

Judge's Commentary

Hiyama, Satomi

The Wall Paintings of Kizil Cave 118: The Story of King Māndhātṛ as a New Identification

Hiyama Satomi's article proposes a new interpretation of the as yet not definitively explained wall paintings of Kizil Cave 118 (commonly known as the Seahorse Cave or Hippocampenhöhle) based on the story of King Māndhātṛ.

The Kizil Caves are the largest Buddhist temple site of the ancient Kingdom of Kucha that flourished as an important center on the legendary Silk Road. An early 20th century German expedition cut away some of the wall murals and this further hastened the destruction of the cave sites. Today, only a small amount of the wall paintings remain on the ceiling vault and main wall of Kizil Cave 118. In recent years, radiocarbon dating has dated these wall paintings to the early period of the site's production, from the 3rd through the 4th centuries. Various Western, Japanese and Chinese scholars, beginning with the early German expeditionary member Albert Grünwedel, have proposed theories regarding the subject matter of these wall paintings. Hiyama has critically evaluated earlier viewpoints linking the subjects to the *Jataka* tales, as well as earlier theories which tended to stop at piecemeal interpretation of the murals. Through the use of photographs and sketches,

she has attempted a reconstruction of the entire cave's wall painting surfaces, including the right and left side walls. This reconstruction then allowed her to conclude that only the story of King Māndhātṛ can produce an consistent explanation for the cave's mural cycle in its entirety.

The *Story of King Māndhātṛ* is one of the ancient Indian tales of the Cakravartin rulers. Representations of this tale, primarily in southern and eastern India, show King Māndhātṛ seated beside Indra in Trāyastriṃśa, or lying on his side awaiting temporal death. Hiyama recognized the similarity between this iconography and that found on Kizil Cave 118's main wall, and right and left side walls. Further, Hiyama considers the entire wall painting cycle, even those areas outside of the story plot, seen in the ceiling vault and other areas, connecting the wall paintings to the history of Buddhism at the site in general. She discusses how they reflect the modality of early period Buddhism at Kucha which was of the Sarvāstivādin version which give particular credence to *Āgama*.

Hiyama proves her theory through the requisite research methodology for Buddhist iconographic studies involving not only a detailed iconographic analysis of the murals, but also a thorough matching with sutra texts in their original Sanskrit and Pali, as well as Chinese translations. Further, she developed her own analysis while carefully considering the broad spectrum of related earlier scholarship in the West, China and Japan. In particular, her discussion is scattered with her own unique evidence which underscores her emphasis, such as her noticing the existence of nude female images which

speak of the origins of the name Māndhātṛ (māndhātu, the Sanskrit term which literally means “Let him suckle me”). Thus, Hiyama's study can be generally praised as persuasive new interpretations of the subject matter of the Kizil Cave 118 wall paintings, and is noteworthy as a clarification of one aspect of the influence of Abhidharma Buddhism on Central Asian art.

For these reasons, we have awarded the Bijutsushi Article Prize to Ms. Satomi Hiyama.