



From Kashmir to Western Tibet: The Many Faces of a Regional Style¹

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THE ART OF KASHMIR has long been established as one of the main sources of early Western Himalayan art. There is much evidence to support this, ranging from invitations of Kashmiri artists and collecting Kashmiri works of art in Western Tibet to the regional adoption of a distinctive art style that was inspired by the art of Kashmir. However, except for the collecting of artworks, which is recorded through the addition of inscriptions on imported objects, the available evidence is largely anecdotal, and direct associations with preserved sculptures or paintings can rarely be established. In addition, the variations in early Western Tibetan art raises the question as to which of the works are truly Kashmiri, in other words, directly dependent on artists or art from the Valley of Kashmir and which works are an offshoot.

In my previous study of early Western Tibetan art, that is, art made during the Purang-Guge kingdom, which flourished mainly in the eleventh century, I differentiated three distinct stylistic strands, all of them with some link to the art of northwestern India. One of

these strands certainly relates very closely to the art of Kashmir, a conclusion supported by the biography of the Great Translator Rinchen Zangpo (*lo tstshā ba* Rin chen bzang po, 958–1055), which reports that he once brought thirty-two artists from Kashmir to Western Tibet. In my analysis of the visual evidence that survives from this period, the relevance of this account is overemphasized in the secondary literature ever since Giuseppe Tucci published his groundbreaking study of the life of the Great Translator, essentially claiming a Kashmiri derivation for all early Western Himalayan art. Given the variety within early Western Himalayan art, I have tried to take a more cautious stance; more important I have tried to differentiate art that directly relates to the Shrinagar Valley from that which is a product of Greater Kashmir, by which I mean the wider region around Śrinagar that may, at least in Tibetan literature, be referred to by the same name. For me the art of the Kashmir Valley is highly distinctive, as Pratapaditya Pal has repeatedly shown.²

However, whereas distinct artistic schools and stylistic trends are obvious, some are more closely related to Kashmiri art than others, and their distinction over

Detail of Fig. 2.33 **Bodhisattva Padmapani**



Fig. 2.1
Bodhisattva belonging to the Cella group
Tabo Main Temple, passage between Assembly Hall and the Ambulatory around the Cella, right side, ca. 996
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, 2001 (WHAV, 47)

time becomes blurred in the Western Himalayas. This is most apparent through the Alchi group of monuments in Lower Ladakh—and thus close to Kashmir—which likely represents Kashmiri art (or something very close to it) within rather confined geographical and temporal parameters.³ Rethinking the evidence and taking new finds into account, I recognize that the distinctions I made earlier between three styles of early Western Himalayan art, mainly on the basis of the sculpture preserved in the Western Himalayan region, must be amended to allow for a larger number of principal workshops; greater artistic freedom to adapt or borrow styles, especially in painting; and the continuous cultural and artistic exchange between the regions.

Rather than trying to differentiate distinctive styles and naming them—in this regard I do largely adhere to the names I have suggested earlier—I will focus on the relationship between works of art and speculate what they may express in terms of the relationship to Kashmiri



Fig. 2.2
Flying deity
Tabo Main Temple, Ambulatory ceiling, painting on cloth, ca. 996
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, 1984 (WHAV, 335)

art, workmanship, and origin. What is suggested below does not represent a comprehensive picture but is largely based on an attempt to place the works in the exhibition within the larger framework of Western Himalayan monuments and the chronology I developed for them in my study of the clay sculpture of the region.

EARLY REFLECTIONS OF KASHMIR

The first group I distinguish is characteristic of the earliest monuments of the Western Himalayan region. The group's most important examples are the oldest paintings and sculptures preserved in the Main Temple at Tabo, in the Spiti valley, which are attributed to the foundation of the temple in the late tenth century.⁴ These include the sculptures inside and in front of the Cella (Fig. 2.1), the murals in the Entry Hall, and the paintings on cloth attached to the ceiling of the Cella and the surrounding Ambulatory (Fig. 2.2).⁵ Characteristics of this group include a certain stiffness in the body, a disproportionate relationship between parts of the body and elongated, stiff limbs, and more freely executed facial features, such as the alignment and symmetry of the eyes. Also noteworthy are the V-shaped upper body and the proportionally large head. Contemporaneous sculptures of this style are also preserved at Ropa, in Upper Kinnaur and in bronze.⁶

Good bronze examples of this type include a standing eleven-headed and six-armed form of Avalokiteśvara



Fig. 2.3
Standing eleven-headed and six-armed Avalokiteśvara
Western Tibet, ca. 1000
Gilt bronze with silver inlay, 15 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 2 15/16 in. (39.4 x 14 x 7.6 cm)
Cleveland Museum of Art, Andrew R. and Martha Holden Jennings Fund, 1975.101

in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 2.3) and a seated image of the same figure in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Fig. 2.4). These two bronzes also share the extreme projection of the side heads and rather simple jewelry and textile patterns, and the depiction of their *dhoti* at the level of the belt is somewhat illogical, indicating a copying process rather than an originally conceived work of art. To be sure, there is a considerable difference in quality between the two bronzes, the Cleveland bodhisattva being much more refined than the Los



Fig. 2.4
Seated eleven-headed and six-armed Avalokiteśvara
Tibet, Tholing region, early 11th century
Leaded brass, 15 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 3 1/4 in. (39.37 x 16.51 x 8.26 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Harry Kahn, M.78.40

Angeles bronze and in many ways closer to Kashmiri art.⁷ A point of interest is that the Cleveland bodhisattva does not wear a sacred thread at all, whereas that of the Los Angeles bronze disappears under the belt line. This detail is crucial; to me it indicates that the artist of this expressive work did not come from an Indian culture familiar with Hindu customs, and so was not Kashmiri but rather local, that is, from a Western Himalayan region.⁸

Of the early Western Himalayan styles, this is the least sophisticated and uniform, and each of its examples

has unique characteristics. The style also lacks a clear successor, as only the sculptures of the Golden Temple (gSer khang) in Lalung could be considered a late variant.⁹ Earlier I followed Klimburg-Salter, who conflated all early art objects lacking a certain degree of sophistication and associated with a Tibetan cultural context, regardless of whether they derived from Western Tibet or Dunhuang, into a single stylistic group,¹⁰ but with increased refinement in our knowledge and in the classification of Tibetan art, the designation of a “Himalayan style” has lost its meaning. Considering the localized character of this style and the fact that it is limited to the earliest preserved monuments and bronzes dated to about 1000 CE, I continue to call it the early Western Tibetan style.

The relationship of this style to that of Kashmir is easily discernible if one compares those works to the a bronze donated during the reign of Queen Diḍḍā (980–1003), a chronological benchmark for the later art of Kashmir, which bears some characteristics similar to this style but is more softly modeled and much more sophisticated in the rendering of the jewelry and textiles (Fig. 2.5). Note how the sacred thread falls above all other clothing and forms an elegant bow across the upper body, and also the intertwined eight-shaped knot that is part of the seat’s decoration. Figure 2.6 represents a rather coarsely modeled variant of the same composition as the Queen Diḍḍā bronze, depicting the six-armed Avalokiteśvara flanked by two goddesses, either two forms of Tārā or Tārā and Bhṛkūtī, but with the deities now seated on a rock base occupied by animals and accompanied by kneeling donors. Given its similarities to the Queen Diḍḍā bronze and the facial features, this bronze was probably made in Kashmir about the same time. Note that these bronzes share the low forehead and wide open eyes also characteristic of the early Western Tibetan style. Clearly, the art found in the earliest Western Tibetan monuments is not identical to Kashmiri art of the same period but rather reflects a corpus of works from Kashmir in a slightly less sophisticated local form.

KASHMIRI ARTISTS IN WESTERN TIBET

Together, the two Kashmiri bronzes of the seated six-armed Avalokiteśvara (Figs. 2.5 and 2.6) provide a good basis for identifying art possibly made by craftsmen from



Fig. 2.5
Triad of the six-armed Avalokiteśvara flanked by goddesses with a dedication inscription during the reign of Queen Diḍḍā (980–1003)
Kashmir, 989
Bronze, H. 9 5/8 in. (25 cm)
Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar
Photo courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies, no. 112-4

Fig. 2.6
Triad of the six-armed Avalokiteśvara flanked by goddesses
Kashmir, ca. 1000
Metalwork, 6 3/8 x 4 3/4 x 1 3/4 in. (16.8 x 12 x 4.4 cm)
Rubin Museum of Art, C2003.48.3 (HAR 65287)
Photograph by David De Armas

Kashmir in Western Tibet, and thus provide visual parameters to evaluate the story of Kashmiri artists brought there by Rinchen Zangpo. To me the strongest candidates to support this story have been preserved in two early *chörten* (Tibetan stupas; *mchod rten*) around the temple of Yeshe ’Od (Ye shes ’od) in Tholing, which were probably constructed in the second or third decade of the eleventh century. As Amy Heller discovered, the bronze from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art discussed above (Fig. 2.4) bears a Tibetan inscription naming the donor, who was also one of the principal donors of the northwestern *chörten* at Tholing,¹¹ a fact that certainly supports the early eleventh-century date and a local workmanship.





Fig. 2.7
Offering goddess Lāsya
Tholing, northwestern *Chörten*, second or third quarter of the 11th century
After Namgyal, *Tuolin Si (Ntho-ling Monastery)*, p. 131

The depiction of the offering goddess Lāsya (Fig. 2.7), one of the secondary figures flanking the standing Buddha image on the main wall of the northwestern *chörten*, compares closely to the goddesses seen on the Kashmiri bronzes illustrated by Figure 2.5 and Figure 2.6, with the Queen Diḍḍā bronze more closely related. Despite the differences in medium, details such as the veil and the ornamentation of the hair clearly relate the works to each other.

The Tholing *chörten* paintings are remarkable for their distinctive stylistic features,¹² most notably the straight continuation of the nose line from the forehead (best seen in profile) and the set-back but clearly marked chin, both of which are seen in a similarly prominent manner in Figure 2.7. Long-haired bearded males wearing short, light cotton vests with horizontal bands across the upper arms (Fig. 2.8) and perfectly rendered lively elephants, like those found among the representations of Avalokiteśvara being rescued from the eight dangers on one of the walls of the northeastern *chörten*, further indicate a Kashmiri origin for the painters.

As to female imagery, the peculiar representation of the veil, which covers the hair and forms a point above it, and the bodice, which reveals much of the breasts and emphasizes the abdomen, are certainly derived from Kashmir. In the Tholing *chörten*, the veil is used through-

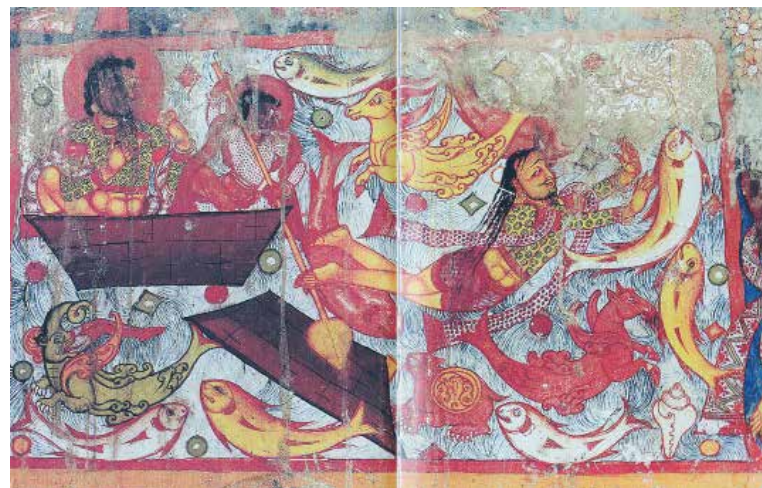


Fig. 2.8
Danger of shipwreck
Tholing, northeastern *Chörten*, second or third quarter of the 11th century
After Namgyal, *Tuolin Si (Ntho-ling Monastery)*, p. 123

out, but the bodice is depicted only with larger figures, which are all in very fragmentary condition.¹³ A somewhat later and likely local rendering of a Kashmiri-style goddess is found among the remarkable wooden sculptures of Charang (Fig. 2.9).¹⁴ Although the crown type and the rendering of the hair and the scarf are comparable to those at the Tholing *chörten*, the proportions of the figure differ considerably, as do the less pronounced facial features and the higher forehead.

In paintings the bodily features are expressed by shading, which with certain colors can be rather excessive. In the northwestern *chörten* at Tholing such excessive shading was applied to the Vajrapāṇi sculpture in the niche of the right wall and to other blue (Fig. 2.38) and yellow painted figures, the latter ones shaded in red. A more detailed work may also identify some other features as distinctively Kashmiri, in particular certain costumes or textile patterns.¹⁵ But, as we will see, it is likely that many of these distinctive elements entered a pool of motifs that were reused occasionally in later eleventh- and twelfth-century Western Tibetan painting.

COLLECTING BRONZES

The early Western Tibetan style preserved in some of the earliest art in the region and in some exceptional bronzes differs considerably from Kashmiri artworks of the same period that were collected in Western Tibet. Examples



Fig. 2.9
Goddess with lotus
Ranrik Tse Monastery, Charang, Kinnaur
Photograph by D. E. Klimburg-Salter, 1998 (WHAV, 56,13)

include a considerable group of bronzes that by inscription are associated with the son of the Western Tibetan king Ye-she 'Od (Ye shes 'od), known by the Indian name Nāgarāja (Nā ga rā dza).¹⁶ Judging from the bronzes he had in his possession, among them very early and extremely sophisticated works from Gilgit and Kashmir, Nāgarāja was a true connoisseur of Western Himalayan bronzes.¹⁷ These imported early bronzes are of less concern in the present context, however, than those likely produced close to or during Nāgarāja's lifetime, such as the standing Śākyamuni in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 2.10).

This refined, large bronze is unusually worn around the face, which indicates a pattern of ritual usage over a considerable span of time as is practiced in India.¹⁸ This may mean that it was made and worshiped in Kashmir before it entered Nāgarāja's collection, but not necessarily. The collector himself and his brother Devarāja were given Indian names, which may indicate that they were brought up and educated with Indian culture, probably



Fig. 2.10
Standing Buddha
Kashmir, late 10th–early 11th century
Brass with silver and copper inlay, 38 9/16 x 11 1/16 in.
(98.1 x 28.2 cm)
Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1966.30

Kashmiri, in mind. However that may be, the exquisite modeling of the body covered by an almost transparent robe and the elegant *tribhaṅga* stance, as well as the elongated features, make it more likely that this is a Kashmiri rather than a Western Tibetan work.¹⁹

A Kashmiri origin is also hinted at in the story associated with the famous image of Khartse, an Avalokiteśvara image ordered by Rinchen Zangpo in the memory and size of his father (Fig. 2.11).²⁰ In terms of sophistication and bodily proportions, this image closely resembles the Cleveland Buddha (Fig. 2.10) and may be a somewhat later product of the same workshop. Two con-



Fig. 2.11
Khartse Avalokiteśvara commissioned by Rinchen Zangpo
 Kashmir, early 11th century
 Bronze with inlays in copper and silver and painted
 Photograph by Thomas J. Pritzker, 1999
 Literature: Ulrich von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*,
 Vol. 1: *India and Nepal* (Visual Dharma Publications, 2001), pp.
 70–71, fig. 11-5.

Fig. 2.12 (opposite)
Mañjuvājra
 Himachal Pradesh, 11th century
 Leaded copper-zinc-tin alloy with silver inlay, 9 1/8 x 7 1/8 x 5 1/8 in.
 (12.2 x 18 x 13 cm) with base
 Rubin Museum of Art, C2004.14.3 (HAR 65339)
 Photograph by Bruce M. White

trasting details are particularly noteworthy about these two images, one adding to the sophistication, the other indicating a workshop production rather than the hand of a master. The shape of the halo follows the elegant stance of the figures and is thus leaning in the direction of the side toward which the hip is directed. However, a few details of clothing on both images are rendered in ways that are poorly conceived and contrast with the sophistication of the representation of the body. In the case of the Cleve-

land Buddha, the lower garment is modeled in a rather schematic manner, and the way the end of the robe is held in the left hand and relates to the garment itself does not make much sense. In the case of the Khartse bodhisattva, similar, less sophisticated details include the ribbons covering the knot behind the ear and the relationship of the upper rim of the garment to the belt.

The strongly V-shaped upper body and elongated limbs of these bronzes relate them to the sculptures of the early Western Tibetan style, but now the upper body is structured in three clearly demarcated parts, a voluminous chest, a relatively straight lower torso, and a pronounced navel area. There are also marked differences, such as the considerably higher forehead area, the complexity and detailing of the jewelry and clothing, and the dominance of the *uṣṇīṣa*, in case of the Buddha, or crown, in the case of the bodhisattva. Even though these sculptures are likely also products of Kashmiri artists, they represent a strain of Kashmiri art that differs from both the Queen Diddā bronze and the Tholing *chörten*.

Thus, we have at least three distinct and roughly contemporaneous art schools active in Western Tibet in the first decades of the eleventh century, but even this may be a grossly simplified picture. From the evidence surveyed so far, we may also conclude that, probably for economic reasons, Kashmiri artists were not present in Western Tibet during the first major phase of artistic production in the late tenth century but became directly involved in a second phase through both works imported from Kashmir and working on site in Western Tibet.

The tripartite upper body is a feature typical of the majority of contemporaneous bronzes that bear an inscription referring to Nāgarāja,²¹ but most of the smaller ones are stylistically closer to the early Western Tibetan style than the large, more sophisticated works imported from Kashmir. Although it does not bear such an inscription, the seated Bodhisattva Maitreya from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is an excellent example of the style of many of these smaller works (Fig. 1.35). It combines features from all three groups discussed so far: the facial features of the early Western Tibetan style, the hair of contemporaneous Kashmiri works, the scarf of the Tholing *chörten*, and the tripartite upper body, as well as the Kashmiri facial features mentioned above. I believe such bronzes are also imported, as only in Kashmir could all these elements come together.²²



Another likely import is a Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra²³ image of the Rubin Museum of Art (Fig. 2.12). Although clearly related to works from Kashmir, stylistically this image does not fit into any of the groups we have discussed so far. Instead, the highly abstracted triple crescent crown, the facial features with slanting eyes, a prominent nose and bulging lips, and the seat with almost horizontal lotus petals are quite different from the Kashmiri works. This suggests that this bronze should be attributed to a region different from but adjoining Kashmir, such as areas of Himachal Pradesh.²⁴

PIOUS COMMISSIONS

We cannot know if the last works discussed above were bought on occasion or commissioned specifically, but there are clear cases for the latter recorded in texts and inscriptions. Despite its large size, the Khartse Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 2.11) is the best example of a commission that was produced in Kashmir and brought to Western Tibet, as suggested by the story associated with this work. In my reading of the art, a Kashmiri origin for the sculpture is plausible. In contrast, the Los Angeles Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 2.4) appears to be a local commission from Tholing.

An inscription on a bronze four-armed Avalokiteśvara preserved at Kamru, in the Sangla Valley of Kinnaur (Fig. 2.13),²⁵ provides greater insight into the commissioning of Kashmir related objects. Amy Heller has considerably improved our understanding of the inscription in her 2008 interpretation, especially in recognizing the misspelled reference to the *paṇḍita* Vīryabhadra referred to at the beginning of the inscription.²⁶ However, I am deviating slightly from her interpretation with regard to the role of Vīryabhadra. In my reading, the inscription states that, in accordance with a ritual practice established by *paṇḍita* Vīryabhadra, images of the Protectors of the Three Families, that is the three bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapāṇi, were commissioned by the great minister Lugön (Klu mgon) of the Mer (sMer) clan and his family for the merit of the deceased Shetsen (Shes stsan), former great minister of the Mer clan, ending with the wish that his sins and those of all sentient beings may be purified. Thus, the four-armed Avalokiteśvara must have been the principal image in a



Fig. 2.13
The inscribed four-armed Avalokiteśvara of Kamru
Possibly Tholing, Western Tibet, 11th century
Brass with silver, copper, and stone inlays, H. 30 5/7 in. (78 cm)
Photograph by D. E. Klimburg-Salter, 1999 (WHAV, 2,30)

triad whose other two images have not come to light. As Amy Heller has summarized, Vīryabhadra collaborated with Rinchen Zango and was probably active in Western Tibet during the second quarter of the eleventh century. The inscription, however, does not imply that Virabhadra was active in making or consecrating the image; it states only that the ritual practice was his.²⁷ This does not change the fact that the appearance of his name allows us to conclude that the bronze was likely made during or shortly after his activities in the Western Tibetan region.

Stylistically this sculpture relates more to the Nāgarāja group of smaller bronzes than to the Khartse

Avalokiteśvara. In the available photographs, Figure 2.13 is somewhat distorted by the top angle and has to be compared with the photographs published by Laxman Thakur;²⁸ the facial features appear close to Kashmiri works, but the bodily proportions are slightly out of balance, with a massive head atop a powerful upper body on relatively short and thin legs. Given the mention of the Indian scholar and his cooperation with Rinchen Zangpo, the bronze was most likely commissioned and made in the region of Tholing.²⁹ To me both the proportions of the figure and the fact that the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) is slightly covered by the belt exclude the hand of a Kashmiri master. It was instead made by a Western Tibetan master trained in Kashmir or by a Kashmiri. As Amy Heller has noted,³⁰ a local Western Tibetan production is often also indicated by an unfinished back, whereas Kashmiri productions are usually finished all around. However, this fact cannot be used as a criterion in this case, as the back is quite well finished,³¹ and even in Kashmiri works the back receives much less attention than the front and is occasionally unfinished.

This analysis of works from the Western Himalayas that can be dated with fair accuracy enables us to distinguish a number of styles, places of origin and workmanship, and intentions behind their making, and we can detect some general trends that appear to be characteristic of Western Himalayan Buddhist art during the first half of the eleventh century:

- an interest in producing high-quality works of art
- an interest in importing works of different northwestern Indian heritage, especially bronzes
- an interest in custom-made imports
- a continued interest in locally made works based on Kashmiri models.

In my reading, the interest in custom-made imports represents a second phase, possibly triggered by the high-quality works that had been imported earlier. That is the phase when the urge to invite artists directly from Kashmir must have been strongest. It is in this setting we have to understand the Tabo Main Temple inscription, which dates only forty-six years after the foundation of the temple, assumed to have taken place in 996 CE:

“When this sovereign, the lha btsun Byang chub ‘od, regarded the work of the ancestor as old, he gathered many masters and craftsmen, and provided the materials. When we, then, were commissioned by his profound order, we purified [the place] well and [the work] was done (vv. 6, 7a).”³²

Thus by 1042 CE the sculptures (Fig. 2.1) and paintings (Fig. 2.2) representing the local early Western Tibetan style were partially replaced by new ones, which superseded them not only in material quality but also in craftsmanship. It is noteworthy that the origin of the masters and craftsmen who were gathered to renovate the Tabo Main Temple is not mentioned in the inscription.

TABO AND KASHMIR

In my earlier work I used the sculptures (Fig. 2.14) and paintings (Fig. 2.15) of the mid-eleventh-century renovation of the Tabo Main Temple³³ to define a Western Tibetan style, which I saw as being distinct from Kashmiri art and possibly deriving from another northwestern Indian region, such as the area where the Sutlej reaches the Indian plains. I had termed this style Western Tibetan, since most examples are found within or close to the core area of the Purang-Guge kingdom. Furthermore, it is this style that developed into local Western Tibetan painting schools and that is referenced in the art of the later Guge kingdom.

In contrast to the Kashmiri style represented by the Tholing *chörten* (Fig. 2.7), all articulations of the body in the Western Tibetan style are very smoothly modeled. In painting, this smoothness is achieved by much more delicate shading than is characteristic of the Kashmiri style examined above. Further, in the Western Tibetan style the bodies are considerably heavier and more evenly proportioned, whereas the heads are comparatively massive. In Kashmir these bodily features are found in eighth-century sculpture,³⁴ and they are also characteristic of early bronzes in the Chamba region, some of them contemporaneous with early Western Himalayan art.³⁵ The Western Tibetan style may thus be seen as a more conservative stylistic tendency that is closer to earlier ideals of northwestern Indian sculpture than to the contemporary regional style of Kashmir.



Fig. 2.14
Bodhisattva Vajratikṣṇa
Tabo Main Temple, Assembly Hall, south wall (S12), ca. 1040 CE
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, 1984 (WHAV, 66)

The faces in the Western Tibetan images appear rounder than in the Kashmiri style, and the lips are not wider than the bottom of the nose, only the grooves to the sides of the mouth project this common width (Fig. 2.16). The eyes are relatively narrow, rounded at top and bottom and elongated toward the outside.

More or less contemporary examples of the Western Tibetan style are the few paintings documented by Tucci and Ghersi from the old temple in Mangnang³⁶ and the sensational clay sculptures of Radni (Rad nis), the birthplace of Rinchen Zangpo, first brought to my attention by Tsering Gyalpo.³⁷ Although they have been completely repainted, the latter sculptures are not only comparable to the Tabo renovation sculptures but they also represent the earliest-known example of a Highest Yoga (Anuttarayoga) Tantra theme, namely the Guhyasamāja, represented as the main theme of a temple. The foundation of the temple at Radni containing the images of a Guhyasamāja cycle is recorded in the biography of Rinchen Zangpo.³⁸



Fig. 2.15
Bodhisattva Vajragarbha
Tabo Main Temple, Ambulatory, c. 1040
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, 1984 (WHAV, 267)

Until recently no painting was known to have survived from Kashmir proper, but of late a book cover has come to light that is very likely from the valley and is early enough to be relevant as comparison to the earliest Western Tibetan monuments (Fig. 2.16).³⁹ The styles found on this cover unite what I defined as characteristically Kashmiri, visible in the secondary figures on the cover, with elements of the paintings of the Tabo renovation phase, as can be seen in the Buddha figures and the peculiar way their robes are rendered.⁴⁰ Obviously, it remains unclear how representative the painting on that cover might be, but since similar wide-ranging variations can be seen in some of the monuments under discussion here, it must be assumed that fluency in a number of styles and variations on a theme mattered to the more accomplished workshops active in the region and their customers.

The broader and more detailed analysis of the bronzes presented above and the stylistic characteristics of the Kashmiri book cover further indicate a highly complex interrelationship between early Western Tibetan



Fig. 2.16
Book cover with teaching Buddha
Kashmir, late 10th or early 11th century
Pigment on wood, 13 x 3 in. (33 x 7.5 cm)
Private Collection

art and that of Kashmir during the eleventh century. This does not mean that my earlier distinctions have been rendered useless, but the claim that mid-eleventh-century Western Tibetan art is characterized by a “Kashmir style” that is different from a “Western Tibetan style” has to be qualified. The comparison between the goddess depictions in the Tabo Assembly Hall (Fig. 2.17) and the northwestern *chörten* of Tholing (Fig. 2.7)⁴¹ may only reveal the range of variation between related workshops at a particular time period rather than providing evidence for two separate styles.

Even within the Assembly Hall of the Tabo Main Temple the goddesses are represented in two distinct forms, which are likely expressions of different workshops. The goddess in Figure 2.17 was painted by the same workshop as the bodhisattvas in the Ambulatory (Fig. 2.15) and most of the paintings on the southern half of the Assembly Hall, whereas the work in Figure 2.18 was painted by a slightly less sophisticated workshop that worked on the upper areas of the Assembly Hall and some of the paintings in the lower section of the northern half of the Assembly Hall, including the life of the Buddha located there. The latter paintings have harder outlines and simpler decorative details, and are thus of lower quality. A comparison of the halos of the goddesses alone makes these differences clear, but the figures themselves are different in almost every detail, including the proportions of the body. When one compares the outlines of the bodies, the *dhoti*, and the scarf and its relationship to the long pearl garland, there is no doubt that both workshops worked from the same basic scheme. To complicate matters, the works produced by both workshops throughout the monument vary greatly in

quality, resulting in a smooth transition between the works produced by the two groups. However, regardless of the finishing the products of the different workshops can be recognized from the rendering of certain details, most telling among them the navel area. In examples of the more sophisticated workshop the navel is set below the double lines marking the waist, whereas in the other workshop it is set between these lines, as is common in early Western Himalayan painting and also the Tholing *chörten*.

Should then the latter harder and more drawing oriented style be more closely associated with Kashmir? This is certainly a possibility, since it appears to be consistent with the sculptural style of the time. But if this is the case, where was the workshop that produced the more sophisticated, painterly work from? As mentioned above and as indicated by the book cover, Kashmir is certainly the possible original source for both styles, but like the bronzes, the Tabo paintings indicate a more complex origin for the artists. Given that their origin is not mentioned in the inscription, we must consider the the Tabo paintings to be the product of two workshops that were dominated by locals or by artists who had already settled in the Western Himalayas. This scenario also explains why it is the main style of Tabo that later dominated Western Himalayan art. Thus, regardless of its ultimate derivation, the designation of this style as Western Tibetan is still appropriate.

EARLY BOOK ILLUMINATIONS

A complex origin is also demonstrated by recent work done on the book illuminations acquired by Tucci in Tholing in 1933 and now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.⁴² As Paul Harrison has shown, the illuminations of five folios discussed here all belong to the



Fig. 2.17
Red goddess with vajra and red lotus
Tabo Man Temple, Assembly Hall, entry wall, immediately right of the entrance
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, 1984 (WHAV, 572)

same manuscript, volume three (Ga) of a *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Perfection of Wisdom in Hundred Thousand Verses*. As usual, the text was written first, and space was left for the illustrations. Only recently, the faint traces of red letters in an Indic script have been noticed at the bottom of each illumination.⁴³ The traces do not allow identifying the script or deciphering the text, but it is likely that these were working annotations for the painters who filled in the illuminations. This further shows that Indian, most likely Kashmiri, painters were active in Western Tibet and worked in cooperation with local writers and artists on these manuscripts.

As with the Tabo murals, the depictions on the folios are unusually lavish in material, quality, and variation. Folio 41 features a depiction of the offering goddess Vajralāsyā, identified as personification of the Perfection of Charity (Fig 2.19), and folio 80 illustrates the offering goddess Vajradhūpā, identified as the personification of Perfection of Insight (Fig 2.20). Together the two goddesses effectively reveal the style of these illuminations and the variety that can be seen in the same manuscript. Compared to the Tabo goddesses, the body of each figure is somewhat slimmer and elongated, as is the face, in which the chin is relatively pronounced. The garments and jewelry are very similar, but the crown elements touch each other and the clothing patterns are more



Fig. 2.18
Blue goddess with lotus and sword
Tabo Main Temple, Assembly Hall, north wall between the Bodhisattva Vajradharma and Vajratikṣṇa
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, 1984 (WHAV, 530)

complex and varied. As at Tabo, the goddesses do not wear veils or bodices. Note that with Vajralāsyā the scarf falls the same way as in Tabo, but with Vajradhūpā it simply lies on the shoulder. Further variations are visible in the decoration and edge of the crowns and in the rendering of the hairline, the garland, and the application of the dress pattern onto the *dhotī*. A unique feature is the casual way in which the fall of the colorful long necklace is rendered in these depictions. The bird-shaped incense burner held by Vajradhūpā provides a glimpse of high-end material culture of the time.

The male figure of Buddha Ratnasambhava (Fig 2.21) is the only one in the group whose body is represented frontally. Its main features are delineated in crisp lines, but the body itself is delicately modeled through shading. This is particularly apparent in the areas of the chest and navel, but also in the fact that most of the facial features are expressed through shading. The crown is five pointed, and the knots behind the ear holding it are nicely articulated, the one on his left side drawn a bit too massive and lower, and the earrings are standing off at an angle. The large jewel pendants hanging from the necklace over the chest are remarkable and probably hint at the identity of the Buddha. The double-string sacred thread disappears straight into the *dhotī*. The Bodhisattva Vajrabhāṣa (Fig 2.22), the personification of Absolute



Fig. 2.19
Goddess Vajralāsyā, Perfection of Charity
Folio from the *Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses*
Western Tibet, Tholing Monastery, 11th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, Image: 3 3/4 x 3 1/16 in. (9.52 x 7.77 cm); Sheet: 7 1/2 x 26 1/8 in. (19 x 66.35 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, purchased with funds provided by the Jane and Justin Dart Foundation, M.81.90.10



Fig. 2.20
Offering goddess Vajradhūpā, Perfection of Insight
Folio from the *Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses*
Western Tibet, Tholing Monastery, 11th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, Image: 3 9/16 x 3 in. (9.1 x 7.6 cm); Sheet: 7 1/2 x 26 1/8 in. (19 x 66.3 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, purchased with funds provided by the Jane and Justin Dart Foundation, M.81.90.8

Nothingness, is stylistically identical. He is identified by the red tongue with the tip of a vajra that he holds in front of his body. Expressing a slight movement toward the left, his head is tilted and his body is twisted at the navel in that direction. He too wears a double-string sacred thread that is covered by the *dhoti* below the level of the belt.

Despite the sophistication of these paintings, their less painterly drawing style—which superficially relates them to the earlier Kashmiri paintings and the second workshop of the Tabo Main Temple—and the notes in an Indic script, the rendering of the sacred thread hints again toward a Western Tibetan workshop responsible for these Tholing manuscript illuminations. This is not surprising if one considers that this manuscript must have been produced in a large manuscript workshop with both Indian and Tibetan monastic scholars and Tibetan writers. As with the Tabo Main Temple, we must assume a workshop in which Indian, probably not exclusively Kashmiri, and Tibetan artists were working side by side, probably within the same workshop. Thus it is likely that these works were produced in a multicultural and multilingual context that appears to be characteristic for the mid-eleventh century. In terms of date, the Tholing manuscript was probably created after the renovation of the Tabo Main Temple but still in the mid-eleventh century.⁴⁴

A fifth illumination of the same Tholing manuscript shows the gatekeeper of the eastern direction, Vajrāṅkuśa (Fig 2.23), identified as the personification of the Power of Faith. His identifying attribute is the elephant goad (*aṅkuśa*), the hook of which is formed by the trunk of a *makara*, a sea-monster. Such *makara*-headed elephant goads are characteristic of Kashmiri art and become increasingly abstract in later Western Himalayan art and possibly also in Kashmir, as the Alchi group paintings indicate. In this illumination, the combination of strong outlines and shading abstracts the face in an extreme manner. The protector is fanged and mustached, and a single twisted hair is drawn to each side of the mouth. His hair is knotted at the top, stands on end above the ears, and falls in a thick long braid along the sides of the head. A pronounced double line marks the bottom of the chest, and the kneecap of the extended leg is marked by a small ellipse. He wears a scarf knotted around the middle of his upper body and a *dhoti*, both of which cover his sacred thread. The stylistic features of this gatekeeper are



Fig. 2.21
The Jina Buddha Ratnasambhava
Folio from the *Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses*
Western Tibet, Tholing Monastery, 11th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, Image: 3 5/8 x 3 in. (9.2 x 7.62 cm); Sheet: 7 1/2 x 26 1/8 in. (19.05 x 66.35 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, purchased with funds provided by the Jane and Justin Dart Foundation, M.81.90.16

consistent with the seated Vajrapani from Kashmir, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (see Fig. 1.62).

Despite their unusual captions, the deities in this manuscript are easy to identify, as they are well known from the pantheon of the Vajradhātu, or Diamond Sphere, mandala, the most important and popular subject of early Western Himalayan monuments. The same deities are also represented in another illustrated manuscript, which is partially preserved at Tabo Monastery.⁴⁵ There the deities follow an expected sequence, but the deities of the Tholing manuscript appear to be distributed according to a system that cannot be identified on the basis of the few preserved folios.



Fig. 2.22
Bodhisattva Vajrabhāṣa, Absolute Nothingness
Folio from the *Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses*
Western Tibet, Tholing Monastery, 11th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Image: 3 x 3 3/8 in. (7.62 x 9.2 cm); Sheet: 7 1/2 x 26 1/8 in. (19.05 x 66.35 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, purchased with funds provided by the Jane and Justin Dart Foundation, M.81.90.14

Fig. 2.23
Gate-keeper of the eastern direction Vajrāṅkuśa, Power of Faith
Folio from the *Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses*
Western Tibet, Tholing Monastery, 11th century
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Image: 3 1/2 x 3 1/8 in. (8.89 x 7.93 cm); Sheet: 7 1/2 x 26 1/8 in. (19 x 66.35 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, purchased with funds provided by the Jane and Justin Dart Foundation, M.81.90.9



VAJRADHĀTU DEITIES

Deities of the Vajradhātu mandala are also depicted in Western Himalayan bronzes. An example for a gatekeeper is the wonderful silver image of Vajrasphoṭa (Fig. 2.24) from the Nyingjei Lam Collection. This image shares many stylistic characteristics with Vajrāṅkuśa from the Tholing manuscript, but it is also strikingly different in other ways. In particular, the slim, elongated form, the gaping mouth, and the somewhat abstracted hairstyle seem to indicate a later date for this sculpture, but the adjustment of the flaming mandorla to the movement of the figure links this image to the Cleveland Buddha (Fig. 2.10) and to the Khartse Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 2.11). Many of the other features, such as the band of intertwined snakes as the base for the skull crown, the garland of skulls, the pelt *dhoti* with its loop across the left thigh, and the way the chain is held in hands pressed against the thigh, remain unique to this sculpture and has no comparison in contemporaneous Western Himalayan sculpture or painting. It may be that this is a Kashmiri sculpture made about 1100 rather than a Western Himalayan work.

The fact that images with this subject can be traced back to Kashmir is demonstrated by a delicate brass work in the Solomon Family Collection that most likely depicts the Bodhisattva Vajrahāsa (Fig. 1.70). The figure holds his hands in front of the body as if holding something stretched between them, most likely a garland of teeth, the attribute of this deity. In the representation of the same deity in the Tabo Main Temple (Fig. 2.25) the hands are not exactly in the same position, but of the Tabo deities with attributes held in front, this one has the hands most widely spaced. Despite their difference in size, the bodies of the Kashmiri and Tabo Vajrahāsa are comparable, but in the smaller image the head is disproportionately large and the simple crown with widely spaced points suggests an earlier date.

Another candidate for the identity of the deity in Figure 1.70 is the Bodhisattva Vajrarakṣa, who usually holds a tiny coat of mail in front of his body in a similar manner (see Fig. 1.73), but with the hands spaced much closer together. A unique representation of this bodhisattva is now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 2.26), where he actually wears a jacket and holds the ends of it in his hands in front of the body. The jacket thus

Fig. 2.24
Gate-keeper Vajrasphoṭa
Western Tibet, 11th–12th century
Silver with copper inlay and traces of pigment; copper alloy throne, 7 7/8 x 4 3/8 x 2 1/8 in. (H. 16 cm)
Rubin Museum of Art, long-term loan from the Nyingjei Lam Collection, L2005.9.30 (HAR 68449)
Photograph by Bruce M. White

represents the coat of mail, an extreme variation of the iconography even for Western Himalayan art.⁴⁶ Jackets of this type, rounded at the bottom with a wide collar, are not known from Tabo or any other early eleventh-century site but appear to be typical for the paintings of the Nako Translator's Temple as evidenced in one of the eight Jambhala represented in Figure 2.27.

A goddess of the same set of Vajradhātu deities as the Cleveland Vajrarakṣa is in another private collection. The figure is Karmavajrī, who personifies the symbol of the karma family, with the crossed vajra (*viśvavajra*) she holds in her hands joined in meditation on her lap (Fig. 2.28).⁴⁷ Her bodice reveals the nipples of her breasts, and the veil and hair in the back of the head are considerably abstracted, with the veil converting into the scarf at the upper arms. With their elongated body, simplified jewelry, and abstracted crown, these deities of a Vajradhātu assembly in silver represent a stage in the development of Western Tibetan art that is certainly later than Tabo. Their features conform more to those found in the early cave of Phyang, to which I will return below. I attribute them to about 1100 and a workshop in the Western Himalayas, but at this preliminary stage of research, it is difficult to tell if the development visible in Western Himalayan painting, and here applied to sculpture, is something specific to the Western Himalayas or if it reflects a similar development in Kashmir, since we must assume that Kashmiri artists continued to be involved.

BODHISATTVA BRONZES

For me, both Tabo Monastery and the Tholing manuscript document an early stage of the transformation process leading from Kashmiri painting to the distinctive art of Western Tibet. The same transition process in sculpture is visible in what can be considered the most





Fig. 2.25
Bodhisattva Vajrahāsa
Tabo Man Temple, Assembly Hall, south wall
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, 1984 (WHAV, 572)

typical representation of early Western Himalayan art, the standing bodhisattva. We have already discussed a number of such bronzes, most important among them the Khartse (Fig. 2.11) and Kamru (Fig. 2.13) images of Avalokiteśvara. Although the Khartse Avalokiteśvara is likely a product of Kashmiri workmanship, the Kamru bronze probably represents a joint Tibetan-Kashmiri workshop in Western Tibet.

A similar joint workshop may be responsible for the bodhisattva image in the Asia Society collection (Fig. 2.29).⁴⁸ In most features this bodhisattva compares closely to the wall paintings of the renovation of the Tabo Main Temple in the mid-eleventh century. This bodhisattva likely represents Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, and he would have had a book on the flower, the stem of which he holds in his left hand. This can be concluded from the braids hanging behind the ear, which go back to Kashmiri imagery of Kumāra and appear to be

typical for Mañjuśrī, whose youthfulness is emphasized in both literature and sculpture.⁴⁹ On later Western Tibetan bronzes, such as the miniature version of the Khojarnath triad in the Pritzker Collection (Fig. 2.32), braids of this kind appear to become common with other bodhisattvas as well.

Closely following the Asia Society bodhisattva image is the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Fig. 2.30). The sacred thread (actually a string of pearls), the extremely elongated proportions, the flat execution, and the completely unfinished back are all signs of a local Western Tibetan production.⁵⁰ These rather distinctive features lead me to attribute the sculpture to the twelfth century.

Considerably more difficult is the assessment of another lotus-holding bodhisattva in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 2.31). Although this is certainly a great object with fine detailing, the sculpture is a Western Tibetan product that introduces a new level of aesthetics. The figure's scarf is spread across the shoulders at his back, and where it falls beside the body, it is bundled together in an unusually realistic manner. The elaborate necklace with a garland hanging from it is also unusual, as is the fall of the long necklace, which appears to have been inspired by painted examples. The prominent use of the lion-like "face of glory" (*kīrtimukha*) in the bracelets, the necklace, and the *dhotī* compares this sculpture to the clay images of the Alchi Sumtsek and Mangyu.⁵¹

While this comparison to sculptures in late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century monuments may seem out of place, there are also two details that link this image to the miniature version of the Khojarnath triad in the Pritzker Collection (Fig. 2.32). All sculptures of this triad share the rendering of the navel with a shadow fold above the actual navel, something not found in earlier sculpture. More decisively, the way the folds of the *dhotī* are modeled, especially between the legs, is identical in both the main figure of the Pritzker triad and the Cleveland sculpture. In fact, the Pritzker triad main image even shares the *kīrtimukha* garlands as the bottom pattern on each side of the *dhotī*. In comparison to the Pritzker triad main image, the Cleveland bodhisattva is more sensually modeled and less pronouncedly Western Tibetan.

What are we to make of this evidence? To me there is little doubt that the Pritzker triad is indeed a miniature version of the famous triad at Kojarnath, which only



Fig. 2.26
Bodhisattva Vajrarakṣa
Western Tibet, 11th century
Silver, 4 1/4 x 2 3/4 in. (10.8 x 5.08 cm)
Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of Mrs. Severance A. Millikin, 989.363. L2015.6.8

Fig. 2.27
One of the eight Jambhala
Nako, Translator's Temple, left side wall,
Dharmadhātuvāgiśvaramaṇjuśrī mandala, early 12th century
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 1998 (WHAV, 28,38)

Fig. 2.28
Goddess Karmavajrī
Western Tibet, 11th century
Silver with gilding, H. 4 1/4 in. (10.8 cm)
Private Collection





Fig. 2.29
Possibly Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī
Western Tibet, 11th century
Brass with inlays of copper and silver, H. 27 1/4 in. (69.2 cm)
Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd
Collection, 1979.045
Photography by Lynton Gardiner, Asia Society

Fig. 2.30
Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
Western Tibet, ca. 12th century
Brass inlaid with silver and copper; traces of paint,
14 1/2 x 6 1/8 x 1 7/8 in. (36.83 x 15.55 x 4.76 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice
Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.75.4.1

was completed around 1220.⁵² Of course, the Kojarnath images are not mentioned in the inscription, and the text gives no historic or regional clue either,⁵³ but the unusual iconography and the comparison to photographs of the “Three Silver Brothers,” the model sculptures at Kojarnath leaves little room for doubt in this regard. Even independent of this association and the resulting date for the bronze, the elaborate frame of the three images equally attributes the triad to the early thirteenth century. Made by the Tibetan craftsman Namkha Drak, the Pritzker triad thus marks the final phase of the highest-quality art production in the early Western Himalayan style. The Cleveland bodhisattva compares closely in details to the main figure of the Pritzker triad but differs somewhat on aesthetic grounds. In addition, it bears two features that most probably derive from Central Tibetan painting dating to the fourth quarter of the twelfth century or later, namely the fall of the long necklace and the addition of a second lotus flower for reasons of symmetry. Both features are, for example, found on the famous Green Tārā in of the Ford Collection, which can safely be dated between 1175 and 1189.⁵⁴ The Cleveland image must therefore also date to around 1200, and it should probably be attributed to a Western Tibetan workshop.⁵⁵

WESTERN TIBETAN VARIANTS

Of the three styles that can be differentiated for the earliest monuments in the Western Himalayan region, it is the Western Tibetan style, fully established by the time of the renovation of the Tabo Main Temple, that remains most relevant from the mid-eleventh to the thirteen century. We should probably imagine a combination of newly established Western Tibetan art schools working alongside traveling artists of the neighboring northwestern Indian regions, including Kashmir, and a gradual depletion of the excessive means necessary to continue to invite artists and to use the highest-quality materials due to increasingly uncertain political times. Kashmiri art continues to inspire and many of the elements defined above for this school, such as the pointed veil and the bodice for the depiction of the goddesses, became part of a staple repertoire to choose from, with different degrees of importance in the diverse art schools that worked in the region at the same time.



Fig. 2.31
Bodhisattva Padmapani
 Western Tibet, 10th–11th century
 Brass inlaid with silver and gold, H. 10 1/3 in. (26.2 cm)
 Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1976.70



Fig. 2.32
Miniature version of the Bodhisattva triad of Khojarnath
 Purang, Western Tibet, early 13th century
 Pritzker Collection



Fig. 2.33
Offering Goddess Ālokā with a butterlamp
Phyang, Western Tibet, right side wall, ca. 1100
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 2007 (Do653)

The increasing number of monuments for which documentation is available today very much complicates the discussion of their interrelationship. In addition, we know from well-preserved monuments with larger mural programs, such as the main temples of Tabo, Nako, and Alchi, that a number of quite distinctive styles are found within the same painting program, indicating that different groups of artists or even workshops were involved. It is also clear from the better preserved sites that much more effort was put into the Assembly Hall of a main temple, than into the paintings of a *chörten*. This fact explains why much more care was taken for the details of the goddess from the Tabo Dukhang (Fig. 2.17) when compared to the northwestern *chörten* of Tholing (Fig. 2.7), as is especially apparent in the textile and the jewelry. All of these issues affect the conclusions that can be drawn from a stylistic analysis alone. The following observations should thus just be taken as one of the possible historical scenarios that can be imagined based on the available material.

Later variants of the Western Tibetan paintings of the Tabo Main Temple are preserved in the recently discovered *chörten* of Malakartse Khar in Zangskar⁵⁶ (Fig. 1.64) and in a delicately painted but poorly preserved cave in Phyang (Fig. 2.33),⁵⁷ both of which are likely to have been completed around 1100. The earliest temples of Nako, which probably date to the first half of



Fig. 2.34
Kubera with consort as Guardian of the North
Nako Translator's Temple, south wall, first half of the 12th century
Photograph by C. Luczanits

the twelfth century, are remarkable for their variation in styles,⁵⁸ as can be clearly seen in the paintings of the two side walls of the Nako Main Temple (also known as the Translator's Temple). Both walls are occupied by a single large mandala of exceptionally high technical quality, but they were apparently produced by different workshops. Consequently, the same deities are depicted with clearly distinctive variations of the same iconography and there are considerable stylistic differences as well (compare Fig. 2.27 with Fig. 2.35). The peculiar headdress in Figure 2.34 may even indicate that the two workshops were working at the same time and that the depiction of the crown on this image resulted from an artist of the south wall being inspired by a depiction on the north wall (Fig. 2.35). Although the Nako paintings are technically sophisticated, their execution was largely done with less attention than those of Tabo.

The fascinating Dunkar caves can be seen as a continuation of the Nako paintings and were presumably painted about 1200.⁵⁹ Of these, the open cave (commonly called cave three) is certainly the latest, and in its abstraction of the figures and their ornaments compares well with the small Dungpu cave.⁶⁰ There are also a few



Fig. 2.35
Kubera with consort as Guardian of the North
Nako Translator's Temple, north wall, first half of the 12th century
Photograph by C. Luczanits

Western Tibetan thangkas that represent this style, some of them recently published from the Pritzker Collection.⁶¹ The earliest of these probably derive from the second half of the twelfth century.⁶²

Some of the later Western Tibetan monuments contain elements that are outside the stylistic development discussed above. Deviating most clearly, in both stylistic and also in technical terms, are the Gumrang sculptures, which in their principal aesthetics are akin to Central Asian sculpture.⁶³ In Gumrang, the broad and heavy "Central Asian" heads contrast with the slenderness of their "Indian" bodies, and the simplicity of their jewelry contrasts with its affluence (Fig. 2.36). Particularly unusual is the high *uṣṇīṣa* of the Buddha image.⁶⁴

Another noteworthy deviation can be seen in the survival of one of the Four Great Kings, Vaiśravaṇa, above the door of the Upper Temple at Nako (Fig. 2.37). It is a curious fact that although the Four Great Kings were known in India since the earliest Buddhist monuments, as evidenced by the identifying captions at Bhārhut, they did not reach Tibet directly from there but via Central Asia or even China. Consequently, they are always depicted in what I would term a Chinese mode. This mode is always apparent in the warrior gown, which is commonly attributed to the northern, in this case Central Asian, origin of Vaiśravaṇa. At Nako this mode is also clearly recognizable in the mustached face with



Fig. 2.36
Red Goddess
Gumrang, probably late 12th century
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 2003 (3,16)



Fig. 2.37
King of the North, Vaiśravaṇa
Nako Upper Temple, entry wall, above entrance, ca. mid-12th century
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 1993 (WHAV, 13,21)



Fig. 2.38
The offering goddess Mālā
Tholing, Northwestern *Chörten*, first half of the 11th century
After Namgyal, *Tuolin Si (Ntho-ling Monastery)*, p. 131.

its emphasized cheekbones. The same features are visible in the poorly preserved depictions of the Four Great Kings on the south wall of the Translator's Temple. Likely dating to the first half of the twelfth century, the Nako paintings represent the earliest survival of this mode in the Western Himalayas.

ALCHI GROUP

Although the paintings of the Western Tibetan monuments discussed above certainly incorporate features of contemporaneous Kashmiri art, there are indications of a more direct continuation of the painting style preserved in the northwestern *chörten* of Tholing. Among the characteristics outlined above is the dramatic shading of the deities in certain colors, such as the blue in the offering goddess Mālā (Fig. 2.38). This shading appears to be achieved by retaining highlights for the exposed parts of the body. Similar shading turns up occasionally throughout Western Himalayan painting, but it becomes particularly prominent in the paintings and, insofar as they preserve their original coloration, sculptures of the Alchi group of monuments. The best sculptural comparison to Mālā is found among the secondary figures in the Vajradhātu mandala of Sumda Chung (Fig. 2.39). The same extreme shading



Fig. 2.39
Bodhisattva Vajrayakṣa
Sumda Chung, Assembly Hall, Vajradhātu mandala, ca. 1200
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 2005 (D5116)

is also characteristic of the paintings at Sumda (Fig. 2.40). Sumda Chung offers a better comparison than Alchi itself, since it is also a secondary monument.

One can recognize a certain consistency between the Tholing Mālā (Fig. 2.38) and the Sumda Chung goddess (Fig. 2.40), but differences are also apparent, in particular in the depiction of the jewelry and the textiles, both of which are characterized by a tendency toward miniaturization in the Sumda Chung paintings. It is this latter aspect for which the Alchi group paintings are particularly well known, and the Alchi monuments preserve the finest examples, as most frequently demonstrated by the highly refined depiction of a six-armed Green Tārā on the left side wall of the Avalokiteśvara niche (Fig. 2.41). As with everything about this depiction, the shading is extremely fine and within the *dhoti* pattern are minute horseback riders hunting elephants.

Thus, the Alchi group of paintings differ considerably from those in other Western Himalayan mon-



Fig. 2.40
Flying offering goddess
Sumda Chung, Assembly Hall, Dharmadhātuvāgiśvaramaṅjuśrī mandala, ca. 1200
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 2005 (D5724)

uments. The relevant monuments (the best-preserved among them are those of Alchi, Sumda Chung, and Mangyu) appear to have been created within a small geographical area and a rather narrow time frame, from the middle of the twelfth to the first quarter of the thirteenth century. For this attribution I follow Roger Goepper in dating the Three-story Temple, or Alchi Sumtsek (gSum brtsegs), to the early thirteenth century. As with the earlier foundations established at the zenith of the Western Tibetan kingdom, such as Tabo Monastery, the material quality and workmanship preserved in these monuments are outstanding. Among the monuments of this group, the Sumtsek at Alchi is certainly the most sophisticated representative.⁶⁵

A comparison of two depictions of goddesses in the paintings (Fig. 2.41) and sculptures (Fig. 2.42) of the Sumtsek shows that the features earlier identified as Kashmiri are much more apparent in the paintings than in the sculpture of the same period, which only partly preserves its original painting.⁶⁶ The Alchi goddess wears a refined version of the pointed veil; her profile with the set-back, but marked chin conforms to earlier Kashmir profiles; and the bodice is now a standard element in depictions of goddesses. The attribution of the Alchi group of paintings to artists from Kashmir is further supported by the depictions of holy places in Kashmir on the *dhoti* of the four-armed Avalokiteśvara sculpture in the Alchi Sumtsek (Fig. 2.45) and an undeciphered Indic inscription in the same niche underneath the Tārā depiction.⁶⁷



Fig. 2.41
Six-armed Green Tārā
Alchi Sumtsek, Avalokiteśvara niche, left wall, early 13th century
Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar



Fig. 2.45
Seated four-armed, wealth-bestowing Tārā
Alchi Sumtsek, Avalokiteśvara niche, left wall, early 13th century
Photograph by J. Poncar



Fig. 2.42
Seated red goddess
Alchi Sumtsek, Mañjuśrī niche, upper goddess on right side wall
Photograph by C. Luczanits

Although they share principal stylistic features, the Alchi group paintings are far from being uniform. On the one hand, general trends can be discerned when comparing paintings in the earliest monuments, such as the Alchi Dukhang, with those in the latest ones, in which the figures become more elongated, the details more miniaturized, and the fondness for minute (textile) patterns reaches a culmination. The sculptures follow a similar trend from more rounded to more elongated features. On the other hand, both paintings and sculptures demonstrate that a number of different workshops must have been involved in the decoration of these monuments. There is only one instance so far in which the same workshop could be identified as being responsible for the decoration in a group of monuments, namely the late sculptures of the Alchi Mañjuśrī Temple, and the large two-armed bodhisattvas of Sumda Chung and Mangyu.⁶⁸

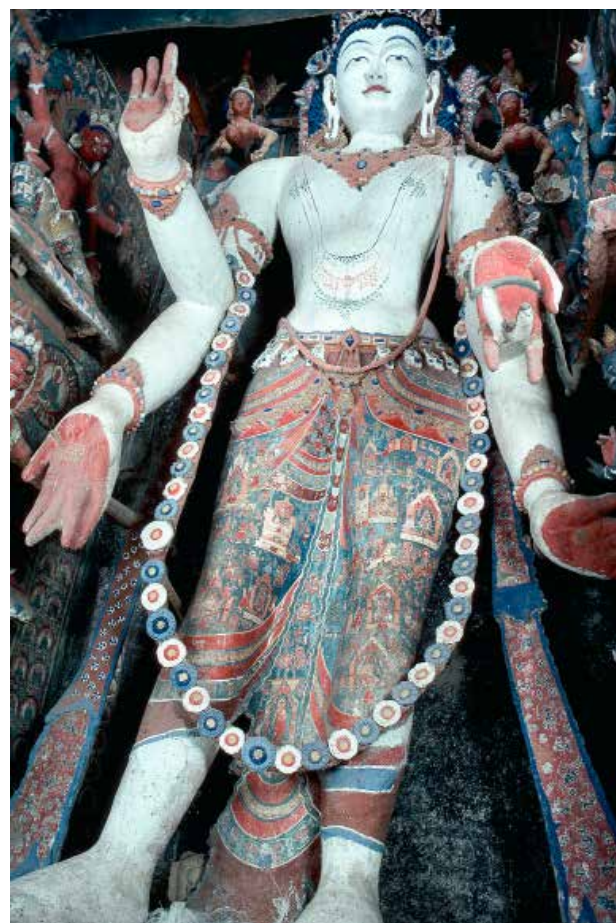


Fig. 2.43
Four-armed Avalokiteśvara
Alchi Sumtsek, Avalokiteśvara niche, left wall, early 13th century
Photograph by J. Poncar

A late phase for the Alchi group is represented by the Four Image Chörten at Mangyu, such as the depiction of Buddha Akṣobhya (Fig. 2.44).⁶⁹ Noteworthy are the bold black outlines outside the halo, the elongated limbs and relatively small head, the lotus blossom above the *uṣṇīṣa*, and the depiction of the vehicle on top of the lotus, with the buddha sitting directly on the horses flanking his knees.

KASHMIR CONTINUED

If we accept an early thirteenth-century date for the Alchi Sumtsek and acknowledge that its paintings and sculptures are expressions of Kashmiri art of that time, our notions of the development of the art of Kashmir require considerable rethinking. Then the Alchi group of monuments are evidence of the latest phase of high-quality Buddhist art in the Kashmir region, and we must

expect that Kashmir remained an active artistic center for Buddhist art into the early thirteenth century. However, as with Western Tibetan sculpture, little has been done so far to acknowledge this scenario also in terms of the sculptural production of Kashmir, which is often presented as fading away in the eleventh century.⁷⁰ Of course, rectifying this view on the basis of the evidence provided by the Alchi group of monuments requires us to reconstruct the late art production of Kashmir, something beyond the scope of this essay. However, the exhibition does provide some examples to address this question.

One of the characteristics of the Alchi group of monuments is the preponderance of four-armed deities in both sculpture and painting (see Fig. 2.45). Of course, some deities are commonly depicted four-armed, such as Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 2.43) or Nāmasaṃgīti Mañjuśrī, but for others four-armed forms are far from common and often not clearly identifiable. The two four-armed forms of Green Tārā flanking the six-armed principal image at head level hold the same attributes but are depicted standing and sitting (Fig. 2.45), respectively. They can be identified as depictions of the Wealth-bestowing Tārā (Dhanada Tārā) as she is described in *Sādhanaṃālā* 111.⁷¹ Iconographically identical is a sculpture of the same goddess from the Solomon Family Collection (Fig. 2.46), in which the goddess holds a chain of prayer beads (*mālā*) in the upper-right hand and performs the gesture of giving (*varadamudrā*) with the lower-right hand, while the two left hands hold a book and a lotus. The sculpture has been attributed to the Western Himalayas, but Tārā's face is completely abraded from ritual usage, which has revealed the silver inlay for her eyes, including a rectangular vertical third eye on the forehead. The sculpted goddess perfectly conforms to the Alchi Sumtsek depiction of the seated form of Dhanada Tārā (Fig. 2.46) and is of the same proportions.⁷² Nevertheless, having a crown with the side points on crescents, a form found in the Tholing *chörten* (Fig. 2.7) and the contemporaneous Charang sculpture (Fig. 2.9) but not in later Western Himalayan monuments, including Alchi, the sculpture appears to be somewhat older than the Alchi murals. At the other end of the spectrum, the further abstraction from the silver image of Karmavajrī (Fig. 2.28) and the flat lotus certainly date this image later than the eleventh century. Given the crown type, the pendants hanging from the belt, the peculiar sitting



Fig. 2.44
Buddha Akṣobhya
Mangyu, Four Image Chörten, early 13th century
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 1998 (WHAV, 112,13)

posture with the lower foot seen from the top (compared to the sitting posture of the goddess on the Queen Dīdā bronze in Fig. 2.5), I tend to attribute this image to Kashmir proper, rather than to the Western Himalayas, and to the twelfth century.⁷³

An identical attribution in terms of workmanship, but probably dating closer to 1200, can be suggested for a painted “Alchi style” book cover with five deities, among them the four-armed, green Dhanada Tārā.⁷⁴ Of course, the size of the cover, 22.2 x 69.8 cm, indicates a Tibetan usage rather than a Kashmiri one, and thus the attribution to Alchi, as put forth in one publication, makes sense as a placeholder. Iconographically, too, this cover has much in common with the Alchi group. Note the peculiar way the side heads are set off from the main one and the rather extreme shading.

Continuing with the theme of four-armed deities, we should note that the red Maitreya in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 2.47), cut out from a book folio, also has close ties to the Alchi group of paintings in both iconography and some stylistic features. Its shading, in particular the strong vertical highlight across the nose, the rather delicate crown, high rosettes, and large knots, as well as the textile patterns, all resonate with the Alchi murals, but certainly not as closely as the above-mentioned book cover. In terms of proportions, this Maitreya



Fig. 2.46 (opposite)
Four-armed Dhanada Tārā
 Kashmir or Western Himalayas, ca. 1100
 Brass; the *urna* and the eyes inlaid with silver; cast in one piece,
 H. 4 3/8 in. (11.1 cm)
 Solomon Family Collection, HIM-018

Fig. 2.47
Four-Armed Maitreya
 Western Tibet or Kashmir, ca. 1200
 Color and varnish on paper (manuscript fragment),
 2 5/8 x 3 1/2 in. (6.67 x 8.89 cm)
 Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Sherman E. Lee in
 memory of his mother, Adelia Baker Lee, 1958.475

image is certainly closer to the earlier representations in the group, so I tend to attribute it to the second half of the twelfth century. Iconographically, this is a rare form of a four-armed deity for which a related textual source has not yet been identified. The same iconography of Maitreya is used for the main image of the Alchi Sumtsek, where it can also be explained as an attempt to make all main bodhisattvas four-armed.

Another late Kashmiri sculpture commonly attributed to the twelfth century is discussed in chapter 1 (see Fig.

1.36). This image, from the Nyingjei Lam Collection, shows considerable abstraction and simplification in all features and an emphasis on symmetry. This image may also represent Maitreya, but now as the future Buddha teaching and seated with the legs pendant.

These examples should not be understood as indicating that later Kashmiri sculpture can be generally characterized by a decrease in quality. Both the quality and originality of the Alchi murals speak against such a conclusion. Instead, it is to be expected that there are also high-quality sculptures in this later period, an example of which, a bronze from the Potala Palace (Fig. 2.48), has been identified by Ulrich von Schroeder.⁷⁵ Particularly noteworthy in this bronze are the shape of the flames along the edge of the halo,⁷⁶ the lotus blossoms above the hair knot, the graphic rendering of the textiles, the tiny antelope skin across the bodhisattva's left upper arm, the second fold above the navel, and the way the animals are inscribed into the pedestal. The last detail is found only in the most recent paintings of the Alchi group.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to explore the question of identifying late Buddhist art from Kashmir



Fig. 2.48
Six-armed form of Avalokiteśvara (Sugatisandarśana)
Kashmir, mid- to late 12th century
Potala Lima Lhakhang, inv. no. 367
Photograph by Ulrich von Schroeder, 1997
Literature: Ulrich von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. 1: *India and Nepal* (Visual Dharma Publications, 2001), pp. 184–85, pls. 54A–C.

further, but let it suffice to say that Alchi and later Western Himalayan works provide some clues for identifying such sculptures through characteristic motifs, such as the lotus above the head, looping scarves, flat, fleshy lotus petals with a double-looped interior, peculiar flames along the halo, four-armed deities with four goddesses around them, deities directly sitting on their animal vehicles, and more.⁷⁷

NEW LOCAL STYLES

The sculptures and paintings of the Dunkar caves—the iconography of the lantern ceiling cave with the Guhyasamāja mandalas as the main topic, and the sculptures of the Eight Buddha cave with the mandala ceiling—announce the arrival of a new era in Western Tibetan art



Fig. 2.49
Ṣaḍakṣarī Lokeśvara
Alchi Translator's Temple, main wall, second half of the 13th century
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 1998 (WHAV, 107,27)

that is characterized by its link to newly arisen Central Tibetan Buddhist schools and a changing emphasis in the teachings conveyed through the art. As I have demonstrated elsewhere,⁷⁸ the beginnings of this shift are also visible in the Kashmiri style murals of Alchi, in particular those of the Sumtsek and the two early *chörten*.⁷⁹ There the most important indicators are the appearance of the Drigung lineage, the representation of Drigungpa, and the prominent representation of the mahasiddhas. These sites introduce a gradual transformation of the content of Western Tibetan monuments, the most important aspects of which can be summarized as follows:

- Among the Five Buddhas, Vairocana and Akṣobhya exchange their positions, the latter becoming the central Buddha. This exchange may well coincide with the



Fig. 2.50
Drigungpa flanked by two bodhisattvas
Alchi Lönpo Chörten
Photograph by C. Luczanits, 2003 (D9446)

- introduction of the gateway stupas, which in Tibetan occasionally are called Kankani stupas, a name that derives from the first syllables of Buddha Akṣobhya's mantra.
- The exchange of the primary Buddha among the Five Buddhas conforms to the emergence of Anuttarayoga themes in temple decoration, in which the primary Buddha is usually Buddha Akṣobhya.
- With the emergence of the Anuttarayoga teachings in public representation, such as the decoration of a temple, their primary practitioners and lineage holders, the great adepts (mahasiddhas) are frequently and prominently depicted as well.
- This is also true for the Tibetan lineage holders and the teaching lineage in general. The lineage thus takes the position on top of the painting, even above the teaching represented through the central deity.
- Consequently, the teacher himself becomes worthy of veneration and is considered a representative of buddhahood. This becomes fully visible with the representation of the teacher with the characteristics of a Buddha and in contexts that otherwise are used for the Buddha. These depictions are an expression of the practice of guru-yoga, a form of visualization in which the teach-



Fig. 2.51
Thirty-seven deity Navoṣṇīṣa Śākyamuni mandala
Tholing, Temple of Yeshe 'Od, third quarter of the 13th century
Photograph by E. Gherzi, 1933
IsIAO, Tucci Photographic Archives, Neg. Dep. 6097/15

- er takes the place of the deity and thus also the Buddha.
- These innovations also lead to the introduction of a consistent hierarchy of teacher, personal deity, and protector, which becomes apparent in the composition of a particular iconographic topic, of a wall, or even throughout a monument.

Of course, these changes were introduced gradually and usually only in association with the establishment of one of the new schools of Tibetan Buddhism in the region. But even then older themes remained predominant in many monuments. For example, there are many thirteenth- and fourteenth-century temples throughout the region that still retain the emphasis on Buddha Vairocana, such as the Senge Lhakhang in Lamayuru and the Mentsün Lhakhang in Lower Mustang.⁸⁰ Thus the new themes do not replace the old ones but complement them, and both old and new themes may take a central position.

Based on the more readily accessible evidence, the art of this period has been interpreted as part of an “international style”⁸¹ as artworks with similar characteristics became known from Burma to Khara Khoto and across the Himalayas. The large number of additional monuments that have come to light in the last decade, however, indicate that this designation is based on the

misunderstanding that the development in Ladakh was shared by the entire Western Himalayan region. Today the evidence suggests that this is not the case at all and that the regions of Western Tibet and Ladakh under consideration here developed in a different way.

Although the styles derived from Central Tibet appear to have predominated in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, particularly in the many monuments associated with the Drigung ('Bri gung) School, the Western Tibetan style retained a strong presence in its core area. This can be demonstrated first by those parts of the Yeshe 'Od Temple in Tholing that were restored and newly decorated in the course of the thirteenth century. Much of this refurbishment is said to have been carried out under King Dragpa De (Grags pa lde, 1230–1277) in the third quarter of that century.⁸² It is mainly this phase of the temple and subsequent renovations up to as late as the sixteenth century that were documented in the few photographs taken by Gherzi inside the complex structure during the 1933 and 1935 expeditions to Western Tibet.⁸³ During the course of these restorations, the original paintings were covered with a layer of clay, the walls were repainted, and most of the sculptures documented in the temple were added.⁸⁴ As the chapel of Amitāyus (or Tshepagme Chapel; Tshedpag med lha khang⁸⁵) shows,⁸⁶ even if the paintings are clearly the product of the adoption of a style prevalent in contemporaneous Central Tibet, the sculptures retain features of the local tradition. However, especially for traditional topics, such as Yoga tantra mandalas, the local style has been retained as well (Fig. 2.51). Note that gatekeepers in this mandala are depicted with the same armor as the Four Great Kings. In terms of the iconography, the topics depicted generally remain remarkably conservative.

Sadly, we have no idea in what color scheme these renovation-phase paintings at Tholing were executed, but from my own observations, the publication by Namgyal (2001), and the documentation shared by generous colleagues, it is clear that the majority of the renovation paintings were made using the familiar color scheme, including the blue for the background. This observation is confirmed by a number of other important sites in Western Tibet that have come to light in the meantime. For example, the cave of Pangda (Pang gra phug), recent-

ly published by the Neumanns,⁸⁷ continues the transformation already visible with the sculptures at Dunkar. Although the deities are now depicted in an entirely different style and set against their horseshoe-shaped, red halos, the background of the cave still is blue, a continuation of local conventions.⁸⁸ A late thirteenth-century date, as suggested by the Neumanns, appears to be the earliest possible for this style. Remarkably, the iconographic program of this cave is extremely conservative. Not only are the Five Buddhas with Vairocana in the center the main subject of the cave, but the entire cave is decorated with conservative themes that indicate a Kadam School affiliation for it.⁸⁹

Another exciting new discovery is the cave of Wachen (Wa chen), presented by Tsering Gyalpo at the Bonn conference of the International Association of Tibetan Studies.⁹⁰ Although maintaining some stylistic features of the earlier paintings, along with the color palette, the iconography of this site entirely derives from new teachings. The Wachen paintings even preserve depictions of topics not known from elsewhere or that are very rare, such as a mandala dedicated to the *bardo* (*bar do*) deities.

In Ladakh the Kashmiri style of the Alchi group continued in much less sophisticated variants well into the thirteenth century, as for example at Alchi itself in the paintings of the so-called Translator's Temple (Lo tstshā ba'i lHa khang; Fig. 2.49). Although extremely coarse, the style is reminiscent of the earlier Western Himalayan paintings in particular in the shape of the body and the ornamentation and the color palette, but the composition is entirely new and the emphasis in the iconographic topics depicted has changed considerably. Similar quality, or even less sophisticated, paintings are preserved in several stupas of Alchi, such as the one in the Alchi Lönpo's garden (Fig. 2.50), and one each in Mangyu (just at the edge of the temple complex) and Sumda Chung (on the ridge above the Assembly Hall). These now feature Akṣobhya as the main Buddha, Vairocana being represented on the eastern wall, and often have something in their iconographic program that hints toward the Drigung School, which certainly was dominant in the region throughout the thirteenth century.

There are a number of other places in Ladakh that preserve paintings comparable to those in the

latest Alchi group monuments. In addition to a few *chörten* attributed locally to Rinchen Zangpo, such as those of Basgo,⁹¹ Lamayuru,⁹² and Tikse,⁹³ there are also noteworthy temple ruins, namely those of Sku,⁹⁴ Saspol Tse,⁹⁵ and Tragkhung Kowache.⁹⁶ Whatever their exact date may be, in the course of the thirteenth century the development in Ladakh separates itself from that in Western Tibet proper and there was no major revival of the Western Tibetan idiom in this region before the later Guge kingdom. Instead, Ladakh developed its own local variant of the painting style derived from Central Tibet that came to the region with the Drigung School. There are numerous monuments dating from the late thirteenth to at least the fifteenth century that are decorated in what can summarily be called an early Ladakhi style. An analysis of these styles is being presented in *Painting Traditions of the Drigung Kagyu School* (2014).

At this stage of research, the rather coarse and naive workmanship of many representatives of the continuation of the Western Himalayan idiom and their strongly localized character make it impossible to differentiate distinctive stylistic strands among them. Thus, one may simply speak of local variants of the earlier Western Himalayan styles, in particular the Western Tibetan style and the Alchi style, the latter found only in Ladakh and in geographical and temporal proximity to Alchi.

Thus, even though the Kashmir-derived Western Himalayan idiom lost its primary status in the course of the thirteenth century, there is enough evidence in Western Tibet that it never really died out there. Instead, its regional continuation may have provided the base for the later revival with the Guge kingdom, the art of which is described in Melissa Kerin's chapter 3 in this volume.

NOTES

- 1 For the wider framework, this essay builds on the first half of an earlier study: Christian Luczanits, "Styles in Western Himalayan Art," in *Han Zang Fo jiao mei shu yan jiu: 2007 [sic] di san jie Xizang kao gu yu yi shu guo ji xue shu tao lun hui lun wen ji, Proceedings of the 3rd International Symposium of Tibetan Art and Archaeology, Oct. 2006, Beijing*, ed. X. Jisheng et al. (Beijing: Guji, 2009). I am grateful to David Jackson for originally encouraging me to update and broaden this account for his book *The Place of Provenance: Regional Styles in Tibetan Painting* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2012), but because of the complexity of early Western Himalayan styles, I was unable to finish my contribution in a satisfactory manner. Rob Linrothe's exhibition project gave me the chance to review the question from a different perspective, the relationship to Kashmir, and on a more object-oriented basis. This approach certainly helped to clarify some of the questions I could not solve earlier, but it obviously does not address the full complexity of the issue at hand. This and many previous studies would not have been possible without the generous support of all those who provided their photographs for research, foremost among them Lionel Fournier, Roger Goepper, and Jaroslav Poncar. Documentation of some of the sites and objects mentioned in this study was provided by Tsering Gyalpo, Rob Linrothe, Helmut and Heidi Neumann, Christiane Papa-Kalantari, and Thomas Pritzker and family.
- 2 See Pratapaditya Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1975);

- Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir* (Milan, New York: 5 Continents, Asia Society, 2007).
- 3 This is true regardless of where one places these monuments temporally; the contested dates ranging from the late eleventh to the early thirteenth century, but there are good arguments for this distinction being the result of the longer chronology.
- 4 The most frequently given date for the foundation of Tabo is 996 CE, which is based on the date estimated for the renovation, which took place forty-six years after the foundation of the temple.
- 5 For more examples, see Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom* (Milan: Skira; New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997), and Christian Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay* (Chicago: Serindia, 2004).
- 6 See Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 57–62.
- 7 The technical analyses of the metal used in these two bronzes attributes the Cleveland bodhisattva to Kashmir and the Los Angeles bodhisattva to Western Tibet (see Chandra. L. Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes: Technology, Style, and Choices* (Newark and London: University of Delaware Press, Associated University Press, 1997), nos. K61 and W124).
- 8 Of course, theoretically they could have come from any non-Indic context, such as Central Asia or Tibet, but then the art would reveal characteristics of their place of origin.
- 9 On Lalung see, e.g., H. Lee. Shuttleworth, *Lha-luñ Temple, Spyi-ti, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 39* (Calcutta: 1929); Giuseppe. Tucci, *The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism. Indo-Tibetica III.1: The Monasteries of Spiti and Kunavar*, vol. 350, Sata-Pitaka Series

- (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988); Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*.
- 10 See Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 226.
- 11 See Amy Heller, “Preliminary Remarks on the Donor Inscriptions and Iconography of an 11th-century *Mchod rten* at Tholing,” in *Tibetan Art and Architecture in Context. PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006*, ed. Erberto F. Lo Bue and Christian Luczanits, Beiträge zur Zentralasienforschung (Halle (Saale): International Institute for Tibetan Studies, 2010), 70. The full name of the donor is Rugs wer phyag chang lha dog, certainly unusual enough that it cannot be an accident that the same name occurs twice. The inscription on the bronze reads: *| *rhugs wer phyag {corner} chang lha dog gi gyad dam du bzheng {corner} s sugso la bam* |
- 12 For the full available documentation see P. Namgyal, ed. *Tuolin Si (Ntho-ling Monastery)* (Zhongguo Dabaike (Encyclopedia of China Publishing House), 2001), 118–132. The connection of the northwestern *chörten*, one of the two preserved fragmentarily, to Rinchen Zangpo and the death of Yeshe ‘Od—and thus a construction date of ca. 1025, as suggested by Amy Heller, “Preliminary Remarks,” remains speculation until stronger evidence comes to light. Strangely, the two *chörten* have been walled up since the publication and thus were not accessible during my visit in June 2007.
- 13 Namgyal, *Tuolin Si (Ntho-ling Monastery)*, 120, bottom figure.
- 14 On the wooden sculptures of Charang, see, e.g., Ajay Kumar Singh, “Rangrig rtse: An Early Buddhist Temple in Kinnaur–Western Himalayas,” in *Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, ed. H. Krasser et al. (Vienna: ÖAW, 1997); Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*: figs. 64 (figure reversed!), 65; Deborah. E. Klimburg-Salter, “*Kha-che lug* and the Wood Sculptures from Charang,” in *Pandita and the Siddha: Tibetan Studies in Honour of E. Gene Smith*, ed. R. N. Prats (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2007).
- 15 In this regard, the pioneering works of Erna E. Wandl, “Textilien und Textildarstellungen im Kloster von Tapho, 10./11. Jhdt. (Himachal Pradesh, Indien). Mit einer Ausführung über die Bedeutung der frühen indischen Textilindustrie,” MA thesis, University of Vienna, 1996; Erna Wandl, “The Representation of Costumes and Textiles,” in Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo*, 179–87; Erna Wandl, “Painted Textiles in a Buddhist Temple,” *Textile History* 30, no. 1 (1999): 16–28; Erna Wandl, “Textile depictions from the 10th/11th century in the Tabo Main Temple,” in *Tabo Studies II. Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*, ed. C. A. Scherrer-Schaub and E. Steinkellner, Serie Orientale Roma (Rome: IsIAO, 1999); Roger R. Goepfer, “Early Kashmir Textiles? Painted Ceilings in Alchi,” *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 56, no. 1991–92 (1993): 47–74; Roger Goepfer, “Dressing the Temple: Textile Representations in the Frescoes at Alchi,” *Asian Art, The Second Hali Annual* (1995): 100–117, and more recently Christiane C. Papa-Kalantari, “Die Deckenmalereien des gSum-brtsegs in Alchi (Ladakh). Studie zu den Textildarstellungen eines frühen buddhistischen Tempels aus dem westtibetischen Kulturkreis,” MA thesis, Universität Wien, 2000; Christiane Papa-Kalantari, “The Ceiling Paintings of the Alchi *gsum brtsegs*: Problems of Style,” in *Buddhist Art and Tibetan Patronage Ninth to Fourteenth Centuries*, ed. D. E. Klimburg-Salter and E. Allinger, PIATS 2000: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), need to be mentioned. The last article by Papa-
- Kalantari listed is unfortunately not representative of her excellent but unpublished MA thesis.
- 16 A list of the relevant inscribed works is provided in Ulrich. von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, 2 vols., (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 2001), vol. I, 84–86.
- 17 See Introduction by Rob Linrothe in this catalog, pp. 6 and 22, note 24.
- 18 The question of the wear of this sculpture came up during the Scholars’ Day organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art on 24 April 24, 2014, to which I was generously invited. I thank Sonya Rhie Quintanilla for her invitation to this very educational event and for the discussion on this point with her and Rob Linrothe. The possible contextual explanation given here only occurred to me later on.
- 19 A Kashmiri origin is also confirmed by metal analysis; see Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, no. K76.
- 20 This image has been rediscovered by Tom Pritzker and family and was first published in David Pritzker, “The Treasures of Par and Kha-tse,” *Oriental Art* 31, no. 7 (2000): 131–33, and von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, vol. I, fig. II-5.
- 21 In my opinion, not all bronzes with an inscription referring to Nāgarāja are actually made for Nāgarāja or are roughly contemporary with him. Not only did he rededicate earlier bronzes that came into his possession, but there is also a small group of bronzes bearing a Nāgarāja inscription that appeared on the art market in the 1990s that on stylistic grounds appears to me later than the time of Nāgarāja.
- 22 This assessment is also supported by the metal analysis of this sculpture; see Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, no. K77, and related ones.
- 23 I prefer this identification over the one favored in HAR, Mañjuśrī Nāmasaṃgīti, as the presence or absence of a consort cannot be used to make an iconographic distinction, as is clear from the Pala stone stele in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which clearly depicts the main deities of this mandala, and the mandala in the Dunkar Guhyasamāja cave.
- 24 Although this image is grouped with the Kashmir bronzes in Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, no. K91, a Himachal Pradesh origin is equally possible based on the alloy used.
- 25 On the Kamru image and its inscription, see Ajay Kumar Singh, “An Inscribed Bronze Padmapāṇi from Kinnaur,” *Acta Orientalia* 55 (1994): 106–10; Laxman. S. Thakur, “A Magnificent Bronze Statue of Avalokiteśvara from Kamru and its Himalayan Legacy,” *Oriental Art* 44, no. 3 (1998): 57–61; and Amy Heller, “Observations on an 11th-century Tibetan inscription on a statue of Avalokiteśvara,” *Revue d’études tibétaines* 14 (2008): 107–16.
- 26 I am thanking Amy Heller for not only sharing her discovery with me at an early stage, but also for reminding me of her interpretation in our discussion at the Alchi workshop in March 2014.
- 27 This rather vague reference to a ritual procedure (*phyag len*) made by Viryabhadra is curious, and one wonders exactly what it refers to. Possible interpretations range from a death ritual, via the making of images of the Protectors of the Three Families in the benefit of a deceased ancestor, to a ritual manual that contains specific details on such four-armed images as represented by this sculpture. In my opinion, it can be excluded that the scholar was more closely involved with the making of the sculpture, and especially its inscription, since the spelling of both his title and his name is so poor that they are almost unrecognizable.
- 28 Laxman S. Thakur, “A Magnificent Bronze Statue of Avalokiteśvara.”
- 29 The fact that the sMer clan is mentioned in rock inscriptions near Alchi cannot be used to establish more than a tenuous connection with that place, as the inscriptions have largely been written by military personnel stationed there. See Tsuguhito Takeuchi, “Old Tibetan rock inscriptions near Alchi,” *Journal of Research Institute: Historical Development of the Tibetan Languages* 49 (2013): 29–69.
- 30 Heller, “Observations on an 11th-century Tibetan inscription on a statue of Avalokiteśvara,” 111–12.
- 31 For an image of the back, see Thakur, “A Magnificent Bronze Statue of Avalokiteśvara,” fig. 3.
- 32 For the full inscription, see Ernst Steinkellner and Christian Luczanits, “A New Translation of the Renovation Inscription in the Tabo Main Temple (gtsug-lag-khang),” in Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo*, 157–59, or Ernst Steinkellner and Christian Luczanits, “The renovation inscription of the Tabo gTsong lag khañ,” in *Inscriptions from the Tabo Main Temple. Texts and Translations*, ed. L. Petech, and C. Luczanits, Serie Orientale Roma (Rome: IsIAO, 1999); the latter includes an edition of the text.
- 33 See also Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo*.
- 34 See, for example, John Siudmak, “Early Stone and Terracotta Sculpture,” in *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, ed. P. Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1989): figs. 16–20, Stanislaw. J. Czuma, “Ivory Sculpture,” in *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, ed. P. Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1989): figs. 1–14, and Pratapaditya Pal, “Metal Sculpture,” in *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, ed. P. Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1989): figs. 1–2.
- 35 See, for example, M. Postel, A. Neven, and K. Mankodi, *Antiquities of Himachal*, vol. 1, Project for Indian Cultural Studies (Bombay: Franco-Indian Pharmaceuticals, 1985): figs. 116, 130. The latter sculptural group is of particular relevance as it may also date to the early eleventh century.
- 36 On Mangnang see, e.g., Giuseppe Tucci, “Indian Painting in Western Tibetan Temples,” *Artibus Asiae* VII (1937): 191–204 (or Giuseppe Tucci, “Indian Painting in Western Tibetan Temples,” in *Opera Minora* [Roma: Dott. Giovanni Bardi, 1971]); Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, “Reformation and Renaissance: a Study of Indo-Tibetan Monasteries in the Eleventh Century,” *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. LVI, 2, SOR 56, 2 (1987), vol. 2, 683–702, 8 pls., and Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, fig. 69.
- 37 See Tshé ring rgyal po, Gu ge, *mNa’ ris chos ’byung gngas ljongs mdzes rgyan* (Lhasa: Bod ljong mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2006): two figures in pl. 15.
- 38 See, for example, Giuseppe Tucci, *Rin-chen-bzai-po and the Renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet Around the Millenium. Indo-Tibetica II*, English reprint ed. in English, vol. 348, Śāta-Piṭaka Series (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988); Giuseppe. Tucci, *The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism. Indo-Tibetica III.2: Tsaparang*, vol. 350, Śāta-Piṭaka Series (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988); Tucci, *Rin-chen-bzai-po*, 67–69, and David. L. Snellgrove, and Tadeusz Skorupski, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, vol. 2, *Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1980), 93.
- 39 This important cover has first been published in Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir*, fig. 108, and in a more detailed study again in Pratapaditya Pal, “A Painted Book Cover from Ancient Kashmir,” <http://www.asianart.com/articles/kashmir/index.html#6> (accessed October 2012, 2009), available online, where a C-14 test of the wood has yielded a date range of 879 to 1024 CE. To me this indicates a tenth- or early eleventh-century date for the painting, as the date of the wood likely precedes its actual usage for the cover, since the probe is likely taken from an area closer to the core of the tree—and thus earlier—than the actual cutting of the tree, which is only represented by its outermost rings.
- 40 See Pal, “A Painted Book Cover from Ancient Kashmir,” figs. 5–7.
- 41 The illustration is taken from Namgyal, *Tuolin Si (Ntho-ling Monastery)*, 131. See also Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, fig. 242, and Heller, “Preliminary Remarks on the Donor Inscriptions and Iconography,” fig. 9.
- 42 The folios have been published numerous times, beginning with Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), pls. C, D; Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Tibet: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, expanded ed., (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1990), 123–126. The most recent study referred to is Paul Harrison, “Notes on some West Tibetan manuscript folios in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art,” in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ. Papers dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the occasion of his 70th birthday*, ed. B. Kellner, et al., Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 70 (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2007), and Gudrun Melzer is working on a new interpretation for the captions accompanying the illuminations. For comprehensive publication lists of each folio, see the respective collection object entry on the LACMA website.
- 43 See Harrison, “Notes on some West Tibetan manuscript folios,” 235.
- 44 This assessment differs from the one commonly expressed, as exemplarily represented by Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir*, 100–113, where the painting of Kashmir is effectively described on the basis of these Western Tibetan examples.
- 45 Tabo Manuscript Running No. 5, a *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasikā Prajñāpāramitā*, cat. no. 1.1.2.7 in Paul Harrison, *Tabo Studies III. A Catalogue of the Manuscript Collection of Tabo Monastery. vol. 1, Texts (Śer phyin, Phal chen, dKon brtsegs, mDo sde, Myan ’das)*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 102,1 (Roma: IsIAO, 2009), 25 f., which preserves twenty-eight illuminations; for a full discussion of this manuscript and its context, see Eva Allinger and Christian Luczanits, “A Vajradhātu Mandala in a Prajñāpāramitā Manuscript of Tabo Monastery,” (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Science, in press).
- 46 For a description of the variants of some of the deity depictions of the Vajradhātu mandala in connection to the illuminated manuscripts of Tabo, see Allinger and Luczanits, “A Vajradhātu Mandala.”
- 47 This image has previously been published in Pratapaditya Pal, *Himalayas* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago in association with the University of California Press and Mapin Publishing, 2003), no. 84, together with another deity of the same set, Buddha Amoghasiddhi (ibid., no. 83), which preserves its base, a fleshy double lotus with a slightly smaller top row on an almost cubic open base featuring his vehicle, the *garuda*. This object is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The metal analysis attributes this piece to Western Tibet (see Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, no. W123).
- 48 The metal alloy used also indicates a Western Tibetan origin for this sculpture; see Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, 85–86.
- 49 For earlier Kashmiri images of this deity, see Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, nos. K58; John. Siudmak, *The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir and its Influences*, vol. 28, Handbook of Oriental Studies: Section 2, South Asia (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), pls. 26, 28, 30, 33, 34, 59, 81, 198, with only some of them clearly showing the braids. Earlier Kashmiri images of Mañjuśrī with a child’s braids are, for example, Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, no. 53–56; Chandra. L. Reedy, “Copper Alloy Casting and Decorating Technology,” in *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, fig. 13; Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, nos. K59, K81, W121; von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, nos. 40, 41B-E, 42A-B, 43C-E,

- 45A-B, 50D, 50E, 51A-E; Siudmak, *The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir*, pls. 94, 229.
- 50 This origin is also confirmed by metal analysis, see Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, 85.
- 51 See the summary in Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 247.
- 52 See Amy Heller, “The Three Silver Brothers,” *Oriental Art* 34, no. 4 (2003): 28–34.
- 53 On the inscription see Amy Heller, “Appendix III. The Tibetan Inscriptions: Dedications, History and Prayer.” In *Himalayas. An Aesthetic Adventure*, edited by Pratapaditya Pal, 286–97. (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago in association with the University of California Press and Mapin Publishing, 2003), 289.
- 54 See Christian Luczanits, “Indian and Himalayan Collections at the Walters,” *Arts of Asia* 39, no. 1 (2009): 72–81.
- 55 On the basis of the metal alloy used, Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, 198–90, classifies this image among the Central Tibetan pieces in a Kashmir style.
- 56 See Robert N. Linrothe, “A Winter in the Field,” *Oriental Art* 38, no. 4 (2007): 40–53.
- 57 See Helmut F. Neumann, “The Cave of the Offering Goddess: Early Painting in Western Tibet,” *Oriental Art* 44, no. 4 (1998): 52–60. The goddess Ālokā depicted in this figure is part of a mandala assembly around a lost central sculpture on the right side wall. The assembly consisted of the main figure in a rock setting, the eight offering goddesses, and four gatekeepers. The goddesses identified as Dhūpā in Neumann are actually representations of Puṣpā holding a bowl full of blossoms.
- 58 On the early temples of Nako, see, e. g., Eva. Allinger, “An Unusual Depiction of Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā in Nako/ Himachal Pradesh as Compared with Other Representations of the Same Tārā in the Western Himalaya,” in *South Asian Archaeology 2001. Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, held in Collège de France, Paris, 2–6 July 2001, vol. 2, Historical Archaeology and Art History*, ed. C. Jarrige and V. Lefèvre (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2005); Christian. Luczanits, “The 12th Century Buddhist Monuments of Nako,” *Oriental Art* 34, no. 5 (2003): 46–53; Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*.
- 59 On Dunkar, see, e.g., Phuntsok Namgyal, *Donggar Cave Murals in Ngari* (1998); Thomas J. Pritzker, “A preliminary report on early cave paintings of Western Tibet,” *Oriental Art* 27, no. 6 (1996): 26–47; Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*.
- 60 This assessment is the opposite of that made by Helmut. F. Neumann and Heidi A. Neumann, “Wall Paintings of the Dungkar Caves Three and Four,” *Oriental Art* 45, no. 5 (2014): 62–75, who also maintain a much earlier date for the Dungkar caves. There are also practical reasons to reverse the chronology of the Dunkhar monuments, as the smaller caves flanking the main ones have obviously been made in places where the rock was much less stable than it was where the big caves were made. Photographs of the Dungpu cave have kindly been provided by Lionel Fournier.
- 61 See Pal, *Himalayas*, nos. 99, and 100, and Amy Heller, “Early Paintings from West Tibet and the Western Himalayas in the Margot and Thomas J. Pritzker Collection,” *Oriental Art* 45, no. 5 (2014): 36–49, which focuses on such paintings.
- 62 I am aware that these paintings have been attributed to the eleventh century, but to me they are far removed from the Tabo Main Temple and relate instead to monuments from the twelfth century.
- 63 On Gumrang, see Christian Luczanits, “Another Rin chen bzañ po Temple?,” *East and West* 44, no. 1 (1994): 83–98, and Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*.
- 64 See Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, fig. 121.
- 65 See, for example, Roger Goepper, *Alchi. Buddhas Goddesses Mandalas. Murals in a Monastery of the Western Himalayas* (Köln: DuMont, 1982); Roger Goepper, “Clues for a Dating,” *Asiatische Studien: Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Asienkunde / Études Asiatiques: Revue de la Société Suisse d’Études Asiatiques* 44, no. 2 (1990): 159–75, and Roger Goepper, and Jaroslav Poncar, *Alchi. Ladakh’s hidden Buddhist sanctuary. The Sumtek* (London: Serindia, 1996).
- 66 I have demonstrated this earlier on the basis of a comparison of the faces of these goddesses shown in profile (see Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, figs. 155 and 156).
- 67 See Goepper and Poncar, *Alchi*, 50–71.
- 68 See Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 236.
- 69 On this *chörten*, see Robert. N. Linrothe, “The Murals of Mangyu: A Distillation of Mature Esoteric Buddhist Iconography,” *Oriental Art* 25, no. 11 (1994): 92–102, and on the entire temple complex, see Peter van Ham, *Heavenly Himalayas* (Munich: Prestel, 2010).
- 70 For the latest expression of this view, see the last chapter in Siudmak, *The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir*.
- 71 See Yashaswini Chandra, “A Form of Tara Peculiar to Alchi,” *Oriental Art* 38, no. 4 (2007): 72–77, for a discussion of the identifications, and Goepper and Poncar, *Alchi*, 72–85, for larger pictures.
- 72 See Chandra, “A Form of Tara Peculiar to Alchi,” fig. 5, and Goepper and Poncar, *Alchi*, 84.
- 73 The attribution of this piece to Kashmir is also confirmed by metal analysis (see Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, no. K83).
- 74 See Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibet: tradition and change* (Albuquerque, [N. M.]: Albuquerque Museum, 1997), no. 28 (identified as Western Himalayan Manuscript cover and attributed to Alchi), and Pratapaditya Pal, “Kashmir and the Tibetan Connection,” 117–35, (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1989), pl. 24.
- 75 See von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, no. 54A–C, where the bronze is attributed to West Tibet and the twelfth century. I assume this attribution is based on the comparison to Alchi.
- 76 See Goepper, and Poncar, *Alchi*, for a variety of painted versions of such flames, most telling among them are those on pp. 39, 83, 89 (turned inward), and 98–99, where they are raised and gilded.
- 77 Obvious candidates for such images are Siudmak, *The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir*, pl. 233, and the comparisons the author mentioned in the accompanying text (p. 491), such as Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir*, fig. 42; as well as Pratapaditya Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1975), nos. 2, 6, 7, 12, 13, 65, 70, 88–90; Pal, “Metal Sculpture,” fig. 19; Robert E. Fisher, “Later Stone Sculpture (ninth–twelfth centuries),” *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir* (1989): 105–16., figs. 16, 17; Pratapaditya Pal, “Kashmir and the Tibetan Connection,” 117–35, 24 illus., fig. 16; von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, nos. 56A, 56B–C, 61A–B, 61C–D, 65A–B; Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, nos. K67, K70, K84, K85, K90, K92, K98, H107–9.
- 78 See Christian Luczanits, “Art-historical aspects of dating Tibetan art,” in *Dating Tibetan Art. Essays on the Possibilities and Impossibilities of Chronology from the Lempertz Symposium, Cologne*, ed. I. Kreide-Damani, Contributions to Tibetan Studies (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003), and Christian Luczanits, “Siddhas, Hierarchs, and Lineages,” in *Mirror of the Buddha, Early Portraits from Tibet*, ed. D. P. Jackson, Masterworks of Tibetan Painting Series (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2011), example 1; Christian Luczanits, “Alchi and the Drigungpa School,” in *Mei shou wan nian—Long Life Without End. Festschrift in Honor of Roger Goepper*, ed. Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch, et al. (Frankfurt: a. M.: Peter Lang, 2006); Christian Luczanits, “Alchi Sumtseg Reconsidered,” in *Recent Research on Ladakh 2007*, ed. J. Bray, and Nawang Tsering Shaksपो (Leh, Ladakh: J&K Academy for Art, Culture & Languages—International Association for Ladakh Studies, 2007).
- 79 On the Great *Chörten* of Alchi, see Roger Goepper, “Great Stūpa,” *Artibus Asiae* 53, nos. 1/2 (1993): 111–43.
- 80 See Susanne von der Heide, “Hidden Gems Revealed: Clay Statues and Murals at the Mentsün Lhakhang Cave-temple in Mustang, Nepal,” *Oriental Art* 42, no. 5 (2011): 41–49.
- 81 See Deborah. E. Klimburg-Salter, et al., eds., *The Inner Asian International Style 12th–14th Centuries. Papers presented at a panel of the 7th seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, 7 vols., vol. VII (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998); Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, “Is there an Inner Asian International Style 12th to 14th centuries? Definition of the problem and present state of research,” in *The Inner Asian International Style 12th–14th Centuries. Papers presented at a panel of the 7th seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, ed. D. E. Klimburg-Salter, and E. Allinger (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998).
- 82 See Roberto Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (Dharamsala: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang lo.gcig.stong ‘khor.ba’i rjes.dran.mdzad sgo’i go.sgrig tshogs.chung (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1996), 78, 437–50; and Roberto Vitali, *Records of Tho.ling. A literary and visual reconstruction of the ‘mother’ monastery in Gu.ge* (Dharamsala: High Asia, 1999), 35–36, 119–132.
- 83 See Giuseppe Tucci and Eugenio Ghersi, *Cronaca della Missione Scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale (1933)* (Roma: Reale Accademia d’Italia, 1934), and Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, “Tucci Himalayan Archives Report, 1: The 1989 Expedition to the Western Himalayas, and a Retrospective View of the 1933 Tucci Expedition,” *East and West* 40, nos. 1–4 (1990): 145–71.
- 84 See also Christian Luczanits, “A Note on Tholing Monastery,” *Oriental Art* 27, no. 6 (1996): 76.
- 85 See Vitali, *Records of Tho.ling*, pl. VII, for the locations and names of the chapels in this complex monument.
- 86 See Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, figs. 310, 311, 312.
- 87 See Helmut. F. Neumann, and Heidi. A. Neumann, “The Wall Paintings of Pang Gra Phug: Augusto Gansser’s Cave,” *Oriental Art* 42, no. 5 (2011): 32–40.
- 88 This statement, of course, assumes that the few early central Tibetan murals that are preserved and of which documentation is available are representative of the conventions there.
- 89 There are no lineage depictions in this cave, and the only historical personages appear to be the four figures painted above the last scene of the life of the Buddha. On two levels an Indian pandita on the right sits opposite a Tibetan layman on the left, the upper one clad in white and the lower one in the dress of a king (the latter visible on Neumann, and Neumann, “The Wall Paintings of Pang Gra Phug,” fig. 12).
- 90 Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, 27th August to 2nd September 2006. Minute pictures of the Wa-chen cave are published in Tshe ring rgyal po, Gu ge, *mNa’ ris chos ‘byung ngas ljongs mdzes rgyan*, on the last two pages of plates (29 and 30 when counted from the first map). A picture of its main wall, showing Śākyamuni and eighteen Arhats flanked by Maitreya and an eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, is included in Neumann and Neumann, “The Wall Paintings of Pang Gra Phug,” fig. 4.
- 91 Besides the two *chörten* at the foot of the rock with the Basgo castle, one of them only half preserved and extremely endangered, a third one on the slope above the village contains paintings. This *chörten* was recently restored, sadly without documenting its interior properly and making it available to the scholarly community.
- 92 Picture galleries of relevant *chörten* in Basgo and Lamayuru can be found on my website (www.luczanits.net).
- 93 While I refrained from doing so for their protection, these have partially published in Gerald Kozicz, “Documenting the Last Surviving Murals of Nyarma,” *Oriental Art* 38, no. 4 (2007): 60–64, who first learned about them from me. Besides these published examples, there are a number of additional relevant *chörten* throughout Ladakh.
- 94 See Melissa. R. Kerin, “Faded Remains,” *Oriental Art* 38, no. 4 (2007): 54–59.
- 95 Saspol Tse only received wider attention when the Tibet Heritage Fund led by André Alexander was asked to restore the ruins there.
- 96 This cave site near Spituk only preserves very fragmentary remains, see Peter van Ham, “Ladakh’s Missing Link? The Murals of Tragkung Kowache,” *Oriental Art* 42, no. 5 (2011): 50–57. The mandalas identified as “Durgatiparishodhana mandala” are actually mandalas of Navoṣṇiṣa Śākyamuni of the Durgatipariśodhana cycle.