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Introduction: Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia. Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity

The boundaries of cultural geographies—real and imagined—did not become permeable and subject to dynamic processes only in the present. In the past, various forms of transfer, translation and transformation were already of great importance in the Himalayas, Tibet and Central Asia, also due to their position as zones of contact and interaction between India, Persia and China. Mobility of people and goods (as well as transfer of knowledge and technology) was not only characteristic of trade relations, diplomatic and political networks and religious activities (such as pilgrimage) but was also highly relevant for example with regard to the spread and circulation of concepts and forms of art and architecture. This corresponds on the one hand with the findings of recent research, for example that in Tibet and Inner Asia, concomitant with the development and spread of tantric Buddhism, a new religio-economic zone arose (called the “Tantric bloc” by Elverskog 2010: 84, *passim*) which was distinguished by specific trade networks and interaction of cultures. On the other hand there are certain implications—notably for the conceptualisation of research in agreement with an earlier dictum by Eric Wolf (1982: xv) that the interaction of cultures needs to be put in their political and economic contexts. In particular with regard to research methodologies, this means that the question of socio-political and religious order as well as of related processes of transformation cannot be answered without recognising the importance of local, medium, and long-term interactions.

Accordingly, interaction, transfer and translation constitute important concepts for research into direct or indirect cross-border relationships, into the transfer and transformation of knowledge and specific cultural traditions as well as into interrelationships

across geographic, cultural and media borders (for example, painting, sculpture, ritual, text) or for research into trans-religious dynamics, not only in border regions. It was therefore logical that the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium, held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna 25-27 November 2013, as well as of the resulting studies gathered in this volume, would focus on interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia and related processes of transfer, translation and transformation in art, archaeology, religion and polity.¹

In addition to the thematic focus on interaction, an important characteristic of this volume is the high degree of research presented here on new materials or sites that were previously unknown or little known. This is also the reason why the illustration of new or previously little-known material is accorded a relatively large amount of space in this volume. These extensive materials were largely documented by the contributing authors themselves in the course

¹ This volume thus represents the proceedings of this colloquium. In addition it also includes the papers by Marialaura Di Mattia, Oscar Nalesini and Tianshu Zhu who were not able to participate. On the other hand, the following papers presented at the colloquium are not contained here: Guntram Hazod (Vienna), The Tibetan tumulus tradition: about new discoveries in Central Tibet; Birgit Kellner (Heidelberg), The Thon mi sambhota complex – on the Indian origins of the Tibetan writing system; Christian Luczanits (New York), Beneficial to see—new observations on early Drigung painting; Klaus-Dieter Mathes (Vienna), The Goddess Ama Yangri of Yolmo—local Himalayan beliefs and the High Religion of Tibetan Buddhism; Anne Vergati (Paris), Representing Svayambhū stūpa (caitya) in paintings (Nepal); Diwakar Kumar Singh (New Delhi), Rituals, texts and transmission: mapping the space between Tibet and Nalanda; Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (London), Tibetan medicine from Dunhuang: notes on transmissions of medical knowledge along the Silk Road.

of recent and current field research; in part they also come from archives and private collections. Much of it has great documentary value and is thus printed in the best possible quality or often in colour. In addition, the contributions included here also shed new light on already known or previously studied objects, sites, buildings, etc.—however, by making use of a new or different disciplinary and/or comparative perspective or additional material.

In earlier research, not seldom based on individual features and information, conclusions with considerable ramifications were drawn, or very general or few specific historical connections were postulated. In contrast, with the aid of newly documented and analysed material, the articles in this volume lead to a more precise definition of broader, supra-regional horizons on particular periods of time (for example for a period from the 10th to the 14th century, in particular around 1200) or also to the first recognition or to a sharper perspective on connections that existed or resulted over additional chronological intervals, sometimes also over greater geographical distances, partly despite religious or cultural differences, sometimes also beyond the boundaries of the material and the medium.

The new material presented for the first time at the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium and in this volume is very extensive and multilayered. Some articles therefore provide a first overview of significant new finds (e.g. the excavation of a completely preserved grave in Mongolia by Lhagvasuren Erdenebold or Eva Allinger's presentation of a previously unknown *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Ladakh) or for the first time illuminate previously unknown objects in private collections (for example, a silver-gilded vase discussed by Frantz Grenet and a gold ewer analysed by David Thomas Pritzker), which are thereby made accessible and useable for a broader circle of researchers and also form an important basis and orientation for the conception and execution of further-reaching research. Anyone who has themselves experienced the stories of unique chances that have been missed or has learned of it from others will know that good documentation of newly accessible objects or grave sites is particularly important. It is particularly fortunate when, as in the case of the grave complex of Shoroon Bumbagar in Mongolia, this is also excavated fully intact and could be documented and analysed using the latest methods, and when the excavation and the material is presented by one of the excavators themselves.

Some contributions (e.g. by Ciro Lo Muzio on the paintings in Dandan Oiliq or by Oscar Nalesini on the stone stelae in west and south-west Tibet) deal with sites in Central Asia and Tibet that were discovered or at least first scientifically explored, documented and

assessed for their historical importance by pioneers of research such as Aurel Stein and Giuseppe Tucci in the first half of the 20th century, and in the course of their "rediscovery" on site or in the archives these still or again provide the occasion for new investigations.

All nineteen original contributions by experts from various fields of knowledge and disciplines including archaeology, architecture, art history, social anthropology as well as Central Asian, Mongolian and Tibetan Studies address past and current transformation processes of social, religious and material culture. The division of the contributions into three parts—I Transfer and Interaction in Central Asia and Tibet; II Translation and Adoption of Art and Architecture in the Western Himalayas; III Patterns of Transformation in Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and Central Asia—is based on a combination of thematic, historical (to some degree chronological) and regional aspects.

With the exception of Élise Luneau, who focuses on transfers and interactions between north and south in Central Asia during the Bronze Age and largely makes use of potsherds and miniatures items, the remaining contributions in Part I are concerned with transfer and interaction mainly in the 7th–8th centuries and present fresh findings from an archaeological excavation in Mongolia, studies of extraordinary, hitherto unpublished metalwork objects and a fresh look at stone monuments, paintings and sculptures in areas of Tibet and Central Asia (Khotan, Kucha).

The contributions in Part II explore the translation and adoption of art and architecture in the Western Himalayas or historical Western Tibet (Tibetan [T.] mNga' ris skor gsum) from the 10th to 14th centuries. Despite this regional limitation and focus on a few sites (such as Tholing, Khorchag, Khartse, Alchi, Hanle), the wealth of these places in terms of paintings, sculptures, manuscripts and architecture of great historical value again brings much new information to light, which among other things makes it possible to identify connections and interactions in a wider historical and transregional dimension. For example, as Finbarr B. Flood points out in his contribution, the paintings in the Alchi Dukhang temple "are but one facet of a much broader transcultural horizon visible in the visual arts produced by and for elites in regions from the Mediterranean to Afghanistan between roughly 1050 and 1250".

Part III is specifically concerned with patterns of transformation. With the exception of Lewis Doney's investigation of narrative transformations of the Tibetan emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan (742–c.800) in imperial and post-dynastic literary sources, the other five contributions in this part cover patterns of transformation in the period from the 16th to 20th centuries involving quite distant loca-

tions and interrelationships in areas of Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia and Central Asia.

I. TRANSFER AND INTERACTION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET

The first contribution in this part, by Élise Luneau, investigates transfers and interactions between north and south in Central Asia during the Bronze Age. According to the archaeological material she discusses, exchanges between northern steppe populations and those to the south were reciprocal and bidirectional, so in this period a unique (and interrelated) economic system had already come into being.

During this period transfer was related to objects, for example pottery of certain quality, colour and production method, which went hand in hand with stylistic and technical transfer. This was based on the expansion or migration of population groups, with different “traditions” dominating during different periods, including also the possibility of a mixing of traditions. Transfer processes seem to have been limited to a form of interaction between individuals or between masters or through possible intermarriages. Transfers were often related to isolated elements, so that the adoption of new features appears to have been a “deliberate and precise choice, according technical, morphological, functional and symbolic factors”. However, archaeological relics do not provide sufficient evidence to prove mobility and assimilation.

In the second contribution in this section on the archaeological site of Shoroon Bumbagar at Ulaan Kherem in Mongolia, together with Ayudai Ochir, the main excavator, Lhagvasuren Erdenebold presents information on a newly discovered tomb under an earthen mound, presumably the tomb of a Turkic aristocrat in the second half of the 7th century who was most probably on military service in the Tang empire. (The dating was confirmed recently through luminescence dating methods; see Solongo et al. 2015.)

What makes this discovery absolutely outstanding is the fact that it was fully intact, the key in place and without any traces of looting or external damage. The description of the successive opening of the tomb, its construction and the introduction to the various objects uncovered (for example, clay figurines of horsemen, animals and guardian creatures; metal objects, including a considerable number of coins; wooden and textile items) as well as wall paintings, all of remarkable quality, therefore make this tomb one of the most important archaeological discoveries in Central Asia in recent decades.

The finds, in particular the presence of cultural aspects associated with eastern Turks and Chinese (terracotta figurines of Turk horse-

men, standing male Turks holding wooden staffs of banners as well as figurines of Chinese women and standing Chinese officials), not only shed new light on the cultural diversity of these finds but also on the sociopolitical order and stratification within the contemporary society.

Oscar Nalesini’s article is concerned with the interaction between researchers and the “research object” in the course of field research, the transfer and preservation of the documentation and their use in later publications. In the specific case, with the critical view of an archiver and archaeologist, Nalesini examines Giuseppe Tucci’s analysis of stone stelae at two sites in Tibet in 1939 based on newly accessible research notes by the researcher and the photographic records made by the photographer Felice Boffa Ballaran. This results in a critical reassessment of the two “megalithic sites” studied by Tucci, with the result that they appear significantly more extensive and complex than he suggested, that they were used up until the present day and that the dating of their erection (at possibly different times) in a prehistoric / pre-Buddhist context should be regarded as a supposition.

Ciro Lo Muzio researches the murals of Skanda that date from the eighth century CE in two Buddhist temples in Dandan Oiliq. The main subject of this article consists in the discussion of the question of how the presence of this deity (and others, such as Hārītī and Vārāhī) from an Indian (“migration”) background and heavily Indian-influenced iconography can be explained at this site and in the kingdom of Khotan.

Lo Muzio explains the appearance of Skanda as the leader of certain female, sometimes animal-headed deities as part of a cult that is originally to be ascribed to Hinduism (and not Zoroastrianism), which experienced a substantial transformation in Brahmanic literature: in this, Skanda is promoted to a general in the army of deities and the female deities, otherwise often (namelessly) called mothers, are identified by name. The presence of this group in a Buddhist context in Khotan may be related to the belief concepts connected to translations of medical texts from the ayurvedic tradition, in which the older (sickness-inducing) conception of Skanda and the female deities was preserved. In a broader sense the question of the role of originally Hindu deities in Buddhist contexts is raised. However, Lo Muzio does not explain this as the assumption of a different (“foreign”) Brahmanic culture by monastic Buddhism and its medicinal concepts. It is rather to be assumed that these elements were an organic part of Buddhist practice from the beginning.

Lo Muzio identifies the field of medicine as the transfer channel through which the particular originally Hindu or Brahmanic deities

were absorbed by Buddhism and integrated or naturalised. Based on quite a few previously unclear cases of the appearance of pan-Indian deities in Buddhist contexts (such as in early west Tibetan constructions) this finding could form a new hypothesis guiding the research. In the explanation of this phenomenon it may thus rather concern a form of a translation with changed signs than an interaction between Khotanese and Sogdian ("Zoroastrian") traditions and their representatives.

This is methodologically relevant to the extent that heterogeneous elements, i.e. associated with different religious, cultural and other traditions, are frequently to be found at a particular site and this (too) quickly, i.e. without further factually based indication, is explained by the (absolutely verifiable) presence and interaction between population groups or people with different social, religious or ethnic origin, without having taken all the historical and other relevant circumstances more closely into account. In the specific case a 9th-century *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī* manuscript found by Aurel Stein in Dunhuang not only provides an important indication of the corresponding ritual context but also a valuable basis for a comparative study of the iconography.

In his contribution Frantz Grenet investigates an extremely significant silver gilded vase with a wealth of illustrations of hunting scenes, protective deities and animals (i.a. lions, apes and deer). The origin of this vase, possibly from graves in Dulan to the north-east of the Tibetan plateau in present-day Qinghai province, has not been definitively established. Based on an analysis of the iconography of the figures and stylistic comparisons with objects from the wider Central Asiatic area, partly drawing on studies by Boris Marshak, Grenet reached the provisional estimate that this object is most probably to be dated to the second half of the 8th century and was produced in an aristocratic, possibly royal Tibetan workshop by craftsmen who were familiar with the tradition of Sogdian art and simultaneously were inspired by Tang-era Buddhist art.

As so often with spectacular objects which appear on the art market after decades in private ownership (in this case by Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis), their largely unclear origin and the fact that there is as good as no information concerning the finding place and/or the more immediate social, political and religious context makes it very difficult to make a well-founded statement on their creation, purpose, use and the commissioner/user. In this specific case an iconographic and stylistic assessment at least permits the formulation of a hypothesis regarding the cultural, sociopolitical and chronological context to which this object should be assigned. Whether anything more or more precise can be said on its history

and whether the contemporary and recent processes of transfer and interaction can be clarified will depend on the discovery of further objects or the clarification of the origin, possibly also through the emergence of information from the milieu of the previous owner.

In his study of a gold ewer, David Thomas Pritzker concludes that this extraordinary object is representative of Sogdian craftsmanship and can be seen as a synthesis of models and motifs of Sasanian Iran and Sogdiana. On the other hand, heavy use of gold, together with turquoise and full-bodied animal imagery are identified as indicative of a socio-political and economic context during the early rise of the Tibetan empire. In addition his findings are based on the analysis of the historical development of ewer typology from the traditions of Sasanian craftsmanship to examples adopted in areas under Tibetan control during the 7th century, which show a number of innovative transformations. Based on "circumstantial" (but not implausible) evidence, Pritzker hypothesises that queen "Khri ma lod [of the Central Tibetan dynasty] was the owner/patron of the Gold Ewer" and that the creation of the ewer could have been related to the great banquet after king Khri Mang slon btsan's death in 676 and the ensuing burial procedures.

Pritzker formulates the supposition of the origins of this object on the basis of a theory of early state or empire building for which, alongside matrimonial alliances, gift-giving, banquets and royal hunts, "deluxe material culture" also constituted an important element. His study provides evidence that the cultural prestige associated with luxury objects is often strongly based on their particular qualities related to foreign origins and design, for which superior political and royal status made it possible to claim exclusive ownership (or rights of appropriation/transfer/importation). The importance of such processes of interaction, transfer and translation for the development of the old Tibetan monarchy within the wider Eurasian political context of the 6th to 8th centuries has been stated in studies by Beckwith (2009; 2012) and cannot be overvalued in terms of recent research on Tibetan burial rituals and tomb mounds (see, for example, Hazod in print).

In her contribution on standing Buddha images in Kucha, Tianshu Zhu explores the exchange between regional centres in the Central Asian area of the ancient Silk Road(s). She aims to show in particular the influence from Khotan (located on the southern route) on Kucha, which according to her analysis is represented in the increase in the number of standing Buddha images. This influence went hand in hand with non-narrative settings where these standing Buddha images appear, thus marking "a shift from representing the historical Buddha in a narrative to the transcendent Buddha in abstract space".

Three new elements were associated with these non-narrative settings: the Buddha standing on a cosmic lotus flower, a reduction in the size and number of attendant figures, and the appearance of local devotees in Central Asian costume. Based on art-historical and inscriptional evidence, supported by recent archaeological excavations and C¹⁴ testing, she can state that this subject began to flourish in Kucha in the second quarter of the 7th century and lasted until the 8th century.

Control over both places during this period was exerted by Tang China through the Anxi protectorate-general, which had its seat in Kucha from 648. Kucha and Khotan not only belonged to a unified administrative and military system (exemplified by a number of fortresses) but were directly linked to each other as the result of a change in the travel routes (itself the result of climate change). Despite a difference in the schools and traditions of Buddhism that were adhered to in these places, this direct strengthened connection—and intensification of interaction—between Khotan and Kucha appears to have been a critical factor as to why standing Buddha figures became so popular in Kucha during this period.

In addition, Zhu touches the question of donorship of caves decorated with rows of standing Buddhas in Kucha. In some cases, groups of non-elite/common people (holding no official title) were responsible for this, which may indicate that this motif was less demanding in economic terms. Thus it appears that (not only in this case), in addition to the political context, the social status of the donors and economic factors are also worth including in the investigation of interaction(s) and transmission(s) that took place between certain Buddhist sites at certain times.

II. TRANSLATION AND ADOPTION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

Based on her detailed description and stylistic analysis of all the miniature paintings in a *Śatasahasrikāprajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Hanle ([T.] Waṃ le) in Ladakh, Eva Allinger has been able to distinguish variations in the quality of execution and in the stylistic features and to classify them into significant groups. What is particularly noticeable is the appearance of different architectural structures framing the 31 figures. The comparison of this manuscript with European book illuminations from the Middle Ages (as studied by Otto Pächt) shows remarkable functional parallels in the majesty of the architectural framing (Pächt's [1994: 191] "majesty of *Ecclesia*") of religious (human or divine) figures.

Similar illustrations from other manuscripts from the western Ti-

betan area are known (Tabo in Spiti, Pooh in upper Kinnaur). Precedents or models for architectural framings like those around the paintings of the Hanle manuscript can be found in the painted thrones of bodhisattvas in Nako in upper Kinnaur and clay ones in Lalung (Spiti). This phenomenon of highly decorative architectural frames in the case of paintings on manuscripts is identified by Allinger as a West-Tibetan idiosyncrasy for which there is no corresponding comparative example.

On six sheets of the Hanle manuscript there are architectural forms that relate to motifs from built architecture in Kashmir, in particular to a group of temples that stand out from other Indian temple architecture and are distinguished by the influence of Buddhist architecture from Gandhāra. These forms can be found on carved wooden portals in the area of historic West Tibet (e.g. Dukhang Temple in Alchi, Lhakhang Chenmo in Khorchag). They are thereby an example of the adoption of built architecture and architectural motifs (with direct references to temples in Kashmir with influences from the earlier Buddhist architecture of Gandhāra) and for the translation into painted (sometimes also carved) illustrations of architectural elements in Buddhist temples in historical West Tibet and as architectural framing of Buddha portrayals in manuscripts.

The painted architectural framings of the Buddha of the Hanle manuscript can be read as embodiments of a multifaceted, correspondingly well and plausibly reconstructable translation process of features from the medium of architecture into that of sculpture, murals and book paintings, at least for someone who is familiar with the furnishings and architecture above all of Buddhist temples and monasteries in the areas of Western Tibet and north-west India. In the author's opinion this represents a crucial and unique translation achievement by the artists.

Heller and Eng's contribution deals with a particular field of the "intense religious transfer and artistic transformations" that was characteristic for the West Tibetan kingdom during the period following the introduction of Buddhism (from the late 10th century): the production and dissemination of illuminated manuscript of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

While the faithful translation of manuscripts from Sanskrit into Tibetan was carried out in collaboration between invited and local scholars, the calligraphy was presumably done by local, possibly also itinerant Tibetan scribes. The manuscript painting reveals the participation of itinerant Kashmiri artists (which explains the aesthetic matrix of the paintings as also found in contemporary murals and in early carved wooden door-frames from the area). The material displays a transformation of Indian models—instead of birch-bark,

palm leaves and clay-coated paper, smooth beige paper was used, which also allowed the opulent embellishment of manuscripts, as in the examples from Tholing analysed by Heller and Eng. The use of brilliant colours (including the abundant use of gold) and painted textiles in detailed geometric patterns is in agreement with contemporary murals in Tholing.

The detailed material analysis of a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript sheet from Tholing in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the palaeographic and art-history examination of folio 1a of the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript sheet from Tholing in the ISIAO in Rome attest to the aesthetic-technical innovation of the manuscripts illuminations in the early 11th century in Tholing, the religious-political centre of the West Tibetan kingdom. Heller and Eng's analysis is enriched by comparisons with contemporary murals and woodcuts from Tholing, partly also from Alchi, and a miniature painting from Khorchag. In the case of book painting, it is clearly demonstrated how the transfer of an aesthetic matrix that comes predominantly from Kashmir went hand in hand with the adaptation of gold (together with local plants) as a local resource in the colouring of paper (and with the development of techniques of paper production).

The article thereby provides a significant contribution to the true, "lossless" translation of holy Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan and is illustrated with visual examples of exceptional quality. While in the visual design the aesthetic-stylistic models from Kashmir were indeed also certainly adopted or adapted by the invited artists, materials-science and technical investigations testify to major and apparently simultaneous innovations that are essentially associated with the use of high-value local resources (colourants).

In her article "The Art of Khorchag and Khartse in the Fabric of Western Himalayan Buddhist Art (10th–14th Centuries): Questions of Style II" on the other hand, unlike earlier research, which was convinced of the dominance of Kashmiri art (traditions) in West Tibet of the 10th to 13th centuries and accordingly propagated a relatively uniform West Tibetan (Kashmir-influenced) style, Christiane Kalantari suggests the development of several different West Tibetan stylistic schools that emerged out of the interaction with artistic—Buddhist as well as Hindu—centres in Kashmir or north-west India and in the southern Himalayas (Nepal). An essential component of this new approach is the identification of workshops whose activities and influences are evident in various places.

Kalantari also suggests a chronology of these different styles and proves this with numerous examples of woodcuts, painting and sculpture. She has documented and investigated many of these afresh in

recent years based on her own research in sites of historical Western Tibet (in particular in Khorchag, in Khartse by the late Tsering Gyalpo).

Finbarr B. Flood investigates paintings at the Buddhist temple in Alchi (Ladakh) with regard to forms of self-(re)presentation of non-Muslim elites, in particular with regard to dress, which were shaped and spread through the Islamic world. He identifies the receptivity and sartorial choices of such elites far from dominant cultural centres as important factors leading to this phenomenon, in his view in general of great dissemination in transcultural and transregional contexts of this period (mid-11th to mid-13th centuries). Flood draws attention to comparative material from courtly art in other peripheral regions (for example, of Christian rulers in Georgia). He shows that such forms of elite dress as depicted at Alchi represent only one facet of a broader cultural horizon. The Alchi paintings thus bear witness to the fact that, around 1200, visual tropes associated with the art of the courts were widely circulated in both permanent and portable media around and beyond the Islamic world—in this case within the world of Tibetan Buddhist temples and monasteries and that of the lay and religious elites responsible for their decoration. Free of specific ethnic connotations, certain modes of dress (including [pseudo-]epigraphic textiles) came to be related closely with the exercise of political and military rank and power. However, Flood's study not only provides a fresh comparative perspective on elite status culture in pre-modern political formations. It is also relevant for future investigations of the wider religio-political contexts which influenced the configurations of the local West Tibetan polities during this period. The analysis of the transregional culture relationships between peripheral Islamic and Buddhist worlds, in particular of patterns of circulation, translation and adoption of art, materials and techniques (often with Persianate, Turkic and Indic elements), is based on an innovative methodological approach from which various possibilities for further comparative studies emerge.

Marialaura Di Mattia's analysis of "foreign" elements in the art and architecture of mNga' ris or historical Western Tibet is based on the concept of an Indo-Tibetan style which came about as a result of the meeting between the Tibetan world and Indian Buddhism and which manifested itself between the 10th and 12th centuries in great variation in the artistic production throughout the area. She sees a powerful influence of Indian Buddhism in the ground-plan of Buddhist monuments, in woodcarvings and in the inner decorations, while architectural construction, materials and choice of colours had their origin in Tibetan traditions. Di Mattia's overview and preliminary conclusions are based on a detailed analysis of original materials that she documented during earlier and recent field research.

The concluding contribution in Part II, by Hubert Feiglstorfer, is dedicated to the reconstruction of one of the two major Buddhist temples at Khorchag in Purang, Western Tibet, the so-called Lhakhang Chenmo ("Great Temple"), which was most probably founded in the late 10th century. Feiglstorfer finds little evidence for its origin in or typological relationship to a *vihāra*-type structure. But based on comparison with other early Buddhist constructions such as Tholing, Nyarma and Tabo and on an in-depth analysis of a variety of constructive, material and other aspects (for example, adobe brick walls; enclosure wall; orientation) as well as isolated textual evidence, he argues that it developed from a single-chamber temple which is more or less identifiable with the space occupied currently by the Maitreya Chapel (T. Byams pa lha khang). He hypothesises that the carved wooden portal most probably formed the original entrance to this temple and that it was conceived as a modular door-frame system, which allowed easy relocation (and perhaps original prefabrication by a workshop of carvers elsewhere). Unlike other early West Tibetan temples, the present architecture of the Lhakhang Chenmo is found not to be the result of a homogeneous planning and building process but rather one of continuous changes, additions and adaptations, showing influences from earlier (Central) Tibetan concepts as well as from traditions of local origin and partly also from neighbouring areas to the south.

III. PATTERNS OF TRANSFORMATION IN TIBET, NEPAL, MONGOLIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Lewis Doney's contribution looks into the narrative transformation of the Tibetan emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan (742–c.800) in imperial and post-dynastic literary sources. His portrayal as Tibetan emperor, Buddhist king, religious teacher and tantric disciple reveals the increasing influence of the cult of religious figures and also of Indian literary genres, which the author traces in Buddhist histories.

These transformations concern changes in the concept of sacred kingship following the introduction of Buddhism as the state religion and more generally in the relationship between socially and spiritually defined rank or political and religious power. In later, post-12th-century histories the role of Khri Srong lde brtsan is reduced even more in favour of contemporary religious masters. Doney's contribution thus provides an impressive case-study for the increasingly Buddhist view of the past in Tibetan historiography which can be read at the same time as delineating a developmental pattern of the Buddhist transformation of Tibetan history.

Quentin Devers' archaeological study of ancient interregional trade routes connecting Ladakh with Tibet, Kashmir, Baltistan, India and the Tarim Basin and neighbouring areas brings together and charts a mass of information on routes, corridors, passes, fortifications, minor and major valleys and places in terms of economic, military and political importance. The pattern of transformation which results from his study of interregional routes transecting (pre)historical Ladakh reveals an increasing standardisation of trade, the diminution of the types of merchandise and the transition from a system with a multitude of small merchants to one with a limited number of traders operating between a limited set of destinations. This study demonstrates that processes of interaction, transfer, translation and transformation depended first and foremost on the mobility of people and goods (as well as knowledge and technology) along (more or less established) routes. Devers also shows that these routes and route networks were subject to changes and transformations themselves over the course of time, a process which in the case of Ladakh is noticeable in particular in the second half of the millennium and which was caused by various factors, among others, political conflicts and agreements.

Based on historic testimonies, maps and accounts from the 16th century onward, Marie Lecomte-Tilouine studies the relationships between distant sites of fire worship in Baku (Azerbaijan), Kangra (India), Dullu and Muktinath in western Nepal. These sacred sites seem to have constituted a gigantic fire-worship network connecting the central Himalayas and Central Asia and frequented by traders, travellers, adventurers and in particular by pilgrims from India. The latter's influence on these sites—with different historical, cultural and political contexts and backgrounds—appears to have been so strong and effective that it makes it possible to explain the numerous and also specific commonalities in the rituals performed at these places as well as their transformations over the course of time.

Isabelle Charleux discusses new research on Erdene zuu monastery at Qaraqorum in Mongolia, relating to its history and in particular its architectural transformations and ritual use over the course of time. A comparative analysis with Mayidari zuu monastery in Inner Mongolia reveals considerable architectural as well as functional similarities: both were founded by Mongolian Khans (Altan Khan and Abadai Khan respectively), originally served as palaces and were turned into monasteries after the death of their founders. Without giving a final answer it can be hypothesised that Mayidari zuu was among the sites that may have served as model for Abadai Khan's foundation of Erdene zuu. The monastery's name, Erdene zuu, in fact translates the Tibetan Jo bo Rin po che ("Precious Lord"), thus mak-

ing it possible to reconstruct its original meaning in relation to a Jo bo-type of statue (originally) modelled on the Jo bo image in the Lhasa Jokhang temple.

Charleux's analysis of literary sources reveals that Erdene zuu can be seen as an example (in fact one of several examples) of the adaptation of the Lhasa Jokhang's Jo bo image (including concepts of divine rulership associated with it) by Mongol Khans in the late 16th/early 17th centuries and thus reveals—despite the fact that in case of the Erdene zuu Jo bo image oral traditions evoke a possible Uighur antetype—that this site (as well as other monasteries dating to the period) represents important (but still not fully understood) evidence of the reciprocal Tibeto-Mongol relationships at the time.

This contribution is itself evidence of the fact that in terms of methodology the analysis of interaction and related processes of transfer, translation and transformation in Central Asia and Tibet profits enormously from the comparison of a variety of sources available in different languages (in this case Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan and Russian) and at the same time from the inclusion of archaeological, architectural and other materials.

Ágnes Birtalan focuses on the transformation of religious practices by Mongols, in particular on Mongolian folk religion, which in her view emerged from a mutual interaction between Inner Asia and the Himalayas, on the one hand from the interaction with Inner Asian and Siberian, on the other with Indo-Tibetan and Chinese religious and philosophical concepts. The examples supporting this hypothesis (which includes various stages of integration) are the figures of the White Old Man and Sitabrahmā (Khalkha/Oirat: Cambagaraw) as well as forms of non-verbal communication and ritual items with origins in Buddhism that appear in shamanic rituals.

In her contribution Maria-Katharina Lang studies sixty-six small wooden figures depicting characters appearing in Tsam dance performances which were made around 1900 by a Mongolian Buddhist monk near Ulaanbaatar to the order of Hans Leder, an Austrian collector. The history of these artefacts, their transfers to different homes, European museum repositories and related processes of translation and transfer of knowledge involving Mongolian, Russian and European contexts is analysed against the background of a number of changeable historic transformations affecting Tsam dance performances in Mongolia, from their introduction in the late 18th century until their repression in 1937 and recent reconstruction and revitalization efforts since the 1990s. Tracing the biographies of these wooden figurines (of which a slightly earlier comparative set is kept in St Petersburg) makes it possible to reveal the interaction between ritual practitioners, collectors and scholars as much as

changes in function and space which determined the lives of these objects, originating from contexts of ritual artefacts and spaces to one of museum collections in repositories or on display, and finally also one that reconnects these objects with their distant origins through digital images on a research website.

Together with the remaining papers of this and the two previous colloquia (Paris 2009, Rome 2011) the contributions to the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium collected in this volume confirm the increasing importance of a research agenda or of *one* coherent research field that includes the Himalaya region, Tibet, Mongolia and other areas of Inner or Central Asia and also China. In view of the diverse landscape of languages and scripts as well as of religions and belief systems, this involves different disciplines and fields of study (in particular archaeology, art history, numismatics, philology, social anthropology, the study of religion) without it being necessary to prescribe a continuous general, determining regional, linguistic or religious primary focus throughout or in advance.² Important desiderata for future research include the integration of research into broader platforms including interdisciplinary and multilingual approaches (similar to a recent suggestion by Shen Weirong [2010: 341] with regard to the reconstruction of the history of Buddhism in Central Eurasia from the 11th to 14th centuries), as well as the creation of an international, multilingual website and research database (similar, for example, to that of the International Dunhuang Project).

² This agrees to some extent with the research agenda described by Carmen Meinert in the introduction to a volume she edited on the transfer of Buddhism across Central Asian networks (7th to 13th centuries), the major difference being her stress on a "research agenda which aims to understand Central Asia through the religious field, which was most successfully propagated for around 1500 years in and through (particularly Eastern) Central Asia, namely, Buddhism" (see Meinert 2016: 1) and consequently "the idea of *Buddhist* Central Asia as an integrated system" (my emphasis) (*idem*: 2).

She also argues that the "spread of Buddhism along a network of trade routes may be regarded as a 'pre-modern form of globalisation' [which she also refers as 'Buddhist globalisation']—the process by which a local religious impulse (originating in this case in Northwest India) developed into one of the driving forces in a societal and cultural change which was of pan-Asian importance (*idem*: 1). Taking into account the concurrent existence and spread of other religious belief systems and practices and in respect of debates on the global before globalization expressing the view that "the circulation and transregional (or transhistorical) reception of objects [...] often mediates between the local and the global or between *different worlds* [that is, other, non-Buddhist, for example, Islamic notions of the world]" (Flood 2010: 10; my emphasis) and finally in the light of findings discussed in this volume (see, for example, the contribution by Flood), a broader approach seems appropriate (and also one not limited to the religious field).

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