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## **Master Thesis**

(Ongoing project – To be submitted in July 2011)

“Kumarajiva: Mission and visibility”

## **Abstract**

This thesis offers a detailed historical research on the life and activities of Kumarajiva (344-413), one of the most outstanding Buddhist translators of all times, relying on biographical markers which facilitate an exploration of his translation theories from a hermeneutic-philosophical approach, the cognitive acquisition of his translating competence, his sense of mission and purpose, and the singularities of his forerunning translators’ school.

Meaningfully enough, this thesis is coincidental with a series of international conferences and events commemorating the 1600<sup>th</sup>. anniversary of his death, which will be held from 2011 through 2013.

Kumarajiva didn’t translate in a stable, safe environment; he developed his abilities in the midst of unpredictable changes, fate whims and political turns. His was a life of transgression and, at the same time, perfect observance. But his translations (74 Buddhist sutras and treatises in 384 volumes, completed in just 13 years) have kept alive a flourishing civilization of peace, culture and education during 1,600 years, and they are still creating vibrant value in our age. This perdurability is explored in our thesis, in the context of validity standards and social discursive practices.

Lastly, from an action-theory paradigm, we investigate to which extent his methodology of “oral translation-master class-collective workshop” could be applied today in the training of specialized translators —not only in religious texts— as an alternative way toward better developments and performance, not only limited to textual superiority.

Key words: Kumarajiva, Buddhism, scriptural translation, translator training, translation methodology, translating competence, 4<sup>th</sup>. century, 5<sup>th</sup>. century, Asia, China, India.