

BuddhistRoad publications: abstracts

Kasai, Yukiyo and Henrik H. Sørensen, ed. *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/36/60/36602e02-7cf2-4445-b94c-c58778f86c78/2022_kasai_and_sorensen_ed_buddhism_in_central_asia_ii.pdf

The ERC-funded research project *BuddhistRoad* aims to create a new framework to enable understanding of the complexities in the dynamics of cultural encounter and religious transfer in pre-modern Eastern Central Asia. Buddhism was one major factor in this exchange: for the first time the multi-layered relationships between the trans-regional Buddhist traditions (Chinese, Indian, Tibetan) and those based on local Buddhist cultures (Khotanese, Uyghur, Tangut) will be explored in a systematic way. The second volume *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Materials Transfer* based on the mid-project conference held on September 16th–18th, 2019, at CERES, Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Germany) focuses on two of the six thematic topics addressed by the project, namely on “practices and rituals”, exploring material culture in religious context such as mandalas and talismans, as well as “visual and material transfer”, including shared iconographies and the spread of ‘Khotanese’ themes.

(1) Keyworth, George. “Did the Silk Road(s) Extend from Dunhuang, Mt. Wutai and Chang’an to Kyoto, Japan? A Reassessment Based on Material Culture from the Temple Gate Tendai Tradition of Miidera.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 17–67. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/dd/08/dd084a85-2a38-4c52-ac47-71e13a82f75c/9789004507937_07-keyworth.pdf

Abstract:

Did the Silk Road(s) actually extend to early or medieval Japan? In this paper I take the two Tendai (天台) pilgrims to China who are central to the Jimon (寺門) tradition of Mii Temple (Jap. Miidera 三井寺), Enchin (814–891, 円珍, Chishō daishi 智証大師) and Jōjin (1011–1081, 成尋), as bookends to answer the question: did the Silk Road(s) extend to Japan through the Jimon Tendai tradition during the 9th–11th centuries? In the first section of the paper I outline how the materials listed in travel diaries and catalogues (Jap. *shōrai mokuroku* 請来目録) of the books, statues, and ritual objects brought back by Enchin confirm that the Buddhism he imported from the continent can be connected to cosmopolitan ritual practices that flourished along the eastern Silk Road(s) even after the Huichang era (840–845, 會昌) persecution of foreign faiths. One of the earliest statues of an indigenous *kami* (神) produced in Japan at Matsuno’o Shrine (Jap. Matsuno’o taisha 松尾大社) in Kyoto (京都市) (and still housed there) is a key product from Enchin’s experiences with cosmopolitan continental East Asian Buddhist rituals. In the next section I investigate what Jōjin’s diary that covers the years 1072–1073, *San Tendai Godaisan ki* 參天臺五臺山記 [Record of a Pilgrimage to Mt. Tiantai and Mt. Wutai], tells us about his encounter with Central Asian and Indian teachers not only on Mt. Wutai (Chin. Wutai shan 五臺山) but also at the *sūtra* translation bureau known as the Institute for Transmitting the Dharma (Chin. Chuanfayuan 傳法院) on the grounds of the imperially sponsored monastery for Promoting Great Peace for the Nation (Chin. Taiping xingguo si 太平興國寺) in the Song capital of Bianliang (汴梁, modern Kaifeng 開封). Several of the rituals that Jōjin describes performing for Song Emperor Shenzong (1048–1085, 神宗) correspond to ceremonies we know were performed at the Daiun Temple (Jap. Daiun ji 大雲寺) and Jissōin (実相院) (located in the Iwakura (岩倉) section of northern Kyoto) and at key shrine like Matsuno’o, Kamigamo (上賀茂) and

Shimogamo (下鴨) (in Kyoto), and Atsuta (熱田) (in Nagoya 名古屋) during the 12th–16th centuries. Finally, I describe how Buddhist—and Indic or Central Asian—rituals which were exchanged along the eastern Silk Road(s) during the 9th–11th centuries were employed in Japan with material culture (like statues and ritual paraphernalia) to venerate the *kami* by Tendai Jimon monastics using unambiguously cosmopolitan language to preserve the narrative of transmission along the Silk Road(s).

(2) Konczak-Nagel, Ines. “Representations of a Series of Large Buddha Figures in the Buddhist Caves of Kuča: Reflections on Their Origin and Meaning.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 68–96. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/d0/93/d093bffc-7710-4e9c-a166-efbfdc401c14/9789004507937_08-konczak-nagel.pdf

Abstract:

One of the iconographic programmes recurring in the painted Buddhist caves in the area of Kuča on the Northern Silk Road is rows of large standing buddha figures occupying the entire height of the wall. According to its position in the cave and its size, this programme was of particular importance. As it has not been satisfactorily analysed so far, this paper examines the manner in which it was developed and the reason for its development.

The series of buddhas in Kuča’s painting are reminiscent, both compositionally and stylistically, of the sets of multiple large buddha sculptures that appeared in the art of Greater Gandhāra in the early 5th century and were most likely adopted from these locations. As in the sculptural art of Greater Gandhāra, the series of buddhas in the Kuča paintings are arranged to be passed during the ritual circumambulation.

A unique feature of the large-scale buddha figures in series from Kuča, which sets them apart from all the other schools of art, is that they are often accompanied by a smaller figure offering a specific donation to the buddha, and thereby alluding to a certain Buddhist narrative. The accompanying figure thus serves as an iconographic element for the identification of the respective buddha. As far as can be discerned from their accompanying figure, the individual buddhas in a series are buddhas of the past.

(3) Lo Muzio, Ciro. “Buddhist Painting in the South of the Tarim Basin: A Chronological Conundrum.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 97–117. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/71/98/719874ff-1e56-49a3-a6a1-2464d7f5a15a/9789004507937_09-muzio.pdf

Abstract:

These notes deal with Buddhist paintings from the south of the Tarim Basin, more specifically with those unearthed in the Khotan oasis and, farther east, at Karadong, in the basin of the Keriya River. The findings were yielded by excavations carried out in the early decades of the 20th century and again, after a long gap, from the 1990s until recently. The methods of the field investigations that led to their discovery and the accuracy of their documentation are dramatically diverse, as are the criteria upon which the chronology of the murals has been formulated: from the 3rd century (Karadong) to the 6th–8th centuries (Khotan oasis). Such a long chronological span seems to be at odds with the relative proximity the murals display in their iconographic and stylistic orientation.

This paper presents a state of art of the topic and a preliminary attempt to spot clues that may lead to a more balanced chronological perspective.

(4) Forte, Erika. "Khotanese Themes' in Dunhuang: Visual and Ideological Transfer in the 9th–11th Centuries." In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 118–152. Leiden: Brill, 2022.
https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/88/57/88573a80-17d7-401e-9092-5faeccabc67/9789004507937_10-forte.pdf

Abstract:

This paper highlights mechanisms of cultural and material transfer across the Tarim Basin through the study of interrelations between the two major nodes of Khotan and Dunhuang (敦煌), as reflected through the presence of so-called Khotanese themes in the arts of Dunhuang.

Here, Khotanese themes identifies specific visual imagery found in the Mogao Caves (Chin. Mogao ku 莫高窟) and Yulin Caves (Chin. Yulin ku 榆林窟) that appeared mainly in the span of time from the 9th century to the early 11th century. This imagery includes: The auspicious statues (Chin. *ruixiang* 瑞像), the Khotanese state tutelary deities known as the eight protectors (Kh. *haṣṭā parvālā*), the legend of the founding of Khotan, and depictions of Mt. Gośīrṣa/Gośrṅga (Chin. Niutou shan 牛頭山/Niujiao shan 牛角山)—the most sacred place in Khotan. These themes emerged from the Khotanese Buddhist and cultural milieu and found their way to Dunhuang through the close relations that developed between the two oases during that period. These themes were most likely promoted by a (semi-)permanent Khotanese community living in Dunhuang.

Attention to Khotanese themes in Dunhuang has grown in the past years, increasing the availability of material that has been seldom studied or, so far, gone unnoticed. This paper presents an overview of the topic and an up-to-date assessment of the material, with an eye toward the archaeological data recent discoveries in the oasis of Khotan brought to light.

(5) Russell-Smith, Lilla. "The 'Sogdian Deities' Twenty Years on: A Reconsideration of a Small Painting from Dunhuang." In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 153–206. Leiden: Brill, 2022.
https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/58/9b/589b316d-6424-437f-adce-ea2bea8371ff/9789004507937_11-russell-smith.pdf

Abstract:

In this article I reconsider the reasons why the so-called 'Sogdian deities' became so well-known in Dunhuang (敦煌) studies, Zoroastrian studies and Silk Road studies and present new evidence that supports my original view that a small painting on paper, P. 4518 (24), was made for a specifically Uyghur donor in Dunhuang, who was most probably Buddhist. It may also show Manichaean features, as Uyghur Buddhist art in the early period frequently did. Finally, I consider the possibility that the female deity on the right may have an astral meaning and is seated on a dog symbolising Sirius the dog star.

(6) Wang, Michelle C. "Seeking the Pure Land in Tangut Art." In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 207–243, Leiden: Brill, 2022.
https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/28/0c/280ca473-87bd-456e-ba4e-9e81c18c570b/9789004507937_12-wang.pdf

Abstract:

An intriguing group of paintings in the collection of the Hermitage, originally from Karakhoto, features Amitābha Buddha receiving the soul of a devotee into the Western Pure Land. Due to the

broad geographic distribution of welcoming descent imagery across medieval China, Korea, and Japan, the origins of this iconography have been keenly debated by scholars. This paper focuses on the motif of Amitābha's welcoming descent in order to illuminate the stakes of transcultural research. Previous scholarship emphasised chronology, artistic style, and iconography in order to situate the paintings from the Tangut Empire (ca. 1038–1227, in Chinese sources known as Xixia 西夏) in between Song China (960–1279, 宋) and its neighbours. In contrast, I consider the mediating role played by print culture, as well as the material features of Tangut welcoming descent paintings that distinguished them from similar paintings produced elsewhere in Asia. In the process, I consider the transcultural resonances of this visual motif.

(7) Kasai, Yukiyo. "Avalokiteśvara Cult in Turfan and Dunhuang in the Pre-Mongolian Period." In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 244–268. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/72/d5/72d5a1cf-1a84-46d9-84ba-5f476c56fdb1/9789004507937_13-kasai.pdf

Abstract:

The art objects and written sources found in the Turfan area show the devout worship of various bodhisattvas by the Buddhists who lived in this region. The Uyghurs were undoubtedly one of the most influential groups there. Chinese Buddhist impact from Dunhuang became an essential factor for the Uyghurs after most of them converted to Buddhism. Some scriptural sources in Old Uyghur had a close relationship with their Chinese versions widespread in Dunhuang. Thus, there were exchanges between Buddhist communities in Dunhuang and Turfan through which some buddha and bodhisattva cults were probably shared. One of those cults was that of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. In Dunhuang, one has both written and figurative sources that show that the relevance of the Avalokiteśvara cult. Significantly, the Chinese prayer texts describe Avalokiteśvara as a saviour from diseases and guide to paradise. In Turfan, on the contrary, the written sources in Old Uyghur neither focus on the cult nor refer to any of this bodhisattva's roles mentioned above, although many banner paintings in Turfan were devoted to Avalokiteśvara. The gap of this bodhisattva's appearance in the written and artistic sources from Turfan is thought to be due to that both Uyghurs and Chinese involved in Buddhist activities. The cult of Avalokiteśvara, which was strongly impacted by Chinese Buddhism, was probably represented in both the Chinese Buddhist community in Turfan and the Uyghur Buddhists, who had a close connection to that community.

(8) Dalton, Jacob P. "Bridging Yoga and Mahāyoga: Samaya in Early Tantric Buddhism." In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 270–287. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/38/78/38784144-5484-47ea-ba8c-a1c80538c89d/9789004507937_14-dalton.pdf

Abstract:

This chapter highlights the role of *samaya* in the early development of Tantric Buddhist ritual. In early tantric writings, *samaya* functions not only as a vow, or set of vows, to be observed, but as the Buddhas' *jñāna* that was ritually installed within the heart of the practitioner. The paper shows how *samaya* was thereby central to both the initiation ceremony and the post-initiatory *sādhana* practices of the Yogatantra system of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. In both of these ritual contexts, the entry of the *samaya* into the practitioner's heart represented a key moment. Turning to the slightly later ritual traditions of early Mahāyoga, the chapter argues that the sexualisation of the earlier concept of *samaya* produced the secret initiation (Skt. *guhyābhiṣeka*) and the subsequent self-administering of

the sacramental drop of *bodhicitta* that marked the culmination of sexual yoga, each paralleling the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*'s initiation and self-consecration (Skt. *svādhiṣṭhāna*), respectively. The developmental continuities between Yoga and Mahāyoga are evident in certain early Mahāyoga works where the drop of *bodhicitta* is referred to as the supreme *samaya* (Tib. *dam tshig mchog*).

(9) Sørensen, Henrik H. "Visualising Oneself as the Cosmos: An Esoteric Buddhist Meditation Text from Dunhuang." In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 288–312. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/e4/0b/e40bcca0-f072-40d3-8d5b-ff7d12014c59/9789004507937_15-sorensen.pdf

Abstract:

This chapter focuses on a manuscript from the Pelliot Collection featuring an Esoteric Buddhist meditation text from Dunhuang (P. 2649V°, S. 6897V°), the significance of which has, to some degree, been overlooked by current scholarship. The manuscript is undated, and the text itself does not have a title, which complicates an assessment of it and its context. However, its detailed and vivid instructions in meditation indicate it is a text that conveys mainstream Esoteric Buddhist beliefs and practices. Of great interest to the author is the fact that the entire process of meditation and visualisation is expressed as a sort of internal ritual of universal salvation. A fully annotated translation of the text is provided, as well as a critical edition of the Chinese text.

(10) Meinert, Carmen. "Beyond Spatial and Temporal Contingencies: Tantric Rituals in Eastern Central Asia under Tangut Rule, 11th–13th C." In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 313–365. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/35/08/35089c9a-75fc-4ad8-be31-bd555ceacad1/9789004507937_16-meinert.pdf

Abstract:

Tantric Buddhist ritual practice during the time of Tangut rule (ca. 1038–1227) in Eastern Central Asia can be studied on the basis of material, visual, and textual sources from various Buddhist sites. Here, I read a variety of sources that share a context to argue that a number of caves in the Northern Section of the Mogao Cave complex in Dunhuang were likely used for meditation and ritual practice, including as burial-meditation caves. These caves include Mogao Cave 465—the sole cave with an explicit Tantric Buddhist iconographic programme. I analyse the sources with the help of an analytical tool established by Knut Martin Stünkel, the three-level model of 'transcend-ence-immanence distinction' (TID), in order to understand the underlying 'transcend-ing process', based on the 'object-language level' rather than on a specific notion of transcendence. Stünkel's analysis is an outcome of an interdisciplinary research consortium at my home institution, the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at Ruhr-Universität Bochum; thus, my chapter is an attempt to test the usefulness of the TID model for a medieval Central Asian Buddhist context. The application of this model allows one to analyse the process of the transformation of space, of the physical space of a ritual cave as well as of bodily space, as the practitioner's perception of it is said to shift from an 'immanent' to a 'transcendent' perception. This would necessarily have an impact on the perception of time as well.

(11) Sinclair, Iain. “The Serlingpa Acala in Tibet and the Tangut Empire.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 366–399. Leiden: Boston, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/99/94/9994b57e-69af-4fe0-933f-68f916d251f3/9789004507937_17-sinclair.pdf

Abstract:

A vision of Acala, the Unwavering, emanating ten furious figures and trampling the elephant-headed Gaṇapati, is a common sight in the art of Tibet and the Tangut Empire (ca. 1038–1227, in Chinese sources known as Xixia 西夏) up to the end of the 13th century. This form of Acala is said to have been taught by the Serlingpa guru (Tib. Bla ma gSer gling pa) of the eponymous ‘Golden Isles’ of Southeast Asia. Its praxis was transmitted to Tibet by his famous Bengali student, Jowoje (Tib. jo bo rje) Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982–1054), who was simply called Dīpaṃkara in the Tangut Empire. As so few traces of these individuals and their praxis traditions were preserved outside the Tibetosphere, it can be asked whether this distinctive vision of Acala was ever taught by a Southeast Asian teacher. The study of this figure allows light to be shed on a rare convergence between the northern and maritime routes of the Silk Road. This chapter examines the writings on Acala attributed to the Serlingpa guru and Dīpaṃkara in conjunction with numerous related works of art, some of which have not previously been associated with the tradition of the Golden Isles.

(12) Hou, Haoran. “Mahākāla Literature Unearthed from Karakhoto.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/15/3f/153ff203-2dae-4182-b440-e6474602d134/9789004507937_18-hou.pdf

Abstract:

In this chapter, I introduce the Tibetan Buddhist Tantric manuscripts associated with Mahākāla unearthed from Karakhoto, which are in both the Chinese and Tibetan languages and date from the 12th to the 14th centuries. Through a comparative study of these bilingual materials, I identify the corresponding Tibetan originals for the Chinese texts and, in so doing, determine the origin of the Mahākāla literature from Karakhoto. Thus, I conclude that the Tibetan Master Ga Lotsaba Zhönupel (1105/1110–1198/1202, Tib. rGwa lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal) is linked to both the Chinese and Tibetan Mahākāla literature from Karakhoto. Then, by studying the biography of Ga Lotsaba, I reveal how he brought the Mahākāla teachings to the Tangut Empire (ca. 1038–1227, in Chinese sources known as Xixia 西夏) all the way from India via Tibet. Lastly, I analyse one of the works Ga Lotsaba wrote about Mahākāla that was recovered from Karakhoto and shed further light on his role in the early textual transmission of Mahākāla.

(13) Wilkens, Jens. “Practice and Rituals in Uyghur Buddhist Texts: A Preliminary Appraisal.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia II—Practices and Rituals, Visual and Material Transfer*, edited by Yukiyo Kasai and Henrik H. Sørensen, 430–464. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/d8/fa/d8fada67-1661-47c6-a8af-41aa80fcd67f/9789004507937_19-wilkens.pdf

Abstract:

Unlike in Tibetan, Chinese, or Indian Studies, ritual and practice are topics yet to be explored in detail with regard to Uyghur Buddhism. Rather, the focus in Uyghur Studies so far is on making the texts

accessible in editions and translations. While some genres of Old Uyghur literature—such as confession texts and tantric materials—clearly have to be understood within the framework of Buddhist rituals, the applicability of a ritual framework is not quite as obvious for other types of texts. Uyghur Buddhist texts with a clear-cut ritual setting draw heavily on the Chinese and Tibetan traditions. This paper looks at the contexts in which a ritual framing of Uyghur literature can be established (that is, festivals, visualisations, *dhāraṇīs*, amulets, talismans, and so on).