SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

Number 225 June, 2012

The Image of the Winged Celestial and Its Travels along the Silk Road

by
Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky

Victor H. Mair, Editor
Sino-Platonic Papers
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA
vmair@sas.upenn.edu
www.sino-platonic.org

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

FOUNDED 1986

ISSN
2157-9679 (print) 2157-9687 (online)

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS is an occasional series dedicated to making available to specialists and the interested public the results of research that, because of its unconventional or controversial nature, might otherwise go unpublished. The editor-in-chief actively encourages younger, not yet well established, scholars and independent authors to submit manuscripts for consideration. Contributions in any of the major scholarly languages of the world, including romanized modern standard Mandarin (MSM) and Japanese, are acceptable. In special circumstances, papers written in one of the Sinitic topolects (*fangyan*) may be considered for publication.

Although the chief focus of *Sino-Platonic Papers* is on the intercultural relations of China with other peoples, challenging and creative studies on a wide variety of philological subjects will be entertained. This series is **not** the place for safe, sober, and stodgy presentations. *Sino- Platonic Papers* prefers lively work that, while taking reasonable risks to advance the field, capitalizes on brilliant new insights into the development of civilization.

Submissions are regularly sent out to be refereed, and extensive editorial suggestions for revision may be offered.

Sino-Platonic Papers emphasizes substance over form. We do, however, strongly recommend that prospective authors consult our style guidelines at www.sino-platonic.org/stylesheet.doc. Manuscripts should be submitted as electronic files, preferably in Microsoft Word format. You may wish to use our sample document template, available here: www.sino-platonic.org/spp.dot.

Beginning with issue no. 171, *Sino-Platonic Papers* has been published electronically on the Web at www.sino-platonic.org. Issues 1–170, however, will continue to be sold as paper copies until our stock runs out, after which they too will be made available on the Web.

Please note: When the editor goes on an expedition or research trip, all operations (including filling orders) may temporarily cease for up to three months at a time. In such circumstances, those who wish to purchase various issues of *SPP* are requested to wait patiently until he returns. If issues are urgently needed while the editor is away, they may be requested through Interlibrary Loan. You should also check our Web site at www.sino-platonic.org, as back issues are regularly rereleased for free as PDF editions.

The Image of the Winged Celestial and Its Travels along the Silk Road

by Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky
Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Winged celestials are a consistent feature in Buddhist art. Like so much of Buddhist imagery, they derive from the West and appear in the earliest extant Buddhist art.[1] Associated with flight and the ascent into the ethereal zone, they convey spirituality. For centuries flying divinities were a regular feature, and during the Kushan era (first to third century) monks, merchants and missionaries brought them with Buddhist texts and icons east along the Silk Road.[2] Thus representations of winged celestials can be found in early Buddhist art in Central Asia and medieval China. This paper will trace the evolution of the image of the Buddhist anthropomorphic flying heavenly spirit beginning with its earliest appearance in India, through its development in the area of Gandhāra (parts of Northern India, Afghanistan and modern Pakistan) during the Kushan era, and its transmission to Chinese Central Asia, before analyzing the appearance and role of these celestials in medieval Chinese art. Among the foci of analysis are a consideration of the topology of angels and a brief etymological and visual survey, for there are a variety of heavenly creatures.

Buddhist art developed late in India, for reasons that are surmised but not known. For the first three hundred years there appears to be no evidence of "Buddhist art" in permanent

---

[1] This paper was delivered at the conference on Buddhism on the Silk Road II, XVIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, held at Dharma Drum Buddhist College in Jinshan, Taiwan, June 2011.

[2] The dates of the Kushan kings have been a subject of scholarly study and debate for nearly a century. A recent article summarizes and discusses the various proposed dates. See Harry Falk, "The Yuga of Sphujiddhvaja and the Era of the Kushânas," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* VII (2001): 121–136. On the Kaniska era in Guptan records, see *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* VII (2004), 10: 167–176; see also Michael Alram, "Indo Parthian and Early Kushan Chronology: The Numismatic Evidence," in *Coins, Art and Chronology,* ed. Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter and Michael Alram. (Vienna: Verlag Der Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), 1:19–51; see also Robert Gobl, "The Rabatak Inscriptions and the Date of Kaniska," in *Coins, Art and Chronology*: 151–176.

materials. Things changed under the leadership of the famous Buddhist king Aśoka (300–232 BCE) of the Mauryan dynasty (321–185 BCE), whose mid-life conversion to Buddhism resulted in a proliferation of activities celebrating his belief, among which the building of stone monuments with decorative programs stands out.[3] Many of the images employed in this earliest stage of art were borrowed from foreign artistic traditions.[4] One obvious source was the neighboring empire of Persia, where in addition to the use of stone, certain decorative motifs such as the lotus, lion, animal capitals, and winged anthropomorphic creatures appear over the centuries. For example, engraved on a tall stele at the Palace built by Ashurnasirpal II in the Assyrian city of Nimrud in the ninth century BCE, and now preserved in the British Museum, are a pair of tall winged figures shown in profile with long beards, dressed hair, tall caps, skirts, a scarf, and large wings; they flank the sacred tree.[5] (FIGURE 1)

[3] Radha Kumud Mookerji, *Asoka* (London: Macmillian Publishers, 1972), gives a brief biography and catalog of the monuments. See also John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Asoka* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983): 117.

[4] John Boardman, *Persia and the West* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 2000): 81, figure 2.65 for one, illustrates a number of motifs employed in early Buddhist art that have their origins in Persia. Among them are the lotus motif found at Samos and at Pasargadae; Boardman points out that the ultimate derivation for the emblem is Egypt. See p. 71 for prototypes of down-turned lotus capitals at Susa and Persepolis that are like those seen on the columns erected by Aśoka; for the use of the animal capital at Susa, see p. 72, figure 2.56a,b. Boardman, however, does not discuss the impact of these forms on Indian Buddhist art.

[5] Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954, repr. 1970), 162 ff.

Figure 1 and detail. Engraved Assyrian stone relief from Nimrud (865–860), British Museum (inv. No WA124580) (author's photo)

Two hundred years later, in a finely carved relief on the doors of the Persian palace at Pasargadae, ca. seventh century BCE, similar large winged figures with the heads of birds stand on either side of the sacred tree,[6] and there is a rather awkward six-winged figure from Tell Halaf,

[6] Boardman 2000: figure 3.21, p. 63ff.

in northeastern Syria, ascribed to the sixth century BCE, that is now in the Walters Art Gallery.[7] (FIGURE 2)

Figure 2 Six-winged genius from Tell Halaf, stone bas relief, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, ca. sixth century BCE (after Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* [Yale University Press, 1970]: figure 347)

Moreover, the most important god of the Zoroastrian religion, Ahuramazda, all-powerful god of light, is figured as a winged disk, for example at Persepolis in the sixth century BCE.[8]

These multi-winged figures share a commonality of iconography with celestials described in the *Old Testament*. Angels with six wings appeared in a holy vision described in the *Book of Isaiah* 6:1, ascribed to the eighth century BCE; the prophet calls them "seraphim" who, looming before him, proclaim the presence of god, saying, "Holy, holy, holy."[9] The prophet Ezekiel (1:6–10), who was active around the end of the sixth century BCE,[10] used the word "cherub" to describe a hybrid living creature bearing the head and body of a man, calf's feet and four wings,

[7] For the figure from Tell Halaf, see Frankfort 1970: figure 347.

[8] See Boardman 2000 for a relief on the east door of the main hall of the central building at Persepolis, p. 146, figure 4.17.

[9] John Bowker, *The Complete Bible Handbook* (Great Britain: Dorling Kindersley, 1998): 200.

[10] Bowker 1998: 212.

that appeared to him in a brilliant light during his vision of the glory of god. Two of the wings extended upward, supporting the throne of God; the other two stretched downward and covered the creatures themselves. Israelite influence is manifest in the area after the eighth century BCE conquest by the Assyrians who were responsible for their dispersal in the region.[11] Visual parallel is found in the depiction of two four-winged crowned figures flanking a tiny deity seated on a long-stemmed flower on an ivory carving from Arslan Tash, in Syria, now preserved in the Louvre Museum.[12] (FIGURE 3) In these biblical forms the angel is a worshipper and a messenger of God, a party to the revelation of the Divine Spirit.

Figure 3 Four-winged figures (the Birth of Horus) from Arslan Tash, Northern Syria, carved ivory, late eighth century BCE. Louvre Museum. (After Frankfort 1970: p. 318, fig 378)

A second source was the Hellenistic culture deriving from the art and artifacts left by the

[11] Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian Publ., 2010): 30.

[12] For the ivory carving from Arslan Tash (ancient Hadatu) in Northern Syria, see Frankfort 1970: p. 318, fig. 378. The city was taken by the Assyrians who built two palaces; a group of over one hundred ivories was found in "room 14" of the smaller palace. The late eighth century BCE ivory (H. 8.5 cm; W. 9.9 cm; D. 1.2 cm) is in the Louvre Museum, Paris (Thureau-Dangin and Barrois expedition, June 1928, inv. no. AO 11470). Nicole Chevalier maintains that many of the subjects carved on these ivories represent Biblical cherubs; see Louvre Museum Arslan Tash web page: www.louvre.fr/llv/oeuvres/detail_notice.jsp?

invasion of Alexander the Great and the satrapies he established in Northern India, Afghanistan, and present-day Pakistan in 326 BCE.[13] Here one can find models of the winged Nike or victory, a female figure dressed in a thin robe with large wings emerging from behind her and "putto" (erote or amorini), shown as small naked toddlers with wings sprouting from their backs, both of which are quite familiar in Hellenistic art.[14] "All Conquering" Cupid (in Latin or Eros in Greek) is described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* from the first century as the son of Venus and Mars and the agent of erotic love; his bow and arrows of desire distinguish him.[15] (FIGURE 4)

Figure 4 Eros with Musical Instrument (Kithara) Bronze figurine from Bahdia Tunis (after Margaret Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1967]: fig 613.)

[13] Saryu Doshi, ed., *India and Greece Connections and Parallels* (Bombay: Marg Publ. 1985):2 ff; see also p. 109 ff ; John Boardman, *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993):109 ff.

[14] See *Search for Alexander* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1980) for winged victory as an earring pendant, figure 63, p. 134, and for musical erotes see figures 93–94, p. 151.

[15] Mary M. Innes, trans., *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1955), Book V: 126.

Hence the winged babe in Hellenistic tradition is a symbol of love and erotic passion, and winged victory marks the attainment of hard-won success. These are largely secular associations, but it should be noted that Christian art adopts the image of Cupid as a worshipper of God, and employs it in many pictorial contexts.[16] Thus, the symbolic meaning of these various winged images varies as does their appearance. These several types form the earliest evidence of the origin of the winged celestial, and as will be shown, the answer to the simple question of the origin of the Buddhist angel is far more complex and cannot be reduced to a single source; moreover, despite the apparent visual similarity among the various airborne celestials, we cannot be certain that all of the Western connotations were assumed in early Buddhist art.

The image of the winged celestial, which certainly originates in the West, has several guises and multiple functions in Indian Buddhist art, as suggested in the several names by which such figures are called in pre-Buddhist India. In the earliest extant hymns, the *Vedas,* ascribed to the second millennium BCE, there is a complex hierarchy of divinities. Buddhist anthropomorphic celestials are sometimes identified as *apsarases*, who are among the lower deities and are described as beautiful supernatural females,[17] and as a *deva*, or "a shining one," which is a higher, more spiritual class of being who inhabits the heavenly sphere, and their combative counterparts, the *asuras* — but, as are all gods, they are subject to the laws of *karma*.[18] In Buddhist scriptures, for example those that narrate the life of the Buddha[19] and such

---

[16] G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, Oleg Grabar, eds., *Later Antiquity: A Guide to the Post Classical World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 298ff.

[17] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1898, repr. Delhi Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), 135. Apsaras are supernatural women first mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, Book X, Hymn 95. In Chinese Buddhist texts these are translated as *Tian Nu* 天女; see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London: Kegan Paul Publ., repr. 1934, New York: Paragon, ND): for "apsarases" see p. 144b, for "deva" see p. 373a.

[18] T. O. Ling, *A Dictionary of Buddhism* (New York: Charles Scribner Publ., 1972), 94.

[19] Among the earliest extant texts telling the life of the Buddha is the *Madhyama-ityuka-sutra* (Xiuxing benqi jing 修行本起經), translated during the Eastern Han by Dharmapala; see *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (大正新修大藏經), ed. Takakutsu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku (Tokyo: *Taishō shinshō daizōkyō kanko kai*, 1924–1932, 85 vols.)

Mahayanist scriptures as the *Lotus Sūtra (Saddharmapuṇdarīkasūtra)*, composed during the Kushan era, these deities and others are subsumed. There is a group of heavenly beings, the Eight classes of supernatural beings (八部) that attend miraculous events in the biography or attend the Buddha's lectures.[20] Among these are "gods" (*devas*) (天), dragons/*naga* (龍), *yaksha* (夜叉), *gandharvas* (乾闥,婆), *asuras* (阿修羅), *garudas* (迦樓羅), *kinnaras* (緊那羅), and *mahoragas* (摩目侯羅迦).[21] Only devas, yaksha, gandharvas, and asuras are anthropomorphic, but they do not have distinguishing physical features in these texts. It is interesting to note that in the Pali tradition the asuras, yashas, and gandharvas are sometimes seen as antagonistic, making their presence at these events testimony to the transformative power of the Buddha.[22] Mention should also be made of the text that describes Mara as Kama, who is armed with his bow and floral arrows, making clear the consanguinity of the Buddhist god of karma and Eros.[23]

Examples of flying celestials in early Indian Buddhist art

Among the earliest representations of anthropomorphic winged creatures in Buddhist art are those that flank aniconic representations of the Buddha. As in the scriptures that relate the biography of the Buddha, the presence of these supernaturals in the portrayal of the major events in his life signals their importance. Indeed, the extraordinary nature of the biographical event seems, in large part, to be expressed by the divine creatures that descend from heaven to witness the occurrence. For example, carved stone slabs from the railing found at the ruined stūpa of

---

(hereafter *Daizōkyō*), vol. III, no. 184:463c14, and the *Guochu xianzai yin-guo jing* (過出現在因果經), which was translated into Chinese in CE 443–443 by Gunabhadra; see *Daizōkyō* vol. IV, no. 186: 642 b15.

[20] Leon Hurvitz translated a late-fifth-century Chinese version of the *Lotus Sūtra* which was translated by Kumārajīva; see Leon Hurvitz *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976): 15.

[21] See Soothill 1934: 41a for the "Eight classes of supernatural beings" (八部) in the *Lotus Sūtra*. For the most part the terms for these supernatural creatures are Chinese transliterations of the Sanskrit words, except "Deva," which is a translation of "Heaven" ("creature").

[22] See Ling 1972, p. 31, for *asuras,* p. 271 for *yashas,* and p. 271 *for gandharvas.*

[23] *Guochu xianzai yinguo jing*; see *Daizōkyō,* vol. IV, no. 186: 640 a5.

Bhārhut, c. second century BCE, now partially preserved in the Indian Museum in Kolkata, show a pair of winged celestials, wearing tall turbans, throwing flowers in celebration of the enlightenment: they flank the tree of wisdom at Bodh Gayā, which is identified by the architectural structure built to enclose the sacred tree.[24] (FIGURE 5)

[24] Arabinda Ghosh, *Remains of the Bharhut Stupa in the Indian Museum* (Calcutta: Indian Museum, 1978); see also Alexander Cunningham, *The Stupa of Bharhut* (1874, repr. Varanasi Indological Book House, 1962). A similar portrayal of winged celestials flanking a tree is carved on a gateway pillar, but this is a depiction of the ascent of the Buddha to visit his mother in Trayastriṃśa Heaven. In this case, the Buddha has ascended to the natural habitat of the celestials; instead of serving only to signify the miraculous event, they also suggest the ethereal realm. A third and last example has celestials placing a garland on a stūpa, the domed monument that stands for the death of the Buddha, or *Parinirvāṇa.*

Figure 5 Bhārhut Stūpa, stone railing pillar carving of gateway, c. second century BCE, Indian Museum Kolkata, and detail (author's photo)

Descending from the sky at a steep angle, a winged, turbaned humanoid offers a garland on the right, and on the left another throws flowers. Significantly, the composition clearly replicates the symmetrical organization of the figures flanking the sacred tree in the Near Eastern prototypes, and they too are dressed; however, in appearance these figures more closely resemble the classical winged cupid, being smaller in stature, and most importantly, airborne. The presence of celestials at this momentous event is described in the scriptures. "Then the devas (lit. various gods [諸天]) made heavenly music and scattered flowers. Singing praises they filled the

sky…." [25] Here the tree represents the presence of the Buddha who is not shown in anthropomorphic form. Such illustrations continue through the Āndhra period (220 BCE – 236 CE); for example, the decorations on the gateways of the Sāñcī Stūpa (c. first century CE) have winged worshipers flanking the upper area. But these devas are somewhat different as their wings have linear patterns delineating their feathers and there is a rather long and curled tail feather.[26] These variants are no doubt the result of the dictates of regional style.

Airborne celestials in Gandhāra art during the Kushan era

A subsequent increase in representations of winged celestials is due to a wave of Western influence resulting from the lively trade along the Silk Road that linked India with the eastern Mediterranean and ultimately with Rome.[27] A heterogeneous culture blossomed in Gandhāra under the kingship of the Kushans (first to fourth centuries), who were influenced by the Persian Empire as well as by the culture of the land they conquered. In addition, commercial traffic provided a link with Rome. All of these elements are discernible in the art of this region, and winged images, in particular, are familiar. Magnanimous patrons of Buddhism, the Kushans were responsible for a plethora of art, and it is here that one can observe not only the appearance of winged celestials, but an increase in the number of types and variety of circumstances in which they occur. Moreover, although at times these creatures bear a much closer affiliation with the Roman prototypes — being short, squat, often winged, and airborne — other connotations may be derived from the Zoroastrian religion, for the area was once under the Parthians[28] (247 BC –

---

[25] *Guoqu Xianzai Yinguo jing*, see *Daizōkyō,* vol. III, no.189: 642 b11ff; see also *The* Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king [佛说行讚經]*, a life of Buddha, by Asvaghosa, Bodhisattva; translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Dharmaraksha, A.D. 420, and from Chinese into English by Samuel Beal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883).

[26] P. R. Rao, *Andhra Sculpture* (Hyderbad: Akshara Publ., 1984); for flying winged creatures on the west gate, see figures 59, 62, and 67; for pillars from the north gate, see figures 48 and 49. See figure 27 for a *kinnari*, a winged human with the lower half of a bird, also represented flying and flanking a stūpa.

[27] Discussions of the impact of Western art on this region, including the creation of an anthropomorphic image of the Buddha, have occupied art historical studies for the last fifty years.

[28] The Parthians conquered the northern reaches of the Euphrates from modern Kurdistan to eastern Iran, and their

224 CE), whose great empire was also a hybrid civilization that espoused several religions.[29] More to the point, the Kushans as well as the Sasanians (224 to 651 CE), who eventually conquered northern Gandhāra,[30] were both devout followers of Zoroaster. A mural with the Zoroastrian god Ahura Mazda, the embodiment of light, as a winged disc, is found in a setting of a trabeated arched balcony on the ceiling of a grotto of a Sassanian tomb, Dokhtar-i-Noshirwan, near the Buddhist caves of Bamiyan, in Afghanistan.[31] What is more, Nike, a wreath-bearing female angel, is a standard figure in investiture scenes of Sasanian kings; for example, one flies toward Shapur I (241–272 CE) at Bishapur in modern Iran,[32] and two large Nike flank the niche at Taq-i-Bustan honoring Khosro II (591–628 CE). In addition, winged putti appear on Sasanian plates that have been associated with Dionysos.[33] Thus the art produced under these neighboring empires provided a source of Near Eastern and classical winged figures that represent not only

---

culture absorbed disparate and heterogeneous influences from the Hellenistic-Roman and Iranian empires. See Francoise Baratte*, East and West: A Central Asian Silver Hoard from the Parthian Era* (London: Melisende Press, 2002), 13ff; see also Malcolm Colledge, *Parthian Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 1ff.

[29] Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism* (New York: Harper and Row Publ., 1966), 20. The Zoroastrian religion was weakened by the prevalence of Hellenistic influences in the aftermath of the invasion of Alexander the Great, 323 BCE, and by the Parthian affiliation with other religious traditions. But Western sources record Parthian fire worship; for example, both Strabo and Pausanius describe it; see Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 63.

[30] Scholars like John Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Art of the Kushans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 116 ff, have questioned the extent to which and at what date the Sasanians came to take control of Gandhāra. He cites the evidence of coins and an inscription of Shapur I at Naqshi-i-Rustam, which record the ruler's accomplishments.

[31] A. and Y. Godard, J. Hackin, *Les antiquités bouddhiques de Bamiyân* (*Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan*, Paris: 1928): 68, figs. 25 and 26.

[32] Prudence Harper, *In Search of Cultural Identity: Monuments and Artifacts of the Sasanian Near East 3rd–7th Century A.D.* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2006): 41, fig. 10; p. 45, fig. 14.

[33] Mehdi Moussavi Kouhpar and Timothy Tayplo, "A Metamorphosis in Sasanian Silverwork: The Triumph of Dionysos?" *Current Research in Sasanian Archaeology, Art and History: Proceedings of a Conference Held at Durham University.* Bar International series 1810 (London: Archaeopress, 2008): 127–131, see figs. 3–4.

divine light, but also Nike or victory. First we will consider the variety of images in Kushan Buddhist art and then compare them to both the classical and to Near Eastern angels to ascertain the function and meaning of the winged figure in Kushan art.

In Gandharan art, as in the past, winged heavenly creatures are associated with the primary events in the life of the Buddha. By the end of the period they appear in crowds and are part of a paradisiacal Mahayanist environment, as they do in scriptural accounts such as the *Lalitavistara* where countless celestials attend each event.[34] In this capacity, as delineated in the scriptures, they throw flowers and play musical instruments signifying supernatural events. Winged divine figures celebrate the First Sermon depicted in aniconic form in a bas relief from the stūpa of Butkara in Swat;[35] (FIGURE 6), and there are two other examples including a stele from Loriyan Tangai, now in the Indian Museum in Kolkata, and another from the Dharmarājjikā stūpa in the Taxila Museum, which though damaged, appear quite similar.[36] Descending from the upper right of a fragment of a scene of the Buddha preaching under a tree, possibly the event of the First Sermon or the Enlightenment, is one of presumably a pair of winged creatures.[37] Like their Near Eastern counterparts these celestials still symmetrically flank the icon and are dressed

---

[34] For the Chinese translation of this scripture made in 308 by Dharmaraksha, see *Fo Shuo Puyao jing, Daizōkyō*, (佛說普曜經) vol. III, no. 186: 483ff; see 492 ff for the celestials attending the descent of the Buddha into Maya's womb.

[35] Domenico Faccenna, *Sculptures from the Sacred Area of Butkara* I (Rome: Istituto Poligraphico Dello Stato, 1962). Chinese Buddhist pilgrims of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries identified the Buddhist sacred precinct of Butkara as the monastery of Ta-Lo, in the area of Udyana, present-day Mingawara. The main stūpa, surrounded by votive stūpas, underwent five stages of construction, from the third century BCE to the tenth century. For the aniconic image of the First Sermon (inv. 1502), see Faccenna 1962: vol. II part 2, pl. CXIX.

[36] For the First Sermon from Loriyan Tangai in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (Calcutta h 12.6"), see John Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960, repr. New Delhi: Oriental Books, 1980): pl. 19–21, pl. 37, fig. 59; for the bas relief of the First Sermon from the Dharmarājjikā stūpa found in Building L, now in the Taxila Museum (h. 19", inv. no. 361), see Harald Ingholt and Islay Lyons, *Gandharan Art in Pakistan* (Connecticut: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1971): fig. 75, p. 69.

[37] For the scene of the Buddha Preaching from the Great Stūpa at Butkara (inv. no. 1213), see Faccenna 1962: vol. II, part 2: pl. CCVI.

in a skirt with scarves; but, like the Roman erote, their bodies have a cherubic quality and their wings are small but well articulated. The relatively small size of these figures suggests their secondary and largely symbolic role. One biographical scene actually calls for divine intervention, and the texts identify deities as the agents who carry the hooves of the mount of the Prince as he makes his way out of the city, in order to muffle the sound of his exit that none could prevent him from leaving.[38] Called *yakshas* (鬼神) in the scriptures, visually they are pictured as squat half-dressed figures that have no wings, as in examples from Sāñcī as well as from Gandhāra, like the relief from Loriyan Tangai in the Indian Museum and another in the Peshawar Museum.[39] There are also a number of pictorial narratives that have celestials in attendance, but these, lacking wings, are distinguished only by their smaller size and placement in the sky. Thus in Gandhāra, though winged celestials are prevalent in the art, there are also wingless divine attendants who are largely identifiable by their placement in the uppermost part of the scene and the billowing scarves that indicate their flight. Notable among these examples is a bas-relief depiction of the decision to depart the palace found at Butkara, in Swat, where the angelic figures have their scarves arranged in this manner.[40] Finally, there are the scenes adorning the miniature stūpa from Sikri now in the Lahore Museum, ascribed to the later period of the Kushan era, where the frequent inclusion of wingless ascendant heavenly creatures, now with halos, attests to the increasing use of such "celestials" to impart divine content even to secondary events.

---

[38] For example, they are called *yaksha* (鬼神 Guishen) in the *Fo shuo Taizi Ruying Benqi Jin*g (佛说太子瑞应本起经), translated into Chinese by Zhi Qian in the third century; see *Daizōkyō* vol. III, no. 185: 475 b19ff. "He saw various devas (诸天) in the sky...sent yakshas to hold up the horses feet." Soothill 1934: 253b translates the term as *yaksha*, "Demons in the earth, or in the air, or in the lower heavens; they are malignant, and violent, and devourers (of human flesh)."

[39] For the Great Departure from Loriyan Tangai in the Indian Museum, Kolkata, see Marshall 1960: pl. 84, figure 119. For the example in the Peshawar Museum (inv. no 457), see Ingholt 1971: figure 45, p. 60.

[40] For the Decision to Depart, from the Great Stūpa at Butkara, Swat (inv. no. 56), see Faccenna 1962: vol. II, part 2:pl. CDLX.

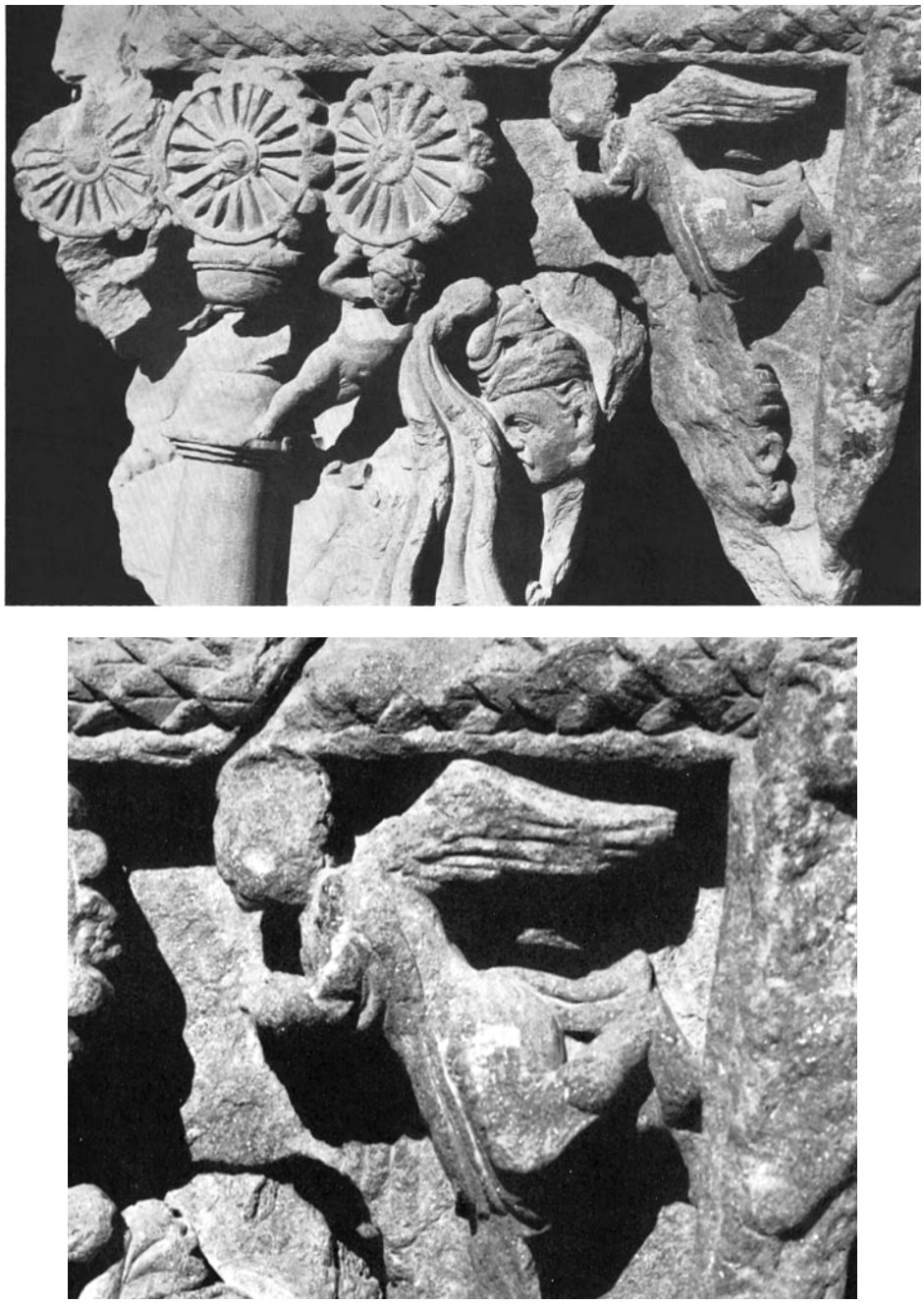

Figure 6 Aniconic Representation of the First Sermon, Great Stūpa at Butkara, Swat, stone bas relief, (inv. no. 1502), (after Domenico Faccenna *Sculptures from the Sacred Area of Butkara* I [Roma: Istituto Poligraphico Dello Stato, 1962]: vol. II, part 2, pl. CXIX)

It is clear from the limited way that these divine figures function in the earlier biographies of the Buddha that the religion is in transition between the older schools of Buddhism and those belonging to Mahāyāna. This is in accord with the general visual depiction

of the biographical narratives that stress the storytelling rather than the celestial nature of the events, for the Buddha is not appreciably larger than the other characters in the drama and bears a discreet halo. It is pertinent to note that among the main branches of proto-Mahayanist schools in the region, the Sarvastivadins, whose presence has been recorded in Mathura and Gandhāra, were believers in the value of the pictorial arts and may be responsible for the plenitude of depictions here, as they were at Amarāvatī and Kizil.[41] In this regard, winged celestial witnesses are familiar; they decorate such architectural members as volutes. At the site of the great Stūpa of Swat there are two distinct types: one clearly related to the cupid — youthful, short, squat and naked with round features — the other a slender fully dressed Indian princely figure. Adoring winged figures employed as architectural decor are common at other sites as well, including Sirkap, Taxila, Kunala, and Dharmarajika Stūpa, in present day Pakistan.[42] These examples attest to the growing frequency of the presence of winged divinities and the message that they convey of a spiritual element. Parenthetically, there is another category of winged supernatural, the atlantid figure, which is a frequent motif in the architectural decor. Typically it is a mature, kneeling, muscular nude male figure with large wings sprouting from his back.[43]

The garland motif, also of classical origin, is inextricably linked with cupid figures.[44]

---

[41] The Sarvastivads are recorded active in Gandhāra and Mathura; see Charles S. Prebish, *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press: 1975), 42–43. One of their scriptures, the *Lalitavistara,* was translated from Chinese to English by Samuel Beal*, The Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha* (London: 1875, repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985); this was the *Fobenjing* (佛本經) *(Abhinishkramana Sūtra)* rendered into Chinese by Djnanakuta, c. sixth century. An inscription at the end of this scripture names the Sarvastivadins. See E. J. Thomas, "The Lalitavistara and Sarvastivada," *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1940): 239–245. For Amarāvatī, see C. Sivaramamurti, *Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Museum* (Madras: Tansi Press, 1977): 177.

[42] For more false volutes with a winged figure see Marshall 1980: figures 21–25, pls. 20–21.

[43] The figure is extremely familiar; there are several in the Guimet Museum in Paris: for example, the one that was a gift of the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1937, inv. no. MG18916.

[44] See Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1964): pl. 108, fig. 121, for a Roman Mid-Imperial, Severan period (200–225 CE) sarcophagus with garlands and erotes in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, (inv. no. Gift of Abdo Debbas, 1870 70.1). For a discussion of the Hellenistic origins of the garland motif and its

Though garlands appear at Bhārhut, they are treated there as thin vines inhabited by human figures, rosettes and auspicious plants.[45] In Gandhāra, however, angels appear with garlands, mimicking the appearance and function as architectural decor of their classical forebears. In one example, in the National Museum of Karachi, naked putti carry the garland, and a winged figure appears behind it.[46] (FIGURE 7) Another relief, from the little-explored site of Charsadda in Peshawar, shows the persistence of the theme. (FIGURE 8) [47]

Figure 7 Garland motif with putti and winged female, from Kunala Monastery, stone bas relief, Taxila National Museum, Karachi (inv. no 568, 19.1cm tall) (After Ingholt 1971:153, figure 380)

meaning and development in Roman, Near Eastern and Buddhist Gandharan art, see Carol Bromberg, "The Putto and the Garland in Asia," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute,* vol. 2 (1991): 67–85.

[45] Cunningham 1962: pls. XXXIX–XLVII.

[46] Ingholt 1971:153, figure 380 from Kunala Monastery, Taxila, now in the National Museum, Karachi (inv. no 568).

[47] Now in the Guimet Museum, Paris, inv. no AO2920 from the Foucher expedition of 1995–1997.

Figure 8 Garland carried by Putti with winged celestial playing the drum, from Charsadda, Peshawar, now in the Guimet Museum, Paris inv. no. AO2920, from the Foucher expedition. (author's photo)

The most famous example of the motif no doubt is the one that appears on the Kaniska Reliquary, which is dated to the first year of the Kushan king's reign, ascribed to the first century.[48] But in some Gandharan examples the putti play musical instruments, as they do in the one from Upper Nathu, in the Indian Museum.[49] It is interesting to note that in Gandharan art, erotes also function in an erotic context as they did in Rome. For example, in a narrow relief from Butkara which features a seated Buddha worshipped by devotees at the top, two cupids flank the pedimental arch that houses an amorous couple.[50] A number of Gandharan so-called "cosmetic plates" also have such decor.[51]

---

[48] The reliquary is now in the Peshawar Museum; see Mirella Levi'Ancona, "Is the Kaniska Reliquary a Work of Mathura?" *Art Bulletin*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1949) 321–323. Kaniska's reign years are not calculated in reference to a calendar. For more recent dating see Falk 2001.

[49] Marshall 1980: figure 91, pl. 62.

[50] For stele with erotes, inv. no. 79, see Faccenna 1962: pl. CCXCIII. See Margaret Bieber, *The Sculpture of the*

It is important here to distinguish between the art generally ascribed to the area of Gandhāra and that of Afghanistan, more specifically the ancient area of Bactria, which, being more centrally located on the Silk Route, felt more strongly the exchange both of the Hellenistic/Roman and Near Eastern cultures, and was more directly linked to China, as is evident in the presence of Chinese articles from the Han dynasty in tombs of the area. In Bactria the great Hellenistic city Ai Khanum, believed to date to the time of Alexander the Great (c. 326 BCE), once had a grand palace, several temples, and a gymnasium all built in classical style, as well as numerous Western-style artifacts.[52] The cultural identity of this region is complex for the city was built on an older Persian settlement and subsequently inhabited by the Kushans, who built a Zoroastrian fire temple at nearby Surk Khotal. Among the finds at the site was a fragmentary stone carving decorated with a garland inhabited by winged erotes.[53] Winged figures executed in a number of media were found throughout the region. Discovered at the Buddhist monastery of Tapa Kalan in Hadda, ascribed to the third century, is a small cupola whose upper arch bears a line painting of two winged celestials carrying a wreath; the occupant is a decapitated Buddha.[54] Western influences are evident in the adept drawing of the two figures, especially the foreshortening of their legs, and their classical facial features; however, in Indian style they are not entirely nude and wear jewelry (FIGURE 9).

Hellenistic Age (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967): figure 632 for Pan, Eros and Aphrodite on a bronze mirror from Corinth, now in the British Museum.

[51] Henri-Paul Francefort, *Les Palettes du Gandhara* (Memoires de la Delegations Archéologique Française en Afghanistan; Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1979) no. 49, pl. XXX, and no. 91, pl. XLV.

[52] See Fredrik Hiebert and Pierre Cambon, eds., *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum Kabul* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008): 81 ff.; see also Francine Tissot, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Afghanistan 1931–1985* (Paris: UNESCO, 2006): 23.

[53] Tissot 2006: 58. It is interesting to note that coins of the late Sasanian era from Syria show kings with wings in their crowns; see Rilka Gyselen, "Monnaies et sceaux sassanides," *Empires Perse D'Alexander aux Sassanides* (Dossiers d'Archaeologie mai (1999), no. 243: 27, figs. 26–29.

[54] Now housed in the Guimet Museum, Niche TK17 excavated from Tapa Kalan is ascribed to the third century, inv. no. MG21810; La Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan led by Jules Barthoux in 1926–1927.

Figure 9 Niche TK17 excavated from Tapa Kalan is ascribed to the third century, La Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan led by Jules Barthoux in 1926–1927, Guimet Museum, Paris, inv. no. MG21810

Among the excavations at the city of Begram, a city best known for its magnificent pieces of furniture fashioned from ivory that feature the garland motif,[55] and multiple pieces of Roman-style glass, there were several bronze Hellenistic style figurines including a cupid carrying a torch and a bow (FIGURE 10) as well as Silenus, Hercules and Harpocrates.[56]

[55] See Tissot 2006: 215 (inv. no. K.p. 489.229) and (inv. no. K.p. 490.230) and p. 216 for (inv. no. K.p. 491.231).

[56] See Tissot 2006: 283 for the bronze figurines of Cupid (inv. no. K.p. Beg 713.453 a & b); Hercules (inv. no. K. 711.451), and Harpocrates (inv. no K.p. 712.452), and for Silenus see p. 286 (inv. no K.p. 720.460).

Figure 10 Hellenistic Cupid carrying his bow, bronze figurine, Begram level II, room 13 first century (15.2 cm), National Museum of Afghanistan, (inv. no. K.p. Beg 713.453 a & b) (after Francine Tissot, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Afghanistan 1931–1985* [Paris: UNESCO, 2006]: 284)

Indeed, among the plaster artifacts were two emblems of Cupid.[57] Moreover, there were fragments of several Chinese lacquer objects from the Latter Han period, unfortunately in a poor state of preservation.[58] Mention should also be made of a fragment of a schist relief that shows a music-making divine attendant playing a stringed instrument.[59] In addition, the site of Tillya Tepe with tombs belonging to peoples from the Eurasian steppes, who descended on the area from around the first century, has numerous objects from different cultures. The great horde of treasures, often fashioned in gold, includes such Hellenistic themes as winged angels and winged figures of Nike and Aphrodite. As for Chinese themes, there are dragons and a Han dynasty bronze mirror.[60] One might also consider Bamiyan, where an Iranian influence combined with a

[57] For plaster Cupid see Tissot 2006: 296 (inv. no K.p. 759.499) and p. 300 (inv. no K.p. 775.515).

[58] For Chinese lacquer see Tissot 2006: 304.

[59] Tissot 2006: 328 (inv. no K.p.861.67).

[60] See Tissot 2006: 244 for Tomb II Tillya Tepe's golden Aphrodite (inv. no MK 04.40.113, 4.5 x 2.5 cm) and for a

late stage of Buddhism and residual Western influences are evident in the ceiling mural of the cave of the smaller, 34.5 meter-tall standing Buddha. Here the Hellenic sun god's attendants have large wings. In sum, by the time of the eastward transmission of Buddhism, there is a clear typology of heavenly beings: in addition to the ancient Indian flower-throwing devas and yaksha carrying the feet of the prince's mount, as dictated in the scriptures, there are celestials with garlands, music-making heavenly attendants, divine figures with wings, celestials with airborne scarves that appear as wings, and even erotic putti.

Ascendant celestials in the Buddhist art of the Silk Road

We will now briefly trace the evidence of flying celestial figures in the Buddhist art of the Silk Road. Located in the modern province of Xinjiang, the site of Kizil in Baicheng County has over 236 cave grottos whose mural decorations are attributed to a span from the fourth to the seventh century.[61] The site is in bad repair having suffered the hazards of history, occupation by unsympathetic residents, and foreign missions who took large parts of the caves' murals home. Yet much remains and the debt to Gandharan art and iconography is readily apparent. Here, too, with the eastward transmission of Buddhism, came a variety of angelic attendants, both winged and wingless, including flower-throwing, music-making, garland-carrying, wreath-bearing celestials, as well as yaksha carrying the feet of the prince's mount as dictated by the scriptures, and erotic putti.

Despite the variety of flying celestials in Gandhāra, they remain a minor motif in the iconographical programs of Kizil and appear in a restricted context, and this may be related to the fact that this is a monastic site that belonged to the Sarvastivadins, as identified by the Chinese pilgrims Song Yun and Xuanzang in their travel records.[62] As in the West, celestials

---

Pair of Cupids Riding a Dolphin (inv. no MK 04.40.175,4.5 x 3.0 cm); see p. 283 for Nike carved on a gem from Tomb V.

[61] For the most recent analysis of the dating of the caves at Kizil, see Rajeshwari Ghose, "The Kizil Caves: Date, Art and Iconography," in *Kizil on the Silk Road*, ed. Rajeshwari Ghose (Mumbai: Marg Publ, 2008): 40–66, p. 42ff; and Giuseppe Vignato, "Towards a More Reliable Chronology for the Site of Kizil," in *Kizil on the Silk Road*: 31–39.

[62] Foltz 2010: 40 ff.

appear with wings and without. The former, far rarer, occur in only three murals: a small winged figure dressed in Indian fashion occupies the corner of the ceiling of Cave 165, his dark colored wings loom behind him.[63] Another appears on the ceiling vault of Cave 38 among dozens of small-scale scenes, some identifiable as *jataka* stories.[64] There a crowned and haloed celestial descends to catch a falling figure; behind him two blue wings articulated with gold paint flutter. The divine nature of these angelic characters is made evident not only by their effortless soaring postures, but also by their halos and crowns. (FIGURE 11) It is noteworthy that the Indian turban that the flying celestials wore in the early Indian examples from Bhārhut, which was lacking in the Gandharan examples, has here been transformed into a tripartite crown.

Figure 11 Feathered winged angel, ceiling mural Cave 38, Kizil, Xinjiang (after *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 3 vol. [Tokyo Heibonsha Publishers, 1983] vol. I: pl. 118)

And at the top center of an arch of a now empty niche in Cave 227 are two Roman style naked

---

[63] *Chukgoku Sekkutsu Kezier Sekkutsu*, (中國石窟克孜尔乡石窟 3 vols., Tokyo: Heibonsha Publishers, 1983), vol. II: and pl. 177, or *Zhōngguó Shíkū Kèzī'èr shíkū* (中國石窟克孜尔乡石窟, Beijing: Wenwu Publ., 1988).

[64] For Cave 38 see *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. I: pl. 118. For a discussion of the narrative vignettes like the ones in Cave 38, see Zhao Li, "In Quest of Literary Sources for the Narrative Paintings of the Kizil Caves," in *Kizil on the Silk Road,* 94–105.

cupids, bearing neither crowns nor halos. Together they carry a wreath: one is light-skinned; the other has a dark complexion. Six wingless flying divinities flank the lower part of the arch of the niche.[65] (FIGURE 12)

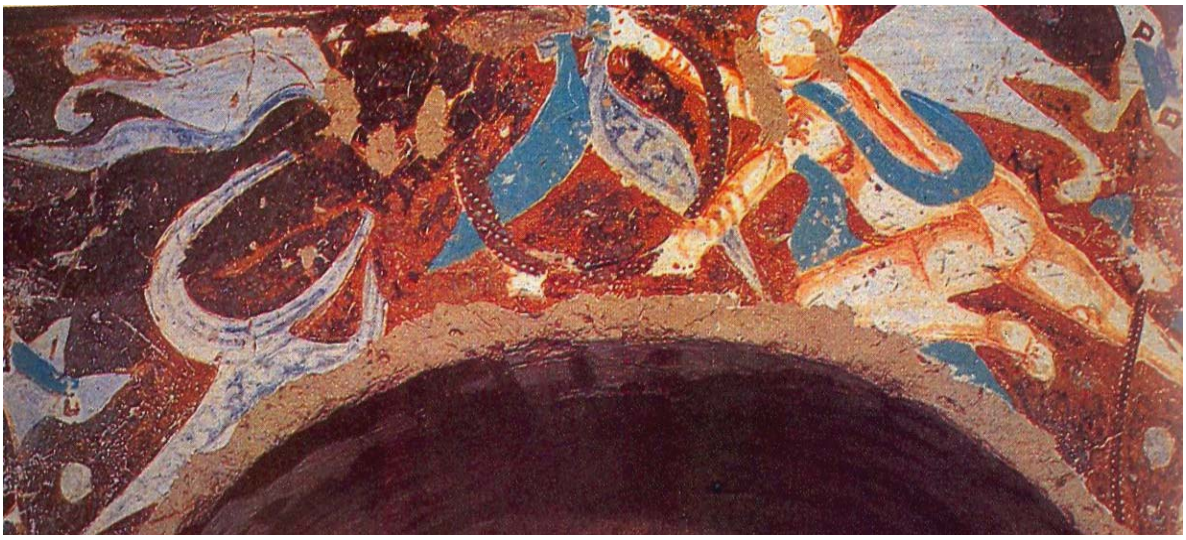

Figure 12 Winged angels, mural over arch of a niche, Cave 227, Kizil, Xinjiang (after Sun Dawei, ed., *The Characteristic Art in the Caves of Xinjiang* [Xinjiang: Xinjiang Photographic Art Publishing House, 1989], pl. 109)

Wingless celestials are more prevalent in cave decor, where they appear in three contexts. First, they still participate in scenes of events in the life of the Buddha. Mention should be made of the yaksha who hold up the feet of the horse of the prince in the Great Departure, part of a biographical pictorial narrative in Cave 110, where, it is important to note, other airborne celestial attendants are entirely lacking.[66] They are a familiar part of the Parinirvāṇa as well, for example, nine extant flying figures hover in the upper area of the rear wall of Cave 48, where

[65] For Cave 227, see *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. III pls. 162–167, see pl. 163 for illustration; see also Sun Dawei, ed., *The Characteristic Art in the Caves of Xinjiang* (Xinjiang: Xinjiang Photographic Art Publishing House, 1989): pl. 109.

[66] See *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Huihuabian Xinjiang shiku bihua* (中國美術全集繪畫編新疆石窟壁畫), ed. Su Bai, vol. 16 (Beijing: Wenwu Publishers, 1989): pl. 76, p. 30; for cave 110 see also *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. II: pl. 111.

they similarly toss flowers and play music.[67] In Cave 1 as well they attend the death of the Buddha on the rear wall of the back chamber.[68] Secondly, flying celestials appear with icons of the Buddha. For example, in Cave 8 two pairs of adult-bodied haloed and crowned heavenly creatures are shown scattering flowers and playing musical instruments on either side of a now empty niche on the front wall of the cave.[69] (FIGURE 13)

Figure 13, detail. Right side mural of celestials, niche over the front wall of the fore-chamber of Cave 8 Kizil, Xinjiang (after *Chukgoku Sekkutsu Kiziru Sekkutsu* 3 vols. [Tokyo: Heibonsha Publishers, 1983]: vol. I, fig. 18)

One dark skinned, the other light, they assume horizontal postures, soaring without the aid of wings, their scarves enlivened by the wind. In all but their more horizontal poses these celestials resemble the Gandharan prototypes. It is important to note that iconic presentations of the

[67] *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. I: pls. 158–160.

[68] For Cave 1 see *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983: vol. III: pl. 48. Because of the great damage sustained at the site, it is hard to determine how many murals depicting the scene of the death of the Buddha were attended by flying angels.

[69] *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. I: pls. 15–37. Cave 8 is ascribed to the third phase of decor (sixth to seventh century).

teaching Buddha and his audience fill the rest of the cave murals of the side walls and ceiling. One more example that may be cited is a fragment of a preaching scene from Cave 207, now in the Indian Museum in Berlin.[70] For the most part, despite these few examples, standing princely figures comprise the audience of the Buddha. Third, in a more general context energetically flying wingless divine attendants often occupy the upper ranges of the wall decor. Painted on the ceiling, music-making divines allude to the heavenly realm and help define the spiritual setting. For example, airborne celestials vigorously circle the perimeter of the ceiling of Cave 48, where they form two concentric rings.[71] Here too, there are buoyant, semi-clad, both light- and dark-skinned, haloed and crowned divinities who throw flowers, play musical instruments, and make offerings. (FIGURE 14)

Figure 14 Mural of Celestials, ceiling, Cave 48, Kizil, Xinjiang (after *Chukgoku Sekkutsu* 1983: vol. I, fig. 158)

[70] *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. III: pl. 216.

[71] In addition to these celestials on the ceiling of the rear chamber of Cave 48, see *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983 vol. I: pl 158; mention might be made of a balcony around the perimeter of the upper level of the wall housing musicians, but these are just upper body portrayals and are not similar to the figures under analysis; see pls. 89–95.

Elsewhere at the site, celestial attendants are sometimes depicted as stationary and contained within an architectonic structure on the ceiling: over a dozen once occupied the center of the domical ceiling of Cave 163; and Cave 77 has rectangular framed panels painted along the spine of the ceiling, each of which contains a haloed worshipper. In both examples, the figures, standing immobile, seem to bear witness to the events portrayed in the cella below.[72] Related to these depictions are the series of flying music-making divinities painted in the small lozenge shapes on the barrel-vaulted ceiling of Cave 196; but the emphasis is on a series of seated Buddhas that cover most of the area of the ceiling and upper walls.[73] Lastly there is a Nike-type figure who crowns a small seated Buddha in a mural detail in Cave 184: descending from the mountains the semi-naked celestial, no longer female in appearance, holds the wreath over the seated Buddha's head; here too the wall areas are filled with seated Buddhas and their audiences.[74] It is odd to note that the celestial garland is nearly absent from Kizil, and this may be in concert with the tenor of the monastic site; but mention should be made of a wooden reliquary with musicians and dancers on the base and a pearled roundel enclosing a winged naked putto on the lid. [75] Also relevant is the compelling example of the third-century garland and erote mural from Miran found by Aurel Stein on the southern arm of the Silk Route, close to China. These are so cherubic, so Western in appearance that they are ascribed to a Western journeyman artist who signed the mural "Titus."[76] Stein also records the finds of a representation of a Buddhist flying angel in Khotan and an Eros figurine at Niya.[77] Thus there are many

---

[72] In Cave 77, ascribed to the second period of decor of the late fourth to mid-fifth century, the figures similarly stand straight; see *Kiziru Sekkutsu* vol. II: pls. 29–40, and Cave 163, vol. II: pls. 163–165.

[73] For Cave 1 see *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. III: pls. 94–96.

[74] For Cave 184 see *Kiziru Sekkutsu* 1983, vol. III: figure 48.

[75] The object was discovered by the Japanese and is now in Tokyo; see Benjamin Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India* (Great Britain: Penguin Publishers, 1984): 198, figure 138.

[76] M. Aurel Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 2 vols. (London: McMillan Publ. 1912, repr. New York: Dover, 1987), vol. II: 459.

[77] Stein 1987, vol. II: 227 and 274, respectively.

examples of flying celestials, here uniformly adult-bodied, found in the art of Central Asia, and these have had a formative influence on Chinese artists.

Ascendant heavenly figures among the early Buddhist cave-chapels of North China

Flying celestials appear with increasing frequency in the Buddhist grottoes of northern China; however, winged figures are all but forgotten. As testimony to the supernatural environment reconstructed in the caves, the wingless variety appear in a number of contexts; but despite their growing number, they still play a relatively minor role in the iconographical program. The earliest murals found in north China are those from the caves at Binglingsi (炳靈寺) in Gansu Province, and it is here, in a cave dated to the early fifth century, that tiny divine beings without wings appear in the halos of the Buddha figure. Semi-naked and entwined in scarves, they effortlessly float in an ethereal setting.[78] In contrast, the early to mid-fifth-century caves at Dunhuang (敦煌) have innumerable examples of airborne creatures that conform in style with those that prevailed at Kizil; however, here they are often portrayed as light-skinned and bereft of crowns and halos. Cave 268, dated to the later Northern Liang dynasty (421–439), has several forms of celestials shown as haloed, naked to the waist, having fluttering scarves, with their legs extending behind them. They occupy the four corners of the lantern ceiling; swooping down, they throw flowers on the seated Buddha in a niche on the west wall.[79] Similarly, they appear in Cave 272 from the same period, but in addition there is a zone of ascendant heavenly characters on the top of the wall, and more angelic musicians occupy a balustrade painted near the ceiling. (FIGURE 15) In Cave 275, also of the Northern Liang period, there are in addition celestial witnesses attending the biographical scenes of the four exits and the narrative of the *Sivijataka*.[80]

---

[78] For Cave 169 at Binglingsi (炳靈寺) Gansu, dated to the Western Qin, early fifth century, see Zhang Baoxi, ed., *Gansu Grotto Art Frescos* (Gansu Peoples' Fine Arts Publishing House, 1997): 128.

[79] For Cave 268 see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku* (中國石窟莫高窟石窟) (5 vols.; Beijing: Dunhuang Institute and Heibonsha Publ., 1980–1982) vol. I: pls. 5 and 6.

[80] For Cave 275 see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* vol. I: pls. 7–9 for cave 272, and pls. 14–16. Only two scenes of the four exits are extant.

Throughout the cave the repeated patterns of their swirling draperies and fluttering scarves vividly and energetically convey their airborne state.

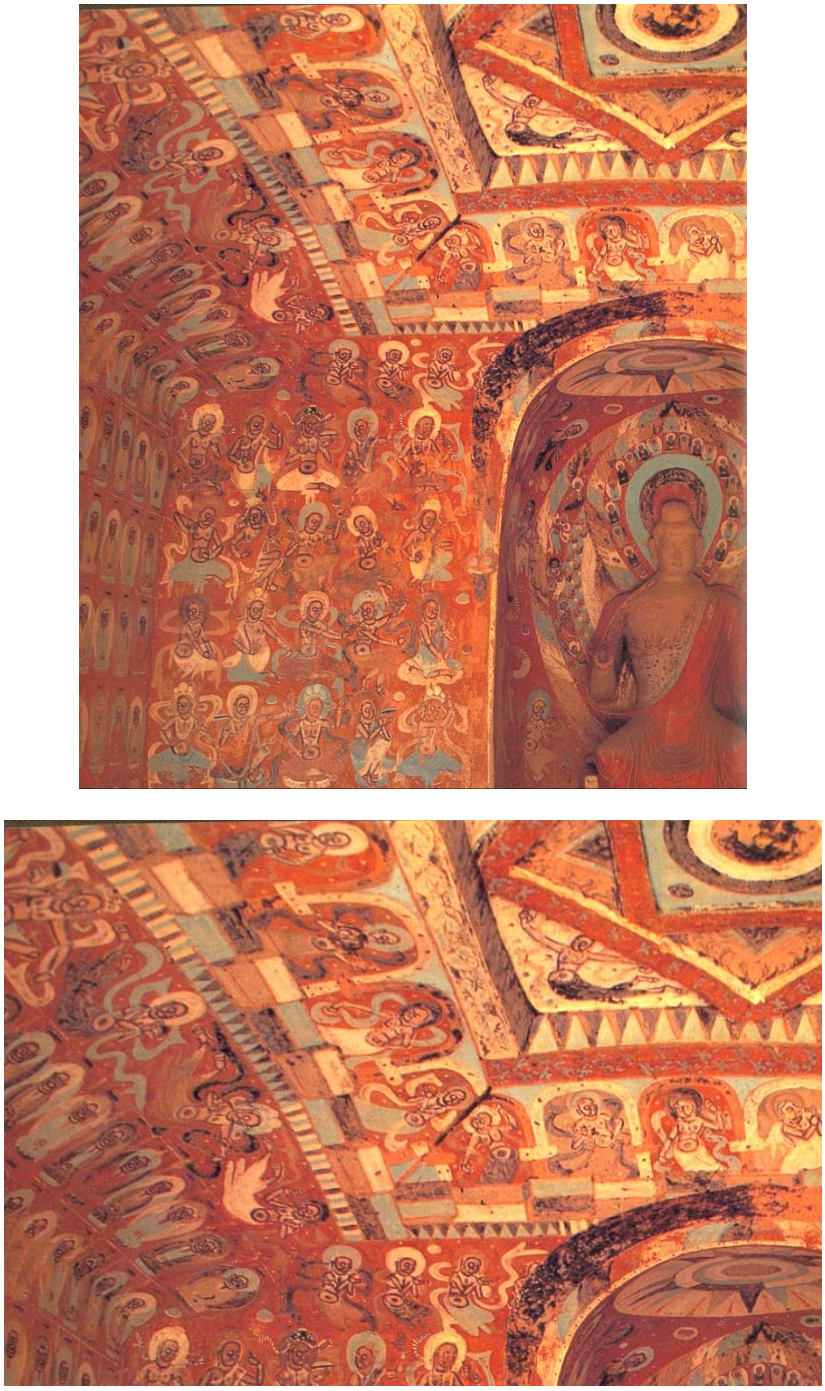

Figure 15 Mural, rear wall, Cave 272, Dunhuang, Gansu, later Northern Liang dynasty (397–439), and detail (after *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku* 5 vols. [Beijing: Dunhuang Institute and Heibonsha Publishers 1980–1982], vol. I: pls. 7)

Though clearly secondary in importance, these angelic creatures still concretely represent the divine environment. Accordingly, at Dunhuang from the earliest period, half-naked Western-style celestials appear throughout the cave, in a number of circumstances. There are also, as at Kizil, depictions of stationary angels in architectonic spaces.[81] It is interesting to note that during the subsequent period of the Northern Wei (386–535), there are two very rare images of a winged celestial found at other sites in Gansu: for example, there is one in a cave at the Wensushan (文石朱山) Grottos; and another dated 502, the third year of Emperor Jingming (景明 Jǐngmíng) of the Northern Wei, appears in a cave at Maijishan (麥積山)[82] (FIGURE 16), in addition to an Eastern Wei stele which has two winged celestial musicians at the top. (FIGURE 17)

Figure 16 Flying Angel, Cave 115, mural Maijishan Gansu, dated third year of Emperor Jingming (**景明** Jǐngmíng), Northern Wei 502 (after Zhang Baoxi, ed., *Gansu Grotto Art Frescos* [Gansu Peoples' Fine Arts Publishing House, 1997]: pl. 155)

[81] For example, Cave 263, from the Northern Wei Period, has celestials contained within rectangular panels on the ceiling, see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* vol. I., pl. 56; and cave 435 from the same period, see vol. I, pl. 71.

[82] *Gansu Grotto Art Frescos*, 155.

Figure 17 Triad of Buddha Sakyamuni with donors. Eastern Wei dynasty (534–550) inscribed in the second year of Wuding era 544 (武定二年). Guimet Museum inv. no. EO 2064. (author's photo)

In time the Western-style image of the flying celestial gradually becomes more native in appearance: the body grows thin, the exposed flesh is less evident, and the linear patterns of the flying scarves overwhelm the three-dimensional depiction of the body. In Cave 257, flanking the mural of a preaching Buddha, are eight flying celestials; their bodies have grown more attenuated, and there is less articulation of their naked torsos.[83] In Cave 437, haloed flying celestials sculpted out of clay actually wear long Chinese robes that obscure their bodies; their legs bend as they ascend, and their long sleeves flutter as once the scarves did.[84] (FIGURE 18)

Figure 18 Mural, Dunhuang Cave 437, bas relief Northern Wei period (after *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* 5 vols. [Beijing: Dunhuang Institute and Heibonsha Publishers, 1980–1982], vol. I, pl. 64)

Indeed, the transition to Chinese-style celestials is erratic, and the new type is not uniformly adopted in all of the Northern Wei period caves. The angels in Cave 260, though still

[83] For Cave 257, see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* vol. I: pl. 41.

[84] For Cave 437, see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* vol. I: pl. 64.

Western in appearance, assume difficult poses of active movement: for example, they fly backwards, their feet rising before them, their bodies encircled by a great long scarf. They now resemble gymnastic performers in Han funereal banquet scenes.[85] In Cave 249 some soaring celestials are still treated in the Western style; others wear long-sleeved robes. Attending a Buddha group painted on the side wall of Cave 249, the heavenly creatures assume a number of acrobatic postures that convey their buoyancy: the upper bodies of the Western-style figures are portrayed in frontal fashion, their hands reaching out before them, while their legs rise behind them and bend over their heads.[86] (FIGURE 19) Those in Chinese dress are drawn in three-quarter frontal posture swooping toward the Buddha on a diagonal; their heads lean back and their covered arms reach behind them, causing their sleeves and scarves to encircle them. What is more, the figures that are dressed in Chinese fashion have been executed in a fluid chromatic style of painting without the use of outlining, while those of Western appearance maintain the Central Asian technique, which is dependent on black linear definition of the anatomy.

[85] For Han banquet scenes of entertainers doing acrobatics, see Michael Sullivan, *Arts of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008): 78, fig. 4:17

[86] For Cave 260, see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* vol. I: pl. 59.

Figure 19 and detail. Mural, Dunhuang Cave 249, north face central pier, Northern Wei period (after *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku* 5 vols. [Beijing: Dunhuang Institute and Heibonsha Publishers, 1980–1982] vol. I: pl. 95)

Furthermore the tent-shaped ceiling murals of this cave harbor hundreds of other celestials, some of whom belong to Chinese mythology.[87] However, at Dunhuang, the ancient prototypes are not entirely forgotten: Cave 428 has a representation of a stūpa whose upper section is flanked by Western-style angels.[88]

Looking at the caves at Yüngang (芸刚) in Shanxi that were excavated during the period 460–499 in the Northern Wei period, one sees an even greater proliferation of angels. Lacking wings and crowns, they now fill every available space. No less athletic in their postures, they are supported by nothing but the wind. Moreover, they are more uniform in appearance, still dressed in Western fashion and equipped with halos. And here the garland motif is nearly ubiquitous, especially in caves from the later phase of construction — the so-called imperially sponsored paired caves.[89] For example, garlands borne by airborne celestials decorate the frames of the niches of the central square pier of Cave 6 as well as those on the side wall. (FIGURE 20)

[87] For cave 249, see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* vol. I: pls. 95–96 and 106.

[88] For cave 428, see *Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku,* vol. I: pl. 165.

[89] Alexander Soper, "The Imperial Cave-chapels of the Northern Dynasties," *Artibus Asiae* vol. XXVII (1960): 241ff. See also James Caswell, *Written and Unwritten* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988).

Figure 20 and detail. Flying angels and garlands, Yüngang Niche Cave 6, Northern Wei, late fifth century and detail (after *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji* vol. 10, *Yüngang shiku diaoke*, Su Bai, ed. [Beijing: Wenwu Publ., 1988]: pl. 30)

And most of the caves, like Cave 7, have a multitude of angelic creatures flying about the ceiling as they did at both Kizil and Dunhuang.[90] (FIGURE 21)

Figure 21 Flying angels ceiling, Yüngang Cave 7, Northern Wei, late fifth century (after *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji*, vol. 10, *Yüngang shiku diaoke* Su Bai, ed. [Beijing: Wenwu Publ., 1988]: pl. 71)

It serves no purpose to catalog the many instances of the appearance of flying celestials in other caves at the site, nor is there much to add to the discussion by examining closely the developments at the other Northern Wei imperially sponsored cave-chapels, like those excavated in Luoyang when they moved the capital from the far north to central China, because even though in subsequent periods refinements in the flying figures occur, they do not substantially alter the appearance of these wingless divinities. Nor do the symbolic meanings associated with these airborne creatures radically change: as in the West, the primary function of these sublime creatures is to attest to the presence of the supernatural whether in extraordinary events in the life of the Buddha, in the heavenly audience who attended his sermons, or the spiritual environment in which the faithful find themselves.

[90] For Yüngang Cave 6, see *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Yüngang shiku diaoke,* (中国美术全集芸刚石窟雕刻) vol. 10 Su Bai, ed. (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1988): pls. 30 31, 32. For cave 7, see pl. 71.

Conclusion

In summation, a variety of types of flying celestials traveled the Silk Road from the West eastwards and became both a decorative and symbolic element in Buddhist art. Such cherubic creatures have a lengthy ancestry and can be found in the Persian, Hebrew, and Zoroastrian traditions. The ancient meaning of the cherub/seraphim told of by the prophets of the *Old Testament* and illustrated in ancient Persian and Near Eastern art seems inextricably tied to the image, making it a witness to the presence of the divine. Artists in India appropriate the appearance of the Near Eastern model: the winged figure is rarely shown naked, but rather follows Near Eastern dressed and turbaned prototypes and is part of a symmetrical composition, flanking a central motif. Hellenistic erotes and Nike figures were also influential in India, affecting in particular the physical type of the cherubic babe which takes precedence over the adult-size Near Eastern types; in addition, the figure is small in scale, and perhaps most importantly, is placed in active flying posture in the upper areas of the composition. In addition, some airborne celestials appear conferring the wreath of victory in Western classical tradition or carrying garlands. Thus Buddhist artists in India appropriated aspects of both models of winged celestials in order to illustrate the group of supernaturals described in their scriptures as playing musical instruments and throwing flowers in testimony to the miraculous nature of the events. Some examples of heavenly creatures lack wings; rather their flowing scarves suggest feathered appendages. In sum, many kinds of angelic creatures appear in Indian Buddhist art, but they persistently play a minor role in the composition. With few changes, airborne celestials appear in the Buddhist art of the Silk Route: here too they may be winged or wingless, with their scarves aflutter. Both dark- and light-skinned adult-bodied celestials with both crowns and halos throw flowers, make heavenly music, confer the wreath of victory, or carry a garland. In early Buddhist China, not only do these various types of images continue to be portrayed, but they proliferate: in concert with descriptions in the Mahayanist teachings there is a growing profusion of such divine beings. In the cave-chapels of the North they appear on the ceiling and fly in the upper areas of the cave walls, alluding to the heavenly environment; they may play instruments or throw flowers as they flank the upper area of a seated Buddha. In contrast to the more sedate murals at

Kizil, these numerous heavenly creatures are testimony to a paradisiacal realm. Gradually, during the Northern Wei period, the appearance of the Western flying celestial takes on a Chinese appearance, as do the Buddha and bodhisattvas. Assuming even more complicated energetic poses which are reminiscent of the native entertainment scenes found in Han dynasty tombs, these celestials wear long-sleeved Chinese robes, and their tumbling in the air causes their multitudinous ribbons and scarves to flutter. They joyfully celebrate the teachings. Such Western activities as the conferring of a wreath nearly disappear, while at some sites, such as Yüngang, the motif of celestials carrying the garland becomes a familiar motif. Despite these variations, the continuity in the transmission of the image of the flying celestial is evident. Moreover, the presence of these divine creatures maintains the same general iconographical function — to indicate the occurrence of the divine.

There is yet one other consideration — why did the winged type of cherub give way to the wingless? The answer may well be a complicated one. It is interesting to note that winged creatures can be found in China at the end of the Han dynasty, when immortals or Xian, probably influenced by Roman prototypes transported along the Silk Route, took on cupid-like winged appendages. Xian (仙), beings who have achieved immortality, were imagined as living in the upper reaches of the mountains, as their name, literally "men (in the) mountains," reflects.[91] (FIGURE 22)

[91] *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Huihuabian, Huaxiang shihuaxiangzhuan*, (中國美術全集繪畫编畫像石畫像磚) vol. 18, Chang Renxia, ed. (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1988): fig 167; Han dynasty, engraved stone from Fangcheng, Henan (方成河南) (175 cm tall).

Figure 22 Winged Xian or Chinese Immortal with Red Bird of the South, rubbings of an engraved bas relief, tomb stone from Fangcheng, Henan 206–220 (175 cm tall) (After *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Huihuabian,* vol. 18, *Huaxiang shihuaxiangzhuan*, Chang Renxia, ed. [Beijing:Wenwu Publishers, 1988]: fig 167, Han dynasty, engraved stone from Facheng, Henan)

Thus the implications of being winged and able to fly and thereby enabling transport to the celestial realms are similar; and also, by extension, the presence of Xian indicates a supernatural environment. But after the Han dynasty, these immortals also lost their wings, though they retained their airborne character. Perhaps in the late fifth century transformation of the Western airborne Buddhist heavenly creatures into more Chinese-style figures, they lost their wings along with some of their other distinctive features, as they acquired a more Chinese body type, facial features and garments. It may be that by that time the winged hybrid creature seemed strange and unacceptable to the Chinese, and it is not unrelated that during this era monstrous composite animals equipped with large wings were conscripted to act as tomb guardians. In sum, though the flying celestial lost its wings, it became a ubiquitous element in Buddhist visions of the divine realm.

Bibliography

Western sources

Alram, Michael. "Indo Parthian and Early Kushan Chronology: The Numismatic Evidence," *Coins, Art and Chronology,* ed. Deborah E Klimburg-Salter and Michael Alram, vol. 1:19–51. Wien: Verlag Der Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999.

Baratte, Francoise. *East and West: A Central Asian Silver Hoard from the Parthian Era*. London: Melisende Press, 2002.

Beal, Samuel. *The* Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king [佛说行讚經]*, a life of Buddha, by Asvaghosa, Bodhisattva; translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Dharmaraksha, A.D. 420, and from Chinese into English by Samuel Beal*. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1883.

Beal*,* Samuel. *The Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha.* London: 1875; rpt Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985.

Bieber, Margaret. *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Boardman, John. *Persia and the West*. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 2000.

Boardman, John. *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Bowersock, G. W., Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar, eds. *Later Antiquity: A Guide to the Post-Classical World.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Bowker, John. *The Complete Bible Handbook.* Great Britain: Dorling Kindersley, 1998.

Boyce, Mary. *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Bromberg, Carol. "The Putto and the Garland in Asia," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute,* 2 (1991): 67–85.

Caswell, James. *Written and Unwritten*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988.

Colledge, Malcolm. *Parthian Art*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Cunningham, Alexander. *The Stupa of Bharhut.* 1874, reprint Varanasi Indological Book House, 1962.

Doshi, Saryu, ed. *India and Greece Connections and Parallels,* Bombay: Marg Publ., 1985.

Duchesne-Guillemin, Jacques. *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism.* New York: Harper and Row Publ., 1966.

Faccenna, Domenico. *Sculptures from the Sacred Area of Butkara I.* 2 vols. Roma: Istituto Poligraphico Dello Stato, 1962.

Falk, Harry. "The Yuga of Sphujiddhvaja and the Era of the Kuṣāṇas," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* VII (2001): pp. 121–136.

Falk, Harry. "The Kaniska Era in Guptan Records," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* VII, (2004):10:167–176.

Francefort, Henri-Paul. *Les Palettes du Gandhara Mémoires de la Délégations Archéologique Franéais en Afghanistan.* Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1979.

Frankfort, Henri. *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954, repr. 1970.

Foltz, Richard. *Religions of the Silk Road*. New York: Palgrave Macmillian Publ., 2010.

Gobl, Robert. "The Rabatak Inscriptions and the Date of Kaniska," *Coins, Art and Chronology,* ed. Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter and Michael Alram, vol. 1: 151–176. Wien: Verlag Der Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999.

Godard, A., Y. Godard, J. Hackin, P. Pelliot. *Les antiquités bouddhiques de Bâmiyân Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan*. Paris, 1928.

Ghose, Rajeshwari. "The Kizil Caves: Date, Art and Iconography," in *Kizil on the Silk Road*, ed. Rajeshwari Ghose. Mumbai: Marg Publ., 2008.

Ghosh Arabinda. *Remains of the Bharhut Stupa in the Indian Museum.* Calcutta: Indian Museum, 1978.

Gyselen, Rilka, "'Monnaies et sceaux sassanides' Empires Perse D'Alexander aux Sassanides," *Dossiers d'Archaeologie* mai (1999): no. 243: 27ff.

Harper, Prudence, *In Search of Cultural Identity: Monuments and Artifacts of the Sasanian Near East 3rd – 7th Century A.D.* New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2006.

Hiebert, Fredrik, and Pierre Cambon, eds. *Afghanistan Hidden Treasures from the National Museum Kabul*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008.

Hurvitz, Leon. *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

Ingholt, Harald, and Islay Lyons. *Gandharan Art in Pakistan*. Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1971.

Innes, Mary M., trans. *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*. Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1955.

Kouhpar Mehdi Moussavi and Timothy Tayplo. "A Metamorphosis in Sasanian Silverwork: The Triumph of Dionysos?" In *Current Research in Sasanian Archaeology, Art and History: Proceedings of a Conference held at Durham University. Bar International,* series 1810, 127–131. London: Archaeopress, 2008.

Levi'Ancona, Mirella. "Is the Kaniska Reliquary a Work of Mathura?" *Art Bulletin*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1949), 321–323.

Ling, T. O. *A Dictionary of Buddhism.* New York: Charles Scribner Publ., 1972.

Macdonell, A. A. *Vedic Mythology*. Strassburg, 1898, reprint Delhi Motilal Banarsidass, 1981.

Marshall, John. *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1960.

Mookerji, Radha Kumud *Asoka,* London: Macmillian Publishers, 1972.

Panofsky, Erwin. *Tomb Sculpture*. New York: Harry Abrams, 1964.

Prebish, Charles S. *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective.* University Park, Penn.: Penn State University Press, 1975.

Rao P. R. *Andhra Sculpture.* Hyderbad: Akshara Publ., 1984.

Rosenfield, John. *The Dynastic Art of the Kushans.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Rowland, Benjamin. *Art and Architecture of India.* Great Britain: Penguin Publishers, 1984.

Search for Alexander. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1980.

Sivaramamurti, C. *Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Museum*. Madras: Tansi Press, 1977.

Soothill, William Edward, and Lewis Hodous. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms.* London: Kegan Paul, Publ., 1934; repr. New York: Paragon, ND.

Soper, Alexander. "The Imperial Cave-chapels of the Northern Dynasties," *Artibus Asiae* XXVII (1960): 241ff.

Stein, M. Aurel. *Ruins of Desert Cathay.* 2 vols. London: McMillan Publ. 1912; repr. NewYork: Dover, 1987.

Strong, John S. *The Legend of King Asoka.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Sullivan, Michael. *Arts of China*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2008.

Sun Dawei, ed., *The Characteristic Art in the Caves of Xinjiang.* Xinjiang: Xinjiang Photographic Art Publishing House, 1989.

Thomas, E. J. "The Lalitavistara and Sarvastivada," *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1940): 239–245.

Tissot, Francine. *Catalogue of the National Museum of Afghanistan 1931–1985.* Paris: UNESCO, 2006.

Vignato, Giuseppe. "Towards a More Reliable Chronology for the Site of Kizil," in *Kizil on the Silk Road*, ed. Rajeshwari Ghose, 31–39. Mumbai: Marg Publ., 2008.

Zhang Baoxi, ed. *Gansu Grotto Art Frescos*. Gansu Peoples' Fine Arts Publishing House, 1997.

Zhao Li. "In Quest of Literary Sources for the Narrative Paintings of the Kizil Caves," in *Kizil on the Silk Road*, ed. Rajeshwari Ghose, 94–105. Mumbai: Marg Publ., 2008.

East Asian sources

Chukgoku Sekkutsu Kiziru Sekkutsu. (中國石窟克孜尔乡石窟) 3 vols. Tokyo: Heibonsha Publishers, 1982.

Fo Shuo Taizi Ruying Benqi Jing (佛说太子瑞应本起经), translated into Chinese by Zhi Qian in the third century; see *Daizōkyō* vol. III, no. 185:475.

Guochu xianzai yinguo jing (過出現在因果經), translated into Chinese in CE 443–443 by Fo Shuo Puyao jing, (佛說普曜經) *Daizōkyō*, vol. III, no. 186: 483. Gunabhadra, see *Daizōkyō,* vol. IV, no. 186.

Taishō shinshū daizōkyō. (大正新修大藏經), Takakutsu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds. Tokyo: Taishō shinshō daizōkyō kanko kai, 1924–1932.

Xiuxing benqi jing (修行本起經 *Madhyama-ityuka-sutra) Daizōkyō* vol. III, no. 184:463

Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Huihuabian, Huaxiang shihuaxiangzhuan, (中國美術全集繪畫編畫像石畫像磚) vol. 18 ed. Chang Renxia. Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1988.

Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Huihuabian Xinjiang shiku bihua, (中國美術全集繪畫編新疆石窟壁畫) vol. 16, ed. Su Bai. Beijing: Wenwu Publishers, 1989.

Zhongguo Meishu Quanji, Yüngang shiku diaoke, (中國美術全集芸岡石窟雕刻) vol. 10, ed. Su Bai. Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1988.

Zhongguo Shiku kezi'er shiku. (中國石窟克孜尔乡石窟) Beijing: Wenwu Publ., 1988.

Zhongguo Shiku Mogaoku. (中國石窟莫高窟) 5 vols. Beijing: Dunhuang Institute and Heibonsha Publ., 1980–1982.

Since June 2006, all new issues of *Sino-Platonic Papers* have been published electronically on the Web and are accessible to readers at no charge. Back issues are also being released periodically in e-editions, also free. For a complete catalog of *Sino-Platonic Papers*, with links to free issues, visit the *SPP* Web site.

www.sino-platonic.org