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The Identification of Kizil Paintings III

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Zusammenfassung: Dies ist der dritte in einer Reihe von Aufsätzen, die zur Identifizierung der narrativen Malereien in den buddhistischen Klöstern in Kizil beitragen sollen.¹⁾ Der vorliegende Aufsatz bietet zuerst die Erklärung einer Szene aus der Buddha-Legende in der „Treppenhöhle“ als eine Wettstreitdisziplin, nämlich „Rohr(-bündel)-Durchschlagen“ (*kalamacchedya*), (**Fig. 1**). Im zweiten Teil wird ein wiederkehrendes Bild (**Figs. 7-10**), das einen Brahmanen beim Wegschütten des Inhalts einer Schale ins Wasser zeigt, als die Geschichte von der Bekehrung des Brahmanen Sundarika-Bhāradvāja erklärt.

This paper is the third in a series which discusses the identification of hitherto unrecognized narrative paintings in the Buddhist monasteries in Kizil in Chinese Central Asia. The first paper looked at depictions of the stories of Yaśa and of Mākandika (ZIN 2005), the second dealt with Sudāya and Bṛhaddyuti (ZIN 2007).

5. The sports discipline: cutting a bunch of reeds

The scenes discussed below are taken from the story of the Buddha's life depicted in Cave 110 („Treppenhöhle“). On the right-hand side of the top row are scenes from His youth. Three scenes on this wall (Nos. 13-15 according to the order proposed by GRÜNWEDEL (1912: 118)²⁾), show the sporting achievements of the young Siddhārtha. The next scene on the right-hand side (No. 16) is a depiction of the Bodhisattva and a young woman, this represents the *svayaṃvara* (the young woman's choice of husband) of Gopī.³⁾ The sports disciplines in the foregoing scene must be a show of skills

1) Teil I, mit der Identifizierung der Geschichten von dem Jüngling Yaśa und dem Brahmanen Mākandika, erschien in *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 9.2005: 23-36; Teil II mit Geschichten von dem im Grab geborenen Jungen Sudāya und dem Töpfer Bṛhaddyuti in *IAZ* 11.2007: 43-52.

2) The order of scenes adhered to in this paper is taken from GRÜNWEDEL and assumes a total of 57 scenes – three rows with 19 scenes each, and 5 scenes in one row on the reverse wall of the cave. For the order of scenes if the total is taken to be 60 (6 on the reverse wall) cf. NAKAGAWARA 1994, PINAULT 2000: 159ff.

3) According to SCHMIDT (in press) the Tocharian inscription above the scene reads: *tan[e] podhisat[v]e swayamparn[e] p[ets ya](star)*: „Hier (wird) der Bodhisattva im Svayaṃvara [zum] Gatten erwä(hlt)“ (“Here is the Bodhisattva in Svayaṃvara for the husband selected”).

preceding the attempt at winning the girl. The first of the three sports scenes (No. 13) shows a wrestling match: Two young men are fighting on the left-hand side of the picture, while on the right side, a third man, sitting on a chair, is watching them. The person with a fair complexion who is sitting and watching the fight is apparently the Bodhisatva: As descriptions found in literature (ZÜRCHER 1978: 69) suggest, He did not always participate actively in wrestling matches. It is also possible that the Bodhisatva is depicted twice in this picture (once in a fight, and once sitting); this is suggested by the fact that aureoles surround the heads of two characters.⁴⁾ The next scene (No. 14) shows an archery competition;⁵⁾ this depiction seems to present another version of the Buddha legend (for references to the episode cf. SCHLINGLOFF 2000, 1: 347-350). This is the version from the *vinaya* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin*, as the right-hand side of the picture shows a well and a *Nāga* holding an arrow in his hands, and this corresponds exactly with this text. The *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya* relates how the arrow of the Bodhisatva, after going through seven iron palms and an iron drum, sticks in the ground where a spring wells up, and then a Snake God brings the arrow back to the Bodhisatva. The scene which follows this one (No. 15; **Fig. 1**; see “List of paintings under discussion” at the end of the paper) shows three young people with their swords lifted as if about to strike a blow; hence it shows another trial of strength, this time with swords.⁶⁾

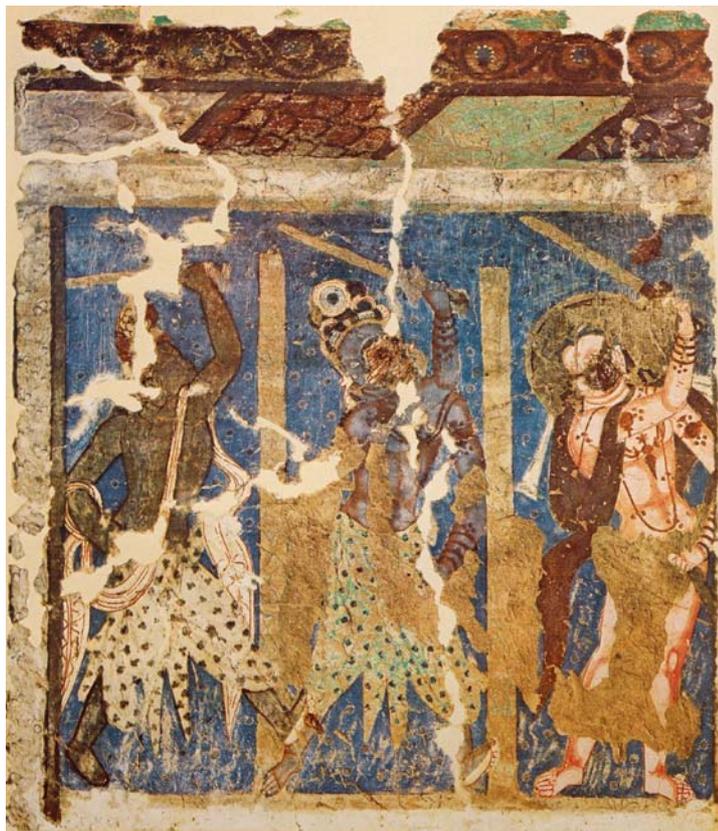


Fig. 1 Kizil, Cave 110 (Treppenhöhle), Cella, right side-wall, third picture from left on the upper row, formerly Völkerkundemuseum, Berlin, IB 8376i. After LE COQ, 1924: pl. 8

4) The inscription placed above reads, after SCHMIDT (in press): [*tan*](*e*) *podhisatve meṣṣam*. SCHMIDT interprets the hitherto unknown verb *me-* or *mesk-* according to the etymological proximity to *meske* = connection, coupling, as a characteristic feature of wrestling and translates: „Hier ringt der Bodhisattva“ (“Here fights the Bodhisatva”).

5) The inscription placed above is badly preserved, and only the following words can be deciphered, according to SCHMIDT (in press): *tan(e) [podhis](atve)* = „Hier der Bodhisattva“ (“Here the Bodhisatva”).

6) The inscription contains only illegible remains; cf. SCHMIDT (in press).

It was probably due to the fact that FOUCHER (1905-51, 1: 326ff.) failed to consider this sports discipline in his epochal work about Gandharan art, that it was later assumed that the discipline had only been represented rarely (cf. SANTORO 2003: 122 – here, however, with supporting textual references). The claim of KARETZKY (2000: 27) that “this event was not described in the extant scriptures and thus not common among the biographical depictions of Gandhara” is not correct. It was presumably based on earlier interpretations of the scene as a “sword fight” or “sword competition” which implied that the young men fought one another. One person who understood and interpreted the scene in this way was FISCHER (1980: 260), who argued additionally that the “sword fight” („Schwertkampf“) was listed among sports disciplines in literary texts. This claim is incorrect, since sword sports were not about fighting but rather about a show of force and manual skills, in which nobody was actually hurt. There are numerous references to the discipline both in literature and in pictorial representations in Gandhara.

The *Sanḡhabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, immediately after the description of the wrestling competition, tells the following story:

The young men say: “Let’s go and make a ‘cutting’ (*cchedya*)”. They are going out. On hearing this, Śākyamuni, the Bodhisatva, with the entourage of 500 (companions) are going outside in order to make a ‘cutting’. The young men are making a ‘cutting of reeds’ (*kalamacchedya*), the cut (reeds) are falling. The Bodhisatva is making a ‘cut of *āḍhaka*(-reeds?)’ (*āḍhakacchedya*); (the ones) cut by Him are not falling down, they are standing straight and upright. The young men say: “Gentlemen, Śākyamuni, the Bodhisatva, is said to be a strong man, ‘the winner in five disciplines’, but he cannot make a ‘cutting’ and he is no stronger than we are, since the stems cut by us fell down, and those cut by Him, are still standing straight and upright.” Now, to a deity, who was devoted to Śākyamuni, the Bodhisatva, came the following (thought): “Those Śākyas, who do not know the force of the Bodhisatva (as well as) His manual skills, are causing contempt against the Bodhisatva and disrespect his force, need to clarify the procedure”. She raised such a fierce wind that all trees fell down with a horrible noise. Seeing that, Śākyas were astonished.⁷⁾

The text is inconsistent; whereas the reference at the end of the passage is to falling trees and stems (*vṛkṣāḥ*, *pādapāḥ*), the one at the beginning of it is to reeds (*kalama*). The word *āḍhaka* is actually a specific term referring to a measure of capacity (*PW*, 1: 613). The same word is used in the *Bṛhat-*

7) *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, ed. GNOLI 1977-78, Vol. 1, p. 60: *kumāraḥ kathayanti; gacchāmaḥ; cchedyaṃ kurmaḥ iti; te nirgatāḥ; śrutvā śākyamunir bodhisattvaḥ pañcāśataparivāraḥ cchedyaṃ kartuṃ nirgataḥ; kumārāḥ kalamacchedyaṃ kurvanti; taiś chinnās chinnāḥ patanti; bodhisattvaḥ āḍhakacchedyaṃ karoti; tena chinnā na patanti; tathaivāvatīṣṭhante; kumārāḥ kathayanti; bhavantaḥ śākyamunir bodhisattvo balavān śrūyate, pañcasu sthāneṣu kṛtāvīti; tad ayaṃ chedyam api na jānāti kartuṃ; na cāyam asmatto balavān; tathā hy asmābhiḥ pādapās chinnās te sarve nipatitāḥ; anena tu ye chinnās te tathaivāvatīṣṭhanta “iti; atha yā devāta śākyamunau bodhisattve abhiprasannā tasyā etad abhavat “ime śākyā bodhisattvabalam ajānantaḥ śilpe ca kṛtāvītām bodhisattvasyāvajñām kariṣyanti; balaṃ ca paṃsayiṣyanti; tad upāyasaṃvidhānaṃ kartavyam” iti; tayā tāḍṛṣaṃ vātā utṛṣṭaṃ, yena sarve te vṛkṣāḥ karkarāyamāṇāḥ patitāḥ; ḍṛṣṭvā śākyāḥ paraṃ vismayam āpannāḥ; te vedhyaṃ kartuṃ ārabdhāḥ.*



Fig. 2 Gandhara. After NAGEL 2004: no. 1840/6, 2944



Fig. 3 Detail of Fig. 2

saṃhitā to denote a measure of rainfall – four *āḍhaka*s are equal to one *droṇa* (a type of a vessel).⁸⁾ Therefore, the term *āḍhaka* must also denote some kind of a vessel. In the context in which this word is used in our story, it may have been a sort of thick bamboo, presumably serving as a container. The falling trees which are referred to are evidently taken over from the archery competition; this is clearly visible in the version from *T 190*, the *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra*, where the young men are aiming at palm trees as was the custom during such competitions.⁹⁾

The scene under discussion has its counterparts in the reliefs of Gandhara, and in these it is possible to see bunches of stalks which are being cut, as for instance, in the lower register of the beautiful relief in **Fig. 2**.¹⁰⁾ The scene must have served here as the only representation of a sports competition. On the right-hand side there is a depiction of the scene in which the elephant killed by Devadatta is thrown (for references cf. ZWALF 1996, 1: 157-158, nos. 161-162), whereas the left-hand side is occupied by a scene in which three men are sitting down. The man in the middle of the left-hand scene is recognizable as the Bodhisatva because of an aureole. This picture apparently represents another competition; it is not a sports event this time but may possibly be an arithmetic contest. In the middle of the relief (**Fig. 3**) a thick bunch of stalks, bound with rings, is standing upright. Its highest section, constituting one fifth of the bunch's height, is cut off, bending at an angle of 45 degrees, to indicate the moment of falling. The bunch must have been cut by a competitor who is depicted in the right-hand register of the scene, turning his back to the viewers. His sword is visible above the shield. Another figure is standing next to the competitor, possibly checking the result. Symmetrically, on the other side of the bunch of stalks, another pair of figures is depicted,

8) *Brhatsaṃhitā* XXIII.2 (ed. + transl. Vol. 1, p. 245): “The quantity of rainfall should be determined with the help of a gauge whose diameter is one cubit. Then this vessel contains 50 Palas, it will measure one *Āḍhaka* [according to Parāśara ... an *Āḍhaka* = 17600/7 cubic *Āṅgulas*. We have already seen that an *Āḍhaka* is $\frac{1}{4}$ *Droṇa* ...].”

9) BEAL 1875: 90: “They then agreed to compete with the sword, as to who could strike, the heaviest blow. Then one of them cut through one *Talas* tree, another through two, but the prince cut through seven, and so clear was his cut that the trees fell not until the *Devas* raised a fierce wind, which caused the tree to fall to the ground. Then the *Sākyas*, who thought that the prince had not even cut through one tree, were convinced of his prowess and skill.”

10) The relief was seen in the antiquary trade (NAGEL 13.11.2004: no. 1840/6, 2944; 60 x 25 cm). I would like to express my gratefulness to Mr. Peter Rößler for drawing my attention to this object and providing me with photographs of it.



Fig. 4 Gandhara, Tokyo, National Museum

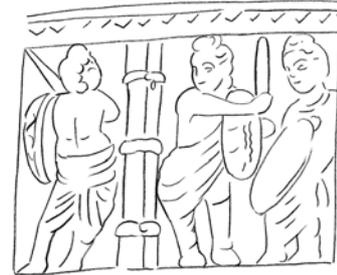


Fig. 5 Gandhara,
Private Collection, Japan

however this time the competitor turns his face to the audience. Despite serious damage to the relief, the aureole allows the viewer to identify the Bodhisatva on the right-hand side. His bunch of stalks which, as we know from literary description, did not fall after a single blow is not represented by the artist. In another relief (**Fig. 4**)¹¹, a similar layout is used: the competitor on the left-hand side turns his back to the viewers; in the right-hand register, he is facing the audience, and in both cases they are lifting swords as if to strike a blow. There is one more person in the relief, in the right-hand verge: He may be the Bodhisatva watching the efforts of competitors. A similar scene is repeated in some reliefs of Gandhara.¹² All the reliefs follow the same layout, and in all of them the bunch is thick, with vertical elements bound with rings; in some, however, the bunch is depicted as not cut (**Fig. 5**)¹³. The same scene looks different in the later (7th century?) ivory diptych from Kashmir (**Fig. 6**)¹⁴, where the artist represents the bunch as a single element, resembling a plain rod. The competitors on both sides are depicted as facing the viewers.

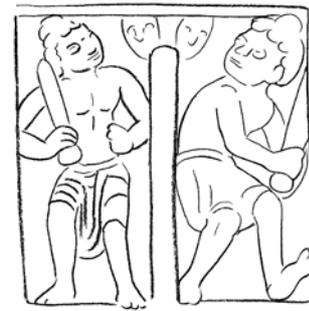


Fig. 6 Kashmir,
Yulin Museum, China

In the analysed scene in Kizil (**Fig. 1**) it is possible to identify a Gandharan layout with the competitor on the left shown from behind, and on the right, from the front. The fundamental difference stems from the fact that in this case the artist depicted not one but two objects to be cut. As in Gandhara one object is shared by two competitors, while the other one is for the Bodhisatva. It is not

11) Tokyo, National Museum (in permanent exhibition, without the number quoted).

12) Private Collection, ill.: FISCHER 1980: fig. 12. The same layout of competitors is found in another bigger and more precisely made relief in a private collection; however the very centre with the bunch is unfortunately damaged, hence it is impossible to identify if it was depicted as cut off (ill. *ibid.*: fig. 11); the Bodhisatva does not have an aureole, nevertheless He can be identified thanks to a high *uṣṇīṣa*.

13) Private Collection, Japan, ill.: KURITA 2003: fig. 102. Such representation also in: Hadda, ill.: DAGENS 1964: pl. 1.6 (only the right part of the relief is preserved); Rome, Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, dep. Is.M.E.O., ill.: BUSSAGLI 1984: 46, fig. 2; Private Collection, Japan, ill.: KURITA 2003: fig. 102.

14) Yulin (China) Museum, Ivory diptych, ill.: SOPER 1965: figs. 2, 3; ROWAN 1985: pl. 1b; *Huá-xià zhī lù* [*The way of China*] 1997: no. 156.

difficult to identify him as He is depicted on the right-hand side of the painting with fair skin, aureole and with the *uṣṇīṣa* not hidden under the turban. Therefore, what the artist has depicted here is, on the one hand, the young men performing *kalamacchedya*, and on the other, the Bodhisatva performing *āḍhakacchedya*. However, the artist has not attempted to present them in different ways. If on the objects rings and vertical elements (reeds) had been depicted, they would not have been visible even in 1906, when the members of the Third Turfan-Expedition took a photograph of the scene *in situ*. Most probably, such elements were never depicted and the painter used a simplified form – just like the artist of the ivory diptych (Fig. 6).

6. Sundarika-Bhāradvāja

Some parts of the paintings in the vaults of Cave 34 are so excellently preserved that they allow us to recognize even the tiniest details. One of the rhomboidal pictures (Fig. 7) portrays the following scene: A Brahmin is standing on the left-hand side, opposite the conventionally depicted Buddha, whose hand gesture suggests a conversation. The depiction of the Brahmin is also typical, he has a conventional gazelle leather around his chest; his hair is long, piled high, and a long beard indicates his advanced age. The Brahmin is standing on bent legs and in both hands he is holding a relatively large object, which can be easily recognized as a flat bowl. The bowl is inclined in such a way that its content could fall out. In fact, in the bottom edge the painter has placed some lines suggesting that something has fallen out of the bowl. The Brahmin is standing on the water bank. A conventionally represented round lake or pond occupies the bottom part of the painting. A bright, pointed object protrudes from the water exactly in the place where the content of the bowl must have fallen out. The colour of the object is irrelevant because a letter placed on it is clearly visible. Such symbols¹⁵⁾ indicated the surfaces still to be painted by the artist who was to finish the painting; the colour was symbolized by a letter.



Fig. 7 Kizil, Cave 34 (Höhle mit dem meditierenden Sonnengott), vault. After XU 1983-85, 1: fig. 80

15) Cf. GRÜNWEDEL 1912, Index: 346, „Brāhmī-Akṣaras auf ...“. The *akṣara* in the object is *tse*, which can stand for *tsem/tsen* in Tocharian B, or *nīla* (dark or black) in Sanskrit. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Dieter Maue for this information.

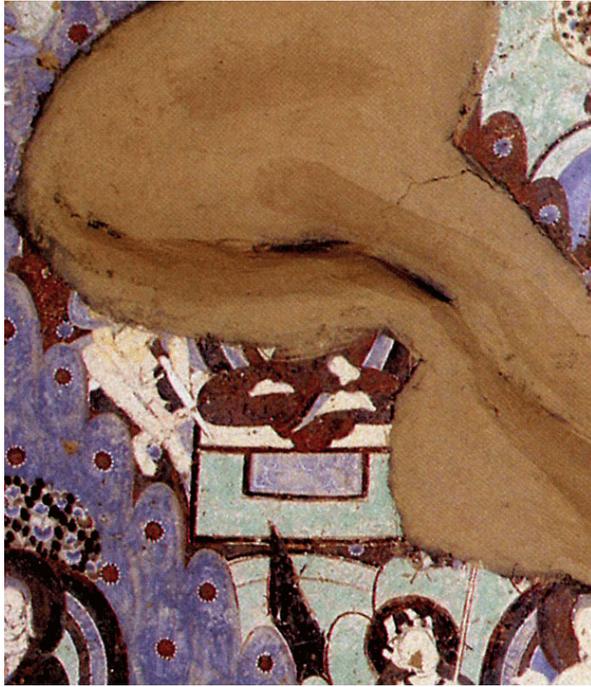


Fig. 8 Kizil, Cave 80 (Höllentopfhöhle), vault, left side. After XU 1983-85, 2: fig. 63



Fig. 9 Kizil, Cave 8 (Sechzehnschwertträgerhöhle), vault. After TAN 1981, 1: fig. 32

Thus it is clear that this particular painting is unfinished, and indeed the contour of the Buddha's face is also missing here.

It is beyond doubt that the same scene is presented in one rhomboidal fragment of the vault in Cave 80 (Fig. 8), though the upper part of the picture has not survived. Clearly visible are a bowl, inclined in the hands of the Brahmin, as well as a pointed object sticking out of the water. What is different here, however, is the fact that the object is black and slightly bent, which causes the shape of the object to resemble a flame. In an analogical representation in Cave 8 (Fig. 9), in which the pond is depicted on the left-hand side rather than at the bottom part of the picture, the object is even closer to the shape of a flame. In Cave 196 (Fig. 10), the object in the water is round and little flames (there were eight of them once) come out of it towards the top of the picture. The painting is



Fig. 10 Kizil, Cave 196, vault, right side. After XU 1983-85, 3: fig. 102

in a very bad state, nevertheless it is possible to see the Brahmin with a beard, standing on his bent legs and holding a red bowl with both hands.

There is no doubt that all four pictures tell the same story, the throwing of something out of a bowl into the water by the Brahmin, depicted at its most dramatic moment. The object being thrown had a shape similar to a flame, or else it caused a flame (or more flames, like in **Fig. 10**) or it produced smoke while falling into the water. Since the Buddha is presented in a gesture of conversation, it may be assumed that the event happened in His presence or as a result of a conversation with Him.

As a matter of fact, this sequence of events – the Brahmin who presented the Buddha with food and, on His instructions, threw the food away into some water – is recognizable as the story of the Brahmin Sundarika-Bhāradvāja. The story is preserved in Pali in the *Samyuttanikāya*,¹⁶⁾ as well as in two Chinese translations¹⁷⁾ of the lost Sanskrit version. The story reads as follows: as the Buddha was staying in Kosala on the river bank Sundarikā, a Brahmin called Sundarika-Bhāradvāja (in the text also referred to as Sundarikāyan) was busy performing the fire-rites. As soon as he finished the rituals, he decided to devote a remainder of the oblation (*havyasesam bhujjeyyasi*) to someone; seeing the Buddha sitting under a tree, he came up to Him with the food and – surprised by His clean-shaven head – asked the Buddha who he was. As an answer to his question he was given a sermon beginning with the words: ‘Ask not of birth, ask of the course of conduct’. The Brahmin was so pleased by the sermon that he offered the altar’s leavings to the Buddha. He, however, refused to accept them, explaining that it was not right to eat food that was described as *gāthābhigītaṃ*.¹⁸⁾ The term *gāthābhigīta* (‘over-sung [with a ritual] song’) is difficult to explain and so is the reason for the Buddha refusing to take the food. The commentator in Pali¹⁹⁾ (and after him, the translator into English), the ancient Chinese translators, and the author of the *Milindapañha*²⁰⁾ all interpret this verse in the following way: The Buddha refused to accept the food because it would have been wages for giving the sermon, which the Buddhas never accepted.²¹⁾ Another possible interpretation, however, perfectly matches our story (though the verse is repeated in several other places of the Pali cannon). In this version the food, more precisely the leftovers of the oblation (*havyasesam bhujjeyyasi*), is not accepted because stanzas were sung above it, that is, because it was a part of a Vedic ritual.²²⁾

16) *Samyuttanikāya* VII.1.9, ed. Vol. 1, pp. 167-170; transl. pp. 209-213.

17) *T 99*, ed. Vol. 2, pp. 320b-321a; *T 100*, ed. Vol. 2, pp. 408c-409c.

18) *Samyuttanikāya* VII.1.9.11, ed. p. 168: *gāthābhigītaṃ me abhojaniyaṃ/ sampassataṃ brāhmaṇa nesa dhammo/ gāthābhigītaṃ panudanti buddhā/ dhamme sati brāhmaṇa vuttir esā!*

19) *Sāratthappakāsinī*, *Samyuttanikāyaṭṭhakathā*, ed. Vol. 1, p. 232.

20) *Milindapañha* V. 9, ed. pp. 228-232; transl. Vol. 2, pp. 27-33.

21) *Samyuttanikāya* VII.1.9.11, transl. RHYS DAVIDS, Vol. 1, p. 211: “Not mine to enjoy [presents] for chanting verses. Not normal this, Brahman, for minds discerning. Buddhas reject wages for chanting verses. True to the Norm, this is their mode conduct.”

22) The verse is explained in this way by K.R. NORMAN in *Suttanipāta* I.4, v. 81, transl. p. 11: “It is not right for me to eat what has been sung over with verses. This, Brahman, is not the doctrine of those who see [rightly]. Buddhas reject what has been sung over with verses. As long as the doctrine exists, this is their way of life.”

The Buddha refuses to accept the food and Sundarika-Bhāradvāja asks whom he should offer the food to. The Buddha explains that He does not know anyone among people or gods, who could digest the food. He advises the Brahmin to throw it away in a place where grass does not grow, or alternatively into water in which there is nothing living.²³⁾ Therefore, Sundarika-Bhāradvāja pours it out into water in which there are no living beings. During contact with the water, a dramatic reaction occurs:

Then that residual oblation, thus placed in water, seethed and hissed and sent forth steam and smoke. Just as a red-hot ploughshare, if placed in water, will seethe and hiss and send forth steam and smoke, so was it with that oblation.²⁴⁾

Terrified by what he had seen, the Brahmin comes to the Buddha, and is instructed about the misery of Brahmin offerings. On hearing this, the Brahmin becomes an Arhat.

The story of Sundarika-Bhāradvāja belonged to the ‘northern’ canon and was undoubtedly widely known, something which is confirmed by its rendering in the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*.²⁵⁾ The story fits our pictures extremely well: It explains the Brahmin pouring the food into the water, and the violent reaction of the water in the form of flames or smoke.

It may be useful to ponder the explanation of this extremely interesting motif. We come across the same scene of throwing food into water in another place in the Pali canon; that is in the *Suttanipātha*. This is a story with a similar plot describing the conversion of the Brahmin Kasi-Bhāradvāja.²⁶⁾ In parts the stories are identical, word for word. The story was set in Magadha, in the Brahmin village Ekanāḷā, where ploughing (*kasi*) was taking place. While the Buddha was standing not far from the place of food-distribution, with a bowl in his hands, a plough-owner Kasi-Bhāradvāja came up to Him. Kasi-Bhāradvāja said that he sowed and ploughed before he ate, and suggested that the Buddha should also work before eating. The Buddha replied with a very beautiful sermon, in which – using parables – He explained that He was also a farm-worker: “Faith is the seed, penance is the rain, wisdom is my yoke and plough ...”. Kasi-Bhāradvāja was so contented with this

23) It is undoubtedly a preventive measure to avoid the situation, in which a living creature is hurt. Similarly in Jaina rules regarding waste disposal: It is decreed that it should be disposed of in the places described as “free of life”, cf. METTE 2002: 220.

24) *Samyuttanikāya* VII.1.9.15, transl. Vol. 1, p. 212; ed. p. 169: *atha kho so havyaseso udake pakkhitto ciccitāyati cīṭicīṭāyati sandhūpāyati sampadhūpāyati. seyyathāpi nāma phālo divasasantatto udake pakkhito ciccitāyati cīṭicīṭāyati sandhūpāyati sampadhūpāyati, evam eva so havyaseso udake pakkhittociccitāyati cīṭicīṭāyati sandhūpāyati sampadhūpāyati*. The Chinese translation in *T 99* makes the comparison with a red-hot iron ball rather than a plough-share.

25) *T 201*, ch. 1,3, ed. Vol. 4, p. 262a; analys. LÉVI 1908: 98-99; trad. in HUBER 1908, pp. 27-28: Il y avait un brahmane de haute naissance, Qui s’appelait *Tou-lo-chö*. Devant les injures ou les louanges le Buddha reste le même. Or il offrit de la nourriture au Parfait. Mais le Parfait ne l’accepta pas, Car personne dans les trois mondes n’eût pu la digérer. Il la jeta dans l’eau, Et au même instant de la fumée et des flammes en sortirent.

26) *Suttanipāta* I.4, ed. pp. 12-15; transl. pp. 9-11; Chin.: *T 101*, ed. Vol. 2, p. 493a-b.

reply that he heaped up rice-gruel in a large bronze dish and offered it to the Buddha. When the Buddha refused to accept this offering, the ploughman poured the food into water, which caused an explosive reaction.

As a matter of fact, the story of Kasi-Bhāradvāja is not relevant to the attempt to interpret the analysed paintings, because the Brahmin depicted in Kizil is not a farmer but a priest. Nevertheless a comparison of the stories is necessary in order to explain the phenomenon of motif roaming. It is worth adding here that both collections – the *Suttanipāta* and the *Samyuttanikāya* – contain both stories, Sundarika-Bhāradvāja (*Sn* III.4 (30), vv. 455-86 and *SN* VII.1.9) and Kasi-Bhāradvāja (*Sn* I.4, vv. 76-82 and *SN* VII.1.8). However, the motif of pouring food into water and causing an explosion appears in each volume only once: In the *Samyuttanikāya* it features in the story of Sundarika-Bhāradvāja, and in the *Suttanipāta* in the story of Kasi-Bhāradvāja. It is obvious that the motif must have originally belonged to one of the stories and must have been adapted to the other one. In the Chinese *Samyuktāgama* the motif is included in *T 99* and *T 100* as part of the story about the Brahmin performing rites (Sundarika-Bhāradvāja), and in *T 101* as part of the story about the farmer (Kasi-Bhāradvāja). BAREAU (1971: 1) claimed, unfortunately without providing any references, that the Chinese counterpart of the story about Kasi-Bhāradvāja from the *Suttanipāta* did not contain the motif of pouring food into the water. Thus we can deduce that the motif initially belonged to the story about Brahmin Sundarika, especially if we assume that it is correct to interpret the food, described as the one ‘above which the verses were sung’, as the reminder of the Vedic sacrifice. In the version about Kasi-Bhāradvāja ‘leftovers’ (*havyasesa*) were substituted with rice-gruel (*pāyāsa*).²⁷⁾

It is also worthwhile questioning the origin of the unusual motif. BAREAU (1971), analysing the story about Kasi-Bhāradvāja in the *Suttanipāta*, matches it with the motif of throwing the food away after the last meal of the Buddha in the *Mahāparinibbāṇasutta*.²⁸⁾ In this story the Buddha orders the food to be buried because no human being or god would be able to digest it. However, there is a significant difference between these two motifs. In the latter, the Buddha orders a meal to be destroyed because He knows (in His omniscience) that it will bring Him death. The order He gives to the Brahmin to throw away food has a different basis, since the meal as such is not harmful: It is only through the act of offering it to the Buddha that it becomes so poisonous that it causes an explosion in contact with water. Since contact with the Buddha cannot have negative consequences, there must be another reason that the food becomes poisonous. In Indian imagery, water has an extremely explosive character in contact with falsehood and ignorance (LÜDERS 1951: in particular 28-33). It is possible then that the analysed motif has something to do with this imagery. In the analysed story, the Brahmin brings ‘false’ food from sacrifices, which in the Buddhist understanding of such sacrifices are based on stupidity and hypocrisy. The contact with the Buddha reveals these characteristics in such a way that in contact with water, which damages falsehood, they burst into flame.

27) *Suttanipāta* I.4, ed. p. 14; transl. p. 11; apart from this change, the text is repeated word-for-word.

28) *Dighanikāya* XVI.4.19, ed. Vol. 1, p. 127; transl. p. 138.

List of paintings under discussion

5. Sports discipline: cutting the bunch of reed

- Cave 110 (Treppenhöhle), Cella, right side-wall, third picture from left on the upper row, formerly Völkerkundemuseum, Berlin, IB 8376i; ill.: LE COQ 1924: pl. 6.15, pl. 8; YALDIZ 1987, Fig. 33.15; *Dokumentation der Verluste* 2002: 135 (*supra*, Fig. 1)

6. Sundarika-Bhāradvāja

- Cave 8 (Sechzehnschwertträgerhöhle), vault, ill.: TAN (*et al.*) 1981, 1: fig. 32; XU (*et al.*) 1983-85, 1: fig. 27 (*supra*, Fig. 9)
- Cave 34 (Höhle mit dem meditierenden Sonnengott), vault, ill.: XU (*et al.*) 1983-85, 1: fig. 80 (*supra*, Fig. 7)
- Cave 80 (Höllentopföhle), vault, left side, ill.: XU (*et al.*) 1983-85, 2: fig. 63 (*supra*, Fig. 8)
- Cave 196, vault, right side, ill.: XU (*et al.*) 1983-85, 3: fig. 102 (*supra*, Fig. 10)

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