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### Remarks on the Use of the *Dhāraṇīs* and Mantras of the *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī*

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This paper considers one of the *Pañcarakṣā* (PR) protections, the *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī* (MPMVR), and attempts to reconstruct the practices related to the earliest phase of this tradition on the basis of textual passages from the Sanskrit recensions and some Central and Eastern Asian archaeological evidence.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a preliminary introduction to this scripture see HIDAS 2003.

## Textual Sources

The earliest independent Sanskrit witnesses of the MPMVR are five fragmentary birch-bark mss. from Gilgit<sup>2</sup> which can be dated most probably to the first half of the seventh century.<sup>3</sup> About a dozen xylographic and painted amulets<sup>4</sup> usually with the first *dhāraṇī* and the four mantras of this scripture were excavated in Central and Eastern Asia, the earliest of which is from the tenth century.<sup>5</sup> Four fragmentary pieces of bricks inscribed with the two *dhāraṇīs* and four mantras of the *Mahāpratisarā* survive in Yunnan. These are dated to the period between the ninth and eleventh centuries.<sup>6</sup> There exists an Uigurian fragment containing a short section of the first *dhāraṇī* of the *Mahāpratisarā*.<sup>7</sup> The rest of the Sanskrit witnesses are to be found almost exclusively<sup>8</sup> in PR mss. which come partly from Eastern India from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries and partly from Nepal from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup>See SCHLIEKER 1984. While four of the Gilgit-fragments (GBMFE 1080–1165) most likely contain parts of the first recension of the MPMVR, the fifth one (GBMFE 3328–3335) does not seem to be the MPMVR itself. Approximating the length of this ms. on the basis of its folio numbers, one comes to the conclusion that this ms. most probably contains a shorter auxiliary scripture of the MPMVR, perhaps, a *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī*.

<sup>3</sup>The donor of one of these mss. (GBMFE 3328–3335) appears to have been the queen of a Paṭola Śāhi ruler who reigned in the first half of the seventh century (VON HINÜBER 2004: 88–90). Palaeography suggests that the other four mss. are also likely to originate from this period (VON HINÜBER 2004: 6–7).

<sup>4</sup>One hand-painted amulet was excavated in a tomb near Xian (MEVISSEN 1999: 109 plate 8.9, DRÈGE 1999–2000: 32). A Japanese *Mahāpratisarā*-amulet kept at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Eastern Asiatic Arts, Budapest is also hand-painted (FERENCZY 1987: 41, CSEH 1996: 54–56).

<sup>5</sup>A number of these amulet-prints are reproduced and dealt with in DRÈGE 1999–2000. Some Chinese sources quoted there date a few of these xylographs to the eighth century.

<sup>6</sup>LIEBENTHAL 1947. These bricks originate from a temple where they were placed inside the walls as spiritual relics.

<sup>7</sup>ZIEME 2005: 160–161. I am grateful to Dr. Alice Sárközi for drawing my attention to this paper.

<sup>8</sup>There exist a few later independent mss. of the MPMVR as well. See, for example, TSUKAMOTO *et al.* 1989: 82–84.

<sup>9</sup>The majority of these mss. are listed in TSUKAMOTO *et al.* 1989: 62–64, the NGMPP CD-ROM catalogue and MEVISSEN 1989: 366–372.

The MPMVR is available in Chinese in a shorter recension (T. 1154) translated by Ratnacinta in 693 and a longer one (T. 1153) translated by Amoghavajra in the eighth century. The text preserved in the Gilgit mss. appears to be close to T. 1154, while the text in the Eastern Indian and Nepalese mss. appears to be close to T. 1153.

The Tibetan translation of this text dates from around 800 and is included in various *Kanjurs*.<sup>10</sup> It seems that only the later recension of the MPMVR was translated into Tibetan.

## Historical Contexts

The earliest version of the MPMVR belongs to the *dhāraṇī*-literature of the Mantranaya.<sup>11</sup> This first recension can probably be dated to the sixth century and it appears to have been known as *Mahāpratisara-Mahāvidyārāja* at that time. The most plausible explanation for the original masculine gender of this protection is that the roots of this tradition go back to Brahmanism, to texts as early as the *Atharva-veda*, where protective threads or amulets called *pratisara* are mentioned.<sup>12</sup> It is not known exactly when the Buddhists started to integrate this protective tradition into their practice, but it seems that various amulet-cults with their own scriptures existed within the Sangha by the middle of the first millennium, for example the *Asiloma-pratisara* found among

<sup>10</sup>Peking 179; Derge 561; Stog Palace 520; Phug brag 363, 622. See HARRISON 1996: 53 for further references.

<sup>11</sup>“Though the term *mantrayāna* is often used in preference to *mantranaya* in (academic) discussions of tantric Buddhism, it does not appear in texts until well after the appearance of the term *Vajrayāna*, upon which it is probably modelled. As a result *mantranaya* is the more appropriate term to describe the self-perception of pre-Vajrayāna tantric Buddhism.” (WILLIAMS with TRIBE 2000: 271). It is important to note here that this first recension already contains some pieces of *vajra*-terminology. As for Tibetan classification, in the *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems*, the *Pratisarā* and its auxiliary scriptures are listed in the ‘Mother of the Family’ section of the ‘Tathāgata Family’ of the *Kriyā*-tantra class (LESSING and WAYMAN: 113).

<sup>12</sup> AV 4.40, 8.5. Further places of occurrence include the *Yajur-veda* and the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*. See IWAMOTO 1938: Introduction and SEN 1965: 68, 70.

the Turfan mss.<sup>13</sup> Finally, however, the *Mahāpratisara* appears to have become the most popular scripture incorporating this tradition and probably in the late seventh century its second recension was composed. This recension most likely served the better integration of this text into the Vajrayāna,<sup>14</sup> changing the historical locus of the *nidāna* to a mythical Vajrayānic setting.<sup>15</sup> It seems that from about the same time this protection was considered to have a feminine nature.<sup>16</sup> This shift of gender may have happened simultaneously with the deification of this scripture,

<sup>13</sup>WALDSCHMIDT 1965: 38–39, 1971: 85–88, WALDSCHMIDT and SANDER 1980: 272–274.

<sup>14</sup>“A significant point in the history of tantric Buddhism occurs, probably sometime during the late seventh century, with the appearance of the term *Vajrayāna*, ‘The Diamond Way’. (...) It is worth stressing that the term ‘Vajrayāna’ was not employed before this period, and that, therefore, the expressions ‘Vajrayāna Buddhism’ and ‘tantric Buddhism’ are not synonymous. (...) An earlier term used to distinguish tantric from other forms of practice was *mantranaya*, ‘the path (*naya*) of mantras’. This expression was paired with *pāramitānaya*, the path of perfections (i.e. the path elaborated in the Mahāyāna Perfection of Wisdom literature). Together, the two paths were considered to constitute the Mahāyāna. (...) Indian tantric Buddhism, in its pre-Vajrayāna phase at least, saw itself as part of the Mahāyāna, a fact that can be obscured by suggestions that Buddhism is comprised of three paths—the Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna.” (WILLIAMS with TRIBE 2000: 196). A line in the MPMVR suggests that the composers of this scripture associated themselves with the Mahāyāna: *mahāyānodgrahaṇalikhanaṅāpanaṅāpaṅāhanasvādhyāyanaśravaṅādhāraṅābhīyuktānām pariṅālikeyaṅ mahādhāraṅā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 20.26–27) “This great *dhāraṅā* is the protector for those absorbed in comprehending, writing down, reciting, reading, daily repeating, listening to and preserving the [teachings of the] Mahāyāna.”

<sup>15</sup>The sermon of the first recension takes place on the *Ḡḍhrakūṅā* near *Rājagrha*. The place of teaching in the later recension is the *Mahāvajrameru*-mountain. I am grateful to Dr. Jundo Nagashima for his help with the translation of the opening parts of T. 1154 and 1153 from Chinese.

<sup>16</sup>In China and Japan the original masculine nature of certain deities of the *Mantranaya* appears to have been preserved. DE VISSER 1920: 377–378 interprets this phenomenon differently and argues that the existence of the masculine forms of these deities in Eastern Asia is due to linguistic misunderstanding. He writes the following on the gender of *Mahāmāyūrī*: “Es ist jedoch eigentümlich, daß die Tantrische Schule nicht aufhörte, diese Figur trotzdem als eine männliche Gottheit darzustellen, welches hervortritt aus den hier unten zu behandelnden Gemälden. Wie alle die vorherigen Übersetzer benutzt er [i.e. Amoghavajra] das Wort *wang*, König, welches aber auch Königin heißen kann. Ich vermute, daß eben der Gebrauch dieses Characters schon in alten Zeiten in China und Japan das Mißverständnis verursacht

when Mahāpratisarā, a protective goddess appeared.<sup>17</sup> Probably in the early eighth century, the MPMVR was grouped together with other apotropaic scriptures and became a prominent member of the *Pañcarakṣā*.<sup>18</sup> In the second half of the first millennium the cult of the *Mahāpratisarā* gradually spread to Nepal, Tibet, Central Asia, China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan and Indonesia.<sup>19</sup>

### The Structure of the MPMVR

The MPMVR consists of two ritual instructions<sup>20</sup> and contains two *dhāraṇīs*, four mantras,<sup>21</sup> nine narratives, the description

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hat, als wäre dies eine männliche Gottheit.” Ibid. 382: “Ein kleiner Schnur- und Kinnbart sind die Bestätigung, daß diese Figur in China und Japan als männlich betrachtet wird; die modernen japanischen Autoren nennen diese Gottheit auch meistens Mahāmayūra-Vidyārāja, als ob feststehe, daß es ein männlicher Pfauen-Vidyā-König sei.”

<sup>17</sup>Mahāpratisarā first manifested in two- then in eight-, ten- and twelve-armed forms. On the iconography of this goddess see the various articles of MEVISSSEN and CHANDRA 1999-. After the deification new auxiliary scriptures including *stotras*, *hṛdayas*, *vidhis*, *kriyās*, *kalpas*, *upāyas* and *sādhanas* were composed, related to this goddess. See, for example, TSUKAMOTO *et al.* 1989: 83–84.

<sup>18</sup>While the Chinese translated these texts separately (SKILLING 1992: 180–182), the late eighth–early ninth-century *Ldan kar ma* catalogue of two Tibetan translators lists the following texts after one another in its section XIII, titled “The Five Great *Dhāraṇīs* (*gzuñs chen po lña la*): *Mahāmāyūrī*, *Mahāsāhasrapramardana*, *Mahāpratisarā-vidyārājñī*, *Mahāśītavana* and *Mahāmantrānudhāri* (LALOU 1953). An early ninth-century manuscript folio found in Tabo also lists these texts after one another, although in a different order: *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī-sūtra*, *Mahāmāyūrī-vidyārājñī*, *Mahāśītavana-sūtra*, *Mahāpratisarā-vidyārājñī*, *Mahāmantrānudhāraṇī-/Mahāmantrānudhāri-sūtra* (HARRISON 1996: 53). It is possible that these five texts constituted the earliest Sanskrit PR collection and later on two of them, the *Mahāśītavana* and the *Mahāmantrānudhāri* were replaced with the *Mahāśītavatī* and the *Mahāmantrānusāriṇī* respectively. See SKILLING 1992: 138–144 on the seven PR texts.

<sup>19</sup>See e.g. MEVISSSEN 1999.

<sup>20</sup>The *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī-Prathamakalpa* (First Ritual Instruction of the Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells) and the *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī-Vidyādharaṇī-vidhānakalpa* (Ritual Instruction of the Protection Performance for the Spell-master of the Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells).

<sup>21</sup>*oṃ amṛtavare vara 2 pravaraṇīśuddhe hūṃ 2 phaṭ 2 svāhā | oṃ amṛtaviḷokini garbhasaṃrakṣaṇi ākarṣaṇi hūṃ 2 phaṭ 2 svāhā | oṃ vimale*

of an amulet-making and a healing ritual furthermore general sections about the various benefits of this protection. The first *dhāraṇī* is called *samanta-jvālā-mālā-viśuddhi-sphurita-cintāmaṇi-mudrā-hṛdayāparājitā-dhāraṇī*, “The *Dhāraṇī* Invincible by Reason of the Essence of the Wish-granting Jewel Seal that Glitters with the Purity of a Garland of Enveloping Flame”. The second *dhāraṇī* is given without a name in this text.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding the various practices related to this scripture, not only the two *dhāraṇīs* and the four mantras but also the whole text of the MPMVR were employed in different ways.

### The Use Of The First *Dhāraṇī*

From the general sections of the first *kalpa* one learns that the first *dhāraṇī* should be recited silently<sup>23</sup> or aloud.<sup>24</sup> According to another passage, this *dhāraṇī* should be worshipped and revered first with different fragrances, incenses and flowers then wrapped up in cloths of various kinds mounted at the top of a flagstaff over a *caitya*, and circumambulated on the right with the music of various string and wind instruments being played.<sup>25</sup>

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*vipule jayavare jayavāhini amṛte viraje hūṃ 2 phaṭ 2 svāhā | oṃ bhara 2 sambhara 2 indriyabalaviśodhani hūṃ 2 phaṭ 2 rurucale svāhā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 20.2–9). Sometimes a fifth mantra is also given in various PR mss. (*oṃ maṇidhari vajriṇi mahāpratisare hūṃ 2 phaṭ 2 svāhā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 20.10–11)). It seems that this mantra was added with the appearance of the second recension. The Sanskrit passages of the MPMVR quoted in this paper are based on drafts of two separate critical editions of the Gilgit and Eastern Indian and Nepalese mss. being prepared by the author. These may differ from Iwamoto’s romanized transcription at certain places. Iwamoto’s page numbers are always given for comparison.

<sup>22</sup>In a later auxiliary scripture of the MPMVR it is called *ārya-pratisarā-kalpa-dhāraṇī* (ŚĀŚANĪ 1999).

<sup>23</sup>*tasmāt tarhi mahābrāhmaṇa nityam evānusmarānamātreṇa manasikāreṇa manasikartavyā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 22.2–3) “Therefore, Great Brahmin, it should always be recollected by concentrating on it and keeping it in mind.” Translations given in this paper are by the author.

<sup>24</sup>*grahāḥ sarve vinaśyanti nāmagrahaṇakīrtanaḥ* (IWAMOTO 1938: 5.16) “All Grahas are destroyed by mentioning or reciting its name.”

<sup>25</sup>*yasmīn viśaya iyaṃ mahāvīdyārājñī mahāpratisarā nāma pracariṣyati tatra taiḥ sarvasattvair jñātvā pūjāsatkāraṃ kṛtvā nānāgandhair nānādhūpair nānāpuṣpair nānāvastraiḥ pariveṣṭayitvā caityasyopari dhvajagrāvavaro-pitām kṛtvā nānāvādyatūryasaṃgītibhir vādyamānābhīḥ pradakṣiṇikartavyā*

The rest of the general instructions<sup>26</sup> about the employment of the first *dhāraṇī* refer to what is probably the most significant function, namely, that an amulet with this *dhāraṇī* should be painted<sup>27</sup> and be worn around the neck or arm.<sup>28</sup> The prepara-

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(IWAMOTO 1938: 17.11–14) “In whichever region this Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells is circulated, there all people, having learnt it, should perform its worship and reverence with different fragrances, incenses and flowers. Wrapped up in cloths of various kinds [and colours] it should be mounted at the top of a flagstaff over a *caitya* and it is to be circumambulated on the right with the music of various string and wind instruments being played.” These instructions apparently prescribe the act of placing the wrapped up *dhāraṇī* at the pinnacle of a flag-pole, presumably in some sort of container which protects it. There is no mention in the text whether a banner should also be used simultaneously. Such a practice of placing rolled up magical formulas sometimes along with other ritual objects at the top of prayer flag standards is still extant in Tibetan Buddhist practice (I am grateful to Dr. Karma Phuntso for this information. Personal communication October 2005). The fifth narrative of the MPMVR gives an account of a similar act: “Right after this the great caravan-leader painted the Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells, fixed it at the top of a flagstaff, and raised it.” The *Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīśasitāpatrā-dhāraṇī* should also be mounted at the top of a flag-pole and having been worshipped it should be raised at the city-gates or various other places (Dhīh 2002: 154.4–9, no author named). The *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhāna-sattvāvalokana-buddhakṣetrasandarśana-vyūham* gives a reference to mounting the text on a flagstaff (DUTT 1939: 80.20–21: *imaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ pūjayitvā vācayitavyaḥ dhvaje vā ucchrāpitam kṛtvā pūjayitvā nānāgandhapuṣpadhūpavādyaiḥ praveṣṭavyaḥ*). The Tibetan version of the *Dhvaṅgrā-keyūra-nāma-dhāraṇī* gives the following instruction for use: “If you put round the neck or on the pinnacle of a victory banner, kings and heroic people shall all be protected.” (Quoted from a translation by Dr. Michael Willis to whom I am grateful for sending me his work in progress). “Flowers, incense, banners, flags, music, and dance were used in the ceremonies accompanying *stūpa* worship. Even at the Buddha’s funeral, the Mallas of Kuśinagara employed music, dance, flowers, and incense to honor, revere, and respect the corpse of the Buddha before it was cremated, as is described in detail in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*.” (HIRAKAWA 1990: 273)

<sup>26</sup>Beside the instructions in the general sections, the nine narratives describing the efficacy of this protection in the first *kalpa* of the MPMVR are also good sources of information. These stories support all types of use included in the general sections. The protagonists of these narratives recite this spell silently or aloud (first, second, eighth and ninth narratives), wear it as an amulet (third, fourth, sixth, seventh and ninth narratives) or fix it at the top of a flagstaff (fifth narrative).

<sup>27</sup>*kīdrśena bhadanta vidhānēyaṃ mahāpratisarā mahāvidyārājñī likhī tavyā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 23.22–24) “Venerable One, what is the method of painting this Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells?”

<sup>28</sup>*yaḥ kaścid dhārayed vidyāṃ kaṅthe bāhau ca nityaśaḥ / tasya sarvāṇi*

tion of such an amulet is described in detail at the end of the first *kalpa*. Firstly, one should fast at the constellation called *Puṣya*, and having generated the intent to awaken, compassion and loving kindness, one should perform the worship of the Buddha. Then one should prepare a *maṇḍala* on a purified piece of ground and he should present various offerings there. Thereafter, one should paint the amulet on birch-bark or cloth with bezoar or saffron. One should paint a boy (*dāraka*) in the middle, surrounded by the *dhāraṇī*, various symbols,<sup>29</sup> and deities.

Since about a dozen *Mahāpratisarā*-amulets have been excavated in various places in Central and Eastern Asia, I shall briefly compare the details of the ritual instructions with these.<sup>30</sup> The perhaps most important and somewhat problematic differences concern the deification and the gender of this protection.

As stated in the ritual instruction, a boy should be painted in the center of the amulet, which implies that this protection was

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*kāryāṇi sidhyante nātra saṁśayaḥ* (IWAMOTO 1938: 5.27–28) “Anybody who wears this spell around the neck or the arm all the time, All his matters are accomplished, there is no doubt.” *yaḥ kaścin mahābrāhmaṇa imāṃ mahāpratisarāṃ mahāvidyārājñīm yathāvidhinā likhitvā bāhau kaṅthe dhārayiṣyati sa sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhito veditavyaḥ* (IWAMOTO 1938: 13.12–14) “Great Brahmin, whoever wears this Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells around the arm or the neck having painted it according to the precept, he should be considered to be empowered by all the Tathāgatas.” *yasyaiṣā vidyā kāyakaṅthagatā bhaviṣyati sa sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhito bhaviṣyati* (IWAMOTO 1938: 19.17–18) “The one who fixes this spell on the body or around the neck becomes empowered by all Tathāgatas.” *tasmād avāśyam eveyaṃ mahāvidyārājñī kāyakaṅthagatāṃ kṛtvā satkṛtya dhārayitavyā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 23.18–19) “Therefore one should wear this Great Queen of Spells fixed on the body or around the neck respectfully by all means.” *tena hi mahābrāhmaṇa pariññātapūrvam tasmād avāśyam eveyaṃ mahāpratisareti dhārayitavyā vācayitavyā likhitavyā yathāvidhinā nityaṃ śarīragatāṃ kṛtvā dhārayitavyā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 15.21–24) “Therefore, Great Brahmin, following this example from the past, this Great Amulet should, by all means, be memorised, recited and painted according to the precept and it should always be worn fixed on the body.”

<sup>29</sup>It should be remarked here that the symbols to be painted on the sides of the amulet appear in the hands of Mahāpratisara after the deification of this scripture.

<sup>30</sup>For a detailed description of such an amulet see SØRENSEN 1991–92. To the best of my knowledge, no such *Mahāpratisarā*-amulets survive in South Asia. CHANDRA 1964: 306 reports about a *raḁṣācakra* of Mahāpratisarā from the Mdzod-dge-sgar-gsar monastery in Amdo.

closely related to fertility and the production of male offspring. As for the actual Central and Eastern Asian amulets, on the majority of these a male deity,<sup>31</sup> Mahāpratisara is depicted in the middle, generally in an eight-armed form.<sup>32</sup> These variations relating to the central image of the amulets can probably be interpreted as reflections of a complex historical process, namely, the deification of the MPMVR. It is likely, that with the course of time, after this scripture had become personified, the originally prescribed central image of a boy was most commonly changed to various iconographical representations of the deity Mahāpratisarā.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup>SØRENSEN 1991–92: 295–298, MEVISSSEN 1999: 110–111. In Chinese and Japanese sources he is referred to as a Bodhisattva or Vidyārāja.

<sup>32</sup>Three amulets have different central images. Once the Bodhisattva Tejaprabha surrounded with the nine planetary deities and the twelve divisions of the zodiac is depicted (DRÈGE 1999–2000: Fig. 6). This image is probably connected to the following couplet in the Sanskrit recensions: *candrasūryau sanakṣatrau rāhuketugrahāṣṭakam | likhec ca ṣaṇḍapaṇḍānām putralābho bhaviṣyati* (IWAMOTO 1938: 26.8–9) “One should paint the sun and the moon with the constellations, Rāhu, Ketu and the eight planets, [Thus even] impotent people and eunuchs become able to produce a son.” Twice a figure holding a vajra and touching the head of a kneeling person is placed in the middle of the *dhāraṇī*-diagram (DRÈGE 1999–2000: Figs. 8 and 9). These images are probably connected to the following couplet in the Sanskrit recensions: *bhikṣuṃ vajradharaṃ kuryād duṣṭatarjanatatparam* (IWAMOTO 1938: 25.14) “One should paint a monk who holds a *vajra* and threatens the wicked.” It is, however, also possible that the aforementioned images reflect peculiarities related to the Chinese adaptation of this tradition. On an eighth-century illuminated Chinese ms. of the *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī* there are only symbolic characters representing Mahāpratisara in the middle of the diagram. See MATSUMOTO 1937: 598–603, plates 158–160.

<sup>33</sup>In the MPMVR the *mahāpratisarā* is never referred to as a goddess, it is an amulet and a magical formula. However, the MPMVR contains some feminine vocatives in its two *dhāraṇīs* which may be considered as proto-iconographic references. The longest and most complex of these refers to a deity holding a *vajra*, an axe (*paraśu*), a noose (*pāśa*), a hammer (*mudgara*), a sword (*khadga*), a conch (*śaṅkha*), a wheel (*cakra*) and a trident (*triśūla*) in her hands. Some of these objects also appear in the eighth narrative from which one learns how the recitation of this spell makes an army of men armed with daggers, axes, nooses, hammers, swords, clubs and tridents come out of the pores of a Tathāgata so that they destroy the enemy.

As far as the masculine gender of the central image of Mahāpratisara is concerned, this phenomenon is most probably the result of a process during which the earlier, masculine form of the Mahāpratisarā-tradition was transmitted to Central and Eastern Asia. A similar process can be seen, for example, in the case of Mahāmāyūrī who was also represented in a masculine form in China and Japan.<sup>34</sup>

### The Use Of The Second *Dhāraṇī*

From the general sections of the second *kalpa* we learn that the second *dhāraṇī* should be recited,<sup>35</sup> should be taught in detail,<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. CHOU 1945: 324, DE VISSER 1920 and the earlier footnote in section two of this paper.

<sup>35</sup> *yasyāṃ bhāṣitamātrāyāṃ munīnāṃ vajramayāsane / mārās ca mā-rakāyikā grahāḥ sarvavinayakā / vighnās ca santi ye kecit tatksañād vilayaṃ gatāḥ* (IWAMOTO 1938: 29.26–28) “The moment it is uttered in the adamant seat of the Buddhas, The Māras and their entourage, the Grahas, all the Vināyakas, And Vighnas, all that exist, are destroyed immediately.” *uccāraṇamātreṇa vā vajrāvamārjanena vā akālamaraṇān mahāvvyādhibhyaś ca parimucyate / sarvarogās cāsya praśāmyanti / dīrghaglānir avamārjanamātreṇa vā praśamaṃ gacchati / dine dine svādhyāyaṃ kuryān mahāprājño bhavati* (IWAMOTO 1938: 31.12–15) “One gets released from untimely death and from the great diseases either by uttering [the *dhāraṇī*] or by *vajra*-purification. All his illnesses disappear. Long-lasting sickness ceases just by the purification. One should recite it day by day, [thus] he becomes very wise.” *rājāgnir udakaṃ caiva vidyud vā taskaro 'pi vā / yuddhasaṃgrāmakalahā daṃṣṭriṇo ye ca dāruṇāḥ / sarve te pralayaṃ yānti vidyāyā lakṣajāpataḥ / vidyām imāṃ parāṃ siddhāṃ sarvabuddhair hi deśitam / kīrtamanā na sīdanti bodhisambhārapūraye / sarveṣu caiva sthāneṣu imāṃ vidyāṃ prayojayet* (IWAMOTO 1938: 33.11–16) “King, fire, water, thunderbolt or robber, Wars, battles, strifes and frightening carnivorous animals, These are all eliminated by uttering this spell a hundred thousand times, The ones reciting this most excellent, accomplished spell taught by all Buddhas, Are not hindered in accomplishing the Equipments for Enlightenment, One should employ this spell in every place.

<sup>36</sup> *parebhyaś ca vistareṇa saṃprakāśayiṣyati* (IWAMOTO 1938: 31.27–28) “Manifests it to others in detail.”

should be written down,<sup>37</sup> and should be worn around the neck or the arm.<sup>38</sup>

As we can see, the above ways of use are rather close to those of the first *dhāraṇī* and it is historically confirmed by a Japanese painting that the second *dhāraṇī* was written on an amulet with the first.<sup>39</sup> However, if we look at the instructions for the healing ritual at the end of the second *kalpa*, the most important way of employment for this *dhāraṇī* appears to be recitation, since only this practice is mentioned there. To perform this healing ritual one should prepare a *maṇḍala* on a purified piece of ground and place various offerings there. After this has been done, one should bring the sick person to the middle of the *maṇḍala*. Then one should recite the second *dhāraṇī* twenty-eight times and should throw seven flowers in each direction. By this method the sick person is healed.

Such an employment of this *dhāraṇī* is reported in a textual account from eighth-century China. At the end of the Shang-yuan period (760–761) Emperor Su-tsung (756–762) was ill and it was Amoghavajra who exorcised the evil spirits by reciting the *Mahāpratisara-dhāraṇī* seven times. As a result the Emperor recovered by the next day.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *grastāś cet kālapāśēna nītas cāpi yamālayam / āyus tasya vivardheta pratisarālikhanād api / parikṣiṇāyuso yas tu saptāhamṛta eva ca / yāval likhitamātreṇa sa jīvati na saṃśayaḥ* (IWAMOTO 1938: 28.4–7) “If someone is seized by the noose of death and lead to Yama’s abode, His duration of life increases just by painting this Amulet, The one whose life-span has terminated and even the one dead for a week, Continues to live just by painting [the Amulet]; there is no doubt.” *atha pāpavināśe tu likhanād eva mucyate* (IWAMOTO 1938: 28.26) “Moreover, when there is [the danger of] death caused by misdeeds, one gets released just by painting it.” *asyā likhitamātrāyāḥ sarvasaukhyam samṛddhyati* (IWAMOTO 1938: 29.9) “All kinds of welfare increase just by painting it.”

<sup>38</sup> *likhitam dhārayet prājño bāhau baddhvā maharddhikām* (IWAMOTO 1938: 35.1) “Having painted it, the wise one should wear [the Amulet] of great supernatural power tied around the arm.”

<sup>39</sup> FERENCZY 1987: 41 reports that this is a painting on paper from the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries; CSEH 1996: 54–56 lists this object as a silk amulet from the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. It should be remarked here that in the actual ritual instruction for preparing an amulet there is no reference to the inclusion of the second *dhāraṇī*.

<sup>40</sup> CHOU 1945: 295. On Emperor Su-tsung see WEINSTEIN 1987: 57–59.

## The Use Of The Mantras of the MPMVR

As far as instructions for the use of the four mantras of the MPMVR are concerned, we learn from the text that these mantras should be worn fixed on the body or around the neck, should always be concentrated on, and should be recited, repeated, and meditated upon.<sup>41</sup> They should be written down, read, memorised, daily repeated and taught to others.<sup>42</sup> The writing down of these mantras is proved by the Central and Eastern Asian *Mahāpratisara*-amulets, on which these four mantras can usually be seen placed after the first *dhāraṇī*.<sup>43</sup>

## Further Types Of Use

So far we have dealt with practices prescribed in the MPMVR itself. However, there were further ways in which this protection was employed which are not mentioned in this scripture but obvious from historical evidence.

Firstly, as can be seen in all the Gilgit mss, the donor's name was inserted at certain places in both *dhāraṇīs* of this scripture.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup>*satatasamitaṃ likhitvā kāyakaṅthagatāni kṛtvā dhārayitavyāni satatasamitaṃ manasikartavyāni vācayitavyāni svādhyāyitavyāni bhāvayitavyāni cādhyāśayena* (IWAMOTO 1938: 19.27–29) “Having written them down, one should always wear them fixed on the body or around the neck. One's mind should constantly be concentrated on these. They should be recited, repeated daily, and meditated upon with strong determination.”

<sup>42</sup>*atidurlabham apy eṣāṃ śravaṇaṃ kiṃ punar likhanapaṭhanavācanadhāraṇasvādhyāyanabhāvanaparadeśanā* (IWAMOTO 1938: 20.15–17) “It is very rare even to hear them, how much more it is to write them down, to read, recite, memorise, repeat them daily, meditate upon them and to preach them for others.”

<sup>43</sup>In the actual ritual instruction for preparing an amulet there is no reference to the inclusion of these mantras.

<sup>44</sup>E.g. *rakṣa rakṣa mama Dinaśīnasya; ye mama Trailokadevisya ahitaiṣiṇas teṣāṃ sarveṣāṃ śarīraṃ jvālaya; svastir bhavatu mama Maṇikeasya; ye mama Śābyakhātunenasya ahitaiṣiṇas; rakṣa rakṣa mama Vāyuphanasya*. Such practice of inserting names in *dhāraṇīs* can be found in various other scriptures as well. One of the Turfan-fragments of the *Asiloma-pratisara*, a text closely related to the MPMVR, reads: *[yo ma]ma Mokṣayaśasya pāpaṃ karoti imāya asilomaprat(i)sar(e)ṇa : ātmarakṣaṃ karomi / paritraṃ parigrahaṃ paripālanaṃ* (WALDSCHMIDT and SANDER 1980: 274). The Gilgit ms. of the *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhāna-sattvāvalokana-buddhakṣetrasandarśana-*

This phenomenon indicates that it was a widespread custom to get this whole text copied for the protection and benefit of the manuscript-donor.<sup>45</sup> The popularity of this custom is suggested by the relatively high number of *Mahāpratisarā*-mss. which survived in Gilgit. Oddly, there is no definite instruction in the MPMVR to copy this whole scripture or to place any name in the *dhāraṇīs*. There are only instructions to copy the *dhāraṇīs*, especially the first. Nevertheless, it is likely that the cult of the book was such a powerful tradition that even without direct instructions in this scripture it was copied in its entirety without hesitation.<sup>46</sup>

Evidence for the rest of the practices not referred to in the MPMVR come from Eastern Asia. Two xylographic amulets of the *Mahāpratisara* were found on the third floor of the Ruiguang *stūpa* in Suzhou. These two amulets were discovered among other relics, including small statues and a copy of the *Lotus Sūtra* written in golden characters.<sup>47</sup> Beside *stūpas*,<sup>48</sup> it seems that placing *Mahāpratisara*-amulets in tombs was also a widespread practice in Eastern Asia, since several such objects were excavated at funerary sites in Central China.<sup>49</sup> Evidence for yet another sort of practice are bricks inscribed with the two *dhāraṇīs* and four

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*vyūham* includes inserted names (DUTT 1939: 56, 58, 71) and so do the *Sitātapatrā-dhāraṇī* from Khotan (VON HINÜBER 1981: 169) and certain inscriptions from Central Asia (VON HINÜBER 1987-8: 246-247), for example. DOUGLAS 1978: XI. mentions that on Tibetan amulet-prints empty spaces are left for names to be added by hand.

<sup>45</sup>Beside the Gilgit mss, the donor's name was inserted at certain places in the MPMVR in numerous Eastern Indian and Nepalese PR mss. as well. In most of these cases the donor's name was also included in the colophone.

<sup>46</sup>On the cult of the book see SCHOPEN 1975.

<sup>47</sup>DRÈGE 1999-2000: 30-31 and Figs. 5 and 6.

<sup>48</sup>Although it has been shown that the practice of placing various *dhāraṇī*-scriptures in *stūpas* was a widespread custom in South Asia and beyond (SCHOPEN 1982: 106, SCHERRER-SCHAUB 1994 and BENTON 1995), directions for placing mss. of this tradition in *stūpas* are not present in the MPMVR and, to the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence for such practice related to this scripture in South Asia. The function of the building where the five *Mahāpratisarā*-mss. were found near Gilgit was most probably different from that of a *stūpa*. VON HINÜBER 2004: 2 suggests that it may have been a monastic library, while FUSSMAN 2004 proposes that it may have been both the chapel and the lodgings of an *ācārya* with a collection of mss.

<sup>49</sup>DRÈGE 1999-2000: Fig. 1. Found in a tomb in Sichuan, Fig. 7. in a tomb in Luoyang, an amulet mentioned on p. 32 (reproduced in MEVISSSEN 1999: 109, plate 8.9) in a tomb near Xian, Fig. 9. in a tomb in Xian.

mantras of the MPMVR. These used to be placed inside the walls of a pagoda in Yunnan and they appear to have been used as spiritual relics perhaps with a protective function as well.<sup>50</sup>

## The Users Of The MPMVR

According to the references in the MPMVR, the *dhāraṇīs* and mantras of this scripture were available for use by everyone in both the monastic and lay communities.<sup>51</sup>

As for historical evidence, there is plenty of information about the actual users of this scripture. These appear in the form of donors' names either in the *dhāraṇīs* or the colophones of vari-

<sup>50</sup>See LIEBENTHAL 1947.

<sup>51</sup>Those expected to employ this magical lore were supposed to be: sons and daughters of good families (*asyā mahāpratisarāyā mahāvīdyārājñyāḥ sahaśravaṇamātreṇa mahābrāhmaṇa tasya kulaputrasya vā kuladuhitur vā sarvapāpavinīrmuktir bhavati* (IWAMOTO 1938: 11.18–21) “Great Brahmin, merely upon hearing this Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells, the son or daughter of a good family is freed from all misdeeds.”); Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras (*brāhmaṇeṣu īśvaro lekhyāḥ kṣatriyeṣu maheśvaraḥ / śūdreṣu ca sadā saumyaṃ cakrasvāminam ālikhet / vaiśyeṣu ca vaiśravaṇam indraṃ caiva sureśvaram* (IWAMOTO 1938: 25.16–18) “For Brahmins one should paint Īśvara, for Kshatriyas Maheśvara, For Shudras one should always paint the benign Viṣṇu, For Vaishyas [one should paint] Vaiśravaṇa and Indra, the Lord of the Gods.”); monks and nuns, male and female lay followers, kings, princes, royal ministers or anybody else (*ya imāṃ mahāpratisarāṃ mahādharmaṇī śrāddhaḥ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā bhikṣur vā bhikṣuṇī vā upāsako vā upāsikā vā rājā vā rājaputro vā rājāmātyo vā brāhmaṇo vā kṣatriyo vā tadanyo vā yaḥ kaścit sakṛc chroṣyati śrutvā ca mahatyā śrad-dhayā gauraveṇādhyāśayena likhiṣyati likhāpayiṣyati dhārayiṣyati vācayiṣyati tīvreṇa manasā bhāvayiṣyati parebhyaś ca vistareṇa saṃprakāśayiṣyati (. . .)* (IWAMOTO 1938: 31.22–28) “The faithful son or daughter of a good family, a monk or nun, a layman or laywoman, a king, a prince or a royal minister, a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or anybody else who once hears this Great Amulet Great Dhāraṇī and having heard it writes it down, gets it written down, memorises it and recites it with great faith, respect and religious determination, [furthermore] meditates upon it with sharp mind and manifests it to others in detail . . .”). The nine narratives in the first *kalpa* of this scripture are another source of information. The users of the first *dhāraṇī* in these narratives are the following persons: Prince Rāhula, the son of Siddhārtha (first narrative); kings (third and sixth narratives); lay followers (second and fourth narratives); a wealthy merchant (fifth narrative); Śakra, the King of Gods (seventh narrative); a Tathāgata (eighth narrative); and an ordinary person (ninth narrative).

ous mss. or amulets.<sup>52</sup> Among the donors' names inserted in the *dhāraṇīs* of the *Mahāpratisarā*-mss. found at Gilgit, two queens, Trailokadevī and Śābyakhātu(nā) are identified,<sup>53</sup> the former being the wife of King Surendravikramādityanandi<sup>54</sup> of the Paṭola Śāhis.<sup>55</sup>

As far as Eastern Asia is concerned, the donor-inscriptions on some of the *Mahāpratisara*-amulets usually contain the names of various *śramaṇas* and *bhikṣus*.<sup>56</sup> Beside these people, this scripture is also reported to have been used by the great master and translator, Vajrabodhi and his disciple Amoghavajra. Vajrabodhi recited this *dhāraṇī* on his way to China in 719 to save his ship from sinking in a storm. Amoghavajra, to whom I have already referred to in relation with the healing ritual, recited this protection during his voyage from China to India in 741 to escape from a terrible sea-storm and a large whale.<sup>57</sup> In 758 Amoghavajra presented Emperor Su-tsung a copy of the *Mahāpratisara-dhāraṇī* and requested the Emperor to carry it with him.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusion

From textual and archaeological evidence it seems that the *dhāraṇīs* and mantras of this protection were primarily used for preparing an amulet. It should not be forgotten that *pratisara* means amulet and there are plenty of references in various scriptures of

<sup>52</sup>In those Nepalese and Eastern Indian PR mss. which I have consulted, the donors' names include *bhikṣus*, *śākyabhikṣus*, *upāsakas*, and an *upāsikā-rājñī* called Daddākā who was perhaps a queen of the Pāla King, Nayapāla in the mid-eleventh century. The great number of illuminated PR mss. suggests that it was a popular custom among well-to-do people to have such costly mss. copied for their protection and religious merit.

<sup>53</sup>On the queens of the Paṭola Śāhis see VON HINÜBER 2004: 114–117.

<sup>54</sup>On this king of the first half of the seventh century see VON HINÜBER 2004: 88–89.

<sup>55</sup>VON HINÜBER 1981: 165 and 2004: 17, 90. See JETTMAR 1993 and VON HINÜBER 2004 on a detailed treatment of the Paṭola Śāhis.

<sup>56</sup>DRÈGE 1999–2000 gives the following references to the donors: Fig. 3: a monk; Fig. 5: four *śramaṇas*, a *bhikṣu* and twenty-five male and thirty-four female lay followers; Fig. 7: a monk.

<sup>57</sup>CHOU 1945: 275, 290, MEVISSSEN 1999: 117 and 123 (fn. 57).

<sup>58</sup>CHOU 1945: 322.

the Mantranaya that the use of different sorts of amulets was popular in the Sangha around the middle of the first millennium.<sup>59</sup>

The second most important function of this protection appears to be healing. Again, various texts of the *dhāraṇī*-literature indicate that curing all sorts of illnesses was one of the main functions of these scriptures.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup>Evidence that Buddhists widely used amulets comes already from the first centuries CE when Gandhāran Bodhisattvas were usually depicted wearing a thread similar to an *upavīta* with small pendant boxes on it presumably containing amulets (MEIJSSEN 1991-92: 356). The use of talismanic strings and threads (*sūtraka*) is mentioned in the *Amoghapāśahṛdaya-dhāraṇī* (MEIJSZAHN 1962: 298): “A string must be tied for every kind of fever. (...) The evil demons are to be killed with the sword; white thread will protect against them. (...) White thread is to be tied to the ear in case of sore eyes. (...) The five-fold thread is to be used against all demons. The white thread is to be used for every fever.” The same text also gives instructions for making a talisman (*maṇi*) of the [mantra-]essence (*hṛdaya*) which should be worn on the body as a protection (MEIJSZAHN 1962: 299): “After having recited [the *hṛdaya*] hundred-eight times over the medicinal herbs *jayā*, *vijayā*, *nākulī*, *gandhanākulī*, *cāriṇī*, *abhayaṇī*, *indrāṇī*, *gandhapriyaṅgu*, *tagara*, *cakrā*, *mahācakrā*, *viṣṇukrānta*, *somarājī* and *sunandā*, a talisman (*maṇi*) is to be made [from them] which must be put on the head or on the upper arm; boys [wear it] around the neck and girls around the waist. It will be the cause of great prosperity, elimination of misfortune and bestowing with children. When the talisman is worn, every possible protection is assured. Poison and fire shall not approach. Poisoning shall not occur, and if [such a case] were possible, it will be cured quickly.” There are references to protective threads (*sūtra*) in the *Mekhalā-dhāraṇī* (TRIPATHI 1981: 157), the *Hayagrīvavidyā* (DUTT 1939: 44.10), the *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī* (IWAMOTO 1937a: 41-2), the *Mahāmāyūrī* (Takubo 1972: 58) and in the *Mahāśītavati* (IWAMOTO 1937b: 4). There are references to the use of amulets with a spell written on them in the *Vijayavati-pratyāṅgirā-dhāraṇī* (WADDELL 1914: 93), the *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhānasattvāvalokana-buddhakṣetrasandarśana-vyūham* (DUTT 1939: 74.15), and the *Āryasarvatathāgatoṣṇīsasiṭāpatrā-dhāraṇī* (*Dhīh* 2002: 153.16-18, no author named). DOUGLAS 1978 and SKORUPSKI 1983 discuss the use of amulets in Tibetan Buddhism. LALOU 1936 describes an amulet inscribed with the *Siṭāpatrā-dhāraṇī* from Dunhuang. STRICKMANN 2002 writes at length on Buddhist talismanic seals used in China.

<sup>60</sup>The *Mahāmāyūrī-dhāraṇī* is included in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* section of the *Vinayavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya*, where it is stated that once the Buddha healed a young monk bitten by a snake using this *dhāraṇī* (PANGLUNG 1981: 61). In Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita* the *Mahāmāyūrī* is mentioned being recited for healing at the royal palace (KANE 1918: 76, 445). A verse by Rājaśekhara in Jalhana’s *Sūktimuktāvalī* gives a reference to the *Māyūrī-vidyā* which works efficiently against snake poison (WINTERNITZ 1933: vol.

Further uses include reciting the *dhāraṇīs* and mantras silently or aloud, keeping them in mind and meditating upon them, teaching them to others, mounting the first *dhāraṇī* at the top of a flagstaff above a *caitya*, copying the entire text and inserting the donor's name in the *dhāraṇīs*. In Eastern Asia *Mahāpratisara*-amulets were placed in a *stūpa*, the two *dhāraṇīs* and four mantras were carved in bricks and placed inside the walls of a temple, and it is likely that in this region this protection was related to funerary rites as well.

As we have seen, while the majority of the functions of this protection are prescribed by textual passages, a number of the practices can only be reconstructed from material evidence. Consequently, it is possible that there were even further ways of use related to this tradition neither described in this scripture nor surviving as historical evidence. To explore such possibilities requires further research which compares the functions of closely related texts of the *dhāraṇī*-literature with the present scripture. Nevertheless, for the time being it can be stated that the MPMVR was held in a remarkably high esteem among distinguished groups of users, and it was applied in various ways already in the middle of the first millennium.

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II. 372. fn. 1). There are references to the *Mahāmāyūrī* as a means of protection against diseases and Grahas in Indian medical literature (MEULENBELD 1999: IA: 560, IIA: 10, 217). Fragments of the *Mahāmāyūrī* were found among medical treatises in the Bower Manuscript (HOERNLE 1893–1912). The *Mahāmāyūrī* was widely used for healing in China and in the eleventh-twelfth centuries it was often employed to cure the Emperor in Japan (DE VISSER 1920: 373, 387). The *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī* includes instructions for various demonifugic and healing rituals towards its end with one of these giving a long list of medicinal herbs (IWAMOTO 1937a: 30–43). The *Amoghapāśahṛdaya-dhāraṇī* includes a list of various medicinal herbs, furthermore specifies several diseases that are cured by reciting this magical formula (MEISEZAHN 1962: 291, 299). The Red-copper Beak *Dhāraṇī* (not extant in Sanskrit), the Thunderbolt-beak *Dhāraṇī* (*Vajra-tuṇḍa-dhāraṇī*) and the *Tathāgatoṣṇīṣa-sitātapatra-aparājita-pratyāṅgirā-dhāraṇī* all have references to their healing function (Translated from Tibetan by WADDELL 1914: 39, 41 and 49). STRICKMANN 2002 presents various examples of early Chinese Buddhist ritual manuals used for healing. ABÈ 1999: 159–164 writes that healing played an important part in eighth-century Japanese Buddhism with the extensive use of *dhāraṇīs*.

## Abbreviations

**GBMFE** Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts Facsimile Edition

**NGMPP** Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project

**MPMVR** *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvidyārājñī*

**PR** *Pañcarakṣā*

**T** Taishō Edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka

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