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A Documentary History

BY

MICHAEL R. DROMPP

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Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang

REGIONAL ART CENTRES ON THE NORTHERN SILK ROAD IN THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES



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Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries

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Colour Plate 32 "Paradise of Amitābha", detail (Stein painting 37) (© Trustees of the British Museum, London)

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Colour Plate 34 Bodhisattva (MG 17650. Ink and colours on silk, H: 80.5 cm W: 27.7 cm) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 35 "Virūpākṣa, Guardian of the West" (Stein painting 108. Ink and colours on silk, H: 64.5 cm W: 17.5 cm) (© Trustees of the British Museum, London)

Colour Plate 36 "Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Guardian of the East" (EO 1172c. Ink and colours on silk, H: 187.3 cm W: 30.6 cm) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 37 Buddha from Bezeklik Cave 48 (Wall painting) (After ZXBQ, pl. 136)

Colour Plate 38 "Adoration of Guanyin" (EO 1175. Ink, colours and gold on silk, H: 96.8 cm W: 65 cm) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 39 *Apsaras* (EO 1175 detail) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 40 Child (EO 1175 detail) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 41 Kneeling monk (EO 1175 detail) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 42 Kneeling monk (EO 1175 detail) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 43 "Avalokiteśvara as Saviour of Perils", (Stein painting 24. Ink and colours on silk, H: 107 cm W: 61.5 cm) (© Trustees of the British Museum, London)

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Colour Plate 45 Heavenly musicians (MG 17780 detail) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 46 Female donors (MG 17780 detail) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 47 Male donors (MG 17780 detail) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 48 "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities" (EO 1148. Ink and colours on silk, H: 66 cm W: 68.5 cm) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

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Colour Plate 52 "Avalokiteśvara Leading the Way" (MG 26461. Ink, colours and gold on silk, H: 138 cm W: 53 cm) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris

Colour Plate 53 Illustration of the *Sutra of Guanyin* (EO 1142. Ink, colours and gold on silk, H: 88.6 cm W: 52.3 cm) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

Colour Plate 54 "Mañjuśri on Wutaishan" (EO 3588. Ink, colours and gold on silk, H: 164 cm W: 107.5 cm) (© RMN, Musée des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris)

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Table 2. Principal stylistic influences on Uygur art

Table 3. List of Dunhuang paintings showing Uygur influence

Table 4. Key features for identifying Uygur influence on Dunhuang art

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in Dunhuang art started during my undergraduate years, and so it is my pleasant task to include here a long list of those who helped me along the way to the publication of this study.

The last major exhibition of Dunhuang art in the British Museum was in 1990-91. An undergraduate student of Chinese and art and archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, University of London), I was then working at the British Museum as a student volunteer. It was a great privilege to see the paintings regularly and to study about them with Professor Roderick Whitfield (now Professor Emeritus, SOAS) in classes and seminars. In 1992 I wrote my first extended essay on a Dunhuang topic on representations of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* in Dunhuang (some short results of this initial research are included in this book). At SOAS I would like to thank most of all Professor Whitfield for his inspired lecturing and for reading so many of my essays, papers, articles, various versions of the thesis and the final version of this study. All his suggestions were very valuable. I am grateful to all my teachers at SOAS, many of whom encouraged me with their advice and support over the years, especially Professor Géza Fehérvári, Professor A.D.H. Bivar (Professors Emeritus), Dr. Tadeusz Skorupski (Reader, Department of the Study of Religions), Professor Tim Barrett (Department of the Study of Religions) and Dr. Youngsook Pak (Senior Lecturer, Department of Art & Archaeology). Philip Denwood (Reader, Department of Art & Archaeology) read part of this study and made important suggestions. I would also like to thank Miss Y. Yasumura for all her help in the library. Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose (now Temporary Lecturer at SOAS) often discussed Indian and Central Asian art with me during our PhD years, I would like to thank her for sharing her knowledge and for her friendship and support.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone at the British Museum who helped me at various stages, especially Dr Anne Farrer (earlier Assistant Keeper at the Department of Oriental Antiquities, now Sotheby's Institute of Education), Carol Michaelson, Jane Portal (Assistant Keepers, Department of Asia), Mary Ginsberg and Dr. Cecilia Braghin for giving me access to the paintings in the Stein Collection whenever necessary.

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At the University of Budapest (ELTE) in Hungary, where I had

studied Western art history, Dr. Ernő Marosi, Sándor Tóth and Dr. Anna Eörsi taught me methods of researching early Christian art and iconography, some of which can be applied to the study of Buddhist art. Dr. Pál Miklós, now unfortunately deceased, had been my first teacher of Chinese art. He was one of very few Westerners to spend several weeks at the Dunhuang caves in the 1950s, fondly remembered by Duan Wenjie, the Director of the Dunhuang Academy during my first visit there in 1991. In China I wish to thank Professor Duan Wenjie, Professor Fan Jinshi, Ma De and Zhao Shengliang from the Dunhuang Academy, Professor Rong Xinjiang (Beijing University) and Dr. Shang Gang for helping me either during their visits to London or my subsequent trips to China.

Perhaps the most decisive moment in discovering the subject of this book was the "Sérinde" exhibition, organised in 1995-1996 in Paris, demonstrating the extent of the cross-cultural contacts within the vast expanses of Central Asia. In Paris, I would like to thank Jacques Giès (Chief Curator of Chinese Painting, Musée national des arts asiatiques—Guimet) and Monique Cohen (Director of the Department of Manuscripts, Bibliothèque Nationale de France), the organisers of this exhibition. At the Musée national des arts asiatiques - Guimet, special thanks are also due to Laure Feugère (chargée de mission au Musée Guimet, Curator) and Vera Linhartová (then Curator of Chinese Painting), who were most helpful and gave me full access to all paintings related to my studies at the time of my visits.

The recent "The Silk Road, Trade, Travel, War and Faith" exhibition in the British Library was another milestone in making us aware of the cross-cultural influences on the Silk Road. I wish to thank Dr. Susan Whitfield (Director, International Dunhuang Project, British Library), curator of the exhibition, for all her ideas and encouragement in the past ten years, for including my summary of the argument presented in this study in the exhibition catalogue, and for collaborating on several projects.

Although by spring 1996 I was convinced of the theory presented here: namely that Uygurs played a major role in shaping the late period of Dunhuang art, I soon discovered that very little had been published on the art and history of the Uygurs, and much of the historical background could only be found in Chinese and Japanese books and articles. At the time, apart from the best known pieces, the collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst (MIK) in Berlin remained unpublished. Subsequently the MIK closed for refurbishment, and the still

unpublished material became inaccessible. Now of course the situation is very different: Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner's extensive catalogue is available and the museum has reopened with an airy and impressive display of objects and amazing facilities in the storerooms. I am most grateful to Professor Marianne Yaldiz (Director of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, Germany) who gave me full access to the collection, and Dr. Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner (independent scholar, Berlin) for showing me all paintings and fragments on silk, ramie and cotton in the store rooms of the Museum für Indische Kunst in 1996 and again in 2004. Special thanks are due to Dr. Zsuzsanna Gulácsi (Assistant Professor, Northern University of Arizona, USA), who has kept me informed of all her research results since 1997 and sent me several articles and her dissertation before publication. Professor Jorinde Ebert (Institute of Art History, University of Vienna, Austria) discussed with me aspects of her unpublished research material during her visit to London in March 2000, many thanks are due for her valuable suggestions. With regards to Tibetan art Dr. Amy Heller (CNRS) has sent me very important research ideas.

This study spans over several scholarly fields, and I am most grateful to everybody who answered my questions regarding Uygur history, religion and language to which I was a newcomer. Special thanks are due to Professor Takao Moriyasu (Osaka University, Japan) and Professor Peter Zieme (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Germany). In 1998 Professor Moriyasu came to London and I am very grateful to him too for sharing many of his ideas which are now mostly published in English and German and are listed in the Bibliography but were then only available in Japanese. Professor György Kara (ELTE, Budapest, Hungary and Indiana University, Bloomington, USA) gave me many practical ideas in 1997 in Budapest and has been most kind in supplying his transcription and explanation of the inscriptions in Appendix 1.

In the United States I am very grateful to Professor Valerie Hansen (Yale University, New Haven) and to Professor Angela Howard (Rutgers University, New York) who have been very supportive of my work. Professor Nancy Steinhardt and Professor Victor Mair (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia) have also been most helpful on many occasions since 1989. Professor Marilyn Gridley (University of Kansas, Kansas City) sent very interesting articles about Tejaprabhā. I met Professor Sarah Fraser (Associate Professor, Northwestern University, Evanston-Chicago) during her graduate years for the first time, and

subsequently she discussed my project with me in London, Budapest and New Haven. Her suggestions were most helpful at various stages. During fieldtrips in India Jitendra Nath (then National Museum, New Delhi) allowed me to see important works of art despite his imminent departure and Dr. Radha Banerjee (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts) was helpful in every possible way.

In 2000-2003 I was also cataloguing Sir Aurel Stein's photographs as part of a British-Hungarian project. The life and achievements of Sir Aurel Stein, who had been brought up in the same district of Budapest where I spent my childhood, have long been an inspiration. Stein had left a large collection of his photographs to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) in Budapest: a favourite place of his from his student years. I wish to thank all members of this British-Hungarian Stein project for all their ideas and support especially Helen Wang (Curator of East Asian Money, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum) and John Falconer (Curator of Photographs, British Library), Dr. Éva Apor (Director, Oriental Collection, Library of the HAS) and Ágnes Kelecsényi (Deputy Director, Oriental Collection, Library of the HAS). As recently more photographs have been discovered I look forward to a second phase starting in October 2004.

Without my family's support this book would never have been written. The optimism of my husband, William, proved invaluable and he also gave me essential support in all practical ways from computing to picture editing, many thanks for all of this. The birth of our two daughters in 1999 and 2002 slowed my work down of course: Alma Flora and her younger sister Isabella Viola have been part of this book writing process all their lives. Alma is now helping me with my slides, and enjoyed sketching Dunhuang paintings at the "Silk Road" exhibition in the British Library. My parents Ádám and Júlia Bikfalvy, who first taught me the appreciation of art as classical musicians, came to London several times to look after their granddaughters, and cared for them in Budapest, despite their busy schedule, many thanks for their unfaltering support and help.

I would also like to thank SOAS for a Travel Grant and the Royal Asiatic Society for the Raymond Percheron Travel Award that made my field trips possible, and the Buddhist Society, who provided additional funding for my studies. I am very grateful to the British Academy for granting me a Studentship for three years. The Committee for Central and Inner Asia of the British Academy made the publication of this book possible. In the preparation of this book I wish to thank

Patricia Radder, and Boris van Gool, Assistant Editors at Brill, who answered all my queries so promptly and guided me through the production of this book, Hilary A. Smith who read this manuscript and made useful suggestions and Lindsay Zamponi for meticulous copy-editing. Naturally all remaining mistakes are mine.

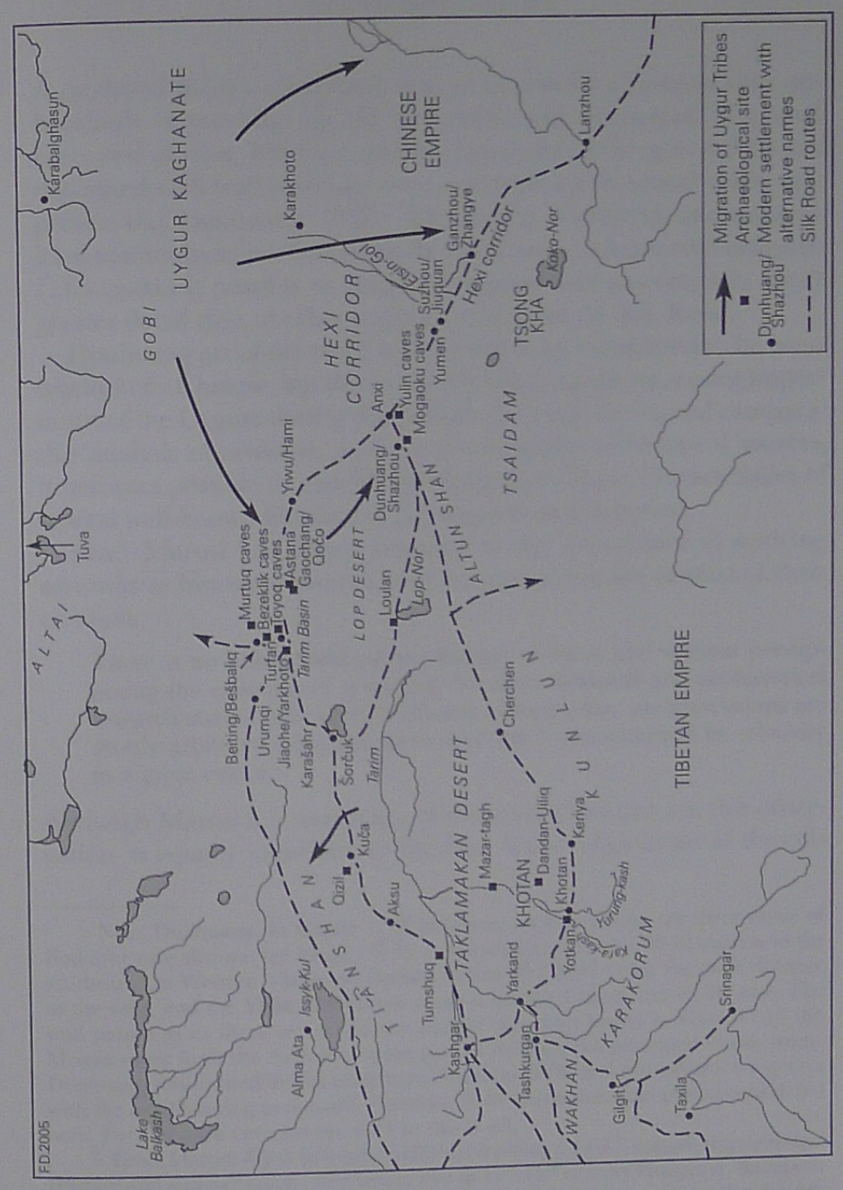
Started in 1999 by Professor Sarah Fraser, an important transformation in Dunhuang studies is taking place. Many institutions listed on these pages are part of the digitisation projects that will for the first time make Dunhuang art accessible all over the world. The digital images supplied by them will be available on the Mellon International Dunhuang Archive (MIDA). In recent years the collections of Uygur art have also been published and studies on Uygur history are also more widely accessible. I present my ideas here in the hope that they shed new light on the late phase of Dunhuang art, and invite readers to discuss my ideas. Only the collaboration of many scholars in different fields of expertise will bring us closer to understanding the complex nature of the regional cultures on the Silk Road.

Note on Spelling and Object Numbers

For Chinese words the pinyin system has been used throughout. For Sanskrit words diacritics have been added with the exception of words that have become part of the English language e.g. mandala, sutra. These words appear with diacritics when part of a title. 'Q' was used in preference to 'K' in Turkic names. Most of the Turkic names can be spelt in different ways. Dunhuang paintings in the Stein Collection of the British Museum have registration numbers, of which only the last digits are different, indicating the Stein painting number. For example 1919,0101, 0.31 refers to Stein painting 31 and 1919,0101, 0.108 to Stein painting 108.

Map

Map After "Map of the Eastern Silk Road" in Susan Whitfield (ed.): *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, London: The British Library and Serindia Publications, 2004, pp. 10-11 and Takao Moriyasu: "Four Lectures at the Collège de France in May 2003", *Osaka University The 21st Century COE Program Interface Humanities Research Activities 2002-2003*, vol. 3, *World History Reconsidered through the Silk Road*, Osaka University, 2003, Map 7: migration of the Uighurs in the 840s.



Map of the Silk Road in the ninth-tenth centuries

INTRODUCTION

A medieval library containing tens of thousands of manuscripts and hundreds of paintings on silk and paper was discovered in a small cave: one of over 400 cave temples hewn out of the gravel cliffs and decorated with wall paintings over a period of a thousand years, near present-day Dunhuang 敦煌.[1] The wealth of material and unparalleled continuity of production at the site (fourth to fourteenth centuries C.E.) makes it possible to study art practice and patronage in much greater detail than at other regional centres on the Silk Road.

Dunhuang art of the tenth century has been considered to be overwhelmingly Chinese, but this study demonstrates the increasing importance of the Uygurs during this period. Through the careful comparative analysis of artworks, and the re-evaluation of historical sources, it becomes possible to identify the distinctive Uygur characteristics of several well-known Dunhuang paintings from this period.

Ernő Marosi has drawn attention to the importance of studying artworks as historical sources, and reconstructing the context of their creation.

> There is no history without the linking of facts, and without presupposing the existence of a context. Modern historical and art-historical research started only when it became obvious that our associations are mostly arbitrary: historical reconstruction is characterised by relativity to a great extent.[2]

Although Marosi is a researcher of medieval Christian art, this observation is equally important in the case of the religious art of the cul-

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[1] Near Dunhuang, in Gansu 甘肅 province, western China are three series of Buddhist cave shrines: the Mogao 莫高 caves are located some 25 kilometres to the southeast; the Western Thousand Buddha Caves 西千佛洞 about the same distance to the west; and the Yulin 榆林 caves about a hundred kilometres to the east. The wall paintings in these caves and the banner paintings found in Cave 17 of the Mogao caves form the most important part of the material presented in this study. Dunhuang was located in Sha prefecture, Shazhou 沙州, and was governed together with the neighbouring prefecture, Guazhou 瓜州 throughout the period considered here. For the sutra cave see pp. 8-11 in this book.

[2] Ernő Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás—Művészet és valóság a 14-15. századi Magyarországon* [Picture and representation—Art and reality in 14th-15th century Hungary], Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995, p. 8. All translations from the Hungarian by the present author.

tural centres of the Silk Road, which are often studied in isolation. The comparative study of artworks from different cultural centres often brings surprising results, helping the researcher to recognise previously overlooked details, and provides new clues for dating.

This study investigates the processes that led to the distinct change in the style of Dunhuang art of the tenth century, and the consequent reduction of Chinese influence on Silk Road centres. It shall demonstrate that instead of looking to imperial China as during the unified Tang (618-907), in this period of local wars and peaceful competition for the control of trade, the mutually dependent ruling groups looked to each other for inspiration, and thereby changed the nature of Silk Road art. Furthermore, the new artistic and religious ideas that they developed were then passed on to central China, partly by the non-Chinese Tangut and Liao dynasties and subsequently by the Mongols. There they became part of both Chinese religious thinking and representational art forms.

By the tenth century, the Mogao caves (Plate 1) offered an important cultural and religious model to the neighbouring Silk Road centres. This has been referred to on several occasions. The influence of the Uygurs on some of the biggest cave temples is less well known, and has never been put into context.

Upon entering Cave 98, one of the largest Mogao caves, built in 923-925 C.E., the visitor is immediately struck by the contrast between the densely decorated upper section of the side walls and the soberly presented lower section where donor portraits appear. In contrast with the multitude of small figures illustrating scenes from various sutras, the large, erect donor figures stand quietly as if making a silent offering. They are led by the governor of Dunhuang Cao Yijin 曹議, who commissioned the caves, and behind him are represented his Uygur and Chinese wives and their attendants (Colour Plate 1). The significance of these figures cannot be doubted: their large size and elaborate clothing emphasise the important role they played. Cao Yijin who commissioned the cave was very consciously demonstrating the powerful political links in the area most important to Dunhuang: his son-in-law, the King of Khotan—the most important Buddhist centre on the southern Silk Road at the time, wears such an elaborate crown that his portrait cuts into the plane of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* illustration directly above him.

The presence of the female Uygur donor figures in the tenth-century Dunhuang caves has been acknowledged for a long time, and they have been illustrated and described in various Chinese and Western

publications, but no one has investigated the significance of Uygur donors in the formation of tenth century Dunhuang art. The present study has a two-fold purpose: first, to understand the background to the increasing importance of Uygur patrons in Dunhuang, and second, to understand in greater detail the way Dunhuang may have shaped Uygur art, a question that has only been discussed in general terms by other authors. By juxtaposing visual and historical clues this study investigates the important role Uygur patrons played in revitalising Dunhuang's art in the tenth—eleventh centuries.

Recent historical research conducted in China and Japan has proved that the Uygurs played a far more important role in tenth and eleventh century Shazhou than previously assumed.[3] Rong Xinjiang has devoted an entire chapter of his study of Dunhuang historical sources to the links between the Uygurs of Xizhou 西州 and Ganzhou 甘州 (Map) and the Chinese of Dunhuang in the ninth and tenth centuries. He points out that research on the relationship between Shazhou and the two Uygur states could only be attempted in recent years, once the relevant Dunhuang manuscripts had become available, because traditional historical sources did not address these issues.[4]

Only isolated attempts have so far been made to put the results of historical research into an art-historical context. At the "First International Conference in Dunhuang" a number of caves in Yulin and Dunhuang that had earlier been regarded as Tangut were identified for the first time as Uygur by Liu Yuquan, but his results have not become widely known in the West, or even in China.[5] The complexity

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[3] Rong Xinjiang: *Guiyijunshi yanjiu. Tang Song shidai Dunhuang lishi kaosu* [Research on the Return to Allegiance Army. A study of Dunhuang's history during the Tang and Song dynasties], Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1996; Moriyasu Takao: "Uiguru to Tonko" [The Uygurs and Dunhuang], in Enoki Kazuo (ed.): *Kōza Tonkō 2: Tonkō no rekishi* [Lectures on Dunhuang 2: The history of Dunhuang], Tokyo: Daito Shuppansha, 1980, pp. 297-338. The studies of Yang Fuxue and Niu Ruji have drawn attention to the dominance of Uygurs in the Shazhou area in the eleventh century. For an extensive bibliography on this subject see Yang Fuxue and Niu Ruji: *Shazhou Huihu ji qi wenxian*, [Shazhou Uygurs and their documents], Lanzhou: Gansu Wenhua chubanshe, 1995. Most recently Moriyasu has criticised certain aspects of Yang's and Niu's argument. See Takao Moriyasu: "The Sha-chou Uighurs and the West Uighur Kingdom", *Acta Asiatica*, vol. 78 (2000), pp. 42-45.

[4] Rong: *Guiyijunshi*: 1996, p. 2; Rong Xinjiang: "The Relationship of Dunhuang with the Uighur Kingdom", in Louis Bazin and Peter Zieme (eds.): *De Dunhuang à Istanbul—Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2001, pp. 275-298.

[5] Liu Yuquan: "Guanyu Shazhou Huihu dongkude fenhua" [Grouping the Shazhou Uygur caves], *1987 Dunhuang shiku yanjiu guoji taolunhui wenji* [Collected papers of the

of this issue is clearly shown by the fact that not all Chinese authors know or accept Liu's attributions, and that consequently some have continued to refer to these caves as Tangut. Since the publication of Liu's research, Chinese historians have simply quoted his results, and there has been no further attempt to study the growing influence of the Uygurs on Dunhuang art. Named Shazhou Uygur caves by Liu, they have all been dated to the eleventh century and consequently the Uygur role in the formation of Dunhuang art in the tenth century has not been investigated at all.

The tenth and eleventh centuries constitute the late period in Dunhuang art, as the earliest wall paintings date to the fourth century C.E. There has been general agreement among Chinese and Western scholars that from the time of the Tibetan occupation (781-847) Dunhuang was in decline in certain ways.[6] With regard to the tenth-century portable paintings, it is clear that due to their later date, more have survived, and consequently more paintings that are very close to each other in composition are available for study. The standardisation and repetitiveness of the art of this period, especially in the tenth century, was also due to the sudden growth in the number of commissions. Duan Wenjie, among others, has already drawn attention to the increased Buddhist activity in Dunhuang during the Cao family's rule (tenth and early eleventh centuries).[7] However, the study of the portable paintings from this late period has been somewhat neglected until recently. Members of the Dunhuang Academy have mostly researched the art of the wall paintings in the Dunhuang caves. Up to the present relatively few Chinese experts have had the opportunity to study the Dunhuang material in London and Paris in

1987 International Conference on Dunhuang Cave Research], Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe, 1990, pp. 1-29. Liu Yuquan: "Shashū uiguru no sekkutsu geijitsu" [The cave art of the Shazhou Uygurs], *Chūgoku sekkutsu, Ansei Yurin kutsu* [Chinese cave temples, Anxi Yulin caves], Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990, pp. 240-253.

[6] Roderick Whitfield: *The Art of Central Asia—The Stein Collection in the British Museum [ACA]*, vols 1-3, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982-85, vol. 1, pp. 8-9. Jacques Giès does not support the view that tenth-century Dunhuang art was in decline but still emphasises the Chinese qualities of the paintings. See Jacques Giès (ed.): *The Arts of Central Asia—The Pelliot Collection in the Musée Guimet [ACA]*, (translated by Hero Friesen in collaboration with Roderick Whitfield), London: Serindia Publications, 1996, pp. 17-38, *passim*.

[7] Duan Wenjie: "Dunhuang Art in the Last Phase", Tan Chung (ed.): *Dunhuang Art through the Eyes of Duan Wenjie*, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Abhinav Publications, 1994, pp. 190-192. The quotes are from Dunhuang manuscripts P 2692 and S 4245.

detail. At the same time it has been difficult for the European experts to gain access to the Dunhuang caves, and good quality publications have only begun to appear in the last twenty years.[8] Therefore, at the time of preparing the European collections for publication, authors had to rely on the then-available material, which restricted the scope for comparative studies.

Additionally very few comparative studies of regional art centres have appeared to date. Beyond a few general remarks and the citing of isolated examples for comparison, scholars have tended to focus on the study of one area. There are, however, important exceptions. The "Sérinde" exhibition, organised in 1995-1996 in Paris, covered a

[8] Most recent of these are the large albums containing detailed pictorial material of selected caves under the series title Dunhuang shiku yishu [Art of the Dunhuang caves] published by the Jiangsu meishu chubanshe [Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House]. Digital 3-D models of 42 caves are now available through the Mellon International Dunhuang Archive (MIDA) in ARTstor (artstor.org). MIDA is the product of a major and ongoing multi-institutional, multi-national effort to create high-quality digital reconstructions of the mural paintings and related art and texts associated with the several hundred Buddhist cave shrines in Dunhuang, China, and creating digital images of manuscripts, textiles, paintings and other objects once located at Dunhuang and now dispersed among museums and libraries around the world. Institutions involved in this collaborative effort include The British Library, the British Museum, the Musée national des Arts asiatiques–Guimet, the Bodleian Library, and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. For more information see http://www.artstor.org/info/collections/mida.jsp.

Under the auspices of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Professor Sarah Fraser started the digitising of Dunhuang caves in 1999. Using digital cameras, her team from Northwestern University, in collaboration with the Dunhuang Research Academy, has photographed the wall paintings and sculpture in the most important 42 caves. The digital images were digitally "stitched" together to produce two- and three-dimensional visual representations of the cave surfaces. The work is bilingual with an extensive catalogue in Chinese and English, and copious Sanskrit terms, with full measurements of all caves. See Hu Suxin: "Siyuan caifu yu suren gongyang" [Temple wealth and Secular Patronage] in Sarah E. Fraser (ed.): Merit, Opulence, and the Buddhist Network of Wealth, Shanghai: Shanghai Fine Arts Publishers, 2003.

Digital photographs of Dunhuang paintings will also be made available through MIDA in ARTstor, making research much easier. The present author coordinated the digitisation of the paintings in the Stein Collection at the British Museum, London in 2001-2002. See Lilla Russell-Smith: "Digitising Dunhuang", British Museum Magazine, Number 42 (Spring 2002), pp. 18-20. A selection of these new images appears on the British Museum website (http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/; search keyword 'stein'). All paintings are available on the British Museum's specialist information site, launched in May 2004: http://www.thebritishmuseum.net/thesilkroad/ and on the website of the International Dunhuang Project at the British Library, London: http://idp.bl.uk/PaintSearch.

vast area of Central Asia.[9] It was the first important display to demonstrate how regional centres influenced each other, and how style and iconography travelled along the Silk Road. Among the exhibits shown was a sketch from Dunhuang described by Frantz Grenet in the catalogue as "*divinités sogdiennes*" or "Sogdian deities" (Plate 2).[10] Two seated females are shown holding various attributes: the one on the left holds a foliated cup and a tray upon which sits a dog. The female on the right is seated on a wolf; she has four arms, the upper two supporting the sun and moon disks, and the lower two holding a scorpion and a snake. During a discussion at the conference linked to the exhibition, it was emphasised that, although this painting came from Dunhuang, the iconography and the clothing of the figures were very unusual; it was compared to Sogdian art.[11] However, no reference was made to the headdresses of the figures. The headdress shown here, a flat water-drop shape was worn by high-ranking Uygur women (Figure 1) as the present author soon realised.[12]

The presence of Uygur headdresses in the Dunhuang material was the first clue to discovering similarities between Uygur art and certain Dunhuang paintings. The author's subsequent systematic search identified a group of Dunhuang paintings that display a concentrated amount of Uygur influence. The selected paintings had often been regarded as 'different' or unusual within the Dunhuang corpus, but in most cases had not been associated with the Uygurs. The second stage was to collect the historical evidence to back up the hypothesis that these unusual features in the Dunhuang context were the result of Uygur patronage. Once historical sources had convinced me of the increasing Uygur influence in Dunhuang, the third stage was to conduct a meticulous step-by-step comparative study of each painting selected in the first stage.

This new discovery has called into question the way we have been researching the later period of Dunhuang art. Until the fall of the Tang Dynasty, in 907, Dunhuang art was overwhelmingly influenced

[9] Jacques Giès and Monique Cohen (eds.): *Sérinde, Terre de Bouddha. Dix siècles d'art sur la Route de la Soie*, Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1995.

[10] J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*, 1995, cat. no. 225, pp. 293-294.

[11] Paris, February 1996. The papers were published in Monique Cohen, Jean-Pierre Drège et Jacques Giès (ed.): *La Sérinde terre d' échanges. Art, religion, commerce du Ier au Xe siècle. Actes du colloque international Galeries nationales du Grand Palais 13-14-15 février 1996*, Paris: La Documentation Française, 2000.

[12] Annemarie von Gabain: *Das Leben im uigurischen Königreich von Qoco (850-1250)*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973, fig. 106.

by central China. Despite the geographical distances, direct parallels with imperial art could be found. During the ninth and tenth centuries, however, the situation changed dramatically. The great empires of Tibet, the Uygur Kaghanate and Tang China all collapsed within a few decades in the ninth century, and small, regional centres became independent. It was the interaction between these regional centres that from then onward defined the military, economic, social and cultural landscape up to the arrival of the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Because of the constant shifts of allegiance and influence among these regional centres, the study of this period is more problematic than that of the preceding one.

Researching this era is fascinating because at this time important iconographic and stylistic inventions initially originating in the art of non-Chinese peoples entered Chinese culture. As the Liao 遼 (907-1125), the Tanguts or Xi Xia 西夏 (1036-1226), the Jin 金 (1115-1234) and the Yuan 元 (1260-1368) were dynasties of non-Chinese origin ruling China or important parts of it, many of their innovations were then taken up and passed into mainstream Chinese religious thought and art. The Uygurs remained the cultural advisors of the Mongols even after the latter established the Yuan dynasty.[13] Chinese intellectuals traditionally have had an extremely strong sense of their country's long history, the character of 'Chineseness' and the importance of the 'Central' as opposed to the borderlands up to the present day. As we all know today even the name of China is the 'Central country' Zhongguo 中國. In contrast with this prevailing view, in the period under discussion the regional ideas often became the basis for shaping the thinking of the centre. Growing awareness of these issues has only just begun to filter into general works on Chinese history.[14]

Another important point to address is the nature of 'nations' and 'religions' in the context of the constantly shifting patterns of Chinese culture during the centuries. Medieval groups did not have the same idea of nationhood, and consequently national art styles, as were

[13] Robert Marshall: *Storm from the East, From Genghis Khan to Khubilai Khan*, London: BBC Books, 1993, pp. 22, 72, 195.

[14] For example Valerie Hansen, Professor of History at Yale University organised the "The Silk Road Project: Reuniting Turfan's Scattered Treasures" with a conference completing the project in July 1998. Her new book on Chinese history reflects her continuing interest in the contribution of non-Chinese peoples to mainstream Chinese culture. See Valerie Hansen: *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000.

developed in the West, especially under the influence of the romantic movements of the nineteenth century. Consequently, it is not possible to find clearly distinguishable features of an 'Uygur style' that were consciously employed by the artists. As it is increasingly difficult in the contemporary world to distinguish the national characteristics of various art forms, due to "globalisation," in the tenth century on the Silk Road, too, there was a similar cosmopolitan atmosphere, in which cultural and religious ideas travelled freely in the footsteps of economic growth and trade. The northern trade route started from Dunhuang and proceeded to the oasis of Turfan. One branch then followed the southern foothills of the Tienshan mountains to Karašahr and Šorčuk (near modern Korla) before reaching Kuča, an oasis surrounded by Buddhist cave complexes such as Qizil and Kumtura. It is clear that along with the merchants and monks artists and artisans were also travelling, and paintings or sketches could also be taken from one regional cultural centre to the other. In these circumstances it is extremely difficult to understand exactly how the art of an individual region was formed. However, as will be demonstrated, workshop practices, local fashions and the patrons' demands made the development of regional styles inevitable.

In the course of this research the importance of studying the art of the regional centres in a connected and comparative manner, rather than in isolation, became evident. The Chinese of Dunhuang and the Uygurs of Turfan were influenced by other ethnic groups too: Tibetans, Kucheans, Sogdians and Khotanese. A comparative, multi-cultural approach may furnish answers in such difficult areas as dating and may also provide new clues to iconographic questions. Furthermore, by setting the material into a socio-historical framework, much more can be understood of the background in which these paintings were produced, and in turn the new perspective may reveal more of their original meaning.

The paintings that form the basis of this study were discovered at some point in 1900 by the Daoist monk Wang Yuanlu, who acted as a caretaker at the Mogao caves.[15] He stumbled upon the bundles

[15] The date 22 June 1900 is accepted in China. The official celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the finds was held in Beijing, Hong Kong and Dunhuang in the summer of 2000 ("Dunhuang 2000" at the Capital Normal University, Beijing, P. R. C., 21-25 June 2000 and the "2000 International Conference on Dunhuang Studies" at the Dunhuang Academy, Dunhuang, Gansu, P. R.C., 29 July–3 August, 2000).

of manuscript scrolls and paintings, which were stacked up to the ceiling in a side chapel of a larger cave temple, numbered Cave 16 today. The side chapel, originally built in the mid-ninth century as a memorial to the high-ranking monk Hongbian 洪辯, is now known as Cave 17, or "The Library Cave."

By 1900 Dunhuang had been a forgotten and largely abandoned site for some centuries, although Buddhist activities continued on a reduced scale. Because Dunhuang was not well known then, Wang met with little success despite his attempts to draw his unique find to the attention of the authorities, who believed that it was expensive and too much trouble to move the large number of scrolls and other paintings and manuscripts to Lanzhou 蘭州 or the capital. Therefore, when the Hungarian-born British archaeologist, Aurel Stein arrived on the scene, Cave 17 was still almost untouched; a temporary wall blocking the entrance had even been built to protect the finds.[16]

In retrospect the Dunhuang manuscripts and paintings proved to be the most important finds of Stein's entire career.[17] First all paintings and documents were sent to London.[18] Subsequently, after a delay caused by the First World War, the material was divided between London and Indian museums.[19] Today the paintings form the most

[16] Aurel Stein: *Serindia. Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921, vols. 1-5; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980 (reprint), vol. 2, pp. 801-806.

[17] It is not widely known that an earlier Hungarian expedition, organised by Count Béla Széchenyi, was a determining factor in prompting Stein to undertake the hazardous journey to Dunhuang. Arriving in Dunhuang on 2 May, 1879 these Hungarians were the first Westerners to see the Dunhuang caves. Their travel notes, written by Lajos Lóczy and Gustav Kreitner, throw light on the very unstable situation at the Dunhuang caves thirty years before Stein's visit. This information, and Stein's personal friendship with Lóczy, is likely to have influenced his decision to take much of the material he found there away for safe keeping. See Lilla Russell-Smith: "Hungarian Explorers in Dunhuang", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, vol. 10, part 3 (November 2000), pp. 341-362.

[18] A. Stein: *Serindia*: 1921, vol. 2, pp. 824-825.

[19] The Sanskrit and Prakrit manuscripts ended up in the India Office Collections of the British Library, London. See Frances Wood: "Two Thousand Years at Dunhuang", Susan Whitfield and Frances Wood (eds.): *Dunhuang and Turfan—Contents and Conservation of Ancient Documents from Central Asia*, The British Library, 1996, p. 3. For the correspondence regarding the division of the material by the Belgian scholar Raphael Petrucci, the British Museum Archives can be consulted. For details see Helen Wang: "Catalogue of the Sir Aurel Stein Papers in the British Museum Central Archives", in H. Wang (ed.): *Sir Aurel Stein, Proceedings of the British Museum Study Day, 23 March 2002*, London: British Museum Occasional Paper 142, 2004, pp. 37-62.

important part of the Stein Collection in the British Museum, and the Stein Collection in the National Museum, in New Delhi. Those in New Delhi are difficult to study and remain mostly unpublished.[20] A preliminary study of Stein's published and unpublished photographs of the Delhi material has not so far revealed any striking resemblance to the group identified here.[21] The British Museum's Stein collection was published by Roderick Whitfield in three important volumes between 1982 and 1985.[22]

Just one year after Stein's visit in 1908 the French scholar Paul Pelliot arrived in Dunhuang. He was a well-trained Sinologist and undertook a thorough study of the material on the spot before selecting important paintings and manuscripts to take to Paris.[23] He had the caves photographed and carefully noted the inscriptions. As some of these have become illegible subsequently, and because many others were not published elsewhere, his notebooks have become invaluable,

[20] In 1998 the present author studied the Dunhuang paintings with the help of Jitendra Nath, then curator at the National Museum, New Delhi.

[21] The present author catalogued Stein's photos with John Falconer: "Catalogue of Photographs Taken or Collected by Sir Aurel Stein", in Éva Apor and Helen Wang (eds.): *Catalogue of the Collections of Sir Aurel Stein*, Budapest: Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2002, pp. 159-350. Importantly, since the publication of this volume, a large box containing about 2000 photographs from the collection of Sir Aurel Stein was discovered in 2003, in Budapest, in a little-used outside storage building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The importance of this find became apparent immediately when the photographs were first examined in October 2003. A group of 155 photographs shows the Dunhuang paintings, and may be a complete inventory of the material originally brought to London by Stein's expedition and then divided between Delhi and London. I first showed some of the photographs during my talk entitled "Sir Aurel Stein's Photographs in the Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest" given at "The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein" International Conference organised by PRASADA De Montfort University, Leicester, in collaboration with the CIAA, SOAS, University of London 6-7 March, 2004. These photographs caused some excitement, as they make it possible to study the original condition of the paintings, including the now often missing mounts, headpieces and streamers. The paper will be published in the conference proceedings: Lindsay Zamponi with Csaba Dezső, Madhuvanti Ghose and Lilla Russell-Smith: "The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein" (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming). The photographs will be catalogued as Phase 2 of a British-Hungarian project.

[22] Whitfield: *ACA*.

[23] Jacques Giès: "The Pelliot Expedition (1906-1909)", in Giès: *ACA*, pp. 10-16. For an up-to-date account of the Chinese assessment of Stein and Pelliot and the other explorers of Dunhuang see Rong Xinjiang: "Dunhuang de faxian jiqi xueshu yiyi" [The discovery at Dunhuang and its academic significance], *Wenshi zhishi* [Chinese Literature and History], No. 6 (1999), pp. 41-42, 44-45.

and have been published in six volumes.[24] The paintings and sculptures he brought back form the basis of the collection at the Musée Guimet in Paris and were published in 1995 in two volumes edited by Jacques Giès.[25] Colours are of great importance when identifying the Uygur-influenced group, but previously only black-and-white illustrations of the paintings had been available in the earlier catalogue by Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, which had made a comparative stylistic study difficult.[26]

Towards a definition of Uygur art

A detailed comparative history of Uygur art is still a distant prospect. This must incorporate the partially published banners, wall paintings, paper fragments, textiles and illuminated book illustrations found by archaeologists, as well as the wall paintings and architecture found in situ in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. In a future project it would also be desirable to investigate the relationship of the Uygur style of the Turfan area with the art of the previous nomadic period. For the present, in order to understand which techniques, materials, types of clothing, and stylistic features can be linked to the Uygurs it is necessary to give a working definition of what constitutes Uygur art, although the main focus of the present study remains on the connections between the Dunhuang and Turfan areas.

Uygur art as we know it, has been excavated and studied only since the beginning of the twentieth century. Four expeditions to the area of Turfan were organised by the then Museum für Völkerkunde (Ethnological Museum Berlin) between 1902 and 1914.[27] The first

[24] Nicole Vandier-Nicolas and Monique Maillard: *Grottes de Touen-houang Carnet de notes de Paul Pelliot*, vols 1-6, Paris: Collège de France (No XI, Mission Paul Pelliot), 1981-1992.

[25] Jacques Giès (ed.): *Les arts de l'Asie centrale—La collection Paul Pelliot du musée national des arts asiatiques—Guimet [AAC]*, vols 1-2, Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1995.

[26] Nicole Vandier-Nicolas: *Bannières et peintures de Touen-houang conservées au Musée Guimet*, (No XIV, Mission Paul Pelliot), Paris: (n.p.) 1974 and Louis Hambis [ed.] plate volume, (No XV, Mission Paul Pelliot), Paris, 1976.

[27] For details see H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Die Seidenstraße. Malereien und Plastiken aus buddhistischen Höhlentempeln*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1987, pp. 15-31. In English: Herbert Härtel: "Introduction", in Herbert Härtel–Marianne Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes—Central Asian Art from the West Berlin State Museums*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982, pp. 25-49.

reports were those written by the two leaders of the German expeditions: Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq.[28] The most important wall paintings come from a temple site called Bezeklik, near Turfan in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region (Plate 3). The collection was later transferred to the Museum für Indische Kunst (MIK), in Berlin.[29]

Uygur works of art from Šorčuk (Shikshin), about 20 kilometres south-east of Karašahr (near Korla), were removed by Sergei Oldenburg's Russian expedition and taken to St. Petersburg, where some of them are exhibited, but they remain largely unpublished to this day.[30] The National Museum, in New Delhi, has an excellent collection of wall paintings from the Stein expeditions. However, all these remain unresearched apart from their inclusion in the large album published by Fred H. Andrews.[31] The fragments are currently disassembled, awaiting conservation and remounting.[32] There is also a considerable quantity of unpublished material in New Delhi from the pre-Uygur Turfan material, including pottery, objects and paintings, mainly found in Astana by Stein.

Annemarie von Gabain was the first author to discuss Uygur art and

[28] Albert Grünwedel: *Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten in Idikutschari und Umgebung im Winter 1902-1903*, München: Verlag der K. B. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1905; Albert Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch Turkistan*, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912 Albert von Le Coq: *Chotscho. Facsimile-Wiedergabe der Wichtigeren Funde der ersten Königlich Preussischen Turfan-Expedition nach Turfan in Ost-Turkistan*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1913; Albert von Le Coq: *Die Buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien*, vols. 1-6, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1922-33; Albert von Le Coq: *Auf Hellas Spuren in Ostturkistan: Berichte und Abenteuer der II. und III. deutschen Turfan Expeditionen*, Leipzig, 1926.

[29] For the German expeditions see also Marianne Yaldiz: "Die Entdeckung Chinesisch-Turkistans im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert", Marianne Yaldiz: *Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte Chinesisch-Zentralasiens (Xinjiang)*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987, pp. 7-13., For the wooden objects brought back by the German expeditions see Chhaya Bhattacharya: *Art of Central Asia (with Special Reference to Wooden Objects from the Northern Silk Route)*, Delhi: Agam Prakashan, 1977.

[30] S. F. Oldenburg: *Russkaya Turkestanskaya ekspeditsiya (1909-1910 gg.) Kratkiy predvaritel'ny otchet* [Russian expedition to Turkestan (1909-1910) Short, preliminary report] St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1914; N. V. Diakonova: *Shikshin, Materialy Pervoi Russkoi Turkestanskoi ekspeditsii akademika S. F. Oldenburga 1909-1910 gg.* [Shikshin. Materials of the First Russian Turkestan Expedition by the academic S. F. Oldenburg 1909-1910], Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 1995.

[31] Fred H. Andrews: *Wall Paintings from Ancient Shrines in Central Asia (Recovered by Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E)*, 2 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948. Reprinted by Bruce Miller (ed.) in Bangkok: SDI Publications, 1998.

[32] Since the departure of Jitendra Nath in April 1998, Dr. Binoy Sahay has embarked on the compilation of a new register classified by material, rather than by site. At present the collection remains mostly unpublished.

culture beyond Grünwedel's definition.[33] She was very aware of the many questions her books raised, and that, because she was a linguist by training, her methods were not those of the art historian. Gabain has concentrated particularly on the links with China.

Larry Clark emphasised the degree to which Uygur art and writing was borrowed from other cultures.[34] Even though Uygur literature was a fusion of different artistic and cultural influences, its important achievements have been described by many scholars.[35] Similarly the Uygurs metamorphosed various stylistic influences into a new synthesis that can be recognised as Uygur art. These distinctive features form the bulk of this study.

The multi-cultural aspect of Central Asian art

Dunhuang lies at the crossroads, where the northern and southern branches of the Silk Road meet. Qočo, near modern-day Turfan, was one of the most important trading centres on the northern branch of the Silk Road. To varying degrees both Uygur art and the art of Dunhuang were influenced by all the major styles reaching them along the Silk Road. Table 1 shows the major influences that reached Dunhuang in the ninth and tenth centuries. Many of the same influences also reached the Uygurs in the same period, as is shown in Table 2. This is one of the main reasons why disentangling the many layers of influence when discussing Dunhuang's links with the Uygurs is a very complex task. Many variants of Uygur art exist, and the assignment of various dates and schools must be addressed in future research. Thus this study concentrates on advancing the field in two primary areas: the art of tenth-century Dunhuang and the early Buddhist art of the Uygurs.

Tables 1 and 2 identify the main sources of influence on the formation of Uygur art in three main periods and in ninth-, tenth- and eleventh-century Dunhuang. Dunhuang and Qočo were always multi-ethnic, as oasis towns and as centres for religious worship. For this

[33] Annemarie von Gabain: *Die Formensprache der uigurischen Malerei*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987.

[34] Larry Vernon Clark: *Introduction to the Uyghur Civil Documents of East Turkestan (13th-14th cc.)*, PhD diss., Indiana University, 1975, pp. 5-7.

[35] For a bibliography of Uygur Buddhist literature see Johan Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*, Turnhout: Brepols, 1997.

reason, at any one time a different quotient of cultural influence can be detected in the art of these centres. The exact nature of the merging of these influences is different almost painting by painting in periods of upheaval, such as the period of Tibetan occupation in Dunhuang between 781-847 or the late tenth–early eleventh centuries. In times of stability and a strong Chinese government, the art of Dunhuang reflected much more closely the influence of Chinese art (especially during the High Tang period between 705-780).[36] This explains the great number of studies devoted to questions regarding Dunhuang art during the High Tang, while the study of the late period has been somewhat neglected due to the complex nature of religious and artistic influences.

In Table 1 it is clear that Tibetan art influenced Dunhuang strongly up to the middle of the ninth century, and after that it never quite disappeared. This can be seen in the presence of esoteric mandalas and paintings throughout the late period. Tibetan art started to play a major role once again from the middle of the eleventh century, with the arrival of the Tanguts, who developed a unique style: for esoteric iconography they employed Tibetan art forms, while their Mahāyāna paintings were closely modelled on Chinese art of the Northern Song 宋 (960-1126) period. Christopher Beckwith has argued that the Tanguts were the preservers of Tibetan culture and religion in the region.[37]

The influence of Chinese art continued in all periods, but to a diminishing extent. In the tenth century it is also important to observe that, due to the isolation of Dunhuang from central China, a local art style developed. This was strengthened by the establishing of an Academy, which made the execution of a large number of cave temples and works of art possible.[38] Consequently, we may conclude at this stage

[36] The new chronology was published by Ning Qiang in his new *Art, Religion, and Politics in Medieval China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004. This book arrived too late to be studied in detail. The beginning of the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang may be as late as 787, these dates are disputed.

[37] Christopher Beckwith: "The Tibetans in the Ordos and North China. Considerations on the Role of the Tibetan Empire in World History", C. I. Beckwith (ed.): *Silver on Lapis—Tibetan Literary Culture and History*, Bloomington: The Tibet Society, 1987, pp. 7-8.

[38] Sarah E. Fraser: *The Artist's Practice in Tang China, 8-10th centuries*, PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1996, p. 260, pp. 239-263. Recently published as Sarah E. Fraser: *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-960*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. This book arrived too late to be incorporated into this study.

that the style of tenth and eleventh-century Dunhuang art was formed as the result of different influences. In my view, while there was only a negligible Uygur presence in Dunhuang in the ninth century, by the tenth century Uygur art had become one of the major influences on the art of Dunhuang, and subsequently became the dominant factor by the first half of the eleventh century. Uygur influence probably coexisted with and was gradually replaced by the influence of Tangut art.

Table 2 shows the influences that reached the Uygurs in three major centres: before the mid-ninth century in the Kaghanate (in present-day Mongolia), from the second half of the ninth century onwards in Qočo, and in the tenth and eleventh centuries in Shazhou. In contrast with Dunhuang in the same period, in the case of the Uygurs only the Chinese cultural models were constant. Tibetan influence reached the Uygurs later, probably only from the tenth century onwards. There was a strong inflence of Sogdian art through the Manichaean religion, and Tocharian influence became very important once the Uygurs had settled in the Tarim Basin, as the cave temples and other monuments that became the model for the Uygurs had mostly been built by Tocharians.[39] One of the major Tocharian centres was Khotan. The influence of Khotanese art both on Dunhuang and Qočo is important, but difficult to define at present. A more detailed comparative study will be undertaken as a different project in the light of recent discoveries.[40]

It is clear from the history of the Uygurs that they experienced many different cultural influences. These can be divided into two general groups: those from China and those from Central Asia. The pattern followed is well known from history, and from Chinese history in particular. A nomadic people came into contact with Chinese sedentary civilisation, and adopted its more developed systems of statesmanship and culture, adapting these to their own needs. In the case of other ethnic groups, the borrowers often became completely sinicised and assimilated into China after a short period of flourishing independently. In contrast, the Uygurs developed a culture independent of China's.

[39] The art of the Tocharians also played an important role in earlier phases of Dunhuang art, but not in the late period.

[40] The Sino-Japanese excavations of 2002 have unearthed a considerable number of Khotanese wall paintings and wooden plaques, but at the time of writing, these are still awaiting publication. I am grateful to Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose for drawing my attention to these images.

This was possible due to China's military weakness from the second half of the eighth to the eleventh century. The other main reason for the creation of a distinct Uygur culture may have been that the Uygurs were selective in what they adopted from other cultures. For example, rather than accepting any of the main religions popular in Tang China, namely Buddhism, Daoism or Confucianism, the Uygurs converted to Manichaeism, which they made their state religion. This seems to indicate that the Uygur ruling class had a conscious 'pick-and-choose' policy with regard to forming their culture. Through their Manichaean religion they also became exposed to Persian and Sogdian art. The Uygurs' nomadic taste also continued to play an important role especially in the ornamental arts, in clothing, in the use of carpets, in the decoration of houses and in horse harness.

After the fall of their steppe empire in the ninth century the Xizhou Uygurs took over a highly developed system of oasis cities, which had been under Chinese cultural domination, with Gaochang (Qočo) as the centre. After their move the original impact of Tang Chinese art on the Uygurs was once again reinforced by the influences of Dunhuang art and local Chinese art. Building on their previous urban experiences the Xizhou branch of the Uygurs was very quick to adapt to the sedentary lifestyle.

The Turfan area had a thriving Chinese community during the Tang dynasty, and Chinese works of art of the highest quality were available there, a fact that is not usually mentioned by the Turkologists working with Uygur material only. Many of the wooden funerary figures that survived in the tombs of Astana represent highly fashionable ladies clad in silks and Central Asian textiles. Fragments dating from the time of the Chinese domination reflect the strong influence of imperial culture and high fashion in this remote outpost of Chinese culture.[41]

The oasis cities that became part of Xizhou Uygur territory also had a Tocharian population. Before the arrival of the Uygurs this area was already an important centre of Buddhist art. The extent of the influence of Kuchean art on the Uygurs has been very well researched

[41] For example "Two boys", found in Astana tomb 187, H: 47.1 cm W: 58.8 cm; "Ladies", found in Astana tomb 187 H: 84.4 cm (both Museum of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomus Region) reproduced in Wang Renbo (ed.): *Sui Tang wenhua* [Culture of the Sui and Tang dynasties], Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1990, p. 199, fig. 10 and p. 204, fig. 19.

by experts in Germany since the time of Grünwedel.[42] As the so-called four Turfan Expeditions brought back much material from Qizil as well, German scholars were always in an excellent position to compare the wall paintings found there to those from the Turfan area.

PREUSSISCHER STAATS-BIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN

The art of Khotan from the southern Silk Road is far more difficult to reconstruct. Its painting style is best known from the wooden panels found there by Aurel Stein.[43] The round faces and strong Sogdian influence in the gestures are features that Khotanese art seems to share with Uygur art. Most important is probably the presence of Hindu and hybrid deities with multiple arms and heads. Very similar treatment of these motifs is found in Uygur art. It is especially worth noting that the additional heads are not shown in profile but in an almost frontal three-quarter view looking at the viewer (Plate 38). Links with Khotan were undoubtedly strong through marriage and trade. Khotanese princesses were also often shown as donors in Dunhuang, for example in Cave 61 (Colour plates 2-3).

In summary the following are the main components of Xizhou Uygur art:

A: *Art of Western Asia and Central Asia*
1. Nomadic and Turkic heritage
2. Persian art and Sogdian art through the influence of Manichaean art
3. Kuchean art
4. Khotanese art
5. Tibetan art
6. Tangut art

B: *Art of China*
7. Tang Chinese art
8. Dunhuang art
9. Local Chinese art

[42] See in the works of Albert Grünwedel, Albert von Le Coq, Annemarie von Gabain and Jorinde Ebert listed in the Bibliography.

[43] See Whitfield: *ACA* vol. 3 pls. 67-72; The most important panels were displayed in the *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith* exhibition at the British Library, London (May-September 2004) 1907, 1111.68; 1907, 1111.70; 1925, 619.25; 1907, 1111.143; 1907, 1111.72. Susan Whitfield (ed.): *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, London: The British Library and Serindia Publications, 2004, cat.nos. 26, 59, 60, 62, 63.

The tenth century was most probably the time when the characteristics of Uygur style crystallised into a recognisable pattern. The Uygurs did not settle permanently in the Xizhou area before the second half of the ninth century. It is evident from the history of other nomadic groups that it usually takes several decades to develop the new art forms needed for the new cultural practices associated with the settled lifestyle of the élite. This period is a time for experimentation. Building on the nomadic heritage, and incorporating the sedentary art of the local population and the influences brought by the new political alliances of the aristocracy a new synthesis is achieved.[44]

Tables 1 and 2 draw attention to the composite nature of the art of both Qočo in the Uygur period and Dunhuang. It is clearly the case that by the tenth century the two centres were mutually influencing each other. This study presents aspects of this regional interaction. Formulating a canon of tenth-century Uygur painting in Dunhuang will throw light on the interpretation of iconography and the dating of uninscribed paintings. Chapters One and Two present and reinterpret our current understanding of Uygur art and art patronage, and the historical and cultural links between the Chinese rulers of Dunhuang and the Uygur rulers of the neighbouring regions. In Chapters Three and Four a group of important Dunhuang paintings are identified as the products of local Uygur patronage and analysed in this new light.

[44] In Europe the Hungarian tribes arrived in the Carpathian Basin in the late ninth century and converted to Christianity in 1000 C.E., but throughout the eleventh century each of the monasteries and churches built reflected a different combination of local, Byzantine and Venetian elements. (Hungarian medieval art taught by Ernő Marosi, University of Budapest, 1985). Cf. also Ernő Marosi: "Hungarian Architecture c. 1000-1440", in Jane Turner (ed.): *The Dictionary of Art*, vol. 14, London: Grove, vol. 14, p. 883.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAKING OF THE UYGUR PATRONS

The patron's goal: the function of religious works of art

As all murals and portable paintings in Dunhuang were commissioned for a religious purpose the function of these works of art should remain the most important focus of any research. The act of patronage in the context of fifteenth-century Christian art has been defined by Michael Baxandall, who argues that a painting was the deposit of a social relationship:

> On one side there was a painter who made the picture, or at least supervised its making. On the other side there was somebody else who asked him to make it, provided funds for him to make it and, after he had made it, reckoned on using it in some way or other.[1]

This definition may also be applied to the social interaction leading to the preparation of works of art in Dunhuang. I shall use the term patron or donor for those who paid for the preparation of cave temples and works of art. In a Dunhuang context, by the act of commissioning works of art the patrons claimed faithful adherence to Buddhism, a religion which emphasised that the copying or ordering of sutras and artworks would benefit the donor's *karma*. The commissioning and making of the artwork itself was only one of the many acts and rituals designed to achieve this.

When Cao Yuanzhong 曹元忠 and his wife decided to pay for the repair works in Cave 96 at Dunhuang they

> "observed the month of fasting... and then retired to the Dunhuang caves. There they performed pious acts such as lighting lamps, burning incense, chanting prayers, and ordering sutras to be copied."[2]

Only after these religious rituals were completed did the repair work

[1] Michael Baxandall: *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: a Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p.1. (first edition 1974).

[2] S. Fraser: *The Artist's Practice:* 1996, p. 260.

start. Less wealthy donors organised religious societies, only one of whose functions was the sponsoring of religious images.[3] With the increasing popularity of esoteric practices, the importance of rituals grew even further, and the surviving sketches for mandalas found in Dunhuang prove that exact guidelines were followed when carrying these out.

As in the rest of Chinese territory, the majority of the population in the Dunhuang area followed a mixture of beliefs, commonly known as 'popular Buddhism.' Charles D. Orzech has emphasised that "in the post Tang period the Chinese religious world was organised around a few key genera." Among these, rites for the dead, including those performed at funerals were among the most important.[4] Paintings and cave temples were also commissioned for the benefit of deceased relatives.

Research on European art has found similarly complex issues regarding the patronage of religious art.[5] The patron was the real initiator of the architecture, sculpture and painting. Patrons played a significant part in determining both the form and content of the commissioned work of art. For example in fifteenth-century Italy it was the patron and not the artist, who was seen by his contemporaries as the creator of his project and this gave him the strongest possible motive for controlling its final appearance. Renaissance patrons knew the value of the arts as propaganda. However, art was commissioned overwhelmingly in the context of religious duty, and the chapels were often burial chapels, built around their patrons' tombs. Their function was to provide a setting for the prayers needed for his soul and those of his descendants. Art was only a small element in the costs

[3] Thomas E. Graham: *The Reconstruction of Popular Buddhism in China using selected pien-wen from Tunhuang*, UMI PhD diss., The University of Iowa, 1975, pp. 135-138. Also V. Hansen: *The Open Empire*: 2000, pp. 253-256.

[4] Charles D. Orzech: "Esoteric Buddhism and the Shishi in China", in Henrik H. Sørensen (ed): *The Esoteric Buddhist Tradition*, The Seminar for Buddhist Studies, Copenhagen & Aarhus, 1994, p 51.

[5] For a summary on the study on the patronage in medieval and Renaissance Europe see Tracy E. Cooper: "*Mecenatismo* or *Clientelismo* The Character of Renaissance Patronage", in David G. Wilkins and Rebecca L. Wilkins (eds.): *The Search for a Patron in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Lewiston/Queenstown/Lampeter: The Edwin Meller Press, 1996, pp. 19-32.

involved as patrons endowed their chapels with funds to cover the costs of regular prayer.[6]

In Dunhuang too, the creation of family temples became very popular with the local rulers, especially in the tenth century.[7] Donors of a higher status soon exploited the obvious political propaganda value of sponsoring works of art, especially caves, where their life-size portraits were depicted.[8] As they were represented in their best festive dress, and consequently have left us clear documentation of changing fashions in Dunhuang. Furthermore, certain supernatural figures also appear wearing outfits closely linked with an ethnic group. The clothing depicted in paintings furnishes some of the most important clues that we can use to estimate the relative importance of certain groups at any one time in the patronage of art.

For researching medieval Christian art or Buddhist art a much wider range of source material must be consulted than that required for stylistic analysis: written documents and traditions concerning the way of life, fashion, customs and wealth are particularly important to help reconstruct the function of works of art. From this perspective, the work of art becomes a historical source in itself: portraits contain important information regarding the function of costumes and adornments. Narrative pictures show the minutest details of life, even those that were not properly described in written sources. To understand the function and appearance of the work of art, special attention should be given both to the viewpoints of their donors and to the workshop traditions.[9]

In the mid-twenties of the tenth century Cao Yijin, the governor of Dunhuang from 914 to 935, was at the height of his power. Cave 98, one of the largest caves in Dunhuang was built during this time

[6] Mary Hollingsworth: *Patronage in Renaissance Italy - From 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century*, London: John Murray, 1994, pp. 1-5.

[7] Ma De has concentrated on the social aspect of this phenomenon, which is undoubtedly a very important factor in the commissioning of works of art. Ma De: *Dunhuang Mogaoku shi yanjiu* [Studies of the history of the Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang], Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996, *passim*. See also Ma De: "Cong Dunhuang shiku yishu kan fojiaode shehuihua" [Society's influence on Buddhism as seen in the Dunhuang Caves], unpublished paper. I should like to thank the author for sending this to me.

[8] For a general study of donors shown in Dunhuang see Edith Wiercimok: "The Donor Figure in the Buddhist Painting of Dunhuang", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 1 (1990), pp. 203-226.

[9] E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás* : 1995, pp. 19-20.

in 923-925.[10] The cave is extremely large, with an entrance corridor 6.8 metres long, and a main chamber measuring 13.2 metres across at the entrance and 15.65 metres deep.[11] There are more than 200 donor figures shown in this cave, many of them larger than life-size: this is political propaganda on an unprecedented scale. They both represent the political alliances of Cao Yijin and symbolise his power. Although the cartouches of some of these donor figures are difficult to read, there still remain a very large number of legible inscriptions.[12] Rong Xinjiang divides the figures represented into three groups. On the southern and northern wall of the corridor are Cao Yijin and his predecessors Zhang Yichao 張議潮, Zhang Huaishen 張淮深 and Suo Xun 索勳, symbolizing the continuity of power, and Cao's close links to the previous rulers.[13] On the east wall of the main hall, on both sides, the wives of Cao Yijin are depicted.

The Uygur wife called Li 李 leads the procession (Colour Plate 1), followed by the Chinese wives Lady Suo 索 and Lady Song 宋. Behind them stand Cao's son-in-law and daughter, Li Shengtian, the King of Khotan 于闐國王李聖天 and his queen. The female relatives of Cao Yijin, bearing the names of leading families from Guazhou and Shazhou, follow them, emphasising that Cao had extensive power links in the area. These aristocrats provided the social base for Cao Yijin's rule: through marriage links he changed them into supporters of his regime. In the middle of the south wall are painted Shazhou's high monks. The high officials appear on the southern and northern walls near the west wall, and on the whole west wall. This cave established an important precedent, and throughout the tenth century large-scale donor figures are shown in some of the biggest Dunhuang caves, in several of which the Uygur wives and their attendants appeared wearing Uygur costumes and headdresses.

Chinese princesses who married the Uygur *kaghan* in the times of the steppe empire had to adapt to Uygur customs and wear Uygur clothing. By contrast, in Dunhuang, Uygur princesses continued to

[10] Ma: *Dunhuang*: 1996, p. 115.

[11] R. Whitfield: *Dunhuang: Caves of the Singing Sands*, London: Textile and Art Publications Ltd, 1995, p. 334.

[12] Dunhuang wenwu yanjiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] (ed.): *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji* [Donor inscriptions at the Mogao Caves, Dunhuang], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986, pp. 32-49.

[13] Suo Xun was probably Cao Yijin's father-in-law. Rong: *Guyijunshi*: 1996, pp. 241-243.

be represented in their Uygur outfits even after marrying the Chinese governors, while other women are shown wearing a combination headdress unique to Dunhuang that resembles the Uygur shape. Whilst in the eighth and ninth centuries clothing in Dunhuang followed remarkably closely the fashion of Tang China, in the tenth century the prominence of Uygur clothing, and the unique Sino-Uygur headdress in particular are a reliable sign of the cultural independence of Dunhuang from the Chinese successor states.

In Cave 61, built between 947-951, part of the original section of the northern part of the south wall was repainted two decades later, possibly to celebrate Cao Yanlu's marriage to a Khotanese princess (Colour Plate 3).[14] This addition of yet another generation of women wearing Khotanese and Ganzhou Uygur dress to the long row of female donors, is proof that they remained some of the most important patrons of art throughout that century in Dunhuang.

Uygur portraits of patrons

The representation of female patrons in Caves 98 and 61 can be directly compared to Uygur wall paintings. Bezeklik Cave 20 (Grünwedel's Cave 9) is well known and widely reproduced, and is regarded as a typical example of the mature phase of Uygur art (Colour Plates 4-5).[15] The

[14] Dunhuang wenwu yanjiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] (ed.): *Zhongguo shiku - Dunhuang Mogaoku* [Chinese cave temples - Dunhuang Mogao caves] [DHMGK], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987, vol. 5, pp. 220-221. Also cf. Duan Wenjie in Li Xianlin (ed.): *Dunhuangxue Dacidian* [Great dictionary of Dunhuang Studies], Shanghai: Cishu chubanshe, 1998, pp. 63-64. Only the two women dressed in red on the left remain in this section from the original row of donors. References to these marriages appear both in the Dunhuang manuscripts and in inscriptions on wall paintings. Paul Pelliot was the first to study some of these cross-references; cf. Jacques Giès: "Central Asian Sites and Works of Art in the Light of the Discoveries made by the Pelliot Expedition", Giès: *ACA*, p. 114. For the latest study see Wang Yanming: "Gua Sha Cao shi yu Ganzhou huihude liang ci heqin shemo" [The two weddings between the Cao family of Guazhou and Shazhou and the Ganzhou Uygurs], *Dunhuang yanjiu* [Dunhuang research] 2003, no. 1, pp. 69-75. see also Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang: "Les noms du royaume de Khotan", *Contributions aux études de Touen-houang III*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême Orient, 1984, p. 31; Rong Xinjiang: "Ye Changchi. Pioneer of Dunhuang Studies", *IDP News*, No. 7, Spring 1997, p. 4.

[15] Several different numbering systems are used for Bezeklik. I use the Chinese system as published in the large albums, e.g. ZXBQ.

latest catalogue quotes the traditionally accepted dates (eighth-ninth centuries), but these dates have to be re-examined.[16] Most of the wall paintings from Cave 20 were removed to Berlin, to be exhibited in the permanent galleries of the Museum für Völkerkunde during the 1930s. Unfortunately during the Second World War many of them were subsequently destroyed by allied bombing.[17] Large colour reproductions of these wall paintings had been published by Albert von Le Coq in 1913, and therefore paintings from this cave have remained the best-known representatives of Uygur art.[18] Several publications that reproduce these photos do not even mention the fact that the large *praṇidhi* scenes from the same cave no longer exist.

Due to their chance survival these two mural fragments from Bezeklik Cave 20 representing Uygur donors have often been reproduced in various publications (Colour Plates 4-5).[19] The fragment showing a row of three male donors and the other one with two female donors have been exhibited in the permanent display in Berlin in recent decades. In the new galleries, opened in October 2000, the two fragments are placed on either side of the entrance to the exhibition room showing the art of Turfan and Qizil.[20] Originally these murals occupied the walls of the inner sanctuary, which further demonstrates their extreme significance.[21] However, it is also important to point out that the donor

[16] Marianne Yaldiz with Raffael Dedo Gadebusch et al: *Magische Götterwelten. Werke aus dem Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin*, Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, c.2000, cat. no. 330, p. 228. With regards to Manichaean art a good summary of the problem can be found in Zsuzsanna Gulácsi: "Dating the 'Persian' and Chinese Style Remains of Uygur Manichaean Art: A New Radiocarbon Date and Its Implications for Central Asian Art History", *Arts Asiatiques*, vols. 57-58 (2002-2003), pp. 6-8. I wish to thank Dr. Gulácsi for sending me earlier unpublished versions of this article, and for keeping me informed about this project since 1997.

[17] Herbert Härtel: "Über das Schicksal der Turfansammlungen", *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, vol. 52 (1957), pp. 5-12; Views of the original galleries are shown in Caren Dreyer, Lore Sander and Friederike Weis: *Dokumentation der Verluste III, Museum für Indische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin*, Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2002, pp. 10-11, and the lost wall paintings are reproduced and listed on pp. 121-127.

[18] von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, plates 16-35.

[19] The male donors (MIK III 6876a) are reproduced in colour in H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes:* 1982, p. 169, cat. no. 108, W: 62.4 cm H: 59.5 cm. For both the male and the female donors see von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, plate 30.

[20] Marianne Yaldiz: "The Re-opening of the Museum of Indian Art in Berlin", *CIAA Newsletter*, 11 (June 2000), pp. 6-8.

[21] Albert von Le Coq gave a detailed description of Bezeklik Cave 20. A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, pp. 14-16, pls 16-35. Denise Leidy has most recently undertaken to reconstruct the iconographic programme in Bezeklik Cave 20. See Denise P. Leidy: "Bezeklik Temple 20 and Early Esoteric Buddhism", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 7 (2001), pp. 201-222.

figures in Dunhuang are almost life size, and therefore much larger than the Uygur rulers' portraits in Bezeklik.

In Bezeklik Cave 20 the three royal figures stood in a straight line, with their feet, hands and faces in exactly the same position, creating a sense of symmetry and dignity. One figure stands in front of and slightly apart from the other two, and has a thicker beard. High-ranking men kept their hair long and straight, thereby continuing the Turkic custom.[22] The hair of nobles is usually left loose, falling in tresses over the shoulder, sometimes a lock encircles the ears. Their hands are tucked away as a gesture of propriety.[23] Their tall headdresses and the objects hanging from their belts are the most obvious signs of their nomadic heritage. Their faces look East Asian: round with high cheekbones; the nose in each case is drawn with an elegant, straight line, the eyes are narrow and slanting, which is the exact opposite of the Chinese idea of the barbaric Uygurs. This is the way in which a highly sophisticated culture represesents its ideal rulers. The remaining inscription indicates that the represented came from a ruling family:

> There is a cartouche at the head of each prince. Only that of the foremost bears a complete inscription, in which von Le Coq has identified the name of a well-known Uighurian family. His reading is: 'The Tutuq Bugra [from the house of] Sali'. This family is reported to have flourished in Qočo for a long time.[24]

Although because of this inscription these donors are usually regarded as Uygur princes, Jorinde Ebert has argued that the headdress is not princely but signifies military rank.[25]

The females depicted in Cave 20 are wearing headdresses not known from Dunhuang, but their posture, gowns and hairstyles can be closely

[22] A. von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, pp. 115-117.

[23] This was due to the strict Manichaean rule that all body parts had to be covered, except for the face. As von Gabain has pointed out, only peasants were represented showing flesh and appearing without headgear, ibid, p. 131. These donors are from a Buddhist cave, but still kept the rigorous Manichaean habit.

[24] H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, p. 169.

[25] Jorinde Ebert: "Gedanken zur Hierarchie der Kopfbedeckung bei den Manichäern", Unpublished paper given at the Fourth International Manichaean Conference, Berlin, July 1997, p. 2. I would like to thank the author for giving me a copy of this paper.

compared to the way the Ganzhou Uygur ladies are represented in the Dunhuang caves described above. It is also important to notice that although the women's outfits share some characteristics with those of the men, such as the overlong sleeves that cover the hands, some features of the female clothing and headdresses seem to be an adaptation of Chinese fashions. The round faces, elaborate hairdos and make-up seem to echo eighth century Tang fashions (Colour Plate 5). Like high-ranking Chinese women of that period they also appear plump, have finely-plucked eyebrows and tiny red lips. In Tang China it was fashionable to have the lips painted much smaller than they really were to achieve a rosebud effect. We can see various combs and other decorations made of gold in their hair.[26] However, they wear gowns that appear much heavier than the usual Chinese ones and that feature a wide embroidered collar, very different from that worn by Chinese ladies.[27]

The faces of the female Uygur donors are depicted in a very formalised way: they are defined by a single continuous line, with only the chin drawn with another curve. The nose is straight with a small wave to show the nostrils; the eyebrows are shaved off, and redrawn as a straight line; the mouth almost disappears, but we can still see the small rosebud, found in other Uygur depictions; the eyes are extremely narrow, and defined with just two lines. The hairline is straight. We can observe the extensive use of gold ornaments and jewellery, especially decorating the extraordinary hairdo of the women (called the "*Flügelfrisur*" or "winged hairstyle," by Gabain), which must have been loosely based on Tang fashions, but seemingly tries to outdo the latter in elegance (Figure 1).[28] Hairpins, a huge golden hair ornament and earrings complete the elaborate head decoration. The feet and hands are carefully tucked away. Specifically Uygur features are the wide collars with a floral decoration, and the ribbon attached to the hair and touching the ground. The emphasised line of white spots in the middle and half-way down the skirt and on the arms of the gown probably indicate stitching.

[26] Chinese hair ornaments made of jade and gold were exhibited at the "Gilded Dragons" exhibition at the British Museum, in London. Carol Michaelson: *Gilded Dragons. Buried Treasures from China's Golden Ages*, London: British Museum Press, 1999, pp. 64-67.

[27] A. von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, pp. 117-119.

[28] Ibid, fig. 106.

Changes in the clothing and objects represented in the art of a specific area are usually sensitive indicators of the arrival of new patrons as observed on Dunhuang wall paintings. The way Uygur donors chose to be represented is a very important clue to understanding more about the formation of Uygur art and culture, and about the other territories it influenced, including Dunhuang. The Xizhou Uygur rulers express their importance by having themselves painted on separate banners (Plate 4).[29] The format followed is the same as in the case of Buddhist banner paintings: a triangular headpiece is mounted on a rectangular lower part, which may originally have had streamers (Figure 2).[30] Although this format was borrowed from Chinese Buddhist art (perhaps even Dunhuang art), as Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner has pointed out, it appears that there are no banners having portraits of donors as their only subject matter from Dunhuang, but such banners were popular in Turfan.[31] Just like the votive banners of Dunhuang these, too, could probably be suspended on either side of religious images, thus giving the donors unprecedented prominence.

The use of this format was not restricted to Uygur Buddhist paintings. An important Manichaean example is a banner decorated on both sides (Plates 6-7).[32] On one side a female *electa* and a small female figure are shown, and on the other side a female donor together with a child. This painting is important from several points of view. The style of the female donor's hair can also be seen on Uygur Buddhist paintings. This suggests that such paintings date from roughly the same time regardless of their religious orientation. The same is suggested by the carpet that the donor is standing on, as its pattern is identical to the pattern of the carpet the female donors are standing on in Bezeklik Cave 20 (Colour Plate 5).

The increased importance of the portraits of donors that we can observe on these banners can also be noted in the case of the donors' positioning within the Uygur Buddhist caves. It was Bögü *kaghan*'s decision to convert to Manichaeism in the 760s, and it was probably

[29] MIK III 4524, M. Yaldiz: *Magische Götterwelten*: 2000, cat. no. 360, p.247.

[30] E.g. Avalokiteśvara see Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 43.

[31] Type A2: Chhaya Haesner: "Banners from Dunhuang and Turfan—A Comparative Study and Their Indian Counterparts", in Raymond Allchin and Bridget Allchin (eds.): *South Asian Archaeology 1995. Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists*, Cambridge: The Ancient India and Iran Trust, 1997, p. 719.

[32] MIK III 6286, M. Yaldiz: *Magische Götterwelten*: 2000, cat. no. 358, p. 246.

once again the Uygur rulers' decision to adopt Buddhism. Therefore the rulers rightly saw themselves as the most important commissioners of religious art. As the initiators of the changes in religious orientation, the Uygur rulers wanted to be represented on a large scale, and shown as closely involved with the religious scenes represented in the hope of attaining salvation. They are portrayed alongside important Chinese and Indian monks, who were responsible for the Buddhist scriptures used in the area—another indication of their equal importance in the conversion to Buddhism.

Hans-Joachim Klimkeit has explained the positioning of the Uygur donor figures within the caves: "Of decisive importance in the self-understanding of the donors was the position of their images within the sanctuary."[33] Accompanying *praṇidhi* scenes, the donors are positioned facing the main image on the two sides of the entrance.

> Thus an analogy is created between the Bodhisattva in a former age, presenting a gift to the Buddha of his aeon, in the wake of his resolution to follow the Buddha path, and the donor. He, too, with his gift, makes such a resolution, hoping at the same time for the promise of future Buddhahood.[34]

A further indirect proof of the importance the Uygur donors attached to their portraits may be the way they treated the cartouches next to their images. Klimkeit has suggested that the donors filled in their names as if signing their portraits, because many different styles of writing can be distinguished, and because the cartouches were all filled in after the paintings were completed.[35] Although the use of cartouches was also standard practice in Dunhuang, on Dunhuang paintings the quality of calligraphy used for filling in the cartouches is more standard, suggesting that the latter were written by professional calligraphers.

Other important murals showing Uygur royal donors were found in the *stūpa* at Bešbaliq, called Beiting 北庭 by the Chinese (Figure 3).[36] Even after the Uygurs settled permanently in the Turfan area they

[33] Hans-Joachim Klimkeit: "The Donor at Turfan", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 1 (1990), p. 191.

[34] Ibid, pp. 191-192.

[35] Ibid, p. 190-191.

[36] Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Xinjiang gongzuodui [Xinjiang archaeological team of The Institute of Archaeology CAAS]; "Xinjiang Jimusier Gaochang huihu fosi yizhi" [Ruins of a Gaochang Uygur Buddhist temple: Xinjiang,

continued to use their summer capital at Bešbaliq, about 150 kilometres north of Turfan. The climate there was similar to the grassland and far less arid than the area around Turfan, which lies in a depression below sea level, and is known as one of the hottest places on earth in the summer months. Near Bešbaliq it was possible to let animals graze, and this suggests that some of the Uygurs continued to lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle.

The *stūpa* of Bešbaliq was not examined in detail by Stein and has only been excavated recently by a Chinese team. Nancy Steinhardt is the first Western art historian to have taken an interest in the iconographic and religious programme of the site.[37] The depiction of the donors in Bešbaliq shows the clothing of the Uygur ruling classes very clearly. Both the female and the male headdresses are characteristic, and they became the most important way of signifying both rank and 'Uygur identity'. As no examples of these headdresses have been found it is possible that they were made of a perishable material, although the female headdress seems to be made of sheet metal, perhaps gold. The male headdress is a tall tiara secured by a red ribbon tied under the chin (Figure 5).[38] Alternatively—and signifying a different rank—a three-pronged headdress was also worn (Figure 4).

The other characteristic way of showing rank was the use of belts with many objects hanging from them (Colour Plate 4).[39] Although their use was also popular with the Chinese by the time of the Tang dynasty, there too this developed, at least partially, under the influence of nomadic cultures. Such a pronounced use of metal is characteristic of nomadic peoples, as their wealth could easily be transported in the

Jimsar County], *Kaogu* (1983/7), pp. 618-623; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo [The Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)] (ed.): *Beiting Gaochang Huihu fosi yizhi* (BGHFY) [Ruins of a Buddhist Temple of the Qočo Uygur Period at Beiting], Liaoning: Meishu chubanshe, 1991, pl. XVI'/2.

[37] Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt: "The Uighur Ritual Complex in Beiting", *Orientations*, vol. 30 no. 4 (April 1999), pp. 28-37; Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt: "Beiting: City and Ritual Complex", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 7 (2001), pp. 223-261.

[38] For the headdresses see A. Von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, pp. 115-121.

[39] A. von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, pp. 133-140. For the Turkic origin of belts used by the Liao see Feng Enxue: "Diexiedai: Qidan wenhua zhongde Tujue yinsu" [Ornamental belts: Tujue elements in Qidan culture], *Wenwu jikan* [Journal of Chinese Antiquity], 1998 no. 1, pp. 65-69, quoted in *China Archaeology and Art Digest*, vol. 3 no. 1 (April 1999), pp. 141-142. The illustration on p. 142 shows belts excavated from tombs in the Altai region and Tuva.

[40] For the use of metal artefacts and body ornaments among the nomadic Hungar-

form of metal body ornaments.[40] Liu Hongliang has attempted to assign dates to various Uygur headdresses in an article about donor figures, but a detailed study of Uygur clothing and hairstyle and especially the changes in fashion will have to be undertaken in a separate project.[41]

The Uygur centre of power in the tenth century was at Qočo, known as Gaochang 高昌 in Chinese, near today's Turfan (about 600 kilometres northwest of Dunhuang). The Turfan oasis is a settlement not dissimilar to Dunhuang. The enormous size of the ruins at Qočo are very impressive even today. Wide avenues and winding streets lead into the huge area of secular and religious ruins, which are the remains of a bustling well-settled city, which was already flourishing as a trading centre before the arrival of the Uygurs.[42] Bezeklik is the largest cave temple site in the Turfan oasis, so well hidden in a desert valley next to a river that only those in the know could find it (Plate 3). Arriving in this lush spot must have seemed like a moment of real triumph and joy to the traveller who then, no doubt, rushed to give thanks to the Buddha for his deliverance in one of the cave temples. The silent line of high-ranking donor figures would have given a festive backdrop to these prayers and rituals performed in the shrines.

As we have seen in Bezeklik Cave 20, the image of the Uygur rulers is highly formalised, their features are repetitive, and simplified, and they look East Asian. The way they are depicted is a conscious statement to link them to Chinese Buddhist art, and yet their outfits, hairstyles, beards and headgear are decidedly non-Chinese: it is easy to notice the many nomadic elements in Uygur clothing, especially the emphasised use of the belts, and the riding boots. Patrons made very conscious decisions about the way they wanted to be represented. The nomadic features of the clothing worn by the Uygur ruling class even after their move to the Turfan oasis can be explained by a short introduction to Uygur history.

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ians in the ninth and tenth centuries see M. Nepper, Ibolya: "A honfoglaló magyarság régészeti hagyatéka" [Archaeological Heritage of the Hungarians of the Conquest], in Fodor, István (ed.): *A honfoglaló magyarság* [Hungarians of the Conquest], Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum [Hungarian National Museum], 1996. pp. 37-55.

[41] Liu Hongliang: "Baizikelike shiku niandai shishen" [Examination of the dates of the Bezeklik caves], *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1986, no. 3, pp. 58-67. Jorinde Ebert is currently researching this question in her unpublished work. Personal communication, March 2000.

[42] Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang: "A Concise History of the Turfan Oasis and Its Exploration", *Asia Major*, Third Series, vol. 11, part 2 (1998), pp. 17-20.

The origin of the Uygurs

It is important to understand who the Uygurs were and how they became part of Dunhuang society. There are still wide differences in the interpretations of the same documents, especially for the earliest part of Uygur history, for which there are few unbiased and clear sources, and for the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, for which historical sources are very scarce.

The Uygurs are a Turkic people. The word 'Uygur' at present refers to one of the largest minorities in the People's Republic of China, with a population of over eight million, who live mostly in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.[43] The Chinese refer to them as Weiwuerzu 維吾爾族, but this name only came to be used during the Yuan period (1260-1368).[44] Furthermore today's Uygurs cannot be directly identified with the Uygurs of the historical period under discussion in this study. The Uygur nation was formed by a process of assimilation that lasted hundreds of years. Consequently, Uygur history must be understood as part of a larger, complex and little understood process in Central Asia: mainly the Turkisation of Eastern Turkestan.[45]

In this book the term Uygur will be used to refer to the tribes that ruled the Uygur Kaghanate (744-840), some of whom subsequently migrated to the Xizhou area and the Hexi corridor. I shall use the term 'Uygur art' for art that was developed under the dominance of these tribes, first in the area roughly covered by today's Mongolia during the years of the Kaghanate, and then from the second half of the ninth century in the Turfan, Dunhuang and the Hexi areas.

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[43] According to the 2000 census there are 8,399,393 Uygurs in China. *Zhongguo 2000 nian renkou pucha ciliao* [Tabulation on the 2000 Population census of the People's Republic of China], Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2002, p. 221.

[44] Li Fu-t'ung: *Huihu shi* [History of the Uygurs], Taipei: Wenfeng chubanshe, 1963.

[45] G. M. Iskhakov (ed.): *Kratkaya istoria uigurov* [Short history of the Uygurs], Alma-Ata: Gylym, 1991, pp. 12-14. For a short history of nomads including Turkic people from ancient times to the first contacts with Russia see S. G. Klyashtorny and T. I. Sultanov: *Gosudarstva i narody evraziyskih stepi—Drevnost i srednevekovie* [States and peoples of the Eurasian steppe—ancient period and middle ages], St. Petersburg: Orientalia, 2000. The current Chinese state of scholarship is summarised in Yu Taishan: *Xiyu tongshi* [General history of the Western Regions], Zhengzhou: Zhengzhou guji chubanshe, 1996. pp. 103-302.

The meaning of 'Uygur' for the medieval period is problematic.[46] It originally only referred to one group. The others referred to themselves as Toquz-oghuz or Toqoguz, as is clear from Arabic sources. According to Malyavkin the name 'Uygur' came to be used only after the fall of the Kaghanate, was never an ethnogenetic term and in the later period included all those who lived in Uygur territory near Turfan and elsewhere.[47] Larry Clark believes that none of the etymologies of the word *uyγur* is acceptable.[48] Although not all Turkologists agree with Malyavkin's and Clark's assessments, it is interesting to note that even specialists have not come to a final conclusion regarding basic questions on the Uygurs.

Another problem hindering research is that most tribal names have only survived in the Chinese dynastic histories, making a reconstruction of the original names almost completely impossible in many cases. As Denis Sinor has stated: "Because of the scarcity and variety of written sources, and with archaeological explorations only recently begun, Inner Asian historiography is in its infancy."[49] The almost total lack of written documents from the nomads themselves is a major problem faced by all those researching the history of nomadic nations. Nomads do not have long, written histories, large-scale art or painting, consequently our knowledge of their appearance and customs are largely confined to the often biased descriptions and representations of them made by the surrounding settled civilisations, in this case China, and to the results of archaeological discoveries. The majority of our knowledge about the nomadic Uygurs also stems from non-Uygur sources, especially the Chinese dynastic histories. Even though the Uygurs used Runic script and the Sogdian script by the eighth century, only a few, short inscriptions have been found, and only some of these refer to actual historical events.

The Chinese have used their own etymology for the naming of

[46] Justin Jon Rudelson: *Oasis Identities. Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 6.

[47] A. G. Malyavkin: *Uigurskie gosudarstva v 9-12 vv.* [The Uygur state in the ninth—twelfth centuries], Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1983, pp. 170-171.

[48] Larry Clark lists the names given by various authors to the same language: "Turfan Turkish", "Uygur-Oguz dialect" and other dialects. L. Clark: *Introduction:* 1975, note 16, pp. 35-38.

[49] Denis Sinor: *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. ix.

the Uygur tribes based on their dynastic histories.[50] According to Yin Weixian the term *uyγur* appears in Turkic Runic inscriptions, and was then transcribed into various languages referring to the Uygur tribes. In Tibetan he lists *hor*, *dru-gu* and *ho-yo-hor* as referring to Uygurs in the early period.[51] In Chinese the word *uyγur* was first transcribed as *huihe* 回紇, but later, in 788 or 809, the Uygurs asked for the characters to be changed to *huihu* 回鶻.[52] As in the case of other nomads, the name referred to an alliance between tribes, still evolving in the early period.[53]

The Chinese viewed the Uygurs as simply another group of Central Asian barbarians. This attitude was justified in some ways, as the Uygurs in the eighth century were, as a major political power, mere newcomers. Their great nomadic empire, situated in today's Mongolia, lasted from 744 to 840; its capital was Karabalghasun on the Upper Orkhon River. The Uygurs took over the legacy of the Eastern Turks, who in several respects set them an example. The Turks had created the first large nomadic steppe empire to survive for a long period. Its political system would continue to be imitated by future nomadic political organisations.[54] The Turks first appeared as peaceful envoys in China, promoting trade. This was however against the interests of the Chinese court, which was opposed to free trade. This led to repeated conflicts between the various Chinese dynasties and the

[50] For the traditional Chinese etymology see Feng Jiashen, Cheng Huluo and Chen Guangwen: *Weiwuerzu shiliao jianbian* [Concise edition of Uygur historical sources], Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1958 (1981 reprint), pp. 2-4.

[51] Yin Weixian: "Zangwen shiliao zhongde 'Weiwuer'" ['Weiwuer' in the Tibetan historical material], *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1996, no. 4, pp. 120-128. This article is partly based on Moriyasu's earlier study: Takao Moriyasu: "La nouvelle interprétation des mots *hor* et *ho-yo-hor* dans le manuscrit Pelliot tibétain 1283", *AOH*, vol. 34, nos. 1-3. (1980), pp. 171-184.

[52] Colin Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories*, A Study in Sino-Uighur Relations 744-840, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972, pp. 97, 108 and 158-159, note 173.

[53] A good recent summary of this early part of Uygur history, with all relevant secondary sources listed, is A. K. Kamalov: *Drevnie uigury VIII-IX vv.* [Ancient Uygurs in the 8th-9th centuries], Almaty: Nash Mir, 2001.

[54] For the Eastern Turk Empire see D. Sinor and S. G. Klyashtorny: "The Türk Empire", in B.A. Litvinsky, (ed.): *History of Civilisations of Central Asia*, vol 3, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp. 327-347; Liu Mau-Tsai: *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-küe)*, vols. 1-2, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1958. See also H. Ecsedy: "Tribe and Tribal Society in the 6th Century Turk Empire", *AOH*, vol. 25 (1972), pp. 245-262; H. Ecsedy: "Tribe and Empire, Tribe and Society in the Turk Age", *AOH*, vol 31 (1977), pp. 3-15.

Turks.[55] This difference in attitude continued after the Uygurs took the place of the Turks in politics and trade.

Most sources agree that the Uygurs originally led a tribal confederation within the First Turk Empire (552-612), and gradually rose to power by the beginning of the seventh century. The ruling tribes of the Uygurs were subdivided into ten clans, collectively called On-Uygur, the Ten Uygurs.[56] By the beginning of the eighth century the Uygurs fought for dominance with increasing success. In 744, together with the Bashmil and Karluk, they managed to oust the last Eastern Turk *kaghan*. It has been emphasised that the difference between Turks and Uygurs is hard to define.

> The first Uighur rulers considered themselves continuers of the Türk tradition, and claimed legitimacy by linking themselves with Bumin Kaghan, the founder of the First Türk empire. The difference separating Türks from Uighurs must have been purely political. As is clearly shown by the inscriptions commemorating the deeds of their great men, Türks and Uighurs spoke the same language, used the same runic-type script and lived within the same geographic boundaries. Were it not for their name, the Uighurs would be indistinguishable from the Türks. The Uighur state in Mongolia was, in fact, the Third Türk empire.[57]

During the period of the Uygur Kaghanate, like all nomadic states the Uygurs could only exist in symbiosis with large, sedentary civilisations. In peace-time they received the necessities they could not produce through trade, and when war broke out through attacks and pillage, so it is not surprising that in the eyes of the Chinese their frightening military might was repeatedly emphasised and little else was mentioned. Chinese historians often present selected and biased information about warfare, trade and diplomacy and only describe

[55] Ecsedy, Ildikó: *Nomádok és kereskedők Kína határain* [Nomads and traders on the borders of China], Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979, p. 80.

[56] All these tribes were categorised in the Chinese sources the Tiele (Tiglig), who lived within the Ruanruan empire, and were considered the descendants of the Gaoche, or Gaoqu, tribes. G. M. Iskhakov (ed.): *Kratkaya*: 1991, p. 8, I. Ecsedy: "A türkök történelmi színrelépése" [The historical *debut* of the Turks] in Ildikó Ecsedy: *Kína és szomszédai* [China and her neighbours], Budapest: Eötvös József Könyviadó, 1997, p. 8. Ecsedy emphasises that most of the names for 'barbarians' are habitually used and interchanged by traditional Chinese histories, and that more research will be needed to clarify the way these groups related to each other, ibid., p. 18.

[57] D. Sinor: "The Uighurs in Mongolia and the Kyrgyz", M. S. Asimov–C. E. Bosworth (ed.): *History of Civilisations of Central Asia*, vol 4, Part One, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1998, p. 192.

the characteristics of a foreign nation if China was attacked by it or if its envoys arrived at the imperial court. China's historians failed to match this traditional approach to the constantly changing actual situation.

> The ancient ideal of the 'five zones of submission' envisioned a world in which China, or rather its ruling dynasty, the bearers of the Mandate of Heaven to control mankind, were the sole legitimate possessors of unquestioned authority—authority that was at once political, cultural, and moral. The surrounding peoples, the 'barbarians' who did not fully participate in Chinese culture, should in this ideal model voluntarily submit to the emperor and become his vassals, and their countries would become a sort of outer perimeter under the emperor's moral authority but beyond his real control and outside the realm of civilian direct administration.[58]

This view of the world had very little relevance to reality by the eighth century. By this time both the Tibetan and the Uygur empires had actually grown stronger than Tang China. Even the Chinese histories had to admit that north of their border the Uygurs controlled huge territories: the first Uygur ruler, Bilgä Kül *kaghan* (744-747) is said to have reigned over a territory stretching from Manchuria and the territories south of the Baikal in the east to the Altai and to the eastern Tianshan in the west.[59] This new military power could not be ignored, and in fact, the Tang grew increasingly dependent on the Uygurs in their internal and external struggles. Combining diplomacy with trade in peacetime, and in times of warfare using nomadic cavalry for attack and fortifications for defence, the Uygurs became very powerful during the eighth century.

The real breakthrough for the Uygurs came when the Chinese had to rely on their help during the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755-763). In this time of turmoil—when the power of the Tibetans was at its zenith and An Lushan controlled large areas of the Tang empire, which his troops almost overthrew—it is clear that the Chinese were dependent on Uygur help, rather than the other way around. As Mackerras stated:

[58] Herbert Franke: "Introduction", in Herbert Franke - Denis Twitchett: *Alien regimes and border states, 907-1368—The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 3-4.

[59] This is described in the *Xin Tangshu* for 745 and "shows that the Chinese emperor recognised the territorial gains, which the kaghan had recently made." C. Mackerras: "The Uighurs": 1990, pp. 321-322. The *kaghans* are listed in Karl-Heinz Golzio: *Kings, Khans and Other Rulers of Early Central Asian Chronological Tables*, Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1984, p. 63.

> the T'ang court's success in persuading them to use their power to support it against An Lu-shan and his followers was one of the main reasons why the dynasty was able to survive the rebellion. It is their vital impact on the course of T'ang history that makes the Uighurs so interesting to the sinologist.[60]

The Uygurs were in a position to dictate terms to the Chinese emperors.[61]

An Lushan was a general of Turco-Sogdian origin, who rose to the top within the Chinese political system, a clear indication of the growing importance of Central Asian nationalities and their regional power within the Tang empire. On several occasions, when troops allied to An Lushan gained almost complete control, the Uygur troops came to the rescue of the Tang. Because of their military importance the Uygurs were regularly sent presents—in effect payments—from the Chinese Emperor. These included silks and precious objects, such as mirrors, and no doubt influenced the taste of the Uygur upper classes.

Even more importantly, from the middle of the eighth century, marriage alliances between Uygur and Chinese royals became an accepted practice.[62] In addition to ensuring peace, the giving of Chinese imperial princesses in marriage to mighty neighbouring powers was also a way to sinicise the family of the local ruler. As Mackerras has emphasised, the principal wife of at least seven of the thirteen Uygur rulers was Chinese, three of whom were the true daughters of Chinese emperors.[63] These Chinese women played an important role as cultural ambassadors. In similar fashion, over a hundred years later the Ganzhou Uygur brides of Dunhuang's rulers became the cultural ambassadors of their own region and introduced Uygur customs to Dunhuang. Large portraits in which they appear in full Uygur dress testify to their political and cultural power. In contrast the Chinese brides of a hundred years earlier had to change into Uygur clothing and adapt to an alien, nomadic lifestyle.

From the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) onwards such diplomatic marriages were inevitably considered a great sacrifice on the part of the Chinese princess, who had to leave the comforts of home life in

[60] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p 1.
[61] C. Mackerras: "The Uighurs": 1990, p. 317.
[62] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 55.
[63] C. Mackerras: "The Uighurs": 1990, pp. 325-326.

China and go to distant and unfamiliar barbarian lands. Stories of such princesses are still known today in China, and became a popular subject in art.[64] In 758 Ningguo 寧國, a true imperial princess was sent to marry the Uygur *kaghan*.[65] The Tang dynastic history describes her fate in a very dramatic tone. According to the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 the princess said, crying violently: "The matters of the state are most important; even if I die I shall bear no grudge."[66]

The words of Ningguo are consistent with the fear of other imperial brides who had to marry barbarians. The story continues by describing from a very Chinese viewpoint how the envoy taught the Uygur *kaghan* a lesson in greeting the representative of the Chinese emperor in an appropriate manner—leaving him, and the readers of the dynastic histories, in no doubt that even though an imperial princess had been granted him in marriage, the *kaghan's* status had to remain that of a vassal to the Chinese emperor.

The Uygur *kaghan* was the first foreign ruler to receive the true daughter of a Tang Emperor as his wife.[67] As might be expected, together with the bride, lavish presents were sent, which included silk, other garments and gold and silver dishes. These were distributed among the Uygur officials and chiefs. As Uygur power rose another Chinese imperial bride was sent. The *Jiu Tangshu* describes the arrival of Imperial Princess Taihe 太和 in the Uygur capital in 822. It is emphasised that the Chinese princess was expected to learn the "barbarian" customs and wear the appropriate clothes for an Uygur royal wife. She is also very sad about her sacrifice:

> [The kaghan] had a large felt tent set up below the tower to house the princess, and sent a group of barbarian princesses to teach her barbarian customs. Not until then did the princess remove her T'ang clothing and put on barbarian clothes... She removed what she had previously been wearing and put on the clothes of a khatun, a single-colored robe and a large mantle, both crimson, and a golden decorated head-dress, pointed

[64] Cf. Robert Albright Rorex: "Some Liao Tomb Murals and Images of Nomads in Chinese Paintings of the Wen-chi story', *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 45 (1984), pp. 174-198 for a full reference and a description of the twelfth-century depictions of a similar theme in Chinese painting. Even though the story itself was well known much earlier, the author argues that the representation of the story became popular only in the twelfth century.
[65] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 62.
[66] Quoted in Li: *Huihu shi*: 1963, pp. 39-40.
[67] Cf. C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 64. and p. 134, Note 56.

> in front and straight behind... we others were about to return home. The khatun gave us a banquet in her tent and wept bitterly.[68]

This passage illustrates that the Uygurs continued to be perceived as barbarians by the Chinese historian: as in the case of Princess Ningguo, it was considered a great sacrifice on the part of Taihe to marry the head of a nomadic nation, a duty she had to perform for the sake of her country. The outfit and headdress described are similar to those worn by high-ranking Uygur women in Bezeklik Cave 20 (Colour Plate 5). It is important to note that on ceremonial occasions the Chinese princesses were not allowed to appear dressed in Chinese outfits. They had to adapt to the Uygur customs, although the continuing 'civilizing' influence of China was also ensured. The Chinese ladies-in-waiting who arrived in the entourage of the imperial princesses remained as concubines, rising to the rank of wives under successive *kaghans*. Resulting offspring were half-Chinese, and it can be assumed that a Sino-Uygur culture emerged among the ruling class of the Uygur empire. There was a growing demand for Chinese luxury goods.

From 760 onwards the Uygurs traded famously bad horses at an agreed high price: each horse cost the Chinese court forty pieces of silk. In the words of the *Jiu Tangshu*, "The barbarians acquired silk insatiably and we were given useless horses."[69] Although the alliance of Uygur troops was essential in defeating An Lushan's army, the Uygurs also plundered Chinese cities, such as Luoyang 洛陽, also called the Eastern capital. Their importance to the Tang court is clearly shown by the fact that not only were they not punished, but, on the contrary, were given even more bribes just to prompt them to leave.[70] The indisputably powerful position of the Uygurs continued in the last decades of the eighth century, and they played an essential part in the fight against the Tibetans too. At the same time Tibetan territorial gains divided the Uygurs, and Tibetan raids into Mongolia weakened them further.[71] The *Jiu Tangshu* describes the Uygurs' cruelties, no doubt to emphasise the difference between the cultured Chinese and

[68] *Jiu Tangshu*, 195.12a, quoted in C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, pp. 120-121.
[69] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 86.
[70] Ibid. pp. 58-59.
[71] C. I. Beckwith: "The Tibetans in the Ordos": 1987, pp. 6-7.

the barbarians: "Everybody was reduced to using paper for clothing, and there were even some who used the Classics as clothes."[72] Nevertheless the Uygurs carried precious treasures back to their territory on several occasions without receiving any punishment.

The Uygurs were usually regarded as a barbaric Central Asian tribe by the Chinese, as we can also see from an eleventh century scroll attributed to Li Gonglin 李公麟 in the National Palace Museum in Taibei (Figure 6).[73] It is interesting to compare the way the Uygurs are depicted to the verbal descriptions already quoted. In 765 Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (697-781), the famous Tang general, was faced by an invasion of Uygur and Tibetan troops, who were numerically superior to his forces. He went without arms or armour to meet the Uygur leaders, who had once served under him. When they recognised him, they dismounted and paid their respects. Recognising the superiority of Guo the Uygurs switched sides, and the enemy was defeated.[74]

This painting is illustrating a text that expresses the clear superiority of the Chinese over the Uygurs' brute military force. The commander of the outnumbered Chinese troops won the situation through his bravery, dignified behaviour, and by reminding the Uygurs of their rightful place, which could only be under his command. The painting illustrates the story's moral by emphasising the contrast between the Chinese and the Uygur troops and between the leaders of the troops, using artistic means. At the beginning, on the right, all is movement: the Uygur horsemen move in from behind a cloud, from above and below the picture. In contrast, on the Chinese side all is calm and dignified. Most striking is the contrast in the formations: the Uygur troops appear in a bundle of untidy groups, which burst with energy. In one section it is difficult to discern which part belongs to a horse, and which part to a human in the chaos. All Uygur faces are exaggerated and distorted, they have bulging noses and deeply set eyes, and one can almost hear their loud cries as they storm into the picture space.

[72] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 76
[73] Li Gonglin (1049-1106): "General Guo Ziyi receiving the tribute of the Uygurs", National Palace Museum, Taipei.
[74] For Guo Ziyi see Bai Shouyi (ed.): *An Outline History of China*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1982, p. 223. See also Richard Ettinghausen: "Chinese Representations of Central Asian Turks", in: *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Asiens—In Memoriam Ernst Diez*, Istanbul: Istanbul Universitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Sanat Tarihi Enstitüsü No. 1, 1963, pp. 211-214.

To emphasise their exotic character as opposed to the Chinese troops, who appear fully armed, the Uygurs wear a variety of exotic fur hats and light clothing, and their horses wear masks, which seem to have a decorative rather than a military function. The focus of the picture is the Uygur leader paying his respects to the Chinese commander (Figure 6). He is kneeling in an undignified fashion with one hand on the ground and with the other one he is reaching up, as if pleading for the forgiveness of a superior being. The other Uygur leaders strike even more comic poses: one has thrown himself down in kowtow, the others are kneeling in various exaggerated postures, looking from below with their eyes bulging out. Their noses are large, and their oversized mouths are wide open. They wear a strange mixture of clothing and armour, which is decorated with various patterns, and the overall effect is busy and undignified.

In total contrast the Chinese commander is dressed in the white robe of a scholar. His clear, quiet features and tidy beard are strikingly different from the grotesque and hairy faces of the Uygurs. His single straight and commanding figure, executed with a few simple brushstrokes, balances the busy bundle of the Uygur group within the composition, thus symbolising the commander's dignity and will power and complete superiority. He tilts his head slightly in a polite and gracious fashion to receive the outpouring of emotion from the barbarians. The slight bow of his head recalls that of the Buddha, who acknowledges the worship of a group of exotically dressed barbarian royals in the copy of a Northern Song scroll.[75]

The Confucian term *li* 禮, refers to the required straight posture and composed expression of a Chinese gentleman: the legs are slightly parted and the hands are pressed together, additional signs of the balance and symmetry that was sought. In contrast, there were three main characteristics of the Tang depictions of the *hu* 胡, commonly translated as barbarians. Apart from deep-set eyes, high noses and exotic clothing they were characterised by their undignified posture, whether acting as part of a performance or poised in a posture of

[75] Tradition of Zhao Guangfu (act. 960-975), "Barbarian Royalty Worshipping Buddha", Northern Song dynasty, twelfth-century handscroll; ink and colour on silk; 28.6 x 103.5 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, 57.358. Reproduced in Marsha Weidner (ed.): *Latter Days of the Law. Images of Chinese Buddhism 850-1850*, Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art—Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994, p. 11, fig. 1.

menace or control. Their expressions and features are often caricatured and exaggerated. Their eyes are either bulging or drawn very large with a heavy outline and large staring pupils. It is not uncommon for their mouths to grimace or shout.[76] All of these features are employed on the Li Gonglin scroll.

In another scroll painting traditionally attributed to Chen Jizhi 陳及之, a Liao painter of the eleventh century, we can see the same contrast between the Tang Chinese and the Uygurs (Figure 7).[77] Yu Hui has redated this painting to the Yuan dynasty and believes that the Uygur entertainers are represented here by Tanguts. However, when identifying the hairstyles, he refers to one of the newly identified Shazhou Uygur caves from Dunhuang as Tangut, which illustrates the continuing confusion regarding eleventh century Dunhuang art and clothing.[78]

In the Chen Jizhi scroll the Uygur troops arrive in complicated formations, which at first sight, look misleadingly organised. A closer look reveals that the formations are made up of grotesque-looking Uygurs, who perform amazing acrobatics to entertain the troops of Tang Taizong 唐太宗. This painting introduces the Uygurs as exotic entertainers, capable of the most varied acrobatics. A larger Uygur balances a smaller figure on his feet, both holding exotic flags. Some Uygurs hang off the side of their running horses, and others play musical instruments on the backs of their animals. Once again the Chinese troops appear drawn up in straight lines, standing to attention, with their flags raised straight. Here too we can see the same contrast between the Chinese and the exotic barbarians as on Li's painting.

These paintings epitomise the Chinese attitude to the Uygurs, which

[76] Marc Abramson: *"Deep Eyes and High Noses": Ethnic Stereotypes and the Depiction of "Barbarian" Peoples in the Tang (618-907)*, Princeton University, April 1998, Unpublished paper, pp. 4-5. I would like to thank Mr Abramson for sending me this paper.

[77] "Bian qiao huimeng tu" [A Meeting for Concluding Treaties at Bianqiao]; Palace Museum, Beijing, reproduced and described in Yu Hui: "Chen Jizhi 'Bianqiao hui meng tu' quan kaobian: jiansong minzuxue zai lanxi guhuazhongde zuoyong" [A study of the handscroll 'A Meeting for Concluding Treaties at Bianqiao', painted by Chen Jizhi: use of ethnographic studies in the research of ancient paintings], *Gugong boweuyuan yuankan*, No. 75 (1997/1), pp. 17-51. I would like to thank Dr. Zhang Hongxing, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London for drawing my attention to the existence of this scroll.

[78] Yu Hui: "Chen Jizhi 'Bianqiao hui meng tu' quan kaobian": 1997/1, pp. 17-51 *passim*. The Shazhou Uygur caves were listed by Liu Yuquan: "Guanyu Shazhou Huihu dongkude fenhua":1990, p. 24.

survived into the eleventh century and beyond as a traditional method of representing them. In both paintings the Uygurs sport strange bulging noses and comical outfits—the typical idea of a foreigner in Chinese art.[79] Admittedly the *hu* might have brute force and military skills, but their rightful place is as military reinforcements for the Chinese. In medieval European art there is a similar trend in which the dignified and disciplined Western knights in heavy armour are contrasted with the light cavalry of the vicious Mongols and other Eastern tribes.[80] In both Chinese and Western European medieval art the characteristics of exotic barbarians are interchangeable, and features are often borrowed from other exotic nations (Plate 9).[81]

Historical sources also continued to repeat these clichés, a twelfth century description still describes the Uygurs as semi-nomadic barbarians with curly hair, deep-set eyes, thick eyebrows and a curly beard.[82] In fact, it is very doubtful, whether this section is based on observations at all: the deep eyes, high noses and curly beards mentioned are stereotypical features of *hu* in Chinese literature and art, as we have observed above. Such clichés are quoted by the Chinese to describe the *hu* up to the present day.[83]

[79] Joachim Hildebrand gives a good analysis of the foreigner in Chinese art, including the ideological background, the influence of religions and the most common activities of foreigners in Chinese art (musicians and dancers). There is also an extensive bibliography. Joachim Hildebrand: *Das Ausländerbild in der Kunst Chinas als Spiegel Kultureller Beziehungen (Han-Tang)*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1987.

[80] E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás*: 1995, pp. 57-66.

[81] In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Europe there was a fashion for showing oriental figures in easily recognisable exotic outfits with no attempt at authenticity. They could be recognised by their strange tall hats. For example "Festivities at the court of the Tatar Great Khan", *Le livre des merveilles*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fr. 2810 f. 44, and "Hannibal's coronation", *Histoire romane*, Cambridge/Mass., Harvard College Library, Richardson 32, II, f. 263, reproduced in E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás*: 1995, figs. 36-37.

[82] Elisabeth Pinks: *Die Uiguren von Kan-chou in der früheren Sung Zeit (960-1028)*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968, pp. 50-51, citing Hong Hao's report in the *Songmo jiwen* (*Liaohai congshu* I, VII, 1.3r) Also cf. A. G. Malyavkin: *Materiali po istorii uygurov v 9-12 vv.* [Materials to the history of the Uygurs 9th-12th centuries], Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1974, pp. 91-92.

[83] Cf. Wu Zhen: "Non-Chinese '*Huren*' in Materials Excavated from Astana" conference paper given at the Third Silk Road Conference, Yale, New Haven, July 1998. The standard description of big-nosed and deeply set-eyed *hu* was used by Wu to describe all foreigners depicted on silk and other media. The paper was followed by a lively discussion led by Victor Mair, which revealed that these sterotypes still exist. The original paper was published as Wu Zhen: "Asitana—Halahezhao gumu jun kaogu ziliao zhong suo jiande huren" [The Hu people in materials excavated fom ancient tombs of Astana - Karakhojo], *Dunhuang Tulufan yanjiu*, vol. 4 (1999), pp. 245-264.

The Uygurs in the light of the material and religious culture of the Kaghanate

In contrast with the Chinese, who viewed them as nomadic barbarians, the Uygur *kaghans* saw themselves as the most important rulers in the region. This is reflected in their titles, which often included phrases showing that their power was derived from supernatural powers such as "Heaven", "the God of the Moon," or "the God of the Sun."[84] Of these, "Heaven" or *tängri* was used from the earliest times, while the references to the Sun and Moon gods reflect Manichaean influence.

In the eleventh century too the Uygurs saw themselves differently, as we have seen in the donor portraits in Bezeklik Cave 20. Their upright, rigidly symmetrical posture, the almost completely covered body, the ample jewellery of the women as well as the facial features, which by virtue of their simplicity exaggerate the East-Asian ideal, convey exactly the opposite message from the Chinese descriptions and paintings, in which the Uygurs appeared as barbarians. The Uygur donors saw themselves as being in no way inferior to their Chinese counterparts, and this is clearly expressed in their portraits in all artistic media, including methods borrowed from Chinese art. Although in many ways they imitated the Chinese, in others they kept their independence. This attitude seems to have been adopted by Uygur rulers from the earliest times, and this is increasingly supported by evidence from archaeological discoveries.

It had traditionally been assumed that during the period of the steppe empire, Uygurs were fully nomadic, practising little or no agriculture.[85] However, excavations in the last few decades have proved the opposite to be true. The capital of the Uygur Kaghanate was at Karabalghasun, on the Orkhon river. Today it is a completely aban-

[84] C. Mackerras: "The Uighurs": 1990, p. 326; Peter Zieme: "Manichäische Kolophone und Könige", Gernot Wießner and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit (eds.): *Studia Manichaica, II. Internationaler Kongreß zum Manichäismus*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992, p. 323. Wolfgang-Ekkehard Scharlipp: *Die frühen Türken in Zentralasien*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992, p. 108.

[85] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 13.

doned ruin in Mongolia and the walls are overgrown with grass since the area is very fertile. The ruin is actually within the flood plain of the Orkhon, and occasionally at the time of heavy rains the route to the ruins becomes inaccessible. From this it is clear that water was abundant, so the area may have been ideal for growing wheat. Today sherds can be picked up even from the surface, proving that the use of pottery was common.[86]

Although the visible walls had been mapped in 1891, the first excavation did not take place until 1949, led by Sergei Kiselev.[87] The layout was rectangular with bastions on the four corners and at interwals. However, the scale was much bigger than elsewhere: the city walls measured about 7 x 2.5 kilometres, and were about 12 metres high. In Karabalghasun the walls are still standing on all sides, and the original entrance can still be seen. According to the published reconstruction, tents were pitched within the square walls—which is an obvious sign of a semi-sedentary lifestyle.[88]

In addition to the walls, on two sides the bases of small circular structures have survived. Furthermore, lower internal walls can clearly be observed within the ruins. Towards the west there is a high artificial plateau built of the same unbaked clay bricks and stone as the surrounding walls.[89] This rises high above the city walls, and can be seen from a great distance, as the surrounding area is completely flat. This may have been the place, where the *kaghan*'s famous golden tent was pitched. If this were the case, it would have made a magnificent

[86] I would like to thank Dr. Judith Kolbas (Independent scholar, London) for this information, and for showing me her slides of the site.

[87] S. Kiselev: "Drevnie goroda Mongolii" [Ancient towns in Mongolia], *Sovietskaya arkheologiya* 2 (1957), pp. 94-95. see also: Yu. S. Khudyakov: "Pamyatniki uigurskoy kultury v Mongolii" [Monuments of Uygur culture in Mongolia], see E. Larichev (ed.): *Tsentral'naya Aziya i sosednie territorii v srednie veka* [Central Asia and neighbouring territories in the Middle Ages], Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1990, pp. 84-89. Nancy Steinhardt has summarised the results of research on Karabalghasun, as she compares the ruins to Beiting - Bešbaliq. N. Steinhardt: *Beiting*: 2001, pp. 231-235.

[88] According to Steinhardt the lack of architectural remains within the city walls of Bešbaliq may show that this was a tent city. N. Steinhardt: "Beiting": 2001, p. 231. cf. also A. Yu. Yakubovsky: "Arabskie i persidskie istochniki ob uigurskom turfanskom knyazhestve v IX-X vekah" [Arab and Persian historians on the Turfan Uygur principality in the ninth-tenth centuries], *Gosudarstvennyy Ermitazh Trudy otdela Vostoka*, vol. 4 (1947), p. 429, for quotation by Gardizi that, even in Uygur Qočo, the commoners lived in tents.

[89] Cf. Yu. S. Khudyakov: "Pamiatniki ": 1990, p. 85, figs. 1/1-2.

impression from afar.[90] The tent is described in the Chinese dynastic histories too. According to Nancy Steinhardt, however, there is no evidence that the famous tent ever stood at this place. Several artefacts found in the area show strong Chinese influence, for example a tortoise-based stele mentioned by Steinhardt (Figure 8). Other free standing steles imitate the type well-known from China, with curled dragons on the top.[91] Mackerras points out that there was a documented Chinese population among the Uygurs, and Chinese builders worked among them even in the early stages of the Kaghanate.[92] Another example is the stele on which the Karabalghasun inscription was carved. This was found in 1889 and describes important events in Chinese, Sogdian and Uygur: the three most important languages used in the steppe empire.[93]

As the Karabalghasun inscription was written in three languages, it is likely that the town itself incorporated features from all three cultures. Karabalghasun as it is known today shows only few specifically Chinese architectural motifs, and it cannot be viewed as a purely Chinese city. Unbaked clay bricks and pounded earth are the most common building materials of Central Asia, and therefore, in addition to the layout, they are a further sign that Karabalghasun probably resembled other Central Asian settlements of the time. It is desirable that Karabalghasun be scientifically excavated in search of more evidence.

The role of fortified cities was much more important in the Uygur Kaghanate than had been assumed on the basis of researching the historical sources only. Even in a relatively remote region there were

[90] Described by Tamim ibn Bahr. V. Minorsky: "Tamim ibn Bahr's Journey to the Uighurs", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 12 (1948), p. 283.

[91] Based on Russian reconstructions such as Yu. S. Khudyakov: "Pamiatniki": 1990, p. 85, figs. 1/1-2 and p. 86 figs. 2/1-3. Steinhardt draws attention to the Chinese features of the city N. Steinhardt: "*Beiting*": 2001, pp. 232-234.

[92] "We even know of a respected T'ang citizen of the Lü clan who went to settle among the Uighurs and became adopted as a member of the Yao-lo-ko clan which ruled the empire until 795. In 792 he returned to China as a Uighur ambassador and was given a distinguished honorary title by the emperor." C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 50. and p. 128, Note 11 According to an inscription, Chinese and Sogdian workmen were commissioned to construct the buildings ibid. p. 321.

[93] According to Takao Moriyasu the first usage of an important Manichaean term can be found in the Runic part of the Karabalghasun inscription. Takao Moriyasu: "A Report on the Mongol-Japanese Expeditions of 1996-97 in Mongolia", *CIAA Newsletter*, 7, 1998, p. 8.

several major urban centres. In 1885 D. A. Klementz was the first to excavate ruined fortifications. The Sayan-Altai Expedition in 1947, led by S. V. Kiselev, in addition to renewing excavation work on the known ruins, also found three new towns. By the fifties twelve city ruins were known in the Tuva area alone.[94] Tuva, in the north-western part of the Uygur Kaghanate from the mid-eighth century, was systematically excavated by Soviet archaeologists, when it lay within the Soviet Union.[95] These excavation results have only been published in Russian, and are not widely available in the West, and, until recently, have not been well known.[96] Kyzlasov argues that the majority of these primarily served a strategic purpose, as this area had to be defended from the Kyrgyz, who lived by the Yenisei river.

These archaeological results prove that the Uygurs built on the legacy of the Eastern Turk empire and absorbed very successfully the widely differing Sogdian and Chinese traditions in all aspects of their existence. The excavations proved the existence of major fortified urban centres even in this relatively remote region of the Uygur Kaghanate, the presence of well-developed stone-masonry, metallurgy and pottery, and the importance of long-distance trade. Tomb finds revealed an extensive range of metalwork and pottery. These include types that were imported from other parts of Central Asia, such as Sogdiana, as well as Chinese bronze mirrors and fragments of Tang

[94] L. R. Kyzlasov: "Srednevekovie goroda Tuvy" [Towns from the Middle Ages in Tuva], *Sovetskaya arkheologiya* 3 (1959), pp. 66-67. According to Potapov there are fourteen examples of Uygur monumental architecture in Tuva, all built following the same basic model of a rectangular fortified town. Potapov, S. F.: *Istoria Tuzy* [History of Tuva], Moscow: Tuvinsky nauchno-issledovatelskii institut yazyka literatury i istorii, 1964, p. 122. see also Qian Boquan: "Huihu zai 'Sizhou zhi lu' de lishi diwei" [The historical position of the Uygurs on the Silk Road], Compiled by UNESCO and the Institute of Archaeology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS): *Land Routes of the Silk Roads and the Cultural Exchanges between the East and West before the 10th century. Desert Route Expedition International Seminar in Urumqi (August 19-21 1990)*, Beijing: New World Press, 1996, p. 55. for the increasing role of towns in the Kaghanate.

[95] Tuva became part of the Kaghanate in 750-751. It is still part of Russia today, on the Mongolian border, south of Krasnoyarsk. For the historical background see Potapov: *Istoria Tuzy*. 1964, pp. 117-137.

[96] Most recently, for the first time a short English reference for the Uygur fortress at Tuva is given in E. Novgorodova: "Turkic and Mongol Art", in M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth (eds.): *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. 4., *The age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the end of the fifteenth century*, Part Two: *The achievements*, Paris: UNESCO, 2000, p. 449.

pots. This is a proof that not only the capital, but also provincial parts of the Kaghanate were exposed to the art of these two important cultural centres.

Other, locally made ceramic objects prove that the Uygurs continued the Central Asian and Turkic style of pottery-making. Some of the vessel types go back to the Hun period (Figure 9). Only the surface decoration distinguishes these vessels from the so-called "Kyrgyz" type. However, they can securely be linked to the Uygurs, as these pottery vessels are very similar to those that had been found in the core area of Uygur rule by the Selenga river. A great number of spindle whorls has also been found, which proves the importance of local textile manufacturing.[97] Kyzlasov, the main excavator of Tuva, found clear differences between the burial habits of the Eastern Turks, Uygurs and Kyrgyz, and has argued against the habit established by previous scholarship, which made little attempt to differentiate between the finds, calling them all "Ancient Turkic."[98]

It is clear from the excavations that the major centres, in addition to being the headquarters of the *kaghan* in case of warfare, also acted as local administrative seats, and centres for trade and handicrafts. From the finds it may be deduced that the majority of the population around these centres lived a semi-sedentary life and was involved in agriculture, the scale of which was, however, relatively small. Animals were also herded into the safety of the city walls for the night, and yurts were set up within the walls to house the people.[99]

Of the major Uygur cities, Shagonar is the best documented in Soviet publications. There were four fortifications in the vicinity, about 260-500 metres from each other, possibly arranged thus for strategic reasons. The largest of these was the No. 3 ruin (Figure 10). As it can be seen from Kyzlasov's reconstruction there was an outer wall and an inner wall, both rectangular, fortified with bastions, and with the outer one surrounded by a moat. The walls were 5.5 metres high. The outer walls measure 126 x 119 metres, and the inner citadel 47 x 45 metres.[100] In another reconstruction Kyzlasov indicates that tents

[97] For a description of the finds see L. P. Potapov: *Istoria Tuvi* : 1964, pp. 129-130, and L. R. Kyzlasov: *Drevnyya Tuva (ot paleolita do IX. v.)* [Ancient Tuva from the Paleolithic to the ninth century], Moscow: Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1979, pp. 145-158.

[98] L. R. Kyzlasov: *Drevnyya Tuva*. 1979, pp. 140-144.

[99] L. R. Kyzlasov: "Srednevekovye goroda Tuvy": 1959, pp., 74-75.

[100] Ibid., pp. 68-80. and fig. 3.

were used within the fortified walls.[101] Tang historical sources do not mention anything about these large fortifications, and only describe the capital, Karabalghasun. Other written sources give some scattered evidence, but the importance of continuing systematic and well-published archaeological excavations in Tuva and today's Mongolia cannot be overestimated.

It is commonly assumed that it was during the battles of 762/3 that the Uygurs converted to Manichaeism under the leadership of Bögü *kaghan*.[102] They came across Manichaean priests in Chang'an during his military exploits there in aid of the Tang court against An Lushan.[103] It is important to understand that by converting to a religion that had its origin in Iran the Uygurs emphasised their difference from the Chinese who often did not approve of these "alternative" religions. Many aspects of their daily life were affected as a consequence, from adopting a new writing system to clothing, dietary habits and art.

Mani, who had lived in the Sasanid Empire between 216-276, developed a synthesis of all known major religions. According to his teachings the soul of human beings, which is part of the mass of light held captive by matter, can only be redeemed if it becomes aware of its true situation. Consequently, the Third Messenger, taking the form of "Jesus the Splendour," sends forth from time to time prophets like Zarathustra, Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth to remind the soul of its true home.[104]

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[101] L. R. Kyzlasov: *Drevnyaya Tuva*: 1979, fig. 100.

[102] For the various names used for this *kaghan*, and the Chinese sources regarding the conversion to Manichaeism see Yang Fuxue and Niu Ruji: "Mouyu kehan yu Monijiao" [Mouyu *kaghan* and Manichaeism], *Dunhuang xuejikan*, no. 12, (1987: 2), pp. 86-93. A seminal study on Uygur Manichaeism is Takao Moriyasu: *Uiguru Manikyô shi no kenkyû* [A Study on the History of Uygur Manichaeism], *Ôsaka daigaku bungaku bukkyo* [Memoirs of the Faculty of Letters, Osaka University vols. 31-32, 1991. For a German translation see the Bibliography. For the latest summary of up-to-date research see Takao Moriyasu: "Four Lectures at the Collège de France in May 2003. History of Manichaeism among the Uighurs from the 8th to the 11th Centuries in Central Asia", *Osaka University The 21st Century COE Program Interface Humanities Research Activities 2002-2003*, vol. 3 *World History Reconsidered through the Silk Road*, Osaka University: 2003, pp. 23-111.

[103] Larry Clark disputes this date, according to him it is more likely that the conversion took place in 755 in Qočo or 757 in Luoyang during military expeditions. Larry Vernon Clark: "The Conversion of Bögü khan to Manichaeism", in R. E. Emmerick, W. Sundermann, P. Zieme (ed.): *Studia Manichaica IV, Tagungsband der 4. Internationalen Manichäismus Konferenz*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, (2000), pp. 83-123.

[104] Hans-Joachim Klimkeit: *Manichaean Art and Calligraphy*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982, pp. 21-23. See also Samuel N. C. Lieu: *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*: Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992.

The *electi*, the leaders of the Manichaean community, saw as their mission to continue this fight against the evil matter and darkness. In order to achieve this they practised abstinence from sexual acts, were clad in white, with all of their bodies covered except for the face, and ate no meat or other food considered unclean. These strict rules were necessary to enable them to fight the dark forces, even within their own bodies: according to Manichaean teaching, bodily functions are evil, and there is also a dark soul, which consists of negative qualities like greed, covetousness, envy and hate. Meals became daily rituals to liberate light from darkness, as fruits and vegetables were thought to contain light particles, with the highest level to be found in grapes.[105] Some of these rules are described by the Chinese in a somewhat distorted form: "The laws of these latter [the Uygur Manichaeans] prescribe that they should eat only in the evening, drink water, eat strong vegetables, and abstain from fermented mare's milk"[106]

Manichaeism as state religion was a conscious choice for a people who wanted to emphasise their independence from the Chinese and yet adopt a religion associated with a sedentary lifestyle and high civilisation. The Uygurs thus became the easternmost representatives of this religion, and as a result, in addition to the continuing Chinese influence, the Sogdians also started to play a major part in shaping Uygur culture. By the eighth and ninth centuries the Uygurs incorporated a strong Sogdian element. With the help of Manichaean missionaries, two new forms of script based on the Sogdian alphabet were developed: the Manichaean script, reserved for religious texts, and the so-called Uygur script, which was based on a form of cursive Sogdian. Runic script had already been used in the Eastern Turk Kaghanate. Brāhmī and Chinese inscriptions have also been found.[107]

As James Hamilton has pointed out, the civilising effect of Mani-

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[105] See Richard Fynes: "Plant Souls in Jainism and Manichaeism, the Case for Cultural Transmission", *East and West*, 46:1-2 (June 1996), pp. 21-44. It is interesting to note that the growing of grapes is still very popular in the Turfan area. Cf. also Jason D. BeDuhn: "The Manichaean Sacred Meal", R. E. Emmerick et al. (eds.): *Turfan, Khotan and Dunhuang*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996, pp. 1-16.

[106] *Xin Tangshu*, 217A.10b, from C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 109.

[107] The Uygur script later became the model for Mongol writing. For a recent survey of the various scripts used by the Uygurs see Niu Ruji: *Weiwuer guwenzi yu guwenxian taolun* [Guide to ancient Uygur writing and documents], Urumchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1997.

chaeism on the Uygurs was radical. It "put a wild, warring nation into contact with the subtle art of Iran and the Mediterranean world."[108] Subsequently, and until the thirteenth century, the Uygurs became the educators of other Turco-Mongol nations. The influence of such an austere religion naturally led to serious changes in the Uygur lifestyle. According to some authors the effects of this conversion brought about the eventual downfall of the Uygur steppe empire, as Manichaeism is a religion of peace and preaches against warfare—but readiness for warfare is an absolute necessity for a nomadic state to survive.

The Sogdians had been the most important trading nation on the Silk Road, so partly under their influence the Uygurs became powerful traders and money lenders. Due to their strategic importance the Uygurs were granted important trade monopolies, even though the Chinese imperial court was traditionally opposed to decentralised trade. The Uygurs' role in the silk trade has only recently been acknowledged. According to Christopher Beckwith the territorial gains of the Tibetans in the eighth century led to the redirection of international trade, and many caravans had to use the Uygur route, via the capital at Karabalghasun and "go around by a very circuitous route through Uighur Mongolia" westwards to the Arab caliphate.[109] Morris Rossabi has pointed out that the Uygurs' insatiable demand for silk had a decided effect on the Chinese economy and "both as traders and weavers, they would influence the development of silk production and commerce in Central Asia and in China from the mid-eighth to the fifteenth century."[110]

The Uygurs became major players in shaping the Chinese economy, especially through their influence in trade and money-lending, and their economic influence survived well into the ninth century according to Mackerras.[111] The Chinese already associated such activities with

[108] "L'action civilisatrice du manichéisme sur les Oïghours devait être radicale. A travers cette vieille religion perse, syncrétisme d'éléments chrétiens, mazdéens at bouddhiques, un peuple rude et guerrier entra en contact avec la pensée subtile et l'art raffiné de l'Iran et du monde méditerranéen." James Hamilton: *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties d'après les documents Chinois*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955, p. 6.

[109] C. I. Beckwith: "The Tibetans in the Ordos": 1987, pp. 4-6.

[110] Morris Rossabi: "The Silk Trade in China and Central Asia" in James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell: *When Silk Was Gold—Central Asian and Chinese Textiles*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997, p. 9.

[111] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, p. 49.

the *hu*, so their increasing political dependence on the Uygurs, did not lead to a change in Chinese opinion. However, individual Chinese described the great wealth and fashionable refinement of those Uygur aristocrats and traders, who lived in the capital Chang'an.[112] It was under Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (reigned 841-846) that the anti-foreign feeling rose in China to such an extent that a persecution of Buddhism and other non-Chinese religions, including Manichaeism started. The otherness and accumulated wealth of monasteries and foreign merchants provoked a harsh reaction.

Jacques Gernet identified the role of the Uygurs as one of the main reasons behind the rise of anti-foreign sentiment. Their profiteering in the horse trade and through money-lending, and their obvious wealth irritated the Chinese.

> There gradually grew among the literati and the officials... most of whom came from south-east China, the idea that the intrusion of the barbarians since the fourth century had slowly impaired Chinese purity, corrupted ancient moral standards, and thus brought about the decadence of China... The term 'nationalism' would be anachronism, yet it was certainly reactions analogous to those of nationalism that took vague shape after An Lushan's rebellion.[113]

In this period Chinese Manichaeans may have fled to Uygur territories, further strengthening the influence of China. We have also seen the important role Chinese imperial marriages played in disseminating Chinese cultural values. At the same time the Sogdian–Manichaean influence continued to be equally important. For this reason, despite the lack of systematic research on this subject, it may be assumed that the ruling class of the Uygurs was familiar with the characteristics of Chinese and Sogdian art well before their move to the Turfan area.

The fall of the central powers and the rise of the regional groups

The end of the eighth century was a period of expanding Tibetan domination, and the Uygur alliance once more became important for the Tang regime. According to Beckwith, however, "unfortunately

[112] For a quote by Li Deyu, a powerful official and Prime Minister under Emperor Wuzong, see Qian Boquan: "Huihu": 1996, p. 55.

[113] Jacques Gernet: *A History of Chinese Civilisation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982 (1987 edition), pp. 292-293.

for the Chinese, the T'ang-Uyghur peace came too late to save the T'ang colonies in Central Asia."[114] Dunhuang itself was in Tibetan hands from 781 to 847. The Uygurs were expanding by force into the Beiting area, but were defeated by the Tibetans in 790. Soon the Uygurs led another attack to recapture Beiting, but this attempt also ended in defeat. Ecsedy argues that at that point the Tibetans retained control, but other authors believe that this marked the start of Uygur military domination of the area, which soon spread to Turfan, Kuča and Karašahr also, when the Uygur powerbase was still in today's Mongolia.[115] Qočo, which had been in Chinese hands, also fell to the Tibetans in 791, but a series of Tibetan defeats followed. According to Beckwith, control of the city may have changed hands several times.[116]

In the first decades of the ninth century the Uygur Kaghanate was at the zenith of its power. The court led a lavish lifestyle in the capital, and Uygur envoys had become important power brokers independently of China. However, in contrast to the life led in the capital, the majority of the population still lived a semi-nomadic life and relied mostly on livestock for their existence. As in the case of many other semi-nomadic nations, the inherent tension may have contributed to the fall of the Kaghanate. From the 820s, famine and illness broke out, and much of the livestock died. There was also an internal struggle for the succession to the throne, which led to a revolt among high officials.[117] The Kyrgyz took advantage of the weakness of the Uygurs, and swept the Kaghanate away in 840.[118] Within a few decades a completely different situation emerged. Very soon the Tibetan empire collapsed, and a much-weakened Tang China only survived them by a few decades. From 874 a series of uprisings started that eventually brought the Tang dynasty to an end. Different

[114] C. I. Beckwith: *Tibetan Empire*: 1987, p. 152.

[115] Hilda Ecsedy: "Uigurs and Tibetans in Pei-t'ing", *AOH*, vol. 17 (1964), pp. 83-104 ; Takao Moriyasu: "Uiguru to Toban no Hokutei sôdatsu sen oyobisono gono sai-iki jôseini tsuite" [The Uygur-Tibetan struggle for Bešbaliq and the subsequent situation in Central Asia], *Tôyô Gakuhô* 55-4 (1973), pp. 60-87; Takao Moriyasu: "Qui des Ouigours ou des Tibétains ont gagné en 789-792 à Bes-baliq?", *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 269, nos. 1/2 (1981), pp. 193-205.; see also C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire*: 1972, pp. 102-104 and p. 165, Note 207.

[116] C. I. Beckwith: *Tibetan Empire*: 1987, p 157.

[117] E. Pinks: *Die Uiguren:* 1968, p. 60.

[118] C. Mackerras: *The Uighur Empire:* 1972, p. 125.

military leaders started exercising control over their local territories. From 907 these became independent countries commonly referred to as the "Five Dynasties."[119] The era of strong empires was gone for the moment, and important regional centres emerged one after the other in the ensuing power vacuum.

Dunhuang was also becoming increasingly independent in the ninth century under the leadership of the local ruling families. In 848, under the leadership of Zhang Yichao 張議潮 (851-876), the Tibetans were driven out of Dunhuang, and a new regime was established under the name: Guiyijun 歸義軍 "Return to the Allegiance Army", indicating loyalty to the Tang government.

In 841 the defeated Uygur tribes fled their old territory. Some of the Uygur groups then disappeared without a trace.[120] Importantly the area east and west of Dunhuang came under Uygur control; and two very powerful new regional centres of Uygur power emerged as a result.[121] Two of the migrating splinter groups settled in Ganzhou and in Xizhou (Map). There are differing views about the time the Uygur groups arrived in the Hexi region, east of Dunhuang. According to Moriyasu the Uygurs occupied Ganzhou from the 890s, and captured it from the "Guiyijun" army.[122]

Of the Uygur groups that migrated south and established new states, usually the Xizhou, Ganzhou and Kuča or Karašahr Uygurs are listed. Geng Shimin lists two main groups: the Ganzhou Uygurs and another branch, which, from the area of Bešbalik, spread out to

[119] Most recently Valerie Hansen has pointed out how arbitrary the 907 date is for the end of the Tang dynasty, which gradually lost power after the An Lushan rebellion. V. Hansen: *The Open Empire*: 2000, p. 244.

[120] The best summary of the migration of the various Uygur tribes is K. Czeglédy: "The Foundation of the Turfan Uyghur Kingdom", in Louis Ligeti (ed.): *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös*, vol. 1, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984, pp. 159-160. Cf. also Karl Jettmar (ed.): *Geschichte Mittelasiens*, Leiden/Köln: E J Brill, 1966, pp. 159-162; see also W. Scharlipp: *Die frühen Türken*: 1992, pp. 105-113, for a short summary of the history of the Uygur states in Xinjiang and Gansu. Scharlipp includes Shazhou as one of the Uygur states, but without exact dates.

[121] For the most recent summary of Uygur history in the relevant period see: D. Sinor, Geng Shimin, Y. I. Kychanov: "The Uighurs, the Kyrgyz and the Tangut (eighth to thirteenth century)", *History of Civilisations of Central Asia*, vol. 4, in Ms. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth (eds.): *The Age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century*, Part One, Paris: UNESCO, 1998. pp. 191-206.

[122] T. Moriyasu: "Uigura to Tonkō": 1980, pp. 306-312; cf. Yang Fuxue: "Jin nian guonei Hexi huihu yanjiu zongshu" [Summary of recent research in China on the Hexi Uygurs], *Dunhuang yanjiu* 1992, no. 2, pp. 98-99.

occupy the Turfan basin.[123] Moriyasu believes that there were four big centres: Gaochang or Qočo, Beiting or Bešbalik, Ark or Karašahr and Kuča. This is why, in his opinion,

> the West Uighurs were also called the Qočo Uighurs, the Hsi-chou Uighurs, the Kuča Uighurs, or the Arslan Uighurs. Arslan means 'lion', and the word was often adopted as part of the West Uighur King's title.[124]

According to some authors, only in 866 did the Uygurs of Beiting manage to defeat the Tibetans and drive them once and for all from the area.[125] All sources agree that the best part of the ninth century witnessed the struggle for supremacy: among the Tibetans, the Uygurs and the Chinese regime of Dunhuang. It is likely that this was the time when the Uygurs consolidated their power.

Before the arrival of the Uygurs, Indo-European ethnic groups had been dominant in the Tarim Basin, but the influence of Chinese regimes was also strong from the Han dynasty onwards.[126] During the first half of the Tang dynasty, Gaochang was an important Chinese outpost, with a large number of Chinese inhabitants, who had very close links to central China. In the course of the ninth century, due to political uncertainties, these close links to central China were cut off. However, the local Chinese presence continued to remain important in the centuries to come, and it became one of the most important influences on the formation of Uygur art. Apart from Manichaeism and Buddhism, other religions, such as Nestorian Christianity, also had followers in cosmopolitan Qočo. This meant that many who were persecuted in the 840s in China escaped to these territories, and inevitably influenced the cultural build-up of the new state, and this must have given a new impetus for Chinese cultural influence.

[123] Geng Shimin: "The Uighur Kingdom of Kocho", in Asimov and Bosworth (eds.): *History*: 1998, p. 200. Yu Taishan also says that the Uygurs had two branches the Xizhou Uygurs and the Kuča Uygurs. Later these evolved into one country, called the Gaochang Uygur Kingdom. See also Yu: *Xiyu*: 1996, p. 294.

[124] Takao Moriyasu: "The West Uighur Kingdom and Tun-huang around the 10th-11th Centuries", *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berichte und Abhandlungen*, vol. 8, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000, p. 338; See also Qian Boquan: "Huihu": 1996, pp. 58-60.

[125] Cf. A. G. Malyavkin: *Uygurskie:* 1983, pp. 132, 134, 138; see also pp. 146-147.

[126] For a general survey of the pre-Uygur history of the Turfan region see Zhang Guang-da: "Kocho (Kao-ch'ang)", in B. A. Litvinsky (ed.): *History of Civilisations of Central Asia*, vol. 3, *The Crossroads of Civilisations: A.D. 250 to 750*, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996, pp. 303-314. and Yu: *Xiyu*: 1996, pp. 249-252; Zhang and Rong: "A Concise History":1998, p. 19.

The Guiyijun regime of Dunhuang was in close contact with the Uygur rulers of Xizhou and Ganzhou from the beginning. At first, confrontation and fights for supremacy on the Silk Road characterised their relationship. Later, when the areas of influence were defined between these states, mutual diplomatic, trade and cultural links were established. Takao Moriyasu was the first to draw attention to the close links between Xizhou and Shazhou. He argued that the name Xizhou, which often appears in ninth and tenth century Dunhuang manuscripts, must refer to the Xizhou Uygur Kingdom (or West Uygur Kingdom), and not to the Khotan area, as Fujieda Akira had believed.[127]

In 851 the Tang court recognised Zhang Yichao as the official leader of Shazhou, and it bestowed various high titles on him. Some Dunhuang documents and Chinese historical sources claim that Zhang managed to control large territories including Ganzhou, Liangzhou 涼州 and Xizhou.[128] Moriyasu believes that Zhang probably never controlled Xizhou. He has argued that by the early ninth century the military domination of the Qočo area had been secured by the Uygurs. Apart from historical sources he also lists the Uygur Manichaean documents that were found in the Turfan area and can be dated to the late eighth—early ninth centuries.[129]

Christopher Beckwith disagrees with Moriyasu's argument, and believes that, as Qočo was located on the Tibetan-Uygur frontier, it must have changed hands many times.[130] Even though we cannot give a conclusive answer to the question of when Qočo was secured by the Uygurs, it is very likely that conflict continued throughout the ninth century. Taking this into consideration, it is unlikely that the Xizhou Uygurs consolidated their supremacy in the Turfan area

[127] Moriyasu: "Uiguru tonkō": 1980, pp. 297-338; Takao Moriyasu: "Tonkô to Nishi Uiguru ôkoku—Turufan kara no shokan to okurimono wo chûshin ni—" [Dunhuang and the West Uygur Kingdom: The historical background of the letter, P. 3672 bis, sent from Turfan], *Tôhô Gakuhô*, vol. 74 (1987), pp. 58-74. For a detailed summary of his argument in English see Moriyasu: "The Sha-chou Uighurs": 2000, pp. 28-33.

[128] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 3 (section on the year 851).

[129] T. Moriyasu: "Qui des Ouigours?": 1981, pp. 203-204 and personal communication, London, December, 1998.

[130] C. I. Beckwith: *Tibetan Empire*: 1987, pp. 170-171, Note 179.

before the mid-860s.[131] It is clear that, by the last quarter of the ninth century at the latest, the Xizhou Uygurs established diplomatic links with Shazhou, as a Dunhuang manuscript describes a delegation of thirty-five Xizhou Uygur envoys arriving in Dunhuang in 887.[132]

The main difficulty in the research of this historical period is the scarcity of reliable sources, which makes contradictory interpretations possible.[133] Due to the difficulties within the Tang empire, which led to the eventual collapse of the centralised Chinese government, there was little interest in China in the fate of the states in the Western Regions. Tibet entered its 'dark ages', when it is commonly believed that there was a lack of centralised government.[134] Arabic sources only report selected events, as the states of this region were resisting the spread of Islam throughout the tenth century, and were, therefore, of no central importance to Muslim historians.[135]

China itself was divided through the first half of the tenth century, and the ruling dynasties were very short lived.[136] Following the established tradition the historians of these smaller states and later of the Northern Song (960-1126) and the Liao (946-1125) also only registered the arrival of envoys. During the ninth and tenth centuries much of the Silk Road remained cut off from the Chinese states, first by the Tibetans, who held Liangzhou until at least 863, and then, from the end of the ninth century, by the Ganzhou Uygurs. The trade routes to central China were only reopened in the mid-tenth century. The isolation of Chinese historians from events further west in this period and the continuing conflicts of the time explain the lack of detailed

[131] Chinese sources first mention the Uygurs of Kocho in 866, Yu: *Xiyu*: 1996, p. 294.

[132] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 10, (P 3569 V).

[133] For the Chinese historical sources see Pinks: *Die Uiguren:* 1968, pp 3-18; Malyavkin: *Materiali:* 1983; Hamilton: *Les Ouighours:* 1955.

[134] Philip Denwood has challenged the traditional view that organised Buddhism completely or nearly died out in ethnic Tibet during the period 842-996, in a lecture entitled "The Tibetan 'Dark Age' 842-996 A.D." at SOAS in February 2001. To be published in Madhuvanti Ghose and Lilla Russell-Smith (eds.): *From Nisa to Niya—New Discoveries and Studies in Central and Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*, London: Saffron Books (forthcoming).

[135] Some of the Arab sources are discussed in A. Yu. Yakubovsky: "Arabskie i persidskie": 1947, pp. 423-443.

[136] These states in the North were the Later Liang (907-923) the Later Tang (923-936), the Later Qin (936-946), the Later Han (947-950) and the Later Zhou (951-960).

information about the new Uygur states. In addition, local Dunhuang history has to be reconstructed from two main sources, the dynastic histories, which usually only refer to the arrival of Shazhou and Ganzhou envoys, and from the manuscripts found in Cave 17, now scattered in various libraries all over the world.

At the end of the ninth and in the first half of the tenth centuries, the relationship between the Chinese of Dunhuang and the Uygurs of Ganzhou was also dominated by rivalry and warfare.[137] This branch of the Uygurs had settled to the east of Dunhuang, controlling routes in the Hexi corridor, and thereby the communication links with China. This brought them into inevitable conflict with the Guiyijun regime.

Ganzhou, before the arrival of the Uygurs in the mid-ninth century, had been under Tibetan control, and at first the incoming Uygur groups probably accepted Tibetan supremacy. It is assumed that at this point the mostly nomadic Uygur groups had no control of the urban centre of Ganzhou itself.[138] It seems that after the defeat of the Tibetans in the Shazhou area, Dunhuang may have controlled Ganzhou for a short period of time. In 861 the Guiyijun army was still the dominant force in the region and was reported to have controlled Guazhou, Shazhou, Ganzhou, Suzhou, Yizhou and Liangzhou.[139] According to Su Beihai and Zhou Meijun, under Zhang Yichao and Zhang Huaishen (867-890) the Ganzhou Uygurs were still not independent. They first had to establish their supremacy over local tribes, such as the Long 龍, and occupy the town of Ganzhou.[140] In 869 the Xizhou Uygurs invaded Guazhou and in 870 Shazhou, but Zhang Huaishen defeated them on both occasions. According to Rong's quotation of Dunhuang sources, by 881 Ganzhou and Liangzhou gradually slipped out of Guiyijun control.[141] According to Su and Zhou, only in 894 did the Uygurs gain control of Ganzhou and establish their new state.[142] In either case it is likely that the question of sovereignty was

[137] Pinks: *Uiguren*: 1968, pp. 64-71.

[138] Gao Zihou: "Ganzhou Huihu hanguode chuangjianzhe" [The founders of the Ganzhou Uygur Kaghanate], *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1991 no. 2, p. 14.

[139] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 5. (section on the year 861).

[140] See Su Beihai and Zhou Meijun: "Ganzhou Huihu shixi kaobian" [Investigating the genealogy of the Ganzhou Uygurs", *Dunhuang xuejikan*, No. 12 (1987, no. 2), pp. 71-72

[141] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 7. (P 2709, P 3451) and p. 9.

[142] Su and Zhou: "Ganzhou": 1987, p. 72.

only settled in the last decades of the ninth century. Both the Xizhou and Ganzhou branches of the Uygurs were engaged in warfare in the second half of the ninth century. Gao Zihou emphasises that at this stage there was no real difference between these two branches of the Uygurs, as they had a common origin.[143]

Because of the political situation and the time it takes to adapt to a new environment, it is likely that the late ninth to early tenth century was a period of experimentation in Uygur culture, during which the incorporation of a varying degree of local and foreign influence took place. I have argued that during the period of the Kaghanate the Uygurs had already successfully assimilated Sogdian and Chinese elements into their culture. The Xizhou Uygurs' ability to develop a unique synthesis of differing cultural elements became prominent when they settled in the Tarim Basin.

The tenth century: inter-marriage and collaboration between the Uygurs and the Guiyijun regime in Dunhuang

The importance of multicultural influences is the most under-researched area of Dunhuang art. There is continuing confusion in the discussion of the Tibetan, Uygur and Tangut-related artworks of Dunhuang. Heather Karmay (Stoddard) was the first to draw attention to the important material that was produced during the period of Tibetan occupation (781-847).[144]

To understand the increasingly multi-cultural characteristics of the late period, we have to take into account the likelihood that even though Tibet lost the territory of Dunhuang, the population remained mixed. Deborah Klimburg-Salter has emphasised that when Zhang Yichao reconquered Dunhuang from the Tibetans, he did not expel the Tibetans, so the multiracial characteristics of the local population must have continued. It is just as likely that to some extent artistic practices continued in a non-Chinese style.[145] The evidence of the paintings examined here show that although the artistic influence of

[143] Gao Zihou: "Ganzhou huihu yu Xizhou huihu bian" [Distinguishing the Ganzhou and the Xizhou Uygurs], *Xibei minzu xueyuan xuebao*, 1982:4, pp. 17-25.

[144] Heather Karmay: *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, Warminster: Aris and Phillips Ltd, 1975

[145] Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter: *Tabo: a Lamp for the Kingdom. Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*, Milan: Skira, 1997, p. 209.

Tibet continued, it was mixed with new influences, notably that of the Uygurs. The stylistic clues are amptly supported by historical research, which has become partially available in European languages only in the last few years.

The clothing of the Uygur brides and their attendants represented in tenth-century Dunhuang caves provides evidence for the closeness of the Xizhou and Ganzhou branches of the Uygurs (Colour Plates 1-3, Plate 10). The headdresses worn by the Uygur females represented in the Dunhuang caves are very similar to one of the types associated with the high-ranking Xizhou Uygur ladies often depicted in Bezeklik (Figure 1, Plate 5).[146] This is a head-ornament shaped like a flattened waterdrop, which often contains the image of a phoenix—a further sign of royal rank. In both Xizhou and Ganzhou this decoration was worn over an elaborate hairdo further decorated with hairpins. The forehead may have been shaved, leaving a characteristically straight hairline. Even though, apart from the Dunhuang wall paintings, we have no other reliable representations of Ganzhou Uygur dress, this must indicate that the customs, and by extension probably the artistic taste of at least the ruling class within these groups, must have been very close to each other. Despite its frequent depiction on murals, this type of headdress appears on only one portable painting from Dunhuang (Plate 2). However, similar headwear continued to be shown throughout the tenth century as the headdress of Ganzhou Uygur women in Dunhuang (Figure 11).

One of the central arguments of this study is that the patronage of these high-ranking Uygur women is likely to account for the appearance and spread of new stylistic and iconographic ideas in tenth-century Dunhuang art. Because they appear in the wall paintings accompanying the male donors, relatively little attention has been paid to their role.[147] In Western art history a completely new field of study, dubbed 'matronage' has opened up after a conference held under the same

[146] Cf. A. von Gabain: *Das Leben:* 1973, Tafelband, fig. 106.

[147] Laure Feugère started studying the unusual headdresses of high-ranking Uygur women as the preparations for the Sérinde exhibition were under way in Paris, but her findings were not published in the accompanying catalogue (J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*, 1995). Subsequently she spoke about her results for the first time in 1997—the same year I also presented my new findings. Laure Feugère: "Some Remarks on Three Paintings from Dunhuang in the Pelliot Collection", in Maurizio Taddei and Giuseppe de Marco (eds.): *South Asian Archaeology 1997. Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, held*

name in 1990. This term focuses awareness on the paradox of the widely accepted term 'patronage', which by definition has an inescapable *patrilineal* basis. As in the case of the Uygur brides, the important women donors discussed were also, for the most part, members of the ruling elite, yet subordinate in a patriarchal gender system.[148]

In Dunhuang also it may be expected that for larger projects the written sources would not usually mention the commissioning activity of the Uygur wives independently, but only linked to that of their husbands. However, for their own private devotion these wealthy women must have had considerable freedom to decide on the appearance and subject matter of the works of art they commissioned. Unfortunately, at the moment, no known inscription links specific paintings to them. For this reason the appearance and iconography of the paintings has to be studied closely in conjunction with the existing historical sources. These attest to the increasing importance of Dunhuang's links with the Uygurs, in which political marriages played an important part.

The historical evidence offers clear proof for the importance of the Ganzhou Uygur women in Dunhuang throughout the tenth century. The Ganzhou branch of the Uygurs became increasingly powerful in this period. The continuity of their ruling class with the Uygur Kaghanate and the ruling Yaghlakhar (Yaγlaqar) clan can be studied through the Chinese dynastic histories, which continue to refer to the Ganzhou Uygur *kaghan* as their nephew ("sister's son"), *sheng* 甥, a term that indicates links by marriage.[149]

There is considerable disagreement among scholars regarding the order of succession and the number of *kaghans* in Ganzhou. The *kaghans*' names can only be reconstructed on the basis of the Chinese dynastic histories, which often contradict each other with regard to the names

in the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Palazzo Brancaccio, Rome, 7-14 July 1997, vol. III, Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2000, pp. 1421-1438. I would like to thank Mme Feugère for giving me a copy of this article in February 2004. I first drew attention to the Uygur hairstyles at the ICANAS conference in Budapest, July 1997 cf. Lilla Russell-Smith: "Uygur Influence on Dunhuang Painting", *IDP News*, Nos. 8-9 (Summer-Winter 1997), pp. 4-5 and then again at The Third Silk Road Conference at Yale University, New Haven, July 1998 where my paper was circulated in vol. 1. of the Conference Proceedings: Lilla Russell-Smith: "The Influence of Uygurs on Dunhuang Art", *The Third Silk Road Conference at Yale University, Conference Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 221-264.

[148] The conference was organised in 1990 at Temple University in Philadelphia, T. E. Cooper: "*Mecenatismo* or *Clientelismo*": 1996, pp. 30-31.

[149] Su and Zhou: "Ganzhou Huihu":1987; p. 73.

of the current rulers. As alternative names were often used, it is open to question whether the same ruler or different *kaghans* were indicated by the various names. Tianmu 天睦 *kaghan* is only mentioned in two Dunhuang manuscripts, and as a result, not all scholars accept his existence.[150] According to Rong, Tianmu married a Chinese imperial princess, and it is possible that later it was his daughter, who married Cao Yijin, Shazhou's governor (reigned 914-935).[151] Despite the confusion caused by the lack of sources there can be no doubt that by the end of the ninth century Ganzhou was officially acknowledged by Tang China, and therefore became a powerful rival of the Shazhou regime. Relations between the two powers were often strained. Although in 901 an envoy was sent from Shazhou to Ganzhou, later that year the Ganzhou Uygurs invaded Dunhuang and damaged one of the caves at Mogaoku.[152] By 902 the Ganzhou Uygurs were strong enough to offer help to the Tang emperor, an offer which was turned down.[153] From this it is clear that Ganzhou was an increasingly important power in the area.[154]

The increase in Ganzhou's power was influenced by another factor: the last decade of the tenth century was a time of unrest in Dunhuang. Zhang Huaishen and his family were killed in 890s probably by Zhang Huaiding 張淮鼎 (890-892).[155] But the latter's rule was short-lived, as he too died only two years later. In 890 Suxun 素勳 (892-894), the son-in-law of Zhang Yichao, started a rebellion and took power in 892. The instability of the times is shown by the fact that he too was

[150] According to Rong Xinjiang, S 8444 refers to the *kaghan* of the Ganzhou Uygurs, who in 898 dispatched envoys to the Tang court to Zhaozong. It lists the silk and other presents that were sent in reply by the Tang court, a sign that, by this time, they acknowledged the growing power of the Uygurs. Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 12 (S 8444, P 3931-10).

[151] Cf. Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996 p. 15.

[152] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, pp. 12-13, (P 4640 V, S 4359 V, P 3905).

[153] E. Pinks: *Uiguren:* 1968, p. 65.

[154] For the study of the historical records to understand the links with central China see Sun Xiushen: "Wudai shiqi Ganzhou Huihu he Zhongyuan wangchaode jiaotong" [The relationship between the Central Kingdoms and the Ganzhou Uygurs in the period of the Five Dynasties", *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1989, no. 3, pp. 51-56; 1989, no. 4, pp. 65-69, 1990, no. 1, pp. 66-71; and Sun, Xiushen: "Shilun Ganzhou Huihu he Beisong wangchaode jiaotong" [Examining the relationship between the Ganzhou Uygurs and the Northern Song Dynasty], *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1994, no. 4, pp. 41-54.

[155] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 88.

soon killed and was followed by the under-aged Zhang Chengfeng 張承奉 (894-910), who was supported by the powerful Li clan, led by one of Zhang Yichao's daughters.[156]

In the same period, after long years of struggle, the central power in China collapsed completely in 907, when the Tang dynasty came to an end. During the Five Dynasties period (907-960), short-lived regimes united parts of Chinese territory, but there was no interest in retaking the Hexi corridor in the far west. All these events favoured the independence of the Ganzhou Uygurs, who became more and more aggressive.[157] To put an end to the regular attacks against Shazhou, Zhang Chenfeng established the Xihan Jinshanguo 西漢金山國 (The Golden Mountain Country of the Western Han) with the aim of retaking all of Guiyijun's lost territories and to counteract the threat of the Ganzhou Uygurs. The start and duration of this regime have been estimated differently by various authors. Rong Xinjiang has presented evidence to prove that it only lasted for four years, from 910 to 914.[158] Hamilton has hinted that the name Jinshan may refer to the Altai mountains—which had long been associated with the Uygurs, and that the ruler was called *baiyidi* 白衣帝 (White-robed Emperor) due to strong Manichaean influence: it is well-known that Manichaean leaders were dressed in white robes.[159]

The Ganzhou Uygurs invaded in 910 and 911. Eventually the Dunhuang forces could not resist the continuing attacks and a group of senior envoys had to be sent to the Ganzhou Uygur *kaghan*, where they declared: 可汗是父天子是子 "[You], the *kaghan* are the father, [I] The Son of Heaven am your son", as a clear indication that Zhang Chengfeng acknowledged the supremacy of the Ganzhou Uygurs.[160] However, Ganzhou could not permanently defeat Shazhou either, so a kind of stalemate developed. With central China in turmoil, Ganzhou and Shazhou became increasingly separatist. According to

[156] Su and Zhou: "Ganzhou Huihu": 1987, p. 71; Zhang Zhong: *Dunhuang jianshi* [A short history of Dunhuang], Dunhuang: Dunhuang shi duiwaiwenhua jiaoliu xiehui, 1990, pp. 108-109. The years are given in Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 3. and pp. 88-91.

[157] Qian Boquan: "Huihu": 1996, pp. 57.

[158] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 95.

[159] J. Hamilton: *Ouighours*, 1955, pp. 16-17. These suggestions have not been repeated by other authors.

[160] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, pp. 14-15. (P 3633); Zhang: *Dunhuang jianshi*: 1990, p. 110.

Pinks, this gave ample opportunities to the Uygurs to further their influence in Gansu province, which included gaining control of the extremely profitable trade on the Silk Road.[161] The isolation of Dunhuang from central China is well illustrated by the fact that in the documents and in paintings alike, the wrong *nianhao* 年號 (reign title) was used in this period, as they were unaware that the Tang dynasty had come to an end.[162]

In 914 Cao Yijin deposed Zhang Chenfeng and restored the name Guiyijun (914-935).[163] In the first two years of his reign he managed to settle the problems with the Ganzhou Uygurs, and dispatched envoys to seek their alliance. His attempts were crowned by success, as in 916 Cao Yijin married the daughter of the Ganzhou Uygur *kaghan*. Rong identifies this *kaghan* with Tianmu.[164] From that year Shazhou regained partial access to the roads leading to central China, but only from 925, after further battles, did Cao manage to reopen the Hexi trade routes.[165] The strength of the Ganzhou Uygurs was by then weakened by internal unrest. According to Rong, from 920, when Tianmu *kaghan* became elderly, and especially after his death in 924, his sons Diyin 狄銀 and Renmei 仁美 started fighting for power. Renmei first took power. Other authors had believed that Renmei, also called Wumuzhu 毋母主, was the first Ganzhou Uygur *kaghan* and that he ruled some time between 894-924.[166] In order to legitimise his rule Renmei sent envoys to the Later Tang court. Later in the same year he too died, and his brother, as the new *kaghan*, sent envoys to the Later Tang.[167]

After the death of Diyin, in 926, the next Uygur *kaghan* married Cao Yijin's daughter, and also dispatched envoys to the Later Tang

[161] E. Pinks: *Uiguren*: 1968, pp. 66-67.

[162] As discussed for Stein painting 14 by Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, p. 301. Rong gives a detailed explanation in Rong: *Guyijunshi*: 1996, pp. 51-52.

[163] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, pp. 15 and 95-96. Rong has demonstrated that Cao Rengui is identical with Cao Yijin. He also defended this earlier date for the start of the Cao regime. He points out that the earliest manuscript referring to Cao Rengui is dated to 914. Rong's argument seems well supported, as the last document referring to Zhang Chenfeng is also from 914.

[164] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 15.

[165] Ibid., p. 17.

[166] Ibid., p. 73; Sun Xiushen: "Wudai shiqi Ganzhou kehan shixi kao" [An examination of the genealogy of the Ganzhou Uygur *kaghans* in the Five Dynasties period], *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1990, no. 3, p. 45; K.Golzio: *Kings, khans and Other Rulers of Early Central Asia"*: 1984, p. 64.

[167] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

court.[168] This demonstrates the continuing importance of Chinese successor states in legitimising the power of these local rulers. The Uygur *kaghan*'s marriage to Cao's daughter not only shows that diplomatic links of alliance continued, but also that within the decade Cao's position became so strong that it was in Ganzhou's interest to request a bride from him. As a further proof of the intensifying diplomatic activity between Shazhou and Ganzhou, in 930 Cao Yijin went to Ganzhou to have discussions with Shunhua *kaghan*, and they resolved to send a joint embassy to the Later Tang court. In the twelfth month these envoys reached Luoyang, taking horses and jade as presents. Throughout the 930s there was increased diplomatic activity, and in 932 and 935 the Shazhou and Ganzhou embassies arrived at the same time. However, shortly after this the relationship between Ganzhou and Shazhou deteriorated again, and further fights broke out.[169]

From 934 Cao Yijin had started calling himself Great King, *dawang* 大王, thereby emphasising Dunhuang's sovereignty.[170] The Cao family regime's increasing independence from central China, and their multi-national character cannot be doubted, although, of course, it continued to have important links to the Chinese successor states. The direct and indirect influence of the Uygurs continued throughout the tenth century. After his father's death, Cao Yuande 曹元得 (935-939), who had already held important official functions, came to power. During his reign Cao Yijin's Uygur wife styled Shengtian gongzhu 聖天公主 (Heavenly Princess) was given the honorary title Guomu 國母 (Mother of the Country).[171]

During the tenth century Cao Yijin's three sons ruled Dunhuang in succession. They were most probably the sons of Cao Yijin's Uygur wife.[172] Cao Yuande was succeeded by Cao Yuanshen 曹元深 (939-944). Cao Yuanzhong 曹元忠 (944-974) ruled Dunhuang for thirty years.[173] Diplomatic activity continued with Ganzhou and Xizhou

[168] Ibid., p. 17.
[169] Ibid., pp. 17-21 *passim*.
[170] Ibid., pp. 104-107. Later in the century Cao Yuanzhong and Cao Yanlu were also called *dawang*.
[171] Ibid., p. 21, see also pp. 107-110. for Cao Yuande.
[172] Ibid., p. 114 mentions the Uygur mother of Yuande, Yuanshen, Yuanzhong. However, Rong's discussion concentrates on the importance of her honorific titles for dating Dunhuang documents.
[173] See also Tan Chanxue: "Cao Yuande Cao Yuanshen zunian kao" [Investigating the year of death of Cao Yuande and Cao Yuanshen], *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1988 no. 1, pp. 52-57. and Yuan Deling: "Cao Yuande zuniande xin shuo" [New discussion on the year of death for Cao Yuande], *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 1997 no. 4, pp. 137-140.
[174] T. Moriyasu: "Uiguru": 1980, pp. 320-321. Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, pp. 18-28 *passim*.
[175] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, pp. 27-29 *passim*.
[176] Ibid., p. 28.
[177] Ibid., pp. 123-124.
[178] Ibid., p. 31.

during these decades, although with changing intensity. The relationship between these two states faced increasing uncertainty after the death of Shunhua *kaghan* in 933 and of Cao Yijin in 935. Diplomatic missions, of which there had been four in five years in the first half of the 930s, became far less frequent after 935 (942, 946, 952). In the 940s and the first half of the 950s, relations with Ganzhou do not seem to have played an important part in the life of Shazhou, judging from the lack of references in the documents. Ganzhou's good relations with the Chinese successor states continued, as in 939 they sent envoys to the Later Jin 後晉 (936-946). In 961 Jingqiong 景瓊, the Ganzhou Uygur *kaghan*, sent envoys to the Song. Only from the second half of the 950s did the relations between Ganzhou and Shazhou improve again.[174]

From the 960s Ganzhou appears far more frequently in the Dunhuang documents. In 971 Guiyijun sent envoys to Ganzhou, and as a response, in 972 Ganzhou sent envoys to Dunhuang. Some of the surviving correspondence reflects everyday concerns of neighbouring states, such as the problems about thieves crossing the border from both sides.[175] Diplomatic activity intensified, and, perhaps as a result of this, in 965 envoys from Khotan, Ganzhou, Guazhou and Shazhou arrived together at the Northern Song court.[176] Cao Yuanzhong's nephew Cao Yangong 曹延恭 ruled for less than two full years (974-976).[177] He was succeeded by Cao Yanlu 曹延祿 (976-1002), under whom links with Ganzhou and the Northern Song regime continued.

It is very important, from the point of view of this study, that in 980 monks from Ganzhou and Suzhou came to Dunhuang.[178] This is a definite sign that at least some of the Ganzhou Uygur population was Buddhist at this time. Furthermore, from this it is clear that apart from the diplomatic and economic contacts there were also religious contacts between Ganzhou and Dunhuang.

In the historical sources Shazhou and Ganzhou are referred to together on several occasions. As early as 965 the Uygurs of Ganzhou,

Shazhou and Guazhou sent a joint tribute to the Song court.[179] In 976 or 977, during the reign of Taizong 太宗 (976-998), an official was sent to Ganzhou with an imperial edict, in which the Emperor said that he presented the *kaghan* of the Uygurs of Ganzhou and Shazhou with different objects and silk. He asked to be sent jade and horses in return. According to Yang Fuxue this is the first reference to the Shazhou Uygurs, who in his opinion ruled Dunhuang at the time.[180] As there also exists a very similar text from 980, Pinks draws the conclusion that "Sha-chou unterstand zu dieser Zeit offenbar der Oberhoheit Kanchous." (Shazhou was obviously under Ganzhou rule at this time.)[181]

Moriyasu, however has convincingly refuted these statements and says: "During the above periods no historical records indicate that Dunhuang was under direct Uygur rule."[182] Even so Moriyasu acknowledges that at this time the influence of Ganzhou Uygurs shaped the politics of Shazhou. In a recent article he has clarified his views regarding this point:

> The term used in the sources from 976 [or 977] is not simply "Sha-chou Uighurs" but the collective term 'Kan-Sha-chou Uygurs' (Kan-Sha-chou Hui-hu 甘沙州回鶻). This expression also appears in 980... It should probably be assumed that either the strong influence of the Kan-chou Uighur Kingdom had spread as far as Sha-chou or an Uighur community was developing in Sha-chou too, and that this lay behind the repeated use of the phrase 'Kan-Sha-chou Uighurs' in spite of the existence of a full-fledged government under the Return-to-Alliance Army in Sha-chou at this time.[183]

The second half of the tenth century was undoubtedly a period

[179] E. Pinks: *Uiguren*: 1968, p. 26.

[180] Yang Fu-Hsüeh: "On the Sha-chou Uighur Kingdom", *Central Asiatic Journal*, vol. 38 no. 1 (1994), pp. 84-85; E. Pinks: *Uiguren*: 1968, p. 76; Moriyasu: "Uiguru": 1980, p. 326. In different historical sources the dates are given alternatively as 976 or 977.

[181] Pinks: *Uiguren*: 1968, p. 127, Note 84.

[182] Quote translated from the Japanese; Moriyasu: "Uiguru": 1980, p. 327.

[183] T. Moriyasu: "The Sha-chou Uighurs": 2000, pp. 33-34. Moriyasu suggests that "the phrase 'Kan-Sha-chou Uighurs' is a unitary term with the emphasis on the Kan-chou Uighurs, and it should under no circumstances be resolved into two separate terms." Ibid. p. 34. However, I feel that although this term sounds very good in Chinese and Japanese, in English and other European languages it is necessary to say "Ganzhou and Shazhou Uygurs."

of strengthening Uygur influence. Uygurs and other Turkic people started settling in Shazhou, and may have aspired to political control in the region. The rulers of Dunhuang started calling themselves "Shazhou Huihu" 沙州回鶻 soon after the beginning of the eleventh century.[184]

The complete independence of the Shazhou and Ganzhou regimes from the Chinese states is proved by the fact that Shazhou and Ganzhou kept regular contact with the Qidan 契丹 regime of the Liao as well.[185] The links between the Liao and the Uygurs are very important, as the Xiao clan within the Qidan Liao empire was in fact of Uygur origin and their importance is demonstrated by the fact that the Liao empresses came from that clan.[186] Good relations continued, evident by the fact that in 940 joint Uygur-Shazhou envoys arrived at the Liao court.[187] This shows that at least in their dealings with the Liao the Uygurs and Shazhou pursued a joint foreign policy from the first half of the tenth century.

Documents are relatively scarce for the relationship between Shazhou and the Xizhou Uygurs, but it seems that regular contact on all levels continued throughout the century. In 930, perhaps as an acknowledgement of Shazhou's rising power, Xizhou sent envoys to Shazhou, and these were followed by others. In 964 Xizhou envoys arrived in Dunhuang and stayed for months.[188] Between 935 and 993 Shazhou envoys were also regularly dispatched to Xizhou, especially during the 940s when three delegations were sent.[189] Moriyasu suggests that in this period the links between Shazhou and Xizhou (his

[184] T. Moriyasu: "Uiguru": 1980, p. 327.

[185] In 937 the Liao empress received the Uygurs, and it is interesting that Dunhuang also sent envoys at the same time. Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 21. In the case of this and many other sources from the tenth century it is difficult to tell which branch of the Uygurs is being referred to. Gao Zihou argues that until the second half of the tenth century the Ganzhou and Xizhou branches may have been regarded simply as Uygurs, not as different countries. Gao Zihou: "Ganzhou Huihu": 1982, pp. 17-25 *passim.*

[186] Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng: *History of Chinese Society. Liao (907-1125)*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1949, p. 93. The importance of these marriage links for art has been pointed out by Marilyn Gridley: "Yulin Cave 39 and Uygur Patronage: Origin and Transmittal of the theme of Guanyin with *Luohans*," to be published in M. Ghose and L. Russell-Smith (eds.): *From Nisa to Niya* (forthcoming).

[187] Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 22.

[188] Ibid., pp. 18-28 *passim.*

[189] Ibid., pp. 20-33 *passim.*

West Uygur Kingdom) became much stronger.[190]

Throughout the tenth century there were close links between the Buddhists of Shazhou and Xizhou. A study of the historical sources makes it clear that Dunhuang was the more important Buddhist centre at this time, and its temples provided Xizhou with scriptures. In 935 Shanyou 善友, a monk of the Lingtu temple 靈圖寺, in Shazhou, dispatched envoys to Xizhou. From 939 there is a record of a Shazhou monk who went on official business to Xizhou.[191] Of even more interest are two documents from the middle of the tenth century that prove that at that time the religious literature of Dunhuang was valued in Xizhou, and most probably used as a model.

In 956, Fabao 法寶, a monk of the Sanjie Monastery 三界寺, in Shazhou, sent envoys to Xizhou. Among the objects they took with them, there were scrolls of Buddhist scriptures or *bianwen* 變文.[192] The importance of this monastery cannot be doubted, since according to Rong Xinjiang, the Library Cave in Dunhuang was the depository of this very same temple.[193] In 966, Cao Yuanzhong and his wife went on a visit to the Mogao caves. In the Great King Cave (Cave 98, Dawangku 大王窟) they ordered the monks to make seventeen copies of the *Dafo mingjing* 大佛名經, one for each of the sixteen great temples of Dunhuang, with an extra copy to be sent to Xizhou to complement their collection of the *Tripiṭaka*. At the same time they also commissioned the refurbishing of the great Maitreya in Cave 96 (originally built under Empress Wu Zetian 武則天).[194] This document provides evidence that Buddhism existed in Xizhou throughout the tenth century, and that the Dunhuang monasteries provided the Xizhou monasteries with guidance and scriptures.

190 T. Moriyasu: *Uiguru*: 1980, p. 320.
191 Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, pp. 20 and 22.
192 Ibid., p. 26; Rong: "The Relationship of Dunhuang": 2001, pp. 293-294.
193 Rong: "Dunhuang": 1996, pp. 23-48.
194 Rong: *Guyijunshi:* 1996, p. 29.

Uygur donors in Xizhou and in Dunhuang: demonstrating regional power through art as propaganda

In contrast to the donor figures of Caves 98 and 61, where the Uygur brides were shown in a subsidiary position to their Chinese husbands (Colour Plates 1-3), by the eleventh century the newly decorated Mogao caves were openly dedicated by Uygur men and women with no apparent reference to the Chinese. The patrons appear to be of high rank as their clothing is directly comparable to those of the Uygur rulers shown in Bezeklik. The painting style employed and the changed iconography also have direct links to the Bezeklik caves, but are executed in a provincial Uygur style. The most famous example is Cave 409, in Dunhuang, where on the two sides of the entrance we can see an Uygur ruler under a parasol held by an attendant, and two aristocratic females (Colour Plate 6-7). The women are dressed in identical red robes that follow exactly the aristocratic female fashion of Xizhou (Colour Plate 5).

Their hairstyle, too, imitates the Xizhou Uygur fashions. The women's faces have completely darkened, and the original features are hard to judge, but they do have the typical straight hairline. This appears to be a regional version of the *Flügelfrisur* (winged hairstyle). On their heads they wear the water-drop-shaped female headdress, here decorated with phoenixes. The hands of the women are tucked away in their sleeves, and their feet are completely hidden. The flowers they are holding are painted as if growing from their hands. Gabain believed that, since it was impossible to hold real flowers in this manner this signified that they were only added after death.[195] However, here it seems that the flowers were part of the original composition, which adds to the possibility that this was simply a pictorial method of depicting flowers.

The royal male figure has no beard, and his features are even more exaggeratedly East Asian than in the case of the Bezeklik paintings. Each male figure has a very round face, a tiny mouth and dark narrow lines for slanted eyes. Attendants further back hold ceremonial fans decorated with imperial dragons, and other insignia. A smaller figure, presumably the son of the ruler, stands in front of him dressed in a similar dark robe and wearing an Uygur cap. The robe of the

195 A. von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, p. 166.

main figure is decorated with curling dragons, further emphasising his high rank. Very similar decoration is known from actual finds from Central Asia.[196]

From the art-historical point of view there are two important points regarding these images. First, the presence of these large-scale portraits leave us in no doubt that there was Uygur political dominance at that time. It is unlikely that if in power, after long of years of fighting, the Tanguts would have allowed the local Uygurs to portray themselves in the style of the Uygur royal portrait tradition, surely this would have amounted to political propaganda. During the Cao family's Chinese rule the only foreign ruler to be given prominence was the King of Khotan in Cave 98, but he appeared as a member of the Cao family, thereby emphasising their political alliance. As all the caves in Dunhuang that contain the portraits of Uygur rulers appear to have no apparent reference to the Tanguts or the Chinese, and as husbands and wives are clearly Uygur, it is more likely that Cave 409 and other caves showing the portraits of Uygur rulers were painted during a period of Uygur domination, however short this may have been. I disagree with Chen Bingying who in a recent article completely discounts the possibility of any kind of Uygur rule and believes that the term "Shazhou Uygur" only refers to loose nomadic groups in the area.[197] The sophisticated style of these paintings indicates more focused local groups than an arbitrary conglomeration of refugees and other Uygurs who would have formed loose groups in the region. Therefore the paintings have to be taken as evidence for a period of Uygur domination possibly in the early eleventh century. Second, these donor paintings closely follow the example set by Bezeklik Cave 20, thereby providing additional evidence for the existence of close cultural and political links between Turfan and Dunhuang. However, the quality of these paintings is somewhat provincial, and not identical with any of the extant styles at the Bezeklik caves, which shows that by the eleventh century a local Uygur workshop must have existed in Dunhuang.

Moriyasu has argued that by the beginning of the eleventh century there was a powerful group of Uygurs in Shazhou. In his view this

[196] J. Watt–A. Wardwell: *When Silk was Gold*: 1997, p. 116, cat. no. 30.

[197] Chen Bingying: "11 shiji cunzaiguo tongzhi Gua Sha er zhoude Huihu hanguo ma?" [Did the Ganzhou Shazhou Uygur Kingdom exist in the eleventh century?], *Dunhuang yanjiu* 2001, no. 2, pp. 68-72.

Uygur group was under the influence of the Xizhou Uygurs. According to him they first controlled the Cao family and then replaced them altogether and ruled Shazhou from the 1020s to the 1050s. The earliest document to point to the increasing power of the Uygurs in Shazhou is the first stake inscription. Written on a wood, it was found in Qočo in the centre of a room of Ruin α, in a Buddhist layer. It is believed that such inscribed stakes were placed in Buddhist temples as part of the consecration ceremony. Grünwedel suggested that the stake belonged to a Buddha statue that stood in the middle of the cella.[198] The first stake inscription, which Moriyasu redated to 1008, mentions an Uygur Buddhist donor, who has the title of *Šaču sangun*, meaning "the commander of Shazhou."[199]

This inscription is important from several points of view for the argument proposed in this study. It shows that by the first decade of the eleventh century the Uygurs had considerable power in the Shazhou area, as there existed an Uygur commander of Shazhou. Furthermore, the fact that the inscription was found in Qočo shows the close links between the Uygurs of Xizhou and Shazhou. It is also important as evidence to prove that the Uygurs of Shazhou were involved with the commissioning of a Buddhist temple, even in the Turfan area.

Another Uygur document proves, according to Moriyasu, that by 1019 the political power of the Xizhou Uygurs had reached Dunhuang. The document mentions that a "West Uygur" ruler expanded his rule to Šaču (Shazhou) in the east.[200] Further proof for the political influence of the Uygurs is provided by the fact that after 1023 there is no reference to the Cao family as the rulers of Dunhuang in the historical records. Referring to 1042 the *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 mentions a

[198] A. Grünwedel: *Bericht:* 1905, pp. 60-61 and fig. 56. Generally it is called the "First Stake Inscription" (*Pfahlinschrift*).

[199] T. Moriyasu: "Uiguru to Tonkō": 1980, pp. 334-335; 337-338; T. Moriyasu: *Uiguru Manikyō*: 1991, pp. 150-152; Takao Moriyasu: "*Uighur Buddhist Stake Inscriptions from Turfan*", in Louis Bazin—Peter Zieme (eds.): *De Dunhuang à Istanbul—Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2001, pp. 152-154. Von Gabain has also drawn attention to the likely domination of Shazhou by the Uygurs based on the existence of this stake inscription, but at that time the dating was not clear (she suggested 10th-11th century). Von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, pp. 19-20. Lao Xin summarises the current state of research with regards of the dating, Lao Xin: "Cong Dunhuang wenxian kan 9 shiji houde Xizhou", *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 2002 no. 1, pp. 81-88.

[200] T. Moriyasu: "Uighur Buddhist Stake Inscriptions": 2001, p. 188; T. Moriyasu: "The West Uighur Kingdom": 2000, p. 348.

Shazhou Beiting kaghan, therefore in Moriyasu's words:

> From this source, we can know that the king of Shazhou in 1042 was the Pei-t'ing qayan, that is the qayan of the west Uighurs. In my view, it is the West Uigurs who ruled Tun-huang, and the Sha-chou Uighurs were a general term which indicated all Uighur groups supervised by the west Uighur Kingdom.[201]

Yang Fuxue's view is that the local Shazhou Uygurs gained control of Dunhuang in the eleventh century. In the *Xuzizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 there is a reference to a certain "Shazhou Zhenguo Wangzi" 沙洲鎮國王子. *Zhenguo wangzi* means "Prince holding the realm", and again, in Moriyasu's opinion, this is the exact equivalent of the Uygur expression *el tutmiš*, which is fairly common in Uygur manuscripts, and therefore refers to an Uygur.[202] According to Yang Fuxue and Niu Ruji, as the reference to *el tutmiš* appears in a Dunhuang manuscript (Pelliot chinois 3049) he must have been the first local Shazhou Uygur ruler.[203] However, this would only be possible, if the *el tutmiš* of the Dunhuang manuscript referred to the person mentioned in the *Xuzizhi tongjian changbian*. As that entry refers to 1041 the date for the sealing of Cave 17 had to be reconsidered by Yang Fuxue, in order to argue that this and other Dunhuang manuscripts might refer to a later period.[204] This reasoning has been strongly refuted by Moriyasu.[205]

The most widely quoted reason for the sealing of the Library Cave is an imminent Tangut attack in the early eleventh century, most probably in 1036. It has, however, been pointed out that it seems unlikely that the manuscripts were put away in a hurry, as the bundles of silk scrolls appeared very orderly.

> The entrance, raised about a metre from the corridor, had been plastered over and covered with wall paintings dating from the Song dynasty, so that it seems certain that there was a deliberate intent to seal the deposit. This consisted of regular bundles of manuscript sutra rolls, and many irregularly shaped bundles containing paintings and other documents. There were so many of these that they almost completely filled the small chapel, which must have been deliberately cleared to receive them. The sealing and the good order in which everything was found, even after initial disturbance by the finder, the Daoist Wang Yuanlu, seems to favour the theory that this was an unhurried safekeeping of sacred material, which was no longer of use, rather than any attempt to rescue it from a wave of invaders, such as the Tanguts.[206]

[201] Unpublished manuscript of a lecture given at SOAS , University of London, December, 1998. Also referred to in T. Moriyasu: "The West Uighur Kingdom": 2000, p. 349.
[202] T. Moriyasu: "The West Uighur Kingdom": 2000, pp. 348-349.
[203] Yang: "On the Sha-chou Uighur Kingdom": 1994, p. 89, Yang and Niu: *Shazhou Huihu ji qi wenxian*: 1995, pp. 14-15.
[204] Yang: "On the Sha-chou Uighur Kingdom": 1994, p. 81.
[205] Most recently in T. Moriyasu: "The Sha-chou Uighurs": 2000.

The Tangut conquest has traditionally been put at 1036, but recent research has revealed that even though a battle did take place in that year, the Tanguts could not have controlled the Shazhou area in the early eleventh century. Only the Prince of Guazhou with his troops submitted to Tangut rule. Zhang Zhong suggests that Xi Xia 西夏 rule must have started between 1049 and 1054, because before that on inscriptions in Dunhuang caves the Song era is used for dating. Furthermore a source describing Tangut territory does not include Shazhou.[207] Others put this date even later, to 1072.[208] Therefore if the sealing of Cave 17 is linked to the Tangut conquest, it could be put forward by as much as half a century. Yang Fuxue has argued for a mid-eleventh century date for the sealing of Cave 17.[209] However, his views have been criticised by Moriyasu.[210] James Hamilton has also stressed that all the Uygur manuscripts published by him date from the tenth and early eleventh centuries.[211]

Consequently, due to the lack of manuscripts that may convincingly be dated to the middle of the eleventh century, the theory of a later date for sealing the cave has not been accepted by most scholars. The most recent authoritative argument has been put forward by Rong Xinjiang.[212] He argues that Cave 17 was not a depository of

[206] Whitfield: *ACA*: 1982-85, vol 1, p. 10.
[207] Zhang: *Dunhuang jianshi*: 1990, pp. 118-119.
[208] Sun, Xiushen: "Xi Xia zhanju Shazhou shijian zhi jian" [View on the time of Xi Xia occupation in Shazhou], *Dunhuangxue jikan*, No. 20, 1991, no. 2, pp. 40-41. Liu, Yuquan: "Zai lun Xi Xia ju Gua Sha de shijian ji qi xiangguan wenti" [Once again about the time of the Xi Xia occupation of Shazhou and Guazhou and the question of their relationship], *Duhuang yanjiu* 1993, no. 4, pp. 68-77.
[209] Yang: "On the Sha-chou Uighur Kingdom": 1994, p. 81.
[210] T. Moriyasu: "The Sha-chou Uighurs": 2000, pp. 44-45.
[211] James Hamilton: "On the Dating of the Old Turkish Manuscripts from Tun-huang", R. E. Emmerick: *Turfan:* 1996, pp. 135-145. The manuscripts were studied in James Hamilton: *Manuscrits Oigours du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-houang*, 2 vols. Paris: Peeters, 1986.
[212] Rong Xinjiang: "Dunhuang cangjingdongde xingzhi ji qi fengbi yuanyin"

waste material, but more likely a storage room for the belongings of one of the temples in Dunhuang, the Sanjiesi. I have mentioned this temple above as the monastery of Fabao who took *bianwen* with him to Xizhou.[213] Rong believes that the cave must have been sealed as early as 1006, as there are no manuscripts reliably found in Dunhuang Cave 17 dated later than 1002.[214] In his view the sealing of the cave could be connected with the defeat of the Khotanese by the Muslims in 1006. According to this view all the paintings and manuscripts originally found in Cave 17 must be dated earlier than 1006.

There is, however one further complication. According to Stein and others, Wang Yuanlu, the Daoist monk, who found the manuscripts in Cave 17, also found other, later ones, which he deposited in Cave 17 himself, before the arrival of Stein, Pelliot and the other travellers. Based on the quality of the paper used and the employed calligraphy, several manuscripts in the Stein material are likely to be much later than the eleventh century.[215] Therefore, even if the *provenance* of a manuscript or painting is assumed to be Cave 17, this cannot be taken as absolute evidence for the *terminus ante quem* of its creation.

In the case of paintings the stylistic evidence must also be examined. The overwhelming majority of the paintings look unquestionably earlier than the eleventh century, but some of the paintings discussed in this study appear to reflect Tangut influence. The "Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan" painting (Colour Plate 54) especially displays Tangut characteristics in addition to the Uygur ones.[216] Further research will be needed to clarify these issues. It seems plausible that Cave 17 was sealed some time in the beginning of the eleventh century.

Moriyasu thoroughly disagrees with Yang Fuxue's suggestion, that

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[The nature of the Dunhuang library cave and the reason for its sealing], *Dunhuang Tulufan yanjiu*, vol. 2 (1996), pp. 23-48; Rong Xinjiang: "The Nature of the Dunhuang Library Cave and the Reason for Its Sealing", *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, vol. 11 (1999-2000), pp. 247-275.

[213] See p. 68 in this book.

[214] F.32A in St. Petersburg appears to be the latest dated manuscript, dated to 1002, ibid., pp. 34, 39.

[215] A. Stein: *Serindia*: 1921, vol. 2, p. 923; András Róna-Tas: "A Brief Note on the Chronology of Tun-huang Collections", *AOH*, vol. 21 (1968), pp. 313-316. The different *provenance* for the late Uygur manuscripts in Dunhuang has been accepted as a fact by linguists, cf. Peter Zieme: *Die Stabreimtexte der Uiguren von Turfan und Dunhuang. Studien zur Alttürkischen Dichtung*: Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991, p. 18.

[216] See p. 215-221 in this book.

Cave 17 may have been sealed after 1053, and that some of the Uygur manuscripts therefore may date from the eleventh century.[217] Moriyasu, along with Hamilton, believes that these documents were written in the tenth century.[218] He has defended his initial view that the Xizhou Uygurs controlled Shazhou, and opposes the idea of an independent Shazhou Uygur Kingdom.[219]

The Dunhuang caves during the Shazhou Uygur period

The most important result of this debate is that whether or not the Uygurs had full political control, undoubtedly they were extremely influential in Shazhou in the first half of the eleventh century. Looking at the additional evidence that art provides it is important to stress that caves such as 409 in Dunhuang (Colour Plates 6-7) provide proof of definite links with the Xizhou Uygurs. They most probably date to the first half of the eleventh century. However, it must be noted that none of the Dunhuang caves identified by Liu Yuquan as "Shazhou Uygur" are in a style identical to that of the Bezeklik caves. Despite the many stylistic, compositional and iconographic links they fit well within the local development of Dunhuang art in their use of colour, and appear to be a local, provincial version of the Uygur art of the Turfan area. In this book I will continue to refer to these caves as "Shazhou Uygur." By these I mean the Dunhuang caves identified as Uygur and listed by Liu Yuquan.[220] It can only be hoped that future research will throw more light on the exact position of Uygur groups in Dunhuang in the eleventh century. Whether politically independent or not their wealth and importance cannot be doubted.

Further examples of Uygur donors can be found in Yulin Cave 39 and Dunhuang Cave 245. Another example of an Uygur ruler is found at Xiqianfodong—The Western Buddha Caves (Plate 11).[221] This smaller site contains several caves decorated in the early period, and several later ones. In Cave 16 a very similar procession to the one in

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[217] Yang: "On the Sha-chou Uighur Kingdom": 1994, p. 81.

[218] J. Hamilton: "On the dating": 1996.

[219] Most recently in T. Moriyasu: "The Sha-chou Uighurs": 2000.

[220] Liu Yuquan: "Guanyu Shazhou Huihu dongkude fenhua": 1990, pp. 1-29. Liu Yuquan: "Shashū uiguru no sekkutsu geijitsu": 1990, pp. 240-253.

[221] Cave 16 (AYK, Plate 239).

Cave 409 is shown. Here too the ruler is standing on a rug and wears a robe decorated with dragons. His cap is of the same type and he holds a vessel. The long inscription next to this figure is not legible, but the word Uygur *kaghan* is clearly part of the Chinese text. According to Rong Xinjiang this inscription is a later addition by Zhang Daqian.[222] The artistic and religious interaction between these regional powers linked to Dunhuang is the subject of the next chapter.

[222] Personal communication, November 1999. Rong also sent a letter to Moriyasu to draw his attention to this, which is quoted as an additional end-note in T. Moriyasu: "The Sha-chou Uighurs": 2000, p. 48. I have not had the chance to verify this on location, but if it were true it would be interesting that in the forties of the last century the identity of the Uygur donors was so clearly recognised and then forgotten again, so that they were repeatedly published as Tangut rulers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REGIONAL SHAPING THE CENTRAL: THE TRANSMISSION OF REGIONAL STYLE AND ICONOGRAPHY

The iconographic programme and style of the Shazhou Uygur caves: comparisons with Bezeklik

Cave 20 is probably the best-known and most widely illustrated cave from Bezeklik, and for this reason it is repeatedly referred to in this study. It can be deduced from the portraits of Uygur rulers in the cave that, it was almost definitely a royal commission (Colour Plates 4-5). As such it reflects a conscious choice of style and iconography and may be regarded as a key example of Uygur Buddhist art. Large figures dominate the compositions set against an otherwise empty red background. Any indication of a setting is stage-like, and as on the sides of *praṇidhi* depictions, very exaggeratedly decorated buildings are shown (Colour Plate 8; Figure 12). These paintings illustrate scenes from the lives of past Buddhas. In each scene all emphasis is on the oversized figure of the past Buddha: he is surrounded by attendant figures linked to the story, shown in smaller size. The overall impression is very decorative, with strong colours flattening the figures. Their postures are exaggerated. Simple, even black outlines define each figure with ornamental details added at every opportunity. The characteristic patterning of the nimbi and mandorlas is especially striking.

Some of these characteristics can be observed in the Shazhou Uygur caves too, especially the dominance of the large figures arranged in strongly symmetrical compositions. The preference for even outlines and decorative details is also shared (Plates 12-13). The greatest contrast is in the choice of colours: greens and blues dominate instead of the reds and oranges of Bezeklik. This use of colour is characteristic of all late caves from Dunhuang.

The iconographic programme of the Shazhou Uygur caves is not identical to any in Bezeklik, but the subject matter chosen is often very similar. Behind the Uygur ruler's figure in Xiqianfodong Cave 16 there are the remains of a Thousand-armed thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara

illustration (Plate 11). There is a further example of this in Yulin Cave 39 (Plate 12), which makes it possible to reconstruct what the image looked like before the ruler's figure was painted over it. This subject matter was very popular in Xizhou Uygur art too. The reconstruction of the iconographic programme of Cave 20 at Bezeklik has established that the primary icon of the cella was a large sculpture that stood on a square pedestal in the centre of the west (back) wall, which was also likely to have been the Eleven-headed or Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara. In the smaller back cave, painted on a pedestal placed against the rear too, a large sculpture of the Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara was shown.[1] The wall painting on its base was taken to Berlin, where it was destroyed during the Second World War, but is often reproduced.[2]

Liu Yuquan has already drawn attention to some of the other similarities between the paintings in the Shazhou Uygur and the Bezeklik caves in two articles. Beyond the dominance of the blue and green colouring, the Tangut caves also share some iconographic features with the Shazhou Uygur caves. Most interesting is the growing popularity of the "Water-Moon Guanyin," another form of Avalokiteśvara. This subject matter is known from earlier portable paintings.[3] In this period it was increasingly portrayed on large-scale murals.[4] It is likely that the simpler composition seen in Cave 237 at Dunhuang can be dated to the eleventh century and represents an earlier version. The same composition can also be found in the Tangut caves of Dunhuang which are more likely to date to the twelfth century.[5]

Liu gives a list of the iconographic programme of the Shazhou Uygur caves.[6] Among others, he has also identified the "Travelling Monk" and the "Sixteen *luohans*" as new subjects shown in Dunhuang for the first time in the Shazhou Uygur caves. There are several paintings

[1] D. Leidy: "Bezeklik": 2001, p. 206.
[2] MIK III 6877; see C. Dreyer *et al: Dokumentation:* 2002, p. 121.
[3] Stein painting 15, ink and colours on paper Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 52; EO 1136, ink and colours on paper, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 83; The lower register of MG 17775 (dated to 943 C.E.), ink and colours on silk, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 96.
[4] Water-Moon Guanyin, Dunhuang Cave 237, Shazhou Uygur period, DHMGK, vol. 5, pl. 130 and Water-Moon Guanyin, Yulin Cave 2, Tangut period, AYK, pl. 138.
[5] Yulin Cave 2. AYK, pl. 138.
[6] Liu: "Guanyu Shazhou": 1987, pp. 1-29.; Liu: "Shashū uiguru": 1990, pp. 242-244.

on paper from Dunhuang known as "Travelling Monk" or "Monk Accompanied by a Tiger" (Plate 14).[7] In each case the monk wears a hat and travelling clothes, holds a fan and is accompanied by a tiger. These paintings on paper closely resemble a wall painting in Dunhuang Cave 306 that has been described and classified as Shazhou Uygur by Liu (Figure 13). According to him there are six representations of this topic in three caves.[8] The facial features and even the colouring of these paintings can also be compared to the *luohans* of Cave 97 at Dunhuang. Especially comparable are the eyes, nose and exaggerated features of the *luohans* (Plate 15) and the way thick black outlines were used, which were then coloured with red and green washes of colour. Exaggerated facial features became a characteristic of most *luohan* paintings from the Tang dynasty onwards, but in this case, beyond the general typological similarity, the stylistic connections are very apparent too.[9]

Annemarie von Gabain has already drawn attention to the popularity of the subject matter of the *luohan* in Uygur art.[10] In the Beiting *stūpa* there is a separate room devoted to this subject where the *arhats*

[7] For a list of these paintings cf. Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pp. 336-337; Jean-Pierre Drège in Giès: *ACA*, p. 151. The latest published studies referring to these sketches are by Michel Soymié: "Peintures et dessins de Dunhuang. Notes d'iconographie", in Jean-Pierre Drége (et. al.): *Images de Dunhuang. Dessins et peintures sur papier das fonds Pelliot et Stein, Mémoires Archéologiques 24*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient: 1999, pp. 47-53 and Roderick Whitfield: "Dunhuang Depictions of Pilgrim Monks," in M. Ghose and L. Russell-Smith (eds.): *From Nisa to Niya* (forthcoming). The two detailed paintings on silk are known as: "Monk Accompanied by a Tiger," ink and colours and gold on silk, H: 79.5 cm, W: 54 cm, Musée Guimet, Paris (EO 1138) and another painting in ink and colours and gold on silk, H: 79.8 cm W: 54 cm. Musée Guimet, Paris (EO 1141). Further examples include three paintings in ink and colours on paper, H 28 cm W 49.8 cm. National Museum of Korea, Seoul; H: 41 cm, W: 29.80 cm, British Museum, (Stein painting 168) and H: 49.6 cm, W: 29.4 cm Musée Guimet, Paris (MG 17683) all entitled "Monk Accompanied by a Tiger."
[8] Liu: "Shashū uiguru": 1990, pp. 243-244.
[9] For the Chinese *luohan* paintings a good summary is given by Richard K. Kent: "Depictions of the Guardians of the Law: Lohan Painting in China", in M. Weidner (ed.): *Latter Days of the Law:* 1994, pp. 183-213. see also Roderick Whitfield: "The Lohan in China", in W. Watson (ed.): *Mahayanist Art After A.D. 900*, London: Percival David Foundation, 1973, pp. 96-101; Evelyne Mesnil: "Les Seize *Arhat* dans la peinture chinoise (VIIIe-Xe s.) et les collections japonaises: Prémices iconographiques et stylistiques", *Arts Asiatiques*, vol. 54 (1999), especially pp. 72-73, fig. 4 for the "Sixteen arhats" attributed to Guanxiu (832-912) in the Imperial Collection (Kunaichô: Sannomaru Shôkôzan), Tokyo.
[10] A. von Gabain, *Das Leben:* 1973, pp. 187-189.

are seated around the side walls (Figure 14). *Luohans* were also shown in a very similar way in one of the caves at Xiqianfodong likely to date from the tenth century.[11] Here, apart from the Buddha assembly shown opposite the entrance, the whole cave is dedicated to this subject matter, with the seated figures of *luohans* shown as statues, and the walls decorated with rows of hooded *luohans* in caves. This iconography is most unusual in the Dunhuang area, and its closest parallel is the room of *luohans* in the Beiting *stūpa*. This cave can not be linked to the Uygurs, so it is clear that in the area certain representational types were shared between the different groups of artists working in different idioms.

In the case of the "Accompanied by a Tiger" paintings too this seems to be the case (Plate 14). There are such substantial differences between the sketches on paper and the two famous paintings on silk in Paris that it is impossible to say that the subject matter was restricted to the Uygur patrons of Dunhuang. The figure of the travelling monk must have held a special meaning to the newly converted Uygurs. I have referred to the monk Fabao, who was one of the envoys going to Xizhou, taking scrolls of *bianwen*. Rong Xinjiang believes that he was an itinerant monk lecturing with the help of scrolls, just like the monks shown in the sketches.[12]

The style and iconography of the Shazhou Uygur caves can be linked to the Bezeklik caves. The *praṇidhi* scenes are almost unique in being represented in Bezeklik. These compositions depict previous stories from lives of previous Buddhas, and appear to be characteristic of the Uygur art of Bezeklik. This subject matter only appears in the Uygur caves of the Dunhuang area, such as in Yulin Cave 39.[13] In both Bezeklik and the Dunhuang Uygur caves all compositions are strongly symmetrical, and large figures dominate, filling the painted area, with little background decoration or setting. As in Bezeklik, here too the composition is dominated by the large figure of a Buddha surrounded by stiffly-arranged accompanying figures. Their postures appear 'flattened', and the appearance is much more two dimensional than the wall paintings during the High Tang period.

[11] *Luohans* in Xiqianfodong Cave 19, Five Dynasties, AYK, pls. 237-238.
[12] Rong Xinjiang: "The Relationship of Dunhuang with the Uighur Kingdom", Louis Bazin–Peter Zieme (eds.): *De Dunhuang à Istanbul–Hommage à James Russell Hamilton*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2001, p. 294.
[13] Reproduced in Liu: "Shashu Uiguru": 1990, fig. 1.

Close comparisons can also be made between the ornamental decorations used in the Shazhou Uygur caves and in Bezeklik: stiff, flattened and highly decorative floral and scroll designs are very popular. The patterning of the nimbi and mandorlas are extremely complex, with the radiating motifs completing a swirl design in one direction (Plate 20 and Figure 15). As opposed to this, in Dunhuang the usual method for showing haloes in the tenth century had been to divide the surface into two halves down the middle and to show the swirls and waves as if in a mirror (Figure 16). In Uygur caves other designs previously unknown in Dunhuang: such as geometric zig-zag patterns, have also become popular in this period. The facial characteristics of the figures are very similar. They are usually shown in a frontal position, and the faces tend to be round, outlined with even lines. Round, dotted eyes and small mouths characterise the faces both in Bezeklik and the Shazhou Uygur caves.

Despite the many similarities, however, the Shazhou Uygur caves can be instantly recognised as Dunhuang caves from the late period, and cannot be mistaken for Bezeklik caves. This is mostly due to the great difference in colouring and to some extent to the somewhat lesser quality of the Shazhou Uygur caves, which appear to be a simplified, provincial version of the more complex Bezeklik compositions. The colouring differs markedly: in keeping with the dominant colouring of all Dunhuang caves from the late tenth and eleventh centuries, greens and blues dominate in contrast to the reds and oranges so typical of the most famous examples from Bezeklik (Colour Plate 8). The Shazhou Uygur caves therefore represent an independent branch of local Uygur art that blends well with the rest of the later Dunhuang caves.

Problems of dating

Several major projects have recently been undertaken to publish the unparalleled collection of Uygur art in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin. Zsuzsanna Gulácsi has published a complete catalogue of the Manichaean fragments. Her article on redating them indicates her continuing work with the material.[14] Most recently Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner has published a detailed catalogue of

[14] Zsuzsanna Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2000. Z. Gulácsi: "Dating": 2002-2003, pp. 5-33.

the silk, cotton and ramie fragments in the collection of the same museum.[15] In several of her publications Bhattacharya-Haesner has concentrated on the influence of Indian Buddhist iconography on the Uygurs.[16] The Museum, under the leadership of Marianne Yaldiz and with the assistance of Bhattacharya-Haesner, has undertaken an important scientific project in collaboration with Chinese colleagues, to date scientifically the wall paintings from Bezeklik and Qizil.[17] In her lectures and articles Jorinde Ebert has also identified many of the key questions necessary for a complete reassessment and redating of Uygur art.[18]

For the first time the majority of the pieces in the Turfan Collection are now published. A relatively small number of non-Manichaean paper fragments still await publication, since Bhattacharya-Haesner chose only a few pieces that seemed to come from banners. It is hoped that future projects will clarify more intricate details of stylistic and iconographic development, and systematic stylistic research may bring us closer to the dating of the material. However, it has become clearer than ever before that the Uygur paintings are very fragmented and that identification of more complex subjects is very difficult both in Manichaean and in Buddhist art.

The greatest difficulty lies in the lack of available precise information regarding the dates of Uygur art within the broad periods so far identified. By contrast with the relatively large numbers of dated paintings from Dunhuang, there are no securely dated examples of Uygur art in any period. Annemarie von Gabain and others have drawn attention to the difficulties of dating Uygur texts, since the Uygurs used no dynastic titles like the Chinese.[19] Because of this problem of dating there have been widely differing views even with regard to basic questions, such as the conversion of the Uygurs from Manichaeism to Buddhism. No generally accepted view exists on the relationship between Uygur Manichaean and Uygur Buddhist art. Besides the problems of dating, the questions of whether Manichaean art coexisted with Buddhist art or whether the former preceded the latter have not been resolved.

This has had a severe impact on the study of Xizhou Uygur art. The dates assigned to Uygur art in the German publications of the first half of the twentieth century have been widely quoted, and it has been assumed that the major period of activity in Uygur art was in the eighth–ninth centuries.[20] However, even Grünwedel and von Le Coq were aware that their classification could only be provisional. In von Le Coq's words:

> A. Grünwedel endeavoured some time ago to classify the different styles of paintings found in the oasis of Kucha ... and in the oasis of Turfan-Kocho, Tuyoq, Sangim, Bazaklik, and Chikkan Köl. But this classification is only provisional; we still know too little of the origin of the pictures, and certain differences in the style of painting, which Grünwedel thinks must be accepted as the result of the immigration of another nation into the country, may owe their origin to other causes... The confirmation or alteration of Grünwedel's list must be deferred to a future time possessing more expert knowledge of accessory circumstances.[21]

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[15] Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner: *Central Asian Temple Banners in the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin (Painted Textiles from the Silk Route)*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2003.

[16] Most recently in "Indo-Tibetan influences in banners from Dunhuang, Central Asia: A Tribute to Stein" a paper given at "The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein" International Conference organised by PRASADA, De Montfort University, Leicester in collaboration with the CIAA, SOAS, University of London, 6-7 March, 2004, to be published in the proceedings: Lindsay Zamponi (ed.): "The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein" (forthcoming). See also *CATB*, pp. 42-43 and C. Haesner: "Banners from Dunhuang and Turfan": 1997, pp. 715-730. and Chhaya Haesner: "Banners from Turfan", Rajeshwari Ghose (ed.): *In the Footsteps of the Buddha. An Iconic Journey from India to China*, Hong Kong: University Museum and Art Gallery, 1998, pp. 93-101.

[17] Marianne Yaldiz: "Sino-German Research Project on the Cave-Temples of the Kucha Region", *Circle of Inner Asian Art (CIAA) Newsletter*, Issue 9 (April 1999), pp. 16-17. Some results (but without discussions) are given in the new catalogue M. Yaldiz: *Magische Götterwelten*: 2000.

[18] I am grateful to Dr. Ebert for her comments and for discussing with me details of her project. Jorinde Ebert: *Fragmentary Evidence for Art Styles in Turfan*, Habilitationsschrift 2001 remains unpublished at present.

[19] Annemarie von Gabain: "Alttürkische Datierungsformen", *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, vol. 27 (1955), pp. 191-203. The lunar mansions (*nakṣatras*) consequently play an important part in the dating process.

[20] As research regarding the dating of Uygur Buddhism and art was until recently only published in Japanese, many writers such as Jane Casey (Singer), Denise Leidy and Nancy Steinhardt continued to use the traditional dates, see their works quoted in the Bibliography. Because they compare Uygur material with Chinese or Tibetan art the dates they use are especially important. It is interesting to note that many specific dates assigned by von Le Coq are very vague: ninth–twelfth century in von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913.

[21] Albert von Le Coq: *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1928 (republished by Oxford University Press, 1985: pp. 28-29). With

The exact dates for Uygur art have not been decided convincingly up to the present day. This explains also why Table 2 cannot furnish the same detailed view century by century as in the case of Dunhuang. As we have seen, in Dunhuang a probable although not definitive *terminus ante quem* is provided by the sealing of Cave 17, an event which probably took place at the beginning of the eleventh century, and is not likely to have been later than the third decade of that century.

In Turfan, by contrast, material from obviously different periods has been found at various sites, and could thus date from any time between the ninth century (when the Uygurs established their power) and the thirteenth. The archaeological methods used at the beginning of the twentieth century are often regarded as unscientific by today's standards. Even the stratigraphy cannot provide sufficient information, as at times traditional archaeology cannot be practised in desert conditions, due to the constantly moving sand layers. This situation is made more complex by the fact that many of the excavated buildings were obviously reused, so that older artefacts were found together with more recent ones.

In order to make comparisons between the Buddhist art of Shazhou and Xizhou it would be advantageous to know when the Uygurs converted to Buddhism. Traditionally it has been assumed that the Turks had already been introduced to Buddhism by the sixth century, and scattered evidence has been found from later times.[22] However, there is no evidence that the Buddhist religion took root.[23] In recent

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regard to the Kuchean style and dating a process of reassessment has begun. See Su Bai: "Xinjiang Baicheng Kizier shiku bufen dongkude leixing yu niandai" Types and dating of some caves at Kizil in Baicheng, Xinjiang] written in 1989, republished; Su Bai: *Zhongguo Shikusi yanjiu* [Studies on the Cave Temples of China], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996, pp. 21-38; Angela Howard: "In Support of a New Chronology for the Kizil Mural Paintings", *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 42 (1991), pp. 68-83; Angela Howard: "Liang Patronage of Buddhist Art in the Gansu Corridor during the Fourth Century and the Transformation of a Central Asian Style", in Wu Hung (ed.): *Between Han and Tang: Religious Art and Archaeology in a Transformative Period*, Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2000, pp. 235-272. I am grateful to Professor Howard for sending me this article.

[22] Jens Peter Laut believes that early Turkish Buddhism was linked to the Sogdians: Jens Peter Laut: *Der frühe türkische Buddhismus und seine literarischen Denkmäler*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986, pp. 1-12.

[23] Hans-Joachim Klimkeit: "Buddhism in Turkish Central Asia", *Numen*, vol. 37 (1990), pp. 53-69.

years historians and linguists have undertaken more research into the question of the Uygurs' conversion to Buddhism. Johan Elverskog has stressed that "many issues regarding the history of the adoption of Buddhism by Turkic peoples remain unclear."[24]

Chinese sources are often quoted to prove that Buddhist missionaries were active among the Turks during the First Turk Empire (552-612).[25] In addition to these there is also an indigenous source often quoted as evidence for the adoption of Buddhism by the Turks of the First Empire. The so-called Bugut inscription can be found in a burial complex for a Turk ruler in present-day Mongolia.[26] The main inscription was written in Sogdian, and mentions that Tatpar Kaghan had ordered that a great new *saṃgha* be established among the Turks. This commonly-held view is now partially questioned by Takao Moriyasu. He points out that it had been generally assumed that a Buddhist monastery was founded in the first Turkic Empire. However, according to Moriyasu, since the other face of this inscription contains a vertically-inscribed text in Brāhmī script, the *dharma*-stone referred to in the inscription is most likely referring to the Bugut inscription itself.[27] Laut considers the use of the Brāhmī language itself as a proof of the presence of Buddhism, as he believes that only Buddhists used this language.[28] However, Moriyasu's new reading makes the role Buddhism played much more questionable, as the inscription may refer to a single occurrence. It seems that none of these early sources can be taken as definite proof of the existence of Buddhism among the Turks.

The text of the first stake inscription found in Ruin α was read

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[24] J. Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*: 1997, p. 5.

[25] Ibid. p. 5.

[26] For a description and photograph see Klyashtorny, S.G. and V. A. Livshitz: "The Sogdian Inscription of the Bugut Revised", *AOH*, vol. 26 (1972), pp. 69-102.

[27] "The new rubbings have enabled us to clarify some hitherto incorrect readings of the texts. Regarding the Bugut inscription for example, the reading by Klyashtorny and Livshitz as *nwh snk' 'wst* (establish a new *samgha*) is now revised by Yoshida as *nwm snk' 'wst* (to establish a *dharma* stone' i.e. a stone inscribed with Buddhist laws)." T. Moriyasu: "A Report": 1998, p. 7. Published in Japanese as T. Moriyasu and Y. Yoshida: "A Preliminary Report on the Recent Survey of Archaeological Sites and Inscriptions from the Turkic and Uighur Period in Mongolia" (in Japanese), *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*, vol. 13 (1998), pp. 129-170. For an analysis of the old reading's importance see J. Laut: *Der frühe türkische Buddhismus*: 1986, pp. 4-5.

[28] J. P. Laut: *Der frühe türkische Buddhismus*: 1986, p. 4.

and translated by F. W. K. Müller. He linked the text to the famous Bögü kaghan, who introduced Manichaeism, and thereby tentatively dated the inscription to the eighth century, whilst acknowledging that the identity of the name might be a coincidence.[29] Takao Moriyasu has provided an altogether new reading of this inscription and has redated it to 1008, based on the alternative dates given by Louis Bazin.[30] Moriyasu's main argument is that the historical situation favours a later date. James Hamilton has provided further support for this by citing Roger Billard's dating method.[31] This has triggered a new debate in specialist circles. Laut, also taking linguistic characteristics into consideration, has argued for the existence of some tenth century Uygur Buddhist literature. He has disagreed with the use of personal names for dating and called for more attention to be paid to observing the layout and characteristics of the manuscript and its calligraphy.[32] Moriyasu continues to stress that among the Xizhou Uygurs, conversion to Buddhism only took place in the second half of the tenth century, and in his view the Buddhist wall paintings in Ruin α all date from after 1008.[33]

Moriyasu's argument has very important consequences for the study of Uygur art, as this stake inscription was found in the main room of Ruin α in Qočo, a room with important wall paintings decorating its walls. Based on this, Jorinde Ebert now dates the beginning of the "full-blown Royal Uygur Buddhist art" of Qočo to the end of the tenth or early eleventh century, as she believes that the wall paintings found in Ruin α represent the earliest Uygur Buddhist style.[34] Research in recent years on Manichaean art and literature also seems to support this view. Mainly due to the lack of complete examples with clearly identifiable subject matter, research on Manichaean art has been difficult. In a study of Uygur Manichaean paintings Gulácsi had to apply

[29] F. W. K. Müller: *Zwei Pfahlinschriften aus den Turfanfunden*, Berlin: Verlag der Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1915, pp. 4-5.
[30] T. Moriyasu: "Uighur Buddhist Stake Inscriptions": 2001, pp. 149-223.
[31] J. Hamilton: *Manuscrits ouïgours:* 1986, vol. 1, p. xvii.
[32] J. P. Laut: *Der frühe türkische Buddhismus:* 1986, p. 6.
[33] Takao Moriyasu: "The Decline of Manichaeism and the Rise of Buddhism among the Uighurs with a Discussion on the Origin of Uighur Buddhism", in T. Moriyasu: *"Four Lectures":* 2003, pp. 84-100.
[34] Personal communication, June 2001.

codicological methodology in order to restore the likely appearance of Manichaean books.[35]

Until recently, Manichaean book illustrations, like the rest of Uygur art, have been dated to the eighth and ninth centuries, and in fact it was traditionally assumed that they preceded the introduction of Uygur Buddhist art.[36] Hans-Joachim Klimkeit accepted the traditional eighth–ninth century dates for the miniatures and other paintings.[37] Most recently, based on a single example of carbon dating undertaken by the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin, Gulácsi has challenged this dating.[38] She builds a case for redating Uygur Manichaean art to the tenth and eleventh centuries.

It is important to keep in mind the general misgivings of experts about the reliability of carbon dating, especially if only a single example is available. For example Jane Casey (Singer) has little faith in the reliablity of carbon dating for purposes other than to find modern forgeries. For dating: "Carbon-14 analysis is useful in identifying modern forgeries, but cannot alone specify a painting's date as well as other chronological guides."[39] Naturally it is important to be careful with the results of carbon dating, especially if the objects in question had undergone conservation in the past, as this can alter the result. However, if available, it is important to use carbon dating as supportive material to confirm or contradict the results of other research methods. Carbon dates are therefore very important whether published in Chinese excavation reports or by European museums and specialists.

If we consider that following its earlier relative importance the Manichaean religion was becoming less popular by the second half of the tenth century, Gulácsi's call for a revision of the dates seems correct. According to the Arabic geographical source *Muruj al-dhabab*

[35] Zsuzsanna Gulácsi: "Rules of Page Arrangement in Manichaean Illuminated Book Fragments", in R. E. Emmerick (ed.): *Studia Manichaica. IV.*: 2000, pp. 270-307; Zsuzsanna Gulácsi: *Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art. A Study of Design, Function, and Origin of Manichaean Book Illumination*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1998 (MMBA). To be published as "Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art", Leiden: Brill (forthcoming).
[36] Albert von Le Coq: *Die manichäischen Miniaturen*, vol. 2 of A. von Le Coq: *Die Buddhistische Spätantike:* 1923, pp. 34-36.
[37] H. Klimkeit: *Manichaean Art:* 1982 (*passim*).
[38] Z. Gulácsi: "Dating": (2002-2003), pp. 5-13.
[39] Jane Casey Singer: *Early Painting in Tibet*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991, p. 53

written, by al-Masūdī in 943 Manichaeism was still flourishing and there was no mention of Buddhism.[40] Only towards the end of the tenth century does there appear to have been a shift by the ruling élite away from Manichaeism towards Buddhism. In 982 Wang Yande 王延德, a Song envoy, noticed only one Manichaean temple in comparison with fifty Buddhist monasteries.[41]

In his book on Uygur Manichaeism Moriyasu summarises the prevalent views on the survival of this religion.[42] To illustrate his own view, according to which Buddhism gradually became dominant by the early eleventh century, Moriyasu retranslated and reinterpreted a text from the Berlin Akademie der Wissenschaften (M112 verso). In this passionate text a Manichaean priest mourns the sad fate of his temple. He writes that the temple is collapsing and his own strength is waning. He laments that a Buddhist temple has moved in, and the Manichaean temple has been knocked down. Its ornaments and decorations have been pulled off and used to adorn the Buddhist temple. The priest then concludes by saying that he wrote this down so that later Manichaeans would understand this sad situation. Moriyasu, with the help of M. Yano, identified the date of the Manichaean temple's destruction as 983. Based on this text it is clear that the Manichaean *electi* had to face fierce competition from the Buddhists from the 970s onwards.[43] Moriyasu believes that the earliest Buddhist caves in Bezeklik were commissioned by the Uygur rulers shortly after this period in the late tenth or early eleventh century. However, the evidence presented in this study makes it likely that the Uygur Buddhist caves of Bezeklik already existed in the first half of the tenth century. The first figures of Uygur appearance in Dunhuang painting can also be linked to this period.

[40] V. Minorsky: "Tamīm ibn Bahr's Journey": 1948, p. 288.

[41] J. Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*: 1997, p. 7. see also pp. 8-9. Cf. also Aurel Stein: "The Turfan Territory: Some Aspects of its Geography and History", *Innermost Asia: Detailed Reports of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su and Eastern Iran*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928, vol. 2, pp. 566-586.

[42] T. Moriyasu: *Uiguru Manikyô*: 1991, pp. 142-143.

[43] T. Moriyasu: "The Decline", in T. Moriyasu: "Four Lectures": 2003, pp. 86-90.

The earliest representations of Uygurs in Dunhuang: the envoy

Any change in the style of Dunhuang art was a sensitive indicator of the area's cultural and political links in different periods. It has often been observed that during the Tang dynasty, especially in the seventh–eighth centuries the style of secular paintings from central China was followed with remarkable closeness in Dunhuang despite the huge distances. The representation of the Chinese emperor in Cave 220 is often quoted to illustrate this, because of its striking resemblance to the portraits of emperors on the famous scroll attributed to Yan Liben 閻立本 from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Figures 17-18).[44]

In contrast, from the Middle Tang period, the time of Tibetan occupation (781-847), Shazhou developed closer links with the neighbouring territories than with central China. The changes in the style of tenth century Dunhuang painting, such as the repetition of subject matter and the embellishment of popular compositions, have already been explained as being due to the isolation of Shazhou from the imperial centre. There was a shift from a China-centered, élite-based culture at Dunhuang to a multi-cultural society characterised by independence from central China. Patronage of commoners and of the ruling class alike reflect these changes.

The late ninth- and tenth-century illustrations of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* in Dunhuang, such as the one in Cave 138, were the results of over two hundred years of local development (Colour Plate 9). In these late examples, the most important teachings of almost every chapter of the *Sūtra* were neatly added to the composition. The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* describes the debate between Vimalakīrti—a layman in his sickbed who is really an enlightened bodhisattva—and the bodhisattva of Wisdom, Mañjuśrī. At the request of Śākyamuni Buddha, who is teaching nearby, only Mañjuśrī dares to take up the challenge to debate

[44] See S. Fraser: *The Artist's Practice*: 1996, pp. 18-19. For a reproduction of Cave 220 see Dunhuang Wenwu yanjiusuo [Dunhuang Research Institute] (ed.): *Zhongguo shiku—Dunhuang Mogaoku* [Chinese cave temples - Dunhuang Mogao caves] (DHMGK), Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987, vol. 3, pl. 33. Yan Liben's "Thirteen Emperors" scroll, in the Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, is widely reproduced, *e.g.* in Wu Tung: *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Tang through Yuan Dynasties*, Boston and Tokyo: Museum of Fine Arts and Otsuka Kogeisha, 1996, pl. 1.

the nature of non-duality with Vimalakīrti. Multitudes of people and supernatural beings arrive to listen to the conversation.

The late compositions are basically the enlargement of the core schema as may be seen in Cave 220 from the Early Tang period and in Cave 103 from the High Tang period, which consist of Vimalakīrti's sick bed on one side, Mañjuśrī and his assembly on the other side, and several key figures of the *Sūtra*.[45] In Caves 220 and 103 Mañjuśrī and Vimalakīrti appear on the eastern wall, on either side of the cave entrance. In the seventh and eighth centuries, by contrast, the whole composition could be shown on the side wall, as in Cave 335.[46] With the larger surface available in the later versions many new details were added. The tenth-century examples were often once again shown on either side of the entrance wall, but, in line with the changing taste, the compositions became increasingly crowded, as is the case in Cave 98, dating from the first half of the tenth century (Colour Plate 10). This is the cave where the female Ganzhou Uygur donors were first depicted (Colour Plate 1).

In all these illustrations the listeners to the debate were assembled behind and by the side of Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī, and by the seventh century were divided into a Chinese crowd and a group of exotic foreigners. By the early tenth century there was a long tradition of showing foreign envoys in Dunhuang. Many of the headdresses had been shown continuously for several hundred years. The crowd of foreigners on ninth century examples usually included a Tibetan monarch, a Korean and a Turkic figure. The Turks could be recognised by their typical triangular collars, which resembled Sogdian dress.[47]

Among the familar types of headgear a new type appeared that resembles the three-pronged headdress of the Uygurs from the Turfan

[45] Dunhuang Cave 220 is dated to 642 by two inscriptions on the north and east walls respectively; see Ning: *Art and Politics*: 2004, pp. 109-110. Cf. also Li: *Dunhuangxue*: 1998, p. 50; Cave 103 (early eighth century) is also described ibid. p. 54. For illustrations see DHMGK, vol. 3, pl. 30 and pls. 154-155.

[46] Dunhuang Cave 335, north wall, Early Tang period, DHMGK, vol. 3, pl. 61.

[47] For Turkic stone figures found in Mongolia see Yu. S. Khudyakov: "Drevnetyurkskie pominal'nye pamyatniki na territorii Mongolii", in R. S. Vasil'evskii (ed.): *Drevnie kul'tury Mongolii*, Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1985, p. 171, fig. 4. Further illustrations can be found in *Ótörök Kőemberek* [Old Turkic stone men], Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum [Ethnographic Museum], 1997 (exhibition brochure) and László Kunkovács: *Kőemberek. A sztyeppei népek ősi hagyatéka*, [Stone men. The ancient heritage of the people of the steppes], Budapest: Masszi Kiadó, 2002.

area. The figure wearing this appears in front of Vimalakīrti's sick bed for the first time in Dunhuang Cave 138, constructed between 894-906.[48] He can be clearly seen in the bottom part of the painting on the left, in the third row, and his head appears just in front of Vimalakīrti's sick bed (Colour Plate 9, Plate 8). The shape of his headgear looks like the three-pronged headdress, labelled *Dreizack-kappe* by von Gabain (Figure 4).[49] A figure wearing the same type of headgear can also be seen in a similar position in Cave 98 (Colour Plate 10). However, the headgear depicted in Dunhuang is white in colour, and not black as usually seen in paintings found in the Turfan area. Therefore it is possible that this points to a regional variation, and that these envoys may represent another area such as Ganzhou, although this assumption remains speculative at this point.[50]

As von Gabain has noted, Uygur nobles distinguished themselves by wearing belts and certain types of headdress.[51] According to Ebert the three-pronged headdress was worn by nobles of military rank, while princes wore the high tiara seen in Bezeklik Cave 20 (Colour Plate 4).[52] If Ebert's interpretation is correct the figure in front of Vimalakīrti is a military envoy, which is in agreement with the traditional ranking of foreigners on wall paintings in Tang royal tombs and on other representations of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*.

Description of the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra illustration at Murtuq and its comparison to Dunhuang examples

It is usually assumed that the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* was not illustrated outside China, even though the *Sūtra* itself enjoyed great popularity in Central Asia. A composition in Cave 3 in Murtuq (second ruin

[48] The date for the construction of Cave 138 and a short description are given by Li Yongning in Li *Dunhuangxue*: 1998, p. 63.

[49] Annemarie von Gabain: "Die Dreizack-Kappe uigurischer Würdenträger", *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, vol. 36 (1965), pp. 331-335.

[50] This was pointed out by Jorinde Ebert, June 2001, in a personal communication. As at present we know of no representations or descriptions of the male headdress worn by the Ganzhou Uygur ruling class, my suggestion remains a hypothesis, but the resemblance of this headgear to the Uygur *Dreizackkappe* and the fact that it appeared in the early tenth century in Dunhuang are worth noting.

[51] A. von Gabain: "Die Dreizack-Kappe": p. 331.

[52] Ebert: "Gedanken", 1997, p. 2.

today known as Baixiha 拜錫哈), which is very similar to the Late Tang examples from Dunhuang, has until recently gone unnoticed by scholars writing about representations of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* (Plate 16).[53] Murtuq is in the vicinity of the Bezeklik caves near Turfan. There are five caves in the complex, and it is the largest of these, the only one with a central pillar, which contains the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* illustration. The shape of the cave is common in the area, with space around the central pillar for circumbulation, and an arched ceiling. It is clear from Grünwedel's description that the whole cave was decorated according to a Buddhist programme. The Murtuq mural is, unfortunately, in very bad condition today. Almost half of the composition has fallen off, including most of Vimalakīrti's figure, and the remaining figures are all defaced. Importantly there is an inscription in the lower part of the composition, which Grünwedel thought illegible, but recognised as being written in the Uygur script.[54]

The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* composition in Murtuq can be recognised by its layout. This is especially close to the arrangement in Dunhuang Cave 138, so it is helpful to turn to this and the other Dunhuang examples to identify the lost or barely discernible scenes of the Murtuq painting. The figures of Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī are shown on the two sides with the multitudes assembled around them. Mañjuśrī is clearly recognisable on the right, while the remains of Vimalakīrti's sickbed can just be made out on the left. The layout commonly used in Dunhuang is also followed in the case of the figures shown in the centre: a bodhisattva pouring rice represents an illusory bodhisattva created by Vimalakīrti, who brought a bowl of rice from a distant Buddha land, called All Fragrances. This bowl of rice could feed all the multitudes, and its fragrance lasted for days. The bodhisattva pouring the rice can be seen towards the middle of the composition.

Despite the poor state of preservation, the remains of Śāriputra and the goddess are also recognisable in the middle of the composition

[53] A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*, 1912, pp. 303-307. The site is also described in A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, pp. 13-14, pls 74a, 38. For reproductions and a short description see ZXBQ, pls. 165-173 and pp. 64-66. In this relatively recent publication (1995) the subject matter was correctly identified. Jorinde Ebert first published this wall painting recently as comparative material to a paper fragment: Jorinde Ebert: "Ein Vimalakīrti-Bildfragment aus Turfan", Peter Zieme: *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra. Edition alttürkischer Übersetzungen nach Handschriftfragmenten von Berlin und Kyoto*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2000, pp. 197-202.

[54] A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*: 1912, p. 305.

in Murtuq. This refers to an incident in the *Sūtra*, when a goddess appeared showering flowers on the assembly. When the flowers reached the bodhisattvas, they fell to the ground, as expected, but in the case of the disciples they stuck to their bodies. Śāriputra tried to shake the flowers off in vain: "Flowers cling to those who have not yet dispelled the pervasions of the passions; they do not cling to those who have dispelled them"[55] explained the goddess, and Śāriputra had to realise that fearing birth and death meant that form, sound, smell, taste and touch could still trouble him. Had he been fearless, he would have been immune to all the effects of the five senses. Śāriputra admired the cleverness of the goddess, and asked her why she should appear in a female bodily form, in spite of being so knowledgeable. The goddess thereupon proved that all phenomena, including forms, are unreal by changing Śāriputra into her own female form, while herself changing into the form of Śāriputra.

The pedestals supported by lions, approaching from the upper right corner in the Murtuq mural represent flying lion-thrones procured by Vimalakīrti from a distant Buddha land.

> ...the room was broad and spacious enough to hold all these thirty-two thousand lion seats without the slightest crowding or hindrance... Shariputra said, "Laymen, I have never seen such a thing! A little room like this and still it can hold seats as tall and broad as these! And the city of Vaishali is in no way crowded or obstructed, nor are any of the towns or villages of Jampudvipa or of the other of the four continents cramped or inconvenienced...![56]

Vimalakīrti takes the opportunity to explain that the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas "can take something as tall and broad as Mount Sumeru and put it inside a mustard seed without enlarging one or shrinking the other."[57]

The group in the middle of the top part of the Murtuq mural is also remarkable: this section in Dunhuang wall paintings usually represents the 500 elders being presented with canopies, as in Cave 138 (Colour Plate 9), but in Murtuq the small figures symbolise the Abhirati Universe, represented by a Buddha assembly. The Abhirati Universe is

[55] Étienne Lamotte: *The Teachings of Vimalakirti*, London: Pali Text Society, 1976, p. 161.

[56] Burton Watson: *The Vimalakirti Sutra*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 77-78.

[57] Ibid. p. 78.

shown in a similar way on Stein painting 57 and in Dunhuang Cave 159.[58] Stein painting 57 on silk is interesting, as it proves that portable compositions of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* were also in circulation.

Dunhuang Cave 159 and Stein painting 57 have been dated to the period of the Tibetan occupation on the basis that in place of the figure of the Chinese emperor, who usually appears in front of Mañjuśrī as part of the listening crowds, a Tibetan *btsan-po* is shown with his retinue. In contrast, in the case of the Murtuq wall painting the figure of the Chinese emperor is visible in the usual position, easily recognisable by his flat crown. For this reason it is likely that the wall painting was copied from an example later than the mid-ninth century. It is also significant that no Uygur ruler's headdress is shown, which is a further proof that a Chinese example from Dunhuang was followed most closely.

On the margins of the east wall a series of smaller frames is depicted. These are in bad condition, preventing the identification of their subject matter, but presumably they illustrated scenes from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*. Each scene is contained in a red field and is accompanied by long inscriptions in Uygur. This arrangement recalls the Paradise paintings from Dunhuang, where stories from the relevant sutras were illustrated on either side of the main composition (Plate 41).[59] However, the execution is very different. In Dunhuang there are no examples where a red background colour was used, and the inscriptions were usually much shorter and simply contained in cartouches.

As there are Uygur inscriptions in the lower part of the Murtuq *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* composition, and under each framed illustration on the right side of the composition, we can be certain that this mural was painted after the Uygurs moved to the area in the mid-ninth century. The rendering of the mountains is also remarkable: on a shared baseline they are shown as triangles with a smooth outline overlapping each other, defined by parallel contours. This remains a feature of Uygur art up to the latest period.[60]

The earliest Uygur caves in the Turfan area may have been Manichaean, and consequently it is also useful to compare the Murtuq

[58] For Stein painting 57 see Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, pp. 316-318 and pl. 20. For Cave 159 see Li: *Dunhuangyue*: 1998, p. 71 and DHMGK, vol. 3, pl. 88.

[59] "Paradise of Amitābha" (EO 1128), Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 16-1.

[60] Such "crystalline mountains" appear on the wall painting fragment known as "Dragon in a Lake" from Bezeklik, MIK III 8383, reproduced in Härtel and Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, cat. no. 84, pp. 148-149.

Vimalakīrti wall painting to these. It is possible that as the Uygur rulers were Manichaean, they commissioned the few existing Manichaean caves in Bezeklik. A likely date for these is the second half of the ninth and the first half of the tenth centuries.[61] In the case of Manichaean wall paintings two extreme opinions are prevalent. Chao Huashan believed that he had identified dozens of Manichaean caves.[62] Most other scholars reject Chao's view, however, and believe that very few have survived; there is more evidence to support the latter view.[63]

As the Manichaean wall painting in Bezeklik Cave 38 is likely to remain a relatively isolated find, it is difficult to draw general conclusions about its style (Colour Plate 11). The matter is further complicated by the fact that in its lack of colouring it also differs markedly from the style of the illuminated Manichaean manuscripts found in the area. The style of Bezeklik Cave 38 appears experimental. The composition is simple, on a white background, executed with sketchy black lines and light colouring, all features that are also present in the case of the Murtuq mural. Of course the poor state of preservation of both these murals is a problem, as they are defaced and the colours have flaked off, making it difficult to analyse the style. Even so several similar features are evident. First, in the case of the Manichaean mural, the background is left white; second the figures are shown in sketchy black outlines with only light colour washes added, in stark contrast to the later colourful style. As in the case of the wall painting in Murtuq, the concept of space is simple, the arrangement lacks depth and the figures appear flat. The round faces are shown using a black outline, with no attempt to show volume, and with thin eyebrows and eyes. Red and green colour washes are used, but the overall impression is monochrome, unlike the brightly coloured examples of the illuminated manuscripts. Jorinde Ebert recently published the Murtuq wall painting as late Song, but she did not support her dating with any

[61] Takao Moriyasu: "Introduction à l'histoire des Ouïghours et de leurs relations avec le Manichéisme et le Bouddhisme", "Four Lectures": 2003, pp. 33-37. Moriyasu has identified Manichaean inscriptions in several Bezeklik caves. T. Moriyasu: *Uigura Manikyō*: 1991, pls. 10-14.

[62] Chao Huashan: "New Evidence of Manichaeism in Asia: A Description of Some Recently Discovered Manichaean Temples in Turfan", *Monumenta Serica*, vol. 44 (1996), pp. 267-315.

[63] cf. Z. Gulácsi: "Dating": 2002-2003 note 13, and personal conversations in Budapest, Hungary in 1997 and New Haven, USA in 1998.

explanation.[64] In the light of the new evidence it is more likely that the Murtuq mural dates from the tenth century: a period of intense links between Dunhuang and the Xizhou and Ganzhou Uygurs.

Workshop practices

The main question that must be addressed is the following: in what way could the composition so popular in Dunhuang have been passed on to the artists active in Murtuq? Recent research conducted has brought us closer to the understanding of workshop practices in Dunhuang, and it has been argued that sketches were used for laying out the composition of wall paintings.[65] Sarah Fraser has also extended her research to the Turfan area as part of the three-year Turfan project. However, like many other members of the project she restricted her observations almost exclusively to the pre-Uygur Chinese period of the Xizhou prefecture.[66]

My own study of *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* illustrations provides further indirect evidence of the existence of sketches in Dunhuang and in China. In Dunhuang Cave 103, from the early eighth century, Vimalakīrti is leaning forward against an arm rest, with his mouth half open as if debating the meaning of non-duality (Plate 18). The same figural type was already in use in Dunhuang one hundred years earlier in Cave 220, dated to 642. Cave 220 is well known for its close connection to Central China and reference has already been made to the remarkable similarity of the figure of the Chinese emperor in front of Mañjuśrī to the figures of the emperors on the famous scroll at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts attributed to Yan Liben (Figures 17-18).[67] It is likely, therefore, that sketches were used to copy the figure of the Chinese emperor, as well as for the figure of Vimalakīrti himself.

The Tang model for representing Vimalakīrti was handed down to the Song painters, as he appears almost unchanged five hundred

[64] J. Ebert: "Ein Vimalakīrti-Bildfragment": 2001, p. 198.

[65] S. Fraser: *Performing the Visual*: 2004, especially pp. 48-108 and Ma De: *Dunhuang gongjiang shiliao* [Historical sources on Dunhuang artisans], Lanzhou, Gansu Renmin chubanshe, 1997.

[66] Sarah E. Fraser: "A Reconsideration of the Archaeological Finds from the Turfan Region", *Dunhuang Tulufan Yanjiu* [Dunhuang Turfan Research], no. 4, 1999, pp. 375-418.

[67] See p. 89 in this book.

years later as the main figure of a painting traditionally attributed to Li Gonglin (c. 1041-1106) (Plate 19).[68] In this painting Vimalakīrti is dressed like a Chinese scholar, sitting on a high pedestal, with a female attendant holding flowers behind him. Only in the knowledge of the earlier extended Vimalakīrti illustrations can we identify the female attendant as the goddess, and the tiny figures of lions decorating Vimalakīrti's seat as references to the lion thrones.

The artist must have followed Tang models, possibly using pattern books or stencils, for this painting. Even though none of these has survived in central China itself, the extreme closeness to the composition in Dunhuang makes this very likely. The Song Vimalakīrti is almost identical to the type shown in Cave 103, the only major difference being that it is a mirror image—further strengthening the impression that this may be the result of repeated copying. Of course this facial type for depicting scholars was already known in earlier Chinese art, but the similarities between the other details are so close that an indirect connection between these two compositions is certain.[69]

If a mode of representation could be followed so closely five hundred years later, it is very possible that similar sketches were used in contemporary Xizhou and Shazhou. Fraser's research on workshop practices has made it clear that workshops were highly organised in the Dunhuang area by the tenth century, and that sketchbooks and stencils were widely used. Importantly, also according to Fraser, the oldest sketch still in existence comes fom the Turfan area, and can be dated to the Jushi 車師 period in the fifth century.[70] She asserts that there were close similarities between workshop practices in the Turfan area and in Dunhuang. She refers to the survival of manuscripts that were later used to make paper shoes and put into tombs as grave goods. A list of artisans' names and titles on these prove, according to Fraser, that a hierarchy of painters existed earlier in the Turfan area than in Dunhuang itself.[71] This makes it likely that workshops

[68] H: 91.5 cm W: 61.3 cm (AK 379, National Museum Kyoto). This is now believed to be a thirteenth century copy. For a reproduction see Osvald Sirén: *Chinese Painting. Leading Masters and Principles*, London: Lund Humphries, 1956, vol. 3, pl. 199.

[69] Even though these paintings of Vimalakīrti are very well known this had not been pointed out before, to my knowledge. I first noticed this in 1991, when writing an essay on Vimalakīrti illustrations in Dunhuang.

[70] S. Fraser: "A Reconsideration": 1999, p. 377.

[71] Ibid., p. 387.

remained highly organised in the Turfan area and that the technique of copying was also adopted by the new Uygur settlers.[72]

Indeed the Vimalakīrti illustration in Murtuq reveals just such a close connection between Dunhuang and Turfan. It is reasonable to assume that there were sketches or pattern books in circulation that could have been used by the Uygur artists in Murtuq. Further evidence to support this theory is the existence of a sketch similar in several details to the Murtuq wall painting from Dunhuang that survives in the British Museum in London (Stein painting 76) (Plate 17).[73]

This sketch of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* illustration may have been used as a model for wall paintings in Dunhuang in the early tenth century, according to Fraser.[74] It could also be a practice drawing, reflecting popular compositions of the time. The sketch shows only parts of the composition, with Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī appearing on different parts of the paper, therefore only limited comparisons can be made. It is clear that the general arrangement is similar, and the composition represents the same type that was used in Murtuq.[75] Stein painting 76 is an important proof of the existence of portable sketches of this subject matter. The sketch is dated to 914 by a draft of a letter written on a sheet between the split drawings of Mañjuśrī and Vimalakīrti.[76] Fraser links the sketch with Cave 146, which is dated to the early tenth century.

The Murtuq *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* composition is closest to Late Tang examples in its arrangement. On later Dunhuang examples, such as that on the two sides of the entrance in Cave 98, which dates from the first half of the tenth century, the composition is far more crowded with additional figures and scenes, and Vimalakīrti's and Mañjuśrī's figures are reduced in size and importance (Colour Plate 10).[77] As the arrangement is simpler and more clearly laid out in

[72] Jorinde Ebert believes that the use of stencils was widespread in Kuchean art as well. Unpublished lecture given at SOAS, London, March 1998.

[73] Stein painting 76. Ink on paper, H: 31 cm W: 127 cm; Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2. fig. 86.

[74] S. Fraser: *The Artist' practice*, 1996, pp. 170-173.

[75] Differences lie in minor stylistic details, such as in the treatment of Mañjuśrī's throne, which is decorated with a scroll pattern in the case of the Uygur mural.

[76] For a description see Roderick Whitfield and Anne Farrer: *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. Chinese Art from the Silk Route*, London: British Museum Publications, 1990, cat. no. 72, p. 92. The text was dated by Rong Xinjiang as quoted in S. Fraser: *The Artists' practice*, 1996, p. 173.

[77] For the date and a short description see Li: *Dunhuangxue:* 1998, pp. 63-64.

Murtuq, it is likely that an earlier model was followed. As previously stated there are similarities between the Murtuq mural and the composition of a wall painting in Cave 138 with regard to the layout of the composition and the iconography (Colour Plate 9). Cave 138 has been dated to 894-906. Additionally, there are similarities with the Vimalakīrti sketch from the British Museum, which is likely to date from the early tenth century.

On account of the observed similarities, it is possible that the Murtuq *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* mural was completed in the tenth century, although at present our understanding of the relationship between the various Uygur wall-painting styles is insufficient to make a final conclusion possible. In view of the afore mentioned example of how a Tang model could still be used in Song times it is also possible that an "old-fashioned", traditional model was used in Murtuq in the eleventh century. We know from the study of surviving Uygur wall paintings that in the Turfan area walls were never so densely decorated as in tenth-century Dunhuang. It is hoped that in the future the Murtuq wall painting's links to Bezeklik will be investigated in detail. In any case the Murtuq mural can be identified as an important Uygur representation of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*, thereby proving that under the influence of Dunhuang proto-types—possibly through the use of sketches—this subject matter was also illustrated in Central Asia.

A sketch as proof of iconographic links between Xizhou and Shazhou

As mentioned in the Introduction, a small sketch provided the first clue concerning the presence of Uygur influence in Dunhuang art. This sketch is today in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris (Plate 2). Painted on paper in black ink with light colouring it was published in Jao Tsong-yi's *Dunhuang baihua* in 1978, but has only attracted the interest of scholars since it was displayed in the Sérinde exhibition in Paris in 1995.[78]

[78] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale: BNF Pelliot chinois, 4518, 24, H: 30.5 cm W: 37.8 cm; J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde:* 1995, cat. no. 223 pp. 293-294. First published by Jao Tsong-yi: *Dunhuang baihua*, adapted into French by Pierre Ryckmans: *Peintures monochromes de Dunhuang*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême Orient, 1978. I first spoke about this image as part of the Uygur-influenced group of paintings at the ICANAS Conference in Budapest, in July 1997, where Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner also presented material related to this deity. She referred to a very poor-quality painting on ramie from the Turf-

Two seated females are shown holding various attributes: the one on the left, who sits on a rectangular throne supported on a row of simplified lotus petals, holds a foliated cup and a tray upon which sits a dog. The woman on the right sits on a wolf. She has four arms, the upper two of which support sun and moon disks, while the lower two hold a scorpion and a snake. Both women have the characteristic hairstyle, of the type that I have identified as Uygur, complete with tall waterdrop-shaped headdresses that are probably made of metal, indicated by the use of a scale pattern and a lozenge grid. The headdresses and hairstyles of the two figures in the sketch are very similar to Uygur examples (Figures 1, 3). As von Gabain has pointed out, this hairstyle was used for showing deities as well by the Uygurs, which is clearly the case in this example.[79]

This sketch stands out within the Dunhuang material as all other examples of figures holding up the sun and the moon from Dunhuang are well known from Chinese Buddhist iconography, such as the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara or the *asuras*. The iconography of this sketch is completely different, and therefore points to outside influence. A search through the material from the Turfan area prompted by the similarity of the headdresses revealed that exactly the same iconography is also to be found in the Xizhou Uygur material.[80]

In Bezeklik Cave 16 several fragments of the image of an Uygur woman with raised arms were found—presumably originally she held the sun and moon (Figure 19), another example shows a female deity with a wolf behind her (Figure 20).[81] In Bezeklik Cave 18 a pair of similar figures appears on either side of the entrance. The better

ansammlung in Berlin, which is proof of the popularity of this iconography among the lower classes too (MIK III 7243). Her argument has now been published in *CATB*, pp. 35-38. and pp. 124-126 (cat. no. 113).

[79] A. von Gabain: *Das Leben:* 1973, p. 118. Dr. Jorinde Ebert considers this type of headdress an example for which there is no directly comparable material in Turfan. She calls this a relatively early example of the later "phoenix in a lotus leaf" type found in Turfan and Hami and compares it to Manichaean representations such as MIK III 4956b. She dates it to the late ninth–tenth centuries. Personal communication, August 2001.

[80] My argument is published in Lilla Bikfalvy Russell-Smith: "Wives and Patrons: Uygur Political and Artistic Influence in Tenth-Century Dunhuang", *AOH*, vol. 56, nos. 2-4 (2003), pp. 410-414.

[81] A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*: 1912, p. 243, figs. 516-517.

[82] Ibid., p. 255, fig 531.

preserved figure was reproduced by Grünwedel (Figure 21).[82] This standing female wears a dress similar to the one worn by the seated deity on the right in the sketch, although her belt is different and does not appear to have the leather part. Her hair is arranged in a very elaborate Uygur chignon. She has four arms, and with the upper ones was probably holding up the sun and the moon. The other two are holding *cintāmaṇi* jewels. There is a dog or wolf-like animal behind her identical to the one in the Dunhuang painting. On the right in a cloud a snake appears. In a cartouche the deity's name is inscribed in Chinese characters, but unfortunately the characters are rendered in an illegible way. These Uygur links should be taken into account when discussing the subject matter of this sketch.

Prompted by similarities with Sogdian wall painting, especially the tray with the dog in the hand of the figure on the left, and because it is well known that there was a Sogdian community in Dunhuang from early times, Frantz Grenet and Zhang Guangda quote Zoroastrian and Sogdian Manichaean sources in order to identify the two figures.[83] They pay special attention to the flowers in the women's hair and the way their belts are tied. To the left "three soft strips are each tied with a knot in front" to the right "there is just one strip at chest level, from which hang two long untied belts with buckles at the ends."[84] Later they state that "The threefold belt of soft cloth worn by the Dunhuang goddess is the *kustīg*, the sacred cord of Zoroastrians" while the loose leather belt and the wolf in their opinion refer to demons, thus they identify the two figures as the good and bad Dēn.[85]

The good Dēn meets the soul of the blessed one accompanied by her two dogs. Zhang and Grenet refer to the dog on the plate and the flowers in the hair of the woman on the left to identify her with this "gracious maiden." They find it harder to identify the female on the right with the bad Dēn, especially as her attributes, the sun and

[83] Frantz Grenet and Zhang Guangda: "The Last Refuge of the Sogdian Religion: Dunhuang in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries", *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, vol. 10, 1998, pp. 175-186. Wang Ding will publish a new interpretation based on a Chinese text in the forthcoming edition of the *Berichte und Abhandlungen der Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (personal communication, January 2004.) Another recent article in support of Grenet's view is Christiane Reck: "Die Beschreibung der Daena in einem soghdischen Manichäischen Text", *Beiträge zur Iranistik*, vol. 24 (2003), pp. 323-338. I am grateful to Dr. Reck for giving me a copy of her article.

[84] F. Grenet and Zhang Guangda: "The Last Refuge": 1998, p. 175.

[85] Ibid. 1998, pp. 177 and 179.

the moon, seem to link her with the goddess Nana. However, they point out that the other attributes, such as the wolf that she is seated on and the scorpion or bug that she is holding may be interpreted as negative, referring to demons, who were also often described as having wide, open eyes. The bad Dēn meets the soul of the wicked, however, the quoted description presents a frightening and disgusting creature, not a beautiful female like the one shown in the sketch. The authors suggest that earlier versions of the texts may have been less negative. They also consider the possibility that the concept of Nana merged with that of the bad Dēn.[86] Grenet and Zhang suggested that this sketch was used by the Sogdian community in Dunhuang. They did not recognise the Uygur connection.[87]

The clothing of the figures appear to be similar to the outfits shown in the Bezeklik caves, and it is difficult to see the belt as the exact representation of the *kustīg*. The female deity from Cave 18 (Figure 21) has similar attributes and clothing to the female shown on the right of the sketch, but a different belt, rather in the style of the female on the left of the sketch with the knots. There is no sign of a leather belt either. This makes it more difficult to believe that the belts would show the negative aspect of this figure, although this possibility cannot be excluded. In Cave 28 (Grünwedel's Cave 18), a row of female figures was originally shown, two of which have been reproduced (Figure 22).[88] One of the women wears long robes, while the other is dressed in clothing and adornments similar to those of the figure on the left in the sketch, with the exception of her headdress. Although difficult to see clearly, the belt at her waist and her upper body's adornments seem very similar.

A painting from the Yale University Art Gallery represents a similar divine pair on its two sides (Figure 23).[89] The female on the *verso* of the Yale painting is in poor condition, and many small details have

[86] Ibid. pp. 179-183 *passim*.

[87] Private conversations with Frantz Grenet in London in February and May 2004, who now accepts my point about the Uygur links. I am grateful to Professor Grenet for discussing all related issues with me at length.

[88] A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten:* 1912, figs. 554 (p. 239).

[89] "Female deities", Yale University Art Gallery, 1937.5576, ink and colours on cotton prepared with plaster, H: 24.3 cm, W: 20.6 cm). Mary Gardner Neill (ed.): *The Communion of Scholars—Chinese Art at Yale*, New York: China House Gallery, 1982, cat. no. 41.

flaked off. However, we can clearly recognise the straight hairline and the elaborate waterdrop-shaped headdress that is the characteristic fashion for Uygur women of high rank. Further observation reveals that in addition to the two hands holding fruit on a tray, another two hands hold up the sun and moon disks. Because of this, and as both the figure on the *verso* and the figure on the *recto* side have haloes, it is obvious that the two sides of the painting represent divine figures.[90] The tray of fruits held by these figures are very similar to the trays shown on the Bezeklik mural (Figure 22) further proving the existence of an iconographic mode of representation for female Uygur deities.[91]

It seems that Grenet's suggestion that these are female deities borrowed from a non-Buddhist religious context is correct, but it is important to emphasise that all Uygur examples were found in a securely Buddhist context. The Sogdians were the single most important source in the formation of Uygur iconography, both in Manichaeism and in Buddhism, therefore it is possible that the Sogdian deities were adopted and transformed by the local Uygur Buddhist population into guardian figures. The positioning of these females near the entrances to Buddhist caves would make such a function likely. Neither of these deities can therefore represent negative forces.

Having established the Uygur links, the next question to be answered is whether this piece could originate from outside Dunhuang. It must be acknowledged that no exact parallels can be found within the Dunhuang material at this time, and that this is the only known example in which the Uygur headdress is shown on a portable Dunhuang painting. The paper and the brushstrokes, as well as the facial features and the way the animals are represented in the sketch appear to be extremely closely related to the tenth-century Dunhuang style, in itself evidence of local manufacture. The facial expressions on this painting are best compared to faces on the "Assault of Māra" composition from Paris (Colour Plates 25-28). On that painting we can see the same differences between rounded eyes to express emotion, and the narrow eyes executed with just a few brush lines. The animal

[90] Jorinde Ebert has also identified fragments (MIK III 6355 and 6697) that belong to a larger composition in which a female deity holding up the sun and the moon was part of the worshipping assembly first published in A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho:* 1913, pl. 46f. Personal conversation, March 2000 and fax August 2001. MIK III 6355 (without the sun and the moon) is published in *CATB*, cat. no. 247.

[91] A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten:* 1912, figs. 554 (p. 239).

attributes are very close to the animals appearing on tenth-century representations of "Avalokiteśvara as Saviour from Perils."[92]

The unusual iconography of this sketch offers indisputable proof of the existence of close links between Bezeklik and Dunhuang. These inter-religious and intercultural contacts continued throughout the period under investigation in this study. Indirect evidence of additional links can be discovered from further studies of the now-destroyed murals from Cave 18 at Bezeklik.

Cave 18 at Bezeklik: a model for the transmission of regional iconography

The closest parallel to the iconography of the sketch described above was found by the entrance of Bezeklik Cave 18 (Figure 21). A now destroyed mural originally from the side wall of this cave holds further clues to the transmission of religious iconography from the Uygur area to Dunhuang, the Tangut, the Liao and ultimately to China (Plate 22). Detailed comparative studies between the Dunhuang and Bezeklik wall paintings have been hindered because many Uygur murals have been destroyed. Of this mural, too, there is only a colour reproduction available today.[93] It originally measured 325 cm x 345 cm and was opposite a large-scale composition of Subhūti, also reproduced by Grünwedel (Grünwedel's Cave 8).[94] Grünwedel was puzzled by the layout of this cave temple, as it included a section where two side chambers had been walled off, rendering them no longer accessible at the time of his visit.[95]

Following the fashion of Paradise illustrations, as known from Dunhuang, an enthroned Buddha is portrayed with two attendant bodhisattvas and additional figures surrounding them. The central Buddha holds no special attribute, and has been identified as Bhaiṣajyaguru by von Le Coq and in Chinese publications.[96] As the central Buddha does

[92] For example Stein painting 28, see Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, Plate 21-3.
[93] Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK III 8451. C. Dreyer *et al*: *Dokumentation*: 2002, p. 147.
[94] For a description of the cave temple see A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*: 1912, pp. 253-259. It was also reproduced in Ernst Waldschmidt: *Gandhara—Kucha—Turfan*: Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1925, p. 50.
[95] A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*: 1912, fig. 529.
[96] A. von Le Coq: *Die Buddhistische Spätantike*, vol. 4, 1924, pp. 25-27, ZXBQ pl. 101 and p. 40.

not hold Bhaiṣajyaguru's attribute of the bowl, we have to turn to the attendant figures surrounding him for further clues about his identity. There are two seated major bodhisattvas turning towards the Buddha, four bodhisattvas stand on both sides of his lion throne, and behind him are monks and additional bodhisattvas. The figures that demand special attention are those standing in the two corners, and who are smaller than the rest of the assembly: twelve on the right and nine on the left. The twelve on the right can be identified as the representatives of the Chinese zodiac from their headdresses. The nine on the left have so far not been identified. However, these figures represent the nine luminaries or planets, according to the standard iconography well known from Chinese Buddhist and Daoist art.[97] They are led by the Sun and the Moon, represented as a Chinese emperor and empress with the sun and moon disks in their hands. The five biggest planets: Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Mercury were observed and named at an early stage in China. They became associated with the five directions and consequently with the five elements. Accordingly their Chinese names, even today, reflect these associations: Venus *jinxing* 金星 metal, Mars *huoxing* 火星 fire, Jupiter *muxing* 木星 wood, Saturn *tuxing* 土星 earth, Mercury *shuixing* 水星 water.

Contact with Indian and Central Asian traditions brought with it a new way of representing the planets through detailed descriptions in sutras. Most of the attributes are described in the various sutras, and these were also taken up by Daoist writers by the time of the Song dynasty.[98] Once established, the iconography remained remarkably consistent. It is important to note that the Sogdians transmitted various methods of measuring time to the Uygurs and the Chinese.[99]

On the mural from Cave 18 the members of the zodiac are shown as deities, each with its attributes in its headdress. On the other side, behind the Sun and Moon, shown as an emperor and empress, stands Jupiter, as an official, holding a tray of fruit with a boar's head in his headdress. Venus plays the *pipa* and has a cock in her headdress. Mer-

[97] For the attributes of the planets see Angela Howard: "Planet Worship", *Asiatische Studien*, 37 (1983), pp. 104-119.
[98] S. M. Kochetova: "Bozhestva svetil v zhivopisi Khara-Khoto" [Planet Gods in Paintings from Khara-Khoto], *Trudy otdela istorii kultury i usskustva Vostoka Gosudarstvennovo Ermitazha*, vol. 4 (1947) *passsim*.
[99] For a short note on the possible role of Manichaeans in the diffusion of the concept of the seven planets cf. Louis Bazin: "Manichéisme et syncrétisme chez les Ouigours", *Turcica*, vols. 21-23 (1991), p. 34.

cury, represented as a woman, holds an inkstone and has a monkey in her headdress, while Saturn is a sage with a bull's head on his head. Finally, Mars appears as a four-armed warrior with a horse's head on his head. The two guardian demons with snakes in the corner are Rāhu and Ketu, derived from Indian astrology.

The presence of the planets in this painting allows us to re-examine the identity of the central Buddha. The Buddha closely associated with the planets was not Bhaiṣajyaguru but Tejaprabhā. According to Henrik Sørensen:

> Tejaprabhā Buddha, is the lord of the Five (or nine) Planets and the Twenty-eight Constellations. As such he is the master of fate and destiny, and the one to whom people pray for good fortune, success and long life.[100]

Tejaprabhā is a transformation of Śākyamuni's *dharmakaya* body, and his main feature is that from all his pores brilliant light issues forth. Therefore he is called the Buddha of the Blazing Light, or Chishengguangfo 熾盛光佛. He is also referred to as Foding Lunwang 佛頂倫王 (the wheel king of the Buddha's *uṣnīśa*). He often holds a golden disk and subdues all the planets, stars, constellations and other heavenly beings, who pay homage to him. This is exactly how he appears in the paintings, and how he is referred to in the sutras.

This Tejaprabhā composition is an important example of the links between the Uygurs, Dunhuang, the Tanguts and central China. The compositional arrangement, and many of the ornamental details link this piece to tenth—twelfth century Dunhuang art, but it is recognisably the work of an Uygur artist. Despite the heavily damaged condition of the painting stylistic features similar to the style of Uygur wall paintings may be recognised (for example the characteristic facial features, and the colourful, wavy pattern of the halo behind the Buddha.) There are Uygur inscriptions in the cartouches in the lower part of the composition, dividing a row of small scenes from each other.[101]

The earliest representation of Tejaprabhā was found in Dunhuang, and is dated to the fourth year of Qianning 乾寧 (897) (Colour Plate

[100] H. Sørensen: "Typology and Iconography in the Esoteric Buddhist Art of Dunhuang", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 2 (1991-1992), p. 301.

[101] The cartouches were left empty and filled in later with names according to von Le Coq: *Die Buddhistische Spätantike*, vol. 4, 1924, p. 27. This was confirmed by Peter Zieme in an e-mail in September 2000, stating that these inscriptions are not legible on the reproduction.

12). It is painted on silk and bears an inscription giving the name of the central Buddha.[102] Another very similar composition on paper is also known from Dunhuang.[103] Both these compositions show the planets in the retinue of Tejaprabhā, who is seated in a moving carriage. Additional examples of this arrangement are in a Korean (or Southern Song) painting now in Boston, and a Tangut wall painting in the corridor of Cave 61 at Dunhuang (Colour Plate 13).[104]

In another type, much closer to our Bezeklik example, Tejaprabhā is enthroned in the middle in a far more symmetrical composition: the planets surround the throne as worshippers. The earliest examples are known from the eleventh century, from Tangut and Liao finds. The most widely reproduced painting on silk is from Khara-Khoto.[105] Another much simpler version was found in the famous wooden pagoda at Fogong Monastery 佛宮寺, in Yingxian 應縣 county, in northern Shanxi 山西 province.[106] A more complex version probably dates from the twelfth century. It is a Tangut painting, found in the Hongfo pagoda 宏佛塔, in Helan 賀蘭 County, Ningxia 寧夏 province.[107] Even though this type was rare in the early period, this is the composition that is known from later Chinese Buddhist art. The best example for the late, full version is today in the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, in Kansas City (Plate 23).[108] This has been dated to the thirteenth century and

[102] Stein painting 31. Ink and colours on silk, H: 80.40 cm; W: 55.40 cm. The inscription reads: "Chishengguangfo and the Five Star-spirits (planets), Qianning fourth year, the eighth day of the first month, Ninth Brother, Zhang Zhundian had it painted" see Whitfield: *ACA*, vol 2, p. 323 and pl. 27-1.

[103] Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, BNF Pelliot chinois 3995.

[104] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Ref. No. 11.4001, Reproduced in black-and-white in Tomita Kojiro and Tseng Hsien-chi: *Portfolio of Chinese Paintings in the Museum: Yüan to Ch'ing periods*, Boston, 1961, pl. 100 and in colour on the museum's website (http://www.mfa.org). For the corridor of Cave 61 see DHMGK, vol 5, p. 231.

[105] State Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Ref. No. x-2424. Mikhail Piotrovsky (ed.): Lost Empire of the Silk Road, Buddhist Art from Khara X-XIII Centuries, Lugano: Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation, 1993, cat. no. 57.

[106] Anning Jing: "The Yuan Buddhist Mural of the Paradise of Bhaisajyaguru", *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 26 (1991), fig. 15. The pagoda itself is described in detail in Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt: *Liao Architecture*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997, pp. 103-121.

[107] Rob Linrothe: "Tangut Buddhist Art", *Monumenta Serica*, vol. 13 (1995), fig. 2.

[108] See Marilyn Gridley: "Images from Shanxi of Tejaprabha's Paradise", *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 51 (1998-1999), pp. 7-15. See also Meng Sihui: "Chishengguangfo xinyang yu bianxiang"[Tejaprabha beliefs and representations], *Forbidden City*, 1998, vol. 2, pp. 34-39. I would like to thank Professor Gridley for sending me this article and her own unpublished manuscript.

was originally in the main hall of Guangsheng 廣勝 Lower Monastery, in Hongdong 洪洞 County, in southern Shanxi. Another mural from the front hall of the lower monastery depicting the same subject is now in the University of Pennsylvania Museum, in Philadelphia, and is one of the latest examples dating from the Ming 明 dynasty (1368-1644).[109]

Marilyn Gridley has already drawn attention to the similarities between the Liao print found at Yingxian and the much bigger mural from the Guangsheng Lower Monastery.[110] However, as she says "the print is only a small fraction of the size of the mural." Perhaps for this reason no seated bodhisattvas are shown. Sūryaprabhā and Candraprabhā are the two attendant bodhisattvas seated on the two sides of Tejaprabhā in the Guangsheng Lower Monastery mural. They can be recognised from the sun and moon disks in their headdresses. The sun and moon are also represented in human form as part of the retinue of the planets. The same two seated bodhisattvas also appear on the Philadelphia mural. However, on the earlier paintings the composition is arranged around the single central figure of Tejaprabhā, and none shows the seated attendant bodhisattvas.

It is, therefore, very likely that the Bezeklik wall painting is the first known large-scale composition to depict Tejaprabhā with two seated attendant bodhisattvas in addition to a large retinue.[111] Even though the bodhisattvas have no special attributes, they are clearly in the same position as Sūryaprabhā and Candraprabhā in the later Kansas City mural. In Bezeklik this arrangement may have its origin in the tenth- to twelfth-century Paradise compositions, which remained a popular subject in Dunhuang during the Tangut period (1036/74-1227).

[109] This and all the above examples with the exception of the Bezeklik wall painting are published in line drawing form and analysed in detail by Meng Sihui in an excellent article. Meng Sihui:"Chishengguangfo bianxiangtu tuxiang yanjiu"(Research on *bianxiang* images of Tejaprabha], *Dunhuang Tulufan yanjiu*, 2 (1997), pp. 101-148. Cf. also the article by Kira Samosyuk: "The Planet Cult in the Tangut State of *Xi Xia*: The Khara Khoto Collection, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 5 (1997/98), pp. 353-376.

[110] M. Gridley: "Images": 1998-99, pp. 8-9.

[111] Even though it cannot be dated securely it is unlikely to be later than the mid-thirteenth century as by that time the Haydu-Duwa rebellion had broken out, which eventually destroyed the Xizhou Uygur Kingdom. Geng Shimin: "The Uigur Kingdom of Qočo", M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth (eds.): *History of Civilisations of Central Asia*: 1998, p. 203.

More work must to be done with regards to the small scenes under the main Buddha assembly scene. These are very difficult to see in most reproductions of the now destroyed mural, and the cartouches were left empty, with personal names added only later. However, closer observation reveals that the small scenes resemble book illustrations representing Kṣitigarbha and the judgment of the Ten Kings. This subject was popular both in Dunhuang and among the Uygurs. In the lower row standing next to the second red cartouche there is a tiny figure dressed as a monk with a staff and a bowl in his hands: these are the attributes of Kṣitigarbha. As the scene above shows a Buddha, and therefore cannot be a representation of Kṣitigarbha, further research will be needed to reveal the connections between Tejaprabhā and Kṣitigarbha among the Uygurs.

Von Gabain has already drawn attention to the fact that the Uygur Kṣitigarbha manuscripts emphasise the importance of the stars much more than Chinese ones do in Dunhuang.[112] It is also known that the *nakṣatras*, or moon stations, were represented in detail in Sengim.[113] Tansen Sen has linked these depictions to some representations of Tejaprabhā, and to Liao tombs, already hinting at a connection with cults concerning the dead.[114] A future comparative study may reveal yet more about the way Buddhist rituals and iconography used in Dunhuang and Qočo mutually influenced each other, and were passed on to the Liao. As Gridley has emphasised, the role of the Liao in transmitting the iconographic innovations of the Uygurs to the Chinese is an area awaiting further exploration.[115] In any case the importance of regional cultural exchange cannot be doubted.

The mural in Bezeklik Cave 18 is an excellent example of a compositional type that evolved from many different sources, and is a proof of the close links of Uygur art with the Tanguts and the Liao, and through them with the development of later Chinese art. It is also an example of shared iconography and interaction between Bezeklik

[112] A. von Gabain: "Kṣitigarbha-Kult in Zentralasien, Buchillustrationen aus den Turfan Funden", Herbert Härtel–Volker Moeller (ed): *Indologen-Tagung 1971*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1973, pp. 63-68.

[113] Grünwedel : *Bericht*: 1905, pls. 26-27.

[114] Tansen Sen: "Astronomical Tomb Paintings from Xuanhua: *Mandalas*?," *Ars Orientalis*: vol. 29 (1999), pp. 31-54.

[115] M. Gridley: "Yulin Cave 39 and Uygur Patronage" (forthcoming).

and Dunhuang. Only the study of portable paintings can bring us closer to understanding more about the different degrees of the various influences that most probably came about through the arrival of new patrons to the Dunhuang area.

CHAPTER THREE

UYGUR BANNERS PAINTED IN DUNHANG

Identifying Uygur influence on Dunhuang art

Although not known in Dunhuang from other portable paintings, the type of headdress worn by the female deities in the sketch from the Bibliothèque Nationale (Plate 2) appears in the caves in wall paintings. A female Ganzhou Uygur donor in Dunhuang Cave 108, dating from around 939, has a similar hairstyle and headdress (Plate 10). Her face is also painted in a comparable fashion. However, there are some differences, as Uygur women represented in the caves normally wear robes with heavy collars and much jewellery. These Ganzhou donor figures are well known and frequently reproduced, but no further research has been undertaken on the importance of their presence in Dunhuang. The recognition of the resemblance between the headdresses in the well-known Uygur donor portraits from Dunhuang and the headdresses in the "Sogdian deities" painting prompted this study.

As argued above, the Uygur headdress and the similarities in the iconography make it clear that the source of the female deities in the sketch was in fact the Turfan area. The existence of this sketch in the Dunhuang material shows that the taste of Uygur patrons was influencing the Buddhist art of Dunhuang not only in a technical and stylistic way, but also in the adoption of religious iconography. Only the detailed study of other Dunhuang paintings revealed the full extent of this influence.

The majority of Uygur fragments, whether Manichaean or Buddhist, present a very different impression from "standard" Dunhuang styles as defined by Whitfield, Giès and others.[1] This is most noticeable in their differing material, the different colours adopted and the different facial types, all outlined in very even, thin lines. The silk used for Uygur Buddhist painting is often less densely woven, and gauze-like, and the 'rougher' hemp is more popular than in Dunhuang.

Although the majority of the Dunhuang material looks very different

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[1] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pp. 7-23 and Giès: *ACA*, pp. 17-37.

from Uygur fragments, there is a group of paintings that to varying degrees displays striking similarities to some of the Uygur painting fragments. The undoubtedly close contact between these two regional centres is useful for the research of both centres: first, it proves the increasing importance of Uygurs in the cultural life of Dunhuang, a question hitherto only explored in the context of eleventh-century caves. Second, as most of these Dunhuang paintings can be dated with some certainty to the tenth century, the comparisons with the Uygur fragments that show the closest links with these paintings provide an indirect clue as to how to date them. This is very important, considering how little evidence exists for the dating of Uygur art.

Some of these paintings have been recently singled out and described as reflecting foreign influence to the extent that they are believed to have been painted elsewhere and brought to Dunhuang. As evidence discussed in the case of each painting shows there are features that link them to tenth-century Dunhuang painting, thereby providing evidence for local manufacture. Furthermore, a thorough examination of the collection at the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin has not revealed any painting fragments that show exactly the same combination of stylistic influences and techniques employed as seen in these paintings. This provides indirect evidence that these paintings were not manufactured in the Turfan area, although the collaboration of Uygur artists in preparing these paintings in Dunhuang is a likely possibility. A comparative approach to studying Dunhuang material and Uygur art together would have many potential benefits for answering questions concerning dating (including the dating of Uygur art) and workshop practices.

The current state of knowledge of Uygur Manichaean art is very limited, largely due to the fragmentary state of the material. Written sources suggest that manuscripts illustrated in precious colours were characteristic of Manichaean art from the start, in the third century when Mani himself illuminated his own works. It is said that he even composed a pictorial illustration of his teachings, the *Ārdahang*.[2] Unfortunately none of Mani's paintings survive, and we can only speculate as to what they looked like and whether they had a direct impact on the development of Uygur Manichaean art.

Uygur Manichaean illuminated manuscripts are very small (about

[2] H. Klimkeit: *Manichaean Art*: 1982, p. 15.

12.4 cm x 25.5 cm in the case of the Bema scene (Colour Plate 14)), a fraction of the size of the well-preserved Dunhuang paintings, some of which are over a metre in height and width.[3] Very few large manuscript fragments exist today. The fragments of many Buddhist paintings in the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin only measure a few centimetres. As von Le Coq reported, cartloads of illuminated manuscripts were thrown into the river by superstitious farmers.[4] The surviving examples of Uygur Manichaean painting are very fragmentary. Research conducted in the MIK's Turfan Collection, made it clear that due to the fragmentary nature of the material the reconstruction of full Uygur compositions is almost impossible, thereby depriving us of an important comparative method.[5] All observations about Dunhuang paintings in the context of this study must therefore concentrate on small technical and stylistic details.

This difference in size and preservation has prevented systematic comparisons being made between the art of Turfan and Dunhuang. It is attempted here in the belief that in the case of medieval art even a small particle of the original composition contains essential clues with regard to its techniques, iconography and style resulting from the artistic aims and the workshop practices employed.[6] Artists and workshops were usually following the set examples of visual and written guides in order to achieve the correct religious results.

The greatest contrast with Chinese art in the case of the majority of Uygur artworks is the preference for bold, bright colours and the use of even outlines that define simple, more summary features than in Chinese art—these are features noticeable at first sight. The preferred colours are blue, red and green. In the case of Buddhist and Manichaean painting alike the background is frequently shown as blue. The popularity of geometric or spiral designs is also important. If a floral design is used, this too tends to be simplified in comparison with Tang examples, and it is flatter in appearance. Another distinct

[3] MIK III 4979, Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 32, pp. 70-75; H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*, 1982, cat. no. 114.

[4] A. von Le Coq: *Die Buddhistische Spätantike*, vol. 2. *Die Manichaeischen Miniaturen*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1923, p. 5.

[5] I was struck by how damaged and fragmented the Uygur material is in comparison with Dunhuang paintings. Dunhuang paintings survived remarkably well in the sealed Library Cave, while the paintings found in the Turfan area were exposed to the elements and only covered by sand.

[6] E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás*: 1995, p. 16.

feature in both the Buddhist and Manichaean art of the Uygurs is the preference for thin, very even lines to render all painted shapes and decorations. This is in great contrast with the quality of the line in Dunhuang, where it is often calligraphic: painted with the Chinese brush the width of the lines change depending on the amount of pressure exercised by the painter. When kept even, the brush lines in the Chinese-style Dunhuang paintings still tend to be much thicker than the extremely thin lines employed by Uygur artists. This feature may have had its origins in the way Manichaean illuminated manuscripts were prepared: as in the case of European illuminated books a fine pen was used to draw the outlines. These were then filled with bright colours and finished with white highlights and carefully, but generously applied gold decoration.[7]

The Manichaean books were small in size, and consequently the illustrations were extremely fine like medieval miniatures, forcing the artists to pay great attention to the minutest detail. These features appear to have influenced Uygur Buddhist painting. Even though the painted surfaces were much larger, and instead of paper silk was increasingly used, some Buddhist paintings show the same preference for thin, even lines and the use of a blue background, bright colours and a generous amount of gold. These features can, in turn, all be found in the paintings from Dunhang selected for this study.

As is the case of medieval illuminated manuscripts, Manichaean art also shows a preference for ornamental decoration on the side of the pages. Spiral and scroll designs abound in the patterning of haloes in Uygur Buddhist art too: in Bezeklik every minute surface is filled with patterns (Colour Plate 8). The spiral designs also appear on Uygur textiles, in an embroidered form. Additionally the textiles are dominated by contrasts in colours, and in the case of embroidered banners two colours of silk are used to make up the streamers, which are then embroidered in contrasting colours with spiral or floral patterns. The shading of petals on flower designs is also quite pronounced, based on the Tang tradition, but the designs themselves are simpler and very symmetrical. The spirals offer a very convenient way to decorate long shapes in a line or larger surfaces with a more complex swirl design.[8]

[7] MMBA, p. 131.

[8] I am grateful to Mr. Michael Franses of the Textile Gallery, London, U.K. for showing me Uygur textiles from his collection in April 2004.

An Uygur bag, carbon-dated to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, made out of red felt applied to a blue cotton tabby with a felt backing, testifies to the continuing popularity of non-Chinese designs, swirls and the use of contrasting blue and red.[9]

A similar approach to the human figure can be seen in Uygur art: humans tend to be flattened out, and their clothing is usually very decorative. Facial features are schematised and repetitive.[10] Details are often kept simple, with small eyes and mouths, and whitened or pink faces. The dominance of red can be perceived in the clothing of donors too. Their garments and the carpets that they stand on are also often decorated with swirls and scrolls (Colour Plates 4-5).

The complexities of research can be illustrated through the case of a fragment on paper from the Turfan collection in Berlin, which has been considered both as a Manichaean and a Buddhist fragment (Colour Plate 16).[11] This shows the difficulties with identifying the subject matter of this extremely fragmented material. Manichaean iconography in particular can be only partially reconstructed as so few pictorial representations have survived. This fragment displays characteristics that are somewhat unusual in a Buddhist context, leading Gulácsi to identify them as Manichaean motifs. Her argument is mostly stylistic: she draws attention to the facial features of the Buddha, as well as motifs she has identified as Manichaean such as the gold disks along the top above the head of the Buddha and the gilded border with its meandering red lines; the halo on the left of the fragment with its upward curving band. She also points out that the position of the Buddha figure is not central and that he is identified in Sogdian letters as *bwt* or Buddha, which would not be necessary on a Buddhist painting.[12] However, Gulácsi did not find any exact parallels to this fragment. This image is considered Buddhist by other scholars.[13]

The fragment shows many of the characteristics associated with

[9] Illustration of the bag (ref. 20249) can be seen on the Textile Gallery's website: http://www.textile-art.com/tg/20249.html.

[10] For Manichaean art cf. Z. Gulácsi: "Dating": 2002-2003, figs. 6 and 9.

[11] Colours and gold leaf on paper. MIK III 4947 & III5d, H: 13.8 cm. W: 5.6 cm; H: 5 cm W: 1.4 cm. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 66.

[12] Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, pp. 146-148.

[13] Jorinde Ebert considers this fragment an example of the earliest phase of Uygur Buddhist art influenced by the Manichaean style. Personal communication June 2001 and January 2004.

Manichaean illuminated manuscripts such as the "Bema scene" and the illumination on its *verso* (Colour Plates 14-15): a blue background, a generous use of gold, thin outlines, a a scroll motif, extremely thin and even lines, facial features with a straight nose linked to eyebrows, the face outlined in red but painted in white and each eye shown with one black line and one black spot. As this fragment is bigger in size than most Manichaean fragments, the features are somewhat magnified and changed.

These features can also be compared to some of the Buddhist art fragments from the Turfan area, which are much bigger in size, but display many of these features. Closest in style and colouring are the many fragments now stored in one drawer in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin.[14] These most probably once belonged to the same painting, but the details of positioning must await reconstruction.[15] The shared features with Manichaean painting include: a blue background, the generous use of gold, the use of thin, red outlines and faces painted white or pink (Colour Plate 17 and Plates 24-25). In both Uygur Manichaean and Uygur Buddhist painting, primary colours are dominant: bright blue, red and yellow or gold. In addition to these, orange and green were also used. There has been serious colour loss on some of the Turfan fragments, where the covering layer of white intended for the face simply peeled off.[16]

Another important group of comparative material was found in Šorčuk in the region of Karašahr, northwest of Turfan. The wall paintings from the temple site traditionally known as Ming-oi are today split between the Hermitage, in St. Petersburg and the British Museum, in London (Colour Plates 18-19).[17] Many of the artistic mannerisms are

[14] Cupboard B drawer 33. In order of the present layout in the drawer: MIK III 6361, 6595 m, 6469 b, 6469 c, 6468 c, 6469 e, 6468 e, 6530 a, e, m, 6530 g, 6530 b, 6595 b, 6595 a, 6468 a, 6597, 6597 c, 6469 c, 6530, 6598, 6599 d, 6595 c, 6469 a, 6595 a and 6468 b. Cf. *CATB* for illustrations.

[15] Published by Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner as individual fragments according to their individual iconography in *CATB*. In an unpublished manuscript Jorinde Ebert has put together many of these fragments and has argued that this is one of the most important and largest examples of the early Uygur style. Jorinde Ebert: *Fragmentary Evidence:* 2001. I am most grateful to Dr. Ebert for discussing with me these questions during her trips to London in 2000 and 2001. She also gave a lecture outlining her argument for the *CIAA* at SOAS: "Interaction: Formation of the Uigur Art Style" on 14 March 2000.

[16] E.g. MIK III 6469c *CATB*, cat. no. 442.

[17] For reproductions see Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 3. pl. 95 and N. V. Diakonova: *Shikshin:* 1995, pls. 4-6.

similar to those observed in the case of the Uygur painting fragments, described above. These include the round faces, elongated eyes with small dots for the pupils, the use of thin, even outlines, zig-zag hairlines, the use of white and pink for showing the skin, flattened body postures, a blue background and the generous use of gold. [18] Importantly all these characteristically non-Chinese stylistic features can be observed in Dunhuang paintings selected for this study.

Furthermore the coexistence of a highly finished style for the main areas of the composition and a far more sketchy style for the less important parts is employed in several Uygur temples, for example at Šorčuk. The fragments today in the British Museum's collection, come from a position low on the rear wall of the rear chamber of the temple while the larger sections came from the front hall of the main cella of the same temple, and are today in the State Hermitage in St. Petersburg. These larger murals show the same facial types executed with much more care. While only a few colour washes were used in the murals in the British Museum, many more colours were carefully applied, and gold was also used in the murals in the Hermitage. The style of these murals appears to be closer to both the Uygur fragments from the Museum für Indische Kunst, described above, and to the tenth-century Dunhuang paintings than to the style of the Bezeklik murals. This may indicate that these works of art can all be dated to a similar period, possibly earlier than the Bezeklik wall paintings.

Several larger remaining Manichaean fragments, once belonged to a painting on silk.[19] When complete, this painting must have also shared many features with the Uygur-influenced Buddhist paintings from Dunhuang. Now the fragments measure no more than a few centimetres in size and can indicate only very specific stylistic mannerisms seemingly shared by these artistic centres: a blue background, the use of red, white and gold, the scroll pattern of the golden halo,

[18] Ebert has already drawn attention to the close links some Uygur painting fragments have to the wall paintings from Šorčuk, and she has argued that Karašahr played an important role in this formative phase of Uygur Buddhist art. J. Ebert: *Fragmentary Evidence*: 2001 and talk at SOAS quoted in Note 15.

[19] MIK III 6953 a-n Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 83, pp. 185-186. These have also been published by Bhattacharya-Haesner (*CATB*), as cat nos. 574-587, pp. 384-386.

the use of parallel even lines to indicate intricate folds, and the use of pink for faces.

Similar features may also be observed on wall paintings. A relatively small fragment displays the same generous use of gold, the preference for blues and greens and the thin, even outlines.[20] The larger pieces that were once in Ruin α at Qoča, also manifest some of these features, especially the use of thin outlines, the facial characteristics and the very popular scroll motif, however the colouring is far more subdued.

Recently published research on the fragments of portable Uygur paintings has produced some evidence towards resolving some important questions. Several paintings manifest a close connection to the "standard" Dunhuang style, thereby proving the close links between the two regional centres.[21] There is at least one banner in which, according to Bhattacharya-Haesner, a Manichaean layer appears to have been painted over a Buddhist layer.[22] Moriyasu finds this detail very important as it may show a backlash of the Manichaean church against the tide of conversions to Buddhism some time during the late tenth or early eleventh century.[23] This makes it more likely that for some time Buddhist and Manichaean art coexisted and that there may have been a transitional period. Further research will have to clarify the exact relationship beween these groups.

There are enough shared characteristics between these pieces in all media to point to a period in Uygur art when Manichaean and Buddhist ideas were closely linked. From this it is evident that the earliest Uygur Buddhist style was closely influenced by the thin lines and bright colouring used by Manichaean workshops, and by their preference for the lavish use of gold.

Among the many different Uygur painting schools, these groups of fragments show very close similarities to the group of Dunhuang paintings presented and discussed in this study. Just as during the Tang dynasty motifs known from imperial Chinese art were extremely closely copied at Dunhuang, by the tenth century, with the routes

[20] Wall painting, MIK III 4466, H: 25 cm, W: 22 cm, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, cat. no. 91.
[21] *CATB*, pp. 43-44.
[22] MIK III 4606 and other fragments, *CATB*, cat. no. 557. I am grateful to Dr. Bhattacharya-Haesner for pointing this out when showing me these fragments in January 2004. However, in my opinion, the possibility that an earlier Manichaean composition was under the present Manichaean painting cannot be excluded.
[23] T. Moriyasu: "Four lectures": 2003, p. 99.

to central China cut off by the Uygurs, the two regional centres of Turfan and Dunhuang developed work practices that very closely echoed each other.

Table 4 summarises the key features used in this study for identifying Uygur influence on Dunhuang art, and thereby likely Uygur patronage. They are listed under three main headings: material, iconography and style. They are characteristic of Uygur art and differ from the "standard" Dunhuang style. The examples have been divided into two groups, Uygur Manichaean art and Uygur Buddhist art, for the sake of clarity, even though, as stated above, there are many links between them. Here the discussion is restricted to the features that enable one to identify of the extent of Uygur influence on portable paintings from Dunhuang.

Materials under observation include the type of support, the pigments, and technical details, such as the use of gold. The most striking feature of Uygur art is the unity of colour. The Manichaean illuminated manuscript fragment described earlier (Colour Plates 14-15) is a good example of the typical colours used in Uygur art. Shades of red, violet, blue, green and white make up the decoration. In addition gold, here outlined in red, is used. The faces of the figures are rendered in pink, which is a feature of many Uygur paintings, and can also be seen in Uygur-influenced paintings in Dunhuang art. In the case of the Uygur Buddhist paintings on silk, reds, blues, green and gold also dominate.

Gold objects and jewellery were represented through the use of gold decoration. In Uygur Manichaean art the gold leaf was cut out to the required shape, and then the details were added by painting. In Uygur Buddhist art in addition to cut-gold leaf decoration very carefully painted gold patterns were also frequently used. In the case of a tiny fragment (Plate 26) lozenge-shaped pieces were applied with great precision. On another fragment (Plate 27) the edge of a robe was highlighted with thin painted golden lines. Both the applied and painted gold were used in Dunhuang in the tenth century.

Iconographical features under consideration include the representation of religious topics, details such as the patterning and colouring of mandorlas and nimbi; the use of motifs not usually found in Dunhuang art, such as textile patterns and unusual banner types and, perhaps most importantly of all, Uygur hairstyles, headdresses and clothing. Plates 28 and 29 show the typical straight hairline favoured by Uygur women. They wear a round bun on the top of the head, covered by a silk scarf. This hairstyle seems to have been popular in Turfan.

Textile patterns not usually observed at Dunhuang include geometric patterns for carpets. The "Bema scene" (Colour Plate 14) features a type of geometric carpet pattern, that is very different from the usual carpets shown in Dunhuang painting, which normally have a floral decoration or are undecorated.[24] Atypical halo patterns also help to differentiate the Uygur-influenced paintings. Unlike in Dunhuang, where the halo patterns always appear symmetrical, in Bezeklik they have a clockwise orientation or radiate from the centre (Plate 20 and Figure 15).[25] Unusually colourful, geometrical patterns in nimbi and aureoles are also common (Colour Plate 8).

In Uygur Buddhist paintings multi-headed deities are often represented with one large main head surrounded by small round heads, all shown facing the viewer. In a depiction of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, two smaller heads are shown by the neck of the main head (Plate 38).[26] In contrast, in Chinese and Tibetan art, these two additional heads are usually shown in profile, and are not substantially smaller in size than the principal head.

The popularity of the plant scroll is apparent both in the case of illuminated manuscripts, where it usually surrounds the text, and on the ceilings and side walls of Buddhist cave temples, (Plates 31-32, Figures 12, 24-25). It also appears on wooden beams and on clothes and textiles.[27] The headgear of the large figure on the now destroyed wall painting showing Manichaean *electi* found in Ruin K and reproduced by von Le Coq, was also decorated with plant scrolls.[28] The extraordinary popularity of the scroll-and-swirl pattern continued in the *praṇidhi* scenes, where it can be seen decorating buildings of different shapes, and even on haloes.[29]

Two bodhisattvas in one of the *praṇidhi* scenes hold banners shaped

[24] For the undecorated type, cf., for example, "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara", dated 981 (MG 17659), Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1., pl. 98-1. (fig. 76) and "Kṣitigarbha as Lord of the Six Ways" (dated 963), Stein painting 19, Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 22. For the floral decoration, cf. "Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings" (dated 983), MG 17662, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 63 (fig. 212).

[25] A. von Le Coq: Chotscho: 1913, pl. 26.

[26] MIK III 8001, *CATB*, cat. no. 241.

[27] Unpublished textiles from the collection of Michael Franses of the Textile Gallery, London, U.K. (April 2004). A large scroll pattern ultimately based on the antique meander design can be seen on an unpublished large wooden beam in the storage area of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.

[28] A. von Le Coq: Chotscho: 1913, pl. 1.

[29] Ibid., pls. 20, 23-26. In Bezeklik, haloes can be floral, geometrical or wavy [pl. 23]; radiating [pls. 20-22, 24]; anticlockwise [pl. 19].

like circular tents, with streamers decorating their sides (Colour Plate 8). They also resemble canopies depicted in Uygur painting, for example in the Beiting *stūpa* (Figure 26). Another bodhisattva, originally from Bezeklik, holds a very similar banner, decorated with a lozenge design on the side (Figure 27). This type of banner, not usually shown in Dunhuang art, appears on several of the paintings selected as Uygur-influenced for this study.

In addition to the identification of some or all of the above-listed characteristics, the style and iconography of each painting has been analysed. Stylistic analysis includes the study of the characteristics of brushwork, linear style, mannerisms, motifs and facial types. The "Bodhisattva Holding a Canopy" (Figure 27) is also a good example of certain stylistic characteristics of Uygur art, namely the way the figure is flattened out and is arranged somewhat uncomfortably within a narrow space. At the same time his clothing—full armour unusual for a bodhisattva in other Buddhist art centres—makes a most striking impression. His shoes, leg-plates and headdress are heavily decorated. His scarf ends in a triangular shape, with almost no attempt to arrange it convincingly in space.

In the case of portable paintings and the wall paintings alike the quality of the line is distinctively different from Dunhuang: Chinese-style calligraphic brushwork is usually avoided, and there are almost no examples of this technique.[30] Outlines are mostly maintained as thin, even, controlled lines, showing no changes in thickness (Colour Plate 20, Plates 28, 33-35). This might have been brought about partially through the Western contacts of the Uygurs and through the use of a fine pen rather than a brush. Even when painting with the brush, the lines are normally finer and more even than in China.

In Uygur art faces are round, the eyes are usually shown with a few thin lines as very narrow and almond shaped (Plates 28-29). At other times only the upper eye-lid is drawn with a line and with a dot indicating the eye itself (Colour Plate 16). In the case of women the eyebrows are also thin (women most probably shaved and repainted them as straight lines). The nose is shown in profile or even in three-

[30] A typical example of the calligraphic Chinese line used in Dunhuang is the Vajrapāṇi (Stein painting 132) reproduced in Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, pl. 58. The "Angry Arhat" from Berlin (MIK III 7241) is perhaps an exception, but it may be a Chinese painting. Reproduced in H. Härtel–M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Route*: 1982, p. 190, cat. no. 129.

quarter view as a continuous thin line with a curve for the nostril. The mouth is small, rounded and red, either outlined or just a red dot with a black line across it. The faces of demons and guardians are exaggerated, their eyebrows are curved, their eyes bulging and they often have outsized canine teeth (Plates 21, 25, 36). The hair of figures is usually black or blue. If blue it is mostly outlined in thin black lines, while if black it is kept thin and close to the head and shoulders (Colour Plate 20), as opposed to the thick black hair flowing over the shoulder of figures in Dunhuang.

Both in Manichaean and in Buddhist art, trees are usually represented by a green shape for the foliage with little definition for the leaves. The branches stem out in a more or less geometric fashion from the trunk. The rendering of foliage displays mannerisms common both to Uygur Manichaean and Uygur Buddhist art. The preferred method was to arrange the leaves in a circle-like pattern with a flower in the middle (Plates 21, 30, Figure 26). This method of representation is likely to have been borrowed from the Chinese art of the Tang period and subsequently became more formalised. If architectural elements are shown they look like "stage props": flat and over-stylised. Simplified details of Chinese architecture, such as the bird-head-shaped finials of roofs and walls ornamented with a decorative design are frequently seen (Figure 12).

In summary, colours, gilding and brushwork used in Uygur art differ from the art of neighbouring regions, such as Tibet, Dunhuang or China. Clothing and carpets are clearly associated with the material culture of the Uygurs. Other features, such as nimbus and aureole patterns, the way multiple heads are portrayed, banners, scroll designs, facial types, hair, architecture and trees in Uygur art are specific examples of mannerisms that were developed by workshops in a specific place at a specific time. They reflect a synthesis reached by the unique combination of various art influences, such as Sogdian and Chinese, in a way only seen in the art of the Uygurs in a given period of time (specifically the tenth and eleventh centuries).[31] A combination of these characteristics appearing in a painting, that has Dunhuang as its *provenance* indicated the influence of the Uygurs on that work of art. Postulating Uygur patronage in such cases offers a new approach to explaining the unusual qualities of these paintings within the *corpus* of Dunhuang material.

[31] Naturally the list could be extended, but here I have concentrated on features which are useful for my comparative study.

The question of inscriptions

The best evidence for Uygur patronage of a painting would be the existence of an Uygur inscription on it. On at least three paintings in the Pelliot collection, a script is present that resembles Uygur in appearance. In the case of two of these paintings stylistic analysis reveals signs of Uygur influence.

Graffiti somewhat similar to these also appears on a painting, which is securely dated by a Chinese inscription to the 8th year of the Taipingxingguo 太平興國 reign corresponding to 983.[32] According to Michel Soymié:

> There are two inscriptions in the lower register, both written in an unusual Uighur script... James Hamilton and Peter Zieme, working in Paris and Berlin respectively, hoped to transcribe these, but failed to recognise even the language used. Owing to the fact that there can be no doubt regarding this painting's execution, we must yet again put forward the hypothesis that these inscriptions were added after the opening of cave 17 but before Pelliot's arrival.[33]

This painting (Colour Plate 21) is very different from the other two, and is a good example of standard tenth-century Dunhuang style. Furthermore, none of the graffiti seems to be linked to the composition of the paintings in question, and each type is obviously a later addition. Therefore it appears that even if they were inscriptions of an early date, their presence on the paintings would simply prove that Uygurs lived in Shazhou, not that they commissioned these paintings.

This hypothesis can now be shown to have been correct: not only are the graffiti clearly later additions, not part of the composition of the paintings in question, but the writing itself is of mediocre quality and is considered to be a late Mongol script from the Manchu period, most probably dating from the early years of the twentieth century, after the opening of Cave 17.[34] The least legible are the lines included on

[32] "Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings", MG.17662, ink and colours on silk, H: 229 cm W: 160 cm. Reproduced in Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2 pl. 63.

[33] Giès: 1996, p. 141.

[34] To establish more about the meaning of these inscriptions I sent copies of them to Takao Moriyasu, Peter Zieme and György Kara. All of them agreed that the writing was of mediocre and varying quality and was a late Mongolian script from the Manchu period. Professor Kara provided me with a full transcription of all the inscriptions where legible and his explanation may be read in the Appendix. I am grateful to Professors Moriyasu (Osaka University, Japan) and Zieme (Berlin-Bran-

the "Assault of Māra" painting (Colour Plate 25 and Plate 37), which according to György Kara's reading seem to bear no connection to the Seven Treasures, which are depicted next to them (Plate 37).[35]

While the inscriptions on the "Assault of Māra" painting indicate no connection with the subject-matter of the painting, and remain the least legible, in the case of our first example a list of names appears to be written in Mongolian, next to the figure of the original donor and next to Yinlu pusa 引路菩薩 the "Bodhisattva Leading the Way" (Colour Plate 21). The meaning of the inscriptions in the other two instances also appears to be more logical: in the case of the Kṣitigarbha painting (MG 17793) all three experts agree that next to the hungry ghost *bečin* "monkey" is written while next to the way of the animals represented by a white horse, *bô cayan mori* "white horse" is written, thus clearly describing what the visitor thought he saw (Plate 39).[36] This is, therefore, an interesting piece of evidence, which indicates that early-twentieth-century Buddhist visitors may have treated the paintings in the same way as they were used a thousand years before. Hans-Joachim Klimkeit has already drawn attention to the habit of ancient Uygur donors of inscribing cartouches with different scripts.[37]

The Uygur-influenced group of Dunhuang paintings

The paintings that reflect Uygur patronage within Dunhuang art are listed in Table 3. These paintings display a combination of Uygur features, thereby proving their close links to Uygur art. Most of them deviate from the Dunhuang style and have often been described by other authors as showing Tibetan or Central Asian influence.

The combination of the basic characteristics is slightly different in the case of each painting studied, therefore it was necessary to analyse the Dunhuang paintings on an individual basis, comparing their iconography, material, technique and style to existing artefacts from the Turfan area one-by-one. As a result of several years of careful

denburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin) for their kind help. I should like to thank Professor Kara (University of Budapest, Hungary, and Indiana University, Bloomington, U.S.A.) for providing detailed readings and checking my Appendix.

[35] Appendix. Paul Magnin and Michel Soymié considered these inscriptions illegible, cf. Giès: *ACA*, p. 55.

[36] Giès: *ACA*, p. 139.

[37] H. Klimkeit: "The Donor at Turfan": 1990, p. 190-191.

analysis of the Dunhuang Turfan material the selected paintings were grouped according to their distinguishing characteristics. Paintings 3-12 form the biggest and best-defined group. This is probably due to the high quality of most of these paintings, and the apparent wealth of their commissioners.

Tenth-century Dunhuang art has been traditionally regarded as provincial and lacking in quality in contrast with the art of the Tang period, which very closely reflected the influence of imperial Chinese art. Recently this view has already been questioned.[38] However, there has not been a systematic study of the importance of non-Chinese influences on this late period of Dunhuang art. The study of portable Dunhuang paintings has made it possible to identify various stages of increasing Uygur influence. Through a close study of this material it has become clear that the nature of Uygur influence changed along with the changing position of the Uygurs themselves. From a more general mutual interchange of ideas at the end of the ninth and early tenth centuries, through the patronage of Ganzhou Uygur brides, specific Uygur features appeared on important Dunhuang paintings. Later with the influx of an Uygur population and the increase of Xizhou's influence, a local version of the Xizhou Uygur style was produced.

Comparisons with Dunhuang art: the formation of Uygur art?

Like the Murtuq *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* illustration, the "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara" (Stein painting 35) too provides clues that show the close links between workshops in the Dunhuang and the Turfan areas (Colour Plates 22-24).[39] In fact, this painting may provide important visual evidence for the formation of Uygur Buddhist art, which occurred during a transitional period when various influences pooled together leading to the emergence of the art of the Uygur Buddhists newly converted from Manichaeism.

There are two specific difficulties that have prevented the recognition of the links between Stein painting 35 and paintings from Turfan. First, it cannot be sufficiently emphasised how damaged the Turfan material is, especially the silk paintings which only survive as small fragments.

[38] J. Giès: "The Pictorial Language of Dunhuang", in J. Giès: *ACA*, pp. 17-37.

[39] Stein painting 35, Ink and colours on silk, H: 222.5 cm, W:167 cm, Reproduced in Whitfield: *ACA*, vol 1, pl. 18., described pp. 313-314.

Several better-preserved banner paintings are painted on much rougher material, such as hemp, and not on the fine silks widely used in tenth-century Dunhuang. Hemp was also popular in Dunhuang, but inevitably the use of line is very different in these paintings, and usually fewer colours are used.[40] Surprisingly perhaps, beyond general similarities there do not appear to be close links between the hemp paintings of Xizhou and Shazhou. This could perhaps be explained by the high status of the Uygur patrons within Dunhuang society. It seems that in Turfan, hemp was also used by the ruling class, but in Dunhuang, paintings on hemp tended to be regarded as cheaper "mass-produced" alternatives for the most popular iconographic subjects. The second difficulty lies in the lack of precise information about dating. Where there are no inscriptions, in both Dunhuang and Turfan, comparative analysis can only provide possible dates, and as such they will always be subjective and therefore subject to debate. On stylistic grounds Stein painting 35 has been dated by Roderick Whitfield to the early ninth cetury, which would be too early for the period under investigation here. The dating of Uygur paintings is problematic, therefore there are no available indirect clues that firm dates would usually provide. For this reason comparative analysis had to be undertaken with all avaible Uygur fragments and wall paintings.

Stein painting 35 has been described as one of the most outstanding masterworks of Dunhuang painting by Whitfield, who has already drawn attention to its many unique qualities. He has suggested that the composition is essentially complete, and there is no reason to disagree with this.[41] This makes it likely that there were probably no inscriptions on the painting, although a large section is missing from the middle of the lower section, where traditionally an inscription could have been positioned. Whitfield has described the composition of the painting in detail, and has identified all of the important figures shown.[42] The iconography is a standard representation of the Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara. Maria Dorothea Reis-Habito has given a detailed explanation of how the cult of this deity became popular in China. She has explained the scriptural development, and given a complete translation of the *Qianshou qianyan guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wuai tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩

[40] J. Giès: ACA, pp. 24-29.
[41] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol 1, p. 314.
[42] Ibid., p. 313

廣大圓滿無礙陀羅尼經 from Chinese into German.[43] The names and Chinese characters used to identify the figures in the cartouches of the Stein painting can be directly compared to the names mentioned in the *Qianshou jing*, as it is also known.[44]

This subject matter is among the most popular in the Turfan area. The *Qianshou jing* is one of the sutras that was translated into Uygur at an early stage [*Mïng közlük mïng iliglig üduq yarlïqancuci köngül atlγ darni nom*]. A similar text, the *Qianyan qianbei guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經, was translated by one of the most important early translators, Sïngqo Säli Tutung.[45] As relatively few sutra translations can be linked to the earlier period of Uygur Buddhism, the existence of these translations is proof of the popularity of this cult in the region.

The artistic evidence also supports the idea that the cult of the Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara was one of the most important characteristics of Uygur Buddhism. In the *Qianshou jing*, which had been translated by Zhitong 智通 into Chinese, he is referred to as *Čïtung samtso* in the Uygur text.[46] Zhitong has been identified as one of the Chinese monks represented in Bezeklik Cave 20.[47] His prominent presence there shows that the Uygur Buddhists regarded the translators of Chinese sutras as equally important to the Indian monks, also represented in Cave 20. A recent reconstruction of the iconographic programme of Bezeklik Cave 20 has proved that a statue of the Eleven-headed or Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara was likely to have stood in the main cave, and a wall painting

[43] T 1060, Maria Dorothea Reis-Habito: *Die Dhāraṇi des Grossen Erbarmens des Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara mit Tausend Händen und Augen*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1993.
[44] In 1998 Dr. Ma De of the Dunhuang Research Academy read all inscriptions on the Stein paintings. I would like to thank him for giving me a copy of his readings.
[45] T 1057 a and b, J. Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*: 1997, p. 11 and p. 120. The exact dates for translating these sutras are still debated, but the late tenth or early eleventh century is likely.
[46] J. Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*: 1997, p. 120
[47] Kōgi Kudara: "Bezekuri ku hekiga kara mita seiiki hokudo Bukkyō no ichikeitai" [On the Trail of a Central Asian Monk. A Bezeklik Portrait Identified], Bukkyō Bijutsu kenkyū Ueno kinen zaidan. Josei kenkyū kai hōkushō [*Studies on the Buddhist Art of Central Asia*, Kyoto: The Ueno Memorial Foundation for the Study of Buddhist Art Report], No. 22, 1992, pp. 1-6. Kudara argues against the traditional proposition by von Gabain according to which one of the monks Vap-hui would be identical with the Fahui mentioned in a historical document referring to 1025. A. Von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, p. 38.

of the Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara decorated the wall of the small back cave.[48]

Although today there are no large-scale portable paintings depicting this topic known from Turfan, the large fragments still surviving give a hint of the lavishness of the compositions that must originally have been painted there. Bhattacharya-Haesner has already identified several unique motifs that can only be found in the Turfan area.[49] She has also pointed out the existence of banners with dozens of eyes on them—a unique adaptation of this iconography.[50] Numerous fragments of paintings showing the "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara" are preserved in the MIK's Turfan Collection in Berlin.[51] Unfortunately, in many cases only small sections of obviously much larger compositions have survived, often with beautifully painted hands and attributes. It is, therefore, somewhat difficult to compare the compositional arrangement of the Stein painting with the remains found in the Turfan area. In any case it is possible to conclude that the subject matter strengthens the likelihood of links with the Turfan area, and certainly does not exclude it.

Key features to be investigated in this context are the colours, facial types and certain mannerisms that point to outside influence. The colouring is an important feature that sets this painting apart from the standard Dunhuang style. On a blue background reds, blues and oranges are dominant. Uygur fragments have a similar palette, but the colours are often much stronger. As mentioned earlier there is a possibility that some fragments represent an earlier style within the Turfan Collection: a transition from Manichaean to Buddhist art.[52] On these fragments the colours and the quality of the silk are very close to Stein painting 35. There is also very similar colour loss with, in some cases, only the black underdrawing remaining. On the Stein Avalokiteśvara painting the colours are better preserved in some places than in others, for example, on the two sides showing the guardian kings. In the cases of several deities in the upper part of the composition, the colour has come off, and only traces of certain colours have remained.

The figure of Avalokiteśvara dominates the composition. It is hard to compare his impressive figure to Uygur painting as no examples of

[48] D. Leidy: "Bezeklik": 2001, pp. 201-208.
[49] *CATB*, cat. nos. 203-217.
[50] Ibid. cat. nos. 203-205.
[51] Ibid. cat nos. 206-239.
[52] See pp. 115-116 and p. 118.

this size have survived in the Turfan Collection in Berlin. The canopy above Avalokiteśvara is unusual, especially for the Tang style. The top part of the painting indicates a slight confusion: Sūryaprabhā, Riguang pusa 日光菩薩 and Candraprabhā, Yueguang pusa 月光菩薩 are shown with their correct colours: an orange disk for the sun and a white disk for the moon, but their attributes are mixed up. The moon is shown in a horse chariot—the attribute of the Sun God in Central Asia since Hellenistic times—and the sun in a goose chariot.

If the details of the Stein composition are compared with other examples of Uygur Buddhist art, several details can be identified that link this Dunhuang painting to the Turfan area. For example, the figure, whose cartouche is inscribed …*san hua* 散花 (scattering flowers) wears a headdress similar in character to those in the *praṇidhi* scenes from Bezeklik Cave 20 (Colour Plates 8, 24). The way her hair is arranged to surround the ear is also similar to the Uygur examples, as is the way she is portrayed in colourful attire.[53] The facial features of the bodhisattvas recall the Uygur style: the eyebrows almost touch each other in the middle, the nose is straight and drawn with a single line, the eyes are very narrow and shown at an angle, and the mouth is small and painted in red (Colour Plates 23-24).

In the case of the representation of the Peacock King in Stein painting, further unusual features become apparent (Colour Plate 23). He lifts his arms in a manner very popular with the Uygurs, with the lower arm shown from the elbow, which is surrounded by a flower-petal-like decoration of the upper garment. This feature can be seen in the case of the *dākinīs* from Bezeklik Cave 21, which is actually a side-chamber to Cave 20 (Figure 29).[54] Unlike the hair of Dunhuang bodhisattvas, which is almost always shown as a thick lock falling on the back, the Peacock King's hair is loose and falls in tresses on the shoulders, with one lock in front of his ear. This hairstyle is very unusual in Dunhuang, but resembles the hairstyle of Uygur aristocrats as described by von Gabain (Figures 4-5).[55] It is also very similar to the way the hair of bodhisattvas is shown in Bezeklik (Plate 8).[56] The figure's additional

[53] Cf A. von Gabain: *Die Formensprache*: 1987, pl 66. and F. Andrews: *Wall Paintings*: 1948, pl. XVI.
[54] For the two examples today in New Delhi see F. Andrews: *Wall Paintings*: 1948, pl. XX.
[55] A. von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, figs. 95-102., 113.
[56] F. Andrews: *Wall Paintings*: 1948, pl. XII.

heads appear not in profile, but as little extra heads in three-quarter view, as is the case with all other figures in this painting. This is rarely seen in Dunhuang, but is a standard feature of Uygur painting (Plate 38).[57] Furthermore the depiction of the peacock feathers behind this figure is also comparable to the decorative way foliage is usually rendered in Uygur art (Figure 26). Although this detail shows feathers rather than leaves, the principle is the same: to simplify the "untidy" motif to a very standardised repetitive design comprised of a rounded leaf shape with a heart design in its centre.

The clothing of the Peacock King is also very unusual within a Dunhuang context. His body and principal arms are dressed in a red garment with a small dotted pattern, which has a striking arrangement of spiralling folds on the chest and the abdomen. A scarf is tied tightly below the chest, presumably to hold the arrangement in place, a popular feature in Uygur art (Colour Plate 23). The closest similarity in clothing can be found among the pre-Uygur statues from Šorčuk. The sculptures from the Šorčuk caves were thought by Aurel Stein to be no later than the eighth century, because coins of that and earlier dates were found at the site, many of them *in situ*, within shrines.[58] On stylistic grounds it is also believed that the sculptures predate the Uygur murals.[59] Most recently Angela Howard has linked one image from Šorčuk to the caves of the Hexi corridor, which are thought to date from the fourth–fifth centuries, but she does not discuss Šorčuk's dating.[60] Future research should reveal how long the representational styles survived in the area.

A female figure from the Kirin cave, Šorčuk, is today in Berlin (Figure 30). According to the catalogue description, "She wears a yellowish red mantle... and a green bodice of unusual spiral design."[61] Another example, without a head, was photographed *in situ*, although

[57] Cf. "Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara" from Yarkhoto, MIK 8001, H: 17.0 cm, W: 15.7 cm), H. Härtel–M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Route*: 1982, p. 201, cat. no. 142

[58] A. Stein: *Serindia*: 1921, p. 1187.

[59] N. V. Diakonova: *Shikshin*: 1995, p. 26. On p. 25. Diakonova emphasises the difficulties of dating. For a detailed description of the caves see Chao Huashan: "Xinjiang Yanqixian Xigexing shiku" [Shikshin caves in Xinjiang, Yanqi county], UNESCO: 1996, pp. 475-502.

[60] A. Howard: "Liang Patronage": 2000, p. 266.

[61] "Female Half Figure", Šorčuk, Kirin Cave, MIK III 8202, H. 45.1 cm, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, p. 135, cat. no. 69.

broken off its original pedestal.[62] The garment of another female figure from the Nakṣatra Cave is also somewhat similar.[63] Although all these figures seem to be female, their facial characteristics can also be compared to the Peacock King's round face and arched eyebrows. It can only be hypothesised at this point that the pre-Uygur art of Šorčuk influenced the making of this Dunhuang painting at the same time as influencing the formation of Uygur Buddhist art.

Features from later Uygur painting are also comparable to the more unusual details of Stein painting 35. Rarely reproduced fragments from Bezeklik Cave 16 (Stein's number Bezeklik xiii, which includes both 16 and 17) show similarities in the rendering of facial features (Plates 33-35).[64] As in the case of the Šorčuk murals (Colour Plates 18-19) the side walls of this cave were decorated in a much higher quality than the rear.[65] On the ceiling, apart from Brāhmī inscriptions, cartouches inscribed in Chinese were used. This led Chinese authors to classify these caves as pre-Uygur.[66]

A fragment from the ceiling of the same cave has survived in Berlin. In two recent exhibition catalogues the same fragment has been dated to the tenth–eleventh centuries by Lore Sander, and to the eighth–ninth centuries by Marianne Yaldiz, but both authors assumed that it was an example of Uygur art.[67] This illustrates how little understood the dating of these wall paintings is at present. On the basis of the facial characteristics of the Buddhas and other figures represented, it is likely that these caves were painted in the Uygur period, although probably earlier than the murals in Bezeklik Cave 20. The design of repeated assemblies as seen in Cave 16 probably originated in the Qizil area, where the arrangements of such groups was much more popular than

[62] Reproduced in N. V. Diakonova: *Shikshin*: 1995, pl. 75/b. For a detailed description of the site see A. Stein: *Serindia*: 1921, pp. 1183-1223.

[63] MIK III 7896b, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Route*: 1982, p. 135, cat. no. 68.

[64] Bez. xiii., C F. Andrews: *Wall Paintings*: 1948, pl. XXIX, and Tulufan diqu wenwu baoguan [Cultural Relics Bureau of the Turfan Region] (ed.): *Tulufan Bozikelike shiku bihua yishu [TBS]* [Painting in the Bezeklik caves, Turfan], Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1990, pp. 25-30.

[65] For Šorčuk see Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 3. pl. 95, and N. V. Diakonova: *Shikshin*: 1995, pls. 4-6.

[66] ZXBQ, pp. 28-32 and plates 69-79.

[67] MIK III 6871 Lore Sander's description in J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, pp. 188-189 (cat. no. 141), and Marianne Yaldiz in R. Ghose: *In the Footsteps*: 1998, p. 263 (cat. no. 71).

larger compositions set in a landscape or against an architectural background as known from Dunhuang. The face of the Peacock King can be compared to the face of another Buddha fragment from Cave 16, still *in situ* (Plate 33). It features the same curve of the eyebrow, which would almost touch the other eyebrow had the latter not been lost.[68] The narrow eye that survives is like the eyes of the Peacock King on Stein painting 35, with just one confident line indicating the eyelid. The mouth is also very similar.

There are even more direct clues that Stein painting 35 had close links to the Turfan area. A fragment from Toyoq in the Turfansammlung, in Berlin, displays strikingly similar painting methods to the Stein painting (Plate 40). Von Gabain described this fragment when discussing the workshop practices of Uygur painters, even though it has a Chinese character written on it.[69] The fragment represents a bodhisattva, presumably part of a larger assembly. Enough remains of his hair to see that it falls in a thick layer over his shoulder in the manner of bodhisattva representations from Dunhuang. Despite this, and apart from the Stein composition described here, no other direct parallels to it can be found within the Dunhuang material. Therefore it is reasonable to accept Gabain's suggestion that this fragment is likely to be an example of Uygur art.

The method of painting the features of the bodhisattva on the Turfan fragment is close to the techniques employed in painting the Stein "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara" (Colour Plates 23-24). In both cases a round three-quarter profile is shown with a little wave at the eyes. A small line was added to indicate the chin. The eyebrows are curved and slightly thicker above the eyes, and almost touch in the middle, by the nose. The eyes are very narrow and no additional lines were used to indicate the eyelids, whereas such lines were a common device in Dunhuang painting. The mouth is identical in both cases: a heart-shaped upper lip is joined by a full lower lip. No hooks or central lines are added as is usually the case in late Dunhuang painting. The lines indicating the inner earlobes are also very similar, as are the jewellery and the way the hands and the nails are shown, even the rendering of the navel is identical (Colour Plate 24).

[68] Also cf. BEZ. xiii C, F. H. Andrews: *Wall Paintings*, 1948, pl. XXIX.
[69] MIK III 6343. Cf. A. von Gabain: *Die Formensprache*, 1987, p. 12 and fig. 21, and *CATB*, cat. no. 171, p. 172.

The fragment in the Turfan collection has a Chinese character added: the character *zhu* 朱 (red) appears over the scarf worn by the bodhisattva. Von Gabain has already suggested that this was probably an instruction within the workshop to indicate the colouring of the scarf, and has become visible due to the paint wearing away. That the character is written in Chinese shows that the artisans were trained in the Chinese manner, or were Chinese themselves. If they were Chinese, this might imply the involvement of Chinese artists with the development of Uygur art.

The discussion above demonstrates the difficulty of disentangling which way influences travelled along the Silk Road. The possible links of Dunhuang workshops with other artists in the area are difficult to research and are consequently not often studied. Very little is known about the beginnings of Uygur Buddhist art. It is possible that Dunhuang paintings were taken to Xizhou. Another possibility is that Chinese workshops in Dunhuang may have trained artists or even gone to the Turfan area themselves. However, the majority of Uygur paintings, as seen in Bezeklik and on the fragments, are so distinctively different in style from Dunhuang art, that the involvement of local workshops must be assumed in their creation at every stage.

For the moment the similarities between the Toyoq fragment and the Stein composition provide us with two possibilities: either they are proof of the close links between artists who worked in the Dunhuang area and those who worked in the Turfan area in the ninth century, or else the Toyoq fragment was brought from Dunhuang to the Turfan area. As the Toyoq fragment does not represent any standard style from Dunhuang, the first possibility should be examined further, namely possible connections between the workshops and artists working in Dunhuang and those in the Turfan area in the ninth–tenth centuries.

The key features of Stein painting 35 that deviate from the standard Dunhuang style and are close to Uygur workshop practices, as listed in Table 4 include: the use of colour, the popular iconography, the hairstyle and clothing, the way multiple heads of deities are shown, the unusual canopy above Avalokiteśvara, the facial type of deities, the depiction of their hair and finally the mannered depiction of the peacock feathers behind the Peacock King. All of these features indicate the influence of artisans from outside Dunhuang.

As mentioned above, Whitfield has dated the Stein painting to the

early ninth century.[70] In view of the evidence presented here it is more likely that it dates from no earlier than the end of the ninth or the early tenth century. A workshop familiar with the transitional phase of Uygur Buddhist art may have painted it for patrons from the Turfan area. This painting appears to be the earliest to reflect the close links that existed between the Shazhou and Xizhou regions. It may have been painted in collaboration with Uygur artists, since only some of the figures display the features discussed above, while others look less different from the Dunhuang style. We know that several artists and artisans collaborated on larger paintings. This is clearly a hypothesis, but other paintings from Dunhuang discussed in this study provide further clues about the likely contacts between artists from the two regions. Perhaps in this case the intention—though never carried out—was to send this large composition with the Uygur artists who had collaborated on it to Xizhou, for local artists to copy it in order to achieve the correct religious effect: the most important function of any Buddhist painting.

How the function of religious art in Dunhuang affected workshop practices

When researching Dunhuang art the importance of the religious function of images should never be overlooked. The influence of visual motifs as well as textual sources must be investigated together. In this context, it is important to point out that in recent years in art historical circles iconographical research based solely on textual sources has been attacked from various angles. It has been emphasised that in most cases it is difficult to prove that a certain text was available to the artist or the patron at the time of commissioning the painting. In fact, most of the artists and patrons were not well educated, and often even their literacy cannot be assumed. As Brendan Cassidy said in his introduction to a volume of papers given at the conference "Iconography at the Crossroads":

> The essentially textual culture to which the scholar belongs stands at some remove from the essentially oral and pictorial experience of the early artist... The elements of style (composition, line, and colour) are themselves meaningful in ways that have insufficiently been explored.[71]

[70] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1 p. 313.

[71] Brendan Cassidy: "Introduction" in Brendan Cassidy (ed.): *Iconography at the Crossroads*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 8-9. See also E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás* : 1995, p. 17, and S. E. Fraser: *The Artists's Practice*: 1996, pp. 22-98.

Buddhist paintings follow specific texts more closely than medieval Christian altar paintings and murals.[72] The case of Dunhuang is special in another respect: a large number of manuscripts has survived together with the paintings. However, in many cases it can be argued that textual research alone is insufficient for the secure identification of the subject matter. It is more likely that artists of the day turned to well-established compositions, if these were available, rather than creating new versions based on the texts alone. With few exceptions, once the iconography was established, visual likeness took precedence over textual fidelity. In most cases it can be assumed that artists' sketches and other visual sources had the greatest impact on the appearance of painted images.

Jacques Giès has emphasised the importance of investigating artistic features such as the use of colour and line. He has stressed that in Buddhist art there was little room for experimentation:

> we should consider how such [Buddhist] subjects, being bound by the iconographic requirements demanded by the Buddhist canon, left little room for the painters' individual temperaments: the latter were effectively broken in by a long apprenticeship which taught them to excel in the anonymity of a pictorial expression whose object was to reveal the ultimate truths of the cult images.[73]

As Giès states, the religious function of these images was the most important factor in determining the appearance of the paintings. However, when studying Dunhuang art, it becomes very clear that the individual patrons had considerable influence in choosing the subject and shaping the details. A good example is the popularity of *Yinlu pusa* 引路菩薩, or the "Bodhisattva Leading the Way", in this later stage of Dunhuang art. The Buddhist canon does not prescribe the preparation of such paintings, rather they reflect the beliefs of the donor. Buddhist doctrine was of course stressing the importance of attaining *nirvāṇa* in this life or in future lives. In apparent contradiction to this, the patrons of these paintings had themselves represented in their finest clothes, in the train of a bodhisattva leading them towards

[72] Medieval Christian illuminated manuscripts and ivories were illustrating specific texts very closely, but in the case of altar paintings and wall paintings in churches the artists had far more freedom, especially in the late Middle Ages.

[73] Giès: *ACA*, p. 18.

a group of Chinese buildings that symbolised the Pure Land, which they were aspiring to reach (Colour Plate 52, Plates 57-58). These are in effect short-hand references to large-scale murals, where the Pure Lands are indicated by Chinese pavilions on terraces above water. This visual tradition was so strong that the Pure Land was represented with Chinese buildings even in Xizhou, where the actual style of architecture was quite different.[74]

In Buddhist art, faithfulness to the original image and observation of the correct ritual were essential. As described above, in the post Tang period the Chinese religious world was organised around a few popular religious beliefs.[75] The Uygurs were partially under the influence of Chinese Buddhism, so the Uygur patrons' approach must have been similar to that of their Chinese counterparts in the tenth century. However, during the earliest part of their conversion, Sogdian and Tocharian scriptures were more important. This may explain the differences from Chinese Buddhism, and may account for the unusual features in subject matter and iconography.[76]

In popular Buddhism, as in Tantric Buddhism, all forms of magic and ritual were of the greatest importance. Tadeusz Skorupski has emphasised the importance of talismans in Buddhism and stressed that Tibetan Lamas actually provided such amulets and recommended their use. He states:

> Buddhism ... has been able to accept such elements without contradicting its fundamental teachings, especially those of the later period, according to which one may make use of any means helpful in controlling natural forces, in eliminating evil, whether in the form of demons or malevolent humans, and thus to promote one's own and other's good.[77]

Stein painting 170, is a simple sketch painted on paper with ink and colours, which has a lengthy inscription in Chinese and in magic script, and was obviously painted with the intention of helping the believer to avert bad influences. The inscription suggests that whoever wears this talisman in his girdle will thereby obtain magic power and will have his sins remitted during a thousand *kalpas*. Moreover, in the world

[74] *CATB*, cat. no. 132, pp. 148-149.
[75] D. Orzech: "Esoteric Buddhism": 1994, p 51.
[76] For Uygur Buddhism see J. Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*: 1997, especially pp. 8-9.
[77] Tadeusz Skorupski: *Tibetan Amulets*, Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1983, pp. 2-3.

he shall everywhere encounter good fortune and profit. Throughout his whole life he shall enjoy other men's respect and esteem. His religious merit will be unparalleled, and protection and purification shall come to him swiftly.[78] Such sketches with long inscriptions blur the distinction between ritual and image even further. Text and image are often complementary in these cases. In Dunhuang the texts of apocryphal sutras gained increasing popularity, *dhāraṇi*s were to be recited hundreds of times, and the making of mandalas, and talismans became standard practice, even if esoteric rituals were never organised into such an exclusive system as in Tibet.

From this it is also clear that the quality of paintings was of little importance from the point of view of their effectiveness in religious ritual, and rough sketches could have a magic value equal to that of meticulously decorated works of art. Regarding medieval Europe, Ernő Marosi observed, that since the aesthetic principles were of a secondary nature, an infinite number of copies could be created:

> at their beginning with a cult object, at their end with common prints or cheap pilgrim talismans. Therefore the glimpsing or touching of the most original representation may be a goal for a humble life, but theoretically the poor quality replacement can also fulfil the same function.[79]

Both the Uygur and Chinese patrons had considerable choice and influence in selecting the type of work of art that best suited their beliefs. The artistic practice of the period was organised in order to best achieve the faithful representation of religious images. Copying ancient models had an important function: it was the only way to ensure that the new image was a reliable representation of the deity. In Buddhism, statues and pictures are not simply symbols of the deities. Apart from being objects of devotion, meditation and visualisation, there was a strong belief that in these statues themselves there was an inherent supernatural power that could punish or reward people.[80] In medieval Christian thinking too, holy images were associated with

[78] Arthur Waley: *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein*, London, Trustees of the British Museum, 1931, p. 165. Stein 170 is reproduced in Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 61.
[79] E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás* : 1995, p. 18.
[80] M. Reis-Habito: *Die Dhāraṇi*: 1993, p. 260, and pp. 270-273.*v.* also the unpublished paper given by Glen Dudbridge at the "Art and Religion in Pre-Modern China" workshop at SOAS, January, 1997.

miracles, and even if these were of inferior quality, they could influence the work of the most famous artists of the day.[81] In China according to the widespread belief of the time, if the circumstances were right the Buddha or bodhisattva could inhabit its own image. The many legends from the Tang dynasty, describing how statues of Guanyin performed miracles, point to belief in the importance of the validity of these images beyond mere likeness. As Reis-Habito has pointed out, statues or pictures of Avalokiteśvara had to be prepared in order to enhance the effectiveness of the *dhāraṇis*, which in themselves were a way to communicate with the supernatural.[82]

Jane Casey (Singer) has emphasised that Tibetan paintings never strayed far from their essential role as icons. She emphasised that while some paintings may exhibit greater virtuosity than others, "aesthetic refinement was never achieved without regard for painting's primary purpose—to act as a visual intermediary between man and the divine."[83] The image, regardless of its artistic quality, had to represent a hidden reality. This principle was also present in the religious art of medieval Europe. According to Marosi:

> a transcendent spiritual content appears in a material form ... [Their] relationship... is not metaphoric according to medieval theory, therefore it cannot be decoded, as the communication hidden in written signs or literary expression can be revealed. The relationship between form and content in this case is that of substitution, according to the original meaning of *repraesentatio*: an existent material represents another one which is beyond senses. [84]

Wu Hung uses similar words when describing a Dunhuang wall painting of "Famous Images":

> What these fourteen Buddha images signify, therefore, is the *system* and *ontology* of a Buddhist holy icon, from its conceptualisation to its materialisation, and from its divine origin to endless copies on earth. The fundamental concept of this system is *presentation*, not *representation*: when a miraculous icon is believed to be a self-manifestation of a heavenly

[81] See for example Craig Harbison: "Miracles Happen: Image and Experience in Jan van Eyck's *Madonna in a Church*" in B. Cassidy (ed.): *Iconography* : 1993, pp. 157-169. I have also drawn my ideas from the seminars given by Dr. Anna Eörsi at the Department of Art History, Lóránd Eötvös University (ELTE), Budapest, Hungary, 1985-1988.

[82] M. Reis-Habito: *Die Dhārani*: 1993, pp. 260, 270-273.

[83] J. Casey Singer: *Early Painting in Tibet*: 1991, pp. 29-30.

[84] E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás* : 1995, p. 16.

> image, the human artist is reduced to a copier facing the impossible task of duplicating what is unduplicable.[85]

The case of the popularity of the "Famous images" compositions in the later period of Dunhuang art proves the importance that was attached to preparing faithful copies of Indian and Central Asian Buddha statues.[86] In Christian art a guarantee was sought for similarity to the original, and the validity of representation was often best achieved by copying, tracing and the use of pattern books, thereby giving rise to serial production and even book printing in Europe.[87] The same is also true in Asia, and in China, in particular, printing was spurred by the desire to make the copying of sutras more efficient. The oldest known dated printed book was brought to London by Aurel Stein from Dunhuang, and there are numerous woodblock prints of repeated impressions in the British Museum and the British Library, which serve the same principle.[88]

In the case of a newly converted people, such as the Uygurs, the question of authenticity was of even greater importance. As mentioned previously, sutras were copied in Dunhuang and sent to the Xizhou Uygurs.[89] Even though at present there is no written proof, it is reasonable to believe that following the working practices of the time, artists travelled between these two important centres on the Silk Road, and that sketches of compositions were passed on to Xizhou on a regular

[85] Wu Hung: "Rethinking Liu Sahe: The Creation of a Buddhist Saint and the Invention of a 'Miraculous Image'", *Orientations*, vol. 27 no. 10. (November 1996), p. 42.

[86] Roderick Whitfield: "*Ruixiang* at Dunhuang", K. R van. Kooij and H. van der Veere: *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art*, Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995, p. 149. Most recently Roderick Whitfield: "Indian connections in the art of Dunhuang: the silk painting of Famous Images in the Stein Collection, London and New Delhi," paper given at "The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein" International Conference organised by PRASADA De Montfort University, Leicester in collaboration with the CIAA, University of London 6-7 March, 2004, to be published in the proceedings: Lindsay Zamponi *et al*: "The South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein" (forthcoming).

[87] E. Marosi: *Kép és hasonmás*: 1995, pp. 17-18.

[88] Diamond Sutra (Stein printed 2, British Library, London), dated to 868. For a recent reference to this print see Jean-Pierre Drège: "De l'icone à l'anecdote: les frontispices imprimés en Chine à l'epoque des Song (960-1278)", *Arts Asiatiques*, vol. 54 (1999), p. 45. fig. 1. For repeated impressions see for example, R. Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 82, figs. 134, 155, 156.

[89] Rong: *Guyijunshi*: 1995, p. 29.

basis. Sarah Fraser's research has shown that preparatory sketches were central to the workshop practices in Dunhuang.[90] Not only was their use the best method to preserve the authenticity of images, but it also made possible the preparation of wall paintings and banners on a hitherto unprecedented scale. In the late ninth–tenth centuries there was a constant demand by patrons for the preparation of wall paintings and paintings on silk, hemp and paper according to their financial means and spiritual goals. An unprecedented number of dated cave temples and portable paintings indicate that work seemingly never stopped in this period. "The ateliers active at Dunhuang orchestrated the construction of the largest and one of the most important Buddhist monuments in East Asia."[91]

Tools as aids for workshops included sketches, practice drawings, pounces (also called stencils) and monochrome drafts for Buddhist rituals. Fraser discusses how the artists of the time were organised into a highly hierarchical academy in Dunhuang.[92] Her research presented elsewhere has also drawn attention to the possibility that similar workshops were being formed in the Turfan area, where sketches and a pounce have been found from the pre-Uygur period.[93] The larger portable paintings were most probably prepared by several artists in the workshops, each responsible for different parts of the painting. This working method also favoured the reappearance of motifs, mannerisms and set images on paintings of differing size and quality.

A large painting in Paris may begin to reveal important clues about these working practices if reinvestigated according to the hypothesis put forth in this study. The painting was probably prepared by a Dunhuang workshop for Uygur patrons who were likely to be new converts from Manichaeism to Buddhism.

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[90] S. E. Fraser: *The Artists's Practice*: 1996; Sarah E. Fraser: "The Manuals and Drawings of Artists, Calligraphers, and other Specialists from Dunhuang", in Jean-Pierre Drège (*et al*): *Images de Dunhuang. Dessins et peintures sur papier des fonds Pelliot et Stein, Mémoires Archéologiques 24*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient: 1999, pp. 55-104; Sarah E. Fraser: "Formulas of Creativity: Artist's Sketches and Techniques of Copying at Dunhuang", *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 59 (2000), pp. 189-224.

[91] S. E. Fraser: *The Artists's Practice*: 1996, p. 3.

[92] Ibid., pp. 239-268. see also Ma De: *Dunhuang gongjiang shiliao:* 1997, especially pp. 9-13 and 16-22.

[93] Sarah E. Fraser: "Turfan Artists, Fifth to Ninth Centuries", paper given at the Third Silk Road Conference at Yale University, New Haven, 1998 published as S. Fraser: "A Reconsideration": 1999, pp. 375-418.

The influence of Manichaean art on Dunhuang painting

The "Assault of Māra" is a very large painting of excellent quality and preservation, and it is therefore very important within the Pelliot Collection (Colour Plates 25-28).[94] Its stylistic resemblance to Uygur Manichaean painting has already been pointed out by Jacques Giès.[95] This section examines clues that may indicate that this painting represents a transitional phase in both the art of Dunhuang and that of Uygur Buddhist art due to the wishes of the unknown patrons. The first part of the discussion addresses the style of the painting and the second part considers its iconography.

The figure of Śākyamuni Buddha dominates the composition of the painting. He is surrounded by an army of demons and other figures, most of whom are attacking him, trying to prevent his enlightenment. Śākyamuni is seated under a very stylised half-circle of foliage, further decorated with orange half circles at the lower edge. Below this a most appealing network of tree trunks is growing from behind Śākyamuni's mandorla. This way the foliage, which represents the Bodhi tree of Enlightenment, also acts as a kind of canopy. A simpler arrangement consisting of just three tree trunks was found in Bezeklik, where it is associated with the Tree of Life of the Manichaeans (Colour Plate 11).[96] The highly stylised rendering of the foliage is very unlike tenth-century Dunhuang art but does resemble Uygur examples (Plate 21).[97]

Unlike in standard Mahāyāna Buddhist painting, Śākyamuni is shown wearing a golden crown, a splendid golden robe and a red lower garment, decorated with a green edge and a floral design. There is no other known example of this from Dunhuang. Although it appears that there is no exact equivalent in Tibetan or Uygur art either, this golden headdress recalls the crowns of the esoteric representations of Buddhas in contrast with the usual Mahāyāna iconography that proscribes no jewels. The unusual garments recall the fully dressed

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[94] MG 17655, H: 144 cm, W: 113 cm, Giès: *ACA*, pp. 54-55; Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 5

[95] J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, p 244, Paul Magnin and Michel Soymié do not refer to this idea in Giès: *ACA*, pp. 54-55.

[96] Bezeklik Cave 38, ZXBQ , pl. 81.

[97] MIK III 6368, Gulácsi: *Manichaean*: 2001, cat. no. 40; and Bezeklik Cave 33, *TBS*, pp. 60-61.

Vairocana at Bida and its beautifully rendered textile pattern and colouring.[98]

Most early Tibetan representations of Māra's attack are not as detailed as the Guimet example. There are, however, two wall paintings in a temple in Guge, published in a Chinese archaeological report, that show remarkably similar details, further confirming the links to Tibet.[99] Both murals display the figure bending over and farting in front of Śākyamuni (Plate 42). In the Guimet painting there are additional fine details, such as miniature riders that appear in the flames depicted with extremely thin lines. This iconographic feature is very unusual and is proof of a link between the Tibetan examples and the Guimet Māra. However, the use of the extremely thin, even lines is an important characteristic of Uygur art.

Also recognisable in the Guge mural are many of the monsters seen in the Guimet Māra and not known from other depictions of this topic. A major difference is that in Guge, Māra's daughters can be clearly recognised in their usual position in the lower part of the picture, first as alluring young women with their breasts exposed and then as old hags. Māra's daughters are not represented in this form in the Guimet painting at all. The style of the Tibetan examples is also very different from that of the Guimet Māra, whose stylistic links point once again to Uygur art.

Further obvious links to Tibetan art are the wrathful deities shown immediately above and below Śākyamuni. This Tantric influence has puzzled researchers. The deities have been identified as Mahākāla or Ucchuṣma, but the range of attributes they carry does not fit either iconography exactly.[100] Wrathful deities are also shown in other Dunhuang paintings, but the combination with an essentially Mahāyāna context is unusual.[101] The deity at the top of the Guimet Māra

[98] Amy Heller: "Early Ninth Century Images of Vairochana from Eastern Tibet", *Orientations*, June 1994, p. 78, fig. 12. According to Heller this image was repainted during the Qing dynasty.

[99] Xizang Zizhiqu Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui [Administrative Council of the Cultural Bureau of the Tibet Autonomous Region] (ed.): *Guge gucheng* [The Ancient Town of Guge], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991, pl. XX'. For a discussion about the difficulties of dating the site see text volume pp. 259-262.

[100] N. Vandier-Nicolas: *Bannières*: 1976, p. 12. Paul Magnin and Michel Soymié do not attempt to identify these deities.

[101] Ucchuṣma "Fiery-headed Vajra", Stein painting 40, Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 57.

composition has a blue body colour, flaming red hair, three heads decorated with skulls, and eight arms. He wears human skin as a loin cloth and holds a variety of gruesome weapons and attributes: from left to right, a human head on a spear, a lance, a wheel, two swords, a *vajra* and a lasso. He stands on a cloud in front of flames. The deity below Śākyamuni is represented on a shield held by a demon; he has normal body colour, one head decorated with a skull, and four arms, two of which hold two human corpses by the hair while the other two hold up crossed swords above his head. He has a green halo behind his head. It appears that this is the image of a wrathful deity, as it is held up by a demon.

Although they do not look identical, both of the deities hold two crossed swords above their heads. Usually wrathful deities hold one sword (*khaḍga*) only in the right hand, and there doesn't appear to be another example with two swords being held up. The sword is the symbol of wisdom, a protective symbol of the Buddhist doctrine, and represents the victory of enlightenment over the attack of the hosts of Māra, as the hindering forces of ignorance.[102] This meaning may explain the exaggerated importance of the sword in this representation of the "Assault of Māra" at a time, when the attributes of wrathful deities were still being developed. Robert Linrothe argues that the mid-eighth—tenth centuries were actually the period when the identity and attributes of such deities became fixed.[103] Before the tenth century they were usually shown in subsidiary positions with only one head, two arms and few attributes. That the iconography was still developing probably explains why the two wrathful deities cannot be identified with certainty. It is interesting that in this painting they are shown along the central axis in a prominent position.

A possible clue to the origin of the Guimet Māra is hidden in the same section of the painting where a demon holds up the plaque or shield showing the second wrathful deity. On the two sides of this

[102] For a modern western interpretation of the attributes of the wrathful deities see Robert Beer: *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*, London: Serindia, n.d. (ca 1999), pp. 276-277.

[103] Rob Linrothe: *Ruthless Compassion*. London: Serindia, 1999. As Jane Casey Singer says in her Foreword to Linrothe's study: "Images of this class of deity [*krodha-vighnantaka* = "wrathful destroyers of obstacles"] first appeared in eastern India during the late sixth-century and gradually came to characterise Indian Esoteric Buddhism by the late tenth or early eleventh century." (p. x.)

there are four demons holding up oversized banners that culminate in dragon heads. The banners are spirally twisted around the flagpoles or staffs held by the demons. The closest parallel to this can be seen on a later Tangut painting.[104] Both Kyra Samosyuk and Ksenia Kepping who give different interpretations to the Tangut painting agree that the oversized folded banners have Central Asian connotations.[105]

The colouring of the main panel is very different from Dunhuang paintings, and it can be best compared to the colour palette employed in the case of Uygur Manichaean illuminated manuscripts. The dominance of the blue background contrasts with the bright reds, greens and the lavishly applied gold. The brushwork is very different from the calligraphic Chinese line usually employed in Dunhuang. The use of controlled, even and often extremely thin lines can best be observed in the case of Śākyamuni, whose round face has a very fine outline filled with a pink flesh colour. The folds of his robe are shown with many parallel lines, another feature seen in Uygur Manichaean and some Buddhist fragments.[106] Further possible Uygur features include the floral patterns on Śākyamuni's lower garment. Several authors have drawn attention to the importance of textile designs in early Tibetan art, and have shown that these often resemble existing textiles the pattern of which now survive in ceiling designs.[107] The floral pattern shown resembles the ceiling design of several Shazhou Uygur temples (Plate 43).[108] This is, of course, a mannered version of Tang floral motifs. The explosion of the colours in the halo and mandorla, can be compared to the extremely colourful haloes and mandorlas

[104] Water-Moon Guanyin (x-2439), M. Piotrovski: *Lost Empire of the Silk Road, Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto X-XIII centuries*, Milan: Electa: 1993, cat. no. 46.

[105] Ksenia Kepping: 'The Guanyin Icon: Chinggis Khan's Last Campaign': M. Ghose–L. Russell-Smith (eds.): *From Nisa to Niya* (forthcoming) and Kira Samosyuk: "The Reassessment of the meaning of an icon from Khara Khoto in the light of a Tibetan text from Dunhuang", Deborah Klimburg-Salter–Eva Allinger: *Buddhist Art and Tibetan Patronage: Ninth to Fourteenth Centuries*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, p. 70.

[106] Especially a fragment showing the seated Buddha, *CATB*, cat no. 67 and a famous painting showing Manichaean *electae*, ibid., cat. no. 554. Further fragments of Manichaean robes include ibid. cat. nos. 578, 583, 584. The Manichaean *electae* have been published elsewhere e.g. Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 82, pp. 182-184.

[107] For example, see "The Sumtsek ceilings and their painted textile motifs" in Roger Goepper: *Alchi—Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary the Sumtsek*, London: Serindia, 1996, pp. 225-265.

[108] DHMGK, vol. 5, pl. 133.

with geometric patterns from Bezeklik (Colour Plate 8).[109] The very colourful halo behind Śākyamuni's head, with the pattern swirling in one direction, is typical of Uygur painting. In standard Dunhuang-style paintings the patterns of nimbi and mandorlas appear symmetrical as if a mirror had been placed in their centre (Figures 15-16).

The unusual appearance of the painting cannot be explained in terms of traditional Dunhuang patronage, as this painting is very different from the standard Dunhuang style. Could it have been made outside Dunhuang? Although the central part of the composition is unlike anything else known from Dunhuang, this is not true of the entire painting. The bottom part, which shows the Seven Treasures of the Cakravartin, looks especially similar in style to tenth-century Dunhuang examples. If the motif of the Seven Treasures is compared with an early Tibetan example the differences immediately become apparent (Plate 44).[110] In contrast, a comparison of the Seven Treasures with the way they were depicted on a standard Dunhuang painting from the Pelliot collection reveals many similarities (Plate 45).[111] Even the dress and make-up of the woman representing the Cakravartin's spouse is close to tenth-century Dunhuang examples, and this female looks different from those wearing red robes in the main area of the picture. Perhaps artisans more familiar with the Dunhuang workshop practices prepared the side scenes and the lower section of this picture.

The subject matter of Māra's attack on Śākyamuni was relatively popular in earlier Dunhuang caves, but is almost absent in the late period. One of the exceptions is the representation on the north wall in Yulin Cave 33 (Plate 46).[112] This cave has been dated to the Five Dynasties period, and the style is in agreement with this assessment. The representation follows closely the layout of the earlier compositions. In Yulin a large figure of Śākyamuni seated on a lotus pedestal and dressed in monk's robes is attacked by an army of demons.

[109] ZXBQ, pls. 89-95. feature the now destroyed *praṇidhi* scenes and pls. 101, 112, 115 show still-existent examples.

[110] Four of the Seven Treasures of the Cakravartin and auspicious symbols are shown in a mural from Guge, Tibet, Xizang Zizhiqu Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui (ed.): *Guge gucheng* : 1991, pl. 52, fig. 2.

[111] Seven Treasures of the Cakravartin as depicted in the lower part of an "Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara" painting from Dunhuang, EO 3587, J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, cat. no. 266.

[112] AYK, pl. 76.

Although these figures are relatively small, there is nowhere near the same number shown as on the Guimet painting. In the lower part Māra's daughters can be clearly distinguished: first three seductive females dressed in their finery, and then on the right portrayed as old hags. The side scenes are noteworthy: although not identical to the scenes in the Guimet painting, they show Buddhist legends in a remarkably similar arrangement. This is another reason to believe that, despite the differences, the Guimet painting too was actually painted in Dunhuang.

These side scenes are even closer in style to portable Dunhuang paintings. Although their subject matter has not been convincingly identified, their layout and style are actually reminiscent of scenes frequently depicted on the sides of large Paradise compositions. The landscape setting, the rendering of the mountains and the depiction of some of the seated Buddha figures may be likened to the meditations of Queen Vaidehī, linked to Amitābha's Western Pure Land (Plate 41). However, beyond the stylistic likeness none of the scenes correspond to that iconography. Even though the Buddha figure appearing above mountains recalls representations of Amitābha, especially popular in Japan, the other images cannot be linked to the Pure Land tradition.[113] Furthermore, the Buddha represented must be the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, because he is shown in the main field of the composition. This is further confirmed by the *parinirvāṇa* representation in a very prominent position in the top right-hand corner of the painting.

These scenes have long puzzled scholars. Despite saying, "The ten other forms remain mysterious, as does the scene as a whole," Paul Magnin and Michel Soymié have already drawn attention to their similarities with the "groups of famous or miraculous images that occur in certain wall paintings or in Stein paintings 51 and 58."[114] There may be a slightly different explanation. The Buddhas in the side scenes are perhaps not simply illustrating Famous Buddha images, but are actually showing the miracles that both the historical Buddha and his statues were capable of performing according to popular belief.[115] Perhaps because the newly-converted donors had special

[113] Cf. "Amida crossing the Mountain" in Joji Okazaki: *Pure Land Buddhist Painting* [translated and adapted by Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis], Tokyo: Pande, 1971, p. 141 figs. 136-138.

[114] Gies: *ACA*, p. 54.

[115] For miracles performed by statues see Roderick Whitfield: "The Monk Liu Sahe and the Dunhuang Paintings", *Orientations*, vol. 20, no. 3 (March 1989), pp. 64-70.

requests to illustrate the omnipotence of Buddhism, the artists may have had to illustrate a text not previously popular in Dunhuang painting. Although it must be left to a Sinologist to identify whether such a text actually exists in the Dunhuang material, the following are some preliminary suggestions regarding clues of patronage by the newly-converted local Uygurs.

Magic and miracles were very important parts of Buddhist teachings, especially to convince potential new converts of the Buddha's powers. Phyllis Granoff has written an excellent article on their various meanings.[116] In it she discusses the efficacy of miracles as a means of conversion:

> Buddhist texts frequently acknowledged the importance of the performance of miracles as a means to impress unbelievers with the greatness of the faith... the Buddha performs miracles in order to turn people away from their false beliefs, that is, to convert them to the true path of Buddhism. The Buddha, moreover, shares this ability with the gods. In fact the miracles the Buddha and the gods can perform are identical, which has led the Buddha to take birth as a human lest his miracles go unnoticed amongst those of the gods.[117]

In the Pāli *Kevaddha Sutta* of the *Dighanikāya* a strikingly similar list of the Buddha's miracles is given to those depicted in the painting. There Śakyamuni explains that there are three separate types of powers. The first, *iddhipathihariya*, includes "such things as making yourself many; appearing and disappearing; passing through a wall or a mountain, sinking into and bobbing up from the ground as if from water; walking on water as if on land; traversing the sky like a bird; touching the sun and moon."[118]

Most of these miracles and other similar ones are represented in the Guimet painting. The Buddha is shown holding up the sun and the moon in the top left-hand corner. Below this he floats above the mountains; in the fourth scene from the top, fire and water issue forth from his hands; below this he is seated on a lotus throne with

[116] Phyllis Granoff: "The Ambiguity of Miracles. Buddhist Understandings of Supernatural Power", *East and West*, vol. 46 (June 1996), p. 79-96.

[117] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[118] Ibid., p. 83. Cf. R. Otto von Franke: *Dighanikaya. Das Buch der Langen Texte des Buddhistischen Kanons*, Göttingen–Leipzig, 1913, p. 162.

flames surrounding his halo and mandorla; and in the lowest scene he makes himself many, tiny Buddha figures are shown in the foliage above him. On the right-hand side at the top the ultimate miracle of the *nirvāṇa* is shown, below this the Buddha goes through a rock, and is then again shown floating in mid-air in the scenes below. In the lowest scene on the right he appears above water as if walking on water, or just appearing from below, from under the water.

Even more importantly, however, in the *Kevaddha Sutta* such miracles are not considered the ultimate goal, as non-believers could argue that they were simply the result of possessing magical powers. The Buddha, therefore, concludes that "the only unique miracle is the miracle of the Buddhist teaching, the *anusasani patiharya*. This miracle of the teaching is the ultimate truth..."[119] Consequently it is reasonable to conclude that the ultimate goal, *nirvāṇa*, is the only truly important miracle. The *Kevaddha Sutta* explains clearly the importance of miracles in Buddhism and for the conversion of non-believers. Although it may not have been the specific text illustrated here, it is important to be aware of the importance of its arguments, which transcend the narrow circle of the Hīnayāna schools.

There are other indirect hidden clues in the Māra painting that make it likely that it was made as a votive painting that symbolised not only Śākyamuni's triumph over Māra's forces, but also the triumph of Buddhism over other religions in the area. P. Banerjee and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit argue that Hindu deities in support of the Manichaean religion are shown in a scene from Qočo now in Berlin (Colour Plate 15).[120]

Although more research is needed in this area it may be stated that Manichaeism is a religion that deliberately uses the scriptures and symbolism of other religions in any given area in order to support the teachings of Mani. It is clear from the extant Manichaean scriptures, that if the Manichaean missionaries were in Christian territory they employed Christian terminology, whilst in a Buddhist area

[119] Ibid, p. 85.

[120] They were identified as Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva by P. Banerjee in "Hindu Trinity from Central Asia", in P. Banerjee: *New Light on Central Asian Art and Iconography*, New Delhi: Abha Prakashan, 1992, pp. 1-6. (originally published in 1970, *Bulletin, National Museum, New Delhi*, vol. 2, pp. 17-20), and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit: "Hindu Deities in Manichaean Art", *Zentralasiatische Studien*, vol. 14 (1980), pp. 179-199; however, Klimkeit later withdrew this interpretation: cf. P. Zieme: "Manichäische Kolophone": 1992, p. 322. Cf. also Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, p. 73.

they employed the language of the Buddhist missionaries.[121] It is by a similar logic that I suggest that the deities of other religions may have been represented on the Māra painting: non-Buddhist deities appear to acknowledge Śakyamuni's superiority and start to worship him.

Although my argument is still a hypothesis it offers a way to understand several puzzling elements in this composition. My suggestion is that the figures distinguished with a halo on either side of Śakyamuni's canopy represent deities of other religions, some of which at first attack him with the demons. There are nineteen such figures. On the upper left a wolf-headed female demon seated on a wolf is shown holding up the sun and moon. Wolves played a crucial role in Turkic mythology. This figure resembles a Central Asian deity or demon. As we have seen earlier deities associated with wolves and holding up the sun and moon, but with the head of a beautiful woman instead of a monster were also shown in the Uygur Buddhist caves of Bezeklik, and are thought to be of Sogdian origin.[122] Left of this wolf-headed female demon there appears a deity resembling the popular goddess Nana, with two disks in her hands and seated on a lion.

Several demons resemble Hindu deities, such as the one to the right, a little above Śakyamuni's tree canopy, riding on a blue bull (Colour Plate 28). He is blue-bodied and three-headed, and aims an arrow: he may be Śiva. Below him the bird blowing a conch shell looks like *garuda*. On the left there is a dark-bodied, multi-headed deity sitting on a *garuda*, also with a conch shell. He is likely to be Viṣṇu as one of his heads resembles a boar head. It is important to note that the blowing of the conch shell was a sign of going into battle. Next to him is a deity shooting an arrow with five heads sitting on a blue bird, most probably a peacock: this may be Skanda—Karttikeya.[123]

The last figure to the right, bearded and crowned, could be Zoroaster or a Zoroastrian, since the figure looks Persian, wears an appropriate brown gown, and, most importantly, is lifting fire above his head on a tray. Above him we can see another bearded figure wearing only a loin-cloth, who holds a wine horn in his right hand and a bunch of grapes in his left. According to Manichaean scriptures, grapes and other fruits were the most important part of the diet since they were

[121] H. Klimkeit: *Manichaean Art*: 1982, p. 1.

[122] See pp. 99-104 in this book.

[123] I am grateful to Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose for helping me to identify these deities.

reputed to contain a high level of light particles (light *nous*). Grapes are prominently displayed in the "Bema Scene" (Colour Plate 14) and hang from the trees above the heads of *electi* on another Manichaean painting (Plate 30). This figure may be a Manichaean *electus*, defeated and disrobed. As all Manichaeans had to cover their bodies from head to toe this would be the ultimate insult. The figures on his right might represent military and civil officers as in Hell scenes. All these figures are shown in an inferior position to Śākyamuni. The two resembling Chinese officials on either side of the wrathful deity at the top put their hands together as if in worship.

To the mind of a newly-converted Uygur patron such unusual ideas might not appear incomprehensible. There was a tradition of showing Hindu deities as accompanying figures in the Buddhist temples of Central Asia.[124] Furthermore, Uygur Buddhist scriptures and rituals may also have been influenced by Manichaean and Iranian practices. Geng Shimin and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, based on von Gabain's argument, suggest that the *Maitrisimit*, an Uygur text, known in only a Tocharian version and which has no known Indian prototypes, was performed every year at the Maitreya festivities, which coincided with the New Year celebrations. For possible parallels they quote Liu Mau-tsai's description of similar festivities held at Kuča, which included seven days of animal fights and also performances in which the players appeared wearing animal masks, and celebrated victory over the heretics. Such rituals had Iranian origins according to Geng and Klimkeit, who suggest that, as the Manichaeans also had New Year celebrations, the *Maitrisimit* may have been written to give a Buddhist scriptural basis for such festivities.[125] This argument is necessarily highly speculative, as the authors could not rely on specific historical sources. However, it is interesting to note that in the text of the *Maitrisimit* there are several references to animals and foreign deities.[126]

The army of demons depicted in the Guimet Māra composition

[124] This was the subject of a recent lecture given by Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose: "A reappraisal of the iconography of the murals at Dandan-Uiliq", at "The Kingdom of Khotan to AD 1000: A Meeting of Cultures," conference at the British Library (May 10-11, 2004), to be published in the proceedings of the conference.

[125] Geng Shimin and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit: *Das Zusammentreffen mit Maitreya. Die ersten fünf Kapitel der Hami-Version der Maitrisimit*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988, vol. 1, pp. 6-7.

[126] Animals paying their respect to Maitreya, ibid. p., 139; foreign gods, pp. 143, 191.

may also show Sogdian influence. Scriptural sources describing the Assault of Māra can only account for a fraction of the activities of the demons. Although the quoted Tibetan illustration of Māra's attack from Guge (Plate 42) shows many similarities with the Guimet painting, there are also differences, for example none of the demons in the Tibetan painting are shown upside down. There is a specific reference to this particular feature in a Sogdian fragment. This text from the British Library contains an epos describing Rustam's victory over the demons with details closely echoing the representations of the demons in the Guimet Māra:

> The demons... began to prepare great heavy equipment and strong armour... Many archers, many charioteers, many (demons) riding elephants, many riding...(?)... many riding pigs, many riding foxes, many riding dogs, many riding on snakes (and) on lizards, many on foot, many who went flying like vultures and ...(?)..., many upside-down, the head downwards and the feet upwards, (all these demons) bellowed out a roar, for a great while they raised rain, snow, hail (and) great thunder, they opened (their) jaws (and) released fire, flame (and) smoke.[127]

Sogdian influence on the manner of the demons' representation is very likely. The Sogdians were, of course, the most important single cultural influence on the Uygurs, especially after their conversion to Manichaeism in the 760s.

This painting is most likely to have been painted in the tenth century. As discussed earlier, Gulácsi has argued that at least some of the Manichaean book illustrations can be dated to the tenth century. Many features link the Guimet painting closely with Gulácsi's "West Asian fully painted" style, which includes her carbon-dated example.[128] The blue background, bright colouring, ample use of gold, 'thin lines,' and the facial and figural types all point to the influence of Manichaean art. The existence of this painting is indirect proof that the Uygur Manichaean style was known and copied in Dunhuang in the tenth century. As the Manichaean mannerisms are, however, employed to promote a Buddhist programme, it is also indirect proof that at least

[127] For a quote on demons from this epos see N. Sims-Williams "The Sogdian Fragments of the British Library", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, vol. 18 (1976), 56-58. The manuscript is Or. 8212/81 = Ch. 00349. The manuscript and its translation can be studied on the IDP web-page: http://idp.bl.uk/GetObjectOverview/12624

[128] Z. Gulácsi: "Dating": 2002-2003, pp. 12-19.

the Uygurs living in the Dunhuang area were already converted to Buddhism by this time.

Although there are no female or male donors shown, the females represented near the centre of the composition resemble Uygur women because of their unusual hair ornaments and red gowns. The four females, who may represent the daughters of Māra, stand on either side of the central Buddha. Perhaps these women are not Māra's daughters at all, because they do not seem to be seductive or threatening and fail to turn into old hags. It is also possible that they are four attendants surrounding Śākyamuni's throne. Their hairstyle is very similar to that of donors in Uygur-influenced Dunhuang paintings described in the next chapter.[129] The other female hairstyle shown, in which the hair is simply combed into a bun at the top of the head, also resembles Uygur arrangements from the Šorčuk area on the basis of examples in von Gabain's book (Figure 31).[130]

The key features listed in Table 4 and present in this painting include: the bright colouring and the extensive use of gold, the hair-style and clothing of the females, the unusual patterning of the nimbi and aureoles, the depiction of deities and demons with Uygur-style multiple heads, the unusual long banners, the even and thin brush-work, the pink face of the Buddha, facial types resembling those in Manichaean painting, the facial types of demons, the depiction of hair and the depiction of foliage. The presence of these key features in this painting indicates strong Uygur influence.

Taken as a whole, the Guimet painting presents a powerful message to the newly-converted Uygurs. The central field shows Śākyamuni just before his enlightenment, but already as a transcendent being, untouched by the many miraculous attacks against him by the demons and deities in Māra's army. On the sides are depicted the most important miracles that the Buddha can perform. The supreme miracle of entering *nirvāṇa* is shown at the top, by a traditionally positioned recumbent Buddha figure. This unique painting was most probably commissioned by Ganzhou Uygur donors in Dunhuang, whose taste for Tibetan and Uygur religious art is reflected in the style and iconography of the painting. Of all the paintings that reflect Uygur influence in Dunhuang this is the one that manifests the strongest Manichaean

[129] See pp. 193-194 and Figure 28 in this book.
[130] A. von Gabain: *Das Leben:* 1973, fig. 107.

influence. Further research must be performed to clarify whether this could be a sign of having been commissioned by a different group of Uygur patrons or at a different time within the tenth century.

The influence of Uygur Buddhist art

The paintings discussed in the following section reflect the influence of Uygur Manichaean art to a lesser extent. They show very close links to Uygur Buddhist art, especially its early transitional phase. First those paintings are described which show stylistic links to Bezeklik wall paintings.

The "Paradise of Amitābha" is an important, newly-restored painting in the Stein Collection of the British Museum (Colour Plates 29-32).[131] Until recently this painting was in a completely fragmentary state, consisting of many parts, some of only a few centimetres. Five small fragments were bought by Roderick Whitfield on behalf of the British Museum from the estate of a past president of the Royal Academy, to whom they had been given in the early years following Sir Aurel Stein's return from his Second Expedition.[132] These were mounted in cards, but the rest of the fragments had only been strengthened by the addition of soft blue backing paper and were stored in several places in separate boxes, and it was only with some difficulty that the original position of the fragments could be identified. The composition was reconstructed and photographed for the first time for *The Arts of Central Asia* by Whitfield in what he describes as a "makeshift assembly."[133] Following the guidelines of this black-and-white photograph, the present author then reassembled the composition in preparation for conservation in 2002, as part of the Mellon digitisation project.[134]

[131] Stein painting 37, Ink and colours on silk, H: 204 cm W: 183 cm. Published in a fragmented state: Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, pl. 19, figs. 55-58.
[132] Personal communication, September 2000 and June 2004. One of these five fragments is shown inserted into the group of musicians in Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, fig. 57.
[133] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, fig. 55 caption.
[134] Lilla Russell-Smith: "Uygur influence on Dunhuang art: reassessing a newly restored painting of Amitābha's Pure Land from the British Museum", in M. Ghose and L. Russell-Smith (eds.): *From Nisa to Niya* (forthcoming). It was intended to be exhibited at the British Library for the first time at the *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War & Faith* exhibition (May–September 2004) and is included in the catalogue.

In the central part, which has suffered the most damage, the larger figure of the central Buddha is almost completely missing. This made the final positioning of fragments in the central area more difficult, even with the help of the black-and-white photograph. In the course of this work, additional small fragments were identified and added to the composition. Reassembling the pieces on the two sides and the lower part was relatively easy. Many of the side scenes have survived very well. Similar scenes are well known from the Pure Land sutras and the later Amitābha Paradise paintings that have remained popular for centuries in China and Japan. Since captions indicate the content of the side scenes in the British Museum fragments, it is possible to make comparisons between these and other surviving compositions.[135]

Now that this painting has been restored, it has become considerably easier to study its details. The cartouches are filled in with great care and identify the subject matter as the Paradise of Amitābha. Two earlier sutras: the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* and the *Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* give a detailed description of *Sukhāvatī*, "one of the innumerable transcendent world-realms located billions of Buddha-lands away in the western quarter."[136] Amitābha, a transcendent Buddha, presides over this Land of Utmost Bliss, the beauty and splendour of which is described in detail.[137] Part of Amitābha's popularity was due to the powerful belief that by merely chanting his name and thinking of his Pure Land, especially just before one's death, makes rebirth in his Western Paradise possible. The Chinese promoters of the Pure Land sutras believed that the era in which they lived was so decadent and so far removed from Śākyamuni's that no one would be strong enough to attain enlightenment just by relying on his own skills and will-power.

The earliest Pure Land resource for visualisation and recitation practices is the *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra* or *Guan wuliang shoujing* 觀無量壽經 [The sutra on the visualisation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life].

Lilla Russell-Smith: "Uighur influence on Dunhuang art", in Susan Whitfield (ed.): *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War & Faith*, London: The British Library and Serindia Publications 2004, pp. 316-319.

[135] I am very grateful to Dr. Ma De who read the inscriptions in 1998 and who gave me a copy of his transcription.

[136] Kenneth Tanaka: *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine. Ching-ying Hui-yüan's Commentary on the 'Visualisation Sutra'*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990, p. 7.

[137] Ibid.

It is usually agreed that this sutra was not written in Sanskrit, but is one of the "apocryphal" sutras. Interestingly several Japanese scholars have hypothesised that it actually originated in the Turfan area.[138]

This sutra describes the story of Queen Vaidehī, who assured her rebirth in the Western Paradise by visualising the features of *Sukhāvatī*, Amitābha and his attendant bodhisattvas. She was the wife of King Bimbisāra, who was imprisoned by his son with the intention of starving him to death. However, the Queen managed to feed her husband in secret. When she was found out, her son almost stabbed her to death and was only stopped by two of his ministers. After her imprisonment Queen Vaidehī prayed to Śākyamuni Buddha, who taught her how to meditate on the Western Pure Land in order to ensure her rebirth there. These became crucially important motifs in the later and more complex illustrations of the sutra.

In the case of the British Museum painting too Amitābha's Pure Land occupies the main position, Bimbisāra's story is shown on left side and Queen Vaidehī's Visualisations on the right. The small, kneeling figure of Queen Vaidehī appears in each scene in the traditional way on the right-hand side of the picture (Colour Plate 31). According to Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis the believer was invited to "read" the left side of the large paintings first, then the right side, and meditate on the different elements that make up Amitābha's Pure Land in detail. Only thus prepared would the believer meditate on the splendour of the Pure Land shown in the centre.[139]

In the British Museum painting the last three visualisations are shown at the bottom, divided into nine sections, corresponding to the nine levels of rebirth. Only a few scenes of this exist today, and in one of them the demons appear to have already dragged the dying person by his hair into the cooking pot of Hell shown in the front of the scene. The dying person is lovingly watched by a female, presumably his wife. If he could manage to recite Amitābha's name, he would

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[138] Kôtatsu Fujita: "The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*: A Canonical Scripture of Pure Land Buddhism", in R. E. Buswell (ed.): *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, pp. 156-159, 163; Nobuyoshi Yamabe: "The Implications of the 'Manichaean' Caves at Toyok, Turfan, for the Origin of the *Guan wuliangshou jing*", in Tokunaga Daishin (ed.): *Rennyo Shōnin no sōgōteki kenkyū* [A comprehensive study of Rennyo]: Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1998, pp. 280-250 [*sic*].

[139] Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis: *The Revival of the Taima Mandala in Medieval Japan*, New York & London: Garland, 1985, p. 33.

be saved, even at this late stage, and be reborn in a closed lotus bud in Amitābha's Paradise, despite all the sins he had committed during his life, referred to in the cartouche as the "Ten Evils" "*shi e*" 十惡. These scenes appear to be a local version illustrating Shandao's commentary. Most other Paradise illustrations in Dunhuang did not show the nine degrees of rebirth separately.[140]

The importance of images increased as the practice of visualising the Western Paradise for rebirth became crucial in following Pure Land practices. The image could help the viewer to visualise the details, and eventually build up the whole Land of Utmost Bliss. As in the case of all Pure Land illustrations, on the British Museum painting too, the centre of the composition would originally have been occupied by Amitābha himself, now lost, who would probably have been portrayed frontally, with additional smaller Buddha groups depicted on the sides. The altar coverings and the vessels are very similar to those of the standard tenth-century Dunhuang style.[141] This composition follows the Dunhuang Paradise compositions closely, but it is not exactly like any of them. The layout of the visualisations differs and there is an even more striking difference in the colouring and style of this painting.

Some of the differences in the British Museum painting from the standard Dunhuang style have already been noticed by Whitfield. He has drawn attention to the use of colour, the facial features, and the atypical halo patterns and then concluded:

> Some of these features… appear related to the wall paintings from Bezeklik: note especially the tiny mouth and full-fleshed face, the prolific use of bright colour, and atypical halo patterns with a pronounced one-directional sense of movement... This is not to suggest that we shall find this painting to have been made outside Dunhuang; it is clearly Chinese and the characters in the cartouches to the side scenes might still be considered to be closest, in the series of manuscripts we have illustrated, to the eighth century of the Tang, but this painting seems to illustrate a different current in the art of Dunhuang, with a substantial contribution from another centre in addition to purely Chinese features such as the "Tang foliage."[142]

[140] On a ninth-century example (EO 1128) the sixteen visualisations are shown on the left, while the bottom part of the painting shows the donors and various objects of offerings. Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1 pl. 16.

[141] For example, cf. MG 17673, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 19.

[142] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, pp. 314-315.

Whitfield was the first to notice the striking similarities with Uygur painting from the Turfan area, specifically Bezeklik. However, he considered this painting to be unique among the Dunhuang paintings. Based on its quality and some similarities to Tang painting he has dated it to the eighth century.

Once the importance of Uygur patronage in Dunhuang became apparent, it was clear that this large painting too was most likely to have been painted in Dunhuang, but for local Uygur patrons in the tenth century. As no donor figures are shown and there is no inscription referring to donors on the painting, the validity of this hypothesis had to be tested by indirect means. The Amitābha Paradise was therefore compared to other Uygur paintings concentrating on the use of colours and gilding and details such as the patterning of mandorlas and nimbi, and the iconography. The brushwork, mannerisms and facial types indicate that this painting is distinct within the Dunhuang material.

A few colours dominate in the painting: on a blue background are shades of green, blue and red. These colours are typical of Uygur art. The very skilled use of gold also characterises this painting. Several types of gilding are present. For larger objects, a layer of gold paint was applied as an approximate shape then outlined in black for finer details. This technique resembles the gilding used in the case of Manichaean illuminated manuscripts (Colour Plate 14).[143] Although the appearance is similar, it is likely that while the Manichaean artists pasted gold leaf on to paper, the Dunhuang artists usually used a thin layer of gold to paint on silk. Uncharacteristically for Dunhuang painting, the edges of the Buddha's robes are highlighted with very thin golden lines. The very same technique can also be found on Uygur fragments now in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin (Plate 27).[144] In Dunhuang this feature is very rare, and it can only be observed on paintings that are likely to date from the second half of the tenth century.

Gold was applied to the central part of flowers and to the blue sky.

[143] Gulácsi describes the technique in Zsuzsanna Gulácsi: "Reconstructing Manichaean Book Paintings through the Techniques of their Makers: The Case of the 'Work of the Religion Scene' on *MIK III 4974* recto," in P. Mirecki and J. BeDuhn (eds.), *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in Manichaeism and its World*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 2001, pp.113-116. and fig. 8.

[144] MIK III 4534c, *CATB*, cat. no. 140.

Extensive gold decoration was used for jewellery, canopies and other details. One of the largest surviving sections is the top left part of the composition. The parasol, towards the right-hand side of this piece, was painted in red, then, without any attempt to show three-dimensionality, layers of pigment and thin gold paint were added. The combination of the main colours and gold is very uncharacteristic for Dunhuang and, at the same time, very close to the decoration of Manichaean illuminated manuscripts, and fragments of Uygur paintings on silk, such as the "Buddha fragment" (Colour Plate 16).[145]

The golden florets, carefully applied to the blue background, are also unusual. Many of the paintings described in this book share the feature of flowers decorating the background, which is otherwise a rare occurrence in Dunhuang art. Whitfield has already drawn attention to the halo types, which are also very different from those usually used in Dunhuang.

> The haloes too are extremely colourful... The Bodhisattva's nimbus consists of overlapping bands of points, while the attendant's, plain orange-red, is dotted with red. In the subsidiary triads, the decoration of many of the haloes has a pronounced clockwise movement, even that of the wavy type which, as normally seen at Dunhuang, is balanced on both sides, meeting at the top.[146]

Haloes made up of brightly coloured geometric patterns swirling in one direction or radiating from the centre were commonly used in Bezeklik (Plate 20).[147] Michael Henss has pointed to possible Uygur links in the cases where these appear in a Tibetan temple.[148] As argued above, the very colourful halo-type swirling in one direction can also be seen in the "Assault of Māra" painting, another important painting from Dunhuang to show strong Uygur influence.[149]

As may be observed on the original fragments even more clearly than on the reproductions, there are two basic facial types used. The bodhisattvas' faces are simply outlined in red, with no attempt to show

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[145] MIK III 4947 & III 5d, Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 66, pp. 146-148.

[146] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, p. 315.

[147] MIK III 9210 (unpublished wall painting).

[148] Michael Henss: "The Eleventh Century Murals at Drathang Gonpa", in Jane Casey Singer and Philip Denwood (eds.): *Tibetan Art. Towards a Definition of Style*, London: Laurence King, 1997, pp. 168-169.

[149] See p. 145 in this book.

three-dimensionality. In case of the Buddha's face, a darker shade of orangy-pink is used for modelling the face. The facial characteristics of the latter may be compared to an Uygur "Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara" found in Yarkhoto (Plate 38). Especially similar is the representation of the eyes with a line going around them.[150]

Also present on the British Museum painting is the tendency to render the foliage of trees as a repetitive decorative pattern of circular motifs with the petals and leaves highlighted in gold. The trees behind each of the Buddha groups provide a most striking backdrop and can be compared to the way the Bodhi tree was shown in the "Assault of Māra" painting. There is an inherent tension between the shading of the flowers, suggesting space, and the fully frontal rendering of the buildings immediately next to them. Some details are shown in high plasticity while others are completely flat. This duality is characteristic of Uygur Manichaean manuscripts too, which often display a great degree of plasticity for ornaments and drapery, which are then juxtaposed with very flat details (Colour Plates 14-15).[151]

A Paradise painting from the Tang period, despite the limitations imposed by the width of the silk, is a harmonic and balanced composition set convincingly in space (Plate 41). No elements or colours contrast with others, while all the sections present a unified, balanced picture. Stein painting 37 presents a very different picture with no sense of this Tang "harmony." In this case, three-dimensional details are juxtaposed with scenes that appear flat and very decorative.

A similar duality of styles is very characteristic of Uygur art. It can be observed at Bezeklik, and even more so at Šorčuk, where the main compositions are carefully defined, but the additional smaller sections are painted in a sketchy style (Colour Plates 18-19). As at Šorčuk, in the case of the side scenes of the Amitābha Paradise too, a much less colourful technique was adopted for the figures: the larger surfaces, such as red or white cloaks, and the white for the faces were painted first, and then details were added, such as the gold decoration in Queen Vaidehī's hair and the green dots on her robe (Colour Plate 31). In the case of the faces, the style is very sketchy and was executed in a black outline only, with no visible underdrawing. In some cases, a very light

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[150] MIK III 8001, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Route*: 1982, p. 201, cat. no. 142.

[151] For example MIK III 4979 a, b; Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 32, pp. 70-75.

pink layer was finally added to indicate the skin colour.

There is no attempt to suggest space in the case of the architecture shown in the side scenes, and this is further emphasised by the incredible decorative ornamentation added to the lower part of the buildings (Colour Plate 30). In the central part of the composition buildings are sketched in more detail, for example, bird-head-shaped finials on the roof are shown in blue with black details added. The buildings are drawn at an angle, and the surfaces are shaded, suggesting spacial awareness. Interestingly the features of the building shown can be directly compared to existing examples of Tang Chinese architecture, for example, the Main Hall in the Nanchan Monastery, Wutai County, Shanxi, dated to 782 (Plate 47).[152] In the knowledge of such existing buildings, in the more stylised side scenes it is possible to distinguish the roof finials, the sloping, tiled roof, the bracketing and the brick-faced foundation platform of stamped earth.

Buildings were shown in Dunhuang during the Tang dynasty in Paradise compositions in such detail as to permit the reconstruction of various architectural types.[153] However, on portable paintings it was necessary to simplify such details due to the shape and size of the painted area which was defined by the width of the silk. Even so, in comparing a typical Tang example it is possible to see the method of representation (Plate 41).[154] In the centre, the buildings are shown in perspective, with many details added, such as the bracketing system. In the side scenes on the right, although the buildings are simplified to a great extent, there is continued spatial awareness: in scene six from the top there is a palace drawn at an angle. In contrast, in the side scenes of Stein painting 37, a fully frontal rendering of the buildings gives a decorative and colourful backdrop to the scenes, which results in a completely flat appearance (Colour Plate 30). The features of existing Tang buildings can be recognised, but have been decorated to an extent that is unimaginable in Chinese art. In China such buildings were, after all, part of everyday life. Here they seem more like fairy-tale palaces, adding to the magical setting of the legends.

[152] N. Steinhardt: *Liao Architecture*: 1997, p. 69, fig. 60.

[153] Xiao Mo: *Dunhuang jianzhu yanjiu* [Architectural Research of Dunhuang Grottoes], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989; Puay-peng Ho: *Chinese Monastic Buddhist Architecture in the Sui and Tang Dynasties: a Study of the Spatial Conception*, University of London: SOAS, PhD diss.; 1992.

[154] EO 1128, H: 171 cm W: 118.2 cm, Giès: *ACA*, pl. 16-1. This painting is made up of one full-width piece and two half-width silks on the sides as usual. There are more detailed comparisons made in L. Russell-Smith: "Uygur influence on Dunhuang art" (forthcoming).

The finials of the roof resemble two bird heads in profile with spiky feathers on top of their heads. This cartoon-like rendering is continued further down the building, where the brick foundation is shown in blue with wildly twisting black swirling lines decorating it. On top of this there is a black-and-white zigzag design, and above this is a flattened meander scroll, a motif that ultimately originated in Greek and Hellenistic art. A large version of this ornamental motif can be seen on a wooden beam in the storeroom of the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin testifying to its popularity.

A similar, decorative approach to depicting Chinese architecture can be seen in several of the famous *praṇidhi* scenes of Bezeklik Cave 20, and one of these buildings has been singled out by von Gabain as a feature of Uygur art (Colour Plate 8, Figure 12). She believes that these paintings portray actual examples of Uygur buildings, the lower portion of which was covered with grey-blue tiles.[155] Although this style seems too decorative to be taken as a realistic representation it is possible to identify the types of architecture shown. In the case of the British Museum painting the blue colour of the lower parts of the buildings may indeed refer to the tiles used, and once again sets this example apart from the usual Dunhuang types.

Figures similar to the demons can be found in manuscripts related to Kṣitigarbha (some of which are late in date), and on wall painting fragments from Sengim showing *pretas*. These feature the same emaciated bodies, with the bones clearly shown by thin outlines, and the red hair standing on end.[156] All the cartouches are filled in with great care, in contrast with many tenth-century Dunhuang compositions, in which the cartouches were often left blank. The links with book art may explain the importance of inscriptions, and their careful calligraphic quality, which is also unusual in late Dunhuang art. As the work on translating Buddhist scriptures into Uygur was only just beginning in the tenth century, it is likely that it was easier to quote directly from the Chinese scriptures. It is also possible that there was no Uygur Buddhist canon as the canon existed in Chinese and Tocharian. A scripture such as Shandao's commentary, however

[155] A. von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, p. 79.

[156] First reproduced by A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, pl. 14b.

popular in Dunhuang, may not even have been translated into Uygur by the tenth century.[157]

Most of the side scenes are partitioned off with a line, except at the top, where the hilly landscape seems to merge into the sky of the main composition. The cartouches are white, oulined in red. Presumably, initially a blank space was left for them, but it is clear that they were filled in as the last step, as details, such as the clouds in the case of the second scene, can be seen under the layer of white.

The side ornament is painted in orange with a darker reddish orange giving a simple inner definition. The scroll is outlined in white on a brown background. This technique and these colours were so unusual in Dunhuang, that Whitfield was able on this evidence to identify a piece belonging to this composition in the Musée Guimet.[158] This scroll most probably has its origin in the palmette motif of Western art, as the leaves open up on alternating sides. It is quite flat in appearance, and only the darker tone of red gives it some definition. It surrounded the entire composition. As mentioned earlier, all shades of red were very popular in Manichaean art and orange was used on Uygur Buddhist fragments. Plant motifs surrounding the text are a popular decorative design type in Manichaean illuminated manuscripts (Plate 31, Figure 25).[159] Even though it does not seem possible to find an exact parallel for this example, the formula of a scroll framing the whole page is an important feature of the illuminated manuscripts.

A blue scroll design outlined in black appears in the lower section of the central part of the painting. There is also a very colourful floral scroll on a pinkish red ground framing the main Paradise scene and separating it from the side scenes. At the top of this appears a lotus flower with a glowing pearl, interestingly still within the main picture area. This flaming jewel or glowing pearl has a close parallel with the ornaments on top of the "Bodhisattva with Lotus" painting also influenced by Uygur art and described below.[160] The same decorative

[157] It does not appear in Elverskog's exhaustive list. J. Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*. 1997. I have given a list of the inscriptions and their translations elsewhere, see L. Russell-Smith: "Uygur influence on Dunhuang art" (forthcoming).

[158] EO 1188, published as No. 5 in N. Vandier-Nicolas: *Bannières*. 1974, cf. Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, p. 314.

[159] MIK III 6368, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*. 1982, cat. no. 115, and M 1887 verso, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, deposited in the Berlin State Library of the Prussian Cultural Foundation, MMBA, pl. 37.

[160] See p. 166 in this book.

colour scheme as in the case of the flaming jewel was employed to decorate the floral border. The contrasting colours used are almost black, a shade of blue, red or green, and two lighter shades of the same colour. In an interesting detail the scroll disappears behind one of the cartouches.

The same contrasting colour combination can be seen on the remains of the lotus petals on a silk fragment from Toyoq.[161] The donors on this fragment have a Tang hairstyle and therefore, this fragment is likely to have been made in the pre-Uygur period. From this it is clear that the shading and colouring technique has its origin in Tang art, and was already known in the area in pre-Uygur times. However, the use of this technique can also be found in Uygur Manichaean art, on a silk fragment reproduced by von Le Coq.[162] On this fragment too, the middle of the petals are much darker, while three to four fading shades are used to reach the edge, which is outlined in white. That this fragment is Manichaean is proved by the inscription, which is in Manichaean script and the Middle-Persian language according to von Le Coq.

A close connection with the Uygurs is also supported by the clothing of Queen Vaidehī as she appears in the side scenes (Colour Plate 31). Unlike in other Pure Land compositions from Dunhuang, where the female figure is dressed in Chinese dress, here Vaidehī wears a bright red gown decorated with green dots. This may be considered a simplified version of the royal gown shown in Bezeklik Cave 20 (Colour Plate 5). The green dots could be an exaggerated way of rendering the seem of these Uygur robes. The hairline of Queen Vaidehī on the British Museum Amitābha fragments is straight and resembles Uygur hairstyles. Although the Queen's hairstyle represents yet another fashion, it is not like the usual Chinese styles, and can be compared to that of an Uygur woman on a now-destroyed Uygur mural fragment from Bezeklik Cave 46 (Figure 32).

In summary, although on account of the size of this composition some of its features cannot be compared to the small Manichaean illuminated scenes, many similarities have been discussed. A plant scroll surrounds the entire composition. The round faces and the red

[161] MIK III 6341, reproduced in H. Härtel–M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Route*. 1982, p. 192, cat. no. 131.

[162] A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho*. 1913, pl. 4a.

cheeks of the female deity on the Manichaean illuminated fragment (Colour Plate 15) may be compared to those of Queen Vaidehī and the other figures in the side scenes. The shading resembles the pink used for the Buddhas' faces, and there is a blue background.

Although, because of the large dimensions of the silk painting, details are much less finely executed than on the Manichaean illuminated manuscripts, the techniques employed are similar. Faces were first outlined in black, and then the light pink face colour shaded with darker pink was added. Next the gold layer was laid down, and then outlines were added in black.[163] As previously noted, several of these features, such as the round faces, the shading, the blue background and the generous use of gold also became typical features of some Xizhou Uygur Buddhist paintings.[164]

Key features as listed in Table 4 and present in this painting include: bright colouring, the generous use of gold, the clothing and hairstyle of figures, the patterning of nimbi and aureoles, canopies and banners, the use of several types of scroll design, even brushwork, the facial types of humans, deities and demons, and the depiction of their hair, the stylised rendering of architecture and foliage.

The mixed appearance of this high-quality painting that can be likened both to Uygur Manichaean and Buddhist paintings seems to indicate a transitory phase in the art of the Uygurs at Dunhuang. While the technique employed resembles the Manichaean style, other details listed indicate that Uygur Buddhist art, as known from Bezeklik and from the fragments of portable Uygur paintings, already existed when the British Museum painting was completed. These observations contribute to the understanding of the formation of Uygur Buddhist art itself.

"Bodhisattva with Lotus": comparisons with Uygur figure painting

The "Bodhisattva with Lotus" banner (Colour Plate 33) appears to be similar to many other banners from Dunhuang that feature bodhisattvas.[165] Jacques Giès chose this painting to illustrate the many

[163] For a comparative description of Manichaean examples see MMBA, pp. 133-136.
[164] See pp. 115-122 in this book.
[165] EO 1399 (P 149) H: 111.5 cm, W: 28.2 cm. Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2 pl. 13.

trends that existed within Dunhuang art, but pointed out that "this style … will in many respects appear to contradict the observations we have already made regarding the pictorial language at Dunhuang." He draws attention to "the simultaneous use of contrasting pure colours such as cinnabar red and malachite green, applied, most unusually, in several layers (or impasted) alongside delicate and transparent washes of the same colours and others of that palette." He also emphasises the decorative and ornamental qualities of the painting: "The whole gives the impression that the rendering of the subject is more decorative than pictorial, the figure more graphic than plastic."[166] Written from the point of view of a practising artist, Giès noticed the same tension between volume and decoration that I described in the case of the "Paradise of Amitābha" fragments.[167] Giès did not look for outside influence in the case of this painting, and he believed that it was essentially a representative of the Tang style, dating it to the ninth century. In contrast, following the initial hypothesis of the present study, in this case too, it seemed reasonable to look for evidence suggesting Uygur influence and a later date. The unusual colouring, the ample use of gilding and the facial features of the bodhisattva indicated outside influence. Also considering that the lower part of the painting is missing, the shape of the painting is unusually long among the banners showing a single figure.

Banners featuring the standing figures of bodhisattvas were very common in Dunhuang. If this painting is compared to a bodhisattva painted in the "standard" Dunhuang style (Colour Plate 34) the absence of light shading, which was usually applied to show volume in Dunhuang is especially apparent. Although there is a light pink wash applied in the case of the "Bodhisattva with Lotus" too, this is much lighter, and does not diminish the flat appearance of the face. The "standard-style" bodhisattva appears much more relaxed, comfortably arranged in the long narrow space offered by the shape of the banner. His left arm and hand are drawn very skilfully with foreshortening, with his fingers elegantly pointing in different directions. In his left hand he holds a round dish containing flowers, all convincingly arranged in space. If we compare the "Bodhisattva with Lotus" to this, it is clearly

[166] Jacques Giès: "The Pictorial Language of Dunhuang from the mid-Eighth to the Eleventh Centuries. Essay on the chronology of the liturgical and votive paintings kept in the Musée Guimet", Giès: *ACA*, p. 32.
[167] See p. 159 in this book.

very different: the figure seems flattened out to fit the narrow space, his arms hold a flower stalk in an unnatural position. His fingers are exaggeratedly elongated and pointed.

The lotus flower held by the bodhisattva (Colour Plate 33) is most unusual. It has a blue and a red closed bud with an open lotus above. The combination of buds with the open flower was a very popular Uygur motif and can be seen on many fragments in the Turfan-sammlung in Berlin. More unusual is the hairy stem of the lotus. This seems to be present found this in Dunhuang only on the newly found "Bodhisattva Leading the Way", described below (Colour Plate 52), and on an Uygur fragment.[168]

Especially interesting is the contrast in the jewellery of the two figures. Whilst the jewellery of the "standard-style" bodhisattva (Colour Plate 34) is shown as relatively simple decoration with black outlines coloured in ochre only, in the case of the "Bodhisattva with Lotus" in addition to this simple combination of a black outline with ochre there is also an array of lively colours employed. Taking the bodhisattva's necklace as an example, there is a contrast between the simplicity and flatness of the main part of the necklace, which is shown using the black outlining technique only, and the jewels hanging from it, which are shown with the use of the shading technique described in the case of the "Paradise of Amitābha." Outlined in red there is a white circle and then darkening shades of the basic colours so popular in Uygur art: green, blue and red. As mentioned previously, the flaming jewels decorating the top of the canopy are identical to the ones shown on the fragments of the "Paradise of Amitābha".

The unusual use of the basic colours, and the flat appearance and decorative qualities of this painting are all key elements that are identifiable as criteria of the Uygur style. Uygur influence can be also be observed in the figure-painting style employed here. The bodhisattva is presented in two-thirds view. The long almond-shaped eyes, the double-chin, the four folds of the neck, the curved eyebrows, the elegant hands, the thin curved line of the eyebrows, the slightly open mouth, the bold colouring and the extremely decorative moustache are all features to be found in Bezeklik.

A rarely reproduced fragment of a bodhisattva face (Plate 34),

[168] MIK III 6352, H: 16.8 cm, W: 27.7 cm, *CATB*, cat. no. 117, p. 127. See also p. 223 and Colour Plate 54 in this book.

now in the National Museum of New Delhi, which was originally on the side wall of Bezeklik Cave 16 (Stein's numbering: Bezeklik xiii), although facing in the opposite direction, features similarities to the Guimet example.[169] In both cases the eyebrows are gently curved, the nose and nostrils are identical, as are the moustache and tiny beard of the two bodhisattvas. The mouth of the Guimet bodhisattva is open, allowing us to see his teeth as if he were caught in the middle of speech. The Delhi bodhisattva's mouth is closed. The chin is indicated with a simple curved line, and the neck shows three extra folds under the chin in both cases. Unfortunately the Delhi bodhisattva's clothing has been destroyed, but it is possible to see that he wore a similarly tied head ornament, and his halo was made up of concentric circles. A Buddha face from the same cave shows exactly the same type of facial features.

The bodhisattva in the Guimet painting (Colour Plate 33) is outlined by thin lines that exhibit no change of width. This can be compared to the bodhisattva head exhibited in Berlin (Colour Plate 20).[170] The Berlin bodhisattva is painted with even finer lines, and the jewellery is less colourful and more decoratively two-dimensional being mostly rendered in black outline. In the Pelliot painting the same technique is used, but as previously noted, there are more coloured additions. In these two examples, the eyebrows are drawn at a very similar angle, the joining of the eyebrows and the nose is practically identical, and the treatment of the end of the nose is very similar. It is above all the eyes that set these examples apart from Tibetan and Chinese paintings. The eyes are big and prominent and painted with four lines: the upper eyelid closely follows the line of the upper eyebrow, the bottom part of the upper eyelid is re-emphasised in black, the pupils are shown relatively large and almost fully round, and another non-wavy line is used for the lower part.

Another fragment of an Uygur Buddhist painting now in Berlin is painted in a slightly different style, but the facial features are once again very similar (Plate 48). This proves that this facial type was the favoured method of showing bodhisattva and Buddha faces among the Uygurs. This together with the fact that the face of the "Bodhisattva

[169] BEZ. xiii. D. 1. B; F. H. Andrews: *Wall paintings*: 1948, pl. XXIX.

[170] MIK III 6166. Originally published by A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, pl. 43b. See also H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, p. 211, cat. no. 150 and *CATB*, cat. no. 193.

with Lotus" does not resemble the faces of bodhisattvas shown on other banners from Dunhuang makes the Uygur influence very clear in the case of this painting. Key features as listed in Table 4 and present in this painting include: the use of colour and gold, the unusual clothing and hairstyle of the figure, the canopy, the even brushwork, the facial features (and the depiction of the flower instead of foliage). In view of the similarities to the Amitābha Paradise and to Uygur murals it is necessary to revise the present dating of this painting. A tenth-century date is more likely.

"Vīrūpākṣa, Guardian of the West"

Another painting that can be clearly compared to examples of Bezeklik wall paintings is "Vīrūpākṣa, Guardian of the West" (Colour Plate 35).[171] This painting was singled out by Stein as "Central Asian." He emphasised its decorative qualities and flatness:

> The banner (Ch.0010)... is complete and excellently preserved. Virūpākṣa's figure combines here characteristics of that lokapala type which may be conveniently called Central Asian with a treatment and certain details not unlike as those in the Chinese style. Though the drawing is careful and the colours clear and fresh, much is lost in general effect through excessive concentration of detail and ornament. In the want of space and free line and in the resulting lack of spontaneity we are made to feel as it were, the influence of non-Chinese models.[172]

A photograph recently discovered by the present author in the collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences shows the way this painting most probably looked when first brought to the British Museum (Plate 49).[173] Still retaining its triangular headpiece and streamers it was one of the well-preserved examples of Dunhuang banners. Later the bottom streamers were detached and the painting was mounted in the European fashion with the headpiece and

[171] Stein painting, 108, H: 64.5cm, W: 17.5 cm, Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, pl. 63-1.

[172] Aurel Stein: *The Thousand Buddhas. Ancient Buddhist Paintings from the Cave-Temples of Tun-huang on the Western Frontier of China*, London: Bernard Quaritsch Ltd., 1921, pp. 62-63.

[173] For Stein's photographic collection cf. Introduction, note 21 in this book. The other two paintings are lv0046 today at the National Museum in New Delhi (in the middle) and Stein painting 117* (on the right).

the green silk side streamers, painted in blue with birds and insects, left attached and folded back to fit in the storage box. The discovery of the photograph of the banner in its original state should make it possible to restore the tail streamers to the banner, and show the full length of the side streamers.

The figure fills the whole available narrow space. The red outlining used for the face and hands, and the very bright colours give it a two-dimensional quality, and these are unusual in Dunhuang art. In this case, yet again, there is tension between details rendered convincingly in space and others shown in a completely flat manner.

The guardian king tramples on a demon, and a cloud rises behind him. This format is well known from Dunhuang, and there are two votive paintings featuring a very similar arrangement in the Musée Guimet, in Paris (Colour Plate 36).[174] This furnishes sufficient evidence for the local manufacture of the "Vīrūpākṣa" painting, as there are no paintings from other areas that display such closely similar characteristics in composition and format. However, if this painting (Colour Plate 35) is compared to the Dhṛtarāṣṭra painting, differences also become apparent. Dhṛtarāṣṭra appears to be far more skilfully arranged in space. The bow and arrow are shown at a slight angle, and one of the feet is half hidden behind the demon's head. The feet are shown realistically: as the guardian is wearing sandals, his individual toes are clearly visible. His body posture is surprisingly relaxed.

In contrast, Virūpākṣa seems to be in a most unnatural position within the narrow field of the painting. Consequently the trampling on the demon appears most unrealistic: both feet are positioned in a decorative way, pointing to the two sides, and one foot is held up by the demon's knees, while the other one is by his head. Instead of the sandals of the previous examples highly ornate shoes are worn.[175] A very similarly dressed figure wearing the same type of shoes was found by Grünwedel in Bezeklik Cave 31 (Grünwedel's Cave 19).[176]

The head is turned to the left and is shown in three-quarter view, while the upper body is fully frontal. The armour worn is decorated in

[174] EO 1172a and EO 1172c, Giès: AAC, vol. 2, pls. 78-1; 79-1.

[175] This type of shoe can be seen on at least one other tenth-century example from Dunhuang: cf. EO 1177b, identified as *Yamarāja* by Vandier-Nicolas in N. Vandier-Nicolas: *Bannières*: 1976, pl. 201. and simply "Deity" by Michel Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, p. 149. Illustrated in Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 81-1.

[176] A. Grünwedel: *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten*: 1912, p. 272, fig. 562.

bright colours, with white circles and a scale-like design. Some of the scales appear completely flat, as they are outlined in white over a red surface, while the green scales, also outlined in white, are decorated using a technique very similar to the shading observed in the case of the fragments of the "Paradise of Amitābha" and the "Bodhisattva with lotus". The white outline encircles a lighter green, while the middle is shown in a darker green. The contrast of this with the simple, thin black outlining of the clothing by the elbow causes a similar spatial tension between flat parts and parts showing volume, such as have already been noted in the case of the previous two examples.

In mature Uygur art the linear design and flat appearance, as well as the unrealistic decorative details, seem to dominate, as in the case of a "Demon" originally from the porch of Bezeklik Cave 20 (Plate 50).[177] Several features in particular invite comparison with the Virūpākṣa from Dunhuang. The Bezeklik demon too has round, bulging eyes and wide pupils. Attention has already been drawn to his "unnatural eyebrows."[178] Similar exaggerated eyebrows appear in the Stein painting. Additionally the rendering of the nose is very similar. In both cases the mouth is very red, with exaggerated white teeth, two of which protrude on either side, although the demon's canine teeth are much longer. The same can be noticed in the case of the demon Virūpākṣa tramples whose teeth turn upwards. The Heavenly Kings and demons on the Guimet banners in the "standard style" have no visible teeth at all.

The sleeve of Virūpākṣa is arranged in a most ornamental way that resembles the layers of an onion. This motif seems popular in Uygur art, and interestingly it can also be observed in Stein painting 35. This way of careful display of the folds most probably originated in Manichaean art. Gulácsi, in her recent article, has identified the "teardrop-shaped folds of robes at elbow of gesturing hand" as one of the reccurring motifs in Manichaean painting, and has reproduced four very similar examples.[179] In the case of the demon, the wave on

[177] MIK III 6875, H: 64.2 cm, W: 25.7 cm, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, p. 147, cat. no. 82. Published most recently in M. Yaldiz: *Magische Götterwelten*: 2000, cat. no. 320, p. 222. Here a carbon date of 779-886 is given with no further comment. However, since this is the only Uygur wall painting with such an early carbon date, for the time being this cannot be taken as absolute proof for the existence of Uygur Buddhist art in the ninth century.

[178] H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, p. 147.

[179] Z. Gulácsi: "Dating": 2002-2003, fig. 9e, p. 14. This method of showing

the forearm appears to be purely decorative. There are further exaggerated features, such as the ear of the demon, which again shows the capability of the Uygur artist to turn a realistic feature into a decorative design. This suggests to me that the demon is likely to be later in date than the Virūpākṣa, as several of its features have become far more exaggerated. Similar demonic faces with potruding canine teeth and identically curling eyebrows have also been preserved in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin and *in situ* in Bezeklik (Plate 25; Plate 21).[180] However, these features are not general characteristics of guardian figures found in the Turfan area. In fact, at this early stage of research, it seems that the fragments displaying such features may also belong to the transitional phase of early Uygur Buddhist art discussed above.[181]

Virūpākṣa's armour can also be directly compared to another Bezeklik mural fragment known as the "Bodhisattva Holding a Canopy" (Figure 27).[182] The leg-coverings and the shoes are also of the same type. Also comparable is the decorative treatment of the sashes—passing round the shoulders and in front of the belly, they hang down and end in decorative triangles on either side of the legs. Apart from the colour, the treatment is practically identical. Similarly arranged sashes do not have the same triangular ends on Dunhuang-style featuring guardians.[183] The treatment of Virūpākṣa's hair is also similar to Uygur examples: it is loosely brushed back, and falls freely on the shoulders. This is not usual in Dunhuang.

Key features, as listed in Table 4, present in this painting include: the use of colour, the facial type, the clothing and hairstyle, and the brushwork. This painting's close resemblance to Bezeklik examples makes Uygur patronage likely. Its links to Dunhuang painting are evidence of local manufacture. Virūpākṣa resembles the guardian figures from the corners of Cave 100, especially Vaiśravana, the Guardian of the North: notable are the little half-circles on the back part of the

folds can also be seen on a fragment from Cave 21 in Bezeklik on all four arms of the *dākinī* figure (fig. 41).

[180] MIK III 6468a MIK III 6469d *CATB*, cat. nos. 397, 415 and TBS, pp. 60-61.

[181] See p. 116 and Plate 25 in this book.

[182] TC 554. National Museum, Tokyo, J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, cat. no. 147.

[183] "Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Guardian King of the East", EO 11729 and EO 11720, reproduced in Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pls. 78-79.

face, representing bulges. This Virūpākṣa painting also appears to have been made in the tenth century.

The paintings examined in this chapter show the strong influence of Uygur Manichaean and Buddhist art, but they display features that are evidence of their manufacture in Dunhuang. They are likely to date from the tenth century, but it is difficult to narrow their dating due to the many different characteristics and different degrees of influences observed. The paintings discussed in the next chapter share more stylistic features and form a coherent group within the Dunhuang material.

CHAPTER FOUR

UYGUR BRIDES AS DONORS: THE INFLUENCE OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF UYGUR BUDDHIST ART

The paintings discussed in the previous chapter all manifest strong Uygur influence, but the source of this influence seems to be different in each case, and consequently these paintings share few characteristics in common. The availability of the various influences at any one time suggests that Manichaean and Buddhist art definitely coexisted in the Turfan area in the tenth century. There seems to have been a transitional period in both Turfan and Dunhuang art, which involved a search for a new artistic language.

The paintings discussed in this chapter form a coherent group and indicate that by the time they were made there was more consistent demand in Dunhuang for Uygur paintings. The key features identified in the first painting are shared by all the others, and consequently the donor figures shown on some of the compositions provide clues about who may have commissioned the paintings identified here for the first time as a group.

The "Adoration of Guanyin": a key painting

The key painting for identifying the elements of Uygur influence shared by this group is the "Adoration of Guanyin" (Colour Plate 38) in the collection of the Musée Guimet, in Paris.[1] This beautifully preserved painting was described only briefly by Jean-Pierre Drège in the catalogue of the collection.[2] Jacques Giès was the first to draw attention to the unusual qualities of this painting in the *Sérinde* exhibition catalogue.[3]

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[1] EO 1175, also called: "Worship of the Bodhisattva Guanyin 'Saviour from Perils'", H: 96.8 cm W: 65 cm.

[2] J. P. Drège in Giès: *ACA*, p. 77.

[3] J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, pp. 273-275. The young monk on the left of the composition was chosen as the title page illustration of the Sérinde catalogue,

The excellent state of preservation is obvious not only from the negligible loss of gold and colour, but also because the original silk border of the picture has been preserved. It is important to note that three of the four complete paintings described in this section still have their original borders. Two of these have only recently been identified.[4] In the case of the "Adoration of Guanyin" the border was photographed together with the painting for the collection's catalogue.[5] It is interesting to consider, however, that the composition must originally have been larger despite the existence of the original border, since it is still possible to see the top part of several small cartouches. This indicates that there may have been donor figures shown in the lowest part of the painting.

Guanyin or Avalokiteśvara is seated in the centre of the composition on a lotus throne (Colour Plate 38). He is worshipped by an elderly monk on the right and a young monk on the left both kneeling on Uygur-style rugs, described below in more detail. Two young boys are seated cross-legged on similar rugs in the foreground. Two *apsarasas* are shown in the top part of the picture. Ornamental banners of the usual Dunhuang type with a triangular top and streamers are positioned on either side of Guanyin.[6] A cartouche on the right identifies the main figure of the painting as "Guanyin as Saviour of Perils." The colouring is unusual. Although this time the background is not blue, the colour blue is still dominant, along with orange, red and gold. The skin of the figures is shown in shades of pink. The skilled use of gold is apparent, with thin lines defining the details.

As Giès has observed, the central figure has no special attribute and is shown in the usual position of a Buddha. The way he is fully dressed, prompted Giès to refer to earlier Central Asian examples. Giès emphasises that Guanyin appears adorned with jewels. He notes that the usual iconography of Guanyin as Saviour of Perils in tenth-century Dunhuang is very different from this painting. Usually the bodhisattva wears Indian-style clothing and jewellery and stands in

and a large poster featuring the same monk was also available, so it became one of the most memorable images of that important exhibition in 1995.

[4] I am grateful to Laure Feugère for drawing my attention to this during my visit to the Musée Guimet in February 2004.

[5] Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 61-1.

[6] Actual examples of such banners are known from Dunhuang e.g. MAS 860, 861, 886 in the British Museum, Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 3, pls. 10-12.

the middle of the composition surrounded by small scenes explaining the many good deeds described in Chapter 25 of the *Lotus Sutra*.[7] In contrast, in the Guimet painting, Guanyin is fully clad with the sleeve of the upper robe reaching to the elbow, and two bracelets showing from under the sleeves of the lower robe. This arrangement is very unusual in Dunhuang. Denise Leidy has drawn attention to the fact that Guanyin as Saviour of Perils usually wears far more elaborate jewellery than other forms of Guanyin. The sixth-century sculptures reproduced in her article also display elaborate garments, although of a different type from the Pelliot painting.[8]

Fully clothed bodhisattvas wearing elaborate garbs and high crowns can be seen in early Tibetan art, such as the statues of bodhisattvas at Bida and in the Amitāyus chapel at Yemar.[9] As emphasised earlier in the "Assault of Māra" painting too the fully-clothed Śākyamuni with a golden head decoration is most unusual (Colour Plate 26).[10] Guanyin's throne is very similar to seats depicted in Uygur art, such as the throne of Hāritī on a well-known painting from Turfan.[11]

The clothing of the accompanying figures is also unusual and shows signs of Turkic influence. The two monks wear garments that are richly decorated in gold. The trousers and shoes of the older monk on the right can be seen, and these resemble Uygur clothing (Colour Plate 42).[12] The children's tunics are tied at chest level (Colour Plate 40), which is similar to the style of Central Asian clothing from the Šorčuk area.[13]

The composition of this painting is closely related to Sogdian art. The small children in the front (Colour Plate 38) are seated in a posture identical to Sogdian figures, also often shown seated on carpets displaying a geometric design. Their hand gestures (one hand on the

[7] J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, pp. 273-275 *passim*.

[8] Denise Patry Leidy: "Avalokiteshvara in Sixth-century China", Janet Baker (ed.): *The Flowering of a Foreign Faith*, Mumbai: Marg, 1998, pp. 88-103.

[9] For Bida see Amy Heller: "Eighth- and Ninth Century Temples & Rock Carvings of Eastern Tibet", and for Yemar see Marilyn M. Rhie: "Eleventh-century Monumental Sculpture in the Tsang Region", p. 43, pl. 15, both in P. Denwood–J. Casey Singer: *Tibetan Art*: 1997, pp. 102-103, pls. 86-88 and pp. 38-41, pls. 7-9.

[10] See pp. 141-142 in this book.

[11] MIK III 6302, H. Hartel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, p. 206, cat. no. 147. I would like to thank Dr. Jorinde Ebert for this suggestion.

[12] Cf. A. von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, Tafelband, fig. 128.

[13] See p. 130 in this book and *CATB*, cat. no. 363, pp. 292-293.

knee with the elbow raised, the other elevated and pointing up) are among the most popular gestures seen in Sogdian painting, and are probably never seen elsewhere in Dunhuang. Some of these features can be observed on a wall painting from Penjikent (Figure 33).[14] The way the vessels are held up by the children can also be compared to another Sogdian example from Adjina-Tepe (Figure 34).[15]

A Vajradhātu Maṇḍala from a now-destroyed wall painting in the Yeshe Ö Temple at Tholing, would have been of interest for this comparative study. This temple, according to Michael Henss is dated c. 985-990, and therefore the mural was contemporary with the paintings discussed here.[16] The only remaining photograph of this mural shows adoring figures turning towards the missing central figure. Although these two Tibetan figures appear to be female and were positioned in the upper half of the composition, judging by the scar left by the missing mandorla on the wall, their posture and the way the one on the left lifts a vessel in her hand appear comparable to the positioning of the two young attendant figures in the lower half of the Pelliot Guanyin painting. The hand of the adoring figure in the upper right part of the Tibetan mural is raised in a very similar gesture. Ultimately this posture must have derived from Sogdian art in both cases. The attendants in the Pelliot painting, however, seem much closer in appearance to Sogdian examples than the depiction of two adoring figures in the Yeshe Ö Temple, at Tholing. However it is important to emphasise that the clothing and hairstyle of the attendants represented on the Pelliot painting, as well as its stylistic features, are decidedly non-Tibetan.

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[14] CA 14863, Hermitage, St. Petersburg, J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, cat. no. 24.

[15] V 1666, Dushanbe, Tadjik Academy of Sciences (TAS) deposited at the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, ibid., cat. no. 137.

[16] "...the art and architecture of this unique shrine was never seriously documented and published before its destruction after 1959. Though Tucci mentions very briefly a general iconographic programme of the Vajradhatu mandala with a central statue of Vairochana and the four tathagathas ... not a single photographic record of the original painted and sculptural decoration is known so far... a Japanese mountaineering team was able to photograph in June 1985 a ruined *chorten* at the north-east corner of this mandala temple showing a fragmentary mural of highest art historical value. .. Regrettably, this earliest surviving wall painting of Guge, in fact of Tibet, of *circa* 985-90 or very soon after, no longer exists." Michael Henss: "Wall-Paintings in Western Tibet. The Art of the Ancient Kingdom of Guge, 1000-1500", in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.): *On the Path to Void: Buddhist Art of the Tibetan Realm*, Mumbai: Marg, 1996, pp. 203-204, and p. 199, fig. 3.

Another unusual feature in this painting is the flames emerging from the shoulders, the halo and the heads. This is rarely seen in Dunhuang, but it is a very common motif in Kuchean and Uygur art. Once again the closest parallels for these characteristics can be found on the Uygur fragments from the "transitional period." A flame emerging from a young monk's shoulders can, for example, be seen on a fragment from Berlin (Colour Plate 17).[17] This fragment is just one of many surviving from a somewhat larger composition described above (Plates 24-25), which represents the earliest, transitional stage of Uygur Buddhist art.[18] Further characteristics are shared between these fragments and the Guimet Guanyin. The face of the monk and his blue hair are very similar to those of the young monk in the Guimet painting, and the old man's wrinkly face and half-open mouth can be compared to the appearance of the older monk. These facial types are essentially based on a Chinese idiom, but render it in an Uygur way (Plate 24).[19] Another fragment in Berlin features similarities to the way the child is shown in the Guimet painting.[20] It is useful to compare the thin, even brushlines used, the round face, the small, red mouth and the upward movement of the figure.

The carpets on which the monks and the boys are shown are further proof that this painting is unique within the Dunhuang material. It is a white carpet with a geometric lozenge pattern made up of thin red lines that contain blue and green lozenges. This type of carpet also appears in three other paintings (Color Plates 44-47, 49, 50) within the Uygur-influenced group, but is not found in any other published Dunhuang paintings. Even though the pattern is not exactly the same as on the carpets from the Manichaean book illustrations, they look remarkably similar both in their geometric pattern and their colouring.

Zsuzsanna Gulácsi has researched the carpets as they appear in the Manichaean book illustrations. She has identified their probable

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[17] MIK III 6361, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, no. 148, cat. no. 148, p. 209. First published in A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, pl. 45b; also published in CATB, cat. no. 435. The same parallels to Sogdian and Uygur art were also drawn independently by Dr. Jorinde Ebert (unpublished lecture, SOAS, London, March 2000.)

[18] See p. 116 in this book.

[19] MIK III 6469a + III 6595c + d; III 6469c + 6597c, *CATB*, cat. nos. 441-442.

[20] MIK III 4998, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, p. 135, cat. no. 137; also published in *CATB*, cat. no. 294.

technique as woven pile carpets and has also argued for the relative value attached to such carpets in Uygur society, one of the possible signs of their continuing interest in their nomadic heritage.[21] Describing the rugs represented in the "Bema scene" (Colour Plate 14), she draws attention to the repetition of the diamond-grid pattern and to the use of the traditional colours: red, blue, yellow, green, brown and cream.[22] The similarities to the patterns and colouring of the carpets in the Uygur-influenced group is striking. The diamond-grid pattern in this case is made up of red and green. A similar although simpler carpet can also be observed on the Uygur wall paintings from Šorčuk.[23]

The outfits and positioning of the flying *apsarasas* (identified in the cartouche as *tianxian* 天仙), especially the one on the right, are almost identical to the flying figures on "Avalokiteśvara as Saviour from Perils", dated to the "fourth year of Jianlong" 建隆四年, corresponding to 963 (Colour Plate 43).[24] Also interesting are the censers they hold in their hands, a very unusual motif in Dunhuang, which appear on both paintings. The scattered flowers filling the background of the Guimet Guanyin also link this painting with the 963 "Avalokiteśvara."

The scroll motif around the halo and mandorla of the Guanyin is a key element shared by this group. This and the pointed top of Guanyin's nimbus can also be compared to the "Avalokiteśvara as Saviour from Perils," which also displays a faint scroll motif in the outer circle of the halo. The structure of the mandorla and the halo is likewise unusual, with a thicker outer circle, a pointed halo, and thinner inner circles. Despite some unusual features, the "Avalokiteśvara as Saviour from Perils," bears many similarities to the standard tenth-century Dunhuang paintings. These include the layout (showing the subsidiary scenes on either side), the small child figure holding up a heart-shaped object next to the inscription, and, most importantly the donors, who

[21] Zsuzsanna Gulácsi: "Textile furnishings of Uyghur Manichaean Miniatures", in R. E. Emmerick (ed.): *Turfan*: 1996, pp. 114 ff., also p. 116 for the importance of these representations.

[22] "Bema scene", MIK III 4979 a,b, Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 32, pp. 70-75.

[23] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 3, pl. 95

[24] A somewhat similar *apsarās* was also found in Qočo. MIK III 4534b, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Die Seidenstraße*: 1987, pl. 62. The gesture of his left hand is very similar to the right-hand of the flying figure in the upper left-hand corner of the Pelliot painting. The main difference is that in the Qočo painting there is a cloud behind the figure, while there is none here.

wear the standard tenth-century clothing of the Chinese population of Dunhuang. I believe that Stein painting 24 shows the degree to which even the Chinese population began to be affected by the spread of Uygur-influenced taste in the second half of the tenth century. The importance of this painting lies in its exact date, which provides clues to the period of the popularity of these motifs.

Other small details in the Guimet Guanyin also justify dating it to the second half of the tenth century. Behind each of Guanyin's ears a flower appears. This motif can also be observed in the "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara", dated to 981, and in the "Avalokiteśvara Leading the Way" in the Pelliot collection, which is likely to be of the same late period, and not of the beginning of the tenth century, as it was dated in the Sérinde catalogue (Colour Plate 52).[25]

The canopy looks like three round flower motifs held together by golden arrows, a type not seen in any other Dunhuang painting. The origin of this canopy type is the mid-tenth-century popular style in Dunhuang, in which the canopy is made solely of plants. Such a canopy made of plants can be seen, for example, in a painting from Dunhuang, today in the Freer Gallery, in Washington D.C., identified as the "Water-Moon Guanyin," which also features a fully frontal Avalokiteśvara.[26] More importantly in the Freer painting Guanyin's *dhoti* is decorated with a pattern of four small lozenges of gold arranged in a lozenge formation similar to the type seen in the Guimet painting. A similar pattern of gold lozenges can also be observed on a fragment from Turfan (Plate 26).[27] According to Lawton, the Freer painting is dated to 968. These combined features make it likely that the Guimet painting dates to the second half of the tenth century, perhaps the 960s, during a period of increased contacts with the Uygurs.

Following the hypothesis proposed in the present study, "Adoration

[25] "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara", MG 17659, Giès: *AAC*, pl. 98; "Avalokiteśvara Leading the Way", MG 26461, J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, cat. no. 250.

[26] 30.36 see Thomas Lawton: *Chinese Figure Painting*, Washington: Freer Gallery, 1973, cat. no 16. I have not had the opportunity to examine the original painting, but its date and that it is genuine are generally accepted in scholarly circles. The style of the upper part of the painting (for example the facial characteristics of Avalokiteśvara and his canopy) conform in all respects to the standard tenth-century Dunhuang style.

[27] MIK III 6359b, *CATB*, cat. no. 535.

of Guanyin" can be identified as an Uygur-influenced painting on the basis of its key elements: it shows strong Sogdian influence—demonstrated in the positioning and posture of the figures. In addition to this the clothing, the throne and flowers all differ from Dunhuang examples and are comparable to Uygur paintings. The faces are rendered in white and pink and can be closely compared to Uygur Buddhist fragments and to Šorčuk wall paintings. The painting appears flat and decorative, executed with thin, even lines and with a preference for extensive surface decoration. Key features, as listed in Table 4 and present in this painting include: the use of colour and gold, the clothing and hair, carpets with a lozenge design, the nimbus and aureole displaying the scroll design, the unusual canopy, the brushwork, facial types and the depiction of the floral motifs in the canopy (resembling the round-patterned foliage of other paintings). The unusual halo with the flame pattern, the carpets with their lozenge pattern, the flowers scattered in the background, and the golden lozenges decorating the surface are all key features that characterise other important paintings from Dunhuang. These form a distinct group of paintings that were most probably commissioned by Uygur donors.

"The Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala" and the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities"

On account of the extremely high quality of its execution and the good state of its preservation "The Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala" (Colour Plates 44-47) (henceforth: the "Five Buddhas") is on display in the permanent exhibition of the Musée Guimet.[28] As in the case of the previous example, the high level of preservation can be seen not just in the negligible loss of colour and gold, but also in the survival of the original silk border. This was detached and kept separately with the textile fragments, but has recently been reunited with the painting.[29] Surprisingly the border silk is black, which is in great contrast to the overwhelmingly light and bright colouring of the rest of the composition.

[28] "Plan du Diamant", MG 17780, H: 101.5 cm; W: 61 cm. Giès *ACA*: 1994, vol. 1, pl. 46.

[29] As Laure Feugère pointed out during my visit to the Musée Guimet, in Paris, in February 2004.

As the arrangement of this painting is in a mandala form, consistent with the requirements of Tibetan art, it has been discussed several times as a representative of early Tibetan painting in Dunhuang. In the seventies it was included in the study of early Sino-Tibetan art by Heather Karmay (Stoddard).[30] It was also one of only a handful of Dunhuang paintings selected for "The Silk Route and the Diamond Path" exhibition, held in 1983, in Los Angeles, New York and Washington D.C., in the United States, which made it well known among specialists.[31] At that time it was assumed that the "Five Buddhas" reflected the iconography and style transmitted during the Tibetan period of Dunhuang. The mandala executed in ink and paper reproduced as the next item in the accompanying catalogue (Stein painting 173), was proof in itself that the more developed "true" mandala form also existed in Dunhuang. As Roderick Whitfield has pointed out in his description of Stein painting 173: "It is exactly comparable in style to some of the booklets illustrating the *Diamond Sutra* in 32 sections or the chapter on Avalokiteśvara from the *Lotus Sutra* (British Library, Stein 5646, 6983)."[32] This demonstrates that, despite its format, Stein painting 173 is securely part of the Dunhuang style material, and Whitfield dated it to the late ninth century.

Interestingly, Deborah Klimburg-Salter, when describing the "Five Buddhas," opted for an earlier dating, thus firmly placing this painting as one of the earliest examples of Tibetan art, while at the same time noticing the differences with the style of other paintings from that period:

> The images of the Five Buddhas have been considered representative of a Himalayan style. While the proportions and strict frontality of the Buddha figures, and the color schemes and composition clearly distinguish this painting from the Dunhuang paintings in the Chinese manner, these same features also distinguish this painting from a group of painted banners in the National Museum, New Delhi, which have long been considered to represent examples of Tibetan painting, and which also seem more clearly related to Khotanese painting... How are we to relate this manner to the third variant of the Himalayan style, also represented

[30] Heather Karmay (Stoddard): *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1976, p. 9, fig. 3.

[31] Pl. 68 in the accompanying catalogue: D. Klimburg-Salter: *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path. Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes*, Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1982.

[32] Ibid., p. 144, pl. 69.

> at Dunhuang, which has been associated with Tibetan painting there, as well as to the different styles found in this painting?[33]

Klimburg-Salter recognised the uniqueness of this painting and that it contrasted with the Tibetan-style group within the Dunhuang material. However, she could not offer any explanation as to the origin of its style, which has puzzled Tibetan art experts ever since.

However, in more recent studies on this subject, the "Five Buddhas" painting has been excluded. Jane Casey Singer, who most recently pointed to Dunhuang as the place for the existence of the earliest Tibetan works of art, selected only narrow painted banners on cloth, the style of which could be compared to other early examples of Tibetan art.[34] Casey Singer has emphasised the strong Indic associations of the banners in the Tibetan style from Dunhuang, which are not present in the case of the Guimet "Five Buddhas." On another occasion, Casey Singer refers to a mandala from Dunhuang that is also in the Indo-Tibetan style (Plate 53) in the context of its early irregular arrangement.[35]

In her recent major monograph on Tabo, Klimburg-Salter makes no further mention of the Guimet "Five Buddhas", despite the fact that she deals extensively with the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and the importance of Vairocana. Instead, she draws attention to the general problems of dealing with the Tibet-related paintings from Dunhuang:

> The problem is the uncertainty regarding patronage and date of manufacture of the paintings and drawings from Dunhuang in non-Chinese styles. Indeed it is important to remember that this group consists of works in different styles and qualities and the only common feature is that they are clearly not created by Chinese artists. But whether they represent Indian, Khotanese or even western Tibetan influences or even artists is difficult to say.[36]

The central figure is Vairocana, around whom the other five Buddhas are arranged (Colour Plate 44). The iconographic details have been

[33] Ibid., p. 144.

[34] S. Kossak and J. Singer: *Sacred Visions*: 1998, p. 28; Jane Casey Singer: "Tibetan Painting", in Jane Turner (ed.): *The Dictionary of Art*, London: Macmillan, 1996, vol. 30, pp. 828-829.

[35] "Maṇḍala of the eight deities of the Lotus Section" (Padmakula), second half of the 8th century, EO 1131, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 80. See Jane Casey Singer: "Painting in Central Tibet ca. 950-1400", *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 54 (1994), p. 112.

[36] D. Klimburg-Salter: *Tabo:* 1997, p. 209.

convincingly identified by Nicole Vandier-Nicolas and Michel Soymié, and will therefore only be discussed in the context of the argument here.[37] Soymiè has already drawn attention to the differences with the standard Vajradhātu Maṇḍala descriptions and representations. Most recently Kuo Liying has written about the iconography.[38]

At the centre Vairocana is shown with golden skin, a white wheel and white lions decorating his throne. The golden complexion of Vairocana is an alternative to the white body colour.[39] At the lower left we see Akṣobhya, with white skin, a vertically placed *vajra*, and white elephants; at the upper left Ratnasambhava, with a blue complexion, a jewel and blue horses; at the upper right Amitābha, with pink (red) skin, a lotus blossom and blue peacocks, and at the lower right Amoghasiddhi with a green complexion, a *vajra* and golden *garuḍas*. The usual colours would be white for Vairocana, blue or black for Akṣobhya, yellow for Ratnasambhava, red for Amitābha and green for Amoghasiddhi.[40] The alternative colours have been discussed by Tanaka Kimiaki, who, on the basis of Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts found at Dunhuang, describing the colours used on the "Five Buddhas", concludes that this colour scheme is based on Buddhist cosmology.[41]

Between the main Buddhas appear bodhisattvas with offerings, and various objects. There is also a small offering table in the shape of a mandala placed just under Vairocana's pedestal. At the top of the composition there are musicians seated on clouds, and the bottom part is occupied by large donor figures: females on the left and males on the right, with their names written in Chinese characters in coloured cartouches (Colour Plates 46-47).

[37] N. Vandier-Nicolas: *Bannières:* 1974, pp. 58-61 and Michel Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, pp. 69-70.

[38] Kuo Liying: "Dessins de *maṇḍala* à Dunhuang: le manuscrit Pelliot chinois 2012", in M. Cohen (et al): *La Sérinde, terre d'échanges:* 2000, pp. 49-78.

[39] Amy Heller: "Ninth Century Buddhist Images Carved at lDan Ma Brag to Commemorate Tibeto-Chinese Negotiations", in Per Kvaerne (ed.): *Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Fagernes 1992*, Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994, p. 338.

[40] Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann: Introduction à l'iconographie du Tântrisme Bouddhique, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, A. Maisonneuve, 1975, pp. 91-99 passim.

[41] Tanaka Kimiaki: Tonkō mikkyō to bijutsu, Kyoto: Hozokan, 2000, p. 272.

Even though the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* was translated into Chinese and Tibetan as early as the eighth century, Vairocana's cult became more prominent during the second diffusion of Buddhism after 950. When describing art and ritual between 950 and 1300 Amy Heller states:

> Principal among the liturgical innovations of this period is the focus on Vairocana Buddha as the subject of many rituals of evocation, to such an extent that his role at the center of the cosmos virtually eclipsed the Buddhas of other directions.[42]

In earlier Tibetan representations, like that at lDan Ma Brag from the first part of the ninth century, Vairocana was shown with eight bodhisattvas.[43] In the following period, mandalas featuring Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, Ratnasambhava and Akṣobhya became common in Tibet. At Tabo monastery, which was founded at the very end of the tenth century, the entire Assembly Hall is arranged as a three-dimensional mandala circling around the statue of Vairocana.[44] These parallels in Tibetan art make a tenth-century date for "The Five Buddhas" possible.

The figures in "The Five Buddhas" are all arranged seated vertically, not around a circle. This simpler mandala form was already used in Dunhuang during the Tibetan period (Plate 53). It is also the way EO 1148, known as the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities," is arranged (Colour Plate 48).[45] In this painting all the figures are shown in pairs, but no sexual union (*yab-yum*) is shown, in accordance with the earliest phase of Tibetan iconography. Each Buddha appears with his female consort enclosed in a single red mandorla, and seated together

[42] Amy Heller: *Tibetan Art*, Milan: Jaca Book, 1999, p. 57. For Vairocana see also M. de Mallmann: *Introduction*: 1975 p. 392-396. Richardson discusses the importance of Vairocana in early Tibet: H. E. Richardson: "The Cult of Vairocana in Early Tibet" Tadeusz Skorupski (ed.): *Indo-Tibetan Studies. Papers in Honour and Appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove's Contribution to Indo-Tibetan Studies*, Tring: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1990, pp. 271-274.

[43] For the eight bodhisattvas see M. Yoritomi: "An Iconographic Study of the Eight Bodhisattvas in Tibet", in T. Skorupski: *Indo-Tibetan Studies*, 1990, pp. 323-332.

[44] D. Klimburg-Salter: *Tabo*: 1997, pp. 95-108. Also Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter: "Reformation and Renaissance: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Monasteries in the Eleventh Century", in G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti (eds): *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1987, pp. 683-702. Here she uses the earlier dating to the eleventh century for Alchi and compares it to Tabo.

[45] "Mandala des Quarante-Deux 'divinités Paisibles'", Ink and colours on silk, EO 1148, H: 67.2 cm, W: 68 cm, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 47-1.

on a single lotus. There are five such couples, all with a golden body colour. They are larger than the other figures in this composition. The bodhisattvas are also arranged in pairs, with the only difference being that they have various body colours, and share a nimbus as well as the single lotus seat and aureole. In the corners guardian figures are shown in front of flames. The remaining six figures do not have aureoles and are shown standing, like the guardians. Only one of them, a Chinese-style Buddha figure playing the *pipa*, has a nimbus of a different, simple type. The fact that this is a mandala is emphasised by the red frame indicating a wall with gate-like openings in it on all four-sides. Interestingly the original striking orange-coloured border of this painting has also been identified recently.

This type of mandala arrangement may be a characteristic of early Tibetan art. Deborah Klimburg-Salter has drawn attention to the popularity of this simpler form in early Tibetan art but has stressed that fully-developed mandala schemes also existed as early as the ninth century in Dunhuang.[46] She has drawn attention to at least three other mandalas of this early type, among them one from the monastery of Mang-nang in Western Tibet.

> Each is presented according to the simple geometric principles which also govern the mandala at Tabo. One of these is a horizontal mandala and the other two form a square. In each case, as at Tabo, the central figure, very much larger than the other figures, is isolated in the centre of the composition by its mandorla. The other figures are clearly separated by their mandorlas, the edges of which touch those of the next figures... The extreme simplicity of the Tabo and Mang-nang mandalas can be best appreciated when compared with the sophisticated and elaborate mandalas from Nako and Dung-dkar, Alchi and Sumda and Mang-rgyu in Ladakh. It is of course this latter type which became the standard "temple-palace" mandala scheme. The Tabo horizontal mandala recalls earlier Buddhist compositions such as the "proto-mandala" from the Hindu-Kush—Bamiyan and Kakrak—where each divinity is separated from the next by a circular mandorla.[47]

The photograph reproduced by Klimburg-Salter shows that the arrangement in Mang-nang was extremely similar to EO1148 (Figure 35).[48] Mang-nang lies in ruins near the Sutlej river, approximately thirty

[46] For a description of mandalas from Dunhuang, including the "Five Buddhas," see Henrik H. Sørensen: "Typology and Iconography": (1991-92), pp. 291-300.

[47] D. Klimburg-Salter: *Tabo*, 1997, pp. 118-119.

[48] Ibid., fig. 117.

miles south of Tholing, in Guge. Now only Giuseppe Tucci's black-and-white photographs of these destroyed murals exist. Jane Casey (Singer) summarises Tucci's research of literary sources; based on this evidence, Mang-nang's now-destroyed mural can plausibly be dated to the mid-eleventh century.[49] In Mang-nang the primary deities are arranged along a vertical axis and a horizontal one, and the smaller secondary deities are arranged in two horizontal rows. The main difference is that in Mang-nang each mandorla contained only one figure, while in the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities" each mandorla is shared by two figures.

The decorated thrones and haloes also link the "Five Buddhas" to early Tibetan art. The mandorlas and haloes are made up of concentric bands, each of them a different colour. Within them wavy red, green and silvery blue lines emanate like light rays from the centre. A similar arrangement appears in the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities," although there the lines are simply straight (Colour Plate 48). In Tibetan art a ninth-century representation of Vairocana, at Bida, has alternating wavy and straight lines behind the figure in a similar manner. This image has been heavily repainted, it must be left to the Tibetologists to establish whether this reflects the original arrangement. The throne bars of the Buddhas in the Guimet painting are decorated with colourful ornaments resembling textile patterns. The artists' interest in the textile patterns is even more obvious in early Tibetan art, for example at Bida.[50]

Vairocana's halo is decorated with an additional ornamental band formed by the golden scaly bodies of the two dragons. The nimbi have a pointed apex. Similar features can be found in early Tibetan art, for example in the halo of the lost central Buddha at Drathang, in which a garuda tops the gilded arrangement.[51] The sides of Vairocana's seat are decorated with winged goats, called *vyalas* (Colour Plate 44). These are rare in Dunhuang but very frequent in Indian and Tibetan art, where they usually stand on the back of an elephant.[52] In Tibet the

[49] J. Casey Singer: *Early Painting in Tibet*: 1991, pp. 113-114.

[50] A. Heller: "Eighth- and Ninth Century Temples": J. Casey Singer and P. Denwood (eds.): *Tibetan Art*: 1997, p. 88, fig. 71.

[51] Michael Henss: "The Eleventh Century Murals at Drathang Gonpa", in J. Casey Singer and P. Denwood Denwood (eds.): *Tibetan Art*: 1997, p. 163, fig. 175.

[52] Cf. for example "Portrait of a lama", Central Tibet or Eastern India, c. last quarter of the eleventh century, Distemper on cloth, The Metropolitan Museum of

earliest examples can be linked to the Dulan finds from the eighth century.[53] The auspicious objects scattered across the paintings include a *vajra*, conch shells, and a flaming *cintāmaṇi* jewel.

In summary it may be concluded that the subject matter and arrangement of these paintings link them to early Tibetan art. However, many details, and especially the style and colouring of the Pelliot "Five Buddhas" set it apart from the Tibetan examples. Michel Soymié has already described the painting technique and the colouring of the "Five Buddhas":

> The artist drew the initial sketch in pale ink, then applied the colours, and finally went over the lines in various colours. The pigments used also distinguish this painting from the others: vermilion, scarlet, gold, lilac, bright green—a very unusual chromatic range. The freshness of the tints and the fine, regular strokes on the almost new silk render this painting not only most unusual but also of the highest quality.[54]

Soymié could not find any explanation for the appearance of these features in this painting.

With the opening up of Tibet, the new excavations by the Chinese and the published studies of the Western Tibetan temples now located in India, much more early Tibetan material has become available for study in the last decade.[55] Several important studies and projects in recent years have been devoted to the subject of the formation of Tibetan art.

The generally accepted evidence of recent research is that the style of early Tibetan art was overwhelmingly influenced by Eastern

Art, New York (1991.152) and Portrait of Taklung Thangpa Chenpo, Central Tibet, ca. 1200. Distemper on cloth, Private Collection. S. Kossak and J. Singer: *Sacred Visions*: 1998: cat. nos. 5 and 18.

[53] For the earliest version of the *vyala*, cf. a votive tablet (*tsha.tsha*) excavated from Dulan sanctuary, dated ca. 750-850, now in the Qinghai Archaeological Institute. A. Heller: *Tibetan Art*: 1999, p. 36, fig. 30. I would like to thank Amy Heller for drawing my attention to this early example. For later, more elaborate versions, cf. "Buddha Mahavairocana", thirteenth century, Pritzker Collections, ibid. pl. 58, and the Tibetan-style Tangut painting "Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha", twelfth–thirteenth century, x-2335, The State Hermitage, St. Petersburg, M. Piotrovski (ed.): *Lost Empire*: 1993. Cat. no. 8.

[54] Michel Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, p 70.

[55] Scholarly documentation in this case is especially important as even today in Tibet many old monuments are being demolished in the name of restoration work or modernisation, and often photographing them is the only way to preserve something for future research. Heather Stoddard: "Restoration in the Lhasa Tsuglagkhang and the Fate of Its Early Wall Paintings", *Orientations*, June 1994, pp. 69-73.

Indian art and by Kashmiri art, to the extent that several authors suggest that Kashmiri workshops were active in producing some of the best examples of early Tibetan art, either *in situ* or by fulfilling a commission.[56] Various authors assign a varying number of paintings actually to Kashmiri or Eastern Indian artists. These individuals were either active in Tibet itself or, as Casey Singer argues in the case of the cover of a *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, such works of art may have been commissioned by Tibetans in Eastern India.[57]

From the point of view, of the present study, it is important to understand that the style of the earliest Buddhist paintings found in Tibet, whether murals or *thangkas*, is so close to contemporary Eastern Indian and Kashmiri styles that they may be taken as actual works of these artists. Several paintings and fragments found in Dunhuang are close to this Indo-Kashmiri style and can therefore be linked to the Tibetan period (Plate 53). Of course, it is difficult to arrive at final conclusions, as almost no wall paintings and portable paintings have survived in India on account of the damp climate.

The style of the two mandalas selected from the Dunhuang material is at variance with this early Tibetan style, which remained influential up to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The paintings in our group show absolutely no evidence of Indian influence, in fact in every stylistic detail they show different features. Kossak describes an early Tibetan mandala of Vairocana in detail, which is interesting as a comparison for several reasons.[58] The subject matter is similar. The layout of the Tibetan mandala can be compared to the "Five Buddhas," as there too the deties are represented in an upright position. Kossak draws attention to the figures' likeness to tenth-century and earlier Eastern Indian sculpture and to the unusual arrangement of the deities: they are oriented in the same way as the central figure and not positioned "with their feet facing the center."[59] Kossak states that he would be inclined to date this particular painting to the tenth century were it

[56] Klimburg-Salter believes that paintings executed in Phase II in Tabo (eleventh century) reflects "true Indo-Tibetan style." D. Klimburg-Salter: *Tabo:* 1997, p. 208. Also cf. S. Kossak's discussion in S. Kossak and J. Casey Singer: *Sacred Visions*: 1998, pp. 29-38.

[57] S. Kossak and J. Casey Singer: *Sacred Visions*: 1998, p. 13.

[58] "Maṇḍala of Vairocana", Private Collection, Distemper on cloth, H: 127, W: 124.5 cm. ibid., p. 28 fig. 13.

[59] Ibid., p. 28.

not for the political uncertainties of the period, and in view of this, settles for the eleventh century.

Despite a similarity in the perceived age of these paintings, there is no resemblance whatsoever in the style of the execution and the colouring. Kossak draws attention to the air of spaciousness of the Tibetan painting, in which large portions of the background are left undecorated, and the clear volumes of the figures do not have elaborate adornments.[60] In the case of the Guimet "Five Buddhas" exactly the opposite is true: instead of suggesting volume, there is a tendency towards the flattening of the figures. This is further emphasised by the artists' interest in surface patterns, such as the ornaments on the thrones and the mandorlas. The "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities" is even more schematic, and the bodies appear completely flat with no attempt to show volume. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that despite the iconography, which follows Tibetan prototypes, neither of these paintings could have been painted by Tibetan or Tibetan-influenced artists or workshops.

Comparisons with Uygur Manichaean painting

This section explores whether stylistic comparisons to Uygur Manichaean fragments may provide evidence of Uygur influence. One of the few recent Manichaean finds is a fragment, that is now at the Turfan Museum (Figure 39).[61] That this is a Manichaean work is beyond doubt, since the two attendants appear to worship a Manichaean headdress in the middle of the composition. The headdress appears as if floating above a line of Sogdian writing, the letters of which are in gold leaf and outlined in red ink. According to Gulácsi this technique can also be seen on other Manichaean fragments. She states that "this letter was sent from the bishop Šahryār Zādag Wahman to the *možak* Mār Aryāmān Puhr. The gilded line in the middle of the pictorial insert refers to the glowing fortune of the možak."[62]

Gold was traditionally a sign of royalty for the Uygurs, as for many nomads. In Manichaean art, gilding was especially important. Gulácsi describes the technique used in detail. The gold leaves are cut and

[60] Ibid., p. 28

[61] 81 TB 60, T. Moriyasu: *Uiguru Manikyō*: 1991, pl. XVIIb.

[62] MMBA, p. 284.

glued over the underdrawing of the motifs. Then the gold leaves are turned into the required motif through delicate line drawings added to their surfaces.[63] This type of gilding can be seen on many fragments in the Turfan collection in Berlin as well as on examples of Manichaean illuminated manuscripts. A similar technique of gold leaf application was used in the "Five Buddhas." After the gold layer was applied, a thin black or red outline was added. This technique is relatively unusual in Dunhuang paintings, where it appears in the tenth century, the period of growing Uygur domination.

The way the musicians are depicted in the "Five Buddhas" in terms of their facial features, pink body colour and the way they hold their instruments may be compared to two figures in a Manichaean miniature. For example, within the group just above Ratnasambhava's blue figure three musicians are shown on a green cloud (Colour Plate 45). The one on the left plays the mouth-organ, which is identical to the one shown in the Manichaean illustration. The way the musicians are represented in the top part of the "Five Buddhas" contrasts sharply with the way they are represented in Alchi and in Tibetan *thangkas*. Goepper has pointed out that in early Tibetan art the musicians are depicted as Kashmiri court musicians.[64] In our case, however, they appear to play Chinese instruments, of a sort also shown in Uygur and Tangut art.

As in the case of the "Amitābha Paradise" and the "Bodhisattva with Lotus," this painting has an inherent tension between spatial rendering and flat surface decoration. Stylistic features also link the "Five Buddhas" to Uygur Manichaean illuminated manuscripts. The figures appear very much like add-on or cut-out designs, lacking in volume, with some overlapping: for example the ribbons disappear behind the mandorlas. These ribbons flying in the wind are also comparable to the miniature from the Turfan Museum (Figure 39). The objects shown on the "Five Buddhas" are also somewhat similar to the utensils of offering shown on the Bema scene (Colour Plate 14).

In the case of the "Five Buddhas" a certain spatial ambiguity is characteristic of each figure: the Buddhas are outlined with extremely fine, even brush strokes. Their garments are coloured in bright reds with a floral edge, and the folds of the robes are shown with further

[63] Z. Gulácsi: "Reconstructing", 2001, pp.113-116. and fig. 8.
[64] R. Goepper: *Alchi*: 1997, p. 45.

extremely fine black lines, which suggest a decorative flatness. At the same time the lotus petals are shaded to suggest volume, and the faces too (where the top layer of paint has not come off) are modelled with fine darker shades.

The carpets on which the donors kneel are further proof that this group is unique within the Dunhuang material. The carpet type usually shown in Dunhuang is undecorated or has a floral pattern. In contrast, here there is a white carpet with a geometric lozenge pattern made up of thin red lines that contains dark and light green lozenges. As we have seen, this type of carpet also appears in the "Adoration of Guanyin" (Colour Plate 38). These carpets look remarkably similar, both in their geometric pattern and their colouring, to rugs shown in Manichean miniatures.[65]

There are no carpets shown on the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities," but there are other links to Uygur Manichaean art. Some details can be directly compared to Uygur book illustrations: for example, the way the offerings are arranged resembles the way the vessels are laid out in the "Bema scene" (Colour Plate 14). It is a characteristic of Uygur Buddhist art that deities with several heads are not shown with the heads in profile as in Tibet and Khara-Khoto, but with smaller, almost round heads facing the viewer. This is how the multi-headed deities, trampling on demons, appear in the two lower corners of this composition. Several of them have three heads, but only two arms. Similarly represented bodies and loin-cloths can also be seen on Manichaean book illustrations (Plate 36).[66] Also noteworthy are the scattered flowers filling the space, which in some cases are identical to those on "The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra" painting (Colour Plate 49). The facial types of the Buddhas are very similar to Samantabhadra's face, as well as to the faces of the Buddhas in the "Five Buddhas."

The type of *pipa* and the way it is held in the top right corner of the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities" (Colour Plate 48) can be compared to Manichaean examples (Plate 31). The open mouth and facial expression of the beast next to the figure playing the lute can also be directly compared to a boar-headed figure (Colour Plate 15).[67] The radiating lines within the mandorlas seem to be a simplified

[65] See pp. 177-178 in this book.
[66] MIK III 4959 and MIK III 6368, Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. nos. 34 and 40.
[67] MIK III 4979 a, b; Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 32.

rendering of the same motif in the "Five Buddhas." The outer band of the aureoles is similar to that of Guanyin on the "Adoration of Guanyin" painting (Colour Plate 38); it can be considered a simplified version of the scrolls appearing on each of the paintings described in this section, and it was one of the key elements identified. The gold complexion of the deities may also be compared to that of the Guanyin of the "Adoration of Guanyin" painting.

The "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities" has puzzled scholars for a long time. Tanaka suggested that it is an old version of the mandala of peaceful deities still used in Tibet. His view has been accepted by Soymié.[68] Tanaka's view is that the additional figures on the edges of the mandala represent the Six Ways of Rebirth.

It is possible that the creatures not surrounded by mandorlas or flames also reflect more popular beliefs. As in the case of the "Assault of Māra" painting, the newly-converted Uygur patrons may have taken more liberties with the textual and visual examples available than was customary in Buddhist art. For example a creature in the lower part accompanies a monk. He has a human body and a boar's head. This recalls the story of Xuanzang, especially as he holds a scroll in his hand. On later Tangut and Uygur representations of Xuanzang, a monkey-headed creature accompanies the Chinese monk. The appearance of these unusual elements within the painting, but not in the usual fashion of a mandala (as they are not seated) seems to indicate that the artists may have merged the layout of a mandala they were copying with figures known to them from other sources. This approach to creating unusual iconography is also a feature of Tangut art. As an Uygur Buddhist canon does not exist, it may not be possible to comprehend fully the meaning of each figure in the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities."

This painting is not unique within the *corpus* of Dunhuang paintings. As argued earlier many features link it not only to the "Five Buddhas" but also to other paintings described in this chapter. In order to investigate whether the patronage of these two mandalas can most probably be linked to the Ganzhou Uygurs of Dunhuang, we should examine the donor figures portrayed in the "Five Buddhas" painting.

[68] Giès: *ACA*, p. 71.

The donor figures

A closer investigation of the female donor figures in the "Five Buddhas" painting makes it clear that they do not follow the general mannerisms, style and facial features that are usually present in tenth-century Dunhuang painting. Nor do they conform to the way Tibetan women were represented at around the same time. The hair of Tibetan women is long, and falls loosely on the shoulder.[69]

The hairstyles of the female donors kneeling on the rugs in the lower left section of the painting (Colour Plate 46) have been singled out by researchers in Paris. Michel Soymié has noticed the unusual clothing of these female figures, but has not offered an answer to the question of why they were dressed like this if they were Chinese:

> The women's outfits ... do attract attention. Their robes seem to lack the richly worked fronts which appear in the scooped neckline of the dresses... Their coiffures in particular are most striking. The hair is drawn up onto the top of the head, where it is first enclosed by a crown, and then held in place by three clips attached to the crown as it hangs down, ornamented with green gems, before ending in a loop.[70]

Even though the exact hair ornament worn by the females in the Guimet "Five Buddhas" is not present in the Turfan banners, the description of the representation of Uygur female donors above highlights the similarities (Plates 28-29). The hairline of the women represented in the "Five Buddhas" is straight, and the rest of the hair is arranged in a square shape that was not popular with the Chinese.

The gowns worn by these women are also very different from the usual Chinese outfit worn with a scarf. The first female donor wears a dark red gown decorated with golden florets. Although they wear scarves loosely thrown over their shoulders, which was the fashionable idea in Dunhuang, these blend in with the red colour. Usually such scarves were of a different colour. The headdresses worn by these female donors most probably represent a local headdress of Ganzhou Uygur women, who were not of royal descent, but still of high rank. A variant of the Uygur hairstyle, involving loops of hair, can also

[69] Goddess and female attendants, Tabo, eleventh century Peter van Ham and Aglaja Stirn: *The forgotten Gods of Tibet—Early Buddhist Art in the Western Himalayas*, Paris: Mengès, 1997, p. 81.
[70] Michel Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, p. 70.

be seen on a fragment from Sengim (Figure 28).[71] This figure has a zig-zag hairline, but the rest of the hair is arranged in loops richly decorated with golden ornaments. The square hairline and golden hair ornaments can also be seen in an embroidery called "Princess with a Child" from Qočo.[72]

Even though gold was frequently used by Chinese women too to decorate their hair, it was usually in the shape of hairpins, combs and ornamental decorations, or, in the ninth—early tenth centuries, metal wires holding up the elaborate coiffure. None of the standard Dunhuang-style paintings demonstrate the loop-style arrangement. Because of this difference from Chinese examples and the similarities with Uygur examples it is reasonable to conclude that the hairstyle of the female donors in the "Five Buddhas" is not Chinese but Uygur.[73]

It is clearly the case that, although the second man from the left in the "Five Buddhas"wears a Chinese hat, the male donors' characteristics may also more readily be compared with Uygur art than the standard type of tenth-century Dunhuang painting. Most importantly the donors do not wear the usual black clothing of Chinese officials usually seen in Dunhuang painting, for example in Stein painting 24 (Colour Plate 43). The flower in the hand of the leading male donor in the "Five Buddhas" is almost identical to that in the hands of the Uygur princes in Bezeklik Cave 20 (Colour Plate 4). Similar flowers held by a princess are shown on the embroidery mentioned above.[74] The facial type of the donor figures kneeling on the Uygur-style rugs in the lower section of the "Five Buddhas" is strikingly different from the standard tenth-century Dunhuang style as described by Whitfield, Giès, Duan Wenjie and others.

Another painting from the Musée Guimet, the "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara" composition, dated to 943, is a good comparative example for the standard Dunhuang style. In the lower left-hand section of this painting, separated from the main composi-

[71] MIK III 6761, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Die Seidenstraße*: 1987, cat. no. 47.
[72] MIK III 4920b, ibid., cat. no. 67.
[73] Laure Feugère has also independently arrived at this conclusion. L. Feugère: "Some Remarks": 2000, p. 1430-1438. I first drew attention to the Uygur hairstyles at the ICANAS conference in Budapest, July 1997 cf. L. Russell-Smith: "Uygur Influence": 1997, and then again at The Third Silk Road Conference at Yale University, New Haven, July 1998 where my paper was circulated in vol. 1. of the Conference Proceedings: L. Russell-Smith: "The Influence of Uygurs": 1998.
[74] MIK III 4920b, cf. note 72 above.

tion by a line as is usual, the donor of the painting, a woman dressed in white robes is depicted (Plate 54).[75] In comparison with the Tang style, her face appears flat, as it is painted white with only her cheeks picked out in red. However, compared with the female donors of the "Five Buddhas," her facial features are far more emphasised. The black outline varies very slightly in width and is made up of short, broken strokes, as we can best observe on the scarf falling off her shoulders. Her left hand is shown in a convincing spatial arrangement behind the incense burner, from which decorative black swirls rise, suggesting the smoke.

She has strong, arched eyebrows, and elongated eyes, with three separate lines defining the eyelids and eyeballs. The brushlines used for the eyebrows and the lower eyelids are noticeably thicker near the nose. Most characteristic is the mouth in this standard tenth-century style, as defined by Whitfield: a straight line runs between the two lips, and ends on both sides in a hook.[76] Similar stylistic mannerisms may be observed in the portrayal of the male donor of another "Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara" composition, dated to 981 (Plate 55).[77] In his case, the eyebrows, the moustache and beard are executed with parallel, short thin lines, with the eyebrows being of a thicker, varying width. A fourth line under the eyes gives further definition to the eyes—this too was a common feature in the second part of the tenth century in Dunhuang painting. Both in the male and female donor portraits the line of the nose is joined to one of the eyebrows.

None of these features can be observed in the "Five Buddhas" painting. First of all the donors occupy the main area of the painting, and are not separated from it by a line, as was usual in Dunhuang paintings. The different artistic approach is readily apparent if the male donors kneeling in the lower right-hand part of the picture are compared to the above example (Colour Plate 47). The second figure in the "Five Buddhas" painting wears almost identical Chinese clothing and headgear to the standing man on the "Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara" composition (although his robe is brown). He also has a moustache and beard and holds an incense burner in

[75] MG 17775, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1., pl. 96-4.
[76] Whitfield has made very detailed observations on similar features on facial types from tenth century Dunhuang paintings in the British Museum collection, Whitfield: *ACA*, vol.1, pp. 14-15.
[77] MG 17659, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 98-11.

his hand. However, all details are rendered in a strikingly different way: the man in the "Five Buddhas" has a very round, flat, pink face, outlined in an extremely thin and even, red line. His eyebrows are thin and small, his eyes are small and wide apart and painted with two even red lines, with a single black line used only for the lower eyelid. The eyes are not elongated, as is commonly seen in tenth-century Dunhuang painting.

The monk kneeling in front of the male donor and the female donors on the left share the same characteristics: their faces, too, appear flat, round and pink, and they have very high eyebrows that give their faces a surprised expression. Their noses are shown simply as a curved line, far from the eyebrows; their mouths are not outlined and are a mere rosebud shape, with only a small black line defining the parting of the lips.

Corresponding features may be observed in fragments found in the Turfan area, now in Berlin, and on both sides of a banner painting from Bezeklik in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery (Figure 23).[78] There are differences, as the Yale piece is painted on cotton with a white prepared ground, a common technique in the Turfan area, and only shades of green and orange are used for the colouring. However, many of the details are very similar. The female on the *recto* side has a plump face and a curve for the chin, outlined with a very thin, even line. Her eyebrows are shown with a single thin line, her eyes are simply defined with two lines and a dot in the middle, and the mouth and nose are also very close to the details distinguished in the "Five Buddhas." In addition her right hand looks almost identical, and the folds in her robe and the light shading also show further similarities. I conclude that these features in the representation of the female donors appear to correspond to Uygur mannerisms.[79]

Key features, as listed in Table 4, present in the "Five Buddhas" painting include: the use of colour and gold, the clothing and hairstyle of the donors, carpets with a lozenge design, the patterning of nimbi and aureoles, the banners on the two sides of Vairocana, the unusual canopies, the pink and white faces, and the depiction of the Buddhas' and bodhisattvas' hair. Key features of the "Maṇḍala of the

[78] "Female deities", Yale University Art Gallery, 1937.5576; M. G. Neill (ed.): *The Communion of Scholars*: 1982, cat. no. 41. For more details see pp. 102-103 in this book. A sketch of this painting was first published by A. Grünwedel: *Bericht*: 1905, pl. 18, fig. 2a, b.

[79] Cf. also further fragments showing Uygur females, *CATB*, cat. nos. 500-504, pp. 356-358.

Forty-Two Peaceful Deities" include: the use of colour, the patterning of the nimbi and aureoles, the way multiple heads are shown, the brushwork, the facial types of both humans (deities) and demons, and the way hair is depicted. These features present evidence of Uygur influence. Some more specific features such as the lozenge-patterned carpet, the flowers decorating the background, and, most importantly, the unusual clothing and headdress of the donor figures in the "Five Buddhas" painting are directly comparable to further paintings from the known Dunhuang material.

Other paintings with similar donor figures

"The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra" painting (Colour Plate 49) is divided into a lower section and a main field by a thick band of quadrangles made up of red, green and grey triangles and outlined in yellow.[80] This arrangement is relatively common in ninth- and tenth-century Dunhuang art, and it furnishes reliable evidence for the painting's manufacture in Dunhuang.[81] It also supplies indirect evidence, that despite their different appearance all of the paintings described in this chapter that share the key characteristics identified in the "Adoration of Guanyin" are likely to have been manufactured in Dunhuang. This is also rendered more likely by the fact that, despite their links to Uygur and Tibetan art, there are no exact parallels to them among paintings with a different provenance.

The main field is occupied by a large figure of Samantabhadra, who sits on a lotus seat mounted on an elephant. He holds a flask and a flower with three stylised buds, that resemble the flaming jewels decorating the canopy above his head. Samantabhadra is surrounded by four bodhisattvas, two of whom hold banners of the Uygur type, and one with a vase of flowers, while the fourth worships Samantabhadra with his hands in *añjali mudrā*. The elephant is restrained by an attendant wearing only a loin cloth, and the figure of a small boy is also depicted in front of the elephant. In the lower part of the painting three female donors kneel on a single carpet on the left, with three male donors on the right.

[80] Samantabhadra, EO 1149, Ink and colours on silk , H: 82.5 cm W: 47 cm, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2 pl. 5.

[81] For example, a comparable band appears on the much grander "Thousand-eyed Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara," dated to 943 (MG 17775), Giès: *AAC*, pl. 96.

Although this subject matter was frequently depicted in Dunhuang, Michel Soymié has already drawn attention to several points in which this painting differs from the usual way of representing Samantabhadra in Dunhuang.[82] He notes in particular that the attendant controlling the elephant looks different from its counterpart in the earlier examples, where he is usually a black servant, and that in other Dunhuang paintings of Samantabhadra no young boy attendant appears. Soymié identifies the young boy as Sudhana, who is usually shown on compositions showing Mañjuśrī. Such confusion usually happens in art that is copying examples for its own development, for example, in the case of certain Tangut paintings.[83] Therefore this painting presents an additional reason for believing that it is not from the standard Dunhuang repertoire, but was produced by artists not accustomed to the traditional representation. Importantly, Soymié has also pointed out that the colour scheme is unusual for Dunhuang painting.[84]

In the main part of the composition three of the four bodhisattvas have single-coloured (pink or blue) elliptical haloes, a type not usually seen in the Dunhuang material, but frequently used in Tibet. The fourth one has a pointed halo. Samantabhadra himself has a halo and a mandorla not dissimilar to those of the four outer Buddhas in the "Five Buddhas". In this case too the halo and the mandorla are built up of concentric circles. The pink outer circle of the halo includes a black line drawing of a scroll motif, which is very similar to the motif used in the case of the Guimet "Five Buddhas", except that there it is painted with darker red on a lighter red background. In Bezeklik Cave 48 a standing Buddha has a similar scroll pattern in his halo (Colour Plate 37).[85] A further interesting similarity is the unusual parasol type held by two of the attending bodhisattvas. Parasols of a similar layered type are shown on either side of Vajradhātu's throne in the "Five Buddhas" (Colour Plate 44). This type of banner, although not necessarily layered, can also be found in murals from Bezeklik (Colour Plate 8; Figure 27).[86]

[82] Giès: *ACA*, pp. 122-123.
[83] Cf., for example, a painting of Guanyin from Khara Khoto, where the attributes of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra are also represented, but the attendants of Kṣitigarbha shown. X-2435, State Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Piotrovsky: *Lost Empire* 1993, cat. no. 49.
[84] Giès: *ACA*, p. 123.
[85] ZXBQ, pl. 136.
[86] ZXBQ, pl. 90; J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde* 1995, cat. no. 147.

The style of the Samantabhadra painting is somewhat different from that of the key painting the "Adoration of Guanyin", but this is partly due to its slightly cruder quality. In the main field of the composition the outlines are executed in red with an even line, and there is no attempt to employ the Chinese brush-stroke style of changing width. There are certain similarities to the "Five Buddhas" with respect to the rendering of the facial features, although the three-quarter profiles of the bodhisattvas are somewhat less round. The face of Samantabhadra can be directly compared with the features of the Buddhas portrayed in the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities." As in that case there is no attempt to show volume: the face is round, and the facial features have been simplified to thin lines for showing the eyebrows, eyes, nose and mouth. The somewhat clumsy way the hands are holding objects is also comparable.

There are further close similarities in the way Samantabhadra's attendant is shown. His chubby legs and posture are comparable to that of the Guardian Kings and composite figures in the "Maṇḍala of the Forty-Two Peaceful Deities." This makes the attendant resemble supernatural demons as usually depicted in Uygur Buddhist art, rather than humans. He has locks of hair combed backwards, and a very round face with prominent wrinkles. The circles on his shoulder and knees are a mannerism taken over from Central Asian art and can also be seen in Bezeklik Cave 48 on the knees and elbows of the two thunder gods on either side of the Wheel (Figure 36).[87] The face and exaggerated features of the attendant in the Samantabhadra painting are similar to the very pink round face of a statue, and to mural paintings of guardians, all in Beiting.[88] Especially characteristic are the wavy hairline, swept back hair and the pointed ears, as well as the arched eyebrows.

Facial types rendered in a similar simple manner to the faces on the Samantabhadra painting can be seen in Beiting and Bezeklik, and these are typified by a straight nose and eyebrows almost touching in the middle.[89] The fragment of a painting on silk, now in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin, also displays similar facial characteristics. Especially interesting is the way the mouths are shown: the small red

[87] ZXBQ, pl. 130
[88] BGHFY, pls. XIV/2, XV/2 and XXVII/3.
[89] BGHFY, pl. 3.

rosebud shape has a line going through it to indicate the parting of the lips (Plate 51).[90] With no hook at the end of the thin lines dividing the mouths the effect is very different from the way the mouth is depicted in tenth-century Dunhuang art.

The origin of this bodhisattva type may perhaps be seen in the earlier cited Manichaean fragment that is now in the Turfan Museum (Figure 39).[91] Although dressed differently, the gesture and facial type of the two lower bodhisattvas in the Samantabhadra composition are directly comparable to the way the two musicians are depicted in the Turfan fragment. The hand gestures in particular are comparable, such as the way the flowers are held by the bodhisattva on the right.

Flowers in a vase, such as those seen in the hands of the bodhisattva behind the elephant's attendant, do not normally appear held in the hands on Dunhuang paintings in the "standard" tenth-century style. A vase of the same type was shown by Gabain as typically Uygur (Figure 37). It can also be seen held by bodhisattvas in one of the Shazhou Uygur caves (Plate 52).[92] In the Samantabhadra composition a lozenge pattern with a dot in the middle of each lozenge decorates the banner on the left-hand side. A similar lozenge pattern can be seen in the same Uygur cave, numbered 310, in Dunhuang on the parasol above the Buddha.

The hairstyle of the little boy standing in front of the elephant is comparable to that of the boy attendants in the "Adoration of Guan-yin" (Colour Plate 38). A young worshipping boy is represented on a fragment of a wall painting from Šorčuk, now in the British Museum, in which he is kneeling with his hands in *añjali mudrā*.[93] Although his hairstyle is different from that of the boy in the Samantabhadra painting, the facial types are comparable. It is also interesting to note that this boy is kneeling on a carpet decorated with a lozenge pattern, which although simpler, is still comparable to the type on which the donors of the Samantabhadra painting kneel.

There are other details that invite comparison with wall paintings from Šorčuk and Bezeklik. In the Samantabhadra painting, uncharacteristically for the Dunhuang style, all the faces and bodies are painted in a flat pink. As a comparison, although outlined in black and not in red, as here, the faces and body parts in the Šorčuk wall paintings are also rendered with pink flesh tones (Colour Plates 18-19). There is a similar attempt to give a summary indication of facial features, with the eyebrows almost touching, a straight nose with a simple wavy ending to indicate the nostrils, and small mouths with a straight black line across to show the lips. The proportion of the hands in comparison with the bodies of the figures, and the gestures are also similar. The treatment of the striped, multi-coloured clouds and the falling blossoms are also comparable.

[90] MIK III 6245, First reproduced in A. von Le Coq: *Chotscho*: 1913, pl. 44c. Published as the Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta in *CATB*, cat. no. 197, pls. 194-195 and col. pl. 56.

[91] 81 TB 60; T. Moriyasu: *Uiguru Manikyō*: 1991, pl. XVIIb.

[92] DHMGK vol. 5/138 (still published as a Xi Xia cave).

[93] Stein painting 279, Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 3 pl. 95. For Šorčuk see N. V. Diakonova: *Shikshin*: 1995.

The wall paintings from the Ming-oi shrines at Šorčuk have been dated to the eighth—ninth centuries by Whitfield.[94] In the light of the new evidence presented here it is likely that these wall paintings too date from the tenth century, and if so, they might be contemporary with the Samantabhadra painting. It is also likely that the Šorčuk wall paintings are among the earliest in Uygur Buddhist art.

The canopy above Samantabhadra's head, which is different from the types usually used in Dunhuang, is very similar to two examples from Beiting in that of it has six sides that are viewed from below (Figure 38).[95] In this period in Dunhuang, canopies tend to be more simplified viewed from eye level, and thus the opening is shown as a straight line. Another popular type is made up of flowers. The canopies in the Samantabhadra painting and in Beiting, by contrast, are viewed from below, have a decorated rim, and three semicircular sections on top.

There is one other example in Dunhuang, where a very similar canopy can be seen, namely "Avalokiteśvara as Saviour of Perils" (Stein painting 24); (Colour Plate 43).[96] There too there are three protrusions at the top in addition to the flaming jewels, the decorative design on the rim seen from below and the golden ball-jewels hanging down. As already noted, Stein painting 24 is dated to the fourth year of Jianlong 建隆四年, which corresponds to 963. Therefore, it is likely that the Pelliot Samantabhadra painting was also painted about this time. The iconography of the painting also confirms a tenth-century

[94] Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 3., pp. 328-329.

[95] BGHFY, pls. XII/1 and XIII/1.

[96] Whitfield, *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 25-1.

date, because the attendant of Samantabhadra's elephant is not a black servant, like those in Tang examples. Furthermore, the similarities of Stein painting 24 to the "Adoration of Guanyin" have already been discussed, and it has been argued that it is likely to date from the second half of the tenth century, possibly the 960s. These stylistic links make this even more likely.

Key features, as listed in Table 4, that can be observed in this painting include the use of colour, the clothing and hairstyles, carpets with a lozenge design, the patterning of the nimbi and aureoles, the banners and unusual canopy, the scroll design, the brushwork, the facial types and the rendering of the hair. The figures are flattened, and their postures are exaggerated. The faces in the main area of the composition are rendered in pink, while the donor figures closely resemble Uygur donors, in their clothing and positioning. Unusual banners and a vase similar to Uygur examples are held up by the bodhisattvas, and the parasol above Samantabhadra's head is also comparable to Uygur examples. The decoration of the nimbi and the mandorla, as well as the patterning of the carpets, link this painting with the key painting, the "Adoration of Guanyin." Perhaps a study of the donors kneeling on these carpets will shed light on the origin of these paintings in Dunhuang.

Clues to the identity of the donors

There is a great similarity, already observed by Soymié, between the outfits and hairstyles of the Samantabhadra painting's female donors to those in the "Five Buddhas" (Colour Plate 44).[97] Although, due to the coarser quality of the Samantabhadra painting a much sketchier style is used, it is easy to recognise the same straight hairline, and the same type of hair ornament. The male donors' hats are different too, representing a more unusual type of headgear.

The clothing of the female donors is also very similar to that featured in the "Five Buddhas" painting, but it lacks the golden decoration, and the women wear scarves decorated with red dots. The scarves were very fashionable in the second half of the tenth century in Dunhuang, but in the case of the elegant donors in the "Five Buddhas," no scarves of a

[97] Giès: *ACA*, pp. 122-123. Cf. also L. Feugère: "Some Remarks": 2000, pp. 1421-1438.

contrasting colour were worn (a red scarf of a colour barely different from the main part of their outfit, is thrown around their shoulders). Perhaps the addition of the scarf in a contrasting colour in the case of the Samantabhadra painting is a sign that the less wealthy donors, who, according to the hypothesis presented in this study, were Ganzhou Uygur women, began to adapt to local Dunhuang fashion.

All of the women and two men are each holding a flower that looks like a simplified version of the flowers held by the women depicted in the "Five Buddhas", with pointed ends somewhat resembling a tulip, in a dark red colour. The carpets are also simplified versions of the same type described in the case of the "Five Buddhas."[98] The lozenge pattern is marked out by red lines, which are then filled with an alternating pattern of greens and grey-blues.

There is a fragment in Paris, that portrays more donors of the type discussed above and is thus important to include it here. Known simply as "Group of donors," it consists of two fragments (Colour Plate 50). The figures occupy the lower section of all that remains of a larger banner painting.[99] Eight females and a child were originally represented on the left, but the woman in the top left-hand corner can only be distinguished by her gown. The remains of four males can be discerned on the right.[100] The hairstyles and outfits, the flowers held by the donors and the lozenge-patterned carpet are features almost identical to those in the previous example, but here the representation is more detailed, and the hair decorations, belt buckles and flower stems are enhanced with gold. From this point of view the fragment occupies a position between the "Five Buddhas" and "Samantabhadra," as it represents a finer quality than the latter, but is not as good as the former.

The women wear golden square-shaped hair ornaments and have straight hairlines, which are identifiable as Uygur fashions. In terms of the shape of the head, the hairline, and the way of rendering the eyes, nose and mouth, the face of the figure kneeling in front of the woman named as Yin 陰 in the inscription looks almost identical to

[98] See p. 191 in this book.

[99] EO 1157, (2 fragments), H: 32 cm, W: 31.2 cm (left); H: 27.5 cm, W: 16.5 cm (right), Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 84.

[100] The remains of the dark robe of one woman can be seen in the top left-hand part of the fragment. For a more detailed description see Michel Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, pp. 150-151.

donors shown in a fragment from Šorčuk now in the State Hermitage collection.[101] This further strengthens the possibility that the murals in Šorčuk are contemporary with the paintings under discussion here. The flowers added to the two hands held tight in *añjali mudrā* is a feature very similar to Uygur examples.

The inscription panel between the two groups is painted in the form of a stele, the Sumeru-type base of which is painted with a black outline with palmette leaf motifs. This black and white geometric pattern is directly comparable to another fragment of a Šorčuk mural. In both cases there is a pedestal in white, outlined in black, that has a top element decorated with a zig-zag motif with alternating palmettes facing up and down.

Key features, as listed in Table 4, that can be observed in this fragment include the use of colour and gold, the clothing and hairstyle, carpets with a lozenge design, the brushwork and the facial types. Although there is no indication of what was represented in the main field of the composition, these features, the clothing and the facial features of the donors place this fragment with the paintings described so far. These paintings represent a unique blend of Dunhuang and Uygur characteristics, which shows that they were most probably manufactured locally in Dunhuang for Uygur patrons. This study has demonstrated that the "The Five Buddhas" is characterised by a strong resemblance to the Qočo Uygur material. How can the unique combination of Uygur stylistic elements and Tibetan iconography be explained in the context of Dunhuang art?

As was discussed in the first chapter, Dunhuang had far-reaching links with the Uygurs of Xizhou from the end of the ninth century. These links became even stronger in the course of the eleventh century, when Xizhou Uygur influence became dominant in Dunhuang. It would, therefore, be logical to assume that this influence contributed to the commissioning of these paintings too. However, this assumption presents one major difficulty that explains why the links to the Uygur style have gone unnoticed for such a long time. The difficulty is that there is no known Uygur work of art from the Turfan area arranged as a mandala. Kira Samosyuk has argued for a late thirteenth—early fourteenth century date for the Tibetan-influenced mural fragments

[101] N. V. Diakonova: *Shikshin*, pl. 18a.

in the State Hermitage collection.[102] This is in accordance with the findings of philologists. According to Johan Elverskog, who summarised all of the research conducted on Uygur Buddhist literature, no Tantric texts were translated into Uygur from the Tibetan until the thirteenth century, but after this period such texts became very influential.[103]

Of course, it must be emphasised that at present the dating of Uygur Buddhist texts has not been definitively finalised. Most authors do not attempt to date individual texts when translating them. Despite its possible late date, it is interesting to quote an Uygur text here, as it appears to describe a similar mandala. According to Zieme, who reconstructed it "Wie viele Verse noch folgen müßten, kann nicht gesagt werden. Auch sind alle Umstände über die Tradition, Autorschaft und Ursprung dieses Gedicht's unbekannt."[104]

The poem describes the five Tathāgathas and their arrangement in a mandala. According to Zieme's reconstruction, Akṣobhya is described in the first two verses in the east, Ratnasambhava in the south (verses 3 and 4), Amitābha in the West (verses 5 and 6), Amoghasiddhi in the North (verses 7 and 8) and Vairocana in the centre (verses 9 and 10). Only Vairocana and Akṣobhya are named with their Sanskrit names. The last verse describes the sixteen Divine Maids. Lines 50-53 read:

altï ygrmi qavsayu turdacï tngrï qïz
arduq kisläk at manggal
arïs mantal yang-l[ïγ]
aksobi-ta [ulatï

[Sechzehn umgebend stehende Göttermädchen;
außerordentliches Geheimnis, Ruhm und Glück.
Zum Ritual des reinen Mandala gehörig,
Aksobhya [und die anderen Gottheiten].[105]

[102] Kira Samosyuk: "Tibetan-Style Painting from Turfan", in J. Casey Singer and P. Denwood (eds.): *Tibetan Art*: 1997, pp. 80-85. Samosyuk's dating is further confirmed by the close similarity between the Buddha shown in her fig. 63 and a fragment showing a Buddha from Tholing, dated to the thirteenth century in M. Henss: "Wall paintings": 1996, p. 207, fig. 6.

[103] J. Elverskog: *Uygur Buddhist Literature*: 1997, p. 13.

[104] [How many verses followed cannot be ascertained. All of the circumstances regarding the tradition, author and origin of this poem are also unknown.], Peter Zieme: *Buddhistische Stabreimdichtungen der Uiguren*, Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985, p. 140.

[105] [Sixteen Divine Maids standing around/ extraordinary secret, glory and happiness./ Belonging to the ritual of the pure mandala/ Aksobhya [and the other Deities], ibid., p. 143.

This text is proof that esoteric Buddhist scriptures specifically mentioning the word 'mandala' existed in the Uygur material, although it is unlikely that such texts could date from the tenth century. Peter Zieme has confirmed that the type of writing and language used makes a thirteenth—fourteenth century date likely for this text.[106] This confirms that this type of iconography may not have been popular among the Xizhou Uygurs in the early period. In accordance with this, in the published material of Uygur paintings and among the fragments studied in Berlin, no mandala arrangement of this type can be recognised. The Bezeklik caves are also decorated according to a largely Mahāyāna programme.

In contrast, the present study has demonstrated the proximity of the "Five Buddhas" mandala in the Guimet collection to the iconography of early Tibetan mandalas. While no comparable iconography is known from the Mogao caves at Dunhuang either, the Anxi Yulin caves do offer parallels. It seems that there was already an esoteric sect in Yulin during the Tang dynasty. In fact, one of these Tang murals was used by Amy Heller as comparative material in her article about the early representation of Vairocana at lDan-ma-brag.[107] Similar esoteric images continued to be produced throughout the Five Dynasties period at Yulin.[108]

However the wall paintings at Yulin are very different in style from the Uygur-influenced group under discussion, and they all follow the Chinese-Dunhuang stylistic idiom. Furthermore it is most striking that not only are there no similar mandalas from the Uygur finds near Turfan, but these Tantric subjects and mandalas also disappear from Yulin (and are not present in the Dunhuang caves either) during the "Shazhou Uygur period" of the eleventh century. They only reappear in a fully Tibetan style with the arrival of the Tanguts.

The answer to these contradictions most probably lies in the patronage of these paintings. In Dunhuang paintings there is often an inscription in the lower part of the composition in the centre, but in the case of the "Five Buddhas" the green square space between the representation of the offering tables has not been filled in. There are three cartouches inscribed and arranged in the usual vertical way, and

[106] Personal communication, September 2000.
[107] A. Heller: "Ninth Century Buddhist Images": 1994, p. 339 and plate 7.
[108] Caves 35, 38, 26, AYK, pls. 83, 88, 98.

interestingly a horizontal cartouche has also been added above the head of the kneeling monk on the right, but it has been left empty. The inscriptions have been translated by Soymié as: "Deng Yichang, deceased father of the donor" 施主亡過父鄧義昌, "Lady Li, deceased mother of the donor" 施主亡過母李氏 and "Yuantai, their deceased daughter" 亡過女員泰[109]

Soymié dates this painting to the tenth century. As he convincingly argues, Deng Yichang and Yuantai, two of the donors named in the cartouches have identical names to two people mentioned in the Dunhuang manuscripts.

> A person called Deng Yichang is mentioned in the manuscript P.2985 vo 2, along with the date 972 A.D. Moreover, in another manuscript (P.3489), dating, it seems to 968 A.D., we learn of a certain Yuantai, a member of a woman's association. If, as it seems likely, these works do indeed refer to the figures known from the inscriptions of the painting, then—since it was executed after their deaths—it must date after 972 A.D.[110]

Although attempting to date works of art on the basis of certain names appearing in manuscripts is not an infallible method, as the identity may be coincidental, here two names have been found only a few years apart, thereby reducing the risk of drawing false conclusions.

In my opinion Soymié's dating appears to be in accordance with the growing Uygur influence in the second half of the tenth century, and also with the stylistic and technical characteristics of the painting. As previously noted there is a similarity to the mandala arrangements as seen at Mang-nang and Tabo and on a Tibetan *thangka*. Therefore a tenth-century date is likely to be correct. This inscription makes a more precise dating, to the 970s or 980s, possible. This is in accordance with the observation that many features of this group are comparable to Stein painting 24, which is dated to 963.

The "Five Buddhas" painting is inscribed in Chinese with Chinese names, and this lead Soymié to conclude that it was commissioned by the Chinese. However, other nationalities often took a Chinese surname in Dunhuang. This was, for example, the case with the Tibetans, according to Takeuchi: "many of the people found in these [Tibetan]

[109] Michel Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, 1996, p. 70.
[110] Ibid.

contracts have a Chinese family name with a Tibetan or a Tibetan and Chinese mixed given name."[111]

Li was, in fact, the surname of Cao Yijin's Ganzhou Uygur wife.[112] As stated earlier, she is represented in Cave 98, one of the largest caves of the mid-tenth century in Dunhuang.[113] Her political importance as the first wife of Cao Yijin cannot be doubted there. Due to the importance of the Ganzhou Uygur women as donors in tenth-century Dunhuang, the most likely argument is that the "Five Buddhas" painting was also commissioned by Ganzhou Uygur women. It is likely, therefore, that this painting and paintings 3-11, as listed in Table 3 showing the Uygur-influenced group, reflect the taste and religious beliefs of the Ganzhou Uygurs based in Dunhuang.

On the basis of the stylistic and technical observations made above, it can be concluded that the paintings described in this chapter reflect the taste of their female Ganzhou Uygur donors. Their differing preferences were allowed to be shown in paintings ordered for private devotion. Their high rank made it possible for them to commission some of the most exquisite known portable paintings from tenth-century Dunhuang, executed with expensive colours and a lavish use of gold. Close links existed between the Ganzhou Uygurs and the Tibetans in the tenth century. These are likely to account for the Tantric iconography of the key paintings investigated above.

Cultural aspects of Ganzhou's links with Tibet

After the collapse of their empire only the Tibetans living in Hexi played an important role in the eastern regions. In this period the Chinese continued to refer to their western neighbours as the Tufan 吐蕃 but now in a restricted sense. Whereas earlier the term 'Tufan' indicated a huge Tibetan kingdom, under the Five Dynasties and the Song it was applied to the small Tibetan territory in Amdo, on the Gansu border. Despite its small size this region became very

[111] Tsuguhito Takeuchi: *Old Tibetan Contracts from Central Asia*, Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan, 1995, p. 19.

[112] Cao Yijin's Uygur wife is called "Lady Li from Longxi." The surname Li was given to the Uygur *kaghan's* family by the Tang Emperor in gratitude for Uygur military help during the An Lushan rebellion. see DHMGK, vol. 5, 1987 (1990), pp. 211-212, (explanation to plate 12). As there is no independent historical evidence cited, this may have been a claim of the local ruling family.

[113] See p. 22 in this book.

important for the succession of Tibetan rulers. According to R. A. Stein the descendants of the Ladakhi kings emigrated to Amdo in the tenth century[114]

Around the mid-ninth century Dunhuang's Guiyijun army captured Ganzhou from the Tibetans. The Uygurs then occupied Ganzhou from the 890s according to Moriyasu.[115] However, Tibetan territory continued to surround Ganzhou's territory from the south and from the east. The main centre was around Xiliangfu 西涼府 (Liangzhou). The Hexi Tibetans occupied the region extending from the valley of the Huangshui 湟水 to the valley of the Taohe 洮河, this was politically the more important area, and had been already known as Tsong-kha during the Tang period. Another territory occupied was the region around the Liupan 六盤 Mountains on the northern side of the upper and middle reaches of the Weishui 渭水, the largest tributary of the Yellow River.[116]

Very little is known about the art and cultural importance of these regions. In the catalogue accompanying "The Silk Route and The Diamond Path" exhibition, the map showing these areas of interest ("The Western Trans-Himalaya and Surrounding Regions") leaves the whole area south and east of Dunhuang blank, as if suggesting that there were no important trade routes and cultural links there.[117] Even as recently as 1991, Jane Casey (Singer), in her PhD dissertation, on "Early Painting in Tibet," had to exclude the eastern areas due to the lack of reliable information. She divided her material into Central and Western Tibetan painting and did not discuss eastern Tibetan painting due to the lack of surviving material *in situ*, which made an assessment of the regional style impossible.[118] She states:

> Virtually nothing is known about painting in Eastern Tibet aside from the names of a few local Buddhists and a handful of monasteries founded

[114] Rolf-A. Stein: *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1959, p. 229. Cf also pp. 230-231 for the situation in this region during the tenth century.

[115] T. Moriyasu: "Uiguru to Tonkō": 1980, pp. 306-312. For the evidence that the Tibetan gains in Hexi still held in the early ninth century see C. Beckwith: "The Tibetans": 1987, p. 5.

[116] Tutsomu Iwasaki: "The Tibetan tribes of Ho-hsi and Buddhism during the Northern Sung period", *Acta Asiatica*, 64 (1993), p. 17. I would like to thank Professor Ronald M. Davidson, Department of Religious Studies, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT, U.S.A. for drawing my attention to this article.

[117] D. Klimburg-Salter: *The Silk Route*: 1982, Map 1, pp. 16-17.

[118] J. Casey Singer: *Early Painting in Tibet*: 1991, p. 28, note 41. Casey Singer gives an excellent study of the research done on early Tibetan art up to 1990 on pp. 1-23.

during this period. Moreover, there is no photographic documentation of Eastern Tibetan murals. Attributions of paintings to Eastern Tibet are speculative, based primarily upon the assumption that eastern Tibetan painting was strongly influenced by contemporary painting from China.[119]

However in recent years more and more evidence suggests that the Tsong kha region was crucial in the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism during the years of persecution in the central areas. It was Amy Heller who drew attention to the importance of the trade routes in the Kokonor region, and their cultural role. She became aware of the area's importance due to her research on the Dulan tombs, which are located in the vicinity of the Kokonor lake. She states:

> This area was the site of many military campaigns in the late 8th to mid-9th century. The sovereigns from central Tibet had first subjugated this northeast region ca. 638, then populated by the Azha tribe. The Tibetans established a firm dominion after 663, when they conquered the Azha capital west of Kokonor near Dulan. The Tibetans gradually established a provincial government of civil and military officials, and *many monasteries and temples, some receiving Tibetan royal patronage*... When the Tibetan empire collapsed in mid-9th century, this area was far enough from the chaos of central Tibet to allow monasteries and individual fortunes to prosper at this important junction of the Silk Route and the trade routes to both central Tibet and toward the Mekong River valley.[120]

Heller stresses the importance of the Kokonor-Chengdu Route, linking Sichuan with the Tarim Basin Silk Routes.[121] Elsewhere she has argued that this was one of just two areas where Tibetan Buddhist art was able to survive the persecutions. The Kokonor area became the traditional stronghold of Tibetan Buddhism from the eighth century onwards. According to Heller an abbot from the Khri ga monastery near Kokonor was responsible for commissioning several of the most important early Tibetan Buddhist rock carvings at the beginning of the ninth century[122]

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[119] Ibid., p. 51, note 28

[120] Amy Heller: "Two Inscribed Fabrics and their Historical Context: Some Observations on Esthetics and Silk Trade in Tibet, 7th-9th century", Karel Otavsky (ed.): *Entlang der Sidenstraße—Frühmittelalterliche Kunst zwischen Persien und China in der Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberger Berichte 6*, Riggisberg: Abegg Stiftung, 1998, pp. 100-101. Emphasis added by the present author.

[121] Ibid., p. 102.

[122] A. Heller: *Tibetan Art*: 1999, pp. 49-52 *passim*.

It is partly because of the lack of artistic remains that this area's importance for the transmission of Buddhist art had not been emphasised in earlier publications. The core of the eastern zone was in Tsong kha, the region southeast of the Kokonor Lake. This region was at the crossroads of several major trade routes: towards Lhasa, Dunhuang, Chang'an and Chengdu. The principal monastery was Khri ga:

> ...whose ritual manuals have survived until today, demonstrating a combination of philosophical and esoteric Buddhism which was then taught and practiced in Dunhuang, in Sichuan, and in Lhasa... Their manuals were circulated in Lhasa, and Samye, and they likewise archived the fundamental texts, translated in Dunhuang and central Tibet. Khri ga probably served as a link among isolated schools of Buddhist activity throughout eastern Tibet. The town of Khri ga, connected to the monastery became the administrative center of the region, where eventually a scion of the old dynasty established his capital of Tsong kha, ca 1020.[123]

Several authors refer to the flight of a number of monks from Central Tibet to Tsong kha in Amdo to escape the persecution of the early 840s, their maintenance of Buddhism there and their passing on of the doctrines to the "men of Ü-tsang," who then revived Buddhism in Central Tibet. According to Heather Stoddard, the Later Diffusion of Buddhism arose "far to the North-East of the high plateau, under the 'Great Lama' Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal (892-975) who... appears to have been an artist, or at least an active builder of temples."[124] He went off in search of the "Three Monks," who had escaped persecution sometime in the middle of the ninth century by disappearing into Amdo. He was ordained by them, and then studied in Mi nyag (the territory of the Tanguts). Later he made numerous offerings and built innumerable temples and *stūpas* in the Yellow River region. This story is important to Tibetans as it demonstrates the unbroken continuity of the *vināya* transmission in Tibet. However, considerable confusion surrounds the details and dating of this episode in Tibetan sources. Some of these problems were discussed by Hugh Richardson, and most recently Philip Denwood has drawn attention to the basic contradictions with regard to dating these events.[125]

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[123] Ibid., p. 53.

[124] Heather Stoddard: "Early Tibetan Paintings: Sources and Styles (Eleventh–Fourteenth Centuries A.D.)", *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 49. (1996), p. 29.

[125] H. E. Richardson: "A Tibetan Inscription from Rgyal lha-khan; and a Note on

These pieces of indirect evidence make it likely that by the ninth and tenth centuries there was a strong Tibetan element in the Buddhism of the eastern regions. It is important to note the strong links between the Tibetans and the Ganzhou Uygurs. The continued use of Tibetan as the chancery language in Central Asia, including by the Ganzhou Uygurs and the Hexi Tibetans, has been discussed by Géza Uray.[126] In the first half of the tenth century the Amdo Tibetans, together with the Ganzhou Uygurs, sent a joint embassy to China. As Luciano Petech says: "As a rule the new kingdom [of the Tibetans] followed a policy of friendship with the Chinese emperor as well as with the Uighur ruler of Kan-chou."[127]

This area was later to become the birthplace of Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419), the great reformer of Tibetan Buddhism. His name actually means "man of Tsong kha." The Hexi Tibetans preserved their Buddhist tradition and were described in Chinese sources, such as the *Songshi* 宋史 [Song dynastic histories], as "revering Buddhism."[128] Even today Qinghai 青海 province is a stronghold of Tibetan Buddhism, and the Ta'ersi Monastery is the one of the most important temples of the Yellow sect.[129]

Furthermore, while the Xizhou Uygurs later gradually converted to Islam, the descendants of the Ganzhou Uygurs, the Sarig Yugurs remained much more cut-off and follow a Shamanistic Lamaist religion up to the present day. The Sarig Yugurs, or Yugu zu 裕固族, live in Qilian Yugur Autonomous County among high mountains in the

Tibetan Chronology from A.D. 841 to A.D. 1042", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1957), pp. 57-64. Philip Denwood: "The Tibetan 'Dark Age' 842-996 A.D.", lecture given in February 2001 at SOAS, to be published in M. Ghose and L. Russell-Smith (ed.): *From Nisa to Niya* (forthcoming). I would also like to thank Philip Denwood for his recommendations on this subject sent in August 2000, partly quoted above.

[126] G. Uray: "L'emploi du tibétain dans les chancelleries des états di Kan-sou et de Khotan postérieures à la domination tibétaine", *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 269 (1981), pp. 81-90, and G. Uray: "The earliest evidence for the use of Chinese sexagenary cycle in Tibetan", in L. Ligeti (ed.): *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Körös*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984, p. 352. I am grateful to Philip Denwood for drawing my attention to these articles.

[127] Luciano Petech: "Tibetan Relations with Sung China and with the Mongols", in Morris Rossabi (ed.): *China among Equals. The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th-14th centuries*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. pp. 174-175.

[128] T. Iwasaki: "The Tibetan tribes of Ho-hsi": 1993, p. 17.

[129] Sarah Fraser studied the monastery's modern atelier to find that many of the old working practices have survived. S. Fraser: The Artist's Practice: 1996, pp. 273-288.

Hexi corridor.[130] Even today many lead a nomadic life as shepherds and keep sheep, cows, camels and horses.[131] Men wear felt hats and a high-collared long garment, with crimson and indigo belts and lace-up cloth shoes. Women also wear a waist belt and decorate their long plaits with silk handkerchiefs. They adorn their hair with accessories (silver disks and coral beads) and wear a conical felt hat with tassels.[132] Because of their isolation, despite their small numbers (13,719 in 2000) they have preserved their archaic Turkic language and music.[133] The first visitor to describe them in some detail was C. G. E. Mannerheim, early in the twentieth century.[134] Mannerheim's contemporary the Russian S. E. Malov, who visited the Sarig Yugurs just a few years later, recognised the Yugur language as an archaic version of Uygur. The result of his work, a grammar and Yellow Uygur-Russian dictionary, was only published in the fifties.[135]

The Sarig Yugurs have preserved a much more archaic way of life than the Xizhou Uygurs. Aside from their practice of a form of Shamanism, as nomads most of the population still live in tents. It is for this reason that there has been no attempt to link any artworks in China to this group, even though it is likely that the Ganzhou Uygur ruling classes, when they arrived in the Hexi region, were well equipped to adapt to the Buddhist art of the local centres, which had been flourishing in previous centuries.

The area near today's Zhangye 張掖 [the old Ganzhou], was steadily gaining in importance economically and culturally due to its position on the Silk Road. It had become an important Buddhist area long before the arrival of the Uygurs. The Matisi 馬蹄寺 (Horse Hoof Temple) Buddhist caves were built about sixty kilometres south-east of Zhangye during the fifth century. This name refers to seven individual sites

[130] Ma Manli (ed.): *Gansu minzushi rumen* [Introduction to the history of minorities in Gansu], Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1988, pp. 59-61.

[131] For a short account of the Yugurs and their history see László Bárdi: *Őseink nyomában a Távol-Keleten—Expedíció a Selyem út mentén* [In the footsteps of our ancestors in the Far East—Expedition on the Silk Road], Pécs: Pannónia, 1993, pp. 114-119.

[132] Central Academy of Ethnology (ed.): *Costumes of the Minority Peoples of China*, Kyoto: Binopi, 1982, p. 235.

[133] *Zhongguo 2000 nian*: 2002, p. 287.

[134] C. G. E. Mannerheim: "A Visit to the 'Sarö' and 'Shera Yögurs'", *Journal de la Société Finno-ougrienne* vol. 27, no. 2 (1911), p. 1-72.

[135] S. E. Malov: *Yazik zheltykh uigurov* [The language of the Yellow Uygurs], Alma-Ata: Isdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Kazakhskoi SSR, 1957.

situated close to each other, including Qianfodong 千佛洞 (Thousand Buddha Caves) and Jintasi 金塔寺 (Golden Pagoda Temple). Although these cave temples were damaged during the Cultural Revolution, they have been partially published by the Chinese, and Marilyn Rhie has drawn scholarly attention to the existence of the Matisi caves.[136] She argues that the impact of this area on the Buddhist art of China was very important during the fifth century, and that its influence can be seen at the imperial Northern Wei caves at Yungang, in northern Shanxi, as the construction of these was directed by the Liangzhou monk, Tanyao.[137]

This is proof that the area played an important part in the dissemination of Buddhism to China during the fifth century, and thus it is likely that the arriving Uygurs in the ninth century were soon influenced by Buddhist ideas too. The religious links between the Ganzhou Uygurs and Tibetan monks were referred to earlier. Ganzhou was artistically important also for the Tanguts, who constructed a colossal *parinirvāṇa* image of the Buddha in Zhangye at the end of the eleventh century and also repainted some of the caves at Matisi.[138]

Today's Sarig Yugurs are followers of Tibetan Buddhism, and this shows that at some point they were drawn into the orbit of Tibetan civilisation. Due to the lack of written documents it is impossible to say when this conversion took place, and, of course, it could have been as late as the Yuan dynasty. There is, however, no reason to exclude the possibility that their conversion took place during the Ganzhou Uygur period. This conversion would have been led by the *kaghan* and his family. As noted previously, the Ganzhou Uygur *kaghans'* daughters represented in Dunhuang caves were important patrons of art. It is therefore possible to postulate at this stage that in their private devotion they would commission works of art that reflected their beliefs, which were influenced by Tibetan Buddhism. Some of the manuscripts found to reflect the iconography of these paintings may perhaps also be connected to these patrons. Such issues can only be decided by future

[136] Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo [Gansu Archaeology and Cultural Relics Research Institute] (ed.): *Hexi shiku* [The cave temples of Hexi], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987; Marilyn Martin Rhie: "Buddhist Sites of Gansu", in J. Baker (ed.): *The Flowering of a Foreign Faith*: 1998, pp. 104-117.
[137] M. Rhie: "Buddhist Sites": 1998, p. 109.
[138] For Matisi see Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo: 1987, pls. 128-132.

specialist research. At this point it should simply be stated that the links of the Ganzhou Uygurs to the Hexi Tibetans and the Tibetans of the Amdo area could account for the ample evidence for renewed Tibetan influence in Dunhuang during the tenth century and that this may have appeared as a result of Ganzhou Uygur patronage.

Beckwith has stressed that the Tanguts preserved and promoted Tibetan culture in this area. He argues that this whole area remained deeply influenced by Tibet, even after the withdrawal of Tibetan troops in the ninth century. In the eleventh century the Tanguts effectively took over the earlier Tibetan territories, including Ganzhou, promoting the Tantric influences that later influenced Yuan China.[139] There is another painting, in Paris, that can be linked to this group through its style, and small mannerisms. Interestingly, it also manifests Tangut features.

"Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan": the simultaneous regional influence of the Uygurs and the Tanguts

A composition of "Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan" puzzled the authors of the catalogue of the Pelliot Collection in the Musée Guimet, because its style is different from that of usual Dunhuang paintings (Colour Plate 54).[140] It is included in the catalogue, but Michel Soymié remains unconvinced by its style:

> Although this painting was apparently acquired by Pelliot, it is not certain that it came from Dunhuang. Considered suspect, it was not included by Mme Nicolas-Vandier... It was again left out of the list of paintings to be published.. when the first version of this work was prepared in 1985... The style of the painting and its pictorial conventions are very different from what we observe in other works.[141]

In the Japanese edition of the catalogue a more positive attitude was taken and a sketch from the Pelliot collection was reproduced to prove that similar compositions did exist in Dunhuang.[142] The view of the

[139] C. Beckwith: "The Tibetans": 1987, pp. 7-8.
[140] EO 3588, H: 164 cm, W: 107.5 cm.
[141] M. Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, p. 123.
[142] Jacques Giès (ed.): *Seiikei Bijutsu. Gimet Bijutsukan. Perio Korekuhsion* [Central Asian Art. Musée Guimet. Pelliot Collection], Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994, vol. 2. pp. 293-295.

Japanese researchers (the entry is not signed) appears to be correct, and there are further examples from Dunhuang and Yulin, which prove that this painting has parallels within the Dunhuang material of the late period.[143] Other authors have also treated this painting as part of the Dunhuang material, notably Dorothy Wong who listed it as an example, when discussing the iconography of paintings representing Wutaishan.[144]

It is informative to compare the Guimet Mañjuśrī to one in the "standard Dunhuang style" from the early tenth century.[145] Stein paintings 33 and 34 are also interesting from the point of view that the matching compositions of Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī were made for a cave with an arched ceiling. There are a few caves with arched ceilings in the Xiqianfo caves, but otherwise this shape is completely absent in the Dunhuang area. However, this was the most popular cave design in the Turfan area, suggesting a possible link. However, all stylistic features follow the standard Dunhuang idioms. On Stein painting 34, Mañjuśrī's lion is led by a black slave as usual on Tang and early tenth century examples. Crowds of attendants fill the space, and there is no indication of a landscape setting. Also notable are the halo patterns: although colourful they are split in the middle as if the two sides mirrored each other. In contrast Uygur halo patterns always swirl in one direction. A sketch in the Pelliot Collection shows a somewhat similar group, with Mañjuśrī on a lion together with a Central Asian attendant.[146]

Michel Soymié gives a list of "surprising stylistic features found neither in the paintings from Cave 17, nor in the wall paintings of the caves of the Dunhuang area dating from after the eleventh century" for the "Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan" painting.[147] These include the

[143] I spoke about this question at the ICANAS Conference in Budapest, Hungary in July 1997, for the first time. Professor Terukazu Akiyama, co-editor of ibid., who was in the audience, stressed in our subsequent discussion that he always believed this painting to have been found in Cave 17.

[144] Dorothy C. Wong: "A Reassessment of the *Representation of Mount Wutai* from Dunhuang Cave 61", *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 46 (1993), pp. 27-52.

[145] Mañjuśrī, Stein painting 34, Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 2, pl. 14.

[146] P 4049, Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris. Michel Soymié: "Peintures et Dessins de Dunhuang, Notes d'iconographie", Jean-Pierre Drège (et. al.): *Images de Dunhuang. Dessins et peintures sur papier das fonds Pelliot et Stein, Mémoires Archéologiques 24*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient: 1999, fig. 11.

[147] Ibid., p. 124.

oval haloes, the geometric form of Mañjuśrī's halo, the lotus flowers beneath the feet of the bodhisattvas and the lion, the flames surrounding Mañjuśrī's mandorla and halo and the rendering of the landscape. Some of these features were also observed in the Samantabhadra composition: for example the oval halo, and the lotuses that hold up all of the figures, including the elephant. These shared characteristics draw attention to the possibility of Uygur patronage for this painting too. However, the date of the commission is likely to be later, as the composition is far more complex than any of the paintings discussed in the present study thus far.

The most striking difference is the elaborate landscape setting that in itself is most probably the sign of a later date. Mañjuśrī and his retinue are floating above the landscape supported by lotus flowers. He is shown in a fully frontal view and has a finely drawn pink face. The dominant colour of the robes is red, with an orange *dhotī* worn by the bodhisattva on the left—these are colours the present study has linked with the Uygurs. Very similar colours can be seen in the large Manichaean Uygur silk fragments.[148] Comparable features include the pink face, the dominance of red, the method of using a white floral design on the red background, the use of gold, very thin outlines, and the lines resembling an onion's skin indicating the folds of robes.

Mañjuśrī's eyebrows are arched and green, and his fingers are extremely pointed. This latter feature is also present in the "Bodhisattva with Lotus." The sleeves are shown in a beautifully drawn "onion-skin" fashion, in a very similar way to that of the Virūpākṣa (Colour Plate 35), whose pink skin colour is also similar. The scroll design on the saddle cloth is very similar to the scroll reproduced by Gabain as typically Uygur (Figure 24) and resembles the scroll pattern shown in the haloes and mandorlas in most of the paintings described in this chapter, and identified as a key element.

Closest in style is the Virūpākṣa banner (Colour Plate 35). Apart from the pink face, blue hair and red onion-skin sleeve, it is also possible to compare the frontally-shown body and the seemingly flattened position of the hands and legs, although Mañjuśrī's right foot does point forward in a more relaxed manner. The clothing is also similar: over the red undershirt a shorter garment is worn ending at the elbows, and this is then reinforced by armour. The *dākinīs* in Bezeklik Cave 21

[148] Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 83.

are also shown wearing similar armour (Figure 29). Almost identical armour and a very similar, tall headdress are worn by the bodhisattva displayed in the permanent exhibition in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin (Colour Plate 20). In both cases the headdress is outlined in black, and coloured with ochre with bright red decorations added. The top is decorated with flaming jewels. This fragment has previously been discussed with regard to its resemblance to the facial characteristics of the "Bodhisattva with Lotus." This high headdress is unusual in a Dunhuang context."

"Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan" also exhibits similarities with Tangut paintings, which shows that its date must be late within the Dunhuang material. This Tangut connection is most perceivable in the background and the overall composition, as well as in the ornamental details. The landscape setting of the Mañjuśrī painting is different from Uygur landscapes. Usually mountains painted by Uygur artists are built up of triangles in an archaic and stylised manner.[149] However, it is clear from studying the unpublished material of the Turfan Collection in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin, that the material found in the Turfan area was not homogeneous either. There is a fragment of a landscape background in the Turfansammlung, which looks very similar to the style employed in the case of the Mañjuśrī painting.[150] This mode of landscape representation in monochrome ink as seen on the Mañjuśrī composition reflects the direct influence of Chinese landscape painting. In the Northern Song period huge advances were made in landscape painting, which in turn influenced the art of the neighbouring regions.

Within the Dunhuang area the closest parallels to the style of the Mañjuśrī painting are in the Yulin Caves. These have not been studied in such detail as the Mogao caves. Roderick Whitfield has already drawn attention to the possibility that "the best artists, and the leading Buddhist monks, had moved to the Yulin caves" which "reflect new developments in iconography, such as the appearance of the Water-Moon Avalokiteśvara, or mandala designs from Esoteric Buddhism, which represent the best creative efforts of the early period of the

[149] For example, "Dragon in a Lake", MIK III 8383, H. Härtel and M. Yaldiz: *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*: 1982, cat. no. 84.
[150] Reproduced by A. von Gabain: *Die Formensprache*: 1987, fig. 90.

Western Xia, and the influence of Song Chinese style."[151] The line of the five-coloured cloud rising from behind the mountain towards the middle of the composition may be compared to the light rays appearing in front of the Uygur ruler represented in Xiqianfodong Cave 16 (Plate 11). Similar light rays are also shown on an Uygur representation of the Water-Moon Guanyin.[152]

The Tanguts employed many of the latest styles in their interesting dual approach, which can be seen in the Yulin caves. It is also a basic characteristic of the Khara Khoto material, which was divided into three groups by the Russian organisers of the important exhibition entitled "Die Schwarze Stadt an der Seidenstraße" (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria, 1994), namely Tibetan style, Chinese style and the Tangut style (a mixture of the two). Several Tangut compositions from the Dunhuang area are extremely close to this one. A similar composition showing Mañjuśrī with his retinue is in Yulin Cave 29.[153] Even though it is a much simpler composition, the idea is the same: Mañjuśrī and his attendants appear on a cloud floating above a mountainous landscape background, representing Wutaishan. Even the wave of the five-coloured cloud behind his mandorla is similar. The simplified landscape is shown with the help of hills on which only pine trees grow, just like in the Pelliot painting.

The posture of the groom is also exactly identical, and the halter for leading the lion is pulled down with his right hand, goes round the neck and is twisted in his left hand, with the rest falling loose. The composition in Yulin Cave 3 (Plate 56) is also of the same type, but probably reflects a later stage in the development. The landscape is far more detailed, but Mañjuśrī's lion has a very similar posture and the bearded groom's outfit and boots, as well as the way he holds the halter, are all very similar. The lion is held up by lotus flowers. A similarly attired attendant can also be seen in a portable painting from Khara Khoto.[154] In both cases the *ruyi* held by Mañjuśrī is of a very similar type to that in the Pelliot painting, and the lion is blue in the wall painting and black on the Khara Khoto banner. The unusually-

[151] R. Whitfield: *Dunhuang*: 1995, p. 339.
[152] MIK III 6833, which is unfortunately, in bad condition, *CATB*, cat. no. 198.
[153] AYK, pl. 124. Cf. also pl. 165.
[154] x-2447, M. Piotrovski: *Lost Empire*: 1993, cat. no 50.

shaped sceptre and the black lion were described as deviating from the Dunhuang style by Soymié, but he offered no explanation of their origin.[155] The little figures of monks in the lower part of the painting recall the row of monks in the corridor of Cave 61—also from the Tangut period.[156] The gold pattern on Mañjuśrī's robe is almost identical to the pattern on Mahāsthāmaprāpta's scarf on a painting from Khara Khoto.[157] This pattern undoubtedly represents gold-embroidered silk, which was considered to be the most valuable material, only fit to be worn by royalty according to Regina Krahl.[158] It shows flying phoenixes among a scroll pattern. A very similar actual silk fragment attributed to the Uygurs has recently also been published.[159]

This type of representation of Mañjuśrī may have come to the Tanguts through the mediation of the Uygurs, although, as the material is not convincingly dated, it is very difficult to draw conclusions at this stage. Furthermore it came to my attention most recently that there is also a Mañjuśrī composition from Bezeklik in St. Petersburg.[160] A reproduction of this mural was not available for examination for inclusion in this study, therefore its existence can only be noted here as an important piece of evidence for the popularity of Mañjuśrī and Wutaishan among the Uygurs.

The key features of "Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan" are very similar to the group identified so far, with some new influences added. The greatest difference is the landscape setting, which is in great contrast with both the Uygur and Dunhuang examples used in this comparative

[155] Giès: *ACA*, p. 123

[156] DHMGK, vol. 5, pl. 160.

[157] x-2441, M. Piotrovski: *Lost Empire:* 1993, cat. no 53.

[158] Regina Krahl: "Medieval Silks Woven in Gold: Khitan, Jürchen, Tangut, Chinese or Mongol?", *Orientations*, April 1997, pp 45-51.

[159] *Sarira* bag with woven phoenix and floral design, ninth-tenth century, silk satin, weft-faced 5/1 twill, L: 40 cm W: 30 cm, unearthed in 1959 at a temple site at Sengim, Turfan, now Xinjiang Museum. "The stylised bird pattern may have been influenced by Uighur designs. Indeed, this bag might have been offered by the Uighur Kingdom." Li Jian (ed.): *The Glory of the Silk Road. Art from Ancient China*, Ohio: The Dayton Art Institute, 2003, cat. no. 42, pp. 108-109.

[160] TY-776. Zhang Huiming: "Guanyu Shengpidebao he Pali fenzande liang fu Wutaishan Wenshutu—gongyuan 10 zhi 11 shiji Dunhuang Tulufan Wutaishan Wenshu xinyangde huihua zai tuxiang shangde yanbian" [About the two Wutaishan —Mañjuśrī compositions in St. Petersburg and in Paris: the pictorial development of the devotional Wutaishan—Mañjuśrī painting in tenth–eleventh century Dunhuang and Turfan], Dunhuang Academy: *2000 International Conference:* 2000, p. 31.

study. This indicates a later date due to both the influence of Song landscape painting and the close parallels in the Tangut caves from the Dunhuang area. However, the group floating on clouds is still comparable to the way the much simpler Samantabhadra painting is arranged. Many characteristics are comparable to other paintings from Dunhuang that show Uygur influence, as well as actual Uygur paintings. These include the pink faces and dominance of bright colours with ample gold decoration; the rendering of the eyes, the four folds of the neck, the thin, curved line of the eyebrows, the extremely decorative moustache, the onion-skin sleeves and the elongated finger nails. The same scroll motif is shown on the saddle as that surrounding the nimbi on the other paintings discussed in this chapter.

Key features, as listed in Table 4, that can be observed in this painting include: the use of colour and gold, the clothing and hairstyles, the unusual patterning of minbi and aureoles, the scroll design, facial characteristics and the depiction of hair. A most likely date for this painting is the eleventh century. Whether this painting could have been found together with the others in Cave 17 is a question that has to be left open for the present.

Other Uygur-influenced paintings: the spread of the Uygur style

The colouring, facial types and stylistic features previously defined as Uygur can be found in other paintings within the Dunhuang material. For example, a "Bodhisattva Leading the Way" (Plate 57).[161] His face is in the similar pink colour observed in the case of several of the key paintings described in this chapter. The banner held by the attendant is of a similar three-tiered type as the one shown in the Samantabhadra painting, and his facial features can also be compared to those of the bodhisattvas.

The arrangement of the painting and the musical instruments flying in its top part resemble twelfth and thirteenth century Tangut examples. The idea of flying musical instruments started with the representations of Amitābha's Western Paradise, as the Pure Land sutras describe that there is heavenly music playing by itself everywhere. In these late

[161] MG 17657, H: 94.5 cm, W: 53.7 cm, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 69-1.

examples also the musical instruments are shown flying across the skies on their own, each with a ribbon tied around it.[162]

The donor figure is painted in a style different from that usual in Dunhuang: his clothing looks Chinese, but he wears sandals resembling those of the young attendants in the "Adoration of Guanyin" painting. Chinese donors were not usually shown wearing such sandals, and his beard also looks non-Chinese. Furthermore, he is dressed in white, which is very unusual since Chinese donors usually wear black. These features may indicate that he is an Uygur, or perhaps of Sogdian origin, as his widow's surname is Kang 康. Key features in this painting include the use of colour and gold, the clothing and hairstyle (of the bodhisattva) and the beard of the donor, the banner held by the attendant, the brushwork, the facial types and the simplified depiction of the architecture. This painting too is likely to date from the second half of the tenth century on the basis of its resemblance to the paintings described in this chapter.

This study has demonstrated that the second part of the tenth century was a period of increasing Uygur domination. The spread of the technique of applied gold-leaf decoration seems to coincide with the appearance of paintings that were most probably commissioned by local Uygurs. However, the use of this technique is not restricted to Uygur-influenced paintings. One of the paintings is executed in the "standard" tenth-century Dunhuang style as defined by Whitfield (Plate 58).[163] Especially obvious is the straight ink line ending in a hook that defines the mouth. The donor figures also appear to be wearing the standard Dunhuang fashions of the tenth century.

Another "Avalokiteśvara Leading the Way" shows yet another combination of technique and style (Colour Plate 52).[164] This painting was "discovered" too late to be included into the catalogue of the Musée Guimet material, and was first exhibited in the Sérinde exhibition in Paris. Once again we see the bodhisattva, identified in a cartouche as

[162] From Khara Khoto cf. Piotrovsky: *Lost Empire*: 1993, cat. nos. 41, 42. S. M. Zuber: "Muzikal'nye instrumemty v ikonografii Khara-khoto" [Musical instruments in Khara Khoto's iconography], *Trudy otdela istorii kultury i isskustva Vostoka Gosudarstvennovo Ermitazha*, vol. 3 (1940), pp. 324-337 discusses similar instruments depicted in Tangut paintings.

[163] EO 1133, H. 57.4 cm, W: 37 cm, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 68-1.

[164] MG 26461, H: 138 cm, W: 53 cm, J. Giès and M. Cohen: *Sérinde*: 1995, cat. no. 250.

Guanyin, leading a donor figure across the picture plane. His outfit is orangy red, and he wears a high crown, which is similar in type to the one worn by Mañjuśrī (Colour Plate 54). The hairy-stemmed lotus in Guanyin's hand is unusual. This rare motif can be seen in the "Bodhisattva with Lotus" (Colour Plate 33) and on a fragment of a Buddha from Toyoq.[165]

The face, hairdo and clothing of the elegant donor resemble Uygur fashions. Her small rose-bud mouth, eyebrows, which are almost touching, and narrow eyes give her an Uygur appearance, but her hair is styled in yet another fashion. Her gown is probably made of silk, brocaded with large circular patterns, a very fashionable design in Central Asia. The gilding on this painting is of a more complex type: apart from the simple lozenges, much larger lozenges with the finer details added in ink were also applied. This painting might represent a stage in which Uygur and Chinese as well as other Central Asian elements started merging in late tenth-century Dunhuang painting.

The same technique of gold decoration can also be seen in a painting representing Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings of Hell from Dunhuang (Colour Plate 51).[166] From the mid-tenth century in Dunhuang paintings, Kṣitigarbha became one of the most frequently depicted figures of the Buddhist pantheon. Kṣitigarbha had been painted earlier, but not with such frequency as from the mid-tenth century onwards. It seems that his increasing popularity also coincides with the growing Uygur influence. Kṣitigarbha was frequently shown wearing a hood on Turfan paper fragments and on silk fragments.[167]

As Youngsook Pak and Michel Soymié have pointed out independently of each other, the representation of Kṣitigarbha with his head covered with a hood appeared during the tenth century.[168] This makes the Dunhuang Kṣitigarbhas so closely related to the Uygur examples, that von Gabain remarked on the similarity, and reproduced one of

[165] EO 1399 (P 149) described above pp. 164-168 in this book and MIK III 6352, H: 16.8 cm, W: 27.7 cm, *CATB*, cat. no. 117.

[166] MG 17795, H: 84 cm, W: 53.6 cm. Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2 pl. 62.

[167] Cf. Annemarie von Gabain: "Kṣitigarbha-Kult in Zentralasien, Buchillustrationen aus den Turfan Funden", in Herbert Härtel and Volker Moeller (eds.): *Indologen-Tagung 1971*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1973, and *CATB*, cat. nos. 253-255.

[168] M. Soymié in Giès: *ACA*, cat. no. 60, p. 137; Youngsook Pak "The role of legend in Koryo iconography (I) The Kṣitigarbha triad in Engakuji", in Kooij-Veere (ed.): *Function and Meaning*, 1995, pp. 157-165.

the paintings in her book on Uygur art.[169] Even though Gabain did not think that such a covered head was a specifically Uygur feature, in Dunhuang only Kṣitigarbha is shown in this form, in contrast with other Uygur territories, where this seems a more common type.[170] Therefore it is possible that this type came to Dunhuang with the increasing Uygur influence. In the case of Kṣitigarbha this is supported by a possible link with Manichaeism.[171] Kṣitigarbha's importance in the Uygur scriptures found in the Qočo area has been noted by von Gabain and Peter Zieme.[172]

This Kṣitigarbha painting is an interesting mixture of highly refined details with sketchy ones (Colour Plate 51). Especially notable are the skillful execution of the fine lines used to render Kṣitigarbha's eyebrows, eyes and his carefully drawn mouth, or the fully developed form of the blue floral motif on the red draperies. The gold leaves have carefully painted thin, black details. In stark contrast to these fine details the attendant figures are painted in a very similar, sketchy style to those in another painting (Plate 39).[173] This latter composition also showing "Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings" gives the impression of having been executed by a painter normally entrusted only with doing less important jobs, such as finishing attendant figures, but who here has been made responsible for the whole composition. The sketchy style and the extreme simplicity of Kṣitigarbha's features, not normally associated with a central figure, may be explained by the increased demand at all levels of society for this subject, which led to less talented

[169] A. von Gabain: *Die Formensprache*: 1987, fig. 51.

[170] A. von Gabain: "Kṣitigarbha-Kult": 1973, figs. 47-50 for depictions of Kṣitigarbha with a hood. A hooded figure in Uygur art appears on Parinirvāṇa illustrations. Jorinde Ebert identifies the figure as Subhadra, see Jorinde Ebert: *Parinirvāna. Untersuchungen zur ikonographischen Entwicklung von den indischen Anfängen bis nach China*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner: 1985, pp. 320-324 and pl. 63i and 63m.

[171] Y. Pak: "The role of legend": 1995, pp. 157-165. "Another Daoming was supposed to be the translator of the Manichean hymns, a hint at a relationship between Manichaeism and the cult of Kṣitigarbha as Annemarie von Gabain has already suggested." [p. 159] A. von Gabain has discussed the question of Kṣitigarbha: A. Von Gabain: *Das Leben*: 1973, pp. 193-196.

[172] A. von Gabain: "Kṣitigarbha-Kult": 1973; Peter Zieme: "Old Turkish Versions of the 'Scripture of the Ten Kings', in Giovanni Stary (ed.): *Proceedings of the 38th Permanent International Altaistic Conference (PIAC)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996, pp. 401-425.

[173] MG 17793, overall dimensions, H: 105 cm, W: 54,8 cm (composition: H: 89 cm, W: 54.8 cm). Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 61-1.

artists executing such commissions. Von Gabain identified this style of indicating the eyes with a simple line for the eyelid and a dot for the eyeball with the Uygurs and found it very skilful.[174] This feature has been noted when describing the transitional Uygur Buddhist or Manichaean fragment (Colour Plate 16).[175]

Soymié has also observed some of the similarities between the two paintings of Kṣitigarbha, although he has also noted many differences. To his list of the similar *kaśaya*, the decoration and colouring of the offering tables, and the headdresses of some of the kings, should be added the mannerisms observed above, especially with regard to the facial features and the colouring technique, particularly the combination of the orange and red tones that creates a shading effect. Also interesting to note are the light rays emerging from behind Kṣitigarbha, which resemble similar lines in the Mañjuśrī composition. The frontal positioning and pink face of Kṣitigarbha can also be compared with Uygur fragments.

On a large fragment in the Museum für Indische Kunst, in Berlin (Plate 60), there is a frontally positioned hooded figure, whose elongated fingers loosely hold something: the parallel lines indicate the *khakkara* held in almost the same way on the more finely-executed painting from the Pelliot collection (Colour Plate 51).[176] The pink face, which is very unusual in a Dunhuang context, can be directly compared to this fragment from Berlin. The other close parallel to this frontally shown pink face is the "Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan" painting, which displays the same method of showing the elongated eyes, the nose and the thin mouth (Colour Plate 54).[177] Also noteworthy are the colourful concentric circles employed for showing the nimbus, which we can see on the two described Kṣitigarbha paintings from the Pelliot collection too. It is likely that these compositions were also painted in the second half of the tenth century at a time of increasing

[174] A. von Gabain: *Die Formensprache*: 1987, p. 16.

[175] MIK III 4947 & III 5d Z. Gulácsi: *Manichaean Art*: 2001, cat. no. 66 described pp. 115-116 in this book.

[176] MIK III 6970a and III 7450, *CATB*, cat. no. 255, pp. 236-237. I disagree with Bhattacharya-Haesner, who says that this fragment can be compared to Tang examples from Dunhuang. The examples she quotes all date to the tenth century, and they do not show such close similarities as the painting from the Pelliot collection: MG 17795, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 62-1.

[177] EO 3588, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 6-1. See pp. 215-221 in this book.

Uygur domination, when the Uygur style merged more freely with other elements in Dunhuang painting.

Other paintings that have been executed in a style that deviates from the "standard" tenth-century Dunhuang painting style interestingly also display links with several Uygur art forms. For example, "Vaiśravana Crossing the Ocean" was a popular subject in the Bezeklik caves.[178] A painting from Dunhuang illustrates the same theme (Plate 59).[179] The most dominant colours of this painting are orange-red and red, which are worn by most figures in the composition. Sketchy floral motifs outlined in white and golden lozenges scattered on most of the clothing complete the composition. A similar technique and colouring is used for showing the clothing of the bodhisattvas in the "Paradise of Amitābha" composition (Colour Plates 29-31).[180] The colouring employing different shades of orange, the floral motifs and the gilding all resemble the Kṣitigarbha compositions just described.

The "Illustration of the *Sūtra of Guanyin*" displays very similar characteristics (Colour Plate 53).[181] Although the face is not rendered in the same pink fleshtone, the clothing of the bodhisattva is very similar in terms of its decoration to the previous example discussed. The red colour of his *dhotī* dominates the darkened composition, and he wears a high crown with his hair arranged in a high coiffure, somewhat similar to Mañjuśrī's in the discussed Guimet painting. The floral motifs, shades of red and orange and the use of gold lozenges render this painting very similar to the "Vaiśravana Crossing the Ocean," and, as their measurements are almost identical, they may have been even part of the same set. In the case of "Life of the Buddha" paintings, there are several examples in which sets were produced.[182] The canopy above Guanyin's head is almost identical to the one above Kṣitigarbha in the

[178] D. Leidy: "Bezeklik": 2001, pp. 203-206.

[179] MG 17666, H: 86 cm, W: 57 cm, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 77-1. Its links to the "Illustration of the *Sūtra of Guanyin*" were not remarked by the authors of the French catalogue.

[180] See Whitfield: *ACA*, vol. 1, pls. 19-1 and 19-2.

[181] EO 1142, H: 88.6, W: 52.3 cm, Giès: *AAC*, vol. 1, pl. 73-1. Chün-fang Yü has discussed the iconography of this painting and the type of "Bodhisattva Guide of Souls," Chün-fang Yü: "*Guanyin*: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteshvara", M. Weidner: *Latter Days of the Law*: 1994, pp. 151-155.

[182] E. g. banners showing the life of the Buddha Stein paintings 88 H: 37.5 cm W: 17.7 cm and 90 H: 42.5 cm W: 17.5 cm Whitfield: *ACA* pl. 35 and pl. 34.

sketchier painting (Plate 39).[183] These shared mannerisms make it likely that by the late-tenth century Uygur features were freely adapted and mixed with other features in Dunhuang, probably in order to prepare paintings for less wealthy donors. By this time the Uygur features became well-known and repeated mannerisms in their own right.

Regional versus central: a reassessment of tenth-century Dunhuang art in the context of Uygur influence

The tenth century has been viewed as a strongly anti-foreign and pro-Chinese period in Dunhuang by most authors:

> The Zhang family government, and the Cao clan who took over in ca. 920, were ethnically Chinese; the official language, political dynamics and social models were all self-consciously Han. An important paradigm was established in this organisation, casting the Han (Chinese) as insiders—normative—and others as foreigners... Even after the collapse of the imperial government in China's heartland (ca. 906 CE), the Cao family kings maintained a close Chinese identity. Dunhuang, independent as a separate kingdom with the rest of China split into regional kingdoms, was increasingly pervaded by a frontier mentality.[184]

Although this account of the political situation is correct, Fraser emphasises the negative aspect of displaying the differences between types of ethnic clothing in the large-scale donor paintings. However, the present study has demonstrated that the fact that these Uygur women were not required to adopt Chinese clothing, and the presence of 'foreign' outfits in such prominent places, points to the multi-ethnic character of tenth-century Dunhuang. The traditional nomadic cultures were far less tolerant, and Chinese princesses who had married Uygur *kaghans* had to adopt Uygur clothing as part of their marriage ceremony.[185] In contrast, Ganzhou Uygur patrons were shown in very important positions in Caves 98 and 61 (Colour Plates 1-3). They can be compared to portrayals of Uygur women in the Turfan area, especially on account of their special clothing, which

[183] MG 17793.

[184] S. E. Fraser: *The Artists's Practice*: 1996, pp 54-55. She goes on to argue that the battle between Śariputra and Raudrākṣa has clear ethnic dimensions in this climate.

[185] See pp. 37-38 in this book.

is very different from the Dunhuang fashions of previous centuries. The large size of the donor figures also emphasises their importance to an unprecedented degree.

In the case of Dunhuang, according to research conducted by Ning Qiang, during the Tibetan occupation (781-847), the "Tibetan authorities forced the local Chinese to adopt the Tibetan style dress and hairstyle." He also believes that only the portraits of deceased relatives could be shown in Chinese dress.[186] This is in sharp contrast with the tenth century, when the ruling family was Chinese, but allowed the brides and daughters to be shown in their non-Chinese costume. There is no doubt that the presence of the large-scale female Uygur donor figures reflected a political necessity to emphasise the new alliances. At the same time, throughout the tenth century, the local fashions in women's headdresses seem gradually to have changed, and this clearly reflected the growing influence of Uygur taste. Two female donor figures are shown in Dunhuang Cave 100 (Figure 11). The one on the left wears a Ganzhou Uygur headdress in the shape of a waterdrop, which in its shape closely resembles the type worn by the Xizhou Uygurs (Plate 5). However, the addition of straight hairpin-like protrusions with dangling ornaments distinguishes it from the usual Uygur type.

The female donor on the right wears a headdress decorated with a phoenix, whose wings make up the Uygur water drop shape. This type of headdress is only found in Dunhuang art. It takes the Uygur idea of decorating the surface of the waterdrop-shaped headdress with a phoenix one step further.[187] The clothing on the right-hand figure is also nearer to Chinese fashions and lacks the wide, embroidered collar that was favoured by the Uygurs. This indicates that local female fashion in Dunhuang reflected Uygur taste to varying degrees. As observed earlier, the Uygur painting style was also mixed with other traditions in the latest period in a similar manner. Some paintings

[186] Ning's approach seems too Sino-centric, but makes an interesting comparison with our period. Ning Qiang: "National Identity in a Local / Political Context. Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Art of the Middle Tang Dunhuang Caves" (Abstract), Dunhuang Academy (ed.): *2000 International Conference on Dunhuang Studies—Abstract of Papers*, Dunhuang: Dunhuang Academy and China's Association of Dunhuang - Turfanology, 2000, pp. 78-80. Ning's research on patronage is now published: *Art, Religion, and Politics*: 2004.

[187] For an example see a mural fragment, A. von Le Coq: *Die Buddhistische Spätantike*, vol. 3, *Die Wandmalereien*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1924, pl. 13.

reflect more Uygur mannerisms and were probably commissioned by richer donors; other, simpler paintings attest the spread of Uygur taste among more ordinary patrons.

Cave 100 was commissioned under the rule of Cao Yuande (935-939). It was dedicated to the daughter of the *kaghan* of the Ganzhou Uygurs, who became Cao Yijin's wife and was styled as *Shengtian gongzhu* 聖天公主 [Heavenly Princess]. During Yuande's reign her honorary title was changed to *Guomutian gongzhu* 國母公主 [Mother of the Country Supreme Princess], and Cave 100 was built in her honour.[188] If nationalities other than Chinese had been really discriminated against in the cultural climate of tenth-century Dunhuang, it would have been unthinkable to have a major cave dedicated to an Uygur Princess wearing a non-Chinese headdress, accompanied by Uygur attendants, even if she had been the mother of Cao Yuande. The opposite seems to be true throughout the period, namely, a proud display of the Chinese ruling family's alliances with the Uygurs.

In a period of political fragmentation this presented a kind of continuity with the following century, when yet another group, the Tanguts, gained prominence in the area. The multi-ethnic character of the population remained constant and, only the relative importance of the different ethnic groups changed. The large-scale donor portraits emphasised precisely this carefully-achieved balance in the political power game, as well as the continuity with the past through the representation of the previous rulers of the area.

For a period in the eleventh century, the Uygurs had considerable influence in Dunhuang, although whether they were politically independent remains undecided. The portraits of an Uygur ruler and his wives and son in Cave 409 suggest this as a possibility (Colour Plates 6-7). As the women's waterdrop-shaped headdress is similar to those of the Ganzhou Uygur ones shown in the tenth-century Dunhuang caves, it is possible that these are the portraits of a local Ganzhou-Shazhou ruler and his family. This is supported by the provincial style of this and some other caves in Dunhuang, which exhibit a treatment influenced by, but distinct from, the Bezeklik Uygur style. Their distinct style is the sign of the existence of a local Uygur painting school in Dunhuang by the early eleventh century. As the style of the portable

[188] See Rong: *Guiyijun*: 1996, p. 21; Ma: *Dunhuang Mogaoku shi yanjiu*: 1996, pp. 127-129.

paintings discussed here shows different Uygur influences from the style of the murals, it is likely that the caves were decorated later, after the sealing of Cave 17. This supports the accepted view that the Library Cave was sealed in the early eleventh century, before the "Shazhou Uygur" caves were decorated. The only paintings that show close similarities with the "Shazhou Uygur" caves are the "Monk Accompanied by a Tiger" paintings (Plate 14). None of these, however shows very specifically Uygur links, and they might simply represent the presence of a sketchier style that remained popular in the later phases of Dunhuang art.

This study has demonstrated that due to Uygur patronage in Dunhuang in the tenth century a new local painting style developed. The recognition of these portable paintings as a group provides further evidence for the increasing importance of the formation of local Uygur art commissioned by the "Shazhou Uygurs" of Dunhuang, which had already been recognised in the case of the wall paintings. Clear evidence has been presented to show that Manichaean illuminated manuscripts, wall paintings from Šorčuk and Bezeklik, and Buddhist painting fragments all have direct parallels among these Dunhuang paintings. As several of the Dunhuang paintings under investigation can be relatively securely dated they are also important for the comparative study and dating of Xizhou Uygur art. This provides indirect proof that all of these art forms coexisted by the second half of the tenth century at the very latest. This supports the view that Uygur Manichaean art probably dates later than traditionally assumed in accordance with Gulácsi's view.[189] Researchers have noticed links between eleventh-century Tibetan art and the mature Uygur style present in the Bezeklik caves, which may be another indirect piece of evidence for the need to accept later dates.[190] At the same time evidence presented in this study also proves that Uygur Buddhist art must have been formed by the 960s at the very latest. This is earlier than the general suggestion of Takao Moriyasu and Jorinde Ebert.

The increasing influence of the Uygurs and their decisive role in commissioning some of the finest paintings in tenth-century Dunhuang cannot be doubted. These paintings provide additional proof for the growing importance of the Ganzhou Uygurs in Dunhuang in the tenth

[189] See pp. 87-88 in this book.

[190] Marilyn Rhie: "Eleventh-Century Monumental Sculpture in the Tsang Region", J. Casey Singer and P. Denwood (eds.): *Tibetan Art*: 1997, pp. 40-41 and Michael Henss: "The Eleventh-Century Murals of Drathang Gonpa", ibid., pp. 168-169.

century, and for the rise of the Ganzhou—Shazhou ruling class. From this point of view they can be regarded as supplementary historical sources. Further research should specify the exact links of Dunhuang art in the tenth and eleventh centuries to Bezeklik in particular and Uygur art in general as more material becomes available.

Epilogue

The beginning of this study argued the existence of close links between the workshops of the Dunhuang and the Turfan areas from the ninth century onwards. It became clear through the study of this material that the connection between the art of these two territories grew increasingly close. This could be symbolised by the way the Uygurs were represented in Dunhuang caves at different points in time. They were shown as foreign envoys eager to learn from Vimalakīrti at the end of the ninth century. By the early tenth century the Ganzhou Uygur brides were shown as important donors, but always in the context of their political marriages with the ruling Cao family. In the eleventh century the presence of large-scale portraits of Uygur donors and their wives without any reference to the local Chinese, proves that they were culturally and politically dominant in Dunhuang by that time.

Interestingly there is a painting in which the headdress worn by Uygur royals is depicted according to the Chinese idiom. Traditionally attributed to Li Zanhua, it is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Plate 61).[191] This scroll, convincingly dated by Wu Tung to the eleventh or twelfth century, proves that the royal Uygur headdress represented in Bezeklik, Beiting and Dunhuang was also known by artists trained in the Chinese figure-painting tradition. It is also another good example of how the artists of central China perceived the periphery.

The centre stage is taken by a princely figure, who is attired in a strikingly similar fashion to the donors in Bezeklik Cave 20 and Dunhuang Cave 409. Six riders are shown, arriving from the left of the painting. The last figure leads a riderless horse, presumably a

[191] Anonymous: "Nomads with a Tribute Horse", 52.1380, Wu Tung: *Masterpieces*: 1996, p. 21. and pl. 10.

tribute horse. All of the riders are male, and they are shown wearing a wide variety of headgear. Wu Tung, in his recent catalogue of the paintings in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, gives a general identification of "Central Asian and Uigurian types."[192] Once again, as in the Chinese scroll paintings described in Chapter One, the Uygurs appear as exotic foreigners associated with the rather despised, but profitable horse trade that sucked China's resources.

It is very interesting to see on the Boston scroll that the princely figure is shown as riding a horse, despite wearing a full-length gown. The side split of his gown, also shown in Bezeklik Cave 20, makes this possible. Interestingly, he does not have Chinese features, even though he has Mongoloid eyes. As mentioned above, in contrast, in Bezeklik the faces are extremely stylised presumably to resemble a set ideal of "Chineseness."

This representation of the Uygur headdress demonstrates how it was worn, and tied under the chin with a red ribbon. The long hair of the ruler was not put in a knot on the head, as in the case of the Chinese men, but left to hang loose on the shoulders. A moustache and a beard complete the arrangement. Wu Tung concludes:

> The Boston scroll suggests a cultural link between Manchuria and Central Asia and a closer relationship between Khitans and Uighurs than has generally been assumed... One can only speculate that the scroll records a Uighur diplomatic delegation leaving the Khitan capital en route back to Central Asia with Khitan horses they received whilst there.[193]

The many fine paintings described in this study attest to the Uygur mannerisms that were powerful enough to influence Dunhuang painting. The proud display of wealth and privilege in the donor portraits of Dunhuang is evident. Far from resembling the entertainers, untidy soldiers and horse-riding exotic barbarians shown in Chinese painting, the elite Uygurs of the Dunhuang area shaped regional culture in a decisive way. It is clear that their taste in religious iconography and style filtered down to ordinary Dunhuang commoners with the passing of time.

The paintings examined in this new context provide further evidence of the importance of the Dunhuang area in pooling various influences into the formation of a unique regional Buddhist religious style and

[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

iconography. Through the transmission of the Tangut and the Liao many of these developments played an important part later in Chinese Buddhist art. Therefore the formation of tenth- and eleventh- century Dunhuang art, and the extent to which Uygur patrons played a part in it, are also important for understanding these later developments and should be examined further in future projects.

TABLES

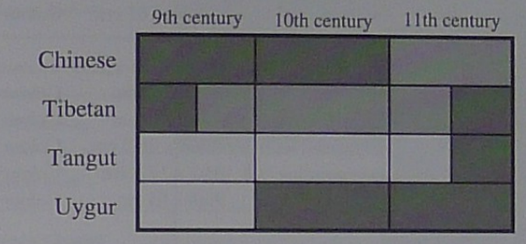


Table 1. Principal stylistic influences on Dunhuang art

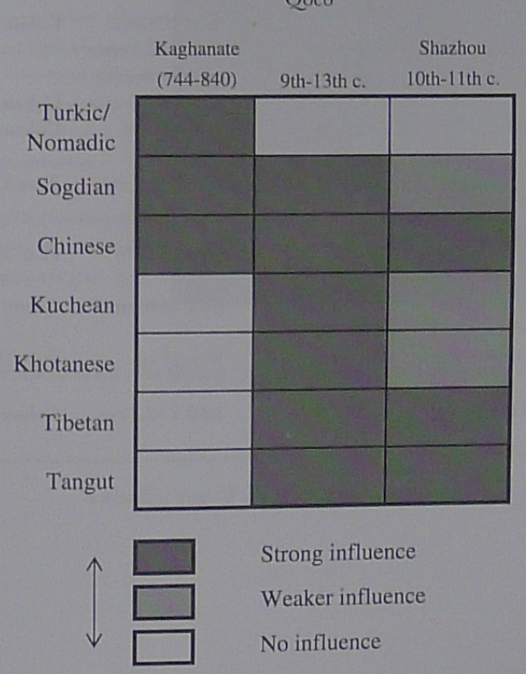


Table 2. Principal stylistic influences on Uygur art

Title	*Acc. No*	*Size*	*Illus. Reference*
1. "Sogdian deities"	BNF Pelliot chinois 4518	30.5 x 37.8 cm	Plate 2
2. Thousand-armed Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara	Stein painting 35	222.5 x 167 cm	Colour Plates 22-24
3. The Assault of Māra	MG 17655	144 x 113 cm	Colour Plates 25-28
4. Paradise of Amitābha	Stein painting 37	204 x 183 cm	Colour Plates 29-32
5. Bodhisattva with Lotus	EO 1399 (P149)	111.5 x 28.2 cm	Colour Plate 33
6. Virūpākṣa	Stein painting 108	64.5 x 17.5 cm	Colour Plate 35
7. Adoration of Guanyin	EO 1175	96.8 x 65 cm	Colour Plates 38-42
8. Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala	MG 17780	101.5 x 61 cm	Colour Plates 44-47
9. Maṇḍala of the Forty Two Peaceful Deities	EO 1148	66 x 68.5 cm	Colour Plate 48
10. The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra	EO 1149	82.5 x 47 cm	Colour Plate 49
11. Group of donors (fragment)	EO 1157	32 x 31.2 cm; 27.5 x 16.5 cm (two fragments)	Colour Plate 50
12. Mañjuśrī on Wutaishan	EO 3588	164 x 107.5 cm	Colour Plate 54
13. Avalokiteśvara Leading the Way	MG 26461	138 x 53 cm	Colour Plate 52
14. Bodhisattva Leading the Way	MG 17657	94.5 x 53.7 cm	Plate 57
15. Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Hell	MG 17793	89 x 54.8 cm	Plate 39
16. Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of CHell	MG 17795	84 x 53.6 cm	Colour Plate 51
16. Vaiśravana Crossing the Ocean	MG 17666	86 x 57 cm	Plate 59
17. Illustration of the *Sūtra of Guanyin*	EO 1142	88.6 x 52.3 cm	Colour Plate 53

Table 3. List of Dunhuang paintings showing Uygur influence

	Uygur Manichaean Art	Uygur Buddhist Art
Material		
Colour		
Gilding		
Iconography		
Clothing, hairline		
Carpets with lozenge design		
Nimbi, aureoles		
Multiple heads		
Banners, Canopies		
Scroll design		
Style		
Brushwork		
Facial Type: human		
Facial Type: demons		
Depiction of hair		
Depiction of architecture		
Depiction of trees		

Table 4. Key features for identifying Uygur influence on Dunhuang art

APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF MONGOL INSCRIPTIONS

These transcriptions and explanations were provided by Professor György Kara (University of Budapest (ELTE), Hungary and University of Indiana, Bloomington, U.S.A). Naturally any mistakes in the translation or transcription are mine.

The late (19th or early 20th century?) Mongolian inscriptions are written with a brush in a somewhat negligent cursive hand. Diacritical dots appear on the side of the grapheme Q (=q or γ) and pre-vocalic N.

"Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings" (MG 17662) (Colour Plate 21)
(Giès: *AAC*, vol. 2, pl. 63)

a) The inscription that appears next to the donor has two lines: [1] *renčin šibi raši bumba* [2] *arši-a raši-a-du nomoγ-a qumuγ-a* [with marked γ; the reading is problematic: it may be *qumuγ*-a for Written Mongolian *qumq-a* or *qumqan* 'jar'].

Explanation: *renčin* is one of the Mongolian variants of Tibetan *rin-chen* 'treasure, jewel', also a common personal name or part of a name among the Mongols. The second word may be another personal name, cf. Śibi in the "*Śaivya-jātaka*" of the *Üliger-ün dalai* in the Mongol *Kanjur*. It can also be an aberrant form of Mongolian *šabi* 'disciple' (from Sanskrit *śramana* through Middle Indic, Middle Chinese and Uygur). The third word may represent a personal name, *Raši*, the Western and Southern Mongolian form of Written Tibetan *bkhra-shis* 'blessing, beatitude', in Oirat Arash, in Khalkha and Buryat Dash. The fourth word, *bumba* 'jar' is also Tibetan in origin, and may be a personal name, but it may also refer to the jar held by the lady on the left-hand side. The first word of line 2, *arši-a* may be a vocative form of *aršï* (Sanskrit *ṛṣi* 'hermit'), but if the following unit *du* is not a dative but renders the attributive suffix *–tu*, then we can read *arši-a-du*, equivalent of *rasiyatu* for *rasiyantu* 'having ambrosia' (Uygur *rasiyan* from Sanskrit *raśayana* meaning "holy water", modern Mongolian *aršaan*ï). This holy

liquid is normally kept in a jar, this is why one can try to read *qumuγ-a* from Written Mongolian *qumqan* 'jar' instead of *nomoγ-a*, where γ has diacritics, while the somewhat aberrant initial *n* has not. This second reading resembles Written Mongolian *nomoqan/nomoγan* 'calm, tame; disciplined by the *vinaya*' and may be a personal name.

b) The inscription next to the Yinlu pusa, the 'Bodhisattva Leading the Way' reads: *kin / gin n[e]ng n[e]ng or n[a]ng n[a]ng.*

Explanation: This may be a Chinese name in Mongol script. The first part may be the equivalent of *Jin* or *Qin*. (The Manchus also had Gin and Kin for what are modern Mandarin Jin and Qin).

"Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings" (MG 17793) (Plate 39)
(Giès: AAC, vol. 2, pl. 61).

The inscriptions appear on the left of the painting next to two of the figures representing the "Ways of Life."
a) Next to the "hungry spirit" appears the word *bečin* "monkey." It is possible that the hungry spirit was mistaken for the monkey, well-known from Wheel of Life representations: the monkey is blindly grasping after branches swinging through the trees and is the symbol of our conditioned consciousness.
b) Next to the white horse representing the "Way of the Animals" appears *bō čaγan mori; bō* probably refers to Chinese *bai* "white." *čaγ an mori* means "White Horse."

"The Assault of Māra" (MG 17655) (Colour Plate 25)
(Giès: AAC, vol. 1 pl. 5)

The inscriptions appear at the lower edge of the painting showing the Seven Treasures of the Cakravartin. Left to right the inscriptions are as follows:

[a] *burqan-u* [b] *nom* "The Buddha's teaching/doctrine/*dharma* / Law"
[c] *ba[y] ši[n]g* 'building, house' is unexpected, *bursa[n]g* '(monastic) community' would fit the context much better, but the š is dotted. *Namtar* 'biography', a Mongolian term for hagiographical and secular use from the Tibetan *rnam-thar*. This could refer to one of

Gautama's *vitae*, for example the *Lalitavistara*, which lists the Twelve Deeds, including 'The Assault of Māra'.
[d] *ǰokiyaqu* is the *nomen futuri* of *ǰokiya-* 'to compose, to harmonise, to put together', hence also *ǰokiyal* and *ǰokiyangγui* 'deed', honorific term used, for instance, for the Buddha's Twelve Deeds, including his victory over Māra's armies.
[e] badly written, appears to be *nomtu* 'he who has the Teaching", "pious', "righteous," it is commonly used as a name.

ABBREVIATIONS

AOH	*Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*
AYK	Dunhuang wenwu yanjiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] (ed.): *Chugoku sekkutsu: Ansei Yurin-kutsu*, Tokyo and Beijing: Heibonsha and Wenwu chubanshe, 1990
BL	British Library, London
BM	British Museum, London
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
BPK	Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz
BGHFY	Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo [The Institute of Archaeology Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)] (ed.): *Beiting Gaochang Huihu fosi yizhi* [Ruins of a Buddhist Temple of the Qočo Uygur Period at the Ancient City of Beiting], Liaoning: Meishu chubanshe, 1991.
CATB	Bhattacharya-Haesner, Chhaya: *Central Asian Temple Banners in the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin (Painted Textiles from the Silk Route)*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2003.
CIAA	Circle of Inner Asian Art, SOAS, London
DHMGK	Dunhuang wenwu yanjiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] (ed.): *Zhongguo shiku. Dunhuang Mogaoku* [Chinese cave temples—Dunhuang Mogao caves], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987, vols 1-5.
EO	Acquisition code for paintings in the collection of the musée national des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris
Giès: *AAC*	Giès, Jacques (ed.): *Les arts de l'Asie centrale. La collection Paul Pelliot du musée national des arts asiatiques—Guimet*, vols 1-2, Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1995.
Giès: *ACA*	Giès, Jacques (ed.): *The Arts of Central Asia. The Pelliot Collection in the Musée Guimet*, (translated by Hero Friesen in collaboration with Roderick Whitfield), London: Serindia Publications, 1996.

GTH	Vandier-Nicolas, Nicole and Monique Maillard: *Grottes de Touen-houang Carnet de notes de Paul Pelliot*, vols 1-6, Paris: Collège de France (No XI, Mission Paul Pelliot), 1981-1992.
IDP	International Dunhuang Project. Website: http://idp.bl.uk
MG	Acquisition code for paintings in the collection of the musée national des arts asiatiques—Guimet, Paris
MIK	Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin
MMBA	Gulácsi, Zsuzsanna: *Mediaeval Manichaean Book Art. A Study of Design, Function, and Origin of Manichaean Book Illumination*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1998.
RMN	Réunion des Musées Nationaux
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
"Stein painting"	Paintings in the Stein Collection of the British Museum, London
T	Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku (eds.): *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* [Taishō Tripitaka]: Tokyo: 1924-1935.
TBS	Tulufan diqu wenwu baoguan [Cultural Relics Bureau of the Turfan Region] (ed.): *Tulufan Baizikelike shiku bihua yishu.* [Painting in the Bezeklik caves, Turfan], Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1990.
UNESCO: 1996	UNESCO and the Institute of Archaeology under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) (ed.): *Land Routes of the Silk Roads and the Cultural Exchanges between the East and West before the 10th century. Desert Route Expedition International Seminar in Urumqi (August 19-21 1990)*, Beijing: New World Press, 1996.
Whitfield: *ACA*	Whitfield, Roderick: *The Art of Central Asia. The Stein Collection in the British Museum*, vols 1-3, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982-85.
ZXBQ	Zhongguo bihua quanji bianji weiyuanhui [Complete edition of Chinese painting editorial board]

(ed.): *Zhongguo Xinjiang bihua quanji* [Collection of wall paintings from Xinjiang, China], vol. 6, *Baizikelike, Tuyougou* [Bezeklik, Toyoq], Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe, 1995

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