

BUDDHIST TEXT CORPORA AND ICONOGRAPHY ALONG THE SILK ROAD:
DYNAMICS OF TRANSFER AND INTERACTION

ABSTRACTS



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Greek smorgasbord or Buddhist narratives?
Identification of Pyrrho's thought and practice

Like Socrates, Pyrrho left no body of writings on his teachings, so it is necessary to reconstruct his thought and practice on the basis of a few quotations, fragments of literary works by his student Timon, and anecdotal narratives written by his contemporaries.

Pyrrho is usually presented in the scholarly literature as an eccentric. This is based partly on scholars' widespread acceptance of patently spurious topoi as genuine accounts of Pyrrho, and partly on scholars' misinterpretations of the philosophical point of the narratives, but most importantly, scholars have misinterpreted many of the genuine narratives out of their single-minded determination to show that Pyrrho's thought is purely Greek in origin.

This paper shows that the narratives depict someone who went to Bactria and Gandhara, learned from the teachers there, and thenceforth practiced and taught a Buddhist way of life.

CHRISTOPHER I. BECKWITH, EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Like Socrates, Pyrrho left no body of writings on his teachings, so it is necessary to reconstruct his thought and practice on the basis of a few quotations, fragments of literary works by his student Timon, and anecdotal narratives written by his contemporaries.

Pyrrho is usually presented in the scholarly literature as an eccentric. This is based partly on scholars' widespread acceptance of patently spurious *topoi* as genuine accounts of Pyrrho, and partly on scholars' misinterpretations of the philosophical point of the narratives, but most importantly, scholars have misinterpreted many of the genuine narratives out of their single-minded determination to show that Pyrrho's thought is purely Greek in origin.

The single most important text for the thought of Pyrrho of Elis (ca. 350-260 BCE) is a quotation of Aristocles that derives ultimately from Timon's lost dialogue, *Pythō* 'Python'. It is a capsule account of Pyrrho's teachings, beginning with his revelation of three negative characteristics of *pragmata* 'things', by which he meant ethical conflicts that cause the arising of *pathē* 'passions, suffering' and 'disturbance'. His entire statement, in the original, is in the negative. The Aristocles passage reads:

Pyrrho says, All 'things' are by nature *adiaphora* 'undifferentiated (by a differentia, or criterion, meaning they have *no intrinsic self-identity*)'; they are *astathmēta* 'unstable; unbalanced'; and they are *anepikrita* 'unfixed; undetermined'. Therefore it is impossible for us to find out any eternal, absolute 'truths' about anything, because there is no logically sound way of differentiating anything, including 'true' and 'false'. So we should be without philosophical theories, we should be uninclined (toward or against 'things'), and we should be unwavering, saying about every single one, 'It no more is than it is not, or it both is and is not, or it neither is nor is not'. Timon says one who maintains this disposition will be left with *apatheia* 'passionlessness, absence of suffering', and then *ataraxia* 'undisturbedness, peace'.¹

With the exception of this fragment and its parallels, and a number of verbatim quotes of Timon's poems praising Pyrrho, the most important testimonies about Pyrrho's teachings and life are narrative vignettes describing him, typically in the context of events involving other actors and spectators, and concluding with a moral, or judgemental comment. Hitherto no attempt seems to have been made to organize the narratives about Pyrrho according to type, or to analyze their purposes. This paper is devoted to examining all of the major genuine narratives in the context of Pyrrho's life and thought.

The narratives are as follows:

1. [Pyrrho] heard an Indian reproach [his teacher] Anaxarchus, telling him that he would never be able to teach others what is good while he himself danced attendance on kings in their courts. [As a result, Pyrrho] would withdraw from the world and live in solitude, rarely showing himself to his relatives. [This was because he] had written a poem in praise of Alexander, for which he had been rewarded with ten thousand gold pieces.²

¹ Eusebius, ed. K. Mras, *Eusebius Werke*, Achter Band: Die *Praeparatio Evangelica*, Zweiter Teil: Die Bücher XI bis XV, Register [*Praep. evang.*] (Berlin, 1983), XIV.18.1-5; M.L. Chiesara, *Aristocles of Messene: Testimonia and Fragments [Aristocles]* (Oxford, 2001), 20-21. This is partly a quotation and partly a paraphrase of the text. See Beckwith (forthcoming) for a detailed study of the Greek text and Pyrrho's philosophy.

² Diogenes Laertius IX.63, Sextus Empiricus, *M* ['*Against the Learned*'] 1.282.

2. Pyrrho the Elean, when on one occasion one of his acquaintances received him with a very sumptuous entertainment, as he himself relates, said, “I will for the future not come to you if you receive me in this manner; that I may avoid being grieved by seeing you go to a great expense for which there is no necessity, and that you, too, may not come to distress by being overwhelmed by such expenses; for it is much better for us to delight one another by our mutual companionship and conversation, than by the great variety of dishes which we set before one another, of which our servants consume the greater part.”³

3. [Pyrrho] lived in fraternal piety with his sister, a midwife, ... now and then even taking things for sale to market, poultry perchance or pigs, and he would dust the things in the house, quite indifferent as to what he did. They say he showed his indifference by washing a porker.⁴

4. [When Pyrrho] was on a voyage, and in peril during a storm, he pointed to a little pig contentedly feeding upon some barley which had been spilled near by, and said to his companions⁵ that such *apatheia* [passionlessness] must be cultivated through reasoning and philosophy by anyone wishing not to be thoroughly disturbed by the things that happen to him.⁶

5. When a dog rushed at him and terrified him, he answered his critic that it was not easy entirely to strip oneself of one’s human nature; but one should strive with all one’s might against *pragmata* ‘things’, by deeds if possible, and if not, then through reason.⁷

The didactic elements of the narratives are discussed and it is shown how they clarify Pyrrho’s teachings and practices. Other details about Pyrrho’s teachings and practice, with the contemporary account of ‘India’ by Megasthenes, indicate that early Pyrrhonism correspond closely to what is actually known about late fourth century (BCE) Buddhism, and to a large extent also to traditional accounts of what ‘early’ Buddhism was like in general. The narratives also represent typically Buddhist views. Nevertheless, they are clearly Greek in color and detail, and apparently none of them reprise any of the well-known stories about the Buddha’s life. The conclusion to be drawn from the evidence about Pyrrho’s thought and practice is that he adopted an early form of Buddhism during his years in Bactria and Gandhara. However, either Buddhism had not yet become fixated on the person of the Buddha, and had not yet developed other devotional and organizational elements that did eventually appear (as recent research arguing for the lateness of the Vinaya also suggests), or Pyrrho accepted the philosophical and pragmatic elements of Buddhism, but stripped it of its alien garb and reconstituted it as a new ‘Greek Buddhism’ for the Hellenistic world.

³ Athenaeus x.14.419d-e, translation by Yonge (1854, II: 661).

⁴ Diogenes Laertius IX.66.

⁵ The text and translation up to this point is from Plutarch, Πῶς ἂν τις αἰσθοίτο ἑαυτοῦ προκόπτοντος ἐπ’ ἀρετῇ - *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus* (‘How a Man May Become Aware of his Progress in Virtue’; often perversely abbreviated as *Prof. Virt.*, for *De Profectu in Virtute*), ed. and trans. Babbitt (from Perseus Project online).

⁶ My translation (Beckwith forthcoming); this part of the text is from F. Decleva Caizzi, *Pirrone: Testimonianze* (Naples, 1981: 36). Babbitt’s translation from this point on reads, “a similar indifference must be acquired from reason and philosophy by the man who does not wish to be disturbed by anything that may befall him.”

⁷ Diogenes Laertius IX.66, revising the translation of Hicks, which reads, “When a cur rushed at him and terrified him, he answered his critic that it was not easy entirely to strip oneself of human weakness; but one should strive with all one’s might against facts, by deeds if possible, and if not, in word.” The translation ‘through reason (or perhaps ‘logic’)’—in the translation of Hicks, “word”—is of the last word in the Greek passage, λόγῳ; cf. Richard Bett, *Pyrrho: His antecedents and his legacy* (Oxford, 2000: 66), who also translates it as ‘reason’.

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Meditation as a Visual Narrative: Remarks on a Meditation Manual from Turfan

Visuality and meditative practice have been combined in Buddhist traditions from an early period. First (and probably historically antecedent), the sets of possible meditation topics an adept can choose from include various exercises of creating visual mental images. These range from quite simply structured, single-colored devices, which are used to induce mental “counter-pictures” (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*), up to complex visualizations of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas etc. together with their various attributes. Even more complex visualizations contain whole groups of deities, usually arranged in a Maṇḍala (ritual circle). Second, meditation as a ritual practice is itself a topos of Buddhist visuality. How a meditating person—the Buddha or somebody else—looks like, is communicated in form of statues, pictures and “visual” narratives.

A special type of Buddhist visual meditation practice is depicted in a yoga-manual found along the Silk Road. This book combines both aspects into an intricate self-referential meditative drama. Here, the meditating adept appears in his own visualization (or induced vision?) as the protagonist of movie-like dramatic sequences situated in a fantastic universal landscape. The “Yoga-Manual from Turfan” raises general questions on the logic and position of meditation narratives in Buddhist culture-production and its connection to religious visuality including visual arts.

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The petroglyphs of the Western Himalayas:
New data on the ancient tracks of the diffusion of Buddhism

The results of our researches on petroglyphs in the Western Himalayas (that refers to the Gilgit-Baltistan province in Pakistan and the bordering region of Ladakh in India) will be presented. After an overview of textual sources available on the introduction and establishment of Buddhism in the area, we will focus on engraved representations of *stūpa*. Taking into account about 2,500 such images we will see how their typological and comparative study with Buddhist monuments, reliquaries and reliefs contribute to our knowledge of religious transfer and exchange between the Indian subcontinent and the Tarim Basin in Central Asia.

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Why Telling Foreign Stories in China? Intentionality - Xuanzang's Xiyu-ji

The Chinese Buddhist canon contains a considerable number of narrative collections some of which are not extant in their Indic original. This paper will address the more general question why Indian stories were popular in a Chinese Buddhist context. More specifically it will attempt to answer the question why Xuanzang, in his “Record of the Western Regions” (Xiyu-ji), included legends of different types. I will discern levels of motivation and intentionality which also explain why some of the legends cannot be found in the standard compilations of legends.

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Beyond the Silk Road: Chinese imageries and Buddha portrayals in the early medieval era

The scholarly debate about the penetration of Buddhist iconography into the Chinese territory gained momentum during the fifties, when Asian and Western scholars traced several Buddha-figures on a number of second and third century artefacts excavated in different Chinese regions, from Sichuan to Inner Mongolia, from Jiangsu to Shandong. Soon, some sectors of the scholarly world were to adopt a more cautious approach. Starting with Zheng Zhaoyue who first spoke of Buddha-like Chinese deities (1956), the focus has been shifted to the absorption of Buddhist motifs within the local religious context. More recently, studies such as those by Wu Hong (1986), Wen Yucheng (2006) Huo Wei (2007), Abe (2001) have greatly contributed to strengthen this perspective. My paper will look at this issue from the perspective of narratives in order to analyse and classify the ways in which Buddhist iconography and fragments of Buddhist iconic narratives intersected Chinese tales involving immortality, auspicious animals, and cosmic trees. Special attention shall be devoted to forms and extent of the overlapping of Buddhist/Chinese narratives by reflecting on "intertextuality", or to say it with Genette (1981) transtextuality.

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Buddhism on the Silk Road: reflections on a curious asymmetry

It is probable that Buddhism reached Gandhara already during the time of king Aśoka in the 3rd century BCE. In the wake of Alexander's campaign to northwest India this region had absorbed a surge of Greek culture which remained present for a surprisingly long time. Even centuries later when the need was felt for creating visible representations of the Buddha and his followers this culture could still serve as a matrix. According to present knowledge the change from the so called aniconic to the iconic style did not occur before the first century CE. Once this step was taken, the Graeco-Roman representations created in Gandhara proved extremely successful; they influenced India proper and, even more important, they travelled along the Silk Road, initiated the Buddhist art of the local cultures and finally reached China and the Far East. So far, Gandhara has mostly been understood as the name for this specific style of Buddhist art, but recent manuscript finds reveal that the region contributed much more to shaping Buddhism during a formative period than previously expected. More and more it becomes apparent that Gandhara, on first sight situated at the margin of the Indian Buddhist world, played a very decisive role in the spread of Buddhism along the Silk Road towards the east. This can be seen as a truly amazing success story: a transfer process, starting from what must have been a real hub, which surpassed incredible language barriers and cultural differences and led to the reception and then adaptation of Buddhism in the Far East. However, it is exactly this success story which leads to the observation of a surprising nonsymmetry that will be addressed in the paper.

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Identification of mural paintings of the Kizil Cave 207 ("Painter's cave") with textual sources

The kingdom of Kucha, which was located in Paicheng province of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China today, played an important role as one of the largest oasis towns along the ancient Silk Road during ca. 3-8th century. Vividly coloured mural paintings of numerous cave temples in the Kucha region reflect the heyday of its Buddhist period. Kizil Cave 207 or the "Painter's cave (Malerhöhle)", the mural paintings of which are described by both A. Grünwedel and A. Le Coq as „the most beautiful and probably the oldest one among the all finds in Kizil Caves“, being dated to ca. 500 AD, is the key cave for studying the dynamics between textual and pictorial tradition of the art of Kucha.

Kizil Cave 207 is a central pillar cave, the mural of which was classified by the German expedition as the first Indo-Iranian style. 18 square scenes on both side walls of the main chamber, 14 of which had remained as the German expedition discovered this cave, show highly detailed depiction of the Buddha's preaching in different occasion.

By the help of some iconographical attributions and some previous attempts to identify the scenes partly, the speaker suggests that the pictorial representation of the preaching scenes of this cave correspond to the *Dīrghāgama* tradition of the Sarvāstivādins. This assumption will also be supported by murals in the back section of this cave depicting scenes concerning on the Mahāparinirvāṇa of the Buddha.

In the presentation the preaching scenes of the Kizil Cave 207 will be analyzed in comparison to descriptions of the textual sources and pictorial depictions of murals on other cave temples in Kucha region to identify each scene and to consider on the selection of certain preaching scenes for the theme of the mural.

SATOMI HIYAMA, EXTENDED ABSTRACT:

I. Kizil Cave 207 (“Painter’s Cave”)—general information and research materials in Berlin

The kingdom of Kucha played an important role as one of the largest oasis towns along the ancient Silk Road during ca. 3-8th century. Vividly coloured mural paintings of numerous cave temples in the Kucha region reflect the heyday of its Buddhist period. Kizil Cave 207 or the "Painter’s cave (Malerhöhle)", the mural paintings of which are described by both A. Grünwedel and A. Le Coq as „the most beautiful and probably the oldest one among the all finds in Kizil Caves“, is the key cave for studying the dynamics between textural and pictorial tradition of the art of Kucha.

The collection of the Asian Art Museum in Berlin provides great documentation for an investigation on the murals of Kizil Cave 207. The abundant unpublished archive documents of the German expedition and original mural fragments allow reconstructing the entire iconographic program of the murals of Kizil Cave 207 in the condition of 1906.

What makes this cave especially important are the nine sermon scenes with highly detailed narrative representations on each side wall in the main chamber. Of the 18 square scenes originally painted on both side walls of the main chamber, 14 were preserved when the cave was discovered by the German expedition. In each scene the Buddha's sermon is depicted in different occasion. This scheme is one of the most typical and popular themes amongst mural paintings in the Kucha region. The sermon scenes of the Kizil Cave 207 are painted with extraordinary elaborated brush strokes and show the great detail of each scene very clearly, while the sermon scenes in other cave temples are very often damaged and the detail is mostly obscure. Thus the analysis of the sermon scenes of the Kizil Cave 207 is of importance for research of the essential character of the Buddhist mural art of the Kucha region.

Some researchers already gave their interpretations of the sermon scenes (Grünwedel 1912, Grünwedel 1920, Waldschmidt 1930, Ding and Ma 1985, Zin 2006). In the presentation the previous identifications and iconographical attributions will be reconsidered in order to analyze each scene in entire iconographical context by the help of historical documents of the German Expedition.

To make it easy to refer to each painting, the abbreviatory number of R.1-9 and L.I-IX are given to each sermon scene after Grünwedel’s numbering (1912).

II. Attempt of Identification of the Sermon Scenes of the Kizil Cave 207

1. Story of Amrapālī (R3)

Let us start with beautiful fragments stored in the Asian Museum in Berlin being restored for our new exhibition in December. This scene was painted on the left upper part of the right side wall (R3).

The sermon of the Buddha takes place on the outside (on the mountainous background accompanying many plants and animals). The Buddha with multiple halos and the flame behind his shoulder, sitting on the throne beautifully decorated with textiles as on all other preaching scenes of the Kizil Cave 207, talks to a brahmana standing in front of him with a strangely stretched out right leg. A brahmana with exactly the same appearance sits at the first brahmana talking to a woman with a grim expression. The two brahmanas should be the same person, who plays a key role for identifying the scene.

Grünwedel interpreted this scene by the story of Amrapālī because of the representation of a woman standing at the right side of the scene and wearing many accessories and a God of tree behind her. Amrapālī, a famous courtesan of Vaiśālī, heard about the arrival of the Buddha. Beautifully adorned, she visited the Buddha with women accompanying her and offered him the meal and her garden. The Buddha accepted it in silence. On the way of her going back, Amrapālī ran across to the group of Licchavi coming to visit the Buddha. They requested the Buddha and Amrapālī to give them a right of inviting the Buddha first, but both of them refused to do it. Then the people from Licchavi saluted the Buddha by bowing, worshiped him by circumambulating around him three times and went away.

The representation of the story can be found in Gandharan narrative sculpture, too. There are, however, no Brahmana but only the aristocrats of Licchavi appearing in the scene.

Only some versions of this episode, however, mention to the role of brahmana Paṅḡika as the leader of the Licchavi-group (*Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* (2-18), *MPS* (ed. Waldschmidt 1950, 11b), *Zhang-Ahan-Jing* (T1, 13b17-14c10), *Wu-Fen-Lü* (T1421, 135b12-136a18) and *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Pinaye-Zashi* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya Kṣudrakavastu*, T1451, 385c25-387a11). As the group arrived, Paṅḡika stepped forward to the Buddha and told the will of the group. Being refused, he takes a step backward, salutes the Buddha and leaves the scene. The pictorial representation corresponds with the textual descriptions well.

2. Story of Urubilvākāśyapa (L.II, R.5, L.XIII (?))

Waldschmidt (1930) interpreted the sermon scene on the upper middle part of the left sidewall as a scene of the conversion of Urubilvākāśyapa at the Gayā mountain. What he pointed out is the performance of miraculous power of the Buddha shown for the conversion of the Urubilvākāśyapa, which is represented as the figure of the flying Buddha and three monks sitting under him and hearing his sermon.

To what Waldschmidt payed no attention was the plant in the left hand of the Buddha. This detail can be explained by the following episode which is found in some versions of the story about the Urubilvākāśyapa: at every meal time, the Buddha shows his miraculous power of flying away to other regions and bringing fruits or rice grains from there as a gift for Urubilvākāśyapa. (*Mahāvagga* (ed. Oldenburg, I.20.6-11), *Catuspariṣatsūtra* (ed. Waldschmidt 1962, 24k-n), *Zengyi-Ahan-Jing* (*Āṅguttara-Nikāya*, T125, 619b25-622c06), *Wu-Fen-Lü* (T1421, 108a07-109b22), *Si-Fen-Lü* (T1428, 793b16-797a12), *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Pinaye-Posengshi* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya Saṅghabhedavastu*, T1450, 131a11-134b04) and canons on the Buddha's life (T185, T186, T187, T189, T190, T191, T195, T196). The form of the plant in the representation looks strange and unrealistic. It can be understood as a representation of imaginative plants growing in unknown land.

There is one more scene in the Kizil Cave 207, which can be also explained in the context of the conversion of Urubilvākāśyapa. A scene in the middle of the left sidewall has a depiction of the mountain in flame and seven disks above. Grünwedel interpreted this pictorial depiction as a representation of Samvartakalpa i.e. how the world is burned out at the end of a Kalpa. The representation corresponds indeed to the textual description about the end of Kalpa: the seven suns rise up to the heaven, the heat from which burns the world out. On the other hand, Ma Shizhang interpreted this scene as an episode of the conversion of Urubilvākāśyapa, in which the Buddha compelled a poison snake to submission, though there is no shrine the depiction, where the event occurred.

This scene can be interpreted as follows: just after the conversion of the Urubilvākāśyapa-brothers, the Buddha brought them to the top of the Gaya mountain and lectured the „fire-sermon“, in which the Buddha allegorized the passion, hatred and blindness as a burning fire. The representation of the burning mountain can be meant as the illustration of the „fire-sermon“ (*Mahāvagga* (ed. Oldenburg, I.21.1-4), *Catuspariṣatsūtra* (ed. and transl.

Waldschmidt 1962, 26.1-17), *Wu-Fen-Lü* (T1421, 109b23-109c07), *Si-Fen-Lü* (T1428, 797a12-797b03), *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Pinaye* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinayavibhaṅga*, T1442, 717a16-17), *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Bichuni-Pinaye* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-Bhikṣuṇī-Vinayavibhaṅga*, T1443, 948c01-02), *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Pinaye-Chujiashi* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-Pravrajyāvastu*, T1444, 1027a12-14), *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Pinaye-Posengshi* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya Saṅghabhedavastu*, T1450, 134b04-25) and canons on the Buddha's life (T190, 191, 192).

The pictorial image of the burning mountain with seven suns, furthermore, at the same time reflects the Buddhist mythology described in the Āgama, which was of importance in the Buddhism of Kucha. There are indeed Sanskrit-fragments mentioning the end of Kalpa found in Ost-Turkestan (SHT VII: cat.-no. 1678). There can be found also the reflection of the Āgama-tradition in the depiction of the story of king Māndhātara in the Kizil Cave 118 (Cave of Hippocampi, see Hiyama 2010).

The scene of L.VIII can be also placed in the context of the series of the representation concerning on Urubilvākāśyapa.

3. Story of the conversion of two difficult opponents (L.VI and R.6)

There are two sermon scenes depicting the conversion of two opponents of the Buddha, with whom Vajrapāṇi should have shown his power in some violent manner. The scene of L.VI is the conversion of the young brahmana Ambāṣṭha, as Zin (2006) identified. The way how Vajrapāṇi flung up to the air and threatened the opponent by his *vajra* in the depiction corresponds to the textual descriptions almost literally (*Ambattasutta* (ed. Rhys, III.1.21), *Zhang-Ahan-Jing* (T1, 82a06-88b08), *Fo-Kaijie-Fanzhi-Aba-Jing* (*Ambāṣṭhasūtra*, T20, 259c05-264a17), *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Pinaye-Yaoshi* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya Bhaiṣajyavastu*, T1448, 33c09-35a03), *Genben-Shuoyiqieyoubu-Pinaye-Zashi* (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-VinayaKṣudrakavastu*, T1451, 35a03-38a14).

R.6 is the scene of a conversion in similar composition with the L.VI, the sermon scene on the opposite wall. This scene can be interpreted as the conversion of the Jaina Nirgranthaputra because of the Buddha's opponent wearing a tied white cloth on his naked bust. This episode can be found in *Majjhimanikāya* (ed. Trenckner, V./ Chalmers, R., I.4.5 (35), *Za-Ahan-Jing* (Saṃyuktāgama, T99, 35a17-37b27), *Zengyi-Ahan-Jing* (*Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, T125, 715a28-717b08).

III. Remark on the choice and the sequence of sermon scenes

In the last part of this presentation, let us consider on the sequence and the choice of each sermon scene.

It is worthy to pay attention to the fact that the detailed depictions of each preaching scene of the Kizil cave 207 correspond to Dīrghāgama of Sarvāstivādin, the Sanskrit-manuscripts of which were found in Kizil caves. The detail of depictions of the scenes corresponds indeed to the version found in Āgama of (Mūla-) sarvāstivādin and Dharmaguptaka and Vinaya of (Mūla-) sarvāstivādin. This close relationship between the textual tradition and pictorial representation in the Kizil caves need to be researched further.

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Dancing in the caves of Dunhuang: Tantric Buddhist Art in Dunhuang cave 465

Dunhuang, one of the most important hubs in religious transfer processes along the Silk Road, appears to have been a thriving community for a great number of Buddhist orders including Mahāyāna as well as Vajrayāna transmissions. Although this richness is very well documented in various languages within the corpus of Dunhuang manuscripts, the iconographic depictions of Tantric materials in the Dunhuang caves are anything but evenly distributed: only one cave (no. 465) explicitly shows images of higher Tantric cycles.

This presentation aims to introduce the history, some topics and narratives depicted in the so far not well researched cave 465.

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Formation of an Avadana Genre in Early Buddhist Manuscripts in Contrast and Comparison
with Visual Narratives of Previous-Birth Stories in Gandhara and Central Asia

Brief summaries of Purvayoga and Avadana narratives preserved in first century CE Kharoṣṭhi manuscript fragments in the British Library (BL) collection belong to very early if not initial stages when Buddhist previous-birth stories emerged as a written literary genre (Lenz 2003, 2010). While narratives labeled as Avadanas are well-represented as secondary compositions in the BL collection, many of these stories (especially those domesticated in contemporary Gandharan historical and geographical contexts) are difficult to identify with other Buddhist literary narratives and do not closely match Jatakas selectively depicted in Gandharan sculptures. Discrepancies between literary and artistic transmission of different types of Gandharan rebirth narratives before conventions for compilation became more firmly established in later periods raise questions about localization and transfer processes between Gandhara and the Tarim Basin in Central Asia, where identifications and genre boundaries between Avadanas, Jatakas, and other previous-birth stories remain unclear.

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Ruhr Universität Bochum CERES/MERCUR Project

Māra's Assault: transformation of a codified iconography along the Silk Road

In Gandhāran art, Māra's assault is, along with the Buddha's birth, the *Dīpaṃkara jāta* and the great departure, one of the most popular episodes of Siddhārtha Gautama's biography. The depictions share very little if at all with the Indian schools of Sāñcī, Bhārhut, Amarāvātī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. While the Indian traditions picture the episode in various compositions, Gandhāran artists seem to have followed a fixed iconography. The Buddha sits at the centre; Māra appears a first time attacking him on one side and a second time on the other side, acknowledging the Buddha's supremacy.

These depictions which closely compare with some of the written traditions such as the *Mahāvastu*, seem to have encountered popularity along the Silk Road where representations of the episode follow a similar scheme. Yet, closer examination of the pictures from Kizil, Bezeklik and Dunhuang reveals that the codified Gandhāran iconography underwent some changes.

This paper will attempt a comparative analysis of textual descriptions of the episode and depictions from Gandhāra, Kucha, Turfan and Dunhuang and will try to pinpoint the transfer processes which can account for the transformation of Māra assault's narrative during its spread along the Silk Road.

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Representations of Amitābha's Pure Land and of Avalokiteśvara: Cultural Exchange and Regional Innovation on the Northern Silk Road

This paper will explore ninth-eleventh century representations of the Bodhisattva Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara) and the Pure Land of Amitābha in the Chinese-influenced art of Kumtura and in the Uygur art of the Bezeklik cave temples, and on silk painting fragments found in the Turfan area. A large silk painting restored at the British Museum during the Mellon Digitisation Project from hundreds of small fragments found in Dunhuang will also be discussed. This painting shows the splendour of Amitabha's Pure Land in the centre, and around the main composition are illustrations of the *Guan wuliang shoujing* 觀無量壽經 [The sutra on the visualization of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life] with the Story of King Bimbisāra and the Visualisations of Queen Vaidehī. Although the composition was popular in Dunhuang from the Tang Dynasty, peculiarities in the story telling and the style of this painting set it apart from other paintings known from Dunhuang, and may offer a clue to understand the extent of Uygur sponsorship and cultural influence in Dunhuang in the tenth century. The paper will demonstrate how difficult it is to piece the fragmentary evidence together to analyse the changes in religion and art at the regional art centres of the Northern Silk Road. The study of the original sutra texts in various languages is as important as the tracking of changes in style and iconography. Building on the results of research already published in "Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang" (Brill: 2005), examples not included in the book will also be presented.

LILLA RUSSELL-SMITH, EXTENDED ABSTRACT:

Promoters of the Pure Land sutras believed that their age was so decadent and so far removed from Śākyamuni's that no one could be strong enough to attain enlightenment just by relying on his own skills and will-power. The growing popularity of the Pure Land school was due to the powerful belief that by merely chanting Amitābha's name and thinking of his Pure Land especially just before one's death rebirth there becomes possible. The *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra* or *Guan wuliang shoujing* 觀無量壽經 [The sutra on the visualization of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life] gives detailed step-by-step instructions how to visualize Sukhāvātī. This is the earliest Pure Land resource for visualization and recitation practices. It is usually agreed that this sutra was not written in Sanskrit, but is one of the "apocryphal" sutras. Interestingly several Japanese scholars hypothesize that it actually originates in the Turfan area.⁸

This sutra describes the story of Queen Vaidehī, who assured her rebirth in the Western Paradise by visualizing the features of Sukhāvātī, Amitābha and his attendant bodhisattvas. The wall paintings and portable paintings from Dunhuang 敦煌 are well documented, and it is clear that Pure Land Buddhism was very popular there in the Tang Dynasty. The Uygur material is very fragmented as the portable paintings were not found in a secure cave as in Dunhuang. Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner in her catalogue of all painting fragments on silk has identified 21 fragments showing "Paradise scenes", among them only one larger composition on cotton in a very bad state of preservation.⁹ Comparing the evidence from Dunhuang to the finds from other oases cities on the northern Silk Road gives us a clearer idea of the transmission of this iconography. Two small wall painting fragments, now in the Turfan collection of the Asian Art Museum in Berlin, from the Kinnari Höhle (Cave 16) will be discussed.

Amitābha's Paradise" (1919,0101,0.37) is one of the largest recently restored paintings in the Stein Collection of the British Museum (Figure 4).¹⁰ It was found together with hundreds of paintings and thousands of manuscripts in the now famous Library Cave in Dunhuang in Gansu 甘肅 province. Its style sets this painting apart from the rest of the large Pure Land compositions known from Dunhuang. The conservation and research of this painting will form the second part of my paper. The cartouches are filled in with great care and identify the subject-matter as the Western Paradise or Pure Land of Amitābha.

Stylistic and historical evidence point to Uygur patronage for this painting. The Uygurs in question were likely to have been resident in Dunhuang some time in the mid to

⁸ Fujita Kotatsu 1990, "The textual origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*: A canonical scripture of Pure Land Buddhism", Buswell, RE (ed.), *Chinese Buddhist apocrypha*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp156-159, p163; Yamabe Nobuyoshi 1998, "The implications of the 'Manichaeic' caves at Toyok, Turfan, for the origin of the *Guan wuliangshou jing*", Tokunaga Daishin (ed.): *Renyo Shōnin no sōgōteki kenkyū* (A comprehensive study of Rennyō): Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, pp280-250. Most recently Ning Qiang 2007: "Visualization Practice and the Function of the Western Paradise Images in Turfan and Dunhuang in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*, vol. 2, pp133-142, especially p134. For the literature on the translations into Uygur see Elverskog, J. 1997: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*, Turnhout: Brepols, pp63-65.

⁹ Bhattacharya-Haesner 2003, *Central Asian temple banners in the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin (Painted textiles from the Silk Route)*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, cat. nos 117-148.

¹⁰ Stein painting 37, Ink and colours on silk, H: 204 cm W: 183 cm. Published in a fragmented state: in Whitfield, R 1982-1985: *The art of Central Asia - The Stein Collection in the British Museum (ACA)*, Tokyo: Kodansha: ACA, volume 1, plate 19, figures 55-58. Russell-Smith, L: "Uighur influence on Dunhuang Art", in Whitfield, S (ed.) 2004, *The Silk Road: Trade, travel, war & faith*, London: The British Library, pp316-319, figure 49; Russell-Smith, L 2005, *Uygur patronage in Dunhuang: Regional art centres on the Northern Silk Road in the tenth and eleventh centuries*, Leiden: Brill, pp153-164.

late tenth century. While the technique employed resembles the Manichaean style, other details listed point to links with Uygur Buddhist art, as known from Bezeklik and from the fragments of portable Uygur paintings. This seems to indicate a transitory phase in the art of the Uygurs at Dunhuang. A point in time when shortly after conversion to Buddhism the local Uygurs experimented with depicting popular Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Guan wuliang shoujing*. This large painting demonstrates the high quality of Uygur Buddhist art of the Dunhuang region. The role of the various regional centres on the northern Silk Road in the transmission of Buddhism and Buddhist iconography still hides many secrets waiting to be discovered. Further examples discussed in the paper will include representations of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

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Image and Narrative in the Song Buddhist Sculptures at Mt. Baoding, Dazu

This paper aims at discussing the narrative aspects of the Buddhist sculptural groups at Mt. Baoding, Dazu county, Sichuan, by singling out a few of the most representative examples in order to elucidate the relationship between Buddhist pedagogics, imagery and popular belief. In the process of unravelling the strands and logic behind the narrative sculptural groups of this important site, special attention will be given to inter-religious issues, especially the inter-play between Buddhist ethics and Confucian filial piety. Moreover, apocryphal Buddhist literature as found in the extensive epigraphs at Mt. Baoding will be seen as having been especially useful as basis for the creation of the narrative, sculptural tableaux we find here.

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The Birth of the Buddha in Gandhāran Art
On the Western origin of its iconographic nucleus
and resulting implications for textual and art history

In Gandhāran art depictions of the wondrous Birth of Siddhartha Gautama have survived in a fairly large number. Over 200 are known through publications, many more lead a secret life in private collections and museum go-downs. Compared to the large number of specimina its restricted variability unveils a ‘canonical’ iconographic nucleus.

The lecture will show that this iconographic nucleus (the group of Indra receiving Baby Siddhārtha from Māyā’s hip) can be traced back to a western prototype, which, at the time of its adoption by Gandhāran artists in the 1st ct AD already could look back onto a 600-year-old history of transmission within the Mediterranean art tradition and had been derived from a context, that went amazingly well together with its ‘new’ application in the Buddhist context. Iconological analysis done by Archaeologists in the field of Classical studies on those prototypes may deepen our understanding of what the Gandhāran artists wanted to express by adapting a foreign figure pattern to a Buddhist context indianizing it and canonizing it in a deliberate way for the central part of the Gandhāran nativity scene.

As the structure of this central figure group has been explained so far mainly by reference to Indo-Buddhist textual tradition, the discovery of a visual western prototype entails a revision of the customary conception of the text-image-relation. A suggestion will be presented, how to form a picture of a less text-dependent construction of iconography as well as of a more image-dependent text-construction (regarding Northwest Indian Buddhavita tradition).

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What can Gāndhārī literature tell us about the Buddhism of Gandhāra?

A source-critical approach.

There is no doubt about the crucial role of Gandhāra in the evolution and spread of Indian Buddhism in the centuries following Aśoka. Until most recent time our knowledge about this phase of Indian Buddhism was mainly based on different types of archaeological evidence in the shape of art objects, architectural remains, coins and inscribed objects. Although these are important witnesses which shed light on many otherwise inaccessible aspects of Gandhāran culture, their scope was naturally a limited one.

This situation considerably changed within the last decades. The discovery of a large number of manuscripts from Gandhāra written in the language and script of the Indian Northwest provided a completely different and new source for the evaluation of Gandhāran Buddhism. For the first time we get access to a rather comprehensive selection of Buddhist texts which belong to different genres of Buddhist literature. The research on these texts is still on-going and it is certainly premature to draw any final conclusions about the contents and value of this new source.

My paper will introduce the main collections of Gāndhārī texts and their contents.

It will try to give some idea about the character of Gāndhārī literature and its relation to other, already known branches of Buddhist literature. Here it is important to clearly distinguish between texts inherited from Middle Ganges Buddhism and translated into Gāndhārī and texts composed in Gāndhārī and henceforth autochthonous to Gandhāran Buddhism. A major focus will be given to the Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts.

On this material bases I will stress some supposedly distinctive characteristics of Gandhāran Buddhism:

- a) the interaction of communities belonging to different Śrāvakayāna nikāyas
- b) the emergence of Mahāyāna and its close association with Śrāvakayāna communities
- c) the interreligious relation to non-Buddhist circles.

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Ascertaining the literary and pictorial sources of Kizil Paintings

In our research on the Kizil paintings, many questions still remain open regarding their literary basis, style, and dating. Interestingly, there are more questions today than 100 years ago when German researchers, presupposing Sanskrit sources as their literary basis, declared them to be of Gandharan origin and understood increasing Chinese contributions as an indication of later date. For scientists working with East Asian art, and with the paintings at Dunhuang influenced by it, the process was by no means so simple. They even considered the development of styles as running in an opposite direction, taking the later Kizil style (for Waldschmidt, 7th c.) as early and connected with the youngest paintings at Dunhuang (4th c.). These stylistic investigations were inadequately argued and both the character and content of the paintings must also play a role.

Even if definitive solutions to such complicated issues cannot be expected from this paper, some examples can be given which will hopefully provide food for thought by assessing the literary and pictorial sources of Kizil.

The main question is what was actually wandering: the illustrations, to be copied in Kizil, or the stories, to be newly illustrated there? There are several instances of representations known from Gandhara repeated at Kizil, but there are also many paintings that have no forerunner in India, but illustrate stories known in Sanskrit or Chinese. However, in Kizil there are also depictions that are known neither from Gandharan art nor from the known literary sources of Northern Buddhism, but from Pali and representations in the central part of the Indian subcontinent, testifying to literary (and perhaps also pictorial) traditions now lost to us.