CHAPTER 15

The Tibetan Himalayan Style

The Art of the Western Domains, 8th–11th Centuries

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During the second quarter of the 8th century the political aspirations of Imperial China, Imperial Tibet, the Kingdom of Kabul, and Kingdom of Kashmir collided in the high mountainous regions of the north-west of the Indian sub-continent, today divided between Pakistan and India. The intense mobility of the period—motivated by political, religious, economic goals—was made possible by a vast network of routes of ancient origin (Klimburg-Salter 1982: Map 1; see Figure 15.1). The routes crossing the Great Pamirs and the Karakoram converged at Gilgit and Skardu respectively. The high valleys of this region were inhabited by different ethnic groups speaking different languages and practicing different religious cults. The richness of this cultural diversity has been largely obscured or destroyed by subsequent historical events. Contemporary literary witnesses from this period are minimal. For a discussion of surviving witnesses see Scherrer-Schaub (2001: 707–719). Therefore an analysis of the visual culture is of great importance for understanding the cultural history of this region during a period of intensive cultural transfer and change.

From at least the 7th century Tibetans participated in the international exchange systems that crossed this area via trans-national trade routes (still the most concise and lucid description of these routes is Maximilian Klimburg 1982: 25–37; for the region discussed here see the details in his Map 2, Historical Northwest India, and Map 4, the Western

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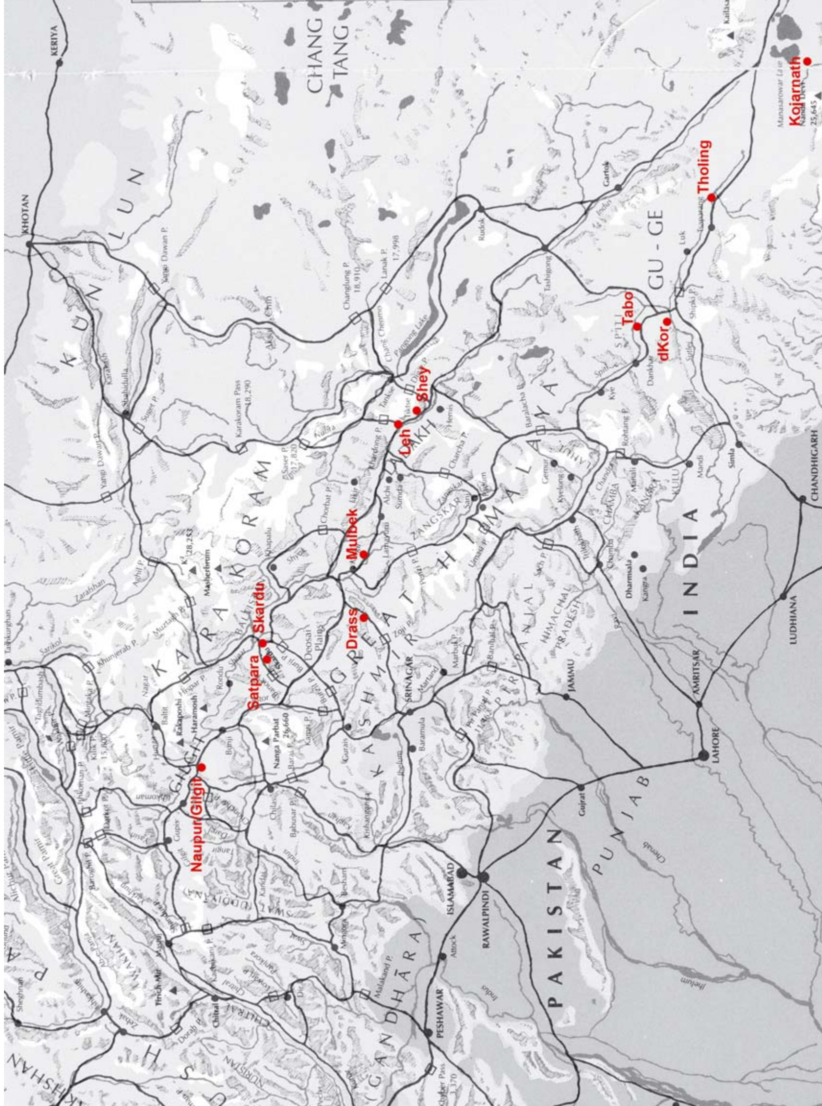

Figure 15.1 India. Based on Map 1 by M. Klimburg in Klimburg-Salter 1982, with modifications by the WHAV.

Trans-Himalaya). The impact of this region on the evolution of various aspects of Tibetan culture is indicated in the primary sources and extensively discussed in the secondary literature. The evolution of distinctive Tibetan cultural forms is more complex than the commonly found historical narrative. To take the example of the Tibetan script, Scherrer-Schaub (2012b) proposes that the script ultimately adapted in Tibet was based on a script that evolved in the region under discussion, and was a reflection of a script used in ancient northern India; and that the Tibetan script was most probably not "invented" but was unified or codified on the basis of "the various forms of Tibetan writing circulating in the border regions" (Scherrer-Schaub 2012b: 233).

I will attempt to demonstrate that an analogous process can be observed in the evolution of the earliest Tibetan style used in the western borderlands of the Yarlung Empire. In the earliest known examples of rock art under Tibetan patronage, attributed to ca. the 8th century, one can identify different modes of a single style which I have termed the Tibetan Himalayan style. Although the style is distinct from the Kashmiri style found in the same region ca. 8th century, the iconographic vocabulary of both styles derives from northern India. This group of artefacts has received little attention, with the exception of a recent article by Denwood (2007).

This present article is the second of a two part discussion of the art of the western domains from the 8th to the 11th century. Because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence it has proven easier to start at the end of this process of cultural transformation and work backwards, attempting to identify the origins of the distinctive Tibetan Himalyan style. The latest presently known evidence for this artistic tradition was discussed in part one, *"Imagining the world of Ye shes 'od. 10th-century painting in Tabo"* (Klimburg-Salter 2008). In this latter study I concentrated on the representation of historical personages, with a focus on the painted program of the Founding Phase of the Tabo Monastery Main Temple, that is, ca. 996 CE.

This present article (part two) will discuss the visual representation of religious images within the same artistic corpus: the rock art located along the routes crossing the geographic area extending from Gilgit (Palur) and Baltistan, through Ladakh, Zangskar, Lahul, Spiti, and/or upper Kinnaur, Guge, and Purang (Figure 15.1); large scale sculptures that are part of monastic iconographic programs; as well as portable arts attributable to this same period and region.

The terms used to identify this region changed with time. Around 650 CE, at the time that Srong btsan sgam po conquered the region, it was called Zhang zhung — the exact western extent is contested by contemporary scholars (compare the maps in Figures 15.2 to 15.4). This region is referred to in Tibetan sources as sTod — upper regions — and only from the latter part of the 10th century, following the occupation by the dynasty of the kings of Purang-Guge, is the region included in the designation mNga' ris bskor gsum (Wangdu 2008: 297 f.). The Bon tradition also considers the western regions — particularly Gilgit, northern Pakistan, and Kashmir — central to their cultural heritage. In contemporaneous written sources, there is no consistently used term for this region during the 8th to 10th century.

The unique compositional and genre features of the paintings in the Tibetan Himalayan style can only be appreciated when compared to the totally new and different style found in the mid-11th century paintings in the Main Assembly Hall, Tabo Monastery. The comparative analysis of the representation of historical figures in the paintings of both the Founding Phase (Phase I, ca. 996) and the Renovation Phase (Phase II, 1042) in the Entry Hall (*sGo khang*) and Assembly Hall (*'Du khang*) respectively of the Tabo Main Temple (*gTsug lag khang*) revealed that the two sequential chronological phases of artistic production could be identified with totally different artistic schools, each with different social and political contexts (Klimburg-Salter 2008: 277–280).

The art of Phase I is the most complex and latest known example of the Tibetan Himalayan style — a summary, if one will, of the visual culture that evolved in the region from at least the 8th century, but probably even earlier. The Phase I Tabo wall paintings are unique in Tibetan and Indian art history for the unusually detailed depiction of all the various segments of contemporary society. On the south wall of the Entry Hall the royal patrons are depicted at the center of the composition (Figure 15.5). Monks, nuns, and lay people, originally identified by inscriptions, are hierarchically organized in rows (Klimburg-Salter 2008: figs. 6, 14). Directly opposite on the north wall, are the local princes seated like their royal counterparts (Ye shes 'od and his two sons) on low thrones under canopies. At the end of the 10th century the local princes were equally or perhaps even more important, as can be seen by their size and placement (Klimburg-Salter 2008: figs. 26, 27a,b). The lowest ranking lay men on both walls are represented kneeling.

Figure 15.2 Map of Zhang zhung. After Karmay and Watt 2007: 16.

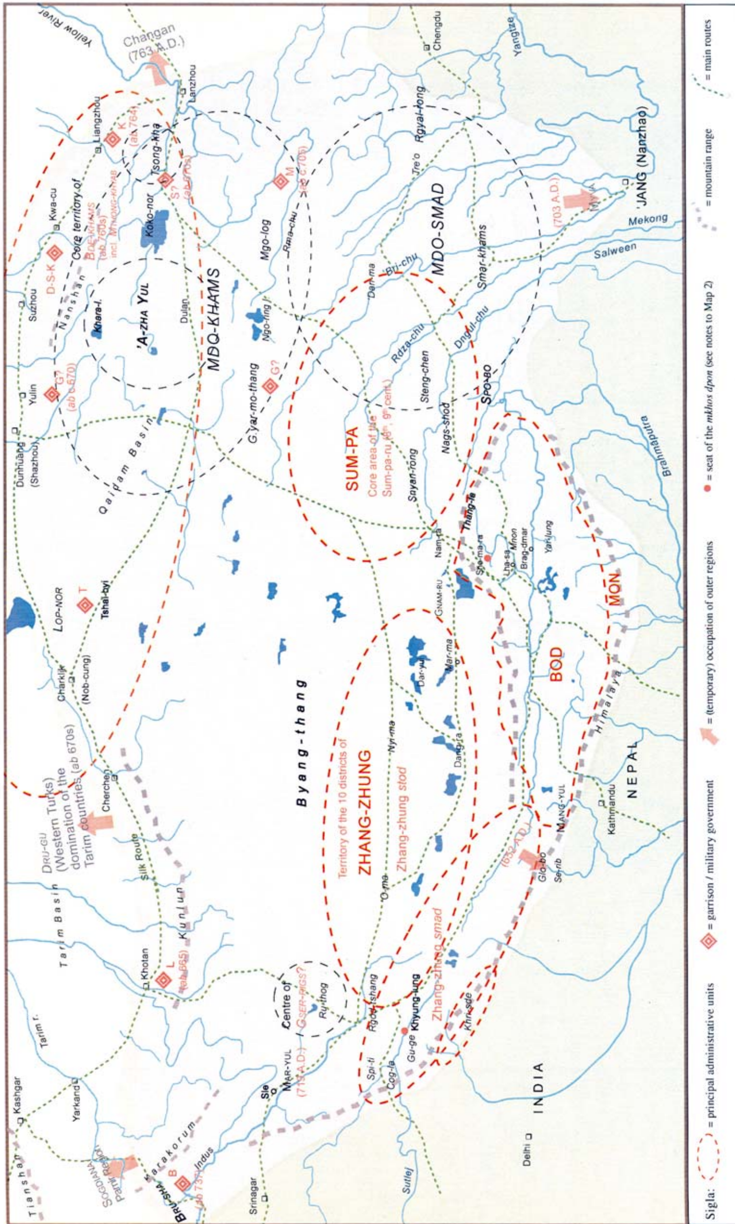

Figure 15.3 The principal regions and administrative units of the Tibetan Empire (based on a map prepared by Karl Ryavec). After Dotson 2009: 166, map 2.

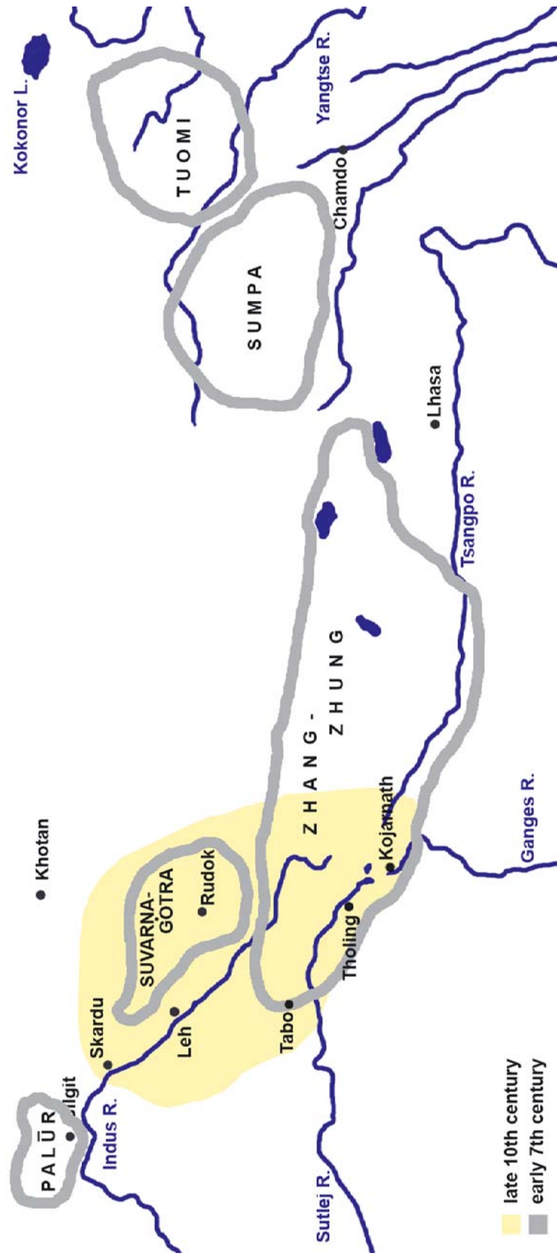

Figure 15.4 Proposed borders of countries to the west and north-east of central Tibet in the early seventh century. After Denwood 2008: 21, map 4 (with modifications).

Figure 15.5 Ye shes 'od and his two sons. Tabo *sGo khang*, south wall. Photo: Christian Luczanits 1994 ©WHAV.

During the next half century a total social transformation occurred. In the Phase II paintings (ca. 1042) the local princes and their distinguishing attributes have disappeared, never to appear again. In the painting above the Renovation Period Inscription at Tabo the hieratic representation of the single royal lama (Figure 15.6) surrounded by monks and lay donors depicted according to a strict hierarchical order is the perfect synoptic image of the ruler of an ecclesiastical estate (see below). I have elsewhere identified this image as the "*lha bla ma* template" and demonstrated how the polemical function of this image was projected through the iconographic program of the Assembly Hall at Tabo (Klimburg-Salter 2007b: 438–40, 2008: 276–7). This visual rhetoric finds parallels in the slightly later art of central Tibet. However, as we shall see, the style of the religious images derives from the Mahāyāna monastic art of Kashmir. In order to understand how the resulting visual tradition, the Indo-Tibetan style, eventually obliterated the identity of the earlier regional Tibetan cultures, it is necessary to try to trace the earliest examples of the Tibetan Himalayan style. The brief historical summary of key political events at this time suggests that the originally heterogeneous Tibetan culture evolved distinctive new identities, only two of which can be mentioned here: the Buddhist monastic arts patronized by the royal elite, that

Figure 15.6 Donor depiction. Tabo *sKor lam*, inner east wall, south side. Photo: Jaroslav Poncar 2001 ©WHAV.

is, the Indo-Tibetan style, and, in response, the evolution of the "Yandrug" Bon.

The Current State of Art Historical Research

The existence of a distinctive early style (Phase I, the Tibetan Himalayan style) is scarcely acknowledged and is overshadowed in modern scholarship by discussions of the Kashmiri inspired art which can be characterized as Indo-Tibetan. This style has been identified with the Phase II artistic program in the Tabo Main Temple. Both the painting and the sculpture which belong to this artistic tradition are characterised by a post-Gupta style that can be easily distinguished by the Kashmiri mode of representation. The present article seeks to define the Tibetan Himalayan style. Following a description of the formal properties of the latter visual tradition, we will review the present state of art historical studies and propose a descriptive terminology. A concluding section outlining a future research agenda will raise the problem of the last phase and eventual disappearance of the Tibetan Himalayan style—allowing us also to consider the evidence for the processes of cultural transfer, adaptation, transformation, and change in visual culture.

Interpreting and contextualising the arts of this region and period remain very difficult. With a clearer sense of the distribution and characteristics of the artistic corpus identifiable as the Tibetan Himalayan style it may be possible to better coordinate evidence from contemporaneous sources, particularly written ones. Tibetan inscriptions demarcate a group of images as having been produced under Tibetan patronage. These benchmark pieces are the core around which we have been able to identify the earliest Tibetan art in the western domains.

The Tibetan Himalayan Style

The earliest examples of the Tibetan Himalayan style currently known from Central Asia are accompanied by informal Tibetan inscriptions. The style of the standing bodhisattvas depicted on the oblong silk banners from Dunhuang (Figure 15.7) are depicted in a simple, linear, two dimensional figure style with straight, tubular legs (Klimburg-Salter 1982: 117 f.). At the time these paintings were first exhibited in the west (ibid.) the Tabo *sGo khang* paintings lay buried under hundreds of years of dust, and were still unsuspected. In the first discussion of the Tabo *sGo khang* paintings (1997: 77) I postulated that the paintings could be related to the oblong painted silk banners from Dunhuang (Figure 15.7) identified by Vandier-Nicolas (1976) as one variant of a Himalayan style. In the depictions on the silk banners, as also in the art of Tabo, all the figures wear simply drawn Indian style clothing and jewellery, but with distinctive patterns. As there is also a variant of the Himalayan style in the art of Dunhuang (Klimburg-Salter 1982: 117 f.) with features deriving from Chinese art, it would be appropriate to distinguish this former group (associated with Tibetan inscriptions) as the Tibetan Himalayan style. It has been proposed that the banners were produced in Khotan (Gropp 1974). According to Tibetan tradition the art of Khotan influenced the early art of Tibet.

The same rigid, flat, two dimensional figure style can be seen in the rock art, for example in the large scale representation of the Five Buddha Families with donor figures at Shey (Figure 15.8). The comparative art historical analysis demonstrated relationships to a large number of rock engravings and low relief sculptures from present northern Pakistan to western Tibet: the low relief sculptures at Naupur, Gilgit (Figure 15.9, ca. 9th century); Satpura, Skardu (Figure 15.10); around Leh and Shey there are images in the Tibetan Himalayan style at Smanla, Changspa,

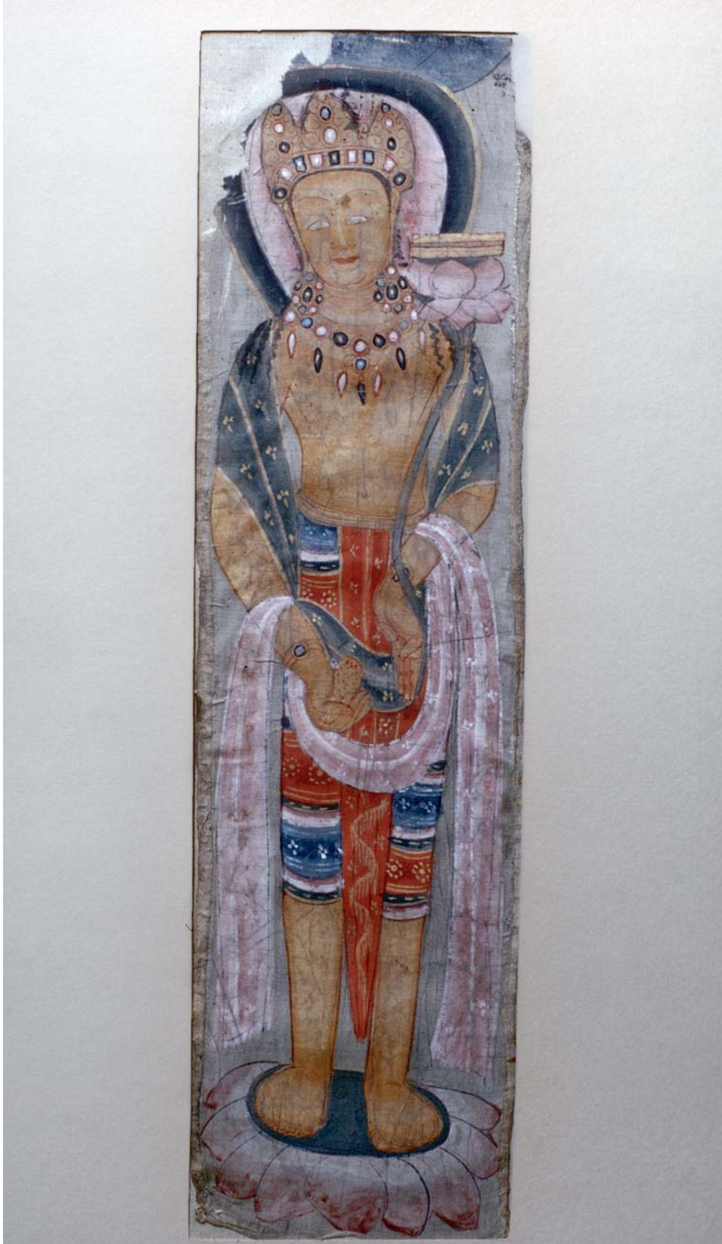

Figure 15.7 Mañjuśrī. Painting on silk. Dunhuang, Qianfodong. Ca. 9th–10th century CE. 53.4 x 14.6 cm. National Museum, New Delhi (Ch.Ivi.005). Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1981.

(a) Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1981.

(b) Detail of Figure 15.8(a). Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1981.

Figure 15.8 Five Buddhas, rock carvings. Shey, Ladakh.

Choglamsar and in Kinnaur at dKhor near Poo; in Purang in Cogro; and in Kardong in Lahul. Similar stylistic characteristics can be identified in large scale sculptures modelled in unbaked clay and sometimes wood.

Monumental free standing sculpture served as the focus of ritual activity in the western Himalayan temples. Considering that the sculptures are approximately 1000 years old, made of fragile materials, and inhabit an earthquake prone zone, it is astonishing that so much has survived at all, and understandable that the clay images have so often been repaired. Again the sculptures of the Founding Phase (996) in Tabo serve as a benchmark. At first glance one is misled by later additions, such as crowns, and it is often difficult to extrapolate back to the original condition. At the time that the Main Temple was founded, the main icon (it is now painted red) was placed, as was usual, in the cella, was painted white, and was understood as Vairocana (Klimburg-Salter 1997: fig. 146). Contemporaneous with this figure and belonging to the original program were also the two attendant bodhisattvas in the cella and the two bodhisattvas in front of the cella (ibid. Figs. 143, 146). Despite awkward repairs, the essential stylistic features noted in the large scale rock art are also found here — rather stiff figures with a flat figure style, hardly any articulation of the body parts, and long, straight, tubular legs.

Despite its small size, the Translator's Temple at Ropa in Kinnaur (Ro dpag in Rin chen bzang po's biography) is a treasure trove of small and large scale early sculptures. As in the Tabo cella, both the Tibetan Himalayan style and the Indo-Tibetan style are present. What is unique to Ropa, however, is that one can trace, to some degree, the changing styles. Probably the finest surviving example of a large clay sculpture in the Tibetan Himalayan style is the red Hayagrīva (Klimburg-Salter 1994: 56). Detailed comparison of particular stylistic, iconographic, and technical elements suggests that the two guardian figures, the two bodhisattvas, and the five Buddhas in the apse of the small chapel at Ropa may also be dated to the late 10th or 11th century (Klimburg-Salter 1994: 67–74; Luczanits 2004: 57–59). The Buddha sculptures were covered with cloths on my several visits, and in their present condition only core elements appear to be original. Features which would suggest that the nine clay images were originally modelled in the Tibetan Himalayan style are the hairstyles and some aspects of the face (Klimburg-Salter 1994: figs. 14, 53). However, as I have earlier demonstrated (compare Klimburg-Salter 1994: figs. 54, 55), the Buddha images were redone around the mid-11th century. At the apex

Figure 15.9 Buddha, rock sculpture. Naupur near Gilgit. Photo: Klimburg-Salter.

(a) Photo: Schuh 2011.

(b) Detail of Figure 15.10(a). Photo: Schuh 2011.

Figure 15.10 Rock carvings, Skardu.

of the pointed oval halos associated with each of the five Buddha images at Ropa is a *stūpa* with a *stūpa* base, a circular body, and a pyramidal series of nine umbrellas crowned with the sun and moon symbols that is almost identical to the same motif sculptured in wood and placed over the heads of each of the four images of Mahāvairocana in Tabo. This form of *stūpa* is used throughout the western Himalaya from the Hindu Kush to western Tibet, but the exact articulation and placement are so close that they must be considered to indicate a shared artistic school.

A fascinating iconographic detail is that the Buddha images have long hair hanging to their shoulders. This detail is only found in the art located in the earliest surviving Buddhist monuments of this region — the Vairocana on the lintel of the portal at Ribba (Klimburg-Salter 2002: pl. 45) and the cella Vairocana at Tabo.

While the distinctive straight legged stance (Figures 15.7 to 15.9) is of course only found with standing figures, the same puppet like limbs, rounded broad shoulders, shovel-shaped head, all depicted in a flat, two-dimensional style, is also to be seen in seated figures, such as the seated Buddha figures in the rock engraving from Satpura (Figure 15.10). The salient characteristics of this style can be clearly seen in painting as well. A rare, albeit fragmentary, standing image (Klimburg-Salter 1997: fig. 191) shows the same stiff form depicted on the large scale rock art, for example at Shey. On a smaller scale are the paintings of seated deities in the Tabo *sGo khang* (Figure 15.11). It is, for instance, interesting to note the close similarities of the drawing of the painted figure from the Tabo *sGo khang* with the incised image on the Ye shes 'od stele from dKhor near Poo (Figure 15.12). Note the pillow-like shape of the folded legs, but most particularly the manner in which the scalloped line at the waist, above the lower garment, is a graphic reference to the stomach muscles. In summation, in all media, the images of the "Tibetan Himalayan style" are strictly frontally represented. The legs are absolutely straight with no joints implied, the feet are usually parallel to each other. The shoulders are broad. The heads are shovel-shaped, that is, broad and narrowing to u-form at the chin, and the *uṣṇīṣa* has a relatively high profile. There is practically no implied volume even when a sculpture such as in the Naupur example is in low relief (Figure 15.9). In this sculpture, even though the drapery is shaped in high relief, there is still no volume or implied movement.

Consistent cultural features associated with this stylistic group are the use of Tibetan language (though not necessarily present on each image)

Figure 15.11 Moon-God Chandra. Tabo *sGo khang*, south wall. Photo: Christian Luczanits 1994 ©WHAV.

Figure 15.12 Yes shes 'od stone. dKhor near Poo, Himachal Pradesh. Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1989.

and clothing of a western Tibetan style, as well as the consistent representation of historical figures in distinctive positions according to their status. Non-royal devotees, when represented, are depicted kneeling. There are a variety of kneeling postures, kneeling on both knees or with one knee raised (Figures 15.6 and 15.8(b)). The most descriptive visual imagery we have from this period are the wall paintings in the Tabo Monastery Entry Hall (see Klimburg-Salter 2008 for a detailed description).

Within the same region and period a volumetric style can be identified in the same media with distinctly post-Gupta Kashmiri stylistic characteristics. Donors, when represented, are depicted standing. Only occasionally are kneeling donors found but the posture is different from that used in the Tibetan Himalayan style (see below). Both groups seem to have patronized a similar repertoire of Buddhist Mahāyāna iconographic types.

Monumental bodhisattvas in high relief are found in the same geographic area at Dras ('Bras) (Figure 15.13) and Mulbek (Figure 15.14). In Ladakh and in Zangskar some of these images are associated with Śāradā inscriptions. The rounded forms of these images are depicted in a volumetric, post-Gupta style, the slightly bent knee and the implied *tribhaṅga* which grows out of an asymmetrical placement of the feet are characteristic of the Kashmiri style as it is known from around the 8th century. There is relatively little *in situ* evidence for the Buddhist art of Kashmir. The standing, stone Buddha image excavated from Parihasapura and attributed to the second quarter of the 8th century (Figure 15.15) allows us to attribute the more monumental standing bodhisattvas mentioned above to the 8th century as well. In the rare instances when donor figures are represented they are depicted standing, as on the base of the Mulbek bodhisattva, following the Kuṣāṇa and post-Kuṣāṇa tradition. These latter sculptures may be seen as representative of the artistic tradition that later developed into the Indo-Tibetan style — which was closely identified with the monastic centers patronized by the kings of Purang-Guge.

The Tibetan Himalayan style is virtually replaced in the 11th century by a Kashmiri inspired style which may be termed Indo-Tibetan. At Tabo this latter style first appears in a highly sophisticated program of ca. 1042 (The Renovation Phase). However, the style certainly existed prior to 1042, as we have seen further west, in the 10th century or before. This brief summary has established that both the Tibetan Himalayan style and post-Gupta Kashmiri style are used over the same wide geographic area. Often

Figure 15.13 Dras ('Bras), Ladakh. Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1982.

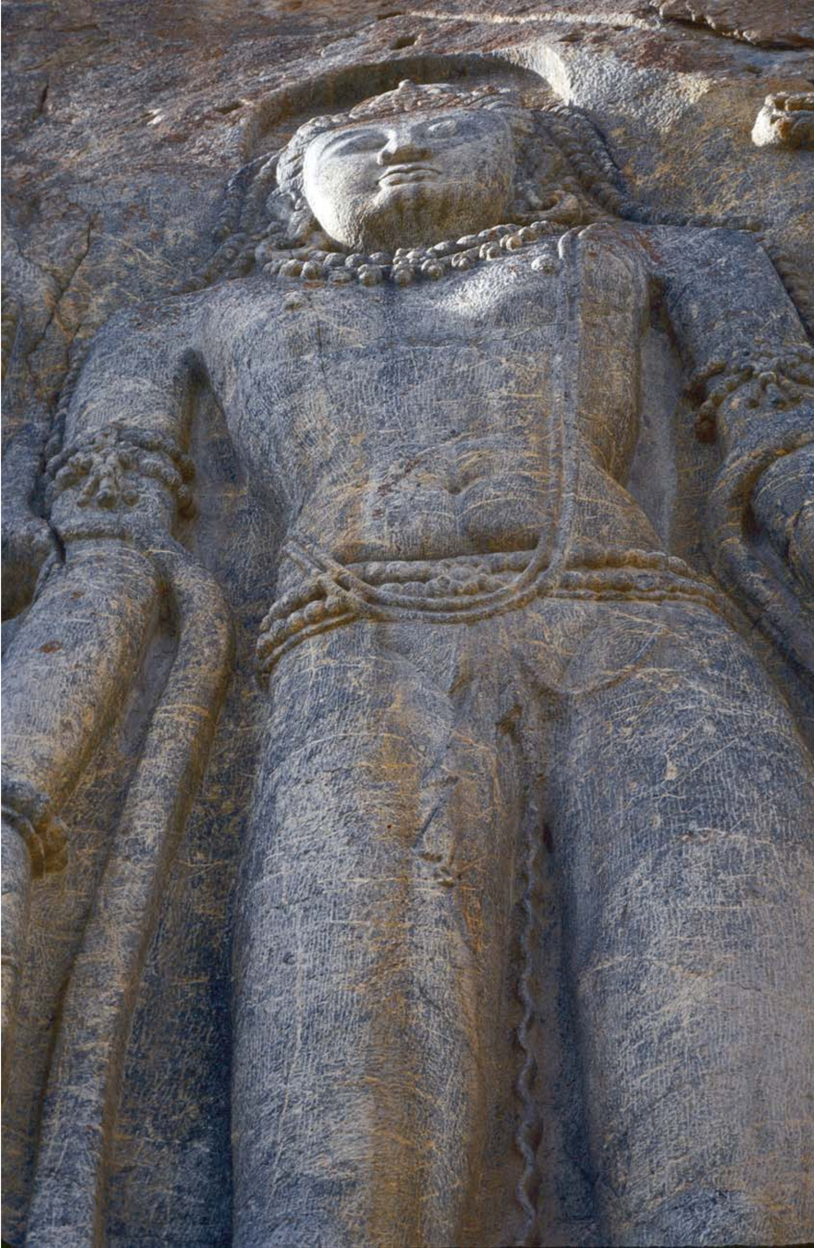

Figure 15.14 Maitreya. Mulbek, Ladakh. Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1982.

Figure 15.15 Stone Buddha image. Parihasapura. Shri Pratap Singh Museum, Shrinagar. Photo: Klimburg-Salter.

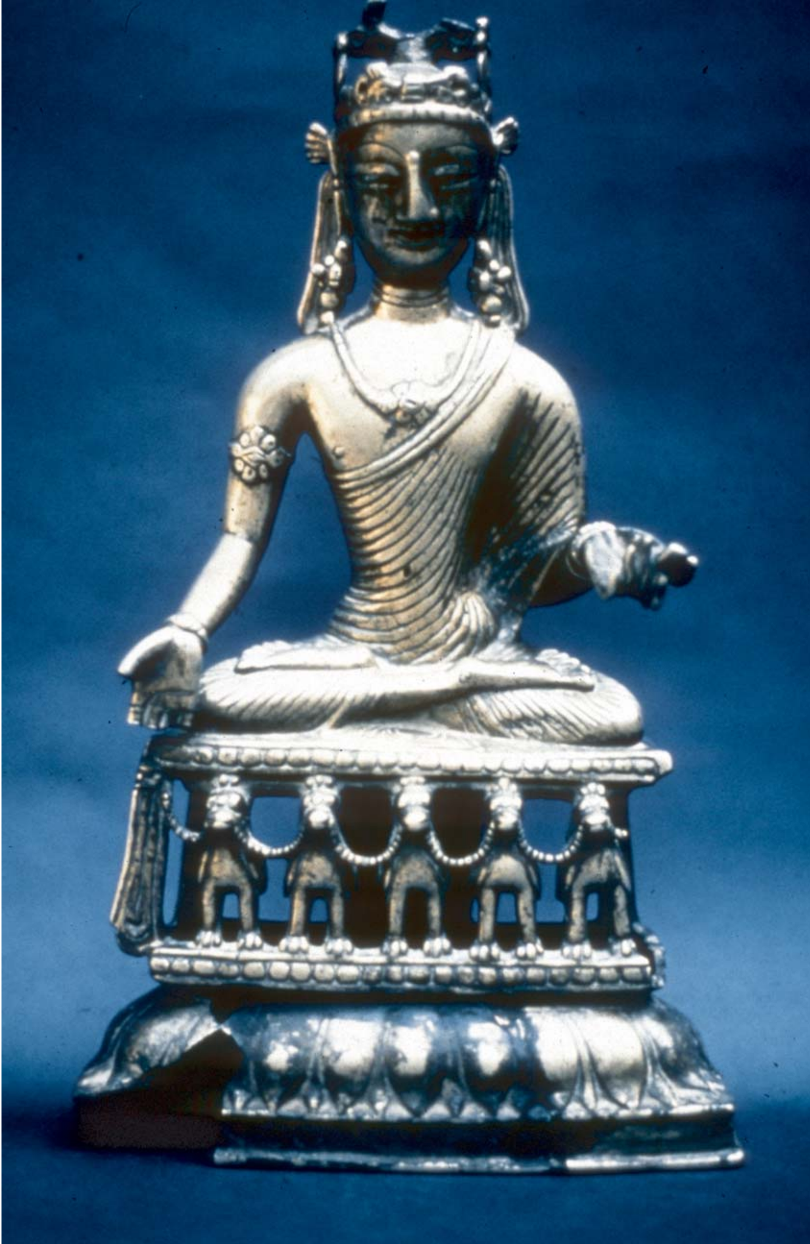

Figure 15.16 Amoghasiddhi. Copper alloy. Ladakh or Northern Pakistan. Ca. 10th century CE. H. 34.3 cm. Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena. Promised gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert King. Photo: Klimburg-Salter ©Pacific Asia Museum.

they are used in close geographic proximity to each other. These two styles may have been used contemporaneously by different patronage groups, as indicated by the different languages used.

Another interesting fact is that the so-called Tibetan Himalayan style is rarely found in surviving portable objects. In addition to the seated Jina Amoghasiddhi (ca. 10th century, Figure 15.16; cf. Klimburg-Salter 1982: pl. 83, p. 172) there are some relatively rare examples of standing images in the straight-legged style. They are invariably small, as in the example of a standing Mañjuśrī on a lion throne in the British Museum in London (Figure 15.17).

An image of a twelve-armed Avalokiteśvara in the Potala Li ma lha khang (Figure 15.18) possesses the distinctive straight legs, but the figure is generally more fleshy. Von Schroeder attributes the sculpture, together with a small number of others, to the Zhang zhung Kingdom and the 7th to 8th centuries. As von Schroeder does not explain how he arrives at the Zhang zhung attribution, I can not at present comment on this proposed category (von Schroeder 2008: 52–55).

Summarizing the above discussion: across this very large area from northern Pakistan to western Tibet and into Central Asia, there was a heterogeneous artistic culture where Tibetan and "Indian" patrons commissioned large-scale, rock-cut images, portable objects, and Buddhist architectural decoration. Each of these groups of patrons was associated with a particular style and a preferred language for dedicatory inscriptions. The presence of the Tibetan language suggests that Tibetan patrons were associated with a flat, two-dimensional style characterised by puppet like limbs (including straight legs) and shovel-shaped heads, while patrons coming from an Indic cultural milieu, indicated by the Śāradā inscriptions, were associated with a post-Gupta Kashmiri inspired style.

The degree of interaction between the Buddhist groups associated with a Tibetan cultural milieu on the one hand, and an Indian cultural milieu on the other, is difficult to evaluate. The Gilgit region, the westernmost point where a rock-cut sculpture in the Tibetan Himalayan style can be found (Figure 15.9) should be most promising for this enquiry. Unfortunately, neither the sculpture at Naupur nor the various rock engravings of figurative imagery in the region have been adequately considered in light of the Tibetan occupation of the region in the 8th century. A potentially fruitful area of enquiry would be a comparative analysis of the images

Figure 15.17 Mañjuśrī on a lion throne. Copper alloy. Western Himalayas. 11th–12th century CE. H. 12.4 x W. 6 x D. 6 cm. The Trustees of the British Museum, London. (1905.5.19.15). Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1981.

Figure 15.18 Twelve-armed Avalokiteśvara. Attributed to the Zhang Zhung Kingdom. 7th–8th century CE. Copper alloy. Height 23.2 cm. Po ta la: *Li ma lha khang*; inventory no. 1569. Von Schroeder 2008.

(a) Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1981.

(b) Detail of Figure 15.19(a). Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1981.

Figure 15.19 Sun-dried brick. Gilgit. Shri Pratap Singh Museum, Shrinagar.

Figure 15.20 Manuscript and covers. Gilgit. Shri Pratap Singh Museum, Shrinagar. Photo: Klimburg-Salter 1981.

(donor figures, religious figures, *stūpa*s) with a view to possible Tibetan—Buddhist or Bon—parallels. Also with regard to this question, the historical testimony of the Gilgit *stūpa* deposits has, until now, been neglected. The latest text contained in the Gilgit *stūpa* deposit is the *Saṃghātasūtra* dated 627/8, the covers found with the text are, however, later than the text, and I have suggested a 9th century date for the covers based on stylistic evidence (Klimburg-Salter 1992). I have reconsidered this dating in a forthcoming publication. In the painted decoration of the covers, neither the style of the bodhisattva figures nor the kneeling posture of the donors speaks of the Tibetan cultural milieu. With regard to the representation of the kneeling male and female donors (Figure 15.20) the lower part of the body is completely lowered and horizontal to the ground, whereas the Tibetan depictions of the kneeling figures are half raised, and

sometimes one knee is on the ground and one knee is raised. However, in the same *stūpa* deposit was a very large number of large-sized, sun-dried "bricks" (Klimburg-Salter 1992; see Figure 15.19). They all have the same design which must have been produced with a wooden mould. The elongated proportions of the figures and particularly the standing bodhisattva attendants have the long, thin, puppet-like legs known from the Tibetan Himalayan style. One obvious possibility is that, by the time of the burial of the *stūpa* relics, the Tibetan Himalayan style was being used in an area where previously there were Indian Buddhist communities who followed the post-Gupta Indian artistic traditions.

The Chronological Parameters of the Tibetan Himalayan Style

Unfortunately none of the examples of the Tibetan Himalayan style except the paintings in the Tabo Main Temple can be securely dated. A consistent visual vocabulary throughout this extensive iconographic program and the relationship to other images such as the rock art suggest that this style was in use for a considerable time before 996, when the *sGo khang* was built and decorated. There is in fact no reason to believe that Tabo was the earliest Buddhist monastery decorated in this style under Tibetan patronage. The very small size of the temples at Ropa (Ro pag; Klimburg-Salter 1994), the original Translator's Temple at Poo (sPu) and perhaps the temple in Tiak, Tibet, indicates that they may well have predated the Main Temple at Tabo. A more detailed archaeological examination of all the earliest paintings and sculptures may make it possible to establish an internal chronology. But for the moment we are restricted to chronological evidence provided by inscriptions. The dates suggested for the other sculptures discussed here are general estimates, based on a comparative art historical analysis, with almost no securely dated points. More comparative analysis on the inscriptions related to these images might provide some chronological points of reference. A very useful survey of old Tibetan inscriptions (Iwao, Hill and Takeuchi 2009: map on p. xxxiv; list and bibliography pp. 86–96) provides an excellent list and bibliography, but few dates.

We can roughly suggest the 8th century as the hypothetical beginning of this style. Many of the rock art examples published in this article are

attributed by Denwood (2007) to a broad period ranging from the 8th to the 10th century. However, the ancient Tibetan texts tell us that this region became part of the Tibetan Empire from at least the middle of the 7th century. But contacts between central Tibet and this region certainly existed earlier — as is demonstrated by the story of the origin of the Tibetan script from this region (Scherrer-Schaub 2012b). Linguistic studies confirm that some of the Tibetan languages or dialects used in that area can be traced to the period of the Yarlung dynasty. So theoretically the style could certainly have originated as early as the 7th century.

Dating the demise of the Tibetan Himalayan style is even more complicated. We know that this style had totally disappeared by 1042 when the renovation of the Tabo Assembly Hall resulted in a new iconographic program executed in a fully developed Kashmiri inspired style, the Indo-Tibetan style. The extremely skilled artists also used materials of the highest quality — for both painting and sculpture. The sophisticated artistic program is the result of a highly experienced workshop. But surviving in Tabo are the only examples of the fully developed Tibetan Himalayan style and the fully developed Indo-Tibetan style — associated with the two chronological phases (late 10th and mid-11th century), the founding and renovation of the Main Temple respectively.

A Visual Polemic

At Tabo, the Tibetan Himalayan style was replaced by the (western) Indo-Tibetan style, each style representing distinctly different social and political contexts. While contemporary and later Tibetan Buddhist sources describe the conflict between the local Tibetan groups and the elite associated with the Purang-Guge kings in ideological terms, the goal was certainly political domination by the latter, as discussed by Petech (1997, 1999: 2–5). As can be seen from the extraordinary quality of the art produced from the 11th century in the Indo-Tibetan style, the expanding political domination of the kings of Purang-Guge was accompanied by control of the economic resources. We know little of the contemporaneous economy except for two key features — profit from long distance trade, and the exploitation of mineral wealth, particularly gold. The link with trade routes from an early date can be clearly seen in Figure 15.1. All of the monumental rock engravings are located along the main “corridor of communication” from Gilgit to Purang. Interestingly, two of the surviving monu-

mental images in Kashmiri style with Śāradā inscriptions are located in the middle of the sequence of Tibetan-patronized, large-scale, rock-cut images. The significance of the location of these Kashmiri sculptures is yet to be appreciated. However, the strength of the Indic Buddhist communities here may explain why the temple in Nyar ma in Ladakh (Mar yul) was founded in a subsequent phase of chapel building by Rin chen bzang po after Tabo and Tholing were founded by Ye shes 'od in 996, according to Petech (1999: 3).

The establishment of the ecclesiastical estate in 996 by Ye shes 'od and his sons, descendants of the royal central Tibetan lineage, proceeded by sustained verbal attacks on local Tibetan groups. This offensive was so successful that the memory of the earlier Tibetan groups has been practically erased. The story of this conflict is known almost exclusively from the viewpoint of the winner. Indeed, we are unsure who exactly the losers were. Based on later sources and subsequent developments we can associate some of the practices attacked in the "ordinances" with Bon and rNying ma Buddhist practices. These ritual practices were certainly associated with imagery. None have been securely identified to date. In the absence of contemporaneous witnesses it is only possible to understand the cultural history of this early period by reference to later sources. Although art historians tend to derive their historical narrative for this period from the Tibetan Buddhist, mostly later, sources, the cultural history of this region is in fact a multi faceted discourse where all the players both affected, and were affected by, the rapidly changing regional and international economic and political events. Naturally the convergence of these forces affected the communities differently. But both Bon and Buddhist sources identify the same periods as having been crucial for their own history.

The art historical evidence falls into chronological phases that can also be identified in the literary sources. The post-Gupta Kashmiri style of the early 8th century was the visual source out of which the (western) Indo-Tibetan style evolved. The 8th century is also the earliest date attributed to images in the Tibetan Himalayan style. The latest monuments in this style are attributed to the late 10th or 10th/11th century. It is certainly not a coincidence that both Bon and Buddhist groups see the same period from 996 to the end of the 11th century as critical in the formation of their political and religious identities.

At least since the 7th century the western regions of the Yarlung Empire were crossed by trade routes linking this region to the broader Eurasian culture zone. Trade and natural resources were important economic factors throughout the area. This was a multicultural world with an ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous population and diverse religious practices.

From the negative polemic against the local Tibetan groups in the successive ordinances issued by the kings of Purang-Guge we can infer that there were intense and long lasting differences between the new political rulers, descended from the ancient Yarlung dynasty, and some of the local Tibetan communities (Klimburg-Salter 2008). What sort of power struggles preceded the realignment of forces resulting in the ecclesiastical estate in 996 and the eventual disappearance of the visual culture associated with some of the local Tibetan communities?

From the 8th century on, the region under discussion was the scene of particularly crucial events, as Tibetan, Chinese, Arab, and local Turkic rulers vied for political control. This was a period of intense political engagement with severe and long lasting consequences. One of the greatest rulers of Kashmir, Lalitāditya, an important patron of Buddhist art and architecture, reigned in the first quarter of the 8th century. The earliest evidence for Buddhist art in the region (Kinnaur and Ladakh) shows a direct link to the Buddhist art of Kashmir of that period (Figures 15.13 and 15.15). Kashmiri monastic Buddhism must also have been important, but the archaeological evidence in Kashmir is minimal. We know nothing about either the patrons of the large scale rock sculptures with Śāradā inscriptions in Ladakh or the patrons of the large scale rock art with Tibetan inscriptions. Also the associated Buddhist practices of both groups are unclear.

At this time the Arab armies enter the scene. From the 8th century the Hindu Śāhi and the kings of Kashmir were the most important opponents of the Arab forces, and sometimes allies of Tibet. The expansion of the Muslim armies impacted the Buddhist institutions and forced the movement northwards and then eastwards (towards Tibet) of Buddhist clergy and artists. As a result of the expansion of the Arab armies and their struggle for ascendancy against local rulers, there was a complete realignment of political forces in the 11th century. And in Central Asia the expansion of local Muslim rulers, referred to in Tibetan sources as the *Gar log* (Petech 1997: 239), brought an end in the 12th century to the already greatly diminished dynasty of the kings of Purang-Guge.

According to Bon sources, the second half of the 8th century was a period of catastrophic events resulting in the loss or seclusion of the Bon sacred texts, written in the Zhang zhung language.[1]

Ye shes 'od's active rejection of all non-orthodox Buddhist practices and practitioners is forcefully articulated in two "ordinances", tentatively attributed by Karmay (Chapter 16 of this volume) to ca. 985 and to 988. These local Tibetan groups did not identify with the goals of Indian monastic Buddhism as espoused by Ye shes 'od and his sons. About this time Ye shes 'od sent Rin chen bzang po and a group of other young lamas to India and Kashmir — in order to secure the correct Indian Buddhist teachings. The goal was to secure and translate original — Sanskrit — sacred texts as a basis for the true transmission of Indian monastic Buddhist culture. The administrative mechanism and political culture were inherited from central Tibet (Petech 1997: 234–236; Stoddard 2004). Together with members of the important Bro family, who originated from Zhang zhung, members of the aristocratic families — Cog ro and Pa tshab — were also part of the original migration westward of the dynasty of the kings of Purang-Guge. These noble families supported the missionary activities of Ye shes 'od. The *lha bla ma* and his descendants continued to be supported by these noble families for several generations, as both monastic foundations as well as translations are associated with their names (Petech 1997: 236).

At the time that Ye shes 'od was formulating his ecclesiastical estate a variety of religious practices were current among the Tibetan population, including Bon and rNying ma practices. These traditions are to some degree mirrored in the first phase of artistic production at Tabo painted in the Tibetan Himalayan style (see below). Vitali is surely correct that there was more interaction of the old and new traditions during Ye shes 'od's time than is generally admitted by the later sources (Vitali 1996: 225 ff.; see also Klimburg-Salter 2008).

The local Tibetan groups who did not choose to adapt the newly imported Indian monastic Buddhism actively proselytised by Ye shes 'od and his family from the beginning of the 11th century all developed different survival strategies. It would appear that the Bon practitioners reconfigured their image in face of the increasing power of the ecclesiastical prin-

[1] The Kingdom of Zhang zhung was conquered by Tibetan imperial forces ca. 650. This was the beginning of a process of acculturation which eventually involved also the loss of the Zhang zhung language.

cipality ruled by Ye shes 'od and subsequently Byang chub 'od and their descendants.

As a result, it is very difficult to understand what would have constituted Bon practice and ritual imagery prior to the 11th century. Scholars are in disagreement about the identity of the culture or religious practices that can be identified with what we today call Bon. Indeed, until the recent discovery of an ordinance tentatively attributed by Karmay (Chapter 16 in this volume) to 988, where Bon is clearly said to exist in the western regions, even this fact was debated. Due to the uncertainty regarding all features of these religious practices, it is not possible to identify Bon visual imagery at that time. This situation may contribute to the difficulty in identifying some of the iconographic forms represented in Tabo in the Tibetan Himalayan style. How can one hope to identify iconographic forms that can no longer be understood? As this problem is central to understanding the distinctive character of the Tibetan Himalayan style, iconographic problems will be discussed in the concluding section.

Given the fact that Bon texts from the 11th century onward demonstrate in some areas an adaptive process, it is instructive to consider the close chronology between key moments in the history of "new" Bon and the history of the (new) Indian monastic Buddhism under the patronage of the kings of Purang-Guge.

Despite the great importance of this period for the history of Tibet and the history of both Buddhism and Bon, it remains difficult to establish an unequivocal chronological narrative of the events and personalities. Petech made many important contributions to this topic (see bibliography). Here I largely follow Petech 1997, which was written and sent to the press before Vitali 1996, an important study based on the 15th century official chronicle the mNga' ris rgyal rabs (a text not then known to Petech). Accordingly, Petech (1999) corrected a few points in his own narrative or registered a dissenting view. For present purposes, I cite here only Petech 1999. The tremendous artistic and religious renaissance presided over by successive generations of the dynasty of the kings of Purang-Guge for almost 100 years resulted from a skillful blending of successful political and economic policies with a focused ideological goal. Petech (1999: 3) proposes that Ye shes 'od founded a sort of ecclesiastical principality in the western parts of Guge, Spiti, and upper Kinnaur, "under the suzerainty of the kings of Purang" (Petech 1997: 235) whose political capital remained in Purang. The new theocratic political order can be traced in stages

marked by great assemblies, four of which have been identified. The first was convened in 992 at sPeg mkhar of the Cog-la region (Petech 1997: 233; 252, n. 20). The latter was in lower Spiti, where also Tabo is located. At this time the hermitage of Pa (or Sa) sgam in Rum, located in Guge, was founded or renovated. This monastery, named Byams snyoms gling, was the site of at least two recorded assemblies in 996 and 1016. The main donor for the renovation of Tabo monastery in 1042 was also a man from Rum (Klimburg-Salter 1997: fig. 140). At the great assembly instituted in 996 by Ye shes 'od (Petech 1999: 3) the *lha bla ma* as well as his oldest son Devarāja, together with eighty-seven other "subjects", were probably also ordained at the same time (Vitali 1996: 241). In the same year, according to Petech, Tholing and Tabo Monasteries were founded. Nyar ma was founded subsequently by Rin chen bzang po (Petech 1999: 3) and Kha char in Purang was founded by Ye shes 'od's younger brother Khor re who became king of Purang-Guge, following Ye shes 'od's abdication. Thus Petech diverges from Vitali who dates the foundation of all four monasteries to 996. The scanty art historical information might be seen as supporting Petech — no trace of the Tibetan Himalayan style is seen at either of the latter two monasteries, but this evidence is thin indeed, and the question should be considered open.

Rin chen bzang po's influence on the monastic Buddhism of the region in the early 11th century is confirmed by all sources. However, there is no firm evidence that he was present at Tabo (Klimburg-Salter 1997). In fact, Rin chen bzang po is completely missing from the extensive representations of the Tabo monastic community. I see no reason not to accept this evidence. Accordingly, Rin chen bzang po was neither present at the founding of Tabo in 996 because he was in Kashmir, nor did he belong to the "great Tabo monastic community" depicted in the renovation inscription image of 1042 because he was residing at that time at Tholing.[2]

Later Bon tradition also identifies 996 as a critical point in their institutional development. This was the year of the birth of the important Bon master gShen chen kLu dga' (996–1035; Petech 1997: 237). Luga is "considered to be the initiator of the Bon religious movement of the eleventh

[2] In earlier articles (1982, 1994) I attempted to integrate the oral tradition for Rin chen bzang po's active involvement at Tabo with the archaeological evidence, that is, the absence of any reference to his presence. Thus I proposed (1994) that there were two early 11th century phases of artistic production, the first initiated by Rin chen bzang po. I subsequently decided for a simpler solution, as explained here.

century" (Karmay 2007: 58). According to the chronology found in later Bon sources, it would appear as if Bon was transforming its institutions in pace with the key phases in the extension of the ecclesiastical estate in western Tibet.

Rin chen bzang po may have returned from Kashmir ca. 1003, at which time he may have received his final ordination (Petech 1997: 234). All scholars accept Rin chen bzang po's return from Kashmir as marking the beginning of the active introduction of Kashmiri monastic Buddhism to Tibet. It is likely that the founding of the temples mentioned in the biography began at this time. Petech (1997: 234) suggests that Rin chen bzang po's last trip to Kashmir, which lasted for six years, started sometime between 1010–1015. According to his biography, he returned from Kashmir with a number of artists, texts, and liturgical objects. The tremendous expansion in the production of sculptures in the Kashmiri inspired Indo-Tibetan style begins at this time (Petech 1997: 252, n. 35), as will be discussed below.

In 1016 (Petech 1997: 235) another great assembly was held, again at Byams snyom gling hermitage. At this time the political and theocratic institutions were expanded and Nāgarāja, the younger son of *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od, received his final ordination (Vitali 1996: 241).

Several dates important to the new Bon traditions are clustered around this event. In 1014 Luga received important Bon teachings and he began to meditate at Dragkar. In 1016 Luga married Paldon, a woman of the Naga family. In 1017 Luga revealed a number of important *gter ma* texts (Karmay 2007: 58), including the "Bon Abhidharma text *Srid pa'i mdzod phug*" (Petech 1997: 237). A number of other important Bon teachers are also said to have taught during that period (Karmay 2007: 60–61).

Resistance to orthodox Indian monastic Buddhism continued as is evidenced by two further "ordinances", both issued in the 11th century. The earlier one, attributed to Pho brang Zhi ba 'od, the only translator in the royal family, contains similar accusations as the earlier ordinances. An important figure, Zhi ba 'od may have been depicted in the cella Tabo Assembly Hall (Klimburg-Salter 1997: fig. 151). And later, rTse lde (r. 1060–1080) also felt compelled to issue an "ordinance" in much the same tone as Ye shes 'od's earlier "ordinance".

The extraordinary productivity — translating of texts into Tibetan, founding and decorating religious establishments with art works of the highest quality — reached its high point in the 3rd quarter of the 11th century. King rTse lde and his uncle, the translator Zhi ba 'od, again convened

a great assembly as the focus of their political-religious activity. The famous *chos 'khor* (religious conference) convened at Tholing around 1076 was the last of the recorded periodic assemblies convened by the kings of Purang-Guge. The separation of Purang-Guge dates to the period following rTse lde's death in 1080.

The Rhetorical Function of the (Western) Indo-Tibetan Style

The stylistic evolution from an 8th century Kashmir style (FIGURE 15.15) to the elegant Indo-Tibetan style (see below) of the renovation period (Klimburg-Salter 1997: figs. 61, 169) can be followed by reference to surviving artistic examples in Kinnaur. As noted above, the introduction of this style most likely began in the second decade of the 11th century with Rin chen bzang po's return from his last visit to Kashmir.

The art historical evidence points to significant differences between the artistic production of the two stylistically defined groups considered here, the Tibetan Himalayan style and the Kashmiri inspired Indo-Tibetan style patronized by the kings of Purang-Guge. The surviving evidence is that these two artistic traditions may even have been chronologically sequential — the Tibetan Himalayan style beginning at about 8th century and the latter in the first quarter of the 11th century. Some overlap at the beginning of the 11th century is reasonable, but the material evidence is so far missing.

The monastic arts represented in the Indo-Tibetan style had apparently a far more substantial economic base, as is seen in the high quality of the arts of the Tabo Renovation period. The use of high quality alloys and even precious metals such as silver is also indicative of this trend. The surviving portable sculptures in the Tibetan Himalayan style are rather poorer quality with regard to materials and manufacture. Many of the sculptures in the Kashmiri post-Gupta style are nothing short of spectacular — both with regard to materials and craftsmanship. This too certainly has contributed to the far greater fame of this artistic corpus, compared to the almost forgotten arts in the Tibetan Himalayan style.

All the recent exhibition catalogues proudly display elegant examples of Indo-Tibetan art, many objects only recently acquired on the art market. The simpler arts of the Tibetan Himalayan style, in contrast, are

missing. This discrepancy has also resulted in a descriptive terminology which *de facto* obscures the existence of a different and earlier artistic school. The same catalogues often acknowledge that the artistic remains of the region and period are not homogenous. However, as the Tibetan Himalayan style images are missing from the historical retrospective in the catalogues, there is no motivation to explore this visual tradition. The picture is different when the art historical discussions evolve in the context of a study of the *in situ* monastic arts. Thus the only studies known to me where the early style, that I call here the Tibetan Himalayan style, appears, is in discussions of the monastic arts of Himachal Pradesh — in temples dated to around the 10th century.[3]

The transition to the earliest phase of the Indo-Tibetan style may be represented by the standing wooden sculptures of bodhisattvas in the Kashmiri style at Ropa in Kinnaur (Klimburg-Salter 1994: figs. 57–59). Also important for an understanding of the chronology of the style are the so-called Nāgarāja bronzes (Warnung-Balogh 2003) that must be dated after his final Buddhist initiation at the great assembly in 1016 (Petech 1997: 235), since only after that time would the title *lha btsun pa* have been appropriate for Nāgarāja. Based on an analysis of all the known examples of images with inscriptions containing the name Nāgarāja, Warnung-Balogh (2003: 68) comes to the conclusion that the large and masterful bronze Buddha image in the Cleveland Museum (Figure 15.21) marks the earliest phase of this group and may be dated to the beginning of the second quarter of the 11th century.

Particularly important for the present discussion is the fact that, in all the representations of historical personages in the Indo-Tibetan style, every trace of both stylistic features and genre elements present in the late 10th century images is totally missing in the mid-11th century paintings. The new iconographic program at Tabo (Klimburg-Salter 2007b, 2008), executed in a magnificent and completely integrated style, signals to us that political and social dynamics moved the ecclesiastical estate and its Buddhist monasteries away from the 10th century regional Tibetan character visually described in the assemblies in the Tabo Entry Hall.

The iconographic choices and the visual presentation of both religious and historical themes in the ca. 1042 iconographic program from the Tabo Main Temple show the influence of Kashmiri Mahāyāna monastic Buddhism and a political culture related to the imperial period and influenced

[3] See bibliography for works by Klimburg-Salter; Luczanits.

Figure 15.21 Buddha. Copper alloy. Tibetan inscription on pedestal: *lha btsun pa na ga ra dzahi thugs dam* (Priest (*lha btsun*) Nāgarāja's private image). Kashmir. 10th–11th century CE. H. 98.1cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Purchase, John L. Severance Fund. (66.30). ©Cleveland Museum of Art.

by contemporaneous events in central Tibet (see Klimburg-Salter 2007b). What has been uncovered and published from the period at Tholing would seem to be consistent with what is found at Tabo in the late 10th and the 11th centuries. The opposing political interests rallied around different ideological and social systems and their associated visual cultures.

An important question is, what happened to the local Tibetan elite depicted in the Tabo Entry Hall? And how can we explain the disappearance of the iconographic choices also expressed there? Of course Tabo and Tholing are royal monasteries and the prevailing preferences expressed there were not necessarily shared throughout the realm. The problem is that until now the art history of this region and period has been told only from the perspective of the dominant, royal elite — the winners.

Iconographic Problems and the Tibetan Himalayan Style

The renovation of the Tabo Main Temple was undertaken only 46 years after the founding of the temple. Since there is no reason to believe that the Temple would have deteriorated in such a short time, it is necessary to seek the explanation for the renovation elsewhere. The Renovation Inscription tells us that it was necessary to renovate the temple, that is, the interior decoration, because it was considered "old". I have interpreted this to mean that the old "*rnying*" arts and iconographic system were no longer acceptable (Klimburg-Salter 2008: 241, 278), and indeed some of what the edicts describe as the unacceptable rituals or ideas current in the region in the 10th century can be found in surviving contemporary *rNying ma* texts. In their discussion of *rNying ma* texts before the *gSar ma pa* (new translation) period, Cantwell and Mayer (e.g., 2010), describe a very complex situation where texts were produced, and used, in both institutional and informal settings. The possible impact of the rNying ma pa, who returned to central Tibet beginning around the 960s, (Petech 1997: 253, n. 50), on the Buddhist institutions within the Kingdom of Purang-Guge merits further discussion (Stoddard 2004).

We know that the Renovation Phase in Tabo was preceded by some sort of violent confrontation resulting in the Admonition Inscription at the entrance to the *Dri gtsang khang*. We also know that the inscription literally obliterates a 10th century guardian figure (a small fragment of the same

Figure 15.22 Nine-headed protector deity. Tabo *'Du khang*, passage between Assembly Hall and Ambulatory. Photo: Uwe Niebuhr 2006 ©WHAV.

type of mandorla as seen in Figure 15.22 is visible at the upper, proper left corner). Such guardian figures always come in pairs. The paired figure on the opposite (north) side of the entrance to the ambulatory (Figure 15.22) clearly belongs to that category of "old" local images which disappeared from the Tabo Buddhist iconographic program in the 11th century. Indeed the figure is still not satisfactorily identified.

There are also other examples of religious images in the 10th century paintings at Tabo that have not yet been explained. While the basic iconographic scheme must have originated within the broad matrix of contemporary rNying ma practices, some aspects such as the protective deities may derive from local non-Buddhist traditions. It is difficult to know exactly where to search for the unidentified iconographic elements surviving from the 10th century paintings at Tabo.

For instance—what is the meaning of the left-turning swastika on the seat-carpets of some of the monks painted on the south wall in the *sGo khang* (Figure 15.23)? I have attempted to explain their function in this composition (Klimburg-Salter 2008: 241–269). At that time I assumed that the iconographic program belonged to the same cultural context as the unknown language and proper names identifying the figures in this composition. Bon scholars whom I queried in 1992 and the following years—Tenzin Namdak and Samten Karmay—could not identify these names or places in Bon literature. The later study by Christian Luczanits (1999) also could only identify a few of the proper names in the ancient Tibetan sources. Returning to the left-turning swastikas, my point of departure was the analogous placement of images of the left-turning swastikas on seat carpets during contemporary Bon rituals (Figure 15.24). But an ethno-art historical explanation is no more than a working hypothesis. I again raised the question during the Shimla conference. The Bon, Buddhist, and western scholars all agreed that the left-turning swastika, while having an ancient and widespread function in pan-Indian culture, is to be understood in Tibetan culture from at least the second millennium CE as associated with Bon. With regard to the presence of Bon in the western Himalaya during the 10th century, the participants confirmed that, although a subject of debate among western scholars, traditional sources identify Bon as present in the later 10th century in Zhang zhung. Spiti was a part of Zhang zhung. New information supporting this thesis was presented in Samten Karmay's talk, "A newly discovered 'ordinance'" (see Chapter 16 in this volume). That ordinance confirms the existence of Bon in the kingdom at that time, but makes no specific mention of

Figure 15.23 Monk sitting on cushion with left-turning swastika. Tabo *sGo khang*, south wall, II/P25. Photo: Christian Luczanits 1994 ©WHAV.

Figure 15.24 Left-turning swastikas painted on seat carpet, Mustang. Photo: Charles Ramble 2008.

Tabo. So just how much "proximity (of Bon to *chos*)" (Vitali 1996: 112) was actually present at Tabo monastery remains unresolved (Klimburg-Salter 2008: 240 f.).

In the Entry Hall of the Tabo Monastery, there are other examples of iconographic forms that cannot at present be identified. For example, there is the protectress of Tabo at the time the monastery was founded. She is identified by inscription as Wi nyu myin, until now totally unknown. The goddess is surrounded by two times nine female attendants. Her name was unknown among the many learned Bon po scholars whom I consulted over the years. However, it is impossible to know if there is any connection to Srid pa rgyal mo and her twenty-seven (three times nine) female attendants (daughters), as there is as yet no reliable information for this deity during the 10th century. Tracing Wi nyu myin's iconography and context, we see that she was transformed into the Tibetan protectress, *rDo rje chen mo*, a form in which she is still important in Tabo today (Klimburg-Salter 1997: 87, 2008: 247–254).

Thus we see that almost all critical questions regarding the Tibetan Himalayan style remain open. The iconology of the surviving images represented in this style suggests that one must consider the larger context of a Zhang zhung culture as discussed by Karmay in Chapter 16 of this volume. Bon sources have long maintained that the western regions—Kashmir, Swat (Uḍḍiyāna), Gilgit, "collectively called sTag gzigs by Bon po sources" (Vitali 1996: 326)—were important sources for Zhang zhung culture.

The brief historical summary has demonstrated that the 10th and 11th centuries saw a period of historical shift where all major factors—economic, political, social—changed dramatically. Greater economic affluence permitted a new political structure in western Guge, the ecclesiastical estate. This appears to have resulted in an eastward shift of political power, away from the old western borderlands (e.g., Gilgit and adjacent areas according to Bon sources). Thus both monastic Buddhist and Bon institutions in the latter half of the 11th century were very radically different from their 10th century predecessors. The nature of Zhang zhung culture also changed accordingly—but how to describe this change? Given the very limited and one-sided written records surviving from the 10th century and earlier, the artistic corpus may be our only window on to the heterogeneous nature of contemporary Zhang zhung culture.

The surviving art historical record would seem to support this perspective. Both the Tibetan Himalayan style and the Kashmiri inspired

Indo-Tibetan style were exotic plants nurtured in the soil of ancient Zhang zhung, from the same sources but under different conditions. They flowered each for a short time, and then experienced very different fates in the 11th century. The Indo-Tibetan style, that began in the early 11th century, eventually matured into the western Tibetan art of the 15th century. The Tibetan Himalayan style either became extinct or was transformed by the emerging artistic traditions of the new Bon. As almost nothing is at present known of the early Bon visual tradition, the answer to this puzzle remains for future scholars.

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