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### COLOUR PLATES

#### Front cover:

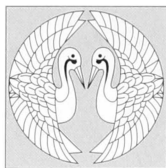
Winding up threads into balls, 17.7 × 26.5 cm, an illustration to the anonymous manuscript *Higashi Ezo iko*, Manuscript fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

#### Back cover:

**Plate 1.** The Ainu loom, 38.2 × 26.5 cm, an illustration to the anonymous manuscript *Higashi Ezo iko*, Manuscript fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

**Plate 2.** The weaving process (*attush-kar*), 38.2 × 26.5 cm, an illustration of the anonymous manuscript *Higashi Ezo iko*, Manuscript fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

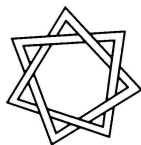
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# ORIENTAL ICONOGRAPHY: SEMANTICS

K. F. Samosyuk

## THE GUANYIN ICON FROM KHARA-KHOTO

The Guanyin icon from Khara-Khoto, now in the Hermitage Museum [1], is the only painting I know where the image of the Bodhisattva of Compassion is combined with what appears, at the first glance, as a “genre” scene: Tanguts dancing and playing musical instruments by an open grave, horses standing near the grave-pit, a banner (*bunchuq*) behind them. This composition has no parallels among any Chinese or Central Asian pieces of art I know [2]. This article presents an attempt to explain the semantics of the icon within the contexts of the Buddhist artistic and religious tradition and the Tangut culture.

The Tanguts, people of Tibetan origin, settled the area of the Great Bow of the Yellow River in the eighth century. In 1038 [3] their State developed into the Tangut empire — Xi Xia. The geographical position of the Xi Xia State was the crucial factor determining the main trends of its cultural life. China, the Kithan empire of Liao (916—1125), later the Jurchen State of Jin (1115—1264) bordered upon the Tanguts on the east and north-east. Tibet, which in the eleventh century again made its appearance in the cultural and religious sphere of life, was their southern neighbour. On the west there were the Uighur khanates which flourished in the tenth—eleventh centuries, and on the north — the Tatar and Mongolian tribes and the Turks, from which the Miñag people received the name of Tangut. The territory of Ordos and the Gansu corridor had a complicated history. It inherited much of its culture from the lands north of the Great Wall inhabited by Chinese, as well as by Turks and different other tribes.

The Tanguts themselves well realised their intermediate position. It developed long before the tenth—eleventh centuries. In the lands to the west of Dunhuang, in East Turkestan, there came into being a culture different from anything else. Influenced, in its turn, by the cultures of India, Iran, Sogd, and China, it retained its own individual face. It is noteworthy that the collection of archaeological finds from the site of Khara-Khoto fully reflects the context of the Tangut culture as well as all its Central Asian features.

The artistic style, the sources of which are traceable in the ninth and tenth-century art of Dunhuang and which could be better defined as Central Asian, is the style of a group of Tangut works of art. It is interesting to follow what combination of elements allows us to attribute some work of art to this group. It is easy to notice a kind of

eclecticism on the level of purely superficial combination of Chinese, Tibetan, and other artistic features. Thus, for example, flat and bright backgrounds, not characteristic of Chinese taste, combine with a purely Song asymmetric “one-angle” composition of the icon “Reception of the Righteous Soul in the Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha” painted after Chinese patterns, which is represented in the Hermitage Khara-Khoto collection (accession numbers X 2410, X 2411). Besides, Buddha Amitābha and *dhyāni*-Buddhas in the upper row, depicted in the Tibetan style, combine with purely Chinese interpretation of “The Pure Land” and with figurines of monks looking as if they were borrowed from Tibetan *tangka* (the patterns decorating the backs of the thrones on which they are seated are similar to Tibetan ones, see X 2419, X 2335).

The second type of combination of the Tibetan and the Chinese is a purely mechanical inclusion of the Chinese iconography elements into the Tibetan-style icon. For instance, in the icon “The Medicine Buddha” (X 2332) the Bodhisattva of the Sun is holding a pre-Buddhist Chinese Sun symbol — a three-footed raven, and the Bodhisattva of the Moon — a disk with the image of the Moon Hare. Chinese iconography of planetary deities (a non-Chinese cult) is repeated in the Tibetan “*Maṇḍala* of Planets” from Khara-Khoto. Chinese, Tibetan, and native elements coexist in the icons of the Guardian of the North and of the God of Wealth Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera. A good example is provided by engravings from Khara-Khoto.

The third type of contacts between different cultural features is the technique of painting: a Tibetan-style *tangka* could be painted on silk — the material used by Chinese painters; or otherwise — a Chinese icon could be painted on cotton.

The fourth case is provided by those works of art, the perfect plastics of which organically accommodate elements of foreign decorative patterns, like the Tibetan-Nepalese “Green Tārā” woven in Tangut workshops and decorated with Chinese patterns in such a way that they do not break the impression of unity and harmony of the whole (X 2362).

The question arises if combination of elements of different cultural traditions is possible not only on the formal artistic level, but on the more profound level of their meaning. This very article presents an attempt to explain the contents of the Guanyin icon from different aspects —

*Plate 1*





Plate 2



Plate 3

Chinese, Tangut, Kithan, and Turkic, as well as to provide interpretation, when possible, of every detail and to demonstrate its non-incidental character.

By its style the icon belongs to the Chinese artistic tradition (see *plate 1*). The figure of the Bodhisattva asymmetrically shifted towards the right is seated on a rock in the *lalitāsana* posture. Guanyin is represented as a man, not in the female form later accepted in China. He is wearing a crown with the Buddha Amitābha in the centre — *huafu*. A pond with lotuses is depicted before the rock. Behind the Bodhisattva's back there is a regular-shaped rounded *mandorla* representing the lunar disk, the iconographic feature of the Shuiyue, the "Water-Moon" embodiment, i. e. of the Moon reflected in Water. The Bodhisattva is represented against the background of the rock and bamboo. To the left of him, on a five-step stone pedestal there is a *kundika*-bottle set in a six-petal glass bowl. The bottle holds a willow-branch. To the left of the figure of Guanyin there is a shrub with red and white peonies. In the upper left corner the companion of Guanyin — Shancai-tungzi, Indian Sudhana — is represented (see *plate 2*). These motifs and their iconography constitute the Chinese stratum of the icon [4].

The origin of the Shuiyue-Guanyin image remains unclear and the interpretation of its meaning is speculative. The accepted view is that similar compositions go back to the painting executed by the famous Tang artist Zhou Fang (730—800) [5]. He might be the actual creator of the composition not directly connected with the text describing the appearance of the Bodhisattva. Zhang Yangyuan, who wrote his "Notes" half a century after the death of the artist, used the character *chuan* ("to create") instead of the usual *hua*, which he applied when describing works of art.

The popularity of the image at that time is confirmed by the verse by Bo Jui (772—846) — "In Praise of the Picture "Bodhisattva Moon-Water"" [6]. I fully accept the interpretation of the meaning of the "Reflection of the Moon in Water" image in the Buddhist context as of the symbol of the illusory nature of the world [7] and in the Chan school context. However, considering the independence and the great popularity of the Guanyin cult in China, the appearance of the new iconography of the Bodhisattva in the eighth century could be explained from the point of view of the Chinese Taoist culture. *Shui* ("water") and *yue* ("Moon") in the system of Taoist symbolism are the signs of the female principle *Yin* and of the night when the full Moon is shining. Such understanding of the image could be possibly one of the reasons for the effeminisation of Guanyin on the Chinese soil [8].

The Guanyin icon was ordered by a respectful son, who is represented in the icon, to commemorate his late mother, as the inscription on the banner from Dunhuang (now in Musée Guimet [9]) testifies. Professor Yu is citing the story of one Qu Fengda, who lived in the eighth century and read *sūtras* in memory of his late wife on the seventh and on the hundredth day, as well as on the first and the third anniversary of her death. The "Shuiyue Guanyin" *sūtra* was read by him on the seventh day [10]. It is noteworthy that besides the three paintings mentioned above Water-Moon Guanyin also appears, in the same iconographic and compositional schemes, in two engravings described by Prof. L. N. Menshikov [11]. They were believed to protect from "the eight evils" (TK-90, see *fig. 1*) and from execution (TK-117). In that way the Shuiyue-

Guanyin's representation was connected with the cult of the dead relatives and was thought to protect from misfortunes, so there is nothing new found here with regard to this particular iconography.

The banners from the Dunhuang sealed cave demonstrate one more iconographic type of Guanyin functioning as a bodhisattva showing the way — Yinlu pusa [12]. In this case the function of Guanyin is the same as in the icons with the "Reception of the Righteous Soul in the Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha", where Bodhisattvas Guanyin and Dashizhi meet the believer in his other birth and convey him to the "Pure Land". M. L. Pchelina interpreted the Shuiyue-Guanyin from Khara-Khoto as Yinlu pusa, that is "The One Who Shows the Way" (translation by M. L. Pchelina) [13]. The presentation of Yinlu pusa includes a banner with a staff (or with no staff). A lotus stem is serving as a shaft in the last case. Prof. Whitfield notes that the banner originates most possibly from the west. It is *bunchuq* of the nomadic Turks. In our icon from Khara-Khoto an oversized *bunchuq* is shown behind the horses.

A similar banner—"bunchuk" is held by the "black horseman" in an illustration to the "Sūtra of Ten Kings" from Musée Guimet [14], who is the herald of the Lord of the Underworld. He is thought to save some of the sinners from the tortures of Hell. Also, an icon from Musée Guimet, reproduced in the exhibition catalogue "Serinde, Terre de Bouddha" (No. 252b), depicts the Bodhisattvas Guanyin, Dizang (Kṣitigarbha) and the Ten Kings. As it was demonstrated by Dr J. Gies, the part of Dizang in this rare composition was to "liberate" the souls going through the Ten Kings' judgement, while the part of Guanyin — to inspire hope in the future being reborn in the Pure Land of Amitābha [15]. The pairs of banners from Dunhuang, which are held by standing Bodhisattvas-Guanyin, seem also to be one of the attributes of Yinlu pusa — "The One Who Shows the Way" [16].

The images of Shuiyue-Guanyin and Yinlu pusa are purely Chinese creations, which have no direct parallels in the texts of the *sūtras*. The Khara-Khoto Guanyin possibly presents a contamination of two iconographic models having neither iconographic nor textual equivalents. So the image of Shuiyue-Guanyin Bodhisattva in its embodiment of "The Reflection of the Moon in Water" sitting on the Potalaka mount is the primary one for the interpretation of the Khara-Khoto icon. The function of Guanyin — to serve a guide to the "Pure Land" of Amitābha — is connected with the death of a righteous person and with the memorial feast. The other function of the Bodhisattva, the most usual one — to give children and to help in childbirth — is related to life [17].

It is possible to suggest that the dual nature of the image related to death and life is reflected in the colour of the peonies. White is the colour of mourning, of virginity not yet awoken to life and fecundity, of sleeping "non-life". Red is the colour of marriage and love. In the Shijing, in the verse "In the third moon, at the time of Picking Orchids festival" a young man is giving his beloved one peonies as the sign of love and life [18]. The Chinese word for "peony" consists of character *mu* ("male plant") and *dan* ("red"), i. e. a red peony is the symbol of the male principle *Yang*, of life and fertilisation. A white peony is represented in another icon from Khara-Khoto [19] depicting two women-donators, their family-names — Bai and Gao. Lady Bai is offering white peonies to Bodhisattva (though in the

inscription it is said that she is offering peach blossom — *taohua*), the symbol of virginity of the bride Gao. In icon X 2438 one of the donors is offering red peonies to Guanyin [20]. It is not quite clear how peonies were introduced into the iconography of Bodhisattva Guanyin in Khara-Khoto, was the offering of peonies connected with some text or remarkable event or only with their Chinese symbolism.

The willow branch in a vase becomes the attribute of “Water-Moon” Guanyin, later an independent embodiment of the Bodhisattva. In the opinion of Yu Chun-fang, the willow branch replaced the lotus of Avalokiteśvara in the fourth century after the publication and translation by the Tiantai school of one esoteric *sūtra*, where Buddha was explaining that one should invoke Bodhisattva Guanyin by offering him a willow branch and pure water [21]. In the Chinese tradition willow symbolised spring; besides that it had the ability to protect from evil. Growing by the water, it symbolised, as well as water and the Moon, the female principle [22]. The willow branch was merged into the Buddhist iconography possibly due to its magic attributes.

As mentioned above, in the Guanyin icon the open bowl and the bottle with the willow branch are set on a five-step “table” made of stones, the surface of each step being painted red. Is it by a pure chance that the table, which replaced in our icon the traditional “Chinese” rock with numerous holes, has this five-fold composition and is painted red? Or should it be regarded as a kind of an altar or a variant of the custom known in the steppes, as well as in Tibet, to set piles of stones surmounted with shafts by cross-roads? Unfortunately, we are unable to answer this question [23].

As to Guanyin — Water-Moon depicted in the icon, he is guiding the righteous one to the Pure Land of Amitābha. The righteous man burning the incense, who is invoking the Bodhisattva, is attended by a boy standing on a cloud. In the three-fold vertical composition of the icon this scene occupies the middle register — between the real earth and the Bodhisattva's place of dwelling (see *plate 4*).

The position on the cloud shows that the righteous one has already died, and that the icon depicts not the invoking of the Bodhisattva but the actual voyage to the Pure Land. The righteous is clad in a green robe decorated with large gold medallions filled with dragons — the imperial symbol [24]. He has a high headgear with folded sides and golden branch in front of it, and shoes. It should be mentioned that in six icons from Khara-Khoto (X 2531, 2400, 2436, 2438, 2416) noble donors are shown wearing shoes, unlike the Tanguts represented in our icon and in icon X 2456. The garments of the donor testifies that the person represented is one of the Tangut emperors. “Portraits” of the Tangut emperors are represented, in my opinion, also in several other icons [25]. It has been proven by Prof. L. N. Menshikov that the members of the imperial family and the emperors had been represented in the illustrations to the *sūtras* commissioned by them. The figure of the boy attending the emperor still remains unexplained. In engraving X 2531 from Khara-Khoto the emperor is also followed by a boy. The two boys-attendants do not look like servants: Chinese paintings usually depict servants serving their masters, i. e. performing some action clear to the observer. In both cases the boys are just standing, their hands folded. So far I can not suggest any interpretation of these figures.

So, the late righteous person in our icon appears to be the Tangut emperor, and the scene in the lower left part of the icon gains a special sacred meaning. As it was already mentioned, there are two horses standing by the open grave, two musicians and two dancers performing funeral rites [26]. It is noteworthy that the scene is represented as if it is taking place on the very edge of the earth: this small real space of the lower register of the composition is set off against the “space” of the upper world. It is depicted as if looked upon from above, from the point of view of the Bodhisattva. The motifs and attributes of the scene require a detailed interpretation. One of the dancers and the harpist [27] have a *tufa* hair-style — clean shaven back and crown of the head, a fringe in front and two locks above the ears. This hair-style was introduced by the first Tangut emperor and reformer Yuanhao in 1033. He borrowed this hair-style from the Kithans and obliged the whole population of the country — Tanguts, Chinese, Uighurs, and Tibetans — to shave their heads along this pattern. This icon provides almost the only example of *tufa* hair-style in the whole Khara-Khoto collection of painting. There are few examples of *tufa* in engravings from Khara-Khoto in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies [28].

Two other personages, a dancer standing, his back to the observer, and a flute-player are shown in the icon, the first one has two plates or locks hanging behind, the second one wears a flat “Tibetan” cap. Both figures are characteristic of East Turkestan. In the “Portrait of the Tangut Emperor” mentioned above the attendants have similar flat caps with protective veils hanging behind. It is difficult to say how long the *tufa* hair-style was in existence among the Tanguts. I do not think it was very durable [29]. In other icons or engravings the Tanguts are shown either with loose hair or wearing hats. Besides, the reform of Yuanhao was an intrusion “from above” into the Tangut customs. The *tufa* hair-style is a weighty argument for dating the icon — after 1033 and before 1124 — the year of the downfall of the Kithan empire on which the Tanguts were dependent.

Turning to the horses standing by the edge of the grave, which are depicted in our icon (see *plate 3*), it should be said that a representation of a grave can be seen in a painting on the west wall of the Kaihua temple in the Gaoping region of the province of Shaanxi, but I have found no other representations of grave pits. The painting is dated to the Song period [30]. The horses are intended for a sacrifice. One of them, the white one, is greasing peacefully. The other one is black, big, with large head and short neck, prominent eyes, square nostrils and a specific mane. It has a rich harness — a mask [31] and a breastplate. The black horse is standing still. While there is nothing special about the white horse, the black one looks “festive”.

In the “New Code of Laws” of the Tanguts introduced in the second half of the twelfth century the sacrifice of a horse is mentioned twice. As sacred animals (along with bulls and cows) they were sacrificed to the Spirits of the Sky in the Old Imperial Palace. At the same time, special article of the Code prohibits to sacrifice horses to the dead [32]. There is no contradiction between the articles, because two different levels of sacrifice are meant. In the first case it is the sacred level, in the second — the common one. A law prohibiting to sacrifice horses most probably appeared because horses were the principal article of the trade of the Tanguts who followed their ancestral custom to



*Plate 4*



bury horses along with their master. The scene represented in the icon could mean either a violation of the law — because the emperor is going to be buried — or the event took place before the prohibition of the horse sacrifice.

As to the banner (*bunchuq*) which is shown in the icon behind the horses, it presents a very long shaft with an elaborately shaped pointed top and a red tassel, with a multicoloured ribbon running around the shaft. In the steppes *bunchuq* always remained the symbol of military authority [33]. The shaft is disproportionately high. In the composition of the icon it links the lower register — the earth — with the upper one, the realm of the Bodhisattva to where the righteous one is striving to get. The funeral rites are performed on his account. It is known also that among the Tanguts funeral feast was accompanied with music and dancing [34].

The semantics of shaft's representation in the icon needs some additional remarks. Noteworthy is the function of a shaft described in the "Chronicle of Xi Xia". According to it, if lovers committed suicide, their bodies were transferred to a rock upon which "a shaft one *zhang* high (3.2 m)" was set, and it was announced that the dead would "fly to the sky" [35]. In this case the shaft is not just indicating the place on the rock. It could be identified with a link between the earth and the sky, which enabled the dead to reach the sky. That was the way by which our "righteous emperor", led by Guanyin along the "road" — *lu*, was going to reach the sky. I suppose that this road is represented in the icon by the *bunchuq*. A *bunchuq*, or a banner, also high rocks or trees, could embody the so-called "external spirits" or the "seats of life". Even bodhisattvas have their own "external souls" or "lives". As R. Stein indicates, on the three hills of Lhasa, which are the seats of Bodhisattvas Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, three banners are set, known as the "trees of life" [36]. A physical connection between the earth and the sky was achieved in the Tibetan (and not only in Tibetan) [37] mythology by means of the rope *dmu*. It was also associated with rainbow [38].

In the Gesar epic, the hero of which belongs equally to Tibet and to Central Asia in the widest sense, including the Mongols, the expression "horse-wind" is applied to the deities of the vital powers. The "horse-wind" was represented as a banner. It bore the inscription: "The Master of the banner of victory, the "wind-horse", the great lord of the gods of warriors, the conqueror of the evil, the best of men, Gesar, be our mighty god of the people. Set the wind pillars towards the sky, fasten the rope — *dmu* of long life". In the same epic, in its Mongolian version, Gesar is ascending to the gods of the sky and to his grandmother by a rope-ladder. Another episode deals with his sending his horse to the sky. The horse is carrying in its mouth the soul of Gesar's wife, i. e. it acts as a mediator between the earth and the sky in the situation connected with death.

It is known that horse-racing around graves were practiced among the Uighurs during the funeral feasts. S. P. Nesterov used the Kirghyz ethnographic materials to explain the ritual meaning of horse-racing by the graves immediately after the funeral, on the fortieth day and then a year later. The winner galloped towards the tent (*yurt*) of the dead, pulled the shaft of the banner from the earth, broke it and threw it into the fire. The act of breaking the shaft meant the end of the mourning period for the dead man's relatives, i. e. his soul was finally leaving this world.

The principal part in this ritual was reserved for the horse of which it was said that "he broke the banner of mourning" [39].

In that way, the representation of the *bunchuq*-banner and of the sacrificial horses in the icon reflect the Tibetan and Turkic or, better to say, the steppe stratum of the depiction.

The connection of the Tanguts with the mythological culture of Central Asia, with the steppes, was determined by the common environment and by regular contacts.

In the Turkic environment music, dancing, ritual merry-making as well as copulation were connected with the funeral cycle and funeral rites. Vital behaviour was supposed to avert death. Horses were killed on the day the man's death to enable his soul to reach the other world [40].

Thus, the Guanyin icon combines different features, borrowed from the cultures of the peoples surrounding the Tanguts, with some particular event from the history of Xi Xia. Chinese style, iconography, symbolism go with Tibetan, Central Asian in general, as well as with Turkic and Mongolian features (*bunchuq*, horses, grave), which were inherent, as it becomes evident now, in the Tanguts — Tibetans by their origin and "Central Asians" ("The Ordos People") by the place of their habitation. The cultural processes taking place among the Tanguts' neighbours — the Kithans — are also inseparable from the general Central Asian ones [41]. Considering this complex of cultural elements in the icon, I come to the conclusion that it is more proper to speak not about mutual influence — Turkic, Tibetan or Chinese — on the Tanguts, but about the unity and succession of traditions within the cultural sphere of Central Asia and the multiple orientation of the Tangut culture. This "many-sided" tendency became even stronger when the idea of the independent Tangut state, of "its own way", came into being. When making their own state and establishing its prestige among the neighbours the Tanguts required not only the Chinese cultural model, not only Buddhism as a vital element of State policy [42], the revival of their own traditions and mythology, but also the inclusion of themselves into the cultural sphere of the Central Asian peoples. S. N. Nekudov has demonstrated how the same process developed in similar circumstances among other peoples of the steppes [43].

Surely, one icon, even endowed with such a deep and complicated semantics, does not allow to make general conclusions. But there are other proofs of the cultural unity of the Central Asian — Ordos peoples. One can mention, for example, the white garments of the Tangut emperors, the same they had in Tibet and in the independent "Kingdom of the Golden Mountains" (founded in 905), the founder of which titled himself "The Son of the Sky Clad in White" [44]. Moreover, according to K. B. Kepping, the binome Bai Gao (White and High) of the name of the Tangut State was the name of a mountain [45]. It is known that in the Turkic tradition, "from the mythological point of view" the centre of the realm was often imagined as a mountain [46]. Therefore, one cannot exclude the possibility that the Tanguts named their State after the name of a mountain, following the Turkic tradition which we observe in the Kingdom of the Golden Mountains, as well as among the Kithans and the Jurchens. All this makes us conclude that the Guanyin icon from Khara-Khoto preserved in the Hermitage Museum could be regarded as an additional argument proving this cultural unity.

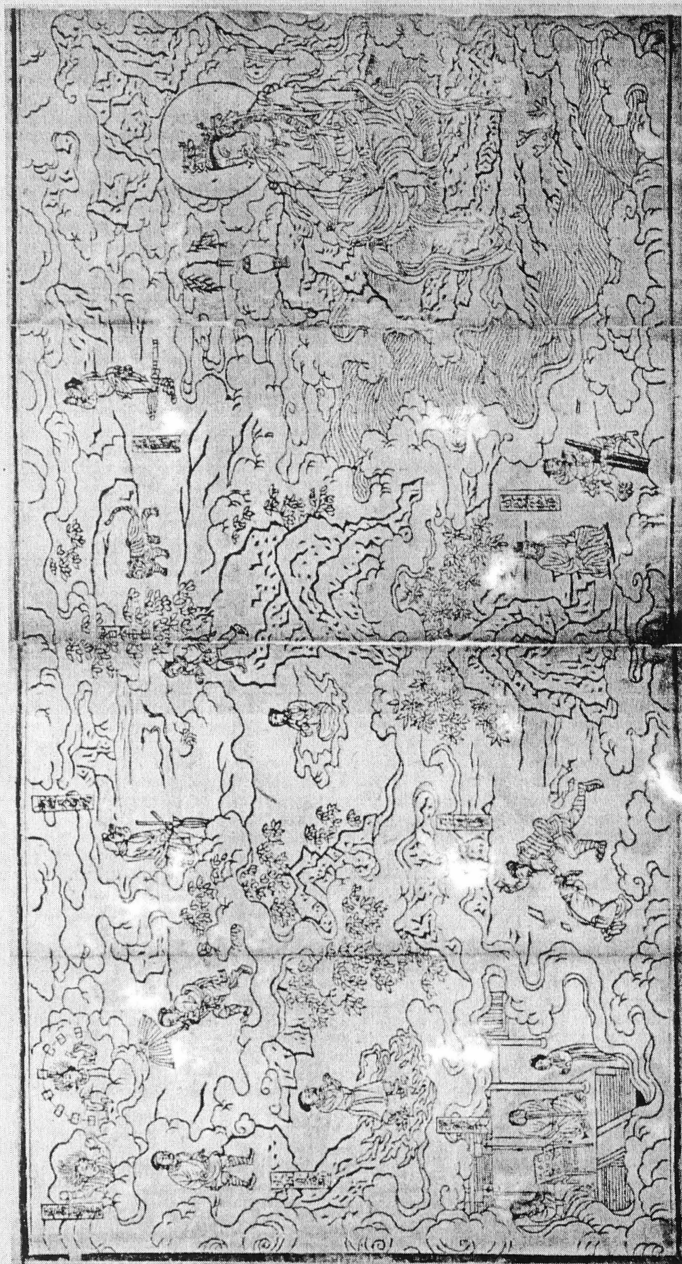


Fig. 1

## Notes

1. No. X 2439, 101.5 × 59.5 cm, scroll on silk. The most recent publication is by M. L. Pchelina see an exhibition catalogue *Lost Empire on the Silk Road*, ed. M. Piotrovsky (Milan, 1993), No. 46. See also her article in the same catalogue "The Chinese style paintings from Khara-Khoto" (p. 91). M. L. Pchelina dates the icon to the Southern Song period (1127—1279). In her opinion, the iconography of Guanyin is eclectic, combining the features of Shuiyue — "Moon in Water", of the "Guanyin with a willow branch" and the "White-robed" Guanyin. The functions of the Bodhisattva, as defined by M. L. Pchelina, are those of Yinlu pusa — "Showing the Way". She also suggests that the principle deity here is Guanyin who is invoked to ensure a rebirth in the Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha.

2. The scene represented here is unique. However, it is worth to take notice of the representations of Bodhisattva Guanyin on other Tangut paintings where familiar historical and literary personages act as donors. These are icons and paintings with Guanyin where on the left of the deity appears the famous Tang monk Hsüan-tsang who in the seventh century made a pilgrimage to India. In the twelfth—thirteenth centuries in the *huaben* and *shohua* stories, created under the impression of his *Xiyu ji* ("Records of the Voyage to the West"), there appear episodes representing Hsüan-tsang and his companion, monkey Sun Ukung, see Duan Wenjie, *Dunhuang shiku ishu lunwen ji* (Gansu, 1994), p. 445: reproduction — in Shi Jinpo, Bai Bin, Wu Fengyun, *Xi Xia wenwu* (Beijing, 1988), Pl. 34. Hsüan-tsang is shown dressed as a monk, with his head clean-shaven. The representation of Sun Ukung leaves no doubt that he was an ape. This last one is significant, because in the Khara-Khoto collection there is an icon representing the same Bodhisattva and two donors offering red peonies (accession number 2438, see also *Lost Empire*, No. 47, p. 93). In 1993 Pchelina came to the same conclusion as Prof. Duan Wenjie, though the icon from the Hermitage shows not a monk with an ape, but an official with an attendant, the last one in no way looking like an ape, rather like someone from the lands of the Southern Seas. His appearance is exotic from the Tangut point of view — his skin is dark, his hair — blond. He wears shoes and a scarf. In my opinion, there is no way to tell definitely who the two companions represented in the icon could be. These are probably some real persons in some way helped by the Bodhisattva.

3. E. I. Kychanov, *Ocherki istorii Tangutskogo gosudarstva* (Essays on the history of the Tangut State) (Moscow, 1968), p. 132. See also Shi Jinpo, *Xi Xia wen hua* (Ch'angch'un, 1987); Ruth Dannel, *The Xi Xia. The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge, 1994), vi.

4. Shuiyue Guanyin is represented in icons from A. Stein's collection, see R. Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: the Stein Collection in the British Museum* (Tokyo, 1982—1985), ii, Pl. 19, 52; from the collection of P. Pelliot, see *Serinde — Terre de Buddha* (Paris, 1996), Pl. 211, 268, pp. 279, 372. All are dated to the tenth century. In cave 237 in Dunhuang, in those of its parts which were painted after the Tangut conquest, i. e. after the 1030s, there are also two paintings representing Shuiyue Guanyin, see Shi Jinpo, Bai Bin, Wu Fengyun, *op. cit.*, Pl. 32. They are present in the Yulin caves of the Tangut time, see *ibid.*, Pl. 33, 34. In Khara-Khoto there are three paintings depicting Shuiyue Guanyin.

5. Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji* (Shanghai, 1963), pp. 204, 67.

6. Duan Wenjie, *op. cit.*, p. 242. In the lexicon of the poet Bo Jui the word "Moon" occurs quite frequently. In his poem "In the Pavilion to the West of the Pond" we read: "The Golden Moon drowned in the autumn pond".

7. *Serinde*, p. 280; Chun-fang Yu, "Guanyin. The Chinese transformation of Avalokiteśvara", *The Latter Days of the Law*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Spencer Museum of Art, 1994), pp. 156—7.

8. The suggestion about the possibility of a Taoist interpretation of the Moon and Water was also made by S. J. Claude Larre in "L'esprit Taoiste des Peintures Bouddiques Chinoises", *Mahayanist Art after A.D. 900. Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, 2 (London, 1977), p. 85.

9. *Serinde*, Pl. 268, p. 372.

10. Chun-fang Yu, *op. cit.*, p. 156. Chun-fang Yu, who read this *sūtra*, notes that it contains passages from the "Dhāraṇī of Great Compassion" and does not present an independent work. It does not explain the iconography of the "Moon-Water" Guanyin. See also Chun-fang Yu, "Images of Kuan-yin in Chinese folk literature", *Chinese Studies*, 8/1 (1979).

11. L. N. Men'shikov, *Knizhnaia graviura v kitaiskikh izdaniakh iz Khara-Khoto* (Book-Engravings in the Chinese Editions from Khara-Khoto), forthcoming. I am grateful to L. N. Men'shikov for his kind permission to use his unpublished work. The engravings belong to the Manuscript fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies: 1) TK 117 — the engraving is preceding the text of *Gao wang Guanshiyin jin*, though, according to L. N. Men'shikov, it does not illustrate the *sūtra* "On the High King Guanshiyin", it illustrates a foreword to the *sūtra* in this edition, which is missing in *Tripitaka*. The foreword tells how one man escaped from being executed by reading the *sūtra* one thousand times. The engraving shows a man with a sword broken into many pieces. The scholar dates the edition to the second half of the twelfth century; 2) TK 90 — according to Men'shikov, it dates from 1189. The engraving illustrates the same *sūtra*. Scenes are showing escape from different perils and misfortunes. Though the composition of the two engravings and the attributes of Bodhisattva are similar to those of the Khara-Khoto icons, there is no prominent circular aura characteristic of Shuiyue Guanyin around the figure of the main personage. Therefore, I cannot say if the engravings represent a popular composition — Bodhisattva on the Potalaka mountain — or it is Shuiyue Guanyin. In the catalogue *Serinde — Terre de Buddha*, Pl. 211, p. 280. Guanyin without any prominent "moon-aura" is defined as "Moon-Water" Guanyin.

12. Two banners from the British Museum are published by R. Whitfield, *op. cit.*, Pl. 9, 10. The third one belongs to Musée Guimet, see *Serinde*, Pl. 251.

13. *Lost Empire on the Silk Road*, p. 91.

14. *Serinde*, Pl. 251.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

16. *Ibid.*, Pl. 241, p. 320; see also A. Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch Turkestan* (Berlin, 1912), p. 304, fig. 617. From the description of the wall-painting in the cave it is evident that it represented Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha (Chinese Dizang), a tree with a ladder against it on the left and birds being let free. The tree and the ladder — a link between the earth and the sky — perform the same function as the banner on our icon. Birds (hawks) among the Kithans and Turks were symbolising human souls. Though we



know that the notion of "soul" is missing in the Buddhist teaching, primitive beliefs and folk traditions were penetrating into Buddhism and were accepted by it.

17. The archetype of Avalokiteśvara in Hinduism is Śiva, the god of creation and destruction, of life and death.

18. Shijing, *Izbrannye pesni* (Selected Songs), trans. by A. A. Shtukin (Moscow, 1957), p. 113; D. Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China. New Year and Other Annual Observances during Han Dynasty. (206 B.C.—220 A.D.)* (Princeton, 1975), p. 274. In the medieval Korean novel "Three Prophecies for Lady Sondok" it is told how the Tang emperor sent to the widowed and childless Queen of Silla a picture representing red, white and purple peonies. The flowers produced no scent — a hint on the loneliness of the Queen. "If a woman is really beautiful, men are roaming around; if a flower is full of odour, bees and butterflies hurry towards it". The symbolism of the colours is clear: red — the colour of life, white — the colour of death and mourning, purple — the colour of widowhood, see *Koreiskie predaniia i legendy* (Korean Lore and Legends), trans. by A. F. Trotseviv (Moscow, 1980), p. 114. I am grateful to Prof. Trotseviv for her referring me to this subject.

19. No. X 2435. *Lost Empire*, Pl. 49. The inscription is the following: *Baishi tao hua. Xinfu Gao shi yin jiang xiang* ("Lady Bai is offering the peach-blossom. The bride Lady Gao is burning the incense"). On this inscription see also K. B. Kepping, "The official name of the Tangut empire as reflected in the native Tangut texts", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 1/3 (1995), p. 27. Kepping is connecting the names of Bai and Gao with the official name of the Tangut State (Bai — "white", the female principle, Gao — "high", the male one). The interpretation of the name Gao seems to be somewhat complicated.

20. No. X 2438. *Lost Empire*, Pl. 47, see also note 2.

21. Chun-fang Yu, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Ding Fubao, *Foxiue daci dian* (Beijing, 1984), p. 1206.

22. The neighbours of the Tanguts, the Kithans, had a special ritual of shooting at a willow tree accompanied by prayers for rain. The emperor himself was shooting twice, the highest officials — once, see Ye Lungli, *Istoriia gosudarstva kidaneï* (History of the Kithan State) (Moscow, 1979), p. 529.

23. R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (London, 1972), p. 206.

24. *Izmenennyi i zanovo utverzhdennyi kodeks deviza tsarstvovaniia Nebesnoe Prosvetanie (1149—1169)* (The Revised and Newly Endorsed Codex of the T'ien-sheng Era. 1149—1169). Text, translation from Tangut, investigation and comments by E. I. Kychanov (Moscow, 1988), i, p. 362.

25. K. F. Samosiuk, "Portrety tangutskikh imperatorov" ("Portraits of Tangut emperors"), *Abstracts of Papers in Memory of Academician B. B. Piotrovsky* (St. Petersburg, 1994); *Lost Empire*, p. 83—6.

26. This suggestion was made by T. V. Grek.

27. The harp belongs to the type originating from Iran widespread along the Silk Road. This type is represented beginning from the middle of the sixth century, it is of no significance for dating our icon. The following two things should be, however, taken into account: 1) the flute-harp duat, and 2) the bent handle of the harp attached to its side. Such kind of handles are not registered by Bo Lawergren, see "The spread of harps between the near and the Far East during the first millennium A.D.: evidence of Buddhist musical culture on the Silk Road", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, IV (Kamakura, 1994/95), fig. 3F, 4C, F.

28. Some of the engravings were described by A. P. Terentyev-Katansky in his book *Material'naia kul'tura Si Sia* (Material Culture of Xi Xia) (Moscow, 1993), pp. 89—91. Fig. 8 is reproducing one of them. The Kithan origin of the hair-style is beyond doubt, see An Zhiming, "To the problem of the ethnic attribution of the ancient Chzhalaïnor burial grounds", *Inner Mongolia*, No. 5 (Wenwu, 1964), p. 42; Tamura Yusuzo and Kobayashi Tukiō, *Tombs and Mural Paintings in Ch'ing Ring Liao Imperial Mausoleums* (Tokyo, 1952—1953), ii, etc.

29. A. P. Terentyev-Katansky also comes to the conclusion that this fashion was not lasting, see his *op. cit.*, p. 90.

30. *Zhonggo meishu quanshu* (Beijing, 1988), xiii, Pl. 34, 38.

31. I am indebted for this example to M. G. Kramarovskiy.

32. *Izmenennyi i zanovo utverzhdennyi*, i, p. 436, article 329; iv (Moscow, 1989), p. 177, article 1362.

33. S. A. Pleitneva, "Pechenegi" ("The Petchenegs"), *Materialy i issledovaniia po arkheologii SSSR*, No. 62 (1958), p. 197; G. A. Fedorov-Davydov, *Kochevniki Vostochnoi Evropy pod vlast'iu zolotoordynskikh khanov* (Nomads of Eastern Europe under the Rule of the Golden Hord Khans) (Moscow, 1966), p. 35.

34. E. I. Kychanov, *Ocherki istorii*, p. 74.

35. *Xi Xia ji shi benmo*, composed by Zhang Jian (Guangxi, 1875—1908), cited after Kychanov, *ibid.*, p. 74. The Tanguts evidently had different funeral rites. The one mentioned above is similar to the Tibetan and Mongolian, when the corpse was left in the steppe.

36. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

37. Also in Central Asian and the Far Eastern mythology. In one medieval Korean novel the first ruler of the Karak state descended from Heaven on a rope of dark violet colour, see *Koreiskie predaniia i legendy*, p. 54.

38. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

39. S. P. Nesterov, *Kon' v kul'takh tiurkioazychnykh plemën Tsentral'noi Azii v épokhu srednevekov'ia* (Horse in the Cults of the Turkic-Speaking Tribes of Central Asia in the Medieval Period) (Novosibirsk, 1990), p. 59. More remote associations are connected with the pair of horses in the icon representing two deities of the Turkic pantheon — "the god of roads on a skew-bald horse" and "the god of roads on a black horse". According to S. G. Klyashtorny, see his "Mifologicheskie suzhety v drevnetiurkikh pamiatnikakh" ("Mythological subjects in Old Turkic monuments"), *Tiurkologicheskii sbornik. 1977* (Moscow, 1981), p. 196, one of them gives a man "god's blessing — soul", the other is "restoring and arranging" the State. Both are the messengers of Tengri, the supreme god of the Old Turks. They are always travelling, connecting the upper and the lower world.

40. J. P. Roux, *La mort chez les peuples altaïques anciens et médiévaux d'après les documents écrits* (Paris, 1963), p. 169, cited after E. Tryjarski, *Zwyczajne pogrzebowe ludów tureckich na tle ich wierzeń* (Warszawa, 1991), pp. 172, 233.

41. Nekliudov, *op. cit.*, pp. 187—8.

42. On the role played by Buddhism in the making of the State, see Ruth W. Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High. Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia* (Honolulu, 1996).

43. Nekliudov, *op. cit.*, p. 187.  
44. A. G. Maliavkin. *Uigurskie gosudarstva v IX—XII vv.* (Uighur States in the Ninth—Eleventh Centuries) (Novosibirsk, 1983), pp. 57—8.  
45. K. B. Kepping, *op. cit.*  
46. Nekliudov, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

### Illustrations

- Plate 1.** Bodhisattva Guanyin (No. X 2439), silk, 101.5 × 59.5 cm, the State Hermitage Museum.  
**Plate 2.** Guanyin's attendant Shancai-tungzi (Skr. Sudhana), a detail.  
**Plate 3.** Two horses standing by the open grave, two musicians and two dancers performing funeral rites, the scene in the lower part of the icon, a detail.  
**Plate 4.** The righteous man, attended by a boy, on his way to the Pure Land of Amitābha, a detail.  
**Fig. 1.** Guanyin protecting from "the eight evils". An illustration, on folios 1—4, to the *Guanshiyuin-tsing* (*Avalokiteśvara-sūtra*). Chinese xylograph TK-90 from Khara-Khoto, engraved in A.D. 1189, from the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 44.0 × 23.0 cm.
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