



## THE RENOVATED CENTRAL ASIA EXHIBIT IN THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM

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In February of 2013, the State Hermitage Museum opened its remounted exhibit of the art and culture of Central Asia after a hiatus of six years (Figs. 1, 2). The exhibit consists of two galleries: in one are works of art which originated on the territory of the Great Silk Road; in the second are archaeological artifacts found in the territory of today's Mongolia and Southern Siberia, Buddhist works from Mongolia and Tibet, and finds from Khara-Khoto and Dunhuang.

The Silk Road divided into two branches, northern and southern. For the southern oases, the Hermitage collection consists only of chance finds from Khotan. At the core of this collection is that of Nikolai F. Petrovskii. Various peoples inhabited Khotan: Iranians, Indians, Chinese, Turks and Tibetans; the written documents from Khotan are in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Khotanese-Saka, Tibetan and Chinese. The traditions and cultures of these people exercised a considerable influence on the emergence and development of the art in this region. A substantial part of the collection consists of terracotta objects (some two-and-a-half thousand), found primarily in Yotkan (Elikhina 2008b). The most interesting is a vessel with three

handles in the form of standing lions. The vessel is decorated with numerous appliques and stamps with an inscription which to date has not been deciphered (Fig. 3, next page).<sup>1</sup> Scholars generally date the Yotkan ceramics to the 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE (D'iakonova and Sorokin 1960, p. 33; Litvinskii 1995, p. 123; Gropp 1974, p. 298). Khotan is known for its jade (nephrite), which is superior in quality even to that of China. Jade was an export commodity, which means that among the chance finds, ones made of jade are few and date from various periods.

The question of what exactly was Yotkan remains open. Some scholars believe that it was the capital of the oasis (Stein 1907, I, p. 200; Gropp 1974, p. 21). Others have thought that a cemetery was located there (Trinkler 1930, pp. 35–37; D'iakonova 2000, p. 233). Apart from Yotkan, in the Khotan region are other centers: Ak-Terek, Ak-Sipil, Dandan-Uiliq, Rawak, etc.— Buddhist monasteries surrounded by settlements.

In addition to ceramic vessels, sculptures of people and animals, the art of Khotan includes abundant clay

*Fig. 1. Gallery view. The mural displayed on the right depicts the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, from the cave temples at Bezeklik, Inv. No. TY-776. See also Fig. 9.*



*Fig. 2. Part of the Tibetan collection. The case in the foreground displays the unique three-dimensional mandala of Bhaiṣajyaguru, mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, from the E. E. Ukhtomskii Collection (see Thurman and Rhie 1991, No. 134).*



and stucco relief depictions of buddhas and bodhisattvas, both in miniature and in large sculptures. Buddhism entered Khotan from India, and from the first centuries of the Common Era Khotan became one of the largest centers of Buddhism. Thus in Khotan, along with objects relating to local cults and cults which arrived from other regions, one finds numerous monuments of Buddhism. In 401 CE, the Chinese pilgrim Faxian spent three months in Khotan and recorded his impressions in his journal. He emphasized that in Khotan all inhabitants without exception were Buddhists. The number of monks was huge, and they were primarily adherents of Mahayana Buddhism. There were fourteen large monasteries, as well as many small ones; the largest monastery housed 3000 monks. West of Khotan was another large monastery. Its columns, beams, doors, and window frames were gilded, and the monks' cells were also richly decorated. Faxian's description also mentions wood carving, mosaic and silvered elements of interior decor. The rulers of six regions would send as gifts to the monastery the rarest of precious stones. "The monastery is so beautifully decorated and grand," noted Faxian, "that words do not suffice to describe it" (Fa-hien 1957, p. 18). The architecture of the monasteries has



Fig. 3 (above). Vase with three sculpted handles. Terracotta, wheel-turned with the base separately attached, the handles shaped in moulds. H.: 28 cm. Khotan: Yotkan; 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. Acq. 1897 from the Coll. of N. F. Petrovskii. Inv. No. ΓA-2721.



Fig. 4 a (right), b (detail left). Votive plaque depicting the legend of the spread of sericulture to Khotan. Wood, mineral paints. 25 x 10 cm. Khotan: Dandan-Uiliq, 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. Acq. 1897 from the Coll. of N. F. Petrovskii. Inv. No. ΓA-1125. (Peshchery 2008, p. 73)



not survived to our day, since they were built entirely of wood. The British expedition of Aurel Stein, which worked in the oasis in 1900–01, found only the foundations of temples and the remains of a stone stupa. Buddhism survived in Khotan until the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when in 1006 CE the Karakhanid Turks conquered the oasis (Elikhina 2008a, pp. 72–73).

Among the local cults, the most widespread was veneration of the god of weaving, whose images are portrayed on wooden votive plaques. One panel in the Hermitage depicts the god of silk and his suite (Fig. 4a, b; Color Plate VIIIa). The Avestan Yima/Jamshid was the first to teach humans industries and crafts. The depiction of the god of silk and protector of silkworms is probably to be connected with this personage and with this myth about the first mentor of mankind who taught it how to work the land, smelt and forge metals, weave a weft into a warp. Xuanzang



Fig. 5. Votive plaque depicting the god of weaving. Wood, mineral paints. 25 x 10 cm. Khotan: Dandan-Uiliq, 6<sup>th</sup> century CE. Acq. 1897 from the Coll. of N. F. Petrovskii. Inv. No. ΓΑ-1120. (Peshchery 2008, p. 72)

(600–664) writes about the presence in Khotan of the cult of the god of weaving and the dedication of a temple to him (Stein 1907, I, pp. 259–60, 279–80, 298, 300; III, Pls. LXI, LXIII).<sup>2</sup>

Sericulture and the production of silk textiles was an important component of the economy of Khotan over many centuries. Silk production arrived in the Khotan oasis probably as early as the first century CE (Hill 2009, p. 467; cf. Lubo-Lesnichenko 1995, p. 63). According to Aurel Stein, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the oasis of Khotan was still the main producer of silk and silk textiles in East Turkestan.

As we can see more clearly in a second Khotanese panel, the painters depicted the god of silk as a four-armed ruler seated on a throne (Fig. 5; Color Plate VIIIb). His lower right hand holds a cup in front of his chest; the lower left hand rests on his knee. In both of these Hermitage panels, the upper left hand holds what may be a mulberry branch. In the panel shown in Fig. 5, the upper right hand clearly holds a loom reed, the slotted plate through which the warp threads pass and which is used to push weft yarn into place. The god's suite shown in Figs. 4a and 4b includes youths,



a young Chinese woman and two female figures. A youth is depicted in the crown of an Indian prince; his fingers are immersed in a large cup on a conical stem. One might suggest that in the cup are silkworm cocoons. In front of him kneels a young woman in Chinese dress. Her coiffure is decorated with long hairpins, in her right hand she holds a large two-tined fork, on which normally are wound the threads from the cocoons, in her left hand is a white cloth (D'iakonova 1960, p. 66; Williams 1973, Fig. 64). Below are depicted two more women: one sits in front of a loom; the other spins.

According to legend, the fourteenth ruler of Khotan, Vijaya Jaya, married a Chinese princess, who brought cocoons in her coiffure (Hill 2009, p. 467; Rhie 1999, I, p. 259). The Chinese princess took an oath not to kill the moths. The local population made cloth from twisted threads of raw silk after the moths had left the cocoon, since killing any living being was a sin according to Buddhist precepts (Lubo-Lesnichenko 1995, p. 62). In this way silk production in Khotan began.

Russian diplomats played a significant role in the study of Khotanese antiquities. Nikolai F. Petrovskii (1837–1908) was Consul General in Kashgar from 1882–1902. In government service in Turkestan beginning in 1867, he became a collector of manuscripts and objets d'art. Academician Sergei F. Ol'denburg wrote: "... the brilliant discoveries of N. F. Petrovskii began a new era in the archaeological study of East Turkestan..." (Ol'denburg 1911, p. 3). Petrovskii also compiled a detailed manuscript map of East Turkestan, on which he marked the ancient monuments known to him and indicated the distances between them. Travelers and scholars turned to him for advice and guidance and always received assistance. Beginning in 1892 Petrovskii regularly sent manuscripts which he had obtained in Khotan to the Asiatic Museum in Petersburg. (The Oriental Department of the State Hermitage was created in 1920, and the collections of the Asiatic Museum, except for the manuscripts and xylographs, were incorporated into the Hermitage collection.)

The Imperial Hermitage acquired Petrovskii's collection of artefacts in 1897. In addition, the museum houses a significant number of objects collected by Sergei A. Kolokolov, Sobolevskii and the engineers L.

Ia. Liutsh and Belinko. A few objects were acquired from students of Nikolai I. Veselovskii and Sergei E. Malov. Thanks to the efforts of these individuals, the museum houses a rare collection of more than 3000 archaeological artefacts.

The State Hermitage also houses small collections of material from the northern oases of the Silk Road: Kucha, Turfan, Karashar and Dunhuang. The collection from Kucha was brought by Mikhail M. Berezovskii (1848–1912), a zoologist by training. Berezovskii participated in fourteen expeditions, initially as a zoologist and botanist; from 1902–08 he directed expeditions to China and Central Asia as a geographer and ethnographer. He visited Subashi, Duldulokur, Kumtura, Kucha, Kizil and Kirish. The Russian Committee for the Study of Central and East Asia sent Berezovskii's expedition to Kucha to undertake archaeological survey in 1905. The research began in the vicinity of Kucha in September 1906, coinciding with the work of Paul Pelliot's French expedition. Berezovskii's main goal was to compile a precise, suitably large scale map of ancient settlement sites and Buddhist monuments. He gathered fragments of paintings and made watercolor copies of them; he collected clay sculpture, frag-

Fig. 6. Fragment of a mountain scene depicting signs of the zodiac and scenes of gift bearing. Loess, clay, glue-based pigments, painted on dry plaster. 83 x 177; 46 x 204; 46 x 177 cm. Kucha: Kizil, Cave No. 198. 6<sup>th</sup> century. Acquired by expedition of M. M. Berezovskii in 1905–06; transferred in 1930 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. KY-821. (Peshchery 2008, p. 125)



ments of wooden Buddhist carvings, moulds for casting heads and separate parts of sculptures. He made large tracings of paintings and photographed sites and separate finds. Of particular interest are the photographs, which recorded the appearance of collapsed walls with painting, caves and inscriptions in Chinese, Tocharian and Turkic which have not survived to this day. The expedition completed its work in December 1907 (Vorob'eva-Desiatovskaia 2008, p. 119).

The most interesting item from the Kucha oasis, from Kizil (Cave No. 198), 6<sup>th</sup> century CE, is a painting from the cave ceiling depicting the heavenly sphere with the signs of the zodiac and scenes of the presentation of gifts to the Buddha (Fig. 6; Color Plate IXa). The signs of the Greek zodiac are placed on a gray-blue background in the space between two chains of mountains, where trees grow and animals are grazing (Samosiuk 2008, pp. 123, 125).

After World War II part of the German collection (several of the finds made by Albert Grünwedel) ended up in the Soviet Union. A number of these objects are now in the Hermitage, including fragments of murals from Kucha and Turfan. One of them depicts a jataka tale about the benevolent prince-turtle (Fig. 7; Color Plate IXb). In one of his previous births, the Buddha was a turtle. Once he swam to the shore to rest. Merchants who were passing by mistook his shell for dry land and built a campfire on it. The frightened

Fig. 7. Jataka about the benevolent prince-turtle. Loess, straw, glue-based pigments painted on dry plaster. 28 x 22 cm. Kucha: Kizil, Cave of the Musicians (No. 38), 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century. Acquired by expedition of Albert Grünwedel; ex-Collection of the Ethnological Museum, Berlin, prior to 1945. Inv. No. BД-628. (Grünwedel 1912, p. 67, Fig. 136 [sketch]; Peshchery 2008, p. 428)

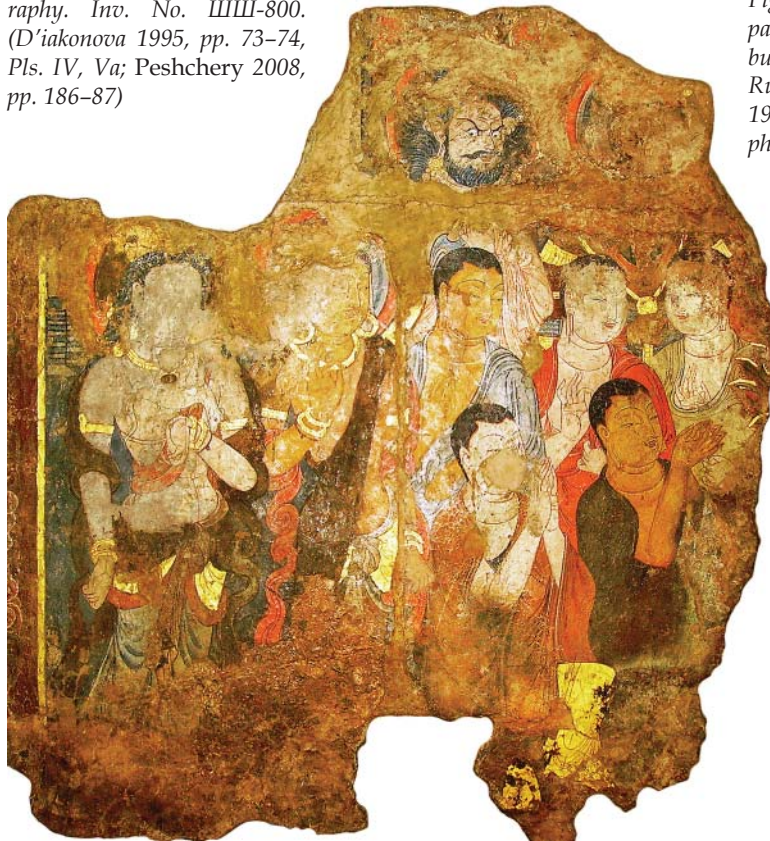


Fig. 8. *Mahasattva (Vyaghri) Jataka*. Loess, straw, glue-based pigments painted on dry plaster. 45.5 x 38.5 cm. Karashar: Shikshin, Cave No. 5a, 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Acquired by the First Russian Turkestan Expedition, 1909–10; transferred in 1930 from Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. IIII-776. (Grünwedel 1912, p. 198, Fig. 446; D'iakonova 1995, p. 83, Pl. XII; Peshchery 2008, p. 180)

turtle jumped into the water to quench the flames, but then, taking pity on the merchants, transported them to the opposite shore. This motif is frequently encountered in the paintings on the vaults in the Kizil caves (Samosiuk 2008, pp. 427–28).

The next gallery is devoted to the art of Karashar. The First Russian Turkestan Expedition, headed by Academician Sergei F. Ol'denburg, worked in 1909–10 at Karashar, located between Turfan and Kucha (D'iakonova 1995). Some of the finds are also from the collections of the Russian diplomats N. N. Krotkii and A. A. D'iakov (Popova 2008, p. 175). In the collection are fragments of murals, clay sculpture and manuscripts. The earliest painting, dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE, depicts scenes from the *Mahasattva Jataka* (Fig. 8; Color Plate Xa), a very popular motif from the previous births of the Buddha Śākyamuni, who sacrificed his body to a hungry tigress with cubs.

Fig. 9. *Bodhisattvas and monks*. Loess, straw, glue-based pigments painted on dry plaster. 101 x 108 cm. Karashar: Shikshin, building K-9e, 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Acquired by the First Russian Turkestan Expedition, 1909–10; transferred in 1930 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. IIII-800. (D'iakonova 1995, pp. 73–74, Pls. IV, Va; Peshchery 2008, pp. 186–87)



The murals depicting Uighur donors are from a later period, no earlier than the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Karashar was part of the Turfan Uighur principality. The paintings on the subjects of the “Siege of Kushinagara,” “A Bodhisattva with monks” (Fig. 9; Color Plate Xb) and a “Weeping noble woman” (Fig. 10; color

Fig. 10. *Weeping lady*. Loess, straw, glue-based pigments painted on dry plaster. 87 x 65 cm. Karashar: Shikshin, building K-9e, 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Acquired by the First Russian Turkestan Expedition, 1909–10; transferred in 1930 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. IIII-801. (D'iakonova 1995, p. 74, Pl. VI; Peshchery 2008, pp. 188–89)





Fig. 11. *Pranidhi (The Taking of the Vow)*. Loess, straw, glue-based pigments painted on dry plaster. 370 x 227 cm. Turfan: Bezeklik, 11<sup>th</sup> century. Acquired by the First Russian Turkestan Expedition, 1909–10; transferred in 1930–31 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. TY-775. (Peshchery 2008, pp. 214–15; <[http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html\\_En/04/b2003/hm4\\_1\\_27.html](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html_En/04/b2003/hm4_1_27.html)>)

image on cover), from the monastery site of Shikshin (Shorchuk), all date to that period. These paintings show the process of sinicization of the style of painting and its closeness to the art of the Tang era (Samo-siuk 2008, p. 178; cf. D'iakonova 1995, pp. 27–28).

Russian scholars and explorers made important contributions to the study of Turfan. The first Russian scholar who devoted attention to its ancient monuments was Albert E. Regel. In his report in 1881 to the Geographical Society, he mentioned “finds of ancient ruins.” When in 1895 on their journeys in East Turkestan Vsevolod I. Roborovskii and Petr K. Kozlov obtained ancient manuscripts, the Academy of Sciences established a special commission for developing archaeological collections from Chinese Turkestan. In 1898 the Commission dispatched to Turfan an archaeological expedition headed by the curator of the Academy of Sciences Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Dmitrii A. Klements, primarily to study the sites of Toyuk-Mazar and Indikut-Shar. The brief stay in Turfan offered Klements no opportunity to conduct excavations, but he described and photographed monuments, drew plans, made tracings and rubbings. In 1907, the doctor from the Russian consulate in Urumqi, A. I. Kokhanovskii, collected Turfan antiquities and manuscripts.

In 1909–10, Ol'denburg's First Russian Turkestan Expedition worked in Turfan, examining there some dozen freestanding Buddhist temples and grottoes. Ol'denburg concluded that it was essential to undertake there in the future carefully planned excavations and draw a detailed map of the town of Yarkhoto. The

expedition also examined the Tai-zan stupa near Astana and a number of monuments at Sengim-ogiz, Bezeklik and Toyuk-Mazar. Subsequently Sergei E. Malov worked in Turfan, collecting there Old Turkic manuscripts in Uighur. In February and March 1915, Ol'denburg and B. F. Romberg, who had participated in the Second Russian Turkestan Expedition, again visited Turfan and obtained there dozens of fragments of manuscripts written in Uighur, Sogdian and Chinese (Popova 2008, pp. 207–08).

Of the greatest interest is a large, multi-figured composition from the 11<sup>th</sup> century which decorated the walls of a cave temple at Bezeklik: “*Pranidhi*” (“The Taking of the Vow”) (Fig. 11; Color Plate XI), in which the donor vows to follow the teaching of the Buddha, and as a reward requests protection for himself and his heirs. In this scene the Buddha is shown in the center of the painting, and the kneeling donor in the lower right corner. This subject was at that time one of the most common in the murals at Bezeklik, to the extent that it almost became kind of a cliché. Most of the best preserved panels with this subject lined the walls of Cave Temple No. 9 (20). The German expeditions took them to Berlin, but during World War II, since they had been too large to remove for safekeeping, they were destroyed by a bomb. The Hermitage painting is thus now a rare example of this scene.<sup>3</sup> In this painting one sees the combination of the Chinese traditions of the Tang era and the blossoming of Uighur art, which created its own distinctive expressive style (Pchelin 2008, p. 210).

A unique work is the painting depicting the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Fig. 12, next page; Color Plate XII), one of the eight great bodhisattvas who were especially venerated in the oases of East Turkestan. Mañjuśrī is seated on a lion, in his right hand he holds a *zhui* staff, in his left a transparent vessel with the blooming branch of a wild plum (*mei-hua*). His head is surrounded by a nimbus; in the crown is a miniature figure of the Buddha Amitāyus. A numerous suite surrounds



Fig. 12. The Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Loess, straw, glue-based pigments painted on dry plaster. 339 x 232 cm. Turfan: Bezeklik, 11<sup>th</sup> century. Acquired by the First Russian Turkestan Expedition, 1909–10; transferred in 1930–31 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. TY-776. (Peshchery 2008, pp. 216–17)

the Bodhisattva; in the left section of the composition are mountains and temples – probably Wutai shan, the location in China where Mañjuśrī resided. On the right is a larger scale figure of Vajrapāṇi. His attributes are a fly whisk and *vajra* (Rudova 2008, pp. 216–17). This image, in whose iconography are the attributes of other Buddhist divinities, enables one

Fig. 13. Fragment depicting the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni. Loess, straw, glue-based pigments painted on dry plaster. 107 x 243 cm (Note: the two sections shown here have not been reproduced in the same scale). Turfan: Sasyk-Bulak, 13<sup>th</sup> century. Acquired by the First Russian Turkestan Expedition, 1909–10; transferred in 1930–31 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. TY-703. (Tibetan Art: Towards a Definition of Style, J. C. Singer, P. Denwood [London, 1998], pp. 80–85; Peshchery 2008, pp. 232–33)



to see the complex processes occurring in Central Asian Buddhism in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition to paintings, the exhibit includes a number of sculptures from the Bezeklik grottoes.

Apart from the monuments from Bezeklik, the exhibit provides examples of art from other regions of Turfan: Sasyk-Bulak, Astana, Toyuk-Mazar, etc. Thus, from the ruins of the Buddhist monastery at Sasyk-Bulak comes a very fragmentary painting with scenes from the life of the Buddha: the attack of Mara, the Great Departure, the tonsure, and several others (Fig. 13; Color Plate XIII) (Pchelin 2008, p. 212). This painting dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and can be identified as in the “Tibetan” style, if one may speak of such in reference to that period. This style was the dominant one in Western Tibet and Khara-Khoto; the painting in the Buddhist temple in Kara in the same style (Kiselev et al. 72). However, it is well known Tibetan classical style in painting appeared only in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> cen-

tury. All the works created prior to that period are distinguished by marked Nepalese and, in all likelihood, Indian influences (Jackson 1996, pp. 103–31; Thurman and Rhie 1991, pp. 61–62).

Ol'denburg's Second Russian Turkestan Expedition was organized specifically to study the Mogao ku complex of Buddhist cave temples, the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas," located 25 km southeast of the city of Dunhuang in Gansu Province. Russian travelers in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had passed through Dunhuang on more than one occasion. In 1879 Nikolai M. Przheval'skii was there, and in 1894 Vsevolod I. Roborovskii, although neither of them undertook any special studies (Popova 2008, pp. 253, 255).

The beginning of construction of the monastic complex at the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas" traditionally is dated 366 CE; the last caves were carved and decorated in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Mogao complex includes several hundred grottoes, carved in the loess conglomerate of the precipitous bank of the river. The synthesis of architecture with painting and sculpture which decorated the walls and had been brought from India transformed the structures into a unique monument both in regard to their grandeur and distinctive artistic achievement and the complexity of the Buddhist philosophical concepts embodied in them.

Over the millennium-long history of this important Buddhist site the art of Dunhuang underwent a significant evolution: the plan of the caves changed as did the stylistic features of the monuments. The sculpture of the early caves right up to the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE developed under the influence of Gandhara. In addition though, one can see in the caves borrowings from other cultural centers located along the Silk Road. The art of Dunhuang reached its peak of development in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, that is, the Tang Dynasty period in China when art experienced a great efflorescence. The complex phenomenon of Chinese Buddhism, shaped completely by that time under the influence of local beliefs and cults of China itself, achieved here its most brilliant and complete expression. Its pantheon, worked out in detail, was based on sutras translated into Chinese from Sanskrit by Indian, Central Asian

and Chinese scholar-pilgrims in the 5<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was precisely in the 8<sup>th</sup> century that Pure Land Buddhism, at the core of which lies the belief in the Buddha Amitābha, became especially prominent at Dunhuang. The grandiose panoramas of the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitāyus covered the walls of many of the grottoes painted in this period. No less inspiring were the depictions of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara saving those in distress, illustrations of the "Lotus Sutra" (Rudova 2008, p. 256).

The collection brought by the Russian expedition from Dunhuang is rather small, numbering some 350 items. These are fragments of wall paintings and paintings on silk and paper, sculpture, votive banners and textiles. In spite of its fragmentary nature, the Hermitage collection from Dunhuang is representative of various periods of the development of the site, which makes its significance equivalent to that of the huge collections of Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot. In the Hermitage is a group of outstanding monuments: a mural depicting the disciples of the Buddha, painting on silk with portrait likenesses of donors, the sculptured head of a bodhisattva and a fragment of a votive banner depicting donors. All these works date to the period of the greatest efflorescence of the Mogao grottoes in the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries and have no exact equivalents in other collections in the world (Rudova 2008, p. 260).

The collection of works from Khara-Khoto, the dead city abandoned by its inhabitants in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is unique. This city was one of the twelve military-administrative centers of the Tangut state of the Western (Xi) Xia (982–1227). The Tanguts, a people of Tibeto-Burmese origin, had settled in the region of the great bend of the Yellow River in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In 1227, the Tangut state was destroyed by the Mongols (Samosiuk 2008, p. 315; *Lost Empire* 1993).

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On 22 May (4 June) 1909, the expedition of Petr K. Kozlov opened a remarkable suburgan (stupa), whence came all of the finds. Buddhist painted and sculptured works date from the 11<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries; they reflect the essence of the culture of the Tanguts, whose art drew upon both Chinese and Tibetan traditions. One of the most distinctive art works from Khara-Khoto is an image of Green Tara (Fig. 14; Color Plate XIV) on a

Fig. 14. Green Tara. Silk tapestry, kesi technique. 105 x 52.5 cm. Khara-Khoto, 12<sup>th</sup> century. Acquired by the Russian Mongolia-Sichuan Expedition, 1907–09; transferred in 1934 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. X-2362. (Rhie and Thurman 1991, No. 23; *Lost Empire* 1993, pp. 40–41; Samosiuk 2006, pp. 282–83; Peshchery 2008, pp. 346–47)





Fig. 15. Xuan U, the Lord of the Northern Palace (Quadrant) of the Heavens. Silk tapestry, kesi technique. 71 x 47 cm. Khara-Khoto, 12<sup>th</sup> century. Acquired by the Russian Mongolia-Sichuan Expedition, 1907–09. transferred in 1934 from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. Inv. No. X-2465. (*Lost Empire* 1993, pp. 244–47; Samosiuk 2006, pp. 355–57; Peshchery 2008, pp. 354–55)

textile woven in the *kesi* technique (“incised silk,” a particular type of Chinese tapestry). This image can be attributed to the Tibetan school of the Tangut tradition. The goddess is seated on a lotus; above her are the five Transcendent Buddhas and flanking her two Taras: the benevolent Aśokakāntā, with a yellow body, and the blue angry Ekajaṭā. At the stem of the lotus are genuflecting nagas; above and below the composition are additional miniature figures of heavenly musicians and dancers (dākinis) (Samosiuk 2008, p. 346; *Lost Empire* 1993, pp. 140–41).

The painted depiction of Xuan U — the lord of the northern palace (quadrant) of the heavens — is a typical Chinese image (Fig. 15; Color Plate XV) and among the finds from Khara-Khoto is unique for its connection with Daoism. He is shown seated on a cliff with his suite, which is difficult to identify in the complete absence of any analogies. Probably one can see here the constellation of the Great Bear (Beidou), which

ruled over death, Xiu (the Void), which governed matters connected with lamenting and tears, and Wei (the Roof). A Tangut donor is depicted in the lower corner of the thangka (Samosiuk 2008, p. 354).

The Hermitage exhibit includes finds from the Noyon uul barrows in Mongolia, which are associated with the culture of the Asian Huns (Xiongnu), one of the best known nomadic peoples of antiquity. Even today the name “Hun” evokes a derogatory stereotype of militarism, barbarism and unchecked cruelty: “...when the savage Hun will grope in the pockets of corpses, burn cities and drive herds into churches, and fry the flesh of our white brothers...” (Aleksandr Blok). In Chinese memory the Huns for a long time symbolized treachery. Many centuries later the Chinese poet Li Bo (701–762) wrote: “...Battle to the Huns is as plowing to the farmer: yet again bones bleach in the fields...”

The first information about the Xiongnu is to be found in Chinese works dating from the last centuries BCE. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE the Xiongnu created a nomadic empire, headed by the *shanyu* — the supreme ruler, commander-in-chief, arbiter of the law and priest. The Xiongnu had a powerful army and frequently carried out raids on neighboring territories and terrorized China. After decades of dominance in Inner Asia, in the first century BCE the Xiongnu polity began to collapse. In the first instance this was due to internal strife and to wars with neighboring tribes. In 80 BCE the Wusun came over to China; in 72 BCE the Dingling and Wuhuan rebelled; in 62 BCE the Xiongnu were defeated by the Chinese. In 59 BCE a civil war broke out amongst the Xiongnu with renewed force and finally tore asunder their state. The Xiongnu split into northern and southern branches, and the leader of the southern Xiongnu, the shanyu Huhanye, in 55 BCE acknowledged the suzerainty of the Chinese emperor. The northern Xiongnu occupied the territory of today’s Mongolia.

At the start of the first century CE, for a short time the Xiongnu regained their previous power and independence; from 9 to 48 CE incursions into China were renewed, and the Han found themselves in crisis. In 48 CE, the Xiongnu again split into northern and southern halves, the latter subject to China. In 93 BCE, a large part of the Xiongnu entered into a tribal confederation under the power of the Xianbei.

The unification of pastoralist tribes which took place at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE under the Xiongnu played an important role in the history of Inner Asia. The Xiongnu conquests at the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, which encompassed a huge region from the Enisei River to Manchuria and from northern China to Lake Baikal, removed barriers in the path of ethnic

and cultural contacts and resulted in the creation of new forms of material culture. Not coincidentally written tradition associates specifically with the Xiongnu the origin of many tribes and peoples in later times. It would be no exaggeration to say that the era of the Xiongnu was the connecting link between “primitive” cultures and civilization. Many historians believe that the Xiongnu conquests in Inner Asia and then the collapse of the Xiongnu polity gave rise to the so-called “Great Migration of Peoples,” as a result of which the Huns appeared in Europe and carried out devastating raids, achieving their apogee under the remarkable leadership of Attila. It is not impossible that precisely the appearance of the Xiongnu accelerated those historical processes which led to the fall of the Western Roman Empire and were the catalyst for the formation in Europe of new social relations which would last for centuries.

Among the best known archaeological assemblages of the Xiongnu are the cemeteries in the mountains of Noyon uul in northern Mongolia (100 km north of the capital of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar) (Rudenko 1960; Miniaev and Elikhina 2009). These cemeteries are located in three forested valleys: Gudzhirte, Tszurumte and Sutszunkte. The main part of the collections of the State Hermitage comes from eight barrows whose construction is roughly similar and most of which date to the first century CE. They had a square mound oriented in the direction of the compass and a square burial pit from 6 to 13 m deep. At the bottom of the burial pit a floor was laid on which a double chamber was constructed with a coffin in the internal chamber. The floors were covered with carpets, the walls draped with textiles. In the corridors were placed the burial inventory. Even though all of the Noyon uul barrows were robbed back in antiquity, a great deal of valuable evidence remained. Archaeological materials from Noyon uul provide information about the burial rituals and economy of the Xiongnu, about their resi-

Fig. 16. Polychrome silk, 175 x 46 cm. China, Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). Noyon uul (northern Mongolia), barrow no. 12. Acquired by the expedition of P. K. Kozlov, excavated by S. A. Teploukhov; transferred in 1934 from the Ethnographic Section of the Russian Museum. Inv. No. MP-1330. (Trever 1932, p. 35, Pl. 15)



Fig. 17. Textile fragment. Embroidered silk. 38 x 26 cm. China, Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). Noyon uul (northern Mongolia), Barrow No. 6. Acquired by the expedition of P. K. Kozlov, excavated by S. A. Teploukhov; transferred in 1934 from the Ethnographic Section of the Russian Museum. Inv. No. MP-1665.

dences and domestic furnishings, about their clothing and adornments, about the techniques used in processing of various materials, about their weapons and military affairs, about their pictorial art, beliefs and international relations.

The finds from Noyon uul are masterworks of the ancient craftsmen which all specialists agree belonged to the Xiongnu “elites.” Of the greatest interest are the textiles, which are distinguished by a variety of ornament and techniques, and the felt carpet. The Noyon uul collection contains eighteen types of polychrome textiles (Fig. 16), seven types of damasked textiles and sixteen types of embroideries (Fig. 17), which, taken together, emphasize the importance of connections with China. The Hermitage exhibit includes objects of daily life, parts of a wheeled vehicle, fragments of a loom, various decorations made of silver, gold and jade, lacquered cups, fragments of a casket and a number of other items. Many of them are Chinese, but there also are objects produced locally. The exhibit includes clothing sewn by the Xiongnu themselves that was suited to the nomadic way of life. A woolen hanging suggests a connection between the Xiongnu and Bactria.

The noted scholar of the Transbaikial region, Iulian D. Tal'ko-Gryntsevich, made the pioneering discovery in 1896 of Xiongnu archaeological monuments in Russia near the city of Kiakhta. Now Xiongnu archaeology is being actively pursued by scholars from various countries. The excavations of the Noyon uul barrows are connected with the name of Petr K. Kozlov (1863–1935), a noted Russian explorer of Inner Asia and student of Nikolai M. Przheval'skii's (1839–88). Following an accidental meeting with Przheval'skii in 1882 he received an invitation to participate in the Fourth Central Asian Expedition. To do this Kozlov had to enroll as a volunteer in the army, since Przheval'skii staffed his expedition entirely with soldiers. From 1883 to 1926 Kozlov participated in six large expeditions to Mongolia, Western and Northern China and Eastern Tibet, three of them under his leadership.

His final expedition in 1923–26 was unable to meet its primary goal of exploration in Tibet. Political intrigues made it difficult for him even to leave Urga (today's Ulaanbaatar). Forced to concentrate on the study of Mongolia, Kozlov decided to excavate the barrows of the Xiongnu elite in the mountains at Noyon uul. The opening of the tombs resulted in new scientific discoveries of world importance. In all of the cemeteries, the expedition counted 212 barrows, of which they excavated eight. The barrows were excavated under the supervision of Sergei A. Kondrat'ev, except for one which was studied by Sergei A. Teploukhov. Evaluating the results of the expedition, Kozlov wrote: "In the Hentei Mountains of northern Mongolia we excavated and studied two-

thousand-year-old, deeply buried graves, the tombs of the Huns. Specialists consider them to be among the most valuable of the archaeological monuments discovered in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

After the Xiongnu various people occupied the territory of today's Mongolia: the Xianbei, Toba, Juan-Juan, Turks, Uighurs, Khitans, Kyrgyz. Over the centuries various cultures, languages and religions succeeded one another and interacted there. The collection of archaeological monuments of Mongolia in the State Hermitage is varied, encompasses the period from the first centuries CE through the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and contains exhibits relating to the cultures of many of these peoples. Among the objects from the Turk period, the most interesting is a stone head with a runic inscription dated to the 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries which has not yet been deciphered and translated (Fig. 18). It is unique, since in Mongolia only one similar sculpture has been preserved that has a runic inscription. The exhibit includes several objects of daily life and weaponry: arrowheads, a helmet, a fragment of armor scales. That kind of armor, both for soldiers and for horses, was widespread among various peoples across all of Inner Asia.

Part of the exhibits is dedicated to the written culture of the Mongols embodied in historical monuments. Mongolian writing appeared at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, borrowed from the Uighurs and going back through Sogdian to Aramaic. In 1206 Chinggis Khan (1165–1227) was proclaimed Khan over all Mongolia, thus establishing the most powerful nomadic empire in the world, in which one of

the first tasks was to create a system of writing and introduce laws. Among the earliest monuments of Mongolian writing is the "Chinggis" stone (Fig. 19), whose inscription mentions Chinggis Khan by name. The stone was found at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the settlement of Khirkhira in southern Siberia.

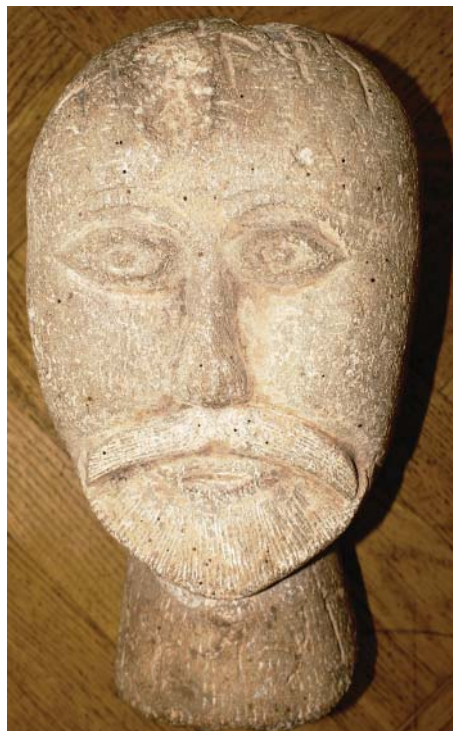


Fig. 18. Head of a Turk with a runic inscription. Granite. H.: 43 cm. Turkic kaghanate in the territory of Mongolia, 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries. Inv. No. MP-4195.

Fig. 19. The "Chinggis" stone. Granite. 210.5 x 66 x 21.5 cm. ca. 1224/5. Found near Khirkhira in Transbaikalia in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Brought to St. Petersburg in 1829; transferred in 1936 from the Asiatic Museum of the Academy of Sciences. Inv. No. BM-728. The inscription translates as: "When, after the conquest of the Sartaul people, Chinggis Khan assembled the noyans of all the Mongol ulus in the place called Bukha-Sujihai, Yesungke shot an arrow 335 sazhen." (<[http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html\\_En/12/b2003/hm12\\_3\\_1\\_5.html](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html_En/12/b2003/hm12_3_1_5.html)>; Dschingis Khan 2005, p. 27)



Figs. 20, 21a-b. Two rectangular paizas. Cast silver with incised inscriptions and gilding. 30 x 9; 29.5 x 8.8 cm. Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), last third of 13<sup>th</sup> century. 1) found in Minusinsk district of Enisei guberniia, 1845; 2) (recto and verso shown), found at village of Niuki, lower Selenga River, western Transbaikalia, 1853. Inv. Nos. BM-1134, 1121. (Smirnov 1909, Figs. 31–32; 29–30; Kramarovskii et al. 2000, pp. 110, 209–10; Dschingis Khan 2005, pp. 27, 29). The identical inscriptions read: "By the power of Eternal Heaven, let the name of the Khan be revered. He who does not show respect shall be guilty and die."

These territories in the 13<sup>th</sup> century first belonged to the elder brother of Chinggis Khan, Khasar (1164?–1213?) and then to his heirs. They then became part of the ulus of Jöchi, the oldest son of Chinggis.

Among the other examples of Mongolian writing are fragments of a 14<sup>th</sup>-century birchbark manuscript found on the Volga River. An iron and two silver paizas (Figs. 20, 21a-b, 22), Mongol passports or credentials of the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries, employ the square writing which was used for official documents in the period of the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368). Not only subjects of the empire but foreigners as well might possess such paizas — Marco Polo mentions them in his will. The square script was invented in 1269 by the 'Phags-pa lama (1235–80), the mentor of Khan Khubilai (1215–94). Inscriptions in the square script are also found on Yuan Dynasty paper money. Other paizas have inscriptions in Chinese, indicating that they were made for use in Yuan China.

The exhibit illustrates the material culture from the town of Karakorum, the ancient capital of Mongolia (1221–64), brought back by the archaeological expedition of Sergei V. Kiselev (1905–62) which worked there in 1948–49 (Kiselev et al. 1965; for more recent excavations, Dschingis Khan 2005, pp. 127–95). These



Fig. 22. Round paiza. Cast iron, with silver incrustation. 15.5 x 12 cm. Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), last third of 13<sup>th</sup> century. Found in the Bogomilov volost', Mari okrug, Tomsk guberniia; transferred in 1930 from the Academy of Sciences. Inv. No. MP-3061. The inscription is analogous to the preceding ones.



Fig. 23. Bowl. Thickly glazed Blue Ware (Jun Ware). D.: 23 cm. China, 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries, Song period (960–1279). Karakorum. Acquired by the expedition of S. V. Kiselev 1948–49; transferred in 1963 from the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Archaeology. Inv. No. MP-3131. (Kiselev et al. 1965, p. 220, Fig. 122.1)

objects are evidence of the relatively high level of urban culture of the Mongols in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. While Karakorum was a Mongol city, the capital of a nomadic empire, it was created in all probability under the influence of Uighur and Chinese cultures. A significant part of the finds originate in China and Korea, although objects produced locally are also represented.

Fig. 24. Mirror. Cast bronze. D.: 15 cm. Korea: Koryo Dynasty (935–1392), 13<sup>th</sup> century. Karakorum, the capital of the Mongol Empire 1221–64. Acquired by the expedition of S. V. Kiselev 1948–49; transferred in 1963 from the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Archaeology. Inv. No. MP-3143. (Kiselev et al. 1965, p. 283)



Figs. 25, 26. Roof tile caps. Glazed pottery. D.: 12 cm; 22 x 12 cm. Mongolia, 14<sup>th</sup> century. Kondui settlement site, Southern Siberia. Acquired by expedition of S. V. Kiselev in 1957–58; transferred in 1963 from the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Archaeology. Inv. Nos. MP-3069, 3070. (Kiselev et al. 1965, pp. 350–52)



fore the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century was burned and completely destroyed. In 1586 on the location of the ancient capital Abatai-khan (1554–88) erected Erdeni Zuu, today the oldest extant Buddhist monastery in Mongolia.

Architectural fragments of the 14<sup>th</sup> century analogous to those from Karakorum come from Kondui, located on the territory of today's Chita region (Figs. 25, 26; Color Plate XVIa). This remote site of what was probably a palace of one of the Chingizids was excavated by Kiselev's expedition in 1957 (Kiselev et al. 1965, pp. 325–69).



Fig. 27. *The Medicine Buddha (Bhaiṣajyaguru; Mong.: Otochi)*. Cast bronze, gilded and engraved. H.: 29 cm. Mongolia, 18<sup>th</sup> century. School of Zanabazar. Transferred in 1934 from the Ethnographic Section of the Russian Museum; ex-Coll. of E. E. Ukhtomskii. Inv. No. Y-529.

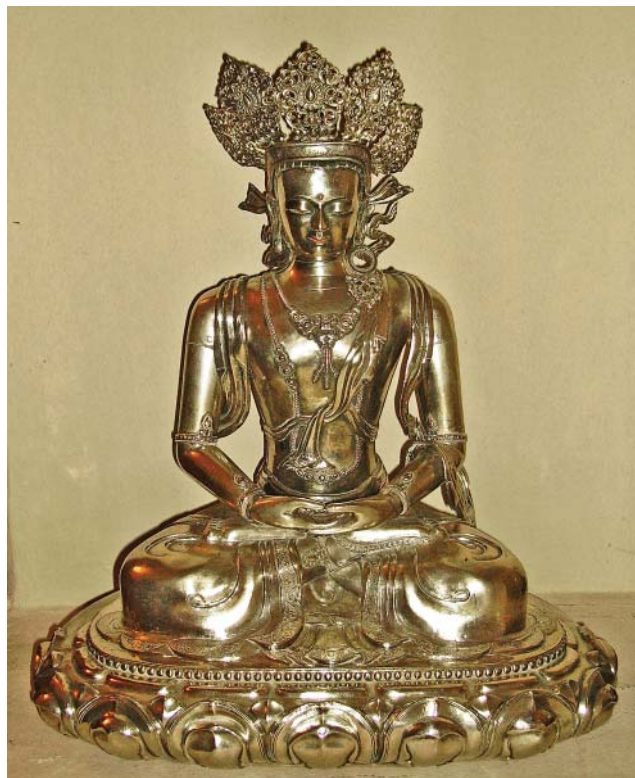
At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in connection with the conquest of the territory of Mongolia, the Manchus inaugurated a new phase in the spread of Tibetan Buddhism. A substantial role in this process was played by the head of the Buddhist religious establishment, the first Bogdo-gegen Zanabazar (1635–1723) who was also a remarkable sculptor and a lama. After his death his pupils continued the work, using his casting moulds. The Hermitage has one of Zanabazar's own creations, which is in the exhibit, and several sculptures attributed to his school (Fig. 27; Color Plate XVIb), some of which are also on display. By the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, practically no sculpture was being made in Mongolia. Instead it was imported from China, where it was mass produced. Many Chinese master craftsmen also worked in Mongolia itself. In 1701 in Inner Mongolia at Dolonnor, a summer residence was erected for a Beijing lama who headed the Buddhist religious establishment in China. Mass production of Buddhist sculpture began there using the repoussé technique. The Hermitage collection includes brilliant examples of the Dolonnor style, among them statues of Maitreya and Ushnisha Sitātapatrā (Thousand Armed Goddess of the Great White Umbrella), and a phurba ritual dagger (Fig. 28). The best of these are on display.



Fig. 28. *Phurba (ritual dagger)*. Brass, repoussé and cast, inlaid with turquoise incrustation, chasing. Inner Mongolia, 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries. H.: 104 cm. Acquired in 1934; ex-Coll. of P. K. Kozlov. Inv. No. KO-278.

Mongolian painting is rather poorly represented in the collection of the Hermitage, but the thangkas there illustrate important features of local iconography. Among them are depictions of the Bogdo-gegen, the war god Dalkha, the White Elder, Geser, and the goddess of wealth Bahaputra Pratisara, who came to be venerated in Mongolia and was also considered to be the bringer of children. Buddhism spread from Mongolia to Buriatia and Kalmykia; thus the exhibit includes Buriat thangkas. A unique silver sculpture in the repoussé technique was presented by Buriat clerics to the tsar on the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Romanov Dynasty (Fig. 29). It is one of several such gifts on display.

Fig. 29. *Buddha Amitāyus*. Silver, repoussé and cast. H.: 48 cm. Buriatia, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the private rooms of Emperor Nicholas II in the Winter Palace, a gift from the Buddhist clergy for the celebration of the Romanov Dynasty's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Inv. KO-384.



Silver was highly valued in Mongolia and Buriatia, where it was used to cast seals for Mongolian officials and in the making of women's adornments, belt accoutrements and women's headdresses. Small bronze sculptures of Chinese and Mongolian craftsmanship and objects of nomadic daily life — belt accoutrements including a knife and chopsticks, cups and pouches for them, belts, *gau*-reliquaries (portable shrine boxes) — and also helmets of the Mongolian elite are on display.

The gallery of the art of Tibet reflects the complex nature of the culture, which arose on the intersection of the cultures of India, China and Inner Asia. Tibetan Buddhist art is international, since it spread among the Chinese, Tanguts, Mongols, Buriats, Kalmyks, Tuvans, Bhutanese, and the inhabitants of Sikkim, Nepal, Mustang and Ladakh. Tibetan art embodies a refined spiritual world of Buddhist culture, a combination of symbols and signs which are well understood by every adept. Buddhism began to spread in Tibet in 7<sup>th</sup> century, and up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was no secular art at all. In spiritual practices the adept identified himself with the divinity to such a degree that he could interact with him and receive counsel. The divinity, the color of its body, its pose, gestures and adornment all had a specific meaning well understood by each adept and pre-determined by iconographic and iconometric rules and also by the structure of the Buddhist pantheon. All the monuments (painting, sculpture and ritual objects) were made in monasteries which were the centers of the spiritual culture.

The craftsmen who were to be the artists were divided into sculptors and painters. Each of these crafts demanded special training, knowledge of the materials, of specific technologies and of the canons. The "lost" wax technique was used for making bronze sculpture. Artists observed strictly iconographic and iconometric canons in which were described the rules for the depiction of divinities and their size. In the iconography of Tibetan Buddhism the position of hands and the pose of the divinity also had particular meanings. The pantheon of Buddhist divinities was quite broad. It included buddhas, angry and benevolent deities, *idams* (protectors) and images of the outstanding representatives of the Buddhist clergy.

Fig. 30. *The Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī*. Gilded cast bronze with traces of paint. H.: 32.5 cm. Sino-Tibetan, Yongle period (1403-24). Ex-Coll. of E. E. Ukhtomskii. Inv. No. Y-834. (Elikhina 2010, Pl. 5)



The core of the Hermitage's holdings of Tibetan art are the collections assembled by Prince Esper E. Ukhtomskii (1861-1921), the explorer Petr K. Kozlov (1863-1935), Aleksandr K. Fabergé (1876-1951, the second son of the famous jeweler), and the orientalist Iurii N. Rerikh (1902-60) and Boris I. Pankratov (1892-1979).

Ukhtomskii was a Russian noble, diplomat, publicist, poet, translator and collector. The family of the princes Ukhtomskii was a branch of the Riurikid house, including in the ancestors of the female line the founder of Moscow, Prince Iurii Dolgorukii, and Khan Batu, the first ruler of the Golden Horde. The father, Esper Alekseevich (1834 or 1832-1885) was a naval officer, who participated in the defense of Sevastopol' and circumnavigated the globe in the corvette *Vitiaz'*. He sailed on the frigate *Askol'd* to Nagasaki, was a Captain First Rank (1870), from 1881 an assistant naval attaché in Austria and Italy, and a founder of the Society of Russian Oriental Steamshipping which had routes to India and China. His mother, Jenny Alekseevna (née Grieg, 1835-70) was the granddaughter of the admiral of the era of Catherine the Great, the hero of the battle of Chesme, Samuil K. Grieg.

E. E. Ukhtomskii graduated from the Historical-Philological Faculty of St. Petersburg University, traveled extensively, and on several occasions visited Kalmykia, Buriatia, Mongolia and China. In 1890-91 he accompanied the heir apparent Tsarevich Nikolai Aleksandrovich to the Orient, a trip which he described in detail in his writings. Since he was a chamberlain at the Imperial court, he had

extensive connections and suppliers in those regions. Several times in the period from 1886 through 1890 he was in the East. He visited "Buddhist monasteries in Transbaikalia, traveled through Mongolia from Kiakhta to the Great Wall, was in Buddhist sanctuaries in Peking," and published descriptions of his travels in *Russkii vestnik*. Throughout his life, in studying the culture of Inner Asia, Ukhtomskii strove to achieve significant political, economic and cultural rapprochement between Russia and the East. To this end were devoted his published works, his travels and the collection he assembled, which was considered the most valuable collection of works of Buddhist art in Russia prior to the Revolution of 1917. It contains unique and stylistically and

chronologically varied monuments (e.g., Fig. 30; Color Plate XVIc), which provide a most complete picture of Buddhist art and the Buddhist pantheon. Ukh-tomskii's collection initially was in the Ethnographic Section of the State Russian Museum, where its first curators were the collector himself and his son Dii Es-  
perovich (1886–1918). In 1934 part of the collection, some 2000 items, was transferred to the Oriental Department of the State Hermitage, where it is housed today.

Bronze Buddhist sculpture of Tibet is rather well represented in the Hermitage. In the center of the gallery is a sculpture mandala of the Medicine Buddha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, a unique work which has no analogue in museums in Europe and America (Thurman and Rhie 1991, No. 134). The mandala consists of fifteen small statues and represents a cosmic model of the universe in the center of which is the Buddha and which is oriented toward the directions of the compass in accord with iconographic canons.

Today Tibetan craftsmen still make Buddhist objects according to the medieval canons, and, as earlier, the identities of the artists and sculptors remain anonymous. Overall Tibetan art expresses the idea of love and compassion. A contemporary Tibetan lama, Tartang Tulku Rinpoche, has written: "In order to appreciate Tibetan art, it is necessary to take one's own measure, to comprehend the fact of one's existence and the quality of one's awareness—that is, everything that is manifest in oneself. Tibetan art is part of this miraculous process of discovery-manifestation, but is neither commentary on it nor an attempt to represent an alternative. If someone completely understands this art, that then means that he may be deemed a Buddha..." (Tartang Tulku Rinpoche 1994, p. 143).

The re-opening of the Hermitage galleries of Central Asian art is a significant event in the cultural life of St. Petersburg and offers visitors an additional incentive to visit one of the world's great museums.

#### About the author

**Julia (Iuliia Igorevna) Elikhina** graduated from the Department of Mongolian and Tibetan Philology in the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University. Her *kandidat* dissertation in history (PhD equivalent) was expanded into a recent book (in Russian) on the cults of the main bodhisattvas and their terrestrial reincarnations in the history and art of Tibetan Buddhism. Since 1988 she has been on the staff of the State Hermitage Museum where she is Curator of Tibetan, Mongolian and Khotanese collections (including archaeological materials from Noyon uul, Karakorum, etc.). She is the author of more than 50 articles. In addition to her monograph on manifestations of Bodhi-

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## Notes

1. In the captioning of the images, selected references to the earlier publication and description of the objects have been provided, where one can often find full descriptions. No attempt has been made here to provide a complete bibliography of all previous publications. In a number of instances, the dates given in the publications vary and may differ from the ones provided here. — *ed.*

2. The plaque Stein found (Pl. LXIII; British Museum no. 1907.1111.73), also from Dandan-Uiliq, depicts the story of the silk princess in horizontal (landscape) format; see <[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=6516&partId=1&searchText=Dandan+Uiliq&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=6516&partId=1&searchText=Dandan+Uiliq&page=1)>. The reverse of

a different panel (Stein's Pl. LXI) depicts what likely is the god of silk (not a Bodhisattva, as Stein suggests; cf. Williams 1973, p. 150). <[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?assetId=1083980&objectId=6514&partId=1#more-views](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=1083980&objectId=6514&partId=1#more-views)>.

3. The pranidhi paintings taken to Berlin are reproduced in A. von Le Coq, *Chotscho. Facsimile-Wiedergaben der wichtigeren Funde der Ersten Königlich Preussischen Expedition nach Turfan in Ost-Turkistan* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1913), Pls. 17-29; several are also reproduced in better quality images in *Xinjiang shiku: Tulufan Baizikelike shiku* 新疆石窟: 吐鲁番 伯孜克里克石窟 (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe; Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe: [1990]), pp. [219-27]. It is not clear which cave might have contained the painting now in the Hermitage, although that might be determined from as yet unpublished expedition reports.

— translated by Daniel C. Waugh



a



b



b



a

Plate X



a



b



Plate XII



Plate XIII



Plate XIV

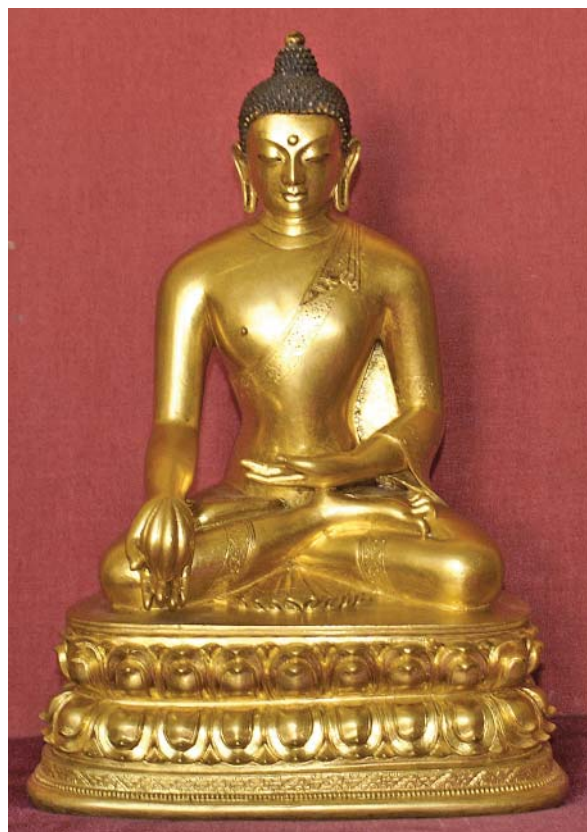




Plate XVI



a



b



c