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Front cover:

“Mullā Du-Piyāza”, watercolour, gouache on paper, Hyderabad, mid-18th century. Miniature in Album (Muraqqa’) X 3, in the Fabergé collection at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 6a, 15.0 × 23.0 cm (inside the frame).

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** *Manāqih-i Murtazaawī* by Amīr Muhammad Šālih al-Husaynī al-Tirmidhī, manuscript C 1684 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 1b, 17.2 × 27.6 cm.
- Plate 2.** “*Dīwān* of ‘Alī”, miniature in the same manuscript. Watercolour, gouache on paper, first half of the 18th century, fol. 13b, 10.7 × 16.2 cm.
- Plate 3.** “‘Alī and the petitioner”, miniature in the same manuscript. Watercolour, gouache on paper, first half of the 18th century, fol. 40b, 10.7 × 16.0 cm.
- Plate 4.** “‘Alī on the march”, miniature in the same manuscript. Watercolour, gouache on paper, first half of the 18th century, fol. 95a, 10.7 × 17.2 cm.

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CONSERVATION PROBLEMS

Françoise Cuisance

MANUSCRIPT 2547 AT THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE: CHINESE PELLIOT COLLECTION (STUDY AND RESTORATION PROJECT)*

Manuscript 2547 (see *fig. 1*) kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France contains three sets of texts. The first one (leaves 1—13) has been identified by comparing them with other manuscripts [1] as a copy of the *Zhai Wanwen*, a collection of eulogies, some of which were used by state administration on ceremonial occasions. The official titles mentioned in the table of contents indicate that these eulogies must have been composed before 710, under Zhongzong's second reign. The second text in the manuscript consists only of one leaf (leaf 14) [2] comprising eulogies for the use in the Area Administration office (*dufufu*) of Liangzhou; one of the eulogies can be dated to Xuanzong's reign, i.e. between the 17th and the 27th year of Kaiyuan (729—739). (The whole manuscript must have been copied at this time.) The third text on leaf 15 is a fu-

neral oration dedicated to the Buddhist monk Yixing [3], mathematician and astronomer [4], who died 25 November 727 and whose state burial was performed twenty-one days later in the countryside east of the capital Chang'an.

The manuscript contains fifteen folded leaves in all. Only the inner sides of the leaves have text written by a single copyist in a fine, neat and small-size handwriting. The text is in columns (18 to 20 mm wide).

The manuscript was repaired several times: it bears the signs of an old restoration (8th century). In our days it was restored twice, in 1954 and 1964, at the Bibliothèque nationale, when the leaves were lined with paper and chiffon without removing the binding. The study of the manuscript and its presentation became possible after partially removing the chiffon that came off without any difficulty.

Technical description of the manuscript

1. Leaves. Only the fragments of the manuscript's leaves are now surviving (see *fig. 2*). The paper is buff, fine (90 μ) mulberry paper [5] (see *fig. 3*), with laid marks discernible in oblique light. The original height of the leaves was 278 mm, which was established by the size of the guards which saw no restoration. Unfortunately, the guards are so badly damaged that their original length remains unknown, the longest surviving one measures 466 mm (the part to the right of the fold is only 54 mm long), but it is not the original length. However, it was suggested that the first leaf might have been 864 mm long [6].

The folded leaves are either a single piece of paper or two pieces with an overlap of three to seven millimetres. Unlike the "butterfly" or "flutter" types of manuscripts, the layout of our manuscript bears no resemblance to that usual in booklets: the text may be found either on the very fold of the leaf (see *fig. 4*) or very near the fold (see *figs. 5 and 6*). It makes us suggest that originally the manuscript was

a scroll which was later cut up into unequal segments. This is evident from the fact that the overlaps' place differs from leaf to leaf [7]. The cutting up of the original scroll became possible because of the small size of the writing. The transformation of the scroll into a booklet had demanded the folding of these segments and the mounting of the folded leaves on guards.

2. Mounting on guards. In order to stack the leaves in such a way that the text should be not hidden at the folds, a guard was stuck on each folded leaf. The guards are seen in the upper and lower part of the manuscript if looked at the edges of the leaves; in the lower part they are visible between the sixth and ninth leaves where the guards escaped stitching. They are also visible if looked at the damaged back of some folded leaves. Each guard is an off-cut of about 50 mm wide and 278 mm long, the last measure corresponds the height of the leaves. Off-cuts are folded

* This study has been started on the advice of Monique Cohen, Head of the Oriental Manuscripts Department at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The work was carried out in collaboration with Hélène Vetch, who has helped us with text analysis, and Nathalie Pingaud, a technician at the laboratory of analysis (in Richelieu) of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Cécile Sarrion, who is in the photographic service of the library, is responsible for the production of the drawings.

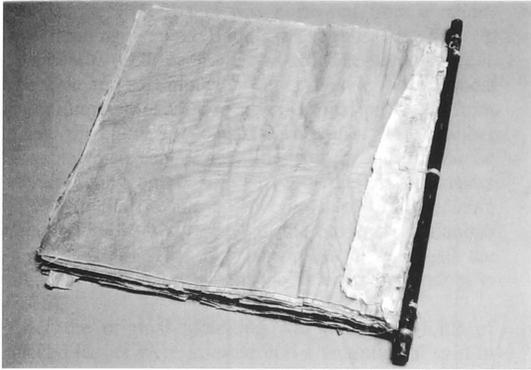


Fig. 1

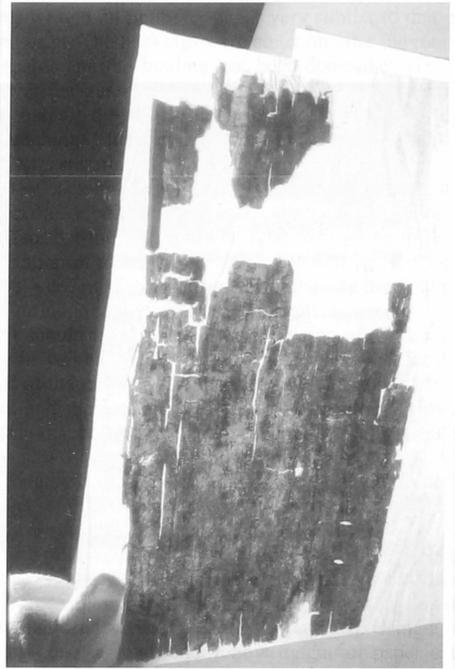


Fig. 2

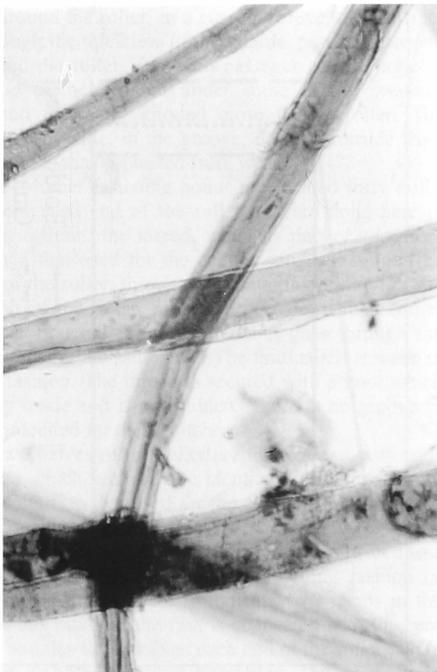


Fig. 3

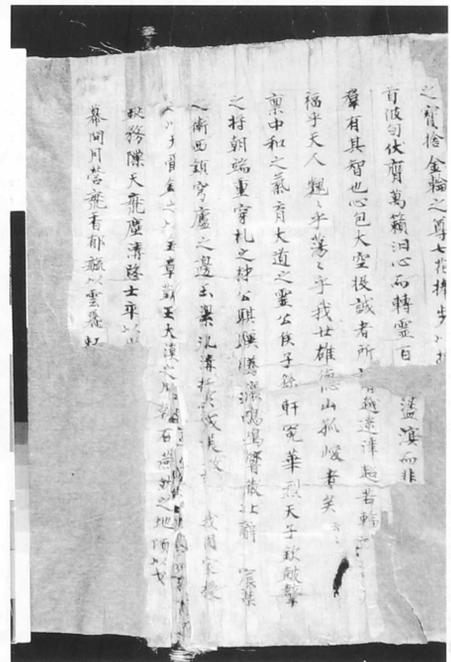


Fig. 4

in half. Each half is stuck on about 15 mm on both sides of the fold, on the unwritten surface of each leaf (see *figs. 7 and 8*). This mounting is longer than the length of each folded leaf by about 10 mm where the stitching is present.

The paper used for the guards is of two types. The first one is buff, fairly coarse and thick paper with large laid marks. The microscope analysis showed that it is hemp (or flax) paper (see *fig. 9*) that was borrowed from a manuscript containing text on Buddhist exegesis (see *fig. 10*). This paper was used for the first guard. The second type is very flexible and soft mulberry paper dyed in yellow; most likely the pigment used is identical to that produced from *Philodendron amurense*. This paper comes from another manuscript which can be identified by the inscription on an overlap found on the fifteenth guard. It is a cadastre compiled in the Military Governorship of Dunhuang (*Dunhuangjun*) [8] (see *fig. 11*) in the 6th year of Tianbao (747) (see *fig. 12*). This fine paper was used for all the other guards (see below where the date of the binding is discussed).

After the original mounting was done, the folds of the stacked leaves were inserted into a longitudinal split in a red-brownish wooden roller (10 mm in diameter and 326 mm long), lacquered or polished, to serve as the booklet's back (see *figs. 13 and 14*). The leaves are attached to the roller at five points: there are three stitches (in the centre and at the ends of the roller) and two ties fastenings (see *fig. 15*).

3. Stitching. The manuscript demonstrates two types of stitches (see *figs. 15 and 16*); one stitch, almost in the centre, is done with a thin slightly twisted yellowish thread; it is going around the roller, in a curved groove, then at right angle through the thickness of the guards, passing a second time around the roller. Ten such passages can be noticed. The thread is then passed under some of the previous stitches and discreetly knotted close to the roller. The stitches, side by side, in the groove, do not protrude from the roller and is thus protected from wear.

The two other fastening points are located forty millimetres from each end of the roller and are done here in a different fashion: the thread, which is thicker and more twisted than that used for the central stitch, goes into the first half of the roller, through the mounting and out of the second half of the roller, using a little hole; it then comes back to the first half of the roller and goes through the wood again using the same hole. The third stitch is made in the same fashion. The thread is secured with a knot which is coarsely made and is not hidden. There is no groove in the roller intended for these stitches.

The two halves of the roller are tightened at both ends by a thread which seems to be identical, in texture, thickness and colour, to that used for the central stitch; it is also embedded in curved grooves.

One may make suggestions about the nature of these similarities or differences in thread, stitching fashion or quality. Anyway, they seem to indicate two stages in the making of this binding: the first is connected with the central stitch and ties fastenings at each end of the roller, while the second — with two other fastenings. This assumption becomes even more likely if one takes into account that the stitchings belong to different hands. The second stage is most probably linked with reinforcing the stitches.

4. General remarks. As was said above, the backings in the manuscript originate from the administrative documents written on mulberry paper very similar to that of our manuscript. The backings were stuck on after the mounting on guards and the binding had been done; they are pasted on over the guard and leaf (see *fig. 17*), as is seen in the right half of the tenth folded leaf, and are always out of the stitching. The backings seem to have appeared during the first restoration.

The backings pasted on the sides of the leaves containing text have been unstuck at the Bibliothèque nationale in 1954 so that the text could be read. According to the first description of manuscript P.2547, the first and the last leaves were reinforced almost over the whole of their surface, turning them into a sort of protective covers.

It should be noted that the mounting of all the guards dyed in yellow was made very neatly and regularly. The guard of the first leaf is wider than the other ones. Both the guard and the leaf are in a very bad condition. However, one can detect that the guard is wedged in the half-roller, in its uppermost part, along 35 mm only; in the middle, where it is roughly completed, the guard is stuck on the folded leaf without any connection with the half-roller and is not caught by the stitching (see *fig. 18*).

The following guard, also yellow, is partly crinkled and out of the roller. Between these two first guards there is a piece of yellow paper, twisted and cut up neatly, as if the guard had been torn out (see *figs. 19 and 20*). Using a magnifying glass, a small and yellow tongue of paper can be seen under the first half of the roller. All this lead us to conclude that the manuscript had undergone an early restoration. The first original guard, probably defective, was then replaced without removing the stitches. It must have been wider so as to restore the first leaf where a few columns are now missing. It would be tempting to relate this old restoration to the assumed second stage, taking into account the stitching mentioned above, but there is no clue clear enough to make such a suggestion.

One may suggest that the leaves of the manuscript were originally wound on the roller, as in the "flutter" booklets, since prior to any restoration the paper of the guards and leaves must have been fine and flexible. However, the suggestion is probably not correct, considering some stiffness at mid-height of the roller resulted from the ten stitches made; besides, the guards had been once inserted into the split of the roller. Moreover, whereas only the faces of scrolls' rollers were usually dyed, in the case of manuscript P.2547 the outer surface of the roller is dyed and lacquered (or polished). After reinforcing the leaves, the paper probably became too stiff to be rolled up. Finally, the whole surface of the first and the last leaf had been reinforced. All this makes us conclude that the manuscript's leaves were preserved flat.

We know no other example of a booklet whose binding would be done in exactly the same technique as in P.2547. However, comparison can be made with the bindings of two booklets where the leaves are fastened to a kind of a roller, though using different techniques: those are (i) a Sino-Tibetan glossary dating to the Tibetan occupation between 786 and 848 [9] — a Chinese manuscript from the mid-tenth century with the tables of agrarian measures (preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale de France) [10], and (ii) the famous "dragon-scale" binding for a beautiful ninth-century copy of a rhymed dictionary [11]; the binding was



Fig. 10

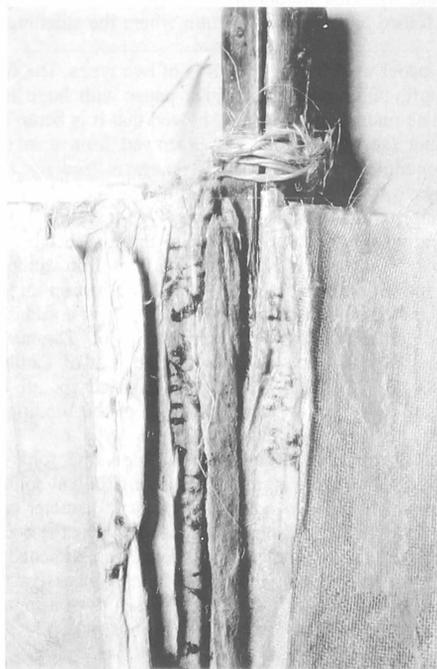


Fig. 12



Fig. 9

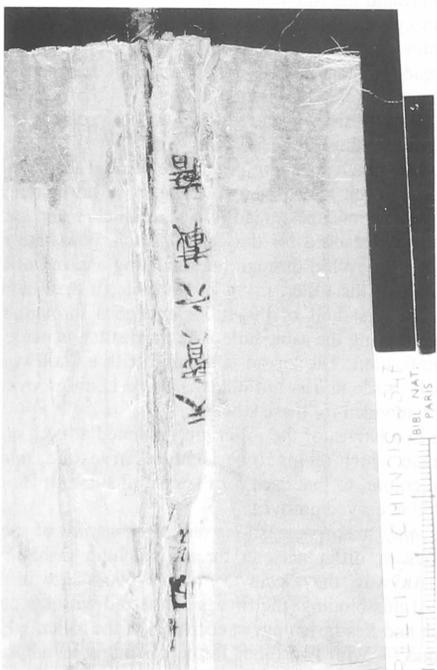


Fig. 11

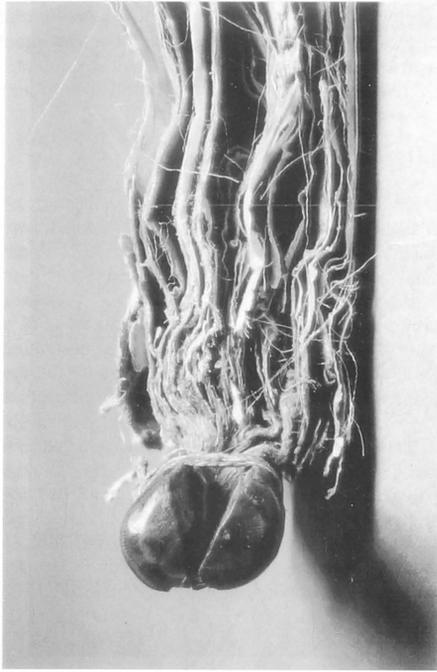


Fig. 14



Fig. 13

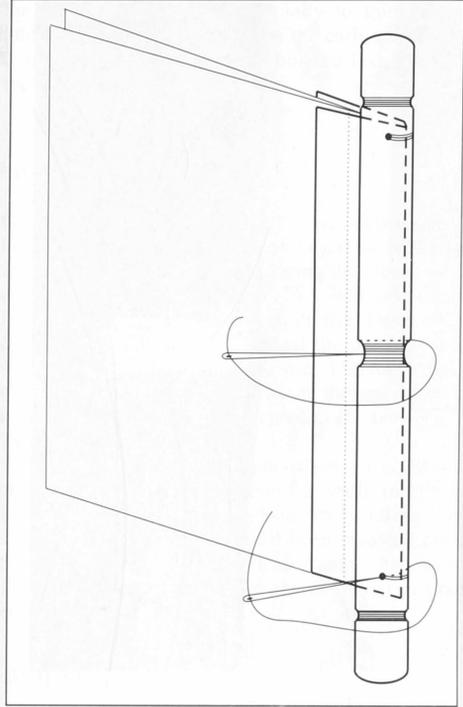


Fig. 16

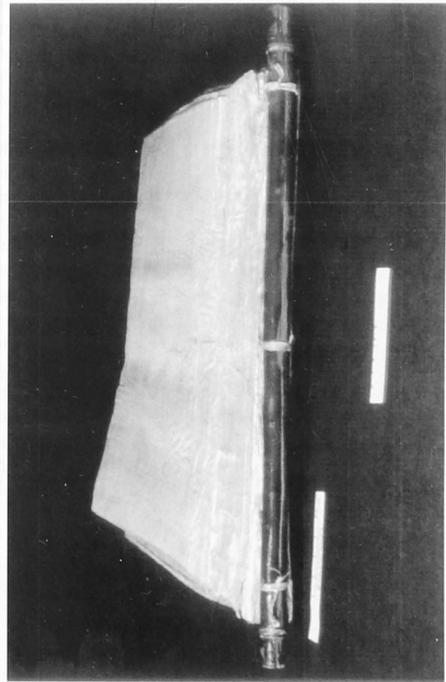


Fig. 15

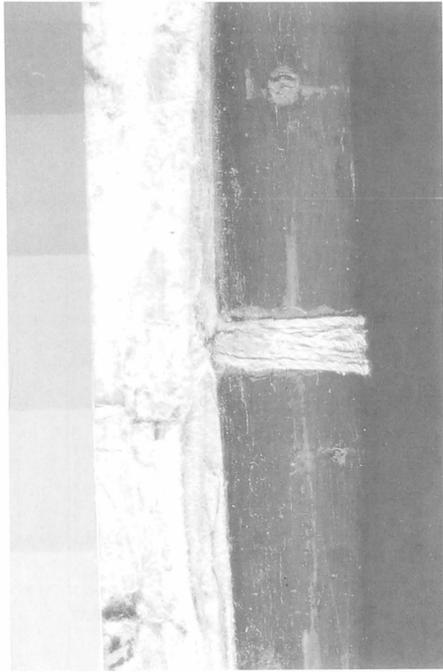


Fig. 18



Fig. 20

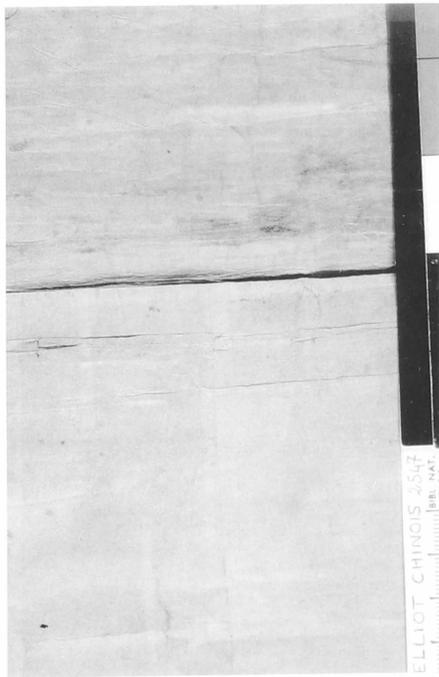


Fig. 17

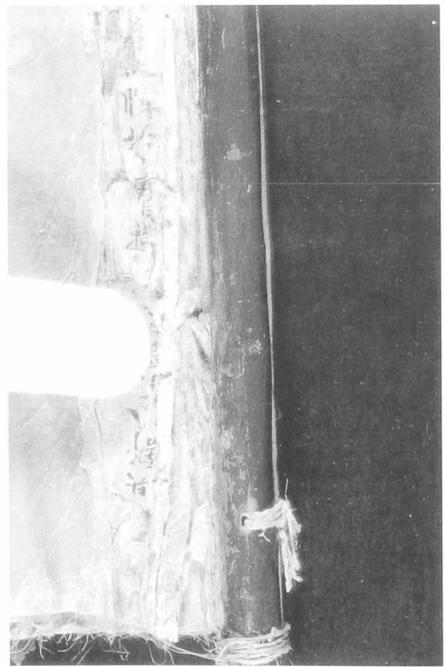


Fig. 19

executed for the Song emperor Huizong of the Xuanhe era (1119—1125) [12] (kept in Beijing, at the Palace Museum). Note that all these bound booklets were intended for consultation: glossary, technical notes, dictionary, etc. Although only few such specimens have survived, the question remains whether the technique was invented especially for this type of manuscripts or it was applied because

this type of bindings was not durable enough to resist intensive using. In any case, manuscript P.2547 is a special case: the technique was used especially to transform a scroll into booklet. It might be one of the early examples of such transformation. The binding, not the text, has weathered the centuries.

Dating the binding

As was stated above, the paper for yellow guards was borrowed from a cadastre drawn up in the Military Governorship of Dunhuang in 747. Such documents had to be kept for fifteen years, therefore, the binding must have been made after 761, perhaps some time after the 5th month of the 2nd year of Yongtai (766), when the seat of the Area Administration office was officially transferred from Liangzhou (where the manuscript most likely was written) to Shazhou, formerly known as the Military Governorship of Dunhuang.

We have also said that the old restoration is subsequent to the binding. Among the backings, three belong to an ordination certificate form with several seal impressions belonging to the Office of Sacrifices at the Department of State Affairs (*Shangshu zhi ci*), on a blank filled in later by a monk (or a nun) in Dunhuang between 30 October 756 and 18 March 758. Such documents had to be sent back to

the capital when the monk died or was defrocked. The fact that the document was cut up and used for backings shows that it was kept in Dunhuang during the eleven-years siege of Dunhuang by the Tibetans (776—786), when manuscript P.2547 was probably still in use, or after Dunhuang surrendered to the Tibetans in 786 and the eulogies the manuscript contained became of no use. The restoration of the manuscript may have occurred in this period. Thus, the binding might have been executed either between 761 and 786 or between 766 and 786.

This document is an exceptional study case. It is an early example, perhaps the first one of a scroll transformed into a book, evidently to make easier its handling, for which a special binding technique had been invented or adopted. So far no other wholly identical example has been found. This manuscript demonstrates the evolution of book form in China.

Restoration project

The binding's restoration presumes preservation of its current condition, without removing the stitching. At the first stage, it is necessary to undo earlier reparings. It is planned to eliminate the elements of the leaves' restoration (paper and chiffon lining), which took place in 1954 and 1964, to make the pages lighter and to ease reading the text. (The original restorations will be kept.) The black ink has preserved its colour perfectly and is very stable.

During the undoing of the 1954 and 1964 restorations and subsequent new restoring, it will be necessary to steady the booklet, without running the risk of damaging the roller. Each leaf will be treated one by one; sheets of mylar, for example, must protect the other guards not in work.

After usual dusting with a smooth brush, chiffon will be totally removed from the leaves, for which light moistening is sufficient. The surviving fragments of each leaf will be temporarily fixed, on the front side, with small off-cuts of very fine Japanese paper and maintained by a few touches of paste. Pure wheat starch paste will be used. Then unsticking is possible with the aid of a steam generator. For repairing clefts and gaps, as well as for assembling fragments, special sorts of high-quality paper are necessary.

The choice will be made among Japanese papers depending on thickness, flexibility and strength of the manuscript paper. The restoration paper selected, in off-cuts or pieces, may be first dyed to fit the tone of the manuscript paper. A thin layer of pure wheat starch paste is to be used; this sort of paste possesses good adhesion and is well reversible. We will avoid the lining.

After this first stage of the manuscript's restoration, other procedures are possible to ensure good preservation of the document. As a matter of fact, the manuscript, though rarely shown *de visu* as there is a microfilm of it, still sometimes needs to be consulted, therefore, the leaves cannot avoid being touched. But the booklet's leaves are very fragile and of different length (some have preserved their original length, many have not). For this reason, even a very careful reader may take by chance two leaves instead of a single one while turning the pages, thus bringing damage to them. Therefore, though no final decision has been taken yet, we think it would be useful to lengthen the leaves to the size of the longest one. Whatever the solution may be, a conservation case will certainly be made to preserve the document in flat position.

Notes

1. For the comparison, the following manuscripts were used: MSS P.2940 *verso* (incomplete copy), P.2867 and P.3535 (of only two paper leaves constituting a booklet), all at the Bibliothèque nationale de France; MS Flug 342 *verso* (incomplete copy), in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

2. See P.3535 (another leaf belonging to the booklet mentioned in n. 1).

3. See P.3535 *V^o*, col. 9—39. The left part of leaf 15 was previously MS P.4072 (2).

4. See J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1959), under I-Hsing. Information in notes 1—3 was provided by Hélène Vetch.

5. The whole analysis was made on the basis of paper fragments (between 2 and 3 mm²) taken from the leaves, guards and original restoration. As the paper of the fragments is very fragile, a few pieces detached from the margins were used.

6. This figure comes from the doubling of the presumed length (430 mm) of the right half of the first folded leaf. The following data were taken into calculation: rather spacious layout of the manuscript, the number of characters per column, the number of missing characters in the text's introduction as compared with those present in MS P.2940. The leaves of P.2867, P.3535 and P.3772 are less long (758—780 mm).

7. For example, at 125 mm, 88 mm, 131 mm, 165 mm from the fold.

8. The right half of these three characters is apparently rubbed off, being on the outer side of the fifteenth folded leaf.

9. The leaves are sewn and put between two boards of wood.

10. The leaves are attached to a rudiment of a roller.

11. The leaves with text on both sides are pasted, on the back of their right edge, to a supporting leaf of paper.

12. Cf. the colophon by Song Lian (1310—1381) in the manuscript.

Illustrations

- Fig. 1.** Manuscript 2547. Chinese Pelliot collection, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
Fig. 2. Fragments of a leaf, MS 2547.
Fig. 3. Structure of the manuscript's paper (under microscope).
Fig. 4. Text on the fold of a leaf.
Fig. 5. Text very near the fold of a leaf.
Fig. 6. Text near the fold of a leaf.
Fig. 7. Drawing demonstrating the fashion of sticking on both sides of the fold.
Fig. 8. Drawing demonstrating the fashion of sticking on both sides of the fold (another projection).
Fig. 9. Structure of the guard's paper (under microscope).
Fig. 10. The first guard's paper with Chinese text (Buddhist exegesis).
Fig. 11. Inscription (from Chinese cadastre) on paper used for most of guards.
Fig. 12. Fragment of the same inscription.
Fig. 13. The manuscript's roller with well visible split.
Fig. 14. The same roller (view of the face and bottom edges of the manuscript).
Fig. 15. View of the leaves' attaching to the roller.
Fig. 16. Drawing demonstrating two types of stitches.
Fig. 17. Backings' paper pasted on over the leaves' guards.
Fig. 18. View of a guard's sticking on the folded leaf.
Fig. 19. A piece of yellow paper seen between the guards.
Fig. 20. The same showing the absence of connection with the roller (blown up).
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