

Comparative Study of the Tripitaka Koreana and Dunhuang Manuscripts & Building a Comparative Image Research System

(Based on the Digital Image Research Environment of the TK-IRS)

Kyukap LEE, Yonsei University, Korea
Yun H. OH, The Research Institute of Tripitaka Koreana, Korea
Myungsoo KIM, The Research Institute of Tripitaka Koreana, Korea
mskim@sutra.re.kr

Project Background

The Tripitaka Koreana (hereafter the TK) consists of three sets of Buddhist scriptures collection: the Second set of TK(再雕大藏經, 1236-1251), the First set of TK(初雕大藏經, 1011-1087), and the Supplementary TK(續藏經, 1090-1099). The Research Institute of Tripitaka Koreana(hereafter the RITK) has been working on projects for building digital image database the Second and the First TK, and currently secured around 170,000 and 90,000 sheets of images, respectively, through the Tripitaka Koreana Knowledgebase Project and the Joint Korean-Japanese Digitization Project of the First-edition Tripitaka Koreana. The RITK plans to include the resources of the Supplementary TK expecting that its original corpus can be reconstructed through its extant catalog by Uichon.

These three components of the TK were originally encarved on woodblocks, among which the whole set of the Second TK only is currently remaining. In the history of compilation of the Buddhist scriptures, 'Tripitaka on woodblocks' throws many hints that need to be carefully examined. It could suggest hints to some of the important decisions made in the time of media change, i.e., from manuscripts to prints, and to development of academic skills such as proof-reading, correction, and standardization of the Text.

To suggest a new direction for the Tripitaka studies, and to facilitate it, Prof. Lee's team and the RITK initiated a project called 'Comparative Study of the Tripitaka Koreana and Dunhuang Manuscripts & Building a Comparative Image Research System' this year. Dunhuang manuscripts consists of more than sixty thousand fascicles, 90% of which are Buddhist scriptures, and the International Dunhuang Project(IDP) has been working on digitization project of the Dunhuang materials.

The RITK is currently working on building a Tripitaka Koreana Image Reading System(hereafter the TK-IRS) through the Tripitaka Koreana Knowledgebase project. The TK-IRS will have resources of high resolution images of the First and Second TK, and features of parallel viewing of the Text and Image. The TK-IRS aims to provide various research support features for collective/cooperative online research activities and the computer-aided environment for Buddhist scripture researches.

Strategies and Goals

Brief list of the strategies to achieve these goals are as follow:

- To make a Comparative Catalog of the TK-Dunhuang manuscripts
- To secure (or access to) the digital Images of the Dunhuang manuscripts and to link them to the images of the TK according the comparative/collated catalog.
- To build the TK-Dunhuang Image Reading/(Research) System
- To Utilize the TK-Dunhuang IRS in Comparative Study of the TK and the Dunhuang materials
- To make use of Text/Image Search
- To perform pilot projects for comparative researches in various fields of study, including Variant Characters Study, Bibliography, Literature, Buddhist Study, Philosophy.

Through this project and the comparative study of the TK and the Dunhuang manuscripts we hope to achieve or contribute to following goals.

- To examine the circulation history of Buddhist scriptures during 4-13C
- Chronological research of manuscripts based on the variant characters study, and advanced research based on content compare & analysis
- To evaluate the status of the TK in history of knowledge/culture in Asia
- To verify reciprocal influence between the renovation of Media and the development of knowledge/culture
- To suggest a new research environment for Humanities study utilizing digital media technology and resources, and a new model for collective research support system.
- To experiment a model case for Inter-institutional Cooperation in digital resource exchange