

Untangling the Textiles in the Murals:

**A Study on the Monks' Robes depicted
in the First Indo-Iranian Style Paintings of Kucha**

〈in English〉

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Abstract

In contrast to the author's last paper published in the previous volume of JWBC which introduced the visual syntax of the Buddhist mural paintings of the ancient Kucha Kingdom, this paper rather focuses on another aspect of these mural paintings as the visual witness of the particular historical, socio-cultural conditions of the region. The specific type of decorative pattern on the monks' robes depicted in the narrative paintings of a particular style in Kucha is worth special attention.

This paper consists of two main sections. The first section charts the geographical and chronological distribution of the depiction of textiles bearing this specific type of decorative pattern. They appear intensively in the Buddhist art in oasis towns from Gansu Province in the east to Bamiyan in the west, which are dated approximately from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the sixth century. The second section analyzes the historical, social and ritual background of these depictions. The archaeological find of the textile fragment excavated from the Boma grave and the textual evidence found in the Turfan manuscripts leads to the supposition that these textiles are most probably portrayal of the actual textiles called "Kucha Silk (*Qiuci-Jin*)" at that time. The reason why textiles with such an outstanding geometric pattern could be accepted in the monastic environment may have to do with the local interpretation of the prescription in the *Vinaya* that the appropriate robes of monks should look like "the field of Magadha". The unusually detailed depictions of the monks' robes made of local textiles in the narrative paintings may have been intended to commemorate and guarantee of the merit of laymen, who donated these valuable textiles to the monastery at particular ritual occasions like *kaṭhina*.

要旨

『世界仏教文化研究』創刊準備号に掲載された拙論「壁画というテキスト ―クチャの仏教壁画を「読む」―美術史と文献学の領域横断的アプローチに向けて―」では、古代亀茲（クチャ）王国の仏教遺跡に描かれた壁画を、絵画的語彙と絵画的文法という二つの切り口によりテキストのように読み解く方法について論じた。一方、本稿では、クチャの仏教壁画の歴史的資料としての側面を扱う。説話美術において、テキストに明文化されていない細部の描写には、当時の物質文化が反映されている場合があり、当時の社会的・文化的状況を復元的に考察する手掛かりとなり得る。

本稿は、クチャの第一インド・イラン様式壁画に描かれた袈裟と、その独特の格子紋様に着目する。前半部では、この独特の格子紋様を持つ染織品の描写の、地理的及び年代的分布を分析する。これらの格子紋様が描かれた布の描写は、およそ五世紀中旬～六世紀中旬の甘粛省からバーミヤンに至るシルクロード沿いのオアシス都市の仏教美術に集中的に観察される。

後半部では、これらの染織品の歴史的、社会的そして仏教学的背景に迫る。新疆北部の波馬遺跡からは類似の格子紋様を持つ絹織物断片が出土しているが、この織物断片に用いられた素材と技法には、五世紀中旬のトルファン出土の漢語文書に二度言及される「丘慈（クチャ）錦」との関連性が見出せる。クチャを中心とする五～六世紀の西域の仏教美術に特徴的に表された格子紋様の絹織物は、「丘慈錦」を写實的に描いたものであった可能性を提起したい。また、なぜこのような比較的派手な紋様の織物が当時の仏教僧団に受容され得たかという点に関しては、各部派の律蔵に伝わる、仏弟子の袈裟は「マガダ国の田園のような」衣でなくてはならないという規定の解釈と関わる可能性がある。クチャの仏教壁画の説話画面において、これらの絹織物を用いた袈裟の描写は際立って緻密である。これはカティナ儀礼などの定期的な仏教儀礼を通して、地方特産の高価な絹織物を僧団に寄進した在家信者の功德を記念することを意図したものであると考えられる。

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Satomi Hiyama

Keywords: Kizil, Dunhuang, Textiles, Vinaya, *kaṭhina*

I. Introduction

The Buddhist mural paintings of the former Central Asian Buddhist kingdoms are a repository of information on various aspects of the local Buddhist culture. The last paper of the present author published in the previous volume of JWBC introduced the visual syntax of the Buddhist mural paintings of the ancient Kucha Kingdom. This paper, in contrast, features another aspect of these mural paintings: the visual records of the historical situation of the region.

While narrative paintings are principally composed on the basis of the textual tradition, the pictorial surface has a realm that gave more freedom to artists. This realm arises in a process of transforming the Buddhist narrative stories into the visual format, in which the artists confront a challenging question: how should details, which are not described exactly in the texts, be visualized?

In confronting such needs, there are two possibilities for painters to undertake this task. The first choice is to follow the already canonized iconographical tradition. Another possibility is creating new representations, particularly necessary in cases when iconographical prototypes are not available or not well established.

There are many possible readings of these details, which are not restricted by the textual tradition, and sometimes such details can be a witness of the actual socio-cultural condition of the region, in which the artisan lived and worked. Some remarkable studies have been undertaken to read specific motifs in Kuchean murals as the visual record of the actual material culture of the region in particular periodic frames

[cf. Su 1983: fn. 8; Il'yasov 2001; Ebert 2006: 109-116; Kageyama 2007; Kageyama 2015 etc., also see Hiyama 2013; Hiyama 2016a: Chapter III]. This paper provides a new case study in this lineage, featuring in monks' robes depicted in the narrative paintings. The specific sort of decorative pattern depicted on the monks' robes, in fact, bears witness to the historical and socio-cultural situation of this region in a particular period.

II. Monks' Robes in Representations

II-1. Monks' Robes in the Mural Paintings: Portrayal or Imaginative?

The Buddhist mural paintings of Kucha include an enormous number of representations of monks, both as protagonists in the narrative scenes (**Fig. 1**) and also as portraits of real monks, often represented together with the portraits of lay patrons (**Fig. 2**).

Huo Xuchu, in his paper in 2011, undertook pioneer research on the representation of monks' robes in Kuchean paintings. The wearing the "three robes (*tricīvara*)" is a common practice in all Buddhist schools, which consists of the inner robe (*antarvāsa*, made of five strips of clothes, covering the lower body), the upper robe (*uttarāsaṅga*, made of seven strips of clothes, worn over the inner robe) and the outer robe (*saṃghāti*, made of nine to twenty-five strips of clothes). On the other hand, the way of how these robes are made and worn differs in each Buddhist school. Huo paid attention to both historical and Buddhist textual sources recording the custom concerning the making and wearing the robes by various Buddhist schools, and compared them to the representations in the murals, drawing conclusion that the robes worn by portraited Kuchean monks follow the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda rule.⁽¹⁾ Considering the fact that costumes worn by the portrayed lay donors in the murals also reflect the actual textile circulation in this region,⁽²⁾ his argument is highly convincing.

⁽¹⁾ Decisive characteristics of the monks' robes portrayed in the Kuchean murals, on which Huo's argument is based, are 1) the way to wear the robes in a manner that both ends of the robe are exposed, 2) the length of the robes, which is about "four fingers(-long) above the ankle", and 3) the colouring of most of the robes in crimson red. All of these features correspond to the prescription of the (*Mūla-*)*Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* according to Huo's analysis (see Huo 2011).

⁽²⁾ Cf. Ebert 2006: 109-116; also see Compareti 2003 for the study on the historical background of the textiles bearing the pearl roundels pattern, which was often used for tailoring the caftans dressed by Kuchean donors portrayed in the Second Indo-Iranian style paintings.

Monks represented in the narrative scenes, on the other hands, are regarded by Huo as not necessarily reflecting actual customs, since they often wear colourful robes, sometimes bearing small flower patterns, apparently disobeying the monastic rule. Huo comments that the robes of those monks belong to the narrative realm and thus are not necessarily to be restricted by the actual custom of the region.⁽³⁾

Huo's argument seems to be basically true. Nonetheless, the present author noticed that the monks' robes bearing with a very particular type of pattern are repeatedly depicted in the narrative scenes in more than one cave temple (**Figs. 3-8**). As such a very particular pattern is repeatedly represented, it seems to be too early to ascribe them to the painters' spontaneous creativity. In following, the overview of all relevant representations is given.



Fig. 1

⁽³⁾ Huo 2011: 7. He yet paid attention to the representations of the patchwork robes (*paṃsukūla cīvara*) worn by Mahākāśyapa in the narrative scenes, which seems to coincide to the actual robe bearing the pattern of the “paddy field”.



Fig. 2

II-2. Monks' Robes with Geometrical Pattern in Kizil Caves

The monks' robes bearing a particular type of geometric patterns can be observed in the mural paintings in Kizil Cave 207 (Malerhöhle, **Figs. 3, 6, 7, 8**) and Cave 84 (Schatzhöhle B, **Figs. 4, 5**). While the murals of Cave 207 are no doubt a masterpiece of the First Indo-Iranian style paintings, those of Cave 84 were classified as “special style” (*Sonderstil*) by Waldschmidt, which display a mixture of elements from both the First- and Second Indo-Iranian styles in a unique way.⁽⁴⁾ While the present author tentatively dates the mural

⁽⁴⁾ See Waldschmidt 1933. There has been a wide variety of attempts to classify the pictorial styles of the Kuchean paintings. While the German pioneer scholars divided the murals into three larger stylistic groups (First Indo-Iranian Style painting, Second Indo-Iranian Style and Chinese Buddhist Style), recent Chinese scholars often propose much more detailed classification, which can list even more than ten groups of pictorial styles (for an example see Wang 2009). Nevertheless, current researches generally agree on the point that there are at least four groups of pictorial styles observed in the Buddhist mural paintings in the Kucha, namely two types of the local artistic styles, Han style and Uyghur style. The first two styles are still called First- and Second Indo-Iranian styles in many of publications as following the German scholarly tradition, while there are writings critical about these terminologies automatically invoking the chronological sequence of these styles as this is a very controversial point. The present author intentionally uses the terminology “First- and Second Indo-Iranian Styles” from two reasons. First, her PhD thesis (Hiyama 2016a) and recent studies have argued the difference in repertory of both

paintings of Cave 207 to around 510's to 530's,⁽⁵⁾ those of Cave 84 are usually dated to around 500.⁽⁶⁾

While there is a variety in details, the geometric pattern depicted on the robes is principally composed of a regularly arranged grid pattern, consisting of a combination of one or several vertical line(s) and one or several horizontal line(s). The crossing point of each grid line looks like a checkerboard pattern. What can be varied are the ornamental designs inserted in each unit of the grid, and the size of the checkerboard pattern at the crossing of grid lines. According to the arrangement of the ornamental design in each unit of the grid, the geometric patterns can be classified as **Type A** and **Type B**.

The textile pattern **Type A** is characterized by the repetition of the same ornamental design in each unit of the grid.

The simpler one among them is found on a monk's robe, which appears in an unidentified sermon scene depicted on the left side walls of Kizil Cave 207 (**Fig. 3**). In this scene, the Buddha is preaching in front of a young monk, who is kneeling and holding a folded piece of textile toward the Buddha. At least three more monks are illustrated in this scene, along with Vajrapāṇi, a *devatā* and Indra with his third eye. There is a remarkable pattern on the robe the monk holding a textile wears, which consists of systematically arranged dots inserted in each unit of the grid. Since this scene is heavily damaged today, the available documentation of this robe is solely the monochrome photograph taken by the German expedition in 1906.⁽⁷⁾ Yet judging from the painters' palette in this cave (the murals of which are partly preserved at the original site, and in the museums in Berlin and St. Petersburg as well),⁽⁸⁾ this robe was most probably coloured crimson red.

The robe with a very similar type of pattern is worn by at least two monks in the mural paintings of Kizil Cave 84, both appearing in unidentified sermon scenes (**Fig. 4**).⁽⁹⁾ These

narrative- and non-narrative motifs in the paintings of both styles, which seems to reflect their different historical backgrounds. Second, the analysis of the Indian and Iranian elements in both styles seem to be decisive for understanding the formation process of these styles.

⁽⁵⁾ See Hiyama 2016a: Chapter III.

⁽⁶⁾ Because of their unique stylistic features showing strong Indian influence, the mural paintings of this cave is generally dated to the early point in the history of Kuchean Buddhist art. Waldschmidt dated this cave to around 500 (Waldschmidt 1933: 26-29), while the recent publications in China date this cave to the late 5th century (*Mural paintings in Xinjiang of China* 2009: (I) 9-16).

⁽⁷⁾ This photograph is kept in the archive of the Asian Art Museum of Berlin (B 811).

⁽⁸⁾ All of the mural fragments removed from this cave by the third and fourth German expeditions are catalogized in the present author's dissertation (Hiyama 2016a: Chapter I and Appendices I-III).

⁽⁹⁾ For illustrations see Grünwedel 1920: Tafel XXXII-XXXIII, XXXIV-XXXV.

representations are still preserved in original (in Asian Art Museum of Berlin, Inv. No. III 8444). Both robes are coloured crimson red and cream white, while the rim of the robe is coloured light green.

A further variation of the pattern with the same structural principle can be found in another sermon scene of Kizil Cave 84 (**Fig. 5**), which illustrates the story of Angulimāla.⁽¹⁰⁾ Among monks standing beside the Buddha is the one clad in a robe with the geometric pattern. This robe is again coloured crimson red and cream white, while its rim is coloured white and blue. A double-framed roundel with a cross mark inside is inserted in each unit of the grid.

In contrast to the pattern **Type A**, the textile pattern **Type B** consists of two sorts of ornamental designs, which are alternatively inserted into the grid pattern.

The textile pattern **Type B** is exclusively found in the mural paintings of Kizil Cave 207 to the best of the author's knowledge. The monks wearing the robes bearing this particular pattern are depicted in the scenes respectively about the Buddha's first sermon in Benares (**Fig. 6**),⁽¹¹⁾ the conversion of Uruvilva-Kāśyapa and his brothers (**Fig. 7**),⁽¹²⁾ as well as in an unidentified sermon scene (**Fig. 8**).⁽¹³⁾ In all of these scenes, one young monk appears among several monks, wearing a robe with a geometric pattern. The pattern consists of the fourfold grid lines. The inner field of the grid lines is alternatively filled with two different types of motifs; a roundel with a flower-like decoration inside, and a geometric motif consisting of five square forms. It is not certain whether all of the monks wearing this specific robe in these three scenes are intended to be an identical person, since this monk always appears together with some other monks, whose appearances are not consistent in each scene and thus are also not sure whether they represent the same personalities or not.

Are these robes, bearing such a complex decorative pattern, a portrayal of the real clothes, or are they just arising from the imagination of the painters? There are two reasons that

⁽¹⁰⁾ For the illustration see *ibid*, Tafel XXXIV-XXXV. For the identification of this scene see Zin 2006: 117-118.

⁽¹¹⁾ Cf. Grünwedel 1912: 154, fig. 342. For further iconographical details see Hiyama 2016a: Chapter IV-1-2-6.

⁽¹²⁾ Cf. Grünwedel 1912: 155, fig. 351 (= Asian Art Museum, Inv. No. III 9136; B 811). The identification of this scene through this story was proposed by Waldschmidt (1930: 4-6). For further iconographical details see Hiyama 2016a: Chapter IV-1-2-4.

⁽¹³⁾ Cf. Grünwedel 1912: 154, fig. 340 (= Asian Art Museum, Inv. No. III 9148a, **Fig. 1**); also see Hiyama 2016a: Chapter IV-1-2-4. Although this scene is identical to **Fig. 1**, the part with the monk bearing the patterned robe is no longer visible in the original fragment.

suggest they are most probably of a portrayal character. First, it is very unlikely that the decorative patterns with such an outstanding complexity are depicted in many scenes with different narrative contents merely by chance. Considering the simplicity of other usual robes represented in the Kuchean paintings, the unusually detailed depiction of these kinds of clothes has to stand for a certain meaning or function. Second, the same types of the textile are in fact represented in the mural paintings and statues outside Kucha, as described below.

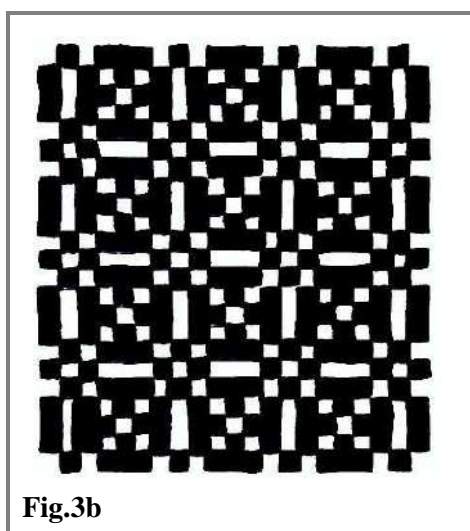
**Fig. 3a****Fig.3b**



Fig.4a

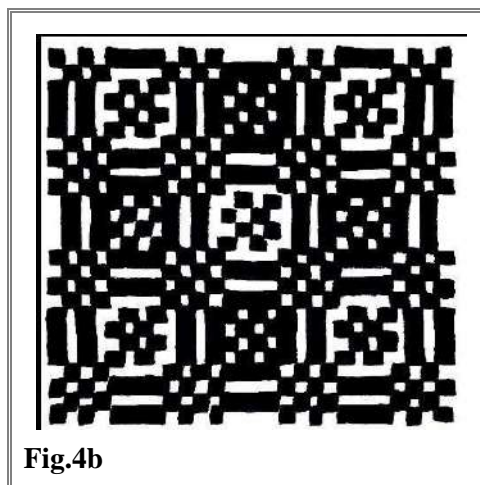


Fig.4b



Fig.5a

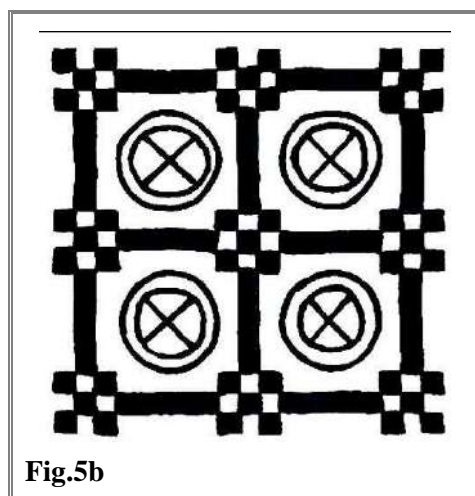


Fig.5b



Fig.6



Fig.7



Fig.8

II-3. Geographical Distribution of the Representations of Textiles bearing the Geometrical Pattern along the Silk Road

The largest number of the related representation can be found in the Dunhuang area, located at the western front of the Gansu Province, China - specifically, the Dunhuang Grottoes carved in the Northern Dynasty period.

The most spectacular representation of the textile pattern **Type A** can be found in Dunhuang Cave 275. This cave is dated to the Northern Liang period (394-439) and is the earliest known decorated cave in the area.⁽¹⁴⁾ A main cult figure of Bodhisatva Maitreya is made of clay and is installed by the rear wall of the cave. This figure is sitting on a throne with an outstanding backrest (**Fig. 9**).⁽¹⁵⁾ The backrest consists of a single board, which is wider at the top and narrower at the bottom. The small triangular verges observed at both

⁽¹⁴⁾ The recent radiocarbon dating carried out by a team from Oxford University reached to the conclusion that three early caves in Dunhuang (Cave 268, 272, and 275) were constructed around 410-440. See Guo (et. al.) forthcoming. The present author sincerely thanks to Dr. Liu Ruiliang (Oxford University) for generously sharing this latest research result.

⁽¹⁵⁾ See *Zhongguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanji* 2006: (I) pls. 25, 28.

upper edges of the backrest seem to indicate that this backrest is intended as being covered with a textile.

This textile representation has a geometrical pattern depicted in black (which can be a result of a carbonized red pigment, though). The pattern is composed of a regularly arranged grid pattern, which shows a striking similarity to the pattern **Type A** in Kizil, especially the one represented in the sermon scene of Kizil Cave 207 (**Fig. 3**).

Curiously, this specific decorative pattern appears in the ornamental panels decorating the side walls in the same cave,⁽¹⁶⁾ and also those depicted in the ceiling in Dunhuang Cave 248 (in the Northern Wei period).⁽¹⁷⁾

A simplified version of the textile pattern **Type A** can be found in the Matisi Grottoes (**Fig. 10**), located 65km south from Zhangye city, one of the historical oasis towns along the Hexi Corridor. The mural depicted on the older layer of the rear wall of Cave 3, dated to the Western Wei period (535-556), contains an image of the sitting Buddha, whose green-coloured inner robe (probably *uttarāsāṅga*) bears the same type of geometric pattern.⁽¹⁸⁾

On the other hand, the textile pattern **Type B** has much larger number of the relevant representations in the Dunhuang Grottoes. As same to the **Type A**, the pattern **Type B** is also represented as the one depicted on the textile hanging on the backrest of the throne, as one of the repertoires of the ornamental designs filling the decoration panels of caves, and as the one painted on the inner robe worn by the Buddha as well.

The most outstanding representations among them are found in Dunhuang Cave 285. The donating inscriptions in this cave mention the year of 538 and 539 (in the Western Wei period).⁽¹⁹⁾ In this cave, two clay figures of venerable monks are installed in the niches carved on both sides of the main cult figure of the preaching Buddha. Each of these niches includes mural paintings depicting the trapezoidal backrest covered by textiles with a colourful geometric pattern (**Fig. 11**). Even though the manifold grid lines are not visible here, the resemblance to the textile pattern **Type B** in Kizil Cave 207 is striking in the structure of pattern, which is composed of an alternating arrangement of a rosette

⁽¹⁶⁾ See *Zhongguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanji* 2006: (I) pls. 39, 40, 50.

⁽¹⁷⁾ See *Zhongguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanji* 2006: (II) pl. 34.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Zhang 2016: 169-170, pls. 14-15.

⁽¹⁹⁾ For recent study on these inscriptions see Ishimatsu 2010: 52-55.

design and a geometric design consisting of the five square forms. While the rosette is beige coloured, the square forms are painted blue and white. Interestingly, the backside of the cloth, which is depicted as hanging backward from the throne, is visible in this representation. The backside of the cloth bears a juxtaposed lozenge pattern, which is alternatively colored in light green and beige.

The same type of the textile design is depicted as the inner robe of the Buddha in Dunhuang Cave 248, 254, 260, 263, 435 (**Fig. 12**) so far as the present author could find, all date to the Northern Wei period.⁽²⁰⁾ These representations can be rendered both in two-dimensional and three-dimensional formats.

To depict the Buddha with a robe bearing such a decorative pattern is, in fact, an extreme deviation from earlier Buddhist iconography. He is supposed to be the ideal figure to be pursued by each humble Buddhist monk, and thus a dressing of a luxurious robe by the Buddha fundamentally runs counter to the nature of Buddhism. A provisional explanation for this intriguing phenomenon will be proposed later.

This pattern can also be frequently found in the ornamental panels decorating the ceiling and side walls in the Dunhuang Caves in Northern Wei (Caves 254, 260, 435 at least), Western Wei (Cave 288) and Northern Zhou (Cave 428, **Fig. 13**) periods,⁽²¹⁾ along with the panels filled with other sorts of decorative patterns. These other decorative patterns possibly derived from the textile patterns as well. These representations show the autonomy of the ornamental pattern, which can easily transcend the borders of the artistic medium.

The striking similarity between the representations of textiles with these specific patterns in Kizil and Dunhuang most probably is evidence of the actual existence of these types of clothing, which were circulated in these regions.

This then leads to the next question: were these types of textiles exclusively circulated in the monastic environment? A representation found in the murals in the Bamiyan area is evidence that suggests otherwise.

Bamiyan was an oasis kingdom located at the strategic point of the traffic route connecting West Turkestan and India which passed through the Hindu Kush mountain

⁽²⁰⁾ *Zhongguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanji* 2006: (I) pls. 62, 132; (II) pl. 29 etc.

⁽²¹⁾ *Zhongguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanji* 2006: (I) pls. 75, 107; (II) pls. 12, 13, 205, 207; (III) pl. 91 etc.

range. The archaeological finds from the Bamiyan area display the great prosperity of Buddhist culture in the region from a very early point in history. In Bamiyan Cave 111, which includes the earliest extant mural paintings of the Bamiyan Caves according to radiocarbon dating (dated to the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the sixth century),⁽²²⁾ some local donor figures can be found behind the mandorla of the Buddha. Among them is a figure wearing a caftan with an opened collar (**Fig. 14**).⁽²³⁾ The main part of his caftan is tailored from the textile with the pattern composed of manifold grid lines, which has exactly the same structural principle as the pattern **Type A** represented in Kizil Cave 84 (**Fig. 4**). This caftan is painted grey, although it does not necessarily correspond to the original colour of the pigment.

The representation in Bamiyan seems to bear witness to the circulation of this kind of textile in the secular realm. This leads to the further question. Assuming that these cloths did actually exist, how was this pattern technically produced? Was it a dyed pattern or a pattern that consisted of various colourful threads woven together? Since the two-dimensional painting lacks the exact information about the material structure of textiles, it is impossible to judge it only from the pictorial representations.

An archaeological find from the Boma grave in Zhaosu Province, located in the northwest of Kucha in the Tianshan mountain range, offers a possible clue to this question. The dating and identity of the grave is still under dispute. An Yingxin ascribes this grave to the Göktürks and dates into the late sixth century,⁽²⁴⁾ while Hayashi and Zheng / Bi rather connect the affiliation of this grave to nomadic groups residing in the area before the Göktürk's arrival.⁽²⁵⁾ From this grave, several extravagant textile fragments were excavated along with a hoard of gold. Among them is a yellow-based textile fragment, bearing the grid pattern (**Fig. 15**). The pattern, woven by thread dyed in dark red, is composed of threefold grid lines running vertically and horizontally. The square field inside the grid lines are alternatively coloured in yellow and red. At the crossing point of the grid lines is a chessboard-like pattern, composed of alternating yellow and red threads.

⁽²²⁾ Miyaji 2006: 138-139. This dating, though, casts a strong contrast to the previous art-historical studies, according to which the stylistic features of this cave are rather to be contextualized in a much later phase. The careful re-examination of the mural paintings of this cave from the interdisciplinary approach is needed.

⁽²³⁾ For the illustration see Higuchi 1983: pl. 13-4.

⁽²⁴⁾ An 1999: 14.

⁽²⁵⁾ Hayashi 2007: 329-330; Zheng / Bi 2011.

The optical features of this textile fragment strongly resemble the represented textiles in the Buddhist art in Kucha, Dunhuang and Bamiyan.

The archaeological report by An provides interesting information about the technical detail of this textile fragment, which is described as a twill. Furthermore, the threads used for this textile are rough and uneven, and both warp and weft are twisted.⁽²⁶⁾ In fact, both the optical and material features of this textile fragment suggest a possible link to a certain type of textile mentioned twice in the Chinese manuscripts found from the Turfan area, which is called the “Kucha-Silk (丘慈錦 *Qiuci-Jin*)”.

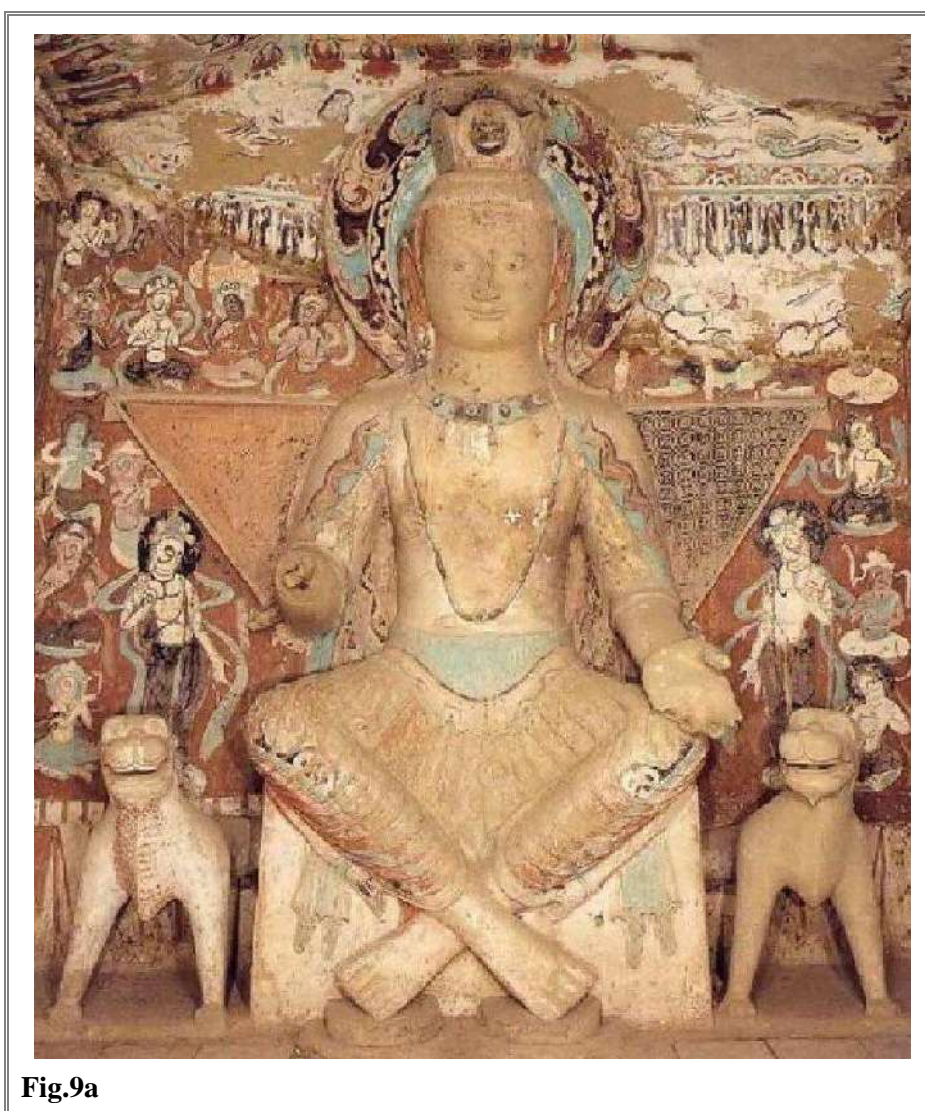


Fig.9a

⁽²⁶⁾ An 1999: 14 “此綾为黄色，经纬线均加拈，其中经线加拈紧，纬线加拈较松。丝线粗细不均 (This twill has yellow colour, both warp and weft are twisted. The warp is twisted more intensively, while the weft is less twisted. The threads are rough and uneven)” (English translation is given by the present author).



Fig.9b



Fig.10

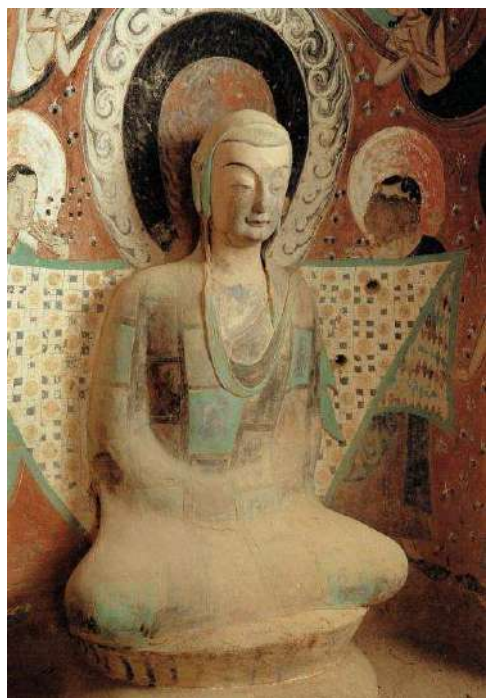
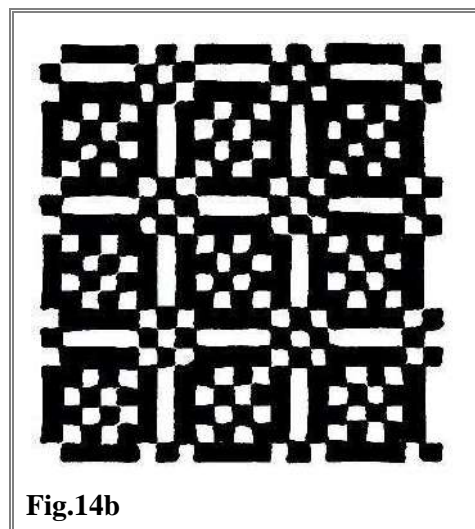


Fig.11



Fig.12



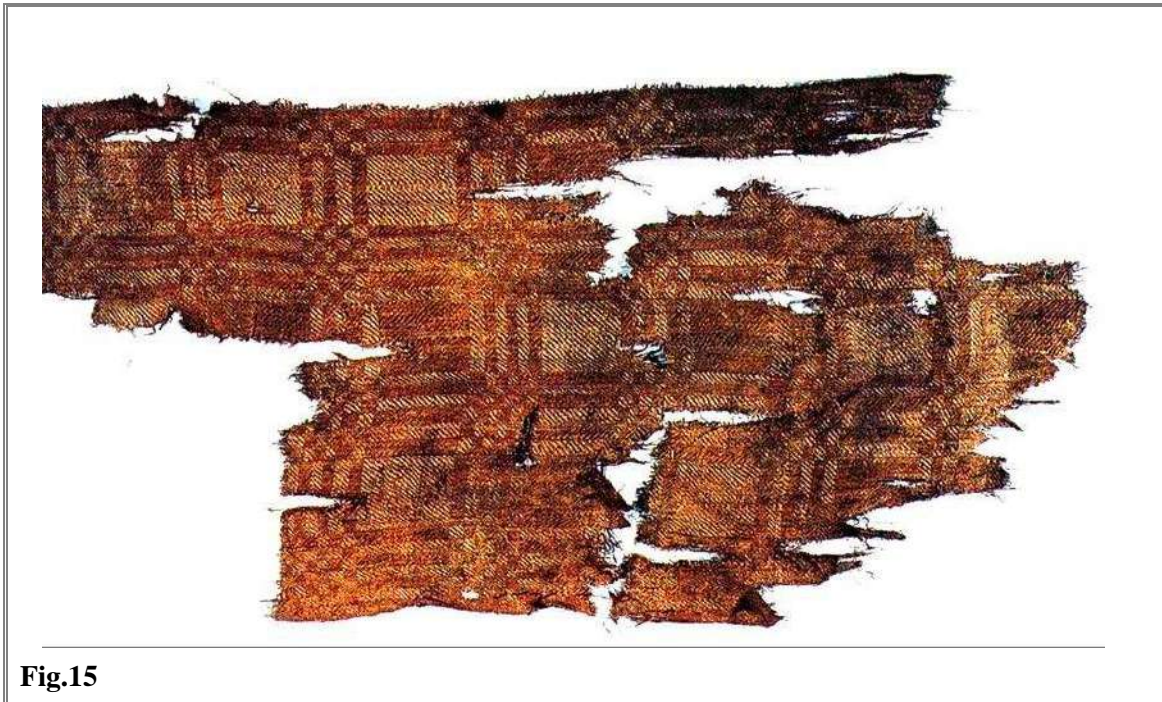


Fig.15

III. Textile Representations in Historical and Ritual Context

III-1. A New Identification of the “Kucha Silk (*Qiuci-Jin* 丘慈錦)” in the Turfan Manuscript

The term 丘慈錦 *Qiuci-Jin*, literally meaning “compound weave silk in the Kucha style”,⁽²⁷⁾ is mentioned twice in Chinese manuscripts recording the economic activities in the Gaochang Kingdom of Turfan in the middle of the fifth century.

A contract for the sale of a female slave written in the eighth year of Chengping of Northern Liang = 450 or 509 AD (北凉承平八年翟绍远买婢契) mentions the usage of the *Qiuci-Jin* as a payment method.⁽²⁸⁾ Considering the fact that textiles had served as one of the main currencies along the historical Silk Road, this reference is hardly surprising.

⁽²⁷⁾ The translation of this specific term follows the glossary by Zhao / Wang (2013: 372-373). While the Chinese character 錦 *Jin* is usually translated as “brocade”, this character rather refers to all sorts of compound weave silk in the case of Turfan- and Dunhuang manuscripts, the complex weave structure of which allows for the creation of various patterns in multiple colors.

⁽²⁸⁾ Tang 1981: 189, 75TKM99:6(a) “翟紹遠從阿奴買婢老入，紹女年廿五，交与丘慈錦三張半”. Cf. Ching 2012: 102-103. Two alternative years given here depends on whether the “Chengping Year” refers to the Chengping Year of Northern Liang (= 447) or to the one of Gaochang (= 506), which is still a controversial point among scholars.

Another Turfan manuscript dated in 447 or 506 AD (北凉承平五年道人法安弟阿奴举锦券) provides further technical information about the *Qiuci-Jin*. The original text is following:

高昌所作黄地丘慈中锦一张，绵经绵纬，长九尺五寸，广四尺五寸。

One(-zhang) yellow-based compound weave silk in the Kucha style in the middle size made in Gaochang, with warp and weft threads from spun silk, measured 9 chi 5 cun long (ca. 2.3m) and 4 chi and 5 cun (ca. 1.1m) wide.⁽²⁹⁾

Scholars of the textile history have pointed out that both the scale of the textile and its measuring unit *zhang* correspond to those of Central Asian carpets, not to the scale of the Han-made textiles which are counted by the unit *pi* (匹 / 疋).⁽³⁰⁾ Alone this information suggests that the “Kucha-Silk” must be a Central Asian production.

The reference that this “Kucha silk” is Gaochang-made evoked various interpretations among the scholars. Recent studies generally agree in regarding the “Kucha silk” as a kind of brand name for textiles typically made in Kucha, most probably bearing a specific decorative pattern.⁽³¹⁾ Tang and Ching further assume that this information may reflect the high demand of the Kucha-made textile in the surrounding areas, so that the weavers in Gaochang were encouraged to produce its imitation.⁽³²⁾ Since the spinning industry in Kucha seems to have been highly developed since the ancient time as documented in several Chinese records, this interpretation is highly plausible.

Another intriguing factor is its technical description that the “Kucha silk” was woven by warp and weft threads both from spun silks. This matches well with the cultural convention of the oasis countries around the Tarim basin, where people took spun silks from the cocoon first after the silk moth flies away from it. To spin the raw silk threads by boiling the living silkworm inside the cocoon was against their Buddhist ethics.⁽³³⁾ These

⁽²⁹⁾ Tang 1981: 181, 75TKM88: 1(b). English translation is given by the present author.

⁽³⁰⁾ Cf. Sheng 1998: 134-5; Zhao / Wang 2013: 386-7.

⁽³¹⁾ Cf. Wu 2000: 94-95; Wu 1987: 98; Sakamoto 2012: 71-4.

⁽³²⁾ Cf. Tang 1985: 146-7; Ching 2012: 103.

⁽³³⁾ Beside the *Chronicle of Wei (Wei-Shu)*, the Buddhist accounts in the seventh century by Dao Xuan (T 2060: 684b27-c1: 親問西域諸僧。皆以布氈而爲袈裟都無繪絹者。縱用以爲餘衣。不得加受持也。其龜茲于遁諸國。見今養蠶。惟擬取綿亦不殺害) and Xuanzang (T 2060:

references led textile historians to assume that “Kucha Silk” does not refer to a sort of brocade made with the raw silk threads produced by killing the silkworms, but to a certain sort of a weft-faced compound plain weave made from the spun silk threads.⁽³⁴⁾

A curious coincidence between the technical description of the “Kucha silk” in the Turfan manuscripts and the material feature of the Boma textile fragment is worth consideration. Namely, the textile fragment of Boma were woven by the spun silk threads, and had a base colour of yellow – as exactly described in the Turfan manuscripts. Furthermore, the textiles with the similar kind of pattern to the Boma fragment were depicted in the mural paintings of Kucha and the areas around, all dated to around the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the sixth century. This observation can cast a new interpretation of how the actual “Kucha Silk (*Qiuci-Jin*)” could have been. The textiles woven with the geometric pattern depicted in the Buddhist art in Kucha and in the regions strongly tied to Kucha through the Silk Road trades may be a plausible candidate for the actual “Kucha silk”, which seems to have been circulated in the oasis countries along the Silk Road from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the sixth century, both as a currency and as a valuable textile as such. Accordingly, the textile fragment from the Boma grave is possibly trace evidence of the now-lost “Kucha Silk”.

III-2. Between the Monastic Rules and the Actual Practice: Mechanism Laying behind the Acceptance of the Patterned Robes

The previous section analysed the historical situation that the local-made textiles circulating both in the secular and religious realms were depicted in the Buddhist art in Kucha and the surrounding regions. Yet assuming that these textiles in representations are of portrayal character of the actual textile products of the regions, why were “Kucha silks” not considered to violate their monastic codes? “Kucha silks”, though not made of unethical raw silk threads, still had bold, colourful patterns, which generally seems to go against Buddhist code requires monks to live in a humble manner. Why were they not considered as violating their monastic codes in Kucha?

944c12-29) also bear the witness to this custom practiced in Karashar, Kucha and Khotan. Cf. Tang 1985: 146-151; Yokohari 1992: 171-172; Sakamoto 2012: 74.

⁽³⁴⁾ Cf. Yokohari 1992; Sakamoto 2012: 74. Yokohari and Sakamoto associate the “Kucha silk” to the so-called “preudo Han silk” frequently excavated from Loulan, Niya and Turfan areas.

The prescription was given that the monks' robe should not be in white or vivid colours, which was subject of the criticism because they resemble the garments of householders enjoying the pleasure of the senses.⁽³⁵⁾ The monks' robes have to be made in the way clearly distinguishable from the garments of secular householder and other schools of ascetics. The robes were originally supposed to be sewn in a particular manner and dyed in a sober colour by the monks themselves. The *Vinayas* of every Buddhist school dictate that the robes were to be made of the pieces of cloth discarded in places like the public cemeteries and dumping grounds. The robes made by stitching such small square pieces of cloth together are called *pamsukūla cīvara* (糞掃衣), which is considered to be the most virtuous and suitable garment for monks.

A remarkable passage concerning the appropriate appearance of the monks' robe is found in Pāli *Vinaya*:

The Lord saw a field typical for Magadha, laid out in squares (accibaddha), laid out by dams (pāḷibaddha), laid out by embankments (mariyādabaddha), laid out by crossroads (siṅghāṭakabaddha). Having seen it, he addressed Ānanda: 'Do you see, Ānanda, this field typical for Magadha ... limited by cross-roads?' 'Yes, Lord' 'Are you able, Ānanda, to prepare robes like that for the monks?'⁽³⁶⁾

This passage is followed by a description of Ānanda making a robe from pieces of clothes. How "the field of Magadha" exactly appeared seems to have no longer been self-evident for the author(s) of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya*, who lacked the visual perception of the agricultural landscape of the ancient Magadha, thus he (or they) paraphrased these sentences like following:

(The Buddha with Ānanda) disappeared in Rājagṛha and stood on the mountain Vaidehika. At that time, when he saw the fields of the people living in Magadha, which were regular (sama), with regular precincts (samopavicāra), laid out in rows

⁽³⁵⁾ Following descriptions about the monastic rules pertaining the monks' robes are based on references in Schlingloff 1963: 545-546; Malalasekera / Weeraratne 1979: 184-5; Sawaki / Kyuma 2001: 18-19, 42-48; Von Hinüber 2006: 12-14.

⁽³⁶⁾ Translation is cited from von Hinüber 2006: 7 (Vin I 287).

(*āvalīvinibaddha*), manifold by preparing plots (?*bhaktīracanāviśeṣavicitra*), he again addressed Ānanda...⁽³⁷⁾

The optical features of the fields of Magadha described here can be understood as a kind of regularly arranged grid pattern. This instruction had surely referred to how a *paṃsukūla cīvara* or a patchwork robe appeared as originally intended, since the textile was made by stitching small square pieces of cloths together surely looks like bearing regularly arranged grid pattern from its structural nature.

On the other hand, is it possible to assume that this prescription was interpreted in a way to allow monks to use textiles bearing the grid pattern for tailoring the robes in Kucha? This may perhaps be an explanation why the circulation of the “Kucha silks” in monastic environment could have been promoted in these regions. Namely, the regularly arranged grid pattern woven on the “Kucha silks”, which itself is more likely to have been generated in the natural development process of the compound weave technique, might have been associated to the pattern of “the field of Magadha”, the most appropriate design for the monks’ robes.

What can be observed here is the subtle balance between the canonized rule of the monastic community and the demand from the laymen to donate the best local products for the monastic members, which interplayed at its marginal border.

Less than a century later, this balance seems to have been gradually distorted, as witnessed in the Buddhist art in the eastern part of the Silk Road. In the Buddhist art of the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, the representation of monks dressed in highly decorative robes increased (**Fig. 16**).⁽³⁸⁾ The excavation in Famen temple near Baoji (Gansu province), one of the most powerful temples during the Tang dynasty, can be presented as an extreme case. The inscription found in the underground palace of this temple refers to the donation of the silk robe with gold embroidery with the involvement of Empress Hui’an.⁽³⁹⁾ Corresponding to the inscription, the actual silk robe with gold

⁽³⁷⁾ Translation is cited from von Hinüber 2006: 8 (*Cītravastu*, GM III 2, p. 50, 7. 12). Also see *ibid.*: 7-8 (for the analysis of the later translations of this original Pāli passage).

⁽³⁸⁾ An example introduced here is the mural paintings from Binglingsi Cave 8 (Gansu Province), dated to the Sui period (*Zhonggguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanji* 2006: (XI) pl. 42.). The monks’ robes are partly tailored with the textile bearing the pearl roundel pattern, which possibly is woven by using the raw silk threads.

⁽³⁹⁾ Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology 2007: 227-229.

embroidery was excavated from the same site.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Although both the use of the embroidery and gold threads is explicitly prohibited by monastic rules, such rules seems to have been not considered anymore. The movement against the use of robes made of silk by Dao Xuan is worth consideration in this context, who was the patriarch of the Vinaya school in early Tang period. This can be regarded as a historical witness to the situation that monks in his period generally had no hesitation to be dressed in the luxury silk robes.



Fig.16

III-3. Prayer behind the Murals: Donation and Rite Relating to the Textiles

This section inquires about the meaning of the representations of the “Kucha silks” in the Buddhist mural paintings and statues. What was the motivation to depict the patterns of the local-made textiles into such detail into the Buddhist narrative scenes? Especially in the case of Kucha, other examples of monks’ robes do not have such complicated patterns. Thus, the detailedness of these representations appears to be very unusual.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology 2007: 263.

An important fact to be noted here is that the donation of textiles to the Buddhist community was and still is reckoned as one of the greatest acts that yield the highest merit to the donors.⁽⁴¹⁾

There is also a system which sustains the regular donation of textiles by laymen to the Buddhist community with a considerable amount. It is the *kaṭhina* ceremony, held annually after the conclusion of the “Rainy Retreat” season.⁽⁴²⁾ In this ceremony, the laity donate textiles for making new robes to the Buddhist community. One robe made with the textiles donated during the *kaṭhina* season is consecrated through the ritual procedure and turns to be called a *kaṭhina* robe. The monastic community which receives the *kaṭhina* robe is endowed with five privileges concerning the daily life matter for the next five months. The donation of textiles during the *kaṭhina* season is thus considered to bring particularly great religious merit for laymen.

Though this ritual consigned to oblivion in the present form of East Asian Māhāyāna Buddhism,⁽⁴³⁾ the Theravāda Buddhist communities in South- and Southeast Asian countries continue to practice the *kaṭhina* ritual as a spectacular festival until the present (**Fig. 17**), even involving the royal donation.⁽⁴⁴⁾ This was also the same with other early sectarian Buddhist schools, as witnessed by *vinayas* of each school. The Buddhist community of the ancient Kucha Kingdom was surely not an exception, since both *vinayas* of the Sarvāstivādins and (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādins contained minute instruction of how to carry on the *kaṭhina* ceremony.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The archaeological fact that a Sanskrit

⁽⁴¹⁾ Cf. Malalasekera / Weeraratne 1996: 161.

⁽⁴²⁾ There are a number of studies dedicated for this ritual. Kun Chang’s comparative study on the accounts about the procedure of this ritual (called *Kaṭhinavastu*) found in *Vinayas* of each school can be regarded as a pioneering work (Chang 1957). Recent work by Mori (2012) critically summarizes previous studies on the *kaṭhina* ritual from various perspectives.

⁽⁴³⁾ Hirakawa (1974: 31) explains the reason of abandonment of the *kaṭhina* in East Asian Buddhism as following: 1. The *pravāraṇā* (a ceremony on the last day of the rainy retreat, in which monks confess their offenses and erroneous behaviors) was transformed as the ceremony called *Yulanpen* in Chinese or Urabon in Japanese by associated with the traditional cult for ancestor, 2. The difference in climate in India and China led the change of the nature of the “rainy retreat” tradition, and 3. the monks’ robe tailored according to the ancient Indian instruction did not have any practical use for it in actual daily life in Chinese Buddhist monasteries.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Cf. Malalasekera / Weeraratne 1996: 161.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ All the accounts concerning *kaṭhina* by the Sarvāstivādins and the Mūlasarvāstivādins in Sanskrit (mainly the *Gilgit Manuscripts*, 3.2.149-170), Tibetan (Kanjur, *’Dul ba*, vol. 3, folios 171a.5-183b.7 in Lhasa edition, 111a.8-119b.8 in Peking edition, 115a.5-124a.6 in Sde dge edition, 134b.2-164a.2 in Coni edition, and 185b.6-200b.6 in Narthang edition), and Chinese (十誦律「八法中迦絺那衣法第一」= T 1435: 206c5- 214a14; 根本說一切有部毘奈耶羯恥那衣

manuscript of the *Kaṭhinavastu* of the *Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya* was found directly in the Kizil Caves⁽⁴⁶⁾ suggests that the monastic community residing at Kizil most probably practiced the *kaṭhina* ceremony as well. The existence of a *vinaya* fragment written in Tocharian A referring to the *kaṭhina* season also underlines the plausibility that the Tocharian Buddhists practiced the *kaṭhina*.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Considering these factors, the unusually detailed depictions of the monks' robes made of the local-made textiles in the regions in the narrative paintings may have been intended to commemorate and guarantee of the eternal merit endowed to the donors through their offering of valuable textiles to the monastery, possibly during the *kaṭhina* season.

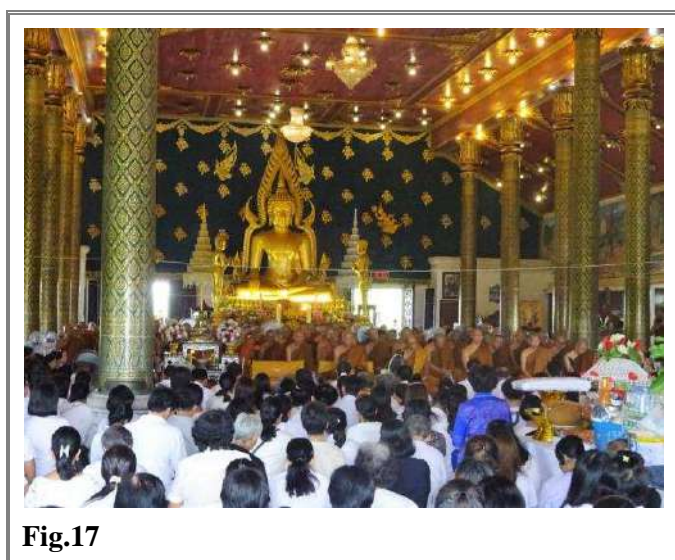


Fig.17

IV. Conclusion

This paper introduced an attempt to read the historical and socio-cultural information in the small details depicted in the Buddhist mural paintings in Kucha and around. As demonstrated by Neelis [2011], the Buddhist monasteries along the Silk Road were operated according to their basic economic system of exchange of material gifts for religious merit (*punya*). In this way, the Buddhist communities in these oasis kingdoms

事 = T 1449: 97b4-99a13) is listed in Chang 1957: 14-16. Also see critical study by Mori (2012).

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Boltz / Salomon 1988: 539. Since the Chinese translation of this *vinaya* was undertaken in Chang'an in 404-5 under the initiative of Kumārajīva, this *vinaya* should have been known to the Buddhist community of Kucha around this period at the latest. Cf. *ibid.*: 541.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ This fragment (352 b4) is considered as the Tocharian translation of Skt. *Prātimokṣa-sūtra*. In this fragment, though, the Tocharian word *katim* is misspelled as *kanim*. Cf. Carling 2009: 97-98. The present author expresses her deep gratitude to Prof. Hirotohi Ogihara (Kyoto University) for giving previous advice about this fragment.

were highly involved in the fluctuating economic and geopolitical conditions of the secular world. Thus, it is no wonder to find some clues about the local material culture in a particular period in the Buddhist art of these regions, and accordingly the social background at that time. A cross-genre reference to the visual, textual and archaeological materials may enable reading the information “packed” in the mural surfaces.

The analysis undertaken in this paper, in fact, forms an interesting contrast to the textiles typically represented in the Second Indo-Iranian Style paintings in Kucha, which bear patterns composed of the large pearl roundels (**Fig. 18**).⁽⁴⁸⁾ The difference in the repertoire of the represented textiles in each style of mural paintings seems to bear witness to the change of the textile markets in the Silk Road.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Yet this is beyond the scope of this paper and should be considered in another paper.

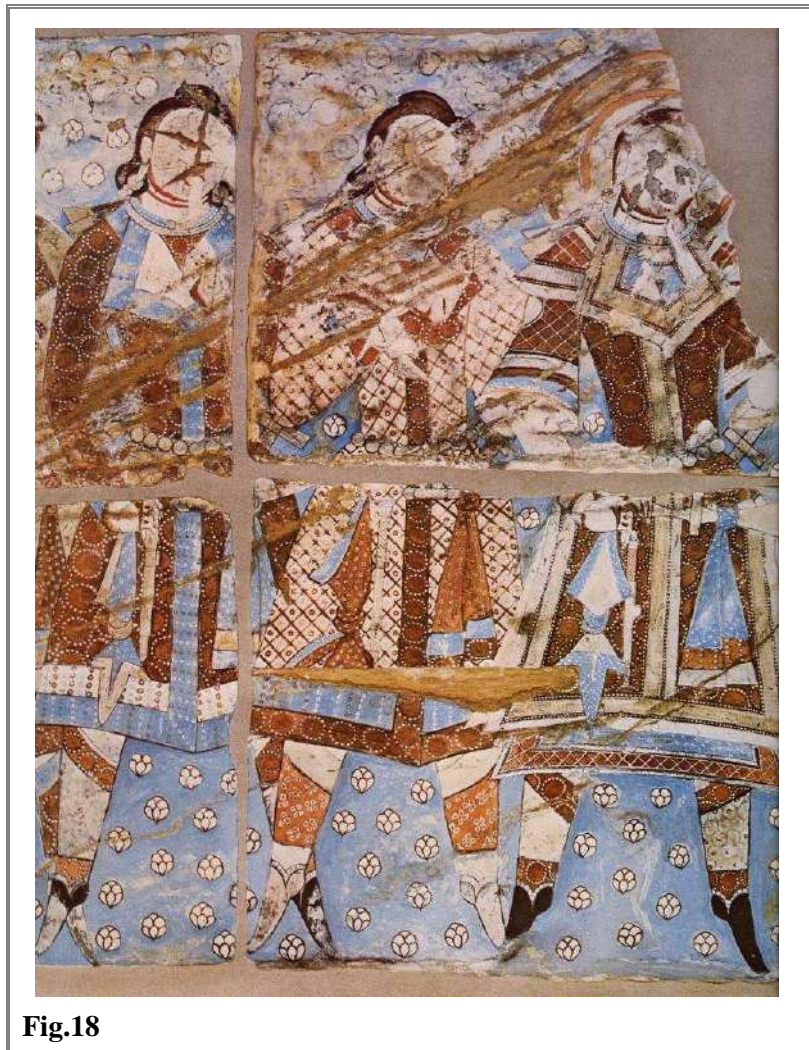


Fig.18

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Le Coq / Waldschmidt 1933: Tafel 14 (portraits of donors depicted in Kizil Cave 199 or Teufelshöhle A).

⁽⁴⁹⁾ A preliminary study on this point was presented in Hiyama 2015.

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