a higher position because of their roles as the chief executor of the ceremony. This special order of ranking also reflects the unusual situations of, and the complicated relations between, political authority and religious powers in Dunhuang at that time.

3. The primary goal of this ceremony was to “avert calamity and prevent enemies for the town’s God” (爲城隍禳災卻賊), and “cherish and protect people via Buddha-dharma” (以佛法擁護人民). It seems that this ceremony was held for extending blessings to a wide range of subjects, including the emperor and all his subordinates, but apparently the primary subject was the local people. For example, as some documents address, the ceremony was held for “all the people in the town” (合邑黎元), and “the county being bathed in health and peace” (一郡沐康寧之慶).

4. Zhang Chengfeng highly valued the ceremony of “installing parasols and parading around the city” (安傘旋城). This attitude may have something to do with his belief in white being an auspicious sign. White was also tremendously worshiped in the Western Han of the Golden Mountain that Zhang established years after; this is probably a reflection of Zhang’s value in the parasol-installing ceremony. Zhang Chengfeng may have attempted to fashion himself as a reincarnated wheel-turning king by manipulating the popular belief in the Mother of Buddha with White Parasols for the sake of political legitimacy; this possibility cannot, of course, be ruled out.

It is well known that, under the great influence of Tibetan Buddhism, Kublai Khan and Emperor Qianlong of the Qing (乾隆, r. 1735–1799) viewed the Mother of Buddhas with the White Parasol to be an important patron goddess. Inscriptions of the White Parasol Dhāraṇī were found various spots inside the latter’s tomb, Mausoleum Yu (裕陵), in the district of Qing Eastern Imperial Tombs (清東陵). For example, the shortest-ever version of this dhāraṇī in Sanskrit is inscribed on the pillars of entrance gates to the four burial chambers, a long Sanskrit version is inscribed in the upper part of the western wall in burial chamber I, and a Chinese version on the ceiling of chamber II (Wang-Toutain 2010). Françoise Wang-Toutain thinks that it is risky to conclude that Qianlong’s intention of worshiping the Mother of Buddhas with the White Parasol was to legitimize himself as a reincarnated wheel-turning king, as Kublai Khan did. Also, Wang-Toutain denies the association of the ceremony of worshiping the Mother of Buddhas with the White Parasol in Dunhuang with the rulers’ attempt for political legitimacy. Instead, Wang-Toutain argues that the purpose of this ceremony was to avert calamity (Wang-Toutain 2009, pp. 119–20). This opinion is open to question.

Actually, evidence shows that the white parasol had already been taken advantage of to achieve political legitimacy in early medieval China. For example, in the History of the Northern Wei, it records that Pei Liang 裴良, Commander of the Wucheng prefect 五城郡, successfully put down a rebellion initiated by Feng Yidu 馮宜都 and Heyue Huicheng 賀悅回成 from the tribe of Shanhu 山胡 (Mountain barbarians). These rebels

“deluged people with evil lies, made up apocryphal imperial titles, wore white robes, held white parasols and white banners ...” (以妖妄惑眾, 假稱帝號, 服素衣, 持白傘白幡...) (Wei 1974, p. 1531). This textual source has been widely used in studies on various topics, such as legends of people in white circulated in the medieval period, the introduction of Manicheism to China, beliefs in Maitreya, etc. (Tang 2011, pp. 2–20). These studies address white clothes, but rarely mention white parasols and white banners. Although the issues relating to a person in white and the sage wheel-turning king have been well discussed, no one has connected the latter to the beliefs in white parasols. There is no definitive evidence that the belief in, and ritual practices surrounding, white parasols had been transmitted to China by the early 6th century, during the rebellion of Feng Yidu and Heyue Huicheng of the Shanhu tribe. However, fragments of the *White Parasol Dhāraṇī* written in Sanskrit found in Xinjiang suggest that some religious practices associated with white parasols might have influenced Shanhu beliefs. Although the precise connection remains unclear, this warrants further investigation into the role white parasols could have played in early religious traditions in the region.

During the rule of the Five Liang States (301–397), a prophecy saying “The one in white will put himself onto the throne” was extremely pervasive in northwestern China.⁶ This prophecy seems to be still influential during the early 10th century: upon receiving the news of the Tang Empire’s collapse, Zhang Chengfeng took advantage of this prophecy, claimed it was the Heavens’ edict, and plotted to legitimize himself as a monarch. Before he officially ascended to the throne, he managed to gather supportive letters from around 10,000 people, include the Left Lackey of the Military Commander An Huai’en 安懷恩, local Buddhist monks, lay practitioners, officials, and clerks, seniors of two prefectures and six towns, and ten tribes, including Tongjia 通類 and Tuihun 退渾, as well as Tibetan and Chinese commoners in three armies, etc.⁷ During the process of creating a bandwagon to benefit Zhang’s ascension to the throne, various auspicious signs were accordingly made up. As Rong Xinjiang states, Zhang Chengfeng was not what we may call a true Buddhist; he may have had, instead, superstitious belief in principles of Yin and Yang, the theory of the Five Phases, and prognostication and apocrypha (Rong 1996a, p. 274). Nevertheless, it seems that Zhang’s lack of genuine enthusiasm for Buddhist teaching did not hinder him from making full use of Buddhist and esoteric rituals as a powerful tool to produce ideological and political propaganda.

Zhang Chengfeng seems to have taken the ceremony of “installing parasols and parading around the city” more seriously after he assumed the title of “Emperor in White on the Golden Mountain” (金山白衣帝). The “Text of Installing Parasols” on P. 3405 depicts Zhang’s seemingly pious performance in such a ceremony:

Following the Lantern Festival (the 15th day of the first month), it is a wonderful time for the ten-day fasting. [People] installed parasols and paraded around the city—this was indeed a grand ritual of Buddhist practices. Accordingly, bells were being sounded, drums were being beaten, and sacred music was being played at the gate to the capital. Upon receiving the order, Buddhist monks and nuns of the two divisions, in a huge group, holding parasols, canopies, and thousands of lotus flowers, went up to the city walls and paraded around. Gentlemen, ladies, princes, and lords, all brought incense to distribute. Sanskrit hymns and Buddhist sounds shook the earth, pipe and string music echo in the clouds.

Our emperor graced the roadside with his presence, respectfully holding a gold incense burner, and prayed for tens of thousands of families. Wish that the harvest will not be frugal; the five crops will be harvested in the southern fields and farmers will not cease in mulberry and hemp; Every family has ample supply, and good year harvest, thousands of households are rich and content (FC, vol. 24, pp. 120–21).

上元下葉, 是十齋之勝辰; 安傘行城, 實教中之大式。所以聲鐘擊鼓, 排雅樂於國門, 命二部之僧尼, 大持幡蓋, 蓮花千樹, 登城邑而周旋; 士女王公, 悉攜香而布散。梵音以(與)佛聲震地, 簫管弦歌共浮雲爭響。

我皇降龍顏於道側，虔捧金爐，爲萬姓而期(祈)恩，願豐年而不儉；五稼倍收於南畝，三農不廢於桑麻；家給年登，千廂足望。

As this document shows, the ceremony of “installing parasols and parading around the city with them” was “indeed a grand activity of Buddhist practices” (實教中之大式). In this ceremony, Zhang Chengfeng not only made his presence conspicuous in the persona of the “Emperor in White” (白衣天子), but also joined the commoners in the activity, holding an incense burner in hands, standing by the road, and greeting the passing-by parade holding parasols, to pray for the well-being for the residents. Zhang Chengfeng’s particular emphasis on the parasol installation and city circumambulation ceremony, and his personal enthusiastic involvement, was driven on one hand by his belief in white auspicious omens, which aligned with the establishment of the Western Han Golden Mountain Kingdom and its reverence for white. On the other hand, it was motivated by his intention to use the White Canopy belief to portray himself as a “Buddha-Headed Wheel-Turning King”, thereby supporting the legitimacy of his regime.

3. Esoteric Buddhism, Daoism, and *Fangshu* 方術⁸: The Origin of the Knowledge of and Belief in White Canopy

The ritual of installing parasols and circling the city was so significant in Dunhuang that it became one of annual routine Buddhist services, including the Parade of Buddha Images and Ullambana Festival. There is no doubt that such a phenomenon has a close relationship with the prevalence of the belief in Sitātapatrā (Mother of Buddhas with White Canopy, 白傘蓋佛母). During the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang, a significant number of sutras, mantras, and ritual texts associated with Sitātapatrā were translated and disseminated, laying a solid foundation for such a belief.

By the end of the 19th century, lots of manuscripts and printed texts associated with the belief in White Canopy were discovered. These manuscripts and texts were written in a wide range of languages, from Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Old Uyghur, to Tangut. The relationship between these texts is rather complicated because they were written in different languages, copied or translated at different times, and excavated in different places. But, if we can initiate a philological study and compare these texts with their counterparts in the *Taishō* canon and the lost ancient manuscript sutras preserved in Japanese temples, it will definitely result in a substantial achievement. Here I will only give a brief outline based on previous scholars’ works.

The most important sutra for the belief in Sitātapatrā is *Rulai dingjizhong chu baisangai wunengsheng tuizhuan damutuoluoni* 如來頂髻中出白傘蓋無能勝退轉大母陀羅尼 (Tib. 'phags-pa de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i gtsug-tor-nas byung-ba'i gdugs-dkar-po-can gzhan-gyis mi thub-pa phyir-zlog-pa chen-mo mchog-tu grub-pa zhes-bya-ba'i gzungs, Skt. *Sitātapatra-mahā-pratyāḡirā dhāraṇī, White Parasol Dhāraṇī hereafter). According to this and other texts, the Sitātapatrā comes from the Buddha’s corona (佛頂, Skt. usṇīṣa). Her body shape is inconceivable and facilitated with unsurpassed supernormal cognition and power. She is the one that most capable of terminating disasters and relieving sufferings among the five Buddhōsṇīṣa.

From 1883 to 1899, a trove of Sanskrit manuscripts was found in the ancient ruins in Kucha and Khotan. These manuscripts were then sent to an expert on Sanskrit, Augustus Hoernle, and preserved in the India Office Library, which later became the so-called Hoernle Collection.⁹ In *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan* edited by Hoernle, there are several relatively late fragments of the *White Parasol Dhāraṇī* written in Sanskrit found in Xinjiang and Nepal (Hoernle 1916, pp. 53–55). After that, the German expedition to Turfan had several new discoveries (von Lore Sander and Waldschmidt 1980, pp. 274–79).

In the Dunhuang manuscripts, there are many Tibetan *White Parasol Dhāraṇī* manuscripts, among which, 38 belong to the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and 24 belong to the India Office Library and British Library. These manuscripts provide us with abundant information to study the translation and dissemination of the White Parasol

Dhāranī in Dunhuang during the Tibetan occupation. Marcelle Lalou is the predecessor in studying these manuscripts (Lalou 1936). Recently, with the publication of *Facang Dunhuang zangwen wenxian* 法藏敦煌藏文文獻, detailed studies of these manuscripts are starting to unfold gradually. According to Cai Rang's 才讓 translation and interpretation, the Tibetan *White Parasol Dhāranī* claims:

This Great Goddess of Reversing and Shielding that comes from Tathāgata's usnīsa with White Parasol, and without enemies, is that who is capable of destroying all the demons, terminating others' spells, reversing and shielding one's untimely death. She also enables all the sentient beings to get liberation from afflictions, reverses and shields one from fierceness and all the nightmares. She can destroy eighty-four thousand evil spirits, make the twenty-eight constellations delighted, destroy the eight great luminaries, reverse and shield one from his enemies, and relieve one from horrible nightmares, and disasters of poison, weapon, fire, and flood.

此如來頂髻白傘蓋餘無能敵大迴遮母,能滅一切魔鬼,能斷除他者之明咒,能迴遮非時之死亡,使一切有情從束縛中得解脫,迴遮兇狠和一切惡夢。能摧毀八萬四千妖魔,令二十八星宿歡悅,摧毀八大星曜,迴遮一切怨敵,從猛厲恐怖的惡夢,及毒,兵器,火,水的災難中解脫。

Specifically, it possesses the following functions: (1) Salvation from various horrible disasters; (2) salvation from disasters caused by demons; (3) termination all kind of spells; (4) elimination all the sentient beings' evil attempts to me; (5) eliminate all kinds of illness and diseases; (6) elimination harms from animals; and (7) fulfillment of various wishes and securing of local safety and peace. Copying this sutra on birch or felt, wearing it on one's body, or reciting it will enable one to avoid disasters, attain happiness, eliminate misfortunes, be protected from calamities, and achieve rebirth in the blissful realm after death. Besides these benefits for individuals, situating it on a parasol and making offerings to it, then putting it on city gates, in palaces and households, and in villages, these activities will protect the peace of the country and local society, and appease all kinds of plagues and wars (Cai 2008).

The evolution of different Chinese translations is rather complicated. Wang-Toutain's work reveals the vein of it: *Da foding rulai fangguang xidanduobodan tuoluoni* 大佛頂如來放光悉憺多鉢憺陀羅尼 (*The Dhāranī of Śitātapatra, Great Corona of All Tathāgatas, Radiating Light*, Skt. *Sarvatathāgataosñīṣaśitātapatrā-nāmāparājitā-mahāpratyaṅgirā-mahāvīdyārājñī-nāma-dhāranī*), translated by Amoghavajra, is the Chinese transliteration of all 11 sections (praise, all disasters, and prayer) of the sutra. Thus, Amoghavajra turned the whole sutra into one long dhāranī. This dhāranī was then incorporated into a larger framework, becoming the nexus of the seventh fascicle of an apocrypha compiled in the 8th century, *Dafodingshou lengyan jing* 大佛頂首楞嚴經 (Skt. **Śūramgama-sūtra*). More than one hundred copies have survived in Dunhuang, demonstrating the popularity of this sutra. Among them, seven manuscripts are identified as the seventh fascicle of the text. There are also manuscripts containing only this long Dhāranī, with a title of *Dafoding rulai miyin xiuzhen liaoyi zhu pusa wanhang shou lengyan zhou* 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴咒 (*Lengyanzhou* hereafter). Ten of these have been found in Dunhuang. The usage of Chinese characters of the Dhāranī in these manuscripts differs significantly from that in the *Taishō* version, possibly reflecting an earlier form of the text. The *Dafoding rulai fangguang xidanduobandaluo dashenli dushe yiqiezhouwang tuoluonijing dawei de zuisheng jinlun sanmei zhoupin* 大佛頂如來放光悉憺多般怛羅大神力都攝一切咒王陀羅尼經大威德最勝金輪三昧咒品 (*Shenzhou* hereafter), which was collected in the *Taishōzō*, contains several sections, but only short dhāranīs are similar to those in the seventh fascicle of *Dafodingshou lengyan jing*. The complete long dhāranī is not contained in it. Every dhāranī in it has a ritual commentary attached, illustrating how to form the mudrā. Meanwhile, other ritual commentaries based on *Fodingda baisangai tuoluoni jing* have been compiled or translated in the Tang Dynasty, such as the *Baisangai dafoding wang zuisheng wubi dawei de jingang wuai dadaochang tuoluoni niansong fayao* 白傘蓋大佛頂王最勝無比大威德金剛無礙大道場陀羅尼念誦法要 (*Fayao* hereafter) in *Taishōzō*, and the *Baisangai dafoding yigui* 白傘蓋佛頂儀軌 (*Ritual Commentary of the White Prarasol, Corona of Buddha*), one fascicle in the catalogue of the "new esoteric Bud-

dhism classics” was brought to Japan from China by the Japanese monk Engyō. But there are no similar manuscripts in Dunhuang manuscripts. The eight Dunhuang copies of *Shenzhou* are similar to the *Taishōzō* version and the seventh fascicle of *Dafodingshou lengyan jing*. Additionally, there are ten manuscripts of *Da foding rulai dingji baigai tuoluoni Shenzhou jing*. They were believed should be the Chinese translation of the Tibetan *Foding baisangai tuoluoni jing* found in Dunhuang. Among them, P. 4519 and S. 6348 were copied with other dhāraṇīs, which are also translated from Tibetan, such as *Zhu xingmu tuoluoni jing* 諸星母陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī of the Planet Mothers, Skt. Grahamātrkā-dhāraṇī*), to form a maṇḍala (Wang-Toutain 2009, pp. 103–7). This seems to provide corroborative evidence. However, recent research indicates that this sutra has direct connections to the Qinglong Temple, a major Esoteric Buddhist temple in Chang’an during the Tang dynasty, and it was not directly translated in full from the Tibetan text (Liao 2015, pp. 67–69).

Two eminent monks, Amoghavajra 不空 and Facheng 法成 made great contributions to the dissemination of esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang. Amoghavajra enjoyed a high reputation and position in both religion and politics of the Middle Tang. Lots of texts and rituals of esoteric Buddhism became prevalent through his promotion.¹⁰ He also had a close relationship with Dunhuang. Su Bai 宿白 once pointed out, “Amoghavajra had promoted the esoteric Buddhism at the western frontier for a long time. It is reasonable to deduce that his activities stimulated the prosperity of esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang directly. Since the High Tang period, the esoteric Buddhist figures in Mogao Cave have undergone significant development in terms of their variety, quantity, and position. It may have something to do with Amoghavajra’s activities.” (Su 1989a, 1989b, 1996, p. 282). Thus, it is quite natural that various White Parasol Dhāraṇī and dhāraṇīs based on Amoghavajra’s translation were prevalent in Dunhuang.

The ritual of installing parasols and circling the city appeared relatively later. All the texts that related to the belief in white parasol can be dated to the later period of Tibetan occupation. It suggests that such a ritual could not be practiced without the influence of Tibetan esoteric Buddhism. Facheng was born in Tibet. The first Military Governor of the Guiyijun, Zhang Yichao, used to study with Facheng. Thus, after Zhang overthrew the Tibetan occupation, he persuaded Facheng to stay and continue to preach Buddhist teachings in Dunhuang. Facheng translated several volumes of esoteric Buddhist sūtras and treaties that were to be widely circulated in Dunhuang. For example, there are as many as 70 copies of the *Dhāraṇī of the Planet Mothers* in the current Dunhuang corpus.¹¹ Even though there is no direct evidence showing that Facheng himself translated any texts related to white parasols, he played a significant role in the continuity and development of esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang during Zhang’s reign.

The most important academic achievement on Dunhuang esoteric Buddhism mainly focuses on the statues and mural paintings (Su 1989a, 1989b; Peng 1994a, 1994b, 1996a, 1996b, 2003; Wang 1993; Tanaka 2000), and parts of the texts.¹² The studies on rituals are still insufficient (Kuo 1994, 1998), and there are even fewer studies adopting the approach of religious-social history.¹³ We have very little information about esoteric Buddhism’s transition from the Tibetan occupation to the Guiyijun period, as well as the religious practices in different periods. According to the *Fayao*, the ritualization of the *White Parasol Dhāraṇī* was accomplished during the Late Tang, which corresponds to the traces of the development of esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang (Misaki 1977, p. 491). Dunhuang manuscripts fill the gap of the white parasol ritual between the Tang and Yuan dynasties and provide us with practical details different from the Buddhist canon.

As discussed above, before the ritual, what the Military Governor, Zhang Chengfeng copied, placed in the parasol, and made offering was the *Shenzhou*. There are several esoteric Buddhism scriptures in Dunhuang pertaining to the white parasol, but why did he choose this particular one instead of the others?

The selection between various scriptures that have the same origin is extremely complicated. The most important factors are the satisfaction of efficaciousness and the zeitgeist

of academia and belief. But we should also take the textual features and physical appearance of the scripture into consideration.

The *Shenzhou* contains only transliterated dhāraṇī, without any explanatory words. For the Han Chinese, such a text does not carry any semantic meanings. Then, the origin of the faith of copying, offering, and worshipping it is mainly due to two reasons: the general understanding that dhāraṇī has a supreme power, and other texts' promotion.

The Chinese generally hold strong reverence for and faith in mysterious spells. In early *fangshu* practices, spells form an important category. Such reverence and faith were further enhanced after the introduction of esoteric Buddhism into China. The colophon of the BD6800) *Lengyanzhou* states that the value of copying lies in the power of the copied words to contain the spells:

The *Sūramgama-sūtra* has ten fascicles, and the dhāraṇī occupies the seventh. Disciple Zhang Qiu handwrote the dhāraṇī, which he will wear it for his entire life, seeking blessings and surports. [Copy] Finished on the 18th day of the 5th month of the 5th year of Zhonghe (885) (Li 2003, p. 28).

大佛頂陀羅尼經有十卷，咒在第七卷內。弟子張球手自寫咒，終身頂戴，乞願加備。中和五年五月十八日寫訖。

Zhang Qiu was a famous literato in Dunhuang during the Guiyijun period (Zheng 1997; Yan 2002). His attitude towards this dhāraṇī represents the general understanding of it among the intellectuals of Dunhuang.

According to S. 2143, the *Dangsi shangzhang nei zhu zijing lu* 當寺上藏內諸雜經錄 (*Catalogue of the Canonical Miscellaneous Sutras in the Temple*), on the 23rd day of the 4th month in the 2nd year of Qiande 乾德 (962), Sengzheng 僧政 Huiyan 惠晏, Falü 法律 Huici 惠慈 of the *jingsi* 經司 (Division of Buddhist Library), checked the canonical sūtras in the temple, hoping to collect and reconstruct two complete *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtras*. But because they lack too many fascicles, this work could not be accomplished. On the same day, Falü Haiquan 法律海詮 asked to canonize the one fascicle *Dafoding lue zhou ben* 大佛頂略咒本 (*Abbreviated Dhāraṇī of Great Buddha Corona*) (Fang 1997, pp. 573–78). This text might be the same as the *Shenzhou* copied by Zhang Chengfeng. Since it was entitled *Abbreviated Dhāraṇī*, it is unlikely that it was a long dhāraṇī such as the *Dafoding shenzhou*. And the fact that Haiquan was asked to canonize it suggests that it was not a canonical one before. The titles of these two manuscripts copied by Zhang Chengfeng on the same day of the second year of Tianfu are slightly different, suggesting that they belong to an abbreviated version with folk features. Its textual form stayed at a “liquid phase” and had not yet been finalized in the “solid phase”. After more than sixty years, Haiquan’s request of canonization reveals that the “solidification” had been accomplished.¹⁴ Such process is also the process of deifying and authorizing *Shenzhou* to surpass other scriptures.

We need also to take the physical appearance of the scripture into consideration. The *Shenzhou* is an abbreviated version, even with added title and colophon, containing only 39 lines of texts. If copied tightly, it could be copied within a single sheet of paper. The combination of content and physical appearance made *Shenzhou* the only scripture suiting the parasol in the situating parasol ritual. Then how was the scripture situated in the parasol, and where was it placed?

The *Foshuo dabasan zongchi tuoluoni jing* 佛說大白傘蓋總持陀羅尼經 translated by Zhenzhi 真智 and other monks in Yuan Dynasty, just like *Foding baisangai tuoluoni jing* 佛頂白傘蓋陀羅尼經 translated by Shaluoba 沙囉巴 (Shes-rab dpal, 1259–1314), used to be considered as a translation of a Tibetan version, like *Foding baisangai tuoluoni jing*. But recent research reveals that it may be translated from a Tangut version (Sun 2008). There is one section that differs slightly from Shaluoba’s translation:

For people’s diseases, cow’s diseases, livestock’s diseases, plagues, and harms, and hinders that cause diseases, and battles, and all other issues pertaining to enemies, put this Great Goddess of Reversing and Shielding, without enemies, that comes from Tathāgata’s usṇīṣa with White Parasol, on the top of a parasol, and just make an extensive offering; Place the parasol on the great city gate, or inside the palace, or inside the villages and

neighborhoods, or inside the settlements, or on plains, or at quiet places, and make extensive offerings to the Great Goddess of Reversing and Shielding, without enemies. Thus, it will soon bring peace and stability to the country, and appease the causes of plagues, harms, battles, and all the enemies (T. 977, 19. 406b26–406c5).

又人病, 牛病, 畜病, 疫病及損害, 及惹病礙, 及鬥戰, 餘他一切軍兵之中, 則能以此一切如來頂髻中出白傘蓋佛母餘無能敵大迴遮母, 安置於幢頂上, 作廣大供養已。將幢置大城門上, 或宮宅之中, 或村坊之中, 或聚落之中, 或川原之中, 或寂靜之處, 于餘無能敵大迴遮母處作廣大供養, 則能速然國界安寧, 亦能柔善疫病礙與損害, 鬥爭, 餘他一切軍兵也。

In the *Da foding rulai dingji baigai tuoluoni Shenzhou jing* 大佛頂如來頂髻白蓋陀羅尼神咒經 found in Dunhuang:

If there are epidemics or livestock diseases, disasters or misfortunes, or external enemies causing trouble, put this dhāraṇī on the four city gates, settlements, villages, or crowded places or wilderness. Set a high parasol, and hang this unparalleled, supreme dhāraṇī that comes from Tathāgata's usṇīṣa with White Parasol, By paying respectful homage and worshipping it, all disasters, misfortunes, and external enemies causing trouble will immediately retreat and disperse.

若有疫癘及六畜疫病, 或有災崇, 或外怨賊來相侵惱者, 或於城門, 聚落, 村邑, 或多人處, 或曠野處, 安置高幢, 懸此如來頂髻白蓋無有能及甚能調伏陀羅尼, 恭敬禮拜, 所有災崇及外怨敵來相侵惱者, 尋便退散¹⁵。

The translation by Zhenzhi states that the dhāraṇī should be placed at the top of a parasol, and then the parasol should be put on city gate after the offering. However, Shaluoba's translation states the dhāraṇī should be attached to the top of the parasol, which should then be welcomed and placed at the four city gates, whereas the Dunhuang version instructs to set up a tall parasol and hang the dhāraṇī inside it. It is not known whether these differences resulted from different original texts, or different styles of translation. In sum, the dhāraṇī is placed at the top of the parasol. From the diction of "place into" in Zhang Chengfeng's announcement, it should be placed in a container at the top of the parasol, such as a wooden bucket or an iron box, or it should be placed in a treasure bottle, and then hung onto the top of the parasol instead of being attached or hang to the parasol directly.

The record of Yongning temple 永寧寺, in the first fascicle of *Records of the Monasteries in Luoyang* 洛陽伽藍記 states:

There is a nine-story stūpa in the temple. It is made of wood. The total height is 90 zhang. There is a golden cha on its top with a height of 10 zhang. Thus [the top] is 1000 feet from the ground. It could be seen from one hundred li away from the capital [viz. Luoyang]. At first, when digging the foundation of the stūpa to the yellow spring, [people] got 30 golden statues. The dowager took it as a symbol of faith in Dharma, which suggests the construction was excessive. There is a golden treasure bottle on the cha; its volume is 25 hu. Beneath the bottle, there are 11 layers of golden plates to collect the morning dew. They are all embroidered with golden bells. (Yang 2010, pp. 3–4).

中有九層浮圖一所, 架木爲之, 舉高九十丈。上有金刹, 復高十丈, 合去地一千尺。去京師百里, 已遙見之。初, 掘基至黃泉下, 得金像三十軀。太后以爲信法之征, 是以營建過度也。刹上有金寶瓶, 容二十五斛。寶瓶下有承露金盤一十一重, 周匝皆垂金鐸。

In Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, the term cha 刹 is used as biaocho 表刹. In Sanskrit, this corresponds to "chatrāvadi" or "chatrāvalī", which means "a series of parasols". Specifically, it refers to the overlapping discs on the top of a stupa, resembling parasols from top to bottom. The original meaning of "chatrāvadi" or "chatrāvalī" is also these overlapping discs. However, after reaching Central Asia and China, the original meaning of overlapping discs gradually became forgotten. As a result, its shape transformed into a hollow ring in the middle, known as the xianglun 相輪 or auspicious wheel (Shindō 2008, pp. 146–49). As discussed above, this cha is an exceptionally magnificent parasol, and the volume of the treasure bottle on its top is as much as 25 hu. It can be inferred that the top of a parasol in Dunhuang has a similar structure. The cha of Yongning temple is a part of the stūpa that was constructed excessively, so its volume is surprisingly big. To the contrary,

parasols of Dunhuang were used to circle the city, so they cannot be too big. Probably the dhāraṇī scripture was put into the bottle, together with other offerings.

This speculation can be corroborated by the newly discovered Khotanese text of the *Vimalaprabha Mahādharmaṇī Sūtra*, which dates back to the late 7th century. In the third section, titled “The Benefits of the Dhāraṇī Prepared as a Parasol by Shakyamuni and the Celestial Beings”, it states: “One should write this Dhāraṇī ninety-nine times, either on birch bark or on paper, and place it inside a wheel or atop a parasol. At the four corners of the stūpa, and in order, the complete Dhāraṇī should be placed in the center of the wheel and in the middle of the parasol, and finally sealed atop the stūpa.” (Duan 2019, p. 31).

The pearl stupa discovered in the heavenly palace on the third level of the Ruiguang Temple Pagoda 瑞光寺塔 in Suzhou features an octagonal pillar stūpa, which stands 19.4 cm high and rests on a lotus seat inside the stūpa hall. The stupa is hollow and contains a small, pale blue gourd-shaped porcelain vase inside. Within this vase are nine relics and one folded printed sheet each of the Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the *Mahāsukhāvātī Dhāraṇī*. This stūpa can be seen as a model of a grand stupa, and its placement and arrangement of relics and scriptures can serve as a valuable reference (Suzhou bowuguan 蘇州博物館 2006, pp. 76–78).

The reason why the ritual of white parasol was so popular is that the scriptures and rituals claim their supreme power in protecting the realm and pacifying people, and this is what was needed most in Dunhuang, which was in turbulence for a long time. In the *Zhisan wen* 置傘文 (*Essay of Installing the Parasol*), there are abundant words expressing such an idea. The combination of scriptural basis and real needs makes the strong faith. At the surface level, the methods of using the dhāraṇī to protect one person, one household, and one area are different, but essentially, they have a shared theory. The seventh fascicle of *Śūramgama-sūtra* includes this passage:

Ānanda, if all the realm in all the worlds, all the sentient beings in all the realms, write this dhāraṇī on birch bark, patra leaves, paper and silk, white cotton, and put into scent bag. These people’s minds are blind, and cannot remember and recite the dhāraṇī, wear it, or write it inside houses, you should know that all the poison couldn’t harm people in their entire lives (T. 945, 19. 137a12–15).

阿難! 若諸世界隨所國土, 所有眾生隨國所生, 樺皮, 貝葉, 紙素, 白氈, 書寫此咒貯於香囊, 是人心昏未能誦憶, 或帶身上, 或書宅中. 當知是人盡其生年, 一切諸毒所不能害。

Furthermore,

Ānanda, if the realms, prefectures and counties, settlements suffer famine and plague, or disasters of enemies and traitors, battles, and all the other places of disasters, write this dhāraṇī and place it on the four city gates, and on caityas and pavilions, and order all the sentient beings in the realm to welcome this dhāraṇī respectfully, worship it with reverence, make offerings to it with all their minds. Order the people to wear it on their bodies, or placed it at their residence, all the disasters and misfortunes will be dispersed (T. 945, 19. 137c4–10).

阿難! 若諸國土, 州縣, 聚落, 饑荒疫病, 或復刀兵賊難, 鬥爭, 兼餘一切厄難之地, 寫此神咒安城四門, 並諸支提或脫閣上, 令其國土所有眾生奉迎斯咒, 禮拜恭敬, 一心供養. 令其人民各各身佩, 或各各安所居宅地, 一切災厄悉皆銷滅。

The words above state that if individuals or single households want to utilize the dhāraṇī, they can wear it on their bodies, or put it in a scent bag and wear it. Secondly, they can place it inside the household. Through the Chinese colophon,¹⁶ we know that the printed Pelliot Sanskrit 1 found in Dunhuang¹⁷ was intended to be wore or placed in a household, according to the dhāraṇī:

The Buddha told Ānanda, if all the sentient beings in all the worlds write this dhāraṇī, and wear it, or place it inside their households, all the poisons couldn’t be harmful to them. If Tathāgatas of ten directions hold this dhāraṇī, their minds will achieve perfect enlightenment. Recoded on the 28th day of the 10th month of the fourth year of Kaibao (971).

佛告阿難，若諸世界一切眾生書寫此咒，身上帶持，或安宅中，一切諸毒所不能害。十方如來執此咒，心成無上覺。開寶四年十月二十八日記。

The emergence of wooden block printing suggests the need for such a dhāraṇī was enormous. Copying, wearing, and placing in households were the general ways to maintain all the dhāraṇīs, not only the white parasol dhāraṇī. In the case of the *Da suiqiu tuoluoni* 大隨求陀羅尼 (*Dhāraṇī of the Protectress Who Grants Great Freedom*), besides reciting, there are other ways to uphold it. The first way is to wear it around one's neck or arm; the second is to place it on top of a parasol or *cha*. The *Foshuo pubian guangming yanman qingjing chisheng siwei ruyi baoyin xinwu nengsheng zongchi da mingwangda suiqiu tuoluoni* 佛說普遍光明焰鬘清淨熾盛思惟如意寶印心無能勝總持大明王大隨求陀羅尼 (*Dhāraṇī of the Great Protectress who is Universally Radiant, Pure, Incandescent, a Wish-granting Gem, and the Sealed Essence of the Invincible King of Mantras*), which was printed in the 2nd year of Jingde 景德(1005) of the Song Dynasty, on vellum paper, was unearthed from the Stūpa in Ruiguang temple 瑞光寺 of Suzhou 蘇州. The Buddha and the nine luminaries are placed at the center, the 28 constellations and mallas at both sides, and while the Sanskrit dhāraṇī filled other spaces. At the bottom, there is a sealed Chinese colophon of prayers:

If someone recites it with his entire mind, or wears it around his neck or arm, he will get his body protected by the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Devanāga, ghosts and deities from ten directions. Uncountable kalpa, all the evil karma will be exterminated. [It will facilitate one to] survive all the disasters. If someone write this dhāraṇī, and place it on top of a parasol or pole, it will pacify all the evil winds and heavy rains, all the untimely cold and hot, thunder and lightning; it will pacify all the conflicts and lawsuits in multiple devas; it will pacify all the mosquitoes, horseflies, locusts, worms, and all the other that eat grains. [All of them] will disperse. [These words] cannot exhaust its merits.¹⁸

若有人志心誦念，戴持頸臂者，得十方諸佛菩薩[天]龍鬼神親自護持身中，無量劫來，一切罪業，悉皆消滅，度一切災難。若有書寫此陀羅尼，安於幢刹，能息一切惡風暴雨，非時寒熱，雷電霹靂；能息一切諸天鬪諍言頌(訟)；能息一切蚊虻蝗蟲及諸余類食苗稼者，悉能退散，說不盡功。

The Ch.Ivi.0033 Dhāraṇī Talisman for offerings to Ketu and Beifang Chenxing found in Dunhuang also stated “whosoever wears it will obtain supernormal powers”. The prayers below these two deities' images read:

Whosoever wears this talisman, which is a dhāraṇī talisman, will obtain supernormal powers and will have his sins of a thousand kalpas remitted. The Buddhas of the ten directions shall be always in sight. Abroad in the world he shall everywhere encounter good fortune. Throughout his entire life he shall gain power and fame and enjoy others' respect. His religious merit shall be unparalleled. May he be protected and purified, and may this be carried out swiftly, in accord with the statutes and regulations.¹⁹

此符陀羅尼符，帶者得神通，除罪千劫，十方諸佛愍在目前。去者無不吉，利達一世，得人恭敬，功德(德)無比護淨。急急如律令。

The practice of wearing dhāraṇī on the body demonstrates a connection between traditional Chinese customs and the ancient, distant practices of Indian Buddhism, including age-old rituals for enhancing the body and the visual imitation of bodhisattvas and their bejeweled adornments (Copp 2014, pp. 74–79). In traditional Chinese *fangshu* practices, wearing objects with mystic power, such as gold and silver, jade, plant (peach, mulberry, willow, elm) branch, and animal's horn (ox, antelope), and feather, etc., is considered to have the effect of exorcism. After the emergence of Daoism, wearing a talisman while traveling became a common method to protect the travelers (Yu 2006, pp. 330–80). In the Tang Dynasty, Buddhism became more prevalent; the influence from esoteric Buddhism grew stronger than ever, combining with the interaction and assimilation of Daoism, giving spells a higher position within Buddhism. Several apocryphal works that incorporate talismans both from Daoism and Buddhism have emerged. S. 2708, the *Foshuo qiqian fo shenfu jing* 佛說七千佛神咒經 (*Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Seven Thousand Buddhas, Preached by the Buddha*) is such an apocrypha. Makita Tairyō thought the content of this apocrypha is absurd, but it suggested the popularization of Buddhism (Makita 1976, p. 85). The main body of it

is comprised of talismans for travel. Probably it is carried by travelers. In the texts, it even states that:

After students wear the talisman, when they go to the four directions, thousands of roads will be without endings, and tens thousands of roads will be without misfortunes. When they lay down, [they will sleep] without nightmares. What is requested will be always fulfilled, what one hopes will be realized. The Dharma of thousand Buddha follows the appointment of the talisman, and may this be carried out swiftly, in accord with the statutes and regulations.

弟子佩千佛符之後，四出行來，千道無窮，萬道無難，臥不惡夢，所求常得，所願從心，千佛法正如符所敕。急急如律令。

Thus, it was easier for people to accept the idea that they could wear white parasol *dhāraṇī* on their bodies.

There is ample evidence in Daoist talismans showing that they could be placed in households. Two talismans in P. 3358 *Huzai shenli juan* 護宅神曆卷 (*The Divine Scroll of Protecting the Household*): The Divine Talisman of Dongzhong 董仲, with notations states: “The divine talisman of Dongzhong: If there is turbulence in someone’s household, and lasts for six days or more, and his corps and silkworms do not grow well, his treasure do not accumulate, and eight spirits are in disturbance. Take a board made of peach wood and one foot in length, write this talisman on it, and hang it to four corners of the household. It is very auspicious.” The second one does not bear a title. It only depicts a beast with wings, a deity with a human’s face, and a lion’s body. The notation states: “[It] comes out of a burrow inside the household, [written on] a board made of peach wood, nine inches in length, nail it.” Thus, we know peach board with human and deity imaged when hanging or nailing to the surroundings of a household can be utilized to protect the security and happiness of the household and its master. Essentially, the theory here is no different from copying *White Parasol Dhāraṇī* and placing it in a household.

I have discussed the *fangshu* of *renxing* 人形 (human figurines) along the Silk Road. The so-called *renxing* is a small statue carved on cuneiform logs. The tops are usually carved into the shape of a human head and accentuated with ink. Since Stein first unearthed these figurines along the Great Wall in 1907, archeologists have discovered quite a number of them in watchtowers, tombs and other architectural structures in the bongsu-dae sites or tombs in Turfan, Dunhuang, Gaotai 高臺, and Juyan 居延, and Kyōto, from the innermost Asia to Japan. Some only bear the characters *dairan* 代人 (substitution person), written with ink or vermilion. Some have Sogdian on their back (with the same meaning as *dairan*). After analyzing a large amount of archaeological and textual materials, I argue that these human figurines constitute one major category of *fangshu*. It is closely pertained to primordial plant worship and exorcism and shares the same origin with the *fangshu* of *zhenzai* (suppressing the household), *zhenmu* (suppressing the tomb). The purpose of sticking these figurines in earth is to exorcise all the invaders; no matter whether they are live enemies or demons and ghosts. At the later period, these figurines were used to suffer punishments for the dead and relieve the living from misfortunes. Meanwhile, they can also be used to protect tombs and constructions. Thus, these figurines are influenced by Daoism. The Great Wall is a military construction, which has its own boundary. In this sense, soldiers stationed near the Great Wall made numerous human figurines, and stuck them around the observation towers, trying to exorcise enemies by employing the mystic power. Such activities were to construct another “Magical Great Wall” besides the real one. The concept of space and boundary not only exists in this world, but also exists in the other world. Thus, this is one factor of death belief, concept of soul, and funeral ritual and convention. In fact, for the Chinese, there is no essential difference between households and tombs. They call the former “Yang household”, and the latter “Yin household”; they are residences for one’s body and soul. If human figures can be used in households and garrisons, then it is natural that they can be used in tombs as well (Yu 2011c, pp. 115–39).

Li Ling argues that various magic that used to exorcise ghosts could be called *yanhe yaoxiang* 厭劾妖祥 (exorcise and suppress ghosts and demons) in general. They share the

same characteristic with *zhuyou* 祝由. Besides magic, they were usually combined with offering and worshipping. Diagrams and talismans are the most important weapons of *yanhe yaoxiang*. The former is usually associated with astronomy and astrology, and the latter with the worship of the visual and textual power from pictures and words (Li 2001, pp. 71–84). These arguments are very helpful to our understanding of such beliefs and their application. The method of application of the *White Canopy Dhāraṇī* undoubtedly came from esoteric Buddhism sutras and rituals. But its wide dissemination and fast adoption also lie in the fact that, in theories and techniques, it has a lot in common with Chinese *fangshu* and Daoism. In the eyes of people in Dunhuang, it was no more than a new technique of *yanhe yaoxiang*.

4. Conclusions: The Making and Guarding of Sacred Space

Due to the practical functions of shielding and guarding of parasols, they are continuously deified in a religious context and endowed with a role of making and guarding a space.²⁰ During the late Tang and Five Dynasties, the religious significance of parasols was enhanced by the dissemination of the beliefs and practices associated with the Mother of Buddhas with Great White Canopy. Installing parasols or carrying them in a procession to circle the city was equivalent to delimiting a boundary,²¹ setting up a defense, or creating a sanctuary. The *White Canopy Dhāraṇī* is filled with mysterious power, whether it is worn on one's body as an exorcising object, placed at the four gates as a symbol of guarding passage, or put into a parasol and circled around the city as a way of dividing up open space. In all these cases, the practice distinguishes the inside from the outside, the self from others, purity from impurity. This practice also has the power to exterminate plagues and disasters, solemnify the space, obtain blessings, and bring purification, health, and peace to all. Such techniques derived from esoteric Buddhism but also have a lot in common with those of the traditional Chinese *fangshu* and Daoist exorcistic prayer. Through the regular and grand performance of the rituals, political legitimacy and a community of shared destiny are successfully constructed in actions that align with maintaining local welfare.

Funding: This research was funded by grants from the State Social Sciences Foundation of China “Comprehensive Studies on Numerology Documents in Chinese and Ethic Languages Unearthed in Dunhuang and Turfan” 敦煌吐魯番出土漢文與民族語文數術文獻綜合研究, grant number 22&ZD220.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Abbreviations

DHSHJJ	<i>Dunhuang shehui jingji wenxian zhenji shilu</i> 敦煌社會經濟文獻真跡釋錄. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1986–1990. 5 vols.
EC	<i>Ecang Dunhuang wenxian</i> 俄藏敦煌文獻. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992–2001. 17 vols
FC	<i>Facang Dunhuang xiyu wenxian</i> 法藏敦煌西域文獻. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995–2005. 34 vols.
T	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i> 大正新脩大藏經, 1924–1932. 85 vols.
YC	<i>Yingcang Dunhuang wenxian (Hanwen fojing yiwai bufen)</i> 英藏敦煌文獻 (漢文佛經以外部分). Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1994. 14 vols.

Notes

¹ The Chinese title reads *Cao Yijin shishe huixiang shu* 曹議金施舍迴向疏. Like many documents in the Dunhuang manuscript collection, this record was not given any title in the original manuscript. This title is given by the editors of DHSHJJ.

- 2 Guiyiju 歸義軍, literally translation, the “Return to Allegiance Army”, is the title of the autonomous Han-Chinese-dominated warlord regime ruling Dunhuang from late 9th century to mid 11th century.
- 3 The author transcribed the text according to the original manuscript and corrected the errors in literacy and sentence structure in previous transcribed texts.
- 4 This manuscript was titled as “大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經歸義軍節度使張公題記”. See (Ikeda 1990, p. 48).
- 5 Su E’s *Duyang zhibian* (杜陽雜編 *Duyang Miscellaneous Records*), “So they used gold and silver to build a pagoda, pearls and jade to build a treasure tent and incense stick, and used peacock feathers for decoration. The small pagoda was ten feet high, and the big one was twenty feet high. They carved sandalwood into flying curtains, flower rails, tiles, steps, etc., and covered them all with gold and silver. It took hundreds of workers to carry one pagoda. Its precious tents and incense sticks are too numerous to count, and their craftsmanship is so brilliant that they rival the beauty of the sun.” (Su 1939, p. 29)
- 6 See Dunhuang manuscript P. 2632, in *FC*, vol. 17, 8. On this subject, see also (Wang 1984, pp. 85–115; Morgan 2000).
- 7 See Dunhuang manuscript S. 4276, in *YC*, vol. 6, 18. For collation of this text, see *DHSHJJ*, vol. 4, p. 386.
- 8 In Chinese context, *fangshu* includes medicine, divination, horoscope, magic, and similar arts.
- 9 For the life, works, and collection of Hornle, see (Wang 1991, 2011). Also see (Rong 1996b, pp. 1–3, 29–35).
- 10 For the life, works, and thought of Amoghavajra, see (Chou 1945). See also (Lü 1995, pp. 246–88).
- 11 For Facheng’s life and works, see (Wu 1984; Ueyama 1990, pp. 84–243).
- 12 As early as the 1960s, Kajite Tsujō 加地哲定 published an overview paper “Tonkōhon mikkyō kei bunken ni tsuite 敦煌本密教系文献について” (Kajite 1965, pp. 223–36). After that, the most important scholar in this field is Hirai Yūkei 平井宥慶, who has published nearly ten papers on the esoteric Buddhism in Dunhuang. For Chinese scholarship, see (Li 2003).
- 13 While speaking highly of Li Xiaoraong’s book, Peng Jianbing’s book review points out that the author failed to discuss the esoteric Buddhism practices of different periods in Dunhuang from a historical perspective. See (Peng 2005, p. 39).
- 14 The most important feature of manuscripts is their fluidity. Li Ling 李零 gives an excellent metaphor about this, “During the Warring State, Qin and Han Dynasty, books were like gas, their types and structures were quite different from their later successors. When it comes to the Sui and Tang dynasty, books were more like fluid, even though they are still not completely stable, their types and structure start to become unified. After the Song dynasty, books became solid, they were solidified, the minor variations usually resulted from errors in coping or printing”. See (Li 2004, p. 198).
- 15 A total of 10 manuscripts were found, and the above text is based on P. 4071.
- 16 Ma De 馬德 proposes that this dhāraṇī should be regarded as a woodblock painting. He argues that the Sanskrit dhāraṇī was printed as spells, while the Chinese words were printed as prayers. See (Ma 2005, p. 3).
- 17 This serial number belong to the Pelliot Sanskrit Collection. Tai Huili 邵惠莉 mistakenly took this item as a Tibetan one, and gave it a serial number P. t. 1. See (Tai 2005, p. 7).
- 18 I had an opportunity to see this dhāraṇī when I visited Suzhou Museum on 9 February 2011. It used to be published as a black-and-white photo with a brief introduction. See (Suzhou shi wenguanhui 蘇州市文管會 and Suzhou bowuguan 蘇州博物館 1979). See also (Su 1999, pp. 74, 141). A high quality colored plate can be found in (Suzhou bowuguan 蘇州博物館 2006, p. 158).
- 19 For studies on this talisman, see (Yu 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b).
- 20 Such functions can be accumulated to an unbounded extent. For example, in the *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經, the Vijaya, who belongs to the five Buddhōṣṇīṣa including the Sitātapatra we discuss here, mentioned people can exterminate all their evil karma by approaching the dhāraṇī or see the dhāraṇī. Even one who is shadowed by a parasol with this dhāraṇī on it, or the dust of that parasol fall down on one’s body accidentally, he will also get his evil karma dispersed. See (Liu 2008, p. 10).
- 21 For studies on boundaries in Chinese history, see (Hay 1994). However, there is still much space for further study.

References

- Cai, Rang 才讓. 2008. Dunhuang Zangwen mizong jingdian *Baisangai jing yanjiu* 敦煌藏文密宗經白傘蓋經初探. *Dunhuanxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 1: 1–13.
- Chou, Yi-liang. 1945. Tantrism in China. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8: 241–332.
- Copp, Paul. 2014. *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Duan, Qing. 2019. *Yutian yu wugou jingguang da tuoluoni* 于闐語無垢淨光大陀羅尼. Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju.
- Fang, Guangchang 方廣錫. 1997. *Dunhuang fojiao jinglu jijiao* 敦煌佛教經錄輯校. Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe.
- Hao, Chunwen 郝春文. 1998. *Tangmo Wudai Songchu Dunhuang sengni de shehui shenghuo* 唐末五代宋初敦煌僧尼的社會生活. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe.
- Hay, John, ed. 1994. *Boundaries in China: Critical Views*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Hoernle, A. F. Rudolf. 1916. *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan: Facsimiles with Transcripts, Translation and Notes. Vol. 1. Pt. I and II, Manuscripts in Sanskrit, Khotanese, Kuchean, Tibetan and Chinese*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

- Ikedo, On 池田温. 1990. *Chūgoku kodai shahon shikigo shūroku* 中國古代寫本識語集錄. Tokyo: Daizō shuppan.
- Iwao, Kazushi 岩尾一史. 2010. *Kodai chibetto no nagasa no tani: Mda' to sormo* 古代チベットの長さの單位: Mda' と sor mo. *Tonkō shahon kenkyū nempō* 敦煌寫本研究年報 4: 181–94.
- Kajite, Tsujō 加地哲定. 1965. *Mikkyōgaku mikkyōshi ronbunshō* 密教学密教史論文集. Ito: Koyasan daigaku.
- Kuo, Li-ying. 1994. *Confessionnet contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois du Ve au Xe siècle*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient.
- Kuo, Li-ying. 1998. Mandala et rituel de confession à Dunhuang. *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 85: 227–56. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Lalou, Marcelle. 1936. Notes à propos d'une amulette de Touen-houang: Les litanies de Tārā et la *Sitātapatrādhāranī*. *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 4: 135–49.
- Li, Ling 李零. 2001. *Zhongguo fangshu kao (xiudingben)* 中國方術考 (修訂本). Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe.
- Li, Ling 李零. 2004. *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu* 簡帛古書與學術源流. Beijing: Sanlian shudian.
- Li, Xiaorong 李小榮. 2003. *Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao* 敦煌密教文獻論稿. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe.
- Liao, Yang. 2015. Bai sangai jing yichuan santi 白傘蓋經譯傳三題. *Sijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究 2: 65–75.
- Liu, Shufen 劉淑芬. 2008. *Miezui yu duwang: Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jingchuang yanjiu* 滅罪與度亡: 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經幢研究. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.
- Liu, Zenggui 劉增貴. 1997. Menhu yu Zhongguo gudai shehui 門戶與中國古代社會. *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 4: 817–97.
- Lü, Jianfu 呂建福. 1995. *Zhongguo mijiao shi* 中國密教史. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe.
- Ma, De 馬德. 2005. Dunhuang banhua de beijing yiyi 敦煌版畫的背景意義. *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2: 1–6.
- Makita, Tairyō 牧田諦亮. 1976. *Gikyō kenkyū* 疑經研究. Kyoto: Kyōto daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo.
- Misaki, Ryōshō 三崎良周. 1977. Bucchōkei no mikkyō:tōdai mikkyōshi no ichi shiten 佛頂系の密教: 唐代密教史の一視點. In *Yoshio ioka hakase kanreki kinen dōkyō kenkyū ronshō: Dōkyō no shisō to bunka* 吉岡博士還曆記念道教研究論集: 道教の思想と文化. Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, pp. 477–99.
- Morgan, Carole. 2000. Mayhem on the Northwest Frontier. *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 11: 183–215. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Peng, Jianbing 彭建兵. 2005. Li Xiaorong zhu Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao shuping 李小榮著敦煌密教文獻論稿述評. *Dunhuangxue guojia lianluo weiyuahui tongxun* 敦煌學國際聯絡委員會通訊 1: 37–39.
- Peng, Jinzhang 彭金章. 1994a. Mogaoku di 14 ku shiyimian guanyin bian 莫高窟第14窟十一面觀音變. *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2: 87–97.
- Peng, Jinzhang 彭金章. 1994b. Mogaoku di 76 ku shiyimian babiguan yin kao 莫高窟第76窟十一面八臂觀音考. *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 3: 42–48.
- Peng, Jinzhang 彭金章. 1996a. Dunhuang shiku shiyimian guanyin jingbian yanjiu: Dunhuang mijiao jingbian yanjiu zhisi 敦煌石窟十一面觀音經變研究: 敦煌密教經變研究之四. In *Duan Wenjie Dunhuang yanjiu wushinian jinian wenji* 段文傑敦煌研究五十年紀念文集. Edited by Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院. Beijing: Shijie tushu chubanshe, pp. 72–86.
- Peng, Jinzhang 彭金章. 1996b. Qianyan zhaojian, qianshou huchi: Dunhuang mijiao jingbian yanjiu zhisan 千眼照見, 千手攬持: 敦煌密教經變研究之三. *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 3: 11–31.
- Peng, Jinzhang 彭金章. 2003. *Dunhuang shiku quanji: Mijiao huajuan* 敦煌石窟全集: 密教畫卷. Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan.
- Rong, Xinjiang 榮新江. 1996a. *Guiyijun shi yanjiu: Tangsong shidai Dunhuang lishi kaosuo* 歸義軍史研究: 唐宋時代敦煌歷史考索. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.
- Rong, Xinjiang 榮新江. 1996b. *Haiwai Dunhuang Tulufan wenxian zhijian lu* 海外敦煌吐魯番文獻知見錄. Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe.
- Shindō, Seishi 新嶋静志. 2008. Hanyu fodian yuyan de yanjiu (san) 漢語佛典語言的研究 (三). *Yuyanxue luncong* 語言學論叢 37: 144–68.
- Song, Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381). 1976. *Yuan Shi* 元史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Su, Bai 宿白. 1989a. Dunhuang mogaoku mijiao yiji zhaji (shang) 敦煌莫高窟密教遺址割記(上). *Wenwu* 文物 9: 45–53+33.
- Su, Bai 宿白. 1989b. Dunhuang mogaoku mijiao yiji zhaji (xia) 敦煌莫高窟密教遺址割記(下). *Wenwu* 文物 10: 68–86.
- Su, Bai 宿白. 1996. *Zhongguo shiku si yanjiu* 中國石窟寺研究. Beijing: wenwu chubanshe.
- Su, Bai 宿白. 1999. *Tangsong shiqi diaoban yinshua* 唐宋時期雕版印刷. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe.
- Su, E 蘇鶯. 1939. *Duyang zhibian* 杜陽雜編. Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan.
- Sun, Bojun 孫伯君. 2008. Zhenzhi yi Foshuo dabaisangai zongchi tuoluoni jing wei xixia yiben kao 真智譯佛說大白傘蓋總持陀羅尼經爲西夏譯本考. *Ningxia shehui kexue* 寧夏社會科學 4: 96–101.
- Suzhou bowuguan 蘇州博物館, ed. 2006. *Suzhou bowuguan cang huqiu yuyansi ta ruiguangsi ta wenwu* 蘇州博物館藏虎丘雲巖寺塔瑞光寺塔文物. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe.
- Suzhou shi wenguanhui 蘇州市文管會, and Suzhou bowuguan 蘇州博物館. 1979. Suzhoushi ruiguangsi faxian yipi wudai beisong wenwu 蘇州市瑞光寺塔發現一批五代, 北宋文物. *Wenwu* 文物 11: 21–31.
- Tai, Huili 邨惠莉. 2005. Dunhuang banhua xulu 敦煌版畫敘錄. *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2: 7–18.
- Tan, Chanxue 譚蟬雪. 2000. Tangsong Dunhuang suishi fosu: Zhengyue 唐宋敦煌歲時佛俗: 正月. *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 4: 66–68.
- Tanaka, Kimiyaki 田中公明. 2000. *Tonkō mikkyō to bijutsu* 敦煌密教と美術. Kyoto: Hozokan.
- Tang, Zhangru 唐長孺. 2011. *Shanju cunqao sanbian* 山居存稿三編. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Ueyama, Daishu 上山大峻. 1990. *Tonkō bukyō no kenkyū* 敦煌佛教の研究. Kyoto: Hozokan.
- von Lore Sander, Bearbeitet, and Ernst Waldschmidt. 1980. *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden. Teil 4. Ergänzungsband zu Teil 1–3 mit Textwiedergaben, Berichtigungen und Wörterverzeichnissen*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

- Wang, Huimin 王惠民. 1993. Dunhuang miyan jingbian kao 敦煌“密嚴經變”考. *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2: 15–25.
- Wang, Jiqing 王冀青. 1991. Kuche wenshu de faxian yu yingguo da guimo souji zhongya wenshu de kaishi 庫車文書的發現與英國大規模搜集亞文書的開始. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 2: 64–73.
- Wang, Jiqing 王冀青. 2011. Huoenlei yu Zhongya kaoguxue 霍恩雷與中亞考古學. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 3: 136–62.
- Wang, Zhongmin 王重民. 1984. *Dunhuang yishu lunwen ji* 敦煌遺書論文集. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Wang-Toutain, Françoise. 2009. The Purification of Sins in the Ornamental Program of Emperor Qianlong's Tomb: The Tantra that Eliminates all Evil Destinies and the Dhāraṇī that Totally Purifies all Obstructions from Karma. In *Hanzang fojiao meishu yanjiu* 漢藏佛教美術研究. Edited by Xie Jisheng 謝繼勝. Beijing: Shoudu shifan daxue chubanshe.
- Wang-Toutain, Françoise. 2010. The Dharanis in Lantsa Script in Emperor Qianlong's Tomb: A Preliminary Survey. *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 西域歷史語言研究集刊 3: 343–73.
- Wei, Shou 魏收 (507–572). 1974. *Wei Shu* 魏書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Wu, Qiyu 吳其昱. 1984. Dai Bankoku daitoku sanzō hōshi Hōjō denkō 大蕃國大德三藏法師法成傳考. In *Kōza Tonkō* 講座敦煌. Vol. 7. *Tonkō to Chūgoku bukkyō* 敦煌と中國佛教. Edited by Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮 and Fukui Fumimasa 福井文雅. Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, pp. 383–414.
- Yan, Tingliang 顏廷亮. 2002. Youguan Zhang Qiu shengping jiqi zhuzuo de yijian xinjian wenxian: Foshuo moli zhitian pusa tuoluoni jing xu jiaolu ji qita 有關張球生平及其著作的一件新見文獻: 佛說摩利支天菩薩陀羅尼經序校錄及其他. *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 5: 101–4.
- Yang, Xuanchi 楊銜之 (fl. 528–530). 2010. *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Yang, Zhishui 揚之水. 2000. Yiqie jingyinyi fojiao yishu mingwu tuzheng 一切經音義佛教藝術名物圖證. *Zhongguo wenhua* 中國文化 1: 175–82.
- Yang, Zhishui 揚之水. 2007. *Sichou zhilu: Yishu yu shenghuo* 絲綢之路: 藝術與生活. Hong kong: Yisha tang.
- Yang, Zhishui 揚之水. 2012. *Cengyou xifeng bandian xiang* 曾有西風半點香. Beijing: Sanlian shudian.
- Yu, Xin 余欣. 2006. *Shendao renxin: Tangsong zhiji Dunhuang minsheng zongjiao shehui shi yanjiu* 神道人心: 唐宋之際敦煌民生宗教社會史研究. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Yu, Xin 余欣. 2010a. Dunhuang fosi suocang zhenbao yu mijiao baowu gongyang guannian 敦煌敦煌佛寺所藏珍寶與密教寶物供養觀念. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 4: 140–51.
- Yu, Xin 余欣. 2010b. Furui yu difang zhengquan de hefaxing goujian: Guiyijun shiqi Dunhuang ruiying kao 符瑞與地方政權的合法性構建: 歸義軍時期敦煌瑞應考. *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 100: 325–78.
- Yu, Xin 余欣. 2011a. Dunhuang wenxian yu tuxiang zhong de luohou jidu shizheng 敦煌文獻與圖像中的羅睺, 計都釋證. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 3: 105–16.
- Yu, Xin 余欣. 2011b. Tangsong zhiji wuxingzhan de bianqian: Yi Dunhuang wenxian suojian xingchen zhanci weili 唐宋之際五星占的變遷: 以敦煌文獻所見辰星占辭為例. *Shilin* 史林 5: 70–78.
- Yu, Xin 余欣. 2011c. *Zhonggu yixiang: Xieben shidai de xueshu, xinyang yu shehui* 中古異相: 寫本時代的學術、信仰與社會. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.
- Yu, Xin 余欣. 2012a. Tianming yu xingshen: Yi Dunhuang xingong tuoluoni fu weili jiexi zhonggu xingming Xinyan 天命與星神: 以敦煌星供陀羅尼符為例解析中古星命信仰. *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 18: 453–73.
- Yu, Xin. 2012b. Personal Fate and the Planets: A Documentary and Iconographical Study of Astrological Divination at Dunhuang, Focusing on the Dhāraṇī Talisman for Offerings to Ketu and Mercury, Planetary Deity of the North. *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 20: 163–90. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Zhao, Feng 趙豐, and Le Wang 王樂. 2009a. Dunhuang sangai de cailiao yu xingzhi yanjiu 敦煌傘蓋的材料與形制研. *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 2: 89–99.
- Zhao, Feng 趙豐, and Le Wang 王樂. 2009b. *Dunhuang sichou yu sichou zhilu* 敦煌絲綢與絲綢之路. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Zheng, Bingling 鄭炳林. 1997. Lun wantang Dunhuang wenshi Zhang Qiu ji Zhang Jingqiu 論晚唐敦煌文士張球及張景球. *Wenshi* 文史 43: 111–19.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.