

The Silk Road Buddhist Studies Workshop presents our Fourth Meeting

International Symposium

Interpreting Buddhist Sites on the Northern Silk Road: Iconographic Programs and Early Expedition Evidence in Kucha, Karashahr, and Turfan

Date: February 26-27 (Thu.-Fr.), 2026

Venue: Toyo University, Hakusan Campus, Sky Hall (Bldg no. 2, 16F)

** This event is in-person only. Admission free, pre-registration needed.*

Registration form: <https://forms.gle/DHmLdwARcpyYV7w86>



This symposium is co-organized and sponsored by:

- Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research: Fund for the Promotion of Joint International Research (Fostering Joint International Research (A)) "Interdisciplinary Research on Buddhist Cave Temples in Kucha by Using Image Database" (20KK0272, PI: Satomi Hiyama)
- Grant-in-Aid for JSPS Fellows "Buddhism and Trades on the Silk Road: Analysis of Painting Materials of the Buddhist Wall Paintings in Innermost Asia" (23KJ2235, PI: Satomi Hiyama)
- Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B): "Integration of Past and Present Archaeological Information through Spatio-Temporal Correlation of Historical Photographs Taken by the Silk Road Explorations" (25K00509, PI: Yoko Nishimura)
- Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig
- Dunhuang Foundation

and supported by:

- Department of Eastern Philosophy and Culture, Faculty of Letters, Toyo University
- Department of History, Faculty of Letters, Toyo University



Buddhist
Murals of
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Program Day 1 (Feb 26, Thursday)

10:00 **Opening Remark (Yoko Nishimura & Satomi Hiyama)**

Session 1: Iconographical Program of Kucha Caves (1):

Visual Program and Ritual Function

Moderator: Nobuyoshi Yamabe (Waseda University)

10:15-11:00 **Monika Zin (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)**

Keynote Speech: Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Iconographic Programmes of Central Pillar Caves

11:00-11:30 **Olga Choi-Kienzler (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)**

Visual Programmes of the Caves: Creating Protection and Sacred Space

11:30-12:00 **Robert Schulz (Freie Universität Berlin)**

Waterscapes and its Inhabitants: Retracing a Central Asian Nether World in the Visual Programme(s) in Kucha

12:00-12:20 **Comments and Discussion**

Session 2 Early Expedition Evidence in Tumshuk, Kucha,

Karashahr, and Turfan

**Moderator: Erika Forte (Kyoto University) &
Yoko Taniguchi (University of Tsukuba)**

13:30-14:00 **Birgit Angelika Schmidt (Asian Art Museum, State Museums of Berlin)**

Material and Meaning: Manufacturing Techniques as an Approach to Iconographic Programs of Buddhist Architecture – Material-Based Evidence from the Turfan Expeditions

14:00-14:30 **Caren Dreyer (Asian Art Museum, State Museums of Berlin)**

Some new light on international expeditions to Kucha at the beginning of twenties century from their diaries, notes and letters

14:30-15:00 **Norio Shinohara (Chuo University)**

Narrative Representation in Buddhist Sculptures from the Toqquz-sarai site

15:00-15:20 Comments and Discussion

15:20-15:40 Coffee Break

15:40-16:10 Satomi Hiyama (Toyo University)

Berlin's Lost Paintings Rediscovered in Japan: Roka Hasegawa's Mural Copies and Their Historical Significance

16:10-16:50 Yoko Nishimura (Toyo University) & Caren Dreyer (Asian Art Museum, State Museums of Berlin)

Caves/ places with wall paintings having come up / or been illuminated by our research of photographs of Murtuk and Sengim

16:50-17:20 Comments and Discussion

Program Day 2 (Feb 27, Friday)

Session 3 Iconographical Program of Kucha Caves (2):

Ornamentation and Donor Images

Moderator: Mary Lewine (Dunhuang Foundation)

10:00-10:30 Luca de Fabritiis (Independent Researcher)

Ornamental and Decorative Programme in the Kucheans Murals

10:30-11:00 Astrid Klein (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

Images of Donors from Kucha and Remains of Their(?) Deceased

11:00-11:30 Ji Ho Yi (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

Visualizing Female Monastic Agency: Buddhist Nun Donors and Iconographic Programme of the Kizil Cave 114

11:30-11:50 Comments and Discussion

Session 4: Iconographical Program of Kucha Caves (3):

Role of the Buddha's live(s) in the Visual Program

Moderator: Hiromi Habata (International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies) & Monika Zin (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

13:00-13:30 Hyosuke Sugiyama (International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies), with translation by Burai Deguchi (Suiha Gallery)

A study on the 'Sumakusha' —based on literary sources and artifacts

13:30-14:00 Dominika Klimaszewski (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

Multi-Scenic and Large-Scale Depictions of *Jātaka* Stories in the Kucha Caves

14:00-14:30 Yi Xie (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

Mapping the Buddha's Previous Lives: Geographical Structuring of *Jātaka* Scenes in Kucha

14:30-14:50 Comments and Discussion

14:50-15:10 Coffee Break

15:10-15:40 Ines Konczak-Nagel (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

From Forest Grove to Pillared Hall: Reading Space in Kuchean Buddha Sermon Scenes

15:40-16:10 Fang Wang (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

Murals of the Buddha's Early Life Legends in the Décor Programme of Kuchean Grottoes

16:10-16:40 Erik Radisch (Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig)

From Digital Annotation to Visual Analysis: Exploring Pictorial Programs in the Kucha Murals

16:40-17:15 Comments and General Discussion

17:15 Closing Remark

Image credit: page 1: Reconstructed dome ceiling of Kizil Cave 123 in the Humboldt Forum, Berlin (photo by S. Hiyama); page 2: clay heads from Kucha and Karashahr in the Humboldt Forum, Berlin (photo by S. Hiyama); page 3: photographic records of the Murtuk site. Above: Asian Art Museum, State Museums of Berlin, B899; below: present state of the site, photographed by Y. Nishimura; page 4: Grünwedel making trace of the wall paintings of Kizil Cave 4 in 1906 (Asian Art Museum, State Museums of Berlin, B 1739) and a Buddha statue found in Kirin Cave, Shorchuk (Asian Art Museum, State Museums of Berlin, III 7841, photograph by S. Hiyama)

