Albert Grünwedel sketching in Kizil in 1907 (see pp.4–5).
Ancient Khotan
The British archaeologist, Aurel Stein, used Hedin’s information was discovered by the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin in 1896. However, after this it remained undisturbed for nearly seventy years until archaeologists from Xinjiang found it in 1928 by the Swiss team of Emil Trinkler and Walter Bosshard. The circumstances leading to this Sino-Japanese Project could have wider value. They therefore recommended that the project be expanded in scope to consider the conservation and restoration of all the murals in Henan. The conservation of the Dandan-Uiliq material can be seen as the exchange and integration of technical knowledge between China, Japan and France.

The programme started in early November 2004 and the conservation and restoration of all the murals was completed within eighteen months by a team of Japanese conservators. They worked on thirty pieces, comprising in total about ten-square metres of paintings. On 11 July 2006 the Xinjiang Cultural Relics Bureau convened a meeting in Urumqi entitled ‘Review of the Conservation of the Dandan-Uiliq Wall Paintings’. After reports and demonstrations of the conservation work, the experts from China and Japan reached a consensus that the Dandan-Uiliq murals have historical, artistic and technical value and the repair and restoration work was timely. They agreed that the work, having been based on the experience of previous projects by Japanese, French and Chinese teams, was of high quality and that it had established new standards for mural protection that could have wider value. They therefore recommended that the project be expanded in scope to consider the conservation and research of murals throughout Xinjiang.

Following conservation, the paintings were exhibited in 2005 in Tokyo, Kobe and Okayama in Japan, in 2008 in Taiwan History Museum, and in 2009 in Brussels in the Europa festival, all exhibits receiving an enthusiastic response. The research results were discussed at Sino-Japanese symposia held in 2005 and 2007 at Bukkyo University, during which scholars agreed that the murals should be described as ‘new treasures of Buddhist art from the western regions’. Professor Ando Yoshiko of Bukkyo University emphasized the paintings’ importance in providing evidence for early exchanges between China and Japan. Japanese scholars long argued that the style of murals at Hōryū-ji in Nara and Hōkan-ji in Kyoto are in the style of Yuchi Yosei (fl. 7th/8th century), a mural painter from the western region. However, no objects had been discovered to support this. The newly-unearthed murals from Dandan-Uiliq and Domoko with their specific style provided support to the hypothesis that the Yuchi painting style from Khotan already had had an influence by the Tang period on Japanese mural production. In early 2005 episode 4 of the NHK and CCTV co-production, ‘The Silk Road’, gave a special report on the new archaeological discoveries of the Buddhist temples at Dandan-Uiliq and Domoko.

Archaeology of the Southern Taklamakan
Located deep in the Taklamakan, the site of Dandan-Uiliq was discovered by the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin in 1896. The British archaeologist, Aurel Stein, used Hedin’s information to find the site in 1900 and carried out a more detailed survey, published in Ancient Khotan (Stein 1907). In 1905 it was visited by the American, Ellsworth Huntington (Huntington 1907), and in 1928 by the Swiss team of Emal Trinkler and Walter Bosshard (Gropp 1974). However, after this it remained undisturbed for nearly seventy years until archaeologists from Xinjiang found it again in 1996. In October 2002 a Sino-Japanese project started to work on uncovering, removing and investigating murals from Dandan-Uiliq formulated a programme for their conservation. In May 2004, the programme was validated following a meeting of cultural preservation experts at Beijing Science and Technology University chaired by Professor Wang Danhua. Lessons were learned about materials and techniques from other successful projects, including the conservation of murals at the Amida Hall of Hōkan-ji (fl. 7th/8th century) in Kyoto, the Sino-French collaboration on the Karadong murals in Xinjiang, and the work on Western Han period murals in Henan. The conservation of the Dandan-Uiliq material can be seen as the exchange and integration of technical knowledge between China, Japan and France.

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The four German expeditions under the leadership of Albert Grünwedel (1856–1935), and later Albert von Le Coq (1860–
1930) travelled on the northern Silk Road between 1902–14. The last boxes of finds from their expeditions arrived in Berlin just at the start of the First World War. The wall painting collection is probably the most important, but archaeological material, textiles and fragments, paintings on silk and paper as well as a large textile collection make up the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst. The manuscripts and text fragments were divided between the Museum, the National Library and the Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Science and Humanities, whose Turfan Research Group led by Desmond Durkin-Mesterton needs no introduction here. The four expeditions aimed to paint the entire Chinese territory and the newly developed methods were being prepared by Caren Dreyer (Archive, AKu) in German and English together with Ingrid Schindlebeck, Curator of the Central Asia collection of the Ethnologische Museum, Berlin, to be published next year.

Lilla Russell-Smith is Curator of Central Asian Art at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Stadtschloss Museum zu Berlin.

References

For publications relevant to this article see p.7.

1. Although commonly referred to as the ‘Turfan Collection’, it includes objects from other areas visited by the German expeditions, notably the region of Kucha.
Scientific Analysis of the Kizil Wall Paintings of the Asian Art Museum, Berlin

Yoko Taniguchi, Ellen Egel, Stefan Simon

Many Buddhist monasteries decorated with wall paintings are known in the Chinese Central Asia especially around the Turfan basin, notably in the vicinity of Turfan, Kucha, Khotan. The Kizil caves near Kucha flourished over several centuries because of economic and cultural interaction with other regions. The painting techniques were strongly influenced by India, Iran and China.

The Kizil wall paintings were created using ‘fresco secco’ or ‘a secco’ technique. This is different from Roman frescoes that requires organic binders to fix pigments onto the painting surface. The ‘a secco’ technique was similarly used along the Silk Road at sites including Bamiyan (Afghanistan) and Dunhuang (China). Caves were excavated from soft conglomerate cliffs and their inner surfaces were covered with earthen plasters. White ground was then applied before the colours were applied. Most of the paintings are now degraded and faded. However, it appears that originally the Kizil paintings were extremely rich in colour and used an abundant amount of gold leaf for decoration.

In order to examine the techniques and materials of Kizil paintings in detail, scientific analysis has been undertaken since the 1930s by Rutherford Gettens at the Fogg Museum on their collection pieces. The Japanese chemist, Kozuo Yamasaki, also analysed some fragments from Kizil in 1960. Using chemical methods that were available at that time (microscopy and chemical tests), both found gysum CaSO₄ • 2H₂O as the white ground as well as chrysocolla [CuSiO₃ • 2H₂O] as green pigment. In the 1970s Josef Riederer analysed the collection of the Asian Art Museum of Berlin, including the Kizil paintings. He identified white materials as gysum [CaSO₄ • 2H₂O], anhydrite [CaSO₄] and, rarely, lead white which he suggested originated from Eastern China. He also reported that the blues were formed from lapis lazuli and indigo, originating in western Central Asia. Pigments and painting techniques reflect the cultural background and this can help us understand the cultural value of each painting fragment.

Within the framework of a German-Japanese collaborative research project, Asian Art Museum, Radlager Research Laboratory and a Japanese team from the three organisations have started scientific diagnosis of Kizil paintings using non-invasive techniques. Multispectral imaging with high resolution photography allows us to create a detailed digital documentation of the paintings and carry out a first screening of pigments used. Then particle information and detailed surface information are obtained with a digital microscope. Selected areas are analysed with micro-X-ray fluorescence (µ-XRF) system to determine the elemental composition of the different colours.

The bright orange colour from fragment MIK III 8793 could be identified as minium by comparing the behaviour of this colour in the different images (VIS, IR false colour and UV false colour) with reference standards (Fig. 2). Moreover, it was possible through µ-XRF to identify the black cross in the VIS photograph of Fig. 2 as tin metal leaf. Fragment MIK III 9189, Cave 224 (see p.4) presents considerable damage. One explanation could be that it was caused by the looting of gold and microscopy revealed traces of this metal at several locations (Fig. 3). The blue pigment was identified by means of multispectral imaging as natural ultramarine from lapis lazuli, certainly used in different qualities and in mixture with a white pigment to obtain a light coloured tone as seen in Fig. 4 & 5.

With these techniques it was possible to identify some of the painting materials and unique areas and these should be subject for further analysis with other analytical methods in future. Vivid colours and decorations with gold and tin metal leaf were recovered from these fragments, and it reminds us again the prosperity of Kizil in this period.

Yoko Taniguchi is Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba. Ellen Egel and Stefan Simon are at Radlager Research Laboratory, National Museum of Berlin.

Buddhist Art Forum

A four-day symposium on all aspects of Buddhist art was hosted by the Courtald Institute of Art, London, from 11–14 April 2012. Generously funded by the Robert H. N. Ho Foundation, the forum brought together art historians, archaeologists, text historians, conservators, curators and Buddhist practitioners from around the world.

The third day was devoted to the conservation of Buddhist art and in one session on Dunhuang, Wang Xudong, Deputy Director of the Dunhuang Academy, and Lorinda Wong of the Getty Conservation Institute discussed the issues facing the preservation of the Dunhuang wall paintings given rising visitor numbers and the work done to address these issues by the Academy and the GCI. Susan Whitfield also gave a presentation on the work of IDP.

The papers will be published in a conference volume in 2013, details of which will be given in IDP News.

During the conference an announcement was made of a new MA programme at the Courtald in the history and conservation of Buddhist art, also funded by the Robert Ho Foundation.

References


Chihaya Bhattacharyya. Art of Central Asia, with Special Reference to Wooden Objects from the Northern Silk Route. Berlin 1977.


Publications


China’s Early Empires: A Re-appraisal
http://tinyurl.com/cldzy9

HB, xx+282 pp., 127 b/w 73 colour ill., €125.00 ISBN: 978-2-8133-5219-7
http://tinyurl.com/capipj9

Xinjiang: China’s Central Asia (Odyssey Illustrated Guides)
The Colony: Tredinnick Hong Kong: Airphoto Int. Ltd. 2012
480 pp., colour ill., $29.95, £17.95 ISBN: 978-9622177790
http://tinyurl.com/bmmadnx

The Silk Road: Key Papers: The Pre-Islamic Period

The Archaeology of Power and Politics in Eurasia: Regimes and Revolutions
http://tinyurl.com/dxwdepk

Chinese Scholars on Inner Asia
xxxv + 767pp. $55.00 shipping of $4.95 USA, £36.95 international ISBN: 978-0-93670300-5
http://www.indiana.edu/~ruasia/

Exhibitions

On the Silk Road: Ancient Pathways between East and West
27 October 2012 – 10 March 2013
Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome
Exhibition organized by American Museum of Natural History, New York in collaboration with Azienda Speciale Palapexpo and Codice. Idee per la Cultura, Torino. This exhibition illustrates the different cultures along the Silk Road with reconstructions of four iconic cities: Chang’an, today’s Xi’an, Turfan, an oasis city in the Gobi Desert, Samarkand, a major centre of trade and culture, and Baghdad, seat of the Arab Caliphate. A section produced exclusively for the Italian exhibition explores the relationship between Italian cities, particularly Venice and Genoa, and the Far East in the final few centuries of the Middle Ages. http://tinyurl.com/kx185 stochastic

Buddhism Along the Silk Road: 5th–8th Century
2 June 2012 – 10 February 2013
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Drawing together objects from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the western reaches of Central Asia the exhibition illuminates a remarkable moment of artistic exchange. At the roots of this transnational connection was the empire established the end of the fifth century by the Huns, which extended from Afghanistan to the northern plains of India. http://tinyurl.com/ft6v4

Treasures of Ancient China
to 23 February 2013
Topkapi Palace, Istanbul
Includes five Terracotta Army sculptures and over hundred artefacts on loan from prominent Chinese museums. http://tinyurl.com/ct9yiy

Donor Profile

PK Lom Pabhassaro
This is a new occasional feature for the newsletter where some of IDP’s users, friends and supporters introduce themselves. The pieces are accompanied by short videos on IDP’s YouTube channel.

My name is Phrakru Samulom, I come from Thailand and I came here in 1976 to work as a teacher of Buddhism and meditation. I live at the Buddhaphala Temple or Thai Temple in south London. This temple was set up in 1968 by the King of Thailand, who also came to open the temple when we moved from Christchurch Road near Richmond Park in 1976. We teach Buddhism according to the Theravada school, practiced in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

We get up at 6am to have breakfast at 7am. In Buddhist countries we go out to collect alms. Here it’s not very convenient because the people who want to give alms might live far from the temple. So people bring food for breakfast or lunch. 8am is time for chanting and meditation practice.

In the afternoon we have school visitors or university students to learn about meditation and Buddhism. I also teach a class on the introduction to Buddhism. At 6pm we have an hour-long meditation session.

Sometimes we go out of the temple if someone dies, we comfort the family. This is very important.

http://www.buddhapadipa.org/
IDP Beijing

At this 10th anniversary celebration of the launch of the IDP Chinese website on 16 November 2012, NLC hosted the exhibition "Documenting Dunhuang: Historical Photographs from the Late Qing and Republican Periods," including 100 photographic prints. NLC also hosted a roundtable with some Dunhuang scholars on the same day to discuss the current status and the future of IDP.

The IDP studio at NLC uploaded 20,160 images from January to November 2012. Of these, 1200 have been uploaded before then uploading the images to the international IDP servers, and the remaining 3000 images will be added to the IDP database by the staff preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, in the next year.

IDP Germany

The joint digitisation project of the Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and the Berlin State Library (RUB) in cooperation with the Union Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts in German Collections (Göttingen Academy of Sciences), financed by the German Research Council (DFG), has now reached its final stage. By the end of this year the digital images of all c. 40,000 manuscripts and block prints preserved in the Berlin Turfan collection will be freely available online through the IDP database. Additionally, a first part (c. 100 fragments) of the small collection of Turfan manuscripts preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, will be added to the IDP database by the staff of the DFG digitisation project.

IDP Sweden

Artfacts and photographs from the Hedén collections in Sweden started to come online through IDP in 2012. The images and data are pulled from the Swedish Open Cultural Repository (SOCHU) using an API. This is a new model for IDP and was tested earlier this year. Now it is working more entries on SOCHU will be validated and thus identifiable as relevant to IDP.

IDP Russia

An international conference, Tan'gus in Central Asia', was held in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts on 22–23 June 2012. It was held to commemorate the 80th birthday of Professor Evgeny Kychanov, the world renowned specialist in the field of Tan'gus and Chinese studies.

IDP Korea


Preparations are currently underway for a conference on Old Turkic to take place at the Institute in late September 2013.

IDP is also discussing a potential collaboration with the Hermann's on their Central Asian collections.

IDP Worldwide

IDP France and Japan

Dr. Shunji Sakamoto, from Digital Ar- chives Research Centre, Rikukoku University, Kyoto is currently at Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris on a collaborative project with Dr. Nathalie Mommet. He is using a high-resolution digital microscope to investigate the paper manuscripts of Dunhuang manuscripts in the Pelliot collection, following on from his work in London. Dr. Sakamoto will take over 30,000 microscopic images of the paper, and all the data will be available on a new new paper database they will develop in 2013. Details of Dr. Sakamoto's work on the manuscripts in London, along with his images, are available through the IDP website.

IDP Korea

Joan Hwang joined IDP Korea in March, 2012 as a successor to researcher Seokja Lee in the management of Korean webpage server and administration of events. In August, Dr. Kwanghun Jung joined the team as a senior researcher in charge of translation of English text for IDP. Dr. Jung also actively participates in various research project in IDP Korea.

RIJKS (Research Institute of Korean Studies, Korea University, Korea) and GCBS (Geumgang Centre for Buddhist Studies, Gyeonggung University, Korea) signed a co-operation agreement last August. GCBS is a centre established in 2003 for various fields of research in Buddhist studies and culture. The parties have already collaborated in translating and publishing the dictionary. At the 10th conference with Turfankunsten was held at Korea University. Entitled 'Central Asia, Korea and the Silk Road as a Cross-cultural Network', the confer- ence included several presentations and follow-on discussions. Participants included Yoonhee Hong, HK research professor and Kwanghun Jung, senior researcher from IDP Korea, and three researchers from the Academy of Sci- ences of Turfankunsten including Asdun An- nakurhan, the director of the Academy.

IDP Deutschland

The IDP studio at NLC uploaded 20,160 images from January to November 2012. Of these, 1200 have been uploaded before then uploading the images to the international IDP servers, and the remaining 3000 images will be added to the IDP database by the staff preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, in the next year.

We refer to announce the death of our esteemed colleague Werner Sundermann who passed away on Friday, 12 October 2012 after a long illness.

The Turfan Study Group (‘Turfan- forschung’) has not only lost a former col- league and director, but also a scholar of the highest standing who was well-regarded world- wide. Even after his retirement he stayed close to us, taking part in our activities and support- ing us in literature, discussions and advice.

He completed his doctorate in 1963. In 1970 he started work in the Turfan research group founded in 1965 at the German Acad- emy of Sciences, which he and his colleagues made internationally known through editions of new textual material. In 1984 he completed his second doctorate (habilitation). From 1993 to 2006 he was director of ‘Turfanforschung’. In 1992 he became honorary professor in the Institute of Iranian Studies at the Free Uni- versity Berlin.

He was an extraordinary member of the Class of Humanities of the Berlin Brand-enburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, a member of the Academia Europaea and also corresponding member of the Italian Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, of the North Rhein Westphalian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, of the Danish Academy and of the British Academy.

We refer to the bibliography see: [http://tinyurl.com/42pjpg for his complete bibliography see: [http://tinyurl.com/au431 for more see: http://tinyurl.com/2p2pgd for more see: [http://tinyurl.com/a13217 for more see: [http://tinyurl.com/a13217]
People

It has been a busy period in terms of staff changes at IDP. We were very sorry this year to say goodbye to Imre Galambos, Alastair Morrison and Kate Hampson. We also said a temporary farewell to Abby Baker who went on maternity leave (and congratulations on the birth of her daughter).

Imre started with IDP in 2002 as Overseas Project Manager and became a Research Manager in 2003, working closely with Sam van Schaik on palaeographical and codicological research and publishing widely. He has now become Lecturer in Pre-Modern Chinese Studies at Cambridge University, and we look forward to continuing to work with him on joint projects in his new role.

Alastair joined in 2003 taking over Imre’s responsibilities for networking and digitisation and was soon promoted to become Overseas Project Coordinator. During this time he developed excellent working relationships with IDP’s many partners, especially in China, and significantly expanded our activities there. He received his doctorate from SOAS in 2012. He has now taken the position of Partnership and International Development Manager at Bournemouth University.

Kate joined IDP in 2001 as a half-time Project Administrator and her support over the years has been invaluable. We wish her well in her retirement.

Joseph Konczaks joined the team in May as a half-time Imaging Assistant, taking over Abby’s work in this area.

Sarah Mullan and Emma Goodliffe joined us in September and October respectively, Sarah taking over from Kate and Emma from Alastair. We welcome them all to IDP.

Volunteers

Thanks to Serena Biondo for her help over this year on the Tibetan manuscripts and to Zhang Qin, who worked as a volunteer for IDP in July. She also did translation and offered general help during the IDP conference in November.

Thanks also to the other helpers at the conference: Siqin Brown, Lorna Komenda, Caroline Lound, Farida Seddon and Ilse Timpermann.

Events

Dunhuang and Hong Kong: Gateways to Ancient and Modern China

This half-day event on 14 May included lectures by Professor C.F. Lee (Director, The Jao Tsung-I Petite École of the University of Hong Kong), Professor Fan Jinshi (Director, The Dunhuang Academy) and Susan Whitfield, followed by a reception. This event was initiated by Jao Tsung-I, who proposed organising lectures on the subject of Hong Kong and Dunhuang on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Held in the British Library Conference Centre, it was jointly organised by IDP with the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office and was attended by around 150 people.

IDP International Conference

See p.3.

Wikipedia Editathon

Wikipedians, students from UCL, SOAS and Birmingham University, scholars and IDP staff participated in the IDP Wikipedia Editathon held from 23–26 October. During the four days they added, edited and updated material on Wikipedia. For details of these see: http://tinyurl.com/bxzyhng

This was one of the activities under an AHRC grant.

IDP China: 10th Anniversary

Susan Whitfield, Vic Swift and Emma Goodliffe were joined by Baroness Tessa Blackstone, Chair of the British Library Board, HE Sebastian Wood, the British Ambassador to China, colleagues from IDP Dunhuang and the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology, scholars and press at this event in Beijing. See also p.10.

Collaborations

The Chinese National Silk Museum in Hangzhou held celebrations for its 20th anniversary in late November 2012. Susan Whitfield attended and, as well as presenting a short paper on IDP, also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Zhao Feng, Director of the Museum (pictured above). The MoU covers collaboration on the cataloguing of Central Asian textiles on the IDP database and website. It is hoped that this work will start in 2013.

Xu Shenggen from the Ningxia Academy of Sciences, China, came to London to discuss a collaboration on Tangut manuscript conservation, cataloguing, digitization and publication with IDP.

Zhao De’an, Director of the Northwest University for Nationalities (Lanzhou), and a team of researchers discussed with IDP the publication of a series of facsimile volumes of the Stein Tibetan manuscripts.

Funding

AHRC

IDP hosted a workshop of its UK Academic Advisory Group as part of the AHRC-funded project to discuss the results of the user survey, the Wikipedia Editathon and the IDP redevelopment.

The online user survey received over 100 responses. The full results are online on http://idp.bl.uk/survey/results.html and a summary report will be added soon.

The AHRC grant will end in March 2013 and further funding is currently being sought. We welcome all donations.

For regular news of IDP’s activities see the quarterly reports on the IDP Blog: http://tinyurl.com/b44mfml